

RABBI JUDAH

MISCHEL

Mashpiah, OU-NCSY **Executive Director, Camp HASC**

Dedicated L'Iluy Nishmas HaChaver Shlomo Michael ben Meir z'l

Emor: To Speak With Jews

n 1952, Reb Shlomo Freifeld zy'a, was among a group of gifted American talmidim — the best and brightest chosen to represent their yeshivot and Rabbeim on a mission to Eretz Yisrael. Upon arrival they began working day and night, their schedule packed with appointments and activities supporting the efforts of Gedolei Yisrael and struggling yeshivot throughout the Land. However, the group was frequently delayed by R' Shlomo. No matter how

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pressed for time they were, he seemed to take opportunities to shmooze with everyone they met, from bus drivers and shopkeepers, to beggars, and anyone they passed on the street.

When one of the chevreh expressed their frustration, Reb Shlomo shared an anecdote he had recently heard about the great Rav Leizer Levin zt'l (Chief Rabbi of Detroit for more than half a century). Once, when Rav Levin was considering moving from his small Lithuanian shtetl to 'the great unknown' of America, he travelled to seek counsel and blessing of his Rebbi, the Chofetz Chaim. The tzadik sent him off on his mission to the United States: "Reb Leizer, gei red tzu Yiden — go speak to Jews!"

Reb Shlomo turned to his friends. "I too feel an obligation to fulfill the instructions of the Chofetz Chaim... and whenever possible, to speak to Jews!"

ILLUMINATION

"Speak (*Emor*) to the Kohanim, and say (v'Amarta) to them...." [21:1]

Rashi teaches us that the apparent repetition of "speak to" and "say" teaches us l'Hazir Gedolim al haKetanim, "the adults should l'Hazir, 'warn' the young". As the older, more experienced Kohanim,

they were to share instruction with the younger generation in the ways of the priesthood.

With tranquility and restfulness shall you be saved

L'hazir is etymologically connected with the word zohar, 'illumination'. The Lubavitcher Rebbe tells us that this term implies not just about what we impart to others, but how we transmit it; how we view, educate and influence them. To influence the listener positively, our l'hazir, our admonition, must bring him zohar; our words must 'illuminate' him with positivity.

Rav Elya Brudny, shlit'a, the Rosh Yeshiva of Mir, Brooklyn once shared advice with a young *maggid shiur*, a teacher dealing with a challenging *talmid* who was antagonistic and rebellious. The teacher was unsure of how to handle the situation, whether or not to rebuke the student

The Rosh Yeshiva instructed him: 'With the same *ameilus*, effort, that you might devote to prepare a shiur or understand a difficult *Tosfos*, you must devote effort in the art of speaking to people with *yishuv hadaas*. You have to talk to the *talmid* in a respectful, gentle, positive manner, as it says in the pasuk in Yeshayahu (30:15): *Beshuvah vanachas tivashei'un*, "With tranquility and restfulness shall you be sayed."



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"Mir ken ah mentch altz zagen," the Rosh Yeshiva concluded, "we can tell a person anything — as long as it is beshuvah vanachas." As long as we respond with tranquility and serenity, anything can be conveyed. This is L'hazir gedolim al haKetanim.

ZACHOR V'SHAMOR

This week Am Yisrael celebrates Lag BaOmer, the Hillula of the holy Tanna, Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai. The Gemara (Shabbos 33) describes Rashbi's dedication to the Jewish people, even when forced to flee Roman persecution hiding in a cave for thirteen years with his son R' Elazar.

Upon emerging from hiding the two sages saw men plowing and sowing in the field. Rebbe Shimon cried out, "They forsake eternal life and busy themselves with temporal life?!" With fire in their eyes, Rebbe Shimon and Reb Eliezer burned all that they saw. But then a bas kol, a Heavenly voice chastised them: "What, have you come out to destroy My world?" The voice instructed them to immediately return to the cave for another year. Their avodah was not yet complete.

When they emerged the second time, they had a different outlook on life, a new way of seeing the world and others. A Jew was rushing home on Erev Shabbos carrying two bunches of myrtle to adorn his home in honor of Shabbos: one for *Zachor*, 'Remember the Shabbat day,' and the other for *Shamor*, 'Keep the Shabbat Day holy.' Seeing the good in Am Yisrael,

Rebbe Shimon exclaimed, "Look, how precious the mitzvot are to our brothers!"

REBBE SHIMON BAR YOCHAI

Bar Yochai, Nimshachta Ashrecha! — "Son of Yochai, You drawn down and channel the power of Ashrecha, of recognizing 'how fortunate we are!" Indeed how fortunate we are when, like Rebbe Shimon, we see the good in ourselves and recognize the value in others.

Ashreinu that we have merited Rebbe Shimon's fiery love for the Jewish People, which shines into us through the teachings of the Zohar, the Book of Illumination. May we actualize the instructions to Aharon HaKohen in our sedra, l'hazir gedolim al haketanim. May we experience the illumination of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai and reflect Hashem's light in the world through our pleasant words and ways. Let us remember to speak to one another B'shuva v'nachas — and with Hashem's help, we will be saved.

"Because of this work, the Book of the Zohar, the Jews will be redeemed from exile." (Zohar 3, 124b) ■

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