

“And Aaron raised his hands and blessed the people etc. And the Glory of Gd appeared to the people” (Vayikra 10:22-23). The first verse mentions only Aaron, the second mentions both Aaron and Moses. Rashi says that the first blessing, offered solely by Aaron, was the Priestly Blessing of **יִבְרַכְךָ, יְאֹר, יִשָּׂא** (Bamidbar 7:24-26), based on the Torah saying that Aaron raised his hands, indicating the blessing associated with **נְשִׂיאת כַּפַּיִם**. The next verse tells us that Moses and Aaron jointly entered **אֶהָל מוֹעֵד** and upon exiting they jointly blessed the people. Rashi explains this as they said **יְהִי רַצוֹן שְׁתַּשְׂרֶה שְׁכִינָה בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יְדֵיכֶם** and **וְיִהְיֶה נֹעֵם** was not associated with the second blessing. Chazal tell us that during this period, Moses had the status of a **כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל**. Why didn't Moses participate in the first blessing? Why didn't he raise his hands like Aaron and bless the people? Why didn't Moses and Aaron, the two **כֹּהֲנִים גָּדוֹלִים**, jointly recite **בְּרַכַת כֹּהֲנִים** upon exiting **אֶהָל מוֹעֵד**?

We find that the children of Aaron are sometimes referred to as **בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים** and other times as **בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן**. Some aspects of the service in the Tabernacle were entrusted to Aaron's children, the Priests, while others were entrusted specifically to Aaron. All those who succeeded him in the role of **כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל** acted as his representative, as a virtual Aaron. For example, **עֲבוֹדַת יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים** was given specifically to Aaron. Aaron was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies to perform the service any time he wanted (Note that according to some opinions Aaron also was limited to entering once a year on Yom Kippur, see Ramban Vayikra 16:3). His successors were restricted to entering once a year, on Yom Kippur, and only then as the representative and personification of Aaron. (This concept is portrayed in the **כּוֹנֵנַת אֶתָּה** description of the **עֲבוֹדַת יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים**, recited by Nussach Sefard.) In such cases the children of Aaron are referred to as **בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן**. Aaron provided the license, to subsequent **כֹּהֲנִים גָּדוֹלִים** as well as **כֹּהֲנִים הַדְּיוּטִים** (simple priests) to perform their respective service in the Tabernacle and Temple. The Ramban (Bamidbar 8:1) comments that the Commandment of lighting the Menorah was given specifically to Aaron. Even though **כֹּהֲנִים הַדְּיוּטִים** could also light the Menorah, they were permitted to do so only because Aaron did it before them, and they were following him.

נְשִׂיאת כַּפַּיִם was another Commandment where Aaron himself was indispensable. Why do Priests recite the blessing of **אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּקִדּוּשְׁתוֹ שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן**, instead of a blessing that they were sanctified with **קִדּוּשַׁת כְּהוֹנָה**? Because the Commandment of **נְשִׂיאת כַּפַּיִם** was given specifically to Aaron, and through him to his descendants in perpetuity. They represent him when performing this Commandment. Since Aaron alone was given the Mitzvah of **נְשִׂיאת כַּפַּיִם** (and his children through him),

Moses could not join Aaron in ברכת נשיאת כפים. Therefore the first blessing of ברכת כהנים was restricted to Aaron.

