

# Living Jewish



## Tell your Children

### The Judge with an Excellent Memory

Yair Eitan's father ran a produce distribution business in Northern Israel. When Yair was old enough, he began driving the delivery truck.

One of his regular deliveries was at Yeshivah Lev V'Nefesh, whose student body was primarily comprised of ba'alei teshuvah.

Yair's parents had carefully shielded him from his religion; his upbringing was strictly secular. Much to his surprise, the joy and excitement Yair saw within the yeshivah walls aroused his curiosity. He allowed himself to be drawn into conversation with a few yeshivah students.

On his third trip there, Yair was already sitting down for a few minutes to sample Torah study.

When Yair finally told his parents what he had discovered in the yeshivah, his father became enraged. "No son of mine is going to become a backward, bearded chareidi! You are no longer to deliver to that route and you are forbidden to visit that yeshivah, or any other yeshivah, ever again!"

### The Trial

Yair knew that one must obey one's father, except when a parent explicitly commands a child to disobey the Torah. He continued to clandestinely visit the yeshivah.

His father found out, and he reacted violently. Yair, however, was determined. He inquired as to other available yeshivas, left a note wishing his parents well, and left without revealing his destination.

His father searched for him and forced him to return home. Not only that, he blamed the Rosh Yeshivah of Lev V'Nefesh and filed charges against him of brainwashing his 18-year-old son and of engineering his flight from home.

The trial aroused great interest, and the trial date found a packed courtroom eagerly awaiting to hear the proceedings.



*"It is a tree of life for those who hold fast to it..." (Mishlei 3:18)*

Yair's testimony did not help the prosecution at all. Yair insisted that he had not been coerced to attend the yeshivah; it was of his own volition.

### Memories from Pinsk

While Yair was recounting his story, the judge presiding over the case, an elderly man, seemed a bit distracted. He would intermittently take his eyes off the speaker to gaze intently at Yair's father.

When Yair left the witness stand, the judge announced, "I would like Mr. Eitan to step forward." Yair's father was surprised as he stepped up to the witness stand.

The judge asked if he was of Eastern European descent, and if his name back in Europe was perhaps "Stark". Mr. Eitan was clearly taken aback, and he stammered that the judge was indeed correct.

"And are you originally from Pinsk?" asked the judge.

Mr. Eitan nodded meekly.

The judge continued, "I remember you well. You come from one of the finest homes of prewar Pinsk. Your father was a deeply religious and highly respected man. Your mother was renowned for her kindness. She would cook meals for the poor and the sick regularly.

"I remember well when, as an 18-year-old, you openly departed from your parents' ways. When you publicly desecra-

ted the Shabbat for the first time, your father aged overnight and seemed to be constantly in mourning.

"Your mother would shed a river of tears every Friday night when she lit the candles. I often wondered what became of all her tears.

"I'm not the most religious person, but I know that there is a G-d who runs this world, and I could not understand how the tears of so righteous a woman could be ignored in Heaven.

### The Answer to her Tears

"Today my question has been answered. I see that her tears were not shed in vain. Today, almost 50 years later, her grandson has returned to the ways of his ancestors.

"Mr. Eitan, I'm sure you recall that on more than one occasion, friends of your parents pleaded with you that for your parents' sake you should at least refrain from public transgression.

*continued on page two*

### Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	4:04	5:22
Tel Aviv	4:25	5:23
Haifa	4:13	5:21
Beer Sheva	4:26	5:24
New York	4:26	5:25

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## Lech Lecha - Go To Your Self

Every child knows the story of Abraham - how he discovered G-d as a lad, broke his father's idols, was thrown into the furnace by Nimrod and saved by G-d.

None of these details, however, can be found in the Written Torah. The Torah mentions Abraham only briefly at the close of the Torah reading of Noach, telling us that he was born, that he married, and that he accompanied his father on his journey from Ur towards Canaan.

But the focus of these verses is on Terach, not on Abraham. It is only in this week's Torah reading, Lech Lecha, with the command, "Go out of your land, your native country, and your father's house," that the Torah begins unfolding the history of the founder of our people.

### A Deeper Relationship

Why this emphasis? Before receiving this command to leave his father's house, Abraham had already attained a high level of Divine service.

He had "recognized his Creator" at three, and from that age onward continued to grow in faith. He had been willing to sacrifice his life for G-d, and a miracle was performed to save him.

All this, however, represented merely his own striving to approach G-d. The command Lech Lecha, "Go out of your land," began a new and deeper relationship with his Maker.

