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EMBRACE

Uniting and inspiring the worldwide community of Bais Rivkah Alumnae



SEASONS OF CHANGE

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ONE CAMPAIGN WITH A LASTING IMPACT
It was when my husband was learning about mikvaos that I became blessed with the incredible gift of pregnancy.

From the REBBE

נשיא דורנו

How to Become a Baal Teshuvah

By the Grace of G-d
2 Tammuz, 5727 [July 10, 1967]
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

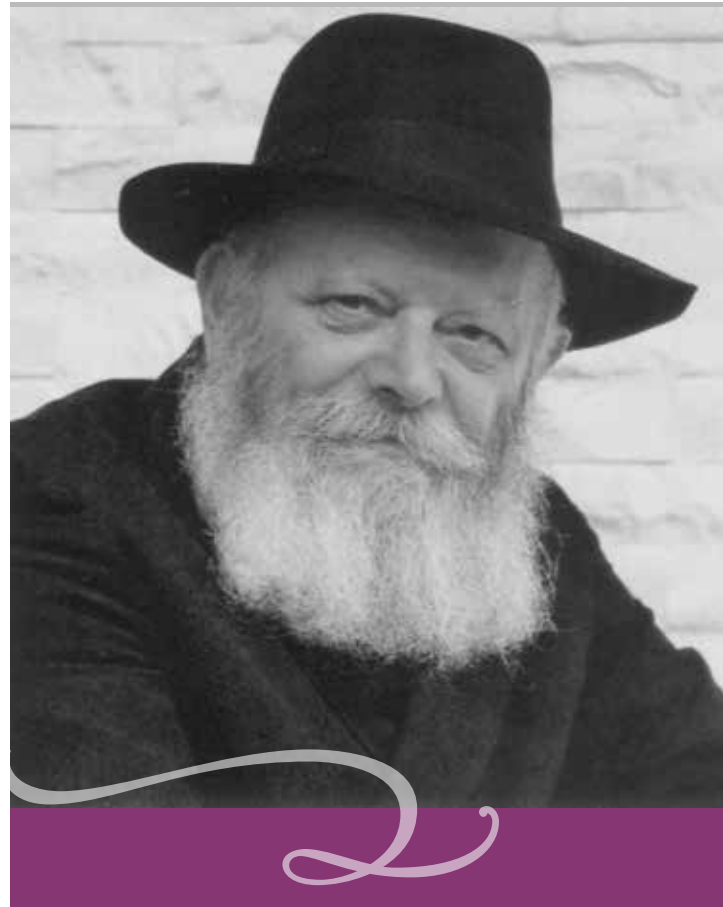
Your letter reached me with some delay. In the meantime I was pleased to see your husband at the farbrengen here.

As for the subject matter of your letter, you surely know that the Torah tells us that the conquest of the promised Holy Land was to take place in stages. The same applies, in a deeper sense, to the personal conquest of the self.

In other words, when it comes to personal advancement in matters of Yiddishkeit, the best method is sometimes precisely in the way of a gradual conquest, step by step, and stage by stage, rather than by means of a drastic change.

Of course, there are certain situations and matters where a drastic change may be necessary, but by and large, steady progress is usually steadier than progress by fits and starts.

In light of the above, and in regard to the matter which you mentioned, it is possible that you may be pushing a little too hard. It is perhaps advisable that inasmuch as you have expressed your opinion, and it was not accepted, it is better to leave it alone until



such time as the other party will himself come to the same conclusion. I trust that this will come to pass sooner than you anticipate.

I trust that you have begun your summer vacation in a suitable way, and may G-d grant that the vacation will generate new strength and power to be able to carry on all good activities with increased vigor.

Above all, I reiterate the central point, namely that you and your husband should together bring up your children in good health and happiness, materially and spiritually.

We have now entered the particularly auspicious month, the month of Tammuz, with the anniversary of the liberation of my father-in-law of saintly memory, the history of which is undoubtedly familiar to you.

This anniversary is not something which affected only the personal fate of my father-in-law of saintly memory, but was of far-reaching consequences for

Russian Jewry and world Jewry as a whole.

Indeed, my father-in-law of saintly memory, referring to his miraculous geula, wrote explicitly to that effect, saying, "It was not me personally that G-d had saved, but it was a salvation for Yiddishkeit in general."

When it comes to personal advancement in matters of Yiddishkeit, the best method is sometimes precisely in the way of a gradual conquest, step by step, and stage by stage.

The anniversary therefore is an occasion for celebration and inspiration for each and every one of us every year at this time.

But this year is particularly significant inasmuch as it will mark the fortieth anniversary. As our Sages explained, the completion of forty years provides special understanding, appreciation, and insight into the mind and personality of one's teacher.

I trust you will suitably observe this coming anniversary on the 12-13th of Tammuz, and derive lasting inspiration from it.

The obvious lesson which we must draw from it is this: If a Jew can accomplish so much for Yiddishkeit single-handedly, despite overwhelming odds and obstacles, how much must each and every one of us try to do our share, being fortunate in living under infinitely better circumstances, with complete freedom of action to strengthen and spread Torah and Yiddishkeit.

With regards to the whole family and with the blessing of Chag HaGeula,

Correspondence by Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, The Lubavitcher Rebbe ■

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GROWTH SPURTS

Sara (Kravitsky) Blau, Crown Heights
Graduating class of 5766 (2006)



As Rosh Hashana approaches and with it the crisp fall season, new beginnings are in the air. But will this coming year really be different from the last? How can you actually make sustainable change?

I remember how disappointed I was when I came home from seminary and I was basically the same person. I hadn't been sure of who I would become during that year, but I had gone to seminary expecting a dramatic transformation. I was underwhelmed when I came home and looked in the mirror and all I saw was exactly what I had seen a year earlier.

When I look back on the years that have passed since then, I see that I'm still pretty much the same person, with the same stumbling blocks and challenges. But there has been lots of sustained growth, thanks to some perspective and tips I've picked up on along the way.

First, I've come to realize that hitting rock-bottom can be a hidden blessing. When you are so fed up with a certain challenge, the issue moves from the

The yetzer hara might even suggest you take upon yourself something larger than life, just so you trip up and fail.

corner back-burner to front and center. If something bothers you enough, your desire for change reaches its peak, and that's when you decide to tackle it. Whether it's a character defect, something broken around the house, or something in your environment that's not sitting well with you, there eventually comes a day when you wake up and decide you can no longer continue living the way things are.

It might not be an easy—or pretty—process to get there. But the first thing that helps you make sustained, real change is really wanting to change. And sometimes you need a little resistance to get you wanting.

The Rebbe once encouraged R' Itche Meir Gurary

to make a hachalata to learn Chasidus before davening, and the Rebbe told him that there are two reasons that make a hachlata, a resolution, hard to stick to.

One is that when the inspiration arrives, a person does not ground it right away in action, so the inspiration leaves. When you are blessed from above with the desire to change, it is important to immediately tie it to action.

The second is that a person can make a hachlata that is too big or difficult to achieve.

That is why it is so important to quantify the change into something small and manageable. I know, you've heard the "start small" trick before—but *for real*. Start anywhere, with anything, and prove to yourself that you can do it. One week of davening every day, one hour a day off of social media—you choose. Keep the change small and manageable, and exercise the new habit again and again. Beware! The *yetzer hara* might even suggest you take upon yourself something larger than life, just so you trip up and fail. It's super important to make sure the change is doable in your life.

Which leads me to my final point. If you're like me, you make the greatest strides when you hold yourself accountable. Write a Duch to the Rebbe. Tell a friend or a mashpia about what you're working on and keep them posted. There's nothing like that little 🟢👍 emoji

to showcase your commitment and make you want to keep it up.

With small, manageable commitments and accountability, you may find that sustained change is in your reach during this season of growth.

Sometimes, the change will be external, like the one described in the beautiful article about a move to a new town on Shlichus. And sometimes, the change will be more internal, as Chaya Abelsky illustrates with her tips for achieving growth.

Whatever the change may be, we will come across many opportunities to embrace it as we face a new year. And while we probably will not see a brand new person when we take a look in the mirror at the end of the year, we will hopefully look back and notice the subtle, sustained growth spurts that we've experienced.

Happy reading,

Sara Blau

Sara Blau

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Message from the Chairman

Rabbi Avrohom Shemtov שיח"י



Esteemed Alumnae, תחיינה

As we approach the conclusion of 5783, a year of Hakhel, it is an ideal opportunity to talk about opportunities.

The year began with many resolutions and plans, and we can now look back and eval-

uate our accomplishments.

Many of us look back at events that we organized or participated in where relationships were reaffirmed and strengthened, and commitments to spiritual growth were generated. Overall, we feel that we have refreshed and strengthened our own Yiddishkeit and Chassidishkeit, as well as that of those around us.

There are two challenging feelings, however, that some might experience: Sadness, as we bid farewell to such a holy, inspiring and productive year, and remorse, because of missed opportunities.

How do we deal with these melancholic feelings?

On many occasions, when addressing the Bais Rivkah graduates, the Rebbe זצ"ל would stress that completing a positive stage in life or period in the yearly cycle does not imply finalization, but rather, a new beginning and empowerment to advance to the next step.

In one of those addresses¹, the Rebbe referred to the lessons to be learned from the shiur Chumash of that day: The mitzvah of Pesach Sheini.

The essence of the lesson, the Rebbe said, (quoting the Friediker Rebbe זצ"ל) is that there is no “*far-falen*.” There is no reason to give up when an opportunity regarding Torah and mitzvos has not been fully taken advantage of. If you care enough and make a sincere effort, Hashem will give you another opportunity to not only fill the void, but to grow and go from strength to strength.

The Rebbe quoted this lesson as an encouragement to graduates who, upon graduating, might feel that they did not accomplish all that they could have or should have during their years in Bais Rivkah.

“Learning never ends...” You can make up for it even though you have already graduated.

A Bais Rivkah alumna never leaves Bais Rivkah, she merely graduates from one stage to another. “קדושה ממקומה לא זזה” -- Holiness is a permanent condition, and it can never be downgraded. Bais Rivkah’s empowerment and the Rebbe’s brochos will always accompany you, no matter what, and you can always tap into them. Once a Bais Rivkah girl, always a Bais Rivkah girl.

The conclusion of the Rebbe’s address is especially

The Rebbe זצ"ל would stress that completing a positive stage in life or period in the yearly cycle does not imply finalization, but rather, a new beginning and empowerment to advance to the next step.

inspiring and empowering:

The Rebbe gives his brocha that Hashem should help each graduate make a *cheshbon tzedek*, an accurate evaluation of the time that she was a student in Bais Rivkah, and if any aspect is found to be lacking, she should be successful in making up for it. Then, Hashem will give her brocha and hatzlachah to go from strength to strength and become a student that Bais Rivkah will be able to show as an example of what a Bas Yisroel, educated with the chassidische chinuch in this holy institution, looks like.


The Rebbe זצ"ל takes pride in each and every Bais Rivkah alumna and sees each of you as ongoing and active students and representatives of the chinuch received in Bais Rivkah. As such, the Rebbe assures you of continuous brochos that will accompany you as you apply all that you learned, to overcome the challenges that life may present you with, and to grow from them.

This message is especially relevant to us now at the conclusion of the year of Hakhel. All of our great accomplishments can and should be a springboard to help us achieve even greater accomplishments in the years to come, until the next Hakhel when we will celebrate together with the Rebbe in the Bais Hamikdash.

With best wishes for a blessed and successful new year,

Rabbi Avrohom ש"יח"י Shemtov ■

1. Sivan 17, 5719



Thank you for your informative article on homeopathy! After witnessing my daughter suffering for years with chronic aches and pains and nausea, for which I was advised to administer Motrin, Miralax, and other forms of medication with no treatment for the underlying issues, the article convinced me to give homeopathy a go. Within days I saw unimaginable results! Not only is my daughter feeling better, but she is no longer anxious and panicky as a result of her pain. My happy-go-lucky child is back!

My other child has a chronic cough for which the doctor wants to prescribe medication with behavioral side effects, so I'm looking into alternative healing for that as well. I can't wait to see what homeopathy can do for her! Thank you again for sharing this incredible healing modality with us readers.

-A grateful Alumna

Thank you for sharing the article about Mrs. Hackner, who was instrumental in building the new Bais Rivkah. I was in awe of how she channeled the Rebbe's brochos on the dollar line to create the edifice that is Bais Rivkah today.

-D Korf

I thoroughly enjoyed the article on homeopathy.

As someone raised with homeopathy (growing up, arnica gel was called magic cream!) I was already familiar with it, but had not delved deeply into it until I became a parent.

I have used homeopathy to successfully treat molluscum, warts, ear infections, impetigo, colds and fevers, just to mention a few common childhood ailments.

The author gives a really comprehensive review of how homeopathy works and what to do to make it work! The resources are great for anyone starting out and even those who are ready to learn more.

-Chaya Stern

In *Embrace*, Volume 4, Issue 3, you printed an article called "Homeopathy" (Page 78).

I was surprised that you had printed this article, since, in addition to the issue of *chalah stam*, as mentioned in the article, there are other *halachic* issues involved, as mentioned in the sefer רנו-רנב & רנב-רנו מו, מט & שלחן הלוי בענין רפואות אלטרנטיביות עמוד מו, מט & רנב-רנו מו, מט.

-D.S.





Thank you so much for an absolutely beautiful magazine!

I enjoyed every single page and I am already looking forward to the next one!

I was especially fascinated by the article on homeopathy and I am ready to order a kit right now!

I was just wondering if there are any kashrus concerns and whether I need to make sure there's a *hechsher*, etc. Mrs. Edelman also mentions having other homeopathic mentors to turn to for guidance and I was wondering how to go about finding them.

Thank you again for all the time and energy put into this! The magazine definitely gave me much entertainment, inspiration, and food for thought!

–Rivky L. Brooklyn, NY

Embrace Responds:

Due to the complicated nature of the kashrus of homeopathy and the technical differences between each and every type of remedy, please consult with your personal Rav to discuss specific scenarios and hashgachos. As well, Mrs. Chana Bongart consults and sells remedies and has seen thousands of people helped and cured throughout her forty-five years of experience in the field of homeopathy. She is happy to help anyone who is interested in learning more, buying individual remedies, buying first-aid or labor & delivery kits, or working with her. She is located in Crown Heights but also ships products throughout the US using UPS Ground (the safest way to send remedies), and can be reached at (718)-756-4389.

I really enjoyed your most recent issue. However, I was concerned to read such an extensive article about homeopathy.

I don't mind if people are helped, but it seems irresponsible and a *sakana* to share this information in your magazine. People are misinformed and will follow any advice given. What is the justification for sharing this information publicly?

–Anonymous

Hi There,

Skepticism surrounding the efficacy of homeopathy, met in large part by those who haven't used this treatment, is not a new phenomenon. In fact, from the very beginning this medical modality has been questioned and maligned. One such pioneering skeptic was Dr. Constantine Hering. In the early 5560s (1800s), he was planning

to write an anti-homeopathy book, but all his experiments pointed to the fact that homeopathy actually worked. In 5584 (1824), he was cured of gangrene (localized death of body tissue), and his hand was saved from amputation with a homeopathic remedy called Arsenicum. After his remarkable healing experience, not surprisingly, Dr. Hering became a complete convert and founded a famous homeopathic college in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He is now frequently referred to as the “Father of American Homeopathy.”

The documented success of homeopathy speaks for itself. In 5591 (1831), cholera swept through Central Europe. Dr. Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, published papers on the homeopathic treatment of the disease. In Raab in Hungary, only six out of one hundred fifty-four homeopathically treated patients died, compared with almost fifty-nine percent of those treated conventionally! These irrefutable statistics show that reliance on conventional treatment proved to be a greater sakana. Consequently, witnessing the remarkable efficacy of homeopathy in treating rampant epidemics led to its widespread popularity.

Fast forward, peer-review journals have conducted and published research on homeopathic medicines with favorable clinical results. The biological activity of homeopathic medicines have been substantiated by numerous scientific studies. This provable, science-backed treatment is not experimental recklessness by any means.

Now that we established the credibility of homeopathy, I'd like to address your concern about the irresponsibility of publicizing personal experiences with homeopathy.

There is no doubt that the rampant spread of misinformation across the internet means we have a greater responsibility to promote accurate information. But sharing personal findings is not misinformation - it's a genuine, first-hand experience. We wouldn't chide a mother for sharing which medication healed her child's headaches, so why would we apply a different standard towards mothers utilizing alternative remedies?

Furthermore, it is not reasonable to restrict the sharing of personal experiences altogether out of a concern that someone might misuse a piece of advice irresponsibly. We should not undermine a parent's ability to make informed decisions in the best interest of their children. To this end, instead of withholding alternative medical options, we should focus on providing clear and transparent information about alternative approaches, empowering parents to make educated choices (as the article does).

While modern medicine is undeniably important, the assertion that the dissemination of alternative medicine is irresponsible is, in fact, irresponsible. Censoring information about all other forms of medicine is perilous, particularly to the thirty-eight percent of adults in the United States who find healing through alternative medicine, including through popular chiropractic and acupuncture treatments. Suppressing this information would be met with objection by a significant portion of the population.

Most importantly, we must accept that Hashem's healing is not bound by, nor limited to, conventional medicine. Nor can we deny the innate wisdom and intuition Hashem conferred onto mothers to be able to raise and take care of their children in a healthy, responsible and proper manner. Each mother uses her bina yeseira to capably care for her children, and her level of competency should not be determined based on the effective medical approach she uses to heal her children.

Of course, during a true emergency no one is suggesting to forgo all contemporary medical



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

Letters, comments, questions and suggestions are welcome!

Write to us at Embrace@bethrivkah.edu



treatments in favor of homeopathy, or to start googling symptoms and remedies that you are unfamiliar with. This is not what the article suggested nor supported in any way. Yes, homeopathy can treat respiratory distress. Yes, mothers should be empowered to heal their children with alternative medicine through proper education and guidance. No, parents should not be compelled to adhere exclusively to modern medicine when their child is suffering and when, at times, immediate medical assistance is unavailable (whether it's because the doctor's office is closed or they're in a remote location where ambulances don't arrive quickly). No mother should be deemed irresponsible for making decisions that prioritize her children's health and wellbeing - decisions that even have the potential to save a child's life.

To a healthy and empowering new year!

- Shainy Edelman



A NOTE ON SAFETY OF HOMEOPATHY:

Interestingly, unlike pharmaceutical prescription drugs, homeopathic remedies do not have childproof caps because they're generally safe. If a child swallows an entire vial of pellets, nothing will happen if he was not suffering from an ailment that the remedy treats. Nevertheless, it's important to keep in mind that homeopathic remedies, if not dosed correctly (i.e. taken for thirty days instead of just a few days), can temporarily intensify the very symptoms you were trying to treat. For that reason, it's important to seek guidance from a homeopath as you get started on this healing path.

Help us continue reaching out to every alumna.

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Big Heart, Passionate Teacher

Dovid Zaklikowski for EmBRace Magazine



Standing- Reuven Kaminetzky, Zelda Nemes Sitting- Batsheva Silberstein, Zeideh Moshe Zalman Kaminetzky, Genesha Gopin. Photo probably taken in Samarkand.



France. Zelda Nemes is standing furthest right. Standing in middle is Sara Katzman. Standing at left could be Riva Teleshevsky. Seated on right could be Olle Schwei

Coming from California, Rachel Jacobs had a lot to contend with: New York's fast pace. New friends. The cold. And the seminary teachers—who were not referred to as missus, but morah—Morah with a capital M. To the young woman it meant that the teachers in Bais Rivkah Seminary were serious about teaching; they were not there to befriend students or hang out. All of it would take adjusting to, but there was one teacher she was particularly anxious about: Morah Zelda Nemes.

“My grandmother is so scary,” her friend told her, adding with a twinkle in her eye that was reserved only for the most beloved person in someone’s life, “but she is our *bubby*.”

Morah Nemes was a presence. It was not the height or the aura—it was who she was. Nothing about her said that she was going to conform. Not her curly *shaitel* or her deep eyes, nor her teaching style or persona. On the first day of seminary, she would inform the class that she was straightforward, blunt, and to the point. She expected excellence, and she let her students know that.

“She was a life unto herself,” Mrs. Jacobs said, “her name was said with reverence—part awe, part fear.”

Batya Engel, who is now the curriculum coordinator of general studies at the Mazel Day School in Brooklyn, recalled her first day in class, when, “Morah Nemes told us off for the way we pronounced the title of the class as *dikduk*, instead of *dikdook*.”

She was struck by the way Morah Nemes brought out that point, hammering home that in the coming year, the learning was going to be precise. Morah Nemes told them how the Rebbe once corrected someone when they pronounced “*dikduk*” incorrectly. Then, throughout the year, when one of the students would make the mistake, she would remind them of the story. They understood; it needed to be precise.

By that time, Morah Nemes was a seasoned teacher. She had learned how to cushion her criticism. Mrs. Engel shared, “While she felt passionate about the subject, she tried to relate to her students.”

“She was a strong leader,” said Rabbi Gershon Shusterman, a Los Angeles businessman and the author of *Why G-d Why*. “She demanded much from others, though never as much as she demanded from herself. Keen intelligence and sophistication were but the backdrop for her warm, caring and sensitive heart.”

Fellow faculty members recall a turning point in Morah Nemes’ teaching when she worked hard to better understand her own tendencies as well as her students’ reasoning. It was her never-ending introspection, which led to her self-awareness, that assisted her growth as a teacher. “I often appear too harsh and too demanding,” she wrote in a letter in 1998, conceding that seminary girls “have to find their secure place in school before becoming my students.”

