

## THE BEARD – ALL SET-APART MEN SHOULD HAVE ONE!

A closer look at a much debated topic!

Shalom,

The purpose for writing this article on 'beards', is to hopefully answer what is often debated on an emotional level rather than simply looking at what the Scripture teaches us and commands us to do. To have a beard or not to have a beard – that is certainly the question that most can never seem to come to a conclusive answer, and so I hope to bring conclusion to the matter, in regards to men who are a part of the Body of Messiah and claim to walk as He walked, and obey His commands!

Before we get right into the topic of beards, I need to outline some fundament basics, so that when we look at various Scriptures, we will be able to allow them to teach us and train us.

When asked why we do what we do in respects to the 'way' we worship our Creator and Redeemer, we have come to recognise that a simple and quick answer does not always bring the much needed understanding to the one who questions our walk of faith. This is as the result of the adherence to the long practiced traditions of many generations that have veered from the clear path of the Truth. When simply 'obeying' the Scriptures and actually **"DOING WHAT IT INSTRUCTS"**, many accuse us of various things, such as 'trying to be Jewish' or 'going back under the law'! With this presentation on 'beards', I hope to give a clear answer and reason for our faith and the joy of walking in obedience to the Truth.

Sha'ul tells us in:

**Timotiyos Bět/2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is breathed by Elohim and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for setting straight, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of Elohim might be fitted, equipped for every good work."**

While there are many who know these verses and will quote them, what we do find is that the very Scripture that is to teach and instruct them in righteousness is sadly set aside, while the traditions of man take precedence in determining how the majority are to worship and are therefore led forth in error, rather than truth!

There is a desperate call being sounded, a call to return to the pure Truth of our faith in our Messiah, and the loving obedience to His Word, obedience that has sadly been pushed aside for many centuries through the teaching of the erroneous traditions and commands of man! While many would not agree with these words, and refuse to recognise, admit and acknowledge that they have been led forth in error, and simply do not even consider this as being possible, we see that Scripture clearly tells us in:

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 16:19 "יהוה O, my strength and my stronghold and my refuge, in the day of distress the gentiles shall come to You from the ends of the earth and say, "Our fathers have inherited only falsehood, futility, and there is no value in them."**

**Falsehood and futility!!!** These words are certainly very sobering when we being to recognise how much falsehood has in fact governed most of our lives for far too long!

As the Living Word begins to pierce into the hearts and minds of many men and women who are earnestly seeking to walk in complete obedience, the traditions that have overstepped the authority of the Word come into question. Many of us, having come from backgrounds that were primarily 'Christian based', began to ask the real questions that need to be asked on a daily basis – and that is, **"Why do we do what we do?"** In other words, we began to ask why we worship the way we worship? Now, in regards to the question of beards – we also need to be asking the simple question of, **"What does Scriptures tell us and what does it teach us?"**, after which we need to ask the very sobering question, **"Will I do what Scripture teaches and commands me to do?"** While this should be asked as a rhetorical question, as the answer in very obvious, many will try to rationalise why they do not have to do what Elohim has commanded us, rather than simply obeying His Word. And the topic of the beard is no different!!!

**Yohanan Aleph/1 John 2:3 "And by this we know that we know Him, if we guard His commands."**

**Yohanan Aleph/1 John 5:3 "For this is the love for Elohim, that we guard His commands, and His commands are not heavy"**

### WE "KNOW" AND "LOVE" ELOHIM WHEN WE "GUARD" HIS COMMANDS!!!

A simple answer for our loving obedience to His commands, when asked why we do what we do, could be as plain as the child-like answer of, **"Because He said so!!!"** We obey what His Word commands, simply because His Word tells us what we should or should not do, yet man, in his own worldly wisdom, has tried to be clever in his own eyes and in vain attempts to reason away the need for simple obedience!

True worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and Truth, and therefore we recognise our need to not lean on our own understand, but rather trust יהוה with all our heart and believe that His Word is good for us, for He tells us it is and gladly submit to obeying His Truth – this is True Love for Elohim!!!

