



By Rabbi Yaakov Deutscher

Mistaken Identity

“You shall sanctify the kohen, for he offers the food of your G-d; he shall remain holy to you, for holy am I, Hashem, Who sanctifies you.” (Vayikrah 21:8)

Rashi, quoting the *gemarah* in *Gittin* (59b), explains that *Klal Yisroel* must recognize the sanctity of *kohanim*. We must show them respect and give them precedence. That is why we call *kohanim* up to the Torah first and give them priority to lead the *bentching*.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Rabbi Yosef Cairo, 1488-1575*) states that one who claims he is a *kohen* is not believed based on his own testimony. He therefore cannot be called up to the Torah first or recite *birchas kohanim*, the priestly blessings. The *Rama* (*Rav Moshe Isserles, 1520-1572*) however, argues and rules that because nowadays we have no Biblical obligation to give *terumah*, there is no harm in having a self-proclaimed *kohen* receive the first *aliyah* or recite *birchas kohanim*.

The *Chelkas Mechokek* (*Rabbi Moshe Lima, 1615-1670*) quotes the *Ramak* (*Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, 1522-1570*) who says that a self-proclaimed *kohen* may have priority when it comes to being called up to the Torah but may not recite the priestly blessings. The stipulation that a *kohen* should always receive the first *aliyah* was implemented as an interest to create peace amongst the different factions within *Klal Yisroel* (*Gittin 5:8*). It is a purely rabbinic decree. Conversely, the priestly blessings are a Biblical commandment (*Kesubos 24b*) as the Torah specifies, “So you [the *kohanim*] shall bless.” (*Bamidbar 6:23*) Therefore, if a non-*kohen* would recite the priestly blessings he would transgress a positive commandment. Hence, the *Ramak* rules leniently in regards to receiving the first *aliyah* but takes a more stringent approach in regards to the recitation of the priestly blessing.

The *Chasam Sofer* (*Rabbi Moshe Sofer, 1762-1839*) questions the *Ramak*’s opinion. It is understandable why a self-proclaimed *kohen* is permitted to be called up first to

the Torah when no other *kohanim* are present. However, when other *kohanim* are in attendance why is it permissible to call up a questionable *kohen* when other, more reputable, *kohanim* are readily accessible?

The *Chasam Sofer* answers that although there remains doubt whether the self-proclaimed *kohen* is in fact being honest; nevertheless, the requirement to obey the Torah’s command of “you shall sanctify him” still remains in effect. As far as the *tzibur*, community, is concerned they must abide to that which is stipulated in the Torah and show honor to the *kohen*. However, regarding *mitzvos* that the *kohen* is required to perform, such as eating *terumah* and reciting the priestly blessings, he may only perform his *avodah* if deemed fit; otherwise he faces the serious crime of transgressing a positive commandment. Thus, the ruling of the *Ramak*, the allowance for a questionable *kohen* to receive the first *aliyah*, is in fact correct.

Ethics 101

“Until the morrow of the seventh week you shall count, fifty days... when you reap the harvest of your land... for the poor and the proselyte you should leave them; I am Hashem your G-d.” (Vayikrah 23:15-21)

Why does the Torah place the precept of giving gifts to the poor immediately following the mentioning of the festival of *Shavuos*?

The *Meshach Chachma* (*Rav Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, 1843-1926*) answers that one might presume that when *Klal Yisroel* accepted the Torah at Sinai they were only taught laws strictly pertaining to *halachic* rulings, not those of human ethical behavior. The Torah therefore stresses the importance of the moral teachings that Hashem passed on to Moshe by mentioning several *mitzvos* which deal with acts of kindness next to the *pasukim* that deal with the festival of *Shavuos*, the day we celebrate the giving of the Torah.

Kollel News

1. This Shabbos at the Kollel: Parshas Emor

Thursday, May 10:

No Gemarah Yoma Shiur Tonight

9:00 - 10:00 p.m.: Rabbi Frand's Weekly Parsha Shiur

9:00 - 10:00 p.m.: Kollel Erev

Friday, May 11:

8:25-8:50 a.m.: Rabbi Prupas's *Chumash Shiur*

7:48 p.m.: Candle Lighting

8:06 p.m.: *Shkiya*/ Sunset

Shabbos, May 12:

8:15 a.m.: Shacharis

8:46/ 9:22a.m.: Latest Krias Shema

Kiddush sponsored by Evan and Ayala Aidman in memory of Faigel Mindel (Ferne) Whitehouse

Chaburas Chacham Lev

5:45 p.m.: Business Ethics

6:30 p.m.: Mincha

Rabbi Goldfarb's Pirkei Avos Shiur

8:07 p.m.: *Shkiya*

No Shalosh Seudos or Maariv at the Kollel

9:19 p.m.: 72 minutes

10:30 p.m.: Rabbi Reisman's *Navi* Shiur

2. THE KOLLEL'S THIRTEENTH ANNUAL LECTURE

You are invited to the Kollel's 13th annual lecture on May 21, 2012 at the Merion Tribute House, featuring **HoRav Aharon Feldman**, shlit"a, distinguished Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Yisrael who will speak on:

"The Crown of Torah- How We Can Wear It With Pride"

Program begins at 7:45 p.m. (Mincha 7:30 p.m.)
FOR MEN & WOMEN. To enroll as a sponsor, please visit phillykollel.org, and choose the "Annual Lecture" tab. For more information please call the Kollel at 610-668-9557.

3. Business Ethics: Rabbi Biberfeld leads a discussion group on interesting questions relating to business ethics and their halachic ramifications. Feel free to come and enjoy! **Note New Time:** 5:45 pm on Shabbos afternoon followed by Mincha at 6:30 pm

Case Study #5

"Bar Mitzvah Gifts"

Who do they belong to: the father or the son?

4. Shavuos 5772: The Kollel's Beis Medrash will be open all night on Shavuos, May 26th. Look out for more details coming soon about the full-night of Shiurim and Chavrusos on Shavuos 5772.

5. Dirshu Daf Hayomi B'Halacha Shiur Update: The Dirshu Shiur will b"zH be finishing the first part of Hilchos Eruvin in a couple of days and starting Hilchos Eruvay Chatzairos. All are encouraged to join!

Community News

Bnos of Bala Cynwyd will iy"H meet this Shabbos, Parshas Emor, May 12th, from **4:30pm - 5:30pm** at LMS.

Torah Youth: 4:30 - 5:30 pm on the downstairs level of LMS. Grades K-8th If you would like to help sponsor a Shabbos or want more information contact Rabbi Ari Silver at 610-6686-6833 or SilverDollar@verizon.net

The Man with the Truck is coming back to Philly! This Monday, May 14, 4:30-8 pm; at the Philadelphia Community Kollel. He will have a full line of shells and skirts in all sizes, camp items, and boys' and men's items. Many new things!

Mazel Tov To:

Mr. and Mrs. Gary and Gail Cantor on the birth of a grandson, born to Rabbi Aaron and Shira Katchen!

Mr. and Mrs. Avi and Julie Zohar on the birth of a daughter! Mazel Tov to the grandparents, **Mr. and Mrs. Mark and Debra Zohar!**

Rabbi and Mrs. Yaakov and Miriam Deutscher on the birth of baby girl!

If you would like to receive Menucha Vesimcha by weekly email or to sponsor an issue of Menucha Vesimcha in someone's honor / memory, please contact the editor at: menuchavesimcha@verizon.net

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