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Emor | The Days of the Omer - Preparation for Matan Torah





MESILOT Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha of Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l

From the weekly lessons of his son **Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita**

פרשת אמור| אנגלית

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Revelation of Elijah the Prophet 1
To Each One An Individual Path 6
The Case of the Blasphemer
The Mitzvah of Pesach Sheni
"We Also Want Flags."
The Disgrace Is Removed 16
Yearning and Longing Above All 17
Renewing the Monarchy
The Holiness of the Omer Days 23
Summary and Practical Conclusions 26



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Parshat Emor - Revelation of Elijah the Prophet



Revelation of Elijah the Prophet

It was Friday night. Around the beautifully set table sat the Cohen family, listening to the words of Torah, and delighted in its words. To illustrate the idea, the following story was shared by the father, Mr. Cohen:

The elegant home of Reb Moshe. the wealthy textile merchant from Kosov, stood proudly at the heart of a vast orchard on the outskirts of the city. Thanks to his wealth and acts of kindness, he earned great respect from the townspeople. Yet, despite his great wealth and honor, Reb Moshe was a man of simplicity and humility. He mingled with people warmly, greeted everyone with a kind demeanor, and never took credit for his good deeds.

Recently, however, a strange and new yearning began to fill his heart — to merit the revelation of Elijah the Prophet. He had read and heard about those righteous Jews who had experienced this, and he longed for it as well.

At first, he began to mortify his body through various forms of self-abnegation, and he imitated the deeds of the pious and righteous men of his city, hoping that spiritual ascension would grant him this coveted revelation.

But, to his sorrow, despite all his efforts, the revelation did not come.

One day, Reb Moshe decided to share his great aspiration with the holy tzaddik of his town, Rabbi Baruch of Kosov. Rabbi Baruch, a great Torah scholar, and a renowned kabbalist, authored the works 'Yesod HaEmunah' on various Torah

Parshat Emor - Revelation of Elijah the Prophet

subjects and 'Amud HaAvodah', a foundational text in Kabbalah.

The tzaddik listened intently to his words, and finally remarked, "Reb Moshe, why do you seek lofty ways? Follow the path of kindness, there you will find the rectification for your soul."

Reb Moshe left the tzaddik's room a bit disheartened, having been instructed to cease his prior efforts.

From that day forward, the fabric merchant fell into a state of neglect. He began ignoring his business duties and soon spent long hours in the study hall. His outward appearance also became disheveled.

Some time later, he returned to the tzaddik's room, his face veiled with sadness.

As he began speaking of his troubling desire, a sigh escaped him; it was clear that he could not relinquish his burning yearning to see Elijah the Prophet.

"Walk the path of kindness and give generously to charity," repeated the tzaddik once more. This time, however, he added a somewhat cryptic statement: "If a poor man comes to you and asks for a thousand gold coins, do not withhold it from him."

Reb Moshe left the tzaddik's room with a heavy heart. Nonetheless, he resolved to follow this guidance with utmost diligence. Soon, every poor person who crossed his path received a generous sum without being overly scrutinized.

Years passed, and Reb Moshe was still consumed by a single concern—the revelation of Elijah.

Then, one day, as he tended to his customers purchasing fabrics, a messenger arrived from his home. "A persistent beggar has come to your house and refuses to eat until he is admitted into the inner parlor. Your wife is asking how to proceed," said the messenger.

At first, Reb Moshe was angered by the beggar's audacity. But immediately, the words of the tzaddik of Kosov echoed in his mind: "Walk the path of kindness."

Parshat Emor - Revelation of Elijah the Prophet

"Tell my wife that I will return home shortly, and until then, she should fulfill all of the beggar's requests," he replied.

When he arrived home an hour later, he found his wife waiting at the door, distressed and impatient. "This man was not satisfied with the parlor; he insisted on being served food in our bedroom!" she exclaimed bitterly.

Reb Moshe entered the bedroom to find the beggar dressed in tattered rags, fully engrossed in his meal. When the beggar noticed the homeowner, he lifted his eyes and demanded the "modest" sum of a thousand gold coins.

Reb Moshe didn't know whether to be angry or amused. "If you don't give me a thousand gold coins now, I won't leave," the beggar declared and threatened, returning to his plate.

Regaining his composure, Reb Moshe began negotiating regarding the sum, and in the end, he agreed to give him two hundred gold coins, which was a substantial amount.

But the beggar was unmoved. He insisted on the full amount of one thousand gold coins, not a single coin less.

Reb Moshe's patience wore thin, and he signaled to a servant to remove the audacious beggar from the house. But the beggar was quicker, leaping out of the window and disappearing.

That day was the eve of Lag Ba'Omer, and later that evening, the chassidim gathered around the table of Rabbi Baruch of Kosov, Reb Moshe among them.

The tzaddik spoke about the lofty divine revelations that illuminate this day, even though only a select few perceive them openly and consciously.

Reb Moshe felt it was an opportune moment to raise the matter of his great desire once more – to merit the revelation of Elijah.

"Have you ever encountered a poor man who asked you for a thousand gold coins?" the tzaddik asked in response.

Parshat Emor - Revelation of Elijah the Prophet

Reb Moshe's heart skipped a beat. "How could I have forgotten?" he anguished.

In a faint voice, he recounted to the tzaddik the story of the insistent and impudent beggar who had visited his house just hours earlier that day.

"Could it be that years of effort were wasted because of a single failure, a moment of weakness when I faltered and did not withstand the test?" he asked, trembling with fear.

The tzaddik of Kosov gave him a deep, penetrating gaze.

