

# MICHHLAH *today*

*News for alumnae, students and friends of Michlalah Jerusalem College*



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מכללה ירושלים



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9 Sutton Road, Monsey, NY 10592      Bayit Vegan, Israel 9116012  
845.356.0664      02.6750.907  
Fax: 845.356.0787      Fax: 02.6750.917

[www.michlalah.edu](http://www.michlalah.edu)  
[www.machal.michlalah.edu](http://www.machal.michlalah.edu)

[michlalahusa@aol.com](mailto:michlalahusa@aol.com)  
[machal@michlalah.edu](mailto:machal@michlalah.edu)

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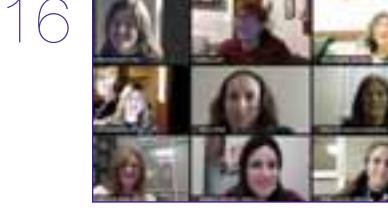


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**ON THE FRONT COVER:**

Machal 5781 on an invigorating outing in the Jerusalem Forest, a Corona-safe destination even when capsule restrictions were in place.

See page 8 for more highlights of this extraordinary year.

## FROM THE DEAN

# A MOTHER'S TEARS

**I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER DAVENED AS MUCH AS I HAVE SINCE COVID-19 EXPLODED** into our lives, and many of those *tefillot* have been accompanied by tears. These prayers flowed from a place of fear, anxiety, frustration, pain, helplessness, and sadness, as well as appreciation, joy, faith, happiness, connection, and relief. Sometimes, one emotion was clearly dominant, but oftentimes there was a mixture of different emotions, some of them contradictory.

What all these *tefillot* had in common was the sense of relief I felt at having Someone to lean on.

One of my favorite *tefillot*, which received an extra dose of *kavanah* and tears due to the circumstances, is the whispered supplication a woman recites when she lights Shabbos candles, one of the Jewish woman's special mitzvot.

I once learned that the letters of the word **תפילה** can be rearranged to spell **אwick**, a wick. Just as a wick connects the flame to the oil, *tefillah* creates a connection between our spiritual and physical components.

There are ten different terms for *tefillah* in Tanach, but the first time we encounter the word "*I'hitpallel*" is in reference to Chana, who davened to Hashem and beseeched Him to bless her with a child.

"**ויהי כי הרבתה להתפלל לפני ה'...**"

Later, after her prayers are answered, when she arrives at the Mishkan in order to fulfill her oath, the *pasuk* again tells us that she davened:

"**התפלל חנה ומתאמך עליך לבך בה...**"

It is no coincidence that many laws of *tefillah* are learned from Chana and her prayers. *Tefillah* is called "*avodah she'balev*" and a woman, whose essence is heart and emotion, is most suited to the role of defining and demonstrating what true *tefillah* is—and that remains true today.

The power of a mother's prayer can overturn worlds, cancel decrees, and pierce the heavens with the sheer power of the emotion behind the words. Sometimes this emotion is expressed as tears and a woman—who tends to cry more easily than a man—can accomplish miracles with every teardrop.

Rachel Imeinu also knew the power of tears and she used this potent weapon to ensure that she would not marry a *rasha*. From her roadside grave, she still cries today, this time for us, her children, as she beseeches Hashem to bring us home. HaKadosh Baruch Hu accepts her tears and her pleas (and the Midrash notes that He did not similarly hearken to the entreaties of the Avot or the other Imahot) and He soothes her cries:

"**מנני קולך מבכי ועיניך מדמעה כי יש שכר לפועלותך...**"

For thousands of years, we've seen the power of a mother's prayers and tears. A mother's prayers for her children—that they be righteous and good and light up the world with Torah—are guaranteed to have an effect. *Hadlakat neirot* is a special time for a woman to daven, calmly and unhurriedly, from the depths of her heart, for every member of her family and their specific spiritual and material needs. This is the time to beg for the *geulah* of the individual and the *klal*, for physical and emotional health, and for the strength to face all the challenges that come our way. At this *utz razon*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is listening and you can literally overturn worlds at this time.

A few years ago, I read an incredible story that took place after the Holocaust. At that time, there were many refugees in the Ponovezhev Yeshivah, survivors who were broken in spirit. Many of them were orphans and all of them needed heaping doses of love and support. The Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman zt"l, who was noted for his warm, loving heart, became both mother and father to these survivors. One day, a *bachur* who was not an orphan but whose parents were physically and emotionally broken by the horrors of the Holocaust, became ill. Rav Kahaneman did everything in his power to help the boy and provided him with the best medical care available. He decided not to inform the boy's parents about the situation. They were so unwell, he feared it would shatter them completely. To everyone's great distress, despite all the efforts made, the boy passed away and his parents had to be told the terrible news.

The funeral procession was agonizing and as the *niftar* was lowered into the grave, his mother asked to say good-bye. She broke down in tears and said, "I know that the Rosh Yeshivah had good intentions. I appreciate that he wished to protect me from pain and that he did everything possible to heal my son. I am also indebted to the yeshivah where my son studied Torah. But there is one thing that pains me deeply: the yeshivah gave my son everything but it could not give him a mother's tears. The hot tears of a mother when she lights the Shabbos candles—that is something that no one could do for him except me. And now I'm crying for the tears I could not shed then, because I did not know he needed my tears."

To this, the Ponovezher Rav replied, "Mama, Mama! You are right! There is nothing greater than a mother's tears."

As the year draws to a close and a new year dawns, let us daven from the depths of our hearts, at every opportunity, that we and our children and all of Klal Yisrael be granted a sweet year filled with blessings.



*Devorah Rosenwasser*

## IN TRIBUTE

### Professor Yaakov Katz z"l

By Rav Chaim Pollock



**M**ichlalah mourns the passing of Professor Yaakov Katz z"l who served as President of Michlalah for seven years until his untimely passing a year ago at the beginning of 5781. In his administrative position in Michlalah, Professor Katz represented us before the Council of Higher Education of the State of Israel (the *MALAG*) and before various other governmental agencies and authorities. Always the voice of calm and reason, Reb Yaakov brought honor to Michlalah with his presentations, advocacy, and defense that always symbolized the Torah outlook of Michlalah along with its leadership in academic excellence. His dignified appearances brought honor and respect to him and all of us.

In honor of his outstanding service to Michlalah and in his memory, Michlalah has dedicated its new Graduate Program in Guidance and Counselling in his name.

Professor Katz had a most distinguished career. With his doctorate in Educational Psychology, he chaired the Department of Education at Bar Ilan University, was the Chairman of the Institute for Religious Education, and held the particularly prestigious position of Chairman of the Pedagogic Secretariat of the Ministry of Education, a department that sets educational policy for all schools under the aegis of the Ministry.

Professor Katz was endeared to the administration, faculty, and student body as the entire Michlalah benefitted from his leadership, wisdom, and exemplary *menschlichkeit*.

**יהי זכרו ברוך**

## DEPARTMENT PROFILE

### The Katz School of Educational Counseling and Guidance Offers Michlalah's 4th Master's Degree Program

**T**HIS PAST JANUARY, A SELECT GROUP OF fifteen women became the first class to embark on studies towards a Master's degree in Michlalah's newly minted Katz School of Educational Counseling and Guidance. Named in memory of Michlalah's past president, Professor Yaakov Katz z"l, it is the fourth Master's Program to be offered by Michlalah, joining the highly successful programs in Judaic Studies (Jewish Thought and Torah *SheBa'al Peh*), Educational Administration and Organization, and Mathematics and Science Education. At the start of the 5782 academic year, another class of women and a separate class of men will be opened as well.

The Counseling and Guidance Program, which was years in the making, prides itself on a high academic level, a professional and experienced faculty, and a network of support which guarantees that every student will graduate with all the tools needed to succeed in the field. Well aware of the needs of a rapidly changing world—including shifts in family structure and ever-developing technology—the School of Educational Counseling and Guidance is geared to producing school counselors who can effectively help today's students.

Besides the requisite guidance and counseling courses that a standard program offers, Michlalah's program is committed to filling the needs of its unique audience and has created special courses to give counselors professional training in the cultural sensitivities of the religious community. Students are expected to acquire in-depth knowledge of their clients' cultural background, increase awareness of their own values, biases and misconceptions, and apply culturally appropriate information and skills for successful intervention with a wide range of clients. An emphasis is placed on enabling counselors to comfortably work with clients of diverse backgrounds.

Since its founding in 1964, Michlalah has had the rare vision to offer high-level educational training and academics that are consonance with Torah values. By training counselors in accordance with these ideals, Michlalah has taken another giant step forward in the fulfillment of that vision.

# Professor Ely Merzbach Named President of Michlalah

**T**HE YEAR 1967 BROUGHT the upheaval and miracles of the Six-Day War to Israel and it also brought a seventeen-year-old boy named Ely Merzbach, a born and bred Parisian who came to study Torah in Yeshivas Be'er Yaakov. His dream was to learn for a year and then return to France to pursue a degree in mathematics at the University of Paris. All that changed on March 21, 1968, in the wake of the Battle of Karameh, a military clash between the Israel Defense Forces and the combined forces of the PLO and the Jordanian Armed Forces in which around thirty Israeli soldiers were killed and many more were wounded.

"When I heard the terrible news, I said to myself, 'Forget about *chutz la'aretz*! I'm staying here!' Then and there, I decided to enlist in the IDF," says Professor Merzbach. "I had a close relationship with the *mashgiach* in the yeshivah, Rav Shlomo Volbe zt"l, and I spoke to him often about all sorts of things. I told him about my decision to leave the yeshivah and join the army, and he did not try to dissuade me."

After his stint in the army, Professor Merzbach studied mathematics at Hebrew University in Yerushalayim, graduating with high honors. During this time, he met and married his wife Myriam (Picard), a fellow Parisian and a Michlalah alumna who has the distinction of being a member of the first Machal ever. Mrs. Merzbach was also a long-time faculty member in Michlalah's Education Department and Founding Director of its Honor's Program.

Professor Merzbach continued his studies, earning an MA in math, after which he took off a year to learn in the Mirrer Yeshivah. A fervent proponent of Torah *im derech eretz*, he then combined his Torah studies with his academic pursuits by learning half a day in the Mir and working towards a Ph.D. in the afternoon.

After living in Yerushalayim for several years, the growing Merzbach family relocated to Shiloh, in the Shomron. "Shiloh is a very special place because the whole city is run according to halachah. For example, halachah determines exactly how taxes are collected in the town. Also, there is absolutely no *lashon hara* in Shilo. There is a local *rav*, a *mara d'dasra*, and he is the halachic authority that all the residents follow. It's a place where people really care about each other and help each other and we were privileged to raise a beautiful Torah family there."

The Merzbachs were blessed with ten

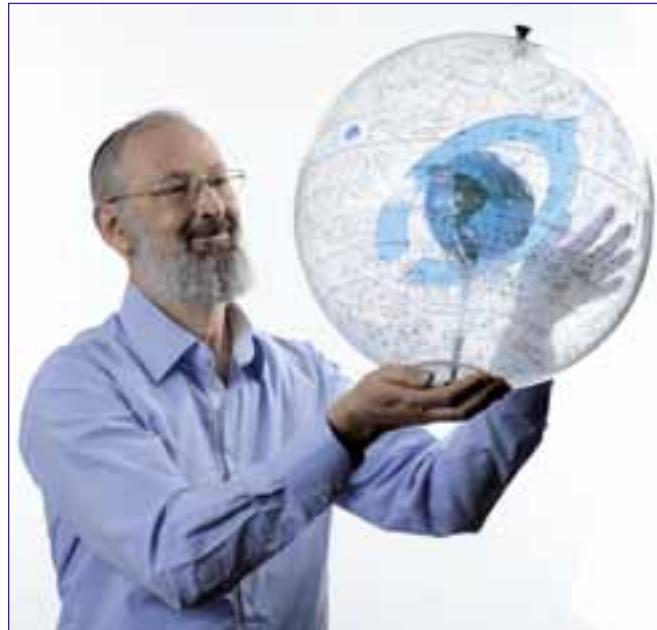
children, all of whom are married with children of their own and carrying on the ideals instilled in them by their parents. "I thank Hashem for that every day. It's not something I take for granted," says Professor Merzbach.

As his family grew, his career blossomed as well and he became a professor at Bar Ilan University, climbing the ranks of academia to become the head of the Math and Computer Science Department. He was dean of the Faculty of Science, as well as dean of all Ph.D. students in the university, and now, after his mandatory retirement at age 68, he is a professor emeritus. In addition, for nearly fifty years he has taught math in Michlalah.

As an academician, Professor Merzbach was frequently invited to join research teams in foreign universities. Four to five times a year, he would travel as a visiting professor to Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal, to Paris, and to far-flung locales such as Wollongong, Australia, which is home to a university renowned for its mathematics department.

With his broad spectrum of knowledge in both Torah and mathematics, Professor Merzbach is also a prolific author. He has written numerous books, including *Higayon HaGoral*, a *sefer* that explores the nature of lotteries in Judaism, and a recently published volume on the Jewish calendar. One of his pet projects is an annual journal of Torah scholarship entitled *B'chol Derachecha Da'eihu* (or *Badad*, for short), of which he is the editor. He is also the author of an immensely popular compilation of riddles on the weekly *parshah*. Originally devised to encourage his own children and grandchildren to pay close attention to the Torah reading in shul, the riddles were later published in a handy spiral-bound book that has made its way to

thousands of Shabbos tables and has been republished numerous times.



