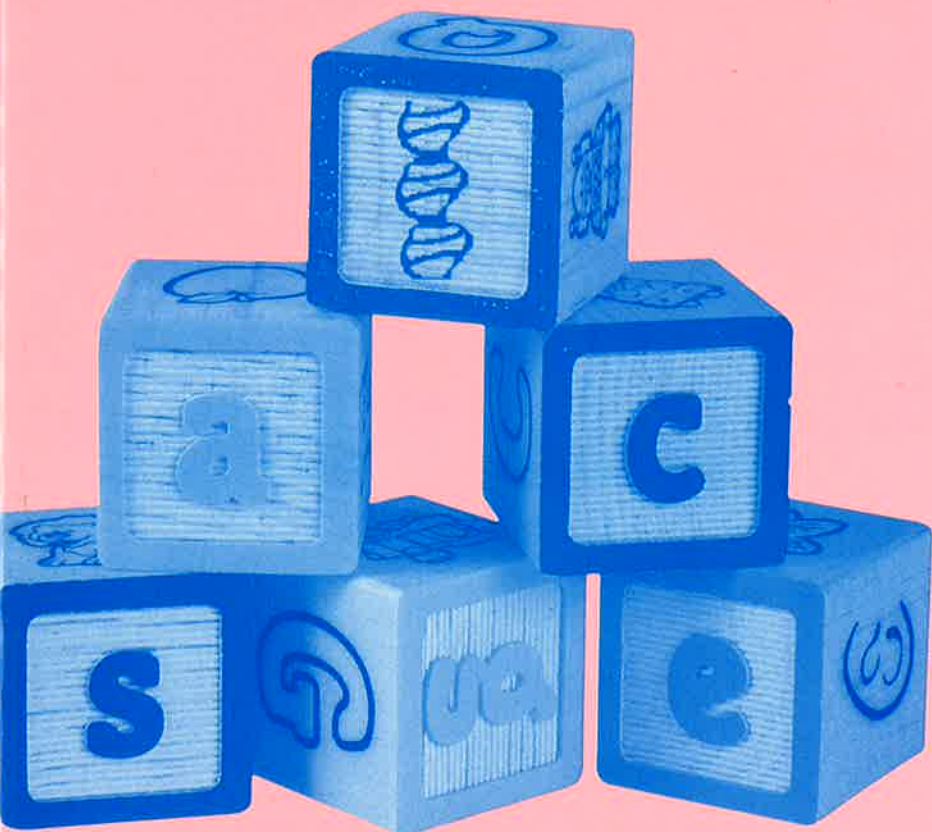


Nature or Nurture?



nature or nurture?



**MANY OF THE TOPICS INCLUDED
IN THE PARDES CURRICULUM
ARE FAR-REACHING AND HAVE
BROAD RAMIFICATIONS.
THE INTENT OF PARDES IS TO
PROMOTE SENSITIVITY AND
SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH
EXPOSURE TO A VARIETY OF
TORAH SOURCES.
IT IS NOT WITHIN THE PURVIEW
OF PARDES TO ARRIVE AT
CONCLUSIONS RELEVANT TO
DECISIONS OF HALACHA.
PLEASE CONSULT YOUR RABBI
FOR PERSONAL DECISIONS.**

Introduction

A while back, at a family simcha, I sat down with one of my cousins for a heart-to-heart discussion about Jewish education. We compared notes, children and schools. We expressed our deepest dreams for our children and how we might be able to turn those dreams into reality.

As he sipped his coffee and I chewed my danish, he made a statement that offended me nearly into shock. "All children are born different," he said, "to me the purpose of Jewish education is to train every child to be the same." I could feel the smoke coming out of my ears. How narrow can a person be? For me, the exact opposite has always been true. To a certain extent every child is born the same, or so it appears. The job of the educator is to bring out the unique, individual qualities of each child. When G-d created the world, He made no two creations identical. That would be a waste. Each blade of grass, and certainly each person, has a unique purpose and task in this world. I want each one of my children to be able to make his or her unique contribution.

I left that encounter with my cousin feeling frustrated, yet very thoughtful. I started to think about the schools I chose for my children. I started to think about my friends and colleagues and their choices. Why do we make the choices that we make? Why do we choose the schools, friends and neighborhoods that we live in? Isn't it because we want to teach by example? Isn't it because essentially all children are born different and we want to make sure they end up more or less like us? I was frightened by my own hypocrisy! And yet I couldn't think of anyone who didn't want his or her children to emulate their own lifestyle, meet their expectations and fulfill their dreams.

