



TOWARDS MEANINGFUL PARENTING

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Matan Torah: Transmitting the Mesorah Across Generations

Every year on Shavuot, we celebrate Matan Torah, the moment when Hashem gave the Torah to Am Yisrael and began the eternal chain of mesorah, the transmission of Torah from one generation to the next. This sacred transmission is the responsibility of each and every one of us.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik explained that there are actually two different forms of mesorah. In his tribute to the Rebbetzin of Talne, he discusses the verse, *שמע בני מוסר* “*Hear, my child, the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the Torah of your mother.*” Rav Soloveitchik explains that “מוסר אביך” refers to the transmission of Halachic knowledge and discipline. But then there is “תורת אבך”. *Torat Imecha* is the transmission of the feeling of Judaism. It is the warmth of Shabbat, the excitement before Yom Tov, the sound of Zemirot floating through the house on Friday night, and the feeling that Torah is not only something we do, but something we love.

Parents need to teach their children not only how to observe Judaism, but how to experience it. And this role extends far beyond parents alone. It belongs to grandparents, teachers, relatives, mentors, and every

person who helps shape the emotional and spiritual atmosphere surrounding the next generation. Shavuot reminds us that transmitting Torah is not only about teaching information. It is about creating connection.

Children absorb far more from the atmosphere than from lectures. We often think of Chinuch as the formal moments: teaching a child to say a bracha, reviewing Halachot, or correcting behavior. But some of the deepest messages children absorb happen quietly and unintentionally. They notice how we react when preparing for Shabbat. They hear the tone in our voice when we speak about Mitzvot. They observe whether Torah feels precious to us or burdensome. They watch whether davening is something we rush through or something we value.

Rebbetzin Slovie Jungreis-Wolff writes that children are like “sponges.” They absorb every interaction, every conversation, every reaction. A child who sees a parent speaking honestly learns to be honest. A child who watches a parent treat Mitzvot with seriousness and joy, learns that Torah matters. Children are always asking one silent question: Does this make my parents happy? If Torah is constantly associated with pressure,

frustration, and exhaustion, children absorb that message. But if Torah fills a home with warmth, singing, laughter, and meaning, that becomes part of their emotional world forever.

This does not require perfection. It does not mean every Shabbat table needs to look picture-perfect or every Yom Tov needs elaborate decorations and creative projects. *Torat Imecha* is not about putting on a performance, it's about authenticity. Sometimes it is the smallest things that children remember most - a parent singing while cooking for Shabbat, excitement over buying flowers for Yom Tov, special family minhagim, or simply hearing "L'kavod Shabbat Kodesh" while setting the table. Those moments create emotional memories that stay with children long after specific lessons are forgotten.

At the same time, one of the greatest challenges of parenting is that it is often difficult to remember the significance of what we are doing. Parenting can feel buried beneath endless practical responsibilities—laundry, dishes, carpools, bedtime routines, and exhaustion. It is easy to become so overwhelmed by the details that we lose sight of the bigger picture. But parenting is one of the holiest opportunities a person can have. There is a beautiful Tefillah about raising children that ends with the words:

“ושנדע מהי התכלית העצומה, הטמונה בחינוך בנים לתורה והיותם חוליה קדושה בשרשרת הדורות”
“*May we recognize the tremendous purpose hidden within educating children towards Torah and helping them become a holy link in the chain of generations.*”

So much of parenting feels repetitive and unnoticed. Yet every small interaction helps shape another human being and another link in the mesorah of Klal Yisrael. And perhaps

this is one of the deepest lessons of Shavuot itself. The Torah was not only given in a desert thousands of years ago. It must be given over again in every generation, in every home. The survival of Torah depends not only on the schools we send our children to, but on the atmosphere they grow up breathing every day. A child who grows up in a home where Torah is alive absorbs something powerful that cannot easily be taught in a classroom. In such a home, Mitzvot are treated with love, parents continue learning and growing, and Shabbat feels beautiful and meaningful.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe writes that the strongest tool in chinuch is the loving bond between parent and child. Values can only take root when they are planted in an environment of love. Children need not only guidance and discipline, but warmth, affection, attention, and connection. When children feel deeply loved, they become far more open to receiving the values their parents hope to transmit.

Ultimately, *Torat Imecha* is about much more than parenting techniques. It is about creating an emotional world in which Torah feels precious. As we celebrate Shavuot and recommit ourselves to Torah, perhaps we should ask not only what we are teaching our children, but what feeling we are giving over to them. Are they experiencing Torah as a source of joy? Do they see that Mitzvot matter to us? Do they feel warmth, love, and meaning in the Judaism of our homes? Because long after children forget specific lectures or rules, they will remember how Torah felt. And that emotional connection often becomes the strongest link in the chain of Mesorah.

Please note: This parenting series has now come to a close. I look forward to restarting the “Towards Meaningful Tefilla” series in my next column. ■