

# Chinuch • Anash

## THE CHASSIDIC APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE

### DISCIPLINE IS THE FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

It is known that discipline is the foundation for success in learning and conduct. (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 10, p. 86)

### THE NEGATIVE IS EXTERNAL AND TEMPORARY

*Chinuch* has to be conducted out of closeness "ימין מקרבת" (the right hand draws near), and only afterwards is it possible to think about the approach of "שמאל דוחה" (the left hand pushes away), in order to release the child from undesirable traits. Even then, it has to be done only with the left hand, the weaker hand "שמאל דוחה". This means, without the same amount of enthusiasm, devotion and tumult that is demanded in *chinuch*.

The reason for this is because the non-desirable things are nothing other than something foreign that "נדבק" (attached itself) from the outside. The essence of each and every person of Yisroel has no connection

whatsoever with non-desirable matters. Even if something external becomes attached, this is only temporary. (*Hisvaaduyos* 5743, vol. 3, p. 617)

### EMPHASIS ON ASSEH TOV

The main thing, unlike the way of *baalei mussar*, with the emphasis on lengthy explanations and descriptions of the negative [to stay away from], the main efforts and explanations should be in explaining the virtue of true goodness. Simply: Efforts should be made to farbreng with them (in matters appropriate to their level of understanding of course), telling stories and *Chabad niggunim* etc. (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 12, p. 378)

### CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

...He is correct that it is not the right path to use in *chinuch* the punishment of the "rod". Most often the loss outweighs the benefit, and this suffices for those that understand. We clearly see that force which is garmented in ways of pleasantness has a greater impact. (*Shaarei Halacha VeMinhag*, vol. 3, p. 192)

### REFRAIN FROM SCARING CHILD

*Chinuch* should be conducted through love and closeness, as we can see with our senses that it accomplishes more than through fear and intimidation. One should refrain from scaring a child in order that he can live his life and make use of his abilities with inner peace and *simcha*, and then he will be able to make maximum use of his potential. (*Hisvaaduyos* 5750, vol. 3, p. 194)

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

- Parents are doing their children no favor by failing to restrict or guide them. It sets the child up for failure, lack of self-discipline and rejection in life.\*
- Children crave discipline and structure. Even when a child throws a tantrum and it seems that the last thing they want is to obey a parent, deep down the child prefers the parent will not give in to his protesting. The child wants a protector, someone to look up to. A child that is able to intimidate his parents has lost his protector.\*
- Discipline must be on a foundation of love.
- Children will internalize our relationship with them to affect their relationship with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. The way we treat their failures and their flaws will deeply impact the way they believe *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* feels about them. It is crucial that our children feel loved unconditionally and not *chas ve'shalom* loved only when they have the behaviors we are looking for.
- Focus on the behavior that needs correction, never label the child. Our children's sense of self is developing based largely on their interactions with us. Focusing on a child's positive qualities will reveal and develop the good in the child.
- "If the recourse to punishment is indeed to be part of our educational approach, it should be for the sole purpose of producing in the student the conviction that he is being punished out of love and concern for his future... (CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

### CHINUCH MASHPIA

Mrs. Beila Goldstein, wife of Rabbi Levi Goldstein, mother and experienced educator is available Sunday and Wednesday evenings 7-9 pm  
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### THANK YOU

Mrs. Beila Goldstein and Sara Chana Radcliffe for tips in this month's issue

...Neither anger nor revenge but the desire to heal must be the motive if the punishment is to be effective- the student [and in our case child] must feel that the object is not to cause him or her pain but to teach a necessary lesson.”\*\*

