



From the desk of  
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 Founder and President of Or Hamelech Institutions  
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עיר התורה שקרובה אליך

## Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad \* Batei Hora'ah \* Religious Services \* Marriage Licensing \* Kashrut \* Mikvaot \* Eiruvim

### TORAT

### Parashat Naso

### HAMELECH

#### Giving Precedence

Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kehat and Merari. Each one blossomed into a beautiful family. When these families are enumerated in this week's parashah, Kehat is placed before Gershon. This is because Kehat was given the job of carrying the holiest of vessels, including the *Aron*, which hosted the Torah. Additionally, the nations' leaders – Moshe, Aharon and Miriam – descended from Kehat.

Kli Yakar says that it was *bedavka* – specifically to show the *Kavod HaTorah* – that's why Hashem had the younger son, Kehat, carry the *Aron* and be counted first.

Yaakov Avinu also had placed Efrayim before Menashe. This is because he foresaw that Efrayim's offspring would outdo Menashe's. In truth, even between Menashe and Efrayim themselves, we see the young Efrayim excelling in Torah study whilst his older brother Menashe seemed to hold political office in *Mitzrayim*.

In *Pirkei Avot* we are taught that Torah surpasses *kehunah* and *malchut*. *Kehunah* and *malchut* have been designated for specific families, but excellence in Torah remains available for any Jew to attain.

#### From Father to Son

*Nedarim* (81a) discusses why sometimes the sons of Torah scholars do not turn out to be *Talmidei Chachamim*. Rav Yosef says that it is so that all should realize that Torah scholarship is not hereditary. Rav Sheshet explains that the idea is that these sons should not become conceited. *Mar Zutra* says that it is a result of the fathers having become conceited from their Rabbinic positions. Rav Ashi says that the problem is that some *Talmidei Chachamim* look down on ordinary people, referring to them as donkeys!

#### Respect Your Scholars

A *Talmid Chacham* once asked this question to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach: why is it that my sons are not *Talmidei Chachamim*, while my neighbor, who works for a living, merited having sons who are *Talmidei Chachamim*?

Reb Shlomo Zalman knew both parties, so he was in a position to set the man straight. You, he said, speak out against other *Talmidei Chachamim*. Your sons hear your criticism and do not want to get near that lifestyle. This working person, on the other hand, holds Torah scholars in high esteem. He constantly sings their praise. It is no wonder that his sons turned out that way.



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They understood that Torah scholarship is a worthwhile endeavor. That is how they were raised.

Shabbat (23b) teaches that one who admires Talmidei Chachamim will merit having sons who are Talmidei Chachamim. This is not just "reward". It is a simple outgrowth of growing up in such an atmosphere.

In Horiot 12b, Rav Poppa got so excited about an answer given by one of the talmidim that he stood up and kissed him and took him for a son-in-law. It is no wonder that Rav Poppa had ten sons who were all Talmidei Chachomim. He had so much Ahavat Torah!

### The Clean Carpet

Reb Elchanan Wasserman was once collecting for his Yeshiva on a very rainy day. In those days before paved streets and sidewalks, a very rainy day meant a very muddy day.

Reb Elchanan was in a quandary. He was about to knock on the door of a wealthy philanthropist, but he did not wish to soil the man's beautiful carpets. So the Rosh Hayeshivah went to the back door which opened into a non-carpeted kitchen.

When the philanthropist saw Reb Elchanan at the back door and heard his explanation for this behavior, he insisted that Reb Elchanan enter

through the front door, track up his carpets and sit down upon his expensive couch, drenched and all. The host explained that through this, he would impress upon his family his admiration and respect for Torah and Torah scholars.

Indeed, this man merited having two sons-in-law who were Talmidei Chachamim.

### With Torah Blessings

Bava Metzia (85a) brings another reason for this phenomenon of sons of Torah scholars not turning out to be scholarly themselves. This Gemara attributes it to their not having blessed upon Torah primarily. The simple explanation is that they learned Torah without having recited the appropriate blessings.

Some add an additional depth: when blessing or complimenting others, they first mention and stress all sorts of other realms of achievement, be it health or financial prosperity or whatnot. Only later on down the list do they bless or praise for Torah aspirations or accomplishments. Their order of precedence is indicative of their agenda, of their prerogatives.

