

“אמור ואמרת” -- To Enjoin Adults with Regard to Children

## It Is the Kohanim’s Mission to Mitigate the Force of Din by Teaching Others Torah

In this week’s parsha, parshas Emor, we read (Vayikra 21, 1): “ויאמר ה' אל משה, אמור אל הכהנים בני אהרן ואמרת אליהם לנפש לא יטמא 1): “ויאמר ה' אל משה, אמור אל הכהנים בני אהרן ואמרת אליהם לנפש לא יטמא” —Hashem said to Moshe: Say to the kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and you shall say to them, “To a dead person he shall not become impure among his people.” It is peculiar that the Torah does not employ the language of “dibbur” as it customarily does; for example (Shemos 25, 1): “וידבר ה' אל משה—Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to Bnei Yisrael . . . Instead the Torah employs the language of “amirah”; and it does so in a redundant fashion—first “emor” and then “v’amarta.” In his commentary, the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh notes this peculiarity: “צריך לדעת למה שינה מסדר הרגיל לומר בכל התורה, דבר אל וגו’.”

Rashi focuses on the redundancy and explains it based on the words of the Gemara (Yevamos 114a): “אמור ואמרת, להזהיר—the redundancy, “emor” and “v’amarta,” instructs the older kohanim to guide the younger kohanim. In other words, the older kohanim must ensure that the younger kohanim, as well, do not subject themselves to corpse contamination—“tum’as meis.” We must endeavor to explain why HKB”H addresses this admonition specifically to the kohanim, the sons of Aharon.

### Twenty-four Thousand Students of Rabbi Akiva Did Not Treat One Another Respectfully

Seeing as we are in the midst of the sefirah, during which we mourn the demise of Rabbi Akiva’s twenty-four thousand students, it is only fitting that we examine the pertinent passage in the Gemara (Yevamos 62b):

“אמרו שנים עשר אלף זוגים תלמידים היו לו לרבי עקיבא מגבת עד אנטיפרס, וכולן מתו בפרק אחד מפני שלא נהגו כבוד זה לזה, והיה העולם שמם, עד שבא רבי

עקיבא אצל רבותינו שבדרום ושנאה להם, רבי מאיר ורבי יהודה ורבי יוסי ורבי שמעון ורבי אלעזר בן שמוע, והם הם העמידו תורה אותה שעה. תנא כולם מתו מפסח ועד עצרת.”

They said: Rabbi Akiva had twelve thousand pairs of disciples extending from Gevas to Antiparis. They all died during one period of time, because they did not treat each other with respect. Thus, the world was left barren (of Torah), until Rabbi Akiva came to our Rabbis in the south and taught it to them. They were Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehudah, Rabbi Yossi, Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Elazar ben Shamua; it was these disciples who upheld Torah-study at that time. A Tanna stated: All of the disciples perished between Pesach and Shavuos.

It is worthwhile addressing the surprising fact that has bothered many, noteworthy scholars. The death of twenty-four thousand students seems extreme for the seemingly minor sin of not treating each other with respect. In Tzvi LaTzaddik (Moadim, Iyar 3, 10), the renowned Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech of Blozhov, zy”a, provides us with a wonderful explanation, based on the Midrash (Koheles Rabbah 11, 6). According to the Midrash, after all twenty-four thousand of his students perished, Rabbi Akiva ordained his new students and said to them: “הראשונים לא מתו אלא מפני שהיתה עיניהם צרה בתורה זה לזה, אתם—the first ones only died because they selfishly withheld their Torah from one another; you will not be the same. Immediately, they rose and filled all of Eretz Yisrael with Torah.