Without expressing the need for complete obedience to His commands, in our loving response to His love for us, I want to know dig further into the topic of beards

## THE BEARD!!!

In Scripture the Hebrew root word used for 'beard' is זָקַן *zaqan* – Strong's H2206 which means, '*beard, chin*' and comes from the primitive root verb זָקַן *zaqan* – Strong's H2204 which means, '*to be or become old, grow old*'. This makes sense as we know that a man only begins to grow a beard when gets older!

This word for 'beard' - זָקַן *zaqan* is used 19 times in 18 verses in the Tanak, and for the purpose of getting a clear understanding of 'beards', I want us to look at each verse in order to help us establish the clear message, them and teaching we can receive, in helping us understand with clarity what the 'beard' represents and show our need to comply with what is commanded us.

The first time we see this word זָקַן *zaqan* being used is in the following two verses:

**Wayyiqra/Leviticus 13:29-30** "And when a man, or a woman, has an infection on the head or in the beard, <sup>30</sup> then the priest shall look at the infection and see, if it appears deeper than the skin, and there is thin yellow hair in it, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean, it is an eruption, a leprosy of the head or beard."

These verses are collectively a part of the Torah of cleaning for one who has leprosy or a skin infection.

The Hebrew word for 'leprosy' is טַרְסָאֵת *tsaraath* – Strong's H6883 '*leprosy, malignant skin disease in people; and in clothing or buildings – mildew or mould*'.

In understanding that leprosy in Scripture is a picture of sin and rebellion, and when understanding the head of a man is typically linked to authority, we are able to see that when one is found to have been in rebellion to the clear Authority of the pure Truth of Elohim, then the 'sin' or leprosy is on the head or in the beard!

The one who has an infection of leprosy needs to be cleansed, and we see the instructions for this given in

**Wayyiqra/Leviticus 14.** The word in Hebrew for 'cleansing' is טָהַר *tahorah* – Strong's H2893 meaning, '*purifying, cleansing, becomes clean, purification*', and comes from the word טָהַר *taher* – Strong's H2891 meaning, '*to be clean or pure, pronounce clean, purge, become cleansed, brightness*'.

With this in mind, let us therefore look at the next verse that contains the Hebrew word for 'beard' - זָקַן *zaqan*, which is in:

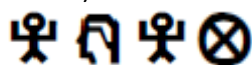
**Wayyiqra/Leviticus 14:9** "And on the seventh day it shall be that he shaves all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shaves off. And he shall wash his garments and wash his body in water, and shall be clean."

This is the first times in Scripture that we see the instruction given to shave one's beard, and we need to understand that this is a part of a the procedure given to one who had been separated for 7 days, after which the hair on their body, including the beard, was to be shaved off.

As we look at the Hebrew word טָהַר *tahorah* we see a wonderful picture in this word alone that speaks of our need to come to Messiah who cleanses us from all sin. Why I say this is because when we look at the ancient symbols of these letters we get a clearer picture of this very message of this Torah of cleansing contained in just one word!

טָהַר *tahorah* – read from right to left are the letters: ט -tet; ה -hay; ר -resh; ה -hay, and when you see this word as written in the ancient pictograph script we see the message clearly – let me show you:

The original pictograph of these letters (from right to left):



Tet – ט:

The original pictograph for this letter is ⊗, a container made of wicker or clay. Containers were a very important item among the nomadic Hebrews. They were used for storing grains and other items. Wicker baskets were used as nets for catching fish. The meanings of this letter are basket, contain, store and clay.

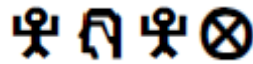
Hey – ה:

The original pictograph for this letter is ☚, a man standing with his arms raised out. The Modern Hebrew and original name for this letter is "hey". The Hebrew word "hey" means "behold", as when looking at a great sight. This word can also mean "breath" or "sigh" as one does when looking at a great sight. The meaning of the letter ☚ is behold, look, breath, sigh and reveal or revelation from the idea of revealing a great sight by pointing it out. It also carries for us the meaning of surrender as we lift up our hands and submit to יהוה as we lift our hands in praise, declaring His authority under which we humbly submit!

