



Likkutei Sichos

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Do Not Disturb the Celebration

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1.

WHAT IS RASHI'S SOURCE

Following the account of the death of Nadav and Avihu,¹ the Torah says,² “Moshe summoned Mishael³ and Eltzafan... and said to them, ‘Draw near and carry your brothers out of the Sanctuary to the outside of the camp.’” Rashi quotes the words, “carry your brothers, etc.,” and explains: “As a person would say to his fellow, ‘Remove the deceased from the presence of the bride in order not to disturb the celebration.’”

What is Rashi’s proof that the reason Moshe said, “carry your brothers,” was (**not** to bury them, but rather) “in order not to disturb the celebration”? Commentators explain that the Torah’s lengthy wording, “(carry...) out of the Sanctuary to the outside of the camp,” perplexed Rashi. For if the command to “carry” was only for the sake of burial, the verse should have just said, “carry your brothers and bury them.” Even if we were to suggest that {the purpose of this lengthy description was because} the Torah needed to inform us that they were to be taken “(to) the outside of the camp” to be buried, the phrase, “out of the Sanctuary” would remain superfluous.

This led Rashi to conclude that the phrase, “out of the Sanctuary,” conveyed the (primary) intent of the command to “carry your brothers.” The reason for this command was “in order not to disturb the celebration” (that took place in the *Mishkan* that day).

This interpretation, however, is difficult.

- a) Why does Rashi quote the words, “carry your brothers” (and merely hint at the words, “out of the Sanctuary” by writing “etc.”)? If Rashi’s explanation

¹ {On the eighth day of the ceremony inaugurating the *Mishkan*, Aharon’s two elder sons, Nadav and Avihu entered the Holy of Holies and “offered an unauthorized fire before G-d, which He had not commanded.” (*Vayikra* 10:1) As a result, “a fire came forth from before Hashem and consumed them, and they died before Hashem.” (ibid., 10:2)}

² *Vayikra* 10:4.

³ {Mishael and Eltzafan were Moshe’s and Aharon’s first cousins. Their fathers, Uziel and Amram, were brothers.}

was derived entirely from the words, “out of the Sanctuary,” Rashi should have **at least** quoted these words (in his caption)!

- b) The main difficulty: The Torah’s emphasis that they should “carry... out of the Sanctuary” is **self-understood**. Moshe commanded Mishael and Eltzafan to “carry...” out the bodies of their brothers Nadav and Avihu not only to bury them, but to prevent impurity from lingering in the *Mishkan*. (Moshe had to emphasize their duty to “carry” in order to hasten them, and not leave the impurity “inside the Sanctuary.”)

As such, the question remains unresolved: How does Rashi know the instruction to “carry...” was given to prevent the celebration from being disturbed?

2.

WHY THE ANALOGY

Furthermore, Rashi’s interpretation itself is difficult to understand.

Why does Rashi add the analogy, “As a person would say to his fellow, ‘Remove the deceased from the presence of the bride in order not to disturb the celebration.’” Seemingly, it would have been sufficient for Rashi to have written more concisely, “carry your brothers... — in order not to disturb the celebration.”

This question becomes even stronger: Rashi discusses this idea (of not disturbing the celebration) two verses later⁴ (regarding the commandment, “Do not let your hair grow wild”). Over there, however, he does write succinctly, “you shall not disturb Hashem’s celebration.”

Perhaps here we can suggest that Rashi relies on having just recently explained this analogy. However, we find a similar passage mentioned

⁴ *Vayikra* 10:6. {Moshe instructs Aharon and his sons to show no signs of mourning the deaths of Nadav and Avihu.}

previously. In *parshas Mishpatim* (on the verse,⁵ “They saw the G-d of Israel”) Rashi comments, “They gazed intently... and they deserved death. But Hashem did not want to disturb the celebration of the Torah.” In his commentary there, Rashi does not mention this analogy.

As such, why in our passage does Rashi find it necessary to explain using an analogy, “As a person would say to his fellow...”? Which detail in **our** verse would remain problematic if not for use of this analogy?

3.

A MINHAG OVER A LAW

Moreover, even if we can find some reason why Rashi needs to compare the command, “carry your brothers out of the Sanctuary...” to the removal of the deceased from the presence of the bride, the reasoning behind Rashi’s wordiness, “**As a person would say to his fellow**, remove...,” remains unclear. Rashi could have written more concisely, “Just as the deceased is removed from the presence of the bride in order not to disturb the celebration” (or something to that effect).