When the daughter of one of her former students was in her class, the mother asked her if she is scared of

Morah Nemes wanted everything to be correct and accurate. The message learned from this—which, for Mrs. Jacobs, hit a home run—was to find the truth and accuracy in life.

Morah Nemes. The young woman told her mother that Morah Nemes is warm and nice. The next time the mother saw her former teacher, she told her, “When you were my teacher, my peers and I were scared of you; now, my daughter can’t stop raving about you.”

The teacher told her former student—in her humble way, unwilling to boast about the fact that she had worked on herself—that when she was teaching her, she was a young mother and she was disciplining her children. “My disciplinary side extended to my stu-



Zelda as a young woman

dents. Now, I am a doting grandmother, and I treat my students as I treat my grandkids.”

Mrs. Jacobs, who is now the rebbetzin at the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation Singers Hill Synagogue in Birmingham, UK, remembers that the students knew Morah Nemes’s class would be a wild ride. They would need to hold tight, for “you never knew where the class was going to go.” But they all knew that everything they were learning was rooted in the truth. “The subject was very *medakdek*; it was exact, it was discerning.” Morah Nemes wanted everything to be correct and accurate. The message learned from this—which, for Mrs. Jacobs, hit a home run—was to find the truth and accuracy in life.

Difficult Beginnings

For most of Zelda Nemes’s first fourteen years of life, she was on the move. Around the time of her birth

in 1935, her parents, Reb Moshe Zalman and Mrs. Risha Kaminetzki, moved to a village near Moscow. A few years later during WWII, they moved to Samarkand.

In a country where the health system was poor, and religious Jews who did not work on Shabbos were mostly impoverished, the Kaminetzki family was followed by tragedy wherever they went. Zelda herself was named after her maternal grandfather Yehoshua Zelig Rivkin who had died at a young age. In Samarkand, her sister Batsheva contracted typhoid, and was sent to a secluded location so that no one else would catch the contagious disease. However, Risha could not bear to be away from her sick child, and she obtained permission to go and care for her. Ultimately, she too became ill, while her daughter was released and sent home.

When Batsheva returned home, the extended family



Zelda Nemes, Zaidch Moshe Zalman, The Bubbeh Shaina Basha Rivkin



Zelda's mother Risha and father Moshe Zalman Kaminetzki

sat around the table to listen to the young girl as she related her experiences. The famed chassidim, Reb Yisroel Nevler and Masha Mala Pevzner, were sitting on opposite ends of the table. “I did not eat any of the meat they gave me,” the young girl shared. “I survived just on the bread and some vegetables.” When hearing this, the two chassidim sprung up and began to dance with joy that their granddaughter and niece did not eat non-kosher food.

Ultimately, in 5703 (1944), when Zelda was seven years old, her mother passed away from the disease. It was Shmini Atzeres when her mother breathed her last breath. The shul was right next to their home. “We were sitting around the corpse of Mother,” Mrs. Nemes would recall, “And we heard the dancing and joy from *hakafos*. It was horrifying. I could never forget it.”

Over the years, Zelda would often share two memories from the *shivah* that shaped her worldview.

During that time, there was a tremendous famine in Samarkand. People were dying of hunger and every day the corpses would be gathered from the streets. Of course, every morsel of food was a treasure. One day, Hinda Deitsch came by with a freshly baked cake. The family soon learned that Mrs. Deitsch would go from home to home collecting the cake ingredients. One person gave an egg, another some flour and yet another some sugar. “Through all our journeys,” Morah Nemes recalled, “I still taste the cake; it was the taste of kindness.”

At one point, Zelda’s father Reb Moshe Zalman sat her down with her brother and two sisters and told them that they have two choices: “We can become dependent on the community, or we can pull ourselves together and take care of ourselves. I choose the latter.”

“It was very hard to be alone without Mother,” she would say. Her father tried his best to compensate, and she became very close with her older sister Gnesha Gopin. “You took upon yourself Mother’s responsibilities,” she wrote decades later to her sister. “You had self-sacrifice without complaining or demanding appreciation.”

Morah Nemes recalled that with the little money the family had they would go to the marketplace to purchase their basic necessities. But her sister would always purchase something that, to young Zelda, seemed like a luxury. When she asked her older sister why she would do that when they had so little money,

“I only cry over that which cries for me; it is people that matter. These are materialistic things and it is not worth crying over.”

Gnesha answered, “I am doing it for my younger sister [Zelda]. If it is just to give her pleasure, or some necessary nutrition. Her joy gives me happiness.”

Educational Run

In 5706 (1946), armed with false papers, the Kaminetski family, together with hundreds of other chassidim, smuggled across the border between the Soviet Union and Poland. From there they went on to Austria, then Germany, and then France.

In France, Zelda’s father asked Rabbi Abba Pliskin to learn Gemara with her. Her father would study with her as well. The young woman developed a great appreciation for knowledge and ideas, which would soon become a lifelong pursuit.

From France the family moved to Israel, becoming one of the first settlers of a new Lubavitch in Safarea, which would later be renamed Kfar Chabad. There Morah Nemes went to study in Bais Yaakov Hachadash in Tel Aviv, which was founded by the Lubavitcher chassidim Rebbetzin Devorah and Rabbi Nochum Goldshmid. At first she studied with the younger classes, and over the next two years she skipped to grades more advanced than her age.

In 5714 (1954), at the age of nineteen, Morah Nemes became a teacher in one of the newly established Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok Lubavitch (“Reshet”) day schools. During that summer, she went to visit her sister in Belgium, and planned on returning to Israel ten days after the start of school. The school was not happy with her decision and wrote her a letter telling her so. She in turn wrote a letter to the Rebbe, in which she admitted she was wrong, but that, for various side reasons, she had chosen to stay in Belgium. One of those reasons was that this was agreed upon with the principal before she left.

“Teaching is sacred work,” the Rebbe wrote to her, “and you note that you are successful in teaching. Therefore, even if the principal agreed that you could return at a later date, you yourself should not agree

to that, for who knows if your substitute will be as successful as you would be. In addition, it is known that switching teachers in middle of a semester is not good for the students.”

The Rebbe said this was especially the case since she had already been in Belgium for a few weeks. “But there is no reason to cry over spilled milk,” continued the Rebbe, noting that the lack of understanding the importance and responsibility of an educator towards her pupils, was the reason why he was writing. “This is especially uncanny for you as you are from a home of self-sacrifice for Jewish life in the Soviet Union.”

The Rebbe then wrote that if she would take his message to heart, she would immediately take a boat or flight back to Israel. “And Hashem should give you success to do what is necessary, and you and all the teachers of the Reshet in the Holy Land, should work together, with one heart, to raise illustrious students.”

After another year of teaching at the Reshet, the Jewish Agency sent Zelda to teach at a Zionist school in Belgium. It was a position she had been vying for, and she was happy that she would now be able to live next to her sister.

There, Rabbi Bentzion Shemtov suggested a *shidduch* for Zelda. Rabbi Shemtov had come to know Yitzchok Nemes, age thirty-two, from his visits to Crown Heights from London. Yitzchok was working with his father in the family stamp and coin business. As a young man he studied at the United Lubavitch Yeshivoh, and once he graduated he would daven in 770 and join the *farbrengens* with the Rebbe. Rabbi Shemtov believed that Mr. Nemes, who travelled around the world for the business, had a good blend of wordliness and a Lubavitcher lifestyle, and would be a good fit for Zelda Kaminetzki, whom he knew from Paris as well as his visits to Belgium. After months of meeting one another, the two got engaged.

After the wedding, which took place in Israel, the couple moved to New York, where Zelda first taught at Bais Yaakov and the Philip Hirsch Academy. When Bais Rivkah opened a high school she joined the faculty, and later became a teacher in the seminary.

Mrs. Nemes worked hard to balance her teaching and taking care of her children, all while Mr. Nemes would travel for weeks at a time on business. When the Nemes children would come home from school, there was supper waiting for them on the table. “She did everything for us,” said her son Rabbi Mendy. “We never felt like she was missing.” Mrs. Nemes

imbued in her children strong values, and a commitment to doing the right thing. “If others were doing something wrong,” shared her son Rabbi Yossi, “she made it clear that we do not need to do whatever everybody is doing; we need to do what is right.” Her son explains that it wasn’t that she was critical about their actions, but that they chose to do the right thing because, “She had expectations of you, and you did not want to disappoint her.”

Rabbi Mendy says that watching how his mother’s dedication to her students trumped everything during those difficult years of juggling all of her duties, “influenced us greatly to be dedicated to our students.”

Before Rabbi Mendy Nemes started to teach in Chanoch Lenaar, his mother gave him teaching advice. “If you see something good in the students,” she said, “always highlight it. If you see something that is not good, you don’t always have to say.”

She explained that in order to succeed to keep control in the class, “You need to prepare.” She also shared her wisdom about marking tests, explaining that if you’d give a student the highest possible mark, “They would not try harder the next time.”



Zelda teaching in Kfar Chabad

Open Heart, Open Mouth

While the Nemes children learned from Mr. Nemes' actions, they learned from their mother through what she said. Morah Nemes would verbalize her ideas and tell stories to bring out a point. Telling the tale about Mrs. Deitsch and the food, Mrs. Nemes explained that one needs to go the extra step to help others. Modeling this attitude, Mrs. Nemes would always welcome guests to sleep at her home and ensured that their stomachs were always sated. One of her greatest prides were the guest bedrooms she built on the first floor of their home.

“When I look at you, I recall my granddaughter. That is why I want you to sit next to me.”

When a college student once came to the Nemes home on a Friday, Morah Nemes prepared a plate of food for him. After thinking for a moment, the student pushed it aside, saying, “I do not want to eat; I will purchase something at the corner store.”

When Morah Nemes asked the student if her food looked unappetizing, he responded that he didn't feel comfortable eating because the only reason she had prepared the food was in order to make him into a *baal teshuvah*. “I am not planning on being convinced to become religious, therefore I do not want to cheat you.” Morah Nemes quipped, “You can eat in peace. The fish does not have a net, and it will not catch you.” She said it in her typical straightforward manner, which he understood, and he ate the food.

The family knew that while they were gone on Shabbos morning, their mother was busy. There was a constant flow of women who came to her for advice, be it for matters regarding their parents, children or spouses. She would joke that if she would charge five dollars for a piece of advice, “I would be rich.”

In truth, because of Mr. Nemes's business, the family was well to do. But luxury didn't mean much to the couple, and they would dispense much of their money to *tzedakah*.

For her daughter Rische Greewald, Mrs. Nemes's example continued into adulthood. Mother and daughter would talk every day at a set time. “No matter how busy she was,” she recalled, “she always took my call.”

One day, her mother told her that she was busy and would call back. A few hours later she called Mrs. Greenwald, and calmly told her that the the reason she could not talk was because they had come home and realized that the home had been burglarized. A large amount of valuables had been stolen, and Mrs. Nemes told her daughter that she was sure that the insurance would not cover all of it.

“How are you so calm?” Mrs. Greenwald asked in surprise, “I would be livid.”

The mother responded, “I only cry over that which



Zelda at her wedding

cries for me; it is people that matter. These are materialistic things and it is not worth crying over.”

Lifelong Education

Her son Rabbi Mendy recalled that growing up, the Nemes children shared their mother. “Her students were like her kids; her love for them was beyond words. She would always talk about them.”

When she would see that a student needed something, whether it was an article of clothing or a comforting word when they were looking down, she would work the phones late at night to deal with the issue discretely.

Once, Morah Nemes slipped in the school kitchen. She hurt herself badly, and she had to wear a cast for a long time. When the doctor gave the bill, Mr. Nemes pulled out a check and paid. The doctor asked, “Are you not going to sue the school?” Morah Nemes retorted, “How can I sue *my own* school?”

It turns out that Bais Rivkah had reported the fall, and when they did not receive a claim, they wrote a check to Morah Nemes for damages. When it arrived, Morah Nemes took the check and gave it to Bais Rivkah.

Morah Nemes felt that it was a great honor for her to teach in the Rebbe’s school. Her dedication to teach-

ing continued even in her later years, when, despite pain from an illness, she continued to go to Bais Rivkah every day.

In the later years, she taught her class twice a week, for forty-five minute periods. For some students, her class gave a love for the language; for others, a love for every Rashi—including the ones about *dikduk*. And then there were those for whom the class was life-changing.

One of her students was very shy, and during the first few weeks of seminary, she sat in the back of the class, scared to say a word. After Sukkos, when the classes resumed, Morah Nemes asked her to sit in the front. “What did I do wrong?” the student asked, shaking in fear. The teacher responded that she did not do anything wrong, but that, “when I look at you, I recall my granddaughter. That is why I want you to sit next to me.”

Over time, Morah Nemes spoke to her, building her confidence by telling her that if she wanted to, she could succeed. “Today I run a Chabad House,” the former student shares, “and it is only because of Mrs. Nemes.”

Learning grammar can be boring, and when it’s grammar of a language that you do not use daily, it can be even more frustrating. “She gave us a greater appreciation for the nuances of the language,” said



With Morah Gorowitz



At Nshei Chabad convention giving schedule to the Rebbe

Mrs. Engel, “stressing that it was a holy language, the language that Hashem used to create the world— the language of the Torah.”

She did not want the students to see the goal of learning as remembering the words. She taught the students “to really understand that there is a logic about the rules.”

But what etched Morah Nemes into the forefront of many of the students’ minds till today, was her passion for the subject matter. “You felt it in the classroom. She wanted to give over the knowledge; she wanted us to have the same appreciation that she did.”



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ALUMNAE

Who, What, Where

Writing With Heart:

An Interview With Four Bais Rivkah Authors

By Libby (Zuntz) Herz, Crown Heights

Graduating class of 5759 (1999)



Meet **Esty Perman** who wrote a davening book entitled *From My Heart*, **Leah Schapiro** and **Leah Engel** who co-authored *The 12 Pesukim Singalong Book*, and **Dassie Prus** who dreamed up The Jewish Big Books series.

Settle into a cozy corner and discover how these women dreamed up books that uplift and inspire Jewish children and adults the world over.

Esty (Wineberg) Perman

Leawood, KS

Graduating Class of 5771 (2011)

Leah (Nash) Schapiro

Delray, FL

Graduating Class of 5771 (2011)

Leah (Polter) Engel

Dumont, NJ

Graduating Class of 5772 (2012)

Dassi (Gansburg) Prus

Doylestown, Pennsylvania

Graduating Class of 5758 (1998)

Is the next great Jewish book stirring in your brain? Do you dream of writing a book one day? Curious about the authoring process?

Bais Rivkah Embrace interviewer **Libby Herz** sat down with four popular children's book authors who plunged deep into the world of publishing, to gain entrance into their experiences.

DID YOU ALWAYS WANT TO WRITE A BOOK?

ESTY: I've always enjoyed expressing myself in writing and I always wanted to write a book.

LEAH SCHAPIRO: I never envisioned myself writing



Leah (Polter) Engel, left, and Leah (Nash) Schapiro, right.

a book.

DASSI: I never believed I would write a book, but my mother believed I would.

WHAT INSPIRED THE IDEA FOR YOUR BOOK?

ESTY: I was always blown away by how, at age two, my daughter would casually have conversations with Hashem. I was inspired to write about connecting to Hashem casually and comfortably, and that's what the book was originally focused on. Then, the publisher told me, "We really love this as a davening book," so we added parts about davening.

LEAH SCHAPIRO: Leah and I were counselors for children in Rostov who were not yet religious. Every day, the campers sang the twelve pesukim in Hebrew and in Russian and we were so inspired that they were reciting these words in their language. Both of us had a Lubavitcher upbringing and had memorized the Hebrew words of the twelve pesukim. It dawned on us then that the Rebbe selected these twelve pesukim as fundamentals of Yiddishkeit to live by, not to just memorize in Hebrew! We felt that some of the understandings that children were familiar with, weren't very accurate or meaningful. "בכל דור ודור" doesn't mean to throw your counselor off the boat! We realized there was a need for something that would make these ideas understandable. So we sat down one night and wrote songs for the twelve pesukim, with the dream of making a CD. We're talking 5772 (2012)!

LEAH ENGEL: Whenever we went touring and driving we'd replay our songs, coming up with better lyrics. The next year I went to record the songs in a studio, but that's where the saga ended. It remained a CD, until we realized that we wanted these songs, which were fun and full of meaning, to really get out there. So Leah came up with the idea of turning them into a niggunim book.

DASSI: I used to work in a Chanukah Wonderland store in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Every year, I encountered parents who were looking for a book about Chanukah that they could read aloud in their child's public school class. It bothered me that I had nothing to recommend.

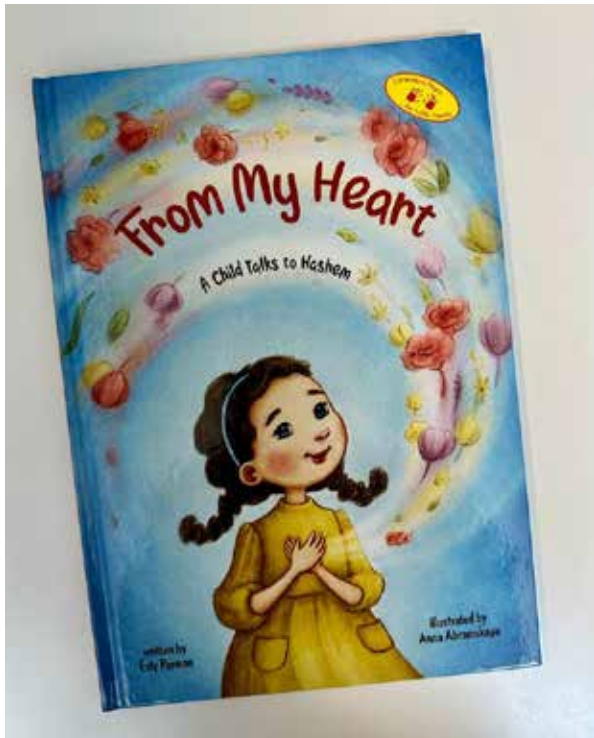


Esty (Wineberg) Perman

I was stuck at home on a snow day before Chanukah when an idea for a book came to mind. I jotted down an outline of a story where the colored Chanukah candles on the menorah take turns telling the Chanukah story. I wanted to teach the story in a way that would be clear and appealing for everyone, even those with no prior knowledge of Yiddishkeit.



Dassi (Gansburg) Prus



Esty's Book

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS LIKE?

ESTY: I wrote the original manuscripts in twenty minutes. It took a couple months until I heard back from the publisher, and then one more year until it was published. Once my book was accepted, I had a very specific style in mind, and Hachai created artwork that conveyed that. I really enjoyed the editing process. I think it's really cool to see things from the eyes of the editor. The little changes make a difference, and the editor has a broader and more experienced outlook.

LEAH SCHAPIRO: When Leah's precious babies tragically passed away, I knew we had to get this off the ground. A friend of ours found an illustrator and set up a meeting for us. We also had a good friend and mashpia look over our songs and give them the finishing touches.

I didn't know where to start with production, so I went on China's Alibaba Express, and found a company who made music books. In order to print a book we needed a sample and that alone cost four hundred and thirty dollars! Then, I went on the Shluchim's chat and wrote that I was looking for kids who would want to sing for the book. My husband took the kids

to record the songs. I also found somebody to help me write something up for parents who would want to make the lessons deeper for older children.

DASSI: I was so excited about the manuscript that I had created, but oh boy, was I in for a surprise when I was rejected by every publisher I approached. For two years, I did nothing with the manuscript. Then a relative suggested that I self-publish it. Once I was self-publishing, I wanted it to be a big book with beautiful and realistic illustrations.

Each step of the way was a learning experience. It was difficult finding a printer that could print a two-foot tall hardcover book. Giving instructions and editing each illustration took weeks. It cost a lot of money and I took a big risk-- I didn't know if it would be successful or if people would understand its value.

WHAT WAS THE OVERWHELMING RESPONSE?

ESTY: I have heard from adults who have bought the book just for themselves. There's a lot of talk about the inner child, and it's very healing to know that Hashem is aware of us and even if He doesn't seem to be listening, it is only Hashem's way of saying "No." We always do have that personal relationship with Hashem.

From a pure numbers standpoint, *From My Heart* sold out within three months. It was definitely a special project to be a part of.

LEAH SCHAPIRO: When I got that first sample I was crying. I was so proud. I went to sign for DHL, and then my kids and I danced around the table.

We have sold almost two-thousand copies so far. Initially I brought it to Hamafitz and gave them ten copies, and then it became a best-selling book. I think the demand sold it. People saw there was a need for it; it was different.

DASSI: Initially, people were skeptical. Some responses I received were, "Why so big?", "It's too large for stores to carry," and "It's too expensive." But once people used it, they noticed how the books captivated the audience and transformed the teaching experience. People began using it for all ages. For example, one *bochur* was hesitant to take such a gigantic book to Released Time, but he eventually took the *Chanukah Big Book* with him. Afterwards, he said that the book was the highlight of the evening. He was amazed by how the children and three

parents were glued to the book. Eventually, Shluchos asked me to make more books. This encouraged me to create the *Purim Big Book* and the *Passover Big Book*. By now the books have been translated into French, and an animated video of *The Purim Big Book* has been translated into eight languages.

