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FOR THE HATZLACHA, HEALTH, AND HAPPINESS
OF OUR FAMILY AND ALL KLAL YISROEL

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פרשת חוקת

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Our Father and Mother

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Part I. The Firm One

Two Great Mournings

We begin with a possuk in this week's sedrah: "וַיֵּרְאוּ כָּל הָעֵדָה כִּי גָוַע אַהֲרֹן" – And the whole nation saw that Aharon had expired, וַיֵּבְכוּ אֶת אַהֲרֹן שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם – and the entire house of Yisroel wept for Aharon for thirty days" (Chukas 20:29). Not that "they mourned" or "were sad" – they wept copiously for thirty days. And who wept? Kol Beis Yisroel – the entire nation! Kol means that all of the men and boys, and all the women and girls, they raised their voices and expressed their grief aloud until everyone's eyes flowed with tears – everyone!

Now, about a half year later the Am Yisroel suffered another tragic loss. Moshe our Teacher, the leader who guided the nation for forty years, passed away. It was a terrible day; one of the saddest days in Jewish history. וַיֵּבְכוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם – And the Bnei Yisroel

wept for Moshe ... for thirty days (Devarim 34:8). They wept! They cried! They pounded their chests! No question it was a dark day for the nation.

And yet our Sages (Avos Di'Rabi Nosson 12:3, Pirkei Di'Rabi Eliezer 17) point out something in those *pesukim* that we may not have noticed. When Aharon passed away it says that “*kol Beis Yisroel*, all of the nation, cried.” But by Moshe it doesn't say *kol*. The nation wept in general, but it wasn't *kol*; it wasn't everyone.

It's a remarkable thing to notice in the *pesukim* and there's no question that it's not an accident – the Torah is telling us something important here; a very big principle lies in this story that deserves our attention. But first, as an introduction, we'll quote a Gemara from Mesichta Sanhedrin, *daf vav amud beis*.

Bending the Law

The Gemara there is discussing the process of litigation in a *beis din*, when people come before the judges for a *psak din*. Two people are arguing over something, a business deal let's say, and they come now to the *beis din* for a Torah decision. And the judges are considering the various arguments. They're going to issue a final decision.

Now, one of the questions raised there is as follows: Does the *beis din* have to follow the letter of the law? Must we *pasken* exactly like the *din* says no matter how much hardship it will cause the loser? Or is it permissible to make a *pesharah*? We won't give a full victory to the winner. Instead of following the letter of the law we'll make some sort of arbitration; we'll find a way to make it that both of them come out satisfied.

So Rabbi Eliezer ben Rabbi Yosi Hagelili says, “Nothing doing.” אָסוּר לְבַצֵּעַ – “It's forbidden to compromise” he says. A *dayan* has to follow what the *din* says no matter how much the other party is going to suffer as a result; no matter how much he'll be disappointed or the effect it might have on him, we don't care. You have to *pasken* the Law of Hashem without any kind of consideration.

Facts Don't Care About Feelings

And the Gemara says that we learn that ideal from Moshe Rabeinu. יָקֵב הָרִין אֶת הָהָר; he quotes what Moshe Rabeinu used to say: יָקֵב הָרִין אֶת הָהָר – The law has to make a hole through the mountain. Let's say the law of the Torah, the *psak*, is now confronted by a mountain; a mountain of human emotions, of human circumstances. Moshe Rabeinu says, “We don't care! The law must go straight on. יָקֵב הָרִין אֶת הָהָר – It even has to

tunnel through the mountain. The *halacha* must drill right through all of those feelings and emotions.”

And that's how Rabbi Eliezer ben Rabbi Yosi Hagelili *paskened*; like Moshe Rabeinu's *shitah* that no matter what, we make no compromises when we deliver the *psak din*. You cannot falsify the Torah. You must say exactly what the Torah says.

On The Other Hand...

