

PERSPECTIVES

ISSUE 13 | WINTER 2021

The magazine of **aish**^{uk}

**YOUR GUIDE TO
WINTER
WELLNESS**

**THE
POWER
OF GRIT**

**RESILIENCE
IN LOSS**

AISH ON CAMPUS

Meet our students,
staff, and alumni

**MENTAL
HEALTH and
JEWISH LAW**

**ALL YOU
NEED IS
LOVE?**

What it takes to
build successful
relationships

**KEEPING
HOLOCAUST
EDUCATION
ALIVE**

THE ART OF
**PURPOSEFUL
LIVING**

CHASING THE SPARKS
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EDITOR'S

WELCOME

DEAR READERS,

Words are like raindrops that nourish the soil and I've always had a deep appreciation for beautiful words, especially ones that are shared for a higher purpose. It is with this in mind that I hope these words will resonate with you, as our sages teach, "words that come from the heart enter the heart." A Rabbi from Jerusalem interpreted this phrase as an application of the principle taught by King Solomon in Proverbs: "As water [reflecting] the face is to the face, so too man's heart is to [his fellow] man." This means that the human heart intuitively feels the emotions of others, and thus if one speaks with an open heart, the heart of the listener will be open as well.

When thinking about a theme for this issue, there were many ideas that came to mind but what featured most prominently was the notion of 'purposeful living.' Editors always need to have their ears to the ground and be listening to the 'word on the street' and around people's tables, so that the choice of articles rings true. It is hard to believe that the Covid battle is still very much part of our lives, back in masks and all! But one of the more positive outcomes of this brutal pandemic is how it has compelled people to take stock of their lives and live more purposefully. The things that were previously of great relevance appear to have shifted and it seems that people have started to prioritise the things that really matter more. It is for this reason that I decided on the theme of purposeful living. So what is purposeful living and how do we go about achieving it? How do we love more purposefully, live more purposefully, in our relationships, in our Judaism, in our family lives and in our professional lives?

I was walking home one Shabbat afternoon a few weeks back and thinking about our life's purpose - What is it that each of us comes here to accomplish? How is it each path is so different from another; an enigmatic phenomenon that only God can understand. Judaism has these answers embedded in its fabric and when Chanukah came around, it shed great light on this existential question, which is "are we vessels for light or vessels for darkness?" As Rabbi YY Jacobson teaches, "the purpose of everything, is to transform darkness to light." Once we clarify that it is our firm goal to be a vessel for light, then our decisions should follow suit. We need to start by asking ourselves, "where is it that I feel most alive and alight?" Sir Ken Robinson, renowned author of the book, 'Finding your element' explains that when you discover your true passion in life, that fact alone is potent enough to ensure that you go

on to live a much happier and more fulfilling life so that when people ask what it is that you do, you will be able to say, "this is not what I do, this is who I am." (I highly recommend watching his talks and reading his book.)

I recently visited Odessa, Ukraine where I was privileged to tour Tikvah, the renowned Jewish orphanage that is home to hundreds of orphans. One morning, I was accompanied by a 19 year old young lady who herself had been through the Tikvah system. As we parked outside the infants home, she smiled gently and proudly told me that she had been there from the age of two. I just couldn't hold back the tears... 17 years, a lifetime she had spent being raised by people who cared for her as their own. I later noticed her praying in shul over Rosh Hashanah and was deeply moved by her commitment to a Torah observant way of life. She had tasted the sweetness of Judaism through the love and care of the staff in the Tikvah family and imbibed it. To me, this story is the embodiment of light. It is a light so powerful that it reaches much farther than the eye can see, but far enough for the heart to feel.

Aish too, shares this lofty goal. In the time I have had the great privilege to work alongside Rabbi Daniel Rowe and his inspirational team, what has been most clear to me is the absolute commitment he has to God to build a more robust version of UK Jewry; who are not only more connected but are proud of their heritage.

As we enter our holiday season, let us remember to be vessels of light, the ultimate task of every Jewish soul, as Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi use to say, "a little bit of light dispels a lot of darkness." Let us endeavour to dig deep so that we can find our God-given purpose and develop it because it is not enough to simply "find our element". No, we must be brave and bold enough to metamorphosise our thoughts and ambitions into a tangible reality. Kindling the candle assigned to you will be the most important task of your lifetime, your soul is destined for a unique purpose, no two the same...

The world needs more light and we here at Aish are committed to a world that is brighter and will be there to warm the embers when your soul finds and ignites its fire.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

WARMEST,

Shira

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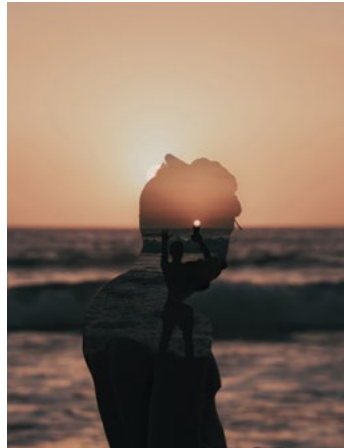
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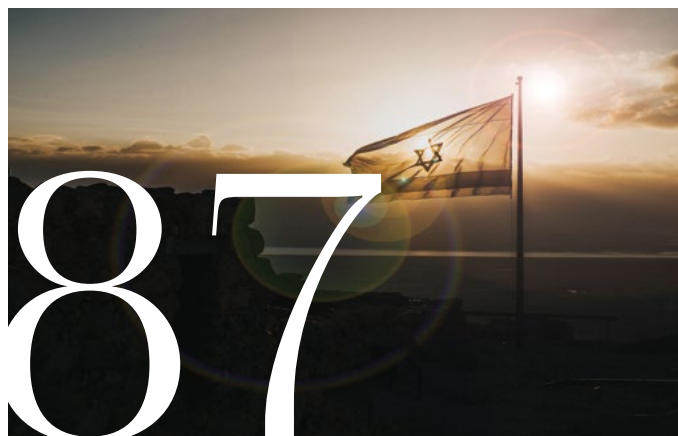
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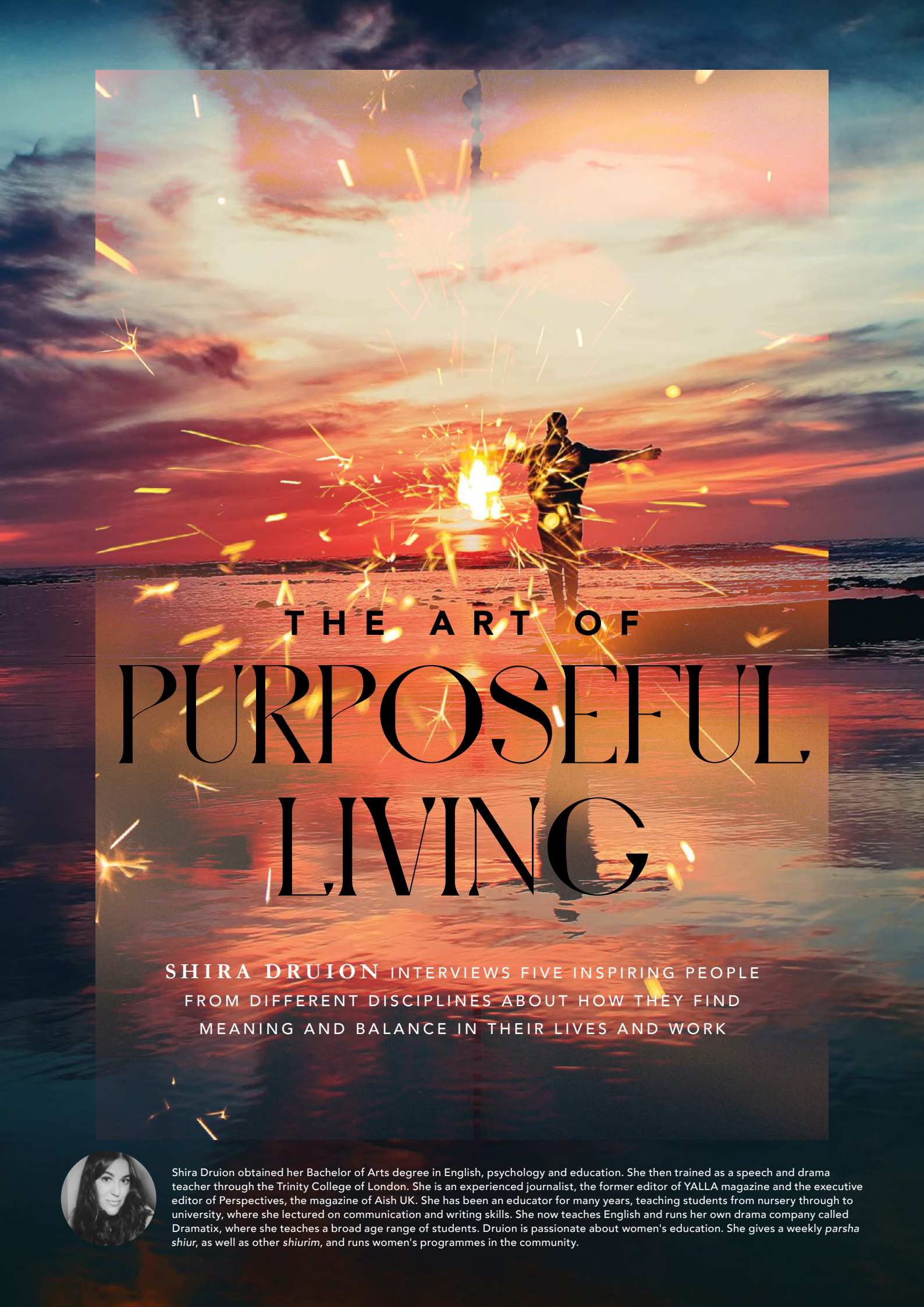
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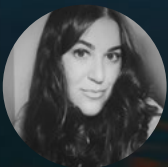
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THE ART OF PURPOSEFUL LIVING

SHIRA DRUION INTERVIEWS FIVE INSPIRING PEOPLE
FROM DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES ABOUT HOW THEY FIND
MEANING AND BALANCE IN THEIR LIVES AND WORK



Shira Druion obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in English, psychology and education. She then trained as a speech and drama teacher through the Trinity College of London. She is an experienced journalist, the former editor of YALLA magazine and the executive editor of Perspectives, the magazine of Aish UK. She has been an educator for many years, teaching students from nursery through to university, where she lectured on communication and writing skills. She now teaches English and runs her own drama company called Dramatix, where she teaches a broad age range of students. Druion is passionate about women's education. She gives a weekly *parsha shiur*, as well as other *shiurim*, and runs women's programmes in the community.



THE JEWISH EDUCATOR: RABBI NAFTALI SCHIFF

1: HOW DID YOU FIND YOURSELF INVOLVED WITH JEWISH EDUCATION/OUTREACH?

I began as a youth leader at the age of 14 and never looked back. I can't think of anything more rewarding or important than introducing young people to the treasures they carry in their knapsacks that they would often otherwise not even bother to take a serious look at! This can be true of mainstream Jewish education as well as outreach.

2: HOW DID YOU KNOW YOU WANTED TO GO INTO THIS KIND OF WORK?

I always knew I wanted to make an idealistic difference in the world. I studied International Relations at the London School of Economics, and for a few years thought my contribution would perhaps be in diplomacy or politics. However, once I tasted the authenticity inherent in Jewish education and the profound and enduring impact it effects, I felt no alternative but to devote my life to Jewish education.

3: WHAT DOES IT DO FOR YOUR SOUL?

The Hebrew word for a Jew is 'Yehudi' which comes from the word 'toda' - thank you! The first words we say in the morning are "mode ani lefanecha" - I thank you (God). I pinch myself each morning that I have the incredible privilege of spending my every waking moment sharing our birth right and heritage with my fellow Jews and simply figuring out how to always achieve more of that! I love it! My heart and soul pulsate with energy and relentless passion to reach, inspire and empower young Jews with their own birth right and heritage.

4: HOW DO YOU FEEL THIS WORK ENRICHES YOU AS A PERSON?

I feel endlessly enriched and replenished both physically and spiritually by being involved in the transmission of Torah and Jewish values to future generations. We are constantly searching for refreshing and innovative ways to share our heritage. The mission is inherently enriching. It is dynamic, multifaceted and compelling by its very nature. A key insight of my journey with Jewish Futures is that Jewish education can no longer be of a 'one size fits all' nature. The diverse pedagogical approaches we are constantly developing are hugely enriching for all concerned.

5: HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR LIFE SO THAT YOU FEEL YOU ARE FULFILLING ALL YOUR DIFFERENT ROLES?

Keep your eye on the ball and the photos on the wall! I have numerous little reminders scattered across my office at home and work that constantly draw my attention to ensure that I am



able to juggle the concentric circles of Jewish life! Be these God, wife, children, family, friends, community, nation, world - each is important; each has a specific time and place whilst also being a constant reality of every waking moment.

6: WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR CAREER AND WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE LOWS?

The truth is that I don't dwell on highlights or lows very much at all. There's too much to do, and the mission of inspiring young people is so critical and challenging each day that we don't have the luxury of contemplating such things! I guess, however, that seeing the palpable impact every successful class, Shabbaton, trip, new initiative actualised, impactful organisation created, incubated and successfully launched represents a new highlight. Thank God there have been and continue to be so many of these and numerous milestones along the way. I think I take greatest pleasure in seeing so many incredible leaders, teachers and influencers out there making a difference in the community whose journeys began or were greatly enhanced by our efforts. Lows? The last great recession was tough! The lack of communal unity was disappointing.

7: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE HIGHS OF YOUR WORK?

I wouldn't! Sorry! We are battling for the authentic engagement and Jewish commitment of our younger generation. I get up in the morning and try to focus on the enormous challenge of attracting Jews across the entire communal spectrum with meaningful Jewish interaction and stickiness. It's tough. It's all consuming. There isn't time for self-congratulatory indulgence! The more Jews take responsibility for the primary mission of our People - to be a moral, decent, balanced, informed, Menschlich light unto the nations and ourselves - the happier I am!

8: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

Discipline yourself from a young age towards more consistency in all areas particularly learning more Torah and living more healthily, with more efficient time management and priorities.



THE MIDWIFE:

ZIPPORAH ECKSTEIN

1: DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE FULFILLING YOUR PURPOSE PROFESSIONALLY?

There are other avenues I would like to explore within midwifery such as working in the vulnerable women's team and specialising within midwifery, however at this juncture in my life I feel fulfilled with my current role.

2: DID YOU ALWAYS KNOW YOU WANTED TO BE A MIDWIFE?

I have wanted to be a midwife ever since I was 8 years old and my father gave me a book about a midwife during the war! I was hooked, and I knew from that moment that I wanted to follow in her footsteps.

3: WHAT DOES IT DO FOR YOUR SOUL?

The moment in time that a new soul arrives in this world is a hugely momentous occasion. One can feel the tremendous joy and celebration, as well as the anticipation of a soul entering the world. To play a role in assisting and helping a mother and her baby during this time is an incredible joy and privilege. My soul feels nourished at being able to help.

4: WHY DO YOU FEEL GOD GAVE YOU THIS GIFT?

I love that you use the word gift because I truly feel privileged to be in the position to be able to personally help and guide women in our community through their pregnancies and often other aspects of their lives of which, as a Jewish midwife, I have developed a nuanced understanding.

6: WHAT FULFILLS YOU ABOUT YOUR WORK?

It is very fulfilling to look after women from the very start of their pregnancies right through to the postnatal period and to build relationships with them during this special time.

7: HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR LIFE SO THAT YOU FEEL YOU ARE FULFILLING ALL YOUR DIFFERENT ROLES?

That is a tough one! The honest answer is I have an incredible husband who supports me 24/7 but the juggle is real! I came off 12-hour labour ward shifts to help with the work/life balance. I am very organised, and I think my kids admire and respect my job, so they are very understanding when I need to run to a home birth at supper time.

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One can feel the tremendous joy and celebration, as well as the anticipation of a new soul entering the world. To play a role in assisting and helping a mother and her baby during this time is an incredible joy and privilege.

8: WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR CAREER AND WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE LOWS?

The highs include saving a woman's life and the tremendous satisfaction that comes with helping and guiding numerous mothers through their pregnancies. The lows... giving 120% and going above and beyond the normal working hours and still feeling unappreciated by some who take the NHS and its staff for granted.

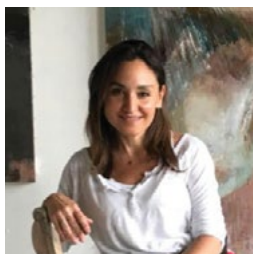
9: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE HIGHS OF MIDWIFERY?

It's a feeling of incredible satisfaction and self-fulfilment.

10: HOW DOES IT FEEL TO TAKE A WOMAN ALL THE WAY FROM PREGNANCY THROUGH TO BIRTH?

I feel very fortunate that women look to me for advice and guidance throughout their pregnancies and I don't take for granted the responsibility that this entails.

Zipporah Eckstein is a 31-year-old wife and mother of three. She has been a midwife in the NHS for 8 years and currently works in the community setting. Her job includes running an antenatal clinic, on-call duties such as home-births, filling in staff gaps in the labour ward and birth centres as well as postnatal care. In addition to her NHS role, Zipporah volunteers for a number of organisations relating to women's health including a hyperemesis charity, and spends her spare time enjoying the company of her friends and family.



THE ARTIST: DAVINA JACKSON

1: DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE FULFILLING YOUR PURPOSE PROFESSIONALLY?

Yes, because I have forged a successful career out of my passion and talent.

2: DID YOU ALWAYS KNOW YOU WANTED TO BE AN ARTIST?

Ever since I can remember I felt complete being on my own, using my imagination and creating a world I could step into and out of. I knew I was happiest creating my own language and making my own discoveries.

3: WHAT DOES CREATING ART DO FOR YOUR SOUL?

It nourishes and comforts my soul.

4: HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU REALISED YOU WANTED TO BE AN ARTIST?

I won my first art competition at the age of 7. It was a colouring-in competition at Brent Cross, and I remember painting the sky green and the grass in blues because I didn't want to conform.

5: WHY DO YOU FEEL GOD GAVE YOU THIS GIFT?

I believe that God wanted me to find a way to communicate what is unsaid, unrealised and perhaps too painful and unconscious; to organise truth into images and mend what feels broken inside of myself and in others, and ultimately to give joy and pleasure.

6: WHAT FULFILLS YOU ABOUT YOUR WORK?

Everything! The making, the ability to lose the concept of time and place, the ability to focus on what feels essential and purposeful, to eradicate harmful distractions and to grow as a person. Art enables me to create a personal language that can communicate something universal, to see better and to connect to Hashem.

7: HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR LIFE SO THAT YOU FEEL YOU ARE FULFILLING ALL YOUR DIFFERENT ROLES?

This is the biggest challenge for me. It's a constant battle between figuring out my time for my work and for others. I could easily paint through the night but then I wouldn't be able to function as a good mother, wife and friend, so I stick to daytime hours most of the time. Over lockdown, when my children were at home all day, I started working at midnight and carried on till about 3 or 4 in the morning. This is when I had peace and quiet, otherwise I would have felt very frustrated and become depressed. I feel like

there is never enough time and I can never fully accomplish what I want to without feeling as if I am neglecting something else that demands my attention along the way.

8: WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR CAREER AND WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE LOWS?

The highlights included finding out I had been offered an unconditional place at Central St Martin's School of Art when there were only 100 places given nationally at the time, and receiving my scholarship to The Royal Academy Schools, which was the place I had dreamed of going to from a very young age. I was also awarded the gold medal for painting there, which is awarded to one painter every two years.

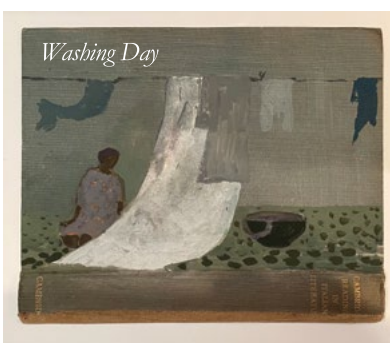
One of the lows was being told by my art teacher at school that I shouldn't apply for art school as I "wasn't art school material" (but this just made me more determined to prove her wrong!)

9: CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT SOME OF YOUR ARTWORKS AND WHY YOU WERE INSPIRED TO CREATE THEM?

I have chosen two works – both of which were completed in the last two years. The first is called *Memories of Summer* and the second is called *Washing Day* - which was painted on a cloth book cover and is currently on show at The Royal Academy until January. Both pieces represent a moment in time where we are witnessing something that feels familiar, but which is also very much another's experience. The viewer can speculate but can never fully know. The white sheet in *Washing Day*, blowing in the wind over a resting maid, offers a subtle



connection to the white colonial history of South Africa. The two women in *Memories of Summer* look out onto a world we immediately recognise but we do not see.



Davina Jackson is a figurative artist based in London where she currently works from a studio at Kingsgate workshops. She studied at Central St Martin's, The Byam Shaw and graduated with a masters from the Royal Academy Schools where she won the Gold Medal for painting. She has had several solo shows in London in the last few years, including her most recent at the Pontone Gallery, and one in Trieste, Italy curated by Edward Lucie-Smith. She is a regular exhibitor in The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and will be included in a group exhibition, at Hastings Contemporary, from November 25th, 2021, to April 22, 2022. For more info about Davina Jackson's art, visit her Instagram page @Artistmotherdj or her website at Davinajacksonart.com



THE RELIGIOUS LEADER:

RABBI MOSHE FRIEDMAN

1: DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE FULFILLING YOUR PURPOSE PROFESSIONALLY?

Short answer: yes! Long answer: I am always oscillating between actualising my potential, and processing feedback about how I could be doing that better. In any given situation, when I'm hitting the mark, I feel that sense of resonance, like 'this is what I was put here for.' If I don't feel that resonance, it's not a failure, it's a message telling me that my path requires correction. That can also be fulfilling if you use it properly.

2: HOW DID YOU KNOW YOU WANTED TO GO INTO THIS KIND OF WORK?

When I graduated from university, I knew I would never be able to do 9-to-5 office work. I thought I wanted to be a Buddhist monk. I think 'rabbi' is now more in alignment with my beliefs than monk, but I wasn't too far off.

3: WHAT DOES IT DO FOR YOUR SOUL?

It hits every level of the soul: the ability to learn and teach wisdom, the ability to have incredibly meaningful relationships and conversations with other deep people, the opportunity to work with role models. What else does a person need?

4: HOW DO YOU FEEL THIS WORK ENRICHES YOU AS A PERSON?

Aside from the 'soul' aspect, there is simply a human element here of learning how to listen to people very carefully and showing them how they can answer their own questions if you give them enough encouragement and perspective. If I've learned one thing, it's that an effective teacher is someone who eventually makes himself unnecessary to the student.

5: HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR LIFE SO THAT YOU FEEL YOU ARE FULFILLING ALL YOUR DIFFERENT ROLES?

The most helpful way I've found to do this is to think of yourself forty years from now. What will you look back on and say, "I wish I had done less of this and more of that when I was younger?" That always knocks the sense into me.



6: WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR CAREER AND WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE LOWS?

The highlights are actually the littlest moments. It's when someone tells me I said something in a class, or a conversation that changed their whole perspective. The 'aha' moments are the ones to treasure! The lows come when I know I could have prepared more for a class or put more effort into a relationship with a student. I've let myself down and I've let the student down.

7: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

Good habits are much easier to form when you're younger. Start being disciplined early, and you will thank yourself later.

Rabbi Moshe Friedman grew up in Manhattan, New York, and received his BA in Politics, Philosophy and Economics at the University of Pennsylvania. He studied Jewish Thought and Talmudic Law for ten years in Israel, including several years at the Mir Yeshiva, and has passed Rabbinic Ordination examinations from the Israeli Rabbinate. In 2017, he moved to London with his wife and two children to take up the role of FJL UK Liaison, a role which includes regular campus visits and London-based educational programmes.



THE BUSINESSWOMAN: LANA ZISKIND

1: DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE FULFILLING YOUR PURPOSE PROFESSIONALLY?

I studied interior design for 3 years, qualified and never worked a day in the profession. I worked in a gym and as a Talent and Celebrity Scout (another fun fact – I have never had a job interview!). I get to be creative, producing bespoke merchandise, mostly made in the Far East. None of these roles have anything in common, except that they all involve people skills as well as making and building connections.

Am I fulfilling my purpose? Yes, I'd like to think so. I am certainly not saving the world – but I like to think that I am where I am today because this is what Hashem wanted from me. I have been very blessed to have an incredible life partner who is beyond supportive and a magnificent family with 6 children that bring us so much nachas.

2: HOW DID YOU KNOW YOU WANTED TO GO INTO THIS KIND OF WORK?

I didn't! I moved to London wanting to continue in the entertainment industry, but Hashem had other plans for me! (one day I'll share the story of how I met my husband!). I fell into a sales role once I had left college, and found that I was good at connecting with people. I think that 'sales' has an age-old stigma, and yet we all have to have the skill – day-to-day interactions, teaching, shidduchim, interviews – all involve necessary people skills.

3: WHAT DOES IT DO FOR YOUR SOUL?

It gives me energy, empowers me and allows me to be as creative and imaginative as I want. I get to dream up all kinds of things and watch them become a reality. I get to deal with all kinds of people and to travel, and I am constantly learning new skills and evolving. I feel that as long as I am growing – I am fulfilled. I am extremely blessed to work the hours that I choose, and so am able to carve out time to do other things that feed my soul. I love what I do and the people that I work with and can't imagine ever doing anything else.

4: HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR LIFE SO THAT YOU FEEL YOU ARE FULFILLING ALL OF YOUR DIFFERENT ROLES?

Balance, what's that? Aren't our lives one big juggling act? Mostly we (my husband and I) are winging it, with a lot of praying involved! One thing I am precious about – is that I ensure that I have nuggets of 'me' time. I wake up daily at 5.30am to be able to fit in exercise. The exercise keeps me focused (and sane!) and a much nicer person. I hope I am being the best wife, mother and marketer that I can be. It's an ever-evolving process and as long as we are happy to keep learning and improving, then we are always fulfilling our potential at that point in time.

6: WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR CAREER AND WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE LOWS?

I've been doing this job for 20 years and there have been many highs and lows along the way. I love the 'chase' of the sale and the high when the deal closes. However, the real stand-out point for me is the meaningful relationships and friendships I have developed along the way – with both colleagues and clients.

7: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE HIGHS OF YOUR WORK?

The biggest high is seeing our team thrive and grow and watching others reach their potential. As a leader or manager, the greatest success is seeing others achieve their own success. I have been inspired by the team and their hard work, perseverance and dedication has been awesome. I can't wait to see what comes next.

8: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

Slow down and try to enjoy each and every process. Trust that Hashem knows best, even when we can't see the end of the tunnel.

Lana Ziskind was born in Johannesburg and moved to London 21 years ago. She currently lives in Hendon, London, with her 6 children and their dog. She has had a very full career, including studying interior design, teaching aerobics and working as a talent and celebrity scout and casting agent. When she moved to London, she found the latter to be non-conducive to a Jewish lifestyle, and began working at 'Rocket', where she has gleaned over 20 years of experience in building business and brands. She currently holds the position of Account Director and works with the likes of Disney, Warner Brothers, Platform 9 ¾, Hard Rock Café and Deliveroo.



THE POWER OF GRIT

by SHIRA DRUION

GRIT IS THE MOST DEFINING FEATURE
IN PREDICTING SUCCESS

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**If you hold them too tight,
you fail them and if you
don't hold them tight
enough, you fail them.**

A few years ago, I came across a TED talk by American psychologist Angela Duckworth, where she speaks about grit being the greatest predictor of people's ability to achieve success in their lives. I was so taken with the concept that I went straight to buy her book titled 'Grit: Why Passion and Resilience are Secrets to Success.' Having been an educator for well over a decade, I have always been fascinated by the concept of grit and how some kids are able to persevere while others give in. Duckworth defines grit as, "the most significant predictor of success embodied by having the passion and perseverance for very long-term goals, combined with the commitment of being able to stick with your future for years, living life like it's a marathon not a sprint." I loved this definition. It is incredible to note how significant this character trait is in enabling or disabling people from achieving success in their lives and is fascinating to examine through a Torah lens.

There is a verse in the Talmud which states, "if a person tells you that they have achieved without effort, you must not believe him, but if he tells you he has achieved with effort, you can believe him." The Talmud is emphasising an important principle, which is the value of effort and perseverance as a measuring tool for success. We live in a world that has many disposable choices on offer. When we are no longer happy with or enjoying something, we most often have the option to simply move on with just the click of a button. Social media is the perfect example of this: we find ourselves scrolling through a newsfeed, and if we don't find it absolutely compelling, with just the click of a button we are able to gloss over it, never needing to sit with something that doesn't hold our full attention. The truth is that there is an upside to this New Age phenomenon, which is that mediocrity is no longer tolerated in the way that it was previously. But the downside is that life is full of things of which we cannot lightly dispose and teaching ourselves and in turn our children that when they no longer 'feel' like continuing with something they can JUST dispose of it, we are doing them a grave disservice. The most disturbing manifestation of this is in relationships, which to a large degree have become disposable, as the next best option is just a click away. This phenomenon starves people of having to tap into their inner resources to solve their problems and instead they take the first exit out.

I recently had the privilege of helping a very smart university student to get back on track with her studies. She had some personal issues to iron out but her main challenge was her lack of grit. If she didn't feel like doing her work or a task became too challenging, she just threw in the towel and gave up. One of our main areas of focus was helping her to break the habit

of constantly giving up on herself. With lots of patience and love, she slowly began to replace her frustrations and defeatist attitude with perseverance and grit. As they say, 'success breeds success' and as she started to taste the sweet fruits of success, she became more motivated to invest more effort and push herself to overcome her difficulties. It was the most rewarding and fascinating experience to facilitate and observe the process as she learnt to develop her 'grit muscle.'

When a baby is learning to walk, a parent can't just walk away and allow them to keep falling. In the beginning, the baby requires sufficient help and support to stand on their own two feet, but as they become more competent, a parent needs to instil in the child the self-belief and confidence to know that they have it in them to manage on their own. If you hold them too tight, you fail them and if you don't hold them tight enough, you fail them. As educators and parents, one needs to strike the perfect balance between supporting children so much that you stifle them and not supporting them enough so that they are left feeling totally afraid to face adversity alone. I think that if a child knows without a doubt that they have someone in their corner, they will feel much safer to take those scary steps, and the same applies to adults. We all need an advocate to support us.

Rabbi Lawrence Keleman explains a most enlightening concept in his book 'To Kindle a Soul', where he speaks about supporting the child enough that he has direction and structure but not so much that the child can't grow on his own. It is extremely difficult to strike the perfect balance because it plays on the vulnerability of the parent, but it is vital that it is done so that the child can become a functional adult. A parent must be able to let go and allow the child to struggle so that the child is given the opportunity to dig into their own inner reservoir of

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Often homes create a culture that is so allergic to failure that children avoid failing at all costs.

The corollary of this is that they never try their hand at success either and that might be one of life's greatest tragedies.

their hand at success because they do not dread failure. Children who do not feel safe enough to do this will experience increased levels of pain and loneliness when life does not go according to plan and will avoid disappointments at all costs, preventing them from ever developing their grit muscle.

In September 2019, I tore my Achilles tendon. As a result of a recommendation not to operate on it, it tore again in December 2019. Anyone who understands injuries can attest to the fact that this is one of the worst injuries to incur and I can safely say that nothing in the world can prepare you for becoming handicapped overnight. I distinctly remember the thoughts that went through my brain as it ruptured for the second time. It was a frosty, winter night and I had been in pain for months and was still very fragile from the shock of becoming so limited, so suddenly. As it ruptured, my whole body went into shock from the pain, and I still don't know how I managed to carry on walking. But as it happened, I looked up to the night sky and said, "Hashem, I am just starting to surface from my black hole, how can you throw me down there again, I just can't go

strength and resilience. It is precisely in this space that the child's self-esteem begins to develop, and they start to get to know themselves and experience their own strengths, abilities and weaknesses. If a parent constantly blocks a child from failing, they are also blocking the opportunity for the child to succeed on their own merits because they have recognised their strengths and developed them.

I have also watched, often with a tinge of sadness, how fear of failure has a massive impact on inhibiting children from wanting to even try to succeed. It is therefore vital to inspire children to take risks, because once a safe space has been created for a child, they will be able to take developmentally appropriate risks. Often homes create a culture that is so allergic to failure that children avoid failing at all costs. The corollary of this is that they never try their hand at success either and that might be one of life's greatest tragedies. Parents can encourage children to take safe risks by helping them to step out of their comfort zones and to know without a shadow of a doubt that their relationship with you is unconditional and not dependent on whether they succeed or fail in their endeavours. Duckworth says that when people ask her how to build grit, she admits she does not have the answers, but that the most compelling way forward is through teaching children to have a growth mindset. She quotes Stanford University's professor of Psychology, Carol Dweck, who developed the growth mindset, which is "having the belief that the ability to learn is not fixed but can change with your effort and application. It is learning about how the brain changes and grows in response to challenges and understanding that failure is actually a set of lessons that encourages children to persevere when they fail because they don't believe that failure is a permanent condition but is rather a journey of lessons learned." Helping children to develop a growth mindset will reinforce their commitment to learning and will also help them learn to overcome the challenges and failures they will face in the trajectory of their lives.

Robust young people will naturally have more grit. It is therefore imperative to nurture children who are confident enough to go out into the world with real emotional stamina and social resilience. Children who are overly sensitive are not able to access the 'grit' button because they have thrown in the towel in catastrophic disappointment before they have even had a chance to discover whether they have what it takes to succeed. If children are able to discuss their emotions in an emotionally safe space with open channels of communication, then they will feel safe enough to express their worries and failures without the fear of being judged. In turn, they will feel safe enough to try



back.” Even then, I had no idea just how brutal the next year and a half of my life would be - navigating enormous pain and limitation in a medically compromised Covid world. Looking back, I know that I only got through it because of the support of wonderful people and because I have developed a strong grit muscle through enduring many other challenging experiences in my life. During the 18-month recovery, I had many ups and downs and often thought I would be confined to a life of pain and limitation, but I continued to believe that I had it in me to cope, which allowed me to keep working towards recovery. Had I not had years of training, I probably would not have managed the gruelling months that at times felt like a prison. But despite the horrible treatments, I was always able to recognize that my previous pain had paved the pathway to being resilient enough to get better.

