

Counting the Omer.

By

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Counting the Omer is the requirement for the setting of Feast of Weeks (Chag HaShavu'ot). By counting we establish when this day is. This is the only Chag we count to determine. We are also commanded to count the days and weeks. We will look at the texts concerning this and determine where we start counting from.

The word in Hebrew used for the Sheaf is Omer. Omer (Ayin-Mem-Resh) is reference number 6016. Which is a masculine noun and from the verb 'Amar or bound sheaf and is reference number 6014.

How do we know Omer means sheaf?

Ruth 2:7, 15

<p>7 She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves (ba' amarim) behind the reapers.' She has been on her feet ever since she came this morning. She has rested but little in the hut."</p> <p>15 When she got up again to glean, Boaz gave orders to his workers, "You are not only to let her glean among the sheaves (ha' amarim), without interference,</p>	<p>7 וְתֹאמַר אֶלְקָטָה־נָּא וְאַסְפְּתִי בְּעֵמָרִים אַחֲרֵי הַקּוֹצְרִים וְתָבוֹא וְתַעֲמֹד מֵאַזְ הַבְּקָר וְעַד־עֵתָה זֶה שְׁבֵתָה הַבַּיִת מְעַט: 15 וְתָקַם לְלָקֵט וַיֵּצֵא בַעַז אֶת־נְעָרָיו לֵאמֹר גַּם בֵּין הָעֵמָרִים תִּלְקָט וְלֹא תִּכְלִימוּהָ:</p>
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Here we see that in the Plural form that many sheaves are Amarim. Where as in the next verse we see that it is omer in the singular.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 24:19

<p>19 When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf (omer) in the field, do not turn back to get it; it shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow—in order that Yehovah Eloheykha</p>	<p>9 כִּי תִקְצֹר קְצִירְךָ בְשָׂדֶךָ וְשָׁכַחְתָּ עֹמֵר בַּשָּׂדֶה לֹא תָשׁוּב</p>
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<p>may bless you in all your undertakings.</p>	<p>לְקַחְתוּ לֶגֶר לַיְתוֹם וְלְאַלְמָנָה יְהִיָּה לְמַעַן יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ בְּכֹל מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיךָ:</p>
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So we can see that the omer they refer to in Leviticus 23 is the sheaf from the first harvest. Not necessarily a measure of Barley.

Vayiqra / Leviticus 23:9-16

9 Yehovah spoke to Moshe, saying: **10** Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving to you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest. **11** He shall elevate the sheaf before Yehovah for acceptance in your behalf; the priest shall elevate it on the day after the sabbath. **12** On the day that you elevate the sheaf, you shall offer as a burnt offering to Yehovah a lamb of the first year without blemish. **13** The meal offering with it shall be two-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to Yehovah; and the libation with it shall be of wine, a quarter of a *hin*. **14** Until that very day, until you have brought the offering of Eloheykha, you shall eat no bread or parched grain or fresh ears; it is a law for all time throughout the ages in all your settlements.

15 And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering—the day after the sabbath—you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete: **16** you must count until the day after the seventh week—fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to Yehovah.

Let us examine this text here to understand what it is telling in English really reflects what is said in Hebrew.

<p>9 And spoke Yehovah to Mosheh to say,</p> <p>10 Speak to Sons of Yisrael and you say to them when you come to the land, which I give to you reap/shorten it harvest and have brought in sheaf (omer) of the beginning of your harvest to the priest.</p> <p>11 And He shall wave the sheaf (ha'omer) before Yehovah for your</p>	<p>9 וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: 10 דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי־תָבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם וּקְצַרְתֶּם אֶת־קְצִירָהּ וְהֵבֵאתֶם אֶת־עֹמֶר רֵאשִׁית קְצִירְכֶם אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן: 11 וְהִנִּיף אֶת־הָעֹמֶר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְרֹצְנֵכֶם מִמִּחֶרֶת הַשַּׁבָּת</p>
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acceptance on the morrow of the Shabbat shall wave it the priest.

12 And shall prepare you in the day you wave the Sheaf (ha'omer) a ram, a whole one [no blemish], a son of a year, for a burnt offering to Yehovah.