Now pay attention. The same speaker goes on. The same speaker is talking and he continues like this: “That was Moshe. **אַבְל אַהֲרֹן** - But Aharon was different. Aharon was an **אוֹהֵב שְׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שְׁלוֹם**. He loved peace and he tried to run after it; **וַיַּשְׁמֵץ שְׁלוֹם בֵּין אָדָם לְחֶבְרֹ** - he made peace between people; he made compromises.

Aharon is being praised because he was gentle with people. He was yielding. Instead of driving them away with a fist of the *halachah*, Aharon used to caress them and make compromises with them.

Everybody remembers that at the making of the *eigel* Aharon participated because he didn't want to alienate the people. He thought, “I'll try a softer approach and I'll win them over that way.” That's how Aharon was – he was a compromiser.

Can You Have It Both Ways?

Now we have to understand what's doing here. Because the Gemara started out by praising the firmness of Moshe and saying that this is the proper Torah way; this *tanna* is upholding the *derech* of Moshe Rabeinu. But then it seems like this same speaker turns around and now he's praising Aharon's system of making compromises.

But that can't be. Both can't be right. After all what does it mean, the *derech* of Moshe Rabeinu? It means being strict; it means saying the law as it is; drilling through mountains to accomplish what's right. When Moshe came down from Har Sinai and found the *eigel*, he gave it over the head to Aharon. “What did you do here?! You can't yield just because the people want to make an *eigel*!” Moshe was indignant. “Nothing doing!”

And Aharon said, “I saw the people were this and this so I thought I'd make an excuse for them temporarily. I compromised so that –

“No!” said Moshe Rabeinu. “No excuses! Look what you've done! You made them **לְשִׁמְצָה בְּקִמְיָהם**.” Moshe was upset! He spoke firm words!

Moshe Our Firm Teacher

Nobody ever was as firm in the compliance with the Torah as Moshe Rabeinu was. After Moshe Rabeinu we had great men, but nobody like him; he was the representative of Hashem's Torah in this world and he did not countenance any yielding, any swerving aside, in even the smallest amount.

And it wasn't just once. Over and over again we see that he criticized the Am Yisroel bitterly for even the smallest deflection from the straight path of the Torah. You remember when **וַיִּקְצֹף מֹשֶׁה עַל פְּקוּדֵי הַחַיִּיל** – Moshe became angry at the officers for an infraction of the Torah (Bamidbar 31:14). He became angry at Aharon and his sons. **מִדּוּעַ לֹא אָכַלְתֶּם אֶת הַחֹטָאת** – Why didn't you eat from the *chatas*? Again and again Moshe Rabeinu becomes angry.

All the time Moshe was there with his eagle eyes, looking over our shoulders. **מִמָּרִים הֵייתֶם עִם הָשֵׁם מִיּוֹם דַּעַתִּי אֶתְכֶם** – You have been rebellious with Hashem! (Devarim 9:24). All the time he was telling them that they have to keep the letter of the law; that they have to become better.

Now, Moshe Rabeinu never lost his temper. Moshe was in full control of his mind. But Moshe said, "We cannot yield when it comes to Torah!" The Word of Hashem has to go on no matter what, and his anger was a public demonstration for the honor of Hashem.

And so, everybody was afraid of him. Don't think it was easy for people to live with Moshe. They knew that he wouldn't keep quiet for even the smallest infraction and therefore they toed the line of duty. They kept every smallest thing because they were always thinking, "What will Moshe Rabeinu say?"

For All Generations

"What will Moshe say?" It went into their bones. You know how much it went in? So much that even 2,000 years later, they were still thinking about it. You know, Flavius Josephus, lived at the end of Bayis Sheini, a few thousand years after Moshe Rabeinu lived. Now listen to what he wrote in the book Jewish Antiquities (Book III, 15:3); it's a remarkable statement: "There is still no one of us who does not act – even now – as if Moshe was present and ready to punish him if he should do anything that is indecent."

