

over and Shavuot is an important time for the Jewish people. While Passover marked the start of liberation, the Torah describes the journey from bondage to freedom as a lengthy process: the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years.

Rabbinic tradition understands these years as a necessary time of transition and preparation – one of discarding old beliefs and shedding old habits. The years of bondage had taught a culture of blame, fear and resentment. It would take years to shift to trust, accountability and compassion. The underlying message is that beliefs and habits can enslave us or free us;

on building new ones. The period between Passover and Shavuot, corresponds to the seven weeks between the exodus from Egypt and the giving of revelation on Mt. Sinai. During this time, many Jews engage in a process called “counting the Omer” which has an ancient Biblical and agricultural basis, but also a spiritual one. It is a time to reflect on the habits and beliefs that keep us from being our best selves.

We frequently speak about the devastating consequences of unhealthy habits such as smoking or addiction. But beliefs can be just as powerful, and like any habit, they can be learned or unlearned. The tendency to find the negative or the positive in