

I am Hashem, your G-d, Who has taken you out of the land of Egypt. (5:6)

The *Aseres HaDibros*, Ten Commandments, the foundation of the entire Torah, begins with these words.. The *Shlah HaKadosh* writes that the *Aseres HaDibros* is comprised of 620 words, of which 613 correspond to the *taryag*, 613, *mitzvos*. And the last seven correspond to the seven *mitzvos d'Rabbanan*, Rabbinic *mitzvos* (*berachos*; *Shabbos candles*; *eiruv*; *netilas yadayim*; *Chanukah*; *Purim*; *Hallel*). *Horav Elimelech Biderman, Shlita*, suggests that the final words, *v'chol asher l'reicha*, "And everything that belongs to your fellow" (regarding the prohibition of, *Lo sachmod*, "Do not covet"), is a summary of the entire Torah. *V'chol asher l'reiecha* means that one is enjoined to care about and perform kindness towards our fellow man.

In his *Agra d'Kallah*, the *Bnei Yissaschar* explains that the last commandment, *Lo sachmod*, (translated) "Do not covet" (but can easily mean do not envy), is, in fact, a review of the entire Torah. The purpose of the Torah is: to imbue one with *emunah*, faith, in Hashem; to realize, acknowledge, and live with the notion that Hashem is the source of everything and that a Jew should believe only in Him. When one sincerely believes that Hashem gives everyone his just portion, he will not be jealous of anyone. A Jew may say, "I want" (if he feels that he does not have "enough"), but a Jew may never say, "I need," because Hashem provides for all of our needs. If He deems it a necessity, we will have it. If we lack, it is because Hashem does not consider it a necessity.

The Torah is our life. While many people say this, how many really believe this statement? Furthermore, he who claims to believe that the Torah is the source of a Jew's life-- and without Torah he simply is not "living" -- must demonstrate his belief in the way he educates his children. Would a parent deprive his child of a vital medicine or health supplement? Would he opt for the less expensive product, despite its diminished efficacy? Certainly not. If so, why is our attitude toward Torah *chinuch* so blasé? Why do we subject our children to a "one size fits all" educational methodology, simply because it is more economical or convenient? Children are individuals, and each individual child deserves that his or her education be specifically designed according to his or her individual needs.

Concerning Moshe *Rabbeinu's* sons, the Torah writes: *Shem ha'echad Gershom... v'shem ha'echad Eliezer*; "The name of one was Gershom... and the name of one was Eliezer." (*Shemos* 18:3,4) Rather, it should have said, "And the name of the 'second' was Eliezer, similar to what is written concerning the *Korban Tamid*: 'One sheep sacrifice in the morning, and the 'second' sheep sacrifice in the afternoon.'" He explains that a parent must realize that each child is individual and unique, thus requiring an education that is singularly fitting for him. The approach in which all children are bunched together and treated the same tends to limit success.

Furthermore, each child should be treated as if he or she is the only child in the family. Just

because one is blessed with a large family does not allow him to lose sight of the individual picture. *The Brisker Rav, zl*, once said, "If you ask a *cheder rebbe* which student is uppermost on his mind, he will probably give you the name of one of his star pupils. Such a pupil lightens the *rebbe's* teaching load, allowing him to teach the class with greater ease. This student gives him no grief and is truly a pleasure to teach. If, however, one were to ask a parent which one of their children is uppermost on their mind, the reply would invariably be the one who is struggling (either in school or socially, etc.). The *Brisker Rav* then said that a *cheder rebbe* should reserve a special place in his heart for the weaker student. To focus solely on the needs of the good student, while ignoring the needs of the weaker ones, would be a serious error (and probably indicate a previous breach in his commitment as a *rebbe*). A *rebbe* should be like a parent, maintaining a special concern for the weaker student, nurturing him or her to grow spiritually as well as emotionally.

The *Brisker Rav* concludes that this is why the Torah refers to students as *banim*, children: (*V'sheenantam l'vanecha; eilu hatalmidim*, "And you shall teach them thoroughly to your children" (*Devarim* 6:7). This refers (even) to one's students (*Sifri*). This is a reminder to teachers that their students are like their own children. Just as a parent wants the best from all of their children, so, too, should a *rebbe* want to see all of his students achieve their maximum level of potential.