

# Moshiach and Sefira

**What will Happen if Moshiach Comes in  
the Middle of Sefiras Haomer?**

Rabbi Yonason Johnson - Kollel Menachem





# Moshiach and Sefira

## If Moshiach comes in the middle of Sefiras Haomer, will we be able to keep counting?

After counting Sefiras Haomer each night, we offer a prayer הרחמן הוא יחזיר לנו עבודת בית עבודת בית עבודת בית - המקדש למקומה במהרה בימינו אמן סלה - May the Merciful One restore to us the service of the Beis Hamikdash to its place, speedily in our days, Amen, Selah.

The source of this practise is a Tosfos in Megillah<sup>1</sup> and it is brought as Halacha by the Bach<sup>2</sup> and Chok Yaakov<sup>3</sup>. It is also brought in the Shulchan Aruch Harav and Mishna Berura.

What is the connection between this Tefillah and the Mitzvah of Sefiras Haomer? Whilst it is always appropriate to pray for the coming of Moshiach and the Beis Hamikdash, as we do daily in the Shemoneh Esrei, why do we add this request after Sefiras Haomer – something that we do not find with any other Mitzvah?

The reason for this Bakasha is because according to the Shulchan Aruch, Sefiras Haomer nowadays is only a Rabbinic Mitzvah that was established as a Zecher L'Mikdash, a remembrance of how the Mitzvah was fulfilled when the Beis Hamikdash stood. We are asking Hashem for the restoration of the Beis Hamikdash and the Korbanos, when we will once again be able to fulfil the Mitzvah of Sefiras Haomer as a Mitzvah Deoraisa<sup>4, 5</sup>.

### The status of our Sefiras Haomer

The source of the Mitzvah to count Sefiras

Haomer is recorded in Parshas Emor<sup>6</sup>.

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאָכֶם אֶת עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שֶׁבַע שָׁבוּעוֹת תְּמִימַת תְּהִינֶנָּה. עַד מַמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת הַשְּׁבִיעִית תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה לַה'

*“And you shall count for yourselves, from the day following the festival, from the day of you bringing the Omer... seven weeks, they must be complete... Until the day after the seventh week, fifty day shall you count and you shall bring a new offering of grain to Hashem”*

The Posuk teaches that the counting of the Omer begins on the morrow of the first day of Pesach<sup>7</sup>, which is the 16th of Nissan. But the Torah then adds a further detail “from the day of you bringing the Omer.”

From this addition, many of the Rishonim<sup>8</sup> understand that the Mitzvah of counting the Omer is dependent on the offering of the Korban Omer. Once the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed and the Omer could no longer be offered, the Biblical Mitzvah of Sefiras Haomer ceased. The counting that we do was instituted by the Rabbis as a Zecher L'Mikdash<sup>9</sup>, similar to other Rabbinic enactments that were made so that we would remember how the Mitzvos were observed when the Beis Hamikdash stood and to be ready to observe them once again when it is rebuilt<sup>10</sup>.

In contrast, the Rambam<sup>11</sup> is of the view that counting the Omer applies “in Eretz Yisroel

and in Chutz Laaretz, when the Beis Hamikdash was standing and when the Beis Hamikdash is no longer standing.” According to the Rambam, the Mitzvah of Sefiras Haomer is independent from the bringing of the Korban Omer and remains a Biblical Mitzvah in all times and places. This is also the opinion of Sefer Hachinuch<sup>12</sup>. The Torah does not say that we count from the actual bringing of the Korban Omer, but from the day of the bringing of the Omer.

Rabbeinu Yerucham (14th Century France/Spain) takes a hybrid approach. From the Pesukim quoted above, we derive 2 obligations; to count the weeks “you shall count... seven weeks” and to count the days “fifty days shall you count”. In the Pesukim, only the Mitzvah of counting the weeks is connected to the offering of the Korban Omer. The Mitzvah of counting the days is recorded in a separate verse. Based on this, he asserts that whereas as our counting of the weeks of Sefira is only Rabbinic, our counting of the days remains a Biblical obligation.

Shulchan Aruch adopts the view of the Rishonim<sup>13</sup> that Sefiras Haomer is only Rabbinic. The Alter Rebbe<sup>14</sup> begins by quoting the ruling of the Rambam, but then writes that there are those who maintain that Sefiras Haomer nowadays is only Rabbinic and that this is the primary opinion in Halacha.

