

## Take Aharon and his sons with him...He poured from the oil of anointment upon Aharon's head...Moshe brought the sons of Aharon forward. (8:1,12,13)

Hashem commanded Moshe to sanctify and induct Aharon and his sons into the *Kehunah*, Priesthood. Hashem chose Aharon and his four sons - Moshe's brother and his four nephews - over everyone to serve in the holy Priesthood. We can understand why some people might question the choice of Moshe's close relatives. Let us understand why Amram and Yocheved merited to have such special children and grandchildren: Moshe, Aharon and Miriam and their offspring who stood at *Klal Yisrael's* helm. What was their unique *zechus*, merit? Why was Aharon selected to be *Kohen Gadol* and progenitor of the *Kehunah*? We can go one step further: Does a contemporary *Kohen* possess a quality that he inherited from his great ancestor, Aharon, that is not to be found in his counterpart among the *Levi* or *Yisrael*?

*Horav Avigdor Halevi Nebentzhal, Shlita*, explains that it is based upon *chinuch*, education. Two elements comprise education: self-education; and educating others, such as children and students. When we refer to education, we traditionally refer to the act of infusing others with knowledge, both scholarly and moral knowledge. The idea of self-education is, for the most part, exclusively for the *Torah*-oriented milieu. Simply put, for one to be -- or to seek to be -- educated, there has to be either a teacher or someone who will inspire him to change his present pattern of behavior. It just does not happen automatically. Why would anyone undertake a lifestyle that runs counter to everything he had previously believed in, unless he was blessed with the capacity to realize that the *Torah* is the blueprint for life through which one can attain perfection?

We now ask ourselves what is more important, self-education or educating others? One major difference distinguishes the two; the success factor is not dependent upon the education, but rather on the student, his diligence, determination and desire. On the other hand, one who places his focus on self-education has the teacher for a student. Thus, the success factor is dependent upon himself. One should, therefore, be aware that the role he serves as educator to others is secondary to his own personal education. Students leave after awhile; even children grow up and out. The student who is very close to his teacher is only there for a good part of the day - but never always. One's own education is never-ending. The truly devoted student, who never leaves, who is always being infused with knowledge, is none other than oneself.

It would, therefore, make sense that one should expend all of his efforts on behalf of the perfect student, the one who will study under him twenty-four hours a day, throughout his entire life - himself! Indeed, common sense would demand that one should exhaust his entire efforts on self-education. Regrettably, that is just not the case. We find excuses to divest ourselves of this responsibility. We have time for ourselves - but we must address the problems at hand. How can I spend time on my personal self-growth when my child needs me? Furthermore, we find it easier to educate others than to work on ourselves. Parents from the finest homes seek *rebbeim*, tutors,

for their children; they go to all lengths to provide for the educational development of their children, while ignoring their own spiritual and academic growth.

They are missing the point. They fail to realize the most basic premise in education. One must first be *mechanech*, educate, himself, before he can inspire others. Why is it that in the secular world the concept of continuing education has received positive response, but as parents who are preparing the next generation, we ignore our responsibility for self-growth? One who seeks to inspire others, to inculcate in his children and students *Toras Hashem*, must prioritize his time and use it effectively for his own learning. An inextricable bond exists between father and son, generation to generation, that is transmitted. If the color of one's eyes and other physical features are passed down through generations, should not spiritual features be likewise transmitted?

We have no idea of the incredible impact that one generation has on the next. Indeed, an ancestor's character trait, regardless how minute, will span generations and appear as an inherent component in a descendant's personality. *Horav* Nebentzhal cites a number of instances throughout *Tanach* which demonstrate this principle. We will cite two instances in *Chazal* which clearly indicate this reality. In the *Talmud Shabbos 23b*, *Chazal* teach us that he who loves the rabbis will have rabbis for sons; he who honors the rabbis will have rabbis for sons-in-law. *Chazal* are teaching us that the love a father manifests for *Torah* scholars is an emotion that is not only heartfelt; it is an innate part of one's personality which is translated into action even generations later as his offspring develop this same love for rabbis. One who gives honor to *Torah* scholars evinces a natural admiration for them, to the point that his daughter feels the same way. By her very nature, she becomes predisposed towards marrying a *talmid chacham*, because it is part of her psyche. Every heartfelt virtue possessed by the parent is transmitted to their offspring!

There is another instance of this type of "bequest" that is remarkable. In the *Midrash Tanchuma*, at the end of *Parashas Ki'Setze*, we are taught the source of Amalek's incredible strength and hold over our people. Indeed, the *Zohar Ha'Kodesh* writes that the most difficult battle prior to the advent of *Moshiach* was the battle with Amalek in the wilderness, immediately after *Klal Yisrael* left Egypt. *Moshe Rabbeinu* had to call upon his spiritual reservoir to defeat Amalek. Wherein lay Amalek's power? What virtue did he have that nearly overwhelmed Moshe? It was Timnah, his mother, the *pilegesh*, concubine of Elifaz, Eisav's son, who had a holy spark that was nurtured in the end and stood guard over Amalek. She sought to be accepted by the Patriarchs. They determined that she was not fit for *Am Yisrael*. While that was certainly true, there was a tiny, minuscule glimmer of sanctity in her request. This spark protected her and grew remarkably until it became a staggering force. *Klal Yisrael's* battle with Amalek was a battle of spirit against spirit.

Let us now reflect: If a spark of *kedushah*, embedded in tremendous forces of impurity, can have such an effect on many generations later on, how much more so are we able to imbue our offspring with our positive qualities?