



## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR FATHERS

**Avos 3:6**

**Harav Y. Reuven Rubín Shlita**

One of the highlights of any wedding is when, after the chassan and kalla enter, the first round of dancing takes place. Circles form around the chassan, the first usually his family and teachers, the next, is made up of his enthusiastic classmates. Further circles take form, until the outer one, where older Yidden (such as yours truly) can be seen shuffling about in what passes for a spiritual outpouring of happiness. As the dancing reaches its crescendo, up bobs the chassan on a chair, being held aloft by brawny chavirim.

As I watched this spirited moment some time ago, I turned to a colleague and said, "You know when you are getting older, when the kid on that chair is no longer your son, but a grandson. (And in my case K'H a great grandchild)" My friend smiled knowingly, for that moment speaks volumes about our own experiences in life.

I fully understand that they will hopefully follow the norm of our community. The young man will sit and learn for a few years as his bride will go out to work. Then, with Hashem's blessing, children will be born, and new pressures will develop. For many, it will mean that the young father will have to leave his place in the kollel and face the world of commerce. Yes, there will be the few who will persevere in their quest for Torah learning. They will make up the cadre that creates the Rebbes in our Yeshivas, the Rabbanim, or the kiruv workers. However, for the majority, time will bring a moment when they must set off to work, and bid farewell to the holy precincts of the Kollel. Or do they? And if this is indeed the case, why spend those early days in the kollel? Is it not a waste of time?

Many years ago I was involved with the running of a yeshiva that worked with bachurim who were not all that successful in a regular yeshiva environment. This was before such situations were understood as they are now, and hence much of what we were doing was groundbreaking. As such I made it my business to ask various Gedolim how we should approach each and every question that arose.

I remember a discussion I had with the Skverer Rebbe shlita about

בס"ד



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### לזכר ולעילוי נשמת

כ"ק מרן אדמו"ר מפיאסצנה  
הרב קלונימוס קלמן שפירא  
זצוקלה"ה



### לזכר ולעילוי נשמת

הרבנית הצדקנית  
חיה שרה בת הרב שלמה  
יחיאל רובין ז"ל



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the topic of Yiddishe identity. He is a great supporter of kollelim, and explained their role in creating a positive identity. He pointed out to me that he tries to make certain that every young man in his community sits in kollel at least two years after their marriage. This is so that a certain atmosphere will be born into the home; this being the understanding that Torah learning is vital for the very existence of the family. Even if later the young man enters the world of commerce, his family will accept and support his need to attend daily shiurim. More than this, the family will consider itself a Torah household, and would strive to act accordingly.

The time I spent working with those boys, so long ago, taught me a lot. One major point was that it is vital for every student to feel that they really are Torah students, and that they have an identity worth protecting.

When a young couple grows together in those first few formative years under the umbrella of belonging to a Torah world, then their future will hopefully be endowed with a Torah ethos.

This mishna underlines the point. **“If one accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah, the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly affairs are removed from him. But if one casts off the yoke of Torah, the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly affairs are placed upon him.”**

The Kotzker notes; “If the yoke of worldly affairs is removed from whoever accepts the yoke of Torah, why were so many of our great Sages craftsmen and laborers? Because for them, their work was no yoke. Conversely, if one casts off the yoke of Torah, his work inevitably becomes a yoke.”

To the Ben Torah who has lived in a complete Torah environment, going off to work does not mean he is leaving the Torah world. He accepts that his role now is to bring Torah into a life that must spend some time in new circumstances, yet his identity is that of a Ben Torah, and that is what he remains. By keeping the yoke of Torah paramount in his heart, he never becomes defiled by the need to rush after material gain.

Even in our own times we have seen great tzaddikim take over the reigns of leadership in huge communities after being in the business world for years. In truth, they never left the halls of Torah study, for their holy spirit was attached to Torah at all times. The harmful pressures of worldly affairs didn't really enter their hearts, for their souls were always bonded with Hashem.

The years spent in kollel should leave an indelible mark upon each young man and his family. The wife will always seek for her husband to grow in Torah knowledge. The children will be raised with the understanding that Torah is all consuming, and brings with it spiritual happiness that far outstrip those temporary gains of the materialistic world.

Next time you dance at a chasna think about this, as they lift the young man aloft; gaze at the wonder of what can be. He will remember this moment, as will his family and friends, the moment when being held high everyone prayed that this height will be indicative of another more holy one; the height that reaches all the way to the Heavenly Throne With Hashem's help he will accept and relish his role as a Ben Torah, and even if fate takes him into the world of material affairs, for him it will always be a Torah world, free of the need to be bound with any crassness.

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