



DEBORAH GORDON

A LITTLE INSPIRATION

The little girl with perfect braids tugged on Yael's swing, pink skirt swooshing around her legs. A smile played on her lips as she pointed across the park. Yael offered her a one-shouldered shrug and looked back at me.

I flashed an encouraging smile. *It'll be good... go play with her. Have fun!*

The girl pointed, tugged again. Yael eased herself off the swing, glanced my way, then followed her to the climbing train.

I checked my watch — four o'clock meant eleven, body-time. No wonder the Hebrew lettering on the page in front of me was a blur. I pushed away the delicious thought of curling up under my comforter; Yael had another few hours before she tired out.

Shutting the *sefer*, I followed a throaty laugh across the playground. A slender woman with a wavy, dark *sheitel* and large sunglasses huddled with her friend, a blond bob. Dark *sheitel* held a baby on her lap while a toddler sat by her feet, outfitted in a matching pink skirt to Yael's new friend's.

Even though my *sheitel* was oxidized to a brassy orange from the Yerushalayim sun, I wished I'd worn it. Or at least a cute baseball cap and fall. As if I owned either. My print headscarf, which had looked so pretty when I left the house, seemed drab now.

The women laughed out loud and the girl's mother looked up for a moment, face in my direction. I started to get up to introduce myself when she turned back to blond bob.

Just be friendly, I heard Chayala's voice in my ears.

"Rachaeli? Where's Rachaeli?" Mrs. Sunglasses stood up, scanned the park.

I made my way across the playground. "Hi, your daughter has the braids? She's over in the train, with mine."

She let out her breath. "Oh. Thanks, thanks so much." She hoisted her baby up on her hip. "You're new here."

"Yeah, we just moved. Sarah Sauer."

"Tova Greenbaum. So it's your husband who took the job with Rav Klugman."

The blonde wheeled her carriage closer to us. "The new *mashgiach*. I'm Shoshie Pogrow."

"We're really here to work in *kiruv* for Jew-Q at the university. He's just doing some *hashgachah* work on the side. It's not easy, we were in *kollel* for a long time, you know... the moving costs from Eretz Yisrael alone were, well, let's just say well beyond what we could afford."

Shoshie tilted her head and studied me with a look of concern.

"But, well... It'll be fine, *im yirtzeh Hashem*." I pressed my lips together and pushed a smile across my face.

Tova examined her manicure, then blurted, "Hey, with three new restaurants, we *need* another *mashgiach*. And the hotel at Orange Tuscany Bay sounds *amazing*. Can you believe a kosher hotel in Pacifica?" She perched her sunglasses on top of her head. Dark circles half-mooned under her bloodshot eyes. "We're going for our anniversary next month. I plan to sleep 15 hours straight."

Shoshie laughed, "Let's you and I go and leave the kids with the guys."

Yael and Rachaeli ran over, water droplets on their cheeks.

"These super big bears just sprayed *mayim*, Ima. Did you see?" She pushed a loose curl from her cheek. "Rachaeli said I can come over to play. *B'seder*?"

"Not today, girls. We have baths right when we get home," Tova said.

Rachaeli gripped Yael's hand and pulled her close. "This is my best friend, Yael. And she's coming over now, Mommy."

“What about Adina?”

“We also have to eat, bathe... Rachaeli, you’re the first girl she’s met, so you’ll make sure she’s okay tomorrow at school?”

“Sounds perfect,” Tova said, giving me a smile.

Rachaeli pulled Yael closer and squinted up at her mother.

Tova turned back to me. “Are you at home? Working?”

Shoshie raised her eyes and scanned the *tichel* I’d wrapped around my head. “Is that hard to do?”

I brought my hand up, felt my face flush. “Just takes a little practice. I have this shaper underneath, then make sure the scarf is the right length; rectangular ones work best. You have to...”

“Oh, Rikki!” Tova bent down to slip her daughter’s shoe back on. “There!”

Rocking her stroller, Shoshie smiled down at her newborn. “No, no, cutie, don’t cry... Where are Malka Leah and Deenie?”

Tova turned back to me. “So, you don’t work out of the house?”

