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PREFACE

From the beginning of the *nesius* and even earlier, the Rebbe began a mission of *hafatza*, bringing Yiddishkeit to every single Yid. Sending shlichim to Morocco and Milan, communicating with Yidden in Manchester and Melbourne, the Rebbe strived to bring each and every Yid closer to his roots.

As the Rebbe's chassidim, we were no exception. The Rebbe invested tremendous *koichois* in raising us to be true chassidim, educating us and guiding us in the right direction. The Rebbe spent countless hours giving dollars and *kuntreisim*, bestowing his *koichois* and *Brochos* upon us. So much effort was invested in establishing the *moisdos* to cater to the needs of Anash worldwide: Chadorim, girls' schools, yeshivos and *kolelim*, all part of a massive effort to enhance the *ruchniyus* of chassidim.

The Rebbe spoke of the tremendous *nachas ruach* brought to him from the good reports of the bochorim's learning. Even during the various crises, when the Rebbe spoke with international activists encouraging them to help global Yiddishkeit, he always took active interest in his own chassidim, caring for their 'small' problems, and anticipating an ultimate uncompromising chassidisheh lifestyle.



The Rebbe charged us with the mission time and again, "*La'asos lo yisbareich dirah betachtonim*," to make this world a dwelling place for Hashem. This operation entails many fronts: ourselves, our family and other Yidden.

Chazal say that the mitzvah of tzedakah with one's own family takes precedence with regard to supplying their basic needs (Shu"t YD 251:3). Surely, the same applies to *tzedakah ruchnis*, the influence of Yiddishkeit – one must first give preference to the *ruchniusdike* needs of his own family.

On a similar token, when Chazal say "*Aniyei ircha koidmin*," to first distribute tzedaka to the Yidden of one's own town; the same applies to those who are 'poor' in the traditions of Yiddishkeit. We have the obligation to cater to the less fortunate in our communities, making sure that their needs are met.

The same way we greet an unfamiliar Yid with a smile and try our best to show him the beauty of Yiddishkeit, so too we have the obligation of **Reaching In** to our family, friends and neighbors and show them the beauty of a warm chassidishe life.

This is the mission given to us – Chassidim residing in Lubavitch communities worldwide.



We thank all those who helped prepare this booklet: Rabbi Eli Simon for managing the entire project, Miriam Szokovski for writing and editing, Penina Baumgarten for cover design, Rabbi Mendy Browd for design and layout and Rabbi M Seligson.

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A very special thank you to The Print house for their help in printing this booklet.

With wishes for a "*kosher un freilichen pesach*"

Merkaz Anash
2 Nissan 5771

TABLE OF CONTENTS

6. Every Single Yid

Lma'an Yishme'u

10. Guiding Others

Lma'an Yishme'u

14. The Rebbe's Guidance

16. Children Leaving Yiddishkeit: Can Anything Be Done?

Rav Yosef Heller

26. Positive Energy

Rav Chaim Shalom Deitch

33. The Key to Successful Chinuch

A Letter from the Rebbe Rashab on Setting Children on the Right Path

EVERY SINGLE YID

Reprinted from *Lma'an Yishme'u*

Reb Mordechai the Tzaddik was a talmid of the Baal Shem Tov. Reb Mordechai had two close friends from his days in Yeshivah, and he wanted very much to share with them this new path in serving Hashem, but he was hesitant to leave his Rebbe. Besides, who knew if he would be able to find them, or if they would listen to him?

The Baal Shem Tov once related, "One must have mesiras nefesh to do a favor b'gashmius, and especially b'ruchnius, for even a single Yid. A neshama descends to this world and lives for seventy or eighty years or more, to do a favor for even a single Yid." Reb Mordechai nearly resolved to begin the journey and seek his friends, but somehow he was unable to do so. He could not bring himself to actually leave. He decided that would remain with the Rebbe for just a few more days, and then he would go.

After a few days, he considered approaching the Rebbe, telling him the whole story, and asking his advice. Then, the Rebbe thru ruach hakodesh could tell him where his friends were now, which would save him much time. But Reb Mordechai rejected the idea. Hadn't the Rebbe clearly said that, "One must have mesiras nefesh to do a favor for even a Yid"? So why ask? And

asking the Rebbe to use ruach hakodesh to save him some time – what chutzpah! Furthermore, if Reb Mordechai would know where they were, then his mesiras nefesh would be less. No - he would not ask! He made the decision to take to the road and search for his friends.

On the day of his departure he rose very early, prepared himself for shachris, and davened. After davening, he packed a small bag containing his belongings and his tallis and tefillin, and began the journey. Reb Mordechai had already passed the city limit when the Rebbe's shamash ran after him with a message that the Rebbe wished to speak with him. When he entered the Rebbe's room, the Baal Shem Tov said to him: "Boruch Hashem, you were victorious in your battle with yourself." The Baal Shem Tov gave him some instructions and a bracha for success. And Reb Mordechai was indeed successful in his mission. After a long journey he managed to locate his friends and bring them to the path of the Baal Shem Tov.

(אגרות קודש אדהריי"צ ח"ג ע' קעד)

Chazal write: One who saves one yiddishe neshama is considered as if he has saved an entire world.

(סנהדרין פ"ד מ"ה)

The Rebbe once spoke of the preciousness of helping just one Yid. One of the *nevu'os* of the geulah is that Hashem will collect all the yidden, one by one, actually holding them by hand, and take them out of golus. Since the geulah is dependent on our avodah now, we must learn a lesson from this. Some people only want to work on helping thousands of Yidden and feel that anything less is a waste of their talents. But, just as it is befitting for Hashem to take a single yid to Eretz Yisroel, so is it befitting for us to go help even one single Yid and kindle within him the light of Torah and mitzvos.

On another occasion the Rebbe pointed out the advantage on working in areas which are overlooked, being similar to a *meis mitzvah* (a dead person that has no one to bury him). Also in this manner there is less concern that his work will lead him to *yeshus* (self worth), causing one to be satisfied and go rest.

(שיחיו"ק תשל"ל ח"ד ע' 385, שיחיו"ק תשל"ד ח"ב ע' 280)

Reb Yosef of Beshenkovitch, a talmid chacham who knew the entire Shas and Rambam by heart,

earned the greatest honor from the talmidei chachomim of his town. In the year תקס"ד, the Alter Rebbe advised him, "For the benefit of your neshama, it is better for you to be a wagon-driver than a Rov." Ten years later, in תקע"ד, Reb Yosef, then 70 years old, was offered the rabonus in the town of Lieple. Recalling the Rebbe's words, he refused the offer. He realized that now was the time to fulfill the Rebbe's advice.

