

א ביסל תורה!

April 25, 2025

THE PARSHA NEWSLETTER
OF MAIMONIDES SCHOOL

כ"ז ניסן תשפ"ה · שמיני

Serving Hashem Above All

By Aryeh Gold '28

This week's parsha has the tragic deaths of נדב and אביהוא. After this, משה told his brother אהרן and his sons - "רִאשֵׁיכֶם אֶל־תִּפְרְעוּ וּבְגֵדֵיכֶם לֹא־תִפְרְמוּ" - "Don't cut the hair of your heads and do not tear your clothes" (ויקרא י'ו'). These two things are the same things you can't do when you are mourning. משה is telling אהרן and his sons that they can't mourn. Why is this?

The reason that אהרן can't mourn is simple. We know from פרשת אמר that the כהן גדול can never mourn outwardly because of how close he is to ה', but what about אהרן's sons? We know that normally כהנים are allowed to mourn for and even get טמא from one of their seven relatives.

חזקוני said the reason they can't mourn outwardly is that they are attendants of ה'. They can't mourn when they are serving since you have to be respectful when serving ה'. When you go to ה', in his temple you should be wearing nice clothes to respect him. If this is true for normal people going to the temple, it is even more true for the כהנים.

חזקוני also says it is because it was a special day. The משכן had just opened, and it was a special holy, and happy day. אברבנאל expands on this. He says it's because they had also been anointed on that day like the כהן גדול. Normally only the כהן גדול is anointed, but other כהנים don't need to be since they have been כהנים since birth. Because they were anointed, אהרן's son's were like a כהן גדול, so the same

restrictions of not being allowed to mourn applied to them.

רש"י says the reason they can't mourn is because this was a happy day for ה'. The משכן had just opened, and so the כהנים who worked in the משכן also had to be happy. Even if on the inside they were sad, after all their brothers just died, they couldn't be open about this and ruin the day when everyone was celebrating the opening of the משכן and praising ה'.

משה knew that not being allowed to mourn would be very hard for אהרן and his sons, so he told them that the rest of בני"י would mourn. This way אהרן and his sons could focus on their work while others focused on mourning for נדב and אביהוא.

רש"י teaches us that sometimes leaders have to put their personal stuff away in order to keep everyone in the proper mood. אהרן and his sons had to put away their sadness in order to keep everyone happy, and in the right mood to praise ה' on this very special day.

We learn from אהרן and his sons not being allowed to mourn that we have to stay in a proper mood when serving ה'. They had to put away their sadness so they could focus on serving ה'. They also had to show בני"י on the first day of the משכן being open how to be respectful in the future when serving ה'. When we go into davening in a bad mood, we should put this away, and compose ourselves to be respectful to ה'. This way we can show everyone how they should act too.

לכך נבחרת: Chosen for a Higher Purpose

By Leah Kaplan '25

In פרשת שמייני, we witness a pivotal moment in the inauguration of the משכן. After months of preparation, the time has finally come for אהרן to begin his עבודה. Yet, when משה רבינו turns to him and says, "קרב אל המזבח"—"Come near to the altar" (ויקרא טז), אהרן hesitates. רש"י explains that אהרן felt a deep sense of awe and unworthiness. He was overwhelmed, unsure if he was truly worthy of serving as the גדול בהן.

משה responds with a powerful statement: "לכך נבחרת", "For this you were chosen." It was precisely אהרן's humility and fear of ה' that made him most fitting for the role. His reluctance was not a flaw but rather a sign of genuine שמים, fear of Heaven.

The Chassidic masters echo this idea. A Rebbe once encouraged a hesitant chassid to become a community Rav. The chassid replied that he was afraid he was not worthy. The Rebbe answered that this fear made him the right person. Someone who feels no fear may not grasp the full weight of the responsibility. It is not arrogance but humility, combined with a deep sense of duty, that qualifies someone for leadership.

There is also a deeper layer in משה's words. When ה' first called משה to lead בני ישראל at the burning bush, משה hesitated repeatedly. He begged ה' to send someone else. חז"ל teach that

because of this hesitation, ה' gave the כהונה to אהרן instead. Now, when משה sees אהרן holding back, he urges him not to repeat the same mistake. "Do not let your humility hold you back. לכך נבחרת. This is why you were chosen."

This message is timeless. We all face moments of self-doubt. Whether it is taking on a leadership role, speaking up, or making a difference in our communities, we often feel we are not ready or not good enough. But the תורה teaches us that humility is not a reason to step aside. It is often the very reason we are meant to step up.

אהרן reminds us that true leadership is born not from self-confidence but from יראת שמים, from understanding the gravity of responsibility and approaching it with awe. The next time we find ourselves hesitating, unsure if we are capable, we should remember משה's words. לכך נבחרת. You were chosen for this.



Receive A BISL TORAH
on WhatsApp

A BISL TORAH

is published weekly
at Maimonides School,
Brookline, Massachusetts

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Avi Abbett '25
Eitan Orkaby '27

EDITORS

Theo Fraenkel '28
Eliana Goldenholz '26

FACULTY ADVISOR

Rabbi Yaakov Jaffe

FOUNDERS

Binyamin Orkaby '24
Ephraim Fischer '24
