



Raising the Next Generation

The Rebbe's advice on being mechanech children



It Falls to the Parents

In this sicha, the Rebbe addresses the necessity of providing for one's child's spiritual welfare as well as his physical needs.

Unfortunately, there are parents who concern themselves primarily with the material needs of the child, i.e. food and drink, clothing, toys, and the like. However, due to their occupation with making a living and so on, they do not pay attention to other aspects [of the child's upbringing], beginning with the most important aspect—that he grows to be a *mensch* worthy of that title; one who acts appropriately. [These parents] rely upon the school to provide all of this.

Therefore, the Torah, תורה, אמת ותורת חיים, emphasizes that the primary responsibility for the education of a child falls upon the parents. The school merely serves as

their *shliach*. Therefore, even when the parents send their child to school, the responsibility [of setting the child on the proper path] remains on the shoulders of the parents.

Certainly, the school must also provide education... but at the same time, one cannot suffice with what a child is taught in school. Instead, the parents must also provide the child with as much as they are able.¹

Jewish Pride

Growing up as a frum Jew in the U.S. wasn't always easy. Kids would often be made fun of for wearing a yarmulke and tzitzis and keeping Shabbos and kashrus. In the following letter the Rebbe addresses this issue:

The essential point is this: Jews have always been a minority amongst nations; they are a minority within the United States as well. Notwithstanding

the democratic principles that are proclaimed in this country (the U.S.), emphasizing the values of acceptance [of all types of people], it is natural for it to be difficult for a minority to be accepted by the majority. Therefore, it is necessary to plant in a Jewish child, from an early age, a feeling of pride in the heritage and traditions of his parents and ancestors, together with a strong sense of Jewish identity, so that instead of hiding his or her Judaism, the [child] will be able to be proud of it, without any personal insecurity, despite any mockery from the non-Jewish neighbors. [To accomplish] this matter, what is necessary above all is to instill within the child the proper feeling toward true Jewish values—including prioritizing the spiritual over the physical².

IT'S NECESSARY TO PLANT IN A JEWISH CHILD, FROM AN EARLY AGE, A FEELING OF PRIDE IN THE HERITAGE AND TRADITIONS OF HIS PARENTS AND FOREBEARS

Residence, Business, and Chinuch

An excerpt from a conversation between the Rebbe and Mr. and Mrs. Meir Jungreis and their daughter, following a yechidus klolis for members of Machne Israel Development Fund. The Rebbe's words are in regular font; those of others are italicized.

Mr. Jungreis: We have to decide about the move —if we should go back to Miami or stay in Monsey?

What is the reason to move from Monsey?

Mr. Jungreis: The only reason is the business in Miami, to which I commute every week. You know, I travel every week from Monsey to Miami.

You can't transfer the business to Monsey? It is not advisable, or too costly?

Mr. Jungreis: It's too costly, it is already established there.

In that case you should consider... If your wife consents to move to Miami, since the business is there, and your livelihood is there, then the owners will also be there.

Mr. Jungreis: In Monsey there is a higher standard in Education and Judaism.

Today Miami has good Jewish schools; if you inquire you will find out where they are. Rabbi Korf is here from Miami and he can advise you on matters of kosher food, schools, etc. You have no peace of mind when your business is in one place and you are somewhere else.

Mr. Jungreis: The problem is that I like Monsey and I'm comfortable there. On the other hand, this weekly commute is a bit hard. That's the problem, it's hard to decide.

Mrs. Jungreis: The main concern is for our children's Yiddishkeit, that's why we moved to Monsey, and I am constantly afraid that if we move back to Miami their Yiddishkeit will not be as we would like.

[Your husband] mentioned that several of them attend school in Miami.

Mrs. Jungreis: Now the year is split—he travels, so half of the week he's away and I stay with the children.

Mr. Jungreis: We thought that we would move in the summer, but the house was still being renovated. However, we had already enrolled two children in school there.

They study there, in Miami...?

Mr. Jungreis: Yes

Then you should consider moving there. It's easier to move in the summer, it's warmer, etc, etc.

And little by little, you'll prepare yourself mentally for life in Miami. May it be in an auspicious time.³

Playing vs. Learning

Many children prefer play over study. In this letter, the Rebbe explains which subjects to prioritize, and to what extent learning should be encouraged.

You write about [a certain child], whose teachers are dissatisfied with his [lack of] diligence in learning, since he prefers playing to learning, particularly with regards to *limmudei chol*.

In general, it is typical of youth that they prefer playing to learning, even at an older age than your brother. Therefore, you shouldn't be overly concerned, although obviously you need to impress upon him, in a pleasant way [to increase in his diligence]. The main [way to accomplish this] is through competition and comparison with the friends his age who are more diligent. You should also lessen, if not cancel entirely, the time he spends studying *limmudei chol*, for it may be that this is hinting that he doesn't want to



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study *limmudei chol* (even though he doesn't yet understand the true reason [not to]). This will automatically have an effect on his *limmudei kodesh*⁴.