It is incumbent on parents and educators to help our youth to stay the journey, even when the journey feels tedious. If they don't get used to being uncomfortable at times, they will not be able to endure the curveballs of life. A child's ability to be gritty will allow them to overcome the many challenges that all human beings will face throughout the course of their lives and to view their failures and mistakes as lessons rather than a life in chains. This in turn will play a determining role in their ability to succeed in their lives because patterns of resilience are formed early on and become a blueprint and great predictor for how likely they will be to succeed as adults. If you give the youth in your circle one gift, let it be... Grit - the most salient factor in the success equation.



Shira Druion obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in English, psychology and education. She then trained as a speech and drama teacher through the Trinity College of London. She is an experienced journalist, the former editor of YALLA magazine and the executive editor of Perspectives, the magazine of Aish UK. She has been an educator for many years, teaching students from nursery through to university, where she lectured on communication and writing skills. She now teaches English and runs her own drama company called Dramatix, where she teaches a broad age range of students. Druion is passionate about women's education. She gives a weekly *parsha shiur*, as well as other *shiurim*, and runs women's programmes in the community.

GRIT.


YOU'VE REALLY GOT IT.

by **BRIAN RUBENSTEIN**

IS GRIT AN INNATE QUALITY THAT WE ARE BORN WITH, OR IS IT SOMETHING WE NEED TO STRIVE TO ACHIEVE?

G*rit.* So, here's the problem: many, if not most of us, have been conditioned to think that grit is a quality that we need to acquire, achieve or instil. But what if that simply is not accurate? What would happen if we understood grit to be something that we always have? All of us. All of the time. No matter what.

“Wait!” I hear you shouting (at least that's what I imagine you to be saying in order to maximise the effect of this short article). “How can that be true? Surely some people have grit, and some don't? Surely we can get more grit? Better grit? Greater grit?” (You get the picture.)



Well, that all depends on your starting point. If you assume grit is something that exists outside of you, then of course you will need to go and get it. And assuming you are motivated to do so, you will likely engage in a whole range of activities to ‘get grit’. These might include signing up to courses (Get More Grit Now!); listening to podcasts (‘Join us for a great Grit conversation with world-famous Gritter ...’); following the social media posts of Grit leaders; and reading Grit books (does anyone actually do that anymore?). Or perhaps you’ll choose to participate in a week-long Grit meditation retreat, during which you are not allowed to speak to another human being, drink caffeine or eat anything not grown organically on the self-sustaining farm hosting the event. These are not necessarily bad options – I’ve tried most of them myself in the past, except for the silent retreat thing (there’s no way I could go a week without caffeine!).

But what would happen if we took an alternative approach - a radically different way of understanding grit? Let’s start by asking some crucial questions about grit (or resilience, or wellbeing) to use two other well-known terms:

What if resilience is not conditional on the events and circumstances of life?

What if grit is not something we need to acquire, achieve or instil?

What if wellbeing is built-in; innate in every human being?

What if it can be covered up, but never lost, damaged or broken?

What if we already have everything we need for life but just don’t know it?

Asking – and answering these questions – leads to a very different narrative. How do I know that?

Well, in my role as CEO of iheart, the mental health education charity, we teach children and young people (and their parents and teachers for good measure!) about uncovering their innate wellbeing and resilience. In other words: we teach them that they’ve got grit – whether they know it or not. And we don’t pontificate about this in order to be inspirational or motivational (not that we have anything against inspiration and motivation, but that’s not really our gig). We tell them about this because it’s true – a psychological fact. Just as almost all people are both with a nose, mouth, two eyes and two ears, so too are all people born with innate wellbeing.

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After hearing this message and learning about how their minds work, so many of these children and teenagers tell us they feel more empowered and better equipped to overcome their setbacks, handle adversity and realise their potential.

Why is this so important to know? To answer that, let's go back to the beginning. As infants, we all need the love, care and physical attention of our parents or carers to survive and thrive. That's just how nature works. But then our minds seem to grab hold of this information, and innocently, but not logically, apply it to areas where it's not necessary. As Terry Rubenstein, founder of iheart and author of some great books about wellbeing and resilience (though in my opinion, her greatest accomplishment lies in choosing the author of this article as her marriage partner some 27 years ago), says: "It's like adding 1 + 1 and arriving at 3. A false equation." What Terry means by this is that our minds mistakenly assume that in order to feel psychologically secure, safe, and whole, we require a whole lot of 'stuff'. Stuff like validation, appreciation, financial security, good looks, material items, people treating us well... and so the list goes on and on.

While all these things are nice to have, they actually have nothing to do with our wellbeing, which is an unconditional capacity to feel content, resilient, secure and at peace. In other words, to experience our built-in grit. Knowing this has implications for how we think, feel and behave. It leads us down pathways to try and acquire our wellbeing. It leads us down avenues of insecure thoughts and feelings as we constantly think of ways to protect that wellbeing. And so, we predictably land up controlling, avoiding and overthinking as we outsource our most precious superpower, not realising that this superpower itself is innate – built into every one of us. It is something we are born with; our natural state of wellbeing – which includes feelings of resilience, optimism, peace of mind, gratitude and love. To wit: grit (sorry, I just couldn't resist that one!).

What I am sharing with you is what we have shared at iheart with almost 20,000 young people around the world – in schools, football academies and youth projects. After hearing this message and learning about how their minds work, so many of these children and teenagers tell us they feel more empowered and better equipped to overcome their setbacks, handle adversity and realise their potential. They feel, really feel, that they've now got grit. Which is of course 100% true. And all we did was show them that they always had it in the first place!

So, the next time you feel the need to get some more grit in your life, ask yourself this question: Is grit something I really need to go out and find? Or have I got all the grit I need inside myself already? And I mean got it. Really got it.

To find out more about iheart, how we are teaching wellbeing, resilience and grit to young people, and to listen to a fascinating BBC World Service Radio report on iheart's deeply impactful work in a South London school, please visit

www.iheartprinciples.com



In addition to being the CEO of iheart, Brian Rubenstein is the father of six sons and two grandchildren; the author of 'Escaping the Illusion', a novel for young adults about the built-in superpower of resilience; and has previously worked as a psychotherapist, a safari ranger, a consultant in a FTSE 100 financial institution and an outreach rabbi for Aish UK.



5 WAYS WE CAN THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT GRIT.

1. **Let's RE-EDUCATE ourselves and our youth about what grit really means.** It is crucial that we understand that our children (and all of us, really) are whole, well and resilient. When this is not understood, we can easily become convinced that we have a 'mental health problem', reinforcing the belief that we are deficient and lack grit.
2. **Let's REDEFINE terms like mental health, resilience and grit.** Mental health is knowing there will be moments when we will not experience our wellbeing – our innate grit – but never doubting it is within. This is the difference between feeling hopeful and feeling hopeless.
3. **Let's talk about 'UNCOVERING' grit.** Not installing it. Nor building it. Grit is innate to the human psychological system; it's already there - our natural setting. It doesn't need to be acquired, developed or installed.
4. **Let's NORMALISE the human experience.** No one experiences their natural grit – their wellbeing – 24/7. It is essential that young people recognise that grit always resides within them, even when they are not experiencing it.
5. **Let's EMPOWER people, especially our young people.** Exploring why wellbeing is covered up and how it can get uncovered again is very empowering. We do not need to wait until discomfort passes. Rather we become empowered knowing that we have the innate grit to manage setbacks and overcome adversity, no matter what.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT

RESILIENCE IN LOSS

by **RABBI SHAUL ROSENBLATT**

RABBI SHAUL ROSENBLATT IMPARTS WISDOM
ABOUT THE PROCESS OF MOURNING AND
NAVIGATING THE PAIN OF LOSS

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In my experience, resilience in loss is not about forgetting and moving on. It is about not forgetting – and moving on.

There are many aspects of Torah that speak to me of its divine origin. None more so, perhaps, than shiva. I have experienced this unique and special mitzvah three times in my life and, each time, I was in awe of how perfectly it was crafted to guide me through the visceral darkness of loss and back into the bright daylight of life. I feel so blessed to have had the guidelines of shiva to support and strengthen me at such disorienting and bewildering times. I can't imagine navigating the process without it.

One of shiva's gifts to me was the opportunity to cry. And cry some more – and then cry all over again. Every time someone new walked into the room, I found myself unable to hold back the tears. Crying is the most potent medicine for loss. It is the wisdom of God's world guiding us to let the pain out. It's incredibly natural for us to cry – and that which is natural is usually that which is most helpful. Our world is set up to work for us, as long as we don't think we know better.

So often, in this country, I see someone put their arm around one of the mourners who is crying, usually at the funeral, and say, 'be strong', meaning, 'don't cry'. It never makes sense to me – in crying, they are being incredibly strong. They are transcending the social pressure and discomfort around expressing emotions in public. That takes great courage. To stop crying is not strength; it is weakness (if we must judge one way or the other). If I feel I have the appropriate permission, I will usually come to the mourner right after and say, 'it's OK to be weak also'. Crying when someone we love dies is part of our natural resilience mechanism. We express the intense feeling of pain and, through giving that pain its due respect, it blesses us with its gifts of healing.

Let me expand further on what I mean.

Here's what I've learnt about the pain of loss. And I learnt it first time around when my late wife passed away from cancer at thirty. When a person is alive there are so many ways in which to experience our love. We can go for a walk together. Have a conversation. Have dinner together. Go on holiday. Write letters (if you're old enough to remember what those are)... the options are almost limitless. However, once the person has passed from this world, all those means are gone. Only one remains. And that is pain. The pain of loss is pure and unadulterated love. Imagine, for a moment, if someone

you loved died and you felt no pain; you didn't even feel numb. You just got on with life. Who would want that? The pain of loss is a friend. And each time I have been through loss, I have welcomed it and embraced it. And in doing so, I have found that something miraculous has happened for me. Eventually, the pain found its rightful and appropriate place in my heart. I have lost a wife and both parents – and there is a special place in my heart that still hurts for each one of them. And I never want that to go away. My wife passed away twenty years ago, now. I am incredibly happily married again. Nevertheless, about once a year nowadays (the gaps become longer over time) I will find myself walking down the street and suddenly memories of her come flooding back and I cry all over again. Those moments are deeply precious to me. They mean that there is still room for her in my heart – and I'm deeply grateful. The same thing happens intermittently with each of my parents too.

In my experience, resilience in loss is not about forgetting and moving on. It is about not forgetting – and moving on.

God has set up the world such that there is a natural process we go through in mourning; and our wisdom will guide us through that process if we do not fight it. The human body has .98% the density of water. That means we float. The only reason a naked person, who does not know how to swim, would drown in a calm body of water is because fear innocently causes them to fight the floating process. Mourning is as natural as floating. Allow your own wisdom to guide you and you will find your way though. Shiva is an incredible support for our own internal guiding system. Fight the process and I see people who drown in mourning.

We are all naturally resilient; we just need to remember that we are and we will navigate even life's deepest pains with grace.



Rabbi Shaul Rosenblatt grew up in Liverpool and has been a lifelong Liverpool FC fan. He studied for his rabbinic degree at Aish Hatorah in Jerusalem where he met his first wife Elana a'h who passed away in 2001 after a long struggle with cancer. They had four children together and Shaul has a further four with his second wife Chana who he married in 2003. Shaul has written two books, 'Mean What You Pray' and 'Why Bad Things Don't Happen to Good People'. Shaul founded Aish UK in 1993 and Tikun UK in 2006. In 2017, he founded the Rabbinic Training Academy in London. He is a practitioner of the Three Principles understanding and is founder and co-host of the Three Principles Conference in London.

The background is a deep navy blue, filled with soft, out-of-focus bokeh lights in shades of blue and white. A prominent, bright burst of sparks, resembling a lit firework or a welding torch, is centered in the lower half of the image. The sparks are a mix of orange, yellow, and white, with long, thin trails radiating outwards. The title text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

FINDING OUR META- PURPOSE

by **GARETH KOBRIN**

CHASING THE SPARKS OF POSSIBILITY AND
FINDING PURPOSE IN A PHYSICAL WORLD

It's my daughter's bat mitzvah this year and we had to decide how to celebrate. I was discussing options with her, and she told me a story so unreal, it had to be real.

There was a boy who wanted to throw a party for his 13th birthday, and instead of asking for a material gathering of his closest friends and family, he asked if they could host the bash on *Roblox*. Roblox is an online platform where users can play and invent games. They create virtual avatars – digital depictions of themselves – who can interact with other characters to complete various tasks. The purpose is to live life in this computer-generated world, where you are rewarded with *Robux*, a kind of cyber money. And you thought Zoom weddings were weird...

This raises two very interesting concepts to be considered, both big and scary words: gamification and the metaverse. The first is simply the idea of turning real-life, regular activities into games so that people are incentivised to complete them (like creating a leaderboard which shows how many deals salespeople have closed). Countless studies have shown that humans are more inclined to do anything if there are points, levels, or rewards at stake.

If you follow and like such things, you might know that Facebook recently changed its (corporate) name to *Meta*, an allusion to the Metaverse. This is a beloved concept written about by tech enthusiasts for decades: the idea of a centralised virtual world, a 'place' parallel to the physical world where humans relate in cyberspace. It comes from the Greek word meaning 'beyond'

Our world is so desperate for purpose; it yearns to create another world – a supernatural place where we can be rewarded for simply living our lives.

Where have I heard that idea before? You do regular things, actions which are seemingly valueless in the material world and yet you are rewarded with an intangible, mystical currency in a world beyond...

I was discussing this with an Israeli colleague of mine, an engineer who understands the secret code of this metaverse, when he interrupted me to ask for a lighter, but in the Holy Tongue it sounds much cooler: '*Achi, yesh lecha eish?*'

My brother, do you have fire?

The expression was on my mind that night and I decided to try find the first time it is mentioned in the Torah (the best way to truly understand something's essence, according to Rabbi Akiva Tatz). I think fire makes its debut as early as *Vayera* in *Breishit*, when Sodom and Gomorrah are annihilated by Hashem raining down fire and brimstone from Heaven. This seems to indicate that fire is a weapon of destruction.

I am no Torah scholar, so my research is limited to the meta-yeshiva that is Chabad's website, and a few hyperlinks later I stumbled upon a gem brought down by Rabbi Chayim Vital about *Nitzotzot*, which I understand means Sparks.

According to the Kabbalistic myth, the universe suffered a cosmic trauma during its creation. This trauma is known as *Shevirat Ha-kelim* - the shattering of the vessels. The mystical teachings describe ten vessels that were prepared to hold the emanation of Hashem's divine light, but they were not strong enough to withstand its power, and shattered. When the vessels broke, sparks of light that they could not contain scattered throughout Creation.

I have no idea what that means, but it's a resonant image. These fragments of divine vitality permeate our world, and our natural Jewish inclination is to chase them. Our *purpose* in life is to find these sparks and elevate them. Forgive the coarse analogy - I have an immature imagination - but I like to picture a video game like Roblox, where we are wandering our world trying to find these hidden treasures, these fiery shards. When you find one, to progress in the game you must extract the spark from the outer shell that covers it, thereby fulfilling the divine potential that longs to be revealed.

The whole point of the game is to find the lost sparks and restore unity to the world. That's *Tikkun Olam*, repairing the world. It's an evocative notion - sparks of infinity are sprinkled everywhere - but what are we supposed to do with it? As 'The Boss', Bruce Springsteen, sang in his gravelly voice 3 decades ago in the classic track *Dancing in the Dark*: "*you can't start a fire without a spark.*" Well, the Real Boss taught us that 3 thousand years ago.

A spark can set a whole forest on fire or kindle an infinite number of candles. I think a spark represents both a servant and a symbol. Armed with fire, men have systematically gassed their fellow humans and burned their corpses in ovens, thereby

demonstrating a capacity to be beastlier than the beasts. Yet with a spark, the same burned bodies are lovingly mourned in candles of remembrance, tiny flickers that connect the living and the dead with the possibility of the eternal.

These *Nitzotzot* – sparks of divine fire – represent potential, which is a burning flame.

Fire always seeks to go up. You can take a candle and hold it upside down and the flame will always rise. Our Sages explain that this is because it is seeking its source above.

In one of the great paradoxes, the second time fire is mentioned in the Torah is when Hashem first appeared to Moshe as fire on Mount Sinai, where we are told that “the bush was not consumed” by it. And yet years later, when the Jewish people received the Torah on the same mountain, God is described as “*a consuming fire*.”

Why did God choose to reveal himself to Moses from a bush that was burning but was not consumed? I think the most important message of Judaism, and literally the first message that Hashem communicates to Moshe is this: to connect to Him one must reveal the fire burning within the human soul.

There is a famous story, widely known as the *Mann Gulch Fire*, which tells of a wildfire that broke out in 1949 where a team of 15 smokejumpers parachuted in to fight the fire.

Tragically, 14 of them lost their lives, but the tale of the lone survivor has become a legend...

The scorching fire was chasing the team up a ridge and with the blaze less than a hundred yards behind; he took a match out and set fire to the grass just before them. He yelled to his teammates to stop running and join him, but in the panic they didn't listen. He lay down in the small fire he had lit, and the main fire burned around him. (This is now known as an ‘escape fire’).

If you want to get close to fire and survive, you must be fire.

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IF YOU WANT TO GET CLOSE TO FIRE AND SURVIVE, YOU MUST BE FIRE

We encounter sparks of possibility every day, but if we haven't accessed that metaphorical flame burning within our souls, these opportunities are wasted, consumed. The privilege of being able to chase the light comes with a risk: you can get burned. To help fix the world, we must embrace the longing to reconnect with the source of all existence, to accept that we live in a physical world but can still touch the Divine.

Fire is as spiritual as a physical thing can get, but we live in an age almost completely devoid of spirituality. We must remember that those timeless sparks are everywhere, and they are inextinguishable.

How do we live a purposeful life? We don't need games or virtual realities to give us meaning, the purpose of life is to live it. Living life means facing daily choices and challenges that are literally infinite, and we need simply believe that every time we do *anything* to help fix the world, every spark with the potential to consume that is transformed into something eternal, puts us one step closer to winning the only game that really counts.

Every game has a set of rules that govern it, and we were given VIP access to the ultimate Rule Book 3 millennia ago. As the poet Dylan Thomas wrote: “*Do not go gentle into that good night, rage, rage against the dying of the light*.” The sparks of Hashem cannot be snuffed, but if we don't continue to fuel the fire of Torah within each of us that is needed to ignite the world, we risk being consumed.



Gareth Kobrin was born in South Africa where he graduated with a Master's Degree in Economics from the University of Cape Town. He moved to London just over a decade ago where he worked in the banking industry for a few years, and then qualified as a chartered management accountant. He is now the CEO of a tax technology company called VATGlobal, which is part of the VAT IT Group. He is married to Aimee and they have three children. When he is not doing VAT stuff, he loves to write and is obsessed with sport. If you need any advice on VAT or just want some sports banter, Gareth can be contacted at gareth.kobrin@vatglobal.com.



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
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COVID 19

A FRONTLINE PERSPECTIVE



GENERAL PRACTITIONER **DR. WALTER ABELMAN**
SHARES HIS VIEWS ON THE CLINICAL PRACTICE AND
CURRENT LITERATURE ON COVID 19



There is yet much to be written about one of the most devastating periods of this millennium. We are still coming to grips with the consequences of the pandemic. Covid 19 has been the world war of our generation - an enormous international tragedy that has cut lives short, challenged everything we know about science and medicine, and above all has shown everybody Who truly runs this world.

Yet our leadership is reserved, perhaps not yet wanting to admit the inevitable? Fearful of speaking out of turn. Quiet, because what can one say? We have become resigned to a new normal. Our children are socialised into worrying about the new invisible enemy. What is our unfolding reality?

As a medical doctor, every day I see how Covid has taken over our consciousness. Every consultation begins with the phrase – “my Covid test is negative.” We have been forced to measure all of medical science against the opposite of being Covid positive. The algorithms that determine medical diagnoses factor this in every time. We have discovered a new freedom - we are free when we are Covid-free!

We may never know exactly what happened in Wuhan in December 2019, but we do know that despite any differences in persuasion, politics or otherwise, we have all been affected

by the events that took place in a small university city in China. If the Internet has taught us that we cannot hide from anyone, Covid has taught us that we cannot ‘mothball’ ourselves from all danger.

But we need a new approach. Most of us have been vaccinated. Those who refuse to vaccinate are still getting very ill. Our ICUs are mostly populated by those who shun the vaccine. Those who have been vaccinated are getting asymptomatic or milder infections. The vaccinated are starting to be able to travel and move more freely. We have solid data that vaccination reduces infections, reduces how infective we are to others, preserves lives and avoids admissions. Those who are unfortunate enough to still get ill, now have access to much better medicine. Monoclonal antibodies, steroids and other biological agents are being tested and we are starting to see some hope that far fewer people will die or be left with severe lifelong health impairments. The journals introduce comforting studies showing good progress in our ability to beat this disease.

But is this true? If we study the epidemiology of viral illnesses, particularly the annual circulating influenza viruses, we know certain things are true. Flu is with us every year and while a true flu illness is actually unusual (many of us think we have had the flu, but it is unlikely unless characterised by being bed-bound with high fever for a week), many people in the population



Covid 19 has been the world war of our generation - an enormous international tragedy that has cut lives short and challenged everything we know about science and medicine

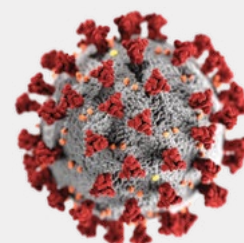
(up to 70%) are immunised in order to achieve enough prevalent immunity that the virus cannot take hold (herd immunity). The decision about which strains of flu we should be immunised against is taken twice yearly by the World Health Organization. The type of vaccine which usually relies on a specific protein of a particular strain, enables rapid distribution of the vaccines to large numbers of people effectively and cheaply. Flu vaccines need to change each year due to flu mutations - what we call antigenic drift. Antigenic drift causes minor changes to the presenting protein of the flu virus and creates the need to re-engineer the vaccine annually.

The next truth is that Flu is endemic in the population, and therefore new vaccines are needed each year. Furthermore, flu does unfortunately harm the vulnerable, and despite vaccines, people still get sick with a significant number of particularly elderly people passing away each year.

So why is Covid-19 any different? Covid represents a mutation which, unlike the flu variations caused by antigenic drift, is caused by antigenic shift - a circulating coronavirus becomes a novel coronavirus. What we saw with Covid-19 in the early days was patchy transmission involving a high burst of illness affecting discrete communities or areas. It is estimated that in some areas, 80% of the illnesses were caused by 10% of infected patients (so-called super spreaders). This why the Jewish community in NW London had such a high prevalence in the early days with so many people in hospital after Purim 2020, and an incredible number of deaths across the broader community, relative to other population groups. With time, several Covid-19 variants started spreading and this then led to a more uniform dispersion of the virus through the rest of the country.

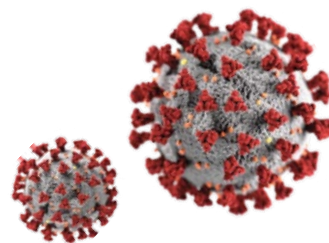
Where flu vaccines may only have a maximum efficacy (effectiveness in preventing illness) of around 50%, Covid-19 vaccines have much higher rates, with efficacy approaching 95% with the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine. However, this does not seem to be enough. With this degree of efficacy and an extremely competent vaccination program, we should see numbers dropping off. We should theoretically be seeing the incidence in the population starting to come down in a meaningful way such that population movement and travel are reverting to normal. But unlike flu, this is not so. We do not seem to be winning on vaccines alone. So why is this?

The key to this conundrum is the prevalence of new Covid-19 variants, waning immunity and a significant enough number of unvaccinated people. The Delta variant in particular has shown scientists that this virus can evade and mutate around vaccines and cause illnesses in the population even when people have had 2 vaccines and the actual Covid-19 illness. However, what matters is that these variants are not causing the mortality they used to cause in the early days. They are not putting people into hospital and causing the long-term damage to organ systems of the body that were encountered at the beginning of this crisis. This is obviously good news. We can then start to reframe our lives around the notion that perhaps we cannot get rid of this virus with all the vaccines, all the shielding and all the testing we could possibly perform. It is endemic - it is in our homes, our schools, our shuls and it is with us no matter how hard we try to fight against it.



Future vaccines will be with us for a long time to come. I personally dread my vaccine. I know that it is 24-hours of revisiting the symptoms I felt when I was first infected. So, what do we do? The studies that have been done with matched controls are extremely reassuring.

A very interesting piece of work looking at health workers at the Sheba Medical Centre who had been vaccinated, and comparing them to matched controls, showed incredible differences between the vaccinated and the unvaccinated groups. Not only were vaccinated healthcare workers not getting ill, but where they had positive PCR results, most were asymptomatic. Similarly, members of the vaccinated household were far less likely to get ill even if the vaccinated healthcare worker had a positive PCR.



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We will need to face the reality that we are dealing with an endemic enemy that will continue to produce potentially deadly variants

One of the most difficult issues faced by doctors and scientists is trying to persuade people who should be vaccinated that the vaccine is a much better bet than getting Covid-19. The key element of resistance to vaccination, in my opinion, is that for someone to take a vaccine they are giving themselves a 100% chance of a potential severe side effect. This is incontrovertible. However, if one does nothing and then develops the illness, one is placing oneself at a much higher risk of harm than the vaccine might ever have caused. As stated earlier, the sickest patients in hospital are almost always the unvaccinated ones.

But what of children? We had early reports in the year of severe clots forming in the organs and particularly the vessels of the brain due to a condition called Vaccine induced Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia (VITT). This association with the Astra Zeneca vaccine in younger people caused a rethink on the use of this vaccine, and the choice made to use mostly the Pfizer BioNTech vaccines instead in the young.

So why do we still not want to all embrace the Pfizer vaccine? The Israeli Clalit study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, looking at over 1.75 million people, using matched cohort of patients, showed that there was an excess of 5 cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart) associated with the Pfizer vaccine per 100,000 people. These were mostly males who developed the inflammation after the second dose at an average of 24 years of age. Since this main finding reached statistical significance (albeit in extremely low numbers) it was published and acknowledged as a risk factor for this vaccine.

Parents in the UK can decide for themselves if their children (over 12) should be vaccinated. Covid-19 in children is generally a benign disease with severe cases in any significant number only seen in developing countries. However, children do occasionally get very ill. There is a dedicated ward at Great Ormond Street Hospital for children who have developed Multi System Inflammatory Disease. This is a condition that, as the name suggests, affects all the organ systems including the muscles and nervous system of the child - and while we should never know such awful things in our lives, this condition is real, and it can be very serious. Balancing this are the few cases of myocarditis that were reported in the Clalit study. Most of these cases were mild with spontaneous improvement without sequelae. Interestingly, the Clalit study did show the incidence of Myocarditis as being in excess of 11 cases per 100,000 people across all ages associated with getting Covid-19 infection.

Taking these personal insights to the next level, I believe that we will be forced to make important choices about Covid-19 for a long time to come. We will need to face the reality that we are dealing with an endemic enemy that will continue to produce potentially deadly variants. We will need to measure its impact on our lives by how full our hospitals are, and particularly the knock-on effect on the NHS as it struggles to cope with all the competing illnesses and conditions it must care for. We will have to consider our travel plans, which social engagements we are prepared to attend, our personal attitude to vaccines, and most importantly perhaps, the way we negotiate all of this in our children's best interests so they emerge with their physical and mental health intact.

The author, Dr Walter Abelman, presents his own views and perspectives based on personal experience and his knowledge of the literature. Dr Abelman does not intend for this article to be used or interpreted to give personal clinical guidance on any of the subjects discussed. Readers are encouraged to speak to their own doctors before making decisions about their health.



Dr. Walter Abelman is a Specialist GP and the founder and Medical Director of JDoc365. He qualified in 1992 in South Africa and after moving to London continued his professional development at University College Hospital and the Royal Free Hospital in Oncology and Haematology. Dr. Abelman has an interest in General Medicine and works both privately and in the NHS. He is married to Avigail Cohen and has two children.



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8 TIPS FOR A HAPPY MARRIAGE

by RABBI JAMIE & ILANA COWLAND

FROM SHOWING TRUE APPRECIATION TO STARTING A NEW ACTIVITY TOGETHER, HERE ARE 8 PRACTICAL AND MEMORABLE TIPS THAT WILL HELP YOU TO INVIGORATE YOUR MARRIAGE

It's funny how couples get into such intense dynamics. You'll often hear complaints like "he's controlling", "she nags", "he's a joker" or "she criticises". It makes romantic relationships sound like such a drag. Have you ever noticed couples in a cafe looking really irritated with each other or really bored? Yet when two mates are having coffee at the same cafe, they seem to be having such a good time. Friends and spouses respond so differently. When you say, "My boss wants to fire me," friends may respond: "That's terrible. Maybe you should work for someone who appreciates you more instead of that jerk." Yet spouses may say, "What do you mean you're getting fired? What about the mortgage?" When you say, "I have no energy to clean up," friends say, "I get it, I had a day like that, it's okay. Just show yourself some self-care and you'll be okay tomorrow." Yet spouses say, "You're so lazy. I always have to do everything myself. You take me for granted." When you say, "I need to get drunk," friends say, "so let's go out and let loose" but spouses say, "Are you developing an addiction? Is this going to be an issue?"

We're often much less judgemental, more supportive and more tolerant of our friends than we are of our spouses. And I understand why. We're more affected by our spouse's lazy days than our friends' and we're less affected by our friends' need to drink than our spouse's. But can you imagine how much more pleasant life would be and how much faster we'd get over our low moments if, when we expressed them, we got the kind of support our friends offered us?

TIP NUMBER 1: Treat your spouse as well as you treat your friends to bring some supportive, helpful, non-judgemental energy into your marriage.





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**WE'RE OFTEN MUCH LESS
JUDGEMENTAL, MORE
SUPPORTIVE AND MORE
TOLERANT OF FRIENDS THAN
WE ARE OF OUR SPOUSES**

Romances begin. There's the excitement and the newness and the discovery. There's the dizzy feeling of really connecting with someone you think you can spend your whole life with. Then you get engaged and there's so much to do! Flower arrangements, hall layouts, music and caterers. Oh, it's so exciting. And then marriage happens, and if you're fortunate, you're preparing a honeymoon, and then setting up house or perhaps relocating. And then comes pregnancy and maternity leave and you're having such a wonderful time dealing with birthing classes and hospital plans and buying strollers and decorating nurseries. Babies arrive, then toddlers and first shoes and first days of school, PTA meetings, dentists, teenagers, orthodontists, acne, school choices, driving lessons, A levels, graduations and university. Before you know it, there are engagements, weddings, grandchildren, new in-laws, pensions and healthcare...and suddenly fifty years have passed, and the house is empty again. You have nothing pressing left to book, arrange, cancel, postpone or organise. You turn to your spouse, with whom you've been co-parenting, and you find yourself looking at someone you barely know; someone you haven't connected with in 49 years. Stop. Back up. Let's press reset and do this again.

Life will get busy, crazy, overwhelming. The urgent matters will demand your attention all the time. Make certain that you don't neglect the important things... like your relationship.

TIP NUMBER 2: From the outset, carve out sacred dating time with your partner, where conversations about work, kids and the house are banned. We grow and change over the years. Let's make sure we keep in touch with who we are both becoming all the way through our lives.

People come from different backgrounds. Even if you grew up on the same street, our homes are so different. They are governed by different sets of values, rules and temperaments. It can be really challenging to build your own home. You feel judgemental about the way your partner is doing things and defensive about the way you grew up. There can be so much tension and conflict. You think your dad is generous and your father-in-law is controlling when it comes to money. Your partner thinks his dad is organized and yours irresponsible. An argument is waiting to happen right there - until you agree that budgeting is probably a great idea but that it is not just about saving - it must also include money set aside to spend on quality of life. Your mum's chicken soup recipe is so much tastier than your mother-in-law's. But your spouse wants it like his mum's because your mum uses too much salt. "What are you trying to say, she doesn't care about her family's health? At least it isn't bland like your mum's!"

There's a way to figure this out. Let's try and make our chicken soup as flavourful as possible but keep it healthy. Celery salt perhaps?

TIP NUMBER 3: Don't fight to make your home like the one you grew up in. Look at the best parts of both your homes and be open to making your home the best of both worlds.

There you were, having a perfectly lovely conversation until you worded something slightly ambiguously and your partner took it the wrong way. It was just a joke, but they got a little offended, a little hurt. So, they shot something back at you that was also a little offensive. But your comment was innocuous and theirs was mean. So, its game on, and you can play this game too. You respond with something clearly insulting. Ready, aim, fire. A nasty backlash right to the solar plexus.

