

Parsha Bamidbar

In this week's parsha, Bamidbar, we read the passage "these are the offspring of Aharon and Moshe..." followed by a listing of only Aharon's sons. Why are they also called the offspring of Moshe? Rashi and Ramban suggest that Moshe's Torah instruction to Aharon's sons transformed him into their spiritual father. We can learn from this that teaching Torah gives life to our students.

Certainly this has amazing implications for the Judaics teachers in our schools, as they are the spiritual parents to an amazing, transformative number of students. Students at Robert M. Beren Academy who are involved in outreach also spring to mind. Furthermore, a most intriguing possibility is introduced: because students frequently ask challenging questions that help teachers learn (and teach) even more, might this spiritual parenthood be a two-way street? Even if most of the teaching is clearly from the teacher to the student, might the student also be given some credit for the life-giving elements of Torah instruction because of their intriguing questions and thirst for knowledge? After all, as Rabbi Chanina said, "much have I learned from my teachers, more from my colleagues and most from my students." (Ta'anit 7a)

May we all be inspired by this idea of giving spiritual life to others and in this way make the impact of our "family" felt for generations to come.

