



הרב הראשי הרב מרדכי מלכא שליט"א
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, ת"ת דרך המלך,
שיבה קטנה ארחות יהודה, ביהמ"ד גבוה לרבנים ודיינים "לקח טוב" קופת "מפעל החסד" אלעד
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Parashat Naso

The Secret to Success for Educating the Young Generation

Our *parasha* states (7:89), "And when Moshe entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking with him from upon the cover on the Ark of Testimony, from between the two *Keruvim*."

Questions:

- 1- Why does the Torah have to explain in such detail from where the voice spoke with Moshe? It could seemingly have just said that the voice was heard from between the two *Keruvim*. Why did it also have to mention that it was from "upon the cover on the Ark of Testimony?"
- 2- Our Sages (*Succah* 5b, also see Rashi *Terumah* 25:18) teach us that the *Keruvim* had the faces of small children. What is the significance of the fact that they looked like children?
- 3- Additionally, Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein *zt"l*, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Slobodka Yeshiva, asked on Rashi's interpretation that the *Keruvim* appeared like small children. He asked that the word *Keruvim* appears twice in *Sefer Bereishit*, when Adam was evicted from *Gan Eden*. There (*Bereishit* 4:54) Rashi explains that the *Keruvim* were destructive angels. Yet here, Rashi says that they appeared like children. Why did Rashi explain *Keruvim* differently in these two *parshiyot*?

The Importance of *Chinuch*, Specifically According to the Torah

The *sefer Zichron Meir* by Rav Meir Rubman *zt"l* states that the Torah wishes to teach us that the reason Hashem chose faces of children was so that we know that educating the youth is so important to Him. Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein, the Rosh Yeshivah of Slobodka, addressed the crowd at the first *Knessiah Gedolah* with an electrifying speech on the topic of *chinuch*. In his speech, he mentioned that the *pasuk* is hinting to the fact that if a child receives a quality education, he can be like a *Keruv*, whose wings are spread out over the *Aron Kodesh*. However, if he does not receive a true Torah education, and his parents distance him from the Tent of Meeting and the Ark of Testimony, then he is likely to grow up to be wild and destructive, like a destructive angel. This is the explanation behind the two commentaries cited by Rashi. The *sefer Otzros HaTorah* writes that even when one educates a child according to the Torah, nevertheless there are two paths he should take, as our Sages teach, "With the left hand one should push away, and with the right hand one should draw close." He should not educate with two left hands! The *Gemara (Sotah 47)* cites two examples of great individuals' mistakes which illustrate that one mustn't push students away with "two hands," in other words, too harshly. Even though their intentions were certainly only to educate them and guide them along the path of Torah and pure Heavenly fear, but in such a manner, one will not be successful. On the contrary, it leads to the opposite. Therefore, the Torah hints to us that when the *Keruvim* were atop the *Aron Kodesh*, inside the *Kodesh Hakadoshim*, and that is where they



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received their *chinuch*, then they will be successful and grow in holiness. However, if they are educated by being pushed out of the *Kodesh Hakadoshim*, then they will grow to be destructive angels.

A Story that Illustrates Just How Influential *Chinuch* Can Be

The *Yerushalmi (Sanhedrin 10:2)* relates a story which illustrates how important it is to instill *divrei Torah* in the heart of a child that will help him hold steadfast in a trying time. Menashe was a phenomenally wicked king, who ruled for 55 years. He violated the most severe transgressions, filling *Eretz Yisrael* and even the *Beis Hamikdash* itself with idols and idol worship. Yet eventually, he repented. What brought him to repent? Menashe was captured by enemies, who rejoiced in having taken the king prisoner. They thought about a way to punish him, and the king of Ashur ordered Menashe to be placed in a pot and cooked alive. Our Sages relate that Menashe began to call out to every idol and "god" that he knew of. Naturally, none of them came to his aid. He then remembered that in his youth, his father Chizkiyahu had taught him the *pasuk (Devarim 4:30)*, "When you are in distress and all of these things have happened to you, at the end of days, you will return to Hashem and listen to His voice." He therefore turned to Hashem. "Hashem," he began, "I now call to You to save me. If You, indeed, come to my aid, fine. If not, then I see that You are as powerless as the rest of the gods." Unbelievably, Hashem tunneled a new passageway under His Throne of Glory, to allow the prayer to reach the heavens. Hashem accepted Menashe's prayer, and sent a powerful wind which blew Menashe out of the pot and back to Yerushalayim, where he repented and lived out the rest of his days in righteousness.

