

THE COUNTING OF THE OMER

This teaching is for Feast of First Fruits, *"the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Yisrael ought to do..."* Divre HaYamim Alef (First Chronicles) 12:32.

The Counting of the Omer is part of the Feast of Yom Ha-Bikurrim/The Feast of First Fruits. We shall begin our lesson of the Omer with an explanation of this great feast. The information for this feast comes from our book *Moedim Exposition of the Feasts of YHWH*. We recommend you purchase a copy of this book along with its companion Siddur Moedim, to help you understand the feast requirements of the Torah and how to keep them. You can also download a free copy of each Feast Order (Siddur) from our website under the Feasts/Moedim section. The Omer is not an antiquated ceremony of the Torah but an appointed gateway into the realm of supernatural release for deliverance, healing, restoration, freedom, peace, love, prosperity, and abundance.

YOM HA-BIKURRIM

This feast is most often associated in the Christian Church with Easter. The problem with this is that most of us know that Easter is not a Scriptural but a pagan term because it originates from an ancient pagan cult called *Ishtar*. It is outside the scope of this exposition to look at this cult and its history except to confirm for you that Easter, the Easter Bunny, and Easter eggs have absolutely nothing to do with the feast of Yom haBikurrim. You might have also noticed that Easter does not fall on the same day as the Feast of First Fruits because the Church operates on the secular calendar that is based on the Roman calendar.

The Feast of First Fruits is celebrated in the month of Abib, of which, according to Scripture, the Father said Abib was to be *"the beginning of months,"* which is to be the head of the year (Shemoth (Exodus) 12:2). In a sense, this feast speaks about new beginnings because it officially marks the beginning of the Hebrew year. Jewish Israel instead celebrates the feast of Trumpets as the New Year, which is called *Rosh Hashanah*, which we will discuss later. This feast is also known by the name *Reshit Kazir*, which is the beginning of the harvest.

The Scriptural command for the feast of Yom haBikurrim is found in Wayiqra (Leviticus) 23:9-15.

"And YHWH spoke unto Moshe saying: Speak unto the children of Yisra'el and say unto them, When you are come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the cohen. And he shall wave the sheaf before YHWH, to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the Sabbath, the cohen shall wave it. And in the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a he lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt-offering unto YHWH. And the meal-offering thereof shall be two tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil: an offering made by fire unto YHWH for a sweet savor, and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine; the fourth part of a hin. And you shall eat neither bread nor parched grain, nor fresh ears, until this selfsame day, until you have brought the offering of your Elohim: it is a statute forever, throughout your generations in all your dwellings. And you shall count unto you, from the morrow after the day of rest, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the waving; seven weeks shall they be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh week shall you number fifty days, and you shall present a new meal-offering unto YHWH."

Yom haBikurrim was to be celebrated the day after the Sabbath (Wayiqra (Leviticus) 23:11). Therefore, this feast is normally celebrated on the first day of the week, *Yom Rishon* (a Sunday), but it starts on Saturday evening because Hebrew days are counted from evening to evening, which coincides with the beginning of the Counting of the Omer. In ancient Yisra'el, on this day, a sheaf of the *omer* of barley (the first grain crop to ripen) was waved before YHWH in the *Bayit haMikdash* (Temple) to mark the

start of the Counting of the Omer, thereby initiating the 49 days count to the harvest of Shavuot. More will be said on this later.

Wayiqra (Leviticus) 23:11-14 catalogs the kinds of offerings YHWH expected to be presented to Him on the feast of First Fruits. Of particular importance is what the priest did on this day. On the Day of First Fruits, the priest waved a sheaf of the first fruits of the barley harvest before YHWH. This first sheaf is called the *omer*, which means to bind and gather together. An omer is also a standard unit of dry measure equal to one-tenth of an *ephad* (Shemoth (Exodus) 16:36), which is equivalent to 3.5 liters.

