

## **Hashem will see and be provoked by the anger of his sons and daughters. (32:19) - For they are a generation of reversals, children whose upbringing is not in them. (32:20)**

In the preface to his *Shev Shmaita*, **Horav Aryeh Leib Cohen, zl**, quotes the *Zohar HaKadosh* who teaches that the term *bas*, girl/female, is used in connection to *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, while *ben*, boy/male, is used to denote the Torah. Thus, the *Zohar* explains the well-known statement in the *Talmud*, *Bas techilah – siman yafeh l'banim*, “If a daughter is born first, it is a good sign for the children to be born.” This alludes to *Chazal's* statement in *Pirkei Avos*, *Perek 3:11* where the *Tanna* teaches, “He in whom the fear of sin takes precedence over his wisdom, his wisdom will endure; but he in whom his wisdom takes precedence over the fear of sin, his wisdom will not endure.”

Obviously, this is not a question of precedence in time, but rather, in values. One should fear committing a sin even more than he desires wisdom. This is despite the fact that learning is the supreme virtue. How do we understand this apparent contradiction? Apparently, wisdom which is not focused on properly utilizing it in practice, but for the purpose of acquiring it for its own sake, will ultimately be an encumbrance. Learning is important, but if it is not under the control of *yiraah*, the “package” is damaged.

Therefore, explains the *Shev Shmaita*, “Hashem will see and is provoked by the anger of His sons and daughters. When the ‘sons,’ representing *limud haTorah*, take precedence over the ‘daughters,’ representing *yiraas Shomayim*, Hashem responds, ‘They are a generation of reversals,’ *banim lo eimum bam*, ‘Their *banim*, offspring, representing their Torah study, will not endure.’” They have reversed the sequence by placing wisdom before *yiraah*. Such values produce nothing more than spiritually crippled intellectuals.