

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Jewish Spiritual Parenting: Wisdom, Activities, Rituals and Prayers for Raising Children with Spiritual Balance and Emotional Wholeness

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Part 1: Building Foundations for Spiritual Parenting

Chapter 1: Searching for Spirituality—Fostering *Ruchaniyut* in Our Children's Minds and Hearts

Do you consider yourself spiritual or religious? Both? Neither? In what ways?

What spiritual or religious rituals, beliefs or experiences do you want to be part of your child's life? Why?

Chapter 2: Partnership, Pluralism and Peace—*Shutafut* as a Spiritual Parenting Strategy

Who are your partners in raising your child and how does their partnership add value to the process?

What have been some of the surprising benefits of partnership?

What have been some of the challenges of your parenting partnership? How have you addressed these challenges in the past? How might you address the challenges you currently face together?

Chapter 3: Holding Them Close, Letting Them Grow—The *Tzimtzum* of Spiritual Parenting

What is the idea of *tzimtzum* (contraction) in its original mystical context? How does this relate to parenting?

At what point do you think a parent should practice *tzimtzum*? When have you tried it? Will you try it?

Chapter 4: Transmitting Our Heritage Through the Generations—The Spiritual Significance of *Mishpacha* and *L'dor Vador*

What are the most meaningful Jewish (or spiritual) rituals, wisdom and values you remember from your childhood? Which do you want to pass on to your child? Why?

In what ways do you hope your child's grandparent or other older adult will enrich your child's life?

Chapter 5: Truths We Know—Sharing *Emet* with Our Children

Can you think of a time that someone shared with you a truth that clarified and guided your own path ahead?

If your life were to end tomorrow, what three messages—besides “I love you”—would you want to share with your child?

Part 2: Practicing Spiritual Living for Spiritual Growth

Chapter 6: Living Holy Lives—*Kedoshim Tiheyu* at Bedtime, at Wake-Up and Throughout the Day

Where and when do you experience holiness in your life?

Which activities are most effective to help bring holiness into your child’s life?

Chapter 7: Each Child Is Unique—Embracing *B’tzelem Elohim*

Where are you challenged to find the image of God in people? How might you work to embrace them?

What are your favorite rituals or ideas for personalizing your family’s Passover seder?

Chapter 8: Caring for Body, Mind and Spirit—Strengthening and Preserving God’s Gift with *Shmirat HaGuf*

Are there messages about body and self-image that your child has received that you wish were different? What are they and how might you counteract them?

How are you bringing *shalom* (peace and wholeness) into your life and your family?

Chapter 9: Reframing and Decision Making—Empowering Our Children to Explore Alternatives Through *Davar Acher*

What are your favorite reframing questions? When have they been particularly effective?

Which decisions do you reserve for the adults and which for the kids?

Chapter 10: Opening Our Hearts with Kindness—Instilling *Chesed* and *Gemilut Chasadim* into Everyday Life

Where in your child’s life would you like to see more kindness? How can you move your child and family in that direction?

In what ways do you feel on the outskirts of the Jewish community? What are two steps that you might take to change that?

Chapter 11: Living Joyfully—Finding *Simcha* at the Center of Life

Which Jewish holidays bring joy into your life? How might you enhance that joy in your family?

Look at the fourteen words Judaism has for joy (see pages 167–168). What are the varieties of joy you and your children experience in your lives?

“Try This” Activities

Which activities feel most relevant and meaningful to you? Which two “Try This” activities will you commit to trying in the next two weeks?