

There are the offspring of Aharon and Moshe. (3:1)

The Torah is about to detail the offspring of both Aharon and Moshe – yet, it enumerates only those of Aharon. *Rashi* quotes *Chazal* in the *Talmud Sanhedrin* 19b who teach that “whoever teaches his friend’s son Torah, it is considered as if he gave birth to him.” The *Shlah Ha’kadosh* adds that one should not take the word *k’ilu*, “as if,” verbatim, for it is more than “as if.” One who teaches Torah to his friend’s son has **actually** given birth to him. Father and mother provide a child’s body; the *rebbe*, Torah teacher, sustains his *neshamah*, soul. Thus, whoever has chosen the holy calling of *chinuch* as his life’s vocation, is actually creating and sustaining *neshamos*.

It goes even deeper than that. One who provides a Torah education for a Jewish child is granting him continued life. The following episode will perhaps shed light on this theory: One day, *Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl*, convened an important meeting concerning vital issues confronting the Jewish People. Most of those “invited” to attend were from the Diaspora. Apparently, this was an important meeting. Therefore, his grandchildren insisted that *Rav Shach* not have his usual “office hours,” during which time individuals from all over the world came to petition his blessing and sage counsel.

The group was waiting to begin their meeting when a father asked to enter the *Rosh Yeshivah*’s office with his fourteen-year-old *yeshivah* son. At first, the reply was negative. They explained that at *Rav Shach*’s behest, the meeting’s attendees had traveled across the world to meet with the *gadol ha’dor*, the generation’s preeminent Torah leader. It was an unusual and quite significant meeting. The *Rosh Yeshivah* would be tied up all day.

The father would not take “no” for an answer. He asked for only a minute of *Rav Shach*’s time, to obtain a blessing for his son that he grow and be successful in Torah learning. The men granted him his request, stipulating that he would have only a minute. The father and son entered the office and departed from there almost two hours later! One can only begin to imagine the group’s agitation when they came out: “You promised us it would be but for a moment, yet you remained for almost two hours!” they exclaimed.

“You are correct,” the father replied. “My intention was to spend a moment, but *Rav*

Shach thought otherwise. **He** insisted that we stay!”

“What happened?” they asked. “When I presented my son to the *Rosh Yeshivah*, he asked my son if he enjoys learning Torah. My son answered that he does not look forward to studying Torah, because it makes no sense to him. Apparently, the *rebbe* teaches the subject, and those students who care to learn do, while the others are allowed to stare at the ceiling.

“*Rav Shach* immediately picked up two *Gemaros* – one for himself and one for my son, and they began to learn together. Slowly, carefully, meticulously, *Rav Shach* explained the

Gemora's dialogue to my son. One could see the subject matter becoming clear in his mind. Suddenly, my son began to cry. 'Why are you crying?' *Rav Shach* asked my son.

"*Rebbe*, I am crying from joy. For the first time in my life, I understand the *Gemora*.

It is no longer a closed book to me. **Now**, I finally sense a *taam*, flavor, to my learning."

The father and son apologized and left. When the group entered *Rav Shach's* office, he immediately explained his actions, "I could not allow the boy to leave here without addressing his problem. To sense a *taam* in learning is *pikuach nefesh*, a matter of life and death! For a Jewish child to have a dispassionate attitude towards Torah study is egregious. Such a child is a *choleh mesukan*, critically ill. To save a critically ill child takes precedence over **everything!**"