Today in Israel, this feast is mostly ignored by traditional Judaism that is because to fulfill the first fruit obligation in ancient Yisra'el, the celebrant was required to bring the first sheaf from his barley harvest (*omer*) to the priest who would then wave it before YHWH in the *Bayit haMikdash*. As it is written, *"And he shall wave the sheaf before YHWH, to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the Sabbath, the cohen (priest) shall wave it"* Wayiqra (Leviticus) 23:11.

What then is the significance of this feast to us today?

The significance of the Feast of First Fruits:

1. The term "first fruits" speaks of the resurrection of our Messiah Yeshua.

Yeshua's resurrection is a type of harvest. It marked the beginning of our Father's harvest season. In the book of Revelation, Yeshua is referred to as the firstborn from the dead *"And from Yeshua the Messiah, the faithful witness, **the firstborn** of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth..."* Gilyahna (Revelation) 1:5. Sha'ul, in many of his writings, typified Yeshua as the firstborn. Refer to Romiyah (Romans) 8:29, 23; Qorintyah Alef (First Corinthians) 15:20, 23 and Qolesayah (Colossians) 1:18.

2. The Feast of First Fruits represents the dead who were raised shortly after the resurrection.

They are also the first fruits. We read of this in Mattityahu (Matthew) 27:52-53, *"And the sepulchers were opened, and many bodies of the Set-Apart-ones, which were laid, arose, And went out from the sepulchers after His resurrection, and entered into the Set-Apart city, and were seen by many."* This resurrection is depicted in the barley harvest that was bound together as presented as sheaves.

3. The Feast of First Fruits speaks of the resurrection of the just when our Messiah returns.

Yeshua alluded to this resurrection when He said, *"And you will be blessed because they have no way to repay you: for your recompense will be in **the resurrection of the righteous**"* Luka (Luke) 14:14. This feast is a continual reminder to us that we will be resurrected just like He was resurrected (Romiyah (Romans) 6:5).

4. It represents Yeshua as being the firstborn of ALL things.

He is first in every way:

- The firstborn of the Father (Ivrim (Hebrews) 1:6).
- The firstborn of every creature (Qolesayah (Colossians) 1:15).
- The firstborn of Mary (Mattityahu (Matthew) 1:23-25).
- The firstborn from the dead (Gilyahna (Revelation) 1:5).
- The firstborn of many brethren (Romiyah (Romans) 8:29).
- He is also the Alpha and the Omega (Gilyahna (Revelation) 1:8).
- The first and the last (Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 44:6).
- The beginning and the end (Gilyahna (Revelation) 21:6).
- He is also the head of the body (Qolesayah (Colossians) 1:18-20).

This is why Yeshua is given first place in everything because He is first in every way. This is the message of (Ephsiah (Ephesians) 1:10-11, 23).

5. The Feast of First Fruits speaks of the best fruits of the Harvest.

The first batch of the harvest was always considered to be the best. That is why YHWH commanded that the firstborn of any man and beast belongs to Him (Shemoth (Exodus) 13:2, 11-13, 22:29). All the first fruits were to be offered with thanksgiving and praise. What was not sacrificed of the first fruits was presented to the Priests and the Levites (Wayiqra (Leviticus) 19:23-25; Nechemyah (Nehemiah) 10:34-39). Part of the barley harvest of first fruits was also set aside for the poor. This is in accordance with the Command of YHWH. In Wayiqra (Leviticus) 19:9-10 and Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:19-22, Yisra'el was commanded to leave the occasionally forgotten sheaf and the gleanings of the harvest in the corners of their fields so that they could be used to feed the stranger, the fatherless, the widow and poor.

6. The picture of the priest standing alone and waving a sheaf before YHWH speaks of our Messiah Yeshua.

Messiah Yeshua is our High Priest under the order of Melchizedek (Ivrim (Hebrews) 7:17). He alone represents us before YHWH. He alone is our advocate or representative in Heaven. That is why we have no need for a human advocate because we have the highest advocate in the Son of YHWH, whose ministry is everlasting.

