

## Moshe said to Aharon...Cook the meat at the entrance to the Ohel Moed...As I transmitted the command: Aharon and his sons are to eat it. (8:31)

We may note that Moshe *Rabbeinu* addresses Aharon in the third person, although he is speaking directly to Aharon. **Horav S.R. Hirsch**, zl, attributes this discrepancy to the fact that during the seven days of *Milluim*, Moshe did not function in his usual capacity as transmitter of the law. Rather, he acted as the *Kohen Gadol*. Moshe appears to Aharon and his sons as the *Rabbon Shel Yisrael*, the quintessential teacher and transmitter of the law, only in regard to this eating of the *Ayil Ha'milluim* and its bread. This set the tone for the future, when the *Kohen Gadol* as well as all his colleagues were to subordinate themselves to the *Torah* and its disseminators. The essential position of the *Kohen* is the execution of the *Torah's* dictate, rather than the study of it. The student of *Torah* stands in a class by himself, unattached to ancestry or tribe. Indeed, *Chazal's* dictum in the *Talmud Horiyos 13a*, declaring that "a *mamzer talmid chacham*, illegitimate child who is a learned scholar, takes precedence over an unlearned *Kohen Gadol*," characterizes the distinction between the Jewish priest and the student of *Torah*. The *Kehunah* is not a hierarchy, but rather a spiritual presence with an important function. No one however, takes precedence over the *talmid chacham*.

*Horav Hirsch* distinguishes between the respective functions of the *Kehunah Gedolah* and the *Bais Din*. The *Kohen Gadol* has no authority. Interpretation of *Torah* law is not a priestly role. In the *Bais Hamikdash*, he is the people's agent for effecting atonement via the medium of *korbanos*. In actual life outside the walls of the *Bais Hamikdash*, the *Kohen Gadol* stands on the same plane as the simplest Jew in relation to the *Torah*.

This, claims *Horav Hirsch*, shatters the myth of a Jewish hierarchy in which the *Kohanim* are considered the nobility of the Jewish people. During the course of Jewish history we do not find that the authority of the *Kohanim* exerted that much influence. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the teachers and rabbis who were non-*Kohanim* shaped and guided our nation. Indeed, those *Kohanim* who were influential stood out only as a result of their personal qualities and erudition.

Ostensibly, the *Torah* expects that those who serve in the *Bais Hamikdash* to be men of virtue, proficient in all aspects of *Torah*. They represent the nation; they have no land to tend that would distract them from spiritual matters; their inheritance is in Hashem. They are, consequently, expected to develop into scholars with a profound knowledge of *Torah*, a deep commitment to its observance, and a spirit that reflects their conviction. Their demeanor should be a credit to the first *Kohen*, Aharon, who was an *ohev shalom v'rodef shalom*, as men who truly loved and pursued peace.