

תשורה

מהגיגת ה"אפשערעניש"

של

יעקב שי' ווענגער

יום ג', ד' מר-חשון ה'תשע"ב

מאנטרעאל, קנדה

Bs”d

With thanks and gratitude to Hashem for all His goodness and kindness, we present to you this booklet, in honor of our son Yaakov's 'ישי upsherenish.

An upsherenish is an important stage of chinuch in a child's life. Therefore, we have included a couple of letters and an essay written by the Rebbe, on the topic of chinuch. These are being printed for the first time.

One of the letters was written to the great grandfather of the upsherenish boy (after whom he is named).

The remaining part is from the archives of Rabbi Nissan Mindel O.B.M., who merited to serve as private secretary of both the Previous Rebbe and of our Rebbe.

We thank and give good wishes to the Zaidy of the upsherenish boy, Rabbi Sholom Ber Schapiro 'ישי who was entrusted by his father-in-law Rabbi Nissan Mindel with his archives.

4 Cheshvan, 5772
Montreal, Canada

Mordechai and Rivka Wenger

Published and Copyright 2011
By NMP Nissan Mindel Publications
466 Crown St., Brooklyn, NY 11225
R' S.B. Schapiro – Editor
Printed in Canada

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form, without prior written permission from the publisher.

ISBN 1-58698-0026

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
HY 6626 3-9250

בית מדרש תלמוד תורה
ליובאוויטש
770 איסטערן פארקווי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

B. H.
27th of Tishrei, 5723
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dr. Jacob B. Hayes, M. D.
Carlton & Blauvelt Roads
Monsey, N.Y.

Sholom uBrocho!

Thank you for your letter of yesterday's date. I am pleased to note that your new resettlement provides you with the ability to enroll your children in a suitable Chinuch institution.

It is surely unnecessary to emphasize to you, and I trust you will not mind my mentioning it, that the essential phase of education and upbringing of children is provided by the home and living example of the parents.

As we are coming now from the holy days of Tishrei which culminate with Simchas Torah, may the joy and inspiration of the Torah and with the Torah and Mitzvoth be with each and everyone of us, in the midst of all our people, throughout the whole year.

Wishing you and Mrs. Hayes success in your work and true Yiddish Nachas from your children,

With blessing, *M. Schneerson*

ווענגער- ברייטאן

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213

Hyacinth 3-9250

מנחת מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

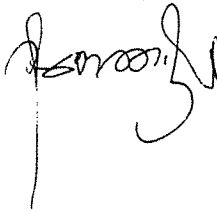
770 אימפערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ.י.

ב"ה, ר"ח שבט תשל"ד
ברוקלין, נ.י.

הרה"ח אי"א נו"נ וכו'
מוה' אליעזר שי'

שלום וברכה!

במענה על הודעתו אודות יום הולדת השלישי של בנם מרדכי
שי', הנה מועתק לקמן קטע ממכתב כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר זצוקלה"ה נבג"מ
זי"ע בנוגע למנהג ישראל זה. ויה"ר מהשי"ח שיגדלו ביחד עם זוג'
הי' לחורה ולחופה ולמעשים טובים מתוך הרחבה.

בברכה


וז"ל כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר.

...ובדבר גזירת השערות -אפשרעניש- הוא דבר גדול במנהג ישראל
ועיקרו הוא בהחנינון והשאת פיאוח הראש, ומיום הגזירה והנחה הפיאוח
של הראש, נהגו להדר להרגיל את החינוק בענין נשיאת ס"ק וברכות השחר
וברכת המזון וק"ש שעל המטה. והשי"ת יהי' בעזרם שיגדלוהו לחורה ולחופה
ולמעשים טובים מתוך פרנסה בהרחבה ובמנוחה הדעה בגשמיות וברוחניות.

Some Basic Problems of Education ¹

By Menachem M. Schneerson
President Merkoz L'inyonei Chinuch, Inc.
Educational arm of the Chabad Lubavitch Movement.
Lubavitcher Rebbe

Education, in general, has two primary objectives: (a) the acquisition of knowledge, including the application of the acquired knowledge, and (b) education in a stricter sense, namely, the cultivation of a proper code of ethics and morality, and the development of a concept as to his purpose and mission in life, which will be reflected in the daily, conduct of the boys and girls when they grow up and take their places in society.

The foundation of the said educational structure, especially in the area which comes under (b) above, is laid during the early period of the child's education, i.e. the period when the child receives his (or her) elementary education. My discussion is concerned with this school-age in particular. More precisely, I wish to discuss here some elementary problems in elementary education.

