

chinuch

Practical Instruction from
the Lubavitcher Rebbe
on Education

Culled from the teachings of 5748-5752

Foreword

The editors of *HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar/a CALL to ACTION* bring you the third edition of its new series portraying the Rebbe's practical instructions on *chinuch*. Translated from the popular Hebrew title, *Chinuch L'Maaseh*, the present work is a collection of excerpts from the Rebbe's published talks between the years of 5748 to 5752 (1988-1992), taken from both edited and unedited sources (*muga* and *bilti muga*).

The education of our children is a matter of the utmost importance. As the Rebbe Rashab decreed, "Just as wearing *tefillin* every day is a commandment of the Torah... so too is it the absolute duty of every person to spend a half hour every day thinking about the Torah-education of children."

May the education of our children and our acceptance of the practical teachings our *Nosi* stand us in good stead and may we immediately merit to hear new teachings from our Rebbe and King, our righteous Moshiach.

Editorial Office of
HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar
3 Shevat, 5763



a CALL to ACTION

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המעשה הוא העיקר

“HaMaaseh Hu HaIkar”

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Birth and Infancy

TAHARAS HAMISHPACHA

- The education of the child begins even before birth, with the parents' observance of *taharas hamishpacha*.¹

LOOKING ONLY AT PURE AND HOLY OBJECTS

- Even before the birth of the child, during pregnancy, Jewish women are exceedingly careful not to stare at impure things, and to look at only those things that are pure and holy.²

- We avoid toys or pictures depicting non-kosher animals inasmuch as children should look at only those things that are pure and holy.³ We begin to exercise this caution even before birth when we put up the *Shir HaMaalos* in front of the delivery room.⁴

- Immediately at birth, as the child comes into the world, we surround him with pure and holy objects like the *Shir HaMaalos*.⁵

- We see that when we put forth the proper effort we are able to receive permission in many hospitals to put up the *Shir HaMaalos* and that the birth is then easier and the child is born physically and spiritually more healthy.⁶

- When we put up the *Shir Hamaalos* for the little baby who has just been born, the baby is G-d's emissary in carrying out His *shlichus* in the world by causing holy things to be brought into the hospital.⁷

1. *Sichas 9th of Sivan, In Yechidus 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 304, footnote 42).*

2. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Emor 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 364).*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Sichas 9th of Sivan, In Yechidus 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 304, footnote 42).*

5. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Emor 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 364).*

6. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Lech L'cha 5752 (Sichos Kodesh, p. 288).*

7. *Sichas 23rd Adar 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 433).*

EDUCATION FROM BIRTH

- The fact that education begins right at birth is readily observed from the behavior of any parent who – before the baby even has understanding – begins to make gestures in front of the baby and teaches him to imitate.⁸

- The child's education "To love G-d, to fear Him and to remember Him always" begins immediately when the child comes into the world and there is a *mezuzah* affixed to the door way and a *Shir Hamaalos* hanging in front of his room.⁹

- It is also part of his education when the infant's father and mother look at him, take pride and give blessings and praise to G-d.¹⁰

"MODEH ANI"

- For those children who are still too young to say all of their prayers, we begin to teach them by having them start each day with saying *Modeh ani*.¹¹ Immediately when the child awakes in the morning, he proclaims verbally – and since we teach him that all of Judaism pertains to him – he sways and proclaims with his whole body, too, that he has received his soul anew from G-d. It is especially so when we teach him the meaning of the words, or if he understands the meaning for himself, that this has an effect on the him throughout his entire day, even until bedtime when he then says *Shema*.¹²

- The custom of righteous women is to say *Modeh ani* on behalf of and with their infants who do not yet speak.¹³

8. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bahaalosecha* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 369).

9. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah* 5751 (*Hisva'aduyos*, pp. 315-316).

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Sichas 9th Sivan* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 304).

12. *Sichas Gimel d'Slichos* 5751 (*Roshei Dvarim*).

13. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeishev* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 37).

WASHING HANDS – "NEGEL VASSER"

- The holy soul of a Jew enters the body in stages, until the body itself becomes holy even during sleep.¹⁴ This is understood from the *halacha* that one should be careful that a child not touch anything before washing his hands in the morning, for when the soul returns to the body each morning, the spirit of impurity that was there departs from the whole body but is left on the hands until after washing them.¹⁵

SAYING HOLY NAMES

- Children who are not yet at an age of understanding are taught to repeat holy names of the Jewish people, the Twelve Tribes, the Patriarchs and Matriarchs, and names of holy books.¹⁶ After they learn to speak, we gradually teach them Torah verses by heart and make them familiar with the *alef-beis* so that they may eventually read the words of Torah.¹⁷

BROCHOS

- Even very young children, who have not yet reached the age of *chinuch*¹⁸ and are just learning to speak, should be taught to recite *brochos* and answer "*Amen*."¹⁹

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14. **Editor's Note:** Precisely because of the holiness of the Jewish soul does a spirit of impurity attempt to draw nurture from him during sleep. Thus, the fact that even a small child should wash his hands in the morning indicates that he, too, attracts this spirit of impurity inasmuch as he also possesses a holy soul to some degree although he does not completely attain this soul until *bar mitzvah*.
 15. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah* 5751 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 315, footnote 71).
 16. *Sichas 5th Night of Sukkos* 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, pp. 181-182).
 17. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acherei* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 75): "As explained in further detail at the beginning of the Alter Rebbe's *Hilchos Talmud Torah*."
 18. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah* 5751 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 315, footnote 66): "In general, this means the age of six (See *Kesubos* 50a). However, more specifically, 'The age of education for positive mitzvos is different for each child according to his acuteness and knowledge and on a case by case basis.' (Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 343:3).
 19. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah* 5751 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 315): "Indeed, our Sages have remarked, 'When does a child merit the World to Come? When he answers, "Amen."'"

