

# Omer, Shemitta, & Har Sinai - what's the connection?

source sheet for lecture by Menachem Leibtag, [www.tanach.org](http://www.tanach.org)

## A. "OMER" - something to count, or something to eat!

### 1. Manna - as preparation for Mount Sinai /Shmot 16:1-4

- 16:1 They moved on from Elim, and the entire community of Israel came to the [Sin Desert](#), between Elim and Sinai. It was [the 15th of the second month](#) after they had left Egypt.
- 16:2 There in the desert, the entire Israelite community began to complain against Moses and Aaron.
- 16:3 The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by God's hand in Egypt! There at least we could sit by pots of meat and eat our fill of bread! But you had to bring us out to this desert, to kill the entire community by starvation!'
- 16:4 God said to Moses, '**I will make bread rain down to you from the sky.** The people will go out and gather enough for each day, so. **I will test them to see whether or not they will keep My law.**

### 2. Taking as much as one 'needs', but not on shabbat / see 16:16-18

- 16:16 God's instructions are that **each man shall take as much as he needs.** There shall be an **omer** for each person, according to the number of people each man has in his tent.'
- 16:18 And they measured it with an **omer**, the one who had taken more did not have any extra, and the one who had taken less did not have too little. They had gathered exactly enough for each one to eat.

### 3. An 'omer' of the manna - in the Holy of Hollies! /see 16:33-34

- 16:33 Moses said to Aaron, 'Take an [urn](#) and fill it with an **omer of manna**. Place it [before God](#) as a keepsake for your descendants.'
- 16:34 As God commanded Moses, Aaron [[later](#)] placed it before the [[Ark of](#)] [Testimony](#) as a keepsake.

### 4. How much does an 'omer' weigh? / see 16:36

לו וְהָעֹמֶר, עֶשְׂרִית הָאֵיפָה הוּא. [1/10 of an eifa עשרון =]

## B. Counting the days - from Pesach till Shavuot - Vayikra 23:9-15

**[To remember the 'manna' when we harvest our own grain!]**

- 23:9 God spoke to Moses, telling him to
- 23:10 speak to the Israelites and say to them: When you come to the land that I am going to give you, and you reap its harvest, you must bring an **omer** of your first reaping to the priest.
- 23:11 He shall wave it in the motions [prescribed](#) for a wave offering to God, so that it will be acceptable for you...
- 23:15 **You shall then count seven complete weeks** after the day following the [Passover] holiday when you brought the omer as a wave offering,
- 23:16 until the day after the seventh week, when there will be [a total of] 50 days

## C. Remembering to forget the 'omer' / Devarim 24:19

**When you gather your grain- think about the 'other'**

- 24:19 [When you reap](#) your grain harvest and forget **OMER** in the field, you must not go back to get it. It must be left for the foreigner, orphan and widow, so that God your Lord will bless you, no matter what you do.

## D. Reason for 'manna' according to Moshe Rabeinu in Devarim 8:1-5 To PREPARE you for the spiritual dangers of prosperity!

- 8:2 Remember the entire path along which God your Lord led you these forty years in the desert. He sent hardships to test you, to [determine](#) what is in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.
- 8:3 He made life difficult for you, letting you go hungry, and then He fed you the Manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had ever experienced. This was to teach you that it is not by bread alone that man lives, but by all that comes out of God's mouth.
- 8:7 God your Lord is bringing you to a good land - a land with flowing streams, and [underground springs](#) gushing out in valley and mountain.
- 8:8 It is a land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs and pomegranates - a land of oil-olives and honey-[\[dates\]](#).
- 8:9 It is a land where you will not eat [rationed](#) bread, and you will not lack anything - a land whose stones are iron, and from whose mountains you will quarry copper.
- 8:10 When you eat and are satisfied, you must therefore [bless God your Lord for](#) the good land that He has given you.
- 8:11 Be careful that you not forget God your Lord, not keeping His commandments, decrees and laws, which I am prescribing to you today.
- 8:12 You may then eat and be satisfied, building fine houses and living in them.
- 8:13 Your herds and flocks may increase, and you may amass much silver and gold - everything you own may increase.
- 8:14 **But your heart may then grow haughty, and you may forget God your Lord**, the One who brought you out of the slave house that was Egypt.
- 8:15 It was He who led you through the great, terrifying desert, where there were snakes, vipers, scorpions and thirst. When there was no water, it was He who provided you water from a [solid cliff](#).
- 8:16 In the desert He fed you Manna, which was something that your ancestors never knew. He may have been sending hardships to test you, but it was so He would eventually do [all the more] good for you.
- 8:17 [When you later have prosperity, be careful that you not] say to yourself, 'It was my own strength and personal power that brought me all this prosperity.'
- 8:18 **You must remember that it is God your Lord who gives you the power to become prosperous.** He does this so as to keep the covenant that He made with an oath to your fathers,...

## E. The mitzvah of Hakhel in Devarim 31:10-15 / to relive Matan Torah

- 31:10 Moses then gave them the following commandment 'At the end of each seven years, at a fixed time on the festival of [Sukkoth](#), **after the year of release**,[\[SHEMITTA YEAR\]](#)
- 31:11 when all Israel comes to present themselves before God your Lord, in the [place that He will choose, you must read \[from\] this Torah](#) before all Israel, so that they will be able to hear it.
- 31:12 'You must gather together the people, the men, women, children and [proselytes](#) from your settlements, and let them hear it. They will thus learn to be in awe of God your Lord, carefully keeping all the words of this Torah.
- 31:13 **Their children, who do not know, will listen and learn to be in awe of God your Lord**, as long as you live in the land which you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.'

## F. The shemitta cycle in Vayikra 25:1-8 - Preparation for Hakhel The only commandment introduced with 'beHar Sinai'!

- 25:1 God spoke to Moses [at Mount Sinai](#), telling him to
- 25:2 speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you come to the land that I am giving you, the land must be given a rest period, a sabbath to God.
- 25:3 For six years you may plant your fields, prune your vineyards, and harvest your crops,
- 25:4 **but the seventh year is a sabbath of sabbaths for the land**. It is God's sabbath during which you may not plant your fields, nor prune your vineyards.
- 25:5 **Do not harvest crops that grow on their own** and do not gather the grapes on your [unpruned vines](#), since it is a year of rest for the land.
- 25:6 [[What grows while](#)] the land is resting may be eaten by you, by your male and female slaves, and by the employees and resident hands who live with you.