The school is not the only source of education. Long before the boy or girl begins to attend school, they learn from their parents, grandparents and immediate family. This source of education stays with them also during and after the school period. Concurrently, the external environment, namely, the society at large, and the day-today life within it, provides a further source of "schooling," one which exercises a strong influence on the individual at all age levels.

¹ By the Lubavitcher Rebbe in His capacity as President of the Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, education arm of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement.

Let us, for a moment, examine the role and relative importance of these three major sources of education - the home, school and society - in our day, and compared to previous generations. This will help us not only to discover what changes, if any, have taken place, but also to project into the future any corrective measures that may, be deemed advisable, or necessary.

Generally speaking, the emphasis in the past was on molding moral character (in the wider sense of the term) and on behavior rather than on imparting knowledge. In line with this attitude, it used to be the home and the church which exercised the essential influence on the ethical and moral education of the child. As for the school, it likewise contributed towards this objective, regarding it as an integral part of its function, on par with (and perhaps even more than) its role in the dissemination of knowledge. To a lesser but none the less significant degree, the society itself complemented the work of the home and church by placing a greater value on conduct than on erudition per se.

In our generation the situation has basically changed. The pressures, social, economic, etc. are directed towards a formal education. There are various effective ways and means of stimulating the child's interest in, and ambition for, scientific advancement. These have created in the contemporary child a drive towards the acquisition of knowledge.

On the other hand, in so far as moral conduct is concerned, the influence of the home, church, and society in general, has been on the wane, for reasons into which we need not enter here. As a result, the moral and ethical standards of our society, have not kept pace with the advancement of knowledge. On the contrary, they have deteriorated, so that the influence of the contemporary

environment in the area of moral advancement has become negligible, and often more negative than positive.

It is becoming increasingly evident that the school must now largely supplant the home and church in this vital part of the child's education, namely, the inculcation of moral values. Moreover, vital though this part of the child's education is, it is not as "obvious" to the average parent (himself a product of a largely materialistic society) as the need of knowledge. This means two things: firstly, that the initiative to correct the situation will have to come from the educators and school authorities; and, secondly, that it will require considerable attention and effort - extraordinary effort in some instances, to overcome the indifference, or even opposition, of certain parental circles.

In speaking here of morality and ethics, I am well aware that there are various concepts as to what constitutes true ethical and moral values, and whether or not these concepts are subject to change and revision to follow the times, and whether there is any need for such definitive norms altogether. The position enunciated here is based on the premise that ethics and morality are obligatory disciplines, and indispensable to the very existence of human society. Furthermore, I am speaking here of ethical and moral concepts as they were defined by our ancestors (with relatively minor modifications which do not affect our discussion).

So much for my general thesis. We may now examine its validity in the light of prevailing conditions and tendencies.

The emphasis on scholarship and scholastic achievement is very much in evidence everywhere: at home and in the schools. It is geared to a society where scholastic achievement is a deciding factor in many job applications, promotions, careers, etc. Curricula are steadily being

expanded and intensified, and there is a constant endeavor to accelerate the rate of scholastic advancement. The contemporary child hears a great deal about intelligence tests and aptitude tests; I.Q. and A.Q. have become familiar symbols to children. But what about C.Q. (character quotient)? Is it not as important to test and measure the child's progress in character building and moral advancement as his progress in amassing facts and figures? A great discrepancy obviously exists between the degree of emphasis placed on scholastic achievement and that which is placed on "moral conduct".

It would be unfair to say that the public schools have completely ignored the moral issue, or the need of character building. There is no denying that much of the material that goes into the so-called Social Studies in the public schools, to mention one instance, has been conceived with a view to emphasizing the ideals of democracy, tolerance, social justice, respect for the law, and the like. Why, then, have these efforts not been effective in curbing juvenile delinquency and spreading juvenile decency?

I venture to suggest and emphasize here one reason, in addition to the many others one often hears in a discussion of these issues:

An essential factor in the deterioration of the moral standards of the children and adolescents of our contemporary society is the fact that vast numbers of children in the public schools are brought up on a strictly and exclusively secular morality and ethics.

The exclusion from the public schools of any activity that would mention and inspire some thought about a Supreme Being is to vast numbers of school children tantamount to almost a denial of His existence. In our society, where morality and ethics can hardly be said to be at a premium,

where the most prevalent criterion of what is right and proper is the claim that "everybody does it," there is no real deterrent for a child against giving free rein to his natural drives and propensities. The authority of the police officer or juvenile court has not proven an adequate deterrent, especially when the truant juvenile bag the ever-present hope that he can "get away with it," or that he can outsmart the policeman and the judge and the probation officer.

