

**T**hose who have chosen the profession of *chinuch* understand it is important, but it can be challenging in many ways, so it's crucial that they have the correct mindset regarding what they're doing. Without a doubt, *mechanchim* are doing *chesed*. They're teaching *Torah* and helping kids, but if they understand the big picture better, it can afford strength to withstand the taxing situations. Let's explore this big picture by looking at three places teaching *Torah* is mentioned, to understand what *chinuch* really is.

*Hashem* says about *Avraham*,  
"כִּי יָדַעְתִּיו לִמְעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה אֹתוֹ בְּנֵי וְאֵת בֵּיתוֹ  
אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דְרָדְךָ הִיא לְעִשְׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט  
לִמְעַן הִבִּיֵּא הוּא עַל אַבְרָהָם אֹתוֹ אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר עֲלָיו"  
(בראשית י"ח י"ט)  
"I have known him (כִּי יָדַעְתִּיו says רש"י is an expression of love) that he instructs his children and his household who come after him to keep the way of Hashem... so that Hashem could bring upon *Avraham* all that he said." רש"י points out that *Hashem* didn't promise the *bracha* to the *bais Avraham* – his descendants – but to *Avraham* himself. Based on the *Medrash Raba*, he says that we see from here that "כל המעמיד בן צדיק כאילו אע"פ מן". In other words, *Hashem* is saying that He chose to partner with *Avraham* because he, *Avraham*, could get *schar*! And what is the *medrash* that *Rashi* brings - "כל המעמיד בן צדיק -

כִּי יָדַעְתִּיו לִמְעַן אֲשֶׁר מֵת  
his descendants for his own good?  
And it's this merit that the choice of *Avraham* stands on! This needs further explanation.

If we look at the *mitzvah* of teaching our children *Torah*, the *pasuk* is וְשִׁנְתָם לְבָנֶיךָ. The *pasuk* then continues, וְדַרְשֵׁתָם בְּמִשְׁכַּת בְּבִיחָתְךָ וּבְלִקְחֵךָ בְּיָרֵךְ... The order of this *pasuk* needs explanation. One would expect the *mitzvah* of וְשִׁנְתָם לְבָנֶיךָ to be after the personal obligation of וְדַרְשֵׁתָם בְּמִשְׁכַּת וְבִיחָתְךָ. First should come the *mitzvos* that relate to an individual's *Torah* study and then the *mitzva* to teach the next generation. Yet we have וְשִׁנְתָם לְבָנֶיךָ first and afterward וְדַרְשֵׁתָם. Why is it this way? Why is teaching our children the first *chiyuv* of *Torah* study?

Regarding the *mitzvah* of *Hakhel*, (as well as at the *Chizukon Brit* in the beginning of *Parshas Nitzavim*), *Chazal* ask: אִם אֲנִישִׁים בָּאִים לְלַמֵּד נָשִׁים בָּאוֹת, לְשַׁמֵּעַ טוֹף לְמֵה בְּאִזְקָה  
The men come to learn, the women to listen, but the children – why do they need to come? The *Gemara* (*chagiga daf gimmel*) answers, כִּי לִזְנוּ שָׂר, לְמַבְיֵאוֹן  
that the children are brought along to earn *schar* for those who bring them. It seems that the children really have no innate reason to be there. How do we understand the *schar* their parents earn for bringing them? If the children had a *mitzva* or a reason to be there then whoever brought them should be rewarded

*The two big parts of emunah are the knowledge that Hashem is intimately involved in the world and our lives, and that He cares about each one of us and our growth, our education.*

for helping achieve this *mitzva*. But if they have no reason to be there, why would bringing them along generate *schar*?

#### A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF KLAL YISRAEL

To explain this and answer these questions, we need to develop a deeper understanding of the idea of *klal Yisrael* and how *Hashem* relates to this *klal*. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* entered into a *bris* with a *klal*. There is no single person who can fulfill the role *Hashem* had in mind. The *avos* were the *shorashim*, the basis of the accomplishment of the mission, but they were not enough to fulfill the totality of what was intended by the *bris*. This would require all the *shivtei Yisrael*, all of *klal Yisrael*. Each *shevet* and individual within that *shevet* would play a role, and if any individual or segment were missing, the *klal* is incomplete.

