



## The Sweetness of the World to Come

"אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אֶהֱרָן", *"After the death of the two sons of Aharon"* — the death of Nadav and Avihu occurred on Alef Nissan, the day the Mishkan was established. That very day was filled with great joy, as all of Am Yisrael saw that the korban was accepted l'ratzon before Hashem, as it says: וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי ה' וַתֹּאכַל עֹל, *"A fire went out from before Hashem and consumed the olah and the fats on the mizbe'ach."* And immediately afterward, Nadav and Avihu entered and offered a strange fire and died.

And the very same phrase that is said regarding the joy of the offering being accepted, is repeated regarding the great tragedy of their death: וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי ה' וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם, *"a fire went out from before Hashem and consumed them, and they died."*

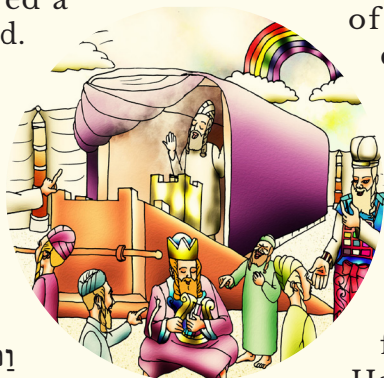
This needs to be understood — why in both are the same words used? Another question: why is the section of forbidden foods placed immediately afterward, where the Torah writes לְהַבְדִּיל, *"to distinguish between the tamei and the tahor"*?

Before explaining this, let us understand why the Torah details the construction of the Mishkan and the offering of the korbanos extensively

in Parshiyos Terumah and Tetzaveh and those that follow — even though, seemingly, the entire structure of the Mishkan and the avodah of the korbanos could have been written briefly in a single parshah, and the halachic details could have been derived from the midrashim of Chazal, as we find in other areas of Torah.

But the Torah elaborates and expands greatly on the topic of the Mishkan, because the ultimate purpose of the Mishkan's construction is to teach a person how to build his own neshamah and home in a way that will become a dwelling place for the Shechinah HaKedoshah. The Mishkan corresponds to Hashem's kindness expressed through the limbs of our body (Midrash HaGadol); the ketores represents the chesed of breath and the neshama; the korbanos correspond to the physical body and the nefesh haBehamis.

From these parshiyos we learn also how to behave with refined middos toward one another — as alluded to in the two keruvim in the Kodosh HaKodashim, who faced each other with wings spread over each other, teaching us to act with kindness within the home and toward others. Likewise, right after



## MY STORY!

### Leil HaSeder of Mesirus Nefesh

Every year, I make a point of purchasing exceptionally mehudar matzos for eating the kezaysim on Leil HaSeder. Last year (5784), due to the war in the south, I suffered significant losses and reached a point of severe financial hardship. I considered in my heart that maybe this year, I would forgo buying such expensive mehudar matzos.

But afterward, I decided to take a loan for this purpose. I asked a friend for a loan, and since he knew me as someone who had never before relied on others—and now I was in need of a loan—he had compassion on me and lent me a large sum, much more than what I had originally requested. He told me that he wasn't in urgent need of the money and that I should pay him back whenever I was able.

However, by nature, I become very anxious about owing money to others. But with no choice, I took the large loan from him, thinking I would have more expenses for Pesach, and it would be good to have funds available for any need that might arise.

In practice, we bought all the Yom Tov needs, and I had money left to purchase the

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these passages, the Torah tells of the kind eye of Moshe and Aharon, who went out and benched the nation.

### This World vs. the World to Come

The Mishkan teaches us that the whole purpose of our existence in this world is to acquire eternal life in Olam HaBa. Yet, this world and the next are opposites: here we dwell in a physical world, while there it is a holy and spiritual realm. In order that a person should not have difficulty entering the spiritual Olam HaBa, he must recognize that this world is temporary and short-lived. This is the meaning of *לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטָּהוֹר*, “*To distinguish between the impure and the pure*” — while still in this world, one must use his spiritual power to notice the difference between tumah and taharah, so that he does not, chas veshalom, sink into the materialism of this world, and thus when time comes his transition to the next world will be less difficult.

Therefore, every so often, HaKadosh Baruch Hu sends a person lacks and shortcomings, to remind him that he lives in a temporary world. That is why at every wedding we break a vessel — to demonstrate that there is no perfection in this world, and even in great joy, there can be a break. One who experiences no yissurim in this world and only success — he is distant from meriting the Olam HaBa. There is no person who has no yissurim and lacks, and all of this is so that in this fleeting world a person can prepare himself properly, with faithfulness to Hashem, for life in the Olam HaBa.

