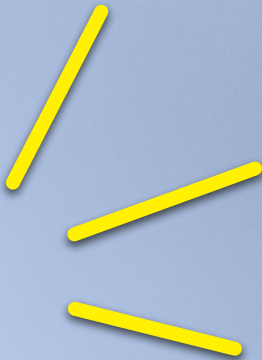


HEAL



Hope and Encouragement After Loss

Issue 6 - Summer, 2023

Suggested Donation \$10.00



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From Our Hearts

Dear Friends,

With much gratitude to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, we are excited to be sharing HEAL Issue 6 with you! We hope it will give you space to feel the renewal of this time, this season, and this coming yom tov. The arrival of such pleasant weather and beautifully blossoming trees warrants a stroll in the park and a breath of fresh air. Although it might not be easy to meet and greet others, we can all enjoy the breeze, warm our hearts with the rays of the sun, and replenish our vitamin D levels!

As Shavuot approaches, we are all focusing on the theme of counting down: sefiras ha'omer means we are counting the forty-nine days until Matan Torah. For some of us, these last few weeks have been a series of countdowns and letdowns, as we recognize that we cannot comprehend Hashem's Master Plan. The question "why?" bothers us to no end, and with the challenges of today, we may have difficulty envisioning a better tomorrow.

On Shavuot, we read in the Torah about Rus, the Moavite princess. Despite her status, she was reduced to an unfortunate pauper and was sent to the fields of Boaz by her mother-in-law, Naomi, to gather forgotten grains. From the height of riches and glory, she was lowered to very pitiable circumstances. Rus had no way of knowing that her great-grandson would be Dovid Hamelech and that she was laying the foundation for Malchus Beis Dovid as well as Mashiach. Just like Rus, we have no way of knowing the purpose of our letdowns and painful experiences, yet in retrospect, we will see that our suffering is the source of much salvation.

As we are counting the days to the renewal of a bond between Hashem and Klal Yisroel, let us make our days count instead of simply letting them pass. Can we count on you for that?

We all hope to get past the countdown one day: to find ourselves pregnant once again and to move along on our respective journeys. When we get the courage and the green light to try again, the roller coaster ride continues. Being pregnant after loss is not only a time of bliss, as it comes along with a generous dose of anxiety. On this note, we now added a new section with messages of hope on this topic. We placed it at the end of the magazine with the intention that you should be able to close it easily when you get there. Remember to be kind to yourself, with it being fully okay to leave the PAL section unread until you are ready for it. Many thanks to Chumie Cohen for bringing this project to fruition.

Before signing off, we must mention here the amazing feedback we got on "Miracles," the second audio-video presentation released for our dear readers. Feel free to contact us for an MP3 copy of the song.

Best wishes for a beautiful summer!

HEAL The HEAL Team
Chaya, Gitty, Ettie

From Your Heart

I got the best surprise here! The magazine couldn't have arrived on a better night. Winter *Motzei Shabbosim* are so long and still for me. Aside from entertainment, it provided so much *chizuk* and encouragement. Thank you so very much!

R. W. E.

I was so excited to get the new magazine just in time for Chanukah! I see in the health column that emotional eating was discussed in a previous issue. I would love if you can email me that article, as it's a very big challenge for me.

C. P.

Thank you so much! It touched my heart from cover to cover.

Sarah L.

Thank you for this beautiful magazine! I gained so much *chizuk* from it! I especially enjoyed reading the poem "A Person Named Loss" and the articles "While Waiting" and "In Focus." They hit their mark!

S. R.

I have no words!!!! The poem 'Perspective' that can be read from bottom up, too, really hit home for me!

Frumie S.

Thanks, it was great to get something validating to read...

F. W.

The magazine so beautifully includes so many aspects of loss, grief and hope. Especially poignant were the 2 pieces by Hadassah Cohen. She touched upon so many thoughts and ideas that left me sitting deep in thought about topics like hope and inspiration, encouragement, using my time wisely, and so much more. Thank you Hadassa and the HEAL team! Please keep her work coming! With much appreciation,

C. A.

Thank you for giving me a full page with balloons along with a reminder that I am stronger than I seem, and more loved than I know ;)

S. S.

Finally there is a space where you can feel safe to say what you feel, and to be validated for what you feel. This is a place to share and connect with women struggling with similar challenges in a way that makes me feel normal. Thank you for the effort and work that goes into this heartwarming, long awaited (at least for me) magazine!! The poem "A Person Named Loss" is something special, and it is so, so validating!! I read it and reread it several times, and each time felt so understood, finally!!!

Thank you and keep up your amazing work,

Tzippy W.

Thank you for the article on Achieving Mindfulness. It is so clearly presented with important pointers and great exercises!

K. S.

It really was beautifully done. Touching and moving but full of hope and inspiration; not at all dark or depressing. Kudos!

Shana

Inspiration

If you can't FLY

Then r u n

If you can't r u n

Then WALK

If you can't WALK

Then CRAWL

But whatever you do...

Just make sure

To keep moving FORWARD

A TIMELY MESSAGE

So, Shavuot is here, my friends. It seems like it wasn't that long ago that we celebrated Pesach. Pesach and Shavuot are connected through the *Omer*. We were liberated from slavery, but for a specific reason: we were given our blueprint for life, which is our Torah.

I want to take you back to Pesach and something that got me thinking at that time. We all know that one of the big ideas of Pesach is to instill in ourselves *emunah* and *bitachon*. It might just be me, but I do find myself on a yo-yo of *bitachon* at times. Sometimes I feel inspired and energized, and sometimes I just don't. I asked someone how I can ensure that I 'leave' Pesach on an elevated level of *emunah* and *bitachon*. How can I ensure that on Motzei Pesach I am actually a spiritually different individual? The answer really inspired me, and I hope it will do the same for you.

Think back to a time when you received an injection as an immunization for an illness or the like. We can't see the injection and the effect it has on our body, yet we believe it has an impact on us physically. The same holds true of our spiritual beings. Coming out after Pesach, we have to know and believe that we are now truly different. After the *sedarim* and the whole week of Pesach, we have emerged as different people. We are now so much stronger in our *emunah* and *bitachon* - and that is true whether we feel it or not. We are different people. Therefore, we should

stop analyzing whether we changed as people after *yom tov*, but instead know and believe that we are completely changed. I realize that not everything that is of value can be seen with our naked eyes. It is because of this that I have again started learning a short daily thought on *bitachon*, as I believe that I am more in tune to it since the *yom tov* of Pesach was not too long ago.

After Pesach, I have become more strongly connected to the idea that Hashem has a plan for each of us. We should stop trying to take over the wheel and instead try to be good passengers who let Hashem lead and 'drive the car'. As we head towards Shavuot, it's interesting to see that this idea connects to this time period. On Pesach, I reaffirmed my belief in Hashem, and now on Shavuot, I strengthen my knowledge of just how much Hashem believes in me.

There is something so wonderfully great in knowing that someone believes in us. For children, it really is a crucial part of maturing into healthy and emotionally stable adults. However, it's not just important for children. Adults also need to know that there are those who intrinsically believe in us. Let's think about this feeling of seeing another's potential and believing in others.

Some people can see potential and belief in places and situations where others cannot. A property investor can understand the value and

potential of an empty piece of land, that to others (like me!), is for now just plain, barren, and in essence nothingness. If we are not inclined towards that area of expertise, we just don't see what others can. I think of budding entrepreneurs, party planners, artists in front of a blank canvas, etc. A powerful example is when a talented teacher sees the infinite potential in her student. Of course, she lets this child know by saying the almost magical words, "I believe in you."

You may know the famous story of the *Ponevezher Rav*, *Rav Yosef Shlomo HaKohein Kahaneman*. At a time when the *Yidden* saw only darkness and despair, he saw potential and light. After the war broke out, he had wanted to establish a *yeshiva*. He had seen a hill in Bnei Brak and thought it would be the perfect location. When the *Rav* told his idea to the Chief Rabbi of the time, *Rav Yitzchok Herzog*, *Rav Herzog* thoughtfully replied, "You're dreaming." *Rav Kahaneman's* famous response was, "I might be dreaming, but that doesn't mean I'm sleeping!" The *yeshiva* began in 1943 with only six *talmidim*. Today, the *yeshiva* has over three thousand students including those of affiliated institutions, and it is considered one of the leading Litvish *yeshivas* in Eretz Yisroel. Indeed, it was only through his vision that he created the *yeshiva* that generated many others.

So how does this idea of potential and belief have to do with Shavuot? When leaving Mitzrayim, Hashem told our leader Moshe to take us out. Moshe was doubtful and said, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh and take them out of Mitzrayim?" Hashem answered

with, "I shall be with you and this is your sign." Rashi explains that the 'sign' is referencing the receiving of Torah. The obvious question is, how does Hashem's answer have any connection to Moshe's question?

The answer is that Hashem was not looking at our past, He was looking at our future and at our potential. He saw something special that even our leader Moshe could not see. Hashem knew that we would be a great nation. Therefore, when we were offered the Torah, the *Yidden* said "*na'aseh v'nishma*." We made the move to accept the Torah right away because Hashem had believed in us and had taken us out of Mitzrayim, even though we had been on such a low level at that point.