You know, Josephus was an ordinary Jew. He was a politician; he wasn't the most *frum* Jew you could find – far from it. And so he's telling us about the thoughts of the ordinary Jew on the street, the lower element. And he says that Moshe Rabeinu lived on in the minds of the Jewish people.

When someone was thinking of something wrong, he thought, “What would Moshe Rabeinu think of me?” and that was a deterrent.

Now, such a thing doesn’t happen by itself. It was a result of something. It was a result of a firmness. Because when you crossed the line of *din* Moshe didn’t stand for it. “The Will of Hashem must stand! If we’re going to be the Torah nation then the Torah must be allowed to drill through mountains if needed. That’s the way of the Torah nation!” And such an attitude changed us forever. That’s how powerful was the influence of the one who said “יקב הדין את החר”

Tough Love

Of course we know that no one loved the Am Yisroel more than Moshe did. Moshe prayed for them more than anyone else. Right after he publicly castigated them for being *mamrim*, for being rebellious, he said, “I prayed for you for forty days and forty nights” (Devarim 9:25). You know what it means to pray for forty days for someone! You have to love them with all your heart! You’d consider yourself a *tzadik* if you prayed for someone else for ten minutes straight. And Moshe prayed for forty days and nights! That’s called *ahavas yisroel*!

And yet the greatest love for his people was demonstrated by Moshe’s strict and constant surveillance and his stern rebuke. Because that is what caused the nation to achieve the superlative excellence of a Torah nation.

You know what it means to make a Torah nation, a nation that will be loyal forever? They have to be forged in fire! You can’t have a nation of millions – it means men and women; boys and girls; wise people and not so wise people; soft people and not so soft people – you can’t have an entire nation that is going to fulfill their destiny of being the Am Hashem unless they learn how to toe the Torah line.

And that’s why at that time Hakodosh Boruch Hu needed the most emphatic man that the world ever had; a teacher, a *rebbe*, a ruler who was the strictest in every detail of the Torah. It could be it wasn’t always sugar and spice and everything nice but we needed a Moshe Rabeinu to teach us what Torah means. It was just what the doctor ordered because the Am Yisroel knew that Moshe wouldn’t keep quiet for the smallest infraction and therefore they toed the line of duty. And that attitude towards the Torah that was planted then was expected to last forever. That was a model for every generation.

Part II. Firm and Yielding

The Strict Teacher

But now we come back to our question. If Moshe Rabeinu is the way forward, if **יִקַּב הָרֵדִין אֶת הָהָר** is the way to make a Torah nation, then why is Rabbi Eliezer ben Rabbi Yosi Hagelili in the same breath extolling the way of Aharon? He applies there wonderful words to Aharon's way. **שָׁנְאָמַר תּוֹרַת וְעוֹלָה לֹא נִמְצָא בְּשׂוֹפְתָיו, אֶמֶת הָיְתָה בְּפִיהוּ** – *In his mouth was the Torah of truth, no injustice was found on his lips*, **בְּשָׁלוֹם וּבְמִישׁוֹר הָלַךְ אֲתִי**, *he walked with Me with peace and uprightness*, **וּרְבִים הָשִׁיב מַעֲוֹן**, *and he brought back many people from doing sins*. It's praising Aharon's way! And not just praise; it's praising him up to the sky.

So who is right? Is it our strict Teacher Moshe, or is it the *rodef shalom*, Aharon Hakohen?

And the answer is you need both; just because the Torah nation needed Moshe Rabeinu's firmness and his unyielding character, that's why we need an Aharon too. You know when you have to talk with *bak-tzeiner* (explicitly), so sensitive people are hurt. When you speak with a *lashon* of strong rebuke, you know what's going to happen? It will arouse certain resentment. And so when Moshe said what had to be said – and he said it with teeth – so some people were frightened by it; many people naturally had a feeling within them of revolt.

The Easygoing Substitute Teacher

Don't you see in this place when I say things that people don't like, some people never come back. I never see them again. Last year, or maybe it was two years ago, I had a group of young men who visited me for a certain reason. Someone brought them to see me. Now I knew that they were very lax in morality. So I told them, I said, "The time will come when, for what you're doing, blood will come out of places in your body that you didn't imagine blood could come out of." Their eyes popped out of their heads. Some of them never came again.