### Adorned Like a Kallah

Now we can understand why the same words — *וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ*, “*a fire went out*” — are used both in the joy of the Mishkan and the death of Aharon’s sons. The establishment of the Mishkan was like a wedding celebration — as it says: *וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם כָּלוּת מֹשֶׁה לְהַקִּים אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן*, “*It was on the day Moshe completed the Mishkan*,” and Chazal (quoted in Rashi) expound on another passuk that uses the same word: *וַיִּתֵּן אֶל מֹשֶׁה כְּחָלוֹסוֹ לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ בְּהַר סִינַי שְׁנֵי לַחַת הָעֵדוּת לַחַת אֶבֶן*, “*He gave to Moshe k’chaloso (as he finished) speaking with him on Har Sinai — the two Luchos Ha’eidus, stone tablets.*” K’chaloso — like a kallah adorned with twenty-four ornaments; so too Moshe was adorned with the twenty-four books of the Torah.

We can also expound: *וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם כָּלוּת מֹשֶׁה לְהַקִּים אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן*, “*On the day Moshe completed erecting the Mishkan*” — that Moshe dressed Aharon in the bigdei Kehunah and gave him the twenty-four matenos kehunah, which correspond to the twenty-four adornments of a bride. The fact

that Aharon HaKohen was dressed in garments corresponding to a bride’s adornments teaches us that his greatness was in how he appreciated his wife, Elisheva bas Aminadav. Similarly, we find (Nedarim 49b) regarding Rabbi Yehudah bar Ilai, that he and his wife shared garments — to demonstrate their unity. In contrast, Nadav and Avihu erred — they entered Kodesh haKodoshim without having taken wives and having children.

After all this, it is written: *וַיִּדַם אַהֲרֹן*, “*And Aharon was silent.*” Which implies he had what to say — but nevertheless, he chose silence, and accepted it all with love.

### A Sweet Lessons from Nadav and Avihu

The Midrash (cited in Rashi) teaches that Nadav and Avihu believed they would be the ones to lead the nation after the passing of Moshe and Aharon. This can be explained in a positive light — that after the passing of Moshe and Aharon, the nation would come to recognize their greatness and holiness more deeply than during their lifetime. Because their very physical presence in this world, in a body of flesh and blood, created a certain concealment of their lofty level of kedushah (see Rashi, Kiddushin 41a: “*Look how thick Moshe’s legs are!*”). Therefore, Nadav and Avihu wanted to assume leadership after Moshe and Aharon’s passing, so that they could then speak before the people of their greatness. Still, their error was in thinking they were fit to lead the nation. The Gemara (Eruvin 63a) teaches: Nadav and Avihu died only because they ruled halachah in the presence of Moshe Rabbeinu.

**The Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 20:9) brings additional reasons for the death of Aharon’s sons:**

**1.** That they entered the Mikdash after drinking wine. A person under the influence of wine experiences a joy that is not genuine, But entry into the Beis HaMikdash must be with true joy — joy born of ahavas Hashem and recognition of His chesed toward us. **2.** Because they entered lacking the proper garments. This teaches us the importance of proper dress — to always wear garments that befit yirei Hashem, as this honors Hashem. And similarly, we must ensure that our neshamah is always clothed in mitzvos and good deeds.

**3.** That they entered the Mishkan without first washing their hands and feet. This teaches us to be careful with the halachos of netilas yadayim in the morning and before eating a meal. And it also teaches us to cleanse our neshamah from all impurity before ascending to the Olam HaEmes after 120 years.



## Descendants of Quality

4. They entered before having children — and there was a claim against them for not leaving offspring in the world. The writings of the Arizal explain that Nadav and Avihu were a gilgul of Er and Onan, whose main sin was that they did not want to bring children into the world, as the Torah states. So too, Nadav and Avihu did not wish to have children. The Gemara (Bava Basra 116a) teaches: One who dies without children — Hashem is angry with him.

