

He shall be brought to Aharon the Kohen, or to one of his sons the Kohanim. (13:2)

Aharon *HaKohen* was destined to live another forty years at the most. The chances are that in the future the *metzora* will present himself to one of Aharon's descendants. Why is Aharon mentioned here for posterity, when, in fact, his tenure was short? The *Tiferes Shlomo* explains that the achievements of *tzaddikim* inspire for generations to come – long after they have left this world. He relates an incident that occurred concerning the *Arizal*, one time when he was sitting surrounded by his students. In came *Horav Shmuel DiOzida, zl*, author of the *Midrash Shmuel*, who was a young man at the time. He came to speak with the *Arizal*. When the *Arizal* saw him, he immediately rose from his chair and stood up for the young *Rav Shmuel*. He sat him down by his side and spoke with him endearingly and with great respect. When *Rav Shmuel* left, *Horav Chaim Vital, zl*, primary student of the *Arizal*, asked his revered *Rebbe* why he had shown favor to the young man. He had observed many distinguished *Rabbanim* come and go and never did the holy *Arizal* express himself in such a manner. The *Arizal* explained that it was the *neshamah*, soul, of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair that had entered into *Rav Shmuel*, so he deferred to him. Apparently, *Rav Shmuel* had performed a *mitzvah* in such a special manner that was consistent with the way in which Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair acted. Therefore, it was decided that the *neshamah* of the holy *Tanna* had transmigrated into *Rav Shmuel*, so that he would be inspired to continue acting in such a manner.

Rav Chaim immediately took leave of his *Rebbe* and pursued *Rav Shmuel*. "What *mitzvah* did you perform that created such a stir in Heaven?" he asked. *Rav Shmuel* explained, "My practice is to go to *shul* early, so that I can be among the first ten worshippers to form the *minyán*, quorum. As I was on my way, I walked by a house from which I heard loud weeping. I entered immediately to see a family without clothes on. (They were obviously concealing themselves behind whatever makeshift furniture they had.) They said that robbers had broken in, ransacked their house and taken anything of value. They even took their clothing off their backs. I took pity on them and removed my clothing which I gave to the head of the household. I ran home to put on my *Shabbos* clothes which you can see I am now wearing." When *Rav Chaim* heard this story, he immediately kissed *Rav Shmuel* and returned to the *Arizal*, who verified the story.

The *Tiferes Shlomo* explains that (according to the *Zohar HaKodesh*) Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair exemplified himself in the performance of *chesed*. When one follows in the ways of our Patriarch, Avraham *Avinu*, and reaches out with love and kindness to others, the Patriarch arises and stands in his behalf before Hashem. Aharon *HaKohen* was a paradigm of *chesed*, pursuing peace and reaching out to his fellow Jews to bring them closer to Torah. This is the epitome of *chesed*. Thus the nomenclature, *ish chasidecha*. (*Tumecha v'urecha l'ish chasidecha*; "Your *Tumim* and *Urim* befit Your devout one") (*Chasidecha* is translated here as devout) [*Devarim* 33:8, Moshe *Rabbeinu's berachah* to *Shevet Levi*]. Their every focus was on seeking and pursuing peace and reaching out to others with acts of lovingkindness. Whoever follows Aharon's lead will have his support. This is what it means to be of the *talmidim*, students, of Aharon *HaKohen*. Therefore, one

who has reason to go to a *Kohen* – a student of Aharon – is as if he is going to Aharon, because Aharon assists those who emulate his acts of lovingkindness.