

## פרשת אחרי-קדושים

The תוספות quote the "חסיד" (possibly Reb Yehuda Hachasid) as to why the תורה prohibits a כהן גדול from marrying an אלמנה, a widow. He explains that שמא נתן עיניו באשת איש - perhaps this Kohen Gadol desires a married woman and יום כיפור, when he would enter the Kodesh Hakodoshim to pronounce the שם ד', The Divine name, he might do so with the intent that her husband would die and he would marry her. Therefore, the תורה commands him only to marry a בתולה and not an אלמנה.

Frightening! Shocking beyond belief! The כהן גדול the holiest of man, as the Vilna Gaon explains, he is comprised of all the קדושה of כלל ישראל. On Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, as he stands in the holiest place in the world about to pronounce the awesome name out loud in its fullness. Can anyone imagine a more exalted moment than this? Yet the Chasid says that at this very moment the Kohen's heart could harbor thoughts of a married women, thoughts of murder. Can man really sink so low? Impossible! Implausible! Yet the "Chasid", who does not delude himself, knows the truth. Yes-indeed this is man.

Unfortunately, anyone can "sink so low". This has become a sad reality in our days. We have witnessed all too often this fall. Children - precious children, holy and innocent - like angels - with such promise and future, suddenly fall and drop so low ... so low.

••• Yes, indeed the Kohen Gadol can fall ••• but he can also soar to great heights. The מדרש tells us something equally astonishing about the greatness of the Kohen Gadol

In this week's sedra we learn:

וכל אדם לא יהיה באהל מועד בבאו לכפר בקודש עד צאתו

Nor may any man be in the אהל מועד when the כהן גדול enters to atone in the holy place until he leaves.

Said Rav Avahu "But was the כהן not a man? In which case he should not be there either. רב פנחס בשעה שהיה רוח קודש שרוי עלו היו פניו אלא כהוא דאמר

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בוערות כלפידים When the spirit of holiness was upon him, his face burnt like a torch. The כהן גדול at that moment was able to elevate himself to a level greater than man. The Yerushalmi adds, even greater than those angles who take on the appearance of man.

See how high man can elevate himself! The בעלי מוסר explain that it is precisely because he is capable of falling so low that he is able to soar to such heights.

This is true of the Kohen Gadol and all the more so by any Jew who learns Torah, Chazal interpret Shlomo Harnelech's Praise יקרה הוא מפניני one who learns Torah is more precious than the Kohen Gadol who enters לפני ולפנים.

Although we are currently not in our actual yeshivah setting. The talmidei Hamesivta have shown that they can rise tremendously by utilizing their time wisely. Immersing themselves into their learning with a tremendous “bren” and tremendous שאיפות. Truly יקרה הוא מפניני! May Hakodosh Boruch hu see our efforts and yearning and bring an end to this terrible situation with the ביאת משיח במהרה בימינו אמן.