

May Hashem extend Yafes, but he will dwell in the tents of Shem. (9:27)

Horav Shabsai Yudelewitz, Shlita, tells a story which serves as an analogy demonstrating the message of this *pasuk*. There was once a wealthy man whose daughter had reached marriageable age. Alas, all the father's money could do very little to compensate for her physical appearance which was, at best, homely. The *shadchanim* had given up hope of finding a suitable husband for this hapless girl. Suddenly, an idea dawned upon the father. He would look for a *talmid chacham*, a *yarei Shomayim*, a G-d-fearing *ben Torah*, who was devoted to *Torah* study. This individual would see beyond the physical and would realize that a girl's character transcends her physical image. He succeeded in finding a wonderful young man who, although replete with fine character traits, was very poor. The father, who would have gladly spent a major portion of his wealth for a young man whose secular knowledge was more advanced, settled for his new son-in-law and gave the young couple a tiny, dingy apartment. Everybody was now happy.

A few years later, the man's next daughter came of age. The father, feeling that this daughter was more "marketable," sought a son-in-law who had a well-rounded education. "Luckily," he was able to find a young professor, a member of the *Haskalah*, Enlightenment Movement, who fit the bill. The young man was prim and proper, intellectual, with culture and breeding--albeit non-observant--but the father did not really care. The young man demanded a large home, of at least eight rooms. He claimed that in preparing his lectures in philosophy, it was necessary for him to move about from room to room. Also, as their family would grow, he wanted every child to have his or her own room.

The father-in-law was taken aback. The expense of such a home would just about exhaust his resources, but he was willing to do it for his daughter and new son-in-law. Since he would probably have to sell his own home to support his son-in-law, the man asked that he be allowed one room in the home for his own use. He agreed to maintain his distance and not mix into the young couple's lifestyle.

The young couple was married, and they settled down to married life. Gradually the new son-in-law began to show his true colors. He abused and humiliated his father-in-law regularly. The young man claimed that his father-in-law dirtied the house. He was not cultured enough to live together with them. Even when the father turned to his daughter, her response was that she could not dispute her husband.

When the father heard these moving words, tears welled up in his eyes. He looked at the beautiful family that stood before him, a family which he had rejected out of shame. He saw the value of the *Torah* way of life. He saw that culture, breeding, beauty, are all worthless without *Torah*. Character refinement, *menschlichkeit*, decency, caring for others; these were the things he saw in the *Torah* family. They realized that there was more to life than money and physical pleasures;

they sought spiritual fulfillment and happiness.

The father lived with his “newly found” family for many years, reaping much *nachas* and joy. Before he passed away, his life passed before him, and he remembered a *pasuk* he had learned many years earlier as a young child: “*May Hashem extend Yafes, but he will dwell in the tents of Shem.*” He had experienced the meaning of this *pasuk*. External beauty and gratification may be found in the home of Yafes. Their culture, beauty and grace are definitely appealing at first. True peace and true beauty, however, is to be found only in the home of Shem, in the home which is permeated with *Torah* values.

While this is a wonderful story, if we were to accept it as such, it would be a waste. We must realize that this is the reality of life. Only in a home where *Torah* reigns exclusively can true joy and contentment be attained.