

## Wait a Little More

**“After the sun sets, he will be ritually pure”** (Leviticus 22:7).

Whatever degree of impurity a Jew has – whether he has to wait one day or seven days – when night falls at the end of this period, he will attain purity. No matter how long it takes, one must be patient and wait. Eventually the time for purity will come, for each day is a new creation (*Likutey Halakhot* I, p. 254).

Rebbe Nachman tells the following parable:

Two hoboes, a Jew and a German, decided to go around together. As the festival of Pesach approached, the Jew told his friend that a very good meal was in store for them. He encouraged the German to pretend he was a Jew, so the Jewish townsfolk would have pity on him and invite him in for the Seder.

The Jew also taught the German how to act at the Seder and explained the customs of that ritual meal: the recital of Kiddush over wine, then the washing of the hands, then the eating of a small piece of vegetable, then the recital of the Haggadah, then the second cup of wine, the second washing of the hands, and the eating of matzah. Afterwards, he promised, a sumptuous meal would be served. However, he forgot to tell his friend about the *marror* (bitter herbs).

The German was indeed invited to a house and, being very hungry, eagerly anticipated the fine foods his Jewish friend had described to him. After Kiddush, his host gave him a piece of celery dipped in salt water. While the family recited the Haggadah, the German sat there longing for the meal. Finally, when the matzah was served, he was very happy.

Then his host gave him a piece of horseradish, which was extremely bitter-tasting. Thinking this was the entire meal, the German jumped up and ran from the house, bitter and hungry. “Cursed Jews!” he cried. “After all that ceremony, that’s all they serve to eat?!” He made his way to the synagogue and fell asleep there.

After a while the Jew arrived at the synagogue, happy and full from a good meal. “How was your Seder?” he asked. The other told him what had happened. “You foolish German!” replied the Jew. “Had you waited just a little longer, you would have had a fine meal, as I had” (*Rabbi Nachman’s Stories*, Parable #23).

This is what happens to us, Rebbe Nachman says, when we want to come close to God. After all the effort we make to get started, we experience a little bitterness and lose our resolve. In fact, this bitterness is sent to purify the body so that it will be able to receive even more holiness. But a person might think that this bitterness is all there is to serving God, and he runs away from it.

Instead, one should exercise patience and wait a short while, allowing himself to be purified. Then he will be the happy recipient of every joy and delight in the world as he comes close to God.

### **Rebbe Nachman's Torah**

*As we Count the Omer in the weeks leading up to Shavuot, we find this mitzvah appearing in this week's parashah.*

**"Count for yourselves seven complete weeks from the day after Shabbat, from the day you brought the Omer as a wave-offering" (Leviticus 23:15).**

Everything we do is confined by time and space. The more we sin and descend into materialism, the more we are attached to time and space. The Counting of the Omer begins on the day after Pesach—when we were “born” as a nation—to teach us that each day (and place) counts. We must learn to guard ourselves and “depart from Egypt”—from our evil traits, evil times and evil places (LH I, p. 40a).

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We count the forty-nine days of the Omer in a way that always reminds us of the beginning. That is, “Today is the first day of the Omer,” “Today is the second day of the Omer,” and so on. The beginning imparts strength and vitality to all that follows. The Counting of the Omer teaches us that we must always draw upon the strength of the beginning so that our continued efforts imbibe our initial enthusiasm (LH IV, p. 70).

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The Hebrew word *SeFiRah* (counting) is similar to *SeFeR* (book). The ARI writes that the days of the Counting of the Omer in general represent constricted intellect. Each day corresponds to a different intellect, and these intellects all add up to help a person attain the higher intellect of Shavuot, when the Torah (great intellect) was given. One who grows spiritually each day adds more knowledge of Torah to his constricted intellect, as if he is increasing the “*sefer*” of the Torah (see LH VIII, p. 136b-137a).

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The Counting of the Omer teaches us that our days are numbered and we will eventually have to give a full accounting for each day of our lives. Not one day is meant to go to waste, God forbid, as implied by the verse “Count for yourselves seven *complete* weeks.”

The Counting of the Omer also prepares us for Shavuot, the Festival commemorating the Giving of the Torah. Torah is acquired by “counting each day” – that is, making each

day count by filling it with good deeds which testify to our attempts to serve God. The Torah calls this process "counting the Omer," since an *omer* is a measure – alluding back to the idea that our days are numbered and we should "measure up" to our abilities and responsibilities (LH VIII, p. 126b-127a).

Furthermore, the Counting of the Omer instills hope in all who despair: "Of what avail are my efforts if I'm going nowhere?" If we acknowledge that each day must be accounted for, we will not let a day go by without at least trying to do something good (ibid., p. 130b).

### **Healing Leaves**

To a small degree, we can perceive – and vaguely comprehend – the way God's wonders and amazing kindnesses operate in this world. Beyond this point, we need to have faith that God is thinking only about our ultimate goal. Fortify yourself and remain strong, my son, and bring joy to your soul over God's salvation. Trust God, for He will never abandon you. Everything is for your good. (*Letter #99*)

View everything in a positive way: for joy and not for sadness, to bring you closer to God and not to distance you, God forbid! For God's kindness is never-ending, and His compassion never ceases. (*Letter #272*)

### **Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom**

27. You must have great enthusiasm in serving God. Be eager to do as much as possible every hour and every day.

Deeds are the main thing. Study much, keep many *mitzvot*, spend much time praying and pouring out your heart before God. You must do as much as possible in every way.

Even so, do not feel overwhelmed. You may find many kinds of devotions in the sacred literature and ask, "When will I be able to fulfill even one of these devotions? How can I ever hope to keep them all?" Do not let this frustrate you.

Go slowly, step by step. Do not rush and try to grasp everything at once. If you are overhasty and try to grasp everything at once, you can become totally confused. When a house burns down, people often rescue the most worthless items. You can do the same in your confusion.

Proceed slowly, one step at a time. If it happens that one cannot do anything, what can he do? A person who is under duress is exempted by God (*Bava Kama 28b*).

Even though there are many things you cannot do, you should still yearn to fulfill them. The longing itself is a great thing, for God desires the heart (*Sanhedrin 106b*).

The Rebbe had many discussions regarding this, all containing good advice about training oneself to serve God. It cannot all be recorded, but if you are wise and have the desire, you can begin to understand from what we have written.