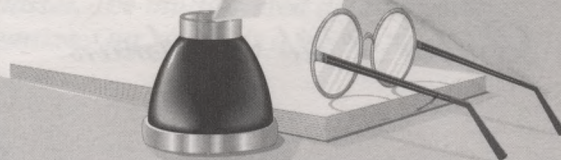




From the Editor's Desk

How often do you get together with your high-school friends? Regular reunions? Classmates' weddings? Or even - gulp - the weddings of your classmates' kids? However frequent or infrequent, each meeting probably leaves you with the resolve to "do this more often." Every encounter reinforces the feeling that there is something special about those friends who "knew you when," who shared the high points and the lows. Friends who shared that crazy, exhilarating sense that you were going to change the world, and the sinking adolescent fear that you were somehow out of sync with the world and would never get it right. And each time, as sincere as the resolve is, the reality of day-to-day living, suppers to be cooked, homework to be supervised, family and friends who lay claim to your time, sets in. You promise yourself you will get together. You promise yourself that you will enjoy that special closeness of people who share so much with you. You promise yourself....

Consider this newsletter your meeting with your friends. You may find your class represented, and you may find your daughter's class represented. And you may find that "the more things change, the more they stay the same." Each stage of life certainly has its issues, and yet so often these issues simply reemerge in another guise. Some of you may be involved in the dating process and looking for guidance as you make very important choices. Or you may be guiding your children through the process, marveling at how the rules have changed, while seeking to find the core of eternal truth that never changes. You may be entering the work force for the first time as a young graduate, or reentering after time off to be with your family. Whatever your concerns, we hope you will use this newsletter as a way to share. Share your questions, and see how your former teachers respond. Share the answers you have found in your particular experiences, in the hope that others will benefit. Share your *simchas* with us - we all love to hear good news. And remember that in times when the news is not so good, *chas v'shalom*, friends are there to try and ease your pain. Consider this newsletter a reunion with Prospect Park friends and teachers. Sit back, relax, and enjoy.



From the Desk of Our Dean

I recently had to research some *halachos* which I had never really had the need to become familiar with. The first question I researched was whether or not there is a need for a *tenoyim*, by a *zivug sheini*. The second question was whether or not the *kallah* at a *zivug sheini* wedding needs to wear a veil. The third question was whether such a *kallah* walks around the *choson* or not.

Baruch Hashem, I had been *zoche* to attend several *chasanos* of *zivugim sheinim* this summer, one of which was my daughter's. I don't recall ever having had so many similar *chasannahs* in a short period of time.

It was truly a pleasure to research all the appropriate *halachos*. By the way, a *zivug sheini kallah* does not have *tenoyim*, but she walks around the *choson*; in addition, there is no *badeiking* and, there is a *machlokes* in *minhagim* in reference to a veil. There is no *machlokes*, however, about fully expressing joy when there is a creation of a new family unit that brings an end to years of loneliness.

Put simply, we are grateful, very grateful, to the *Ribbono Shel Olam* and want to make ourselves available particularly to our alumnae who may be going through this difficult *parsha*. Call us!!

Each *chasuna* and *bais neeman b'Yisroel* brings us one step closer to the *Bais Hamikdash* and the clarity with which to resolve all of *Klal Yisrael's* challenges.

Rabbi Leib Kelman



MAZAL TOV

Shaindy Alter
Adina Berger
Shira Berkovits
Michal Bouskila
Malka Bouskila
Jill Ben Dayan
Rochel Diamond
Chavie Fichman
Chavie Fischman
Nechama Fonfeder
Esti Gamzon
Ilana Glatstein
Aviva Goldfarb
Devorah Goodman
Sara Grossman
Aliza Kappel
Sarle Katz
Shelia Klein
Chaya Leah Kleiner
Chani Koschitzki
Chaya Langsner
Bluma Luftig
Chani Manheimer
Suri Markowitz
Aviva Mayerfeld
Rivky Opshinsky
Naomi Pifko
Sara Ilana Pollack
Lea Press
Shaina Prussman
Elisheva Rabinowich
Michal Tamar Respler
Orit Respler
Judy Rosenfeld
Tziva Ross
Hadassah Sadowsky
Leah Sadowsky
Frimie Serhofer
Michal Shimoni
Devorah Shteinman
Hindy Skovronsky
Nechama Stern
Zelda Szanzer
Shani Szmulewicz
Norma Tepfer
Racheli Warshavchik
Sara Malka Weinberger
Chedva Weinstein
Serel Wicentowsky

If you have not yet received your mazal tov package and if your name is not on this list please be in touch and share your simcha with us at:
www.bloppy.org

G.O.

G.O. has kept the school moving, starting with a mock wedding, to question of the week, *מגור* contest, and games, games, games. We had basketball and *מחזנים* leagues twice a week and an exciting ping-pong tournament. Walking around the building, you saw walls that our artists designed; each grade painted their own wall in their own unique style.

משמרת

משמרת, a program started by the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation, is a program that has been in the school for a few years, working to spread awareness of *הלכות לשון הרע*. This past year's dynamic heads began a "משמרת Monday" routine. Every Monday they introduced the focus of the week, which came together with a jingle, a handout, or a game to help the girls adopt this awareness for at least a week or maybe longer. One example was *אל תדין את חברך*. The girls were invited to switch shoes with someone for a couple of hours and see what it means to put yourself in someone else's shoes. We also had an ongoing lesson a day, which was written up by the girls and distributed to each classroom at the end of 3rd period.

Guest Speakers

New and interesting speakers have always been a part of the school. This year we had the privilege to hear from Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss, Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky, Rabbi Y. Milstein, Rebbetzin S. Meisels (daughter of the Bobover Rebbe, זצ"ל), and the school was treated to

entertainment from Miriam Israeli, composer of *אמא תגיד לי* who writes her own music.

מלוח מלכה

The 11th grade organized an inter-school *Melave Malka* to which juniors from Masores, BYA, and Bais

What's Doing in BLOPPY ???

Yaakov D'Rav Meir were invited. The evening was one of fun and inspiration with an address by Rebbetzin Rochel Lubin of Bais Yaakov of Boro Park Seminary. The girls from each school gave a presentation, games were played, and a good time was had by all! The 10th grade *Melave Malka* was a wonderful evening for which the girls themselves exercised their culinary talents by preparing a delicious meal in the school kitchen on Friday morning.

J.A.C.

Jewish Affairs Committee took off in a new direction this year. With their expanded agenda, they keep the school informed of all Jewish communal activities in א"י and around the world. They have arranged *תדלילים* groups and *צדקה* collections for various families of victims in א"י. They instituted J.A.C. circle with Dr. Press, Rivka Schwartz, and Dr. Rosenshein in

which they discussed current events with the girls during lunch. With a "What if...we do ours" project they arranged Friday night groups throughout the area where girls congregated at *licht bentching* time and listened to other girls speaking on areas in which we could all improve. The goal of J.A.C. was to inform the students of needs in the greater Jewish population, and mobilize them in *tefilla*, *צדקה*, and any other area of *bishtadlus*.

Play, Play, Play

Not a *רננו* year, but we couldn't stop

entertaining, so...the seniors worked on a cantata which they performed on *הניסן* on the subject of *תפילה*. A school play was prepared by two seniors for the school's entertainment. All practices took place on the girls' own time and the results were superb. The language department put on a creative assembly using Spanish, Hebrew, and Yiddish. It was a joy. The music and voice recital held by Mrs. Shapiro was sophisticated and beautiful, enjoyed by all.

Gemach

Gemach's philosophy in Prospect Park is to get everyone involved in doing something meaningful outside of themselves, whether it's the girls who regularly tutor or the ones who organize programs for Otzar, Ahi Ezer, Beer Hagolah, Nefesh, HASC or JEP. Possibilities were explored this year for helping the blind, the deaf, and the elderly. We in Prospect Park stood to gain most of all.

Overheard: "I think this place is a camp with some learning taking place intermittently."
"I really disagree! There is hefty learning going on in all classes. The multifaceted activities allow any girl on any level and talent to participate and organize. Our school is a happy place."



Our devoted principal, Rabbi Stern, is an integral and beloved part of life at Bnos Leah.

AN ALUMNA

ASKS: How much should you trust young teenagers? I have heard that Rav Avigdor Miller z"tl, had encouraged parents not to let children have sleepovers at friends' houses. I have a *heimishe* friend whose teenage daughter spoke on the phone to a boy for hours at night for almost a year without her parents knowing. How much surveillance is necessary?

RABBI STERN: You must trust your teenagers. In reality you have no choice. If they want to do something that you don't approve of, they will. Think about the amount of time they are away from home and you will realize you must trust them.

But what exactly is trust and how does it develop? I define trust as the knowledge that your children know and represent the values you have instilled in them. Trust is not the statement "I trust you," but rather the result of the *chinuch* that you have provided for your child. Use every opportunity to talk and share. Share stories about your growing up, stories about grandparents that teach and illustrate those values. If you're very comfortable, discreetly share the mistakes that you made when you were younger and the regret you feel. The more you instill these values from an early age, the more you put them into practice, the more equipped your child is to handle the different situations that arise.

Parents should inform their pre-teenagers about smoking and drinking. I don't mean by giving them lectures and handing out anti-drug paraphernalia, but rather by taking advantage of situations that come up. If they see someone they know smoking, tell them it's dangerous to them and to others. Inform them that lying drunk in a stranger's garden on Purim is not "cool."

You write that "a *heimishe*" (by the way, what does that mean?) friend has a daughter who was secretly speaking on the phone with a boy for over a year. That doesn't happen just because she has too much time on her hands. It's not a result of spending a Shabbos at a friend's house without supervision. It's something that has built up over time. True, people do have a *Yetzer Harah*, and in many cases he wins regardless of our *chinuch*, but that is beyond our control. We can only do what we can do and daven for *s'yata d'shmaya*.

Invest in the *chinuch* of your child, and surveillance will not be as necessary. The trust that you have in your child and the responsibility that he or she feels towards you will often be enough to keep them safe.

AN ALUMNA ASKS: I enjoy knowing things about literature, art, music... The way I have been raised I consider it very important to be knowledgeable, and to some extent this is how I measure intelligence. On the other hand, I know

that Torah is the most important thing and that should be the focus of my life and that is the true measure of wisdom. I know it, but I am not sure if I feel it. So the question is, what is the ideal and what should be my goal? Is the ideal to isolate us from the world as much as possible? I know that I can't isolate myself completely, but what is the correct attitude to impart to my children? Should I want them to grow up not exposed at all? But these things are important to me.

MRS. CZERMAK: We live in the information age. We are inundated with words and pictures describing the "news" of the world. Is it important to know? Should we be aware of the comings and goings? The answer is yes - a qualified yes, a hesitant yes, and a yes that is tempered by doubt.

I believe that it is important to know the world and even more important to know that the world is not us. We listen to the news, we absorb the facts, we try to filter what come into our homes, all the while knowing "they" - not we are in control.

As we absorb the world around us and become somewhat worldly, we must continue to keep our home a sanctuary. We must remain an island in the sea of the secular day-to-day. No matter how much of the world we know, we must always remember we are different, apart, and more.

Mrs. Czermak will not only know your name when you meet her years later, but the row and seat in which you sat. Mrs. Czermak embodies warmth, wisdom and grace, and so we asked her to respond to this classic and most often asked Hashkafa question.

Occasionally, my students ask me what I wanted "to be" when I was in high school. They act somewhat disappointed when I tell them that, in fact, I've always wanted to be a teacher.

I have never needed to look far from home for thrilling career options. My mother (Mrs. Schick) has been a devoted teacher for over 25 years and I can't imagine her ever stopping. But, while I smiled in response to gibes about following in her footsteps (I teach, among other things, American History in Bruria High School), teaching is something that I feel I would have come to, even if my mother had been a doctor, a lawyer, or "just" a stay-at-home mom.

I keep thinking back to 10th grade when Mrs. Galinsky was telling us why she went into teaching. I forget the context and the exact phrasing, but it was something along the lines of always being in a "growing" environment. When I heard that, something clicked, and I too wanted to always be in a "growing" environment, though I would have been loathe to admit that in 10th grade.

The teenage years are the most change-filled, turbulent, exciting, terrible, and terrific years of life. To be surrounded by kids of this age day after day, year after year, makes it almost impossible not to be sucked into their enthusiasm for life. Don't get me wrong, of course there are difficult days too - days when the kids are annoying, I'm not in the mood to perform at my best, and the class is stale and boring. But that too is a challenge and I (usually) relish it.

I pity my friends who clock in and clock out at their desk jobs. They may be bringing home larger paychecks than I - and I hope so for their sakes - but can any of them love their jobs as much as I, (I'll

On Being in Chinuch

by Aliza (Schick) Feder '96

slightly obsessively) love mine? Can one feel about a

client or patient the way I feel about my students? And can they possibly be having as much fun as I'm having?!

I am reminded of the time I gave a model lesson in Prospect Park. I called on a girl who seemed startled that I noticed her. "How did she see me?" she whispered, too loudly, to her neighbor. I had to laugh out



loud. "You think you're invisible because you sit behind the pole?" I questioned. "I know the feeling. When I was in high school, I chose that seat too."

So while some of my friends and



admit

former teachers - and certainly my parents - may find it funny that a student who frequented detention more often than class chose to sit on the other side of the desk, I find it fulfilling to try and engage a classroom of 15-year-olds, knowing their thoughts firsthand because I was in their place not so long ago.

A couple of weeks ago, the school psychiatrist where I teach, spoke at the end-of-the-year luncheon and told an inspiring story. She said that she had grown up wanting to be a journalist, and in fact became a successful editor. But one *Yom Kippur* she realized her disappointment in the thought of reaching *shamayim* after 120 years and presenting *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* with the books she had edited. So immediately after *Yom Tov*, she began retraining and entered the world of *chinuch* - because there is no way to "give back" to the world as effectively and meaningfully as teaching.

I have never tried another profession and I don't think I will ever care to. My years in the classroom, on the teacher's side of the desk, have brought me more than I dreamed a job could offer. Teaching also brings me a new appreciation for my high-school teachers. Daily I try to bring, among other teachers' attributes, Mrs. Bronstein's warmth, Mrs. Weinberger's efficiency and clarity, Mrs. Shreibman's magnetic personality, Mrs. Galinsky's effectiveness, Mrs. Rosenshein's passion and love for teaching, Rabbi Stern's wit and humor, and my mother's single-minded devotion to her students into my classes. I catch myself using my teachers' methods and even their expressions - and though my students don't realize why, I smile at my private joke.

"The point is not what happens to us in our lives but what we become in the process."
- T. Heller



Though no longer with us in the Prospect Park building, Rebbetzin Hoberman still has an ongoing powerful effect on the Prospect Park family.

QUESTION: I "*red*" a shidduch. The parents wanted 5 references, no less. Then they said they would give it to the *Bachur* to check it out. Are we going too far with the way we check?

ANSWER:

There are times when we are puzzled or bothered by things, forgetting that our opinions are irrelevant. Whether we theoretically wonder about the extent of the "checking" today, our opinion only counts when we are involved in our own shidduchim, and how we conduct ourselves.

When you are involved in "*redding*" a shidduch, your goal - your agenda - is to try to get the shidduch going and *b'ezras Hashem* bring it to a happy ending. If the parties involved are being less reasonable than you like, then you can decide whether you want to continue to pursue it or not. Leave your opinions out of it, unless you decide that something is making you have second thoughts altogether, in which case you will probably and wisely drop it.

As for my personal experience with "checking," I have found that a reasonable amount of inquiry is absolutely essential. Beyond the "reasonable," it is actually the "checkers" who are creating a reputation for themselves and - as such - may be creating their own problems. It is their decision - to each his own.

QUESTION: My daughter is 24, married with 2 children, and is

working 9 to 6. Her kids are cared for by three babysitters. Her 2-year-old was thrown out

welfare programs if they are eligible? Is it better to sacrifice your comfort level and go on

programs, when eligible, in order to be with your children more? Some say there is a

REBBETZIN HOBERMAN

answers questions from alumni

of playgroup because he hits other children. I know that you could stay home and still have a "*leibidik*" kid, but why are these young mothers working full time? Does the end of *Torah* justify the sacrifice, where tiny babies don't see their mothers from morning till night? Should the babysitter be the one telling the mother about the first tooth and about the child's likes and dislikes? Is this *Torah*, or is it the way we educate them that most young women feel they cannot stay home? One girl told me that they were taught that they must not view leaving their babies as a sacrifice. This young woman has a one-year-old, works 9 to 5, is expecting, and does not see this as a sacrifice. She completely numbs her maternal instincts and believes it is for the sake of *Torah*. Is she right, or should she just use up all her *chasunab* money and supplement it with a part-time job or social

haftacha, that your children will fare well even without their mother in the home, if you are working so that your husband can learn. Is this true, and if it is, does it include the times when the children are sent to the babysitter just so the mother can have a day off?