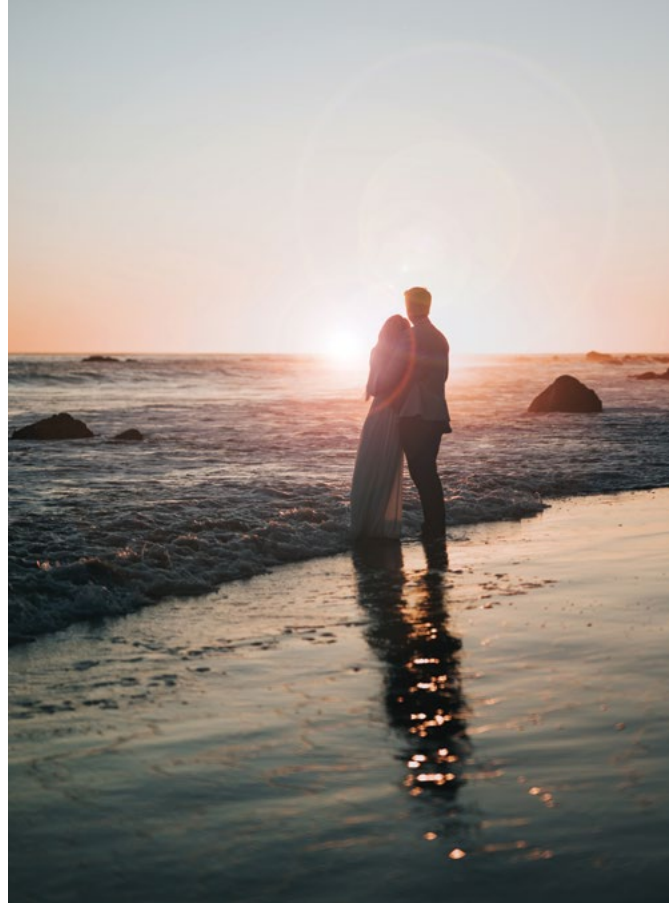
Things can escalate really fast. Within three rounds you are saying hurtful things that you don't necessarily mean and that you certainly can't take back. You have veered completely off-topic. You're deep in the land of sharp, painful, always to be remembered arguing.

An escalating argument is like a game of catch. The game will continue as long as the ball is being caught and the ball is being thrown back. Once you put your hands up or refuse to catch or throw, the game is over as quickly as it began.

TIP NUMBER 4: Treat a fight like you would a ball game. If you refuse to participate, the game is immediately over.

Have you ever shared a blanket with someone? You see, there are two ways to share a blanket. If you are both worried that you're going to get cold, you will both keep pulling the blanket onto yourselves. What happens? You both freeze all night because someone is constantly pulling the blanket off you. Alternatively, you may both be concerned that the other person should stay warm, so you keep making sure the other is covered. You stay warm all night, because someone else is ensuring you are covered, and you do the same for your partner. With the same blanket, you are either cold all night or covered and warm all night.

If you are constantly trying to get your partner to be a good spouse - demanding that they give and criticising when they're not doing their part - its going to be a long, cold marriage. But if you both try your best to meet the needs of the other and go out of your way to look after your partner, you're both going to feel the warmth of how much your partner does for



you. Marriage requires effort. A bad marriage takes a lot of energy, as does a good marriage. It's going to require work either way, so you may as well choose the marriage you want.

TIP NUMBER 5: The blanket goes further when we ask not "What have you ever done for me" but rather "What can I do for you?"

Very often, you can see how couples are doing by observing their body language. It's not just subconscious behaviour. If couples are happy with each other, they are often more affectionate. If they're making time for each other, their physical vibes may reflect more attentiveness. If they're feeling connected, they may hold hands, and if they're feeling playful, their gestures may follow suit. Likewise, if a couple is feeling distant, they may sit at a distance. If they're feeling isolated, there may be no touch at all, and if they're feeling hostile, the little touch they show may be quite brusque. It's natural both in our physical and intimate lives to reflect the way we feel in our relationship, resulting in the following pattern: When I feel close, I act close; when I feel distant, I act distant. Often, if I am feeling distant, I will wait until the emotional closeness has appeared before I demonstrate any physical closeness, thus perpetuating the distance. So, our physical interactions, from the small instances of physical touch to the most intimate, become a reflection of our emotional state. We wait until our emotional closeness improves before we make any changes in our physical expression.

This seems to be a terrible waste of an opportunity. The creation of emotional closeness can require a great deal of effort and take a long time. But you can give your partner a hug in ten seconds! We suggest that you stop allowing your physical relationship to reflect your emotional relationship, but

that you use it as a shortcut. If you want to express care and concern for your partner, you can sit with them and take their hand. If you want to improve how much you give, you can offer a massage. If you desire closeness, you can give them a hug. The physical distance that is endured while you're waiting to improve the quality of your emotional connection does not help the process. On the contrary, it puts pressure on us and makes us feel more distant from one another.

SO, TIP NUMBER 6: Do not view your physical connection as a reflection of your emotional connection but use it as a model and a precedent-setter for how you'd like your emotional connection to manifest. This will help you to achieve your emotional goals more quickly.

Many people choose their partners because they share things in common. People who meet in youth groups have their causes in common, people who meet when volunteering have their caring in common, people who meet at university may have their careers in common, people who meet at the gym have physical fitness in common and people who are introduced by friends... well, they have their friends in common. So, it's interesting just how separate our lives can become. We might have the same career, but we have different jobs. Maybe we both love exercising, but you go to the gym at night so that I can go in the morning. We may still value the same things, but we're often doing them at different times and in different places. As a couple, we are developing separately. We start to feel that our lives run in parallel, but not together.

To revitalise your relationship, start doing something new together. It doesn't have to be brand new, but it should be an adventure you're embarking on together. Perhaps you've both always enjoyed cooking, so you decide to learn a new type of cuisine together. This is not about one person participating in an established part of the other person's routine. I am not coming to hang out in your gym. Rather, we are going to start training for a marathon together. It needs to be a joint experience where you're both beginners. (And don't worry, it doesn't have to be a marathon!) You can start learning about something you've never learned about before, like learning a new language online or joining dance classes or attending lectures or visiting museums. You might even choose to learn a book together that neither of you have learnt, or go to a concert or a comedy show.

TIP NUMBER 7: We could all do with newness in our lives to invigorate us, and our marriages can often do with a surge of new energy. So, kill two birds with one stone and do something new together.

Would it be weird if you came home one day to find a present and a card saying, "I wanted to thank you for the laundry that you do every week." Or how about, "Thank you so much for going to work to pay the electricity bills." Does the person taking out the rubbish expect a prize? Do you get an award for doing the shopping or cleaning the bathroom? Of course not. We have responsibilities and we take them seriously. So seriously in fact, that we might feel silly being thanked or praised for them.

Isn't it funny that we can go through life doing so much for others and never be appreciated? Think of all the people who go to work every day and never get thanked. Have you ever seen someone thank a traffic warden? Or a debt collector? These guys work hard every day to ensure that people can function within the systems that serve society. Of course we don't expect praise for doing the mundane things that we are responsible for, but a little recognition can go such a long way. And when you're someone who recognises what others do for you, you don't just become more grateful, you also become more aware of the hundreds of kindnesses and blessings that surround you every day.

I'm not just grateful for a partner that gets me gifts, but I'm grateful for how they make the bed, how they say good morning, their humour, their health, their dental hygiene habits, their great choice of clothes, their energy, their taste in music. Every piece of goodness becomes a noticed blessing in my life. By thanking them for the things they expect me to take for granted or expect me not to notice, I create a home where we recognise everything we receive and are, in return, recognised for the good we do.

TIP NUMBER 8. Find new ways to show thanks for the wonderful things your partner does and the wonderful person he or she is.



Rabbi Jamie and Ilana Cowland have been married for 26 years and have over 25 years' experience as front-line Jewish educators, working with groups and individuals from all over the world to reconnect them to authentic, meaningful Judaism. They are best known for their classes, often given together. Entertaining, relevant and deeply insightful, Ilana and Jamie lead audiences on a journey through relationships, Shalom Bayit and Marriage, Parenting, Women in Judaism, Tikun Olam and broader topics in Jewish Philosophy, Leadership and Personal growth. For more dating and marriage advice, you can follow the Cowlands on Instagram @ilanaandjamie

ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE?



by **SHIRA DRUION**

PSYCHOTHERAPIST **CHARLOTTE PHILIPPSOHN**

PROVIDES INSIGHTS AND PRACTICAL ADVICE
FOR CULTIVATING AND STRENGTHENING HAPPY,
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



1 What are the most important factors in building a good relationship/marriage?

I believe that developing good communication skills lies at the heart of any good relationship. This means taking time to listen to one another, allowing your partner to talk without interrupting or walking out of the room and practicing active listening (see the example later in the article). Respect is another vital ingredient in a healthy relationship.

Relationships should never be taken for granted. It is very important to let your partner know every day how much he or she is loved, cared for, and appreciated. Be generous with praise, encouragement, and words of endearment. Pick your fights - sometimes it can be useful to turn a blind eye on issues that are not so important. Try to talk about your conflicts before bedtime and try not to go to bed annoyed with each other.

It is also very useful to be conscious of the love languages of your partner. There are five basic love languages, and it is important to keep all five of these alive in a relationship. However, different individuals may attribute different levels of meaning or priority to each of the love languages. They include:

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

People who prioritise this love language need to hear that they are loved and appreciated. They respond well to verbal praise and compliments but might react negatively to criticism or harsh words. A general principle is to avoid criticising the other using “you”, but instead to try and tackle your partner’s unwanted behaviour by explaining how it makes you feel. Use the words “I feel...when this or that happens...”

ACTS OF SERVICE

People feel cared for and appreciated if their partners are helpful in the house or perform ‘acts of service’ without being asked or told to. Acts of service can include small things like making breakfast in bed as a surprise, taking out the bins, washing up or vacuuming the house. Conversely, broken promises, laziness or being absent or ‘too busy’ can lead people who value this love language to feel unloved.

RECEIVING GIFTS

Gifts are a relatively straightforward love language. Gifts do not necessarily need to be expensive, however they should be thoughtful. People with this style recognise and value the careful process of choosing a gift to represent their relationship.

QUALITY TIME

People who appreciate quality time feel most cared for when their partner actively wants to spend time with them. Quality

A GENERAL PRINCIPLE IS TO AVOID CRITICISING THE OTHER USING “YOU”, BUT INSTEAD TO TRY AND TACKLE YOUR PARTNER’S UNWANTED BEHAVIOUR BY EXPLAINING HOW IT MAKES YOU FEEL

time can include date nights but is essentially about giving your partner your undivided attention.

INTIMACY

Intimacy can range from holding hands to having an intimate physical relationship, which should be openly discussed in a marriage. While intimacy should be a natural part of a relationship, it can become a source of stress. Feeling emotionally connected to your partner is a foundation for physical intimacy but sometimes in older couples, physical intimacy might play a lesser role in a relationship than emotional connection.

2 How did COVID impact marriages and what can now be done to mitigate the damage going forward?

This varies widely from couple to couple. In some cases, Covid brought couples closer together, as they had to spend more time together and had to learn to communicate, with fewer outside distractions. However, for other couples, Covid escalated the difficulties in their relationship. To mitigate the damage, it might be helpful to seek therapy to explore the root of the couple’s difficulties and to learn to communicate better.

3 Each genre of marriage comes with its highs and lows. What tips do you have for people who are just married, young parents, middle-aged and grandparents to keep their marriages alive and filled with happy times?

Each period in a couple’s life comes with its own challenges. Again, I would like to point out the importance of communication, compassion, listening to one other and trying to understand where the other person comes from. If you understand your partner’s defences and how their upbringing



and personal issues informs their reactions (which can be very different from your own) then it will be much easier to tackle the challenges that come with each phase of your relationship.

What do you think are the biggest challenges to creating a happy marriage?

Stress, which often cannot be avoided, often poses the biggest challenge in a marriage. Learning to support each other during times of stress can be very helpful.

What tangible tips would you give people wanting to improve their marriages?

I recommend that couples practice this useful exercise during times of conflict:

The couple (let us call them partners A and B) make time to sit down together in a quiet space when both are calm, not when emotions are running high. The tone of the engagement remains respectful, and partners should reflect on their own feelings in a particular situation, noting what could be helpful and what they need from one another. Accusations are not helpful in this exercise.

- Partner A speaks for a previously agreed amount of time (approximately 3 to 5 minutes) about how he / she feels about one issue at a time.
- Partner B repeats what he/she heard and understood Partner A express.
- Partner A agrees or disagrees that partner B understood what partner A wanted to express. (It is amazing how often partner B misunderstand partner A)
- If partner A does not feel understood, partner A continues to explain until partner A feels heard and understood.
- Of course, the roles then get reversed.

In the beginning it might be helpful to have a therapist facilitating this roleplay

How important is a weekly date night for couples?

I believe it is vital to take time for each other no matter how difficult this might be at times.

BE GENEROUS WITH PRAISE, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND WORDS OF ENDEARMENT

If a couple has decided to end a marriage, how as a therapist would you be able to see if there is still a glimmer of hope to get it back on track?

As a therapist, it is not necessarily my aim to get a couple back together, but rather to make the couple aware of what is going on in their relationship and assist them to make the right choices. Sometimes it might be helpful to reflect on what they loved and appreciated in one another when they first got together, to look at old photographs and to develop an awareness of what triggered the issues in their relationship in the first place. It is important to communicate with each other in an appropriate way and to show compassion and forgiveness. It is never helpful to cry over spilled milk but sometimes the right decision is to start anew, even when it means a couple goes their separate ways.

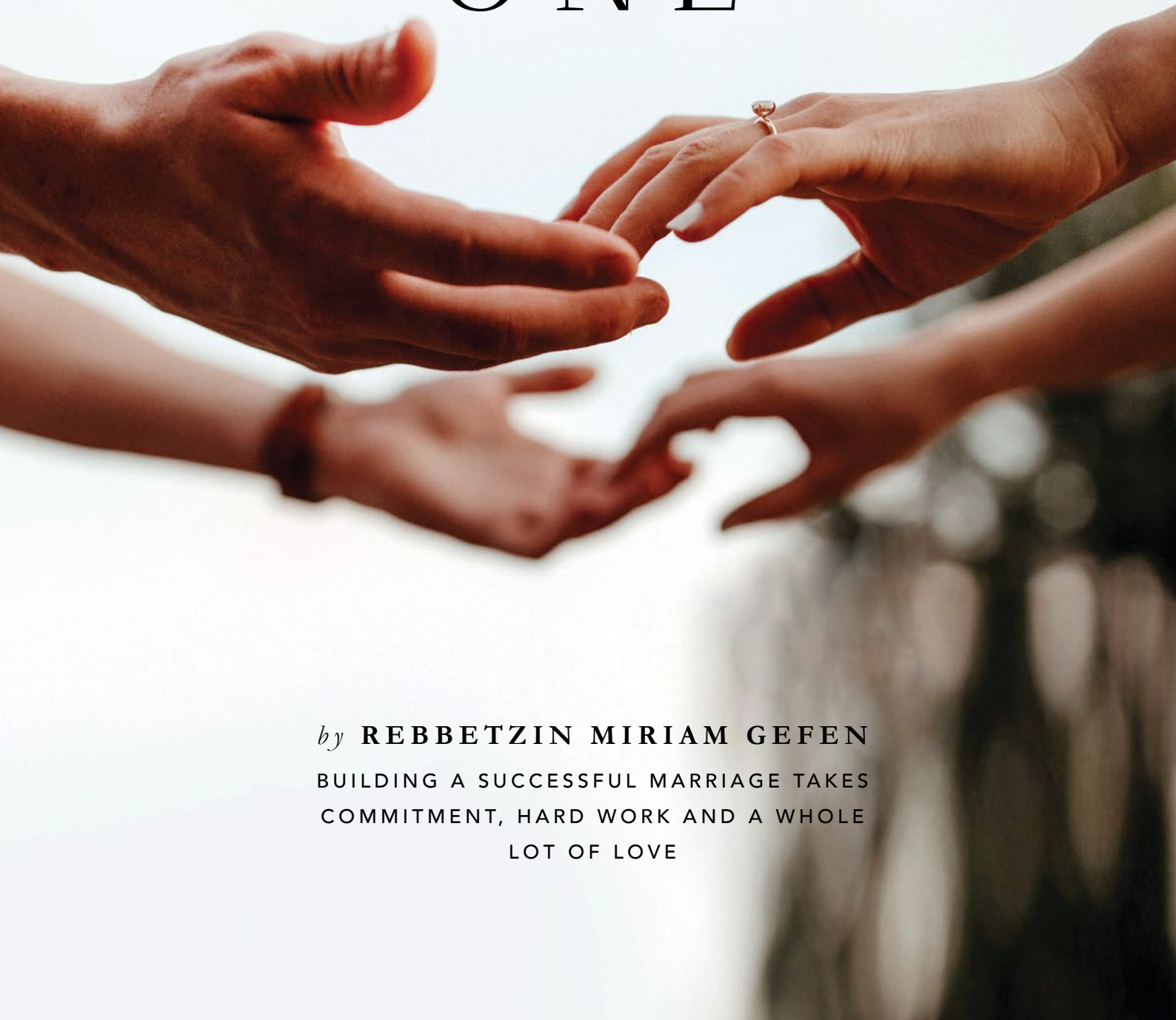
What have been some of the highlights you have been privy to witnessing while helping people in your 13 years as a psychotherapist?

It is very rewarding to see individuals or couples making progress through psychotherapy. I am merely the facilitator - the individual or couple needs to do the work by reflecting on their stumbling blocks in the past that prevent them from moving forward. It is so wonderful to be privy to the way individuals and couples can turn their lives around, recognise abusive relationships, take charge, and evolve to become more contented individuals, with a positive outlook on life and the ability to establish healthy relationships, not only with their partners but also with other family members, friends and colleagues.



Charlotte Philippsohn moved to the UK in 1988 after completing a degree in Economics and Communication Science in Munich. She holds an Advanced Diploma in Psychotherapy and Counselling from Regents college, has completed several courses at Tavistock and is BACP registered. Born in Munich, Charlotte speaks German and understands Yiddish. She previously worked in the UK as a registered representative of the stock exchange and takes painting classes to express her artistic side.

WHEN TWO BECOME ONE



by **REBBETZIN MIRIAM GEFEN**

**BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE TAKES
COMMITMENT, HARD WORK AND A WHOLE
LOT OF LOVE**



The building block of a strong Jewish identity, and emotionally and spiritually healthy children is the Jewish home.

I sit with a young couple. Their wedding day is not far off, and they have a spark and excitement in their eyes, eager ahead of their big day. After chatting for a while, I ask them, “What is the goal of marriage?”

We are more educated than ever before - we spend years studying to be successful in our jobs. We are well-travelled - we research, Google, look up on TripAdvisor, and speak to friends before going anywhere. And we have access to anything and everything that we might need in our lives. Yet we make little or no preparations for *this* crucial part of our lives. We just throw ourselves off the plane with no parachute, no training and no instructor, and we get lots of broken bones and bruises on the way. Often when you ask someone to explain the goal of marriage – they don’t know the answer, and sometimes they have been married for years. In our society, we lack education when it comes to marriage, and there is a huge amount of miseducation.

It’s incredible to be able to look into Judaism and see what it says about marriage. The whole Torah opens with this incredible relationship - with the beginning of humanity. It is relevant and speaks to us. We are talking about Adam and Chava, and we are told something fascinating: they were created as one. Male and female connected on every level. This androgynous being was connected back-to-back with dual faces. Hashem then splits them, and He tells them, as two separate beings, that they should become like one flesh. Because they were originally created as one man and woman, they have the capacity to reach that level of oneness. That is the goal of a relationship. The goal and challenge of marriage is to recreate Adam and Chava’s wholeness to the extent possible for two physically separate beings.

As an Aish educator, I work with students and young professionals in Manchester. Our works starts with students when we meet them in schools and on university campuses and continues all the way through to setting up their own Jewish homes. I don’t believe in just helping Jews to meet and leaving them there, but rather I help them through the process of building a Jewish home. The building block of a strong Jewish identity, and emotionally and spiritually healthy children is the Jewish home. That is why I feel so passionate about sharing the Jewish perspective of marriage and the beauty of the divine system for family living.

I absolutely love learning with a bride before her big day - before she embarks on the next stage of her journey. I feel passionate about filling the void in marriage education, so we spend time discussing the goal of marriage, practical steps to achieve that goal, dispelling the many myths about Jewish marriage and

discussing the crucial values that are inherent in building a strong, beautiful Jewish home.

Relationships are difficult - the deeper the relationship, the more difficult it is. When Rosie called me, asking if she could come chat, I could hear something was up. She came and told me how, when she and her husband were dating, there was excitement, fun and passion. Now, a few years down the line and two kids later, the spark has gone, and they don’t spend any time together. The last straw was when she was juggling work, kids and all her many other responsibilities, he got really upset with her. She didn’t know what had happened and how the connection between them had been lost.

When we hit challenging moments in marriage, one common knee-jerk reaction is to wonder, “Did I marry the wrong person?” But typically, the problem is not that we didn’t *find* the right person. Rather, we’re not *being* the right person. Being the right person means that we’re committed to learning how to love the person we married.

Marriage is not just pleasure or convenience, as that is nothing compared to the depth we can achieve. As humans, we want a quick fix, but successful marriages don’t just happen on their own. Couples don’t just meet and live happily ever after. Marriage is the most beautiful relationship, but it requires work – a lot of it. In marriage we have to move from the concept of ‘me’ to ‘we’. This is the journey to oneness. The goal of marriage is to achieve oneness, and to build something bigger than ourselves; to build a home that is a sacred space for growth, love and connection to God. We have to be completely, 100% committed to the goal.

Rosie was committed to bringing the enthusiasm and spark back into their marriage as was her husband, but they just weren’t sure how to go about it. So often when we are dating, we make such

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*Love is not just a feeling,
it's a verb. Love is created
when we act lovingly*

an effort to go to fun places, do interesting things and spend time alone together. What often ends up happening, once people settle into their busy lives and especially once children come along, is that they don't ever spend time together in that same way, just having fun together and enjoying each other's company.

A marriage is not just roommates. Do something that's fun – something that makes you laugh together. So often the time with our spouse feels full of logistics and practicalities – running house, bills, kids etc. That's all necessary but we mustn't lose the focus – building that oneness through enjoying each other's company. Let's not lose each other – we have to make a conscious effort to reconnect. In marriage we are either building an upward spiral or going on a downward spiral. We can transform our spirals. When we are connecting less, we are communicating less and that leads to conflict.

Under the Chuppah, a couple is blessed, “Be joyful, be happy, beloved friends”. We can understand “beloved friends” to mean “friends who love each other”. That expression defines the relationship. It says friends first and “who love each other” second. Friends first, then lovers. Love is not just a feeling, it's a verb. Love is created when we act lovingly.

I would like to share with you four of my top tips to practically work to take your relationship from good to great:

1. WHO'S IN CHARGE?

No-one! You are equal partners. We have to work together as friends and lovers. There are many issues in marriage that need to be negotiated. It could be small things like what colour to paint the walls or what cereal to buy... negotiation is inevitable. We have to be able to negotiate without giving commands.

2. APPRECIATION IS ONE OF THE TOOLS THAT BOND.

The work of marriage is to peel away at what you take for granted until you reach a point in time that you value all the wonderful things your spouse does, and you become aware of them and are grateful. You wake up next to your spouse and you feel the luckiest person in the world – because of all the great things that you have.

3. RESPECT, RESPECT, RESPECT!

Every single person in society needs to feel respected. The real test is being able to respect someone whose flaws we know, like our spouse. Respect is the foundation for a successful marriage. A big part of a successful marriage is in the myriad small details – showing respect in the daily, mundane activities.

4. BE TOLERANT AND FORGIVING

A marriage is different to any other relationship because it is continuous and constant – you are always around each other. It's 24/7, you are never on a break from your marriage. A marriage isn't about rights and demands. It's about working together through the issues of life. Just as we recognise that we are a work in progress and we are far from perfect, we need to accept and tolerate our spouse. We need to learn to be tolerant, forgiving and to look the other way.

We spend so long looking for the right person and not being the right person. There is a saying – “to be the change you wish to see in the world”. I believe this is true to marriage as well – Instead of trying to change your partner, be the change you wish to see in your relationship.



Rebbetzin Miriam Gefen grew up in London. After studying and living in Israel, Miriam moved to Manchester with her husband Zvi and their children to join the Aish Manchester team. Miriam is passionate about helping others apply the ancient wisdom of the Torah to their modern lives. Her greatest satisfaction comes from teaching women to learn about the vital elements needed for building a Jewish home, including the beautiful mitzvot related to Family Purity. She has infused a deep appreciation for Shalom Bayit (marital peace) in the many women she has taught.

LEOPOLDSTADT

THE OLIVIER AWARD-WINNING PLAY ON JEWISH IDENTITY

by **RABBI MICHAEL POLLAK**

**TOM STOPPARD PROVOKES POWERFUL
QUESTIONS ON WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A JEW**

What a story! A young Jewish boy – only just aware of his heritage – is rushed away from his home in the face of the impending Nazi invasion. He travels halfway around the world to Singapore just in time to flee once more – this time fearful of a Japanese invasion. Safe in India, our young hero learns of his father's death onboard a battleship bombed by Emperor Hirohito's Air Force. His mother remarries. This time it is to a British Army Major. The major takes the now 9-year-old boy and his mother to his fourth country of residence – England. As befits the quintessential Englishman, the army major gives his stepson the perfect English education explaining, "to be born an Englishman is to have drawn first prize in the lottery of life."

The metamorphosis was complete. Jewish Tomas Streussler was now the prep school boarder, Tom Stoppard. He spoke English almost like a native. He was always to retain a strange enunciation of his vowels which betrayed his Czechoslovakian roots, but Tom Stoppard was reborn English. As for his Jewish antecedents, it would be another 50 years before they featured in his life. In the early 1990s, with the fall of communism, Stoppard discovered that all four of his grandparents had been

Jewish and had died in Terezin, Auschwitz and other camps, along with three of his mother's sisters.

It would be another 30 years until Stoppard, by now Britain's greatest living playwright, would put any part of this story on stage. In *Leopoldstadt*, Stoppard borrows from moments in his life, dawning realisations, painful awakenings and the Rise and Fall of Austro-Hungarian Jewry to populate the story of one family living in Vienna. It's absolutely not the story of the Streussler family, but the unmistakable presence of Tom Stoppard infuses the story. Questions of Jewish identity are asked through the prism of his strange and belated identification with his Jewish genes.

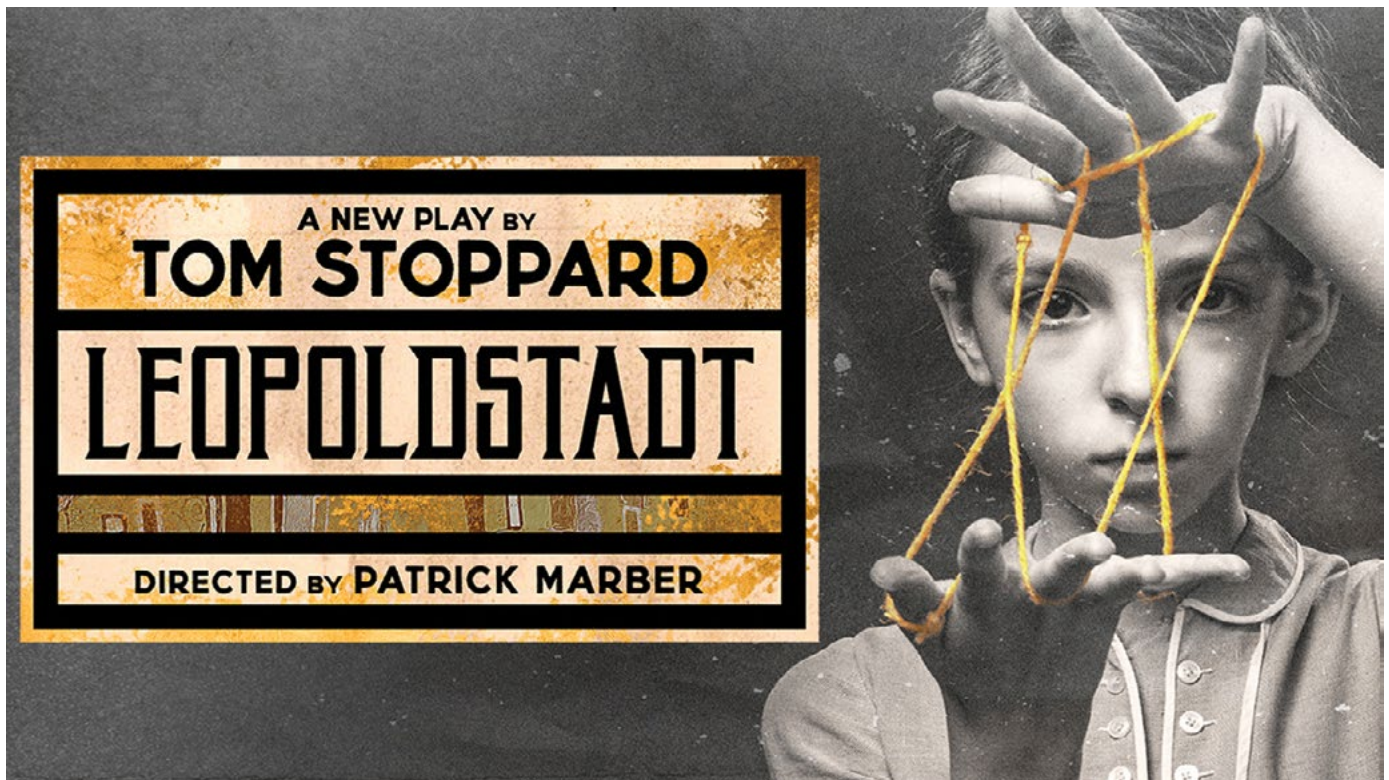
What is it to be a Jew?

Does being Jewish matter?

Is it easily cast off?

Can one easily become Jewish?

All these questions can be answered from a Jewish perspective, but the play also investigates how the world of Catholic Austria views them. Stoppard puts a spectrum of anti-Semites on the



stage who reflect on these questions with varying degrees of contempt; with different measures (but always a large dose) of that hatred which will eventually fuel mankind's greatest ever inhumanity.

One of the great difficulties of narrative drama about the Holocaust is that we know the final scene – a lot of dead Jews. You would expect, therefore, that dramatic suspense cannot be achieved. Stoppard, however, is rightly lauded for creating interest in unlikely characters. He got us to spend three hours watching the fate of two 'extras' from Hamlet unfold in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. A decade later in the 70's he persuaded us to care about an unbearably verbose Lenin, and a whacky Tristan Zara intellectually duelling with James Joyce. And so on. In every decade he has put ideas on stage personified in characters we worry about, fear for and celebrate with. We don't care too much about his characters, but we can't wait to watch the fate of the ideas they portray.

In this way we wait to see the fate of the characters of *Leopoldstadt* - What happened to the one who married a Christian? What about the one who became a Christian? All the while Patrick Marber, the Jewish director, drives the play forward. A clock whose ticks get louder and louder as the action unfolds. A stage set which initially reconstructs a luscious

drawing room in *Leopoldstadt*, Vienna's Jewish Quarter, is slowly undressed, until by the last scene the stage is just about people. Culture and context have been wiped away and we see human beings - ordinary people trying to make sense of ineffable evil. Marber grew up in an observant Jewish home but now his Jewishness is less obvious. Coincidentally, the producer is Sonia Friedman, whose Jewish upbringing is the mirror opposite of Stoppard's. Friedman, who was brought up by a Jewish father and an English mother, brings another perspective to the play's themes of the nature of identity.

Whilst all three – Stoppard, Marber and Friedman – have an intense interest in their Jewishness, none of them wish to roll back the process of secularisation and assimilation which is portrayed on the stage. What then, is it to be Jewish? As a final flourish at the end of what might be his final play, Stoppard puts himself on stage in the character of a young great-grandson of the family who went to live in England and thus avoided the Holocaust. Gradually, like Stoppard himself, he learns of the fate of his Austrian relatives. What does this mean for him – the exemplary Englishman who has some Jewish roots? It makes him sad, but like Stoppard himself, this Jewishness starts and finishes there. A special relationship with death and the dead. Nothing more.



Rabbi Michael Pollak is an educational consultant for PaJeS and is the Head of the Philosophy Dept at JFS. He is a graduate of Chevron Yeshiva in Jerusalem and studied philosophy at the LSE. He has held a series of communal positions and is the Daf Yomi teacher at Ner Yisrael Community Centre.

LEXI HUDALY: A STAR IN THE MAKING

We chatted to 10-year-old Lexi Hudaly, who made her debut on the West End this year, starring as Sally / Mimi in Tom Stoppard's *Leopoldstadt*

1: HOW DID YOU LAND A ROLE IN THE PLAY?

I am part of the Sylvia Young Agency, and they organised the audition. I was nervous, but very confident at the audition and I'm just lucky that they liked me and offered me the amazing opportunity to be a part of the show.

2: WHAT ROLE DID YOU PLAY? AND WHAT DOES THIS CHARACTER MEAN TO YOU?

I actually play two different characters. The first is a child named Sally and then during the play Sally becomes an adult, so I also play her daughter named Mimi. When I am Sally, it is set before the war during happy times - a Christmas scene and a Pesach Seder which were fun - so those were good times. When I play Mimi, it's during the Holocaust and so it's mainly quite scary and sad scenes. However, I enjoyed playing both characters because I got to imagine myself living in a different place, during both the good and bad times.

3: WHAT DID YOU FEEL PLAYING THE ROLE OF MIMI AND ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST?

When I played Mimi, I felt sad to see how Jewish people were treated and especially to think about how scared the children must have been. It was such a horrible time, but having the opportunity to be in a play about it and spend time thinking about it was a very meaningful experience.

4: WHAT MESSAGE DOES THE PLAY HAVE FOR CHILDREN OF TODAY?

I think more than anything else it taught me how grateful we should all be, especially since we don't have to go through what they did. I also think it's very important to show children the history of Judaism, to make Jewish children proud of where they've come from and non-Jews sensitive to how badly the Jews were treated, not so long ago.



5: WHAT DID THE PLAY MAKE YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR JUDAISM?

I think I appreciate how special it is to be Jewish because our ancestors had to go through so much and fought so hard to make sure our beautiful traditions survived. I am very grateful to be part of it all and most of all I am proud and will never be embarrassed to call myself Jewish.

6: DO YOU THINK ANTI-SEMITISM EXISTS TODAY?

I hadn't even heard that word before, so I think that is a good sign! My mum explained what it is and I think that I'm lucky that I have never seen it in my life. But I think that it probably does still exist because what I learned from the play is that people can be very easy to convince, even if it means they are hating something they don't know anything about.

7: HOW DO YOU THINK THAT WE CAN BREAK THE BELIEFS THAT PEOPLE HAVE AROUND JEWS?