For a month he wavered, undecided, confused, not knowing what to do. Eventually, he mustered up the courage and went to the local wagon station. When the wagon drivers saw him, they asked him to where he wished to travel.

"I have not come to travel but to learn to become a wagon-driver," he answered in a low voice. The wagon drivers looked at each other in surprise, and began to joke at his expense. One driver saw his insistence and agreed to teach him the trade. In the stall, he was shown how to hitch the horses, attach the saddle and the reigns, and oil the wheels. One of the horses whipped his

One must have mesiras nefesh to do a favor b'gashmius, and especially b'ruchnius, for even a single Yid. A neshama descends to this world and lives for seventy or eighty years or more, to do a favor for even a single Yid.

tail and almost knocked out Reb Yosef's eye. That night, Reb Yosef arrived home dirty and bruised. He changed his clothing and went to shul to daven and give his shiur. Returning home, he found his wife in tears, for she had heard of her husband's visit to the stables. When Reb Yosef shared the Rebbe's instructions, she told him, "In my opinion, if the Rebbe told you this, you mustn't delay even a day. Tomorrow I will sell my jewelry and you will be able to buy a wagon." Hearing her innocent words, Reb Yosef decided to travel to Velizh, where he would learn the trade from a wagon-driver who was also a talmid chacham and a chossid.

A year passed and Reb Yosef became used to his new lifestyle. One evening, he stopped over at a Yiddishe inn, and sat down to learn torah. The innkeeper introduced him to a guest who needed to travel the following day. The guest, 'Solomon Gamitzki' (Shlomo Leib), was a Yid who had left the ways of Yiddishkeit, and had become a friend and employee of the Batchaikov Count. "What time will we leave?" asked the guest. "After davening," was Reb Yosef's reply. "At what time?" he retorted. "To me, it makes no difference whether you daven or not; I need to know when we will travel, to know when to wake up, wash, and eat." "...And daven," added Reb Yosef. "That I leave for you," concluded the guest. When the guest realized that Reb Yosef

would not be ready to leave until 10:00 am, he ordered another coach for 5:00 am.

He went to sleep for the night, but awoke shortly after midnight, bewildered. Someone was crying. He opened his door and saw Reb Yosef sitting on the floor, saying tikun chatzos by candlelight and weeping. Reb Yosef's crying penetrated deeply into his heart. Memories of his youth, his father, his melamed, the wife and children he had left, all passed before his eyes. When the night came to its end, he watched Reb Yosef daven, with great kavana, and his eyes filled with tears. At 5:00, the innkeeper came to notify him that his coach was ready, but he decided to travel with Reb Yosef instead. Hours passed, and Reb Yosef was still davening. Overcome with anguish, the guest went to the innkeeper, borrowed his talis and tefillin, and davened too.

Because of the intensity of his feelings of regret and teshuva, Shlomo Leib became extremely ill, hovering between life and death for several days. The count sent his own doctor to examine him, but the doctor gave up hope. Reb Yosef remained at the sick man's bedside, fasting and saying Tehillim, helping him with his decision to return to his family and Yiddishkeit. Eventually, Shlomo Leib regained his strength and was able to leave the inn. Reb Yosef traveled home and when he arrived, he saw many Chassidim preparing to travel to the Mittlerer Rebbe in Lubavitch.

While in Lubavitch, Reb Yosef was greatly surprised to meet Shlomo Leib. He had resigned from his job with the Count, and had now come to Lubavitch to learn and be near the Mittlerer Rebbe. Reb Yosef entered into yechidus with the Mittlerer Rebbe who informed him, "My father appeared to me last night and told me that Yosef of Beshenkovitch has fulfilled his mission. My father has turned a lamdan into a wagon-driver for one Yid, and now, for the benefit of the public, he has commanded me to appoint you as mashpia to the Chassidim in Beshenkovitch."

(הקדמה לפוקח עורים)

A Papa chossid related: One of today's elder Papa chassidim was born and raised in a small city in Hungary. Because he was blessed with exceptional intelligence, it became necessary for his parents to put extra effort into sheltering him from secular influences. However, secretly, the child joined a group of Maskilim ('enlightened') and slowly drifted away from Yiddishkeit. Eventually his parents threw him out of the house to prevent him from influencing the rest of his family.

He went to learn in the local gymnasium and because he was so successful his professor advised him to continue his studies at the prestigious Sorbonne University in Paris. He was happy to go to a new place where he would not be embarrassed of his family and

townspeople, and no one would know of his yiddishe origins.

On his first day at the Sorbonne, while walking to his classroom, he was shocked to see a chassidish youngster with a beard and peyos approaching him. The youngster asked him, "Did you put on tefillin today?" Shocked, he remained speechless. Before he had a chance to get back to himself, the youngster took hold of him and said, "No problem! We put on tefillin with many yidden and we can put on you as well." He pulled out a pair of tefillin and put it on with him. Every single day the youngster came to put on tefillin with him, until he did complete teshuva.

The chossid concluded the story: The youngster was none other than the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and that bochur is now one of the elder chassidim of Papa. The fact that he is a frumeh yid today is thanks to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

(ורבים השיב מעון ע' 75)

GUIDING OTHERS

Reprinted from *Lma'an Yishme'u*

THE OBLIGATION TO GUIDE

For many years, the holy brothers Reb Elimelech of Lyzhensk and Reb Zusha of Hanipoli traveled through towns and villages across Europe to arouse Yidden to do teshuvah. Whenever they arrived somewhere for the night, one of them would act as a sinner coming to the other, his Rebbe, asking for a tikun. Within earshot of their host, the 'sinner' would list all the aveiros of which the host was guilty. Overhearing this confession, the host would remember that he too had committed such aveiros, and he would be aroused to do teshuvah.

One night, the brothers arrived in the house of a certain Yid, and Reb Zusha began to beg his brother for a tikun for his negligence. He had never had his tefillin checked until recently and the sofer had found that there were no parshiyos inside. All his life, he had never put on real tefillin!

