

Journeying Through the Omer Week by Week

אֶתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּאֶרְצוֹת חַיִּים

I will walk in the Presence of the One in the lands of life.

Psalm 116:9

May we walk the Omer Journey
For the sake of each other and all life.
May our steps be aligned for abundant healing,
Deep connection,
And abiding, expansive peace.

*Blessed is the Mystery, Source of All
Who gives us life, raises us up and brings us to this moment.*

Week 1

Chesed Abundant Love and Generosity

We begin the *omer* journey in *chesed*,
And take our first steps on the 49-day path
Into a field of loving-kindness.

Begin here, the Infinite calls.
Begin in the expanse of wide and steadfast love.

And so we step,
With tender hearts
Into the vastness of what will be discovered
And all that will become.

A prayer as we enter into *chesed* and the first week of the *omer*

Source of All, with loving care, guide us into the expanse.

Help us be present with the abundant generosity that springs from creation,
Help us be lifted by the generous offerings of earth, sky and waters.

Help us touch the wellspring of generosity that lives within us
And realize that this is the Life Force that flows through all.

May our hands be open,
And our hearts be willing ,
To receive and offer steadfast, generous love.

And in those moments when pain, turmoil and fear
Make it impossible to reach generosity or touch love,
May we pause and with calm, even, deep breaths,
Feel ourselves held by the Source of All.

Help us open to the expanse of *Chesed*.
So we can be messengers for compassion, generosity and love.

כִּי־חֶסֶדְךָ לְנַגִּד עֵינַי וְהַתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְאִמְתְּךָ

*Infinite Love and Generosity are before my eyes,
And I will walk in the truths revealed.*

Psalm 26:3

Week 2

Gevurah Strength, Discernment, Restraint

We step out of the narrow place into the expanse
And soon comes the call for restraint.

Gevurah calls for setting boundaries,
Making distinctions,
Acknowledging limits.

Gevurah declares life is mystery
And urges us to bow to all we do not know.

Out of balance *Gevurah* becomes harsh judgment,
Disparagement,
Fear.
It inspires a grasping for control,
And a perspective that insists on separation.

In balance, *Gevurah* is a gateway to discernment,
The bearer of discipline.

It makes way for sacred practice
And helps us stand in the face of mystery
With humility and strength.

Gevurah urges prayer and action.

It encourages us to take the stance of the spiritual warrior
Who will abide in the face of uncertainty
With dedication,
Determination and love.

May the week of *Gevurah*
Help us set boundaries and stay mindful of the One.

May it strengthen our practices,
And help us stand into all that this time brings with
Humility and strength,
Courage and love.

Meditation for Week of *Gevurah*

Setting an intention to be with Mystery, we focus on the verse

שִׁיִּתִּי יְהִי לְנֶגְדִי תָמִיד

Shiviti Havayah l'negdi tamid

I place the Infinite Presence before me always.

Psalm 16:8

Taking our seats, we rest the attention on the breath and after a few minutes begin to recite the verse:

Shiviti Havayah l'negdi tamid שִׁיִּתִּי יְהִי לְנֶגְדִי תָמִיד

I place the Infinite Presence before me always

Gently, we repeat the verse over and over, letting it travel with the breath.

In our mind's eye we place the verse before our eyes and upon our hearts and notice the sensations in the body as the verse is repeated.

When we notice the attention has wandered, we return to the breath and the movement and vibration of the verse through the body.

We close the sit by noticing the wonder of breath and giving thanks for the mystery that is this life.

Questions for Reflection

What happens in my mind and body when I face uncertainty?

What supports and uplifts me?

Where/when would it be helpful to exercise holy restraint?

Week 3

Tiferet: Balance, Harmony, Beauty, Truth

Tiferet brings an awareness of the interdependence of all being,

The harmony of the Infinite design.

Tiferet calls forth the heart's yearning to be in balance and truth.

In *Tiferet's* light vibrating threads of interconnection are revealed,

All life is relationship.

At times the awareness of interconnection brings

Amazement, delight, wonder,

And calls forth joyful *Halleluyahs*.

Other times the experience of interconnection opens us to tremendous grief

As we feel the pain and suffering of each other,

Of earth and of creatures large and small.

Tiferet guides us to be spacious enough to be with the truth of all that is,

Present to joy, amazement, beauty,

And present with suffering, pain and devastation.

