



Kinder Torah



We're Serving Hashem

"Class, let us begin our study of the *Parashas Ha'shavuah*. I have a question for you. Who has ever helped clean up the ashes after a bonfire?"

Several boys raise their hands.

"Please tell us about it Avi."

"It was very messy. The ashes were black and stuck to my skin and clothes. I was dirty from head to toe."

"Would you call this a high level job, Avi?"

"Not at all, Rebbe."

"Would you wear nice clothes for this job, Avi?"

"Never, Rebbe."

"Very good, Avi. I have another question for the class. Which *avodah* (service) is mentioned in the beginning of the *parasha* (Vayikra 6:3)?"

"Cleaning the ashes of the *korbonos* (sacrifices) from the *mizbeach* (altar)."

"Very good Chaim. What did the Kohen wear when he performed this *avodah*?"

"*Bigdei Kehuna* (the Priestly Garments)."

"Excellent, Chezikie. Let me ask you another question, class. Why would the Kohen wear his holiest clothes - the *Bigdei Kehuna* - when cleaning up ashes?"

The class was quiet.

"This is not my question, class. Rabbeinu Bechaye discusses the subject. He points out that the *haramas hadeshen* (clearing the ashes) was the simplest *avodah* in the Mishkan. Even so, Hashem commanded the Kohen to wear the *Bigdei Kehuna* when performing this *avodah*. Why? To glorify the mitzvah. Rabbeinu Bechaye learns two important lessons from this mitzvah. Who knows what they are?"

"To glorify our *Avodas Hashem*."

"Fantastic, Nochum. Any mitzvah or service to Hashem that we perform must be done with the utmost care and honor to the One Who commands us."

"To humble ourselves before the Almighty."

"Perfect, Moishie. We must be prepared to perform even the simplest work for Hashem. That is why it is called *Avodah*. Because we are His *avodim* (servants). There can be no servant without a Master, and no Master without a servant. One does not precede the other; rather they come into existence at the same time. When we lower ourselves to serve Him in any way that is necessary, we become His servants and He becomes our Master."

"The Rabbeinu Bechaye is saying that sometimes must do things which appear very small. However, we must still glorify them by giving them our best. In that way we humble ourselves, and bring splendor to our Creator."

"Tzviki, you've got it right. May you al-

ways be a faithful *Eved Hashem*.
"Amen."

Kinderlach . . .

"Who is going to help with the dishes, the laundry, the floors, and the gardening?"

No one answers. "These are mitzvos of preparing for Shabbos and helping your parents." Still no answer. Imma begins humming a little tune. "I'm serving Hashem with simcha and a lev tov (good heart)!" She begins folding clothes, taking great care to do a very good job. Abba joins in the tune, as he cleans the garden.

"I'm serving Hashem with simcha and a lev tov!" One by one the children begin to join in. "I want to Serve Hashem!"

"Please wash these dishes, Yossie. "I want to Serve Hashem!" "Sweep the floor with simcha and a lev tov Chani." Soon the whole house is humming with Hashem's happy children, serving Him. "Everyone, please make sure that you do the best job you can, to glorify your mitzvos. "Of course we will, Abba. After all, we're serving Hashem!"



Eat, Drink, and be Close to Hashem

Disaster was impending. In our days, *I'tsaareinu* (distressingly), we have become accustomed to tragic news. However, this was an unparalleled catastrophe. Each and every single Jew - man, woman, and child was to die, in one single day (Megillas Esther 3:13). Was this *gezayra* (decree) final? Was there no recourse? The Medrash (Esther Rabba 7:13) relates that Eliyahu HaNovi told Moshe Rabbeinu that the decree was written Above. Moshe said, if it was sealed in mortar, then our *tefillos* (prayers) will still be heard. However, if it is sealed in blood, it will stand as it is. Eliyahu said that it was sealed in mortar. Immediately Eliyahu informed Mordechai.

What should Mordechai do? All of Klal Yisrael was in mortal danger. Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l explains that there was only one solution. Mordechai had to appeal to Hashem's mercy in the most basic way. "You are children to Hashem

your G-d" (Devarim 14:1). A father has mercy on his children. We had to show The Almighty that we still cherished our relationship with Him like a son to a father. And so, Mordechai gathered 22,000 children who donned sackcloth, fasted, learned Torah, and cried out to Hashem. These children showed Hashem that we are still His children. Their cries rose to the very Heavens and disturbed Hashem's sleep (so to speak). At that moment, He rose from His throne of *din* (strict judgment) and sat on His throne of *rachamim* (mercy) [Esther Rabba 9:3].

What is the uniqueness of Purim?" asks Rav Pincus. This is the day that we renewed our father/child relationship with our Creator. We still love and revere Him like a child to a Father. How do we demonstrate this? By eating and drinking. What is the connection? Food and drink are what keep us alive. That is how Hashem bestows the gift of life upon His creations. On Purim, we celebrate life itself, the special life that we were granted as Hashem's children. We eat a *seudas mitzvah* (festive meal) and drink wine because eating and drinking is our most basic connection to our Source of Life - the Holy One. In doing so, we realize that Hashem is close to us at all times. We need only to mention His Name, "Blessed are You Hashem, our G-d, King of the World, Who created the fruit of the vine." Our *seudas mitzvah* on Purim becomes a unique way achieving closeness to Hashem that is unmatched on any other day of the year. May we all merit enjoying our Purim *seudah* this year as never before.

Kinderlach . . .

*Hashem is "Avinu Malkeinu" (Our Father Our King). To get a personal audience with the King, one must normally wait several months or even years. However, the King's son gets in right away. We are the King's children. We can speak with Him whenever we want. How? The whole world recognizes Hashem in His Glorious, Majestic role as the King of Kings. We know Him as our Father - giving out treats at the table. That is Purim. We eat and drink because we know that this treat, which gives us life, comes from Hashem. Enjoy the Purim *seudah kinderlach*, as well as every other treat from Our Father in Heaven.*

Parasha Questions

- Why does the Torah repeat the words, "do not extinguish it" in verses 5 and 6? (Rashi 6:6)
- What *korbon* did Aharon bring on the day that he was anointed? (6:12)
- What is done with the pot that the *chattos* was cooked in? (7:21)
- What does the Kohen keep from the *olah* and the *mincha*? (7:8-10)