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לרפואה שלימה וקרובה
נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר ולאח שיחיו שפאלטר

CHILDREN EDUCATE

★40

SHNAS HACHINUCH
5736 - 5776

LAG BA'OMER PARADE 5736, SHNAS HACHINUCH.

In Iyar of this year, we mark **40 years** since the Rebbe's establishing "*Shnas Hachinuch*—a Year of Education, eventually leading to the launch of *Mivtza Chinuch* and the proclamation of Yud-Aleph Nissan as "Education Day - USA." The famous "Twelve Pessukim and Maamorei Chazal"—the trademark staple of every children's rally, were also introduced by the Rebbe during this campaign. Read the story of a revolutionary mivtza with an impact of global proportions and gain insight into the underlying points of this most important endeavor.





INTRODUCTION

Throughout Jewish history, educating and teaching our children has been recognized as the bedrock of our nation's continuity and the secret of our survival, for it is at a young age that the foundations of Yiddishkeit are planted in a person. Although children may not be the deepest thinkers, and will understand their learning much better as they grow older; they often act on the shallowest of emotions, and will perform mitzvos with much more depth once they reach adulthood—it is their early education that influences them for a lifetime, and is the most crucial.

That's one way to view children in Yiddishkeit—as an investment in the *future*; but in the present, a child's actions have little meaning or importance. But there's another way to see children: in addition to being critical to our future, they are important on their own.

Throughout the *nesius*, the Rebbe showed an unprecedented focus on children and their education. When there was a difficult time in the world, he requested that people gather children; when he would enter and exit the shul, he would give tzedakah

to the children; and when they came into *yechidus*, he would quiz them on their learning. The Rebbe's first activities upon arriving in America were dealing with children—Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, the *mesibos Shabbos* campaign, and the first children's rallies—and, later on, a major focus of Lubavitch's activities was on education. The Rebbe himself created a children's program—Tzivos Hashem—complete with uniforms and slogans.

And unlike any of the previous Rabbeim, the Rebbe spoke directly to children on a regular basis. It wasn't enough for them to get the Rebbe's message as it trickled down through their parents—they had to hear it on their own. Notwithstanding the fact that children could hardly understand the *sichos* on the level of adults, and often didn't even understand Yiddish, relying on the translation that followed; and despite the fact that the children, being children, were not always as focused on the *sicha* as they should have been—the Rebbe took the time to speak to them, presenting the *sichos* in a format that they could relate to. This wasn't only a novelty in Lubavitch: there is not a single known Jewish leader—in this century or in millennia past—that did so.

But the Rebbe's focus on *chinuch* didn't stop with the time and effort he put into children and their education; rather, he articulated new approaches and philosophies to every area of *chinuch*, with the result that *mitvza chinuch*, launched in Nissan/Iyar 5736, is one of the most multi-faceted, rich—and complex—of the Rebbe's *mitvzoim*.

The *mitvza* was officially launched on Shabbos mevarchim Iyar 5736, when the Rebbe announced *mitvza chinuch*—as a general *mitvza*—and designated the remainder of the year 5736 and 5737 as *shnas hachinuch*. Then, the following week, the Rebbe held three farbrengens one after another—Thursday night, Shabbos, and Sunday night—in honor of the new *mitvza*. As with many of the *mitvzoim*, the Rebbe continued developing the *mitvza*, adding different components and *shtureming* about it, throughout the following summer months.

In this article we will attempt to highlight some of the special events at the outset of the mitvza, and the various points that the Rebbe discussed about the approach and necessity of chinuch during that period.



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SELF-EDUCATION

“I was once accosted with a complaint,” the Rebbe said. “How can I say that *chinuch* still applies after bar mitvza, and also regarding *talmidei chachamim*? I answered that there is a *din* in Torah [that in order to begin working in the *Bais Hamikdash*] a Kohen must bring a *minchas chinuch*, notwithstanding the fact that he was already an adult. And even later, after he is a practicing Kohen for many years, in order to rise to the level of Kohen Gadol he must bring yet another *korban chinuch*.¹”

In the Rebbe’s view, *chinuch* is much broader than in the simple sense—*adults* educating *children*. Firstly, the Rebbe believed that it isn’t only about educating others, it is about educating yourself, as an adult.

The need for constant self-education, the Rebbe explained, is because no matter how much knowledge you possess in Torah and in Yiddishkeit, it is inherently finite. Torah, on the other hand, is infinite; and something finite—as great as it may be—has absolutely no significance in comparison to infinity. So no matter how lofty one is, you must always strive to climb higher

LAG BA’OMER PARADE, 5736 - SHNAS HACHINUCH

and higher, to leave your personal Mitzrayim. Just like a child begins his education by entering into *cheder* (his *arainfir*), every person should “*arainfir’n zich in cheder*,” to check himself into “*cheder*.” Your education has just begun!²

Then there is *chinuch* in another sense, the education of others. This, the Rebbe said, is really the overall concept of all the *mitvzoim*: to approach a Yid, explain to him the importance of the *mitvza*, and keep at it until he is actually convinced to do it.³ Nevertheless, the Rebbe said, *chinuch* is important in itself—“*kove’a bracha l’aztmo*.⁴”

Later on, whenever the Rebbe would list the *mitvzoim*, he would begin with *mitvza chinuch* and *ahavas Yisrael*—“the general *mitvzoim*”—since they include the rest of the *mitvzoim* in them.

