



RABBI JUDAH

MISCHEL

Mashpiah, OU-NCSY
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Dedicated L'Iluy Nishmas HaChaver
Shlomo Michael ben Meir z'l

“Anderish!”

The famed Mirrer rosh yeshiva, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, zt'l (known as “Reb Leizer Yudel”), was the son and successor of the Alter of Slabodka a prize talmid of the great Reb Chaim Soloveichik of Brisk. With the outbreak of WWII, Reb Leizer Yudel established a new branch of the Mir Yeshiva in Yerushalayim. He was beloved for his incredible *ahavas haTorah*, *midos*, sensitivity and concern for others.

Not long after Reb Lazer Yudel came to Yerushalayim, he met the sons of the Brisker Rav, his Rebbe’s grandchildren, and was surprised to see that the young children were dressed the same exact way as they had back in Europe, in old-fashioned caps and vests. The Rosh Yeshiva reasoned that like most families in Yerushalayim, they were struggling financially, and lacked the funds to buy new suits.

Ever sensitive and generous, Rav Leizer Yudel sought out their father, the Brisker Rav, and offered to buy the children new outfits, commenting that with their old-

school clothing, the kids stood out and looked very different than the other *bonei Torah* in the city. The Brisker Rav nodded in agreement: “Ah, Yes... they do look different... because they are *takeh anderesh* — different indeed!”

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”ויאמר ה' אל משה אמר אל הכהנים בני אהרן
ואמרת אליהם...”

“Speak the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and tell them...” (21:1)

Rashi teaches us that the apparent repetition of “*emor*, speak to” and “*v’amarta*, say” teaches us להזהיר גדולים על הקטנים, “the adults should *l’hazir*, ‘warn’ the young.” In other words, in addition to the Kohanim themselves following the laws of purity, they should also ‘warn’ their children to observe the commandments, to see to it that young Kohanim too should not make themselves impure. They should avoid contact with the dead so as not to be rendered *tameh l’nefesh*, ritually impure.

Rav Yaakov Bender, shlit’a, beloved rosh yeshiva of Darchei Torah in New York, shared a powerful memory from a Torah Umesorah convention held the week of Parshas Emor many years ago. Rav Yaakov Weinberg zt'l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Yisrael in Baltimore, addressed the convention and spoke on the topic of transmission of values to the next generation. He expanded the exhortation in our *parsha* to include every area of Torah, and

not limited to elder kohanim training their children. It applies to all of us.

Rav Weinberg noted that the Torah specifically shares this lesson in context of *halachos* of *tumas Kohanim*, a set of laws that are exclusive to a small minority of Klal Yisrael. This he explained with a *mashal*:

Two newborn infants lay in bassinets next to each other in a baby nursery, one born a *Kohen* and the other a *Yisrael*. From birth, from the very first moment, the *Kohen* is different; his place in the community, his future role and responsibilities, the spiritual expectations and standards he must keep, are unique. This is not as a result of anything he has done, achieved or earned. Simply because of where he comes from, born to a family of *Kohanim*, he is elevated: he will bless the Nation during the repetition of the *Amidah*, be honored to lead *bentching*, receive the first *aliyah* to the Torah, and one day, BE"H, serve in the Beis Hamikdash. While both babies are beautiful and holy, the infant *Kohen* is different.

It is specifically with the mitzvah of warning the children of *Kohanim* regarding the care they must exercise in maintaining their *taharah* that the Torah reveals the mandate to inform *all* of our children and students, and transmit to them a lesson that is applicable to every single law and area of the Torah. That is, we are a Nation that is different, set apart and charged with a unique responsibility to live with a higher sense of spiritual standards and obligations. Indeed, as the Brisker Rav told Reb Lazer Yudel... we are *takeh*, indeed, *anderish!* ■

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