There is only one factor which can induce children to curb their desires and cultivate decent and moral conduct. That is - the knowledge that the world in which we live is not a cosmic accident, but that It has a Creator and a Master, Who takes a "personal Interest" in all its affairs, and in every individual in particular. Imbued with this idea, the child will grow up with the realization that his actions come under Divine scrutiny; that nothing can be concealed from Him, and no one can outsmart Him. It will not be fear of Divine retribution alone that will deter him, but as he grows more mature it will be the feeling of awe, coupled with love, for the Divine Majesty that will be "a lamp unto his feet" in his daily conduct.

Those who will be responsible for the education of our youngsters in the days ahead, on the national, state, and community levels, and especially those who determine educational policy in the public schools (the system with which this discussion is particularly concerned), will have to reevaluate the foundations on which our present educational system rests. It will be necessary - if we are to preserve at least minimum standards of morality - to place in the center of all educational activity, whether at home or in the school, the emphasis on a Divinely based morality and ethics, and to bring into closer harmony the ideals of knowledge and conduct. Our youth is growing (though not necessarily growing up) and it cannot wait until the adults will work out

some "nice" formula, within the existing educational order, for their spiritual survival. The situation demands a thorough re-examination of basic approaches of education, unhampered by preconceptions. There can surely be no validity to the argument that anything that has to do with morality founded on the acknowledgment of Supreme Being should be held in abeyance until the boy or girl has reached maturity and decided for himself, or herself, what kind of a morality, secular or Divine, he or she wished to adhere to. This indeed is the dictated policy in certain countries and we know the results of such a policy.

It is a tragic delusion to think that the natural proclivities and appetites are something which the child will "outgrow" in time; just leave it to him. You cannot expect this any more than you can expect a person to lift himself up by pulling at his hair. There must be an outside power upon which to lean for support if any effort to elevate oneself physically, and even more so spiritually. In our generation we have, to our dismay, seen how little the school boy and school girl have been influenced by their teachers, or older brothers, in the way of moral standards. We have, more-over, seen a breakdown in parental control, and the ineffectiveness of the policeman on the beat. The alarming growth of juvenile delinquency leaves no doubt as to the inadequacies of the existing means and methods.

As for the hope that advanced human "civilization" will itself somehow correct those ills, we do not have far to go to convince ourselves what a "broken rod" human culture is upon which to lean for moral elevation. The country that was the most "cultured" and "civilized", whose preponderance not only in the realms of science but also in philosophy and ethics was well known, was precisely that country which has outraged every moral principle and produced the most depraved and vicious animals in human form.

To some extent the discrepancy between knowledge and conduct can be narrowed by a concerted effort on the part of parents, spiritual leaders, youth workers, and similar groups, to inculcate into the children the idea of the existence of a Creator, Who holds everyone accountable for one's actions. It would be folly, however, to shift the entire responsibility on the parents and ministers of religion, while the children are compelled to spend five days of the week in the school, where their character and ideas are actually molded to a much greater extent than at home, or in the house of worship which they visit only occasionally.

It is inconceivable that while many educators have been bold enough to come out with all sorts of experiments in educational policy, some of them dubious or even perilous, there should be such an obviously misplaced "embarrassment" to voice the vital need of impressing upon all children of public schools and private schools that there is a Supreme Being, Who not only created the world at a given time in the past, but Who watches it continuously, and from Whom no action, word or even thought can be hidden.

In an era when old-established scientific theories frequently toppled and are cast by the way-sides it is to be hoped that educational concepts and practices will not escape the scrutiny of a fresh reappraisal in the light of experience. After all, what is at stake here is not just another technological improvement, but the youth of our generation, the very future of mankind.

By the Grace of G-d
15th of Tammuz, 5731
Brooklyn, N. Y.

London, England

Greeting and Blessing:

I trust you had an inspiring 12-13th of Tammuz, the history and significance of which you surely know. As I have often mentioned it before, the important thing of observing a special day in our calendar, is not simply for the sake of remembrance of an event in the past, but that this remembrance should serve as a source of inspiration and stimulus for positive action in the present and future.

