

# Educational בנת יבות החינוך Pathways



A Division of Merkos  
L'Inyonei Chinuch



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## THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY of מחנכים TO IMBUE STUDENTS WITH a LOVE of TORAH



Adapted from a talk by **HaRav Ezra B. Schochet**, *Rosh Yeshivas Ohr Elchonon, Los Angeles CA.* at the Kinus Hamechanchim, summer 5762  
Though originally addressed to mechanchim in yeshivos, it is equally applicable to mechanchim and mechanchos at any level in any institution.

**B**oth in his personal life and in his leadership, the Lubavitcher Rebbe zy" a exemplified the principle of *Torah* as a *Toras Chayim* - a compass for life. The Rebbe personified the idea that the physical and spiritual are inexorably bound up with one another. *Torah*, he taught, is the source of life, and as such, cannot be separated from the living. The Rebbe demonstrated to us repeatedly, that our lives in this physical world correspond to the practical fulfillment of the mitzvos. Drawing a direct link between our physical wellbeing and our observance of *Torah* and *mitzvos*, the Rebbe often advised people suffering of specific physical problems to strengthen their observance of a mitzvah, underscoring the relationship between the two dimensions. This would emerge as a recurring theme in the Rebbe's letters, talks and his blessings: Correct the problem at its source in the spiritual component, and issues which relate to the natural or physical problem will consequentially be resolved.

Taken to its logical conclusion, the awareness of this inherent relationship ought to determine our day-to-day behavior. As *mechanchim*, *magidai sbiur* and *roshei yeshiva*, our personal

example must speak to this link. The *talmid* must learn from us that his success in the future is inexorably linked to his experiences during his years in *yeshiva*. We all understand and accept the premise that any paradigmatic chosid will reflect a characteristic love for *Torah* study and a deep connection to the Rebbe and to his teachings. How much more so when one is charged with the responsibility of the spiritual development of *bochurim* yeshiva as we are. Among our most important responsibilities is to imbue our *talmidim* with an abiding commitment to *limud baTorah* which should define his whole life in the future. The *mechanech* must serve as a role model to

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## A Memorandum from... the Chinuch Office Director

Welcome to the spring issue of this publication. It is chock-full of information and chinuch ideas which we are confident many readers will find practical and beneficial. We are heartened by the fact that we regularly receive requests for back issues of **B'Nitivot HaChinuch**. We hope this issue will be as well received as its predecessors.

This issue follows the template developed over the course of the last year. On page 15 you will find the article by Rabbi M.A. Seligson which attempts to distill some of the educational philosophies of the Rebbe zy"va. It is the fifth in a series. The cover article is an adaptation of a lecture during a summer chinuch conference by HaRav Ezra Shochet, rosh yeshiva of Yeshivas Ohr Elchonon Chabad in Los Angeles CA. on a topic which is both timeless and timely.

Rabbi Hershel Fried offers the third and final installment of his outstanding analysis of the process of teaching "thinking" skills. It is a concern shared by many thoughtful educators and he has distilled a serious thesis into a short paper.

The Chinuch Office is involved in many projects which service the chinuch community. The latest is an early childhood project which we hope will have a major impact. New standards of excellence are being developed, as part of a national accreditation drive for preschools, which will strengthen existing early childhood educational centers, and foster the development of new schools in outlying communities. Spearheaded by Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch the creation of such new early childhood centers can potentially impact hundreds of Jewish homes and help lead them toward more Jewishly oriented lives. An article describing this project appears on page 5.

Comments from our readers about this and other articles are not only welcome but will be appreciated.

Rabbi Nochem Kaplan

### EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

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continued from page 1    **The Personal Responsibility of Mechanchim**  
the student, and may thus enable him to integrate these values and appropriate them for himself. I would like to address this issue at this opportunity.

### לְיָמוּד הַתּוֹרָה TO OUR תַּלְמִידִים:

The challenge to *Torah* educators is to imbue the student with an appreciation for *Torah* study as foundational to his life. All too often it is reduced to merely another religious rite of passage for which the student hopes to receive a passing mark. But Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim was founded on the values of *Torah* study (*limud haTorah*) and devotional service (*avodas haTefillah*) with the objective of making these essential to the life of its students. Through integrating the idea of *ki heym chayenu*, the student is prepared to venture into the world to face the myriad challenges that will invariably arise in the course of his life. The yeshiva years present the most opportune time to foster this sensibility - and if missed, it is unlikely that he will develop it later in life. This is important during all the years of chinuch, but it becomes imperative in yeshiva ketana and ultimately in yeshiva gedolah.

How is it accomplished?

When הר"ח ר' שלמה חיים קסלמן ע"ה was the *mashpia* in Kfar Chabad, he demanded that bochurim daven *b'arichus*, with deep contemplation and emotional devotion. To be sure, his many *farbrengens* left an impression, but it was his *davening* which the students had opportunity to observe day in and day out, that ultimately made a profound impression upon them, and became a source of inspiration to them in their own *avodah*. The *davening* was not just something that they learned about; it was part of their daily experience.