We understand today that in addition to the three dimensions of space, there is an additional dimension of time. In a similar way, each generation of *klal Yisrael* is an integral part of the whole of the *klal*. Just like we say that *shevet Zevulun* engaged in trade, *Yisachar* learned, and *Yehuda* led, each contributing to the *klal* in their own critical way, each generation has that same sense of being part of a whole. The *dor hamidbar* had a role, the *dor* of *kibush ha'aretz* had a role, the *dor* of *Dovid HaMelech* had a role, and the *dor* of *churban HaBayis* had a role. Every generation has its challenges, its accomplishments, and whatever character and historical events define it. There's a reason why the *Rishonim* had a certain *cheilek* in *Torah*, while *Acharonim* had another *cheilek*. Each and every *dor* contributes a *cheilek* to *klal Yisrael*, just like each member of *klal Yisrael* at any given time contributes a part of the whole. This can help us understand what is meant by, "פסח בדרור בשמאל בדרור". *Shmuel* contributed, and *Yiftach*, though he was no

*Shmuel*, likewise contributed a crucial part during his generation.

Viewed this way, if there is ever a breakdown of *hemshech* in *klal Yisrael*, if any generation misses an opportunity, that's a piece that is forever missing from the greater *klal*. This changes the way we think about ourselves as individuals. A Jew needs to think about himself in terms of how he is achieving his own *shleimus*, and beyond himself how he affects others, in terms of *בל ישראל ערבם זה לזה*, but even beyond that, how he is responsible to see to it that there is a *hemshech*, that there is a legacy that continues from him, to contribute his part to the *shleimus* of *klal Yisrael*.

#### YIDDISHE NACHAS – JEWISH PARENTHOOD

It's hard to translate the *Yiddish* word *nachas*, which seems to be a uniquely Jewish idea. A non-Jew who has children obviously wishes for his children to be successful, and there is disappointment if they're not, but there is no concept that his children should be continuing a chain. Some people maybe be more opinionated or have a strong identity and really care that their children align with certain beliefs or causes, but the idea that their child is continuing or bringing out a fuller realization of themselves doesn't exist. For Jews, we start with this idea, that our children are our continuity. An individual understands that his *avodah* is to accomplish something personally, and that that accomplishment will also have a *hemshech*, because that is what it's about – that's the understanding of *klal Yisrael*. This is the uniquely Jewish idea of *nachas*.

When *Hashem* was choosing someone to start this nation, the choice obviously needed to be a *tzaddik* and a *shaleim*, and He also needed to be someone who would make sure that his children would do the same, but it's more than that. His choice needed to be someone who would make sure that his children

*...he is responsible to see to it that there is a hemshech, that there is a legacy that continues from him, to contribute his part to the shleimus of klal Yisrael.*

would be able to continue the process that their father began. *Hashem* said to *Avraham*, *כי ידעתו למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת בנות אחריו ושמו דודך זה לעשות צדקה ומשפט*” It was important that *Avraham* teach the next generation, but we know that he taught many people besides for his children, so it’s not just about teaching. *signals that creating a hemshech was part of the plan Hashem had for Avraham. He wanted Avraham to bring a certain light into the world, and it couldn’t be accomplished just by Avraham, but by all the collective generations of his descendants. Avraham Avinu threaded a needle with the understanding that the job of the next generation was going to be to pull that thread a bit more, and their children a bit more, for dorei doros.* למען הביא זה על אברהם את אשר דבר עליו wasn’t just a fulfillment of a promise, but it was itself the plan, that the generations that come out would be the entity that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* had in mind.

Let’s go back to the *chazal* by *Hakhel* and *Parshas Nitzavim*. When all of *klal Yisrael* gathered for *Hakhel*, this includes the *taf* and the *mevi’eihem*. Not that the children are *per se* getting anything from the experience, but because it’s critical for the parents to bring them, making these parents into ones who are threading the needle and pulling *klal Yisrael* ahead. If one generation sees the next as something ancillary, just something that comes after, that’s not a *hemshech*. The next generation has to be there because if their parents don’t bring them, they’re missing the understanding of *Hakhel*, of gathering all of the *klal*. And when they do bring them, what *schar* they get for doing so!

We find a similar thing by *ma’amad har sinai*, that all the *neshamos* of the future generations had to be present. This is because the *Torah* was given to *klal Yisrael*— *klal Yisrael* was them and all the future generations that would follow. One of the most moving

moments of the year is *kol ha’ne’arim*, when we take a huge *tallis* and bring all the children under it. It’s so meaningful because we’re making a statement that we are who we are, plus a future that follows.

