

WATCH ME

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

And you shall teach them to your children to speak in them (words of Torah) Debarim 11:19

In the second paragraph of the Shema Yisrael Moshe Rabenu repeats his instruction to the Jewish people to teach Torah to their children. Of all the requirements that parenthood entails the command to teach our children is repeated many times in the Torah in order to stress its importance to all generations. In each of the places where this all-important misvah is mentioned a different aspect of the commandment is learned. What is special about this week's alert?

There was once a man that sent his son to a great scholar asking that the Rabbi train his son in preparation for his thirteenth birthday when he would reach the age of Bar Misvah - entry into the adult congregation of Israel. After several lessons the boy did not come back to learn from the Rabbi. The curious sage contacted the father and inquired about his young student's whereabouts.

"I am not sending him back", responded the irate parent.

"What seems to be the problem?" asked the Rabbi, "We were progressing very well towards the big day when he would accept the yoke of the commandments". "Well, I made up my mind not to continue when my son returned from a lesson and asked me, 'When are you going to make Bar Misvah Daddy?'"

"What do you mean?" the Rabbi asked.

"My son said, 'The Rabbi told me that once I became Bar Misvah I would have to put on my tefillin every day and so I was wondering when you were going to make your Bar Misvah'."

"I was not able to answer but I did decide not to send him back again," Dad explained.

The verse says: "And you shall teach them to your children - to speak in them." Our Rabbis explain that the best way to teach is by example. If you want to teach a child that he must learn Torah and observe its commandments you should "Speak in them" - occupy your time learning and doing. The best teacher is a father who does what he wants his children to do.

It is important to work on oneself constantly in order to become a positive role model for one's offspring. Someone once asked the Hafetz Hayim "When should one start the training of his children?"

"About twenty years before he is born", replied the Torah giant. The traits necessary to be a Torah

personality and a figure for one's children to emulate takes years of training to develop. Therefore, one must begin the self-improvement program years before becoming a parent. To be successful in the job of parenting one must live Torah "When you are sitting in your home, when you are lying down and arising and when you depart on the road" Success.

Shabbat Shalom

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