- Show your child you know they are capable of better choices. If a child feels they are “bad” in the eyes of the parent, they have nothing to live up to and no motivation to do better.
  - Discipline should not be conducted out of anger. Anger sends the child a message of rejection. A raised voice, unpleasant tone and ugly facial expression make a statement to the child “I don’t like you!”\*
  - Raising one’s voice is often done out of frustration to convey power to a child, but in fact the screaming parent is usually one that has just lost control. Children feel powerful at their ability to reduce a grown adult to hysteria.\*
  - A calm voice increases the likelihood that one’s message will be heard. When the parent is angry, the child sees the parent and the anger as their problem and cannot focus on the problem to be dealt with (the negative behavior that needs correction).
  - A child should always feel that the parent is on his side, on the same team, wanting what’s best for him.
  - Phrase things in the positive whenever possible, stating the desired behavior “please be gentle” instead of the negative behavior “don’t play roughly”. Sometimes turning a “no” into a “yes” just requires a little more creativity (e.g.- “No you may not have a candy” into “Yes, we can buy the candy for *Shabbos kodesh*”).
  - Have a plan that moves from the most positive and pleasant forms of education (explaining to a child, telling a story to get a message across) to the more negative and less pleasant forms.\*
  - Be proactive whenever possible. Find stories of *tzaddikim* on a certain topic to teach your child before the issue gets out of hand. Stories are an extremely powerful teaching tool.
  - Be consistent! A child that learns that “No” can turn into a “Yes” with enough whining because mommy is tired will repeat the negative behavior in the future.
  - “Two-times rule”: Parent asks a child to do something (or refrain from doing something) no more than two times. “Please sing a little quieter Yossie, Chava is trying to sleep” After making a request the mother should take a moment to recognize this instead of absent mindedly repeating the request while carrying on with other things (which would condition the child to ignore parental requests! The child learns that the parent will simply keep repeating himself without expecting the child to actually comply). The mother should then ask herself “Is this really important?” And “Am I fully free physically and emotionally to carry through with a consequence right now?” If the answer to both questions is yes, the parent should make the request of the child, this time with a consequence of non-compliance. “If I have to ask you again Yossi, you’ll have to leave the room.” If the child does not listen to the parent, the
- parent must carry out the consequence in the most brief and calm manner possible. “That’s it, Yossi. Please leave.” It is then imperative that the consequence be carried out if it has been “earned”.\* Be careful not to allow the child to manipulate you into giving “another chance” over and over again.
- Whenever possible the consequence should be related to the misbehavior (e.g.- a child that doesn’t pick up their toys may not play with them for 24 hours).\*
  - Most children are disciplinable from around fifteen months old.\*
  - It is most important to show little ones how they can win parental approval. When a young child is reprimanded he should also be told what behavior he can engage in instead of the prohibited behavior. The child must know not only what he mustn’t do, but what he is permitted to do.\*
  - When you see a small child doing the wrong thing, if possible, distract the child with another positive behavior. For example, if the child is throwing toys, say “we throw a ball, let’s find a ball.”
  - Whenever possible be as descriptive as possible so the child understands clearly what is expected of him. (e.g.- Clean up” vs. “Put all of the toys back in the cabinet and put all of the clothes in the drawer where they belong”). A parent cannot blame a child for failing to comply with vague orders; a child may have a different standard than the parent does.\*
  - Parents must show a united front, otherwise children will take advantage and work one parent against the other to get their way. If you do not agree with your spouse, speak about it privately when the children are not around. Teach a child to respect the other parent even when you do not agree that something is so important. For example, having a messy desk doesn’t bother you, but is extremely important to your spouse. When the child makes a mess of the desk say to the child “you know Tatti doesn’t like when his desk is messy”.
  - “Adolescents are old enough to participate in the disciplinary process. We want them to understand. We do not want to enforce discipline by telling them what to do and what not to do... Our purpose is not just to get out children to do what we want... They are in the midst of developing their minds, their senses and their judgment... their ability to make decisions... we want the initiative to come from them.”\*\*\*
  - “The way to handle a fight [with an adolescent] that we know we are not going to win is to establish our disapproval clearly. Tell him that we cannot and will not try to stop him physically from doing it, whatever it is, but that he does not have our blessing and we do not think it is good for him to do it; it is wrong and/or harmful for him.”\*\*\*

