

# Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"l, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



תשפ"ד Shmini

• Zera Shimshon - the Limud that brings Yeshuos •

ז'יין 284

## אמרות שמשון

### Why Nadav And Avihu Did Not Merit to Bear Children

ויקחו בני אהרן נדב ואביהוא איש מחתתו ויתנו בהן אש וישימו עליה קטרת ויקריבו לפני ה', אש זרה אשר לא צוה אתם. ותצא אש מלפני ה' ותאכל אותם וימתו לפני ה'. ויאמר משה אל אהרן הוא אשר דבר ה' לאמר בקרבי אקדש ועל פני כל העם אכבד וידם אהרן: (ויקרא י, א-ג)

*The sons of Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, each took his fire-pan, and put fire in it and placed incense upon it... A fire came forth from before Hashem and consumed them both, and they died before Hashem. Moshe said to Aharon: Of this did Hashem say, "I will be sanctified through those who are close to Me"...*

Rashi explains what it was that Moshe told his brother Aharon. אמר משה לאהרן, אהרן אחי, יודע הייתי שיתקדש הבית. במידועיו של מקום, והייתי סבור כי או בר, עכשיו רואה אני שהם גדולים ממני וממך - Moshe said to Aharon, "Ahron my brother, I knew that the Mishkan would become sanctified through those close to Hashem. I was thus under the impression that it would become sanctified either through me or through you. Now I see that they are greater than you and I".

It seems hard to comprehend how Moshe could declare Nadav and Avihu to be of greater status than him and Aharon, when one of the transgressions that the Midrash attributes to Nadav and Avihu is the fact that they did not bear any children, and the Gemara in Brachos (ה) tells us, firstly, that the deprivation of children is not an affliction of love, and secondly, that righteous people are only afflicted with 'afflictions of love'. Thus, Nadav and Avihu who did not have children, were clearly not considered amongst the righteous, and definitely not more righteous than Moshe and Aharon. [Ed note: Although, in context of this discussion, the Zera Shimshon quotes the Gemara according to Rashi's commentary, nevertheless, it is important to note that Tosfos argues with Rashi's premise that righteous people are not afflicted with childlessness; for throughout our history many very righteous people have been known to be barren, and thus Tosfos explains this Gemara in a different manner.]

Furthermore, the Passuk (במדבר ג) recounts how Elazar and Isamar inherited the position of ministering in the Bais Hamikdash from their brothers, Nadav and Avihu. וימת נדב ואביהוא לפני ה' בהקרבם אש זרה לפני ה' במדבר סיני ובנים

Nadav and Avihu died before Hashem when they offered alien fire before Hashem in the Sinai Desert, and they had no children; and Elazar and Isamar ministered in the presence of Aharon, their father. The Midrash (ויקרא כ) expounds on the connection that the Passuk makes between the fact that Nadav and Avihu had no children, and the fact that Elazar and Isamar ministered in their stead, and infers from it the following lesson. If they would have had children those children would have preceded Elazar and Isamar in serving as Kohanim, for we learn that whoever takes precedence in the order of the financial inheritance also takes precedence in the order of the inheritance of positions of honor; with the one condition being that this is only if he conducts himself in the same worthy manner as his forbearers. We need to understand how the Midrash infers from this Passuk that one inherits his father's position only on condition that he is as worthy as his father.

The Passuk (בראשית טו) states that Avraham asked Hashem, מה תתן לי ואנכי הולך ערייר, "What will You give me, seeing that I go childless?" This is hard to understand, being that Hashem had already promised him a child. The Midrash (בר"ר מד ט) thus explains his words as follows. There were two people who said the same thing before Hashem: Avraham and David. Avraham said to Hashem, "What will You give me?" What he was alluding to was, "If I am destined to beget children who will anger You, I prefer to go childless". Similarly, David said to Hashem, "Hashem, examine me and know my heart, and see if I have a troublesome way; and lead me in the way of eternity". What David was alluding to was, "Hashem, examine who will come out from me, and if I am destined to beget children who will displease You, I prefer that You take my life before that happens". Avraham and David's whole purpose in having children was to raise them to serve Hashem; if this was not the case, then they did not wish to have descendants.

In light of this, we can explain that when Hashem told Moshe that 'He would be sanctified through those who are close to Him', and then it was through Nadav and Avihu that Hashem was sanctified, Moshe understood that it must be that they were indeed greater than him and Aharon, and thus the reason why Hashem withheld children from them must be only because the children that they were destined to bear were those who wouldn't grow up righteously, and the righteous would rather go barren than to bear unworthy children.

