CONSISTENCY IS KEY

by Rabbi Dovid Green

In this week's parsha the Torah talks about exposing our children to Torah, and Torah functions.. "And their children who don't know will hear, and learn to fear Hashem Your G-d _all of the days_ etc." Why does the Torah stress "all of the days"? Either the goal is to see to it that observance remains throughout one's generations, or it is a statement about the quality of our observance of Torah. That is to say that we can understand the words "all of the days" as expressing expectations to us specifically about how we perform commandments, as opposed to making sure observance remains in our families. Even so, we'll see that the two really go hand in hand.

The quality of observance which we are speaking of is consistency. Many commandments are meant to be performed daily. Nevertheless, many people have ebbs and flows. Sometimes we give it our best, and other times we backslide. Even though that might be very "human" - it is not the preferred way to be.

The Chofetz Chaim has a parable to illustrate this point. Reuven meets Shimon. "Greetings, Shimon. How are you?" Oh, Reuven, I don't wish it on you. I'm quite ill." "But Shimon, to look at you is to see a man who looks in the best of health." "Indeed, I feel well today, Reuven, but I'm suffering from a chronic fever. Today I may feel well, but I could wake up with a high fever tomorrow. I've been suffering with this for quite some time now. So you see, I really am a very sick man."

So it is with the way we run our lives. If we are not consistent in important matters, it is a reflection on our entire performance - even at the times we do work consistently. G-d wants our performance of His commandments to be done with consistent effort, enthusiasm, and forethought. If not, it is a statement about the entirety of our devotion to G-d and His commandments.

I believe there is another important point to emphasize here. The topic of the passage is conveying loyalty to G-d to children who were not in the wilderness experiencing G-d's miracles and salvation. It's not something which can be done in one day with a good speech, or an inspiring seminar. It's a process. We convey it to our children daily. They see what we consider important. What do we do enthusiastically on a daily basis? Well, of course, we never forget to come to the dinner table. Many people would say that a day is not a day without watching one's favorite show, or "chatting" on the internet. This is what we are conveying to those who emulate us. The things we do every day "religiously" are the things which are most important to us. By examining what we think is really important, we may find that we would alter some things we often do. We might even place a new emphasis on some things we would like to do, especially knowing that generations may emulate our

qualities.

Before Yom Kippur, it is customary to introspect. Let us ask ourselves if the example we set is one which we would be proud to see in the next generation. What should we continue doing? What should we eliminate? What is the approach to take to self-improve? "In order that they will hear and learn...all of the days."

Good Shabbos!

Text Copyright &copy 1998 Rabbi Dovid Green and **Project Genesis, Inc.**