



Counting the Omer and Making It Count

Dear Congregants,

Throughout generations, we have leaned on rituals and traditions to inform and enrich our lives. Today, we want to draw your attention to the counting of the Omer and share some resources with you if you would like to try this spiritual practice this year (links to resources below).

From the Torah we learn to count 49 days starting on the second night of Pesach all the way to Shavuot. It is written: *“You shall count from the eve of the second day of Pesach, when an omer of grain is to be brought as an offering, seven complete weeks. The day after the seventh week of your counting will make fifty days, and you shall present a new meal offering to God”* (Leviticus 23:15-16).

And I often wonder, since most of us do not work the land as our ancestors did, why do we still count?

Our rabbis suggest that counting can help us not only in a ritualistic way, allowing us to engage daily with the world of mitzvot, but perhaps it can also provide us an opportunity to dive into a more personal and spiritual journey.

The seven weeks of counting the Omer represent seven of the divine attributes that are reflected by the spectrum of human emotions. We then assign a different attribute to each one of the days.

The seven divine attributes are:

1. Chesed: Lovingkindness, benevolence
2. Gevurah: Justice, discipline, restrain, awe
3. Tiferet: Harmony, compassion, beauty
4. Netzach: Endurance, fortitude, ambition
5. Hod: Humility, splendor

6. Yesod: Bonding, foundation
7. Malchut: Sovereignty, leadership, nobility

From the Kabbalah we learn that the word S'firah means both "*Mispar*" as in number, and "*Sipur*" as in telling a story. The third meaning can be found in the word "*Sapir*" sapphire stone, a translucent crystal that shines brightly.

Here are some resources for your use: (click the links!)

- [Calendar of the Omer](#)
- [More information about this practice from My Jewish Learning](#)
- [A way to sign up for daily learning and practices from At The Well](#)

We hope that this year, counting the Omer can illuminate the different states of our emotional lives, encourage us to refine every corner of them, and reshape the story of our souls.

May we be worthy of receiving the true gift of freedom.

Chag Sameach!

Rabbi John Carrier & Cantor Ruth Berman Harris