



Parshas Yisro 5764

February 13, '04
Volume III Issue 17

Am I obliged to make sure that my child hears havdalah?

Chinuch – education is a serious matter and parents are obliged to educate their children from a young age in the ways of the Torah. The *Mishan Berura* writes¹ that there is no set age for *chinuch* because each child must be educated according to his individual comprehension. If a child is aware of the Shabbos he must listen to *kiddush* and *havdalah*. This probably means that the child realizes that *Hashem* created the world and rested on the 7th day and hence Shabbos is different from other days.² It does not suffice that the child knows how to say *gut Shabbos*, because a 2 year old can also say *gut Shabbos* but it is meaningless to him. Accordingly, before commencing with the Shabbos meal, the parents must make sure that children of the appropriate age are present to listen to the *kiddush*.

What if havdalah is late at night?

One must not forget that a child is only a child and their education for *mitzvos* must be suited to their capabilities and limitations. In

many northern European countries, during the winter months, it becomes dark very late and as a result *havdalah* is recited late at night. Obviously we do not expect and demand that children remain awake late at night in order to hear *havdalah*, nor should we wake them for that purpose.³ At their young age, when they are normally asleep they may be excluded from *mitzvos* at this stage of their development.

We would not be wrong in saying that children only need to be educated during the hours when they are awake. If a certain *mitzvah* only occurs when they are sleeping they are not ready to be educated for that *mitzvah*.⁴

Children of an older age such as 11 or 12, who are often awake when the occasion demands, must be awake for *kiddush* and *havdalah* as well, as the importance of the *mitzvah* is a part of *chinuch*.

There are however other opinions regarding this matter and one is advised to seek guidance from one's rav.

Must the child then hear havdalah on Sunday morning?

¹ M"B *simon* 343:3.

² I say this for two reasons. A) the M"B says that the child knows about the ענין of Shabbos, not merely that today is Shabbos. B) The M"B continues with the issue of Torah prohibitions and says that when a child understands that something is forbidden one must educate him and tell him that it is *assur*. This implies that for positive *mitzvos* it is a much deeper comprehension.

³ Heard in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל.

⁴ Even though the M"B in *hilchos k'rias sh'ma simon* 70:6 writes that a child of the age of *chinuch* must be taught to read the *sh'ma on time*, it does not necessarily mean that he should be woken in order to say the *sh'ma*, it could mean that if he is awake he must say the *sh'ma*.

I assume you mean that since the *halacha* says that when one did not or could not recite *havdalah* after Shabbos one must recite it on Sunday morning as compensation.⁵ In this case, since a child is exempt from the actual *mitzvah*, which is on *motzei Shabbos*, he is possibly exempt from the compensation on Sunday morning.⁶ The opinions of this *halacha* vary as well.

Are children permitted to eat before Kiddush?

This *halacha* is discussed by the *poskim* in reference to the practice of reciting the *kiddush* in shul on Friday night.⁷ Adults may not drink the wine because they do not intend eating after the *kiddush* and it is akin to eating before *kiddush*, but the accepted practice is to give the wine to children. The question is whether it should be *ossur* because they are not eating either.⁸ The *Magen Avraham* offers several answers to this question. One of the answers is that since food and drink are necessary for a child's growth and welfare, *Chazal* did not implement any *g'zeiros* that could inhibit his growth. A child may therefore eat and drink before *kiddush* even though an adult is prohibited from doing so. All the more reason for them eating before *kiddush* on Shabbos morning and not waiting for the father to return from shul. The *Magen Avraham* adds another point and says that children must not be made to fast and go hungry.

Why then must I prevent him from eating non-kosher food? Is it not a matter of growth etc.?

The *Magen Avraham* himself answers this saying that we make a distinction between

prohibited food and food at a prohibited time. In addition, non-kosher food is not part of a child's growth and is contrary to his welfare unlike kosher food which is necessary for his welfare and as such was not limited to a time factor. He proves this from the fact that young children are not 'taught' to fast even for a short time on Yom Kippur.⁹

Vort on the Parsha

Yisro was awarded a section of the Torah to be named in his honor, the *parsha* of "וְאַתָּה תִּחְזֶה", where he advised Moshe how to set up courts of law. In actual fact though, Yisro began speaking with the words "לֹא טוֹב", you are not doing the correct thing by judging the *B'nei Yisroel* on your own, so why does *Rashi* say that Yisro was awarded with the *parsha* וְאַתָּה תִּחְזֶה, which only begins later? The answer is that to say that one is doing the wrong thing is easy and anyone can do that. One is not awarded a *parsha* for saying that one is doing the wrong thing. One is awarded a *parsha* for offering sound advice, and that only began from the words "וְאַתָּה תִּחְזֶה".

Food For Thought

May one hire a gentile worker on Shabbos?

What if I make up with him to only come after Shabbos?

Is one permitted to instruct a gentile before Shabbos to perform a melacha on Shabbos?

What if I only hint?

Answers coming next week.

⁵ See *simon* 299:6.

⁶⁶ שו"ת קנין תורה ח"ה סי' כ"ח.

⁷ *Simon* 269:1.

⁸ The *M" A* 269:1 poses this question.

⁹ As written in *simon* 616:2 – *Hilchos Yom Kippur*.

One may receive and distribute these weekly shiurim by calling or writing: Office 99 Rechov Bayit Vegan, Yerushalayim, Phone Numbers: U.S. and Canada 732-370-3344 Israel 972-3-616-6340 South Africa 2711-728-4275 UK 020-8731-6666 Australia 61-296835626 Switzerland 0114143 333 0288 • e-mail: shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com, or www.shemayisrael.com, weekly sponsorships are available as well.

If you would like to send a question to Rav Ostroff, you can write to him at shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com.

Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.