



WINTER 5781

ב"ה Volume 2, Issue 2

# EMBRACE

*Uniting and inspiring the worldwide community of Bais Rivkah Alumnae*



“IN THE REALM OF  
GOODNESS AND KINDNESS”

**A BONEI OLAM STORY:  
A STORY OF KINDNESS, HOPE, AND  
DREAMS FULFILLED.**

28

**THE OUTSTANDING STAFF  
OF BAIS RIVKAH ALSO MAKE  
TIME TO GIVE TO THE COMMUNITY.**

34

**I CAN HEAR HASHEM CHUCKLING  
AS IF TO SAY, “WHO MADE YOUR  
EVENT TRIPLE IN SALES?”**

42

# Contents

December 2020, Volume 2, Issue 2. EmBRace is published 4 times a year by Associated Beth Rivkah Schools. Postage paid at Brooklyn, NY and additional post offices.

## LOOK INSIDE



**MONO-MONO MIRACLES**  
*I was the “mono-mono mom”—super rare. —Danit Schusterman*

### CREDITS

DIRECTOR  
Sara Blau

CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
Rivkah Katz

MANAGING EDITOR  
Geula Gniwisch

ADVISORY  
Morah Tiechtel  
Morah Gorovitz  
Mrs. Chanie Wolf

EDITORS  
Rabbi E. Shemtov • Mimi  
Palace • Shterna Karp • Altie  
Raskin • Rochel Greenberg  
Faigy Karasik • Chaya Berghoff

ADS  
Mrs. Esther Mahtuf

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Rabbi Avraham Shemtov  
Rabbi Sholom Duchman  
Mr. Mendy Gansburg  
Rabbi Efraim Goldfein • Mr.  
Yerachmiel Jacobson • Mr.  
Dovid Junik • Mr. Yosef  
Kazarnofsky • Mr. Yigal  
Niasoff • Mr. Itchik Orimland  
• Mr. Dovid Sputz

### IN EVERY ISSUE

**5**  
THE BALANCING ACT  
*Sara Blau, Editor*

**6**  
FROM THE REBBE

**9**  
A MESSAGE FROM  
THE CHAIRMAN  
*Rabbi Avraham Shemtov*

**12**  
DEAR EDITORS

**16**  
ALUMNAE  
*Sara Blau*

**80**  
BAIS RIVKAH TALENT

**82**  
A TASTE OF BAIS RIVKAH  
*Leah Nagel*

**86**  
EMBRACE MOMENTS

**90**  
KEEPSAKES

### BR STORY

**14**  
THE PRINCIPAL WHO DIDN'T  
WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL  
*JEM*

### BR HOME

**20**  
IT'S A JOY!  
*Chanie Wolf*

## THEME

**28**  
MY BONEI OLAM STORY  
*Rochie Junik*

**34**  
OF TEACHING AND GIVING  
*Mina Zalmanov*

**42**  
IT'S NOT MINE  
*Anonymous*

**50**  
THE ART OF GIVING  
*Chava Lorventhal*

**58**  
RECEIVING WITH GRACE  
*Brachie Katzman*

**60**  
PLANTOGETHER  
*Chayale Sorkin*

### BR LIFE

**66**  
THE GIFT OF PRESENCE  
*Chaya Abelsky*

**68**  
HARMONY IN CREATION  
*Shterna Karp*



54

# RAIZEL shel CHESSED

*It's hard to capture my sister Raizel in words.  
Raizel completely embodied chessed.*



74

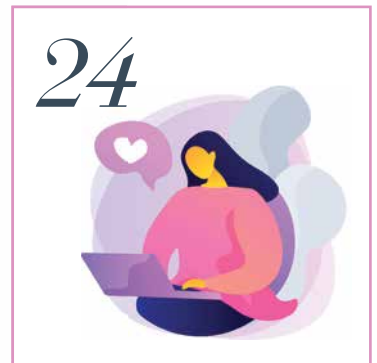
INBETWEENERS  
ANONYMOUS  
*Mimi Deitsch*

BR BIZ

78

5 TIPS FOR LONG-LASTING  
MAKEUP  
*Mirel Heber*

NEW! BR VALUES



24

ASKING FOR A FRIEND  
*Real questions, real answers!  
Send in your conundrum to  
[embrace@bethrivkah.edu](mailto:embrace@bethrivkah.edu)*



48

KEEPING THE  
CONTENTS HOT  
*The only way to contribute and  
impact another is to first do some  
inside work- to fill your own vessel.*





ב"ה



# Mikvah

MEI CHAYA MUSHKA

*Over 4 years of personalized service  
—with a smile*

[WWW.MIKVAHCM.COM](http://WWW.MIKVAHCM.COM)

718-221-0221



# THE BALANCING ACT

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



**D**o you push yourself past your comfort zone to give when it's uncomfortable? Do you host guests when you'd rather not, make dinner for a woman who just had a baby, or donate to the current Charidy even when you don't feel like you have what to give?

Or, on the flip side, are you accustomed to giving — too much? Do you do favors for the whole world besides your family? Are you busy saving the world at the expense of your loved ones, or even yourself?

“You can't give from an empty cup” — self-care is all the rage now. But is it legitimate? Is it selfish to take care of yourself first?

The halachos of Parah Adumah are an unlikely source for a fascinating perspective:

A Kohen who purifies another Yid with the Parah Aduma causes impurity to himself. This paradox teaches us to give to our fellow Yidden even at the expense of our own comfort or even our own spirituality. There is room for sacrifice. Think Shlichus, the various Chesed organizations run by Chabad women worldwide, and the selfless giving of our Bais Rivkah teachers that you will read about in this issue.

The ashes of the Para Aduma were divided; one

part was put away for “safekeeping.” This is another angle, symbolic of the need to leave time for ourselves, guilt-free, to make sure that we don't sacrifice all of our “purity” in the interest of saving another. This includes the full range of very real needs that we have physically and emotionally, and we are entrusted to take care of our guf so that our neshama can accomplish what we need to. To that end, we need to fill our cup so that we have what to give. This isn't selfish; it ensures that we are able to fulfill our G-dly obligation of “V'nishmartem meod l'nafshoseichem.” It's all about asking ourselves, in the moment, what Hashem needs from us — to take care of ourselves and our families or bend over backward for someone else.

So go ahead and push yourself — but not so far that you fall apart and can't function. That ever-elusive balance. ■

*Sara Blau*

Sara Blau

# From the REBBE

נשיא דורנו

## *The Rich*

*The following is a free translation of a letter by the Rebbe, dated Tishrei 25, 5719 (October 9, 1958):*

**I** acknowledge with thanks your letter of 17 Elul and the books you kindly sent for my library; my hope is that you will continue to make available to us the books you will publish in the future. Please forgive my delay in responding, which is due to the busy days in the interval.

Many wonder about the saying by our sages that “Rabbi [Yehuda HaNassi] honored the rich.”

To me, the meaning is clear and well-understood, based upon one of the fundamental principles in the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, which is:

Everything in the world, even the most minor thing, is by Hashgacha Protis, and especially things that affect a great number of people.

The rich are people whom Hashgacha Protis has granted the means to achieve much good in Hashem’s world. Accordingly, they certainly have also been granted the spiritual faculties necessary to fulfill this role—a role many times more demanding than that of a person of average means or a pauper. Rabbi [Yehudah



HaNassi] lived in a period in Jewish history that was a time of transition from a relatively tranquil life to a life of persecution, and he had to rally all the forces within Bnei Yisroel to enable them to withstand these trials and emerge intact and invigorated. So his was the task to appraise each and every individual and seek to utilize all their potentials. Thus he expressed his reverence toward those whom Hashem had granted greater potentials, which were certainly utilized to preserve all that is holy for Am Yisroel, for this was the aim of all Rabbi [Yehuda HaNassi]’s works.

It is only that, in keeping with the manner in which Hashem conducts the world, every Yid has been given freedom of choice, and “Hashem

tests him to know whether he loves Hashem... keeps His commandments and heeds His voice”; as the Torah writes, “See, I have set before you today the life and the good...” A rich man also has the choice of choosing to fulfill the conclusion of the above verse, “and you shall choose life,” or, Hashem forbid, the opposite.

*Everything in the world, even the most minor thing, is by Hashgacha Protis, and especially things that affect a great number of people.*

It is obvious that if the above applies to those who are rich in gold and silver, how much more so does it apply to those who have been blessed with a wealth of talent and ability to influence their immediate and distant surroundings.

Also obvious is that it is not at all sufficient to merely refrain from using one’s “wealth” toward undesirable purposes. Since there is a Master to the world and nothing in it is in vain, there must be an active, positive utilization of one’s wealth. Failure to do so would disrupt the entire edifice of creation, which was formed so that all its parts should actively contribute toward its all-inclusive, unified goal.

Surely it is superfluous for me to point out that I am speaking of the true purpose of our people, the people of the G-d of Avraham, as a community and as individuals—namely, life in accordance with our Torah, the law of life, Torah in its entirety without compromise. For the greatness of Torah is that it is “learning that brings to deed”—the actual observance of the mitzvos in everyday life, as it is said regarding [the mitzvos]: “and live by them.”

Please forgive me for touching on this most basic point immediately in my first letter to

you. Perhaps this arouses wonder in you: do I indeed expect to bring about the desired results with these lines? But there are several explanations for this:

Firstly, we are living in a time replete with occurrences that but a short while ago were in the realm of the impossible; anyone who contemplates them, if only briefly, sees things that transcend the reasonable every step of the way. How true are the words of our sages, “Do not discount any thing.”

Secondly—and this is a point whose truth is absolute and rooted in the teachings of Chasidus—it is in the nature of every Yid and the constitution of his neshama that when one speaks to him regarding the Torah and the optimal observance of mitzvos, one does not need to achieve any “change” in him, since his deepest self agrees to it. One need only remove whatever might be obstructing the “garden spring, a well of living water” (as the verse refers to every Yid) so that it may gush forth on its own. And this can occur, in the words of the Zohar, “in a single hour and a single moment.”

*It is not at all sufficient to merely refrain from using one’s “wealth” toward undesirable purposes. Since there is a Master to the world and nothing in it is in vain, there must be an active, positive utilization of one’s wealth.*

Another basic point: you have been granted, by Hashgocha Protis, influence over many people, and since many of these people are themselves leaders and wielders of influence in various circles; so if these lines would have any amount of actual effect, this would be disseminated and be magnified many times over...

*Translation by and printed with permission from [www.sie.org](http://www.sie.org).*

# GET SEEN: ADVERTISE WITH EMBRACE

REACH OUT FOR MORE INFO

[embraceads@bethrivkah.edu](mailto:embraceads@bethrivkah.edu)

DESTRIBUTED TO THOUSANDS OF  
BAIS RIVKAH ALUMNI ACROSS THE GLOBE





# Message from *the* Chairman *of* the Board

Dear Alumnae,

Bais Rivkah was named by the Frierdiker Rebbe זצוקללה"ה in honor of his grandmother, Rebbetzin Rivkah, ה"ע, whose *yahrzeit* is approaching.

My mother, Esther Golda Futerfas ה"ע, grew up in Kharkov with her widowed mother, Mariashe Badane Futerfas. Bubbe alone cared for her four young children during a most turbulent time. Russia and Ukraine were undergoing great political and cultural upheaval, seducing many of our best and brightest with the novelty of revolutionary ideologies. It was illegal for a child not to attend a government licensed school, so my widowed grandmother chose to place my mother in the French school of Kharkov.

Why the French school?

My grandmother figured the French were the worst antisemites at the time. She put her young, impressionable daughter in an atmosphere where she would not be welcome in the social life of her classmates. Spiritually, she would have a fighting chance. You can well imagine my grandmother's concerns and sleepless nights as a result of the environment, culture, and values that her precious daughter was exposed to day after day.

My maternal great grandmother, Rochel Leah Segalovitch, was very close to Rebbetzin Rivkah and would visit her in Lubavitch. One visit, she took my mother, who was twelve years old at the time, along with her. During their visit, Rebbetzin Rivkah walked over to the window and showed her the *Tmimim* walking in the street.

There was much poverty in Lubavitch at the time, and it was apparent in the patched boots and clothes that the *bochurim* wore. The *tziyur* of the *Tmimim* in Lubavitch was a far cry from the polished attire in the streets of cosmopolitan Kharkov.



“Do you like what you see?” The Rebbetzin asked.

“Yes,” my mother replied.

“Enough to want to marry one of them when the time comes?” the Rebbetzin continued.

“Yes,” my mother answered, and burst out crying.

“Why are you crying?” asked the Rebbetzin.

“Because I don’t know if I will still want to marry one of them when I’m ready to get married.”

“You *will* want and you will,” the Rebbetzin reassured her.

I think we can find many similarities between our reality today and the situation my mother was in then.

Today, as then, the prevailing cultures and value systems in the world at large were very uncondusive to a Torah-true lifestyle. Today, as then, the alternatives to a Chassidische lifestyle were very tempting and within easy reach. Today, in *contradiction* to then, we are blessed and privileged to have Bais Rivkah.

Soon after our Rebbe and Rebbetzin arrived at these shores, the Friediker Rebbe זצוקללה"ה founded Bais Rivkah and appointed our Rebbe as its 'נשיא'. As far as I know, it's the only time in the history of Chabad that the title 'נשיא' was bestowed by a Rebbe to an individual during his lifetime.

It is beyond the reach of our limited intellect to comprehend the implications of such an unusual occurrence. What seems clear to me, however, is that the relationship between our Rebbe and Bais Rivkah, its staff, students, and alumnae, is a unique one. The Rebbe is its 'נשיא'.

'נשיא' means prince, but it also implies נשיאות ראש, lifting up. Every detail of Bais Rivkah has always been carried and elevated by the Rebbe. Any student who was privileged to have been educated in Bais Rivkah has been blessed with the ability to see life and its challenges from an elevated vantage point; from the Rebbe's 'נשיאות ראש' perspective. The outside world

is not viewed merely as seductive or threatening, but rather as an opportunity. It is precisely in the outside environment that we can fulfill our mission of teaching and inspiring —by personal example— each and every person that we come in contact with to serve Hashem with joy.

Each one of you has gone on to lead your own lives, taking advantage of the opportunities and overcoming the challenges that come your way. Remember the special powers you were given and can draw from constantly.

May we merit to see the גאולה האמיתית והשלימה בקרוב ממש.

Rabbi Avraham Shemtov ■



ב"ה



# Essel Eyewear

- Essel eyewear
- Glasses and contact lenses
- Doctor on premises
- Large selection of frames for all ages
- Most insurances accepted

---

**628 EMPIRE BLVD  
SIDE DOOR  
347-221-1095**



# Cut Out The Middleman!

LEASE OR BUY DIRECT FROM THE SOURCE,  
AND SAVE BIG...



**PAL** Plaza Auto Leasing  
*Are you a PAL yet?*

*Auto Leasing Figured Out!*

You Know Us, Let Us Know You!

**718.975.9000**


Don't delay!

2750 Nostrand Avenue | Brooklyn, NY 11210 | [www.PlazaAutoLeasing.com](http://www.PlazaAutoLeasing.com)

*Lowest Prices. ANY MAKE. ANY MODEL. ANY TIME. Huge Inventory.*

Open: Sunday 10am - 1pm | Monday - Thursday 9am - 7pm | Friday 9am - 1pm

DCA Lic#: 1312589 DMV#: 7084665



**I** just heard about Embrace and found the PDF of the latest issue online. All I can say is, wow! What a special initiative! The magazine is so well done. I haven't read all of it yet, but whatever I did read looks well done and professional. This is such a special way to keep Bais Rivkah living on in the hearts of alumni. As someone who lives far away from Crown Heights, not particularly on Shlichus (I live in Beitar Illit, Israel, in a fairly insular Jewish community), I sometimes feel detached from it all. This magazine really does a good job driving the feeling of community home.

Thank you!

– *Chaya Sara (Zirkind) Ben Shachar*

**I** really love your magazine and enjoyed every single issue so far. I wanted to point something out, though you may not have meant it. The article about the woman's journey to stop eating compulsively was inspiring; however the accompanying photos were not. I felt like they were a bit fat-shaming. Please try to be more sensitive in the future.

– *Anonymous*

**H**i, Gmar Chasima Tova!!!  
Wow! What a beautiful magazine you put together. Very informative, inspiring and timely. Thank you! May you see continued nachas gezunterheit and freilecherheit from all students and may we already see the Geula.

In response to "A Journey of Accepting the Gift of Children" in the Fall Issue: Thank you for bringing up what the Rebbe says on the subject of raising large families. I would like to add that B"H, here in Crown Heights, we are gifted with so much help to help mothers recuperate after birth and be able to move forward.

There is mothersofcrownheights.com which is very resourceful. It provides resources for meals, cleaning help, and volunteers to help the family. They also provide contact information for places where mother and baby can go to rest for a few days following birth (and it can be fully sponsored).

In regard to "The Making of a Healthy Mom" p. 60: The woman lives in Crown Heights, where there's a new rehab center that just recently opened and takes insurance. It would be worth giving it a try, if she hasn't already! They help with weakened core muscles and pelvic floor issues (that caused me constant lower back pain) which can happen after pregnancies and birth.

The PT that I take helps me strengthen and use the muscles that are dormant and are therefore getting weak.

Hatzlocha and Refua Sheleima

– *Anonymous*





t o r s  
i d  
E d  
a r  
D e



I read the Embrace before the meal on Friday night. It was such an enjoyable hour. I folded pages so I'd remember on Motzei Shabbos to comment on the few that stood out to me.

The letter to the editor from the single woman. She wrote so well and was spot on. I loved the response as well.

I wanted to respond to her as well. My sister and I run a small high school here in crown heights. The mission statement of our school is that each and every girl has value. Each girl holds a responsibility to the world to do good. Our job is to instill in them the confidence of "Bishvili Nivra Haolam" by reaching into them, igniting that spark, showing them that they can succeed with the skills we teach, and pushing them to use their talents.

We have quite a few single women who teach in the school. They range from age 20 to age 40. The impact that they (and all our teachers) are making on these students, and the ripple effect that this will create for years and generations to come, is huge! I see it firsthand. For example, many of the girls enter 9th grade barely able to translate the word Vayomer. Within the first month of school, their teacher has them working *bechavrusa*, translating full Pesukim and Rashi on their own. The confidence it gives is huge! I only wish I knew how to show my teachers how appreciative I am of their efforts and impact. Iy"Y, they will get married this year, but in addition, the mission they are fulfilling right now is vital to the world.

I loved Kesem Mia Hetsrony's article. If it had been written by any other person, it would seem phony and "too happy." But I remember Kesem Mia from over a decade ago. She really is what she wrote: a truly happy person, a genuine person. Someone who will work hard happily, embrace a challenge, and get the job done.

I thought Chaya Mushka Raskin's article was very relatable. She wrote what I'm sure every mother feels at one point or another. I loved that she didn't take the easy route, which would not have made her a happier, more fulfilled person, but she took the long-short route to add more brachos into her life.

Thank you again for the obvious effort you put in to creating such a masterpiece.

– Chaya Margolin



### TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

*Letters, comments, questions and suggestions are welcome!*

*Write to us at [Embrace@bethrivkah.edu](mailto:Embrace@bethrivkah.edu)*

THE

# Principal

HERE'S  
my  
STORY

WHO DIDN'T WANT TO GO

To School

---

Shana (Itkin) Teichtel, Crown Heights  
*Graduating Class of 5724 (1964)*

*M*y parents – Rabbi Meir and Sima Itkin – were part of a group of Lubavitcher Chassidim who escaped the Soviet Union after World War II and came to the United States at the direction of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

As our family awaited permission to immigrate, we stayed in Paris. I was a baby at the time, but I remember the story being told of the visit by the Rebbe, who had come to escort his mother to America. You can imagine the excitement of the refugees at his arrival, with everyone rushing to meet him.

My father told me later that the Rebbe realized the need of the Chassidim to connect with the Rebbe through him, and so he took the most personal thing that each person owns – his name – and spoke about it. To my father he said, “Your name, Meir, comes from the word *ohr*, light. You will light up the world.” This short conversation set the stage for my father’s lifelong attachment and devotion to the Rebbe.

To both my father and my mother, the Rebbe was everything. He epitomized the philosophy they believed in, the values they held dear, and most importantly, the love that united all Yidden. And whatever he said – or even hinted at – was of utmost importance to them; they followed his directives to the letter.

*“Write to the Rebbe. Whatever he says you will do.”*

So it was no accident that they bought the house at 760 Eastern Parkway, as close as one could possibly get to the Rebbe’s headquarters at 770. My father had considered another property at first, not on the main street but a few blocks away where other religious families lived, but the Rebbe asked him, “Don’t you like me as your neighbor?” So that was that.

Because of our location, we had a steady stream of visitors. We never knew how many people would



drop by on a given Shabbos following davening while they awaited the start of the Rebbe's farbrengen. In a sense, our home became an extension of 770, and I grew up around many legendary Chassidim, listening to the stories that they had to tell.

An incident that made a lasting impression upon me occurred when I was thirteen. I was about to enter high school and I wanted to go to Beis Yaakov where my older sister had gone. But as luck would have it, Chabad had recently opened a new high school for girls, Bais Rivkah, and my father said that I had to go there.

I objected. I said I didn't want to go to a school that was just beginning to establish itself; I didn't want to be experimented on. So my father said – as I could have predicted – “Write to the Rebbe. Whatever he says you will do.”

I wrote a letter to the Rebbe and delivered it without first showing it to my parents. I explained to him why I didn't want to go to Bais Rivkah, and I used the expression, “I don't want to be a guinea pig.” Definitely not the right choice of words.

But the Rebbe knew just how to answer me – a teenager who wanted to conquer the world, to be special, to be unique. And he did it so simply. He crossed out “guinea pig” and he wrote “pioneer.”

