

SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 15

Vayera - Chof Marcheshvan

The Story:

The 20th of Cheshvan, which always falls in proximity of the Torah reading of Vayeira, is the birthday of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom DovBer (1860-1920). When he was a young boy of four or five, he went to his saintly grandfather, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, on Shabbat Parshat Vayeira, in honor of his birthday.

Having just learnt the parshah, where G-d appears to Avraham on the third day after his having entered into an everlasting covenant with G-d, the boy broke out in tears. "Why did G-d reveal himself to our Father Avraham, and not to us?!"

The Rebbe replied: "When a righteous Jew at the age of 99 decides to circumcise himself, he is worthy that G-d should reveal Himself to him."

What lesson can the average Jew take from this story of the deep spiritual sensitivity of a future Rebbe?

Furthermore, the fact that the Rebbe was a child under six years old at the time of this story highlights that the lesson is intended to be applicable to the smallest children, those that are not yet obligated in religious educational practice.

What can this be?

The Explanation:

Rambam writes that the standard educational process is to entice children to study and behave correctly through rewarding them with sweets and other things that appeal to children.

But the story of the Rashab opens a new path of possibility in education. The Rebbe was modeling that it is possible for children to inculcate within themselves an authentic desire for connection with G-d, to the point that it moves them to tears. When the Previous Rebbe made this story public, he was, in effect, declaring that now this is possible to replicate with all children. Children have a spiritual sensitivity that is innate and can be nurtured.

Furthermore, this does not only apply to a child's relationship, but also to his or her interpersonal relationships. As illustrated by

another story of the Rashab: When he was around four years old, the tailor had come to deliver an article of clothing to his mother. The Rashab innocently pointed out that the tailor had taken a piece of material from the home and the embarrassed tailor scrambled to explain himself. After he had left, his mother chided him for

embarrassing the tailor, causing the Rashab to burst into tears and ask his father for a path for forgiveness for his insensitivity. Again, the purpose of sharing this story of a Jewish leader with the public is to illustrate how it is possible to cultivate this sensitivity to others even in a small child.