



## *Balancing your life 2021, the Shavous Perspective*

*The Shavous Perspective is in memory of Shlomo Ben Edward and Edward Ben Efraim & in honor of the Refuah Shlema of Shaul Ben Berta, Sasson Bezalel Ben Batia, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Tova Basha. May they have a complete and speedy recovery.*

We are about to celebrate the giving of the Torah with the holiday of Shavous, we will hear the 10 Commandments and eat dairy foods in celebration of this momentous occasion.

Leading up to these important days, we count the Omer, a 49-day cycle that culminates on Shavous, the 50th day. During each day of the Omer, we are given a different emotion and element of ourselves to uplift and purify. During the counting, we say, "*we are counting the Omer to purify ourselves from our uncleanness,*" hoping that we are at the highest level of holiness when we receive the Torah once again.

However, a question comes to mind: On the day that we receive the Torah and at our highest level of holiness, we give one of the only two offerings with bread. The offering that was given on Shavous in the Beis Hamikdash was called **Shtei Halechem**, two loaves of bread made from the finest flour of that year's harvest. But we know from Pesach that bread represents the concepts of arrogance, self-importance, and ego. Why do we commemorate achieving the ultimate level of purity by giving an offering of bread?

Furthermore, it says in Bereishis Rabbah (99) that the Torah was brought down on Mt. Sinai because all the other mountains were “fighting” each other. They each wanted the privilege of having the Torah given on them based on their external qualifications, being big and tall, etc. However, G-d saw this as a sign of the mountains being self-centered and decided to give the Torah on the smallest mountain, Har Sinai. But all mountains, no matter how small, are still elevated than the ground. Why did G-d not give the Torah on the desert floor, representing the idea of equality?!

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that the answer to both of these questions is one word: **balance**.

G-d wants us to live a balanced life, not overly focused on just one opinion or view. By always giving us many opposing thoughts and ideas in Jewish law. The Torah teaches us not to become excessively saturated with only one outlook, enabling us to live a well-balanced lifestyle.

The Rambam views the element of balance as a condition of one’s service to G-d. He writes in Mishneh Torah (Sefer Madda 1:4), *“The straight path involves discovering the midpoint of every trait a person possesses within their personality. For example, they should not easily be angered or like the dead without feeling. They should not be overly stingy nor spread their money greatly. They should not laugh excessively nor be sad and depressed in spirit. The same applies to all their other character traits that a person possesses. Every person with intermediate characteristics can be called a wise person.”*

By Pesach, our impurities and arrogance were considerably high, they needed to be brought down before we could receive the Torah. The way to do so is by going to another extreme until you can find a healthy balance between the two.

Like a new book is bent to the opposite end to be able to stay open. Therefore, during Pesach, we remove and stay away from all Chametz. But as we work on ourselves throughout the Omer period, we begin to find the perfect equilibrium between our ego and the need for humility.

As the Gemara in Sota writes, (5a) *“From the fact that G-d decided to give the Torah on Har Sinai, which was just a little mountain, but a mountain nevertheless. We learn that a Torah scholar should have a small ego.”* The reason is so he can have ambitions in his learning and strive to help others as well.

Throughout the Omer, we work on our many different character traits to find the perfect equilibrium. Now we can bring bread as an offering in the Beis Hamikdash and show G-d that we are ready to receive the Torah in the holiest possible manner. The Shte Halechem, the two breads demonstrates that we understand the necessary balance between humility and ego.

In our daily life, and especially during these unique times, it is imperative that we understand that we should strive to find balance in all aspects of our lives. We must seek symmetry of ideas to help us overcome the challenges of life. Which enables us to become successful and prosperous beyond our wildest expectations.

***“Balance is not something you find,  
but rather something you create.”***

*Have a meaningful Shavous,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*