

Moshe said to Aharon and to his sons Elazar and Isamar, “Do not leave your heads unshorn and do not rend your garments that you do not die, and He became wrathful with the entire assembly; and your brethren, the entire House of Yisrael, shall bewail the conflagration that Hashem ignited. (10:6)

Aharon *HaKohen* is instructed by Moshe *Rabbeinu* not to mourn the deaths of his two sons overtly. His two remaining sons, Elazar and Isamar, are likewise instructed to refrain from overt mourning. Yet *Klal Yisrael*, the entire nation, is adjured to mourn the deaths of these two *tzaddikim*, righteous persons. Why? Is it more appropriate for those who are unrelated – in fact, distant from the deceased, to mourn, while those closest to them do not? The *Sefer HaChaim* explains this based upon the following statement made by *Chazal* in the *Talmud Megillah* 15a: “When a righteous person dies, he is lost only to his generation, for his soul lives on. This can be analogized to a person who has lost a pearl. Wherever it is, it is still a pearl; it continues to exist. Thus, in effect, it is lost only to its owner.”

A *tzaddik*, righteous person, remains a righteous person wherever he may be. When a *tzaddik* passes from this world, the loss is felt solely by the members of his generation. He is no longer there to inspire and reprove them when they are wrong. When a *tzaddik* dies, the members of his generation sustain an unfathomable, irreplaceable loss.

This is why, explains the *Sefer HaChaim*, the obligation to mourn the deaths of Aharon's two sons was placed solely on *Klal Yisrael*. They are the ones who suffered the loss, felt the pain, and experienced the void left by the passing of the *tzaddikim*. Those who are distant are the ones who mourn. Hashem sought to teach us an important verity. The *aveilus*, mourning period, for the *tzaddik*, is not for the *tzaddik*. It is for us. The *tzaddik* did nothing wrong. His death was not bad – for him. If the passing of the *tzaddik* would be an indication of the failure of the *tzaddik*, then his family would be obligated to mourn.

In actuality, the people who sustained the greatest loss are all of those who benefitted by the presence of the *tzaddik*. The *tzaddik* continues on his spiritual plateau in death as in life. It is we who suffer. Thus, it is we who should mourn. Aharon and his sons were luminaries. They did not incur a loss with the passing of Nadav and Avihu, other than the physical separation created by the passing of their family members. *Klal Yisrael* lost two leaders. They must mourn for themselves.