WHAT IS SPECIAL TO YOU ABOUT YOUR BOOK?

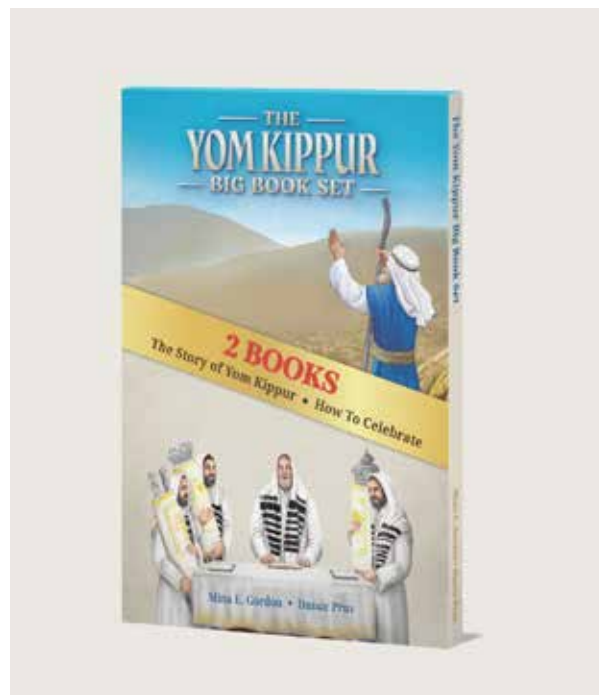
ESTY: I think I would say if someone reads the book they can just appreciate the sweet rhythm of it, but if they read it a second time, they'll notice a lot of detail. It begins with Modeh Ani: she's talking to Hashem, saying, "I'm here. I know you love me. רבה אמונתך."

The book goes through all the parts of davening--*shevach*, *hodaah*, and *bakasha*--without stating it outright. For example, when she says, "Sometimes I feel happy," that is *hodaah*.

I also specifically wanted it to be a girl because a lot of the time the girls books are about cooking, baking, or dresses, but I wanted to portray a girl who thinks. I wanted the book to be relatable to all kids, so the main character talks about universal things that make her happy like sunshine and people who love her, and she asks Hashem to make her friend feel better, showing that we daven for other people, too. At the end, she asks Hashem for a scooter, which emphasizes that nothing is too big or too small for Hashem. Everyone can talk to Hashem and keep up that relationship.

LEAH SCHAPIRO: My biggest nachas is hearing that kids who are both frum and not yet frum sing the pesukim, especially in English. While I had to memorize the twelve pesukim in school, I strongly believe that it's really about living life by the concepts of the pesukim, not just memorizing the words. Leah and I originally made the songs for camps. We purposely didn't repeat a Hebrew lyric more than once, because we wanted the song to convey the pure possuk. We also wanted to be clear and concise and ensure that kids really understand the meaning of the pesukim through the songs.

DASSI: I always dreamed of having Jewish big books. Every time they pulled out the big books at the public library, the children would be suddenly captivated. You could feel the excitement in the air. I always thought, "Why don't we have that for Jewish books?"



Dassie's Book

DO YOU HAVE MORE BOOKS IN THE WORKS?

ESTY: Lots, but I haven't found the right one. I sent in a bunch of different ideas that have been nixed because publishers have to lay out a lot of money to pay the author, the artist, and printer. They try to determine how sellable a book will be before taking it on as their project.

LEAH SCHAPIRO: I have other Jewish-based creations for kids that I would love to work on, but not necessarily books. I hadn't really dreamed of writing a book; I felt there was a demand for this and that's what drove me to do it. It was something I really had to believe in in order to accomplish it and I feel so grateful that Leah and I were able to do it.

DASSI: I'm releasing a new book, *The Yom Kippur Big Book*, which I co-authored with my aunt, Mina E. Gordon. Yom Kippur is a well-known Yom Tov but with very few resources, it's difficult to teach about it. The book is beautiful and designed to give readers a better grasp of the day of forgiveness, with the help of visuals. Many children and families come to shul only once a year--on Yom Kippur-- and I want the day to be meaningful for them. I hope this book will be a great addition to their shul experience. ■

The Most Underrated Parenting Advice

Estee (Goldberg) Lieblich, Crown Heights
Graduating Class of 5759 (1999)

Shhh.

**Pause. Observe.
Notice.**



As parents, this is probably the hardest thing to be asked to do. We've seen the expression "If you see something, say something!" posted all over New York City, and this saying seems to be the adage of great parenting too. There are so many opportunities throughout the day to educate our children by pointing things out as we notice them. So we comment, direct, and lecture. We mention what we see, what we want, and what we expect. We tell them what they should do and what they shouldn't do, what they should say and what they shouldn't say. And if we do it all kindly and calmly, what could be wrong?! There are so many teachable moments around us-- let's take advantage and be the ultimate teachers of good values!

The question is: How can we stand idly by and not get involved when the situation seems to demand it of us?

Taking advantage of all these moments can come at a cost:

- We can start to micromanage, hover, or meddle where we really shouldn't.

- We can become hypervigilant, always on the alert for what's about to go wrong.
- Children can become apprehensive about making mistakes, for fear of us interfering.
- We can develop the tendency to play “judge” and mete out justice, losing trust in our children's ability to get along and experience healthy sibling rivalry. This can result in jealousy amongst children, as well as children feeling misunderstood by us.
- Children may stop absorbing what we say, or worse, they may tune us out completely.
- Children may become defensive, which in turn can greatly limit their ability to be receptive to the chinuch we are trying to impart.

The question is: How *can* we stand idly by and not get involved when the situation seems to demand it of us? How do we strike the balance of guiding without hovering?

The Rebbe addresses this question very clearly in a letter:

“...As I was speaking to your husband when he was here: It's not right to watch over a child's every move and tell them exactly how to behave in every area; this was always true, but especially in our times. This applies even if one is a hundred percent sure that they are correct.” (*Igros Kodesh vol. 28 p. 82 -- A Chassidisher Derher*)

I can hear your questions: “So what should I do in the moment-- just ignore what's going on?!” “How will my children know right from wrong, or what I expect of them?” “Will the other children think I'm condoning what's going on if I don't get involved?”

The truth is that “teachable moments” actually rarely occur in the moment. In most cases, it is better to discuss the matter at hand at a later time, when both parent and child have a quiet, calm, connected moment together. *That's* where the real growth happens!

In the Hayom Yom of Chof Beis Teves, we learn (as per the words of the Rebbe Rashab) that we are obligated to think about the chinuch of our children for thirty minutes every day. If it's hard for you to commit to thirty consecutive minutes, consider the minutes where you stop, pause and observe, as time spent towards your thirty-minute obligation. The conscious awareness of these moments is vital information that enters your mind. Observing leads to absorption, and that brings clarity. This is the clarity of “aha!” moments that come as a result of making connections, noticing patterns, realizing the triggers behind behaviors, discerning cause and effect,

The same gevurah we use to discipline our children is the same attribute that we need in order to hold ourselves back from commenting.

tuning in to the particular needs of a particular child, and so on. Not interfering in the moment does not create negligence in our parenting; it actually gives us the opportunity to see the bigger picture, to respond instead of react, and to raise our children with intention.

The Rebbe's words teach us to take a step back and get out of our own way. The same *gevurah* we use to discipline our children is the same attribute that we need in order to hold ourselves back from commenting. This message is a timeless one that can help us steer clear of controlling behaviors and negative interactions, and bring more positivity and lightheartedness into our homes.

So if you see something, don't feel the need to say anything at all. Instead, be curious. Stop micromanaging. Give children the space to figure things out. And *believe* that they can!

And then, later on that day, or the next day, after you've given some thought to what your kids need to hear from you, find some time to sit down together while you're feeling calm and connected and have an intentional conversation. Try this for a few weeks, and see the tremendous shift this brings to your relationship with your children and to their relationships with each other! ■

*Estee Lieblich is an early childhood consultant, a parent coach, and a certified temperament specialist. Her **Head to Heart** workshops focus on mindful parenting for heartfelt relationships. She lives in Crown Heights with her husband and four children.*



7 TEACHER TIPS -



Not Just for Teachers

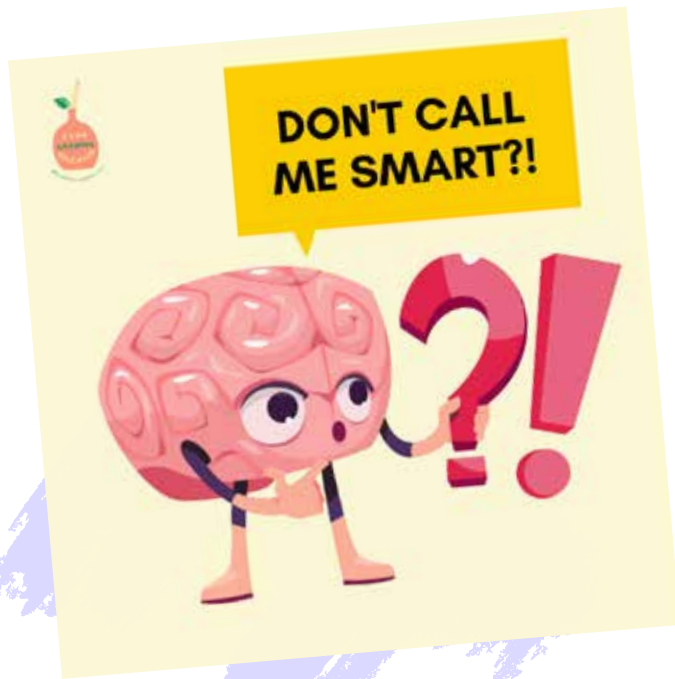
Mushkie (Junik) Lipsker, Garden City, NY
Graduating Class of 5768 (2008)



Mushkie Lipsker is the founder of Evergrowing Educator, which offers tips and resources to support teachers in creating a connected, engaged classroom. For practical education tips that are easy enough to use in your classroom the same day(!) follow @EverGrowingEducator on Instagram or Whatsapp 516-421-7071 to join the Whatsapp group.

Website: evergrowingeducator.com

Email: EverGrowingEducator@gmail.com



1. DON'T CALL ME SMART

💡 Instead of telling a child: “You’re so smart!” —> Try: “I can see how hard you’ve been trying,” or, “You’re really putting in effort, and it shows.”

These comments focus on their effort and growth-- things that they’ve earned-- and not just their inborn intelligence.

💡 You can also encourage their interests and passions by saying things like, “I love how curious you are, it’s great to ask questions.”

By focusing on what the child can control, you’re helping them build a love for learning and a growth mindset.

2. INSTEAD OF “GREAT JOB!”

□ There are so many benefits to giving children (and adults) specific praise.

□ Instead of telling a child, “Great job,” use the opportunity to praise their specific efforts and encourage a growth mindset.



3. DON'T TAKE ATTENDANCE

Don't take attendance.

Yes, you read that right.

Don't call name by name as you wait for a "here" or a "yes."



Instead, do this:

Ask each student a question as you say their name. Turn "roll call" into "connection time."



Here are 5 questions to last you through this week:

Chocolate or vanilla?

Group work or self work?

What's your dream job?

What's your favorite emoji?

If you were writing a book about yourself, what would the title be?



4. HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

Did you hear of the 80/20 rule? This is similar.

For every negative piece of feedback (or "no") that we need to give to a child, we need to ensure that we have five times as many positive interactions (or "yeses").

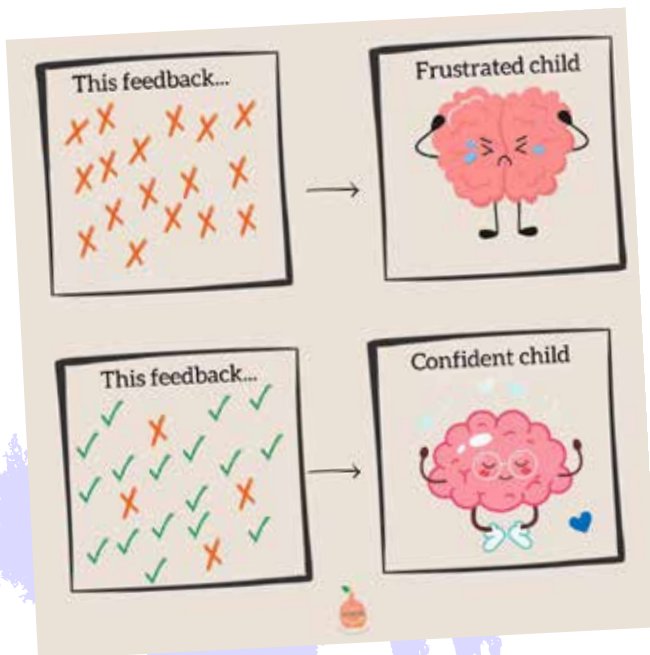


"Five to one-- gets the job done!"

Research shows that couples with five times as many positive interactions as negative have healthier relationships.

Of course, this goes for classrooms and homes too. Children with these 5:1 ratios learn better, are more engaged, and are able to accept criticism in a healthier way.

Plus, class participation increases, which brings a whole set of benefits on its own.



5. EINSTEIN'S REPORT CARD

Yes, this genius had trouble with school.

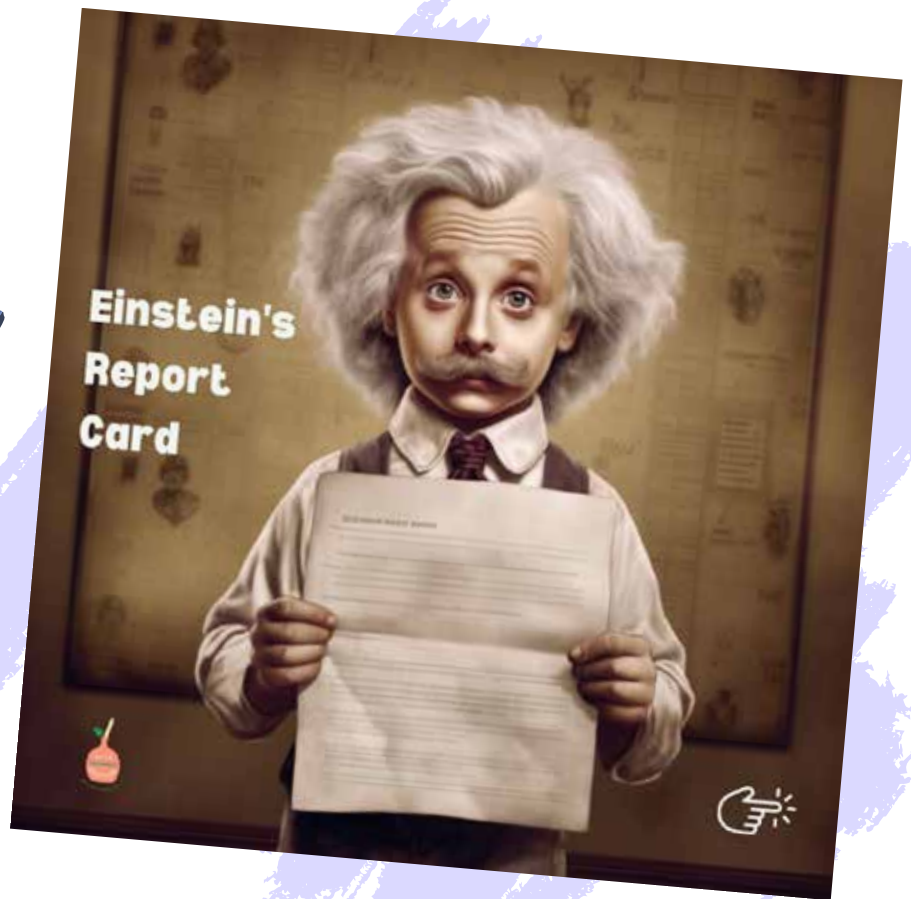
One of the greatest scientists ever, Einstein reportedly had difficulties in school, specifically with memorization and typical teaching methods.

His report card may have had comments like:


“Albert often appears disengaged during class and lacks focus.”

“Albert interrupts the lesson with many random and atypical thoughts.”

“Albert struggles to follow instructions and complete tasks within given timeframes.”



Yet his untypical thinking led to groundbreaking discoveries in physics.

 If we were rewriting his report card today, knowing what we now know about him, it would probably sound very different-- and positive. Maybe it would say this:

“Einstein shows a strong curiosity and deep interest in exploring scientific concepts. He would benefit from an environment that encourages exploration and nurtures his unique way of thinking. I am so proud to know him and can't wait to see everything he will accomplish and discover.”

Can we keep this in mind year round when a child isn't acting “typical?”

6. THE MAGIC WORD

Add this word for a magical touch! YET.

I don't understand how to translate this... YET.

I can't solve this math problem at all... YET.

I don't know how to read such a long word... YET.

I'm not good at writing script... YET.

This doesn't make sense... YET.



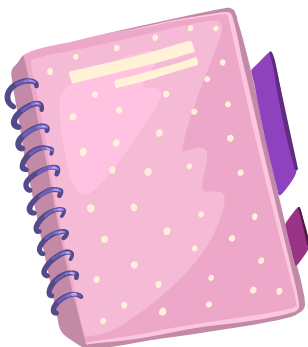
Adding Y.E.T. turns a statement from a “fixed mindset” of “I can’t” to a growth mindset of “I just need more time.”

And let's be honest. This isn't just for kids. We can all add some more YETs to our lives, too.



7. THINGS TO TELL A CHILD

*(That Don't
Cost a Cent!).*



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Are Children Addicted to

ALL THINGS SWEET

or the Excitement Around all Things Sweet?

Chaya (Hershkop) Stern, Philadelphia, PA
Graduating Class of 5765 (2005)



As a child, I had three requirements when choosing friends: How much candy they had in their house, how much of a variety of candy they had, and how much access to candy they had! So I know all about seeking candy. Seeking sweet. Seeking snacks. I spent my childhood becoming an expert in this field. And as a kid raised in a very health-conscious household, it wasn't easy to get the experience I wanted. I would

go to great and embarrassing lengths to get access to the sugary (and spicy and salty) foods I craved.

Today, as a parent myself, and a feeding specialist helping parents with all their food, snack, and meal-time struggles with their children, I think it is so important to find that balance around snacks, whether savory or sweet¹. To present all foods neutrally in a way that allows our children to learn that all foods can be valuable. That they can enjoy a wide range of foods without gravitating to the excitement that is created around sweet and packaged, processed snacks.

The teaching, modeling, and shifting start at home.

I recently did an experiment. A small-sample, short-term, very faulty experiment — a preliminary experiment to test a hypothesis.

My hypothesis is that children are drawn to sugar, not for its own pure sweet value, but for the culture of sugar. They are enticed by the excitement that is created around sugar.

For three days I offered my children sugar cubes. Pure, plain, white sugar. I then gave them an equal amount of sugar in the form of jelly beans. Fun, colorful, flavorful, chewy jelly beans.

I would go to great and embarrassing lengths to get access to the sugary (and spicy and salty) foods I craved.

I tracked their intake. Would they eat everything? Would they demonstrate a preference? What would their preference be?

The first surprising result revealed itself before the experiment even started. We were at a hamentash bake and there was a tea table. On the table were sugar cubes. Since the experiment was on my mind, I expressed some excitement over seeing the sugar cubes, and my children asked if they could have some.

I was quite surprised by how interested they were. They each ate two sugar cubes before moving on.

A few days later, we started the experiment and the novelty of sugar cubes quickly wore off. By day three, none of the three children were touching the sugar

Whether a particular food benefits an individual or not is individual!

cubes. Two out of three children were still eating the jelly beans, and my most candy-loving daughter wasn't eating either of the options —she wanted cereal instead!

Every approach in this world exists on three levels: Thought, speech, and action. So when we want to adopt a new approach to snacks, we want to make changes in the way we think about snacks, speak about snacks, and behave around snacks.

So here are some sweet ideas that you can consider incorporating into your thought, speech, and action plan:

Think about the value of the food, not the category you would put it into.

Whether a particular food benefits an individual or not is, well, individual! So a food that is good or healthy for one person might be problematic for another! I have worked with children who are surviving on sugar and preservative-loaded Pediasure. So if those children could switch to whole milk, for example, that would be more “healthy” for them. For my daughter, who has a milk sensitivity, it would not—it triggers her eczema. Some foods give us a quick boost of energy; some give us lasting energy.

What we need from our food changes all the time and different foods will serve a purpose at different times. Some foods are just for a good taste, and some give great sensory input and that is valuable in and of itself! We eat for satiation *and* satisfaction.

Once we start thinking about individual foods, rather than food groups or categories, it becomes easier to identify what our concern with that food is. Often, it is the ingredients in the food we may prefer to avoid. When we think about how we can change a food rather than determining that we must restrict it completely, we can generate creative solutions for ingredient replacement. That way, we can continue to enjoy the food in a way that also benefits our bodies.



How we talk about food matters more than *what* we say about it.

Children are very attuned to the energy in our language. They are more interested in our tone than in what we are telling them! When we present snacks as a treat, something special, and something desirable, we create a correlation between the enthusiasm we are infusing our language with and the food we are offering them. If we present snack foods as neutrally as we present fruits or nuts, then we bring the same energy into the language we are using for all foods, and that equalizes the foods we are offering.

The other day, my children had a school Hakhel gathering. The children were all given a taffy and then plates of baby carrots were passed around. I loved the way candy and carrots were offered! Then, when the girls were directed to make the brochos, the teacher said, “Make a shehakol on your treat and a ha’adoma on your healthy food.” So one food is a treat and one is just a boring old healthy food. The words we choose and how we say them makes a difference.