13 And its food offering two tenths of flour mixed with oil, a fire offering to Yehovah a fragrance soothing and its drink offering, of wine a fourth of a hin.

14 And bread or roasted grain or carmel (fully ripe) not eat you until same day this until brought you the offering of Eloheykhem a statue for all time to your generations in all dwellings yours.

15 And you shall number/count to you on the morrow the shabbat from the day you bring the Sheaf of the wave offering seven Shabbatot whole they shall be.

16 Until on the morrow the shabbat seventh, you shall number/count fifty days. And you shall bring a food offering (min'chah) new to Yehovah.

יְנִיפְנוּ הַכֹּהֵן:

¹² וְעָשִׂיתֶם בַּיּוֹם הַנִּיפְכֶם

אֶת־הָעֹמֶר כֶּבֶשׂ תָּמִים

בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ לְעֹלָה לַיהוָה:

¹³ וּמִנְחָתוֹ שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים סֹלֶת

בְּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה רֵיחַ

נִיחֹחַ וְנִסְכָּה יַיִן רְבִיעֵת הַהֵיזֶן:

¹⁴ וְלֶחֶם וְקֹלֵי וְכֶרְמֶל לֹא

תֹּאכְלוּ עַד־עֶעֶפְסֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עַד

הֵבִיאְכֶם אֶת־קֶרְבֵּן אֱלֹהֵיכֶם

חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם בְּכֹל

מִשְׁבַּתֵיכֶם: ס

¹⁵ וְסִפַּרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמַּחֲרַת

הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הֵבִיאְכֶם

אֶת־עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שֶׁבַע

שַׁבָּתוֹת תְּמִימֹת תִּהְיֶינָה:

¹⁶ עַד מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת

הַשְּׁבִיעֵת תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם

וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה

לַיהוָה:

The points to consider from this section is:

1. What is the morrow?
2. Why use Shabbatot and not Shavu'ot?
3. Which morrow after the Shabbat?
4. We are not to eat of the new grain or roast grain until the sheaf is waved.
5. We are to count both complete Shabbats and days.

So lets look at what is the Morrow.

Morrow in Hebrew is Macharat. It is reference number 4283 and is a feminine noun. The Hebrew is Mem-Chet-Resh-Tav. It os from the verb root Mem-Chet-Resh which is Machar and reference number 4279. The verb mean “to morrow” or towards morrow. The feminine noun is morrow so as a thing it is a specific oject. In this case it is a time of day.

We can see that this is the period after sunrise.

Yonah/Jonah 4:7

6 Yehovah Elohim provided a ricinus plant, which grew up over Jonah, to provide shade for his head and save him from discomfort. Jonah was very happy about the plant.

7 **But the next day at dawn (ba'alot hashachar lamacharat - in the rising of dawn of the morrow)** Elohim provided a worm, which attacked the plant so that it withered.

We also see that they rose early the morrow.

Shemot/Exodus 32:6

5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron announced: “**Tomorrow (machar 4279)** shall be a festival of Yehovah!” 6 **Early next day (vayash'kiymu mimacharat - And rose up in the morrow)**, the people offered up burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; they sat down to eat and drink, and then rose to dance.

Shofetim/Judges 6:38

37 here I place a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If dew falls only on the fleece and all the ground remains dry, I shall know that You will deliver Israel through me, as You have said.” 38 And that is what happened. **Early the next day (vayash'kem mimacharat)**, he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew from the fleece, a bowlful of water.

Shemu'el Aleph/1 Samuel 5:3-4

3 **Early the next day (vayash'kimu mimacharat)**, the Ashdodites found Dagon lying face down on the ground in front of the Ark of Yehovah. They picked Dagon up and put him back in his place; 4 **but early the next morning (vayash'kimu baboqer mimacharat)**, Dagon was again lying prone on the ground in front of the Ark of Yehovah. The head and both hands of Dagon were cut off, lying on the threshold; only Dagon's trunk was left intact.

So we see from this that the morrow after the Shabbat is the daylight portion of the day following the day in question.

So after the Shabbat ends the next morning is the morrow. So that leaves us with a question. What Shabbat is it?

