

Vertical & Horizontal Connectivity

Reb Shlomo Halberstam, the Bobover Rebbe zy'a of the post-Holocaust era, revived his community with his resilience and faith. The Rebbe restored Kavod, dignity, to thousands of survivors and helped them rebuild their lives, expressed the paradigm of fatherly love, Chein vaChesed, grace and righteousness.

Family weddings in Bobov were majestic; thousands joined the Rebbe to share in the celebration, dancing into the wee hours of the morning. For all the survivors, their families and the community, smachot uplifted them with a sense of victory, affirmation, continuity, faith and celebration. All felt certain that Netzach Yisrael Lo Yishaker, 'the promise of the eternity of Klal Yisrael is true.'

At the height of the dancing and fervor, the Rebbe took a breather while standing at his shtender. Scanning the thousands of revelers, the Rebbe caught sight of an elderly Chasid dancing, his arms on the shoulders of a taller Chasid in front of him in the circle. The Rebbe called over a young man who was nearby and whispered to him, "Ti Mir a Toiveh, please do me a favor: go stand between that elderly yid and the tall fellow in front of him, so that the Zakein need

not exert himself and have to stretch uncomfortably during the Rikud."

Amid rejoicing and Dveikus, the Rebbe not only perceived the vulnerability and possible discomfort of another person, his mind computed and communicated a solution. At the height of his spiritual bliss, the Rebbe remained aware of the seemingly minor need of another.

The Bobover Rebbe and Aharon HaKohein share the same Yahrzeit: Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av.

Our sedra praises the consistent and passionate Avoda of Aharon HaKohein in the way by which he lit the Menorah: L'hagid Sh'vacho shel Aharon, she-lo Shina. Day in and day out, Aharon HaKohen did not change; his service was constantly new, exciting and filled with chiyus, vitality.

The Tzadik Rebbe Meir of Premishlan shared an expansive interpretation of Aharon HaKohein's service, and offered a beautiful P'shat in explaining this praise. Aharon haKohen was unique in the trait of Ohev Shalom, Rodef Shalom, being a lover of people and a pursuer of peace. His days and nights were spent bringing people together, helping them work through a falling out or resolve a Machloket.

The great Shevach or praise of Aharon is that even while in a deep meditative state of Dveikus while lighting the Menorah in the Mishkan, he remained completely open and sensitive to the

people around him. He is praised for maintaining his character and Avoda of being involved with people. His concern and attunement to the needs of those around him did not change, even in intensely introspective moments in the Beits HaMikdash. Lo Shina, he didn't change his way.

When we bring to mind a 'holy moment' or envision a 'spiritual person', we might think of someone with their eyes closed, 'vertically' focused, reaching beyond this world. A 'mundane moment' or 'people-person', by contrast, might seem to be characterized by a horizontal focus, reaching out to the world. These two modes of being seem to be mutually exclusive. However, a person can be completely given over to their inner world, and simultaneously to the minutiae and needs of the outer world.

It is davka Aharon HaKohen who is chosen to light the Menorah. Big people, truly holy people, even amid their biggest moments, notice 'little things'. May we learn from this and apply it to our lives as well, on our level. May our service of Hashem and fulfillment of Mitzvot be one of passionate devotion, intensity and focus, and yet may we remain ever aware of the needs and wellbeing of those around us.

*Dedicated in Loving Memory
on the occasion of the 50th Yahrtzeit of
Yehuda ben Menachem Mendel HaLevi z'l*