Expand your awareness, *Tiferet* calls,

So pain does not deny joy

And delights do not dismiss suffering.

Tiferet teaches that as we touch into this place

Hearts break open,

Releasing a flow of Infinite Compassion

That waters the ground for healing and peace.

יְשֹׁאוּ הַרִים שְׁלוֹם לְעַם וְגִבְעוֹת בְּצִדְקָה

*May the mountains lift up peace for all peoples
May the hills inspire justice.*

Psalm 72:3

Meditation for Week of *Tiferet*

(Inspired by a teaching from friend and colleague Rabbi Mordechai Liebling)

As we take our seats, we begin with soft, calm, even deep breaths.

After a few minutes, we bring the attention to the heart space and feel the breath in our chest and torso. With kindness and care we imagine strings going out from our heart, vibrating with the breath, reaching into the *olam* (mystery), intertwining with the heartstrings of each other and all the world.

We continue to engage the imagination and see and feel our hearts as jewels in the web of connection. Our hearts are jewels, sacred, beautiful, connected by vibrating strings to the hearts of all. All our hearts are connected, vibrating in beauty and harmony.

Each time we notice the attention has wandered, we return the attention to the breath, to the awareness of our hearts and heartstrings of all, intertwined in harmonious beauty.

We close the sit with this prayer:

May all beings know compassion

May all beings know love

May all beings know healing

Questions for Reflection

What inspires my devotion?

What helps me return to balance?

What is my response when I encounter the suffering and pain of others?

What beauty can I take notice of to nourish my heart and soul?

Week 4

Netzach Endurance, Vision, Eternity

Eternity exists in the present moment, *Netzach* teaches.

Everything that ever happened, created this moment,

Everything that will ever be,

Goes forth from here.

We are all here for our time,

And everything we do matters.

In this moment in the life of our country and in life of the world,

Let us not be tricked into thinking there is nothing we can do.

Every moment of connection creates strength.

Every act of kindness, compassion and generosity endures.

Our dedication, choices and actions

Continue to create the world.

Netzach reminds us that the ancestors are rooting for us,

And the generations to come are holding us in their prayers.

And *Netzach* calls us to continue to act

Even when we don't see the results we so long for.

For our children's, children's, children will continue to build the world

Upon our efforts and upon our love.

In the words of the psalmist,

Let us act with justice grounded in deep faith Psalm 119:138

And let us remember that

Love extends beyond time and space. Love is forever Psalm 1118:1

Meditation for Week of *Netzach*

As we take our seats, we say gently to ourselves:

Everything that ever happened created this very moment

And everything that will ever be flows from here.

Right here, right now, I sit in eternity and the breath that moves through me is the One breath that flows through all life.

With slow, calm, even, deep breaths we bring awareness to the sensations of the breath being received and the breath being released. This breath that moves through us is the One breath that moves through all life. This breath that flows through me, is the Life Force that breathes us all.

Each time we notice the attention has wandered, we return to the sensations of the breath and the awareness of being breathed by the One breath that flows through all.

We close the sit by giving thanks.

Questions for Reflection

What enlivens me and gives me strength?

What are sources of inspiration?

How can I extend myself in kindness?

What help have I received?

What help can I offer?

Week 5

Hod Presence, Glory, Gratitude

Hod calls,
Be present,
Be patient,
Be still.

Sit and be with what is.

Even as the mind races,
Even as thoughts arise
Demanding that things be different.

Be with what is.

There is glory as we sit in the present moment
Hod declares.

Take a receptive posture,
Wait. See. Notice.
Awareness brings its own transformation.

And when the present moment is filled with pain,
When the heart quakes,
And the soul trembles,
Hod offers the solace of sacred companionship.

Hod offers the presence of the Infinite Mystery
That calls

hiney makom iti

shemot 33:21

I am here with you in this place.
I am here with you in this moment.
I am right by your side.
Wherever you are
There I am.

*Take notice, the Mystery calls, I send an angel to guard you on your way
And bring you to the place I have prepared.*

shemot 23:20

Meditation for Week of *Hod*

We take our seats and with the attention resting gently on the breath,
we open to the Divine Presence seeking and holding us, always here.
With each breath, we imagine, feel, experience, *Shechina*, the Divine Presence
holding us steady, wrapping us in a tender, loving embrace.
We sit in and with the Presence.

