

FALL 5781

RISE

REACHING OUT WITH INSPIRATION SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

A Project of Chazkeinu





A **REVOLUTIONARY PROJECT** UNITING JEWISH WOMEN WORLDWIDE

A **PEER-LED ORGANIZATION** STRENGTHENING AND EMPOWERING
JEWISH WOMEN WITH MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES

SERVICING WOMEN LIVING WITH:

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- ADDICTION •
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- DEPERSONALIZATION/
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- OCD •
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“AFTER THE FIRST MEETING I JOINED, I WAS ON A HIGH! IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE. I FELT SO CONNECTED AND VALIDATED.”

“I WOULD DESCRIBE CHAZKEINU AS A HEARTBEAT, IT IS ESSENTIAL AND PART OF WHAT KEEPS ME ALIVE.”

“I HEARD SOPHISTICATED NORMAL WOMEN SHARE THEIR STRUGGLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS. I DON'T THINK OF MYSELF AS DAMAGED GOODS ANYMORE. I THINK OF MYSELF AS A REGULAR PERSON WITH A TOUGH CHALLENGE.”

“I HAVE BECOME MORE CONFIDENT, STRONGER, HAPPIER, BECAUSE OF CHAZKEINU.”

“CHAZKEINU HAS BECOME MY GO-TO PLACE TO CONNECT AND FEEL LIKE A REAL HUMAN BEING.”

IF YOU ARE A WOMAN LIVING WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES OR COPING WITH A FAMILY MEMBER STRUGGLING, WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US! PLEASE CALL, EMAIL OR CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

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| Letters |

To our Dear Chazkeinu Family,

We are living in challenging times. That is probably the understatement of the century, but there it is. Hashem is testing us all, in many different ways. On a global level so many things have changed, and individually, we still continue to struggle, each in our own unique way.

We never signed up for this life, but our Loving Father in Heaven deemed this to be our fate, for reasons best known to Him. What can WE do is the question we ask ourselves. The answer I believe is deep inside. As a line in a song very close to my heart reads, "Hold on tight". Hashem wants us near, and He is pulling us. It's up to us to follow. With prayer, and with good deeds; themes that are expanded upon in the pages that follow. May it be His will, that this year be one of revealed good all the time.

*Love you all,
Zahava and the team*

*A Message from Rabbi Yisroel Grossberg,
Rabbinical Advisor of Chazkeinu*

As we approach Rosh Hashana, it is an opportunity to look back on the previous year as well as look forward to the year ahead. This past year has been especially challenging in so many ways for all of us. The one thing that remained constant throughout all the upheaval so many of us experienced, was Chazkeinu being there with support and chizuk. As we look forward may we all be zoche to a year mazal, bracha, simcha and menuchas hanefesh. May HKB"H answer all of our teffilos l'tova !

*"You don't need to
see the whole stair
case, just take the
first step."*

Martin Luther King Junior

*"You must do the
thing you think you
cannot do."*

Eleanor Roosevelt

| Feedback|

First, it's really nice to see all the faces (and the people who preferred not to show their face). Really, every person contributes in a way that feels safe for them; which takes us one step closer in eradicating the stigma. Zoom and the phone meetings are a safe, warm, uplifting and encouraging environment where you really feel accepted. The Zoom meetings are fun, entertaining, engaging and a big highlight for me! Thank you Zahava, Breindy, Shiffy and Chaya Sara M for all your help in making it possible!

Saralah

We had a few people sing and play guitar for us. The lyrics ranged from whimsical to humorous to deep to soul-stirring. Music is the language of the soul, so I think that everyone, despite having their own unique struggles, was impacted in some way by the melodies. I know they gave me a great feeling of chiyus (life) during a challenging time. Thank you Mindy, Sprinci, Naomi, and Shaina for sharing your beautiful talent with us.

Miriam B.

The Chazkeinu Zoom meetings have been a life changer for me. They feel like mini reunions each time! Seeing everyone is so exciting for me! The Concerts have been my favorite: I love music, and sharing it over Zoom has been magical! I also loved having my girls do a cooking demo. It was a pleasure to see them shine, and I really appreciate all the positive feedback everyone gave them! Thank you to Rachel for making every person feel like an artist! She is a great teacher and always full of positive words to everyone! A special thank you to Zahava for arranging all the events and leading the conversation starters. I don't know how she does it all –with being busy with meetings almost the whole week! I am beyond impressed!! Thanks to all who go on to Zoom. You make it something I look forward to joining!

Ciril

The Scattergories game was so much fun, I bought the game to play with my family.

Connecting with other Chazkeinu Sisters consistently really helps me get through the day and cope through difficult times. I feel so lucky to have people around me to help navigate my daily life, and we can all give chizuk to one another. We remind each other that Hashem is holding our hands with every step we take.

Chaya Friedman's lecture on shame was really helpful. It was about taking care of yourself, having good posture, and holding yourself well, as a way of dealing with shame. It something that was really helpful for me to implement. There was another lecture on body shame, but I forgot who gave it. It was also very informative. I feel like every girl needs hear it; nothing to do with people who struggle with mental health

issues. We all deal with issues with body shame. I think it was such an important topic, and it was explained very well. I wish I remembered who gave it. I think it's so great that Chazkeinu addresses all these issues.

Mindy Jacobson's discussion on emotions was so helpful! The next day, I was on the way to a levayah (funeral) and I felt

my stomach tighten, so I asked myself: "What is this emotion? What's it preparing me for?" And I was able to feel calmer. Thank you, Mindy!

Rivka Bauman's Shiur, Feel Your Feelings, and her two books recommendations, were so spot on. I can't even tell you. I not only got the books and went through the books, but I tried to apply them. It's been so helpful and so empowering, and so healing. I reached out to her, and told her and she got back to me, because I felt like it was really what I needed. It was a great lecture, said over well, and for me, it was really what I needed.

I loved the virtual scavenger hunt. My favorite question was: "something you don't need but can't throw out"!



Every Heart is Ill

By Avrohom Steier



Yom Kippur. The holiest day of the year, and the day that bestows upon the Jewish people the loftiest of levels, bringing us closer to the Angels in Heaven. In addition, Yom Kippur is a mighty day of prayer. It is a day to pour out our hearts before Hashem (each person according to their own abilities and station in life) and to ask for all that we need for the coming year.

There is one specific prayer that I find to be especially moving, and I believe that it is relevant to everyone reading this article. During the final prayer of the day, Ne'ila, when the gates of Heaven are soon to be closed and the Tefila of Yom Kippur is at its apex, we say the piyut of the Yud Gimmel Middos (Thirteen Attributes of Hashem). In it, we pray to Hashem using the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy which are promised to never be returned empty-handed.

In the third stanza, I, together with the entire congregation, say the following powerful words:

Attribute of Mercy roll over us (i.e. envelop us),
and before Your Creator send forth our Prayers,
and on behalf of Your nation ask for mercy,
for every heart is ill and every head is sick.
And I cry.

I cry for all the tormented souls in Klal Yisroel whose lives are filled with pain and anguish due to their psycho-emotional condition. I cry for these men and women, my brothers and sisters, who struggle mightily with demons that plague them through no fault of their

own. I cry for those who have made rash decisions and taken self-damaging actions because of their illness and whose lives are (sometimes) permanently altered due to them. And I cry for the pain of the family members of these tortured souls who are forced to sit on the sidelines and watch their loved ones fight with a force that they cannot begin to comprehend.

Then, two stanzas later, I and the entire congregation, conclude this particular piyut with the following soul-stirring words:

May it be the Will before You, the One who hears the sounds of our weeping,
that You place our tears in Your eternal flask,
and save us (with these tears) from all harsh decrees,
because to You alone do our eyes gaze.

We conclude this prayer with a request that Hashem collect our tears that we have cried and use them to protect us, and all of the Jewish people, from any and all harsh decrees. Tears are very potent, and they are the key that opens all of the doors in Heaven.

I invite you to join me this Yom Kippur. During the time of Ne'ila (whether you are in a shul or not), pull out a Machzor and say these poignant prayers. Daven for all those whose hearts and heads are ill and, most importantly, for yourself and your loved ones. Even if you are unable to cry and even if you are unable to say the Hebrew words, say the words in English with as much energy as you can. If we all join together to ask Hashem

(Continued on page 12)



Breaking the Cycle

By Dr. Sara Teichman

Note: This is a composite of a number of patients. Any resemblance to any one person is totally coincidental.

Sometimes when I looked in my children's eyes, I shuddered to think at the parent I had become. Let me explain. I woke up every morning with the best of intentions: I would keep my cool and be positive with my children. Like failed dieting, my resolve melted sooner or later in the day- when a child spilled, when I realized I am late *again*, or there was just too much homework for one set of parents to deal with. I quickly became irritable and angry, and I lashed out at whoever was in my path. The pain and confusion in my children's eyes was only matched by the guilt that I felt.