When you have to follow that Torah principle of **יִקַּב הָרֵדִין אֶת הָהָר**, there are going to be wounded people. If the *halacha* keeps on going even through a mountain of people, it makes a hole in them and sometimes feelings will be hurt. Some will be alienated.

And so Aharon came along on the footsteps of Moshe Rabeinu and he utilized his abilities to console people; to caress them and to be *mekarev* them. And he was **וּרְבִים הָשִׁיב מַעֲוֹן** – *he saved many people from*

falling away into sin. And that was the plan of Hashem from the beginning. In order for the nation to gain from Moshe Rabeinu the most that they could gain, an Aharon was needed too. Aharon was the complimentary personality who helped to complete the personality of Moshe Rabeinu and together they led the *dor hamidbar* in becoming a generation that achieved *shleimus*.

The Soap Factory

And that's why in the same breath of *paskening* that the right way is to be unyielding, the same speaker goes on and he praises the kindness of Aharon. Because we need kindly people. The Am Yisroel needs a Moshe Rabeinu, absolutely, but just the same it was necessary to have another one who stood by the side and consoled the people; he comforted them and cajoled them. Not to wipe away the firm words *chas v'shalom* but to help the firmness settle in.

It's like when they used to make soap. You know how soap was made? Soap was made of two things. One is lye. The lye is what does the cleaning. But if you tried to clean yourself with lye, your skin would come off too. So you need some *schmaltz*. Lye and *schmaltz* together; the lye cleans it but the fat soothes it so it shouldn't be too strong.

And so Moshe Rabeinu was the lye. He burned out all the wickedness from us, all the mistakes, by teaching us the straight and firm line of Torah. And Aharon Hakohen was the gentle *tzadik*. He was the salve. He was the vaseline that came afterwards and smoothed us and caressed us so that the lye could do its good work.

Losing Our Gedolim

I remember when Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik *zichrono levrachah* passed away, there was a *hesped* here and one of the older *rabbanim* got up and said that it was a tremendous loss for our people. "Do you know why?" he said. "Because up until now everybody was afraid! We were afraid of him! But now *ovad gavra dimistafeena minei*; we lost the one who we were afraid of and now some people are going to do things that they would never have thought of doing before. They'll make statements they never would have said before."

Because when there's a *gadol hador* who has a strong character, a Moshe Rabeinu who speaks up, then many people who have *azus* and would do wrong things and say wrong things, they keep quiet. But if the generation is made up of leaders who are silent, who don't open their mouths, then the *baalei azus* start speaking and doing things.

Now it could be some weaker people don't appreciate that firm hand; it could be the more sensitive people, the weaker people, didn't cry over Rav Yitzchak Zev. Because there are always weaker people who like softies; they want to be caressed and babied. Ok, that's important too. And that's why we need Aharons to lead us too; because we want the lye that cleans to have its effect. And therefore we appreciate the Aharon Hakohens, those loving leaders of ours who caress us always.

But number one is we have to tell all Jews, "You must toe the line! There are no concessions! Everybody must keep the Torah! You have to adhere to our laws!" We'll always need a Moshe Rabeinu to be a strict and truthful teacher of the Torah who won't allow any yielding.

Removing The Reformers

One of the great troubles of the Jewish people is they're too weak in dealing with *resha'im*. Today you have wicked people, ignorant people, who take over the synagogues and the institutions and there are concessions and more concessions and that's how they finally arrive at nothing.

Who knows what kind of terrible things would have been averted had we had *Gedolei Yisroel* like in the days of old who spoke up. I remember the days of the *Agudas Harabbanim*. They were very strong! They came out openly!

I don't want to mention the terrible things that the Reformers are doing today, the Reform rabbis and the *mishkav zacharniks*, but when they came together and said "We should permit gay marriages" there should have been an upheaval, a revolution!

