

תורה  
צוה לנו  
משה  
מורשה  
קהילת  
יעקב

The Torah

commanded  
to us

by Moshe

is the  
inheritance

of the  
congregation

of Yaakov

דברים לג:ד — Devarim 33:4.

## TORAH TZIVAH

# To Cherish the Torah

## 1. OUR PRIZED POSSESSION

### The Opening Message

On a basic level, the *pasuk* of *Torah Tzivah* teaches that all Jews should see the Torah as their everlasting birthright. While *Moshe Rabbeinu* taught Hashem's Torah to our ancestors in the *midbar* long ago, it will forever be the heritage of the Jewish People. We, "*Ke-hilas Yaakov*," the collective entity of *Yaakov Avinu*'s descendants, are an eternal nation, and Hashem's Torah is everlasting as well.<sup>1</sup>

*Torah Tzivah* is the very **first** of the Twelve *Pesukim* and Torah messages that the Rebbe selected for children to learn, internalize, and

---

1. See Ramban and Ibn Ezra on the *pasuk* of *Torah Tzivah*, *Devarim* 33:4.

teach others. Clearly, this placement is deliberate. It indicates to our children that this idea **precedes** all others, and without it, the other messages of the Twelve *Pesukim* might not be fully appreciated.

This raises an obvious question: What is so outstanding about this message? Chances are that a child is already well familiar with the fact that we were given the Torah. What is the significant insight offered here that must be reiterated and internalized?



playact  
pg. 21

## Our Bond with the Torah

Upon closer look, one will notice that the *pasuk* of *Torah Tzivah* does not only state the fact that we were given an everlasting Torah. It also indicates how we should **feel about the Torah**:

A key word of the *pasuk* is “*morashah*,” specifying that the Torah is our **inheritance**. Regular property can be bought and sold at any time, but an inheritance stays in the family. It is too special to be given to anyone else since it is cherished on a personal level. Children may be familiar with a family heirloom or other precious items passed down from generation to generation. It’s easy for them to recognize that it’s not the item’s monetary value that makes it worth holding onto; it’s about personal attachment and connection.<sup>2</sup>

In this light, *Torah Tzivah* is telling us to cherish the Torah and hold it especially dear. We do not just have **access** to the Torah; rather, it has been given to us as our **personal inheritance**. The Torah isn’t only holy and special — it’s personal, and we should feel a boundless attachment to it every day of our lives.

Importantly, this insight is not some complex *derush* on the *pasuk*’s wording; it is actually the *pshat*, the simple meaning, as taught by *Rashi*. Seeking to explain the *Chumash* on the level of a young child, *Rashi* writes: “The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the inheritance of the Congregation of Yaakov; we possess it as **an inheritance**, and **we will not forsake it!**”<sup>3</sup>

2. In some cases, the Torah makes it impossible for a person to forgo their inheritance. This is the concept of the *Shevatim*’s inherited fields in *Eretz Yisrael*, a *sdei achuzah*, which may not be sold unless there is no other choice. Then, even when it is sold, the sale is considered temporary and the land is returned to the family by the *Yovel* year. *Vayikra* 25:10-28, and *Rashi* there, 25:25.

3. *Rashi* on *Devarim*, *ibid.*, as is clarified in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 29, p. 229ff.

## The Foundation of *Chinuch*

With the above clarification in mind, the placement of *Torah Tzivah* as the first of these twelve educational messages is clearly understood.

*Yiddishkeit* contains many foundational ideas, ranging from *emunah* in Hashem to the identity of a *Yid*, *ahavas Yisrael*, and so on. However, a strong connection to the Torah is the cornerstone of all Jewish education. In fact, this is a message that must precede all others.

This is because the Torah is the foundation of all Jewish living. Everything a child will be taught to do and live by is stated in the Torah:

A young child is taught to say *Modeh Ani* because that is what the Torah says; to say a *berachah*, because the Torah says so; to have *ahavas Yisrael* because this is the *klal gadol*, the great principle, of the Torah, and so on.