On the flip side, I have yet to hear from a parent that any of their long, drawn-out speeches on how bad and unhealthy some foods are and how their children shouldn’t eat them, have made a desirable difference to their child’s food choices! I have a daughter who asks me if every single food she comes across is healthy or not. I use every opportunity to explain the nutritional value of the food, and regardless of what information I share, she still trades the costly, better-quality snacks I buy for the cheap snacks her friends bring to school.

One of the most likely outcomes of hearing how terrible their favorite foods are is that children will

eat them in hiding, or lie about eating them. I remember buying the biggest ice pop you could get for twenty-five cents from the corner store on my way home from school. When my mother asked if I bought it, I would deny it, not realizing that my bright blue tongue was telling a different story.

Do it differently.

One of my Instagram followers shared the following experience. She taught children with Autism for many years and her classes often had ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) providers working with the children. ABA tends to focus on rewarding children for skill development and most often those rewards are snack foods. This teacher moved up with her class over the years and noticed that even as the rewards were phased out, the children

One of the most likely outcomes of hearing how terrible their favorite foods are is that children will eat them in hiding, or lie about eating them.

would still constantly seek the snack foods that had been used. This association between snack foods and accomplishment stayed with them, and they continued to seek those feelings of success from these foods.

When we offer children snacks as rewards, we



are giving them the message that these foods are more valuable than any other food. That these foods are prizes! This puts snacks on a pedestal, leading children to desire them more, whether it's because we make these foods special or because they associate these foods with the feeling of being rewarded.

Another common way parents elevate snacks over other foods is by withholding snack foods unless children eat other foods first. This gives children the message that mealtime food is just a means to an end — snack food. They think that the truly worthy food is the snack food, and mealtime food is at best to be tolerated and at worst to be forced into their bodies.

Something else I've observed about parents is how much power they can give to snack foods. They'll worry that their children will overconsume, that it will make their children hyper, that their children will feel ill, or will choose to eat only snacks. So they hover over their children, checking how much they are serving themselves, they make all kinds of dire predictions and constantly warn their children about how they will get a tummy ache. Some, or all of this, might even be true, and like all other natural consequences in life, we need to allow our children to have these experiences so they know for themselves how their choices impact them.

When you are ready to shift away from these behaviors that raise snack foods above all other foods, here are some ideas you can try:

Occasionally offer a snack or "treat" for no particular reason. Show children that they can have snack foods without needing to earn them.

Practice trusting your children and giving them chances to learn to trust themselves.



Consider offering snack foods alongside other foods. This shows children that all foods are valuable and can be enjoyed unconditionally.

Look for opportunities to allow children to freely explore their food choices². Let them choose what and how much they want to eat. This can be outside the house, where they might have access to snacks that you do not typically buy. Practice trusting your children and giving them chances to learn to trust themselves.

Ready to shift your approach? Think of where you are and where you want to be. What changes feel most important to you? What resonates the most? What would be most helpful to you and your children? Shifting your approach will be a journey. And it's not about getting it one hundred percent. It's about moving forward, one snack at a time! ■

Chaya Stern is an OT and feeding specialist. Chaya coaches parents through food and mealtime struggles with their children so they can nourish and nurture their children in fun and pressure-free ways. Chaya's goal is for mealtime to be family time that everyone enjoys. Chaya offers one-on-one coaching, group classes, and pre-recorded courses.

Contact Chaya: Chaya@eatersfeeders.com or check her out on Instagram @eatersandfeeders.

1. For simplicity's sake, I will address all snacks — any savory or sweet foods that are typically processed and packaged that children may prefer.

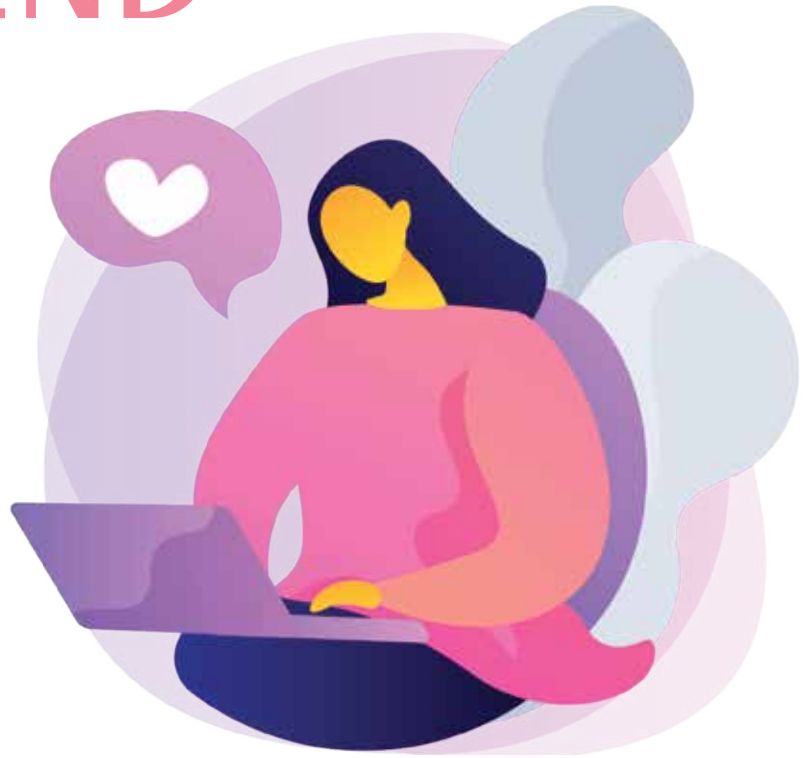
2. As long as there is no specific known health or safety concern.





ASKING FOR *a* FRIEND

FOR THE SAKE
OF PEACE.....
OR NOT?



DEAR CHAYA,

Yom Tov is coming up and all the siblings are coming together at my mother's house. While there's plenty of space for us, some rooms have an advantage, whether they are larger, have an ensuite private bathroom, or have more comfortable beds. Every year I get the "worst" room. While I don't want to cause a fight, a part of me feels like maybe sometimes I should stick up for myself and my family to get a better room. I have this internal conflict: Am I just being a loser and a doormat for always agreeing to take the worst room, or is there an inherent value in "being *mevater*?" Am I supposed to always be *mevater*? Is it better not to make waves?

Signed,

Not sure if I'm a loser for being mevater



DEAR NOT SURE.

The situation you are describing is not an unusual one, and I'm sure there are many who can relate. When families come together under one roof there are many elements to work out, and chances are, things aren't going to be equal. Even if the rooms are exactly the same, each family has different needs which all need to be met differently. This is a major logistical challenge and even the best arrangements are bound to leave someone feeling sidelined. Add to that differences in personality, plus people who will insist on having their way, and things only get more complicated. It really is a wonder when families can enjoy time peacefully!

So what is the answer? Is it the right thing to always be *mevater* for the sake of peace, no matter how it feels? Or is there another way to deal with these sticky situations where your needs can also be considered?

THE IMPORTANCE OF PEACE

First off, the value of peace cannot be overstated. In Pirkei Avos, peace is listed as one of the pillars of the world, and we are taught that in some cases it is even permissible to bend the truth for the sake of peace. Considering this, I think it is fair to say that if there are issues that are really and genuinely not a big deal to you that others care about more, being *mevater* for the sake of peace is definitely the way to go.

The Gemara also emphasizes the virtue of being *mevater* on issues which may be rightfully yours, and yet you defer for another. Many brochos are promised to a person who does so.

ONE CONDITION

However, there is a caveat.

Most of us are familiar with the concept of *nekama*: we are forbidden to take revenge when someone does us wrong. Less known is the concept of *netirah*, or bearing a grudge, where we treat someone kindly in spite of the way they treat us—only that we haven't forgiven them in our heart. We are filled with resentment, even as we treat them

Is it the right thing to always be mevater for the sake of peace, no matter how it feels?

well. The Torah forbids this, telling us so in the very same possuk as the one that teaches us not to pay revenge, then followed immediately by the famous words, “ואהבת לרעך, כמוך”—“love your fellow as yourself.”

The Torah does not want us to behave well outwardly *despite* what we feel inside, but to be aware of and work with our very human feelings to do the right thing.

Which means, if taking the “worst” room will bother you, whether it is because of the injustice of it or because you really don't like the very firm mattresses or noisy air conditioner, it is not truly “being *mevater*” if it will cause you to be resentful of the other family members who got the better bedrooms, or the host who made the decision. Being *mevater* is not just an action but an internal decision to really forget and forgive, even when something that was rightfully yours was given to another.

Now what happens when you aren't in that place? What if you can't truly be *mevater* in your heart when things are really unfair?

We can look at the possuk immediately preceding the warning against holding a grudge, for very clear instructions:

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your fellow, but you shall not bear a sin on his account.” (ויקרא יט: יז)

In other words: Use your words. Talk it out.

Consider the other person's position while expressing your own, and work on a compromise that can work for you both. Perhaps this time you'll accept the “worst room,” but next time it will be someone else. Perhaps you'll have the worst room but they'll take on some extra cooking or cleaning responsibilities that you don't enjoy anyway. With a little bit of creativity and a win-win atti-



Have a question you want to see addressed? Trying to figure out the balance in a specific area of your life? Send in your AFAF question to embrace@bethrivkah.edu to have an answer featured in an upcoming issue!

Being mevater is not just an action but an internal decision to really forget and forgive, even when something that was rightfully yours was given to another.

tude, it is possible to find a solution to almost any disagreement.

LAST RESORT

And if it happens that you've tried your best and are unable to come to an acceptable compromise, it may be time for you to dig deeper. Perhaps you can find room in your heart to give to another what you really had wanted for yourself, like Rochel Imeinu did for her sister Leah. Rochel gave up the right to marry the man she loved, with a full heart, even though she had no choice in the matter, and would have surely chosen otherwise if it were up to her. We are taught what a tremendous *zechus* this was for Rochel Imeinu and for her descendants.

Perhaps, in a case when there really is no other peaceful option, Hashem is giving you a challenge that only He knows you can overcome, by being *mevater* not just in action but in the fullest sense with a complete heart.

Far from being a loser, you are showing your strength of character with your ability to give up something that you may truly deserve, and still be content without it.

CONCLUSION

The key is to be honest with yourself, to recognize how you really feel about the situation, and take the appropriate course of action. You really don't care? Great, be *mevater*! Let the others have what they prefer at no cost to your own dignity.

You do care and wish it wasn't so? Talk it through and find a creative compromise.

Compromise not happening, though you really tried? Find it in your heart to let it go. Maybe treat yourself to a little extra something (that is in your control) so you can feel good about the sacrifice you made for the sake of peace.

This journey of life is designed to help us grow into the best people we can be. When facing a situation like this, remember that it isn't there to hold you back but in fact to push you forward and challenge you to find new strength that you may not have known you had.

Accept the challenge, and discover the brochos that will follow.

Much hatzlacha!

<3 Chaya ■



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וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן פְּרֵי עֵץ הַדָּדָר... (ויקרא כג: מ)

And you shall take for yourselves on the first day, the fruit of the *hadar* tree... (Vayikra 23: 40)

רַבִּי אַבְהוּ אָמַר: אַל תִּקְרֵי "הַדָּדָר", אֶלָּא "הַדָּר" – דְּבָר שֶׁדָּר בְּאֵילָנוֹ מִשָּׁנָה לְשָׁנָה... (סוכה לה, א)

Rabbi Abbahu said: Do not read it "*hadar*," but rather read it "*ha-dar*," meaning one that dwells – referring to an item that dwells on its tree from year to year... (Sukkah 35a)

***Despite the
changing seasons,
the esrog endures.***



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One Campaign with *Lasting Impact*

Manya (Friedman) Lazaroff, College Station, TX
Graduating Class of 5758 (1998)



Since they began their mikvah-building campaign called, “Jewish Family Life Center: A Mikvah Educational Space,” Manya Lazaroff and her family have witnessed numerous miraculous events. “We’ve seen Hashem’s hand in a very unique way,” Manya says.

Manya and her husband have been on shlichus for the past twenty-five years, taking root in College Station in 5767 (2007). The couple serves students and faculty of the largest university in the United States-- Texas A&M University.

The nearest mikvah to College Station is one hundred miles each way, and the only route to get there includes two-lane, dark country roads. Manya describes the great miracles she has seen in building the new mikvah in her own town.

Kallah Teacher's Training

In the summer of 5780 (2020), I saw an advertisement for a kallah teacher's training course, arranged by Mikvah.org. At the time, I was not looking to become a trained, certified kallah teacher, as I live in a remote college town far from any frum kallahs. Still, quite a few of my students were growing in their Yiddishkeit and heading toward the path of Chabad chassidim. Based on experiences with past students who became baalei teshuvah, I wanted more resources to guide my students with issues that might spring up in their marriages.

My sister-in-law, Chassie Rivkin, Director of Operations at Mikva.org, encouraged me to take the course. I told her that I was considering it because I wanted to be there for my students as their lives evolved, just as I was always there for them in their freshman years.

The COVID Halt

I started the course after Tishrei. But halfway through the course, COVID-19 hit. All our children returned home, and studying Taharas Hamishpacha for hours a week was suddenly off the table. I felt I had learned a lot, but whatever was, was. Life had changed drastically.

A year passed and Chassie reached out to me again, asking if I would finish the course. "We'll let you jump in and finish the course because we understand the circumstances," she said.

But life was busy, and the entire world felt uncertain. I was hesitant. While many other people's shlichus had come to a halt that August, we were very fortunate that ours was up and running. Still, the student body was needier than ever because there were less resources. The world was so isolating since COVID, and everything took much more time and effort to put together. Food needed to be individually wrapped and all the programming had to be outdoors. I was really hesitant about getting back to the course. But Chassie urged me, and finally I decided, "OK, I am going to just do it."

All our children returned home, and studying Taharas Hamishpacha for hours a week was suddenly off the table.

Miracle Baby

The course started in Cheshvan, and in the middle of Kislev, I found out that I was expecting! Now, this came as a very big surprise, as I was forty-one years old. We had not been blessed with children since I was twenty-nine, when we had our triplets. Since then, for no explainable reason, Hashem had not blessed us with more children.

The pregnancy was extraordinarily spontaneous, surprising, and welcomed. My husband and I had tremendous gratitude to Hashem. It was clear that our lives were going to change.

What we needed now was to live near the Chabad house so we could spend more time there on Shabbos. Our shlichus very much keeps us at the Chabad House on Friday night and Shabbos day. Students hang out there all Shabbos afternoon; it's their home. Since only my husband, our three older boys, the triplets, and I walked to shul and there were no babies to consider, we had bought a house about a mile away from shul. The triplets were already ten years old, so we could easily walk back and forth between our home and the Chabad House.

But now, with the new baby coming, we needed a space right near Chabad. Lo and behold, around Purim time during the pregnancy, the owners of the last property attached to our Chabad House approached us with an offer to purchase a house!

Learning to Build A Mikvah

Interestingly, a course about building mikvaos had opened up during COVID. Due to life's circumstances, chaos, and our shlichus, my husband had never paused to take it. But since COVID had caused a certain lull, he was able to take on and complete the personal online learning.

It was when my husband was learning about mikvaos that I became blessed with the incredible gift of pregnancy. Hashem not only gave us a place to live with this new baby and the solution to being at Chabad on Shabbos, but Hashem also provided us with the

It was when my husband was learning about mikvaos that I became blessed with the incredible gift of pregnancy.

property for the construction of a mikvah! We will be adding the mikvah to the house next door to the Chabad House, b'ezras Hashem.

I completed the kallah teacher's training course on a Tuesday in the summer of 5781 (2021), and my precious Batsheva was born the next day. It was a week earlier than she was officially due, and it was also the same day as my sister-in-law Chassie's birthday. It was amazing that this precious neshoma was gifted to us at the same time that the mikvah property fell into our laps-- exactly when Hashem decided it was the right time. These direct brochos were pouring down all at once.

We started our "Jewish Family Life Center" campaign and put it online. We realized what a huge undertaking this was; it was a \$1.3 million project which is much heftier than a campus shlichus city can normally take on. Still, this was obviously what Hashem wanted of us.

Clear Messages

The week we were deliberating about buying the mikvah property, we got a message from a graduate student who lives in Eretz Yisroel. "Hey," he said, "I'm moving to College Station for the next six years. I'm not very religious but I use mikvah. Is there a mikvah in your city?" Unfortunately, the answer was no.

That same week, my husband received another message: "I was offered a great job position right in your city. But I looked into the city and saw that there was no mikvah, so I didn't take the job."

Hashem had clearly sent two people to remove all doubt and say to us, "Guess what? This is exactly where Hashem wants you. This is exactly the next step in your shlichus. This mikvah needs to happen now."

Miracle Donations

During the campaign, my husband got a message from a young man who said, "You may not remem-

ber me, but I came to you for a summer conference in 5768 (2008) and I want to start donating monthly to your mikvah."

My husband asked why he wanted to donate to us, as he didn't even live in our state.

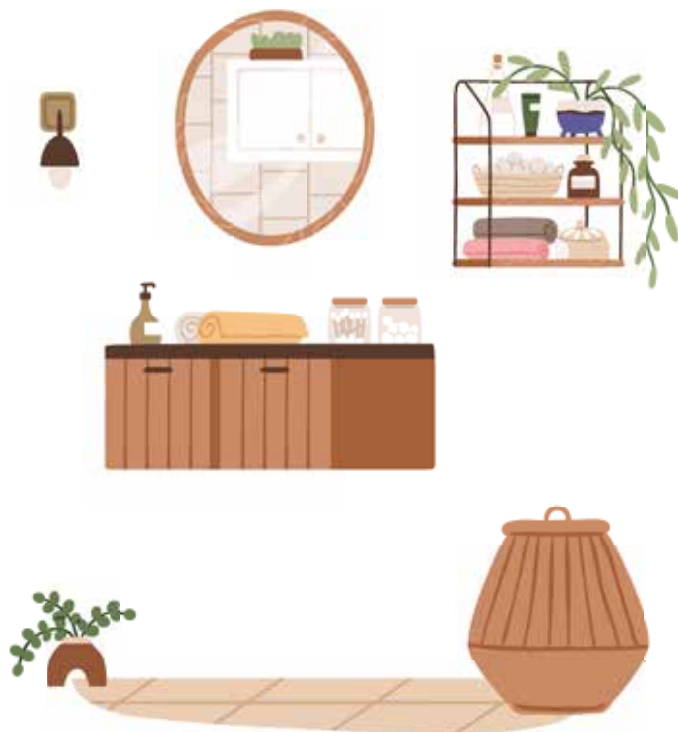
"My wife and I have been married for five years," the man replied. "We have not been blessed with children, so my Rav told me to find a mikvah that's in the process of being built and that needs funds. He said to give to that cause and it will bring brochos."

Remarkably, this young man called us back this year right before Rosh Hashanah to tell us that he and his wife have been blessed with their first baby! Another precious neshoma!

Every time this project seems to be overwhelming or burdensome, Hashem sends us another incredible reminder. Case in point: When my daughter was about one year old, I discovered that I was expecting again!

Four Years of Waiting

There's one final story. About a year-and-a-half ago, a young frum couple told us that they're moving to town. My husband and I explained that our city is not the best place for a young frum couple because there's no chinuch for children here, and there are no other young frum couples. Additionally, the mikvah is far away, although we are in the midst of building



one, b'ezras Hashem.

The couple confided in us saying that although they had been married for four years, they had not been blessed with children. They had decided that instead of obsessing over it, they'd move to our town and the wife would focus on getting her master's degree. My husband told them about the couple that was blessed with a baby after donating to our mikvah campaign. Upon hearing this story, the couple donated a hefty sum towards our mikvah. Miraculously, their first baby was born a month ago! Once the baby was born, they decided to leave our city because they realized that they needed to live somewhere with proper chinuch for their children and the infrastructure of a frum community.

Over the last few years, we have seen this project bring tremendous brochos. Since I took the kallah teacher's training course, I've been able to help about six different couples, each with unique circumstances, by guiding them to the right halachic resources. This course has sparked tremendous brocha.

We are now at the halfway mark of our mikvah project, and we see first-hand that the fundraiser has been the channel for tremendous brochos for Klal Yisroel. I look forward to witnessing many more miracles. ▀

Hashem had clearly sent two people to remove all doubt and say to us, "Guess what? This is exactly where Hashem wants you."



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GIVE *Change* A CHANCE

Chaya S (Minkowicz) Abelsky, Crown Heights/Chabad of Moldova
Graduating Class of 5749 (1989)



*H*ave you ever made a *hachlota* and didn't quite stick to it? When Rosh Hashanah comes around, do you find that you're still trying to change the same old behaviors you thought you left behind?

Sometimes we can get so frustrated with ourselves, other people, or challenging situations that we actually lose any hope of moving forward. We may find ourselves saying, "Oh well, people don't change." When Hashem told Avraham "לך לך", He revealed for all time that it *is* possible to "leave our land, our birthplace and our father's house." The world may want us to believe that our lives are dictated and determined by our DNA (our birthplace), past trauma, habits, family patterns (our father's house) and economic, political, or social forces

that are bigger than us (our land). But Torah teaches us that we have *bechira chofshis*; we are free to choose in a way that sets us on a different path.

