

“The hidden (sins) are for Hashem, our G-d, but the revealed (sins) are for us and for our children forever.” (29:28)

Simply, we are not held responsible for those sinners who hide their evil. The hidden sinners are in Hashem’s province. Our focus must be on those whose evil is blatant, who have no shame and no fear. Our lack of response to those sins and sinners – and in some cases, our open acceptance of their evil – impugns the integrity of Klal Yisrael. In an alternative exegesis, the Belzer Rebbe, z.l., suggests that nistaros and niglos, “hidden” and “revealed,” refer to mitzvos and good deeds, but not to sins. His pshat, rendering of the pasuk, is better understood in light of the following story:

A man was once called in from the street to join a minyan, quorum, being held in a private home for a group of aveilim, mourners. The minyan was in an apartment in a very frum, observant, section of Yerushalayim. He was, therefore, surprised to see that the mourners and a number of the minyan attendees were wearing their yarmulkes perched precariously on their heads, indicating that wearing a yarmulke was not a common occurrence for them. Yet, when he looked around the room it appeared like the home of a devout Jew. The shelves were filled with seforim, volumes of Torah literature, that were well-worn and used. This enigma was even more puzzling as a result of the fact that many of the seforim had notes and observations penciled in alongside the text. What was going on here?

After Mincha, the guest could no longer contain himself. He went over to one of the mourners and asked for an explanation, “Do any of the deceased’s children use his books?” he asked, judiciously attempting to find out if any of the siblings might be observant. “No, he was the only one that was observant. You see, when my father came home from work, he would quickly execute his fatherly responsibilities and proceed to lock himself in his study for the rest of the evening, immersed in his precious books. Although we knew he was studying in there, this knowledge was basically hearsay, because we never actually saw him studying Torah.”

What a living tragedy! Children learn from their parents. When children see their parents studying Torah, when they observe how their parents value Torah study, they learn to also value and appreciate it. This applies to chesed, acts of kindness, as well. Children should share in their parents good deeds. Make them a part of the endeavor. It is certainly more important and enduring than playing baseball with them. The most important memories children look back on when they become parents are related to the quality time they spent with their parents. How we spend time with our children will determine what aspect of our relationship with them they will remember and eternalize.

Let us return to the Belzer Rebbe’s homiletic rendering of the pasuk. He explains that as Moshe Rabbeinu, was about to take leave of his beloved nation, he turned to them and said, “The hidden things are Hashem’s, but the revealed ones are for us and our children.” If we act righteously but keep these acts hidden; if we do not include our children in our meritorious activities; if they are not

privity to our Torah study and acts of chesed, then only Hashem will know of the honorable and upright way we lived. Our children will remain unaware and consequently, uninspired. If we see to it, however, that our positive actions are revealed to our children, then these good deeds will become a part of the family legacy as we impart our noble actions to the next generation to carry them on.