Therefore, when a child is imbued with the ability to appreciate and cherish the Torah, by extension, they are given what it takes to appreciate every aspect of Torah, *mitzvos*, and *minhagei Yisrael*.<sup>4</sup>

The Twelve *Pesukim* are intended to provide *Yiddishe* boys and girls with proper clarity, conviction, and direction in their young lives. They are, in a sense, a general roadmap to raising Jewish children. Therefore, it begins with the fundamental message of *Torah Tzivah*, imbuing children with connection and attachment to the Torah — their blueprint for life.

## A Toddler's First Lesson

As the Rebbe himself noted, the selection of *Torah Tzivah* to be the first *pasuk* actually follows the pattern of a clear *halachah* regarding the start of Torah education.

*Halachah* establishes that as soon as a child starts to speak, even before they can comprehend big ideas, we are to teach them *Torah Tzivah*.<sup>5</sup>

---

4. 1 Teves 5739, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, p. 493; *Toras Menachem* 5749, Vol. 1, p. 203. See also 18 Tishrei 5752, *Toras Menachem* 5752, Vol. 1, pp. 133-134.

5. Sukkah 42a; *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Talmud Torah*, 1:1. In particular, this

At that tender age, a toddler is likely unable to intellectually comprehend the *pasuk's* meaning. They have just begun to speak words and have surely no concept of inheritance, transfer of property, and how exactly we are connected to the Torah. Nevertheless, *Torah Tzivah* is taught first, even before *pesukim* which they are better equipped to understand.

Clearly, what we wish to impart is not merely informational. A proper Jewish education requires the foundation of how the Torah is intrinsically connected to who we are, and just how dear it is to us. Therefore, at the first opportunity to teach them to say a *pasuk*, we teach them to say these special words, deeply implanting its message and meaning within their subconscious.<sup>6</sup>



## Talking to Kids about the Torah

For a child to cherish the Torah, they need to know that it is precious. How do we explain the Torah's preciousness on a child's level?

In truth, the concept of holding something dear and precious is not foreign to children. From a very young age, children feel attachment to their possessions, especially to a favorite toy. Children will not forgo their cherished toy or doll, even in exchange for something much more expensive. It's theirs, and so it shall remain.

By identifying this phenomenon in the child's world, we can likewise teach them to cherish the Torah.

We can tell them that "*Torah tzivah lanu Moshe*," that Hashem trusted Moshe to be His messenger to give over the Torah as a personal present to every *Yid*.

This means that every Jew, even a young child, has the most amazing, priceless gift. The Torah is the most precious item in the world,

---

inaugural study of Torah is the obligation of the Jewish father.

On one occasion, the Rebbe explained this specification by comparing it to the way Hashem, our Heavenly Father, drew us close at *yetzias Mitzrayim*, thereby setting us on the right track and prompting the Jewish People to reciprocate with lasting dedication. *Sichos Kodesh* 5736, Vol. 2, pp. 181-184.

6. *Sichos Kodesh* 5736, Vol. 2, p. 213; *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 32, p. 95ff. See below, p. 15, fn. 1, regarding the powerful influence we can have on cultivating this connection even earlier during infancy. See also *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 00, p. 000, regarding the **mother's** fundamental role in the child's most formative stages of *chinuch*, readying the child to learn *Torah Tzivah* and begin their formal education.

as even Hashem — Who owns the entire universe — finds it dear. We are lucky enough that Hashem chose to give us this present and let us own His cherished Torah.<sup>7</sup> What could be more precious than that?

In a child's language, the Torah can be presented as Hashem's favorite "toy," that He is letting us use and keep forever. This simple comparison speaks to even young children and they can clearly relate to the message that the Torah is to be cherished as well.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, a child may ask: "Am I the only one? There are millions of Jewish people; maybe I only have a part of the Torah, and the others have the rest."

