



Who is a role model? Is there anybody that does not have a role model? Is there anybody that can't be a role model?

In this week's Parsha we are given a perfect example of what a role model can be.

Yosef HaTzaddik is put in a very tempting situation where a woman is trying to get his attention and seduce him. The Torah tells us that ultimately Yosef HaTzaddik stands up against that temptation, runs away and doesn't commit the Aveira. Due to this incident, Yosef HaTzaddik becomes known as the one we look up to and try to emulate when it comes to guarding our eyes and staying pure.

The Gemara in Sota tells us that while being seduced Yosef HaTzaddik saw the image of his father, Yaakov in his mind and that is how he was able to overcome his desires and overcome the complicated situation he was in.

We should ask ourselves, "what causes someone to have an image in their mind when they are about to do something good

or bad"?

I see two sides to this question, first: How do we come to look up to another person and what causes them to be our role model?

Second: How does one obtain the status of having others look up to him and serving as a role model to others?

I think the answers to these questions are intertwined in one.

As a father and an educator, I constantly try and ask myself what is it that I have to do in order to make sure that my children - biological and non-biological - will have a positive role model, whether it is myself or somebody else - assuming I am a positive role model - what do I need to do and accomplish so these youngsters will think of me or any other adult as someone to emulate and look up to.

Yaakov Avinu shows us the answer. In Yosef's mind, his father, Yaakov was the one that was there for him throughout all his hard times; when he is being thrown in a pit, when he is thrown into jail, when he is being tempted by Potiphar's wife. Yaakov had worked on himself and his personality and therefore was able to pass on an endless amount of unconditional love and acceptance to his son, Yosef.

We learn in this week's Parsha that little Yosef had dreams, dreams that we are

The OU Israel Family
sends its deepest condolences
to the family and friends of
Eliyahu Dovid Kay הי"ד
who was brutally murdered
by a terrorist at the Kotel

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

רפואה שלמה לאהרון יהודה בן טובה
injured in the terrorist attack
this past Sunday at the Kotel

going to see in the next couple of weeks that came to fruition. But these dreams in Yaakov's mind were dreams that showed how his son was going to achieve greatness. In the words - V'AVIV SHAMAR ET HADAVAR - His father was able to keep these words, as opposed to his brothers where they said VAYEKANU BO ECHAV - his brothers were jealous of him. His father was able to keep those words. Yaakov clearly didn't take a piece of paper, a tape recorder or an MP3 and record what Yosef was saying about the dreams but he clearly took those words and put them in his heart and that clearly was evident to Yosef HaTzaddik. The fact that his father took his words and his dreams seriously meant everything in the world to Yosef. Therefore, even after Yosef is sold by his brothers, is down in exile of Mitzrayim, is a slave of some minister, is being tempted by a woman, is far away from all the morals of the Torah he grew up with, Yosef knew that his father was the one he wanted to reach out to - spiritually and physically.

I think this is the message that each and every one of us, as parents, as family members and as educators, need to take and pass on to our children and students and those we come in contact with. We need to show them that we are always there for them and we love them unconditionally. By doing that we become role models to these children and students. They will look up to us and emulate us. In these tough times, especially on days when we hear of people that our children might have looked up to, are being accused of not being the role models they are acclaimed to be. These children need to know they can come to us and get positive reinforcement.

We need to constantly work on ourselves to make sure that our children, biological and non-biological - are looking up to us and know they can come approach us, that we are having open conversations with them, that we are being honest with them and that we are here for them.

This is the feeling I get after visiting any of our 20 OU Israel youth centers across the country. The admiration and love that the teens have for their dedicated advisors is heartwarming and inspiring.

I daven that we will all learn from Yaakov Avinu and from Yosef HaTzaddik what it is to be a role model and what it is to have a role model in our life.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my parents as well as all of my Rabbanim and role models in my life that constantly made sure that I had role models to look up to.



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In loving memory of our
parents/grandparents
NATHAN ZUCKER z"l

On his 6th yahrtzeit
and

BELLA ZUCKER a"h

On her 1st yahrtzeit

ניסון בן שלמה אריה ז"ל - ר"ח כסלו
הענא ביילא בת יחיאל מנחם ע"ה - כ"ח כסלו

*Estie & David Goldstein,
Arnie & Debbie Zucker and families*