

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Emor 5784

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The Torah teaches about the moadim (holidays) and says:

**אַלֶּה מוֹעֲדֵי הַמִּקְרָאִי קֹדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם בְּמוֹעֲדָם:**

“These are the appointed times (moadim) of Hashem, holy occurrences that you shall declare them in their appointed times.” (Vayikra 23:4)

When reading through these pesukim a few questions arise. When does counting for sefirah commence? What date is Shavuot? Why use moed instead of chag (festival)?

The days are called moadim. The word moed means appointment. They are more than festival days. Each has specific meaning. These are not random days. Certainly, Pesach is celebrated on the day of freedom. Succos, the Torah says, is in regards to the time of ingathering the summer crops. (Ibid 23:39). Yom Kippur is בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה “that exact day.” What exact day is it referring to? Shavuot is not even mentioned in connection to a date certain. It is a date of fifty days from counting the Omer offering. When does that commence?

When the Torah introduced Creation, the Torah teaches why the sun and the moon were created. וַיִּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֹת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּשְׁנָיִם: “And the Lord said, ‘Let there be luminaries in the firmament of the heavens, in order to separate between day and between night, and let them be a sign or the appointed days of days and years.’” (Bereishis 1:14). The sun and the moon were created for the purpose of telling time, days and years. More than that, they were also created to Bnei Yisroel can set the appointed times.

This concept again arises with the birth of Yitzchok. Hashem tells Avraham that he will have a son, Yitzchok, to Sarah, who he will have to give a bris to. “Sarah shall bear a son to you at this appointed time (moed) next year.” (Ibid 17:21). When the episode is clarified the Torah again says, “I will return to you at the same appointed time (moed) next year, and Sarah shall have a son.” (Ibid 18:14). The appointed time was that exact day. The Torah should have used the term בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה to mean that exact day. Instead, it was not the exact *solar* day. It hinted to the lunar calendar and the months and days based on that calendar. That day that Hashem promised Yitzchok to Avraham was not just a day in the year, it was an appointed time: it was Pesach, the eternal day of redemption.

Shavuot is fifty days after the Omer offering. (Vayikra 23:15). The day of the Omer offering is “When you reap your harvest, you shall bring the first sheaf to the kohen.” (Ibid 23:10). Then, “the kohen will wave on the day after *the* Shabbos.” (Ibid 23:11). The Torah does not say, explicitly, the second day of Pesach. It says, from the day after the Shabbos when the first harvest is brought. Then the Torah says, “And count for yourselves from the morrow after the Shabbos, from the day you bring the Omer wave offering.” (Ibid 23:15). The count is until “The morrow of the seventh Shabbos, count fifty

days.” (Ibid 23:16). On the fiftieth day you shall bring two loaves of barley bread (ibid 23:17), seven one-year-old lambs, one bull, and two rams (ibid 23:18), and the kohen shall wave two *shelamim* lambs together with the first fruits (ibid 23:19). On that day of the two loaves and offerings and the first fruits, it shall be a sacred occurrence and no work shall be done. (Ibid 23:21). That day is Chag haShavuos.

According to the Torah, Shavuos is based on the following: When the harvest comes in, a day after “the Shabbos” the Omer is offered and counting begins, and day fifty is a day of offerings, first fruits, and a *mikra kodesh*. It is also only celebrated after Bnei Yisroel enter the Land. (Ibid 23:10). When is this day and why is it called a moed?

The pasuk does not say the day the Omer is offered is “Sunday.” It says, the Omer is “the morrow of the Shabbos.” When is this Shabbos? Is it the Shabbos that comes every week? The Torah says about Pesach, Shavous, and Succos “do not do work.” It does not call them days of rest. Then the first of the seventh month (aka Rosh Hashanah) and the tenth of that month (aka Yom Kippur) are both called “Shabbos.” Further, the Torah says, “These are the appointed times of Hashem...apart from the Shabbos days.” (Ibid 23:37-38). Which Shabbos, then, is the Omer offered afterwards? It cannot be the day of Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur, then it must be the day after the regular Shabbos, (i.e. Sunday). There is, however, one other “the Shabbos.”

What defines a Shabbos is made clear here. “Six days do all kinds of labors and on the seventh day rest completely.” (Ibid 23:3). The pasuk goes on, *מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ כָּל־מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ* “It is a sacred occurrence, all labors do not do.” (Ibid). The Torah equates “Shabbos” with not doing work. The pasuk about the Omer says “the Shabbos.” Which is “the Shabbos?” It is the first Shabbos given to Bnei Yisroel. *וּבְיָוֹם הַרְאִישׁוֹן מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה* “And on the first day [of the moed] it is a sacred occurrence, and on the seventh days, too, a sacred occurrence for you, all labors you shall not do them.” (Shmos 12:16). This is the Torah teaching about the first Pesach while still in Mitzrayim. It is the first time Bnei Yisroel were taught not to do work and it was their first sacred occurrence. Thus, it was “the Shabbos.” Pesach was the first time the concept of Shabbos—rest, was taught to them. (The weekly Shabbos was taught later with the manna).

The pasuk is a saying, the Omer is given on the morrow of *The Shabbos*—the first day of Pesach. It is counted fifty days until *the morrow of the seventh week*. The latter Shabbos refers to “week.” Shavuos is the fiftieth day from the second day of Pesach. Pesach is always in the spring time, after the first cut of the crops. Shavuos is a moed because it occurs with a special day-therearound the time of Matan Torah. Shavuos is an appointed time as it is tied to Pesach, also an appointed time.

Yom Kippur is *בַּעֲצֻם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה* that exact day, referring to the day the Torah permitted Aharon—and the Kohanei Gedolim to follow him—to enter behind the inner sanctuary. (Vayikra 16:29). These times given by the Torah are not random. They are appointments with Hashem for extra celebration, reminders of service, and special rations of redemption, forgiveness, bounty, and celebration.