

PART TWO: THE SKILL OF PARENTING

by Rabbi Chaim Morgenstern

Once the parents feel their responsibility towards their children's chinuch, they must educate themselves how to do it properly and efficiently. By failing to do so, they may innocently make serious mistakes in their chinuch techniques, some of which may actually be counterproductive. The following contemporary Rabbonim have expressed this concern in their public lectures:

- Rav Shimon Schwab, Rav of Kehillas Adas Yeshurin, N.Y. (Breuer's), said, "We need a night kollel for parents to train them how to properly raise and be mechanech their children."
- Rav Chaim Dov Keller, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Telshe Chicago, once remarked, "Instead of teaching child psychology to the parents, we need a course in parent psychology."
- Rav Nachum Diament (Mashgiach of yeshivas Netivot Olam in Bnei Brak, and one of the foremost lecturers on family relationships in Israel) said, "Parents often ask, 'How should we deal with a child who is closed, quiet, stubborn, rebellious and is making our lives miserable?' Some parents may rationalize by attributing certain negative behavioral patterns to the child's nature. However, the real answer is to reverse the question: 'How should we deal with a problem child whose parents are...?'; in other words, is it the child's fault, or is the problem due to improper parenting?"

Rav Diament once took his child to a physician. Trying to become friendly with the child, the doctor asked, "Are you a good child?" The Rav then interjected, "You're forcing my child to lie. What child would reply that he's bad?"

The doctor retorted, "Rabbi, you're mistaken. All children are born good. We are the ones who make them bad!"

This concept is alluded in our morning brachos, "*My G-d, the soul that you gave us is pure...*". This pure soul, when properly nurtured, can be developed into the well-adjusted and balanced child that we are all praying for.

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