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Harvesting for the Omer

The *Mishna* had stated: One can harvest because of saplings (since it cannot be used for the omer; the Sages did not issue a decree lest he come to eat it, for the growing of this grain would be harmful to his trees, and they did not want to cause him a significant loss), or for a place of mourning (in order to make room to sit for the blessing of mourners; they would find an open area to serve the mourner on his first day of mourning), or on account of a reduction of attendance at the *Beis Medrash*.

It is written: *the first of your harvest*. This indicates that one may harvest if it is for the purpose of a *mitzvah*.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: It is written: *When you bring a minchah offering on the first grain*. What does this teach us? [The Torah seems to repeat itself from that which is written in the first part of the verse.] Since the commandment of the omer is that it shall be brought from the standing grain, how would I know that if standing grain cannot be found it may be brought from cut sheaves? The Torah therefore states: *you shall bring*. Another explanation is: *You shall bring*. Since the commandment is that it shall be brought from the fresh kernels, how would I know that if fresh kernels cannot be found, it may be brought from the dry ones? The Torah therefore states: *you shall bring*. Another explanation is: *You shall bring*. Since the commandment is that it shall be harvested by night, how would I know that if it was harvested by day it is valid, and also that it overrides *Shabbos*? The Torah therefore states: *you shall bring*. *You shall bring* -

whatever it is (even if it is cut already). *You shall bring* - from any place (even if it is far from *Yerushalayim*). *You shall bring* - even on *Shabbos*. *You shall bring* - even in a state of *tumah*.

The *Mishna* had stated: If it was harvested on the day (of the sixteenth) it is valid.

The *Gemora* asks from a *Mishna* which states: The entire night is appropriate for the harvesting of the omer and for the burning of the sacrificial fats and limbs. This is the general rule: Any *mitzvah* that must be performed during the day may be performed the entire day; and any *mitzvah* that must be performed during the night may be performed the entire night. Now the laws applicable to the *mitzvos* of the night should be similar to those of the day, and just as those which are to be performed by day are not valid if they are done by night, so too the *mitzvah* which is to be performed by night is not valid if it was done by day!?

Rabbah answered: This is not difficult, for our *Mishna* represents Rebbe's view (who holds that the omer can be harvested on the day of the sixteenth), whereas the other *Mishna* is following the view of Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon, for it was taught in a *braisa*: If a *Kohen* was standing and bringing the omer offering and the offering became tamei in his hand, the *Kohen* tells his colleagues and they bring another omer offering in its stead. If there is no other barley from the crop available, we tell the *Kohen* to be silent and offer the omer in a state of *tumah* (but he should not publicize the matter, because we do not want people to erroneously assume that one can also offer a private minchah in a state of *tumah*); these are the words of Rebbe. But Rabbi



Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon says: In either case he is told to be wise and keep silent, for the omer that was not harvested in its proper manner is invalid. [*He obviously maintains that it must be harvested on the night of the sixteenth; when left with no option, we must offer the omer in a state of tumah. Rebbe disagrees and holds that it is valid if it is harvested by day.*]

Rabbah bar bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: The ruling of Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon follows the reasoning of Rabbi Akiva, his father's teacher, for it was taught in a *Mishna*: Rabbi Akiva stated a general rule: Any work which can be performed before *Shabbos* does not override the *Shabbos*. And he holds like Rabbi Yishmael who maintains that the harvesting of the *omer* is a *mitzvah*. For we have learned in a *Mishna*: Rabbi Yishmael says that the verse is referring to *Shabbos*, but only these activities are mentioned to teach us that just as the plowing that is prohibited is voluntary, as there is no obligation to ever plow, so harvesting is only prohibited when voluntary. This excludes harvesting the barley for the *omer* offering, which may be done on *Shabbos*.

Now, if you were to hold that if the *omer* was harvested not in accordance with its prescribed manner it is valid, why would it override the *Shabbos*? Let it be harvested on the day before *Shabbos*! Since, however, it does override the *Shabbos*, one may infer that he holds that if it was harvested not in accordance with its prescribed time (by day instead of the night), it is invalid.

The *Gemora* asks: But wasn't Rebbe a disciple of Rabbi Shimon? Surely it has been taught in a *braisa*: Rebbe said: When we were studying Torah by Rabbi Shimon in Tekoa, we used to carry for him on *Shabbos* oil and a towel from a courtyard to a roof, and from a roof to a *karpeif* (an enclosure that was not meant to be used for residential purposes), and from one *karpeif* to another *karpeif*, until we came to the spring where we bathed! [*Rabbi Shimon maintains that it is permitted to carry from one private domain to another*

adjoining one as long as the objects were there before Shabbos.]