I knew that this was a pattern that was reactive and unhealthy and needed to stop. I certainly did not wake up saying, "I will yell/punish my child today." I had good intentions; but- for a variety of reasons- could not withstand the trials of the day. Unfortunately, the yelling was reinforced by the fact that in the short run it worked- it scared the children out of their wits and into compliance and provided me with a release of pent up emotion. However, in the long run- which is what counts- I could see how it led to damaged relationships and wounded children- who suffer from low self esteem, depression, anxiety and 'at risk' behavior.

I cannot pinpoint what made me break this cycle: my best guess is that it was a slow dawning, not an AHA moment. I began with recognizing that though I was parented poorly- ignored, discounted, and criticized

constantly, I still needed to take responsibility for my own actions. Though I had no idea how to parent, just doing the opposite of my parents was just not good enough.

My journey began with reading anything parenting and going to as many lectures and classes as I could. What I learned that helped me most is that I had to be emotionally fit and well-regulated myself in order to deal with my kids. From there, it was a short trek to therapy -and medication to regulate my moods. When we feel better, we do better. It's as simple, and complex, as that.

My journey has not been easy- with many fits and starts- but it has been rewarding. Learning about my emotional world and using that knowledge to better understand my children has had an unbelievable impact on my family. Believing, teaching, and modeling that we have choices and do not have to react has resulted in a happier atmosphere in the home.

Every day that I do a smidgeon better than the day before is a victory for me. Though I would not have chosen the hard road for myself, I have benefitted and grown from the struggle- and of that I am proud.

Dr. Sara Teichman (Dr. T) formerly of Los Angeles currently lives in Lakewood where she maintains a family and psychotherapy practice. She also writes for a number of publications, most notably Binah magazine. She can be reached at drsteichman@gmail.com or 323 804 6686.

| Humor |



The Aseres Yemei Teshuvah is a serious time, and we do a lot of things in all seriousness.

But in all seriousness, it's sometimes difficult for your kids to tell which things are minhagim and which you just happen to do. So you should really take the time to talk to your kids about it. Sooner than later, especially if your minhag is not to talk on Yom Kippur.

Here are some things that my kids probably think are our family minhagim:

- We have a minhag to polish our silver before Yom Tov, because Rosh Hashanah is the time to polish your silver. Metaphorically. But also physically.
- We have a minhag, once we're paying for seats, to be very conservative over which of our kids will actually sit for all of davening. ("Nah, he doesn't need his own seat. He'll just sit in mine and I'll stand over him. He's only here for the parts I need to stand for anyway.")
- I have a minhag to wonder why I have to buy seats for Yom Kippur, when on Tisha B'Av I can just bring my own.
- My students have a minhag to ask me for mechilah, because in the 5 days of school we've had so far, they've done so much to me that mechilah is really their only option.
- I have a minhag that my Hataras Nedarim group somehow ends up being the one with six guys.
- We have a minhag to come home on Rosh Hashanah night and entirely butcher saying "L'shana tovah" to the women and toddlers, making it obvious that we have no idea of how Hebrew grammar works ("L'shana tovah tikasavna... Nu?...No?") while the women all laugh, because they all took dikduk in school and we never make them butcher a Gemara in front of *us*. We should probably look in the machzor, because the most polite way to say, "Have a good year," is with our nose in a sefer.
- My kids have a minhag on the first night of Rosh Hashanah to say things like, "I'm starving; I haven't eaten all year!" "You smell like you haven't showered since last year!" "This food tastes like it was made last year!"
- I have a minhag to have no idea how to cut a round challah. Do I cut it like a pie? Do I cut it like a normal challah so that some people get a huuuuuuuuuuuge slice? There is no good way. I think I'm supposed to cut it horizontally like a bagel, put some honey in the middle, and let everyone else cut their *own* challoos.
- We have a minhag to leave bits of challah in the honey so it's less appealing for subsequent meals.
- We have a minhag to eat every siman in the machzor, including several with the same Yehi Ratzon.
- We have a minhag, as we eat the date, to tease someone at the table about shidduchim.
- We have the minhag to try cooking the fish head in all different kinds of sauces and brines, and the fish head has a minhag to always taste the same, regardless.

- We have a minhag to make way too many black-eyed peas. (TIP: The proper amount of black-eyed peas is one pea per person per meal.)
- I have a minhag to put a piece carrot over the fish eye so he's not looking at me.
- We have a minhag that, by the time we finish eating the simanim, we have no room for the rest of the meal.
- We have a minhag to look at the clock as we finish davening, because we just *know* people are going to ask.
- I have a minhag to take a nap on Yom Kippur during the break, despite the fact that I feel worse when I wake up than I did before I went to sleep. I think it's the nap.
- I have a minhag to encourage my kids to say the paragraphs in the machzor that have bigger fonts. I personally have no idea which to pick and choose, but the typesetter probably knew what he was doing.
- We have a minhag, when the chazzan sings really long, to count how many pages are left.
- My minhag is to forget that we say *Baruch Sheim* out loud on Yom Kippur until the entire tzibbur launches into it when I'm well into *V'ahavta*.
- I have a minhag every year to be mekabel that I'm going to start davening with the proper kavana. Then I think, "Just because I have time to daven with proper kavana *today*, when the chazzan is singing, doesn't mean that I'm going to have this kind of kavana on work days." And I go back and forth about it, and then I realize that the chazzan has done like 6 pages without me.
- I have a minhag, when I'm saying that paragraph before shofar blowing that I have to say seven times, that I secretly use my fingers to keep track.
- My shul has a minhag to give out paper towels for Va'anachnu Kor'im. And to save them from year to year.
- I have a minhag to look up after Tashlich and realize I have no idea where any of my kids are.
- We have a minhag to not be sure the second night whether we're also supposed to do simanim too, or just the new fruit.
- I have a minhag to define "new fruit" every year as "a fruit that we have never eaten ever in our entire lives," and to come home with something before Yom Tov that we cannot eat without first printing out instructions.
- We have a minhag that, in addition to whatever weird new fruit I buy, we also eat star fruit.
- I have a minhag – seeing as experts recommend that we drink 8 cups of water every day – to drink 16 cups right before Yom Kippur.
- We have a minhag to break our Tzom Gedalyah fast on leftovers from Yom Tov. ("Black-eyed peas and Fish Head? No thanks. I think I'll fast another day.")

Mordechai Schmutter writes a weekly and a bi-weekly humor column for Hamodia and a comic strip for The Brooklyn Family Pages of Brooklyn. He is also the author of the books, Don't Yell "Challah" in a Crowded Matzah Bakery, A Clever Title Goes Here, This Side Up, Cholent Mix, What Is This - Some Kind of Joke?, and For This I Had to Grow Up? all published by Israel Book Shop. In his spare time, which doesn't exist, he attempts to teach Language Arts to a bunch of high school guys, most of whom are far more interested in bombarding him with reasons not to impart them with knowledge that their parents already paid for. He is also available to do stand-up comedy. He lives in New Jersey for some reason.

| Meet a Member |



Meet a Member

Can you please share with our readers a little bit about yourself and your struggles?

I am a twenty four year old mother of two beautiful children. After my second child was born, I was diagnosed with Postpartum Anxiety and Panic Disorder. Today, with the gift of hindsight, I understand that I was struggling with these issues for as long as I can remember. I wish I would have received treatment earlier, but this was Hashem's plan for me. In the past I wasn't in a place to accept help from my parents.

Presently, my husband is very supportive and I am grateful to Hashem for that. My daughter is almost two years old. I recently went through a big trauma which caused me to relapse. The therapy work I have done, the support from Chazkeinu organization and my Chazkeinu friends are all helping me get through these challenging times.

What important lesson have you learned from your struggles?

One very important thing I learned is the following. There are two extremes of behavior regarding responsibility-taking that are not healthy. One extreme is not to take any responsibility for things you say and do. The other extreme is to take responsibility for others' words and actions. The healthy way is the middle way: to own what you said and did, no more and no less. Therefore, if I hurt someone, I am responsible to apologize. After that, it's on the other person to deal with their side. I am only responsible for my things.

How did you hear about Chazkeinu?

I first heard about Chazkeinu on the Chazak Hotline, where I heard Zahava telling her story. Ever since I have joined my life revolves around the question of "What day is today? Is there a phone meeting planned?"

What message and words of inspiration would you give to those with similar challenges?

I would like to encourage all my Chazkeinu friends and say: "You are not alone." there are many people going through similar things. On my first phone meeting, someone was asking advice about how to get out of bed when not feeling able to. This made me feel so validated and so not alone. This was the first of a lot of inspiration I keep gaining through Chazkeinu.



Meet a Member

Can you please share with our readers a little bit about yourself and your struggles?

