



Uncompromising Jewish Education

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We live today in a situation in which God has blessed the Jewish people, and in a country where we aren't persecuted. We live in a state of freedom — to the extent possible in exile.

But there is a difficult challenge regarding the education of one's sons and daughters:

Some people begin to compromise. They want to be "worldly." Their child will later need to earn a living himself, or — if it's their daughter — will need to marry such an individual who will earn a proper living, in keeping with the country's custom of earning a livelihood.

And the parent begins to reason that the only way to earn a living is by relying on "the power and might of my hand."

So within this context — the world's approach to earning a livelihood — they then consider Jewish law: what Torah prohibits or allows, or what is permitted optimally.

Usually parents are cautious to a certain extent; but when it comes to their children, they're even more cautious.

However, in this situation some are blinded by love for their children. They direct their child's education with the goal that when he ventures into the street he will not be made fun of or laughed at. They want Jews to imitate the gentiles. It must not be recognized that this is a Jewish child: a Jewish boy who always wears a *yarmulke*, a Jewish girl who dresses modestly — regardless of the latest fashions reported in the newspapers.

Their daughter knows how God's Torah directs a Jewish daughter to act. Torah is her sole guide for how to dress, and how she prepares to go out among others.

This misguided concern is a severe "exile" more prevalent in the free countries, where there are no visible barriers between Jews and non-Jews.



פרשת תרומה

There, particularly, the danger of absorbing non-Jewish values is greater than in countries with government-imposed measures separating Jews and non-Jews.

So we must maintain our Jewish character even while “we remain under the rule of Achashverosh”: even after the Purim miracle when Mordechai became viceroy to the king and “his fame spread throughout all the provinces,” and Jews were free to do as they wish.

Seemingly, then, all the barriers and restrictions should have been removed; Jews should have been the same as non-Jews.

The lesson of Purim, however, teaches us that the Jews maintained their own language even after the miracle granted them freedom.

This must continue, so that Purim “will not cease from their descendants”: not only must one maintain his own heritage which his grandfather and father taught him in the “old country” — but he must continue to educate his own children and grandchildren accordingly. It should be noticeable that they are unembarrassed by their great-grandfather’s distinct clothing, appearance and customs — he wasn’t timid, fearful or insecure among non-Jews.

One must also raise his children in this way.

Regarding this we say, “It is God’s blessing that brings wealth”: God grants us all we need in a prosperous manner — an overflowing measure of spiritual and material wealth.

And in the literal sense, as well: “The Jews had light, joy, gladness and honor.” The simple meaning of “honor” is that the surrounding nations respected the Jews: they saw that despite their persecution, the Jews persevered and upheld their distinct practices, and educated their descendants in a manner that “Torah will not cease from their descendants.”

And when Purim arrives fathers and mothers sit with their families; an entire family around the same table: the grandmother and grandfather, father and mother, sons, daughters and grandchildren.

And together they discuss the lesson of the Megillah, which concludes: “It will not cease from their descendants” — which is to say, that the children resolve to educate their own children accordingly. And those descendants will be so imbued with Judaism that they will educate their own children in the manner that befits “the nation of Mordechai” — so that



even non-Jews see that this is the nation led by Mordechai, his Torah, his spirit, and "they will neither bend nor bow."

