

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klimick
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אבות פרק ג'

פרשת אמור תשע"ו

Priming the Kohanim to assume their exalted role

אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם: (כ"א א)

Speak to the kohanim, the sons of Aaron, and say to them:

Let none [of you] defile himself for a dead person among his people (21:1) The Midrash brings a posuk from Tehillim

(19:10) to bear on this posuk: יִרְאֵת ה' מְהוֹרָה עוֹמֶדֶת לְעַד

The fear of the Lord is pure, existing forever. The Tiferes

Yosef of Mattersdorf זצוק"ל explains the connection: The

Oibershter feared that the sons of Aaron would ascribe

unwarranted importance to themselves because the

command לִנְפֹשׁ לֹא-יִטְמָא בְּעַמּוּיוֹ, "Let none [of you] defile

himself for a dead person among his people applied to them

exclusively, as a "kohen-specific" distinction. Moshe was

directed to remind them that they were "Bnei Aharon", and

as such their holiness stemmed from their father, and was not

inherent in themselves. Aharon had struggled to develop a

pure Yiras Hashem, which would endure forever "עוֹמֶדֶת

לְעַד", and which he transmitted to his children for eternity.

This teaching should serve as a paradigm for someone who

exhibits positive character traits and worthy personal

attainments. He should attribute all of these good traits to his

parents' indefatigable efforts at child-rearing. Any

self-achieved refinements building on the parental base can

then be bequeathed to his own future children. (בית ישראל

מאטטערסדארף)

In a very similar vein, the Chasam Sofer analyzes the posuk

quite cogently. אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים "Speak to the Kohanim." But

what exactly was the content of that first message? Let's

clarify this before going further in the posuk. The Chasam

Sofer teaches that the message was: Moshe, inform the

Kohanim that their lineage is from a holy source, since they

are "Bnei Aharon." They need to hear this so that they will

not see themselves as holier than other Yidden. Then you,

Moshe, can proceed וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם to inform them of the

specific Kohanic restrictions, as we learn further. (תורת משה)

Shabbos helps prepare for Yom Tov

דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם מוֹעֲדֵי ה' אֲשֶׁר-תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם

מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ אֲלֵהֶם מוֹעֲדֵי: (כ"ג ב)

Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: Hashem's appointed holy days that you shall designate as holy occasions. These are My appointed holy days: (23:2)

The end of the posuk seems glaringly redundant. The early part of the posuk mentions the "holy days." Why mention them a second time? We need to explain this since our

guiding principle in any such inquiry is that there are no unexplained redundancies in the Torah's text. There is yet

another issue. Why does this posuk about the Yom Tovim

occur adjacent to a detailed teaching about Shabbos in the

very next posuk? שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלֶאכֶה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת

[For] six days, work may be performed, but on the seventh day, it is a

complete rest day, a holy occasion; you shall not perform

any work. It is a Sabbath to Hashem in all your dwelling

places.

The ultimate goal of Yom Tov observance is to be

thoroughly infused with the intrinsic holiness of Yom Tov --

and acquiring this state requires focused, concrete, and

personal steps to prepare for the Yom Tov. The Torah's

saying אֲלֵהֶם הֵם מוֹעֲדֵי is not at all redundant. It directs us to

view Yom Tov as "מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ" as a day of supreme

Kedushah/holiness. It is Shabbos which "trains" us in the

preparatory process. Our Shabbos experience, which entails

preparation ("hachono") from Friday, is a weekly,

year-round event. Leveraging our Shabbos "practice" primes

us to prepare, analogously, for the Holiness of Yom Tov.

Hence, the proximity of Yom Tov and Shabbos in our

pesukim. (קב ונקי חתן ר' מאיר מפרימישלאן)

Building on this teaching, Chassidische Seforim deduce that

the Shabbos preceding a Yom Tov is greater than that actual

Yom Tov, because the illumination of the Yom Tov draws

upon and stems from the preceding Shabbos. [The heilige

Zohar says כל בְּרַכָּאֵין בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִּלְיָה וּמַהוּא יוֹמָא מְתַבְּרָכִין כל

שְׁתָּא יוֹמִין. "all blessings of the week are derived from the

previous Shabbos"] So the requisite preparation invested in

that preceding Shabbos will extend to and enhance the

holiness of the ensuing Yom Tov. (שמח זבולין)

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11204 U.S.A. 718 438 8414 718 633 5500 - pardesyehuda1@gmail.com or seforimworld.com - hours 11-7:30 This Gilyon is available by email or on Ladaat, <http://ladaat.info/gilyonot.aspx> or www.parshasheets.com. Also available for pickup at our store from Thursday. For sale a page handwritten by Harav Mendel of Shklov, Talmid Vilna Gaon. A letter written by Reb Aron Walkin describing his sick daughter and his financial difficulties. A letter in English by Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik 1946, objecting to join a political organization. Many more handwritten letters for sale!