I think that Jewish people need to be proud of who they are and their history and not be scared. This play helps people understand that Jews are just normal people and hopefully that is a lesson everyone in our time can learn.

Lexi Hudaly is 10 years old. She loves netball, running, drama and art. Lexi attends the Sylvia Young Theatre School where she learns singing and drama. Lexi loves helping people and it is her dream to become a successful actress or singer when she grows up.





KEEPING **HOLOCAUST** **EDUCATION** ALIVE

by SHIRA DRUION

SHIRA DRUION CHATS TO SEARLE BRAJTMAN FROM
YAD VASHEM ABOUT THE ROLE OF HOLOCAUST
EDUCATION IN TODAY'S WORLD

1: What is the importance of Holocaust education?

As time progresses and the generation of eyewitnesses dwindles, Holocaust education is key to helping Yad Vashem to build a better tomorrow by ensuring that the atrocities of the Holocaust are not relegated to the annals of history. To quote the late Nobel Laureate Professor Eli Wiesel, "If we (the survivors) decided

to tell the tale, it is because we wanted the world to be a better world - just a better world, and learn and remember..."

Today's climate of rising antisemitism, Holocaust distortion, trivialisation and even denial, provides a strong argument for prioritising education about the Shoah. The Holocaust provides the ultimate paradigm for what can happen when antisemitism or other forms of

hate rise to the forefront. Today, with so much uninformed discourse taking place, it is vital that students and educators are equipped with both solid historical knowledge and the tools to fight against antisemitic sentiment. Educating people about the Holocaust and the evils that were perpetrated against the Jewish people can contribute directly to this goal.

Yad Vashem has been pioneering Holocaust education pedagogy for decades. In the early 90s, we established the International School for Holocaust Studies on our Jerusalem campus, and today we work with some 60 countries training educators to teach about the Holocaust. Our educational specialists are encouraged by the ongoing approaches and interest in Holocaust education. In modern classrooms, where it is becoming increasingly difficult to hold pupils' attention, it is not a given that students will want to learn in-depth about something that happened 80 years ago, or that history teachers will choose to focus on Holocaust history. And yet, they do. Yad Vashem's pedagogical philosophy - which we are constantly re-adapting to suit modern teaching methods - rests on three main pillars: learning about the Jewish world before the Holocaust (that which was lost); the history of the Holocaust, imparted in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner; and the return to life of those who survived.

Personal testimonies - of those who survived and those who did not - are at the core of our teaching. This philosophy is also evident for those who visit Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum in Jerusalem. Creating empathy and connection with what was lost helps learners develop a true understanding of what happened, and this is true for all participants in our educational programs, whether they are teachers from China, Israeli soldiers, Ministers of Education from Latin America, Jewish students in the UK, campus Rabbis from the US, or federal judges from Germany. For our diverse audiences, our educational experts continue to work with our scholars and archivists to create a range of resources in dozens of languages to make Holocaust education accessible and engaging.

2: What can be done to improve Holocaust education?

While Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies is internationally acknowledged as the gold standard in Holocaust education, we are constantly seeking ways in which to develop tools that are more relevant to modern educational settings. There are many factors to consider - dwindling attention spans of students, 'smart' virtual classrooms in many countries, and making the history engaging for students in countries where the local narrative focuses on the Holocaust / antisemitism in a way that may engender fatigue, cynicism or distortion. Most crucially, we are facing a world without survivors to share their stories directly with the students.



Description: Men, women and children on the Auschwitz-Birkenau arrival platform known as the "ramp". The Jews were removed from the deportation trains onto the ramp where they faced a selection process - most of them were sent immediately to their deaths, while others were sent to slave labor.

*Source: An album known as "The Auschwitz Album" of photos taken by SS photographers in Auschwitz-Birkenau during the arrival of a transport of Hungarian Jews, including on 26/5/1944.
Yad Vashem Archives*

For years, meeting a survivor was the most effective way to impress Holocaust history and empathy on student groups. Finding ways to replicate this in the absence of the survivors themselves remains our greatest challenge. We have created explanatory films which incorporate testimonies, infographics, YouTube clips and animated shorts for children - but with methods and standards of teaching constantly shifting, we have to keep our finger on the pulse.

Prior to the pandemic, Yad Vashem had already established itself as the global pioneer for intensive online courses and webinars as a vehicle to enrich Holocaust study - reaching literally millions across the globe. When we could no longer welcome international visitors in Jerusalem, these online efforts have become the focus of our work, and we continue to integrate new tools and methods. Even once we can return to in-person teaching, we will continue to develop more ways to maintain massive online educational outreach.

It is also important to mention that we keep up to date with the surveys carried out around the world that indicate the glaring gaps in Holocaust knowledge among students. Together with feedback from our network of graduates across the globe, who report on which methods best resonate in their classrooms, we do our best to address these challenges head-on.

3: How does Holocaust education have a positive impact on Jewish and non-Jewish communities?

By focusing on the fates of individual victims and survivors, Holocaust education takes this almost-impossible-to-fathom 6 million number and breaks it down into stories of individual, recognisable people rather than mere statistics, within the context of their times. The moral issues are enormous in terms of decision-making, consequences, empathy and courage; and delving into them often provides role-models for us all.

Educators are at the front line of the fight against hatred. Most of the many thousands of educators trained by us each year are not Jewish, and during their decades-long careers they will inform millions of students about the Holocaust. (We did the maths!) We are proud that Yad Vashem's diverse graduate network, spread across 60 countries - with their respective social challenges and national narratives - serve as ambassadors for educating against hate, combatting antisemitism, intolerance, racism and xenophobia.

4: Please share some of the highlights that have moved you during your time with Yad Vashem

First and foremost, hearing personal stories from the survivors themselves is an experience for which there is no substitute. One such story stands out for me. It was mindboggling to learn that non-Jews were willing to hand over Jews to the Germans, knowing that they would be murdered - just to get a kilogram of sugar as a reward!

I am also always astounded when I go to Yad Vashem's Children's Memorial and hear the name, age and country of origin of each child victim. I will never be able to comprehend how human beings could murder children, sometimes by throwing them into pits of open flames.

The Official State Ceremony for Yom Hashoah held annually at Yad Vashem in the presence of dignitaries, including Israel's President, Prime Minister and others, is an incredibly poignant and moving event. The highlight of this ceremony is the torch lighting by the six Holocaust survivors and the short film telling their emotional stories that brings tears to all. At the conclusion of the ceremony, with the six memorial torches burning, Hatikvah is sung, and I am invariably too choked up to sing the first stanza.

This inspirational message of life and rebirth is what we instil in those who visit Yad Vashem. At the end of the Holocaust History Museum, as you exit the long corridor that has taken you through the chronology of the events of the Holocaust, you emerge into a view of the future, gazing out over the hills of Jerusalem and you can truly understand how critical our work is for our children and future generations.

5: Please share some of the disappointments of your time there

The pandemic! It has been very difficult to see our Campus so empty for so long when we were used to having over a million visitors a year.

6: Do you think it is important for the average Jewish student to visit Poland to bear witness to the atrocities of the Holocaust?

I inherited a letter to my predecessor from the then-President of a major Jewish museum who had led a mission to Yad Vashem after first visiting Poland that read: "After 8 days in Poland, I thought Yad Vashem would have little to add. How wrong I was." I believe that the quality of the education that the student receives about the subject matter is more important than seeing the actual sites of the atrocities. Certainly, there is merit to visiting the sites where the atrocities were perpetrated, but only if the visits are accompanied by comprehensive explanations and preparation and provides the visitors with resources to process what they have witnessed. So, I would answer that visiting authentic sites can be very powerful, and that there is great value in Holocaust education, irrespective of the medium, if it is taught at a high level.

7: Do you think Holocaust education can play a role in fighting assimilation?

The name of our organization 'Yad Vashem', from the passage in Isaiah, means that we provide a "memorial (place) and a name" to those Jewish men, women and children murdered at the hand of the Nazi Germans and their collaborators. This remains our focus.

As an organization with many ties across the world and the Jewish world, we have of course noted that many large-scale surveys carried out in recent years have indicated that the Holocaust is a central facet in the identity of a large percentage of Jews, even decades after it took place. We hope that our resources on the Shoah can continue to educate, engage and inspire all those who seek them out.

8: What new projects does Yad Vashem have in the pipeline?

Yad Vashem houses the largest collections of Holocaust-related art, artefacts and archival materials in the world. We are currently constructing the new Moshal Shoah Legacy Campus that will contain as its major feature the Shapell Collections Centre, which will store and preserve these collections in the best way known to mankind. The Moshal Campus will also include our refurbished Joseph Wilf Curatorial Centre, the renovated David and Ruth Mitzner Auditorium and temporary exhibition lobby and the Family and Children's Exhibition Gallery.

We are also completing the Yad Vashem Holocaust Remembrance and Heroism Education Centre at the Ariel Sharon IDF Training Campus in the Negev. This Centre will inform tens of thousands of IDF troops about the Shoah and increase their motivation to defend the Jewish State and People. To quote the previous Commander of the base, "when you train a soldier in morality you don't just get a better soldier, you get a better citizen".

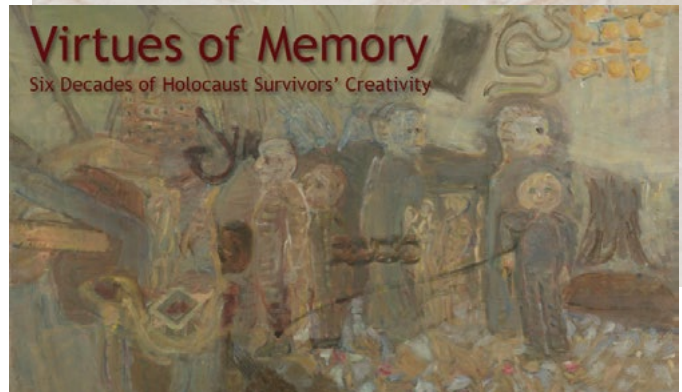
9: What have been some of the most powerful exhibits at Yad Vashem?

'*Virtues of Memory*' was an exhibition of Survivor Art that we had about a decade ago. I suppose it can be described as Art Therapy for Survivors. Art is an incredibly powerful medium for expressing emotion, and this exhibition conveyed the terrible suffering which was experienced. It was a truly humbling glimpse into their experiences.

A subsequent exhibition entitled "*I Am My Brother's Keeper – 50 Years of Honouring Righteous Among the Nations*" was inspirational.



Shira Druon obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in English, psychology and education. She then trained as a speech and drama teacher through the Trinity College of London. She is an experienced journalist, the former editor of YALLA magazine and the executive editor of Perspectives, the magazine of Aish UK. She has been an educator for many years, teaching students from nursery through to university, where she lectured on communication and writing skills. She now teaches English and runs her own drama company called Dramatix, where she teaches a broad age range of students. Druon is passionate about women's education. She gives a weekly *parsha shiur*, as well as other *shiurim*, and runs women's programmes in the community.



These incredibly brave non-Jews risked their lives and the lives of their families to act morally, for no material reward.

What an incredible example to all of mankind! Details of both these exhibitions (and others) can be found on our website at: www.yadvashem.org/exhibitions.htm

While not a physical exhibit per se, I was also moved by the IRemember Wall in 6 languages, which Yad Vashem implemented and which Facebook promoted. Hundreds of thousands of social network users continue to become part of this project on International Holocaust Memorial Day, which is just astounding. You too can join the IRemember wall at: remember.yadvashem.org

By joining the IRemember Wall, your name will be randomly matched to the name of a Holocaust victim from the central database of Shoah victims' names and will appear together on the Wall.

Our Holocaust History Museum is, of course, replete with incredibly powerful exhibits. To get the most out of the experience, I strongly recommend arranging a Yad Vashem-trained guide through our site at www.yadvashem.org/visiting.html

99% of those who carried out the 11 million murders in the Holocaust were never prosecuted.....
They were never even questioned. Why?

GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER(S)



by SHIRA DRUION

WE GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH DOCUMENTARY
FILMMAKER, **DAVID NICHOLAS WILKINSON**, ABOUT
HIS RECENT FILM ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST, WHERE HE EXPLORES
WHY SO MANY WAR CRIMINALS WENT UNPUNISHED

Almost 1 million people in 22 countries carried out the unprovoked murder of 11 million innocent men, women and children.

99% of those responsible were never prosecuted; most were never even questioned.

The Allies knew what their crime was.

The Allies knew where a great many of the murderers could be found - Germany, Austria, Italy, the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, and numerous countries in South America.

The Allies had an endless wealth of evidence to present to the courts.

The Allies unanimously agreed to prosecute those responsible when they drew up The London Agreement in August 1945. But, after the late 1940s, these very same Allies did almost nothing.

Why?

1: Why did you make the movie *Getting Away with Murder(s)*?

Like most documentary filmmakers, potentially interesting ideas occur to me all the time. Every week I have two or three ideas,

99.9% of which I discard because either they're not very good, or somebody else has made something similar, or I just don't have enough passion for the subject matter to sustain me for the long hard slog of raising the money and then for the lengthy production. (This stems from the all-too-familiar prospect of being significantly underfunded.)

The idea for *Getting Away with Murder(s)* stayed with me constantly and never went away. I first pitched it to Sir Ronald Harwood back in 2003. He thought it was a terrific concept and so I went in search of backing. For whatever reason, not one broadcaster anywhere in the world thought that there was a film or television series in the concept: trying to forensically examine why so many of those who took part in grotesque mass murder during the Holocaust were never prosecuted.

Idealistically, I did not want money from any Jewish source. Over the years of my research, I accidentally stumbled across many Holocaust-denying websites. Most of these talk about the "Spielberg lie" and purport that all films made about the Holocaust are produced and/or financed by Jews. As a non-Jew, to counter this obscene misconception, I wanted the funding to

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come from sources that were not Jewish. I thought that was very important. But sadly, I failed in this respect.

Every year, I went to the Sheffield DocFest where I would pitch the project to numerous UK and overseas broadcasters. I never got any sign of the slightest interest. Nothing. That said, there are hundreds of producers in attendance, all pitching multiple ideas, of which only a small fraction will ever see the light of day.

I remember bumping into a TV commissioning editor at DocFest the year after I had originally pitched the idea to him. I asked him if he had changed his mind. He said “no” but admired my tenacity in trying to interest him again, saying, “I don’t understand why you are so passionate about this subject - you’re not Jewish” (an unintentionally pale variation on the “Spielberg lie” comment). I wonder if he would have warmed to the film had I been Jewish?

Curiously, I was subjected to antisemitism on a personal level, which was most unexpected, considering that I am not Jewish. In 2018, I had jumped on board a bus in Tottenham Court Road heading for London King’s Cross station. I nearly always wear a hat and this time it was a large black one, matching in a way my black overcoat. At Goodge Street a man got on, spotted me and came to berate me for what I was doing to the Palestinians. With my white beard, I clearly fitted his image of what a Jew looks like. He was a big man, probably a boxer or bodybuilder. The confrontation was intense, aggressive and frightening – and fear is an emotion I rarely feel. Finally, I got up, told him I was not Jewish (something I regret even now) and went upstairs. He did not follow.

That was not what shocked me. What shocked me was that it was a crowded bus and not one person said a word. He was very loud, and so everyone would have heard his remonstrations. I never thought that in the UK, a bus full of Brits would turn a blind eye to such a bigoted verbal assault. That night I started pre-production on *Getting away with Murder(s)*.

Ultimately around 50% of the finance came from Jewish sources – Peter Briess (a man who had escaped the Nazis as a child), an anonymous source and Michael Slowe. However, the most important of all was Neil Phillips. Not only did he provide money when I really needed it, he also let us film in his house.

During the final editing, I was under significant pressure from my team, key industry people, film festivals and others to cut one hour from the film. Neil was the only person who advised me not to do this. He watched so many variations of the film in various stages of the editing process and never thought about

THE ALLIES UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO PROSECUTE THOSE RESPONSIBLE WHEN THEY DREW UP THE LONDON AGREEMENT IN AUGUST 1945. BUT, AFTER THE LATE 1940S, THESE VERY SAME ALLIES DID ALMOST NOTHING. WHY?

it too long. He even showed his children the film. None of the other backers were as kindly conscientious. The film had around 25 reviews in the press. All good. And not one of them mentioned the length as being in a way negative.

The main reason for my making the film, however, was that no one had touched upon this aspect of the Holocaust before. I realised that if I didn’t document this visually, it was extremely likely that nobody else ever would. That notion compelled me to make the film.

2: What are the most important lessons that humanity should take out of the Holocaust?

We must look for signs of such barbarism happening again and aim to stamp it out before it grows into something uncontrollably dangerous. Throughout history, people have risen to power by telling their discontented followers that the reason that their lives are not more enriched and easier is because of “them, over there”; blaming all the ills afflicting their country on one selected (and generally completely innocent) group of people. This is a disgusting ploy that is likely to continue to find supporters throughout the coming ages. We must always point this out whenever we see it happening.

As soon as Hitler came to power, he suppressed, one way or another, all the journalists, writers, playwrights, film makers, thinkers and educators who were opposed to him and his ideologies. These are the same people in many countries around the world today who are likewise being silenced. We who live in free democracies must do all we can to help the many oppose the power-hungry criminal few.



The train entrance to Auschwitz- Birkenau

GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER(S)

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3: Do you think antisemitism still exists in the way that it did during the Holocaust, and if so, what can be done to combat it?

What was interesting in making the film was that I had not expected that the recording of antisemitism 80 years ago would throw up antisemitism today, and in my own country. When I set up a semi-successful crowdfunding campaign and advertised this on Facebook, I received an uncomfortable welter of antisemitic messages and posts which were not only shocking, but also a great surprise to me. My late brother was black. The racism I saw in the 60s and 70s was instant and vocal. But I had not before directly witnessed and experienced antisemitism.

Over the years, the film was rejected by UK broadcasters. In rejecting the film, some of the language that was used would never have been used about other minorities. I was asked once by a representative of one of Britain's leading broadcasters, "Don't you think the Jews have had enough about the Holocaust?" Had I approached him with another subject, would this person have said, "David, don't you think the African Americans have had enough about slavery?"

I had heard whispers but without any firm confirmation that two cinemas would not screen *Getting Away with Murder(s)* because of the treatment of the Palestinians by the Israelis. Apparently, their refusal to take the film was their silent protest against Israel. I decided to confront this rumour head on with one of these

exhibitors, and so wrote to the man in charge and copied one of his main funding sources. I had expected a reply refuting this saying, "David, it's absolute nonsense. Somebody is just trying to cause trouble by saying such a thing. We just didn't take the film because we didn't like it." Instead, silence. No reply whatsoever, which, for me, answered the question. This sums up the problem with antisemitism. The person I confronted did not take my complaint seriously. Why on Earth not? It was a legitimate complaint.

I have had the Palestinian argument put to me before when trying to employ individuals or facilities companies. I find this odd. How is boycotting a film that highlights the injustice to 6 million Jews (and incidentally 5 million other people) connected to a country that did not even exist when these atrocities took place? The answer, of course, is that in both cases, Jews are at the centre of the discussion. This, therefore, can only be seen as antisemitism and nothing whatsoever to do with Palestine.

4: Although you yourself are not Jewish, what motivated you to create this movie when so many would rather not tackle these issues head on?

As I stated before, my motivation was precisely because I thought if I did not make the film, I suspected that nobody else would. And, to me, it is important to highlight injustice wherever and whenever it has occurred.

I have used up my savings and borrowed from the bank, as well as from my wife, to make the film. (My last two films, which I also financed mostly myself, were sold overseas by a distribution company that went bankrupt last year. Only then did I discover that they had sold the films to a significant number of countries without keeping me informed. And I never got a penny back.)

Therefore, to make the film was in many ways foolish. I might, instead, have come up with a cooking or gardening documentary series for which I could not only have been paid handsomely but would probably have made a significant profit. But there would have been no satisfaction in that. I had started the film and I just had to finish it, no matter what.

Many in the audiences around the country have seen me as a moral crusader. I am not sure about that. At the end of the day, I am just a filmmaker telling an important story the best way I can.

I am often asked why I think that Jewish filmmakers never tackled this subject. As a non-Jew I am still very angry about the lack of justice. I think the answer is that Jewish filmmakers may have found it far too painful a task for them.

5: What feedback have you had from the film?

The feedback has been extraordinary. I have attended 30 Q&A screenings thus far in England, Wales and Scotland. At almost every screening, there is someone present who had family members murdered in the **Holocaust**. Each of them has a story, which, although on a similar theme, is specific to them.

So many Jews have said that they are grateful that a non-Jew has told this story. Many said that if the film had been made by a Jew, then the story and findings would be questioned. This goes back to the "*Spielberg lie*" mentioned previously.

Outside the key metropolitan areas in places like Wisbech, Wotton-under-Edge, Penrith, Stirling, Uckfield and the like, most of the audience is non-Jewish, and they learn so much. This I like. After all, I made the film not for Jews - they know the truth - but for everyone else.



David Nicholas Wilkinson is the director, producer, co-writer and presenter of *The First Film*, *Postcards from the 48%* and *Getting away with Murder(s)*, and an executive producer of *How to Change the World*. He has produced over 20 documentaries and distributed several others, including Alex Gibney's *Zero Days*. He started his career as an actor in 1970, but in 1982 pioneered the Reverse Co-Production with the BBC for *To the Lighthouse*, and together with Kenneth Branagh effectively became the first true independent producer to work with the BBC. He gave Anthony Hopkins the chance to direct with *Dylan Thomas: Return Journey*. Wilkinson has also distributed 120 films in the UK and Ireland in the cinema, on video/DVD, to television and online.



David Wilkinson (director) in front of the infamous gate in Auschwitz I.

GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER(S)

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WE TOUCHED BASE WITH NEIL PHILLIPS, WHO SUPPORTED THE PRODUCTION OF THE FILM, AND ASKED HIM A FEW QUESTIONS:

1: Why did you feel the film was worthy of being supported?

I met David when he came to describe the content of the movie to me. I didn't know the answers to many of the questions that he posed. The passion and enthusiasm he had for this project was something incredibly rare to see amongst those people who were not themselves affected by the Holocaust, particularly at this time in our lives where society is becoming increasingly more polarised and Jewish people are finding themselves on the receiving end of so much latent antisemitism.

2: Do you think anti-Semitism is an issue that we continue to grapple with today, and if so what impact can films like this have on the status quo?

Antisemitism is more prevalent right now than at any other time in my life. It's happening through various channels - one is via BDS and Israel, while another is just blatant Jew-baiting and Jew hatred. Antisemitic tropes are becoming more commonplace in today's

societal subcultures. Every solution to every problem starts with dialogue and education, and if we want to change people's opinions, we must educate them. Remember this is the first period we are living through where there are few survivors who can give a first-hand account of the atrocities that were perpetrated against Jews and non-Jews on the basis of ethnicity or beliefs.

3: Do you think that in the UK, more should be done to bring perpetrators of anti-Semitism to justice?

I was shocked at how little was done in the UK, and I think most people in the UK would be equally horrified to see that their many post-war governments actually turned a blind eye to the perpetrators of this evil. It made it feel personal. As if I could have done something later, by insisting that the government deal with these issues - and yet again there was silence.

4: In your opinion, are the arts a good forum to educate people about these important issues?

The arts are a very effective way of influencing cultures which otherwise may not be receptive to such a message. Film is also a mechanism that can be widely distributed for maximum effect.



Neil Phillips is the Founding Partner, CEO and Co-CIO of Glen Point. Prior to founding Glen Point in September 2015, Neil was a Partner and Senior Portfolio Manager at BlueBay Asset Management LLP, which he joined in December 2005. Neil worked for Lehman Brothers Europe as Head of Local Market Trading from 2004-05. From 2002-04 he worked for Morgan Stanley as an Emerging Markets Trader, and from 1999-2001 he was the Managing Director for Corp Capital Bank in Johannesburg, South Africa. Prior to that he was an Emerging Markets Trader at Credit Suisse Financial Products (1995-99). He received a Bachelor of Commerce (1990), majoring in Mathematics and Accounting, an honours degree in Accounting (1991) and a higher diploma in Company Law (1994), all from the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, and is a Chartered Accountant.



Auschwitz guide Łukasz Lipiński with director David Wilkinson

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Auschwitz survivor Kitty Hart-Maxon

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Benjamin Ferencz the last living prosecutor to give an eye witness account of the Nuremberg trials.

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Jens Rommel Nazi crimes Prosecutor

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Malka Levine – Holocaust survivor and one of just 30 out of 25,000 to survive a massacre in the Ukraine.

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Dr Dan Plesch author of HUMAN RIGHTS AFTER HITLER

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Mary Fulbrook is Professor of German History at UCL London and the award-winning author of RECKONINGS and A SMALL TOWN NEAR AUSCHWITZ.

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EXPERIENCE POLAND

by **RABBI ZVI GEFEN**

EVERY YEAR, AISH MANCHESTER TAKES A GROUP OF YEAR-12 STUDENTS ON A TOUR TO POLAND TO CONNECT WITH THE PAST

We landed in Poland on October 27th 2021 with a group of 70 students from Manchester.

It was good to be back. Good? How can you say it's good to be in a land filled with horror, murder, extermination camps, and death to millions of Jews?

Before I answer that question. Let me rewind to the first time I visited Poland in 2013. I felt I had to ask my grandmother's permission before going to Poland. She wouldn't step back into the country that

had caused so much untold suffering to her and her family. Safta told me, "Go back, and walk proudly through the streets of Poland. Make sure they see that you are a proud Jew." That is the experience that is created by being in Poland with Jewish groups. The Jews are back.

Five years ago, when we were in Poland, we cleaned out a shul that had been in ruins for 70 years. When the shul was in better order, we began to dance and sing "Am Yisrael Chai". Neighbours of the

shul heard the singing. They began looking out of their windows, coming out of their homes and taking pictures of this Jewish group. We were back. They probably thought that after what the Germans had done there would never be any Jews left, or that those that were left would assimilate and want to hide. Yet these Jews were singing and dancing proudly: "The Jewish people live on." Georgia Fine* wrote of her memories that day: "The fact that I, as a young Jew with all my friends and mentors, could be there, shows the dream the



Nazis had was a failure, and that makes me proud to be a Jew.” Rabbi Sacks of blessed memory writes, “There is a profound difference between history and memory. History is *his* story—an event that happened sometime else to someone else. Memory is *my* story—something that happened to me and is part of who I am. History is information. Memory, by contrast, is part of identity. I can study the history of other peoples, cultures and civilisations. They deepen my knowledge and broaden my horizons. But they do not make a claim on me. They are the past as part. Memory is the past as present, as it lives on in me. Without memory there can be no identity.”

Today post-COVID, it is more difficult than ever before to have a survivor join us on an Aish journey to Poland. They have turned to us and asked us to please make sure their stories are not forgotten because what is remembered does not die. The stories that are shared are stories of resilience, of strength, of light over darkness. It’s about the power of the human spirit. It sits and lives inside each and every one of us. Standing in Auschwitz, Madjenek, Belzec, confronts us with questions. Can I live a better version of myself for the sake of the future? How will I continue to live as a Jew?

Alex Levi* wrote, “When the Jews died screaming the Shema in the gas chambers, it shows they never gave up their identity. For me to carry on that identity today couldn’t make me prouder to be a Jew. Another student, Jess Stone* said, “The trip has definitely reconnected me to my Judaism and all the things that matter most in life so I definitely have you to thank for that...” As an educator, I’m always moved by the enormous capacity that the teenagers have to connect deeply to the Holocaust, in this fast-paced world, where information streams more quickly than ever before. It is these immersive experiences to Poland that allows students to reflect on their past and understand that they are the future. It affirms the work and resources that Aish UK is investing to create these memories and moments. Do I have permission to say it’s good to be back in Poland?

Every year, Aish Manchester takes Year-12 students to Poland. Due to COVID they missed out. When COVID restrictions relaxed, we realised that we had to take them *now* as Year-13, before they go to University. People told us, “it’s crazy, its COVID, its risky.” But how could we not? Wasn’t this a risk worth taking? We have another 60 Year-12 students travelling in February in the coming year, and can’t wait to share the experience with them.

**All names have been changed to protect confidentiality*



Rabbi Zvi hails from London and received Rabbinic ordination in Jerusalem under the prestigious programme led by Rabbi Yitzchak Berkowits. In 2014, Rabbi Zvi and his family moved to Whitefield, Manchester, where their home has become a hub of learning and socialising for teens, young professionals and families. He is the Director of the Aish Manchester Branch, teaching in schools, campuses and within the wider community, featuring as a guest speaker and leading groups of students on trips to Poland. His charm and teaching style has allowed him to shine and spread Jewish wisdom to hundreds of students, young families and the community at large. Together with his wife, Rabbi Zvi has helped tens of couples to the Chuppah.

FAR FROM GOLDEN

by ADAM ARNOLD

WALKING A PATH OF BALANCE IN A WORLD OF EXTREMES



Life is full of decisions. And a successful life is all about making enough good decisions in a row. Our Tradition is full of advice on how to do this in many of the specific situations in which we might find ourselves. But there's also one overarching rule that encompasses every choice we encounter yet is little known - and much less observed. It is called 'The Golden Mean' and it was written by the Rambam - the greatest arbiter of what is and what is not proper Jewish behaviour. It focuses on finding and following the middle way.

In the opening of his greatest work, the Mishneh Torah, the Rambam attributes 'The Golden Mean' method back to Chazal and even to Avraham Avinu himself. He says: "We are bidden to walk in the middle paths which are the right and proper ways." This dictum has been made memorable by our Rabbis in the analogy "Between a road of fire and a road of ice, walk in between them - lest you are burned or frozen." This means we should always avoid extreme behaviour, as if our very lives depended upon it. Successfully charting a course through life in this manner - steering clear of indulgence and giving self-denial a wide berth - makes one wise. It's a hallmark of our spiritual development to reject extremes.

The Middot, the mastering of our character traits, is a similar concept - derived purposefully from the word 'measures'. Each of our emotions, good or bad, must be measured in the right proportion for the given situation. There's even a rare convergence here with Aristotle, who said: "Equilibrium is the right feelings at the right time about the right things, toward the right people, for the right end, and in the right way." It is clearly a universally compelling ideal.

And its implication is everywhere in our practice. Think of why some wear the gartel to daven - to literally separate the upper angel from the lower animal. Again, balance and measure are key to our spiritual health. On this point Rabbi Steinsaltz of blessed memory notes: "In Kabbalistic literature, the constant opinion is that the middle way is the true way. In fact, the basic assumptions of Hasidism are based on the recognition that the difference between good and evil is the difference between the sedate order and the unrestrained wildness of any kind of extremism."

This all makes great sense as an ideal for our personal conduct and as a guide for our inner morality. But what I want to suggest is that 'The Golden Mean' makes equal sense - and has even greater urgency for us as a community today - when you consider how it is applied to the cultural milieu and the political realm we find ourselves in.

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ICE, WALK IN BETWEEN THEM -
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OR FROZEN

The political spectrum (if indeed it is still a spectrum and not a circle where the extremes meet) is frankly no longer recognisable to anyone over the age of thirty. 'Left versus Right' is the natural order of things and works well as a check and balance when both those positions are mainstream, maintain dialogue and are respectful of difference. But today we are faced with an Illiberal Left and an Irrational Right. As Gerry Rafferty sang, "Clowns to the left of me! Jokers to the right! Here I am stuck in the middle with you." Only, behind the clowns on the left are militants prosecuting a culture war and behind the jokers on the right are militants that look and sound a lot like Nazis.

Indeed, these two camps are assembling fast and attracting all sorts of deeply dangerous ideologues to their totem poles. It is very clear to see how Jihadis use the cover of the Illiberal Left to attack our children on campus. And it's very clear to see how Alt-right online conspiracy theories end with a very bad punchline for our community. "The rats are underneath the piles. The Jew is underneath the lot." T.S. Elliot would approve of the rabbit holes on Facebook and Twitter that take people down to the echo chambers of Jew hatred. Antisemitism fuels both camps' fires. And this means that there is now danger at every turn for us. I don't say that with any alarmism. It is, sadly, a cold, empirical fact.

The extremes are so effective at ensuring that only their manifestos receive attention, that many very real threats no longer register in the national consciousness. Take the recent case where Oxford University accepted a multi-million-pound donation from Max Mosely (the unrepentant son of the British



fascist leader Oswald Mosely). The only audible (and ignored) objection came from Jews. Why was there no social media mobilisation against the timeless spectre of fascism? Why wasn't the Mosely family 'cancelled'? Because attention is elsewhere, and fascists have lost their sting amidst the new myriad of modern day crazies. And, frankly, because 'Jews don't count'. David Baddiel's timely book could already support a new chapter in the year since it was published.

We should be grateful that The Times published his work at all. There's currently a battle raging for the soul of The Guardian between its traditional journalists who want to keep publishing all views, even those they disagree with. And the next generation of its journalists who believe that only their own views should be given oxygen and that 'debate' is the enemy of progress. Well, that 'progress' is like the progress of a disease for our People. When we can no longer be heard, no longer use our intelligence to create reason – then all will be lost.

The noble quest for social and racial justice has truly passed over our timeless cause. Identity politics has failed to include

our most unique identities. Whether by accident or on purpose, the effect is the same. The new extremes have placed us in a precarious position. Alone and exposed. Our Levantine DNA is denied. Our own rich diversity as a People - ignored. We can't even call ourselves what our pursuers of the past called us: Semites. We are white, we are privileged, and we are the problem. And as an added layer of challenge for many observant Jews – we are also religious. So, we are stupid, brainwashed and bigoted too. You can really start to see how the Rambam's rule plays out at the political level for our community: Jews can only enjoy a Golden Age when the Golden Mean is in place.

