



Your Legacy Is Greater than Theirs

The Korbanos of the Nesiim Atone for Iniquities that Have Been Committed Aharon Lit the Light of Torah so that a Jew Will Not Sin to Begin with

This week we read parshas Beha'aloscha. Here HKB"H commands Moshe Rabeinu to assign Aharon HaKohen the avodah of kindling the lamps in the Mikdash (Bamidbar 8, 1): "וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, דבר אל אהרן ואמרת אליו בהעלותך את הנרות אל מול פני המנורה יאירו שבעת הנרות, ויעש כן אהרן אל מול פני המנורה העלה נרותיה." Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, "Speak to Aharon and say to him: 'When you kindle the lamps, toward the face of the menorah shall the seven lamps cast light.'" Aharon did so; toward the face of the Menorah, he kindled its lamps, as Hashem had commanded Moshe. Rashi comments: "Aharon did so"—this extols the virtue of Aharon—that he did not deviate. The commentaries find this comment perplexing. Who would even suspect Aharon, the Kohen Gadol, of deviating or failing to fulfill HKB"H's directive to a T? So, why did the Torah see fit to praise the fact that he did not deviate?

Additionally, Rashi asks: **Why does the Torah juxtapose the passage of the Menorah with the passage describing the contributions of the "nesiim" (the princes of the shevatim)? Because when Aharon saw the inauguration of the "nesiim," he was disheartened, for he did not participate with them in the inauguration—neither he nor his tribe. HKBH said to him: "I swear by your life! Your contribution is greater than theirs, for you will kindle and prepare the Menorah's lamps."** A lengthier version of this subject is found in the Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 15, 6): **You find in the passage above that eleven shevatim offered sacrifices, and the shevet of Ephraim offered sacrifices; in fact, all of the "nesiim" offered sacrifices, with the exception of the "nasi" of Levi. Who was the "nasi" of Levi? It was Aharon . . . He thought to himself: Woe is me! Perhaps, it is because of me that HKB"H is not**

accepting the shevet of Levi. HKB"H said to Moshe: "Go tell Aharon not to despair; you are destined for something greater." This is the significance of the statement: "Speak to Aharon and say to him: When you kindle the lamps . . ." While the Beis HaMikdash exists, the korbanos will be offered; the lamps, however, will face the center of the Menorah forever. Furthermore, all of the Berachos that I gave you to bless My children will never be annulled.

The Ramban is perplexed by the statement in the Midrash: "The korbanos will be offered as long as the Beis HaMikdash is extant; the lamps, however, will face the center of the Menorah forever." He points out: "והנה ידוע שכשאין בית המקדש קיים—והקרבת בנות בטלין מפני חורבנו אף הנרות בטלות—it is known that when the Beis HaMikdash no longer exists, and the sacrificial service is abolished due to its destruction, even the service involving the lamps will be abolished. So, how can the Midrash claim that the lamps will illuminate the face of the Menorah forever? Therefore, the Ramban explains that HKB"H's statement refers to the Chanukah candles that HKB"H would establish in the future through the priestly Chashmonaim, the descendants of Aharon. They exist forever; for, even during times of galus, we fulfill the mitzvah of lighting the Chanukah candles.

The Chiddushei HaRim Says that the Western Lamp Continues to Burn

The great Chiddushei HaRim, zy"a, writes inspiring, sacred words in Sefer HaZakus (Beha'aloscha) that illuminate the meaning of the Midrash's statement: **The lamps, however, will face the center of the Menorah forever.** He relies on what we have learned in the Gemara (Sotah 9a): "משנבנה מקדש ראשון נגנז אהל: מועד קרשיו קרשיו ובריחיו ועמודיו ואדניו, היכא, אמר רב חסדא אמר אבימי, תחת

When the first Mikdash was built, the Ohel Moed was concealed; its beams, its hooks, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets. Where? Rav Chisda said in the name Avimi: Under the tunnels of the Heichal.