Rashi notes that the second blessing, given jointly by Moses and Aaron, was ויהי נועם. Was this second blessing given voluntarily or were they somehow required to bless the people at that point? It would appear that this was an obligatory blessing on the part of Moses and Aaron. We find a similar obligatory blessing based on the daily morning sacrifice, קרבן תמיד של שחר. The Mishna (Tamid 32b, Brachos 11b) tells us that in the Temple, the Priests gathered early and the appointed leader would tell them to recite one of the blessings of קריאת שמע, (there is a difference of opinion as to whether it was יוצר אור or אהבה רבה), קריאת שמע and an abbreviated שמונה עשרה that included רצה and ושים שלום. In the times of the Temple, the blessing of רצה concluded with שאותך ביראה נעבוד. This blessing was said after offering the קרבן תמיד של שחר, to mitigate the potential rejection of the sacrifice. Sacrifices can, and have been, rejected. For example, we find that Gd rejected Cain's sacrifice. We find (Vayikra 26:31) that Gd promised He would not accept the people's sacrifices if they sin and do not follow His laws. In short, there is no guarantee that the just-offered sacrifice will be accepted by Gd. A Jew must pray and ask Gd to accept his sacrifice. Therefore the Priests prayed in the Temple that the קרבן תמיד של שחר should be accepted, just as Moses and Aaron blessed the people with ויהי נועם, a prayer that Gd should accept their sacrifices.

Why do the Priests pray for the acceptance of the sacrifice after they perform the service instead of before? We learn from the prayer of Moses and Aaron that followed the sacrifices noted in פרשת שמיני, that there is a requirement to pray after the offering of the sacrifice. The prayer of Moses and Aaron was more than a personal prayer. They prayed as representatives of כלל ישראל, that the sacrifices just brought by Aaron should be accepted. That prayer was therefore offered only after Aaron performed the service.

We find a similar concept with the אנשי מעמד, who served as the representatives of כלל ישראל and prayed in conjunction with the daily service in the Temple. While one group represented the people in prayer in the Temple area, other groups gathered in various cities to offer prayers coincident with the time of the sacrifice. All these groups fulfilled the requirement of prayer for the acceptance of the קרבנות הצבור on behalf of those for whom the sacrifice was offered. Moses and Aaron established the precedent for the אנשי מעמד in פרשת שמיני.

The concept of prayer for the acceptance of our sacrifices can be found in our שמונה עשרה. Twelve of the middle thirteen blessings focus on our personal and

communal needs. We ask for wisdom, health sustenance etc. concluding with the blessing of *מצמיה קרן ישועה*. The last blessing in the middle set is *שמע קולנו*, which is followed immediately by *רצה* and asking for acceptance of our *עבודה*, service, just offered through prayer, and return to the Temple.

At first glance, the two blessings of *שמע קולנו* and *רצה*, appear to be redundant. However, on closer inspection we find that they serve vastly different purposes. *תפלה* fulfills dual aspects: prayer and sacrifice. *שמע קולנו* is recited after one concludes his prayers for personal as well as communal needs. We describe Gd as *שומע תפלה עדיך יבואו*, the ultimate listener and recipient of our prayers. However, He may not always accept our prayers or grant our request. We conclude the middle section with *שמע קולנו*, asking that Gd, the ultimate acceptor of prayer, accept **and** answer our supplications favorably.

From the other perspective, prayer is called *עבודת שבלב*, worship of the heart, as it is essentially a *קרבן*. The subsequent blessing of *רצה* (which is associated with the acceptance of sacrifices) asks not only should Gd accept our prayers as supplication with the just concluded blessing of *שמע קולנו*, but as a sacrifice as well. There is no duplication between these blessing. Both aspects of *עבודת שבלב* are distinct and required.

Similarly, at the conclusion of his *הכפורים* *יום הכפורים*, the recitation of the special service performed on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would read from the Torah and recite blessings whose themes were asking Gd to accept the sacrifices of the day that were already offered. This is derived from Moses and Aaron praying on the eighth day of the consecration of the Tabernacle for the acceptance of the just-offered sacrifices.

In *נרצה*, the conclusion of the Pesach Seder, we pray that Gd should accept our just concluded Seder that revolved around the *פסח* *קרבן*. Like *רצה* in our daily prayer, *נרצה* applies where there is a *קרבן*. For example, there is no concept of *נרצה* with the obligation to take a *לולב*. The concept of asking for *רצוי הקרבן*, acceptance of the Paschal sacrifice, (or in our situation where there is no Temple the recitation of *מצה ומרור* (פסח מצה ומרור) combined with our Seder service (which includes supplications such as *אנא השם* from the conclusion of *הלל*) be accepted, is based on the events detailed in *פרשת שמיני*.

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