As a master certified coach, I've seen first-hand that real change is possible -- but it takes more than davening for results. We have to work hard, and not rely on miracles. Of course, we need to ask Hashem for help even as we put in our best efforts to grow, because, while the work is up to us, we still need *siyata diSh-maya*. And we can take great comfort in knowing that, "הבא לטהר מסייעין אותו" -- someone who comes to purify himself, is helped from Above. When we put in our best efforts, Hashem *will* help us.

The starting point is to acknowledge that you are fully whole and resourceful. You have within you the potential to change.

In my coaching, I use and train on the model of change developed by James Prochaska, author of *Change for Good*. Prochaska studied thousands of people who were trying to quit smoking, and created a six-step formula called the "Trans-theoretical Model of Self-Change." This information has not only helped my clients, but it's helped me as well. I'm sharing it here in the hopes that it will be useful to you as an individual, friend, wife, and parent.

The starting point is to acknowledge that you are fully whole and resourceful. You have within you the potential to change. That's why, as a coach, I refrain from telling my clients what to do; I ask questions to guide them toward finding answers that are right for them.

Change begins with the frustration that we are stuck in some area or another. Often, we are in denial that we can do anything about the situation. We might blame someone or something outside of ourselves, and there may be a genuine obstacle in the way. This is called the **Precontemplation** stage.

Recently, I was struggling with feeling sluggish, tired, and dehydrated. I was drinking lots of strong coffee during the day to keep up with tight deadlines and late meetings, only to be waking up many times during the night, struggling to fall back asleep. In the morning,

Come up with a plan of action, figuring out what you will do differently to get different results.

the whole cycle would begin again, as I drank coffee after coffee to keep my energy up. This cycle was affecting my health. For some time I told myself that it wasn't a problem. Then one day I realized: I could stay stuck in complaining and feeling helpless, or, I could choose to move to stage two: **Contemplation**.

Shlomo Hamelech says, "דאגה בלב איש ישיחנה", which can be interpreted to mean, "If one has a worry in his heart, he should talk about it." In other words, articulate the problem to someone. As we learn in Pirkei Avos, "עשה לך רב וקנה לך חבר" "Make for yourself a *rav*, and acquire for yourself a friend." Sometimes we may even need to pay someone to be a sounding board for us and to give us their objective opinion. On numerous occasions, the Rebbe advised people to speak to "yedidim mevinim," friends who are mavens in the area of concern.

Let's explore a relevant example in chinuch: Suppose your child is struggling with something at school--perhaps her grades are dropping, or maybe she's acting out during class. You can blame the school, the teacher, or the other children in the class. If you do this instead of taking ownership of the issue, you won't be able to facilitate change. The way to work toward change is to take the time to gather as much information as you can from all the players in your child's life. Be curious enough to look at the challenge from multiple angles, and speak to the experts. The Rebbe Rashab advised parents to spend thirty minutes every day contemplating the chinuch of their children. Contemplation is the key to meaningful planning and action.

Once you've done this, you can move to stage three: **Preparation**. In this step you want to carefully craft a plan to change the situation. At this point, go back to the experts and give feedback on what you've discovered about the challenge you've been facing. Come up with a plan of action, figuring out what you will do differently to get different results. Albert Einstein said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. So don't do the same thing! To refer back to my unhealthy coffee habit that was keeping me up at night and making me look like a raisin, my plan to change

When days are more challenging for me, with late meetings and early mornings, I can control my behavior and decide that coffee is not going to be the solution.

this was to keep a log of every cup I drank. This way I could consciously keep count and reduce my coffee intake. Remember, if you don't change, nothing will!

After preparation, you're ready for stage four: **Action**. Notice that we don't jump from awareness of a problem (pre-contemplation) to a quick-fix action. That might work short-term, but when we do this and then relapse, which is to be expected, we are likely to feel frustrated with ourselves and give up before we've even given change a chance. Yes, sustainable change takes thought and long-term planning!

Action is very different from reaction. In this step, you are not simply reacting to the problem, you are proactively responding by taking action. When you are ready to take action, it's helpful to share your goal with someone who can hold you accountable. It's totally normal and expected to slip back into the old habit. When I stopped logging my cups of coffee because I forgot to, or was away from my computer

(where I kept the log) I started drinking more to keep up with my busy schedule. Once again, I wasn't sleeping well and was feeling jittery. So I looked at my plan again. I put an app on my phone that would help me log every cup. The awareness of how much coffee I was drinking was right at my fingertips, enabling me to take back control. Remember, you can't control what's outside of you. When days are more challenging for me, with late meetings and early mornings, I can control my behavior and decide that coffee is not going to be the solution.

The two final steps toward change are **Maintenance** and **Termination**. To maintain your new course of action, you must regularly reflect on what's working, acknowledging the positive shifts that you're making. You can adjust the plan, building on what works and figuring out what can be improved. Of course, you can always ask for help, and go back to your yedidim mevinim. **Termination** is when you reach a whole new level of consciousness where the problem is no longer a threat to you. You are no longer the same person.

Then, all that's left is to tackle something new, and start the process again! I trust that this scientifically established model will be helpful to you on your journey to making change in your life.

In addition to the change that we choose, sometimes change chooses us. When a life event asks much more of us, we are called to do deeper inner work, known as **Transition**. I hope to share insights on this with you, next time. ■



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Why we picked up our family
and moved out of town

Chaya M. (Katzman) Raskin, Ellenville, NY
Graduating Class of 5768 (2008)



"Want to go away for Shabbos this week?"

After ten years of marriage, I'm no longer surprised by my husband's spontaneous—and to my mind, often wild—ideas.

“Where to?” I ask.

“There’s this place upstate that needs new Shluchim. They want us to come this week to check it out.”

I smile to myself. We’ve done this before. It’s a familiar script for our family already, although the last time it happened was a few years back. An offer comes up, we travel there for an interesting Shabbos, only to arrive back home and recognize how impractical, inappropriate, or otherwise unappealing the offer is for us.

Some Background

Neither of us had grown up on shlichus, and so there was no immediately obvious position for us to accept. And while an exotic island in the Indian Ocean sounded like a great adventure, it wasn’t a place we could realistically see ourselves living.

So my husband studied in kollel for a number of years, and I was happy to work to support us for as long as it was possible. Time passed and our family grew, and the thought of moving out on shlichus slowly faded away. We bought a small house in East Flatbush and made new friends in the growing community. We got involved with the shul, and made a point to invite Shabbos guests. By this time, we were married for a decade already; it seemed clear that Hashem had other plans for us. Our shlichus, it seemed, was local.

To be perfectly honest, I was kind of relieved. Sure, we had been brought up inspired and motivated to live our lives as the Rebbe’s Shluchim, and my husband and I had agreed to pursue it when we got married. But deep down, I didn’t really think it would happen. While I had many relatives on shlichus all over the world, I myself had not been brought up on shlichus and I was comfortable where I was. I couldn’t see myself away from my family and all that was familiar, left to figure everything out alone.

So I was somewhat surprised that my husband was still entertaining the idea of moving out. And yet, it seemed so far-fetched that I saw no harm in humoring him. What was the chance that there was any place that would actually be practical for us to move to at this stage in our lives?

The Offer

We went. The place was beautiful. We were immedi-

I couldn’t believe we were seriously considering it. It really was a wild idea. And yet, it was also compelling.

ately won over by the fresh air, trees, and mountain setting. There was a house and a massive shul already owned by the community—old, and in need of repair, but still an impressive building. The community was an eclectic mix of Yidden from all stripes, and we knew that uniting them would be a challenge, but we were hopeful. As we spoke it over, the details started falling into place. There were options for income. Nothing tremendous, but enough that we wouldn’t be starting from scratch. Kosher grocery stores less than half an hour away, and a Walmart Supercenter just down the road.

I couldn’t believe we were seriously considering it. It really was a wild idea. And yet, it was also compelling.

Both my husband and I had always struggled with the noise and bustle of the city. We longed for the fresh and peaceful surroundings of country life that we got a small taste of once or twice a year. How many times had we asked each other what we were doing in this concrete jungle anyway?

And there was something else.

We had bought our house five years back. It was tiny, but it fit our small family, and it was what we could



The fact that it was unusual didn't bother me; I've never been a major conformist. But I tried to analyze the situation and determine honestly whether this wild idea was, in fact, a good move for us to make for our family.

afford. Since then, we were blessed with a few more children and filled up the three little bedrooms with bunk beds and cribs. But now, with our newest arrival just a few weeks old, there simply wasn't space for another bed. We knew we had a few more months to make some serious renovations to somehow add another bedroom, or move to another house entirely.

And that's when the offer came. The timing was too perfect to ignore. And so we agreed to continue traveling for Shabbos as we worked out the logistics of a possible move.

Considering the Move

We knew it would be a big lifestyle change. We would be moving from living among thousands just like us to a place with virtually none. No longer would we have access to all of the programs, services, and conveniences of modern frum life. In fact, (besides for kosher food which, for the most part, we could get twenty minutes away) we'd have nothing Jewish at all except what we'd create ourselves.

Of course, to a Lubavitcher none of this is unheard of. But we were no longer a young couple, wet behind the ears and as of yet unaware of the challenges of raising a family. We had almost a decade behind us of raising our kids within the comfortable framework of our schools, friends, family and the community shul and neighbors around us.

Anyone we mentioned it to thought the entire idea was simply bizarre. Sure, many go out on shlichus with a baby, maybe two - but no one goes out with seven. Somehow, it's assumed that if the kids don't know better then surely it isn't such a big deal. But to uproot a family from all that's familiar to start in a new community? Why?

We thought about it as we continued to travel for

Shabbos, getting to know the community better.

The fact that it was unusual didn't bother me; I've never been a major conformist. But I tried to analyze the situation and determine honestly whether this wild idea was, in fact, a good move for us to make for our family.

What about Chinuch?

One of the biggest factors to consider was, of course, chinuch.

Our children were in good schools, the girls in Bais Rivkah and the boys in one of the flagship Crown Heights Lubavitcher schools. And they were generally happy there, even if (naturally) not without issues.

Should we move, instead of relying on a school for chinuch, the chinuch would be on us. Whether we found a school for our kids, or chose to homeschool, we certainly wouldn't have the complete *chassidische* package we were used to at home.

At first that seemed like a major disadvantage, even a hardship. But the more I thought about it, the more I came to like the idea.

The word "chinuch" today has come to mean "school." As the place where children tend to spend the majority of their day, school has a tremendous effect on their lives. But chinuch is so much more than covering certain subjects, hearing people talk, and celebrating events in a particular way - all very important elements of our schools today.



What chinuch truly is, is about molding a child—particularly their middos—into a good person, a servant of Hashem, and a Chossid. And it is accomplished primarily by example and through the child’s personal experience, along with gentle guidance in helping each child make the most of their individual personality.

I thought about this idea. I started to think about what I wanted my children to be as they grew up. And I realized that life on shlichus, devoted to helping other Yidden in the most literal sense, was probably the best form of chinuch there was. Yes, my children would be different from their peers— if they had classmates at all—but it would be a difference they knew and took pride in. Perhaps they would struggle with the lack of frum neighbors, being far from family, and having to travel a distance to 770 and the Ohel. But it would be a struggle for a life of meaning, with a purpose, and an excellent preparation for a lifetime of sacrifice for the sake of Yiddishkeit.

I realized that as long as I was sending my children to a *chassidische* school, I was not being proactive about their chinuch. I was relying on the school to provide “standards” for my child and to determine at each point in time what was appropriate for them to learn, daven, and do—even at home, even on Shabbos and Yom Tov. We were just following along. Most of the time we were happy with this arrangement, and when things weren’t exactly as we liked them, we grumbled to ourselves, but why even complain? A few small issues seem like a small price to pay when a “proper

chinuch” is being provided.

It was only now, with a real thought of taking our children out of this safe and predictable system, that I realized how mistaken this attitude was.

I realized that, no matter where I send my children to learn to read and write, no matter where and with whom they are spending the majority of their day, at the end of the day, I am the primary educator of my children. Nobody knows a child more than an in-

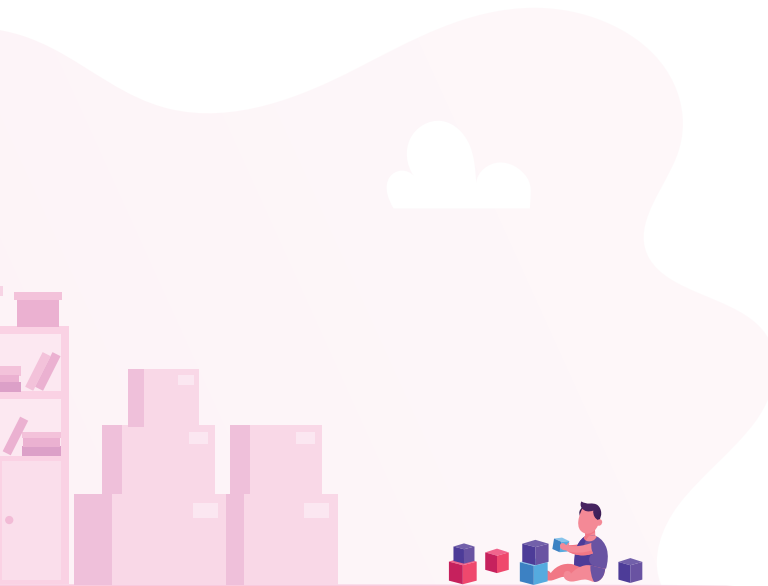
Nobody more than a parent can give a child a sense of right and wrong, a feeling of pride in who they are, and a model of how a good person behaves.

involved parent, who can actively guide and encourage him according to his unique abilities and character as he grows up. Nobody more than a parent can give a child a sense of right and wrong, a feeling of pride in who they are, and a model of how a good person behaves.

Chinuch never belonged to the school; it was only given to them when parents weren’t able to provide it themselves. And as parents got busier and busier and more and more uninvolved with their children, the schools stepped in more to fill in the gaps. Admirably so; but it was still second-best. The mandate of educating a child—beginning with the possuk of “*v’shinantam l’vanecha*” which we recite twice daily in Shema—is on the parent.

Shifting in Place

With this new awareness, and as yet unsure if we were moving or not, I was already feeling a shift in my attitude. We began to implement some changes. For one, we started to bentsh together as a family every Shabbos and Yom Tov—the entire bentshing, word for word. I wanted my children to have warm and happy associations with bentshing, and to know that it’s not only exciting when done in school or at camp. I paid more attention to what they were doing or watching in their spare time. And most importantly of all, I started listening to them more, taking time to



answer their questions seriously, rather than distractedly offering the most basic thing that came to mind.

Easy isn't always good. Sending a child through a "system" seems easy; everything is in place to "produce" a good *chassidische* child. But if we are honest, we know it doesn't work that way. People aren't "produced" by a system; they are influenced by the thousands of factors in their lives, and ultimately choose their own way. We may hope the "system" inspires them enough to choose Torah and Chassidus, but we can hardly expect it to.

It took a few months until we finally felt ready to make the move. Who am I kidding? We are never ready for such a huge unknown. But we decided to take the plunge and go for it. It was time for a change in our lives, and Hashem had sent us this offer. Everything lined up, and while it was new and different, we were confident that as long as we stayed focused and put our best foot forward, Hashem would continue to guide our path.

We have been living here for almost a year and a half, and we have never looked back. We are consciously running our home as a place of chinuch, knowing that we are our children's role models and it is our job to

direct their education as best we can, even if there are others doing the actual teaching. We are aware that the way to teach priorities is by the way that we live. And that by graciously giving up our time and conveniences to help a fellow Yid in need we are showing that joy comes from giving, and that our passion lies in our connection to the Rebbe.

It is an amazing *zechus* to serve as Shluchim of the Rebbe. We are grateful that—despite ten years and many children beyond the norm—we were given the opportunity to make this change and join the Rebbe's army. And we are thankful for the lessons learned from the way it came to be. ■



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The Power of COLOR

Shaindel (Reizes) Namirovski , Crown Heights
Graduating seminary class of 5779 (2019)

Hashem created everyone and everything in this world with a specific intent. Each detail in creation serves a purpose in Hashem's design. From your hobbies, talents, and even the exact shade of your eyes, nothing is by chance.

Hashem wired us in a way that, whenever we see something, we subconsciously evaluate what we see and draw conclusions automatically. Our observations on different settings will make us feel different energies. For example, if we walk into a room full of people dressed in formal attire, seated around a long table, we immediately get the vibe of a serious business meeting.

We are affected by color in a similar way. Different shades of colors communicate different feelings and energies. Take the color yellow, for instance. Someone wearing a neon yellow shirt may give you the feeling that they are confident and don't mind standing out. Because of this color's attention-grabbing feature, it is usually used for warning signs and labels, such as caution tape and traffic signs. In contrast, a pastel yellow gives off a vibe that is cheerful but soft. If someone were to wear clothing with that shade, you would probably, subconsciously, perceive them in that same way.

In the same vein, Hashem beautifully made our natural coloring and features reflect who we are internally. When initially meeting someone with strong, sharp features, thick black straight hair, and electric eyes, more likely than not our first words to describe them would be strong and confident. On the other hand, someone with light blond hair, soft pink cheeks and delicate round eyes, is likely to be seen as a person who is sweet and approachable.

Of course, this is not our license to go around judging people's character based on their outer appearance. The point is, even before giving it any conscious thought, our minds automatically evaluate people we meet based on their appearance. That is how Hashem wired us.

Not only do colors and aesthetics express certain energies and characteristics, the reverse is also true: People usually gravitate towards colors and styles that reflect their own features and personalities.

A great story to illustrate this occurred the day before I did my friend's palette. I overheard her telling her mother, "My friend is so gutsy. She painted the walls in her house blue." *Painting a house blue is gutsy?* I wondered. I know plenty of beautiful homes with blue walls and the word "gutsy" is not how I would usually describe it. To me, blue walls just made sense.

The next day, before the palette session began, I brought the topic up. "Chana," I said, "I know you're in the middle of renovating your home. Can you show me pictures of the design plans?" She gladly pulled out her phone and scrolled to the pictures. It was evident that Chana had great taste, but I was stunned. What was her choice of colors and design? A charcoal brown kitchen, a smooth-cut white marble dining table, heavy drapes in the living room, and a gray accent wall. "Chana, to me, that's gutsy! I can't imagine living in a black-and-white home. That would be way too intense for me." "Not at all," she responded. "This is what I love and feel most comfortable with. I feel like this is me." "I know," I told her with a smile, as it all clicked. "It's because you're a Winter."

Getting more specific, Chana is a Classic Winter. She is a woman with a dark sheitel, sharp, pale features and deep, blue eyes. She had unintentionally designed her home to resemble her very own looks.

The same tends to be true in the reverse: We are not attracted to colors and styles that don't mesh well with our personalities and features.

While getting my own palette done, I noticed the con-

"My friend is so gutsy. She painted the walls in her house blue." Painting a house blue is gutsy? I wondered.

sultant was adding purples to my palette. "I can't wear the color purple," I commented. "What makes you think so?" she asked. "I don't know why, but whenever I wear the color purple, instead of feeling pretty, I feel like something is off." "Trust me," she said.

Once the palette was complete, I was amazed and fell in love with it. "This is me!" I said. I felt beautiful as I looked at the colors that she held up next to my face. But why had I reacted so strongly to purple?

When I was in fourth grade, I had a teacher that I really looked up to, so much so that I wanted to dress just like her. (I know, embarrassing — but also, what a testament to the power of a teacher!) She always wore turtlenecks, so the next time I went shopping, I knew exactly what to look for. I found a turtleneck and purchased it, but I never wore it. After bringing it home and trying it on, I said to myself, "Something is off. I don't look like myself."

The turtleneck was a dark, bright eggplant. It was way too strong for my soft and muted features. Of course, I didn't feel good in it-- *I already sensed it, even at only*



Each individual person has their own preferences and gravitations according to their unique make-up. Our looks, personalities, and coloring are all harmoniously connected.

ten years old! (I guess Hashem had already planned my future) I knew this color wasn't for me. This led me to believe that purple just wasn't my color.

But now when I look at my palette, I can see that there are purples that do suit me. The purples on my palette are much softer, like mauve. And when I wear my shades of purple, I feel good; I feel beautiful.

Color isn't something technical or a random choice of design. Each individual person has their own preferences and gravitations according to their unique make-up. Our looks, personalities, and coloring are all harmoniously connected.

By getting your palette done, you learn how to take all these elements of yourself and translate them into your outfits. You learn how to make your wardrobe reflect who you are both physically and spiritually. When your best colors surround you, you look and feel vibrant and beautiful. You feel your best. You feel like yourself.

Your Colors

Your palette is comprised of the natural colors of your skin, hair, eyes, and the colors that complement them. This set of colors is your unique tool kit to help you highlight your natural beauty. With the guidance of a customized palette, your selection of outfit designs, makeup colors, jewelry pieces, and even hair styles become a smoother and easier choice. Instead of conforming to a new trend or what you noticed looks good on someone else—which are both not truly reliable in reflecting your unique beauty and style—you know exactly what to wear to make you shine.

Once in a while I hear people say, “I don't want to get my palette done because I don't want to be limited to only a few colors.” I both agree and disagree with this sentiment. On one hand, it is true to some extent—

—getting your palette done does “limit” you to a set amount of ideal colors. However, its objective is not to limit you, but to guide you. The palette is a tool to direct you towards expressing who you really are and what is your best. And when you feel and look your best, you aren't limited and restricted-- you are empowered.

