



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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Thoughts on Parashat EMOR Year 23

by Dayan Abraham David

As we know, a Cohen, even nowadays, is forbidden to defile himself with a corpse as it says, "*Lenefesh Lo Yitama Beamav*" with the exception of defiling himself for the burial of a corpse who has no relatives or carers and his seven close relatives. The Pasuk enumerates the seven in the beginning of the Parasha: '*Ki im Lishero HaKarov Elav Le emoh Vul Abiv Vulebno Vulbito Vulachev Vulachoto Habetulah*' His close flesh (referring to his wife) his mother, father, son, daughter, brother and sister who has no husband to take care of her. We may ask, why is the wife put before even the mother and father and why is she referred to as '*She-ero*', the close kin, and not explicitly as the wife? The Kli Yakar explains with a question that Rav Yosi asked Eliyahu Hanavi "Why is a wife called '*Ezer*', the supporter of her husband?" He answers: "A man brings home wheat, does he chew it? He brings home flax, does he clothe himself with it? No! His wife makes him bread and sews his clothes, does this not brighten his life and support him?" He

explains '*She-ero*' as his sustenance for she feeds him and looks after him and takes care of his physical being, replenishing his being with nourishment and providing his needs; that is why she is called '*Hakarov Elav*', his close kin, and is considered as part of his own being. She is also the one he has chosen to become his partner for life as the Pasuk says, '*Al Ken Ya-azov ish et Abiv VeEmo VeDabak Beishto*', and a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife. That is why she is first on the list and is called his sustenance and closet kin as part of him.

With this concept he explains the saying in the Talmud: '*Hacham SheMet Hakol Kerovav*', when a Sage dies we are all considered his relatives, to the extent of having to make '*Keriah*', '*Cholzin*' and '*Mavrim*', some of the laws of mourning. We are all considered his close kin '*She-ero Hakarov Elav*' since it is through the merit of our Sages and Tzaddikim we receive '*parnassah*' as we are told in the Talmud '*Bezechut Chananiah beni nizon haOlam*'. This world was given sustenance at that time because of the merit of this great rabbi but he himself only survived on a meagre amount of '*charuvim*' – carobs, a cheap fruit.

One who sustains and supports another is considered a 'Karov' as part of the other. We can add another insight to why the wife comes first and is called his closest relative 'She ero', the Zohar says that the 'Neshama' of a man and his 'Zevug', his wife were created as one and split and then put into two bodies to become again as one when they marry. So even though his parents were partners in His creation and were instrumental in bringing his 'Neshama' into this world but since his 'Neshama' was part of his wife's when they come back together, she is closer to him than his parents.

TORAH INSIGHTS

Towards the end of the Parasha we are told about the son of an Israelite woman and an Egyptian father who blasphemed against Hashem. It says: 'Vayetze' and he went out. Where did he go out from? Reb Barachia said: "He went out making fun of the previous subject mentioned in the Parasha, the 'Lechem Hapanim', the 12 loaves of bread offered weekly on the 'Shulchan' the table, before the Parochet in the sanctuary of the Temple as mentioned in Rashi. He made fun of this 'Mitzvah'. "What sort of king is this whom we serve with stale bread only changed from Shabbat to Shabbat.?" The new bread was brought on Shabbat and the old bread taken away at the same time. "Why not fresh bread daily?" Our Rabbis explain that the reason why the bread was only changed from Shabbat to Shabbat was to show that Beracha for the week comes from Shabbat. Shabbat gives sustenance to the creation for the coming week as it says on the first Shabbat, 'Vaybarech

Elokim et yom HaShevee vay Kadesh oto ki bo Shabbat mikol melachto asher bara Elokim, la asot. And G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it for He rested on that day from all his work. The extra 'Laasot' at the end needs explanation. To do what? The Or Hachaim explains that the creation would continue, G-d would keep creating the world from one Shabbat to another giving it existence and sustenance from Shabbat for the coming week. This was depicted and shown in the 'Lechem Hapanim' which was changed from Shabbat to Shabbat. Beracha comes to the world through Shabbat. In fact the bread miraculously did not become stale, it remained fresh and warm as if it had been baked on the day. Here is a lesson which the Ben Mitzri coming from an Egyptian father could not grasp, his was a superficial outlook why not fresh bread daily? He did not bother to find out the reasoning and understanding behind it. He did not take the trouble to observe that the bread remained fresh after 7 days? Is that not the way of the world, that only looks at things superficially without content? The outlook of a Jew is different. He looks in depth, 'meveen davar metoch davar', like Yaacov Avinu and not Esau, who only saw the red pottage and not what it symbolized.

TORAH GEMS

In this Parasha we are told about the mitzvah of Sefirat haOmer, to count 49 days, seven weeks from the 2nd day of Pesach until Shavuoth. The Chinuch explains that the concept of counting of the Omer was to impress upon us that our redemption from Egypt was not only for the purpose of our salvation from slavery but more importantly to bring us to Kabbalat haTorah, to receive the Torah.