There is an even greater difficulty: The source of the phrase, “remove the deceased from the presence of the bride” is found in tractate *Kesuvos*.⁶ However, the *Talmud* records this point (not as a common saying, “as a person would say to his fellow,” but rather) as a **law**: “We remove the deceased from the presence of a bride.”⁷ As such, why does Rashi add, “as a person would say to his fellow”? (With this addition, Rashi relegates this action from a law to a common practice.)

The *Midrash*⁸ writes the following:

⁵ *Shemos* 24:10. {At the time of the giving of the Torah, Moshe, Aharon, Nadav, Avihu and 70 elders ascended the mountain to some degree. The 70 elders sinned by gazing upon Hashem’s glory, thereby deserving death. Hashem did not kill them immediately.}

⁶ 17a.

⁷ {The context: We reroute the funeral procession for burial of a corpse to yield before the wedding procession of a bride.}

⁸ *Vayikra Rabbah* 20:4. *Psikta De’Rav Kahana, Psikta Rabasi*, “*parshas Acharei Mos*.”

Out of the Sanctuary — As a person would say to his fellow, “Remove this deceased from the presence of this mourner. How long must this mourner suffer?” (Or an alternate version: As a person... the presence of his father, “For how long must a father look upon his dead son?”)

This example clearly is speaking of common practice (“as a person would say to his fellow”). In contrast, regarding a bride’s celebration, it is a law.

Rashi does not quote the *Midrashic* analogy, “As a person... remove the deceased... from the presence of this **mourner**... How long must he suffer?” Meaning, the deceased is removed from a mourner’s presence in order to **ease his pain** (and similarly, “For how long must a father look upon...”). Rashi writes {instead}, “as a person would say... from the presence of the **bride** in order not to **disturb the celebration**.” Meaning, we remove the deceased from a bride’s presence in order not to disturb the bride’s celebration (which began before the body had arrived).

Conceivably {Rashi’s reasoning is as follows}: According to the *Midrash*, the phrase, “out of the *kodesh* {state of holiness}” refers to *Aharon* (“from the presence of this mourner”). According to the **simple meaning**,⁹ however, “out of the *Kodesh* {Sanctuary}” refers to the *Mishkan*. Therefore, Rashi explains, “in order not to disrupt” the celebration concerning the *Mishkan*.

On this basis, however, the difficulty as to why Rashi connects these two explanations becomes even more puzzling. On the one hand, such conduct {removing the deceased from a mourner’s presence} is common practice, but on the other hand {diverting a funeral procession away from} a wedding celebration is the law!

⁹ {In the Hebrew original, “*pshat*, or ”“*pshuto shel mikra*”; lit., “the simple meaning of the verse.” Rashi states in his commentary to *Bereishis* 3:8: “I have come only to explain the plain meaning of the Torah,” et al. When the plain meaning is understood clearly, Rashi does not comment. Though there are many levels and depths of interpretation on the Torah, Rashi adopts a straightforward approach.}

4.

HASHEM'S FAVORITE PLACE

We also need to clarify:

As mentioned above, since Rashi explains¹⁰ regarding this same issue,¹¹ “you shall not disturb **Hashem’s** celebration,” he should also have explained here that the command to “carry your brothers out of the Sanctuary” was in order not to disturb Hashem’s celebration. Why does Rashi explain here that it was “in order not to disturb the **bride’s** celebration,” understood plainly as referring to the **Jewish people’s** celebration?¹²

Perhaps we can answer: Since “the whole earth is full of His glory,”¹³ moving the dead from one location to another would accomplish nothing in preventing disruption of Hashem’s celebration. (For Hashem is also present “outside of the camp.”) Therefore, Rashi had to explain that removal of the bodies prevented the disturbance of the **Jews’** (bride’s) celebration. In contrast, concerning the directive “Do not let your hair grow wild,” which instructed the people to show no signs of mourning, would also avert the disturbance of Hashem’s celebration.

However, in truth, this answer is unsatisfactory: Although “the whole earth is full of His glory,” obviously, Hashem’s **celebration** was tied to the specific place where He instructed {the Jews to} “make a sanctuary for Me, **so that I may dwell among them**,”¹⁴ where His presence rested (openly). Therefore, it was necessary for Aharon’s sons to remove the bodies from the Sanctuary in order not to disturb Hashem’s celebration in the *Mishkan*.

