

"And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, it is because of that (which) Hashem did for me when I went out of Egypt." (13:8)

A father has the holy obligation to educate his child, as well as to serve as a paradigm of guidance and inspiration to his child. Just as parents are required to provide for their child's physical needs, they must also be vigilant in sustaining them spiritually. Various techniques have been developed for the appropriate manner in which to educate children.

The *Rambam* cites Avraham Avinu's unique approach to reaching out in order to educate the members of a pagan society concerning belief in Hashem. Avrohom had the ability to relate to each person according to his individual level of understanding. The *Rambam* expands on this idea in regard to the *mitzvah* of telling the story of the Egyptian exile and exodus. First, he emphasizes the importance of ,sdvu, "telling" your son, and not waiting for the child to "ask". Second, one should focus on the lbck - your son - in accordance with his particular aptitude. In closing the *Rambam* states, "*Everything is dependent upon the son's level of understanding.*"

Another aspect of Avraham's unique approach to education was his preemptive involvement in the educational process. We find that Avraham and Iyov were both great *tzaddikim*. Although Iyov's attributes were impressive, they were nevertheless insufficient to render him the Patriarch of our nation. We may suggest that the difference between them may be derived from the *Torah's* characterization of their distinctive relationship with their offspring. Regarding Avraham it is stated "*For I have known him to the end that he may command his children.*" (*Ber. 18:19*) Avraham's attitude towards his children's education was to direct them in the correct way of life from the onset, before they had the opportunity to deviate from the prescribed path. In contrast to this orientation, we may note the *pasuk's* description of Iyov's attitude " *Perhaps my sons sinned and cursed Hashem in their hearts.*" (*Iyov 1:5*) He offered sacrifices as a penance for his sons misdeeds only after they had deviated from the prescribed path

Education must begin at home at a tender age. As it says in *Tehillim* (127) "*As arrows in the hands of a warrior so are the children of the youth.*" Just as an archer carefully adjusts his aim prior to releasing the arrow, so too, should be the educational process of children. Prepare them before they are independent, make the necessary adjustments before it is too late. As the archer doesn't foolishly claim a lack of time or patience as an excuse for lack of preparation, neither should parents use this apologetic to absolve themselves of their ultimate responsibility.