

Now you, take for yourself choice spices. (30:23)

The *Ohr HaChaim* observes that the command to Moshe *Rabbeinu* regarding the *Shemen HaMishchah*, anointing oil, is different from the other commands concerning the construction of the *Mishkan*. Regarding the other aspects of the *Mishkan*, Hashem spoke to Moshe in second person. His intention, however, was that Moshe convey His instructions to a surrogate to perform the actual work. Not so concerning the anointing oil which, in this case, Hashem wanted Moshe to produce from ingredients which Moshe himself would donate. While the original call to donate the various items needed for the construction of the *Mishkan* included Moshe as well, this time it was directed to him exclusively. What was it about the *Shemen HaMishchah* that required Moshe's personal involvement from purchase to production?

Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl, explains that the key lies in the purpose of the anointing oil. This oil was to anoint and to sanctify all the utensils of the *Mishkan*. As such, for the most part, the oil did not have its own purpose. It was, however, an enabler that empowered the other utensils to function in the *Mishkan*. The creation of a product to sanctify physical entities with a degree of holiness that allows them to serve and function in the *Mishkan* is no small contrivance. It requires that its initiator be one of impeccable moral, ethical and spiritual accomplishment – in other words, someone no less the caliber of Moshe *Rabbeinu*, who had achieved a level of holiness that was the envy of even the Heavenly angels. In fact, the original oil which Moshe made remained with the nation forever; it was never replaced.

A similar lesson may be extrapolated concerning teaching Torah and the quality of character that should be inherent in everyone who acts as a vehicle for Torah transmission. Growth in Torah is intimately connected with holiness. Thus, it makes sense that the one who is the conduit (the *rebbe*) for teaching Torah should reflect personal sanctity and impeccable character. He is the anointing oil that will empower his students to grow into enablers. A *rebbe* must not only be erudite, his deeds and attributes must parallel his Torah knowledge.

This is certainly the standard by which our *rebbeim* have lived and taught Torah. They were not only scholars; they were the embodiment of everything the Torah expected of a person of their calling. They are not the only ones who impart the Torah *weltanschauung* to us. These are also parents who teach by example and who, for the most part, are a child's first mentors. *Horav Mattisyahu Solomon, Shlita*, writes that following a talk that he gave to a group of young men, one of them remarked that he had never seen his father not wearing a shirt. This comment was considered quite praiseworthy by the other men in the group. The venerable *Mashgiach* was appalled at their reaction, almost as if it were a common occurrence for children to see their fathers prancing around in their tee-shirts or other stages of undress. How low have we descended if dignity is measured on the barometer of how coarse one presents himself in the privacy of his own home?

Chazal teach (*Sotah* 36b) that Yosef refrained from sinning with Potiphar's wife as a result of

seeing *d'mus d'yukno shel aviv*, the image of his father's face, appearing before his eyes. This image had been seared into his mind for twenty-two years! What images do we present to our children for posterity? *Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl*, makes an intriguing (almost frightening) observation. *D'mus d'yukno shel aviv* is a *mechayeiv*, compels the father to present himself in such a manner that his *d'mus d'yukno* will leave a lasting impression on his children. To put it in ordinary vernacular: How do we want to be remembered? Sitting with a *sefer* and learning, or acting in a manner best suited for a bar? Yosef was filled with shame – a shame that prevented him from committing a terrible sin, only because he saw his father's image before him. Can we say the same? The Torah thus requires of us that our children see us with full dignity. This concept applies under all circumstances – even intimate family settings. Children remember what they see, and it might come back to haunt us!

The *Gerrer Rebbe, Horav Pinchas Menachem Alter, zl*, was the youngest child, the *ben zekunim*, of his father, the saintly *Imrei Emes, zl*. The *Pnei Menachem* once said, "From the time I was three years old, I did not forget even one thing that my father told me or one action that I saw him do." Everything that he saw became seared into the future *Rebbe's* phenomenal memory, never to be forgotten.

The *Pnei Menachem* learned one of the most important lessons that his father taught him when he was child. He had noticed the *Baal HaTurim's* commentary to the phrase describing Yosef's relationship with Yaakov Avinu: "He was a *ben zekunim*." The *Baal HaTurim* writes that the word *zekunim* is an acronym for the various orders of the *mishnayos*. The Torah alludes to the idea that Yaakov taught Yosef various orders of *Mishnayos*: *zayin* = *Zeraim*; *kuf* = *Kodshim*; *nun* = *Nashim*; *yud* = *Yeshuos* (which is another name for *Nezikin*); and *mem* = *Moed*. The young boy made an obvious observation to his father: One *sefer* is glaringly missing – *Seder Taharos* – which deals with laws of purity. His father's reply remained with him for the rest of his life, "When it involves purity, you must attain it on your own! One cannot achieve that pinnacle of *avodas Hashem*, service to the Almighty, simply from learning with his father! That is a level that requires much personal endeavor and sacrifice."

The *Pnei Menachem* understood that *yichus*, illustrious pedigree, does not imbue one with purity. If he wanted to achieve and make his mark, he would have to work very hard and yearn for it.