The host, overhearing the conversation, realized that he himself had never had his tefillin checked, so he quickly went to have a look at his tefillin, and to his alarm, he found that they were empty! Sobbing, he begged the visitors to show him how he can do teshuvah. Reb Elimelech instructed Reb

Zusha to write a set of parshiyos for their host, and to have the kavana that these tefillin draw down a great light, appropriate for one who has never put on tefillin. Reb Zusha took klaf, quill and ink, wrote the parshiyos required, placed them in the battim (boxes), and returned them to their owner. Many years later, these tefillin were found by the holy tzaddik Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev.

(ספורי חסידים זוין מועדים ע' 66)

We read in the Torah several times about our obligation to guide other Yidden in the right direction. This obligation is included in the mitzvah of ahavas yisroel, and more specifically instructed in the mitzvah of tochacha (rebuke). Additionally, there is an arvus (responsibility) that all of klal yisroel have for one another, and a mitzvah or an aveirah (R"L) done by one Yid affects the others.

(שו"ע אדמו"ר הזקן או"ח סי' קנ"ו, תר"ח, הל' אונאה וגניבת דעת)

Rabbi Yoisi ben Chanina said that rebuke brings love, for love that does not include rebuke is not true love. Reish Lakish said that rebuke brings peace, for any peace that does not incorporate rebuke is not real peace.

(בראשית רבה נ"ד)

Chazal say that one who has the ability to raise objection to a wrongdoing and does not, will be held accountable for that aveirah. Someone in a leadership position, such as the head of the household, community leader, or a person of influence in a city, must speak up and fix that which needs fixing.

The neighbors of Rabbi Elozor ben Azarya were unlearned in the halachos of Shabbos, and sent their cow to graze with a strap between its horns, an act which is *osur*. When the chachomim saw this happen, they ordered Rabbi Elozor to do something about it, or else they would place him in *cherem*. As a *kapara*, Rabbi Elozor later fasted many fasts until his teeth turned black. Since Rabbi Elozor could have rebuked them, he was considered responsible for their actions, to the point that the Mishna refers to it as 'the cow of Rabbi Elzor ben Azarya'.

(שבת נ"ד ע"ב, ירושלמי פ"ה ה"ד)

HOW TO GUIDE

The tzaddik Reb Mendel Barrer was a maggid who traveled from town to town giving mussar and pointing out the deficiencies of the townspeople. However, he would only speak in places where he would be paid. He explained, "When I finish my mission on this earth, Hashem will ask me, 'Who are you to speak like this about my children?' I will answer, 'Since Hashem

gave me the job of supporting my family, and my only skill was giving mussar, I had no other choice.'" If he would do this without payment, he would have no excuse...

The Rebbe explained that when rebuking in a manner of chassidus (rather than mussar), this approach is not necessary. For then, one points out to the other what needs to be improved (without highlighting the problems), which can be done in a pleasant manner. This method of rebuke is more successful and influential, and prevents claims from being made above against the one who is rebuking, for he is only bringing the cure for the sickness...

(דרך מצוותיך קצ"ו ע"ב, תו"מ חט"ו ע' 143)

The Alter Rebbe paskens in Shulchan Aruch that if a person sees another doing something wrong, he is obligated to guide him on the correct path and to inform him of his wrongdoing. He must repeatedly remind the other of the proper conduct ("even a hundred times"), until the other is angered and is not willing to listen further.

When rebuking, one must not cause embarrassment. One should speak softly, explaining that the rebuke is intended for the other person's benefit. In the event of a public aveirah, to avoid a chillul Hashem one may not keep quiet. Even when the other person will not listen to the rebuke, one still has the

obligation to speak up one time, so that it does not become his responsibility.

(שו"ע אדמו"ר הזקן אור"ח סי' קנ"ו, תר"ח, הל' אונאה וגניבת דעת)

Yeravam merited his kingship over the Yidden because he rebuked Shlomo Hamelech. Nevertheless, he was punished for doing it in public.

(סנהדרין ק"א)

The idea of a farbrengen, where the speakers usually demand improvement from the participants, is fundamental to chassidus. The rebuke at a farbrengen is only regarding matters that will not cause embarrassment to the participants, and since the earliest days it has been done successfully with love and deep affection.

(היום יום כ"ד תשרי)

The chossid Reb Hillel Paritcher once said in the name of the Tzemach Tzedek, that the double expression of rebuke in the Torah ("*hochei'ach tochi'ach*") implies that one must first rebuke oneself and then rebuke another. Reb Hillel explained that rebuke is effective only when it follows self rebuke.

(לקוטי דיבורים חלק א' ע' 182)

The Shaloh explains the possuk in Mishlei, "Do not rebuke a fool for he might hate you; rebuke a wise person and he will love you," that this is an instruction how to give rebuke. When rebuking another, do not call him a fool, by telling him his deficiencies, for then he will hate you and not listen

to what you are telling him. Rather, treat him like a wise person, and tell him that his actions are not befitting for someone like him. This way, he will love you and listen to your rebuke.

(של"ה פ' דברים דרך חיים)

In the year תרצ"ה, the Frierdiker Rebbe underwent a medical procedure and learned a lesson in Avodas Hashem from the surgeons. In a letter he writes, "Today the doctors came to inject some medicine, and I watched how cautious they were while preparing for it. They sterilized the tools, dressed in special gowns, washed their hands, checked their nails, and then poured alcohol over my feet. Having just washed myself, I asked why this extra cleaning was necessary. 'No matter,' they answered, 'The policy is that before any injection is given, the area must be washed with alcohol, sterilizing it completely, because if some bacteria remain, the medicine will be ineffective and may even cause additional sickness RL.'

Rebuking another is like giving an injection. The sharp poke brings healing, but causes pain nevertheless. Therefore, it is necessary to make sure that all is clean, to enable the injection to have the desired effect.

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ חלק ג' ע' רצ"א)

In a maamar the Frierdiker Rebbe explains, when rebuking another one must act humbly and pained that this has happened during his time. He must include himself in the rebuke by finding

some measure of the wrongdoing within himself b'dakus, in a slight form.

(ספר המאמרים קונטרסים ח"ב ע' שנ"ח ע"ב)

In the year תש"א, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent Reb Sholom Ber Gordon to open a yeshiva in Newark, New Jersey. A few years later, Reb Sholom Ber was given the position of Rov in a large shul, where he encountered a number of problems. The members of the shul were not observant of Shabbos and the president of the shul owned a movie theatre that was open on Shabbos. Reb Sholom Ber tried to influence them by explaining the importance of Shabbos and stressed its severity by listing the punishments given for desecrating it.