We need leaders who condemn it in the strongest words possible. And the Reformers would have known beforehand the *kabalas panim* they'd get. They would have thought it over before they stepped in. You toe the line or else! If you don't toe the Torah line then goodbye – you're not part of our nation. And that would save us. The scabs would fall off and we'd remain the Torah nation!

The Leaders Need Followers

That's why when we look back on that great generation in the Wilderness and think about all of the great things they experienced we have to remember that one of the greatest of all experiences was Moshe Rabeinu. Moshe, our Teacher! Everybody was afraid of him! And the nation was expected to appreciate his firm hand because we need that.

When the Torah contrasts the crying of kol Beis Yisroel over Aharon's death and the crying of Bnei Yisroel over Moshe, one of the lessons, the criticisms, is that we're expected not only to be afraid of Moshe Rabeinu – we're expected to appreciate him! As much as possible it should be kol Beis Yisroel who appreciates Moshe Rabeinu. If you understand the plan of Hashem you would appreciate equally the Moshes who are always saying, "יִקַּבְּ הָרִדִּין אֶת הָהָר." The Torah nation has to learn to open their ears to the firmness of the leaders who walk in the footsteps of Moshe Rabeinu! Not only do we need strong leaders, but just as much we need a nation who want strong leaders.

That's why when the Hisachdus HaRabbonim [Williamsburg] made their stand against television, they were successful. Because they had the people behind them. The Williamsburg Jews always meant business and they still mean business! They're very staunch Jews and they don't want their children to deviate in the slightest from the ways of their fathers. And it's easier to be a leader when you have somebody to lead.

But if you would have taken the Rabbonim of the Hisachdus and put them in our Ashkenazi *kehillos* or our Sephardi *kehillot*, they'd have to keep quiet. They wouldn't be able to open their mouths because if the people are milquetoasts so there's nobody to talk to.

Throw It Out Of Your Home!

You're lucky that I'm soft. I say the truth but I'm not saying it in the way I should be saying it. There's nobody to talk to here; there are a lot of weaklings. I know that people have it in their homes. Ok, so over here there's one *tzadik* who means business and he obeys – he threw it out. Another *tzadik* over there who also threw it out. But otherwise there are a lot of weaklings. People are putting up a good front, that's all that they're doing. Some of them even grow beards. They put on black hats and they act like *tzadikim*. But I know what's doing in the homes. There's a *ruach hatumah* in the homes. And so there's nobody to talk to.

But if you have people who know what their role is in this world, people who want to be the Am Hashem, so they *want* leaders like Moshe Rabeinu! Because that's the great opportunity for perfection, for the great perfection of achieving a Torah mind. Yes, we need the Aharon Hakohens too, absolutely. We need the *schmaltz* along with the lye. But we have to know that it's the lye that's doing the cleaning.

Life is successful when you have both the Moshe treatment and the Aharon treatment. We need both. It's a principle that we need strictness

and we also need consolation. And therefore every generation, every situation, must have Moshe Rabeinus and Aharon Hakohens.

Mashgiach vs. Menahel

You know, there was once a yeshivah and the *mashgiach* was a strict *mashgiach*. When he saw a *bachur* who didn't keep *sedarim*, he said, "I'll give you one more chance. Next time I'll send you home."

But the boy kept on missing *sedarim*. Finally one day he came into the yeshivah very late and the *mashgiach* told him, "You have to leave. No more."

The boy was hurt; he walked out of the *beis medrash* door with a broken heart. But on the other side of the door, down the hall, the *menahel* was sitting there and he told the boy to sit there in the office and learn. "Don't leave," he said.

