

**“Don’t Lecture Me...” (Shemini)**

*“What you dislike in another, take care to correct in yourself.” — Thomas Sprat*

In Jewish tradition, the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest, is entrusted with immense spiritual responsibility. Among his most profound roles is the ability, through the sacrificial service, to seek atonement on behalf of the entire nation of Israel.

Yet before he can bring this powerful offering, before he can stand as an advocate for the people, he is commanded to do something striking. He must first bring a sacrifice for himself.

Ibn Ezra, commenting on Leviticus 9:7, explains that the Kohen Gadol must attain personal atonement before attempting to secure it for others. A person cannot effectively plead on behalf of another while remaining entangled in the very same failing. The message would ring hollow. The listener would recoil, not from the rebuke itself, but from the hypocrisy behind it.

There is something deeply human in that reaction. We instinctively resist being corrected by someone who has not first corrected themselves.

Before we speak, we are meant to look inward. Before we guide, we are meant to refine. Before we rebuke, we are meant to repair.

May we clean our side of the street before lecturing others. Only then can our words carry weight, not as a lecture, but as truth.

Chag Sameach and Shabbat Shalom,

Ben-Tzion

*Dedication*

*To Israeli goalkeeper Daniel Peretz and his team, Southampton, and their victory over Arsenal.*