The answer to this is that Hashem is an unusual type of father; He is the Father of every Jew, but to Him, each one is like **His only child**. Therefore, while so many others were also given the Torah, Hashem is amazingly capable of giving it to every individual man and woman, boy and girl, as if they are **the only one**.<sup>9</sup>

As the child grows, we can further deepen their appreciation for Torah. We can explain that their ownership of the Torah is more personal than any other possession they may own, even their most beloved toy. This is because the Torah is "*chayeinu ve'orech yameinu*," the vitality and sustaining influence of the Jew's entire lifetime.<sup>10</sup> It is not a favorite toy that one sometimes puts away. It is constantly in use. Wherever and whenever, the Torah is always illuminating our lives and directing us how to behave.<sup>11</sup>

7. See also *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 41, p. 130.

8. *Sichos Kodosh* 5736, Vol. 2, p. 146. Importantly, at a young age, the child's resulting appreciation of the Torah is not necessarily intellectually founded. As is commonly seen, even if the child is not yet able to fully understand why the Torah is to be cherished, nevertheless, when their own parents repeatedly emphasize the Torah's preciousness, the child will naturally feel affinity to the Torah. *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 66, p. 304.

9. 29 Iyar 5740, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, p. 252.

Similarly, when Hashem spoke to the entire *Am Yisrael* at Har Sinai, the *Aseres HaDibros* were phrased in the singular form. By doing so, Hashem was showing us that each individual Jew is each recipient of the whole Torah just to themselves. *Toras Menachem* 5743, Vol. 3, p. 1559.

10. *Ahavas Olam* preceding the *Maariv Shema*. See *Berachos* 61b.

11. 5th day of Sukkos 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 1, p. 156.

With these layers of explanation, a child begins to cherish and value Torah even before they formally start to attain Torah knowledge. They can feel happy about having the *Chumash*, *Mishnayos*, *Gemara*, *Midrash*, *Halachah* and so on, as their personal “property,” even before they can study the actual *seforim*. From there, the next step of education is to fill children’s minds with the Torah’s **teachings** and watch their appreciation grow day by day.<sup>12</sup> After all, what can be more satisfying than actually getting to use one’s cherished “privately-owned” present from Hashem, that has been waiting just for them.

### *Takeaways*

- Torah will always be **cherished** by *Am Yisrael* because it was passed down to us as our inheritance.
- Helping our children **love** the Torah, sets them up for their entire Jewish lives because everything is based on it.
- If the Torah is so precious to Hashem, the owner of the whole world, how could we not treasure it? And we’re so **happy** that it’s each of ours alone!

## 2. EXPERIENCING TORAH

### Never Too Young

The *pasuk* of *Torah Tzivah* is of course relevant to *Yiddin* of all ages, as it provides a general message of the Jewish People’s connection to the Torah. However, it is particularly pertinent to Jewish children.

Some may think that the Torah is primarily for grown-ups who are over *bar mitzvah* or *bas mitzvah*. Adults are **obligated** to fulfill the *mitzvos*, while children are still preparing to do them all properly. Additionally, adults commonly know more Torah than children do, so maybe the Torah is primarily theirs?

This question, however, is clarified by the *pasuk*’s description of the Torah as a *yerushah*, an inheritance. In *Halachah*, receiving an in-

---

12. *Toras Menachem* 5752, Vol. 1, p. 133ff.

heritance is different from other types of property transfer, such as buying and selling or gifting and receiving. While young children and infants are too young to do business and consent to legal transactions, they are not too young to receive an inheritance.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, by using this particular wording, *Torah Tzivah* demonstrates that Torah belongs to all Jews equally, regardless of age.<sup>14</sup>

This *pasuk* teaches that a Jew is never too young to be fully connected to the Torah. Even before the obligations that begin at *bar* or *bas mitzvah*, children are already full-fledged recipients of the entire Torah.<sup>15</sup>



playact  
pg. 22

## Lessons for Life

Having learned that the Torah belongs to them just as much as to adults, a child may ask: “The *pasuk* tells me that I own the whole Torah, but am I old enough to actually use all of it?”

Often, a child will encounter parts of the Torah that seem to be talking about things that only adults deal with. Laws of business, marriage, and judicial courts seem irrelevant in the child’s world. One might assume that the Torah is something one ought to grow into throughout life, rather than being fully accessible at every point.

