

The Essential Parent

Dear Parents,

This coming week in the elementary divisions, we will be embarking on a year-long co-curricular project entitled **Project Derech**. *Project Derech* features weekly lessons, stories and activities focused on *Kibud Av' V'eim*, including related areas such as respecting teachers, and in general acting properly and helping to create a *Kiddush Hashem*. Let's examine the importance and centrality of the *mitzvah* of honoring parents, and the absolutely integral role parents play not only in their nuclear family, but in the eternity of the Jewish Nation.

The Torah tells us that *Hashem* decided to reveal his plans for the destruction of *Sodom* to *Avraham Avinu* because: (Bereishis 18:19) כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו ושמרו דרך השם... "For I have loved him, because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem..." *Avrohom* is beloved to and trusted by *Hashem* because he will faithfully transmit the teachings of the Torah to the next generation. **One reveals his true values by what he teaches his children.** It is not enough to preach to others and act properly in public. What takes place in the home portrays the sincerity of the person's outside character. Not only does the child receive life from the parents but their chance for earning eternal reward after 120 years depends greatly on what values and priorities their parents have implanted in them. *Avrohom* could be absolutely entrusted with such a mission.

The foundational rationale behind the *Mitzvah* of *Kibud Av V'Eim* is gratitude (*Sefer HaChinuch* (*Mitzvah* 33)). Gratitude to one's parents for bringing him to life and gratitude for all their exertion on his behalf when he was young. This trait is so essential because it is the building block to feeling gratitude to *HaKodosh Baruch Hu* for the myriad kindnesses He bestows upon us daily. **The more a child can feel grateful to his parents, the more he can feel gratitude to Hashem,** which in turn will motivate him to appreciate and love *Hashem* and follow the path of Torah and *Mitzvos*.

This *mitzvah* of honoring and revering one's parents, both the parents' role and the children's role, are essential to all of *Yiddishkeit* and to ensuring the perpetuation of *Am Yisroel*. Children need to be taught and trained in how to feel and express gratitude. The laboratory for that process is in the home, in the relationship between child and parent. Commanding respect and honor from one's child is not something a parent can choose to do or not do -

it is a fundamental requirement and expectation of every parent, to imbue their children with a 'gratitude' attitude - first and foremost to them, the parents, and then by extension to others and ultimately, *Hashem*.

All this brings us to the point that parents cannot be passive observers or even merely cheer leaders in *Project Derech*. As the weeks and lessons unfold, the family will be integral to the success of the project. The children will learn a lesson in *Yeshiva* and can immediately put it into practice at home, with your help. **As uncomfortable as we may be in demanding respect from others, that is precisely what we need to do - not for our sake, but for our children's sake.**

The key to the effectiveness and success of the project is the parent. Accordingly, we will be presenting an evening for parents devoted to launching *Project Derech*. In addition to hearing more details about the parents' role in the project, we will have the honor and privilege of hearing from the renowned *Mashgiach*, author and lecturer - **HaRav Noach Orlowek, Shlita** who will speak on the topic of Raising Respectful Children. The event takes place this **Sunday evening, Nov. 5, 8:15 PM** at the Young Israel of Greater Miami (North Miami Beach) 990 NE 171st Street. KES fathers and mothers are urged to attend.

As we endure daily, the painful news out of *Eretz Yisrael*, we must continue to protect our children's sensitive eyes and ears from images and information that can indelibly damage their developing psyche. We hope this very worthy program of strengthening the parent-child bond through infusing our children with the ability to recognize and feel and demonstrate gratitude, will generate *zechusim* on behalf of *Acheinu Bnei Yisrael*. May this endeavor equip them to pass on our Torah to their children, and IY'H, we will be contributing in a unique way to the efforts of all *Klal Yisrael* to rise to our current challenge and help ensure the perpetuity of the Jewish people.

May our partnership and combined efforts bring peace and tranquility to our homes, our land and our people.

Have a peaceful Shabbos,



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