

Cantorial Notes

May 2018

As I write this bulletin article, we are in the midst of counting the omer. In the Torah, Lev. 23:15-16, it states: “From the day on which you bring the omer of elevation offering, the day after the Sabbath, you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete: you must count until the day after the seventh week, fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to the LORD.” The counting of the omer begins on the 2nd day of Passover until Shavuot, which is the spring harvest in Israel. Even something as mundane as harvesting the barley, was elevated to remind us to be grateful to G-d for the bounty of the harvest. Not being a part of a farming community, I can only guess at the work and awareness of what it takes or feels like to be in awe of, and thankful for a good crop to harvest.

The counting of these 50 days has been likened to coming out of the darkness of Egypt, into the light of the Torah. Another analogy would be going from physical freedom to spiritual freedom. Again, not being part of a farming community, I can identify better with moving toward spiritual freedom or awareness over these seven weeks, creating a habit in which I choose to make each day matter, to be aware of as many moments as I can in the length of a day that are meaningful. I find it all too easy to choose to say, I’ll find something to be grateful for tomorrow. Time moves quickly and all too often I find myself saying, It’s Friday already? What happened to the rest of the week? How could I not have grabbed a few moments to take a breath and be grateful for the beauty around me? I’m not always successful, but I try to make an attempt to find something to be grateful for throughout the counting of the omer and hope that I can retain this practice throughout the year.