This is what Moshe Rabenu was told at the beginning of his appointment as the messenger of G-d to redeem Am Yisrael, '*Ve ze lecha ha-ot ki Anochi shelachtecha beHotzeacha at Haam Mimizrayim ta-avdu et HaElokim al haHar Haze*', that when they receive the Torah on this mountain (Sinai) that will be the sign of the fulfilment of your appointment. The mitzvah of counting day by day is to impress upon us the importance of the receiving of the Torah, which was really the climax of our exodus from Egypt. This was the great day we became a special people '*Am Segula*'. As a slave who is promised his freedom looks forward to the great day and eagerly counts everyday that brings him closer to it. The Bnei Yisrael counted enthusiastically every day that brought them nearer to the receiving of the Torah preparing for the event that would make them into a special nation with a special purpose.

The Zohar adds a new dimension to the sefirah when it compares counting the seven weeks to the seven days of purification a bride prepares herself to meet her beloved groom. The Jewish People in Egypt became contaminated with the '*tumah*', uncleanness, of Mitzrayim. The day after they were freed, the sixteenth of Nisan, they began the process of purification. They began to count seven weeks, each week consisting of seven days, to correct the seven kinds of tumah mentioned in the Torah. Seven times seven until the 50th day when they stood in complete purity at

Har Sinai to receive the Torah from G-d as a bride stands before her groom, radiant in her purity under the Chupah, which was signified by the cloud of glory above Mount Sinai. The count started from the day after Pesach (Mimahorat haShabbath), no date was mentioned as by the other festivals (i.e. the 15th of Tishri and the 15th of Nisan) and not even for Shavuoth the finish, to emphasise that it was the counting of the seven weeks as a period of purification after their redemption from Egypt which brought them to Matan Torah, not a fixed date. During this period the Bnei Yisrael raised themselves from very lowly beginnings signified by the offering of the Omer which was from barley, a coarse food, to the highest levels of Holiness and purity signified by the offering of the Shte haLchem on Shavuoth, which was brought from refined wheat flour in the short period of seven weeks. Our Rabbis tell us that the Jewish calendar of festivals is not just for remembrance but a living calendar where all that happened before as set out in the Torah influences the cycle of our year and each festival gives us an input as it was with our forefathers. Even today this period of Sefirat haOmer should be a time for introspection and preparation to receive the Torah again personally on Shavuoth.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

The story is told of the great Rabbi Moshe Feinstein who took a cab to his home in Manhattan and to the surprise of his students who were with him he asked the cab driver to let him off on the main road, a block away from his home. When asked, he explained to the cab driver that it would be easier for him (the cab driver) to get another fare on the main road than if he would have to go all the way round. The cab driver surprised at such consideration exclaimed, "Now I know why you are the Chosen People of G-d". With a little thought and consideration we can fulfil the mitzva of 'Kiddush Hashem'. With our actions we can draw and attract people to the Torah and to the service of G-d or do otherwise.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

- 1) Any Cohen who has not been disqualified from saying Berchat Cohanim is obliged to bless the congregation if he is in the Synagogue when the Hazan says 'Cohanim' in the repetition of the Amida or if he is invited to do so. If he does not he is 'Mevatel' a positive Mitzvah and is considered as if he is transgressing 3 Mitzvot even if there are other Cohanim to bless the 'Kahal'. If he has already blessed once on that day he is 'Patur'.
- 2) A Cohen may make Berchat Cohanim with its full Beracha even more than once a day as we do for Shacharit and again for Musaf or if he goes over to another congregation.
- 3) Every Cohen who blesses the congregation fulfils a Mitzvah from the

Torah and is promised a blessing from G-d.

3) The accepted Minhag among the Sephardim who follow Maran Beth Yosef is to say the Berchat Cohanim daily. But among those who follow the Ramo, the Minhag is only to say Berchat Cohanim in Musaf of Yom Tov.

4) Berchat Cohanim is not said at Mincha except on a Taanit and then only when Mincha is said about half an hour before sunset and not much earlier. The Cohen must be fasting.

**This parshat sheet is
dedicated
L'ilui nishmat
Tzion ben Menashe Sadik**

*If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush
Please contact
Monty Sassoon 07787 571313
For Seuda Shlishit
or to rent the
Nancy Reuben Hall
for a Simcha
Please contact
Yanky David 07725 408724*

**We have a regular Youth
Minyan organised by Jason
Ibrahim and Jordan Moses
followed by a kiddush**

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	8:13 pm
Shabbat terminates	9:31 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat for the summer	7:15 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 am
Shiur Pirkei Avot	6:50 pm
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit	7:50 pm
Shacharit Sundays	7:00 am
Shacharit Weekdays	6:50 am
Mincha followed by Arbit	
Arbit for the summer	7:30 pm