



“To share, to care. To make the world a better place...”

Parsha favorites of **Moreinu HaRav Avraham Chaim Tanzer zt'l**. Including his uplifting and edifying teachings. Ideas and values with which he raised and educated 4 generations, including lessons gleaned from his great character.

Compiled and elucidated by Rav Dov Tanzer *le'iluy nishmas* Abba Mari hk'm.

Please share at your table as an Aliyas Neshama

## MY CHILD, MY TEACHER

### בְּהַעֲלוֹסֵעָה אֶת הַמְּנוֹרָה

#### *When you kindle the lamps of the Menorah*

Rashi is troubled by the expression that the Torah uses: *'Behaalosecha'* – literally *'when you raise up' the lamps*. Rashi explains we learn from here that there was a step placed in front of the Menorah, that the lighter literally needed to climb upon to light the Menorah – ostensibly due to the height of the Menorah.

The question has oft been raised, that after all, the Menorah was only 5 cubits high – roughly 1.5 meter, which would allow a person of average height easy access to lighting the Menorah without needing to ascend upon stairs.

Abba used to frequently cite the comments of Rav Moshe Feinstein, that the Menorah is a metaphor for *'chinuch'* – Torah education of our children. All the details of the kindling of the Menorah need to be examined in this 'light'.

The need for the Menorah lighter to climb up on a step, indicates that the Torah teacher – the Rebbe, and indeed the parent – cannot simply rely on his/her own superior experience and learning to teach Torah. Rather, the educator needs to 'raise himself up' to a new and higher level. He needs to assume the mantle of the Educator.

Teaching Torah is not simply a matter of imparting information – it requires sharing a vision that the Talmid does not possess. This challenges the parent and teacher to climb up a level – to attain a new vista, a panoramic view of the landscape of life, so that when they share their inspiration, it

incorporates a broad view and vision, and indeed a perspective for life.



Actually, this raising up of the educators is ironic, because we traditionally think of the educator raising up the child or student. Here we are learning as Rebbe taught (Taanis 7a): I have learned more from my students than from my teachers and from my colleagues. Part of that additional learning, is becoming worthy of wearing that exalted robe of the Bearer of Torah to a new generation.

This implies the well-known idea, that as much as we love our children and indeed our Talmidim, we are not to err in thinking they need or wish us to be their equal status and standing. In fact, it's in their best interest that those who raise them, do so from a higher level, of maturity and wisdom, seriousness and learning.

Rav Hirsch said in his inimitable way: Torah was given on a mountain, because it must essentially come to you from a higher place.



Abba zt'l forged real and true bonds of friendship and love with generations of Talmidim. Yet, he truly never forgot or diminished his inner stature and standing as a Talmid Chacham, whose primary goal and purpose was to transmit with love, a true and dignified tradition of Torah.

He managed to preach to almost anyone, staying current and relevant and humorous, so that every person could take something out of his sermons and even his Divrei Torah. Yet he remained the Man of Letters – a man of learning who bore the mantle of leadership with dignity and much love.



This Pasuk also indicates that the one who lights the Menorah, must hold the flame to the new wick until it goes up – it is aflame independently.

From here, Abba taught, we learn that it's insufficient just to cast a smattering of Torah ideas and basic information to our children. That will never suffice – particularly in our own complex times. Rather, the art of Chinuch, is to hold the flame close for long enough that the child burst into flame himself. The child develops his/her own independent love for Torah learning and Mitzvos, to the degree that even when the parent/teacher is no longer there, the child will continue with their own flame, to remain alight, and even to inspire and warm others with their light.



Abba z'l displayed this Middah personally where his Beracha to every child and grandchild was that he should become a Gadol BeTorah. His Beracha to every Bar Mitzvah was that he should become and outstanding Talmid Chacham.

His love for Torah and for Chinuch was such that he dreamed to build a Yeshiva Gedolah on his Campus – to uplift and inspire each child in the school with the presence of Bnei Torah pursuing higher Torah studies with single minded devotion and passion – till the candle burns independently.

He had much Nachas decades later from Talmidim who were leaders in many diverse fields of endeavour, and who still maintained regular and rigorous higher learning shiurim, pursuing the Daf Yomi, and even giving Shiurim to others.



This Menorah metaphor also indicates that the art of Chinuch, is not so much about 'frontal teaching and transmission of information.

Even more importantly, Chinuch is about the parent/Rebbe being aflame with a passion and inspiration for Torah.

Then, you don't have to force anything, just hold the child/student close to you, they will 'catch' the

flame naturally: Torah, he said, is not simply 'taught'; it needs to be 'caught' – through example, inspiration, and relationship.

Torah study certainly includes a struggle with ideas and truth, and clarity. There is also, however, a very gentle, loving art of inspiration, which has much more to do with closeness of heart, than battle of wits.



וַיַּעַשׂ כִּן אֶהְרֹן אֶל מוּל פְּנֵי הַמְּנוֹרָה  
הַעֲלָה גִרְתִּיהָ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ד' אֶת מֹשֶׁה

*And Aharan did so. He kindled the Menorah facing the Middle lamp, as Hashem commanded Moshe*

The Sages were troubled by the comment that Aharon 'did so' – as he had been instructed. Surely we would never have expected less from Aharon the Tzaddik?

Abba z'l frequently cited the Chassidic insight of Rav Bunim of *Peshischa*, who explained that it was Aharon himself who did not change.

Even after his appointment as Kohen Gadol, and later, his special service of lighting the Menorah in the *Mishkan*; he remained the same person – he did not assume an exaggerated self-image. He remained Aharon – with a great service to perform – but just Aharon. He understood that the great service he was allocated was reason to become humbler – for it was, after a gift, not a right.



This was truly a lesson we learned continuously from Abba himself. Even as he began to enjoy the fruit of his decades of toil, and he saw the pivotal role he had merited to do; yet he remained real and honest with himself – it was all *Siyata Dishmaya* – a humbling gift from Hashem. No reason to assume airs or to lord it over anyone at all.