“I do bookkeeping from home. Now I’ll work for Jew-Q — phone calls, going to campus. And my husband wants to host every Shabbos.”

“That’s nice.” The edges of Tova’s lips raised. “I thought I’d be a CPA, even got my degree. But so far, my kids keep me more than busy. I had my plans, but Hashem wanted something different, right? Oh, I head PTA.” She gave me a serious look. “Hey, you need to sign up.” Then she counted off on her fingers. “There’s the lunch program, the Books for Birthdays program, the Shabbos Hamalkah project, and the extras, like Rosh Chodesh brunch for our teachers...”

Tova froze with one pinky poised in the air. “Shosh, what am I forgetting?”

Shoshie knocked her pinky. “My committee.”

“Yes, *shiurim*,” She held out all five fingers and Shoshie high-fived her. “Organizing, publicizing. We have four a year.”

“Four, the whole year?”

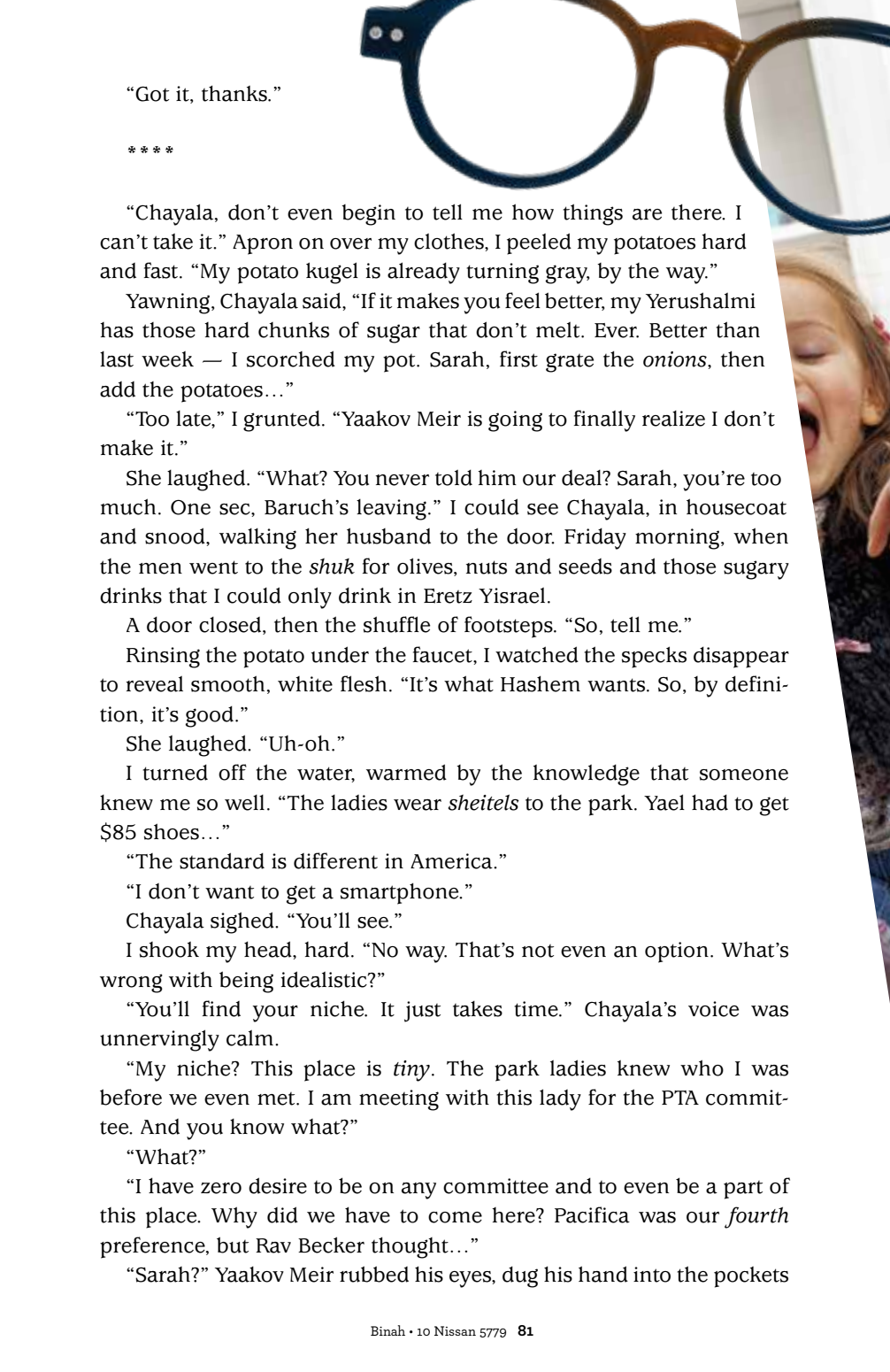
“Well?” Tova raised her eyebrows at me.

