

# PARENTING With PRIDE



**Is it not every parent's most ardent wish to have good children?**

Solid advice on how to raise children who are indeed a source of joy and pride to their parents

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Written by the holy tzaddik  
**MOHORO"SH ZT"L**

Based on the teachings of the holy tzaddik  
**REBBE NACHMAN OF BRESLOV ZT"L**

and of his prime disciple  
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# SUCCESSFUL PARENTING THE YIDDISH / TORAH WAY

## 1.

*Yiddishe nachas*, or parenting with pride and pleasure, as children live a life that revolves around Torah, is a gift that every *Yiddishe* father and mother hope to attain. Parents overextend themselves for their offspring. They put in so much effort with the hope that their children will grow up to be healthy, happy, and observant Jews, which will bring them much joy and *Yiddishe nachas*.

Everyone is aware that to achieve this lofty goal, one must work very hard. Educating children is difficult, but its rewards and subsequent gains are very great.

Parenting skills require much effort. Parents must observe, with a keen eye, what is best for their child's future. Smart parents are ready to devote time and toil to learn how to manage and how to discipline children. **Their goal is always in front of their eyes: to raise giving, good-hearted, and respectful adults who will live a joyous and honest Torah life.**

There are parents who think that their childhood upbringing was too strict. Therefore, they tend to spoil their children and give in to every wish and whim that they desire and demand. Such caretakers are mistaken in their beliefs. Namely, they assume that children will be happier if they can choose whatever they want,

whenever they want, and however they desire. This leads to chaos, not happiness. Structure and limit setting are very important in a home.

Yes, it is true that we have to be very patient and loving with children. We have to make them happy and content, as the home atmosphere should be pleasant. A relaxed home environment is very important and healthy for children. However, this is not enough. A calm atmosphere will not bring the results of a proper *chinuch* to raise Torah-true Jews.

————— ⇌ 2. ⇌ —————

Children by nature are egocentric; they think the world revolves around them and that everyone is here to please him/her and take care of his/her needs. Parents try to anticipate their children's every need. For example, a baby cries for his bottle without consideration that he is waking others. In his immature mind, all the toys, bottles - and just about everything - is his. He demands control, as young ones tend to say "mine!" He must be given his desire immediately - or else. This is how children develop. As they grow older, they learn they are not the only ones who are of importance here. Their caretaker/mother has other matters to do. As his brain develops, the child learns that not everyone and not everything is here to serve and please him. He learns that he may be insignificant at times.

In the beginning developmental stages, he will not understand why he does not get his wishes immediately.

When he is asked to do something, he may refuse. Mainly at home, a child can be very stubborn. He will shout, cry, hit, and kick to get his way. If he doesn't get his way, he becomes wild and out of control. He can have a tantrum and scream until the parents think they have no choice but to give in to their little tyrant. The parents want to be good parents. They pity their child. They can't bear to see him so miserable, so they give in - so now he will be content, until the next episode. For a short while he will stop misbehaving. He will be happy and calm. This is false sympathy, for it will disturb a child's proper development. If you have foresight, you see this is dangerous for a child's life. **If you give a child everything he wants, it is not true compassion, but actual cruelty. Both the child and the parents will suffer in the future.**

## LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES ARE VERY IMPORTANT

A child who grows up feeling that he gets everything he wants, has no understanding of limits. He does not know what is allowed or disallowed. He does not have a sense as to where he can go and where he should not. He does not know what one may say or not say. He lacks self-control and consequently he will suffer in life. As he grows older, he will see he may be insignificant in other people's eyes. Not everyone is out there to please him; to the contrary, he comes last. He will be shocked and disappointed, to say the least. This is a

result of improper training. His parents neglected to teach him that he can't always have what he wants. His personality will be warped, and both he and his parents will be very pained by it.

One cannot expect a two-, three-, or four-year-old child to have the understanding of a twenty- or thirty-year-old person. Parents must know this very clearly: **The parents are on a different level than their children.** (They are not friends or peers, but they can be kind and caring.) Parents are wiser and more experienced in life. If parents allow their youngsters to boss them around, then the parents are very foolish. Children are very smart and they know with whom they can get their way. They will test the limits. (If you give in once, they will test you seventeen times, but if the rule is consistent, they will not challenge it.)

A good and proper Torah education is one in which children know that only the parents make decisions in their home. Parents plan the structure of the home, including wake-up time and sleep schedules. Meals are served at a certain time in a specific place. (For example, children cannot eat what they want all over the house. This is not acceptable.) Children learn quickly what is permitted and what is not. They are keenly aware as to where, when, and with whom they may associate. Even if children do not comprehend the reason behind the rule, they must listen, accept, respect, and follow instructions. Children flourish in homes that are structured. They develop good behavior patterns with discipline. They know what is expected of them. Children who learn to

accept and respect their parent's wishes are on the road to success. Children thrive in homes with stability.

