

Rabbi Ziegler - Behar - Bechukosai 5780

'AVDEI' HASHEM

By now, that we are more than half way through the counting of the Omer, we certainly all are aware of the purpose. The counting is an expression of our enthusiastic anticipation for that moment of Kabbalat HaTorah, which demonstrates our love for it. Kabbalat HaTorah which took place on Shavuot, and subsequently coming into Eretz Yisrael. It was the ultimate purpose of the world's creation and the liberation from Mitzrayim (Egypt).

The Sefer HaChinuch (#306) asks why we wait until the second night of Pesach to begin the count and not on the first night. He answers that the first day should be set aside to commemorate only the events that happened at the liberation from Egypt. Although the main purpose of liberation was that the fledgling nation should accept the Torah and live in Eretz Yisrael, the liberation itself served as an independent value.

What this means is- that the day of Ye'tziat (liberation) Mitzrayim, the fifteenth day of Nissan, changed our complete status and relationship with HaShem. As the Torah states (25:45) "**KI LI BNEI YISRAEL AVADIM, AVADAI HEIM, ASHER HO'TZEITI OTAM MEI'ERETZ MITZRAYIM**", on that day, the pasuk is saying, because HaShem took us out of Egypt- we chose to become Avadim (servants) to HaShem. The entire Nation of Israel, Knesset Yisrael, became elevated to the status of "**AVDEI HA'SHEM**", not a forced servitude, but by choice as an expression of freedom.. We are praised and ennobled by that title by David HaMelech as he refers to us "HALELU AVDEI HA'SHEM" (Psalm 113) Give praise, you servants of HaShem, Note-. We are not Po'alei HaShem, workers for Gd, but servants of Gd. A worker expects to be paid at the end of the day, but Eved, servant is rewarded at the end of his mission. Therefore, our reward for doing Mitzvot does not come daily or immediately, but is reserved for the "World To Come"

No other nation of the world can make claim to being called "Servants of God", such a title is ours exclusively. As a matter of fact no individual besides Moshe Rabbeinu has **ever attained such a revered and endearing title. Only Moshe Rabbeinu had that zechut at** the end of his life as being referred to as "**VA'YA'MOT SHOM MOSHE 'EVED HA'SHEM**" (Devarim 34:5). But as a nation, we are all entitled to be collectively called- **Avdei HaShem**. The collective Tzibbur can attain a level of Kedusha far beyond the sum total of each individual combined.

Now this step of becoming Avdei HaShem was a prerequisite for Kabbalat HaTorah must be independently recognized and given its full due of significance. That is what we mean in the Haggadah at the Seder when we say "Had He only liberated us from Mitzrayim and not given us the Torah- Dayeinu", that in itself was sufficient for us to praise HaShem.

After that, on the 16th day, the day after Yetziat Mitzrayim, can we then begin counting towards our anticipated goal of **Kabbalat HaTorah**.

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QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT BEHAR:

1-Why does Torah state [25:1] that this Mitzvah (Shemita) was declared on Har Sinai when indeed all Mitzvot were given on Har Sinai?

2-On Yovel year the Shofar must be sounded [25:9]. What is the difference between the Shofar blowing on Rosh HaShana and the one on Yovel year?

3- There are different levels of giving Tzeddaka. What is the highest level ,according to Rambam [Matanot Evyonim 10:7]?

4 –When a Jew sells himself as an Eved to another Jew [because of poverty] who sustains and supports his wife and children at home?