



## DVAR TORAH

## EMOR



By: Rabbi Noach Peled

### On Him We Count

In this week's parsha we are introduced to the mitzvah of *Korban Omer* – the Omer offering. The *Korban Omer* is offered each year on the 2nd day of Pesach – the 16th of Nisan, from the new grain harvest's yield.

In addition to the mitzvah of *Korban Omer*, our Parsha adds another mitzvah which also begins on that same day, the 2nd day of Pesach – the 16th of Nisan, culminating with *Shavuos*.

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת, מִיּוֹם הַבְּיָאֵכֶם אֶת עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה, שִׁבְעַת שָׁבָתוֹת תְּמִימֹת תִּהְיֶינָה  
And you shall count...from the day you bring the (*Korban*) Omer...seven weeks” (Vayikra 23:15). This mitzvah is known as *Sefiras HaOmer* – the counting of the Omer.

So, in addition to mitzvas **Korban** Omer, we also have mitzvas **Sefiras** HaOmer.

Now, as is obvious from the language of the above pasuk, the Torah is clearly linking the mitzvah to **count** till *Shavuos*, to the *Korban Omer*. Why? What is the connection?

To answer this we must first understand the *Korban's* name – Omer.

Other *korbanos* have specific names which identify and describe their role, like *Chatas* for a *chet* – a sin, *Toda* for *hoda'ah* – thanks, *Olah* which is *oleh* – elevated – completely to Hashem, *Shelamim* which brings *shalom* – peace, *Pesach* for *Pesach*, etc., etc.

Yet this *korban* is named *Omer*, which is merely the quantity measurement of this *korban*. Why is this *korban* simply named after the amount? Why is that the name of this *korban*?

The Medrash (Vayikra Rabba 28:3) reads as follows: “Hashem said to Moshe, Go tell Yisroel, when I gave you **מן** (*mann*), I provided **an omer amount for each of you**, now that **you** are giving to **me** (the *Korban Omer*), it is but a single omer from all of you collectively.”

The Medrash is saying that the *Korban Omer*, which celebrates the new grain harvest, symbolizes the **מן**. **That is why this korban is plainly called Omer, to remind us of the מן which measured an omer, and undeniably revealed that Hashem is our Provider and Sustainer, crystal clear with no uncertainty.**

On *Shavuos*/*Maamad Har Sinai*, we committed to and continue to commit ourselves to the Torah. Commitment to the Torah is no small thing. The Torah creates many physical boundaries, greatly limiting how we live, what we may eat, and significantly regulating what we may/may-not do to generate income and earn a living.

We may at times find it hard to remain fully committed, we may even hesitate to stay fully on board, because the many limitations and the demands can make it hard to live and to sustain ourselves.

**Therefore, leading up to Shavuos, we are commanded to specifically give an omer amount of the new grain harvest, to bring us back to the מן, and remind us of the true Provider and Sustainer.**

**And we are further commanded to recall the מן by counting the Omer each day from that point on till Shavuos, to bring us to a complete readiness of commitment to the Torah with all its boundaries and limitations, knowing full well that our Provider is boundless and our Sustainer is never limited.**



By: Rabbi Rory Meyerson

# INSIGHTS INTO PIRKEI AVOS



In Pirkei Avos, Rabbi Akiva (3:14) tells us: חָבִיב אָדָם שֶׁנִּבְרָא בְצַלְם בִּלְבָד Beloved is Man who is created in the image of Hashem. Rabbi Akiva is teaching that the inherent פְּנִימִיּוֹת of a person is חָבִיב, beloved. Each individual Jew is cherished by Hashem.

Yet the Mishnah uses the word צֶלֶם, which can imply an external form. Is there an outer appearance that a Jew ought to have?

Perhaps we can gain insight from a pasuk in last week's parsha (Vayikra 19:27): וְלֹא תִקְפוּ פְּאֵת רֵאשְׁכֶם, וְלֹא תִשְׁחִית אֶת פְּאֵת זָקְנְךָ "You shall not round the corners of your head, and you shall not destroy the corners of your beard."

While this pasuk addresses the prohibition of shaving with a razor, it would be incomplete to end the discussion there. The Gemara (Shabbos 152a) states: "הִדְרַת פְּנִים זָקֵן" - "The glory of a person's face is his beard." How can something as simple as a beard be described as a person's glory?

More broadly, why have Jews throughout history worn beards? Does this carry relevance today, especially with the advent of electric shavers? Should one still strive to grow a beard?

There is a unique calling within the Jewish people, a quiet but persistent desire to remain distinct from the surrounding culture. Not as a rejection of others, but as a steady declaration: we are Yidden, and therefore we are different.

The Chafetz Chaim (Sefer Tiferes Adam) strongly cautions against removing one's beard for Kabbalistic reasons. He writes that cutting the beard severs the "spiritual pipelines" through which holiness flows. In this sense, the beard is not merely an external feature. It is a spiritual conduit.

Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky would often encourage people to grow beards as it is a source for both פְּרִנְסָה and רְפוּאָה. A story is told of a man who needed to donate a kidney to a family member. As a כֶּהֵן, he hesitated. He was concerned that he might become a בַּעַל מוּם and be disqualified from the עֲבוּדָה in the בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ. Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky told him, "You should donate the kidney. Missing an internal organ is not a מוּם. It is a great mitzvah." As the man was leaving, Rav Chaim added, "In any case, you are already disqualified from the עֲבוּדָה. The Ramban says that a כֶּהֵן without a beard is disqualified. You shave your beard, so you are disqualified." Although this is not הַלְכָה לַמַּעֲשֶׂה, Rav Chaim is teaching us an important point in our עֲבוּדַת ה'.

Ultimately, whether one wears a beard or not, we are all created בְּצַלְם אֱלֹהִים. The Satmar Rav was once asked why he held such respect for the clean-shaven Mike Tress. He replied: In Heaven, Mike will be asked, "Jew, Jew- where is your beard?" But the bearded critic will be asked, "Beard, beard- where is your Jew?"

May we all be זוכה to remember that while appearance has its place, the essence of our עֲבוּדַת ה' lies in our learning, our תְּפִילָה, and our character. Whether one has a beard or not, every person carries inherent worth as they are created בְּצַלְם אֱלֹהִים. The external form may vary, but it is the פְּנִימִיּוֹת that truly defines who we are.

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