For as our Sages state: "A person who observes a mitzvah because he is commanded to do so is greater than one who observes it without having been so commanded."

### No Limits To Growth

The word mitzvah and the word tzavta, meaning "together," share the same root. When a person fulfills a Divine command because he has been commanded to do so, the act connects him to G-d in all His infinity.

Were, by contrast, the person to perform the same deed without having been commanded to do so, the act, however worthy, would remain merely a good deed.

Lech means "proceed," referring to the beginning of a journey. This concept is alluded to in the Torah's description of Abraham, "continuing on his way, steadily progressing southward," i.e., in the direction of Jerusalem, the place where G-d's presence is most manifest.

Real spiritual progress requires that one leave one's current state behind. Yet as long as an individual's growth depends

entirely on his own power, his progress will be limited; nobody can exceed the bounds of his own understanding.

When, by contrast, one's progress is guided by G-d, there are no limits to the potential for growth. The Torah and its mitzvot can take a person far beyond his natural horizons.

### Revealing You To You

To accentuate this point, G-d tells Abraham to proceed "to the land which I will show you," without specifying a destination.

The expression "I will show you," arecka in Hebrew, can also be rendered "I will reveal you," i.e., through the journey to Eretz Yisrael, Abraham's true self was revealed to him.

This is also indicated by the expression Lech Lecha, which literally means "go to yourself," i.e., "to your essence."

As we proceed through life, each of us is given the chance to discover who he is, what G-d is, and that the two are one.

*Based on the teachings of the Rebbe from Keeping in Touch; From our Sages adapted from Vedibarta Bam; reprinted with permission from Sichos in English.*

## From our Sages

*"And I will bless those who bless you and those who curse you, I will curse." (12:3)*

Why doesn't the Torah write both in the same order, i.e., "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you?"

When a person blesses or curses, he first thinks about it and then expresses verbally what he has in mind. Therefore, Hashem is saying to Avram, "I will bless those who bless you as soon as they plan to bless you, even if they have not yet blessed you. However, those who curse you will be cursed only *after* they actually curse you, but not merely for thinking about the curse."

*(Kli Yakar)*

*"And Avram went according to G-d's instructions, and Lot went along; and Avram was 75 years old when he left Charan." (12:4)*

Why is Avram's age mentioned? Avram lived a comfortable life in Charan. Picking himself up at the age of 75 and moving to a new country was indeed difficult. However, Avram was very much attached to Hashem and did anything that Hashem told him, even if it appeared difficult or

he did not know its reason or significance. On the other hand, Lot accompanied Avram *only* because he calculated that he was an old man who would soon die childless, leaving Lot as his sole heir.

*(Eshkol Anavim)*

*"And he went on his journeys from the South to Beth-El, to the place where his tent had been in the beginning." (13:3-4)*

Why does the Torah discuss Avram's return journey at such length? Upward mobility often leads people to change communities. Often the new neighborhood is less compatible with Torah values than the old one.

Avram started his travels as a poor man and established his residence in the vicinity of Beth-El, an area which was spiritually in accordance with Hashem's desires for humanity. The Torah emphasizes that on his return, after being blessed with an abundance of material wealth, he did not change his style of living. He returned to the area of Beth-El, where he originally lived when he possessed modest means. Despite his affluence, he remained in the "old" Jewish neighborhood.

*(Matei Aharon)*

## The Judge with an Excellent Memory

*continued from page one:*

"As I recall, your response was, 'I'm now eighteen and I make my own decisions. I can live my life any way I please.'"

"And you dare to file charges because your eighteen-year-old son has chosen to return to the ways that you abandoned? ... Case dismissed."

Connection: [Midrash on] weekly reading—Terach abandoned the ways of his holy ancestors, and Avraham turned from the ways of his father, Terach, and cleaved to the One G-d.

Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition by Rabbi Shlomo Price on [nevehzion.org](http://nevehzion.org).

*Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles of Tsfat is co-founder of ASCENT. His email list for stories is in its 28th year. To join the list a/o his WhatsApp group for Saturday night Audio, Video and Zoom stories, go to [AscendOfSafed.com](http://AscendOfSafed.com) or WhatsApp +972-526-770-137.*

# Chassidus page

## Portrait of a Teacher

The Rebbe explained the first step in education is for the educator to show a living example in his personal conduct. This is always the best way to influence another person. Furthermore, human nature is such that to influence a student to do something, the educator must do it to a greater degree, since the student considers himself to be less advanced and thinks he can live at a lower standard than his teacher. So too, the educator must speak "words that come from the heart." This will cause his words to "enter the heart."

