Psalms 90:12

(12) Teach us to count our days rightly, that we may obtain a wise heart.

Leviticus 23:15-17

(15) And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering—the day after the sabbath—you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete: (16) you must count until the day after the seventh week—fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to the LORD. (17) You shall bring from your settlements two loaves of bread as an elevation offering; each shall be made of two-tenths of a measure of choice flour, baked after leavening, as first fruits to the LORD.

Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvah #306

Since the acceptance of the Torah was the goal of our redemption and serves as the foundation of the Jewish people, and through it we achieved our greatness, we were commanded to count from the day after [the first day of] Pesach until
the day that the Torah was given. This manifests our great desire for that
awesome day which our hearts yearn for just as a servant yearns for shade. We
count constantly – when will the day come that we yearn for, the day that we
left slavery? Because counting [towards a certain date] shows a person that all
his desire and longing is to reach that time.

Rambam, Moreh Nevuchim (Guide for the Perplexed) 3:43
Shavuot is the time of the Giving of the Torah. In order to honor and elevate
this day we count the days from the previous festival until it [arrives], like
someone who is waiting for a loved one to arrive, who counts the days by the
hours.

ReformJudaism.org
The counting of the Omer (S'ﬂirat HaOmer), which lasts for 49 days, takes place
at night, commencing on the second night of Pesach. Those who "count the
Omer" recite a blessing each night of the 50-day period:

בָּרוּ כָּלָה אֵלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעֹלָם אֱשֶׁר קִדְּשָֽׁנוּ בְּמִצְוָֽׁתָיו
Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu al
seﬁrat ha'omer.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who sanctifies us with
mitzvot, and commands us concerning the counting of the Omer.

The count is stated in both total days (“Today is the twenty-third day of the
Omer,”) and weeks and days (“which is three weeks and two days of the Omer.”)

OMER, by Karyn Kedar
Rabbi Joseph Soleveitchik teaches that the practice of counting days and weeks
makes us aware both of where we've been and where we're going, thus evoking
a sense of movement from one state of being to another.

Kabbalistic Interpretation
Kabbalists, Jewish mystics, interpreted this counting of days between Passover and Shavuot as a spiritual practice, utilizing the 7 lower sefirot to represent the 7 weeks.

**What are sefirot?**

"There are 10 s'firot, linked in a complex figure that some have called the “Tree of Life,” significantly a phrase also often used to refer to the Torah.

Each of them represents one aspect of the Godhead, a facet of the powers of the All Powerful. Each is also identified with a part of the body or aspects of the human personality.

The 7 S'firot used to represent the 7 weeks during the Counting of the Omer are:

1. Chesed - Loving Kindness, Overflowing
2. Gevurah - Strength, Discipline, Boundaries
3. Tiferet - Beauty, Harmony, Balance
4. Netzach - Victory, Endurance, Persistence
5. Hod - Glory, Splendor
6. Yisod - Foundation, Intimacy, Generativity
7. Malkhut - Majesty, Divinity in Nature

**OMER, Karyn Kedar**

According to Kabbalistic theory, all seven s'firot continuously act and react upon each other, creating dynamic spiritual energy within God. Because we are made in God's image, the same spiritual dynamism exists within us as well. To help us tap into it, kabbalistic practice sets each of the seven s'firot as the theme of one of the Omer's seven weeks: the first week's theme is Chesed, the second G'vurot and so on.

...Purifying ourselves spiritually during the Omer period raises us to a new level of holiness and enables us to commune with God on Shavuot.

**Tikkun Middot**
WEEK 1 - CHESED: LOVING-KINDNESS

Day 1 -- Chesed of Chesed: Loving-kindness in Loving-kindness
Love is the single most powerful and necessary component in life. It is both giving and receiving. Love allows us to reach above and beyond ourselves, to experience another person and to allow that person to experience us. It is the tool by which we learn to experience the highest reality -- God. Examine the love aspect of your love. Ask yourself: What is my capacity to love another person? Do I have problems with giving? Am I stingy or selfish? Is it difficult for me to let someone else into my life? Am I afraid of my vulnerability, of opening up and getting hurt?

Exercise for the day: Find a new way to express your love to a dear one.

Day 2 -- Gevurah of Chesed: Discipline in Loving-kindness
Healthy love must always include an element of discipline and discernment; a degree of distance and respect for another's boundaries; an assessment of another's capacity to contain your love. Love must be tempered and directed properly. Ask a parent who, in the name of love, has spoiled a child; or someone who suffocates a spouse with love and doesn't allow them any personal space.

Exercise for the day: Help someone on their terms not on yours. Apply yourself to their specific needs even if it takes effort.

Day 3 -- Tiferet of Chesed: Compassion, Harmony in Loving-kindness
Harmony in love is one that blends both the chesed and gevurah aspects of love. Harmonized love includes empathy and compassion. Love is often given with the expectation of receiving love in return. Compassionate love is given freely; expects nothing in return - even when the other doesn't deserve love. Tiferet is giving also to those who have hurt you.

Exercise for the day: Offer a helping hand to a stranger.

Day 4 -- Netzach of Chesed: Endurance in Loving-kindness
Is my love enduring? Does it withstand challenges and setbacks? Do I give and withhold love according to my moods or is it constant regardless of the ups and downs of life?