Each time we notice the mind has taken us elsewhere, we return to the sensations of the
breath and the awareness of *Shechina*'s presence, holding us close with loving care.

*Blessed are those who know that in each moment
They dwell in the Divine presence
Their very being offers praise, Selah*
Psalm 84:5

Questions for Reflection

What happens in my body, in my mind when I stop, pause, allow stillness?
How can I invite greater patience?
What guides have I encountered along the *omer* way?

Week 6

Yesod Foundation, Alignment, Connection

Let us bow to the Infinite Presence
As we step into the week of *Yesod*,
 Foundation, Root,
 The study strength of Unfathomable Mystery,
 The very ground beneath our feet.

Yesod brings generative fires of earth,
Deep replenishing wells,
Vast root systems woven
By the Infinite.

As we stand on and with these forces
Let us call on the ancient ones,
Trees, animals and creatures
Who have been here for thousands of years:

*Guide us please,
We humans are so very young
And need help learning how to live in harmony.
Teach us how to walk with reverence and care,
Show us how to tend the ground,
For the health and well being of earth.
Show us how to be,
So through our lives
Healing, justice, compassion and peace
Will take root and grow.*

*

*May our prayers be rooted,
May they rise like incense,
May the offerings of our hands be received as a gift.*

Psalm 141:2

Meditation for Week of *Yesod*

We take our seats and rest the attention on the breath.

After a few moments we imagine roots coming from the tip of our spine, reaching deep into earth, deep into the soil, reaching through the water table, and around the rocks.

Roots from our spine, reaching, expanding, intertwined with the roots of each other.

Roots spreading, expanding, strengthened, held by each other, nourished by the life force of earth.

Notice the breath move in, through and with this vast root system.

And each time we notice the attention has wandered, we return awareness to the breath and the strength that comes from our rooted connection.

We close the sit by saying:

With clear vision, wise discernment and sturdy steps we will walk together.

Questions for Reflection

What land, places have I grown from?

Who are the ancestors that are alive in me?

How can I be guided by wisdom that flows from earth, water, sky?

Week 7

Shechina/Malchut Sacred Presence, Majesty

Let us enter the
The final week of the Omer
And hear the Mystery call

You are not alone.

You are companioned by all living beings,
You are breathed by the one breath of all life.

I reside within you,
I hold you in my embrace,

You are not alone.

And you are needed.

Fashioned in your unique way,
By time, circumstance, choice, history,

You are a vessel through which I come into the world.

Only you can shine the One light in your particular way.

Be courageous,
Vulnerable,
Fierce,
Willing.

For I seek you,
A vessel for holiness.
A channel for blessing.

You are necessary.
You are needed.

Through you I come into the world and shine.

Meditation for Week of *Shechina/Malchut*

We take our seats and settle the attention with soft, calm, even deep breaths.

Taking notice of the sensations of the breath moving in and through us, we engage the imagination to see ourselves as channels through which the Divine flows. With each breath comes the awareness of the Divine Presence filling and flowing through us.

Each time we notice the attention has wandered, we give thanks for noticing, and return the attention to the sensations in the body as the breath enters and is released, feeling ourselves as sacred vessels, channels through which the Divine flows into the world.

We close the sit with this verse:

*I am my prayer to you, Source of All, aligned with the highest will.
In your abundant love, answer me with the truth of your presence.*

Psalm 69:14

Questions for Reflection

What have been some of the challenges and gifts of this *omer* season?

What have I learned/discovered?

How has the *omer* helped me through these times?

What do I want to raise up and carry from the journey?

Prayer for Standing at the Mountain

וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה הִבֵּאתִי אֶת־רֵאשִׁית פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתָּה לִּי יְיָ

Here I am, I have come. Here I am, now.

Deut 26:10

Here I am, with the first fruits of my soul,
With all that I have become through this *omer* journey.

Here I am willing to give from all that I receive.
Let wisdom be written upon my heart and inscribed on my soul.

Here I am, I have come,
To reaffirm my covenant with all life,
To walk on earth with reverence and care,
To give myself to what is true
And to offer my gifts and blessings for the benefit of all.

Let me be part of a great healing.
Let me be part of a great transformation.

Here I am, I have come. Here I am now.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

*Blessed are You, Source of All, who gives us life,
Raises us up and brings us to this moment.*

