

בית הוראה דיעטראיט  
**BAIS HORAAH OF DETROIT**  
HALACHA HOTLINE

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF HaRav Shmuel Irons שליט"א VAAD HALACHA Rav Aharon Yoel Sorscher • Rav Yissachar Wolf • Rav Boruch Miller

KITCHEN • SHABBOS • YOM TOV • BRACHOS • AVEILUS • TAHARAS HAMISHPACHA • EVERYDAY SHAILOS

## ISSUE #24 – Counting Sefira FAQs

### Commonly Received Questions and their Answers

Below are some common questions and answers based on psakim from the rabbonim of the Bais Horaah. Please note: in the event one believes they have heard a different opinion in the past, one's family posek should always be consulted. Mareh mekomos for any specific answers below are available by email request to [ask@bhdetroit.org](mailto:ask@bhdetroit.org).

- **What is the earliest time one may count the Omer?**
  - Ideally one should count after tzeis hakochavim. If necessary, however, it is permitted to count as early as 13 and 1/2 minutes after sunset. However, one who does so, should preferably repeat the count without a bracha after tzeis hakochavim. One who did not repeat the count in this scenario has still fulfilled the obligation and may continue counting with a bracha on subsequent nights.
- **Should children under the age of bar or bas mitzvah be encouraged to count with a bracha?**
  - Boys under the age of bar mitzvah should be taught to count with a bracha once they are old enough to be awake to count each night after sunset, and provided they are likely to follow through.
  - Girls under the age of bas mitzvah have the same status as boys in this regard, however a bracha is only made if the family minhag is for women to make a bracha.
- **Must one stand count while counting?**
  - Yes. One should stand while reciting the bracha and the sefira. However, one who did not stand is nevertheless yotzei.
- **What should be done if one forgot to count at night?**
  - If he remembers prior to 30 minutes after sunset of the following day, he should count the missed night without a bracha. He can then continue counting with a bracha later that night and on subsequent nights.
- **What if he forgot to count at night and the entire next day?**
  - He is still obligated to continue counting but should do so without a bracha. Ideally, he should ask someone who is counting with a bracha to be motzi him. In all cases, he should recite the actual count himself.
- **If one remembers after accepting early Shabbos, may they still count the previous day?**
  - As long as one remembers prior to 30 minutes after sunset, they may still count the previous day and then continue with a bracha.
- **What if one is unsure whether they counted the previous night?**
  - In such a case, one may continue counting with a bracha.
- **What if one only mentions the number of days when counting, but not the number of weeks?**
  - If he remembers prior to sunset, he should recite the proper count (without a bracha). However, one who did not do so may still continue counting with a bracha.
- **If one recited the wrong count, what should be done?**
  - If he realized the error immediately, it may be corrected within 1.5 seconds (*toch k'dei dibur*).
  - However, if one did not correct the error within 1.5 seconds, a new bracha is recited.
  - If one did not correct the error at all throughout the entire day, he continues counting without a bracha.
- **Must one have the correct count in mind while making the bracha?**
  - It is important that one is aware of the proper count prior to making the bracha. However, if one did not have the count in mind, or had the wrong count in mind, while making the bracha, he is still yotzei provided the correct count was recited.
- **May one begin a meal before counting sefira?**
  - One may not begin a bread meal within thirty minutes of tzeis. However, if he (a) appoints someone to remind him, e.g. one's wife or (b) sets a reliable alarm, or (c) regularly attends the same minyan for Maariv, he may begin a meal during this time.
  - If the meal was started prior to thirty minutes before tzeis, it may be continued even past tzeis.
- **If someone initially recites the correct count, but then repeats the count incorrectly because they believe they made an error the first time, is their count still valid?**
  - Yes. Even if the incorrect count was recited within *toch kdai dibbur* (1.5 seconds), he is still yotzei.

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- **When making early Shabbos, must one interrupt the seudah to recite sefira at the proper zman, or may he wait until afterwards?**
  - One is not obligated to interrupt the seudah as long as it was started at least thirty minutes before tzeis.
  - One who wants to start the seudah within thirty minutes of tzeis should ask someone to remind them to count sefira after the meal. Please note: This applies for sefira as well as krias shema shel arvis.
- **What is the proper order for bentching, sefira, and krias shema?**
  - After the seudah, one should recite krias shema, and then count sefira. According to some opinions, krias shema should be said prior to birkas hamazon.
- **If one is unable to determine the correct count and is unsure between two different days, what should he do?**
  - He should count twice without a bracha, once with each of the two possible days, and stipulate that if he later determines the correct number, this counting should not be deemed effective.
  - If he does indeed later find out the correct number, he may then count with a bracha.
  - In either case he may continue counting with a bracha on subsequent nights.
- **If one accidentally mentioned the night of the omer, may he still count that night with a bracha?**
  - One who accidentally recited the full formula of counting may no longer count that night with a bracha.
  - However, if one did not preface the count with "Hayom..." or "Tonight is..." they may still count that night with a bracha.
  - Similarly, if one mentioned only the weeks but not the days, or (beginning with the seventh day) omitted the number of weeks, they may still count that night with a bracha.
- **If one said "Tonight is Lag Ba'omer," may he still count again with a bracha?**
  - Yes, as a result of several Halachic considerations.
- **If I have not yet counted sefira, what is the proper way to answer someone who asks for tonight's count?**
  - The ideal way to answer is to inform them what last night's count was.
  - If that is not an option (e.g. for a child who won't understand), you can provide the correct count after stating that you are not being yotzei counting with this statement.
- **If one had to skip krias shema in order to daven shemoneh esrei with the minyan, when should he count sefira?**
  - After shemoneh esrei, he should say birchas krias shema and shema, and then count sefira.
  - Please note: If there is a later minyan which he can attend, he should do so in order to daven in the regular order.
- **If a boy becomes Bar Mitzvah during sefira, may he continue counting with a bracha?**
  - He may continue counting with a bracha provided that he was careful to count each night with a bracha until that point.
- **May an onein count sefira?**
  - If he expects to be in a state of aninus long enough that he will miss that day's counting all together, he should count that night without a bracha. He may then resume counting with a bracha on subsequent nights.
- **If one knows he will be unable to count sefira at a certain point due to an unavoidable situation (e.g. scheduled surgery), may he begin counting that year?**
  - Yes, he should begin counting with a bracha. After the interruption he should continue counting, but without a bracha.

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