Continued on page 28



My Thoughts

Yehudis Schenker

I was getting packages
From an organization
That gives lunches
For *kimpeturins*.

Each day, the bag
Was hung on my doorknob.
Once,
I opened the door
To see
If it had arrived
Just as a woman
In a bandana
Stepped out
Of her sleek, black SUV
Parked in my driveway.

She handed me the bag
This time
And said...
Mazel Tov.

For a second
I was taken aback,
But then I realized
That Everyone Else
Who was getting

These
Packages
Was getting
Mazel Tovs -
Not lovely articles
and purple ribbons
and whispered wishes-
We're so sorry
For your Loss.
Right.

Those two little words
Hung in the chilly air
As the woman with the bandana
Slid back into her black SUV.

I nearly slammed the door
Leaving the words there
Out in the cold.

But something inside me
Made me stretch out
My skinny, still-bruised arm
And grab those two small words
And pull them
Inside.

I pressed them tightly to my
chest.
Perhaps they were stolen words
Not really meant for me.
At least not now.

But I still kept them as my own.
'Cuz don't you think
That after
Eight months
Of carrying a miracle inside me,
The arduous labor and
momentous birth
Of bringing a *neshama* down, if
Also back Up again,
And cradling her, though so
fleeting,
And whispering her name -
And then even having the
Wondrous milk fill me so...

Don't you think
That I, too, deserve
Just that One
Mazel Tov? 🌟

Just One

Mazel Tov

Been There
Chaya Hott

From Darkness *To Light*

*My Journey of Transforming
Tears of Pain Into Tears of Joy*

Issue 6 - Summer, 2023

My story takes me back many years. When my husband and I first got married, we were blessed with two beautiful healthy girls who were close in age, *baruch Hashem*. I never imagined where life would take me next. I fractured my lumbar spine a few weeks after my second daughter was born. I found myself in an orthopedic cast surrounding my torso. This led to a devastating irreversible diagnosis of Osteoporosis at the age of 24. The underlying reason for the diagnosis remained a mystery for years, and with the passing of time, the likelihood of having any more children seemed to be fading away into a farfetched dream. It became too dangerous for my skeleton to carry any future pregnancies.

Two years before we got married, my father-in-law sadly passed away at a young age. Having a boy to name after my father-in-law was our fervent wish when we had started our family. I was grateful for the children I did have, however, each time a new baby was born into the family it would bring up a lot of pain for me. I felt pain for all my lost fertility years and for that baby boy we would never be able to have. With each year that passed, I understood that my chances of having more children were slimmer and closer to none.

Despite the reality of my situation, one day, I decided to start saying *tefillas Chana* after lighting Shabbos candles every Friday night. I did this consistently for a few years, hoping that Hashem would bless my family with a son of our own. I would resonate deeply with the words and pain of Chana as

I recited this *tefilla* week after week.

At a yearly doctor's visit, I surprisingly received the clearance to have one more baby, since I had been medically stable for nearly ten years. My bones first needed a boost so that they would be strong enough to hold a pregnancy, and the treatment took longer than expected. Finally, when the time was right, I became pregnant, but this time it was extra special. In addition to the long years we had waited, I was now carrying a baby boy! My dream was becoming a reality and my *tefillas* were finally being answered, or so we thought.

Nearing the end of the pregnancy, we were so very ready to welcome him home. The excitement was palpable. But then, with no warning and total shock, my whole life suddenly and tragically came crashing down to the ground. While the rest of the world went into a sudden Covid-19 lockdown at the end of March 2020, my personal family entered our own lockdown of a nightmare. The unthinkable happened. My baby returned his soul to his creator.

"Hashem still said no" (to having a son), I uttered, as the doctor told me my baby was no longer alive. Alone at my appointment, I called my husband to share the terrible news with him. Speaking from the depth of my heart and soul, I told him we will try again. The hard truth is that I couldn't just carry another pregnancy so simply, but that didn't stand in my way at that crucial moment.

When my husband spoke to his Rav regarding

"Hashem still said no." (To have a son) I uttered as the doctor told me my baby was no longer alive.

the name for our baby, he was told we wouldn't be able to use his father's name twice, should we have a live son in the future. We had to make a decision, not knowing

what the future had in store for us, but to me it was transparent. I wasn't going to give up here, and therefore we chose a different name. We named our baby Avraham Refoel. We chose Avraham for my grandfather who had recently passed away. Although heartbreaking, I knew this would be my only chance. We chose Refoel for Malach Refoel. We knew Hashem would need to send us much healing in the days and years to come.

With all the *emunah* and *bitachon* that I had in my toolbox, this still crushed my soul to, what felt like, absolute death. I didn't think I could survive this unbearable gut-wrenching pain after coming home with empty arms. So how did I lift myself up off the ground? How did I have the strength to move forward after our



only son, who we had davened for for all these years, was buried in the cemetery? To be honest, I couldn't have done this alone. I couldn't see outside my own black hole or into a brighter future. It was some family members, close friends, and my newly acquired family from ATIME and Knafayim, along with other organizations, that held my hands. They supported me for countless days. They helped me put one foot in front of the other, one minute at a time.

One week later, amidst the most heartbreaking soul-draining days of my life, I gathered those papers, still trembling from early grief and trauma, and began davening *tefillas Chana* anew. I'm not quite sure what gave me the fortitude to do it. Perhaps my stubborn personality wouldn't take no for an answer, or maybe it was my *emunah* and *bitachon*, the

only thing I had left to hold onto in those darkest days.

My sister-in-law shared a large portion of the pregnancy with me. It was excruciating and brutal for me to watch her go on

to have her live baby boy. This nephew is the first boy to carry on our family's name, and his was the first *pidyon haben* too. It added extra exhilaration to the scene. To top it all off, six weeks later my sister gave birth to, not just one, but two baby boys! People were wishing me *mazel tov* for my sister's twins. The added buzz all around only accentuated my pain. It was literally pouring salt on my open wound.

When I thought it couldn't get any more agonizing, I was proven wrong. Three months following my loss, I was approved to try for another baby once again. The next pregnancy resulted in an early miscarriage on the very same weekend as my nephew's *bris*. In a place where I had a new spark of hope, and in a place where my family was celebrating with joy,

I was crushed even further. I was already so broken, and now I felt that I was certainly shattered with nothing left of me.

At this point, my sister-in-law asked if she could open the Igros Kodesh on my behalf, given the circumstances. I didn't care to even believe at this point. It was on this day, though, that a new hope began. I could see a tiny new ray of light. The letter I received from the Igros Kodesh through my sister-in-law was unbelievable.

To clarify, the Igros Kodesh is a *sefer* with a collection of correspondences and responses from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Chabad *chassidim* as well as other Yidden now use these *seforim* of compiled letters to connect to the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *neshama* and to receive *brachos* in a time of need.

The following are exact words taken from the letter I received: "I wish to extend here my prayerful wishes that your wife, Tzivia Devorah, should have a normal and complete pregnancy as well as a normal delivery of a healthy offspring in a 'good and auspicious hour'."

This letter is addressed to someone my husband's family is familiar with. (We would later meet the original recipient of the letter in person.) We were blown away and really resonated with the *bracha*. We felt we received a true *bracha* perfectly intended for us, and that the details in the letter were no coincidence. I printed and pinned the letter at my bedside.

A couple of weeks after my miscarriage, the summer came to a close. On the first day back to

school for my girls, I was unproductive at work and considered taking leave for the remainder of the day. Those "first days" and milestones without my baby Avraham were particularly challenging. It is by no luck but rather *hashgacha pratis* that I stuck around on this day. Unexpectedly, there was a commotion in my office. HaRav Kaladetsky from Eretz Yisroel was in town and approached our building. My colleagues summoned me to go ask for a *bracha* upon his arrival. He granted me a *bracha* and suggested that I partake in a few *segulos* and take upon myself to learn *hilchos* Shabbos. Although I had never heard of this *tzaddik* before, I recognized my experience with Harav Kaladetsky to be genuine. Standing in front of this saintly man, I felt a sense of *déjà vu*. When I was a little girl, I had received dollars and stood eye-to-eye with another *tzaddik*: the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

The new pregnancy that followed immediately after the miscarriage was filled with tremendous anxiety and grief, but what we had to cling to were the *brachos* we received from the Lubavitcher Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh as well as that of Rav Kaladetsky. When worry would strike, I would say a special pregnancy *tefilla* as many times as I felt necessary, and I also read the Igros letter to keep me going and grounded. My affirmation throughout the pregnancy was that, "I have my two *brachos* and everything is going to be 'good'." In fact, that is how the pregnancy came to a close. I had low amniotic fluid at the end of the pregnancy and had to be induced. My heart literally sank at first, but I reminded myself of these two *brachos* once more. I had my two *brachos* and everything was 'good'.