But on the simplest level, *chinuch* is about children’s education, and

here we come to perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the Rebbe’s *mitvza chinuch*. The Rebbe announced that education wasn’t only about *adults* educating *children* (or other adults)—children can be *mechanchim* as well. This brought into sharp focus his general stand on children—they are not simply keys to the future, but they are inherently important individuals. It is with this theme that the Rebbe instituted the Twelve Pesukim at the onset of this *mitvza*.

The Rebbe brought a precedent from an intriguing Gemara in Bava Metzia. The Gemara relates⁵ that when Rabbi Chanina and Rav Chiya were in a dispute, Rabbi Chanina said to Rav Chiya: “Would you dispute with me? If, *chas veshalom*, the Torah were forgotten from Yisrael, I would restore it with my powers of *pilpul*.” To which Rav Chiya replied: “Would you dispute with me, who achieved that the Torah *shouldn’t* be forgotten from Yisrael?”

“What did I do? I sowed flax, out of which I made nets to trap deers. Their flesh I gave to orphans, and from their skins I prepared scrolls, upon which I wrote the five Chumashim of the Torah. Then I went to a town that contained no teachers, and I taught the five Chumashim to five children, one Chumash to each child, and the six *sedarim* of the Mishna (which was learned by heart at that time) to six children, one *seder* each. I told them: ‘Until I return, teach each other the Chumash and the Mishnah.’ I.e. each child should teach his friends his Chumash or his Seder.

“Thus,” Rav Chiya concluded, “I preserved the Torah from being forgotten from Yisrael.”

The Gemara continues that this is what Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi meant when he said, “How great are the works of Chiya!”

From this story we see, the Rebbe said, that when a child is five years old, the age of learning Chumash, it is already time to make him into a *mechanech*! And not only the *mechanech* of one other person; as soon as he knows Chumash Bereishis, and there are four other children who don’t know it yet, he should immediately begin teaching them!

The Rebbe gave concrete directives in all the various areas of *chinuch*, from conventional *chinuch* in schools and camps, to education at home, and even to children educating their friends.

CHILDREN’S EDUCATION

The first proposal was to get as many children as possible into schools and camps where they would receive a kosher education; and, even more so, an education *al taharas hakodesh*, of solely Torah. Camps, the Rebbe pointed out, are even better than schools in certain respects: First of all, the children don’t have to learn

limudei chol. Additionally, overnight camps have the advantage that the child is within a framework of *chinuch* twenty-four hours a day, for several weeks at a time.⁶

The Rebbe’s proposition was that, from now on, every type of educational institution—yeshivos, day schools, talmud Torahs, preschools, day camps, overnight camps, etc.—should accept ten percent of their children without charge.

The source for this comes from the Gemara, which says, “Take heed to the children of the poor, for Torah

will emanate from them.” The Rebbe noted that if the poor are paying for their children’s education, what is there to take heed to? The Gemara is telling us to be careful—and put in more effort—to help the poor children because they cannot pay.

Just like *maaser* has an effect on the rest of the product, the ten percent of the students that are enrolled for free, will impact the rest of the institution.

The point of this, the Rebbe stipulated, was not to absolve parents of their obligation to pay for their children’s education. Rather, the



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES COINS FOR THE CHILDREN AT THE CONCLUSION OF A CHILDREN’S RALLY.

aim of this tuition break is to assist people who truly cannot pay—and are possibly even embarrassed to ask for help. But once they know that every educational institution has a quota of children to take in for free, they will feel comfortable signing up. This way, many children will be saved.⁷

Sweeping and broad—and revolutionary—as it was, the Rebbe said as follows: “Regarding the *mosdos* that will do so because I requested, I am asking them with a double request. Regarding the *mosdos* that need more than just a request [from me], may it

be Hashem’s will that they consider the proposal on their own, and eventually arrive at the same decision.”

EDUCATION AT HOME

Here the Rebbe emphasized the value of early-childhood education, beginning at birth. This is sourced in the generations-old custom of hanging a *Shir Hamaalos* near the infant from before birth, and rocking the baby to sleep with lullabies extolling the value of Torah. It is far from just a nice *minhag*, the Rebbe said: Everything an infant sees has an effect for the rest of his or her life; and for those that aren’t ready to accept anything unless others confirm it as well—science has “discovered” this as well.

