

רמב"ם הלכות תמידין ומוספין פרק ז הלכה כב

מצות עשה לספור שבע שבתות תמימות מיום הבאת העומר שנאמר וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת שבע שבתות, ומצוה למנות הימים עם השבועות שנאמר תספרו חמשים יום, ומתחילת היום מונין לפיכך מונה בלילה מליל ששה עשר בניסן.

שמות פרק כ פסוק ב

אָנֹכִי יְקוֹק אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל פְּנֵי:

משנה מסכת אבות פרק ו משנה ב

...והלוחות מעשה אלהים המה והמכתב מכתב אלהים הוא חרות על הלוחות אל תקרא חרות אלא חירות שאין לך בן חורין אלא מי שעוסק בתלמוד תורה...

R. J. B. Soloveitchik, Sacred and Profane. Shiurei HaRav pp. 15-18

The basic criterion which distinguishes freeman from slave is the kind of relationship each has with time and its experience. Bondage is identical with passive intuition and reception of an empty, formal time stream.

When the Jews were delivered from the Egyptian oppression ... metamorphosing a tribe of slaves into a "nation of priests", [Moshe] was told by God that the path leading from the holiday of Pesach to Shavuot, from the initial liberation to consummate freedom (Revelation), leads through the medium of time. The commandment of s'fira (counting the Omer) was entrusted the Jew; the wondrous test of counting forty-nine successive days was put to him. These forty-nine days must be whole. If one day is missed, the act of numeration is invalidated.

A slave who is capable of appreciating each day, of grasping its meaning and worth, of weaving every thread of time into a glorious fabric, quantitatively forming the warp and woof of centuries of change, is eligible for Torah. He has achieved freedom.

We may say then that qualitative-time consciousness is comprised of two elements: **First**, the appreciation of the enormous implications inherent in the fleeting moments of the present. ...eternity may depend upon the brief moment. **Secondly**, the vicarious experience, while in the present, of the past and future. No distance, however removed, should separate one's time consciousness from the dawn of one's group or from the eschatological destiny and infinite realization of one's cherished ideals.

ספר המצוות לרמב"ם מצות עשה קסא

והמצוה הקס"א היא שצונו לספור מקצירת העומר תשעה וארבעים יום והוא אמרו יתעלה (אמור כג) וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת. ודע כי כמו שנתחייבו בית דין למנות שנות יובל שנה שנה וששמה ששמה כמו שבארנו במה שקדם (מ' קמ) כך חייב כל אחד ואחד ממנו למנות ימי העומר יום יום ושבעה שבוע. שהוא אמר (שם) תספרו חמשים יום ואמר (ס"פ ראה) שבעה שבועות תספר לך. וכמו שמנין השנים והשמטים מצוה אחת כמו שבארנו (שם) כן ספירת העומר מצוה אחת. וכן מנה אותם כל מי שקדמנו מצוה אחת. והאמת מה שעשו בזה. ואל יטעך אמרם (מנחו' סו א) מצוה למימני יומי ומצוה למימני שבועי ותחשוב שהן שתי מצות. כי כל חלק וחלק מחלקי אי זה מצוה שיהיו לה חלקים מצוה לעשות החלק ההוא ממנה. ואמנם היו שתי מצות אילו אמרו מנין הימים מצוה ומנין השבועות מצוה. וזה מה שלא ייעלם למי שיטעם הדבור. כי אתה כשתאמר חובה לעשות כך וכך הנה לא יתחייב מזה המאמר שהפעולה היא מצוה בפני עצמה. והראיה הברורה על זה היותנו מונים השבועות גם כן בכל לילה באמרנו שהם כך וכך שבועות וכך וכך ימים. ואילו היו השבועות מצוה בפני עצמה לא היינו מסדרין מנינם כי אם בלילי השבועות לבד והיינו אומרים שתי ברכות אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על ספירת ימי העומר ועל ספירת שבועי העומר. ואין הדבר כן, אבל המצוה היא ספירת העומר ימיו ושבועותיו כמו שתקנו. ומצוה זו אין הנשים חייבות בה:

Extras:

The great Gaon of Vilna, Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer zt"l, once looked at a clock upon the wall. "Do you know what is the greatest mussar sefer of all?" he mused. "A simple clock. The seconds tick away, the minutes pass - and there's nothing we can do to stop it. How precious is time!"