ANSWER: One of the harshest realities in life is to recognize and accept change. Today's life-style differs considerably from what was accepted - and/or standard - during our growing-up years. It is certainly unlike the "norm" of two and three generations ago.

As such we must realize that our daughters and granddaughters will probably be having wage-earning jobs. I believe that many families will become a TWO salaried family, in order to maintain a life-style that is ever-escalating. So, before we evaluate the "merit" of the woman who is working in order to be a partner of the (full or part-time) Kollel pattern of living, let us take note of the others - those who are working to reach or maintain a life-style that one salary can't cover.

If, in fact, the "economy" of the future will (almost) force certain women to pursue a wage-providing job, there is probably some degree of choice as to how many hours away from her children will be necessary. Here is where the *Yetzer Hara* (otherwise known as *negius* - rationalization) comes into play. An honest evaluation of whether one must have those things that this second salary will provide, versus the price being paid in the caring for, and involvement with one's children, must be made. I would venture to say that this is a very difficult task requiring *chochmos* Shlomo Hamelech, and formidable integrity mixed with a great amount of *emunah* and *bitachon*.

The woman who is a partner in the (full or part-time) Kollel life (as well as those who have chosen to be in the world of mechanchim), faces a different situation.

There is a *mesora* today for Kollel families where the wife/mother is working. It is not for us to pass judgment as to whether this is an acceptable or valuable way to live. People far greater than us have encouraged this choice for those who merit it and are willing and able to adjust their lives to it. A major expectation is that this family will successfully replace a higher-level "*gashmi*" pattern of living, with a life permeated with a higher level of "*ruchnius*." It would be expected that if the wife/mother must be away from her children in order to have this type of home, the couple will set their sights lower and minimize.

If this home is maintained with *chochma* and *simcha*, *b'ezras Hashem* this *bais neeman b'Yisroel* can be filled with great pride and satisfaction, despite the usual (and natural) trials and tribulations of raising a family.

To impose upon a couple who is trying to have this type of home with criticism or by

questioning its value or correctness is - in my humble opinion - out of order. We help our children because we love them. Our gedolim have recognized the merit of a Kollel lifestyle. Shouldn't we?

QUESTION: An alumna called recently saying she felt unfulfilled and empty. She had always thought that this empty feeling was something that would go away when she was settled in life, i.e. married and beginning a family. However, it seems not to be true.

She has a degree in special education and recently began doing an intervention in the home of a Hindu family. She commented that as she watches the mother doing things around the house to take care of her family, she wonders how is this woman different from her?

How can we help this alumna and many others deal with this empty and unfulfilled feeling?

ANSWER: Finding satisfaction in one's life is directly related to the goals one sets. If a young person grows up with the idea that her primary function in life is to be an *eved Hashem* who will dedicate her life to being *marbeh kavod Shamayim*, she will *b'ezras Hashem* find the means to fulfill that goal.

We pray that she will do so as a wife/mother as well as through her own identity. In this triple role (self/wife/mother) she can choose to maximize all the skills and talents with which she has been blessed and, as such, should have a good chance at having a deep sense of satisfaction and

fulfillment.

In dealing with our young women who feel "unfulfilled," we should examine what we have done for them as teachers and mothers during their developmental years. What have we done directly or indirectly to develop the *Torah's* concept of one's purpose in this world, or have we erred? Has misplaced ego motivated us to belittle the wife/mother role, otherwise known as being "just a housewife"? Has the "value" of college degrees or potential wage earning replaced the "value" of the lofty position of *ezer kinegdo/aim b'Yisrael*? Regardless of what one may do in addition to caring for one's family, are the priorities clear? Whose achievements generate our respect, our envy - the woman who is coping successfully in a difficult home situation, the woman who is bringing up exemplary children, or the woman who is excelling in areas other than family life?

It is never too late to help someone, but surely this *chinuch* must begin when our girls are very young. As they observe mothers and teachers who successfully convey to them their own happiness, satisfaction, and fulfillment in their home roles, our young women will develop by osmosis their own yearning to emulate these role models. They will find ways to develop their own personalities and potential within the home, as well as in whatever they choose to do along with their primary essence of being the partner in a *bayis ne'eman b'Yisrael*.

Our deepest condolences to the entire **Diamond family** on the petira of **Rabbi David Diamond**

המקום ינקם אתכם בתוך
שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים



I began teaching because the hours were better than corporate hours and because I had been seeing my child between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. I know that the feminist revolution happened because women did not want to be considered baby machines, but that's exactly what I felt like—a machine that had made a baby for someone else to care for, while I worked like an unfeeling, seemingly-never-exhausted, genderless corporate executive. And I wanted more. I wanted to be a mother.

So I became a teacher—high school English, grades 10 through 12 (9th grade and A.P. came a year later). And in becoming a teacher, I became a new person. I became myself.

I have not been so intellectually stimulated since college. Nowadays, I read. I create. I change. I think. I explore. I analyze. A lot goes into preparation—it's just so exhilarating. I get to think. And ponder and research and understand.

And then I get to organize and deduce and decide—what do my students need to know? How can I help them

WHY I DO What I Do

By Brendy (Soroka) Siev '94

arrive at these conclusions themselves? What skills do I consider essential to the high-school experience?

I was once a cog in the corporate wheel. Now I have ownership of my classroom. I ruminate, I cogitate, I set the tone, I make my own decisions, I help shape people. I feel empowered. I'm the queen of my classroom.

And there's nothing like watching a child's writing improve over a year, to hear students think more maturely, analyze incisively, understand the human experience a little bit more because of some literature I've introduced in the classroom. There's nothing like leaving dog-eat-dog Manhattan—that self-centered everyman-is-an-island ladder—for a roomful of students. There's no competition. It's

all about sincerity and understanding and relationships. It's about emotional growth and confidence and (touchy-feely words like) sharing and caring. Really. It really is.

So when my husband and I decided on our move to Philadelphia this summer, we had a choice. Either the corporate world for me (out of town 9 to 5 really means 9 to 5, not 8 to 7) or teaching. And we thought about it and weighed the pros and cons, and on the corporate side the only pro was—money. Which is quite a pro.

But we sat down with papers and calculators and said, "We gotta make teaching work." Because there are so many pros to teaching. Because my husband finds his wife the senior account executive—with her tears, her nervousness, her anxiousness, her achy weariness at the end of the day—a mere shell of his fulfilled, happy, dynamic, and excited wife the teacher. And I find her that way too.

So we found a way. And that's why I joined Torah Academy of Philadelphia this September and not Johnson & Johnson.

יהי זכרם ברוך

Rabbi Leib Kelman opened the evening with *kapitlach* of *Tebillim l'iluyi nishmas* the *niftarot*, Chani Fridman Teitelbaum ז"ל and Rochela Fishelis Alstock ז"ל. He told a moving story from HaRav Dunner about the serious effects we could cause when we hold a *bakpadah*, a grudge against another. He urged all of our alumnae to let go of hurt feelings and forgive any who have wronged us, לעילוי נשמתם.

Mrs. Press continued the evening with a description of both girls as "salt of the earth," rich with the values of responsibility and consistent loyalty. Both of the *niftarot* were

extremely modest. *Yehi Zichrum Baruch*.

On Monday the 22nd of September, the Prospect Park Bnos Leah auditorium filled almost to capacity with alumnae and friends who came to honor a tragic loss for our Prospect Park family.

Mrs. Press gave a profound *shiur* on a broad dimension of teshuvah. A particular emphasis was placed on the importance of Rosh

Hashanah as the day on which we celebrate the *malchus* of Hashem. Understanding that all events have meaning because they are Hashem's will, allows for a more meaningful teshuvah.

While Rabbi Stern could not join us in person, his *daf yomi shiur* that night was *l'iluyi nishmas* the girls as well. Over \$1800 was collected in their memory.

May all the members of their families and friends find נחמה.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך
שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים



Shumli's life ended just months before his *bar mitzvah* was to take place. Much time had been invested in learning his *parsha* before his departure for camp, leaving ample time to review and perfect. Shmuli faced many obstacles while learning to *lein*.

Each *perek* brought new challenges that were difficult for him to overcome. Once he achieved his goal, it was extremely satisfying, for not only had he learned how to *lein*, he had overcome every hurdle that stood in his way. We were proud of him and anticipated the *nachas* we would feel as we stood in *shul* with our friends and family as our Shmuli would be called to

Rabos machshavos blev ish...It was not meant to be. But we cannot let these months merely pass us by. Just as *Pesach* is

We created the *simcha* of *hascholas k'sivas sefer Torah*, *l'iluy nishmaso*. No, Shmuli will not *lein*, but many a *bar mitzvah* boy will be called up to this Torah and *lein* from it. Shmuli will not deliver a *p'shetal*, but many a *p'shetal* will be created by the *talmidim* who

will benefit from the donations made. We will not be able to dance with Shmuli, yet as a *klal*, we can embrace our Torah as our dancing and singing fill the street with a *simchas haTorah* the like of which no one has seen. Perhaps our *ahavas haTorah* will rise to *Shamayim* and beseech *HKB"H* that we should know no more sorrow.

Our sorrow was replaced with some joy, our emptiness with fulfillment, and an absolute end with the hopes of new beginnings. *Eitz chaim he lamachazikim bah*.

The Life of My Child

By: Chani Steinberg Borenstein '77

a *zeman cheiruseinu* and *Succos* is a *zman simchaseinu*, our family had a *zman* set

"No, Shmuli will not *lein*, but many a *bar mitzvah* boy will be called up to this Torah and *lein* from it."

me.

but remembering with love

Needless to say, the repairman showed up on Monday morning. Until then, we managed by leaving the drinks out on the fire escape to stay sort of cool (another joy of apartment living) and by storing my son's milk in the refrigerator of our neighbors two floors up.

Up

tz '94

It was at that point that I called my mother. I'm tired of being an adult, I said. I want to go back to a time when broken refrigerators (and surgery, and hospitals, and doctors' visits, and death) are things that someone else has to take care of, not me.

I realize that I've been lucky. *Rachmana litzlan*, some of my friends, some of my classmates - some of you - have had to grow up in this sense much earlier. I got away with being a kid until I was twenty-five.

But at whatever age it happens, growing up is hard to do... Try breathing... Try coping with the swerve ball... and rest assured that a small part in you is being actualized

In the midst of all this life-altering busy-ness, I found myself having to go into school one Friday. School being over an hour away from my home, I prepared as much of *Shabbos* as I could in advance, rushed to school, and as soon as I could, rushed home to embark on a very hectic few hours of cooking. And dis-

(and entirely unwelcome) intrusion into what it means to be a grownup. But finally, it was the refrigerator that did me in.

repairman in before sunset that evening. Yes, yes, he assured me, he would do his best.

I rushed home...my refrigerator had died.



BROOKLYN, NEW YORK
1604 AVENUE R
PROSPECT PARK
BNOS LEAH

I began teaching because the hours were better than corporate hours and because I had been seeing my child between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. I know that the feminist revolution happened because women did not want to be considered baby machines, but that's exactly what I felt like—a machine that had made a baby for someone else to care for, while I worked like an unfeeling, seemingly-never-exhausted, genderless corporate executive. And I wanted more. I wanted to be a mother.

So I became a teacher—high school English, grades 10 through 12 (9th grade and A.P. came a year later). And in becoming a teacher, I became a new person. I became myself.

I have not been so intellectually stimulated since college. Nowadays, I read. I create. I change. I think. I explore. I analyze. A lot goes into preparation—it's just so exhilarating. I get to think. And ponder and research and understand.

And then I get to organize and deduce and decide—what do my students need to know? How can I help them

Rabbi Leib Kelman opened the evening with *kapitlach* of *Tebillim l'ilyui nishmas* the *niftarot*, Chani Fridman Teitelbaum and Rochela Fishelis Alstock. He told a moving story from HaRav Dunner about the serious effects we could cause when we hold a *bakpadah*, a grudge against another. He urged all of our alumnae to let go of hurt feelings and forgive any who have wronged us, לעילוי נשמות.

Mrs. Press continued the evening with a description of both girls as "salt of the earth," rich with the values of responsibility and consistent loyalty. Both of the *niftarot* were

WHY I DO What I Do

By Brendy (Soroka) Siev '94

arrive at these conclusions themselves? What skills do I consider essential to the high-school experience?

I was once a cog in the corporate wheel. Now I have ownership of my classroom. I ruminate, I cogitate, I set the tone, I shape the queue.

And the child's hear st analyze human because duced i ing Manhat man-is- of stude

On Mond Prospect

filled almost to capacity with alumnae and friends who came to honor a tragic loss for our Prospect Park family.

Mrs. Press gave a profound *shiur* on a broad dimension of teshuvah. A particular emphasis was placed on the importance of Rosh

all about sincerity and understanding and relationships. It's about emotional growth and confidence and (touchy-feely words like) sharing and caring. Really. It really is.

So when my husband and I decided on our move to Philadelphia this summer, we had a choice. Either the corporate world for me (out of town 9 to 5 really means 9 to 5, not 8 to 7) or teaching. And we thought about it and weighed the pros and cons, and on the corporate side the only pro was—money. Which is quite a pro.

But we sat down with napers and cal-

While Rabbi Stern could not join us in person, his *daf yomi shiur* that night was *l'iluyi nishmas* the girls as well. Over \$1800 was collected in their memory.

May all the members of their families and friends find נחמה.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך
שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים



Shumli's life ended just months before his *bar mitzvah* was to take place. Much time had been invested in learning his *parsha* before his departure for camp, leaving ample time to review and perfect. Shumli faced many obstacles while learning to *lein*.

Each *perek* brought new challenges that were difficult for him to overcome. Once he achieved his goal, it was extremely satisfying, for not only had he learned how to *lein*, he had overcome every hurdle that stood in his way. We were proud of him and anticipated the *nachas* we would feel as we stood in *shul* with our friends and family, as our Shumli would be called to the Torah. He was excited about the singing and dancing, surrounded by friends and family.

Being comforted is not about forgetting but remembering with love

This was the year that I finally grew up. Graduating high school, seminary, college, didn't do it; marriage and the birth of my first child didn't do it. While all milestones, those are things you can experience without ever confronting the unyielding realities of life. It was this year, which brought the serious illness of one close family member, and the *petirah* of another, that forced me to do that. As my husband and I rearranged our schedules and lives to accommodate daily hospital visits, as I spent long days (and nights) alone with first one and then two children, I felt that I was getting a thorough (and entirely unwelcome) initiation into what it means to be a grownup. But finally, it was the refrigerator that did me in.

In the midst of all this life-altering busy-ness, I found myself having to go into school one Friday. School being over an hour away from my home, I prepared as much of *Shabbos* as I could in advance, rushed to school, and as soon as I could, rushed home to embark on a very hectic few hours of cooking. And dis-

Rabos machshavos blev ish... It was not meant to be. But we cannot let these months merely pass us by. Just as *Pesach* is

a *zeman cheiruseinu* and *Succos* is a *zeman simchaseinu*, our family had a *zeman* set

"No, Shumli will not *lein*, but many a bar mitzvah boy will be called up to this Torah and *lein* from it."

aside that would be a *simchadik* time.

Growing Up

Rivka (Press) Schwartz '94

covered that my refrigerator had died. This is some kind of law of the universe: stoves die on *Erev Pesach* (it happened to my mother a few years back); refrigerators go late on Friday afternoon. I called the super. (Ah, the joys of living in an apartment building). Between his Pidgin English and my non-existent Spanish, I tried to convey the urgency of getting a

"I rushed home...my refrigerator had died."

repairman in before sunset that evening. Yes, yes, he assured me, he would do his best.

We created the *simcha* of *hascholas k'sivas sefer Torah*, *l'iluy nishmaso*. No, Shumli will not *lein*, but many a bar mitzvah boy will be called up to this Torah and *lein* from it. Shumli will not deliver a *p'shetal*, but many a *p'shetal* will be created by the *talmidim* who

will benefit from the donations made. We will not be able to dance with Shumli, yet as a *klal*, we can embrace our Torah as our dancing and singing fill the street with a *simchas haTorah* the like of which no one has seen. Perhaps our *ahavas haTorah* will rise to *Shamayim* and beseech *HKB"H* that we should know no more sorrow.

