

# From the desk of Rabbi Baumann



Dear Parents,

*Erev Shabbos Parashas Ha'azinu Likras Sukkos 5780*

All parents have an image and dream of what they wish for their children to achieve in life. This can be helpful because having clear goals is a major step in achieving and accomplishing something meaningful. On the other hand, if the child's dreams don't coincide with the parents', there's potential trouble ahead.

**“...having clear goals is a major step in achieving and accomplishing something meaningful.**

At the very end of *Parashas Ha'azinu*, (*Devarim 32:50*) Hashem tells *Moshe* to ascend the mountain and prepare to die, “*like your brother Aharon died.*” *Rashi* points out this was the type of death that *Moshe* desired, for *Moshe* had expressed longing for what he observed – that of “*...Aharon seeing his son (Eliezer) being honored by inheriting his father's position.*”

The question therefore arises – we know that *Moshe* had wanted his own sons to inherit his leadership position (*Rashi -Bamidbar 27:16*). How could his death possibly parallel that of *Aharon's* if *Yehoshua* is the one actually inheriting the mantle of leadership from *Moshe*, and not one of his own sons?

*HaRav Dovid Feinstein, Shlita* is quoted as answering this question by pointing out that *Moshe's* main leadership role was not that of a king or leader, but rather as the major Torah authority and teacher of his generation. Just as a father brings a son into this world, so does a *Rebbi* bring his “sons,” his students, into the eternal world. As *Yehoshua's Rebbi*, it brought great joy to *Moshe* to see his *talmid* being the one to carry on his teachings into the next generation. What greater *Nachas* can there be for a *Rebbi* than to see his students following in his path and continuing his legacy into the future?

This is also a point of departure between parent and *Rebbi*. A parent, as mentioned earlier, may have a clear goal set for his child, usually as the result of his own skill set and career choice. Successful doctors wish the same for their children, and accomplished *Talmidei Chachomim* presumably have their hearts set on producing sons just like them. In a family of several children, it's likely one or more will follow that path. However, what of the one who has a different skill set, different interests, a different temperament and a different nature? What does the parent do with that child?

**“...work towards appreciating your child's strengths and how you can best help him or her realize that potential.”**

*Rabbi A. L. Scheinbaum* raises this issue and points out that it is not the Torah way to force a child onto a path he is not comfortable with. Negative responses to a child not conforming to the parent's dream and expectation of life choice, is counterproductive. In the end, *Moshe's* children did not become the leaders, and *Moshe* was fine with that. *Moshe* accepted Hashem's decision and joyfully bestowed the leadership role onto his student. *Moshe*, in his role as teacher and leader taught this lesson so well – a parent's love and respect for his children need to transcend his personal aspirations for them.

Take the opportunity this *Sukkos* to observe and analyze your children's strengths and challenges as you spend quality time with them. Reflect upon your personal preferences for your children's future. If the two are not in sync, work towards appreciating your child's strengths and how you can best help him or her realize that potential. This may be the greatest gift you will ever give your child.

Best wishes for a wonderful *Shabbos* and a joy-filled *Chag*,

*Rabbi Kalman Baumann*

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