### More Than Eighteen

Somewhere in the U.S.A., there lived a man who would not turn away collectors empty-handed. Whoever knocked on his door came away with a standard donation of \$18.



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A certain Rosh Hayeshiva made his way to this *gvir's* office, expecting the normal handout. When he entered, he began describing his yeshiva and its needs. The *gvir* took out his checkbook and wrote out a handsome check. The Rosh Hayeshiva was visibly moved.

The next year, he came again, and again received a large donation. When the matter repeated itself for a third time, the Rosh Hayeshiva could not contain himself. He begged for an explanation. He had been told to expect nothing more than \$18, and here, for three consecutive years, he received much more.

The *gvir* felt comfortable sharing his life story. He began: As a child, I never knew my father. I was an infant when he passed away. My mother and I lived in a small town, not far from Vilna. When I was 13 my mother sent me to Yeshiva in Vilna. It was not easy for her.

I got to the Yeshiva with my father's old, worn-out Gemara. I sat and learned for a few hours. I was getting hungry. I inquired as to the location of the dining room. An older bochur smiled and said, "There is no dining room. The bochurim here eat 'teg'." This meant that they eat each day in the home of one of the townspeople.

He directed me to the bochur in charge of arranging who goes where. He told me, "Only

one address is still available for this evening. They are happy to host Yeshiva bochurim, but do not ask for doubles! Anything you take means that less goes to the orphans."

The home of the widow was quite close to the Yeshiva, but it took me half an hour to get there, as I went and returned, paced back and forth, embarrassed and not wanting to deprive a widow and orphans. Eventually, overcome with starvation, I peevishly knocked. I had already decided to return home the next day. I had had enough of this place.

The door opened wide and six pairs of innocent young eyes rested upon me, twinkling and excited. A motherly voice drifted from within, "Who is at the door?"

In unison, they all responded, "Der Talmid Chuchum! Der Talmid Chuchum!"

"Nu, come in, Talmid Chuchum."

Had the little children not held onto me, I would have run for my life!

On the shaky table, were six plates with food and a seventh plate – empty.

The widow called out, "Kinderlach, for whom is the empty plate?"

The choir responded, "For the talmid chuchum!"

"Kinderlach, what do we do now?"



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At once, on cue, they let go of me and each one picked up a plate and shared some of its contents with the empty plate.

The *gvir* began crying. Do you know what it means for an orphan to happily share his meager meal? They would not let me go until they saw me eating.

"Did you eat my cucumber yet?" Etc.

After I finished eating, the widow said, "Kinderlach, the talmid chuchum wants to go, what do you ask of him?"

At this point, said the *gvir*, I was ready to do whatever they wanted.

The innocent children asked me, "Talmid chuchum give us a berachah that we should grow in Torah!"

That half hour, said the *gvir* inspired me for a lifetime! It instilled within me such ahavas Torah which can never be extinguished!

I decided to stay in Yeshivah. But the war broke out and I had to run for my life. I got to America and had to work for a living. I became a successful businessman, but the ahavas Torah which those yetomim put into me, no one can take away from me!

### More Than Sixty Five

There is a cheider in Petach Tikvah where instead of a bell, the "tziltzul" is songs, Torah songs. One

day, an elderly irreligious man stood outside the fence as the bell rang or sang. He seemed to be enthralled by the music, but he could not make out the words.

One of the mechanchim approached and asked, "May I help you?"

The man answered, "I pass here every day and enjoy the music. But what are the words?"

The mechanech explained, "It is taken from the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh on Parashat Ki Tavo. The pasuk says: Be happy with all the goodness. The Ohr HaChaim explains that this refers to Torah. The song says as follows: If people would only be able to feel the sweetness and pleasantness of Torah, they would go crazy over it and pursue it with passion! And a world full of gold and silver would mean nothing to them, because Torah contains within it all of the good things in the world!"

The man said, "You mean to say that you religious people love Torah so much that you make songs about it?"

"For sure!" the melamed answered.

Two weeks later, they met again. The older man said, "Until age 65, I never opened a Sefer Kadosh. After I met you and you explained to me the song, I told myself: If the religious people love Torah so much that they have songs about it, I



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have to see what this is all about. At age 65, I began to learn Torah.”

