



Habayis

Home with Hashem

Rosh Hashanah
How can we properly
prepare for the Yom Hadin?

CONVICTED

Alleged murder.
Is there any way out?

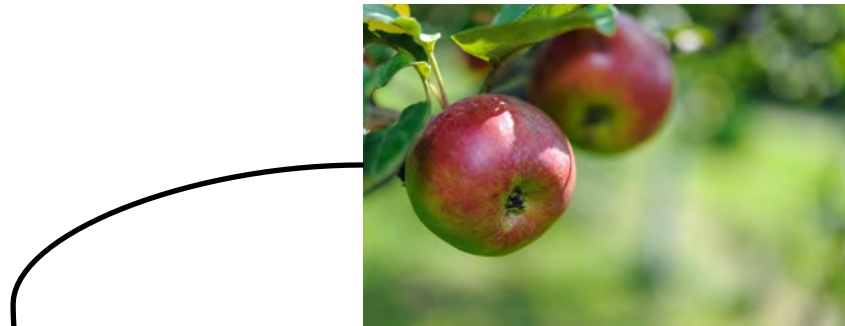
I'm SO Normal

So why does everything feel so wrong?



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My Sister's Secret



Healing Dust



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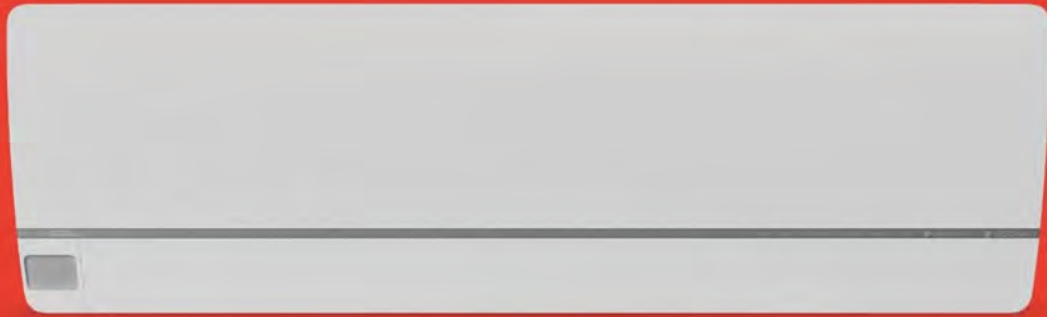
Dear Readers

Rosh Hashana. The word itself brings many feelings to the fore. Fear, a deep desire to do *teshuva*, despair, hope... Everyone's different. As the day of judgement approaches, preparations vary. How can we possibly prepare for such an auspicious day on which so much depends? Many of us try and many of us think that we're beyond help, while yet others wonder where to begin. But, everyone has one thing in common. Everyone will be judged. Everyone will pass before Hashem as His beloved sheep, His צאן קדשים

Whether or not we prepare and whether or not we believe we are worthy of a good year, everyone will be judged by our אב הרחמן on this auspicious day. How, indeed, should we approach the upcoming *yomim noraim*? We've all learned that we should take upon ourselves new *kabbalos* to show Hashem how sincere we are in our desire to be good. Many of us have tried to be good and have taken upon ourselves all kinds of *kabbalos*. And many of us have found ourselves losing our grip on the *kabbalos* a mere few months (or weeks) later. We feel like fakers who act nicely as long as the judge's gavel is being banged, only to drop the act as soon as the verdict has been passed. It's so easy to despair when we go through this year after year. We really do want to be good! So, why, oh why, do we feel like such failures?

Hashem gave us a very special present. It's hand-made specially to help us get through situations like these. Situations when we so badly want to be good, but we just don't know how. The present is our mouth. Hashem gave us this mouth so that we should be able to talk to Him. He wants to hear from us. We should use this present and tell Hashem how badly we want to be good. Tell Him how hard it is. We can go into all the gory details of how many times we fall, why we fall and how we fall. Hashem wants to hear it all. And we should ask Him for His help. He waits for us to talk to Him like this. You won't find this *tefillah* in any *techinos* book or in any siddur. This is an individual *tefillah* that each person says based on their own circumstances. We should talk to Hashem in our own words, telling Him what we're going through and asking Him for help. This way, when we take upon ourselves our yearly Elul/Rosh Hashana *kabbalos*, we don't need to despair when we find ourselves not following through with them. We very simply need to ask Hashem to help us continue.

This is Rosh Hashana. This is Yom Kippur. This is our entire year and our entire life. We all want to be good. Just showing Hashem and telling Him how badly we want to be good already makes us good. It brings us closer to Hashem and ensures us the best year possible. When we use this present that Hashem gave us, we can get through even the most challenging times, because Hashem is always tangibly at our side.



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Rosh Hashanah

How to approach the Yom Hadin?

By: Rabbi B. Wildey

Rosh Hashana is the beginning of a new year, and the day on which people are judged. The entire coming year is determined by Hashem on Rosh Hashana. Everything from the smallest detail to the most monumental event in someone's life is inscribed on this auspicious day and will be sealed on Yom Kippur. Knowing this, or even thinking about the aspects of this tremendous time of year, gives every individual different feelings. Some may feel awe, fear, a strong desire to fix their wrongdoings... Some might even despair or become depressed, *chas v'shalom*, as they look back at what they have done wrong and begin to do some self-introspection. They think, "I'm a lost cause; I am just too far gone."

Rebbe Nachman of Breslev says that on Rosh Hashana, we should be happy (Sichos HaRan 21)! "What? Are you telling me that I'm supposed to be *happy* on Rosh Hashana?! Why?!"

Rebbe Nachman says that a person should never fall into despair; if a person believes that he can mess up or destroy, then he also believe that he can repair (Likutei Moharan 2:112). It doesn't matter what a person might look like, how old they are,

what their background is, how long they have been lost, or how many mistakes they have made. He just needs to make a fresh start and believe in himself. A person mustn't allow himself to become depressed. He should rather seek out the good points in himself, his spouse, family members and others. By doing so, he actually lifts himself up together with those around him (Likutei Moharan 1:282).

And, if a person is all excited and enthusiastically makes a fresh start only to fall again shortly thereafter, he must pick himself up once more and start again. This is the essence of life and of Rosh Hashana.

Let us also ponder another interesting query. What does is

mean to be happy? And what makes a person happy? Well, when we pursue happiness, we all seek a true and enduring, uplifting feeling. We look for a light, worry-free conscious with excitement and delight in every moment. What is that really? Where does it emanate from?

Rebbe Nachman says that even the richest, most prominent individuals also have sorrows, anxiety, and troubles. He tells us that there isn't even one person for whom everything goes the way they want. The only solution is to run to Hashem and learn Torah (Likutei Moharan 2:119). Every person can learn Torah. Even if he doesn't understand and even if he doesn't have a *chavrusa*. He can simply say the words. This is very great and brings him to purity and closeness to Hashem. And with time, he will even to understand it as well.

When a person runs to Hashem and becomes close to Him, he begins to appreciate all of the undeserved bounty and gifts that Hashem so lovingly pours upon us. He becomes truly humble and grateful. He is then able to experience true joy, as it says, "איזהו עשיר השמח בחלקו", who is wealthy? He who is happy with his lot (Avos 4:1).

Rosh Hashana is a time of repentance. Rebbe Nachman shows us how easily we can return to Hashem joyfully anytime and anywhere! How? Teshuva, it is a gift that Hashem gives us because He loves us so much - more than anyone can ever begin to fathom. Hashem wants *you* to be close to Him and have faith in Him, as nothing bad can happen to a person who has faith - he has a constant comfort in knowing that whatever happens to him is for his absolute good.

Teshuva - repentance - is actually so great that when a person does it out of love for Hashem, their misdeeds turn into merits, and it lengthens their years of life (Yoma 86b). All a person needs to do is cry to Hashem, like a weeping child to arouse his mercy. "I am sorry. I want to be close to You. I want to be good. I want to start right now." That is *teshuva*. When a person has a broken heart and converses with and pours out his heart before Hashem in his own words. This brings a person to great joy. Chazal say that in the place where *baalei teshuva* stand, not even the greatest of *tzadikim* stand. A person can become so close to Hashem and reach the greatest heights. Such a person has the sweetest life, as he feels Hashem right at his side. He is humble and joyful, and he brings the *shechina* into his home, where peace and harmony will reign. Begin right now and talk to Hashem.

A Kesiva V'Chasima Tovah.

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- The Lost Princess -



Recap: The king's beloved daughter disappears and the loyal viceroy embarks on a long search to find her. After many years, he comes upon a castle. Once inside, he finds a king and his men in the midst of a merry celebration. Taking some food, the viceroy sits in a corner and watches the scene. Suddenly, the queen is brought in amidst loud cheering, and the viceroy recognizes the lost princess!

As the queen was seated on her throne, she looked around and her eyes caught sight of a person reclining in the corner. It took only a moment for her to recognize her father's second-in-command. She stood up from her throne and walked over to him. "Do you know who I am?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied. "Of course I know who you are. You are the long lost daughter of the king!"

When a person cleaves to the Torah even when he feels lost and far from Hashem, then he is zoche that his neshama, as well as the shechina itself (akin to the lost princess) reveals herself to him and helps him come closer to Hashem.

How did you get here?" asked the viceroy.

"It happened when my father exclaimed that the evil one should take me. Here is the place of evil.

Mohorosh, zt"l, explains that when a tzaddik wants to help a person escape from the evil clutches of the yetzer hara he will lead the person to confess his sins. As soon as a

person confesses his sins, the tzaddik can help him do teshuva. Therefore, the viceroy asked the princess how she got here so that she herself should confess that it was when she angered her father so much so that he exclaimed that the evil one should take her. And, here is the place of the klippos.

The viceroy then related to her how grieved the king was and how he, the viceroy, had been searching for her all over the world.

The tzaddik is so full of mercy, and he always assures a person that even though he sinned, Hashem still has rachmanus on him. He reminds the neshama that her Father in heaven is grieving for his lost princess and is eagerly awaiting her return to Him.

"And, now, please tell me: how can I take you out of this place?"

"There is only way you can take me out. Choose for yourself a spot where you will sit for an entire year and continuously wish and yearn to be able to liberate me. These yearnings should occupy your thoughts in every free moment.

When a person wants to do teshuva and pull his neshama out of the depths he has sunken into, the main solution is hisbododos. The Rebbe speaks of the importance of having a special room

set aside for this purpose of doing hisbodedos. Even if a person does not have such a room, he should find a deserted area where he can pour his heart out to Hashem, begging and yearning to come closer and return to Him.

“On the last day of the year, you should fast and refrain from sleeping that entire day and night”, the princess told him.

The last day of the year is Erev Rosh Hashana, when many observe the custom of fasting and not sleeping.

The viceroy heeded her words, and thus passed a full year. On the last day of the year, he fasted and remained awake, and with excitement and trepidation set out for the castle. On the way, he came across an apple tree with the most luscious apples he had ever seen. The temptation was too great to resist, and he bit into one of the apples. Immediately, he fell to the floor in a deep slumber.

This is how the yetzer hara works; he looks for every opportunity to make a person stumble, as Chazal say, "The yetzer of a person is renewed within him every day". This is especially true when a person tries to climb higher in serving Hashem. The closer he comes to kedusha, the harder the yetzer hara will try to overpower him. The person then needs extra determination to remain strong and not give up.

The Rosh Yeshiva shlit"a says that the apple which threw the viceroy into his deep sleep can be seen as an allusion to the 'bitten apple' icon of the Apple company. It symbolizes the Iphone, Ipad and any device that connects to the internet. Once a person gets a 'taste' of watching movies, surfing online, Instagram, Facebook, etc., he falls into a deep slumber. It is not his body that sleeps, but his neshama is numbed into unconsciousness; he loses his focus of purpose in life. He can even go through the motions of davening and learning, Shabbos and mitzvos... But everything is done robotically, without feeling any satisfaction, because he is disconnected from Hashem.

