



OLD MISSION, NEW TORCHBEARER

Erev Shabbos Parashas Tzav, Shabbos HaGadol, Erev Pesach 5783

Dear Parents,

We read in this week's *parsha* of the *mitzvah* performed each morning in the *Beis Hamikdash* – that of *Terumas HaDeshen*, the Lifting Up of the Ashes (*Vayikra 6:3*). The selected *Kohein*, dressed in his priestly garments, would go up on the *Mizbeiach* (altar) and remove some of the ashes remaining from the previous day's *Korbanos*. Once this was performed, the *Avoda* (service) of the day could commence. **“...whatever service of Hashem we perform today, is on the shoulders of what came before.”**

Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch *zt'l* explains (Commentary on *Chumash*) that this ceremony served to demonstrate that whatever service of *Hashem* we perform today, is on the shoulders of what came before. By incorporating their removal into the new day's service, the ashes come to symbolize what was attempted and accomplished yesterday. There is no new mission. Today's *mitzvos* are carrying out, in a renewed form, the mission that yesterday too was to accomplish. *Rav Hirsch* writes: *The very last generation's children stand before Hashem, with the same mission of life that their ancestors bore, and every day adds to all its predecessors in the whole passing of centuries.*

This appreciation of how each day builds upon the day before, and each generation carries on the same sacred mission of parents, grandparents and preceding generations is so apropos for this time of year. These days, our minds and time are absorbed by the myriad steps and details involved in proper preparations for *Pesach* and the *Seder*. Let's keep our eyes on the goal of all this frenetic activity; to properly keep *Hashem's* commandments, and to do them in a way that makes as positive an impression as possible, on our children.

This is not a call for parents to conduct themselves like absolute *Tzaddikim* in the face of the inevitable overwhelming frustrations that *Pesach* preparations throw our way, even as we hope to set a good example for the children. What every parent can and must do, is re-center our focus once *Pesach* arrives and the pressure abates. Let's give thought to how we are going to make this *Yom Tov* pleasurable and enriching for each of our children.

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You might be thinking – look at everything I've gone through since *Purim* (and before) to get ready – it's all for the children! That is true and undoubtedly appreciated in the Heavens, but what do the children perceive and feel? Do they feel more connected to you and *Hashem* because you stayed up until 3:00 AM four nights in a row to get everything ready? They need a personal connection that is meaningful. It can't be bought or fabricated. Even the most expensive *Afikomen* gift won't do it. It might breed greed and jealousy, but not connection.

Our children need our special attention, and it will only happen if we plan for it. Whether we have one, two, five or ten children, we have to consciously decide when we will spend special time with each of them- It is easier than we realize to overlook any or many of them and the entire *Yom Tov* can fly by and we will not have had that special time with that special child. Thankfully, it is also easy to incorporate a special walk, talk, game, shopping trip, even a shared chore.

The same holds true for the *Seder* and each *Seudah*. Let's think consciously of each child and make a mental note to ensure that each of them has a chance to ask a question, tell a story or *Dvar Torah*, answer a question, sing a song, be the center of attention, or just to sit by your side with you holding them.

A major part of being a successful parent entails allowing each child to occupy space in our consciousness and keeping a *Cheshbon* (accounting) that each one gets his or her opportunities to bond with us and to feel special, **for they all are truly special.**

“Ensure your children are growing into their role of keeping the torch of previous generations burning brightly.”

May your *Yom Tov* find you strongly connected to *Hashem* and to your family. May *Hashem* help you to ensure your children are growing into their role of keeping the torch of previous generations burning brightly. Make the most of this *Yom Tov's* unique opportunities to inspire your family to truly appreciate the special mission with which *Hashem* has entrusted us. That's what the freedom in *Z'man Cheiruseinu* is for.

Best wishes for a wonderful *Shabbos* and a *Chag Kasher V'Sameach*,

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Principal