

Count The Days

"How was your Pesach Seder, Chaim?"

"Pesach Seder? Pesach was 3½ weeks ago. You're still thinking about Pesach, Avi?"

"Yes I am. How was your Seder?"

"Now that you mention it, Avi, it was fantastic. We all put in effort and participated. My Abba dramatized the slavery and the *makkos* (plagues) in beautiful detail. We really felt like we left Mitzraim."

"Wonderful. Hashem gives tremendous *siyata dishmaya* (Heavenly assistance) on the night of the Seder, Chaim. The inspiration we can receive is awesome."

"I almost forgot about it."

"I see. Perhaps this will help you remember Avi. As inspiring as Pesach is, it is only an indication of something far greater."

"Greater? What could be greater than the night of the Pesach Seder? The four cups of wine, the matza, the maror, the story of the exodus . . . the Vilna Gaon counts 64 mitzvos that night!"

"T rue. However, the Sefer HaChinuch writes that the whole purpose of *Yitzias Mitzraim* (the exodus from Egypt) was for the Jewish people to receive the Torah. As awesome as *Yitzias Mitzraim* was, it was only a step to *Kabalas HaTorah* on Har Sinai."

"Wow. Chaim, I can hardly wait."

"Marvelous. This is one of the reasons behind *Sefiras HaOmer* (Counting the Omer). The verse states, "You shall count for yourselves (from Pesach) . . . seven weeks (until Shavuus) (Vayikra 23:15). The Sefer HaChinuch explains that we count the days to show our great desire to reach this magnanimous event."

"I'm with you, Chaim. Let's count and then go outside to play."

"I'm afraid it's not as simple as that, Avi. Anything worthwhile requires work. Receiving the Torah is no exception. Just counting is not enough."

"What type of work, Chaim?"

"Sit down, Avi, and I'll tell you a story."

Kinderlach . . .

Pesach was fantastic. Shavuus can be even greater. Isn't that exciting? I'll bet you can hardly wait. Count the days. That shows you great desire for receiving the Torah on Shavuus. While you are counting, roll up you sleeves and get ready to work. Receiving the Torah requires some preparation.

Make It Yours

"Welcome! Come in, come in. Make yourselves at home. What can I get you? How can I help you?"

"Actually, a cold drink would be nice."

"No problem. What would you like? Water? Soda? Milk?"

"Water will be just fine."

The man brings ice-cold glasses of water. The guests relax and refresh themselves.

"Thank you so much. That was very refreshing. Actually, we came to have a look around the grounds here. We are thinking of buying a property similar to this and we want to see the layout to get some ideas how to renovate our property."

"My pleasure. Where would you like to begin? In the kitchen? Play room? Office? Garden?"

"Why don't we begin right here, in the family room."

"Excellent. Now, let me tell you about the construction and the furnishings of this room."

The man begins to explain how the home was constructed and renovated. He then details each piece of furniture and from where it was imported.

"Now, with your permission, we will move on to the kitchen."

Again, the man tells a detailed story of the kitchen with all of its storage areas and state-of-the art cooking equipment. He continues on to the office, the bedrooms, and all of the rooms of the property. His knowledge of the home is impeccable. The guests are very impressed.

"Sir, you are really amazing. You really know your home inside and out."

"Why thank you. I appreciate the compliment, but I must correct you."

"Why? Did we say something wrong? We can't think of one other homeowner who knows every detail of his home as thoroughly as you do. You know about the construction, the renovations, the furnishings. You are in total command of the information."

"That is true, however you are making a big mistake."

"What is that?"

"This is not my home. I am just a servant here."

The guests are taken aback with surprise.

"You do not own this home?"

"No. I have worked here for many years and I know the property inside and out. But I do not own a penny of it. It is not mine at all."

"The Torah is acquired with forty-eight means: study, proper listening, ordered speech, etc." (Pirkei Avos 6:6). These are they means with which Torah is acquired. If one has the means, he may acquire Torah. He must train himself to study, to listen properly, to speak properly, etc. Without these means, he may read the Torah, and he may remember it, and he may know it. However, he will not acquire it. It will not be his. Just like the servant in the story. He knew the property. However, it was not his. He did not pay the money. He did not have the means to acquire it.

Kinderlach . . .

We are looking forward to acquiring the Torah this Shavuus. We can only do this if we have the means. The sefer Yalkut Lekach Tov explains that the students of Rav Yisrael Salanter zt"l would work on one of these 48 means each day of the sefira. On the 49th day they would review them all. They arrived at Shavuus rich with the means to acquire Torah. We can do it too. Work hard during these days. Make that Torah yours, kinderlach.

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