



BADERECH

RABBI JUDAH MISCHEL

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Shining

Rav Yehuda Amital, zt'l, was a unique *talmid chacham*, visionary and builder of Torah. After his family was killed in Auschwitz, Rav Amital came to Eretz Yisrael, fought in the Haganah and was the founding Rosh Yeshiva of Har Etzion (“the Gush”). Respected for his penetrating genius and fierce independence, Rav Amital was beloved as a humble *gadol b'Torah* and deeply caring and dedicated *rebbe*.

Students of Rav Amital relate that he often shared the following *ma'aseh*:

“Soon before Mincha one Erev Shabbos, a simple farmer entered the *beis medrash*, exasperated. He finally spotted the rebbe there, who, having just come from the mikvah, was immersed in reciting *Shir haShirim* with holy fervor and intensity. The farmer cried out, urgently interrupting the rebbe’s *deveykus*, ‘Rebbe, Rebbe, my cow is sick! Please help me!’ Raising his head from




Rav Yehuda Amital zt'l

his sefer with a look of empathy, he responded, ‘Oy! Your cow is sick? Let’s go take a look!’ Following the farmer to his barn, the rebbe looked at the cow, and sighed. ‘May this cow be blessed,’ he said. He then placed his hand on the the farmer’s cheek, ‘And you, my precious friend, may you be blessed!’ As the farmer shone with contentment and the cow turned to munch some tasty clover, the rebbe made his way back to *beis medrash*.

“When he arrived, the *chasidim* gathered around their revered teacher with questions in their eyes. The rebbe smiled and explained. ‘So, you want to know how I could possibly interrupt *Shir haShirim*, the holy of holies, to go bless a cow minutes before Shabbos? When one of you experiences a desire to draw close and strengthen his *kesher* and relationship with his rebbe, he can interrupt the learning in the *beis medrash* in order to ask him for guidance in *avodas Hashem*. Well, a simple farmer also yearns for a *kesher* and a blessing from his rebbi, but he may not have any entry point other than his cow!’”

Rav Amital, zt'l, would encourage his students to come to him to discuss any issue, whether in his personal life or in his learning. Even if a *talmid* would knock on his door and cry out, “*HaRav, ha-parah ha-parah* — the cow, the cow...,” really having nothing specific to discuss, he would still have the full attention and presence of his

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rebbe, which he craved.

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"Speak (אמר) to the Kohanim, and say (אמר) to them...." [21:1]

Rashi teaches us that the apparent repetition of "speak to" and "say" teaches us *l'hazir gedolim al ha-ketanim*, "the adults should *l'hazir*, 'warn' the young." As the older, more experienced Kohanim, they were to instruct the younger generation in the ways of the priesthood.

L'hazir is etymologically connected with the word *zohar*, 'illumination'. The Lubavitcher Rebbe tells us that this term implies not just about *what* we impart to others, but *how* we transmit it; how we view, educate and influence them. To influence the listener positively, our *l'hazir*, our admonition, must bring him *zohar*; our words must 'shine' and illuminate him with positivity.

As the Klausenberger Rebbe said, every craftsman has his own special tools through which he performs his work and succeeds in his trade. A teacher, too, has special tools that allow him to succeed in his trade: his love for his students and his kind words. He uses these tools to polish the student's heart, reveal the pure *emunah* within, and make it shine.

Eilu Metzios, the second perek of *Maseches Bava Metzia*, addresses different scenarios and halachos of returning lost objects to their owner. The Mishna (33a) clarifies the order of priority in which lost objects belonging to various people need to be returned. After tending to one's own lost objects, "If one finds his father's lost item and his teacher's lost item, tending to his teacher's lost item takes precedence," שאביו הביאו לעולם הזה ורבו שלמדו "as (even though) his father brought him into this world, his teacher, who taught him the wisdom of Torah,

brings him to life in the World to Come." The Mishna continues to discuss the order and priorities of *kavod*, honor: if one's father and teacher had each been carrying a burden, one first takes his teacher's burden and puts it down, and then takes his father's burden and puts it down.

A number of opinions of the Sages in the Mishna then work to clarify what is meant by *Rabbo*, 'his teacher'. Rav Yehuda says, כל שרוב חכמתו הימנו, "*(Rabbo* refers to) a teacher from whom one learned most of his knowledge," be it Bible, Mishna, or Talmud. Rav Yossi says, אפילו לא האיר עיניו אלא במשנה, "Even if he enlightened him in the understanding of only one mishna, that is his teacher." The Gemara concludes that one's teacher is given precedence over one's father when the teacher has a status of רבו מובהק, *rabbo muvhak*, one's outstanding, preeminent, primary teacher.

Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller, the "Tosfos Yom Tov", interprets the term *muvhak* as deriving from the word *bohak*, 'shining'. Indeed, a *rebbe muvhak* is a teacher that makes his student shine, and by means of this, becomes a primary source of knowledge for him.

We are all teachers to each other, modeling wisdom and extending kindness blessings to all those who are connected with us. So, even if it feels like an interruption, may we provide a listening ear, care and concern, to our children, students, teachers, parents, friends, and to everyone (even cows!) whom we meet along the way. And may we help one another shine. ■

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Excerpt from Rav Judah's upcoming "Baderech: Along the Path of the Torah" (Summer 2026/5786)