In contrast, the Torah refers to Aharon's surviving sons as *"the remaining ones"* — to teach that Aharon had the merit of leaving children behind. This teaches us to daven and beseech Hashem to merit leaving behind offspring of permanence — numerous and of good quality — *"like the stars of the heavens and the sand on the seashore."*

5. That they did not marry — thereby lacking the unique spiritual advantage attainable only through marriage: acquiring middos tovos through self-sacrifice and acts of kindness toward one's wife. This teaches us to daven for our children

(and for those who are not yet married, to daven for themselves) — to merit a proper zivug, and daven to Hashem for the strength to honor one's wife and thereby acquire noble character traits.

## Humility of the Servants of Hashem

Indeed, this raises a question: why does the Torah need to state explicitly that Elazar and Isamar, the sons of Aharon, are *"בְּנֵי הַנוֹתָרִים"*, *"the remaining ones"*? It's obvious — if Nadav and Avihu passed away, then only Elazar and Isamar remained! Another question: immediately after, the Torah says that the kohanim receive the chazeh and shok portions. And for the first time in the Torah, it is stated that not only Aharon and his sons, but also their daughters, are eligible to eat from the matnos kehunah. Until now, the Torah emphasized, *"כָּל זָכָר בְּכֹהֲנִים יֹאכֵל אֹתָהּ"*, *"Every male among the kohanim may eat it,"* and so forth. What changed here?

Rather, Elazar and Isamar are referred to as *"the remaining ones"* to teach that they felt that without a wife, they were incomplete. And in the merit of taking wives and having sons and daughters, they became worthy of eating from the chazeh and shok — for themselves, their sons and their daughters — and thus acquired great spiritual value. It is also hinted that they saw themselves as *"leftovers,"* feeling unworthy to lead Klal Yisrael — and for that humility, they merited the priesthood for generations.

## The Sweetness of the Conversation Between the Holy Brothers

After Aharon was commanded that he and his sons must not enter the Mikdash drunk, Moshe Rabbeinu instructed Aharon and his sons to offer the se'ir chattas — the korban chattas of Rosh Chodesh — and commanded them to eat it in the courtyard of the Ohel Moed. In fact, they burned the se'ir instead of eating it, and Moshe Rabbeinu became angry over this. Aharon HaKohen replied that he was an onen and therefore forbidden to eat kodashim, and Moshe Rabbeinu agreed with his reasoning.

At first glance, this is difficult to understand — for Moshe Rabbeinu already knew that Aharon was an onen, since he had told him: *"רְאִשֵׁיכֶם אֵל תִּפְרְעוּ" וּבִגְדֵיכֶם לֹא תִפְרְמוּ*, *"Do not let your hair grow unkempt, and do not tear your garments."* Meaning, do not display external signs of mourning. It was for this very reason that he instructed him to eat from the kodashim, so that they would not behave in a way that shows aveilus. Why, then, did Moshe ultimately agree to Aharon's words?

## The Depth of Aharon's Thought

In derech derash, this can be explained: Aharon HaKohen argued to Moshe Rabbeinu that it was true they were not showing external signs of mourning, such as letting the hair grow or tearing garments. However, this se'ir was the korban of Rosh Chodesh — which expresses gratitude for the great chesed that a person is granted to marry a wife: *"מוֹשִׁיבִי עֵקֶרֶת הַבַּיִת אִם הַבָּנִים שְׂמֵחָה"*, *"He makes the barren woman dwell in the home, a joyful mother of children."* And through the sprinkling of the blood of the se'ir, we thank Hashem for the chesed of the renewal of the blood each month.

And since Aharon had just received the message that he and his future generations would merit to eat from the kodashim — *"אַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ וּבְנֹתֶיךָ"*, *"you, your sons, and your daughters"* — he said: precisely by refraining from eating the korban now, it will remind me of what Nadav and Avihu lost by not marrying. Because by abstaining from this se'ir, which evokes gratitude for the chesed of a wife, his heart would be stirred to greater appreciation for this kindness — that he merits to have a wife. [Just as the five inuyim of Yom Kippur teach a person to appreciate the blessings he receives all year — food, drink, etc].

## Moshe Admits and Is Not Ashamed

And Moshe Rabbeinu accepted Aharon's reasoning — *"וַיֵּיטֵב בְּעֵינָיו"*, *"and it was good in his eyes."* It was as



if he was saying to him: I knew all of this at first, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu caused me to forget — because His will was that Aharon himself would be the one to express his desire to appreciate the matnas eshes chayil (gift of a righteous wife) and the generations that would follow after him.