"What a pity, truly what a great pity," he said. "You saw Elijah the Prophet – yet apparently, you did not merit it."

"That was Elijah the Prophet?!" Reb Moshe exclaimed in surprise and anguish.

"You must understand; Elijah the Prophet reveals himself to people according to the root of their soul and their deeds," the tzaddik explained calmly. "The same was true for you; he revealed himself to you according to your spiritual level and the root of your soul."²

2. Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh recounts ('Ve'Abita', Parshat Tzav 5783, p. 12): Rabbi Bunim would invite the "Chabura Kedusha" (his closest circle of students) to join him for the Passover Seder, while other chasidim who came to be in his presence were assigned, after Maariv, to dine with distinguished townspeople in the village.

Just before the Seder would begin, Rabbi Bunim would enter the Beit Midrash to ensure that no one was left behind, arranging a place for any straggler to eat.

One chasid, Reb Rafael, yearned deeply to be at Rabbi Bunim's Seder, but he knew that only the close circle of students were permitted. Undeterred, Reb Rafael hid under a bench while the rabbi assigned places after Maariv. After everyone left, he emerged and began to sit and study Torah. When Rabbi Bunim returned before the Seder and saw Reb Rafael, he understood how much this mattered to him and said, "If so, you will be my guest — but on the one condition that whatever you see must remain secret; do not tell anyone."

When they opened the door during the recital of "Shefoch Chamat'cha" - "Pour Your wrath," an elderly Polish farmer entered, approached Rabbi Bunim, and spoke to him in Polish.

Parshat Emor - Revelation of Elijah the Prophet

Reb Moshe's heart was broken, and following this humbling experience, he and his wife decided to move to the Land of Israel, settling in the holy city of Safed. There, Reb Moshe experienced a renewed spirit. He no longer sought spiritual greatness or miraculous revelations, but rather served G-d with simplicity and sincerity.

Every year on Lag Ba'Omer, Reb Moshe would gather strength within himself and devotedly serve the masses who came to Meron. He joined in the great joy and festivities and mingled with the simple Jews, feeling immense satisfaction in their company.

Several years later, on Lag Ba'Omer, as Reb Moshe busily tended to the crowds of guests, he suddenly saw before him the very same beggar who had visited his home many years ago in Kosov — the one who had insisted on dining in his bedroom and who had demanded of him a thousand gold coins.

Reb Moshe froze, staring in astonishment and good fortune at the beggar, whose face now shone brightly, his eyes radiant and glowing.

The farmer explained that he had a lot of grain of various types but was unsure what to do — whether to sell it, given the current prices, or trade it for barley or other crops. Rabbi Bunim advised him accordingly, and the farmer departed, saying in Polish, "Do widzenia" ("Goodbye").

After Rabbi Bunim's passing, Reb Rafael visited Rabbi Yitzchak of Vorka, one of Rabbi Bunim's greatest disciples. When Reb Rafael recounted to him the story, Rabbi Yitzchak asked him to describe and characterize the farmer's appearance, since Rabbi

Yitzchak had also witnessed the event.

Rabbi Yitzchak of Vorka then said, "Know that the farmer was Elijah the Prophet. And while you saw him as a farmer; I saw him as a nobleman. Surely, Rabbi Bunim saw him in a form entirely beyond our comprehension."

Thus, there are revelations of Elijah in many various forms; each person perceives him according to their spiritual level. The very name Elijah the Prophet hints at this; its letters spell "לי הוא" — "He is mine, meaning according to my own level."

Parshat Emor - To Each One An Individual Path

To Each One An Individual Path

"Father," one of the sons asked, "I don't understand. At the beginning of the story, it seems that Reb Moshe's desire was improper; his rabbi rebuked him and said: 'Why do you seek greatness for yourself?'

Yet, in the end, he in fact did merit seeing Elijah the Prophet. So, was this desire of his proper or not?"

The father's face grew thoughtful, and he pondered for a few moments and said:

"His rabbi rebuked him because he was mistaken in his approach. Due to the intensity of his desire, he strayed from the path that the Holy One, blessed be He, had set for his soul.

G-d wanted him to serve Him primarily through acts of charity and kindness. He however, driven by his powerful longing for the divine, began mortifying himself and imitating the practices of the most pious in his town.

That was a grave mistake," the father continued. "For every Jew has a unique path and way that is specifically suited and reflects the essence of their divine soul.³

3. Although each Jew has a unique path aligned with the root of their soul, the foundation of all paths is Ahavat Yisrael (love for fellow Jews).

The story is told: Rabbi Aharon of Starosheley, known for his strictness, guided many young Torah scholars but was often quick to dismiss and criticize them for minor faults.

Once, during a private audience, he lamented to his teacher, the Baal HaTanya,

about his lack of sufficient warmth and vitality in Torah learning and prayer.

The Baal HaTanya responded: "Man's work is repaid to him" (Job 34:11) — Divine conduct reflects one's own. One who pushes away a fellow Jew, even for Heaven's sake, will find the doors and gates of heaven closed to them from.

But one who brings a fellow Jew closer will, in turn, be drawn close from above, and the gates of Torah

Parshat Emor - The Case of the Blasphemer

However, once Reb Moshe resumed walking his unique path, Heaven remembered his longings, yearnings, and immense desires and indeed granted him the vision of Elijah the Prophet.

The father added, "a Jew has the power to bring about new realities through holy desires and yearnings." "Father," asked the son, "truly? Can one create a new reality through desires and longings?"