¹⁰ {*Vayikra* 10:6.}

¹¹ {Moshe’s instruction to Aharon and his surviving sons, “Do not let your hair grow wild.”}

¹² In the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish People, Hashem plays the role of the groom and the Jewish People, the bride. (See Rashi *parshas Ki Sisa* 34:1.)

¹³ *Yeshayahu* 6:3. This fact is logical and obvious even to the novice student of Torah. See also Rashi *parshas Va’eschanan* 5:7.

¹⁴ *Shemos* 25:8.

5.

WHY THEM AND WHY NOW?

The explanation of all the above:

When studying this verse, two perplexing points arise immediately, one regarding the verse's **general** meaning and one regarding the phrase, “your brothers.” [Rashi quotes the words, “carry your brothers...” because these words (“to carry,” the instruction, in general; and the words, “your brothers,” specifically) pose a difficulty.]

The verse in general is unclear: Why **at the outset** must Scripture recount, and at such great length — in the midst of describing the events of the eighth day of the *Mishkan's* inauguration — Moshe instructing Mishael and Eltzafan to “draw near... to the outside of the camp,” and how they then “came forth and carried them...”? Obviously, they would have removed the bodies of Nadav and Avihu “out of the Sanctuary,” and would not leave them inside the *Mishkan*. If the purpose of this verse is to inform us that they had carried the bodies “to the outside of the camp,” only this point could have been written.

Similarly, we must clarify why, when speaking to Mishael and Eltzafan, Moshe emphasized, “(carry) **your brothers**,” i.e., that Nadav and Avihu were their relatives.¹⁵ Since the Torah informs us in the first half of the verse that they were, “sons of Uziel, uncle of Aharon,” we already know that they were “**your brothers**”!

This implies that Mishael and Eltzafan had to remove the bodies of Nadav and Avihu specifically because **they** were related.

This is difficult to understand:

¹⁵ As **Rashi** explains in his commentary on *Bereishis* 13:8; 29:12; 31:23. {In these citations, Rashi defines “brother” as “relative.”}

- a. Why is it necessary for this verse to emphasize that relatives had to remove the bodies?
- b. The crux of the issue: Why *did* relatives specifically need to remove the bodies? Seemingly, on the contrary! Being relatives of Nadav and Avihu, they were levites; accordingly, they played a role in the *Mishkan* service.

(Although the **Torah** had not yet mentioned the role of the levites serving in the *Mishkan* — this is first mentioned in *Bamidbar*¹⁶ — a novice student of Scripture¹⁷ learned this earlier in **Rashi’s commentary**.)¹⁸

Since the levites played a part in the *Mishkan* service, it would have been quite reasonable to assume that they had to remain (ritually pure and) inside the *Mishkan*, in order to participate in the celebration of the eighth day of the *Mishkan*’s inauguration. As such, it would have been reasonable for ordinary Jews¹⁹ to have carried the bodies of Nadav and Avihu “to the outside of the camp.”

Furthermore, **Rashi** previously explained²⁰ that Yaakov instructed Levi not to carry his coffin, “for he was destined to carry the Ark.” Now, if Levi could not carry his own father’s coffin because **generations later**, in the *Mishkan*, he — i.e., his **tribe** — would carry the Ark, how much more so in our case,²¹ in which Mishael and Eltzafan were not such close relatives should have a similar consideration applied. Meaning, at the celebration of Hashem’s Presence coming to rest on the *Mishkan*, Mishael and Eltzafan should have certainly participated in the celebration rather than carrying out the bodies of Nadav and Avihu!

¹⁶ *Bamidbar* 1:50-53; 3:5 ff.; 8:5 ff.; 18:1 ff.

¹⁷ {“*Ben chamesh lemikra*” in the Hebrew original, meaning, “a five-year-old beginning to study Scripture.” This is a term borrowed from *Pirkei Avos*, which teaches that the appropriate age for a child to begin studying Scripture is at the age of five.}

¹⁸ Rashi’s commentary on *Bereishis* 50:13; See Rashi’s commentary on *Bereishis* 29:34.

¹⁹ {In the Hebrew original, “*yisraelim*.” That is, a non-*kohen* and a non-*Levite*.}

²⁰ *Bereishis* 50:13.

²¹ {In the original, the *sichah* refers to this construct as a *kal vachomer*, Lit., “light and heavy.” *Kal vachomer* is a talmudic logical proof, whereby a strict ruling in a lenient case demands a similarly strict ruling in a more stringent case; alternatively, a lenient ruling in stringent case demands a similarly lenient ruling in a lenient case.}

6.