Our sorrow was replaced with some joy, our emptiness with fulfillment, and an absolute end with the hopes of new beginnings. *Eitz chaim he lamachazikim bah.*

Needless to say, the repairman showed up on Monday morning. Until then, we managed by leaving the drinks out on the fire escape to stay sort of cool (another joy of apartment living) and by storing my son's milk in the refrigerator of our neighbors two floors up.

It was at that point that I called my mother. I'm tired of being an adult, I said. I want to go back to a time when broken refrigerators (and surgery, and hospitals, and doctors' visits, and death) are things that someone else has to take care of, not me.

I realize that I've been lucky. *Rachmana litzlan*, some of my friends, some of my classmates - some of you - have had to grow up in this sense much earlier. I got away with being a kid until I was twenty-five.

But at whatever age it happens, growing up is hard to do... Try breathing... Try coping with the swerve ball... and rest assured that a small part in you is being actualized



Mrs. Fink is our wise and regal teacher, a mechaneches as well as Seminary Coordinator par excellence. Mrs. Fink manages all this as well as organizing superb schoolwide events. These are her responses to some alumnae questions that came our way.

ALUMNA'S QUESTION: A lot of eligible yeshiva boys and their families all seem to want girls with degrees who can make ends meet more than they want a stay-at-home mom. Don't the mothers of these boys want girls who will stay at home for their sons and families most of the time?

MRS. FINK answers: The question you raise is a very valid one. Several years ago someone framed a similar question at a Torah Umesorah convention and posed it to the Noviminsker Rebbe. She said: "The girls' schools are teaching the girls three mutually exclusive and therefore contradictory messages."

"A. It is the ideal that a mother should stay home with her children. B. It is the ideal for a girl to want to teach. C. It is the ideal for a girl to marry a *ben Torah* and support him!"

The Rebbe replied that although it seems contradictory, the schools should continue to promote all three ideals. Each girl, in whatever path she personally will forge for herself, must simultaneously be mindful of the other two important messages. For example, if a girl is marrying a *ben Torah* and is forced to compete in the workplace, she must be mindful of the ideal of being

home with her children and also the threat of the influence of the workplace. Perhaps then, she will negotiate for part-time work or choose to study for a degree that allows her to be home for her children.

ALUMNA'S QUESTION: I grew up in a wonderful *frum* home with a TV and its trappings. My high-school friends were the same. I went to seminary and reassessed. As many of us did, I veered to the right. Our home does not have a TV. My children go to a school that is more to the right than the one I went to. How sad it is for me to see my teenage daughter being enticed by the scene at the pizza store, the music, and the TV that I struggled to stay away from. I try to teach and be somewhat accepting – but I feel sad that this is what came of my efforts. Why is it that there seems to be a pattern? That the children of those who become *frum* revert?

MRS. FINK'S answers: You are describing the *nisayon* of living in an open, free society where our *Yiddishe kinder* are exposed to *goyishe* values. You are writing in absolutes. "What's wrong with our *chinuch*?" "Why is it that there seems to be a pattern?"

Please be assured that with your efforts as a parent and our efforts as *mechanchim*, we must ask to be *zoché* to a tremendous *siyata d'sh-maya* that in a great measure our children remain insulated and protected from the negative messages of the outside culture. The majority of students are getting the message of the *chinuch* of their parents and teachers.

You are saddened by your daughter's enticement to the pizza store, etc. Try to be sensitive to her *nisayon*. It's hard to judge individual *tchonot*. Stay close to your daughter. Show her love while you continue to instill Torah values. The *Chazon Ish* said **אבל פעמים צריכים לקרב בשתי ידיים לעולם תהא שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת**

Your daughter is traveling through a difficult but passing stage. Hang in there. Continue to daven for her. The message you are teaching and that she is learning from school will come across, and I am sure she will *b'ezras Hashem* mature and you will have *nachas* from her.

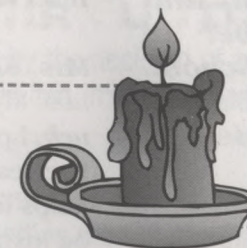
Faigy Silverman-

Thank you so much for
all your help & editing.



An Ode

By: Shiffy Engelsberg Steinberg '90



Our Grandmother, Celia Silber A"H

Mirel and Liba Price's grandmother

On April 22, nineteen hundred and ninety, Chaviva Esther Schurayetz came into the Engelsberg family. She was so very beautiful, you could see that by her face, And her actions were careful, filled with elegance and grace. As she walked down the aisle on the day of the *chasuna*, She was davening with focus, concentration, and intense *kavana*. Her *tefillot* were directly sent to *Hashem Elokim*, And now she surely sits next to Him in the *shamayim*. Chaviva taught her children to daven that way too, To speak your heart and tell Him whatever is bothering you! She trusted *Hashem* completely, and she taught the boys to know, Not only your father and mother, but the *Ribbono Shel Olam* loves you so. We should try to emulate Chaviva when we daven every day, And her memory will be blessed in this very special way. Now everything Chaviva did was well thought through, And she strived each and every day, to become a better Jew. I always admired how she was able, with tremendous ease, To pick up the telephone and speak to a Rav, about a problem, if you please. She discussed all angles with the Rav, until she felt satisfied, And this was true in health and sickness, until the day she died. Chaviva was a *tzenua*, that's clear to all of us, She was careful in her dress and speech, never showy or making a loud fuss. Just like her name, Chaviva, she was dear to all she knew, And Esther, a hidden or quiet queen, now that was also true. Chaviva was a saver, most things could be used again, And Shaul praised the flair she had when she picked up a pen. Chaviva taught me cooking tips, let me share them if I may, Use olive oil when you cook or bake, margarine just does not pay. And when you make your *challah*, mix whole wheat flour with the white, And no one will complain at all when they take the first bite. Chaviva was sick for so long - five and one half years, And we all davened for a *refuah shleima* and cried with heartfelt tears. But *Hashem* decided it was not to be and took you to Him now, And we must all get up and go on, but I keep asking HOW? I see your smile on my fridge and think of you every day, But it is hard not to be able to pick up the phone when I have something to say. From where you are, high up above, reasons are clear to see, And you're surely davening for Shaul, the boys, your friends and family. Dear Chaviva, what is there left to say except I LOVE YOU, And may Moshiach come quickly *bimhayra biyamenu*!

Letting go of pain is not betrayal.

There are so many reasons we were proud of our strong and generous grandmother. Her last day was spent in waiting, as always, until her little charges were safely on the bus, homeward bound. This was a constant in her many years as the director of Bobov Pre-school. Her devotion to her "charges" at home and in school was monumental, overshadowed only by her devotion to *Hashem Yisbarach*.

During the *shiva*, the *Hatzalah* member who had taken our grandmother to the hospital told our family that as the stroke began to take over her body, she began to speak. It was a little difficult to make out what she was saying at first, but then he understood; her last words were "Cover me properly, please."

Rabbi Abraham Kelman, *yibadel l'chaim tovim*, her esteemed brother, will miss her as surely as will the *chinuch* world she gave to for decades. So too will the *orchim* who enjoyed her warm hospitality. However, we, the grandchildren who shared her house, her weekly homemade *challah*, and all that came along with it, are feeling more than ever the blessing, the extra special blessing, we merited in our grandmother.

Yehi Zichrah Baruch.



Mrs. Shany Kohen is the youngest and newest 10th-grade Chumash teacher in Prospect Park Bnos Leah High School. Cleveland – Yavne born and bred, she is a powerhouse. Here is a short interview to introduce her to our alumnae.

Interviewer: What do you think is the most important idea to convey to our girls while teaching them *Chumash*?

Mrs. Kohen: I tell my girls on the first day that my goal is not to make them into *talmidei chachamim* but to increase their *abavas Hashem* and *abavas baTorah*.

Interviewer: How do you teach the angry, rebellious students or the non-academic ones?

Mrs. Kohen: My zeide, Rav Miller זצ"ל, encouraged building a positive mindset...I explain to the girls that even though they may have some legitimate reasons to be upset or angry, it is important to get a handle on it. For example, I suggest that they focus on five small positive things they can be grateful for. It could be new shoes, it could be the supper they ate. As for the weaker students, I try to modify the work so they too can feel successful.

Interviewer: How did you choose to go into *chinuch*?

Mrs. Kohen: It's my DNA. My family's lifeline is *chinuch*. My immediate and extended family are all in *chinuch*. I personally love learning and I enjoy sharing what I've learned. Being in *chinuch*, as you can imagine, helps my own *ruchniyus*. I like to give, to inspire, and be inspired by the process.

Interviewer: Who most influenced you to make you the teacher that you are?

Mrs. Kohen: My father has an open, straightforward, as well as deep and challenging personality. His very warm style is what formed me. Both my parents made the Shabbos for us twelve *k"ab* children fascinating. There were rides for

the younger children, *zemiros* for each one to solo, lots of contests and riddles; *Shabbos* was a vibrant experience.

My parents emphasized that *Shabbos* was "*tov l'hodos l'Hashem*." At every *seuda* we went around the table and announced what we were grateful for. These kinds of experiences made our family more open to showing emotions of all sorts. All in all, it is natural for me to love my students as my parents love us.

How do you teach the angry, rebellious students or the non-academic ones?

The way to remove negative thoughts is to introduce positive ones. If we don't introduce thought's, we revert to the old one. - R' Nachman M' Breslov

Miss S. Wikler is a perfect fit for Prospect Park. Whether it is accounting or Pirkei Avos, there is always respect, humor and above all a warm sensitivity to the student as a person. Needless to say, many connections are formed. We welcomed Miss Wikler to the PPY family and are the better for it.

Interviewer: What would you think is the most important idea to convey in *chinuch habanos*?

Miss. Wikler: I heard one from Rebbetzin C.L. Kotler, שרת, that the most important

thing to remember when teaching is that you're not teaching your subject matter,

Interviewer: Why did you choose to be in *chinuch*?

Miss. Wikler: I consider myself a "people person" because I've always enjoyed working with people. And I enjoy having the privilege of contributing to the noble calling of *chinuch habanos*.

Interviewer: What do you like most about Prospect Park?

Miss. Wikler: The two things I most appreciate about Prospect Park are the high level of *derech erez* of the students, and the warm atmosphere of camaraderie among the faculty. As a new teacher in the school I value that very much.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO BE IN CHINUCH?

you're teaching girls - the future mothers of *Klal Yisroel*. Considering what she said, I feel that the goal of *chinuch habanos* should be to help each and every girl achieve her full potential in each area.



A G R U D G E

Once upon a time there was a girl who was hurt by the decision of a teacher. The decision, maybe right and, as it goes with human beings, maybe not so right resulted in the girl being very, very hurt and very, very angry for a very, very long time.

One time a relative of this girl met this teacher and said, "She is still so angry at you." The teacher, shocked and pained, tracked the student of many years ago. Getting the full *mechilah* was not a simple thing; the hurt and anger was deep. In the very month when that *mechilah* was actually given, this particular teacher got the "*yeshuah*" in her personal life that she was waiting so long for.

Dear Alumnae, we are all human. We all try not to hurt each other. Please, please forgive us and others who err. Please, please don't hold a grudge.

Tzar Gidul Banim

From a '77 Alumna

As parents and teachers, we teach Torah standards and we discipline. Most of all, we are role models, and must always give unconditional love and then daven...daven...and daven..

I was dealing with an ongoing crisis with my teenager. During this trying time my daughter came home one day and repeated some

thing that a friend's mother had said to her. She told her, "You know you are putting a knife through your mother's heart, ruining her life, causing her untold anguish." My daughter came home and wanted to know if it was true.

I told my daughter, "No, it's not true. You are *not* ruining my life,

you *are* my life. You are not putting a knife through my heart. *Yes*, I am upset at the way you dress; however, I know that one day *you will see the beauty of our way.*"

This particular alumna told me that her son, who had also been struggling, is *Baruch Hashem* back in *yeshiva*. He recently told her that if she had not been "nice" to him through his struggle, he would have been gone forever.

Book Review

Mother's Memoirs is authored by our very own Rabbi Abraham Kelman and siblings. "Our goal was to fulfill yet another aspect of honoring our parent," they wrote.

This book is a tribute to a mother who was gracious, educated, and a *baalas chesed* with exceedingly fine *middos*. Rebbetzin Mirel Kelman a"h, our dear Rabbi Abraham's mother, was an extraordinarily selfless person, always seeking to do good, and engaged in the pursuit of noble goals she always had a considerate and gentle manner. A widow with limited financial means, she lived a life of fortitude with significant accomplishment. She made a great impact on the community of Toronto.

To read about this incredible woman, please contact the school office.

Rebbetzin Shlomtzie Weiss gave a special *shmuz* on the different levels of *neshoma* that we all possess. It was a very different approach; the girls were exhilarated. If any alumna is interested in forming a class with Rebbetzin Weiss, please call Mrs. Shreibman at: 718-837-1484





Esther Sarafaty Morell ע"ה

by Leah Malka Diskind '86

It is still difficult to believe that my close friend Esther Sarafaty Morell is no longer here on this earth. Generally when you experience an event, the emotions associated with it begin to fade with time. Not so with Esther's *petirah*. I am still overwhelmed by this tragedy. The pain that I felt when I first heard the news often sears through my body. It happens seemingly out of the blue, but I know that something I must have seen, heard, or thought about triggered the pain. It happens as I am sitting in traffic, shopping in the supermarket, or lying in bed. Suddenly it is there. My eyes well up with tears as I contemplate the meaning of Esther's short life and try to make sense out of her death.

We are taught to believe that this life is only a "*prozdor*" to the world to come. We are here only to amass *mitzvot*. It is in the next world that we reap our reward. I take comfort in knowing that Esther is reaping her deserved reward in *Olam Habah*. You may wonder how I know this. I was privileged to be Esther's close friend for close to nineteen years. I experienced her character and her *chesed*. I also experienced her humor, her laughter, and her tears. Esther was a multifaceted person.

Esther was a whiz at math. I was not. Esther would walk to my house from her aunt's house on 50th street where she boarded, and tutor me on nights before tests. I was not an easy student to work with; very often I would feel like giving up. I remember lying flat on my back on my dining room floor near

the door, refusing to continue. Esther persevered, often physically bringing the material to me and prodding me on.

When Esther got married to Avi Morell, she moved to Teaneck, New Jersey and later to New Hempstead in Monsey. Esther and Avi had two children, Eliezer and Elisheva. She was exceedingly proud of their accomplishments and character. Esther was consumed with love for her children and with the desire to be the best mother she could possibly be. It was a role she assumed instinctively. She always appeared to know the most

My eyes well up with tears as I contemplate the meaning of Esther's short life and try to make sense out of her death.

appropriate words to address her children every situation. I can still hear her speaking Hebrew to her children in loving and gentle tones no matter what was taking place. Esther appreciated her children's early childhood as a time of tremendous opportunity to shape their characters and values for life. She labored over important decisions for her children, analyzing them from many angles. Since I was a pre-school teacher, she often included me in this process when it regarded their schooling. That this exceptional mother would take into account my advice about her children was always so immensely flattering. Esther made sure to read quality Hebrew books to

her children. Since I have a special love for children's literature, she often asked me to suggest English titles for her so that she could borrow them from the library. She came to love children's books written by Eric Carle. Esther shopped for her clothing over the Internet late at night while her children slept. She told me that she wanted to spend all of her spare time with her children. In her selfless perception, quality time precluded shlepping her children with her while she shopped for herself.

Of course I can go on and on. Each of Esther's family members and friends owns his or her own vast collection of stories about our beloved Esther. There is no longer a mundane story. Each memory is now imbued with so much meaning. The people who loved Esther continue

to react with disbelief and deep sorrow to the knowledge that she is gone. I know that I am not the only one who continues to see Esther's animated face in crowds by day, in dreams by night. Understandably, we have not yet fully accepted the reality of her death. Esther left us with no warning. I still have important stories to share with her, good times to experience, memories to relive, advice to ask, apologies to make. I still long to dial her telephone number and greet her with "Hi, Esther!" when she answers.

Esther I miss you. I will never forget you. "*Tehe nishmata tsura bitzror hachaim.*"

Forty hours a year. Twenty hours a semester. An hour a week. That was the *Gemach* requirement when I was in high school — an hour a week of some sort of *chesed* in order to get your report card — and it remains the requirement in many high schools today.

An hour a week of any sort of volunteer work — for the school, for an organization, for a family. You could do almost anything. And we did.

