

## "And the years of the life of Levi were 137 years." (6:16)

*Horav Avigdor Miller, Shlita*, suggests that the secret of this family's success and virtue is found in this *pasuk*. Levi, who was four years Yosef's senior, lived 23 years longer than he. During Yosef's tenure as viceroy of Egypt, he undoubtedly supervised the complete spiritual education and development of his extended family. After Yosef's death, which was generally at the same time as the demise of most of his brothers, a spiritual decline among the surviving brothers began. After all, a deterioration was to be expected in light of the loss of Yosef's spiritual leadership.

The exposure to the decadence of the Egyptian lifestyle was definitely not conducive to spiritual development. The family of Levi, however, was privileged to be under the tutelage of their revered father who lived on long after Yosef's death. Levi, who possessed a fiery anger against any perversion of *Torah* values, indeed infused this quality into his descendants. This was a providential factor in *Shevet Levi's* role as the tribe who maintained a total devotion to *avodas Hashem*, service to Hashem, as their prime vocation.

We may suggest an added factor in this family's spiritual success. Children tend to follow in the values prioritized by their parents. Levi was the paradigm of *avodas Hashem*. It was his whole life. Indeed, he did not possess land or ascribe to any materialistic profession. He was in the *ubuhdk lkn kaw* a member of Hashem's private legion.

Children who grow up in such an idealistic environment will surely harbor an affinity for greater spiritual devotion and development. This does not preclude the possibility that a child reared in a home in which the parents are involved in a more materialistic vocation will attain the same spiritual heights. It is only a matter of how much significance is attributed to *Torah* endeavor. It is also necessary to emphasize that one who is involved in a *Torah* vocation or endeavor must generate enthusiasm and excitement about his chosen profession. If this is not the case, this alone can be the greatest deterrent or "turn off" for his children. Children naturally aspire to success and achievement. When *Torah* is the governing value system in a parent's lifestyle, when it is the determining factor in their family orientation, children will be inclined to pursue this way of life with exuberance and devotion.