

Miketz

In Sidrah *Miketz*, we read how Joseph prepared the land of Egypt for the coming famine. Not only was there enough grain for the people of Egypt, but as the Torah tells us: "And all countries came unto Egypt to Joseph to buy corn because the famine was strong all over the earth."¹ The Torah goes on to tell us that Jacob sent ten of his sons to Egypt to purchase corn. When the brothers arrived in Egypt they were brought before Joseph, whom they did not recognize, for interrogation. Although the brothers tried to convince Joseph that they were not spies, Joseph had them imprisoned for three days. On the third day, Joseph told them that they could redeem themselves and demonstrate their good faith by having their youngest brother, Benjamin, brought to Egypt.

The Torah tells us: "And they said to one another, we are very guilty concerning our brother, etc." They began to feel guilty for the way they treated Joseph. "And Reuben answered them saying: 'Spoke I not unto you saying: do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear?'"²

I once heard a Rebbe say, "When someone sins against G-d, he has Yom Kippur to atone for his sins. When someone sins against his fellow man he can always ask forgiveness from him. If he took something or destroyed one's property he can make restitution. However, when one sins against a child, it is then considered as if he has sinned against the entire world, against every coming generation.

When a Jewish child is born, having the potential to grow up to become another *Rashi*, *Rambam*, *Ramban*, etc., but his parents rob him of a proper Jewish education by just giving him a smidgen, the barest minimum, thereby estranging him from Torah Judaism—is there then a *kapparah*, atonement, for this? Man was given by G-d the choice to decide his own spiritual fate.³ What one does to himself is between him and Hashem; however, no parent has the right to deprive his children of Hashem, his Torah, or his nation. Should parents do this, who will forgive them?

The lesson of *Limud HaTorah* is clearly visible not only for our children but for ourselves as well. For if we are bidden to ensure the *Limud HaTorah* of our children, then, certainly we must see to it that we too designate a fixed time for Torah study. Especially the Yom Tov of Chanukah reminds us of the victory of Torah Judaism. The word Chanukah comes from the word *chinuch* which not only means education, but dedication as well. Let us follow the example of the Maccabees who rededicated the *Bais Hamikdosh*, and rededicate ourselves by fixing a daily time for learning, studying, basking in the warmth of Torah.

Listen as the Maccabees did to the cry of "*Mi LaHashem*" and become a soldier of Torah. If you do, then you can surely know that you will not be guilty of Reuben's charge of "*al techetuh ba'yeled, v'lo sh'matem*"—"Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear."

FOOTNOTES

1. Bereishith 41:57
2. Ibid. 42:21, 22
3. See Devorim 30:15