Resh - ר:

The Ancient picture for this letter is א, the head of a man. This letter has the meanings of head or man as well as chief, top, beginning or first.

Now in terms of the cleansing process we see the following message through this pictograph lettering of טַהֲרָה tahorah :



We, as 'clay baskets' come and surrender and 'raise our hands' in acknowledgement and confess our sins/lawlessness before our 'head' and High Priest, יהושע Messiah, and put our lives in the hands of Him who 'lifts us up' from the miry clay and makes us clean and purifies us from all unrighteousness!

For more on leprosy and cleansing, please see the Torah portion commentaries of Wayyiqra/Leviticus 12:1-13:59 as well as Wayyiqra/Leviticus 14:1-15:33 on our website (<http://atfotc.com>)

As part of this cleaning we are able to recognise that wonderful work of Messiah, our High Priest and King, who cleanses us through His own Blood, and in our immersion into His Name we are able to see this cleansing we receive – for the old has gone and the new has come! This is what the shaving of one's head and beard at the end of the period of separation symbolises and shadow picture for us, as the one who was unclean and would have shaved their beards, would symbolically be shaving off the old rebellion and lawless authority of self, and receiving a new fresh start that would cause them to grow in the true authority of the cleanliness and purity of Elohim, as they submit to the Torah of cleansing!

Why I am mentioning this, is simply to highlight that the shaving of one's beard, as first mentioned in Scripture, was clearly for a cleansing purpose and was not for recreational preferences or for one's personal fashion sense or choice!!!!

Let us now go on to the next verse where we see the Hebrew word for 'beard' - זָקָן zaqan:

Wayyiqra/Leviticus 19:27 "Do not round the corner of your head, nor destroy the corner of your beard."

Here we have in Scripture the first clear command to not destroy the corner of the beard – what does that actually mean? What is interesting to note is that the instruction given here not to 'round the corner of your head or beard' is given straight after the command to not practice divination and magic; and what is important for us to realise is that the rounding of the head and beard were in fact done as worship rites in pagan cultures, and is still practiced by many today. So what is the instruction saying to us? Let us look at the Hebrew words that always brings clarity to our understanding: The word for 'round' is תַּקִּיפוּ takifu meaning, 'to go or come around' in regards to time or a cycle and also 'trim around' the head or beard as being clear in this verse and comes from the root word נָקַף naqaph Strong's H5362 and carries the meaning, 'to go around, encircle, encompass, to make round, round off' as well as 'to strike or strike off skin, cut down or destroy'.

The word for 'destroy' is the root word שָׁחַח shachath – Strong's H7843 meaning, 'destroy, ruin, spoil, pervert, corrupt'.

The word translated as 'corner' is פֶּאֶה peah – Strong's H6285 meaning, 'corner, side, boundary, edges'.

What is very clear from this verse is the strict prohibition of rounding off the hair of one's head at "the edges" or trimming "the edges" of one's beard. Now as simple as this instruction may seem, sadly so many wrestle against this very straight forward command; and while it may seem meaningless and of no effect, we must recognize that this command is found listed with other abominations such as body piercings or cuttings, tattooing, and even cultic prostitution.

Cutting (shaving) the hair at the sides of one's head was a pagan ritual done as a mourning/grieving rite for the dead, and is still practiced in many cultures today. Hair was also used as a form of divination, as those who worshipped the stars and solar system would cut their hair evenly around and shave the edges off. It was a custom of the Arabs to shave the hair around the head, and let a tuft stand up on the crown in honour of Bacchus; a custom still very prominent in India and China.

The trimming or cutting of the beard was an ancient pagan practice associated with the dead, as offerings of the hair would be placed with the deceased to appease the 'spirits' of the underworld, a practice clearly forbidden and prohibited for the set-apart one's of יהוה our Elohim.

