

Counting for the Climate: Omer 578 I

ספירת
העומר

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for

IPLdmv.org/omer



INTERFAITH
**Power
& Light**

Our religious response to climate change.

Jewish communities formally count each day starting on the second night of *Pesach* — our retelling of the exodus from slavery in Egypt — for the seven weeks until *Shavuot* — a celebration of receiving the Torah. This counting, called *Sfirat haOmer*, recalls an agricultural practice of bringing sheafs of barley — each unit an “omer” — as offerings to the Temple. This year, our Jewish community is using this calendar to both appreciate abundance in the natural world, and to journey towards greater responsibility for those we are harming most by our climate pollution. The Jewish mystical tradition, *kabbalah*, overlaid two Divine attributes onto each of the 49 days. As we count, may we reflect on how we might bring each of these pairs of virtues to the struggle for environmental justice.

The blessing for the Counting of the Omer, said on the evening of each new day:
Baruch atah A-donai Elo-heinu Melech HaOlam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al sfirat haOmer.

Blessed are You, A-donai our G-d, Sovereign of the Universe, who has sanctified us with your commandments and commanded us to count the Omer.

After the blessing, one recites the appropriate day of the count. For example:

Hayom yom [echad] la'Omer

Today is the [first] day of the Omer.

After the first six days, one also includes the number of weeks that one has counted. For example:

Hayom [sh'losa asar] yom, she'hem shavuah [echad] v'[shisha] yamim la'Omer

Today is [13] days, which is [one] week and [six] days of the Omer.

28 Pesach We begin counting the Omer at the second seder. As we open the door tonight for the prophet Elijah, who brings hope for a redeemed world, how can we also open ourselves to a journey through the #ClimateOmer this year?

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT	SUNDAY
	<i>Chesed: loving kindness</i>	<i>Gevurah: discipline</i>	<i>Tiferet: beauty/harmony</i>	<i>Netzach: eternity</i>	<i>Hod: splendor</i>	<i>Yesod: foundation</i>	<i>Malkhut: leadership</i>
	MARCH 29 <i>Pesach</i> closes the season when our daily prayers praise G-d for causing wind to blow. Support wind power through your energy bills! In DC or MD, sign up for 100% green-e wind: Green-e.org/certified-resources	30 <i>Pesach</i> Join our friends at Virginia IPL today at noon for an online discussion of how the spiritual discipline of counting the Omer can sustain us in our work to repair our climate: bit.ly/Omerdiscussion	31 <i>Pesach</i> Our tradition teaches us to extend loving kindness to <i>baalei chayim</i> , living creatures. At 6 pm, join Jewish Veg for an online animal welfare “seder.” bit.ly/jewishvegzeder	APRIL 1 <i>Pesach</i> Whose land are you on? As we reflect on loving kindness across time today, learn from these Jews on Ohlone land about ways to honor the first caretakers of the lands where we live: bit.ly/JOOL_JYCA	2 <i>Pesach</i> Trees are blossoming earlier every spring in our damaged climate. Behold the splendor and fragility of spring blossoms around you today, and recite <i>Birkat ha-Ilanot</i> , a blessing for fruit trees: bit.ly/birkat_hailanot	3 <i>Pesach</i> Rabbi Ari Hart offers this loving kindness practice through <i>Avodah</i> : While walking ... today, look at every single person you can and whisper or think the phrase from Psalms: “ <i>Avaksha tov lach</i> - I wish the best for you.”	4 <i>Pesach (for some)</i> The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. z”l went to Memphis to advocate for sanitation workers, and was killed on April 4, 1968. Consider our own call here today to work for climate and racial justice: bit.ly/envjusticevid