Professor Ely Merzbach is the new President of Michlalah Jerusalem College. The life-long academician and Professor Emeritus at Bar Ilan University will represent Michlalah to Israeli government bodies and hopes to expand Michlalah's academic offerings and enrollment.

Recently, with the passing of Michlalah's former president, Professor Yaakov Katz, Professor Merzbach has assumed this eminent position. As president, he ably represents Michlalah Jerusalem College to government bodies such as the Ministry of Education and the Council of Higher Education of the State of Israel (the MALAG). Professor Merzbach places a strong emphasis on the academic level of Michlalah's degree programs and envisions increasing Michlalah's enrollment of both men and women.

"I am currently involved in arrangements to increase the enrollment of *chareidi avreichim* in Michlalah where they can earn a degree and pursue a successful career. This is all being done in full partnership with the yeshivahs in which they learn, and we are doing everything possible to accommodate their needs," he explains.

He also has a number of other projects in the works, the details of which he can't divulge. "People ask me why I took on this position now, after my retirement," says Professor Merzbach. "But I can't just sit back when there's so much more to accomplish."

# THE CORONA CHRONICLES

## An inside glimpse into a year like no other

Join us for a month-by-month recap of Machal 5781. Although it was a year filled with unique challenges, the dedication of the administration and faculty of the Linda Pinsky School for Overseas Students, coupled with the determination and positivity of the students, made the year a resounding success. Creative approaches to all sorts of unprecedented situations brought out the best in everyone and yielded results that far exceeded expectations. It was without a doubt a year to remember.



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### Tishrei

**ONE OF THE BIGGEST DILEMMAS FACED** by the Machal administration was when to start the school year. Bringing the girls to Eretz Yisrael in Elul would have meant two weeks of quarantine followed immediately by the *Yamim Noraim*. Who knew what Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur 5781 would be like? Shuls were operating in Corona mode and everything was up in the air. It seemed preferable for the girls to enjoy an uplifting Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur at home with their families in a familiar environment. Arriving after Sukkos, though, would put the start of school very late in the year, especially taking into account the mandatory 14-day

quarantine. Michlalah's creative solution was to bring the girls to Israel right after Yom Kippur and plan a wonderful Sukkot for them in quarantine on campus. Each *dirah* would quarantine together and, with lots of ingenuity and detailed planning, a separate sukkah was built for every apartment. Yom Tov was filled with learning, exciting programming, getting-to-know-you activities, staff visits (all from a distance, of course), delicious meals, guest speakers (photo 1), live concerts (photo 2), and much more. Every one of the students' needs was attended to by the dedicated campus staff and a joyous Yom Tov atmosphere prevailed throughout. What a welcome to an amazing year! By the end of Sukkot, the girls in each *dirah* had bonded powerfully. There are upsides to quarantine!



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## Cheshvan

**TO ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY** of its students as much as possible, Michlalah opted to implement the “family model,” in which the entire school was considered one “capsule,” colloquially known as Mitveh Chevron, for the yeshivah that popularized this approach. With this plan, capsule members are not restricted in their interactions among themselves (no masks or social distancing required), but they cannot have direct contact with anyone outside the capsule. In practice, this meant that students could not leave campus to run errands, visit relatives, or meet friends from other schools. All interactions with faculty, including classroom instruction and one-on-one meetings, took place from behind plastic dividers (photo 3). Here again, creativity was the key, as Michlalah found ways to meet the girls’ needs despite limitations. Arrangements were made for them to shop at stores after-hours when no other customers were present and, of course, transportation was provided. In this way, Machal enjoyed outings to the supermarket, pharmacy (photo 4), sefarim store, ice-cream store, and more, in addition to weekly *tiyulim* and hikes to destinations approved by the Ministry of Health. Shabbosim were spent on campus, with inspiring programs and different staff families in attendance every week.



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## Kislev

**ONE OF THE THINGS MACHAL STUDENTS** yearned for most was a visit to the Kotel, which was off-limits due to capsule restrictions. When the staff issued a surprise announcement that they would be taking the girls to the Kotel in the middle of the night (when crowding was not an issue), the response was a spontaneous eruption of cheers! The *tefillos* that night were heartfelt and the girls davened that this visit be the first of many (photo 5). With the approach of Chanukah, Michlalah had another bright idea. If you can’t visit your friends and relatives in Israel, why not let them visit you?



And so “Host Your Hosts” was born as Michlalah set aside times and made arrangements for friends and relatives in Israel to visit the Machal students they longed to see while still upholding capsule requirements. Chanukah was filled with joy and celebration, activities, inspiration and, of course, a fantastic *chagigah* featuring Michlalah’s famous *sufganiya* contest (photo 6). From the outset, the administration was aware that the family model would not be in place all year long, and at some point, restrictions would need to be eased to allow more freedom to leave campus and join family and friends for Shabbos. That time was soon approaching, and Machal savored its last days in the “Mitveh.”



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## Tevet

**MID-WINTER BROUGHT AN END** to the “family model” that had been in place since the beginning of the school year and was now replaced by a less restrictive two-capsule system. Machal students were excited to be out and about, getting to know Yerushalayim, going out for Shabbos, and enjoying the more typical seminary experience they always expected to have, albeit with certain limitations still in place. Tevet also saw the departure of Machal Bet who concluded the semester with a special trip up north to daven at *kivrei tzaddikim* (photo 7). It was touch and go whether the trip would take place because Corona-related logistics were extremely complicated. At the last minute, a combination of intense faculty effort and a loosening of restrictions made the trip possible, much to the delight of the Shana Bet girls.



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## Shevat

**THE RELATIVE CALM MACHAL HAD EXPERIENCED** up until now was suddenly shattered when a few girls in one of the capsules developed flu-like symptoms and Covid tests came back positive. The entire capsule went into quarantine, but it wasn’t long before someone in the second capsule tested positive as well. The virus speedily swept through Machal and almost everyone came down with it. The campus was split into a “corona hotel”—*dirot* in which all those who tested positive could interact with each other and “*bidud villas*” for those who were still negative. A small group of girls already had antibodies for the virus and were invaluable in helping navigate between the sick and the healthy, delivering things that girls needed, and much more. Classes switched over to Zoom and fun activities brightened up the girls’ days (photo 8). *Baruch Hashem*, everyone recovered quickly and life soon returned to normal—relatively speaking, that is!

## Nissan

**WITH NO GUARANTEES THAT THEY WOULD BE** allowed back into the country after Pesach, Machal 5781 planned to spend Yom Tov in Eretz Yisrael. Faculty and alumnae gladly volunteered to host students, and *chol ha-mo’ed* activities were organized. At the last minute, overseas students received the government’s assurance that they if chose to go home for Pesach they could return to Israel afterward. This sudden development sent Machal into a frenzy of booking tickets, packing luggage, and saying a temporary good-bye to their home of the last six months. They would soon be saying hello to the families they hadn’t seen

since their departure right after Yom Kippur. Those students who chose to remain and experience Pesach in Eretz Yisrael enjoyed stimulating pre-Pesach classes and a *tiyul* to Ein Gedi (photo 9), beautiful and uplifting *sedarim*, *chol ha-mo’ed* fun, and an action-packed *tiyul* to Eilat after Yom Tov. When school resumed after Pesach, students and faculty were welcomed by a special sight: No more plastic barriers in the classroom! “Normal” seemed closer than ever.



## Adar

**THE ARRIVAL OF ADAR** always brings *simchah* but Adar 5781 brought an extra degree of happiness to Machal. Now that almost the entire student body was recovered or had antibodies, there were almost no restrictions. The lone holdouts who never came down with Covid would be fully vaccinated over the next few weeks. A Shabbaton at Keshet, a great *tiyul*, and of course, Purim revelry, rounded out the month.



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## Iyar

**YOM HAAZMAUT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY** to thank Hashem for the gift of a year in Israel, something Machal 5781 knew they could not take for granted. It was celebrated with a falafel lunch and a trip to Gush Etzion (photo 10). But just when life seemed to be back to routine, Eretz Yisrael was crushed by the deaths of forty-five people at Meron on Lag BaOmer. Along with Jews everywhere, Machal students struggled to

make sense of the tragedy and find the light within the darkness. They took *kabbalos* upon themselves, committing to bring meaning to the loss of these precious souls. A letter describing these *kabbalos* was delivered to every one of the shiva houses, bringing a measure of consolation to the grieving families. Michlalah also organized an inter-seminary *kumzitz* attended by over 1000 girls, as a show of *achdus* and a venue for inspiration and introspection (see story on page 10).

## Sivan

**DURING THE FINAL** weeks of school, a quiet afternoon in Yerushalayim was shattered by the wail of an air-raid siren. Missiles had been falling incessantly in other parts of the country, but this was much closer to home. Machal 5781 once again demonstrated its strength and resilience by responding calmly to this turn of events, viewing it as another opportunity to work on *emunah*, another chance to grow. *Boruch Hashem*, the security situation soon calmed down and it was time to focus on end-of-the-year preparations. The year ended on a high, with special *yemei iyun* and a *tiyul* up north (photo 11). The *mesibat siyum* was a wonderful opportunity for the girls to express their *hakaras ha-tov* to everyone who had invested so much time and effort in making the year so successful. Machal faculty also had a chance to express their admiration and appreciation for the students, who had been through so much throughout the year, yet had met every challenge head-on and dazzled everyone with their unwavering focus on growth, personal development, and *avodas Hashem*.





# Songs of Healing and Hope

## MACHAL'S INTER-SEMINARY KUMZITZ BROUGHT A MEASURE OF CONSOLATION IN THE WAKE OF THE MERON TRAGEDY

By Hannah Pollack (Machal 5781)

**OUR SEMINARY YEAR** was not the classic year in Israel our older sisters or friends had. It was not exactly what we had expected. But that doesn't mean we didn't have a full and rich seminary experience. On the contrary, the turbulence and the bumpy roads were precisely what made our year so special and so intense.

From the very beginning of the year, even before making it to Eretz Yisrael, we were learning on Zoom and davening for each other. We all wanted to be here, to learn in our land from our teachers and our friends. Once we finally made it, we had a Sukkos that was jam-packed with programming and the forging of new relationships. Later, when we were kept on campus for two months, we had our teachers, Torah, fun hikes, midnight trips to the Kotel, and of course we had each other to laugh and kvetch about our wishes and frustrations.

Then Corona came and hit most of us. Those who tested positive and those who tested negative had different challenges, but everyone had a positive attitude, and of course the "antibody girls" were unconditionally there to help and provide for us with a smile.

At long last, we became a "recovered" school. The plastic aquariums that separated us from our teachers were finally gone. We could use public transportation without feeling guilty and we were allowed to go out for Shabbos freely.

Finally, we thought, we were going to have a "regular" ending to our seminary year.

However, Hashem had other plans and a much bigger and more devastating tragedy shook us all. Some of us were present for it, but there is no doubt that every Michlalah girl, along with the rest of the Jewish People, was deeply affected by the Lag B'omer tragedy at Meron.

We had overcome our personal and schoolwide struggles this year with *emunah*, *simchah shel mitzvah*, and *achdus*. Perhaps we had been primed to use these tools to deal with this national catastrophe. With her usual insight and understanding, Mrs. Schoonmaker came up with a beautiful initiative. Why not organize a *kumzitz* for all the seminaries? Together, we would sing to Hashem and say *brachos* (over baked goods made by the students) *l'ilui nishmas* the *kedoshim*, and overlook what separates us, trying to focus on the same *Hashem Echad* we all believe in and the holy *neshamos* that had been lost.

It sounded like a dream, but after two days, thanks to the joint effort of the administration, campus staff, and students, about a thousand girls from nearly forty seminaries all across the *hashkafic* spectrum were sitting under the stars on Michlalah's basketball court. Full of hope and inspiration, guided by Mrs. Yudin's

powerful words, we sang and perhaps even cried to Hashem, trying to bring some light to those dark days for the entire Jewish People.

It would be deceiving, insensitive and simplistic to say that the *kumzitz* healed our wounds. Until *techiyas ha-meisim*, the Meron Tragedy of 5781 will be another reason to cry every Tisha B'Av. That said, we truly feel that this unprecedented show of inter-seminary *achdus* was a great source of *chizuk* and comfort that helped us turn the page and make the best out of the darkness we were facing as individuals, as a school, and as a nation. The *kumzitz* showed us once again how *emunah*, *mitzvos*, and *achdus* can carry us through the hardest of times.



Snacks, drinks, and a heartfelt invitation for participants to recite berachos *l'ilui nishmas* the Meron victims.



## THOUGHTS ON OUR TIMES

*Rabbi Dr. Chaim Pollock writes about education, culture and the challenges of our age. He is the Senior Consultant to the Linda Pinsky School for Overseas Students at Michlalah.*

# TRANSCENDENTAL SOMATICS

**ALTHOUGH THIS TITLE IS UNFAMILIAR** because I invented it, the concept behind it is eternal. It is deeply anchored in our belief system and it deserves our attention.

