

ספירת העומר The Counting of the Omer

Fourth Week: Time and Eternity — נְצַח (Netzah)

Psalm 90 remarks: “Teach us to count our days,” or perhaps better translated, “Teach us to make each day count.” On some level, we are all conscious of mortality. The days of our lives are limited. And so this week, we ask: What should a day look like? What would make my days seem not just busy, but rich in their fullness? Am I spending my time on what I care about most? What would make a day feel blessed? How do I deal with frustration? How can I transform my good intentions into actions and patterns of behavior? Thus, *netzah* is also associated with endurance, carrying through with our intentions over the long haul. We might ask: How does my life reflect consistent commitment?

רַבִּי טַרְפוֹן אוֹמֵר: הַיּוֹם קָצֵר, וְהַמְּלָאכָה מְרֻבָּה, וְהַפּוֹעֲלִים עֲצִלִּים, וְהַשְּׂכָר הַרְבֵּה, וּבַעַל הַבַּיִת דּוֹחֵק.

Rabbi Tarfon taught: The day is short, and the work is great, and the workers are lazy, and the reward is much, and the owner is urging us on.

—Pirkei Avot 2:20

בֶּן־עֲזַאי אוֹמֵר: הָיִי רֵץ לְמִצְוָה קְלָה כַּבְּחֻמוֹהָ, וּבּוֹרֵחַ מִן הָעֲבֵרָה. שְׂמִצְוָה גּוֹרֶרֶת מִצְוָה, וְעֲבֵרָה גּוֹרֶרֶת עֲבֵרָה. שְׂשֹׂכֵר מִצְוָה מִצְוָה, וְשֹׂכֵר עֲבֵרָה עֲבֵרָה.

Ben Azzai taught: Pursue a minor mitzvah as you would a major one, and flee from a transgression, for one good deed leads to another and one transgression generates another. Thus the reward for a mitzvah is another mitzvah, and the consequence for a transgression is another transgression.

—Pirkei Avot 4:2

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.

הִנְנִי מוֹכֵן\מוֹכְנָה וּמְזוּמֵן\וּמְזוּמְנֵת לְקִיּוֹם מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה שֶׁל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר כְּמוֹ שְׂכָתוֹב בַּתּוֹרָה:

וּסְפִרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמְחֻרַת הַשָּׁבֹת מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאָכֶם אֶת־עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה, שִׁבְעַת שָׁבֹתוֹת תְּמִימַת תְּהִיְיִנָּה. עַד מִמְחֻרַת הַשָּׁבֹת הַשְּׁבִיעִת תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם. וְיִקְרָא כַּב: טו-טז

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

On IYAR 7:

הַיּוֹם שְׁנַיִם וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם, שְׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וַיּוֹם אֶחָד לְעֹמֶר.

Today is 22 days—three weeks and one day—of the *omer*.

Hayom sh'nayim v'esrim yom, she-hem sh'loshah shavuot v'yom ehad la-omer.

On IYAR 8:

הַיּוֹם שְׁלֹשָׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם, שְׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וּשְׁנַיִ יָמִים לְעֹמֶר.

Today is 23 days—three weeks and two days—of the *omer*.

Hayom sh'loshah v'esrim yom, she-hem sh'loshah shavuot u-shnei yamim la-omer.

On IYAR 9:

הַיּוֹם אַרְבָּעָה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם, שְׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וּשְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים לְעֹמֶר.

Today is 24 days—three weeks and three days—of the *omer*.

Hayom arba-ah v'esrim yom, she-hem sh'loshah shavuot u-shloshah yamim la-omer.

On IYAR 10:

הַיּוֹם חֲמִשָּׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם, שְׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְאַרְבָּעָה יָמִים לְעֹמֶר.

Today is 25 days—three weeks and four days—of the *omer*.

Hayom hamishah v'esrim yom, she-hem sh'loshah shavuot v'arba-ah yamim la-omer.

On IYAR 11:

הַיּוֹם שֵׁשָׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם, שְׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְחֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים לְעֹמֶר.

Today is 26 days—three weeks and five days—of the *omer*.

Hayom shishah v'esrim yom, she-hem sh'loshah shavuot va-hamishah yamim la-omer.

On IYAR 12:

הַיּוֹם שִׁבְעָה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם, שְׁהֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְשִׁשָּׁה יָמִים לְעֹמֶר.

Today is 27 days—three weeks and six days—of the *omer*.

Hayom shivah v'esrim yom, she-hem sh'loshah shavuot v'shishah yamim la-omer.

On IYAR 13:

הַיּוֹם שְׁמוֹנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים יוֹם, שְׁהֵם אַרְבָּעָה שָׁבוּעוֹת לְעֹמֶר.

Today is 28 days—four weeks—of the *omer*.

Hayom sh'monah v'esrim yom, she-hem arba-ah shavuot la-omer.