



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

OD YOSEF HAI
50 FINCHLEY LANE, NW41DJ
TEL: 020 8203 5701

Thoughts on EMOR

Year 25

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 ben 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.

GEMS

On Tuesday (12th May) we celebrate Lag B'Omer, the 33rd day of the counting of the Omer. There are a number of reasons given for this celebration. One of the reasons given is that, as we know, tragically, 24,000 talmidim of Rabbi Akiva died during the days of the Omer and it stopped on this, the 33rd, day. Another reason given is that Rabbi Akiva was able to keep alive and teach Torah to those he had saved. The Ari z"l says that it was on this day that he ordained his five great talmidim to spread the Torah in its greatness after the plague. They are the ones from

whom we received the bulk of the 'Torah Baal Peh', the Oral Law. They are: Rabbi Meir, Rebbe Yehuda, Rebbe Elazar ben Shemuah, Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai and Rebbe Nehemiah. Others say this was the Hilulah of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, the day he passed away, he commanded that it should be celebrated, for on that day he revealed many hidden teachings to his students this was compared to the day we received the Torah on Mount Sinai. The 7th of Adar the day when Moshe passed away we remember with solemnity of Avelut, the Chevrah Kadisha make it a day of remembrance for their holy work of burying the dead whereas on Rebbe Shimon's yarseit we make a celebration with music and happiness. The Seforim Kedoshim explain, each day was fulfilled according to the will of that Tzaddik, Moshe when he passed away was in tears with an unfulfilled longing to enter the land to fulfil its mitzvot. But Rebbe Shimon willed a celebration for he had looked forward to the descent of the Shechina on his petirah when he merited to pass over to his students secrets of his learning. There is a great and accepted custom to celebrate in Meron where he is buried but even here we study the sayings and praises of Rebbe Shimon on this night

and kindle lights in his honour and those of other tzaddikim. Children celebrate around bon fires and play with bows and arrows. The bow is to remind us that because of the greatness and merit of Rebbe Shimon and his fellow Rabbis a rainbow, which is in the shape of a bow, was never seen i.e. there was no necessity for G-d to remember the covenant not to destroy the world, that generation was raised to a great level and did not need the warning of the rainbow.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

Rabbi Mordecai Eliyahu z"l once visited the prison in Ramla, Israel. On his visit he noticed there behind fences, children, he asked the prison officer, who are these and was told these were young offenders behind bars. The Rabbi said I want to visit them to speak to them. The officer said you cannot because they will riot and throw rotten fruit and eggs at you and ruin your 'glimah' cloak. The Rabbi said don't worry for this there are cleaners to clean my cloak but I cannot leave without speaking to them. As soon as it became known that the Chief Rabbi was visiting them, their 'madrichim' social workers encouraged them to break into the store house and take tomatoes and eggs to throw at the Rabbis entourage. The Rabbi entered their section in the prison. There was great commotion and shouting. The Rabbi with his sharp

eye noticed one of the boys about 14 years old as the leader. The Rabbi called him and he approached the Rabbi with a swagger showing off his importance. The Rabbi as if acknowledging his importance asked him when will there be quiet he answered in 3 minutes. After 3 minutes he lifted up his hands and everyone became quiet, complete silence. The Rabbi began to speak to them from the heart for nearly an hour, he told them you are not really prisoners you have your whole life before you, you can build your lives you are young and can live good and worthy lives, come to me when you leave here and I will help you. In the meantime the Rabbi sent his secretary to the shops to buy, sweets, chocolates and goodies the boys did not have in prison. When the secretary went to the shop and told him why he was buying so many goodies, the shops keeper said take it free but the secretary insisted on paying this is our mitzvah and it was given to the boys who could not believe their eyes. After the Rabbi finished the talk the boys came to him for a beracha, he blessed every one of them with tears in his eyes. At the end the leader who had silenced the boys came to the Rabbi, you know we have tomatoes and eggs with us, which we prepared to pelt you with on the encouragement of the 'madrichim'. We would like to pelt them with it now. The Rabbi forbade him don't do it they are also Jews and we need to draw them to Teshuba as

well. This was really a Kiddush Hashem which helped so many.

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.

**Please G-d we should be able to
congregate again in Synagogues
and have Birkat Cohanim**

**Do not forget to count sefirat
ha'omer after nightfall every day**

**We have started last week to say
Pirkei Avot every Shabbat. We are
now in the fourth perek.**

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences 8:21 pm
Shabbat terminates 9:40 pm
Shabbat :Latest Shema
Magen Avraham 8:31 am
Shabbat Latest Shema Gra 9:07 am

**PLEASE FOLLOW ALL THE
GUIDELINES AND WARNINGS
CONCERNING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**
**VUSHMARTEM MEOD
LE'NAFSHOTECHM**

VEAHAVTA L'REACHA KAMOCHA