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ותלמוד
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Children and Mitzvos – 2

Ki Savo 5786

388

Chinuch of Children for Mitzvos

Some Principles

1. In the prior issue (387), we cited some principles of parents' mitzva of chinuch to train their children to fulfill mitzvos asei (par. 19)—even d'rabanan mitzvos (13)—and to prevent them from violating issurim (31), and certainly not to place issurim into their hands for them to violate due to the "issur of feeding" ["איסור ספיייה"] (24).
2. We cited different ages for the average child. The issur to actively feed a child something assur applies even to a day-old infant (ibid.). The chiyuv to prevent them from doing issurim applies from the age at which they understand, which is approximately three years old (23). And the chiyuv to train them to perform mitzvos is from six years old, which is approximately the age when they begin to understand a mitzva and how to do it (21).
3. In the current issue, we will discuss halachic details, various cases, and various melachos that commonly come up on Shabbos. Strengthening these areas will fulfill the zemer we sing, "השומר שבת הבן עם הבת, לקל ירצו וכו'."

Hilchos Shabbos

Kiddush

4. **The mitzva of kiddush.** One must train his chinuch-aged child—approximately six years old—to hear kiddush and havdala (מ"ב (סי' שמ"ג סק"ג). If there is no gadol present to be motzi the child, he should make kiddush for himself with a cup that can hold a least a reviis—86 cc [2.9 oz] according to Rav Chaim Naeh—and drink at least his cheekful (ביאה"ל סי' רע"א סי' ד"ה צריך). He should then eat so that his kiddush is in the place of his seuda, just like a gadol (שו"ת נשמת השבת ח"ב סי' ע"ב). A child can be motzi other children.
5. **Eating before kiddush.** Nevertheless, children may eat before kiddush, both by night and by day, as well as before havdala. With respect to things for a child's needs, Chazal did not make gezeiros to prevent them from creating habits.
6. **Feeding them before kiddush.** Similarly, parents may actively feed their children before kiddush since the issue is time-related, not inherently assur food, and when it comes to time-related issues, there is no issur to feed a child (מג"א סי' רס"ט סק"א). Hence, one who gives out candies to children in the beis medrash is not causing them to violate the issur of eating before kiddush.

Havdala

7. **Doing melacha.** A chinuch-aged [six-year-old] boy or girl may not do melacha before havdala until they say "ברוך המבדיל בין קודש" (שו"ע סי' רצ"ט ס"י) just like a gadol (לחול).
8. **Eating before havdala.** However, they may eat before havdala. As we wrote with respect to kiddush (above, 5), Chazal did not make gezeiros in situations of children's needs.
9. **Chiyuv of havdala.** When children reach chinuch age, they must either hear havdala from someone else or make havdala themselves.
10. **Late Motzei Shabbos.** According to most poskim, in places where Motzei Shabbos begins late at night, e.g., on summer Shabbosos, and children go to sleep before havdala, or if a child fell asleep for the night before Havdala, they must hear havdala on Sunday morning (שו"ת להורות נתן ח"י סי' ל"ג, פוסק הדור בתשובות והנהגות ח"ג סי' (ק"יב). A gadol, even one who already made havdala, may be motzi a child (מג"א סי' רע"א סק"ז לגבי קידוש, מ"ב סי' רצ"י סק"ב) but it is better

for the child to make havdala himself if he knows how to (מג"א, (מחצה"ש סי' רע"ג ס"ד, מ"ב סק"כ). A child can be motzi other children. He should only say the brachos of Hagafen and Hamavdil, not the other sections of havdala (הליכות קטנים פ"י אות כ"ג) (הגר"ש"א).

11. A girl who did not hear havdala on Motzei Shabbos does not need to make havdala herself, and a gadol should certainly not make havdala for her, since women's chiyuv in havdala is a topic of machlokes and doubt (see Issue 157, para. 21 onwards).

Various Melachos on Shabbos

The Rules

12. We cited (Issue 378) some rules and different halachos regarding melacha done by a child on Shabbos. We will briefly review them and then go through some practical examples.

For Himself

13. **Under three.** If a child who does not understand [under three] does melacha for his own purposes and benefit, one does not need to stop him. Even his father and mother do not need to stop him (ibid., par. 31). However, no one may instruct him to do melacha even if it is for the child's purposes (33). One may also not place something before him if it is clear he will do melacha with it (35).
14. **Over three.** If a child is over three, even if he is doing melacha for his own purposes and benefit, everyone must stop him. Other people must stop him if the melacha is assur d'Oraisa, while his parents must stop him even if he is only violating an issur d'rabanen (par. 36).

