



PARSHAS ACHAREI MOS/ KEDOSHIM/ LAG B'OMER

SHALOSH SEUDOS TORAH

5772

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

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Aharon is the Persona of Kodesh Kodoshim

Introduction

This parsha begins with the verse, 'Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of the two sons of Aharon [Nadav and Avihu].' The first verse of a parsha always contains the theme of the entire parsha. This parsha discusses the Avodah (service) that the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) performed in the Temple on Yom Kippur.

How does the death of the sons of Aharon feature the idea of the parsha?

Verses that are out of Place

The parsha continues, describing the Avodah of Yom Kippur which was divided into five parts.

First, the Kohen Gadol donned the usual colorful garments he wore every day when performing the service of the Temple and offered the daily morning sacrifice.

Second, he switched into the special white clothes of Yom Kippur and performed the service unique to the holiday, including the offering of Ketores in the Kodesh Kodoshim (Holy of Holies).

Third, he changed into his usual clothing and offered an Oleh offering on his own and the people's behalf, as well as various other sacrifices.

Fourth, he again changed into the special white clothes of Yom Kippur and went into the Kodesh Kodoshim to remove the utensils that had been used for the Ketores.

Fifth, he changed back into his usual garments and concluded the services of the day with the daily evening sacrifice.

Before changing garments, the Kohen Gadol was required to immerse himself in the Mikvah.

The Torah describes the Avodah according to the order of the procedures, except for one verse. The verse, "ובא אהרן אל אהל מועד", indicates that Aharon went into the Kodesh Kodoshim to remove the Ketores utensils before sacrificing the Oleh offering.

However, we know that this cannot be. The Kohen Gadol had to immerse himself in the Mikvah five times on Yom Kippur. Had he removed the Ketores utensils before the Oleh offering, he would not have been required to change from the white garments to the usual ones and back into the white garments. He would only have immersed himself three times on Yom Kippur.

Therefore, the Gemara concludes that the verse, "ובא אהרן אל אהל מועד" - which indicates that Aharon went back into the Kodesh Kodoshim to remove the Ketores utensils - is out of order¹.

In last week's parsha there was also a verse that was out of order, regarding tzaraas (leprosy) of a house, the verse of, "וַיִּנְתֹּץ אֶת-הַבַּיִת וכו'", 'He should destroy the house...' (See Rashi there at length.)

The world is astoundingly organized. Every atomic particle is exactly where it should be. The ecosystem is balanced precisely. If the trajectory of the stars would be even slightly off, life on Earth would cease to exist. The human body has each organ in its place; and would one of them be out of place - even somewhat - man would suffer greatly.

The Torah is the blueprint of the world. If the world is so perfectly organized, how can it be that something in the blueprint should be out of place?

Aharon was Permitted to Enter the Kodesh Kodoshim a Whole Year

The GR"A² quotes the Midrash³ which states that Aharon was permitted to enter the Kodesh Kodoshim any time he wanted to, as long as he first performed the procedures described in this parsha. The other Kohanim Gedolim were only permitted to do so on Yom Kippur.

According to this Midrash, the GR"A notes, the verses are in their proper order regarding Aharon HaKohen. On any day of the year, when Aharon wished to enter the Kodesh Kodoshim, he did not need to change clothing five times. He was able to follow the regular procedure without interrupting the service of Yom Kippur to sacrifice the Oleh offering, and only change clothing three times.

It is only regarding the regular Kohen Gadol - who can only perform these procedures on Yom Kippur when he must immerse five times - that the verses are not in their proper order.

However, it is still difficult to understand why the verses are not in their proper order even regarding the regular Kohanim Gedolim. Hashem is omnipotent and could have arranged the verses to be in the right order, both regarding Aharon and regarding the other Kohanim Gedolim.

The Middos of Sefirah

There are seven attributes with which Hashem created and runs the world. Our character is also comprised of these seven Attributes/Middos. These are חסד – Loving Kindness, גבורה/דין – Strength/Strict Justice, תפארת – the balance between Chesed and Din, נצח – Victory/Eternity, הוד – Subservience/Gratitude, יסוד – the balance between all the Middos, מלכות – Kingship/Reflection.

During each of the seven weeks of Sefirah we work on a different one of these seven attributes. Each of the seven days of the week, we work on a different dimension of each attribute. For example, on the first day of Sefirah, the attribute of the week is Chesed - and the specific dimension of Chesed we focus on is Chesed of Chesed. The second day, we focus on Gevurah of Chesed; the third, Tiferes of Chesed, and so on.

