
Pearl Seeking

COUNTING OF THE OMER GUIDE

Counting of the Omer (Sefirat Ha'Omer) to Feast of Weeks (Shavuot)

First of all, WHAT EVEN IS AN OMER? An omer is an ancient measure of grain, but also the special sheaf of grain that was to be offered as first-fruits and waved by the priest before Yahweh.

Exodus 16:16 tells us that each day the children of Yisra'el were given an omer of manna to gather and eat. And at the end of the chapter it says, "And an omer is one tenth of an ephah!" Which begs another question..... **WHAT'S AN EPHAH?** In U.S. measurements an omer is about 3-4 cups and an ephah is about 6 gallons.

However, it doesn't really matter that we know the precise measurement. What matters is that the omer was just enough (**dayenu**). It was all any one person needed for the day. No more...and no less! Yahweh knows what we need and He always provides it. That is all we really need to know.



Barley was the very first grain to be harvested in the spring harvest. It was called the first fruit. No, it's not a fruit, but it was the 'first fruit' of one's labors. When the children of Yisra'el lived in the land of Kena'an, an omer of the first sheaves of the harvest barley were cut down and brought to the Dwelling Place or Temple to be presented by the priest as a wave sheaf before Yahweh as a means of thanking Yahweh for the harvest. This wave sheaf offering event marked the beginning of the barley harvest. In Hebrew this is called **Bikkurim (first-fruits)**, a one day event.



Leviticus 23:9-14 tells us:

And Yahweh spoke to Mosheh, saying,

- "Speak to the children of Yisra'el, and you shall say to them, 'When you come into the land which I give you, and shall reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest (bikkurim).'
- 'And he shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh, for your acceptance. On the morrow after the Sabbath the priest waves it.'
- 'And on that day when you wave the sheaf, you shall prepare a male lamb a year old, a perfect one, as a burnt offering to Yahweh,
- And its grain offering: two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to Yahweh, a sweet fragrance, and its drink offering: one-fourth of a hin of wine.'
- 'And you do not eat bread or roasted grain or fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your Elohim - a law forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.'



Right after these verses we are then told to count the days to Shavuot.

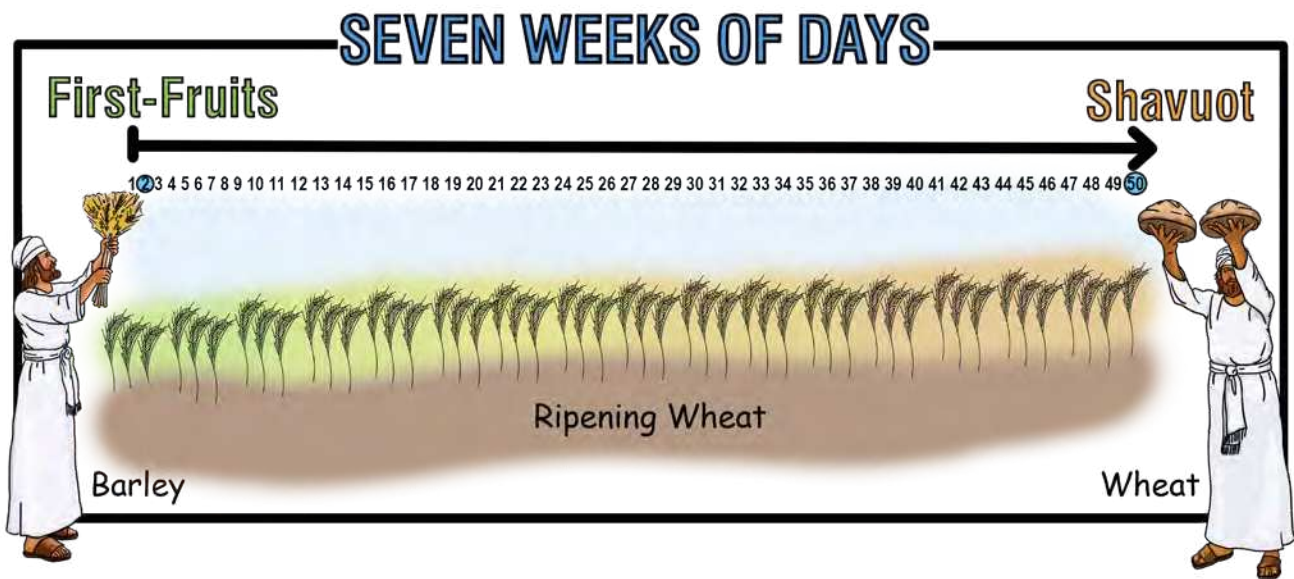
- "And from the morrow (the following day) after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering (**first-fruits/bikkurim**); you shall count for yourselves 7 completed Sabbaths. Until the morrow after the 7th Sabbath, you count 50 days, and you shall offer a new grain offering unto Yahweh." - Lev. 23:15-16

We like our brother Yehudah using the Hillel II calendar, start the counting of the omer at sundown after the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread has ended. The omer is then counted each evening after sundown until 7 weeks are complete or a total of 50 days. This is known as **Sefirat Ha'omer**, the 'Counting of the Omer.'

As a 2nd witness, Deut. 16:9-10 says,

- "Count 7 weeks for yourselves. Begin to count 7 weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain. Then you will observe the Festival of Shavuot (**Feast of Weeks**) to Yahweh your Elohim."

Then a new offering of wheat (2 loaves of bread) was to be presented to the priest to be waved 50 days after Passover. This is the next spring Holy Day commanded to be observed, Shavuot (**Feast of Weeks**).



The counting of the omer reminds us of the link between the exodus from Mitsrayim when the children of Yisra'el left hurriedly on the first day of Unleavened Bread, to the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai on Shavuot 50 days later.

The journey from Pesach to Shavuot, reminds us of the Yisra'elites' journey from slavery in Mitsrayim to becoming Yahweh's people.

Tradition!

How does one count? Our brother Yehudah has given us traditions they follow that you can choose to do, or you can simply just acknowledge each day by marking it off on your calendar or have fun with the various crafts we provide in this special Counting the Omer supplemental lesson.

Counting the Omer - A step-by-step guide (Remember its TRADITION!)

1. Wait for nighttime (sundown) to begin
 - All days begin at sunset the evening before.
 - As long as it's dark, you can begin to count.

2. Recite the Blessing

*Baruch atah Yahweh, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam
Asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav
V'tzivanu al sefirat ha'omer*

*Blessed are you Yahweh Our Elohim, King of the universe
Who has sanctified us by His commandments
And has commanded us to count the omer*

3. Count the days and weeks UP

- Count the days up from 1 to 50, not backwards.
- Recite the number of the day and then how many weeks and days that calculates to.
 - For example:
 - The 6th day would be, 'Today is 6 days of the Omer'—as no weeks have passed.
 - The 8th day would be, 'Today is 8 days, 1 week and 1 day of the Omer.'



In conclusion, counting the omer is a daily mitzvah wherein we should focus on spiritual growth during the 49 days between our liberation from slavery on Passover and the giving of the Torah on Shavuot.

Blessings from all of us at YMTOI/MTOI