

B217
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(Yush)

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Y.U. WOMEN - PATRONESSES OF HIGHER LEARNING

1. The name "higher learning" is rather ambiguous. There have been many definitions. One of them was given by an eminent president of one of our great colleges when he said that our universities are treasuries of higher learning because when the freshmen come in they are full of enthusiasm and preparation for a career of learning; but by the time they had finished four years of distraction with extra curricula activities, athletics, socials, etc., they have left all their "higher learning" behind in the college so that as time goes on more and more higher learning is deposited in the schools...
2. In the case of Yeshiva University, however, "higher learning" has a much broader and deeper and more Jewish definition. Let me explain it by referring to the reading of this Shabbat the portion of Korah. We read that after Korah had unsuccessfully challenged the leadership of Moses and Aaron, the Lord told Moses that he would give a sign to the children of Israel confirming the leadership of Aaron. He had the head of each tribe, and among them Aaron as the head of the tribe of Levi, place their rods, or staff of leadership, into one circle, and he said, ve'ha-ish asher evhar bo matehu yifrah - the man whom I will choose, his staff will blossom. It will begin to grow and bear flowers. When the leaders did put their staff into the circle

the next day something a bit different was noted: ve'hinei parah match Aharon...

tzitz... va-yigmol shekedim - not only did the staff of Aaron bear blossoms

and ~~did~~ buds but also it bore fruit, ripened almonds. Why this change, this

addition? One answer that has been suggested that the Torah wanted to ~~find~~ ^{point}

out an unusual occurrence here. Usually a fruit tree will blossom, but before

the fruit appears the blossoms will wither ~~up~~ and die and fall off. It never

happens, or very rarely, that the flowers and the fruit co-exist on the branch

at the same time. The miracle of Aaron's rod was enhanced by the fact that

when it bore fruit, almonds, the blossoms would yet remain. He waited ⁿ thereby

to teach all the children of Israel that Aaron's greatness lay not only in

his achievements, his shekedim, or fruit, but also in his parahim ,

the blossoms of his character, ^{the} flowers, of his attitude and his gentleness.

3. There is no doubt that this was a lesson we need to learn in our personal

lives. It happens all too often that people who have flowers of personality -

kindness, considerateness, courtesy, gentleness, helpfulness - discard these

when they have reaped the ^{fruit} ~~truth~~ of their labors. Many a person who turns

successful ^c ~~dis~~cards and abandons the sweetness of his character when he was

not yet "made." The truly great man is one who will retain his modesty, sense

of humor, gentleness - the flowers of his life - even after he has ripened

and borne fruit and seen great achievements and attainments in his life.

4. This is no less true, and even much more, in the Jewish world. Refer to the American Jewish Congress "dialogue" in Jerusalem, where novelists, authors, and columnists who had "borne ^{fruit} ~~truth~~" in their professional careers, have yet lost the perahim, the flowers of Jewish ^{loyalty} and humility and understanding...

5. This is a ^{the} negative indication of/positive value of Yeshiva University. Speak of "synthesis" and the hundreds upon hundreds of graduates who although they have achieved ~~in~~ their shekedim in so many different and varied fields and professions, ~~it~~ always retain~~s~~ the freshness and beauty of perahim, of their Jewishness.

6. This combination of perahim and shekedim is the **definition**, the Jewish definition, of "higher learning."

7. It is true for Yeshiva University in another way as well. Although we have seen it ^{its} shekedim,/~~phenomenal~~ expansion, nevertheless it has never lost the perahim, the blossoms of the intimacy and charm and familiarity that will always characterize Yeshiva University.

8. You ladies in particular add the element of perahim to the shekedim of Yeshiva. Whatever its attainments financially, academically, Jewishly, your personal, maternal ~~instinct~~ interest - so beautifully symbolized by the attainment of the title "patrons of higher learning" - ~~it~~ would add the blossoms, the charm, the

perahim to our entire endeavors.

9. The importance of Yeshiva University is perhaps best indicated by the story of the Hafetz Hayyim. When electrification first came to the small town of Radin, he said that there was a moral in it for all of us. When we had only kerosene lamps, then when one lamp was extinguished only that one room went dark, the rest of the house was unaffected. Now with electricity, ^{if the} ~~if the~~ power house fails, the whole city is plunged into blackness and doom. The same is true with Yeshiva University. It is important not only for itself, but also because it is the power house of traditional Judaism in this whole country. By becoming a patronage of higher learning you have *helped* keep this power house alive, vigorous, and dynamic.