Keeping Promises

In the following Sich'a, the Rebbe stresses the importance of keeping a promise made to a child as a reward for good behavior.

If a child is promised something for his studies, the promise must be kept. *Seforim* teach that one must take care not to leave a promise to a child unfulfilled. They emphasize that [keeping one's word] applies even with regard to [promises made to] a child. Contrary [to what one might think], especially with regard to a child, there must be extra care [to keep promises]. Sometimes it is permissible to modify [a promise made] to an adult for the sake of keeping the peace, and the like. A child, though, doesn't understand compromises, and as soon as a child realizes that promises made are not kept, he loses his trust in the teacher, having seen untruth in him⁵.

Instilling Self-Confidence

In the following conversation the Rebbe addresses the hardships of moving a child from one school to another. It is an excerpt from a conversation between the Rebbe and Mr. and Mrs. Reuven Pollock, following a yechidus klolis for members of Machne Israel Development Fund. The Rebbe's words are in regular font; those of others are italicized.

Mrs. Pollock: We're moving our children from the Hebrew Day School to Breuer's yeshiva in Washington Heights. I have a first grade girl, but my son is in third grade, and he's behind in Hebrew, and it's going to be difficult for him. So I would like a blessing from you that we're doing the right thing by him—he's nine years old—to move to Breuer's. He's doing okay where he is now, which is [at] the Hebrew Day School, but I feel he'll get more of a Torah way of life if he's at Breuers, and that's why we want to make the move. But he's going to have to go there without friends, and socially he's going to have to start again, which is going to be difficult for him, but we want to do the right thing.

It is possible for him? Does he have strong enough force to achieve it?

Mrs. Pollock: Do you mean academically? We might have to tutor him; he might be behind in the Hebrew, because the Hebrew may not be the same.

Maybe it is advisable to take a helper for him—a teacher from time to time—maybe once a week, to help him take upon himself the additional load of the new school. Then it is advisable, and you can explain to him that because he became older and wiser, you have found for him a school that is [on par] with his possibilities now, which he was not able to achieve half-a-year ago. ...To incite his self confidence to do so. May G-d Almighty bless you to have much *nachas* from all the children, and much *nachas* from yourself. In an easy way, and a healthy child.⁶



YOUNG CHILDREN DAVEN IN 770, TISHREI 5750.



THRONGS OF CHILDREN WAIT NEAR THE DOOR OF GAN EDEN HATACHTON TO RECEIVE A COIN FROM THE REBBE, 13 TISHREI, 5745.

Exercise Restraint

Rabbi Shmuel Lew asked in *yechidus* how he can prevent himself from getting angry at his children. The Rebbe told him:

You write that you get angry. One of the solutions for this is to contemplate the fact that every Jew is Hashem's child ("בנים אתם לה" "אלוקים"). They're Hashem's children as much as they're yours, and to hit Hashem's child? The hand will tremble! You wouldn't strike someone else's child, all the more so Hashem's. The imposing of reverence [that a parent] must occasionally accomplish must never happen out of anger.

May Hashem grant you and your wife that just as you had success in the past, in both personal and general matters, may it be so in the future, and even more so.⁷

Yaldei Hashluchim

For a young *shliach*, it can be difficult to study in the local school, where he has few, if any, *chassidishe* friends and the level of *chinuch* not always up to the standard of a Lubavitch school. The alternative—leaving home to study in a city with an established Jewish infrastructure—can be very difficult as well. The Rebbe's advice depended on the circumstances of each case.

The following *maaneh* was written to a *shliach* who asked whether to send his 11-year-old son to learn in a different city, where there was a *mosad chinuch al taharas hakodesh*:

It is preferable that he continue learning in school [locally]—as of now, for another year.⁸

When a *shliach* from Europe wrote to the Rebbe that his son had no

friends in their *makom hashlichus*, the Rebbe wrote the following *maaneh*:

It is therefore not suitable [that he remain in his hometown].

It is preferable that he come to New York (or its surrounding cities) [to study]—since numerous people from [his hometown] live here or visit often.⁹ ①

1. Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos 5744 vol. 3 p. 1434
2. Moreh Ledor Navuch p. 177
3. chabad.org/212428, Living Torah Disc 2 Program 5
4. Igros Kodesh vol. 10 p. 293
5. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2 p. 277
6. chabad.org/2139958, Living Torah Disc 111 Program 443
7. Vigler - Lew Teshura, 10 Adar I 5763 p. 16
8. Mikdash Melech vol. 3 p. 155
9. Ibid p. 155