Parents should also actively focus on this stage of children’s education in other areas. Instead of giving their children toys and pictures of non-kosher animals, like dogs, cats, etc. parents should give their children holy things to look at and play with, like a pushka, a *bentcher*, and the like. Similarly, the entire family—parents as well as siblings—should know that when they rock the child to sleep with a lullaby about Torah, in whatever language it is, it isn’t just another way

to calm him down—it is a vital part of the education.⁸

The Rebbe also asked parents to get their children used to giving *tzedakah*; and here he displayed a unique understanding of the struggles a child has to deal with. Other things, like learning with another child, or teaching another child to fulfill a mitzvah, are much easier for them, because they aren’t losing anything. On the contrary, they feel good about themselves—they feel like teachers and leaders, like their parents. So although it takes time and effort to teach a child to do that, it is not so difficult.

But when a child receives an “allowance” (as it’s called in this country), and is told, “You should give *tzedakah*”—And to whom? To an acquaintance? To a friend? No!—“To a poor person. You don’t owe the poor person anything and you never even saw that person. Yet, because you know that the poor person needs money, go and take your hard earned money—which you received as a prize for learning Torah by heart—and give it away without asking for anything back.”

This is against a child’s nature and is their greatest *nisayon*. “I can’t do it!” the child cries. “I was able to do all



11 EVES 5739, YOSSEI MELAMED via JEM 286591



27 KISLEV 5737, Y SCHILDKRAUT via JEM 108587

JEWISH PUBLIC-SCHOOL CHILDREN ARRIVE AT 770 FOR A CHANUKAH RALLY WITH THE REBBE.

the other things: I say Shema Yisrael, I say all the *pesukim* and *maamarei Chazal* and passages from Tanya, I also convinced other children to do so, and I was happy to. But when it comes to *mitvza tzedakah*, here is where it gets *farhakt*—I just can't do it!"

So the child must be taught not to be discouraged by this; some things in life are more difficult than others, but if Hashem tells you to do something, it is within your capability. If you work hard enough, you'll be able to fulfill this mitzvah too.

When you educate a child in tzedakah early on, before their obligated in the mitzvah of tzedakah, and possibly even before they have the mitzvah of *chinuch*, the child will learn to empathize with another person's suffering. Furthermore, tzedakah helps in the security of all Yidden, because when Hashem sees that you gave life

to a poor person, He reciprocates in a similar manner.

As an incentive for the children, and in order to make this difficult mitzvah a little easier, the Rebbe said that each child should have his and her own tzedakah pushka, with their own name on it, where they will give tzedakah of their own money, ideally every weekday. When it gets full, *the child* will be the one to call the pushka collector and tell him that they filled up their own tzedakah pushka with their own money.⁹

CHILDREN AS EDUCATORS

All children, the Rebbe said, should get involved in educating themselves and their friends, and, one of the ways to do so is by learning the Twelve Pesukim and Maamarei Chazal. These *pesukim* should be translated in all

languages,¹¹ and it is critical that the children *learn* them—not just memorize them by heart—since the whole point is for them to educate their friends with the *content* of the *pesukim*.

The Rebbe announced that he would distribute three dollars to every child: Two for their activities in *chinuch*, which they could use for whatever they want, and a third for tzedakah, which would bring success to the activities. This should also be done throughout the world—giving the children three coins in local currency, in denominations of one or ten. The point of this is to combine all the worldwide activities, which is accomplished when they are funded by general pools in every location, which all become one, general, worldwide pool.¹²

Then the Rebbe added, that “being that it is all coming from a fund of my father-in-law *nessi doreinu*, the words of the Gemara regarding Iyov—‘he who takes a *pruta* from Iyov is blessed’—apply here as well.¹³ This will bring added *bracha* and *hatzlacha* in all the coins, or bills that will be distributed,” throughout the world.¹⁴

Additionally, since children should be incentivized to do good things—until they get older and do it for the right reasons on their own—prizes should be given out to whoever submits reports of their activities. This should include children after bar mitzvah as well. The first prizes should be given on Lag Ba'omer, the Rebbe said, since it is connected to children. (“Meanwhile,” the Rebbe added, “I haven’t found an explanation in Chassidus for *why* it’s connected to children, but on a simple level it’s because that’s when the students of Rabbi Akiva stopped dying.”)¹⁵

On a more general level, the Rebbe requested that every single person get involved in *chinuch*, in every possible way. “We are asking everyone, men

ONE SINGLE JEWISH CHILD

In parshas Emor, the torah tells us the story of “the son of a Mitzri” who, while fighting with “the son of a Yisraeli”, cursed Hashem’s name. He was upset because when he tried pitching his tent with his Jewish mother’s *shevet*, he was kicked out. He was told that a person’s *shevet* goes by the father, so he couldn’t pitch his tent with any other of the *shevatim* either. When he brought his case to Moshe, he was ruled against, and when he left the courtroom, he cursed Hashem’s name. Since the Yidden had never been taught what to do in such a situation, they put him in jail for the time being, until Hashem would give guidance to Moshe. After Hashem told Moshe the laws of a *mekalel*—which included various details of how he should be stoned to death, and also other laws of *nezikin*—he was taken out of jail and put to death.

