CHEVRAH CONNECTIONS

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ISSUE 8

Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah News


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- Better Than a Segulah – Torah study as a merit for success
- Kaddish & Yizkor recital
- Yahrtzeit & Yizkor reminders

PRODUCTS

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- The Neshamah Should Have an Aliyah
- Cremation or Burial? A Jewish View
- Mishnas Chayim
- Mishnah Memoirs
- I Lost Someone Special
- To Comfort and Be Comforted
- Aliyas Neshamah Curriculum
- Comfort, Courage and Clarity: Support Group Handbook New!

Audio/Visual

- To Comfort and Be Comforted – Audiovisual DVD
- To Comfort and Be Comforted – Audio MP3
- Mishnah Messages – Audio CD for kids
- Personal Perspectives –Audio CD by R' Aharon Margalit

Blog

- Comfort, Courage & Clarity

Other Publications

- Mishnah Charts for Mourners
- Mishnah Study Reminder Cards
- Final Prayers
- Prayers to Be Said at a Grave
- Hakafos Companion
- Mishnayos Review Charts for Students
- Mishnayos Poster
- Tefillah Card
- Shivah Kit
- Hadlakas Neiros Card New!
- Hafrashas Challah Card New!
- Tefillas HaShelah Card New!
- Parshas HaMan Card New!

SPOTLIGHT: QUIET HEROES

Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah's Torah scholars – they are, in a sense, the quietest members of the Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah team, but they are truly the backbone – an exceptional group of *talmidei chachamim* who complete *mishnah* after *mishnah, masechta* after *masechta,* earning *zechusim* for those in need.

Now, we turn the spotlight on some of these extraordinary men and get a glimpse of their dedication.

RABBI DOVID GREENHOUSE
married 14 years
participating for 10 years

RABBI SHMUEL NEWMAN
married 16 years
participating for 10+ years

RABBI ARYEH PERLSTEIN
married 13 years
participating for 5 years

Do you learn for* Better Than a Segulah, Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah *or both?

RABBI GREENHOUSE Right now I am learning mostly for Better Than A Segulah, but I still learn for *yahrtzeits*. I also do a lot of *maseches Kinnim* with the commentary of the *Kan Mefureshes* as a *segulah* for sicknesses.

RABBI NEWMAN Both – I was actually the first person to learn for Better Than a Segulah.

RABBI PERLSTEIN I learn for both. Originally, Better Than a Segulah, which is learning done as a *zechus* for someone who is looking for a *yeshuah*, was part of Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah. Now, Chevrah Lomdei focuses on learning *l'iluy neshamah.*

Can you share any experiences that have had a real effect on you?

RABBI GREENHOUSE I feel touched when I hear that the person had a *yeshuah*. Once I actually knew the girl who became a *kallah*. I am always touched when I learn *l'zecher nishmas* Holocaust survivors. I feel that they don't need my *mishnayos*, but yes, we can still do something for them.

RABBI NEWMAN Before I started learning for Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah, if I would have been asked if I could learn *maseches* Shabbos (one of the longest *masechtas)* within a short span of time, I would have said it's not possible. Once, Rabbi Haikins gave me six weeks to learn this *masechta*, during which time my wife had a baby, so I learned the whole thing in four weeks!

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Where do you find the time to do the extra learning? How does it affect your daily life?

RABBI GREENHOUSE I do it during breakfast and lunch, during breaks, on Shabbos, between morning and afternoon *seder.* I also go to night *seder* early. I am always with a *sefer*. This summer we went away, and the first thing I packed was my Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah notebook with all my learnings in it. I made sure to schedule time to complete what needed to be learned each day.

RABBI NEWMAN I can't *find* the time. I must *make* the time, or else it would not be possible. I try not to learn my Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah material during *seder*. Mostly I learn any *Gemara* for Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah right after *shacharis*. Between first and second *seder* (lunch break), I learn *mishnayos* for Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah.