It didn’t seem like thinking about it was an option. I couldn’t remember everything she’d said. “*Shiurim*, I guess.”

“Welcome to my committee,” Shoshie said. “Hey, I’ll shoot you my number.” She scrolled, paused. “New contact. Good... okay. What’s your cell?”

“Uh... I... we’re working out a plan...”

Tova lifted her baby higher on her hip and shook her *sheitel* off her face. “Did you get the school directory? It’s Pogrow. P-O-G-R-O-W.”



“Got it, thanks.”

“Chayala, don’t even begin to tell me how things are there. I can’t take it.” Apron on over my clothes, I peeled my potatoes hard and fast. “My potato kugel is already turning gray, by the way.”

Yawning, Chayala said, “If it makes you feel better, my Yerushalmi has those hard chunks of sugar that don’t melt. Ever. Better than last week — I scorched my pot. Sarah, first grate the *onions*, then add the potatoes...”

“Too late,” I grunted. “Yaakov Meir is going to finally realize I don’t make it.”

She laughed. “What? You never told him our deal? Sarah, you’re too much. One sec, Baruch’s leaving.” I could see Chayala, in housecoat and snood, walking her husband to the door. Friday morning, when the men went to the *shuk* for olives, nuts and seeds and those sugary drinks that I could only drink in Eretz Yisrael.

A door closed, then the shuffle of footsteps. “So, tell me.”

Rinsing the potato under the faucet, I watched the specks disappear to reveal smooth, white flesh. “It’s what Hashem wants. So, by definition, it’s good.”

She laughed. “Uh-oh.”

I turned off the water, warmed by the knowledge that someone knew me so well. “The ladies wear *sheitels* to the park. Yael had to get \$85 shoes...”

“The standard is different in America.”

“I don’t want to get a smartphone.”

Chayala sighed. “You’ll see.”

I shook my head, hard. “No way. That’s not even an option. What’s wrong with being idealistic?”

“You’ll find your niche. It just takes time.” Chayala’s voice was unnervingly calm.

“My niche? This place is *tiny*. The park ladies knew who I was before we even met. I am meeting with this lady for the PTA committee. And you know what?”

“What?”

“I have zero desire to be on any committee and to even be a part of this place. Why did we have to come here? Pacifica was our *fourth* preference, but Rav Becker thought...”

“Sarah?” Yaakov Meir rubbed his eyes, dug his hand into the pockets

of his pajamas. “It’s late.”

I covered the phone with my hand. “I’m cooking and talking to Chayala. We’re having how many students again?”

“Four or five...” he said, the light coming back to his squinting eyes. “But you never know. Make plenty.” He watched as I peeled another potato. “These kids are gonna become *frum* just from your potato kugel.” He stretched, smiled. “Thanks for all your work, Sarah. G’night.”

I watched him walk past the boxes and disappear down the hall. “Chayala, still there?”

“I heard that. You’re in trouble.”

I laughed, then lowered my voice. “Why couldn’t we go to a normal community, with more than one school? And I could meet some women who are into growth? The strollers are worth more than the used car we just bought. They have a *shiur* for mothers four times a year!” I let out my breath in a rush, surprised at my own words. Rav Becker was a *Gadol*. He understood Yaakov Meir. But maybe he didn’t get me.