Children can be complimented for following the rules even if they did not intend to do so. They can be proud of their behavior of listening to their parents. If children resist and cry, parents must stay calm and help them self-calm by ignoring their tears. Eventually, they will stop complaining and whimpering. They will learn to follow instructions. Parents should not become overwhelmed by their child's tears and tantrums, but rather see to it that the child follows the rule one hundred percent without compromises. For example, when a child wants something that the parents know is not good for him, or he starts dallying about bedtime, **parents must be consistent.** Even if he cries crocodile tears, parents must be firm and the child must follow the rules he was told. (For example, it is a good idea to prepare the child's clothing for the next day near his bed. Prepare *nagel vaser* and promise a reward - to tell a story of *tzaddikim* before he goes to bed. This will encourage him to bathe quickly and be cooperative. In this way he can hear quality stories, which children love.)

A child's good behavior can be reinforced with rewards. He must do the job as he was told. Even though he cries that he wants the prize, if it is undeserved, he must do it right to get it. This is how a child learns boundaries and consequences. He learns if he wants a reward, he must work hard for it.

This does not happen in one minute nor in a day. It

takes many years of practice and repetition until a child absorbs these lessons. This is the responsibility of the parents, if they wish to see *Yiddishe nachas*. If they want their child to be a normal, responsible adult, they must prepare him with these tools. There are boundaries and limits we must accept. We cannot buy or do whatever we want. *Chazal*, our sages, say in the *Medrash Tanchuma on Shemos*, that if one does not discipline his son, his child will eventually partner with evil and bad company. He will detest his father, too.

The parents' job begins in their child's infancy. They should not put off disciplining a youngster to when he is older, thinking they still have enough time. In adolescence it may be too late. The parents will tear their hair out in frustration and berate themselves as to why they failed to train their child to accept restrictions that don't appeal to him.

At times, parents feel guilty because they do not give their son/daughter everything the child desires. They wonder if they are being cruel when they don't allow the child to do as he pleases. The truth, though, is just the opposite. The greatest cruelty is when one allows a youngster to do that which is harmful to him. Even if the child is very angry at his parents, with time he will calm down and it will pass. In the long run, the child will learn a lesson that will be beneficial for a lifetime.



**It is very important that when we discipline, we do not hit, shame, or belittle our children.** Hitting, shaming, and blaming are a means of calming the nerves of the parents, but they do nothing helpful for the child. Quite the contrary; they leave emotional scars on the child and they reduce his self-confidence.

Parents have to be careful to tread between the raindrops. On one hand, they have to be firm and whatever they decide upon must be completed. On the other hand, they must be calm and mentally balanced. They must withhold any display of anger.

One can gently explain to a child why he cannot do such and such. We can reason with him as to why it is not good for him. When a child presents with certain behaviors that are wrong, or when we see others misbehave, we can mention clearly that Hashem does not allow one to act out with bad character traits. We can say in a firm yet gentle way, using a low tone, “Although you may yell, cry, and stamp your feet, we will not allow this to happen. It will not help you to throw a tantrum.” No matter how much the child continues to beg, cajole, scream, or yell, the parents should not lose control of their equilibrium. Parents should not become angry and hit, belittle, or degrade the child. We must tell him with great resolve this is how it is. He cannot get what he wants as Totty and Mommy feel it is harmful to him.

It is healthy for a child to hear the word “no” many times. This is how children learn to live like honest, observant Jews and how to be respectable, decent people of integrity. **Parents must work together.** If a father

demands something, the mother should not ignore it to please the child. So too, if a mother restricts something from her child, the father should not permit it. When a mother says no, it is no. At that moment the child may be very displeased, but it will come to great use in the future. This is the child's opportunity to learn self-control and acceptance of situations that are not to his liking.

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It is self-understood that the raising of a child with Torah *chinuch* means that the Torah is the guideline for his education. We follow the examples, customs, and mandates of our holy sages and *tzaddikim*. We cannot force our children to accept foolish and capricious decisions that we decide on a whim for our personal convenience, or this is very harmful and can affect them negatively.

The Talmud states<sup>1</sup> that a small child who knows how to shake the *lulav* should make a *brachha* on the *lulav*. The same is true regarding the mitzvah of *tzizis*. If they can put it on, then they should do so. As soon as a child begins to speak, his father and mother should teach him Torah and *yiras Shomayim*, (fear of Hashem). He should say *Krias Shema*, too. When children are quite small, we must train them to go in the ways of our holy Torah. They will be acclimated to do mitzvos and learn Torah. We must reinforce the basics of *emunah* (belief in *hashgocha pratis*, divine providence), good behavior,

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1. *Succah* Ch. 42

and positive character traits through daily training and interactions.