The father rose from his place, approached the bookshelf, took out the book of Leviticus, opened it to the end of Parshat Emor, and began to read.

The Case of the Blasphemer

At the end of our Parsha, Parshat Emor, it is written: "And the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel. and he blasphemed the Name of G-d and cursed" (Leviticus 24:10–11).

Moses did not know what punishment to administer him, and "They placed him under guard to clarify for them according to the word of G-d" (Leviticus 24:12).

G-d soon appeared to Moses and commanded him: "Take the

blasphemer out of the camp; let all who heard lay their hands on his head, and let the entire assembly stone him" (Leviticus 24:14).

Moses was then taught by G-d the entire section of the laws of the blasphemer. The Jewish people soon acted according to G-d's command, as stated in the final verse of our Parsha: "Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and they brought the blasphemer out of the camp and stoned him with stones" (Leviticus 24:23).

and divine service will open wide before them ('Likrat Shabbat' – Iggud Talmidei Hayeshivot Haolami', Parshat Re'eh, p. 11).

Parshat Emor - The Case of the Blasphemer

The father continued, "The Targum Yerushalmi explains that this tale with the blasphemer is one of four times that Moses encountered situations and did not know how G-d wanted him to act, namely:

1. The blasphemer – as mentioned. 2. The man who gathered sticks on Shabbat, as it says: "And the children of Israel were in the wilderness, and they

found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day" (Numbers 15:32). G-d commanded Moses to stone him, and the Jewish people did so, as it says: "The entire assembly brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones" (Numbers 15:36).⁴ 3. The daughters of Tzelofchad, as it says: "The daughters of Tzelofchad, son of Hepher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of

4. The great Rabbi Meir of Lublin (also known as the Maharam of Lublin), lived almost 500 years ago.

Even in childhood, his genius and erudition was becoming evident: by age eight, he knew several Talmudic tractates by heart and offered insights that astonished his teachers.

One day, while reviewing Parshat Shelach with his teacher, the young prodigy reached the verse describing the man who gathered sticks on Shabbat: "And the entire assembly took him outside the camp and pelted him with stones" (Numbers 15:36), and then he suddenly paused, and was soon lost in thought.

Recognizing the child's remarkable abilities, the teacher waited, and indeed, after a short while, Meir's eyes lit up and he continued learning on.

When asked why he had paused, the young prodigy explained that the verse describing the man who gathered sticks on Shabbat had reminded him of the blasphemer, who was also stoned.

When comparing the verses he noticed that the Torah says there:

"They took the blasphemer outside the camp, and they stoned him with a stone" (Leviticus 24:23).

Why is the term used here "with stones", in the plural form here, but in the singular - "with a stone" with regard to the blasphemer?

Young Meir cited Tosafot (Bava Batra 119b), which explains that the man who had gathered sticks on Shabbat acted with pure intentions — for the sake of Heaven — to demonstrate and prove that the commandments of G-d still applied

Parshat Emor - The Mitzvah of Pesach Sheni

Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph, approached — and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah" (Numbers 27:1). 4. The individuals who were ritually

impure and could not bring the Passover offering.⁵ Of these four instances, let us focus on the last one – those who were ritually impure and unable to bring the Passover offering in its time.

The Mitzvah of Pesach Sheni

On the 15th of Nissan, in the year 2448 to Creation, the Jewish people left Egypt.

Nearly a year later, on the 1st of Nissan in the year 2449, the Mishkan was erected, and on that very day, Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aharon,

took "each man his fire-pan, put fire in it and placed incense upon it, and offered before G-d a forign fire that He had not commanded them" (Leviticus 10:1).

Since they sinned, they were punished: "And fire went forth

and were in effect despite the sin of the spies and the divine decree that would keep them in the desert for 40 years.

Consequently, those who stoned him held mixed personal views: some saw him as evil, others believed he acted righteously with pure intentions, and each person threw his stone with a different thought — hence the plural "stones." By contrast, the blasphemer was unanimously condemned for blasphemy; and with his punishment the Jewish people all stoned him with a single shared intent, and for this reason the Torah uses the term "a stone" in the singular tense ('Chachmei Yisrael Beyaldutam', p. 20).

5. Following each of these extraordinary events, we received from G-d new Torah laws and directives:

The daughters of Tzelofchad brought about the laws of inheritance (Numbers 27:1–11); the blasphemer's case established laws regarding cursing (Leviticus 24:10–16); and those impure from contact with the dead led to the transmission of the laws of Pesach Sheni (Numbers 9:6–14).

That is with the exception of the incident of the gatherer of sticks on Shabbat, when no new laws were established or introduced.

Parshat Emor - The Mitzvah of Pesach Sheni

from before G-d and consumed them, and they died before G-d."

Their bodies remained inside the Mishkan and needed to be removed. Moses called upon Mishael and Eltzafan: "And he said to them: 'Come close, carry your brothers from before the Holy, and out of the camp'" (ibid. 10:4).

On that very day — the 1st of Nissan — the Jewish people were commanded regarding the observance of Pesach which would occur in another two weeks, on the 14th of Nissan (Pesachim 6b), as it is stated: "And Moses spoke to the Children of Israel to make the Pesach offering" (Numbers 9:4), and when that appointed time arrived to offer the Korban Pesach. Mishael and Eltzafan were ritually impure (from contact with the dead) and therefore could not bring the Pesach offering.6

They approached Moses and poured out their distress: "Why should we be diminished, and not be able to bring the sacrifice of G-d?" (ibid. 9:7).

Moses said to them, "Stand still, and I will hear what G-d commands concerning you" (ibid. 9:8).