RABBI PERLSTEIN Between morning and afternoon *seder* I come home to babysit and am often able utilize that time for Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah *limudim*. I am home a bit in the evening, as well, to help out with the children, and sometimes I manage to learn more *mishnayos* then, before going back to yeshiva for night *seder.* After night *seder* I stay a little longer to do some Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah learning, usually until around 11:00, 11:30, and if I have a lot to accomplish, I continue my learning at home.



What do you feel you have gained personally from this extra learning?

RABBI NEWMAN I feel I gained a tremendous amount. It really makes a difference that I always have to learn: *erev yom tov, yom tov, bein hazmanim*, vacation. Wherever I am I know that I have to learn. One day I was on vacation and hadn't yet learned. It was close to *shekiyah*. I ran to the *beis medrash*. And right there on the table was the *sefer* that I needed. After 120 I will be asked if I was *kovea itim* – set aside time for learning; this means one has to have to have a *kevi'yus* – an established time, even during very busy times of the year, such as *erev* Pesach. As long as I am with Chevra Lomdei Mishnah, I know that I will have that *kevi'yus*.

RABBI PERLSTEIN I now know all of *Shishah Sidrei Mishnah*. The first time Rabbi Haikins asked me to learn *Shishah Sidrei Mishnah* in three months, it was a huge deal. Now I can learn it in a much shorter time span.

What inspires you to want to continue?

RABBI NEWMAN I personally feel grateful to be able to help other people in such an incredible way to acquire their most important needs, whether it's a *zechus* for a *yahrzeit* or for children, health, a *shidduch*, or *parnassah*. (Believe it or not, I once learned for a child to get into a good school!) I really feel thankful to be doing this and genuinely enjoy it.

RABBI PERLSTEIN This is a real *achrayus*; I am learning because it is important for someone else. I feel directly connected to others through enabling them to have this *zechus*. And I see the power of what we are doing. I have actually paid for services for my own children. It says that it is a greater *zechus* to have someone else learn or *daven* on your behalf, and we have seen a direct correlation: when someone was learning for our child, the situation improved.

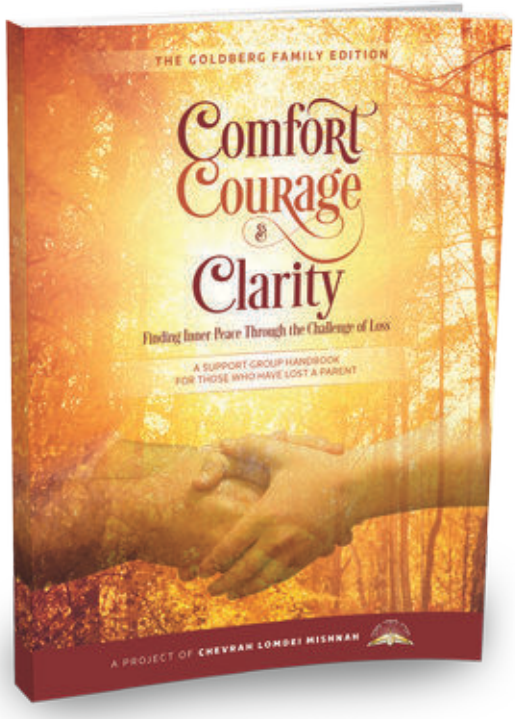
COMFORT, COURAGE AND CLARITY: SUPPORTING ADULTS THROUGH LOSS

Sitting outside with a group of friends who were discussing yerushahs *(inheritances) from their grandparents, I felt as if I wanted to run and hide. My friends were talking about losing grandparents, whereas I had already lost both of my parents but still had my grandparents. I was already a mother of several children, but at that moment, I felt utterly alone. Was there anyone who could understand my pain?*

Throughout Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah's years of assisting those who have lost a loved one – most commonly a parent – we have seen the need for and value of solid, guided, skilled support in the face of loss – and in ultimately finding the strength to move on.