This is resolved when we realize how broadly **applicable** the Torah is. It’s so much more than a collection of *halachos* teaching us dos and don’ts, some of which we encounter regularly and others infrequently, or only later in life. The Torah is *Toras Chaim*, a “living Torah,” which provides real to life lessons to adults **and children**, regardless of age.

A child should not be left to conclude, “The Torah is mine, but in a non-tangible way,” or “I can learn it, but it’s talking about someone else’s reality, rather than my own.” Instead, all of Torah should be seen as relevant to the child and their day-to-day life.<sup>16</sup>

---

13. *Niddah* 44a.

14. *Toras Menachem* 5752, *ibid*.

15. 16 *Menachem Av* 5744, *Toras Menachem* 5744, Vol. 4, p. 2376.

16. The same also applies to the stories found within the Torah, See for example *Toras Menachem* 5747, Vol. 2, p. 401ff; 5 *Tishrei* 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 1, p. 97.



To explain: Children should be taught that their success in regular struggles and challenges matters to Hashem. We are *Yidden* all of the time, no matter where we are, or what type of activity we are doing. As soldiers in Hashem's army, tasked with combating the *yetzer hara*, we constantly have a mission to accomplish. Hashem gave us the *yetzer hara* so that we can outsmart it, and there must always be a strategy with which to succeed.

The Torah that Hashem gave us is not just meant to be learned as a subject in school. It is Hashem's book of rules and orders of how we, His children and soldiers, are to behave. The Torah illuminates our lives and shows us the way to properly fulfill our mission. It gives us the best advice for how we can win over the *yetzer hara*.

A child can be taught that their personal ownership over the entire Torah is not just **theoretical**. They too, own it and **can use it successfully**, even before they grow up. The many *halachos* and details that may seem to be dealing with grown-ups' issues have lessons that are easy for kids to appreciate as well. Within the Torah's vast teachings, children can always be taught to find the proper guidance that addresses their circumstances and struggles.<sup>17</sup>

Importantly, while other armies' weapons get outdated and require replacement with more current technology, our weapon, the Torah, will never expire. Even though it has been thousands of years since the Torah was given at *Har Sinai*, and the challenges found in the world have changed over time, the Torah is fully relevant and "up-to-date." Today, just like thousands of years ago, it will help us deal with the *yetzer hara*'s latest nonsense.<sup>18</sup>

## An Example

To find practical illustration of this idea, one need not look further than the topic of our present discussion: Inheritance.

In the study of *Chumash*, *Mishnayos*, *Gemara*, and *Rambam*, children are likely to encounter the *halachos* of property inheritance.

---

17. 16 Menachem Av 5744, *Toras Menachem* 5744, Vol. 4, p. 2376; 19 Tishrei 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 1, p. 158.

18. 25 Kislev 5741, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, p. 461.

They discuss the transfer of estate that happens upon the passing of a close relative and how the property is meant to be properly divided between the family.

A child may wonder:

“What relevance does this have to me? I’m just a kid, not a *dayan* in a *beis din*. Furthermore, since Mashiach is coming so soon, and then we will all live forever in good health and happiness, why will I ever need to know these ideas?”

This is where the child can be told that *yerushah* is about more than physical property. These *halachos* dealing with estates and belongings are really a reflection of a much greater idea, namely, the fact that we inherit all of Torah and *Yiddishkeit* as a spiritual inheritance from our *Avos* and *Imahos*, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, and Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, and Leah.

This *yerushah* of “*Torah tzivah lanu Moshe morashah Kehilas Yaa-kov*” is a most wealthy collection of goodness and unique *berachos* from Hashem. It applies at all times, and because it is spiritual, it exists even without anyone passing away.

Importantly, the study of these laws reminds the child that just as a physical inheritance must be administered and cared for with integrity, so too, we are responsible to administer and take care of our age-old inheritance from our *Avos* and *Imahos*, behaving in a manner that will truly make them proud.<sup>19</sup>

## Big Ideas, Simple Words

An important emphasis of the Rebbe’s approach in guiding Jewish children is that deep ideas need not be seen as “for grown-ups only.”