G-d then answered and commanded that in such a case, there would be an option to fulfill the Pesach sacrifice at a later date — on the 14th of Iyar, known as "Pesach Sheni", in lieu of the First Pesach on the 14th of Nissan.

This Pesach offering would require adherence to all of the original rules, as it is stated: "In the second month, on the fourteenth day, at twilight, they shall make it, with matzot and bitter herbs they shall eat it" (ibid. 9:11).

6. As the Talmud states (Pesachim 90b): According to Rabbi Yitzchak, those impure were defiled due to contact with a corpse and were in their seventh day of impurity, which fell on the eve of Pesach.

As the verse says: "They were unable to perform the Pesach sacrifice on that day" (Numbers 9:6) - "On that day" they were unable to sacrifice — but they would have been able to do so on the very next day.

Parshat Emor - Do Not Be Indifferent

Do Not Be Indifferent

From the tale of how Pesach Sheni came about, we learn an important and wonderful principle.

We bring an excerpt from a talk delivered by the Lubavitcher Rebbe of saintly memory:⁷

"The command regarding Pesach Sheni differs from all of the other commandments of the Torah in that this command was introduced after the claim and demand of the Jewish people to Moses: "Why should we be diminished?" — whereas the other commandments of the Torah were given by G-d without any prior arousal or demand on the part of the Jewish people.

The explanation of this concept is as follows:

Concerning all of the creation of the world, it is written: "Which G-d created to do" (Genesis 2:3), and Rashi explains "to do" to mean "to fix," i.e., G-d originally created the world in a

way that requires rectification.

The divine intent is that a Jew completes and perfects it through his toil and service, thereby becoming a partner with the Al-mighty in the work of Creation.

Similarly, with regard to Torah and its commandments, although all of the aspects of the Torah and mitzvot were given to Moses at Sinai, there are still matters in the Torah that are newly revealed through diligent Torah scholars throughout the generations.

This is emphasized most prominently in the command regarding Pesach Sheni, which came about solely through the actions of the Jewish people who protested to Moses and said, "Why should we be diminished?"

When Moses thereafter presented their demand to G-d, the Giver of the Torah, and the Commander of the mitzvot, the command for Pesach Sheni was then revealed and awakened.

Parshat Emor - Do Not Be Indifferent

From this, we learn profound lesson in serving G-d: At first glance, the demand of those unable to bring the Korban Pesach — "Why should we be diminished?" seems puzzling. For if G-d wanted them to perform the mitzvah, He would have instructed so to Moses: and since He had not done so, they were clearly exempt from it.

How then could they protest and demand, "Grant us this mitzvah"?

Rather, when a Jew senses a lack in spiritual matters, he must not passively accept it. He mustn't simply submit and say, "We have no one to rely on but our Father in Heaven," instead, he cries out, "Why should we be diminished?"

The idea of relying entirely on Heaven is, in fact, one of the signs that our sages use to describe the very end of the darkness of exile. As explained elsewhere,8 this mindset must not serve as an excuse for spiritual inaction, and to exclaim — "there's nothing we can do."

The Torah teaches otherwise: "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for the fear of Heaven" (Berachot 33b).

G-d desires that a Jew actively demand and strive for spiritual growth, and when he shows sincere longing, G-d fulfills his request — just as He did with Pesach Sheni

This offers a profound directive to each and every one of us: A Jew may feel small and insignificant, and may question what impact his mere mortal and finite efforts can have

Yet, the story of Pesach Sheni teaches that even those who are 'impure', and thus 'distant' from G-d, they too can demand, "Why should we be diminished?" Not only was their plea accepted, but a new mitzvah was introduced into the Torah in their merit.

Parshat Emor - Do Not Be Indifferent

Moreover, Pesach Sheni then became one of the 248 positive commandments, which are all essential to spiritual wholeness. Even someone who brought the regular Pesach offering his entire life still needed completeness in all of the 248 mitzvot, including Pesach Sheni (to a certain spiritual degree).

This highlights the immense power of a Jew's will. Despite our vast distance from G-d, when something truly matters to us, we can demand, "Why should we be diminished?" And then, as the Talmud teaches: "I toiled and found" (Megillah 6b) — G-d grants our request.

In fact, a parallel to this concept also exists among Jewish women as well:

The Torah records the case of the daughters of Tzelafchad, who also demanded, "Why should our father's name be diminished?" (Bamidbar 27:4). Their plea led to a new passage being recorded in the Torah, which was vital and of great importance to all the Jewish people: "If a man dies and has no son, you shall pass his inheritance to his daughter" (ibid. 27:8).

This underscores a vital principle: Every Jew must recognize the strength they possess.

While true success and might comes merely from G-d, He nonetheless desires that we take action on our end.

In matters of fear of G-d, He waits for a Jew to show how much it matters and is important to him — not just in the depths of the soul, but also in practice in thought, speech, and action.

When we then demonstrate our insistence, our plea is answered, and new dimensions of Torah and mitzvot are revealed for all of the Jewish people."9

9. An Additional insight was shared by Rabbi Yoram Abargel in one of his talks (Imrei Noam, Beha'alotcha, Ma'amar 8):

"The Lubavitcher Rebbe writes in the Hayom Yom (14 Iyar): "The message of Pesach Sheni is that nothing is ever lost. It

Parshat Emor - "We Also Want Flags."

"You see," the father concluded, "the power of deep longing is powerfully conveyed by Mishael and Eltzafan's demand that led to the commandment of 'Pesach Sheni.'

