
סדור

לב שלם

Siddur

Lev Shalem

לשבת ויום טוב

FOR SHABBAT
& FESTIVALS

Erev Shabbat

*Shabbat:
Israel's Partner*

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish taught: The day of Shabbat came before the Holy One and said, "Creator of the world, every day has a partner (Sunday has Monday...) but I have no partner?" The Holy One replied, "Israel shall be your partner." And when Israel stood at Sinai, God said to them, "Remember My promise to Shabbat that 'Israel will be your partner.'" Thus it is written, "Remember the day of Shabbat to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8).

—GENESIS RABBAH

L'kha Dodi

*Come, my beloved, to welcome the bride;
let us greet Shabbat as she arrives.*

"Observe" and "remember" were uttered as one, we heard it thus from the singular One. God's name is one and God is one, renowned with honor and deserving of praise.

Come, my beloved . . .

Let us go out to greet Shabbat, sacred wellspring of blessing, conceived at the beginning of time, finally formed at the end of six days.

Come, my beloved . . .

Shrine of our sovereign, royal city, rise up from destruction and fear no more. End your dwelling in the tear-filled valley, for with God's compassion you will be upraised.

Come, my beloved . . .

continued

L'kha dodi likrat kalah, p'nei shabbat n'kab'lah.

*Shamor v'zakhor b'dibur ehad,
hishmi-anu El ha-m'yuhad.
Adonai ehad u-shmo ehad,
l'shem u-l'tiferet v'lit-hilah.*

L'kha dodi likrat kalah, p'nei shabbat n'kab'lah.

*Likrat shabbat l'khu v'nei'khah,
ki hi m'kor ha-b'rakhah.
Meirosh mi-kedem n'sukhah,
Sof ma-aseh b'mahashavah t'hilah.*

L'kha dodi likrat kalah, p'nei shabbat n'kab'lah.

*Mikdash melekh ir m'lukhah,
kumi tze'i mitokh ha-hafeikhah.
Rav lakh shevet b'emek ha-bakha,
v'hu yahamol alayikh hemlah.*

L'kha dodi likrat kalah, p'nei shabbat n'kab'lah.

לְכָה דוּדִי

לְכָה דוּדִי לְקִרְאֵת כְּלָה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.

*שְׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבּוּר אֶחָד
הַשְּׂמִיעֵנוּ אֵל הַמִּיחָד.*

*יְהוּה אֶחָד וְשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד,
לְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֵרֶת וּלְתִהְיֶה.*

לְכָה דוּדִי לְקִרְאֵת כְּלָה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.

*לְקִרְאֵת שַׁבַּת לָכוּ וְנִלְכָה
כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה.*

*מֵרֵאשׁ מְקֻדָּם נְסוּכָה
סוּף מַעֲשֵׂה בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה תִּתְחַלָּה.*

לְכָה דוּדִי לְקִרְאֵת כְּלָה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.

*מְקֻדָּשׁ מְלֶךְ עִיר מְלוּכָה,
קוּמִי צְאִי מִתּוֹךְ הַהֶפְכָּה.*

*רַב לָךְ שַׁבַּת בְּעֵמֶק הַבְּכָא,
וְהוּא יַחְמוֹל עָלֶיךָ חֲמֻלָּה.*

לְכָה דוּדִי לְקִרְאֵת כְּלָה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.

continued

with the upper realms. The poem serves as an introduction to Psalm 92, "The Song of the Day of Shabbat," which was the start of the Friday evening service in many rites, before the introduction of Kabbalat Shabbat.

COME, MY BELOVED לְכָה דוּדִי. The "beloved" who is invited here may refer to the soul, to others within the community of Israel, or to an aspect of the Divine. The first half of this refrain contains fifteen letters and the second half contains eleven, which are respectively the numerical equivalents of *yod-hei* and *vav-hei*, spelling out the name of God.

"OBSERVE" AND "REMEMBER" שְׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר. The Decalogue appears twice in the Torah, with minor differences of wording. In Exodus (20:8), the fourth commandment opens with the verb *zakhor*, "remember" the Sabbath day; the Deuteronomy (5:12) version begins *shamor*, "observe" the Sabbath day. Harmonizing them, a midrash states that God uttered both words at once (Mekhilta, *Bahodesh* 7). Evoking that midrash here, the poet thus alludes to the unity established by Shabbat; for God, thought and action are one. And on Shabbat we, too, may feel as if who we are and how we behave are more unified.

LET US GO OUT TO GREET SHABBAT לְקִרְאֵת שַׁבַּת לָכוּ וְנִלְכָה. This verse alludes to the practice of leaving the synagogue and going out into the fields to welcome Shabbat, the custom followed by the mystics of Safed, based on their interpretation of the Babylonian Talmud (Shabbat 119a).

SHRINE OF OUR SOVEREIGN מְקֻדָּשׁ מְלֶךְ. This verse and the next five all build on the theme of Israel's exile and her promised redemption. Shabbat is seen as a manifestation of the Shekhinah (God's presence in the world), which is in exile with Israel. At the same time, Shabbat is also a foretaste of the redemptive time.