It is likely that we connect this title with the well-known term "psychosomatic," and that connection is valid. "Psychosomatic" is based on the idea of the interrelationship between a person's mindset and his body, usually referring to the deleterious effect that a negative attitude could have in exacerbating and even causing physical ills.

I borrowed the title from it but purposefully did not use that term because I am not talking about the mind but that which seems to be distinct from it. And I am not referring to a bodily effect alone; my concept refers to the spirit of a person and its influence upon his intellectual capacities as well as his *guf*. That is what the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 25:5) calls: *הנשמה שהיא במוחו*, 'The soul that is in the mind.'

What is the power of the *neshama* 'that is in the mind'? Does the soul deal with metaphysical matters exclusively or is it connected to this-world experiences as well? Is its location in the mind an indication that it deals with the same worldly matters that the mind does? Or, since it is separate and disparate from the mind, is it only located there, while its focus is exclusively spiritual?

Shlomo HaMelech provides us with an answer (*Mishlei* 18:14):

רוח איש יבלכל מוחלה ורוזם נבאה מי ישאנָה

The spirit of a person will provide for him in his illness;  
who can bear a depressed spirit?

Rashi writes:

רוח...איש גבר ואינו נתן דאגה לבבו ומתקבל כל הבא עלי  
בשמחה ובחבה

The spirit of a courageous person does not let worry into  
his heart and accepts all that comes upon him with  
happiness and appreciation.

The message of *Sefer Mishlei* is clear: the state of our soul has a holistic impact. Our emotions and our bodies sense the stimulus of our *neshama*.

What makes this function of the spirit, of the soul, particularly appropriate for us, our children, and students in our present experience? What can we learn from the *posuk* and Rashi's commentary – even though the goal of not worrying at all and seeing all that befalls us as a source of happiness seems to be most elusive?

No one is unaware of the troubling events which have confronted us personally, as a people and in the world over the last many months. From pandemics to disasters in Meron and Surfside and that which was in between and to the alarming and frightful surge of

anti-Semitism, we are bombarded with disconcerting happenings. Shlomo HaMelech offers us a prescription that provides us with a buffer between our emotional well-being and the perils which threaten to encompass and overwhelm us. This is not a pie-in-the-sky platitude that has no relevance to the 'real world'; rather it is a concrete suggestion for the realities that are not in our control. That which is in our control—preventive medicine, safety inspections, and neighborhood surveillance—are obligatory. It is forbidden to rely upon miracles! But that which is not in our control—how are we to shield ourselves from devastating external events?

And an even more grievous concern! The Torah's moral dicta are clear. They are immutable, no less than the Torah itself, and for centuries and millennia were respected, at least in principle.

In the whirlwind of change and transition of the last two decades, values long-held dear are being trampled. If all this was taking place outside our community, it might have been sufficient to bemoan that grave deterioration. But, the venue of that decline impacts upon us and upon our children who are particularly vulnerable.

How do we empower 'the spirit to provide in time of illness'? The spirit needs to be nurtured; its nourishment stems from itself.

We need inspiration so that we and our loved ones will be *איש אשר רוח בו*, an individual of spirituality.

Such a person is not other-worldly. Quite the opposite. Such an individual draws upon his or her spirituality to serve as a guideline for this-world experiences. Spirituality imbues the this-world experience with a framework, a monitor, and a filter to take the good and to reject the bad.

Spirituality is not blind faith. It is *הנשמה שבמוחו*; its locale in the mind inspires straight thinking, honest evaluation and the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood, between that which is momentarily politically correct and truths that are eternal.

How does one hone that judgment and advanced spiritually-enhanced thinking?

The more advanced and sophisticated Torah learning is, the more it emphasizes process and analysis, the more one's spiritually-enhanced thinking becomes sharper and increasingly precise.

However, as parents and educators, we must not mislead ourselves into thinking that immersion in Torah texts alone provides the solution. If the relevance of those texts for our personal lives is not emphasized and understood, then their spiritual influence may very well be negligible. No less a personage than Rav Moshe Feinstein *zt"l* made this very point.

Decades ago, a prominent Rosh Yeshiva came to Rav Moshe expressing bewilderment: a student in his Yeshiva inadvertently damaged the property of another boy and claimed exemption from responsibility because the breakage happened by accident. "How could it be," asked the Rosh Yeshiva, "that the boy claimed an exemption from payment because his action was unintentional? We are now learning the very subject in Gemara that a person is liable for all damages, regardless of intent."

Rav Moshe answered, "That is because no one related the Gemara that was studied to the practical life of the student. To the student, the Gemara was dealing with esoterica, inapplicable to real-life situations."

We each have infinite spiritual capacity, but it must be initiated and invigorated. By the activation of our infinite spiritual capacity, our *neshama* can impact every aspect of our lives, intellectually, emotionally, and physically, and provide us with the means to healthily withstand all the challenges that we face.

May we find the means to give our *neshamos* that transcendental empowerment.

With best wishes for a *Shana Tova*,

Rabbi Chaim Pollock

# Under the Same Tree

AN APPRECIATION OF DEVORA MEINEKES RIVKA

## SCHOLARLY THOUGHTS

BY MRS. AVIGAIL (APFEL 5767) TELLER

*Mrs. Avigail (Apfel 5767) Teller attended Michlalah for two years and then received a B.A. from Thomas Edison University and an M.A. from Azrieli School of Jewish Education. For over a decade she has taught Tanach in Michlalah and several other seminaries and is currently Director of Academics for Machal. Mrs. Teller lives in French Hill with her husband and children.*

**A** theatrical production can only be successful when the cast on stage and the crew behind the scenes each execute their roles flawlessly. The performers who bring the script to life are quite literally in the spotlight and naturally receive the most attention and adulation. In contrast, the stagehands, who work tirelessly to ensure that the show runs smoothly, remain hidden from the audience's sight and awareness.

Similarly, there are people with whom we may spend a significant portion of our day and yet we fail to see them. These are the unappreciated, anonymous faces, with whom we interact all the time, but always superficially. If we even bother to consider them, we view them as insignificant. Despite being right before our eyes, these individuals, for all intents and purposes, are as invisible as the backstage crews.

Which brings us to our story. It is the tale of a woman named Devora. Not Devora the prophetess who governed beneath a tree and adjudicated the disputes of an entire nation.<sup>1</sup> Our Devora led a far more ordinary life. She was the unremarkable wet nurse of Rivka Imeinu. The only detail that the Torah provides about her life is, ironically, her death. Her death is encompassed in one simple line: "Devora, the wet nurse of Rivka,<sup>2</sup> died, and she was buried below Beis El, below the Alon and he<sup>3</sup> named it *Alon Bachut*—The Tree of Crying."<sup>4</sup>

The careful reader will realize that included in this simple *pasuk* are two previously unknown facts: first, that Devora, the wet nurse of Rivka, died. And second, that Devora, the wet nurse of Rivka, once

lived.

But who was she?

Why was a woman whom the Torah refers to as "Rivka's wet nurse" traveling with Yaakov and his family instead of at home with Rivka? No account is given of Devora leaving Rivka, so how and why did she end up with Yaakov? Further, the first and only time we hear about the existence of Devora is upon her death. But if this Devora was someone mourned deeply by our forefathers, as evident from the *pasuk*, why are we told nothing about her life?

As we know,<sup>5</sup> the Torah is only interested in conveying the details of that which is didactic in nature. Therefore, any individuals whom the Torah does discuss must have possessed a persona or accomplishment that is worth memorializing for all generations.

In the case of Devora, we encounter a unique situation. Devora is neither a woman whose life is recounted in the Torah nor is she a woman destined to be forgotten by the mists of time like countless others who lived then. Devora represents an intermediate position: a woman forgotten in life, but remembered in death; a four-thousand-year-old puzzle begging to be solved.

To begin to unravel this mystery, let us first take a deeper look at the context of her death. Devora's demise occurs while Yaakov and his family are in the city of Beis El, their final stop on a long journey. After many years and much trial and tribulation, Yaakov is at last poised to return to his parents' home.

It had not been Yaakov's choice to leave home in the first place. For the first part of his life, he spent his days in his tent where, like Yitzchak and Avraham before him,<sup>6</sup> he studied Torah.<sup>7</sup> After Yaakov succeeded in

securing the blessings that Eisav believed were rightfully his, Eisav resolved to kill his only brother. Rivka, intuiting Eisav's murderous intent, exhorted Yaakov to flee.<sup>8</sup>

Yaakov's exile was to be indefinite. Rivka did not tell him whether to return in five or even in ten years. She simply said that she would send for him when the time was right. Adding to this sense of finality, Yitzchak encouraged Yaakov to marry while away from his family, directing him to find a bride from Rivka's family.<sup>9</sup>

Only decades later did Rivka beckon for Yaakov to return home. In the interim, Yaakov acted as he had been instructed. He arrived at his uncle Lavan's home and married not one bride but four: Lavan's two daughters and their two maid-servants. God blessed him with many children, children who would later form the Twelve Tribes that comprised the Nation of Israel.

And then the long-awaited day finally arrived. A messenger came, bearing the tidings that by now seemed only a fantasy: Yaakov was to return home at last.

That messenger was Devora, the wet nurse of Rivka.<sup>10</sup>

The Midrash informs us that Rivka specifically chose Devorah to be the one who would inform Yaakov that it was time to come back. She had traveled all the way to Charan to deliver her message and remained with Yaakov until he departed for home.

To truly appreciate the significance of Devora's task, let us consider how old she must have been at the time.

Yaakov was 63 years old when he left home. He learned for 14 years in the *beis midrash* of Shem and Ever,<sup>11</sup> and then worked for his father-in-law Lavan for 20 years.<sup>12</sup> That would make Yaakov 97 years old upon his return. Rivka would have to have been at least 120.<sup>13</sup> Devora, having been Rivka's wet nurse, was obviously significantly older than even Rivka. These facts make Rivka's selection of Devora seem very perplexing.

Why was Devora, at her mature age, selected to be the messenger on so long and arduous a journey?<sup>14</sup> Did Rivka not have a multitude of servants,<sup>15</sup> presumably many of them stronger, healthier, and younger than her former wet nurse?<sup>16</sup>

The resolution to this question can be found by turning to Chazal and the commentaries.

Searching through the Midrash, one discovers that while Devora may have only been mentioned once by name in the Torah, she is clearly referenced anonymously several *parshiyos* earlier when Rivka left her home with Avraham's servant, Eliezer, to marry Yitzchak.<sup>17</sup>

The commentaries tell us that Rivka came

from a family of charlatans and idol worshippers.<sup>18</sup> Despite the negative influences of her environment, Rivka was a modest and refined young lady with a kind and charitable soul, worthy of marrying into the family of Avraham.<sup>19</sup> Even though she must have been frightened at the thought of her journey into the unknown with Eliezer, she was determined to not bring along anyone associated with her past.<sup>20</sup>

She was starting anew, with individuals whose values resonated deeply with her own beliefs. These were people whom she wanted to emulate and, therefore, any reminders of her former life might only hinder her future personal growth and aspirations.

Nonetheless, there was one person she *did* bring with her from her parents' household:

"And they sent away Rivka their sister, and her wet nurse, and Avraham's servant, and his men".<sup>21</sup>

This anonymous woman is Devora, the wet nurse of Rivka. She retained that title and remained with Rivka all the days of her life.<sup>22</sup>

It is highly remarkable when someone's nature is so radically different than that of her family, as was the case with Rivka. Such a phenomenon does not occur in a vacuum. Rivka's desire and ability to distinguish herself from her household must have come from somewhere or *someone*. Targum Yonason's Aramaic translation of this *pasuk* describes Rivka's departure from home in the following manner:

"**ואלוויות רבקה אחთהם וית פdagותה וית עבדא דארברם וית גוביו<sup>23</sup>.**"

Devora is referred to as *pedgavasa*, her teacher.

With this one-word translation, Devora's essence takes on a whole different dimension. She was not simply Rivka's wet nurse, she was also her mentor and her teacher<sup>24</sup>—Rivka's first source of sustenance not just physically, but spiritually.

Now we can begin to understand why Rivka sent Devora to Charan to summon Yaakov home. Why would she send someone of Devora's advanced age on such a trip when surely there must have been others better suited for the job?

The Abarbanel says that Rivka sent Devora specifically "because she was a wise woman."<sup>25</sup>

This is quite puzzling considering the fact that very little wisdom is required to deliver a simple and straightforward message. Clearly then, Devora's mission could not merely have

been to inform Yaakov to return home. She must have been given an additional task, one that does require intuition and wisdom. A task that Devora and Devora alone was suited for.

#### *What was this important task?*

As a mother, Rivka had been challenged with an incredibly difficult decision: should she allow her precious son Yaakov to stay in his hometown, possibly risking his life, or should she urge him to flee for his own safety? Realizing that the latter was the only viable option, Rivka adjured Yaakov to run.

Certainly, for the many long years that followed, Rivka must have mourned him and missed his presence terribly. No doubt she fervently hoped and prayed that he was upholding the moral standards he was raised with—to be righteous, gentle, and honest.