His servant tried waking him, but to no avail. He slept deeply for a very long time. After many years, the viceroy awoke. “Where in the world am I now?” he asked.

Immediately upon arising in the morning, a Yid should

always ask himself "Where am I? What is my purpose in this world?"

His servant then told him the whole story, “You fell asleep after biting into the apple, and I could not wake you as much as I tried. You have been sleeping here for several years already, and in the meantime I lived off these apples”.

The servant is the person's body which continues to eat and function even when the neshama is in a deep sleep. However, when it happens that a Yid disconnects from Hashem and is not zoche to feel close to and serve Him, and even more so when he falls and stumbles in sins, the loss is immeasurable. Every moment in life is so precious, and if a person knows how to utilize the time wisely with Torah and mitzvos, then he is truly blessed.

The viceroy was very distressed upon hearing all this. He made his way to the palace and met the princess there. She cried to him in distress. “Had you come on that last day, you would have been able to free me. Now, because of that one day, you lost this precious opportunity.

This is an important lesson for everyone. A person struggles for months and years to serve Hashem, and then, because of one small nisoyon, he can lose it all. When that happens, the neshama itself cries out in pain. Rebbe Nachman says that when a Yid pours his heart out to Hashem and tells Him all his sorrows and struggles, then the Shechina itself also expresses her pain and sorrow.

“However, I see now that to refrain from eating is a very difficult challenge, especially on the last day when the yetzer hara is the strongest.”

The princess therefore told him that now he would be allowed to eat on the last day. “Find a place once again where you will spend the entire year thinking about me and yearning to take me out. On the last day you may eat, but do not sleep. Also refrain from drinking wine which makes a person fall asleep. The viceroy went on his way, intent on fulfilling her instructions.

Another entire year he spent waiting and yearning for the day when he would be able to rescue the lost princess from the hands of the evil one. The last day of the year, he arose and began heading to the castle. On the way, he suddenly stopped short at a very interesting sight: a spring of water flowed in front

The yetzer hara
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and vice versa.

of him, but the color of the water was red and it smelled of wine.

He asked his servant "Do you see what I see? It's a spring of water, but it is red and smells like wine!" The viceroy tasted from the spring and he immediately fell into a deep sleep that lasted seventy years.

This is one of the infamous tricks of the yetzer hara: he 'paints' himself in different colors to create the illusion that what's wrong is right and vice versa. Although it is very difficult to discern, this is all just a trap through which he tries to cause a person to stumble and sin.

The seventy years he slept alludes to the seventy years of a person's life. Rebbe Nachman explains that there are people who sleep through their lives, even though it may seem like they are learning and davening. But when a person does not feel connected to Hashem in his daily life, then his brain is really sleeping.

While the viceroy slept, a large contingent of soldiers marched by, along with all their baggage and equipment. The servant hid from the troops and watched them march by. At the end of the procession came a chariot and carriages carrying the princess. She stopped near the sleeping viceroy and descended from her chariot. She sat down next to him and tried with all her might to wake him up, but he did not awaken.

She began to weep and lament, venting her great sorrow to him. How sad it was, that he had spent so much effort for so many years to free her, and on the very last day, he had lost the opportunity for the second time already. She cried bitterly, "It is a very big pity both on him and on me. I have been here for so long and still I cannot go free".

She removed the kerchief from her head and wrote a

message on it with her tears, leaving it next to him. She then got up, sat back into her carriage and rode off.

Some time later the viceroy awoke and asked his servant, "Where in the world am I?"

The servant told him everything that had transpired; that many troops had passed and a woman had come in a chariot. She had wept at his side and cried that it is a great pity on both of them. The viceroy then noticed the kerchief lying next to him. "Where did this come from?" he asked.

"She wrote on this with her tears," the servant replied.

The viceroy took the kerchief and held it up to the sun. He began to see the letters and started to read what she had written. He read all her lamentations and grief, and then continued reading, "I am no longer in the castle. Now you must search for a mountain of gold and a pearl castle. There you will find me."

The golden mountain refers to a ma'mar chazal that says that for tzaddikim everything is like a tall mountain. The greater a person is, the more the yetzer hara will challenge him, and every step he tries to take in avodas Hashem becomes very difficult for him, as if he is trying to climb a tall mountain. But a person must remember that every tiny effort he makes to come closer to Hashem is as precious in heaven as a mountain of gold and a castle of pearls. Even during the most difficult times, when all seems lost, a person must remain strong and remember that every small mitzva and tefilla is a precious pearl in the crown of the King.



CONVICTED

By Rivky Marcus



Jo: My name is Jo. Do not call me Yosef. That name is a name of the past. Nowadays, I am Jo. Curt, short and to the point. Jo.

Well, - Joey, if you must. Do not start with the *crypted* jargon of "So, are you happier now?" What kind of question is that, anyway? Happiness is a myth, a fairy tale, a false belief, an ancient legend told by babushkas sitting in rocking chairs drinking tea from a mug. There is no such a thing as happiness. "Happy" is for toothless babies crawling around in mud. That's where it begins. That's where it ends. If you are in question asking mode, I do suggest you rather ask me if I can no longer feel. And to that question, the answer lies in my haunting eyes. Desolate, bleak and basically dead. Sing the virtues of alcohol and heroin for the blessed oblivion, for the coveted unconscious I finally am. Emotionally, I am limp and immobile. Let a cheetah rip my flesh apart with its sharp teeth and claws; I will remain totally frozen. I can no longer experience pain.

Leah:

My eyes are chronically swollen from crying, like Leah, my namesake, the mother of us all. Does prayer even matter? If I look to Leah Imeinu for the answer, I know that the truth is that it does. With her prayers, Leah Imeinu managed to alter what was decreed 40 days before she was born. Indeed, her *bashert* shidduch was switched! If prayer can do *that*, then I too, can alter what was decreed. Surely, I can only gain by continuing to beseech Hashem in prayer. I open my Tehillim for the eighth time today. *Shir hama'alos*... I burst into a fresh torrent of tears. Oh, the pain! I witnessed my Yosef slide down the slope in front of my eyes. At first, his charming curly *peyos* grew thinner by the week until they completely disappeared. The tiny, freshly sprouted beard that bore witness to his new adolescent stage suddenly vanished, and soon after, his clothes changed drastically. The foul language followed, making me wonder if the lanky fellow named 'Jo' is my son at all. Today he shows up in an orange tank top. The bare bicep of his left arm that so recently exhibited his precious *tefillin* straps now reveals a large menacing tattoo of a viper wound around the arm, it's deadly fangs ready to attack anyone who dares approach. I try to stifle the uninvited gasp. I choose not to get up from my perch at the edge of the couch where I am sitting. Feeling faint, I grip the edge of the coffee table in front of me, trying to compose myself. My head is spinning. Is it because of the sight in front of me? Or maybe it's the all-new, gut-wrenching stench of Marijuana. Can things get any worse?

Yaakov:

The word "painful" is inadequate in describing the transformation that occurred to our family. I stare straight ahead at the wallpaper design adorning the *seforim* room walls, circles and lines in myriad of sizes. If they'd be able to talk, they'd share the beautiful memories they have witnessed over the years. Yosef sweetly point-

ing to the Aleph Bais he'd already recognized at the age of two and a half; Yosef, beaming face, proudly handing me his first award for finishing a *masechta* in Mishnayos; Yosef learning how to don *tefillin*... I blink my eyes and shake my head, coming back to reality. The Aibishter is with us. He will not forsake us, "ה' לי לא אירא". I will remain strong and put up a courageous front. My wife needs me to be the strong one. Together, we will shelter the rest of our *mishpacha*, our *kinderlach*, from the havoc around them. We will continue to shower Yosef with the love and warmth he is used to as if nothing has ever changed. And I will remember that Hashem will bring our *yeshuah*, ישועת ה' כהרף עין, even if it seems as if things are only getting worse. I will unceasingly implore Him - and only Him - until we are freed from this nightmare.



Yosef, sweetly pointing to the Aleph Bais he'd already recognized at the age of two and a half, Yosef, beaming face, proudly handing me his first award for finishing a *masechta* in *mishnayos*,

my friends. Those criminals. They had it perfectly planned. Too perfect. I'm doomed. My fingerprints are there to prove it. But if perchance my blunder saves you from believing in friends, then maybe by miserable end will have been worth it.

Leah:

There are no more tears left. We got the phone call. Convicted of murder. My baby! The one I just so recently swaddled and held and with whom I built large Lego towers together. How did the sun rise this morning? How can my husband remain so strong in his faith? I thought I believed in Hashem, too! Why then, am I a mound of crumbled shattered self with no will to get out of bed? I hear the sweet voices of my waking children oblivious to any pain. Oblivious to what fate is hanging over my first born, their eldest brother, Yosef. Yossele. Is there anything for us to do?? I glance at my trusty Tehillim laying on my night table, wet and bloated, telling the tale of a mother who still believes... I think about Leah Imeinu changing her *bashert* through repeated prayer. I caress the Tehillim softly and swing my legs over my bed. Now I'm ready to begin another day, somehow feeling lighter...

Jo:

If you have dreams, toss them to the wind. If you have hopes, snuff them out - the sooner the better.

I envy the dead.

It had nothing to do with me. Nothing. I wasn't even there when it happened. Here's my dying will to the world, to whomever is interested in avoiding the trap I fell into: "Never rely on friends, they will charm you and use you as

long as you are convenient to them. Then, they will stab you in the back and flee, leaving nothing but 30 police officers surrounding you, placing cuffs are your wrists and escorting you to prison. For me, it is too late now. I'm a goner. No one will believe me anyway. I am condemned to rot away in a sordid prison cell, my only companions the lowest of criminals, and emerge some 25 years later, a rotten corpse in a coffin. I feel ashamed to admit that I thought that everything I ever had were

Yaakov:

We just came back from the Rav. Even Yosef – out on bail - agreed to join us. Although I know that our *yeshuah* will come directly from Hashem, we never move without *daas* Torah. It's the only way. If we view our situation through the lens of *teva*, *mikra*, and *mazal*, there is no possible way out of our predicament. 25 years in prison is the kindest verdict we can hope for our Yossele. But for the Aibishter, it takes nothing to

turn *arur* Haman to *baruch* Mordechai. The Aibishter is above and beyond *teva*, *mikra*, and *mazal*. He created *teva* and manipulates each and every single *mazal*. *Tefilla* can and will change it all. When a person reaches rock bottom, the only place left to go is upward. There is a thin ray of light at the end of this dark harrowing tunnel - the Rav connected us with the *askan*, Reb Yidel Gutfreund, who will hopefully refer us to a good criminal defense attorney who can defend our Yosef. I might have been imagining it, but I think I noticed some life in Yosef's eyes for a faint second or two. Something that looked like pleading desperation. Something that made it appear as if he still has some humane specimen left in what seems to be a walking deceased.

Leah:

My husband's *emunah* is rubbing off on me. I feel like I can lift my eyes up, look around me and even smile. Maybe it's because I realized that there is nowhere to go other than to Hashem? Perhaps it is because things cannot possibly get any worse, so from here things will just have to get better? The *askan*, Reb Yidel Gutfreund, didn't yet lead us to any hopeful suggestions. I think that the realization that a human being cannot do anything without Hashem's command is what awoke me from my drunken stupor of trying to place my expectation in a human being. I now fully realize that there is nowhere to go; only to Hashem Him-

self. I lift my Tehillim once again, "*shir hama'alos*..."

