

Moshe said to Bnei Yisrael, “See, Hashem has proclaimed by name, Betzalel son of Uri... He filled him with G-dly spirit, with wisdom, insight and knowledge... To weave designs... He gave him the ability to teach.” (35:30,31,32,33,34)

Betzalel was filled with a G-dly spirit, with various forms of wisdom and understanding. The Torah goes on to state *v'lachashov machashavos*, which is translated as the ability to put his extraordinary wisdom to practical use. Furthermore, he was granted the ability to teach. Is it not all part of the “wisdom package”? If one is Heavenly endowed with uncanny wisdom and ability, what is added by his ability to weave designs and mentor others? *Targum Onkelos* defines *v'lachashov machshavos* as *u'lalfa u'manin*, to train others in how to carry out the tasks of working with the gold and silver. *U'lehoros nasan* is the ability to convey his wisdom and understanding in such a manner that others can also achieve his level of perception. Thus, they are able to carry on the transmission from generation to generation.

Horav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zl (Rosh Yeshivas Be'er Yaakov), explains that wisdom to be carried forth requires a special merit. Betzalel was blessed not only with the wisdom, but also, the ability to disseminate and teach others. Being a scholar is valuable, but the ability to teach and share with others is equally important. Effective teaching and mentoring help to pass on expertise and contribute to the growth of others. *L'horos nasan* affords one to become a *moseir HaTorah*, a “giver” of Torah to others.

A *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, who accumulates a wealth of knowledge through his own efforts is a very fortunate individual. If, however, he is unable to disseminate and teach it to others, this knowledge remains limited in its impact. Knowledge should not stay confined to one person. Teaching also creates a legacy, whereby students carry on the lifework of their *Rebbe* – thus keeping his memory alive and his Torah lessons perpetuated.

Alas, not every scholar is equipped with the capacity to teach. It is a skill which requires the ability to communicate effectively what is easily understandable to him, but may pose difficulties for others. Teaching requires patience and empathy, which are not easy to come by when a scholar is brilliant and may unfortunately be unable to empathize with a student who is not as exceptional. Some scholars have unique learning styles which are tailor-made for their abilities, but not geared to everyone else. There are those who are simply not interested, for fear it will detract from the time they have allotted for their own development. In other words, for some it works and, for others, it does not. Hopefully, those who, for whatever reason, are unable to perform the task effectively will allow those who could teach to do so.

From a positive perspective are those scholars who are mentors par-excellence, who – with acumen, charisma, love and patience – transmit their knowledge in such a manner that the

students return to one class and to another until they become learned and transform their lives. Indeed, the greater the scholar, the more innovative are his efforts to encourage his students to incorporate his lessons into their lives.

The *gadol* responsible for being *machzir atarah l'yoshnah*, returning the crown of Torah to *Sephardic* Jewry, was none other than *Horav Ovadiah Yosef, zl*. A *talmid chacham* without peer, who was fluent in all areas of *halachah*, he did not settle to say *shiurim*, deliver lectures, only to the top echelon of the *yeshivah* world. He sought out students of all backgrounds and levels of erudition. He would provide gimmicks in order to convince his students to attend. These were simple laborers, who, after a hard day's labor, came to a two-and-one-half-hour *shiur*. How did he achieve this? He came up with an ingenious strategy. In addition to the humor and stories that accompanied the *shiurim*, he related a serial story of which he would tell one part daily. In order for them to hear the entire story, they had to attend the *shiur* daily. The fact that his students were, for the most part, not versed in Jewish law made no difference to him. His true goal was their children. He knew that, in order for parents to send their children to a Torah school, they must value and cherish Torah. When fathers learn – children follow suit. This is not a rule – it is reality.

He convinced the *shiur's* attendees, "Soon, the country will need the talents and knowledge of *Roshei Yeshivah, rabbanim* and *dayanim*. If you send your children to Torah institutions, they will become the future leaders of *Klal Yisrael*."

One participant at *Rav Ovadiah's shiur* was prepared to send his children to *yeshivah*. He was not quite ready, however, to make good on his commitment: "My oldest son is presently in eighth grade. I am sending him to a national religious high school. I need to know that at least one of my sons will earn a *parnassah*, livelihood. [He felt that the general studies curriculum and the school's lack of focus on Torah 24/7 would prepare his son for going out into the world and earning a living.]

Today, this man's three younger sons – who attended *yeshivah* – are distinguished *rabbanim* in three different cities. The oldest, who was the one who trained for a *parnassah*, became an electrician. He is a fine, upstanding Jew who works all day and sets aside time daily to study Torah and attend a *shiur*. He is, however, envious of his three younger brothers, who are great Torah scholars and have at least as much *parnassah* as he does.