

## Bringing the Farbrengen Home

# WHAT'S IN A NAME

## The Passing of Aharon HaKohen

By: Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

Shabbat is Rosh Chodesh Av, which is the *yahrzeit* of Aharon HaKohen.

Aharon HaKohen is the only person that the Torah tells us the date of his passing, as recorded in this week's parsha, Matos-Masei. In a great twist of Hashgocho Protis (Divine Personal Providence), we read the date of his passing on the very day itself.

From Aharon's passing we can learn something about his life. The Torah tells us that when he passed away, "the entire house of Israel mourned him for 30 days."

Not some people, or even the majority of the people mourned -- but the entire Jewish people.

Even when Moses passed away, the Torah says, "the Jewish people mourned" -- "the people," but not "the entire people."

How could this be? How could anyone be beloved to everyone? Surely even the greatest of men has some detractors?

Yet in fact, everyone did love Aharon. And the reason is because he, "loved peace, pursued peace, loved all creatures, bringing them close to Torah" (Avos 1:12).

This can help us understand a passage in the Talmud (Taanis 9a):



"Three good sustainers rose up for the Jewish people during the Exodus from Egypt; and they are Moses, Aharon and Miriam."

The Talmud goes on to explain that three good gifts were given from Heaven through their agency: the well of water, the pillar of cloud and the manna.

The well was given in the merit of Miriam; the pillar of cloud in the merit of Aharon; and the manna in the merit of Moses.

The manna was given in a limited amount; each person only received a certain amount.

The water from the well, although not limited per se, was distributed to each Tribe individually.

Only the clouds of glory, in Aharon's merit, surrounded the entire Jewish people, protecting all of us as equals.

And that was the unique quality of Aharon. He loved every Jew equally. He was able to emphasize our common denominator, bringing to light our inherent unity.

To take it a bit deeper:

This very idea is alluded to in the letters of Aharon's name  
אהרן


The first two letters, hei and alef, stand for *ahava* (love).

The third letter, reish, stands for *rabba* (great).

And the final letter, nun, which is drawn down, lower than the other letters, indicates how Aharon was able to extend his *ahava rabba* (great love) even to those who were on a low level.

Aharon was able to do this because he was like the clouds of glory, he transcended division and was therefore able to unite all Jews as one.

The Mishna in Avos (quoted above) says, "Be of the disciples of Aharon." That is not just a suggestion, it is a necessity. It is also a blessing, something that each of us is capable of.

We can all emulate Aharon's great love for others. This Shabbat we read the verse with the date of his passing, and at the end of the parsha we proclaim *Chazak chazak v'nischazek*, adding energy and power to our love of others. 

**א גוט שבת**

# The Fair in Leipzig

## A Found Fortune

by Tzipah Wertheimer

When Chana Leah found out that a large sum of money was found by a Jew at the fair in Leipzig, she knew her miracle had come. Her husband, Berel, was ill and she had come in his place to buy fabric for a year of upcoming business.

Chana Leah finished her business in a few short days and was ready to collect the merchandise. She would leave the boisterous business fair to return to her ailing husband and quiet shtetl. She reached into her purse to pay the vendor and .... her money was gone!

She almost fainted. The seller offered her a chair and some water. "Don't worry Chana Leah," he said, "I trust you and your husband. Take the rolls of fabric now and you can pay later." She couldn't bring herself to share that there was no later, there was no money at home. Berel entrusted her with everything they had and it was lost. She noticed a hole in her purse and realized the money had slipped out in the midst of the all the business stalls, endless rows of merchandise and thousands of people that frequented Leipzig in the mid 1800's.

In a final effort, Chana Leah put up signs in the Jewish section of Leipzig, asking to be notified if anyone found a large sum of cash.

She ran with great anticipation to meet Moshe, the one who they said had found a large stack of bills.



She told him the exact amount she had lost, the order of the bills and the color of the cords which she had used to secure the bundle. Indeed it was a match.

"I'm not obligated to return the money," Moshe shocked her.

"It's my money," she said in disbelief.

"I'm sure it WAS," he said in the cold matter of fact way of scientist about to dissect a living being. "The Shulchan Aruch says the if one loses money in a public place that is mostly populated by strangers one naturally gives up hope of finding the object. Therefore, the money is no longer yours."

Then he looked at her as if he were an X-ray machine. "Now tell me Chana Leah, did you really think you were going to find your money?"

The good woman had to admit that in fact she did despair and lose hope. "Let's take it to a Rav to decide," she asserted.

They met with Rabbi Yitzchak Elchonon Spector the Rav of the city of Kovno. He heard both sides. "Tell the woman the halacha," Moshe berated. The Rav was silent.


"The money belongs to Chana Leah," Rabbi Spector asserted. Before Moshe could get the words out of his mouth Rabbi Spector continued, "If I lose a sweater and YOU give up hope of ever finding it, that has nothing to do with me, correct?" He waited for Moshe to nod.

"The money is not Chana Leah's," he judged. "She was at the market in her husband's place. It's Berel's money which he entrusted with her." Moshe did not like where this was going. "Berel never knew the money was lost so he certainly never gave up the hope of finding it. Berel never depaired. The halacha states that if a person loses something and doesn't know it's lost it still belongs to them and it must be returned."

This story was told by R. Yeruchum Leibovitch of the Mirrer Yeshiva (before the Second World War) and he explained that we are all here as messengers from above and the Sender never gives up hope! The One Above NEVER despairs!

We may be down here in the hectic and wild fairs of Leipzig or affairs of the world – but we're not aimless floaters. **We're on a mission, with a purpose from on high.**

Sometimes it feels hard to figure out exactly where I ought to be, or what I should be doing at any given moment. Sometimes the emotional (or real) bank account has a low balance. Remember, It's not ours. The money, talents, strengths, intellect, good looks, charming personality and all the wonderful traits were given to us on loan. The Lender of All Lenders never despairs.

Even if one of our strengths seems to dwindle, there is an important mitzvah to return all lost objects to their original owner. 


### HAYOM YOM

#### 1 Menachem Av - Rosh Chodesh

The unique quality of Mashiah is that he will be humble. Though he will be the ultimate in greatness, for he will teach Torah to the Patriarchs and to Moshe Rabeinu a"h, still he will be the ultimate in humility and self-nullification, for he will also teach simple folk.

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**7:59pm Candle Lighting**  
**8:05pm Mincha & Kabbalas Shabbos**  
**8:45am Chassidus**  
**10:00am Davening**  
**5:00pm Tanya Shiur (men & women)**  
**7:45pm Mincha**  
**9:04pm Maariv / Shabbos Ends**