Of course, I wanted to be a pioneer. I'd climb a mountain, I'd ford a river, I'd do anything! He appealed to my sense of independence and pride. And of course, I went to Bais Rivkah.

After I graduated, I wanted to do something very special. I wanted to be a journalist because I loved to write. With my parents' approval, I applied to Columbia University, was accepted, and even won a



Regents' Scholarship. And I was very excited to go.

Then the phone rang. It was Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe's secretary, asking my father to come meet with him. My father went and was told, “We hear that your daughter wants to go to university. We don't think it is the right thing for her to do right now.” My father's immediate response was: “No problem.” Of course, to him it was no problem; to me it was a big problem.

When my father came home and said, “You're not going to university,” I was devastated. This was my dream. I was going to become a famous journalist who made a major difference in the world. Now I had no hope; I had no future.

However, I did as I was told and enrolled in Bais Rivkah Seminary, feeling that all my hopes and dreams and aspirations were going down the drain.

But, again, the Rebbe knew what was best for me, which is not to say that the Rebbe ignored my teenage angst at the time.

*continued on page 73*





# ALUMNAE

## *Who, What, Where*

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



Hindy (Bruchstat) Greisman  
Crown Heights  
*Graduating class of 5758 (1998)*

### WHAT DO YOU DO NOW, AND WHAT COMPELLED YOU TO GET THERE?

I focus my energies on several areas, and I am fortunate to be passionate about them all!

We all have dreams of what we are going to be when we grow up, or even once we are grown we wonder which opportunities we will capitalize on and where life will take us. I always thought I would be a housewife, maybe a preschool teacher as I was for many years. I was passionate about childbirth and women's health, and even joined some intense home birth vs. hospital debates, and it was actually one of my teachers in high school who planted a seed for me to be a doula... The last thing that I ever imagined I would be is a kallah teacher.

When I was in twelfth grade, we took our Dor Yeshorim tests, and naturally, some of the girls were having a hard time with the needles and blood. One of my friends was hyperventilating and I stayed with her, calming her down. Mrs. Rochel Vail, who was one of the only doulas around in those days, said, "I think

you should be a doula." Sure enough, a few years later I was trained and began working as a doula.

Many of my clients would share with me that they felt that there was so much information they wished their kallah teacher had taught them. It felt like there was a gap in the education some kallos were getting. In my ten years of marriage, these sentiments were being shared more and more often. Around that time, I shared a post on my son's class WhatsApp chat about a review that was taking place on Mikvah.org. One mother shared that she found the review helpful; there was even some information that she had never learned before! She kept telling me, "I think you should become a kallah teacher!" These were sentiments I had been hearing from my sisters and friends over the years. She encouraged me to take a training course being given by Mikvah.org over the summer.



*Hindy receiving kos shel bracha from the Rebbe together with her father.*

Around that time, my teenage brother passed away. I wasn't in the frame of mind to register or consider getting trained, even though it was on my radar for a while. With a cousin's encouragement, I did end up applying. They



*Hindy's brother, Menachem Mendel, who passed away three and a half years ago at age nineteen.*

graciously extended the deadline for me, as I needed to get a recommendation from a Rav, as well as write about myself which was really hard for me. As challenging as it was, I decided to do it l'iluy nishmas my brother, who would never have the opportunity to do this mitzvah. Passionate about the importance of this delicate topic, understanding the necessity of kallos receiving a proper learning experience, and in honor of my brother a"h, I became a kallah teacher. Today's kallah teacher curriculum includes so many additional and important topics that were not covered back in the day.

I also have bris gemach, where I lend out a full bris set which includes a pretty white pillow and bris outfit. I started the gemach nine years ago when my grandfather, Rabbi Kalmenson, passed away. He was a mohel and the Rebbe said, "Anyone that he is *mall* will be a yirei shamaim." I started the bris gemach in his memory (I only had girls and it would be six years

until I used it myself!). There was one Shabbos that I had five sets lent out and I marveled at how there were five Shabbos brissim in the neighborhood. I feel honored to partake in a simcha of another Yiddishe neshama.

I also recently started a Purim costume Gemach, right before Covid hit. We'll see where it takes us.

### CAN YOU TELL US SOMETHING INSPIRING ABOUT BEING A KALLAH TEACHER?

Each kallah is unique and I give her my full attention.

You know how it says, "You learn the most from your students"? I see this with every Kallah. I am always so inspired by the young women walking through my door who are committed and dedicated to this special but sometimes difficult mitzvah. There are so many brachos associated with this mitzvah, but it is still tedious and time-consuming. I find that the kallos are inspired and excited to keep the mitzvah to the fullest. Taharas Hamishpacha is a *chok*; it is not something that we understand, and yet, the women I teach are so motivated. It moves me each time.

I try to instill in the kallos that during the time of harchakos, there are plenty of ways to feel supported and comforted, even without physical touch. Whether it's after a baby or even a miscarriage, there is a way to work through your emotions and bring your relationship to a whole new level. Especially after birth, I teach my kallos to focus on gratitude to Hashem for a new child being born.

I also emphasize that building a marriage on the foundations of Torah involves not only the detailed halachos, but also the responsibility of shalom bayis, choosing calm over chaos and kind words over unkind words.

I also mention that even though there's an app today to keep track of the calendar, the chachamim note that Yarei Shamayim keep a hard copy also, in case of a glitch (which has happened in the past), and to check on a three-day Yom Tov. (This can be easily done by printing out your online calendar.)

### WHAT WAS A DETERRENT IN YOUR PATH AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME IT?

This might sound funny, but I have stage fright. It is hard for me to be in the limelight and even talk publicly. I would avoid oral reports like my life depended on





*Hindy receiving a dollar from the Rebbe.*

it and would blush crimson when my name was even mentioned during attendance.

I once tried out for a choir by calling the choir head and putting the phone on the floor upside down. I went to the other side of the room and turned around, and then I sang. B”H I was accepted for the choir and even got a solo. (Ironic, I know.)

Being a doula and being a kallah teacher constantly pushes me out of my comfort zone. I remind myself each time that this is what I want to do and I think

of the reason I do it. My care and passion for these matters drive me.

### HOW DID BAIS RIVKAH SHAPE YOU AND IMPACT YOU?

The high school teachers that looked beautiful and regal exemplified tznius in every way to me. When I was in ninth grade, the style was very masculine-bulky workman boots and oversized clothing. I used to look at the teachers who looked so elegant, poised,



*A baby in an outfit from Hindy's bris outfit gemach.*

and put-together. Obviously, modesty is a journey, but that was really impactful for me.

### WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE FOR ALUMNAE AND CURRENT BAIS RIVKAH STUDENTS?

We hear a lot about having a mashpia. It’s crucial to have guidance as a teen, and even as an adult. The Rebbe’s foresight prepared us for challenges and life ambiguities. The Rebbe trained and encouraged us to have a mashpia from a young age — and it’s even more important when school is a mere memory and life is busy!

I never would be where I am today if not for my mashpia. As a teenager, I pushed the envelope with my questions and challenged authority. I am so grateful for the proper guidance that was life-changing for me, thankful to those who have guided me to reach where I am today. I am grateful to be involved with all that I am involved with and to run a home that is like a Chabad House in Crown Heights. ■



*Hindy's grandfather (center, with white hat), Rabbi Kalmenson, at a bris.*





PROUD SUPPORTERS OF

*Bais Rivkah*

DOVID BERNEY

SHAUL C. GREENWALD, ESQ.



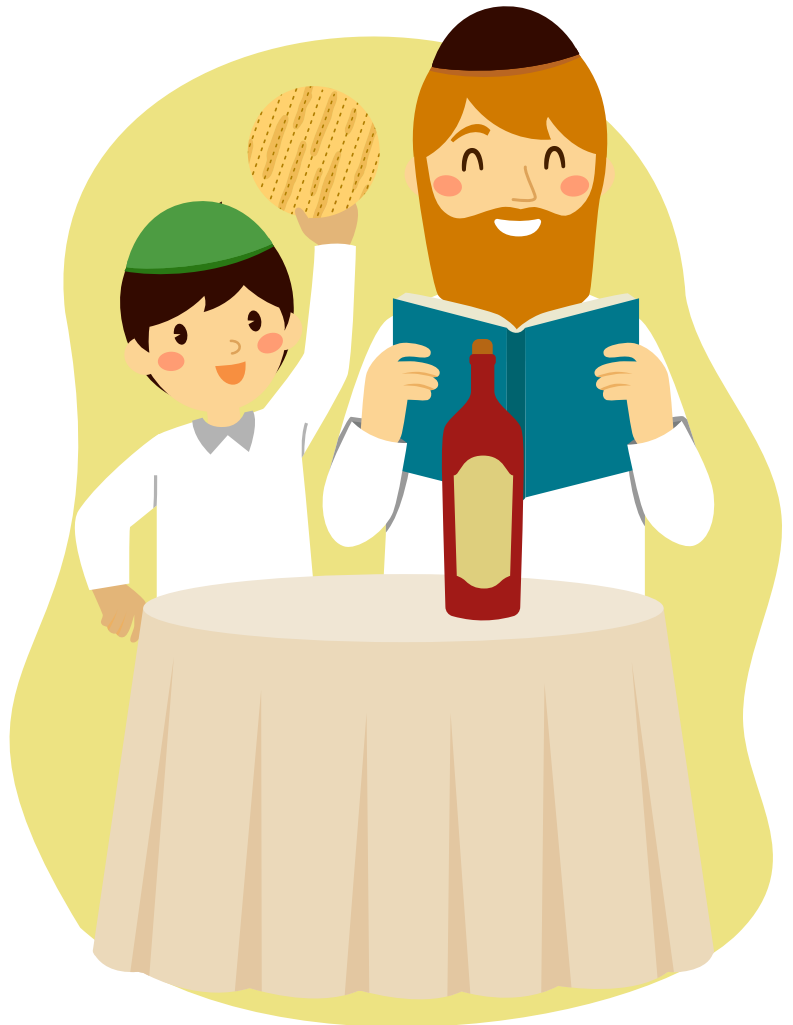
**Better Staff | Better Service | Better Results**  
**A BETTER WAY TO CLOSE!**

# It's A Joy!

Mrs. Chanie (Avtzon) Wolf, Crown Heights  
*Graduating class of 5763 (2003)*

*The little boy enters wrapped in a tallis, eyes shielded from impure images. A loving Rebbi greets him, and the atmosphere is festive. A special honey cake has been prepared and engraved with pesukim. Candies rain down from above him, a gift from Malach Michoel, as he recites along with the Rebbi: Alef, beis, gimmel.*

*The letters are covered in honey. Taste the honey, zeese yingeleh. Always remember that Torah is sweet.*



One of the greatest gifts that parents (and teachers) can give their children is a joyful experience of Yiddishkeit.

Dovid Hamelech teaches us in Tehillim: “*Ivdu es Hashem B’simcha*” – serve Hashem with joy.

Reb Chaim Vital, who recorded the teachings of the Arizal, writes<sup>1</sup>: “*Know that one who performs a mitzvah, it is not sufficient that he [simply] does it...; rather, when doing a mitzvah one should not think of it as a burden upon him and hurry to remove it. Instead, one should conceptualize that by doing this mitzvah he is earning millions of gold coins and rejoice in doing the mitzvah with endless joy, full heart and soul and great excitement...*”

Why joy?

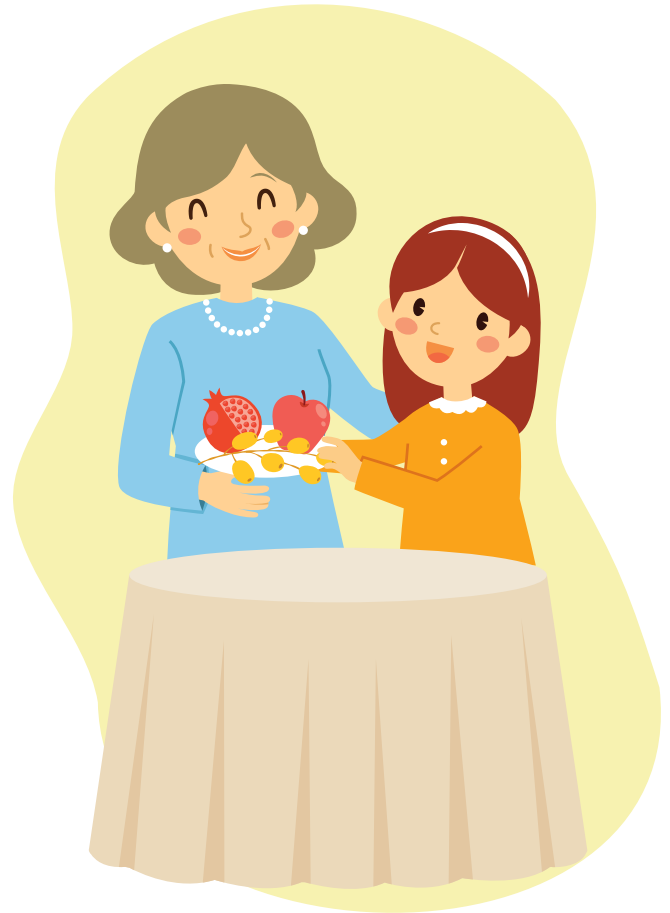
Joy is not merely a pleasant addition to Yiddishkeit; it is an essential part of it. It is a reflection of our values, for whatever is important to us makes us happy. Money makes us happy because we value money and what it can buy. Popularity and social media likes make us happy if we value the opinions of others. To learn Torah and do mitzvos with joy is to see them for what they truly are: the greatest gifts in the world.

We have been chosen by Hashem, out of all the nations on earth, to be His people. We have been granted the privilege of building His home in this world. We have been gifted a priceless treasure – a guide to living, not merely existing. As we declare in the bracha before every mitzvah we perform, “*asher kideshanu b’mitzvosav*” – You, Hashem, have made us holy to You with Your mitzvos. With each mitzvah we perform, we are bound to You, the Creator, in an everlasting union. Is this not the ultimate cause for joy?

When our children see us celebrating Yiddishkeit, they absorb a most potent message: Torah and mitzvos are gifts. They are a privilege. We *want* to keep them.

As the Rebbe teaches<sup>2</sup>: “*In addition to succeeding in teaching her children the regular observance of Torah and mitzvos, the Jewish mother imparts to her children a unique enjoyment and warmth toward Torah and mitzvos... This, in turn, inculcates in the child – even when the child grows old... a deep love and cherishing of Torah and mitzvos.*”

Many minhagim that are integral to chinuch



involve helping our children associate Torah and mitzvos with joy and positive memories: The hachnasa l’cheder, introducing a child to Torah learning, is filled with sweetness. The day a boy or girl becomes obligated in mitzvos – bar or bas mitzvah – is marked with a joyous celebration. The Seder night, which is focused on the mitzvah of *vehigadeta l’vincha*, transmitting the heritage of Am Yisroel to our children, is a uniquely memorable,

*Joy is not merely a pleasant addition to Yiddishkeit; it is an essential part of it. It is a reflection of our values, for whatever is important to us makes us happy.*

exciting experience. And the traditional mesibas Shabbos enhances the holy day in a way that children can appreciate.

With every celebration of a milestone in a child's chinuch, we are teaching them, as mothers have sung to their babies for generations, "*Torah is di beste schoirah*," Torah is the most precious commodity.

There are many ways we can make this positive association with Yiddishkeit on a daily basis.

*And perhaps most importantly, when a home is filled with love, laughter, and joy, everything about the home and its values is experienced as positive.*

Celebrating a child's achievements in Torah learning through a siyum at home sends a powerful message that we value it. Depending on the age of the child, it can be for mastering Alef Beis, a perek or parsha of Chumash, a masechta of Mishna or Gemara.

The words and tone of voice we use when speaking about mitzvos are significant. "Guess what? We are having guests!" said with enthusiasm tells children that hachnasas orchim is a joy. "Who wants the zchus of giving up his bed?"

Taking on a new mitzvah, at an appropriate age, is exciting. We can help set a positive foundation for it by using language such as: "Wow, you're ready to start dressing tznius just like Sara Imeinu!" And when timing is flexible, such as starting to go to Shul with Tatty, it can be presented as a privilege to be earned: "You've been davening so nicely in Shul, I think soon you'll be ready to go for the whole Shachris!"

And perhaps most importantly, when a home is filled with love, laughter, and joy, everything about the home and its values is experienced as positive.

## The Challenge

Unfortunately, as parents we may struggle to communicate this positive energy. We may be overwhelmed by the challenges involved in fulfilling certain mitzvos (Pesach cleaning!) Avodas Hashem is called avoda (labor) for a reason: Yiddishkeit re-



quires a true investment of effort. As is the nature of this world, what is good is not easy; what is healthy may not be tasty; what is right is unpopular. We may be stressed about the cost of tuition or burdened by the responsibilities involved in running a home.

And so, we fall into the trap of focusing on the challenges. We kvetch about the bills or the mountains of laundry and how many Yom Tov meals there are. How we wish someone could host us for Pesach or how tired we are because the baby was crying at night. The message we start giving off is, like the name of the Yiddish-culture play, “Shver tzu zein a Yid” – it is hard to be a Yid.



*los nimshachim halevavos*” – the heart is drawn after the actions. Simply choose to smile at home. Use positive, enthusiastic language even if you aren’t fully feeling it. Put on some joyful music. Real it ‘till you feel it.

If we feel stressed or overwhelmed, we can try to avoid venting in front of our children and instead reach out for support from someone who can help us gain perspective and rise above the situation. It is also helpful to make sure we are physically taking care of ourselves – for when we are depleted, joy may feel elusive.

Our challenges may be very real. But if this is what our children hear at home, will they want to do what we do? If Yiddishkeit is associated, *chas vesholom*, with frustration and stress, will they want to embrace our values?

## Choosing Joy

So, what can we do if the joy is lacking?

First, as the *Sefer Hachinuch* says, “*acharei hapeu-*

And most importantly, we need to learn. Perhaps it has been years since we truly learned Chassidus in a meaningful way and we are uninspired. Learn with your spouse or a friend. Listen to or watch a shiur. As we strengthen our perspective with the light of Chassidus, joy will follow.

Simcha is an *avoda*. And perhaps now more than ever, it’s one we so desperately need. ■

1. *Shaar Hamitzvos* 5

2. *Sefer Hasichos* 5752 vol. 2, p. 357



# ASKING FOR *a* FRIEND



## DEAR AFAF.

I live in Crown Heights in a small apartment with lots of little kids, ka’’h. My niece is dorming in town for the year, which is really exciting, except that she asked if she can count on me to eat over every Shabbos, and now I’m feeling a lot of pressure.

On the one hand, I know she’s on shlichus and grew up hosting guests all the time and won’t be able to relate to me not always having guests. And I really am excited that she’s in town to bond with my kids. But I’m feeling anxious about having to make every Shabbos meal a “guest” type of affair. Because I work full time during the week, my Shabbos meal is usually a bare-bones, plain-white-rice type of Shabbos—very informal and easy meals. I feel that, to host properly, I need to make a whole menu, use glass dishes, and add a stress to my life that I don’t feel up to having.

I want to say yes, but I’m afraid it will result in stressing me out, which will result in me letting that out on someone somewhere.

How should I navigate this?

Signed,

Torn



## DEAR TORN,

First of all, I want to commend you for being so in tune with yourself, grounded, and real. Being a mother of little kids while working full time is extremely exhausting, and a low-key Shabbos is very important for your health, in all senses of the word. You know that, while it's good to be idealistic, demanding too much of yourself is going to backfire.

At the same time, you care deeply about your niece and want to be able to give her that home-away-from-home that a girl in a dorm could really benefit from. However, every week feels like a really big commitment, and it just doesn't seem like it could work. But how could you say no to your niece?

I'm going to suggest that sometimes things that feel like a major contradiction can be overcome with a little bit of creative thinking.

It may be true that, in general, to host properly you need a whole menu and real dishes. The question is, is that what your niece is asking you for? Is she looking for a place to have a beautiful, formal Shabbos meal, or is she looking for a place she can comfortably roll into after shul and hang out with her cousins? A place she can go to when she's not in the mood of "being a guest" and "imposing" on another family? I would not assume that she expects your home to be like hers; I'm sure she realizes there is a difference between a family on shlichus and a family in a local frum community. And remember, if she is looking for formal meals, there will always be other families in the neighborhood who would be happy to have her.

I would suggest that you bring up your dilemma with your niece (or her mother) directly (depending on your relationship dynamics). Explain to her that in your house the meals are rather informal, and that's how you like it. Tell her that since you consider her as part of the family, she is most welcome to join as often as she likes. (Or, if every week still seems too overwhelming, you can offer to have her every other week, which still goes a long way for a girl who is away from home.) You can also suggest that she can come over and help cook if she likes specific dishes. You might be surprised at how well the arrangement turns out once you are up-front and honest about what factors are at play.

I'm going to add one more point as food for thought. Chazal teach us that inviting guests is greater than greeting the Shechinah. Shabbos itself is all about

welcoming the Shechinah, otherwise known as "the Shabbos Queen." You may find that once you find a way to fulfill this mitzvah **without overly straining yourself**, you will feel the beautiful energy that hosting guests brings to your home and to your Shabbos meal. I have experienced this myself, and while we still don't host guests every week (as I also have many young kids at home), I am more enthusiastic when I do because the little bit of extra effort is well worth the results.

*I'm going to suggest that sometimes things that feel like a major contradiction can be overcome with a little bit of creative thinking.*

Most choices in life are not all or nothing. Finding the right balance is key. And remember, a mitzvah like this, which may push you just a little bit out of your comfort zone, is a spiritual effort that is bound to bring much bracha into your life.