We find no such longing that existed for any of the other Festivals — and we therefore do not find in the Torah a 'Second Sukkot' or a 'Second Shavuot.'"

"We Also Want Flags."

A hush fell over the table, and everyone sat quietly, reflecting on what they had heard.

Then one of the children spoke up: "Some time ago, I

learned a Midrash that teaches this very same principle:

The years of enslavement had ended, and on the 6th of Sivan in the year 2448 to Creation, the

is always possible to rectify and complete. Even someone who was impure, or far away, even if it was done wantonly — one can still correct and repair."

Meaning, from the fact that G-d created a second opportunity for those unable to bring the Pesach offering on time, we learn that even if one has fallen spiritually, whether unintentionally, intentionally, by force, or willingly, G-d always provides opportunities to rectify and return to the right path.

The famous story of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter illustrates this concept. Walking late at night, he noticed a small light burning in a shoemaker's shop. Peering inside, he saw the shoemaker mending shoes by the dim flame of a nearly extinguished candle.

Rabbi Yisrael asked, "Why are you still working so late? Shouldn't you sleep at this late hour?"

The shoemaker replied, "Rabbi, as long as the candle burns, there is still time to repair."

The shoemaker referred to shoes in his shop, but Rabbi Yisrael derived from this episode a profound spiritual lesson:

The soul of every Jew is likened to a candle, as it is written, 'The soul of man is the candle of G-d' (Proverbs 20:27); as long as the 'candle' of a person's life burns, they can still accomplish great things and correct their misdeeds.

No one should despair or believe they are beyond repair, and should

Parshat Emor - "We Also Want Flags."

Jewish people stood excitedly at Mount Sinai.

The heavens opened, and the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself — but He did not come alone.

As the Midrash says: 10 "When the Holy One revealed Himself on Mount Sinai, myriads of angels descended with Him, as it is stated: 'G-d's chariots are myriads, thousands of angels' (Psalms 68:18). Furthermore, they were all arranged by their separate flags, as it is stated: 'Distinguished among myriads' (Song of Songs 5:10)." The Midrash continues (ibid. 2:10):

"Just as the Holy One created four directions and correspondingly four banners, so too, He surrounded His Throne with four angels — Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael," thus, the angels themselves are also divided according to these flags.

The Ramchal, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, writes¹¹ that when the angels are called to serve, a proclamation goes forth — "Be ready to serve faithful servants" — and they all ascend with great joy, each group aligning under its own flag, led by one of the four archangels.

Rabbi David Eichenstein once explained this idea: 12

A flag represents a shared will or objective, just as in times of war, soldiers rally around a flag, united in purpose.

Similarly, the angels' mission is to fulfill the Creator's will, which is revealed through four primary attributes — hence the four banners.

By their exalted nature, the angels constantly stand ready under their respective flags, each devoted to designated task and the respective attribute

make every effort to correct their wrongdoings promptly. The longer one delays, the more difficult this process may become.

- 10. Bamidbar Rabbah 2:3.
- 11. 'Tikkunim Chadashim' (Tikkun 38).
- 12. 'Maor Yitzchak' (p. 451).

Parshat Emor - The Disgrace Is Removed

of divine service that they represents.

Thus, when the angels "landed" upon Mount Sinai, the Jewish people saw them arrayed under these banners — each angel recognizing its unique mission

and place, and witnessing this, the Jews longed to have their own "flags" — they too desired to experience a revelation of their individual purpose and mission in the fulfillment of the divine purpose in creation.

The Disgrace Is Removed

The Revelation at Sinai concluded, and Moses ascended to receive the Torah.

Then forty days had passed since the giving of the Torah, and in the Israelite camp, anxiety began to surface — "Where has Moses gone?"

This mounting pressure led a group of people to approach Aharon the High Priest, demanding that he make them a molted golden g-d to lead them, and ultimately, the Golden Calf was fashioned.

Word of the Golden Calf spread throughout the world, provoking mockery from the nations:

"Is this the Chosen People? The special nation seems to have reached its end."

Meanwhile, in the heavens, turmoil: G-d there was annihilate wished to the Jewish people. But Moses — Israel's faithful shepherd himself with all his exerted harsh might to sweeten the decree and to arouse Divine compassion.

Ultimately, he succeeded: the decree rescinded. was and G-d announced to him. have forgiven, as have requested." However, the did reach the news not nations, and they continued to belittle and ridicule the Jewish people.

Seven months went by, and on the first of Nissan, the Mishkan was erected, and on that day, the

Parshat Emor - Yearning and Longing Above All

Divine Presence returned to dwell among the Israelites.¹³

Even then, the news did not reach the ears of the nations. Only a month later, on the first of Iyar, did G-d appear to Moses and say: "I remember the people's longing and desire for banners. Now the time has come; go and count them, and then arrange them all under their respective flags."

As we read at the beginning of the Book of Numbers:

"G-d spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert, in the Tent of Meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had left the land of Egypt, saying: 'Take the sum of all of the congregation of the Children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' houses, by the number of their names, every male by head" (Numbers 1:1–2).

The Ibn Ezra comments on this verse:

"On the first day of the second month" — this command was to organize their flags, and how they should travel and camp around the Sanctuary; and on the twentieth of the second month they journeyed on."

The Megaleh Amukot teaches¹⁴ that at that moment when the Jewish people received the banners, the nations finally understood and witnessed that G-d had reconciled with the Jewish people.

