

D'var Torah by Rabbi M. Jaroslawicz for Parshas Emor 5775 (2015)

In this week's Parsha, Emor, we find the instructions for the mitzvah of Sefirah which we are now actively in the middle of performing. "U'sefartem lachem mi'mocharas ha'shabbos" [You shall count for yourselves - from the morrow of the rest day] (Vayikra 23:15).

Why is it that this mitzvah of counting the days of the Omer does not require us to make the traditional Bracha of "She'hechyanu" on the first night -- just as we do at the beginning of every other annual mitzvah?

The Rashba explains that the mitzvah of counting the Omer is really in-and-of-itself only a PATHWAY for us to reach the actual mitzvah, which is the sacrifice of the Sh'tei Halechem (the two breads that were offered in the Bais Hamikdash on Shavuos).

Nowadays we remain with just the "count," without the follow-up of the main mitzvah, the actual sacrifice itself. It is for this reason that we do not make a She'hechyanu. This is also the reason why most Poskim agree that the counting of the Omer without the existence of the Bais Hamikdash is only Rabbinical in nature, and not Biblical as it was then.

What we can derive from this teaching is that, even though the process to get somewhere is very important, we cannot lose focus of the fact that many times the main objective is not visualized until the process is complete.

I write this message on the eve of Lag B'Omer. What a jam-packed week this was.

On Sunday we celebrated Pesach Shainee.

On Thursday we celebrated Lag B'Omer.

And, in between, we had the pressure of seeing how and if PM Netanyahu will pull together a coalition and form a government. By now we all know that B'H he did.

Pesach Shainee represents the opportunity for a Jew to make up for a missed opportunity. Not always in life do we get a second chance. However, in G-d's realm, we most always do if our intentions are sincere.

Lag B'Omer as well represents a break in the action. Rabbi Akiva's students stopped dying. Lag B'Omer is an opportunity in the middle of a period of mourning to stop and reflect. But it, too, is not the essence. It, too, is meant to ground you and prepare you for what follows ... receiving the Torah on the Yom Tov of Shavuos.

After reaching a last-minute agreement with PM Netanyahu, Naftali Bennett was quoted as saying;

"This isn't a rightwing government, this isn't a leftwing government, and this isn't a center government. It is a government of all the nation of Israel."

This took place on the eve of Lag B'Omer, Israel time.

It is important that we remember that the elections, the differences of opinions, the negotiations, deal cutting and finalizing of ministry positions -- are all nothing more than the PATHWAY to what follows.

Now, more than ever in Israel's history, we need "Ahdus"; we need unity.

I think it would behoove us all to say a silent prayer and to hope that all of our brothers and sisters around the world see truth in Naftali Bennett's statement and help to start breaking down the barriers of Right and Left and work towards a single unified Jewish people. In fact, in Shul, this Shabbos, when we recite the prayer for the State of Israel, let's do it with a little extra Kavannah and enthusiasm.

Wouldn't it be great to make a Sh'hechyanu on Sefiras HaOmer next year?

Have a Great Shabbos