The Middah of Hod

During the fifth week, which we are entering now, we work on the fifth attribute, Hod. The fifth day of Hod is "Hod of Hod" and is Lag B'Omer.

Hod is the lowest of all the Middos. Chesed is the first and greatest Middah, Gevurah is second, then comes Tiferes and Netzach, and then Hod. Yesod and Malchus are not really Middos in their own right, but are a generalization of the first five Middos.

Each of the Middos corresponds to a different part of the body. Chesed and Gevurah correspond to the right and left hand, Tiferes to the trunk, Netzach to the right foot, and Hod to the left foot. The foot is the lowest part of the anatomy of man, and the left foot is weaker than the right foot.

Hod Corresponds to the Bais HaMikdash

King David praised Hashem as the Master of these seven great attributes. He said, 'לך ה' "To You Hashem is the [Middah of] greatness [which is Chesed], Gevurah, Tiferes, Netzach, Hod, for everything that is in Heaven and Earth [this refers to Yesod], to You Hashem is Kingship [Malchus]."

The Gemara⁵ states that Hod refers to the Bais HaMikdash.

The Bais HaMikdash is the greatest place in the world. From there the world began developing; it is the first point of creation. It is the opposite of Hod, which is the last Middah. Why does the Gemara refer to the Bais HaMikdash as Hod?

A Dwelling for Hashem

Hashem created the world for one purpose, "נתאוה שיהא לו דירה בתחתונים", 'He desired that there should be a dwelling place for Him in the lower realms⁶.'

The entire purpose of Sefirah is to infuse G-dliness into all of our character traits, beginning from the highest, Chesed, to even the lowest, Hod. When the seven weeks of Sefirah are over, Shavuos arrives, and "וירד ה' על הר סיני"⁷, 'Hashem descends to the [lowly] Mount Sinai.' His objective in creation is fulfilled.

With the Bais HaMikdash, the desire of Hashem - to have a dwelling place below - was fulfilled. Hod is the Middah of bending down. It was in the Bais HaMikdash that the sublime presence of Hashem descended into this lowly world.

In the Musaf prayer of Yom Tov we say, "אין אנו יכולים להשתחוות בבית בחירתך", 'We can't bow down in Your chosen house.' Can't one bow down just fine in his own home to Hashem? No, explains the Tanya. To truly nullify oneself into the grandeur of G-dliness, the revelation of the Divine Presence which was manifest in the Bais HaMikdash is required.

This is why the Bais HaMikdash is referred to as the place of Hod. Only there, where the Divine Presence revealed Itself in the dimension of Hod, was one capable of achieving the ultimate greatness of Hod.

Aharon's Essence is Hod

The Jewish people have seven spiritual leaders, corresponding to the Seven Middos. On Sukkos, these are known as the 'Ushpizin.' Avraham corresponds to Chesed, Yitzchak to Gevurah, Yaakov to Tiferes, Moshe to Netzach, Aharon to Hod, Yosef to Yesod and David to Malchus.

Aharon is a soul that is entirely Bais HaMikdash. His character was perfected Hod. Only a man complete in this attribute would be able to see the greatness of his younger brother and not feel even the slightest twinge of envy. Hashem himself testified, "וראך ושמה בלב⁸", 'He will see you [coming to assume your position of leadership] and he will rejoice in his heart.' Aharon reached the ultimate self-nullification; he had no ego at all.

Aharon Corresponds to all of the Jewish People

There is a disagreement as to when Avraham Avinu circumcised himself. One opinion is that he circumcised himself on Pesach. The other is that he did so on Yom Kippur.

The Kedushas Levi explains as follows: Every Yom Tov has a different character. Pesach is a Yom Tov of love of Hashem. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are days of awe of Hashem. When a person engages in loving Hashem, he immerses himself in Pesach. When he engages in fear of Hashem, he actually experiences Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

However, just because one person is now in Pesach or Yom Kippur, it does not mean that it is indeed Yom Kippur or Pesach. To actually affect the time, the focus of the entire Jewish people would be required.

However, in his time, Avraham Avinu was the only Jew. He was the entire Jewish people. When he was overtaken by love and longing for Hashem, it was Pesach. When he was in awe of Hashem's greatness, it was Yom Kippur. His Bris Milah (circumcision) could indeed have

been on both Pesach and Yom Kippur, as he fluctuated between great love and great awe of the A-mighty.