Throughout the pregnancy, we wondered what this 'auspicious hour' would be. Our son, Meir

Yonasan, was born 13.5 months after our loss, on Friday, 25 Iyar/May 7, 2021. His *bris* took place the following Friday, several hours before the *yahrzeit* of my father-in-law whose name is Meir Yonasan, a"h. That Friday night was extraordinary and memorable. After candle lighting, I grasped those papers again to say *tefillas Chana*, but this time with overflowing tears that came from a place of gratitude. This is gratitude that will last a lifetime. "For this child I have prayed."

We were blessed with "a normal and complete pregnancy as well as a normal delivery of a healthy offspring in a good and auspicious hour." I don't think the timing of Meir's birth and *bris* could get any more auspicious than it was, and I think the letter and *brachos* I received speak for themselves!!

I can close my story here with a happily ever after ending, but that would be an injustice to my journey. My fertility years were terminated the day my son Meir was born. The back-to-back pregnancy reduced my bone density more than expected. At this point, it is just too unsafe for my bone health for my body to carry any future pregnancies.

To say the truth, a rainbow baby is no replacement or magical fix for a baby born still. It does not make the grief or the lasting effects of trauma suddenly vanish into thin air. Caring for a baby so soon after the loss of a baby is a rocky boat ride. It is both wonderful and also so difficult, and that is no contradiction at all. As human beings, we have the capacity to hold space for multiple and even conflicting emotions, thoughts, and beliefs.

My *emunah* has certainly been challenged throughout all of this. The *emunah* I had three years ago isn't the same *emunah* that stands today.

It's a necessary and healthy work in progress. I am now learning to serve Hashem "*bechal levavcha*," wholeheartedly, with my pain and with my joy.

My family has definitely taken enormous steps to move forward in our healing journey, but that doesn't mean "move on", or "let go" as people often say. The path to healing a broken heart doesn't mean the path to forgetting or erasing. Time does not heal all wounds. Time gives us the space to work through and process painful emotions as we learn to integrate and adapt to our new normal. The grief usually softens as we slowly learn to cope and carry what can't be fixed, but at the end of the day, it is the love that often remains.

Our Jewish faith teaches that the *neshama* is eternal. My pain is a reflection of the relationship, the love, and the connection of my *neshama* to my baby's *neshama*. It is a bond that can never be broken for as long as I live.

Meir Yonasan – Hashem gave us a light. His name had been in place for as long as we were married, but what a befitting name for this very child who arrived following so much heartache and darkness. Meir fills our home with extreme joy and light that is much brighter than we ever experienced before. I am incredibly grateful to Hashem for blessing my family with this gift of light.

To conclude, as impossible as it might seem at first, we can survive our grief. We can live life with an



abundance of joy again and even thrive alongside loss.

The day my son died in utero, his mission here on earth was completed, but I didn't die along with him. I was left here to process all this pain, and clearly, to continue on with a task of my own. Converting my חוש (darkness) into a נור (Illumination) is a part of my mission and my healing process. I am transforming darkness into light by lighting up the way for others.

I am a Case Manager at Nechama Comfort and work with women one-on-one who experience a loss at any stage. I am also learning about grief and trauma in depth, and with Hashem's help, I am receiving my certification as this magazine is going to print. My vision is to provide grief workshops to help women with practical tools and guidance to work through the early stages of grief.

I choose to share my identity because I believe everything that happens is from Hashem, and therefore, I have nothing to hide. I'm not ashamed of my wounds and scars. I wear them with pride. My name is Chaya Hott (Baruch). I grew up in Monsey and graduated from Bais Rochel High School in 2002. I lived in Crown Heights for nine years and now I live in Pomona. I can be reached at (718) 310-8678. 🌟

My AHA Moment

Chaya K.



I will try my best and Hashem will do the rest!

As time went by, Hashem granted me the strength to pick myself up off the floor and move forward in life. My pain wasn't still sitting in front of my brain. It sort of settled into a permanent space, not any longer the first thing I woke up to in the morning and the last thought I went to sleep with at night.

But I was scatter-brained. Super duper scatter-brained. I changed my mind three times a day about what I'll be preparing for supper at night. Shopping wasn't getting done, and more often than not, when I couldn't change my mind anymore 'cuz the clock was ticking dangerously close to the time that the meal needed to be served, I found myself without the necessary ingredients at home. Oh, and once again I forgot to make a grocery order to restock my empty pantry. Laundry was piling up dangerously along with the mail. I went to work, but my mind simply wasn't there. You get the picture - I just wasn't managing!

And then realization hit. Although physically I was doing better, since I was actually able to fall asleep and sleep through the night and I was basically eating and taking care of myself, my mental strength wasn't up to par with my physical abilities. I did have physical strength, but no mental capabilities. They weren't adding up. If I was feeling a whopping 90% okay physically, my emotional well-being was only 75%. Get the gist of it?

Let me share with you what worked for me. Every evening I wrote up a list of things that I needed to get done the next day, and I kept it short.

Sample: *eat breakfast *1 load laundry *fold yesterday's load * supper: baked chicken with mashed potatoes and frozen vegetables *take a walk *if time: schedule dentist appointment

As I went along my day, I crossed them off my list. Yay! Another chore off my list! See? I am capable! I am taking care of my family! And I ended up feeling accomplished instead of 'not managing with the basics'. I must add here that this trick is only going to work for you if you put onto your list a manageable amount of things and make it extremely detailed as well.

x laundry	x supper
✓ 2 loads laundry.	✓ exactly what the menu will be

Say to yourself, "I am a capable woman, and with some more time I will not be feeling so overwhelmed and scatter-brained anymore. I will continue doing my best and Hashem will do the rest!" ✨

Poem
F. Adams

Just Make Lemonade

When life gives you lemons,
You make lemonade,
But then the lemonade spoils,
Cuz you don't have shade.

So you try it again,
But it's not sweet enough,
Because you've run out of sugar,
Your life is that tough.

The third batch, it spills,
All over the floor,
Then there's no water,
And you just can't anymore.

And the lemons keep coming,
You've got barrels and crates,
You have enough lemons,
To fill an estate.

And the people keep saying,
All sugar and dimple,
"Just make lemonade,
Life? It's that simple!"

I don't have the answers,
I've simpered it too,
But perhaps I can help you,
By being there for you.

I'll come to your home,
I'll wade through the pile,
And find you beneath them,
Lift you with my smile.

I won't give you my recipes,
My tricks of the trade,
Or say, "If you'd just listen,
You'd have great lemonade."

We'll juggle those lemons,
Until they all drop,
Then we'll stack those crates high,
And you'll climb to the top.

From your lemon mountain,
You'll check out the view,
You'll stand up above them,
Not them above you.

We'll dance with these lemons,
We'll stir them about,
I'll shove some in my purse,
As you cry and shout.

And when you're too tired,
I'll just hold your hand,
And we'll sit there together,
In your lemon land. 🍋

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Answers on the Mark

Chumi Friedman

I have been listening to your monthly teleconferences, and I was wondering: There's so much talk about 'self care'. Can you explain to me why it's important? Are there ways of doing it without spending too much money?

Thank you for asking a great question!

The Torah commands us as follows: *v'nishmartem meod l'nafshosaichem* - And you shall watch yourselves very well.

I always wonder why the word *meod* - very well - was added. Couldn't the Torah just say watch over yourself? I think the word *meod* takes us to the next level. We are not only obligated to watch over our physical bodies. We are obligated to take care of our mental health as well.

So, what is self-care and is there a way to do it without spending lots of money? The answer is a resounding yes!

Self-care means doing what you need to do for yourself so that you can continue functioning. That may mean drinking more water, getting more sleep, sitting down on the couch with a good book, listening to music, coloring, games, going to the beach, taking a walk, etc. It can also mean getting a message, a manicure, going shopping, going to a show, etc.

What does it mean – well, what do you need?

Self-care is like filling up your car with gas; a car can't run without fuel and neither can we. Just like not eating will cause you to feel weak, dizzy, and unable to function, so too, our minds and souls need to be filled up as well. This is especially true after a trauma or difficult situation.

So, what does self-care look like? For each one of us it is going to be different; it all comes down to what gives us each individually a sense of peace and allows us to rest and recharge.

Does it have to cost a lot of money? Absolutely not. However, if that's what helps you navigate through the challenge... Go for it! 

Wishing you many days of light and happiness,

Chumi Friedman

Director, ATIME/HUG Program

chumi@atime.org

The Healing Process

There is something I wish people would be more aware of: our emotions directly impact many things including our physical sensations. When you are stressed, nervous, anxious, or angry, your body may react because it is attempting to process those negative feelings.

The first step toward healing emotional pain will always be recognizing that there is a problem that needs our attention. One cannot start working on a problem if they don't realize that there is an issue to begin with. The second step requires recognizing the source of our problem. The third step is the most active one: what are we going to do with the information that we now possess?