*Hatzlacha rabbah.* ■





**Bais Rivkah's**  
Dollar-A-Day  
Campaign

# **\$1 FOR CHINUCH**

## **\$1 X 365 + \$365**

*Hayom Yom: Tevet 22*

My father proclaimed at a farbrengen: Just as wearing tefillin every day is a Mitzva commanded by the Torah to every individual regardless of his standing in Torah, whether deeply learned or simple, so too is it *an absolute duty for every person to spend a half hour every day thinking about the Torah-education of children*, and to do everything in his power - and beyond his power - to inspire children to follow the path along which they are being guided.



[BethRivkah.edu/DollarADay](http://BethRivkah.edu/DollarADay)

# **HELP US PLANT A SEED**



# עולם חסד יבנה

(תהילים ע"ט:ג)

*A world of kindness will be built.*

MY BONEI OLAM STORY .....	28
OF TEACHING AND GIVING .....	34
IT'S NOT MINE .....	42
KEEPING THE CONTENTS HOT .....	48
THE ART OF GIVING .....	50
RAIZEL SHEL CHESSED .....	54
RECEIVING WITH GRACE .....	58
PLANTOGETHER .....	60





# MY Bonei Olam STORY

A PLACE TO TURN

---

Rochie (Nash) Junik, Crown Heights  
*Graduating class of 5768 (2008)*



We were married only a few months when I first became pregnant. My husband and I were so ecstatic that we would soon be parents!

During our second appointment with the OBGYN, we were told the unfortunate news that the baby did not have a heartbeat. We sat across from the doctor, his office covered in pictures of babies that he had delivered, wishing that one day, our child would join his gallery of joy. It wasn't to be.

We left the doctor's office absolutely broken. We felt completely alone.

The experience of that first miscarriage was incredibly isolating. It was just us, my husband and me, alone in our sadness. I felt as if I had failed as a woman. I could not carry a child. The shame engulfed me like a dark cloud and added to the terrible pain of losing a pregnancy.

Heartbroken and lost, we went to the Rebbe's Ohel in search of comfort and opened an Igros Kodesh. "I am pleased to hear about the news of your pregnancy. May it bring much bracha in all aspects of your life." Further down the page, the Rebbe wrote that he wasn't happy with the doctor's approach to pregnancy, and we should look for another doctor.

While timely, the Rebbe's letter was also confusing. After all, the pregnancy had just ended.

As per the Rebbe's instruction, we found another doctor. Soon afterward, I became pregnant. Again, we wrote to the Rebbe, asking for a bracha. When we opened the Igros, the letters were similar to the letters we had read during our first pregnancy; "the pregnancy should be a source of bracha; get another opinion from a *rofeh yedid*." To our great pain, I miscarried a few weeks later.

A few months later, I became pregnant for the third time. My husband and I were a jumble of emotions - scared, nervous, cautiously excited, hopeful.

Early on in pregnancy, I received some good news. My morning sickness was much worse than it had been with my first two pregnancies. I was told that this is a good sign. My blood tests showed that the pregnancy was progressing, and we allowed ourselves to believe and to hope that I could and would carry this baby to term. We wrote to the Rebbe again, asking for a bracha that we should have a healthy pregnancy, delivery, and baby.

Once again, when we opened the Igros Kodesh, we read letters that were eerily similar to the letters from

*He was an expert in his field, delivering live babies. His expertise didn't include figuring out why unborn babies don't stay alive, or why women don't get pregnant, to begin with.*

the previous pregnancies. The general theme was about finding the right doctor and expressing happiness about the pregnancy, with one difference: "... the pregnancy should bring the bracha of *refuah* into your lives."

I don't remember when we were told it wasn't looking good, and when we were told with finality that the pregnancy was not progressing, and we would be losing this baby. It's a blur now. The memories of each ultrasound all merged together.

We cried the most bitter tears. I felt as if I had been sucker-punched over and over until a hole formed. A black hole, burning hot fire on the edges, getting bigger, consuming my entire being until I would be no more. I couldn't breathe. How was this fair? Why did I become pregnant, only for it to be taken away from me? Three times? What about the Rebbe's brachos? Why was this happening to us?

To make matters even more painful, the pregnancy didn't end. I couldn't let go of the baby we wanted with all our hearts. My husband and I didn't sleep





for weeks. We were broken. We had allowed ourselves to dream of parenthood, only for it to be shattered. Again.

During this time, both of our immediate families were making weddings. We showed up for our siblings simchas while I carried a baby who was no longer alive. We showed up at each event — l'chaim, bridal showers, pre-wedding parties; we laughed; we danced; we looked as if we had not a care in the world. The night would end, and we would go home to our quiet and empty home together. This was the darkest point of our life.

The pregnancy ended at fourteen weeks... two nights before my sister's wedding.

We were devastated. I sat on the phone with my brother, crying gut-wrenching tears that I didn't even recognize as my own. My doctor had said this was normal. Up to five miscarriages were normal. I knew we couldn't go through another loss like this. While I poured out my heart and soul, my brother put me on hold so he could make a phone call. The phone call I would never have been able to make on my own. He called Rabbi Bochner at Bonei Olam for us.

Admitting that there was something wrong, that I was suffering and I needed help, was a step I was unable to take on my own.

Bonei Olam immediately took over my care. Three miscarriages in a row (while perhaps common) were not, in fact, normal. They helped me get an appointment with a reproductive endocrinologist specializing in recurrent pregnancy loss. Suddenly, I had someone in my corner.

It seems obvious to me now, but OBGYN's are *not* experts in recurrent pregnancy loss or infertility. It wasn't anything against our doctor; he was an expert in his field, delivering live babies. His expertise didn't include figuring out why unborn babies don't stay alive, or why women don't get pregnant, to begin with.



Tests, tests, and more tests. Time passing became a new kind of agony. We waited for test results, only to be sent for another test, and then to wait



Pictures reprinted with permission from Collive.com

## BONEI OLAM

began in Rabbi Shlomo and Chanie Bochner's living room in 1999. After suffering from infertility themselves for twenty two years, they created Bonei Olam with the goal of guiding couples in the Jewish community in their quest to become parents.

The organization is made up of thirteen offices internationally, but the majority of the staff is composed of volunteers. Ordinary people with ordinary day jobs volunteer their time and talents to do something extraordinary - help couples build a family of their own. Rabbi and Mrs. Bochner, the two founders of the organization, don't take a salary from Bonei Olam. Professionally, they work in design and luxury women's clothing businesses. Yet, outside of work, they donate their entire beings to Bonei Olam, at great self-sacrifice.

In the Jewish world, Bonei Olam is well known for funding fertility treatments. Fertility treatments are outrageously expensive, and insurance rarely pays. Bonei Olam and their financial team work tirelessly to raise funds to ensure that a couple's dream of becoming parents is not prevented simply because they cannot afford it. Bonei Olam chapters are separated geographically, with each community assigned a designated chapter of their own. Each chapter focuses on raising and distributing funds for couples in their community. Bonei Olam Crown Heights is unique in that it not only supports Crown Heights couples facing infertility, but also supports many Chabad couples across the U.S. who need finan-

cial help for treatment, but do not have a chapter of their own.

In the medical world, members of the Bonei Olam team are recognized for their world-class knowledge of the best fertility treatments available today. Bonei Olam's medical personnel, who are mostly volunteers, work tirelessly to research the latest treatments and studies. The organization collaborates with medical labs around the world that are working on cutting-edge medical treatments that can potentially help Jewish couples become parents.

In helping its couples, Bonei Olam is willing to explore any avenue necessary.

As Mrs. Bochner explains, "when someone needs help, we find a way to help them. It's that simple." This approach of leaving no stone unturned has brought Bonei Olam into every field of fertility including shid-duchim with genetic disorders, pediatric and adolescent oncology, single-gene disorders, male-factor infertility, unexplained infertility, pregnancy loss, secondary infertility, and high-risk pregnancy. Bonei Olam is the foremost medical referral agency in the fertility field. However, unlike other medical referral organizations and agencies who only help to find the right specialists, Bonei Olam follows through each couple's entire journey. They guide, advocate, and assist with each decision the couple needs to make.

This has been Bonei Olam's mission from the beginning, to help childless couples celebrate a simcha. Rabbi Bochner and his team will push through every single barrier in order to make that happen.

for another result. Bonei Olam, and specifically Rabbi Bochner, was there the entire time, they helped to explain each test result, and make recommendations for the next steps.

When my fourth pregnancy began, I was not doing

it alone. I had a group of people who were not only competent but also cared deeply about me, Bonei Olam. Along with the new doctor they introduced me to, we were all dedicated to the same goal: having a healthy baby. Through every scare, every question,

Bonei Olam was there, available and ready to guide and support us.

Once again, we went to the Ohel to ask the Rebbe for a bracha that we should celebrate a healthy pregnancy with a healthy birth. We opened the Igros, and this time the letter was clear: “May the pregnancy and birth be in an auspicious time and in good health.”

There was another letter at the bottom of the page. “Mazal tov on the Upshernish of your son...”

We welcomed our son Beryl later that year on Rosh Chodesh Kislev.



Months after the birth of our son, we embarked on the rest of our journey, finding the complete refuah mentioned in the Rebbe’s bracha: healing emotionally. We had gone to Bonei Olam to thank the team for helping us achieve our dream of becoming parents, and asked if there was a way we could repay our debt for all that they had

*The energy in the room made that fear go away. Standing with all these women, I realized that I was not alone.*

done for us. At this point, I had become filled with a sense of passion and made it my personal mission to spread the word about Bonei Olam.

“Organize a chapter in Crown Heights,” was the answer. And so we did, together with other dedicated volunteers in the Crown Heights community.

In Kislev 5779 (2019), while we were in Eretz Yisroel celebrating the Upshernish of our son, our fellow coordinators of Bonei Olam Crown Heights, Esther Kleinman and Etel Hurwitz, brought together a committee of volunteers. We began to organize Bonei Olam’s first event in Crown Heights. Sara Varon (BRHS graduate), an event coordinator with enormous talent, donated her time and expertise to pull off an event on a bare-bones budget.





It was incredible! Instagram influencers donated their time and expertise to help us launch a marketing campaign that was so successful, it neared viral levels. Gourmet bakers donated their talents to make a beautiful sweets table. Various merchants donated to the mini-auction. One after the other, members of the Crown Heights community showed up for Bonei Olam to offer love and support for all those among us going through infertility. Over forty five women volunteered as ambassadors to make sure that their immediate circle of friends and family knew about the event and would attend in person.

On Tes Teves, January 6, 2020, Crown Heights came together in the Jewish Children's Museum. The hall overflowed with women who stood in solidarity with those in our community facing the physical and emotional challenges that infertility brings. The event hall quickly became standing room only as attendees spilled into the hallways, steps, and even the lower lobby. Out the front door and toward Kingston Avenue, women came from all over Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and Monsey/Pomona areas to show they care.

This was the first time that Crown Heights had an event where infertility was spoken about publicly. There was a sense of healing that night. Healing of the loneliness, of feeling invisible, and of shame.

I wasn't on the roster to speak the night of the event. I'm not a shy person by any stretch of the imagination, (think true Bais Rivkah spirit) but there was a horrible fear of speaking about my private pain publicly. The energy in the room made that fear go away. Standing with all these women, I realized that I was not alone. I was not the first woman to go through infertility, nor would I be the last. But I could speak to the feeling of loneliness, shame, and isolation. Experiencing the energy in the room the night of the event, and the outpouring of love that we have received since, showed us that Crown Heights, and the Lubavitch community at large, care deeply about friends and family who suffer from infertility.

You are not alone. ■



*Crown Heights* and the Chabad community worldwide have continued to show up for Bonei Olam.

When the Vezakeini campaign was launched, women around the world signed up to donate one dollar a week at candle lighting, joining together with eighteen thousand (now twenty five thousand) women to donate one round of IVF to a different couple each week. These thousands of women surrounded the weekly designated couple with so many tefillos that the couples started sharing their full Hebrew names so that all the women of Vezakeini can daven for them to become parents as they lit that week's Shabbos candles.

When Covid hit, many of Bonei Olam's planned fundraising events were canceled, and much-needed funds essentially dried out. Couples who were in the middle of a round of treatment were forced to abandon their round, losing all the money that had to be paid up front. In response, Crown Heights families created teams for the Bonei Olam Charidy campaign, adopting a couple in need of funds and doing everything possible to raise the money. Together, the Crown Heights chapter raised over two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in less than thirty six hours!

The reality is that the need for Bonei Olam in our community is constant. More couples reach out every day, each one needing the personal attention of our medical counselors, and the majority of them needing financial help. But it's not just the financial help this community continues to give.

In the short amount of time that Bonei Olam of Crown Heights has been open, people from all over the world have reached out to donate time, resources, and funds. Medical professionals have made themselves available to administer medications, pharmacies have donated supplies, news agencies and Instagram influencers have donated their platforms, graphic designers have created inspiring campaigns, writers have written beautiful articles, photographers and videographers have donated images, and produced beautiful videos.

Each person contributed the way they were able to. Each contribution is valued and important.

On behalf of all the couples whose lives you have touched, we thank you.

If you are in need of Bonei Olam's services, expertise, or medical support; or if you would like to get involved, please reach out.

[@boneiolamchabad\\_crwnhts](https://www.instagram.com/boneiolamchabad_crwnhts).

Or call us at:

Esther Kleinman: 917-259-6006

Rochie Junik: 646-241-4621

Etel Hurwitz: 718-564-5444

# OF TEACHING AND GIVING

*They are truly one and the same*

---

Written by Mina Zalmanov, Queens, NY  
Graduating class of 5778 (2018)



**TEACHERS.** The most hard-working among us, for whom there are insufficient words to express appreciation. Day in and day out, devoted teachers of Bais Rivkah care for and guide the future of Lubavitch mothers. They spend time in school, plenty of time out of school, and endless effort to give the most to their students.

A day in the life of a teacher can look something like this: sending children off to school, davening, marking a few papers, teaching, planning for supper, designing a visual aid for the next day's lesson, preparing supper, welcoming children home (supper, homework, bathtime, bedtime), noting down that nice story to tie in to the next day's class, grocery shopping while on the phone with a student's mother, ... their students always on their mind as they run their home. The teachers of Bais Rivkah go above and beyond.

The outstanding staff of Bais Rivkah boasts a generous faction of those who, besides working in chinuch, running a home, and having a side job/hobby, also make time to give to the community without receiving anything in return. This is chessed. This is giving. And these are our Bais Rivkah teachers.





### *MRS. TIECHTEL:* *Keren Alta Mina*

From the moment a baby is miraculously born, **Mrs. Shana Teichtel**, the beloved high school principal, seeks to ensure that no family's happiness should be marred by the lack of funds for the baby's needs. She instituted **Keren Alta Mina**, a gemach to provide baby furniture to families regardless of financial status. It was inspired by a shiva call on the fourth night of shiva for the Teichtel's daughter, Mina.

Mrs. Teichtel relates: "A woman came in and shared that she had a daughter in Mina's class who lost her life in a car accident the year before. She explained how, although we can no longer buy beautiful birthday gifts for our children, wrapped in colorful paper and ribbon, we can do good deeds as a special gift for their neshamos. She described a Malach announcing, "Alta Mina, there is a present for you!" as each deed is done, and the Neshama rejoices. All through the night, my children discussed what project would best reflect Mina's life. They recalled Mina's joy, positive energy, strength, and courage, and decided that we had to do something that would bring a smile to every child's face. We realized that there was no organization in Crown Heights donating baby furniture. In addition to furniture, Keren Alta Mina also includes a children's clothing store, where parents could pick up outfits for one dollar, as well as a program to place Jewish children's books in waiting rooms and libraries."

Keren Alta Mina, which has been servicing families for about thirty years, has seen its far-reaching effects when the help has trickled down to the second generation. Hundreds of families and their children have had many of their baby's needs seen to with the assistance of the gemach. When it comes to giving, Mrs. Teichtel explains that it would be incongruous for a

Chossid to not be a giver. A Chossid gives not just the minimum, but lifnim mishuras hadin.

"My family and I picture the malach announcing to our Mina'le, "You have a new gift!" every time we help someone. Just envisioning the smile of our daughter, who in seven short years of her life Inspired so many, gives us so much joy."

### *MRS. GOLDMAN:* *Chasdei Soul II Soul*

**Mrs. Tzirl Goldman** is not just a dedicated ninth grade mechaneches in Bais Rivkah High School. She and her husband are the founders of the well-known **Chasdei Soul II Soul** Organization and responsible for getting **Friendship Circle of Brooklyn** on its feet about thirty years ago! The seeds of Chasdei Soul II Soul, an organization that provides financial assistance to families in Crown Heights who wish to send their children to Jewish special education schools, were sown some years back. Mrs. Goldman helped her cousin, Mrs. Rische Deitch, in a similar venture. "My cousin Rische was helping a friend of hers send three children to a Jewish special education school. Rische got me involved one year when she held a community-wide event in her home. From that event, we recognized the need for such support for many families."

Mrs. Goldman sometimes speaks to school administrators who are quick to express how they are impressed when Crown Heights parents "manage to get their tuition in." What is unique about Chasdei Soul II Soul is that it offers a stipend to help cover the expensive tuition fees required by Jewish Special Education schools, or lawyer fees to help parents advocate for the most appropriate school for their child.

*"My family and I picture the malach announcing to our Mina'le, "You have a new gift!" every time we help someone.*



The Goldmans had heard about the Friendship Circle organizations in Detroit, Michigan and Livingston, New York, which offer support and resources for families of children with special needs. They wondered

how they might bring this much-needed support to families in Crown Heights. Having a son with special needs themselves, they decided to act. Starting out with pairing a few of her older son's friends with children in the neighborhood, the Goldmans created the foundation for the soon to be well-known (and still growing) Friendship Circle of Brooklyn. As with all teenage volunteer work, Mrs. Goldman ensured that her son's friends remained motivated; some warm soup distributed in the winter for being "SOUPER volunteers" and various other events hosted in their basement.

"One Lag B'omer, about sixteen years ago, there was a parade. The Friendship Circle marched as a group. There was an unbelievable, awesome, respectful, 'Kol hakavod, you guys!' feeling conveyed from the viewers. A parent contacted us afterward, saying how she was trying to get her son to march with one of the schools, (he did have a disability) pushing him to have a place to join in the parade. As she saw Friendship Circle march by she thought, "That's where my son belongs!" She signed him up, and although they moved out of town after a while, did find a place where her son belonged."



## MORAH CHANI BROD:

### Keren Miriam

As a child grows, his needs and their expenses grow along with him. **Morah Chani Brod**, a beloved first grade teacher in Bais Rivkah, established **Keren Miriam** to ensure that every girl should have what she needs to feel special for Yom Tov. Whether it is a new dress, headband, or tights, "Every girl deserves to have something new," she says. The funds for this organization are usually collected from teachers and staff members of Bais Rivkah, who collaborate to help their students obtain what they deserve. The families receive coupons to stores in Crown Heights so they can shop for the clothing and accessories on their own, without feeling like they are receiving charity. Many times, teachers will take coupons to give to the mothers of their students.

The organization and its cause have struck a chord in the hearts of many. On one occasion, Morah Chani went to raffle off a piece of jewelry to those who donated. A young lady courageously spoke up and explained that she was one of the young girls who received a new dress from Keren Miriam. She



Throughout her years as a teacher in Bais Rivkah, Morah Yehudis Baitz A"H, dedicated her time and energy to her students and fellow staff members. Her warm smile expressed her care for each one of them. Morah Baitz spared no effort to help other teachers and frequently gifted them with treats to express her gratitude and appreciation for them.

While sitting shiva, her daughter, a second grade teacher at Bais Rivkah, and her friends decided to do something special in memory of Morah Yehudis Baitz a"h, who so embodied hakaras hatov. They would treat the teachers just as Morah Baitz had.

During the school closure (due to the pandemic), just a few weeks after shiva, the first initiative came about. It was just before Shavuos. Cheesecakes and chocolates, generously sponsored by family and friends, were packaged and hand-delivered to each Bais Rivkah Primary staff member to enhance her Shavuos.

gave three thousand dollars to Keren Miriam. At that time she was still single and Morah Chani wrote to the Rebbe, asking for a bracha that in zchus of her mitzvah she should find her zivug. B”H, she is now married with a baby girl.

Morah Chani started the organization in honor of her aunt around thirty years ago and included the zchus of her parents when they passed away. “Keren Miriam,” she says, “is the perfect name. Not only does it include the names of both my parents, but it also is the name of Miriam Hanevia who wanted the Geula Shelaima. My parents talked about Moshiach and chaled for the Geula!”

Carrying on her parents’ legacy and being a part of ensuring that every girl feels special in honor of Yom Tov is one of the many ways Morah Chani makes it her mission to bring Moshiach. “I am so grateful for the zchus,” she concludes.



### ***Mrs. LUSTIG:*** ***Uniform Gemach***

Not only can new dresses for Yom Tov be a

*Starting out with pairing a few of her older son’s friends with children in the neighborhood, the Goldmans created the foundation for the soon to be well-known (and still growing) Friendship Circle of Brooklyn.*



heavy expense for some families, at times even buying school uniforms are a strain. **Mrs. Rochel Lustig**, the seasoned ninth grade Navi teacher, and her sister-in-law Mrs. Karp have established a gemach for uniforms. Mrs. Lustig’s basement is filled with uniforms ranging from Pre-1A through high school, in as good as new condition. Being handy with the sewing machine, Mrs. Lustig works

With the new school year approaching, an appreciation event was arranged for the teachers of Bais Rivkah. It was a tremendous event. What began with one contribution — a pair of earrings from Tzfasman Jewelers to raffle off — transformed into multitudes of donations from the many who remembered Morah Yehudis Baitz a”h. Store owners were excited to be giving to this cause, and shared their memories of her; she was always pleasant and friendly, with a kind word to share. At the opening session, the raffles were drawn, with a chance for all teachers, grades Pre-1-A through eighth grade, to win. In addition to the raffles, each teacher was gifted a mug and a treat in celebration of the Shlichus that she does. “Teaching is a Work of Heart,” the mug read. How appropriate, for this was something Morah Yehudis Baitz a”h so exemplified.