Jo:

For the first time since, well let's just say since... I actually feel like I *want* to live. I'm not sure why I feel that way when I am finally offered to live dead, locked in a prison cell for the rest of my life. To



rot away like a stray banana peel left out in the sun. The Rav blabbered religious jargon that scratched my ears like freshly trimmed nails on a chalkboard, and then referred us to some big *askan*, Reb Yidel Gutfreund. When we met with him, he hemmed and hawed as he shook his head from side to side while stroking his beard over and over again. He mentioned the name of a lawyer who

specializes in cases like mine, but begrudgingly admitted that to get him on board with us is an outlandish idea for too many reasons to list. And, after reviewing my already-thick file, he admitted that my case is too complicated for a way out. The rifle and cloth used to cover the dead body both had my fingerprints on them. I suddenly wish there was a way for me to prove that I was not present during the shooting; that I only arrived after it was all over.

Those scoundrels.

On our last trip to the bar, Blake handed me a large rag while I was woozing over my fifth glass of bourbon. I threw it back at him and noticed through hazy eyes that he was wearing gloves as he shoved it into a plastic bag. That night, the night of the shooting, Blake and the others texted me about meeting up at 'the garage' for a surprise birthday party for Jerry. I said, "Ye, why not?" and we made up to meet at 11 pm. I arrived promptly, like I always do - "Joey style" they use to joke. Then, in one humongous mess of confusion, it was all over. The gang dispersed suddenly. Then it was only me, the dead body and the police. Oh, and the rifle lying on the ground to bear testimony to the crime I had not committed. What is this wetness on my cheeks now? Tears?? Tears are for humans. I am *not* crying. I am *not* human. Is it possible that I *do* want to live...??

Yaakov:

There is a hopeful update: I got a call from Reb Yidel about the attorney whom he had mentioned specializes in cases like Yosef's while admitting that getting him on board would be a miracle. It seems that with a lot of pull and connections (read: my wife's and my *tefillos*), we will be able to get an appointment with him.

Blah,

blah... alleged felony is his specialty, and he has turned around cases like ours unbelievably. It all sounds too good to be true. I waited to hear the catch, which followed immediately. The price. Where in the world will we



shem. He will help us. He *must* help us. We don't yet see how, but one

The Aibishter has been so kind to us until now. He is the One Who led us to hear about this great lawyer in the first place. If there is a chance that he may be

the right *shaliach* to prove Yosef's innocence, we will let nothing stand in the way. *Emes me'erez tzitzmoch ...*

take such enormous sum of money from?

Leah:

It is now my job to be the rock of faith for my husband on this stormy journey. Tehillim is strengthening my nerves. I accept the news of the lawyer with both hands and repeatedly thank Hashem for sending us this messenger in our time of need. We absolutely don't have the funds to cover the expenses; not even a tiny percentage of it! Asking for help from family is out of the question for now, as, understandably, we've kept the whole story under wraps, and no one is aware of our situation. No one, that is, but Ha-

thing is certain: money cannot and will not hold us back from getting the best lawyer available. We sit down together and try to come up with

something.

Yaakov:

After weighing and considering all possible options, we came to the realization that we have no other choice in the matter; we take the initiative and reach out to R' Shlomo Helfiger who has a well-known money *gemach*. Somehow, we will figure out how to repay it. *There is no way that we will let money stand in the way of doing everything possible for our Yossele.*

Leah:

I marvel at how I swing from strong to weak in a matter of seconds. I thank Hashem for the moments of strength and *emunah* and I ask of Him to pull me out of my weak moments of dread and despair. Now, I'm feeling hopeful. We found a *malach* from *shomayim* to help us out with the cost of the lawyer. Hashem's ways are truly wondrous. I couldn't see how money would be the factor hindering our one chance to do the best we can for our Yosef. We meet again with our intermediary, Reb Yidel, who lays out the lawyer's



then, as if from a distance, I hear a loud bang ---- then all I see,

black.

*

Looming over every single Yid is the great-

grant us the gift of life. Yidden and *goyim* alike are all judged on this day. *Who will live, who will die, who by fire, who by water...* The terrible tragedies, *r"l*, that are heard about all year round are decreed on Rosh Hashanah. Every single day young people are torn from this world, both men and woman. Young children remain without parents and all the hospitals are full of our brothers and sisters.

appointment options. The first available date for an initial meeting turns out to be on the same day we are *iy"h* expecting a *simcha*. *Can my husband leave me to meet with the lawyer?*

The notion crosses my mind only subtly and then disappears as quickly as it came. I almost laugh at my foolishness. This is not a time to look at personal feelings and comfort. During such a difficult time, when the fate of our son hangs in the balance, nothing will deter us from doing whatever possible to bring his salvation. *Nothing stands in the way of Yossel's indictment right now. We will do what it takes to prove him innocent, to free our precious son of the terrible verdict that hangs over his head.* An uninvited image of my son in prison uniform, thin and vulnerable, frail arms clutching steel bars suddenly shatters all feelings of hope.

I break out in cold sweat, my heart begins pounding wildly, I feel my chest tightening, can't breathe. A sudden image of a long-mustached judge, cold-blooded antisemitic look in his steel blue eyes... black gown, pounding gavel against the lectern, harsh merciless tone, "guilty...!" "guilty....!" "guilty...!" I try to get a grip of myself, to think positively. But I'm losing it. The room begins spinning, a feeble attempt to get up...

est court case of all. Everything that will occur during the year is decreed on this sacred day. Like sheep passing in front of their shepherd, each and every one of us will pass before the King of the universe - Hashem Himself, Who will review our *maasim* of the previous year and then lay out the verdict of the coming year.

From when we were children in school we learned about the balance scale, the book of *tzaddikim*, the book of *beinonim* and the book of *reshaim*. We learned about *teshuva*, *tefilla* and *tzedaka* that have the power to annul any difficult decree.

And with each passing year, as the month of Elul approaches, we are enveloped in a feeling of awe, knowing what awaits us. We all do our part, rushing to *selichos* at the break of dawn, doing *teshuva*, giving *tzedakah* and davening with all our hearts, begging Hashem to

At the same time, all the *brochos* with which we are showered daily are also decreed on Rosh Hashana. It is natural to think that breathing, swallowing, walking and talking are a regular part of our lives. Yet, when we think about it for a moment, we realize that Hashem is the One who grants us these priceless gifts. Rosh Hashana is the time when all the good in our lives is decreed. Health, wealth, marriages, births, and, yes, every breath, heartbeat, footstep and word that is emitted from our mouths are all inscribed for us on this [sacred](#) day.





Hashem is the King of the universe, but to us, Yidden, He is a father Who loves us and cares for our every need at every moment. Therefore, Hashem gave our generation a tremendous gift. Two hundred years ago, the *neshama* of the great *tzaddik* entered this world: Rebbe Nachman *ben* Feiga. And to this day, we thank Hashem for the great *tzaddik* whose teachings bring light into the life of every Yid. Unlike *teshuva*, *tefilla* and *tzedakah*, this is not something most of us learned about in school. And even among those who *are* aware of it, there are so many who mock it in disbelief.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslev said, " הראש השנה שלי הוא חידוש גדול והשם יתברך יודע שאין הדבר הזה בירושה מאבותי רק השם יתברך נתן לי זאת במתנה שאני יודע מהו ראש השנה. לא מבעיא אתם כלכם בודאי תלויין בראש השנה שלי אלא אפילו כל העולם כלו תלוי בראש השנה שלי" (חיי My Rosh Hashana is not something that I received from my an-

Money will definitely not be a factor, and he will surely not worry about what his friends and family members have to say

cestors; it is a gift from Hashem ... Not only are you (my *talmidim*) dependent upon my Rosh Hashana, the entire world is.

Many people travel across the world to Uman, paying whatever it costs in order to merit being there for Rosh Hashana. It's as if they are awaiting a dreaded court case. Any sane person will take the greatest lawyer possible to defend him when awaiting judgement of any sort. All the more so, when every detail of

the coming year will be decreed, including whether or not he will live out the year, then without a doubt, he looks at nothing and at nobody, simply doing whatever he needs to do to be saved. Money will definitely not be a factor, and he will surely not worry about what his friends and family members have to say. Absolutely nothing will stand in the way of traveling to the best lawyer possible for the chance of being found meritorious.

Rosh Hashanah is the ultimate court case. It is the day when every single creature in the entire universe is judged by the Ultimate and Almighty Judge, Hashem Himself. וכל באי עולם יעברון לפניך כבני מרון כבקרת רועה עדרו מעביר צאנו תחת שבטו כן תעביר ותספר ותמנה ותפקד נפש כל חי ותחתך קצבה לכל בריותיך ותכתב את גזר דינם. There is no doubt that a person must do everything possible to get a good lawyer, someone who will help





anything in the world to hold her back from sending her husband to the greatest lawyer. There is no way we can know what awaits us. Yet, along with *teshuva*, *tefilla* and *tzedakah*, we can do what is most prevalent during such a time and send our husbands to the *tzaddik* who promised to help us on this day. A clever wife encourages her husband to go wherever he needs to go to be able to stand a chance at granting the family

him and stand up for him in defense to annul any difficult verdict.

We are very fortunate to know about Rebbe Nachman's promise that on Rosh Hashana he can help everyone and give everyone a *tikkun*. He said (חיי מוהר"ן,) that on Rosh Hashana, he is able to rectify even the people whom he is unable to help throughout the year. The facts are clear, and any person with *seichel* grabs his bags and runs to Uman to the best lawyer who can help him.

What more convincing does a person need than Rebbe Nachman's own words? He also promised that whoever comes to his *kever*, recites the *tikkun haklali* (תהלים, ט"ז, ל"ב, מ"א, מ"ב,) and gives a penny to *tzedakah* in his *zhus* - even if he committed the harshest of sins, "I will exert all of my energy to do him a favor. I will pull him out of Gehinnom by his peyos! (חיי מוהר"ן, סימן) רכה

One of Rebbe Nachman's *talmidim* once complained to him that it is too difficult to come to Uman for Rosh Hashanah, because he has neither a regular place to sleep nor to eat. Another

talmid complained to Rebbe Nachman that he is unable to daven properly when he comes to Uman for Rosh Hashanah. To them, Rebbe Nachman responded, "Whether or not you eat, whether or not you sleep and whether or not your davening is as it should be, the main thing is to be in Uman for Rosh Hashana."

Rebbe Nachman of Breslev is the greatest lawyer that there is in the world. Therefore, we travel to his *kever* in Uman for Rosh Hashanah in spite of the difficulty that the journey entails. We pay what it costs and look away at every discomfort just to be able to be in Uman for Rosh Hashanah.

Had Jo/Yosef's story been yours, and you would know that a difficult and complicated court case awaits you or one of your loved ones, you would leave absolutely no stone unturned in your quest to find the greatest, most successful lawyer who has the most experience in the field. You would undeniably beg him to do something on your behalf to save you from the fate that awaits you. Traveling to Uman for Rosh Hashana is only applicable for men and boys. (Any time throughout the year, women and girls can go, too.) A wise woman doesn't allow anybody or

the best possible verdict for the year.

Therefore, if you are among the fortunate ones whose husband and/or son spends Rosh Hashanah in Uman with Rebbe Nachman, you should rejoice and thank Hashem; he will surely bring home *yeshuos* for everyone.

Leah: I'm watching my Yossele throughout this harrowing journey. It's truly heartbreaking for a mother to witness. Yet, in spite of the fear of what the future holds for him, I see something in him that wasn't there the past few years. There is a twinkle of life in his eyes, a slight bounce in his step. I am holding my breath, awaiting a miracle.