In my experience, 'giving space' to unprocessed emotions and/or a subconscious faulty beliefs is crucial for a client's healing process, and it

is one of many valuable tools I employ to help my clients heal. 'Giving space' means looking at the pain, observing it as if you are an outsider looking in, and allowing it to just 'be'. Giving space to your pain is a deeper step than simply cognitively being aware that the pain is there. For example, let's say I have a cut on my hand that is causing me pain. I can look at my cut, see it, and say, "Oh, this hurts." Alternatively, I can not look at my wound and not give it attention, but the pain will still be there driving me and my actions, albeit unconsciously.

As part of encouraging my client to 'give space' to his pain, I invite him to 'meet' his belief, for example, his old feelings of rejection. When a person repeatedly experiences rejection, the emotion of shame often comes up as well. Building a relationship with the emotion of shame can be



helpful to my client. For instance, I will ask him to sit quietly in a chair and close his eyes. Then, I'll ask him to think about his emotion of shame and to see it as a separate entity - as something inside of him, but not him. I will ask him questions like, "When did you last feel this emotion of shame?" He may answer, "Last week, I sat at the table with relatives at a family simcha. I felt intense shame when thinking that they must see me as such a loser because they're a loud and *leibedig* bunch and I have nothing interesting to say."

I will encourage my client to try to connect to the painful emotion. I might ask, "In which part of your body do you feel the shame? Do you feel it in your stomach? Your head? Your feet? How does it look? Does it have a shape? A face? A voice?"

I will encourage him to let his imagination build a picture of the shame sitting with him... This exercise will inevitably make him feel uncomfortable, but it's something I know he can handle as long as he understands this entity of shame is not him.

Allowing the shame or whatever other unprocessed emotion, whether it is grief, sadness, anger, etc., the space to 'be' ultimately decreases its power and its hold on the body. Once the negative emotion is unblocked and processed, it will leave. The person is then free to move on and live his or her life in balance and harmony.

Mr Klein is an alternative emotional healer who helps his clients move past their stucknesses and emotional blockages, and move forward towards greater success and healing. You can reach Moshe Klein by phone, text or WhatsApp at 845.244.9066, or by email at ask@moshekleinshift.com

Emunah Insights

...שחש ישראל ה' אלוהינו ה' אחד

Yaakov Avinu said to himself, "Listen, Yisrael: In your life you have seen '**Hashem**' - manifestations of *middas harachamim* (mercy) - and '**Elokeinu**' - manifestations of *middas hadin* (judgment) - but now you see that, in truth, it all emanates from One Source - **Hashem Echad** - which is all '*rachamim*.'"

- HaRav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch, zt"l

Inner Expression

E. G.

MATH RULES

I was never too great at math in school,
But smart enough to grasp the addition rule.
So why years later, when it's been so long,
Am I trying to figure out where I'm going wrong?
One pregnancy plus another plus another five,
Should equal 7 children, but I have 4 alive...
I take out my pencil, I erase and rewrite,
I struggle this way and that, try as hard as I might.
It's not working out, I attempt to fix my blunder,
I sit there and stare at the problem in wonder.
Then seemingly from nowhere the answer appears,
I shake my head and wipe away my tears...
I guess the answer is that in real life situations,
Things don't always add up with our calculations.
We can try and plan and imagine what will be,
But there is Someone else in charge, He's proven it to me.
So though the math I've always learned, over here doesn't fit,
I know that there's Someone up there working on it.
But I still want those 3 I lost and I want it all to make sense,
Instead of tiredly sitting here in suspense.
So I struggle with that and the struggle is real,
And maybe the struggle is what He wants me to feel.
And I've gained while I lost, I really do see,
I've gained texture and strength, I'm a whole better me. ✨

Inspiration

Ruchie G.

His People

When thinking of Shavuos, images fill my mind,
Bunches of lovely flowers and warm sunshine.
I hope my inner feelings along with the weather will match,
Although when living through losses, it's so hard to catch.
Let's remember our forefathers, an eternal inspiration,
Exiled in Egypt for years of brutal work and degradation.
Finally freed, they traveled through desert hardships,
Until Hashem gave them the Torah, the purpose of their whole trip.
Every year on vav Sivan He gives it to us afresh,
The Torah, pure and sweet, guides us every minute - no less.
Hashem leads us through our lives, no matter where we're standing,
With His direct *hashgacha* and with sincere understanding.
Our lives are shaped for the big picture by Someone who cares,
We're pieces of the puzzle He's formed for almost six thousand years.
There's a plan beyond comprehension, we need to trust the One Above,
On the day Moshiach comes, we'll all openly see His love.
May it be speedily in our days! 🌟

Inner Expression

A. F.

Gone, before I really knew,
Gone you were, so fast,
And as the days and months go by,
It's farther in the past.
The times I sat with starry eyes,
Thinking of what would be,
The times I shared the solitude,
With you. Just you and me.

Then dreams were shattered, hope was gone,
There was no beating heart,
I sobbed and could not come to grips,
Feeling so ripped apart.
I cried out to the One above,
Why? How can this be?
Do I deserve a punishment?
Am I just not worthy?

Every night a flood of tears,
My broken heart is crying,
I can't collect the pieces,
Is there any point in trying?
Time heals all wounds they say,
But there's no real wound to heal,
Just a piece of me that's missing,
That's so tiny yet so real.

Words given over from the heart,
Perspective slowly changed,
I don't know for what reason,



But I know this was arranged.
By the One, ever merciful,
Who sees 'til the end of time,
The One who gifted me,
With a soul that's so pure, sublime.

Though we never met down here,
There's a bond that can't be broken,
I think of you and shed a tear,
With every prayer spoken.

My dreams for you have changed,
And the things that I used to ask,
I now *daven* that your precious soul,
Fulfilled its holy task.

My little one, I miss you,
And though I may still cry,
I know my tears are gathered,
And tears shed along on high.
The pain of separation,
Is an ocean with no measure,
But the gift to be your mother,
Is mine to always treasure.

A time will come, when joyfully,
We'll get to meet again,
Until that day I hope you know,
In my heart you remain.

A time will come, we'll reunite
I know this to be true.
Until that day, I hope you know,
My depth of love for you. ✨

Humor Me

Y. Freund

I was counting sheep again. One thousand and one, one thousand and two, one thousand and three... then watching the white balls of cotton metamorphosing into clouds. How beautiful, those puffy white clouds on the clear, azure sky.

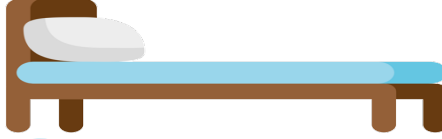
And still, I could not fall asleep.

My nights are spent wide awake with me staring into the darkness, and my days are spent falling asleep. How would that be, to turn around the a.m. and p.m. settings on my psyche? If only it would be as easy as changing the setting on my bedside alarm clock. It's clear like night and day that I. Need. To. Sleep. I keep on hoping that this night will be different; tonight I will fall asleep as soon as my head hits the pillow. So why are my eyes wide open when only moments earlier I was falling asleep in my chair?! Is my wish of sweet dreams but a dream?!?

You know, it's terribly, horribly, dreadfully awkward when slumber befalls me at the wrong time and in the wrong place between the wrong people - like when I am sitting at my work desk, cradling my third coffee of the day, yet still my eyes are drooping dangerously. If only I could see what those around me are thinking... Even though I don't want others to know how my nights stretch endlessly and I'm craving some shut-eye. I want to function like a normal human being again: like the capable young woman I once was, eons ago, before my loss.

"Sleeping is working overtime," my sister said to me one day when I spaced out while she was talking to me. "But this thought is not something that can be understood when tired." She finished off with a wink. Am I too tired to get that??

Unlike last night and the night before and the night before and the night before, (should I continue??) tonight will be the night that will be different. Oh, I feel it in my bones. I am already dreaming of sweet dreams. And just like that, oh so quickly, I will be fast asleep! Ask me tomorrow how it went ;) 

CRAVING  **SHLUFF**

* The slogan "sleeping is working overtime" is credited to Rabbi Mordechai Weinberger, LCSW

Perspective

H. M.

Nothing ever goes my way
And don't try to convince me that
Everything is designed by Hashem
Because, when I take a closer look
Everyone around me seems to have better
Even if
There's a lot of good I do have
They always have more
And it's not true that
He grants everyone what they need
Because
Happiness and contentment can be obtained
Only if everything is going my way.
It's false to believe that I can be happy
My attitude
Depends on
My circumstance
It's all beyond my control.
And you'll never in a million years hear me say that
I'm happy with the lot Hashem gave me

Now read from bottom up to gain a new perspective!



My Loss is My Gain

I lost my baby,
I lost my dream,
I lost my reassurance,
I lost my confidence,
I lost my ability to believe,
I lost my trust in my body,
I lost my youth,
I lost meaning in my life.

However...

I gained new friends,
I gained a deeper appreciation for what I've got,
I gained a new understanding for others,
I gained some pounds too,
I gained years in my age,
I gained a deeper meaning to life,

And, after some time,
I regained my ability to have faith and to believe.

