

True Humility and Chesed

In the Talmud Sotah 40A, Chazal relate that Rabbi Avahu was a great Torah scholar who had the opportunity to become a Rosh Hayeshivah. This was an enviable position, not only because of the inherent esteem, but also because of the financial rewards that were involved. When Rabbi Avahu heard, however, that Rabbi Abba, another Torah scholar, who was in deep financial straits also needed this position, he deferred, asserting that Rabbi Abba was more suitable to be Rosh Hayeshivah. This is yashrus at its zenith! Imagine, how much time and effort Rabbi Avahu had exerted preparing for such a position. He had expended endless hours of study and research to achieve a position of erudition and respect that would render him worthy of being selected as Rosh Hayeshivah. He had another character trait that outshone his learning - yashrus. This trait did not permit him to assume a position that another scholar needed. His humility was consistent with his erudition. He was rewarded with five sons that illuminated the Torah world with their knowledge.