Yaakov: There is nothing too difficult for Hashem to turn around. There is still a long haul ahead of us. Yet, Hashem is with us, right beside us at every moment, and we will surely emerge victorious.

Jo: Something is changing in me. I still stand far from knowing what fate awaits me. It looks like the journey has only just begun, like the story is only now starting to be written. I fumble beneath the stash of cigarette cartons in my bottom drawer. Right, left... Is it even still there?? It is, I realize, as I pull out the bag. My hands tremble as I slowly pull the zipper open to reveal...

My *tefillin*.

My dear Father, I'm coming back.



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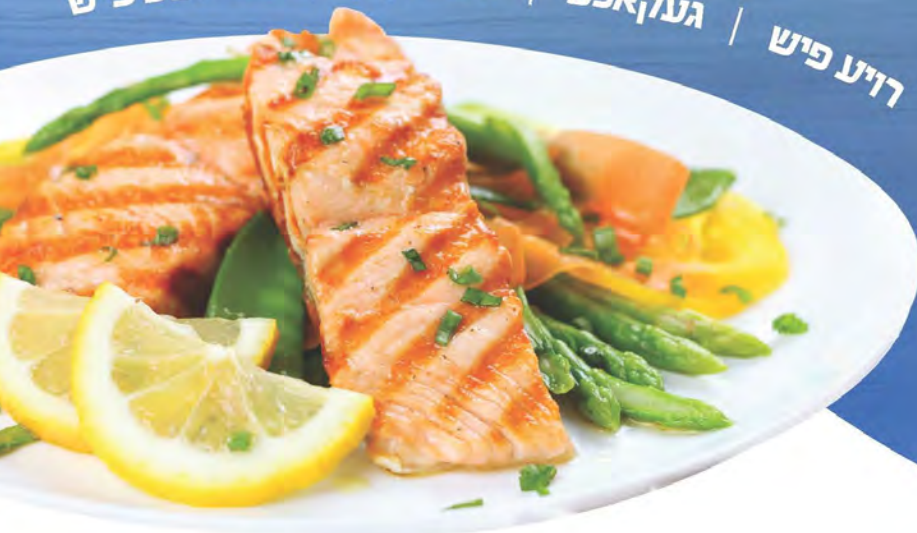
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By: Y Silver

*Based on the shiurim
of the Rosh Yeshiva,*

Chinuch - A Parent's Most Treasured Possession

Each generation comes with its unique challenges. The ever increasing brazenness in our times makes chinuch a particularly daunting task. What is the solution to the chutzpah that is so prevalent nowadays? Is there even a solution? How can we teach our children to behave with

Old News

The lack of *derech erez* in our youth is not a new problem, yet it is one that gets increasingly worse with each passing year. It should be no surprise to us; hundreds of years ago Chazal already predicted that *chutzpah* would be one of the primary hardships of the generations before *Mashiach*. However, with a bit of perspective and a lot of *siyatta dishmaya*, this challenge can be properly addressed and dealt with.

Planting Trees

In a small town in Europe lived a devout *chassid* with a large family. Times were difficult, and many of the town's youth were caught up in the winds of modernity, leaving *Yiddishkeit* in futile search of greener pastures. Children from the best families were falling away; nobody was spared this heartbreak. Nobody, that is, but this *chassid*. Every single one of his children grew up to be righteous, upright Jews who were outstanding in their *middos tovos*.

The people of the town all wondered about this apparent miracle. They approached the *chassid* and asked him, "How did you manage to raise such fine children?"

The *chassid* gestured to rows of apple trees growing in a nearby orchard and retorted, "Do you think children are like apples that you can just pick off a tree? That's not the way it works. Children are the result of years of toil and countless *tefillos* on their behalf. Good children don't just sprout on their own - I worked long and hard to be *mechanech* my children, and each day I davened to Hashem for success, crying enough tears to wash my face with them. That is how I raised good, *erliche* children."

Children, like apple trees, cannot grow on their own. They need to be painstakingly planted, carefully cultivated, thoughtfully tended. Raising children is not easy, and yet our *chachamim* teach us that a parent who fails to be *mechanech* his child will eventually see the child abandon *Yiddishkeit*. *Chinuch* takes an enormous amount of thought, time and energy - and above all, *tefillah*. But it's an investment that bears results more worthwhile than anything else in the world. And every parent bears this sacred responsibility.

Start 'Em Young

Fortunately, most parents realize that children must be trained to do what's right; however, many don't realize how

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young they must begin. They mistakenly believe that *chinuch* can wait until their children grow up a bit, but this is a critical error. *Chinuch* begins from when children are as young as two or three years old - or even younger! - because little children are more easily molded and more easily trained into proper behavior.

This is especially true regarding *derech erez*. In order to raise children who behave with respect, it is necessary to train them to obey their parents from a very young age. Training a child to listen to his parents lays the groundwork for his sense of respect toward all authority.

Children are Children

So, here's the million-dollar question: how can you get children to listen?

Firstly, it's important to understand how children work: **Healthy children do not listen.** There's nothing wrong with a child who doesn't listen and there's nothing wrong with parents who are not being obeyed. Children don't hear when their parents call them and don't listen to what their parents tell them. They are wired to do what **they** want to do, not what **we** want them to do. They are not trying to be bad, they are only doing what they were "programmed" to do. And yet, they can be "reprogrammed" to listen. That's what *chinuch* is all about: training children to do what's right. As parents, we can empower ourselves to teach our children the proper way to behave.

A Parent's Word is Law!

Adults are smarter than children, and the responsibility of making decisions - both major and minor - rests on the parents' shoulders, not on the children's. When making decisions, be confident! As parents, we were granted the title of Prime Decision Makers in our homes, and as Prime Decision Makers, our decision prevails, whether or not the children understand the logic behind it. They might argue, question or try to reason, but explaining, excusing or justifying ourselves is not necessary. Children need to see their parents' strength and confidence in their decisions. They need to see that we mean what we say. Children will detect their parents' uncertainty and capitalize on it, pushing their limits as far as they can. Give in

once and they will continue to challenge again and again. However, if we hold firm even in the face of resistance, they will learn that a parent's word is law and must be obeyed.

Children are more likely to listen when their obedience is expected, not just desired. Therefore, we must be mindful with the way we give directives. Phrases like, "If you listen," or "If you don't listen," are counterproductive, as they imply that the child can choose not to listen, if he so prefers. That's not the message that we want to give our children. Children must listen to their parents and there is no other option. A wise parent will give small incentives and rewards for listening (and consequences for not listening). At the same time, know that the words we choose to use make a difference! Phrases like, "**When** you are ready for bed, I will tell you a story," or, "**After** you eat supper, you can get ices," work better than **ifs**, because they do not allow for any alternatives.

But They're Not Listening!

Inevitably, there will be times - many times - when children don't listen. It's their nature! It may be the very common and very frustrating "selective hearing" phenomenon,

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when the children get so absorbed in their activities that they don't hear (or choose not to hear) what goes on around them. But even even if the child **did** hear, he may try to get out of listening by nagging, arguing or throwing a tantrum. It can be frustrating, especially if the child is particularly stubborn; however, reacting out of irritation or anger backfires. We must remember that the child is only a child, while we are the adults! The wise (yet far more challenging) approach is to remain calm and firm. Some children listen the first time, some the second time, and some only after we



The ones who continue not to listen will need some more help. For some, escorting the child to do what he is being told might work, while continuing to remind him that he needs to obey his parents whether he wants to or not.

And sometimes, when even that doesn't help, a thought-out consequence can prevent future problems. Remember, though, that these can only be truly productive when done in a calm

But remember that the most important outcome is not for the child to listen in the current situation, but for him to learn to listen for the future as well.

put on a very strict face and speak very sternly, while remaining in control of ourselves. Other children will **still** not listen. She wants to play outside until too late? Repeat yourself calmly and firmly. He wants to eat dessert for supper? Repeat yourself calmly and firmly. She's refusing to get into pajamas? Repeat yourself calmly and firmly. The trick is to remain unruffled until your child listens.

and controlled fashion.

Remaining calm might sometimes seem as impossible as climbing Mount Everest, but by bringing Hashem into the picture, it becomes much more doable. Feeling your blood begin to boil as your child insolently lifts his nose and runs off in the other direction? Feel like you absolutely will not be able to control yourself and remain calm? You're right – unless you ask Hashem to help you through the challenge. A short whispered *tefillah* can be the difference between being a parenting success or a dismal failure.

Of course, each child is different and some children will react better to certain phrases or body language than others. But remember that the most important outcome is **not for the child to listen in the current situation**, but for him to **learn** to listen for the future as well. He needs to learn it, and angry reactions will not teach that to him! We must never, *ever* allow ourselves to lose control and be reduced to hitting, shaming or belittling a child, *chas v'shalom*. Physical or verbal abuse is not *chinuch*! It may seem like the quicker way to get a child to listen, but in reality, it makes the problem far worse. The child may **listen now out of fear**, but the respect towards his parents will be lost. Once he is older, he will no longer be afraid of the physical blows or verbal abuse, and he will most definitely not obey then.

Children respond best when parents remain calm and firm, as long as it's not abusive or belittling; **what** you choose to say doesn't matter as much as **how** you say it. When dealing with a child's noncompliance, we must stay calm and keep our bigger goal in mind: to be *mechanech* our children.

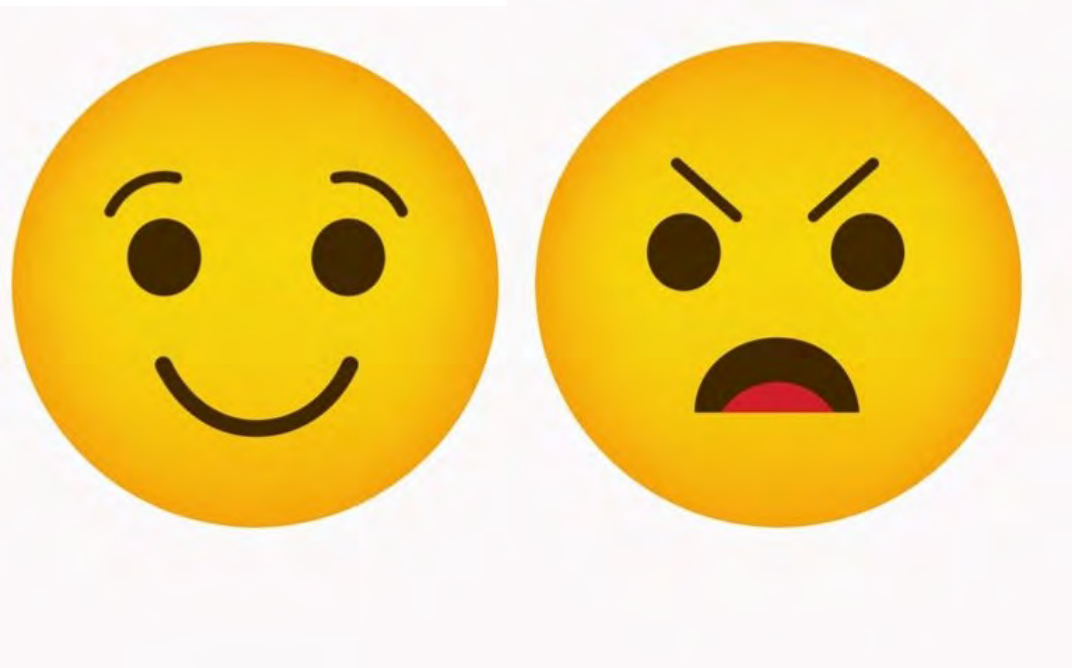
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It's Up to You: A Story

Suppertime. Mommy calls Chaim, Esti and Sarala to come inside. Esti and Sarala come with minimal fussing, but Chaim shrugs his shoulders and refuses to get off his scooter.