When a nation's debates are for the sake of national betterment alone – then the centre holds, and so does respect for our community. But when the nation's mainstream has gone AWOL, and the narratives are written by militants, it breaks down for us. Every. Single. Time. The Cordoba Caliphate, The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Weimar Germany ... brief periods where that essential "dignity of difference" ensured we could be ourselves without fear or censure. They all ended when the extremes started to ferment. It's an important, timeless lesson



HE IS SAYING THERE WILL BE
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majority. The good but gaze-averting majority who are yet to buy into extreme newsfeeds. We must be our best selves. And we must remain proud of our Yiddishkeit, as Rabbi Sacks of blessed memory said “Non-Jews respect Jews who respect Judaism.” In short, we must make our case to the majority and take the fight to extremes.

To end on a positive note, I must turn to our Tradition and get a little Messianic. But that is the way our people have always held onto hope in dark times. Hear Rav Kook, the fighter and the spiritualist that guided us through the first flowering of our redemption:

“People mistakenly believe that peace in the world means that everyone will share common viewpoints and think the same way. True peace, however, comes precisely through the proliferation of divergent views. When all of the various angles and sides of an issue are exposed, and we are able to clarify how each one has its place – that is true peace. The Hebrew word shalom means both ‘peace’ and ‘completeness.’ We will only attain complete knowledge when we are able to accommodate all views – even those that appear contradictory – as partial perceptions of the whole truth. Like an interlocking puzzle, together they present a complete picture.” (Ein Eyah).

He is saying there will be a reckoning, one fine day, when the mistakes and the mistruths of each extreme fall away and what is left is once again truth. Like a simmering pan, what is left after the heat will be a crystalised world view that everyone can appreciate and live by. May that time come speedily.

that hurts not only us, but all humanity. Yeats penned it perfectly when he wrote:

*“Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world”*

Words we need to heed right now. If we don’t recognise the pincer movement we are in and call it out and fight it at every turn – then we cannot hope to avert the cycle. We need to speak up against extremism on both sides. We can’t kid ourselves that the one side or the other will redeem us – because neither will. And both are accelerating to more virulent and even violent positions on the spectrum. We can only appeal to the silent



Adam Arnold is 43 and lives in North London with his family - and a Pug and a Pomeranian. He works in global marketing and communications. When he’s not advising brands how to navigate the metaverse, his passion is applying timeless principles from our Tradition to timely challenges in our modern world.

NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES OF MENTAL HEALTH AND JEWISH LAW



IN HIS NEW BOOK, **RABBI YONATAN ROSENSWEIG** EXPLORES UNCHARTERED TERRITORY AS HE EXAMINES THE PRINCIPLES OF HALACHA IN RELATION TO PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Can someone with depression listen to music on Shabbat? How do we accommodate those with dementia and ADHD in our shuls? Do people with eating disorders need to fast on Yom Kippur?

It was over four years ago when I started receiving difficult halachic questions pertaining to mental health from community members. Given my poor understanding of mental health at the time, I did not know how to answer these questions, so I did what all good rabbis do in such a situation: I turned to the Jewish bookshelf for help. Surely, I thought to myself, someone has written on this subject.

To my great surprise, I found nothing to assist me. What I didn't know then, I can tell you now: while there are certainly rabbis who have dealt with questions of halacha and mental health, and one can even find a few articles and comments on the issue if one digs deep enough – there is a significant dearth of readily available and clearly defined material on this subject.

I realised then that the only option was to craft the answers myself, but that this would require a deeper understanding of the issues at hand. I approached my good friend, Dr. Shmuel Harris, a psychiatrist in Jerusalem with whom I was having a weekly chevrotah. He agreed to devote our time together to the study of halacha and mental health, and we started learning, week in and week out.

I soon realised that my simple desire to be able to answer a few questions had the potential to answer a much greater need. With so many questions arising in relation to halacha and mental health, I started considering how helpful it would be to have an encompassing work that would give clear and concise responses to halachic challenges, which were also source-based (halachically) and fact-checked (professionally). It seemed to me that the importance of such a work could not be overstated.

To check my assumption, I took to social media, and made one very simple request: I asked people to share any halachic challenges that they had encountered which relate to mental health. The response was astounding. I received over 50 different questions within the space of two days, and very quickly learned so much about the kinds of challenges people face.

Armed with the knowledge that there was indeed a large hole waiting to be filled, I turned my attention (together with Dr. Harris) to the academic work that needed to be done. For the next two years we met, discussed, debated, and analysed. I brought my halachic knowledge, and he brought his expertise in mental health. I collected articles, halachic responses and books – really anything and everything that I could find that had been

written on the subject – and slowly but surely, a corpus of work on halacha and mental health was formed.

The next step was writing the first draft of our book based on all the information I had gathered. This was followed by an in-depth review process by both rabbis and mental health professionals. I knew that if the book was to be helpful, it would have to include names that people could trust, so I consulted with rabbis from the entire Orthodox spectrum, and as many great halachists as possible. When Covid hit, it became more complicated to meet in person, and many of the discussions with mental health professionals were conducted virtually. I received a great deal of wisdom from men and women deeply embedded in this field: psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, dietitians and more. These inputs helped to shape and reshape the book, until I could bring it to a point where it reflected the most current available knowledge.

This process, coupled with fundraising for the book and preparing it for publication, has taken another two years, and the book is scheduled for publication before the end of the year. It is a book which will give people a better understanding of mental health issues, and it is a book that will help those who deal with mental health challenges to understand what the halacha requires of them. It will also assist mental health professionals to find avenues to help their Orthodox patients.

So, what is it all about and why is it so important? As many of us are aware, there is a social stigma attached to mental health challenges. Often, people who suffer from mental disorders feel compelled to try and convince the world that although their challenges may not be visible to others, they are as serious and debilitating as physical illnesses. This is apparent in the Orthodox community too and is both frustrating and hurtful. Many individuals feel the need to hide their struggles, and as a result they do not receive the care and support that they need during hard and difficult times.

The halachic-mental work that Dr. Harris and I have undertaken is an important tool in battling this stigma. Compare the following scenarios: Firstly, imagine a young woman who goes into labour on Shabbat and is rushed to the hospital, violating several Torah prohibitions. This woman receives a clear message from the Torah, the halacha, the rabbis and the community. The message is this: 'We see you. We understand the danger you might be in. We recognize we need to care for your health. And we will do whatever it takes to make sure you and your baby are safe.' Consequently, the young mother feels cared for and supported by her religion.

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PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM MENTAL DISORDERS FEEL COMPELLED TO TRY AND CONVINCE THE WORLD THAT ALTHOUGH THEIR CHALLENGES MAY NOT BE VISIBLE TO OTHERS, THEY ARE AS SERIOUS AND DEBILITATING AS PHYSICAL ILLNESSES

Now imagine someone suffering from depression. He experiences anhedonia (the inability to experience pleasure). He cannot go to work and is unable to enjoy his family. He is plagued by depressive thoughts, which affect his life constantly. He may even experience suicidal ideation. This young man is soothed by music, and he approaches his rabbi to tell him that he would like to listen to music on Shabbat. Let us assume a hypothetical negative response: “I understand that music helps you, and you may get a little depressed, but surely you can go 25 hours without it, and get the music on your phone immediately after Shabbat?”

Now let us ask ourselves: what is the message being conveyed? The rabbi is not intentionally being insensitive. It is very likely that he genuinely doesn’t see why this situation is so problematic and why this person requires leniency. Nevertheless, the message the young man receives is this: ‘I am not taken seriously. My situation is being ignored. Halacha has no room for people like me. I am doomed to choose between suffering and remaining Orthodox.’

To be clear: I am not suggesting that all cases of depression require or deserve a leniency of this nature. Each case must be evaluated by a competent halachic authority, but that evaluation can only be handled properly with a full understanding of the condition the person is suffering from and its implications. I am blessed that my journey over the past four years has given me deep insight into these issues and my ability to relate to the mental disorders and conditions presented to me has made me a better, more sensitive, and more expert halakhist.

Here is a short case study that demonstrates the kinds of questions I receive: Recently a young woman contacted me with a question about trichotillomania (a disorder which causes the sufferer to obsessively pull out their hair). This young woman had found that she could control her hair pulling if she could keep her hands occupied with needlework, such as sewing, weaving, and crocheting. She was enquiring about whether she could continue with her needlework on Shabbat.

When answering a question of this nature, it is essential to evaluate both aspects (the halachic and the medical) adequately. I assume that my readers are fully aware that needlework is prohibited on Shabbat. Furthermore, this is a Torah prohibition, not a rabbinic prohibition and as such, it is more difficult to abrogate. Only in the case of ‘*Pikuach Nefesh*’ – a life threatening situation – could we allow such an activity on Shabbat.

Someone who is not well-acquainted with trichotillomania and its manifestations might justifiably ask: “What’s the big deal? So, she pulls a few hairs. Is the suffering associated with this disorder so acute that we should even be considering how to help her at the expense of a Shabbat violation?” This type of sceptical response demonstrates why it is so important to have a working knowledge of the disorders we handle. This woman, for example, had become completely dysfunctional because of her disorder. Photographs of her head showed numerous bald spots that made her embarrassed to leave her house; she had stopped going to work; she could not go shopping or meet up with friends. Her disorder was ruining her life.

Does this mean that we can permit her to busy herself with needlework on Shabbat as she requested? Not necessarily. As mentioned, the bar for allowing that is high. However, the distress that she was feeling was very real and had very real consequences. Her dilemma was worthy of consideration and the full attention of a halachic authority who could work with her to find alternatives that would allow her to remain mentally healthy while still observing the halacha.



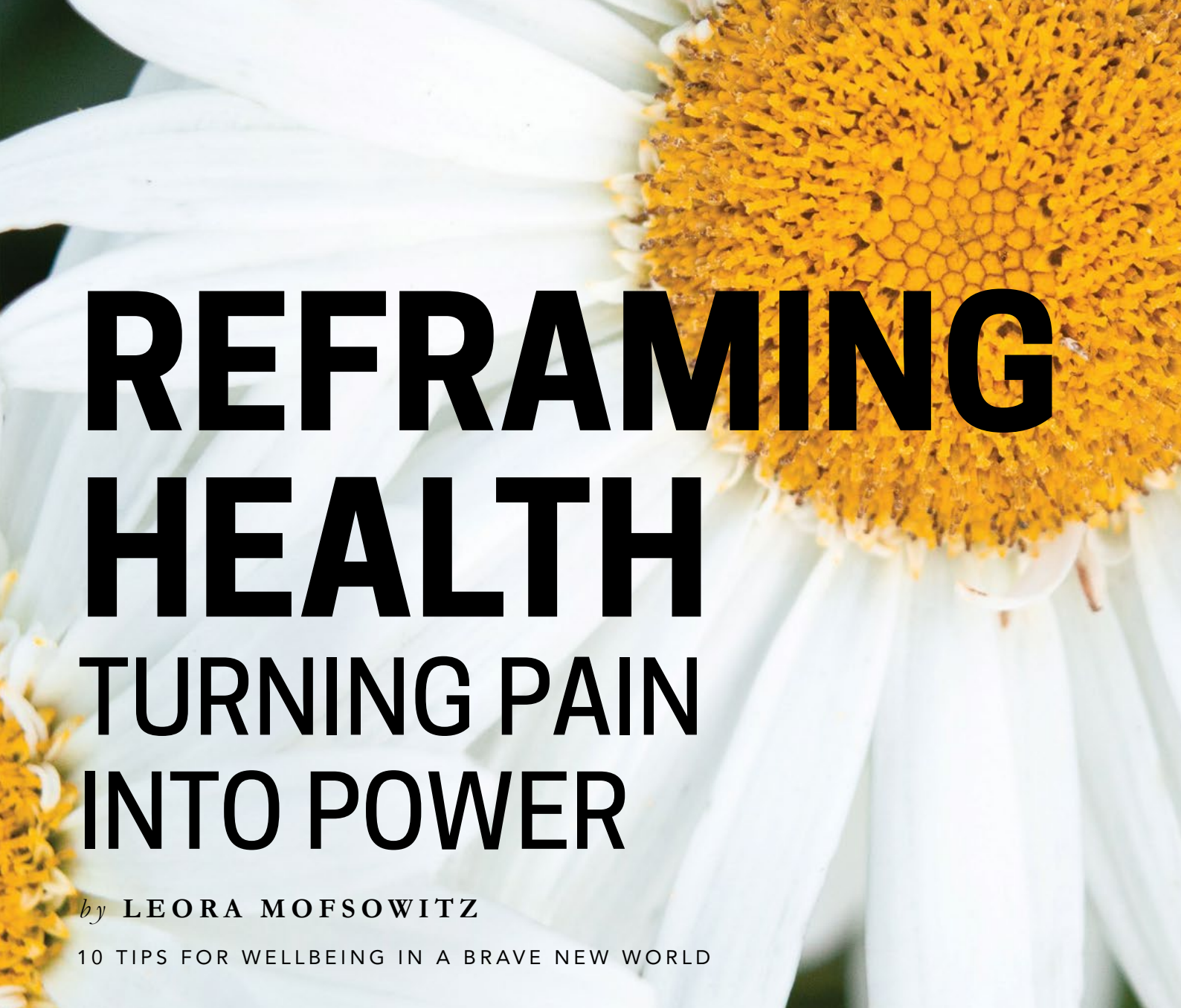
In another instance, a man who was learning in yeshiva came to me with the same disorder, but he found that chewing gum stopped him from pulling at his beard. Once again, the distress and the practical impact of his disorder were very real, and he wanted to know whether chewing gum on a fast day would be permitted. This too, required an in-depth halachic discussion about the level of severity of different fast days, whether chewing is the same as swallowing, whether there is a difference between tasteless gum and flavourful gum and so forth. These discussions assisted us to reach a proper conclusion to guide the individual within the halachic framework.

As my work has gained momentum I have been approached on an array of issues, each with its own set of specific complexities and implications. Does someone who has experienced abuse at the hand of his parents have the obligation to respect and honour them? Can people with agoraphobia walk out with their phones on Shabbat if it helps them to come to *shul*? Can someone with bipolar disorder who requires medication to prevent manic episodes drink water on Yom Kippur? What form does the obligation to fast take for someone suffering from an eating disorder? Can a child with ADHD bring a spinner to *shul* if it helps him stay inside and participate in the davening? Can people with autism who are nonverbal use electronic assistive technology on Shabbat to help them communicate? Is one permitted to work at a suicide hotline if there are only two people there and laws of *yichud* are not kept?

These are just a handful of questions – there are so many more. Each one requires a response that is tailored to a specific person in a unique situation. This takes time, patience, knowledge, and a certain amount of experience. It also requires working in tandem with the mental health professionals who are treating the individual. It is my fervent hope that my book will open a long overdue conversation and help those in need to receive the assistance they deserve.



Dov Lipman is the Founder and Director of Government Relations at Yad L'Olim. Dov was elected to the 19th Knesset in 2013, making him the first American born MK in 30 years. During his time as an MK, he opened the doors of his office to English-speaking olim and he worked to assist them individually and to advance causes on behalf of the community. Former MK Lipman moved to Bet Shemesh with his wife, Dena, and four children in 2004 and is the author of 8 books about Israel and Judaism. Dov's experience assisting the olim community with corona travel and other challenges led to his founding of Yad L'Olim.



REFRAMING HEALTH TURNING PAIN INTO POWER

by LEORA MOFSOWITZ

10 TIPS FOR WELLBEING IN A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Are you feeling overwhelmed and burnt out? Has almost two years of paradigm-shifting brought your life choices and wellbeing into focus? I am sure the answer is a resounding YES. Now is the time to turn your pain into power and an opportunity to pull out what is already inside of you, to learn how to break negative self-belief systems, take risks that build self-worth and rethink any old conditioning that keeps you where you are. I know first-hand what those overwhelming and paralysing feelings of fear, pain, depression and anxiety can do. I am learning every day how to live my best life, and the more we share with those who care, the more we know we are not alone. Life is a shared reality. Taking even one small step can be liberating. It does not mean that the pain goes away, but we start to cultivate a way of initiating and sustaining lifestyle changes that serve us.

As a Functional Medicine Certified Health Coach, I spend a great deal of time with my clients looking for what is right with a situation, acting as the navigator and guide. I take steps to bridge the gap and empower people to reframe their health challenges and feel empowered. This is a process of self-discovery, self-monitoring, education, goal-setting and accountability. We use evidence-based interventions including active listening, motivational interviewing, appreciative inquiry, positive psychology strategies and SMART goal setting.

So, for now, let's get started by considering my **top 10 tips** that can act as a springboard for encouraging you to become curious about exploring this brave new world. Consider these tips a starting point for you to look at what is working or not working in your world. There is no definitive set of rules, and your list may look completely different. In fact, there may be items I have left out that you would place as a priority.



“
ARE YOU FEELING
OVERWHELMED AND BURNT
OUT? HAS ALMOST TWO YEARS
OF PARADIGM-SHIFTING
BROUGHT YOUR LIFE CHOICES
AND WELLBEING INTO FOCUS?”

LEORA'S TOP 10 WELLBEING TIPS IN A BRAVE NEW WORLD:

1. HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS:

It is no surprise that healthy relationships take first place on this list. These relationships can be both personal and professional. Think about what is working for you? What is not working for you? What are you bringing into these relationships for unresolved spaces?

2. LIFE PURPOSE:

Take time out to focus on your life purpose. It seems for many people that life is on autopilot. Have you taken time out to consider and focus on what drives you? What is your passion? Where does your curiosity lie?

3. REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

Investigate what this looks like for you. No guilt, please. Are you exercising too little or too much? Do you sweat? Are you able to go into nature? Is this part of your daily routine? Consider the possibility that moving your body is as essential as that email you just answered. How about standing up right now and stretching before you carry on reading?

4. CONNECTION:

What does being connected mean to you? Is there a mindfulness practice you take on? What centres you? What do you find satisfying or what transports you? Consider your daily rituals and how these nourish you. Is there an opportunity to be connected to self and find community with others?

5. CURRENCY:

What is your life currency? Look at your values and what you bring to the world. This is your exchange. How much are you worth? Can you see it? What makes you feel worthy?

6. JOY:

Take a moment to explore without judgement anything that pops into your mind. Notice the moment where you access this. Once you have accessed what joy looks like for you, perhaps make a note and pop it up on the screen in front of you. Remind yourself of this space when you have challenging moments. Nothing is permanent.

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THIS IS A PROCESS OF
SELF-DISCOVERY, SELF-
MONITORING, EDUCATION,
GOAL SETTING AND
ACCOUNTABILITY.

7. ENVIRONMENT:

Who determines the tone of your space? Is it safe, competitive, loud, soft, gentle or firm? How do your home and work environments differ? Are the boundaries blurred, and where can you be responsible for making things work better?

8. SLEEP:

Did you get less than ideal sleep last night? Was it a once-off occurrence, or is this something that occurs regularly? There is so much research to share, but I look at five simple steps that I call CELEB-T that you can start to work on right away:

- C- Caffeine – don't over-caffeinate after a poor night's sleep
- E- Exercise – After a poor night's sleep, you need to listen to your body. What is it saying to you today? Light or gentle exercise, or maybe a rest day?
- L- Light- Poor sleep can suggest your circadian rhythm is out of sync. Do your best to get as much natural light exposure as possible.
- B- Breath – nasal or abdominal breathing. Notice if you hold your breath when you scroll on your phone or type on your keyboard.
- T- Technology- If you have had a poor night's sleep, look at ways to filter artificial light.

9. LIFE EDUCATION:

Consider where your information is coming from? Social media / the news? What are you reading? Is a love of learning something you value? Do you learn from books or people? Whatever your answer is to these questions, this is your life journey, and this life is your education.

10. PLAYFULNESS:

So, here we are. Somewhere along the line, we had to grow up and be responsible. What about expressing your voice, spending time on your creativity and laughing out loud till it hurts?

Now look forward to six months from now, and imagine what your health and wellbeing could look like if you started to implement some of these ideas. It only starts by working on one, and the ripple effect will follow. Be kind to yourself, move gently and find someone you can trust to support you along the way.



Leora Mofsowitz is a Functional Medicine Certified Health Coach (FMCHC), with a personal growth mindset, helping her clients to live life with wellbeing and vitality. While working for a global nutraceutical brand, she honed her skills in Functional Medicine, practitioner training, value-based sales and public speaking. Leora is a skilled group facilitator, has been a featured panellist and speaker in numerous forums and is the founder of 14DSHIFT, an online group that provides health & transformation coaching for teams and leaders. She moved to London just over a year ago with her husband Uri, and daughters Ariella and Ashira. For more info, contact Leora: Instagram: @leora.reflects / LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/leoramofsowitz



WINTER WELLNESS

HOLISTIC HEALTH EXPERT **KELLY KAHN** SHARES HER SECRETS ON HOW TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY HEALTHY DURING THE COLD WINTER MONTHS

These are the top tips that I follow to keep my family well through the winter months, and throughout the year. With the world being so interconnected, we are constantly exposed to new viruses, so it's important to boost our immune systems and try to keep ourselves as healthy as possible. Remember that to get sick once a year actually shows that you have a healthy immune system.

SLEEP: The number one remedy is sleep. The best time for adults to go to sleep is between 10pm and 11pm. The room should not be too warm and should be as dark as possible. So many of us suffer with sleep issues that sleep could be a whole article in itself. If one does not get enough sleep then the body becomes inflamed, and in time this can cause stress and illness.

HYDRATION • GOOD QUALITY FOOD:

The second tip relates to hydration and good quality food. Most of us are perpetually dehydrated and are not drinking good quality water. Tap water is said to be safe in London, but the water is hard, with high levels of calcium and magnesium compounds, lead from old pipes and micro plastics (which are also found in bottled water). Due to the presence of BPAs, plastic bottled water is also not good for your body, and is terrible for our planet. I would recommend the installation of a good water filter at home, and using that to fill up a stainless steel or glass water bottle to take out with you. We should be drinking about 6 to 8 glasses of water a day, depending on lifestyle, exercise, climate and other factors.



Eat clean food as much as possible and try to avoid preservatives, colourants, and other 'natural colourants' which aren't really natural. When buying products, always read the label and choose the product that has the fewest numbers and names that you can't pronounce. Also be aware that sugar has so many different names – there are up to 56 different types of sugar and sometimes one product can contain 4 or 5 of these! I think we are all aware that sugar is very addictive and has negative effects on the brain and gut. There is plethora of evidence that indicates that sugar impairs the immune system for a few hours after consumption.

WHOLE FOOD: Buy whole foods that most closely resemble what they originally looked like and then prepare a meal from scratch. And don't forget to add herbs to your food - it's a great way to boost your immune system. Try to eat numerous servings of vegetables and some fruit daily. Chicken soup/ broth is a great remedy to boost the immune system.

CAFFEINE: Many of us consume too much caffeine to help us to stay awake and get through the day. Caffeine comes from numerous sources including coffee, tea, green tea, matcha and chocolate. Be mindful and limit daily consumption.

VITAMINS + MINERALS: If someone in my family is not feeling well I usually make them a 'medicine' tea. In a flask, I mix half an organic lemon (sliced), a few chunks of ginger, turmeric (I use ground but you can use fresh), a cinnamon stick and any other herbs that I have in the fridge such as thyme, sage or rosemary. I add another herbal tea bag for flavour and once it has seeped and cooled a little I will either use Manuka honey or raw, unheated honey. (Note that you can also have a teaspoon of raw honey before bed if you are feeling unwell). At this point I add a bit of cayenne pepper, if you can handle it. I can only drink one cup of medicine tea each day, but my husband can happily drink 5 cups, so see how you feel. If you don't have time or all the ingredients, you can make a cup with just one of the herbs that you have in your fridge. Rosemary has so many uses, from stimulating memory to helping to fight viral and bacterial infections. Thyme is anti-viral and can help to soothe coughs and fight infections, and sage is another potent herb with anti-inflammatory properties. Curcumin, which is a component of turmeric, reduces

inflammation and is great for colds and flu and for liver support. I also keep the following vitamins, minerals and herbs at home to give to anyone who isn't feeling well:

- Cat's claw is an amazing herb. Taken in tea or tincture, it can help strengthen the immune system and help fight viruses and bacteria. I would only take this if I felt any symptoms coming on and while sick.
- Golden seal is another fantastic herb that is great for acute infections, for colds, flu and other bugs. It's very strong so don't take it for an extended period, and follow the dosage recommendations on the bottle.
- Elderberry syrup is a wonderful remedy for colds and flu. The berries are well known to significantly enhance the immune system. I like to start taking elderberry syrup when the weather begins to get cooler, and if someone in my family is sick, then to increase the dose.
- Zinc is an essential mineral for anyone fighting colds and flu.
- Vitamin C strengthens the whole immune system.
- As soon as I feel out of sorts I like to soak in an Epsom salt bath. I find that 1-2 cups in warm water for 20 minutes is fantastic.

FRIENDS + FAMILY: In addition to what we consume and how we sleep, there are many studies showing that having supportive friends and family is essential to one's physical and mental health, as the two are closely linked. Arguments with people that we are close to can have a serious impact on our health, and we need to acknowledge the impact of relationships on our health and how they can even affect our life span. If you are very stressed, try taking a few deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth to activate the parasympathetic nervous system to calm you down. And remember - if we can find daily meaning and purpose in our lives we will function better – both physically and mentally.

This article is not intended to provide medical advice or treatment. Please always consult your primary healthcare practitioner before implementing any supplementation or treatment protocols.



Kelly Kahn is a therapeutic reflexologist and holistic health counsellor. She has worked in the field since 1998. She is qualified in a range of holistic healing modalities and has studied nutrition which she incorporates into her treatment sessions. She practices in Hampstead Garden Suburb and can be contacted on kellykahn1@gmail.com

A pregnant woman is shown from the waist up, wearing a light beige, long-sleeved dress with a ruffled neckline. She is gently holding her pregnant belly with both hands. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting foliage. The text is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

HYPEREMESIS GRAVIDARIUM

**IT'S NOT JUST
MORNING SICKNESS**

by SHIRA DRUION

WE CHATTED TO **REBBETZIN RUTHIE HALBERSTADT** AND **JANICE SUGARMAN**,
TWO OF THE FOUNDERS OF HG HELP, A SUPPORT
INFRASTRUCTURE FOR JEWISH WOMEN, SUFFERING
FROM HYPEREMESIS GRAVIDARIUM

1. WHAT IS HYPEREMESIS GRAVIDARIUM (HG)?

HG is an extreme form of pregnancy sickness.

2: HOW MANY WOMEN DOES IT AFFECT?

As far as we know, HG is diagnosed in about 1% of women, but unfortunately there are many women who suffer through HG pregnancies undiagnosed and unsupported. If a woman feels dysfunctional because of extreme symptoms (and she does not have to tick the boxes of all the symptoms) she does not need an official diagnosis - it can be assumed that she has HG. Anyone who feels that she needs guidance with this can contact us at support@hghelp.co.uk

3. WHAT METHODS HAVE YOU FOUND TO BE HELPFUL IN TREATING HG?

We are not medical doctors or professional therapists but we are compassionate, experienced survivors of HG who would like you to benefit from the information we have put together and the community support that is available.

Although every woman is different, the following methods have been found to be very helpful by most sufferers:

- Early use of medication (as soon as the woman gets a positive pregnancy test result) to control nausea, vomiting and other symptoms
- Rest and lowering of stress levels/responsibilities
- Avoiding triggers (such as smells)
- IV fluids to rehydrate and potentially medicate when swallowing or retaining pills is not possible

4: WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL VIEW ON WHY WOMEN SUFFER SO MUCH IN CHILDBEARING, PARTICULARLY WITH HG?

Suffering with HG falls under the general category of suffering in childbearing. It is one of the curses of Chava. The Torah tells us that as a result of the sin, Adam received ten curses, as did Chava,

the snake, and also the earth. This is difficult to understand on a surface level. Firstly, why should I suffer for Chava's sin? Why am I to blame?! And secondly - what is the purpose of a curse? How does this help anything?

It is important to understand that:

a: We are not suffering *for* Chava, but rather we *are* her. The mystical sources explain that when Adam and Chava sinned, their souls shattered into many pieces and were sprinkled over all of subsequent human history! We are not suffering for something she did – rather we are shards or splinters of those macro souls, and now, in this plan B of Creation, we are all building the world, fixing the brokenness and climbing the steep mountain back to perfection. Which takes us to the second point...

b: What is the point of curses? What does this suffering achieve? This is a broad subject that the Torah covers extensively, but in a nutshell, these curses are the painful but necessary surgery that heals the spiritual problems and issues in the world. Before the sin, Adam and Chava could have brought the world to its perfection *through* their actions, but now, post sin, the breakdown is fixed by experiences that happen *to* us.

It forces certain things out of us.

Studying the meaning of these curses and the meaning of challenge and suffering in general enables us to go through difficult experiences with very minimal (and often no) trauma, and more importantly, with our connection to God, our faith and joy, intact!

I would also observe that in my 15 years of research and speaking to women who suffer from HG, I have found a commonality in the personalities of woman that suffer from this condition - and, while there is, as yet, no cure, working on certain negative tendencies has proven to significantly reduce the symptoms. There are Torah classes that can be accessed on our website for more information on this.



5: HOW CAN ONE USE THE EXPERIENCE TO BECOME SPIRITUALLY ELEVATED?

As with every challenging situation, one is faced with a choice - to go under and fall apart, or to hold tight, find Hashem and rise to the challenge; to get all the help one can both emotionally and spiritually, let go and let God take over. "Pain is an invitation to grow. Hashem is challenging you to find Him. To trust Him and embark on a deep and intense journey - to the self." (The Torah of Pain, Finding Hashem in Challenging Times)

6: HOW HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO HELP WOMEN THROUGH THIS CHALLENGE?

When in crisis, women suffering from HG require help in three areas:

1. Practical help (rides to the hospital, meals for the rest of the family, cleaning help etc.)
 2. Emotional support and encouragement (and sometimes therapy)
 3. Chizzuk - spiritual strengthening and spiritual focus.
- There's also a class for men on our website, where Rabbi Halberstadt offers guidance, advice and support to the husbands of women suffering from HG.

7: WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR MOTHERS EXPERIENCING THIS?

The most helpful advice to women who've suffered from HG in previous pregnancies is to PREPARE in advance when considering another pregnancy:

Speak to your GP, explain that you would like support in the form of prescriptions for the medication you already know works for you, and request this medication in advance if possible, or at least the minute you get a positive pregnancy test. Start saving every month as you will need extra help and may also have to pay for certain medications and treatments.



Rebbetzin Ruthie Halberstadt was born in South Africa and raised in Israel, and is a student of Rabbi Mordechai Miller of beloved memory and her father, Rabbi Dr Akiva Tatz. She lives in London, with her husband, Rabbi Ilan Halberstadt and their sons. Having suffered from severe HG in all her pregnancies, she has explored numerous treatment options and has been driven to get all the help possible to alleviate the symptoms. Her suffering also gave rise to a deep need to find answers to spiritual questions like: "What can this experience teach?" and "What is the point of suffering?" and led to the establishment of the HG Help website.

STUDYING THE MEANING OF THESE CURSES AND THE MEANING OF CHALLENGE AND SUFFERING ENABLES US TO GO THROUGH DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES WITH VERY MINIMAL (AND OFTEN NO) TRAUMA, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, WITH OUR CONNECTION TO GOD, OUR FAITH AND JOY, INTACT

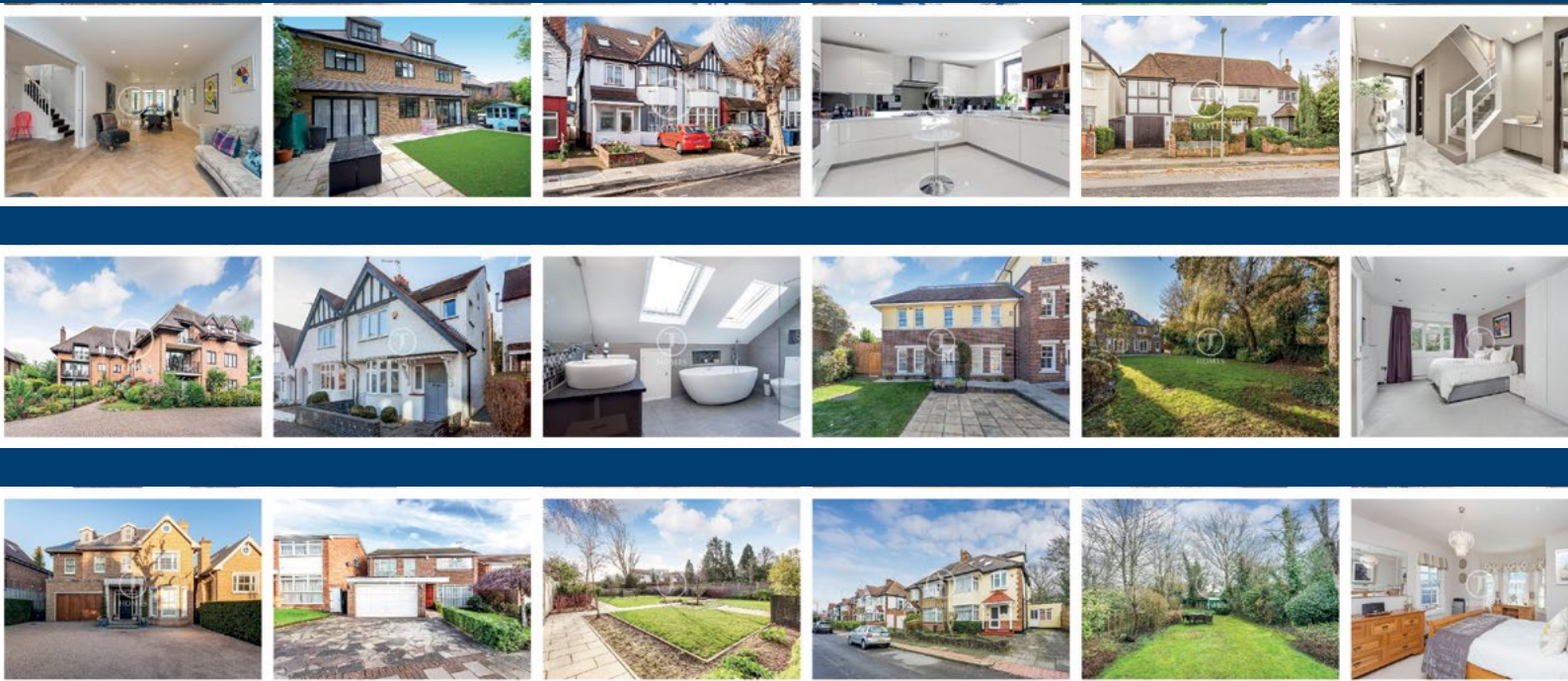
Ensure that you have a good support system in place.