At the start of the school year, as teachers faced the myriad of challenges that this school year brought on, the Teacher Appreciation event and

the legacy of Morah Yehudis Baitz a”h encouraged teachers. Many expressed how thoughtful it was, and that invigorated them.

“You’re still gifting me with your unconditional love. You’re still gifting us all,” one teacher wrote, in an emotional letter to Morah Yehudis. “And all of us who have been touched by your vivacious spirit — our hearts are still thumping with the joie de vivre we saw in you every day.”

May the pure neshama of **יהודית חוה בת יעקב דוב** have the ultimate aliyah, and may we reunite with Moshiach now!

If you would like to sponsor upcoming Teacher Appreciation Gifts/Treats for a Rosh Chodesh/ Yom Tov you can do so by emailing [shalon@bethrivkah.edu](mailto:shalon@bethrivkah.edu). Checks can be written out to Beth Rivkah (memo: in memory of Yehudis Baitz A”h) and mailed to Baitz Family at 642 Empire Blvd Brooklyn, NY 11213.

CashApp: \$Morahsari



*“Every girl deserves to have something new,” she says.*



to make all uniforms in the gemach look nice and new. With the generous assistance of Regency Cleaners, Shaina Pewsner, and Little Toes, her basement has been transformed into a uniform outlet.

By appointment only to protect confidentiality, families can come to the gemach and select skirts, jumpers, sweaters of a variety of sizes, and even headbands and bows. “What is nice about giving uniforms,” Mrs. Lustig explains, “is that there is no way of knowing who bought her uniform from the store and who got hers from a gemach. It is also nice to give clothing, but most people can recognize if someone is wearing last year’s selection... With uniforms, that isn’t the case. Everyone wears the same thing!”



### **Mrs. Shiffy Goldstein:** *Furniture Gemach, HOO*

About fifteen years ago, **Mrs. Shiffy Goldstein** had a relative’s chassuna and was hoping to get a gown for the occasion. However, she had just bought a house and used every last penny to make the purchase, so there was nothing to spare. Every gemach she went to had a fee for gown rentals, and with spending money out of the picture, she made do with wearing her nicest Shabbos dress.

About a year later, a chosson and kallah moved into a new apartment in Crown Heights. They knew the arrangement was only for about a year and both sides did not have money to spare, so they wanted a more budget-friendly option to furnish their apartment. Mrs. Goldstein put a classified in the Crown

*There is no way of knowing who bought her uniform from the store and who got hers from a gemach.*



Heights Links saying, “Looking for furniture for a chosson and kallah.” An overwhelming amount of people responded, all so excited to give away furniture in perfect condition, and she realized that many others could be helped as well.

These two incidents inspired Mrs. Goldstein to start a furniture gemach, so she reached out to three people to get it off the ground: NCFJE, Community Council, and Devorah Benjamin. “What we do is make shidduchim between people who have furniture to give away and people who need furniture. We don’t pick up, deliver, or store- we just work with pictures. People call requesting stuff, we forward pictures to them, and they go and pick it up. There is no money involved.”

Although the organization is geared to help the Lubavitch community, many others have been assisted as well, such as newlywed couples moving out to a Lakewood Kollel community from New York. Up until about three years ago, Mrs. Goldstein would get twenty to thirty calls a day in regard to the gemach! Although it is currently not as active, it’s effects are still felt! There are countless mitzvot incidents that happened between people picking up and giving away furniture which shows how although the influx of “shidduchim” has slowed, the effects of the gemach are far-reaching. “It’s also beautiful to see how the people giving the furniture away are actually more appreciative than those receiving! They are so happy that their furniture can go to others that will make good use of it,” she shares.

Mrs. Goldstein also runs the Bais Rivkah High School HOO (Helping Our Own) Chessed program under Mrs. Sara Blau. She relates how the program’s mantra used to be “helping hands,” and during a mini-farbrengen about it in the teachers’ room, Mrs. Esti Feldman brought to her awareness that a Chossid doesn’t just help with his hands. The entire being of a Chossid is Ahavas Yisroel, the entire being of a Chossid is a giver! She suggested changing the mantra to “A Chossid is a Giver” and it stuck.



### **Mrs. Halon:** *The Bubby and Zaidy Project*

**Mrs. Toby Halon**, a second grade teacher in Bais Rivkah, realized that besides her job to make young children happy, there is a special zchus in bringing joy to older people as well. When her

own parents were in a car accident that took her mother's life and left her father ill, she looked for a way to ensure that the older people in our lives would not be forgotten. A call from their grandchildren would make them so happy. This sparked the **Bubby and Zaidy Project**, which encourages elementary school children to call a grandparent or older person they know who might not have grandchildren to wish them a good Shabbos. To incentivize consistency in the project, students who bring a signed note to school the following week receive a treat! There also are sponsorship opportunities to cover the cost of the weekly incentive. Mrs. Halon realized that the initiative was attainable for everyone, and brings a happy and proud feeling to all those involved!

*The entire being of a Chossid is Ahavas Yisroel, the entire being of a Chossid is a giver!*



One week she received a letter that really highlighted the vitality of such a project from a parent:

*"It was just less than a month ago on Motzei Shabbos. I sat down with my six-year-old son Zalmy and looked over his notes from school.*

*We suddenly came across the "Gut Shabbos Bubby and Zaidy" note that we get every week l'ilui nishmas Bubby Wilansky. My son said to me, "Mommy! Oh no! I forgot to call Bubby and Zaidy before Shabbos!" I told him that it was okay and we could still call. My son called his Bubby and Zaidy. After wishing them a gut voch, I spoke to my father. I wished him well and told him that I love him very much.*

*Unfortunately, a few hours later, in the middle of his sleep, Hashem took my father's neshama back on Zayin Adar. It was because of this beautiful campaign that the Wilansky family started that I was able to speak to my father, and my son to speak to his Zaidy, right before his petira.*

*My father, R' Betzalel Jacobson A"H, was a humble giant! A true "ChaYoL" — Chossid, Yirei Shamayim, and Lamden. A genuine Lubavitcher Chossid, an exceptional human being, and a Talmid Chacham, we had the zchus to be his children and grandchil-*



## **ROCHEL KARP:** *How FC is a part of Bais Rivkah*

In tenth grade, Rochel Karp was debating which program she should join to fulfill her school *tzorchei tzibbur* requirements. Friendship Circle seemed to call out to her, and she chose to be a part of the "Friends at Home" program. Years later, as the current Program and Volunteer Coordinator, she still visits her "Friends at Home" buddy!

"Seeing the impact that volunteering had on me, I wanted to inspire other teens to do the same and get involved. I learned and grew so much from my Friends at Home buddy, so I wanted to help this program to continue and get better!" She shares. "Going to all the programs where you see the smiles of the families and children, how people leave their worries and struggles at the door, truly inspired me and showed me that this was something I wanted to be a part of."

The Friendship Circle continues to feel the impact of Bais Rivkah High School volunteers. Families sometimes request to specifically have Bais Rivkah volunteers! They want "the energy and happy positive vibe that you see imparted by Bais Rivkah in their students."

Teenagers need the opportunity to understand what true friendship is, and being a friend to a special child gives them that chance to love unconditionally and be themselves without any peer pressure — just to have a good time with a special friend while being the best person they can be! Taking an hour of the week and giving it to another person really impacts girls to be more giving, accepting, and selfless, and by being part of something greater, they also get a sense of community.

The Friendship Circle is founded on the precept of "*Veahavta l'reacha kamocho*". As Yidden and as members of a community, Friendship Circle thanks the girls of Bais Rivkah, and Bais Rivkah is grateful for Friendship Circle!

dren. This is a lesson for all of us to treasure our parents, grandparents, and the elderly, and not to take anyone for granted. You never know what tomorrow can bring.

*May the Geula come speedily in our days and we will be reunited with our loved ones with Moshiach Tzidkeinu.*

*Fraidy Taicheman — a very grateful parent.”*

“When we do a mitzvah in honor of someone who passed away, it makes the neshama have an aliyah,” Mrs. Halon explains. Her father himself embodied this idea of noticing and reaching out to others. He noticed if people were lonely (a widow or one who was not well) and would call to wish them good Shabbos. “Especially nowadays, when older people can be more lonely than ever, it is so important to teach our children to reach out not because we get something for it, but because this is what it means to be kind and to be a giver.”

*Treasure our parents, grandparents, and the elderly; and not to take anyone for granted.*

The teachers and staff of Bais Rivkah have ingrained in us, through teaching and by example, that you don’t have to open up a gemach or an organization to be a giver. As Mrs. Goldstein explains, “Every person has a talent or calling and should have in mind, in whatever situation that comes up, ‘What can I do to be the giver?’ It can be through giving money, making supper for another, or lending notes. It is really the giving mindset that a Chossid needs to have, and every person can have this mindset.” ■



### **MRS. SARI HALON:**

#### *Teacher Appreciation Initiative*

While sitting shiva for her mother last year, **Mrs. Sari Halon**, a second grade teacher in Bais Rivkah, decided to do something in her mother’s memory. Her mother, Mrs. Yehudis Baitz A”H, was a beloved teacher in Bais Rivkah primary for many years who invested much effort in caring for her fellow staff members. Many recall her warm smile and gifts of appreciation to the other teachers as an expression of her gratitude to them. Mrs. Halon’s Teacher Appreciation Initiative follows in the footsteps of her mother’s embodiment of hakaras hatov.

Right from the onset of this initiative, teachers have been pampered with thoughtful gestures of appreciation. Cheesecakes and chocolates were distributed to all primary teachers in honor of Shavuos, and an appreciation event for teachers at the start of the year included raffles for gifts from local Crown Heights stores. In addition, each teacher received a mug that said “Teaching is a Work of Heart”- a beautiful portrayal of what Mrs. Baitz put into her shlichus as a teacher and a continuation of the love and gratitude she showed to other teachers. Mrs. Halon explains that her family hopes to continue sharing and giving to teachers as an expression of the never-ending gratitude we owe to our teachers.



*Cheesecakes and chocolates were distributed to all primary teachers in honor of Shavuos.*





Mr  
A PASSION FOR PRODUCE  
**GREENS**  
NEW YORK

Fresh high-quality produce, platters,  
fresh juice, specialty items.



*Phone and email orders • Delivery*  
*Locally owned • Great customer service*

330 Albany Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11213  
Tel: 718-774-7336 • Email: [mistergreens@gmail.com](mailto:mistergreens@gmail.com)

# IT'S NOT MINE

Anonymous



"It's not mine," I whisper to myself.

I'm looking at my bank account and the profits of a deal that I promised, if successful, I'd donate a percentage.

\$3,000.

Sitting there in the bank account.

In my mind, I hear my cousin who I had just spoken to, who was fundraising for a project and was short.

Short by \$3,000.

But I'm not the \$3,000 type of donor.

In my mind, I would donate this pledge in small amounts, amounts that didn't hurt the pocket so much; didn't feel so scary; amounts that made sense for a plain and simple person like me. You had to be super rich to donate \$3,000 like that.

I'm sitting there, trying to block out the obvious hand of Hashem waving at me from the computer screen. I'm thinking about bills that I had to pay, and things I would want to use this money for if could just pay this pledge slowly. I tell myself, "This isn't mine, it's G-d's. I already promised it to Him. I need to put aside my ego, my comfort level, and what suits and doesn't suit my self-image. It's not about me, because this money isn't mine."

I opened Whatsapp.

"You're good; I'll do the full \$3,000."

I pressed send.

Then I gasped.

What on earth had I just done?

But the truth is, I wasn't scared anymore.

The deed was done and I felt a certain sense of calm.

A sense that I had done exactly what I was supposed to do.

Suddenly I became so intrigued by this concept called Tzedakah. This bizarre phenomenon of emptying out your bank account when there are so many bills to pay and somehow feeling so content. How did it work? How could this type of emptiness in the bank account make you feel so good when a slim bank account usually causes a pit in your stomach?

I began doing research and it was fascinating.

It turns out that Hashem promises “*Asser te’asser- bishvil shetis’asher*— give maaser so that you will become wealthy,” connecting the word מעשר *maaser*— a tenth— to עשירות *eshirut*—wealth. Whatever money you give to Tzedakah, He will repay, and more. Not only that; Hashem begs us to test Him on this promise, “*U’Bechamuni nah ba’zos*.”

In simple terms, if I give \$1,000 to Tzedakah, then Hashem will give more than that \$1,000 back to me. Not only am I not losing any money; I am actually investing it wisely with Hashem.

The following year, my cousin reached out to me again. He wanted to know if I would be able to help out with his project again. In the course of the conversation, he mentioned how this year was harder; his operations had grown and he was now short an even bigger amount: \$6,000.

This year, there was no pledge staring at me from the computer screen. There was, however, the blessing of the past year and the \$6,000 that I did have the ability to give. Technically, if Hashem would continue to shower those blessings on me, that \$6000 would easily be included in what I would be required to give for *Maaser*.

I was torn.

You see, that \$3,000 donation was a one-off. I'm not a \$3,000 type of donor, and I'm definitely not a \$6,000 type of donor. As a relative, he had confided in me that the people whom he would normally rely on to finish off his budget weren't going to pull through. The thought of how everything that crosses our path is Hashgacha Pratis whispered in the back of my head, while another voice whispered on the other side, “You have it, you could give it, why are you refusing someone the help

*This isn't mine, it's G-d's. I already promised it to Him.*

that they need? Is it really your call to judge where this money belongs?”

I was so torn.

So I began to read. I pulled a volume of Igros Kodesh off the shelf and checked for letters about Tzedakah. The first few letters under the topic didn't really have a message that I could apply, but then I turned to a letter that really hit home.

In this letter, the Rebbe was writing to a Chossid who had informed him of a pledge that he had made for an annual appeal. This year he had given more than he had in the past and he was concerned if he would be able to fulfill this pledge. The Rebbe expressed his thanks and assured him that since the need was greater this year and therefore his pledge was bigger, giving tzedakah would open up the channels for parnassa. Being that it's a mitzvah to give *maaser* (10% of one's earnings) and ideally *chomesh* (20%) but not more than that, Hashem would ensure that the giver earn at least five times the sum of the pledge, rendering his tzedaka chomesh.

(See the original letter at the end of this article.)

I was blown away, but also scared that I was missing something. This bracha sounded too good to be true.

I called a mentor of mine who is very practical and grounded. I wanted to know up to which level I should follow this directive.

She got excited when I read the letter to her. Then she confided in me. She and her husband had begun giving extra tzedaka based on this very letter, and she shared with me multiple stories in which she had seen that indeed, Hashem had repaid them many times over.





*The coin we drop in the pushka  
each day is like a daily exercise  
for our muscle of belief.*

Encouraged, I did something that felt so wild and once again opened up Whatsapp.

“You’re good, I’ll do the entire \$6,000.”

This letter was so powerful, and understanding how in essence Tzedakah was a key to parnassa was so empowering. And forget empowering; who wouldn’t make a deal in which the other party promised you 5x on whatever you put in?

I couldn’t believe that I discovered this easy deal. I was ready to roll.

And for a while, I was seeing a pretty obvious trail of transactions with this new “Client.”

Well, I didn’t exactly get a deposit in my bank account of 5x with a memo “from G-d,” but I definitely was seeing lots of growth in my overall income, between increased job opportunity, more work, a bargain of a lease, etc...

Until it stopped working.

One day, things took a tough turn. At first, it was nothing major; a few customers stopped using us, some products sustained damages— nothing huge, just a bunch of little things that were eating away at the bottom line. I began to wonder if I had been naïve to think that it would go so simple. I slowly began to ease up on my Tzedakah giving, anticipating the fact that if things continued this way, I would need those extra dollars for myself.

In essence, I was preparing for things to be bad.

I didn’t trust Hashem that when He says He will repay you, He means it.

Sure enough, things continued to unravel. Business continuously slowed, merchandise was detained at customs for weeks, and a massive line of credit was pulled.

Friends and cousins, whose organizations I had regularly supported, approached and asked me if they could count on me once again. I was too embarrassed to admit that I just wasn’t in the position this year.

It wasn’t necessarily that there wasn’t money in the bank; I just didn’t believe that I would see the success continue, allowing me to give what I had given previously. I began to berate myself for giving all those

donations that added up to thousands, and for creating this mess of having people think I was able to give when I was struggling myself.

I wasn’t even mad at Hashem for doing this to me. I was mad at myself for believing that it was really so simple.

As things continued to spiral downwards, the tough times forced me to assess my business in attempt to turn things around. I discovered a huge bleed, one that would have gone unchecked if not for those tough times.

Hashem must have wanted so badly to pay me back all along, He just was waiting for a good place to send the check.

(Why I had to have a bleed in the first place is way above my paygrade to understand.)

As this sense of belief in Hashem’s goodness began to slowly dawn on me, I began to work on not only creating a physical vessel for these brachos but a spiritual one as well. Knowing that Hashem will repay me and that my Tzedakah will end up being at least 1/5 of my income wasn’t enough. I had to have the spiritual fortification to believe in something that runs so counter



to what any financial advisor would suggest, to really truly believe that all will work out even when I didn't see any possible ways that it might.

I finally learned what the condition was in this seemingly miraculous promise. I needed to trust the other party explicitly, and sometimes it is so, so hard because it just doesn't make sense that He will pull through.

It dawned on me that in the last few months I had given up on Hashem's deliverance, while the whole deal is contingent on trusting Hashem. Only once my faith began to return did my wheel of fortune start to move upwards once again.

I began to realize that the best way to keep my trust in Hashem in shape was actually to give Tzedakah on a daily basis. Each time I dropped a dollar in the pushka, wrote out a check, or keyed in my credit card, it was a declaration, not only to the world, but to myself, that this money didn't belong to me, and that ultimately the same G-d who gave me this dollar would make sure that I would have as many dollars as I needed.

The coin we drop in the pushka each day is like a daily exercise for our muscle of belief. A few moments strengthen our realization that all that we have is, in essence, Hashem's.

Each morning, as I put my dollar in the pushka, I began to say "thank You" to Hashem for the fact that I had what to give. That I was lucky enough to be on the giving end.

Those 18 months, as I saw the bracha so clearly, I still struggled with emotions each time I gave a dollar, each time I swiped my card, each time something fell through and I wondered when Hashem would "repay" me. I gave more, but always with anxiety, always with caution, always with calculations and considerations.

I didn't truly believe that the bracha would flow as it had in the past.

My mind understood how it worked, but my psyche didn't believe it.

Around this time, my company had a massive sales event coming up. We were desperate for it to be a success in order to give us the cushion we needed to move ahead. I made a pledge to Hashem that I would donate 10% of this event to Tzedakah.

We ended up tripling our goal.

I sat there looking at my bank account and the \$10,000 that I had pledged.

I began to reason with myself. I had planned to give

\$3,000; did I need to give the remaining balance? Could my pledge be only the amount that I had intended? Could 10% be read to mean 10% of profit, rather than sales?

I'm not the \$10,000 type of donor.

Plus, we had run this event to create a cushion. How could I give so much away when I had so many bills to pay and so many things I could do with this money?

I can hear Hashem chuckling as I stared at the spreadsheets open on my computer screen as if to say, "Don't you realize who made your sales event triple in sales?"

"It's not mine," I whisper to myself.

I type in the number 10,000 and hit the donate button. ■

*I can hear Hashem chuckling as I stared at the spreadsheets open on my computer screen as if to say, "Don't you realize who made your sales event triple in sales?"*

#### **Translation of the Rebbe's letter:**

BH, 11 Shvat, 5714  
Brooklyn.

To the attendees of the Nusach AR"Y Shul, Anshei Lubavitch in Dorchester, and their chairman, teacher Rabbi Shraga Asher Fine, and the gabbaim. May G-d give life to them.

Greetings and blessing!

I was happy to receive regards from you through the Chossid, Rabbi Yehuda Leib HaLevi Horowitz with the enclosed check of \$200 from the previous Yom Kippur appeal.

Just as every living thing grows, and specifically things of kedusha, I was happy that the income of this year's appeal surpassed the previous years', although it is still far from enough to cover the needs and expenses of the budget that the money is used for. I hope, however, that this will be a good beginning to further add more and more.

The saying of my father-in-law, the Friediker Rebbe, whose passing was marked yesterday, is known, that when a Yid pledges a large sum of money to Tzedakah,

although at that moment he may not see where he'll get the money from to make it possible, new channels are opened Above so that he can receive additional bracha in his livelihood and he is enabled to fulfill his pledge in actuality.

We can add to the Rebbe's words, that since Tzedakah is given as a tenth (*maaser*) or a fifth (*chomesh*), it is ruled above that he receive at least five times the amount he had allotted to Tzedakah, and the remaining four parts he profits, to use for his personal expenses.

With a bracha that the mitzvah of Tzedakah should bring each of you the brachos from Hashem which are definitely a Tzedakah and it should be expressed in whichever way each one needs. ■



ב"ה, י"א שבט, תשי"ד  
ברוקלין.

מתמללי בית הכנסת נוסח האר"י אנשי ליובאוויטש  
בדארטשעסטרע ובראשם הוי"ר מוה"ר שרגא אשר מ"ן,  
והנבאים  
ד' עליהם יחיו

שלום וברכה!

איך בין געווען צופרידען צו באקומען א גרוס פון אייך דורך הרה"ח  
הו"ח אי"א נ"י עוסק ב"י צו מוה"ר יהודא ליב שי הלוי הורוויטץ מיט דעם  
ביגעלייגטען טשעק אויף \$200 פון דעם פאריגען יום כפור אפיל.

און אזוי ווי יעדער לעבעדיקע זאך וואקסט און בפרט א ענין של  
קדושה, בין איך געווען צופרידען אז דער האראיגער אפיל איינקופט איז  
געווען גרעסער ווי פאריגען יאר, האטש [עס] איז טאך ווייט פון צו זיין  
גענוגענד לבני די הצטרכות און די הוצאות פון די ענינים אויף וועלכע דאס  
געלט ווערט פארנוצט, איך האף אבער אז דאס וועט זיין א גוטע התחלה  
אויף ווייטער צו מוסיף זיין טאך מער און מער.

