

## A Close Second

BASED ON SELECTED SPEECHES, BY RABBI SHIMON SCHWAB

## A Teaching Lesson

Count (literally, "raise") the heads of the sons of Gershon, also... (4:22)

IN PARASHAS BAMIDBAR (LAST WEEK'S Torah portion), the Torah began counting the tribe of Levi, starting with the family of K'has. This week the Torah continues, with the counting of Gershon.

Two questions:

Gershon was the oldest of Levi's sons. Why did the Torah start with K'has?

Additionally, why does the Torah add the two words "*gam heim*—also them," when referring to Gershon, but not when introducing the census of the third family, M'rari?

[The Torah is] more precious than *p'ninim* (jewels), and all of your possessions can't equal it. (Mishlei 3:15)

This speaks of K'has and Gershon. Even though Gershon was the firstborn—and we find that Scripture everywhere gives honor to the firstborn—because [members of] K'has carried the Ark, where the Torah was, the Torah places [K'has] before Gershon... This [shows that Torah is] "more precious than *p'ninim* (jewels)"—more than a firstborn. *P'ninim* always connotes precedence, similar to the verse (Rus 4:7), "this was *lifnim*, previously done, in Israel..." (B'midbar Rabba 6:1)

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[The angel said to the woman who would eventually mother Shimshon,] "You will conceive and give birth to a son. A razor must not come onto his head, for this boy will be a Nazir of Hashem from the womb..."

Mano'ach prayed to Hashem and said, "Please, my L-rd, may the angel which You sent come to us once again, and teach us what we should do to the boy..."

The angel of Hashem said to Mano'ach, "Your wife should beware everything that I have told her." (Shof'tim 13:5–13)


THIS EXCHANGE IS SLIGHTLY PERPLEXING. First, the angel told Mano'ach's wife that they would have a son, and that they should raise him as a Nazir. When she related this to Mano'ach, he responded by asking Hashem for guidance on how to raise their son—seemingly ignoring the details of what his wife had just told him! The angel then came back, and repeated—almost verbatim—what he had told Mano'ach's wife initially. Why didn't Mano'ach just listen to his wife?

If one looks closely, there is a slight difference between the angel's two sets of instructions. When the angel initially spoke to Mano'ach's wife, he placed Nazirite restrictions on Shimshon, as well as on Mano'ach's wife for the time she was pregnant with Shimshon. When the angel returned, in response to Mano'ach's

questioning, he then placed Nazirite restrictions on Mano'ach himself!

Why? Mano'ach was never meant to become a Nazir! Was this some sort of punishment for not trusting his wife ("if only you would have listened to me...")?

Clearly, we cannot understand Mano'ach's question and the angel's answer on a literal level. Rather, Mano'ach was asking the angel: "How can I raise my son properly as a Nazir, and tell him to refrain from drinking wine, if he sees his father drinking wine? How can I raise my son properly as a Nazir, and tell him not to cut his hair, if the very man who told him not to get a haircut always looks freshly groomed? In fact, how can I raise my son properly at all, if my overall message is 'Do as I say, not as I do?'"

The angel agreed to Mano'ach's assessment of this potential *chinuch* (educational) disaster. He resolved Mano'ach's dilemma, answering him like so: "You are correct. You cannot effectively raise a child in that environment! Although one is not required to be a Nazir, you should nonetheless refrain from drinking wine, in order to set an example of the higher standard that will be expected of your son." 

This week  
in our  
Beis Midrash

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# At the Kollel

**KEY:** 🖐️ Beginners 🖐️🖐️ Intermediate 🖐️🖐️🖐️ Advanced 🧑🧑 for men and women

**Looking for a chavrusa?** See Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!  
Chavrusos are available noon–1 PM on weekdays, and 8–9:45 PM Sun.–Thurs.

## Sunday *Free brunch!*

🖐️🖐️ **America Runs on Torah**  
(Jewish Law & Parasha)  
Rabbis Dani Schon  
and Yisroel Kaufman.....10 AM  
*Grand Deluxe breakfast served*

## Tuesday

🧑🖐️ **Partners in Torah**  
**at the Mayerson JCC**  
Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

## Wednesday

🧑🖐️ **Torah Treasures for**  
**Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....10:30–11:15 AM

🧑🖐️ **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn**  
**at Strauss & Troy**  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....12–1 PM

## Thursday

🖐️🖐️ **Halacha** (based on the parasha)  
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM  
*Homemade refreshments served.*

## Minyanim Daylight Time

**Shacharis**  
Sunday .....8:15 AM  
Monday–Friday .....7:20 AM  
Shabbos .....N/A

**Mincha**  
Sunday .....7:45 PM  
Monday–Thursday .....5:45 PM  
Shabbos .....6:30 PM

**Ma'ariv**  
**In the Beis Midrash:**  
Sunday–Wednesday .....9:45 PM  
Thursday .....10 PM  
Shabbos .....N/A

## Every Day

🖐️ **“Dirshu” Gemara Shiur**  
(Maseches B'choros)  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....  
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM  
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kollel Yisgaber K'ari**  
(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)  
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....  
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kitzur Shuchan Aruch**  
Live video conference!  
Rabbi Dani Schon.....  
Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

🖐️ **Daf Yomi**  
Rabbi Meir Minster.....  
Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM  
Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🖐️🖐️ **Nightly Halacha Chabura**  
Rabbis Dani Schon  
& Binyamin Teitelbaum .....  
Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

**Chavrusa Learning**  
(private & small groups).....times vary

## A Close Second CONTINUED

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky, of blessed memory, cites this Midrash, and with it explains why the Torah uses the expression *gam heim* in reference to Gershon. The men of Gershon were also similar to those of K'has, who carried the Torah, since they gave honor to the Torah.

How did Gershon honor the Torah, and how do we know that?

The clue is in the Midrash quoted above, which makes its comments in connection with this week's Torah portion—the counting of Gershon—and not last week's, where K'has is counted. The Torah wants us to realize that the choice to be counted after Kehas was made by Gershon!

When Rav Zeira was tired from his learning, he would go and sit at the entrance of Rav Yehuda bar Ami's yeshiva. He said, “When

the rabbis go in and out, I'll rise up before them, and I'll receive a [Heavenly] reward [for honoring them.]” (Eruvin 28b)

Of all of the mitzvos Rav Zeira could have done when he was unable to learn, why did he choose this one?

Standing up and honoring Torah scholars is part and parcel of learning Torah. Though he couldn't do the ultimate mitzvah—learning, itself—giving honor to Torah scholars is the next-greatest way to connect to learning Torah.

This idea, the importance of *kavod haTorah* (showing respect for the Torah), is timely in light of our having just experienced the beautiful Yom Tov of Shavu'os, when we accepted and received the Torah. This acceptance entails not just learning Torah but showing reverence to those who represent it.

May we all strive to give such honor and, through that, attach ourselves to the Torah and those who represent it, and, ultimately, to the Holy One, Blessed be He. 🕊️



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