For a Gadol

15. If a child is doing an assur melacha on Shabbos for a gadol, even if he was not asked to do it and he had intention on his own to benefit a gadol by doing melacha, everyone must stop him from doing the issur even if he is a one-day-old infant. Everyone else's chiyuv to stop him is d'rabanen, while his parents' chiyuv to stop him is d'Oraisa from the mitzva of ensuring one's child rests from melacha ["שביתת בנו"], based on the pasuk "אתה ובנך ובתך עבדך" (ibid., 37).

Carrying

16. **Candy in a reshus harabim.** If a child less than three takes something from the house for himself, e.g., a pacifier or candy, and carries it with him when going out of his house into a reshus harabim d'Oraisa, no one needs to stop him from violating the issur of carrying since he does not understand and is taking it for his own purposes and benefit (שו"ת באר משה ח"ו סי' ח"י).
17. However, one may not give a child—even if he is less than three—something he will carry for the gadol in a reshus harabim, or even in a karmelis, which is an issur d'rabanen, since the child is acting for a gadol and must be stopped.
18. **Carrying a siddur, food.** Some allow giving a child a siddur, chumash, or anything a child needs for shul, to take it through a karmelis, which is d'rabanen, in a place without an eiruv. This is because Chazal allowed a child to do an issur d'rabanen for himself. Then, once the siddur or machzor is already in the shul, a gadol may also use it (ביאה"ל סי' שמ"ג ד"ה) (מדברי סופרים). Similarly, a child may carry food he needs through a karmelis to bring it to another place (חוט שני שבת ד' עמ' רצ"ה).

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19. **Place with an eiruv.** In a place with a kosher eiruv built in accordance with the accepted rules and stringencies of eiruvim for neighborhoods with a Torah and mitzva observant population, even if the father is personally machmir not to carry due to halachic concerns [or community/social affiliations...], there is no need to stop chinuch-aged children from carrying within the eiruv. The pasuk says "חֲנוּךְ לְנֶעֱר ע"פ דְּרָכּוֹ" i.e., according to the path appropriate for that child at that time, not to what is appropriate for the father.
20. The father may even actively give a child something to carry, as they can rely on the eiruv. When the child gets older and understands the concept that a scrupulous individual can be machmir and he wants to choose this path, then he can be encouraged to also be machmir on himself from a place of willingness, joy, and becoming close to Hashem.

Games

21. We discussed at length (Issues 341 and 342) all sorts of games as they pertain to issurim of Shabbos and the permissibility of children playing with them. See there at length. Here we will just cite some examples.
22. An electric, battery-operated toy that has no way to be played with without electricity is muktzah machmas issur. One may certainly not hand it to a child, even one less than three, to play with it, due to the issur of feeding, as it is clear the child will use it.
23. However, if the child took it on his own and used it, activating lights or sounds, one does not need to stop him, as he is acting for his own purposes and enjoyment and does not understand. If he is over three, though, his parents must stop him.
24. However, if there is a way to play with it without using electricity, e.g., a small electric train or car that can be played with just as a train or car without electricity, the toy is not muktzah because a kli shemelachto l'issur may be used in a permissible way [צורך גופני] (מ"ב (ס"י ש"ב סק"י). It may even be given to a child to play with, but the child should be instructed not to turn it on. If the child subsequently turns it on, he does not need to be stopped if he is under three, but if he is over three, he should be stopped, as mentioned.

Using a Child to Do Melacha

Actively "Feeding"

25. No one may ask a child to do any melacha, even an issur d'rabanen, for him on Shabbos. This is regardless of the age of the child; it is true even for a day-old infant, as one may not feed a child something assur. Thus, one may not ask a child to turn on or off a light, oven, air conditioner, fire, alarm clock, or the like.
26. One may not even hint at a child to do melacha. As long as the child understands he is supposed to do something, it is considered like feeding him assur food (ארחות שבת פכ"ד אות ה').

Benefiting from a Child's Action

27. If a child acted on the instructions of a gadol or did something solely for a gadol, not for himself at all, no one may benefit from the child's actions until Motzei Shabbos, plus the amount of time it takes to do that action ["כדי שיעשו"], the same way one may not benefit from melacha done by a non-Jew for a Jew in a forbidden manner (מג"א סי' שצ"ה סק"ב, ביאה"ל שם סי' ד"ה אינו יהודי).
28. If the gadol told the child not to do the melacha but the child did it anyway, one may benefit from his actions (ע"פ המג"א סי' רע"ו) (סק"ג, מו"ר בשו"ת שבט הקהתי ח"א סי' ק"כ).

