



Volume 5. Issue 12

A Biblical proof for a Rabbinic tradition

The tenth *perek* of *Masechet Menachot* deals with the laws of the *Omer* ritual which is commanded in *Sefer Vayikra* (23:10). The purpose of the *Omer* offering was to allow the use of the new crop of grain and its time is specified in the Torah as being “the day after the *Shabbat*” (*Vayikra* 23:11). However, based only on the biblical verses, there are many aspects of the *Omer* offering that remain unclear, including the precise date of the offering.

The *Rabbis* explain that the “*Shabbat*” mentioned to in the above verse refers not to the seventh day of the week, but rather to a day of rest and the day of rest in question is the first day of *Pesach*. Thus, the *Rabbis* maintain that the *Omer* is brought on the 16th day of *Nissan* regardless of the day of the week.

The third *Mishnah* in the tenth *perek* goes into great detail as to how exactly the entire ceremony took place. It is a ceremony that involves a lot of repetition. In fact, as the *Mishnah* states, everything was repeated “three times for each item, and [each time] they said to him, ‘Yes, yes, yes’.” According to the *Mishnah*, the reason for all this repetition is “Because of the Boethusians who declared that the reaping of the *Omer* is not performed at the conclusion of the Festival.”

As we know from previous study, the Boethusians were a group that only believed in the Oral tradition and as such rejected the rabbinic tradition defining in this verse “the Sabbath” as the first day of *Pesach*. They believed that the “Sabbath” in the verse should be taken literally and hence the *Omer* must be offered on a Sunday.

There are a number of biblical proofs for this rabbinic tradition. The *Gemara* in *Menachot* (65a-

66a) offers one proof based on the following two verses from *Vayikra*:

And you shall count for yourselves, from day after *Shabbat*, from the day you bring the *Omer* as a wave offering seven weeks; they shall be complete. You shall count until the day after the seventh week, [namely,] the fiftieth day, [on which] you shall bring a new meal offering to the L-rd. (*Vayikra* 23:15-16)

If, according to the Boethusians, *Shabbat* refers to the day of the week and not the first day of *Pesach* and seven complete weeks must be counted from the day after that *Shabbat*, then the ‘meal offering’ which was brought on *Shavuot* will not always be the fiftieth day since *Pesach*. Sometimes it will be the 51st or even the 56th. Therefore, the *Shabbat* must be referring to the first day of *Pesach*.

This is not the only time in Tanach that the *Omer* is mentioned. The Book of *Yehoshuah* states:

And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and they made the Passover sacrifice on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. And they ate of the grain of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened cakes and parched grain on this very day. (*Yehoshua* 5:10-11)

Although the *Torah* states that the time of the *Omer* is “the day after the *Shabbat*”, in the book of *Yehoshua* the date that they ate the grain was the day after *Pesach*. The *Rambam* in *Hilchot Temidim U’Musafim* (7:11) offers these *p’sukim* from *Yehoshua* as another proof for the rabbinic tradition.

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Revision Questions

מנחות ט: א' – י' ה'

- How many different types of measuring utensils for dry goods were in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*? (Provide both opinions.) (ט: א')
- How many different types of measuring utensils for liquids were in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*? (Provide both opinions.) (ט: ב')
- Regarding the previous question, what were each of the measures used for? (ט: ג')
- If the *nechasim* of which two *korbanot* got mixed up would they be invalid? (ט: ד')
- What is special about the *keves* that came along with the *Omer*? (ט: ד')
- What is the difference in the status of the contents of a dry and wet measure that spilled over the top of the utensil? (ט: ה')
- Regarding the previous question, what are the two reasons brought for this difference? (ט: ה')
- Which five sacrifices do not require *nesachim*? (ט: ו')
- Regarding the previous question, which specific *korban* is the exception to that rule? (ט: ו')
- Which communal sacrifices require *semicha*? (ט: ז')
- Which private sacrifices do not require *semicha*? (ט: ז')
- Explain how *semicha* is performed? (ט: ח')
- Which seven people do not perform *semicha*? (ט: ח')
- How is *semicha* stricter than *tenufah*? (ט: ט')
- How is *tenufah* stricter than *semicha*? (ט: ט')
- What are the two debates regarding the difference between the harvesting for the *Omer* if the sixteenth of *Nisan* fell on a *Shabbat* or weekday? (ט: י')
- From where should the *Omer* ideally be brought? (ט: י')
- Describe how they harvested the barley for the *Omer*. (ט: י')
- Describe how they prepared the *Omer* once it reached the *azarah*. (ט: י')
- What was done with the excess barley? (ט: י')
- Describe how the *Omer* was offered? (ט: י')
- What was permitted once the *Omer* was offered? (ט: י')
- What was decreed (with respect to this law) once the *Beit Ha'Mikdash* was destroyed? (ט: י')

Local Shiurim

Sunday -Thursday

Between mincha & ma'ariv
Mizrachi Shul

Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before mincha
Mizrachi Shul

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
20 th July י"ז תמוז	21 st July י"ח תמוז	22 nd July י"ט תמוז	23 rd July כ' תמוז	24 th July כ"א תמוז	25 th July כ"ב תמוז	26 th July כ"ג תמוז
Menachot 10:6-7	Menachot 10:8-9	Menachot 11:1-2	Menachot 11:3-4	Menachot 11:5-6	Menachot 11:7-8	Menachot 11:9-12:1

