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Why is there a lack of *Yiras Shomayim* (fear of G-d) in today's generation?

There are two general reasons for this. One reason is because today, people lack *temimus* - earnestness.

Another reason is because we simply don't think or reflect; we don't make a *cheshbon hanefesh* (self-accounting). We are not used to thinking. We hear a *musser shmuess* (lecture) about *Yiras Shomayim*, and we all know that Chazal say "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for fear of Heaven", but we don't know **how** to get *Yiras Shomayim*, because we don't think enough: How can we have *Yiras Shomayim* when we are alone and no one is watching?

What is Chinuch? When we are *mechanech* a child, to where are we leading him to? Chinuch is a multi-faceted topic, but what is the main underlying part in Chinuch? Is it that we should teach a child how to have all the good middos in Sefer Orchos Tzaddikim? What is the purpose of Chinuch - *Yiras Shomayim*, good middos, or *Derech Eretz*? Every *mechanech* has his own answer...

Is it that the child should become an *Oved Hashem*? Before a person becomes an *Oved Hashem*, he has to first be a "person" to begin with. A person has to know who he really is, his real "I", and then he can come to reveal Hashem within himself. All of the good middos are only tools to get there; love for Hashem, *temimus*, and *Kedushah* are all wonderful qualities, but they aren't the person himself. A person cannot build himself up or identify himself based on **any** of these qualities! They are all qualities we should have, but they are not who we **are**. If we use all of the qualities we need to have as a way to build ourselves, then it is good. But whenever we hear a *mussar shmuess* about how we have to do this good middah and that good middah, we don't see how it contributes to building our personality; we simply think of them as another good middah to have, and there is no system to it.

There are many people who grew up learning Torah and doing all the mitzvos, but later in life they

had to go “find themselves.” Why? It is because they didn’t view their learning and mitzvos as something that builds them; they looked at it as *maalos*, “good qualities.” Even if a person always does things because he knows that it is the Ratzon Hashem (G-d’s will), he doesn’t necessarily understand that what he does has to build him up.

If a person wants to improve, acquiring more good middos or more temimus isn’t the solution. A person is not just a conglomerate of many good middos; he is a structure of 248 limbs and 365 sinews. Yes, we have many good aspects in our life we need to have: Torah, Yiras Shomayim, Middos, and Kedushah, etc. But we must understand that all of our life is supposed to build up our personality. Our entire job is to become a person, to use all these many qualities to build who we are.

If a child is misbehaving – such as if he has a temper or is very envious of others – it’s not that we have to get him to have good middos. We have to get him to become a person. We need to teach him good middos, but only as a means for building him as a person.

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