What is the alternative? If we let our children do their own thing from the beginning, does that imply that we don't care? How can loving parents encourage their children to fend for themselves emotionally and find their own path to happiness without any guidance? Doesn't that border on abusive behavior? How do we, as parents, find the right balance between wanting to help our children fulfill their potential and letting them blaze their own trails?

This Pardes was written to help us find that balance.

Rabbi Yaacov Haber

How would you respond?

1 Your brilliant eighth grader is applying to high school. The available yeshiva high school has a weak secular studies department, and your daughter is hoping to apply to Ivy League universities. An acceptance letter has arrived from an exclusive secular, private school, which has also accepted two of her closest friends who are eager to attend the private school and who plan to supplement their education by attending a Judaic studies program several nights a week. How do you prioritize your daughter's education?

2 His obsession with sports is no longer cute. When your son was nine, he spent every free moment either on the ball field or devouring sports magazines. Now, at sixteen, he still thrives only in athletics. While his standardized test scores indicate that he is clearly bright and capable, your son's grades are consistently mediocre, and his social experience appears to be limited to playing, talking or watching sports. You fret that he is compromising his academic future and, more significantly, stifling his intellectual, spiritual and social growth. His friends are planning to attend a summer tour to Europe, but your son resists your encouragement to enroll since his summer plans are only to improve his jump shot. What would you do?

3 After returning from a summer program in Israel, your tenth grade child is excited and eager to begin the new school year. As the academic year progresses, you note that your child has dropped various extra curricular activities still pursued by others in the class, and has assumed an intense, almost obsessive, interest in religious studies. While you, of course, admire, the intellectual and academic progress that your child is exhibiting, you are concerned that your child may become too narrowly focused, and may miss out on experiences necessary for a teenager's development into a well-rounded adult. When your child asks if he or she can attend a kollel (Jewish studies) seminar during winter break, rather than join the family's trip to the Islands, you wonder whether granting the request may be letting things go too far.

It is customary to recite the following prayer before entering into a Torah discussion.

Shulchan Aruch O.H. 110

בדבר יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי ואלקי אבותי שלא יארע דבר תקלה על ידי ולא אכשל הלכה וישמחו בי חברי ולא אומר על טמא טהור ולא על טהור טמא ולא על מותר אסור ולא על אסור מותר ולא יכשלו חברי בדבר הלכה ואשמח בהם. כי ה' יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ותבונה. גל עיני ואביטה נפלאות מתורתך.

May it be Your will, Hashem my G-d and G-d of my fathers, that You illuminate my eyes with the light of your Torah and that You save me from all stumbling blocks and errors, whether it be in discussions of what is prohibited and what is permitted or in monetary matters, whether it be in any other Halachic decisions or just in theoretical study. I pray that I do not make any mistakes, and if I do, my study partners should not take delight in them. I pray that I should not proclaim the impure pure or the pure impure, the permitted forbidden or the forbidden permitted. I pray that I should not derive joy from the errors of my study partner. Open my eyes and allow me to see the wonders of Your Torah because it is from G-d that all wisdom comes forth, it is from His mouth that I will acquire wisdom and understanding. Amen.

Discussion Points

1 Learning begins when a child becomes educable, personality development starts when the child is born, spirituality begins at conception.

Rabbi A.Y. Kook; Midos Raya, emuna 1 Biography, p. 12

2 *The son of a good family who stole apples from a cart did not become a thief overnight. The deed has its roots in previous generations. Perhaps his very pious grandfather hid behind the bimah of the synagogue in the name of humility, but the act contained a trace of deception because he was acting more pious than he really was. His scholarly son went a step further and "stole" chidushei Torah (plagiarized) from other scholars by reciting them in his own name. The grandson, in turn, became an apple thief.*

Rabbi Noson Tzvi Finkel, the Alter of Slabodka quoted in the introduction to A Letter for the Ages; Igeret HaRamban, Artsroll

3 *"Train each child according to his own way, and even when he is old, he will not depart from it."*

Mishle, 22:6 Source, p. 17

4 *"The Children (Esau and Jacob) clashed inside her (Rebecca)."*

Genesis 25:22 Source, p. 18

4a Everything in the world is drawn after its nature. Thus, even while Jacob and Esau were still in the womb, they were drawn after their temperaments. When Rebecca would walk past a study-hall, Jacob would press to come out, and when she would pass by a temple of idolatry, Esau would struggle to emerge. There were no bad intentions on Esau's part. He was merely being drawn after his nature.