The *Gemora* answers: Rebbe concurs with a different teaching of Rabbi Shimon, for it was taught in a *braisa*: Rabbi Shimon said: Come and see how precious a *mitzvah* is when performed in its proper time! For the burning of the sacrificial fats and limbs is valid the entire night, yet they did not wait until nightfall. [*They therefore burned them on Shabbos – for it is preferable to perform a mitzvah in its proper time. This explains why the barley for the omer could be harvested on Shabbos.*]

The *Gemora* challenges this explanation: And did not Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon hear of this teaching of his father?

The *Gemora* answers: There it is different, for the slaughtering has already overridden *Shabbos*.

The *Gemora* retorts: And according to Rebbe as well; is it not the fact that the slaughtering there has already overridden *Shabbos*?

Rather, the *Gemora* says, Rebbe is of the opinion that the harvesting of the *omer* does not override *Shabbos*.

But does it not? But we have learned in a *Mishna*: The Sages say: Whether on the *Shabbos* or on a weekday, it was taken out of three *se'ahs*! [*They maintain that the harvesting does not override the Shabbos.*]

The *Gemora* answers: That is not in accordance with Rebbe's opinion.

The *Gemora* asks: But we have learned in that *Mishna*: The Sages say: Whether on the *Shabbos* or on a weekday, it was harvested by three men into three baskets and with three sickles. [*They maintain that the harvesting does not override the Shabbos.*]

The *Gemora* answers: That is not in accordance with Rebbe's opinion.

The *Gemora* asks: But we have learned in a different *Mishna*: When the harvesting occurs on *Shabbos*, the harvester called out, "On this *Shabbos*?" [They responded, "Yes."]

The *Gemora* answers: That is not in accordance with Rebbe's opinion.

The *Gemora* asks from our *Mishna*: If one harvested it by day (on the sixteenth), it is still valid. The harvesting of the *omer* overrides *Shabbos*. Who is the one that you have heard say that if it was harvested by day it is valid? Clearly it is Rebbe. Yet the *Mishna* states that it overrides the *Shabbos*! Presumably this is referring to the harvesting of the *omer*!?

The *Gemora* answers: No, it is referring to the offering of the *omer*.

The *Gemora* asks: And the harvesting does not override the *Shabbos*! But surely it has been taught in a *braisa*: Rebbe said: *And Moshe declared the appointed times of Hashem*. For what purpose is this stated? It is because we have learned only of the *tamid* offering and the *pesach* sacrifice that they override the *Shabbos* and *tumah*, since 'in its anointed time' is written in connection with them – 'in its appointed time' - even on *Shabbos*; 'in its anointed time' - even in a state of *tumah*. From where do we know it of the other communal offerings? The Torah therefore states: *These shall you offer for Hashem in your appointed times*. From where do we know to include the *omer* and that (*the olah*) which is offered with it, and the *shtei halechem* and that (*the two lambs*) which is offered with them (*which are not mentioned in these passages*)? The Torah therefore states: *And Moshe declared the appointed times of Hashem*. The Torah has fixed 'the appointed time' for all of them.

Now, for what service is the *Shabbos* overridden? It cannot be in reference to the burning on the altar, for the *shtei halechem* is not offered at all! Obviously then, it is in reference to the grinding and the sifting (*which can be performed before Shabbos*), and similarly in the case of the *omer* for the harvesting (*which also can be performed before Shabbos*); and evidently, it overrides *Shabbos* (*which is in contrast to Rebbe's viewpoint*)!?

The *Gemora* answers: The *omer* overrides the *Shabbos* for the act of offering (*which cannot be done before Shabbos*), and the *shtei halechem* for the baking. The *Gemora* explains that Rebbe is of the opinion that the oven sanctifies them, so had they been baked on the previous day, they would be invalid by being kept overnight.

The *Gemora* asks: But does Rebbe hold that the oven sanctifies them? Surely it was taught in a *braisa*: The lambs brought on *Shavuot* only sanctify the accompanying breads when they are slaughtered. What is an example of this? If they are slaughtered and the blood is sprinkled with proper intent, the breads become sanctified. If he did both with improper intent, the breads are not sanctified. If he slaughtered with proper intent and sprinkled the blood with improper intent, the breads are "sanctified and not sanctified." These are the words of Rebbe. Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon states: The breads do not become sanctified until the slaughtering and sprinkling is done with proper intent.

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak answered: Rebbe means that they are either established or not established (*with those particular lambs; he does hold, however, that they are sanctified in the oven*). (72a – 72b)

**WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU,
RABBI YISHMAEL**