There was the year we worked with a young boy who was brain damaged. The form of therapy that the parents chose, a rather dubious one called patterning, has since proven to have little value as a therapy. But the hours we spent with him had value in and of themselves. He had friends who came to him every week to spend time with him. And we grew fond of him, cheering his limited progress, feeling thrilled beyond words when he circled his eyes with his fingers to describe "the girl with the glasses."

There were the hours spent organizing the school library — you mean I can get *Gemach* hours for working with books? — and more hours spent running every machine in the school office. Aaaaah, the indescribable essence of duplicator fluid for the mimeograph machine, and the joy of inking the old Gestetner machine till black ink ran all over us. Today's copiers may break down as often, but with far less flair. And let us not forget the old Addressograph machine, the size of a teacher's desk, with boxes of metal plates for everyone on the Prospect Park mailing list. To this day, a pile of envelopes wait-

ing to be stuffed and stamped brings on a wave of nostalgia for the fun we had doing it together.

"Humility is knowing that for those to whom much is given, much is required."

'72 Graduate

And there were special events, too. There was the night we had promised to make several dozen centerpieces for a *tzedaka* function. The fact that it was also the night before the music final fazed us not a bit. Sprawled on the floor amid piles of tissue paper, tape, florist's wire, and vases, we worked diligently to the strains of classical music. My children wonder why I am prone to humming strange tunes as I work on craft projects.

"Sprawled on the floor amid piles of tissue paper, tape, florist's wire, and vases, we worked diligently"

Now that I am out of high school, does that absolve me? On the contrary, I may not have to hand in a time card to my teacher, but being finished with school doesn't mean being finished with mankind. Tutoring peers has given way to learning over the phone with a *baalas teshuva*.

"What challenges can evolve and strengthen the soul!"

There are no more mimeograph machines in my old school, but the P.T.A. is always looking for volunteers to organize events and make phone calls. And yes, sometimes they still let me help with the food decorating and centerpieces. The lesson I have carried with me from those hours I put in as a girl, is that I can still do those things I love to do. Indeed I have an obligation to do those things that I do uniquely well, when I can do them in a way that benefits others. And in all honesty, often these "*chasadim*" are lots of fun, too. So I offer to help at the school's book fair, know-

ing that because I read anything in print, I am in a unique position to make sure that their offerings are appropriate. By the same token, neighborhood children know that if their mothers don't get to the library before the book report is due, they can always pull something off my shelves. You can always count on me for a cake for any *siyum* or *tzedaka* sale. And if a friend's kid needs help with a project for school and her mother is crayon-challenged, I'll jump at the chance to pull out the paste and the scissors. The amount of time I can offer to formal organizations may vary, but opportunities for the one-on-one bit of help are always there.

I hope I always fulfill my "*Gemach* requirement." In fact,

I hope that I can continue to exceed the formal hour a week, just as my daughters often turn in time cards with 60-80 hours filled in. There are no more *Gemach* certificates and rewards for community service. These days, I know that the real rewards are far, far greater.



Ten Pitfalls Before and During the Dating Process

As you know by now, the priority for us in Prospect Park is to help all our alumnae build a *bais neeman b'Yisrael*. These practical ideas are based on the teachings of Rabbi Heller. If you can make them work for you, we will be delighted.

* A PITFALL IN DATING CAN OCCUR WHEN YOU DON'T CHECK CHARACTER TRAITS AHEAD OF THE DATE .

Some character traits that definitely must be checked for:

Yiras Shamayim: Does he have a genuine care for *mitzvos* and *halachos*?

Humility: Does this person believe that "doing the right thing" is more important than personal comfort?

Kindness: Does this person enjoy giving pleasure to other people? How does he treat people he doesn't have to be nice to? Does he volunteer? Give charity?

Responsibility: Can I depend on this person to do what he says he is going to do?

Happiness: Does this person like himself? Does he enjoy life?

Ask yourself: Do I want to be more like this person? Would I like my child to turn out like him?

* A PITFALL IN DATING CAN OCCUR WHEN YOU DON'T CHECK AHEAD OF THE DATE for emotional stability. Men and women have unique emotional needs. The unique need of a woman is to be loved – to feel that she is the most important person in her husband's life. Can this person give emotionally? A need for intimacy is part of a woman's make-up. Men by nature are goal-oriented. When a man learns how to switch gears, to be more flexible and more experience oriented, he will discover what makes his wife very happy. When we focus on giving pleasure, amazing things happen. It is important to know if he was given to and in any case if he has this capacity in him.

* A PITFALL IN DATING CAN OCCUR WHEN YOU DON'T CHECK AHEAD OF THE DATE FOR COMMON GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Understand that there are three basic ways we connect with another person: chemistry and compatibility; common interests; life goals. Make sure you share the deeper level of connection that sharing life goals provides. To avoid growing apart, you must figure out what you are "living for" while you are single, and then find someone who has come to a similar conclusion. This is the true definition of a "soul mate." A soul mate is a goal mate – two people who ultimately share an understanding of life's purpose and therefore share priorities, values, and goals.

A PITFALL IN DATING IS MARRYING POTENTIAL.

The golden rule is, if you can't be happy with the person the way he or she is now, don't get married. So when it comes to the other person's spirituality, character, per-

sonal hygiene, communication skills, and personal habits, make sure you can live with these as they are now.

A PITFALL IN DATING IS WHEN YOU FOCUS MORE ON CHEMISTRY THAN ON CHARACTER.

Understand that chemistry ignites the fire, but good character keeps it burning. Beware of the "I'm-in-love" syndrome. "I'm in love" often means I'm in love with the idea. Know it for what it is.

A PITFALL IN DATING IS: WHEN YOU CAN'T SEEM TO CONNECT EMOTIONALLY.

To evaluate whether you have a deeper emotional connection or not, ask: "Do I respect this person?" You should be impressed by qualities of truth, loyalty, determination, and regular connection to an upstanding Rav. Also ask, "Do I trust this person?" This also means, "Is he emotionally stable? Do I feel I can rely on him?"

* A PITFALL IN DATING IS WHEN YOU CAN'T FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH HIM.

Ask yourself the following questions: Do I feel calm, peaceful, and relaxed with this person? Can I fully be myself and express myself with this person? Does this person make me feel good about myself? Do you have a really close friend who makes you feel comfortable? Make sure the person you marry makes you feel somewhat as comfortable as your friend does. Are you afraid of this person in any way? You should not feel the need to monitor what you say because you are afraid of how the other person will view it. If you are afraid to express your feelings and opinions openly, there is a problem with the relationship. Another aspect of feeling safe is that you don't feel the other person is trying to control you. Be wary of someone who is always trying to change you.

* A PITFALL IN DATING IS: WHEN YOU CAN'T BE OPEN WITH HIM.

If something bothers you about the relationship, it must be brought up for discussion. Bringing up uncomfortable matters is the only way to evaluate how well the two of you communicate, negotiate and work together. Over the course of a lifetime, difficulties will arise. You need to know now, before making a commitment: Can you resolve your differences and find compromises that work for both of you? Never be afraid to let the person know what bothers you. This is also a way for you to test how vulnerable you can be with this person. If you can't be vulnerable, than you can't be intimate. The two go hand in hand.



A PITFALL IN DATING IS IF YOU USE THE RELATIONSHIP TO ESCAPE PERSONAL PROBLEMS AND UNHAPPINESS.

Understand if you are unhappy single, you'll be unhappy married, too. Marriage does not fix personal, psychological, and emotional problems. If anything, marriage will exacerbate them. If you are not happy with yourself and your life, take responsibility for fixing it now while you are single. You will feel better, and your

future spouse will thank you.

A PITFALL IN DATING IS A TRIANGLE.

To be "triangulated" means a person is emotionally dependent on someone or something else while trying to develop another relationship. A person who hasn't separated from his or her parents is the classic example of triangulation.

This year I spent my time in a lion's den. For those of you who have less of a flair for drama, I suppose you would refer to it as a first-year teaching experience in a 7th grade classroom. The opening line more or less explains my tale, with perhaps the exception of identifying the characters involved. I, the once strong, passionate king of the jungle, was being devoured by a

pack of cubs with an insatiable appetite. Day after day, attempt after attempt, failure after failure was the sustenance that I was being fed by the mischievous bunch...and by my personal fierceness.

THE LION'S DEN

by Ronit Grossman '2000

And so, as the year came to a close, and decisions concerning next year arose enter into the lion's den I will, but not as a roaring lion, as a fair and understanding person.

"My mother did everything she had to do. She was quiet and understated, but we all knew she was smart. If there ever was a *pasuk* from *Tehillim* mentioned in a *dvar Torah* by our little brother on a *Shabbos*, we all knew my mother would place it. When we would run to check the *perek*, she never failed to be right. I guess years of consistent *Tehillim*-saying made her proficient.

Quiet, understated, and devoted, my mother did what she had to do...and more...

My father woke up early for many years to learn in morning *kollel*, and my mother would be up at 5 in the morning with him to prepare breakfast. Similarly, if there was a math test that my brother needed to study for late at night, she was up then as well. At

She Did What She Had to Do

Shul was not *shul* without my mother; she was there every *Shabbos*. She used to invite us girls but never tried to make us over. This was true in all areas. When we took on a diet, she would prepare the meals for us, but she was never the type to urge us to diet. Even when it came to *shidduchim*, we never heard, "If you would only lose weight, wear this, do that."

her work with special-needs children she carried little ponytail holders and a brush so that these difficult lives would be touched by a mother's hand. She did what she had to do.

Yehi Zichrah Baruch.

(As heard at the *shiva* from Rochel and Sara Blumberg)



Deciding and Deciding Again

by a '99 alumna

With a major in business and a good job in the business field, I was nearing graduation but was still not happy about what I planned to do. I felt like I was settling for something that I knew I would not enjoy, but it seemed so practical - I would probably make a nice amount of money and it wouldn't be too hard to find a job. But there were two issues weighing down on me everyday.

The first was that my mind and energy were never on the work that I was doing. While in business, I was volunteering for Chai Lifeline and loved it. My thoughts were always on finishing work at the office so that I could go do what I really enjoyed at Chai Lifeline. At one point, my

supervisor at work told me that to be successful and really "make it" at work, I would have to put much less time into my volunteer work. I then realized that work with the seriously ill is really what I wanted to be doing, that was where I wanted my energies to go; why waste my time in the business world if I could do something that I enjoy doing, where I could do my job with heart and soul?

The other issue that bothered me was that I saw myself changing because of my work at the office. My job tapped into business acumen and seemed ever so slightly to dull some sensitivity I had worked hard to develop. It upset me that in

looking out for my company I was playing a bit with other people's minds. I was doing well at work - but I was not proud of the wheeler-dealer part that was surfacing.

And so, although I was one semester away from graduation, I took my chances and applied to graduate school in a completely different field. A new field where I could work closely with the patients - this is what Chai Lifeline introduced into my life. I am now nearing graduation, unsure of exactly where this choice will take me, but confident that I made the right choice in this helping field.

"We fool ourselves from time to time in order to keep our thoughts and beliefs consistent with what we have already done or decided."

Rochel, an alumna of Prospect Park shared some of her experiences as a frum woman in the workplace. You will be able to glean a lot from her take on the issue.

INTERVIEWER: What are some of the challenges you came up against in the corporate world?

RG: The pressure can be immense although it is not *always* there. You have to be very strong if you don't want to compromise your standards.

INTERVIEWER: What were some of the issues that you have had to deal with?

RG: My first question, of course, was about shaking hands. My particular Rav (H. D.) told me that on an interview it is better if you don't shake hands, but if you have to, do it. Once you start working, then avoid it by explaining it as a religious principle.

INTERVIEWER: Did anyone ever challenge your behavior?

RG: One colleague once said, "Boy, this custom makes dating very difficult," and I said, "And matrimony more special."

INTERVIEWER: What are some problems in the secular world that you have had to deal with?

RG: Developing camaraderie in the group is important for promotions. Parties for all occasions are encouraged. I was willing to work with *goyim*, but I was not willing to party with *goyim*.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of parties are we talking about?

RG: Celebrating birthdays in restaurants is a very big thing. If there is a disappointment on a project we have worked on, then we raise spirits with an event, a party.

INTERVIEWER: So what are the guidelines?

RG: I asked my grandfather, Rav Sheps z"tl, and my Rav, and as a rule of thumb, if you are otherwise going to lose your job then you can go. If it is an opportunity to meet more people to enable a promotion or the like, then the answer is no. I guess the idea is, this is a *parnassa*, not a career.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever have an unpleasant experience?

RG: Yes. First of all, every time there is a new manager, it starts all over again. The more human they are, the more they care about integrating us. My manager keeps asking me about my team spirit - it's very uncomfortable. The general *psak* I got for holiday parties is no. Recently I got invited to a holiday party; in the letter it said, "Holiday of your choice, Rochel." I did not join and had someone cover for me, saying

she had sent me back for some needed work. However, the next day my boss called me in and showed me a list of all the Orthodox people that were there.

INTERVIEWER: How did you respond to that one?

RG: I tried to explain that some things in the Orthodox world are black and white for everyone, while other things have to do with one's comfort level. She was not very understanding.

INTERVIEWER: So do you ever have to go to a restaurant with your co-workers?

RG: Yes, *if* it impacts business. Rav Moshe held you can go out to eat with a client to discuss business. To a show, party, dinner cruise or country clubs, I try to offer an explanation. My Rav said that the anticipation is usually worse than the actual declining of an invitation. The less you say, the better it is.

INTERVIEWER: Any last words of advice?

RG: If they see you are consistent, they will eventually respect you. If they see that sometimes it's yes and sometimes no, you will be pressured all the time.

"It is easier to resist at the beginning than at the end." - Leonardo Da Vinci

I still cannot believe how *fresh* the air is, how good it smells. My nose is accustomed to the car exhaust and cigarette smoke of midtown Manhattan. In this young-old, ruined yet unspoiled land, the mountain air is just pure. The walls and battlements surrounding the Old City only appear medieval until I pause and realize--they *are*. I have never before in my life walked a city of stone. My feet expect smooth concrete, and stumble. The streets are uneven, painful even through the thick soles of my sneakers. The white stone buildings near *Sha'ar Yaffo* nearly blind my eyes in the early morning sunlight. I can't tell what has been around for a few thousand years and what has gone up a few short weeks ago.

The sky is cerulean from atop the last staircase. Yerushalayim is all hills and valleys. Wherever I look, the country below is a bumpy blanket, all shades of green, brown, and gray. I begin my descent and get my very first glimpse of the Kotel in a sprawling, majestic view.

Oh... My heart skips. No one ever told me it would feel so—*right*. Beyond the parking lot lies the smooth marble courtyard leading directly to the Kotel itself. Lone figures retreat, not allowed to turn their backs to the holy stones, separated by a *mechitza* clearly delineating the sections for men and women. I can now see something I never noticed from all the pictures I've seen of this: it continues on past the boundaries of prayer, leading around a corner where there is a sort of ruined structure with arches and towers atop a grassy hill. I look farther; the golden Dome of the Rock makes my stomach jump and the corners of my mouth turn down. *How dare they...* I think sadly.

Then my sister is grabbing my wrist and pulling me along behind her down the stairs. The pink-and-white stones disappear from view, blocked by the small structure at the entrance to the Kotel. I wriggle with impa-

I Will Return

By: Tova Krausz '01

tience, waiting on line to get through the all-important metal-detector. There have been one too many attempts at violence here. A fine, ripe target for a suicide bomber is this wall. Should this hallowed ground withstand an attack, there would be more than just physical repercussions. *Not right*, I think to myself, placing my belongings on the conveyor to be X-rayed and stepping through the metal detector. *Nothing should ever disturb the peace of this place.*

I follow the rest of the girls out into the sunshine. Those who have been here before make a beeline for the circular stone wash-basins rising out of the solid ground like plants, looking for all the world as though they have been cultivated by a stone gardener. My feet refuse to go any further than a short distance away from the security checkpoint. I stand and stare. What seemed so small, so *cozy*, from atop the steps leading down now dwarfs me.

My eye is drawn to the right, where a cluster of feminine shapes huddle on cheap metal chairs as close to the stones as possible. On the men's side, *Tallis*-swathed figures sway in fervent prayer. Some have their faces pressed to the wall. Others' gaze is directed towards the heavens, or into their *siddurim*. My chin tilts up. From far it looks as though there are black smudges on the stones, almost like burn marks. My mind provides the images from childhood tales: Roman legions sacking the city, throwing down pillars, chaining Jewish wrists and ankles, throwing flaming torches.