"Chaim, it's suppertime. Mommy said to come inside."



No response. Kick at the gravel.

What now?

Option 1: Mommy's frustration level begins to rise, along with the volume of her voice, and she begins to yell and berate Chaim for not listening. Chaim digs in his heels and fights back, shouting angry words in response. Her simple directive has become a royal power struggle. Mommy may be stronger and the interaction may end with Chaim inside, but Chaim will be sulking and Mommy will be furious and exhausted from the battle. Repeat this scenario (or similar ones) multiple times and Chaim becomes an angrier and more difficult child.

Option 2: Barely suppressing her annoyance, Mommy remembers that the bigger goal here is not to get Chaim inside for supper, but rather to be *mechanech* him to obey his parents. She controls her aggravation and keeps repeating herself, sternly but calmly. Perhaps she mentions a consequence, like the potential loss of a treat or prize. Perhaps she reminds him of a delicious dessert or treat after finishing the supper. Perhaps she calls for Totty to help

If a child is disrespecting his mother, his father should not stay quiet but rather reprimand the child for his *chutzpah*.

out. She remains completely focused on her goal of **training** him to listen; she does not **force** him to listen. Chaim eventually tires of his stubbornness and joins the family inside. Repeat this scenario (or similar ones) multiple times and Chaim learns to comply sooner.

Which option would you prefer? How would you like **your** home to look and sound? It's up to you.

What About Chutzpah?

Training children to obey authority is only the first step to developing their *derech erez*. But that isn't enough. During the early years of *chinuch*, children will behave with a lack of *derech erez* - if not outright *chutzpa* - and they need to be taught how to relate to authority appropriately.

A child must be taught what *derech erez* is. We need to **teach** our children to behave with respect. Otherwise, how should they know? They weren't born knowing to make *brachos* before eating, not to turn off lights on Shabbos or to be quiet in shul during davening. They had to be taught it all. Likewise, no child is born with an innate respect toward authority. No child was born knowing all the "rules." *Derech erez* needs to be taught! And saying it once is not enough. Just like a toddler needs to be told numerous times, "Uh uh, it's Shabbos! No turning off the light!" the child needs to be reminded again and again of the proper way to behave.

Is your son interrupting you at the Shabbos table again? He isn't trying to be bad. He needs you to tell him - again - that it's not *derech erez*. Is your daughter contradicting you again? She isn't trying to undermine your authority. She needs you to tell her - again - that it's not *derech erez*. Children will inevitably be disrespectful. Being children, they need to be told again and again until they learn to

incorporate new habits.

Teaching children *derech erez* is so important - perhaps more important than anything else they will learn. In other areas of *chinuch*, it is sometimes wise to "not to notice," but in matters of *derech erez*, a parent shouldn't look the other way.

Practical Pointers

Some parents find it hard to demand respect. They may even feel that it is beneath their dignity. Yet it needs to be done. It may be easier to use phrases like, "You need to stand up when a **father** walks into the room," or "You cannot talk that way to a **mother**," making it less about **me** and **my** respect, but more about teaching the children that these are *halachos* that **Hashem** said they must follow.

Additionally, parents should stand up for each other. If a child is disrespecting his mother, his father should not stay quiet but rather reprimand the child for his *chutzpah*. And likewise, if a child is disrespecting his father, the mother should reprimand him. This makes it easier to demand respect, as it is easier to stand up for a spouse's honor than one's own. Moreover, this teaches children that their parents are one unit and they cannot get away with *chutzpah* to either one.

Strong and Strict, Yet

Upbeat

It's easy to notice when a child is doing something wrong. However, it is incomparably more important to notice and commend children for doing what's right. Children who tend to be obnoxious need positive reinforcement even more, because their defiance often stems from a simple, natural need for attention. Some children need a lot more attention than others, and if they don't get it, they look for a way to provoke others - especially their parents. This kind of child needs a proactive parent who gives him positive attention **before** he misbehaves. We should notice when he listens and point it out to the others: "Look how nicely Menachem is listening - he's getting ready

We should notice when he listens and point it out to the others: "Look how nicely Menachem is listening - he's getting ready for bed right away!"

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for bed right away!” Or, “You are such a *tzaddik*, listening the first time Mommy says something!” Praise motivates children; in truth, every child really wants to be good. Looking for the good in them will make them actually *be* good. Additionally, this will create a happier, more positive atmosphere in your home.

A *Yiddishe* home should be a happy place. In order for children to want to stay *frum* and *erlich*, it **needs** to be a happy place. It is up to the parents to create that. Time spent interacting positively with one’s children builds their confidence in a way that nothing else can. Playing with them, listening to their stories and conversing with them will do them a world of good! At the same time, we must be sure to maintain our position as parents. Some parents make the mistake of lowering themselves *too* much to their children’s level, and the children then feel like their parents’ equals. The blurring of these boundaries becomes a problem, because while a child must obey his parents, he does not have to obey his friends. When a child feels like his parents are his friends, he does not listen to them. Children need to know that while their parents are kind, loving and attentive, parents are parents and they need to be obeyed. A healthy distance between parents and children ensures that the parents remain with their authority intact and the children remain with their *derech eretz* intact.

Monkey See, Monkey Do

In any discussion about *chinuch*, we cannot omit the fact that children learn primarily by example. Consciously and subconsciously, children pick up on the actions of the adults around them and mimic their behavior. The way our children see their parents behaving toward their parents is the way they will learn that parents should be treated.

An arrogant millionaire had an elderly, impoverished father who lived with him. Irritated that his father could not support himself, the millionaire threw him out of the house, rendering his father homeless.

That winter was especially cold, and the poor old man had no shelter. One especially frigid night, he noticed the millionaire’s son - his grandson - passing by. Hoping to arouse some compassion, the grandfather pleaded with his grandson to get him a coat to wear. The grandson hurried home and begged his father, “Please give me something warm for Grandfather!”



The millionaire was unmoved and responded, "Go to the attic and find something there. All the clothes there are old; I don't need them anyway." The son went up to the attic and searched through the old clothes, but all of them were frayed and moth-eaten. Furious with the way his father dared to treat his grandfather, he took a tattered coat and tore it in two, returning to his father with half of the coat.

At his father's puzzled-turning-angry look, he said, "The other half is for you. When you will be old like Grandfather, I will also kick you out of my home, and when you come to me because you're cold, I will send you the other half of the coat." His father immediately realized his folly, and took his father back into his warm, opulent home.

Derech erez toward parents is always important, and even more so when there are children who are watching every interaction, listening to every conversation and sensing every nuance of it all. Because the way you treat your parents is the way that your children will treat you. Of course, that is not the reason why we respect our parents - we do so because that is our *mitzvah* to fulfill. But fulfilling that *mitzvah* is the best *chinuch* we can give our children.

Be Patient - It's a Process!


Nothing of value happens in an instant. *Chinuch* is a process - a long, painstaking process. While it may at times seem as if you're speaking to a brick wall, know that your children are slowly absorbing, gradually being trained to do what's right. Keep at it! Remind them - yes, again - that a parent must be obeyed. Remind them - yes, again - that they must speak with *derech erez*. It doesn't happen so fast; Rome wasn't built in a day, and children are not machines that can be programmed in an instant. With time and patience, you will see beautiful results.

Parents are not expected to be perfect, either. Don't throw up your arms in defeat just because you have made mistakes in the past. Don't give up when you see that you continue to make mistakes. It is never too late to start again, to take the circumstances as they are and make the best of them. When we make mistakes, we

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Ephraim Feldman

must turn to Hashem, ask His forgiveness and for His help to continue properly. Perfection does not exist in this world, and even near-perfection is hard to find. Just keep trying and keep doing your best, because that - together with *tefillah* - is the most you can do.

The Best Method

Again, above all else, parents must know that any efforts, methods or techniques are in vain without the most important component of successful *chinuch*: *tefillah*. Children, like apple trees, cannot grow on their own. Yes, trees need to be painstakingly planted, carefully cultivated and thoughtfully tended, but without life-giving rain they will shrivel and die. Yes, a proper *chinuch* is crucial to raising *erliche* children, but without parents' *tefillos* and tears, how can this endeavor possibly bear fruit? It's impossible to raise good, *erliche* children on our own; the only way to have a chance at success is by davening for our children, day after day. Only with *tefillah* will we succeed. Only with *tefillah* will we see *nachas*.



My
SISTER'S
Secret

As told to Rivky Marcus

Something happened to my sister; I don't know where to begin
It seems to me that her life has taken a 360-degree spin.
It's difficult for me to describe it - something about the way she speaks
And the new bounce in her step and perpetual blush to her cheek.

Then one day when I was visiting, our kids enjoyed a play date
While playing with lego, I overheard her little girl innocently state.
"Hashem please help my tower be so very high
Let it reach way past our ceiling, all the way up to the sky.

I look up at my sister, trying to meet her gaze
I see her proudly smiling with that perpetual blush on her face.
"Good job, Goldy," she says, as she gives her a peck on the cheek.
I like that you ask Hashem for everything you want, in the language that you speak.

I ask my sister straight, Where are you taking this from?"
"I've known you since you were born, this is not how you come
What exactly happened; how did this come to be?"
When suddenly a bright pink business card, she handed me.

I tried to stay cool, and pretended to be calm and collected
But my blood began boiling; that was the last thing I expected.
These hot pink cards, with a shade of mint green
Were shunned everywhere where they were ever seen.

Random ladies walk over to you and shove them into your hand,
Stating "You can really enjoy this hotline, its light and easy to understand"
"Oh seriously?! They are stupid and crazy, please give me a break!
"Don't tell me you were sucked into their cult; please say it's a mistake!"

I don't even wait for an answer, I tell her I am in a mighty rush
"I think I left a pot on the stove", I stupidly gush.
And as I exit the doorway, I hear Goldy excitedly cry
"Thank you so much Hashem, my tower can almost touch the sky!"

As I walk through the streets, confused and unsure
I think I might be dreaming but I spot a card on the floor.
I glance around quickly, to see if anyone's there,
And then swiftly into my pocket I make it disappear.

I don't want to call it. It's just something I can't bring myself to do
This hotline is just not for me, I can almost guarantee that's true
However, when the itching in my mind refuses to cease
I dial the two-one-two number just to give myself some peace.

At first, I'm terribly annoyed, these people talk like Hashem is their own

And only to them He lets His face be shown.
They think that the rest of the world is living a miserable life
And that only they have a way out of every possible strife.

Wanting to give myself a break, I head over to my closet of books
Scanning the titles deciding into which one I should look.
Being a growth-oriented person, the variety is quite vast
I pick one and begin reading a book that will give me inspiration to last.

