

סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר

Counting the Omer






Pesach occurs in the Spring time, in the month of Nisan. In HaAretz (the Land of Israel), the first crop to ripen in the fields is barley and it ripens at the same time that we celebrate Pesach. Now the fact that the two events happen at the same time of year allows HaShem to teach us a very important lesson: our redemption from Egypt (Pesach) was so that we could serve HaShem, and part of serving Him has to do with the harvest (Shavuot). The barley harvest can be seen as an illustration for us. Even as we bring in the grain from the fields at the very time of Pesach, so we are to be a light to the nations to bring them in with us to worship HaShem. We learn that G-d redeemed us so that we could be part of the world-wide “harvest of the nations” in which peoples from every tribe, culture, and language would come to understand that there is only one G-d, and that He alone is to be served by all of mankind.

HaShem wanted to teach us this great lesson, and so He gave to us the mitzvah of “counting the omer”. In ancient times the people would bring an omer of barley (about a quart) to the Temple as the “first-fruits” of the harvest. They would do this each day, counting 49 days. Then, the next day, the 50th day (called “Pentecost” in Greek), would be a festival to HaShem called Shavuot (which means “weeks” or a period of “seven”). Foreshadowing the sabbatical years which led to the Jubilee, this symbolism teaches us about G-d’s plan to bring in all the nations to worship Him in a final, world-wide harvest. The Torah, given at Shavuot, was to be the Torah for all mankind. That is one of the reasons HaShem poured out His Ruach on Shavuot—the Ruach would empower Yeshua’s talmidim (disciples) to tell the world about HaShem, the One true G-d and of His Messiah, Yeshua, Who is the “first-fruits from the grave.” Even as He conquered death, so all who receive Him as their Messiah and Savior receive eternal life.

Today, while living outside of the Land (in the diaspora), though we cannot bring an omer of barley to the Temple, we still “practice” by saying the blessing as though we were bringing the omer, and marking a calendar to count the days between Pesach and Shavuot. By doing this we remind ourselves to be a light to others, and to be workers together with HaShem in bringing in the Harvest of the Nations. What can you do to be a light for HaShem to others?

Here's a verse to memorize:

ACTS 1:8

*but you shall receive  _____
when the _____
has come upon you; and you
shall be My  _____
both in _____, and
in all _____ and _____,
and even to the remotest part of
the  _____.”*



= WITNESSES

= JERUSALEM



= WORLD

= HOLY SPIRIT

= JUDAH AND SA-
MARIA



= POWER

One nice thing to do as you count the omer each day between Pesach and Shavuot is to put something in your Tzedekah box, and then at Shavuot to give what you've collected to someone in need. Here's the blessing for counting the omer, and a calendar to mark for each day. It is traditional to read Psalm 67 after counting the omer.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech
ha-olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu al s'firat ha-omer

“Blessed are You Adonai our God, King
of the universe Who sanctified us with His commandments
and commanded us about counting the omer.”

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48	49

Some Math Fun with the Omer:

1. If you add all the numbers in the first vertical column, they total 154. Without adding the other columns, can you guess what each would add up to?
2. Starting with the first square and adding the numbers diagonally from left to right, they total 175. What do you suppose would be the total of the diagonal column if you start with the seventh square and went right to left?
3. The middle vertical column is the one beginning with number 4. Add that column. What does it total? How does this compare with the diagonal columns you just added?
4. What is the middle number of the whole table? Add each column that uses the middle number (whether vertical, horizontal, or diagonal). Do all the columns that

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use the middle number add up to the same total? Take the total of any column that uses the middle number and divide it by seven. What answer do you get?

5. If you add all the numbers in the table together, what total do you get?
6. How many numbers in the table above are perfectly divisible by 7? What are these numbers _____? If you add them together, what do they total? Is their total evenly divisible by 7?

Color this picture which reminds us of the time when our people brought in their first-fruits to the Temple