

בשבת

BY RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN
RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS



PART OF SOMETHING WONDERFUL

Almost hidden by the incredible story of the Jewish people's liberation from Egypt is the background to a fascinating scene that will unfold later on in the desert. After the terrible sin of the *Egel Hazahav*, the men of Levi were commanded to take the place of the firstborn, as they are now the ones to serve in the *Mishkan*, and later the *Beis Hamikdash*, instead of the firstborn. The firstborn lost their right because of their involvement in idolatry, and the tribe of Levi gained this special merit, because of their battle against the idolaters.¹

But why did the firstborn have the right to serve in the *Beis Hamikdash* in the first place? What did they do to be given such a special position? The *passuk* states² it is because Hashem 'acquired' them in destroying the firstborn of the Egyptians. But what exactly is going on here? Because Hashem caused the firstborn of the Egyptians to die, the firstborn of the Jewish people deserved to serve in the *Mishkan*?

The Alter of Kelm³ (Reb Simcha Zissel Ziv, 1824–1898) gives us the background necessary to understand the great merit of the Jewish firstborn. The final blow against Egypt showed the world Hashem's ultimate mastery over every aspect of the universe. Hashem can discern between one neighbor and the next, between one person and the next, striking the Egyptian firstborn, while leaving his Jewish counterpart untouched.

The Jewish firstborns were passive in this phenomenon — yet they were amply rewarded because of their participation in this phenomenal *kiddush Hashem*. Even the firstborn animals were rewarded, despite their inability to distinguish good from bad. This is the power of *kiddush Hashem*, everyone, everything, involved becomes elevated.

Imagine then, says Reb Simcha Zissel, how elevated one we would become if we were to actively choose to make a *kiddush Hashem*.

**This is the power
of *kiddush*
Hashem, everyone,
everything, involved
becomes elevated.**

Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

We are accustomed to thinking that a *kiddush Hashem* is something that is done with a big crowd, a lot of publicity, and a terribly difficult challenge, or a particularly wonderful deed. If that is the definition of a *kiddush Hashem*, it would be difficult indeed to accomplish such a task — how often would we have the opportunity?

However, this is not the definition of a *kiddush Hashem*. The Rambam¹ writes, "Anyone who avoids an *aveirah* or does a *mitzvah* solely for the sake of Hashem, is *mekadesh Hashem*." The implication is clear, even if one were alone, and did what they could to serve Hashem properly, they are within the parameters of *kiddush Hashem*.

Living according to Hashem's Will is itself a *kiddush Hashem*, whether we are watched or otherwise.

With this newfound understanding of *kiddush Hashem*, the opportunities to be *mekadesh Hashem* are always around us — let's take advantage!

¹ Hilchos Yesodai HaTorah 5:10

¹ Bamidbar 3:11-13

² Shemos 13:2, Rashi *ibid.* s.v. ליהויה

³ Ohr Rashaz, 218

Have you thought about sponsoring Beshivticha?

Sponsor in honor, or in the merit of a loved one!

To sponsor, or receive by email, please contact us at info@ohr-yisrael.com or call 732-451-GROW



A Talmid Chacham that studies Mussar will discover great benefit, and inspiration that will affect his very soul. Therefore one must attach Mussar study, built upon the teachings of Chazal, to the rest of his other studies. - Chacham Ovadia Yosef zt"l, *Sefer Halichot Olam*, vol. 8, pg. 336

STRIKING THE MATCH

It was an 'out' Shabbos for Yeshiva Tiferes Naftali,* the small out-of-town *yeshiva* nestled in the Ozark Mountains in Hardy, Arkansas. Unfortunately, while everyone was away, a terrible fire broke out, and the *yeshiva* building was destroyed. After some investigation, police determined it was a deliberate act of arson. Whatever the cause, the *yeshiva* desperately needed a place to house all their students when they returned on Monday.

The *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rabbi Cohen, turned to the local radio station for help. Philip Burnett, a local teenager, heard his plea and asked his parents to help. Though they were Jewish, they had no connection to the *yeshiva*, or any religious activity. But they immediately jumped into their car, and went to the *yeshiva*, offering help.

When Rabbi Cohen heard the Burnett's had room for ten *bochurim*, he was delighted, though not comfortable to place them where they might have *kashrus* or other challenges. Mr. Burnett sensed something was wrong, and assured Rabbi Cohen that the boys would have their own entrance, and would not need to bother or be bothered by anyone in the household.

And so it was, the *yeshiva bochurim* moved in. In a short period of time, the Burnetts were very impressed by their guests' behavior, which led Mr. Burnett to call Rabbi Cohen. "Rabbi, it bothers my wife and I that the boys cannot eat breakfast in our home — they can't even drink anything. Is there anything we can do?"

"I appreciate your goodwill, but it would be a complicated process to make your home into a kosher home." Rabbi Cohen then detailed all that would be involved. Mr. Burnett listened carefully, and said that he would get back to Rabbi Cohen, after discussing with his family.

The next morning Rabbi Cohen's phone rang. "Rabbi, you have a deal — get busy!"

A team of young rabbis affiliated with the *yeshiva* came over, and with some effort, made the kitchen 100% kosher. The first kosher breakfast was a celebration with the *bochurim*, and the Burnetts soon felt like they adopted 'their' *yeshiva bochurim*.

Soon, the Burnetts decided to keep Shabbos as well, and the long Friday night discussions with these *yeshiva* students opened up the Torah in a way the Burnetts never knew.

Now, many years later, the great-grandchildren follow in the path of the Torah. A match made by the Burnett's kindness and the *yeshiva* students' *kiddush Hashem*.

*Adapted from *Shining Lights* by Ruchoma Shain

DID YOU KNOW?

- The *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem* is more beloved than any other *mitzvah* in the world.¹
- Hashem elevated and chose the Jewish people, and gave them the Torah and *mitzvos* so that they should be *mekadesh Hashem*.²

¹ *Shnei Luchos HaBris, Sha'ar Ha'Osiyos, Os Aleph*, 60

² *Shaarei Teshuvah*, 3:158