

Moshe came and told the people all the words of Hashem... and the entire people responded with one voice and they said, “All the words that Hashem has spoken, we will do.” (24:3)

There is a debate among the *Rishonim* concerning this *parsha*, which records Hashem's instructions to Moshe *Rabbeinu* vis-à-vis the Torah and the nation's affirmative response. *Rashi* contends that the events mentioned in this *parsha* actually preceded the Revelation and the Giving of the Torah – which is recorded in *Parashas Yisro*. As far as sequence is concerned, we apply the principle: Torah is not necessarily written in chronological order. Other *Rishonim*, among them *Ramban* and *Ibn Ezra*, feel that these events occurred following the Giving of the Torah. In any event, we will digress and focus on the actual Giving of the Torah and the fascinating words cited in *Midrash Shir HaShirim* (1:24).

“Rabbi Meir said: At the time that *Klal Yisrael* stood at *Sinai* prepared to receive the Torah, Hashem said, ‘Am I to give you the Torah freely? Rather, you must first provide Me with guarantors (*areivim*) who will guarantee that you will abide by it.’ The Jews suggested that their forefathers would be guarantors. This was not acceptable to Hashem. He countered with the Patriarch's descendants; Avraham begot Yishmael; Yitzchak fathered Eisav; Yaakov complained concerning the various travails which challenged him. Finally, *Klal Yisrael* said: “Our small children shall guarantee us.” Hashem replied, “They are good guarantors. By their virtue I will give you the Torah.” The question which begs elucidation is: how are the yet unborn children better guarantors than the Patriarchs and the Prophets whose lives were wholly devoted to Hashem?

Horav Berel Povarsky, Shlita, explains that the concept of *areivus*, guarantorship, associated with the Giving of the Torah is unlike the guarantor who must pay the borrower's loan, if the borrower defaults on his loan. The guarantor that Hashem required was one whose guarantee was by their personal virtue and educational integrity in raising their children to be moral, ethical, spiritual advocates and adherents of the Torah. They were assuring the perpetration of the Torah. Hashem required personal commitment. Thus, when the nation reverted their responsibility to the Patriarchs, Hashem said that this was applicable only if they had perfectly transmitted Torah to their progeny. Unfortunately, the Patriarchs did not succeed to perfection. Perfect commitment obviates any questions of Hashem, which on the most demanding level, they came up short. Thus, there no longer was an assurance of a seamless transmission to the next generation.

When *Klal Yisrael* realized the incredible influence parents have on their future generations, and how perfect their inspiration via their example must be, they acknowledged that their children would be the guarantors for the Torah. This meant that they, the generation that stood at *Sinai* – and all ensuing generations, have an overwhelming obligation to not only transmit Torah to their children – but must also impart it by example, because children are acutely insightful and do not respond well

to the “Do as I say – not as I do” syndrome associated with parental neglect.

The Jews understood that there is no greater guarantor than themselves. Once they accepted the responsibility to inculcate Torah to their children, Hashem acquiesced to their promise. With this in mind, parents must realize that their promise to teach Torah to their children and commitment to transmitting Torah to the next generation, is the reason Hashem granted us the Torah. Therefore, when parents renege their responsibility, they endanger the very underpinnings of our relationship with the Torah, and, by extension – Hashem.

I recently came across an inspiring story by Rabbi Yechiel Spero (To Light a Spark) that underscores this very idea. The Kupshitz family of *Eretz Yisrael* have been blessed with extraordinary Torah *nachas*, with generations of their children becoming exceptional *talmidei chachamim*, Torah scholars. Obviously, there was a secret to their success. Anyone who has raised children and reaped *nachas*, knows that it does not just happen. Many years ago, *Rebbetzin* Kupshitz, who was the matriarch of the family, came to the *Chazon Ish* with a request for two *brachos*. First, she requested that her sons be blessed with *kisharon*, acuity, and *chochmah*, wisdom, so that they have clarity and retention in their learning. Erudition which lacks clarity defeats the purpose. Second, she asked that the *Chazon Ish* bless her sons to always have *cheishek*, deep-rooted desire, to learn more and more Torah. They should not settle. Enough is never enough with regard to Torah.

The *Chazon Ish* listened intently to her requests and rendered the following response. “Regarding their comprehension and retention, Hashem should bless them with outstanding knowledge and with utmost clarity; however, with regard to your second request for passion to learn more and more, I cannot help you.”

The *Rebbetzin* was dumbfounded, since this was the more important of her requests. Brilliance without desire will only generate minimal knowledge. A person must want to learn, to thirst for Torah. The *Chazon Ish* added, “I cannot give you a blessing that will catalyze your sons’ desire to learn. The only one who could achieve that is you – their mother.”

This response startled the *Rebbetzin* even more than the initial “no.” Seeing that the *Rebbetzin* was in a state of incredulity, the *Chazon Ish* explained, “The more you want them to learn, the greater will be their desire to learn and grow in Torah. The greater your burning desire that they become *gedolei Torah*, giants of Torah, the more they too will want to achieve this enviable milestone. This is how it is achieved.”

Years passed and the *Rebbetzin*’s sons each became exemplary *gedolim*. Toward the end of her life, the *Rebbetzin* who had garnered so much *nachas* from her sons, was asked how she did it. What was the key to her outstanding success? She replied, “Because I wanted it.”

“But *Rebbetzin*, we all want this for our children. Who does not want their son to be a *talmid*

chacham?”

“True, everyone wants this. However, I wanted this and nothing else. When one of my sons was struggling with his learning, I dropped everything to facilitate him. I could not function when my son had difficulty with his *Gemorah*. On the other hand, even when we hardly had food in our home, but the boys were learning diligently, an air of calm and joy prevailed in our home. Everything revolved around Torah. I just wanted them to learn and be happy learning.”

This is how *Klal Yisrael* achieved their *areivus* for the Torah.