It is true that everyone assumes that a *magid shiur* studies *Rambam* daily. But do the students actually see him sitting in a *Beis haMedresh* on his own time and learning? The student must see his *magid shiur* - when not on duty - occupying himself with *Torah* study, and involved in *Torah* conversations. This living example of what he demands of his *talmidim* is far more effective than any number of *farbrengens* may be.

Every *melamed*, *magid shiur*, every *rosh yeshiva*, and every *mashpia* must recognize himself as a role model to the student. If a student is to develop the desire to learn, to make *Torah* his essence, he needs to see this embodiment with his own eyes. Nothing he reads in *seforim* nor anything he hears at a lecture or a *farbrengen* - indeed - nothing short of his *magid shiur's* behavior when outside the setting of the yeshiva, will leave him similarly impressed.

With the recognition that he serves as a role model, the *magid*

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# The Process Of Thinking

## Disequilibrium: Piaget, (פיאז'ה) The Panim Yafot, The Baal HaTanya and The Meor Einayim

By: Rabbi Aharon H. Fried, Ph.D.

**I**n a previous article (Fried 2000) I wrote that teachers should make sure that their students are being engaged by the material they are learning, are questioning it, grappling with it, turning it over in their minds, and considering it from various angles. The students should be asking how what they learned relates to what they already know, and how it changes and informs their understanding of issues they have learned or thought about, and of events in their lives.

Because this is a very basic concept and often overlooked I feel it deserves elaboration. In that article I wrote that: **It is important to understand that "thinking" is not an addendum to learning-it is learning itself!**

What does that mean? Let me try to explain.

Jean Piaget a famous Swiss Psychologist/Philosopher studied how thinking develops in children. His research and thinking led him to a conceptualization of thinking which includes the following main concepts. (see Piaget and Inhelder 1956)

### Piaget:

People have a need to make sense of the world they live in. They seek to understand how things work and how things in their world are inter-related. When they understand something, (that is when the predictions they make about a situation prove to be correct) they have a sense of **equilibrium** (a sense of things being in balance, being OK).

As long as things are OK, no further learning needs to (or will) occur (regarding the particular issue). For further learning to occur the learner must first be faced with evidence that his previous understanding of an issue, concept, or event, was either incomplete or faulty. This feeling that things are not OK, that one doesn't fully understand the issue, Piaget called "**Disequilibrium**". Disequilibrium is what drives us to learn. It is the resolution of Disequilibrium which results in real learning.

Disequilibrium occurs when the child is faced with new information which calls into question his earlier understanding of a situation. Piaget speaks of two kinds of such information.

1. Information which can fit into our current understanding of a situation, but which nevertheless forces us to expand our current understanding of a situation in order to **assimilate** the new information and
2. Information which forces us to change our understanding of a situation in order to **accommodate** our understanding to the new situation.

An example depicting this process (adapted from Siegler 1991) is that of a child learning the definition of the term "being alive".

*At first the child might define it as a being which "walks and talks." This is a basic and primitive understanding of this concept, but it represents the child's current understanding of the concept. Until and unless this understanding of the concept (or using Piaget's terminology, this schema) is challenged the child will be quite happy to hold on to this definition. When however the child hears that his pet dog must see a veterinarian because he is sick, otherwise he may die, the child will experience some puzzlement, or disequilibrium. After all, dogs don't talk and therefore do not fit his definition of "alive." But this disequilibrium is not too great. He can come to terms with the idea that dogs are alive without really changing his definition. He can assimilate this information by broadening his definition of "talk" to include "doggy talk." When he hears that the goldfish dies, his dilemma and disequilibrium is somewhat greater. After all goldfish don't talk at all (at least he's never heard them make any noise). The realization that goldfish are also alive creates greater disequilibrium for the child. He may now conclude that "talk" is not an essential part of his definition and decide that the definition of "alive" is simply anything which "moves on its own." Imagine however this child's consternation and puzzlement when he hears his father ask his mother to call the gardener because "the old tree in the back looks like its dying!" This disequilibrium will require the child to completely revamp his idea of alive to include the tree. He will need to*

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accommodate his thinking to handle the new information.

Thus, each experience of disequilibrium forces a change in the child's thinking, and brings the child to a higher more sophisticated level of understanding. Without disequilibrium, without questions, without problems, no changes will be forced and no development of understanding will occur. - i.e. no real learning will occur.

In this view real learning takes place only when the mind has first been faced with a problem or puzzle, has grappled with it, and as a result has come to an insight and a new more complete understanding of an issue.

Thus:

- The rote repetition of scientific facts without understanding their underlying principle, and how they relate to life and inter-relate with each other.
- The chanting of poetry without the words of the poet having been understood i.e. without the reader having been changed by the poem in some (even minute) way.
- The repetition of a series of dates in History without appreciation of their significance or the significance of their historical sequence.
- Or the memorization of the rules of grammar of a language which does not change how we speak and write.

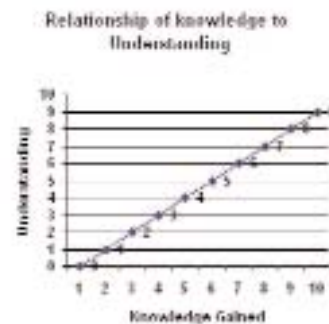
All of these cannot be considered real learning. Any accumulation of information which is gained without the benefit of such understanding is no more meaningful, and no different than the chanting of nursery rhymes which children do while jumping rope or playing hopscotch. They give not a thought to what they are saying, and remained uninformed by it. Their knowledge of the rhyme is "inert" or lifeless; it does not and cannot affect anything in their minds or in their lives.