### Chumash Party

R' Yaakov Rabinovich is a rebbi in cheider. He teaches the class which finishes Chamisha Chumshei Torah. Each year they make a beautiful siyum to celebrate. The night before the siyum, R' Yaakov goes to the kotel to thank Hashem for this milestone and to daven for the hatzlachah of each talmid.

In 5775 (2015), Reb Yaakov went to his annual visit to the kotel. After he davened, a bochur with a rather small kipah looked at him and exclaimed, “Rebbi! Rebbi!” and cried.

Reb Yaakov looked at him and recognized him as a talmid from before a number of years. He had not kept up with him at all. The talmid wanted to share his story.

After his cheider years, he went on to yeshivah, but he was not the best behaved, so he went from yeshivah to yeshivah, until one day he found himself on the street. He decided to begin doing some fix-it-jobs to make some money, and at this point, his life was rather void of any religiosity.

He was good at his job and managed to earn enough to buy an apartment and whatever else

he needed, but his life was quite empty and unfulfilling.

One day, he rummaged through old cassettes and decided to transfer them onto discs. One disc there had his Chumash Mesibah from 5762 (2002). He turned it on and heard the songs and drashot. It aroused memories of his youth and he decided that he would now learn something and make a siyum. He chose Masechet Beitzah.

He plugged away at it, all by himself and got to the finish line. He bought some refreshments and decided to make the siyum at the kotel. And whom does he see but his rebbi whose recorded voice encouraged him to give Torah another try?

Both sets of eyes did not stay dry, and the rebbi had a fresh, inspiring story to say at the mesiba the next day.

### Tastier than Steak and Ice Cream

One bochur did not find his way in yeshivah. He would hang out on the streets. He wanted to visit Rav Shteinman. He entered and took out a picture of steak. He asked, “Does the Rav like this kind of steak?”

“What’s steak?” asked the elderly, saintly Rabbi.

“It’s super good meat,” answered the young man.

“No, I don’t like steak,” said Rav Shteinman.

“What about ice cream? Can I bring the Rav some ice cream?”



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Rav Shteinman looked at his gabbai. "What does this boy want?" he asked.

The bochur said, "HaRav, they told me in Yeshiva that Gemora is tasty. But it's not. At least not for me. I enjoy steak and ice cream. Can I bring the Rosh Yeshiva some steak and ice cream and show him how good it tastes?"

Rav Shteinman asked, "What is the sweetest food?"

"I don't know," said the boy, "There are a lot of foods I like. I'll have to think about it."

"I know," said Rav Shteinman. "Honey is the sweetest thing around. And I'll tell you a story. A man once hosted a distinguished guest. He gave him a spoonful of honey. The guest tasted it and showed signs of disgust. The host said, "Let me taste some." He took a spoonful of honey and said, "Delicious!"

Then he asked the guest, "Do you have sores in your mouth?"

"Yes, I do," answered the guest.

"No wonder the honey haunts you. Honey, in and of itself, is the sweetest thing in the world. But if your mouth is full of sores, there is no way for you to enjoy it."

"So, too," continued Rav Shteinman, "Torah is sweeter than honey. But in order to enjoy it, you have to clean up your sores. Get your mouth and

brain empty of other vanities. Then you can focus on Torah and you will see that nothing is sweeter."

### Priorities

So it is important, when building a Torah home, to give respect where respect is due. How you speak of Torah scholars, whom and what you praise, will be quite influential upon the outlooks your children will acquire.

A child takes it all in. He notices what his father talks about, whom and how he criticizes. When the father returns home after a long time outside the home, how does he relax; with a newspaper or with a sefer? Does he set aside time for learning? Does he get excited over financial acquisitions, new gadgets for the home, or new insight in the *parashah*?

If money is important to the parent, there is no reason to expect it not to be important to the child. If free time means go to a *shiur* or open up a *sefer*, that speaks volumes.

May we merit to create positive atmospheres, to build homes which value Torah and respect Torah scholars; for those are homes which produce Torah scholars and the future wives thereof.

**Shabbat Shalom Umevorach,**  
**Mordechai Malka**