Thus, we learn a novel interpretation from the Midrash. When the Gemara claims that Rabbi Akiva’s disciples failed to treat each other with respect, it means that they selfishly withheld their Torah-knowledge from one another. The unique

Torah that each had personally gleaned from Rabbi Akiva, they kept to themselves. They refused to be magnanimous and to pass on what they had learned to their fellow disciples. Therefore, Rabbi Akiva admonished the new disciples not to selfishly hoard their Torah-knowledge. Heeding his remarks: **“They immediately rose and filled all of Eretz Yisrael with Torah.”** Based on this notion, the Tzvi LaTzaddik explains the gravity of Rabbi Akiva’s students’ flaw:

“והענין הוא, שהתלמידים הראשונים לא היו רוצים ליהנות זה לזה בתורה מחמת שנאה, ולא היה מגלה כל אחד ואחד לחבירו מה שיודע וקיבל מרבו מפני השנאה שביניהם, וממילא מובן המכשלה הגדולה שיצא מזה, אחר שכל עיקר בחינת תורה שבעל פה נסמכת, על המקבלים איש מפי איש עד משה רבינו ע”ה, ואחר כי חיים הם למוצאיהם כתיב, והם עשו להיפך לפיכך נענשו מדה כנגד מדה היפך בחינת החיים המובטח למוצאיהם.”

The point is that the first disciples did not want to allow the others to benefit from their Torah due to hatred. So, each disciple would not reveal to his colleague what he knew and received from his teacher . . . The resulting tragedy is obvious. The essence of Torah she’b’al peh relies on receiving one from another all the way back to Moshe Rabeinu, a”h . . .

Let us explain why their punishment was so severe based on an elucidation in the Gemara (Berachos 63b) regarding the passuk (Devarim 27, 9): **“הסכת ושמע ישראל, עשו כתות וכתות ועסקו בתורה, לפי שאין התורה נקנית אלא בחבורה, כדרבי יוסי ברבי חנינא, דאמר רבי יוסי ברבי חנינא, מאי דכתיב (ירמיה נ-לו) חרב אל הבדים ונאלו, חרב על שונאיהם של תלמידי חכמים. שיושבים בד בוד ועוסקים בתורה.”** **The word “הסכת” teaches that you must form groups (a play on the word “haskeis”: “asu kitos”) upon groups to engage in Torah-study. For Torah is only acquired in groups. This accords with the words of Rabbi Yossi the son of Rabbi Chanina. For Rabbi Yossi the son of Rabbi Chanina said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “There will be a sword against those who are alone, ‘v’noalu”? There will be a sword against the enemies of those Torah scholars who each sit alone and engage in Torah-study.**

This Gemara teaches us that a Torah-scholar who studies alone and does not transmit his knowledge to others is judged harshly. Therefore, the students of Rabbi Akiva, who did not teach one another, were subject to the full force of “din.” Clearly, this still deserves further explanation. Why, indeed, does a “talmid-chacham” who studies alone warrant such a severe punishment? The Yalkut Gershuni poses this question quite eloquently: **“וכי לא היה לו עוד את מי לקלל, אם לא את התלמיד חכם העוסקים”** **“וכי לא היה לו עוד את מי לקלל, אם לא את התלמיד חכם העוסקים”** **—was there no one else to**

**curse other than Torah-scholars studying the halachah on their own?! After all, they are engaged in Torah-study!**

### Hashem Spoke to Moshe Saying

I would like to explain the matter based on a wonderful idea I had. Throughout the Torah, we find the well-known passuk: **“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, בא דבר אל פרעה מלך מצרים:—Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying.** This passuk first appears in parshas Vaeira, when HKB”H entrusts Moshe Rabeinu with the sacred mission of taking Yisrael out of Mitzrayim. He is instructed to go to Pharaoh, the Egyptian ruler (Shemos 6, 10): **“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, בא דבר אל פרעה מלך מצרים:—Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, “Come speak to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, that he send Bnei Yisrael from his land.”**

Subsequently, this passuk appears countless times in relation to most of the Torah’s mitzvos that HKB”H gave Moshe to transmit to Yisrael. It appears in this context for the first time in parshas Bo, regarding the mitzvah of sanctifying the firstborn (Shemos 13, 1): **“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, קדש לי כל בכור בטר:—Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, “Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first of each womb among Bnei Yisrael, of man and beast, is mine.”** The last time it appears in this context is in parshas Masei, regarding the cities of refuge (Bamidbar 35, 9): **“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם כי אתם עוברים את הירדן ארצה כנען, והקרייתם לכם ערים, ערי מקלט תהיינה לכם—Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, “Speak to Bnei Yisrael and say to them: When you cross the Yarden to enter Eretz Canaan, you shall arrange cities for yourselves, cities of refuge shall they be for you . . .”**