On another occasion the Rebbe added: The beginning of education is to educate a child with a strong foundation—that he is a son of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, who are the same fathers of his parents, his grandparents and of all Jews. In order to implant this feeling in his pupils, the teachers must act accordingly, because a child does not understand play-acting ("chochmot"). When he sees that he is told one thing, and then finds his teacher acting differently, not only is that lesson undermined, but moreover he loses trust in his teacher completely.

### Image of a Chassid

Reb Michael Beliner ("Michael der Alter") of Nevl was a mashpia in the Yeshiva in Lubavitch. When he grew old and weak and could no longer teach the students, Reb Leizer Kaplan, the administrator of the yeshiva, asked the Rebbe Rashab for permission to stop paying Reb Michael his weekly salary of five rubles. The Rebbe Rashab told him, "for me it is worth the money in order that he should

stay, and the students will be able to watch him. He is a tziyur (image) of an old chassid."

The Previous Rebbe writes: A person doesn't have a choice about the children that are born to him, but he does have a choice about how he raises them, by having them educated according to the Torah by teachers who are G-d fearing.

### Igniting the Heart

In a letter the Rebbe advises the administration of a yeshiva that was having difficulty recruiting students on how to make their yeshiva sought after: "Attracting new students and encouraging them to remain in yeshiva depends on the heads of the yeshiva and the teachers. It is quite obvious that merely teaching students at designated times, and even farbrenging with them occasionally, does not suffice. Torah is not like other subjects; it must be alive and all-encompassing, by the students and more so by the teachers.

"If the heads of the yeshiva and teachers learned Torah in this manner, the yeshiva would no doubt become legendary throughout Eretz Yisrael. Young people would come banging on the doors, begging to be allowed to listen in to classes that capture them and energize them with chassidishe zeal and warmth. This liveliness can be achieved not only when teaching Tanya and Chassidus, but even when teaching alef-bet."

*reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com*

## I Have the Same Question

It was 5752 (late 1991). The Rebbe was hunched over his volume of Gemara, deep in thought, when he noticed a blurriness in the Aramaic script. He rubbed his eyes, but the smaller letters on the page did not get clearer.

He summoned me (Rabbi Leibel Groner) with the complaint, and I promptly phoned an eye doctor. This man, a prominent ophthalmologist and well-traveled communal figure, came to the Rebbe's office in 770 and gave a private examination.

He looked over the Rebbe's glasses, as well, and increased the prescription. None of this worked, and again the Rebbe summoned me. So I again phoned the doctor.

"This might require a more intensive exam," the doctor said, after listening to me. "I have an instrument at the office I can use, but it isn't portable. I'm afraid the Rebbe will have to come over here." Knowing of the Rebbe's need for privacy, he added, "I can arrange a time when no one else is around."

So the Rebbe went. Opening wide the Rebbe's eyes, the doctor deftly squeezed into them the liquid from the dropper. "It will take about fifteen minutes for dilation to take effect," the doctor said.

Taking advantage of the interval, he decided to ask the Rebbe a question. "As the Rebbe knows, I have visited many places in the world and seen many things, wonderful but also tragic. How is it that with all Chabad has accomplished, Moshiach still hasn't come?"

The Rebbe smiled broadly. "I have the same question, but apparently there's a little left to do to fill the cup." To make his point, he motioned with his hand. "This is why," he continued, "that whenever I speak to the Chassidim, I urge them to do a bit more. I don't let my Chassidim sleep."

*Told by Rabbi Leibel Groner. Source: COLive and the Avner Institute*

## Moshiach Now

### Misplaced Faith

*Also the nation they serve will I judge, and afterward they will go out with great substance (Gen. 15:14)*

Just as those Jews during the Egyptian and Babylonian exiles who put their faith in the nations and their kings for salvation were proven wrong, so too will those who, in our present exile, think that we must rely on the nations of the world for our continued existence and redemption. When Moshiach comes and G-d judges all the nations, the Jews will see that their faith was misplaced. At that time we will also "go out with great substance," the greatest riches of them all - the ultimate Redemption.

*(the Rebbe, reprinted from LchaimWeekly.org - LYO / NYC)*

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## ScrollUp

On a warm sunny morning in Honolulu, Hawaii, Bianca Mintz, a young Jewish hydrogeologist, walks purposefully down a bustling city street with a small package in her hand: a mezuzah. As she approaches a neighbor's apartment, Mintz is on the front lines of a new global initiative aimed at combating hate through proud, public displays of Jewish identity.