The Seasons

In the process of getting a palette done, people are divided into one of four aesthetic categories, known as ‘The Four Seasons’: Winter, Spring, Summer or Autumn. Being that the four categories of color and aesthetics align with and have similar characteristics to the four weather seasons, these are the names chosen to describe them.

Of course, every person is unique and classifying someone into one of these four categories can hardly be considered a comprehensive description of the person. But that is not the purpose of the palette seasons. Instead, they serve as the compass for a person's ideal coloring and aesthetic.

Let's dive into each season in its purest form. We will explore the features, personalities, and ideal coloring of people who belong to each season.





Instead of conforming to a new trend or what you noticed looks good on someone else—(which are both not truly reliable in reflecting your unique beauty and style--) you know exactly what to wear to make you shine.

SPRING

Like the season of spring, when the flowers are blooming and the warm weather slowly takes over the cold winter air, Springs are all about looking fresh and alive. In terms of personality, they are usually known to be charismatic, friendly, and “ageless.” The typical characteristics of Springs include warm and golden undertones and soft round features. Nothing about them is sharp or dramatic. Their ideal colors are ones that are tinted, meaning colors that appear to be mixed with white, or bright like the colors of flowers in a garden. The coloring is candy-like, sweet like a Spring’s personality.

SUMMER

As the Summer days get longer, the warmth of the sun relaxes upon you. Your surroundings are glowing and blending from the sun’s rays. This relaxing characteristic is true of people in the Summer season palette. They are soft, gentle, graceful, and feminine. They are princess-like and elegant, and their features

often appear refined, delicate, and a bit faded. Summer’s most common hair color is ashy tone, and their skin has a blue or pink undertone. Ideal colors for Summers are ones that are cool and muted, meaning colors that are mixed with gray. Colors that are too warm or too bright can be overpowering and make Summers appear washed out.

AUTUMN

Autumn arrives and the trees transition from colorful to all shades of golden yellows, oranges, and browns. The leaves are textured and your surroundings become more rustic. This characterization is often found in Autumns: they are grounded, warm, dynamic, and confident. They’re known to be loyal, independent and self-disciplined. Autumns usually have warm or golden undertones, textured hair, and sharp, angular lines in their features. They radiate in warm, earthy colors as well as colors that are mixed with brown.

WINTER

The snow is pure and the icicles are sharp and sparkling, and the sky is deep blue. Everything is still but regal. The same is true of Winters. They are striking, classy, and have a sense of royalty to them. Winters have very dark brown to black hair and smooth, sharp, angular features. They are at their best when they wear colors that are vivid and bright, shaded (meaning mixed with black), or pale and icy.

FRAME YOUR LOOK:

Season Tips

Discovering the ideal eyewear to complement your features and complexion can be a game changer. While personal advice is key, general season tips serve as a great starting point. Here are a few tips to look out for the next time you go glasses shopping to look and feel more harmonized.

Winters

Select frames in bold and contrasting colors like black, navy, or deep burgundy. These colors will enhance the contrast against your cool complexion. Opt for frames with sharp angles and bold shapes that highlight your defined features. Consider geometric frames for a more fashionable statement.

Summers

Consider thin metal frames in colors like soft gray or rose gold. These frames will harmonize with the cool undertones of your complexion and your soft features. Rather than being perfectly rounded, look for frames that have an asymmetrical look while having soft edges.

Autumns

Look for thick and angled frames. This will add spice and character to your look. Choose frames in warm brown or amber tones that compliment the rich warm undertones of your complexion.

Spring

Plastic frames can be a great material choice for eyewear. Look for rounded frames with soft angles. Springs look best in round, curved lines versus angled and sharp. ■

Shaindel can be contacted via email at shaindelscorner@gmail.com or on Instagram @shaindels_corner.





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Let Go

Anonymous



I you tell me exactly when it will happen, I will be okay. I can let go and relax, if you'll just give me the time and date when I will have another healthy baby. I can handle the waiting, if I only know when this waiting game will end.

I see the mazel tov wishes on the WhatsApp group; I see the oohing and ahing over the baby, and the “who does the baby look like?” comments. I see the baby announcements on Facebook, and I wonder why people think it is okay to post baby announcements on Facebook. I did it too when I had my baby, but now I’m going through secondary infertility and I can’t fathom why anyone in their right mind would want to interrupt someone else’s scrolling by putting a baby picture in their face.

The hardest part of all of this is not the unfulfilled desire to have a child. I have faith that I will have more children. The hardest part is the letting go of the control of when it will happen. If Hashem would only tell me, I could unclench my fists and stop pointing at a calendar and telling Hashem when my baby should arrive.

I once heard an amazing quote: “It’s not that we have to give up control, it’s that we

have to give up our *illusion* of control.” I think that touches the core of why it’s so challenging to let go. As long as we think we have control, we feel like we have security. When our sense of supposed security is threatened, or we realize that we don’t in fact control the world, our feeling of safety can fall apart.

But it can also make room for something beautiful. When we clearly see how we are not in control, we can replace a false sense of security with a true sense of faith. We can exchange feelings of anxiety and desperation, for surrender and calm. It’s exhausting to always feel like you are holding up the world, guaranteeing success and the next right step. It’s actually a relief to let go, to acknowledge that Someone Higher is running the show.

It takes the pressure off of us and, dare I say, those around us. Subconsciously, or not so subconsciously, when we are under the false illusion of control, we may blame people for messing with our carefully constructed plans. But when we wake up in the morning with sincere trust in Hashem to direct and guide our day, we can let others off the hook for not doing exactly what we wanted, when we wanted it.

As you can probably guess, although I’m writing about letting go, it isn’t easy for me. I’m that type-A personality who wants to plan and know exactly what will happen; who wants to snap her fingers and have life all set out for her; who wants to point at a calendar and decide exactly when she’ll have a baby.

I recently read a letter from the Rebbe that gave me some helpful perspective on this. I must have read the letter one hundred times since I’ve seen it:

By the Grace of G-d

2 Kislev, 5716 [1955]

Brooklyn, NY

Blessings and Greetings!

This is a reply to the letter in which you write of your mood, your hope, and your request of G-d that you should bear healthy children.

Since this is one of the most important mitzvos in our holy Torah, the Torah of Life, one must be firm in one’s trust in the Creator of the world, that He will make it possible for you and your husband to fulfill it. However, it is self-understood that one cannot point out to G-d on the calendar that this must happen at the time that appears right to oneself. For since G-d is the well-

“It’s not that we have to give up control, it’s that we have to give up our illusion of control.”

spring of good, it is certain that He knows what time is good, and that is when He will fulfill your hearts’ desires in a positive way. One can only — with a strong trust in the fulfillment of one’s request — pray that this should come about as soon as possible.

As to what you write about losing hope, G-d forbid, a daughter of Israel must not say this, because G-d is omnipotent, and He desires that things should be good for every Jew not only spiritually, but also on the actual material level.

With blessings that your prayer on the above subject will be fulfilled soon and that we should hear glad tidings from you,

[Signed by a secretary on behalf of the Rebbe]

(Igros Kodesh, Vol. 12, p. 109, Letter 3921)

Hashem is not an ATM machine and we don’t dictate to Him. Yes, it feels really, really scary to let go and face the what-ifs. But it helps to know that on the other side of letting go of control, there awaits a peace and serenity that comes from a firm trust in Hashem.

But don’t take my word for it-- try it out yourself. And *bli neder*, when I do have a child b’ezras Hashem, I will write about it in the *Embrace*.

I just don’t know yet which issue that’ll be. ■



A Whale of a Tale

Chiena Avtzon, Crown Heights
Graduating class of 5766 (2006)



So often, we face a moment in life where we know what we are meant to do.
We want to.
And yet we are scared.

We have to make that choice.

That choice to do it.

In reality it's easier when things happen to us, than when we have to choose to do them willingly. For example, when a child with special needs is born, the family doesn't choose this challenge and yet they try their best to accept their *nisayon* and rise to the occasion. Then there is my friend Sury.

Sury and her husband are raising two children with Down Syndrome that are not biologically theirs. I remember being at a bar mitzvah when their younger son, Dovi, was only with them temporarily at the time and I asked one of her kids who was holding him if she would miss him when he left.

“We are not letting our parents let him leave,” she responded.

When I spoke to Sury about it, she told me how she battled with herself to make the move. Chayale, her older daughter with Down Syndrome, had been staying with them temporarily while arrangements for a long-term home were being made. When a permanent home wasn’t materializing so quickly, Sury began to wonder if this special *tafkid* was meant for her, and if this was why Chayale had come to stay by them in the first place.

Ultimately she made the decision to CHOOSE her destiny, despite the inherent fears and challenges involved.

This is, in essence, the battle of Yonah.

The illusion of choice.

The fact that our destiny is something that we deep down WANT to do because Hashem chose it for us, and our neshoma knows that it is good, and yet we often run away from it, unless we are forced into it.

When a permanent home wasn’t materializing so quickly, Sury began to wonder if this special tafkid was meant for her, and if this was why Chayale had come to stay by them in the first place.

To make that decision to rise to our *tafkid*, even when there are so many reasons to run away, this is our very own story of Yonah.

My first Yonah story took place nine years ago, exactly ten days before reading sefer Yonah in shul on Yom Kippur.

My good friend, Mushka Zaklos, a Shlucha in Manhattan, reached out to me a night or two before Rosh Hashana asking me if I knew of any girls that could come help her with her programs over Yom Tov.

The first thought that ran through my head was “She’s stuck, let me go help her”. It wasn’t something that I would *v’chatchila* want to do, but I felt that now that a friend’s challenge came to my attention, it couldn’t be for no reason. The fact that I could solve her problem easily made me wonder if this was that reason. Except exactly three seconds later, that other voice chimed in, the voice

To make that decision to rise to our tafkid, even when there are so many reasons to run away, this is our very own story of Yonah.

that reminded me that I had plans already for Yom Tov. The voice that reminded me that as a twenty-five year old, I didn’t belong helping anymore with Chabad house programs. The voice that reminded me that it’s not my issue.

And so, the battle waged. On a practical level, it was really something above and beyond to go there myself. It wasn’t something I had to do and was out of my comfort zone, and yet a part of me felt that it was something that was the right thing to do.

And ultimately I decided to walk away from that battle and stick to my original plans, despite feeling deep down that I was taking the easier road instead of the correct choice.

Erev Rosh Hashanah rolled around and the car I was supposed to drive to where I was going for Yom Tov had a problem and wasn’t ready. It was supposed to be fixed shortly and I optimistically expected that, despite this delay, all would go according to plan. Except everything that could go wrong went wrong and the clock started to tick dangerously close to the time that would be officially too late to leave anymore.

And that’s when I realized, I’m here in Crown Heights, I’m “stuck,” and I picked up my phone and texted Mushka “I’m coming.”

It turned out to be a beautiful Yom Tov, a Yom Tov that I thoroughly enjoyed and one that I was grateful I had been “forced” into.

So beautiful in fact, that I easily accepted her request to come and help on Yom Kippur as well.

And on Yom Kippur, as we were reading the story of Yonah, it suddenly dawned on me.

Two nights before Yom Tov, I had sensed Hashem sending something my way because it was something *nogeah* to me, something that I wanted to do and yet didn’t want to do because it wasn’t comfortable.

So I ran away.

Not from an actual *bas kol* from Hashem. I’m not a neviah yet. But I ran away from myself, from that intuitive feeling of what was right but wasn’t easy.

Yet somehow that belly of the whale is where we often see it all so clear.

And Hashem schlepped me there through stressful and frustrating circumstances, and put me in the belly of the whale to get me to go there.

That's when it dawned on me

We can't control our destination in life. We can, however, control how we accept it. We can fight it or we can rise up and embrace the challenge.

When we do rise to the occasion, we travel first class on a ship.

When we don't, we arrive at that same exact destination, this time traveling in the belly of a whale.

Yup, that belly of the whale.

I think we can all relate to being there before. That dark, smelly, suffocating place where we feel choked and trapped and often regret the decisions that we made that got us there in the first place. Often, it's precisely in that dark and uncomfortable place that we suddenly see the light and have the clarity to see a *tafkid* in front of us.

You see, as much as we can recognize the smarts in accepting our *tafkid* and not running away from it, as humans, it can be a little tricky. Sometimes we don't even realize we are running away.

Sometimes, we only realize it's our *tafkid* from the dark place, the same way when you are in a dark theater looking at a brightly-lit stage, you see all those details so clearly.

It may be a *tafkid* we knew we were trying to avoid. Or it may even be a *tafkid* we weren't aware of until being in the belly forced us to dig deep and ask, "Why? Why am I here?"

Yet somehow that belly of the whale is where we often see it all so clearly.

When we are in that belly, it can feel like we missed the boat. That it's too late. We cry out from that belly, because here we are, finally understanding what we need to do, and yet feeling so stuck and so unable to because we "messed up" and feel we are "doomed to die" in that belly.

This is the lesson of Yonah to us all.

Our mission still lies before us, no matter how many times we stumble. Even from that darkest pit of the whale's belly, Hashem is ready to give us another chance to live up to our *tafkid*. As much as we will try to embrace our *tafkid* and travel there on a first class cruise, when we find ourselves heading to the wrong direction, and thrown overboard and swallowed alive, Hashem is still ready to give us another chance. Even from the belly of the whale, even when all seems lost and too late, we can accept that mission and cry out to Hashem.

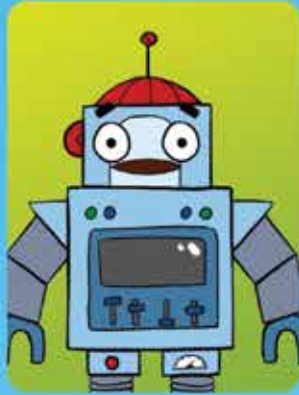
How He will get us out of there is not our business. Where that second chance will materialize from is not our job to figure out. Our business is embracing what is ours. The rest we can leave in Hashem's capable hands to figure out.

Whales don't regularly swallow and spit out humans from their bellies. Whatever it is that will be your *yeshua* will likely be a first and/or unexpected as well.

We read the story of Yonah on Yom Kippur to remind us that we were each put on this world with a mission. We can't choose it, however we can choose the perspectives we take on our journey to get there. And if we stumble along the way and feel like we are underwater in our mistakes and being swallowed alive by them, we need to remember that Hashem loves us so much that as long as we call out to Him, He will rearrange the world to help us on our mission, no matter how many mistakes we have made. He loves us way more than we love ourselves.

But more than that, we read the story of Yonah to remind us that our mission is ours, and it's waiting for us. We can't choose it, but we can choose how we want to travel there. ■





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MACHANE MOM

HOW TO BE THE HEAD COUNSELOR
OF YOUR FAMILY... ALL YEAR LONG

Chava (Sneiderman) Witkes, Crown Heights
Graduating class of 5771 (2011)



No one could understand why my kids weren't in camp. Some days I couldn't understand why my kids weren't at camp. Everyone else's kids were. As one friend put it, "I'm with my kids from after camp until bedtime — that's more than enough for me."

I chose a middle ground: Four weeks at home with Mommy and four weeks at camp. Four weeks of unstructured, sweaty chaos. Four weeks of drop-offs and pick-ups, camp t-shirts and hours of silence.

While I was home with my little ones, I learned that kids don't need that much. I like to be busy. I appreciate structure. So we made schedules and packed our days full. But then my six-year-old son Avtalyon complained. "I'm tired, Mommy. Why do we have to go somewhere all the time?"

So I learned to take a step back. Try not to fill every space. Give room for free play. Let things slide. Take a few days where (*gasp!*) there's no schedule.

We started the summer with an intense schedule. Davening. Daily activities. Countless outings. Science, art, and baking, all led by Mommy. It was a lot of fun, but it was also exhausting for all of us.

As the summer marched on, I realized that my kids didn't need as much stimulation. I was able to let go, and they often found something to occupy themselves with. For kids, play is work, and my kids worked really hard.

When I stopped hovering, they started playing more on their own. Going outside to catch bugs for thirty minutes. Making a picnic in the living room with their blankets and rice cakes. Arranging the kitchen stools in the shape of a store and selling water bottles for Monopoly money.

In those moments when they laughed together, used their imaginations, and came up with something totally creative, it was suddenly obvious why I had chosen Camp Mommy.

TEN WAYS TO CHANNEL CGI AT HOME

How to bring the spirit, structure, and fun into your kids' schedule.

With summer behind us, Mommy Camp continues. Every morning routine, every after-school activity, every Shabbos day — we always have the opportunity to be the head counselors of our homes. As the weather crisps and school uniforms are brought out, I borrow some of that summer camp energy and bring it into my everyday life.

When I stopped hovering, they started playing more on their own.

Here's how:

1. GO SCREEN FREE

If you've gotten this far in an article about Mommy camp, you may already be on Team Screen Free. Or maybe you've always wanted to get rid of those devices, but you have been afraid to. Something has been holding you back. *What am I going to do without it?* You wondered in a panic.

Or maybe the whole screen-free discussion is putting you on the defensive. *My kids don't watch that much. Or: It's always my husband who turns the thing on.* I get it; we can all use a break. But ask yourself: For what reason do I depend on screens? What does the screen help me cope with or avoid?

If you and your family are willing, going cold turkey from screens is a great way to quit. As long as a video



game, show, or even an innocent Toveedo episode is an option, kids will choose that over the backyard, a book, or toys they've played with a million times. And why wouldn't they? A screen takes zero mental effort to be fully entertaining. Play is work, and screens make it easy for our kids to choose laziness.



The secret to CGI's success is the way Yiddishkeit flows naturally throughout the day.



2. EMBRACE BOREDOM

When you part with screens, you must also come to terms with what appears in their absence: Boredom. Maybe it's time to opt out of a culture that tells us we must always be busy. Maybe it's time to slow down and let your kids slow down, too. Practice turning off the podcasts and doing the dishes with just your own thoughts as company. Practice not planning activities or outings to fill your kids' day. Boredom is a vehicle for creativity. So leave the time unfilled and watch your kids' imaginations (and your own) blossom.

3. LEAVE YOUR PHONE AT HOME

The truth: smartphones are addictive. And risky.

I am the conflicted owner of a smartphone. As long as smartphones are a reality in our lives, we need to work on taking charge of how we use them. We don't necessarily need to take pictures of our kids as they slide down the slide. We don't always have to be available to every potential playmate or delivery person, nor do we always have to be on call for our spouses. When we go to the park, I tell my husband, "Hey, I'll be back in an hour if you need anything" - and then leave my phone in the charging station. Believe me, I always have more fun without it.

4. INTERWEAVE YIDDISHKEIT

The secret to CGI's success is the way Yiddishkeit flows naturally throughout the day. Davening before activities, parsha books as special Mommy time, soft Jewish music or stories in the background to calm

down - our kids learn so much when we do not teach directly. Take the time to proactively put together costumes, props, books and audio tracks that convey more than words can say.

5. MOMMY, MY COUNSELOR

More important than the role of cleaning lady, cook, nurse, or personal shopper is your role of mother. When it comes to structure in our homes, there is so much to learn from camp. Think about systems you can adopt and implement for your kids. Can you create a set weekly meal plan for breakfast and dinner? Can you maintain punctual meal times, bath times, and bedtimes? Can you incorporate daily room cleanup and bedside inspection? Try different things, find a rhythm, and see what works for your family.

6. REGULATION STATION

Sometimes, I underestimate how much energy my kids actually have. While I can push myself to go from one thing to the next without stopping, my kids remind me that breaks are important. Teach your kids concrete ways to calm themselves down when they are tired or need a break from stimulation. For my six year old I love our sensory swing and weighted blankets. Kids can decompress with Lego building, free art, or reading too. Tip: Try turning off the lights and playing *Jewish Bedtime Stories*.



7. GO-TO PROJECTS

While I love giving my kids lots of free play, preparing a fun project can be rewarding and fun. I'll sometimes leave something out on the dining room table before I go to sleep or set something up while they're at school. They love it! Whenever I'm at the store I try to keep my kids in mind—you'd be surprised how the most basic of supplies can get your kids excited.

- **Washi tape:** Use it to decorate anything from pencils to notebooks to folders to old toys or furniture.
- **Bamboo skewers and fruit:** My kids love making patterns and eating them.
- **Iron-on beads:** Just remember to use a plastic tablecloth. Otherwise those tiny beads can be hard to clean up.
- **Pasta and yarn:** There's something therapeutic about stringing together a pasta necklace.
- **Paper airplane making:** With practically zero supplies your kids can learn about aerodynamics while having fun.
- **Plastic cups:** If you're willing to sacrifice a few dollars worth of disposables, let your kids build towers galore.
- **Bottle bowling:** Set up some water bottles or seltzer cans and have a great time.



8. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Sometimes you want to treat your kids to an extra-special activity. Maybe it's a Friday afternoon; maybe it's a Sunday morning when there's no school. Think like a head counselor and prepare all the supplies you'll need in advance. Explain the instructions, then let your kids' creativity fly.

One thing I love doing with my kids is cake decorating. We make one cake and cut it into 4 big pieces, one for each kid (and one for me). Then we make a batch of icing and divide it up into bowls with different colors, then put each color into a sandwich bag for each kid. Next, we raid the kitchen cabinets and find anything that could possibly be used to decorate a cake: Fruit loops, wafers, mike and ikes, chocolate lentils, fruit roll ups, marshmallows, chocolate chips, jelly, pretzels. (I also keep our fondant supply stocked because I love making birthday cakes, so everyone gets a few balls of that too.) And then we let our imaginations run wild. Kids can cut their cake out into different shapes, make layers, letters, pictures. Everyone has a great time and we make a huge mess. This is also a time when I like to take pictures to celebrate their creations.

