

Mussar HaTorah

Torah Insights into Human Nature – Dedicated in memory of Rabbi A. Henach Leibowitz zt"l

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Parashas Naso

“ON THE SEVENTH DAY, THE PRINCE FROM THE TRIBE OF EPHRAIM...” (BAMIDBAR 7:48)

Hashem removed that protection

THE DA’AS ZEKAYNIM, in his commentary on this *pasuk*, quotes a Midrash that cites the verse, “Yehuda My lawgiver” (Tehilim 60:9) to explain the incident of Dovid HaMelech and Batsheva: Dovid deserved Divine protection from sinning with Batsheva. Nevertheless, Hashem removed that protection so that our nation will learn a lesson about the power of *teshuva*. This was a fitting role, as Dovid was from the tribe of Yehuda, which was charged with the responsibility to teach the laws of the Torah to the Jewish people. What greater lesson could he teach than the laws of *teshuva*!

But what about his first, perhaps primary function as king?

The *bracha* that Yaakov gave to Yehuda bequeaths to him the kingship of Israel and refers to Yehuda’s responsibility as the lawgiver. It was this second responsibility of lawgiver that the Da’as Zekaynim pinpoints as the factor that elected him to teach *teshuva* to the generations. But what about his first, perhaps primary function as king? As leader and ultimate role model of the Jewish nation, Dovid was surely expected to set a shining example for the people to follow. If so, wouldn’t his royal status be a sufficient qualification for Dovid to teach the Jews the power of *teshuva*? How does his pedagogical responsibilities, derived from the second half of Yaakov’s blessing to Yehuda, add anything in light of his awesome royal obligations?

With every *zechus* is an equally great responsibility

Certainly a king has a far-reaching mandate to rule and lead his subjects properly. The Gemara (Horiyus 10b) discusses the awesome responsibilities of a king. Yet the role of a teacher of Torah is even more powerful and extends further. Dovid – when looked at as merely the king – may not have been required to teach the power of *teshuva*, at least not in those circumstances. However, his inherited obligation to teach Torah went beyond that limitation and charged him with this additional responsibility.

One of the greatest privileges that exists in this world is that of teaching Torah to our nation. Reb Dovid Leibowitz, zt"l, used to say that commensurate with every *zechus* – merit, is an equally great responsibility. This is the weighty obligation that every *marbitz* Torah – Torah disseminator – carries on his shoulders. It can be the justification for Hashem to change the natural order and remove special protection from the great Dovid HaMelech, to allow him to sin and thereby set a stirring example for all generations to follow – the miracle of *teshuva*.

May we recognize the privilege, and the duty, that our Torah teachers carry with them. Let us express the proper respect for them and cherish their teachings and personal life-lessons. For those fortunate enough to be those teachers – members in the, “Legion of Hashem,” who share the beauty of Torah with our fellow Jews: let us be aware of the profound responsibilities, as well as the eternal merit, of serving as the link between Hashem’s truth as revealed at Sinai, and the holy people He chose to be its recipients and guardians, for all eternity.