



TOWARDS MEANINGFUL PARENTING

REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI
DIRECTOR OF OU ISRAEL WOMEN'S DIVISION

Sanctifying Our Time: Parenting Lessons from Parshat Bo

In Parshat Bo, we learn that the very first mitzvah given to Bnei Yisrael as a nation was “הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשִׁים” — the commandment of Rosh Chodesh. **Rashi** explains that Hashem showed Moshe the moon in its renewal and said, “*When it looks like this, you shall declare the new month.*” This moment

marked the first time the Jewish people were given control over their own calendar — and, symbolically, over their own time.


Rav Soloveitchik (Reflections of the Rav p.201-202) points out that it is no coincidence that this was the very first mitzvah given to the newly freed nation. He writes as follows -

“Time-awareness is the singular faculty of the free man, who can use it or abuse it. To a slave, it is a curse or a matter of indifference. It is not an instrument which he can harness to his purposes. The free man wants time to move slowly because, presumably, it is being employed for his purposes.”


A slave's days are not his own — every hour is dictated by someone else. But a free person can choose how to spend his time, and with that comes responsibility: to use time well and to ensure that his days have meaning.

As parents, we often experience this tension. We sometimes feel like our time isn't our own — swallowed by endless cycles of meals, laundry, carpools, and bedtime routines. Yet, in truth, *this* is our sacred opportunity to sanctify time. Every interaction, every bedtime story, every small act of patience or love is a chance to elevate the hours of our day.

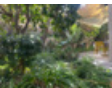
Hillel's timeless words in **Pirkei Avot**



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come to mind: "אם אין אני לי, מי לי? וכשאני לעצמי, מה אני? ואם לא עכשיו, אימתי?" The balance between caring for others and caring for ourselves is one that every parent feels deeply. "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?" reminds us that we must also nurture our own growth — to learn, to rest, to reconnect to Hashem and to ourselves. But the final phrase — "If not now, when?" — brings us back to the urgency of the present moment. These years of parenting, though often exhausting, are precious and fleeting.

If one calculates it, there are roughly 940 Shabbatot between a child's birth and the day he leaves home. It sounds like a lot — until we realize how quickly those weeks pass and how little time we have to spend with our children during the week. Each Shabbat, each bedtime, each car ride becomes a chance to invest in our children's hearts and neshamot.

Rosh Chodesh teaches us that time is not just something to get through; it is something to sanctify. Just as the moon renews itself each month, we too can renew our commitment — to our children, to ourselves, and to using our time with intention. ■

Pinchus Klahr, MD

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