

Counting the Omer

Contributed by [jayce koester](#)

Source: Velveteen Rabbi, Adapted by Jayce Koester

עמר *Omer* means “measures”. When the Temple stood, it was customary to bring harvest offerings three times a year, at Sukkot, Pesach, and Shavuot. The tradition of counting the Omer dates back to those days, like many of our holidays. It’s measured by the agricultural calendar, helping us live fruitfully in relationship to the land. We measured the seven weeks of the Omer between planting new barley and harvesting it; then offered a measure, in thanks, to our source.

Now that few of us are barely farmers, and the Temple no longer stands, practices like counting the Omer take on new meaning. Pesach leads us from the narrow straights into a widening, and Shavuot (the holiday that signals the end of our count) marks our acceptance of revelation at Mount Sinai. The days in between form a liminal space that allows for us to return to our selves, to reflect, to navigate our own deserts. Throughout traditional counting of the Omer we mourn and celebrate at different times. We work on hearts and souls. We do the work that queer people have been doing for generations, marking time with hard work, love, and community.

Join me as we count the Omer together, tonight is the second night of the Omer.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו רוח העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו אל ספירת העמר.

Blessed are you, Adonai, Breath of Life, who sanctifies us with the commandment to count the Omer.

היום יום שתיים לעמר!

Today is the second day of the Omer!