A DIFFERENT SORT OF PARTICIPATION

On the basis of these two questions, Rashi asserts that: a) the instruction Moshe gave to “carry...” (was not for the sake of burial alone, or just in order that the bodies be removed from the *Mishkan*, for this was self-understood. Rather, Moshe’s instruction) was related to the eighth day of inauguration; and b) their “brothers” had to be the ones to carry out this task.

Thus, Rashi explains that they were instructed to “carry...” in order not to disturb the celebration that took place in the *Mishkan* on the eighth day of inauguration. (For this reason, Torah adds, “out of the Sanctuary.” The primary issue was that the bodies should not be in the Sanctuary, and as such, they would not disturb the celebration, as mentioned above in section 1.)

For this very reason, relatives, i.e., members of the tribe of Levi, had to remove the bodies, as the removal was connected to the ***Mishkan service***. However, this service was not an obligation requiring action (like singing, or the like); it was one of negation, requiring them to remove things from the *Mishkan* which would **disturb** the service from being performed appropriately. This was similar to the service of clearing the ashes from the altar and removing them from the camp.²²

Thus, Mishael and Eltzafan’s were not precluded from participating in the celebration of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, for by carrying out the bodies of Nadav and Avihu from the Sanctuary, Mishael and Eltzafan took part in the celebration.

²² Mentioned **previously** in *parshas Tzav*. See Rashi’s commentary on *Vayikra* 6:4, s.v. “*Vehotzi*”; see also Rashi’s commentary on *Shemos* 25:38, 30:7.

MOSHE WANTED AN UNINTERRUPTED CELEBRATION

However, Rashi could not have written succinctly, “carry... in order not to disturb the celebration” because it would immediately prompt a difficulty: If disturbing the celebration of the *Mishkan*’s inauguration should be avoided, why did **Hashem** disturb the celebration by punishing Nadav and Avihu instantly (rather than postponing their punishment until after the eighth day of inauguration)?

This question is even stronger: Rashi explained previously in *parshas Mishpatim* (as mentioned above in section 2) that at the time of *Matan Torah*, Nadav, Avihu (and the elders) “were deserving of death.” However, “Hashem did not want to disturb the celebration of the *Torah*; therefore, He waited to punish Nadav and Avihu until the day of the *Mishkan*’s inauguration.” Thus, we see that Hashem did not want to disturb the celebration of the *Torah*, but He saw **no** reason to avoid disturbing the celebration of the day of the *Mishkan*’s inauguration through the deaths of Nadav and Avihu. Moreover, Hashem postponed punishing the elders to a much later date in order not to “disturb the celebration of the *Torah*.”

In light of this, how can we suggest that Moshe instructed that the bodies should be removed “in order not to disturb the celebration,” if Hashem Himself disturbed the celebration?

To address this issue, Rashi adds that according to *pshuto shel mikra*, Moshe instructed Mishael and Eltzafan to “carry...” (**not** as a law, i.e., he did not convey this as a **command from Hashem**, but rather) “**As a person would say to his fellow**, ‘Remove the deceased from the presence of the bride’” — as a common societal practice.²³

²³ That is why Rashi emphasized, “(as a person would say) **to his fellow**” — Moshe’s instruction to Mishael and Eltzafan was similar to a conversation between **a person and his fellow**.

It is human nature to do everything possible to avoid disturbing a bride's celebration. For this reason, they would remove the deceased from her presence, and even take the funeral procession on an **alternate route** in order not to encounter a bride on the way to her wedding, and not to **trouble** the bride to take a different route.

Similarly, in our case: Hashem punished Nadav and Avihu with death in the midst of the *Mishkan's* inauguration celebration. (Meaning, Hashem's will was that there should be a measure of distress, etc., on the eighth day of the inauguration). Nonetheless, **Moshe** wanted to minimize the disturbance to the (Jews') celebration. That is why **Moshe** instructed ("as a person would say to his fellow") that the bodies be removed from the place of the celebration ("Remove the deceased from the presence of the bride").

8.

NOT DISRUPTING HASHEM'S CELEBRATION IN THE SERVICE

On this basis we can appreciate why Rashi offers different explanations: He explains that Moshe's instruction to "carry..." was in order not to disturb the celebration of the **bride** (the Jewish people)," while the instruction not to let their hair grow out {as a sign of mourning} was so that "you shall not disturb **Hashem's** celebration."