Science projects are also a great activity. Many of them you probably already have supplies for—things like shining pennies or comparing the taste of milk dyed red versus green. I love using a book with a bunch of cool experiments so I don't need to have my phone out with my kids.

9. PLAY DATES

There's nothing like having a new person around to change the family dynamics. My kids are instantly entertained, more independent, and better behaved with the right playmate. I love knocking on a neighbor's door and inviting the kids to come to the park with us. (No phones, remember?) The best is when we can do a Mommy playdate. The kids run off to the slides while we get to glue ourselves to a park bench and catch up. (Just kidding; usually we're both called over to push someone on a swing after five minutes, and then our kids spend the rest of the time eating snacks while sitting on our laps.)

10. TRIPPING OUT

As a CGI counselor, I always looked forward to trip days. They filled time and kept everyone interested. Living in New York, we're lucky to have the Cool Culture Card, which gives us free access to 90+ museums. But many cities out of town also have a free day at the zoo, or other ways to enjoy free or discounted access to different spots. I'll share my favorite Crown Heights locations, but definitely take the time to do your research where you live and come up with your go-to list.

Now that the summer is over, adapt trip days and work them into your weekly schedule. Maybe you can prepare for Shabbos on Thursday night and do a Friday afternoon trip (at least until Daylight Savings Time starts). Or maybe you live out of town where there isn't school on Sundays and that's a great day for family excursions. Even after school sometimes it can be fun to include a small, short trip into your week. Your kids will thank you!



- **Local parks.** Do not underestimate your local parks. When your kids get bored of the ones right near you, venture out a little further to the other side of town. You'll meet different kids and get a new experience. You can also make the park exciting by bringing something fun along, like a kite, drone, bubbles, balls, frisbee, picnic blanket, water balloons, or chalk. If all these ideas are making you feel tired, remember that the most entertaining thing to bring to the park is a friend.
- **Local museums.** Do the math, then decide if a membership makes sense for you. Over the summer we were at the Jewish Children's Museum and Brooklyn Children's Museum all the time. We loved open play at Gymies gymnastics gym. If we lived closer to Miriam's Motherhood Center, I would definitely head there often. The key for my kids

is to spend about an hour each time—this way they're never ready to leave and always asking to come back again.

- **The library.** Free, easy, and a great way to expose your kids to reading. Find out if there are any fun activities hosted by your library and try to schedule your library visits then. Our library gives out to-go bags of craft projects every Friday, so we love going then.
- **The store.** Imagine a fun, indoor trip for kids that cost you one dollar per kid. Would you do it? What about three dollars per kid? My kids love coming to the store with me and being able to pick something out. I give them a price limit and send them off while I pick up what I need. They are learning to read price tags, do some basic math, and cultivate some important self-restraint.

In the rushed mornings and hectic afternoons, it's important to remember that our kids have one childhood. A balance of structure and freedom, room to make a mess, and a few fun family outings will help your children look back on happy memories when they are ready to raise the next generation. ■



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Women at Work

Anonymous



Dear EmBRACE Magazine,

For obvious reasons, I'm writing anonymously. I want to share my personal experience, and I was wondering if maybe you could find someone to write more about this too.

I am a proud Bais Rivkah alumna, working in a small, out-of-town *moisad*. I am passionate about what I do, and I really love to use my talents to make a difference.

Over the last couple of years, I've realized that boundaries have become blurred in my work relationships with some of the men at the office. While of course I've tried to maintain a professional demeanor, I've slowly started seeing subtle changes.

WhatsApp played a big role in this. With access to WhatsApp, communication became

much more frequent, because it was so easy. Then, WhatsApp introduced “statuses,” and I soon had male co-workers commenting on mine. I also had some embarrassing ‘oops’ moments when I mistakenly sent the wrong emoji to a male co-worker (before WhatsApp had the delete feature). It started to get uncomfortable.

I found myself very confused about what was okay and what was not okay, both with my colleagues and my boss. I wished I was more prepared for this aspect of life.

I soon stumbled upon the series that Mikvah.org ran on the topic of workplace relationships. It was a game-changer for me. I listened and re-listened to it. It gave me tremendous clarity and the strength to set healthy and appropriate boundaries. I now feel so much more comfortable and safe in my work environment. I highly recommend the series to anyone who is facing this struggle. I also read the book *9 to 5*, which goes into great detail about appropriate boundaries at work.

After speaking to some friends about this topic, I learned that I’m not alone in this challenge. Many of us feel that there has been a gap in our learning. While we did learn the laws of *yichud* in school, we didn’t cover the topic of appropriate behavior in the workplace. And people who modeled proper boundaries were often viewed as extreme. Today, I see how they are not extreme-- they are sincerely trying to maintain a professional distance as required by *halacha*. But I wish I had been taught this perspective long ago.

I’m thankful that I’ve strengthened my perspective now and that I can go into the workplace with a healthier mindset and better boundaries. I’d like to share some of the changes that I’ve made, in the hopes of inspiring others in this area:

1. I stopped calling male co-workers or bosses by their first names. I even stopped referring to them by their first name when speaking with others. This may seem trivial, but having a male call me by my first name, especially a nickname, is way too close for comfort.

2. If I have to reach out to a male coworker after hours, I try calling instead of using WhatsApp. If I have to send a quick message, I choose text over WhatsApp because somehow, WhatsApp feels more personal. Texting keeps things professional.

3. By nature, I’m an extrovert and I like to share about what’s going on in my personal life. I realized that when meeting with male co-workers, I had to

I found myself very confused about what was okay and what was not okay, both with my colleagues and my boss.

exert effort to stick to the subject at hand. I had never realized that talking about personal vacations and other similar plans, or sharing about my personal interests, was inappropriate. It was eye-opening for me to realize that I had to take responsibility on my end by not volunteering information that was irrelevant to the work conversation.

4. Before a long meeting with male co-workers, I started saying a short tefilla to Hashem, in my own words. I realized that in order not to slip into my old ways, I needed to be focused and present, and I needed Hashem’s help. It is really an avodah!

Some days, I really struggled. A part of me didn’t want to set such strict boundaries. That part of me enjoyed the informal banter and friendliness that I shared with my coworkers. I felt this inner resistance to the boundaries, and I had to tell myself that engaging in this struggle was Tanya 101-- especially when I felt shame for feeling the resistance. When the shame surfaced, I found myself meditating on the Alter Rebbe’s advice in Perek Chof Zayin: Not only should we not be sad or depressed when we struggle in *ruchniyus* matters, but we should be overjoyed at the opportunity to bring *Hashem* joy-- the joy of seeing us overcome a struggle!

My experience has taught me that, while many of us are inclined to think that it’s only the men who struggle with this, women really struggle too. My experi-



ence has also taught me that we are lucky to have a Torah that guides us in overcoming these struggles in our *Avodas Hashem*.

And most of all, my experience has taught me that when we sincerely ask Hashem to help us serve Him to the best of our abilities, He helps us. ■



Women in the Workplace

In a sicha from Parshas Noach 5751¹, the Rebbe acknowledges the changes in technology and environment that were occurring at the time and the subsequent adjustments to many social and communication barriers. Restrictions for women that had been present in previous generations were dropped and women had become more involved in society than ever before. Jewish women were questioning if the unprecedented changes were positive or if they were a conflict to traditional values.

The Rebbe states that women need not be discouraged from involvement in the world, but instead, ensure it is done with the unique characterization of *tznius*, which is not merely a set of rules, but an expression of a woman's femininity and *pnimiyus*.

"*Kol kvudah bas melech pnimah*"² teaches us that a woman has a unique ability to bring a *pnimiyus* level to the people around her and the environment she is in. With this in mind, we can understand man's mission in this world: "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the land *and conquer it*."³ While it is mainly the man's objective to "conquer", the *chachamim* explain that his efforts depend on a woman, "for until a desirable environment in his own home is established, a person's service in the world at large will be deficient. To express this idea in allegory, only a foolish king would go out to conquer other countries before mastering his own." This implies that while men and women accomplish their mission differently, it is of utmost importance for a woman to fulfill her role in bringing *pnimiyus* to her home and whatever environment she is in in order to contribute to the man's mission as well.

"As our Sages teach, "By virtue of the *nashim tzidkaniyos* of that generation, the Yidden were

redeemed from Mitzrayim." Similarly, the qualities of *tznius* and inwardness which characterize the lifestyle of Jewish women in our generation will help transform the world into a dwelling place for Hashem, and thus hasten the revelation of His presence, through the coming of Moshiach. May this take place in the immediate future."



Atomic Power

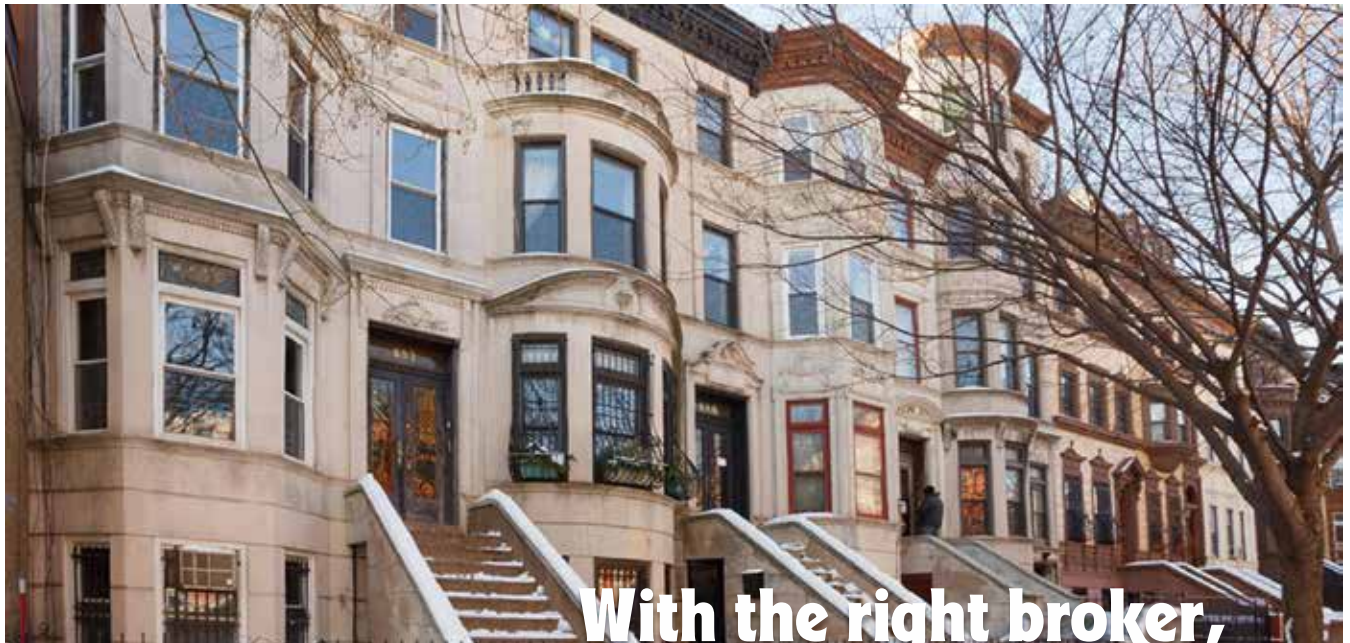
Mrs. Yehudis Fishman once had a *Yechidus* with the Rebbe. After twenty minutes of speaking about personal matters, she got up to leave. As she walked out back—first respectfully, the Rebbe said, "You don't have any other questions?" Mrs. Fishman remembered that she had a small piece of paper in her pocket where she'd written a question that she'd been thinking about. She hadn't told the Rebbe about the nagging question, but the Rebbe knew. Mrs. Fishman asked, "Why are the laws between men and women so strict in *Yiddishkeit*?" The Rebbe told her: Atomic power. It can be so creative and helpful, but if misused, it can be tremendously destructive. The same is true about the attractive force between genders. It can be a powerful, life-giving, and beautiful energy, but when misused, it can be destructive just the same. Therefore, we need guidelines in place to ensure that we only bring out the positive side of this force⁴.

1. Adapted from *Sichos in English, A Partner in the Dynamic of Creation: Social Involvement Enhanced by Modesty; a collection of talks of the Rebbe on the fourth and seventh nights of Sukkos, as well as on Shabbos Parshas Noach 5751 (1990)*.

2. *Tehillim* 45:14

3. *Bereishis* 1:28

4. Adapted from JEM's *Living Torah Program 704, My Encounter: "Any Further Questions?"*



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Dump THAT!

Yael (Nagar) Brummel, Crown Heights
Graduating class of 5760 (2000)



"Maaa, where is my cap?"

"Ugh, I didn't realize I already have two bottles of ketchup!"

"I feel like I'm forever refilling the forks!"

"This corner is so hard to reach!"

"I have no idea what's in that closet."

Sounds familiar?

If you feel like your living space can use some organizing, you are not alone.

Consider this:

- We spend an estimated 3,680 hours in our lifetime searching for misplaced items. (*The Daily Mail*)
- A study of 2,137 U.S. women revealed that their closets had an average of \$550 worth of unworn clothing. (*10 Yetis survey*)
- 67% of people surveyed believe they could save up to thirty minutes a day if their spaces were more organized. (*Alpha Phi Quarterly study*)

With Pesach cleaning behind us and the start of a new season, now is the perfect time to focus on home organizing, which is definitely having its moment, and for good reason. If you're like most people, you have experienced the frustration of searching for misplaced items, buying duplicates, and generally struggling to keep your space tidy.

An intentionally organized closet or pantry can maximize usable space and flow, minimize frustration, and save you money in the long run, thereby improving your overall quality of life.

Home organizing has two phases. The first, and often challenging for many, is the decluttering stage. This is where you empty the space of its contents and make hard decisions about what you need and what should be dumped, donated, or placed elsewhere.

In phase two, you organize the remaining items in a way that makes sense and enables the space to be used functionally.

An intentionally organized closet or pantry can maximize usable space and flow, minimize frustration, and save you money in the long run.

Thanks to social media, we now get a peek into people's homes, seeing how they organize their pantries, their toy rooms—you name it! Even bedroom closets and drawers are not off-limits and are there for all to see. So you take note of the magazine-worthy looks and try to recreate the same look in your own spaces. But before you run out and purchase bins and baskets to organize, it's important to keep a few things in mind.

As a home organizer, I often help clients who have attempted to fix a space but find that it's just not working. One common mistake is purchasing bins with the goal of organizing, only to have them become clutter themselves, piled in a corner. Bins and baskets can be pricey; it's important to make sure you're purchasing the right ones for your space. When planned right, bins can provide easy maintenance and organization, making them a worthy once-off investment that can save you money in the long run.

Here are some things to consider ahead of purchasing and arranging bins:

Before



After



Do:

- Use social media images for inspiration.
- Measure your space! As simple as this may seem, it's often forgotten. A bin that's protruding over the edge of the shelf looks misplaced.
- Use the same bin several times for consistency, creating a uniform look.
- Hide the ugly — use opaque bins or baskets to conceal unattractive items.
- Adjust shelf height when necessary to maximize space.
- Consider the material of the bin/basket. Plastic that'll be pulled in and out might scratch the shelf surface (solution: add felt circles to the bottom corners of the bin). Wicker can easily get dirt in its crevices, so it's not ideal for shoes or on-floor storage. Rope bins may lose their shape over time — not the best fit for frequent handling.

Things to Avoid:

- The temptation to organize without decluttering first. You'll end up with more bins than you really need.
- Filling a corner space, or what I like to call 'the black hole,' in your cabinet or shelf unit.

Be honest with yourself about the level of maintenance you can handle. Does your lifestyle afford you the time necessary to refill and clean containers?

Instead, use a small Lazy Susan that will turn easily and allow you to reach items with ease when needed.

- Decanting everything. Spices in matching glass jars and chocolate chips in air-tight containers may look beautiful on a shelf, but do require a certain amount of maintenance and are definitely not right for everyone. Be honest with yourself about the level of maintenance you can handle. Does your lifestyle afford you the time necessary to refill and clean containers?
- Buying bins without considering:
 - Purpose: What will it contain?
 - Size: What amount needs to fit inside?
 - Location: Do items need to be visible or hidden?
 - Usage: How many people and who will be handling it? How often?

As you can see, there's a lot more to home organization than meets the eye. Keep these tips in mind and

Before



After



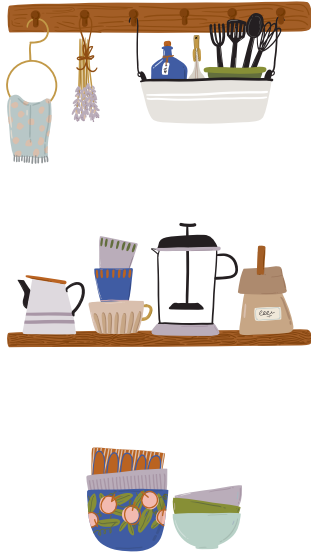
start with one area to make a huge difference in the look, feel, and function of your home.

Good luck! 🍀

Yael can be reached via WhatsApp at 718-290-4023.
Follow her on Instagram @thehappyhome.organizer

Before

After



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ACU FOR ATHLETES

A Taste of Bais Rivkah



Date: _____

Simi (Edery) Dubroff
Crown Heights

Graduating Class
of 5772 (2012)



WHEN IT COMES TO SHABBOS AND YOM TOV, I LIKE TO PUT IN THE EXTRA EFFORT TO MAKE DELICIOUS FOODS THAT WILL NOURISH MY FAMILY AND GUESTS.

I'm usually a one-step recipe kind of person, so I try to keep it simple, yet delicious and presentable.

If there is more than one step, like in the kabocha recipe, it has to be worth it. And you bet it is! Kabocha is a type of winter squash that is so delicious and filling. If you haven't tasted it yet, try this recipe. It might just become a staple. The meat recipe is simple once you have all the ingredients on hand, and the salad is a classic Rosh Hashanah hit.

Happy cooking!



4. Place the meat in the pot and flip it over after two minutes.
5. Add marrow bones.
6. Sprinkle cumin and curry over the meat and vegetables.
7. Add a splash of marinara and fresh thyme or rosemary.
8. Pour chicken stock over the meat and bring to a boil. Lower the flame, and let simmer for six or more hours, or overnight.

Note:

If you want to serve this for Shabbos day, you can make it an hour or two before Shabbos and leave it on the blech the whole night. The meat will be soft and delicious in time for the seudah. If you are making this for Friday night, cook it Thursday night or Friday morning.

The vegetables are optional but recommended. They are delicious and add a nice touch.

SLOW-COOKED ROAST IN BROTH

INGREDIENTS:

Minute steak roast (can work with brisket too)
 Marrow bones
 ¼ cup olive oil
 1 fresh onion, diced
 4 cloves fresh garlic
 3 carrots cubed (optional)
 1 small butternut squash cubed (optional)
 Salt
 Pepper
 Splash of marinara
 Cumin
 Curry
 Fresh thyme or fresh rosemary
 About 4 cups of chicken soup broth (enough to cover the vegetables and the meat)

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a medium size pot, heat olive oil. Place onions and garlic in the pot, and sauté until brown.
2. Add carrots and butternut squash (if using).
3. On a plate, generously sprinkle salt and pepper over each side of the meat.



CINNAMON MAPLE ROASTED KABOCHA SQUASH

INGREDIENTS:

1 large kabocha squash (or 2 small ones)
 Avocado oil
 Salt to taste
 Cinnamon
 Maple syrup

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Put the whole kabocha on a sheet pan and drizzle

- with oil and salt.
- Put it in the oven and bake for 15-20 minutes until hard, but soft enough to cut.
 - Cut in half, and take out all the seeds.
 - Cut into wedges.
 - Generously drizzle olive oil and salt to taste.
 - Sprinkle half the slices with cinnamon and half with maple syrup.
 - Put it back into the oven on 350° F for 30-40 minutes or until golden.

Enjoy!

Note:

This also tastes delicious with just salt.

This recipe was inspired by @summertruffles on Instagram



- 1 tablespoon real maple syrup
- 1/3 cup raw pepitas
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 heads kale*, chopped (or other greens, such as arugula)
- 2 honey crisp apples, thinly sliced
- Arils from 1 pomegranate

DRESSING:

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Juice of 1 lemon (about 1/3 of a cup)
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 350° F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- On the prepared baking sheet, toss together olive oil, maple syrup, pepitas, cinnamon, and a pinch of salt. Arrange in a single layer. Transfer to the oven and bake for 10-15 minutes, or until the pepitas are toasted.
- Meanwhile, in a large salad bowl, combine kale, apples, and pomegranates.
- Place all the dressing ingredients in a small bowl and whisk together with a fork.
- Pour the dressing over the salad, tossing to combine. Top the salad with toasted pepitas.

Eat and enjoy!

Note:

If you're short on time, or you want to make this salad on Yom Tov, you can buy salted & roasted pepitas, ready to use.

**Consult with a Rav for the proper way to check kale. ■*

ROSH HASHANAH KALE SALAD

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

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- BAIS RIVKAH - Talent



MORAH KORF'S KORNER

Many of you recall Morah Korf's beloved halacha classes in high school. Her unique teaching style has made a lasting impression on us, as she used creative hints and wordplay to help us understand and remember the intricate halachos of Shabbos, Netilas Yadayim, and more. One memorable feature of Morah Korf's classes was her occasional catchy and entertaining poems, or "raps," that she would share with us.

