

For they are a generation of reversals, children whose upbringing is not in them. (32:20)

It hurts much more when the troublemaker is “ours.” We read about someone who has committed an act of dishonesty; we are angered. “What kind of person is that? Who could act in such a reprehensible manner?” When the culprit is someone young, we wonder what kind of parents he had; what kind of home he came from; what type of upbringing he had. When the culprit is one of our own – when it is one’s own child, there is anger, hurt, humiliation, and then all of the questions that we would have asked of others we ask ourselves: “Where did we go wrong?” When the upbringing was perfect, when the educator/parent was none other than Hashem, however, there are no questions – just plain condemnation. “A generation of reversals, whose upbringing is not in them.”

We are not only G-d’s people; we are His children Whom He raised. We made a commitment at *Har Sinai*, but soon afterward we reneged our faith in Him. It hurts so much more when the culprit is one’s own child.

On the other hand, being viewed as children more easily facilitates our return. In *Sefer Tehillim* 116:1, *David Hamelech* says, *Ahavti ki yishma Hashem es koli*. *Chazal* remark (*Pesachim* 118b), “*Klal Yisrael* said to Hashem, *Ribono Shel Olam*, when am I beloved to You? When You hear the sound of my voice.” Apparently, *Chazal* are teaching us that the mere sounds of supplication which emanate from us inspire Hashem’s love for us. What is it about the “sound” of our voices that engenders such positive response?

Horav Zelig Reuven Bengis, zl, relates that he heard a powerful explanation from the *Netziv*. When a person notices a child weeping, he assuages him in order to calm him down. This is true of any child. A baby cries; one moves to soothe him. One responds differently, however, when the infant is one’s own and when he is someone else’s child. When a stranger’s child cries for an appropriate reason, one will go over and do whatever is necessary to alleviate his distress, to calm the child. If the child is “just crying,” then the adult will go about his business and ignore the infant. If the child is one’s own, then the mere fact that he is raising his voice is sufficient reason to respond. No one wants to allow his own child to cry unnecessarily.

Thus, the catalyst for the father’s response to his own child is the *kol*, sound of his voice, nothing else. A stranger’s child, on the other hand, effects a response when the cause of his crying is reasonable. *David Hamelech* says, because we are Hashem’s children, as soon as we issue forth a *kol*, sound, even if our reason for crying is not substantive – Hashem listens. This is the love that the Heavenly Father manifests for His children.

May the Almighty listen to all of our voices as we supplicate Him for a *Shanah Tovah*.