Well according to the brothers the Rabbanites the Shabbat is the first day of Chag HaMatzot (Feast of Unleavened Bread). The reasoning for this is that since work is restricted on that day save cooking then it must also be a Shabbat since working forbidden on Shabbat. They don't make the leap that cooking; as work would also be forbidden so therefore they are not the same. They are using analogy to make the first and last days of the Feast Shabbats also. So they start the count of the Omer on the morrow of the first day of unleavened bread. So in the references to the first and seventh day of Chag HaMatzot does it ever refer to them as Shabbatot/Sabbaths? Lets look

Vayiqra/Levitucus 23:4-8

4 These are the set times (mo'adey) of Yehovah, the sacred occasions (miqra qodesh), which you shall celebrate each at its appointed time (bamo'adam): 5 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a passover offering to Yehovah, 6 and on the fifteenth day of that month Yehovah's Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat unleavened bread for seven days. 7 On the first day you shall celebrate a sacred occasion (miqra qodesh): you shall not work at your occupations. 8 Seven days you shall make offerings by fire to Yehovah. The seventh day shall be a sacred occasion (miqra qodesh): you shall not work at your occupations.

Notice that Shabbat nor Shabbaton are used here while later in the same chapter the word Shabbaton is used for Yom Teru'ah, Yom Hakippurim, and the First and Eighth of Sukkot.

24 Speak to the Israelite people thus: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe **complete rest (shabbaton)**, a sacred occasion (miqra qodesh) commemorated with loud blasts. (Yom Teru'ah)

32 It shall be **a sabbath of complete rest (shabbaton)** for you, and you shall practice self-denial; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall observe this your sabbath. (Yom Hakippurim)

39 Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of Yehovah [to last] seven days: **a complete rest (shabbaton)** on the first day, and **a complete rest (shabbaton)** on the eighth day. (Sukkot and the eighth day)

So you can see that here we see that the end of the growing season the miqra qodesh or mo'adey (appointed times) are Shabbaton or/ Shabbat whereas the beginning of the growing season the miqra qodesh or mo'adey are not. This is the only place were we see the word Shabbaton used in reference to a miqra qodesh. Therefore, we see that the only

Shabbat possible in the one that occurs in conjunction with the weekly Shabbat and the Chag HaMatzot.

How do we know this was to happen during the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

Yehoshua/Joshua 5:10-12

10 Encamped at Gilgal, in the steppes of Jericho, the Israelites offered the passover sacrifice on the fourteenth day of the month, toward evening (should be “in evening”).
11 On the day after (mimacharat - on the morrow) the passover offering, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the country, **unleavened bread (matzot) and parched grain (va qalui/kalui – roasted grain)**. **12** On that same day, when they ate of the produce of the land, the manna ceased. The Israelites got no more manna; that year they ate of the yield of the land of Canaan.

We know that they ate of the produce of the land in the day period after the Pesach offering which would have been the 15th day. We know it is the day period of the 15th from the verse used in Numbers 33:3

Bamidbar /Numbers 33:3

3 They set out from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month. It was **on the morrow (mimacharat מִמָּחָרַת)** of the **Passover (hapesach הַפֶּסַח)** [offering] that the Israelites started out defiantly, in plain view of all the Egyptians.

This is the first day of Unleavened Bread. We know that they were instructed to make an offering before eating it. This was from the words spoken by Moshe and so Joshua would have been well aware of it.

Vayiqra / Leviticus 23:9-11

9 Yehovah spoke to Moshe, saying: **10** Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving to you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the first sheaf (omer) of your harvest to the priest. **11** He shall elevate the sheaf (ha'omer) before Yehovah for acceptance in your behalf; the priest shall elevate it on the day after the Sabbath.

Joshua would have done this with the sons of Yirael. Here we have the Shabbat, which falls outside the 7 days of Chag Hag Matzot. With the 15 day as the morrow of the Shabbat, which shows us also that, the important day to fall within the seven days is the Morrow of the Shabbat. This would also be the day of the first count. It also shows us that it is not a shabbat and the first day are not the same less they would have eaten unleavened bread of the land on the 16th not the 15th.