\*\*\*Rabbi Zecharya Greenwald, Preparing Your Child For Success,

\*\*The Educator’s Handbook, R’Mordechai Hodakov

\*Sara Chana Radcliffe, The Delicate Balance: Love and Authority in Torah Parenting

## CULTIVATING KABOLAS OL IN TODAY'S CHILDREN

As an educator, you know that children need motivation, but that is only one aspect of the problem. The most important aspect, in my opinion, in this day and age, is the lack of *kabolas ol* [acceptance of the yoke], not only of *ol Malchus Shomayim* [the yoke of the sovereignty of Heaven], but also general insubmission to authority, including the authority of parents at home and of teachers in school, and the authority of law and order in the street. There remains only the fear of punishment as a deterrent, but that fear has been reduced to a minimum because there has in recent years been what amounts to a breakdown of law enforcement, for reasons which need not be discussed here.

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On the other hand, American children have been brought up on the spirit of independence and freedom, and on the glorification of personal prowess and smartness. It has cultivated a sense of cockiness and self-assurance to the extent that one who is bent on mischief or anti-social activity feels that one can outsmart a cop on the beat, and even a judge on the bench; and, in any event, there is little to fear in the way of punishment.

As with every health problem, physical, mental or spiritual, the cure lies not in treating the

symptoms, but in attacking the cause, although the former may sometimes be necessary for relief in acute cases.

Since, as mentioned, the root of the problem is the lack of *kabolas ol*, I thought long and hard about finding a way of inducing an American child to get used to the idea of subordination to a higher authority, despite all the influence to the contrary—in the school, in the street, and even at home, where parents—not wishing to be bothered by their children—have all too often abdicated their authority, and left it to others to deal with truancy, juvenile delinquency, etc.

I came to the conclusion that there was no other way than trying to effect a basic change in the nature, through a system of discipline and obedience to rules which she/he can be induced to get accustomed to. Moreover, for this method to be effective, it would be necessary that it should be freely and readily accepted without coercion.

The idea itself is, of course, not a novel one. It has already been emphasized by the Rambam in the Introduction to his Commentary on *Mishnayos*, where he points out that although ideally good things should be done for their own sake (*lishmoh*), it is necessary to use inducements with young children until they are old enough to know better.

Thus, a “pilot” *Tzivos Hashem* was instituted. It immediately proved a great success in getting the children to do good things in keeping with the motto *V’Ohavto L’Reacho Komocho* (Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself), coupled with love and obedience to the “Commander-in-Chief” of *Tzivos Hashem*, namely *Hashem Elokei Tzivo’os* (the G d of Hosts). The *Tzivos Hashem* Campaign has a further reward, though not widely applicable to Jewish children attending Hebrew schools. This, too, has already been alluded to by our Sages, in their customary succinct way, by saying that a person born with a violent nature should become a (blood-letting) physician, or a *Shochet* [ritual slaughterer], or a *Mohel* (circumciser)—in order to give a positive outlet to his strong natural propensity (T.B. *Shabbos* 156a). Thus, children that might be inclined to aggressiveness, and hence easy

candidates for street gangs, and the like, would have a positive outlet by diverting their energy in the right direction.

This brings us to the point that although the ideal of peace is so prominent in the Torah, as mentioned, the fact is that G d designed and created the world in a way that leaves man subject to an almost constant inner strife, having to wage relentless battle with the *Yetzer Hora* [evil inclination]. Indeed, the *Zohar* points out that the Hebrew term for bread-lechem-is derived from the same root that denotes “war,” symbolizing the concept of the continuous struggle between the base and sublime natures in man, whether he eats his bread as a glutton, in a way an animal eats its food, or on a higher level—to keep the body healthy in order to be able to do what is good and right in accordance with the Will of the Creator.

This is the only kind of “battle” the *Tzivos Hashem* are called upon to wage. By the same token, the only “secret weapon” they are encouraged to use is strict *Shabbos* observance and other *Mitzvoth* which have been the secrets of Jewish strength throughout the ages.