This idea is born out further if we look more closely at the *Gemara* we’ve been speaking about (*chagiga daf gimmel*):

תני רבנן: מעשה ברבי יוחנן בן ברוקה ורבי אלעזר (בן) חסמא שהלכו להקביל פני רבי יחזקאל בפקיעין. אמר להם: מה חידוש היה בבית המדרש היום? אמרו לו: תלמידך את ומימך את שוחתן. אמר להם: אי על פי בן, אי אפשר לבית המדרש בלא חידוש.

and רבי אלעזר בן חסמא went to visit *Rabi Yehoshua*. *Rabi Yehoshua* asked them what new *Torah* idea was said in the *bais medrash* that day. They responded that they were his students and they hoped to hear *divrei Torah* from him and not say *divrei Torah* in front of him (out of respect.) He said, “Still, there must have been a new *Torah* idea in the *bais medrash* today,” and asked them to tell him.

שבת של מי חידשה? שבת של רבי אלעזר בן עזריה חידשה ובמה חידשה והגדה היום? אמרו לו: בפרשת הקהל ומה דרש בה?

He asked them, “Whose week was it to give the *Torah* presentation?” They told him that it was *Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah*’s week. He asked, “What did he speak about?” They responded that the topic was the *mitzvah* of *Hakhel*, and that *Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah* taught the following *drasha*:

”הקהל את העם האנשים הנשים והזקן: אם האנשים באים ללמד הנשים באות לשמעת טף למה באין? כדי ליתן שכר לצביאיהן”

The *pasuk* says that all the men, women, and children should gather at *Hakhel*. He said, “The men come to learn, and the women come to hear, but why should the children come?” And he answered that the children are brought to give reward to those who brought them.

The *Gemara* continues with the rest of the story and

*Avraham Avinu threaded a needle with the understanding that the job of the next generation was going to be to pull that thread a bit more, and their children a bit more, for dorei doros.*

at the end it says, “בלשון הזה אמר להם אין דור יתום שרבי אלעזר בן עזריה שרוי בתוכו.”

When they were done telling him what *Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah* had said, *Rabi Yehoshua* declared, “A generation with *Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah* living in it cannot be considered orphaned;” such a generation has a father.

It’s notable that *Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah* was the one who made this *drasha*. When *Raban Gamliel* headed the *yeshiva* they allowed in only the elite, which makes sense because such *talmidim* were cut out to be the future leaders. *Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah* opened the *yeshiva* up to everyone when he took over. Why? What was this policy disagreement with *Raban Gamliel* about? It wasn’t because he thought that the weaker *talmidim* would be able to be leaders and *rabanim*. *Rabi Elazar ben Azaryah*’s insight was this idea of *ליתן שטר לברייתו*. He opened the *yeshiva* even to those who perhaps couldn’t gain from it personally because he was focused on the crucial idea of building all of *klal Yisrael*. *Rabi Yehoshua*, understanding this goal, and having heard his application to the situation of *Hakhel* was moved to declare that a generation whose leader has this attitude, אין דור יתום שרבי אלעזר בן עזריה שרוי בתוכו.

This also explains why *ושנתם לפניך* comes before *ודברת בם*. The most significant obligation a person has regarding his *Torah* is to teach it to his children and to ensure there will be a *hemshech*. *בם ודברת בם* is a broadening of *Torah* – speak about it at all these different times – but continuing the chain to the next generation comes before broadening your own *limud haTorah* because if the *hemshech* is cut in any place, it’s incomplete. Only once the *Torah* is complete, only then can you work on making it wider.

#### THE MINDSET OF A MECHANECH

This helps clarify for us the mindset of a *mechanech*. As we stated at the beginning, a basic level of

understanding *chinuch* is that when a *rebbe* teaches his students he is helping them, so it’s *chesed*. It’s like whenever someone needs help with something, and you help them. Additionally, *talmud Torah* is more significant than a regular *chesed* because *talmud Torah kneged kulam*, and teaching a student *Torah* is the highest form of *talmud Torah* (like we discussed last time we addressed this topic.) But even this falls short of capturing what a *mechanech* is doing, when viewed through the lens of the building the totality of *klal Yisrael*.

*Klal Yisrael* is not just the sum total of all of the people in *klal Yisrael*; it’s the sum total of the people and the *hemshech*, layer after layer, and wherever there is something missing, it’s a *chisaron b’etzem*. One of the most profound stories in all of *Tanach* is *pilegesh b’giv’a*. During that time, there was a chance that an entire *shevet* would be cut off from *klal Yisrael*. It’s unthinkable! Just like having 11 *shvatim* is not *klal Yisrael*, having 19 out of 20 generations fulfilled but one generation missing something is not *klal Yisrael*. And the fact that a later generation may recover and seem to make up for lost time never makes up for the unique role that that generation needed to play to complete the *klal*.