Hence, it is worthwhile considering: Since these pesukim begin with the words **“Hashem spoke to Moshe,”** why do they conclude with the word **“לאמר”—saying?** This word seems superfluous. Even without this word, the meaning of the directive would be understood. Furthermore, why does the passuk begin with the language of **“וידבר”—and conclude with the language of “לאמר”—“amirah”?**

Among those who study Torah, it is well-known that the word **“לאמר”** implies that the information is to be transmitted to Yisrael. The source for this interpretation comes from the Ramban in parshas Vaeira (Shemos 6, 10): **“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, אמרו המפרשים כי מילת לאמר בכל התורה לאמר לישראל”**—according to the commentaries, the term **“לאמר”**, appearing throughout the Torah, implies that the information is to be conveyed to Yisrael.

## Torah that Is Taught to Others Is Torah of Chesed

In this manner, let us rise to the occasion and explain why the Torah begins with the term “וידבר” and concludes with the term “לאמר”. We will refer to a statement from Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai appearing in the following Mishnah (Avos 2, 8): **“אם למדת תורה הרבה אל תחזיק טובה לעצמך כי לך נוצרת”**—**if you have learned much Torah, do not ascribe any merit to yourself, because this is the purpose for which you were created.**

The Midrash Shmuel and the Avodas Yisrael (ibid.) explain the meaning of the Mishnah. If you have learned much Torah, do not keep the good of the Torah that you learned to yourself; rather, teach it to others. **“Because this is the purpose for which you were created”**—the main reason why man was created in Olam HaZeh is so that he will influence others with his Torah. This is the order of creation, as indicated by the following passuk (Yeshayah 6, 3): **“ומקבלין דין מן דין”**—every individual influences someone else, and so on and so forth.

The Avodas Yisrael adds a beautiful allusion from the passuk (Iyov 5, 7): **“כי אדם לעמל יולד”**—**because man was born to toil (לעמל)**. He points out that the word **“לעמל”** can be interpreted as an abbreviation for **ל'למוד על מ'נת ללמד**—**to learn for the purpose of teaching**. This then is the thrust of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai's lesson: **“If you have learned much Torah,”** do not keep it selfishly to yourself; **“because this is why you were created”**—man's main purpose is to teach Torah to others.

I would like to share my own interpretation of this lofty statement: **“Because this is the purpose for which you were created”**—based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Succah 49b):

**“מאי דכתיב (משלי לא-כו) פיה פתחה בחכמה ותורת חסד על לשונה, וכי יש תורה של חסד ויש תורה שאינה של חסד, אלא תורה לשמה זו היא תורה של חסד, שלא לשמה זו היא תורה שאינה של חסד, איכא דאמרי תורה ללמדה זו היא תורה של חסד, שלא ללמדה זו היא תורה שאינה של חסד.”**

The passuk in Mishlei employs the expression **“Toras chesed”**—literally: **“Torah of kindness.”** The Gemara questions the meaning and significance of this phrase. The first opinion defines **“Toras chesed”** as Torah that is pure in purpose; a second opinion suggests that this term refers to Torah that is passed on to others.

Upon further consideration, it becomes apparent that the Gemara's two explanation are connected. A person who learns Torah with the purest of intents—**“I'shma”**—wishes only to please his Creator. He does not learn Torah for his own pleasure or edification; instead, he teaches what he has learned to others, in order to enhance the glory of Heaven—**“kevod shamayim.”** We can suggest that this is the deeper implication of the term **“תורה לשמה”**. For, the word **“תורה”** means to teach and guide others. Hence, a person who transmits his Torah to others fulfills the true meaning of **“Torah I'shma.”** In other words, he engages in Torah-study **“לשמה”**—to accomplish the very implication of the name **“Torah.”**