You may need a few people to cover all the needs of the home and family - buying groceries, collecting prescriptions, preparing food, doing laundry, getting children ready for school, rota, homework so that the pregnant woman is able to cope with HG. Shabbat, Yomtov, Sundays, holidays and half-term are times when it is crucial to have both structure and support.

We encourage anyone who has HG, or is the husband, mother, father, sister, brother, cousin or friend of anyone with HG, to visit our website - www.hghelp.co.uk - to find out how they can be most helpful. Please reach out to us for guidance once you have checked the website.



Janice Sugarman is a wife, mother, grandmother and teacher who experienced HG in her pregnancies. Having recently witnessed close family and friends struggling with HG, she is passionate about helping women going through this trauma to feel understood and supported. She is also available to discuss ways to alleviate pressure and promote peace of mind with their caregivers.



Josh Tenenblat MNAEA
Director

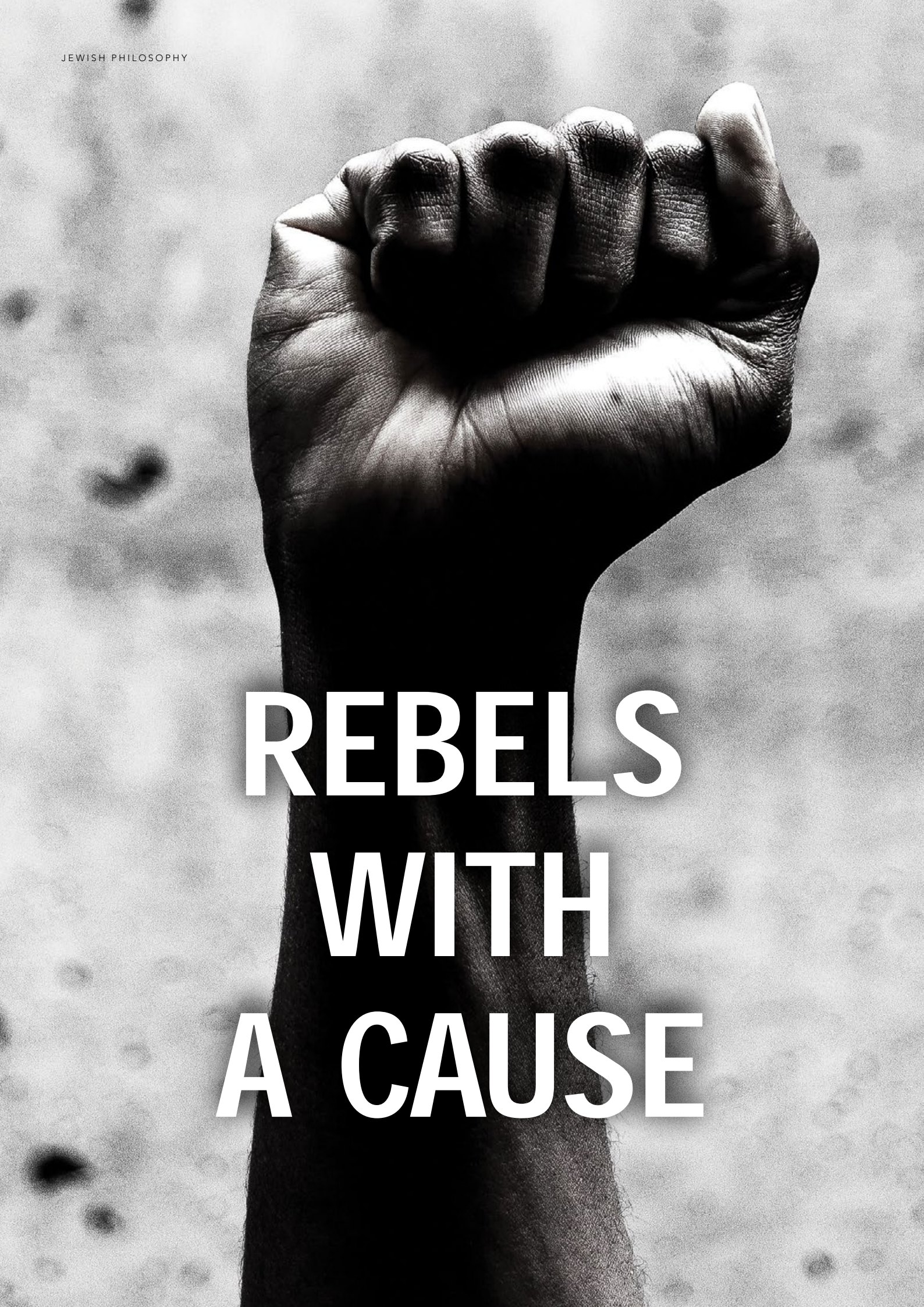
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A black and white photograph of a raised fist against a cloudy sky. The fist is the central focus, with the hand clenched and the arm extended upwards. The skin on the hand and arm is dark, and the texture of the skin is visible. The background is a bright, overcast sky with soft, diffused light and some darker, wispy clouds. The overall mood is one of strength, defiance, and solidarity.

REBELS WITH A CAUSE

by **RABBI ELI BIRNBAUM**

MUSINGS ON THE MERITS AND DOWNFALLS
OF REBELLION AND DEFIANCE IN JUDAISM

Rebellion.

The word sends a shiver down the spine, conjuring up imagery as diverse and far-ranging as the forest moon of Endor, to Americans in Boston harbour deciding they'd had enough of paying taxes on mediocre tea, or the anonymous chap who stared down a column of tanks in Tiananmen Square, to 'Swampy' gluing himself to Euston station in an attempt to block the HS2.

Rebellion conjures the mystique of the impossible becoming possible. The moment we defy space and time and reach beyond the event horizon into the black hole of reality itself, forcing existence into a crucible of reckoning before it emerges the other side - an entirely new butterfly ready to spread its wings. "To dare is to do" bellows the emblem of the team with the Emptiest Trophy Cabinet in the World™. But perhaps that's immaterial. Maybe sometimes the act of daring itself is what pushes the boundaries of being into new dimensions. Like when Newton tossed the apple, Edison flicked the switch or Archimedes forgot to check his bath.

Maybe it's just the Halo Effect caused by social media serving up buffet tables of social discontent on an hourly basis that drives my perception, but are we witnessing higher volumes of rebellion, more frequently? The global unrest over renewed Covid restrictions, the sight of horn-clad 'Q-Anon Shamans' actually storming the seat of American democracy, the ever-increasing numbers of political sycophants wantonly waving the wand of protest to magic anti-Zionism into anti-Semitism. Are we just angrier? Less patient? Has technology conditioned us to expect things to be filtered according to our own personal tastes, and immediately? Does the total anonymity and opacity of social media encourage the casting of various toys out of prams? Do we scare easier? And why, pray tell, did Admiral Ozzel come out of light speed too close to the Hoth system? Or am I being melodramatic?

There is certainly an irony in the observation that with all the communication going on in the world, there seems to be worryingly little dialogue. And there is certainly truth in the observation that violence steps into the void where words have failed.

Rebellion conjures the mystique of the impossible becoming possible. It galvanises us to defy space and time and reach beyond the event horizon into the black hole of reality itself. And for this reason, it is terrifying. Nothing escapes that black hole. No-one can travel there, observe reality remade, return and report back that all is well and good. From the moment of the first gunshot fired, the first crate of East India Company tea hitting the water, the first brick of the Berlin wall striking the ground, we take a leap of faith into the vast unknown. Into the unknowable. And so we beat on, boats against the current, hoping and praying that the grass on the other side is greener and preferably not AstroTurf.

Violence steps into the void where words have failed.

Given that we've just celebrated Chanukah, that idea is quite apropos. In chapter five of his twelfth book, Flavius Josephus recalls:

"When those who were appointed by the king were come to Modiin, that they might compel the Jews to do what they were commanded, and to enjoin those who were there to offer [idolatrous] sacrifice, as the king had commanded, they desired that Mattathias, a person of the greatest character among them, both on other accounts, and particularly on account of such a numerous and so deserving a family of children, would begin the sacrifice because his fellow citizens would follow his example, and because such a procedure would make him honoured by the king. But Mattathias said he would not do it; and would not he nor his sons leave the religious worship of their country. But as soon as he had ended his speech, there came one of the Jews into the midst of them, and sacrificed, as Antiochus had commanded. At which Mattathias had great indignation, and ran upon him violently, with his sons, who had swords with them, and slew both the man himself



Rebellion. That rare corner of human intrigue that manages to be a cause and an effect at the same time.

who sacrificed, and Apelles the king's general, who compelled them to sacrifice, with a few of his soldiers. He also overthrew the idol altar, and cried out, "If," said he, "anyone be zealous for the laws of his country, and for the worship of God, let him follow me."

Rebellion. That rare corner of human intrigue that manages to be a cause and an effect at the same time.

Sizzling with the same intensity as a latke in the pan. End it early, it is an inedible flop. Let it go for too long, it loses all taste and is burnt. But strike the balance just right, and you might well end up changing the course of history.

Judeo-Greek relations and dialogue had been steadily deteriorating since Antiochus III the Great's defeat of Ptolemy V at the battle of Panium, a defining moment for the land of Judea as it switched hands from Ptolemaic to Seleucid Greece for the first time. The Seleucids were far less tolerant. Waging a two-pronged campaign of Hellenization and persecution, they sought to trap the beleaguered Judeans in a cultural pincer movement. Antiochus' son and heir Seleucus Philopator took things a step further by raiding the Temple treasury to fund his lavish lifestyle, meanwhile appointing corrupt yes-men to the office of the High Priest. Seleucus' grandson, Antiochus Epiphanes, stretched the elastic until it snapped by outlawing public gatherings, banning various fundamental Jewish practices, constructing the military fortress 'Accra' adjacent to the Temple Mount, and erecting statues of Zeus in every town square.

Enough, as they say, was enough. Words had failed. The Jewish world was a star collapsing into itself. A black hole forming. And there were some possessed with enough daring to dive in, headfirst, and see where the vortex would take them.

In fact, the Torah itself is replete with rebels and their causes. Moses himself refers to the Jewish people as rebels-by-essence at the end of his life; an epitaph which, let's be honest, really does suit us - no-one thought of perching a carrot on top of blended fish until we came along. #trendsetters

"You have been rebels with God for as long as I have known you." (Deut. 9:24).

And yet, the above description isn't all bleak. Notice the grammatical peculiarity: 'rebels *with* God'. Not 'to' or 'against', but 'with'. Herein there is perhaps an echo of the words spoken by a man identified as Esau's angel as he grappled with Jacob...

"Your name will no longer be Jacob. Rather, Israel shall be your name - for you have wrestled with the divine and with humans, yet you have prevailed." (Genesis 32:28)

The plot thickens.

The book of Numbers provides us with a fascinating insight into the precariously fragile gap between dialogue and violence so often bridged in the name of rebellion. Two narratives told sequentially, each with radically different solutions to radically different problems. The first narrative occupies much of chapters 16-17. It is the story of the first mass uprising specifically against Moses' leadership. Spearheaded by his cousin twice removed, Korach, the rebel alliance immediately goes on the proverbial offensive:

"And they gathered against Moses and Aharon, saying: 'It [your power] is too much for you! Is not the entire congregation holy? So why then do you land over Hashem's nation?'" (Numbers 16:3) Here, Moses' response is remarkable:

"And Moses listened to them, and he fell on his face. He spoke to Korach and his supporters, saying: 'Come morning, Hashem will reveal whom he has chosen and who [is truly] holy by drawing them close to him; and who has been chosen [for leadership] He will draw close to him.'" (Numbers 16:4-5)

The tension is palpable. It is the velociraptor in Jurassic Park's kitchen. Yes, that one. And yet, the chosen course of action is clearly dialogue. Korach's claims are baseless at best, outrageous at worst. Some of his more prominent supporters stand to gain almost nothing should his rebellion succeed. Yet dialogue prevails:

"And Moses sent for Datan and Aviram, sons of Eliav. But they said 'we will not go up'." (Numbers 16:12)

In this verse, the Talmud comments (Sanhedrin 110a): *"From here we learn that it is wrong to try to resolve conflict forcefully. Rather, Moses went out of his way to try to reconcile them with words."*

But the times, they are a-changin'. Fast forward to Numbers chapter 20 and a new generation has risen to prominence. This generation didn't grow up in the chains of Egyptian bondage. From their emergence from the womb, they have breathed free. And free air is a special type of air. It is the air of unlimited opportunity. It is an air that we in the modern West breathe more deeply and more pollutedly than any civilisation in the history of mankind. It is the air that carries us toward the black hole. Where slaves rebel because of desperation, free men rebel *because they can*. Because freedom isn't static. It cannot be. It must constantly challenge authority, always pushing boundaries, testing limits. The moment it stops doing this; the moment it gives way to docile compliance, it is no longer freedom. It isn't slavery either, granted. But it is something in some ways more depressing: indifference. Also, freedom must never challenge authority *for the sake of challenging authority*. The moment it does this, it morphs into something perhaps more dangerous than slavery and indifference combined: anarchy.

The second generation of Israelites rebel in a very different way. They too see greener pastures beyond the event horizon. But their predecessors have already been down that road, and they know that it isn't green. It is dark and full of terror. Stand and watch as freedom challenges authority for the sake of the challenge and a generation of free people demand a return to slavery:

"The people quarrelled with Moses, speaking up and saying: 'If only we had perished as our brothers perished before Hashem [in Egypt]! Why have you brought Hashem's congregation to this desert, to die there – us and our livestock? And why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to bring us to this bad place; a place without greenery, fig, pomegranate or water to drink!'" (Numbers 20:3-5)

And this time, dialogue stretches to breaking point. God commands Moses to take the staff and speak to the rock in order to provide water for the grumbling masses. That Moses is told to take the rod and spare it anyway is extraordinary in and of itself. But then things take a turn for the worst. Whereas Korach and his assembly were fully on board with the vision of freedom and the roadmap that led to the land of Israel, this generation – by now on the brink of reaching the end of that map – seeks to turn freedom into anarchy. Moses' patient resolve finally breaks as dialogue retreats into a void:

"And Moses said to them: 'Listen well, rebellious ones! Shall we extract water for you from this rock?!' And Moses raised his hand and hit the rock twice with his staff, and water gushed out, and the congregation and their livestock drank." (Numbers 20:10-11).

For the first time, that void is filled by an act of violence. A barely perceptible act, true enough. An act which, when all is said and done, provides a working solution to the immediate problem.

But in its wake, more problems are created. Violence cannot ever truly fill dialogue's void. Violence is quick, over in a flash, bulldozing through the problem leaving wreckage and ruin in its wake. Society's scar tissue. Violence solves problems by rendering all other solutions null and void. It fixes relationships by ending them entirely. And to this, God's response is as swift as it is awe-inspiring:

"And Hashem spoke to Moses and Aharon: 'Since you did not believe in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the Children of Israel – therefore, you will not bring the congregation into the land that I have given to them.'" (Numbers 20:12).

Moses is the single most important figure in Judaism's long and colourful history. The person is described as "exceedingly humbler than any man" (Numbers 12:3) and as speaking to God face to face (ibid. 12:8). A personality loftier and more holy than we could ever imagine, is nonetheless taken to task for abandoning dialogue just that little bit too hastily and inadvertently creating a void which is and can only be filled by violence.

So when we turn on the news or scroll through our social media feeds and glimpse the worrying levels of global malcontent, the first and most important question to ask is: Has dialogue been completely exhausted? Are these rebels with a cause, backs against the wall like the heroes of the Chanukah story, forced either to live in the void of indifference or fill that void with violence? Or are they rebelling for the sake of rebelling, posing impossible questions that dialogue cannot answer?



Rabbi Eli Birnbaum studied in Talmudic College in Israel for six years before attaining Rabbinic Ordination after two years in the Jerusalem Kollel. During this time, Rabbi Birnbaum completed a BSc in Criminology & Social Psychology. Together with his wife Naomi, Rabbi Birnbaum moved back to London to take up a position in the JLE's campus department, where he set up the infrastructure for regular Lunch & Learns across London's major campuses, as well as creating the 'Genesis+' programme, aimed at older students and post-graduates. He is now the Director of Education at Aish UK.



AT THE END OF THE DAY

by REBBETZIN LEAH MOSZKOWSKI

WHY SPENDING HALF OUR TIME ASLEEP
IS A VITAL KEY TO LIFE

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In thinking of the myriad of gifts we have so graciously been endowed with, sleep - the method of mental and physical renewal with which our bodies have been programmed - is particularly eye-opening. Let's explore this nocturnal wonder just a little, from a Judaic and scientific point of view.

Firstly, we need to pause for a second to deeply acknowledge and appreciate that the Creator of all wonders fashioned this nightly experience to be fantastically pleasurable. God intentionally lavished on us a recurring prescription of pleasure, because the ever loving, kind God constantly wants us to experience goodness - lots of it. Sleep could have been a completely neutral experience, purely functional, or even traumatic and painful, but God, by divine design, chose for it to be delightful.

The ever-cool thing about science, as a believing Jew, is that it gives us a glimpse into the immense genius of God's wisdom. Science is the name given to the system God created to instigate and operate the universe with. It is breathtaking to discover how cohesively and cleverly all the moving parts operate and cooperate. This is the chain of events which result in sleep: "When the sun sets, the encroaching darkness sets off a chain of molecular events spreading from our eyes to our pineal gland, which oozes a hormone called melatonin into the brain. When the melatonin latches onto neurons, it alters their electrical rhythm, nudging the brain into the realm of sleep. At dawn, sunlight snuffs out the melatonin, forcing the brain back to its wakeful pattern again." (NY Times)

This here is a ringing endorsement for the idea of avoiding technology just before bed, and certainly not in bed. It's not to punish ourselves or put our brains into a state of boredom. Rather, the modern access to artificial light has the ability to mislead our bodies away from sleep - something to think about tonight when you reach for your phone to scroll through Insta one last time, just in case, at 1.04am.

The cool thing about Judaism, is that everything, and yes, I mean, everything, in the scientific, metaphysical and natural world, is discussed, dissected (and, obviously, disputed). This is not by chance and not merely to satisfy an insatiable curiosity about the world and its workings. To the contrary, studying the world around us is a means to understand the spiritual world, since everything we see and experience is merely a mirror and

So, while our physical body is physically sleeping, our soul is spiritually sleeping, which means it is going through the process of renewal and getting a spiritual refresh

manifestation of what is going on in the spiritual system. Our physical world is a metaphor for the spiritual world. The spiritual world was, is, and always will be - *we* are the newbies. When we have difficulty understanding the spiritual world, this does not mean the spiritual world is defective, or a myth, it means our understanding is flawed. So, while our physical body is physically sleeping, our soul is spiritually sleeping, which means it is going through the process of renewal and getting a spiritual refresh. This means that EVERY DAY we get a fresh start in life; every day we can wake up and make more spiritually and physically wholesome and mindful choices.

If sleep is so good for us, why would God create insomnia, I hear you ask. Great question. Well, we all know one only appreciates things when they're gone. No truer words could be ascribed to sleep, or the lack thereof. It takes only one maddening experience of insomnia, where all the efforts in the world are unable to alter even a single iota in our desperate quest for this precious gift, but the next night - when the melatonin and dusk and pineal gland work once again in perfect harmony - then we truly and fully know and appreciate what an incredible gift sleep is.

Calming your mind is a big half of the battle. Your body knows what to do, so long as your thoughts don't continuously disrupt this. Practicing gratitude is a hugely effective placebo on the mind, and what more meta way to do that, than to think about the wonderful gift that is sleep.



After spending some years on the West Coast of America, Rebbetzin Leah Moszkowski now lives in Leeds together with her husband Ozer and daughter Tehillah. Together they run an Aish on Campus branch for the students at Leeds University. With a background in English literature and creative writing, Leah loves anything and everything to do with words.

TO MEDIATE OR NOT TO MEDIATE?

FAMILY MEDIATOR, **DEVORAH GREENBERG**, EXPLORES
THE BENEFITS AND IMPLICATIONS OF MEDIATION AS AN
ALTERNATIVE FORM OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR COUPLES
GOING THROUGH SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

Divorce and separation can feel like a sea of stress. During these times, which may prove to be amongst the most challenging in your life, it can be very difficult to know where to go for help. Just when you need more support than you have ever needed before, you are faced with uncertainties about who to ask or how you are going to afford to pay for expert professional guidance.

If you have already sought legal advice, or applied to court, you will likely have seen numerous references to mediation, but many people who are caught up in a divorce or separation don't know what family mediation really involves.

What is Family Mediation?

The Family Mediation process helps you to explore possible solutions to the issues surrounding separation and divorce in a constructive, cost-effective and supportive way. The aim of mediation is for you and your ex-partner to negotiate your settlement and to reach decisions about your future and your children's futures. This isn't easy, and the mediator is there to help you have these difficult discussions, to give you the legal backdrop against which you can make your decisions, and to record your decisions to take forward and convert into a legally binding agreement, should you need one.

Mediators can help you discuss the following issues:

- Division of finances (such as property, savings, pensions, inheritance, or debts)
- Ongoing parenting arrangements for any children

- Child and spousal maintenance payments
- Practical arrangements for separating, including interim finances
- Communication now and in the future

What are the principles of family mediation?

MEDIATION IS VOLUNTARY:

Mediation is voluntary – it can only take place if the participants wish to commit to resolving their dispute in this way. For most family applications to court, you will be required to show evidence that you have attended a MIAM (Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting). This meeting is an opportunity for you to share your story and your objectives, and to assess whether mediation is the right form of dispute resolution for you. If you decide mediation is not the correct way forward, the mediator will issue you with a signed form to take to a solicitor or to show when you apply to court.

MEDIATORS ARE IMPARTIAL:

Unlike solicitors, who represent their clients, mediators are impartial. Their role is not to represent the interests of one party to the other. Their aim is to assist discussion, help minimise conflict, and assist clients to focus on future solutions, not past gripes.

YOU MAKE THE DECISIONS:

If you elect to go to court to sort out your dispute, a judge will make decisions on your behalf. You are then bound to abide by those decisions, even if one or both of you feel unhappy



about them. Mediation can help you to remain in control of your separation / divorce process. The mediator will assist to try and find a solution which works well for both of you and explain how to make any agreements that you reach become legally binding.

Clients are firmly in control of the process and outcome. There are no imposed decisions and the parties set the agenda defining what they wish to cover in mediation. The mediator can give you information to help you assess your options but won't give you advice or impose decisions on you.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Mediation is a private and confidential process. Even though you will have documents to use in the divorce process ahead, apart from specific exceptional circumstances, the discussions held in the mediation room are confidential.

Other benefits of mediation

- Mediation is far more cost effective than going to court.
- The focus is on working together with your ex-partner, rather than coming to the process as adversaries.
- Mediation is less stressful than court proceedings.
- Child Inclusive Mediation, when appropriate, can allow you to hear your child's feelings and views in a safe, informal environment.
- Mediators can give you tools to help you communicate better with your ex-partner. They can direct you to courses and other support resources that will enable you to start building a more successful co-parenting journey ahead.
- Mediation can result in creative, tailored, and sustainable solutions.
- Clients can benefit from online mediation if they live in different cities.

Am I too late to mediate?

It is never too late to mediate. Even if court proceedings have started, mediation can begin.

Who attends family mediation?

Anyone can attend family mediation, including couples, ex-partners, parents, grandparents, and other family members.



UNLIKE SOLICITORS, WHO REPRESENT THEIR CLIENTS, MEDIATORS ARE IMPARTIAL. THEIR ROLE IS NOT TO REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF ONE PARTY TO THE OTHER. THEIR AIM IS TO ASSIST DISCUSSION, HELP TO MINIMISE CONFLICT, AND ASSIST CLIENTS TO FOCUS ON FUTURE SOLUTIONS, NOT PAST GRIPES

How long does family mediation take?

This depends on the matters to be discussed but it can be considerably quicker (and cheaper) than the more traditional route of communicating through solicitors or a court application.

Hearing the Voice of the Child – Child Inclusive Mediation

Mediation allows you to look more deeply at issues affecting your children. If they are of an appropriate age, children can have the opportunity to meet with a child inclusive mediator for an informal chat to voice their thoughts and feelings. Although they won't be given the burden of decision-making, having their voices heard during the process can be extremely therapeutic for children, and insightful for parents to hear their children's perspectives.

Mediation has the advantage of being able to deal with issues relating to the children at the same time as dealing with the finances. In the court process, two separate applications would have to be made, as the children and finances are never dealt with together in the court process. This is often a considerable disadvantage and can be very expensive and time consuming. Solving issues relating to the children are often connected to finance solutions too.



Who pays for family mediation?

Ordinarily, the costs involved are shared equally between the participants. However, on occasion, one party may, by agreement, pay a greater portion of the associated costs, or alternatively pay the costs in full. If you are eligible for Legal Aid, you can minimise your costs and those of your ex-partner, by attending mediation through a company that offers Legal Aid Mediation.

How do meetings take place?

There are different forms of mediation which might suit you and your ex-partner. Round table talks where everyone is in one room have been adapted since Covid 19, and the good news is that mediation, in all its forms, is ideally suited to virtual sessions conducted through Zoom, Teams or WebEx.

Types of mediation

The most common form of mediation is where both parties sit with a mediator in a comfortable room where separating couples are free to discuss matters in a relaxed atmosphere. In some cases, co-mediation - where there are two mediators - can be beneficial, particularly where there are complex dynamics at play.

SHUTTLE MEDIATION, where each party sits in a separate room, or in zoom breakout rooms, works effectively both in person and online. Where there is a strong power imbalance, a high conflict situation, or you simply aren't yet ready to sit together, the mediator can talk just with one person at a time and help to negotiate your settlement without face-to-face confrontation.

HYBRID MEDIATION is conducted by lawyers who have been trained either in resolution in the hybrid model or in the family mediation model. In a typical Hybrid mediation session, you might have your solicitor and a mediator present for each person. This is naturally more expensive. Hybrid mediation is often used in complex family cases where there are significant differences between parents in relation to the arrangements with their children, or in financial remedy cases where the use of other professionals such as accountants, independent financial advisors and divorce planners can be utilised very effectively.

Using experts

Another advantage of mediation is that both parties can agree to bring in the expertise of a specialist to help resolve issues. This might involve instructing a valuations expert to value a company, business, or properties, or bringing in a pensions expert to establish the best way for both parties to reschedule pension investments. It could also involve consulting with an independent financial adviser to help each person in a neutral way to plan budgets, which can be far less expensive than contested court maintenance proceedings. Other experts could include divorce coaches and therapists where one or both parties are finding the emotional side of separation particularly challenging. Mediation is a very flexible process and the use of such experts, although adding to the costs, can be extremely beneficial. It is not necessary to use experts in every case.

When is mediation not appropriate?

Mediation is not appropriate when there is evidence of domestic abuse, or when significant welfare / child protection issues are raised by one or both parties at the initial Mediation

Information and Assessment Meeting (MIAM). One of the key tasks of the mediator at the MIAM is to carry out a safeguarding screening enquiry with each person, to consider if it is both safe and appropriate to mediate. If the mediator does not consider it safe and appropriate to mediate, then mediation will not take place, and you will have to find an alternative means of resolving your differences.

The emotional benefits of mediation

People who have opted for mediation have been found to have a quicker emotional recovery and are thus able to move on with their lives more rapidly than those engaged in protracted court proceedings.

Potential problems with mediation

If either partner has not fully and frankly disclosed all information and documentation relating to their finances, then the mediation cannot proceed. You will then need to consider other forms of resolution.

Mediation sessions can, at times, be intense, challenging and even upsetting, not least because the issues at hand are invariably very important to both parties. A skilled mediator will ensure that the sessions never get out of hand and that time is allowed for each of you to 'recompose'. However, the tension that can be caused in a mediation session is nothing compared with the pressure and anxiety that a contested court case can bring - with the prospect of giving evidence, being cross-examined and someone else [a judge] making decisions about your children and your finances.

Other Forms of Dispute Resolution

COLLABORATIVE LAW

If you prefer to resolve matters with your solicitor present, then collaborative law is something to consider. Collaborative law is

a series of four-way meetings comprising you, your ex-partner, and your respective solicitors. All present need to be committed to achieving the best outcome for the family – as opposed to the individual.

PRIVATE FINANCIAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION (FDR) – EARLY NEUTRAL EVALUATION

Whether you are in court proceedings or not, you can agree to instruct a judge or experienced family law barrister to give their opinion on what they believe a judge would order if your case went to a final hearing. At the end of the process, you get an indication of the outcome, which can be used to help reach an agreement – or at the very least narrow the issues between you.

This process involves paying a dedicated judge to review your case for the day (or half-day if the issues between you aren't too extensive). You are not huddled in court corridors, trying to discuss sensitive issues with your barrister whilst waiting for your case to be heard along with several others, wondering how much time the judge will be able to give you or whether they have had the chance to read all the papers for your case. With a private FDR, you have the luxury of time, and that in itself can be worth every penny.

ARBITRATION

Arbitration is very similar to the court process but has the advantage of both parties agreeing upon the arbitrator (a specialist lawyer) at a time and venue of your choice. As with private FDRs, you will pay the arbitrator's fees. The difference with arbitration, as opposed to mediation and private FDRs, is that the decision of the arbitrator is binding because both of you will have agreed beforehand to be bound by their decision.

In Summary

Any relationship breakdown can be difficult and fraught with emotion but adopting an alternative approach to resolving your disputes can help to lessen the pain, stress, delays, and costs involved in court proceedings. There is no doubt that there is a time and a place for court judgments, but these are not the first or only option. The case studies in this article give some real-life examples where mediation has been used very successfully to assist couples to resolve their issues.



Devorah Greenberg grew up in London. She received her BA (License) at the Sorbonne University in Paris, and her MA at Edinburgh University. She has lived mainly in Israel and London and currently runs a private Family Mediation business - Sage Mediation. Her career has been predominantly in adult and teenage education. She was drawn to mediation whilst working with divorcing couples at the London Beth Din. She currently lives in London with her husband and children, and mediates divorcing and separating families nationally.



A RESET FOR FOREIGN RELATIONS UNDER ISRAEL'S NEW GOVERNMENT

by **DARREN COHEN**

SIX MONTHS POST-INAUGURATION, ISRAEL'S NEW
COALITION GOVERNMENT IS DEMONSTRATING A SHIFT
IN ITS TONE AND APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE THAT IS
PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY.

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In the last edition of *Perspectives*, we discussed Israel's 'government of change' and its chances of survival. Indeed, six months on, a non-Benjamin-Netanyahu-led Israel still exists. Although the diverse coalition of eight parties representing Israel's left, centre, right and Arab constituencies has by no means had an easy ride, it has etched its own distinct policies and approach to governance and distanced itself from the Netanyahu era. This is particularly evident in the government's foreign policy.

REVITALISED FOREIGN MINISTRY

One of the accusations hurled at Netanyahu by critics during his 12-year tenure was that he stripped the Foreign Ministry of its autonomy and influence by appointing politically aligned diplomats and draining ministry budgets. Bibi's detractors argue that the septuagenarian current leader of the opposition centralised foreign policy under the Prime Minister's Office, for instance, by simply holding onto the role of foreign minister himself. This was due to his lack of faith in even his most loyal political allies to safeguard Israel's national interests.

The new government has changed this approach and actively buttressed the Foreign Ministry. This is both a result of right-leaning Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's limited electoral strength and centrist Foreign Minister Yair Lapid's demands for a reinvigorated foreign service. Lapid, who is slated to become PM in August 2023, has defined his foreign policy as one that's "optimistic, open-minded, and ready for dialogue", in contrast with Netanyahu's "pessimistic suspicion". Is this rhetoric alone or has this peculiar alliance of dissimilar political factions really become an agent of change?

THE PALESTINIANS: STRENGTHENING THE PA

Every Israeli government is forced to manage (or try to solve) the protracted conflict with the Palestinians. The previous government adopted a policy of largely undermining the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority (PA), while granting economic concessions to the Gaza-based Hamas in an effort to buy some calm. The current Israeli coalition, particularly Defence Minister Benny Gantz, has embarked on a policy that seeks to strengthen the PA, which has increasingly been under pressure over the past year. A poll released in September indicated that almost 80 percent of Palestinians seek the resignation of PA leader

There has been a nuanced and clear shift in strategy by the Israeli government to support the UN-backed moderates and at the very least minimise the conflict, if not solve it

Mahmoud Abbas. The PA has been accused of weakness and ineffectiveness vis-a-vis Israel, corruption, and a crackdown on domestic activists and critics.

The new policy of emboldening the Ramallah-based authority aims to bolster its control and stabilise the West Bank - a core Israeli security interest. Gantz even travelled to Ramallah to meet Abbas - the first such high-level meeting in a decade - and thereafter pledged to grant the PA a 500 million NIS loan, among a series of other measures including additional permits for workers. Other Israeli ministers have also publicly met with PA officials to coordinate on areas of mutual interest such as health, environment, and the economy. As was the case in the Netanyahu years, it is unlikely that any government comprising right-wing factions will make the major territorial concessions that the Palestinians desire. However, there has been a nuanced and clear shift in strategy by the Israeli government to support the UN-backed moderates and at the very least minimise the conflict, if not solve it.