My Loss Is My Gain. ✨



Farina

So suddenly, my newly bought maternity clothes were not needed anymore. When those long nights turned into days and there was nothing that pulled me out of bed in the morning, a dear friend of mine knocked on the door of my summer bungalow with a steaming bowl of farina every day for a week straight. I swallowed her love and tender care along with the steaming cereal, until the day came that I was able to drag myself out of bed and prepare my own breakfast. I am sharing her recipe with you.

Ingredients:

- 6 cups milk
- 4 T butter
- ½ cup farina
- ¼ cup oat bran
- 1 T wheatena
- 6 T sugar or honey
- ½ T vanilla sugar
- Pinch of salt

Instructions:

Using a 3 quart pot, combine all ingredients over medium heat. Once it turns hot, stir continuously until fully cooked. Turn off the flame and let it sit for 5 minutes for a creamier texture.

Health Tip: Substitute the farina, oat bran and wheatena for 1 cup oat bran.

Enjoy! 🌟

Hugging 'Treat'ment

T.G.

*A simple act of care goes a long way...
Especially when it's prepared with heart.*

*Are you or someone you know struggling with
pregnancy loss or infertility?*



HUG IN A BOX

*Contact us for a complimentary care package to
Know that you are not alone.*

SUPPORT@HUGINABOX.ORG

AVAILABLE IN THE U.S. & ISRAEL

Feedback from recipients:

- This is such a beautiful thing. It made me feel really good! Thank you so much!!
- When opening the box I received from Hug in a Box, I had no clue what I was opening. I didn't know what it was or who it was that had sent it to me. When I opened it, I felt this loving, cared for, fuzzy feeling inside... The packaging was very classy, yet it was decorated with a loving touch. Once I found the card and saw who it was from, I was eager to see what was inside the box: an assortment of self care items! Each item in the box is something I'd actually use, and it made me feel so loved and cared for. Thanks!!

Moms are holders.

We hold babies. We hold hands.

We hold “stuff”. We hold our breath.

We hold secrets. We hold hope.

We hold on. We hold hearts.

We hold them in our heart.



Continue from page 7

Not only is this idea related to Shavuos, but we know that every single evening when we go to sleep at night, a part of our *neshamah* leaves us. Each and every morning that we wake up, Hashem reaffirms His belief and faith in us. We start each day with such confidence when we say in Modeh Ani, “*rabba emunasecha*.” Hashem has total belief in us every day. He has not given up on us.

It is indeed a beautiful thought when going into Shavuos, that Hashem can see something in us people that we just can't see. At times, we may only see grief, loss, and despair, when really Hashem can see something totally different. Let's think back to a time when we really believed that we just could not carry on or continue dealing with the life we were given, yet somehow we managed to find strength and move on. Let's remember this each time we feel despairing in life. Hashem does believe in us, and He

knows that we will continue to get up and be great; that's what is important.

On Shavuos, we should make sure that we will live the rest of the year with this belief, too. We will try not to worry about the future and what will be or what will not be. Let us remember that the greatest gift is knowing that Hashem, the *Kol Yachol*, believes in us. He sees something in us even if it's something we don't see and may never see. It is precisely this that will give us the confidence to continue to step forward and keep trying. We all know that sometimes thinking logically about our situation can be both frightening and scary, and in those times let's remember that the Highest Power of all believes in us, and that, in and of itself, fills us with courage to keep on moving in the right direction. May this belief from Above really fill us with strength this Shavuos. A *gut yom tov* to all. 🌟

The Hope of Salvation

What is in a hint?

"Give me a hint," we say. We ask for that tiny nugget of information we call a hint.

Why?

A hint is a key: a key that unlocks a door to a wide-open field of information.

"*Mashcheini acharecha narutzah* - Pull me and I'll run after You," we say to Hashem in Shir Hashirim (1:4). Metzudas Dovid says that we're asking for a hint: "*Herah li remez yeshuah v'chibah* - Show me a hint of salvation and love." Just a hint.

Now, of course, we want the entire salvation. Of course, we want Moshiach now. But while we wait, a hint: a small sign of love or salvation, opens a window to the reminder that it's coming one day, and that gives us the strength to keep going for now.

"*Roni v'simchi bas tzion ki hinneni ba* — Rejoice and be

happy, Bnei Yisrael, because I am coming," says the *passuk* in Zechariah (2:14). Rejoice because I am coming? Why would we rejoice that Hashem is coming? We are still persecuted and alone until He arrives, so how does it help us to know that He is on His way?

We know the answer. Instinctively, on the way to picking up a crying baby, every mother says, "Mommy's coming, Mommy's coming." Sometimes the baby does stop crying even before he's picked up because knowing that the end is coming gives comfort and the strength to wait.

Hashem sent
a caravan of
spice merchants
to take him,
though
Yishmaelim
at that time
usually carried
petroleum.

A famous 'hint' of salvation and love is the one sent to Yosef Hatzaddik after he was sold into slavery. Hashem sent a caravan of spice merchants to take him, though Yishmaelim at that time usually carried petroleum. This was so that, Rashi says, "he [Yosef] should not be harmed by the foul odor [of petroleum]."

A bad smell? Surely Yosef, who was judged as a *rodef* by his brothers, separated from his father and teacher, and was sold as a slave would not notice a bad smell. Surely he would not be comforted by a good smell...

In contrast to Yosef's suffering, a smell was something so minute and insignificant, but as a hint of salvation and love, it was a window into something enormous. It was a reminder that Hashem was with Yosef in his suffering, and that his suffering had an exact measure. Though the present was excruciating, there was hope for him in his future.

Is hope enough?

Rabbi Yosef Friedenson, z"l, is quoted in his biography, "Faith Amid the Flames", by Rabbi Yosef C. Golding. He wrote, "My memory does not cooperate [in remembering the clandestine seder held in the sick block of the Buchenwald concentration camp during the Holocaust]. We had a few small matzos, the size between a quarter and a half a dollar. I absolutely forget whether, in fact, we had anything [else]. All I remember is that I left spiritually refreshed, with a new desire to survive and to go on living."

When I gave birth to a boy a few years after the *petirah* of my grandfather, Rabbi Shaya Shimanowitz, z"l, my husband and I knew that we wanted to name our new baby after him. I felt particularly attached to the name since I was teaching *sefer Yeshayahu* at that time and I knew that the name stood for the *tafkid* of Yeshayahu: *yeshuos v'nechamos* - salvations and comforts. Yeshayahu, more than any other navi, was charged with comforting us through relaying

his visions of Moshiach's glorious times.

My students asked my sister-in-law, who was teaching *Mishlei* in the same school, "Did Mrs. Perr name her son Yeshayah because she teaches us Yeshayah?"

"Oh, of course," she said with a laugh, "And I'm going to name my next son *Mishlei*."

She didn't, obviously. She named him Menachem Mendel, as did I, after my husband's grandfather, HaRav Menachem Mendel Perr, zt"l.

I knew that the name Menachem means comfort, as in the second word of Yeshayahu's *tafkid*, "*yeshuos v'nechamos*." I wondered about the name Mendel, though. What did that name mean? My sister-in-law had done her homework. Mendel comes from a version of Menachem, shortened to Man, and then the term of endearment "el" was added so we have the name Mendel.

Menachem Mendel is really Menachem Menachem, a double comfort, like the words of the

haftarah, "*Nachamu, nachamu*."

My sister-in-law quoted that HaRav Matisyahu Salomon explains the concept of double comfort in this way: Comforting a person means giving him another way to look at his suffering. Sometimes we can find meaning in the suffering. Sometimes we can alleviate the situation in a practical way. At the very least, we can always show a person how he is not alone in his suffering, and that there is someone who cares.

The ultimate comfort, the clarity of seeing all suffering and all joy as equal measures of Hashem's compassion, will only come in Moshiach's time. That level of comfort and clarity, the double comfort - as hinted to in the words "*nachamu, nachamu*" of the haftarah of Shabbos Nachamu, or as in Menachem Mendel which is really Menachem Menachem - has to wait until then.

And so, we wait. We wait for Moshiach's time. Until then, there is only one level of *nechamah* possible; there is only the knowledge that there will be a future more comforting than our

imagination even allows for.

For now, we have hope.

Is hope enough?

On Shivah Asar B'Tammuz, I (re)read the Holocaust survivor account of Pearl Benisch and her friends, who were students of Sara Schenirer, in her book "To Vanquish the Dragon." It's a story of faith and courage. It's a story of astounding giving and selflessness. It's also a story of hope.

The language of hope, of salvation being just around the corner, is sprinkled throughout the book. Here's one example of how the girls used the language of hope to sustain themselves and their fellow inmates:

One day, one of Pearl's friends saw a group of about 15 girls waiting outside Block 25, the barracks that led directly to the accursed gas chamber. Sick of their miserable lives, "They had chosen this shortcut to death."

Pearl's friend Tzila risked her life and rushed to the would-be-suicides. "Do you know what you are doing? You're playing into the Nazi's hands: What they didn't manage, you'll finish for them.

The war will soon be over. You'll start new lives and rebuild your families... Don't give up! That's what they want you to do. Suffer just a little more. Victory will come any day. Have faith... I don't want to see you here [outside Block 25]."