The Day of First Fruits is largely ignored in Israel today because there is no Temple where the Priests can waive the sheaf (*Omer*) or present the proper offerings because the Passover and Unleavened bread overshadow it. Since there is no Temple and Priesthood, the Sagas decided not to observe this feast.

It is evident that all the aspects of this feast are fulfilled in our Messiah Yeshua. In Heaven, on the day this feast saw its ultimate fulfillment, Yeshua, our High Priest waved a sheaf in Heaven on our behalf. When He offered that Set-Apart sheaf, all of Yisra'el were accepted – all who were, all who are His, and all whoever will be His.

"For the Messiah did not enter into the Set-Apart place which was made by hands, but which was a mere copy of the true ones: but He shall enter into heaven on our behalf, which shall appear at the time of the service, in the presence of Elohim" Ivrim (Hebrews) 9:24.

"But now the Messiah has risen from the dead and, has become the firstborn of those asleep. And as through a son of man came death, so also through a son of man came the resurrection of the dead" Qorintyah Alef (First Corinthians) 15:20-21.

Therefore, we must keep this feast in the light of this understanding.

THE OMER

The Counting of the Omer

The Day of First Fruits marks the beginning of the Counting of Omer. Refer to Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:9. It is, in fact, the first day of the Omer. In Hebrew, this period of fifty days is called *Seirat haOmer* (*Sefira* for short) or "the counting of the Omer." *Seirat haOmer* is a very significant period; it consists of seven weekly Shabbats (7 X 7= 49 days) plus one day for the feast, of which each week is considered to be an annual Shabbat. During this period, the seven weeks are considered special Shabbats a *Shabbat-Shabbaton* – literally a Sabbath of Sabbath, a period of special rest in which we begin to harvest our labors.

However, there is a contention as to when the Omer period should be counted, whether it was to start after Unleavened bread according to the Rabbinical tradition or on the marrow after the weekly Shabbat

a Sunday? According to the rabbis, the words "the day after the Sabbath" refer not to the weekly Sabbath but rather to the first festival day of the Passover (the 15th of Nisan). The Sadducees of the first-century continuing with the Karaites of the early Middle Ages, interpreted the word *Sabbath* to mean the weekly Sabbath during the Passover season. If we are to maintain the accuracy of the Scriptures, then the Omer must be counted after the weekly Shabbat on *Yom Rishon* (Sunday) as *Wayiqra* (Leviticus) 23:16 commands; therefore, it would also end on a Sunday.

It is during the period of the Omer that the bulk of the first fruit harvest was being brought in, which is generally known in Israel to be a time of harvest, restoration, and Jubilee. In Jewish Israel, this period is characterized by specific palms and prayers that are read out on a daily basis during the fifty days of the Omer. On each of these fifty days, a "counting benediction" is recited, and the days are marked off on a calendar. It is a rich tradition that promises a bountiful harvest when it is practiced. Some Jews recite Tehillim (Psalms) 67 after the Counting since it consists of seven verses and a total of 49 words in Hebrew. This Counting is done at night, as the new day begins at sundown.

According to other traditions, this period between Passover and Shavuot is a season of mourning or reflection. Marriages are not performed during this time, and personal grooming and festivities are avoided. This is because it is a time of separation and preparation for the bride. This is a picture of Yeshua and His bride, Yisra'el. The 49 days embody the 49 steps of self-improvement, beginning with the departure from our "personal" Egypt until we arrive at Mount Sinai, when we are ready to receive our marriage Covenant. Fifty days later, during Shavuot, the Groom marries His bride.

A note on the Counting

There are different methods of counting the 50 days. According to some, the commandment 'and you shall count for yourselves fifty days' means to simply observe the 50th day as *Shavuot* while others actually declare out loud the number of each of the fifty days. A medieval Karaite practice combines two different methods of declaring the daily count. The first method is the Counting of seven weeks. Each day, the number of the week and the number of the day in the week are declared. So for example, the first day is 'first day of the first week'. The second counting method used is an overall number for each day. In this method Day, one is 'the first day', and Day 25 is 'the twenty-fifth day'. These two methods are used to satisfy the commandment to count seven weeks (Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:9) as well as the commandment to count fifty days (Wayiqra (Leviticus) 23:16). In our companion file to this teaching "the Counting of the Omer Program is a list of the Counting for each day and the Scriptures for declaration.