Thus they pleaded and said: "Return, return, Shulamit, return, return, that we may gaze upon you" (Song of Songs 7:1)

Yearning and Longing Above All

The members of the Cohen family remained in their places,

transfixed by these riveting ideas. They all were thinking the same

13. As it is written: "Moses and Aaron entered the Tent of Meeting, and they came out and blessed the people, and the glory of G-d appeared to all the people" (Leviticus 9:23) - Rashi explains:

Moses entered together with Aaron, and they prayed for G-d's mercy, and the Divine Presence returned to dwell among the Jewish people.

14. Va'etchanan, 121.

Parshat Emor - Yearning and Longing Above All

thing: "When will we, too, be privileged to taste even a glimpse of those higher, hidden worlds — where the soul longs and yearns for closeness to the Divine?"¹⁵

The father rose at once, went to the bookshelf, removed a volume of Sefer HaChinuch, and opening to the mitzvah of Sefirat HaOmer (Mitzvah 306), began to read aloud:

"This Mitzvah is to count forty-nine days from the day of the Omer-offering, which was

15. One Friday afternoon in 1970, in the office of Minister of Transportation Ezer Weizman, a poignant moment unfolded.

For several consecutive Shabbatot, Egged buses had been violating Shabbat by departing the central station late Shabbat afternoon, before its conclusion.

The Charedi public protested fervently, clashing with police, while the government insisted the buses would keep running.

That Friday, the Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, Rabbi Menachem Porush, led a delegation of prominent rabbis to appeal to Weizman's Jewish heart.

Among them were figures such as Rabbi Moshe Adler, the rabbi of "Shikun HaRabbanim" in the Romema neighborhood of Jerusalem, and a great Torah scholar and a unique figure in the city — one of the last representatives of the earlier Chassidic generation and a descendant of the righteous leaders of the Lelov Chassidic dynasty.

Additionally, he had founded the higher level kashrut certification under the

Jerusalem Rabbinate, which became a national model for others to follow.

The rabbis pleaded with deep emotion, yet Weizman remained unmoved. As they prepared to leave, Rabbi Adler turned to Weizman, and inquired, "Your family is from Pinsk, near Karlin, correct?"

Weizman's face lit up. "Yes, my parents came from there!"

Rabbi Adler continued, "Surely, you have heard of Rabbi Aharon of Karlin, who composed the hymn 'Y-ah Echsof' which is widely sung in honor of Shabbat."

He then took out a siddur and began to sing the stirring melody. The delegation joined in, their voices filling the room. When they reached the final verse, "Shabbat Kodesh," Rabbi Adler wept with longing and emotion.

The rabbi's deep sincerity pierced Weizman's heart. Overcome with emotion, he wiped his tears, and then picked up the phone and ordered: "The central station must close on Shabbat; no buses may depart until Shabbat ends!"

Parshat Emor - Yearning and Longing Above All

brought on the sixteenth of Nissan, as it is stated: 'You shall count for yourselves from the day after the Shabbat, from the day you bring the Omer of waving — seven complete weeks shall they be'" (Leviticus 23:15).

He continued reading:

"The for this roots commandment is that the primary essence of the Jewish people is the Torah, and for the sake of the Torah, the heavens and earth and the Jewish people were created. It is the main reason they were redeemed from Egypt: all so that they would receive the Torah at Sinai and fulfill it.

Therefore, since the Torah is the essence of the Jewish people, and for its sake, they were redeemed and attained all their greatness, we were commanded to count the days after the festival of Pesach until the day the Torah was given. This demonstrates our profound desire for that revered day for which our hearts yearn — like a servant longing for freedom, counting the moments until his liberation arrives. Counting demonstrates that a person's whole ambition and desire is to reach that time.

This is also why we count the Omer and say, 'So and so many days have passed from the count,' and we do not count the remaining days since we do not merely wish to highlight the great number of days that are still left until the offering of the 'Two Loaves' on the holiday of Shavuot."

The father closed the book and said, "You see, my dear family, our primary focus during the days of Sefirat HaOmer must be to deepen our desire and longing to draw closer to G-d.

And it is through this longing, that we will ultimately merit to receive the Torah on Shavuot."

To ensure compliance, he added, "Park buses across and block the station

entrances; no bus shall leave until Shabbat concludes" ('Sichat Hashavuah' issue 1466).

Parshat Emor - Renewing the Monarchy

"I don't understand," came a voice from the far end of the table, "how this longing has to do with the Giving of the Torah."

Renewing the Monarchy

The father rose once more from his place, went to the bookshelf, took out the Book of Samuel. opened it, and began to share:

After Moses passed away, the leadership of Joshua, son of Nun, began — a leadership that lasted twenty-eight years.

After Joshua's death at the age of 110, the leadership passed to the "Elders" of that generation, and upon their passing, the era of the Judges began.

This entire era lasted about 350 until Saul vears crowned King of Israel, and at that point, a new period began: the Era of the Jewish Kings.

The last Judge was Samuel the Prophet, and in the book that bears his name, we read of the coronation of the first king, Saul, the son of Kish:

Samuel the Prophet had grown old, and the Jewish people

approached him, saying: "For hundreds of years now, whenever we needed a leader, a righteous judge would arise and lead us. But we have had enough of that; now we want a king."

To quote the verses:

the elders of "All Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, 'Behold, you have grown old; appoint for us a king to judge us, like all of the nations" (I Samuel 8:4-5).

Prophecy rested upon Samuel, and G-d revealed Himself and said, "I have heard their request, and I shall fulfill their desire go and anoint Saul, son of Kish, as king."

then describe verses Saul's virtues:

"There was а man Benjamin whose name was Kish; he was a mighty man of valor,

Parshat Emor - Renewing the Monarchy

and he had a son named Saul, a handsome and good man, and there was none among the people of Israel better than he; from his shoulders and upward he was taller than all the rest of the nation" (I Samuel 9:1–2).