I'm swept away into a kabbalistic world of *nefech*, *ruach* and *neschama*
This is the real stuff I think; I'm already feeling a *nechama*.
I'm reading about meditation and real ways of connecting to the soul
All the *ruchniyus* methods of filling the gory *gashmiyus* hole

With passing time, the play date incident is all but forgotten
Daily routine is distracting; no time to fret over what feels rotten.
Then one late night while facing an overflowing sink,
I scroll through my contacts; whom to call I tried to think

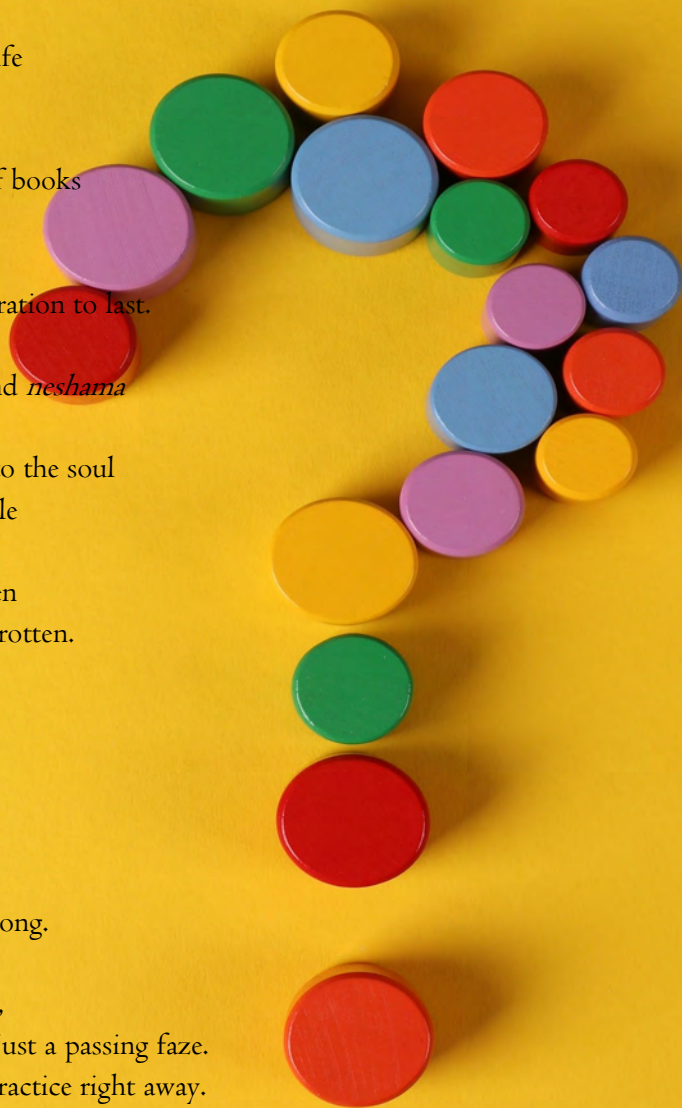
Suddenly I notice that hotline number again
Figuring I won't wake anybody up by calling, I press send.
I listen to personal stories, shiurim and songs
I don't resent it quite as much this time; not sure what's wrong.

I find myself calling again and again over the next few days,
There's definitely something about it I realize – unless it's just a passing faze.
The *eitzos* and *chizuk* they spread are simple and easy to practice right away.
There's no deep thinking involved, I realize with each passing day.

The changes I notice are subtle, nothing obvious or big
I'm the same simple person but something in my mind did a jig
The lens I used to see through is now seeing Hashem wherever I go
I hear myself consulting with Him and I feel a solid inner peace.

I realize that my regular, mundane life running as it should,
Has become elevated in a way I never even believed it could.
I thought that to get to this place, meditation for hours is required,
And reading every self-help book on the shelf is what will make me inspired.

But looking at the turnaround in my life, and seeing the change black and white,
I can attest that this place and their theory works, turning darkness to light.
By practicing the *eitzos* I listen to, without feeling or understanding how it could be
The most mundane has become elevated in a way that I never knew meant me.



The five main ideas I learned (amongst many others) I'd like to share with you,
Why not pass on this beauty to make your dreams a reality too.
And then one day when boredom knocks on your door,
Call the two-one-two hotline number to hear it straight from the source.

I learned to *give myself over to Hashem* and ask Him to take care of my day,
And that everyone in my family should be successful and ok.
I *discuss my dilemmas and ask Him to help me decide*,
Should I walk to the store twenty minutes away, or pay for a ride?

I learned that *nobody* owes me anything - *especially* not my spouse,
And to *look for only the good in him*, so that the *Shechina resides in our house*.
I learned to *praise* and *compliment* him on the *slightest good* that I see,
And to speak to him *kindly* about the things that bother me.

I learned to see my *children* as *normal* and *perfectly ok*,
Even if they turn my house *upside down*, and give me a heyday.
Healthy children don't listen, cannot sit still and make thousands of mistakes,
Its simply my job to patiently teach them *by telling them nicely as many times as it takes*.

And for the times that the yetzer harah traps me and I lose myself completely,
There's a simple and easy way to return without eating myself alive guiltily.
I can just say, "I'm sorry Hashem that I yelled at your little angels and hit"
And just like that, I can begin anew right this minute.

I learned to really look inside myself and to live life honestly,
To *impress only Hashem* and to do what's good for *me*.
Tznius became the *only fashion* I intrinsically aspire to follow,
And following the *current-season-high-end-label-craze*, I now see as *vain* and *hollow*.

Mostly I learned about *tefilla* in a brand-new way I never knew I was able,
I can ask Hashem for anything and everything in whatever language I am comfortable.
Everything has a *tefilla price tag* that, of course, we cannot see,
I just have to *keep asking and asking* - until it becomes good for me.

Tefilla is like *oxygen*, it's something you can't live without
And it's what *strengthens emunah* and *brings yeshuos* without reason or doubt
It *changes* what was *already decreed* and can alter the course of nature believe it - *it's true!*
And no, this privilege is not only reserved for tzaddikim of the past *you can do it too!*

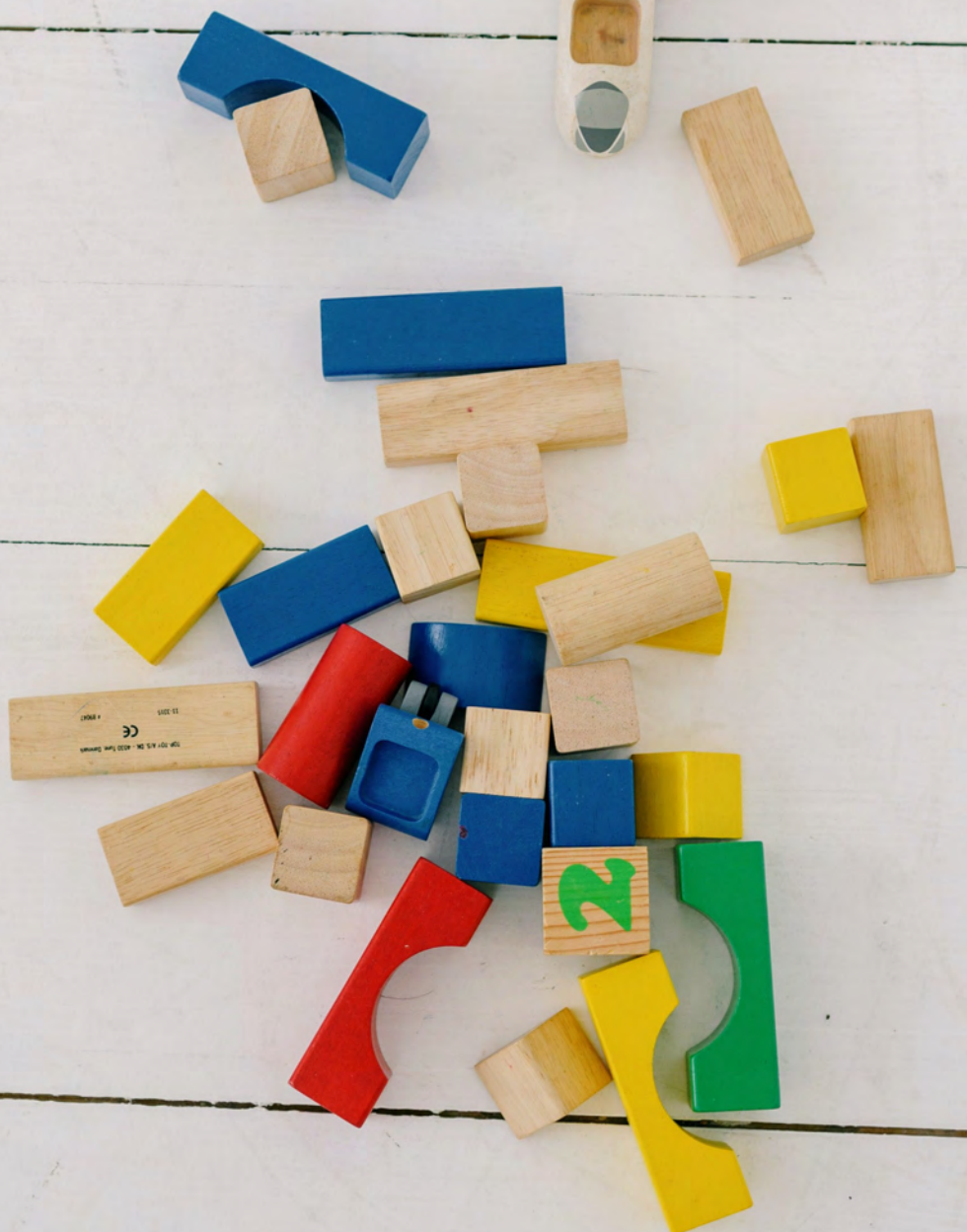
Along with *tefilla* comes *savlanus*, patience, until my request is fulfilled
If I get a no, I know my *tefillas* were saved for later, I simply need more *tefillas* and *gedild* (patience).
I beg of you try it out; you can begin right here and now - think of *anything* you *wish* for
Don't be shy; just ask Hashem for that thing you want, and keep *asking* for *more*.

My Sister's Secret

Don't think Hashem is too busy, or that you may not be worthy of this special treat.
That's pure yetzer harah wanting to stop you - just ignore him until he leaves you in defeat
Take any beliefs that blocked you from *tefilla* until now and shove them out of your mind
Begin anew from *today*, and you'll see that *tefilla* is better than any *gift* you will ever find.

It may sound too good to be true to say that this place has got it all
But believe me; I'm coming from where you are, and it's worth the phone call
Being a *mevakesh* by nature, never satisfied, always looking to fill the hole
I've been through years of searching until I landed in this pot of gold

My sister's life and the way she is *mechanech* her children is now my way of life, too,
I wish this level of connection to Hashem and *yishuv hadaas* to all of you.
So next time you hear about "Breslov people", know what they are really all about.
And if you come across the hotline card, think twice before you throw it out.