The Backbone of Counting the Omer Program is Torah Tefillah. We live in a time that requires a type of prayer that will always hit the mark and never return unanswered because we live in perilous times. "*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come*" Timotheous Bet (Second Timothy) 3:1. Is there such a type of prayer, and how can I learn it? The good news is there is such a prayer, and it is available to anyone, whether they are a newcomer to prayer or an ardent warrior of prayer.

This prayer is called *Torah Tefillah* or Torah prayer. This is the type of prayer we activate during the season of Omer through the No Mans Zone Omer Program that is guaranteed a harvest. This part of our teaching comes from our book *The Breach Maker Series 700*.

TORAH TEFILLAH

Torah Tefillah transcends every type, category, tradition, and custom of prayer because it is outside the scope of human deed and human sacrifice because its foundation is not manmade or made-centered. It emanates directly from Elohim (the Creator), having the full endorsement and sanction of Heaven. In other words, it is like having a direct line of communication to the Throne room that bypasses all the normal protocols or channels of communication.

This is how the Prophet brought its revelation to the people of Yisra'el.

*"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the shamayim (heaven), and returns not there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give zera (seed) to the sower, and lechem (bread) to the eater: **So shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing where I send it**"* Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 55:10-11.

There is no prayer that is superior or equal or a substitute to Torah Tefillah! A form of Prayer you will not find in any ancient tradition, whether Judaic or Christian because it has been kept from the view and understanding of most believers due to its extraordinary possibility and extraordinary capability. Why? Because it hastens Heaven to act!

The Word of YHWH does not return unfulfilled. It will always accomplish that which it is sent to do, regardless of its mediator, its circumstances, or its conditions. The power of this prayer lies in a unique property of the Word that few theologians have had the privilege to know because it has been kept from the wise and prudent and reserved for babes in Yeshua (Mattityahu (Matthew) 11:25).

The Word of YHWH is INELUCTABLE! The Collins English dictionary defines ineluctable as *"impossible to make void."* In other words, once YHWH speaks a Word into existence, no matter how insignificant it may be, it cannot be retracted or destroyed even by its Creator. Yeshua revealed it this way.

"For truly I say to you, Until the current shamayim and earth pass away, not one yud (jot), or one nekudah (tittle) shall by any means pass from the Torah, until all be fulfilled" Mattityahu (Matthew) 5:18.

This property of His Word is seldom explained because haSatan has made it his mission to keep prayer people ignorant of its divine potency.

Four ineluctable factors make YHWH's Word impossible to make void:

First, the Word of YHWH is forever SET-APART

Meaning it is by virtue of its Creator who is inherently set- apart (holy), the Torah is also forever set-apart. Nothing we can say or do can make it set-apart or improve its unalterable state; it is, according to Scripture, inheritably and forever set- apart (kodesh).

"Your word is very pure: therefore Your eved (servant) loves it" Tehillim (Psalms) 119:140.

*"Your tzedakah (righteousness) is **an everlasting tzedakah (righteousness)**, and Your Torah is the emet (truth)"* Tehillim (Psalms) 119:142.

Second, the Word of YHWH is forever COMPLETE

Meaning it is by virtue of its Creator who is forever whole; the Torah is also forever complete. Nothing can be added to it or taken away from it to alter its complete state, it is forever settled in heaven, and it is perfect.

"Forever, O יי, Your word is settled in the Shamayim (heavens)" Tehillim (Psalms) 119:89.

