

## JEALOUSY AMONG SIBLINGS

- Strong jealousy amongst young siblings<sup>1</sup> is normal and is not indicative of their future bad *midos*<sup>2</sup>.
- *Chazal*<sup>3</sup> warns parents to be very careful about stoking the flames of jealousy amongst siblings by exhibiting any form of favoritism to one child over another<sup>4</sup>.
- Parents are often not fully aware how much each and every one of their children deeply crave their love and attention.
- The sense of parental devotion is critical to the psyche of children as sunlight is to plants.
- When a child exhibits intense jealousy over a seemingly trivial item received by a different sibling, his acute jealousy is really over the perceived extra measure of devotion<sup>5</sup> received by that sibling<sup>6</sup>, not over the item in question.
- Merely instructing children not to be jealous won't solve this issue.
- Making a “big deal” over an accomplishment of any one child by effusively praising him in front of his siblings creates an atmosphere of jealousy in the home<sup>7</sup>.
- Accomplishments should be noticed and praised only in a calm and offhanded manner<sup>8</sup>.
- When an older child is jealous of all the attention given to a newborn sibling, it is advisable to make the older child feel as if he is the “helper” in caring for the baby<sup>9</sup>. He will then perceive the newborn as his project as opposed to his competition.
- Although motivating children with prizes can be beneficial, a sense of competition<sup>10</sup> among siblings should always be avoided<sup>11</sup>

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1. Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach Z"l once remarked that he notices even respectable adults finding it hard to hear the praises of a sibling; see *Binas Hamidos* (p. 231).

2. Personal letter from Rav Shach Z"l to Rav Dovid Barkin Z"l of Telz.

3. *Shabbos 10b* [אמר רב לעולם אל ישנה אדם בנו בין הבנים שבשביל משקל שני סלעים מילת שנתן יעקב ליוסף יותר משאר בניו נתקנאו בו אחיו ונתגלגל הדבר] יירדו אבותינו למצרים]

4. See *Avos D'Reb Nosson* (28:3) regarding the obligation of parents to ensure there is no negative competition and jealousy among their children.

5. That is of such extreme importance to him.

6. *Binas Hamidos* (p. 230) compares sibling rivalry to the extreme jealousy that exists between [צרות] co-wives competing for their husband's attention as described by *Chazal*.

7. Rav Shteinman *Shlita* as quoted in *Binas Hamidos* (p. 233).

8. *Ibid.*

9. See *Igros Harav Volbe* and *Sefer Zikaron Michtav Eliyahu*.

- When a child feels, for whatever reason, that he is not receiving his due of parental attention<sup>12</sup>, it is advised to take that child out of school for an hour every once in a while, and spend quality time with him by treating him to a *nosh* or a meal in a restaurant. Those precious moments of interaction with just the two of you will be a tremendous boost to your child<sup>13</sup>.
- There exists a big distinction between wrongful *kinnah* and the positive *kinas sofrim tarbe chachmoh*<sup>14</sup>.




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10. In a competition, the winners are glorified at the expense of the losers (see *Pesachim 89b banim shfeilim*); this leads to further jealousy and bad *middos*.

11. *Binas Hamidos* (p. 234).

12. This could happen particularly to a quiet child among many boisterous and loud siblings.

13. Advice of numerous experienced parents.

14. See *Orchos Yosher (Kinnah)*.