

"Seven days shall the kohen put them on (who will be) in his place of his sons." (29:30)

The *Kohen Gadol's* position was passed on to his son after his death. The *Talmud* in *Yoma 72b* states that this *halacha* was not applicable to a *Kohen Gadol* who had been anointed specifically to lead *Bnei Yisrael* into war. The *Mashuach Milchamah*, the special *Kohen Gadol* who had received his position only for the purpose of leadership in battle, did not bequeath the *kehunah gedolah*, high priesthood, to his son.

The *Chofetz Chaim z.l.* was once asked to decide a *din Torah* regarding a *Rav* of a community who had passed away. The members of the community chose to select another *Torah* scholar to fill the vacated position. The sons of the late *Rav* argued that by the laws of inheritance their father's position rightfully belonged to them. They agreed to go to the *Chofetz Chaim* to seek his guidance in the case.

After listening to both sides, the *Chofetz Chaim* remarked that there had been a law regarding inheritance in the area of *Rabbanus*, Rabbinate. Times had changed, however, and this principle was not applicable. He gave the following reason for his decision. The *Mashuach Milchamah* did not bequeath his position because a *kohen* who went into battle must have been an inherently aggressive individual who did not shy away from conflict. This characteristic is in-born. Thus, the trait cannot be transferred to a son. One's son either reflects that attribute or he does not! If the son did not possess a similar temperament, he was not qualified to inherit the mantle of high priesthood from his father.

The *Chofetz Chaim* continued to assert that contemporary times demand that a *Rav* be more than a *Torah* scholar who was erudite in Jewish law and proficient in adjudication. He must also be a fighter to uphold the mantle of *Torah* against incursion from the secularists. No longer can a son inherit his father's position simply because they share a common surname. The son can ascend to his father's position only after he has demonstrated his own qualifications for the position. The mantle of *Torah* leadership must be earned; it cannot be inherited.