

You shall relate to your son on that day. (13:8)

One might ask why the Torah emphasizes *bincha*, your son, rather than *talmidcha*, your student? After all, every Jew bears the collective responsibility of *v'shinantam l'venecha*, which is explained, “You shall teach Torah to all of *Klal Yisrael*” – not only to one’s biological children. Why is the father-son relationship underscored?

Perhaps the Torah seeks to impart an important message. The foundation of Jewish continuity is bolstered in the *yeshivah*, *bais ha'medrash*, *Bais Yaakov* – but it begins at home. Before one can inspire a *talmid* he must first connect with his *ben*. The *mitzvah* of *v'higadeta l'veincha* is not merely an injunction to transmit information, but to build a relationship founded and concretized in Torah.

A father whose bond with his son revolves around sports or shared hobbies may find it challenging to transmit Torah values when the need for *chinuch* arises. The medium for their rapport does not lend itself to holiness. By contrast, when the father’s affiliation with his son is rooted and built around Torah, every conversation, every activity, every moment spent together, becomes an act of *v'higadeta*.

Chazal teach that Yosef *HaTzadik* did not fall prey to the seductive wiles of Potifar’s wife because, *ra'ah d'yukno shel aviv*, “he saw the vision of his father before him.” What did Yosef see in that vision? He saw much more than Yaakov *Avinu*’s countenance, he saw the totality of what their relationship represented. As Yaakov’s *ben zekunim*, son born in his old age, he spent much time teaching him the Torah that he had imbibed in the *yeshivah* of Shem and Eiver. Yaakov’s time with Yosef was filled with Torah, with spiritual bonding, with the transmission of values which became Yosef’s moral compass.

When a father’s relationship with his son is built upon Torah, then the son remains *bincha* – even when he is far away – geographically or even spiritually. When challenged with harmful influences, the products of a noxious society, such as those to which Yosef was exposed, he continues to carry his father with him, a presence which becomes his moral strength.

V'higadeta l'veincha – teach your son not only with words, but with a bond founded with love and nurtured with Torah. When that is the foundation of fatherhood, the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the Egyptian exodus, continues to be told again – generation after generation.