## The Torah of Chesed Mitigates the Force of Din

Now, we are all familiar with Rashi's commentary on the first passuk in the Torah (Bereishis 1, 1): **“בראשית ברא אלקים, ולא אמר ברא ה' , שבתחילה עלה במחשבה לבראותו במדת הדין, וראה שאין העולם מתקיים, והקדים מדת רחמים ושתפה למדת הדין, והיינו דכתיב ביום עשות ה' אלקים ארץ ושמים”** The opening passuk of the Torah employs the name Elokim rather than Havaya; this indicates that the Creator initially intended to create the world based on the midah of **“din.”** He foresaw, however, that the world could not survive based on this strict standard. Therefore, he preferentially partnered the midah of **“rachamim”** with the midah of **“din.”** This partnership and preference for **“midas harachamim”** are evident in the passuk (ibid. 2, 4): **“ביום עשות ה' אלקים ארץ ושמים”**. Note that in this passuk both divine names are employed, but the name of rachamim precedes the name of **“din.”** Rashi is teaching us that the world cannot survive based solely on the midah of **“din”**; it must be joined by the midah of **“chesed.”**

Thus, it turns out that if a person teaches Torah to his fellow man—which we have defined as the **“Torah of chesed”**—then HKB”H will treat him with chesed. For we have a vital principle (Megillah 12b): **“במדה שאדם מודד בה מודדין לו”**—in the manner a person deals with others, so will Hashem deal with him. We express this notion in the first berachah of Shemoneh Esreh: **“מכלכל חיים בחסד”**—**He sustains the living with chesed.** However, if a person does not wish to transmit his Torah to others, then his Torah-study does not live up to the standard of **“Toras chesed.”** As a consequence, HKB”H will relate to him with the midah of **“din”** rather than with the midah of **“chesed.”** As a result, he will not survive in Olam HaZeh.

This is the message conveyed by Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai: **“אם למדת תורה הרבה אל תחזיק טובה לעצמך”**—do not keep the Torah

that you have learned to yourself; teach it to others, so that it will represent **“Toras chesed.”** He explains why: **“כי לכך נוצרת”**—after all, man’s creation and continued existence in Olam HaZeh depend on the midah of “chesed.” Without the midah of “chesed,” we would have only the midah of “din,” creating a nonviable situation. Therefore, it is imperative that a person teach Torah to others, in keeping with the words of the passuk in Mishlei: **“וְתוֹרַת יְהוָה חֶסֶד עַל לְשׁוֹנָה—**and the Torah of chesed is on her tongue.

Based on what we have learned, we can comprehend why a Torah scholar who studies alone, without the company of others, deserves such a harsh punishment. When Torah is studied with others—with at least a minimum of two, such as a Rav and his pupil, or two colleagues—they are essentially learning from each other and teaching each other. This constitutes **“Toras chesed”** and effectively mitigates the force of “din.” However, when a talmid-chacham studies alone and does not pass on his learning to others, the notion of **“Toras chesed”** is not fulfilled. Consequently, he is subject to the attribute of “din,” **חַסַּד וְשָׁלוֹם**, and the fulfillment of the passuk: **“חֶרֶב אֶל הַבָּדִים”**—**there will be a sword against the enemies of those Torah scholars who each sit alone and engage in Torah-study.** For, in the absence of **“Toras chesed,”** they are powerless to oppose the force of “din.”

### The Aspect of Torah Known as “Emes” Does Not Allow for Leniency

Let us elaborate on the statement: **“Torah that is taught to others is the Torah of chesed; that which is not taught to others is not the Torah of chesed.”** We have learned in the Gemara (A.Z. 4b) that on Rosh HaShanah, one should not daven the Mussaf service privately—without a minyan—during the first three hours of the day. Since “din” prevails during that period of time, it is possible that his deeds will be scrutinized and his tefilah will be rejected. The Gemara poses a question based on the viewpoint of Rabbi Yehudah in the name of Rav (ibid. 3b):

**“שְׁתַּיִם עֹשֶׂה שְׁעוֹת הַיּוֹם, שְׁלֹשׁ הַרְאֻשׁוֹנוֹת הַקַּב”ה יוֹשֵׁב וְעוֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה, שְׁנֵיִת יוֹשֵׁב וְדָן אֶת כָּל הָעוֹלָם כּוֹלֵו, כִּיּוֹן שְׂרָוָה שְׁנַתְחַיֵּיב עוֹלָם כְּלֵיהָ, עוֹמֵד מִכֶּסֶּא הַדִּין וְיוֹשֵׁב עַל כֶּסֶּא רַחֲמִים, שְׁלִישִׁית יוֹשֵׁב וְזָן אֶת כָּל הָעוֹלָם כּוֹלֵו מִקְרָנֵי רַאמִים עַד בִּיצֵי כְּנָפִים, רְבִיעִית יוֹשֵׁב וּמְשַׁחֵק עִם לׁוֹתֵן שְׁנֵיִת לׁוֹתֵן זֶה יִצְרֵת לְשַׁחֵק בּוֹ.”**