And when the time came to summon Yaakov home, Rivka sent him the one individual who could cleverly and skillfully navigate whatever circumstances she would encounter. That individual was Devora—her wise teacher and role model. Devora, who knew her family well and could handle them. Devora, whom Rivka trusted implicitly.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, her advanced age notwithstanding, Devora set off to find her old home in Charan, where she had lovingly nursed Rivka as a tender baby. Her goal? To seek out Yaakov to tell him to return to his birthplace at last.

Imagine how incredible that reunion must have been! Yaakov had raised his family in exile. He likely had told his children many stories. Stories of his parents and how they conducted their home. Stories of Eretz Yisrael, stories of the one true G-d, and of all the miracles that He had performed for their father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

And then, almost as if in a dream, Devora, his mother's beloved caretaker and mentor, arrived completely unexpectedly! She personified for Yaakov's children all the tales he had told them, every lesson and moral value he had tried to instill in their hearts and minds. She represented a whole new world to them; the existence of an entire family whom they had never seen, and the dream of living in Eretz Yisrael, a place that existed only in their minds. And when she died, they wept. They wept not only for her demise but also for what her passing symbolized—the loss of their sole connection to their relatives in Eretz Yisrael.

The *Da'as Sofrim* takes over the narrative here and clarifies all of our remaining questions.<sup>27</sup>

In the words of the *Da'as Sofrim*, Devorah's passing and the subsequent mourning of Yaakov's family is recorded to teach us the honor and reverence that we are supposed to display for "this type of woman."<sup>28</sup>

What type of woman? Who, after all, was Devora?

Devora's title was and forever will be that of wet nurse to Rivka even though she was clearly much more. And in that humble title, we can come to appreciate the "type of woman" that demands our considerable respect.

Her mistress, Rivka, led a difficult life. After leaving everything she knew behind upon leaving her father's house, Rivka entered a household of men and became the sole female presence. She had no mother-in-law to provide guidance, no daughters to confide in. She endured many years of infertility,<sup>29</sup> and then subsequently experienced a difficult twin pregnancy.<sup>30</sup> She gave birth to two sons who proved to be quite challenging to raise. One son strayed far from her ways and the other, her pride and joy, was forced to leave.

But ultimately, she was never really alone. Why? Because she had a shoulder to cry on, a confidant, a mother figure who could give her perspective and *chizuk* when she most needed it—she had her wet nurse Devora.

Who was Devora?

Many of us are lucky enough to have people in our lives like her, or perhaps we are that person for someone else. These are the people who can always see the big picture when we can't. These are the people who reassure us, "It's going to be okay. Look! You've already been through so much and you've pulled through. There's a master plan at work here, and it's going to work out at the end, you'll see. And in the meantime, I'm here with you."

This is the person who exudes boundless empathy and positivity. This is the person who keeps you going when you're down, who sacrifices their time and energy without expecting any recognition or reward in return.

This is the person who knows that it's not about them. Their place is in the background, backstage, removed from the spotlight.

Devora played this silent, supporting role for some of the most prominent figures in the Chumash for the majority of her life. She helped Rivka raise her children and she was the person Rivka trusted most in the world to make that journey to Yaakov, to find him in whatever predicament, and bring him back. She was the only person Yaakov would have trusted to bring him home. She was there for him throughout his difficult journey—his confrontation with Eisav,<sup>31</sup> the abduction of Dina,<sup>32</sup> all those painful hardships, up until the very end of her life. She played an essential role in the world of our forefathers but she did not share their spotlight.

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## IN CONVERSATION

# Machal Students from the Southern Hemisphere Talk About Their Growth-Filled Year North of the Equator

**M**ichlalah always attracts students of diverse nationalities and Machal 5781 was no exception. A contingent of six South American students (hailing from Mexico, Chile, and Brazil) joined dozens of girls from the Northern Hemisphere for a year of learning and growth. Although greatly outnumbered, they easily became an intrinsic part of the Michlalah mosaic and added their own distinct flavor to Machal.

Michlalah today spoke to four of these students to find out more about their Machal experience. Meet Hannah Pollack of Chile, and Frida Khafif, Bella Picciotto, and Hadar Wajchenberg of Brazil.

## WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO GO TO MICHLALAH?

**Hadar:** In Brazil, after graduating high school, most girls go to college and a few to seminary. I decided to come to Michlalah and it was the best decision in my life. In the beginning, I wasn't sure about going because of Corona. But Michlalah showed us the schedule and I was hooked. They showed a lot of concern for us and always took care of us no matter what and when. Dealing with the pandemic was not easy, but Michlalah did a great job and I definitely don't regret my decision to come!

**Frida:** Although it is not typical for a Brazilian girl to attend seminary, I have some cousins who went to Michlalah and they always say how incredible this experience was. I wanted to go to a place that just focuses on Torah learning for one whole year. I knew how much I would gain and that it would give me values that will take me through life. It's hard to go to a place where they don't speak your mother tongue and where you don't know anyone. But when you think how much you will gain in terms of Torah, knowledge, and fun, it is more than worth it.

**Bella:** Coming to study in Israel was something I've always wanted, because, even though I'm exposed to Torah and

*shiurim* at home, I was looking for something deeper, for a type of growth that I felt I would only be able to get studying in Israel, in an environment like Michlalah's. I knew about Michlalah from some cousins and friends who went there. We knew it was a serious and committed place and my parents were comfortable sending me. It wasn't such a hard decision because, as I said, I felt a need to grow. Nevertheless, since my twin sister (Leah, who also attended Machal) and I are our parents' only children, it was really hard for them to be away from us for almost a whole year. And it was hard for us as well.

**Hannah:** I was born and raised in Chile and privileged to be part of the only Orthodox community in the entire country. For us, it's not so much of a given that you go to seminary after high school, and it's even rarer to go in September. Since we have a Southern Hemisphere calendar, our school year goes from March to December. Many girls from my school go straight to college in Chile and others go to seminary after graduation in January. My class was



Hamantashen baking takes on an international twist with (L-R) Bella Picciotto and Frida Khafif of Brazil, Chana Chambre of Passaic, NJ, and Hannah Pollack of Chile.

quite an exception because out of fourteen girls, seven left twelfth grade a semester earlier and came to learn in Eretz Yisrael. I chose Michlalah because my principal told me it would be great for me and I trusted his advice. I'd also had the opportunity to come to Israel for a family simchah, so I came to visit and knew right away that it was the place for me.

#### HOW DID YOU FIND THE ADJUSTMENT TO MICHLALAH? WHAT WAS CHALLENGING FOR YOU?

**Frida:** In the beginning, it's hard for everyone—a different country, different people, no family, and for me a different language. But because of Corona, we spent more time on campus in the beginning and it was easier to adjust and make new friends. Michlalah provided a special South American faculty member just for us, Mrs. Vanessa (Garzon 5760) Dreyfuss, and she would talk to us every week. She was very helpful and caring and made us feel comfortable.

**Hannah:** To be honest, before going to Michlalah, I knew nothing about seminary but I was okay to be out of my comfort zone and try new things. Socially, it was a little hard for me because the culture between Americans and Latins is very different, from the language and way of speaking, to modes of dress and food preferences. I came knowing English and, as the year progressed, my English got even better. Even so, it was hard to express myself sometimes, because it is not easy to express ideas and feelings in another language. The entire Michlalah staff was very attentive and always trying to help, making sure to create a positive and spiritual environment. For me, that was one of the most special things in Michlalah. I felt welcome from the very beginning and I'm very grateful for that.

#### WHAT DID YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR YEAR IN MICHLALAH AND WHAT DID YOU GAIN?

**Hadar:** Michlalah gave me the skills to be able to learn and the desire to learn and study Torah. In my whole life, I didn't learn as much as I learned this year! Being in Israel and learning Torah you really feel part of Am Israel and I'm very grateful to my parents who gave me this opportunity.

**Bella:** The best thing about my year in Michlalah was getting to know how deep Torah knowledge can go and all the potential that I have in myself to continue growing and learning *b'ezrat Hashem*. Before coming to Michlalah, I wasn't used to opening a *sefer* and looking something up. But I gained so much love for Torah and the confidence to continue learning. I was exposed to inspiring teachers and rabbanim who taught me so much about *emunah* and *yirat shamayim* just by being themselves and I gained a new sense of *chashivut ha-Torah* and halachah. In Michlalah I discovered that the thing I like to do most is to study Torah and it's hard to see myself now going back to secular studies.

**Hannah:** It was really special to be in the presence of great, awe-inspiring people—the administrators, campus staff, teachers, and students. What I gained from Michlalah is more awareness of the incredible potential in every person. The teachers' example and the administration's *mesirus nefesh*, the campus staff's dedication and constant availability, and the incredible commitment and growth-orientation of my peers, empowered me to push myself and to see the greatness in others.

#### WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHER SOUTH AMERICAN GIRLS WHO ARE



Frida Khafif and Hadar Wajchenberg of Brazil at an erev Shabbos challah bake with Machal.

#### CONSIDERING A YEAR IN MICHLALAH?

**Hadar:** I would definitely tell them that every second in Michlalah is worth it. You gain and learn something just by being there. Michlalah exceeded all my expectations for this year and I can't believe it's already over.

**Frida:** I would say that it's the best experience and that it is a must. There were so many incredible moments and a huge number of new things I learned and will share and keep forever, things that helped me to build myself and will help me hold on to my values.

**Bella:** I would tell them that coming to Michlalah was a very good experience—not just for a year, but for my life. First of all, you will have the *zechut* of living in Eretz Yisrael for ten months, traveling around the most amazing country in the world and feeling the *Shechinah* where it is most clear. That alone would already be worth coming for. Second, it is an experience of growth and independence that is very hard to have in South America. The deep and constant learning you will have here is something exclusive and is very fulfilling.

I had the taste of the happiness that Torah can bring to one's life and I'm sure this will accompany me for the rest of my life. It is so beautiful to be around people who are so inspiring and have a way of life that is clearly guided by Torah; it makes you think about how you would like your home and your life to be. It won't be easy. To be honest, sometimes it was really hard, much harder than I imagined. But it builds your resilience and it will be one of the most special experiences of your life.

**Hannah:** Come with an open mind, healthy optimism, and a generous eye that strives to learn and sees the good in everything and everyone. I can't tell exactly what the culture shock would be for each person because there are many different communities and cultures within South America. However, I can say that if you're expecting the difference it shouldn't be so shocking. I'd also say one should not focus so much on those differences. Instead, try to bridge the cultural gaps that separate us. We're all Jewish girls of the same age, in the same stage of life, trying to learn and striving to be better *ovdei Hashem*.

# Getting Together

## Alumnae Week 5781

By Rav Avraham Lubarsky

**G**ENERALLY TAKING PLACE IN mid-January during college winter break and Machal exam week, the Annual Alumnae Week program brings together dozens of Machal alumnae from across the world as well as Eretz Yisrael. Students participate in *shiurim* with Machal staff, arrange personal meetings with teachers, and reconnect with each other.

I've had the privilege of organizing several Alumnae Week programs during my tenure as an administrator and it is one of the most satisfying endeavors of the year. This year it became clear that with non-existent international travel and mobility within Israel greatly limited, we would have to adjust the program. I met with Rabbi Yisroel Benovitz who assisted us with many projects this year to discuss Alumnae Week. Reb Yisroel's vision, creative thinking, and organized execution produced a very special program. Libby Josephs and Atara Benovitz provided top-notch technical support.

After determining the winter breaks for the various institutions, we surveyed our alumnae concerning which times were best for them, a complicated task for a group spread across many time zones. We then planned the various teaching slots and arranged with our teachers which slots worked for them. As the program began, we realized the very high participation rate and added another day to accommodate the demand.

The Alumnae Chaburos allowed alumnae to learn in small groups with Machal teachers recreating a very special aspect of their Machal year. Mrs. Saperstein and I taught the *chaburos*, which included such topics as *בִּיאַת לְשׁוֹנוֹת הָאָלֶה*, *רַק יִשְׁמַר לֵךְ פָּנָים תְּשִׁבְחָה תְּהִלָּה*, *Intrrospections and Retrospections*, and *Topics in Alei Shur*.

Secondly, we encouraged and provided support for Machal Zoom reunions. The students who participated in these events appreciated the opportunity to reconnect with each other and their Machal teachers.

In retrospect, I am left with two somewhat contradictory impressions that define all these programs while also describing much of the Covid-19 reality. On the one hand, as the saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention. If not for the various Corona restrictions, we would not have stretched ourselves beyond our comfort zone, many of these events would not have taken place, and we would not have reached the unprecedented number of alumnae who participated this year. On the other hand, a Zoom *shiur*, *chaburah*, or reunion, as wonderful as it may be, can never replace face-to-face interaction. In this upside-down world it behoves us to retain this clarity.

This coming year, we are looking forward to organizing more opportunities to reconnect with alumnae.

If you would like to share your ideas, please email me directly at [aylubarsky@gmail.com](mailto:aylubarsky@gmail.com).