When it comes to Shabbos observance, the parents must be strict not to allow the children to profane the holy Shabbos. We can tell them that a *Yid* who does not keep Shabbos incurs the death sentence, G-d forbid. Children have to accept and respect that no amount of bargaining, cajoling, or finagling will work on his parents regarding the holy Shabbos. (We do not turn on lights on shabbos nor do we color with crayons.) We can be steadfast and explain, "My dear child, if we want to live well, we have to abide by Hashem's commandments. We don't turn on lights on Shabbos. It may not always be so comfortable and we lose out on a pleasurable activity, but the rewards for keeping the Shabbos by far exceed the loss."

It may happen that a child sees a delicious, tempting food. He would really like to have it now. However, if it is not kosher or not under a good *hechsher* (kosher approval), he has to hear the word no with absolute firmness. That food is not acceptable under any circumstances. "My dear child, if we want to stay healthy, we have to listen to Hashem's commandments of eating only kosher foods, no matter how appealing it looks!"

We have to ingrain in the child's mind and heart a very deep *emunah*, belief in Hashem. We have to talk much about the *Eibishter*-- Hashem. We have to discuss with them very clearly what *emunah*, Hashem's divine providence means: Hashem dictates every iota, every happening, and the smallest detail in this world.

Nothing happens on its own. No one can take away that which is destined for someone else. No one can give you something unless Hashem wills it. If we desire something, we should daven and ask Hashem for our needs.

Children who live with *Emunah* develop self-confidence. Many children are broken and disheartened when they see others who are more successful than they are. But, if they live with a strong *emunah*, they know that every person gets exactly what was destined for him - including how much he should know and how much he should have. They realize that with Hashem's help, they, too, will succeed. They will beseech Hashem for their needs and they will manage very well as a result.

How happy and fortunate are the parents who raise their children to be honest, Torah-true Jews, whose lives revolve around the Torah's commandments and values! They traveled the path of *Emunah*, *yiras Shomayim*, fear of Hashem, knowing there are consequences to misbehavior, and they were led on the road to good character traits. They were firm in their *chinuch* training and they didn't allow the children to manipulate them. Quite the opposite; they were calm and firm with their convictions. These are the parents who will merit to see much *Yiddishe nachas* from their offspring. As a result, the children will be appreciative and grateful for their upbringing. They will respect their devoted parents who taught them proper skills to live well.

The main *chinuch*, Torah training, of a child is dependent on his parents. The way the parents behave serves as a model for their offspring. We can't expect a child to behave better than his parents. The Talmud states (*Succah* 56) that what a child says in the street is usually what the child hears at home from his mother or father. If a child speaks in an unrefined and disrespectful manner, if he yells or curses, it's a sign that he most probably heard this at home. In contrast, if the child speaks in a refined manner with respect - he says pardon me, excuse me, and sorry when appropriate, and he thanks those who do him a favor - this reflects the speech and behavior he saw at home. The child mirrors his parents' conduct.

it is of utmost importance that if people want to see *Yiddishe nachas* and have much joy and contentment from their children, they must work hard on their own character. They have to be mindful of their behavior, to be respectful and refined in all their actions.

Unfortunately, there are children who veer from the Torah way. The parents eat their hearts out as they cannot face this. They cannot understand how this happened to their dear son/daughter. Yet if they would reflect, they would see that they did not keep the Torah properly. If the child follows their poor example, it is no wonder.

How is it possible that children go off the proper path when their parents do their utmost to be observant Jews?

Most children follow in the ways of their family, but there

are exceptions. For example, a child may be raised in a home that was built on Torah values, but the child meets up with bad friends. They have a negative influence on him. They encourage him to leave the straight path of our forefathers. This can be a complex situation. For example, the parents kept the Shabbos, but how did they behave on Shabbos? Did the children see happy parents who were delighted that the holy Shabbos is coming? Was the Shabbos respected and dear in the eyes of the parents? Or did they see the parents observe Shabbos due to a lack of choice? Were they impatient for Shabbos to end so they can return to their mundane work?

Children are unlikely to be better than their parents, in spiritual affairs. In fact, they are usually less careful in certain mitzvos. However, if they see how important and dear Shabbos is to their parents, then it will be important to them, too. They will absorb the joy and happiness Shabbos brings; they too would never profane the Shabbos, G-d forbid.

The same applies to all mitzvos. Everything depends on the enthusiasm and desire shown to truly fulfill Hashem's commandments. Do the parents look for loopholes and ways to get away without doing certain customs and stringencies? If they are not careful and they are lax regarding mitzvah observance, their children may pick up on this nonchalant attitude.