The other place we find the reference to counting is:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 16: 9-10

9 You shall count off seven weeks; start to count the seven weeks when the sickle is first put to the standing grain. 10 Then you shall observe the Feast of Weeks for Yehovah Eloheykha, offering your freewill contribution according as Yehovah Eloheykha has blessed you.

<p>9 Seven Weeks (shavu'ot) you shall number/count for you from begin the sickle the standing grain begin you to number seven (weeks) shavu'ot.</p> <p>10 And perform you the Feast of Weeks (Shavu'ot) to Yehovah Eloheykha enough a volitive offering you hand which you give according as blesses you Yehovah Eloheykha.</p>	<p>שִׁבְעָה שָׁבָעַת תִּסְפְּרֶי-לָךְ⁹ מֵהַחֵל חֲרֹמֶשׁ בְּקִמָּה תֵּחֵל לְסַפֵּר שִׁבְעָה שָׁבָעוֹת: וְעָשִׂיתָ חַג שָׁבָעוֹת לַיהוָה¹⁰ אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִסֹּת נִדְבַת יָדְךָ אֲשֶׁר תָּתַן כְּאֲשֶׁר יְבָרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:</p>
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Notice here the word weeks is used. Shavu'ot is used here because he is reminding them of the previous reference in Leviticus. That way they could count the weeks by counting Shabbatot/Sabbaths. Each week would end in a Shabbat as it does weekly.

So we need to count from the morrow after the Shabbat that falls during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. From the Joshua account, that day would be the first day of the week which in Hebrew is Yom Rishon and the in the Gregorian calendar as Sunday. Counting the individual days up to 49 and the weeks up to 7 complete shabbatot we then keep Chag HaShavu'ot on the first day of the week as we started the counting from.

So how will we count it this year?

For 2008 the count will be:

April 20	April 21 Pesach in Erev	April 22 FDUB	April 23	April 24	April 25	April 26 Shabbat
April 27 Day 1 Week 1 Morrow after shabbat	April 28 Day 2 Week 1 LDUB	April 29 Day 3 Week 1	April 30 Day 4 Week 1	May 1 Day 5 Week 1	May 2 Day 6 Week 1	May 3 Day 7 Week 1
May 4 Day 8 Week 2	May 5 Day 9 Week 2	May 6 Day 10 Week 2	May 7 Day 11 Week 2	May 8 Day 12 Week 2	May 9 Day 13 Week 2	May 10 Day 14 Week 2

May 11 Day 15 Week 3	May 12 Day 16 Week 3	May 13 Day 17 Week 3	May 14 Day 18 Week 3	May 15 Day 19 Week 3	May 16 Day 20 Week 3	May 17 Day 21 Week 3
May 18 Day 22 Week 4	May 19 Day 23 Week 4	May 20 Day 24 Week 4	May 21 Day 25 Week 4	May 22 Day 26 Week 4	May 23 Day 27 Week 4	May 24 Day 28 Week 4
May 25 Day 29 Week 5	May 26 Day 30 Week 5	May 27 Day 31 Week 5	May 28 Day 32 Week 5	May 29 Day 33 Week 5	May 30 Day 34 Week 5	May 31 Day 35 Week 5
June 1 Day 36 Week 6	June 2 Day 37 Week 6	June 3 Day 38 Week 6	June 4 Day 39 Week 6	June 5 Day 40 Week 6	June 6 Day 41 Week 6	June 7 Day 42 Week 6
June 8 Day 43 Week 7	June 9 Day 44 Week 7	June 10 Day 45 Week 7	June 11 Day 46 Week 7	June 12 Day 47 Week 7	June 13 Day 48 Week 7	June 14 Day 49 Week 7
June 15 Day 50 Morrow after shabbat						

It is very important that we read the Tanakh for our answers and not seek out convoluted reasons for not keeping it in its appointed time. It is not kept outside the Days of Unleavened Bread nor do equinoxes or stars determine it. Its tie is to the Barley Harvest, which starts during the Days of Unleavened Bread and continues seven Shabbatot to the Wheat Harvest. For the Harvest to begin in the Land it must be ready for harvesting. If the month does not get called with the Aviv then it will not be harvest ready by the time of the Omer/Sheaf that is waved as a offering.