## If Moshiach comes during Sefira

Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Shapiro of Munkacz (author of Darkei Teshuvah) in his Sefer Tiferes Banim, writes that the Rabbinic status of Sefiras Haomer only applies during Golus, where we have neither the Korban Omer nor the Shte Halechem (the two loaves from the new wheat grain that were offered on Shavuos). If Moshiach comes, all of that would change, even in the middle of Sefiras Haomer itself.

The passage quoted above concludes **עַד מִמְחֶרֶת הַשָּׁבֹּת הַשְּׁבִיעִת** תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה לַיהוָה “you shall count fifty days and you shall bring a new offering to Hashem.” The new offering refers to the Shte Halechem.

From this, the Darkei Teshuvah derives that the Mitzvah of Sefiras Haomer is counting towards the offering of the Shte Halechem on Shavuos<sup>15</sup>. If Moshiach comes and the Beis Hamikdash is rebuilt, we will





be able to bring the Shte Halechem. Therefore, from that moment on, the remaining count of Sefirah would become a Biblical obligation. It may also retroactively transform the prior days' counts into a Biblical Mitzvah as well.

The Darkei Teshuvah's opinion is elaborated on by his son and successor, Rabbi Chaim Elozor Shapiro, the Minchas Elozor of Munkacz<sup>16</sup>.

The possibility of our Sefiras Haomer becoming a Biblical Mitzvah would explain the practise of those who recite Hineni Muchan before counting the Omer, in which they declare their preparedness to fulfil the Mitzvas Aseh (Biblical Mitzvah) of Sefiras Haomer. Even though their counting is only Rabbinic, it can become a Biblical Mitzvah retroactively if Moshiach comes during the remainder of Sefira.

The Rebbe<sup>17</sup> explains that this may be why the Alter Rebbe at the beginning of the Halachos of Sefiras Haomer<sup>18</sup> writes that there is a Biblical Mitzvah to count, even though he rules like the opinion that Sefiras Haomer nowadays is only Rabbinic.

## Will we Continue to Count?

If, as the Darkei Teshuvah suggests, our Sefiras Haomer will transform in the middle and become Biblical, the question arises whether we

will even be allowed to continue counting the rest of the nights of Sefira with a Bracha<sup>19</sup>. The

Rebbe raises this question based on the ruling of the Baal Halachos Gedolos (Beha"g)<sup>20</sup>.

The Beha"g rules that if one misses an entire day of Sefiras Haomer, they may no longer continue to count Sefiras Haomer, since the entire Sefiras Haomer is viewed as one Mitzvah. If one missed a night, the Mitzvah can no longer be fulfilled. This is because the Torah specifies that the weeks of Sefiras Haomer must be Temimos – complete<sup>21</sup>.

This is in contrast to the Rishonim<sup>22</sup> who view each night of Sefiras Haomer as an independent Mitzvah<sup>23</sup>.

The Shulchan Aruch<sup>24</sup> is concerned for the opinion of the Beha"g and rules that if one missed an entire day of Sefiras Haomer, they must continue to count (in accordance with the view that each night is an independent Mitzvah) but may no longer count with a Bracha, because perhaps the Halacha is like the Beha"g and we apply the concept that in a case of doubt, we do not recite a Bracha<sup>25</sup>.

## The case of the Barmitzvah

Another Nafka Minah of this dispute relates to a boy who becomes Barmitzvah in the middle of Sefiras Haomer<sup>26</sup>. Since he was not personally obligated to count the nights before his Barmitzvah<sup>27</sup>, can those nights be combined



**Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Shapiro  
of Munkacz  
Author of Darkei Teshuvah**

with the nights counted after his Barmitzvah where he is now personally obligated? If they cannot be combined, seemingly, the ruling of the Beha"g would apply since the single Mitzvah of Sefiras Haomer can no longer be observed and they would not be able to continue counting with a Bracha.

Birkei Yosef and others<sup>28</sup> write that the Barmitzvah boy would not be able to keep counting with a Bracha. However, Shaarei Teshuvah<sup>29</sup> suggests that the Birkei Yosef was referring to a child who was not counting Sefiras Haomer<sup>30</sup>, if they had been counting (as is common practise nowadays), they would be able to continue counting with a Bracha. Many Acharonim<sup>31</sup> rule that a child who was counting Sefira before their Barmitzvah do continue to count with a Bracha after they become Barmitzvah. How can this be reconciled with the Beha"g?

The Rebbe<sup>32</sup> takes a novel approach in understanding the Beha"g. Based on this, he concludes that the Barmitzvah boy would be able to continue counting with a Bracha according to all opinions.