A typical question arises that if one is not cutting the edges of their beard in relation to funeral rites of the dead, then is it acceptable to יהוה? My answer to this is simply NO – it is not acceptable to יהוה, as we do not see anywhere in Scripture that the cutting of the beard is acceptable to יהוה. So cutting it in relation to say, one's desires vs. paganism, is not acceptable either. One might ask another question that should help us to see the answer clearer, "Is one free to celebrate Christmas if one doesn't worship Tammuz but יהושע?" Although we find no explicit reference in Scripture not to celebrate Christmas, there are many indirect references not to, as it is clearly not a feast of יהוה.

And while we find no explicit references not to trim one's beard outside the concept of paganism, we find numerous references to the untrimmed beard as being the standard, with this verse in Wayyiqra/Leviticus 19:27 forming the

background. The reason for this instruction has to do with pagan practices and idolatry and so to destroy the sides of one's beard is prohibited, whether it be for pagan practices or for other reasons.

There is however a time when one is permitted to, and in fact must shave off all his hair, and that is for the cleansing requirements of a leper (**Wayyiqra/Leviticus 14:8-9**) as already discussed above; and done at the end of their time of separation!

The next verse we see this clear command not to destroy the beard is in reference to leaders as found in:

**Wayyiqra/Leviticus 21:4-5** **"A leader does not defile himself among his people, to profane himself; 5 they do not make any bald place on their heads, and they do not shave the corner of their beard, and they do not make a cutting in their flesh."**

A leader here refers also to the head of the home, i.e. the husband who is expected to lead his family according the clear instructions of the Torah and not be found to do as the nations do. While we have seen in **Wayyiqra/Leviticus 19** how it is clear that this command to not 'shave' is for all Yisra'el, here we see the further emphasis placed on leadership, as they are the ones who are to lead the family and community in the correct manner; and so we once again reiterate the strict command to not shave one's head nor shave one's beard!!! What is a huge concern and sad reality today, is that there are many today who are claiming to be true torah teachers and leaders in the greater community of the returning tribes of Yisra'el, while they neglect to heed this command; and when I see a so called 'torah' teacher who is clean shaven or has a 'goatee', or even a 'shaped' beard that has the majority of the 'corners or sides' shaven away, I have to question their validity as true teachers of the torah of Elohim!

There is the view that this instruction refers specifically to the mourning of the dead and therefore based on this view it is thought that it is ok then to shave for any other reason. While at first glance this may sound like a valid point, let us consider the obvious; and that is that in Scripture the instruction to not shave for the dead presupposes that one has a beard! Secondly, if the argument is used that this instruction on not to shave applies only to the mourning for the dead then one has to ask in the same breath in regards to the instruction given in Wayyiqra/Leviticus 19 if it is then ok to have a tattoo if not done for the mourning of the dead? The answer is pretty obvious – NO – no markings or cuttings in the flesh is allowed, period!

Let us move on to the next verse where the Hebrew word 'beard' - זָקָן **zaqan** is found:

**Shemu'el Aleph/1 Samuel 17:35** **"I went out after it and smote it, and rescued it from its mouth. And when it rose against me, I caught it by its beard, and smote it and killed it."**

These words were the words of Dawid to king Sha'ul, before he faced Golyath and told Sha'ul that he had already killed a lion and a bear while tending the sheep of his father! While this verse has no relevance to the cutting of one's beard or not, I simply am showing all the accounts that this word זָקָן **zaqan** is found, and here it renders how Dawid grabbed the animal by the hair on its face (or whiskers)!!!

The next verse that the word 'beard' - זָקָן **zaqan** is found is in:

**Shemu'el Aleph/1 Samuel 21:12-13** **"And Dawid took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Aqish the sovereign of Gath, 13 and changed his behaviour before them, and feigned madness in their hands, and scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down on his beard."**

Dawid had fled from Sha'ul and had come to the sovereign of Gath, and after the servants of Aqish had revealed to him who Dawid was, and how Yisra'el sang praises for his mighty victories, Dawid acted like a madman and let spit run out of his mouth and on his beard! This is just a very plain and clear verse that shows us that Dawid, the beloved sovereign of Yisra'el, had a beard!

