

"Did I not speak unto you saying: Do not sin against the child." (42:22)

The *Gerer Rebbe (Bais Yisrael)* suggests that the words, "*Do not sin against the child,*" allude to another form of "sin" against a child. He is referring to a parents' responsibility to provide their children with a quality *Torah* education. Parents who neglect to give their children the opportunity to have a *Torah chinuch* are placing them at a disadvantage. They are themselves sinful. As parents, it is our moral obligation to transcend our personal prejudices and vested interests in order to provide for our children's eternity.

There is an interesting story regarding the *Bais Ha'Levi*, who was confronted with a communal problem in the city of Slutzk, Poland. A substantial number of distinguished families in the city refused to send their children to the *Torah* school. Rather, they sent them to the secular school, which provided no *Torah* studies. Furthermore, the student body and faculty were obviously not conducive to spiritual development. He promptly called these individuals to his "office," attempting to dissuade them from continuing in this outrageous manner. He did not achieve his goal, however.

When the *Bais Ha'Levi* saw that his pleas fell upon deaf ears, he called a communal meeting in the *shul* to rebuke these irresponsible parents. He began his admonishment by citing the *Talmud* in *Kesubos 54a*, which states that a widow is supported from the inherited property of the orphans. This *halacha* is applicable only as long as she retains her status as a widow, demonstrating fidelity to her first husband. Once she has begun to beautify herself, she indicates that she is interested in remarrying and no longer has any allegiance to her first husband.

The same concept applies to *Klal Yisrael* in *galus*, exile. We are like a widow, who looks to Hashem *Yisborach* for sustenance and support. When we begin to accept the blandishments of the gentile nations and adorn ourselves with the multifaceted feathers of gentile persuasion, we indicate a schism in our relationship with Hashem. No longer can we entreat Hashem to have pity on us during our exile. By venerating the secular and relegating *Torah* to a demeaning second place, we are unfaithful. His heartfelt words made an enormous impression upon his audience, and they immediately enrolled their children in the community *Torah* school.