While a general principle of education is that one progresses in stages, “*min hakal el hakaved*,” from lighter material to more advanced study, this applies primarily to the style of **presentation** rather than the actual **content**. Of course, children’s minds can easily be overwhelmed by complex ideas and nuanced explanations. But the Torah is theirs, and that means the truth of Torah can be delivered to them as well.

---

19. 12 Adar 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 2, pp. 1369-1370.

Parents and educators are empowered by their G-d-given responsibility to share even profound ideas in simple language that children can understand. Rather than being caught up with sharing the complexities of the topic, one can ponder the inner kernel of the idea and find simple words so that it can be comprehended and appreciated by young minds.<sup>20</sup>

In this manner, the Torah truly becomes cherished as their own, in a way that causes them to naturally begin sharing the ideas they learned with their friends at lunch or on the playground.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, for a primary example of this approach, one need not look further than the Rebbe's personal addresses to children. Across the varying seasons, *yomim tovim*, and a wide array of topics, the Rebbe consistently elucidated Torah's guidance, with the deepest ideas imparting impactful and relevant messages in a child's day-to-day life and mission.<sup>22</sup>

### *Takeaways*

- Since the Torah is an inheritance, it fully belongs to every Jewish child from birth.
- But what about the complex parts of Torah? Those, too, are relevant to children and provide them with a guide for life.
- As parents, we can consider the "big idea" of any part of Torah which lends itself to messages our child can make their own.

20. See 2 Marcheshvan 5743, *Toras Menachem* 5743, Vol. 1, p. 404.

21. *Sichos Kodesh* 5736, Vol. 2, pp. 146-147, 433-434. The nature of children is to share what they know or may have seen or heard to "impress" others. While some may see this self-bolstering behavior as negative, the Rebbe encouraged it to be utilized for the positive with children themselves becoming an active force in educating others.

22. See *Toras Menachem* cited above, fn. 21. Of course, the same is true for the Twelve *Pesukim* and *Maamarei Chazal* that the Rebbe selected for children to study. Rather than seeking to present the "easiest" concepts, the Rebbe opted to focus on what is fundamental. Whether it is a profound *pasuk*, statement of *Mishnah* and *Gemara*, or a quote from *Tanya*, the Rebbe saw it worthwhile to encourage for these phenomenal ideas to become the basics for countless Jewish children around the world.

In a sense, one might say that the *pasuk* of *Torah Tzivah* is an important foundation for the following *Pesukim*, simply for the purpose of teaching children and parents that no one is too young to learn these lessons. After all, the Torah is truly theirs.

## 3. TORAH AND ME



playact  
pg. 23

## Education Revisited

To better understand the depth of the Jewish child's connection to Torah, it is important to clarify the general concept of Torah education.

In its simple meaning, education is about teaching something for **the first time**. A baby is born into the world, clueless about the complexities of life and the society around them. For a child to succeed, it is incumbent on their parents and community to **educate** them: to teach them right from wrong and provide the skills and know-how so they can lead productive and meaningful lives.

Jewish education, however, is notably different. Instead of being a **first-time** introduction where a child encounters their nation's age-old *mesorah*, it is actually just a **reminder** of what they already know intrinsically.

Parents may feel daunted by the immense responsibility of providing their children with a meaningful connection to Torah and *mitzvos*. It seems that a baby enters the world with nothing, and we need to build them “from ground up” into committed *Yiddishe kinderlach* and adults. The concept of *chinuch* seems to be an intimidating task.

The true meaning of *chinuch* is clarified by *Torah Tzivah*. It informs us that a child's true connection with the Torah precedes all our educational efforts. The Torah is “*Morashah kehillas Yaakov*.” By virtue of their identity as a Jewish child, every *Yiddishe* boy and girl are recipients of a *yerushah*, a wealthy inheritance of complete ownership of the entire Torah. The same Torah that Hashem Himself taught Moshe at *Har Sinai* now entirely belongs to every Jewish child.