"The Torah of יי is perfect, returning the being: the testimony of יי is sure, making wise the simple. The chukim (Statutes) of יי are right, bringing simcha (joy) to the lev (heart): the commandment of יי is pure, enlightening the eyes" Tehillim (Psalms) 19:7-8.

Third, the Word of YHWH is forever INALIENABLE

Meaning it is by virtue of its Creator who is forever called the Word (Yochanan (John) 1:1, 14), He is inalienable from the Torah. There is nothing that we can say or do to alienate YHWH from His Word. YHWH is His Word, and His Word is YHWH.

"My brit (Covenant) will I not break, nor alter the thing that has gone out of My lips" Tehillim (Psalms) 19:34.

"יְיָ" has sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 14:24.

Fourth, the Word of YHWH is forever EVERLASTING

Meaning it is by virtue of its Creator who abides forever, His Word is everlasting. The Word of YHWH does not have an expiry date. In other words, it is always current and applicable in any situation and every generation.

"Your words are true from Beresheeth (Genesis): and every one of Your tzadik mishpatim (righteous judgments) endures le-olam-va-ed (forever)" Tehillim (Psalms) 119:160.

"He has remembered His brit le-olam-va-ed (forever), the word that He commanded to a thousand generations" Tehillim (Psalms) 105:8.

This is why YHWH will always perform His word? Not to perform it will cause it to be nullified. Thus, He is obligated to perform His Word because it is ineluctable!

This is confirmed in these words of the Prophets;

"For I am יְיָ: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more delayed: for in your days, O rebellious bayit (house), will I say the word, and will perform it, says the Master יְיָ" " Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 12:25.

"Then said יְיָ" to me, You have seen well: for I will hasten My word to perform it" Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 1:12.

YHWH speaking as the first person in these passages, informs His navi (prophet) that the Word He speaks He will undoubtedly perform it, making it clear that it is not their job or the job of Israel to bring His Word to pass. While the lesson may appear to be obvious and simple, however, has not been the experience of history.

THE MOSHIACH NEGEV

The History of Israel is littered with so-called self-proclaimed messiahs (moshiach negev) who tried to perform the Word of YHWH over Yisra'el, and not one succeeded.

The book of Acts mentions two men who claimed to be the messiah prior to Yeshua's ministry (refer to Maaseh Shlichim (Acts) 5:34-37), Theudas and Judas the Galilean; both movements were dissolved after their deaths. Josephus, a Jewish historian, also mentions Judas the Galilaean, commenting that he had the aid of a Pharisee named Saddok. Judas led a major revolt of the Jews against the Romans in the Year 6 A.D., which was crushed and led to his death. He is known to have started the Zealots.

After Yeshua's death, two other famous men claimed to be the messiah: Bar Giora, who became leader of a Jewish faction during the first revolt in 69 A.D, and Bar Kochba, who led the second revolt in 132-

135 A.D. Bar Kochba was proclaimed as the messiah by Akiba, one of the influential rabbis of Judea at the time. Both revolts were bitterly crushed, resulting in the death of their leaders.

Unfortunately, however, we have not appropriated this important history lesson. Today, many others continue to take up the role, whether they are heralded as Messiah Jesus, Moses, or Elijah. When we endorse these self-appointed "messiahs," we become just as guilty as they are when we look to man to perform YHWH's Word. Be warned! This is the spirit of the moshiach negev or anti-messiah that is in the World (Yochanan Alef (First John) 2:18).

It is not our job or the job of the Assembly or the Church to perform the Word of YHWH, and all who tried to fill the role have utterly failed. The Word of YHWH does not need our help to perform it, and when it is left in the domain of its Maker, He always does a perfect job of fulfilling His Word because inherent in the Word of YHWH are "built-in agents" that cause it to perform what YHWH has purposed His Word to accomplish.

These agents are:

1. The agent of WATER (Psalm (Tehillim) 19:5, 9; Yochanan (John) 15:3, 17:17; Ephsiyah (Ephesians) 5:26).

The Word is like water; it is life-giving, refreshing, and a cleansing agent.