We asked some Alumnae Week participants to share their impressions. Here's what they said:

### **Bobbi-Esther (Gordon 5771) Wasserman:**

**R**ight after my year in Machal, I made Aliyah. Each year I was so excited to be able to attend alumnae week. I lived right in Bayit Vegan and was attending Michlalah's Israeli college so I was already right there! As Hashem blessed me with a job and a family, and as I later moved farther away in the country, attending Alumnae Week became impossible. This year, though, Virtual Alumnae Week gave us all a special opportunity and I was able to participate when I hadn't been able to in years. While, of course, nothing is better than in-person learning, attending a *shiur* on Zoom has its advantages! I'm sure many others feel the same way. In each *shiur*, I found a message, a moment, or a lesson to take with me and implement into my life. The learning I loved so much when I was in Machal ten years ago is the same learning that is going on in Machal today.

### **Rachel (Wolf 5773) Gottesman:**

**O**ut of the less-than-ideal reality of Covid, Michlalah brought something positive. Something that, after a long day of trying to work from home and entertain my kids at the same time, gave me something to look forward to. Something for me. I learned from many wonderful *rebbeim* and teachers who made me feel like I was back in seminary. I was lucky enough to join a *chaburah* with Mrs. Saperstein. One thing she said has really changed my outlook on life post-Corona: "Everyone wants things to go back to normal. But we shouldn't want normal life! We shouldn't be satisfied with where we were. Instead, try using that desire for pre-Corona life and transfer it to a desire for Mashiach!" May we all long for the *geulah* and use our experiences over the past year to help with that longing. And may we all continue joining Michlalah for more *shiurim*—online and in-person!

### **Yitzhar Shalom (5778):**

**P**ersonally, it was an incredibly profound experience to see all of the alumnae who

came together from their different time zones and schedules and at many different stages in life, all connected in that moment by the Torah of Eretz Yisrael. Torah supersedes time and space. And, through the *limud ha-Torah* provided by Alumnae Week, we were all back in the Michlalah classroom, sitting together as though the years that have passed and the miles between us are immaterial.

### **Marnie Weingarten (Machal 5779)**

**I**was amazed at how Michlalah saw the pandemic as an opportunity to further its alumnae programming and the virtual platform gave testament to Michlalah's global and intergenerational impact. Machal graduates had the opportunity to attend their choice of *shiurim* offered by many of Michlalah's phenomenal mechanchim and mechanchos. Topics included "Breaking Bad Habits," "Enhancing My Life with Emunah," "The Purpose of a *Makom Torah*," "Perspectives on the Parsha Based on the *Pachad Yitzchak*," and many others. My fellow alumna, Aliza Rothman (5779), noted that "the topics spoken about were extremely diverse and the teachers somehow found a way to make sure they applied to everyone's life, whether you were a mother with children or a girl just recently returned from seminary." The inspiration and *chizuk* the teachers provided was just what we needed amidst the challenges posed by COVID-19.

### **Tzip Kupferstein (5778):**

**I**was privileged to join a 5-week alumnae *chaburah* given by Mrs. Saperstein, called "Tzipisa L'Yeshua." Using *mefarshim* and insightful *meshalim*, Mrs. Saperstein taught us that waiting for the ultimate *yeshua*, as well as our personal *yeshuot*, is a huge part of our *avodah*. We learned about the incredible opportunity we can grasp if we open our eyes to the benefit of living with an awareness that we are in Hashem's hands. It was a warm environment in which everyone felt comfortable and Mrs. Saperstein engaged all the girls to contribute to the discussions. She would have us analyze the *mefarshim* and the different ideas she spoke about. It was a great feeling to be a part of this unique learning program.

# In A New Way

## Machal 5756 25 Years Later

by Yedida Lubin (5756)

**W**ay back when I was in Machal, I would obsessively scour the Machal board for all new announcements. It's no surprise that I keep up with the news and announcements from Machal via emails from the office. When I saw one from Rav Lubarsky asking for volunteers to host Zoom reunions during alumnae week, I knew it was *min hashamayim*.

In planning the virtual reunion, Rav Pollock was the first person I turned to. He immediately agreed to speak to our group via the now ever-present Zoom.



I wanted to get in touch with as many women as possible from our year, and I started with a list of about twenty email addresses and a list from Michlalah with a lot of outdated contact information. The response to my initial email was incredible! With a lot of networking, we were able to contact the majority of the hundred and twenty alumnae from our year.

In preparation for the evening, I also made a short video composed of photos from our year. Many people sent in their favorite photos and I added my own as well. For the soundtrack, I used a couple of hit songs from back when we were in Machal—"Yerushalayim Oro Shel Olam" by Avraham Fried and Dedi's "Lecha Etein et HaAretz HaZot." I also wanted to remember our teachers and role models who had passed away and I made a PowerPoint presentation highlighting Rav and Rabbanit Copperman zt"l and Rav Shraga Silverstein zt"l.

Our reZoomion took place on Sunday, January 17, 2021. More than seventy women joined from locations including Seattle, Montreal, London, and Baltimore. Of course, there was a large presence from the New York area and Eretz Yisrael. The excitement was palpable as each new name popped up.

Rav Pollock opened the event with a very inspiring *dvar Torah* about the power of the *chaburah*. The program continued with the memorial section as well as Tehillim for all those suffering from COVID-19 and other illnesses. The evening lightened up with the showing of the video. Then we transitioned into catching up with our old friends, splitting into four breakout rooms according to our old *kevutzot* (for those who could remember!). After nearly two hours, it was time to say *Laila Tov* even though many of us could have gone on for hours. It was a *zechut* to be a part of this evening full of energy, enthusiasm, and *chizuk* from the comfort of my own home.

In the words of one participant, it was a "smashing success." Another noted that "it was the best thing that's come out of Corona." One said she'd had other Zoom reunions and while others left her "feeling flat," this event was meaningful and left her "feeling nostalgic for simpler times."

After such an uplifting evening of reconnection, we were all eager to stay in touch. As Corona subsides, there have been suggestions for in-person gatherings and perhaps a newsletter for alumnae of our year. It looks like there's more in store for Machal 5756!

## A 21st-Century Style Reunion

By Yona (Schaap 5761) Zalesch

**Our Mission:** A 20-Year Machal Reunion.

**Our Challenge:** How do we reach out to 147 Machal girls from twenty years ago, living around the globe in many different time zones, to create the connectedness so many of us are craving during these unique times?

**Our Success Story:** An inspirational, fun-filled, emotional Zoom reunion.

**O**n Sunday, March 2nd, 2021, we were blessed to have an opportunity to learn, daven, and reacquaint ourselves with special people from our past. Over 60 students and staff from Machal 5761 (2000), hailing from all around the world, attended a Zoom Reunion. The reunion began with informal schmoozing, where we caught glimpses of friends' and teachers' slightly older faces, houses, and family members.

As our event happened only a few days after the communal tragedy in Meron, we were honored to hear words of *chizuk* from, and recite Tehillim with, Rav Pollock. This was followed by updated alumnae service information from Mrs. Schoonmaker. Rav Ginsburg then shared a beautiful *shiur*, full of inspiration and humor. Our program continued with the appearance of many staff members including Rav Rudman, Mrs. Weinberg, Mrs. Saperstein, Mrs. Blachman, and Mrs. David. We watched a video highlighting memories of our time in Michlalah. Students and staff were then divided into breakout rooms, to catch up and reconnect in a more intimate setting.

So many of us experienced an infusion of inspiration in the early part of our lives. Our school days were sprinkled with *shiurim*, discussions, Shabbatonim, and trips designed to build our spiritual and interpersonal connections. Our experience in Michlalah gave us a massive dose of intense introspection, learning, *tefillah*, and connection. We were then asked to live our lives, which are often full of seemingly mundane, day-to-day experiences and responsibilities. Yet so many of us continue to strive to reconnect to the people and experiences that helped us tune into a higher purpose.



I often think of a game of laser tag (you can try to guess the ages of my children). One finds a team, plans strategy, finds hiding places, creates formations, and collaborates with teammates. Yet, without regularly revisiting the charging station, one runs out of power. It is my sincere hope that this reunion was able to serve as our stop at the charging station to renew our power and reinfuse spirituality into our daily lives.

## ALUMNAE GUIDANCE & ADVICE

Available to all Machal Students & Alumnae Free of Charge

### Mrs. Dina Schoonmaker

**CALL (Israel time):**

Fridays until 1 hour before Shabbat

011-972-52-764-9332 or

011-972-53-277-5084

To schedule a call email [dinaschoonmaker2@gmail.com](mailto:dinaschoonmaker2@gmail.com)

- **Dating**

- **Engagement**

- **Marriage**

- **Family issues**

- **Career choices**

- **Challenges to New Stages of Life**

### Mrs. Rivka Yudin

**CALL (Israel time):**

Sundays & Thursdays 9:00p-10:30p

718-689-1353

011-972-2-641-6522 or 011-972-53-724-4715

To schedule a call email [yudin613@gmail.com](mailto:yudin613@gmail.com)

## Under the Same Tree

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Who is Devora?

Devora is one of the invisible people who inhabit our world. We interact with them every day but we don't truly take notice of them—unless we make an effort to do so.

Now we can understand what the *Da'as Sofrim* is trying to convey when he writes, "to teach us about honoring this type of woman." Which type of woman? The Torah tells us to have respect for the people who are the anonymous, supporting characters, to see all the invisible people, and appreciate their essential roles in our lives.

There is another Devora in the Tanach, a far more famous Devora. This is Devora the Judge. A woman who found herself occupying a traditionally masculine position, but she was the best person for the job. She sat under a tree, out in the open, to prevent problems of *yichud*,<sup>33</sup> but this also served to emphasize her importance. Instead of traveling to people to judge their claims, as Shmuel had done previously, the people came to adjudicate their disputes before her.<sup>34</sup>

While Devora the wet nurse was buried beneath a tree and was mourned, Devora the judge sat beneath her tree and judged an entire nation.

According to Chazal, it was the very same tree.<sup>35</sup>

This is no coincidence. There is a deeper association between the two Devoras, the one who was laid to rest beneath that tree and the one who chose to sit in its shade. Why do Chazal establish a connection between a quiet, low-key wet nurse and a prominent leader and judge who was so important that the nation traveled to her to seek judicial wisdom?

Chazal may link the two to suggest that these two paradigms of women exist in complete harmony.

One Devora plays a public role and the other a private one. But these women are not contradictory. Both roles are sanctioned, both are necessary, and both kinds of women—the woman in the courtroom and the woman in the kitchen—are noble and complementary.

Of course, Devora the Judge knew of Devora the wet nurse and both women would have had only the greatest admiration for the other. We know this because although the two Devoras seem dissimilar to each other, the simple truth is that they are both found under the same tree.

They both may have led vastly different lives, but they each lived a life that exemplified sincere devotion and dedication to ideals far greater than themselves.

#### ENDNOTES:

1 *Shoftim* 4:5.

2 This title of "דבורה מינקת רבקה," "Devora the wet nurse of Rivka," is how

she is consistently referred to in all sources.

3 I.e. Yaakov.

4 *Bereishis* 35:8.

5 There are many places where *mefarshim* will emphasize that there are no unnecessary words in the Torah. One example of this is Rabbenu Bachye on *Bereishis* 47:28:

"אבל התורה قولת רמזים, אין בה תיבה ואות שלא נאמר לעננו הכרחי ווחוץ"  
"But the Torah is all hints, there is no word or letter that is not stated for a necessary reason."

6 *Bereishis Rabba* 56:11.

7 Rashi, *Bereishis* 25:27.

8 *Bereishis* 27:42-45.

9 *Bereishis* 28:2.

10 *Midrash Lekach Tov, Bereishis* 35:8:1.

11 Rashi, *Bereishis* 28:9.

12 Ibid.

13 This calculation is based on the *pasuk* in *Bereishis* 25:20, which states that Yitzchak was 40 years old when he married, and according to *Bereishis* 25:26 he was 60 when Yaakov and Eisav were born. There are a couple of possibilities suggested by the Midrash for Rivka's age when she married. The youngest possibility is 3 years old.

14 Chazal say that this was a seventeen-day journey on foot (*Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer* 17).

15 In *Bereishis* 26: 12-25 we are told of Yitzchak's great wealth.

16 See the Ramban, who argues that Devora's advanced age was indeed an issue. In fact, the Ramban disagrees with the Midrash, and explains that the messenger could not possibly have been Devora as it would be highly improbable to send such an elderly emissary.

17 *Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer* 16; *Midrash Sechel Tov, Bereishis* 24

18 *Megillah* 13b; *Bereishis Rabba* 75:5; Rashi, *Bereishis* 31:19; Rashi, *Bereishis* 24:31.

19 Rashi, *Bereishis* 24:14.

20 Abarbanel, *Bereishis* 24:57.

21 *Bereishis* 24:59.

22 *Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer* 16; *Midrash Sechel Tov, Bereishis* 24.

23 *Targum Yonason, Bereishis* 24:59.

24 According to *Seder HaDoros* (*Eleph HaShlishi*, p. 25) Devora was the daughter of Utz, who was the son of Nachor, the brother of Avraham. It makes sense that Avraham's great-niece had been exposed to his worldview and seemingly chose to live her life in accordance with it. More specifically, when Hashem commanded Avraham to leave his homeland and go to Eretz Israel, the *pasuk* tells us that he took with him all "the souls he had made in Charan." Rashi (*Bereishis* 12:5) explains that when Avraham and Sarah were in Charan they connected with many people and brought them "close to the Divine Presence." Devora would have had plenty of opportunity to learn from her great-aunt and uncle.