To be sure, it is conceivable that the significance of a bit of meaningless information can at some later date, in a flash of insight, become apparent to the student. At such time the student might exclaim, "Oh, so that's what it means! Now I get it!" but this will happen only because in some way disequilibrium has been brought about by events in the student's consciousness at that time. Learning would then be said to have occurred at the later date-when insight and understanding has been acquired.

Another important implication of the concept of learning through disequilibrium relates to the path taken by the learning process takes.

Generally we would think that the relationship between learning and the growth of the intellect takes is a straight linear path. Thus as one gains more information the intellectual prowess and understanding grow steadily. Such a relationship is (roughly) what would be predicted from a behavioristic point of view.

It is illustrated in figure A.



*Each experience of disequilibrium forces a change in the child's thinking.*

Piaget's theory sees the relationship between information intake and the growth of understanding differently. In his view, (depicted in Figure B) one begins with a lack of understanding (zero level in Figure B) of a situation, which one needs to understand. The initial gains in knowledge lead to some tentative growth in understanding of the situation (depicted by the upward slope of the learning curve in Figure B), as preliminary hypothesis are formed. Further

gains may strengthen this understanding and a hypothesis or schema is adopted (depicted by the plateau in Figure B). So long as further input of information on the issue in question remains constant with the schema, no further growth in understanding will occur. When new information fails to correspond with the schema, it forces the schema to be discarded. In effect there is now again no understanding of the situation, hence a loss in understanding. (represented by the dip in the learning curve of Figure B). Further thought and information gathering allows for and results in a new hypothesis being formed, in new gains in understanding, until a new more sophisticated schema is formed i.e. a new better understanding of the situation has been reached (represented by the new plateau in Figure B). This process continues and repeats itself, theoretically, ad infinitum, as greater experience and more knowledge continually challenge existing schema and, after a struggle, give rise to increasingly more sophisticated understanding of the situation, and the construction of ever more sophisticated schemas.



These ideas should ring familiar to any student of Judaic thought, especially Chassidic and Kabbalistic thought.

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# RENEWED ATTENTION TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

by: Rabbi Nochem Kaplan, Director, Merkos Chinuch Office

*The Education/Chinuch Office of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch has been studying the problem of Early Childhood education in outlying communities across America. In contrast to some of finding presented by other studies, the Merkos study found some interesting differences in the programs offered at Chabad Early Childhood centers. The possibilities and opportunities which were indicated were presented in a formal proposal. These lines present a synopsis some of the issues raised.*

**D**uring the past decade, many Jewish organizations have expended substantial resources and creative energy to reach out to the unaffiliated. Concerns about Jewish continuity resound as a principle theme at Jewish leadership conclaves. While proposals may vary, the themes are identical. With the rate of intermarriage as high as it is and involvement in Jewish life, in any form, woefully inadequate, Jewish leaders from any point on the widest spectrum of Jewish observance are alarmed about the future.

A comprehensive study by Pearl Beck, PhD in November 2002, funded by the Jewish Early Childhood Foundation Partnership, concluded that Jewish preschools present significant, yet underutilized opportunities for strengthening families' Jewish affiliation and enhancing their Jewish identities.

When asked as part of the Pearl Beck study "how did you decide upon sending your child to this school?" parents pointed to a variety of reasons, most of which were unrelated to the school's Jewish content. Jewish education, while perceived as a bonus, was not a primary concern among parents. Rather, attractive conveniences such as proximity to home, and beautifully appointed facilities were frequently cited as the primary reasons. The school's reputation for having warm and nurturing teachers was noted as another highly valued feature.

Indeed too many Jewish preschools were found to have very little in the way of Jewish curriculum. In most cases, Jewish content was limited to the school's Shabbat parties and similar pre-holiday events. Most schools spoke in general terms about Jewish conduct, ethics and values. It was rare to find a school that designed a Jewish curriculum addressing the children's cognitive, affective and behavioral needs. In fact, much of the Jewish programming appeared ad hoc, upon the director's initiative. The study did find though, that while most

schools did not appear to have highly articulated Jewish educational goals, their more general goals seemed to focus on integrating Jewish values and Jewish culture into the preschool environment and fostering a sense of Jewish pride among the children.

The study also found that despite curricular gaps, children enrolled in Jewish preschools appeared to be learning about Jewish traditions, rituals and holidays. But parallel learning opportunities are rarely available for the parents. In fact only one preschool out of the seventy in the study sponsored a Jewish educational program for them.

## THE MODEL OF CHABAD-SPONSORED PRESCHOOLS

Chabad preschools are created to serve not only as institutions of early childhood learning but as vehicles to reach out to the families of the children who attend. A case in point is the Chabad Early Learning Center on the Upper West Side of Manhattan which caters to a mixed crowd, the majority of which is only marginally observant at best. The teachers are required to visit the home of every child during the first few weeks of school. They discuss their educational plans and curriculum in a setting which is comfortable for the parents. A number of Shabbatonim are sponsored for parents and families. Attendance by parents at these events is almost without exception. As is the case with most Jewish preschools, the majority of parents do not expect at first to send their children to Jewish day schools. Having experienced Jewish education as warm and nurturing, a large percentage of parents ultimately chooses day school education.