Now, we have learned elsewhere in the Gemara (Shabbas 22b): "מחוץ לפרוכת העדות יערוך... עדות היא שהשכינה שורה בישראל. מאי: עדות, אמר רב, זו גר מערבי שנותן בה שמן כמדת חברותיה, וממנה היה מדליק." **Outside the curtain of testimony, he shall arrange it" . . . Rather, it is a testimony for all mankind that the Shechinah dwells with Yisrael. What constitutes the testimony? Rav stated: This is the Ner HaMa'aravi into which he (the kohen) puts an amount of oil equal to the measure of each of its counterparts (the other lamps). Yet, from it, he would kindle the other lamps each evening, and with it he would conclude.** Thus, we learn that the Ner HaMa'aravi burned continually until the kohen came to renew and replenish it (i.e., remove the old wick and oil remnants and introduce a new wick with fresh oil). At that time, he extinguished the Ner HaMa'aravi, refreshed it along with the other lamps and lit them anew.

Based on this premise, the Chiddushei HaRim, zy" a, proposes that when the Mishkan was stored under the tunnels beneath the Heichal, the Menorah kindled by Aharon with his incredible kedushah was stored along with it, and it remained alight. In fact, it continues to burn miraculously where it is stored away; it is never extinguished, so that it illuminates the darkness of galus for us. This was how HKB"H comforted Aharon: **"The lamps will burn facing the center of the Menorah forever."**

This allows us a very nice interpretation of the teaching in the Gemara (B.B. 25b): "הרוצה שיחכים ידרים ושיעשיר יצפין וסימניך: שלחן בצפון ומזורה בדרום." **One who wants to become wise should face south (Rashi: He should face south while praying), while one who wants to become wealthy should face north (he should face north while praying); and your mnemonic is: The Shulchan stood in the north, while the Menorah stood in the south.** Thus, we learn that the purpose of kindling the Menorah in the south is to instill in Yisrael the light of the Torah. This is the message of the passuk (Mishlei 6, 23): **"כי נר מצוה ותורה: "for a mitzvah is a lamp and the Torah is light—Shlomo HaMelech compares a mitzvah to a candle or lamp and the Torah to the light it produces.**

Thus, it is apparent that Aharon HaKohen was commanded to kindle the lamps of the Menorah in order to imbue Yisrael with the light of the Torah. HKB"H attests to this in the following passuk (Malachi 2, 6): **"תורת אמת היתה בפיהו ועולה" לא נמצא בשפתיו, בשלום ובמישור הלך אתי ורבים השיב מעון, כי שפתי כהן ישמרו דעת ותורה יבקשו מפיהו כי מלאך ה' צבאות הוא."** **The Torah of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and with fairness and turned many away from iniquity. For the lips of the Kohen should safeguard knowledge, and people should seek teaching from his mouth; for he is an agent of Hashem, Master of Legions.**

It appears, now, that this is the meaning of the Gemara: **"One who wants to become wise should face south, while one who wants to become wealthy should face north."** We have learned that the Mishkan was sequestered beneath the tunnels of the Heichal together with the Menorah that was kindled by Aharon and it remains alight. Therefore, Chazal offered the following sound advice: **"הרוצה שיחכים ידרים"**—one should pray facing slightly south in the direction of where the Menorah stood and still stands lit until this very day. In this manner, a person can draw upon the light of the Torah it provides. Similarly, if one wishes to become wealthy, he should pray facing slightly north in the direction of where the Shulchan stood. It, too, still stands there sequestered with the beams and other contents of the Mishkan; he can draw wealth from there.

"Yours is greater than theirs" because the Torah is an Antidote for the Yetzer HaRa

Following this line of reasoning, we will now explain how HKB"H managed to console Aharon. Aharon was disheartened, because he was not allowed to participate in the inauguration ceremony of the nesiim. To console him, HKB"H said: **"I swear by your life! Your contribution is greater than theirs, for you will kindle and prepare the Menorah's lamps."** The nesiim from each shevet, excluding shevet Levi, offered korbanos to inaugurate the mizbeiach. The purpose of the sacrificial service—provided by the mizbeiach and the korbanos—was to provide atonement.