I am a twenty years old girl. This past year I was diagnosed with BPD (Borderline Personality Disorder), MDD (Major Depressive Disorder), PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), Conversion Disorder and GAD (Generalized Anxiety Disorder). In addition, I have recovered from Anorexia.

I am a very motivated person who works many hours a day with children with disabilities. I have been working with this population for over six years and it has always been something that touches my heart. I use this volunteer time to help me feel fulfilled and good about myself.

I was in therapy for four years as a teen. During that time I was being bullied and therapy helped me survive that time period in my life. It was then that I was hospitalized for the first time. Boruch Hashem I was able to bounce back into life. When I was in seminary I had a relapse and I had to go home to be hospitalized again. That was really hard. Following that hospitalization, I was home for a while before I was hospitalized yet again. I have since joined a DBT (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) program that has really helped me cope with my challenges.

What part of Chazkeinu did you gain most from?

Even though I live out of town I was able to join the Chazkeinu Shabbaton! It was amazing and I never felt so normal since I got all of those diagnoses. The speeches that were available gave me hope! They gave me the courage to continue! I was able to see that other people have also been hospitalized and when you see them you would never guess! It helped me feel ok and like I will be able to survive. Thank you Chazkeinu for offering me this amazing opportunity! I was also able to make friends in Chazkeinu that can support me through my struggles.

Do you regularly participate in Chazkeinu meetings?

I try whenever I can to call into the conference. I will never forget the day, the first day that I was home from the hospital and I called into the hotline. When I got on someone was saying how it's their first day being out of the hospital. My first thought was how can you say that to people? Aren't you embarrassed?! And then I remembered that I am on Chazkeinu and there is no judgment here! I was then able to unmute myself and say that I was also just discharged from the hospital and there was no shame in me for admitting that! It was the best feeling I ever had. It was all the support I needed.

What have you gained from your relationships with other Chazkeinu members?

My life was saved by having Chazkeinu sisters. Through all of my struggles, my sisters have been there for me. Sharing my story on the line and receiving everyone's support, knowing that I am not alone, and feeling like everyone is in this together. When I was discharged after my last hospitalization I came home to a gift from my sisters- a bracelet with an encouraging message on the inside. That made me feel better than I have felt in a long time!

What message and words of inspiration would you give to those with similar challenges?

I always tell people with struggles that there is hope. I have been hospitalized four times in my life and I am still here. You need to make sure that you have all the supports you need such as Chazkeinu! Everyone should also have a mentor besides for their therapist to help them through their struggles.

(Continued from Page 6)

to help those who need psycho-emotional salvation, we can bring a little closer the day where there will be no need for any therapists or medications; a day where the light that is the human mind will shine brightly without the dark cloud of mental illness shrouding its brilliant glow.

P.S. I used to think that my understanding of the words in this piyut was not the simple explanation of what they

were referring to. However, while writing this article, I found that the source of these words is found in Yeshaya (1,5), and the Radak there explains these words to be referring to mental illness.

Avrohom Steier is a talmid of Bais Medresh Govah in Lakewood, NJ and the author of the book Battle of the Mind; a book offering Torah based words of encouragement and inspiration for those battling mental illness.

*“Success is going
from failure to
failure without
losing your
enthusiasm”
Winston Churchill*

*“I have not
failed. I’ve just
found 10,000
ways that won’t
work.”
Thomas A. Edison*



Sand tray therapy, as its name implies, involves sand and figurines. Using these mediums, without the need of uttering even one word, processing occurs. Sand Tray is used with diverse populations. For clients dealing with different issues and diagnoses, from depression and anxiety to PTSD and eating disorders, Sand Tray can help. Initially developed as a different form of play therapy, it was assumed that sand tray work is reserved specifically for children. However, that myth has been disproven. Following decades of successful treatment of clients of all ages and stages dealing with a broad range of life challenges, we now know that Sand Tray can benefit all populations. Across the spectrum of background and differing issues, Sand Tray therapy can reach and heal anyone.

“For dust you are, and to dust you shall return”. This is the explanation given by Mrs. Chani Hertz, of Jackson, NJ, as to why Sand Tray is so transformational. “It is your Neshama (soul) speaking,” she says. “The work is being done from the innermost, hidden parts of one's very being. Our life-force, our soul, speaks through the sand, that initial place of contact between body and soul.” Working the fingers through the grains of sand brings peace and clarity. Placing the figures inside and telling your story in 3D, is an extremely powerful experience. Especially for clients who are not so verbal, or for those whose defenses are so tight and firm, this form of therapy is helpful in reaching deep into the subconscious. The client's inner world is allowed a voice using this tool, which connects one to the very beginning of existence.

You can enter the room with no particular agenda. The door closes, allowing the client to enter a different, magical world, the world of sand and play. Working with the sand and then searching for and placing all miniature figures that call your name into the sand brings to the fore issues and dilemmas, even those you were not aware of. And every single thing matters. Which kind of sand you choose to work with, how you place everything in the tray, what is near or far, to the right or to the left; all of it, tells a story. And through telling that story, clarity and healing come. The experience of seeing the reality before your eyes, coupled with the loving, non-judgmental and therapeutic presence that is there with you, allows you to experience real connection and love. On that platform, deeper understanding, acceptance and resolutions can be found.

If other forms of therapy are not working for you, you may just want to give Sand Tray a try!



Ask the Therapist

By Rebecca Holczer, PsyD and

Dr. David H. Rosmarin PHD, ABPP

How can one use therapy to help promote spiritual health, and how can spiritual growth be helpful for one's emotional health?

Dear Reader,

Thank you for your question. You've brought up an important topic that is not addressed often enough in the world of mental health: What is the role of spirituality in therapy? Studies have shown that over 90% of the United States population have some belief in G-d, and more than 50% of therapy patients want to discuss spiritual matters with their therapist, yet the vast majority of clinicians are taught to leave spirituality out of the therapy room. This practice stems from over 100 years of anti-religious sentiments in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, and related disciplines.

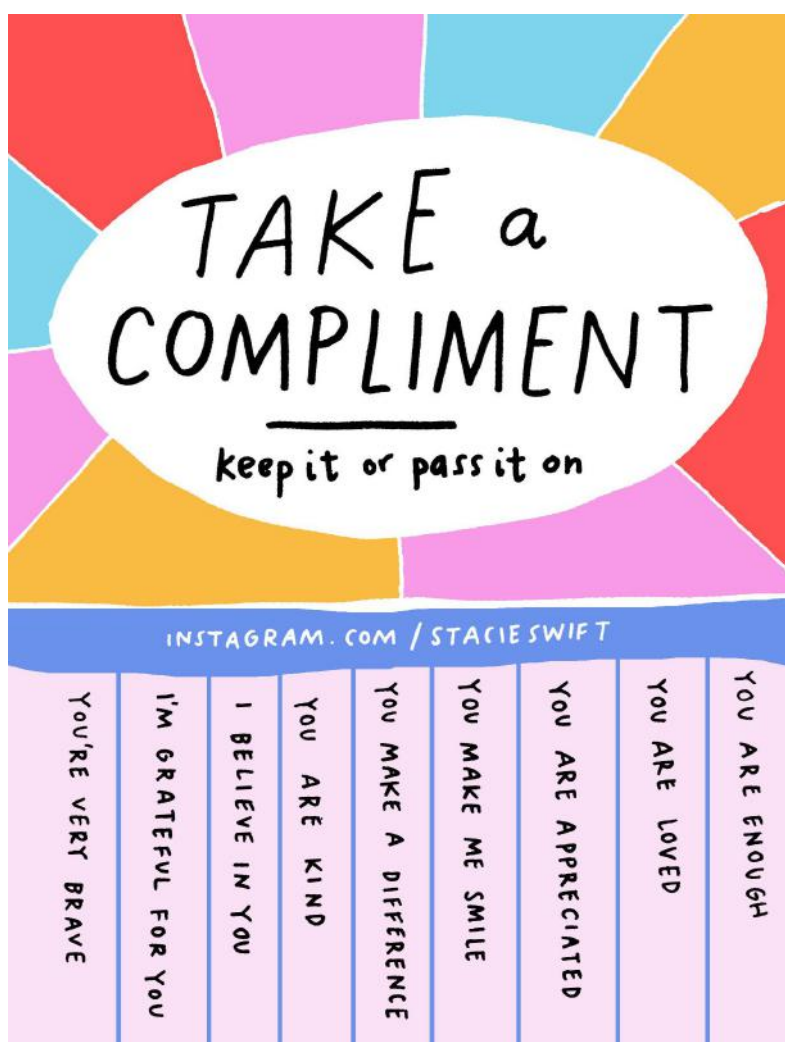
However, in the past 20 years there has been a considerable shift. It is now known that spirituality *can* be very important for recovery, and that this domain is generally associated with greater emotional well-being, greater life satisfaction and self-esteem, better marriages, and higher quality family functioning. In this regard, to address your second question first, spirituality can have a positive effect on emotional health. Drawing upon religious concepts such as *Emunah* can help us accept extraordinary life circumstances, which can in turn reduce the intensity of uncomfortable emotions and moods. Similarly, the predictable and steady nature of many religious practices can help keep us grounded and be sources of stability and strength.