He told the Rebbe of his difficulties, and the Rebbe answered, "You were born in Dokshitz and are familiar with a '*shvitz-bud*' (sauna). In the '*shvitz*', after pouring hot water on a person, they beat him with a leafy branch, and the person being hit pleads for more. Suppose you would take such a branch and hit this fellow in middle of the street, he would be greatly angered and scream at you, but in the bath house, where he is warmed up, he is happy to receive such treatment. Similarly, in the shul, it is necessary to warm them up with stories, and they will then gladly accept the mussar."

(מפי אחיו ר' ישראל שי' גארדאן)

The Rebbe explained, when stopping someone from actually committing an aveirah the obligation

is greater (לאפרושי מאיסורא), yet one should still attempt to do so in a pleasant manner.

The Rebbe also points out that in the case that remaining silent will be understood by others as agreement, one must object regardless of its possible success. This can be seen from the torah's teaching to rebuke "a hundred times", even though he already tried ninety nine times without success.

(תו"מ תשמ"ב ח"ד ע' 2126, לקוטי שיחות חכ"א ע' 405)

LISTENING TO GUIDANCE

One should love and accept rebuke, for rebuke brings nachas to Hashem, goodness and bracha to the world, and chases away negativity.

The Rebbe Rashab writes in one of his letters, "Cherish criticism for it will lift you to true heights."

(תמיד כ"ח ע"א, היום יום י"ב סיון)

At a farbrengen the Rebbe said, "The gemara tells of the people who lived in the times of the shoftim. When rebuked about some wrongdoing, they would respond 'You have an even greater problem!' This is no excuse at all, for if the accusation is not true, then just say so, and if it is true, attacking the admonisher with not minimize the accusation..."

(תו"מ חט"ו ע' 143)

THE REBBE'S GUIDANCE

AN ANTHOLOGY OF LETTERS FROM THE REBBE

Reb Chaim Shaul Bruk served as the Rosh Yeshivah and the Mashpia of the Lubavitch Yeshivah of Rishon Letziyon during the early years of the Rebbe's nesius. During the winter of 5715, the

number of talmidim in the yeshivah grew, but Reb Chaim Shaul felt that many of the new talmidim were not suitable for the tomchei tmimim atmosphere. He wrote to the Rebbe that he feels they are "gasige bochurim" – street boys. In a letter dated 5 Teves, 5715 (Igros Kodesh vol. 10 page 201), the Rebbe notes the risks these students present to the other students, and the importance of helping them:

...In response to your letter dated the fourth day of Chanukah... I was pleased to learn that the student body of the yeshivah has grown. Regarding what you write that they are 'street boys', I strongly hope this will motivate you and all others involved, to work with these boys as well to the utmost of your ability.

Although it is a well known rule that the good of the general public, and certainly the prevention of destruction, overrides the good of one person, still, before expelling, one must research all possibilities to avert doing this. And Hashem should grant you success...

Reb Tzvi Greenwald, the legendary mechanech of Kfar Chabad's Beis Sefer Limlachah, found himself with an extremely difficult case of rebelliousness from one of his teenage students. In a letter dated 6 Tammuz, 5715 (Igros Kodesh vol. 11 page 225), the Rebbe repeats the above mentioned rule, and suggests medical assistance:

Regarding what you wrote concerning your student... two obvious points are necessary:

- 1) Damage done to the public takes priority over the good of the individual, and therefore if keeping him in the yeshivah, will cause others to be influenced by him, it would not be right to endanger them.
- 2) Chazal teach us that saving the soul of one single Yid is equivalent to saving

Although it is a well known rule that the good of the general public, and certainly the prevention of destruction, overrides the good of one person, still, before expelling, one must research all possibilities to avert doing this.

the world. Since this student is surely included in this category, you must search for a means to help him back.

According to your descriptions, it seems this student is suffering from a clinical condition, and it would therefore be most appropriate to consult a professional in the field. It may be advisable to first you seek medical advice without the knowledge of the student, and to bring him only when the professional will advise to do so.

In a letter dated 9 Tammuz, 5713 (Igros Kodesh vol. 7 page 310), the Rebbe explains that the above mentioned rule to give priority to the good of the public is relevant not only to expelling a student, but also with a student who is in Yeshivah:

In response to your question, concerning a talmid of whom there is concern that he may influence his friends negatively... In a situation where it is possible to influence the talmid, in a manner of *kiruv*, not to influence others (which only rarely is it not possible) – one will eventually succeed in transforming the student himself.

In this letter, dated 35 Kislev, 5715 (Igros Kodesh vol. 10 page 173), the Rebbe directs a mechanech that a farbrengen or the influence of friends may be the answer:

This what he writes that he has students who are breaking the boundaries [in *Yiddishkeit*], it is known that the good of the public overrides the good of one person, but one must do everything in his power to see to it that this one person stays within the fold. Chazal say that our right arm [the more dominant one] should be dedicated to being *mekarev*; it is therefore my fervent hope that if you talk with them at a farbrengen, and also influence them through their friends, they will change their ways...

Chazal teach us that saving the soul of one single Yid is equivalent to saving the world. Since this student is surely included in this category, you must search for a means to help him back.

CHILDREN LEAVING YIDDISHKEIT: CAN ANYTHING BE DONE?

Based on the talks of **Rav Yosef Heller**
Rov and Rosh Kolel 'Kolel Menachem', Crown Heights

Prepared by **Rabbi Shimon Hellinger**

Parents and educators in today's generation face a relatively recent and increasingly common problem. Unfortunately, some of our youth are leaving our yeshivos, communities and often Yiddishkeit altogether, joining the secular world.

Before World War II, this phenomenon existed in Europe. Young adults left yiddishkeit in order to advance their education and careers, or pursue pleasures of the world. In the last decade this phenomenon has returned but with different roots. Today, no one leaves yiddishkeit because Shabbos observance interferes with their work, or because they have a taivah for something treif.

In our age, it is the atmosphere in the child's home, together with his education, that play a large role in determining if he or she will continue along the path of Yiddishkeit or *chas v'shalom* forsake his roots to seek out a new way of life.

There are three primary factors which can lead to children forsaking Yiddishkeit. In my experience I have seen, that it is usually one of these (or at times more) that have caused children to turn away.

To help ensure that a child will remain within the community, it is important that: a) his experiences with yiddishkeit be pleasant and enjoyable, b) he or she is taught Yiddishkeit in the correct manner, and c) he sees truth in what he is taught.

