



מרדכי מלכא

רב ואב"ד עיה"ק אלעד ת"ו

יו"ר ועדת סת"ם העולמית

הרבנות הראשית לישראל

לשכת הרבנות הראשית אלעד. ראש העין. הרצליה

בד"צ אלעד*בתי הוראה*שרותי דת*רישום נישואין*כשרות*מקואות*עירובין

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Parashat Naso

Honoring the Torah:

Bamidbar 3:17 “These were the names of Levi’s sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.”

Bamidbar 4:1 “The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying: [2] Make a count of the sons of Kohath from among the children of Levi by their families, according to their fathers’ houses. [21] The Lord spoke to Moses saying: [22] Take a census of the sons of Gershon, of them too, following their fathers’ houses, according to their families. [29] [As for] the sons of Merari, you shall count them by their families, according to their fathers’ houses.”

Questions:

The Kli Yakar asks why the pasuk counts the sons of Kehat before the sons of Gershon? Gershon was the oldest as it states in Bamidbar 3:17 so shouldn’t the sons of Gershon be counted first?

The world’s custom:

Unfortunately, when we look at the world around us, we see that when there is a need for help in the house and such the go-to person is the one who sits and learns Torah rather than the one who works since there is a financial ramification when a person loses work. This stems from the fact that Torah learning is considered less valuable than money. Torah teaches us that it is the other way around and we should value the time of someone who is learning Torah more than anything else. We see a sad example of this twisted mindset in Liberman’s actions recently who grabbed at the holy branch of Torah learners, and stubbornly insists to go against them and drag the entire nation to a second election cycle that costs the government enormous amounts of money, which evidently will affect every citizen’s pocket. Therefore it’s crucial now more than ever to internalize and spread the value and importance of Torah learning as we will address and explain.

The Kli Yakar’s answer: Kvod Hatorah.

The Kli Yakar writes that Hashem wanted to instill within us the duty of honoring the Torah. Therefore he chose Kehat, the youngest, to carry the Aron and appointed him first to show everyone that the honor of the Torah precedes all else. Had he appointed Gershon to carry the Aron, we wouldn’t have learned the importance of honoring the Torah because we would have ascribed it to Gershon’s being the first born and not the Torah on its own.

An indication of the honor and greatness of the Torah:

In the Book ‘Otzar Efraim’ he writes a clear hint in the name Chacham Avraham Harari Rafoul zt”l from the oldest and greatest rabbis of Aram Tzova. He learned from the famous rule in Baba Metziah 22:2 ”the halacha is always like the ruling of Abayei in cases of ”Y.O.L K.G.M”

Which means the cases that starts with one of these letters as Rashi explains. But he added that this is



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also an acronym of the pasuk "hashem oz le'amo yiten." and "Kehat Gershon u(and) Merari" Oz is the Torah that's why Kehat comes before Gershon because he was the one who carried the Torah.

Amram merited that his three children were the leaders of Am Israel.

In addition, we might add that Kehat was the father of Amram, father of Miryam Aharon and Mosheh who was chosen to deliver the Torah to the Jewish people thanks to his humility. Surly the merit of his father stood for him that his father divorced his mother because of Pharaoh's decrees and the Jewish people followed him and did the same. When his daughter confronted him and said that his decree is more significant than Pharaoh's he went and remarried Yocheved his wife and everyone did the same, and because of that he received Moshe as his son, the Pillar of Torah. We see the great legacy of Kehat. From his offspring came leaders of Torah and Kehunah and this is why he precedes his brothers and carried the Aron.

We have found that Yakov blessed Efraim first before Menashe the eldest.

We might say that this resembles what Yakov did when Yosef brought his sons before his father to receive his blessing. They wondered why Yakov swapped his hands when he blessed them. Yakov Avinu explained that although he knows Menashe is the elder, yet Efraim, who was striving in Torah preceded his older brother Menashe who was occupied with kingship since the crown of Torah is superior. As he says in his blessing, "By thee shall Israel bless, saying: G-d make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh." And he set Ephraim before Menashe in order to amend the jealousy among the brothers, but they were not envious and accepted their grandfather's decision and blessings with no doubt in their mind or heart. We learn these two points from Yakov; to precede when needed to prevent jealousy and that Torah precedes and is superior to birth right and kingship

The greatness of Torah according to the Tana in Pirkei Avot.

