

Chinuch

CONTEMPORARY *&* TIMELESS

With contributions by

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Introduction

“כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו ושמרו דרך ה'” - For I (Hashem) have loved him (Avraham Avinu), because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem” (*Bereishis* 18:19.)

The transmission of our *mesora* has been a defining mission of *Klal Yisroel* since the time of Avraham Avinu, and continues to be a central focus in our individual and communal *avodas* Hashem. When trying to determine the best approach to *chinuch* for an individual or a community, at least three sets of factors must be carefully considered. The first set of factors is comprised of the timeless values and priorities established by the Torah and explicated by *Chazal*. An unwavering dedication to *mesora*, the primacy of *talmud* Torah, *emuna*, *chessed*, *kedusha*, and all other Torah truisms define our ultimate goals in *chinuch*, as they do in all aspects of life, and provide the lens through which the other two factors are viewed. In addition to our timeless Torah values, successful *chinuch* has to take into account the contemporary challenges that exist in each generation and community. Current realities and problems, such as egocentrism, the arrogant superiority of youth, substance abuse, a rising divorce rate among religious families, children at risk, child abusers, and the unfettered hedonism of our surrounding society must be fully understood, and our *chinuch* efforts must be properly calibrated to overcome these challenges. And last, but by no means least, as Shlomo *haMelech* instructs us, “חנוך לנער על” - *פי דרכו* - educate a child in accordance with his capabilities” (*Mishlei* 22:6.) *Chinuch* must be personalized for each child, and the best interests of the child must be the driving force, and litmus test, for all decisions.

“חנוך לנער על פי דרכו” can only realistically be accomplished by dedicated parents and educators who know the child, engage in heartfelt *tefillah*, and are blessed with *siyata deShmaya*. The customized approach of individualized *chinuch* can't realistically be captured in the generic, one size fits all format of a *sefer*. At the same time, those tailored decisions must be made by parents and educators who have done all they can to master the

first two areas mentioned above, i.e. timeless Torah values and contemporary *chinuch* challenges. We hope, through this *sefer*, to assist such committed individuals to succeed in their *chinuch* efforts. In the pages of this *sefer* the reader will find both timeless discussions of *hashkofas haTorah* on *chinuch* as well as an unflinching examination of, and guidance regarding, the many jarring and sensitive contemporary issues that parents and educators must grapple with.

About TorahWeb and the Sources of this Book

The TorahWeb Foundation, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, was founded in 1999 at the initiative of members of our community. Its goal is to disseminate *divrei Torah* and *hashkafa*, with special attention to contemporary religious and social issues. TorahWeb's board consists of Rav Hershel Schachter, Rav Michael Rosensweig, Rav Mayer Twersky, and Rav Mordechai Willig. TorahWeb's primary projects have been publishing weekly *divrei Torah* on www.TorahWeb.org and our email list, and arranging for *leilei iyun* a number of times a year in various communities, the audio and video of which is available on TorahWeb.org as well. Neither the *rebbeim* nor other individuals involved in TorahWeb receive any financial compensation. In addition, shuls receive the *leil iyun* programming free of charge.

The "Essays" section of this book is based on *shiurim* given at our *leilei iyun*. Some of these essays were written by the *maggid shiur* (speaker) himself, while some were converted to writing by others and reviewed by the *maggid shiur*. A footnote at the beginning of each essay states when and where the original *shiur* was given, as well as the name of the editor(s) for those essays that were not written by the *maggid shiur* himself. The rest of this book is comprised of selected *divrei Torah* written by the *rebbeim* which originally appeared on TorahWeb.org. The realities of the time pressures with which these Torah leaders function on a daily basis result in the *divrei Torah* on the web site not being properly edited and often missing *mareh mekomos*. These short-

comings were addressed for the *divrei Torah* included in this volume¹.

The proceeds of this book will go towards TorahWeb programming. Please send any suggestions, comments, or questions to TorahWeb@TorahWeb.org.