In 'Be'or HaChassidut' 16 this description is explained as follows:

"Regarding the first king of Israel, King Saul, the verses say that he was 'from his shoulders and upward he was taller than all the rest of the nation.' This does not refer merely to physical height; this primarily refers to his spiritual loftiness, as implied by these words. Saul's personality and character traits were exalted and 'taller' than the rest of the nation. His 'shoulder' — hinting at his character traits — was higher and loftier than the 'head' and 'mind' of everyone else,

even the greatest among them (Since this was true regarding his spiritual state, it also manifested physically in that he literally stood 'head and shoulders above' the rest in height). Saul lived within his inner world, a realm filled with love and compassion, illuminated by the light of Torah and fervent prayer, and encompassed by the sublime iov and delight experienced by the 'spiritually wealthy' of his kind.

When he heard that the people wished to pull him out of his world and 'throw' him into the task of leading the nation, he resisted with all his might: 'What have I done wrong? What do you want from me?"¹⁷

Samuel the Prophet realized that the only way to kindle in Saul the desire to rule was through the people's utter submission to him, and he told

16. Year 1 (Issue 12, p. 6).

17. As is explicitly written in the book of Samuel: "They sought him, but he could not be found. They

asked G-d further, 'Has a man come here yet?' And G-d said, 'Behold, he is hiding among the vessels'' (1 Samuel 10:21-22). Parshat Emor - Renewing the Monarchy

them to cheer and accept his kingship:

"Let all of the people shout and say, 'Long live the King" (I Samuel 10:24).

The coronation had ended, yet a large group among the people of Israel refused to accept Saul:

"But certain untoward people said. 'How can this man save us?' And they mocked him" (I Samuel 10:27).

Since this was the case, it was not yet possible to stir within him the will to be king; thus, the Scripture states:

"And Saul also went to his house" (I Samuel 10:26), and the Radak comments: "This teaches us that he went home a civilian as before, for when he saw that he was not accepted or welcomed by all of the Jewish people, he returned home and did not yet conduct himself with the status of a king."

In the same manner that is this dynamic between a mortal king and his nation, how much more is this true with regard to G-d, the King of all kings.

Needless to say, relative to G-d, the entire world is far more distant than a nation is from its mortal king. After all, in the latter case, we are dealing with one human being relating to others; here, we speak of the relationship between the Infinite Creator and His finite and limited creations. All of the worlds combined are considered no more than utter nothingness in relation to G-d.

In Kabbalistic teachings, the Ten Utterances through which G-d created the world are called "ordinary speech," and regarding them, it is said: "It is not fitting for a King to engage in mundane matters."

From G-d's vantage point, the entire creation — from the loftiest spiritual realms to the lowest — is but "ordinary speech."

From all this, we understand how exceedingly great is G-d's "descent" to rule over the world.

Parshat Emor - The Holiness of the Omer Days

and how infinitely He must limit and constrain Himself so that worldly matters have any standing before Him at all, thus enabling Him to reign over it and guide it, since, on His own, so to speak, He has no desire whatsoever to be King over the world.

True, He created the world because it arose in His will to reign. And since "there is no king without a people," He created the world which would be his subjects.

However, this was only true at the beginning of creation. Once the world was already brought into being, G-d requires

and wants the request for His kingship to come from the inhabitants of the world itself.

G-d wants His rule to be established through our service and free choice, not by compulsion from above; from His own side — so to speak — He does not wish to be King.

This is the essence of the spiritual service of yearning and longing to G-d: it brings us nearer to His will and awakens His will to rule over us to such a degree that we will not be separate from Him at all.

The Holiness of the Omer Days

We will conclude with the words of my father, Rabbi Yoram Abergel, of saintly memory:¹⁸

"On the first evening following the Seder night, we begin counting the Omer for forty-nine days, arriving at Shavuot on the fiftieth. In

'Shibolei HaLeket' (Seder Atzeret, section 236) he cites a Midrash: Why is Shavuot uniquely dependent on counting? Because when the Jewish people were told they would leave Egypt, they also learned they would receive the Torah fifty days later, as it says

Parshat Emor - The Holiness of the Omer Days

(Exodus 3:12), 'When you bring the people out of Egypt, you shall serve G-d on this mountain.' The extra Nun (ב) in "תעבדון" alludes to fifty days (חמישים).

Out of their great love for G-d, the Jewish people counted each and every day until the receiving of the Torah; out of their great joy and love every day seemed like a long period of time, and henceforth this counting was established for all generations.

They waited fifty days, because the Jewish people in Egypt had sunk into the Forty-Nine Gates of Impurity, and to receive the Torah, they had to leave those Gates of Impurity and enter the Gates of Holiness.

Each day of counting brought them out of one gate of impurity and into a corresponding gate of holiness, and by the time the Torah was given, they had left all impurity and entirely entered into the gates of holiness. The same is true in our times: each day of the Omer frees the soul from another Gate of Impurity and opens up before us another Gate of Holiness — enabling every Jew to receive the wondrous light of the Torah on Shavuot."

The Baal HaTanya in Likkutei Torah¹⁹ similarly teaches that the verse "You shall count for yourselves from the day after the Shabbat" (Leviticus 23:15) can be interpreted to mean: refine your traits until they shine like a radiant sapphire, since, "you shall count" (מפּרָת) also connotes "shining sapphire" (ספּיָר) — reflecting clarity and the purity of one's character.