און עס [איז] דאך באוואוסט דער ווארט פון מ"ן שווער כ"ק אדמו"ר  
זצוקלה"ה נב"י ז"ע וועמענס הילולא מיר האבען געפראוועט נעכטען, אז

אדמו"ר שליט"א

קטן

ווען א איד באשליסט בא זיך צו געבען צדקה א גרעסערע סכום, האטש אין  
דעם מאמענט זעהט ער ניט די מעגליכקייט אויף דעם און פון וואס ער  
[וועט] נעמען די געלט, איז למעלה ווערן באלד פאר עס געמעסט נייע צנורות  
אז ער זאל האבען א תוספת ברכה אין זיין פרנסה און ער זאל קענען ערפילען  
זיין גוטע הבטחה במעל ממש,

און אויף די דברי הרב קען מען טאך צוגעבען, אז וויבאלד אז צדקה איז  
דאך א חלק מעשר אדער א חומש, פסקינט מען אפ למעלה א הוספה לכל  
הצרות מינף מאל אזויפיל וויפיל ער האט באשליסטען צו געבען אויף צדקה,  
און די איבעריקע פיר חלקים בלייבען בא עם אויף זיינע ענינים הפרטים.

ברכה אז די מצות הצדקה זאל יעדערען פון אייך בריינגען די ברכות  
פון השם יתברך וועלכע זיינען דורכאויס א צדקה און דאס זאל זיך  
אויסדריקען אין דעם וואס יעדער איינער פון אייך באדארף.



311 Kingston Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11213  
718 - 756 - 0361  
Eye Exams Sunday - Thursday  
by appointment

 @seeview.optical





# THANK YOU!

*To our wonderful Charidy partners:*



Mr. Abe J Chehebar	Rabbi & Mrs Yossi Kazarnovsky	Mr. & Mrs. Shloimy Fischer
Mr. Adam I Gordon	Rabbi & Mrs. Efraim Goldfein	Mr. & Mrs. Dovid Katz
Mr. Alan Dern	Rabbi & Mrs. Mordechai Nagel	Mr. & Mrs. David Rogatsky
Mr. Alan Steinberg	Rabbi & Mrs. Mordechai Skolnik	Mr. & Mrs. Chanan Feldman
Mr. Andrew Chung	Rabbi & Mrs. Moshe Drizin	Dr. Schwartz
Mr. Babu Reddy	Rabbi & Mrs. Shmulik Brook	Mr. & Mrs. Sruli Richler
Mr. & Mrs. Zalmy Cohen	Rabbi & Mrs. Yosef Muss	Mr. & Mrs. Itchik Orimland
Mr. & Mrs. Eliezer Kornhauser	Rabbi & Mrs. Shmulik Eisenberg	Rabbi & Mrs. Shlomie Greenwald
Mr. Gary Korn	Mr. Richard Wagman	Mr. & Mrs. Ezriel Rappaport
Mr. Gilles Gade	Mr. Robert F. Corroon	Mr. & Mrs. Menachem Gurevitch
Mr. Jack Braha	Mr. Ryan Nelson	Mr. & Mrs. Yigal Niasoff
Mr. Joe Lostritto	Mr. Shimon Eisikowicz	Mr. & Mrs. Mendel Jacobson
Mr. Kevin Chisholm	The Maling Foundation	Mr. & Mrs. Nussi Sternberg
Ms. Leslie Wohlman Himmel	Mr. & Mrs. Dovi Sperlin	Mr. & Mrs. Binyomin Levin
Mr. & Mrs. Ari Greenwald	Mr. & Mrs. Dovid Kugel	Mr. & Mrs. Dovid Sputz
Mr. & Mrs. Avremy Zuntz	Mrs. Chani Drizin	Mrs. Devorah Scheiner
Mr. & Mrs. Faivish Pewzner	Mr. & Mrs. Chezky Klein	Mr. & Mrs. Shai Denburg
Mr. & Mrs. Lazer Schiener	Mr. & Mrs. Tuvia Greisman	Mr. & Mrs. Mendel Pinson
Mr. & Mrs. Levi Eckhause	Mr. & Mrs. Dovid Junik	Mr. & Mrs. Osher Karnovsky
Mr. & Mrs. Mechy Stiegman	Rabbi. & Mrs. Sholom Ber Drizin	Mr. & Mrs. Mendy Rabkin
Mr. & Mrs. Mendel Mangel	Mr. & Mrs. Lavie Popack	Mr. & Mrs. Benabu
Mr. & Mrs. Mordy Werde	Mr. & Mrs. Yerachmeal Jacobson	Mr. & Mrs. Shuey Scheiner
Mr. & Mrs. Schneur Plotkin	Mr. & Mrs. Yanky Markowitz	Mr. & Mrs. Ari Sperlin
Mr. & Mrs. Tuvia Greisman	Mr. & Mrs. Chaim Drizin	Rabbi & Mrs. Beryl Junik
Mr. & Mrs. Yosef Gorowitz	Mr. & Mrs. Mendy Gansburg	Mr. & Mrs. Shmaya Krinsky
Mr. & Mrs. Zevi Drizin	Mr. & Mrs. Boruch Greenberg	Mr. & Mrs. Sruli Bernstein
Rabbi & Mrs. Dudi Farkash	Rabbi Yudel Krinsky	
Mr. Peter Castellana III	Mr. & Mrs. Shimon Liani	

# Keeping *the* Contents Hot

---



*The brainchild of this article was a pitch at the first Alumni Embrace Reunion Chinuch Tank. Mrs. Chayale Tzukernik and Miss Miriam Elberg, both devoted Bais Rivkah high school teachers, realized the necessity for teachers to have time designated for learning and preparing their lessons. This was their proposal: "We all know that there's never a dull moment and time is a coveted phenomenon. B"H many teachers are raising small children or are involved in various initiatives. The idea of learning thoroughly in free time is a mere fantasy. We therefore propose a two hour learning group every Sunday. The time will be divided between chavrusa learning and a communal shiur. Babysitting will be provided. The courses will be divided into four-week sessions for a group of 15 teachers. Each teacher will get a \$50 stipend per session attended with the expectation that they attend all 4 sessions per course."*

In my years in Eretz Yisroel, I have graced many Shabbos tables, each with its own rituals. It was one of those meals that the host requested that everyone around the table share either a Torah thought, a personal experience, or a fun fact. My mind went blank. I couldn't think of anything to share. As the host called on me, I let him know that I

was stumped. He then asked me a peculiar question. “Are you empty?”

“I hope not,” I responded. “A person is a vessel that expresses what it contains. To fill one’s vessel, it’s important to learn, and once full, the next step is to share.”

It reminded me of the woman who approached a Rabbi, asking for a method to ensure that her children would be happy. The Rabbi asked the woman how she ensures her personal happiness. When the woman’s response was that she’d given up on herself and had pinned all her hopes on her children, the Rabbi brilliantly remarked, “The maximum you can guarantee is that your kids will give up on themselves but want their kids to be happy.”

This idea has become ubiquitous to me.

Years later, I’m preparing my Shabbos morning coffee, and I see my son observing my double-hot cup process. I take his inquisitiveness up for a learning experience. I explain to him the concept of *kli rishon mevashel*- the original vessel that contains something hot has the power to cook. I demonstrate how, by the time the water is poured into the third vessel, its contents have cooled off and have lost their cooking powers.

As I sip the coffee, I fill myself with that dose of energy to get through the day. We all have those burnout moments of dampened momentum and frayed motivation. The only way to contribute and impact another is to first do some inside work- to fill your own vessel.

The basis of Chabad Chassidus is that a Chossid does not rely on inspiration to keep him going, but rather develops a deep and strong connection to Hashem through his personal efforts and learning.

As a mechaneches, my role is to imbue my students with Yiras Hashem and Ahavas Hashem until they manifest their beings as they become *Neros L’Hair*.

The only way to cultivate true Ahavas Hashem and Yiras Hashem is through an invested process of Chabad. As the adage goes and logic dictates, “You can’t pour from an empty cup.” Just as words from the heart enter the heart, if one is immersed in the waters of Torah and invests in gaining what he can for the purpose of imparting in others, he will surely succeed.

It’s easy to feel empty. To feel like you’re stuck in the cold. And that’s because you are. Without constant

*A person is a vessel that expresses what it contains. To fill one’s vessel, it’s important to learn, and once full, the next step is to share.”*

investment in real learning and original texts, your once heat-retaining *kli rishon* can easily cool to a *kli shlishi*, which can no longer cook.

A lukewarm coffee won’t warm the chill in your bones, and it definitely will not illuminate your students. Only once you have made a truth your own and have delved into the holy texts and sources, can you share it with others.

I find this in my own experience as well. The only way to have that eureka moment, the fiery-eyed clarity and understanding, the propelling, forward motivation, is through emptying those seforim shelves and pouring over each page. That eureka moment came to me post-high school as I explored one of the fundamentals of Yiddishkeit: Ein od milvado. With my minds eye, I was able to see that Hashem is the Sole reality. I was only able to achieve this through investment in my learning.

This experience is crucial for every Chossid, and is the responsibility of each teacher.

In a sense we are all teachers; “If you know alef, teach alef.”

So, as I sip my coffee, I pull out the Tanya to get a deeper glimpse into the infinite wisdom and life guidance that I can share with my students.

I take an extra moment to learn for myself too, because after all, “A person is a vessel that expresses what it contains. To fill one’s vessel, it’s important to learn, and once full, the next step is to share.”■





# THE ART OF

# Giving



---

Chava Loewenthal, Copenhagen, Denmark  
*Graduating class of 5778 (2018)*



I was in one of my “down” moods. I had had a long day with a lot going on, and by the time I came back to my apartment, I was done. I sat on my bed, rehashing the day’s events and moping about everyone and everything. I heard my phone ding and saw a text from my aunt, *“Hey Chava, I know this is super last minute, but are you available now for a bit to help me? I’m not feeling so well and need to get everyone settled.”* I groaned. Seriously? This was the last thing I needed with the mood I was in. All I wanted was to crash. But I didn’t actually have a valid reason to say no. I couldn’t really say, “Sorry, I’m in a bad mood, so it’s not going to work.”

I wrote back, “Sure! Coming in a few.” I left my house bemoaning my fate.

I came to my aunt’s house and quickly got to work. For the next few hours, I was busy feeding the kids supper, getting them into bed, dealing with a tantrum, trying to calm a crying baby, washing the dishes and cleaning the house. I left very tired, but I noticed that I wasn’t so upset anymore. I was actually in a much better mood.

I grew up on Shlichus in Copenhagen, Denmark, raised with the concept of “give, give, and then give some more.” If we would ever complain about the amount of people or problems streaming through our home, the response was always something to the effect of, “Baruch Hashem we are on the giving side.” I never fully realized what that meant until I left home to attend Bais Rivkah High School in Crown Heights. All of a sudden I was on the receiving end. I needed Shabbos meals and places to go for Yomim Tovim, and in general, being an out-of-towner puts you on the receiving side more often. In the beginning, I hated it. I hated being a guest, relying on people, and asking for favors. I soon realized that the reason it was so unpleasant was because I was only on the receiving end. I had to start giving as well. In high

school, I was lucky to have a built-in system that ensured that I was also on the giving side. There were always opportunities to get involved, between Chessed every week and new projects popping up. Now that I am out of the official school system, I need to find my own opportunities to give, of which there are so many.

*I soon realized that the reason it was so unpleasant was because I was only on the receiving end.*

Giving doesn’t just mean money or time. There are so many ways to give, whether it’s patience, a listening ear, advice, talents, food, knowledge, love, or even with just a smile. Each person has so much to give and so much to offer, the right opportunity just needs to be found. For example, when I was in the dorm on Carroll Street, the Mintz’s next door invited us every Motzei Shabbos to hear havdalah in their home. More recently during Covid, the Schneerson family on President Street offered their lawn for Chassanim, Kallos, and their families to take pictures.



*Sometimes we are so busy looking for the big projects that we miss the important, seemingly smaller opportunities.*

Hosting people for Shabbos and Yom Tov meals, arranging meals for families who may need, donating clothes that aren't being worn anymore, dancing at the wedding of a couple who may not have much family, sharing ideas, making phone calls for organizations, helping to set up and arrange events, there is no end to the list of giving opportunities. One simply has to think creatively.

I remember watching a puppet show called *The Unhappy King* when I was younger. It's a story of a king who was unhappy, so his servants tried to cheer him up, giving him all sorts of entertainment and gifts. At the end, what makes him happy is when he helps someone out. It's a cute video that we used to act out and memorize, but the message is quite applicable, especially in today's world. Everyone is busy running after happiness. There are so many products out there that advertise themselves as "bringing happiness." At the end of the day, these things come and go and can be a waste of time in the grand scheme of seeking happiness. There are countless letters from the Rebbe telling people who are feeling down that rather than focusing on their negative thoughts, they should occupy themselves with positive thoughts and actions. By helping others, you actually end up helping yourself!

As Lubavitchers, this idea was ingrained in us since day one. Our entire being is for another Yid no matter who or where. Sometimes we are so busy looking for the big projects that we miss the important, seemingly smaller opportunities. The woman struggling with her bags, wallet, and kids on the checkout line may just need some understanding patience, your neighbor might just need a smile, and your friend may just need to hear a genuine, "How are you?" The list is endless. Look out for the opportunities, and the opportunities will find you. When you give, you get so much more back. ■



# FINDING Joy AND BENEVOLENCE IN *Life* BY BEING BENEVOLENT TO OTHERS

I was truly astonished to read in your letter that you cannot find anything in your life to bring you joy — this, after having written that you have “thank G-d, two very delightful and religiously observant daughters.”

Make an effort to minimize, as much as possible, thoughts such as, “What am I feeling?”; “Am I afraid of someone?” and so on.

Replace these thoughts with profound contemplation as to how you can assist and see to the needs of your neighbors or your relatives sheyichyu. Surely you will find many such matters [where you can be of benefit].

[Bear in mind that] one who acts benevolently toward one's friend is rewarded with Hashem's benevolence to an even greater extent [than the individual's own benevolence toward the other].

Since all matters are to be accomplished through natural means as well, consult a doctor who is also a friend (*rofeh yedid*).

*(From a handwritten response of the Rebbe, Tishrei 12, 5743)*

*Reprinted with permission from Sichos in English.*



A child feeling sick comes with challenges. **Getting an appointment is not one of them.**

*quickly*

 555 Lefferts Ave  
Corner of Kingston

 646.757.8751

Call to book  
appointments  
or book online

**Healow.com**  
**Zocdoc.com**



“  
Looking forward  
to serving your  
family soon!  
”



**Dr. Avraham Gottesman**

*The Pediatrician trusted by parents and loved by children.*

# Raizer shel Chessed

---

Chani Mochkin, Crown Heights  
*Graduating class of 5776 (2016)*



**I**n Crown Heights, large families are BH a dime a dozen. The adage “Chessed begins at home” rings very true here, as children who practice chessed at home provide a huge help to their families. It begins at home and is instilled and reinforced at home, in every interaction among family members.

The term seems so straightforward, but as I mature I realize that home can be the most complex place to practice chessed. The return is not as ego-stroking as helping strangers or the needy. Helping at home easily becomes a chore as it shifts into a routine, and can even be a drag.

The people we know best sometimes slip under the radar, and they become hard to “see.” How can we become impersonal to people we are so familiar with?

It’s hard to capture my sister Raizel in words. Raizel completely embodied chessed. On Wikipedia, chessed is described as the attribute of grace, benevolence, or compassion. My sister was all of the above. She was full of grace; the way she spoke about herself was kind and encouraging. There was no moment of “Could I do it?” and self-doubt. Instead, there was, “What is the best way to go about this?”

Raizel got married at 25 and moved to Eretz Yisroel after having her third child, and had another five kids while living there. With eight children to care for, she had every excuse in the world to avoid over-extending herself for anyone but her husband and children. But she never leaned into excuses. I never heard my sister ever say, “No, sorry, I’m busy with the kids” or, “I’m too tired.” It is a bizarre thought! I am twenty-two, studying in school, and I hear myself constantly come up with valid excuses to not do something; valid, but nevertheless still excuses.

My mother mentioned something about Raizel the other day: Raizel would call her as night fell in Israel and New York began to hustle. She would frequently say, “Ma, I have this wedding in Yerushalayim and I’m so tired from the day and the kids.” My mother would respond matter-of-factly, “Rai, you have every excuse not to go, just go to sleep.” Without fail, Raizel would call my mother back the next day and say, “Ma, I went and it was great, I’m so happy I pushed myself.” Isn’t that phenomenal, the way she showed up?

I loved going to Israel simply because I adored every moment I would spend chatting with Raizel. The last I spent time with Raizel in Israel was the last time I had with her before she returned to America to undergo treatment.

I had the wonderful fortune of being a counselor on the Swerdlow program in Eretz Yisroel. Camp had just ended, and I hopped on a forty minute bus to Beitar, ready to spend the day with Raizel. I walked down two flights straight into her Israeli apartment. Her kids greeted me with hugs and kisses, like always, and I felt the warmth of home right there in Eretz Yisroel. Raizel immediately got to fussing around, asking me about camp, and if I was satisfied with how it concluded. She asked me what I wanted for dinner, and I just shrugged, “anything you make would be great.” She pursed her fingers as the Israe-

*Home can be the most complex place to practice chessed. The return is not as ego-stroking as helping strangers or the needy.*

lis do, (Raizel was so proud of her Israeli mannerisms!) and said, “Chani, what do you want to eat?” I still responded with a shrug, as I looked around the house that was in a state of motion, the kids playing, friends over; it was a hectic summer day. “Rai, anything will be good, whatever you have in the house.” Exasperated, Raizel started naming options for me. “Do you want salmon or chicken or —” “Salmon would be great,” I answered, hoping that would be the simplest response.

With that, Raizel grabbed her car keys and said, “Take the baby, let’s go pick up salmon.”

I remember just standing there for a minute in the whirlwind. I had just walked into her life; it would have been easy for her to say, “Make yourself at home — my home is your home,” and continue on with her routine and the housework she needed to get done. I always felt completely comfortable



*R-L Chani, Raizel,  
and Raizel’s daughter at the Kosel.*



*She didn't just want the gossip about the family back in America; she wanted to know how I was doing amid the noise.*

cooking in my sister's house, yet Raizel insisted I get what I want.

We picked up salmon and some greens and it was the most delicious meal I ate in Israel over that trip. I would always compliment Raizel, "People come to Israel for the food they can get; I come to Israel for your food."

It's easy to create space for family when it is convenient or for your benefit. It can feel great to do chessed, and at home it can turn into tit for tat — I helped you, now help me back. I raised you, now you can babysit my kids. Raizel never had those expectations. Every time I'd come to visit, she would encourage me to venture out of Beitar and explore. She would take time and effort to make sure I wasn't just fine or happy, but that I had everything I wanted. She overextended herself and made me feel like I was a priority. I look at it as a

complete chessed. She could have left me to play with the kids or at least to my own devices, but when I would come into her home, it was as if all the space was there for me. She didn't just want the gossip about the family back in America; she wanted to know how *I* was doing amid the noise. She would turn every conversation we had into an introspective one. Instead of giving me advice, she gave me tools. That is true chessed.

Chessed is also defined as benevolence — to be good and have goodwill. Raizel showed up, privately and publicly. The simple act of showing up is possibly the most underrated act of chessed. I think about that part of my sister a lot, about how significant she made me feel by talking things over with me. By showing up, we give people the understanding that they are worth the effort. You never feel bad about the good things you do, only the good things you don't do. That's something I'll always have from Raizel.

*Chani Mochkin publishes a weekly Dvar Torah in memory of her beloved sister, Raizel (bas yblch"t) Yosef Yitzchak Zucker. Email her at [chanimochkin@gmail.com](mailto:chanimochkin@gmail.com) to join the email list and receive a fascinating and refreshing thought on the Parsha. ■*



*Raizel and her Mochkin sisters and sisters-in-law.*





# Get Cozy

WITH A Free  
MAGAZINE  
*delivered to your door!*

BY ALUMNI.  
FOR ALUMNI



Did you read  
our first issue? ↘

Unite with fellow Bais Rivkah alumni worldwide and subscribe to the EmBRace magazine! It's quick and easy to sign up.

**[BethRivkah.edu/alumni](https://BethRivkah.edu/alumni)** ↘

Follow us on Instagram @thealumniembrace for updates and exciting giveaways!

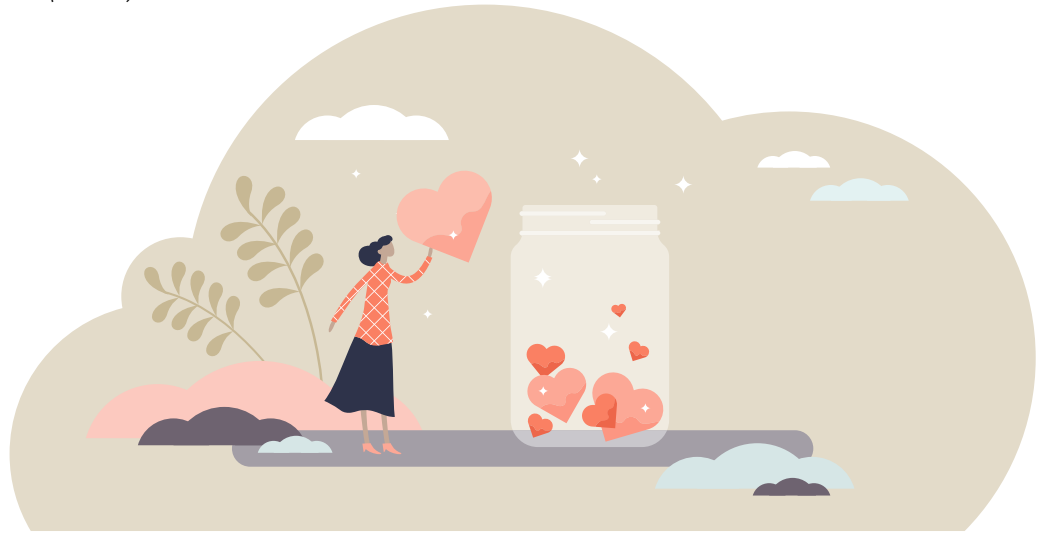
For submissions and articles please email [embrace@bethrivkah.edu](mailto:embrace@bethrivkah.edu)

© @estfarkas101

# Receive *with* Grace

---

Brachie (Gurkow) Katzman, Chicago, IL  
*Graduating class of 5768 (2008)*



## *Giving is Easy*

Our days are full of giving. As friends, mothers, wives, and employees, there are so many opportunities to give. It feels empowering — like we contributed to society, maybe even made a difference in the world. Giving feels good.