- Not only are we particular that they should not eat without a *brochah*, but we intentionally give them all types of candy just to accustom them to reciting the blessings until it becomes habitual and automatic.²⁰
- This does not just mean pronouncing the *brochos* verbally, but most of all, it should permeate their entire being – their desire, will, intellect and emotions – by our teaching them the meanings of the blessings, "to fear G-d and love Him and remember Him always through the blessings we recite always."²¹
- Children are taught to recite the first – biblically obligatory – paragraph of the Blessing After Meals and in a way that they understand for themselves the need to bless and praise G-d for material sustenance.²²
- Reciting "one hundred blessings a day" is easily accomplished by every Jew – man, woman and child – and even by children of less than six years old.²³ Even before *bar* or *bas mitzvah* we already teach children to say one hundred blessings each day.²⁴

20. *Ibid.* (Footnote 67)

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayera 5752 (Sefer HaSichos, pp. 88-89).*

23. See *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah 5751 (Roshei Dvarim)*: "Even though the obligation to recite one hundred *brochos* daily begins only after *bar mitzvah* – especially since a little child does not yet say three prayers a day which constitutes most of the one hundred *brochos* – yet, by educating them to make a *brocho* every time before they eat and drink it is possible for them to make up the one hundred *brochos* without any special effort at all, as is explained in the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*. From this we should learn a practical lesson – that we should be particular to say one hundred blessings a day, and also for children, their parents, teachers and older brothers and sisters should take care that they also recite one hundred blessings a day. Not just children from six and up whom we are obligated to begin educating, but even before this "immediate when the child begins to speak... his father teaches him Torah." ...And by educating them this way in their youth, then not only when they get older will they not stray, but even during their youth it will become their nature to recite *brochos* quite automatically."

24. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah 5751 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 315)*. See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayechi 5752 (Sichos Kodesh, p. 514)*.

STORIES OF MIRACLES AND SELF-SACRIFICE

- For little boys and girls who have not yet reached the age of "five to the learning of Torah," we teach them by telling them stories from the Written and Oral Torah, stories of *agaddah* and *midrash* from *Sefer Ein Yaakov*, for hearing these stories has a world of effect on the education of a child.²⁵

- We begin to educate a Jewish child specifically by telling him miraculous stories and stories of self-sacrifice. Only this will be accepted by a Jewish child.²⁶ We know that my father-in-law, the Rebbe, taught that we must even teach children stories such as the binding of Yitzchak, contrary to those who assert that this will scare them. By nature, a Jewish child is able to understand and to be sensitive to the idea of self-sacrifice and, as a matter of fact, a child's insight into these matters is even greater than that of a grown-up with a mature intellect.²⁷ Yet, it is also understood that while self-sacrifice is a foundation and prerequisite to serving G-d, this must be followed by a service of G-d with sense and intellect.²⁸

Methods in Early Education

TO REFRAIN FROM SCARING CHILDREN

- We must refrain from scaring children so that they may live their lives and expend their energies in peace, tranquility, happiness and cheer, for it is then that they will be able to expend their energies most fully.²⁹

25. *Sichas Lag B'Omer* 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 307, footnote 6).

26. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Yisro, Chof Beis Shevat* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 291): "There is a well known story about the education of the daughters of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, that their teacher wanted to present everything in a rational way and not to scare the children with stories of miracles and self-sacrifice. Said my father-in-law, the Rebbe, to the teacher, 'Exactly the opposite is so!'"

27. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 349).

28. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Yisro, Chof Beis Shevat* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 291).

29. *Sichas Lag B'Omer* 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 194, footnote 38).

REWARDS

- Education means to familiarize the student with something that is fundamentally new. And being that "All beginnings are difficult," we need to implement extra special tools in educating the child. Education is not just by teaching – which is repetitive and constant – but also by adding something new and special, an act of affection or a present.³⁰
- When we first begin to educate the child, we give him "big presents," things that he values, "in order to accustom him to learning." These presents must be fitting to the specific personality and nature of each child as instilled in them by G-d. Thus, for a small child, what may constitute a big gift – according to his understanding – are small things, candies and the like.³¹

IMBUING THE CHILD WITH A SECOND NATURE

- A Jewish child is educated by ingraining within him the habit of doing mitzvos while he is still young, until it becomes his very nature and habit. For example, when he gets up from sleep, he immediately, without so much as thinking, recites *Modeh ani*.³²
- When he matures, however, and gains fuller understanding, we negate the idea of fulfilling mitzvos by rote. Then we require him to learn and understand the Torah and mitzvos, and to fulfill the mitzvos with exertion and effort.³³

30. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz, Shabbos Chanukah 5748 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 123).*

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas B'chukosai, Shabbos Chanukah 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 188):* "Since he is still a small child and cannot yet understand the reasons for the mitzvos, the way to bring him to fulfill the mitzvos is through ingraining them into his nature so that he does them automatically."

33. *Ibid:* "And even then, we demand from him that his Torah and mitzvos be not just like beautiful writing on beautiful parchment, but rather like letters engraved in stone – engraved and ingrained within him."

TEACHING ALEF-BEIS

- Around the age of two,³⁴ we teach the child the Hebrew letters and vowels. Then, when his mind has developed, we teach him how to put the letters and vowels together.³⁵ As is known, the Rebbeim were extremely meticulous about the holiness of the letters and vowels and how they should be taught to boys and girls.³⁶
- We begin to learn *alef beis* with the child by identifying the letters on the title page, or first page, of *Tanya*.³⁷
- When we teach the child *alef-bais*, we also teach him the inner meanings of the letters.³⁸ For example: א is אנכי ה' אלוקיך – "I am the Eternal your G-d." As my father-in-law, the Rebbe, taught, we begin learning *alef-bais* specifically with the letter and vowel אָ, קמץ א, אָ for this is the אָ, קמץ א, אָ of אנכי ה'.³⁹ ב is the first letter of the Torah, and the world is likened to a ב, surrounded on three sides with the northern side left open. This shows us that the task of a Jew is to close off the "northern side" of the world and become a partner with G-d in creation.⁴⁰ י is a "Yid," a Jew, and is shaped like a little dot, the "pintele Yid" within us. And with its numerical value of ten, it alludes to the Ten Commandments.⁴¹

Special Instructions for Girls

NAMING GIRLS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

- Our custom is to make the naming at the first possible Torah reading even if it is on a weekday and not to delay until

34. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar* 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 246, footnote 48).

35. *Sichas Shavuot* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 278, footnote 32).

36. *Ibid.*: "See also the *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rashab, Vol. 2, p. 482."

37. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Dvarim* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, pp. 109-110).

38. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Korach* 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 538, footnote 44). See also *HaYom Yom*, 5th of Adar I; *Likutei Diburim*, Vol. 4, p. 641a.

39. *Sichas 11th Sivan* 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 309).

40. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Korach* 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 538, footnote 44).

41. *Ibid.*

Shabbos. If only this custom were to spread out to other Jewish communities since this is something that hastens the coming Redemption – as in the saying of our Sages, "Moshiach will not come until all of the souls have come into bodies," and the connection between soul and body comes about through the letters of each person's Jewish name.⁴²

TORAH STUDY

- Jewish education is for both boys and girls. For boys and girls alike, we emphasize the necessity to raise them to Torah, *chupah* and good deeds, inasmuch as women must learn the halachos that are necessary for them and, in this way, fulfill the Biblical command for Torah study.⁴³

BRINGING LITTLE GIRLS TO SHUL

- Reputable authorities have consented that fathers should bring their little girls with them to *shul*, not just to the women's section, and even after the age of three, as long as we have not yet begun to educate them [to conduct themselves as women] in this respect.⁴⁴

KASHRUS

- It is the custom of Jewish women to educate their daughters about matters of *kashrus* as they help to prepare meals.⁴⁵

LIGHTING CANDLES

- The mitzvah of lighting Shabbos candles is also for girls under *bas mitzvah* and even little girls of just three years old, two and a half, two or even one, if this is a one year old that has

42. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shlach* 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 364).

43. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acherei* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 75).

44. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeilech, Vov Tishrei* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 39, footnote 25).

45. *Sichas 27 Elul* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, pp. 378-379).

already started to speak and can light the candles and make the blessing.⁴⁶

- Our custom is for girls under *bas mitzvah* to light candles in front of their mother so that if anything needs to be corrected or improved, their mother – or older sister – will be able to help them.⁴⁷

- Girls should start lighting candles for the first time on *Yom Tov* so they can recite the *shehechyanu* blessing for the holiday having in mind that it should also be for their beginning to perform the mitzvah of lighting candles. Those who are anxious to begin before *Yom Tov* should then buy the girl a new garment on which she may recite *shehechyanu*.⁴⁸

First Day of School

CHEDER AT AGE THREE

- It is our custom to enter the child into *cheder* at the age of three, being that every Jew possesses the qualities of Avraham our father, the first Jew, who at that age of three began to "hearken to G-d's voice."⁴⁹

GIVING THE CHILD CANDIES AND FOOD

- It is customary that when we enter the child into *cheder*, in order that he will have a desire and fervor for his studies, we

46. *Ibid.*: "She has the merit and the ability to light up the whole room, whether she lights in her bedroom or if she lights together with her sisters in the family dining room. And so too, her mother who lights after all of them so that she can supervise and help them to light. Since there is no limit to the amount of light, with each candle that is lit, there is more and more light. We can see for ourself the great joy and shining face of a little girl, even of a year old, who sees that her candle is lit and is shining. Hers is a true joy, for by nature children do not put on a facade and all that they do is with pureness and truth."

47. *Sichas 23rd Adar* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 209, footnote 26).

48. *Sichas 25th Iyar* 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 225, footnote 38).

49. *Sichas 28th Cheshvan* 5752 (*Sichos Kodesh*, p. 343).

throw candies at him and tell him that it is the Angel Michael who throws the candies at him.⁵⁰

- It is understood that what we tell him is the truth. For in addition to the injunction to stay far from falsehood, it is known that we take great care in educating our children with truth. Indeed, it is that the parents and others throwing the candies, but they do so as *shluchim* of the angel Michael, and "one's *shliach* is as one's own self."⁵¹

- It is customary that when the child comes to learn Torah for the first time in *cheder*, we give him some food – a piece of sweet cake or the like – after he says the first verse.⁵²

STANDING THE CHILD WITH A TORAH SCROLL

- We stand the child next to a Torah scroll, but a "Torah scroll" such as is fitting for a child, not a real Torah made of parchment.⁵³

The Child of a Chasid

CHASID AND TAMIM

- The education of the child must be such that one looks at the child and sees that this is the son of a *chasid* and *tamim*, so much so that the only difference between the child and his father

50. *Sichas Shabbos Mikeitz, Shabbos Chanukah 5748 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 123)* See also *Sefer HaSichos 5701, p. 30.*

51. *Sichas Shabbos Mikeitz, Shabbos Chanukah 5748 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 123, footnote 19).* See also *Sichas Lag B'Omer 5748 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 307, footnote 8):* "As we have said many times, whatever we explain to a child must be a true explanation based on the truth of the Torah, especially since we know how exceedingly careful we are not to speak falsely to children."

52. *Sichas 28th Cheshvan 5752 (Sichos Kodesh, p. 343).*

53. *Ibid.*

is their age. The father's beard is graying and the little boy's beard hasn't started growing yet.⁵⁴

CHILDREN ARE SHLUCHIM

- It would be worthwhile to publish a book featuring the pictures of all of the *shluchim* and their families, even the small children.⁵⁵ Then, when the child will look through the book and see his picture, he will remember that he, too, is essentially a *shliach*, only that now he has to study Torah for many more years until he grows up and becomes an actual *shilach* as his parents have taught him.⁵⁶

INFLUENCING OTHER CHILDREN

- In addition to their studies in *cheder* or *yeshiva*, every boy and girl should lead a class where they teach other children a Torah subject which they have learned outside of school. Being that it is the nature of children to want to tell other children what to do, this tendency should be channeled towards the teaching of Torah.⁵⁷

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54. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah* 57501 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 317): "This is because the focus of his education since the time he was born has been to infuse him with the basic principles of loving, fearing and constantly remembering G-d, in reference to which all of us from the youngest to the oldest are equal."
55. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Toldos* 5751 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 332): "When the children see themselves in this book, it will encourage them to follow in the ways of their fathers and mothers and go on to be actual *shluchim*."
56. *Sichas 13 Menachem-Av* 5751 (*Roshei D'varim*): "It is a wonder that this has not been done already. It must be that we are so confounded by the hardships of exile that we no longer discern between that which is secondary and that which is essential. And that is -- to compile a *Sefer HaShluchim* with the names and pictures of all of the *shluchim* and their children. The book that was recently made has only some of the *shluchim*. Many, if not most, of the *shluchim* are not listed there individually and it does not even mention how many children they have."
57. *Sichas 2nd Day of Shavuos* 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 276). See also *Sichas 11th Sivan* 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 309): "Especially since it is the way of little boys and girls to want to tell their friends what they learned that day in *cheder* or kindergarten or what they heard from their parents, for instance, learning the letters of *alef-beis*."

- Ideally, they should have ten children attend the class. Even though the typical quorum of ten people needed for prayer services includes only adult men, still, there is a certain value in assembling groups of ten women or ten children since the number ten is significant by itself.⁵⁸
- Every boy and girl in "*Tzivos HaShem*" must shine their light and influence other children, for a Jewish child must know that everything good that he or she has, must also benefit others.⁵⁹
- At the same time, however, the child should not neglect his own progress. He must always remember to seek guidance from a teacher or another educator, for even though the child may have already reached a level where he is accustomed to good behavior, he must remember that he is still only in the middle of the journey and continuing to grow. And we know that a Jew grows by ever increasing in his study and knowledge of Torah.⁶⁰
- A Jewish child, thus, has a two-fold responsibility. One, to be a *mekabel* from his teachers and amass more Torah knowledge, and two, at the same time, to be a *mashpiah* on his friends and his surroundings.⁶¹

CHILDREN DISSEMINATING CHASIDUS

- Every Jewish man and women is able to disseminate the "wellsprings" of *Chasidus*. Even children can and must influence others in this respect, for in our days, the teachings of *Chasidus* have been explained in a way that children can understand.⁶²

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Sichas 19th Nissan 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, pp. 31-32)*

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Ibid.*

62. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayera 5749 (Hisva'aduyos, pp. 333-334).*

CHILDREN CAN INFLUENCE ADULTS

- A word from the heart, even from a little child, can have a great impact on a Jew who is thus far unfamiliar with the matters being spoken. Even if it does not have an immediate effect on him, it certainly will have an effect later on, when the listener has had time to reflect upon what he has been told.⁶³

CHILDREN RECITE THEIR CHAPTER OF TEHILIM

- The custom originating from the Baal Shem Tov for one to recite the chapter of *Tehilim* each day corresponding to one's age⁶⁴ is applicable to everyone, even children, and it is proper to teach them to say their chapter of *Tehilim* during their free time.⁶⁵

Love and Awe for G-d and Torah

A CHILD KNOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF TORAH

- Even a very small child who has not yet reached the age of "five years to the study of Torah" already knows the *importance* of Torah, that is, that he must do what it says in Torah. For example, saying *Modeh ani* at the beginning of the day, once we tell him that such is commanded by the Torah, that is enough already to make him do it.⁶⁶

KISSING THE MEZUZAH AND SEFER TORAH

- We see for ourselves that Jewish children by nature are drawn to kiss the *mezuzah*. We, then, should lift them up to kiss

63. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas B'reishis* 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 292).

64. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shlach*, "Koach" Sivan 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 392, footnote 85.)

65. *Ibid.* (p. 399)

66. *Sichas Night of Simchas Torah* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 203). See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayechi* 5752 (*Sichos Kodesh*, p. 509): "When you ask a little child, 'Why do you say *Modeh ani* right away when you get up from sleep?' he will answer you simply, 'Because it says in Torah!' And so it is with all that he does throughout the day."

the *mezuzah* many times throughout the day, especially at the beginning of the day when they awake, and at the end of the day before sleep.⁶⁷

- We bring children to *shul* to kiss the Torah with love – the kind of love with which they kiss their own father and mother, and even more. Since his parents and teachers educate him properly, the child already knows that when we kiss the Torah, it is with an even greater love than when kissing our parents.⁶⁸

LOVING G-D FOR OUR PHYSICAL SUSTENANCE

- Every single Jew is able to come to a love of G-d, even a very small child. And being that all Jews are "believers sons of believers," the child accepts the fact that G-d nourishes and sustains us all, including his father and mother, who in turn support him. Thus, the child loves G-d for the goodness He bestows.⁶⁹

LOVE SICKNESS FOR G-D

- With the proper education, we can influence a little child of four or five years old to so intensely desire a revelation of G-dliness that he cries over the fact that G-d has not been revealed to him and is so "love sick" for G-d⁷⁰ that we must prevent his soul from leaving his body.⁷¹

67. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayera* 5752 (*Sefer HaSichos*, p. 89).

68. *Sichas Night of Simchas Torah* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 203).

69. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acherei-Kedoshim* 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 281): "We do not mean just the innate love for G-d that is latent within every Jewish heart and inherited from our patriarchs, but also an overt love with feelings of emotion." See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah, 22nd Cheshvan* (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 317): "An education instilling a true feeling of awe and love for G-d is also for little children, as we learn from the well-known story told by my father-in-law, the Rebbe, that when the Rebbe Rashab was four or five years old, he so much yearned for a revelation of G-dliness, that he cried because G-d had not appeared to him like He appeared to Avraham *Avinu*."

70. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acherei Kedoshim* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 291): "In fact, since a child has a very strong will -- as we see, when he wants something, he goes after it with all his might and even cries -- he is more inclined to attain this state of "love sickness" for G-d than an adult. And although a child is fond of trivial

HIDUR MITZVOS

- Even when a person is at a very low level, he can – and must – begin immediately performing some mitzvah in the most beautiful and meticulous way. This particularly applies when it comes to the education of children, for it is the nature of children to want to take every good thing for themselves – including the true good of Torah and mitzvos.⁷²

FIGHTING THE EVIL INCLINATION

- We should teach a child that since he has a *yetzer harah* through which he can be lead to negative things, he must wage war against this evil inclination and resist it, for even the most difficult battle is well worth it when it is for the sake of our Father in Heaven.⁷³

- In truth, the child has only a very little *yetzer harah* and when his education is in order, there is no need to worry at all about him, even when he walks down the street and may meet non-Jewish children, G-d will protect him. The parents must do their part and educate the child.⁷⁴

things that are of little value, because his undeveloped mind cannot yet appreciate things of great value, nevertheless, with the proper education we can influence him that his desire should be for lofty things." See also *Ibid.* (p. 281, footnote 31): "See the Maimonides, *Hilchos Teshuvah* 10:3-5. "The proper love with which to love G-d is an extremely great and powerful love.. a constant obsession, like a person who is love sick... and when we teach women and children... we reveal to them this secret gradually until we accustom them to it."

71. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Acherei-Kedoshim* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 291): "Every individual Jew is able to attain this level of love and thirst for G-d to a point of love sickness and even to a point that we have to prevent the soul from expiring and leaving the body."

72. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan* 5749 (*Hisvaduyos*, p. 138). See *Ibid.* (p. 142).

73. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei* 5751 (*Roshei D'varim*).

