



A Message For Shavuos

Dear Parents,

The excitement with which we anticipate the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuos* and reliving the experience of accepting the Torah anew, as our forefathers first did at *Har Sinai* 3,330 years ago, steers us toward two of the notable features surrounding *Kabbolas Hatorah* (*Receiving of the Torah*).

We are all familiar with the *Gemara* (*Sotah 5a*) which tells us that *Hashem* bypassed higher and more majestic mountains to reveal Himself on *Har Sinai*, a lesson in humility. We are also familiar with the comment of *Rashi* (*Shemos 19:2*), quoting the *Mechilta*, that the Jews were as one person with one heart when they encamped at *Har Sinai*. This powerfully demonstrates that successful transmission of the Torah can take place only when there is unity and peace among the Jewish People.

These twin attributes - humility and unity, are not only a successful formula that was necessary 3,000 years ago, but they are keys to our and our children's success in learning and internalizing the words of Torah. Our entire lives are dedicated to enabling our children to successfully internalize the message and values of Torah. A deeper examination of the role of humility and unity would therefore be in order.

What marks a child for success in Torah learning? Is it IQ? Is it a good memory? Is it having the best teachers? Best parents? While these may be helpful attributes, they are not the keys the Torah delineates. **The most important factors are not gifts from Hashem, rather they come from a person's own efforts.** They are *midos* that any and every person can strive for and achieve. Most curiously - they are not directly related to the cognitive process of

taking in, understanding and retaining information. They are in the realm of *Bein Adam L'Chaveiro* - interpersonal relations.

Humility and unity were fundamental thousands of years ago and they remain so in the modern classroom and *Beis Medrash*. Not only are these wonderful *Midos* which have intrinsic value and are ingredients to a happy and fulfilling life, **these are the secret entranceways to the ultimate depth and profundity of the universe - the Torah.**

We must keep this in mind when raising our children. We want them to be successful students of Torah, perhaps even real *Talmidei Chachomim*, so they surely need to work on their *midos*, as we work on ours. We can help them help themselves and their peers by emphasizing good *midos*, and conferring the highest value on sensitive and ethical behavior.

This week's chapter in *Pirkei Avos* (6:6) lists the 48 Ways that Torah is acquired. The vast majority are in the realm of interpersonal human behavior and *midos tovos*, humility and love of others among them. Let us celebrate this *Shavuos* and our receiving the greatest gift mankind has ever known - the Torah, our blueprint for life, by redoubling our efforts to bring an atmosphere of humility and unity into our homes, for the sake of our children's success in the effort to become true personifications of Torah.

Have a great *Shabbos* and a wonderful, *nachas*-filled *Yom Tov*,



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