

"A man's holies shall be his, and what a man shall give to the Kohen shall be his." (5:10)

Chazal interpret this *pasuk* to imply that he who gives *tzedakah* to the poor or gifts to the *Kohen* or *Levi* will not sustain any loss as a result. It shall be *vhvh uk*, it will continue to be his-as Hashem will reward him. Accumulating wealth carries with it enormous responsibility.

The first blessing that the *Kohanim* confer upon *Bnei Yisrael* is, "*Hashem should bless you and guard you.*" This blessing grants *Klal Yisrael* material abundance. Riches and prosperity, however, do not always generate blessing. At times, one needs to be protected from his own possessions, he must be guarded from the society he builds around himself with the bounty he has been fortunate to receive from Hashem. Therefore, the *Kohen* adds a blessing, "*May Hashem guard you against yourself and your possessions.*"

In the *Talmud Berachos*, *Chazal* question the juxtaposition of the *mitzvah* of giving *terumah* and *maaser* upon the issue of the adulterous wife. They respond that he who does not accord proper respect to the *Kohen*, who does not acknowledge his presence as a factor in Jewish continuity, will one day have to come to the *Kohen* to deal with marital problems.

The **Dubno Maggid** offers a compelling parable that lends practical insight to *Chazal's* statement. A large family was preparing to leave on a long ocean voyage. Knowing that such a journey was expensive, the father felt he could not take the servants along. Each child would have to participate, doing his share of the work. One son in particular was very talented in the art of cooking. The father could not, however, designate him as the cook, for he did not get along with his brothers. He might seek any excuse to deny his brothers their food.

The father, therefore, instructed his servant not to pack any small cooking utensils. They were to send along only the largest pots and pans. The father's logic was simple. If his son who served as cook would see small pans, he would assume that he was to cook only for himself. After all, how much can one cook in a small pot? If he had large pots, he would realize that not all the food was intended for him.

The same is true with *Klal Yisrael*. Hashem sends His blessing through those that are close to Him, who dedicate themselves to spiritual advancement. They are the conduit through which Hashem's beneficence flows to *Klal Yisrael*. *Shevet Levi* is referred to as "*ligyono shel Melech*," the legion of the King - Hashem. In order that the abundance designated for *Shevet Levi* reach the rest of *Klal Yisrael*, Hashem did not provide *Shevet Levi* with any land. The *Levi* should not be the one with the small pot that provides sufficient sustenance only for himself. Hashem, therefore, ordained that the rest of *Klal Yisrael* be blessed with sufficient material possessions so that he realize that it is not all for him; he must share with those who do not have enough of their own. Only by sharing with the *Levi* can he become worthy to receive a part of the *Levi's* beneficence.

We might acknowledge one simple fact: Whatever possessions we are fortunate enough to amass is by virtue of Hashem's blessing. We receive this excess only so that we share it with its rightful owners. To hoard our wealth will not be constructive: We will, regrettably, cut ourselves off from the source of our bounty.