

A Difficult Childhood – Rebbe Nachman's Remedies

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Reb Shimshon Barski was a descendant of Rebbe Nachman and was one of the leaders of the Breslov community in Uman, Ukraine until the 1930s. The Breslov Research Institute book [A Bit More Advice](#) is an English translation of his commentary on Rebbe Nachman's Likutey Eitzot.

We also have some of Rabbi Barski's letters. I'd like to share one with you. It's about anger and children. He writes:

To my dear son Nosson and Family,

Please tell me how my precious grandson, Yisrael, is, may he live a long, productive life.

Has he started cheder? Does he know the Alef-Beis and the

nekudos? Does the teacher teach him the blessings to say on the different types of food and drink?

Make sure to be gentle with him, no matter what. Don't frighten or scare the child in the least, no matter what. A child's mind is extremely sensitive, as you know, so it's totally unacceptable to scare a child or make him anxious on account of anything. This might, G-d forbid, cause something unfortunate to happen.

Likewise, tell his teacher not to show any anger or annoyance, or to frighten or worry the child. Whether he's teaching him the siddur, the blessings, or anything else, he should do it gently, without being angry or aggravated. Again, this is to prevent the child's mind from becoming crippled, G-d forbid.

No matter what, no excuses, make sure to do what I've outlined in this letter, and in His mercy, may Hashem help you to raise him and all your children up to Torah and mitzvos with holy success and pride.

Your father, Shimshon.

Reb Shimshon understood that to a child, anger can be very, very frightening and can even harm their development. What might seem to us as merely slightly abrupt or a bit gruff, can seem scary to a child. (That's not even mentioning the effect real anger has on a child.)

A child reflects the world back to them. To a child, everything that happens to them determines their self-worth.

So if we follow this advice, we know how to treat a child.

But what happens if you're an adult and you've been harmed in this way in your childhood, as so many have? What happens if you are struggling to overcome the deleterious effects of a difficult childhood, one where perhaps anger was exhibited a

lot towards you or around you?

Learning Rebbe Nachman's teachings and beginning to understand your self will help. Rebbe Nachman's teachings such as Azamra, will help you build your self-worth.

Also, beginning to build and strengthen your emunah and your awareness of Hashem, will help. The fact is, that if something happened in the past, it was Hashem's will. Now what we have to do is to assimilate it and move forward, and maybe even make sense of it or maybe not. Either way, Hashem to help you get over the difficult, painful moments in your childhood and life, and He will help you.

It may take time, but eventually you'll find that if you really pay attention and work through this issue, especially praying to Hashem to help you, the damaging effects of a difficult childhood can begin to fade into the background.

Now, of course there may be other things that you need to do to work through a difficult childhood. But don't leave out the spiritual piece. It's essential, it's central to healing.

May you have a day in which you feel strong and whole.

Today's mini-lesson is dedicated to Ana Bayla bas Golda.