

FAMILY ISSUES

Feuerman

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a teacher-student transmission of information; otherwise one would be tempted to suffice with simple explanations.

This explains the “why” of the Oral Torah but not the “what.” What is the functional feature and benefit of the Oral Torah? Does something qualitatively different occur when one studies the Oral as opposed to the Written Torah?

To better understand this we should consider that the idea of not transcribing the Torah did not necessarily end with the Mishna and Gemara. Not everyone welcomed the codifying of *halacha*. The Maharal (*Nesivos Olam, Nesiv Ha-Torah* 15) strongly criticized the *halachic* codes of his day because he felt it would lead to an ossification of the dynamic halachic process:

“We are taught in a *Beraisa*: “The *Tanaim* [this is

referring to the savants who memorized the teachings and not the *rabbanim* of the Mishna] destroy the world. Could it truly mean that they destroy the world? Do they not establish the world [by preserving the teachings]? Rather they destroy the world because the offer *halachic* rulings from their rote memorized teachings... This means that they *pasken* from their teachings without understanding the basis of their rulings. This is why they destroy the world because they are destroying Torah when they do this, as this is not real Torah. It is only real Torah when you decide based on your intellectual understanding... In our generation it would be bad enough if they ruled from the Mishna, which at least is the beginning of the Talmudic analytic process, but worse, they rule from codes which are not designed to teach Torah but rather to offer *halachic* guides. This state of affairs is contrary to proper thinking. True, the early authorities such as the Rambam and the Tur also wrote codes and didn’t provide their analy-

sis, but their intention was to show the *halacha* they arrived at through the intellectual and analytic process of studying the sources. It never was their intention that a person should rule from their codes without knowing the underlying reason. If they thought that their writings would have led people to abandon studying Gemara and deciding *halacha* from merely external texts, they never would have written it. It is far better to rule *halacha* from studying the Gemara even if it is possible that one might rule incorrectly. The scholar only can know what his intellect shows him from his analysis – and even his albeit mistaken ruling is beloved to Hashem, may He be blessed. The judge only can judge from what his eyes see. This is far preferable than to rule from a composition without knowing any of the real reasons, to be as a blind man who gropes along the path.”

The Maharal makes several powerful points that require discussion and understanding, which we will focus on in Part II.

Schonfeld

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Space. Unconditional love gives children the space to be themselves. They retain a basic trust in the world and a sense of their inherent value as human beings. When they feel protected and safe, they are able to explore and engage in the world creatively. This allows them to gain an increasing sense of responsibility over themselves.

Mentorship. Through direct instruction and our behavior as role models, we teach our children skills that are applicable to their everyday lives. At times, we might cultivate generalized capacities such as *middos* or courage; at other times, how to tie shoes and brush teeth. Giving your children the ability to take care of themselves and thrive is the essence of parenting.

Healthy boundaries. Often parents think that in order to preserve their loving connection with their children (based on unconditional love), they cannot set strong limits and boundaries. Shapiro and White argue that this is not accurate. When we offer our children strong clear boundaries, we create a sense of safety. We also indicate unequivocally who is the

parent and who is the child. While there are times where we might let the child lead, in the broad sense, children need to know that the parent is taking care of them. Shapiro and White call this a “loving hierarchy.”

This loving hierarchy is a balance between authoritarian parenting (“I am always in charge. You will do as I say. Because I said so.”) and permissive parenting (“Dinner is whatever you can find in the fridge. Don’t wake me when you get home. Oh, you had a test in school today?”). A loving hierarchy allows your child to know that he is loved for and taken care of and therefore has limits, but also gives him space to occasionally take the reigns himself.

Mistakes. Shapiro and White actually spell the word as “mis-takes” in their book. They use that spelling to signify that these are “missed takes” or times that we missed the mark and need to redirect. Rather than seeing these as errors, we can see them as ways to allow ourselves to recognize our vulnerabilities and improve our parenting.

Discipline

Just like in Daniel Siegel’s book *No Drama Discipline*, Shapiro and White point out that “discipline” comes from the Latin root “to teach.” They argue that

discipline should be about helping your child cultivate greater happiness and health in his life. Mindful discipline involves disciplining in a “conscious, loving way that can deeply support your child’s growth and development. It’s about being attuned to the present moment so that you know what the most skillful action is in any given moment. Discipline will really not be impactful unless a parent are first and foremost present and connected with themselves and with their child. Parenting is not a flip chart, where you first do A, then B, then C. It’s really a dynamic process, and mindfulness is the best tool.”

To that end, their book offers fifteen mindful awareness practices that help parents increase their capacity to be present, clear-minded, and heartfelt as they set limits. Obviously, there will be moments that being mindful will elude you like a screaming child in the grocery store the week before Pesach. *But*, the idea behind mindful discipline is that you try to live in the moment, adjusting to needs of the situation, and, of course, growing from your mistakes!

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Pachter

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pansion of your inner self allows you to see your own greatness. Thus, you create enough room to let another person into your heart, giving all you can to him or her.

Let us explain with a Love-Log analogy: You need sticks, twigs and newspaper to ignite a bonfire. If you only have these three things, however, the fire will extinguish quickly. You need wooden logs to eventually catch aflame and sustain the fire. On the other hand, if you only have these logs, the fire will not alight. These components are all necessary for a successful bonfire. This idea is the concept behind in-

fatuation and love. You need sparks of passion or the love-logs will never ignite. However, you need love-logs or these sparks will never endure.

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