You know what it means to leave the yeshiva? Sometimes it's a death sentence. The *beis medrash* is like a *teivah*. In the *teivah* of Noach if you sent somebody out, what's going to happen to him? He'll drown *chas veshalom*. Even if he thinks he can swim he's in trouble. The truth is that if he thinks he can swim, he's in even more trouble. It's a terrible world today. Even if a boy sits in a yeshivah and doesn't learn anything, he's better off than going outside the yeshivah. And so as soon as he's sent out you have to catch up to him and be an Aharon Hakohen and help him find a place, someplace good for him. Whatever it is, it's always Moshe and Aharon; it's *semol docheh veyamin mekarev*.

And that was one of the great lessons of the *dor hamidbar*. When you are fortunate enough to appreciate both treatments, that's when you'll make the most progress in life. Why did the Generation of the Wilderness become the best generation in our history? Why is that our model nation? Just because of that. Because they had the benefit of a Moshe and Aharon.

Part III. The Family Firm

A Father's Mercy

That's a very important lesson you're hearing now. In the Wilderness we needed a father and mother to be formed into a Torah nation. We had the benefit of both a father, that was Moshe Rabeinu, and a mother, that was Aharon Hakohen. And I use those words purposefully because that generation was a model not only for the nation; it's a model for the Torah home too.

In the davening we say *כְּרַחֵם אָב עַל בָּנָיו כֵּן תְּרַחֵם ה' עָלֵינוּ*. We're asking Hashem to have mercy on us *like a father has mercy on his children*. But there's a question here. Why doesn't it say "like the pity of a mother on her son"? That would make more sense – after all isn't it the mother who has more pity?

The answer is like this.

Let's say, one morning the father had to leave for work early and so he's not home. And now the mother goes into Chaim's room to wake him up for *cheder*. "Chaim," she says, "It's late. Get up quickly. You have to go to the *yeshivah*."

Playing Hooky

"You know, Ma, I'm really sick. I don't feel well. I can't go today."

So the mother, she has a soft heart, so she says, "Alright; alright. Get some rest."

The father comes in and says, "What do you mean you don't feel well? What's the matter? You have temperature? We'll take your temperature."

"No, I don't have a temperature."

"You have a sore throat?"

"No sore throat."

So the father is thinking, 'If I let him stay home now, at 9 o'clock, at 10 o'clock he'll become well and he'll go out in the street'. No, I can't allow that. He says to the son, "Smack! Go straight to the *yeshivah*."

Do Not Yield

Now, had there been only a mother there, who knows what would have happened to this boy. Every second day Chaim would have a sore throat at 8 o'clock and he'd stay home from *cheder*. And by early afternoon he'd be outside on the street. Who does he meet on the street? Bums. How do you think a boy bumps into drugs? He found them outside in the candy store when he was bumming around that day when he was off from the *yeshivah*.

And therefore we say *kerachem av al banim* because those are the mercies we need; a father's mercies are generally better than the mother's mercies because you need a mercy that's firm; it's *rachmanus* on the *neshama*.

And so the father in the home is a Moshe Rabeinu; he has an iron fist because he wants the children to toe the line. You need a father in the

house, somebody to carry out the strictness. If there's a son that doesn't want to go to *yeshivah*, the father has to yank him out of bed. No such thing as pity on him. The mother can come along and give him a kiss, very good. But the father has to be a father. A son that doesn't want to learn, you have to force him to learn. Of course it doesn't mean you can't give him inducements. You should give him bribes too, certainly. But don't yield.

Saving a Child's Life

You know sometimes a father comes to me and he's describing a problem with a child. And as he's talking to me I'm thinking, "What kind of milquetoast are you? That's a father?!" He should have laid down the law: "You're back in the house before dark or else! You think you're going to hang out on the street? No way!" But he just can't bring himself to that. He's a weakling. That's not a father. A father must be firm; he must demand that the family walk in the ways of the Torah, in the ways of righteousness.

I know it's not the style today but sometimes the father even has to hit the child; that's also mercy. *חושך שִׁבְטוֹ שׁוֹנֵא בְנוֹ* – If you hold back the stick you're an enemy of your son (Mishlei 13:24). That's not mercy; it means you're his enemy.

