



Ahron's Great Longing for Mitzvot

"And Hashem said to Moshe: Speak to Ahron your brother – he shall not come at all times into the Sanctuary" (Vayikra 16:2)

The following commandment, specific to Ahron and his sons the kohanim, was told to Aaron directly by Hashem Himself: "Hashem spoke to Ahron saying: Do not drink intoxicating wine, you and your sons with you, when you come to the Tent of Meeting" (Vayikra 10:8). This gives rise to the question that how come here, the law forbidding them to enter the innermost Sanctuary, "he shall not come at all times into the Sanctuary", was told to Moshe by Hashem, and he was commanded to tell Aaron his brother. Why did Hashem not give over this command directly to Aaron?

I would like to suggest the following answer: This directive forbidding them to enter the Holy of Holies whenever he wished was a very hard concept for Aaron to accept. Aaron's entire essence was longing for closeness to Hashem, without any partitions or boundaries. Suddenly here, Hashem is setting some kind of limit and forbidding him to approach Him in the innermost Sanctuary, besides once yearly on Yom Kippur. This was a difficult command for Aaron and his sons, so in order that they shouldn't be distressed about it, Hashem told Moshe to impart it to them in a pleasant way, explaining that this is Hashem's will and he must fulfill it with love.

This idea also correlates with the fact that Aaron came from the tribe of Levi, who were exemplary for their defining desire to fulfill Hashem's will with mesirut nefesh. When the Bnei Yisrael sinned with the Golden Calf, Moshe gathered the tribe of Levi and said to them "Every man, put his sword on his thigh and pass back and forth from gate to gate in the camp. Let every man kill his brother, every man his fellow, and every man his near one" (Shemot 32:27). There is no doubt that this mitzva was extremely difficult for them. How can a person bring himself to raise his hand against his own family members and kill them?! But since this was Hashem's wish – they banished all personal feelings from their hearts and distanced any subjective sentiments, and through that were able to wholly fulfill Hashem's command. For this was their essence – performing Hashem's will even when the matter at hand was most difficult and almost impossible.

This was Aaron's attitude; he did not let up in his avodat Hashem. He was continually thirsty to fulfill Hashem's wish, as the following Rashi illustrates: "Why is the section of the Menorah adjacent to the section of the offerings of the leaders? For when Aaron saw the dedication offering of the leaders, he was chagrined that neither he nor his tribe was part of the dedication. Hashem said to him – by your life, your (portion) is greater than theirs, for you will prepare and kindle the Menorah" (Bamidbar 8:2).

This leaves us with an interesting observation: Aaron HaKohen's entire life was taken up with his service in the Beit Hamikdash. He would offer the daily sacrifices, bring the ketoret (incense) and kindle the lights. So how come the offerings of the leaders at the dedication of the mizbeach - their only offering - disturbed him to such an extent that he was terribly bothered at not being part of it?

The answer is consistent with what we explained above. Aaron HaKohen was never satisfied with what he had already achieved in matters of spirituality, but always strived for more. His strongest wish was to reach the closest degree possible of holiness. Therefore, despite his constant service in the Mikdash, he still had a deep desire to take part in the offerings of the leaders. Aaron HaKohen loved Hashem with a burning love which was never satiated, and he longed for ever-increasing closeness to Hashem and constant spiritual growth.

His holy sons Nadav and Avihu, also followed in this path and longed to come close to Hashem as much as was humanly possible. They agreed to sacrifice their lives and die for the sake of achieving this goal. As it says (Vayikra 16:1) "when they approached before Hashem, and they died". They approached Hashem too intensely and wished to cleave to the shechina which is a consuming fire, and therefore they were burnt. They inherited this trait from their father Ahron, who was a flame of fire in his avodat Hashem.

This kind of person, who has a burning passion in his heart to come closer to Hashem, will certainly find it very difficult to hear a command which limits him and forbids him from entering the Sanctuary whenever he wishes. Therefore Hashem had pity on him and sent Moshe to explain this command to him in a way that he will accept it.