I too go to wash my hands. The cool breeze helps dry them, though it freezes my fingers after the incredible chill of the water. I pull my *siddur* out of my shoulder bag, my hands numb and damp. I can see my sister and roommate off to the side, already *davening*. I

am shy, and not fluent in Hebrew. I don't dare ask any of the entrenched locals to allow me to scoot over. I am not close enough to touch until it is time for the *Shemoneh Esrei*, the holiest part

of *davening*, for which it is preferable to be facing a wall. Only now do I see why. I wait for the woman in front of me to finish up. She stands for a few short minutes, murmuring a small prayer of her own quite apart from what is written down in the *siddur*, and then presses a kiss to the wall. I can see many other women doing the same.

Before I begin the *Shemoneh Esrei*, I lay my trembling hand on the stone. My ribs creak, my sides heave, but all that escapes is one tiny sigh. The most profound sense I have is of unshouldering burdens, as if someone else could care about all the myriad worries I have for the time I am here, and I am free to concentrate on prayer. That brings a warm, contented feel, like I've been handed back something I'd been missing for a long time. That warmth fills the hollows and repairs the cracks my soul has sustained in *Golus*. I never want to leave this place. I will never forget this feeling.

I feel like I can whisper into the cool, smooth stone, the silky wind on my skin, unconsciously listening to the quiet cooing of the Kotel's doves soaring to bring the *kvittlach* straight to heaven, and have G-d hear me and answer. He seems so far away when I *daven* at home. Most of the time it seems as though I am calling over a wide chasm. Here I can rest my forehead on stone and feel like I am leaning on a shoulder, murmuring into a massive collarbone, like I do when I am too tired to look at my mother and still want to speak to her. There can be no doubt. *Here* is my home, and I do not wish to go back. As I am forced to back away from the wall and follow my tour group after the best *davening* of my life, the tears come, spilling out of the corners of my eyes. I make a promise that cool, heady morning. *I will return...*

ארץ ישראל לא מטרה בפני עצמה אלא כדי שתהווה ככלי נוסף להכרת הקב"ה בעולם



Yiras Shamayim

One definition of *Yiras Shamayim* is that you care to do it "right." We sometimes demonstrate care by asking *daas Torah* at different crossroads of life.

Below are what some of our alumnae in the "world," who are struggling to sustain their *yiras Shamayim*, asked our esteemed and beloved Rabbi Blumenkrantz. Needless to say, one cannot apply someone else's *psak* to her situation. One should rather consult with a *talmid chocham* who is familiar with her personally and understands the entire context and dynamic.

QUESTIONS FROM ALUMNAE IN SCHOOL:

I am taking education classes. The professor assigned some PG movies as part of the curriculum. I don't go to the movies. May I watch them in class?

RABBI BLUMENKRANTZ: If it is "kosher" and you can't get out of it, there is a *heter* under those circumstances.

My Middle East professor assigned the Koran as required reading for his course. May I read it?

RABBI BLUMENKRANTZ: The Koran is not *avodah zara*. Again, if you can get out of the assignment, do so. If not, try to read as little of the text as possible.

On the topic of school, one alumna shared a victory she had achieved: I majored in Jewish History and had a professor make offensive remarks about *nevuah*. I couldn't graduate without this particular class, and there was no other professor offering it. I was advised to try to get out of the class. It wasn't simple; however, I was able to get the necessary credit through a self-study course that the head of the department reluctantly agreed to.

QUESTIONS FROM ALUMNAE IN SHIDDUCHIM:

Can I go out with more than one boy simultaneously?

RABBI BLUMENKRANTZ: If there is an extreme circumstance at play. It is

really not fair to the boy and moreover not fair to you, because you will not be able to judge how comfortable you are with either one. You will be constantly comparing one to the other. Of course, in an unusual situation, exceptions can

"On the topic of school, one alumna shared a victory she had achieved..."

be made, but don't be nervous about the "other" not waiting until you work things out. During the dating experience, you must learn to talk to Hashem all the time and ask Him for your *bashert*. If the one who is waiting is your *bashert*, your talking to Hashem will make him wait or come back.

How often should I get together with my *chasan*?

RABBI BLUMENKRANTZ: I'll tell you what I tell my own children. Engagement creates a closeness that translates to developing emotions. The *issur* of *yichud* becomes stronger at this time and one needs to be more careful. Generally, I encourage dating and engaged couples to go out in the afternoon rather than at night. At night there are fewer people in the streets and

certainly on country roads we are dealing with a *d'oraysa*. Even if you sit in a car in front of your parents' home and *shmooz*, you should call your parents and let them know you are there to avoid a compromise of *halacha*.

As for the frequency of *chasan* and *kallah* seeing each other, I guide my own kids to speak twice a week for about an hour and to go out for a normal five to six hour date once every two to two and a half weeks.

(Note: you may need to add some umph to the relationship on occasion, so talk to your parents, teachers, and mentors as the need arises.)

QUESTIONS FROM WORKING ALUMNAE:

I find that the atmosphere in my office is too casual. How can I create more of a distance between myself and the male staff members?

RABBI BLUMENKRANTZ: One suggestion I can offer is to make a serious effort not to be on a first-name basis with the men in the office.

Rabbi Stern
is discussing
חובות הלבבות
Friday mornings at
10:30 am in Prospect Park.
Please join him.

Truth is knowing the whole picture.
- Tzipporah Heller



Ahuvie Stillerman Weinberger ('90) is the newest education coordinator in Prospect Park Pre-School. It's exhilarating for the teachers in Prospect Park to see her utilizing her professional expertise, some of which she absorbed in the chinuch of these very walls, and reinvesting it into Prospect Park Pre-School. This coming back with sophisticated expertise in *kriah* is, I guess, what we call a dividend Prospect Park is collecting proudly. We wish Ahuvie much *hatzlacha*!

Siyata d'Shmaya, I think, means that you can't plan your whole life...you do what's right in any given situation...you daven and then the rest is history...I came back from seminary considering

occupational therapy as a way to support a kollel life, which I was hoping to have. When a state certification was offered in special education and

and 60% will learn even if the system is mediocre. The remaining 20% need our expertise, or serious social and emotional problems may set in.

Siyata d'Shmaya allowed me to help many late bloomers who hadn't been able to read in higher elementary grades. Right now I am primarily a homemaker. However, I am interested in developing our sources and methods into a cohesive training program for all pre-school teachers – if you would like to help please call me and we will try to launch it. Hopefully 100%, not 80% of our kids, will be able to read and enjoy the confidence that comes with mastering language.

Chinuch with Interest

then a high paying job in early intervention, it became a calling and eventually a love.

I loved early intervention. I also began to realize that a significant reason we are losing some of our kids is because *kriah* is not taught well to all. Statistics show that 20% will learn to read on their own

The more a person believes in himself the more he believes in Hashem. The more he believes in Hashem, the more he believes in himself. – Rav A Baharan

Mrs. Pultman, who is a mainstay of the Prospect

Mrs. Pultman Special

Park Bnos Leah office, spoke to the girls in school about living with a brother who has Down Syndrome. The girls were moved by the genuine love Mrs. Pultman expressed, as well as the respect she has for her brother. Mrs. Pultman shared some funny stories, some bits and pieces about her brother and his life. For instance not only is her brother not demanding — he is responsible and as neat as a pin. He goes to *shul* three times a day and can find anything in a *siddur*.

Most of all Mrs. Pultman emphasized that her brother is a *mentch*. She described how he recently greeted the family returning from a *levaya* with a

ready cup of *negel vasser*, anticipating their needs. All in all, he is a real family person who loves and cares deeply for all of his relatives. He enjoys his nieces and nephews. As for the ones named after his parents, he says that he loves them, but would rather have his parents.

The girls in Prospect Park wondered whether there had been any shame or frustration in having a brother with Down Syndrome. Mrs. Pultman seemed a little bewildered by the question. "It was really my parents' attitude that filtered down to us kids.

The way we all look at it," she answered, "is that he isn't perfect but he has definitely proved time and again that he is a brother - a very loving, funny brother."

To trust every single event in our lives has meaning, purpose and value is to believe that no aspect of Creation is accidental.

WANTED

A COMPUTER
AND PRINTER

Please call:
Mrs. Shreibman
718-837-1484



One of the hallmarks of Prospect Park is its diversification in the area of chesed. The creativity and the heartfelt compassion continue in our alumnae long past graduation.

Read and marvel as you eavesdrop on some of the phone calls that come my way:

Alumnae and Tzedakah V'chesed THE PHONE CALLS

PHONE CALL FROM AN '84 ALUMNA: "I recently went through a very difficult *tekufa*. My husband and I went out for the day and it revived me. It also made me think about the people who may be going through difficult times and don't have the extra money for time out together. Mrs. Shreibman, I want to enable others who are in crisis to be able to have quality time with their husbands - I want to start a fund..." We have already activated a fund whose goal is to provide time out for couples who otherwise couldn't afford it.

PHONE CALL FROM A '77 ALUMNA: "I am a parent of a '99 Prospect Park alumna. We are making a *chasuna* and we would like to pay for a *kallah* in need - do you know of someone?" We did.

TEHILLIM at Devori Treuhof's / Wednesdays / 8:30 pm / 1821 East 26th Street
לעילוי נשמת Rena Assoulines's father & Sara Blumberg's mother

Lea Press spoke to Cleveland high school girls about a common "fixation."

She said to her audience of teenage girls, "This is what I hear a lot from teenage girls, - 'I was so bad'... or 'I'm going to really try to just keep my mouth closed'... or 'Watch me, today I will be good.'"

Sounds like ripples from a *Yom Iyun*; but no, Lea's talk was about obsessive thoughts. It was about a value that takes over to the point of control. To make them understand, Lea Press let her high school audience hear the end of these sentences.

The complete sentences she let them in on

PHONE CALL FROM A 2000 ALUMNA: "I am in school and working, but I want to do something very meaningful when I can - can you help me find something?" There was plenty to do.

PHONE CALL FROM A '97 ALUMNA: This is a classic..."I want a *Yissaschar* and *Zevulun* relation-

ship. Can you set it up for me?" This alumna is now helping another alumna of Prospect Park whose husband is learning.

PHONE CALL FROM A '03 ALUMNA: "I am a recent *kallah* - I did what you said. I sat down with my father and said, 'You know lots of people, can we find a way to help my single friends? Not everyone has names and connections.' My father promised to help."

PHONE CALL FROM AN '03 ALUMNA: "We have a case of chicken. Do you know someone in need who could use food for Shabbos?" As it turns out, we had prepared Shabbos for a family in need but were missing the chicken, but with this Prospect Park alumna - not for long.

were..."I was so bad...I ate a ton...I'm going to really try to just keep my mouth closed... I just have to fast today - to stop eating period. Watch me, today I will be good (no carbs)."

Lea appealed to the girls on many levels to fill and fill and fill their lives. She enumerated countless ideas of *how* to fill their lives with meaningful activities, but what she finally put forth is this: If you can't acknowl-

edge that weight/food is an obsession or if you are not at this time ready to take active steps to make your life more productive, at the very least, commit to doing this:

DON'T TALK ABOUT WEIGHT, EXERCISE, CALORIES or DIETS. This in itself will bring about a fuller and healthier person in both *gashmiyus* and *ruchniyos*.



WE IN THE TEACHERS' ROOM ENJOY EACH OTHER'S COMPANY IMMENSELY. WE THOUGHT WE WOULD LET YOU LISTEN IN ON THE *SICHAS CHULIN* OF YOUR FORMER TEACHERS.

"Once on Erev Pesach, we realized that we had left the *matzos* in Lakewood. My husband and I looked at each other and said "Let's not yell at each other." Now when-ever tensions rise, we say, "Let's not yell at each other." And we go on from there" - Mrs. Czermak

"My family does not mind becoming *fleishig* at lunch any more. This year there was no ice cream to eat in our home. Our family made this decision after hearing Rav Frand speak about the *chiyuv* to do something to feel with the *matzav*." - Mrs. Cohen

"Is there any difference between the girl who wishes for the BMW and the one who dreams of the Avraham Yehoshua - Brisker boy only? Is one less status seeking than the other?" - Mrs. Press

"I make my daughter call my husband from the store...to thank him for the outfit his hard work enabled." - Mrs. Rosenshein

"My son packed up after Pesach, all his suitcases were in the car ready to go, but I asked him to come back for a minute into the house. When he came in, I informed him that in this home there are rules and regulations and he has to comply. He knew exactly what I meant and as long as I was asking for my rights 'inside' and not 'outside' (where the other guys were waiting) he acquiesced and gave me the dutiful but warm kiss. Be mindful of your rights." - Mrs. Bronstein

"You know, what I like about the school is the feeling of *simcha* and vitality and openness that is felt between teacher and students." - Mrs. Sima Hilsenrath

"The Rabbis Kelman did everything for me when I lost my husband. They called me every day and did not stop until I was on my feet. I will never forget this support" - Mrs. Menashe

"I met a person I consider a hero this morning. This young man was in camp with me one year, and he gave away all of the tips he made on visiting day just to get his elderly mother home from the country in style - by car service! To me that is a hero." - Mrs. Lifchetz

"I took my son to practice before his road test. He was so nervous anticipating this juncture that I turned and I said, 'Avraham, imagine if we would feel all this excitement or anticipation every day at shachris'." - Mrs. Mati (Frankel) Eisen

"*Yom Tov* preparation is just me and my girls. I don't allow any phone calls when I am in the kitchen with the girls" - Mrs. Press

Overheard

"A vitamin you can give your children to ensure good *chinuch* is a regular vitamin called 'no.' For example, say no to the outfit even if you could afford it because it's right to say no. Have the courage to set standards." - Rabbi Kramer

"Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that you can't read someone else's mind. You don't know what someone is thinking or feeling - and he doesn't know what's going through your mind. You must communicate what's on your mind in a calm, respectful tone - and then you will find that you will be able to talk about absolutely anything and find satisfactory ways of dealing with things. You won't always get your way, but you will find that that is less important than letting the other person know you respect him and his feelings enough to bring things up for discussion. The ideal is not "me" and "you" - BUT WE." - Mrs. Bronstein

"We don't all teach about being wife or mother and an upright person directly but that is our school mission statement...The school mission statement is not about marks or the best seminary." - Mrs. Stefansky

"When we hear of someone's difficult situation, just passing along the news perpetuates a smallness of sorts. Acknowledging the *דבר בעל*, awkward as it may be, is actualizing within us the *כח* to the *פועל*." - Mrs. Stefansky

"I changed to a shul that would be elevating. I did the same when I chose a bungalow colony. Like they say in real estate - it's a lot about location, location, location." - Rabbi Kramer

"Like everything that's important and precious, marriage needs work. A relationship requires a lot of openness and flexibility to work issues through. A good idea is to have fun together and laugh a lot. A key ingredient, of course, is the ability to know what to look away from and what to address." - Mrs. Lipsett

"We shouldn't spend so much time talking about changing the 'systems' out there as much as we should show interest in developing our own true convictions and the courage to act on them." - Mrs. Press

"Why does the storekeeper seem so surprised when after a purchase my daughter turns to me and pointedly says thank you?" - Mrs. Press

"Give your children's *mechanchim* respect. I ask parents, 'Would you treat your *sheitel mocher* the way you sometimes treat your child's teacher?" - Rabbi Kramer

"You want to know when a girl calls you and says she is nervous to say 'yes' to an engagement, how you can know if it is just normal nerves or something that really needs attention? Well, first I listen to her voice - it tells me a lot. Then I try to find out if she is generally a nervous type or if there are serious issues to be dealt with. I take note of the fact that she says when she is with him for 4-6 hours she is fine..." - Rebbetzin Hoberman

"Healthy people don't think about their head, heart, eyes, and joints, etc. Rich people don't think about the telephone or gas bill. Secure people with healthy self-esteem don't think about their 'selves' - as in "He said to me, and I felt. "He didn't say to me and I expect." - Mrs. Press

"My granddaughter told us she is sorry it's the end of the summer because in the summer she feels SMART." - Mrs. Lifchetz



As we cherish and stand in awe of our *mesorah*, it is sometimes necessary to sift out the superstitions and folk tales from that which has its source in our *Seforim Hakodoshim*.

Rabbi Blum, a renowned posek who teaches in our high school, was kind enough to go through our list and point out what is a "*bubbeh maiseh*" and what is actually an *inyan* based on our *mesorah*.