Once upon a time even *goyim lehavdil* understood that. How many *goyim* were saved from ruining their lives? The father, an old Italian *goy*, took his boy in the backyard, into the woodshed, with a stick and gave him a drumming. And you know what? They didn't become criminals. Their lives were saved.

Italians and Snoopers

I once saw a write-up. It said like this: In which country in Europe – this was a long time ago – which place in Europe is there the least juvenile delinquency? And it said there that Italy was the place. And the reason was because in Italy, of all the countries in Europe, the father was the boss. His word was law. And therefore, there was the least juvenile delinquency; because there was a fear of the father's *potch*.

Only that today there are child abuse phone lines and snoopers. They see you hitting your child and they call up the child abuse committee and a woman comes down with a notebook, "What's it all about?"

So we live in a *meshugeneh* world where they don't want us raising our children; there should be no fathers in the home, that's what they want. But we say no! We don't want to become *meshugeh* like you. And so

certainly you must hit. Sometimes you must! Only you must employ wisdom. I can't give you easy solutions but you must be a father!

If you do it right, words will help much more than hitting. Moshe Rabeinu didn't hit the *kohanim* when he saw that the *chatas* was burned up. *Vayiktzof!* He showed anger. But Moshe's anger was worse than hitting. They were frightened to death. And so if a father knows that the son is hurt by his father's displeasure, showing displeasure is sufficient. Whatever it is, the father's role is to make sure everyone is toeing the line.

Nature's Plan

Of course you need the mother too. You need an Aharon Hakohen in the house. Let's say the boy got a *potch* and now the father walks out. The mother caresses him and says, "My sweet boy. I'm so sorry. Go to the *yeshivah*. Listen to your father." And she sends him off with a piece of cake or a cookie and he yields. He yields to the *potch* and the caress.

And so you need both of them, certainly! Your mother always came to console you, to make you feel happy even though the father was strict. So you need both together.

That's what a father and a mother are for. Hakodosh Baruch Hu planned the family that way; the father is firm and the mother caresses. It's a ruination of the family if they break the natural arrangement that Hakodosh Baruch Hu made. There must be a father and his mercies are "No concessions!" And the mother cooperates. Only she does it differently; she cajoles and persuades the child. "Obey Abba. He knows best."

That's how Hakodosh Boruch Hu made it. It's a natural thing. Hakodosh Boruch Hu made such an arrangement for the purpose so that the Torah family should always be successful because both father and mother play their role. Of course sometimes the father is the weak one. Sometimes the mother is stronger, but by and large that's the principle.

Fathers Are Mothers Too

Now, everything should be done with *seichel*. The mother cannot be too yielding. The mother also has to worry about the child's future. She'll let the children do what they want? She should always yield to them and make them feel good? No, of course not. The mother has to be a Moshe Rabeinu sometimes too.

And the father also cannot be cruel and ignore the child's feelings. But is the father going to bring home toys all the time to his children? Should he always let them do what they want? If he does that, he's not a father. He'd be failing in the performance that's required of him. And

therefore although a father has to use judgment too – he can caress, and he can give toys too, but a father must still be a father. From the beginning the father should say, “Do this!” and he should also caress. The mother should also say, “Do this!” and caress. Both things, with *rogez* and with *rachamim*; בְּרִגְזוֹ וְרַחֲמֵם תִּזְכֹּר. Both things together.

Encouragement Works

A man called me this week on the telephone and he says that he has a son that doesn't listen to him. A young boy who doesn't listen to him. So I said, “Call him in and caress his cheek and talk to him.” You should know that the words go into his head. Even though he may seem to not be listening, the words go into his head anyways. Give him a *glett*, a caress on the cheek, and talk to him.

You know children also have burdens; they might not be your burdens but in their own eyes they have very big burdens. And you can put your shoulder under their heavy packages and lighten their load by encouraging them with kind words. And children who are encouraged in the home learn better. They are more neat in their habits. They are cooperative if they are encouraged. Parents who speak to their children should know that their words are heard. And not only if he's a good child; any child.