Acknowledgements

Publishing a high quality book involves a tremendous amount of work by a number of talented and dedicated people. Converting a spoken shiur into a well written essay is an *avoda kasha*, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to Rabbi Michoel Zylberman and Dr. Allan Weissman for their editing work. We would like to thank Rebbetzin Meira Mintz and Mrs. Tamar Schwartz for their copy editing and proofreading. And finally, we extend our deepest gratitude to Rebbetzin Rina Schachter for her extensive and tireless effort to ensure that our rebbeim's *chochma mefuara* is presented in a *kli mefuar*.

¹ On TorahWeb.org, though, they remain in their original, unedited form.

Table of Contents

Rav Hershel Schachter

Mesora and Change.....	3
Ma'aseh Avos Siman LaBanim.....	4
Ego and Humility in Torah Study	7
Straightening Out Our Priorities	10
True Simcha.....	13
True Freedom	15
Rachel's Longing for Children.....	18
Regarding Mesira	19

Rav Dr. Abraham J. Twerski

Adam – A Unique Individual	25
The Lesson of Noach	27
“Do Not Sin Against The Child”: Divorce Involving Children.....	29
The Lessons of the Yosef Epic	32
Reaching Old Age: Victory or Defeat?	36
Kedoshim: Rashi vs. Ramban.....	42
Are We Derelict in Teaching?	44
Substance Abuse in Adolescents: Detection, Treatment, and Prevention	46
Materialism.....	55
Histapkus vs. Consumerism and Entitlement.....	60
Glatt Kosher Is Not Enough	63
Getting the Uninterested Child to Shul	67

Rav Yakov Haber

A Surprising Aspect of the Count: The Jewish Family	73
The Methodology of Kindness	77

Ben Sorer U'Moreh: The Child at Risk	79
The Commandment of Peru U'Revu: An Example of the Dual Law System	83
Children of All Levels	86
<i>Rav Yaakov Neuburger</i>	
Chessededucation	93
Two Tents of Education: The Yeshiva and the Home	95
Beginnings	97
Guarding Our Safety and Protecting Our Values.....	99
<i>Rav Michael Rosensweig</i>	
Ya'akov's Final Spiritual Bequest to His Children	103
An Approach to Formative Jewish Education	105
Ben Sorer U'Moreh: The Importance of Cultivating a Religious Personality	109
Educating About the Elevated Standard of Halachic Man's Human Interactions.....	112
<i>Rav Yonason Sacks</i>	
Teaching Torah Values	117
VeHa'amidu Talmidim Harbeh	118
<i>Rav Zvi Sobolofsky</i>	
Giving vs. Taking.....	125
Back to Yeshiva.....	126
Shavuos: Do Not Forget, For Ourselves and Our Children.....	128
<i>Rav Mayer Twersky</i>	
Emuna and Masora	133
Consistency	135
Superseding Societal Conventions.....	139

Rav Mordechai Willig

VeHigadta LeVinchá 145
Raising Children 149
Descendants and Deficiencies 152
Jewish Education, Family, and Community 155
Family First..... 159
Youthful Hearts and Eyes 162
Inheritance Without a Fight:
Writing a Will in Modern Times..... 164

Rav Benjamin Yudin

A Man's Work Is Never Done..... 171
Parental Guidance Suggested 173
Home Equity Insurance 176
Show and Tell: We Had It First..... 179
Do As I Do 181

Essays

Rav Hershel Schachter: Jewish Parenting 187
Rav Dr. Abraham J. Twerski:
Alcohol, Drugs, and Morality Among Orthodox Teens 217
Rav Yaakov Neuburger:
Scholarship and Scholarships: Marketing and Messages.... 227
Rav Michael Rosensweig:
How to Pick a School for Your Child:
Values and Priorities in Jewish Education..... 233
Rav Mordechai Willig:
Dress Down Shabbos?..... 261
Rav Mordechai Willig:
Drinking: Purim and Beyond..... 273
Rav Benjamin Yudin:
Bridging the Religious Generation Gap 281
Rav Benjamin Yudin:
Talking to Our Kids About the Birds and the Bees..... 291