Not making a <i>kiddush</i> for a newborn girl, may mean she will have a problem getting a <i>shidduch</i> . <i>This is said in the name of the Chazon Ish z"tl, that a kiddush is a segula for a shidduch, because of the brachos that people give.</i>		
Should the <i>tefillah</i> " <i>Hamalach</i> " be put on a newborn's crib? – <i>This is common in some circles. However, you must be careful that it is covered when the baby is being changed.</i>	One can't eat food left under a bed. – <i>Shulchan Aruch</i>	Knock on wood or "poo-poo" to defray an <i>ayin hara</i> – <i>Knocking on wood is of Christian origin. No known source on "poo-poo."</i>
Can hurt your eyes by touching them without washing <i>negel vasser</i> . – <i>Gemara Shabbos</i>	Is going to <i>עבודה</i> , to the <i>קבר</i> of <i>בן עזיאל</i> a <i>שידוך</i> <i>סגולה</i> for a <i>ינתן</i> ? A <i>מנהג</i> - but no known source	Will wearing something inside out cause you to forget your learning? – <i>Aishel Avraham, Shulchan Aruch</i>
Not permitted to say <i>Tehillim</i> at night? – <i>Many poskim permit if you were not able to say it during the day.</i>	Will leaving a room with a <i>sefer</i> left open cause you to forget what you learned? – <i>Shulchan Aruch,</i>	Thinking something bad will happen can make it happen. – <i>Pesachim kuf yud</i>
One can't sew an item of clothing that someone is wearing unless they chew thread while you are doing it. – <i>Machzor Nitri (Vitri)</i>	<div>TRUE OR FALSE?</div>	
Stepping on egg shells can cause a rash or pimples. – <i>Gemara Pesachim</i>	Stepping on a nail can cause a miscarriage – <i>Gemara Niddah</i>	Getting married at the end of the month is to be avoided. – <i>Rama</i>
Will you stunt growth by walking over someone? – <i>no known source</i>	One may not learn on Xmas. – <i>Chasidim</i> refer to this as <i>Nitel</i> night and are <i>noheg</i> not to learn.	One can't sit with fingers intertwined? – <i>no known source</i>
Is eating a <i>מלוח מלכה</i> a <i>סגולה</i> for easy labor? A <i>מנהג</i> - but no known source	Is eating a cake baked by someone in early stages of labor a <i>סגולה</i> for children. A <i>מנהג</i> - but no known source	Is consistent <i>כונה</i> in <i>אשרי</i> a <i>סגולה</i> for a <i>חתן</i> ? A <i>מנהג</i> - but no known source
Is saying <i>תהילים</i> with the name of a person a <i>סגולה</i> ? A <i>מנהג</i> - but no known source	When you <i>daven</i> for someone else you get answered first. – " <i>V'Hashem pakad es Sarah</i> "	One can't use raw onions that were cut and left out overnight. – <i>Shulchan Aruch</i>
Is <i>davening</i> 40 days at the <i>כותל</i> a <i>סגולה</i> for a <i>חתן</i> ? A <i>מנהג</i> - but no known source	Is saying <i>שש</i> Friday night for 40 days a <i>סגולה</i> for a <i>שידוך</i> ? A <i>מנהג</i> - but no known source	One should cut nails on alternate days in a certain order. – <i>Rama, M'GA</i>
Eating olives without olive oil can adversely affect memory. – <i>Shulchan Aruch</i>	One hiccups because someone is talking about you. – <i>no known source</i>	Will a red string from <i>Kever Rochel</i> protect against <i>Ayin Hara</i> ? – <i>no known source</i>
<i>Ayin Hara</i> only affects you if you believe in it. – <i>To a certain extent – Pesachim Kuf Yud</i>		Will planning something on Shabbos cause it not take place? – <i>no known source</i>



The Awe of a Bas Mitzvah

By: Chumi Rosen Friedman '83

Recently my daughter's school had a beautiful mother/daughter event. It was for the sixth and seventh grades, and its focus was on "Becoming Bat Mitzvah." It was a night of song and dance, good food, and of course wonderful speakers. While Shuli Calek spoke to the girls, Rebbetzin Esther Reisman addressed the women. She touched on a number of issues relating to mothers and daughters, but I believe the essence of her message is applicable to all of us.

She talked about how we have lost the currency of words. For example, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are referred to in English as the High Holy Days or Days of Awe. But today, she said, so many things are awesome — the new ice cream flavor, a great pitch, a new outfit. Words have lost their meaning and we have lost their understanding.

She talked about her memories of growing up and watching her parents on Erev Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, days on which just looking at their children could bring her parents to tears. She related how one Erev Rosh Hashanah she had to take a child to the doctor. On the way home — just a couple of hours before this "Day of Awe" —

"...we have become casual; we have become superficial in many ways."

she happened to pass a nail salon. Inside she saw one of her students and her student's mother having their nails done.

Her point was that we have become casual; we have become superficial in many ways.

She talked about how years ago when someone would call for info on one of her students for a *shidduch*, the questions were always about *middos* and personality. If there was a question about appearance, it was always asked in such a way that you knew that the person asking was embarrassed to have brought the subject up.

Nowadays, she said, one of the first questions she gets asked is about appearance, without reservation or embarrassment.

She talked about the importance of giving our children space to grow, and at the same time being a role model for them to look up to. When we try to be our children's friend, we can cause a loss of parental respect. Understand them, sympathize with them, but always, always, give them someone to emulate.

Chesed Available to Alumnae

I often get calls from alumnae looking to dig their fingers deep into something meaningful. Here are some ideas that have worked for others:

Our alumnae have been opening their home to various shiurim during the year. We encourage you to open yours. It rejuvenates the host as much as the guests who come to learn.

Call Mrs. Shreibman / 718-837-1484.

Partners in Torah needs many volunteers. I encourage all of you not to let a fear of being unable to answer questions keep you away. You can always say, "I'll check it out for you."

Call Mrs. Rosenshein, Miss C. Hamburger or Mrs. Lifchitz at 718-376-3337.

Mrs. Steinberg is in need of volunteers who will call or visit the elderly on Shabbos.

Call her at 718-627-5602.

Chai Lifeline has many needs that can't be filled by young high-school volunteers.

Call Rivky Miller at Chai Lifeline at 212-465-1300 or 212-699-6616.

There are many troubled families with children that could use a stabilizing hand.

Call Rivky Berger at 718-435-5700.



מכל מלמדי השכלתי

What I Learned from a Student

*BEDANA NEWIRTH ONCE WROTE AN ESSAY THAT THE PEJORATIVE TERMS "FARFRUMT" OR "FARCHNYUKT" ARE USED IN A VERY SPECIFIC CONTEXT. ALL OF US ADMIRE PEOPLE WHO ARE MORE "MEDAKDEK." WHY THEN DO THESE WORDS ELICIT NEGATIVE FEELINGS? TO EXPLAIN, BEDANA WROTE THAT BAIN ADAM L'CHAVEIRO HAS TO BE IN BALANCE WITH BAIN ADAM LAMAKOM. THE MORE A PERSON IS SEEN AS STRIVING TO PERFECT HIMSELF IN MITZVOTH KALFEI SHAMAYIM, THE MORE HE MUST BE SEEN AS STRIVING TO REFINE HIS CONDUCT TOWARDS HIS FELLOW MAN. SHE USED AVRAHAM AVINU AS AN EXAMPLE. HE WAS CERTAINLY THE "FRUMEST" PERSON, HAVING BEEN THE FIRST TO BE MAKIR HASHEM ON HIS OWN. HE THEREFORE HAD TO BE THE BIGGEST GOMEL CHESED WHO EVER LIVED SO THAT HIS CALLING OUT B'SHEM HASHEM COULD BE ACCEPTED AND ADOPTED BY ALL PEOPLE. I HAVE QUOTED THIS STUDENT MANY, MANY TIMES OVER THE YEARS.

MRS. PRESS

*I LEARNED TO PAUSE WHEN TEACHING. DOES A TEACHER REALLY NEED TO GO 65MPH ALL THE TIME, OR DOES THE STUDENT LEARN BETTER AT 50 MPH WITH PAUSES? I ALSO LEARNED TO RESPECT STUDENTS AND WATCH EVERY WORD I SAY. I ONCE REMARKED THAT SOMETHING SOMEONE DID WAS STUPID. AFTER SEEING THE REACTION OF OTHER STUDENTS AND THINKING ABOUT WHAT I SAID. I HAVE NEVER DONE IT AGAIN.

MRS. WIEDERKEHR

*A STUDENT ONCE THANKED ME FOR BEING ON HER TAIL. SHE SAID IT REALLY HELPED.

*A STUDENT ONCE TOLD ME THAT FROM OTHER TEACHERS THEY LEARNED THROUGH YIRAH, BUT FROM ME THEY LEARNED THROUGH AHAVA.

RABBI STERN

A tribute to the Bostoner Rebbetzin ע"ה
(Reb. Frankel's mother)
by S. Horowitz

I will forever be grateful for the relationship
I was zoche to merit with you, my dear mother-in-law.
You brought out my potential of giving unconditionally.
You taught me how to love every Jew.
You never looked for kavod. Your favorite saying was
"You take the credit, I'll take the cash!"
You told me a few weeks before you left this world,
"I have had a rich and rewarding life. I don't regret a moment."
And every moment I had in your presence
Transformed each moment of my life. Thank you, Ima.



Our deepest heartfelt condolences to these alumnae who have lost loved ones:

Hamakom yenachem eschem
bsoch shaar aveilei tzion
v'Yerushalayim.

Ella Goldenberg
Freida Bergstein
Rachel Blumberg
Sara Blumberg
Baila Feig
Rivky Nimchinsky
Leiba Rosenzweig
Rana Reisman
Barbara Samet
Chayie Stegman
Sara Tepfer

ROCHEL FISHELIS ALSTOCK WENT "HOME."

"When is her boo-boo better?" he asked.

"When is Mommy coming home?" she asked.

"Kinderlach," he answered,
"Mommy went to her real home, and we will sorely miss her."

Rochel, although a successful accountant, was the kind of mother who regularly sat on the floor and played with her 2-and-3-year-olds. They, as well as her husband Avraham (Sara Alstock/Tepfer's brother), will miss her surely.

יהי זכרה ברוך

MONDAY NIGHT SHIURIM IN PROSPECT PARK

- Mrs. Press started the year with her class in Chumash text and continued with a small select group that meets in her home.
- Mrs. Shreibman and Mrs. Rosenshein gave classes on Inyanei Megilla in preparation for Purim.
- Mrs. Shlomtzie Weiss gave sessions on the different levels of neshama and preparing your soul for Shavuot.
- This summer classes were given by Mrs. Galinsky, Mrs. Shreibman, Rabbi Stern, and Shlomtzie Weiss, and a chavrusa on Ezra & Zecharya was led by Devora Schmulevitz.
- This Elul, Mrs. Rosenshein gave moving classes in preparation for ימי הדין.

What some of our 12th graders said on the last day of school about what they got from 4 years of Prospect Park:

Sarah Leah R.: Integrity. Yashrus is a big thing in our school. Honesty is very important. I learned that you can't sneak here or get around things easily.

Shira S.: Respect. In Prospect Park you develop respect for the fact that there are many ways to be oved Hashem.

Devora S.: Friendship, deep and meaningful friendships are what I have from my 4 years.

Zesel C.: Warmth is what I got from Prospect Park, though in 9th grade you don't pick up on it.

Yitty: Understanding. Prospect Park has people who really understand where you come from.

If you have children's clothing in good condition to donate, call:

Mrs. Shreibman 718-837-1484.



SHIDDUCHIM

Tovi Gross taught in Prospect Park for 5 years. Currently she lives with her family in Silver Springs. As an aside to home-making, she is very involved with a creative puppet show program that has kiruv as its agenda. I wanted to make contact with Tovi Gross because I heard that besides everything else, she dabbles in shidduchim. For us in Prospect Park this is always the #1 agenda. We are determined to marry off all of our alumnae ב"ב, so we try to pursue all leads at our disposal.

Interviewer: Tovi, what should we be doing more of? Our main

concern as alumna liaison is to help make shidduchim for all our girls.

Tovi: What I do is talk to people - on the phone, at a simcha, in the car. Everyone knows someone or has an idea of someone. I keep a book with all the details I find out. I take it seriously. If I had the time I could be doing this all day. The opportunities are endless.

Interviewer: How effective are the organizations that work for our singles?

Tovi: If the organization makes a shidduch, then it's effective. In general, we can't control who will marry whom and when, but what we can and must do is be nice.

Interviewer: You mean some of us who "help," dig?

Tovi: Most of us are not cruel, but being nice means not saying, "I have nobody for you." Being nice means if you say, "I'll get back to you," don't take 12 days to get back, even if you are busy.

Interviewer: But, Tovi, what if you really don't have anyone for them?

Tovi: Then give her a lead, or tell her that you will call someone else - and follow through right away. Get people dates even if they are not perfect; give them options. Most of all, even when you are overwhelmed or people get on your nerves, you have to be nice.

Ideas

By: Mrs. Z. Press

MRS. FISHER:

You know how I show Hashem that I am grateful for two wonderful son-in-laws? I do my best to make shidduchim for others.

* I asked my son how he decided to get engaged as I thought there were "issues." His answer was simple and direct. "Mom," he said, "she likes me and she is able to show it, so I want to marry her."

* An eligible man came to speak to me about a shid-duch. During the course of conversation, I asked him if he had ever gone out with anyone he liked. He had. "So what happened?" I probed. The shadchan told him that the girl wasn't interested. "So," I argued, "why didn't you call her yourself and say 'I just can't stop thinking about you'." Now, some girls may not like this approach, but on the other hand - you never know.

ATTENTION MARRIED ALUMNAE

Sometimes just making a call and saying, "I was thinking about your son/daughter, I might know someone," is enough to brighten the day significantly for someone in the parsha of shidduchim.

WANTED: Eligible Men

WE ARE COMMITTED TO WORKING FOR OUR SINGLE ALUMNAE. WE WILL MAKE THE NECESSARY CONNECTIONS. FORWARD NAMES OF MEN WHO ARE EHRLICH AND OF HIGH CALIBER TO:

**Mrs. Shreibman • 718-837-1484
7914 21st Avenue**



HOW DID WE BEGIN HOMESCHOOLING?

Michal (Simons) Neuman '84

When a frum friend let me experience homeschooling in her house, I was impressed. Then I read a book called *Homeschooling for Excellence*, by David and Micki Colfax. It's a fast read and tells their story. Three of their four boys - two of whom were adopted - went to Harvard after home schooling. They explain that all of us enjoy learning when it's "meaningful." If you remove television and videos and engage your children, they will learn. This philosophy is called "unschooling."

I imagined that unschooling would be a good way to guarantee that a child would stagger into adulthood a semi-literate, blithering idiot. But the unschoolers I met at the Orlando conference (yes, there are actual conferences about this) were smart and very nice. And many unschoolers are now adults, seemingly quite successful. There are also "classical" homeschoolers and school-at-home families who purchase curricula and follow scripted lessons. Many of the frum families, including ours, do the "eclectic" thing. We buy curricula, do some lessons daily, and have other experiences that generate learning and discussion. We found that, more than an educational choice, homeschooling is very much a lifestyle. Not a boring, professorial, teach-them-all-day kind of thing, but a fulfilling way to see the world. Today we homeschool

our eight-year-old twin boys, an older ten-year-old boy, and our daughter, 13, who spends her mornings in Bais Yaakov for limudei kodesh. Our older son learns at a regular, Agudah-type yeshiva all day and has night seder.

Our day begins with davening, either at my older son's yeshiva minyan or at home. The children have a journal entry with a creative writing assignment. They suggest some of the journal entries like "Which one of the Avos would you like to meet today and why?" We have reading time using two different series suggested by reading teacher friends and a standard math curriculum. The boys have a tutor for limudei kodesh and learn with their father. But that formal learning is really to make us feel like learning is going on. The real magic, when their eyes light up, happens in the quiet times throughout the day.

One morning a college professor friend came by with his power saw and showed the boys how to cut geometric shapes. They discussed energy and atoms. We might have a visit like that, or the boys can spend the rest of the morning practicing their instruments for the music lesson, or working in the garden planting herbs, taking

pieces and looking at them under one of the two high-quality microscopes we have. They'll listen to books on tape, read, build things, and play chess. My husband walks home each day for lunch, and everyone enjoys a relaxed hot lunch with lots of conversation.

My husband loves biographies, so he reads children's versions of them aloud. He enjoys taking the kids with him into the real world and watching the delight of other adults who offer to share what they know. There is the banker who explains compound interest with real money, the chef in London who invited the kids to experiment in his kitchen, the art gallery owner who shared a spontaneous tour, information, and a small canvas with our group. The questions in the real world make learning exciting. How does shatnez testing take place? We enjoy finding out about things that none of us fully understands and all of us enjoy learning together. We also use tutors for the subjects we can't or don't want to teach, but most learning is generated by the kids. Why does the milk say "Pasteurized?" Who was Louis Pasteur? This leads to a trip to the grocery store to take pictures of the things that are pasteurized.