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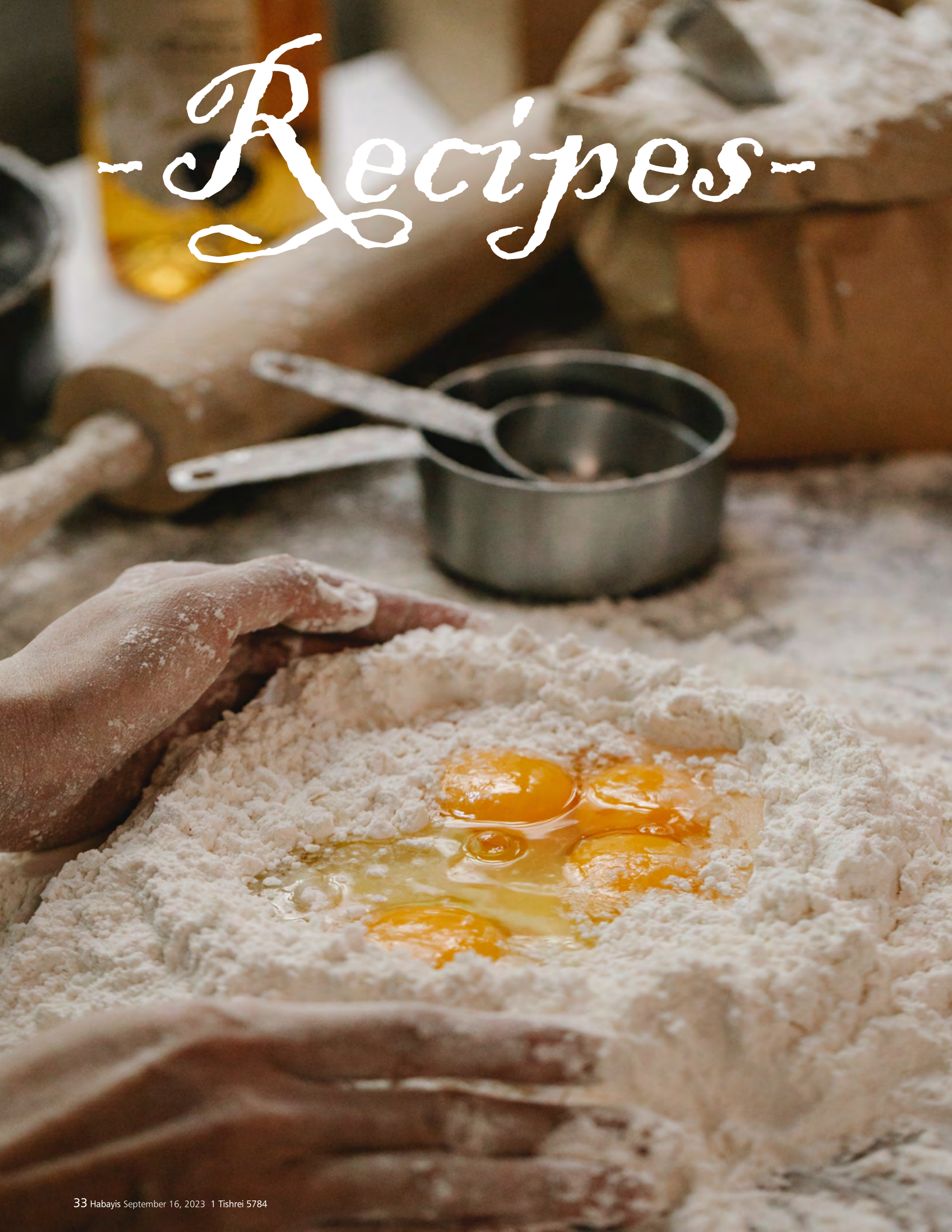
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Recipes





- Sweet & Savory Maple Salmon -

- Refreshing Fruit Combo -

- Delicious Honey Cookies -



SWEET AND SAVORY MAPLE SALMON



Wonderfully delicious and delightfully simple to prepare, this salmon will ly"n be enjoyed by young and old, alike.

8 slices salmon fillet
8 Tbsp maple syrup
4 cloves garlic, crushed
12 Tbsp sesame seeds
4 tsp black sesame seeds

- Preheat oven to 350°. Line a 9x13 pan with parchment paper. Mix the maple syrup and garlic in a bowl. In a separate bowl, mix both colors of sesame seeds together. Dip each slice of salmon first in the maple mixture, and then in the sesame seeds, making sure to coat the top and sides very well. Place the fish in the prepared pan and bake uncovered for 18 minutes.

Remember to ask Hashem that it turn out delicious!

REFRESHING FRUIT COMBO



This recipe was born from having too much fruit laying around my house.

The result was an instant hit that immediately became a family favorite. I've been making it ever since.

2 honey crisp apples, peeled and diced
2 bananas, diced
3-4 kiwis, peeled and diced
8-10 dates, diced
A very generous splash of fruit juice (I use pine-

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and refrigerate. Remember to ask Hashem for the diverse tastes to mingle well. Let it sit for a few hours after being prepared before serving..

DELICIOUS HONEY COOKIES

This quick and easy honey cookie recipe tastes nothing like the store-bought version.

A completely different texture, you'll be surprised at how flavorful and full these cookies are. I actually triple the recipe each time.

With a tefillah while they're being made, they just turn out that good!



3 C flour
2 eggs
1/2 C sugar
4 oz. honey
1/4 C oil
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
Pinch of salt

Preheat oven to 350°. Mix all ingredients until smooth and stiff. Form balls and place on lined or sprayed cookie sheet, leaving space for them to rise. Bake for 15-20 minutes. Do not overbake. Remember to ask Hashem for them to be delicious!

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I'm SO Normal



So, where are you from?" That is, most likely, the top-rated question once you enter the territory of Jewish geography. Standard responses like, "Brooklyn" or "Lakewood" warrant equally standard feedback, as in, "Nice, I know a few people there."

But, a response like mine, "Liberty, NY" entitles me to some more interesting responses, ranging from mild interest, to genuine curiosity to outright surprise. "Kiryas Breslev?? What brings YOU *there* (raised eyebrows)?"

Along my path of life, throughout my three beautiful years breathing and living the *limudim* of Heichel Hakodesh, I've gotten my fair share of interesting conversations. While I generally keep calm, smile and offer a free tasting (212-444-9191), I do want to share the real story with you today between the pages that you are currently reading. To me personally, it was - and is - a very dramatic story. (Dramatically life changing, that is!)

Once upon a time...

My life was perfect, baruch Hashem. I married my husband on a beautiful sunny day, settled into a nice home and started our new life very blissfully.

Our first beautiful baby girl was born fourteen months after our *chasunah*.

My husband and I were doing well. He was learning, I was earning. We had a nice home, supportive family, perfect social standing... it was really idealistic. If I wasn't myself, I'd really envy myself!

Two years later, a beautiful baby boy joined the ranks of Family Perfect. Two more years passed before yet another baby boy expanded our family and hearts. Life was really okay. Everything was sailing smoothly until ... hold your breath ... nothing! Until everything continued just so. Life moved on and on. Things were nice, more or less. You know, the everyday stresses sometimes drain you, but more or less everything was just fine.

Some days were good. Others not so. Some days I was super-mom. Other days...well... whatever.

But everything was really ok. Perfect. That's what neighbors and friends told us all along. And I even believed them.

I shoved the occasional bad feelings, moods and typical rub-ins under the rug. I figured that everyone gets fed up from the kids once in a while. After all, moms are people too. Aren't we? Little kids (and big ones too) are sometimes really naughty. Aren't moms entitled to feel "Enough is enough! I need a runaway!"?

But I was doing well, really well.

The kids were growing up fast and I found myself getting more overwhelmed faster. But really, isn't that normal? Who doesn't get burnt out at



age 26? Whoever said life was meant to be easy? And who doesn't have marriage burnout sooner or later? Whoever said marriage is a piece of cake?

So if I am so normal, why am I feeling so... I don't know... maybe sad? Why do I get nervous from my adorable (not so) little (anymore) kids? Why am I getting so irked by my spouse? If it's

So if I am so normal, why am I feeling so... I don't know... maybe sad? Why do I get nervous from my adorable (not so) little (anymore) kids?

so normal, why don't I feel okay? Why don't I feel the warmth, the joy, the glow of the *shechina* my kallah teacher was talking about many years earlier? What's going on?

But I was OK. I really was! I was doing everything right.

About once a year I signed up for classes on how to cope, both live and over the phone. I paid from savings. But I figured I wasn't paying; I was investing. (At least, that's what the ad said.)

The speakers spoke a lot about finding yourself, and about your



inner insecurities, focusing on the years between childbirth and about five years old. I tried. I really did. (I even remembered a story of when I was about four, being left behind in the grocery and felling anger at my parents. I was told that I need to replay the incident to get rid of my unhealthy feelings and put them in a healthy perspective.)

I learned a lot about retaining your original inner child, maintaining your opinion while respecting others, and sustaining your dignity and self-worth, irrelevant of the circumstances around you. It was nice. I didn't really see impactful results. I mean, I guess I did, because everyone did...

But I still found myself getting nervous at bedtime and during the morning rush. And then the wave of guilt really drained me.

But I was really okay; I was really normal.

I listened to shiurim when I felt

guilty. I was searching. I was a growing person. I was a nice lady, sometimes... other times I doubted myself. How could a good Yiddishe mother and wife do that, talk like that or

entertain such thoughts?

Am I really normal?

Oh! Yes! For sure! So many people even ask my advice on how to lead a successful life (I even considered becoming a life coach.)

I am really good. I am really okay!

But... No but... keep moving!

And move I did... the ball of life kept rolling, blending moments into days, and weeks and months and years...

Without thinking or blinking,
I dialed. I was okay, really
okay! But I was also a
growing person. So just for
interest, I was going to listen.

And this could have been my (sometimes) happily ever after, if not for this sweet young lady (she's got healthy confidence, I had to admit) who bumped into me one day

at one of the local government offices and politely extended her hand to me. I instinctively looked down and saw a little card there. I winced. I mean, what does she think? I am normal. So normal. Do I look like someone who is in the need of *chizuk*? Does she really think I would call the hotline number so boldly and brashly displayed on the abhorrent card?

But I was civil and polite, so I took it from her and thanked her for it. I took the offending card, quickly tucked it deep into my handbag, and promptly forgot about it. Until about three months later when I changing my bag for the winter season and I chanced upon the little card. Now it didn't look so offending anymore; perhaps because I was in the privacy of my own home.

Without thinking or blinking, I dialed. I was okay, really okay! But I was also a growing person. So just for interest, I was going to listen.

So I called. And I listened... and listened and listened and listened.

Suddenly, a honking bus shook me out of my reverie. I dropped the phone and ran to get little Moishy from his bus. I glanced at my watch in shock. Four hours! That's a lot of listening. But it didn't feel that long and I felt like I needed more. For the first time, I heard someone speaking straight to my *neshamā*, salvaging, understanding, soothing, demanding, raising my spirits and connecting all at once. (Granted, some things

rubbed me the wrong way. But I'd heard the truth. The *bas kol me'har choreiv* was calling and reaching out to me, *shuvu banim shovavim...*) For the first time in my (sometimes) perfect life, I heard something profound, real and connecting.

Hey, was that for free!? Um, that raised a red flag. Why would someone do something for free? There's no such thing as a free lunch!

Where's the catch? Was that a demo I was listening to? Will they prompt me for my credit card info once I call back? I really wondered.

I needed to check it out again. That evening, I did.

No, they didn't ask for my credit card info and I didn't hear any sponsored ads.

Well, I actually *definitely* did hear some ads. I heard an advertisement for a truly happy life; happy the way the Torah intended. I heard an ad that there actually *is* a way to find true satisfaction in life, at any time and in the comfort of my humble abode...

I heard about concepts that were always so close to my heart but so far from reach. I heard how I could reach so much higher. I learned the

route, such simple concepts that I was able to implement right away.

The shiurim were clearly being given by a Ra whose sacrifice for Klal Yisrael was unparalleled. There was nothing else to explain the endless hours of *shiurim* and *chizuk* on all kinds of topics - *tefillah*, *sholom bayis*, *chinuch*, connecting to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, *tehillim*, the power and *chashivus* of every Jew, the joy of motherhood, of raising a family, the

loving wings of Hashem is something you want to experience.

Life turned from (sometimes) bland to (forever) grand.

Disclaimer: This is not a Cinderella fairytale. This is real life with real time results. No, circumstances didn't necessarily change. I changed. My perspective, my attitude and outlook on life shifted. It still is. And slowly, slowly, things are changing, and my hopes and desires (which translate into tefillos) are taking root.

Even when I (sometimes) have a hard day and forget to keep my cool, I have a way back. I know how to get back on track; I have a derech. My inner GPS knows how to recalculate.

It's a process, a life-long process. Nothing happens in a day. Any approach is a process. However, the beauty of this one is that the process itself is so beautiful.



There is nothing as comforting and encouraging as finding a quiet corner and talking your heart out with Hashem, through singing, thanking, begging, crying or just talking. I actually booked you a free demo session, go ahead... try it!