So the mercy of a father also means to pat him on the cheek and say, “Chaim'l, you really have a good *neshama* and I think you can make something great out of yourself. So let's do this one line in the Gemara. I'm going to learn with you now, just one line. And say it over to me.”

So Chaim says one line over. He knows one line in the Gemara and he feels good that he knows it. You praise him up to the sky! You know what that means?! You're putting him on his feet! And sometimes you give him something too. Give him half a dollar each time. דָּבָר תּוֹרָה מְעוֹת קוֹנוֹת. Money helps. A kind *glett* and words of encouragement – some money too – can do wonders. You can build up a boy that way!

Planned Parenthood

But even that requires firmness. A line a day is still a line. He can't go outside to play until it's done. And he should know it! The end will be he might become a *chacham* too. A lot of boys who bummed around, but they had strict fathers and something came of them!

And therefore the father must be the Moshe Rabeinu, the one who stands on principle. Of course he has to be a man of consideration too, but he has to be a man of principle because knows what will happen in the

long run if he allows the child to do as he wishes. And so he has to sacrifice some of that mercy that is in his heart.

So you understand now why *kol Beis Yisroel* cried for Aharon when he passed away, while for Moshe not so much. Beis Yisroel means the more emotional element. Who doesn't appreciate a softie, someone that makes everything smooth? And therefore the weeping for Moshe was less than the weeping for Aharon.

But we see that Hashem's plan was to supply Israel with a stern father and gentle mother. *These are the journeys of the Sons of Israel when they went forth from the land of Egypt according to their hosts, by the hand of Moshe and Aharon* (33:1). It was Hashem's arrangement whereby two leaders of such different natures headed the nation and He wants us to appreciate that. And as long as you appreciate them properly and know that the father is a father and the mother is a mother and that together they accomplish the purpose of giving you the perfection from which you were created, that's how you'll become successful in this world.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Being Firm

While everyone mourned the death of Aharon, only the wise people mourned the death of Moshe who was a stern father to his people. It takes wisdom to recognize "a father's mercy", to feel the love even when it is administered with sternness.

This week I will *bli neder* work on developing the attitude of being a demanding father. Rav Miller always explained that the most important child one can parent is him/herself. This week I will set aside a minute each day to berate myself sternly and exercise strict self control so that I can improve in serving Hashem.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

Tapes: **R-24** - Good Misfortune | **266** - Gateway to Greatness
433 - Benefit of Misfortune, Substitutes for Misfortune | **483** - Bringing Up Children VI, Preparing for Life | **E-66** - Our Father and Mother

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

What is the purpose of a yetzer hora in children if anyhow they will not receive reward or punishment for their deeds?

A:

The answer is that a child benefits greatly by the battle for virtue. It's only because of trial and error, the experience that a child gains by means of trial and error, that's what makes him prepared when he is *bar mitzvah* to immediately step into the shoes of an adult.

When a child has to fight against jealousy – for example when he sees his mother handling a new baby and this little boy who was there first, he was the only one, the darling of the house, and now feels left out and he feels jealous, so he knows he has to contend with it. Even without being intelligent but because he has to live in that house, he knows he can't run away. And so to some extent he battles against his *yetzer hora* and he adjusts. He has an innate intelligence to battle against any wicked feelings. And by means of that he is flexing his muscles.

That, by the way, is why little children frolic so much; it's why little kittens jump around, and little dogs jump around, and little birds jump around; because when they do that they are flexing their muscles and they develop their bodies and so they are prepared for the career of adulthood.

And the same is spiritually. A child is tested by the *yetzer hora*; he battles against it. Little children have a conscience too; they have *chochmah* within them and they battle against the *yetzer hora*. Until finally at *bar mitzvah*, they are prepared somewhat. They don't suddenly make an abrupt change; they are prepared for the test because they are already experienced in the *milchemes hayetzer*.

— This week's Q&A sponsored: —

Refuah Shleima for Daniel ben Shifra