Can we say the same about receiving? “Sure,” we say, “I can take from others. I get cleaning ladies, babysitters, and I even accept favors from family or friends.” However, an honest look at our actions often tells a different story. Are you more likely to say “Thank you,” or “I got it on a great sale,” when complimented on what you’re wearing? When someone offers help, will you accept it, even if you think you think you can or should do it yourself?

Hashem didn’t create things equally. There are always givers and receivers. In every ecosystem, animals and plants give and receive from one another. In an exchange of ideas, each party leaves with a new perspective. In every interaction, no matter how small, we get from the other person. We often play both roles of giving and receiving in parts of our lives. Hashem created us to live as an interconnected community, where we cannot live alone. We need to be in contact with others. Sometimes we

*Instead of feeling less-than  
when you need help, accept the  
help and let the warm feeling of  
being cared for wash over you.*



are in a position to give and other times in a position to receive. We need to strike a balance.

## Receiving is Also a Chessed

Often, receiving can trigger feelings of not being enough, “I should be able to do this myself.” Or we may feel indebted to those who help us, that we now need to go out on a limb for them. This is especially true when we are in a situation where we feel needy to begin with. With this mindset, we can feel like a taker; like a person who just keeps taking and doesn’t contribute anything to his surroundings. Often, during the period of time that we need help the most, we may be the least able to give, which only enhances this image of ourselves. We just need a shift in perspective.

It is helpful to understand that it is also a chessed to receive. Accepting help from others allows them to feel like better people. Accepting a compliment makes the other person feel that her words are worthy. By allowing others to give to us, we allow them to feel good about themselves and that they matter. Accepting a compliment also creates a change in us. When we accept a compliment or favor with a smile and a “thank you,” we add value to ourselves. We are agreeing that we are worth spending time on.

When we allow ourselves to receive from others, we fill up emotionally. It is hard to give when we are empty. We end up feeling depleted and tempers can run short. Only when we are full can we continue giving. Instead of feeling less-than when you need help, accept the help and let the warm feeling of being cared for wash over you.

The Gemara<sup>1</sup> notes an interesting exchange between Rabbi Akiva and Turnus Rufus, where Turnus Rufus challenges the concept of giving Tzedakah. “If your G-d loves the poor,” he asks, “why does he not support them?”

Rabbi Akiva’s answer teaches us that being the recipient of someone else’s giving can actually be more helpful to the giver than the receiver. “When we give Tzedakah we are saved from punishment that may be coming our way. Picture a king, out of anger, who

*We may never be in the position to pay back. Instead, we can pay it forward.*

condemns his child to prison and orders that no one give him food nor drink. If someone goes and feeds the king’s son [saving him from danger], wouldn’t the king show his appreciation and send a gift?” While Hashem may have decreed poverty to His children, He rewards those who seek to assist and give to them.

## Pay it Forward

After receiving from another we may feel conflicted. Do we need to find an opportunity to pay it back, or should we focus on paying it forward? Real chessed is done without the intent to get paid back. We may never be in the position to pay back. Instead, we can pay it forward. When someone else is in need, give to them, in the way that we can. Everyone has talents and gifts, each charged to give in his own way. We don’t need to pay it back or forward in the exact same way we received. Be it emotional support or physical assistance, we each have something to give. Often, we aren’t even aware of our role in another’s life. What one may consider an easy, insignificant favor may have been a lifesaver for her friend in a hectic season.

Yes, a favor must always be acknowledged gratefully. However, we don’t need to feel indebted. There will be a time when you will be able to pay the favor forward, though possibly in a different way. There is a season for everything. ■



1. Bava Basra, daf 10, amud 1

# planTogether

Chayale Sorkin, Crown Heights  
*Graduating class of 5777 (2017)*



**A**t the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the terms social distancing and quarantine became part of everyday lexicon, two Bais Rivkah alumnae launched an initiative, spreading love and hope to many and inspiring hundreds of others.

Growing up, each involved with their respective grandparents, both Baila Dalfin and Nechama Shpigelman (Hecht) have always taken interest in seniors. Additionally, Baila herself currently works in a nursing home. They subsequently noticed the heavy toll the pandemic was taking on seniors and heard the silent plea of this group, so isolated and vulnerable. “We knew we wanted to do something to show seniors that we care and that they are not alone,” says Baila.

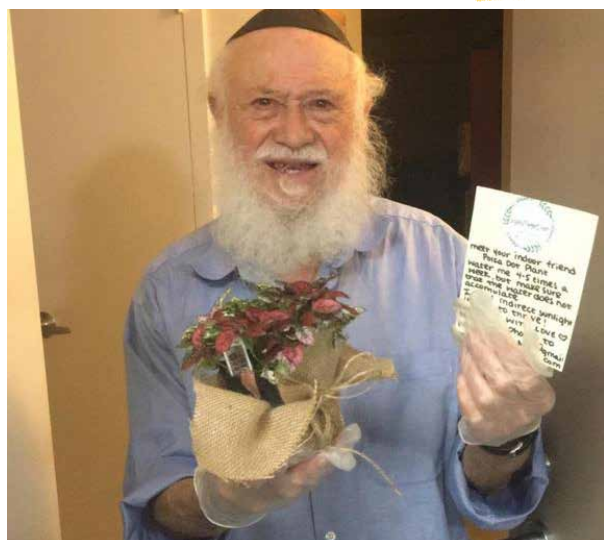
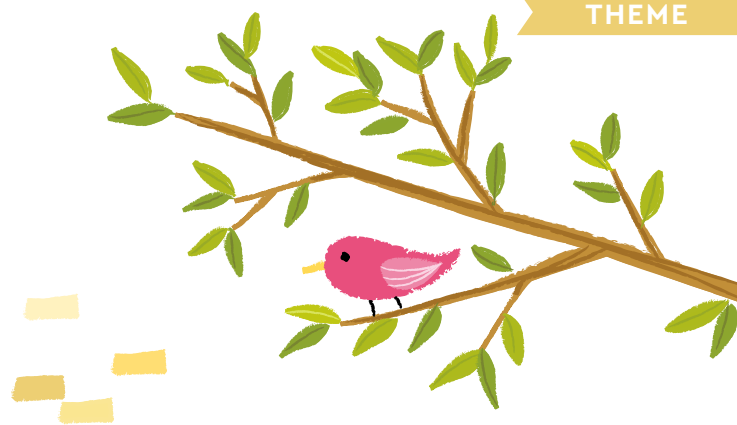
Charged with the mission of looking out for others and making a difference, the two teamed up and began an organization they named “planTogether.” Their goal — to deliver plants to seniors and provide comfort during these trying and lonely times. They chose plants, as studies have shown that caring for a plant can improve one’s mood and overall health.

The operation started out with local deliveries to seniors within the Crown Heights community, and as positive feedback began to pour in, they knew they needed to expand to neighboring areas as well. Currently, planTogether delivers to numerous assisted living facilities and nursing homes.

*This project inspired the world at large, causing a ripple effect of acts of goodness and kindness.*

One of the many heartwarming stories that encouraged them to keep branching out came from the granddaughter of a plant-recipient. She explained that her grandmother had lost her husband before the pandemic and had been living alone for quite some time. With the start of Covid and the lack of in-person visitors, she was feeling extra lonely. Upon receiving the plant, she felt so loved and cared for and immediately occupied herself with tending to it. It brought her so much joy that she went so far as to purchase a new pot for the plant. Her entire family was grateful for the change they saw in her.

The story of planTogether was featured in articles and on news sites, creating a tremendous Kiddush Hashem. Many were moved, witnessing what two girls were able to undertake and accomplish once they set their minds to help others. This project inspired the world at large, causing a ripple effect of



acts of goodness and kindness.

“Being educated in Bais Rivkah the focus was always on the fact that each person matters, and that one must look out for others. This empowered us to think big and try to help whoever we could reach,” says Nechama. When asked regarding plans to continue, Baila responded: “It’s something we want to keep growing, since we know we’re making a difference. With the Rebbe’s brachos, we hope to keep reaching even more people.”

“We began this project with the intention of making people happy,” noted Baila. “If our story inspired someone to take action and perform a good deed, we already know we did something right.”

“There is one last message we would like to leave readers with,” Nechama added. “If you feel passionate about doing something for the benefit of others, don’t hesitate or wait around for someone else to take it on. Throw yourself into it! You’d be surprised at what you are capable of accomplishing!”

If you would like to get involved in any way, feel free to reach out to [plantogethernyc@gmail.com](mailto:plantogethernyc@gmail.com). ■



# Mono-Mono Miracles

---

Danit (Friedman) Schusterman, Crown Heights  
*Graduating class of 5757 (1997)*



The young resident looked me straight in the eye as my babies were wheeled out of the delivery room and said, “I don’t know what religion you are, ma’am, but *Someone* was watching those babies.”

I was at my seven-month checkup when I asked my doctor, “Don’t you think I’m carrying a little bigger than I usually do?” She answered that it’s my fourth pregnancy, and that’s very common. My measurements were perfectly fine, and the baby seemed healthy b”H. My previous pregnan-

cies were healthy and uneventful. I never had an ultrasound with any of them, and unless directed by the doctor, I wasn't planning to have one with this baby either. The Doppler told us that the baby's heartbeat sounded great, and that's all I needed to know.

"If it will make you feel better, get an ultrasound to rule out any extra fluids. It could be why you seem to be carrying bigger than you usually do," added the doctor, and then she laughed, "It'll also rule out twins."

Living on Maui, things work a little slower than they do on the mainland U.S.. The next available ultrasound was two weeks away. So as I approached my eighth month, my husband and I went to the radiology center of Maui to get my ultrasound. Just to make me feel better.

After doing a routine check, the technician told us we had one healthy baby inside and all looked good. He said he would do one more check just to be thorough. After a few long minutes, the sonographer looked up at me and said very seriously, "I see another head." There was another baby hiding away in the back behind its twin sibling.

I looked at him and yelled, "But we don't have enough car seats!" and then burst into tears while simultaneously laughing hysterically. He asked me if my husband and I needed a moment, to which I answered yes, I'd appreciate that.

A little while later, the technician came back in and said that now that there was clearly another baby in there, it was necessary to find the membrane separating them. We sat there for another half hour, but he could not find said membrane. I asked if we really needed this membrane, as I had to get home to my other kids, ages four, two, and one. He thought I was joking. He then said that I needed a specialist to find the membrane if he was unable to find it. The specialist flew in to Maui from Honolulu once a month and would only be here in three weeks, so I needed to make an appointment for then.

Three weeks later, as I entered my thirty-second week of pregnancy, I arrived to see the "specialist" ultrasound technician. He sat with me and looked for the membrane, which was supposed to separate my newly-discovered twins. He searched for forty-five minutes. He then looked up at me and said in a most nonchalant tone, "So, there is no membrane. You are carrying mono-mono twins. This means that your twins are in one amniotic sac. They are also sharing

*The sonographer looked up at me and said very seriously, "I see another head."*

a placenta. There is a huge risk of twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, which means one baby can take all the nutrients from the placenta, posing death to the other twin. Since they share a placenta, if one twin dies, the other will die too, or have huge health issues. Their umbilical cords are completely knotted together. If one twin so much as moves in the wrong direction, pulling on the cord, it means instant death for both of them. Mono-mono twins happen in 0.1 percent of all pregnancies, with a 50 percent mortality rate. This pregnancy is a ticking time bomb. You need to get these babies out of you TODAY. You will need to be airlifted by the medivac helicopter from Maui Memorial Hospital to the hospital in Honolulu since there is no NICU in Maui, and you are only thirty-two weeks along. Best of luck."

On the way home, in the very silent car ride, I very calmly told my husband that we need to get more car seats. I also said that Hashem has watched these babies for eight months, I'm sure He will give us another day or two to make the necessary arrangements for someone to come watch our other kids while I fly to another island to have these babies.

Hashem really came through. We found the most wonderful young girl who was a friend of a friend and was available to fly in immediately from Chicago



*Hashem has watched these babies for eight months, I'm sure He will give us another day or two to make the necessary arrangements.*

and take care of my kids while I was away. Her name is Michla Lichy, and I can write an entire book about how wonderful and miraculous this woman was and is. During these two days, I did an insane amount of research on mono-mono twins and realized that the longer they would be inside me, the better it would be for them—as long as the babies were under twenty-four-hour observation in a hospital.

I arrived at Kapiolani Medical Center in Honolulu and was treated like royalty. It is a teaching hospital, so all the residents wanted in on my case. I was the

based on my research if both babies were monitored 24/7, I could keep them inside me until thirty-five weeks, which is full-term for twins. This would mean I needed ten more days. And if, chas vesholom, one of the babies went into distress, I was in the perfect place. I just felt certain that the babies would be okay.

The doctors spoke amongst themselves. They said that every one of my points was indeed valid. They then proceeded to list every possible thing that *could* go wrong. I then asked them what they could do *if* any of these things actually happened, and the answer to all of the above was an emergency C-section. We agreed to set up the hospital room for just that, and they conceded that as long as the babies' heart rates looked good, they would agree to deliver them at thirty-five weeks.

I was fine. The babies were fine. I had an undeniably good feeling that everything would turn out okay, something I couldn't explain. Hashem had brought us so far; He would surely continue to take care of my babies.

Every day, all seven specialists would come to see me.



“mono-mono mom”—super rare. On my first day there, they led me into my huge private room, and I was met by seven ob-gyn specialists. “You need to get these babies out of you today. The risk of something happening to them is too great.” I replied that

The babies looked good, b”h. There were many times there was a “code red,” when the nurses would come running into my room only to find that “baby B” had moved, so the heart monitor couldn't find her heartbeat. They'd reposition the monitor and see that all was fine.





Baruch Hashem, both twins were delivered at 34.5 weeks, healthy and at a good weight. They spent a week in the NICU under observation until they hit thirty-five weeks. They were the little celebrities of the hospital. Our mono-mono twins are now, b”h, ten years old and in the fourth grade in Bais Rivkah, absolutely loving it.

I often look back at that time and long for the unbelievable bitachon that I had. It was an undeniable feeling that although it seemed like all the odds were against me and the babies, I just knew that we would all be fine, and it would all be okay.

Bitachon is a funny thing. It is like a cloud that can carry you through the most difficult of life’s challenges. I just handed it over to Hashem. He has carried me through all the hardest moments of my life so far, and He will continue to do so. We just need to know—really, truly know—that it will all be okay. Even when painted with all the worst-case scenarios, as the doctors did, just keep your head up. Remember Who runs the show, do your part, and let Hashem do the rest. He’s got this. ■



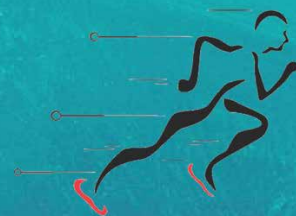
# GETTING THROUGH YOUR DAY REQUIRES ATHLETIC STRENGTH. WE CAN HELP.

Acu for Athletes is a Brooklyn-based acupuncture office specializing in chronic pain, orthopedic injuries, migraines, anxiety, and women’s health issues. Find out what it’s like to live pain-free again.

 (845)608-0380

 [acuforathletes@gmail.com](mailto:acuforathletes@gmail.com)

 [acu\\_for\\_athletes](https://www.instagram.com/acu_for_athletes)



**ACU FOR ATHLETES**



# THE GIFT *of* PRESENCE

---

Chaya (Minkowicz) Abelsky, Crown Heights  
*Graduating class of 5749 (1989)*



**W**hen was the last time you gave without doing anything? When you stepped out of the cycle of action and stepped into a process of presence? No work, housework, or schoolwork. No last-minute loads in the dishwasher at 1:00 am. As women, we are the ones who most often struggle with this because the list of things we have to do never seems to end.

And so, we fall into a pattern of doing for others, rather than being for others. For example, our husband might complain we are always busy and never have time for him. A child might lament that we only give them attention when it's for academic purposes. What is it that they really want?

Giving is at the heart of all of our relationships. We give to what, and whom, we love. In many ways, it is the foundation and catalyst of every form of love. Where there is no giving, real love cannot exist. Giving is not just with money. Or presents. Well, it's part of it, and sometimes giving can be not the kind you're thinking. Giving is being available. Giving is being open-hearted and showing up for another person's process. Many times, it is the people

who are there for us, who give by just being there. Giving with their presence.

The halachos of *nichum aveilim* teach us the value of supporting others with our presence. We show up. We sit silently until the mourner is ready to speak. With our presence, we make space for his or her feelings. This powerful form of support allows the individual to face her challenges and find the resilience to rise above them - to the point where she can experience “*Eis Tzarah L’Yaakov - U’memena Y’vashea.*” From within adversity, we find our resilience and transcendence.

Giving becomes the opportunity of the giver to reflect support and positive thinking. The giver acts as a mirror to remind the other of their uniqueness, so that they may recognize their guided journey is exactly planned in order to achieve the goals Hashem has in mind for them.

To be present for others means to be completely and fully there — physically, mentally, and emotionally. The countless individuals who merited yechidus with the Rebbe recall the undivided attention the Rebbe gave them — as if no one and nothing existed at that moment other than them and their concerns.

We must take our cue from the Rebbe. Despite the distractions, and with all the important matters we need to attend to, we can give those we love the gift of our complete selves.

And to be able to give in this way, we need to learn to be present ourselves; to live in the moment.

In the words of the Rebbe:

“Every detail of one’s service, or even *preparation* for that service, be it the means to some other end, or some minute detail, it must all be performed with complete presence of mind, speech, and action. As the Rebbe Rashab famously said, and as related to us by his only son and successor, my father-in-law, the Rebbe, the leader of our generation: A *pnimi* is one who invests him or herself completely in whatever it is that he or she is doing...

...Even if your present activity is merely the means toward another end, so long as this activity requires your attention, you must be fully and completely invested, present, in the moment.”

(*Sefer Hasichos 5751, Parshas Pinchas*)

It’s been said that living in the present moment is the highest form of sanity. You are the most attractive when you live right now, in the present moment. Not

worrying about the future, or striving for it, or trying to repair the past. A smooth, secure, present-focused orientation is the best way to reach a better future. It’s about being tuned in with what is happening right now. The past and the future do not exist. Life can only exist in the present moment.

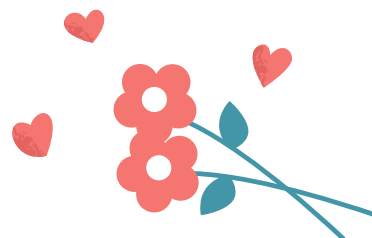
We all have things we want to achieve or acquire. There is absolutely nothing wrong with this. However, chasing these types of goals often gets us worked up to the point that we are more passionate about tomorrow than we are about today. When this happens, the future becomes far more interesting than the present; the destination holds more importance than the journey. You gradually lose the present, which is where the real “presents” are. And the destination, if you ever reach it, is shabbier and much less sparkling than it looked at a distance. True, some sacrifice is required to reach long-term goals, but when you deny the pleasure of the now for a self-negating path, you create a rather gray and sunless personal existence.

We may be waiting for a shidduch. Waiting to be blessed with children. Waiting for our children to fall asleep or grow older. Waiting to find the right job, move to a larger home, or have some time off. We feel we are travelers on the road to an important destination; the present is a stage we are trying to simply endure.

Let us embrace the gifts Hashem has given us by being fully present in our lives. Whatever our stage in life, there is no more important day than today; this very moment is the most valuable of all. There is a vital avodah for me, here and now.

And as we become more of a “*pnimi*,” we will develop the capacity to be truly there for those we love. ■

*Chaya is a sought after speaker, facilitator, and the creator and Instructor of the ICF ACTP Certified Infiniti Coach Training (ICT) & ICT Advanced Certified Coaching (ACC) program. Her mission is to help people become the best version of themselves and be able to achieve their goals. Chaya resides in Crown Heights, NY with her husband and children.*



# HARMONY *in* CREATION

---

Shterna Karp, Crown Heights  
*Graduating class of 5774 (2014)*

*Mrs. Miriam Rhodes and her husband, Meir, are known for their incredible hachnosas orchim in Bat Ayin. Before that, though, she spent two decades teaching in Bais Rivkah.*



In the small town of Bat Ayin, halfway between Yerushalayim and Chevron, you'll find Mrs. Miriam Rhodes, probably preparing for another slew of guests or teaching a Chassidic psychology class. Walk into the wild haven of trees and vines that is their backyard and pick grapes for homemade grape juice or gather olives to squeeze oil — which the Rhodes use for their cooking on Pesach and to light the Chanukah menorah.

