

CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

"They are given to me from amongst the Children of Israel...and I have taken the Levites instead of the first born" (Bemidbar 8:16)

When the Jewish people left Egypt, the first born were chosen to serve as the priests in the future House of G-d. When they joined with those who sinned with the Golden Calf, they lost their place of honor amongst the Children of Israel. The call of Moshe was "Who is for G- - come to me" brought a throng of men from the tribe of Levi to purge the camp of sinners and silence the wrath of G-d. Their reward was a special place of service to G-d originally intended for the first born.

When Rabbi Shimon Schwab zt'l was a young man he had the special merit to visit the great of his generation the Chafetz Chayim zt'l.

Upon entering the room the Chafetz Chayim asked: "Are you a Cohen or a Yisrael?"

"I am a Yisrael," the young Rabbi answered.

"I am a Cohen," boasted the sage, "Do you know what the difference is? Soon the Mashiach will arrive and we will all enter the newly built Bet haMikdash. After passing through the first courtyard together you will be stopped and I will be amongst the privileged few to go inside to serve in the Temple and you will be kept out."

The young man was taken aback by the seemingly haughty behavior of the legendary scholar who was known for his modesty.

"Do you know why this will be?" continued the Chafetz Chayim. "When Moshe called for those loyal to Hashem to come forward and to purge the camp of those who sinned with the Golden Calf my ancestors came and yours did not. From that moment forward we are privileged and you are not. The envy that will be felt is a result of our predecessors' behavior at a crucial moment 3300 years ago."

"Now I will tell you why I am relating this to you. In every person's life there are times when the call goes out and says, "Who is for G-d, come to me". When you hear this inner voice jump at the opportunity - don't delay. Don't repeat the mistake of your great, great grandparents. They lost out for eternity. Please jump at the opportunity because what they impacted negatively you can impact positively. It is a moment of choice that can effect you and your offspring forever."

We too will get the call. It may be an opportunity to join in a group out to do good for the community

or it may be an individual decision that could change your life. It will come. Be ready. It is the chance of a lifetime and beyond

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