**The Big *Kahuna* (Priesthood) and Sacred Time**

1) The exact sequence of the weekly cycles of courses and the annual cycles of service was bound up with the priestly conception of time as a cyclic reflection of an eternal divine order. This cyclic time and the ritual order associated with it were determined by permanent, eternal numerical patterns, which were of paramount importance in priestly tradition; thus, the priests were charged with maintaining the regularity of the terrestrial world and the cycles of cosmic order...

Basic to the sacred service was the perception of heaven and earth as a unity, so that one could postulate the existence of a mutual relationship between the cosmic cyclicity of the eternal, incorporeal, divine realm and the ritual cyclicity established in the material, terrestrial realm by the sacred service. The Temple was the earthly embodiment of cosmic order and cyclicity; hence the guardians of the sanctuary, the priests, discharging their duties, maintained a macrocosmic and microcosmic order in which the laws of nature where harmonize with sacred time, sacred place, and sacred service...The sanctity of the Temple and its essences as a divine source of life derived from its purity as a place and from the sanctity of its time, from the ritual cycle that established the oneness of sacred time and place.

-Rachel Elior, *The Three Temples: on the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 2-3.

**Key Dates:**

960 BCE-- Founding of Solomon’s Temple

586 BCE--First Temple destroyed

515 BCE--2nd Temple built

153BCE-37BCE--Hasmonean Dynasty (i.e. the Maccabees) holds high priesthood, kingship, and controls Temple rites. During this time, Zadokite priests and their supporters denied access to Temple (or voluntarily avoided it).

70 CE--2nd Temple destroyed

1947 CE--1st Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in Judean Desert near Dead Sea

2) “And all the weeks which will be commanded will be fifty-two weeks of days, and all of them are a complete year. Thus it is engraved and ordained on the heavenly tablets...And you, command the children of Israel so that they shall guard the years in this number, three hundred and sixty-four days, and it will be a complete year. And no one shall corrupt its (appointed) time from its days or from its feasts…”

-From Jubilees 6:30-2, quoted in Elior, p. 45.

3) The second paradox was that in accepting my identity as a Kohen I was better able to find myself in the liberal Jewish world.  I do not think it is a coincidence that shortly after my first experience ‘dukhaning,’ I contacted RRC for an application.  Something inside was fused together.   Kehuna is the chosen of the chosen.  In some spiritual mathematical equation that was slightly beyond my comprehension, being a ‘Reconstructionist Kohen’ made perfect sense.

In the past six years [of RRC], my identity as a Kohen has continued to evolve.  It has given me access in religious communities.  It has opened up my heart to the spiritual technology of both giving and receiving blessings.  The story of the kohanim makes sense to me.  Aaron Hakohen was called an ‘.אוהב שלום  The kohanim of the original Temple period did not have their own land because they were intercessors for the twelve tribes.  They were not supposed to be partial to one tribe over another.   They received truma from everyone.   The Kohanim were spiritual peacebuilders.   The more I’ve learned about Kehuna, the more it resonates.   And yet, living in the liberal Jewish world, I feel the need to paradoxically keep this identity, more often than not, closeted.   It is a dialogue that I walk, but I don’t talk.  Reclaiming Kehuna has helped crystallize a central truth for me:  Egalitarian Judaism has it right just as much as non-egalitarian Judaism.   Chosen-ness can be synthesized with universalism.  But in the process of synthesis, both attributes must be allowed to flourish.  Ultimately, it takes two wings to fly.

--Rabbi Ezra Weinberg, written at the end of his time as an RRC student