Concerning the burnt-offering and guilt-offering sacrifices that the Bnei Yisrael were commanded to offer, it is important to understand that the main concept that lies behind the idea of bringing korbanot, is that a person should feel that he is offering himself and his desires before Hashem Yitbarach, and he should be prepared to bind his personal desires on the mizbeach – for the sake of fulfilling the Torah and mitzvot. We are told (Vayikra 1:2), "When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem". This implies that a person should sacrifice himself for the honor of Hashem and His Torah, just like Aaron and his sons who sacrificed themselves for Hashem's service and for His Torah.

Tzaddikim conduct themselves in this world with one singular goal: to sacrifice their souls for the honor of Hashem and to be able to perform His will wholeheartedly. This is why Hashem fulfills their desires and requests and listens to their prayers and supplications.

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Hilkot

29 – Rabbi Mordechai Shalom Yosef Friedman, Admor of Sadigurah

30 – Rabbi Yakov Beirav

1 – Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapira, Rosh Yeshiva of Be'er Ya'akov

2 – Rabbi Shmuel of Nikolsburg

3 – Rabbi Aryeh Leib Tzintz, author of 'Meloh Ha'omer'

4 – Rabbi Yakov Sassportass, author of 'Tizit Novel Tzvi'

5 – Rabbi Meir Auerbach

28 – Rabbi Yechiya Tzalach, the 'Maharitz'



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v' Rabbeinu Hagaon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

A Healthy Dose of Zikuy Harabim

I once visited my family doctor, Dr. Bismuth, for routine tests which I do every so often. Then I returned to my regular busy schedule of receiving people, delivering mussar lectures to the yeshiva students, and various other activities connected with the public needs. I summarily forgot about the previous tests.

But when I was in the thick of receiving people that very afternoon, my secretary, R' Yitzchak Marciano, came in and informed me that the results were not good, and I must report immediately to the hospital. I phoned my doctor, expecting him to assure me that there was no need to hurry. Imagine my chagrin at hearing my doctor, who is normally calm and congenial, speak in a most worried manner. He ordered me to stop what I was doing. I should likewise cancel my upcoming flight for the sake of zikuy harabim.

How could I possibly halt my holy works? That day, I was scheduled to deliver a shiur in the kollel, and, later that week, fly to Canada to strengthen the Jewish community there. It was inconceivable that I should cancel all of my plans. After analyzing all angles, I decided to continue as planned, not halting my efforts in zikuy harabim in any way. This is my purpose in

this world; how can I stop in the midst of it all? I believed that, B'ezrat Hashem, my medical condition would stabilize, and I would have no need for physicians or prescriptions.

I was still sunk in thought, when I was suddenly roused by the ringing phone. My family doctor ordered that I repeat the tests in order to verify that my condition had not worsened. I did as I was told and then went back to my work, as I had decided to do.

I will not say that fear and worry did not enter my mind at all. Nonetheless, I placed my trust in Hashem. I truly believed that He can do anything and would certainly not abandon me. With this uplifting thought, I went to the kollel to deliver the shiur.

In the middle of the shiur, R' Yitzchak, my secretary, entered. This time, he was happily waving a pile of papers in the air. These were the test results. A smile spread across his face, and he joyfully informed me that, Baruch Hashem, the results were fine, and I was in perfect health.

How thankful I was to witness the open miracle Hashem performed for me. I am certain that it was only in the merit of the resolution to continue in my pursuit of zikuy harabim, in spite of my concern for my health, which annulled the harsh decree.



Words of our Sages

To Mention the Feather or Not?

"He shall don a sacred linen Tunic; linen breeches shall be upon his flesh"

(Vayikra 16:4)

"Lately," protested Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin zt"l in his sefer 'Oznaim L'Torah', "the 'mitchassdim' (those who behave with false piety), have proliferated and they present themselves as lovers of the Jewish people. They complain about anyone who stands up in defense of the breaches of the generation, saying that it is forbidden to judge the holy people of Israel in a negative light. They support their views by claiming to be followers of the tzaddik Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdithev zt"l, who was famous for always finding a way to judge the Jewish people favorably and they are of the opinion that the more one is able to find the benefit of the doubt, the more praiseworthy one is.