Boys being boys, they would often rather jump on each other than write anything, and I have to admit

(turn over page)



those times can be difficult. But they learn from our attitudes, and that's a good incentive to be patient. For the boys especially, we remember that they need to jump and run and swim. Some part of our time is spent on *chesed*. We visit the nursing homes, and the kids learn it's "not all about them."

Our hallway features a massive timeline so we can see how history played out in different parts of the world. History is exciting when it's learned in context and meaningful. (Do you know the stories of who fought against the U.S. in the War of 1812? We didn't. None of our friends or family did. Most people's eyes glaze over when you mention it. Too bad, because it's very exciting. Which is exactly the point.)

We read aloud at least an hour a day, and that has been the best part of this whole experience. The triumphant shouts from the kids when the hero succeeds or their genuine sadness when we finished *Tuck Everlasting* or *Farmer Boy* is incredible to watch. Reading aloud in the middle of our day provides an unhurried tempo to the afternoon. We read aloud with our teenagers too and it enriches us, brings us closer to each other, and gives us perspective.

To learn in context, we travel a lot. When my husband has business somewhere, we learn about that place before we go there. This year we toured the Netherlands, meeting people and seeing a different culture. We went to the market

each day because the Dutch do. We hung our clothing out because even upscale Dutch families don't have clothes dryers like in America. Then we went to the Marriott.

The kids socialize on all levels. Good friends have permission to let me know if the kids are getting weird, but I'm told they're "normal, *leibedike* boys," albeit particularly polite and empathic, as studies report regarding most homeschoolers. The grandparents approve, amazingly, and that's usually a good gauge of things. The kids have friends from Pirchei, camp, and organized sports teams. They don't have to spend a lot of time with kids who are mean or who have bad habits. This can be a pro or con depending on your perspective.

It's fun, but a lot of work. Contrary to American theory, the two are not mutually exclusive. Homeschoolers find they have to enjoy being around their kids a lot and like them as people. As a result, I don't know too many bratty homeschooled kids. In her new book *What the Rest of Us Can Learn From Homeschooling* by Linda Dobson, she points out ways to set up your house for learning. There should be organized paints and games, tons of books. I personally don't go for the Gameboys, cubes or whatever.

The Baltimore homeschoolers we know who have chosen this

lifestyle have kids in the top *shiur* at Ner Yisroel. The studies done over the last twenty years show homeschoolers do well academically and socially. I don't consider homeschoolers to be people who yank their kids out of school because the principal didn't do what those parents wanted and now they keep their kid home watching videos. I think there are other words to describe that situation – something with "neglect" in it maybe.

People think we have no life or private time, but I find that many homeschooling families have gentler lives, and because of a greater focus on priorities, there is ironically more time. My husband and I have a date night each week and go out. We also go away for the night once or twice each month and have family and/or a housekeeper stay in the house. We know as a couple that we need to have quiet time to plan and talk. You burn out otherwise, even if you don't homeschool. Learning and spending quantity time together seems to have made us "click" more as a family. Whether or not the kids go to school in the future, this investment of time in each other feels right. And we always know the date and time for the PTA night.

Need Hebrew tutoring?
Call: Mrs. Shreibman
718-837-1484



My Lessons in Kiruv

by Devorah Schreck

I was involved in *kiruv* while in high school, but once I graduated, somehow my schedule became so busy that my outreach activities fell by the wayside.

Rav Moshe, *zt"l*, writes that the same way we are obligated to give *ma'aser* of our money to *tzedaka*, so too we have an obligation to dedicate a tenth of our personal learning time to teaching others. With that in mind, I decided to contact Ruchie Friedman, the director of the Aish HaTorah mentoring program in Brooklyn. A few weeks after our first conversation, she found a *shidduch* for me: Sheila,* a woman in her thirties who lives in my neighborhood with her husband and one-year-old son. Sheila grew up in a Conservative home but was interested in learning about *Shabbos* and *teshlilab* with the goal of increasing her fledgling commitment to an Orthodox lifestyle.

It has been over a year since Sheila and I first met. Fortunately, I kept a journal throughout the process so that I could chart not only our progress in *Torah* learning, but the lessons that I have learned as well.

First and foremost, I have learned that *kiruv* requires patience. I have come to appreciate the words of Shlomo HaMelech, "*V'davar b'ito ma tov.*" When I hung up the phone with Ruchie over one year ago, my mind filled with so many ideas about all of the possible topics we could cover. Overwhelmed, I called my Rav, Rabbi Aaron Levine, who explained that I should first teach what Sheila wants to learn; if *Shabbos* is what "*leeba chafetz bab,*" then *Shabbos* is what should take precedence, he explained.

I must admit that as I am writing this article, we still have not covered even half of the thirty-nine *mela-chos*. We began learning about *Shabbos* for a few sessions and then our conversations veered off to cover topics in *tznius* and seasonal issues such as the *yomim tovim* and *inyanei d'yoma*. Had I forced or pressured Sheila into completing our *Shabbos* curriculum, our ties would have been severed months ago.

It's a psychological truism that people like to feel empowered in their own learning process and will not be influenced or taught if they feel that they are being compelled or forced. That is

why Chazal teach us, "*Gadol hametzueh v'oseh mimi sh'eino metzueh v'oseh.*"

In our digressions, Sheila and I have discussed matters of *hashkafa* and deep philosophical issues such as a person's role in this world, and what *middos HaKadosh Baruch Hu* is trying to imbue within us through the practice of certain *mitzvos*. I have learned to take my cues from Sheila and only move forward when I see that she is emotionally and intellectually ready to do so. It's a delicate balance, I have discovered; on one hand, I wish I could share everything that I possibly can about *Torah* and *mitzvos* all at once! However, I know that if I come on too strong or seem too imposing, I will not be successful. By picking up on external cues, verbal and otherwise, and by progressing slowly, my gains have come to outweigh my losses.

Sometimes, it can be like a walk on a tightrope to present *Torah* as unequivocal truth that must be followed at all times, while conveying the beauty of the "*re'ach*" and "*ta'ain*" of *Torah* with an air of relaxation and calm.

In addition, *Baruch Hashem*, I have gotten a small taste of the personal rewards of *kiruv* endeavors. For one, having to ask many *she'elos* and read up on many topics to answer the "why's and from where's?" has afforded me the opportunity to learn more and enrich my understanding of *Torah* and *mitzvos*.

Second, the joy of teaching *Torah* and seeing the other person's face light up with "*simcha shel d'var mitzva*" is beyond description. The feeling is comparable to reuniting someone with a beloved long lost relative. Being born Jewish without living a life of *Torah* is like owning a treasure chest of riches without owning the key.

I am grateful to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* that I have the opportunity to help another Jew on that quest to unlocking the treasure.

If you are interested in becoming involved in the Aish Hatorah Mentoring Program, please contact Devorah Schreck at 917-693-2060.

*Name has been changed.



A Meeting with an Isha Chashuva

by Rochi Reichman

Mrs. Reichman is a beloved English teacher in Prospect Park. She is also an amazing role model to all the students. Mrs. Reichman will often develop in her students a discerning eye and a sensitivity for the unique beauty of our Torah and mesora. Mrs. Reichman guides her students to an awareness of even the subtle, seemingly non-apparent differences between Yisroel and the amim.

I want to share a recent experience. Last midwinter vacation I traveled to Eretz Yisrael to visit my newly married daughter and observe the dynamics of her marriage.

Despite the brevity of the visit (or maybe because of it), and despite the fact that we wanted to spend every possible moment together - no wasting time and no distractions, my husband advised me to visit an adam chashuv in Bnei Brak, Rav Chaim Kanievsky. I agreed and was duly informed that he no longer receives women. My husband said, "Just go and watch him learn on the porch. Then send up a list of names for a bracha." Again I was told he is no longer available on the porch. Finally my husband said, "So visit Rebbetzin Kanievsky. Can it hurt to see an אשה חשובה up close?"

And so we did. Each night we were told by phone that she was unavailable for various reasons. Finally on Thursday evening, my last available night in Eretz Yisrael (I was scheduled to fly out on Motzei Shabbos), I told my daughter Temy, let's go anyway. Maybe we will have mazal.

Of course, we arrived in Bnei Brak and discovered a note taped to the Rebetzin's door apologizing to the public that due to a family simcha she would not be receiving visitors. Temy and I walked slowly across the street watching people arrive, go up the stairs, and descend once again in disappointment.

I told Temy we had nothing to lose. Maybe we'd catch a glimpse of her if she had not already left for the chasuna.

Sure enough, within 10 minutes she exited. We dared not approach her to invade her privacy, but, wonder of wonders, she crossed the street, took each of our faces in her hands individually, and kissed us and bentched us with "גפן" - gezunt, parnassa, and nachas. Her glowing face and moist eyes touched us deeply and we left crying in amazement. How did she know?

I truly felt chizuk all year from being in the presence of this אשה חשובה.

This past midwinter, I flew again to my daughter's simcha to attend the bris of her son and pamper the young family. I did not tour or travel since my only purpose was to be an akers habayis, cook fresh vegetable soup, and cover the night shift with the newborn so the young couple could sleep. I was adamant, though, that I would

make one trip - to Bnei Brak to Rebbetzin Kanievsky, to thank her for the bracha and to share our בשורה טובה. בשורה הכרת הטוב demanded no less. This time I waited for hours patiently. I was rewarded by her shining face once more, and by her appreciation that I came with good news, not the צרות and בקשות to which she is unfortunately accustomed. She joyously "vintched" me once again that I will be back next year with more בשורות טובות.

I am confident I will return to thank her once more, hopefully celebrating the בשורה טובה, of the גאילה for "gantz Klal Yisrael."

I told the Rebbetzin how we had all davened tehillim for the Rav's recovery from his recent stroke, and she enthusiastically and sincerely thanked me and repeated how he had made an almost perfect miraculous recovery due to all of the tefillos of Bnei Yisrael.

WANTED

ANY ALUMNAE WHO
ARE FAMILIAR WITH
GRAPHICS & LAYOUT

to work on our
newsletter.

Please call us.



Everest by Ruth Lewis, Jerusalem

Some think it's great
To climb Mt. Everest,
To navigate the Amazon
I think it's great
To dress a three-year-old
"I want the white blouse!"
"But that's for Shabbos!"
"Then the pink blouse
And also the stripey one."
"But you can't wear two..."
"So I'll wear my velvet dress."
"But that's for Shabbos."

I think it's a challenge, a fear
To buckle a child's shoe
For the nineteenth time;
To serve a meal
For five children under seven.

Mazel Tov!

When you have your new information,
please fill this out and send back to us.

First Name _____

Husband Name _____

Last Name _____

Maiden Name _____

Full Address _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail Address: _____

Mazel Tov and please keep in touch.

718-376-4400
alumni@bloppy.org

OUR PROSPECT PARK ALUMNAE WERE
REMELY INSPIRED BY MRS. LEAH KOHN'S
ELLENT LECTURE ON THE "THREE WEEKS."

For more information on other
scheduled events call:

The Jewish Renaissance Center
1-845-434-8013

Especially when done joyfully,
Uncomplainingly. Lovingly.

Let others conquer Everest.
Let me conquer me.
Let me climb and climb
And Neverest.

*Presence is more of a catalyst
to change than analysis.*



A Meeting with an Isha Chashuva

by Rochi Reichman

Mrs. Reichman is a beloved English teacher in Prospect Park. She is also an amazing role model to all the students. Mrs. Reichman will often develop in her students a discerning eye and a sensitivity for the unique beauty of our Torah and mesora. Mrs. Reichman guides her students to an awareness of even the subtle, seemingly non-apparent differences between Yisroel and the amim.

I want to share a recent experience. Last midwinter vacation I traveled to Eretz Yisrael to visit my newly married daughter and observe the dynamics of her marriage.

Despite the brevity of the visit (or maybe because of it), and despite the fact that we wanted to spend every possible moment together - no wasting time and no distractions, my husband advised me to visit an adam chashuv in Bnei Brak, Rav Chaim Kanievsky. I agreed and was duly informed that he no longer receives women. My husband said, "Just go and watch him learn on the porch. Then send up a list of names for a bracha." Again I was told he is no longer available on the porch. Finally my husband said, "So visit Rebbetzin Kanievsky. Can it hurt to see an אשה חשובה up close?"

And so we did. Each night we were told by phone that she was unavailable for various reasons. Finally on Thursday evening, my last available night in Eretz Yisrael (I was scheduled to fly out on Motzei Shabbos), I told my daughter Temy, let's go anyway. Maybe we will have mazal.

Of course, we arrived in Bnei Brak and discovered a note taped to the Rebetzin's door apologizing to the public that due to a family simcha she would not be receiving visitors. Temy and I walked slowly across the street watching people arrive, go up the stairs, and descend once again in disappointment.

I told Temy we had nothing to lose. Maybe we'd catch a glimpse of her if she had not already chasuna.

Sure enough, within she exited. We approach her to invade cy, but, wonder of w crossed the street, to our faces in her hands and kissed us and b with "געזונט, pa nachas. Her glowing moist eyes touched us we left crying in amaz did she know?

I truly felt chizuk all year in the presence of this

This past midwinter, I my daughter's simcha to attend the bris of her son and pamper the young family. I did not tour or travel since my only purpose was to be an akere habayis, cook fresh vegetable soup, and cover the night shift with the newborn so the young couple could sleep. I was adamant, though, that I would

make one trip - to Bnei Brak to Rebbetzin Kanievsky, to thank her for the bracha and to share our בשורה טובה. בשרות הטוב demanded no less. This time I waited for hours patiently. I was rewarded by her shining face once more, and by her appreciation that I came with good news, not the צרות and בקשות to which she is unfortunately accustomed. She joyously "vintched" me once again that I will be back next year with more

|||||

7162-622911 K

K YESHIVA



ARE FAMILIAR WITH
GRAPHICS & LAYOUT

to work on our
newsletter.

Please call us.



Everest by Ruth Lewis, Jerusalem

Some think it's great
To climb Mt. Everest,
To navigate the Amazon
I think it's great
To dress a three-year-old
"I want the white blouse!"
"But that's for Shabbos!"
"Then the pink blouse
And also the stripey one."
"But you can't wear two..."
"So I'll wear my velvet dress."
"But that's for Shabbos."

I think it's a challenge, a fear
To buckle a child's shoe
For the nineteenth time;
To serve a meal
For five children under seven,
No two of whom will eat the same thing.
And one of whom, aged three,
Will eat only Bisli.

Or to wash the same dishes,
Pick up the same clothes,
Again and again.
Or give a drink to a four-year-old,
"Not the green cup, the blue cup!
Not THAT blue cup,
The one with the clown!"

Or to put a five-year-old to bed
"Not the big pillow, the little pillow."
"Not the blue blanket-the green one."
"I'm thirsty! Not the green cup,
The blue one. Not THAT blue cup..."
*Or anything requiring exertion,
Constant repetition, patience
Which goes unnoticed, unapplauded,
Especially when done joyfully,
Uncomplainingly. Lovingly.

Let others conquer Everest.
Let me conquer me.
Let me climb and climb
And Neverest.

Presence is more of a catalyst
to change than analysis.

Mazel Tov!

When you have your new information,
please fill this out and send back to us.

First Name _____

Husband Name _____

Last Name _____

Maiden Name _____

Full Address _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address: _____

Mazel Tov and please keep in touch.

718-376-4400
alumni@bloppy.org

OUR PROSPECT PARK ALUMNAE WERE
EXTREMELY INSPIRED BY MRS. LEAH KOHN'S
EXCELLENT LECTURE ON THE "THREE WEEKS."

For more information on other
scheduled events call:

The Jewish Renaissance Center
1-845-434-8013



Dear Mrs. Guttenplan,

I had the pleasure of meeting your beautiful granddaughter, Jacqueline. We had lots of interesting discussions, and somehow, she told us about a comment you had made. I am writing this letter because I was so sympathetic to what you had said – I empathize so strongly with your dilemma that I must express my feelings. She told me that you said that you'd love to believe in G-d but you just can't – you just don't see it.