Another typical school is the Alan E. Zimmer Preschool at Chabad in Basking Ridge, NJ. At seven intervals during the year, parents are invited to come to school and experience the child's Jewish education first hand. Parents are involved in

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**Disequilibrium:**

Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz (died 1805) in his commentary on Torah, the Panim Yafot (first published in 1825) writes as follows: (Because the style of Biblical commentators is not familiar to the general reader, I will paraphrase what he says, and following in the Appendix present his words with translation. This way the general reader will be able to more easily gain appreciation of what he says, and also be able to contemplate his ideas in the original.)

*The Torah states: "He (G-d) tells His words to Jacob, His laws and His ordinances to Israel."* Now in Rabbinic literature, "Jacob" is generally taken to refer to the simple folk of the nation, while "Israel" is taken to refer to the scholars of the nation. If so, this raises a question. Namely, are G-d's "laws and ordinances" meant only for the scholars?! This certainly could not be! (Besides, if so, what are the "words" which he tells to Jacob?). Therefore, the interpretation of "laws and ordinances" must take on a different meaning. The Panim Yafot interprets as follows:

In Talmudic and Rabbinic literature a differentiation is made between those of the Torah's commandments whose rationale we have some understanding of (e.g. Thou shalt not steal), and those whose rationale we do not understand but accept as an expression of G-d's infinite wisdom (e.g. not eating pork). The former are generally referred to as Mishpatim - Ordinances, while the latter are referred to as Chukim - Laws.

The Panim Yafot takes this idea a step further. He suggests that in each and every Torah commandment, there are aspects of the commandment of which we have some understanding (Mishpatim - Ordinances), and aspects of which we do not (yet) have any understanding (Chukim - Laws).

Based on the above he interprets the Torah statement, "He tells...His laws and His ordinances to Israel" as referring to the learning process through which G-d leads, guides, and helps the scholars. Thus he says:

In the Torah there are things which are understood (Mishpatim) and things which are not understood (Chukim). It is impossible for a person to progress in his understanding of the Torah, without his first raising doubts and questions and carefully thinking about them. It is then that G-d will help him to reach a proper understanding of the Torah mystery he has been investigating, thus turning these previously not understood Chukim into Mishpatim.

And if he still further engages himself in Torah study, G-d will reveal to him also in these now understood commandments (Mishpatim), aspects which he does not understand. He will do this so that by subsequent questioning and contemplation, the student of Torah will be able to further elevate his understanding. And this process continues forever.

Thus we find in the Panim Yafot, who predated Piaget by more than a century, a concept very similar to that which Piaget introduced so much later through his own research. Both are saying that gains in under-

standing can only come about through the experience of disequilibrium which comes about through raising questions and doubts about what one has understood. They both also say that all understanding is tentative. All understanding is based on explanations which "will do for now". Implicit in both their positions is the idea that absolute understanding is never really attained by the human mind.

The kernel of this idea is actually found earlier in the Talmud, albeit in a much briefer form, when the Talmud says:

**A person cannot fully understand the words of the Torah unless he has first erred in its understanding.**

**Progress of Learning:**

Rabbi Menachem Nochum of Czernobel writing in the late 18th century (first published in 1798) makes an interesting commentary on a statement by Moshe Rabeinu (Moses) (Deuteronomy 31-2) before his passing. In this commentary he explicates his view (actually a Kabbalistic view) of the learning process. As I did above, I will first (closely) paraphrase his commentary, and then (in the Appendix) present it in the original with translation.

**...I am one hundred and twenty years old today, I can no longer go out and come (in)...(Devarim 31,2.)**

The Talmud in Tractate Sota comments on this verse **"This teaches us that the wells of wisdom were now closed to him."**

Rabbi Mordechai raises a question, if as the Talmud says, this verse refers to "Torah study" then what does he mean when he says that he "can no longer go out or come in?"

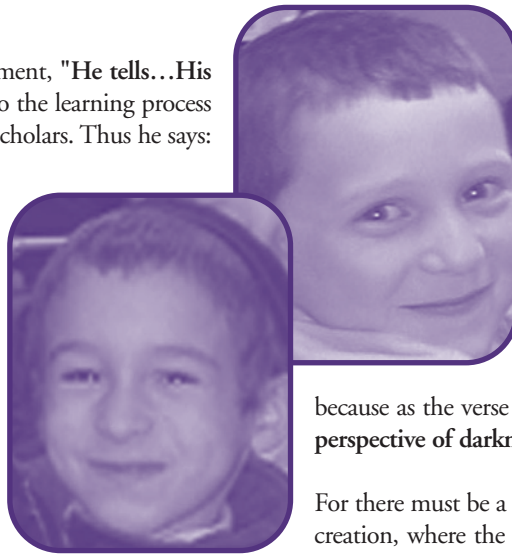
He explains it as follows:

It is known that the righteous person who is elevating himself from one lofty level of knowledge (or conceptualization) of G-d, will eventually arrive at a higher level of comprehension than he had earlier.