Most interesting about this story is the fact that it is a story altogether. Why does Hashem care that a lowly person like that cursed His name? And it’s not as if he went and cursed Hashem’s name randomly; it was at a weak moment, when he was upset. Why is it so very important, to the extent that it takes up entire section in the Torah?

This shows us that every Yid, every child, makes a difference to Hashem. One must never upset a fellow Yid and cause him to rebel; even if you’re right, like in the case of the son of the Mitzri, who was rightfully denied a place by the *shevatim*. Still, one must exert extreme effort to take care of a Jewish child and ensure that he behaves correctly. This story demonstrates just how important every child is.¹⁰



LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 257278

THE REBBE LOOKS ON AS A CHILD RECITES ONE OF THE 12 PESUKIM AT A CHILDREN'S RALLY, CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS 5749.

and women, adults and children, to do everything within their ability to involve the most Yidden possible in *chinuch*.¹⁶ Every adult and child should take upon themselves to do at least one activity for *chinuch* every month—learning one *possuk* by heart, gaining at least one *mechunach*, etc. Once you start, you'll realize that it is not as difficult as you imagined, and hopefully, you'll grow even more the second month.¹⁷

NO COPYRIGHT!

The Rebbe directed his words to every segment of the Jewish world, both those who would be happy to fulfill the Rebbe's directives and also those who would be less enthusiastic. He quoted the words of the Frierdiker Rebbe who, upon arrival on American soil, announced that he didn't want a "copyright" on his activities; to the

contrary, he would be happy if others copied him and did even more! He also didn't need the activities to be done in his name, everyone could do it as his own thing, especially if he adds his own ideas, in which case the additional activities truly are his own, just as it is with patent laws: A person can utterly duplicate an original invention, but if he changes even a single small detail, he can take out a new patent under his own name, and make a *gevaldiken tummel*, that this is his invention now! He then publicizes throughout the world that people should pay him for it, give him honor, rewards, and so on.

It doesn't make a difference why people choose to get involved in the *mitvza*, the Rebbe said, *as long as it happens*, and includes the maximum amount of children, both boys and

girls, and children in years and children in knowledge.¹⁸

Lubavitchers world-wide threw themselves into the new *mitvza*. In New York, *bochurim* met with representatives of the Jewish Federation of New York and convinced them to subsidize children's tuition. Then they went house-to-house talking to parents and recruiting children to Jewish schools. They also spoke to principals in Jewish schools all over New York and asked them to accept children for lower prices or for free, and many agreed. (Tzach of New York also subsidized children's tuition and continues to subsidize the tuition of many Jewish children in the New York metropolitan until this day).

Immediately following the first *farbrengens*, dozens of *askanim* from all over Eretz Yisrael met in Kfar Chabad to discuss practical steps.

Various people took upon themselves tasks related to their field: The director of Beis Rivka in Kfar Chabad (Beis), Rabbi Shmuel Chefer, for example, took upon himself to begin preparing material to learn with the children, and להבחיל"ח Rabbi Moshe Slonim a"h was to put together a list of schools and preschools to visit.

In one of the early farbrengens of the mivtza, the Rebbe singled out people that had experience in *chinuch* to get involved in the *mivtza*, and specifically the shluchim who had recently been sent to Eretz Yisroel. (When they do so, the Rebbe said, they will *schlep* along with them also those who are sleeping, as well as those who argue that they are too old and dignified to get involved).¹⁹

Following the Rebbe's call, the shluchim visited schools all over the country to speak about *chinuch*, eventually reaching 941 schools over a span of a mere few months! They also took a mitzvah tank from Yerushalayim and visited *moshavim*, where some of them fanned out among the houses to check mezuzos and put up new ones, and others gathered children around the tank to learn with them, give them cards with the Twelve Pesukim, *mincha/maariv* booklets, tzedakah pushkas, and pictures of the Rebbe. On Fridays they would visit the army bases. Rabbi Aharon Leizer Ceitlin a"h, one of the shluchim, wrote a detailed account of their activities.

A sample log reads: "16 Tammuz, Kibbutz Kfar Hanavi and Moshav Mishmar Hayarden: 8 mezuzos, a few tefillin, 55 tzedakah boxes, 50 [children in] *mivtza chinuch*, distribution of materials. 17 Tammuz, Metula: 10 *mivtza* tefillin, 3 mezuzos, *mivtza chinuch* with 25 children, 25 tzedakah boxes, distribution of materials." This goes on and on, day after day, as the shluchim marched on to spread the Rebbe's message.

Due to the Rebbe's emphasis on camp being central to *chinuch*, the Machne Yisrael Day Camp was established that summer, with many children recruited from the Released Time program in public schools. Other existing camps were extended for an additional week.

The following Sukkos, 5737, the Rebbe held a special, one-of-a-kind farbrengen for the children who attend the Released Time program in the sukkah adjacent to 770.²⁰

It was that year, at the conclusion of *shnas hachinuch*, when the Rebbe began delivering *sichos* to children's rallies several times a year; when they returned from camp, on Chanukah; and several other occasions. These *sichos* were preceded by the recital of the newly instituted Twelve Pesukim, and followed by the Rebbe distributing

two coins to each child through the teachers and counselors, one for tzedakah and one for personal use.

THE TWELVE PESUKIM

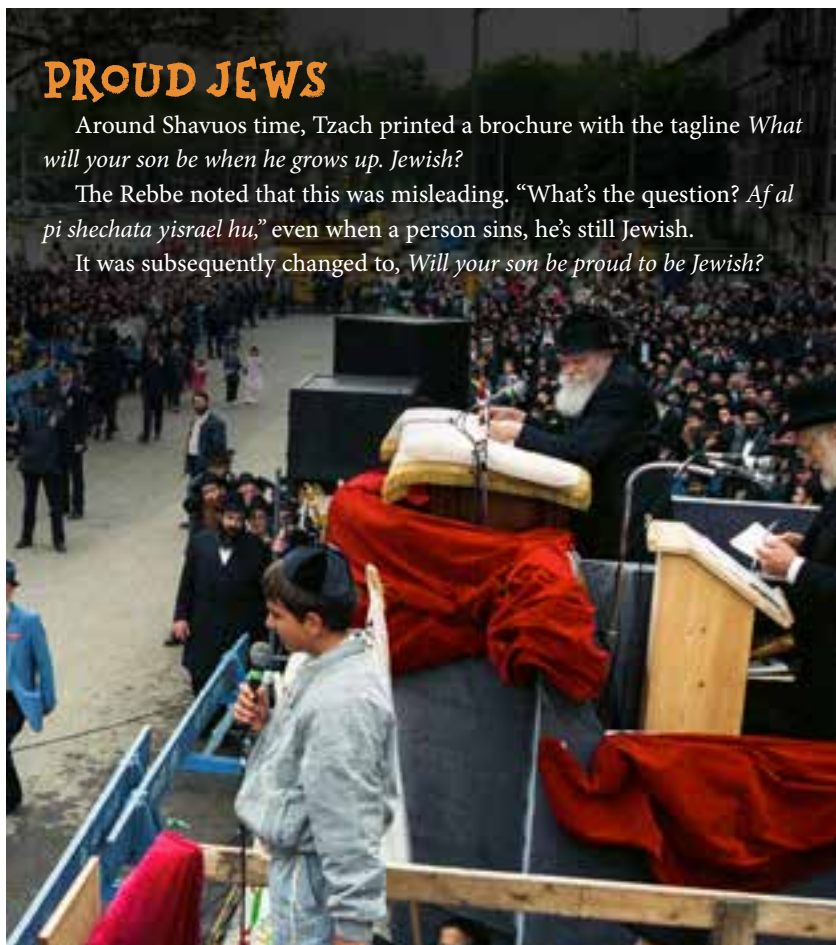
In addition to the importance of *chinuch* as a general theme, the Rebbe also pointed to it as an antidote to the enemies of the Jewish people, as the *possuk* says, "מפי עוללים ויונקים יסדת עוז" — "Out of the mouths of babies and sucklings You have established strength...in order to put an end to enemy and avenger." In the earlier stages of the *mivtza*, the Rebbe highlighted the behind-the-scenes pressure to put a Jordanian flag on Har Habayis. There was also the famous story of the plane with hundreds of Yidden being hijacked to Uganda, and eventually rescued by a miraculous Israeli operation.

PROUD JEWS

Around Shavuot time, Tzach printed a brochure with the tagline *What will your son be when he grows up. Jewish?*

The Rebbe noted that this was misleading. "What's the question? *Afal pi shechata yisrael hu*," even when a person sins, he's still Jewish.

It was subsequently changed to, *Will your son be proud to be Jewish?*



THE REBBE LOOKS ON AS A CHILD RECITES ONE OF THE 12 PESUKIM AT THE LAG BA'OMER PARADE, 5750.

