



ON EDUCATION



**RABBI ARON
DOV SUFRIN**

Rabbi Aron Dov Sufrin was the Director of Education at Lubavitch Foundation, London, UK, for almost 40 years. The yechidusen published here were originally printed in the Sufrin-Lerner teshura – 11 Sivan 5763. They were transcribed from Rabbi Sufrin's personal notes by his son, Rabbi Yisroel Boruch Sufrin.*

Over the course of his many yechidusen, Rabbi Sufrin raised numerous issues and asked many questions to which the Rebbe responded:

Question:

Since work in Jewish education takes up so much time, (personal) Torah learning is affected and minimized, and tends to become lethargic.

The Rebbe's response:

The fact that work in Beis Lubavitch (London UK) leaves little time for learning should be looked at from a different perspective. This work is considered "necessary" and falls under the category of a mitzvah. (One good deed leads to another.) In addition, the work also aids in achieving *taharas hamoach vehalev*—purity of the heart and soul—and this in turn helps the learning process. Therefore, the actual time spent learning—even though it may be limited due to communal work—is incomparably more effective than the time one spends learning when not involved in communal work.

Question:

What attitude should be taken when a person had successfully influenced a child in a positive direction and the child subsequently reverted back to his original ways?

The Rebbe's response:

If one has success with a child, one must not close the door. One must always be *mekarev*—bring closer—the child, as there may be many reasons for his estrangement.¹

Question:

(Note: The following issue is worded exactly as written by Rabbi A. D. Sufrin, and is a copy of the exact language he handed in to the Rebbe upon entering for his yechidus. The school referred to is Lubavitch House School in London, UK.)

Most of the children in our school speak English at home. However in each class there are at least half the parents who would like their children to be taught in Yiddish and one child has left because of this. There are one or two others who may leave because we do not teach in Yiddish. On the other hand there are one or two who may take their children away to other schools if we do start teaching the children in Yiddish, and it will also deter parents of the English and German type from sending their children to us. Yet there is a possibility that if we would go over to teaching in Yiddish, a small percentage of *frummer*

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק שיחי'
ליפסקער
והכלה המהוללה מרת זעלדא תחי'
אבעלסקי
לרגל חתונתם בשעטומ"צ
ער"ח אדר שני ה'תשע"ט

children may join our school. Under the present system we have adopted we are introducing Yiddish into each class (as the Rebbe Shlita may have noticed from the curriculum I handed in) but there is still dissatisfaction amongst some of the parents. We therefore wish to know what our policy should be for running the school to teach in Yiddish or English.

The Rebbe's response:

Tell the parents who want everything taught in Yiddish that they most probably also want their children to grow up to be *shomrei Torah umitzvos*—Torah-observant Jews. If their children will be taught in Yiddish, which is a strange language to them, they may develop distaste to everything they learn. This will affect them in the future development of their personal Yiddishkeit. It is appropriate to speak to them in Yiddish during their playtime, recess, breaks, or when telling them a story, as this will help expand their familiarity with the language. However [this should] not [be done] when teaching them formal Yiddishkeit subjects.

Issue:

The nervous strain and stress with tension that comes from working at Lubavitch House and in Jewish education.

The Rebbe's response:

Why should there be nervous strain and stress from the worries of this position? The worries are not on the person's shoulders; they belong to Hashem, they are His worries! He has given the person a share in what is a tremendous merit [in general], and is indeed a tremendous merit for the person himself. If only others would also have the same merit.

Question:

To what extent should school curriculum be determined by the feelings and whims of parents? The school usually follows the curriculum issued by Merkos, but how much of it should be adapted according to the local situation, including parent needs and demands.

The Rebbe's response:

The Merkos curriculum is prepared for the United States. It should be adapted or revised to suit local conditions. It should take into account children's needs and their inclinations, and so on.

Question:

(Note: The following issue is worded exactly as written by Rabbi A. D. Sufrin, and is a copy of the exact language he handed in to the Rebbe upon entering for his yechidus. The Tzach Minyan referred to was the Lubavitch House Youth Minyan in Stamford Hill, London, UK. The Talmud Torah refers to the after-school Judaic program at the Lubavitch House. The school, Tzach Minyan and the Talmud Torah were all run under the direction of Rabbi A. D. Sufrin in his capacity of Director of Education and shliach as well as member of the administration of the Lubavitch House in the United Kingdom.)

On Friday evenings between Mincha and Maariv, I usually give a *shiur* on Kitzur Shulchan Aruch to the younger members of the Tzach Minyan. However, as most of the boys learn *dinim* in the Talmud Torah and some of the others learn at other times, I have been wondering whether it would perhaps be an idea to learn Chassidus instead. If so, what type of Chassidus to choose for this purpose as their knowledge is not good in this subject.

The Rebbe's response:

Continue to learn with them *dinim* and then include Chassidus. A possible model to use is: 15 minutes of *dinim* as a *shiur* in lecture format. Then tell them to do *chazzara*—review. This should then be followed by 15 minutes of Chassidus. It is advisable to begin with excerpts from Likkutei Dibburim.² **T**

1. Yechidus - 28 Tishrei, 5721*

2. Yechidus - 20 Adar Sheini, 5725*