In fact, *Chazal* teach us that within the womb, the baby is already learning the entire Torah under the tutelage of a *malach*. Even before being born into the world, the Torah and the child are inseparable. At birth, the child is made to forget what they have learnt, but that is only in preparation for its re-study throughout their life.<sup>23</sup>

---

23. *Niddah* 30b; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 5, p. 13-14, et al.

Accordingly, the *chinuch* responsibility of parents and educators is largely to bring forth a connection and identity that **already** exists. We are not truly starting from scratch; we are building upon the solid foundation of “*Morashah Kehilas Yaakov*,” which Hashem already granted them.

While various *mitzvos*, *halachos*, and *minhagim* are presented at appropriate stages of development, these are not truly new introductions. Although it may seem that we are gradually introducing them to elements of *Yiddishkeit* that they have never heard of before, the reality is that for the children, it can resonate as something they already knew but are now being **reminded** of and encouraged to put it into practice.<sup>24</sup>

With this perspective in mind, one need not be surprised when young children embrace a newly taught *mitzvah* with full commitment and enthusiasm. In their pure hearts, it does not feel like uncomfortable new habits, but as features of their **personal inheritance** that are finally being put to use. In fact, the *yerushah*-quality commitment allows them to be fully engaged in their *Yiddishkeit* as they see every detail as intrinsic to who they are.<sup>25</sup>

## How Inheritance Works

On a physical level, inheritance happens at the time of a person's passing. That is when the father's property will become his children's, but not during his lifetime. However, as mentioned above, this does not apply to a spiritual inheritance such as the Torah. This type of inheritance happens from the moment the child is born and becomes eligible to receive a physical *yerushah*; at that time, they are immediately a recipient of their spiritual inheritance.<sup>26</sup>

Insightfully, the inheritance that every Jew receives is the result of several connections and relationships:

---

24. *Toras Menachem* 5743, Vol. 2, p. 678-680; see there, where the Rebbe concludes by saying: “If only this approach to *chinuch* would be actually implemented, as this would cause success in a most tremendous manner.”

25. 18 Tishrei 5752, *Toras Menachem* 5752, Vol. 1, pp. 133-134.

26. See above, pp. 9-10, from 12 Adar 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 2, p. 1370.

**From our Avos and Imahos:** Every Jew is a descendant of our nation's fathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, and mothers, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, and Leah.<sup>27</sup>

In some families, they have heirlooms passed on from previous generations. They have old jewelry or dishes, kiddush cups or menorahs that help them remember their family's past.

In the family of *Kehilas Yaakov*, the Jewish People, we do not have a tangible inheritance such as *Avraham Avinu's* furniture or *Sarah Imeinu's* candlesticks. Instead, we have their spiritual "possessions" of their generous character and devotion to Hashem. We have Torah and *mitzvos*, the way of life that they wished to pass on to us and we can live as they did.<sup>28</sup>

**From Moshe:** Beyond our connection to the Avos and the Imahos that runs through our parents and grandparents tracing back for generations, every Jew has a direct connection with *Moshe Rabbeinu*. He is our teacher who gave us the Torah from Hashem. As the *pasuk* emphasizes, "*Torah tzivah lanu Moshe...*," this is the Torah that Moshe gave **us** as our personal inheritance.<sup>29</sup>

*Moshe Rabbeinu* was not just the person who delivered the Torah from Har Sinai, but moreover, Hashem gave him special abilities that help us connect to the Torah. Moshe is our most amazing teacher. He did not just give over information, instead, he also provided an unbreakable connection. This effect is so powerful that it applies at all times. Even now, thousands of years later, we are all students/inheritors of Moshe.<sup>30</sup>

**From Hashem:** The Torah calls the Jewish People "Hashem's children." A child inherits a parent's property by virtue of **being** their **child**, irrespective of personal talent or capability. Torah is Hashem's wisdom, and He gave it as an inheritance to each and every Jew, young and old.<sup>31</sup>

---

27. Regarding the unique manner in which this applies to converts to *Yiddishkeit*, see *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 8, p. 152. See also *Ramban*, *Devarim* 33:4.

28. 12 Adar 5745, *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 2, p. 1370.