When we think about this story, we will realize that after years of sinning, Menashe repented by recalling a few words of Torah that his father had taught him. History testifies to the fact that there were many individuals who threw off the yoke of Torah and mitzvot, only to return after recalling words of reproach that they had once heard in the past. It is therefore vital for parents to teach their children Torah when they are younger so that it should enter their hearts. Then it will influence them when they are older as well.

Story About the Chofetz Chaim

A young man once came to the Chofetz Chaim's yeshiva, hoping to be accepted. But after speaking with the young man, the Chofetz Chaim saw that he was not cut out for the yeshiva. He therefore told him that he could not accept him. But since the boy lived far away, and there was no train to take him home at that hour, the Chofetz Chaim invited him to sleep in his house, since he did not want him to sleep in the yeshiva. The young man agreed. The Chofetz Chaim prepared a bed for him, and the boy went to sleep. Late at night, the Chofetz Chaim passed by the boy's bed and saw that he was cold; he therefore brought the boy his down coat and placed it on him. This warmed the boy, and although he was aware of what was happening, he did not react. The following morning, he returned home. Years



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passed and, indeed, the young man did not continue to study much Torah and entered the business world. However, he *did* send his children to yeshiva and they were all Torah scholars. He once met one of his friends from his youth, who asked him how he merited children who were Torah scholars. He responded that until today, he feels the warmth of the Chofetz Chaim's coat, and he related the story that had transpired with him. From the time that story occurred, he began to value Torah scholars, and this influenced his descendants.

This teaches us just how much love displayed for another can influence entire generations. On the other hand, we see just how much damage can result when one individual insults another. This does not only apply to the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva who perished, but as mentioned above, our Sages relate other stories that illustrate the severity of such a misdeed.

A Lesson from Rav Pincus

Rav Pincus writes that the concern a Rav has for his student's success must be like concern that a father has over his son's success. What is the way to become successful in this world? Our Sages (*Niddah 70b*) have revealed the secret to us: "What should one do to become wise? He should spend much time sitting and studying Torah and minimize the amount of time he spends earning a livelihood. The Rabbis say that many tried this and were not successful; rather, they should beseech mercy from the one to whom mercy belongs [i.e., pray] ... From here we learn, that one without the other is insufficient." An individual who prays his whole life for Divine assistance, but does not study Torah diligently, will not become wise. Similarly, an individual who studies diligently his whole life, but does not pray, will also not become wise. Half the effort must be invested by the individual studying, and the other half is dependent solely on Divine assistance. A child the age of 5, 6, or 7 is placed into the hands of a *melamed*, with the hope that over the duration of time, the child will grow to become a *talmid chacham*. But he needs both to study and the Divine assistance. Therefore, no matter how qualified a *melamed* may be, if he doesn't pray for his students' success when he recites *Shemoneh Esrei*, he is only doing half a job. The only one who knows this is Hashem, but he will be blamed if the student does not succeed. A teacher does not always feel the need to pray for a weak student. The fact that his student is floundering does not disturb him; he is doing his job and that's enough. The teacher will only pray for the child, though, if he realizes that Hashem has placed this child into his hands. He should realize that our Sages have referred to students as the sons of the teacher, and then he will realize that he is responsible for all of their actions.

Words of Mussar

We have learned that the proper way for both parents and educators is to draw them as close as possible with warmth and love. This is especially true in our generation, when, sadly, we see youth turning to the streets. It is our responsibility to make the Torah beloved to them. It takes great wisdom to know how to touch their hearts, or to know how to encourage a struggling student to succeed.



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There is also a requirement to pray for each student's success; for without prayer there is no chance to succeed in *chinuch*. Just as it was for the fathers' so it will be with the children. Just like Moshe Rabbeinu and the *Gedolei Yisrael* shed tears over the success of their children and students, so too, should we. By doing so, we will merit all of the *berachot* and *yeshuot*, and to see the fruits of all our labors, that they should not be in vain. By doing so, we will merit sons and grandsons who are *talmidei chachamim*, who study Torah, perform mitzvot, and do good deeds, *amen ve'amen*.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka