

So though I continue to work (now strictly due to financial necessity), my priorities are ever so gradually falling into place. For self-fulfillment, pride and *nachas*, my family takes first place. Work doesn't even make a close second.

It was strictly financial in nature, that which energized me was an emotional motivation. Enter the feminist movement. Despite being a sheltered *Bais Yaakov* girl, the secular world's influence had readily if not obviously penetrated. Indeed, there was an ever-so-subtle voice nagging in the back of my mind, reminding me of the talents I would be wasting if I did not return to work. The voice relentlessly continued by questioning if I truly wanted to exchange the challenge and stimulation that is part and parcel of working life for crying babies and dirty diapers. With whom can one replace the satisfaction and gratification that a responsible position affords? Housekeeping by comparison is a rather thankless task. A problem well resolved at work is a feather in one's cap, while beds made this morning, no matter how meticulously, will be unmade tonight. And yet, this inner voice dared not let itself be too clearly heard. Twelve years of schooling had taught me better. I knew that true satisfaction for a *bas Yisroel* was to be attained in the confines of one's home. I grew up with a "stay-at-home mother" and in my heart, I wished to provide the same for my children.

Frankly, it was not too necessary to dwell on the "whys," for the facts were clear. If my husband was to learn (I did not attend *Bais Yaakov* for nothing!), I was to work. So it went for the first ten

years (and six children *קטני*) of my married life. But life is a complicated matter. I found myself becoming the living embodiment of "*lo sifaneh*." My life was counted not in years or days, but in moments... stolen moments.

#### MATURATION BY EVOLUTION

Now, finally, to respond to the question. What was the motivation that changed my self-perception/ my lifestyle? I cannot honestly point my finger at one particular encounter or one definitive lifestyle decision. My lifestyle changes have evolved as I matured and grew, and it was not the major decisions that have helped me grow. Instead it is the daily progression of minor quandaries that nearly drive me to distraction. Do I tell my boss that I'll stay late, and ask a neighbor to take my son off the bus, or do I put my foot down because my three-year-old comes first? The fact is clear. A moment given to one cause is doubtlessly stolen from another. Time, a precious commodity for all of us, becomes a forbidden luxury to a *frum* working mother. The questioning is never ending: *How much time do I allow for my husband, what share belongs to the children, what do I owe my employer, and where in the world do I fit in?*

Ironically, it is my children who have proven to be my most able teachers. Both indirectly, as in (overheard) "Don't give Mommy the note about the speech - if she goes, we'll have a babysitter tonight" - and directly, "Mommy, just write the JO that you have seven children - you don't have time to write," they have guided me along the road of Jewish motherhood. But more importantly, they have taught me better than any lecturer or author that my only real satisfaction will come from my home. Deciding to stay home when my little one is sick ceases to become a challenge when his small hand squeezes mine ever so gratefully. So though I continue to work (now strictly due to financial necessity), my priorities are ever so gradually falling into place. For self-fulfillment, pride and *nachas*, my family takes first place. Work doesn't even make a close second.

## Nature, Nurture, and Free Will

### The Road to Self-Realization

Rebbetzin Faige Twersky

While the nature/ nurture controversy rages on unabated in psychological circles, Jewish thought insists that a third, pre-eminent dimension occupies the most critical role in directing our personal destiny, a factor called *bechira*, free will and choice. We have nothing to say about our genetic makeup, and equally little to say about the ways in which our parents choose to raise us, but each of us has the opportunity to take complete ownership of our will and make the appropriate choices. Recognition of the potential of our G-d-given resources as well as of our innate shortcomings provide the raw material for the expression of this factor.

Some reminiscences may prove helpful in illustrating the interplay between these three elements - nature/nurture/free-will - and enable us to heighten our consciousness about characteristics we would do well to cultivate.

Rebbetzin Twersky lives in Milwaukee where she assists her husband, Rabbi Michel Twerski, in serving their *kehilla*, which is made up of recent *baalei teshuva* and the long-time *frum*. She is a highly popular lecturer on a wide range of topics in venues around the globe.

**CHEVRA OSEH CHESED  
OF AGUDATH ISRAEL**

**BURIAL PLOTS  
IN ERETZ YISROEL**

Interment in a Shomer Shabbos Beis  
Olam near Beis Shemesh

Please phone or write to:  
Chevra Oseh Chesed of Agudath Israel  
84 William Street, New York, NY 10038

(212) 797-9000

A singularly invaluable asset in my nearly four decades of communal work has been my ability to connect with others. While this has not come without some industry, the undeniable fact remains that it is in large measure a Divine endowment. From my earliest childhood, I seem to have been blessed with a natural affinity for people and a proclivity to be drawn to the best in others. The family joke during my formative years in response to my having met someone new was, "How long will it take before Feige exclaims 'Isn't she won-

derful?'" Growing older has invested this attribute with greater discrimination, but in the main, it is an asset that I treasure to this day. For those anticipating or already engaged in a career in communal service, I cannot recommend anything of greater consequence than the development of this asset, even if it must be actively willed, cultivated, and chosen.

Proper due must be given to parental reinforcement and encouragement (nurture) of our dispositional inclinations (nature).

IN THE PRESENCE OF MY FATHER

Again a reminiscence: My father, Rabbi Yisroel Avraham Stein, רב"ד, Rav of Faltichen, Rumania, was a figure out of the *alter heim*, the old world. Charged by his early Chassidic roots in Vizhnitz and further enriched by his apprenticeship to the famed Rabbi Mayer Shapiro of Lublin, he was a man of great learning, charisma and religious fervor. His spiritual discipline was exacting, and his Chassidic perspective on life in the "new" world unbending. All of the above notwithstanding, he crafted and broadened the horizons of my life in ways might seem incongruous with his background.

For one, he was the living personification of what our sages in defined as a "chacham" – "Who is wise but he that learns from every person" (*Avos* IV, 1). My father was fascinated and intrigued by everyone who crossed his path. During his summer stays in Tannersville, New York, he formed a bond of affection and respect with Rabbi Breur, רב"ד, and his German-Jewish community that was truly remarkable. Similarly, during his frequent visits to Milwaukee, where few in those days understood his European Yiddish, he connected with all of our *baalei teshuva*, shattering barriers of age, language, culture and background. Though their frames of reference were so disparate, my father had the capacity to build bridges out of his context of "learning from every person." It is a lesson etched in my memory, complementing my natural propensity to connect.

A second lesson came from the effectiveness of his communication, which is best expressed in the rabbinic axiom, "Words which emanate from the heart, penetrate the heart." My husband, Rabbi Michel Twerski שליט"א, once explained that communication is analogous to a bow and arrow – the farther back you pull the bow, the greater the distance the arrow will travel. My father communicated out of a blazing kiln of rich emotion and spiritual passion. Whether in sweeping an audience of tens of thousands to share in his splendid Torah visions, or in his per-

בס"ד

# Only 5 In The World... And She Is One Of Them

The disease is **incredibly rare, terribly painful**  
– and a little girl from Jerusalem is  
**one of only five in the world that has it.**

Only a delicate bone marrow transplant in Seattle can save her life! Her grandfather is one of Jerusalem's most respected Torah sages. Her parents are magnificent people, who spend days and nights tearfully comforting their precious, stricken, suffering little girl. They have love, Torah wisdom, concern and bitachon – but **only with your help** can they possibly pay bills of

## \$250,000

That is what Ruche's life will cost

### רחמנים בני רחמנים

Join us in answering the plea of Gedolei Eretz Yisroel.

Horav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv	Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman	Horav Shmuel Aurbach	Harav Moshe Halberstam	Horav Meir Brandsdorfer
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------

**וכל המציל נפש אחת ישראל כאלו קיים עולם מלא!**

Horav Avrohom Pam Rosh Yeshiva Torah Vodass	Horav Yaakov Perlow Novominsker Rebbe	Horav Yosef Rosenblum Rosh Yeshiva Sharei Yosheer
--	--	--

Your tax deductible contributions can be made out to TZEDAKAH V'CHESED and sent to

### RABBI NISSON WOLPIN

305 Avenue F, Brooklyn, NY 11218

onal discussions with members of the immediate family, his heart was always open and bare. Whatever abilities I and my siblings have in this realm are a direct result of having witnessed on a constant basis my father's communication reverberating with fervor, conviction and passion.

Finally, my father, the Chassidic *Rebbe*, always made me feel very special, defying the myth that Chassidic daughters are second-class citizens. He took great pride in my academic achievements and, generally, in the strength of Jewish women. He was fond of interpreting Egypt's downfall to Pharaoh's lack of appreciation for the power of Jewish women. Hence, the Pharaoh's decree that only little boy babies be drowned. Would he have understood the strength of Jewish women, who knows what he would have resorted to! — my father would exclaim.