<i>Chesed: loving kindness</i>							
<i>Gevurah: discipline</i>	Many hands grow your food with loving discipline. Learn how new legislation begins to repair decades of injustice to Black farmers. How can your community reckon with the legacy of structural racism? bit.ly/farmloanrelief	6 “Those who sow in tears will reap in joy.” (Ps. 126:5) The discipline of growing food is good for the soul. Now is the time to plant beans, cantaloupe, swiss chard, and eggplant: GreenAmerica.org/climate-victory-gardens	7 <i>Yom HaShoah</i> On this Holocaust Remembrance Day, listen to “Dreaming Birds,” a lullaby from the Vilna ghetto. Remember how we have prevailed through loss and grief: NeoHasid.org/audio/dremlen_feygl/	8 Play a mindful role in the eternal water cycle by stewarding the rain that falls on your home. Look up stormwater grant programs: DC RiverSmart Homes, Montgomery Co. RainScapes, Prince George’s Co. Stormwater Stewardship	9 Open your Shabbat dinner tonight with a land acknowledgement, a powerful discipline for honoring the original caretakers of the places we live. Look up whose land you’re on: Native-Land.ca	10 Rabbi Alana Alpert offers this practice through <i>Avodah</i> : Grip everything left over from the to-do list ... exhale, release your hands and say “I forgive myself and everyone else for all that is left undone. I give thanks for ... rest.”	11 G-d “brings forth bread from the Earth” with the help of many human hands. Consider purchasing produce from one of the many Black-owned farms in our communities: bit.ly/Black-OwnedFarms
<i>Gevurah: discipline</i>							
<i>Tiferet: beauty/harmony</i>	Rosh Chodesh Iyyar 12 We say <i>Hallel</i> today, and “praise the One who made the sun ... Your loving kindness is forever!” Pay a BGE or Pepco bill? Subscribe to community solar: NSunSolar.com/ipl	13 <i>Rosh Chodesh Iyyar</i> Today is the first day of the holy month of <i>Ramadan</i> for our Muslim neighbors. <i>Ramadan Mubarak!</i> Study some of the Islamic teachings that inform a Muslim response to climate change: bit.ly/40greenhadith	14 Celebrate the multiplying beauty of native plants today, whose growth can support hundreds of interconnected species in our ecosystem. Find plants that will do the most good in your zip code: NWF.org/nativeplantfinder	15 Through <i>Dayenu</i> , American Jewish communities are calling on their legislators to pass strong climate policy in Congress. Add your voice, and start or join a <i>Dayenu Circle</i> for ongoing action: Dayenu.org	16 “We have this unique opportunity to dismantle systems of oppression and build something new in its place.” Prepare for Shabbat with a call to action from Isha Clarke, a young Black Jewish climate activist: bit.ly/IshaClarke	17 Rabbi George Wielechowski offers this harmony practice through <i>Avodah</i> : Spend time in <i>hitbodedut</i> , contemplative solitude — in nature, if you can. Bring along a couple words or a melody to keep you company.	18 What role does your community play in repairing our climate? Get involved with our green work, and join together with other “green sheep” through IPL-DMV: bit.ly/IPLsignup . Follow and share our work on social media @IPLdmv.
<i>Tiferet: beauty/harmony</i>							