We are excited to announce a column featuring Morah Korf's unique and inspiring poetry. We hope that her words will continue to inspire and entertain for years to come.

Put it in the Can

1. I got these socks, they are so neat,

To school I'll wear them on my feet,

I know they're stripes and not allowed,

But my skirt is long and I walk in crowds.

Excuses I will have for sure,

Guests used my room - couldn't get to my drawer,

The wash it wasn't made in weeks,

And so the socks I'll try to sneak,

No you can't no you can't, put it in the can.

2. This t-shirt says it is size three,

But I know it will fit on me,

The color's right, they all agree,

It's just a bit tiny.

I'll hold my breath and will not move,

I'll try it twice, my point to prove,

The color's just a perfect blend,

No! Throw it in the can.

3. My studying's not going right,

At this point I'll be up all night,

The test I just *must* pass you know,

Or down a grade they say I'll go.

I'll write the answer nice and neat,

I'll put the paper in my sleeve,

I'll bend down as is my plan,
No! Put it in the can.

4. These shoes so classy - just my style,
My friends will see it for a mile,
They'll think I grew up like one,
two, three--
How fancy they'll all see me.
I'll look so big, I'll look so tall,
I'll overpower all.
I'm sure there's nothing wrong
at hand,
Or anything to understand,
Goyish shoes of the land?
Throw it in the can!

CHORUS:

Say goodbye to *goyishkeit*,
Only do the thing that's right,
That is what it's all about-
Goyishkeit, go out!
Don't fardrey me on you can't,
I will put you in the *can*,
Yes I can, yes I can, put you in
the can!

5. I'm babysitting here all night,
I just stopped a real big fight,
Baby just now went to sleep,
And older one's, not a peep,
Boy it's boring now for me,
I'll open the T.V.
Just look at something small,
Perhaps the news and then
that's all,
Although that was your first
thought plan,
Put it in the can!

CHORUS

6. The shul door's closed,
they're by the door,
They'll see you going in for
sure,

You go downstairs and through
the backdoor,
And now you're in for sure.
It seems so good - no detention,
Everything with good intention,
Then Mrs. X comes by so
meek,
And says, "Don't be a sneak!"

**Yes you can, yes you can,
throw it in the can!**

CHORUS

7. These knee socks are from
last year, true,
So many washes they've been

through,
You put them on, they stay up
high,
But then begin to fly.
They fall for sure, and knee is
bare,
And it seems that you don't
care,
Tights stay up forever more,
But too much steam in Bais
Rivkah will make your skin sore,
Knee socks falling every day,
Seems to be your way.
But one day you just say, "No
more!
I want to be dressed right for
sure!
**I'll take the knee socks, yes
I can,
And put it in the can!"**

CHORUS

8. My birthday's coming you
know what I mean,
I'm turning, um, sixteen,
What better way could I want,
Than in a restaurant?
We'll be so quiet and no mess,
My friends, they'll just act their
best,
The setting really is complete,
And I think it's really neat,
A little *goyish* it might sound,
But I'm sure it's still allowed,
**Throw it out, change your
plan,
Throw it in the can!**

9. I have this nice new denim
skirt,
And let me tell you of its worth,
Dirty it will never get,

So comfortable, you bet.
Pockets that are everywhere,
And it doesn't matter if it tears,

It looks real cool when hem
folds up,
And never creases up.

It could be what the *goyim* wear,
To show they're carefree in their
wear,

It's worn in stables when
washing horses,
Some wear it when *zey geyin
borfis*,

Uniform of Bnei Akiva, but
your friends are also wearers,

What's the answer - is it *chassi-
dish*?

Is it something that's called
Yiddish?

**It's a doubt? Throw it out,
Throw it in the can!**

CHORUS

10. *Sgeit, sgeit*, they want to roll-
erskate,
Roller skating or on ice - it's so
nice, it's so nice,

Feel free to *glitch* zich up and
down,
Fall a little, hit the ground,
The company is far from
sound-
Here you should be found?

Any place but here is yours,
Even if with friends of course,
The company, the bumpity, it
really isn't sound.

Whenever friends say, "Come
let's go,"
Manhattan or rings or other
no-nos,

It's so hard to refuse a friend,
You'll hear it till no end.

How then friends will I now
keep,
If with them I don't leap?
No to drugs, no to thugs, no to
anything bad at all,

**That's how we're standing
tall,
Throw it in the can!**

11. One thing we can't forget,
And that is called the internet,

The television of our time,
That causes so much crime.

I know that you're gonna fight,
And tell me of such wonderful
sites,

But so much bad is your prey,
Only a mouse away.

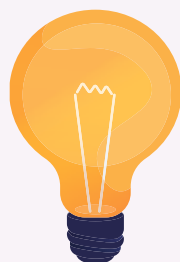
Better not to play with fire,
There are other ways of getting
higher,

Sichos are all there to look,
You'll find it in the book.

Never caught with going down,
Not even a virus to be found,

Won't erase, gives you space,
And doesn't need updating
every year.

Now if just you follow through,
Of the cleansing process, up to
you,



A guarantee, one, two, three-
You finally will feel free.

Free of Golus, *goyishkeit*,
Knowing you are acting right,

**Do it quickly yes you can,
Goyishkeit out in the can,
Goyishkeit out in the can,
Yes you can, yes you can,
Goyishkeit out in the can!**

12. And now that Golus is out,
Geula *can* step in,
For the fight with our Yetzer
Hara,
We did win!
But that's only the way we
begin.

CHORUS

13. There's a sicha on the table,
Not for me - I'm just not able,
That's for *bochurim*-- boys and
men,

I cannot be like them.
Take a peek - it sounds so
pleasant,
Answers questions of the
present,
Makes me feel so *chassidische*
too,

The Rebbe talking to me too.

**Yes you can, yes you can,
Put it in the can!**

Geula gives *kochos* extension,
Even with our small intention.

**Put it in the can,
Show you can, show you
can,
Put it in the can! ♣**

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EMBRACE MOMENTS



“It’s when you make with the nose,” Mrs. Raskin enthusiastically explained while pointing to her scrunched up face, making a look of disdain.

It’s a lesson I’ll never forget. Twenty-plus years later I can still hear her excitement and Israeli-tinged English as she taught twelfth grade Chumash from her heart.

We were learning about the reports of the *meraglim* and the words in question were: “אִפְסֵי כִי עַז הָעָם” “However, the people living in the land are strong.” What did the word “אִפְסֵי” mean? It seemed to serve no purpose in the possuk.

“It’s when you make with the nose.” Mrs. Raskin explained that the word represents the kind of thing you don’t say with your words—the messages that your facial expressions give away.

The lesson from this is relevant every day, everywhere, and for everyone. It's not always about what you say; more often than not, it's *how* you say it that makes an impact. Hashem gave us the amazing power of language, and that power lies in the subtleties of communication. I refer back to this Chumash lesson often as a reminder of the power that we have. With one facial expression we can build someone up or *chas v'sholom* the opposite. Over two decades later, raising a family and living on shlichus, I've tapped into this lesson more times than I can count. I am forever grateful to Mrs Raskin for her love for Chumash and for spreading that love by bringing the lessons to life for us!

Goldie (Tenenbaum) Grossbaum

Folsom, California

Graduating class of 5759 (1999)

It was the year 5760 and I found myself settled in the first row of my twelfth grade classroom, right near the door. Mrs. Piekarski breezed in, doing the attendance thing and ticking off the absentees, and then she breezed out. We got back into the lesson, but our rhythm got interrupted when Mrs. Piekarski walked in again. She waited while Mrs. Gluckowsky wrapped up her thought, and then she shared with deep humility about feeling a pang of unease for not picking up a paper on the floor during her earlier exit. Like, it genuinely bothered her. Enough to disturb the class again just to pick up that strewn paper. Wow.

Now, as a parent myself, that memory has stuck with me. See, it's not the lectures about rules or the talks about behavior that really stick. I couldn't give you a rundown of what I learned in Chumash back then because I was too busy talking about the latest Steve Madden shoes and Dedi's newest hits. And those first ten perakim of Tanya? Yeah, still pretty hazy. But you bet I'll always notice and stoop to lift a stray paper on the floor in a communal space, because that's just what a considerate, respectful person does.

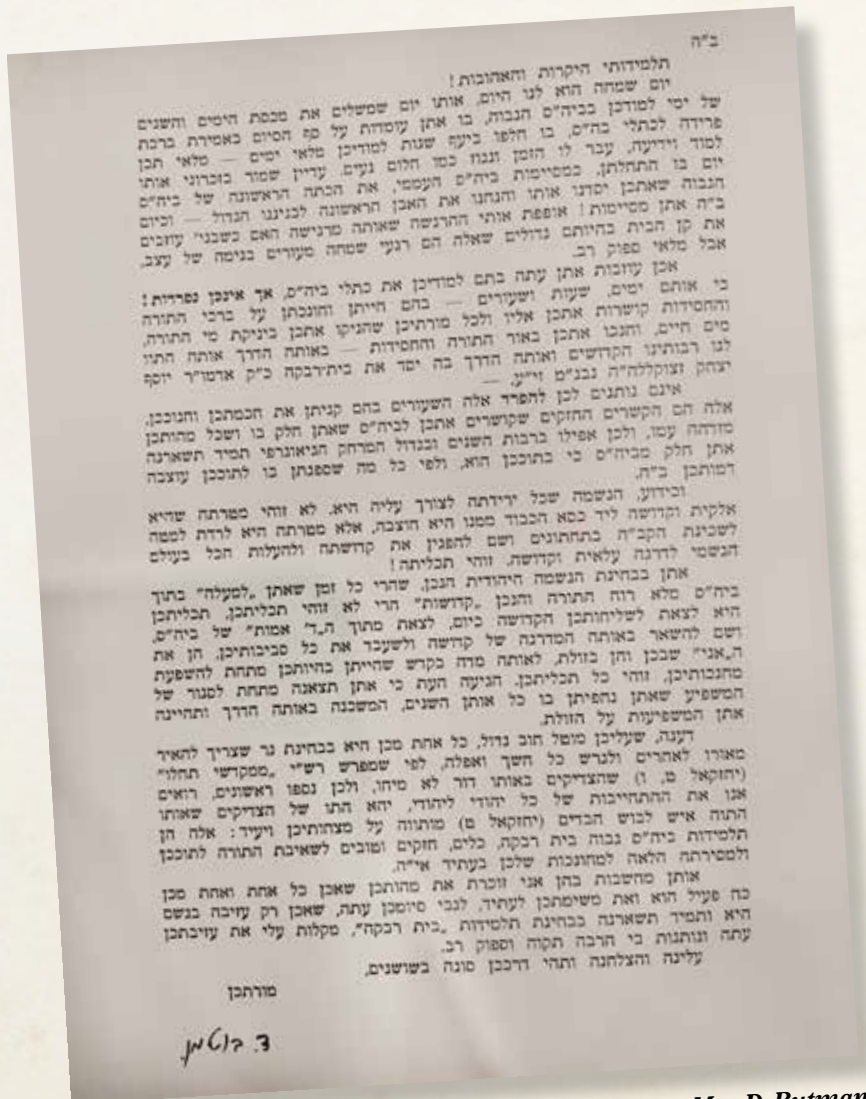
Anonymous



Keepsakes

Do you recognize anyone in the photos or know the precise year? Let us know at history@bethrivkah.edu

Have photos of your Bais Rivkah experience? Please let us know.



Yearbook letter from Mrs D. Butman

The following is a translation of Morah Devorah Butman's letter to the first graduating class of Bais Rivkah High School, which appeared in their yearbook. Morah Butman taught this inaugural class for their entire high school experience, beginning in 5720 (1960) until they graduated in 5724 (1964). A talented and beloved educator, Morah Butman's dedication to her students, coupled with her talent for teaching, had a tremendous impact on every girl who entered her classroom. She eventually became the principal of Bais Rivkah High School until she moved back to Eretz Yisrael, where she lived for most of her life.

My precious and beloved students,

Today, the day when you are completing your days and years of learning in high school, is a very joyous day for us. You are now standing on the threshold of your graduation, wishing goodbye to the building where you spent years filling your days with learning. Your days were filled with information, learning, and knowledge, and now they are gone, faded like a sweet dream. I still remember the day that you began, as elementary-school graduates, your first year here, establishing our high school and placing the first stone of our great edifice, and today, you are boruch Hashem graduating. I am encompassed by the feeling that a mother feels when her children grow up and leave the house, feelings of happiness tinged with sadness, full of satisfaction.

As you graduate, you are leaving the walls of our school, but we will never be separate. Those days, the hours and the classes, when you lived and were educated on the lap of Torah and Chassidus, connect you to our school and to the teachers who gave you the water of the Torah to drink--waters of life--educating you with the light of the Torah and Chassidus. It was our holy Rebbeim who charted the course of this path, and it was with this approach that the Rebbe Rayatz, of blessed memory, founded Bais Rivkah.

The classes during which you acquired vast knowledge and your education can never depart from you; these are the strong bonds that connect you to the school which you are a part of, characterizing your very identity. Thus, even after many years have passed, or if you are far away geographically, you will always remain a part of our school. It is a part of you, and boruch Hashem, everything that you have absorbed shapes your character.

As is well-known, the descent of the neshoma is for the sake of an ascent. The neshoma's mission is not to be G-dly and holy under Hashem's throne from which it is hewn. Rather, its mission is to descend below, to Hashem's abode in the lowly world. There, it can express its kedusha and elevate everything in the world to a sublime level of kedusha. This is its purpose!

You all are these Yiddishe neshomos. During the time when you are "above," enrolled in a school filled with the spirit of the Torah, you are all "holy," but this is not your ultimate purpose. Your purpose is to go out on your present shlichus: To leave the daled amos of school, and to remain on the same level of kedusha wherever you go. There, you are to influence your surroundings — both your own ego and that of others — elevating them to the level of what you experienced while you were under the influence of your educators. This is your purpose. You have now reached the time to leave being under the influence of others who guide your path and to begin influencing others.

Indeed, all of you have a great responsibility. Each of you is a candle which needs to share its light, illuminating others and dispelling darkness. Rashi explains the possuk (*Yechezkel* 9:6) said about the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash, "It began with my mikdash," to mean, "It began with my sanctified ones. The righteous of the generation did not protest, and therefore others joined the sinners." From here we see the responsibility of every Yid to another, to be the tzaddikim, "marked by the man dressed in linen, who marks on their forehead testifying..."¹ These are the students of Bais Rivkah High School: strong, good containers to draw forth the Torah and to transfer it to their future students.

These thoughts lead me to remember who you all are — you are all dynamic individuals. Your task now as you graduate is to only leave physically. However, you must always remain Bais Rivkah students. This strengthens me as you depart, making it easier for me and filling me with much hope and satisfaction.

Wishing you tremendous success, and may you walk a beautiful path,

Your dear teacher, D. Butman

¹ This is a reference to an earlier possuk in the same perek of *Yechezkel* in which a malach is instructed to save the righteous from the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash.

ONE HAKHEL INSPIRES ANOTHER

Zisel (Schusterman) Gurevitz and
Shterna (Schapiro) Krinsky
Crown Heights
Graduating Class of 5731 (1971)

TELL US HOW THE HAKHEL CAME ABOUT.

MRS. ZISEL GUREVITZ: Of course, throughout the year, I'd been hearing about all the beautiful Hakhels and reunions that were taking place. A couple of us discussed the idea of arranging a reunion for our class, and shortly after Pesach, I approached my classmate Sara (Gansburg) Lieberman and we decided we would make it happen. On that same day, Rochel (Weingarten) Okunov spoke with Shterna (Schapiro) Krinsky about creating a Hakhel. We graduated fifty-two years ago, and many of us have lost touch or have not seen one another in years. Only ten out of our class of thirty-five actually live in Crown Heights. It was high time for a reunion, and we got down to planning. We took out our yearbooks from the back of our closets and started making lists.

We messaged everyone that we had contact information for and asked them if they wanted to take part as well as invite anyone else they were in touch with from our class. Most people answered in the affirmative and were very excited! It surprised me when I thought some people who wouldn't be interested in joining were so enthusiastic. It just goes to show that you really never know who wants to connect.

We dedicated the reunion in loving memory of our dear friend and classmate, Shaindy (Pewzner) Lieberman a"h, whose love, friendship, and positivity touched the lives of all those who were privileged to know her. She continues to live on in our hearts and minds.

WOW! WHAT WAS THE PRO- GRAM LIKE?

ZG: The graduating class of 5735 (1975) had just done a Hakhel reunion-- which was actually featured in the *Embrace*-- and they shared their invitation template and program for us to use. They were

very generous with helping us, and we got a lot of our ideas from them.

Chaya (Rozinsky) Drimmer kindly hosted the reunion in her home. Unfortunately, Chaya lost her husband a year ago and she said this was the first time she had opened her home since her husband had passed away and it was a *nechama* for her and her family. The set up was beautiful and the ambience was so welcoming and warm. A classmate from New Jersey, Chaya Fraida (Chanowitz) Kohl, was so excited for the reunion, and came in early to help set up and manage the technology side of it all!

Boruch Hashem, we had sixteen alumni present, with women hailing from Toronto, Kingston, Lawrence, and New Jersey, as well as ten women who joined from around the world over Zoom.

Our friend and classmate, Bassie (Goldshmid) Gottesman, participated in our Hakhel gathering while she was by her husband's side in the ICU. He sadly passed away on Rosh Chodesh Tammuz. Dear



Shaindy (Pewzner) Lieberman a" h, in whose memory the Hakhel reunion was dedicated.

People were hugging each other like they were reuniting with family that they hadn't seen in a long time. It was so heartwarming.

Bassie, our wishes to you to keep strong, and may Hashem comfort you as only He can. May you merit all *brochos* and good things until we all greet Moshich very soon.

Devorie (Levitin) Kornfeld was our amazing MC, and Morah Gorowitz opened the evening with greetings and wishes for a *Kabolas HaTorah b'simcha u'bpnimityus*. Then, she expounded on the concept of *simcha*, referencing a letter from the Rebbe where the Rebbe quoted the Zohar saying, "When a person is happy, it opens up the channels for *brochos*." Afterwards, Morah Gorowitz connected the concept of *pnimityus* to Bais Rivkah's mission statement of permeating the world with *pnimityus* in the way that we look at Torah and our fellow Yidden.

Next, Sara (Gansburg) Lieberman shared a beautiful dedication about our friend, Shaindy a" h. Rochel (Hecht) Kaplan gave over a *dvar Torah* about Hakhel, and Chaya (Leet) Teldon shared memories from our school days. Morah Gorowitz distributed copies of the *Embrace* and signed up those who weren't yet on the mailing list for the magazine.

Overall, there was a beautiful atmosphere of reconnection, reflection, and rejuvenation.

After the reunion, one of my classmates came over to my house to make copies of our yearbook because she didn't have one and was interested in looking through it and reminiscing.

MRS. SHTERNA KRINSKY: People were hugging each other like they were reuniting with family that they hadn't seen in a long time. It was so heartwarming. It was beautiful to have Morah Gorowitz join us as well. She was our teacher and having her there brought back such good memories of Bais Rivkah. She is a woman that lives with the Rebbe on a daily basis and I have the utmost respect for her. She came with a 'Savta Simcha' bag replete with *mivtzoim* packets, *kos shel brocha*, copies of the letter from

the Rebbe that she referenced in her greetings, and materials for learning Inyonei Geulah U'Moshiach.

During the event, I thought to myself: "We can't leave without an *u'vechein*." Then, an idea came to mind. The women on my block had started a Tehillim group, dividing up the *kapitelach* to complete the Tehillim every Erev Rosh Chodesh. I know that incredible and clear brochos were seen from this initiative, so I suggested that splitting the Tehillim as a class could be our *u'vechein*. Everyone was enthusiastic about the idea, and right then and there, we divided up the Tehillim.

WERE THERE ANY SPECIAL MOMENTS THAT STOOD OUT FOR YOU?

SK: The fact that we hadn't had a reunion for the past fifty years made this Hakhel feel like a Yovel. Everybody was so happy to reconnect.

What was special about the Torah that was given at Matan Torah compared to the Torah that the Yidden had before Matan Torah? It was the fact that the Aibishter gave it to us! Matan Torah was the unity of Hashem, Torah, and Yidden. We felt this same energy at our Hakhel. What made it extraordinarily special was the unity that we felt as a class. And that's the

I wasn't sure if people would show up, but people did, and it was all due to the koach of the Rebbe and Bais Rivkah.

whole idea of Hakhel! Hakhel is a reenactment of Matan Torah. In fact, the day of our Hakhel was Rosh Chodesh Sivan, which marks the day when "ויחן שם ישראל, כאיש אחד בלב אחד". It was really special.

ZG: Everyone was so excited to see each other and reconnect. People hadn't seen each other in so long.

We all signed a *duch*, sharing with the Rebbe what we had done and what we would continue to do to connect. Now, we have a WhatsApp group where people share *divrei Torah*, inspiration, and simcha announcements.

When I left the Hakhel gathering, I really felt the power of Hakhel. I wasn't sure if people would show up, but people did, and it was all due to the *koach* of the Rebbe and Bais Rivkah.

Now that we had our first reunion, we plan on having more b'ezras Hashem. But we won't wait another fifty-two years to make it happen! ■



The women present at the reunion, while many more joined on Zoom.

Wishing you a sweet new year!



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