

"The son of an Israelite woman went out and he was the son of an Egyptian man... and the son of the Israelite woman pronounced the Name and blasphemed the name of his mother was Shlomis bas Divri of the tribe of Dan." (24:10,11)

Why does the *Torah* place such great emphasis upon the mother of the blasphemer? *Rashi* comments that her name, Shlomis, was given to her as a result of her frequently addressing others, "Shalom to you," as an opening for a conversation that would lead to gossip. **Horav M.D. Solovetichik, Shlita**, feels that her lack of *tznius*, modesty and discretion, her constant chattering with whomever came her way, was the basis of her son's miscreancy. When the mother is not a *tznuah*, the child may gravitate towards evil behavior.

Horav Soloveitchik cites the *Talmud Yumah 47b*, which relates that Kimchis had seven sons who served as *Kohanim Gedolim*. When asked by what virtue did she merit to have such remarkable *nachas*, she attributed it to the fact that the "walls of her house never saw a hair of her head uncovered." We infer from this statement of *Chazal* the amazing power of *tznius* in developing virtue for raising children in the *Torah* way.

In expounding on the words of *Chazal*, *Horav Soloveitchik* makes the following observation. How are we to know that the lofty spiritual plateau which Kimchis's sons attained was due to her virtue? After all, did she not have a husband? The *Maharsha* offers a number of responses to this question. In his primary response, he claims that Kimchis's husband was not a person who was worthy of such children. We may derive from here that even if the father is not spiritually refined, the mother, the *eim b'Yisrael*, the *akeres ha'bayis*, foundation of the home, can turn the balance in favor of her family with her righteous deeds. It is no wonder that *Chazal* attribute such remarkable reward to *Klal Yisrael* in the merit of *nashim tzidkaniyos*.

Why does *tznius* play such a pivotal role in child rearing? We may suggest that the way a person acts in private is the most accurate representation of that individual. Parents may act one way in public and revert to a completely different personality at home. The "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" syndrome of Jewish spirituality has destroyed more than one child. Our consistency in religious observance and entire spiritual/moral demeanor is reflected in our children's acquiescence to follow in the path we seek to forge for them.