It can further be explained that as a tikkun for this, the Torah follows with Parshas Tazria — which deals with the continuity of generations for every individual in Yisrael. This is Hashem's will — that a person should leave behind enduring offspring. And afterward comes Parshas Metzora, to teach us how careful one must be from the sin of lashon hara — not to speak evil of any Jew, and certainly not of

tzaddikim, as Nadav and Avihu, according to their level, were considered to have spoken disrespectfully about Moshe and Aharon.

Therefore, the Torah placed right after this the command to distinguish between the tamei and the tahor, and the warning about forbidden foods — to teach us that man comes into this world to contend with nisyonos. Certainly, there are times when a person rises and grows, but there are also times when he is tested with challenges — such as guarding himself from forbidden foods and other matters of tumah. And when such tests arise, one must not become disheartened, but rather stand firm — and through this, merit elevated spiritual levels.

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mehudar matzos. When I went on Erev Yom Tov to buy those matzos, the seller suggested I also buy a very fine bottle of wine for fulfilling the mitzvah of the four cups on Leil HaSeder. I told the seller I no longer had money, but he agreed that I could pay him after Pesach. It was difficult for me to even consider buying wine on credit, but after a few moments of thought, I decided to go ahead and purchase the bottle as well.

When I left the store, I was filled with joy that I had made a mesirus nefesh decision—something very difficult for me by nature—to take on debt, and yet I had done it for the sake of the mitzvos of the holy Yom Tov. I planned in my heart that tonight, at the Leil HaSeder, I would fulfill the mitzvos with great joy—using the matzos and wine acquired through mesirus nefesh. I returned home, placed the matzos in my room, locked the door, and after finishing the preparations, I went out to shul for davening.

When I returned from shul, I saw my wife in great panic. I asked her, "What happened?" and she sorrowfully told me that our young son had entered the room and broke the bottle of wine. When I heard that, I too was very distressed. I went in to see what had happened—and to my astonishment, I saw that the child had broken the bottle on top of the matzos. The matzos were broken and wet. I was surprised that my wife hadn't mentioned the matzos as well, and I realized that she probably wasn't even able to speak about the

added pain.

At that moment of great crisis, I pulled myself together and said to Hashem: "Ribbono shel Olam, I know this is a nisayon that You are sending me, and I will not allow this nisayon to destroy my joy in the Yom Tov. I accept upon myself not to get angry, not to comment, not to make any remarks. I will now go and conduct Leil HaSeder with the regular matzos and wine that we have in the house, and I will not make an issue out of this pain."

Throughout Leil HaSeder, every now and then, the yetzer hara tried to creep into my heart and weaken my spirit over what had happened. But in response to the nisayon, I increased my joy even more—so as not to fall into sadness and grief. I strengthened my emunah that everything is from Hashem Yisbarach, and there is no power other than His. In practice, I had that year a Leil HaSeder that was more joyous than any other year.

After the first day of Yom Tov, anxious thoughts began to creep in about the debt I now owed. I exerted all my strength to banish those thoughts and to trust in Hashem—despite the fact that this was an enormous nisayon for me, because I naturally experience great pressure from debts.

On Thursday, the second day of Chol HaMoed, I called the bank's automated system to check if anything had changed—and to my surprise, I heard that an additional 150,000 NIS had been deposited into my account. I quickly tried to find out where the

money came from, and it turned out that the person who had deposited the funds was someone who had done business with me fifteen years ago, had not acted honestly, and had cut off contact while still owing me a large sum of money.

I made efforts to reach him, until eventually we spoke on the phone. He told me:

"On Simchas Torah, I was at a celebration with friends near Gaza, when the Arabs broke through, and I suffered a serious injury. I was hospitalized in pain and in life-threatening condition. There, I promised the Borei Olam that if He would save me, I would do teshuvah. On Rosh Chodesh Nissan, I was released home, and after doing some cheshbon-nefesh, I remembered the injustice I had done to you. I gathered the money and deposited to you what I owed."

I was very moved and thanked him profusely. I added, "I want to return part of the money to you as a token of appreciation." And so, I transferred back to him ma'aser from the amount—15,000 NIS. Thus, I saw with my own eyes the good hand of Hashem—that after I had withstood the nisayon and chose not to become angry or ruin the simchas Yom Tov, HaKadosh Baruch Hu sent me great shefa. And the greatest joy of all was that my friend returned to dwell once again beneath the Kanfei HaShechinah.

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