

I Must Decrease

By Yehudah ben Shomeyr

John 3:30 He must increase, but I [must] decrease.

The pashat level of this verse is Yochannon the Immerser (John the Baptist), the older cousin of Yeshua the Messiah tells it's time for him to step back and let Yeshua take center stage.

But on a remez level, I believe this can apply to a Rav and Rabbi relationship.

A Rav has gained the reputation of having Mastery of the Torah and teaches Rabbis, while Rabbis teach Talmidim (disciples). The goal of a Rav is to duplicate himself in the Rabbi and the Rabbi in the Talmid. Giving meaning to the phrase, "I've taught him everything I know." But on top of that, the Rav desires that the Rabbi he trains to actually outshine and eclipse him. If this happens the Rav is considered successful. The same is for the Rabbis relationship to his Talmid. The Rabbi during his training under the Rav, assist him in achieving his calling, but once the Rabbi is sent out, the Rav comes along side the Rabbi to assist him in the fulfillment of his specific calling and ministry in Judaism, and likewise the Rabbi and the Talmid.

After all, did not Moshiach allude to this Jewish tradition when he said in John 14:12: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater [works] than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."?

This form of education from Rav, to Rabbi and Rabbi to Talmid, epitomizes the highly treasured character trait of Humility.

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When one reads the Talmud, one sees a deeper aspect of this style of education. We see the Talmid ask questions and debate with other Talmidim to hone their reasoning and oratory skills. The Rabbi's we see burn with scholarly and intellectual zeal with words of poetry and fire, and when we see the Rav speak, his words are simple and few. To many, the teaching style of the Rabbis and the Rav's in the Talmud seem backwards to most. Shouldn't the Rabbi's words be few and simple and shouldn't the Rav's have the compelling golden tongues? On the

contrary, the Rabbi's target their peers and the common people thus speak to attract the ear in order to educate. The Rav on the other hand has nothing to prove, his greatness is well established and people seek him out and so he communicates the message of the profound in words that are simple and few.

Rav Sha'ul (Paul) even instructs us to follow this Jewish model:

Rom 12:10 [Be] kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;

The key is esteeming others greater than ourselves, allowing others to enjoy the limelight if you will.

As well did Rabbi Kefa (Peter):

I Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all [of you] be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.

Although this is a method of religious Jewish education and training, it is very applicable and relevant in the life of the everyday laity and has been promoted as such from Kefa to Rav Sha'ul to the Messiah Himself.

What is the old Protestant saying?

If it's good enough for Paul and Silas it's good enough for me!