Our experience with *Tzivos Hashem*—wherever the idea has been implemented, in the U.S.A. and Canada, Eretz Yisroel, and in many parts of the world—has completely convinced us of its most successful positive results, with no negative side-effects whatever. I can only hope that it would be adopted in other sectors, outside of Lubavitch, in growing numbers. ■

- (Letter of the Rebbe  
26th of Teves, 5742)

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## TEACHABLE CHINUCH MOMENTS

How do we maximize a child's actions, whether positive or negative, and turn it into a learning opportunity for *chassidische chinuch*? We can't make a blanket rule -- "don't over-react" or "don't under-react." Sometimes one will work better, sometimes the other.

Let's talk about "over-reacting." When we try to inculcate *chassidische hanhagos* we are not "over-reacting" but rather -- reacting vigorously. Let's say it's *Shabbos*. The child is handling a *muktza* object and you want the child to understand that this is something he should not touch on *Shabbos*, you don't want to be negative but we do want the child to gain that this is extremely important.

I like to offer the analogy of a child approaching an outlet. Even an exhausted mother who is finally putting up her feet on the couch would jump up with all her energy to physically remove that child from the danger zone. Here's another example. Let's say your son's *yarmulke* falls off while he is playing and he continues to play. Maybe he just turned three and he's not used to having a *yarmulke* on his head.

How does the mother respond to the *yarmulka*-less child? When a mother will treat the fallen *yarmulke* or other digressions in the same vigorous way that she would handle a child approaching an unprotected outlet, she will be giving the child the gift of *yiras shamayim*. The speed and vitality of the mother's response is in direct correlation to her own *yiras shamayim*. The child realizes, though no words were spoken, **that this is important.**

The mother who jumped into action is actually modeling *yiras shamayim* -- and modeling is the best way to teach any value. And this is a fact of life -- *yiras shamayim* can best be taught if the mother develops its presence in herself.

- Mrs. Gitty Stolik

## IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT ME

It is very important to help a child recognize that life is not about them, "it's not all about me". Life means what I can accomplish, not what I can have. It's a really important thing. Every opportunity and every circumstance there is a way to bring that message across. Life is not about me. You don't have to have what you want. It's not what life is all about. So child can get comfortable with the idea of "I wanted to go but I guess we can't", "I want to have that bicycle but I guess we can't, and that's okay". "It's okay if I don't have, the main thing is what do I do". In other words, to be a *shliach*. I am here to be a *shliach*, not to gather stuff, get things... because it's not about me. What can I do to help someone else? Never-mind me.

I don't actually say that, because that sounds threatening or dismissing, but in so many ways we can get that across, such as "what have we done today to help somebody?" "I know you don't want to do this but, you do what you are supposed to do even when you don't feel like it"- the message being: it's not about me. So in every way that we can get that message across and model it in our own lives we can actually, and I'm not exaggerating, save lives. Because children who grow up thinking life is about them will eventually discover that it's not, and will get depressed and then all sorts of trouble. We must avoid the trap of narcissism because that's what's ruining children today in the free world.

- Rabbi Manis Friedman

For Rabbi Manis Friedman's full course on raising kids please visit: [www.itsgoodtoknow.org](http://www.itsgoodtoknow.org)

## INSPIRATION FROM ANASH

"I try my best to carve out time to learn the *Chittas* of the day... yet it would always be the last thing of the day, usually late at night after the kids went to bed. It then dawned on me, role modeling is not a way of education it is the ONLY way of education. Instead of trying to teach my children the power of saying *Chittas*, they actually never see me saying it. So now I try after bed time routine, reading the books...I give the kids some extra time in their room with the light closed for them to fall asleep. I use a flashlight sitting in their beds saying *Chittas* from the *Chayenu*. It sends a powerful message without words of the importance of learning *Chittas* with positive association." - Mrs. Yehudis Bluming

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