RESTORING STRATEGIC TIES WITH NEIGHBOURS

In accordance with the policy direction vis-a-vis the Palestinians, the government has sought to reset ties with Jordan and strengthen its relationship with Egypt. This is part of a recalibration of Israel's regional positioning and a recognition of the strategic value that positive relations with neighbouring Arab states, as well as the PA, can yield in terms of stability. Relations with Jordan in the latter years of the Netanyahu administration were strained, especially surrounding Israel's proposed annexation of parts of the West Bank, with King Abdullah II reportedly refusing to take a call from the previous Israeli PM in June 2020. Since the change in government, high-level meetings

have been held between Bennett and Lapid and their respective Jordanian counterparts. Israel has also sought to stabilise Jordan by selling an additional 50 million cubic metres of water to the Kingdom, where this precious commodity is extremely scarce.

In a similar vein, Bennett has sought to elevate Israel's relationship with Egypt to the next level. His efforts appear to have borne fruit, with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi extending an invitation to Bennett for an official state visit to Sharm el-Sheikh in September. In contrast with meetings with Netanyahu that were often held in neutral territory, not widely broadcasted by Egyptian authorities, and without the Israeli flag, Bennett was invited to a meeting on Egyptian soil with the Israeli flag in full view in a meeting broadcast by Egyptian state television. Egypt and Israel have continued to collaborate in both the security and energy fields, with both countries leading members in the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) that seeks to collaborate over potential energy sources. Bilateral trade has risen over the past year and Egypt's national airline, EgyptAir recently announced that the Cairo-Tel Aviv route would fly under its name. However, despite the overall positive trajectory, collaboration with Israel remains highly controversial amongst segments of the Egyptian populace. People-to-people contact, also known as a 'warm peace', as opposed to high-level state cooperation, appears to remain a distant goal for Israel.

More broadly, the strengthening of ties between Israel and its more established US-aligned neighbours is a core interest for Washington. How has the new Israeli government positioned itself with the new US administration?

RE-ESTABLISHING A BIPARTISAN US POLICY, A NEW START WITH THE EU

Another noticeable shift in tone and strategy adopted by the government has been in its relations with the US administration. In comparison with Netanyahu's combative approach to Obama and firm embrace of Trump, the current government has sought to gain favour with both Democrats and Republicans and restore bipartisan support for Israel in Washington. This is particularly evident in its efforts to resolve disagreements pertaining to the Iran nuclear deal with quiet diplomacy and private closed-room discussions. This stands in contrast to Netanyahu, who was perceived by many Democrats to be undermining the bilateral relationship when he addressed the

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These peace deals bolstered Israel's geopolitical standing in the wider region and cemented a growing alliance of countries that seek stability and peace, rather than belligerence

US Congress in 2015 and publicly condemned the Obama administration's flagship foreign policy, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known as the Iran nuclear deal. Looking forward, the two governments will have to navigate several challenges, specifically Iran and the lack of progress on the Palestinian front. However, given both Lapid's preference for dialogue over hostility and the fact that the coalition of left and right parties has committed to Washington to neither annex the territories nor to establish a Palestinian state, this government can be expected to contain any disagreements with the US before they become full-blown bilateral crises.

Similarly, with the EU, there has been a marked change of tone, which is illustrative of Lapid's open-minded optimism. The European Union has been a persistent critic of the Israeli government over the past decade at least, particularly on the Palestinian issue. This is due to its devotion to the two-state solution and the perception that Israeli actions undermine its realisation. Lapid has sought to amend these ties: In July, he made his first visit to Europe to the EU Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels and asked EU states to embark on a 'new start' with Israel. He stressed that Israel and the EU share many liberal values, including human and LGBT rights and a commitment to fighting racism. Although Jerusalem and Brussels will continue to disagree on multiple policy areas, and the Israeli opposition will accuse Lapid of naivete and appeasement vis-a-vis the European bloc, there is a clear shift in language and an apparent understanding that Europe remains an important ally for Israel both economically and politically.



The Biden administration is less oriented towards Trump's transactionalism that facilitated the peace accords between Israel and its new partners, namely, recognition of Israel in exchange for US aid or weapons. Biden is more focused on human rights and pressuring state actors to respect international norms. Moreover, the crown jewel of normalisation, Saudi Arabia, is highly unlikely to commit to recognising Israel unless Jerusalem makes major concessions on the Palestinian front, which remains unpalatable to Bennett and the right-leaning parts of his government.

DIALOGUE AND OPTIMISM OVER SUSPICION AND PESSIMISM

Overall, despite evident tensions within the government between its left and right factions, predominantly on the Palestinian issue, there is some level of cohesion within the coalition on foreign affairs, and a marked shift in policy and rhetoric. In the same style in which it was established - focusing on similarities, rather than differences - this government has aimed to adopt a far more careful and open-minded foreign policy. Its willingness to listen and in some cases make concessions will be touted as pragmatic by its supporters and called weak by its detractors. Regardless of domestic perceptions, should the government survive and see out its term, it will be interesting to see if Lapid's efforts pay dividends and yield a more positive perception of Israel within the international community. This can only be a good thing for the Jewish communities of the world.

Disclaimer: The views expressed are that of the author and do not necessarily express the views of Aish UK. This article was written on 27 October 2021 and is therefore reflective of events up to this date.

THE FUTURE OF THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

One of Netanyahu's undisputed major achievements was to reach historic normalisation agreements with the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. These peace deals bolstered Israel's geopolitical standing in the wider region and cemented a growing alliance of countries that seek stability and peace, rather than belligerence. The Bennett-Lapid government has made the strengthening of these ties a priority. Lapid visited Bahrain in October and inaugurated the new Israeli Embassy in Manama. He also visited Morocco in August to launch the Israeli mission in Rabat. Meanwhile, trade relations between Israel and the UAE have reached \$570 million within a year of the peace agreement and are expected to exceed three billion USD within three years. Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan (MbZ) also extended an invitation to Prime Minister Bennett for a state visit to the Emirates.

The ability to maintain and even expand Israel's ties with Arab actors is an undeniable win for the coalition. However, additional normalisation agreements between Arab countries and the Jewish state are unlikely over the coming months.



Darren Cohen was born and raised in Manchester and made Aliyah to Israel in 2014 where he served as a combat soldier in the IDF's Nahal Brigade. He currently works as the Regional Director of Intelligence of the Middle East and North Africa division at a private security firm. Darren completed a BA at King's College London and holds an MA in Conflict Resolution from Tel Aviv University.



YAD L'OLIM

OFFERING
A HELPING
HAND TO
DIASPORA
JEWRY

by **SHIRA DRUION**

DOV LIPMAN, FOUNDER OF YAD L'OLIM,
EXPLAINS HOW HIS ORGANISATION IS ASSISTING
OLIM TO OVERCOME BUREAUCRATIC HURDLES,
PARTICULARLY DURING THE TIME OF COVID

1: What is Yad L'Olim and why did you set it up?

Yad L'Olim is an Israeli-based NGO which was established to assist new immigrants, their families and global Jewry with Israeli bureaucracy and government-related issues. There has been a need for an organisation of this nature for some time, but it was established during the Covid travel crisis when tens of thousands of people turned to us for assistance with understanding the rules and the framework within which they could enter Israel.

2: Who is there to serve and what is your mandate?

We are available to help Olim and Jews all around the world. We are here to guide them through Israeli bureaucracy and to act as their voice within the Knesset and the Israeli government.

3: How have you been instrumental during the pandemic?

At the beginning of the pandemic, I would receive 4 or 5 requests for help per day. This escalated quickly, to 25, then 50, then 100 and then hundreds every day. We set up a website and hired a complement of staff to handle the requests for assistance. This also freed me to spend some of my time advocating for changes to the rules in government. Thank God, we have been able to help Olim and Jews worldwide by providing clear updates regarding the rules in real time, assisting people with completing their forms, making sure they get their approvals with our contacts in government, and changing the rules to allow for more people to enter – especially for important family occasions – while always being aware of protecting the health of the Israeli public.

4: It is concerning that Israel does seem to be following world trends with allowing people back into the country with ease? Can you comment on this please?

I am happy that Israel is opening up more but am concerned that the infrastructure to process requests in a clear, easy, and effective manner has not been set up. This creates a scenario in which many who should be able to enter Israel according to the rules have a difficult time doing so, and many who should not be allowed in, manage to get in. I also believe that there needs to be greater sensitivity to the needs of Olim and their families to make sure that no one is excluded from important family celebrations such as weddings and births.

5: How do you see the way forward for people being able to enter Israel freely? Is it going to be vaccine dependent?

There is no doubt that Israel's policies will be guided by vaccines and, therefore, I encourage anyone who can get vaccinated or get the booster to do so. People have to remember that Israel is a small country in which variants can spread quickly and cause terrible damage – both to the health of our citizens and the economy. The current government has managed to keep the country open while managing the health risks, and vaccines are the major reason for this. I don't see them changing their approach and suddenly allowing those unvaccinated to enter.

6: Can you share some of the incredible stories that you have helped to make a reality through your interventions?

We have managed to get people onto flights all around the world when the airlines were confused about the rules and were not letting them board. We helped the parents of lone soldiers get to their children's IDF ceremonies; parents, siblings and grandparents to weddings; and grandparents to the births of their grandchildren. It is the greatest joy to help in these situations, especially when many thought that all hope was lost. We also helped children make it in time to see their parents as they were passing away, which was sad but also incredibly important. The greatest story was the role that we were blessed to play in getting approval for a Holocaust survivor in his 80's to enter Israel to meet his only known biological relative who was discovered via genetic testing.

7: How are you planning to strengthen the relationship between Yad L'Olim and Jews in the diaspora?

Jews all around the world already see us as their address for anything related to Israeli bureaucracy and the Israeli government. We have a dedicated team that answers people who reach out to us at all hours of the day, and we have begun advocating in the Knesset for a wide range of issues impacting Olim, their families and Jews wherever they live. These go way beyond the pandemic and will hopefully lead to more people making Aliyah and to a greater connection for all Jews to Israel.



Dov Lipman is the Founder and Director of Government Relations at Yad L'Olim. Dov was elected to the 19th Knesset in 2013, making him the first American born MK in 30 years. During his time as an MK, he opened the doors of his office to English-speaking olim and he worked to assist them individually and to advance causes on behalf of the community. Former MK Lipman moved to Bet Shemesh with his wife, Dena, and four children in 2004 and is the author of 8 books about Israel and Judaism. Dov's experience assisting the olim community with corona travel and other challenges led to his founding of Yad L'Olim.



Rabbi Benji with local children in Eswatini



FROM ISRAEL TO ESWATINI: A RELIGIOUS MISSION LIKE NO OTHER

RABBI DR BENJI LEVY RECENTLY
PARTICIPATED IN ISRAAID'S
EXPEDITION TO TACKLE
VACCINE HESITANCY IN
ESWATINI - USING THE SHARED
LANGUAGE OF FAITH

by RABBI DR BENJI LEVY



Rabbi Benji with local leaders in Eswatini

When Israel's principal global development NGO, IsraAid, approached me and asked if I would be willing to participate in their efforts to administer the COVID-19 vaccine to the people of the Kingdom of Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland), I was a little surprised.

My doctorate is in philosophy, so medical advice is beyond my scope, and I thought it may have been a mix-up. Surely the people of Eswatini needed physicians and nurses working on the ground to assist with vaccinations?

The reality is that the roll-out in Eswatini, as in many parts of Africa, required a multi-dimensional approach. Faith has a crucial part to play in this. For many of Eswatini's population, religious and tribal leaders are the primary source of authority when it comes to making decisions in all areas of life, including healthcare. Initiating a productive dialogue with the nation's most influential leaders was thus crucial to the success of the vaccination campaign and they requested to meet a 'rabbi from the holy land.'

IsraAid, who are working together with the government of Eswatini to assist in the country's vaccine roll-out, were willing to facilitate this. Having participated in previous IsraAid missions to refugee camps in Lesbos, Greece and Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, I was aware of the extent of the organisation's capacity to successfully carry out complex projects to aid those in need around the globe. Furthermore, doing this work in the name of the people of Israel is a tremendous Kiddush Hashem which I was honoured to support.

IsraAid hoped that Israel's successful vaccination campaign, which included the country's diverse religious populations, would serve as inspiration for local leaders in Eswatini. This would lead them to get vaccinated and, in turn, encourage their congregants and communities to consider accepting the vaccines on offer. By using the shared language of faith to articulate a deeper vision of how the vaccine is a life-saving blessing to our families, friends, communities and the world, the chances of success would be higher. However, since the beginning of IsraAid's efforts to secure and deliver the life-saving coronavirus vaccines to the people of Eswatini, they have reported high levels of scepticism. When vaccine supplies were secured and imported amidst the massive global demand, the authorities found that most citizens were not interested in taking up the jabs.

For many, concerns stemmed from religious fears of getting vaccinated that were being exacerbated by the spread of misinformation.

In this context, I flew with IsraAid to address a large conference of over 100 faith and tribal leaders in Mbabane, the capital of Eswatini. My message was clear: our shared religious tradition urges us to preserve and sanctify human life. Contrary to the circulation of falsehoods, the speed at which experts delivered and distributed a working vaccine is a true blessing and has already saved millions of lives around the globe. Therefore, getting vaccinated and encouraging others to get vaccinated - as we have seen in Israel - is a sacred task that we must all work towards.

While the reception to my message was warm and IsraAid continues its inspirational humanitarian efforts in conjunction with Eswatini's Health Ministry to administer vaccines to people across the country, there remains much work to do. To date, not enough people have taken the vaccine. Dispelling myths - both those rooted in religious language and beyond - must continue to be a priority around the world if we are to defeat the pandemic together.

The next stage in our efforts to do this will aim to reach an even broader audience, especially those in Eswatini who may not fall within the structures of faith communities in the country. To this end, we are currently producing a series of short videos (in English with Swazi subtitles) that will be broadcast and shared through online networks in Eswatini. Communicating clear and honest information about the vaccine will be crucial in progressing towards a post-COVID world.

There is also a broader conclusion from my experience in Eswatini. While in many western societies today faith is often dismissed as a relic of the past, with nothing useful to say about some of the pressing issues of the day, it is a refreshing reminder that there are billions around the world for whom religion is their primary moral compass. A laser-sharp focus on the messages of our scriptures and the sacred texts of our religious traditions can be a force for good in bringing about a healthier path for all of us in our complex modern world.



Rabbi Dr. Benji Levy is a founding partner of Israel Impact Partners, which works with funders to accelerate the growth of the non-profits they care about. He is the former CEO of Mosaic United, Dean of Moriah College, Sydney, and has just published *Covenant and the Jewish Conversion Question* with Palgrave Macmillan.



My Story, My Vision

**GIDEON GOLDWATER SHARES
HIS VISION FOR AISH ON CAMPUS**

Moving from Jerusalem to Birmingham is not something that happens every day, but the journey gave me a perspective on the reality on the ground for Jewish university students. I spent the years in Birmingham meeting with and getting to know all about Jewish Uni living in the UK. Now based in London, I oversee the Aish on Campus team, which comprises five dynamic rabbinic couples, our amazing Campus Coordinator, and an incredible team of operational and logistics support staff who ensure that our educational team can focus on education.

Before starting work on campus I enjoyed writing a dissertation for my MA about the different educational strategies employed by multiple organisations operating within the Jewish student community in the UK. I asked and analysed which strategies were working and what kinds of programmes were helping to build young Jews who cared for, and were invested in, the future of the Jewish community. What I discovered drove me to develop a vision for the future of British Jewish Students and one that I was privileged to be given the keys to bring into a reality.

Central to the mission of Aish and the findings of my dissertation is the role that education plays in the continued journey of young Jews, especially at that stage of life when they are at university. The primary cause of apathy amongst young Jews was the absence of relevant, inspiring Jewish educational offerings that could address the intelligence and academic abilities of university students. Whilst Jewish schooling in the UK was developing better and stronger syllabi and teaching strategies, even those who attended Jewish schools were then left wanting more and were faced with a vacuum in quality Jewish education once they entered the realm of 'higher education'. This to me was reinforcing one of the most unfortunate stereotypes about Jewish ideas: that they are cute, childish and irrelevant to the academic, intelligent and sophisticated thinker. It became apparent that it was critical to develop a way of engaging with Jewish students to share with them the depth, beauty, and sophistication of Jewish teachings specifically during their time on university campus.

The method we developed revolved around social spaces where Jewish students could find a comfortable space to meet and greet, attend targeted educational events and participate in immersive experiences, all with the single goal of encouraging further thought and learning about Jewish values and Jewish knowledge. If we could cultivate a critical mass of students who understood the necessity of engaging with Jewish education on this level, we would effect a grass-roots

revolution of Jewish engagement; a community of young Jews who recognised the need, but also the importance of getting more involved in Jewish learning, Jewish thinking and Jewish practice.

Seeing these mini-communities bud across the country, and then, on occasion coming together to connect with each other, has been the witnessing of a real revival. Covid hit us hard, but we innovated. Initially we had to cancel trips to Israel, Poland, Costa Rica, Brazil amongst others. But then we produced a virtual summer internship with 40 students, our very own chat show and an encounter with 100 weekly participants. Across the country we saw innovative virtual escape rooms, DIY Shabbat dinners, cocktail-making Zoom parties, game shows, and so much more. Since the regulations have decreased, we have seen an explosion of activity across the country, starting with our over-subscribed weekend with more than 180 people, followed by the opening of our Birmingham-based, Selly Oak Aish Hub in the heart of the student community. At the time of writing this article, the Campus department is seeing at least two events every night and engaging with over 400 Jewish students every week.

In addition to all of this we have pioneered the launch and inception of the new Maven hybrid learning platform that gives students access to the world's best Jewish educators from the comfort of their own homes, whilst pairing them up with their local campus educators to mentor them throughout their journeys. Once launched, we saw well over 150 students sign up to a variety of different courses and it was very special to see how excited they were to start learning regularly with their personal mentors. Our team was very quickly outnumbered and we began outsourcing to others to ensure we were able to provide the personal connection to each of our students who applied. We partnered with PAL (Phone and Learn) to make this a reality, and as I write we have just reopened applications to allow even more students to begin their journey in Jewish learning.

The campus department is beginning to see signs of a real revolution of attitude towards increasing involvement and engagement in Jewish activities. It is very special to hear from and speak to so many students who are loving the programming, events and initiatives that we are rolling out on a daily basis. But above all else it gives me hope that the Jewish community of the future is not being lost in their formative years away from the central Jewish areas of the UK. Through our activity and the incredible team of dedicated educators that have, and continue to, sacrifice so much for their love of every Jew, we are playing a critical and instrumental role in ensuring the strength and continued existence of young, proud and connected Jews here in the UK.



Aish Campus Life



DANIELLE JEFFRIES, OUR AISH CAMPUS COORDINATOR, PROVIDES SOME INSIGHTS INTO THE VIBRANT JEWISH LIFE THAT AISH PROVIDES FOR STUDENTS ACROSS THE UK

I am Whitefield born and bred, and am, in many ways, typical in my Jewish identity. I've grown up going to Jewish schools and living a socially 'typical' Jewish life, aware of customs and traditions, but I would by no means consider myself religious. Aish UK, however, has played a key role in my life for many years. From the age of 14, I participated in trips and events, including Israel, Shabbatons and 'lunch and learns', which truly encouraged me to develop my knowledge of Judaism. At the age of 17, I went to Poland and experienced one of the most important and empowering journeys of my life. After this trip, I took the step to strengthen my identity and I decided to start keeping kosher.

When choosing my university, I was influenced by my Jewish experience and decided to choose one with an active Jewish society. When I found out that Aish was on campus at Bristol, this confirmed that it was the university for me. On campus, many Jewish students stray from their Jewish identity, but I made a conscious effort to build a strong relationship with the Aish on campus couple. They pushed me to be the best that I could be, helped me to answer the questions I couldn't previously, and encouraged me to interact with other Jews around me, widening my circle. My university experience would not have been the same without them. Some people mistakenly shy away from involvement with Aish because they might not be religious enough, or because they are expecting the interaction to be always on a deep spiritual basis. This couldn't be further from the truth. For me, the Jaskiels in Bristol were first and foremost a warm and loving family who became good friends. Bristol University has had many issues in relation to anti-Semitic staff, making the Jewish students feel powerless and unsupported. Therefore, after graduating from Bristol, I appreciated the

need to empower Jewish students in order to ensure that they don't lose their identities and are able to fight back against those who respond with hate, and to educate those who are naïve. My role with Aish has been a good platform for this.

When given the opportunity to work with Aish in the campus department, I knew that my passion and experience would be evident and would spread to other students. The role of Campus Coordinator entails travelling up and down the UK participating in and organising various events – from social to educational. The role is so important as it gives me the chance to share my experience with students from all backgrounds. The saying, "A Jew, is a Jew, is a Jew" drives what I do. I pride myself in encouraging students of all levels of 'religiousness' to participate and learn more to strengthen their individual identity and to support their own personal Jewish growth.

The beauty of the role comes with the diversity of the team, their projects, and the students. Events range from challah bakes to intense learning, to pamper evenings. Some students grew up in London and are studying in Birmingham, others are students from Glasgow studying in Sheffield. I am never bored. Not only am I able to share what I know and have learnt with those around me, but I am constantly learning from students myself.

Within the Aish on Campus team, I feel that I have an important voice; a voice that shares what students want and need from us. I strive to develop deep relationships with many students in order (along with the rest of the team) to push their personal Jewish growth. Some students don't know they want it, others ask - identifying who is who and nurturing them accordingly is just one part of why I love what I do.

Danielle was born and raised in Manchester. After being a head girl at King David High School, she attended the University of Bristol to study a BSc in Psychology. Danielle has been babysitting for over 10 years and enjoys supporting young children in their development through life. She has always been involved in Aish events and trips and has been working full-time for Aish for the past year. She spends most of her time travelling to different university campuses, running events and building student relationships. Danielle enjoys socialising, musical theatre, baking and using the supportive skills she has learnt through her degree to support younger students at university.

Campus Team



Rabbi Moshe Friedman

Musician | Aish Bristol | Senior Educator for FJL



Rabbi Gideon Goldwater

Director of Aish on Campus



Danielle Jeffries

Campus Field Worker



Rabbi Shauly Strom

Director of Northern Campuses



Rebbetzin Leah Moszkowski

Leeds Campus Educator



Rabbi Ozer Moszkowski

Leeds Campus Educator



Rabbi Elieser Amiach

Birmingham Campus Educator



Rebbetzin Mirah Amiach

Birmingham Campus Educator



Rabbi Yehuda Davis

Nottingham Campus Educator



Rebbetzin Malky Davis

Nottingham Campus Educator



Rabbi Jonny Newman

Bristol Campus Educator



Rebbetzin Elisheva Newman

Bristol Campus Educator

Aish On Campus

MEET OUR CAMPUS STAFF

1 What motivated you to want to work on campuses in the UK?

YEHUDA DAVIS:

After working with students in Israel for 3 years, I realised how little some students can know about Judaism and how many misconceptions they can have. So I decided I would spend a few years on campus after leaving Israel - to help build a Jewish campus community and educate by way of example, share experiences and have discussions about Judaism.

GIDEON GOLDWATER

I am passionate about the future of the Jewish people. University is a formative experience for most people, and it is also when people leave their homes and their Jewish communities and have little access to meaningful, inspiring Jewish opportunities. I felt I had so much to offer and as R'Sacks said: "where your passion meets what needs to be done, is where you find your destiny" (or something like that).

SHAULY STROM

I love exploring and I love meeting other Jews. Originally, when we moved back to the UK, our role within Aish was with a younger demographic, mainly teenagers and the upper years of high school. After the previous family left Leeds to Israel, I was asked to step in for an interim couple of months until they found a long-term family as a replacement. That two months turned to two years, and we discovered the joy of meeting new people from around the UK and beyond, and being able to support and guide them Jewishly during their time at University. During that time, I also visited campuses such as York and Durham and realised that students out of the "Jewni" bubble were seriously underserved. This brought me to my new role as Director of Northern Campuses - a job which requires many hours on the road and late nights but is something that I feel is a vital area of need in the UK Jewish university scene.

OZER MOSZKOWSKI

My wife and I spent three years in Jewish outreach at the University of Oregon. During this time we saw first-hand the impact one can have on young adults, at a time in their lives when they are thinking about their identities and what it means to be a Jew as they form their future life goals and values. We are both originally from the UK and so when a position to do the same opened up at Leeds University working for Aish, we grabbed it - and we are glad we did!

LEAH MOSZKOWSKI

From a young age, I was perturbed by the divide between secular and non-secular Jews in the UK. I saw Aish as the ideal bridge-builder, and after working here for over a year, can very much confirm that to be the case.

JONNY & ELISHEVA NEWMAN

My university years were significant in my religious growth, and the relationships I built during those years are now life-long mentors and friends. I've always wanted the opportunity to be able to provide that for Jewish students wherever they are in life. Elisheva taught Jewish Studies in London for 9 years and always had a passion to open her heart and home to Jewish students.

ELIESER AMIACH

Having grown up in Switzerland which has a very 'square' mentality (meaning people like to keep to themselves), I always felt that there was more out there to experience. So from a very young age I strived to build relationships with people from all different type of backgrounds and the longer I did that, the more I saw the differences between the different groups in Judaism. I thought to myself, "What can I do to change that; how can I merge the differences and reunite Klall Yisrael to what it is supposed to be?" Of course outreach is an amazing way to achieve that - showing people that Judaism isn't as black and white as it may seem but actually a beautiful and warm place for anyone who wants to be a part of it.



2 What have you enjoyed about meeting uni students and what you do you love most about the role?

YEHUDA DAVIS

I really like getting to know different people from such different backgrounds, and I learn so much from every single student I meet. They all have different perspectives, study different things, and have taught me so much!

GIDEON GOLDWATER

Meeting new people and learning about everyone's personal story is amazing. But above all else, sharing with others, which means so much to me, is what makes this the best job in the world.

SHAULY STROM

You can't help but notice that often different types of students choose to go to different universities. Amongst other reasons, those that choose 'Jewniss' (Leeds, Birmingham Nottingham and Bristol) are typically interested in staying involved in the Jewish 'bubble', whereas those that choose to go further afield are looking for more independence in terms of their Jewish choices. I used to think that this would influence how involved they would become when Jewish events and learning opportunities were offered, but after two years in this position I realise that I was wrong. I meet Jewish students that have had little to zero Jewish education but are committed to their Judaism and are interested in getting involved and learning more. I feel that Jewish Uni students are in a unique stage of life where they are discovering their Jewish identities, and it may take a different form for different people. For example, there are many students that did not respond when they were offered social opportunities on campus, but who reached out to me to get them a menorah. Others are interested in anti-Semitism and others in Kosher food. However, none is less valuable than the other and each Jewish student has that spark of divinity, however far flung or disconnected they may seem.

OZER MOSZKOWSKI

THE COFFEE! Joking aside, I love the ambition and drive the students today have to contribute to the betterment of our planet and society. Being able to assist them even just a little, in crystalising and actualising their dreams and aspirations is a blessing and responsibility I will forever be grateful for. I firmly believe that "today's idealistic student is tomorrow's Jewish leader" and I try to keep this in mind whenever I interact with them.

LEAH MOSZKOWSKI

Being openly Jewish on campus today takes a tremendous amount of bravery. Every time I meet students, I am over-awed by their courage and pride.



JONNY & ELISHEVA NEWMAN

We love engaging with students, talking to them, inviting them to our home and sharing our passion for our Jewish life.

ELIESER AMIACH

Getting to know the students, building relationships, sharing warmth and love is something I have always been passionate about. And of course, once you see success from your work, that motivates you to strive for more and more.

3 Tell us a little about what it is like to be religious in the place you live in? (Leeds, Nottingham etc.)

YEHUDA DAVIS

Being religious in Nottingham can be challenging. In order to buy kosher meat, chicken and cheese we need to drive a minimum of 2 hours. I also don't have a minyan for davening, aside from on Shabbat. So I need to set myself a timetable setting out when I will daven three times a day, so I can be strict and serious about my davening, as opposed to letting it fall to the side.



GIDEON GOLDWATER

Although I now live in London, when I lived in Birmingham it felt special and unique to be a Jew. The sense of pride that those who live in smaller Jewish communities feel is inspiring and I loved getting a dose of it during my time there.

SHAULY STROM

We are lucky that we moved back to the UK and were able to settle in a vibrant Jewish community. For much of the 18 months preceding Covid, our time was split between Manchester (where we live) and Hyde Park, Leeds. Bearing the same name but no resemblance to its doppelganger in the capital, Hyde Park, Leeds is largely a student area with high crime rates, a lot of drug usage and, well, let's say, simpler living arrangements. I personally enjoyed the crisp air, the novelty of being away from the ghetto-like Jewish life. My family appreciated that aspect as well, but it was strange to be wary of walking around late at night wearing a kippah, and to be one of the only Jewish families. Our home became the hub of Jewish activities. We resolved that we would spend time in Leeds as long as there was enough reason to be there, so our house was packed with activity and that became our haven of warmth on campus. Shabbat involved hosting from 7pm on a Friday until the end of Shabbat, so we can safely say that we really enjoyed 'the Leeds house' as my kids called it. I can imagine, though, that it was simpler for us, since we always were able to return to Manchester where the kids could spend time with their family and friends. I think to live there constantly would be an added challenge, and I am full of admiration for the other families that have chosen to do this.

OZER MOSZKOWSKI

It is a little harder to get all the Kosher foods you may want and the Jewish amenities you'd take for granted living in big, vibrant Jewish community such as Manchester or NW London,

but you get something here that you can't get elsewhere - an expressed feeling that your Jewishness matters, which is noticed and appreciated by Jews and non-Jews alike. Living in a place like Leeds you get stopped more often at your local supermarket by non-Jews who are interested in the Jewish religion and Jews who want to connect and expand the Jewish presence in town.

LEAH MOSZKOWSKI

My experience in Leeds as a religious Jew has been nothing but heartening and positive. I have been met with only acceptance and polite curiosity.

JONNY & ELISHEVA NEWMAN

We are really enjoying it although it has been an adjustment moving back to the UK from Israel! There are 3 religious families (including us) in Bristol and no Jewish amenities aside from a minyan on Shabbat morning and a small kosher section in Sainsburys! But in just a few months we have seen how much meaning this has given to our everyday religious activities like eating kosher, davening, going to the Mikva - things we have always done without much thought have now become more significant. We also feel so much more responsible that we are representing Judaism - a privilege and responsibility.

ELIESER AMIACH

Of course it's something incredibly challenging - missing out on normal things like a kosher bakery, minyan or Jewish school for your kids. However, if you are clear on why you are doing what you are doing and see the fruits of your hard work, it makes it all worthwhile.

4 When do you interact with the students? And what kinds of activities to you organise for them?

YEHUDA DAVIS

I am constantly interacting with students - taking them out for a drink, hosting them for suppers, Shabbat meals, and throwing interesting events. This term we have done a cake decorating event, whisky tasting, a BBQ and much more. It's a great chance for students to meet other Jewish students, build relationships, and explore their Jewish identity.

GIDEON GOLDWATER

I help organise national events like weekends and special evenings that allow for students from different universities to engage with each other. In addition to that I design immersive experiences including journeys abroad to different countries including Morocco, Poland, America, South Africa, Israel, Ukraine and Spain.

SHAULY STROM

I am responsible for programming across all Northern Campuses (save the ones that have a couple living there). This includes, to mention a few: Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Durham, Newcastle, York, Lancaster and recently Edinburgh and Glasgow. We have also run events in other remote campuses, such as Warwick and Keele. During the pandemic, a lot of our events were delivered in person in the form of packages and experiences were run online, such as DIY Shabbat Cooking and a Jewniversity Challenge (a pub quiz between universities). Interestingly, for this young department, this was a blessing in (a very poor) disguise, as we were able to develop relationships not only between individuals and ourselves but also between campuses, giving students a feeling of being part of something far bigger. Now that life is back to normal, many of the students that stayed away or weren't involved remotely have begun to get involved, and students are enjoying our fresh bout of new in person events. To name a few (it seems all of our events are food-related for some reason): we launched this year with a games event at each campus attracting a lot of first timers, and our more regular events include 'Deliveries' where students can order a meal and talk on selected dates, as well as 'Tasters', which involves making food such as Sushi, Hummus, Challah etc, and enjoying a taste of our new online Maven programme. We are also currently running a very successful Chanukah 'fry-off' at our Chanukah parties. We hope to move things forward for next term with more pub learning events, Maven watch parties and 'Deliveries' sessions at a wider variety of campuses.

OZER MOSZKOWSKI

All the time, really. During the day most of my time is spent on campus at different coffee shops meeting with students. Most of them want to spend our weekly catch-up learning Jewish texts together, whilst others use it as an opportunity to have a discussion with a Rabbi in a non-formal setting and pose the Jewish questions that they have never had the opportunity to ask. The evenings are when we run our programmes and classes. We host a variety of events to ensure we have something of interest for every Jewish student regardless of their Jewish affiliation and background. This year we have been focusing our events around Aish's brand new Maven courses - in-person discussions on each particular course for those students who are engaged in that particular course.

LEAH MOSZKOWSKI

I get to interact with students in a variety of settings and circumstances including at our house for social and educational events, at their homes for learning groups, and over Zoom for catchups and learning sessions.

JONNY & ELISHEVA NEWMAN

We have a weekly open house on Sundays for Bristol Brunch; a group that joins us for dinner and learning every Tuesday evening; some bigger social events on Thursday evenings like a Games Night, Soup & Sushi social; unique Fresher dinner events; Shabbat meals that we host; and going to say hi at the JSoc FND. We also meet up with students for coffee to really get to know them well and learn together.

ELIESER AMIACH

We interact with students on a 24/7 basis in various different ways. We hold social events to connect the students on campus with each other and educational events where we teach people about basics in life and Judaism. We host Shabbats where we share warmth and love and the beauty of sitting around a table on a Shabbat, and invite people to become a part of our family. We also facilitate Chaburah learning, where we engage and discuss deep topics of Judaism and Torah. But most important are the one-on-one sessions where we really get to know our students and build friendships for life.



Aish On Campus

MEET OUR STUDENTS

1 WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO STUDY AT THAT PARTICULAR UNIVERSITY?

Sam Niman

It's one of the few universities that offer the degree that I want to do.

