

## **"And these are the laws which you shall place before them." (21:1)**

*Rashi* explains the idea of "placing the laws before them" as referring to Moshe's and every teacher's obligation to teach the laws over and over until the student is proficient in them. The material must be placed before the student like a table which is set and prepared for eating.

The *Talmud* in *Eruvin 54b* relates the story of *Rav Pr'eida* who had a student whose weakness demanded that he be taught each law four hundred times! Only after this persistent review, would he comprehend the material. One day, after the "usual" review of four hundred times, *Rav Pr'eida* was concerned and asked his student, "What happened today that seems to inhibit your ability to grasp the lesson?" The student responded, "You were summoned to attend to a *mitzvah*, and I was concerned lest you leave me during the lesson. This anxiety interfered with my ability to comprehend the lesson." *Rav Pr'eida* responded, "Do not worry, I will not leave you until you have fully comprehended the lesson." He proceeded to begin over again, and he taught the student four hundred more times. Imagine, *Rav Pr'eida* taught the lesson eight hundred times!

There are a number of valuable educational lessons to be gleaned from this story. The student who was taught each *halacha* four hundred times by his rebbe was apparently educationally challenged. Imagine, having to review the lesson so many times, just in order to understand its basics. On the other hand, where do we find a student with such amazing persistence and resolve to study *Torah*? When he heard a *halacha*, he knew from the outset that it would take him hours and hours of determination and toil just to comprehend it. Such an iron will is surely exemplary. He never gives up, even when he sees all of his friends grasping the lesson immediately. He remains alone in the *Bais Ha'Midrash* persevering tenaciously for one goal -- to understand one lesson.

*Rav Pr'eida*, the rebbe par excellence, took upon himself to teach this student *Torah* with remarkable patience and understanding. He never lost control, his tolerance level was outstanding. As *Horav Shmuel Truvitz, Shlita*, notes, during this time he could have taught countless students *Torah* on the most profound level. Yet, he devoted himself totally to this student. He denied himself the opportunity to teach students who were more astute, who would challenge him more intellectually. He was on a mission that transcended everything -- to teach this one student *Torah*. For him this was a more edifying experience than any other opportunity in education.

This relationship between rebbe and talmid, teacher and student, represents the essence of *Torah chinuch*. This idea is reinforced by the fact that once the student thought *Rav Pr'eida* might leave, he could no longer concentrate. The feelings of familiarity, attachment and esteem existed between the student and *Rav Pr'eida* to the point that he could not separate himself from his rebbe. Indeed, his rebbe was his source of understanding *Torah*; he was his link to eternity.