Regarding a *mechanech*, *chazal* say *כל המלמד בן חבירו יכלה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו יולדו*. But what does it mean to be a father? The *Gemara* says in *Bava Kama*, “אבות – מכלל דאיבה חולדות.” You can’t have an *av* without the children. For someone who is just mating, and a child comes along, it is just a *mikreh* – something that happened, but it doesn’t define him. *Avraham Avinu* is called a “father” because he had the mentality that he was there to produce children who would continue to build *klal Yisrael*. *Avraham* was an *av* – he recognized that his job was to bring out *Torah* in a way that it will unfold in its totality, *dor* after *dor*. A *mechanech*, likewise, is creating

*And the fact that a later generation may recover and seem to make up for lost time never makes up for the unique role that that generation needed to play to complete the klal.*

the opportunity for *Torah* to continue to unfold, *dor* after *dor*.

The idea of having children isn't just that a large population keeps us strong and secure. Having children means that we're bringing out the *shleimus* of *klal Yisrael*. All the *neshamos* that exist are there in us and bringing them into the world is unfolding *klal Yisrael*. But even once they're in the world, they need to

למען אשר יצוה את בנו ואת בתו אחריו ושמו דרך זה לעשות צדקה ומשפט. יכל המלמד בן חבירו - תורה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו 'ולדו' - if you teach someone else's children *Torah* it's like you gave birth to them. You are the one who allows that part of the *klal* to be unfolded. It's the father-ness of *Avraham*.

This is what to think about when you go into *chinuch*. It's extremely challenging in so many ways, and unless we think about it in the right way, it's hard to overcome these challenges. *Chasadim* are nice, but *chesed* has a limitation. *Ad kan*. Teaching *Torah* also has a limit – we would close the *Gemara* to earn a living if we had to. The one thing that has no limit, in a certain sense, is fatherhood. Every time you are מלמד תורה you are pulling the thread a little farther. You're engaged in the core *avodah* of *klal Yisrael*, the *avodah* of *Avraham Avinu*.

#### THE MESSAGE OF SCHAR MEVI'EIHEM

This message goes even beyond the *Torah* you actually teach. When you're teaching and the students see that the continuity of *klal Yisrael* is what you stand for and who you are, this is an extraordinary message that they pick up. Sometimes you're not successful at teaching *Torah* in a specific situation – let's say there is a child whose ability to learn is limited – but the

mere fact that the child sees his *rebbe* bringing him into the *klal* plants in his mind that it is his life's mission to be *mamshich* with his own children.

There was a *ger tzedek* in my community named Dr. Price and when he passed away, his son told a story that was one of the most striking things I ever heard. The son is now a principal of a *yeshiva* in New Jersey but as a young boy he wasn't doing so well in his learning. He did, however, love playing basketball, and he approached his father with a proposal. "Why don't I leave *yeshiva* and go to public school? Then I can play more basketball and you can save all that money you pay for tuition!" His father turned to him and said, "Son – I would work for 24 hours a day so that my children will get a *Yiddishe chinuch!*" Perhaps at the time the son didn't find success in learning, but the message made an impact and now he is a wonderful *marbitz Torah* himself. This is the *schar mevi'eihem*, getting passed along.

Those engaged in the *avodas hakodesh* of *chinuch* are the *avos* of the *dor* and of all the *doros*. You are the ones who not only mold the next generation, but who pass along the understanding that this is what *klal Yisrael* is all about. If this is your approach, you're part of the team of אבן חזקת יצחק. Having this attitude means the *dor* has fathers. There is no greater title for a person, no greater crown to wear than to be the *ba'alei bris* of *Avraham Avinu*, one of the fathers continuing the work of *Avraham*. Everyone who is *marbitz Torah* should merit

למען זכיא זה על אברהם את אשר דבר עליו  
למען אשר יצוה, את בנו ואת בתו אחריו ושמו דרך זה לעשות צדקה ומשפט. ♦

*Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky is the Rosh Yeshiva of the Yeshiva of Greater Washington. He is the author of numerous scholarly works in Hebrew and English. Rabbi Lopiansky has a unique teaching ability that lures one into the depths of Chazal, pulling out profound messages as well as inspirational and practical lesson for life. His depth of understanding and broad application of the sugyos provides new clarity and insight into the many facets of Torah.*



Feedback? Email us at [sgewirtz@cojds.org](mailto:sgewirtz@cojds.org)