## Questions on the Baal Halachos Gedolos

Until now, we understood that in the view of the Beha"g, each night's count is not a separate Mitzvah, but rather part of one overall Mitzvah. This understanding of the Beha"g is problematic and raises a number of questions.

Firstly, if the entire Sefiras Haomer is one

Mitzvah, why do we make a Bracha for each night's count? Only one Bracha should be made on the first night<sup>33</sup>, to cover the entire Mitzvah.

Another question raised by the Acharonim is that if all of the nights are part of one Mitzvah, one should not be able to make the Bracha at all until the final night, as they cannot be sure that they will complete the Omer; they may miss a day, pass away or experience an Ones and be unable to complete the Sefira<sup>34</sup>. If they do not complete the Omer, they would not be able to fulfil the Mitzvah and all of the Brachos that they had recited would be in vain<sup>35</sup>. This is the reason given for why a Zavah does not make a Bracha when starting the count of seven clean days, because she may not end up completing the days in purity<sup>36, 37</sup>.

## A new Understanding of the Beha"g

The Rebbe suggests that the Beha"g agrees that each night of Sefirah is an individual Mitzvah<sup>38</sup>. Nonetheless, each night's individual Mitzvah is dependent on the count of the previous nights. In order to be able to count the Mitzvah of one night, one must have counted the previous nights as well, otherwise it would not be a consecutive count and by definition, would not be an act of counting. How can one count 8 if they did not count 7?

This is the reason why there is no longer a Mitzvah to count if one missed an entire day.



Not because there is no Mitzvah, but because the count cannot be performed. The requirement of Temimos refers to the act of counting, not to the sum total of all of the nights to create one Mitzvah<sup>39</sup>.

This answers why a Bracha is recited for each night's count. Further, missing a day would not have any retroactive implication for the previous nights or the validity of the Brachos. It would only affect the ability to count the future nights.

This understanding of the Beha"ng could also be used to explain the ruling of Rabbeinu Yitzchak Geius (11th Century Spain), that if someone forgot to count the first night of Sefiras Haomer, the following night they should say "yesterday was day one and today is 2 days of the Omer." If all of the counts of Sefira make up one Mitzvah, if one missed a day, how does mentioning what yesterday was help for the Sefira to be considered Temimos?

According to the Rebbe's explanation, the concern of missing a day is that the act of counting is deficient, it is possible to say that mentioning yesterday's count is considered enough of an act of counting to be able to count the subsequent days<sup>40</sup>.

## Applying to the Barmitzvah

Based on the Rebbe's explanation, even according to the Beha"ng the Barmitzvah boy would be able to continue to count the rest of Sefirah with a Bracha, since he had counted all of the previous

nights. Even though they had a lesser degree of Mitzvah status, they are considered an act of counting nonetheless and will allow the Barmitzvah boy to keep counting the remaining nights.

However, the Rebbe takes the discussion a step further. The mere act of counting the days may not be sufficient to qualify as a 'significant count', because it does not confer any significance to the day. It could be that it is the Mitzvah that confers the significance to a count and without the Mitzvah, the count would have no meaning<sup>41</sup>.

If so, it could still be argued that the child counting Sefira would not create the status of a 'count' in relation to the remaining nights, because the lesser degree of obligation is not considered significant when compared to the higher-level obligation.

In the end of a detailed analysis, the Rebbe concludes that even if we require a 'significant count', it is not the observance of the Mitzvah that confers the Chashivus. Rather, it is the existence of the Mitzvah of



The Lubavitcher Rebbe



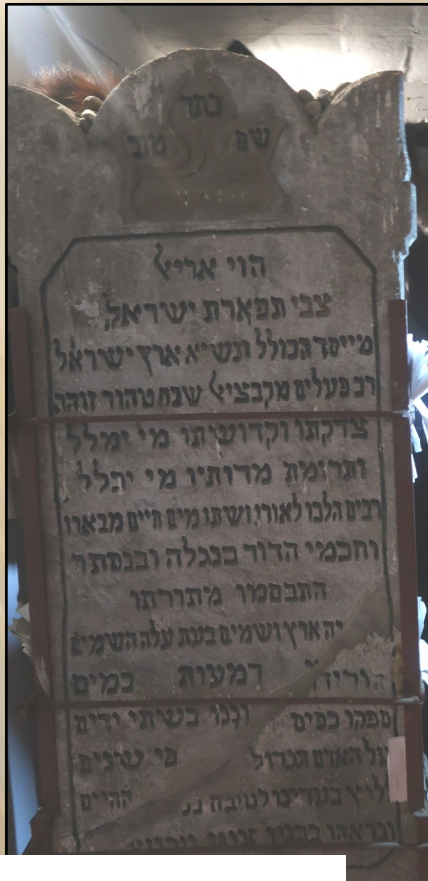
the counting in Torah that confers the significance to these days and renders them 'counted'<sup>42</sup>. As such, the Barmitzvah boy may certainly continue to count<sup>43</sup>.