URLs that begin with bit.ly are case sensitive; all other links are not.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT	SUNDAY
	<i>Chesed</i> : loving kindness	<i>Gevurah</i> : discipline	<i>Tiferet</i> : beauty/harmony	<i>Netzach</i> : eternity	<i>Hod</i> : splendor	<i>Yesod</i> : foundation	<i>Malkhut</i> : leadership
Netzach: eternity	Tonight at 7 pm, join local Jewish green leaders working together with loving kindness to preserve our world for eternity. RSVP for JCAN-DMV's online meeting: bit.ly/apriljcan-dmv or email jcan-dmv+subscribe@googlegroups.com 19	Tonight at 8 pm, a national network of grassroots Jewish climate leaders will have their monthly call to speak out for climate action in Congress. Email contact@ jewishearhthalliance.org to register. 20	Live out the Jewish principle of <i>bal taschit</i> by using energy mindfully. Weatherize at home: DIY tips: bit.ly/weatherizehome , or hire pros: DCSEU.com/homes, Leap-VA.org/services, EnergyPrograms.CivicWorks.com/ipl 21	On this Earth Day, learn how faith communities here in our region and around the world are coming together to repair our world: EarthDay.org/faith 22	This Shabbat, take some time to be like a "tree planted by the water" (Ps. 1:3), grounded in nature and connected with those you love. 23	Rabbi Elliot Kukla offers this endurance practice through <i>Avodah</i> : Reclaim the radical roots of self-care ... tend to yourself as if you are the most precious seedling or mysterious wild animal you have ever met. 24	So many Jews in this generation are coming together to preserve our world for eternity. Join JCAN-MA today for the Third Jewish Climate Change Conference, 12-8 pm: bit.ly/jcan425 25
Yesod: foundation	<i>Pesach Sheni</i> Get connected to a grassroots group that's advocating for climate repair locally: SunriseMovement.org/hubs , ChesapeakeClimate.org , SierraClub.org/chapters 26	There's no splendor in green lawns that host only one species and are covered in chemicals. Cultivate grounds hospitable to wildlife at home: bit.ly/greenergrounds , and at shul: bit.ly/sacredshulgrounds 27	Visit a local community garden today! Behold the beauty and splendor of neighbors growing food together: bit.ly/DCgardens , bit.ly/Baltimoregardens 28	A better world is on her way. Bring this hopeful song by Jewish musician Aly Halpert to your <i>Lag BaOmer</i> picnic or bonfire: bit.ly/sheisonherway 29	<i>Lag BaOmer</i> This Shabbat, let the splendor of creation exist without your interference. Observe the original Buy Nothing Day and consider how you might make greener purchasing decisions: GreenPages.org 30	Rabbi Lizzi Heydemann offers this splendor practice through <i>Avodah</i> : Free-write your way to prayer, Anne Lamott-style ... starting with "Help ..." then "Thanks ..." and finally "Wow!" What opens up? MAY 1	We bless our food as bread from the Earth, fruit of tree or vine. Connect with locally grown food this week. Join a community-supported ag group: LocalHarvest.org or get rescued produce weekly: HungryHarvest.net 2
Hod: splendor	Listen to this conversation with Piscataway people, one of the several Indigenous peoples of our region: bit.ly/stillherepodcast 3	Nourish the soil (<i>adamah</i>) from which we (<i>adam</i>) are made: compost at home: bit.ly/DCcompost , BaltimoreCompostCollective.org , CompostCrew.com , VeteranCompost.com 4	We are commanded to love G-d with all our heart and all our soul and all of our resources. Choose to use your money for people and the planet: bit.ly/greeninvesting , bit.ly/greenbanks 5	So many Jewish communities are powered by the sun, now including Pearlstone Center! Check out our solar congregations map and download a guide for leading a solar project at shul: IPLdmv.org/green/solar 6	It can be hard to talk about climate change. Have one conversation at tonight's Shabbat dinner that is literally " <i>I'shem shamayim</i> ," for the sake of our shared sky. 7	Rabbi Rachel Van Thyn offers this grounding practice through <i>Avodah</i> : Close your eyes and think of a time when you felt safe, strong, and loved. Breathe the moment in and feel it ... call upon it when you feel unbalanced. 8	Planning meals for <i>Shavuot</i> ? Explore vegan versions of holiday treats and consider the lighter climate footprint of plant-based foods. Find lots of teachings and recipes: Shamayim.us , JewishVeg.org 9
Malkhut: leadership	Join Pearlstone Center's online Resilience Circle to "understand and solve personal and community challenges regarding Energy, Water, Soil, and Spirit:" bit.ly/psresilience 10	Has your synagogue become a Hazon "Seal of Sustainability" congregation? Learn how you can lead your community to greener food practices: Hazon.org/seal 11	<i>Rosh Chodesh Sivan</i> Climate change is already harming our most vulnerable global neighbors. Read stories from American Jewish World Service's partners around the world: AJWS.org/tag/climate-justice 12	"I am establishing my covenant with you, your descendants, and with every living creature." (Gen. 9:9-10) Explore outside today, perhaps with Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake's guide: bit.ly/IPC-Walk 13	As you prepare for <i>Shavuot</i> , learn some Torah about what this season can teach us about our place in the natural world: bit.ly/CanfeiNesharim-Omer 14	Rabbi Danya Rutenberg offers this leadership practice through <i>Avodah</i> : Spend time ... intentionally connecting with someone you don't see often ... remind someone that they're loved and seen in their wholeness. 15	<i>Erev Shavuot</i> When Israelites received the Torah, they assigned their children to be guarantors of the covenant (<i>Shir HaShirim Rabbah</i> 1:4). Let's follow the lead of young Jews, who'll inherit the promises we make now: bit.ly/climatefuturevid 16

17-18

Shavuot I & II (for some)

We gathered during *Pesach* to ask four questions. Now, as we renew our covenant to our community and G-d this *Shavuot*, let's ask ourselves and each other:

- How does the climate crisis make this moment we are in different from all previous generations?
- What can we do before next *Shavuot* to hear from young climate activists in our community?
- What can we do before next *Shavuot* to follow the lead of Black and Indigenous folks in the struggle for climate justice?
- What can we do before next *Shavuot* to ground ourselves spiritually in fighting the climate crisis?



Share your journey:
#ClimateOmer

Download an Omer-counting app for daily reminders, traditional readings, and instructions.