

Making Counting Count - Sources and Worksheet

Part One: "Counting the Omer" in the Torah

Source: [Vayikra 23: 9-17](#)

IMPORTANT NOTE: An *omer* is either a sheaf of grain or a measurement of grain (about 3.5 pounds/1.6 kg).

Comprehension Questions

1. Where do we observe this mitzvah?

2. On what day/date does the *kohen* bring the *omer*?

3. What does the *kohen* do with the *omer*?

4. What are you allowed to eat after the *omer* is brought that was forbidden until then?

5. How many days and how many weeks do we count?

6. What do we bring as "offerings" on the 50th day? (3 things from *pesukim* 16-17)

7. Is the name *Shavuot* mentioned here? Is *Matan Torah* mentioned here?

Thought questions:

1. What is the **focus** of the omer offering and the whole counting period?
2. Why is it hard for us to connect to this in a deep and meaningful way?
3. Why do you think that Shavuot is not mentioned outright – neither the date nor the name – in this section of the Torah? (And the date is never mentioned at all).

Part Two: Counting 49 days to *Matan Torah*

Source: [Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvah 306](#)

IMPORTANT NOTE: The connection between counting the *Omer* and counting from Pesach and *Yetziat Mitzrayim* to Shavuot and *Matan Torah* is rabbinic and a very ancient tradition.

Comprehension Questions:

“The commandment of counting the *omer*: To count forty-nine days from the bringing of the *omer* which is on the sixteenth day of Nissan, as it is stated (Leviticus 23:15), “And you shall count for yourselves from the morrow of the Shabbat from the day of your bringing the *omer* of waving.” And this tallying is an obligation, and it is upon us to count the days on each day and, likewise, the weeks.

1. Is counting the *omer* a Torah command or a rabbinic command?

2. On each of the 49 days of *Sefirat HaOmer*, we count the day according to the number of _____ and according to the number of _____.

“It is from the roots of the commandment from the angle of the simple understanding [that it is] since the entire essence of Israel is only the Torah, and because of the Torah were the heavens and earth created,...And it is the essence and the reason that they were redeemed and left from Egypt — in order that they receive the Torah at Sinai, and fulfill it.”

3. What is the connection between *Yetziat Mitzrayim* and getting the Torah?

“And because of this – that it is [the] essence of Israel, and because of it were they redeemed and went up to all of the greatness to which they rose – we were commanded to tally from the morrow of the holiday of Pesach until the day of the giving of the Torah; to show about ourselves the great desire [we have] for the honored day, which our hearts yearn [for]...like [the slave] always tallies when will come the yearned-for time that he goes out to freedom. As the tally shows about a man that ...all of his desire is to reach that time.”

4. What are we counting towards?

5. Why do we count “up” and we don’t count “down”?

Thought Questions:

1. *How do you connect the idea of food (remember: the Omer is a grain offering) and the Torah?*
2. *Is it easier for you to connect to Hashem and Torah through physical things - food, nature, doing mitzvot - or is it easier for you to connect to Hashem through spiritual things - learning, davening?*

Part Three: The *Sefirot* and *Sefirat HaOmer*

IMPORTANT NOTE: The ideas behind the *sefirot* are very deep and complex. What follows is a basic summary, but enough to get you started on your own *Sefirat HaOmer* journey!

Brief Explanation of *Sefirot* based on [Chabad](#):

The *sefirot* are various characteristics of God, specifically geared towards God’s creative process. The *sefirot* were all used to create the Universe. All of the *sefirot* are actually part of the Universe as we know it.

According to Kabbalah, there are 10 *sefirot*. These *sefirot* are each unique and separate and can operate alone. However, they also interact and act together in a coordinated way. The Kabbalah compares them to a body, which has many systems. Each system is unique, but they also work together. It also uses the metaphor of a tree.

Sefirot are also described as being like a ladder—there is a “bottom” and each rung that you go up includes the ones below it. There is a “top” to this ladder also; when you get to the highest rung, you have touched, climbed, and included all of the lower rungs.

When it comes to counting the 7 weeks of the *Omer*, each week has a different and specific *sefirah*.

The seven weeks of the *Sefirat HaOmer* period and the *sefirah* for each week:

1. *Chesed*: kindness and compassion
2. *Gevurah*: strength, self-control
3. *Tiferet*: grace, balance, and harmony
4. *Netzach*: persistence and dedication
5. *Hod*: beauty, splendor, and diversity
6. *Yesod*: groundedness and foundation.
7. *Malchut / Shechina*: connecting with God’s kingly presence

Thought Questions:

1. *What is your best trait? Are you:*
 - a. *Kind*
 - b. *Smart*
 - c. *Athletic*
 - d. *Physically Strong*
 - e. *Helpful*
 - f. *Forgiving*
 - g. *Passionate*
 - h. *Loyal*
 - i. *Other:_____*

2. *How do you use that trait to help you:*
 - a. *Connect to God?*
 - b. *Connect to other people?*
 - c. *Make the world around you a little better?*