

The Hourglass of Time & the Omer

by Dafna Ezran-Young

Next week we celebrate the new month of Sivan. Rosh Hodesh Sivan heralds the final week of the Omer count, the 49 days leading from Passover to Shavuot. What do we gain from numbering each day for seven weeks? Why bother?

In the most mundane and practical terms, the Omer counts the time from the beginning of the barley harvest in the land of Israel to the beginning of the wheat harvest. During the millenium when the Temple, the Bet HaMikdash, stood in Jerusalem, people would bring the first barley cuttings and offer them, through the Cohanim, to Hashem on the second day of Passover. And on Shavuot, they would bring offerings from the first cuttings of the wheat harvest.

Historically, the Omer memorializes a difficult time of year for the Jewish people, one in which we have suffered repeatedly at the hands of oppressors ranging from Roman despots to medieval crusaders. This is why many observant Jewish people, especially among the Eastern European communities, refrain from celebration during the Omer period and observe other

customs associated with mourning, such as not cutting hair.

In spiritual terms, some say that counting each day of the Omer helps us prepare and purify ourselves to receive the Torah. For Shavuot celebrates the moment on Mt. Sinai when Hashem delivered the Ten Commandments.

Each year we receive the gift of the Torah again, as if for the first time. And we must be ready to accept the moral responsibility of the Torah, including the Ten Commandments and all the other mitzvot and wisdom it contains.

Yet another way of looking at counting each Omer day, is that it makes us aware of life's preciousness and of time. The Omer offers a way of seeing each day not as a small loss, but as another small but significant opportunity.

To fully count the Omer, we say a blessing each night as the next day begins on the Jewish calendar. Miss one day completely and the privilege of blessing is lost. We can still count the days of the Omer, but we cannot say the blessing. Why? There is a lesson here about how to make our lives count, how to make meaningful contributions in the world.

(Continued on page 2)

KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat / Friday, May 3rd

Shaharit	6:30 am
Shir Hashirim	6:45 pm
Minha & Arbit	7:00 pm
Candle Lighting.....	7:20 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer Thirty Ninth Night	

Shabbat / Parashat Behar-Behukotai Saturday, May 4th

Shaharit	8:30 am
Class with Rabbi Batzri	6:00 pm
Ladies Tehillim	6:00 pm
Minha/Arbit	6:30 pm
Shabbat Havdallah	8:05 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer Fortieth Night	

Weekdays

Sunday, May 5th

Shaharit	7:30 am
Talmud Torah	9:30 am
David S. Kelly Youth Choir	11:00 am
Sefirat Ha'Omer Forty-First Night	

Monday to Friday, May 6 to 10

Shaharit	6:30 am
Sefirat Ha'Omer Nights 42 to 46	

Yom Yerushalayim / Wednesday, May 8th

Rosh Hodesh Sivan

Thursday Eve, May 9th & Friday, May 10th

Erev Shabbat / Friday, May 10th

Shaharit	6:30 am
Shir Hashirim	6:45 pm
Minha & Arbit	7:00 pm
Candle Lighting.....	7:25 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer Forty-Sixth Night	

(Continued from page 1)

It takes mere minutes to count the Omer each day. But ask anyone who has tried to count the Omer and they will tell you how easy it can be to forget a day. To remember consistently and to act consistently requires awareness, consciousness, choice, and presence of mind. That is the challenge of the Omer.

Caught up in the drama, the concerns and crisis of the moment, how often do we fall into bed at night, worn out by the day's journey? Yet, if we pause each day for a moment in the stream of life, if we act each day with intention, even the smallest action will accrue over time. And this small action, this daily intent, will impact us and those around us.

One significant way to influence the world, then, is not by the grand gestures, the heroic moments so celebrated in modern culture. What Judaism tells us, through the Omer, is that an important way to create change is small and consistent, well-chosen actions performed over time, throughout our lives.

Refuah Shlemah

Yocheved bat Rachel, Mazal bat Malka, Dan Herdooon, Mazal Tov bat Salha Matana, Moshe ben Ezra, Sasson ben Rahel/Sassoon Moses, Penina bat Henia, Dov Ber ben Sonia, Maurice Ovadia / Moshe ben Noosha, Pnina bat Esther, Vera Levi Yossef ben Jamila, Ruth bat Aliza

SHABBAT READINGS

Torah Portion 531-550, Haftara 551-553

Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored
in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of
Samuel Moshe Hannani
by
Natalie and Bahman Hannani

Congratulations

Samuel Moshe Hannani
on your Bar Mitzvah
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your grandparents, Akram Hannani
and Sarideh & Jahangir Soufer*



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In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries for May 4th to 11th, 2013. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, and attend services the preceding Shabbat.

24 Iyar / Shabbat, May 4th

Judah Freddy Bekhore Yehuda Faraj ben Yosef

25 Iyar / Sunday, May 5th

Simcha Nazarian Simkha bat Michael

26 Iyar / Monday, May 6th

Sarah Elias Sarah bat Ester

27 Iyar / Tuesday, May 7th

Sassoon Elisha Sassoon Yoseph Elisha

28 Iyar / Wednesday, May 8th

Hannah Sassoon Hannah Khatoon bat Mozelle Tov
Yoseph Hai Ezra Shimon

1 Sivan / Friday, May 10th

Ezra Shalom Avraham

ROSH HODESH SIVAN

We are entering the Hebrew month of Sivan. The central event to take place in this month is G-d giving the Torah to the Jews at Mount Sinai. Sivan is the third month of the Hebrew calendar. Tradition teaches that it was on Rosh Hodesh Sivan that the Israelites "camped" at the foot of Sinai in preparation to receive the Torah. The verb used for "camped" is in the singular. It is taught that at the moment the Israelites determined to receive the Torah, they were united in heart and mind like a single person. Sivan's symbol of the twins – two distinct human beings sharing one womb - can represent the harmony that comes when people celebrate their differences while coming together to work for a common, higher goal, such as receiving and following the Torah. Shavuot falls on the sixth day of Sivan (and on the seventh of Sivan for those Diaspora communities that observe two days). In biblical times, Shavuot marked the end of the grain harvest (which began with the bringing of the Omer on Pesach), and was called Hag Ha'katzir (The Harvest Holiday); it also ushered in the new agricultural season – the bringing of the first fruits of the land to the Temple. It is also called The Holiday of the First Fruit Offering. *On Erev Rosh Hodesh Sivan we will recite A Special Prayer on Behalf of our Children.*

We wish you a Hodesh Tov, a great, healthy and successful month to all of you.

Thursday, May 9, 2013 at 7:00 pm, Hostess Sigal Feruza RSVP– Space is limited. Contact orlysbatzri@gmail.com

Rosh Chodesh Sivan
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