



Adapted from the sefer במוצאי שבת חמין a collection of maamarim on תנא דבי אליהו given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Bamidar 5761

The אור החיים הקדוש explains a discrepancy in the Torah's description of עבודת הלויים. While the duties of בני גרשון ובני מררי are described as לעבוד עבודה, the duties of בני קהת are described as לעשות מלאכה. He explains the difference by noting that בני קהת were responsible for carrying the ארון הברית. Chazal taught us הארון נושא את נושאיו, the Aron Hakodesh miraculously carried those who carried it. Since בני קהת were carried by the Aron Hakodesh, as opposed to carrying it, their task was not considered עבודה.

This faces us with another question. If the Aron Hakodesh carried those who carried it, why did the requirement that לויים be older than thirty, but younger than fifty, apply to בני קהת? As we see in Rashi, the age restriction is based on the fact that men achieve their maximum physical strength during that period. Since בני קהת didn't actually use their physical strength to carry the ארון, shouldn't the Torah allow בני קהת of any age to carry the ארון?

This question reveals an important aspect of Avodas Hashem. Even though the Aron miraculously carried those who carried it, the Leviim assigned to carry the Aron had to be physically capable of bearing the ארון even without the miracle. This teaches us that we cannot benefit from miraculous דשמיא, until we have first done all that we are able to do.



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A well know Midrash illustrates this principle.

"חזית איש מהיר במלאכתו" (you have seen a man who works speedily) (משלי כ"ב"ט), This refers to R. Chanina, who once observed the people of his town bringing עולות and שלמים to Yerushalayim. He said to himself, 'Everyone is bringing korbanos to Yerushalayim, and I have nothing to bring. What am I able to do?'. He immediately went out to the desert and found a large stone which he cut and shaped and beautified. He then tried to hire workers to carry the stones to Yerushalayim. They agreed to take the stones for the price of one hundred gold coins. R. Chanina said, "Where can I get a hundred or even fifty gold coins?" When the workers saw that he couldn't pay their salary, they left.

Hakadosh Boruch Hu immediately sent five malachim in human form, who told R. Chanina that they would carry the stones to Yerushalayim for five selaim, *but only if R. Chanina would help them carry the stones*. He lifted the stones together with the malachim, and they immediately found themselves standing in Yerushalayim. When R. Chanina wanted to pay them, they were nowhere to be found. R. Chanina went to the לשכת הגזית, to ask the Sanhedrin what he should do. They told him that it seemed clear that the men who helped him, were actually מלאכי השרת. R. Chanina the five selaim that he had designated for the workers, to the (שהש"ר א,ד). "חכמים."

The שפתי צדיק brings the חידושי הרי"ם's explanation of the Midrash. "My grandfather ז"ל said, that the gate of ישועה משמים opened for R. Chanina because he so deeply desired to bring something to Yerushalayim, and because he worked so hard preparing the stones. This is the model of an עבד השם. He throws himself into עבודת השם with great desire and energy, even if it seems inconceivable that he will be able to complete the עבודה."

Of course, the opposite is also true. A person will not experience miracles, if he doesn't do all that he can to succeed. Only after he has



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thrown himself into a project with all of his willpower and strength, can he receive סייעתא דשמיא that will enable him to complete his avoda. If he simply relies on miracles without doing all that he can, those miracles will not happen.

Now we understand why בני קהת had to possess the actual physical strength that would enable them to carry the ארון הברית. A בן קהת who was younger than thirty, or older than fifty, was not a candidate for that avoda, because a person has to utilize all of his human abilities before he can experience miracles.

Moments ago, we recited together the תפילה of the של"ה הקדוש זיע"א, asking that our children grow in Torah, Avoda, and Midos. We must remember that any tefilla, segula, zchus avos, or brochos from tzadikim, cannot help us, if we don't do all that we can for the chinuch of our children. Chinuch that expresses true love requires us to listen to, and think about each individual child, and address his or her individual needs. We must listen to them patiently, with empathy and understanding, and certainly without anger or irritation.

Only if we guide them in the path of Torah and Mitzvos with great love and affection, can we hope that the תפילה of the של"ה הקדוש will help us.

There is a very special story that I was זוכה to hear many times from הרה"ק הפני מנחם זיע"א.

When he was about five years old, he took a long train ride with his father, the אמרי אמת זיע"א, and his mother, מינטשא, הרבנית הצדקנית פיגא מינטשא, and his mother, הרבנית הצדקנית פיגא מינטשא. In the middle of the journey, his mother heard that the Chofetz Chaim זצוק"ל was on the same train. She told the Rebbe that she wanted to bring Pinchas Menachem to receive a brocha from the Chofetz Chaim. The Rebbe enthusiastically agreed, noting that the Chofetz Chaim is not only the צדיק הדור, but also a ברכה whose כהן is fulfilled.



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The Rebbetzin immediately took her son to the compartment of the Chofetz Chaim. When the Chofetz Chaim heard that she was the wife of the Imrei Emes zt"ו, he stood up in her honor, declaring, "אשת חבר" "אשת חבר", (the wife of a "chaver" is to be honored like the "chaver" himself).

She presented her son Pinchas Menachem, and asked the Chofetz Chaim to bless him. The Chofetz Chaim kindly drew the boy close to him and asked him which brocha he would like to receive. The little boy answered that he would like a brocha for Torah.

The Chofetz Chaim replied, "אויף תורה איז ניט דא קיין ברכה, מדארף הארעוון, און הארעוון." (There is no brocha for Torah you have work and work with all your strength.) He paused for a moment and then said, "I can give you Birkas Kohanim". He placed both of his hands on the little boy's head, and recited Birkas Kohanim.

When they related the exchange to the Imrei Emes, he smiled and said, "אבער נאך די קבלה האט ער געווינטשען" (after the boy's commitment, he did give a brocha!). Once the Chofetz Chaim sensed that the young Pnei Menachem absorbed the lesson, and committed himself to learn Torah with all of his strength, the Chofetz Chaim then blessed the boy with ברכת כהנים.

The message is clear. First and foremost, we must truly learn Torah, and perform Mitzvos, with all of our strength and ability. This will enable us to receive Birkas Kohanim, and merit special **סייעתא דשמיא** in reaching our goal of **קרבת אלוקים**.



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