



Overview

Halacha Highlight

Is it preferable to count the *Omer* with the *tzibbur* before reading *krias shema*?

Shulchan Aruch Siman 489 Seif 1
אחר תפלת ערבית מתחילין לספר העומר

After davening *ma'ariv* we begin to count the *Omer*

Although one should count the *Omer* as soon as possible (עי מייב סקייב), nevertheless, Shulchan Aruch writes that the *Omer* is counted after davening *ma'ariv*. Biur Halacha (ד"ה אחר תפלת) cites two explanations why we daven before counting the *Omer*. One reason is that historically *ma'ariv* was davened before it was dark. Night would begin as they finished *ma'ariv*, so they saved counting the *Omer* until after davening in order to count at night. Chok Yaakov, however, writes that one must daven first since davening is a *mitzvah* that is done more frequently than counting the *Omer* and preference is always given to the *mitzvah* that is performed with greater frequency.

It happens sometimes that a person arrives at shul as the *tzibbur* is about to daven *shemoneh esrei*. The *halacha* is that he should daven *shemoneh esrei* together with the *tzibbur* and then recite *krias shema* and the *berachos* afterwards (סיי רלייג סעי וי). There is a disagreement amongst the Poskim what should be done when this occurs during the *Omer*.

Minchas Yitzchok (שו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ט סי' נ"ו) maintains that after *shemoneh esrei* one should count the *Omer* together with the *tzibbur* and then recite *krias shema* and the *berachos* after that. Even though *krias shema* carries the advantage of being the *mitzvah* that is more frequent, nevertheless, counting the *Omer* should be done together with the *tzibbur* and the more people involved in fulfilling that *mitzvah* enhances the *mitzvah*. Similarly, one who arrives when the *tzibbur* is about to count the *Omer* should count with them and then recite *krias shema*, the *berachos* and *shemoneh esrei*. Teshuvos V'Hanhagos (ח"א סי' ש"י וח"ב סי' רמ"ח) disagrees and contends that the preference to fulfill the *mitzvah* that is more frequent does not get pushed aside for the advantage of counting the *Omer* together with the *tzibbur*. Consequently, after davening *shemoneh esrei* with the *tzibbur* one should make up of the *tefilos* that occur more frequently before counting the *Omer*.

times, however, which are especially auspicious to help us recognize this fact so that our sense of our own mortality will be more accessible.

"One of these times is *sefiras haomer*. As we begin the *sefirah* we count, today is the first day of the *omer*; today is the second day... We feel as though there is plenty of time until *Shavuot*. But the time races by and before we know it, it's a day or two before the festival. At this time one who is focused sees before his eyes how fast time flies and understands that he must work hard to use his precious time before it is too late..."

הליכות שלמה, ספירת העומר, ארוחות הלכה, אות 13 ואות 15

Siman 489 Seif 1:

On the 2nd night after *ma'ariv* we begin to count the *omer*. If one forgot to count at the beginning of the night he may continue to count the entire night. The *mitzvah* is for each person to count for himself. One should count standing up and the *beracha* is recited before counting. One must count the days and the weeks, meaning, on the first day and onwards one should say, "Today is the first day *ba'omer*." On day seven one should say, "Today is seven days which are a single week *ba'omer*." On the eighth day and onwards one should say, "Today is eight days which are one week and one day *ba'omer*." On the fourteenth day one should say, "Today is fourteen days which are two weeks *ba'omer*." Following this pattern one counts the remaining days until the forty-ninth day.

- ❖ *Sefiras HaOmer* should be done before *Aleinu* since it should be done as early as possible. (M.B. 2)
- ❖ Women are exempt from *Sefiras HaOmer* although Magen Avrohom notes that they have accepted it as obligatory. Others write that the custom is that women do not count and those that do should not recite the *beracha*. (M.B. 3)
- ❖ There is a disagreement whether one could count *sefiras HaOmer* and discharge another's obligation. Regarding the *beracha* all opinions agree that one could recite the *beracha* for another person although the custom is that everyone recites the *beracha* and counts for themselves. (M.B. 5)
- ❖ One must count in a language that he understands. (M.B. 5)
- ❖ Most Poskim write that one should say לעומר rather than בעומר. (M.B. 8)
- ❖ The custom is to recite יהי רצון after counting and there are those who also have the custom to say *Tehillim* 67. (M.B. 10)

Stories to Share

"Teach Us to Count Our Days"

שי"ע סי' תפ"ט, אי' יומצוה על כל אחד לספור לעצמו..."

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach once gave a very moving explanation of the *avodah* of *sefiras haomer* to the *bochurim* of Kol Torah. "As we find in the beginning of *Orach Chayim* 489, every person must count for himself. This is learned from the verse, "וספרתם לכם"—And you shall count for yourselves.' But what is behind the obligation for every Jew to count for himself? The answer is that this shows that every Jew can be holy if he will only make his days count so that he is fitting to receive the Torah each year anew."

On another occasion, Rav Shlomo Zalman explained how this was done. "The verse states, 'ימינו כצל עוברי'—Our days are like a passing shadow.' Yet it is very hard to internalize this without spending time contemplating this fact. There are certain