## Back to Moshiach's Arrival

The Rebbe writes that the same question will arise for each of us, if Moshiach will come in the middle of Sefirah and the status of the count will change to become Biblical. Since the days counted before Moshiach's arrival were only Rabbinic in nature, will we be able to combine them with the remaining days after Moshiach arrives, where the counting will now be Deoraisa, to be able to continue to count with a Bracha?

This is the same as the question that relates to the Barmitzvah boy, which is also about the ability to combine the previous days that were counted with a lesser-degree of obligation.

The Rebbe's understanding of the Beha"g's opinion would apply here as well. Even though the prior days were counted with a lesser degree of obligation, they were still counted. This is like the Chinuch-obligation count of the boy before Barmitzvah that are considered a valid act of counting that enables him to keep counting each night after his Barmitzvah. So too, the counting before Moshiach's arrival is a valid act of counting and one would be able to continue to count the remaining days that would now be Deoraisa.



**Tziyun of Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Shapiro of Munkacz**

This conclusion is articulated clearly by the Minchas Elozor, who writes that "since they counted the days at the beginning of Sefira while still in Golus, they certainly will combine to the remaining days so that we will be able to bring the Shte Halechem<sup>44</sup>."

May Hashem answer our prayer to "restore to us the service of the Beis Hamikdash to its place" with the coming of Moshiach. Then we will be able to fulfil all of the Mitzvos and Korbanos in the true form<sup>45</sup>, including the remaining days of the Omer and the offering of the Shte Halechem on Shavuos in the Beis Hamikdash Hashlishi – "speedily in our days, Amen, Selah".

1. Megillah 20b ד"ה כל
2. End of Siman 489
3. 489:11
4. Shulchan Aruch Harav 489:11, Mishna Berura Shaar Hatziyun 15, Levush
5. Shibolei Haleket gives a different explanation for why we recite this Tefillah after Sefiras Haomer, that would apply even according to the opinion that Sefiras Haomer remains a Biblical Mitzvah and is not connected to the Korban Omer. He shares an answer from his brother Rabbi Binyamin, that it is in reference

to the cutting and offering of the Korban Omer which cannot be done in the absence of the Beis Hamikdash. The Shibolei Haleket offers an additional explanation. Biblically, it is forbidden to eat from Chadash (the new year grain) until after the Korban Omer has been brought. After the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai instituted that it is forbidden to eat Chadash for the entire day of the 16th of Nissan. The Tefillah after Sefiras Haomer is a request for the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash where we will revert back to being able to eat Chadash after mid-



day. Another explanation is that it is a general request for the reinstatement of all of the Korbanos.