Maharal of Prague, Gur Aryeh on Genesis 25:22 Source, p. 18 Biography, p. 15

5 *"The boys grew up; Esau became a skilled trapper, a man of the field and a Jacob was a scholarly man who remained with the tents."*

Genesis 25:27 Source, p. 19

5a The striking contrast in the grandchildren of Abraham may not have been due to a difference in their temperaments, but to mistakes that were made in their upbringing. As long as they were little, no attention was paid to the latent differences in their natures, both had exactly the same teaching and educational treatment, and the great law of education "*educate each child according to his own way*," was forgotten - that each child must be treated differently, with an eye to the slumbering tendencies of his nature... The attributes of strength and courage are no less important before G-d than the ability to think lofty thoughts and have fine feelings. Every person, in the most varied ways of his callings, is to achieve the one great common task of life.

Each child must be brought up in the path of life to which his tendencies lead, each person must approach the one great goal differently. To try to bring up a Jacob and an Esau in the same college, make them have the same habits and hobbies, and to teach and educate them in the same way for some studious, sedate, meditative life is the surest way to court disaster. A Jacob will, with ever increasing zeal, imbibe knowledge from the well of wisdom and truth, whereas an Esau can hardly wait for the time when he can throw away the old books, and with it, a whole purpose of life, for he has only learnt to know life from one angle, and in a manner for which he can find no relation to his soul.

Had Isaac and Rebecca studied Esau's nature and character early enough, and asked themselves how can even an Esau—with all that strength and energy, agility and courage that lies slumbering in this child—be won over to be used in the service of G-d, then Jacob and Esau, with their totally different natures could still have remained twin-brothers in spirit and life. Esau's "sword" and Jacob's "spirit" could have worked hand in hand, and how different all of history might have turned out. But, as it was, only when the boys had grown into men, one was surprised to see that, out of the very same womb, having exactly the same care, training and schooling, two such contrasting people emerge.

R. Shimshon Rafael Hirsch, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis 25:27 Biography, p. 14

6 *"If a man will have a wayward and rebellious son... his father and mother shall take him to the elders of the city and say 'THIS son of ours is rebellious'... All the men of his city shall pelt him with stones."*

Deuteronomy 21:20 Source, p. 19

6a The Talmud derives from the word THIS 'Zeh' that the parents must be able to clearly see and point with their fingers to identify the child who has been giving them the trouble.

Why is it that the law of the Wayward Son does not apply to blind parents? The answer is that if the parents are blind, they cannot see what their son really needs. They will not be able to customize the education and upbringing that they provide for him based on his unique and particular qualities. There is no one way to raise children. Raising children is the most specialized field in the world. That which is good for the first child is not necessarily good for the second child. If, unfortunately, the parents cannot see the child, then, unfortunately, the education that they provide will not be based on first-hand observations.

Such a child cannot be found guilty as a Wayward Son, since he is not fully responsible for his situation - there were extenuating circumstances in his upbringing.

Rabbi Zev Leff quoted in a lecture by Rabbi Yissaschar Frand

7 *"The spirit of man's heart is evil from his youth."*

Genesis 8:21 Source, p. 20

8 *"Man is born a wild ass."*

Job 11:12 Source, p. 20

9 It is impossible for a person to change his nature; however, he can use his inborn traits to become good, evil, or just ordinary. The Talmud states that a person born under the influence of Mars will be inclined to bloodshed, he will become either a mohel (a ritual circumciser), a butcher, or a criminal; for though his inclination is given, he is free to apply it as he chooses, whether for good or for bad. If you teach each child how to serve G-d using his own particular strengths, then even when he gets old, he will not leave it. However, if you try to force upon him a foreign mode of behavior, he may listen to you when he is young, out of fear, but when he grows up and becomes independent, he will throw away and rebel against the mode of life that was thrust upon him.

R. Eliyahu of Vilna, Mishle, 22:6 Source, p. 21 Biography, p. 13

10 There are two aspects to the task of education. One is to accustom a person from his youth to strive for perfection — in his understanding, his deeds, and his emotions. For the training you give a person when he is young becomes part of his very essence, and will not leave him even in his old age; whereas things a person learns when he is older do not go deep, and will not remain with him as he ages.