25 Abarbanel, *Bereishis* 35:8.

26 One may wonder why, given the complicated circumstances of this mission, Rivka did not go herself. It is likely that she was reluctant to leave her blind and aging husband.

27 *Da'as Sofrim, Bereishis* 35:8.

28 "לְהוֹרָאָה עַל כְּבוֹד נְשָׁמֶן מִסְגֵּב הָהָר".

29 *Bereishis* 25:21.

30 Rashi, *Bereishis* 25:22.

31 *Bereishis* 33:1-17.

32 *Bereishis* 34:1-31.

33 Abarbanel, *Shoftim* 4:5.

34 Malbim, *Shoftim* 4:5.

35 *Torah Shleimah, Bereishis* 35:8.

# Healing and Holocaust: Body and Soul

## The 2021 Rose Stark a" h Memorial Event Was Not Your Usual Holocaust Presentation

Dr. Emmy Leah Zitter, Chair of Michlalah's English Department

**L**IKE PEOPLE THE WORLD OVER, the English Department at Michlalah-Jerusalem faced a tough decision during the global pandemic. For fourteen years, working with Michlalah's Center for Holocaust Education, we'd organized a special event about the Shoah, focusing on those who gave their lives *al Kiddush Hashem*—and on those who survived to live and rebuild their lives *al Kiddush Hashem*, as well. The evening had become a Jerusalem tradition for the English speakers of Israel. After her *petirah*, the event was named for my mother, Mrs. Rose Stark a" h, an Auschwitz survivor who shared her experiences and *berachot* with our audience for many years.

And now... Covid.

With the pandemic raging worldwide, we wondered whether to go forward with the event. In an age of quarantines and lockdowns, how could we continue as always? But in a time of mourning and fear, how could we not continue sharing our message of strength, hope, *emunah*?

The question then became...could we engage our audience, share our message of inspiration, touch the younger generation, using Zoom technology?

With Hashem's help, the answer was a resounding yes.

We searched for a theme relating to our own difficult days and came up with something unexpected. We would focus on the Holocaust and Healing.

Healing...and Holocaust? Really? As they say in Israel—*mah hakesher*? What's the connection?

For starters, we dedicated the event to today's health workers—doctors, nurses, researchers, ambulance crews, hospital staffers, secretaries organizing vaccine drives: today's healers.

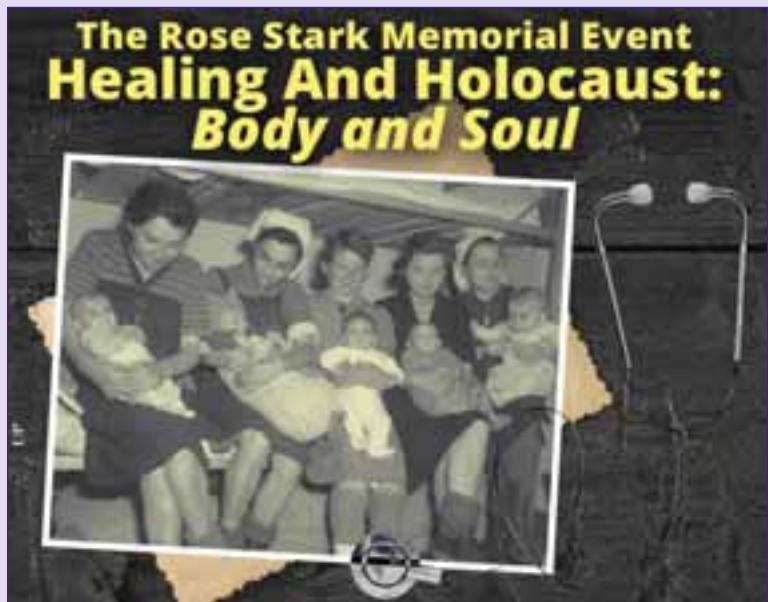
Our first speaker combined the themes of the Holocaust and today's pandemic. Dr. Yoel Isenberg is a child of Polish survivors and a senior physician in Jerusalem's Shaarei Zedek Hospital. After describing his parents' Holocaust experiences, Dr. Isenberg, a geriatric specialist, shared insights—sometimes saddening, often inspiring—into the lives of elderly survivors during the pandemic. Characteristically, the Zoom interview was held from Dr. Isenberg's car, on his phone: he was delayed getting home after making house calls throughout Israel. The miracle of technology meets the dedication of today's healers.

Our featured speaker, world-renowned *Maggid* Rabbi Paysach Krohn, took us back to the darkest days of the Holocaust. His central story focused on a *tefillah* written in a concentration camp—a prayer to be said before eating *chometz* on Pesach. To keep their bodies alive, these broken prisoners had to eat their rations of moldy bread. To keep their spirits, their souls alive, they had to show their faith in Hashem by rededicating those lives to Him in an unforgettable prayer.

And yes, the spirit, the soul of our people did emerge unbroken from the ashes of the camps. The spirit of healing is dramatically evident in the story of the Klausenberger Rebbe, shared with us by

Shira Leibowitz Schmidt in a fascinating presentation. The Klausenberger Rebbe lost his wife and eleven children in the Holocaust. At one point, shot and with only dead leaves to stop the bleeding, the Rebbe made a promise: If he survived, he would build a hospital in Israel. Hashem healed him, and he not only rebuilt a family, but he also built Laniado Hospital, in whose maternity ward over 150,000 babies have been born. Healing, indeed.

Every birth is a miracle; the birth of children to survivors is especially moving. But perhaps the most miraculous Holocaust births took place in a lager in Dachau, and so the event ended with a film documenting the amazing story of seven children born in the last months of the war in a concentration camp. And in perhaps the most healing moment of our event, we met Dr. Akiva Chaim Rosenthal, the youngest of the seven children, arguably the youngest survivor of the Holocaust. In the name of his mother Miriam a" h, Akiva Chaim blessed the audience—hundreds of viewers from Israel, the US, Canada, Brazil, Russia, the Czech Republic, even Tunisia—with a blessing of long life, peace and goodness, a blessing of sustenance, a blessing of health, and an end to the pandemic. In a word, a blessing of healing.



*Postscript:* Let's end with one of dozens of letters Michlalah received after this year's annual English-language Holocaust event—one that has inspired similar events around the world:

From BL: "Thank you so much for this wonderful, unbelievable experience. I am not exaggerating when I say it made a total change in my attitude to the subject. I always shy away from Holocaust-related conferences, books, etc. I found them too painful. Now I see what I've missed. Thank you for opening up a positive angle, demonstrating the courage and strength that helped the sufferers survive. *Ashreinu* to be part of this nation, along with the departed survivors and their descendants. Thank you for all you've done. (And may I say thanks to Corona for Zoom?)"

If you missed the event or would like to watch it again, you can find it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/C2PvxqyocM0>

# STAYING IN TOUCH WITH ALUMNAE & FACULTY

## MAZAL TOV ON WEDDINGS:

Leah Berman (5777) & Uri Spiro  
 Dena Bienenfeld (5763) & Kalman Flaks  
 Chaya Cohen (5779) & Yaakov Kaminetsky. Mazal tov to her parents Chana (Danziger 5753) & Aharon Cohen, and his parents Elisheva (Benovitz 5748) & Yisroel Kaminetsky.  
 Leah Engelman (5777) & Tzvi Eli Cohen  
 Tehila Finkelstein (5776) & Uri Schneider. Mazal tov to her parents Elissa (Schwartz 5747) & Barry Finkelstein.  
 Dina Golfeiz (5769) & Uri Westrich  
 Batsheva Golker (5777) & Uriel Leblanc. Mazal Tov to her parents Annette (Faber 5752) & Jeremy Golker.  
 Meira (5778) Gurell & Matthew Wexler  
 Rochel Hirsch (5776) & Menachem Gans  
 Nechama Kurland (5772) & Jacob Sternberg  
 Shira Kurland (5779) & Jacob Dauer  
 Elisheva Marcus (5778) & Yitzchak Kaminetsky  
 Shoshana Schreier (5776) & Ezra Hagler  
 Jennifer Silverman (5775) & Ezra Teichman  
 Ora Lea Tewel (5765) & David Dayan  
 Devorah Tuchman (5777) & Jeremy Perlow. Mazal Tov to her parents Suzie (Maggid 5749) & Ele Tuchman.  
 Tamar Wasserman (5772) & Avi Reich. Mazal Tov to her parents Chana (Kahn 5746) & Noam Wasserman.  
 Ariella Wiedekehr (5778) & Jacob Rosenfeld  
 Elka Wiesenbergs (5777) & Shmuli Blonder

## MAZAL TOV ON BIRTHS:

Odilia (Shemer 5770) & Dovid Ben Abu on the birth of their son  
 Hanna Ledia (Afriat 5759) & Yohai Albo on the birth of their son  
 Shira (Zuckier 5768) & Rafael Asper on the birth of their daughter  
 Esther (Bleier 5770) & Mattias Amster on the birth of their son Noam Elimelech  
 Oksana (Natanelov 5767) & Ephraim Aykelinchayev on the birth of their son Yaakov Baruch  
 Elizabeth (Carmen 5770) & Colin Bergman on the birth of their daughter Hadassah Shalva  
 Sara (Esrig 5772) & Eli Bilmes on the birth of their son Gavriel Moshe  
 Aviva (Schlesinger 5766) & Jesse Bienenfeld on the birth of their daughter  
 Menucha (Kahn 5766) & Naftali Brenner on the birth of their daughter  
 Davina (Sagoskin 5772) & Yechiel Bresler on the birth of their daughter Miriam Nava  
 Miriam (Baron 5764) & Baruch Burstein on the birth of their son Chaim  
 Chanita (Engelberg 5768) & Baruch Cassel on the birth of their son Akiva Yitzchak  
 Rivka (Gerber 5762) & Yisroel Charloff on the birth of their daughter Esther Malka  
 Priva (Jacobovitz, Michlalah 5774) & Mordechai Yehuda Cohen on the birth of their son.  
 Mazal tov to grandparents Chani (Steiner 5749) Menachem Jacobovitz.  
 Ariella (Lunzer 5773) & David Dachor on the birth of their son Shlomo Yehuda  
 Elisheva (Swartz 5771) & Michael Friedman on the birth of their son Moshe Adin  
 Meira (Margulis 5778) & Yaki Gedanyan on the birth of their daughter  
 Meira (Shemer 5769) & Or Gera on the birth of their son  
 Kayla (Pliskin 5756) & Avi Hack on the birth of their daughter Rochel Leah  
 Sofia (Peimani 5770) & Emanuel Haghighat on the birth of their son Yaakov Yisrael  
 Mindy (Eisenberg 5758) & Chaim Hilewitz on the birth of their son Moshe  
 Shani (Schlesinger 5762) & Edon Hirt on the birth of their daughter  
 Rikki (Lewis 5774) & Sammy Kahn on the birth of their son Elisha  
 Yehudit (Fischer 5766) & Benjamin Kandel on the birth of their daughter Naomi Hila.  
 Mazal tov to grandparents Brocha (Perl, Michlalah 5736) & Ariel Fischer.  
 Mindel (Zomber 5769) & Naftali Kassora on the birth of their daughter Chava Sheindel  
 Rikki (Sugarman 5770) & Shaya Katz on the birth of their son  
 Talia (Wasserman 5770) & Sender Klein on the birth of their son. Mazal tov to grandparents Chana (Kahn 5746) & Noam Wasserman.  
 Tami (Lipshitz 5766) & Aveeshi Lev on the birth of their son  
 Naomi (Abrams 5764) & Avi Markovic on the birth of their son Yosef  
 Martha (Wall 5771) & Yehuda Meyers on the birth of their daughter Adira Pesya  
 Zahava (Rothberg 5778) & Ephraim Miretzky on the birth of their son  
 Avigail (Schwert 5767) & Motte Neuberger on the birth of their daughter Rachel  
 Sarina (Miller 5770) & Gaby Novick on the birth of their daughter Odela Avigail  
 Rachelli (Goldberg 5777) & Mikey Pearl on the birth of their daughter. Mazal tov to grandparents Yocheved (Bruckstein 5754) & Efrim Goldberg.  
 Ashira (Forman 5776) & Roni Perez on the birth of their daughter  
 Bracha (Jachter 5775) & Yisroel Perton on the birth of their son Shmuel Dovid  
 Adina (Brizel 5767) & Noah Pollack on the birth of their son Yitzchak Shlomo

Hava (Abbe 5764) & Dovid Preil on the birth of their daughter  
 Chana (Reichman 5763) & Tani Prero on the birth of their daughter  
 Goldie (Spetner 5769) & Igor Rebel on the birth of their daughter  
 Rachael (Laker 5763) & Simcha Rimler on the birth of their son Yosef  
 Devory (Sherman 5761) & Danny Rovner on the birth of their daughter Temima  
 Rina (Blumberg 5778) & Avi Salomon on the birth of their son. Mazal tov to grandparents Shani (Landesman 5753) & Leslie Salomon.