Accordingly, we can also understand from where the Midrash learns that only worthy children inherit their righteous father's position. For the Passuk



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states that Elazar and Isamar inherited the positions of their brothers only because their brothers had no children. This clearly infers that had Nadav and Avihu had children, it would have been those children who would have inherited their positions. Because we established that Hashem only begets worthy children to righteous people, therefore this Passuk can only infer that Nadav and Avihu's worthy children would have inherited their position. Thus, indeed, this Passuk only infers that one inherits the position of his righteous father on condition that he is as worthy as his father.

(זרע שמשון פרשתנו אות 1)

## Why The Wicked Live a Life Free of Any Suffering

וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי ה' וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי ה'

(ויקרא י, ב):

*A fire came forth from before Hashem, and consumed them, and they died before Hashem.*

The Gemara in Taanis (יא ע"א) expounds on the Passuk that says, Hashem is faithful and without injustice, as follows. א-ל אמונה, כשם שנפרעין מן הרשעים לעולם הבא אפילו על עבירה קלה שעושים. וכן נפרעין מן הצדיקים לעולם הזה על עבירה קלה שעושים. ואין עול, כשם שמשלמין שכר לצדיקים לעולם הבא אפילו על מצוה קלה שעושים. 'Hashem is faithful'; just as the wicked are punished even for their minor sins in the World to Come, so too are the righteous punished even for their minor sins in this world. 'And without injustice'; just as the righteous are rewarded even for their minor good deeds in the World to Come, so too are the wicked rewarded even for their minor good deeds in this world.

Although the Gemara's intention is to emphasize the impartiality of Hashem's Judgment, nevertheless it would seem that this concept alludes to just the opposite. This is in view of that which the Gemara in Kiddushin (לט ע"ג) teaches that שכר - the reward for mitzvos is not given in this world. The idea behind this notion is presumably because one cannot be adequately rewarded by means of the limited scope of pleasures that this world has to offer. Consequently, the righteous, who reap their reward in the World to Come, are rewarded the full measure of their reward, while the wicked, who reap their reward in this world, are only rewarded in partial measure.

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After speaking to the Jewish People, and describing to them the curses that would befall them if they were to sin, Moshe went on to tell them היום כלכם לפני ה' א-להיכם וכו' (פי' נצבים) - You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem... Rashi (כט יב) explains that what Moshe was telling them was that, The curses and

punishments are what keep you standing before Him. Rashi is explaining that Moshe was implying that it was necessary for the Jewish People to specifically hear the punishments for the transgressions, in order to keep them standing upright before Hashem.

This is very difficult to understand. Why would Hashem need to specifically detail the punishments in order to keep the Jewish People standing strong and righteous; could it not have been achieved just the same by encouraging them through describing the reward for their righteous behaviors?

It seems that the answer to this question is that materialistic rewards and incentives do not necessarily guide one to righteousness. On the contrary, directing one's focus to materialistic rewards and gratifications might just tempt him to follow his heart towards achieving more and more worldly pleasures, which can clearly bring one to sinful behaviors. However, hearing the curses and punishments that one will bring upon himself by sinning will definitely keep him strong and righteous. Thus, it was indeed of great importance for the Jewish People to specifically hear the details of the punishments that their sins can bring about, in order 'to keep them standing upright before Hashem'.

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In view of this we learn that pain and suffering is brought upon a person for one of two reasons. Initially, suffering is brought upon a sinner so that he should take note and repent from his sins. This is the same idea why one does not reap reward for his righteous behavior in this world; so that it should not draw him to focus on worldly pleasures, which in turn might tempt him to sin. However, once the sinner takes note and repents, the suffering that is brought upon him is atonement for his sins.

*We can now understand why the wicked do indeed reap the reward for their good deeds in this world. This is because even the wicked initially do suffer some measure of pain, which was brought upon them so that they would take note and repent from their sinful behaviors. However, the wicked person chooses to ignore this message, for he does not wish to take this message to heart and leave his sinful ways. Henceforth, there is no longer any reason to bring suffering upon him, for the general motives of one's suffering don't apply to him. This is because the purpose of the initial suffering is for the sinner to take note and repent; this is obviously not relevant to him, as he explicitly chose to ignore this message. The subsequent suffering comes as atonement for one's sins; this also does not apply to him, because one who openly chooses not to repent does not deserve any atonement. The sinner will consequently live a most pleasant and blissful life, free of any pain and suffering, and will thus consume, in this world, all reward that was destined for him in the World to Come.*

(זרע שמשון פרשתנו אות ד)

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