L'KHA DODI became a favorite Friday night hymn almost as soon as it was written. Its author, Shlomo Halevi Alkabetz (d. 1580), was a participant in the mystic circle in Safed, associated with the great master, Moses Cordovero. The poem is one of many written by Safed poets in which Shabbat, God, and Israel are intertwined and related through love. The depiction of Shabbat as bride and as queen has a long history of talmudic origin. The stanzas form an acrostic spelling out the author's name, Shlomo Halevi.

L'kha Dodi juxtaposes two simultaneous movements: the human quest for the Divine and the Divine for the human. Thus, we are invited to go and greet Shabbat as she comes to us. Similarly, those mystics who interpreted the process of redemption as reflecting the inner life of the Divine imagined God's glory, *tiferet*, as flowing toward Shabbat, the Shekhinah, and of the Shekhinah rising up to unite

Forty-Nine Gates

The Torah mentions the exodus from Egypt fifty times, hinting that there are fifty steps or aspects to coming out of the mindset of slavery. Indeed, the Torah teaches that the Israelites went up out of Egypt *hamushim* (Exodus 13:18), which literally means “armed” but may also suggest “one-fiftieth.” Thus, on the first day of Pesah, we may be said to have walked through the first of fifty gates toward genuine freedom. To complete the exodus, we must journey through another forty-nine gates.

—BASED ON THE NETIVOT SHALOM

Counting Up

The ancient rabbis say that when we count the *omer*, we are counting

toward the time that we will receive the Torah. Day by day, week by week, we count, and in a highly regulated fashion: when, how, in what language, with or without a blessing, are all issues addressed by Jewish law.

But what is most noteworthy is that when we count the *omer*, we count up. Our natural tendency is to count down. We count down the seconds in anticipation of the secular New Year. We count down the days to an upcoming vacation. We count down toward a professional deadline or the end of a specific project.

I can think of only one time in my life when it was natural for me to count up: when I was pregnant. Week by week, month by month, I counted. I was excited about my due date, but I also wanted to be pregnant for nine complete months. Like other pregnant women, I knew that the period of gestation was not simply a time I needed to get past in order for the “real” event to take place; each week, each month, was vital for my baby’s development. Each day had its own significance, nurturing the growth that would be necessary for my baby to enter the world. So quite naturally, I knew to count up.

So too with receiving Torah. Torah defines us as a people; it shapes our individual identities and our character. But its transformative potential is dependent on our preparation. To truly receive Torah, we need to grow into it, to make ourselves ready for it. We count up to remind ourselves of the significance of this gestational time. We count up because each day, each week is an opportunity to identify and refine the ways we want to grow: as moral people, as people who live a life of care, as people willing to be instructed.

—AMY WALLK KATZ

The Counting of the Omer

From the second night of Pesah until the night before Shavuot, we count the omer. We rise.

I am about to fulfill the mitzvah of counting the *omer*, as it is written in the Torah:

“You shall count from the eve of the second day of Pesah, 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.” *Leviticus 23:15–16*

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space, who has provided us with a path to holiness through the observance of mitzvot and has instructed us to count the *omer*.

Barukh atah adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu al s’firat ha-omer.

We recite the line for the appropriate day, from the following pages.

ספירת העומר

From the second night of Pesah until the night before Shavuot, we count the omer. We rise.

הַנְּנִי מוֹכֵן\מוֹכֵנָה וּמְזוּמָן\וּמְזוּמָנָה לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה שֶׁל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה:

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאָכֶם אֶת־עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה, שִׁבְעַת שַׁבָּתוֹת תְּמִימֹת תִּהְיֶינָה. עַד מַמְחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת הַשְּׁבִיעִית תִּסְפְּרוּ הַמַּשִּׁים יוֹם.

ויקרא כג: טו-טז

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר.

We recite the line for the appropriate day, from the following pages.

THE COUNTING OF THE OMER. Unlike the other festivals, the Torah gives no specific seasonal date for Shavuot; instead, we are told to observe it exactly seven weeks after Pesah, counting and enumerating each of the forty-nine days in between, thus creating an intimate connection between the two holidays. This connection is both agricultural and spiritual. In the Temple, a daily offering of the new barley crop (a measure of grain called an *omer*) was made beginning on Pesah; barley was the first grain to be ready to harvest. Anticipating the full spring harvest approximately seven weeks later, our forebears counted the days; and then offered the

first fruits on Shavuot, a celebration of ripening and bounty.

Equally, the period of *s’firat ha-omer* commemorates the historic journey from slavery in Egypt to meeting God at Sinai. We celebrate freedom on Pesah, but recognize that the exodus is not truly complete until we receive instruction as to how to live with that freedom, on Shavuot.

Jewish mystics saw this period of counting time as one of preparation for revelation, a time of purifying the self and striving for a deeper understanding of God’s relation to the world. They saw seven circles of divine energy that needed to be entered into, in order to come to achieve the revelation.

The meditations offered here for these days are based on that mystical understanding. Early medieval authorities, perhaps out of a similar motive of self-improvement before coming to the moment commemorating Sinai, developed the custom of studying one of the six chapters of *Pirkei Avot* (often translated as “The Ethics of the Fathers,” but perhaps more accurately translated “Fundamental Principles”). This tractate (pages xx–yy), incorporated in the Mishnah in the mid-3rd century, constitutes the most explicit statement of rabbinic ethics.