Rivky (Warshawsky 5777) & Shalom Sanders on the birth of their son Chaim  
 Michal (Hirschorn 5774) & Aharon Schapira on the birth of their son Eliyahu  
 Avigail (Bachrach 5772) & Ari Scher on the birth of their daughter  
 Ahuva (Hirtz 5773) & Shimi Schiff on the birth of their son Gavriel. Mazal tov to grandparents Rochelle (Schwartz 5740) & Yonoson Hirtz.  
 Bracha (Wainman 5756) & Yosef Sebow on the birth of their son  
 Shani (Brizel 5764) & Ari Sendoric on the birth of their son  
 Dety (Shicker 5768) & David Sher on the birth of their daughter  
 Malki (Schlesinger 5768) & Raphael Stohl on the birth of their son Shlomo Zalman  
 Suri (Kirschner 5772) & Isaac Stollman on the birth of their daughter  
 Lindsay (Sohacheski 5764) & Steven Turk on the birth of their son  
 Tova (Esrig 5766) & Meshulam Twersky on the birth of their daughter  
 Tova (Lejtman 5774) & Effie Wagner on the birth of their daughter. Mazal tov to grandparents Stephanie (Gross 5747) & Saul Lejtman.  
 Adina (Gold 5766) & Naftali Wein on the birth of their daughter  
 Chaya (Neuburger 5766) & Aryeh Westreich on the birth of their daughter  
 Rena (Garbow 5766) & Dov Winston on the birth of their daughter  
 Shira Elana (Mittelman 5775) & Rafi Wolfe on the birth of their daughter Elisheva Liba

## BAR & BAT MITZVAH MAZAL TOVS:

Rivka (Carmel 5752) & Daniel Alter on the bas mitzvah of their daughter Avigail  
 Michelle (Rosenberg 5756) & Dovid Bistricer on the bar mitzvah of their son Yehuda  
 Miriam (Baron 5764) & Baruch Burstein on the bar mitzvah of their son  
 Chava (Fischer 5764) & Rafi Cohen on the bas mitzvah of their daughter Talya.  
 Mazal tov to grandparents Brocha (Perl, Michlalah 5736) & Ariel Fischer.  
 Vanessa (Garzon 5760) & Michael Dreyfuss on the bar mitzvah of their son Yitzchak Shmuel  
 Chaya (Russ 5750) & Aryeh Feigenbaum on the bar mitzvah of their son Rephael Mordechai  
 Yael (Sussman 5764) & Pinchos Friedman on the bar mitzvah of their son Chaim  
 Shayna (Lerner 5758) & Judah Goldberg on the bar mitzvah of their son Akiva  
 Michal (Pine 5756) & Michael Gordon on the bar mitzvah of their son Shay  
 Esther (Resnick 5756) & Seth Grossman on the bar mitzvah of their son Menachem  
 Mindy (Eisenberg 5758) & Chaim Hilewitz on the bar mitzvah of their son Eliyahu  
 Rebecca (Mandel 5762) & Avi Hochman on the bar mitzvah of their son Aharon  
 Amy (Luxenberg 5754) & Benji Horowitz on the bar mitzvah of their son Elisha  
 Malka (May 5755) & Shlomo Hubscher on the bar mitzvah of their son Dani  
 Shula (Garbow 5762) & Moshe Hus on the bar mitzvah of their daughter Esther Tova  
 Shoshana (Eleff 5764) & Chaim Kassora on the bar mitzvah of their daughter Ariana Sara  
 Tami (Rosenfeld 5760) & Daniel Katz on the bar mitzvah of their son Elchanan  
 Amira (Saltzman 5757) & Yossi Kra on the bar mitzvah of their son Moshe  
 Rina (Schwartz 5757) & Chaim Lanner on the bar mitzvah of their son Akiva  
 Shani (Bruckstein 5764) & Binyamin Muschel on the bar mitzvah of their son Sruli  
 Aviva (Balk 5762) & Aryeh Needle on the bar mitzvah of their daughter Zahava  
 Ahava (Kanner 5756) & Avi Oppenheimer on the bar mitzvah of their son Noam.  
 Mazal tov to grandparents OraLee (Gross 5734) & Michael Kanner.  
 Devorah (Gutis 5758) & Shmuel Ravitz on the bar mitzvah of their son Meir Zalman  
 Ariel (Schlenger 5750) & Yaakov Rosenthal on the bar mitzvah of their son Binyamin Refael  
 Devory (Sherman 5761) & Danny Rovner on the bar mitzvah of their son Dovid  
 Rina (Binter 5762) & Doniel Seif on the bar mitzvah of their son Avraham Yehoshua  
 Arielle (Glass 5757) & Aryeh Scheinbein on the bar mitzvah of their daughter Leora Daphna  
 Miriam (Willig 5753) & Gidon Shoshan on the bar mitzvah of their son Boaz  
 Daniella (Moskowitz 5757) & Dov Teitz on the bar mitzvah of their son Shmuel Shabsi  
 Shira (Zeffren 5758) & Asher Yablock on the bar mitzvah of their son Menachem  
 Sarah (Magenec 5763) & Yisrael Zuckerman on the bar mitzvah of their son Avraham Yisrael

## MAZAL TOV TO THE NEXT GENERATION:

Miri (Jacob 5756) & Ely Behar on the marriage of their son Yerachmiel to Rachel Azar, daughter of Rav Yosef z'l and Mrs. Yocheved Azar, and on the marriage of their daughter Chana to Ariel Lapp  
 Risa (Golzman 5758) & Shlomo Berkowitz on the marriage of their daughter Shayna to Shimmy Weiss  
 Bluma (Shkop 5750) & Yishai Broner on the birth of their granddaughter to Davidi & Shprintza Broner  
 Chaya (Russ 5750) & Aryeh Feigenbaum on the marriage of their son Shimon to Avigail Haskell  
 Annette (Faber 5752) & Jeremy Golker on the birth of their grandson Dovid Elchanan to Chaim & Gila Faber  
 Michal (Pine 5756) & Michael Gordon on the marriage of their son Yoel to Tzofia Shama Chana (Leslie Langenbaum 5748) & Elchanan Greenblatt on the marriage of their son Moshe to Keren Klistov

Share your news with Machal alumnae around the world.

Tova (**Kronenberg** 5753) & Noam **Herman** and Shoshanah (**Frankelstein** 5751) & Michael **Olshin** on the birth of their granddaughter to Rivka & Simcha **Olshin**  
**Shira (Sukenik** 5753) & Gavriel **Hershoff** on the marriage of their son Ari to Racheli **Oscherowitz**  
**Rachel (Ross** 5747) & Noam **Himmelstein** on the birth of their grandson Adir Shalev to Yehuda &  
**Rachel Himmelstein**; on the birth of their granddaughter to Yedidya & Chemda **Himmelstein**; and  
on the marriage of their daughter Ora to Daniel **Slomovitz**  
Chani (**Steiner** 5749) & Menachem **Jakobovitz** on the birth of their granddaughter to Aryeh &  
Batsheva **Jakobovitz**  
Shira (**Weinberg** 5746) & Dovid **Kahn** on the birth of their granddaughter Rus to Malka & Nachum **Spitzer**  
Esther (**Russ** 5747) & Shlomo **Klapfoltz** on the marriage of their daughter Chana to Pinchas **Altman**  
Sheri (**Chasin** 5743) & Shimon **Kurland** & Nechama (**Goldfinger** 5755) & Dovid **Mirsky** on the  
marriage of their children Devora & Yitzie **Mirsky**  
Aviva (**Kronenberg** 5755) & David **Markowitz** on the birth of their granddaughter Tzippora Rivka to  
their children Ilana & Moshe **Spirn**  
Miriam (**Levy** 5748) & Shabtai **Matzlach** on the birth of their grandson to their children Yona & Sarah  
**Matzlach**  
Elana (**Bashevkin** 5755) & Shlomo **Moskowitz** on the marriage of their son Baruch to  
Esther Lehrfield  
Rachel (**Helman** 5746) & David z"l **Quint** on the birth of her grandson Gavriel David to Tzippy &  
Gilad **Bendheim**  
Inbar (**Schwartz** 5750) & Jerold **Rapaport** on the marriage of their son Ofer to Tal Eiseman  
Shira (**Pfeffer** 5756) & Zvi **Romm** on the marriage of their daughter Chava to Levi Goldman  
Ariel (**Schlenger** 5752) & Jake **Rosenthal** on the birth of their grandson to Chani (Michlalah 5780)  
& Lazer **Weiss**  
Hana (**Landman** 5750) & Yaakov **Ross** on the marriage of their son Yehuda to Henny **Tesser**  
Nomi (**Dworkin** 5750) & Yechiel **Rotblat** on the marriage of their son Ezra to Malka **Kaminetzky**  
Stacey (**Lebovitz** 5756) & Avi **Shapiro** on the marriage of their daughter Yocheved to Shmuel  
**Deutsch**  
Shoshana (**Levine** 5748) & Yitzchak **Shechter** on the marriage of their son Yoni to Leah **Gulkowitz**  
Kira (**Rozenberg** 5748) & Yossi **Sirote** on the marriage of their son Yair Eitan to Nechama **Peikes**,  
and on the birth of their grandson Daniel Pinchas to Elisheva Rina & Benji **Berkowicz**.  
Candi (**Price** 5754) & Davie **Sommer** on the marriage of their daughter Adina to Betzalel **Levin**  
Shani (**Feiner** 5752) & Reuven **Taragin** on the birth of their grandson to Penina & Itzik  
Karen (**Milch** 5753) & Yaakov **Thaler** on the birth of their granddaughter Molly to Zevi & Rachel  
**Thaler**  
Yael (**Werblowsky** 5753) & Shaul **Wiesner** on the birth of their granddaughter  
Shlomit (**Cooper** 5755) & Binyamin **Wolf** on the marriage of their daughter Aviva to Gavriel Lovy

#### SPECIAL MICHLALAH MAZAL TOVS:

Rav & Mrs. Yaakov Moshe **Altman** on the birth of their daughter  
Mrs. Yocheved **Azar** (& Rav Yosef **Azar** z"l) on the birth of her grandson Yosef Tzvi  
Rav Immanuel & Mrs. Judy (**Aron** 5753) **Bernstein** on the birth of their grandson to Sarah Malka &  
Yisrael **Blassberger**  
Rav & Mrs. Yosef **Cohen** on the marriage of their daughter Devory to Chaim **Ziskind**  
Mrs. Brocha (**Jacob** 5756) & Rav Simcha **David** on the birth of their grandson Avraham to Nosson &  
Avigail **David**, and on the bar mitzvah of their son Eliyahu Noah. Mazal tov to great-grandparents  
Rav & Mrs. Avishai **David**.  
Former Machal secretary Deborah (**Weisrose** 5762) **Erlanger** on the bar mitzvah of her son Eliyahu  
Mrs. Leah & Rav Avi **Feinberg** on the birth of their granddaughter Avigail Aidel to their children Akiva  
& Rochel Esther **Feinberg**  
Rav Beinish & Mrs. Chana (**Shaw** 5746) **Ginsburg** on the birth of their grandson to Naftali & Tehilla  
**Ginsburg**  
Mrs. Elana (**Schreier** 5772) & Rav Chezky **Glatt** on the birth of their son Yosef Shalom  
Mrs. Talia & Rav Eric **Ifrach** on the birth of their son  
Rav Benzion & Mrs. Lisa (**Goldstein** 5738) **Kermaier** on the marriage of their son Azaria to Sara  
**Barron**  
Mrs. Leah (**Spindel** 5748) & Rav Yosef **Nusbacher** on the marriage of their daughter Yaffa Bracha  
to Yaakov **Citron**  
Mrs. Tamara (**Weinberg** 5773) & R' Tzvi **Pearl** on the birth of their daughter  
Rav & Mrs. Chaim **Pollock** on the marriage of their son Moshe to Joani **Davidovitz**; on the birth of  
their great-grandson Shimon Ariel **Goodman**; on the bar mitzvah of their grandson Yehuda Binyamin  
Novack, son of Chani & R' Shlomo **Novack**; on the marriage of their grandson Yehonoson **Novack**,  
son of Chani & R' Shlomo **Novack**, to Hadassah **Unger**; and on the bar mitzvah of their grandson  
Eliezer **Pollock**, son of Sari (**Ben-Porat** Michlalah 5765) & Rav Avidan **Pollock**. Mazal tov to Sari's  
parents, Yona (**Bina**, Michlalah 5732) & Rav Yosef **Ben-Porat**.  
Mrs. Rachel (**Zimmerman** 5762) & Rav Nachum **Pollack** on the bar mitzvah of their son Moshe  
Rav Zave & Mrs. Rachel **Rudman** on the marriage of their son Petachya to Sarah **Ralbag**; on the birth  
of their grandson Yosef Yechezkel to their children Temima & Dovid **Marcus**; on the birth of their  
granddaughter Oriya to their children Yaakov & Chani **Rudman**; and on the bas mitzvah of their  
granddaughter Avigail, daughter of Dassy & Arele **Teller**.  
Mrs. Rivka (Landau 5750) & Rav Chaim Dovid Saperstein on the birth of their grandson Gedalia to  
Devorah & Yehuda Segal  
Mrs. Dina (**Sosevsky**, Michlalah 5749) & Rav Dovid **Schoonmaker** on the birth of their grandson  
Yisrael to Meir & Ahuva **Schoonmaker**. Mazal tov to the great-grandparents, long-time Machal  
teachers Rav Dr. Moshe & Dr. Chana **Sosevsky**.  
Rav & Mrs. Hanoch **Teller** on the birth of their grandson to Ilana & Chanani **Teller**  
Mrs. Sarit & Rav Noach **Tzoref** on the marriage of their daughter Miriam to Yaakov Moshe **Kurlansky**  
and on the birth of their grandson Meir to their children Dovid Eliyahu & Efrat **Tzoref**  
Mrs. Rivka (**Marcus** 5757) & Rav Andi **Yudin** on the birth of their grandson Gavriel Chaim to their  
children Miri & Yaakov **Gherman**