When Tzila looked back at Block 25, the girls were gone. Hope means we know the end is coming, and if the end of suffering is coming, we can make it through one more day.



The seventh *brachah* of *shemoneh esrei* is the *brachah* of *geulah*. This is because the gemara in Megillah points out, "We are destined to be redeemed in the seventh [millenium]," meaning that Moshiach will come by the year 6,000.

That is very straightforward, except for one thing. The seventh *brachah* of *shemoneh esrei*

(according to most opinions) is not about Moshiach. It's about personal redemption: freedom from the personal suffering that comes along with *galus*. So why do we mention *geulah* in the seventh *brachah* at all?

It is because we need to know that there is an end. We need to see the word *geulah* in *brachah* number seven to remind us that our *galus* has an end. This *brachah* is not about Moshiach, but the word *geulah* is a reminder to us. It's a reminder that by the year 6,000, the suffering of our nation's *galus* will end.

The word *geulah* in the seventh *brachah* is a hint: a hint of salvation and a hint to the glorious day of Moshiach's arrival that is definitely coming by a certain time. It is a hint that gives us hope.

We ask Hashem in Shir Hashirim to give us a hint of His love, and then we continue in the *passuk* to explain. Ever since You, Hashem, brought us into the union of *matan Torah*, we rejoice in that choice we made to be Your nation. We're happy we chose the Torah, despite the fact that we have been hated and persecuted ever since,

as a result of that choice.

Why are we so happy with that choice? Because, as we say, "Nazkirah dodecha miyayin." We have a memory of Your love, and it lifts us beyond our material circumstances. The memory of Hashem's love sustains us. The memory of Hashem's love carries us beyond our present suffering. Why? Memories are stories of the past. Why should memories, the stories we remember of the past, help us in the present?

My principal, Mrs. Chaya Gornish, who's every word contains a lesson, told us the following story at a teachers' meeting. She meant to demonstrate the power of a teacher, but teaching aside, I was profoundly moved by this story.

Mrs. Gornish described her grandfather, Rabbi Shalom Mark, z"l, in Auschwitz. Sometimes

he would look around and see barbed wire. He would see Nazi guards and their vicious dogs. He would see tall watchtowers with searchlights and armed guards poised to shoot. It was a place of no escape.

Then, he would remember. He would remember his rebbi of years before teaching the class about Mitzrayim. He would remember himself as a little cheder yingel learning about being a slave in Mitzrayim. Mitzrayim had guards and whips and watchtowers. Mitzrayim was a place of no escape. In fact, in all of its history, no slave had ever escaped Mitzrayim.

And then, one day, Hashem decided it was time for us to leave. At the exact moment that Hashem decided it was time, we marched out of Mitzrayim in broad

daylight. In an instant, the power of Mitzrayim disappeared.

That is what will happen to me, he used to tell himself. One day, Hashem will decide that my time here is over. And in that instant, all the guards and barbed wire and Nazi dogs will disappear.

The memory of Hashem's salvation in Mitzrayim sustained Rabbi Shalom Mark. The memory of the past gave him hope for the future.

As we await the double comfort of Moshiach, we are sustained by memories of the great love between us and Hashem. For now, hints of salvation and love help us wait. Hints of salvation open the window to our future and give us hope, because sometimes, when hope is all we have, we remember that hope is all we need. 

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Small Talk; Big Talk

It's been some time since my last loss, and with no baby in sight, people often offer me to be *kvatter* at their son's *bris*. On one hand, I feel I should accept it since I know it's a big *zchus*, but on the other hand, I feel self-conscious and that embarrassment is keeping me back. Should I push myself to do it, or should I consider my feelings first and pass on the offer?

Hi, I'm in the same situation right now and I had a close family member who recently made a *bris*. I made it very clear that they should please not even think of offering us *kvatter* because it would make me very uncomfortable and bring out my pain in public. Additionally, my losses were just as I was putting on maternity clothes, so most people didn't know. Therefore, I felt that being *kvatter* would make other random people aware of my struggles, when I have no interest in sharing with them.

My reasoning for not wanting the *kvatter'shoft* was that it's not like it's a given that if you are *kvatter* you'll have a baby. The truth is that it's a big *segulah* as well as a *zchus*, and I will do lots of other *segulos* and nice things as a *zchus*. Hashem has many ways; it's okay if I don't do this uncomfortable one. My

yeshua isn't hanging on *davka* this *zchus*.

I'm sharing my opinion and my story, but for someone that doesn't feel so uncomfortable, I would say to go for it. Why not?

E. S.

I feel you. This is a tough one. I always feel like accepting and declining at the same time... I've learned to pass it on when the offer is from a cousin whom I don't feel close to or have a special relationship with. I do accept when offered by really close family members and friends whom I feel truly care.

C. M.

I don't think there is any "should" in this scenario. I've been *kvatter* and I've also declined, and there wasn't always an earth-shattering reason for my decision. Do what feels right for

you at the moment. There will be offers that draw you in, and you can definitely accept those. There will be other offers that feel uncomfortable and you can decline them.

One thing that always helps me make a decision about *kvatter* is remembering that everyday there are *brissim* where the *kvatter* is just someone the *baalei simcha* chose to honor. It isn't always this huge, stigmatized, embarrassing moment and it just feels that way to us because we "need" the *segulah*. May you be the *baalas simcha* very soon!

Esty

In my opinion, your own feelings come first. If you don't feel comfortable doing such a thing, please be kind to yourself first and tell them 'no' in a nice way.

E. F.

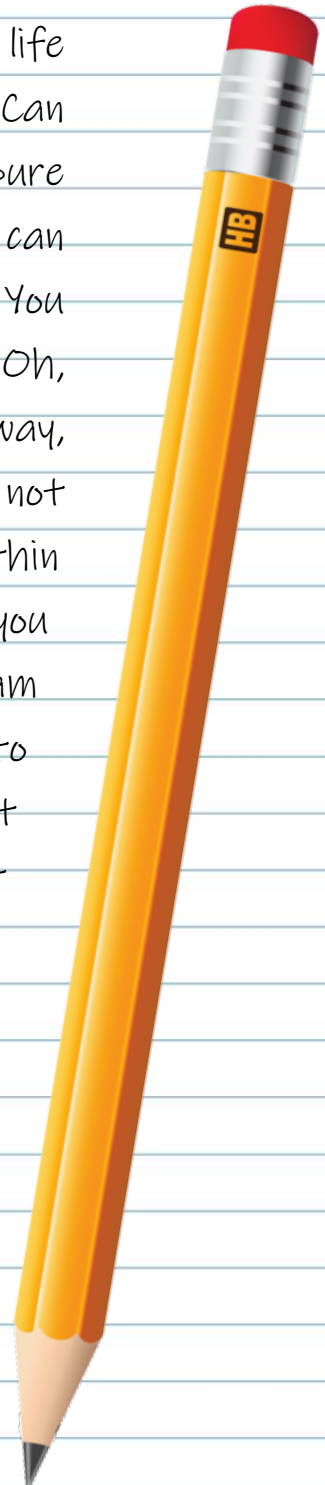
Next Issue's Talk:

What helped you get through the initial stages of shock and grief? 

To My Dear Tzippy W.

I'm thinking of you, my precious little girl. Tell me, how are you doing up there? I am fantasizing a good life for you here with me. Are you even interested in that? Can you fathom what good is here when you are experiencing pure goodness?! When you are surrounded by holiness and truth, can you even understand my pain of not having you with me? You see the whole picture; can you calm my throbbing heart? Oh, my dearest neshama'le, I feel so close to you, yet so far away, as though in a different world where the language is not understood between us. I can still feel your heartbeat within me, your face is engraved in my mind, and I do not know you at all. It's a painful journey without you here and I am waiting for the day when I will reunite with you and get to know you from up close. In the meantime, dear, please don't forget about me. I risked my life for you, wanted the best for you, and I dream about you every day. Remember me.

Your mother, always 🌟



Dear Diary

B. L.

Dear Diary,

You know I grew up in a home that values *hachnasas orchim*. I'm someone that knows how to host guests. I can even run a Shabbaton without blinking an eye!

But...lately I've been rethinking *hachnasas orchim*, because I have a very pesky guest. This guest pesters me at the most inconvenient times: when I'm working on Wednesday afternoon, on Friday night just as I light candles, and even when I'm dancing at my brother's wedding. Sometimes, that guest knocks and I close all the blinds, hoping he won't realize I'm home. I even turn off my phone so he can't call.

I've tried venting and complaining to my husband, "Why can't he take the hint?" "I haven't invited him in ages but he keeps coming over!"

The thing is, ignoring him hasn't been working. Maybe I should switch tactics?

Signed,

Tired of hosting

Dear Diary,

The next time this guest dropped by unexpectedly, I invited him inside for tea and snacks. I put on some music and we had a chat for a couple of hours, taking the time to catch up on our week.

Finally, he left with a, "Bye! This has been so nice. I wish I could stay longer, since you're such a nice hostess, but I have to run." I sent him off with a goodbye wave. The best part? Relief rushed through me. It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I walked out my guest named... Grief.