The next 2 verses that the word 'beard' - זָקָן **zaqan** is found is in:

**Shemu'el Bēt/2 Samuel 10:4-5** **"So Hanun took Dawid's servants and shaved off half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, as far as their buttocks, and sent them away. 5 And they informed Dawid, and he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the sovereign said, "Wait at Yeriho until your beards have grown, and then return."**

Here we have a very interesting account that is a very powerful lesson in itself, as to the reality of what the shaving off of one's beard signifies. Here we see that Dawid instructed his servants, who had been captured and had their garments cut to the buttocks and half of their beard shaved off, to stay at Yeriho **until their beards had grown** and then return. By shaving half their beard Hanun not only treated Dawid's ambassadors with contempt, but made them objects of ridicule. The shaving of the beard of a slave was also recognised as a sign of servitude and a stripping away of authority. Now if one was permitted to shave your beard then why did Dawid tell them to wait until their beards grew back instead of telling them to shave off the other half? Well that is easy – because we are supposed to have full beards!!!

Hanun made a clear statement to Dawid, that by humiliating Dawid's servants, he did not respect nor acknowledge, nor would he submit to the authority of Dawid, under which these servants walked.

Herein lies another very powerful lesson for us today! הַנּוּן Hānun – Strong’s H2586 means, *‘favoured, gracious’*, and comes from the primitive root הָנַן ḥanan – Strong’s H2603 meaning, *‘show favour, be gracious to, dealt graciously with, given to them voluntarily, shown favour’*. There are so many who are walking in ignorance of the truth today, and while they claim to be ‘under grace’, their disregard for the Torah and complete observance of the commands of Elohim, reveal that they show no regard for the needed submission to the Beloved King’s instructions; and in the process will even do their utmost at trying to humiliate true believers and try to strip away their true identity through ridicule and slander. Just as Dawid encouraged his servants to wait at Yeriho until their beards had grown back, we too hear the encouragement of our Beloved King, יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Messiah, to wait for His soon return, and mature in our loving obedience as we wait on Him.

This same account is given in:

**Dibre haYamim Aleph/1 Chronicles 19:4-5** *“So Hānun took Dawid’s servants, and shaved them, and cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away. 5 And when some went and informed Dawid about the men, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the sovereign said, “Remain at Yeriho until your beards have grown, then return.”*”

The next verse that the word ‘beard’ - זָקָן zaqan is found is in:

**Shemu’el Bet/2 Samuel 20:9** *“And Yo’ab said to Amasa, “Peace, my brother?” And Yo’ab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.”*”

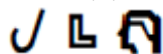
Amasa was caught off guard when Yo’ab extended his right hand and took the beard of Amasa as a form of greeting, and Yo’ab struck Amasa with his sword that was in his left hand, and did not notice it because a sword would normally be in one’s right hand if it was to be used; and the showing one’s right hand normally indicated one was unarmed. But he kept his right hand occupied in order to deceive Amasa. Having said all that, I simply am making mention of another verse where the word for ‘beard’ is found.

The next verse that the word ‘beard’ - זָקָן zaqan is found is in:

**Yeshayahu/Isaiah 7:20** *“In that day יְהוָה shall shave with a razor hired beyond the River – with the sovereign of Ashshur – the head and the hair of the legs, and also remove the beard.”*”

While we have clearly recognised that the shaving of one’s head and beard is strictly prohibited, except in the case of cleansed lepers and a Nazirite who had ended their vow, we need to recognise this clear message given here in Yeshayahu! This removal of the hair from the head, legs and beard would serve as a sign of the humiliation coming upon the people who had clearly disregarded the Torah of יְהוָה! What is interesting to note here, is that with the hair of the legs too being removed by a razor, symbolises a rebuke against those who have disregarded the need to keep the Feasts of יְהוָה, for the Hebrew word used here for ‘legs’ is רֶגֶל ‘regel’ Strong’s H7272 – means *‘a foot/feet or to walk’*, and in Scripture this often speaks of one’s obedience to walking according to the commands of יְהוָה and obeying His call to keep His feasts as commanded; as this same word is used in **Wayyiqra/Leviticus 23** and translated as ‘times’ in reference to the 3 times a year all males were to appear before Elohim at Yerushalayim, marking out the clear need to walk according to His word and guard the Appointed Times or Feasts of יְהוָה!