This is the process of gaining knowledge because as the verse says, **"The benefit of light is seen from the perspective of darkness."**

For there must be a void before there can be a being. As it was at creation, where the world was first **"void and empty"** and then there was a creation.

In the Kabbala we are told that there are fifty possible levels of the conceptualization of G-dliness, however only 49 are possibly accessible by the human mind. To grasp the fiftieth level of G-dly understanding and conceptualization, one must leave ones corporal and earthly limitations. Now Moses had attained the 49 levels that were available to him in this world. To do so, he had to at each level, first **go out** of (abandon) the level he was at and come into the new level. He had done so for 49 levels. And now, at age 120 he had nowhere left to rise to, at least as a mere



human being. This is what the Talmud means when it says that the "fountains of wisdom were closed to him" and this is what Moses meant when he said, "I can no longer go out and come in," in other words, I have learned as much as I can as a human on earth, I cannot learn any more here. To elevate myself, I must leave.

This description of the process of growth in learning and spiritual attainment is also clearly expressed (in briefer form and with a different emphasis) by Rabbi Snuer Zalman of Liadi (The Alter Rebbe, the founder of ChaBaD Lubavitch) in his sefer HaTanya (in the introduction to Part 2, Shaar HaYichud VeHoemuna).

...Now those who are familiar with the esoteric meaning of scripture, know the meaning of the verse, "For a tzadik (a righteous person) falls seven times, and rises up again." Especially since Man is called "mobile" and not "static" he must ascend from level to level, and not remain forever stationary at one level. **And between one level and the next, before he can reach the higher level, he is in a state of decline from the previous level.**

In the words of Rabbi Mordechai of Tchernobel in Meor Einayim we thus again find very much the same description of the process of knowledge that we find in Piagetian writings.

I hope these words of mine will help elucidate to the Jewish educator what it is we mean when we say that "Thinking is learning." For without questioning learning does not change the mind, and learning which has no effect on the mind, cannot be called learning.

Piaget held that when a person "understands" or "explains" something, he has created or as he would put it, has invented an explanation which satisfies him at his current level of intellectual development. Thus the explanation is his own, he created it and he owns it. The Talmud similarly speaks of the student making the Torah his own.

To explain the phrase (Psalms 1,2)

Praised is the man who has not walked in the path of the wicked nor sat in the counsels of sinners. But rather he desires only G-d's Torah and in he studies his Torah day and night.

Rava taught (Tractate Avoda Zara 19a)

*At the start the Torah is called by the name of G-d. But in the end it is called by his (the student's) name.*

And the commentator Rashi elaborates:

It is called on his name:

The name of the student who has struggled with it.

Our mission as teachers is to give children ownership of what they are learning. How can we do that?

**Some practical implications for teaching:**

**Make learning come alive:**

A number of years ago my family took a trip to northern New

Hampshire. One day we climbed a mountain called bald mountain (because there are no trees at the very top), and allowing for a 360 degree panoramic view). As we all stood transfixed by the beautiful view in front of us, my son-in-law bent down to his six year old son and said "You see Kalman, that's Niflaot Haboreh." When the child failed to understand the words, his father explained, "You see all that beauty, the mountains, the lakes, the trees, the sky? Hashem made all of it." The child looked around wide eyed for another half a minute or so, and then asked in amazement, "and it only took six days?!?"

*If we are to properly raise our children we must make the Torah we teach them come alive.*

Now this child had heard the Bereishis - the story of creation - a number of times before; in nursery, in kindergarten and in first grade. Never had he been amazed by it. Never before had he asked, "in six days?!?" It was only when he was faced with the **reality** of 50 or so beautiful miles of a panoramic view, it was only when he was faced with the wonderous beauty of the world, and only when he was told that this very real segment of earth had been created by Hashem that he was touched. Up to then he had been *saying* Bereishis Boro Elokim. Now, because wonderment had been aroused in him, the knowledge touched him, now he *knew* it! He knew that Bereishis Boro Elokim!

If we are to properly raise our children we must make the Torah we teach them come alive. We must not merely tell them about events we must allow them to experience them.

Thus for example; how much does a child in kindergarten understand when he is told that "Oil that was enough to burn for only one night, burned for 8 days?" He understands little about oil burning, less about time, and still less about the relationship between the amount of oil and the time it will burn for. Would it not pay to help them grasp and experience these concepts to create a sense of amazement? Here's how.

-First fill up two identical transparent vessels (each labeled with a different color) with differing amounts of oil, show them to the children,

-Then light them simultaneously, noting the time (perhaps with a sticker placed on the clock at where the minute hand is) and then let the children watch to see when each one goes out,

As each one goes out mark the time on the clock with a sticker corresponding to that vessels color.

-Then, discuss with the children what happened. Did both amounts of oil burn for the same amount of time? What made one burn longer?

-Could it be that the one with less oil should burn for as long as the one with more oil? If that would happen, what would we call it?

-At this point we can introduce the concept of "Nes" - Miracle. At this point the children can feel the wonder of such an event and feel wondrous about He who made it happen.