CHAIM B HALBERSTAM via JEM 101585

For this reason, the Rebbe insisted that children be involved in all the *mitvzoim*, especially *mitvza chinuch*, and how it is so important for them to educate their friends.²¹

Children are natural educators, because they naturally make friends with others their age, and when they learn something new, their first instinct is to run and share their

exciting discovery with their friends. They also love boasting to their friends when they find out something that their friends didn't know about, and this impulse, too, can be used for holiness. All you have to do is have a talk with your children—boys and girls—and explain to them that whenever they meet another child, whether at home, in school, and even in the street, they should influence them in Yiddishkeit. And this will motivate the competitive instincts in the other child, that he, too, should learn something new in Torah to share with his friends.²²

The Rebbe went on to propose twelve passages from Torah, *maamarei Chazal*, and Tanya, which every child can understand and explain to his friends—the *Yud-Beis Pesukim U'maamarei Chazal*. The first six were announced at the farbrengon on Rosh Chodesh Iyar, and the next six on Lag Ba'omer at the parade. Through learning these verses, the Rebbe explained, the children would attain the great level (“*inyan nifla*”) of “*Torasoi umnasoi*”, constant learning of Torah. Because throughout the day, whether while playing with friends or sitting at home, the child remembers passages of Torah. Furthermore, they would be tools with which to educate friends as well.

GLOBAL MISSION

The activities weren't limited to the centers of Lubavitch in New York and Eretz Yisroel; it was an international campaign, aimed at reaching Jewish children worldwide. Rabbi Chaim Benyamini, founder and *rosh yeshiva* of Yeshivas Machne Yisrael in Petropolis, Brazil, reported to the Rebbe: “...We announced in the newspapers, in the name of the yeshiva and *michlala*, about our decision to accept financially-disadvantaged students at a 26% discount...and we asked the other local organizations to do likewise. On Lag Ba'omer and the Sunday before, several groups of *talmidim* visited five schools in Riu—2,500 children—where they taught them about learning the *pesukim* by heart and distributed coins for tzedakah. Several of the students are going home for the Shabbos before Shavuot, and they will work in their local cities. We also printed a translation of the letter to parents and students...”

Rabbi Hodakov sent letters from the Rebbe's *mazkirus* to various international contacts, especially shluchim, urging them not to forget about countries in their areas. To Rabbi Ezriel Chaikin, a shliach in Belgium at the time, he wrote: “Surely you have already begun energetically working in the activities of *shnas hachinuch* in your country, both in regards to yourself and in regards to others whom you can influence. I wanted to note that since, in the years past, you have laid a foundation of Yiddishkeit in the Scandinavian countries [—Rabbi Chaikin was a shliach in Denmark years earlier—]...it is therefore your responsibility, and great merit, to quickly concern yourself with spreading the activities of *chinuch* in those countries as well, including Denmark. As is known, the goal is to quickly reach every single child, both in the literal sense, and ‘children’ in knowledge of Yiddishkeit...”

To Rabbi Nachman Sudak, shliach to England: “Do not forget about Ireland; find someone there who will get involved in the activities.”

Rabbi Hodakov also wrote to businessmen with connections in far-flung Jewish communities which didn't have shluchim yet, like Rabbi Hirshel Chitrik (Japan) and Rabbi Mendel Shemtov (Taiwan and Hong Kong). To Rabbi Mendel Shemtov: “..Since, *b'hashgacha pratis*, you have business connections in Taiwan, Hong Kong, etc., you surely understand that you have the responsibility—and great *zechus*—to find out about the situation of *chinuch* in those countries and see what you can do to help.”

A letter was also written to Rabbi Avrohom Gudin, who was Rabbi Hodakov's student in Riga before the war, asking him to arrange a convention of all his former students, in order to encourage them to add in their own *chinuch* and of their families, and to get involved in strengthening Yiddishkeit and *chinuch* wherever they could.



COINS FROM THE REBBE SENT TO ALL JEWISH CHILDREN IN MOROCCO IN HONOR OF SHNAS HACHINUCH; ONE COIN FOR TZEDAKA, AND THE OTHER TWO TO BE KEPT AS A CONSTANT REMINDER TO INFLUENCE OTHERS IN TORAH AND MITZVOS.

RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES



THE REBBE CLAPS ALONG AS A GROUP OF CHILDREN PASS BY ON A FLOAT, LAG BA'OMER 5736, SHNAS HACHINUCH.

This brings us to a basic tenet in the Rebbe's philosophy in *chinuch*: never underestimate a child. Don't assume that he can't understand. If you put in the effort to explain it on their level, children can understand even the deepest concepts in Yiddishkeit, and although they comprehend it in 'childish language,' they understand the core concept just like adults.²³ This is true even at the youngest ages, when they're just beginning to learn to talk.

For example, the *possuk* "Shema Yisrael". On a very simple level, it is saying that Hashem is the one and only deity. On a deeper level, as explained in the Beis Yosef—and at length in Chassidus and Kabbalah—it means that Hashem is creator and originator of all existence, as hinted in the word *E--ch--od*: Hashem, hinted in the *Aleph*, creates the seven heavens and one earth, *Ches*, and the four directions of the world, *Daled*.