Aharon had the advantage of Avraham Avinu of being a man who consisted of all of the Jewish people. Through his complete self-effacement, he was full of an incredible love of all Jews and connected with each one. Upon his heart, Aharon carried the weight of all of the Jewish people - "ונשא אהרן את משפט בני ישראל על לבו"⁹, 'Aharon carried the judgment of the Children of Yisrael upon his heart.'

Like Avraham Avinu, Aharon embodied the Jewish people. All of the Jewish people were united as one in his heart. Therefore he was able to affect the reality of time due to his being a man who encompassed the entire Jewish people.

When he engaged in the service of Yom Kippur, he was able to actually change the date of the calendar, and it was Yom Kippur.

יבוא אהרן is gematria (numerically equals) אחד היה אברהם (they both equal 281)

Aharon Corresponds to the Kodesh Kodoshim

The Kodesh Kodoshim was the point in the Bais HaMikdash where the Divine Presence rested on the Ark. It was the ultimate point of Hod, "Hod of Hod."

The Kodesh Kodoshim is the holiest place in the world and corresponds to the holiest day of the year. In the Kodesh Kodoshim it is Yom Kippur all year long.

A regular Kohen Gadol could only enter there on Yom Kippur, when it was Yom Kippur for all of the Jewish people. Aharon, being the persona of "Hod of Hod," corresponded to the Kodesh Kodoshim and was able to enter all year.

וּבֹא אֶהְרֹן אֶל אוהל מועד, 'Aharon shall come into the Kodesh Kodoshim,' is gematria מדת ההוד (they both equal 464). Aharon was able to enter the Kodesh Kodoshim all the time because he was the completely perfect form of Hod.

The State of the Torah Depends upon the State of the Jewish People

It would not suffice for one studying the laws of Shabbos to learn only the tractate of Shabbos. Many laws would need to be imported from all over the Talmud in order that his knowledge should be complete. Why is that so? Why does the Gemara – in contrast to any secular law text – not have its contents structured?

This, the Maharal explains, is because the Torah reflects the state of the Jewish people. The Jewish People are currently scattered in exile, torn away from their proper position in Eretz Yisrael. What happened to the Jewish people happened to the Torah. The Jewish people are scattered, and the laws of the Torah are also exiled and therefore not found united in their proper place.

In the Vicinity of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai there is no Exile

The Tanya states that in the vicinity of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai there is no exile and no destruction. He is a very sublime soul, corresponding to the Kodesh Kodoshim, as sung in the popular poem, Bar Yochai, "בר יוחאי בקודש הקדשים".

In the Kodesh Kodoshim, there is no destruction or mourning. The destruction of Yerushalayim did not reach the hidden innermost chambers of G-dliness. "עוז וחדוה במקומו"¹⁰, 'Exultation and delight in [Hashem's] vicinity.'

The Ari HaKadosh visited the resting place of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai on Lag B'Omer with his students. Among them was R' Avraham HaLevi who had the custom of constantly mourning the exile of the Divine Presence and of the Jewish people. He constantly recited the consolation prayer of Tisha B'av in his daily prayers.

He recited it at the resting place of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai during this visit. Rabbi Shimon revealed himself to the Ari and informed him that R' Avraham had offended him by mourning in his presence and he would be punished for it.

The Satmar Rebbe once visited the resting place of Rabbi Shimon during the first nine days of Av when we mourn the destruction of the Temple and do not sing or dance. He instructed his students to dance and sing 'Bar Yochai' and was questioned, "Isn't it forbidden to do so during The Nine Days?"

He responded, "In the presence of Rabbi Shimon there is, "עוז וחדוה במקומו"

Rabbi Shimon embodies the aspect of G-dliness where destruction and mourning does not reach.

עוז וחדוה במקומו is gematria מירון (they both equal 306).

Regarding Aharon there is no Exile

Aharon personified the Kodesh Kodoshim, where exile and destruction do not reach. The scattering of the Jewish people in exile – which was due to jealousy and hatred - did not reach him because he was a man of peace, tolerance and goodwill¹¹. Therefore, specifically regarding him, the verses of the Torah are in order.

Only regarding the other Kohanim Gedolim are the verses not in order. This is because there were among them some who did engage in jealousy and pettiness, the root cause of the exile. Regarding them the verses are exiled out of place.