**Help the children to own the questions: Introduce disequilibrium**

On more than one occasion I have walked into a classroom just as a rebbe or teacher had finished explaining Rashi's question on a Posuk (verse) in Torah, only to witness a child raising a hand, pencil poised, asking, "What's Rashi's question?" The teacher invariably says, "I just explained it", but the child insists, "Yes, but I want to write it down!" The child wants the teacher to dictate the question to him/her.

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How much comprehension can the child have of the question? Can the child feel the question, or does the child merely know that "Rashi asks a question." And if the child isn't bothered by Rashi's question, what appreciation could he possibly have for the answer that Rashi gives?

If children are to appreciate what they are learning, if they are to truly comprehend what they are learning we must introduce disequilibrium, such that they ask Rashi's question themselves. It is only when they are themselves troubled by the question that they will understand, appreciate, grow from it, and come to love it.

Allow me to share with the reader one example of how I might do this with children.

First I present them with three sentences to complete with either the words "couldn't" or "wouldn't." Thus:

Please fill in the blanks in the following sentences using either wouldn't or couldn't as you see fit.

REMEMBER:

WOULDN'T = WOULD NOT = DID NOT WANT TO

COULDN'T = COULD NOT = WAS NOT ABLE TO

1. Miriam had a cast on her leg she \_\_\_\_\_ go to the party.
2. Miriam was angry at her friends she \_\_\_\_\_ go to the party.
3. The brothers were angry with Joseph they \_\_\_\_\_ speak to him nicely.

After the children had filled in the sentences, presumably using "couldn't" for the first sentence and "wouldn't" for sentences 2 and 3, I would direct them to a Posuk in Chumash.

Now review the following posuk:

and (his brothers) despised him וישנאו אתו  
and they COULD NOT ולא יכלו  
speak to him in peace דברו שלום

I would then help to notice their problem (which they by now have probably noticed on their own.)

Sentence 3 above is a rough translation of the posuk.

How did you complete the Posuk ? with couldn't or with "wouldn't ?

How does the Torah say it ? \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Why does the Torah say it differently than you would have put it. What does the Torah want to teach us?

Only now, when the child himself is troubled by the question, when disequilibrium has been introduced is he ready to gain from the answer.

Now then I say to him, "Let's see what Rashi has to tell us."

and they couldn't speak to him in peace: ולא יכלו דברו לשלום  
from their shame מתוך גנותם  
we learn their praise למדנו שבחם  
that they did not speak שלא דברו

one way with their mouth אחת בפה  
while their heart was thinking in another way ואחת בלב  
(thus they COULDN'T)

It is only by this process that the child can truly come to understand and to appreciate what Rashi is telling us.

**In summation:**

I have presented here only two examples of many ways in which we can open our children's minds and thereby their hearts to the beauty of Torah. It is only when we introduce disequilibrium - questions, puzzles, and a sense of amazement that we can have our children truly comprehend. This we must do with questions.

When Rebbe Laibel Eiger the son of Rebbe Shloime Eiger returned home from the Kotzker Rebbe where he had gone to study in spite of his illustrious father's opposition, his father derisively asked him, "So what did you learn from this Rebbe of yours." Reb Leibel answered, "Why, I learned that there is a G-d who created heaven and earth." "Is that all?" his father asked, "and who doesn't know that?" Whereupon he summoned a simple maid who worked in his house and asked her, "Tell, me who created heaven and earth?" "Why, Hashem did!" she answered. Reb Shloime turned to his son, as if to say, "for that you had to go to Kotzk?!" But Reb Leibel answered, "Yes, yes, she says it, but I know it." We must bring our children not only to repeat Torah truths, but to know and to feel Torah truths. Only if they are themselves first troubled by the questions can the beauty of answers be beheld and appreciated.

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shiur may appreciate the need to share with his students more of his personal spiritual life than he would normally be inclined to do. If he is in the habit of staying up late at night poring over tomes of the *Talmud*, his students need to see this.

### USE OF THE NEW

מתוך שרא לשימה בא לשימה :

It is quite acceptable, and in fact quite popular today, to be committed to a cause even *shelo lishma* - for less than complete altruism. We should not expect every student to sustain the rigorous yeshiva curriculum with only altruistic motives, *lishma*. In other aspects of Chassidic life some elements of *shelo lishma* have almost become expected. The Rebbe once told הרבה ח"ו ר'ש"ד רייטישיק ע"ה , "When you go into a shul, you have to sit at the *mizrach* wall. You have to know that you do not represent yourself, but rather *"מו"ח אדמו"ר נ"ע*". For a *Chasid* like Rabbi Raichik, public posturing was out of character, and the very idea of positioning himself so visibly made him uncomfortable. But it was the only way to be effective and he did it. Making a visible example of oneself is thus worthy as an end in itself, even where the motives may be less than altruistic.

The *yeshiva* environment must foster a desire within the student to spend his *yeshiva* years learning diligently. We must remember that if there is no emphatic focus on these basics in the *yeshiva*, they will not become part of him; they don't exist in his world otherwise. In his world, the educators, whoever they may be, are the ultimate representatives of *Chassidus* and the Rebbe. By publicly exhibiting a personal spiritual side of himself, he may be a catalyst in inspiring a student to maximizing his potential.