Exercise for the day: Reassure a loved one of the constancy of your love

**Day 5 -- Hod of Chesed: Humility in Loving-kindness**
You can often get locked in love and be unable to forgive your beloved or to bend or compromise your position. Hod introduces the aspect of humility in love; the ability to rise above yourself and forgive or give in to the one you love just for the sake of love even if you're convinced that you're right. Arrogant love is not love.

Exercise for the day: Swallow your pride and reconcile with a loved one with whom you have quarreled.

**Day 6 -- Yesod of Chesed: Bonding in Loving-kindness**
For love to be eternal it requires bonding. A sense of togetherness which actualizes the love in a joint effort. An intimate connection, kinship and attachment, benefiting both parties. This bonding bears fruit; the fruit born out of a healthy union.

Exercise for the day: Start building something constructive together with a loved one

**Day 7 -- Malchut of Chesed: Nobility in Loving-kindness**
Mature love comes with -- and brings -- personal dignity. An intimate feeling of nobility and regality. Knowing your special place and contribution in this world. Any love that is debilitating and breaks the human spirit is no love at all. For love to be complete it must have the dimension of personal sovereignty.

Exercise for the day: Highlight an aspect of your love that has bolstered your spirit and enriched your life...and celebrate.

* * *
WEEK 2 - GEVURAH: JUSTICE, DISCIPLINE, RESTRAINT, AWE

After the miraculous Exodus from Egypt, the Jewish people spent 49 days preparing for the most awesome experience in human history -- the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Just as the Jewish peoples' redemption from Egypt teaches us how to achieve inner freedom in our lives; so too, this 49-day period, called 'Sefirat Ha-Omer' the Counting of the Omer, is a time of intense character refinement and elevation.

During this time, the aspect of the human psyche that most requires refinement is the area of the emotions. The spectrum of human experience consists of seven emotional attributes, or sefirot. This week we continue Sefirat Ha'Omer, utilizing the seven dimensions of the seven emotional attributes. The first week after Pesach was dedicated to examining the aspect of chesed, loving-kindness. The second week corresponds to the emotional attribute of gevurah, discipline or justice.

If love (Chesed) is the bedrock of human expression, discipline (Gevurah) is the channel through which we express love. It gives our life and love direction and focus. Gevurah -- discipline and measure -- concentrates and directs our efforts, our love in the proper directions.

**Day 8 - Chesed of Gevurah: Loving-kindness in Discipline**

The underlying intention and motive in discipline is love. Why do we measure our behavior, why do we establish standards and expect people to live up to them -- only because of love. Chesed of gevurah is the love in discipline; it is the recognition that your personal discipline and the discipline you expect of others is only an expression of love. It is the understanding that we have no right to judge others; we have a right only to love them and that includes wanting them to be their best. Ask yourself: when I judge and criticize another is it in any way tinged with any of my own contempt and irritation? Is there any hidden satisfaction in his failure? Or is it only out of love for the other?

Exercise for the day: Before you criticize someone today, think twice: Is it out of concern and love?

**Day 9 -- Gevurah of Gevurah: Discipline in Discipline**
Examine the discipline factor of discipline: Is my discipline reasonably restrained or is it excessive? Do I have enough discipline in my life and in my interactions? Am I organized? Is my time used efficiently? Why do I have problems with discipline and what can I do to enhance it? Do I take time each day for personal accounting of my schedule and accomplishments?

Exercise for the day: Make a detailed plan for spending your day and at the end of the day see if you’ve lived up to it.

**Day 10 -- Tiferet of Gevurah: Compassion in Discipline**
Underlying and driving discipline must not only be love, but also compassion. Compassion is unconditional love. It is love just for the sake of love, not considering the others position. Tiferet is a result of total selflessness in the eyes of God. You love for no reason; you love because you are a reflection of God. Does my discipline have this element of compassion?

Exercise for the day: Be compassionate to someone you have reproached.

**Day 11 -- Netzach of Gevurah: Endurance in Discipline**
Effective discipline must be enduring and tenacious. Is my discipline consistent or only when forced? Do I follow through with discipline? Am I perceived as a weak disciplinarian?

Exercise for the day: Extend the plan you made on day two for a longer period of time listing short-term and long-term goals. Review and update it each day, and see how consistent you are and if you follow through.

**Day 12 -- Hod of Gevurah: Humility in Discipline**
The results of discipline and might without humility are obvious. The greatest catastrophes have occurred as a result of people sitting in arrogant judgment of others. Am I arrogant in the name of justice (what I consider just)? Do I ever think that I sit on a higher pedestal and bestow judgment on my subjects below? What about my children? Students?

Exercise for the day: Before judging anyone, insure that you are doing so selflessly with no personal bias
Day 13 -- Yesod of Gevurah: Bonding in Discipline
For discipline to be effective it must be coupled with commitment and bonding. Both in disciplining yourself and others there has to be a sense that the discipline is important for developing a stronger bond. Not that I discipline you, but that we are doing it together for our mutual benefit.

Exercise for the day: Demonstrate to your child or student how discipline is an expression of intensifying your bond and commitment to each other.

Day 14 -- Malchut of Gevurah: Nobility of Discipline
Discipline, like love, must enhance personal dignity. Discipline that breaks a person will backfire. Healthy discipline should bolster self-esteem and help elicit the best in a person; cultivating his sovereignty. Does my discipline cripple the human spirit; does it weaken or strengthen me and others?

Exercise for the day: When disciplining your child or student, foster his self-respect

*Source Sheet created on Sefaria by Beth Schafer*