

## **Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and tell them. (21:1)**

*Emor*, say; *v'amarta*, and tell them, is an apparent redundancy. *Rashi* explains *emor*, *v'amarta* as an enjoinder, *l'hazhir gedolim al ha'ketanim*, that the *Kohanim* convey this teaching to others; More specifically, adult *Kohanim* were cautioned (*l'hazhir*) regarding the children, the young *Kohanim*, for adults are not permitted to cause children to become contaminated. The commentators, each in his own inimitable manner, explain the idea of *l'hazhir gedolim al ha'ketanim*. If I may use my writer's license, I would suggest that *l'hazhir*, which also means illuminated and cause to shine, is an enjoinder to parents to make their children's positive achievements shine, to give them luster, so that they see how proud their parents are of their achievements. This imparts a powerful message: You mean so much to me. Your success is very important to me. I am so proud of you. *L'hazhir*, help your children shine. This is the best way of ensuring their continued passion for learning.

The story is not new, but I feel its message is timeless and should be reiterated time and time again. When *Horav Yitzchak Hutner, zl*, was about seventeen years old, the heretical philosophies of the *Haskalah*, Enlightenment movement, were being espoused throughout Europe at the expense of young people whose spiritual future was at serious risk. The *Haskalah* promised them respect, opportunities to further themselves both intellectually and financially. No longer would society look down on them disparagingly as beggars and nonentities. They would be cultured and contributing members of society. Many young Jewish men and women fell prey to the glitter and promises. The leaders of this mutiny against Torah sought out the brightest and most promising young people, because they would comprise their future. *Rav Hutner* was hounded to join the ranks of the defectors. They made every attempt to wear him down. Finally, they gave him an ultimatum: He must give them an answer the next morning. If his response was positive, the world would be his. If it was negative, he could go back and continue being scorned as a parasite.

When one lives with his other nine siblings under abject poverty conditions and the blandishments are presented in the most alluring and convincing manner, it creates ambiguity within one's mind. *Rav Hutner* went to sleep. It was a troubled sleep, because he did not know how to get these people out of his life. He was not strong enough – until 4:00 a.m., when he woke with a start. His decision had been made – he was continuing to attend *yeshivah* and on to *bais hamedrash*. His life would be one long symphony of Torah study. What entered his mind at 4:00 a.m. that had the power to wake him up and cause him to make such a conclusive decision? It was his mother's love for Torah.

He reminisced about eight years earlier, when he had come home from *cheder* and informed his mother that his class was making a *siyum*, concluding the first chapter of *Meseches Bava Kamma*. His mother was beyond excited. The next morning, as he was about to leave for school, he noticed that his mother was wearing her one *Shabbos* dress, which she had purchased before she got married. His sisters were also bedecked in their *Shabbos* clothes. He could not understand why they were doing this: "Mother, today is neither *Pesach* nor *Shavuot*. Why are you dressed in

*Shabbos* clothes?” His mother explained, “Today is more important than *Pesach* and *Shavuot*. Today you are making a *siyum* on a *perek*. Soon you will make a *siyum* on the next *perek*, then the entire *Meseches*, until you finish all of *Shas*. Is there any greater joy than that?” *Rav* Hutner realized how much Torah meant to his mother. This imbued him with a love of Torah and an ambition to devote the rest of his life to learning and disseminating Torah. His mother met the criteria of *l’hazhir*: she catalyzed the shine of Torah within her child. She illuminated him as a result of the Torah he had learned. She showed him how much Torah meant to her and, by extension, how much it should mean to him. *L’hazhir gedolim al ha’ketanim*: The adults should light up the lives of their children, as a result of the Torah that they learn.