Years ago the Rebbe demanded that *bochurim* write and publish *chidushei Torah*. At one time, however, there was serious discussion as to the possibly negative consequences of publishing these *chiddushim*. In response, the Rebbe talked about the light of *Torah* that results and of its benefits - the more spiritual light generated, the more darkness is dispelled. So being in the public eye presents an opportunity: it increases

*shk'idab v'hasmadab*, diligence and devotion, and for many it leads to a greater degree of personal satisfaction in the process of *limud baTorah*.

Furthermore, the yeshiva ought to find a public way to acknowledge students who excel in the areas of *Torah* and *yiras shamayim*, learning, *davening* and *keiyum haMitzvos b'bidur* - the things we value most. We need to express our appreciation of the serious *shomrei hazman* as the prized students of the yeshiva.

The concern that today's younger *bochur* observing this may notice the attention paid to externals - in its recognition of students' exemplary behavior even when it is decidedly inspired by ulterior motives, is legitimate. But when weighed against the gain - the unequivocal message that these are the values most cherished by the *yeshiva* - the concern is negligible, as his efforts *shelo lishma* will draw him to develop the behaviors and interests that his, *rosh yeshiva*, *mashpia* and *menahel* demand of him. Ultimately, he will come to appreciate and identify with the *yeshiva's* values and objectives and cultivate a deep, personal *hiskasbrus*. The onus, of course, is upon the yeshiva to ensure that the *chitzoniuss*, however important it may be and whatever goals we may have, is not confused with *limud baTorah v'shk'idab v'hasmadab* - the inner, pnimum qualities of a student. Controversial as it might be, we must

use the *shelo lishma* to achieve our goals.



### AN ADDED DIMENSION OF THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS:

The Rebbe quotes the Rebbe Rashab in *Hayom Yom*, stating that just as the binding of *Tefillin* is a daily obligation, so too is the responsibility to think about the *chinuch* of your children at least half an hour every day.

Now there are a variety of ways and methods to decide on the course of your child's education, but what is there to think about for half an hour every day? We know how to keep *Shabbos* but we repeatedly learn *hilchos Shabbos* to refresh our memories. However, with regard to *chinuch* once you have the established the general principles and you have a general idea of the direction of where your children's *chinuch* is heading, what is there to think about on a daily basis?

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The answer, it seems to me, may be found in another entry in *Hayom Yom*. The Rebbe points to a quote citing two varieties of *chukim* - statutes. Certain statutes are created by life's experience (*nozer min ha'chaim*), and others determine, or dictate life. The statute created by life's experience is man-made, subject to circumstances and may vary from society to society. The other is the law of *Torah*, transcendent, immutable and eternal. But we know this from the 13 principles of faith, and as this is the foundation upon which everything is built, we must wonder why this should require half an hour of contemplation every day?

Perhaps when dealing with the rules governing our physical existence, the details - the minutiae - are important. As we become involved in the mundane and immediate aspects of life and physical survival, we find a greater concealment of the Divine. This manifests itself in the multitude of categories that exist in the physical realm. As regards the light of *Torah*, there is but one light that dispels a vast darkness, from which all else follows. But that light must be filtered into the details of human existence.

Similarly, as regards the matter of the child's education: the educator is involved in the process of conveying the light of *Torah* to his students, and must consider the most appropriate and effective way to do this. Each student is a world unto himself, and the educator must be thoughtful about how to "filter" the light so that each student is most receptive to it. Devoting half an hour every day to contemplating this challenge is thus understandable. And with every passing day, the student grows another day, and with that, so does the challenge for the educator. The student has now been exposed one additional day to the world of illusion, and the educator's task is the individual application of *Torah's* unchanging truth for each and all of his students.

An example: I attended one of the lectures today where someone mentioned that he plays ball with the students to develop a rapport with them, and that's a terrific thing. However, one must be very, very careful so that the students don't begin to view him as ball player. They must understand that it is specifically in his capacity as a representative of *Torah* that he is willing to befriend his students and enjoy a

sport with them. If the student begins to see his *rebbe* as a buddy who plays ball, he will miss the message of his *rebbe's* friendship entirely. The *rebbe* needs to evaluate his students regularly, and his decision to play ball with a student must reflect this thoughtfulness.

The application of this principle will vary from student to student. That does not mean that the image of what *Torah* is changes according to the needs of the student, nor may the child's image of what a *rebbe* who teaches him *Torah* change in his eyes. A *talmid* may never think that his *rebbe's* personal commitment to learning *Torah* is not quite so important to him; that there are other, equally important things in his world. He must never be allowed to think that *Torah* is anything less than all important to him in his life or the message of the eternity of *Torah* would then be lost. The student must appreciate that it is *Torah* - around which all else centers in his *rebbe's* life - that inspires his *rebbe* to befriend the student and even to play ball with him when appropriate.

This is our responsibility. Chasidim scorn public displays of personal achievements. But the Rebbe insisted we consider another perspective. We know that regarding *tzedakah* there is a special blessing bestowed upon those who give quietly and with out fanfare, yet the Rebbe instructed us to publicize it so that other people are aware of the generosity of the donor so they may learn to emulate him. It applies to everything else, but certainly with regard to personal *Torah* study. We must resolve that our *talmidim* will see us as the embodiment of what we teach. They will see us learning and they will see us preoccupied with davening, they will observe us in meticulous observance of the *mitzvos*. I believe this will raise the standard of our students.

