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## Canfei Nesharim

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### Our Relationship to the Land: Meaning of the Omer A Curriculum Guide Canfei Nesharim

#### Students’ Course Book

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### Unit: Our Relationship to the Land: Meaning of the Omer

#### Lesson One: Everything Comes From The Land

**Let’s begin this Study:** As we consider the period of Sefirat HaOmer/ Counting the Omer, Jews are generally aware of the connection between the Hagim at both ends of this period. Pesah/ פסח, the time of our leaving of Egypt/ יציאת מצרים begins this “counting of the barley” which continues for seven weeks and Shavuot/ שבועות, the observance of our receiving of the Torah/ קבלת התורה completes this

period of time. In thinking of these celebrations in this manner, we talk about their historical meanings. Additionally, we must also be mindful of the agricultural and land-linked meanings of these Hagim and the time in which they come. The lessons embedded in their very being and the *cycle* of which they are a part are as critical to us as G-d's protection and instruction through Torah, of which this cycle is a part, actually leading up to our celebration of this defining aspect of our identity.

**To begin this lesson, your teacher will ask you:**

What is the Counting of the Omer/*Sefirat HaOmer* and what does it mean to us as observant and involved Jews?

What exactly is it that we are counting during this period of time? What lessons can we learn about the land and its meaning in our lives from this season and its heightened consciousness about our land and its resources?

**Write your thoughts here:**

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### **The Bracha and the Bread Basket**

An adapted story

Dani came home from school as he did every day and offered to help his Ima prepare dinner for their entire family, observing the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud Av v'Em*. They set the table, prepared the food and when everyone was home, they sat down to eat. Before eating bread from the bread basket, all members of the family washed their hands and said the appropriate *Bracha* as they did every evening. Then, they all

sat at the table and took bread from the bread basket and said together:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמּוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Dani's sister reported that in school that day, her second grade class visited the area's Kosher Bakery and learned about the process of how bread is made. They talked about where bread came from and how it was processed to the point where they bought and consumed it. The youngest child in the family, Rivkie explained that "Well that's simple silly. We all know where bread comes from. It comes from the grocery store, of course." All agreed that this was an absolutely appropriate answer from one so young. However, pensiveness set in as the older members of the family began to go mentally through the chain of events that brought the bread to their bread basket and table.

At this point, the family became involved in a conversation tracing the bread from its source as reflected in the *Bracha* they said to the bread basket on their table. They explained for Rivkie that the bread that we have on our table did not by any means begin its journey in the supermarket...

YOU TRY THIS FIRST .... With one or two of your classmates, try to trace the steps that the bread goes through before it gets to you. Be sure to include all of the steps involved.

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In processing what you have just seen, go back to your lists that your group has created and see what actions you are already committed to that will increase our responsible stewardship of our environment and its elements and work towards the intended goal of maintaining a healthy and sustainable *system of interdependence*.

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