As stated in Pirkei Avot 6:6 "Greater is learning Torah than the priesthood and than royalty, for royalty is acquired by thirty stages, and the priesthood by twenty-four, but the Torah by forty-eight things." We see that Torah is even higher than Kehunah and to be careful to honor the Torah as stated in Pirkei Avot 2:10 "They [each] said three things: Rabbi Eliezer said: Let the honor of your friend be as dear to you as your own; And be not easily provoked to anger; And repent one day before your death. And [he also said:] warm yourself before the fire of the wise, but beware of being singed by their glowing coals, for their bite is the bite of a fox, and their sting is the sting of a scorpion, and their hiss is the hiss of a serpent, and all their words are like coals of fire."

The crown of Torah is greater than the Crown of Kehunah and Malchut.

The reason for this is because Torah is different from other crowns, a kohen can be only someone who is a descendant from Aharon Hakohen and can't be acquired otherwise. As such, it's not so much a quality and merely a genealogy. The same goes for the kingship that David Hamelech merited that the kingship



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would be for him and his sons for eternity. This as well does not reflect a unique quality of a person, rather his lineage and birthright to the crown. On the other hand, the crown of Torah belongs to everyone with no differences and does not pass through lineage even if his father's and forefathers were all great scholars. This does not guarantee that the generations that follow will be Talmidei Chachamim, rather Torah awaits for anyone to study it and it's up to every one of us to toil in Torah to learn in it and understand it as much as our minds can reach. The crown of Torah is a true indication of the quality and greatness of the one who merits it. As our sages said "Seek and you shall find". The true reason why Torah does not pass through lineage is because Torah is the source of all life and we cannot exist without it as the pasuk says, "She (the Torah) is a tree of life to those who take hold of her". It also says, "If not My covenant with the day and the night, that the statutes of heaven and earth I did not place". That is why Torah cannot belong to a single group, it is essential to everyone unlike the Kehunah or the kingship which are not essential for existence.

A story that teaches us to respect the Torah:

In the book Ahavat Chaim: I heard a beautiful story in the name of Rabbi Yosef Zaruk N"Y from Yeshivat Torat Emet in Yerushalayim which seves as a glimpse into the preciousness of the Torah. In the days of our holy Rabbi Chay Dihav Zt"l that was always drunk and at the same time he was an exeptional Tzadik and preformed great wonders among Jews and non-Jews. His uncle was Rabbi Itzchak Dihav Zt"l who was the city's chief Rabbi. Once he was asked about his nephew, how can Rabbi Chay the great scholar and holy man be so drunk all the time? Rabbi Itzchak Dihav answered by telling a story: One winter night there was a Brit Itzchak in the house of one of the Rabbis of Morocco. Their custom was to gather in the house of the woman who gave birth and to learn Gemara all night long. They did so on this occasion as well. Among them was a great sefardi Kabbalist from Yerushalayim that studied with them. Suddenly, in the middle of the night, while they were learning, two people came in carrying a drunk man. They placed him carefully on a bed, respectfully kissed his hands and left. The guests looked at them fiercely but did not say a word. Two hours later the drunk man woke up and asked the Rabbis 'How many pages have you studied?' When they answered he asked them to study what they had learned again in order for him to hear it too. The Kabbalist guest said to him 'We have just spent a few hours studying and arguing, it takes a lot of effort to go through it again. This drunk man, who was of course Chay Dihav, said to this Kabbalist guest 'You won't be sorry, all I ask is for you to recap what you learned at the beginning just so I can hear a little.' They did. Immediately as they began Rabbi Chay Dihav asked a question and nobody knew the answer. The Kabbalist went outside and summoned Eliyahu Hanavi and asked him the question then came back with an answer. Rabbi Chay asked another question that was even harder than the first one and nobody knew the answer. The guest went out again to Eliyahu Hanavi and timidly asked him the second question then came back inside with an answer. Rabbi Chay smiled and said, 'I see you are a great scholar and a Kabbalist, may I ask another third question?' and he asked another profound question harder and more in-depth than the first two. The Kabbalist guest was astounded. He wanted to go outside again to ask Eliyahu Hanavi for an answer, as the thought crossed his mind Rabbi Chay said 'pardon your honor, please don't go out and disturb Eliyahu Hanavi again since he wouldn't be able to answer that either'. Now everyone saw he had divine inspiration. But the question remains, how could he be so holy and so drunk?



