



JEWISH EDUCATION: A FAMILY AFFAIR

BY: RABBI YISROEL TZVI SEREBROWSKI – TORAH LINKS OF CHERRY HILL

BIBLICAL SOURCES

- ושננתם לבניך ... במ
Teach them thoroughly to your children and speak of them
(First Portion of the Shema - Deuteronomy 6:5-10)
- ולמדתם אתם ... לדבר במ
Teach them to your children, to discuss them
(From the Second Portion of the Shema - Deuteronomy 11:18-20)
- חנך לנער ... לא יסור ממנה
"Educate a child according to **his own way**, even when he grows old he will not depart from it."
(Proverbs 22:6)

TALMUDIC SOURCES

- "A father is obligated with respect to his son, to circumcise him, to redeem him if he is a firstborn, to teach him Torah, to take a wife for him and to teach him a craft. Some say: He is even obligated to teach him how to swim."
(Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Kiddushin 29A)
- "If the child knows how to talk, his father teaches him Torah and the recitation of Shema. What does 'Torah' mean? Rav Hamnuna said: It means to teach him to recite the verse: 'The Torah that Moses commanded us is the heritage of the Congregation of Jacob.'"
(Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sukkah 42A)
- "If a man has limited funds, and it is a matter of whether he shall go to study Torah, or his son shall go and study Torah, then he takes precedence over his son. R' Yehudah says: If his son is diligent, bright, and retains what he has studied (and the father sees in his son greater potential for Torah scholarship than in himself - as per Rashi's commentary) then his son takes precedence over him."
(Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Kiddushin 29B)
- "Minors are free from the obligation of Torah study. Nevertheless, a father is obligated to teach his son Torah, as it states (Deuteronomy 11:19) **'Teach them to your children, to discuss them.'**"
(Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Talmud Torah 1:1)
- "It is a positive precept to learn the wisdom of the Torah and to teach it... The root reason for this precept is known: for by learning, a man will know the ways of the Eternal L-rd, while without it he will neither know nor understand, and will be reckoned as an animal."
(Book of Mitzvah Education - Mitzvah 419)



JUST SAY SHEMA II

From Prayer to Practice



THE JEWISH PARENT'S MISSION STATEMENT

“Educate a child according to **his own way**, even when he grows old he will not depart from **it**.” (Proverbs 22:6) In other words, **to initiate each child into a Torah way of life in the manner best suited to that child so that he will embrace it throughout his life.**

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL PARENTING

- Develop and communicate a clear and consistent set of values and goals
- Implement rules and structure
- Lead by personal, enthusiastic example
- Identify, understand and work with each child's strengths and weaknesses
- Active listening, positive reinforcement and successful discipline
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Avoid put-downs, intimidation, sarcasm and anger
- Bestow unconditional love
- Develop an effective strategy to deal with outside influences
- Thoughtful prayer

Practical Applications

- **Develop and communicate a clear and consistent set of values and goals**
 - a. **develop** – it must be thought out, discussed and agreed upon by both parents – dissent will lead to inconsistency, exploitation and chutzpah
 - b. **communicate** – your child must hear and understand what you want – don't expect your child to know on his own what you don't tell him
 - c. **clear** – it must be clear to you in order for you to convey it clearly – use simple easy to understand words - don't leave any room for ambiguity
 - d. **consistent** – all the time, exceptions must be explained
 - e. **values** – what is important – learning Torah, performing Mitzvos, good character traits, respect for authority and rules, selflessness, chesed, positive attitude etc.
 - f. **goals** – personal, familial, spiritual, emotional, professional, communal, etc.
- **Implement rules and structure**
 - a. **implement** – establish authority - the purpose of discipline is to guide your child from being a self-centered infant to being a self-disciplined adult
 - b. **rules** – listening to, and obeying rules are essential social skills
 - c. **structure** – schedule, i.e. bed-time, clean-up, meals, personal hygiene, etc.



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- **Lead by personal, enthusiastic example**
 - a. **lead** – the parent is the role model – the one who imparts values – if you relinquish this role your child will find other role models not necessarily with the best morals
 - b. **personal** – “do as I say, not as I do” is a recipe for disaster – you must be the living example for your child - your child will seek to please you by copying your actions
 - c. **enthusiastic** – your child will take his queues from your demeanor as to what is important and what is not – actions and attitude speak far louder than words
 - d. **example** – in every situation your actions are a learning experience for the child

- **Identify, understand and work with each child’s strengths and weaknesses**
 - a. **identify** – like a detective searching for clues - your child is your project – your diamond to be lovingly cut and polished
 - b. **understand** – what you identified - learn effective methods of interaction and teaching (i.e. sensory, visual, etc.) that will maximize your child’s chance for success
 - c. **work with** – implement a developed strategy in tandem with teachers and mentors
 - d. **strengths** – channel them effectively – learning opportunity to teach humility
 - e. **weaknesses** – understand them & convey to your child that these are their G-d given challenges - not personal failings – explain that life is all about overcoming challenges and that everybody has them

- **Active listening, positive reinforcement & successful discipline**
 - a. **active listening** – validates your child’s feelings – their feelings are valued, not negated
 - b. **positive reinforcement** – motivates your child to do the right thing
 - c. **successful discipline** – timing is key – rewards and consequences – keep it private don’t embarrass them

- **Maintain a positive attitude**
 - a. **maintain** – your child’s outlook on life is greatly dependent on your consistent attitude
 - b. **positive attitude** – looking to see the positive in people, situations and surroundings

- **Avoid put-downs, intimidation, sarcasm and anger**
 - a. **put-downs** – children have feelings and are sensitive – build them up, don’t knock them down
 - b. **intimidation** – causes resentment – the child feels he is being intimidated because he is weaker
 - c. **sarcasm** – children don’t understand it and don’t appreciate it
 - d. **anger** – negates feelings of love – creates distance and barriers



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- **Bestow unconditional love**
 - a. **bestow** – tell your child how much you love them - make sure they know it and feel it – it's not enough that you know or feel it
 - b. **unconditional** – your child's sense of self worth and personal image is largely dependent on your unwavering love that is not dependent on their living up to your expectations
 - c. **love** – it makes a child feel valued for who they are – everyone needs to be really loved

- **Develop an effective strategy to deal with outside influences**
 - a. **develop** – it must be thought out, discussed and agreed upon by both parents
 - b. **effective** – it will need constant fine tuning as circumstances and friends change
 - c. **strategy** – a battle plan for victory – includes creating a happy home environment
 - d. **to deal with** – how to communicate effectively without putting up barriers between you and your child regarding outside, negative pressures and influences
 - e. **outside influences** – peers, television, movies, internet, school, camp, etc.

- **Thoughtful prayer**
 - a. **thoughtful** – think about and ask for the specific needs of each child – say their name as part of the prayer (i.e. “Hashem, please help little Avraham who is having difficulty learning to control his temper”, etc.)
 - b. **prayer** - there is so much out of our control (i.e. peers, health etc.) - we need help from the Almighty to ensure success – He is also a partner to consult with, take advice from His instruction manual – the Torah, and to lean on

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Classic Jewish Texts

TALMUD, TRACTATE KIDDUSHIN, 29A-30B
BABYLONIAN TALMUD, MESORAH PUBLICATIONS, NEW YORK, 1992

MISHNEH TORAH, LAWS OF TALMUD TORAH
MAIMONIDES, MOZNAIM PUBLISHING CORP., JERUSALEM, 1989

SHULCHAN ARUCH HARAV OF THE BAAL HATANYA, YOREH DEAH, LAWS OF TALMUD TORAH
RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI, OZ VEHADAR PUBLISHING CORP., JERUSALEM, 1993

ARUCH HASHULCHAN, YOREH DEAH, LAWS OF TALMUD TORAH, CHAPTERS 245-246
RABBI YECHIEL MICHEL EPSTEIN, ZUNDEL BERMAN PUBLISHING CORP., JERUSALEM, 1995



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Contemporary Reading

PLANTING & BUILDING: RAISING A JEWISH CHILD
RABBI SHLOMO WOLBE, FELDHEIM PUBLISHERS, 2000

TO KINDLE A SOUL: ANCIENT WISDOM FOR MODERN PARENTS AND TEACHERS
LAWRENCE KELEMEN, TARGUM PRESS/LEVIATHAN PRESS, 2001

LOVE IS NOT ENOUGH: SOUND ADVICE ON CHILD-REARING, RELATIONSHIPS & EMOTIONAL HEALTH
RACHEL SCHMIDT, R.C.S.W., TARGUM PRESS/FELDHEIM PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK, 2000

CHINUCH IN TURBULENT TIMES: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS
RABBI DOV BREZAK, MESORAH PUBLICATIONS, NEW YORK, 2002

CHILDREN IN HALACHA: CHINUCH, SHABBOS, KASHRUS, LEARNING & MUCH MORE
RABBI SIMCHA BUNIM COHEN, MESORAH PUBLICATIONS, NEW YORK, 1993

DEAR DAUGHTER: A FATHER'S WISE GUIDANCE FOR A HAPPY MARRIAGE & A SERENE HOME
RABBI ELIYOHU GOLDSCHMIDT, MESORAH PUBLICATIONS, NEW YORK, 2002

DEAR SON: A FATHER'S WISE GUIDANCE FOR A HAPPY MARRIAGE & A SERENE HOME
RABBI ELIYOHU GOLDSCHMIDT, MESORAH PUBLICATIONS, NEW YORK, 2004

SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS: AT HOME, AT WORK, AND WITH FRIENDS
RABBI ABRAHAM J. TWERSKY, M.D., SHAAAR PRESS, NEW YORK, 2003

WHY MARRY JEWISH? SURPRISING REASONS FOR JEWS TO MARRY JEWS
DORON KORNBLOTH, TARGUM PRESS/FELDHEIM PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK, 2003

LET'S FACE IT! THE 8 ESSENTIAL CHALLENGES OF LIVING,
TZIPORAH HELLER & SARA YOHEVED RIGLER, TARGUM PRESS/FELDHEIM PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK, 2005

Contemporary Listening

SUCCESSFUL PARENTING, VOLUMES 1 & 2
RABBI JONATHAN RIETTI, JEWISH INSPIRATION, WWW.JEWISHINSPIRATION.COM, NEW YORK, 2005

TO KINDLE A SOUL: 5-PART PARENTING SERIES
LAWRENCE KELEMEN, WWW.LAWRENCEKELEMEN.COM, JERUSALEM, 2001

FACING THE CHALLENGE: 1. PARENTING: ON BEING A PARENT, 2. GIVING UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
TZIPORAH HELLER, WWW.TZIPORAHHELLER.COM, JERUSALEM, 2005