It has come to a point where this outlook has invalidated the mitzva of rebuke. There was a story with a certain 'mitchassid' who challenged the Rav of his town for rebuking someone for eating treif food. This 'mitchassid' shouted at the Rav telling him that it is forbidden to judge a Jewish person's actions in a negative manner.

But the truth is, Rabbi Zalman zt"l determines, there is no doubt that if we see someone transgressing a Torah commandment, one is obligated to rebuke the person to the best of one's ability. Every Rav is obligated to "proclaim to My people their willful sins, to the House of Ya'akov their transgressions" (Yeshaya 58:1) in order that they should repent and return to Hashem and He will heal them. This negative conclusion of their behavior is really a 'merit' for Yisrael, for this is what will bring them closer to their Father in Heaven.

When does this rule apply? When the one offering the rebuking is speaking directly to the person or people who sinned, then he is obligated to take a stand and reprimand them for their sins. However, when a Rav or the one admonishing is speaking to Hashem and praying to Him, then he must favor Am Yisrael and judge their actions in a positive light and find excuses for their sins, even in a far-fetched fashion. He must always search for merits and speak only good and kindness about Yisrael before Hashem.

This distinction is brought out with the garments that the Kohen Gadol wore on Yom Kippur. On this awesome day of the year when the Kohen Gadol served in the azarah which was full of Kohanim and Yisraelim who came to observe the service in the Mikdash, he would wear his golden vestments. Despite the fact that these garments would remind them of the sin of the Golden Calf, this is not a problem. On the contrary, the people should see and remember how they angered Hashem – this will cause them to feel abashed and to return to Hashem who is ready to forgive.

But once the Kohen Gadol enters the innermost Sanctuary, no one is permitted to be in the heichel. He prays to Hashem on behalf of the people alone; no one can see him or hear him. Certainly now there is no place for rebuke and at this time he is required to find all kinds of excuses and justifications in order to vindicate the Bnei Yisrael and to find merits for their actions before Hashem.

This is why in the innermost Sanctuary he must remove his golden vestments which are a reminder of the Golden Calf and instead he wears only white garments which are a sign of forgiveness.

Rabbi Hillel Brisk shlita, told once that once when he was a young bachur, he noticed that a feather had fallen onto his Rosh Yeshiva's coat. He couldn't decide whether it was correct to point this out to his Rosh Yeshiva or not. He consulted with an authority who told him that it would be correct to mention it but that he should do so in a subtle manner.

This true story can be used as a mashal. Everyone understands that the young bachur preferred not to point this out to his esteemed Rosh Yeshiva. So what was his indecision? He realized that maybe he has an obligation to make him aware of this, for the Rosh Yeshiva's own good. This should be our attitude every time we debate whether to reprimand someone. If the person feels true responsibility for his friend, then it bothers him that 'feathers' – all sorts of sins- have landed on his friend. "He loves rebuke" refers to one whose love for his friend is so great and he is spurred solely by his desire for his rectification. This person will be able to overcome his awkwardness and offer the rebuke!

The Haftarah

"Yonatan said to him, "Tomorrow is the New Moon" (Shmuel I, 20)

The connection to the parsha: The day following this Shabbat (Sunday and Monday), will be Rosh Chodesh Iyar. This is the connection to the haftarah in which the verse says, "Tomorrow is the New Moon".



Guard Your Tongue

Keep Your Distance

In Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer in the will of R' Eliezer HaGadol, he cautions his son Herkonus with the following words:

"My son: Don't sit in the company of those who gossip about their friends, for their words will go up to heaven where they will be inscribed, and all those sitting in their company will be considered as a wicked group and as habitual speakers of lashon hara."



