**Miller’s Musings**עֵקֶב  **פרשת**

**Don’t Forget Your ~~Toothbrush~~ Torah**

There is nothing as important to Jewish continuity as our children’s education.  The transmission of our Torah values and teachings is the linchpin of the Jewish people’s endurance throughout the centuries.  This week we are directed to be a link in this chain and to teach Torah to our children.  Our question this week is why in this task we are asked “to speak **in**them”, rather than to “speak them” and parenthetically why the recipient of this teaching seems to be concentrated exclusively on our children, when in fact we are obliged to impart Torah wisdom to anybody we have the chance to do so to?

There are many ways and many opportunities for teaching Torah, but to be truly successful there are two preconditions, alluded to by the verses we have just referred to.  The first is that Torah not just be something that one teaches but is something very much peripheral to who we are, but it must be something that is an integral part of one’s own life.  When you are trying to instil Torah it must be from “within” Torah.  It must be that you yourself are endeavouring to be the embodiment of those lessons you are edifying to others.  This is perhaps the meaning of speaking “in them”, it is giving over the Torah from within the confines of a Torah existence in all we do.  The second prerequisite is that the beneficiary of the lessons be someone that we view of as our child.  Just as the sole motivation behind our child-rearing is for their betterment, so must any influence we bring on others be only driven by the desire to improve their lives.

Chances are we are now spending more time with our families than we normally would and in places and circumstances perhaps unfamiliar to us.  The opportunities for imbuing each other with the values we cherish are many and it is not always about the obvious ways of doing so.  Teaching is not always best achieved in the formal manner. Rather we can find occasions to give over what is most important through responding to situations in the right way, bringing up Torah viewpoints in unusual settings and perhaps educating other communities by our behaviour about what it really means to be a Jew.  Holidays bring the prospect of showing what we believe in, not just talking about it.  In this manner we will be once again taking something enjoyable, precious yet mundane and turning it into something enjoyable, precious and sublime.  It is a chance to transform our holidays into our holy-days.

May the holiness of Shabbos radiate throughout our week, wherever we are.

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם