

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Chinuch of Reb Shmuel's Sons and Daughters

Chinuch of the Children: A Fundamental of Yiddishkeit

“*Ki yedativ lema’an asher yetzaveh es banav v’es beiso acharav vesh-amru derech Hashem, la’asos tzedakah umishpat, lema’an havi Hashem al Avraham es asher diber alav.*” (Bereishis 18:19).

Avraham Avinu was the only one who promulgated the Oneness of Hashem in his generation, and still, the Torah emphasizes that the main reason for Hashem’s love of Avraham was because he commanded his family to abide by the ways of the Torah. The *chinuch* of children to follow in the path of our forefathers is a fundamental of *Yiddishkeit*, and is the channel of the conveyance of Torah from one generation to the next.

When we analyze the facets of Reb Shmuel’s personality and try to pinpoint what was unique about his observance of *mitzvos bein adam laMakom*, we feel that it was the effort he invested into the *chi-*



Reb Shmuel at his son’s *chuppah*

nuch of his children to follow the ways of the Torah. For him, *chinuch* was not accomplished by rote. *Chinuch* of his children to Torah and *mitzvos* was something that burned like a fire in his bones.

Chanoch Lana'ar

It's hard to describe how assiduously Reb Shmuel kept an eye on his children when it came to mitzvah observance. Despite being very softhearted and endlessly compassionate, with regard to the *chinuch* of his children, he was firm as a rock.

He would make sure that his children rose early for davening, even when they were young. He was scrupulous about observing *mitzvos*, even when there were difficulties involved.

He would keep tabs on who his children were friendly with; he guided them to always be honest and true. He constantly inculcated them with concepts of *kedushah* and protected them from alien and misguided influences. Despite his wealth, he was uncompromising in his principles, conducted the family's life in a simple fashion, and kept them far from pride and external opulence.

His children knew that if they wanted to give him pleasure, there were definite ways to do so — by observing the *mitzvos*, acting in accordance with the Torah, and displaying *yiras Shamayim*. They knew that their father davened for all this, as they were his greatest aspirations; they saw how he was *moser nefesh* to raise a generation of G-d-fearing Jews.

One of Reb Shmuel's sons related:

I will never forget how, when I was nine years old, my father noticed that I was not davening properly. He spoke quite harshly to me and I was in absolute shock. I didn't understand how my soft, loving, gentle father, who thought more of his children than they did of themselves, was suddenly acting so rigid and demanding!

Reb Shmuel once told his children:

I learned from my mother, *a"h*, that in *chinuch*, there is no room for *rachmanus*, compassion. Even when I went to bed very late at night, my mother would wake me up to daven *vasikin*. I was the apple

of her eye, but when it came to *avodas Hashem*, she had no misplaced “mercy” on me.

The Imrei Chaim's Promise for a *Dor Yesharim*

“I have no greater *nachas* in my life than my children learning Torah,” Reb Shmuel once shared with his children. They knew he was revealing something he felt very deeply.

“But —” he began, and started to speak slowly, as if he wanted his children to understand the message within the message. “*Yiras Hashem* is the main thing. Only through *yiras Hashem* can one keep the Torah.”

And with that, he shared the story about the promise for good children that he had received from the Imrei Chaim.

One Friday night, I was standing behind the tish of the Rebbe, the Imrei Chaim. You were young children and I was concerned about your chinuch. At that particular moment, I happened to have been absorbed in thoughts about the new home I was building.

The Rebbe began to sing the zemer “Az Beyom Hashvi'i.” The walls shook and the chassidim appeared to be swept up into another world. I felt how the Rebbe was elevating us a bit above the ground. But my worries about chinuch continued to trouble me...

I didn't feel very near to the Rebbe right then. My thoughts were wandering very far away in time, to the future in thirty or forty years. The holy emotions that had enveloped me a short time before were transformed into mounting worry.

A strong jolt shook me out of my reverie. Reb Shmuel Stern, the gabbai who was standing next to me at the tish, touched me on the shoulder and instructed me to look at the Rebbe. Suddenly, I noticed his holy visage. The Rebbe had turned his head to me and I trembled. And then the Rebbe smiled lovingly, shook his head, and motioned with his hand. “Yes! Yes! Don't worry. I'll watch over your children!”

The ruach hakodesh that I witnessed then is indescribable. In one moment, all my worries dissipated, as though they had never been. I knew that the Imrei Chaim would guide me on the path to establishing righ-

teous generations. Indeed, a few years later, his son, the Rebbe [the Yeshuos Moshe] continued to fulfill his father's promise...

Full Involvement

It was Nissan 5732/1972, right after the passing of the Imrei Chaim. In awe, I approached the Rebbe and gave him the first kvittel. The Rebbe studied the kvittel and asked me, "Where will your son Yaakov be learning next year?"

I didn't reply. The Rebbe persisted and informed me, "Your son Yaakov will learn in Vizhnitz!" Right then, I didn't understand why the Rebbe wanted my son to learn specifically in Vizhnitz, but years later, I realized why — the Rebbe wanted to keep an eye on my children.

It wasn't only in chinuch of the boys — the Rebbe also got involved in the chinuch of my daughters.

Chinuch of the Girls

"Where do your daughters go to school?" the Rebbe asked me before we parted at the end of the vacation in Switzerland.

"In the Bais Yaakov in Shikun Gimmel," I replied.

"Your daughters will attend Bais Yaakov Vizhnitz!" the Rebbe declared.

I was quiet as thoughts flashed through my mind. The girls were already registered for school, and studies at the local Bais Yaakov would be starting in just a few days. Switching to Bais Yaakov Vizhnitz, which was located far from our house, wouldn't be so simple for little girls. Moreover, the girls were already settled in their school; how could I pluck them out of their familiar environment?

I hoped that Mommy would help me deal with the new situation. With a heavy heart, I came to the hotel. She was busy packing the suitcases for our return flight.

"The Rebbe wants us to take the girls out of Bais Yaakov in Shikun Gimmel and send them to Vizhnitz," I told her. "What do you think?"

She replied tranquilly, "If the Rebbe says so, then why not? When we come home, we'll talk to the schools and we'll switch them to Vizhnitz."



Reb Shmuel's sons and sons-in-law at a *mitzvah tantz*

Her calm words were infused with emunas chachamim. And that's exactly what happened!

I merited the Rebbe's attention to my children's chinuch thanks to the combination of the brachah of the Imrei Chaim and the Rebbe's guidance.

I Worry for His True Wealth

The *gabbai*, Rabbi Tzvi Katz, related:

I heard people asking the Rebbe, "Why does the Rebbe demand that Reb Shmuel put his children into the Vizhnitz education institutions?"

"I'm worried about Reb Shmuel's real wealth!" the Rebbe replied.

Interestingly, the Rebbe explained the second half of the *passuk*, "*Chanoch l'naar al pi darko, gam ki yazkin lo yassur mimenah*" (*Mishlei*), to apply to the father. He explained it to mean that even when the father gets older, he will not regret the *chinuch* that he gave his children.

When a person ages, his children are already grown, and that is when the results of the *chinuch* they received in their youth become evident. Therefore, Shlomo Hamelech warns the father to be wise and educate his child with the type of *chinuch* that, when the father gets older, he will not regret.

Living in a Place of Torah

Reb Yitzchak Beirach Daskal related:

A substantial part of our *chinuch* is due to the location where we lived. When my father found a house to buy, and had even prepared the down payment, he went into the Imrei Chaim to ask the Rebbe's opinion.

The Imrei Chaim's response was unequivocal. "No, you must come closer to the area of Vizhnitz." Consequently, he purchased the house on Rechov Saadya Gaon, in a neighborhood saturated with *ahavas Torah* and *yiras Shamayim* — and that undoubtedly had a positive effect on his children.