The Ramban (Vayikra 1, 9) explains the process of atonement provided by the korbanos: **כל בעשותו אדם בעשותו כל: "כי חטא לאלקיו בגופו ובנפשו, וראוי לו שישפך דמו וישרף גופו, לולא חסד אלה, כי חטא לאלקיו בגופו ובנפשו, וראוי לו שישפך דמו וישרף גופו, לולא חסד"**

הבורא שלקח ממנו תמורה, וכיפר הקרבן שיהא דמו תחת דמו נפש תחת נפש".
The sinner must imagine that everything being done to the korban should have been done to him. Because he sinned against G-d with his body and soul, his blood deserved to be spilled and his body burned. It is only due to the Almighty's kindness that a substitute was accepted in his stead. In this manner, the korban provides atonement—its blood in place of his blood, its life in place of his life. Therefore, the nesiiim inaugurated the mizbeiach by offering korbanos. In other words, the role of the nesiiim was to prepare the mizbeiach to atone for Yisrael's transgressions.

In contrast, the role of Aharon HaKohen was to imbue Yisrael with the light of the Torah, the antidote to the yetzer hara, by kindling the lamps of the Menorah. As we have learned in the Gemara (Kiddushin 30b), HKB"H said to Yisrael: **כני בראתי יצר**—**הרע ובראתי לו תורה תבלין, ואם אתם עוסקים בתורה אין אתם נמסרים בידו**—**My son, I have created the yetzer hara, and I have created Torah as its antidote. If you engage in Torah-study, you will not be delivered into its hand.** Seen in this light, Aharon's role was superior to the role of the nesiiim. By influencing Yisrael with the light of Torah, they would be unlikely to sin; then they would not require the atonement of korbanos.

This explains the following passuk very nicely (ibid. 7, 37): **"זאת התורה לעולה למנחה ולחטאת ולאשם"—this is the torah (laws) of the olah, of the minchah, of the chatas and of the asham.** They expounded in the Gemara (Menachos 110a): **"אמר רבא כל העוסק"—Rava explained: Whoever engages in the study of Torah does not require neither an olah, nor a minchah, nor a chatas nor an asham.** As explained, since the Torah is the antidote for the yetzer hara, it prevents a person from sinning. Thus, a person who engages in Torah-study does not need to bring korbanos for atonement. After all, he is protected from sinning in the first place.

Thus, we have learned a wonderful chiddush. If a person studies Torah, not only will he not be required to bring a "korban chatas" for the sinful act, but he will not even have to bring a "korban olah" for the improper, misguided thought or deliberation. Regarding the "korban olah," the Midrash teaches us (V.R. 7, 3): **"אמר רשב"י לעולם אין העולה באה אלא על הרהור הלב"**—**Rashbi said: The "olah" comes exclusively for deliberations of the heart.** Now, Torah-study safeguards a person from contemplating a sinful, iniquitous act. Regarding this fact, the

Rambam writes (Hilchos Issurei Biah 22, 21): **גדולה מכל זאת אמרו, יפנה עצמו ומחשבתו לדברי תורה, וירחיב דעתו בחכמה, שאין מחשבת—עריות מתגברת אלא בלב פגוי מן החכמה—and they (our Sages) gave even greater advice, saying: "A person should always turn himself and his thoughts to the words of the Torah and expand his knowledge in wisdom, for the thoughts of forbidden relations (immorality) grow strong solely in a heart which is empty of wisdom."**

We can now comprehend why Aharon was consoled when HKB"H said to him: **"I swear by your life! Your contribution is greater than theirs, for you will kindle and prepare the Menorah's lamps."** The korbanos offered by the nesiiim prepared a mechanism of atonement for Yisrael after they had sinned. What Aharon provided by kindling the Menorah far surpassed that. He **"kindled"** with the light of the Torah **"the lamps"**—the neshamos of Yisrael. As it is written (Mishlei 20, 27): **"נר ה' נשמת אדם"—a man's neshamah is the lamp of Hashem.** Due to the positive influence and illumination of the Torah, a person is able to rid himself of the yetzer hara and remain only with a yetzer tov.