Gideon Denton

I chose Nottingham because I liked the course option and it's in a very central location.

Lottie Simmonds

Bristol is a very academic university whilst still having a great social life so I think it gets the balance right.

2 HAVE YOU CONNECTED TO THE AISH CAMPUS COUPLE?

Sam Niman

Yes

Gideon Denton

Yes

Lottie Simmonds

I've connected to the Aish couple through looking after their baby! I've really enjoyed babysitting for them as well as getting to know them over the past few months.

3 WHAT KIND OF JEWISH LIFE IS OFFERED AT THIS UNIVERSITY AND WOULD YOU CHOOSE IT AGAIN IF YOU HAD THE CHOICE?

Sam Niman

We have a student shul, with Chabad on campus and Aish come and do events so it's very easy to have a Jewish life.

Gideon Denton

Yes, I would choose Nottingham again. There are loads of different Jewish events.

Lottie Simmonds

There is a very united, community feel to the Jewish life in Bristol which I've experienced with both JSoc and Aish.

4 WHAT ARE YOU STUDYING?

Sam Niman

Football business and media at UCFB Etihad.

Gideon Denton

Environmental engineering.

Lottie Simmonds

I'm studying French and Spanish.

5 WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF STUDYING IN THIS PLACE?

Sam Niman

Having my lectures in a box at the stadium with a great view of the pitch.

Gideon Denton

A good social life and great sporting opportunities.

Lottie Simmonds

I've really enjoyed my seminars so far at Bristol - they're very engaging and thought-provoking.

6 WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO AFTER UNI?

Sam Niman

I'd like to go into football media - either commentary or social media for a football club.

Gideon Denton

Engineering.

Lottie Simmonds

I am hoping to enter the diplomatic service after I graduate.

MEET OUR ALUMNI

1 What did you love most about your time on that university campus and in that place?

LIAM SCOP

The people.

ARIELLE KAUFMAN

I loved the actual university campus and I loved being part of such a large and active Jewish social life.

2 Do you think that it offered you a positive experience as a Jew?

LIAM SCOP

Yes, very.

ARIELLE KAUFMAN

Yes, I got to meet lots of other Jewish students from a variety of different backgrounds and was very welcomed by all the couples from organisations such as Aish, Chabad and Chaplaincy.

3 Would you recommend it to other students?

LIAM SCOP

Yes.

ARIELLE KAUFMAN

Yes, definitely. I had the best 4 years at Birmingham University.

4 How did the Aish couple on campus play a role in your experience at uni?

LIAM SCOP

By providing food and good speakers, Shabbat meals and informal learning.

ARIELLE KAUFMAN

I met three Aish campus couples whilst I was at Birmingham and they all provided engaging activities, lots of food and a welcoming home for all the students.



5 Did Aish help create a mini community for you while at uni?

LIAM SCOP

No, the community was already big, but Aish played a vital role in the community.

ARIELLE KAUFMAN

There is already a large JSOC and Jewish student community at Birmingham, but Aish provided many events and evenings to help play a part in this.

6 What are you doing now after uni and are you still involved with Aish YP programs?

LIAM SCOP

I am a software developer and very much involved with YP programmes.

ARIELLE KAUFMAN

I work as an assistant Psychologist and I am still involved with Aish.

COMMUNITY

SHABBAT WALK

ENRICHING LIVES, ONE STEP AT A TIME



Our volunteers in action Photo credit: Shimon Mayerfeld

by **SHIRA DRUION**

WE CAUGHT UP WITH **ELIEZER GILBERT**, CEO OF
SHABBAT WALK, AN ORGANISATION THAT IS INSPIRING THE
YOUTH OF OUR COMMUNITY TO GIVE BACK



Volunteering • Giving • Changing Lives

How did Shabbat Walk start?

Shabbat Walk Started back in 2015, when I was just 24 years old. A friend approached me about walking to the Royal Free Hospital on Shabbat afternoon to visit Jewish patients. I thought he was mad - walking all that way to visit people you don't know. He reassured me and told me he had been doing this for a while. I was very sceptical, so it took some convincing before I reluctantly agreed. That Shabbat, I joined him, and we spent four hours in the Royal Free talking and singing to patients. I was amazed at how the time flew by. I enjoyed every moment and didn't miss a week for the next five years.

At the same time, I was also volunteering for a host of other organisations. One Sunday I was tasked with giving a ride to a family member of a patient at the Royal Free hospital. On our drive, I spoke about my Shabbat visits and mentioned that if I had known about the family member then, I would have visited them too. My passenger loved the idea and expressed the desire to join my grassroots organisation.

Later that week, a group of keen volunteers messaged me saying they would like to get involved. This was amazing - but I wondered whether the Royal Free Hospital would appreciate so many young volunteers arriving all at once. And so, the search was on to find meaningful volunteering opportunities for these youngsters. I contacted all the local care homes to ask them if they would appreciate having volunteers come on a Shabbat afternoon. Within a few months, 17 care homes had requested our services. This quickly expanded to include helping families on Shabbat, and in time the need for our service grew exponentially to the point that we now help the community 365 days a year.

Who does it service? Please describe the way you help families and individuals.

Shabbat walk helps anyone in the Jewish community who can benefit from youth volunteers. There are no set criteria. We currently have around 22 projects that service 120 families and 2000 individuals. Our ethos is to offer support to those in need. From assisting a child with his homework so his overwhelmed

mother can care for her newborn baby, to giving a much-needed break to parents of a child with special needs, our volunteers offer a helping hand. Without sounding dramatic, we are a lifeline to many of our families, who would struggle to cope without our help.

Families can be in turmoil for several reasons - a death or divorce, financial struggles or children with additional needs. There is also the physical and emotional toll that illness can take on a family, and whilst there are many organisations that help the sick person, the family often need direct assistance too. This can be in the form of ready peeled vegetable soup packs, taking little ones to the park or just keeping them occupied. By matching our volunteers with families in need, we alleviate hardship in a tangible way.

Who are your volunteers? How old do they have to be to volunteer?

Our young volunteers attend local orthodox schools including MGS, MH, Hasmonian, Pardes House, BY, Tiferes, Lubavitch, JFS and Emmanuel college. The minimum age for joining is 13.

Avi Dubiner has been part of the charity since the outset. He joined Shabbat Walk as a volunteer at age 15 and rapidly grew in his role, becoming my right-hand man, recruiting and coordinating boy volunteers. Avi was instrumental in gaining a solid volunteer pool of over 200 young people, while volunteering himself almost every day. In 2018, at the age of 18, he received the well-deserved Points of Lights award from the Prime Minister Theresa May.

When he went to yeshiva, Avi did not stop volunteering. He started Shabbat Walk Israel, and during his break times he arranged for volunteers to visit the elderly and individuals with special needs. Shabbat Walk paid for travel (sometimes over an hour) and for all other expenses including a dedicated staff member to find and coordinate volunteering opportunities. When Avi returned to London, he joined the staff team to head the boy's division and arrange events, including our yearly bike ride.



Theresa May presenting Avi Dubiner with the 2018 Points of Light Award

We regularly hold recruitment events and provide our volunteers with training and safeguarding. We only set them up as active volunteers after completion of basic training. We implement strict safeguarding protocols to keep all our volunteers safe and check in with them regularly. There is no direct contact between the families and volunteers and all communication is handled by our extended staff.

How many families do you service and how big is your capacity? Are you looking for more volunteers?

More than 120 families use our services. Depending on their needs and the availability of our volunteers, they may receive daily or weekly assistance.

We currently have over 700 registered volunteers and are always looking to recruit new volunteers. With Covid, many more people have reached out to us for help, plus every year some of our volunteers graduate from school and move on.

Harnessing the energy of youth and channelling it into helping people in need is a win-win situation. Those seeking help benefit, and our volunteers learn to give and to appreciate life in a new way. After all, there is no better feeling in the world than being able to help someone in need!



Shira Druon obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in English, psychology and education. She then trained as a speech and drama teacher through the Trinity College of London. She is an experienced journalist, the former editor of YALLA magazine and the executive editor of Perspectives, the magazine of Aish UK. She has been an educator for many years, teaching students from nursery through to university, where she lectured on communication and writing skills. She now teaches English and runs her own drama company called Dramatix, where she teaches a broad age range of students. Druon is passionate about women's education. She gives a weekly *parsha shiur*, as well as other *shiurim*, and runs women's programmes in the community.



Some of our amazing riders who rode 230km to support Shabbat Walk

Why is it important for children today to give back to others and to do chesed? How does this structured form of chesed help young people to become people who build their chesed muscles?

Chesed is one of the fundamental tenets of Judaism. In fact, it is one of the three pillars the world rests upon. Lest we forget, our forefathers were the epitome of chesed and we continue to try to emulate this trait.

The Jewish community at large has a vast network of charitable organisations to help with every need imaginable. But where does the younger generation fit in? This generation is indulged and hyper focused on self-gratification, so offering them opportunities to be selfless and giving can change their whole outlook on life.

Regular commitment to volunteering will encourage children to think of others, to be caring, patient and generous. These are all character traits that will change their lives and help them to succeed in their relationships. To reinforce this point, we convey this message both through education and in its practical application.

We understand young minds and the need to have fun. Consequently, we incentivise, praise and offer fun activities for our volunteers. It is most certainly an exciting club to belong to. Shabbat Walk is, in fact, shaping the next generation of givers.



Eliezer Gilbert is the CEO of Shabbat Walk. He is actually a trained chef by profession and has taken his love for cooking and passion for inspiring youth and translated it into a career teaching food and nutrition at Pardes House Grammar School.

He lives in London with his young family and when he is not busy with Shabbat Walk, which rarely happens these days, he enjoys football, golf and skiing.

SHIRA DRUION REVIEWS SOME OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE UK JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

This year's 25th anniversary edition of the UK Jewish Film Festival was a kaleidoscope of panache and pizzazz, and boasted a superb collection of unique films to reach filmgoers from across the spectrum. I was lucky enough to review three films, each of which held its own magic and delivered stories of relevance that highlighted the richness of Jewish life in cities all over the world. Often, particularly in big cities, we may not be aware of what goes on in other Jewish communities or of projects that are running on the global circuit. These films lift the veil off many beautiful vignettes to reveal these stories.

Shalom Taiwan



Shalom Taiwan tells the story of a Chabad rabbi whose Chabad House in Argentina is under financial stress, and he is made aware of a fundraising opportunity in Taiwan which promises lucrative potential. However, when he is there, a wealthy woman makes him an offer that if he breaks her daughter and her boyfriend up, she will give him a sizable donation. The rabbi is forced to choose between his principles and the looming debt of his Chabad house. He chooses his principles. As I sat there, I thought about how this story is true of so many rabbinic personalities who are required to fundraise, and how often it proves to be challenging for them to stick to their values which can at times prove to be a high price in collateral damage. I was left most inspired by what it is to commit to the goal of living truthfully and how that phenomenon manifests for so many who want to do what is right. The film is quirky, cool and provocative!

A Starry Sky Above the Roman Ghetto



This movie stole the show for me. It was moving, historic and shared many important and relevant messages. Truly the best contemporary film out there. It begins in the all too familiar violent past of the wartime years at the height of the 1943 Nazi occupation of Rome, and narrates the story of a young gentle woman, Sophia, who finds a letter addressed to a young girl by the name of Sarah Cohen. The letter was written just after the Holocaust and so after reading the letter, Sophia is determined to find Sarah Cohen. She ropes in a group of youths to help her, some of whom are Jewish and some not. This brings to the fore issues of assimilation and highlights the immense destruction caused by the Holocaust which reverberates through our world to this very day. The narrative unfolds against the backdrop of the Roman ghetto and is sewn together with Italian love and drama. I thought it was marvellous.

Become a member with UK Jewish Film and gain access to priority booking for next year's festival, 10% discount on cinema screenings around London, and 20% discount + 2 Free film rentals on our On Demand service which is the only place to watch Jewish and Israeli films, TV series and shorts at home, right now.

Final Account



This stellar piece of work took home the award for best documentary at the festival. It is a mind-blowing set of testimonies that filmmaker Luke Holland recorded over a ten-year period. In 2008, Holland began hunting Nazis. His goal was not to bring them before a war-crimes tribunal, but to get them to share their stories and document the truth for eternity. The elderly men and women he sought out in the big cities and small burghs of Germany and Austria were the last living generation to have experienced the Third Reich first-hand. They had been members of the Hitler Youth, served as Waffen S.S. storm-troopers, or guards at concentration camps. Others had simply watched as their neighbours were rounded up and shipped away, never to be seen again. These witnesses, who will all die within the next decade, are the subjects of this movie.

I sat in my seat both riveted and disgusted at the depravity of which human being are capable. This movie must be shown to audiences all over the world, because only when you listen to first-hand accounts will you say that these sentiments are still here with us today. It is undisputed, and nobody can say that we are now out of danger. This documentary is an account of the hard and painful truth which is still very much an ongoing battle. It is a great pity that Holland died just short of the film's release. His efforts should be applauded, for he has delivered the truth from the other side, which undoubtedly carries great significance.



Shira Druon obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in English, psychology and education. She then trained as a speech and drama teacher through the Trinity College of London. She is an experienced journalist, the former editor of YALLA magazine and the executive editor of Perspectives, the magazine of Aish UK. She has been an educator for many years, teaching students from nursery through to university, where she lectured on communication and writing skills. She now teaches English and runs her own drama company called Dramatix, where she teaches a broad age range of students. Druon is passionate about women's education. She gives a weekly *parsha shiur*, as well as other *shiurim*, and runs women's programmes in the community.



SAM POPE, ASSOCIATE
PRODUCER OF FINAL ACCOUNT,
THAT WON BEST DOCUMENTARY
AT THE UK JEWISH FILM
FESTIVAL 2021, PROVIDES SOME
INSIGHTS INTO THE MAKING
OF THE FILM

When Luke Holland set out on the journey that would become Final Account, he sought to answer the question, "Why were my grandparents murdered?" The only people he felt could offer some insight into the answer were the same people who had so far refused to do so - the men and women of Germany and Austria. The ordinary people, whose complicity and engagement had allowed for the great crime of the Holocaust to take place.

I began working with Luke in January 2011. Even in those early stages, in their raw, un-edited form, the accounts being recorded were shocking. In cosy living rooms, surrounded by religious and familial paraphernalia, the last living witnesses from the perpetrators' side were prompted to explore a part of their history that had, perhaps intentionally, remained buried for several decades.

Through his skilful and delicate examination, honed over several decades as a documentary filmmaker, Luke posed questions of responsibility and complicity. Answers ranged from refusal to acknowledgement to acceptance. In all cases, however, the expressions passing across their faces revealed a perhaps hidden experience.



Within a few months of watching these interviews, I knew I had to be a part of this project. It seemed to me to be not only a project of significant historical importance, but one that held a disturbing relevance to our contemporary world.

This journey was not easy. Finding those who were willing to go on the record was a challenge in and of itself, requiring a range of approaches from the obvious to the occasionally unorthodox. Equally, securing funding for such a project proved tremendously challenging. The early years of the project relied on individual donations from family and friends until we received institutional backing from the Pears Foundation and the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (INA) in Paris, to whom we remain immensely grateful. Still, the project was run on a shoestring, every spare penny invested into the ongoing search.

Final Account was always conceived as an archive first, a film second, built on three founding pillars of education, research, and memorial. When it came to editing this film, its archival role proved to be an immense blessing as we whittled down the near 600 hours to 90 minutes. We took comfort in the knowledge that every sequence lost from the film would not end its life on the cutting room floor, that it was preserved in perpetuity.

When I asked Luke about what he hoped this film to achieve, he responded, "I don't necessarily expect it to provide answers, I only hope it will prompt people to ask better questions."

Speaking personally, one of the most important outcomes of this work is the recording of names. Often during the course of an interview, a Jewish name would be brought up - a friend, a neighbour, a teacher. Luke would ask questions about these people, and whether they knew what had happened to them. History is not tidy. It is easy for people to disappear; slip through the cracks. If we accomplished nothing else, that some of those names have been saved through this work; that their memory does not fade away, is justification enough for a decade of work.



Born in Wiltshire, Sam first met Luke Holland in 1995 at the age of six when Luke moved with his family to the same small village of Ditchling in East Sussex. During his studies he developed an interest in film and photography, and his work was included in a collaborative exhibition with Photoworks and Glyndebourne Opera House. After graduating with a BA from the Metropolitan Film School in 2010, Sam began working with Luke to develop the Final Account Project, and for the next nine years he worked almost exclusively with Luke on this project. Currently Sam is working on a number of documentary projects and continues to support the development of the 'Final Account Archive' with institutional partners at the Wiener Library, INA and UCL.



Luke and Diane Weyermann met nearly twenty years ago at the International Documentary Filmfestival, Amsterdam (IDFA). It was a chance encounter and a friendship that paved the way for Final Account two decades later. Much like the hesitancy regarding funding, there was a great reluctance from production companies to support this film, but Diane and Participant Media championed Final Account with conviction.

Whilst shooting Final Account in 2013, Luke was diagnosed with smoldering multiple myeloma and B-cell lymphoma, beginning a long struggle with cancer, nearly claiming his life in 2015. He recovered enough to complete his work on the archive and begin editing Final Account, when his cancers reemerged and his doctors gave him a year to live. He was able to see the Final Account to completion. He died six months later, on 10 June 2020. A little over a year later, Diane lost her own fight with cancer and died in October 2021.

In the short period I knew Diane, she was compassionate, kind and intelligent. She had a vision for this film, without which it may never have been made at all.

Receiving the Best Documentary award from the Jewish Film Festival is a huge honour for the film and all those who made it possible. When you are in the thick of it there are no guarantees. How will it be received when it makes its way out into the world, particularly when it deals with such an important and sensitive moment in so many lives, this is felt acutely?

This award serves as an acknowledgement, not only of the accomplishments of the film, but of the years of dedication and labour that went into it. From the hundreds of individuals who supported and contributed to this project, the production team and creative partners who shaped it and brought it to the screen, and Diane Weyermann, without whom this film could not have been made. Most importantly of all though, it serves as a testament to Luke and his steadfast perseverance to capture these last echoes from history before they were lost forever. I wish he was still with us to receive this confirmation, but in my heart I am certain he knew he had accomplished his mission, to honour the memory of his grandparents and the millions of others who were lost.

MY RELATIONSHIP *with* FOOD

THE ART OF MINDFUL EATING

Delicious meets Healthy

WHOLESOME RECIPES TO GET
YOU THROUGH WINTER

by LISA ROUKIN



Lisa Roukin is an author, chef and teacher, with an absolute passion for nutritional, wholesome and delicious food. Through her own challenging journey, she has developed a wealth of knowledge and experience that has led her to become a gluten-free expert, and industry leader in healthy eating. Lisa has now devoted her life to sharing her passion and encouraging, supporting and inspiring people to change their dietary habits for the better. Her self-published cookery book, *My Relationship with Food*, features 100 delicious, nutritious recipes.





WHEN MAKING THESE RECIPES, I'D LOVE TO SEE HOW YOU
GET ON, SO EITHER SEND A PHOTO TO
LISA@MYRELATIONSHIPWITHFOOD.COM OR POST A PICTURE
TO INSTAGRAM USING THE [#MYRELATIONSHIPWITHFOOD](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/myrelationshipwithfood/) AND
TAG [@MYRELATIONSHIPWITHFOOD](https://www.instagram.com/myrelationshipwithfood/)



BEEF MINCE WITH SWEET POTATO & BUTTERNUT SQUASH HASH BROWN

Using a combination of veal and beef mince, this dish is not only extremely light and delicate in flavour but also irresistibly tasty. Plus, in swapping out the traditional mash topping to one of my all-time favourites, butternut squash and sweet potato, this hash brown topping is like nothing you've ever tried before – addictive and crispy!

SERVES 8

- 400g beef mince
- 400g veal mince (if you're unable to get veal mince you can just use beef mince)
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 aubergine, cubed in ½ inch pieces
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 chicken or vegetable stock cube (gluten free, if required)
- 4 tbsp. tomato puree
- 500g passata (I recommend the brand Mutti)
- 1 tsp. garlic granules
- 2 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. honey
- Cracked black pepper
- Sea salt

SWEET POTATO & BUTTERNUT SQUASH HASH

- 1 butternut squash, grated (discard the seeds and skin)
- 3 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and grated
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- Sea salt
- White pepper

PREPARATION TIME – 40 MINS; COOKING TIME – 40 MINS

Pre-heat the oven to 400°F, gas mark 6, 200°C (180°C fan-assisted).

In a large frying pan add 3 tbsp. olive oil and sauté the onions until they are soft and translucent for about 5 minutes. Add the aubergine to the onions and after 3 minutes crumble the chicken stock cube in, stirring continuously for 4 minutes over a gentle heat. Then add in the crushed garlic and cook for a further 3 minutes. Set the aubergine and onions aside on a separate plate.

Add the beef and veal mince to the pan and fry until it has browned all over.

Once the meat has browned, season generously with sea salt, garlic granules, paprika and black pepper and cook for a further 3 minutes, until the juices start to evaporate and all the seasoning is thoroughly combined. Add the tomato puree, stir into the meat and cook for a further 2 minutes. Add the aubergine and onion back into the meat and mix it in, then add in the passata sauce and honey. Mix together, reduce the heat to medium, check for seasoning and cook for 5 minutes.

To make the topping, season the grated sweet potato and butternut squash with sea salt and white pepper, 2 tbsp. olive oil and mix.

Pour the meat mixture into a casserole dish then spoon the hash topping over the meat and drizzle 1 tbsp. olive oil over the top.

Place in the pre-heated oven for 40 minutes.

LISA'S TIP

The mix of veal and beef in this dish makes it a slightly lighter texture, and together with the grated vegetables on top is a great alternative to your typical meat and potato dish and makes a change from the traditional cottage/shepherd's pie!

You can make this the day before as I find it's tastier the next day.

When reheating, place in a preheated oven for 30 minutes. For ultimate indulgence, serve this dish with some fresh greens or beans on the side!

CHICKEN QUINOA STIR FRY

A great dish for everyone to tuck into and share. A simple mid-week meal that will satisfy the whole family. This Chicken Quinoa Stir Fry is super simple to put together and is extremely high in protein. Plus, it's perfect as leftovers served cold as a salad!

SERVES 4-6

- 500g chicken breast, cut against the grain into 1 cm strips
- 300g quinoa, rinsed and drained
- 400ml cold water
- 125g shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- 2 Echalion shallots, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 red chili, deseeded and chopped
- 1 tsp. fresh ginger, finely grated (approx. 1 inch)
- 2 handfuls coriander, chopped
- 100g baby corn, cut in half lengthways
- 100g mange tout
- 150g edamame beans, cooked
- 1 tbsp. rapeseed oil
- 1 tbsp. sesame oil
- 1 ½ - 2 tsp. Chinese 5 spice
- Cracked black pepper
- Sea salt
- 3 tbsp. tamari soy sauce (gluten-free)
- 3 tbsp. honey
- 7 tbsp. coconut aminos (If you would prefer to use coconut aminos – use instead of the soy and honey option above)

GARNISH

- Sesame seeds, toasted
- Coriander
- Soy sauce or coconut aminos, siracha sauce or sweet chili sauce

PREPARATION TIME – 20 MINS; COOKING TIME – 40 MINUTES

Season the chicken breast with sea salt and black pepper and 1 ½ - 2 tsp. Chinese 5 spice, 1 tbsp. sesame oil. Mix it in and leave to infuse.

Rinse the quinoa under cold water until the water runs clear, then drain through a sieve. Put the quinoa in a saucepan and cover with the cold water, bring to the boil, then cover and reduce to a simmer for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, leave to stand for 5 minutes, fluff with a fork and then put the lid back on until ready to use.

Heat the wok on a medium/high heat; add the rapeseed oil then add the onions and sauté until soft and translucent. Remove onions from the wok and set aside. To the wok, add the marinated chicken and fry until cooked through, around 8 minutes, stirring continuously. Add the sauteed onions and shiitake mushrooms to the wok and cook for 2 minutes, then add the garlic, ginger, coriander and chili, and cook for a further 2 minutes. Add the tamari soy sauce and honey (or 7 tbsp. coconut aminos) and cook to reduce the sauce slightly for about 1 minute.

Add the baby corn, mange tout and edamame beans. Mix and cook for 3 minutes so the vegetables are lightly cooked.

Take off the heat and fold in the cooked quinoa.

To serve, sprinkle toasted sesame seeds and chopped coriander on top.

LISA'S TIP

I use quinoa instead of rice to prepare this stir fry since quinoa has more dietary benefits than rice. Quinoa has four times more protein and fibre and ten times the iron and potassium when compared to white rice. I also think that quinoa adds a nice texture to the stir fry, but if you love rice, feel free to use it as a substitute for the quinoa.





BANANA & CHICKPEA FLOUR CAKE

Banana cake always goes down a treat but it's time to add another new recipe to your repertoire. This is not your ordinary banana cake. One piece of advice is not to mention the word chickpea flour until your guests have tried it! Chickpea flour has loads of added benefits - it's packed with fibre, extremely high in protein, rich in vitamins, minerals and entirely grain free.

SERVES 10-12

- 3 large eggs
- 3 ripe bananas, mashed
- 185g butter (I use organic by Yeo Valley)
- 200g golden caster sugar
- 200g chickpea flour (aka garbanzo bean flour, ceci flour, chana, besan and gram flour)
- sifted
- 2 tsp baking powder (wheat -free)
- 1 pinch sea salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla bean paste

PREPARATION TIME – 20 MINS; COOKING TIME – 1 HOUR AND 30 MINUTES

Preheat the oven to 375°F, gas mark 3, 160°C (140°C fan-assisted).

In a food mixer, or by hand, cream the butter and sugar until smooth. Then add the eggs one at a time. Add the bananas, blend until smooth together with the chickpea flour, vanilla, sea salt and baking powder, and beat until combined.

Line the base and sides of a non-stick 2lb loaf tin with parchment paper or 2lb loaf tin liner.

Pour in the mixture and bake on the middle shelf of the preheated oven for 1 hour. After 1 hour, loosely cover the top of the loaf with tin foil to prevent burning and cook for a further 30 minutes.

Remove from the oven when cooked and place on a cooling rack. After twenty minutes, release the cake from the loaf tin and leave to cool.

As soon as the cake has cooled, wrap tightly in foil to keep the cake extra moist. You'll often find banana cake tastes better the next day, so if you want to get ahead of the game, you can make this cake the day before serving and keep it tightly wrapped in foil until ready to eat!

LISA'S TIP

Okay, this recipe has sugar, but feel free to use your choice of sugar or sweetener instead. Bananas have always been one of my favourite fruits for breakfasts and snacks. As bananas are packed full of goodness, including vitamin C, potassium and dietary fibre any cakes baked with them are family favourites. I love having a slice for breakfast topped with a dollop of yogurt, honey and berries. If you fancy, you can add some chocolate chips or walnuts to the mix if you prefer a different texture in each slice.

Don't be tempted to substitute the chickpea flour with regular flour. This recipe works particularly well with chickpea flour, and it is not like for like when it comes to regular flour. I've made a few attempts to get the consistency right, so try not to alter the recipe, unless you want to add a few small chocolate chips or walnuts. Plus, chickpea flour is extremely high in protein – the cake itself contains 200g of flour which is around 44g of protein!



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PAYING IT FORWARD, ONE STARFISH AT A TIME

by MARIA BEIDER

SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS CAN MAKE
THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE



As an old man walked along the beach at dawn, he noticed a young boy picking up starfish and putting them into the sea. He asked the boy why he was doing this. The boy answered that the stranded starfish would die if left until the morning sun. "But the beach goes on for miles and there are thousands of starfish," countered the old man. "How can your efforts make any difference?" The young boy looked at the starfish in his hand and placed it safely into the waves. "It makes a difference to this one," he said.

(Loren Eisley, an American anthropologist)

The story of the little boy and the starfish has always held a special place in my heart and has become a legacy 'heirloom' passed down and along my family. My uncle, Professor David Baum, a dedicated paediatrician, told the story many times over the years until it became his signature story.

When I was chosen to be the speaker at my master's graduation ceremony a few years ago, it was obvious to me that the starfish story would make a guest appearance. My message was clear. Social work is not about changing people. The goal is to be there

as our clients make incremental, but significant steps forward. Social work is also not about numbers. It is all about helping the individual. We cannot expect to change the whole world, but we can help one individual at a time.

At some stage, the late Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks of blessed memory, met my uncle and was enchanted by his philosophy of life and in turn perpetuated the starfish story in my uncle's name. In the Chief Rabbi's book, *To Heal a Fractured World* he remembers my uncle fondly, citing the starfish story, and then he develops the idea by proceeding to offer his own interpretation, based on the concept of Tikkun Olam - fixing the world, which he describes as a part of the Jewish ethos of responsibility: "We do it one day at a time, one person at a time, one act at a time. A single life, said the sages, is like a whole universe. Save a life and you save a world. Change a life and you begin to change the world."

I have always carried this belief with me. Every one of us can do this and what is more, it is the small acts that count. Once my husband attended a funeral in Jerusalem where the following story was shared during the eulogy, illustrating this very point. Every Shabbat morning, the Bayit vegan-based rabbi (whose funeral this was) used to walk past an elderly Russian couple sitting on a bench, on his way to shul. Every time, he would greet them with a warm smile and wish them 'Shabbat shalom.' This went on for many years. One Shabbat morning as he approached, he saw that the lady was sitting alone. He asked her where her husband was. She replied that he had been taken very suddenly the week before. She then explained that she had wanted the rabbi to know that his weekly greeting and warmth had been the highlight of her husband's week. This tender story echoes the poignant message of the Chief Rabbi.

The legacy of the little boy and the starfish continued in my own life. In November 2020, our dear chief rabbi passed away. Jews and non-Jews alike were shocked, and deeply mourned the immense loss of this great man, described as a 'prince of God.' I picked up his book, which I had spontaneously thrown into the top of my suitcase en route to the southern hemisphere. Not only was it a comfort to me to have it readily available and to be able to drink from the fountain of his wisdom, but I was reminded of his connection to my family legacy.

At the same time, I was involved in a Zoom personal development course for therapists where the aim was to explore and deepen our own internal processes. Each week we would be given a different exercise which would stretch us in some way. That week, as our group facilitator started to read the starfish story my eyes welled up with tears. Why did I need to hear this story again? The timing was surreal and yet I felt complacent because I knew the ending. It was her punchline that turned the story upside down, giving me vertigo and making my hairs stand on end. "So, who was your starfish thrower?" she asked. "Who threw you back into the sea?"

I was quite literally speechless. Yes, I had been living my life according to this principle of making a difference to one starfish at a time, but I had never contemplated the fact that I too have been a vulnerable starfish, at a certain point in my journey, who had been picked up and thrown back into the waves. I mulled this over and did not take long to recognize the starfish throwers in my own story. How often do we take the time to appreciate the first-grade teacher who noticed us and made us feel like a star, or the Rabbi who pushed to get us into the yeshiva we wanted?

There were a few people along the way, who made me feel special, but there were one or two that really stood out at a critical time in my life, and with the encouragement of my supervisor and the group, I decided it was time to share with my starfish throwers and thank them. At this point in the story, I would just like to extend my gratitude to Aish UK - all the Rabonim, Rebbetzins, educators, madrichim and madrichot - for collectively throwing me back into the sea when I was drying up on the beach.

I contacted two of my mentors and showed my appreciation for all that they had done for me when I was a confused, young adult - seeing me and believing in me, when I certainly did not, giving me confidence and encouragement. The result of my sharing and making myself vulnerable, made a very powerful

impact. One of my mentors, none other than Rabbi Naftali Schiff, was so moved by my openness and outpouring of gratitude, that he decided to make this metaphorical starfish story tangible, memorable and real in a way that only he knew how. In a moment of spontaneity, he ordered me a beautiful fish tank with real tropical fish, adorned with stone starfish, which he organised with tremendous effort to have delivered to my home in South Africa! I was both amused and touched by this typically quirky, yet profound and sincere gesture.

However, this fish tank is not just a cute and generous gift. It is a testament for me of how those small acts can make a big difference, and how giving creates a ripple effect in the world. Some of us know what it is like to have been there, washed up and helpless, and it is wonderful if we can show gratitude to our starfish throwers. One cannot underestimate the power of gratitude.

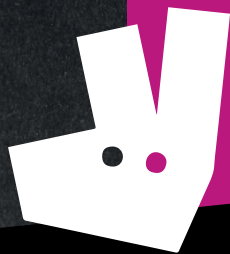
So now it is my turn. Since receiving this gift, I have felt an obligation to pass on this important message of communal responsibility and tikkun olam shared by my uncle, Rabbi Sacks of blessed memory and by my mentors. For me, the legacy of paying it forward, one person at a time, will go on and on creating more ripples. I received vital help when I needed it and now that I feel empowered and my starfish muscles are strong, it is my privilege to help other stranded starfish get back to sea.

We all have times in our lives when we need to be carried on another's wings or given a helping hand. Sometimes it is hard for us to see we are the stranded ones and drying up on the beach. Sometimes it is difficult to ask for the help to get back to where we need to be. But we must remember that we are not divided into helpful starfish throwers and helpless starfish. We take turns in life. There is a time to help and a time to be helped. If you are feeling stuck you must reach out and accept help from others, knowing that the time will come when you will be able to pay it forward to another. Having this awareness will make the receiving part easier.

If you are doing nicely, think of the small kind acts you can do that will impact those around you - a smile, a thank you, a word of encouragement, a check-in, a gift or a compliment. One last thought: if we all make a pre-emptive effort to look out for our students, workers, neighbours, patients, friends and family, then there will be less starfish stranded on the beach at dawn.



Originally a primary school teacher from London, Maria Beider has been living in Israel with her husband and their five children for the past fourteen years. During this time, she gained a Master's in Social Work and subsequently practiced as a psychotherapist at the Neve Family Institute, specialising in trauma. She is also trained in EMDR and IFS (Internal Family Systems). The Beider family recently moved to Johannesburg, where her husband has taken up a Rabbinical post.



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