When a child stops putting on *tefillin*, G-d forbid, perhaps he absorbed a lukewarm attitude towards this mitzvah from his parents. If a child starts to neglect kashrus and he eats *treif* food *r"l*, it could be that he saw his parents

were not careful in *hashgochas* (kosher certifications), such as in regard to restaurants and wedding halls.

Why should a child respect his parents? If he saw that his parents were disrespectful to his grandparents, he will surely imitate the same neglect and degrading behavior towards his parents. In addition, if a child sees that his father is busy with foolish pursuits, and he hardly opens a *sefer*, how can he expect that his child should desire to study and be motivated to learn more Torah? the Gemara<sup>2</sup> says that a son who sees his father study Torah every day will want to learn Torah too. A daughter who sees that her mother cherishes the time her husband learns Torah (for example, she ensures that no one disturbs him at that time), her daughter will respect Torah learning as well.

The Gemara talks of how women are *zocheh*, merit, the World to Come<sup>3</sup>. When a girl sees that her mother respects learning Torah above everything else, she will do the same. She sees her mother patiently awaiting the return of her husband from his *shiurim*. Her mother, who is filled with joy and pride to do Hashem's will, does her own job happily and with alacrity. She rises early morning as she helps her children to get ready to go to school/yeshivah. With a smile, she takes her children to learn Torah in the *cheder*. Her daughters will then imbibe the importance of learning Torah. They will respect Torah learning to its utmost.

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2. *Brachos* 13

3. *Brachos* 17

*Chazal* give the example<sup>4</sup> of how parents used to send their children to deliver raw materials needed for an *eiruv* (such as string or wood pieces) to the rabbis. This was a training method to do mitzvos. Even though a Shabbos *eiruv* is *deRabanan*, from the *rabbonim* rather than from the written Torah, but from the Oral Law, they wanted their children to develop a love of mitzvos. They should be actively involved when mitzvos are done, so they will be accustomed to doing all the mitzvos of Hashem with *simchah*, joy.

We mentioned a few examples of mitzvos, positive commandments, that we must do. The same applies to the *aveiros* that we must not do. This rule is applicable to good character traits and behavior. If children see parents who are good, virtuous, and G-d fearing, they will do and be the same. They see their parents striving to do Hashem's will, and they will mirror this, too. It is crucial that parents do not mock the ways of good, *ehrliche Yidden*. Then, with Hashem's help, the children will absorb the ways of their parents. They will go out of their way and walk that extra mile to do what is right according to the Torah. Then their parents will see much joy and success from their *Yiddishe doros*, offspring.

6. Children learn mainly from their parents and peers in the yeshivah or school. These environments have the greatest influence on the children. Therefore, parents need to be very careful where their children are educated. The yeshivah or school must be one where

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4. *Yerushalmi Eiruvin* 87



children are taught to love Hashem and His Torah. The children should absorb a love and joy of *Yiddishkeit*. As they grow, they will not, G-d forbid, look at Torah as a heavy yoke and difficult responsibility.

*Chazal* ask how is it possible<sup>5</sup> that if a father fails to reprimand his child, the father himself may hate his own son? Is there a father who detests his own child? *Chazal* say that if a father does not teach a child to be an upright, good, honest, and respectful person who keeps the Torah, then his father will come to hate him. If he directs his child to good behavior and fine character traits, then he will love his child very much.

Parents cannot expect their children to grow up to be good Jews with fine character traits, like the wild mushrooms that grow without toil. If we want to see *Yiddishe nachas*, joy, and successful parenting, it calls for a great investment. One must give much time and energy to educate them to go on the right path. Children must learn what is right and what is wrong; what we must do and what we must avoid doing. Children must know there are limits and boundaries in life. There are certain rules that can **never** be broken. There are certain behaviors that are **never** permitted. Children see and mirror their parents' behavior of what is good and what it means to honestly and truly want to do what is "right in Hashem's eyes." They must see the happiness of the parents as they perform each and every mitzvah. Parents must monitor where their children spend much of their

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5. *pasuk in Mishlei 13*

time. A great emphasis should be put on the education of the children so they will attend proper schools and yeshivos. These educational centers should be geared to ingraining feelings of joy and contentment to be a *Yid* and to have the privilege to be able to do Hashem's mitzvos and study the holy Torah.

Above all parents should *daven* and beg Hashem to give them the right thoughts and the proper frame of mind to know how to educate their children, so they will go on the true Torah path. Parents will receive Hashem's guidance on how to balance love and firmness. We must pray and beseech Hashem that **all Yiddishe** children - including ours - will be successful and lead *Torahdig* lives. With hashem's help, we will see much **Yiddishe nachas**, joy, from them. **Parents who will truly absorb these words into their hearts and do what the Torah says, will surely see much nachas in this world during their lifetime and feel so much more delight from their children in the next world.**



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