

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON SHEMINI - 5759

B'S'D'

that Simchas Torah, he danced and rejoiced like on every other year. The Alter made Havdalah at the conclusion of Simchas Torah. After reciting the words "Baruch HaMavdil bein Kodesh l'chol," he fainted.

We might think, "OK, that is the Alter from Slabodka". But the truth is that you can read any of a number of books about simple Jews during the holocaust. The stories are unfortunately so similar. Jews lost wives, husbands and children. But when it came to having to do a mitzvah, to make a Shabbos, to bench light, to bench Chanukah light, under the most terrible of circumstances -- in the concentration camps -- there were Jews who continued and did what they had to do. These were not Jews on the level of Aharon the High Priest or the Alter from Slabodka. They were 'simple' Jews and Jewesses. We call them 'simple', but they were not 'simple'. That is the interpretation of "through those who are close to Me I will be sanctified". When people can still demonstrate their closeness to Me in the face of such adversity, they achieve the biggest Kiddush HaShem.

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"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Shemini -

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 188 - Netilas Yadayim for Bread and Fruit. Good Shabbos!

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to David Twersky, upon the engagement of his daughter Dena to Moshe Luchins!

Shemini Sanctifying G-d's Name Through Perseverance

This week's parsha contains the terrible incident of the death of Nadav and Avihu. The pasuk [verse] tells us, "And the sons of Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, each took his fire pan. They put fire in them and placed incense upon it, and they brought before Hashem an alien fire that He had not commanded them." [Vayikra 10:1]

Nadav and Avihu were inspired to bring an offering on the eighth day, the day of dedication of the Mishkan. They felt it was a great moment in Jewish history. The Shechina [Divine Presence of G-d] had descended. The Mishkan [Tabernacle] was complete. They wanted to offer a sacrifice, but it was a sacrifice and fire that G-d did not command. Their action was well intended, but it was misguided. Unfortunately, Nadav and Avihu died.

After this terrible incident, the pasuk says that Moshe consoled Aharon by telling him, "This is what G-d intended when He said 'through those near to Me will I be sanctified and in the presence of the nation I will be honored.'" [Vayikra 10:3] The Torah records that Aharon's response was silence (vaYidom Aharon).

Rash"i, quoting the Talmud [Zevachim 115b], interprets that G-d had previously foretold that the Mishkan would be sanctified at the expense of two people who are holy. Moshe had expected that this would have included either himself or his brother, Aharon. It turned out, however, that the real holy ones were Nadav and Avihu. That is the Gemara's explanation.

The Rashba"m offers an alternative interpretation based on the "p'shuto shel mikra" (the simple reading of Chumash). G-d told Aharon, (through Moshe,) "I do not want you to mourn or to cry or to cease from doing the Kohen Gadol's [High Priest's] Service because of the death of your sons. This is the matter that G-d intended when He said "I will be sanctified through those near to Me." In other words, the Kohen Gadol (the one near to G-d) will sanctify G-d by continuing to perform the Service, even when he has just suffered the loss of a close relative. Since this is what the Halacha demands, stopping the Service would be a desecration of G-d's Name. Conversely, continuing the Service is a sanctification of G-d's Name.

Moshe was asking Aharon for almost super-human behavior. Aharon was being asked to control one of the most basic human emotions -- mourning for the loss of a child. Every emotion in Aharon's body must have been pleading to stop and mourn the loss. But since the Halacha requires -- from the Kohen Gadol only -- that he not stop, that is the highest form of Service. That is a tremendous Kiddush HaShem [Sanctification of G-d's Name].

The verse concludes, "Aharon was silent". He did not mourn. He did not stop. He did what the halacha demands, in the face of this great tragedy. This, says the Rashba"m, is the meaning of the simple interpretation of the verse, when it says, "With those who are near to me (the High Priest), I will be sanctified" (when he does not allow his human emotions interrupt the Divine Service).

When we think about this concept, we think to ourselves, "This is something that an Aharon is capable of, but we are mere mortals who cannot be in charge of our emotions to such an extent." The Rosh Yeshiva, zt"l, used to mention every Succos, that his teacher, the Alter from Slabodka, lost his son on the Yom Tov of Succos. As the halacha proscribes, there was no mourning on the Festival. Rav Ruderman testified that the Alter from Slabodka continued to act as though nothing had happened. When it came to