In the Ancient Script the pictographic symbols for the word רֶגֶל ‘regel’ which means ‘feet’ or one’s walk is as follows:



the letter ‘resh’ – ‘ר’ – is a picture of **a head of a man** which speaks of headship or beginning or first. This letter has the meanings of head or man as well as chief, top, beginning or first.



the letter ‘gimel’ – ‘ג’ – which in the ancient script is pictured as **‘a foot’** carries the meaning or ‘walk, gather, carry’ as referring to the functions of a foot; and it can also give the meaning of a gathering of people, and we know that ‘feet’ in Hebrew speaks of one’s walk and ability to keep the feasts of יְהוָה.



the letter ‘lamed’ – ‘ל’ – is a picture of a **‘shepherd’s staff’** and can give the meaning of ‘to, toward’ as a shepherd’s staff was used to push or pull flock in the direction the shepherd wanted them to go; and so this also pictures ‘authority’ of the one leading as well as a ‘yoke’ which is used to direct; and from this we can see how in Scripture this pictures the ‘rod’ of our Good Shepherd - יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Messiah that leads us and guides us!



The Hebrew letter 'lamed' – ל' has the numerical value of 30 and its name – **lamed** – is based on the word לָמַד **lamad** – **Strong's H3925** which carries the meaning, '**to exercise in, learn, instruct, teach, train**'; and so we see that by the age of 30 a priest should have been trained and instructed in the ways of Torah and learned all that they can and be ready to now do the work of service.

In understanding that this pictographic symbol is another clear picture in its meaning to be instructed and led by the Shepherd and The Good Shepherd – Messiah – was 30 years old when He began His duty of the priesthood, as reckoned by Torah! Dawid began to rule at 30 years old and Yosëph too was given rule over Mitsrayim at 30 years of age – all shadow pictures of Our King and High Priest!

To have the hair of one's legs removed is a clear rebuke for lack of submission to the Truth, and so it is also with the removal of one's beard. Here in Yeshayahu the message was clear, and having the beard shaved symbolises a loss of authority or self-rule, as well as the fact that they were no longer a set apart as a people, and that they were essentially becoming pagans through the mixing with the nations:

**Hoshëa/Hosea 7:8 "Ephrayim mixes himself among the peoples, Ephrayim has become a cake unturned."**

Let us look at another verse in **Yeshayahu/Isaiah** where we find the Hebrew word for 'beard' – זָקָן **zaqan**:

**Yeshayahu/Isaiah 15:2 "He has gone up to the house and Diḅon, to the high places to weep. Mo'ab is wailing over Neḅo and over Mëydeḅa; on all their heads is baldness, and every beard is cut off."**

This was part of the message concerning Mo'ab, and once again we see here the picture of the humiliation of a false authority being stripped away, and also are clear symbols of the loss of one's wealth and wisdom, as we see also being verified from:

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 48:36-38 "So My heart sounds for Mo'ab like flutes, and My heart sounds for the men of Qir Ḥeres like flutes. Therefore the wealth they made shall be gone. 37 "For every head is bald, and every beard clipped – cuts on all the hands, and sackcloth on the loins. 38 "On all the house-tops of Mo'ab and in its streets it is all lamentation, for I have broken Mo'ab like a vessel in which no one delights," declares יהוה."**

Once again we are able to see the symbolic picture of one's head being made bald and one's beard being clipped or cut off.