Pearls of the Parshah

The Robe has a Unique Role

"After the death of Aaron's two sons" (Vayikra 16, 1)

The Midrash enumerates one of the reasons for the death of the sons of Aaron was that they entered the temple while they were lacking one of the priestly garments. "What were they lacking (which garment)?" "They were lacking the robe."

At first sight this is difficult to comprehend, for the sons of Aaron were merely ordinary kohanim, while the robe was one the garments that only the kohen gadol wore and thus they were not obligated to wear it?

Rabeinu Asher answers, that since the sons of Aaron took license to conduct themselves as kohanim gedolim by entering the Holy of Holies with incense (which was a privilege reserved strictly for the kohen gadol on Yom Kippur), thus according to their viewpoint (that they are like kohanim gedolim) they were obligated to wear the eight garments of the kohen gadol, Therefore, they were considered to be "lacking of priestly garments", and were liable to the death penalty.

In truth, the sons of Aaron were lacking all of the garments of the kohen gadol, not just the robe. Why then does the Midrash mention only the robe and not the other garments?

The book "Yam HaTalmud" explains this according to a different Midrash that the sons of Aaron sinned by speaking lashon hara about Moshe and Aaron; "when will these two elders die and we shall lead the generation"

Chazal state that the robe of the kohen gadol atoned for the sin of lashon hara. Therefore, the Midrash says that they lacking the "robe" meaning that they were lacking atonement for the sin of lashon hara and were thus punished.

Not to let the Cloud to bring us to Despair

"For in a cloud I will appear upon the Ark-cover" (Vayikra 16,2)

Rabbi Meir Shapira, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin once commented that this verse refers to weak-natured people who in difficult times manifest weakness of emunah. Regarding such people, the Torah here states: "For in a cloud I will appear upon the Ark-cover; a person must never despair, even when he is going through hard times. For many times when the world is covered with darkness and it seems as if there is no hope; suddenly the sun of hope shines forth and reveals to us the light of salvation in its utmost glory. A Jew must train himself constantly to be prepared for difficult times which one is liable to encounter in the course of his lifetime. He must remember that after the heavy storms the sun shall rise again.

Imitation is Cheap

"Do not perform the practice of the land of Egypt in which you dwelled" (Vayikra 18,3)

Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib, the admor of Gur and author of the "Sfat Emet", comments that the Torah is not referring to abominable or forbidden acts, for we are commanded concerning them in the following verses. Rather here the Torah is adjuring us regarding permissible things. The children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must be careful not to imitate the lifestyle of the Egyptians and the Canaanites; the lifestyle of the goy, not to eat like a goy not to drink like a goy and in general not to act in any manner like a goy.

Treasures

*Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik,
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shilita*



"Be As Scrupulous in Performing a 'Minor' Mitzva, as in a 'Major' One"

"Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of Ahron's two sons, when they approached before Hashem, and they died" (Vayikra 16:1)

Chazal offer different reasons (Yalkut Shimoni remez 554) why the sons of Ahron died. One of the reasons is because they did not marry. This seems to be difficult to understand. What is the difference between Aaron's sons and Ben Azai? Our Sages tell us about Ben Azai that after marrying his wife, he realized that his soul was pining for Torah and he could not survive without it, therefore he went and divorced her. The Midrash says that on the night of their wedding he asked his wife to hold the candle for him because he wished to study Torah and delve into it throughout the night. She stood with the candle in her hand until the morning, and the next day when he observed her distress, he sent her back to her father's house and the Sages permitted him to divorce her.

The holy Zohar says that after the souls of Nadav and Avihu left them, they cleaved to Hashem and became an inseparable part of the shechina. This could be the reason why the verse says "after the death of Aaron's two sons", without mentioning their names. The Torah wishes to hint to us that after their death they were so tightly bound to the holy shechina to the extent that we can say that it was as if, just like the Name of Hashem is hidden and it is forbidden to say it—their names too are not mentioned to tell us what a great level of holiness they achieved.

