

## Then I will provide your rains in their time and the land will give its produce and the tree of the field will give its fruit. (26:4)

“Rains in their time” means the time most convenient for people – such as Friday nights when people are generally at home or close by. When we get “wet,” it is for a reason. Hashem defrays anything that might prove to be a nuisance from inconveniencing us. The *Midrash*, however, adds that, at times, an entire community or even a city might have rain in the merit of one person who needs the benefit it provides. *Chazal* go so far as to posit that, at times, Hashem may send rain for the benefit of one field, even one blade of grass. We neither know nor understand Hashem’s ways, because we are not privy to everything – past, present or future – that factors into a Heavenly decision. Thus, concerning Heavenly knowledge and Divine power, nothing stands in the way of sending an entire rain shower for the benefit of one meritorious person.

*Horav Avraham Pam, zl* (quoted by Rabbi Sholom Smith in “Messages From Rav Pam”), gleans from this *Midrash* (*Vayikra Rabbah* 35:12) an insight that should serve as a source of encouragement and *chizuk* for *mechanchim*, educators. (In truth, as representatives of Heaven on this world, every Jew is a *mechanech* by personal example. Every parent is certainly a *mechanech*.) One has moments in his career (we have all experienced this feeling) in which he works, toils, sweats, prepares, puts all of his life into his *talmidim*, students, but does not see the fruits of his labors. He/she wonders what it is that he/she is doing that is wrong. Something is just not working. Weeks can pass, and the *rebbe/morah* feel that he/she is just not reaching the students. How are they to be molded into Torah loyal Jews if their mentors cannot get through to them? The next point of the downward spiral is to give up. “Is it really worth it? Does it make sense to toil to the point of exhaustion, expend blood, sweat and tears in this school, for this class? (As *Rav Pam* underscores, the sacrifice is that much greater and the challenge and obstacles are that much more difficult in an out of town school, far from the major *yeshivah* Torah communities). When the teacher/*rebbe/morah* asks the critical question: “Am I making a difference in the lives of these children?” one should begin to worry about the *rebbe/morah*’s viability in Torah *chinuch*.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that the answer is to be found in the above-quoted *Midrash*, which teaches that it is worthwhile for Hashem to bring rain for an entire field, when, in fact, He only wants to irrigate one blade of grass. A *rebbe* can teach an entire class and, at the end of the day, only one student will go through the system, *yeshivah*, *kollel* and become a *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, whose erudition impacts thousands. (I add that it does not mean that the rest of the class was not “successful.” Every Jewish child who studies Torah is a success. Some, however, apply that Torah to disseminate it to others (*lilmod u’le’lamed*.) From a Torah-productive perspective, this is meaningful in the sense that the Torah is transmitted and continued. It molds and shapes the student’s life. Furthermore, this budding *talmid chacham* has a direct influence on his family: father, mother and siblings. All of this has been achieved through the efforts of the *mechanech*.

I would like to expound on this idea. A *rebbe* can have a class of boys who are, for the most part, doing well. They may not be performing in accordance with the high expectations of the *rebbe*, but they are listening, learning and observing. One boy in the class might be more challenging than the others. His family background might gravitate more to being observant, but not passionately so. As a result of the *rebbe's* influence, the boy becomes more observant, with stronger and greater devotion to *shemiras ha'mitzvos*. Along the way, he *shleps* his father along. In an attempt to assuage and encourage her son's newly-found attitude, the mother changes her own level of observance. When the parents change, the home/siblings change. In the space of a few years, an entire family is transformed: parents, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. All of this is the result of a *rebbe* who cared. One blade of grass – one *Yiddishe neshamah* – an entire family – generations of *Yiddishkeit*. There is not one *mechanech* that has not impacted the life of “one” student, and, as a result, transformed a family!