This concept is easily understandable for a young child, the Rebbe said. You can easily explain to him that the entire world that everything he sees—the ground, the sky, the four directions—all come from Hashem; and wherever he looks, Hashem is there. But in this explanation lies all of the deepest explanations of *mussar*, Chassidus and Kabbalah.²⁴

The Rebbe went through each of the Yud-Beis Pesukim, explaining the concept behind them, and, in a fascinating display of empathy, detailed exactly how each one can be explained to a young child, taking into account the concepts he does or doesn't understand. For example, when explaining the *possuk* "Torah Tzivah"—that the Torah is the inheritance of every single Yid, even a newborn infant—the Rebbe

pointed out that a very young child may not understand the idea of birth or a newborn. But since he is at the age when he has just begun talking, he *does* remember that there was a time before he was able to talk. So the way to explain to him this idea of unconditional inheritance is by explaining that even before he began talking, he already inherited the entire Torah.²⁵

Once a child gets into something, the Rebbe added, they do it all the way, wholly investing themselves, with all their emotions, without any limits. So when a child gets excited about Torah, they will immediately run and share it with their friends, and no-one will be able to stop them.²⁶

A WEEKDAY PARADE

In 5736, Lag Ba'omer fell out on a Tuesday, which meant that there was no parade scheduled, since parades were usually only on Sundays, when public school children were off from school. However, following the *shturem* of *mivtza chinuch*, the idea was raised to arrange a parade nonetheless, although there were only a few days left to get ready. The Rebbe answered, "אם אפשר להשיג מספר גדול של ילדים כדאי" - "If it is possible to get a large number of children—it is worth it."

And so they got to work. Some *bochurim* began working on the floats, while others spread across schools all over the New York area to recruit children to come to the parade. A huge banner with the newly introduced Pesukim—there were only six at the time—was hung on the exterior of 770. The weather was terrible all morning, and it looked like the parade might be rained out; but wonders of wonders, it didn't rain the entire time. In the *sicha* during the parade the Rebbe introduced the next six *pesukim*, and afterwards asked that they also be hung outside.



THE ORIGINAL BOOKLET OF THE 12 PESUKIM PRINTED SHORTLY AFTER THE REBBE INTRODUCED THEM.

The Rebbe also announced another initiative: That children in the diaspora should become pen-pals with other children in Eretz Yisroel, which would serve to strengthen the bond between Jewish children everywhere.²⁷

When a booklet of the *pessukim* was later prepared, its cover featured a boy. The Rebbe noted that it should include a girl as well. Later on, at a farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed that the next edition of the booklet should include an empty page for the child to write his or her name on. Another empty page should be left for the child to write the names of other children he or she influenced to study these *pessukim*.²⁸

TAKING IT GLOBAL

As a direct continuation of *shnas hachinuch*, the Rebbe took the

call for chinuch to a global level - campaigning for a moment of silence in public schools and encouraging the government to take more heed to the realm of education.

The first “Education Day USA” signed in honor of Yud Aleph Nissan 5738 actually mentioned the Rebbe’s call of *shnas hachinuch*.

In the “joint resolution” of the US congress they wrote: “...Whereas world Jewry marked in 1977 the seventy-fifth birthday of the revered and renowned Jewish leader, the head of the worldwide Lubavitch Movement, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who proclaimed on that occasion a “Year of Education”; Whereas the seventy-sixth birthday of this celebrated spiritual leader will occur on April 19, 1978, thus concluding the year of Lubavitch Movement activities

dedicated to the “Year of Education” and the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s milestone birthday: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation designating April 18, 1978, as “Education Day, U.S.A.”

In the ensuing months, the Rebbe highlighted the importance of education again and again, and requested that each and every person get involved in the *mitvza*. The Rebbe also encouraged other governments to follow the example set by the US and emphasize education as well.²⁹ **T**



THE FIRST SIX PESUKIM ADORN THE BUILDING ADJACENT TO 770 DURING THE LAG BA'OMER PARADE OF 5736, SHNAS HACHINUCH.

1. Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol 2, p. 255
2. Ibid, p. 142, 186
3. Ibid, p. 142
4. Ibid, p. 143
5. 85b
6. Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol 2, p. 120; p. 189
7. Ibid, p. 190-191
8. Ibid, p. 170; p. 185
9. Ibid, p. 444
10. Ibid, p. 284
11. Ibid, p. 150
12. Ibid, p. 153-154
13. Bava Basra, 15b
14. Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol 2, p. 154
15. Ibid, p. 171
16. Ibid
17. Ibid, p. 151
18. Ibid, p. 188-189
19. Ibid, p. 125
20. See story and photographs, Derher Tishrei 5775
21. Ibid, p. 144
22. Ibid, p. 144; p. 146; p. 186
23. Ibid, p. 146
24. Ibid, p. 439
25. Ibid, p. 440
26. Ibid, p. 148; p. 186
27. Ibid, p. 202
28. Yud-Gimmel Tammuz 5736
29. Chof Av, Motzoei Shabbos Eikev, and Motzoei Shabbos Re'eh, 5738

YUD BEIS PESSUKIM UMAAMAREI CHAZAL

The Twelve Pesukim were introduced on two separate occasions, as two sets of six. Each set includes two *pesukim* from Torah, two passages from Chazal, and two passages from Tanya. Over the farbrengens of that period, the Rebbe explained each *possuk* at length, detailing 1) exactly how to explain it to children, and 2) how it should impact their practical life. The Rebbe explained all the *pesukim* twice: When he introduced them (on Rosh Chodesh Iyar and Lag Ba'omer) and on Yud-Beis Tammuz. While some of the explanations were the same, others were quite different. For this reason, some *pesukim* have one explanation and others have two.