Grief walked down my porch steps, reassuring me all the while, "Oh don't worry, I'll be back. I know how much you enjoy my company."

I swear he had a twinkle in his eye.

Signed,

Relieved hostess ✨

A Father's Words

D. Portowicz

I'm smiling

The sun is shining, the birds are chirping, cars are
driving, lawn mowers mowing,

and I'm smiling.

People are walking, people are talking, people are
delivering, people are calling,

and I'm smiling.

Children are crying, children are laughing, children
are eating, children are rushing,

and I'm smiling.

I am cleaning, I am feeding, I am changing, I am
dressing,

and I'm smiling.

I am complimenting, I am coaching, I am calming, I
am coaxing,

and I'm smiling.

I am running, I am driving, I am shopping, I am
working,

and I'm smiling.

But behind this façade, behind this smile, there is
some sadness.

A lonely sadness where –

I am frowning and I'm tearing, I am crying and I'm
missing,

I am wishing and I'm reminiscing, I am thinking and
I'm rehashing,

I am guiltig and I'm blaming, I am falling and
I'm sinking,

I am drowning and I'm floundering,

but I'm still smiling.

Because life moves on, and there is so much to live
for.

Life is moving, life is zooming, life is whizzing, life is
happening,

I am parenting and I'm child rearing, I am spousing
and I'm siblinging,

I am neighboring and I'm friending, I am teaching
and I'm mentoring,

I am breathing and I'm eating, I am seeing and I'm
hearing,

I am walking and I'm talking, I am feeling and I'm
smelling,

I am hoping and I'm praying, I am singing and I'm
dancing,

But most of all, I am trusting and I'm believing!

So, I'm still smiling.

And I feel Hashem smiling back at me. ✨



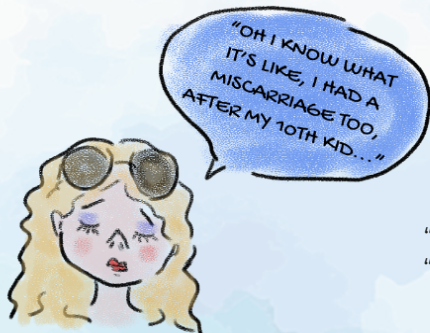
My Voice

E. G.

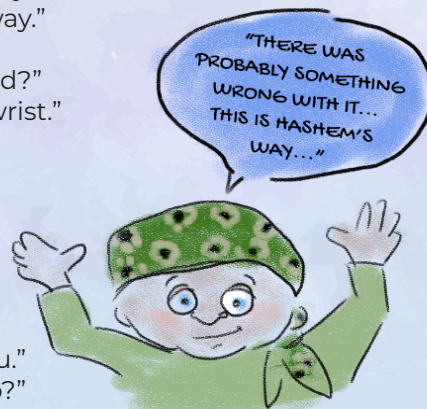
What They Say



Oh the things people said
When my baby was dead...
"Just focus on the good."
"Be happy, you should."
"He's in the best place now."
"You're so special, wow!"
"Your kids need their mother."
"You can always have another."
"Maybe something was wrong with it."
"At least he lived for a little bit..."
"He'd be disabled, with tubes to breathe."
"It's for the good, we just have to believe."
"Who do you have pity on? Your baby or you?"
"Oh I can understand, I had a miscarriage, too."
"At least you have the chocolate..."
"I can't believe I never got my toddler's birth certificate."
"Hashem gave you a special *neshama* to hold."
"That's not done if he was less than 30 days old."
"What happened???? Did something happen today?"
"You don't have to get angry at me and act this way."
"You have to hear this *chizuk* I heard."
"I can't talk about babies? I shouldn't say the word?"
"Make a bracelet for her new baby, for her pudgy wrist."



Oh it's just an endless list...
Some of these comments may be true,
But would you want them said to you?
I think if your baby would die,
You would just want to cry.
So if you really want to show you care,
I'll tell you things I'd want to hear:
"I'm so sorry for your loss and I'm thinking of you."
"I am so sad for you, is there something I can do?"
"I'm thinking of your baby, he's on my mind."
Yeah, these are things that show me you're kind.
"I can't imagine the pain, how you manage to go on."
"I was thinking of your baby, I wrote this song."
"The hole in your heart won't go away,
But will get filled with happy things, there will come that day."
"For now, celebrate each day you make it through...
I've been through this, and I'm here for you."
"I wish I could take it away, this awful pain you live with."
"Grief does not come in clearcut stages, that's just a myth."
Ask me what I named him, and then use his name.
He was a person, my child, it's really the same.
Tell me it's ok to feel whatever I do.
I think that will help me heal faster, it's true.
Just be there for me with a hug and listening ear.
Sometimes I just need to know that someone is there.
Don't judge, don't assume, just ask how I feel,
And show me support as I struggle to heal.
This grieving is tough, it's tiring, there's pain.
We'll look for the rainbow once we get through the rain.



Shirley

Shavuos

Chaya K.

Dairy Delights

Ingredients:

- ½ lb. farmer's cheese
- ¾ cup sugar
- 8 oz. whipped cream cheese
- 2 T flour
- 1 T vanilla sugar
- 3 eggs
- 3 bars of 3.5 oz dark milk chocolate
- Baker's Choice dairy caramel shpritz (for filling)



Image Credit Goes To Oh!My Image 201-491-2648

Instructions:

1. Combine the first 6 ingredients and mix well.
2. Fill silicone molds of your choice almost till the top.
3. Place molds into a baking pan filled with water and bake at 350° F for 30 minutes. Leave in a closed oven to cool for 2 hours.
4. Melt chocolate in a double boiler. Spoon chocolate over the cheese filling to fill the mold completely.
5. Freeze overnight.
6. Remove your masterpiece from the mold and fill the center with Baker's Choice dairy caramel shpritz.
7. Optional: Garnish with Klics chocolate on a slant

Note: When I started with this creation, I didn't realize how time consuming it would be since I was making a max of two trays a day, (Especially with the cool-down time and freezing overnight for the molds to pop out so easily and beautifully...) but the time spent was well worth it! I am so excited to have them on my Yom Tov table along with my carefully selected floral napkins. 🌸

Shavuos

Beautiful Buds

Tricks and Tips to Get Your Flowers to Last

You went to a florist, chose a beautiful bouquet of flowers that caught your eye, and now you ask the million dollar question: how do I get it to last? How do I keep my cut flowers fresh and vibrant for the longest possible period of time?

1. **Use a Squeaky-clean Vase.** Wash your vase thoroughly and change the water every 2-3 days.
2. **Snip the Stems.** Before placing your cut flowers into the vase, snip a bit of the stems using sharp scissors; remember to cut on a slant. Since the ends of the stems dry up, snipping them will enable the buds to drink the water and remain fresh longer.
3. **Utilize the Floralife Packet.** If you got this little sachet of flower food along with your bouquet, empty it into the water before putting in the flowers. In the event that you didn't, put some sugar into the water to keep your flowers fresh and blooming.
4. **No Foliage in the Water.** When you put your flowers into a vase, fill it with water three-quarters full. Then check that there are no leaves below the water line.
5. **Avoid Direct Sunlight.** Your flowers will last longer in a room with cool temperatures. Avoid displaying them in direct sunlight or near appliances that generate heat. Do you have extra fridge space? If so, store the flowers in the refrigerator overnight. This will help keep your blooms looking crisp. 🌸

Artistic Expression

Chaya B.

I open up my arms

My embrace I surrender,

I know it's Your will, Father,

To return him to Sender.

And when I know

That he is safe in Your hand,

I feel so calm and free

Even though I don't understand. 



To share your artistic creation, find our contact information on page two.

Quote Me

"Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible,
and achieves the impossible"

*"If you think you're too small to make
a difference, try going to bed with a
mosquito."*

"A WINNER IS A LOSER WHO TRIES ONE MORE TIME"

Did You Know?

T.G.

Ask for help!

People like to be independent and self-sufficient. They enjoy feeling in control and having it all together. This means that when people do need outside help, it becomes something shameful which makes it really difficult to reach out.

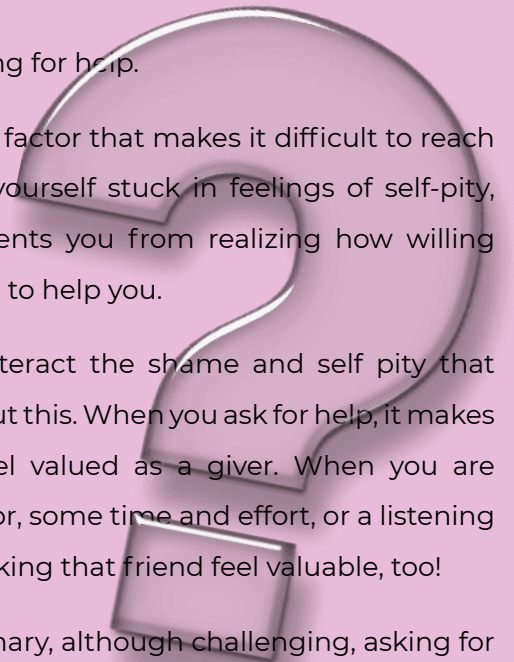
A recent study conducted by Stanford University found that people tend to overestimate how inconvenient a favor may be for their friends. Generally, people like to help each other out, and often it's not even a big inconvenience for them to do so. The study showed that friends are very able and willing to help out those in need, yet people still hold

back from asking for help.

