

# Counting the Omer and Shavuot:

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Through the joy we have on Purim, clapping our hands and dancing, we are able to fulfill the mitzvah of counting the Omer properly. Then we are ready to receive the Torah on Shavuot, both the revealed and the hidden Torah (10:8).

Each day of the Omer period is associated with a different aspect of the Sefirot. And on that day everything which everyone in the whole world is talking about is purely an expression of the particular aspect with which that day is associated. A person with understanding can hear and recognize this if he pays attention to what people are saying (182).

The forty-nine days of the Omer period correspond to the forty nine gates of repentance, and these in turn correspond to the forty-nine letters in the Hebrew names of the twelve tribes. It is through these letters and gates that we must make our return to God Almighty. The festival of Shavuot is the fiftieth gate. This is the gateway of God's 'repentance,' when God himself returns, as it were. That is to say, He returns to us in love. It is possible to reach all these gates and open them by reciting the psalms. You should be careful to concentrate when you recite the psalms. Then you will be able to reach all forty-nine gates. During the forty-nine days of the counting of the Omer we have to cleanse ourselves of our impurity and return to God. Then God will return to us on Shavuot (Likutey Moharan II, 73).

When we immerse in the mikvah on Shavuot we are connected with the highest levels of God's loving kindness and abundant mercy, and we can attain awesome levels of perception of God. The illumination which radiates on Shavuot is a supremely exalted level of the Divine wisdom, fine and subtle in the

extreme. And this wisdom is in itself an expression of God's lovingkindness and mercy. For love is bound up with wisdom and perception, as is explained elsewhere. It is a wonderful thing to experience the holiness of Shavuot, and in particular the mikvah of Shavuot, the mikvah of the fiftieth gate, which then becomes the wellspring of holiness and purity for Israel (Likutey Moharan I, 56:7).

Shavuot is the season of receiving the Torah. It is a time of new vitality. And it is a season that brings healing to the lungs. (The five lobes of the lungs correspond to the five books of Moses.) (266).

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