In this light, the Torah is precisely arranged according to the state of the world. During exile, when the Jewish people are scattered, there is a verse in the Torah that is out of place – exactly like the world's state; similar to the spiritual condition of the later Kohanim.

Nadav and Avihu

We are taught that the sin of Nadav and Avihu was that they determined the law in the presence of their Rebbe, Moshe Rabbeinu. (See Parshas Shemini.) The Midrash¹² notes that they did not even consult each other to verify their decision. They did not sufficiently respect their teachers or colleagues. They were incomplete in the attribute of Hod.

Therefore, the parsha of the Service in the Kodesh Kodoshim, Hod of Hod, is introduced by the detail that two great people were punished for a deficiency in the Middah of Hod.

This verse also enlightens us as to why there is a verse that exiled out of its proper place. As a result of a blemish in the Middah of Hod among the children of Aharon, there will therefore be an exile.

This is also the reason why in regard to the Metzora there is also a verse out of order. Tzaraas came about due to the sin of gossiping and alienating Jews from each other. The Metzora causes the exile of Jews and of the Torah.

The Students of Rabbi Akiva Stopped Dying on Hod of Hod

The students of Rabbi Akiva stopped dying on Lag B'omer, on Hod of Hod. They had been wiped out in a plague because they were not perfect in the attribute of Hod, but when the apex of Hod came around, Hod of Hod, they improved in this area and stopped dying.

The Lighting of Bonfires on Lag B'omer

We introduce the prayer of Lecha Dodi on Friday night with the Psalm, "הבו לה". The word קול, voice is repeated seven times with a clause following it. Each קול corresponds to a different one of the seven Middos. The fifth קול, corresponding to Hod, is "קול ה' חוצב להבות אש", the voice of Hashem cuts through flames of fire.' Hod has a connection to fire.

The Bais HaMikdash, the place of Hod, is complete when the Divine Presence resting dwells there. Hashem's promise that He will return His presence to Yerushalayim is, "וְאֶנִּי אֶהְיֶה", "And I will be a surrounding wall of fire for her, says Hashem.' This is gematria of יוחאי בר יוחאי (they both equal 1,005). The bonfires of Lag B'omer reflect the Hod of the Bais HaMikdash.

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai Recognized the Value of Every Jew

Rabbi Shimon, the soul of the hidden chamber of the Kodosh Kodoshim, is the author of the Zohar, the basic text of Jewish mysticism. He taught the secrets of the Torah. Each Jew is essentially, a part of the Torah. Being the primary authority on the hidden Torah, Rabbi Shimon understood the secret essence of every Jew.

Every Jew has a value that no one else has. However, it is hidden; as much from himself as from anybody else. Superficially, there seem to be great people, lesser people and really wretched people. Rabbi Shimon taught that there is a secret part to every person where he has extreme value that no one else can match.

The verse "וְכָל-בְּנֵיךָ לְמוֹדֵי ה'",¹³ 'all of your children will be students of Hashem' can be interpreted to mean that every Jew is a לימוד, a teaching, in the Torah scroll of Hashem. Each is unique and essential. Without each individual, the entire Torah scroll is invalid and one cannot fulfill the obligation of reading from the Torah.

The focus in the week of Hod is to teach ourselves to value every single Jew. The verse "וכל בניך למודי ה'" concludes with the clause, "ורב שלום בניך", 'There will be abundant peace among your children.' When we will recognize the value of every Jew, there will be peace among the Jewish people.

ויה"ר שנזכה לתקן נפשותינו ורוחותינו מכל סיג ופגם, ונזכה – ובא אשר לו הבית, ותחזינה עינינו וכו', וגדול יהיה כבוד הבית.

May it be the will of Hashem that we merit rectifying our souls from every blemish and imperfection and may we merit that the One to Whom the house [Bais HaMikdash] belongs shall come, and we will see with our own eyes that 'Great will be the splendor of the Bais HaMikdash.'

¹ רש"י ויקרא טז:כג, יומא ל"ב ע"א

² מובא בסוף חכמ"א

³ רבה, ויקרא פ"א פרשה כ"א סימן ז'

⁴ דברי הימים א' כט:יא, יב

⁵ ברכות דף נ"ה ע"א

⁶ תניא

⁷ שמות יט:כ

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- ⁸ שמות ד:יד
⁹ שמות כח:ל
¹⁰ דברי הימים א' טז:כז
¹¹ פרקי אבות
¹² רבה, ויקרא פרשה כ' סימן ט'
¹³ ישעיה' נד:יג