29. *Sichos Kodesh* 5737, Vol. 1, pp. 141ff, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 29, p. 229ff.

30. See also *Toras Menachem* 5742, Vol. 4, p. 2247, regarding the extent a young child can feel relatability to Moshe.

31. 5th day of Sukkos 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 1, pp. 155-156.

Significantly, the Torah is so special to Hashem that He and the Torah are inseparable. One cannot have one without the other. Therefore, as surprising as it may sound, Hashem always comes along with the Torah. When a *Yid* owns the Torah and learns the Torah, Hashem is found at their side.

Obviously, this recognition provides added encouragement and empowerment to properly fulfill what Hashem wants.<sup>32</sup>

### *Takeaways*

- Our children have to be taught Torah, sure, but we are educating them on the basis of a significant personal inheritance.
- Our family relationship with the Avos, Imahos, Moshe Rabbeinu—and Hashem, Who stands beside every Torah-inheritor—entitles us to their rich endowment.

---

32. Lag Baomer Parade 5740, *Sichos Kodesh* 5740, Vol. 3, pp. 11-12. This connection to Torah has a powerful effect on our *neshamah* connection with Hashem. While every Jew is born with a pure and G-dly soul, this bond is not felt clearly at first. The *neshamah* is there, but its true colors do not shine forth.

The Torah, however, is what illuminates and clarifies who the Jew truly is. By connecting to the Torah, we reveal our *neshamah*'s connection to Hashem as well. In this way, the true virtue of what it means to be *Yid* is brought out.

Therefore, even by teaching this very first *pasuk*, the parents cause that Hashem is with the child in a more revealed way.

## A P P L I C A T I O N S

• **Singing Torah-Themed Lullabies to Infants :**

Some of the most important elements of Jewish education are not clearly mandated in *Halachah*, but rather are customs practiced by Jewish mothers throughout the ages. One such custom is the habit of women to sing their babies to sleep with lullabies extolling the virtue of Torah.

Often, the Rebbe made mention of the Yiddish lullaby, "*Torah iz di beste sechoirah*," "The Torah is the best merchandise." With just a few simple yet heartfelt words, the infant is instilled with the message that the Torah is the very best thing they can possess in the world.<sup>1</sup>

• **Showing Physical Affection Toward the *Sefer Torah*:**

From a young age, children are brought to *shul* on occasion, where they are given a chance to kiss the *sefer Torah*.<sup>2</sup> The child recognizes that a kiss is an expression of affection which they display toward their parents and loved ones. Having learned from their parents or teacher how precious the Torah is to us, the child will naturally kiss the Torah with the greatest love and delight.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. *Sichos Kodesh* 5736, Vol. 2, pp. 169ff., 185. This lullaby follows the theme of the verse, "I rejoice over your words like one who found a great spoil" (*Tehillim* 119:162). The idea of introducing an infant to words of Torah can be found in *Yerushalmi*, where the mother of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanayah would take his cradle to the *Beis Midrash* so that his ears would be filled with the words of Torah (*Yevamos* 1:6). It is also the custom to hang words of *Torah* and a *Shir HaMaalos* card by a baby's crib; see for example, *Sefer HaSichos* 5747, Vol. 1, p. 147.

2. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, Rema*, end of sec. 149.

3. *Toras Menachem* 5749, Vol. 1, p. 203. This bond that children have with the Torah is clearly seen in the manner that young children will excitingly engage in the dancing and celebration of *Hakafos* on Simchas Torah. *Ibid*.



- **A Personal Letter in the Children's *Sefer Torah*:**

As is well known, the Rebbe encouraged that all children should have ownership of a letter in a *sefer Torah*. This illustrates to the child that the Torah is their own in a very tangible way. For this purpose, the Rebbe initiated the writing of special *sifrei Torah* for Jewish children. In this way, all Jewish children are brought together as a single unit, more connected to the Torah, to Hashem the Giver of the Torah, and to all *Yidden*.<sup>4</sup>

- **Torah Meet-Ups:**

To emphasize the message of *Torah Tzivah*, the Rebbe encouraged that when even two children meet up, for whatever purpose, they should also take some time to discuss words of Torah. By making the Torah an inseparable part of their daily interaction, it solidifies the fact that the Torah fully belongs to every Jewish child.<sup>5</sup>

---

4. See for example 24 Kislev 5742, *Toras Menachem* 5742, Vol. 2, p. 587.

5. 19 Tishrei 5751, *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 1, p. 155.