Email us: [michlalahusa@aol.com](mailto:michlalahusa@aol.com)

#### CONDOLENCES

ברוך דין האמת

We mourn the passing of  
our Machal Alumnae

Shifra Yehudis (Liberman 5751) Orlian  
Shoshanah (Wachman 5746) Kahan  
תנצ"ב"ה

Oksana (Natanelov 5767) Aykelinchayev  
on the passing of her sister Ora Bat Menachem

Deborah (Glyn 5754) Garson and  
Abigail (Glyn 5758) Shine  
on the passing of their father Mr. Howard Glyn

Mirlana (Kronenberg 5760) & Aryeh Morris  
on the passing of their son Doniel

Binyamina Mostofsky (5759) on the passing  
of her father Rabbi Dr. David Mostofsky

Shira (Pfeffer 5756) Romm on the passing  
of her mother Mrs. Judith Pfeffer

Tamar (Brandman 5744) Abell  
and Yael (Brandman 5748) Atkin  
on the passing of their mother Mrs. Rivkah Brandman

המקום ניחם אתכם בתוך שאור  
אבל ציון וירושלים

#### Contribute to the YAD AVIVA RACHEL FUND

The **Yad Aviva Rachel Fund** sponsors weddings  
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## INBOX

Dear Dr. Rosenwasser, Rabbi Lubarsky,  
Mrs. Schoonmaker, and Mrs. Yudin,

At the halfway point of the year, this note of appreciation is long overdue. We watch from America as the year unfolds with new events and drama practically every week. I truly believe we cannot fathom the amount of effort and time and thought you have invested in this year and continue to do so. You constantly reassure us parents that you are taking care of both the physical and emotional needs of all the girls. We have experienced first-hand your attention to our daughter's individual needs and have no doubt you have done the same for each and every girl.

Before the year started there was so much uncertainty. We wondered if there was even going to be a seminary year. Although the decision to push off the start was disappointing, we were sure you weighed so many factors before making it, and the final plan you devised allowed the girls a taste of Sukkos in Eretz Yisrael. Thank you! While quarantine is hard, through the pictures and videos we saw many of the creative details you worked on that made it a Sukkos these girls will remember for a lifetime.

After Sukkos, you made sure the girls had trips and opportunities to get off campus, to shop, have fun and just change the scenery. This is not an ordinary year, and each of these excursions must have required inordinate amounts of coordination and arrangement. Thank you again!!

Even with all the plans, trips and activities, some girls found staying in the family model restricting. That created an even further stress, as the needs of some were starting to conflict with the needs of others, emotional wellness conflicting with physical wellness. To your credit, you stayed flexible, poured further innovation, negotiation and

consideration into the developing situation and worked out a capsule arrangement.

A big *yasher koach* to you and much *hatzlacha* with the rest of the year!

With much appreciation and thanks to every faculty member.

*L'chvod* Dr. Rosenwasser,

As the daughter of a proud Machal graduate, I had always eagerly awaited the time when I would experience the magic of a year in Michlalah. I grew up hearing teachings and quotes from Rav Cooperman zt"l, and saw the glow on my mother's face when reflecting on her time in Michlalah. I would watch the excitement and passion as my mother opened a *sefer*, and admired the sophisticated level of learning and vast knowledge base that is one of the trademarks of Michlalah graduates. My mother accredits much of her *ahavas haTorah* and *chibas Eretz Yisrael* to her year in Michlalah, and so it was only natural that I wanted to attend this institution that seems to never leave the hearts of its students.

Now, as I proudly hold the title of a Machal alumna, I realize how privileged I am to be a part of an institution that is grounded on *yashrus*, sincerity, and a palpable *simcha shel Torah*. The high level of learning and energy for *Yiddishkeit* imbued within me an awe and appreciation for the vastness and beauty of Torah. The research skills that Michlalah provided us with gave me the confidence and ability to explore Torah on my own, thereby allowing me to make a personal *kesher* to Torah. Through example, the *hanhala* has shown me that genuine growth in Torah must go hand-and-hand with *derekh eretz*, *kavod habriyos*, and *ahavas Hashem*.

I realize that no words, no simple "thank you" will sufficiently express the overwhelming sense

of *hakaras hatov* I have to you for this most impactful year. I only hope that I will give you *nachas* in the future as a *talmidah* of yours, and that I will maintain a meaningful relationship with you as I continue to grow and develop from all you have taught me.

Dear Dr. Rosenwasser,

On behalf of our daughter, we thank you and the wonderful Michlalah staff for everything you have done for all the girls. This is such an unusual and unprecedented time. We are grateful that they were able to come and you have gone above and beyond to take care of their needs by providing a beautiful and delicious Chag Sukkot. Thank you for the emails and updates you share with us. We appreciate all your hard work and the many hours everybody is putting in to provide the best for all the girls.

All the best!

Hi Rav Margolin,

I hope this email finds you well. I was in your Tanya class last year and I can't express how much the class changed my outlook on life and has positively influenced me. I wanted to let you know that I started to learn your *sefer* Living Simcha with a younger camper back in March when we got home from seminary and we just made a *siyum* on it tonight. I know that my camper has gained tremendously from the *sefer*, but I have gained much more. It helped me actualize concepts that we learnt in class and strive to live *b'simcha*. Thank you so much for writing this *sefer* and for teaching me more than I can say last year.

**SAVE THE DATE  
& JOIN US!**

### NY SHABBATON AT STERN COLLEGE

*for all Machal alumnae*

**February 4-5, 2022 Parshat Terumah**

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## ALUMNAE REFLECTIONS

# Across the Verrazano Bridge

*Esther (Bleier 5770) Amster*

**I WAS DRIVING BACK TO NEW JERSEY** from Brooklyn on a visit back to the US. There is this part of the drive where you exit on the right, and on your left, in the distance, you can see the Verrazano Bridge, soaring and alit against the night sky.

It reminded me of something I learned one Elul, I think in the *Netivot Shalom*, about reconciling the seeming determinism of Elul with our ongoing *bechirah* throughout the year. You make the big, overarching choices in Elul, you point your car and exit right, if you will, and along the way you have so many micro-choices to make against the backdrop of this larger goal.

It's been some time, but this is what I understand: We can choose what distant point we look towards, and we can make—must make—a million choices every day, choices each moment. We cannot choose what these choices will be, and sometimes we need to redirect, navigate somewhere new, pivot, go back, ask for help, beg for help, recalibrate, rest, but sometimes we are lucky and are given the gift of *siyata d'Shmaya* and we find ourselves making our daily choices with the bridge we chose in the approaching distance.

For me, this was my year at Machal. Joining Machal for Shana Bet did not feel like a finished journey, a complete experience, packaged, tied up, digested. Like that NJ exit, knowing the road ahead, not seeing how, but knowing with certainty that the bridge lies ahead of this road and that you are on it; and your car is capable, even when uncertain; and that I had chosen this turn, and set a vision for the future.

Entering Machal, leaving my friends and family behind, mostly in Lakewood, where I was raised, not knowing anyone (but the super lovely friend of a super lovely friend!) was probably the scariest thing I ever did. Literally, standing outside in the early morning hours after the *sheirut* dropped me off, with my duffels and a sense of total aloneness, those steps, those beautiful, cobbled steps, were some of the hardest I ever took. In their deliberateness, I owned my choice.

I made some of my most cherished friendships in Machal, but in truth, they were cemented in the years that followed. I gained direction from Rav Pollock's *eitzah* and deep insight, but perhaps the most important guidance was the direction Rav Pollock gave me in the years that followed—advice that proved startlingly relevant in the funny turns my road took. From my questions and the response of seemingly endless time and profundity of the Machal teachers, I got these maps, that magically continued to unfold, maps I asked for, searched for, maps I didn't know I needed.

There were some bits of my Machal year that cocoon that time and paint it a special, glowing color; back-to-back classes interspersed only with trips to the shuk and my Touro classes, kitchen experiments between classes, the hills of Yerushalayim outside my *dirah* window, with the cars on the faraway road seeming to arrive from the sky. And when the end of the day came, it brought a wash of *kavannah* and connection to my *tefillah*.

This past year might've found me, having moved to Stockholm, Sweden, from Portland, Oregon (and before that, Jerusalem, Israel), in the late afternoon Northern darkness, heading out with my baby to pick up the older two from Hillelskol. I am booted and begloved and stomping through snow, between the flickering of 'mysigt' candlelight and cardamom buns in café windows, on the way home from school with the kids, pushing my stroller through the snow while pulling a sled, bundled up because in Sweden there is no bad weather, only bad clothes. Usually,

we walk home from school, more often they scoot, but I have pulled that sled, and oh yes, there are candles and darkness and cinnamon buns.

Mattias, my husband, was invited back to Stockholm, where he grew up, to be the community's Rabbi, and it is in many ways, aside from a shared affinity for black midi skirts and yeasted pastries, a long trip across the pond from the

Lakewood I grew up in! Sometimes people ask me if I could've ever imagined living in Stockholm, and in some ways, no, I could never have, but in some ways, actually, maybe. I had wanted to work in Jewish education for a long time, and before that, as a kid, I had marked up Architectural Digest pages of whitewashed Swedish Gustavian furnished farmhouses in fantasy. So it's an unexpected place, today, but also, in a way, a part of my journey I had pointed my car towards, long ago, and crossing this bridge is at once nostalgically exhilarating and unexpectedly familiar.

There are, of course, many times, when I ask myself where I am and how I got there, and most importantly, where I should be going. Oftentimes, this question comes to me as I find myself in the wrong room of our apartment, holding a sock, a Magna-tile, a toy lioness and her cub.

I'm here to put these things away, is the usual answer, and sometimes I am overwhelmed by a feeling of wonder, wondering how I came to be right here, right now. I think of all the lives I could be inhabiting right now, instead of cleaning, or unpacking Shabbos groceries, produce, and kosher-list items. An office with an elevator, a hiking pack with a mountain view, in place of making dinner or organizing the Shabbos guests; a warehouse art studio and gallery openings in lieu of WhatsApping *shiur* links and coffee dates; a comfortable life in a *frum* neighborhood where my neighbors wear the same head coverings as me, in place of time-zone timed FaceTime. The way we imagine things often looks far different; the things we want sometimes feel like other things. Some of the things we want the most we don't get. My baby smiles at me and then the present moment is right here, it can be anywhere, it is everywhere and it is only now. The sun sets outside the window, and the spires rise into the sky over colorful buildings, and the water sparkles in the strait near our building and I feel the warm energy of living somewhere new, learning new streets and words each *mamaledig* (maternity leave) walk. Nobody uses titles here, but sometimes in my head, I see the words "Rabbanit, Rebbetzin"; they feel like they were lost and I stepped into them by mistake, and I try to get comfortable with them, so I can own more so I can share more. I struggle to find the balance between my roles of teaching and supporting, I try not to overcook in a last-minute panic, I try to ask for help, and I pretend to be the world's most loving and empathic mom so other moms will come to my parenting class.

I cannot do everything, and I for sure cannot do everything well. One thing I am learning is to actively choose what I do. To choose to do some things less than my best, so I can save my best for something else, or so I can do a few other things, but not all the things.

But it was Machal that helped me start my journey and learn that it is never done, it is never all, there are always new choices, new things to learn, new ways to be, and that I am strong and capable and imperfectly able.

*Esther (Bleier 5770) Amster lives in Stockholm, Sweden, by way of Portland, Oregon, Jerusalem, Israel, and Lakewood, NJ. She studied at Bnos Sara seminary and attended Machal for Shana Bet. Esther received a BA in psychology from Touro College, a Masters in Art Therapy from The School of Visual Arts in NYC, and made Aliyah and completed the women's program of the Jerusalem Kollel. She is a mom of three, wife to Stockholm's Chief Rabbi, Rabbanit in Stockholm, and enjoys weaving together her background in Torah texts, studio arts, and postgraduate work in Child-Parent Psychotherapy.*

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### THE LAST WORD...

**ON THE END-OF-THE-YEAR TIYUL TO THE GOLAN,** Machal 5782 drinks in breathtaking views of the Golan as long-time Machal teacher and tour guide Mr. Nachum Applbaum shares a wealth of historical, geographical and archaeological knowledge, along with a deep love for Eretz Yisrael.