

## INSTILLING EMUNAH, BITACHON AND AVODAS HASHEM IN OUR CHILDREN

Question:

I have long believed that in today's world successful "*chinuch*" must not only provide book knowledge but also must instill foundations to children such as *emunah*, *bitachon*, and *avodas Hashem*. The school day is already quite long and the curriculum demanding. As a result, many schools are not able to emphasize these topics in school. It seems that no longer is it enough to learn about *Mitzvoths*; one must also learn why we do *mitzvohs*, and answer basic foundation questions for our children. My question is, what can I do, as a parent, to instill this knowledge in my children.

Answer:

We all know that *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* requires that every man teach his children - "*Ve'Shinantem LeVonecho*". Schools were created by Reb Yehoshua ben Gamla for children who had no fathers or their fathers were not able to teach them. As time went by, all children were included in these schools. The role of the school has now evolved to the point of being the sole educator of the child, and the home has become secondary in this process. The roles have been reversed.

In this modern age, where many parents are unable to assume the role of being *mechanech* their children because of lack of education and lack of religious observance, it is wonderful that the Yeshivas, Bais Yaakovs and Day Schools took over. However, many of our readers are parents who are *Bnei Torah* and are quite able to assume the role that was originally given to them by the *Torah*. But, because so much was expected of the schools in the teaching of all aspects of *chinuch*, such as textual accomplishments, *mitzvoh* observance, *emunah*, *bitachon*, *middos tovos* etc. parents shirked their own responsibility in the *chinuch* of their children and became "homework helpers" even in the *Torah* community.

I think that *emunach*, *bitachon*, and *middos* are not learned in a classroom setting; rather they are acquired by osmosis from parents. What a person learns from observing his parents, becomes part of his own makeup and personality. The schools take that personality and expand on it through the teaching of *Torah*.

I believe, that the way to help your son would be to improve yourself. That doesn't mean that you have to become a *Tzaddik* and the biggest *Maimin* overnight for your child to be able to emulate you. Let your son see you learn *Mesilos Yeshorim* or another *Mussar Sefer* or hear you speak and become involved with these subjects often. In other words show him that you are actively working to improve your own *emunah*, *bitachon* and *avodas Hashem*. Ultimately this will be a true example of your great will to grow in *Emunah* and *Yiras Shomayim*. Even though you may not reach great heights, your sincerity will be quite evident and your son will take that, incorporate it into his *yeshiva* studies and grow ten-fold. You might even send him the message in a stronger way by having a short *sefer* in *mussar* with him on a regular basis. This will create a beautiful partnership between the textual studies given in the *yeshiva* and the *middos*, *bitochon* and *emunah* learned at home.

The school can only work with and expand on what is sent to them from the home. The concept of the parent being the 'homework helper' must be replaced with the realization that the parent is the primary source of spiritual DNA.