We all have a corner of pain etched into our hearts; that's galus. However, we all have it within ourselves to alleviate that pain and actually elevating pain to gain. That is, through our dibbur, just by opening our mouths and expressing everything to our Tatte in himmel, Who is pinning to hear our voice. That's geula.

One of the main gifts I have acquired from the Rosh Yeshiva, shlit"a (Rabbi Yoel Roth, the speaker on aforementioned hotline) is the power of "wanting", the power of a wish. The Rosh Yeshiva, shlit"a, constantly reminds us that even if we are still very from where we want to be, we should 'want' to be there. And even if I don't yet want it, then I should want to want it! (Is that grammatically correct? I'm not sure, but it is definitely correct in life's skills.)

Rebbe Nachman of Breslev says, "The only thing Hashem put into our hands is the 'ratzon' the will power, the desire to be good." Because actually doing the mitzvos, the davening, learning and performing maasim tovim is only the zchus that Hakadosh Baruch Hu grants us by enabling us to do it.

"Ribono Shel Olam, I want to like tznius."

"Hashem, I want to have patience for my kids"

"I beg of you Tatte, I want to raise a dor that will make you proud." "Hashem, I want to want to appreciate my husband's learning." "Hashem, I want to have koach to do chesed."

And mainly,

"Hakadosh Baruch Hu, I want to be happy. Very happy. I want to appreciate all the countless gifts you keep showering upon me.

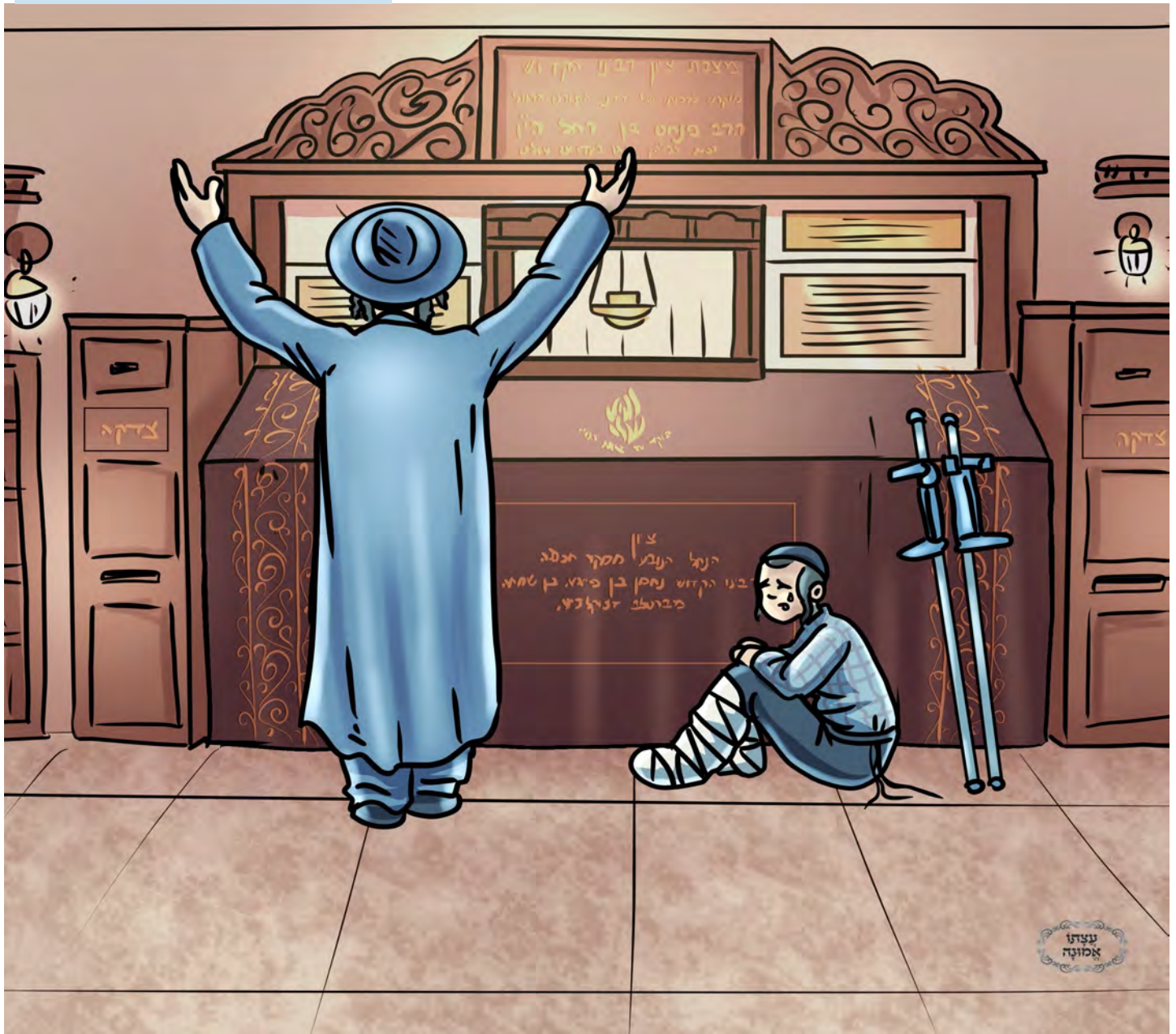
I want to live (really) happily ever after!

beauty of Shabbos, etc. It was all given over in layman's terms, so practical that even I, Miss (sometimes) Perfect, would also be able to attain this glorious Gan Eden lifestyle that was described.

Oh... and the songs. They stirred my heart, and I sang right along and cried to Hashem, expressing my true desires, my inner hopes and dreams, my fears and despairs, my wants and my needs.

The sweetness of this feeling of being enveloped under the protective and

IN THEIR
FOOTSTEPS



THE HEALING DUST

"Hashem! Please, help me!
Help me! Help my son be
able to walk!"

A man stood at the *kever* of Rebbe Nachman in Uman, crying bitter tears. Who was this man, and why was he crying? Mohorosh told us the following story:

It was erev Rosh Hashana in Uman. Thousands of Yidden were at Rebbe Nachman's *kever*, davening and begging Hashem to give them a sweet new year. They all knew that when we go to Uman, it's not a time to play around in the streets or buy nosh and other treats; it's a very special time to go to Rebbe Nachman's *kever* and daven for anything that we need. It's a time when we can get *yeshuos* that have been impossible until then. Hashem accepts all of our *tefillos*!

In the midst of the hulla-baloo, a Yid walked in carrying his son on his shoulders. His son was, *nebach*, not able to walk. His feet were completely paralyzed! The father sat him down next the *tzion* and waited until everyone else went to shul to daven *mincha*. Once everyone left, the father hurriedly gathered all the dust from around

the *tzion* and sat his son down in the pile of dust and dirt. He then began crying and davening, begging Hashem to heal his son's paralyzed feet.

While the father was davening, the boy suddenly stood up on his feet and began to walk! They walked together to the main shul to daven *mincha*. Everyone who saw them was shocked and awed at the open *nes*!

When people asked the boy's father why he gathered all the dust from around the *tzion* and sat his son down in it, he quoted from Rebbe Nachman's stories, *Sipurei Maasiyos*. In the third of these stories, Rebbe Nachman told about a person who limped. This person overheard the sun telling the moon that there is a special dust that can heal feet that walk on it. The father turned to all the onlookers and said with amazing simplicity, "Where else in the world can you find dust that is so special? Here, at Rebbe Nachman's *kever*, thousands of people come and pour out their hearts to Hashem. I realized that this dust must be the special dust to which the sun was referring."

This amazing story teaches us that when we go to Uman, it's not a time to run and play and try to find all kinds of interesting things. We are only in Uman to go to Rebbe

Nachman's *kever* and beg Hashem for everything that we need, because, as we see, at Rebbe Nachman's *kever*, we are able to see supernatural *yeshuos*.

I realized
that this
dust must
be the
special dust
to which
the sun
was
referring.



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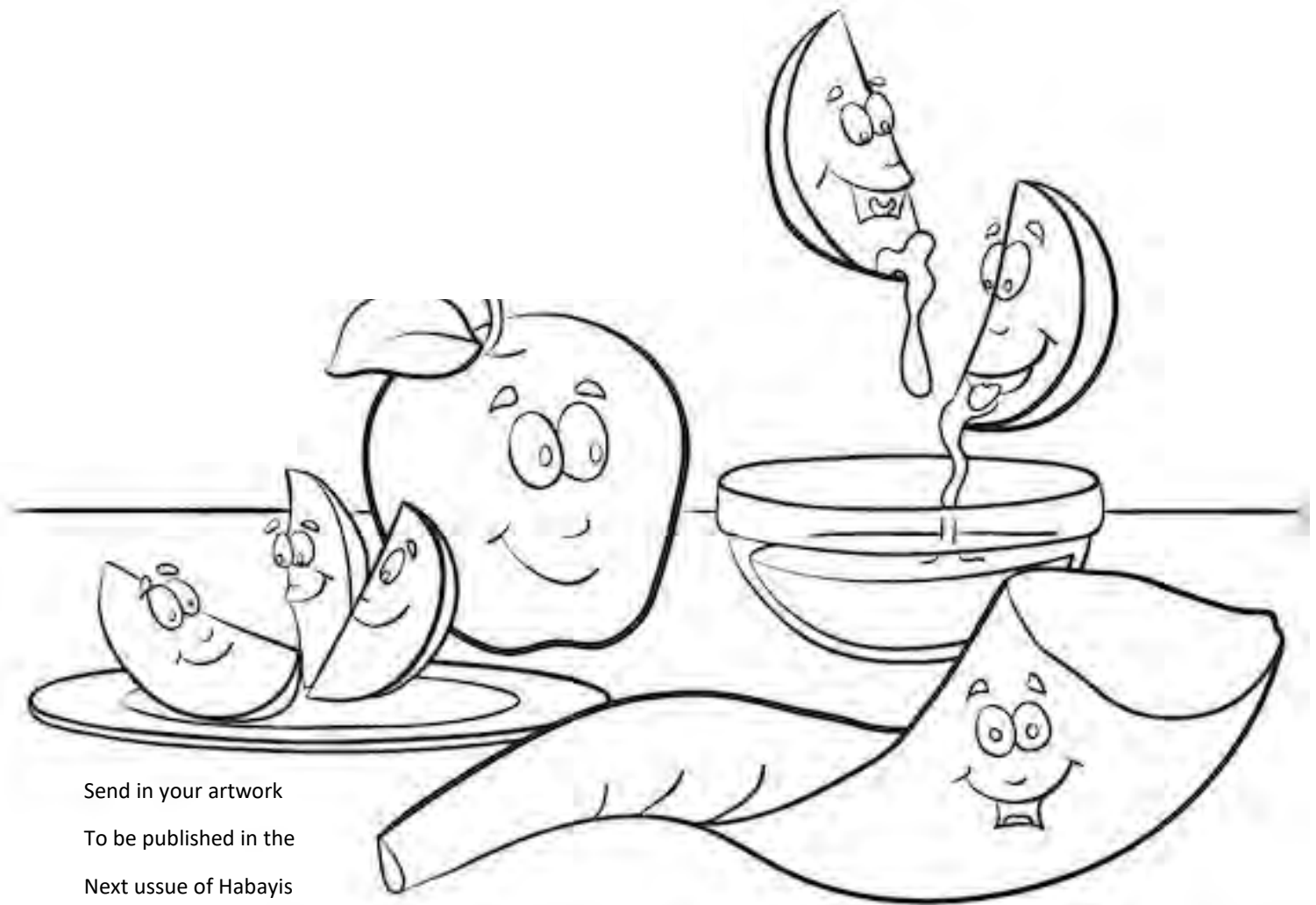
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