FIRST FACTOR: PLEASANT EXPERIENCE

Many of the youth who chose to leave the community relate that it was not Yiddishkeit that

turned them off, rather it was their home. In fact, many of them feel that frumkeit was the price they had to pay in order to leave home. (See also article of Rav Chaim Sholom Deitch. Ed.)

It is a crucial that a child feel good, happy and comfortable at home. If a child is not happy at home, he or she will almost certainly look elsewhere for that happiness.

The first step in determining the home atmosphere is the husband-wife relationship. The relationship should be one of peace, warmth, acceptance and tranquility. Once this feeling of warmth exists, the home will become a pleasant and comfortable place for the children, and the parents will be able to educate them properly.

The children must also be treated with dignity and respect. When a child feels listened to and appreciated he will want to stay close. Parents should spend time with their children, giving each child the attention that they need, thus building a strong relationship.

HANDLING LIFE'S CHALLENGES

Some pressures in life seem unavoidable. Each family has its own set of challenges. One family may be financially strained. The roof of their house may leak when it rains, the steam may not always work and something is always broken. Another person may be wealthy and his business demands that he attend meetings from early in the morning until late at night. Each family may have their problem. Nevertheless, it is important that the home atmosphere remains a pleasant one.

Children should not grow up feeling burdened by their parents' worries. A child cannot be educated in this way. A home must be filled with simcha, emunah and bitachon.

To prevent their concerns from being felt in the home, the parents must be full of emunah and bitachon. The father must be involved in avodah daily – davening and learning nigleh and chassidus, so that the problems won't affect him or the home environment.

LOVING YIDDISHKEIT

The teaching of Yiddishkeit itself must also be done in a pleasant manner. When children are taught

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Yiddishkeit in an unpleasant way, they are likely to dislike it and want to escape. For example, when a boy is ordered to prepare a section of Gemara to be tested at a certain time, or else he will face punishment, he feels angry and resents learning torah.

In previous generations, people were more receptive to authority and for the need to conform, allowing parents to coerce their children. Times have changed, and it is crucial to present Yiddishkeit in a tasteful manner, so that they look forward to more.

In our times it is dangerous to take away free choice from a grown child. A child must never be told, "I forbid you from doing..." Instead the severity of the matter should be explained and

emphasized, and the child should be left to choose. One may even request and plead with the child, but the choice must always remain his; both in mitzvos and other areas of life.

Moreover, there is no need to ever force Yiddishkeit upon a child. Hashem gave each child a neshama that is naturally attracted to Torah and Yiddishkeit – it just has to be presented the right way. The beauty of Shabbos, the meaning of a mitzvah and the warmth of an inspirational davening – all touch the heart of a Yid. When the mitzvos are presented to the child in a warm fashion, and explained clearly so that he is able to understand, he will himself stay away from doing the wrong thing.

No child wants to act bad; a normal child does not try to be stubborn. When handled properly from the outset, there is no need to demand anything with force. Just as a child does not need to be 'forbidden' to go out in the cold without coat; so too, a child can be taught not to go to a certain place

because it's 'cold' in Yiddishkeit and similar.

This concept, with all its details, is quite complex and we will discuss it on another occasion IYH.

SECOND FACTOR: INDIVIDUAL CHINUCH

Shlomo Hamelech writes: "Chanoch lana'ar al pi darko, gam ki yazkin lo yasur mimena," when a child is educated on his individual level (darko), we are assured that he will not depart from that

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which he is taught. However, when we try to teach him things beyond his level, we risk him leaving everything.

The rational in this is: When a child is taught at his pace, he connects with each mitzvah and internalizes it. Having the necessary tools, the child is able to process what he is taught, mentally, emotionally and practically. Forcing a mitzvah upon a child before he is ready is like feeding solids to a newborn child - the time has yet to come.

For example, a father wakes his young son (pre-Bar Mitzvah) early in the morning and forces him to go to Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim. He is demanding too much for a child of that age. It is too hard for the child who wants and needs his sleep. The results are to be expected: By age 10 or 11, the child already hates tehillim, the Rebbe and Dovid Hamelech!

Why would a father do this to his child? In his simplicity, the father equates Shabbos mevorchim tehillim with davening shacharis. Indeed, the child *should* daven some of shacharis, properly and with feeling, but he is not obligated to say tehillim.

KNOWING EACH CHILD

A father once called me, asking what to do with his son. The seventeen year old boy had a strong desire to play baseball, and he wanted to join a local modern-orthodox team. The father felt that it this was inappropriate for his son.

I explained to the father that his son is not asking to do something forbidden. All he wants to do is to play ball. If the father will forbid him from joining the team, the son will rebel and do far worse things.

A while later, late Erev Yom Kippur, I received a phone call from the father, thanking me for the advice. His son had joined the team and had with time transformed for the better. The boy began to daven and learn with chayus, for the game gave him an outlet to vent all his stress.

This illustrates the need to differentiate between scenarios. Surely, a mashpia in yeshivah should farbreng about the inappropriateness of such activities for a bachur in yeshivah, but for a boy who

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is on the verge of going off, this is the right thing. Had the father been a 'chossid-shoteh' and prohibited it, he would have destroyed his own son...

One cannot talk to each child the same way; what is an aveira for one, is a mitzvah for another.

AGE APPROPRIATE

The child must have the right foundations. He must be introduced to mitzvos at the right age, according to his capabilities. To push mitzvos at a younger age will often cause the child to have a negative association with that mitzvah for the rest of his or her life.

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A Shliach tells of a family in his area, who for years only came to shul on Yom Kippur. After some persuasion, the Shliach convinced the family to come for Simchas Torah and they had a wonderful time. The Shliach then inquired why they had only ever attended the break – fast until now. The mother answered, “As a child, I grew up orthodox and my father forced me after every meal to read loudly Hebrew words that I didn’t understand. I hated doing that and ran away from home as soon as I was old enough.”

A parent needs to know how to discern what each child is ready for, and what is important for the child to keep. By giving the child the right foundation in Yiddishkeit, and a warm, happy atmosphere at home, parents can greatly influence the path their children will take.

