



Illuminating words that we merited to hear from The Spinka Rebbe Shlita

✦ What is the true "copy" our children take from us?

Shlomo HaMelech sets a test before us — a way to know if our Chinuch was successful:

The test is: 'גם כי יקין לא יסור ממנה' **"Even when he grows old, he will not depart from it"**.

Will our child continue to cling to Toras HaShem even when he feels "old" towards it? Even when there is no freshness in his Avodas HaShem? **Will he persist in staying connected even when he doesn't understand why HaKadosh Boruch Hu is leading him through such great challenges?**

If the answer is yes — that is a true sign of successful Chinuch.

The question is: How do we achieve that?

How can we ensure today—while our children are still young and innocent — that during those future moments of trial, when their human mind fails to comprehend the Creator, they will continue to cling to Him with a complete heart?

The Rebbe said: A child is like a blank sheet of paper. He doesn't invent his behaviors on his own.

Our children observe us — the adults, the ones which know —and they observe how we behave in all sorts of situations... and they copy it into their own lives.

Many times, a child behaves in a way completely opposite to our expectations — and we can't understand him.

What happens then? How do we react in such situations?

When we don't understand the child's behavior – do we disconnect from him? Do we become angry and have a meltdown have a "sheviras hakeilim"? Do we retreat inward, busy with notions of justice?

If this is our reaction, the child receives a clear message: If I don't understand the other – the appropriate behavior is a meltdown / sheviras hakeilim, emotional disconnection or anger...

And if I don't understand the Creator? If I don't understand the Mitzvos? It makes no difference. **My parents taught me that everything depends on understanding. If I don't understand – it's a reason to lose it.**

But if we manage to restrain ourselves and contain it — if we continue to love and accept the child unconditionally, even in the most challenging moments — **He learns the most important lesson in life: Even if I don't understand — I still have a mission!**

✦ On Expectations and Disappointments...

When he was just one year old, he didn't always meet our expectations. We didn't always understand his behavior — yet we never got angry. **On the contrary, we delighted in his childish mix-ups!**

Now that he's older, and is supposed to understand, we expect mature behavior.

But right before we get angry — let us ask ourselves: **Do we always understand ourselves? Aren't there times when we do things we ourselves don't understand?**

We must not allow our natural expectations as parents to ruin the vital, healthy connection between us and our child.

✦ Presence — That's What He Needs

Inside each of us lies a potential for Mochin (mental faculties) for a full life of 120 years.

Even within the young mind of a newborn infant lies the potential intelligence of a mature and seasoned adult.

Over a lifetime, the gates of understanding are meant to open further and further in line with our age — through which we mature and grasp the ways of life.

But in order for these Mochin to open — the child needs a growth space called: Trust.

When he feels the presence of his parents at his side, when he feels safe and protected – he develops healthily, and learns to think and behave appropriately for his age.

But if he feels that his parents are not truly present for him, if he senses them as distant, if he seeks them and finds them too busy to engage with him in his experiences, his fears, and his growing moments – he will be forced to seek their attention in negative ways.

He's forced to seek their attention negatively: He will disturb, act out, create problems – all from a silent cry: Abba, Ima, notice me!

He would even prefer negative attention—so long as there is presence.

This behavior is called: Manipulation.

Manipulation is a sophisticated way in which a person performs an innocent act outwardly—but harbors an entirely different intention behind it.

A child who gets used to seeking attention from his parents through negative behavior develops a manipulative mindset. It will be much harder for him to develop healthy mochin and to mature. **He will require tremendous internal work to disconnect from the behavioral patterns ingrained during his childhood.**

We, the parents, have a critical role: To be present with the child.

To instill within him the feeling that we are with him.

The Rebbe illustrated this with the bedtime routine in every Yiddishe home:

Putting children to sleep is, at times, a complex task – to say the least. **Too many nights, they refuse to cooperate or get into bed.**

Why?

Because at that time—more than any other part of the day – the child needs us! **In those final moments of the day, when his eyes are already heavy with sleep, all the experiences of his young soul rise to the surface: Everything that happened today in the cheder or gan, the frustrations and challenges he faced, the fears that accumulated within him – and they flood him.**

When he finally falls asleep, it's not because he's calm – it's because he's simply too exhausted.

The thoughts? They continue racing in his young soul. The worries and fears don't stop when his eyes close – and so, without us realizing it, emotional problems begin to take root.

But when the child enters his bed and feels that the parent is sitting next to him, present at his side during the release of those experiences – he closes his eyes with a sense of security. And his sleep is calm and healing. He will wake up tomorrow with a refreshed soul and joyful childhood energy.

✦ **On the Situation Opposite Iran** (*Spoken before the recent attack*)

The fears arising now can lead a person to panic, to obsessively check the news – But they can also be a tremendous opportunity to connect to the Borei Olam.

When fear overwhelms us – **it can destroy the Nefesh - But it can also awaken the realization that** אל תבטחו בנדיבים **"do not trust in nedivim" that despite all the advanced weaponry and cutting-edge tech – nothing can stand against the enemy if HaKadosh Boruch Hu is not protecting us.**

Simchas Torah 5784 is living proof.

✦ **Like You – Like You Alone**

There is no such thing as truly loving another with unconditional love – if I don't first love myself with such love.

If a person is in conflict with himself, unfulfilled, only loving himself with conditional love – He will never be able to set aside personal interests to truly love another.

Only when one loves himself with ahavah she'einah teluyah b'davar – unconditional love – despite all his failures and burdens, because of his essence as a Chelek Eloka Mi'ma'al - then he can teach his Nefesh to love others in the same way: for who they are, as Chelek Eloka Mi'ma'al. Then, and only then, can he disconnect from interests – and embrace another soul without conditions.

Gedanken from the Spinka Rebbe Shlita. Written in Hebrew by R' Menachem Rubinfeld, and translated by Yissochor Raffles

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