But before she lived in Eretz Yisroel, and before she lived in Crown Heights, Mrs. Rhodes was an aspiring scientist. In the late '60s, she studied biochemistry at Cornell University, then continued on to study plant-cell physiology at graduate school in Berkeley. The beautiful West Coast inspired her to switch her major to ecology, which led to a fellowship on an ecological expedition in Costa Rica. "It was fun," she says. "I got paid to canoe through the jungle, go snorkeling, and ride helicopters onto active volcanoes — but all those experiences felt empty, which led me to search



*Yud Tes Kislelev farbrengen in the streets of Beis Lechem near Kever Rochel*

for the truth.” In 1974, she came to Machon Chana in Crown Heights and merited to be there for their first year, when the Rebbe came to tour the building before the Pesach seder.

Mrs. Rhodes actually grew up on Rogers Avenue and Montgomery Street in Crown Heights and went to the public school next door to Bais Rivkah High School. She remembers going to Released Time programs, one of which was held in the Bais Rivkah shul. “I remember the young man teaching about ‘know before Whom you stand’ and pointing to the Hebrew words engraved on top of the Aron Kodesh. So I was

*I was in Bais Rivkah as a child, but I had to go all the way around the world searching for the truth before I came back.*

in Bais Rivkah as a child,” she says, noting the hashgacha pratis, “but I had to go all the way around the world searching for the truth before I came back.”

“I never planned to be a teacher,” Mrs. Rhodes stressed. “I had friends who always dreamed of it. They had roll books made up when they were little kids and used to play with their pretend students.” That was never Mrs. Rhodes. So how did it happen?

“Normally, when I tell this story, I say that I was walking down Crown Street when someone threw out a net. They pulled me into the building and kept me there for twenty three years — that’s how I landed up teaching at Bais Rivkah,” she laughed.

The real story is a little bit less dramatic. In 1979, Mrs. Rhodes’s husband was teaching at Machane Mordechai, a camp program the Hechts were running for the many Persian children who Lubavitch had brought to America. It was supposed to be a paid job, but the salary often didn’t come. Rabbi Hecht felt

**“It’s interesting,” Mrs. Rhodes said. “When the Rebbe came he said that there weren’t enough mirrors. When he came back the next year, the Rebbe said that there were still not enough mirrors. The fact that the Rebbe cared really made an impression on me.”**



*Farbrengen at the kever of Menucha Rochel.*



*Mrs. Rhodes would start each topic with 'Avoda Compositions,' where girls decided what moral they could take from the laws of physics for life.*

horrible and, when the Rhodes' electricity was turned off, he tried finding Mrs. Rhodes a job. There was an opening for an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher in Bais Rivkah, he heard — and that's how Mrs. Rhodes was first netted in to her twenty three years as teacher.

After five years — upon the request of a student — Mrs. Rhodes started teaching the girls physics. Hundreds of Bais Rivkah alumnae passed through her classes. Most remember them as unique because they were never only about science.

Pulling on the message from the Baal Shem Tov that someone can always find a lesson in avodas Hashem, Mrs. Rhodes would start each topic with 'Avoda Compositions,' where girls decided what moral they could take from the laws of physics for life. When Mrs. Rhodes bumps into students even decades later, many share that they held onto their Avoda Compositions. "There doesn't have to be a dichotomy between Limmudei Kodesh and Limmudei Chol," she explained. "It's all about getting closer to Hashem."

Mrs. Rhodes loved the subject because it's something the Rebbe himself learned. The Rebbe's brother, Reb



*An underground farbrengen at Kever Rochel*

Yisroel Aryeh Leib, also studied quantum mechanics, a part of physics, in depth. "Whenever I was in Tzfas, I would stop at his kever to ask for a bracha in learning and teaching physics." On Yud Beis Iyar, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib's yahrzeit, Mrs. Rhodes would host a farbrengen for her physics students. "We would go through a page of his research — the students couldn't understand everything, but they understood enough to follow. Then we would learn a sicha that the Rebbe said about his brother and I would sneak in a bottle of wine to make it a farbrengen. I got away with a lot when I taught," she laughed. ("I hope they won't fire me!" she said when I reviewed this line of



*When we received our land, I opened an Igres and the Rebbe said he wanted to be a partner in our new house and to put up a sign saying "Beis Lubavitch."*



the article with her.)

“The high school physics curriculum has nothing that needs to be censored,” Mrs. Rhodes explained. “When we got to quantum mechanics at the end of the year, we saw even more how physics unites with Chassidus.” One example is how light is both a wave and a particle — two opposites. The human mind can’t grasp the paradox. “Scientists usually think that if they can’t understand something now, they’ll understand it next year, but quantum mechanics is the first time they needed to accept that the contradiction is built into the fabric of light’s existence. The idea that the building blocks of reality transcend knowledge is pure Chassidus,” she explains. “The poor scientists,” she continued. “It’s such a humbling experience to want to know everything and have to accept that you never will.”

At the beginning, “I had no idea how to control the class. The girls seemed to have a lot more self-confidence than I did,” she laughs. “I needed to learn that elusive balance between chessed and gevurah. You don’t want your class to be a zoo and you don’t want it to be a prison,” says Mrs. Rhodes. How does one find the fine line? “Experience. That — and you have to love both the subject and every girl in the class. That has to be your goal and you have to see it as something attainable. It doesn’t always happen easily, but if you try and put the energy in, whether speaking to a girl on her own or trying to understand her, it’s possible to really have Ahavas Yisroel for every student.”

For Mrs. Rhodes, teaching became more and more enjoyable as time went on. “You know you’re getting better at it when you end every day with more energy than you started,” she says. “I owe a lot to the Rebbe and Bais Rivkah because it’s where I learned how to teach. I knew the Rebbe wanted the girls to get the best possible education and that pushed me to do the best possible job.” Nowadays, when Mrs. Rhodes gives Chassidus classes around Eretz Yisroel, she uses the tools she gained while walking the halls of 310 Crown Street. “I really feel like the Rebbe arranged for me to teach at Bais Rivkah in order to bring out my potential. I don’t think I would have considered teaching Chassidus now if I didn’t have that experience.”

It also helps that Bais Rivkah brainwashed her, she laughs again. “If you have to act as a role model for 23 years, it’s going to affect your personal standards too.”



*So nice to be visited by a former physics student, her husband, and her 9 oldest children!*

In 1985, Professor Herman Branover asked the Rhodes if they could meet with the Lubavitch underground in Moscow and Leningrad. “We went three times for a few weeks each and it was a life-changing experience,” she remembers. “I was in the Chevra Kadisha at the time, so when we went to Russia I was asked to teach the *dinim* of *taharos*. Two weeks before we came, a woman named Sarah Garbose had been asked to be Chevra Kadisha in the only functioning Jewish cemetery — she didn’t actually know the *dinim* yet and she felt like the Rebbe had sent me to Russia just to teach her.”

The people the Rhodes met in Russia, Sarah among them, became their life-long friends. So, when Rabbi Rhodes was due for his sabbatical after 15 years of teaching at a Crown Heights public school, they spent a year in Bat Ayin, where many of their Russian friends had made aliya.

After the Sabbatical, the Rhodes returned to America







From the Rhodes' back porch

to finish tenure and then moved back to Bat Ayin in 2003 — this time permanently. Now, instead of teaching physics with a side of Chassidus, Mrs. Rhodes teaches Chassidus with the occasional physics thrown in “to wow the crowd.”

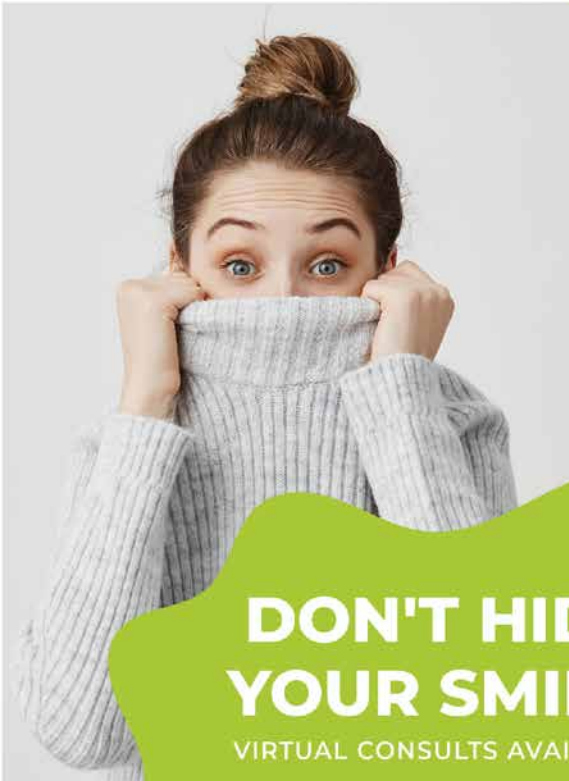
“There’s a way to connect all secular learning with Chassidus,” she stressed. For example, during Parshas Noach, Mrs. Rhodes taught her science class a sicha from that week where the Rebbe discusses using modern technology to bring the Geula. “It’s good to look around and see the connection, to find

*You have to love both the subject and every girl in the class.*

the hashgacha pratis. Our job is to approach everything — physics or ecology, shlichus or work — through the lens of Chassidus.” ■

*Mrs. Miriam Rhodes would love to connect with her students and friends, both old and new. She’d love it if you reached out via WhatsApp at +972 54-769-9364.*

*Mrs. Miriam Rhodes (bottom, second from the right) at a reunion she made during the Kinus Hashluchos with students from her first class 35 years ago, her last class 17 years ago, and the classes in between.*



**DON'T HIDE YOUR SMILE!**

VIRTUAL CONSULTS AVAILABLE

**Hanson Place**  
ORTHODONTICS

Dr. Yakov Eisenberger,  
Dr Arthur Kammerman,  
Dr. Rahul Gulati,  
Dr. Rosie Katz



**VIRTUAL CONSULTS**



**COST CALCULATOR**

P: 718.622.2695

E: INFO@HANSONPLACEORTHO.COM

A: ONE HANSON PLACE, STE 702  
BROOKLYN, NY 11243

continued from page 15



That he understood my need to expand my horizons was demonstrated a short while later, when I proposed taking a trip to Eretz Yisroel with stops in Europe to visit some of the famous cultural centers there. I had yechidus with the Rebbe around Purim, prior to which I submitted a long letter pouring out my frustrations and unhappiness. “If I can’t go to university and become a famous journalist,” I wrote, “then at least I want to travel and see the world.”

The Rebbe actually approved of my travel plan, which was delayed until the following summer because I had to earn the money to pay for it. This I did by teaching in Bais Rivkah elementary school, an experience I enjoyed. At the time, I did not foresee that I would end up happily spending the rest of my life at Bais Rivkah and eventually becoming principal of the school.

I was busy saving up money and looking forward to my trip, when a new wrench was thrown into my plan. My father would not agree to it. “An eighteen-year-old girl traveling through Europe by herself? That’s unheard of. You must have misunderstood the Rebbe.”

The stand-off was resolved some months later when my father had an audience with the Rebbe on the occasion of his birthday. “My daughter thinks that the Rebbe gave her permission to go to Eretz Yisroel with stops in Europe,” my father began.

“She didn’t go yet?” was the Rebbe’s response.

That ended all objections. I was allowed to go, and I went, spending quite a bit of time in Eretz Yisroel. I badly needed to make this trip, as the Rebbe understood so well.

Upon return, I continued to teach at Bais Rivkah and then I met my future husband. Although I felt that we were compatible, one concern caused me to hesitate before committing to a future together. I feared that the cultural divide between us was too great. I quoted Robert Frost and he quoted Yehuda Halevi. I grew up

*The Rebbe knew what was best for me, which is not to say that the Rebbe ignored my teenage angst at the time.*

in America and he, in Eretz Yisroel.

Naturally, I wrote about it to the Rebbe. And the Rebbe – as busy as he was with his countless responsibilities – understood me once more. He answered my concerns about marrying an Israeli with a rhetorical question, “But weren’t you in Eretz Yisroel already?”

I do believe that when the Rebbe approved my trip back then – when it wasn’t normal for an eighteen-year-old girl to go traveling the world alone – he foresaw that it would be a pivotal factor in my life. And, indeed, it was. My visit to Eretz Yisroel made all the difference.

Looking back, I am amazed at the Rebbe’s sensitivity, his caring, his love, and I am so grateful that he guided my life. ■

*This story has been presented with permission from JEM’s **My Encounter with the Rebbe** oral history project and **Here’s My Story** project, which is dedicated to recording first-person testimonies documenting the life and guidance of the Rebbe. For more information, please email [mystory@jemia.org](mailto:mystory@jemia.org).*

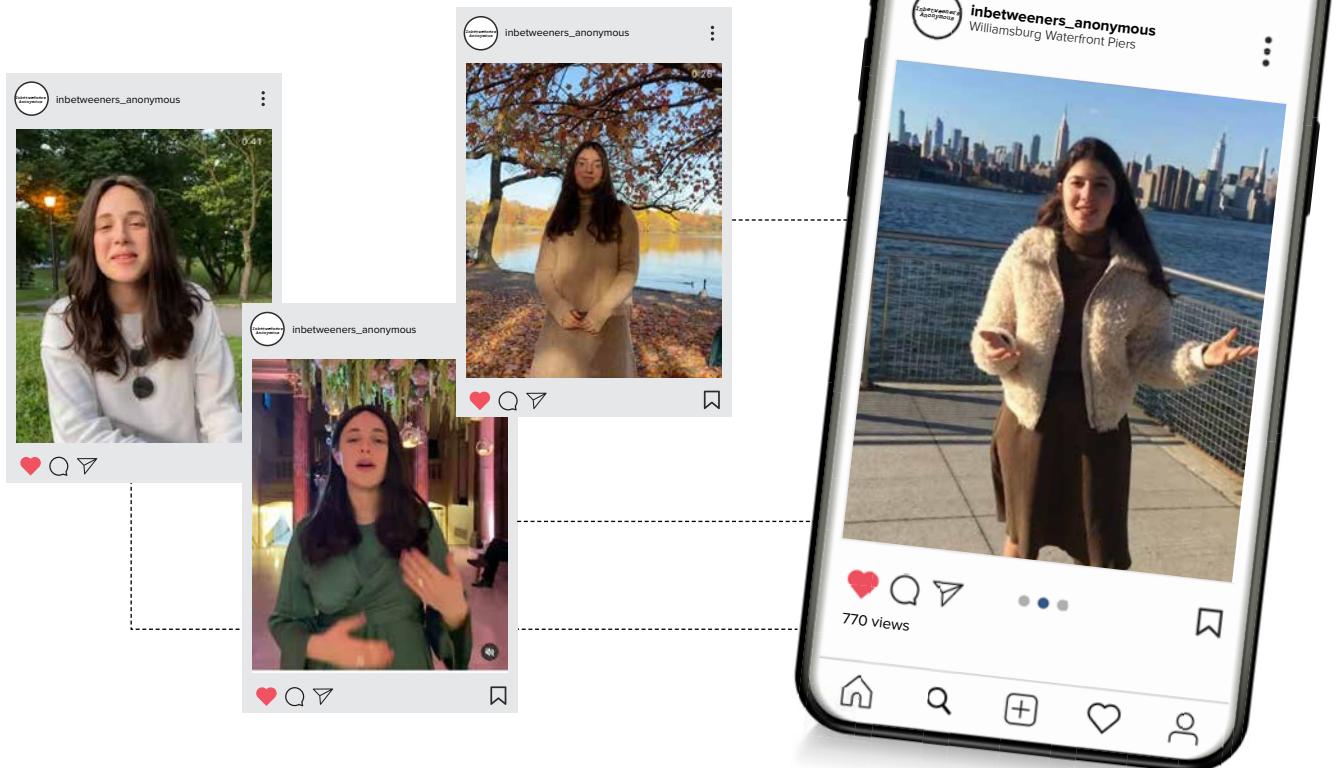




# Inbetweeners Anonymous

*Who, What, Where, Why, and How?*

Written by Mimi Deitsch  
on behalf of Mimi Deitsch and Mushka (Feldman) Deitsch,  
Crown Heights  
*Graduating class of 5778 (2018)*



*It was Yud Tes Kislev, and Mushka Feldman and I were on an inspirational high. Our learning was at a steady incline, but we thought to ourselves, “how can we take this to the next level? What more can we do?” Both Mushka and I were completely enchanted with the Tanya. Most of the chavrusas and lessons we were involved in were centered around the holy book. We loved sharing our excitement for Tanya with the girls we learned with, but now we wanted it to be accessible to others as well.*

**M**ushka and I have always been quite the powerful pair, but we mostly kept our projects separate- a divide and conquer type of thing. Growing up, we went to different camps and seminaries, but for our year of shlichus, we decided to combine forces and go to Israel. There was something about the air there that we craved. After looking into a few schools, we decided on Machon Alte in Tzfas. As shluchos, we were expected to guide the girls through their Teshuva process in whichever ways possible. That included: learning together, making programs, having late-night talks, and whatever else the girls needed. Life in Tzfas meant living in a castle on a cloud, in the holiest city, with the holiest people. Mushka and I were taken.

As Shluchos in Machon Alte, we spent most of our days learning and teaching Chassidus; it is fair to say that our minds, bodies, and souls were fully saturated. There is something incredibly inspiring about watching a Jewish soul igniting, and we felt proud to be holding the match.

That Yud Tes Kislev, it dawned on us: we would start sharing Tanya in a public, accessible way. We knew just the platform; while neither of us was very active Instagrammers, we understood that in the year 2020, the age of social media, Instagram could be our way to spread the light of Chassidus. As soon as we thought of the idea, we immediately began to run with it.

We began brainstorming names for our new shlichus, and a friend suggested that we call it “Inbetweeners.” An Inbetweenier is a Beinoni, someone who strives to do good, is held back by desire, and eventually chooses to conquer. Truthfully, we all have this struggle. Being that the Tanya is called Sefer Shel Beinonim - “The Book for Inbetweeners,” this name was perfect. Although we were set with “Inbetweeners,” something was missing. We didn’t want this project just to explain the Tanya, but rather to make it practical and supportive for our fellow Inbetweeners. Our train of thought somehow led to the most famous support group we knew: Alcoholics Anonymous- the support group for recovering alcoholics. The first time we tested the words “Inbetweeners Anonymous” on our tongues, something clicked, and we knew it was meant to be. With that began the support group for our struggling Inbetweeners.

It all escalated from there. We immediately began to form a game plan: content, style, length of the videos, and it took off! We opened an Instagram page and a small WhatsApp group, and we were very proud. Since

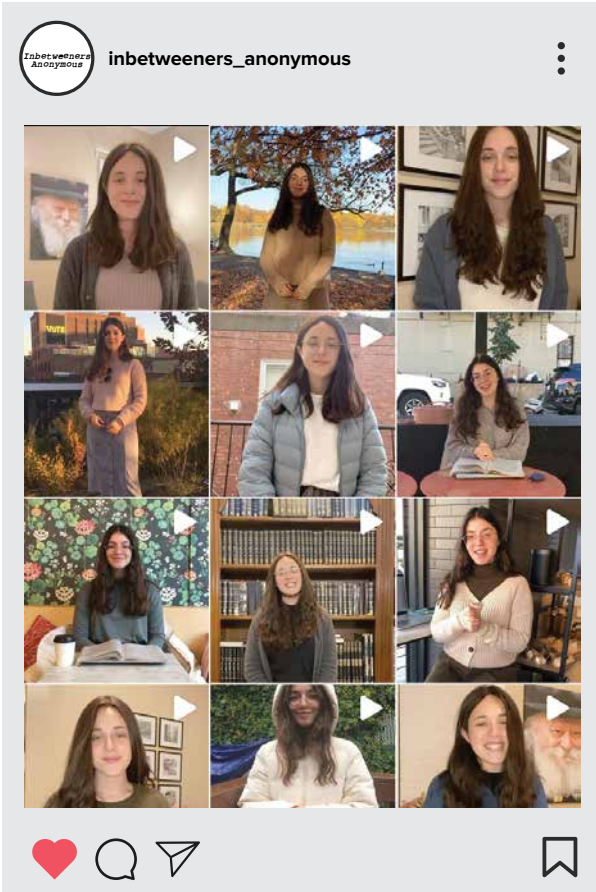
*We want to share our message and excitement with all of you in hope that you will spread Chassidus in whichever way you can.*

the length of an Instagram video and the average attention span are both under a minute, we decided to keep to that time frame.

We started off with a few WhatsApp members and about 100 followers on Instagram (mostly friends and family), and it slowly began to spread. We watched as our audience grew from 100 to 500. We held our breath as we went from 1,000 to 1,500 to 2,500 listeners of Inbetweeners (Instagram and WhatsApp combined).

Making Tanya videos takes more energy than one might imagine. It means learning the Tanya, formulating a summary that is understandable and practical, and under a minute long, finding the right place and person to film it, making sure the lighting is good and the hair looks okay, and not making mistakes. For the first few months, we spent hours on each video. We would





stumble over our words and change the angle and lighting at least 100 times. Eventually, we got the hang of it and are proud to say that our most recent videos took an average of only three takes. Some days we have more energy than others, but every day we make a conscious effort. Honestly, the outcome depends on if the person taking the video makes us laugh.

This project has been an incredible journey for us, and we are still proudly going at it. We have already completed three parts of the Tanya and are looking forward to the coming Yud Tes Kislev when we will have finished learning the entire Tanya together. (Ed note- by the time Embrace Magazine hits your doorsteps- it will be after the big siyum!) It has not been easy taking on such a big commitment, but when we see how many new people are joining every day, we know it is worthwhile. We want to share our message and excitement with all of you in hope that you will spread Chassidus in whichever way you can.

You can find us on Instagram @inbetweeners\_anonymous or email us at [inbetweenersanonymous@gmail.com](mailto:inbetweenersanonymous@gmail.com) to be added to the WhatsApp group.