6. Vayikra 23:15
7. Even though the verse literally means “on the day following Shabbos”, the sages have a tradition that the Shabbos refers to the first day of the Yomtov of Pesach. Yomtov can also be referred to as Shabbos as it is also a day of rest. This was one of the great debates between Chaza”l and the Tzedokim and many proofs are put forth by the Tannaim and amoraim, recorded in Menachos 65a-66b, to support the Kabbalah.
8. Tosfos Menachos 86a, Rosh Pesachim 10:40, Ra”n.
9. See Shulchan Aruch Harav 489:2, Beis Yosef 489.
10. Other examples... Korech, Lulav, Shemittah
11. Hilchos Temidin Umusafin 7:22. See Biur Halocha OC 489 ד”ה לספור who brings other Rishonim who hold like the Rambam, including; Rabbeinu Yishaya, Ravia as quoted in Or Zarua, Rav Amram, Rav Yehudai Gaon and Rit”z Geius. The Alter Rebbe adopts the view that Sefiras Haomer is only Rabbinic however he opens the Siman with the words of the Rambam that there is a Biblical Mitzvah for each person to count.
12. Mitzvah 306
13. Tosfos Menachos 86a, Rosh Pesachim 10:40, Ra”n.
14. Orach Chaim 489:2
15. See Radba”z Teshuvah 1327 that the reason Shehecheyanu is not recited over Sefiras Haomer is because it is only a preparation for another Mitzvah. Since Sefiras Haomer is a preparation for Shavuos, the Shehecheyanu of Shavuos covers the Sefirah.
16. Teshuvos Volume 5, Siman 18, Nimukei Orach Chaim
17. Likkutei Sichos Volume 38 Chag Hashavuos footnote 56
18. Orach Chaim 489:1
19. This question would not apply if the previous nights are retroactively transformed into Biblical Mitzvos. It would apply if only the days after Moshiach’s arrival become a Biblical Mitzvah.
20. Hilchos Menachos 137:3
21. See Shulchan Aruch Harav 489:23 and Mishna Berura 489:37
22. Tosfos, Rosh, Rabbeinu Yonah
23. See Biur Halacha 489 ד”ה סופר בשאר הימים for different explanations of how this opinion understands the word Temimos.
24. Orach Chaim 489:7, based on the ruling of Terumas Hadeshen Siman 37. Shulchan Aruch Harav 489:24
25. Pri Chadash 489:7
26. Discussed in Birkei Yosef, Shaarei Teshuvah 489:4
27. The Mitzvah of Chinuch is not a personal obligation for the child, but rather a Rabbinic Mitzvah on the father to educate their child in the fulfillment of Mitzvos. Even though nowadays Sefiras Haomer for everyone is only Rabbinic, the child’s counting is a “double Derabbanan” – a Rabbinic requirement of Chinuch in a Rabbinic Mitzvah, which makes it a lesser degree of obligation.
28. Avnei Nezer Orach Chaim 539, Chiddushei Harim and Malbim in his commentary on Parshas Emor.
29. 489:4
30. This understanding is problematic, because there always would have been a Chinuch requirement for a child to count Sefiras Haomer, especially if we are discussing a nearly 13-year-old.
31. Conclusion of Minchas Chinuch Mitzvah 306, Minchas Elozor 3:50, Ksav Sofer 99, Maharam Shik 269 and others.
32. See Likutei Sichos Volume 1 page 272, volume 8 p54, Sefer Hasichos 5751 Acharon Shel Pesach
33. The Rebbe suggests that the Bracha could be said on the last night of Sefira. Presumably this would be

Bedieved because the Bracha should be recited before beginning the fulfillment of the Mitzvah.

34. This question is raised by Sdeh Chemed Erech Yom Hakippurim 1:3
35. See Pri Megadim Mishbetzos Zahav 489:1, Chok Yaakov 489:6. Avodas Hakodesh of the Chid”a writes that if one missed a day, according to this view all of the previous nights’ Brachos would be Levatalah.
36. Tosfos Kesubos 72a, Menachos 65b
37. Other Acharonim write that even according to this view, the previous Brachos would not be rendered Levatalah, since they were recited at the time with the intention or at least the possibility of fulfilling the Mitzvah in its entirety. Rav Pealim 3:32, Kinyan Torah 5:45. It could be possible according to this view that if one is certain that they will not be able to complete the Sefira, they would not be able to count with a Bracha at all.
38. This is why a blessing is made on each night and not just one blessing over the entire Sefiras Haomer.
39. This understanding could be read into the wording of the Alter Rebbe (489:23). The Alter Rebbe records the opinion of the Beha”g and then writes that there are those who argue and say that one must continue to count on the remaining nights, because each night is a separate Mitzvah and is not dependent one on the other. Why after saying that each night is a separate Mitzvah is it necessary to add “and is not dependent one on the other”? It could be that this is what distinguishes the other opinion from the Beha”g. The Beha”g agrees that each night is a separate Mitzvah, however each night is dependent on one another for the count. The arguing opinion holds that each night is not dependent on the others for the count.
40. The opinion of Rit”z Geius is referenced in Biur Halacha, however his opinion is not followed.
41. Similar to the principle found elsewhere of מצוותיה אחשביה, that the Mitzvah confers significance. The application of this would be in the case of a non-Jew who counted the days of the Omer and then converted in the middle of Sefira.
42. Obviously the child would still have had to count the previous nights
43. According to this logic, the non-Jew who converts in the middle of Sefira would also be able to count with a Bracha (if they had counted the previous nights before converting). However, since a convert becomes a new person, we may not be able to combine the previous count, because it was performed by “someone else”.
44. The Munkaczer writes this in relation to being able to bring the Shte Halechem which must come after the count of Sefiras Haomer. The same logic also dictates that the count of the Omer must be considered a fully valid count as well.
45. In accordance with Your will – Nusach of Musaf. See Rambam’s laws of kings chapter 11 that Moshiach will bring about the restoration of all of the Mitzvos.

