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GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

BS"D
By Michael Sionov
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PARSHAT BAMIDBAR

From Matzah to Cheesecake

We find ourselves in the period known as Sefira. Growing up, Sefira always felt like a confusing space. The mitzvah of counting the Omer appears in the Torah right in the middle of the holidays, yet these days do not resemble a typical Yom Tov at all. There is no prohibition of work, no obligation of *simchat* Yom Tov, and almost no outward expression besides the simple act of counting. It feels like a spiritual twilight zone between Pesach and Shavuot. What exactly is Hashem conveying to us through this unique period?

The answer carries profound spiritual and emotional truth. To understand Sefira, we first need to understand the transition from Pesach to Shavuot.

Pesach is the birth of the Jewish people. In Egypt, we stood on the forty-ninth level of impurity, and had we remained any longer, we would have been spiritually lost (Ohr HaChaim, Ex. 3:8). We had no real merits; no reason to deserve redemption. Yet Hashem redeemed us anyway. Why? Simply because He loved us. The *Sefat Emet* explains that Hashem chose us not because of what we had accomplished, but because of our essence. Pesach reveals that a Jew possesses intrinsic worth independent of success or spiritual achievement.

But this raises a question: how could a people who had just emerged from the depths of Egypt be expected to receive 613 mitzvot only seven weeks later? How do we move from slavery and brokenness to Har Sinai so quickly?

The answer is Sefira.

Every person carries feelings of shame, insecurity, and inadequacy. We often search outside ourselves for

validation and self-worth. Pesach comes to uproot that mindset. On Pesach, a Jew reconnects with healthy self-esteem rooted not in external approval, but in the soul Hashem gave him. Beneath all the noise and struggle lies a pure inner core that is eternally connected to Hashem.

But holding onto that clarity is difficult. One mistake, one trigger, or one uncomfortable interaction can quickly pull us back into shame and insecurity.

This is the spiritual work of Sefira.

Sefira is the process of taking the truth revealed on Pesach and allowing it to penetrate every area of our lives. First, we discover our worth; then we spend forty-nine days working through the inner blockages that prevent us from truly living from that place. Sefira is about refining ourselves so the light of the soul can shine without obstruction.

Only then can we arrive at Shavuot.

Because Torah was never meant to be a burden placed upon broken people. Torah is the natural expression of a soul that knows its worth. When self-esteem is rooted in Hashem's love, mitzvot are no longer driven by fear or shame, but become uplifting expressions of inner wholeness.

This is the journey from Pesach to Shavuot: first discovering unconditional self-worth, then refining ourselves to fully internalize it, and finally living a life of Torah from a place of joy, connection, and authenticity.

By (my dear friend) Tzvi Negnewitzky

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida Rachamim Ben Shifra Yitzhak Ben Naama Noah Yisrael Ben Victoria Yaffa Mazal Bat Liza
Frida Bat Yaffa Dovber Nachman Ben Devora Necha Miriam Bat Bakol Yisrael Ben Yocheved Tinok Ben Sara
Chana Bat Nina Nekadam Esther Bat Frida Dov Ben Shoshana Yael Bina Bat Chana Chaya Frida Bat Rachel Rivka

Dedicated l'hatzlachat zivug for all those in shidduchim to find their match with ease, success, and clarity

"Staying positive doesn't mean you have to be happy all the time; it means that even on the hard days you know that there are better ones coming."