Nadav and Avihu died because,²⁴ "A fire came forth **from before Hashem** and consumed them." That is to say, Hashem overlooked His celebration in order to punish them with death. Thus, the suggestion that their bodies had to be removed in order not to disturb **Hashem's** celebration is completely unreasonable.

(Moshe said "carry..." only because he did not want to disturb the **Jewish people's** celebration, "as a **person** would say to his fellow, remove the deceased from the presence of the bride," as mentioned above in section 7.)

²⁴ {*Vayikra* 10:2.}

In contrast, Moshe instructed Aharon and his sons, “Do not let your hair grow wild,” (a) (not “as a person would say to his fellow,” but rather,) as a **law** that Moshe conveyed to them in Hashem’s name (as all the other Torah laws); and (b) (unrelated to the death of **Nadav** and **Avihu**, but) as a prohibition for **Aharon and his sons** to show signs of mourning in the *Mishkan*.

Here {regarding the prohibition “do not let your hair grow wild”}, Rashi explains the rationale: “You shall not disturb Hashem’s celebration.” “Hashem’s celebration” (at the inauguration of the *Mishkan*) was connected to the service of Aharon and his sons in the *Mishkan* on that day. Thus it would have been completely inappropriate for **them** to act contrarily to “Hashem’s celebration” on that day itself {by showing any signs of mourning}.

9.

UNDERSTANDING THE DEBATE

We can extract an additional insight from the analogy, “As a person would say to his fellow, ‘Remove the deceased from the presence of the bride’”:

In the analogy, the mourning is not cancelled. Rather, they simply reroute the funeral procession away from (the bride and) the celebration. Similarly, in our case, Aharon and his son did not cease mourning;²⁵ they just showed no signs of mourning in the place of celebration.

On this basis, we can explain what seems to be a rather surprising anecdote in our *parshah*.

When Moshe discovered that Aharon and his sons had burnt the “(Rosh Chodesh) sin-offering”²⁶ instead of eating it as they had done with the other two sin-offerings,²⁷ the Torah says,²⁸ “He was angry... he said to them, ‘Why did you

²⁵ {“*Aninus*” in the original. *Halachically*, the term *aninus* refers to the state of mourning observed by a deceased’s relatives between the passing and burial.}

²⁶ *Vayikra* 10:16.

²⁷ {The other two sin-offerings were: a) one offered by Nachshon ben Aminadav, the leader of the tribe of Yehudah, and, b) one offered in honor for the eighth day of the inauguration.}

²⁸ *Vayikra* 10:16, 17.

not eat the sin offering...?” Aharon responded, “Was it they who this day offered their sin-offering... before Hashem? Now that such things befell me, were I to eat... would Hashem approve?”²⁹ When “Moshe heard this, he approved.”³⁰

What was Aharon’s rationale for treating these sin-offerings differently? Rashi³¹ explains, “Since you heard this {exceptional ruling allowing an *onen* to eat} regarding one-time sacrifices, you have no right to be lenient regarding regular sacrifices.”³²

This is very perplexing: The distinction between one-time sacrifices and regular sacrifices is a straightforward explanation, so when Aharon presented it, why did it seem unconventional to Moshe? Furthermore, it seemed obvious to Moshe that no distinction should be drawn between one-time sacrifices and regular sacrifices, to the extent that when he heard that the *kohanim* had burnt the sacrifices {instead of eating them}, **immediately**, Moshe “**was angry**”!

On the other hand: If Moshe had been so sure that a one-time sacrifice and regular sacrifices should be treated equally, how could Aharon have convinced Moshe by saying only, “Since you heard this regarding one-time sacrifices, you have no right to be lenient regarding regular sacrifices”? Yet, “When Moshe heard this he approved (immediately)”!

10.

WHERE DID HASHEM CELEBRATE?

The explanation: Moshe maintained that the reason Aharon and his sons could eat the *minchah* offering in a state of *aninus*³³ (similar to the command, “do not let your hair grow wild”) was in order not to disturb Hashem’s

²⁹ {Rashi, *ibid.*, gives us the context behind this statement: Moshe said to them, “Did you perhaps sprinkle its blood while you were in a state of *aninus*? An *onen* who performs the service renders that sacrifice invalid!” Aharon answered him, “Did they offer up...?” I.e., they did not offer up the sacrifice, I did. They are ordinary *kohanim* for whom the law of invalidation by an *onen* applies. But I am a *Kohen Gadol*, who while in the state of *aninus* is permitted to offer a sacrifice.}

³⁰ {In other words, Aharon responded to Moshe that a *kohen* in a state of *aninus* may not eat a sin-offering.}

³¹ *Vayikra* 10:19, 16; See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 27 pg. 66.