74. *Ibid.*

The Child's Room

CHUMASH, SIDUR, TANYA AND TZEDAKA BOX

- It is extremely proper that every Jewish boy and girl, however young⁷⁵, should have a set place⁷⁶ in their room for holy books – a *Chumash*, a *sidur*, and a little Tanya of their own⁷⁷ – as well as their own personal *tzedaka* box⁷⁸, as this will increase their fervor and excitement to make use of these items.⁷⁹

AFFIXING THE TZEDAKA BOX

- The *tzedakah* box should be nailed to the wall of the child's room, thereby transforming the entire room into "a *tzedakah* room."⁸⁰ Then, also, we will not come to leave the *tzedakah* box in another room, whether accidentally or on purpose, which would make it seem to the child that this other room is more important than his own room.⁸¹

- The child should be sure to place the *tzedakah* box in a conspicuous place so that the box itself will remind him to put coins there for *tzedakah*. The same is so with the *sidur*. The

75. *Sichas 25th Tishrei 5750 (Hisva'aduyos*, p. 261). See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo 5751 (Roshei D'varim)*: "Everyone must have a *sidur*, even little children. As we have said many times, every child needs to have a *sidur* with the letters of the *alef-beis* in it. Then the child will know that not just the letters of his name have significance to him, but all twenty-two letters of the Torah. Now, there are even little prayer books just a page long that have only the things children need printed there, like the abbreviated *Birkas HaMazon*."

76. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5750 (Hisva'aduyos*, p. 89).

77. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Yisro 5750 (Sefer HaSichos*, p. 360).

78. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeira 5752 (Sefer HaSichos*, p. 89): "This way the room becomes a room of Torah study, prayer and good deeds, similar to the Holy Temple."

79. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5748 (Hisva'aduyos*, p. 480): "The child's education does not just take place in yeshiva, but also when he is at home. Thus, when he will have in his room a *tzedakah* box, a *sidur*, a *Chumash*, he will automatically remember Torah and mitzvos."

80. *Sichas 24th Elul 5748 (Hisva'aduyos*, p. 346).

81. *Ibid.* (Footnote 33).

sidur itself should be able to remind him to recite a blessing or to say *Modeh ani*.⁸²

- If it is impossible for the *tzedakah* box attached to the wall to be in a conspicuous place, then the child should put out another box that is not attached and keep that in a conspicuous place and then he will have both good things – one *tzedakah* box that is attached to the wall, and one that is in a conspicuous place.⁸³

CHERISHING HOLY OBJECTS

- The child's Jewish books and other holy articles make up the personal Temple of his spiritual life and, like the Temple, must be guarded. The children should cherish their holy objects much more than any of their other possessions.⁸⁴

LABELING THE CHILD'S POSSESSIONS

- In order to demonstrate and stress the importance and preciousness of our connection to G-d, every child should write in his *sidur* or *Chumash* or on the outside of his *tzedaka* box and other items, that these things are the property of G-d. In the standard text, "L'HASH-M HA'ARETZ U'MLOAH." Then,

82. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Baha'alo-secha* 5751 (*Roshei Devarim*). See also *Sichas 24th Elul* 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 346): "The *tzedakah* box should be in a conspicuous place. Then, when the child has a friend over to the house who, for whatever reason, is not familiar with such things, then, as is the nature of a child who sees something new, the friend will immediately ask what it is. The child whose house it is will then answer that this is the *sidur* from which he prays to G-d, the Torah from which he studies, and the *tzedakah* box with which he performs the great mitzvah of giving money to the poor. Immediately, this will arouse the Jewish nature of his friend, and he will decide to have the same in his room. And, as it is the nature of children to be impatient, seeing a good thing, he will want to do it right away, especially when the host is urging him on, and he will immediately take out his own money and put it in the box. The host will then explain to his guest that the most important thing is the mitzvah of loving your fellow Jew as yourself, and that now if he will meet another child who he knows, or even suspects, does not have one of these three things, he will encourage him to acquire these three things as well."

83. *Sichas 24th Elul* 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 346, footnote 32).

84. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shemini* 5750 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 89).

under these words, the child should write his own name as his signature verifying that indeed, "The earth and all that is in it are the Lord's."⁸⁵

Methods in Education

THE WORLD WAS CREATED FOR ME

- By nature, small children possess the quality described by the adage of our sages, "Each man must consider it as if the world was created for him." We see that, even though they are in constant need of the parents and ask for their assistance at every step of the way, children nevertheless feel that the whole world was created for them. We must only educate them that this feeling take form in an appropriate way.⁸⁶

TALMUD AT A YOUNG AGE

- In later generations, it has become common practice, rather than waiting until the traditional age of fifteen, that children begin to study Talmud much earlier, soon after they have begun to learn Mishnah.⁸⁷
- The fact that this has become prevalent throughout the Jewish community is an indication that it is a good practice backed with the full force of Maimonides' ruling that "A custom accepted by all Israel takes on the strength of a Biblical commandment."⁸⁸

TEACHING CHASIDUS TO CHILDREN

- We must put forth extra effort in disseminating *Chasidus* even amongst children – at the latest, right after *bar mitzvah* and,