**The day is comprised of twelve hours; during the first three hours, HKB”H sits and engages in Torah study. During the second (three hour) period, He sits and judges the entire**

**world. When He sees that the world deserves annihilation, He rises from the throne of “din” and sits down on the throne of “rachamim.” During the third (three hour) period, He sits and feeds the entire world—from the horns of the “re’eimim” to the eggs of lice (from the exalted to the lowly). During the fourth (three hour) period, He sits and plays with the Leviathan, as it is stated: “You created this Leviathan to sport with it.”**

According to this passage in the Gemara, HKB”H does not sit in judgment during the first quarter of the day; He merely engages in Torah-study. This seems to contradict the Gemara’s contention that one should not daven alone during those three hours, because it is a time when “din” prevails. In the Gemara’s second answer, it teaches us an interesting point: **“תוֹרָה דְּכֵתִיב בָּהּ אֱמֶת, דְּכֵתִיב (מִשְׁלֵי כֹג-כֹּג) אֱמֶת קָנָה וְאֵל תְּמַכּוֹר, אִין הַקַּב”ה עוֹשֶׂה לְפָנִים מְשׁוֹרֵת הַדִּין, דִּין דְּלֵא כְּתִיב בֵּיהּ אֱמֶת, הַקַּב”ה עוֹשֶׂה לְפָנִים מְשׁוֹרֵת הַדִּין”**—**the Torah is associated with “Emes” (truth), for it is written: “Purchase Emes (Torah) and do not sell.” Therefore, HKB”H does not go beyond the limits of strict “din” (justice), during that time period. During the period of “din” (i.e. the second three hours), which is not associated with “Emes,” HKB”H may neglect the limits of strict “din.”**

Thus, we learn a fundamental principle regarding Torah-study. The Torah itself is referred to as **“Emes”**—it represents strict “din.” Hence, during the first three hours of the day—when HKB”H is engaged in Torah-study—He does not judge with leniency. In truth, this notion is perplexing. It seems inconceivable that when a Jew engages in the study of Torah, the epitome of “Emes,” he subjects himself to “din,” without the possibility of leniency. After all, we have a passuk extolling the virtue of Torah-study that states explicitly (Mishlei 3, 16): **“אֹרֶךְ יָמִים—length of days is at its right; אֵת לֵפֶת, עֲשֵׂר וְכָבוֹד—**at its left, wealth and honor. In other words, Torah-study is associated with long life, wealth and honor.

### Rabbi Akiva’s Disciples Tarnished the Torah of Chesed

Notwithstanding, based on our current discussion, we can reconcile the matter fabulously. It is precisely for this reason that it is imperative to learn Torah for the sake of teaching it and passing it on to others. For, as we have learned, the Torah itself is the personification of “Emes” and as such represents “din” in its purest and strictest sense. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to perform an altruistic act representative of pure “chesed”; we must teach the Torah to others. This “chesed” counteracts and diminishes

the forces of “din” associated with the Torah; in its merit, “midah k’neged midah,” we are treated with “chesed” and leniency.

This is the lesson conveyed by the Gemara’s elucidation: **“פיה פתחה בחכמה ותורת חסד על לשונה... תורה ללמדה זו היא תורה של חסד”**—if one’s Torah is not transmitted to others, it maintains the status of strict “din,” it is not associated with “chesed.” Only after it is taught to others is it transformed into **“Toras chesed.”**

We can now begin to comprehend, to some minor degree, why Rabbi Akiva’s twenty-four thousand disciples were subjected to the full force of “din.” They did not learn for the sake of teaching their Torah to others. In the words of the Gemara, they did not treat each other with respect; they did not share with each other what they had gleaned from Rabbi Akiva. As a consequence, they were subjected to the strict “din” of the Torah—which is referred to as “Emes.” They lacked the power of **“Toras chesed”**—the ability to mollify the force of “din,” which is only achieved when one teaches his Torah to others.