³² {That is, sacrifices mandated by the Torah to be offered throughout the generations.}

³³ *Vayikra* 10:12; see Rashi’s commentary *ad. loc.*

celebration, for in that respect, one-time sacrifices and regular sacrifices were no different. Moshe “was angry” because (in his opinion) by burning the sin-offering, they had disturbed **Hashem’s celebration**.

To this argument, Aharon responded, “They... offered their sin-offering... **before Hashem...** were I to eat the sin-offering today, would Hashem approve...?” In his response, Aharon emphasized that the sacrifice was specifically **offered** “before Hashem” (literally), but it was not eaten “before Hashem.” (Although it had to be eaten “in a holy place... within the {courtyard} curtains,”³⁴ it did not have to be eaten “before Hashem,” i.e., near the altar.)

“Hashem’s celebration” took place (primarily) in proximity to the altar, the place where “fire went forth **from before Hashem.**”³⁵ (Presumably, this was why the celebration of the inauguration of the *Mishkan* involved so many sacrifices offered on the altar.) *Aninus* was **not** suspended; signs of *aninus* just couldn’t be shown **in the place of the celebration** (“remove... from the presence of the bride”). As such, Aharon claimed that the command not to “disturb Hashem’s celebration” only applied to services performed before Hashem, near the altar. It did **not** apply to the eating of the sacrifices, which took place solely *within the curtains* {i.e., away from the altar}.

They were **permitted** to eat the *minchah* (and the other two sin-offerings) while in a state of *aninus*. This was **not** in order to avoid disturbing Hashem’s celebration; it was a “one-time, exceptional ruling,”³⁶ and thus, “Since you heard this (one-time, exceptional ruling) regarding one-time sacrifices, you have no right to be lenient regarding regular sacrifices..”

11.

CLEANING IS ALSO IMPORTANT

Of the many lessons that we can derive from Rashi’s explanation:

³⁴ Rashi’s wording, *Vayikra* 10:14 (regarding the *minchah*); see *Vayikra* 10:14 and Rashi’s commentary ad. loc.

³⁵ *Vayikra* 9:24.

³⁶ {“*Hora’as sha’ah*, in the Hebrew original; lit., “a ruling of the hour,” a temporary injunction used in exceptional circumstances.}

As known, Rambam writes that **every person** can emulate the tribe of Levi if “his spirit generously motivates him... to set himself aside and stand before Hashem to serve Him... and remove from his neck the yoke of the many reckonings {regarding worldly concerns and affairs}...”³⁷

Thus, a person may think that since he has already achieved the rank of a “Levi,” and even beyond that level, he is “sanctified as Holy of Holies, and Hashem will be his portion and heritage,”³⁸ he must only occupy himself in matters of holiness. If an occasion presents itself for him to “prevent a person from violating a prohibition,” he will claim that has no connection with {and so cannot involve himself in} matters that are not “holy.” That is the domain of the common Jews, who are involved in “the many reckonings.”

Rashi’s commentary offers guidance {to address this attitude}: On the contrary! Since *removing the deceased from the presence of the bride* is relevant to the celebration of the *Mishkan*, it is considered part of the service of the *Mishkan* and must be performed specifically by “your brothers” (the levites).

Similarly, this applies to every person’s individual service of transforming the world into a *Mishkan* and “a dwelling-place for Hashem.” Since the world cannot become dwelling-place for Hashem unless it is *cleansed*, “so that it will have no *dirt* or *filth*, G-d forbid,”³⁹ this *avodah* becomes integral in making this dwelling-place (i.e., the service of the *Mishkan*). And such service can only be rendered by a levite, “whose spirit generously motivates him... to set himself aside and stand before Hashem to serve Him.”

By “cleansing” the world (by turning away from negativity, i.e., from prohibitions), and decorating it with “beautiful furnishings” (by doing good, i.e., fulfilling positive *mitzvos*), the world can become a dwelling-place befitting the King, the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed is He. This will be perceived in a

³⁷ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Shemitah*,” ch. 13, par. 13.

³⁸ *Mishneh Torah*, *ibid*.

³⁹ *Likkutei Torah*, “*Balak*,” p. 70c.

revealed way in the Future Era, with the actual, imminent arrival of our righteous Moshiach.

-From a talk delivered Shabbos *parshas Shemini*, 5736 (1976), and *Motza'ei Shabbos parshas Shemini* 5739 (1979)