

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

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The Torah gives an interesting command in regards to observing Shavuos.

**וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי־עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּמִצְרָיִם וְשָׁמַרְתָּ וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה:**

“And you shall recall because you were indentures servants in Mitzrayim. And you shall guard and you shall perform these ritual statues.” (Devarim 16:11).

Why does the Torah require use to recall our servitude during Shavuos? It was just recalled during Pesach. Also, Succos does not have that similar requirement.

The Torah mentions Shavuos a few times. It is first introduced as the festival of the harvest, and the bringing of first fruits. (Shmos 23:16). Then it is called the Chag Hashavos – festival of weeks, the first of the wheat harvest. (Ibid 34:22). Later, Moshe gave other instructions regarding Shavuos. A new Mincha (meal) offering shall be brought. (Vayikra 23:16). It is also the first offering of bread. (Ibid 23:20). Then later, Moshe does not mention first of anything. Instead, he said give a nedava, a free gift, without explaining what that free gift was. (Devarim 16:10).

Shavuos is introduced as the harvest festival. It is seven weeks after the first sickle cut. (Ibid 16:9). This is understandable, as it may take seven weeks to gather in the new grain. Therefore, Shavuos celebrates the spring harvest. Shavuos is the day of the first fruits and the new meal offering. (Bamidbar 28:26). Combined, Shavuos is a day of first fruits, first bread, and new meal offering. Further, the new meal offering hints at new, too. It is specifically seven weeks from the first harvest cut of the season. That harvest cut comes on the second day of Pesach. (Vayikra 23:15). There is a connection between the first harvest cut and the first fruits and first bread offerings.

When Moshe reiterates counting the weeks between Pesach and Shavuos he says, “Seven weeks shall you count for yourself, from the when the sickle is first put to the standing grain.” (Devarim 16:9). Earlier, Hashem taught the laws a bit more elaborately. “And you shall count for yourselves, from the day after the Shabbos (first day of Pesach), from the day that you bring it; the waved Omer.” (Vayikra 23:15). This Omer is described a few pesukim earlier.

“Because you will come to the Land which I am giving to you, and you shall reap its harvest, you shall bring an omer [amount] of the first harvest.” (Ibid 23:10). Omer is a measurement of solid volume. The pasuk says, “es omer.” This makes the omer a proper noun and includes all versions of this omer. It does not go so far as to say “the omer” as the later pasuk does. That later pasuk refers back to this omer. What else is included in this omer that the Torah had to qualify it with es? Also, why does one place say count from the omer and the other place say count from the first sickle swipe at the grain?

The term omer is only mentioned one other place in the Torah. It is tied to the manna. Bnei Yisroel arrived on the fifteenth day of the second month in the wilderness

of Sin. (Shmos 16:1). They began to grumble that they were out of food. (Shmos 16:3). Hashem then promised food but it would be a test. (Ibid 16:4). For six days it would rain down one portion and on Friday a double portion. (Ibid 16:5). Each day they would gather an omer amount per person. (Ibid 16:16). Amazingly, when they gathered it by the omer portions, no large family went without and no small family had excess. (Ibid 16:18). It was an exact amount per person that perfectly satiated. On the sixth day the double portion fell, two omers per person. (Ibid 16:22). Then the test: the concept of Shabbos was first introduced. The next day would be a rest day; they should not go out to gather any manna. (Ibid 16:23). While usually anything left overnight would turn foul (ibid 16:20), on this seventh day it would not (ibid 16:24). The day they entered the wilderness of Sin was a Shabbos. (Gemara Shabbos 84a). Therefore, the first day the manna fell was Sunday.

To note, an initial impression – quite fleeting – is that when the Torah says count seven weeks from the day after the Shabbos, the day you give the waved Omer offering, it could be referring to the first Shabbos given to Bnei Yisroel – that of the twenty-second day of the second month. That is the day they were commanded not to collect the manna. The three problems with that is: (1) that is a long time to wait to start harvesting grain each season, (2) that day does not always fall out on Shabbos every year, so which Shabbos would that be when the 22<sup>nd</sup> falls in middle of the week, and (3) Pesach is inferred to be a Shabbos in that it is a holy convocation day with no work, just as Shabbos is.

The connection, though, of the manna to the counting of the Omer is clear. The omer offering is unique. It is given based on the first cutting of the grain. The measure is the exact measure needed to sustain a person – any and every individual. The lesson is that on Pesach Hashem took us out of bondage. However, before He gave us His Torah he made sure to feed us. He then fed our souls, with Shabbos and soon after gave the Torah. The counting from the first grain cut to the end of the spring harvest, shows that Hashem always takes care of us. The new bread, new fruits, a new Mincha is given at the end of the count. The count is constantly recalling the omer of manna that Hashem provided when needed. The omer offering is given on the anniversary of the day after leaving bondage. Shavuos is directly connected to Hashem freeing us from bondage in Egypt.

The word hisomer (root word omer) means enslavement. (Devarim 21:14). We are commanded to recall the bondage in Mitzrayim to know that it was Hashem that made us His nation and gave us His Torah. It was only upon reaching the wilderness of Sin, the doorstep of Har Sinai, that the food ran out and Hashem provided manna from heaven. This special food did not come coincidentally. It came with a full week to count up to Shabbos. The instruction was to count six days the manna would fall and the seventh they would rest. They were taught to count the days of the week. That is why it is seven weeks, not just forty-nine days. The omer and the counting ties directly into the miracle of the manna. Count the weeks as you counted the days. Call the count by the measurement you collected manna. Hashem always provides us with substances for our bodies and our souls. Good Yom Tov.