



# REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES

FACULTY, OU ISRAEL CENTER

## Special Sayings

**“Emor el haKohanim bnei Aharon ve’amarta aleihem le’nefesh lo yitama be’amav — Speak to the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: Let none [of you] defile himself for a dead person among his people.” (Vayikra 21:1)** Hashem tells Moshe Rabbeinu to speak to the Kohanim and instruct them in the laws pertaining to their clan. Rashi explains that this double expression of “speak...say” comes to admonish the adult Kohanim to be responsible for the minors. How can we apply this teaching to the broader community?

Rav Sorotzkin zt”l in *Oznayim La’Torah* offers an insight relating to education. Children are primarily influenced by two groups, their parents and teachers and their peers. Sometimes, their peers can have an even greater impact on them than their elders. It has been said that it is more important for parents to daven for their children to have good friends than it is for them to daven for their children to be good. To that end, parents will carefully choose their neighborhood, their children’s schools and their children’s playmates. The Kohanim often lived scattered among different tribes whose children may not have been as careful with the laws of purity and impurity. It was therefore imperative for the elder Kohanim to continuously reinforce these laws so that their children would

guard them appropriately, even without the support of their peers.

Accordingly, any value or custom that is important to a family must be regularly emphasized and esteemed so that the children will absorb, prioritize and revere it as well and stay true to their family tradition. If children do not experience this element in their education, their peers will sway them in a different direction.

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l in *Darash Moshe* shares an additional lesson learned from the twofold expression. He notes that a parent wants to impart two components in Torah education. Firstly, there are the actual laws and instructions, what to do and what to avoid. This is “Emor — Speak.” Then there is the feeling and connection that accompanies the directive. This is “ve’amarta — and say,” explain that living with Torah values is not simply a challenging rulebook to follow, rather it is a precious commodity that gives shape to life with meaning and purpose.

In *Ohel Miriam*, Rav Pincus zt”l notes that cultivating *ahavat Hashem* must begin when a child is very young. We can teach babies to kiss a mezuzah, a siddur and holy books. Such precious moments become fixed in a little one’s psyche and form the building blocks of his love for Hashem, His Torah and mitzvot. ■

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