85. *Sichas 2nd Day Choel HaMoed Sukkos 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 170).*

86. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayechi 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 139).*

87. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Sisa 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, pp. 411-412).*

88. *Sichas Shabbos 4th Night of Sukkos 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 162).*

ideally, even before *bar mitzvah* – thereby teaching them belief in G-d, the love of G-d and the fear of Him.⁸⁹

- We must try to explain these ideas to children in a way that they will be able to assimilate into their understanding. We should even be able to explain to the child the difference between the states before and after the initial contraction of Divine Light as represented in the various aspects of man's soul.⁹⁰

MOSHIACH

- The education of schoolchildren must be such that even the very young children – even nursing babies – are so completely permeated with the idea of Moshiach that we just look at a Jewish child and what do we see? Moshiach!⁹¹

Educational Institutions

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR GIRLS

- In recent generations, leaders of the Jewish community saw the need for the establishment of educational institutions for

89. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Noach* 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 418): "If we want to disseminate the wellsprings of *Chasidus* outward, let us begin with the children, who are on the "outside" of the obligation for Torah study and mitzvos. Thus, by teaching them *Chasidus*, we truly spread the wellsprings outward."

90. *Sichas Nights of Pesach* 5748 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 121).

91. *Sichas Night of Simchas Torah* 5752 (*Hisva'aduyos*, pp. 148-149): "This is to be understood from the saying of our sages, 'To whom does the verse 'Do not touch my anointed ones' apply? To the little school children.'" See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas D'varim* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 112): "The fact that our main focus is the children, including and especially, when dealing with the future Redemption, is simply understood from the saying of our sages that 'The little school children -- including even nursing babies -- are called 'My anointed ones,' the very title of our righteous Moshiach." See also *Ibid.* (Sichos Kodesh pp. 192-193): "We see for ourselves, when we look at the school children who have been educated in the past year -- and certainly it should be so as well in this year -- we immediately see that they are "My anointed ones." It is not difficult at all to understand why we call the children 'My anointed ones.' Just look at them and you'll see right away that this is their entire existence. To the contrary, the only thing difficult to understand is why the true and complete Redemption has yet to arrive."

girls. Since girls now go outside of the home anyway and are subject to outside influences, there must be schools where they can receive a fitting and pure education.⁹²

- Girls' schools should learn not only practical *halacha* but many other Torah subjects,⁹³ including the underlying discussions and polemics behind the laws, for this brings added vitality and pleasure to their studies; only that the main focus should be on the final ruling and practical law.⁹⁴

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS SHOULD DISTRIBUTE TZEDAKAH

- Principals of every kind of educational institution – primary schools, Hebrew schools, high schools, rabbinical seminaries, and even non-Jewish⁹⁵ schools – should distribute monies from either their own or the school's funds for the students and teachers to give *tzedakah*.⁹⁶

- In order that this not become an excessive burden, the principals may give out just a penny or more to each person. The main thing is to set an example that encourages the students and

92. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Emor 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 173)*. See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Yisro, Chof-beis Shevat 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 284)*: "In connection with the *yahrzeit* [of the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka], it would be proper to establish further places of education on her behalf... especially schools for girls. In the generation of the Previous Rebbe, the Rebbetzin's father, leaders of the Jewish community introduced the establishment of schools for girls even though in earlier generations there were only schools for boys; girls were chiefly educated at home by mothers, grandmothers or older sisters. One such institution is Beis Rivkah, which the Previous Rebbe founded in the middle of his period of leadership."

93. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Emor 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 174)*: "This also poses the additional benefit of making it possible for the mothers to assist in their sons' and husbands' studies. More than the portion and merit they receive for 'escorting their children to school and awaiting their husbands' return from the house of study,' they can actually help by taking part in the learning itself."

94. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Yisro, Chof-beis Shevat 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 284)*.

95. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha 5750 (Hisva'aduyos, p. 336)*: "...Since *tzedakah* is connected with the settling and civil inhabitation of the world -- and according to many opinions, *tzedakah* is also one of the Seven Noachide Laws -- and especially in this nation [The United States] whose central pillar is giving *tzedakah*..."

96. *Ibid.*

teachers to give *zedakah* and maybe even to give extra *zedakah* from their own generosity.⁹⁷

- This should be done at least once a week, ideally on Erev Shabbos when the needs of the poor are most pressing.⁹⁸
- This directive should be publicized in every place and it will certainly be accepted with immeasurable success.⁹⁹

INFLUENCING PARENTS TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO A PROPER JEWISH SCHOOL

- Before the beginning of the school year, as parents are enrolling their children in schools for the coming year, it would be most proper for everyone to do everything possible to pleasantly and peacefully influence parents – even if it takes a hundred times – to send their children to a proper Jewish school for a pure, Torah-based education.¹⁰⁰
- Even with those parents who are at this time still far from making this commitment and are unable to make such a radical change, we still must prevail upon them with the greatest possible effort in a pleasant manner but with the resoluteness befitting this issue.¹⁰¹

"AND YOU SHALL TEACH THEM UNTO YOUR CHILDREN"

- It should be explained to parents that there are six hundred thirteen mitzvos, one of which is "And you shall teach [these laws] unto your children," which we say twice daily in *Shema*,

97. *Ibid.*

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Ibid.*

100. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re'ei* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 208). See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas B'reishis* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, pp. 258-9): "Even when you are off to tend to some other matter and you chance to meet a Jewish child in the middle of the way, you must know that "G-d directs the footsteps of man" and that Divine Providence has acted so that you may become involved with this Jewish child and influence him. And you must know the responsibility that you have, for you know not if you will ever meet with him again."

101. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re'ei, Chof-beis Shevat* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 208).

and anyone who cannot fulfill this mitzvah themselves, must send their child to a proper Jewish school.¹⁰²

- It should also be explained that the good of the child depends on receiving a good education. Parents want only good for their children¹⁰³ and should thus be concerned that *everything* will be good in a spiritual sense by seeing to it that they receive a proper education; and this is by sending their child to experts in the field of Torah education.¹⁰⁴

COOPERATION BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIONS OF SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL AFFAIRS

- The administration of spiritual affairs and administration of material affairs must be two separate agencies. On the other hand, it is compulsory that at least the heads of both administrations should meet with each other from time to time.¹⁰⁵

- To facilitate greater success in this matter, it would be worthwhile to appoint a joint committee composed of many members from both the administration of spiritual affairs and the administration of material affairs.¹⁰⁶

THE "VA'AD HAMOSIFIM"

- We see for ourselves that when somebody else is watching, and more so when an accounting must be made to this person,

102. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re'ei* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 208).

103. "We see that it is the natural order of things that when dealing with the physical welfare and health of the child, parents consult with experts, not just when the child is born but even before. How much more so then should it be afterwards when G-d has already blessed the parents with healthy children."

104. *Ibid*: "Especially since this is something that affects not only the child but also the family that the child will raise when he or she is older. The matter has become all the more urgent in recent generations as we see that Jewish children now receive most of their education at school and are sent there from a very young age -- unlike in the past when a good portion of the child's education took place in the home."

105. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo* 5749 (*Hisva'aduyos*, p. 316).

106. *Ibid*.

the "fear of flesh and blood" motivates us to conduct ourselves properly and not to be swayed by the *yetzer harah*.¹⁰⁷

- Every neighborhood, every group and, if possible, every individual man, woman and child, should appoint a board of three¹⁰⁸ members who are to be informed of all progress. These three should then periodically and frequently come in to check on everyone's progress and to encourage more and more growth.¹⁰⁹
- All organizations everywhere, and especially¹¹⁰ institutions of education, should appoint this board of three – who are not members of the administration – to periodically and rather frequently come and determine whether the institution is making progress in the fulfilment of its mission.¹¹¹
- The board should encourage and respectfully and pleasantly demand more and more progress. The more they

107. *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Eikev 5748 (Hisva'aduyos, ch. 10)*. "It is thus understood that progress in activities must not be in a way of 'Walk modestly with the L-rd your G-d,' but instead, out in the open. In the words of the Rashba, 'It is a mitzvah to publicize those who do mitzvos.' This will also have a positive effect on others who will see and do likewise; in addition to the fact that in this generation especially we have the mission of spreading out the wellsprings of Chasidism and this is something that is impossible to be done quietly."

108. "A *beis din* cannot have less than three judges, for there must be a majority and a minority if they come to a disagreement. In this way, one can bring out favorable points (*chesed*), the second can be more demanding (*gevurah*) and the third one can make a compromise between them and the final ruling is from all three, for the greatest reconciliation is when there are different opinions and, in the end, they come to a consensus. Furthermore, there is an advantage in having three people, for then there is the indwelling of the *Shechinah* and Divine help and blessings in carrying out the said activities."

109. *Ibid.* (ch. 11).

110. "An institution carries the responsibility not just of an individual but of many people, especially educational institutions, institutions for disseminating Torah and the like. We see for ourselves, especially in these generations, after appointing the members of the administration of a given institution, they start off with a great excitement but are afterwards wont to lack in their attentiveness and fervor in carrying out their duty to the utmost perfection. All the more so they do not *increase* their activity. Thus, there must be others, from outside of the institution to instill the 'fear of flesh and blood' and be vigilant in this matter."

111. *Ibid.* (ch. 12).

demand, the better, for this will incite more and more from the members of the administration when they see that these demands are sincere, pleasantly presented and from the heart.¹¹²

- Regardless of how much increase in activities there may be, the board should still demand more, for "He who has one hundred wants two hundred, and he who has two hundred wants four hundred."¹¹³

- Ideally, reports on this progress should be sent here *in writing*, verified with the signatures of the three board members whereupon they will be brought to the resting-place of my father-in-law, the Rebbe.¹¹⁴

מוקדש

לכ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח

❧

לזכות

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' צבי מרדכי בן שרה

וזוגתו שלומית בת שושנה

בניהם ובנותיהם:

יוסף יצחק, משה, מנחם מענדל, חנה וחי' מושקא

שיחיו גודמאן

❧

יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

112. *Ibid.*

113. *Ibid.*

114. *Ibid.* (ch. 11).