A moment passed and Chayala said, “I know it’s not what you envisioned. You know, everyone’s busy and distracted. Each baby takes away how many brain cells?” She laughed but stopped when she heard my silence. “Oh, I’m sorry, Sarah.”

“It’s okay.” I dug into a box on the floor for the baking pans. “On top of everything, my *emunah* and *bitachon* have gone out the window. From the moment I stepped off the plane. And that’s making me even more depressed.” I stirred the kugel mixture, lost track of how much salt I’d sprinkled and just kept sprinkling.

“You’re human. You just got there,” Chayala said. “Oh, I forgot I have to take Faige to the neighbor. Good Shabbos, Sarah. Hang in there.”

“Good Shabbos.” I poured the batter into the pans, set them in the oven and slumped on the couch. Unpacked boxes and various items were strewn everywhere. But a wave of exhaustion told me not much more was happening that night.

“So, let’s see. We’ll have Rav Klugman, of course. He’ll do the bug-checking class next month. Rabbi Reich can speak on *chinuch*, everyone likes that one.” Shoshie’s blond *sheitel* had been replaced with a chenille snood, revealing her diamond studs. She jotted something down on her notepad, then took a sip of diet soda.

Setting my teacup down on the polished wood table, I smiled at





Shoshie. “Do you know Chava Grossman?”

“Of course. She’s fantastic!”

“She’s very close with my mother. Said she’d come in December.”

“Wow, Sarah. Amazing!” She wrote it down. “In Adar, Rebbetzin Levy will teach ‘Pesach Cleaning Made Easy.’ And...” She bit the end of her pencil. “We need one more speaker for Shavuot time. Or maybe not? With Rebbetzin Grossman, we have four.”

“Let’s think bigger. This sounds like same old, same old.”

She raised her eyebrows. “Well, these are timeless messages, Sarah. *Chinuch*, Pesach, practical *halachah*. You can’t just hear them once.”

“Women need more. Let’s plan for *each* Sunday before Rosh Chodesh.”

Shoshie laughed. “Once a month?” Eyes full of wonder, she shook her head slowly.

“Do you know how much learning is going on in Yerushalayim? You could go to a *shiur* once a day, or more. Once a month is nothing. The issue sounds like just getting people to speak.”

“I’m all for it, but we have to ask Tova. There really aren’t so many local teachers.” As she let out her breath, deep lines in her forehead appeared. “But honestly, Sarah. It’s a nightmare for me to get out, any night. And Sundays, we prepare for the week.”

A newborn’s cry came, loud and fierce, from down the hall. “Malka Leah,” Shoshie called. “Please, Malka Leah!”

“Anyway, it doesn’t have to be Sundays. But we need to be consistent.”

“The women here are sort of, well, practical. They want to know how to avoid *melachos*, how to teach their children, what to do for Pesach. They aren’t necessarily looking for inspiration. Even if they are, they don’t have time for it. Not now.”

She paused, swallowed. I knew what was coming before she said it.

“Babies are exhausting. Having three, four, five more children, maybe all under 8, is, well, more than a lot.”

“If you think it’s important enough, you make time.”

“If you don’t want to sleep. Or have dinner ready for your husband, or make Shabbos...” Shoshie took a long sip of soda. Then she stood up and smoothed her skirt, glanced toward the hall. “The average woman needs to prioritize, and at this stage, learning isn’t a priority for most of us.” She shrugged as the baby’s cries intensified. “Speaking of which, this baby needs me. Talk to Tova. I’m game. Let me know.” She walked me to the door.

Standing on the porch, I wrapped my shawl around my shoulders and looked out at the street. No men running to *minyán*. No pairs of women, clutching plastic bags, heads bent together as they hurried to the bus. It was impossible to picture the bustle of Yerushalayim against the backdrop of these homes with their two-car garages, manicured lawns, and cypress trees — dark fingers frozen against a tangerine sky. An endless border of ocean held it all in tight, teasing the hope of any change.

This is where G-d wants us. I heard Yaakov Meir's buoyant voice in my head. I envied the ease with which he embraced *daas Torah*, while I held onto my own opinions as if they meant anything. As if they meant everything.

