

## About COUNTING THE OMER

In Jewish tradition, we count the 49 days between Passover and Shavuot, symbolically connecting the Exodus from Egypt to the revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai. This commandment is found in the Torah:

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאְכֶם אֶת-עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שֶׁבַע שַׁבָּתוֹת תְּמִימֹת  
תִּהְיֶינָה: עַד מַמְחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה  
לַיהוָה:

*us'fartem lakhem mimokharat hashabbat miyom haveekh m et omer hatenufa, sheva  
shabatot temeemot tih'yena: ad mimokharat hashabbatt hash'vieet tisperoo  
khameesheem yom v'hikravtem minkha khadashah l'adonai.*

And you shall count from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven full weeks shall they be; continuing fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall present a cereal offering of new grain to the ETERNAL.

Leviticus 23: 15-16

In ancient Israel, these 49 days marked the harvest season. The term "Omer" refers to a sheaf, and the Israelites would present a portion of their barley harvest as an offering at the Temple.

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Later, *Kabbalists* (Jewish mystics) assigned distinct mystical attributes to each of the seven weeks of the Omer. These seven qualities, known as *sephirot*, represent how the Kabbalists envisioned God's interaction with the world.

**The seven sephirot/qualities are:**

Hesed | Lovingkindness | חֶסֶד  
Gevurah | Strength | גְּבוּרָה  
Tiferet | Beauty | תִּפְאֶרֶת  
Netzach | Eternity | נְצִיחַ  
Hod | Splendor | הוֹד  
Yesod | Foundation | יְסוּד  
Malchut | Divine Presence | מַלְכוּת

We invite you to join our community in this counting tradition. Each week, we will share readings, prompts, and practices to reflect on that week's quality and how you can embody it in your life. Think of counting as taking a mindful moment, a time to recharge your *neshamah* (soul).

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### How to count:

### Blessing from the Reconstructionist siddur: Kol Haneshamah Shabbat Vehagim

Traditionally, the Omer is counted each evening at sundown, beginning with the second night of Passover. It can be recited any time before dawn.

### Before counting the Omer, say the blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדוֹנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ  
עַל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר:

*Baruch atah adonay eloheynu melech ha'olam asher kiddeshanu  
bemitzvotav vetzivanu al sefirat ha'omer.*

Blessed are you, ETERNAL, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who has made us holy with your mitzvot, and commanded us concerning the counting of the Omer.

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**How to count:**  
Blessing from the Reconstructionist siddur:  
Kol Haneshamah Shabbat Vehagim

After saying the blessing, you recite the day of the Omer:

**Today is the \_\_\_ Day of the Omer.**

Then, after the first six days, you also include the number of weeks and days that one has counted.

**Example:**

Today is the thirteenth day of the Omer.  
That is one week and six days of the Omer.