The second is to recognize that every person has a different potential, according to his nature. Intellectually, some people have quick minds, whereas others may be slower, yet clearer in their thinking. Each one must be taught according to his nature. Some people are gifted in certain areas of livelihood, and will grasp it quickly. The same is true regarding character traits.

A young person's natural inclination is recognizable according to his desires, and according to the efforts he himself makes in a given direction, and that is what you must teach him. Then, "even when he is old, he will not depart from it." That is not the case, however, if you train him in a way that is foreign to him.

Malbim, Mishle 22:6 Source, p. 21 Biography, p. 14

11 There are psychologists who think that a person is born without any natural inclinations at all, that a child is completely influenced by his surroundings. But that is incorrect. Even a fetus can have an instinct for evil, though he lacks all thought and consciousness. The particular traits of each person are born with him. Of course, the surroundings do have an influence; however one's main traits are not learned, but inherent.

R. Eliyahu Dessler, Michtav m'Eliyahu, Vol. 3. Pg.360 Source, p. 22-23 Biography, p. 13

12 A teacher is like a gardener in the garden of G-d, assigned to cultivate it and protect it. Even if some of the children seem rebellious or have flawed character traits, the teacher must know that this is the nature of "soul seeds" and unripe fruit; they taste bitter while they are ripening and are filled with nectar when they mature. Neither a particular quality nor the nature of a Jewish child is absolutely evil... What we have to know is how these qualities should be used and help them grow.

Take as an example a student who is very stubborn—this is a flaw in his character. His teacher may suffer greatly because of this. Even so, the teacher should realize that when this child matures and receives the yoke of Torah and service to G-d, he will perform all of his service to G-d with stubbornness and sacrifice. He will not be frivolous or vacillate; rather, in all areas of Judaism, he will be as strong as the wall of a fortress.

Therefore, if a teacher or a father sees a child with an angry character, it is true that the child's expression of anger at this time is very bad. However, is it possible to decide that because of this his root is bitter and corrupt and that this nature is of an inferior quality? ...

Is it possible to predict in advance the great benefit that can be realized through the efforts of the principal and teacher, from the very anger of this angry child? When one can penetrate into his inner soul and bring him close and ignite his heart and soul so that they are totally dedicated to G-d, his anger will be transformed to a fire from above. All of his acts of service to G-d that he will perform will burn like fiery coals, and all of his words that he will speak to G-d, in Torah and in prayer, will thunder from a voice of fire.

Rabbi Schneuer Zalman, the author of the Tanya, explains this concept in his commentary on the Siddur, as follow: The heat that is in anger often stems from the heat of the heart. Any person who is hot-tempered by nature is naturally inclined to be ignited with fiery flames of desire for G-d.

Rabbi Kalman Klonymus Shapiro; Chovos HaTalmidim pg.10 Biography, p. 16

13 A young pumpkin is known by it's shaft. (The future scholar is recognized by his utterings in childhood. Ed.)

Brochos 48a Source, p. 23

14 Q. My children act so immature. Is that normal?
A. We expect too much from our children. Many of us have gone through hardships in life and we expect our children to act older than their age. Let them enjoy life and play around. Don't take the child's behavior too seriously and expect him to be what you are today. I myself was a somewhat mischievous boy. It does not reflect a fault in the child's character. As children grow up, they mature and settle down.

Rabbi Chaim Pinchus Scheinberg; Heart to Heart Talks pg. 143

Biographies

Rabbi Abraham Yitzchak Kook (1865–1935)

The first chief rabbi of what was then Palestine, Rabbi Kook was perhaps the most misunderstood figure of his time.

Born in Latvia of staunch Hasidic and Mitnagdic stock, he retained throughout his life a unique blend of the mystical and the rational. He was a thorough master of the entire Halachic, Midrashic, philosophic, ethical, and Kabbalistic literature. But more important, he brought to bear the entire tradition upon the contemporary scene. He saw the return to Eretz Yisrael as not merely a political phenomenon to save Jews from persecution, but an event of extraordinary historical and theological significance. Rabbi Hutner once said that Rav Kook peered down on our world from great heights and hence his perspective was unique.

Above all, Rav Kook pulsated with a sense of the Divine. And, he sought to reach those who had strayed. He once quoted the rabbinic dictum that one should embrace with the right hand and rebuff with the left and commented that he was fully capable of rejecting, but since there were enough rejecters, he was fulfilling the role of embracer. On the other hand, he was never tolerant of desecration of Torah, as will be clear to any objective student of his life and works.