It was for this reason that Rabbi Akiva cautioned his new disciples: **“הראשונים לא מתו אלא מפני שהיתה עיניהם צרה בתורה זה לזה”**—my earlier students were selfish with their Torah, leading to their demise; they lacked the aspect of **“Toras chesed”**—the ability to mitigate the “din.” **“אתם לא תהיו כן, מיד עמדו ומלאו כל ארץ ישראל תורה”**—do not make the same tragic mistake; they heeded his warning and immediately filled all of Eretz Yisrael with **“Toras chesed.”** As a result, all of the judgments against Yisrael were transformed into “chesed” and “rachamim.”

**“וידבר ה'” Connotes “Midas HaDin”  
“לאמר” Connotes “Midas HaChesed”**

Continuing onward on this delightful royal journey, let us proceed to clarify the meaning of the passuk: **“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר”**. We shall refer to the commentary of the great Rabbi of Ropshitz, zy”a, on parshas Shelach in Zera Kodesh. He comments on Moshe’s tefilah to HKB”H in the aftermath of the “cheit ha’eigel” (Bamidbar 14, 17): **“ועתה יגדל נא כח ה' כאשר דברת”**—**and now, may the strength of the Lord be magnified as You have spoken, saying.** This passuk employs both the language of “dibbur” and the language of “amirah.” As we know, “dibbur” connotes a harsher form of speech, associated with midas-hadin; whereas “amirah” connotes a milder form of speech, associated with midas-hachessed.

It is also well-known that the term **“גדולה”**—**“greatness”**—alludes to midas-hachessed, as we find in the passuk (D.H. 1 29, 11): **“לך ה' הגדולה והגבורה והתפארת”**—**Yours, Hashem, is the greatness, the might, the glory . . .** According to the order of the midot, chesed precedes gevurah. Therefore, when Moshe sought to diminish the force of “din” directed toward Yisrael, he prayed to HKB”H: **“ועתה יגדל נא כח ה'”**—he specifically employed the term **“יגדל”** associated with “gedulah” in order to arouse the element of chesed. Then he continues: **“כאשר דברת לאמר”**—what began as a form of “dibbur” (“דברת”), indicating the enforcement of “din,” should be transformed into a form of “amirah (“לאמר”), indicating the bestowal of “chesed.”

We can now rejoice for we have shed some light on the deeper implication of the passuk: **“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר”**—with which HKB”H introduces most of the mitzvos in the Torah. As explained, the Torah itself represents **“Emes,”** which is associated with “din.” “Din,” however, is diminished by teaching the Torah to others—transforming it into **“Toras chesed.”** This then is the meaning of the passuk: **“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר”**. HKB”H spoke the Torah, epitomizing “din,” to Moshe. Nevertheless, HKB”H installed a remedy prior to the actual affliction. Namely: **“לאמר”**—he instructed Moshe to teach the Torah to Yisrael; this would effectively transform the Torah’s aspect of “din” to “chesed”; it would become **“Toras chesed.”**

We can now better understand the depth of the Zera Kodesh’s explanation regarding the passuk: **“ועתה יגדל נא כח ה' כאשר דברת לאמר”**. Moshe Rabeinu presented HKB”H with a convincing argument. You Yourself wrote in Your Torah: **“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר”**. In this manner, You hinted to me that it was my duty to transform the “din” of the harsh “dibbur”--**“וידבר”**—into the attribute of “chesed” associated with the milder “amirah”--**“לאמר”**. Hence, I beseech You to do the same: **“ועתה יגדל נא כח ה' כאשר דברת לאמר”**—transform the “dibbur” to an “amirah.”

**It Is the Kohen’s Job to Diminish  
the Force of Din Directed at Yisrael**

Following this enlightening line of thought, let us proceed to explain the change of language found in this week’s parsha. As pointed out, regarding the kohanim, the Torah only employs the language of “amirah,” associated with chesed: **“אמור אל הכהנים”**—**בני אהרן ואמרת אליהם לנפש לא יטמא בעמיו”**. Now, we learn from the Zohar hakadosh (Part 1, 256b): **“כהנים מסטרא דחסד אתו”**—in other words, the kohen’s being is rooted in the midah of chesed.