The Torah Is a Vehicle Transforming the Yetzer HaRa into a Positive Force

Let us embellish this thought and elaborate on HKB"H's remark to Aharon: **חייך שלך גדולה משלהם, שאתה מדליק ומיטיב את הנרות.** The Orach L'Chaim (Bereishis) brings down in the name of Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritsch, zy"a, a question concerning the Gemara's statement that HKB"H says to Yisrael: **"My son, I have created the yetzer hara, and I have created Torah as its antidote ("תבלין")."** Now, the word **"תבלין"** actually means a **spice** (which in the context here means an antidote). Usually, a proper spice enhances the taste and flavor of the item being cooked; it is not meant to spoil it. Yet, the purpose of Torah-study is to destroy and eliminate the yetzer hara, not to enhance or improve it.

Hence, he offers a wonderful insight. In truth, the ultimate goal is to transform the yetzer hara into a positive force—to improve it not to destroy it. As such, it will serve as a good ally, helping a person better serve Hashem also in all matters pertaining to Olam HaZeh. We learn this from a passuk in the first paragraph of Krias Shema (Devarim 6, 5): **"ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך"**—**you shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all of your heart.** As they

expound in the Mishnah (Berachos 54a), this means: **“בשני יצרתי”**—**“ביצר טוב וביצר הרע—with both of your yetzers, with the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara.** However, as long as the yetzer hara has not been transformed, it must be thwarted. It is to address this situation that HKB”H says to Yisrael: **“בראתי יצר הרע ובראתי לו תורה”**—**“תבלין”**. By studying Torah, a person can spice up and transform the yetzer hara into a good ally.

In this manner, I would like to propose a resolution for the contradiction between two statements in the Gemara (Kiddushin 30b) that concerned the Arvei Nachal (Ki Seitzei 1). Initially, the Gemara presents HKB”H’s statement: **“בראתי יצר הרע ובראתי לו תורה תבלין, ואם אתם עוסקים בתורה אין אתם נמסרים בידו”**—**“I created the yetzer hara, and I have created the Torah as its antidote. If you engage in Torah-study, you will not be delivered into its hand.** This implies that Torah-study possesses the power to negate the yetzer hara. Yet, afterwards it states: **“יצרו של אדם מתגבר עליו בכל יום ומבקש המיתו... ואלמלא הקב”ה”**—**“עוזרו אין יכול לו”**—**“a man’s yetzer overwhelms him every day and tries to kill him . . . And if not for HKB”H, Who aids him, he would be unable to withstand it.** This latter statement implies that man cannot overcome the influence of the yetzer hara on his own.

To reconcile this difficulty, we will refer to the words of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh (beginning of Parshas Bechukosai). He asserts that when HKB”H says to Yisrael: **“I created the yetzer hara, and I have created the Torah as its antidote. If you engage in Torah-study, you will not be delivered into its hand”**—this only applies on the condition that Yisrael are studying Torah l’shma—sincerely, with proper intent. If, however, this is not the case, their studies will not subdue and eliminate the yetzer hara.

So, now, let us resolve the contradiction between the Gemara’s two statements. The first statement: **“I created the yetzer hara, and I have created the Torah as its antidote”**—applies to someone who learns Torah l’shma. His Torah is a spice that enhances and transforms the yetzer hara into a positive force. Someone who does not learn l’shma, however, does not have the power to transform the yetzer hara. Hence, the latter statement applies to him: **“A man’s yetzer overwhelms him every day and tries to kill him . . . And if not for HKB”H, Who aids him, he would be unable to withstand it.”**

With this in mind, I would like to suggest that by means of Aharon HaKohen’s kindling of the Menorah, he influenced Yisrael to such a high degree that they studied Torah l’shma. Thus, their Torah acted as a spice transforming the yetzer hara into a good ally. Furthermore, we can propose that by kindling seven lamps, Aharon illuminated and transformed all seven names of the yetzer hara listed in the Gemara (Succah 52a): **“שבעה שמות יש לו ליצר הרע”**. Hence, HKB”H said to Aharon: **Yours is truly greater than theirs. For you kindle the light of Torah that enhances their neshamos by transforming the yetzer hara within them into a good, positive influence.**