Regarding your first question, just as spirituality can promote mental health, our wellness can also help us grow spirituality. As one example, depressed individuals often find it hard to pray or engage in religious activities, and once they feel better it's easier to engage spiritually. More broadly, a skilled therapist can address spiritual as well as mental health issues, for patients who want spiritually-integrated treatment. In therapy, religious questions can arise such as "What does G-d want from me right now?" or "How can I navigate an apparent conflict between my religion and mental health needs?" (e.g., balancing the need to fast on Yom Kippur with the need for eating disordered individuals to get enough nourishment). Similarly, during therapy patients may learn to excel with interpersonal skills, and ultimately decide to engage more with their religious communities. In fact, some therapy skills may directly facilitate spiritual growth, such as the ability to manage difficult relationship can help people to maintain Kibud Av v'Em.

It is important to state that while spirituality and therapy can go hand in hand, it is up to the patient and therapist to determine the extent to which they should address spirituality in treatment. Therapists should feel comfortable asking their patients “Do you wish to discuss spirituality in treatment?” much like any other personal question asked in session. Furthermore, we often collaborate with spiritual/religious leaders in providing spiritually-integrated care for our patients.

*All our best,
Rebecca Holczer, PsyD and David H. Rosmarin*

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| Your Voice |

"New Beginnings" to me is an attitude of working to change the present state of mind. It is the choice to face the pain that I am in now and to take steps to change what is in my power. This is not easy. You need bravery, guts, and the desire to get better.

A new beginning for me is the first day of the year, Rosh Hashanah. We daven (pray) to Hashem and crown Him as our King. I have a white notebook where I'm going to start being more on top of things. I'm going to pick a Kabbalah on Rosh Hashanah to do it for the rest of the year. My father said it's a segulah. I have a story:

My daughter was going into 3rd grade and making some trouble, so she asked Zeidy (my father) for advice. He suggested that she should try to not lick her fingers till tomorrow morning. She slept with bandages on her thumb and was successful. My father said she should do it again. She did it a second time, and successfully broke through that habit.

And I'm hoping that the same thing will happen to me. I'm going to break through one of my habits - and it's hopefully going to continue like that for the rest of the year.

Chaya

The new year is coming our way
What will it be like, we must daven and pray
When we look back at the past year gone by
What do we feel? So much sorrow and pain
From our struggles what did we gain
We learn to connect to the one above
He wants to shower us with so much love
He wants us to connect and return
Do teshuva and really learn
How to be a better Jew
And have the strength to start anew
The new year is here the shofar is blown every day
Are we gonna learn a lesson or are we too far astray
Let's grab on to the moment at last
The days are flying by really fast
We will approach the new year with a different tone than ever
It's gonna be a year full of Brachos Simcha and memories to treasure

Baila V

What 'new beginnings means to me' is Fresh Start and clean slate!

What a beautiful topic for this time of year: new beginnings! We are now entering the fall season, new school year, and new Jewish year.

So many new beginnings, but the lessons I focus on are from the fall season.

Fall is a time when leaves fall and change colors. I take this lesson: we all have opportunities now to let our leaves fall: our old stuff, our old habits, things we are holding on to and need the opportunity to let go of!

Leaves also change color. We have the opportunity now in the season of new beginnings to change color: start anew, start over, and make change. We can become different, become new, more beautiful inside and out. Fall is a time for a new start.

The tree is standing bare and alone after it let everything go. Now it's rooting itself and bracing itself to become stronger - to handle the winter storms. We are like that tree. We are learning more about ourselves: what makes us tick, what prompts change. It's preparing us for road ahead. This makes us stronger people, ready for new beginnings, a new year, a new start, whatever this season of new beginnings brings us.

We are just like the tree: first we shed our leaves-problems. Then, just like the

leaves change into beautiful colors, we start over by changing. Finally, just like the tree stands bare as it's preparing, re-rooting itself for winter storms, we are becoming stronger people in preparing for our winter storms: the challenges, the struggles the new year may bring.

This is a lesson I learned this year, during one of the groups of intense therapy during my heightened struggles this year...we can change, step by step. Just like the leaves fall and change color, we can let those things that keep us stuck just fall to the side, and we can change into beautiful colors, independent of others. We are like the tree standing bare and strong: preparing, embracing itself for the winter storms, and we can stand strong and be prepared for whatever this new year may bring.

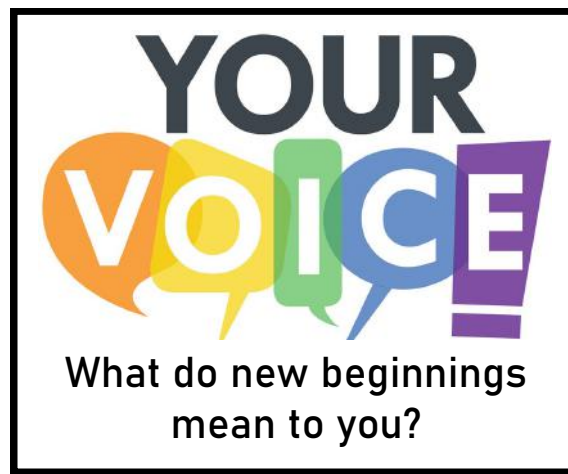
Baila P

It means hope, healing, growth and joy as I move on in my journey through life.

Shani

New beginnings can be so hard and overwhelming. Especially when there are so many emotions along with it. With perseverance I see that I can be happier and adapt. It's so important for me to get the right support through it all. I'm learning to be willing to get advice from those who really understand, and to trust my own healthy choices. Self-care during this time is definitely helpful for me.

Rochie



| Chazkeinu Sisters Share |



Higher Connection

By Baila

Upon reflection,
My soul, she longs.
For a connection,
Eternal and strong.
That which I yearn,
How do I attain?
An inward turn,
An everlasting gain.
Happiness and joy,
Serenity and peace.
Truth and clarity,
Will be there for me.
Please give me the key,
Grant the possibility,
To connect, to bask,
In Your glory!

Accepting Anxiety

It feels very strong, like a trapped honey bee in the honey jar.
Jumping up and down, with emotions running like wild fire
Running away from it makes it worse
Igniting the fire stronger
Chasing it away from your heart,
Makes it grow moldier

When doing self care it helps- come to yourself,
But acceptance- your feelings needs to be accepted
Because if the fight will continue and no self care will be let in
Only the fight for anxiety will remain
And it will block out the love you have
But once you open yourself to acceptance of your feelings,
You can let your self care cause self love to shine through!
Be open, don't be afraid of your feelings,
They have a story to tell you---
Once it is through you will emerge victorious and accept your love!

dear friend

Looking back on my behavior, it's no surprise that you left me.

I was clingy. I was moody. I was impulsive. I was self-destructive. I was needy. I was selfish. I was a ticking time bomb, a walking red flag. It didn't seem like I cared about you at all, only about my own inner hurricane of emotions. And you were so confused. I was confused, too. I couldn't stop any of it.

You were gone. I got worse and worse and worse and spiraled lower and lower and lower until I found myself in the hospital.

They told me I have Borderline Personality Disorder. BPD is a disorder of instability. Instability of mood, of self-image, and of relationships. Fear of abandonment. Disconnection from reality. Explosiveness. Emptiness. Impulsivity. A recurrent need to end the pain.

Once I decided to take responsibility for what this sickness turns me into, I started to get better. I left the hospital, went to therapy and to group, and I started to get better.

I talked about my childhood. I talked about my family. I talked about school. I talked about you. I talked about my other friends. I talked about my favorite band. I talked about my feelings. I knit in therapy. I drew pictures in therapy. I played music in therapy. I cried in therapy. I screamed in therapy. I cursed in therapy. I slammed the door, again and again and again.

It took a while.

Slowly but surely, the pieces fell together. Why I act out. Why I am so desperate to keep my friends close. Why I do things that hurt no one but me. Why I lash out at those who are only trying to help. Why I can't seem to keep healthy boundaries. Why my heart is weighed down with guilt, and fear, and shame, and self-hatred. Why, above anything else, I feel...defective.

I tried a lot of new things. I tried communicating my feelings. I tried waiting before acting impulsively. I tried meeting my own needs instead of manipulating other people. I tried many, many different methods of calming myself down. I tried exploring and understanding the void inside me. I tried filling it with healthier things.

Friend, I have worked on so many things. I'm still in the process. But so much has changed.

I am a passionate girl. I am a loyal girl. I am an excitable girl. I am a loving girl. I am a creative girl. I am an inspired girl. I am a brave girl, a strong girl, and a girl who never stops caring. I am happy, and I genuinely love life.