Similarly, the Zohar hakadosh (Nasso 145b) teaches us this fact in relation to the passuk (Tehillim 103, 17): 'וְיַחֲסֵד ה' "דחסד" מעולם ועד עולם, אליו אינו כהני דאתו מסטרא דחסד" Hashem's chesed is transmitted through the kohanim. Accordingly, the Zohar hakadosh (ibid.) explains that this is why HKB"H delegated the kohanim to bless Yisrael. Seeing as they are rooted in the midah of chesed, it is within their power to extend the midah of chesed to Yisrael through their blessing.

Now, we see that this indeed was the outstanding characteristic of Aharon HaKohen; he bestowed chesed upon Yisrael by drawing them closer to the Torah. The following Mishnah highlights this point (Avos 1, 12): "הלל אומר הוי מתלמידי: "של אהרן, אוהב שלום ורודף שלום, אוהב את הבריות ומקרבן לתורה"—Hillel says: **Be of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving humankind and bringing them near to the Torah.** The Bartenura explains in the name of Avos D'Rabbi Natan:

"וכיצד היה מקרב הבריות לתורה, כשהיה יודע באדם שעבר עבירה, היה מתחבר עמו ומראה לו פנים צהובות, והיה אותו אדם מתבייש ואמר, אילו היה יודע צדיק זה מעשי הרעים, כמה היה מתרחק ממני, ומתוך כך היה חוזר למוטב, הוא שהנביא מעיד עליו (מלאכי ב-1) בשלום ובמישור הלך אתי ורבים השיב מעון".

**And how did he bring people closer to the Torah? When he was aware that a particular person had committed an aveirah, he would befriend him and greet him with a smile. That person would feel ashamed. For he would say to himself: If this tzaddik was only aware of my evil deeds, he would surely stay far away from me. As a result, he would return to the good (i.e. mend his ways). Thus, the prophet attests with regards to his character: "He walked with Me in peace and with fairness, and turned many away from iniquity."**

Thus, the prophet sings the praises of Aharon HaKohen (Malachi 2, 6): **"The Torah of Emes was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and with fairness, and turned many away from**

**iniquity. For the lips of the kohen should safeguard knowledge, and people should seek teaching from his mouth; for he is an agent of Hashem, Master of Legions."** These pesukim attest to the fact that Aharon HaKohen taught all of Yisrael Torah. Thus, he diminished the force of "din" directed toward them, by means of **"Toras chesed."**

This enlightens us as to why HKB"H chose to address the kohanim with the language of "amirah"—a gentle, mild form of speech, associated with the midah of "chesed": **ויאמר ה' אל משה, אמור אל הכהנים בני אהרן**—who bestowed "chesed" upon Yisrael by drawing them closer to Torah, by means of **"Toras chesed."** Therefore, it was fitting that the kohanim follow in Aharon's footsteps, endowing Yisrael with gentle speech, representative of the midah of "chesed."

Then HKB"H adds: **"ואמרת אליהם"**—prompting our blessed sages to expound: **"אמור ואמרת, להזהיר גדולים על הקטנים"**—do not hoard the Torah that you have learned to yourselves; caution the younger kohanim as well to teach others the ways of the Torah. Specifically: **"לנפש לא יטמא בעמיו"**—warn them not to fall prey, chas v'shalom, to the yetzer, who pollutes and contaminates mankind. Thus, they will bestow "chesed" upon Yisrael, by means of mild, gentle speech.

From all that we have discussed, we have learned a valuable lesson. It is incumbent upon every individual Jew to fulfill the dictum taught by Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai: **"If you have learned much Torah, do not keep the valuable commodity to yourself"**—instead you must transmit your Torah to others, in keeping with the passuk: **"פיה פתחה בחכמה ותורת חסד על לשונה"**. Why? **"Because you were created for this purpose."** Man was created to learn and to teach; by doing so, he is able to diminish and soften the forces of "din" and transform them into forms of "chesed" and "rachamim."

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