

The Kabbalistic prayerbook *Rehovot HaNahar* encourages this to be read before Counting the Omer on 16th Nissan.

Translations of *Rambam Sefer Ha'avodah, Hilkot Temidim and Musafim, Perek Shevi'i*, from R. Eliyahu Touger on [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org)

### Learning Before the Omer Blessing:

וַיְדַבֵּר יְ-הוָה-לְ-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר

9 And Hashem spoke to Mosheh saying:

י דַבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם,  
כִּי-תָבֹאוּ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם,  
וְקָצַרְתֶּם אֶת-קִצְיֹרְהָ--וְהִבֵּאתֶם אֶת-עֹמֶר  
רֵאשִׁית קִצְיֹרְכֶם, אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן

10 Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land which I give to you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then you shall bring the sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest

This meal offering may be brought only from *Eretz Yisrael*, as [Vayikra 23:10] states: "And you shall bring the omer, the first of your harvest, to the priest." It is a mitzvah to bring the *omer* from [fields that are] close [to Jerusalem]. If it was not brought from a close place, it may be brought from any place in *Eretz Yisrael*.

It is a mitzvah that it be reaped at night, on the night of the sixteenth [Nisan]. [This applies] whether [that day falls] during the week or on the Sabbath. The entire night is acceptable for reaping [the barley for] the *omer*. If it was reaped during the day, it is acceptable.

The mitzvah is to bring it from standing grain. If [appropriate standing grain] was not found, it should be brought from the sheaves.

The mitzvah is [to harvest grain] that is fresh. If [such grain] was not found, it may be brought from dried grain. Their practice was to bring [the *omer*] from fields to the south [of Jerusalem]. They would leave one half of the field fallow and sow the other half one year. And the following year, they would leave fallow the half of the field that was previously sown and sow the other half and bring [the *omer*] from it. This *omer* would come from barley.

This is a halachah communicated by Mosheh our teacher. How was [the offering] brought? On the day before the festival of Pesach, the agents of the court would go out [to the field] and tie [the barley] into bundles while it was still attached to the ground so that it would be easy to reap. [On the evening after Pesach,] all [of the inhabitants] of all the neighboring villages would gather so that it would be reaped with much flourish. They would have three men reap three *se'ah* of barley in three baskets with three sickles.

When it became dark, the reapers would ask those standing [in attendance]: "Has the sun set?" They would answer: "Yes."

"Has the sun set?" They would answer: "Yes."  
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"Is this a sickle?" They would answer: "Yes."  
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"Is this a sickle?" They would answer: "Yes."  
"Is this a basket?" They would answer: "Yes."  
"Is this a basket?" They would answer: "Yes."  
"Is this a basket?" They would answer: "Yes."  
If it was the Sabbath, they would ask: "Is it the Sabbath?" They would answer: "Yes."  
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"Is it the Sabbath?" They would answer: "Yes."  
Afterwards, they would ask: "Should I reap?" They would answer: "Yes."  
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"Should I reap?" They would answer: "Yes."

Three [questions and answers] were given regarding each matter. Why was all this necessary? Because of those who erred who departed from the community of Israel in the Second Temple [era]. They maintained that the Torah's expression [Vayikra 23:11]: "*From the day following the Sabbath*" [should be understood literally, as referring to] the Sabbath of the week. Nevertheless, according to the Oral Tradition, [our Sages] derived that the intent is not the Sabbath, but the festival. And so, was understood at all times by the prophets and the *Sanhedrin* in every generation. They would have the *omer* waved on the sixteenth of Nisan whether it fell during the week or on the Sabbath.

[This interpretation is also reflected in the Written Torah itself,] for it is written in the Torah [*ibid.*:14]: "*You shall not eat bread, roasted grain, or kernels of grain until this self-same day.*" And [Yehoshua 4:11] states: "*And they ate from the produce of the land on the day after Pesach, matzot and roasted grain.*" And if one would presume that in that year Pesach fell on the Sabbath as these fools have supposed, why would Scripture make the license for them to eat new grain dependent on a factor that is not fundamental, nor the true cause, but mere coincidence. Instead, since [Scripture] made the matter dependent on "*the day after Pesach,*" it is clear that the day after Pesach is the cause that permits new grain [to be eaten] and no attention is paid to the day of the week [on which it falls].