Though keenly aware of the huge numbers of non-observant Jews, he had a vision of the repentance of the nation. His concept of repentance envisioned in addition to the repentance of the individual, a repentance of the nation as a whole; a repentance which would be joyous and healing. He refused to reject Jews as long as they identified themselves as Jews. In a noteworthy exchange with his great friend, admirer, and opponent, Rabbi Yaakov David Willowski, Rav Kook explained the two components of a Jew: his essential nature — the *pintele yid*, and the path he had chosen in exercising free will. Even if the second element were weak, as long as the first was not repudiated, there was still hope.

He called for and envisioned a spiritual renaissance where “the ancient would be renewed and the new would be sanctified.” His vision of repentance disdained fear and apprehension and looked forward to “the poet of Teshuva, who would be the poet of life, the poet of renewal and the poet of the national soul waiting to be redeemed.”

Perhaps he was that poet.

Rav Kook’s printed works to date are in excess of 30 volumes with many works still in manuscript. There are a number of translations into English of a small fraction of his works. **M.G.**

Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (1891-1954)

Rabbi Dessler was born into a family steeped in the musar movement founded by Rabbi Israel Salanter and he remained a musar personality for his entire life. However, his thought went considerably beyond the ordinary concerns of other musar thinkers and he integrated other systems and confronted different problems as well.

Most of Rabbi Dessler’s education took place at the Kelm Talmud Torah where his father had been an outstanding disciple of R. Simcha Zissel. The family resided in Homel where Eliyahu had the opportunity to meet outstanding Chabad thinkers. In 1929, he became a rabbi in London and in 1941 accepted the directorship of the Gateshead kollel. Over the years, he became familiar with Kabbalistic and Hasidic thought, particularly the thought of Rabbi Zadok HaCohen and the Tanya.

His essays and letters have been collected in four volumes (several volumes under the title *Strive for Truth* have been edited and translated into English by Rabbi Aryeh Carmel). His topics include perennial questions such as free will and faith as well as contemporary problems in education, evolution and how to respond to the Holocaust.

His personal character and modesty complemented and affirmed his thought. On the last Sukkot of his life he visited the sukkah of the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish, upon seeing Rabbi Dessler, rose and rushed toward him. Not imagining that he was coming toward him, Rabbi Dessler turned to the door to see who the distinguished guest was that the Chazon Ish was so honoring. **M.G.**

The Vilna Gaon (1720-1797)

Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, also known as Ha-Gra, was the foremost scholar-sage of Lithuanian Jewry in the eighteenth-century, and has become the spiritual forefather for much of the non-Chassidic yeshiva world. Known for his greatness in Talmudic and Kabbalistic study, he likewise mastered astronomy, mathematics and music. His system of Talmudic study focused on trying to find the true meaning intended by the sages in the text. The Gra was a fiercely outspoken opponent of Chassidism, fearing the movement would erode the centrality of Torah learning in Judaism, and was pivotal in galvanizing the split between the Chassidic and non-Chassidic world. **M.G.**

R' Samson Rafael Hirsch (1808-1888)

The father of modern German Orthodoxy, he was a fiery leader, brilliant writer, and profound educator. His greatness as a Talmudic scholar was obscured by his other monumental accomplishments. After becoming chief rabbi and member of Parliament in Bohemia and Moravia, he left to revitalize Torah Judaism in Frankfortam-Main which he transformed into a Torah bastion. His best known works are the classic six-volume Commentary on Chumash, noted for its tribution was his formulation of a self contained system of Jewish thought.

R' Meir Leibush, Malbim (1809-1879)

Rav and Biblical commentator (1809-1879), Malbim is an acronym of his name Meir Leibush ben Yechiel Michel.

He was born in Volhynia and was still a child when his father died. he studied in his native town until the age of 13. He then went to Warsaw where he was known as the 'iluy (prodigy) from Volhynia.' He was Rav of several cities but he suffered much presecution beacuse of his uncompromising stand against Reform, leading even to a brief imprisonment on a false accusation. He wandered much of his life, serving as Rav in various cities for several years at a time-even serving for a short while as chief Rabbi of Rumania.

His fame and immense popularity rests upon his widely esteemed commentary to the Bible. His first published commentary was on Megillas Esther(1845). His commentary to the remaining books of the Bible were published between then and 1876.