It's Elul, the month of teshuvah. The month of returning to our best selves. The month of forgiveness. The month of putting down our bad habits and picking up some new ones. The month of using the tools He gave us. The month of trying.

I am extending a hand of friendship. Not what we had before. Something healthy, something where we both enhance the best parts of each other. Where we help each other grow into what we want to be, what we know we could be.

Friend, I think we can do it.

*Love always and forever,
Me*



Kaleidoscope

By Shiffy

Hello, my name is kaleidoscope.

I am made up of little fragments, just some small chips, in different shapes and colors.

But who am I?

Sometimes I am bright and cheerful; and sometimes I'm gray and bleak.

My master gives a spin, and suddenly a whole new look appears.

Who am I really?

I am learning that I am all of my parts – each piece of me is important. If I wouldn't have every little fragment and chip, I would not be able to fulfill my special role.

I must appreciate and embrace every small bit of me.

And you, my friend. Who are you?

Sometimes you're full of happiness, yet sometimes I see despair. There are days that you are full of energy, and days that you seem depleted.

Maybe you are a kaleidoscope, just like me.

Are you learning to embrace and appreciate every part of yourself?

Maybe, we can be friends – you and I.

Together we can discover the truth.

That...

The Master Designer created me. I am perfect just the way I am.

Oh Hashem

By C.S

Sometimes things seem unclear,
And my pain seems too much to bear.
Oh, Hashem, even when I don't understand,
I know You're holding my hand.
You're with me in my pain,
Which I know is for my gain.
You see every tear,
And show that You care.
You guide the steps I take,
And show me when I mistake
You hold me during my shame,
And help me when I'm to blame.
You look into my broken heart,
And You're with me from the start.
And even though You I don't see,
I know You're always with me.



Twenty Chocolate Bars

By SM



I'm normal, really. My life is very boring, usually. Routine stuff, you know? Oh, and I'm also expecting a baby, my third. I'm super excited.

So, I'm not sure why and when this happened but two days ago my life turned upside down. And now I'm sitting on my worn brown couch with tears streaming down my face. I'm in labor. It's not the pain that's making me cry, although I could do without it. I'm in labor and my husband has been hospitalized for two days already. I've been crying ever since. I don't want to give birth now, or ever, if my husband is unstable, and I don't care what happens.

As the going gets tougher and the baby gets closer, and I'm feeling it descend; I cry from the depths: Hashem, I know it's good. Just make me taste its goodness. Let me know it, and feel its sweetness.

This wasn't a prayer. It was desperation. I knew just how frantic I was, as I was shuffling around and deep breathing, huffing and puffing along, through each contraction.

My husband of seven beautiful years suddenly was acting strange, speaking about weird things, nonstop. I was in awe, how a quiet person can have so many words and interesting opinions. I didn't recognize it for the mania it was. But as the hours turned into days, it was fascinating no more. He was in shul and his friend realized what was happening and brought him home. He tried calling me, but I refused to speak to him. I was overwhelmed, listening to this nonstop, never-ending sermon delivered by my husband. I felt inside that something was wrong, but I refused to acknowledge it. So his devoted friend knocked on my door, but I wouldn't open. When I thought he left, I went to the back of the house to take care of something and my son opened the door. Mr. L. walked right in. I was mortified and angry. I knew I was finally being forced to face this nightmare.

These are things that don't fit my profile. These things don't happen to me or to people I love. Such happenings are so, so far out of my league.

I am so normal and regular. So is my family. Boring and plain. Nothing glamorous or odd. These things happen to other people, people who are different, families who are cases of various zedaka organizations. Things we read about in the periodical magazines, sigh, and turn the page. Maybe we donate occasionally to these causes. But they have totally no connection to us.

Normal people stay normal, right? Crazy doesn't just happen out of the blue.

There are absolutely no promises in life, I am learning that, and I don't like it one little bit.

I pretended to keep my cool and stay calm. Mr. L. tried calling various doctors, in a vain effort to avoid this hospitalization. No one had availability for an appointment that day. As the hours wore on, my husband's talk became increasingly scary, featuring wild imaginations and exotic fabrications, laced with bizarre conspiracies and hallucinations. Left with no choice, Mr. L. called an ambulance.

Somehow, I went to work. I'm not sure how I kept my tears at bay. I picked up my children from school and went through the motions of playtime, homework, dinner, baths, bedtime. Then I collapsed and cried and cried and cried and cried. I thought the tears would never stop. I fell asleep, somehow. I awoke and went through all those motions again: breakfast, sending off my children, work, pickup, playtime, homework, dinner, baths, bedtime. Woohoo! Torture to my eyelids. As soon as the children fell asleep, those tears pushed aside those curtains and fell again, pouring rivers, cascading and flooding... I never knew I had so many tears in my ducts. I never knew the idiom crying buckets could be true. I never thought it can come true by me.

I got myself ready for bed, but sleep wouldn't come. I felt awful. And suddenly I realized that what I was feeling was something I had been looking forward to for some nine months, but completely forgot about in these past few dreadful, mayhem -filled days.

Labor. Frankly, I was not excited. I was angry and miserable. I was feeling sorry for myself and this poor, poor baby, about to be born without a father.

I left to the hospital in a daze. I was mentally going through all I had been through in my life up to the present and shook my head. I had gone through a rough childhood, and so far, marriage had been an ecstatic paradise for me. I had sort of expected it to continue like that, for the next one hundred years or so. It was supposed to be like this. I was not ready to embrace this challenge, thank you very much. I did not want to be strong and brave and a hero. I wanted normalcy and joyful joy. Happy happiness. Simcha'diga Simcha.

I came home with my newborn baby cradled in my arms, the smell of Gan Eden still fresh on his soft skin. His cheeks were glowing from the shechinah, a soft fluffy pompom hat on his head. My heart, though, was full of turmoil and pain. At my doorstep was a UPS package addressed to me. I hadn't ordered anything but, hey, you never know...

A case of chocolate bars.

A win of a weird raffle I had entered on a whim.

20 in total.

Hashem sent me a bundle of joy, along with tremendous trauma and pain. But he made it taste sweet.

Hashem Please Have Rachmanus

Is the world coming crashing down?
No, it has just come to a standstill
Realizing I am not So strong
But, I just have to do the Best I can
Those things don't happen to me
That is so sad for THEM
When it happened to me, it feels quite devastating
I wasn't prepared at all
Who is ever prepared, I guess
Summoning all my strength to get through this one
Hashem where are You?
It's just not fair!
But I know it is
Hashem loves us Even more than a Mother loves her child
When we are sad so is He
Can these tears bring us closer to the Guela?
Can these tears go to help my children or grandchildren with some challenge in the future?
Please Hashem have rachmanus on me and my precious family
Please keep us all protected and loved by You, our majestic King of the world.
Let us feel Your help and closeness to us



Life is Like a Bike Ride

By Channie Micahnik

One of my favorite forms of exercise and recreation is bike riding. I have been riding for over 30 years. Bike riding was my transportation of choice in college when my home and college were on the same avenue and the bus was 5 blocks away. During my single days, my mother and I did bike tours in beautiful natural surroundings. I recall vividly hoisting our bikes onto the car and driving miles on the highway praying they would stay in place.

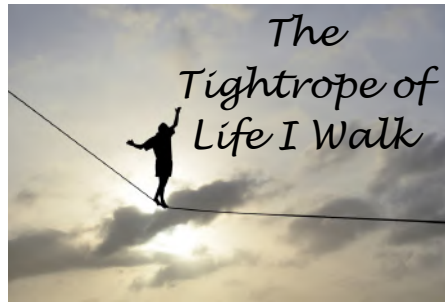
Now as a Mom myself, I have taught my daughters the joy of bike riding. Recently, while having our bikes fixed at the bike store, I saw a sign that struck me as deep and meaningful. It said, "Life is like a bike ride. In order to stay balanced, you have to keep moving." The lesson is that what makes us imbalanced is dwelling on the past, on our mistakes, on our sins, on what we could have done differently. That's what throws us off balance, and it's certainly not what Hashem wants. The steps of Teshuva are 1) Azivas Hachet- leaving the sin behind 2) Charata- Feeling sorry 3) Viduy- Admission of wrongdoing 4) Kabalah L'asid- Accepting upon oneself behavioral change. These are supposed to be done in quick succession and not as a long drawn out process, and only as a springboard for success.

Another poignant sign I saw was on a magnet on my mother's fridge. It said in Hebrew. "Life is like a bike ride. If it's hard, that means you're going up". The most important part of the bike is the gears. The most recent bike I bought was from Walmart. It's gears didn't work well which made riding up hills nearly impossible. The bike store was able to replace them for almost the same amount I paid for the bike, but the difference was immeasurable. Now I could go up and down whatever hills I wanted while shifting gears. This is by far the most important life lesson from bike riding: You can successfully navigate the hills and valleys of life if you know how and when to shift gears. In fact, you will welcome the changes because they provide an exhilarating ride and change of scenery.