Similarly, a child should be placed in a class and Yeshivah that is best for him. At times, parents who want their children to excel in learning will place a child in an advanced class or Yeshivah, when the child is not holding at that level. This, of course, does not benefit the child. The parent must choose what is best for the child, and not make choices for the sake of the

family name or social status.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Furthermore, in educating a child, a process must be followed. Just as a building must have strong foundations and only then can it be extended upward, floor upon floor, so too a yiddishe child must

be solidified with the foundations of Yiddishkeit and then he can rise slowly to his full height.

Therefore, even when a child expresses interest in doing something positive, the parents must evaluate whether the child is ready, and the possible consequences further down the road. When a child shows excitement because he is promised prizes, we must be mindful that such excitement is temporary and later on, when it will be time for the child to do that mitzvah, the real excitement from fulfilling that mitzvah will not come.

For instance, I once saw a father bring his three and four year old sons to the mikvah early Shabbos morning. The children go to the mikvah with their father and then to shul. The children are tired and worn out and don’t daven. The father also can’t daven because he’s busy chasing his sons around shul telling them to daven!

The father doesn’t realize that his sons have no mitzvah to immerse in the mikvah and don’t even have to come to shul! Even if he does bring the children to shul, they do not need to daven the whole davening, as long as they don’t disturb others.

Instead the father should focus on the mitzvos which are appropriate for their age, and when the time will come they will add more. If their yiddishe experience is healthy, they will look forward to growing and increasing.

HELP FROM ABOVE

In order for all of our work to succeed we need *siyata dishmaya*, help from above. In the world today with the many distractions, it is only through Hashem's protection that our children can succeed. To merit this protection we must follow the order that has been set out for us.

When giving the Torah to the Yidden, Hashem gave every Yid the power to fulfill Torah and Mitzvos. However, when a person leaves the path of the Torah and paves his own way, he is no longer protected by the torah. If we choose our own methods, we are in our own hands.

In the Vidui of Yom Kippur written by Rav Nissim Gaon there is a puzzling phrase: "Where You, Hashem, were strict I was lenient, where You were lenient I was strict." The Alter Rebbe asks on this the obvious question: If one is lenient inappropriately this is problematic, but what is so bad if someone will be strict unnecessarily?

The Alter Rebbe explains that by a person departing from the Torah, even though he was even

stricter, the Torah doesn't guard him. Since the Torah no longer protects him, he will therefore fall and become lenient in areas where he may not do so. (Maamarim Haktzarim Parshas Chukas)

When educating children about mitzvos, it is necessary that they be able to prioritize between the different levels of obligations. It is important for children to be taught, and to understand, the difference between halacha and minhag; divrei torah and divrei chachamim (in cases of priority, *safek* etc.)

When educating children about mitzvos, it is necessary that they be able to prioritize between the different levels of obligations. It is important for children to be taught, and to understand, the difference between halacha and minhag.

A child will not be confused by this, as long as the father is clear and not confused. A child can understand that a mitzvah d'oraisa is more severe than a mitzvah d'rabanan. At the same time, he can understand "Chavivim divrei sofrim m'divrei Torah," – The words of Chazal are more beloved than the words of Torah.

For example, a child may learn a sicha where the Rebbe says that dancing hakafos on Simchas Torah is very great because it's a minhag. But he can still understand that if one must choose between davening and dancing hakafos, davening takes priority.

In order to transmit this order of priorities to the child, without confusing him, the father must learn Gemara, Shulchan Aruch and chassidus to appreciate it himself. If the father has his priorities skewed, he will not be able to convey the correct balance to his child.

Whenever in doubt, the parents should consult a mashpia, to ensure that they are taking the right approach.

THIRD FACTOR: A LIVING EXAMPLE

A third necessary factor to ensure children stay on the right path is the behavior of the parents. In order for children to appreciate the value of Torah and Yiddishkeit, they must see it followed by their role models.

A child who sees consistency in his parents' observance of mitzvos, is likely to follow in their way. When he sees the sacrifices they make to uphold their standards, he recognizes the truth of that which they are observing, seeing how much it means to them. Conversely, when a child sees his

parents disregard what he has been taught, he loses appreciation for the truth of Yiddishkeit, and he concludes that everything he is being taught is purely ceremonial.

For example: When a parent teaches their child not to steal, and the child then witnesses that parent act dishonestly in business, the child will no longer take his parents' words serious. Though the concept the parent is teaching is true and logical, the child sees hypocrisy. Only when we follow what we teach, can we influence through education.

Or in another scenario, a father tells his son to daven and then he turns to talk to his neighbor, causing the child to understand that davening is a nice activity for children. It can't truly be important, for otherwise the father would also be davening. Similarly the father cannot expect his son to take his learning in cheder seriously, if the father does not have set times for torah learning. The boy will not be satisfied being told that "Children have to do their school work," and thinks to himself "If torah learning is truly of value, why does my father not want to learn?" The same applies to all other matters; children will only accept the truth.

In a similar sense, the feelings of the parents will affect the child's feeling towards Yiddishkeit. In a home where the parents enjoy learning torah and look forward to an upcoming Yom Tov, the children will feel the same; when the parents see it as a burden, the children will want to avoid it completely.

However, when children see that their parents hold Torah and mitzvos dear, they will always seek it out in life. The appreciation of shabbos, Yom Tov and a mitzvah will be impressed upon them forever.

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POSITIVE ENERGY

A farbrengen with Rav Chaim Sholom Deitch Rosh Kolel Tzemach Tzedek, Yerushalayim

By Y. Sholoms

Midnight has long fallen on the old city. I quicken my pace, as the sound of singing reaches my ears. One turn onto the stones of Chabad Street, up a winding staircase, and I've reached my destination; the farbrengen with Reb Chaim Sholom.

Crowded in the small, two century old Tzemach Tzedek Shul, are close to fifty men. Gerer bochorim sit alongside mizrachi professionals; an elder Lubavitcher Chassid converses in Russian with a recent immigrant, and there's an Australian ba'al teshuvah taking notes, while a sephardi youngster spices the chummus.

The diversity is not felt in the company of Reb Chaim Sholom, as each one feels that the Rosh Kolel knows him personally and relates to him. Reb Chaim Sholom sits in the center and exchanges lechayims with everyone present.

As a well known gaon, whose depth and proficiency are world renowned; he was selected by the Rebbe to serve as the head of the local Lubavitch kolel.

But for most of those present, he is much more than a teacher. At any given hour, one could find Reb Chaim Sholom walking the narrow streets of Yerushalayim, deep in conversation with another Yid. It may be a student of his asking pshat in a difficult wording of the Alter Rebbe in hilchos shabbos, it may be a baal teshuvah seeking direction, or it may be a frustrated teenager who has found someone who listens.