Having a Child Turn On a Light

29. **Placing a child next to the switch.** The poskim discuss whether there is a heter to place a child who has no level of understanding about doing an issur, e.g., until two years old, next to a light switch. A child commonly plays with anything his hands can reach, so when the child is placed there, he might turn the light on or off while playing with the switch.
30. **Some say assur.** Some say this is assur, as the gadol is helping the child in doing the melacha, which is considered like feeding something assur (שו"ת תשובה מאהבה ח"א סי' קל"ה, א"א בוטשאטש סוף סי' (פ"י אות ג'), נשמת שבת סי' שמ"ג אות ח"י ש"ט, הגר"ש"א, הגר"ש"א, הליכות קטנים).
31. **Some allow standing him there.** Some allow one to stand a child who has no understanding at all next to a light switch [or sit him on a chair, table, or bed next to the switch] with the hope he will play with the lever. The reason for this is that the child is considered to be acting for himself since he enjoys playing with an object that moves and does not have intent for his father, as he does not understand that his game affects the light. Until two years old, a child does not have the cognitive function to realize he is acting for the gadol. However, one may not urge him or direct his hand to the lever, and one certainly may not hold him next to the lever, as that is considered helping him and is assur due to the issur of feeding (הגר"ח קנייבסקי, מו"ר בשו"ת שבט הקהתי ח"ד סי' קכ"א, ארחות שבת פכ"ד אות ח').

32. **Some even allow holding him.** Some even allow one to hold the child next to the switch, but l'chatchila it should be someone else's child, not his own. For one's son, one may stand him there (מו"ר (הגר"י בלויא הובא בס' בכורי יאה סי' ט"ו אות ג'). One may be meikel and rely on this if there is a great need, but not just for convenience.
33. **To turn off the light.** Even according to the machmir poskim who hold one may not stand a child next to a switch to turn on a light, some poskim are meikel if one needs the light turned off. This is only an issur d'rabanen, as it is a מלאכה שאינה צריכה לגופה, and if there is a need to turn off the light so the child can fall asleep at night, one who is meikel has a basis to rely on (שו"ת נשמת שבת ח"ז סי' תס"ו).

Forgot to Disable Refrigerator Light

34. If one forgot to disconnect the lightbulb in the refrigerator, he may not tell a child old enough to know that opening the fridge will turn the light on to open the door so that he can take out the food for the family's seuda. This is an issur of feeding for the purpose of a gadol.
35. However, if he is not old enough to understand that opening the door will cause the light to go on in violation of a Shabbos issur, one may tell him to take something he likes out of the refrigerator. Then, he is opening it for himself and his own benefit, and there is no issur of feeding. If he does not have any understanding at all, e.g., he is less than three, there is also no issur of בנו.

Gauze Soaked in Wine for Baby After Bris

36. Many mohelim give a baby after the bris gauze soaked in wine to calm him. The poskim discuss whether this may also be done on Shabbos. The baby sucks the absorbed wine out of the gauze, involving potential issurim of sechita [squeezing], dosh [threshing], and melabein [laundering]. Even though the baby is eight days old, a mohel may not feed or cause issur even to a day-old infant.
37. Thus, l'chatchila the mohel should try to use a pacifier or his finger dipped in wine. If this is not possible, in a pressing situation he may use red wine, not white, which does not involve any concern for laundering (מו"ר בשו"ת שבט הקהתי ח"ה סי' ס"ד). As far as the issur of mefareik [extracting], one may rely on the meikel poskim who allow feeding an issur d'rabanen for the purposes of the baby (שם ושו"ת מחזה אליהו ח"ג סי' נ"ו נ"ז).

Turning On a Baby Intercom Before Shabbos

38. The poskim discuss whether one may turn on a baby intercom/monitor before Shabbos in a baby's room so that when the baby cries, it will be heard in the parents' room. Setting this up causes the baby to make noise in a microphone on Shabbos—does this involve the issur of feeding assur food? (עי' תשובות) (הנהגות ח"א סי' ר"ל, הקטן והלכותיו פ"ט אות י"ז).
39. If there is a great need, we are meikel. When the baby cries, it is not considered like it is doing melacha; it cannot understand that its voice is heard via the microphone; and it is for the needs of the baby, who is considered a non-dangerously ill person. However, one should ensure the volume is low and cannot be heard outside due to a concern for noisemaking ["אוושא מילתא"] (שם). Similarly, when the parents enter the baby's room, they must be careful not to talk or make noise when moving things, opening closets, or the like, so as not to activate the microphone with their actions.

Feeding Baby Cereal

40. Some types of baby cereals involve concerns for the issur of losh [kneading] on Shabbos, e.g., when mixing milk into oatmeal. Similarly, pouring milk onto Weetabix involves a potential issur of losh (see Issue 351, par. 27, 33, and 34). However, one may put baby cereal, oatmeal, or Weetabix in a bowl with a bottle of milk next to it and let the child under three years old pour the milk himself. The child is doing it on his own for his enjoyment and is not capable of understanding that his actions involve melacha on Shabbos, and his parents do not need to stop him from doing this melacha.

Next Issue: Feeding a child milchigs after fleishigs, chinuch in various day-to-day and seasonal mitzvos

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