

The Message We Send

The story takes place in the early 1900's, as the family of Yitzchak, an outstanding young boy of eleven, waited in anticipation for the new dress the father had ordered for the mother. It would be the first new dress she would have in years. Pesach was coming soon, and what better time than Yom Tov to banei, put on the new dress for the first time. The entire family waited eagerly in anticipation of the arrival of the new dress. Finally, news came that it was ready, but the mother was not going to put it on until Yom Tov. It was just not right.

Yitzchak was an exceptional student who was very adept at his Torah studies. Although young in age, he had skipped a few classes and was already studying with boys much older than himself. He came home a few days before Pesach and matter-of-factly told his mother that he had just completed Meseches Bava Kamma. His mother kvelled, beamed, with pride. Yitzchak made nothing of the accomplishment, but his mother was thrilled.

The next evening, Yitzchak came home from the yeshivah to be greeted by an astonishing sight. The table, covered with Shabbos linen, was set with their finest china; the candles were lit; and - his mother was wearing her brand new dress that she had been saving for Yom Tov!

Understandably, Yitzchak was shocked. After taking a few moments to compose himself, he blurted out, "What is all of this? It is not Shabbos! It is not Yom Tov! Yet, you are wearing the dress that you were saving for Pesach. What is the happy occasion?"

His mother looked glowingly at Yitzchak, smiled and said, "You are correct. I was saving the dress for Yom Tov. What greater Yom Tov is there, however, than when my son completes a Mesechta, tractate in the Talmud? There is nothing more special to me than my son's Torah learning. If you are making a siyum, completing a Mesechta, then I want to celebrate with you."

Yitzchak never forgot this incident. He knew how proud his mother was of his achievements, and he was now acutely aware of the value she placed upon them. As he continued to complete one Mesechta after another, his mother's message reverberated within him. As Yitzchak grew into the venerable Horav Yitzchak Hutner, zl, Rosh Yeshivah of Mesivta Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin, he imparted this lesson to his thousands of students.

Having said that, let us ask ourselves: Do we demonstrate to our children the proper esteem in which we hold their Torah studies? What message do we send them? Do we attend their siyumim? Do we encourage their learning? Do we appreciate their rebbeim? Are we setting the proper example?