



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of maamarim given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Seudah Shlishis Parshas Bamidbar

Each Year, we read *Parshas Bamidbar* on the Shabbos preceding *Shavuos* because each aspect of the Parsha provides us with guidance that helps us prepare for the great yom tov of *Matan Torah*.

The third *Perek* begins with the *pasuk* 'ואלה תולדת אהרן ומשה ביום דבר ה' (סנהדרין י"ט): Rashi quotes the *Gemara*: את משה בבר סיני

“And it only mentions the sons of Aharon. They are called the descendants of Moshe because he taught them Torah. This teaches us that whoever teaches his friend’s son Torah, is considered by the Torah as if he gave birth to him.”

We need to examine this comparison. Why do *Chazal* present the concept of giving birth to child as a lofty achievement? Every living creature is born, and procreates. The terminology utilized by *Chazal* (מעלה עליו הכתוב) implies that giving birth to someone is an even greater achievement (מעלה) than teaching him Torah. If the *chidush* was simply that the two are equivalent, they could have simply said “When someone teaches the son of his friend Torah it as if he gave birth to him.” The phrase מעלה עליו הכתוב implies that the *Rav* is ascending to a higher level.

The question is amplified by comparing this statement to the *Gemara* (ב"מ ל"ג.) that explicitly states that the importance of someone’s *Rav* exceeds that of his biological father.

“If there is a lost object belonging to his father, and a lost object belonging to his *Rav*, that of his *Rav* takes precedence, for his father



[1]

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brought him into *Olam Hazei*, whereas his Rav brings him to the life of *Olam Haba*".

In light of this, we need to understand why Chazal praised someone who teaches his friend's son Torah, by placing him on the same level as the boy's biological father. (This question is addressed by the *Chida* in his *sefer Maris Ha'ayin* on *Maseches Bava Metzia*).

It seems to me that *Chazal* are drawing our attention to a vital aspect of Torah education. In *Maseches Kidushin* (כ"ט.), the *Gemara* enumerates a father's obligations.

"A father is obligated to circumcise his son, to redeem him (*Pidyon Ha'ben*), to teach him Torah, to help him get married, and to teach him a trade. Some say that he also has to teach him how to swim."

However, when it comes to the obligations of a *Rav* to his *talmid*, Chazal didn't provide us with a specific list. Therefore, it seems that by teaching us that one who teaches his friend's son Torah, is viewed by the Torah as the boy's father, Chazal remind a *Rav* that he must view each *talmid* as his own child. Like a father, the *Rav* must care about the *talmid*, and constantly search for ways to benefit his *talmidim* as long as he lives.

Even if a *talmid* has failed and sinned, a *Rav* must have mercy on him, and help him in any way possible. He must see himself not only as a *Rav*, but also as an *Av*. Chazal teach us that רחמי האב על הבן תמיד - a father always has mercy on his child. Even if the *Rav* is no longer able to teach or guide the *talmid*, he must continue to care about him, and do all that he can to help him, for his role as a "father" never ends.

A *Rav* who combines his role of a teacher with that of a merciful father will successfully produce generations of true *talmidim* who will continue to learn Torah, and build Torah homes.



[2]

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We can now understand why *Chazal* utilized the specific terminology, מעלה עליו הכתוב. The word מעלה implies elevation. They wanted to teach us that a Rav who cares for his *talmidim*, both as a Rav and an Av, will not only benefit his *talmidim*, but will himself become a more elevated person.

In *Maseches Bava Basra*, *Chazal* provide us with an example of such a Rav.

“וְעַד – וּמַצְדִּיקֵי הָרַבִּים כְּכֹכְבִּים לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד” – And those who guide the many to righteousness will shine like stars forever. (“דניאל י"ב:ג”) These are the teachers of children. Like whom? Rav said, ‘Like Rav Shmuel Bar Shilat’. For Rav once found Rav Shmuel Bar Shilat standing in his garden. Rav asked him, ‘Have you abandoned your faithfulness (to your *talmidim*)?’ Rav Shmuel Bar Shilat answered, ‘I haven’t seen them for thirteen years, but even now, my mind is focused on them.’

From this exchange we see that when Rav Shmuel Bar Shilat taught his *talmidim*, he committed himself to caring for them not only as a Rav, but also as an Av. That is why even thirteen years after they left his shiur, he was still thinking about them and seeking out ways to heal them, help them, and guide them in the ways of the Torah.

We now understand why the Torah presented the mitzvah of *Talmud Torah* in the context of *banim* - children, rather than *talmidim*. In *Krias Shema* we say, וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָם (דברים ו"ז) - you shall teach them to your children and speak in them. Rashi explains that the word בניך - your sons, refers to *talmidim*, and brings a variety of examples from Tanach where *talmidim* are called *banim* and a Rav is called Av.

It seems reasonable to ask why the Torah chose the word בניך as a “code-word” that refers to *talmidim* instead of simply writing וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְתַלְמִידֶיךָ. The answer is that the Torah wanted to emphasize that only if a Rav relates to his *talmidim* as *banim* will he be able to transmit the Torah to



[3]

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the next generation. Without that relationship, the Torah taught by the Rav won't endure.

This approach is one of the foundations of *Chasidus* as taught by my ancestor the Baal Shem Tov zy" a. (Whose *yohrzheit* is on *Shavuos*). He established the concept of *hiskashrus*, - the deep bond connecting the *chasidim* to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe to the *chasidim*. A true Rebbe is meant to be *moser nefesh* - to give himself over entirely for the good of any Jew. In the earlier generations, a Rebbe of *chasidim* used to be called א גוטע יוד - a "Good Jew" because everyone knew them to be גוט מיט יעדער איינער - good to everyone. The Rebbe, like a father, felt responsible to teach his *chasidim* Torah, help them find a *shidduch*, and care for them in every way possible, whether in *gashmiyus* and *ruchniyus*.

A Rebbe who follows the path of the Baal Shem Tov zy" a, won't hesitate to "get his hands dirty", and will willingly descend to the lowest places, even suffering humiliation in order to help purify a single Jew.

This is why we read *Parshas Bamidbar* in the days of preparation for the *yom tov* of *Shavuos*. This *parsha* teaches us how to prepare our hearts in order to successfully לערנען וללמד לשמור ולעשות - learn, teach, keep, and implement the Torah. We must realize that each Jew is a teacher and guide to others, whether at home, in the *beis medrash*, and even to himself. Each of us has to adopt the *midah* of Moshe Rabeinu, and truly internalize the idea that *talmidim* are truly our children.

ובזה יוכל לגדל בנים ובני בנים עוסקים בתורה ובמצוות אכי"ר



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