Why were they punished for not marrying while the Sages permitted Ben Azai to divorce his wife in order to be free to learn Torah?

I would like to suggest that while it is true that some Gedolei Yisrael and Chizkiyahu HaMelech and the sons of Aaron were exceptionally holy and their entire lives were devoted to Hashem, however Ben Azai did not know of anything else besides Torah learning. He didn't have a hand or leg in this world, as he himself answered the Sages "what should I do that my soul desires to learn Torah?" He was married to the holy Torah and distanced himself entirely from all worldly concerns.

The sons of Aaron were certainly holy and pure and achieved an exceptionally high level, even above that of Moshe and Aaron as the above Midrash points out, but nevertheless Hashem indicted them for not getting married for there are also other reasons why Hashem punished them- they entered the Mikdash intoxicated and they also said "when will these two elders die and we will be able to lead the people". Even though their sole intention was for the sake of Hashem, as the commentaries explain, nevertheless Hashem said to them that if they had time to make reckonings of when will these elders die in order that they can take their position and lead the people, certainly it was fitting that they should find the time to marry, for this commandment is one of the 613 mitzvot and that is why they were punished.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Two Yetzer Haras

“ From the assembly of the Children of Israel he shall take two he-goats for a sin-offering and one ram for a burnt-offering” (Vayikra 16,5).

On Yom Kippur the Kohen brought in the Beit Hamikdash two sin-offerings, two he-goats. What was the purpose of these sacrifices? Rav Yisrael Salanter explains: The two he-goats parallel two types of yetzer hara; there is a yetzer hara of desire, and concerning this yetzer hara the Torah states: “Aaron shall bring near the he-goat...and make it a sin-offering.” As Chazal stated “with all your heart – with your two inclinations;” to utilize the power of desire for matters of sanctity.

There is another yetzer hara of “spite”, to anger Hashem. Concerning this yetzer hara it is stated: “Shall be sent to Azazel to the Wilderness;” in other words, a person has to distance himself absolutely from this yetzer hara.

Men of Faith

Excerpts from the book *Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto*

Rabbi Chaim Barda told the following story of the power of emunah in the merits of true tzadikim to Moreinu Rabbi David Chananyah Pinto shlita.

It was erev Pesach after nine hours of traveling from Paris on their way to Spain together with his wife and family. Suddenly, they realized that they had left their passports at home!

One can imagine their chagrin; in a matter of a few hours Pesach was about to commence and they had no idea where to turn and whom to approach. However, Rabbi Barda promptly strengthened himself in his simple emunah in Hashem and said to his wife “We will trust in Hashem and in the merit of the tzadik Rabbi Chaim Pinto we shall cross the border”.

Lo and behold! To their surprise not one policeman stopped them; just smiles and friendly waves, nobody asked them at all for their passports!

Rabbi Barda and his wife thanked Hashem for the miracle he had performed for them and celebrated Pesach joyfully. But when the time came for them to return home their hearts filled with worry; miracles don't happen every day, how then were they going to return to Paris without passports?

Here too Rabbi Barda strengthened himself and his wife in simple faith in Hashem and told her that b'ezrat Hashem now too the merit of the tzadik Rabbi Chaim Pinto will stand by them.

As they neared the border checkpoint, they saw from far much activity; tens of policemen seemed to be searching feverishly for suspicious individuals; the police had received a report that terrorists were attempting to cross the border. Every vehicle was being thoroughly checked.

Rabbi Barda began worrying how are they possibly going to pass through without passports at a time when the checking is so thorough. Nevertheless, he strengthened himself that in the merit of the tzadik they will pass through uneventfully. He also promised to give 500 euros to charity.

As they got to about fifty meters from the checkpoint, a vehicle suddenly crashed through the barrier in an attempt to elude the security forces. In a flash all the policemen began pursuing the suspicious vehicle.

And so, in the absence of any security personnel, Rabbi Barda and family passed through the border without any passports, and without any checks,