With much love,  
Mushka & Mimi ■



# LITTLE PEOPLE'S *Clothes*

---

324 KINGSTON AVE.  
BROOKLYN, NY 11213  
(718) 773-8161





*We want to hear  
from you!*

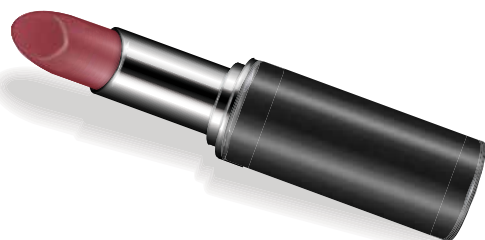
Submit an article, memento,  
poem, or artwork and be  
featured in the EmBRace  
Magazine!

[EMBRACE@BETHRIVKAH.EDU](mailto:EMBRACE@BETHRIVKAH.EDU)

# 5 TIPS *for* LONG-LASTING MAKEUP

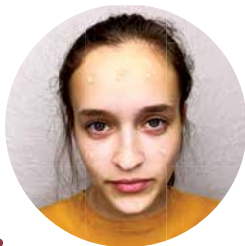
---

Mirel (Deitsch) Heber, Delray Beach, FL  
*Graduating class of 5774 (2014)*



**I**t's the third day of Yom Tov. Like a good Chabad Rebbetzin, you've got your table extended to its max and fully set for the last meal. The guests start rolling in. "Chag Sameach! Chag Sameach! Come on in." As each woman leans in for a warm greeting, you become astutely aware that your face is bare—not a stitch of makeup remains. That's fine for a Tuesday morning jog, but oh how you wish for some extra glow as you host a table full of Yom Tov guests.

Relate? Or not so much? Kudos to you if you're the all-natural type! For those of us who appreciate what makeup has to offer in enhancing the already beautiful features Hashem has gifted us, here are some tips that might help your makeup last long after it's been applied:



## *Tip 1:*

**Prime** your skin before applying your favorite foundation. Dot the primer on and then blend with your fingers or beauty blender.

### *Mirel's Pick:*

Maybelline Baby Skin Instant Age Rewind Primer | \$5



## Tip 2:

Use a **cream eyeshadow** instead of powder. Apply a generous amount to your entire lid and then use your finger to blend upward towards your brow. (This is also a great way to achieve a twenty-second smokey eye! Use a darker shade for extra drama, or a lighter shade for a brightening effect.)

### *Mirel's Pick:*

Maybelline Color Tattoo Longwear Cream Eyeshadow | \$7



## Tip 3:

Check that you're using an eyeliner and mascara that say **"waterproof."**

### *Mirel's Pick:*

Urban Decay 24/7 Waterline Eye Pencil | \$22  
Maybelline The Falsies Waterproof Mascara | \$7



## Tip 4:

Apply a long lasting lipstick in thin layers. Apply the tiniest amount to your lips, blott with tissue, and repeat.

### *Mirel's Pick:*

Revlon Colorstay Overtime Lipcolor | \$5



## Tip 5:

A little spritz of setting spray goes a long way in keeping your makeup in place!

### *Mirel's Pick:*

L'Oreal Infallible Pro-Spray & Set Makeup Extender | \$14

Mirel Heber first gained experience doing makeup as a senior in Bais Rivkah High School. When it was time to take yearbook photos, Mirel would bring her shoebox filled with makeup to school. After the last bell would ring, she'd sit in the Headstart playground (best lighting!), applying makeup on face after face of her fellow seniors headed to their yearbook photoshoots.

She recently moved on shlichus to Delray Beach, FL, where she continues to do makeup jobs in-studio and all over South Florida! She also does makeup consultations on Zoom and in person, teaching clients how to apply their own makeup and recommending products that will best enhance their natural beauty. ■

*Follow Mirel on Instagram:*

*@makeupbymirel and @delrayjewish*



*Mirel's niece, Mirel Levitin, has been the face Mirel has practiced on since she was 6 years old!*





- BAIS RIVKAH -  
Tafent



## TO BE A MEKABEL

Chana Lerner

Monsey, New York

*Graduating class of 5774 (2014)*

TTO: An Aura So Strong

New concepts thrown at me  
day and night  
I could not care less,  
it just doesn't feel right

Apathy fills me-  
but wait let me see  
I'll choose now to gain  
and perceive

I think of some mitzvos  
when I am alone  
The ones that I learn  
when I am at home

They may be so small  
yet they mean something great  
These lessons I  
should not negate

CHORUS:

Mekabel we know,  
and we believe  
To grow and to give,  
we have to receive

Tut altz vos ir kent  
S'iz in ayere hent  
The tasks we were given  
The seeds it's now our job to plant

Tzama we yearn for  
Lecha Nafshi  
Empowering us to be all  
that we can be  
Internalizing we must  
make it real

To learn from each other  
we constantly strive  
To take in from others  
and make it alive



## A HUMBLE KING

Mussy (Lipskier) Kaminetsky

Melbourne, Australia

*Graduating class of 5769 (2009)*

Nails chipped  
and knuckles rough  
She wears no jewels  
to the field

No silken garments  
for work this tough  
Nor white gloves  
for tools to wield

But well-worn clothing  
as her shield  
Lace and satin  
stored away

For when they've  
been needed last  
They belong to brighter days  
That seem an ever distant past

The light behind her  
growing dimmer  
Holidays promised  
seem too plain

Lacking luster,  
light, and laughter  
A small umbrella  
in the rain

Plain and ragged  
from the every day  
Gazing upward  
a waste of time

A waste of hope,  
her demons say  
A sharp reminder  
of the grime

But suddenly  
upon her scythe  
Falls the shadow  
of a crown

The One who sent her  
to this field  
Approached while she  
was looking down

He stands before  
her simple work  
But makes no judgment,  
begs no tasks

He only wants to  
close the distance  
And hear, in person,  
what she asks

The king remains  
as close as ever  
And His open smile  
stays the same

She has spoken,  
the king has heard  
The moment saved now  
for all time

There among  
the grass and dirt  
The lowest rocks  
became sublime

Nails chipped  
and knuckles rough  
A woman whistles  
as she goes

Six days a week  
her cup is full  
The seventh day,  
it overflows

The light that lit  
the other year-  
It isn't  
bright enough today

Because we're in  
a bigger room,  
Not because it's  
far away

It's time to ask  
for brighter times  
This year will be  
a better one

Take away  
the dreaded dark  
Give us  
the entire sun! ■



She must look up  
and speak her heart  
But she has nothing  
sweet prepared

She pours the raw  
unpolished words  
They sound as awkward  
as she feared

But there are no officers  
to mock her  
No witnesses  
record her shame

# A Taste of Bais Rivkah



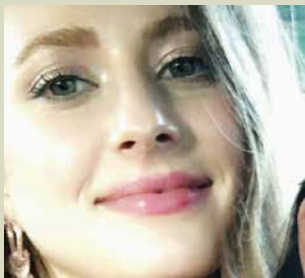
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Leah Nagel  
Crown Heights

Graduating class of  
5772 (2012)

**LEAH NAGEL** is the blogger behind TrufflesandTrends.com. Truffles and Trends is a blog that combines fashion and food (mostly desserts) in a fun and aesthetic display.

truffles  
and TRENDS



## TAHINI ROASTED CAULIFLOWER WITH HERB VINAIGRETTE

*Servings: about 6*

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large head cauliflower, broken into florets
- 4 tablespoons olive oil



1 teaspoon ground cumin  
 ¾ teaspoon salt  
 ¼ teaspoon pepper  
 ⅓ cup pine nuts

3 tablespoons tahini  
 3–4 tablespoons water  
 1 tablespoon lemon juice  
 Salt and pepper, to taste

Large handful mint leaves, chopped  
 Smaller handful parsley leaves, chopped  
 2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
 1 large clove garlic, minced  
 Salt and pepper, to taste

#### DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 500° F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Toss the cauliflower florets with the olive oil, cumin, salt, and pepper and roast for 20 minutes, stirring halfway through. Add pine nuts to baking sheet and roast for another 5-10 minutes, until pine nuts are golden and cauliflower is browned.
3. Meanwhile, prepare the tahini sauce: in a small bowl, whisk together the tahini sauce ingredients until smooth and pourable.
4. In another small bowl, stir together all the herb vinaigrette ingredients.
5. Spread the tahini sauce in a thin layer onto the bottom of a large serving platter. Layer the roasted cauliflower and pine nuts over the tahini. Spoon the vinaigrette over and serve warm.

**NOTE:** It is recommended that you purchase frozen and/or fresh cauliflower from a company that has a reliable hechsher. Make sure to carefully check the cauliflower by cutting all florets from the head in half and allowing them to soak in water for 5 minutes. If one bug is found, it is likely that there are more and it is advisable to dispose of the cauliflower.

In addition, make sure to check your fresh mint and parsley.



## SIMPLE POTATO CARROT SOUP (VEGAN)

*Servings: about 6-8*

#### INGREDIENTS:

3 tablespoons olive oil  
 One large onion, diced  
 4 garlic cloves, minced  
 3 carrots, peeled and sliced  
 6 baking potatoes, peeled and diced  
 5–7 cups water (or enough to cover all the vegetables)  
 2–3 teaspoons salt, or to taste  
 ½ teaspoon black pepper, or to taste  
 1 teaspoon dried parsley  
 Few sprigs fresh thyme (or 1 teaspoon dried thyme)

#### DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large heavy pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add in the diced onion and sauté until onions are translucent, about 6 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add in the minced garlic and sauté another few minutes, until garlic is fragrant and golden.
2. Add the rest of the ingredients into the pot and bring mixture to a boil. Cover pot, lower heat, and cook soup until the potatoes are very soft, at least 45-60 minutes.
3. Leave the vegetables whole or use an immersion blender to blend up some (so you're left with some vegetable chunks) or all (so you're left with a smooth mixture) of the soup. Serve, with fresh

thyme for garnishing, if desired.

NOTE: Fresh thyme tends to be infested with numerous types of insects. Make sure to check it thoroughly before using.



## CHEDDAR HERB BEER BREAD

*Servings: 9x5" loaf/8 servings*

### INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups flour, sifted
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1¼ teaspoons salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1½ teaspoons dried basil
- 1¼ teaspoons dried rosemary
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 12 ounces (1 1/2 cups) favorite beer
- 3 tablespoons honey (can substitute sugar)
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted (can be omitted for less buttery and less crunchy loaf)

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375 F. If not using butter, grease 9x5" loaf pan.
2. In a large bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder, spices, and herbs. Add in the beer, honey, and grated Cheddar cheese and mix until just combined.
3. Pour half of the melted butter into the bottom of a 9x5" loaf pan and brush butter all the way up the sides of the pan. Spread dough over butter (doesn't need to be smooth). Pour/brush remaining butter over dough.

4. Bake beer bread for 40-55 minutes, until browned and crusty and a toothpick inserted comes out clean.

NOTE: When baking milchig bread, one is required to bake in small amounts to ensure it's consumption immediately so one cannot forget that it is milchig. Alternatively, one can bake it in a particular shape so that it is visibly discernible that it is milchig. Otherwise, the bread will be rendered non-kosher.



## GOOEY GLAZED NO-BUTTER COFFEE BARS

*Servings: about 18 bars*

### INGREDIENTS:

- ¾ cup light brown sugar, packed
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup canola or vegetable oil
- 1 large egg
- 2 teaspoons instant coffee dissolved in 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1¼ cups packed flour
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅔ cup chopped walnuts (optional)

### GLAZE:

- ¾ cup confectioners sugar
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee dissolved in 2 teaspoons boiling water
- 1 teaspoon oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Water, if needed for thinning

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Line an 8" square baking pan with parchment paper, leaving some excess hanging over the rim for easy removal later.
2. In a large bowl, stir together the sugars and oil. Add in the egg and dissolved coffee and whisk vigorously until smooth.
3. Pour the flour, cornstarch, baking soda, and salt over the wet ingredients and mix everything together until just combined. Stir in the chopped walnuts last.
4. Flatten dough into prepared pan. Bake for 20-24 minutes, until the edges are set and golden but the center is still slightly under baked. Bars may seem a bit raw but are supposed to be that way!
5. Let bars cool before lifting them out of the pan by the excess parchment paper and glazing.
6. Whisk all the glaze ingredients together until a thick yet pourable consistency forms. Drizzle glaze in diagonal pattern over the bars, then slice into bars of desired size.



## MUFFIN TIN CHOCOLATE LAVA CAKES

*Servings: 8 muffin-sized lava cakes*

### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 ounces good-quality, bittersweet chocolate  
(I used 72%)
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt

- 2 whole eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- 3 tablespoons flour

## DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease 8 muffin molds and then coat them with flour, shaking out the excess flour.
2. Chop up the chocolate and butter and melt them together in the microwave or over a double boiler until smooth.
3. Whisk the sugar, vanilla extract, and salt into the melted chocolate mixture until smooth. Next, whisk in the whole eggs and egg yolks vigorously until smooth again. Gently stir in the flour until just combined.
4. Divide the batter evenly among the muffin molds, filling each three-quarters full. Bake 8-11 minutes, until the edges are just set but the center is still soft and slightly jiggly.
5. Let the lava cakes cool for 2 minutes. Then, insert a knife around the edges of the cakes to ease them out of their molds before gently lifting them out. Serve right away, with a dusting of confectioners sugar and ice cream, if desired.

NOTE: you can prepare the lava cakes up to a day in advance by covering the muffin pan with the unbaked lava cakes and placing it in the fridge until ready to be baked. If you want to bake these lava cakes in 4 ramekins instead of 8 muffin molds, bake the cakes at 400°F for 12-14 minutes. ■





# EMBRACE MOMENTS



I'll never forget the time Mrs. Raskin made me cry.

We were learning Parshas Va'Eschanan; Moshe Rabbeinu was imploring Hashem to allow him to enter Eretz Yisroel with the Yidden. Mrs. Raya Raskin painted the picture in vivid detail: a beloved Rebbe, pleading desperately to remain with his Chassidim as they journeyed into the unknown, yet Promised, Land. She described how Moshe was willing to surrender his title of leadership and enter Eretz Yisroel as just another Yid, to realize the dream that he had ingrained so deeply into Bnei Yisroel throughout the travails of the desert and the obstacles along the way. This, she declared, is the love of the Rebbe to his Chassidim. And this is the one goal he was barred from achieving. The emotions of Moshe Rabbeinu were alive in the classroom; I didn't even fight the tears that fell as I internalized this message that my teacher lived. Mrs. Raskin's sincerity and passion is something that still brings tears to my eyes whenever I remember that lesson from my 12th grade year.

Thank you, Mrs. Raskin, for imparting the beauty of our heritage within us.

*Geula Gniwisch*

---

**T**he teacher who made the most impact on me was, without a doubt, Miss Paneth-Feferkorn. She was my 5th grade English teacher (from Boro Park), and that year was the highlight of my school experience.

Despite the fact that we were a challenging class, she was always so loving and never lost her temper. She taught me what true, unconditional love was.

She loved us and brought out the best in each and every one of us. Each lesson was filled with life. Whether through self-composed songs or the incorporated hands-on and dynamic activities, I will never forget her classes. I felt that she loved being with us in class. We made her crazy at times but she nevertheless responded with discipline only surrounded with love. She was a wonderful teacher and I have the best memories from her class.

Everyone loved her.

I loved going to school.

She always had a smile and I will never forget it.

She stood for what a true machaneches represents—a demonstration of middos and Ahavas Yisroel that her students could learn from.

She was modest in her dress, speech, and actions and she is an example to me until this day.

She inspired me to teach the same grade many years later and I'm truly grateful to her.

She also directed a mini 5th grade production that incorporated a powerful and meaningful lesson, thereby bringing out our talents in ways we didn't know we had and may have never tapped into otherwise.

## *Sara Rogalsky*

**I** can still remember my anticipation as I stood by my desk when Miss Hirsh was to enter our eighth grade classroom, waiting to catch a glimpse of my beloved journal in the pile of notebooks she'd be carrying.

Today was the day she'd return it to me, and I was counting down the minutes until I would be able to turn page after page and read all the comments and remarks she was sure to have written alongside

my writing.

I had never thought much about writing; it was just something we did for assignments at school. Boring, annoying, and tedious. But that all changed in 8th grade with Miss Hirsh, when she announced that we would be journaling. She informed us that she would be collecting and reading our journals often and that she would be commenting on our writing. She encouraged us to write about anything, whatever was going on any given day.

The first time I submitted my journal, I was pleasantly surprised to see the pages filled with red pen replies in the margins of my entries. Miss Hirsh had read every single entry, and she had taken the time to comment on it all. I was hooked.

My entries doubled and tripled, filled with anything and everything that happened each day. Because suddenly, writing wasn't just a boring assignment to get done with; it was a way of forming a personal relationship with my teacher. It was a way for her to get to know me as more than just a rule-following eighth grader in a class of 30.

In my journal, I could be an individual. I was just me. And Miss Hirsh would reciprocate by responding to me, the real me, who was more than just another uniformed girl in a room full of girls who looked the same.

Instead of being a technical form of expression, writing became a vibrant form of connecting. And I loved it.

Fast forward 20 years... deep in the throes of motherhood and Shlichus and dealing with life's regular ups and downs, I had an urge to start writing. To write about the daily grind so many of us go



through and think we are the only ones who struggle with the juggle.

I wanted to write so that I can connect with moms like me; I decided to write so that moms out there can connect with me. I started to write so that those struggling and juggling can read it and say, "Hey, I thought I was the only one who felt that way!" Because when we discover that what we feel is normal, we become empowered. It changes our perspective and the challenges look different. Together we can find humor and learn to laugh, supporting each other in the process.

And so 10 years ago, with much trepidation, I started a blog.

To write as a way of connecting, you need to be open and honest. To be open and honest, you need to make yourself vulnerable. And to make yourself vulnerable is a scary, daunting thing!

With my husband cheering me on, I took the plunge and started writing and, deep breath, posting publicly.

And I find that the more I write, the more I enjoy it.

Not just because it's a form of expressing myself, but because I have connected with so many people. And there's no doubt in my mind that my eighth grade teacher, Miss Hirsh, subconsciously gave me the joy in writing not by teaching about it - but rather by showing how writing is a way of connecting. I don't know what she intended at the time, but I do know that the time and patience she took to respond and connect with 8th graders had a lasting impression on me, and I'm sure others. I invite you all to check out my blog at [www.littleyellownotepad.com](http://www.littleyellownotepad.com) and let's connect!

P.S. I'd love to get in touch with Miss Hirsh. If you have any contact information for her, please share it. ■

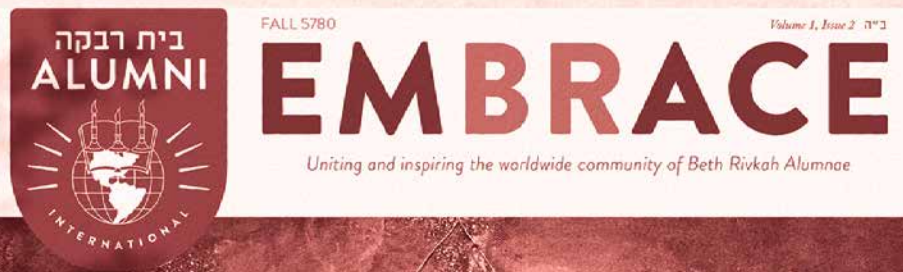
*Goldie Grossbaum*

---

## Uh Oh!

Did you see an EmBRace addressed to the wrong recipient? Please email us at

[ALUMNI@BETHRIVKAH.EDU](mailto:ALUMNI@BETHRIVKAH.EDU)





5% OFF when you give this special BRonze

# The original leather Tallis bag

Featuring the 2020 collection



457 Albany Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11213 • (347) 663-2424 • www.PrestigeEmbroidery.com • Info@PrestigeEmbroidery.com



www.BenzsFish.com

# G O U R M E T

Special Prices for Shluchim  
We Ship Worldwide

❖ We carry a Full Line of ❖

Fresh /Frozen /Smoked Fish • Imported Olives /Cheeses • Premium Imported Beers

WE DO PLATTERS FOR ALL OCCASIONS

*Exclusive Distribution of Bat Yam Gourmet Fish Products*

**We Deliver!**

Come try our famous home-made gefilta fish

**332 Albany Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11213**  
**info@benzsfish.com • Fax: (718) 778-3124**

We Accept all Major Credit Cards & Foodstamps

# 718.778.3329

# Keepsakes

Have more photos? Please send them to [alumni@bethrivkah.edu](mailto:alumni@bethrivkah.edu)



*Recognize Someone??  
Let us know!*

Email [alumni@bethrivkah.edu](mailto:alumni@bethrivkah.edu) and tell us who is in these pictures!



# Needle & Stitch

*Sewing Boutique*  
by Chana Berger

Alterations & Tailoring  
Dressmaking / Sewing Classes  
Fabric & Notions / Gifts & More

Afterschool classes  
for girls of all ages  
Morning, afternoon &  
evening classes available  
Private and groups

Sunday Funday DIY projects!  
Nursing Undergarments Conversion

327 Kingston Avenue, second floor (Inside LaFemme)  
(786) 312-3478 Call, text or WhatsApp  
@needleandstitchbrooklyn

## OAK TREE

INSURANCE SERVICES

HOMEOWNERS AUTO COMMERCIAL

PROPERTY & LIABILITY  
INSURANCE NEEDS FOR

BUSINESSES	REAL ESTATE OWNERS	CONTRACTORS	INDIVIDUALS
------------	--------------------	-------------	-------------

326 Kingston Ave. Brooklyn NY 11213  
718-514-7288 | oaktreeinsgroup.com

# Toners Plus

Printing and beyond

**Solomon Banda**  
Tell: 718-435-4099  
Sales@Toners-plus.com

Now in Crown Heights!

## VIOLIN LESSONS

FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

LIMITED SPOTS LEFT!  
CALL 845-665-5230



SOME HAVE WELL GUARDED  
TRADE SECRETS

WE JUST CALL THEM  
FAMILY TRADITIONS



HERZOG LINEAGE

NINE GENERATIONS OF PATIENT WINEMAKING