## P L A Y A C T S

**OUR BOND WITH THE TORAH**

**YISROLIK:** Mommy, today in Shul Tatty picked me up to kiss the Torah!

**MOMMY:** Wow! That's beautiful. Did you know that it's your Torah?

**YISROLIK:** I think it belongs to the gabbai in Shul!

**MOMMY:** No it's yours too!

**YISROLIK:** But I'm not Bar Mitzvah yet!

**MOMMY:** It's yours right from when you were born!

**YISROLIK:** Really? But I'm learning kriaah now! I didn't start learning Gemarah even...

**MOMMY:** Hashem let's you have it anyway! He wants you to keep it!

**YISROLIK:** It's mine? It's mine!

**MOMMY:** It's yours!

**YISROLIK:** Wow! I love the Torah so much!

**TALKING TO THE KIDS ABOUT THE TORAH**

**SHAINA:** I like the nightlight you bought me. It makes nice stars and colors in our room.

**MOMMY:** It was a wonderful present. And it's so beautiful to see at bedtime. And since Mimmy shares your room she gets to have the nightlight too.

**SHAINA:** Ok, but it's really mine!

**MOMMY:** True, and do you love it?

**SHAINA:** yes!

**MOMMY:** You know, there is the best present in the world I'm thinking of that's just yours...

**SHAINA:** Really? What is it?

**MOMMY:** Here's a clue: Hashem gave you this present.

**SHAINA:** Only for me?

**MOMMY:** You are like Hashem's ONLY child, every Yid is. Hashem decided to take His most special thing and give it to you.

**SHAINA:** The Torah?

**MOMMY:** Yes! And the nightlight is fun just for bedtime but the Torah is a present that's useful all day long and also when you get older.



## LESSONS FOR LIFE

**RIVKA:** Mommy, why did the lady give me a farm map? I'm just a kid so I'm going with you, and anyway I only want to see the sheep!

**MOMMY:** Oh look! It says on the map that today they will be trimming off the sheep's wool— it's called shearing.

**RIVKA:** Oh wow. What else does it say?

**MOMMY:** Look on your map, and you'll see all kinds of things— there's also a hay ride...

**RIVKA:** Oh wow! What else? Oh look! There's a butterfly garden— let's go there!

**MOMMY:** Sure!

**RIVKA:** I'm glad I got my own map!

**MOMMY:** The map that the lady gave you reminds me of the Torah that Hashem gives to children. The whole Torah is for you!

**RIVKA:** Even though I'm a kid? Even the Tatty sefarim? Even the mitzvos I don't keep yet?

**MOMMY:** Yes all of Torah is for you right now and teaches you new and amazing things, like the best way to fight the Yetzer Hara and how to make good choices.

**RIVKA:** Wow!



## EDUCATION REVISITED

**TEACHER:** Sara, please present your Dvar Torah...

**SARA:** Fine... I'll just say whatever it says here on the paper...

**TEACHER:** But it's your dvar Torah, you can make it exciting!

**SARA:** Actually you told me the whole thing, so it's yours...

**TEACHER:** I'm just the teacher, but you're the OWNER.

**SARA:** Ooh, the owner?

**TEACHER:** The entire Torah and every Dvar Torah that you'll ever learn was given to you by Hashem. So I'm teaching you YOUR Torah!

**SARA:** Hmmm... If it is mine, then I want to say it LOUD! And I'll stand on the chair...

**TEACHER:** You can!

**SARA:** If it is mine, I want to say it in rhyme!

**TEACHER:** Go for it!

**SARA:** Since it's mine, I want to be the first to say my Dvar Torah every Shabbos!

**TEACHER:** I love the enthusiasm, Sara! Keep it up!