

Taking Pride in Our Children

In this week's parsha, in the Shema prayer, we are told "these words, which I command you... you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them."

The Commentator Beis Yitzchak explains that if we teach our children Torah and Jewish values, we will be able to speak of them when we "sit in the house" and when we "walk by the way" (the language used later on by the Torah). We will always have something in common to talk about.

If, on the other hand, our children are taught only secular wisdom to the exclusion of Torah, they will sit at the table like strangers, and we will face a struggle to find topics of conversation.

The Hebrew could be interpreted a little differently. "Veshinantam l'vanecha, v'dibarta bam" usually means "and you shall teach them to your children and you shall speak of them", as mentioned above. The word "bam" means "of them", meaning of the Torah which we are teaching them.

Another way of translating this word would be to take "bam" to mean "of them" referring to the children. In other words, by teaching our children and passing on our heritage to them, we will speak "of them".

We will speak proudly of their achievements and of their adherence to Judaism. By teaching our children, we will shep nachas from them, as they say in Yiddish.