* * * *

As usual, I knocked on Tova's door and opened it without waiting for a response. *Who knows what'll be flying?* she'd said the first time I'd worked late at the university and she'd brought Yael home. *My door's open.*

Through the sliding glass door, I saw Mendy and Rikki bouncing on the trampoline. Tova stood on the side, holding shoes in one hand, her coffee cup in the other.

"Sarah!" Tova smiled, waved me outside.

The sound of laughter, music, and the *creak, creak, creak* of the trampoline springs hit me as I walked out. This is what my house was supposed to have been like.

"Thanks so much for taking her," I said, looking across the yard to the top of the swing set where Rachaeli sat on top of the monkey bars. "Where's Yael?"

"There!" Rachaeli pointed to the little house above the slide. Through the window I could make out wisps of blond hair.

"Yael! Let's go!"

Tova came closer, checking her watch. "She can totally stay longer. I want them to get tired out. I'm already dreading the night. Gavi has fever, maybe teething; Rikki's got a double ear infection, but she's loaded up with antibiotics." She lifted her chin to Rikki, jumping away, then took a sip of coffee. "There goes our anniversary trip to Orange Tuscany."

"Really?"

"And leave sick kids? Wouldn't do it, even to my mom." Rikki scrambled off the trampoline, held up her arms. Tova lifted her, kissing her forehead. "Oh, well. You troublemaker!"

"I'm so sorry. It's so good to get away with your husband every so often."

"That's what they always said in *kallah* classes, right?" She winked at me. "Weren't our *kallah* teachers mothers, also? By the time I get a sitter, either a kid is sick, or crying, or there's something else going on. Chanoch and I barely squeeze in a 20-minute walk on Shabbos afternoon, *if* my parents come for lunch and we run."

Two nights ago, Shoshie's daughter had come to babysit and we'd gone for our date night — a walk by the ocean. Yaakov Meir told me about his new class, "Ten Things You'll be Totally Shocked to Know About Torah."

I had asked about five years before why we kept those date nights. No child was awake to distract us at home after eight. *Let's save money, have tea and cookies.*

We need to be away, from everything. Yaakov Meir had said.

There was something to it, seeing the expanse of sea or sitting in a loud falafel stand. Together. Outside of the home we had created. In those moments, I saw the person who had trusted me with his dreams. And the one to whom I had given mine. We were once again two separate souls, lingering over empty coffee cups.

Tova shook the conversation away with a shrug. "One day."

Sruli ran to Tova and tugged at her blouse. She clipped his *yarmulke* on straight and pushed his hair off his sweaty forehead.

"Uppy! Uppy!"

"Shoshie and I were thinking about more *shiurim*. Once a month. Is that all right?"

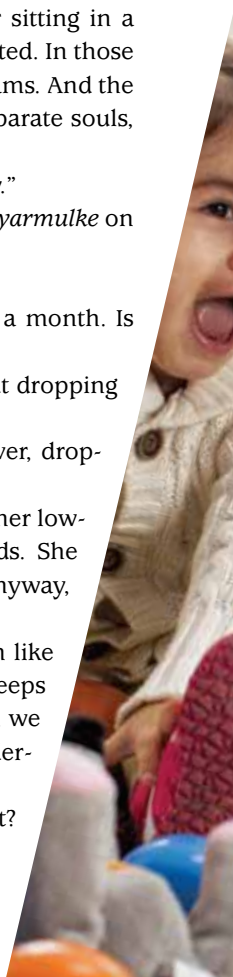
Somehow, she managed to bend and pick up Sruli without dropping Rikki. A child on each hip, she shrugged. "Well..."

"Mommy, we are *starving!*" Rachaeli and Yael skipped over, dropping their sidewalk chalk onto the cement.

"I made pasta before we came out. Come." Tova clicked in her low-heeled booties toward the sliding door, balancing both kids. She turned to me. "What do you think needs to be covered, anyway, once a month?"

"Don't we all need a little inspiration? Not just inspiration like a shot in the arm and then we're done, but something that keeps us going... We need *halachah*, sure, but at the end of the day, we need to connect. To Hashem." I watched her for a sign of understanding, or agreement, as she set the kids on their chairs.

