

Parsha Knowledge

TORAH THOUGHTS, STORIES, AND INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

פְּרַשְׁתֵּי אֵמֹר

ל' אייר תשפ"ד

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“Say to the Kohanim...” (Vayikra 21:1)

In the beginning of this week's Parsha, the Kohanim are warned to avoid *Tumah* (impurity). The pasuk starts off “*Emor El Hakohanim*” – say to the Kohanim... On this Pasuk, Rashi says that the Kohanim were charged, “*Lehazir Gedolim Al HaKetanim*” - to make sure that the adults admonish the children and warn them how to behave. I heard from my father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita that the Sefer Be'eres Mayim says that the word *Lehazir* – to warn, comes from the word *Zohar* which means to radiate or shine. According to this, the adults were charged with lovingly guiding the children coaxing them to be the best they can be. Perhaps we can learn from here that the most effective way to get children to behave appropriately is not necessarily through strictness and discipline but to shine the love of Torah and Mitzvos and to lead by example.

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l views this as a major lesson in *chinuch* (education). He says that one can't inculcate children or students with fidelity to Torah and its values by merely telling them that this is permitted, and this is forbidden. A child must see the vitality and beauty of *Yiddishkeit* (Judaism) and Mitzvos. The Dubno Maggid teaches that adults serve as role models for their kids. How children behave in their own lives often reflects how the parents live their lives. It's a tremendous and crucial thing for parents to find the strength to do what's right for the sake of their children.

Near Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l’s home there lived two families that kept Shabbos with tremendous self-sacrifice. The men of those families were fired every Monday morning because they refused to go to work on Shabbos (in those times most businesses and factories operated on Shabbos, and those who didn’t go to work on Shabbos were fired from their jobs and it was extremely hard to find a new one). They were starving. One of those families raised children who grew up and kept mitzvos, while the children of the other family tragically all abandoned Judaism. The father whose children catastrophically left the path of Torah, poured out his heart to Rav Moshe: “How did this happen to me? I kept Shabbos with tremendous sacrifice, just like my neighbor. Why did all of his children come out observant, while mine didn't?”

Rav Moshe answered: “Your neighbor came home happy every Friday. Even though it was incredibly hard for this man’s family, his children felt a tremendous thrill - they fully recognized the enormous privilege that it is to keep Shabbos. You, on the other hand, went home broken. You said, ‘Who knows what will happen to us? I’ll lose my job again because of Shabbos!’ Your children thought that Shabbos was the cause of your problems and they wondered, ‘Who needs Shabbos? Our poor father was raised to keep Shabbos, but us - why should we suffer as much as he does?’ That’s why your children stopped keeping mitzvahs preferring the so-called ‘easy life’. We must have a love and special joy for *Yiddishkeit*, instilling this thought into children at a young age. We must be Jewish and Joyful following and embracing Hashem’s Torah and Mitzvos!

Have a Great Shabbos!

By Aryeh F.

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