The nature of this world that we live in is such that it hides G-d's presence. In Hebrew the word for world is *olam*, which comes from the Hebrew word *ne'elam*, which means "hidden." Faith is never absolutely reached. It is a struggle that even our very greatest people had to deal with. Belief in G-d becomes consistently stronger as one's behavior changes, as one interacts with G-d as though He is there. It is okay to communicate with G-d before one believes. Doing actions which are based on the assumption that G-d exists is a way to attain a real feeling for G-d. The actions eventually shape one's state of mind. I was thinking that for you it might be easy to begin a tiny relationship by doing one *mitzvah* such as lighting candles every Friday before sundown. You may find your tiny speck of faith, and it may allow itself to be built upon. Everyone has some faith in them, and everyone has some lack in absolute faith. The task is just to keep getting closer and closer, stronger and stronger in one's feeling for G-d.

There are two particular thoughts that have helped me believe. When I look at the intellectual history of humanity, I can't help but notice that no system of thought has civilized man and brought man to truly great heights. True humility, compassion for one

Mrs. Ziemba (a former teacher in Prospect Park Yeshiva) had a Jewish girl from Russia as a guest for a Shabbos. The girl mentioned to Mrs. Ziemba that her grandmother, who lived in Florida, was curious about but uncommitted to Yiddishkeit. Mrs. Ziemba wrote the following letter to the grandmother in an attempt to increase the latter's love for Judaism:

another, and the sense of control over one's natural impulses are just never seen by the heroes of any culture (atheist, pagan, enlightened, etc.) as they are by our Jewish greats. So "the proof is in the pudding"; the fact is that our *Torah* works to make man transcend himself and become somewhat divine.

A second thought originated from a discussion with my three very young boys. We showed them a detailed picture of what the insides of a human being look like, with every organ clearly labeled. One of them asked,

"But where is the soul?" We explained that it is all over, but the scientists who made the picture can't see it. The discussion made me think about the following question: If a person has a heart transplant or a brain transplant and continues to live, who is he? Is he himself or a new (the donor) man? I am convinced that he stays himself. It is fascinating that one's soul – one's being – is so real to him, and yet can never be seen. When I see a stranger walk down the street, I automatically know that he is not merely the sum total of his parts, i.e. his head, face, trunk, feet, and hands that I can see. I know that he has hopes and fears, he has happy and sad memories, and there are things he loves and things he despises. I know it only by projecting what I know about myself. I know it with absolute certainty although I definitely don't see it. The expression "seeing is believing" is not really true. There are many optical illusions in life where one sees what is, in fact, not real. This idea applied to the world makes it easier to believe that just as I have a soul and my fellow man has a soul, the universe with all of its splendor has its soul, and that is one way of understanding G-d.

It is almost three months since I met Jacqueline and I can't believe that it took so long to find the time to write this letter. I only want to tell you that if you want to believe, pursue it. The reward is in the struggle itself. I hope you have many long healthy years to discover G-d and to have lots and lots of *Yiddishe nachas* from your children and grandchildren.

Mrs. Davis is our brilliant 10th grade English teacher. She is so articulate that a reader can feel the passion.

The music shifted at a friend's recent chasuna. It lost its brassy, boisterous tone and assumed an old-new familiar sound. The dynamic glory of "Kadsheehee" eased into the far-less-common classics: "Ush'avtem Mayim B'sason" and "Shiboles Ba'sadeh." I grabbed the arm of an "old" friend I had danced those very same choreographies with a long, long time ago on my high school stage of Esther Schoenfeld on the Lower East Side. Our eyes were the first to dance as rusty memories of "right, left, back, step" started revving into motion. Along with us, a spontaneous community of old-timers touched hands and souls, forming an exclusive circle on the glistening dance floor. We flew into those time-honored steps that tapped well-buried memories and coaxed them into action.

I danced with passion.

We danced with passion because we were retracing what had been taught to us in our youth, in our adolescence. We had mastered those steps with the physical and mental agility of our lean years. The stage we danced on had been sparse, meager, but our enthusiasm then was boundless. Grace, harmony, and discipline had captivated us.

Now, palm upon palm, we imitated the shibboleths, sheaves of grass bowing in the wind. Manicured fingers snapped in unison -- right,

beat, left - as "Od Nashuva" invited us to chant a "nigun atik." Then our

So it is with those beloved pesukim of Yirmiyahu I had committed to memory in my high-school years, reverberating with the weekly haftoras: "Makel shoked ani ro'eh u'panau p'nei tza'fonah." And so it is with the doleful narrative of the aseres ha'rugei malchus, the image of R' Yochanan's beauty indelibly stamped on my mind.

My dear girls, lessons taught cogently and dynamically dance on

in our psyches. So do the pulsating dance steps of the "Mizalu." They evoke passion because a passion born of a lesson well taught is a passion that abides.

I'm sure your children will hear about these lessons. They may not be heirs to the identical passions, but they might learn the new equation:

A Lesson Well Learned = A Passion

May we dance together at simchas!



arms converged as we huddled together for the arch-classic, "Ush'avtem Mayim," shrinking our circle and our differences. Our primordial selves were awakened.

And then it was over. But, my dear girls, the experience was not lost on me. It yielded an insight I'll share with you.

Passion is born in youth, in adolescence. The seed is sown when we are mentally and emotionally charged - by an edifying lesson on *egla arufah*, a deep understanding of *maskil l'Dovid* in *Tehillim*, a parsha presentation, a (*l'havdil*) creative table setting for a home economics class, a novel well analyzed and digested, a *Raninu* production. What we richly learn amid experience, we generally grow to love and to own.

ALUMNAE IN NEED

PLEASE HELP US HELP THEM

Send your contribution to:
Alumnae Fund
1601 Avenue R
Brooklyn, NY 11229



Child's Play

By: Esther (Mandel) Deutsch '97

My mother said, "It'll all work out."

My father said, "Where are you sending her again? Seminary? Or kindergarten?"

My husband said, "We're in this together. Relax."

Relax! I couldn't relax. I couldn't sleep or eat either. Well, that isn't really true. I can always sleep (just give me my bed) and I can always eat. But if I couldn't eat or sleep, I'd be extremely thin by now, with purple circles under my eyes.

The problem was, my darling daughter was turning three. And in our highly structured, highly competitive society, that meant it was time to start applying to various elementary schools. Actually, it was past time. If I had been really organized, I would have put her name on all the lists the minute the doctor told me I had a beautiful baby girl.

A few phone calls assured me that as long as I got my act together and started the process soon, I would not have to home-school my child. I took a deep breath, picked up the phone, and informed a scary-sounding lady on the other end of the line that I needed an application for kindergarten.

"And how old is your daughter?" she inquired

"She'll be three on Chanukah."

"Oh, that's the perfect age!" she said, her voice softening temporarily. I wasn't charmed. "The perfect age for what?" I wondered. "Fattening and eating?"

This reaction to a perfectly innocent question points to a deep-seated problem of mine, I admit. Besides the anxiety of actually choosing the right atmosphere for my child to flourish in, I was possessed by a much stronger, simpler terror – the fear of parting from my precious baby from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon, every day, not even counting traveling time.

I just didn't know. Maybe a few more winter months plus a spring

and a summer would transform my blue-eyed, curly-haired toddler into a bona-fide kindergartener with a heavy backpack, lunchbox, and shiny first-day shoes, but I couldn't see it.

Well, the application came. I filled it out. ("Are you a registered voter?" Um, is that a trick question?) Then I marched to the mailbox and popped it in. That was Friday. On Motzei Shabbos, my husband found the envelope on the other side of our street, practically around the corner, wet and muddy. "It's a sign!" I said to him, but he just laughed and re-deposited into the mailbox.

A few weeks and an interview later, we had an acceptance letter. Now I could relax – at least until September.

SPECIAL THANKS

to

Mrs. Tovey

for so graciously assisting with editing.
Without her expertise and sensitivities
we wouldn't go to print.



Mimi (Rubin) Kipper '81

My high school memories include Rebbetzin Hoberman, and I'm sure that yours do too. (We called her Mrs. H. back then.) She ruled the hallways with an iron fist, and if you were late to class or missing a button, she was likely to notice from her perch at the end of the hall. I learned a vast amount in her *Chumash* and *Avos* classes, and when we were seniors, we couldn't wait for juicy Family Living, which just hinted to another side of the *Rebbetzin*. But I never really knew her back then.

As adults, many of us got to know her better, because she opened her heart to us with countless hours of guidance as she shared her life's experience. I actually had the privilege and the pleasure of living in her home and becoming "part of her family." I would like to offer you a tiny glimpse of this Rebbetzin Hoberman, whom I have come to know and love.

Memories of those years are filled with vignettes of *mesiras nefesh*, *kovod haTorah*, giving to the *klal* and the *tzibur* - all this in a warm, glowing home filled with laughter and humor. Enter Rebbetzin H's home and you entered a happening hub, pulsing with action and fun. Mealtimes meant lively (often heated) discussions about current issues in *Chinuch*, or the frum world at large, with humorous tales from a history rich with experiences with *gedolim*. Nothing was greater fun than taking the opposite side of the *Rebbetzin* in a given debate (you'd better duck from the onslaught!). Of course, every argument was settled by Rabbi Hoberman's word. He gave the final verdict - but getting there was so much fun!

The phone never stopped ringing. Parents calling Rebbetzin H for parental guidance - "How shall we deal with our moody daughter?" "Which seminary shall we choose?" "What type of *Shidduch*?" Oh, the *Shidduchim* that passed through that kitchen! Boys' parents, girls' parents, *shadchanim* all called for some sage advice. Then the *mosdos* - seminaries consulting about future *talmidos*, high schools about curriculum - you name it

and Rebbetzin Hoberman has provided guidance and direction about it to infinite hosts of *Klal Yisrael*. She ought to print a business card: "Consultant Extraordinaire." Rebbetzin Hoberman was a happening place.

Nothing permeates Rebbetzin Hoberman's home more than the reverence she has for her husband and her husband's *Torah*. *Ahavas Torah* and *emunas chachomim* are the nucleus of her home, from which all else radiates outwards in concentric circles. Spend one moment in Rebbetzin Hoberman's home and you will live it and breathe it. The true values of the "*yeshiveshe velt*" and a "*daas Torah*" are the banners, which fly proudly in her home

Nothing is too great a sacrifice for Rebbetzin Hoberman - she has devoted her entire life to supporting, upholding, and aiding in the spreading of Rabbi Hoberman's *Torah*. The *simchas chaim* that results is deep, and something to be envied.

Many a time, in the wee hours of the morn, I witnessed first hand Rabbi Hoberman's study alight, the sounds of his learning emanating from within. How fortunate I feel to have experienced personally this lofty existence. As high school girls, we did not realize what we had in our midst. This is the stuff of legends.

Another alumna who once lived in the same building as the Hoberman family told me, "In the Hoberman house they are always laughing; the *simcha* is palpable." ולישרי לב שמחה.

How many women today can say they have spent decades and decades in *chinuch*? How many human beings can say they literally devote their lives to giving with *seichel*?

Call her Mrs. H. or Rebbetzin Hoberman - we are grateful for the inspiration and are unanimous in our awe.



My skirt is a symbol, an identifier, a comforting sign to those who recognize it in the midst of a jungle of low-rise, high-rise, boot cuts, knee cuts, and bell bottoms. My skirt is a magnet, a drawstring, a welcoming pulley to those who acknowledge its significance. My skirt is a pathway, a guide, an entrance into my mind, my ways, my community. "You're Jewish," they say, no need to ask. And I nod, before shifting my eyes downward to look for their symbol, their identifier, their comforting sign in return. I almost never find it. But they always find mine; they always find me. In my years since graduation, I have found myself in a world where there are so few skirts, yet there are many seemingly lost Jews who are looking, and when they find me, they smile and say, "I'm Jewish too."

"I'm Jewish too." I have heard that line so many times now. That identifying line that is shouted from the mouths of all Jews, even those seemingly far-gone. I have heard it from a Greek girl with long dread-locked hair who walked around in three-inch platforms and sported a pierced eyebrow, before she went on about her Pesach cleaning. I have heard it from a girl who was concerned that the small tattoo on her back would one day prevent her from being buried in a Jewish cemetery (a myth that I cleared up for her). I have even heard it from my professors. My art history professor spoke of cooking gefilte fish, my biology professor spoke of her son's bar mitzvah (where she expressed

remorse for serving lobster), one of my computer professors let me in on what jobs in my field would

"I'm Jewish Too"

Noni Dayan

be good for a Shabbos observer (even though she herself was not observant), and last year when I told my marketing professor that I'd be skipping two classes in a row because of Succos, he was eager to help me make up the missing work. His reason? "I'm Jewish too."

"I'm Jewish too." It has one meaning, but many different interpretations, as does my skirt. the symbol of my religiousness. To most, it is a connection to shared roots. But to a few, the implications of my skirt confuses them. I was recently on a train en route to Manhattan, when a woman asked me for directions. After giving her the information she needed, she looked down at my long skirt and remarked, her nose stuck up in the air, "You're observant, aren't you?" I nodded. "Yes. Yes, I am." She then went on about how she resents the religious population because of how they treat her because she's Conservative (she

lives on a street where almost everyone is religious). She said she's thinking of moving away from the community. Of course, I was mindful throughout the conversation to make a proper Kiddush Hashem, so that she would see that not everyone who wears a skirt is like that.

I am out. I have graduated. I no longer have to wear the uniform. But in a sense, I am in a uniform every day. So is everyone who wears a skirt. Because a skirt is a symbol, an identifier, and it must always be a comforting sign to those who recognize its significance; it must always be accompanied by a Kiddush Hashem. Because they see it, they recognize it, they identify with it — with the person in it. And for now, that's enough. But perhaps one day something might spark, and they will remember that symbol, that magnet, that pathway... and follow it.

Do you have fond memories of your days at Prospect Park? Is there a teacher that stands out in your mind? What was the nicest thing a teacher ever said to you?

Please e-mail us and let us know for an upcoming newsletter.

Many of our Prospect Park graduates opt for seminary in Eretz Yisrael. The consideration is one that is subject to diverse opinions and heated discussions. Here are some of the "flashpoints" that are debatable and open for discussion as we guide our seniors.

ON THE ONE HAND:

"The cost of learning abroad is an estimated \$18,000- a sum considered steep by most standards:

Even if one has or can get the amount together, is it a necessity and therefore something to encourage straight across the board?

Since when did girls go away from home to "learn?"

ON THE OTHER:

*It is a hefty expense to send a high-school girl to a seminary overseas. It is also a conscious choice to experience quality learning with a quality chevra in Eretz Yisrael. It should not be viewed as a short-term investment. Consider it a valuable choice for the long-term gain over an extravagant wedding hall or such. To avoid the spoiled little rich girl syndrome, perhaps we

can encourage the girls early on in high school to save babysitting money or the like towards the cost of seminary.

ON THE ONE HAND:

*Rav Avigdor Miller was against allowing children to sleep over at other families' houses, as is common in America. A year without your family is a lot more of an unknown. At a still relatively young age, you are sending teenage girls away with

one concentration that can have a deep and long-lasting effect.

ON THE ONE HAND:

*Continued learning in an in-town seminary within a day-to-day family life develops a balance for long-term values to become entrenched rather than the quick, intense, and frantic pace of development in that year. The gap for the girl, in coming back is challenging. The returnee

tries to mesh what she learned into "real life" and often this makes the most zealous

girl give up and slip back completely to the before - seminary experience. In the end this gains her little if anything from the intense year's experience. That which was easily and quickly inspired can be quickly and easily lost when she is reinstated.

ON THE OTHER:

*Exposure to Eretz Yisrael and its people is an investment to strive for and something to cherish as a privilege. The experience in Eretz Yisrael develops a connection to the Holy Land and a paradigm of a life style that, though you may not embrace it fully, will definitely give your daughter a deeper perspective of a Torah life.

ON THE ONE HAND ON THE OTHER

little supervision. Although the schools have ehrlche administrations and "good" girls from all walks of life, the arrangement can still be delicate if not precarious. If your post-high school daughter is not yet very stable, mature, or committed to her studies, the kedusha of Eretz Yisrael is apt to bring the possibility of zeh l'umas zeh. This is a real danger and gamble.

ON THE OTHER:

*The isolated year of learning without distraction from home, from secular schooling, and from dating allows for a focus and integration that is often diluted elsewhere--- even when there is a superior program "in town." A year away allows

"If we all think alike, no one thinks very much" - Walter Lippman

Monday Night Shiurim / MRS. SHLOMTZIE WEISS / Reflections on Yiddishkeit
8:45 pm in the shul at 1601 Avenue R

October 27th • November 3rd • November 10th • November 17th

For more information call: 718-837-1484 / www.bloppy.org