May we soon be זוכה to witness the days of which the נביא says

וּמִלֵּאָה הָאָרֶץ דַּעַה אֶת ה' בַּיָּמִים לַיָּמִים מְבֹסִים

*The yeshiva ought to find a public way to acknowledge students who excel in the areas of Torah and yiras shamayim.*



building Menorahs, sewing Purim costumes, preparing for a Seder and other non-holiday related activities. The Chabad Rabbi is in attendance and measures his success in large part, in terms of his ability to develop a productive personal relationship with most of the parents. He invites parents to study with him and many do. Soon a rapport develops, and conversations often concern the future of the child's Jewish education. The result has been a growing desire among parents to create their own Jewish day school.

Over the last decade, Chabad preschool professionals have published a variety of well designed, educationally sound, preschool curricula. Many non Chabad schools have expressed interest in obtaining copies of these educational materials, which our schools gladly share with them.

Teacher training with a specific concentration on early childhood has been a growing feature in Chabad teaching seminaries. During the summer, educational conferences sponsored by the Education/Chinuch Office of the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, preschool education is highlighted in a two - day series of workshops geared to the early childhood educator. One would have to conclude that the shortcomings sited in the Beck preschool report are not concerns in Chabad preschools. Indeed the very reason for their being is for the Jewish education and Jewish outreach programs they provide.

There are currently 135 Early Childhood programs under the Chabad auspices in the English speaking world - more than 100 of them in the United States and Canada. 74 of these preschools are not sponsored by existing elementary day schools; they are rather, independent preschools. The Merkos, Education/Chinuch Office coordinates teacher recruitment, teacher training and placement and curriculum development for most of these schools.

The recognition of the need for a thorough early childhood

education is becoming more widespread. There are a number of initiatives on the Federal level and there is a movement afoot in a number of states to fund what has become known as "universal PreK", publicly funded education for four year olds. As governmental sponsorship of early childhood programs becomes more of a reality, (which brings its own set of problems - but that bridge will be crossed when we come to it), the issue of credibility will increasingly be brought to the fore. In fact, accreditation is, even now, fast becoming the hallmark of the more successful early childhood centers nationwide. The newly recognized National Accreditation Board of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch is now working with the six regional accredited associations in America as well as the national and state sponsored early childhood accrediting associations. The NAB will, naturally, be of service to Jewish early childhood programs wherever possible.

*There are currently 135 Early Childhood programs under the Chabad auspices in the English speaking world - more than 100 of them in the United States and Canada.*

Merkos, is thus through the resources of the Rebbe's Shluchim positioned to become the catalyst for the reinvigoration of interest in early childhood programs where they are most needed; in the smaller outlying Jewish communities across the United States. Additionally Merkos, because of the NAB, is in a unique position to assure the veracity of such programs.

It is clear, however, that the main impediment to the creation of more Jewish preschools which will provide authentically Jewish programs to serve the broadest spectrum of the Jewish community is the dearth of funds. The capital investment necessary to start a successful preschool seems prohibitive to the typical Chabad Shliach, and other Jewish professionals for that matter, who are struggling daily to meet the demands in an ever-growing budget which is the result of ever-expanding activities. The Jewish community has the responsibility and the opportunity to make a real contribution to the strengthening of Jewish life through the strengthening of meaningfully Jewish Early Childhood education. It should not be passed up.



# Around the Misrad

## NEW PROJECT

The Chinuch Office is joining with Lubavitch News Service to create a website template for schools. Chabad schools will be able to customize their website in the same way that chabad.org works for Chabad houses. A variety of different options will be available along with various feeds, articles and icons. The website should be operational some time after Pesach.

## NEW LIBRARY

A tape and video educational library is being established at the Chinuch Office. It will feature educational lectures, workshops and model lessons by master teachers and other educators. Teachers will be able to obtain copies of any item in the collection for a very nominal fee.

## ACCREDITATION UPDATE:

There is a movement afoot that the highest levels of American accreditation, CITA, Council International and Interterritorial Accreditation, which encompasses the six United States regional accreditation agencies and the NCPSA, National Council for Private School Accreditation of which the Merkos NAB is a member, to establish new up-to-date early childhood accreditation standards. Rabbi Meir Muller, principal of Columbia Jewish day school will attend a conference in Denver, Colorado in May representing the interests of Jewish day schools on behalf of the Merkos NAB. The new standards are expected to be finalized and voted on at the next national accreditation meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah which Rabbi Nochem Kaplan will attend.

## CONFERENCES

Planning is underway for this year's Kinussim, the summer educators' conferences which will again be held at the Robert Treat Hotel. The Mechanchos / women's conference will take place in July; the Mechanchim / men's conference will take place in August. Hundreds of Mechanchim enjoy a variety of expert lectures and workshops and are professionally enriched in the process.

Check out our website at [www.chinuchoffice.org](http://www.chinuchoffice.org)



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# SAVE <sup>the</sup> DATES

**WOMEN:**  
JULY 11-13 / TAMMUZ 22-24

**MEN:**  
AUGUST 8-10 / AV 21-23

AT THE ROBERT TREAT CONFERENCE CENTER IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

