

32 Days Completed

Learning Focus

Here I am ready to consider **erroneous impressions** on this journey, undertaking to know more each day about the workings of oppression, so that we might get ourselves, all of us, out from under this millstone that is the Narrow Place.

As mentioned briefly in the Introduction and on Day 21, the entire period of the Omer is considered one of semi-mourning by many Jews. Music, dancing, weddings, and many forms of pleasure are avoided during these weeks -- with a shift in custom, beginning with *Lag B'omer*.

Lag B'omer

30=לamed + 3=גimmem is 30 לגlamed-gimmem, "lag"

The 33rd/34th day of the Omer marks a shift away from mourning: Sephardic custom breaks mourning on the 34th day and forward toward Shavuot; Ashkenazi custom breaks mourning on the 33rd day, returning to semi-mourning until Shavuot.

One explanation for Omer mourning is linked to R' Akiva's study house, where it is said that a plague arose, killing 24,000 students -- 12,000 pairs -- and ending on *Lag B'omer*.

These deaths are explained as due to "lack of respect" (Babylonian Talmud Yevamot 62b). So, *Lag B'omer* seems a good time to focus on respect.

One commentary (from R' Meir Goldwicht of Yeshiva University) focuses on the fact that it's 12,000 **pairs** of students who died in the plague. Studying with a partner is crucial in Jewish tradition, and these partnerships are important relationships. So, this commentary wonders: How could the head of a study house miss all this strife under his nose? The conclusion: The students were outwardly engaging in discussion, apparently learning from one another, while harboring disrespect in their hearts.

...For those keeping score in Hebrew: There are 32 days of plague and 17 days afterward. This is equivalent to the Hebrew words "*lev tov* [good heart]" — *lamed* + *bet* (32) and *tet* + *vav* + *bet* (17). The "good heart" seems to have been missing from Akiva's beit midrash.

Do we give the erroneous impression that all is well in personal and/or communal relationships while harboring inner disrespect?

What, if any, role can intergroup dialogue play in addressing this?

Ritual Focus

Here I am, ready and prepared

[use traditional *kavanah* and/or continue here]

Here I am, ready and prepared to fulfill this project of counting 49 days,
from Narrowness to Expansion,
seeking to examine oppression and envision liberation,
inspired by the Torah's counting of the Omer,
counting seven full weeks, from Liberation to Revelation,
until I reach fifty days,
and prepare to bring new thoughts before the Eternal and into the world.

Bless

[See "Blessing" page for masculine or feminine God-language]

Brukheh ateh YHVH

Elohéinu hei ha'olamim

asher kidshétu

bəmitzvotéihe vatzivétu

al sefirat ha'omer

בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְהוָה

אֱלֹהֵינוּ חַי הָעוֹלָמִים

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁתָנוּ

בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְצִוִּיתָנוּ

עַל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר

Blessed are you, YHVH,
our God, Life of endless worlds,
who made us holy
with Voix commandments and commanded us
to count the Omer.

Count

הַיּוֹם שְׁלֹשָׁה וּשְׁלִישִׁים יוֹם

שֶׁהֵם אַרְבָּעָה שָׁבוּעוֹת וְחֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים לַעֲמֹר

Hayom sh'loshah ushloshim yom

shehem arbaah shavuot vachamishah yamim la-omer.

Today is thirty-three days,
which is four weeks and five days of the Omer.

visit <http://Rereading4Liberation.com> for more on Recounting Exodus
and Rereading Exodus along the Anacostia