“Toward the face of the Menorah” —Refers to Moshe Rabeinu Who Studied Torah L’shma

Following this sublime path, we will now explain the directive given to Aharon: **“Toward the face of the menorah shall the seven lamps cast light.”** To begin with, let us focus on the passuk (Malachi 3, 22): **“זכרו תורת משה עבדי אשר ציויתי: “אתו בחורב על כל ישראל חוקים ומשפטים”**—**remember the Torah of Moshe My servant, which I commanded him at Chorev for all of Yisrael, its decrees and its statutes.** They expound in the Gemara (Shabbas 89a): **“אמר לו הקב”ה למשה, הואיל ומיעטת עצמך: “הואיל ומיעטת עצמך.”** **HKB”H said to Moshe, “Since you belittled yourself (the significance of your role in receiving the Torah), it shall be named after you,” as it says: “Remember the Torah of Moshe, My servant.”**

It appears that this explains HKB”H’s request that we **“remember the Torah of Moshe.”** For we explained above that the Torah is a spice and antidote for the yetzer hara only if Torah is learned l’shma. Obviously, not everyone is capable of achieving that high level of learning—to learn solely for the sake of Hashem without any ulterior motives. Hence, the solution is to study Torah with Moshe Rabeinu in mind. Not only did he deliver the Torah to us, but he studied Torah l’shma. As the Tiferes Shlomo (Vayakheil) writes in relation to the passuk (Devarim 31, 1):

“Moshe went and spoke these words to all of Yisrael.” The Rishonim ask: Where did Moshe go? The passuk means that he passed away; he went to the next world. Nevertheless, **“he spoke these words”**—even though he went to the upper world, he is the one who learns Torah with all of Yisrael. As

the Arizal teaches us, anyone who learns Torah l'shma is accompanied by the neshamah of Moshe. Hence, the word "לשמה" is an anagram for "למושה".

This then is what HKB"H is requesting of us: **"Remember the Torah of Moshe My servant, which I commanded him at Chorev for all of Yisrael, its decrees and its statutes."** Whenever you are engaged in Torah-study, remember that the Torah is named after him; so that you study Torah as he did and he intended you to—l'shma. If you do so, his neshamah will join you and assist you to accomplish this noble feat.

This illuminates for us the command HKB"H issued to Aharon: **"When you kindle the lamps, toward the face of the menorah shall the seven lamps cast light."** According to the Noam Elimelech, the seven lamps represent the seven shepherds: **Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and David.** Thus, it turns out that the middle lamp, the fourth lamp, corresponds to Moshe Rabeinu. Accordingly, when HKB"H instructs Aharon: **"בהעלותך את הנרות"**—when you kindle the lamps to elevate the neshamos of Yisrael with the light of Torah; **"אל מול פני המנורה יאירו שבעת הנרות"**—they should emulate the middle lamp and learn Torah as he intended them to—l'shma. As a result, they will succeed in transforming the yetzer hara into a good, positive influence.

As for Aharon HaKohen, due to his own incredible kedushah, he was able to study Torah l'shma on a very high level. HKB"H attests to this in the passuk cited above: **"The Torah of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and with fairness and turned many away from iniquity. For the lips of the Kohen should safeguard knowledge, and people should seek teaching from his mouth; for he is an agent of Hashem, Master of Legions."** So, it was not necessary for him to kindle the lamps **"facing the central lamp"** for his own edification. He studied Torah l'shma in his own right without having to connect with Moshe.

Nevertheless, as a testimony to his extreme humility: **"Aharon did so; toward the face of the Menorah, he kindled its lamps."** Why did he do so? **"As Hashem had commanded Moshe"**—because HKB"H wanted every Jew to connect with Moshe, represented by the middle lamp. This is the message conveyed by Rashi: **The passuk is praising Aharon for not deviating.** Even though he did not need to kindle the lamps in

this manner—facing the central lamp in order to connect with Moshe; nevertheless, he did not deviate. He did so **"as Hashem had commanded Moshe"**—with the sincere, unmitigated intent of connecting with Moshe.