On the Seder night, an immense light descends upon every Jew without any special effort, yet at dawn it ascends back upward to heaven.

Our task in the days of the Omer is to reclaim this light through our own efforts, day by day, over forty-nine days.

Parshat Emor - The Holiness of the Omer Days

One might ask: If the light will be withdrawn, why grant it on the Seder night at all?

A parallel to this concept can be found in the Talmud (Niddah 30b) where it says that a fetus learns the entire Torah in the womb, only to forget it upon birth — and the purpose of this is so that its subsequent study will not be entirely new and difficult to comprehend, but rather somewhat of a "review."

Likewise, on Seder night, G-d grants us a gift of a divine light; and although it is soon taken back, reacquiring what was once ours is far easier than gaining it from the beginning.

In the times of the Temple, the Omer Offering — brought on the second day of Passover — came from barley, which is primarily an animal food, while on Shavuot, two wheat loaves were offered, wheat being 'human food' (Sotah 14a). This symbolizes how a person may begin Passover still ruled by their

animal soul but completes the counting of the Omer refined, and wholly governed by the G-dly soul.

Although the Omer days seem to appear like ordinary weekdays, they are intrinsically holy — comparable, says Ramban (Leviticus 23:36), to Chol HaMoed.

Hence, even someone who does not immerse daily in a mikveh during the whole year should at least try to do so on these days.

There is abundant divine assistance at this time for refining one's character more than at any other time of year. It is, therefore, fitting to minimize distractions and use every moment for Torah study and self-improvement, thus becoming a worthy vessel for the immense light of the Giving of the Torah on Shavuot.

"Father," the children's voices gushed with emotion, "what a wonderful and inspiring talk emerged from the story about the revelation of Elijah the Prophet that you started with!" Parshat Emor - Summary and Practical Conclusions

Summary and Practical Conclusions

- 1. When the Jewish people left Egypt, they were informed that in fifty days they would receive the Torah. Out of great devotion and longing, they counted each day, saying: "Blessed be G-d, another day has passed and brought us closer to the Torah." G-d required them to wait fifty days in anticipation of the Torah because, while in Egypt, they had sunk into the Forty-Nine Gates of Impurity, and to be worthy of receiving the Torah, they had to leave those gates of impurity and enter the Gates of Holiness.
- 2. Likewise, in our times: in each of the forty-nine days that we count the Omer, we ascend from one Gate of Impurity and enter one Gate of Holiness. By the day we receive the Torah, we have left all of the Gates of Impurity and entered into the Gates of Holiness by Shavuot, each and every Jew can be prepared to receive the wondrous light of the Giving of the Torah.
- 3. Although the Omer days seem, on the surface, like ordinary weekdays, in truth they are extraordinarily holy akin to the sanctity of Chol HaMoed.

Therefore, even someone who does not usually immerse in a mikveh every day should strive to do so during the Omer. During these holy days, unique

heavenly assistance in serving G-d and in refining one's character abounds. more so than at any other time of the year, and it is thus fitting to reduce excursions worldly and similar distractions, and to instead dedicate every available moment to Torah study and to work on character refinement so that each one of us becomes a fitting vessel for the awesome and magnificent light of the Giving of the Torah on Shavuot.

4. The reason we were commanded to count the Omer from the day following the first day of Passover until the day of the Torah's Giving is to outwardly demonstrate our intense desire for the exalted day that we eagerly anticipate.

Just as a servant longs for freedom and repeatedly checks how much time remains until his release, so too we count these days with anticipation — and the entire time is bound up with that yearning.

That is why we count how many days have passed, rather than how many are left, for we do not wish to dwell on the large number of days still to go at the outset.

5. The essence of the Mitzvah of Counting the Omer is the yearning and longing to reach the Festival of the

Parshat Emor - Summary and Practical Conclusions

Giving of the Torah; these longings themselves make a person fit to receive the Torah. When a Jew yearns and desires to draw close to G-d, at that very moment he sets aside his own will in favor of the Divine will, thus connecting and cleaving to Him — and that emotional-spiritual attachment is the gateway to the Torah. May we merit receiving the light of Pesach Sheni and the radiance of Lag BaOmer in all of their illumination.

Shabbat Shalom!





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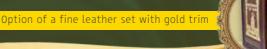
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Shabbat Times Emor 19th of Iyar ,5785

	Candle	Shabbat	Rabbeinu
City	Lighting	Ends	Tam
New York	7:50 pm	8:56 pm	9:20 pm
Miami	7:42 pm	8:38 pm	9:13 pm
Los Angeles	7:31 pm	8:32 pm	9:02 pm
Montreal	8:02 pm	9:14 pm	9:33 pm
Toronto	8:19 pm	9:29 pm	9:50 pm
London	8:30 pm	9:54 pm	10:01 pm
Jerusalem	7:15 pm	8:06 pm	8:59 pm
Tel Aviv	7:12 pm	8:03 pm	8:56 pm
Haifa	7:12 pm	8:07 pm	21:00 pm
Be'er Sheva	7:10 pm	8:04 pm	8:57 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l The Days of the Omer - Preparation for Matan Torah

Once accustomed to receiving, it is difficult to refrain from doing so.

It is human nature that their physical faculties overcome them, and they have trouble parting from their usual ways. The path of moderation is thus, "Poverty and great wealth do not give me" (Mishlei 30). The trial of poverty is difficult and that of riches is even more so.

The path of moderation is not one of great wealth or of poverty, not one of great wisdom or foolishness; it is one of fine balance and proper



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