The Hebrew word that is translated as 'clipped' in the above verse, and also translated as 'cut off' in the previous verses we have mentioned is גָּרַע **gara** – **Strong's H1639** which means, '**to diminish, restrain, withdraw, cut off, limit, reduce, take away, keep back, clip or cut off**', and so we are able to see the effect of **cutting off** one's beard – and that is to 'diminish' the Word of Elohim, which Yirmeyahu was clearly warned not to do, as this word is used in:

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 26:2 "Thus said יהוה, 'Stand in the courtyard of the House of יהוה, and speak to all the cities of Yehuḅah, which come to bow themselves in the House of יהוה, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not diminish a word."**

When we are to speak and do according to the Torah, then we cannot and must never 'diminish' the Truth! We cannot 'keep back and restrain, or reduce' the clear Truth we are to speak and do! In a manner of speaking, the beard is often seen by some as being the 'guard' for one's mouth; and while we do not see this in Scripture, what we do see in Scripture is that a removal of one's beard is done as a symbol of having diminished the Word by not adhering to it; and in the case of cleansing, it is an acknowledgement of one's old ways of sin and lawlessness and a submission to walking wholeheartedly in the Torah of Truth – and the growing of one's FULL beard expresses such submission and obedience!

We see another verse in Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah that contains the Hebrew word for 'beard' – זָקָן **zaqan**:

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 41:4-5 "And it came to be, on the second day after he had killed Gedalyahu, when no one yet knew it, 5 that men came from Sheḱem, from Shiloh, and from Shomeron, eighty men with their beards shaved and their garments torn, having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the House of יהוה."**

In this chapter of Yirmeyahu we begin with the account of Yishma'ël son of Nethanyah, son of Elishama, who came with 10 men to Gedalyahu and killed him while eating bread with him at Mitspah. Yishma'ël pretended to weep for Gedalyahu and lured these men from Sheḱem into the city and killed them and threw them into a pit. However 10 among them pleaded for their life telling him they had wheat, barley, oil and honey hidden in the field, and so he held back and did not kill them. This chapter is another shadow picture of the counterfeit messiah who shall slay the nations (as pictured by the 70 that Yishma'ël had slain), while a remnant (as pictured by the 10 – symbolic of the 10 tribes of Yisra'ël) were not killed. These men from Sheḱem should not have shaven their beards, nor cut themselves! They were on their way to worship יהוה. This was in the 7<sup>th</sup> month, and they were perhaps going up to keep Yom Kippur, and perhaps did not yet know that the temple had already been destroyed. Here we see a clear picture of many who are seeking to worship יהוה, yet they are still trying to do so in a pagan manner, due to a lack of proper teaching. Their shaving of beards and cutting of

themselves for mourning rites was a pagan practice that they had certainly become accustomed to under the falsified adopted under the wicked rule that the northern House of Yisra'ël had been subjected to for many years before being dispersed.

What I want to show here in these verses is that even while one thinks that the shaving of one's beard does not affect one's worship unto יהוה – it does, and we need to be aware of this clear fact!

Let us now look at another verse that contains this Hebrew word for 'beard' - זָקָן *zaqan*:

**Yehezqël/Ezekiel 5:1** “**And you, son of man, take a sharp sword, take it as a barber's razor, and you shall pass it over your head and your beard. And you shall take scales to weigh and divide the hair.**”

The instructions given here to Yehezqël are once again given by יהוה as a clear sign of Yisra'ël's disobedience and the judgement that was coming as a result of such disobedience.

As we consider the thread of verses regarding the shaving of one's beard, we are able to clearly see that it symbolises the stripping away or the cutting off of one's authority, or the lack of submission to authority.

Here we see how Yehezqël, as a prophet of Elohim representing Yisra'ël, was to take a razor, that represented the Babelonians, would come and 'pass over' the hair on his head and beard and divide the hair, which represented the people. This cutting of the hair was to represent the calamities and disgrace that was coming upon them, and how there would be the clear distributions of the Judgement of Elohim over a rebellious people, who had rebelled against and rejected the right-rulings of Elohim and refused to walk in His ways.

To have a razor pass over his beard was not a positive witness for Yisra'ël, but was rather a clear witness against them.

Let us now look at another verse where we see word for 'beard' - זָקָן *zaqan* being used:

**Tehillim/Psalm 133:2** “**Like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aharon, running down on the collar of his robes**”

Here in this verse the precious oil that is running down the beard of Aharon is likened to how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity – a unity that is as a result of walking in obedience to the commands of Elohim!