Two personal lessons I learned from bike riding are: don't shift gears while going uphill and only look at what's in front of you when going uphill. If you shift gears while going uphill your chain will slip making it impossible to ride. When we are under stress it's not the time to take on something new. Additionally, when trying to climb a mountain, if you focus only on the peak, you will never make it. But if you only look at the ground in front of you, what you have to deal with right now, you can do it. When you deal with one piece of ground, and then the next, and the next, consistently setting new goals, you will achieve.

One of my favorite wise sayings of the Friediker Rebbe is, "I wouldn't ask for my Tzaros, but I wouldn't trade them either." Meaning, nobody wants to be tested, but the lessons we learn from the tests, and the character refinement the tests produce, are invaluable. Bike riding teaches this lesson as well, that it's the hills and valleys in life that provide us the richest and most beautiful landscape on which to build our lives.

"Thank you Chazkeinu for being there exactly where and when it was needed. These isolating times are just an extra challenge in an already difficult situation. I am so grateful for the support and validation that comes from knowing I'm not alone"- NB



They say that in life one must be strong
But what would be if I expressed my vulnerability and
feelings of fragility, would that be so wrong?
At times I just don't want to be strong!

To block away my intense feelings and sensitivity,
As along with it - goes my passion, my desire and
creativity.

They say you can't have both, it's either or---
for you're fragile and will fall apart and get hurt to your
core-
which I have been. First I must master emotional
regulation - from a ten to a four,

I think I can, just not yet for I've got more work to do,
To strengthen myself and know my self worth doesn't
come from who-knows-who

It comes from Hashem and my inner avodah that I work
on
And holding on tight to my faith that I must rely upon.

So for now I walk that tightrope as I teeter between both
worlds on a thin rope
Keeping things in check, putting on a mask in order to stay
sane and cope

For now I remain mostly angry inside and my feelings are
strong
but detached from others feeling that I don't belong

I feel the pain and feelings of others to an extreme..
So if someone says something hurtful or tough to anyone,
my insides want to scream

For most of those around me cant feel so deeply each and
every touch.
But everything- tone of voice, mumble, smirk, grimace or
eye roll...hurts me so much

And it makes me gasp for air,
my heart fills with searing anguish, it's too much to bear

It pierces my heart, going straight to my soul
Yet still I yearn to master my emotions- that's my ultimate
goal.

As not feeling the world and its people around me is like
breathing without oxygen and being unable to fully
empathize with others.
Yet at times I feel like I'm caught in a bubble gasping for
air and needing to hide under my covers.

So for now I dance that tightrope with caution and with
fear.

With tears streaming down my face as I don't feel
connected to those I hold so dear.

It's hard to give freely which makes me so sad from this
place of confinement
I do believe Hashem has a plan and I try to follow His
assignment

For now I feel restless, irritated, not at peace, not at ease
Yet somehow I accomplish more physically while I'm in
this freeze

I know its a heavy price I have to pay
As it extinguishes my passionate desire as I go about my
day

One day I hope I'll be able to open up to the deepest parts
of me

And be able to share my passion, intensity & empathy,
those very best parts of me.

To those with whom its safe to be the real true me.

Without being misunderstood or seen as being weak,
since they are unable to appreciate what they see.

Yet for now along with others I may not know or see
We wear that mask of I'm ok just please don't look inside
of me!



I hop off the bus at Birch Street, and head towards 3rd avenue. I look both ways; no one that I know is here. I turn to walk down 3rd avenue, then I cross Willow road. Is anyone following me? No. I breathe. I reach Maple Street and turn the corner. I brisk-walk to the pink house, fly down the driveway and ring the bell. I'm safely inside; my secret is safe.

On my way out, I'm not so lucky. As I walk down 3rd avenue, I meet Bracha.

"Hi!" she greets me in her too-sweet voice. "What are you doing on this side of town?"

"Um...I went to visit someone." Thankfully, she's in a rush and doesn't ask who I was visiting.

It's Tuesday again. I run down 3rd avenue, alert for every sound. On toward Maple Street I run, faster and faster! Phew – no one sees me. On my way out, I leave the pink house walk to 3rd avenue. Who do I see? Bracha!

"Hello!" She greets me. "Don't you live at the other end of town?"

"Um...I came here to shop."

"Oh! Which store do you have here that isn't near you?"

As I fumble to answer, her phone rings. I'm saved by the bell, quite literally.

And it's Tuesday again. I didn't meet anyone I know on my way in, but now I need to get back to the bust stop. This time I have a plan! I'll go through 4th avenue! My eyes pop as I notice who is walking towards me. It's Bracha again! I open my pocketbook, pretending to search for something as I rush past her with a wave. What a relief!

You know what the strangest part is? It never dawned on me to wonder: Why is Bracha heading toward Maple street every Tuesday?



Same old
They grow cold
Yet feel like gold
Because from life they unfold

Starting anew
Takes a whole cheering crew
Bravery and courage to start
While you grow apart

Same old feelings attached
Sewed and patched

To make them fit
With their pain you sit

Starting freshly and sparkly
Affords you an end to the darkly

The light is bright
A new spark you ignite

Same old is history
Like to tell the story

Shed a tear
Fade from old wear

New is enlightening
Brings power to the fighting

Bridging the Gap
Putting the finger on the map

Old is a memoir of greatness to treasure

Packed away, reassuring forever

Looking ahead at the new possibility
Knowing- it's within your ability!

Unspoken Words By Debbie

'ונפשי בבהלה מאד ואתה ה' עד מתי' (תהילים)

Until when will I be 'terrified' to make a decision? An old friend of mine who passed away shared with me a quote that often soothes my soul. "Be as gentle with yourself, as you can." (Quote by Ricki ע"ה)

There is so much fear, anxiety, and panic that comes up. I read an uplifting book by Rebbetzin S Feldbrand, who shared from Rebbetzin Kanievsky zt"l that her husband Reb Chaim shlita says, If you feel fear, imagine the letters ג-ד-ו-י which spells out G-d's name. This name of G-D refers to His mercy. Imagine these letters in the air in front of you. Spell out these letters, and say to yourself, 'אין עוד מלבדו' -There is nothing and no one else besides; other than G-d. No other power!

'שועתי אליך ותרפאני' (תהילים)

My G-d; I cried out to You and You healed me.

Could it really be so simple? Wouldn't that be wonderful?

Tehillim tells us that we cry out and G-d hears and rescues us. Hashem is close to the broken-hearted and those crushed in spirit, He saves. Many are the troubles of the righteous, and from all of them G-d rescues them.

If any of you who are reading this is doubting, "Am I righteous?", I strongly believe that anyone suffering from emotional distress is a righteous person by definition.

The suffering qualifies you as righteous!

I wish for all of us that we be rescued from all of our anguish.

'ואהי' כציפור בודד על גג'

I'm like a bird ALONE on the roof-top

I write this with tears in my eyes. This is how I feel right now. This is what makes Chazkeinu so special! Chazkeinu is a place where we can come together and remove all judgments. Understanding, sharing, caring, without any words. Often people don't understand our suffering. We can feel so alone. There really aren't words to describe the feelings...Chazkeinu doesn't need an explanation! We get it.

A soothing balm for the soul.

To end off on a happy note:

'כי עת לחננה כי בא מועד'

There will come a time to favor her, the appointed time will have come.

May we merit this time very soon.

*"Life is like riding a bicycle
to keep your balance you
must keep moving"
Albert Einstein*

*"Be happy with what you
have while working for
what you want."
Helen Keller*



Simcha on Yom Tov

By Rosie



We are taught that there is a positive commandment to rejoice on the holiday of Succos. The question arises, how can we be told to feel joy? In general that would be a difficult thing to command. The Vilna Gaon tells us that this is the single most difficult mitzva to fulfill. How much more is this challenging for people like us, who struggle to find joy and happiness. For us this seems to be an impossible demand. What can we do and how can we attempt to fulfill this mitzva?

One may wonder what the connection is between all of the different holidays of the month of Tishrei. How do Days of Awe connect to Days of Joy? In the great Yeshiva of Mir, Poland, they knew the answer. In truth, these holidays naturally spill into each other in a very clear and logical sequence. I would like to suggest that if we learn to see it their way, it might become easier for us, even amidst our challenges, to experience true joy.

The focus of these days is on our relationship with The One Above. On Rosh Hashana we crown Him, and beg to continue doing the Divine Service. Yom Kippur follows, where we get a chance to start again; slates wiped clean, a fresh start. To celebrate that, and to show God we really meant it when we said we desire true closeness with Him, we pack in unique mitzvos, which require our entire bodies to be immersed in closeness to Him. (As a side note: Succa is similar to mikva in that both are a total bodily immersion). The culmination of this beautiful time is Simchas Torah, where we celebrate our completion of the holy manuscript that God shares with us, His recipe for the greatest life.