Indeed, at the farbrengen, much of the time is dedicated to listening. And when he listens, everyone listens. Roshei Yeshivos share their chidushim, buissnessmen their jokes, and they both receive the same radiant glow.

Reb Chaim Sholom begins in his sweet yerushalmi dialect.

I want to discuss a sensitive topic, one that many of us are dealing with on a daily basis, and one that all of us can have a positive impact to help make change.

I want to talk about the problem of our youth dropping out. Truthfully, there is no solution for that problem. If we view children as dropouts, there is no reason for them to return.

Hence, before we approach the issue, we must understand that there is no such thing as a 'dropout'. The very terms *frum* and *frai* do not exist in *chassidus* terminology. *Chassidus* teaches us that every *Yid* has a *neshama*, and every *Yid* has challenges. We all need to strengthen ourselves, and we need to assist others in their struggles.

A few years ago, a *moisad* dealing with these children produced a journal which included several interviews with our struggling youth. The common message of them all was that they felt that they did not get enough love from their parents. Also included, were some interviews with parents, where they quoted one father, "How could one say that a father doesn't love his child?!" The results show, however, that if the love is not expressed, the child will not feel it.

Most importantly, the love must be unconditional. A child must feel that he is not loved because he did well, or even because he is trying to do well. He must feel that his connection with his parents is regardless of who he is - just because he is their son.

THE GIRL THAT CAME HOME

I would like to share with you a story I heard first hand from a family member.

It was during the final years of the British mandate in *Eretz Yisroel*, when a number of youth groups sprouted up throughout the land, including *Etzel*, *Lechi* and the *Palmach*, with the goal of driving the British from the land. Naturally, some children from *frum* homes joined their ranks, and sadly many *korbonos*, in a *ruchniusdike* sense, fell as a result.

One eighteen year old girl, from a *Karliner* family, joined the *Etzel*, much to the distress of her family and community. Despite his feelings, her father warned her siblings that they dare not mention a negative word to her. Even when she would return home at two in the morning from their meetings, her father

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would get out of bed and tell her, "Daughter dear, you haven't eaten supper yet," and he would prepare a fried egg for her. She later said that these eggs would turn over in her stomach as she lay in bed, while thinking to herself, "I have such a loving father; how am I reciprocating?"

One *Shabbos*, a group of these youth from *chareidi* homes met. In contrast to this girl, their parents had been hounding them for their behavior, so they decided that the time had come for them to show their parents who they truly were. They jubilantly climbed onto a jeep, and prepared themselves to go roaring through the *meah she'arim* neighborhood, just to let everyone know how they feel about *Shabbos*.

This girl was there but could not bring herself to do this to her father, and though the others poked fun at her cowardice, she remained steadfast. The jeep drove off, and she walked home. This was the first break in her association with the group. Eventually, she left them entirely, and set up a beautiful family. I know her sons; one of them married into a very respectable *litvishe* family.

Reb Chaim Sholom's voice drops and is strained with emotion. He now turns to one of the assembled in person:

True, on the surface, this does not seem to make sense. If her father was so tolerant, despite the fact that he knew what she was up to at night, what was she afraid of? However this demonstrates that **Positive Energy**, dispensed unconditionally, produces the best results.

HOW CHASSIDUS TEACHES US

Two years ago, I brought this thought up at a *farbrengen* here in our *Shul*, and a heated debate ensued. While some agreed with this approach, others were vehemently opposed. They argued that when a child feels that he does not have to perform in order to be on good terms with his parents, he will not feel the need to earn their love. It is illogical to expect a child to learn and act appropriately, if his parents will be tolerant of everything.

Earlier in the day, I had learned a *maamor* of the Rebbe, *Ani L'dodi 5726*, where the Rebbe was elaborating on this point. The *maamor* explains that what causes an apathetic, uninspired *Yid* to

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do *teshuvah*, is the love which is demonstrated to him by Hashem. Or in the words of the *mammor*, the pleasant countenance of the king in the field evokes *teshuva*.

The *baal aveira*, the sinner, instead of being reprimanded and dutifully punished, he is rewarded with love. And in fact, it is the love which causes him to return to Hashem!

One might think that it is irrational; if a *Yid* sinned, and he sees that he is loved nonetheless, why would he decide to change his ways?

Whether we have a psychological explanation for this phenomenon or not, the fact remains, that it is only through positive energy that one returns.

There was once a child who was straying off the *derech*. The Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to the boy's father that he not reprimand his son, rather ask someone else to speak to him. The Rebbe explained that since he, the father, is so hurt by his child's behavior, it would be impossible for his anguish not express itself in the conversation he would have with his son. The Rebbe wanted the father to keep his negative feelings contained, so that the son will only feel positive vibes.

We've been talking much too much. Lechayim, fellow chassidim, lechayim!

Reb Shlomo, a niggun.

A soul stirring niggun begins from the back of the crowd and tens of voices join in. The walls of the shul reverberate as the melody reaches a crescendo.

Reb Chaim Sholom turns to talk with a new attendee, who has no yarmulkah or peyos, and is adorned with an earring. From somewhere near my spot, I hear it whispered that this youth was once a choshuver bochur in one of the great yerusholayim yeshivas. I watch the conversation, and from the newcomer's expression, I sense the positive energy.

The niggun dies down, and a hushed silence prevails. Reb Chaim Sholom won't continue until all those present warm their hearts with a lechayim.

Finally, he begins to talk again.

HOW TO INSPIRE LOVE IN OURSELVES

The issue remaining to be addressed is: How do we inspire such feelings in ourselves? How do we find uncompromised love in our heart, which is drowning in disappointment and perhaps anger?

One solution is to say *Tehillim* and give *tzedoko* for the *zechus* of the child. I know many people who have done this with success. Aside from the *ruchniusdike* impact, it has an immediate psychological affect on the person. When you think about and feel for the child, in a sincere *pnimiusdike* way, it is sure to have an effect on your relationship with him. When that feeling is expressed in deeds, and also in your own *tefilos* to Hashem, the connection with the child takes on a different meaning.

I recently heard a story about Reb Alter, a longtime *melamed* in the *Chabad Toras Emes Cheder* of *Yerushalaim*. The Breslover Mashpia Reb Yaakov Meir Shechter once came into Shul and found Reb Alter saying *Tehillim* with great emotion, and tears were streaming down his face.