Aharon was the high priest, and shadow pictures for us our High Priest, יהושע Messiah, in whom we dwell and are joined together, walking in unity and fellowship with one another and walking in the joy of His commands, having been cleansed by His blood:

**Yohanan Aleph/1 John 1:7** “**But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of יהושע Messiah His Son cleanses us from all sin.**”

Now we will look at the last verse in the Tanak where we see word for 'beard' - זָקָן *zaqan* being used:

**Ezra 9:3** “**And when I heard this word, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished.**”

This Ezra did after he had heard that the people of Yisra'ël, the priests and the Lëwites had not separated themselves from the nations and their abominations, and had intermingled with the nations, with the leaders and rulers being foremost in this trespass.

This was once again a symbolic picture of a lack of submission to Elohim, by a people that had been called out and set-apart unto Elohim as His Bride!

יהושע Messiah, our High Priest and King, had a beard as we see in the prophetic words describing Him being handed over to be tortured and having His beard plucked out of his cheeks in:

**Yeshayahu/Isaiah 50:6** “**I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard, I did not hide My face from humiliation and spitting.**”

The Hebrew word used for phrase, 'plucked out the beard' here is מָרַט *marat* – Strong's H4803 which means, 'to make smooth, bare or bald, to scour, to pluck out the beard', and is also used in **Ezra 9:3** quoted above.

As we consider the use of this Hebrew word for 'beard', and the clear thread we see throughout the Tanak (O.T.), we are clearly able to recognise our need to submit to and walk in the clear Torah of Elohim; and in doing so we too are to heed the clear command to not cutting (shaving or rounding) the corner of the beard.

I want to make it very clear that we are not to cut off or make bald patches on our heads and circle them as the monks do, for example; nor are we to shave the head in a circular fashion as some religions do; and we are not to cut off the edges of our beards – that part which grows on our cheeks!

To put it plainly, as set-apart servants of the Most High, we need to recognise and acknowledge the following:

A “goatee” is not acceptable for a Torah observant follower of Messiah!

A moustache alone is not acceptable for a Torah observant follower of Messiah!

Any fashioned or 'styled' beard acceptable for a Torah observant follower of Messiah!

We are to grow a FULL BEARD and keep it tidy, and we are not to grow our hair too long, as we see being instructed to us when speaking of the priesthood in the Millennial Reign as seen in:

**Yehezqël/Ezekiel 44: 20** **“And their heads they shall not shave, nor shall they let their hair grow long – they shall keep their hair well-trimmed.”**

The Hebrew word translated as 'well-trimmed' is קָסָם *kasam* – Strong's H3697 which means, ***‘to shear, clip (only trim – not shave)’***, and in this we recognise our need to be 'tidy' and well groomed with a **FULL BEARD!!!** This does not allow for any 'shaping' or styling by shaving parts of the beard, but rather it tells us, as a royal priesthood, that we are to keep a well-trimmed FULL beard!!!

We are a royal priesthood and are expected to look like it! Any Torah claiming follower of Messiah that tells you he is allowed to shave his beard, neglects the authority of the Torah, and if the outward picture is neglected who knows what is in the heart!!!

When the world makes a statement that **“a best a man can get”** is to be clean shaven, as we see being promoted by Gillette's advertising campaigns, we certainly recognise how this goes totally against the plumb-line of the Torah, and that they are wrong in their promoting of falsehood and lies. It further reveals a lack of submission to the authority of the instructions of יהוה in order to rule self, which will only lead to destruction. The best a man can get is to walk as Messiah walked and guard the commands of Elohim – so men of Elohim:

## **GROW YOUR FULL BEARDS!!!**

Having shown you the Scriptural references regarding the beard, I hope that by the end of this article you will clearly recognise that any Torah observant man of Elohim ought to have a full beard, and not shave off any part of it, for to do so would be a neglecting to walk in complete obedience to our Master and King, and show a lack of reverence for His Authority!

What therefore is the conclusion of the matter:

**Qoheleth/Ecclesiastes 12:13** **“Let us hear the conclusion of the entire matter: Fear Elohim and guard His commands, for this applies to all mankind!”**