Each of us has a unique relationship with Hashem. For some of us He is our safe place, some of us feel His love, some of us are angry (and this too is a relationship!). But all of us have something, even slightly, going on between us.

If we can take these days to notice that relationship, to understand what He means to us, and to strive to get even just a tiny bit closer to Him, then we too can merit the joy of these days. Each one of us is a beloved princess, daughter of The Ultimate Ruler. The closer we come, the closer we will feel. And that closeness will bring great joy. Why? Because that closeness reminds us of happy days gone-by, when we were hanging out near Him all the time. And tasting that closeness here on this earth will bring us similar joy.

I hope that if we focus on this closeness, understanding that the joy is in the closeness itself, then we can have a very happy holiday, regardless of our diagnoses and circumstances

Poem

By Baila P

I have to live with myself, and so
I want to be fit for myself to know
I want to be able as days go by
Always to look myself straight in the eye:
I don't want to stand with the setting sun
And hate myself for the things I have done.
I don't want keep on a closet shelf
A lot of secrets about myself.
And fool myself as I come and go.
Into thinking that nobody else will know
The kind of person I really am:
I don't want to dress myself up in sham.

I want to go out with my head erect.
I want to deserve others' respect:
And here in the struggle for fame and wealth
I want to be able to like myself.
I don't want to look at myself and know
That I am a bluffer, an empty show
I can never hide myself from me
I see what others may never see
I know what others may never know
I never can fool myself, and so
Whatever happens, I want to be
Self respecting and guilt free!

BULLIED

Today I saw something that broke my heart and took my breath away. I saw a teenager being bullied. I was passing by a school and I saw a thirteen year old boy forcibly pushing another child across the street and throwing him into a pile of dirty garbage bags. I heard the peers snicker. I saw the boy struggle to get up. I saw a part of the boy that will never be whole again. And I cried.

I was bullied as a nine year old child. My peers had a cruel game of which I was the target. I was the source of contamination. One girl would start the "game" by pushing another girl into me, causing her to unwillingly become "contaminated" from me. Then the "fun" started. That girl would touch another girl, and that girl would become contaminated. Then she would touch the next girl, causing the next girl to become contaminated. The game would go on and on until the blessed sound of the bell signaling the end of recess.

Today I am a mother of several children. I suffer from OCD. I am obsessed with contamination. I worry a lot about Kaskrus, Taharas Hamishpacha and Negel Vasser.

Here is an excerpt from my diary. If I can help one child not to suffer, it will be worth publicizing.

A little girl with crooked hair, ugly clothing, looking down at the floor. Afraid to even look up. Waiting to be found out. To be discovered. To be revealed for who she is. The filthy, contaminated, despicable, smelly, untouchable garbage that she is. She is the source of all the Dirtiness. She makes it spread and spread and never end. She is the essence of the dirt. Out of her comes infinite contamination that goes on and on and on and never ends. She knows this is the fact. Everyone knows. It is common knowledge. That's just the way it is. This is reality to the little girl and to all the important people in her day from 9:00am-4:00pm. Seven hours a day (or more). This is the little girl's life. This is her reality. This is her truth.

Come to me my Little Girl. Come to me, my Precious, Precious. Come to Mommy. Come to me my Pure, Sweet, Delicious, Innocent, Clean Neshama. You're as pure as can be. You're so clean. You're sparkling. You're my Dear Neshamale. Come to Mommy. Open your eyes. Don't listen to this falsehood. Don't believe the Lies. It's all deception. You are pure. You are not dirty. You are clean, clean, clean. You are Kosher. You can not ruin anything. You can not contaminate anything.

My dear child, come to Mommy. Sit here on my lap and breathe onto me. I want to feel your holy breath. I want to feel your soft touch. You are touchable. I want to be with you. Don't believe them. You're lovable. You only have the power to spread Light, and Goodness, Warmth and Health, Happiness, Confidence, Security, and Peace. You have no power to ruin, destroy or contaminate. You are my child, and you're precious. You only have the Power to Purify and Light up your surroundings. My child: Open your eyes. Don't believe their lies. You're my dearest, most precious one. I feel warm, and peaceful, and comfortable when I am with you. It is delightful to be with you. It is a pleasure. It is goodness at its core. It is so sweet.

The Middle Road

By Chaní M.



Bipolar
A diagnosis
Shame
Racing thoughts
Talking fast
Buying too much
Less inhibition
Depression
Darkness
Despair
Not doing things I enjoy
Low confidence.

Stability
Calmness
Tranquility
Getting my life back on track
Chazkeinu
Family
Sisters
Acceptance
Love
I have finally arrived home

I'm Feeling on Fire



On fire.
I have a deep desire,
To help, to give,
To contribute,
To make a difference.
My muscles are pulsing with energy,
My knuckles full of tension.
For I feel good when I give,
When I contribute.
I'm helping another Jew,
Alleviating their pain,
Showing them I'm with them.
I am on fire,
Want to give, give and give some more,
Alleviate their pain just a little more.
Help them feel better,
Just a tiny bit better,
To know that my blazing energy is being served in the
right way.
I feel like dancing and letting out all that pent-up
energy,
But I will just give, empathize, and contribute,
See how I can help another Chazkeinu Sister and
friend.
I will do housework and chores to alleviate my
parents' burden,
I will contribute and hope to ease someone's burden,
I will use my fire energy with Hashem's help.

The Gift of Life

I used to think, that life would last.
Now I know it goes by fast.
As fast as a song,
One that won't take long.
Before you know,
The children grow.
Time does fly,
And people die.
Time melts away,
Like snow on a sunny day.
And so you must ask,
What is your task?
And as the days go by fast,

Did you make an impact that will last?
All you have to do is try,
Even when your wings are clipped, and you cannot fly.
Take every opportunity as a chance,
To get up and do a dance.
Every year,
Is held so dear.
Every day is a precious gem,
Another gift from Hashem.
So take each moment in your hand,
For what you care make a stand.
For you'll want something to show,
Before the time does go.



Doing Teshuva The SMART Way

The heady scent of fall weather is in the air, the leaves are turning auburn, crimson and gold, and a new beginning is imminent. Elul is a time to contemplate how we have changed over the last year and where we need to improve. Behavior modification does not come easily to most of us. Chassidic sources tell us that the Middah that we find most difficult to modify is exactly where our life's purpose and "soul correction" lie. In order to make this task less daunting, I have decided to apply an acronym from my profession, medical nutrition therapy. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Limited. Using this construct in my profession is the single most effective way to achieve behavior modification. Those who "bite off more than they can realistically chew" usually fail. We can apply this to the process of Teshuva as well.

First, I will define each element of an effective goal:

- **Specific** means clearly defined and focused.
- **Measurable** means quantifiable, indicative of whether the goal has been met.
- **Achievable** means realistic for you and your life circumstances.
- **Relevant** means how it will benefit your life as a whole.
- **Time limited** means a time limit is set to make the goal more attainable.

In order to give specific examples of how this process works, I will give a SMART goal example for the Mitzvah of Judging favorably. A general goal would be, "Love all people equally." A SMART goal would be: "When I notice thoughts of jealousy, resentment and anger I will clean and organize my kitchen for 30 minutes to distract myself from speaking lashon harah. This will increase my peace of mind and enable me to sleep better."

Try this exercise yourself and you will see how empowered it will make you feel. Additionally, purchasing a notebook to record your victories further enhances the process. Writing 1-2 victories over one's base inclinations daily can do wonders for self-esteem. Then when you review your notebook next Elul you will see in a very concrete way, how far you've come.

In Hashem's Embrace *By Saralah and Rivka*

On Succos, we sit in a Succah,
Feeling Hashem so close,
Sensing His protection,
He's keeping us safe,
He's holding our hand through and through,
Guiding us every step of the way.
He's carrying us,
On His shoulders,
Never letting us down,
Not even for a minute,
He's right there by our side,
Lo Ira Ra Ki Ata Imadi.
Never fear because He is with me,

Although it's difficult,
And I feel abandoned and lost,
I know He's right here next to me,
And He feels my pain,
Imo Anochi B'tzara,
He's in it with me,
Succos, Z'man Simchaseinu,
A time to be happy even though there's pain,
A time to rejoice in Hashem's embrace,
To feel Hashem's love again, and again
To revel in His Presence,
Doing His Mitzvos,
And becoming one with Hashem

Dear Journal,

August 2: Today I bought a fan sprayer for my coworker, who is having difficulty with the heat. I did this because I cared, and wanted to do something nice for a friend, rather than out of a sense of obligation. I feel proud.

August 3: I saw my therapist today. During the session, I told him that I needed a break. I noticed how I was feeling and figured out what I needed. I can see that I'm making progress.