Late at night, as I was falling asleep, I overheard my father sharing with a friend, what a wonderful and special child I was. Needless to say, I worked hard not to disappoint him. As a result, I have often advised parents to allow children to catch them in the act of giving praise — a page out of my father's parenting manual.

**LOW PUBLIC PROFILE,  
HIGH PRIVATE IMPACT**

King Solomon must have prophetically envisioned my mother, Rebbetzin Sara Stein, רבנית סארא שטיין, when he wrote his exalted "*Aishes Chayil*" (Woman of Valor). She was the ultimate modest, self-effacing and low public-profile person. It wasn't that she thought less of herself — just that she thought of herself less. She had her priorities straight: husband first, then children, and only then, the rest of the world. Unlike so many of us, who are driven, conflicted and scattered, she was always anchored, and as a result, tranquil of spirit.

While to the outside world, my father was the voice to be reckoned with, to his children he would confide, "Listen carefully to what your mother is say-

ing now, because in three weeks that's going to be my opinion." From the proverbial tent of Sarah, my mother demonstrated, that in so many ways, "the hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world." My mother's legacy to me and through me to those I am privileged to teach is the antidote to the contemporary American illusion that cripples the real power of Jewish wives and mothers. It promotes the healing effect of humility as the remedy to power and the soothing quality of modesty to stem the corrosive effect of ambition.

**CONTINUING TO LIVE WITH  
MY PARENTS**

My parents are gone, but curiously, are with me more than ever. When I look at another human being, I look through my father's eyes. When I find myself succumbing to the sea of opportunity and blandishments which beckon temptingly, my mother's image jolts me back to concentrating on what ultimately is really important and fulfilling. To be sure, my immediate family, husband, children and grandchildren have played a vital role in inspiring and encouraging my growth and development. My extended family, the *kehilla* in Milwaukee and our *chevra* everywhere, are significantly responsible for whatever modest achievements I can legitimately claim. Though I am supposed to teach and inspire, it is they who have challenged and inspired me, transcending both nature and nurture by their determined striving and courage in the realm of free will.

In conclusion, the legacy and guidance from those who preceded me illuminate my path with an unerring light. Ultimately, however, the bottom line is that as human beings we have little control over the circumstances of our lives or what tomorrow will bring. But we do have the free will to command our response to our daily trials and tribulations. The composition of these choices will define, more than anything else, who we really are and how great our impact on others will be. ■

**Source of the "Goodness"  
in Yaakov's Tent**

Mrs. Hinda D. Wolpin

**M**ah tovu oholecha Yaakov, *mishkanosecha Yisroel*. Ever since Balak — eyes boggling at the neat rows of Jewish tents in the desert, marveling at their discreet domestic arrangements — uttered those immortal words, a Jewish woman's charge has been articulated. Those tents epitomized the quintessential Jewish home. It's the inner ambience that counts. An atmosphere of *bitachon* and *simchas ha'chaim* (trust in Hashem and joy in life) can override nearly all external factors. Throughout the ages, women have been cocooned in tents of one sort or another, trying to make of the variables a home. Though the parameters may change, the dynamics remain the same. At one point in history, the challenge was trying to make ghetto life less oppressive, by infusing meaning as well as some lightness and security into a perilous lifestyle.

Hinda Dvora Wolpin is a wife, mother, grandmother, educator and free-lance writer whose articles and book reviews have been featured in *JO*. Her husband, Rabbi Chaim Boruch Wolpin, is *Rosh Hayeshiva* of Yeshiva Mesivta Karlin-Stolin in Brooklyn.

Reading And Writing Classes  
On All Grade Levels  
Given by a Renowned  
**READING SPECIALIST**  
in the Teaching Profession  
for Over 25 Years

Special Enrichment  
Classes given on Sunday  
4, 5, 6, & 7<sup>th</sup> graders

**MRS. RIVKIE SCHONFELD**

- MAXIMIZE YOUR CHILD'S POTENTIAL
- PRIVATE SESSIONS AVAILABLE ON ALL GRADE LEVELS IN HEBREW AND ENGLISH
- LEARNING IN A FUN ATMOSPHERE
- CLASSES GIVEN AFTER SCHOOL
- SEPARATE CLASSES FOR GIRLS & BOYS

For More Information  
Call Mrs. Schonfeld  
**(718) 376-5545**