

THE OMER - COUNTDOWN TO REVELATION

Week Two

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu be'mitzvotav ve'tzivanu al Sefirat ha'Omer. Ha'yom, yom echad [sheni, shlishi...] ba'Omer.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us through Your commandments, and has commanded us to count the Omer.
Today is Day [one, two, three.etc.] of the Omer.

Today is **Day 8**, 1 week and 1 day of the Omer



Chet - Psalm 119:57-64 “*Chelki* – The LORD is my portion; I have promised to keep Thy words. ...The earth is full of Thy lovingkindness O LORD; teach me Thy statutes.”

Verse 62 reads: "I arise at midnight to praise you." The Rabbis asked how David woke at midnight. They imagined that he hung his harp above his bed, and God sent a cool, nightly breeze, which is common in Jerusalem. This vibrated the strings of the harp and roused from sleep by its sweet music, David would praise God.

The great Medieval poet Yehuda HaLevy wrote, “I am a harp for all Your songs.”

“If we tune the strings of our characters, when the breeze blows, we will produce beautiful sounds. Begin the week as an instrument for God’s song.”

~ Rabbi Wolpe

Today is **Day 9**, 1 week and 2 days



Tet - Psalm 119:65-72 “*Tov* – Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy Word. Teach me good discernment and knowledge, for I believe in Thy commandments.”

The primary foundation for the practice of God’s Law in everyday life is *emunah* - faith.

“If one fulfills God’s laws and ordinances of righteousness, he has done justice to God, to the world and to himself. If he transgresses them, he has sinned against all three: against God, against the world and against himself.”

~ Rabbi S.R. Hirsch, *The Hirsch Psalms*

Today is **Day 10**, 1 week and 3 days



Yod - Psalm 119:73-80 “*Yadecha* – Thy hands made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments.”

Each person is uniquely and specifically created to bring a revelation of God into the world that no other can. We each have a purpose that can be fulfilled by no one else.

“Man is set apart from both the plants and the beasts by the fact of God being directly involved in his coming into being. It is the knowledge of this fact that inspired the psalmist's prayer: "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments" (Psalm 119:73). Thus the statement that man was made out of dust stresses not only his fragility but also his nobility.”

~ Abraham Heschel, *Insecurity of Freedom*, p 157

Today is **Day 11**, 1 week and 4 days



Kaph - Psalm 119:81-88 “*Kalta* – My soul languishes for Thy salvation; I wait for Thy Word.... All Thy commandments are faithful; they have persecuted me with a lie; help me!”

For I am the Lord your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says, “Do not fear, I will help you.” (Isaiah 41:13)

There is a Hebrew expression, *B’ezrat Hashem*, meaning, “with the help of God”, that is said as a preface before announcing any plans. According to Rabbi Yitzhak Karo it is drawn from the verse “In *all* thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:6)

It is good to remember that our help comes from our Father in Heaven, the God of Israel, the Almighty Creator of Heaven and Earth.

Today is **Day 12**, 1 week and 5 days



Lamed - Psalm 119:89-96 “*Le’olam* – Forever, O LORD, Thy Word is settled in heaven.”

“From the Torah’s outset, we learn that everything is in Hashem’s hands. Not only did he create heaven and earth In the beginning, but He creates them anew and sustains them every single day. King David says (verses 89-90), “Forever, Hashem, Your word stands firm in the Heavens...You established the earth and it endures.” This passages teaches that both heaven and earth exist only by virtue of Hashem’s ongoing command, for “the word of Hashem shall stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8).”

~ Rabbi Shalom Arush

The Word of God, which stands immovable forever, is the only solid foundation that cannot be shaken and upon which we can stand in full security.

Today is **Day 13**, 1 week and 6 days



Mem - Psalm 119:97-104 “*Ma-ahavti* – O how I love Thy Torah! It is my meditation all the day....How sweet are Thy words to my taste!”

In the *Shema* we are commanded, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, and your might.’ Then almost immediately it says, ‘Teach these things repeatedly to your children, speaking of them when you sit at home and when you travel on the way, when you lie down and when you rise.’...

“Study is holier even than prayer, for in prayer we speak to God, but in study we listen to God. We strive to understand what God wants from us. We try to make His will ours. For the holiest thing is God’s word. ... In study, we make Torah real in the mind so that we can make it actual in the world. “

~ Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Today is **Day 14**, 2 weeks of the Omer



Nun - Psalm 119:105-112 “*Ner* - Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. ...I have inclined my heart to perform Thy statutes forever, even to the end.”

Why is the Word of God compared to both a lamp and to a light? The psalmist, say the rabbis, intends to say: “When I begin to study the words of Torah, my attainment is

modest. But once I enter the words, many gates open up and the way is lit before me.”
~ Abraham Heschel, *Insecurity of Freedom*, p. 208

The Word of God needs to move from our minds (*chochma* - wisdom) to our hearts (*binah* - understanding) and then to our actions (*avodah* - worship and service of God).