Mrs. Miriam Ribiat, Project Manager at Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah, began offering this support with her blog, *Comfort, Courage and Clarity.* But she wanted to do more. "I saw how a well-run support group can be so important in the healing process. As a result of my own experiences with loss and the work I subsequently did on myself, I felt like I could put myself out there for other adults dealing with the loss of a parent," shares Mrs. Ribiat. "That is really the background to *Comfort, Courage and Clarity,* the Support Group Handbook that we developed."

The handbook is a guide for how to properly run a support group for those who have lost a parent. "The well-run support group offers a safe place to share your feelings, to feel cared for, to gain tools that have been effective for others. Everything shared is kept confidential, and the environment is completely non-judgmental," continues Mrs. Ribiat.



Mrs. Ruchy Rosenfeld, the other driving force behind this publication, suffered the loss of her parents and mother-in-law in rapid succession. Already involved with Yad B'Yad, an organization that offers support groups for many life challenges, Mrs. Rosenfeld offered to run a support group for women in mourning. In no time, the group was up and running. Putting together this handbook was an outgrowth of that experience.

As Mrs. Rosenfeld frequently tells people: "The year of *aveilus* can be a very overwhelming time. Don't go it alone! It's always easier to process your grief with others who are experiencing the same thing."

Mrs. Miriam Liebermann, LCSW, an accomplished author and lecturer who has led many support groups herself, explains why this project is so valuable: "Feeling isolated and alone adds to the trauma and worsens the pain of loss. Research has shown consistently that a healthy support network encourages healing. With practical guidance and relevant readings included, those so inclined, with basic leadership skills, can facilitate such groups, bringing healing and comfort to those in need.

A SAFE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR FEELINGS, TO FEEL CARED FOR, TO GAIN TOOLS THAT HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE FOR OTHERS

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"Kudos to Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah for stepping up to the plate once again, by creating this innovative support-group guide."

Mrs. Sara Rivka Kohn, Founder and Director of LINKS, an organization that provides support to teenagers who have lost a parent, was so taken with the handbook's content that she immediately used it in a support group that she currently runs for adults. "I began with the first essay and loved the discussion that ensued," shares Mrs. Kohn. "As the facilitator, this has made me much more willing to lead the group because I have quality material ready to use. What a gift this is for those dealing with the loss of a parent!"

The guidebook includes instructions for how to structure and run a group; topic suggestions; materials and articles to help initiate discussion; and questions that can be discussed in the group or with a partner following group meetings. In addition, Mrs. Ribiat has made herself available to anyone using the handbook who needs assistance in setting up or running a support group.

"It helps just to realize that your emotions and feelings, given the circumstance, are *normal,* that others *can* relate to you. If someone is hesitant to go, I would say, 'Try it, see if you can connect. It just might be one of the most important choices you'll make,'" says Mrs. Ribiat. "I worked on this project *l'iluy nishmas* my parents and other loved ones, and it is my hope that the *nechamah* it will bring to others will be a *zechus* for them."



THE links CONNECTION: BRINGING COMFORT TO TEENAGE GIRLS

When the wife of the Steipler Gaon, Harav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, passed away, he instructed his daughters to learn Pirkei Avos in their mother's merit. To enable girls who have lost a parent to follow this suggestion, Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah has created a series of Pirkei Avos articles, which are printed in the bimonthly magazine put out by Links, a wonderful organization that provides support for teenage girls who have lost a parent. The series is authored by Mrs. Miriam Ribiat, Project Manager at Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah, and is tailor-made for this specific audience. Each article includes a lesson culled from a *mishnah* in Pirkei Avos, as well as the text of that *mishnah* and a *tefillah* to say when learning *mishnayos* in memory of a loved one. Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah is proud to partner with Links in bringing *chizzuk* to these young women and an *aliyah* for their parents' *neshamos*.