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So Rabbi Itzchak Dihav, his uncle, explained what happened when he was a young bachur Rabbi Chay used to sit in his room and learn and study for days in a row, eating one meal a day that his mother brought him. He spent all his time writing Chidushim and his room was full of papers with his writings. Once his mother said to some guests who came to visit that her son doesn't know what the street even looks like. The guests warned her that it's dangerous being so isolated and he can go mad if he stays like that for too long. They advised her to take his writings and burn them all and that would force him to stop isolating himself. And so she did. She came to his room in the middle of the night, took his writings and burnt them. All of a sudden, Rabbi Chay woke up and saw the fire burning with his all his writings and he had gone mad from the pain and agony. They took him to different doctors and tried different treatments but nothing helped. Then some people advised giving him some Arak and let him get drunk so that would help him forget and recover. They did just that and it kept him calm. Whenever he remembered his burnt writings he would run and get drunk and relief his pain. Once, on Shabbat Hagadol, Rabbi Chay ran out of Arak and needed to drink. He went to the grocer and asked him to open the store for him and give him something to drink. The grocer went to ask the Rabbi permission. Rabbi Itzchak said no since he was about to begin his Drasha. Rabbi Chay went and sat in the corner of the synagogue and stared at his uncle that stood on the Bima about to start the Drasha of Shabbat Hagadol. All of a sudden Rabbi Itzchak forgot his entire speech and had nothing to say. He stood there in front of his books and the whole congregation and didn't understand a word. He was so ashamed. He addressed the crowd and asked is Rabbi Chay present? Tell him to open for me; Rabbi Chay replied if you open for me, I will open for you. Rabbi Itzchak immediately called the grocer and asked him to open the store and let Rabbi Chay drink. When Rabbi Chay heard these words, he stood up and said to his uncle 'speak Rabbi. The congregation awaits,' and Rabbi Itzchak eyes lit up, and he felt as if he were receiving the Torah from Hashem on Har Sinai and loudly said 'Be wary of Rabbi Chay's holiness'. From this story, we learn how much we need to be careful and mindful with respecting and honoring the Torah and Torah learners. And for that, the sons of Kehat who carried the Aron are mentioned before Gershon's sons in our Parashah.

A story with Rabbi Akiva Eiger - Whoever harmed him got harmed.

Once, Rabbi Yakov from Lisa Zt"l, writer of the book 'Chavat Da'at', praised the wisdom and the righteousness of Rabbi Akiva Eiger and told a story that he had witnessed. 'When the people of Friedland wanted to anoint a new Rabbi to the city. They had three choices; Rabbi Akiva Eiger, the Ba'al Hashemen Rokeach and myself, that was prior to me becoming the Rabbi of Lisa. They decided to appoint Rabbi Akiva Eiger to be their head and master and to become their Rabbi. Rabbi Akiva asked me to come with him and to stand beside him when he would accept the Rabbinat position. Although it was a long journey, I went with him and fulfilled his will. When we entered the city, a vast crowd came to welcome the Rabbi with the appropriate respect and honor. But two frivolous men stood in the corner and mocked the tremendous respect given to the Rabbi. I then turned to Rabbi Akiva Eiger and told him this is not a time to endure the humiliation and disgrace of the holy Torah and Its scholars. Rabbi Akiva Eiger then turned to look at one of the men mocking the respect. That man instantly dropped dead and his partner ran for his life. Look how great the power of those who study the holy Torah righteously. This is what is written in Pirkei Avot but be cautious around their coals that you should not be burned



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Another story with Rabbi Akiva Eiger.

Once there was a big fire in the city of Friedland, and many houses burned to the ground, the destruction was severe. Rabbi Akiva Eiger, the city's chief Rabbi, helped the people to recover and restore the houses that were destroyed but he released a ruling that people should not hire workers to work on Shabbat. One rich man, whose house was also destroyed, wasn't willing to follow the Rabbi's instructions and hired workers to work on Shabbat in spite of Rabbi Akiva's Psak. Rabbi Akiva published a Psak and on Friday night asked that Gabbai to read it out loud. The Psak ended with the words 'one who breaks a fence-a snake shall bite him.

The wealthy man took the Psak from the Gabbai, erased these words and warned him not to reread these words. The Gabbai told Rabbi Akiva what happened and what the wealthy man said. The next Shabbat Rabbi Akiva stood and announced the Psak himself but the man proceeded despite the Rabbi's clear Psak. After a while, the house of this man collapsed from worm infestation.

The moral:

The moral we have learned is to what extent one must be careful with honoring and respecting the holy Torah and Its scholars. We must give priority to those people in our lives who learn Torah and make an effort to support them in every possible way including not interfering with their learning time. One who diminishes the honor of the Torah has a very big punishment since it is the foundation of the world's existence. Happy is he who merits in learning the Torah and respecting the Torah and at the very least supporting those who learn the Torah. With this we shall merit all the blessing and salvation speedily in our days Amen.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rav Mordechai Malka