

DVAR TORAH IMITATION AND UNIQUENESS

The Torah repeats every single one of the donations of the twelve nesi'im (heads of tribes), even though they each gave exactly the same items, from the silver bowl to the peace offerings (see Bamidbar Chapter 7). Why didn't the Torah just mention the list of donations once, and then mention the names of the twelve donors? Why repeat the same list verbatim? Furthermore, each time it lists the sacrifices the Torah closes with, "This is the sacrifice of ..." then lists the name of the nasi. Why is that added?

Reb Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha, of blessed memory, answers (Kol Mevaser Part I, Parshat Naso): The reason the Torah repeats each time, "This is the sacrifice of ..." is because it was truly his own sacrifice. He did not offer those sacrifices in order to imitate another prince who had offered those sacrifices on a previous day. Each of the princes had totally individual motivation. That emphasis on individuality and aversion to imitation became a hallmark of that stream of Polish Chassidus.

It is striking, though, that each one offered exactly what the others did. The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 13 and 14) describes each aspect of the sacrifices had special significance for each of the tribes. For instance, the silver bowl weighed one-hundred and thirty: for Asher, whose sacrifice emphasized God's choosing Israel from all the nations, 130 represented the seventy nations and the sixty queens (see Shir Hashirim 6:8 and Bamidbar Rabbah 14:9); but for the tribe of Dan, ancestor of Shimshon the mighty nazirite, that number signified the one-hundred and thirty words in the Torah that describe the nazirite's sacrifice (see Bamidbar 6:13-20 and Bamidbar Rabbah 14:8).

The external similarity of the princes' sacrifices might actually emphasize the differences between their internal intentions (much as we appreciate the personality differences between identical twins because they are so similar externally). The

princes model for us the ability to express our individuality and uniqueness in those aspects of life where we do – superficially – what everyone else is doing: saying the same words of the Shemoneh Esrei, learning the same words of the Chumash, and doing the same mitzvah acts. We can truly be ourselves even as we do what everyone else does.



Rav Benny Hager, a ten year veteran of Shapell's and former colonel in the IDF, shared his personal experiences of the 6 Day War and the liberation of the Kotel at this Wednesday morning's Shapell's Darche Noam festive Yom Yerushalayim breakfast.

Also in this week's Daf Keshar: · [Sefer Hachinuch on the Birkat Kohanim](#) · [Rav Farber: How Can I Acquire Kedushah?](#)

THE SEFER HACHINUCH ON BIRKAT KOHANIM: WHY KOHANIM?

The Torah closes the section about the priestly blessing, Birkat Kohanim, with:

<p>Bamidbar 6:27 They (the kohanim) will Place My Name upon the Children of Israel and I will bless them.</p>	<p>במדבר ו:כז וְשָׂמוּ אֶת שְׁמִי עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֵם.</p>
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This verse is the basis of the following discussion that takes place between God and Israel, according to the Midrash:

<p>Midrash Tanchuma Naso, Chapter 8 ... Said the Congregation of Israel before the Holy One, blessed be He: Master of the Universe, You tell the Kohanim to bless us – we need only Your blessing and that we are blessed by Your mouth! For it says, “Look down from your holy abode (and bless the people)” (Devarim 27:15). Said the Holy One, blessed be He to them: Even though I told the kohanim to bless you, I will stand with them and bless you. Therefore the kohanim stretch out their hands, to say: the Holy One, blessed be He stands behind us. And thus it says, “Behold He stand behind our wall, looks out through the windows, and glances through the lattices” (Shir Hashirim 2:9). When does He glance through the lattices? It is at the time when the kohanim stretch out their hands ...</p>	<p>מדרש תנחומא נשא פרק ח אמרה כנסת ישראל לפני הקב"ה: רבש"ע לכהנים אתה אומר שיברכו אותנו אין אנו צריכין אלא לברכתך ולהיותנו מתברכין מפיו, שנא' (דברים כז: טו) "השקיפה ממעון קדשך". אמר להם הקב"ה: אע"פ שאמרתי לכהנים שיהו מברכין אתכם אני עומד עמהם ומברך אתכם. לפיכך הכהנים פורשין את כפיהם, לומר שהקב"ה עומד אחרינו. וכן הוא אומר (שה"ש ב: ט): "הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו משגיח מן החלונות מציץ מן החרכים." מה בין אצבעות של כהנים מציץ מן החרכים בשעה שפושטין כפיהם.</p>
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This only begs the question: If God will bless them, why is there a need for the blessing of the Kohanim? The Sefer Hachinuch (Book of Education) addresses this issue in his discussion of Birkat Kohanim:

<p>Sefer Hachinuch 378 The roots (reasons) for this mitzvah are that God wanted, in His great goodness, to bless His nation through His servants who constantly dwell in the House of God. All of their thoughts cling to His service and all day their souls are tied to His awe. In their merit the blessing will apply to them, and all of their actions will be blessed and the pleasantness of God will be upon them.</p>	<p>ספר החינוך - מצוה שעח משרשי המצוה שחפץ השם בטובו הגדול לברך עמו על יד המשרתים החונים תמיד בית ה' וכל מחשבתם דבקה בעבודתו ונפשם קשורה ביראתו כל היום, ובזכותם תחול הברכה עליהם ויתברכו כל מעשיהם ויהי נועם ה' עליהם.</p>
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· Which halachot of Birkat Kohanim might be connected with making sure the kohanim bless Israel with the highest of intentions and the loftiest of thoughts?

<p>Do not wonder saying, “Why, if God wanted to bless them, did He not just command that they be blessed without any need for the kohanim’s blessing?”</p>	<p>ואל תתמה לאמור ולו חפץ ה' בברכתם יצו אתם את הברכה ואין צורך בברכת הכהנים</p>
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Answer #1

<p>For I have already mentioned many times before, that through the power of our own actions the blessing takes hold upon us, for His hand, may He be blessed, is open to all who ask – those who are prepared and ready for accepting his goodness. Therefore, since he chose us from all the nations and wanted that we merit His goodness He warned and commanded us to prepare our acts and</p>	<p>כי כבר הקדמתי לך פעמים רבות כי בכח הכשר מעשינו תחול הברכה עלינו, כי ידו ברוך הוא פתוחה לכל שואל בהיותו מוכשר ומוכן לקבלת הטוב. ועל כן כי בחר בנו מכל העמים ורצה שנזכה בטובו הזהירנו וצונו</p>
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ready our bodies so that we should be worthy of the good.

להכין מעשינו ולהכשיר גופנו
במצוותיו להיותנו ראויים אל הטוב,

· What “preparation for the Divine goodness” does the Sefer Hachinuch refer to here?

Answer #2

He also commanded us, in His great goodness, to request of Him the blessing and ask it of His pure servants. All of this is a merit to our souls and through it we will merit His goodness.

גם צונו בטובו הגדול לבקש ממנו
הברכה ושנשאל אותה על ידי
המשרתים הטהורים כי כל זה יהיה
זכות לנפשותינו ומתוך כך נזכה
בטובו:

· Where do we “request the blessing of his servants”?

· How does the Sefer Hachinuch answer the question, “Why do we need the kohanim’s blessing if God blesses us anyways?”

Rav Tzadok Hakohen – Pri Tzadik Parshat Naso: The reason there is so much material in the Midrash Rabbah on Parshat Naso, and such significant material in the Zohar on this Parshah, is because Birkat Kohanim appears in this Parshah. Because of the Kohanim’s inner qualities and position as teachers of Torah, they have the special ability to bring down an overflowing *shefa* of Torah. That is a main theme of their brachah.

TORAH FROM OUR FACULTY

HOW CAN I ACQUIRE KEDUSHAH? BY RABBI MENDEL FARBER

[This is Part II of a two-part series: “The Shavuot-Shabbat Connection.” Part I, “What is Kedushah?” developed the concept of Kedushah as anything that expresses the Divine ideal. Shabbat is the day that reveals the ultimate goal of creation. Becoming kadosh is a life goal: “When one’s life and his very being is an expression of the Divine ideal for which the world was created, he is said to be Kadosh.”]

Acquiring Kedushah

We must now turn to the questions: How does one acquire Kedushah?