"Yours surpasses theirs" since in Your Merit Every Individual Can Be Like Shevet Levi

We have learned a fundamental principle. By means of his avodah, the kindling of the Menorah, Aharon HaKohen imbued all of Yisrael with the light of Torah. Let us propose a novel interpretation based on this principle. To console Aharon, HKB"H said to him: **"Yours surpasses theirs; for you kindle and refresh the lamps."** Now, our sacred sources explain why the Torah repeats the details of the korbanos brought by the nasi of each and every shevet for the inauguration of the Mishkan, even though they were all identical. We are taught that every shevet possesses a unique kedushah. With his offering, each nasi focused on the unique kedushah of his own shevet.

Aharon HaKohen was the nasi of shevet Levi. In the words of the Midrash cited above: **You find in the passage above that eleven shevatim offered sacrifices, and shevet Ephraim offered a sacrifice; in fact, all of the "nesiim" offered sacrifices, with the exception of the "nasi" of Levi. Who was the "nasi" of Levi? It was Aharon . . . He thought to himself: Woe is me! Perhaps, it is because of me that HKB"H is not accepting the shevet of Levi.** This prompted HKB"H to comfort him by saying: **"You are destined for something greater."**

To better comprehend the matter, let us introduce the inspirational, thought-provoking words of the great luminary, the Rambam. It behooves every Jew to study and review this sacred insight (Hilchos Shemitah V'Yoveil 13, 10-13):

All of shevet Levi are commanded against receiving an inheritance in the land of Canaan, and they are commanded against receiving a share in the spoil when the cities are conquered . . . Because they were set aside to serve Hashem and minister unto Him and to instruct the masses in His just paths and righteous judgments, as it states (Devarim 33, 10): "They will teach Your judgments to Jacob and Your Torah to Israel." Therefore they were set apart from worldly matters. They do not wage war like the remainder of the Jewish people . . . Instead, they are God's army, as it

states (ibid. 11): **“God has blessed His army” and He Who is blessed provides for them, as it states (Bamidbar 18, 20): “I am your portion and your inheritance.”**

This applies not only to shevet Levi, but to each and every person from all walks of life whose spirit inspires him, and he understands with his intellect to set himself aside and stand before Hashem, to serve Him and minister to Him and to know Hashem, proceeding justly as G-d made him, removing from his neck the yoke of the many reckonings which human beings seek. Such a person is sanctified as holy of holies. Hashem will be his portion and heritage forever.

Thus, we learn from the Rambam that every Jew, no matter from which shevet he hails, can sanctify himself like a member of shevet Levi; he need merely divorce himself from all worldly matters and accept upon himself the yoke of Torah.

We can suggest that this was made possible by the avodah and merits of Aharon HaKohen who loved Yisrael deeply. In the words of the Mishnah (Avos 1, 12): **“הלל אומר, הוי מתלמידיי של אהרן, אוהב שלום ורודף שלום, אוהב את הבריות ומקרבן לתורה.”** Hillel says: **Be among the disciples of Aharon—love peace and promote peace, love your fellow creatures and bring them closer to Torah.** It was for this reason that HKB”H assigned Aharon the avodah of kindling the lamps of the Menorah. He kindled the light of Torah not only for his shevet—shevet Levi, who were sanctified to study Torah—but for all of Yisrael. He imbued them all with kedushah, enabling all of Yisrael to be like shevet Levi.

We can now truly understand the message HKB”H conveyed to Aharon: **“שלך גדולה משלהם שאתה מדליק ומיטיב את הנרות”**. All of the other nesiiim were only able to impart kedushah to their own respective shevatim. You, Aharon, in contrast, kindle and refresh the lamps of the neshamos of all of Yisrael, enabling every Jew to attain the kedushah of shevet Levi.



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