

SEFIRAS HA-OMER: FORGETTING TO COUNT ONE DAY

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

QUESTION: If one forgot to count one day of the Sefiras ha-Omer, may he continue to count?

DISCUSSION: There is a major dispute among the poskim of the Geonic era over whether or not forgetting to count one day invalidates the entire count. Some are of the opinion that the Torah's command to count "seven complete weeks" renders the entire count as one entity, one long mitzvah. Consequently, forgetting to count one day destroys the entire sequence and no further counting is possible. Most other poskim hold, however, that each day is considered a separate mitzvah. One [or several] day's omission, therefore, has no bearing on counting the other days.

The Shulchan Aruch⁽¹⁾ rules like the majority opinion, that one day's counting has no connection to the other days'. One must, therefore, continue to count the sefirah even when a day [or several days] were omitted. The blessing over the count, however, should not be said, in deference to those who hold that omitting a day invalidates the entire mitzvah. The Mishnah Berurah recommends that one hear the blessing from someone else, so that he can fulfill the mitzvah in the proper way, with a blessing.

If a person is uncertain as to whether he missed the previous day's count, he is permitted to count the remaining days with a blessing⁽²⁾.

One who forgot to count during the night should count during the following day without a blessing. He may then continue to count on the following evenings with a blessing.

One who forgot to count on a Thursday night but remembered to do so on Friday afternoon after kabbalas Shabbos and Maariv but before sunset, may count on the following days with a blessing⁽³⁾.

There is a dispute among the latter-day poskim⁽⁴⁾ concerning one who forgot to count one evening, but remembered to count the next day after sunset but before nightfall (the time period known as *bein ha-shemashos*). Some allow him to count on the following days with a blessing while others do not. A problematic case like this should be presented to a rav for a decision⁽⁵⁾.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1** O.C. 498:8.
- 2** O.C. 489:8, Mishnah Berurah and Beiur Halachah.
- 3** Sha'arei Teshuvah 489:4; Igros Moshe O.C. 4:99-3.
- 4** See Sha'arei Teshuvah, *ibid.*; Birkei Yosef 489:17; Sho'el u'Meishiv 4:3-127.
- 5** See Kaf ha-Chayim 489:83 who rules not to say a blessing, while Yabia Omer 4:43 rules that a blessing may be said. Surely, one who remembered to count within 9 minutes after sunset, may count on the following days with a blessing; see Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62.

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