

# WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

*by Torah.org*

Children intuitively feel their parents' love... even when their parents are upset. Children may not like the experience of being reprimanded, losing a privilege or being sent to their rooms, but they still know whether they are loved.

This week we read the section of the Torah called the "Tochacha - the rebuke." The Torah portion begins with a description of the great rewards promised to the Jewish nation if they remain loyal to the Commandments of the Torah, but then turns to the dire consequences for not following the Torah's teachings. The punishments are laid out, and the Torah even warns that should the Jewish nation not return to G-d, the severity of the rebuke will increase.

In Lev. 26:23-24, G-d says, "If with these [punishments] you will not return to me and you continue to act with me with indifference, I too will act with you with indifference." The description of the consequences that follow appear to be a new level of severity, but the expression of "indifference" - *Keri* in Hebrew - seems strikingly mild. Is "getting the silent treatment" such a terrible punishment?

Beyond the showering of gifts or the sting of discipline, children recognize their parent's love through the attention parents give them. Toys and treats can be meaningless, or even painful, if the parents don't have time for their children. If parents are indifferent to their children's accomplishments, or even to their misbehavior, the child feels they have no value. They tell themselves, "my parents don't care what I do." And if their parents don't care about them, why should anyone else?

Feeling parental interest is critical to a child -- and feeling G-d's interest is critical to us.

We must, as G-d's children, show our love as well. Serving and loving G-d demonstrates that our relationship with Him is valuable to us, much like gifts to a parent, even simple drawings, represent a child's love. Our lives are busy, but we must make time for prayer and studying G-d's words. If G-d doesn't make a difference in our lives, we cannot expect to feel His blessings of love and His direction. May we all find new ways to incorporate G-d into our schedule, and then we can look forward to a more meaningful, spiritually connected life. (Based on the teachings of Rabbi Shmuel Yaakov Weinberg zt"l)