

GREAT FOR SHARING
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בשבת



אור ישראל

Self Inspired

PARSHAS
EMOR

BY RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN
RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
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INJURED IN BODY BUT NOT SOUL

Parshas Emor contains a litany of directives aimed at the *Kohanim*. The guidelines include what type of person a *Kohein* may marry, to whom they may become *tamei*, and the fact that they must be in a state of purity when doing the *avodah*.

The Torah then states that any *Kohein* who has a physical defect may not serve in the *Beis HaMikdash*.¹ When introducing this law, the Torah uses the phrase, "Tell Aharon — no offspring of his who possesses a defect may serve..." The Ramban² (R' Moshe ben Nachman, 1194–1270) points out that this statement is a departure from the more common, "Speak to Aharon and his sons, etc." Normally, any directive to the *Kohanim* was told to Aharon and his children. Yet, when it comes to a discussion about defects, the Torah doesn't simply tell Aharon the law, as it normally would. Rather, it tells Aharon the law in the context of his progeny, as if the law didn't apply to Aharon himself. Why would the Torah phrase the law in this manner?

The Ramban explains that Aharon was certainly included in these laws. However, the Torah did not want to specifically tell Aharon the law, as a discussion of physical defects could be hurtful. Therefore, it couched these laws as directives to his children, though Aharon knew that these laws applied to him as well.

R' Henschel Leibowitz³ (1918–2008) points out a wonderful lesson from Hashem's words. Aharon was well aware that these laws were directed to him as well. What, then, did it help to hint to Aharon, as opposed to telling him outright? We must conclude that it would have been more upsetting to Aharon had he been told directly instead of simply implying the information.

Thus, it is clear that the manner in which a person shares difficult or distressing information has an impact on the recipient. There are times when we must share unpleasant information, for example, someone may be doing something incorrect, and needs to be corrected. There are many ways to deliver a message, and it is important to be aware that the manner in which we say something may be as impactful as the words themselves.

1 *Vayikra* 21:17

2 *ibid.* s.v. דבר אל

3 *ibid.*

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Unfortunately, many of us have been on the receiving end of hurtful information. And we all know how the manner of delivery can change the impact of the words said. Yet, it seems so difficult to be aware and careful with our words when it comes to others. And in the heat of the moment it seems almost impossible to speak properly. Are there any strategies to accomplish the impossible?

The Ramban¹ writes that, like any skill in life, speaking properly takes practice. And the more one practices, the more they will be able to draw upon those skills when needed.

Therefore, it is proper to learn to speak softly and pleasantly in all situations, even situations where the topic would not seem to require such tact.

Acting in this way when the stakes are low will accustom oneself to a certain manner of speech. This will serve one well when the emotions are running high, and a soft and kind word is needed.

1 *Iggeres HaRamban*



One who does not learn Mussar every day cannot be considered a faithful Jew! - R' Eliezer Zushia Portugal, the first Skulener Rebbe, Tzava'ah 7

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WHO IS FIRING WHOM?

Eli* sat in the airport, waiting for his flight to start boarding. As he waited, he mentally reviewed the events of the day. Just that morning he had been employed with a top position in an international company. In fact, that's why he was sitting in the airport.

The firm he was with had just made a major acquisition and they invited all of their top-tier associates to a gathering in Florida, where the new company was located. There was a meet-and-greet, speeches, and a festive atmosphere.

As things were winding down, Eli's boss Boruch, who was the CEO, asked to see Eli privately. Eli was always nervous this day would come, and his fears were confirmed. Eli had been with his firm for some time, and had moved up the ranks. However, due to personal reasons, he had to move out of his home state of New York. As for his job, he was moved into a position that would allow him to telecommute. Nevertheless, he was unable to execute some of his former duties, and it was clear that his position in the company was tenuous at best.

All these things he knew, and he had already done some research into other options that were closer to home. But he still wasn't ready for this meeting. And, as he suspected, he walked out of the room knowing that he had one month left to wrap up loose ends, and then he was let go.

His flight back home was uneventful, and he entered his house after everyone but his wife Hindy had gone to sleep. "How did it go?" she asked with a smile. "It must have been exciting!"

Eli sat down and smiled. "It was, but I have to tell you... I was let go."

"Oh! Wow. I mean... I'm sorry. But, why are you smiling?"

Eli's smile grew wider. "We both knew this day was coming, and Boruch Hashem, I think I have some good leads. But even so, this could have been a very unpleasant conversation. I'm smiling because of the way Boruch let me know that we had to part ways. You should have seen it, it was... amazing."

"Amazing?"

"He did it so gently, and with such concern. It was as if it really hurt him, and knowing Boruch, it did! I almost wanted to fire myself, just to spare him the pain! It was really something, and I wish I could be as caring as he was."

Hindy laughed. "Well I'm glad it went well, I suppose. But what's the plan for tomorrow?"

"I'll make some phone calls. And I want to learn some Mussar. I don't want to have fire anyone, but if I do, I want to know how!"

**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- One who gives money to the poor is blessed by Hashem with six blessings, but one who gives the poor an encouraging word is blessed with eleven blessings.¹
- Despite living in a generation filled with wise and righteous people, R' Elazar ben Azariah said he would be shocked if there were anyone alive who could give rebuke in a way that doesn't hurt the recipient.²

¹ *Bava Basra* 9b

² *Arachin* 16b, Rashi *ad loc.*, s.v. שיוודע להוכיח

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