When asked what the matter was, Reb Alter replied, "I have a *talmid* who is not succeeding with his reading, and as much as I try, the *yingele* cannot pick up the skill. I am davening for him..."

Hearing this, Reb Yaakov Meir took a *Tehillim*, sat down next to Reb Alter, and began reciting with him.

When a teacher, and even a person who does not know the child personally, engages in such an intense emotional connection with the child and his needs, their relationship is sure to blossom. This is certainly something we could learn from the old school *melamdim*.

SHOWING CARE

Additionally, it is important to openly demonstrate concern for the child, for his day to day needs.

There is a *vort* from the *Baal Shem Tov*: "Prior to assisting someone *b'ruchniyus*, one must do that person a favor *b'gashmiyus*".

A child may feel that your guiding him *b'ruchniyus* is out of ulterior motives, not for his sake alone. He may assume that his family is only concerned about their status, or that his school truly cares solely for its name. But when the child sees that his *gashmiusdike* wellbeing is important to the teacher, his trust has been attained.

This is my message to you tonight: When we want to assist a person in strengthening his *yiddishkeit*, it must be done through positive energy. We could call them over for a talk, invite them over or take a walk, but we must be wary not to talk anything negative. Positive communication.

Obviously, this does not mean that within the *moisad* or Shul he may act as he wishes. We cannot

afford to let one person's weaknesses influence others; this is something that every adult and child could understand. We are talking about how to bring this message home. He must feel that though I am not letting him speak or act in that manner, his behavior is not the basis of our relationship; it goes much deeper than that.

TO STRENGTHEN THE CONNECTION

As we talk of unconditional love, true Ahavas Yisroel, I am reminded of a *chassidische mayseh*, as told by Reb Yithchok of *Radvil* (son of Reb Michel Zlotchover):

There were once two brothers; Berel was extremely wealthy, whilst Chaim was drowning in poverty. One day, Chaim approached Berel's house for financial assistance, and when he reached the mansion, the doorman asked what he needed. Chaim told him to let his master know that his brother was here. The wealthy brother realized what the purpose of this visit was, so he ordered the doorman to say that his master says he does not have a brother. Chaim begrudgingly left and later reported the incident to their father.

A short while later, the wealthy brother visited his father and fell on his shoulders hugging him with emotion and cried, "Father! Father!" The father shrugged him off, "Chaim is my son. If he is not your brother, you cannot be my son."

Reb Yithchok of *Radvil* concluded, "We approach Hashem when we need him, and we cry 'Aviyinu – father!' But we must remember that if we do not treat Hashem's children like brothers, we cannot expect Hashem to treat us like a father."

On a positive note: When a person assists his brother in need, this strengthens both of their connection to their father. If we want to influence a person to strengthen his connection with our father in heaven, it is through treating him like a brother.

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THE POWER OF A FARBRENGEN

The best time for positive communication, as I have seen from experience, is at a farbrengen. I have seen this countless times in my dealings with different people who would be called 'dropouts'.

There was a family in *Yerushalaim* who thought they had lost their son. He was not *frum* at all, and was spending most of his nights in bars *R"L*.

One of their younger children once went missing in the middle of night, and out of panic the mother called the older son to help search for him. Eventually, he found his brother at our *Chai Ellul farbrengen*, here in the *Tzemach Tzedek Shul*.

Once he was here, we made him sit down. He did not need much *lechayim*, as he was already adequately warmed up from his previous venue.

Being it was *Elul*, we were discussing *teshuvah* as is explained in *Chassidus*, when suddenly he cried out, "That means I could do *teshuvah* too?!" We showed him what the Alter Rebbe writes in *Tanya*, that every Yid davens for *teshuvah*, and if it would be doubtful whether he would be accepted, it would be considered a possible '*bracha levatolo*'.

As morning dawned, he began dancing on his feet, and through his tears, he started to scream over and over, "I can do *teshuva*!" He began attending our *shiurim* on *Chassidus*, as he promised. Today, he learns *Nigleh* and *Chassidus*, and is a passionate *lubavitcher chossid*.

This is the power of a farbrengen. The power of true, unconditional love.

Lechayim.

Reb Chaim Sholom stands up and begins dancing in his place, the entire crowd after him. I am swept up with the atmosphere. Absolute positive energy.

When a person assists his brother in need, this strengthens both of their connection to their father. If we want to influence a person to strengthen his connection with our father in heaven, it is through treating him like a brother.

THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL CHINUCH

A LETTER FROM THE REBBE RASHAB ON SETTING CHILDREN ON THE RIGHT PATH

"In earlier years one would always find Balei-Batim in the Beis Medrash"

In response to your first question about the condition of Yiddishkeit in our area. In general it is a Yiddishe neighborhood; however the specific [behavior] is very not good, and some of the youngsters do very inappropriate things. The reason for this is that in the last few years a different spirit has passed among the general population, and this has brought about negative results...

I still remember how in earlier years we would always find Balei-Batim in the Beis Medrash (aside from the steady learners), who after work (or at specific times during the day), would go to the study hall to learn a Mishnah, Gemara or Poskim, each one according to his capabilities. They did this specifically in the Beis Midrash, not in their own homes, and therefore they learned. And most importantly, this set a place for Torah in the heart of each person, and his son would see this and would not stray too far, and the father also kept an eye on his son that he should learn.

"He thinks he will learn at home ..."

Nowadays however it is not so that people learn in the Beis Medrash even by the G-d fearing Balei-Batim; there is no thought to go to the Beis Midrash to learn, rather he plans to learn at home. But when he comes home, he wastes the learning time in the company of his wife and children which are closer to his heart, and the result is that he doesn't learn.

"... and through this, he goes down from one step to another, R"L"

However, more than all of the above, when the son sees that the father doesn't learn, the Torah seems to him something which is completely superfluous, and automatically he distances himself from it and he chooses another type of path, and this way he goes down from one step to another, R"L.

Also, the father doesn't keep an eye on his son's learning (which leads to his negative actions,) because by the father as well the idea of learning has cooled off. And afterwards, when the son goes overboard, he is powerless to help him anymore.

And therefore when the idea came up for "Machzikei Hadas", one of the vital points for me was that the Balei-Batim should learn everyday, and specifically in the Beis Medrash, in order to make a set place for Torah learning, that would lead to improvement of the general situation.

(Igros Kodesh Rashab, volume 4, page 305)

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