

Count Your Blessings

Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by Rav Boruch Penfil

May 4, 2023

<https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/sefira-bzman-hazeh-parshas-emor.mp3>

You shall count for yourselves—from the morrow of the rest day, from the day when you bring the omer of the waving—seven weeks, they shall be complete. Until the morrow of the seventh week you shall count fifty days.

Vayikra 23:15-16

The Gemara (Menachos 66a) records a *machlokes* whether the mitzvah of *sfiras ha'omer* today involves counting both the days and the weeks (*Rabanan debei Rav Ashi*) or only the days (Ameimar). Ameimar explains that since *sfirah* today is only performed *zeicher laMikdash* (in commemoration of the Bais Hamikdash), counting the weeks is unnecessary.

The Ran (Psachim 28a in Rif pagination) writes that all agree that *sfiras ha'omer* today is only *mideRabanan, zeicher laMikdash*, but the *Rabanan debei Rav Ashi* maintain that the mitzvah must still be performed in its complete form. This is the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch. But according to the Rambam (Temidin 7:23-24), the *Rabanan debei Rav Ashi* hold that the mitzvah today is *min haTorah*, and it is on this point that they disagree with Ameimar. The Rambam accepts their view as the halacha.

Rabeinu Yerucham says that counting the days and counting the weeks are two different mitzvos, each of which warrants its own *bracha*. Today, he says, the mitzvah to count the days is still *de'Oreisa*, but counting the weeks is *mideRabanan, zeicher laMikdash*, and does not require a *bracha*.

One ramification of this dispute is if one recites a *bracha*, counts the days, and then interrupts before counting the weeks. According to the Rambam and Ran, one must make a new *bracha* and count again, because a key part of the mitzvah was omitted, but Rabeinu Yerucham would say that counting the weeks is not included in the mitzvah today, so it was already fulfilled.

A second *nafka minah* is in the case of *safeik*. If one is unsure whether he counted, Rabeinu Yerucham and the Rambam would require him to count again, even on the last day, because the mitzvah is *de'Oreisa*, while the Ran would not, because it is a *safeik deRabanan*.