Shaking out her arms, she said, "You mean like, what? *Emunah* and *bitachon*?"



“Sure, any of it, all of it. Whatever the speaker is interested in.”

“If you can get that many speakers, go for it. I, for one, don’t think I could make it. Even if I wanted to.” She took paper plates from the cabinet as Gavi cried from his bassinet.

“Now?” She looked up, distressed.

“I’ll go.” I crossed the room, Yael right beside me. I’d forgotten how light babies are. Fumbling for a moment, I brought him close to my chest. I inhaled deeply, pulling in his scent as if it belonged to me.

“Soooo cute, Ima? You have a baby, too, already, yes?” Yael stroked his arm. He yawned and the tug was almost too strong to bear. *Will I ever stop feeling this way? I’d asked Rebbetzin Becker before we’d left. Maybe when you’re past the age... maybe when you have your own grandchildren... maybe not.*

I felt Tova’s eyes on me and forced myself to blink back the tears. She looked away, phone to her ear.

“Chanoch, hi. Yes, I’m sorry, we were out back. What’s up...” Her smile faded as she spooned pasta onto a plate. “Oh, I see.” She set the plate down, pressed two fingers against her forehead and turned toward the wall. “Well, you could see it from that perspective... I guess. I just, well, it’s sort of hard to talk now...” I hadn’t ever heard her voice unsteady. Then she said something I couldn’t hear and put the phone down.

“Tatty’s coming home soon, kids,” she sprinkled cheese on top of pasta. “Ketchup, Mendy?” She wiped her hands on a towel and looked in my direction, “The girls will see each other tomorrow. In school.”

“Right, in school,” I said, as if there had been a question. “Thanks for having Yael.”

Following us to the door, she flashed a smile, “Any time.”

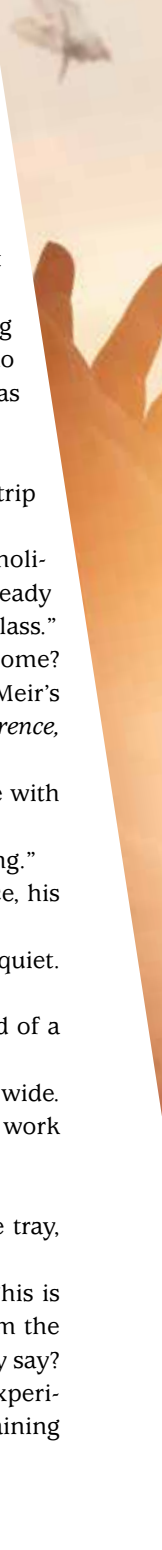
“Tova?” I paused, but Yael pulled me toward the steps. Tova leaned against the doorframe, one hand covering her eyes.

“I love their house, Mommy!” she smiled up to me. “Maybe it’s not so bad in Pacifica, *nachon?*”

I turned back to say goodbye, but the door was shut and she was gone.

“Just keep trying.” Yaakov Meir set the plates on the white tablecloth. “You already have Rebbetzin Grossman. Big name.”

“In two weeks, I’m one for sixteen. Not great numbers.” I followed him around the table, putting the small plates on top of the



large ones. We set for eight, adding if we needed to. The students had endless questions for Yaakov Meir, who managed to answer each one with sincerity, while throwing in a joke or play on words. If there was ever a lull in the conversation, he began a *niggun*. Soon the guys were singing with him, sometimes the meal lasting past midnight.

After they left, Yaakov Meir would pace the apartment, replaying his answers, thinking of other angles, asking me how he could do better. When they asked to come the next week, Yaakov Meir was thrilled.

“Sarah, why is it so hard?”

“No one wants to trek out here for one night, three hours round trip from the city.” I reached for the cutlery tray.

“Sarah, I was thinking. What about you teaching a class on the holiness of Shabbos after challah-baking next week? Eight girls already signed up for challah. We’ll have some awesome snacks, then the class.”