Kedushah is different than other attributes we attempt to acquire. The Mesilat Yesharim, who sees Kedushah as the highest rung on the ladder of growth, explains the difference. The Ramchal opens his chapter on Kedushah (Mesilat Yesharim Chapter 26) with, “The issue of Kedushah is twofold. It begins with service and ends with reward, its beginning is toil, and its end is a gift. That is to say, Man must first sanctify himself, and then they sanctify him from the heavens.” We sanctify ourselves by living the ideal, but it is granted from heaven that one’s physical being becomes an expression of the ideal. The achievement of Kedushah is a heavenly gift. Even though a person can live a life of Kedushah, to become an expression of Kedushah is a gift from heaven.

The source for this we also find in Shabbat. The Gemara explains the difference between the ending of the berachah (blessing) we say in the Amidah (silent prayer said while standing) on Shabbat and the berachah we say in the Amidah on Yom Tov. On Shabbat we say Mekadesh HaShabbat (He sanctifies the Shabbat), and on Yom Tov we say Mekadesh Yisrael Vehazmanim (He sanctifies Israel and the holidays). The Kedushah of Shabbat was created exclusively by Hashem. “Blessed is Hashem that sanctified the Shabbat.” The seventh day is a result of the creation cycle of seven days. Hashem’s goal in creation was Shabbat. “Sof Maaseh bemachshavah techilah” – “The thought that motivated creation was the final act of creation”. Hashem wanted Shabbat, but needed the six days to create the Shabbat. On Yom Tov, however, the brachah ends, “Mekadesh Yisrael Vehazmanim,” Hashem is sanctifies Yisrael and we sanctify Yom Tov. Yom Tov is a result of the human court, the beit din, determining which day the Jewish month begins and declaring it Rosh

Chodesh. We create Kedushat Yom Tov but Kedushat Shabbat is a gift from heaven. Kedushat Yom tov is the result of human effort.

The Maharal tells us that Shabbat is “Mei'ein Olam Haba” – the essence of the World to Come – and Yom Tov is “Meiein Yemot Hamashiach” – the essence of the Messianic Era. Just as Mashiach is a preparation for Olam Haba, so is Yom Tov a preparation for Shabbat. The source of Kedushah is Shabbat, and therefore the ultimate Kedushah is a gift, just as the Shabbat is a gift. The Gemara tells us, “Hashem told Moshe, ‘Go tell my people I have a precious gift I am bestowing upon them and Shabbat is its name.’” With all the effort we exert we cannot create a Shabbat, but we can live our six days of the week in a way that merits the great gift of Shabbat.



Rabbi Mendel Farber

Shavuot, the Shabbat-like Yom Tov

There is one Yom Tov that in some degree shares the quality of Shabbat, and that is Shavuot. The Gemara records a dispute about on which calendar date the Torah was given, the sixth or the seventh of Sivan, everyone agrees that it was given on Shabbat.

What connects Shavuot to Shabbat? Shavuot is the only Yom Tov that the Torah does not connect to a calendar date. It is the fiftieth day after the first day of Pesach. That day did not become Yom Tov because the court declared Rosh Chodesh Sivan, but because Klal Yisrael counted forty-nine days. Great effort was needed to merit that fiftieth day. It wasn't simply counting – it was achieving, each day, through great effort and toil, the level that day represented. Level by level we came closer to the fiftieth day. But, alas, we did not count the fiftieth day. We entered into that day by the Grace of Hashem, the ultimate heavenly gift, the Torah. All human effort cannot create a Torah, but it can make us worthy of receiving the Torah. Our Kedushah is our Torah. It, and only it, can bring us to the ultimate goal and gift, the eternal world with all the “Heavenly Good” destined for us, “Olam Haba”.

The Mesilat Yesharim ends the chapter on Kedushah by saying that the real heights of Kedushah are not reached by refraining from or avoiding contact with the physical aspects of our world. On the contrary, they are achieved by converting that world itself into a true expression of the ideal. That is the heavenly gift, the creation of a new world with all the beauty of Hashem's Divine Ideal.

As we approach Shavuot let us do what is incumbent upon us, to strengthen our commitment to Torah; learning it and implementing it in every aspect of our lives. Then, with Hashem's help we will merit that greatest of all gifts, to receive the Torah once again on Shavuot, with all its beauty, newness, and freshness. Chag Sameach!!!!

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This issue is dedicated
in loving memory of
Mark Bader,
Moshe ben Yitzchak ha'Kohen, z"l,
brother of Mrs. Fela Shapell