His commentary on the Bible (as the author sets forth in his introduction to Isaiah) is based upon three fixed principles: in the text of the Torah and the figurative language of the prophets there are no more synonyms repetitions; profound and brilliant philosophical approach to Biblical commentary, his similar Commentary to Psalms, and Horeb, a philosophical analysis of the mitzvos.

Rabbi Judah Loew, The Maharal of Prague (1525-1609)

The Maharal was one of the most seminal thinkers in the post-medieval period. He developed an entirely new approach to the aggada of the Talmud and it is likely that no previous author devoted so much space to the interpretation of the non-halachic thought of the rabbis of the Talmud. He was held in great esteem by his contemporaries and has had a profound impact on all streams of Judaism. Rabbi Kook stated that the "Maharal was the father of the approach of the Gaon of Vilna on the one hand, and of the father of Chasidut, on the other hand". He has been described as a Kabbalist who wrote in philosophic garb.

The Maharal castigated the educational methods of his day where boys were taught at a very young age and insisted that children must be taught in accordance with their intellectual maturity. Thus, Talmud and certainly Tosafot should be introduced only when the child is developmentally capable of fully comprehending what is being taught. He recommended that the system proposed in Pirkei Avot be followed.

One of his leading disciples was R. Yom Tov Heller, author of the classic mishnaic commentary, Tosafot Yom Tov, who, in his introduction informs us that the Maharal greatly encouraged group study of the Mishna. Maharal may have been the founder of Chevra Mishnayot.

The Maharal was one of the staunch defenders of the tradition and of the undisputed wisdom of Chazal and wrote a critique of Azriah de'Rossi's Me'or Einayim. At the same time, he was fully conversant with the scientific knowledge of his time as well as friendly with some of the contemporary eminent scientists. His disciple, David Ganz, worked in the observatory of Tycho Brahe, the distinguished astronomer.

His works include a major commentary on Rashi's commentary on the Pentateuch, volumes on Passover in all its facets, on exile and redemption, on Torah, on Pirkei Avot, on drashot chazal and on development of character.

The Maharal was held in esteem by Jew and non-Jew alike and was summoned for an interview with Emperor Rudolph II, though the subject of the interview is still the subject of speculation.

At one time it seemed that the Maharal was best known for a fictitious creation, that of a golem. However, with the passage of time it seems that his true enduring creations have become an integral part of the intellectual and spiritual heritage of the Jewish people. **M.G.**

ספר בראשית פרק כה

יט) ואלה תולדת יצחק בן אברהם אברהם הוליד את יצחק:
 כ) וזיהי יצחק בן ארבעים שנה בקחתו את רבקה בת בתואל הארמי
 מפדן ארם אחות לבן הארמי לו לאשה:
 כא) ויצטר יצחק ליחנה לנכח אשתו כי עקרה הוא ויצטר לו יחנה
 ופתר רבקה אשתו:

כב) ויתרצו הבנים בקרבה ותאמר אם בן למה זה אנכי ותלך לדרש

את יחנה:

כג) ויאמר יחנה לה שני גינים וגו' } בבטנה ושני לאמים ממעיד
 יפרדו ולאם מלאם נאמץ ורב יעבד צעיר:
 כד) וימלאו נמיה ללדת ונהגה תומם בבטנה:
 כה) ויצא הראשון אדמוני פלו כאדרת שער ויקראו שמו עשו:
 כו) ואחרי כן יצא אחיו וידו אחזת בעקב עשו ויקרא שמו יעקב
 ויצחק בן ששים שנה בלדת אתם:

כז) ויגדלו הנערים ויהי עשו איש ידע ציד איש עדה ויעקב איש תם

ישב אהלים:

כה) ויאסב יצחק את עשו כי ציד בפיו ורבקה אהבת את יעקב:
 כט) וינזד יעקב נזיד ונבא עשו מן השדה והוא עיף:

ספר גור אריה על בראשית - פרק כה פסוק כב

כה) ועשו מפרכס לצאת. שלשון "ויתרוצו" לשון ריצה, שזה רץ לכאן
 וזה רץ לכאן, ומפני שכתוב בב' צד"י דריש ב' ריצות. ואם תאמר
 לפירוש זה שהיה עשו מפרכס לצאת, וחלא אין היצר הרע באדם אלא
 מעת שנולד, שנאמר "לפתח חטאת רובץ", ולקמן פירש רש"י 'מן
 המעיים הם נפרדים זה לרשעו וזה לתומו', ולא בעודם בבטן, ונראה
 דהיינו דוקא שאין האדם חוטא ביצר הרע להיות מתאוה לחטוא קודם
 שנולד, שאין יצר הרע בא אלא אחר הלידה, והטעם ידוע למשכיל, אבל
 כאן מה שעשה עשו לא בשביל יצרו, אלא מפני שהיה עשו רוצה לצאת
 לשוב אל מינו וטבעו, שכל דבר ודבר מתעורר אל טבעו, לפיכך כשבא
 יעקב לבתי מדרשות היה מתעורר אל רוח הקודש, ומתעורר לצאת
 בטבעו, וכן עשו כאשר היתה באה לפניו עבודה זרה, ולא משום
 יצרו הרע. עיין בפרשת נח נתבאר זה היטב אצל "כי יצר לב האדם
 רע מילדותו":

ספר בראשית פרק כה

יט) ואלה תולדת יצחק בן אברהם אברהם הוליד את יצחק:
 כ) וזיהי יצחק בן ארבעים שנה בקחתו את רבקה בת בתואל הארמי
 מפדן ארם אחות לבן הארמי לו לאשה:
 כא) ויצטר יצחק ליחנה לנכח אשתו כי עקרה הוא ויצטר לו יחנה
 ופתר רבקה אשתו:

כב) ויתרצו הבנים בקרבה ותאמר אם בן למה זה אנכי ותלך לדרש

את יחנה:

כג) ויאמר יחנה לה שני גינים וגו' } בבטנה ושני לאמים ממעיד
 יפרדו ולאם מלאם נאמץ ורב יעבד צעיר:
 כד) וימלאו נמיה ללדת ונהגה תומם בבטנה:
 כה) ויצא הראשון אדמוני פלו כאדרת שער ויקראו שמו עשו:
 כו) ואחרי כן יצא אחיו וידו אחזת בעקב עשו ויקרא שמו יעקב
 ויצחק בן ששים שנה בלדת אתם:

כז) ויגדלו הנערים ויהי עשו איש ידע ציד איש עדה ויעקב איש תם

ישב אהלים:

כה) ויאסב יצחק את עשו כי ציד בפיו ורבקה אהבת את יעקב:
 כט) וינזד יעקב נזיד ונבא עשו מן השדה והוא עיף:

ספר דברים פרק כא

יח) כי נהנה לאיש בן סורר ומרד איננו שמע בקול אביו ובקול אמו
 ויטרו אתו ולא ישמע אליהם:
 יט) ותפשו בו אביו ואמו והוציאו אתו אל זקני עירו ואל שער
 מקמו:
 כ) ויאמרו אל זקני עירו בננו זה סורר ומרד איננו שמע בקולנו
 וזלל וסבא:
 כא) וינמחו כל אנשי עירו באבנים ומת ובערת הרע משךך וכל ישראל
 ישמעו וייראו:

ספר בראשית פרק ח

כא) וַיִּרְחַק יְהוָה אֶת רִיחַ סַיְחָם וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל לְבֹן לֹא אֶסְפָּק לְקַלֵּל עוֹד אֶת הָאָדָמָה בְּעִבְרַת הָאָדָם כִּי יֵאָר לֵב הָאָדָם רַע מִנְעֻרָיו וְלֹא אֶסְפָּק עוֹד לְהַכּוֹת אֶת קֶל מִי כִּפְאֶשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי:

ספר איוב פרק יא

יא) כִּי הוּא יָדַע מִתֵּי שְׂוֵא וַיִּרְא אֵן וְלֹא יִתְבּוֹנֵן:
 יב) וְאִישׁ נָבוֹב יִלְכֵב וְעִיר פְּרָא אָדָם יוֹלֵד:
 יג) אִם אֶתָּה תִּכְיִנּוֹת לִבִּי וּפְרִשְׁתָּ אֵלָיו כְּפָף:
 יד) אִם אֵן בְּיָדְךָ תִּרְמִיקָהוּ וְאֵל תִּשְׁכֹּן בְּאַהֲלֶיךָ עוֹלָח:

ו) חנך לנער קל מי דרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה. „חנוך לנער“ כשהוא עוד נער ואז גם כשיזקין „לא יסור ממנה“. והענין: כי האדם אי אפשר לו לשבור דרכו, כלומר מזלו, שנולד בו כמו שאמרו²⁶: האי מאן דבצדק יהיה גבר צדקן כו'. אלא שניתנה הבחירה ביד האדם שיוכל לאחוז במזלו ולהעמידו כפי שירצה, — או צדיק או רשע או בינוני וכמו שאמרו במסכת שבת²⁸: האי מאן דבמאדים יהי גבר אשיד דמא (שופך דמים) אמר רב אשי אי אומנא (מקין דם) אי גבא (ליסטים) אי טבחא אי מוהלא. וזכר אלו השלשה, לפי שמולו מורה שיהיה שופך דמים, אך בבחירת יוכל לבחור באלו השלשה: 'אי מוהלא' והוא צדיק שעושה מצות עשה. 'אי טבחא' הוא בינוני, 'אי ליסטים', והוא רשע שופך דמים כמשמעו. וזה שאמרו²⁹: שאול באחת ולא עלתה לו, דוד בשתים ועלתה לו. והענין הוא: כי בדוד נאמר³⁰ 'זהו אדמוני' והוא במאדים, ולכך טעה בו שמואל בעת שראה קלסתר פניו, והוא העביר מדותיו בכל. ואף שאלו השנים לא העביר, מכל מקום עלתה לו כמו שאמרו³¹: כל המעביר על מדותיו כו'. ודוד הרבה להעביר על מדותיו, מה שאין כן שאול שאמרו³²: בן שנה שאול כו' כבן שנה שלא טעם טעם חטא. והוא העביר מדתו הטובה לרעה בדבר אחד, ולכן אף באחד לא עלתה לו. וזה שנאמר „חנוך לנער על פי דרכו“ — לפי דרך מזלו וטבעו ותחנכהו ותדריכהו לעשות מצות, ואז גם כאשר „יזקין לא יסור ממנה“, אבל כשאתה מכריחו נגד טבעו, עתה ישמע לך, מיראתו אותך, אבל אחר כך בעת יוסר עולך מעל צוארו יסור מזה, כי אי אפשר לו לשבר מזלו.

הרשיון, ולכן שומר נפשו ירחק מן הקצוות וילך בדרך הישר הממוצע: (ו) חנוך לנער אליה, שאו לא יסור ממנה גם כי יזקין, לא על פי דרכו, מצוה ב' דברים, אן שיהנכו את הנער, והוא שירגילו מעוריו אל השלמות אם בדעות, אם במעשים ובמדות, כי ההרגל שירגל בעוריו, יעשו בו חקיו עצום ורועם שמור בנפש לא יסור גם לעת זקנה. לא כן החינוך שיונחך בגולתו אין החקיו קבוצ בנפש, וימשו כמנו לעת זקנתו, בן מצוה שיהיה החינוך ע"פ דרכו כי כל אדם מסוגל מטבעו לענין אחר, בין בדעות יש שמוחם זה. ויש ששכלם ישר בלתי מחדד, וצריך ללמדם כפי התכונה שנמצא בו, ובין במעשים, יש שמוכן לאומנות מיוחדת, ולמה מיוחדת, ויכל אהיה בקל, והו יזכר בנער לפי התשוקה, ולפי מה שמתחיל בעצמו באיזה דבר מיוחד, צריך לתנו לפי

דרכו ולפי הרשמים שיש בו אל מה שהוא מוכן אליה, שאו לא יסור ממנה גם כי יזקין, לא כן אם יתנכו אל מה שהוא זולת טבעו: (ז-ט) עשיר ברבים ישול וכו' זוהי עולה וכו', טוב עין וכו', נודע מקורות העמים כי בימי קדם היו העשירים מלומדים מלומדים להדלים כרבות: היה חקם כשלא היה לו שלום היה לו רשות לקחת אותו ואת אשתו ובניו לעבדים ולרדות בו בשבת ברצונו. והיו העשירים מלומדים להדלים ועל ידי הרבית התמוטטו לגמרי ונעשו רשעים. שורש גרוע מן הדל שהיה החולדל מנכסיו ולרש אין כל, הוא נעשו לו עבדים, אבל עייב התעורר כפעם בפעם מרידה מן העם הלויים, והיו הורגים את העשירים ועושים בהם נקמת גדולות, עד שעייב וזכרו השרים כים להקים חק לחותר את האבות או לשלמם מכיס המדינה להשקט המרד.