“Fine. Doesn’t Rabbi Klugman know some speakers who could come? You’ll ask him?” I set the forks, knife and spoon beside Yaakov Meir’s plate first, as one teacher had told me. *No one will know the difference, but you will.*

“Sure, but we’re here for the college kids. Why waste more time with PTA?”

I sighed, “Yaakov Meir, women need to get filled up by something.”

He raised an eyebrow in my direction. We set the table in silence, his mouth drawn into a tight line.

“What?” I folded my arms and stood in front of him. He was too quiet.

He shrugged. “Nothing.”

“What is it?” I handed him his *Kiddush* cup, desperately in need of a polish.

Placing it on top of its silver plate, he looked down at me, eyes wide. “You seem to have some extra time and energy. You’re on top of the work for Robertson. Maybe *you* teach these women?”

“Teach women?” I shook my head. “That’s crazy.”

“Who says?” He finished arranging the small silver cups on the tray, then moved toward the kitchen. “You teach all the time.”

“Kids. College kids. About stuff that any *frum* woman knows. This is different. These are peers.” I went after him to get the glasses from the cabinet. “And they’re just, well... I don’t know. What could I possibly say? I have one kid. They all have many more than me, much more experience.” I pictured Rebbetzin Becker with her pearls and suit, explaining

the nuances of a *passuk* on Shabbos afternoon. I was nothing like her.

“You don’t have to have the same life experience. But you have *emunah*... you’re always learning some *sefer* with your friends. You had that little *chaburah*...”

“Those were my friends. Not strangers. Miri, Chayala...” I took two glasses down and let out my breath. “That’s different.”

He stood there, a grin on his face. “Is it? You have what to offer, Sarah. You’ve been through your stuff.” He looked at me closely. “Our stuff.” Was he remembering all the nights I’d run off to the Kosel to *daven*? Or was it the days at Kever Rochel?

“How will that help them? They need to get through their days, their nights, sick kids, dealing with what might come as they mature... I don’t know about those things. Not enough. Not enough to advise.”

Yaakov Meir set the bouquet of roses in the center of the table, and stepped back. “Who is telling you to advise? *Emunah* is the foundation. Trusting Hashem, knowing Hashem is good and all comes from Him — that’s for every situation. You know that.”

I stared at those eyes that thought I was something.

“I’ve got to get to bed. I need to write three grand-slam *divrei Torah* tomorrow and meet with four kids for bagels at ten.” He gave me a parting smile as the phone rang.

Seven a.m. in Israel. Ah, our Erev Shabbos call.

“Hi, there,” I said, without checking caller ID. “How are you? And more importantly, how’s the Yerushalmi?” I laughed as I took a chicken from the fridge.

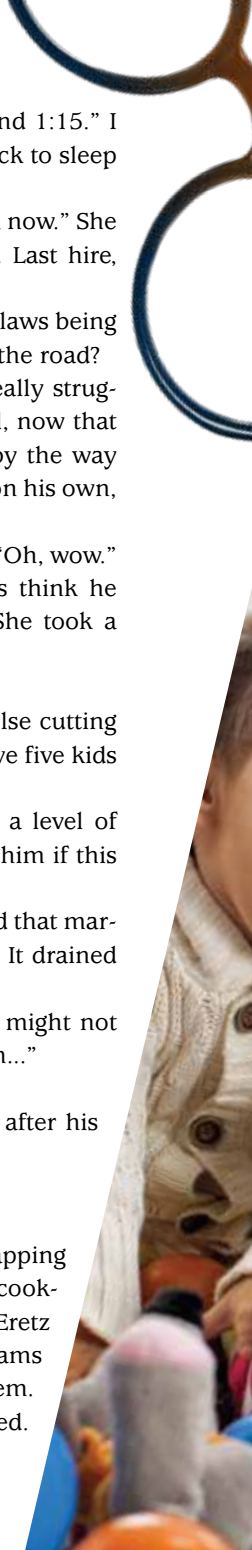
“Sarah? Hi, it’s Tova.” Her voice was just above a whisper. “I’m sorry for calling so late. Did I catch you at a bad time?”

“No, I just was expecting someone else. It’s fine. What’s going on? Need me to pick up the girls after school tomorrow?”