August 4: Today I was compassionate to myself. The weather was hot and humid. I sat at a bubble show, wearing a mask, with a group of people I didn't know. Afterwards, I acknowledged that my social anxiety was very high and that of course I felt frightened and uncomfortable. I noticed the feelings and allowed myself to cry. At work today, I got angry at a student, and yelled at him. When I got home, I went straight into bed. Later a friend called, but I did not pick up the phone. I'm afraid that I'll always be triggered. I'll never learn how to regulate my emotions.

August 5: I've been watching for hours. I ate ice cream, potato chips and peanut chews, instead of breakfast, lunch and dinner. I did not respond to texts or emails. I just want to be alone. I feel hopeless.

August 6: Today I shared a feeling with a coworker, and she told me that she feels the same way! Later she told me to breathe, and added she does it all the time. I'm not the only one who feels this way! I felt connected. I feel hopeful. Right now in this moment, I want to be alive. I don't feel like being alone.

Ribono Shelolam

רבונו של עולם,
No one, no one, but you,
Knows what's going on here,
What I'm going through...

I have to encourage myself
And keep on going,
While with unbearable thoughts –
My mind is overflowing

The pain buried,
so deep inside
טאטע אין הימל (Father in Heaven)
From you, I don't hide...

In the darkest moment
I believe You're here with me
I keep my בטחון (faith)
השם לישועתך קיותי (I await your salvation)

It's hard, It's tough
But so am I
Holding on tight to You
In שמים (heaven) up on High

I don't give up on me

I'll strengthen myself once again,
I'll keep on going
Even without knowing what will be
then

Cuz I'm strong,
I've got a challenge now
I'll swim through it...
No matter how

I pick myself up
I'm going further
No matter the fact,
That life looks murder...

I have no one
But You
Who knows everything
I've gone through

You give me strength
When I fall
You guide me
To stand up tall

I'm smart
Though I've fallen so many times

This time, Hashem,
I'll be wise

I take my thoughts
Give them over to You
You know everything
I'm going through

I take care of me
I need to do so...
From this challenge,
I want to grow

With a contented, relaxed heart
I talk to You
'cuz You know how much
I've gone through

I'll strengthen myself,
again once more
I believe Hashem,
For me is always opens His door...

I'm sitting on Your lap
Like a child so small
I've reached higher
I'm confident, standing tall!

On Setting up Camp *By Kayla*

Right here, right now
I am
In this space where I don't want to be
I yearn to be anywhere but here
This yearning, burning
Urgency of needing to come home
The home I have yet to meet
Home base.
That space where I can let go
And be at home
Truly, fully
In myself in my space
Surrounded and filled with all I need
Bonded, connected, clear and open
Well, vibrant
Safe..

And right now
I'm camping out,
Somewhere,
In my wandering
Seeking, searching
Journeying to find
Home.
Right now, where I am...
It's not what I call home
At all.
And I So want to be Home.
I find, today this new
Possibility of setting up camp
Right here,
Right now,
Where I am today.
To pitch my tent,
To line the ground with fuzzy warmth

To prepare the campfire and
The spaces and figures
To make this space-- life.
I can still make myself at home today
Where I am today.
I don't have to give up the journey at
all.
It's just what's for me to do
To surround myself with love and
care
While I'm here.
I no longer need to stand there
Shifting my weight from foot to foot
Itching, begging to run away
Until I get called to the next
Space,
Closer to
Home.



As I sit on my couch,
I feel grounded,
I'm listening to my breathing,
It makes me feel so relaxed,
I feel myself sinking deep into the couch,
My feet are curled up,
I'm listening to my favorite sounds and observing my surroundings,
I inhale and exhale,
Hearing my heartbeat rise and fall,
I am so grateful to be alive,
Every moment is a gift,
To be savored and cherished,
I immerse myself in this one moment,
Using each of my 5 senses,
I see the blue sky, a brilliant blue,
I hear the wind blow and the birds chirp,
I feel a sense of serene and calm washing over me,
I taste this delicious feeling,
I savor this moment, deep inside me,
And I revel in its awesomeness,
This precious moment is etched in me,
To draw strength from when I'm overwhelmed,
I thank Hashem for this gift,
The gift of being present,
Being one with myself and with Hashem

Love as a Child and Adult

By Saralah

A child feels loved,
As it's held in your embrace.
Feels secure,
calm and safe,
Breathing easy and steady,
feeling your security

Adults, too, long for safety.
Sometimes in a tiny voice.
Sometimes in a whisper.
And at times bellowing,
Demanding...
Security,

Love,
Acceptance.
An insatiable thirst,
Waiting to be quenched,
soothed and acknowledged.
To be told that feelings are okay,
that they are valid and make sense.

And when this need can't be met,
you need to self-validate,
calm that shaky, fearful voice,
let it rest and give it space,
In *Your* unconditional loving embrace.



Peace, Love, Security and Kindness,
Essential Ingredients that family members should have,
Respecting feelings,
Yours and mine,
Acting in a way that's only kind,
One that respects all that comes our way.
Not the ones that say "it doesn't make sense,"
An invitation for deep conflict,
For raised voices and disrespecting of others,
For strained and hurt feelings.
Security is long lost
Kindness is over-taken,
Peace is no longer on the table,
Love a thing of the past,
Tension envelopes the room,
Spoiling our moods.

.....

Longing for just some peace in the air,
Longing to be respected for how I feel and what I do,
Longing to be appreciated for what I am,
Do all families have such dynamics, I wonder?
Or are they mostly healthy ones? I ponder,
Why can't they just honor my feelings?
Honor all our feelings?
Why do they need to be so negative and blunt?
Can't we all engage with camaraderie and appreciate each other, and perhaps have some fun?
Talk of positivity, love, and ways to improve,
Enveloping each other with empathy and love,
Peace, love and security I so want!



CORNER



Artwork by Miriam B



Artwork by Rachel



Artwork by Miriam B



Artwork by Miriam B



Artwork by Miriam B



Artwork by Rachel



Tishrei 5781 Sept-Oct 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Shabbos
13 כ"ד	14 כ"ה	15 כ"ו	16 ז'	17 ח'	18 ט'	19 י'
20 ב'	21 ג'	22 ד'	23 ה'	24 ו'	25 ז'	26 ח' Rosh Hashana
27 ט'	28 י'	29 י"א	30 י"ב	1 י"ג	2 י"ד	3 ט"ו Shabbos Shuva/ Parshas Ha'azinu
4 י"ז	5 י"ח	6 י"ט	7 כ'	8 כ"א	9 כ"ב	10 כ"ג 1 st day of Sukkos
11 כ"ז	12 כ"ח	13 כ"ט	14 ל'	15 ט"ו	16 ט"ז	17 ט"ח Sh'mini Atzeres
Simchas Torah						Parshas B'reishis

Calendar Instructions

Chodesh Tishrei is a month of holiness. Our souls bask in the joy of the *mitzvos* (commandments), *minhagim* (customs), and close connection to Hashem. At the same time, it's a busy month, with all the cooking, cleaning, and clothing. Sometimes, self-care lands at the bottom of the list. But, this is a time when we need it most!

So, we will plan ahead!

Before Rosh Hashanah, you can take a few moments to fill in the calendar with how YOU will accomplish self-care every single day. Enclosed are ideas for you to cut out and paste into the appropriate days. There are also empty boxes for you to fill in with things that are meaningful to you. The emojis are for decorating the calendar :-)

Throughout Tishrei, you will have the calendar to refer to for your self-care of the day. Hatzlachah!


A big, big thank you to Saralah for all her hard work on this project – including creating a Hebrew/English calendar from scratch!

Kesivah vachasimah tovah!



Read a book	Call a friend	Go Jogging!	Visit a friend	Read a joke
Take a (bubble) bath	Text a friend	Read a magazine	Look at photo albums	Help a friend
Read a Chazkeinu email!	Eat chocolate (in moderation)	Engage in a Mindfulness activity	Watch a funny clip	Call a Chazkeinu Sister!
Do a sudoku puzzle	Read the Rise Newsletter!	Spend time in nature	Write a cute poem	Do your favorite house chore
Listen to music/your favorite song	Spend time with yourself with a self-soothing box	Drink something warm in a cozy spot	Journal your feelings/write a letter to yourself	Scrapbook (gather articles you like and make your own concoction)!
Paint/color/draw	Walk around your block			

| Rising up |

A single lit candle is positioned on the left side of the image. The flame is bright yellow and orange, with a small, dark, charred wick visible. The candle itself is a solid yellow-orange color. The background is a deep, dark brown or black, which makes the light from the candle stand out prominently. The overall mood is contemplative and hopeful.

*“As long as the
candle is still
burning, it is
still possible to
work and to
repair”*

*-Rabbi Yisrael
Salanter*

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