Another factor that makes it difficult to reach out is finding yourself stuck in feelings of self-pity, since this prevents you from realizing how willing your friends are to help you.

To counteract the shame and self pity that arise, think about this. When you ask for help, it makes that person feel valued as a giver. When you are asking for a favor, some time and effort, or a listening ear, you are making that friend feel valuable, too!

In summary, although challenging, asking for help is something worth working on, because it will benefit both the giver and the receiver. ✨



Resources

Asking for help is a sign of strength, not of weakness.

A TIME

P: 718-686-8912 Ext. 113
E: losssupport@atime.org
W: www.atime.org

A TIME/HUG offers emotional support and medical guidance for couples experiencing perinatal and infant loss as well as for terminations for medical reasons. Support includes comforting packets home delivered and/or mailed throughout the world, monthly phone supports, a Groupme support chat, special webinars and teleconferences, 24 hour helpline (Kol Chaya/ 845-81-ATIME), doulas who are trained to be with couples when delivering babies born still, *chevra kadisha* services when necessary, and so much more.

Haneshama

A beautiful telephone line, in Yiddish, for the Jewish Woman. (A project of Tal Shel Tchiya) 718-906-6466, 4, 7. Options 6 and 7. For the password, call/text Rivky at tel # 929-214-0503

Our Tapestry

P: 718-438-6930 and 718-771-3443
E: miriam@ourtapestry.org
chanadevorah@ourtapestry.org
W: www.OurTapestry.org

Our Tapestry provides support and inspiration to families who have suffered the loss of a child, sibling or grandchild. We offer a publication, whatsapp chats, support groups and events.

Knafayim

P: 718-925-2113
E: Support@knafayimwings.org

Knafayim Wings supports those who experienced a pregnancy/infant loss. We offer guidance, counseling, and referrals. We hand deliver full care packages for those who experienced a loss, lead phone support groups moderated by licensed professionals, host lectures by doctors discussing topics related to the physical and emotional aspect of loss, and send out weekly inspirational messages culled from the Parsha of the week.

RSK

P: 845-414-8001 Ext. 103
E: thekitchen@rsk.org
W: RSK.org Link for application:
<https://reb-shayala.secure.force.com/applications?id=0014T00000UGZZF>

Our program is geared for families hit by a sudden shift in the household which in their current situation are unable to prepare dinner, and the meals would ease their financial burden. Thanks to our generous donors, we temporarily subsidize specified takeout foods so they can emerge on the other end as strong as before. Once an application is submitted and approved, we will send you another email with the menu.

Do you know of any helpful resources? Help us keep this list updated!

PAL

PREGNANCY AFTER LOSS

The path forges on ahead

The future is unknown, yet full of promise

Anxiety peaks

You twist and turn on the winding roads

The happiness and the void and the tears and the yearning and the longing and the never ending anxiety are all intertwined in the twisted road ahead.

Traveling along the trip through

Pregnancy After Loss.



Caution! Read at your own risk

Chumi Cohen

Stop and Go

Life is like a trip down Route 9 in Lakewood: go, wait, go, wait, go, wait. Go to the doctor, then wait for treatment. Do treatment, then wait for a positive result. Get a positive result, then wait for the scan. Get the scan, then wait for the heartbeat. Get the heartbeat, then wait for the first trimester to end. Get through the first trimester and wait till 9 months. Get to 9 months and wait for birth. Get to birth and wait to recover. Recover, rinse, repeat.

But this road is not accompanied by the cheery music of radio station 107.9. This journey features a rock and roll of emotions like fear, anxiety, worry, and nervousness, plus a helping of guilt, shame, and overall inadequacy. All of those emotions, along with the roller coaster of excitement and happiness which I know can instantly be transformed into grief and mourning.

There is so much anxiety bundled up inside of me. Dear child, do you know that I love you as only a mother can? Do you realize how much I worry about you? This time in your life - or your pre-life - is the most perilous time you may face until old age. There are scary statistics about one in ten not making it...or one in five. But you - I love you, and you have to make it. It's not like I am blissfully ignorant enough to think that my love is enough to keep you in this world. I wish it could. I wish I could bind you with cords of love into me, ensuring you grow healthy and strong. I wish I could hold you in my arms... I wish I could protect you and make you okay.

All I have are some shiny black and white printouts. I look at those pictures, really just a little circle of black on a gray screen, and to me they speak of love and hope and heartbreak. Cleverly marked "baby", they offer a peek into your future, our future, together. I want so badly for it to become reality.

For now there is only the little blob of you, some pesky symptoms, and my love. My love is so strong for you that it threatens to overpower me with anxiety, drown me in depression, paralyze me in this difficult state of waiting. My love is strong enough to build the foundations of our lives together. My love could sustain us both. If.

If God wills it that you live. If God wills it that you grow. If God wills it, that this time will be different. ✨

Leah Weisberg



Hope is a very precious thing
So rare and hard to find,
Hope is the very spark of life
That fuels body and mind.

Hope is why I hold on tight
And hope is why I pray,
Hope is what I beg for, please,
Don't take my hope away.

Hope should bloom and blossom
Hope should plant, flower, and grow,
Hope should become so real
That from hope blessings may flow. ✨

An Ode to Hope

Anonymous

Dearest Babies

Dear Baby 1,

I remember when I saw that faint pink line and knew that you were on the way. I remember the joy that filled my heart. You would be born 2 years to the day from your brother. I was so excited, so joyful.

Really, everything was going fine, but I couldn't help telling my doctor. Even though everything looked good, they brought me in for bloodwork anyways. The bloodwork didn't look great, but nothing a little supplementation couldn't take care of. I hated doing the supplementation, but I loved you, so it was worth it.

Everything looked totally fine, until it didn't. I didn't know why you stopped growing. I didn't know why you were misshapen. I hate to call you that - you were CUTE, and I still keep your little photographs... but something wasn't right.

My heart sang when I heard your heartbeat, and I wondered why the doctor didn't smile as he played it again and again. Then he said those words: "too slow." I asked what that meant. He said it meant we needed to daven.

I did daven, hard, for you, my little one. I davened and davened and came back to the scan, promising to be a good mother. But you were gone already. At 9 weeks and 2 days, you finished your time inside of me.

We brought you to the doctor for testing, to find answers to what went wrong with our precious little embryo. We were blessed to receive an answer a month or so later.

You did good work in this world, Baby 1. You did good work and I was proud to be your mother.

Love always,
Mommy

Dear Baby 2,

I was surprised to see you come, but not really. Only 2 cycles after we had said good-bye to your little brother, you were there to comfort us. And I knew you would be our rainbow baby, who would bring us comfort and closure after what we went through. You would make everything alright again. I knew, I just knew.

I didn't call the doctor this time. Hashem who gave you to us would take care of you and make you grow healthy and strong. I waited, confidently and only a little bit of anxiety crept into my heart.

And then the spotting started. Just a little, no worries, except it was Yom Tov and I was worried. I went to the doctor on Chol HaMoed and was told you were okay... mostly. With just a little progesterone, hopefully everything might just be fine.

But I felt pain on Yom Tov and panicked. The kind doctor told me not to fear the worst. Monitoring bright and early the next morning revealed a sac still empty. A sac that would remain empty forever, and with it a piece of my heart.

Then came the tortuous technical wait. You had blessed me with pregnancy symptoms aplenty for a pregnancy that wasn't. 14 long days had to pass since that first ultrasound. Finally, at 7 weeks and 2 days, I got rid of you. I couldn't stand having you hang around, making me sick with this tease of a pregnancy. I just wanted to be done.

This time, too, we sent you in for testing. But this time there were no answers to be found. You were too little to test but not too little to sear a giant hole in my heart. I'll never know if you were a girl or a boy. I'll only know that you were always mine.

So... Goodbye forever, little one. You left me with questions and with pain, but I'm your mother so I still love you anyways.

Love,
Mommy

Dear Baby 3,

By you we did things differently. We went all out so that you shouldn't end up like your siblings. We waited till the right time, tested and waited, tested and waited. That's why the second pink line gave me hope, albeit cautiously optimistic hope. We went to the doctor right away and started supplementation even before you were conceived.

You looked okay at the first scan. I allowed myself to hope a tiny bit. Now comes the interminable wait for the heartbeat scan; the one that will show that you are different than your siblings. That you will survive and thrive and be born B'sha'ah Tovah U'mutzlachas.

As much as I love you, you can't fill the hole bored by your two siblings. But you don't need to. You'll be you, and I'll love you as only a mother can.

Please, Hashem, make this one grow healthy and strong. Please make this one produce the child we are begging for.

Love,
Mommy 