{ TORAH }

TORAH TZIVAH

The Torah is precious, and should be cherished and valued.

Also, you inherited the entire Torah as your birthright, much before you were able to talk and begin learning it; you are the *baal habayis* on the entire Torah!

SHEMA

Hashem is one. He creates every single thing in the world, as hinted in the word *E--ch--od*: Hashem, hinted in the *Aleph*; creates the seven heavens and one earth, *Ches*; and the four directions of the world, *Daled*. Everywhere you look, wherever you can see, Hashem is there.

How does Hashem truly permeate the entire world? When you make Him “Elokeinu,” your own, personal G-d.

{ CHAZAL }

BECHOL

A person must always view themselves as if they have just left Mitzrayim, because if Hashem hadn't freed our ancestors, we would still be there today. When you think

about this, it brings a powerful feeling of appreciation, and you'll do anything for Hashem!

Therefore, you should never feel intimidated by your challenging mission, thinking ‘How can I do more than many adults do?’ You have just been freed from 210 years of slavery, and now you can do anything you want! The fact that you didn't do it yesterday means nothing; you're a new person now!

KOL YISROEL

However great your father or mother is, Hashem is much, much greater. Yet, even though He is so great, you have the merit to be Hashem's handiwork, His planting. He rejoices and is proud of you.

You are eternal, since you're going to live in *Olam Haba* forever together with every other Yid. So just like Hashem, who is eternal and created the world, you too have the power to change the world.

Also, if you do what you should in this world, you will sit proudly with the *gedolei Yisroel* in *Olam Haba*. But if you don't, you will sit embarrassed on the side, and your embarrassment will also last forever.

{ TANYA }

KI KAROV

This *possuk* is quoted by the Alter Rebbe on the *shaar-blatt* of Tanya as the basis for the whole *sefer*. Although you're not always in the mood of doing Torah and mitzvos—sometimes you want *tchatchkes* (toys) or to go out and play—it is always within your power to overcome these obstacles by thinking about how important and valuable Yiddishkeit and Torah and mitzvos really are. And you have this power in all areas of your life—in your thoughts, speech and action.

VEHINEI

Hashem is always watching you and checking whether you're doing the right thing. So if you ever feel embarrassed of doing the right thing in front of your friends, remember that someone even greater is standing over you and watching you—Hashem Himself.

Furthermore, the fact that Hashem is standing strong like a king—*nitzav*—is dependent on you and your behavior.

{ TORAH }

BEREISHIS

Don't be intimidated by the big, scary world out there. Hashem is the one who created it, and through Torah, a Yid can influence everything that happens on earth, and also everything that happens in the heavens, since a Yid can get Hashem—in the heavens—to give us *brachos*.

VESHINANTAM

Knowing the importance and value of Torah, a child will demand of his or her parents to teach them Torah, and in a way that they will etch it in their mind and heart; so that at all times and in all situations—at home, traveling, going to bed and waking up—he or she will remember the words and lessons of Torah. Every moment is important.

{ CHAZAL }

YAGAATI

Never feel incapable or unworthy because of previous setbacks; they didn't come from a lack of ability, but from a lack of sufficient effort. You always have the capability to do what Hashem wants. If you ever come to a mitzvah that is very hard for you to do, remember that you are Hashem's handiwork, and that your mission is to make the world a *dira betachtonim*. If you work hard enough, you have the power to do even the most difficult things to fulfill your mission.

V'AHAVTA

These efforts shouldn't be limited to yourself; you work to influence your friends and everyone around you, with the same excitement and energy as when you were working on yourself.

{ TANYA }

V'ZEH

The task of fulfilling Torah and mitzvos is the greatest mission a person can have, since it is the sole reason Hashem created you, and *all the worlds*: To make yourself, your house, and the entire world a *dira betachtonim*, a place where Hashem can be.

Being that this is the purpose of your existence, and the purpose of the entire world, everything in your life—including eating, drinking, and playing—are part of your mission, and nothing in the world can stop you.

YISMACH

When you think for even a moment how great your shlichus is, it will bring you great joy. Furthermore, Hashem Himself rejoices with your *avoda*, and His joy causes you even more joy. When you fulfill your mission with happiness, it breaks down all barriers and walls, and gives you unlimited energy and excitement to share your Yiddishkeit with others.