Sefer Oitzar Harabanim encyclopedia of Rabanim for the last 1000 years until 1970 for sale \$150.00

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick and translated by Duvid Pinchas Rose)

Reb Meir'l Premishlaner's biding his time yields major chasadim for two Yidden at the same time

Rabbi Reb Yosef Baruch haLevi Epstein of Neustadt, known as "Der Gutter Yid" (תק"ב - י' באדר תרנ"ו) was the son of the holy Rebbe Klonymous Kalman haLevi Epstein, author of the seminal Chassidic sefer מאור ושמש Maor veShemesh. He was a talmid of first the Chozeh of Lublin and then of Rav Meir Premishlaner. At age 50, he firmly resolved to make aliya to Eretz Yisroel, to engage in Torah study and Divine service. To his relief, his wife was not opposed to the plan and the upheaval it meant for their life. Both man and wife shared a firm confidence that Hashem would help them in their endeavour. Reb Yosef Baruch naturally turned to his Rebbe, Reb Meir, for a brocho. But the Rebbe held matters in abeyance. "Where do you propose to obtain money to fund your move?" "I will approach my close friends and other fine Yidden and ask them to contribute to my needs." "No, not yet," said Reb Meir. "I don't want you to waste your precious time from learning Torah. Besides, who knows if you will succeed in collecting the amount you need? Stay here meanwhile in Premishlan and I myself will assemble 400 rubles for you. With that in hand, you can make the trip and tide yourself over in Eretz Yisroel until you get settled with a clear, unburdened mind." Reb Yosef Baruch's bond with the Rebbe grew even deeper and he repaired to the Beis Medrash al haTorah veAl hoAvodah and awaited a summons from the Rebbe. However, to his dismay, the days dragged on without a word from the Rebbe, although Reb Yosef Baruch noticed much traffic in and out of the Rebbe's chambers. After a full month, he asked the other chassidim if the Rebbe could possibly have forgotten about his plight, but to a man, they exclaimed that chas vesholom, that was not the way of the Rebbe, that a promise was a promise, and that the time for his salvation had simply not arrived yet. Being a devoted husband, Reb Yosef Baruch worried about the effect the prolonged uncertainty was having on his wife and could wait no longer for a response from the Rebbe. He went in for a private *yechidus*/audience and the Rebbe greeted him warmly, but with a demeanour suited for someone he had not seen for a long time. The conversation was a replay of the previous one -- the chosid laying out his problem and the Rebbe promising to help, but with exactly the same terms as before. Sadly, Reb Yosef Baruch was forced to conclude that the Rebbe had indeed forgotten about his case -- his need for security and funding. He blurted out to Reb Meir that he had been waiting a full four weeks for his salvation through the Rebbe's hands. The Rebbe merely reiterated that his hour had not yet arrived. Just then, a wealthy magnate appeared in the doorway, waiting for some private time with the Rebbe. The Rebbe motioned for him to enter with Reb Yosef Baruch still in the room, and told them that he wanted them both to hear a certain story, which went as follows.

"Not far from here, there lives a rich tycoon who has all the material things a person could want in life: a sumptuous house, a

staff of servants and all the rest. But when it comes to giving tzedaka, he has a heart of stone. Petitioners beat a steady path to his door, and servants have pity on them, but are afraid to tell their master. They send them instead to a neighbour who, while not wealthy, does open his wallet to the extent he can for each needy supplicant. The flow of "collectors" has been growing steadily and the generous man has actually taken out loans to support his charitable endeavours. This has created a stir in shomayim: here you have a very rich man, who lacks nothing, yet is stingy and chases the poor away, while his neighbour of more modest means is actually borrowing money to distribute to the needy. There is a faction in Shomayim who are pushing to redistribute wealth in This World, taking from the stingy rich man and transferring it to the generous neighbour of modest means. Still and all, a defense advocate for the rich man urged that he be given another chance to show pity for the poor and to do teshuva for his miserliness. You may remember the recent blizzard we had. A poor man got stuck outdoors and made his way to the rich house. He stood at the door, bedraggled and soaked to the skin. He begged only to be admitted where he could warm himself by a fireplace and dry out his clothes. Even this modest request was rebuffed by the householder, who noticed the puddle of muddy water the man was dripping into his foyer and instead of helping him, he brusquely and summarily sent the vagabond over to the neighbour. Apparently, this stone-hearted and cruel act was the final straw in Himmil, and the decision was taken to transfer this miser's fortune to his generous neighbour, thus forcing the miser to go begging for sustenance from others. But I, Meir'l, threw a monkey-wrench into that plan. After all, Chazal teach us in many places, אין עונשין אלא אין עונשין אלא כן מוזהרין there needs to be warning before punishment is imposed. The Court in Shomayim has agreed to a delay."

The rich man who had been listening to this hair-raising story was the very same person whom the story had been describing. Reb Meir'l turned to him sternly and said: "Listen closely, my wayward brother. It was bashert that you should be standing together in my office with this other gentleman. He is a worthy soul who is in pressing need of 400 rubles, which I realize is a large sum. If you will provide it, all well and good, and the judgement against you will be nullified. But if you refuse, then I am putting you on notice that the decision in the Heavenly Court will be carried out to the last detail, and without delay!" Hearing this, the man fainted straight away and when he was revived, he beseeched the Rebbe to arrange a kappora/penance for him. "Holy Rebbe, I agree to the terms and am doing complete teshuva/repentance for my stinginess, which I declare now before you is a thing of the past, never to return. The 400 rubles will be on the Rebbe's table within a half-hour." And he left.

While they were waiting, Reb Meir explained to Reb Yosef Baruch: "My son, the truth is that I could have arranged for you to have the 400 rubles many days ago. But I wanted you to wait a bit so that I could help both you and the rich man, who obviously needed a major *tikkun*, at the same time. I see him coming with the money now in hand. Tell your *aishes chayil* the good news and relocate to Eretz HaKodesh with my strong brocho for *hatzlocho be torah un avoda bechol inyanim, ad bias goel tzedek bimheira beyamainu, amen.*