2. The agent of FIRE (Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 23:9).

The Word burns, cleanses, and purges all that is contrary to its set-apart status.

3. The agent of HAMMER (Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 23:29).

The Word smashes and demolishes evil.

4. The agent of ROD (Tehillim (Psalm) 2:9, 89:32; Gilyahna (Revelations) 11:1-2). The Word as a measuring instrument is the divine standard as well as a correcting rod.

5. The agent of OIL (Shemoth (Exodus) 30:25; Wayiqra (Leviticus) 8:10-14; Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 10:27). The Word as oil sets apart as well as breaks the yoke.

6. The agent of SWORD (Ivrim (Hebrew) 4:12). The Word is a two-edged sword that can both kill and make alive.

7. The agent of LIGHT (Tehillim (Psalm) 119:105). The Word is an instrument of light and illumination in the darkness.

The task and honor that we have been given are to pray YHWH's word. In Hebrew, this activity of praying YHWH's Word is described as *Mikra*, which means proclamation.

THE MIKRA

Ha Tehillim teaches us that Mikra is the privilege of all of YHWH's saints.

"Let the high tehillot (praise) of El be in their mouths, and a two-edged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the nations, and punishments upon the peoples; To bind their melechim (kings) with chains, and their nobles with shackles of iron; To execute upon them the written mishpat (judgement): this honor have all His kidushim (saints), for the children of Yisrael, His personal people. Hallel 777 !" Tehillim (Psalms) 149:6-9.

Mikra is essentially Torah Tefillah and is a very simple form of prayer. It involves four simple steps to compose and can be done very simply and quickly:

1. Find an event or situation in Scripture that YHWH has prophesied or ordained. (For example, a move of His Spirit, a judgment of His Word, an act of mercy, etc.).
2. Find and compile a list of Scriptures that YHWH has spoken about the event or situation. (With the aid of a Bible Concordance, this can be done very quickly).
3. Find a free space in your day to declare aloud these Scriptures (Preferably a space in your daily routine that is always available).
4. Find a place where you will not be interrupted during your prayer time. (If you possess a *Tallit*, a prayer shawl or *kipur*, a skull cap, it will be advisable to use it. Otherwise, it is not necessary to perform Mikra).

However, there are four corresponding "imperatives" to doing Mikra:

1. It is imperative that you do not add your own words to or change or alter the words of the Scripture least you judge the Word (Devarim (Deuteronomy) 12:32; Mattityahu (Mathew) 7:1-2). The Word does not need our assistance; let it speak for itself.
2. It is imperative that the Scriptures you use for the task contain the Sacred Name because the authority is in the Name of YHWH (Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 42:8, Luka (Luke) 11:52). It is the name that unlocks the inherent power of the Word and not the substitute Lord or God. Simply replace these substitutes with the Name YHWH.
3. It is imperative you anoint yourself and the place where you pray with anointing oil before you declare YHWH's Word. It is symbolic of being set-apart to the task as Priest and an Alter to YHWH (Shemoth (Exodus) 28:41, 29:36, 40:10-15). Should you not possess a jar of anointing oil, use pure olive oil mixed with the same spices you use to close Havdalah.
4. It is imperative that you do not fast because this is not a prayer requiring this type of sanctification (Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 58:4-6). There are times that we are called to fast, but in this situation, it is YHWH's faithfulness to His Word that does the work (Tehillim (Psalm) 119:138).

Mikra can also be done for a personal situation you are facing or on behalf of someone else. The Word of YHWH is an inexhaustible treasure of promises for every situation we are challenged with. Know for certain that when you start to pray according to YHWH's expressed will, His Word, no prayer is ever left unanswered because *"He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it"* Tesloniqyah Alef (First Thessalonians) 5:24.

Note: Please download our latest 'The Counting of the Omer Program' from our website that explains how to implement the Omer.

Barukh haba b'shaym יהוה, Halleluyah! Praised is He who comes in the name of יהוה!

All Scripture reference is from the RSTNE version



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