“Oh, could you? I know it’s my day, but... Oh, wait, hold on.” There was a shuffling sound, then footsteps. When she came back, she hissed, “He’s up *again*. It’s not possible for a baby to sleep *this* little. Mendy got Rikki’s ear infection that, ha ha ha, wasn’t an ear infection — but the flu! And I mean the 104° flu. I’ve slept like seven hours the past three nights.”

“Yael told me today that everyone at your house has been sick. I didn’t know or I would have been doing carpool all week.”

“Things are getting to me. Orange Tuscany being off, you know...”



“Right. So, fine. I’ll pick up tomorrow. See you around 1:15.” I pulled my chickens from the fridge. “Hope Gavi gets back to sleep soon, and you get rest.”

“Anyway... the trip would be off for a different reason now.” She dropped her voice even lower. “Chanoch was laid off. Last hire, first fire, you know.”

“Oh, Tova. I’m so sorry.” With her large home and in-laws being pillars of Pacifica, was this more than a slight bump in the road?

“I know what you’re thinking. It’s not that we are really struggling, or anything like that. But Chanoch wants to, well, now that he’s out of that marketing job — which he detested, by the way — he sees this as an opening. An opportunity to go out on his own, start this business he’s been thinking of.”

I took the phone to the couch, curled up on one end. “Oh, wow.”

“Yes, he’s bright, and a few people in the business think he should give it a whirl. Our Rav is on board. But...” She took a breath. “What do you think?”

“What do I think?”

“We got the practical advice. But it’s a risk. No one else cutting the paycheck. Who knows what will happen? We do have five kids already.”

I sat up straighter, took a breath. “There has to be a level of trusting your husband, trusting *daas Torah*. Supporting him if this is what he wants, if it’s within reason.”

She was quiet, then said, “You know, he couldn’t stand that marketing job. He came home miserable almost every day. It drained all of us.”

“You’re afraid... there are no guarantees, right? You might not have vacation this year, or perhaps that Pesach program...”

“Canceled.”

“But, in the long run, you want your husband to go after his dreams, right? Not go on vacation.”

She laughed, “Of course.” I paused.

You want your husband to go after his dreams, right?

Ten years ago, a young couple sat at a tiny table, wrapping cellophane around grape juice bottles and homemade cookies. Snapping pictures of each other, enthralled with Eretz Yisrael, learning, each other. Taking each other’s dreams and holding them close, so nothing would happen to them.

Two years in, the baby girl came. But then, years passed.

Quiet years, when the baby slept, then was at school, then a friend's house. He was at *kollel* by 8:30, home for meals, back out until late in the evening. In between work and housework, she filled her hours with *Tanach*, *mussar*, a bit of *Chassidus*.

One dream replaced with another. A good dream, a dream fulfilled.

Until now.

"Sarah?" Tova let out her breath so hard I felt it through the phone. She paused, and I knew in that pause our relationship had extended beyond our daughters. "That was... thank you."

A chill coursed down my arms. "It was good to talk it out, for me too. I... I needed that."

"Hey, any headway on all those *shiurim* you were planning?"

I wandered to the Shabbos table, to Yaakov Meir's setting. I adjusted the forks, knife and spoon so they were perfectly straight. Then I picked up his *Kiddush* cup and silver plate.

"Not a drop. Striking out left and right. Anyway, Shoshie spoke to most of the women and they can't do it. They're too busy."

"For now," Tova said. "But I was thinking."

"Yes?" Where was that polish? Oh, under the sink. I unscrewed the cap, let the pink liquid drip on the rag. I rubbed hard until the dull finish transformed into a bright shine. Yaakov Meir would bring those thirsting souls into the holiest day with a shine that matched his eyes.

"I need it. Maybe I am too busy. But can we get together, learn something?"

I stopped rubbing the cup, smiled. *Maybe just this. One at a time. One connection at a time.*

"If it's too much for you, that's okay. I know you work like crazy with the bookkeeping and the *kiruv* stuff. But I need it. I need to hold onto something."

"So do I," I said. "So do I." ●

