

## אמור

There is a מחלוקת among the Rishonim whether the mitzvah of ספירת העומר is מן התורה, or only מדרבנן. We start counting on the second day of Pesach, the day the קרבן העומר was brought. Today, however, we don't have the בית המקדש and we can't bring the קרבן העומר. Therefore perhaps, the whole mitzvah of ספירת העומר can't be fulfilled מן התורה. The Sefer Hachinuch is of the opinion that the mitzvah today is only מדרבנן. This would seem difficult to understand based on the Chinuch's well known explanation for the mitzvah of ספירת העומר We count the days until Shevuos to show our great desire and longing for מתן תורה. What connection does ספירת העומר have to do with the קרבן העומר and the בית המקדש?

Rav Mordechai Gifter זצ"ל, Rosh Yeshivas Telz, explained it in the following way. The mitzvah of ספירת העומר is not merely to show our love and desire for Torah, but rather it is a yearning specifically for קבלת התורה, when we received the Torah on Shevuos. This manifested itself in the בית המקדש as well. The Ramban writes in the beginning of פרשת תרומה that the same השראת השכינה, Divine Presence, that was at Matan Torah, continued in the Mishkan and the בית המקדש as well. When Klal Yisrael had the בית המקדש, they had a special סיעתא דשמיא in their learning. It was as if they had a constant קבלת התורה. As long as they had the בית המקדש they were able to appreciate firsthand מעמד הר סיני and could relate to the mitzvah of ספירת העומר. Once the בית המקדש was destroyed and the שכינה was removed from our midst, we no longer were able to properly fulfill the mitzvah.

The Rishonim at the end of Pesachim question why we don't say a ברכת שחינו for ספירת העומר. One explanation given is that since it is not a mitzvah מן התורה rather it's only a זכר למקדש, it is lacking in the שמחה for the mitzvah. On the contrary, it is a painful reminder that we are missing the בית המקדש. From ספירת העומר we can appreciate even greater the absence of the בית המקדש. Not only are we unable to bring קרבנות, we are also lacking the שכינה and that special סיעתא דשמיא in Torah that was present when we were privileged to have the בית המקדש. When we count the Omer we long for the coming of Moshiach to bring back all that we have lost.

Have a good Shabbos.

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