And who, after all, fully appreciated the value of time more than the Gaon. It is told that one year, before Yom Kippur, the Gaon, in a period of great remorse, decided he would add together all the minutes he had idly wasted that year. He reckoned that - over the period of a year - he had wasted more than two hours that could have been spent studying!

Counting the Minutes

The great Chassidic Rebbe, **Reb Dov Ber of Radoshitz**, was traveling across the Polish countryside. Night fell, the roads would soon be unsafe, and so he directed his wagon driver to stop at the first Jewish inn that they could find.

In a short while, they had pulled up in front of a small Jewish tavern. The owner welcomed them in warmly, helped them with their bags, fed and watered their horse, and prepared for Reb Dov Ber a special room reserved for traveling rabbis and noblemen. After praying the evening prayer, Reb Dov Ber retired to his chambers and to bed, tired after the long day's journey.

Soon the house was quiet, the fields outside still. Only the occasional barking of a lone farm dog broke the silence of the night. And yet . . . the clock on the wall -- it was ticking in the most amazing way; it wouldn't let Reb Dov Ber sleep. He tossed and turned in his bed. He got up and started pacing the room. Verses from the Books of the Prophets flooded his mind, songs of deliverance and hope. He tried to lie down again, but the clock kept ticking, until he was forced to rise from bed once more. Thus he spent the night, pacing the room in anxious anticipation.

In the morning, the tired but exhilarated rabbi approached the inn-keeper. "Where did you get that clock in the room?" he asked.

"That clock? Well, several years ago another rabbi stayed in the room, **Reb Yosef of Turchin**, the son of that *tzaddik*, the **Seer of Lublin**. He came for only one night, but the weather turned bad and he was forced to stay for several days. In the end, he found that he did not have enough money to pay the bill, so he covered the difference by giving me that clock. He said that he had inherited it from his father."

"Now I understand why I couldn't sleep," said Reb Dov Ber. "Most clocks in the world only cause depression, for they count the hours that have passed -- another day lost, another opportunity gone by. But the clock of the holy Seer of Lublin counts the time that is coming - - another minute closer to the final redemption, another second nearer the age of universal peace."

Another Version:

In one of his travels, chassidic master Rabbi Dov Ber of Radoshitz occasioned to stay the night at a wayside inn. In the morning, he sought out the innkeeper.

"The clock," he asked excitedly, "the clock you have hanging in my room -- where is it from? Where did you get that wonderful clock?"

"Why," said the surprised innkeeper, "it's quite an ordinary clock. There are hundreds like it hanging in homes throughout the country."

"No, no," insisted Rabbi Dov Ber. "This is no ordinary clock. You must find out for me where this clock comes from."

If only to humor his guest, the innkeeper made some inquiries, which yielded the information that this clock once belonged to the famed "Seer of Lublin," Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz. An heir of the "Seer" had been forced by poverty to sell all his possessions, and so the clock passed from owner to owner until it came to hang in one of the guestrooms of the inn.

"Of course!" exclaimed Rabbi Dov Ber upon hearing the clock's history. "This clock could only have belonged to the 'Seer of Lublin.' Only the Seer's clock could mark time in such a manner!

"Your standard clock," he explained to his host, "strikes such a mournful tone. 'Another hour of your life has passed you by,' it says. 'You are now one hour closer to the grave.' But this clock proclaims: 'Another hour of *galut* (exile) has gone by. You are now one hour closer to the coming of Moshiach and the Redemption...'

"All through the night," concluded Rabbi Dov Ber, "whenever this clock sounded the hour, I leapt from my bed and danced for joy."