Mintz is one of 50 young professional leaders part of the ScrollUp Mezuzah Ambassadors initiative, launched by Chabad Young Professionals (CYP) International at Merkos 302. The campaign, which kicked off with a virtual launch event attended by CYP Ambassadors worldwide, aims to empower young Jews to inspire others to affix mezuzahs on their doorposts, a powerful statement of resilience and pride.

"The mezuzah connects all of us, no matter where we are," said Ravit Car-



melli, a young professional and ambassador from Little Rock, AR. "In Arkansas, there aren't a lot of Jewish people. But when we put up mezuzahs, it makes us feel connected as one big family. No matter where we are, it brings us closer together."

The ScrollUp initiative comes at a critical juncture for the Jewish community. Recent incidents, such as the forcible removal of mezuzahs from dormitory doors at Harvard University, have heightened concerns about antisemitism on college campuses and beyond.

In response, young Jews have committed to put up even more mezuzahs—a defiant gesture that epitomizes the spirit behind the ScrollUp campaign.

The ScrollUp Mezuzah Ambassadors initiative is a movement of young Jews standing tall, reaching out, and scrolling up – one mezuzah at a time. For information: [scrollupnow.com](http://scrollupnow.com) or [ambassadors@chabadyoung.com](mailto:ambassadors@chabadyoung.com).

*Adapted from COLLIVE*

## Cooking Tip of the Week

### Chalva Ice Cream:

In a small pot combine and melt 2 cups of unsweetened almond milk, 4 tsp agave syrup and 200 grams Ahva Halva w/o sugar. Put into ice cream maker. I had to do it in two batches. You can also do this in your freezer and whip it up in the middle.

*Alizah Hochstead,  
alizahh@hotmail.com*

## Halacha Corner – Washing Dishes on Shabbat

One is not permitted to turn on the hot water tap when washing dishes on Shabbat since by doing so, additional cold water will flow into the hot water tank and be boiled on Shabbat. However, if one has prepared hot water before Shabbat, or a tank which stores the hot water, it may be used to wash the dishes. However, it is forbidden to pour hot water on something which is very greasy, since the hot water will dissolve the fat on Shabbat.

One may not use a bar of soap on Shabbat, but using liquid soap is permitted; however, some people are particular to dilute it, making it more liquid than usual, reducing its viscosity. One is not allowed to use a sponge or a steel wool on Shabbat, nor wash dishes that are not needed for use on Shabbat. If one wishes to soak the dishes when clearing them off from the table, as long as the basin of warm water was prepared before Shabbat, it is permissible.

*Rav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita, member of Beit Din of Crown Heights; One Minute Halacha, #137, reprinted from crownheightsconnect.com*

**Question:** You mentioned in a previous column that to build a connection with our teenage children we should show interest in what interests them. I have been doing what you said. However, when I try and talk about ideas in Torah, things that interest me, my son just spaces out and doesn't pay attention. I feel that if I am making the effort to be interested in his stuff, he should at least, out of respect, try and be interested in what I talk about. Do you think I should tell him?

**Answer:** The column you referenced discussed a situation wherein a parent was looking for ways to bridge the distance he felt with his teenage child. It was explained that teenagers are at an age where they are beginning to form opinions and are exploring new interests. When a parent shows interest in their child, the child feels respected and valued and the potential for closeness is created.

A parent must have an eye to the future. Expectations of quick gains with teenage children are a recipe for disappointment. While the short road looks tempting it is more often the "long but shorter road" which sees positive results.

In other words, while it is possible for change to happen fast, it usually takes time, and requires investment and patience. Growth is a process. As parents we are sowing seeds, knowing that the future will yield fruit.

When the parent wants their child to change because it is good for the parent, the relationship becomes a battle of wills - the parent versus the child. However, when the parent's focus is on the good of the child, the situation becomes less personal; it is easier for the parent to remain calm and regulated. The child senses the difference, he feels the genuine care of the parent, and space is created for a real connection to take root.

Consider taking a dual approach. On the one hand, don't give up, but continue to speak with your child. Your child may not seem like he is listening, but your words do seep in. Try and speak with stories and analogies that have the potential to arouse his interest.

At the same time, connect with your child where he is holding. Show interest in what interests him. You cannot change him, but by creating an environment where he feels accepted and supported, there is the potential for positive growth.

Let go of the pressure and expectation that he will now listen to you as you listen to him. Just enjoy spending time with your teenage child. The better the connection, the better things will be.

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