

"There were men who were contaminated by a human corpse and could not make the Pesach-offering on that day... Those men said to him (Moshe)... 'Why should we be diminished by not offering Hashem's offering in its appointed time?'" (9:6,7)

That a portion of the *Torah* was dedicated to these people suggests that they had great merit. Indeed, *Chazal* teach us that they deserved this distinction. *Chazal* discuss the identity of these individuals. According to Rabbi Akiva, they were Aharon *Ha'Kohen's* cousins, who tended to the bodies of Nadav and Avihu. **Horav Meir Bergman, Shlita**, derives two significant lessons from the incident of Nadav and Avihu which should be mentioned.

Aharon was rewarded for his unparalleled *kiddush* Hashem, sanctification of Hashem's Name. What really was the *kiddush* Hashem? *Horav* Bergman cites the *Rashbam* who imputes the *kiddush* Hashem to be Aharon's ability to continue, to go on and perform the priestly service despite the fact that his two elder sons had just recently been tragically torn away from him. Such peerless devotion to Hashem, such superhuman dedication to Hashem's service is unequalled. To observe his two sons, the two diamonds who represented his hopes and aspirations for the future, die a most terrible death might have aroused feelings of anger -- or at least dejection. Not Aharon. He continued to maintain his position as if nothing had occurred. He was silent; he acquiesced to Hashem's decision and went on. True *kiddush* Hashem is the ability to overcome personal grief, while retaining one's fidelity to Hashem. Such loyalty demonstrates one's conviction as it manifests the triumph of spiritual devotion over physical love.

On the other hand, Aharon's cousins, Mishael and Eltsafon, who were not actually closely related to the deceased, ceased everything they were doing in order to provide *chesed* to the *niftarim*. This was the eighth day of the *milluim*, the culmination of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, the day when Aharon and his sons were to be consecrated and inducted into the *Kehunah*. Yet, on this auspicious day they were prepared to forego participation in order to perform a deed of kindness to the deceased. They were giving up the opportunity for unprecedented spiritual involvement - but that is the epitome of *chesed*.

Two significant lessons are derived from here. First, we see the devotion of Aharon to the priestly service. Second, we note the commitment of Mishael and Eltsafon to performing *chesed*, even at the expense of their own spiritual ascendancy. In truth, these two perspectives represent the essence of *Shevet Levi* and its present day descendants - *bnei Torah*.