One of the significant aspects of the 12-13th of Tammuz, recalling the imprisonment and liberation of my father-in-law of saintly memory in those crucial days of the Soviet regime, is the nature of his activities which had brought about that crisis. For, my father-in-law of saintly memory had been very actively engaged in a variety of activities to preserve Yiddishkeit even under that hostile regime. These included the placement and financial support of Rebbonim, Shochtim, Mohalim, teachers, etc., and the maintenance of houses of prayer, Chadorim, Yeshivoth on both elementary and advanced levels. While all these activities were characterized by the same dedication and spirit of selflessness for the preservation and spreading of Yiddishkeit, going against the tide and in defiance of a brutal regime, and especially the militantly anti-religious Jewish section of the Communist party, etc., the main weight of this general activity was in the educational area, namely establishment and maintenance of clandestine Chadorim, Talmud Torahs and Yeshivoth. For, however vital all the other activities were, such as providing a Rav and a Shochet and a Mikvah, etc., the most important and far-reaching

activity was the Chinuch of the Jewish children, since the children are the foundation of the whole future of our people, and also the basis for all religious and spiritual activity devoted to the adults. As our Sages put it succinctly (in keeping with their way of expressing profound ideas in a few laconic words): "If there are no little lambs, there are no big rams."

Nowadays where Chinuch is concerned, it is not enough to provide the facilities for Jewish children to acquire the knowledge of Torah and the Jewish way of life. In this day and age the important thing is to inculcate into the children the proper Torah spirit and develop their true Jewish character, so that they should be able to face the world, even if they are a small minority, and should not fall prey to the various new ideas and ideologies which are so contrary to the spirit of Torah and Judaism.

For this reason it is necessary to get the Jewish children at their earliest age, in order to enable the Jewish boy and girl to realize the full potential of his or her Jewish Neshamah. This is also what makes the elementary Jewish school so important nowadays, because it is there that the child's character is primarily molded.

In this connection, I want to recall one particularly meaningful episode connected with the anniversary of the 12-13th of Tammuz, since it was one of the factors which aggravated the position of my father-in-law of saintly memory and precipitated the investigation and arrest. I refer to a public discourse which he gave on the Purim before his imprisonment, based on the text – **מפי עוללים ויונקים יסדת עוז** – **למען צורריך להשבית אויב ומתנקם** — "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings You established strength because of (in answer to) Your enemies, in order to silence the enemy and avenger" (Ps. 8:3). He explained on that occasion, and in the

published discourse which appeared already after his liberation, the vital importance of Torah-true Chinuch which must begin at the earliest age, and this is the way to overcome and silence our enemies, not only the enemies of Yiddishkeit, but also the enemies of the Jewish people. Actually the two are closely interlocked, inasmuch as the destiny of our people is essentially bound up with Yiddishkeit, as Rav Saadia Gaon expressed it, "Our people is a people only by virtue of the Torah" (Beliefs and Opinions" 3:7)

In the nature of things, G-d has so created man that he should advance from the elementary to the advanced and from the simple to the complex. However, even at the lowest and most elementary level it is necessary to act with strength, as indicated in the verse above, that is to say to give them of the Torah and Torah spirit the maximum they can absorb, and then we can be sure of the fulfillment of the promise of our Sages, "Try hard and you will succeed," for such all-out effort on the part of man is certain to bring forth the utmost help from On High in a most wonderful way. This is one more meaningful lesson of the 12-13th Tammuz anniversary, which not only led to the wonderful triumph of my father-in-law of saintly memory over his adversaries, but also ensured the extra-ordinary success of his work. For even now half a century later, we see the fruits and the fruits of fruits of his labors, in the hundreds of Jewish families coming out from the Soviet Golus, with their children and grandchildren proudly bearing the banner of Torah Yiddishkeit and Chasidus, and whose dedication to the Torah and Mitzvoth in their daily life is a source of inspiration even in the Holy Land.

Once again, wishing you and all your co-workers the utmost Hatzlocho to follow in the footsteps of my father-in-law of saintly memory, and this will surely broaden the

channel to receive G-d's blessings in the utmost measure,
materially as well as spiritually.

With blessing,

נדפס לזכות
יעקב שי' ווענגער

לרגל ה"אפשערעניש" שלו בשעטו"מ

אחיו ואחיותיו

צבי'ה, מנחם מענדל, ניסן, שמחה, שניאור זלמן, שמואל,
חנה שיחיו

הוריהם

הרב מרדכי וזוגתו רבקה שיחיו

זקניהם

הרה"ח הרה"ת שלום דובער וזוגתו פרידא חוה שיחיו

שפירא

מרת רייצל לאה שתחי' ווענגער

*

ולע"נ

הרה"ח הרה"ת הרב אליעזר בן הרב מרדכי ע"ה ווענגער