



דרכים בפרשה

שמיני

וישא אהרן את ידיו אל העם ויברכם

Aharon raised his hands and he blessed them (9:22)

After completing his first day of performing the *avoda* (sacrificial service), Aharon HaKohen's joy was on such an intense level that he needed to share it with others. At that moment, Aharon lifted his hands and gave Klal Yisroel the bracha that the kohanim still use today, otherwise known as the *Bircas Kohanim*.

There is a great lesson to be gleaned from here. Aharon is teaching us that when we experience joy in our lives, we should not just keep it for ourselves. Rather, we should follow up with an act of bestowing goodness on others as well. In this manner, the moment becomes complete and can actually become eternal, enduring forever, as seen from today's usage of this very bracha.

In Rashi's comments on this possuk, he notes that the bracha that Aharon gave them was the Bircas Kohanim. Just in case we don't know what this bracha is, Rashi then continues telling us the words "yevarechicha, ya-er and yisah".

From the time that we began learning Rashi's sacred words as small children, we are taught that each and every word is measured, and he never uses any extras. Yet, Rashi makes it a point of mentioning what we surely all already know.

Furthermore, If we look at the words that the chazzan says prior to *bircas kohanim*,

האמורה מפי אהרן ובניו –*that was recited from the mouth of Aharon and his sons*, there is another question that we can ask. Why must we mention that these are the words that were recited by Aharon? Isn't it enough that in Parshas Nasso, HaShem Himself tells Moshe to tell Aharon and his sons that these words will be the bracha that the kohanim shall recite for all the future generations? What are we adding by saying that they recited it as well?

Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank z"l (Har Tzvi) beautifully explains that Rashi is sharing with us a wonderful *chidush* (novelty). Rashi tells us what *bircas kohanim* is because up until now, no one had ever uttered these words. This was the first time that they were used. The copyright of these words belonged to Aharon. In Parshas Nasso when HaShem first mentioned the idea of the kohanim giving out brachos, HaShem said that words that should be used were exactly these very words that Aharon offered on his own. At that very moment, HaShem was giving His stamp of approval to Aharon's words for eternity. We now also understand why we mention האמורה מפי אהרן ובניו –*that was recited from the mouth of Aharon and his sons*, because they were the ones that actually coined these words.

A thought that comes to mind here is the idea that HaShem gives an opportunity for



each and every one of us to make our very own unique mark in this world. We have all arrived here with something to give over. Sadly, many never actually accomplish this because they are too busy focusing on what everyone else has.

On Erev Rosh Hashana 5772, Rav Nissan Kaplan shlita shared the following mashul with his students:

There were two Egged bus drivers that would work their routes, 7 and 18 respectively, going through the daily grind. The driver of the 18 bus would collect hundreds of passengers daily, bringing in to the manager at closing time large amounts of money. It was not the same for the very unpopular bus 7. The driver of that route would collect perhaps twenty passengers the entire day. This disturbed the driver to no end.

One day, the driver of bus 7 decided that enough was enough. Was he really making a difference for the company this way? After all, barely any passengers on a bus amounts to little money for the company and definitely not enough to even be worth the company's keeping the route open. Why bother with this when he can really be bringing in a lot more money for them? With that, he decided to ignore his own route and drive bus the route of his friend.

The entire day, he felt amazing, transporting all the different passengers and really bringing in so much money for the company. At day's end, with a huge triumphant smile, he walks into the manager's office placing down the day's

earnings. Much to his chagrin, instead of being applauded for his efforts, he was given the pink slip, thus being fired from his job. The manager explained to him that instead of earning them extra money, he caused a huge loss. Part of the agreement when the company won the mandate from the city was to operate the busses on the roads less travelled as well. By ignoring that route, the company would now receive an enormous fine. Furthermore, the bus that you did drive was already covered by someone else so you've added absolutely nothing other than not doing your own job. Lastly, you both were getting paid the same amount and if anything, you were the lucky one not having to work as hard.

The *nimshal* of course is that HaShem asks of us to serve Him with the tools that we are given for our own job, each person a different job with a different skill set, no two alike. We must always remember that "there is no one out there that is better at my job than me".

I heard a quotable quote which sums this all up: "Be yourself; everyone else is already taken!"

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפל



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