



THE PESACH ISSUE



Rabbi Yakov
Danishefsky, LCSW



Dr. Leslie
Ginsparg Klein



Yaakov
Langer



Rabbi Elliot
Schrier



Rabbi Moshe
Walter



Rechy
Zolty

Through the Pain: Where is
Hashem? **Page 2**
A Divorced Woman Changed
the Jewish World **Page 3**
Frequently Asked Halachic
Questions: Pesach **Page 5**

Guiding Couples through
Divorce **Page 8**
The Critical Role of Familial
Support **Page 11**
3 Day Yom Tov: A Poem
Page 12

Through the Pain

by Rabbi Yaakov Danishefsky, LCSW



We've all heard the chizzuk. Hashem only gives people challenges they can handle. The greater the challenge, the greater the reward. Hashem loves you and has only your best in mind. One day you will understand why you needed this. These messages are true. They are important. Yet, here we are. In pain. The pain is real. The situation is not fair and no one really gets it.

The children's book, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, tells the story of a family trekking across terrains to catch a bear. They get to a field of tall grass and say, "We can't go over it, we can't go under it, we've got to go through it." Next, they get to a deep, cold river, and again they say, "We can't go over it, we can't go under it, we've got to go through it." And so on and so forth.



To read more articles,
visit the Kol Ehad
website

Being single is lonely. Too lonely to put properly into words. And when it comes to loneliness, "We can't go over it" and "we can't go under it." But perhaps "we can go through it."

The poet, Hafiz, writes:
Don't surrender your loneliness
So quickly.

Let it cut more deep.
Let it ferment and season you
As few human
Or even divine ingredients can.

Something missing in my heart
tonight
Has made my eyes so soft,
My voice
So tender,

My need of God
Absolutely
Clear.

Going through loneliness can mean different things for different people. For Hafiz, in his poem, it meant finding G-d. This too can mean different things for different people. I want to try and share what it means to me, and what it doesn't mean to me. For me, it doesn't mean that the pain goes away. It doesn't mean that I am now girded with an endless reservoir of optimism and positivity. But it does mean that profound experiences typically

unfold.

Sometimes, sitting in loneliness becomes an experience of sensing a Presence with me. Right here. His presence like a canopy enveloping me from behind and wrapping itself tightly around me. Holding me. I feel this in my skin. Down into my bones. They shake from His warmth. And the tears flow more freely from my eyes because He too is crying.

Other times, I do not feel Him on me, but sense Him next to me. Looking at me patiently, with the most caring gaze. He sits with me on the floor. He has nowhere else He'd rather be. He might take my hand in His. He may not.

But there are also other times. Where I don't feel this at all. Instead, I feel that He is my adversary. He is here but not to comfort, rather to listen. And He is okay listening to me. I am angry. Angry with Him. And I hurl my words against Him. Unflinchingly. And He takes them. I sense that somehow, He is both unhurt and hurt by them. He is not callous but He is rock-hard. And most of all, He does not go away because of my anger.

And yet, there are still even more times. Times that my sense of Him is through trepidation and

awe. There is something mighty, powerful, and awesome about Him. He is mysterious. He is the Almighty. He is high above, majestic, and larger than the universe itself. In these moments, the captivation with Him dissolves my personal boundaries.

Finally, there is one more experience. The sense that He is nowhere to be found. That this life is too unfair and too unbearable to associate it with any caring presence. And yet, when I don't try to go over that feeling or around it, but allow myself to move through it, I discover something unexpected — another doorway to Him. In not sensing Him at all, I may actually be encountering Him more deeply. If Hashem is truly infinite, and I am finite, then I cannot fully grasp or experience Him in any complete way. In a certain sense, the truest way to relate to the Infinite is to recognize that He cannot be contained or understood by me at all.

This is a paradox — and not an experience any of us would choose on our own. But it is powerful. When I do feel Hashem's presence, it means I am sensing a form of revelation that can fit within human understanding and emotion. But when I don't feel His presence at all, I may be touching something even more fundamental — the reality of a G-d who is beyond anything I can feel, grasp, or contain.

None of these experiences resolve our pain, but they do allow our pain to unearth levels of depth that remain otherwise unseen. One of the most pivotal moments in our history is when Moshe noticed a thornbush aflame in the desert. The fire, says the

“When I don't feel His presence at all, I may be touching something even more fundamental.”

Medrash, represents the presence of Hashem and the thorns represent the pains of our lives. Some of them are very sharp. What made this vision unique was that the thorns were on fire without being consumed. In other words, the flame was present for

the thorns. It was there, in the thorns, around the thorns. The transcendent Creator of all worlds came down to this tiny little bush to accompany and sit with the pain of these sharp ends. And yet, the thorns didn't blunt or shrivel up. They stayed sharp. Because sometimes Hashem's presence absolves our pain, and sometimes He accompanies it. ■

Rabbi Yakov Danishefsky, LCSW, is a Chicago-based therapist and author of the widely read *Attached*, the newly released *Attached Haggadah*, and the forthcoming sefer *The Delight of Shabbos*. He leads *Avodas HaLev*, a Chicago organization devoted to meaningful learning and community programming, and hosts *The Attached Life Podcast*.

Personalities and Perspectives

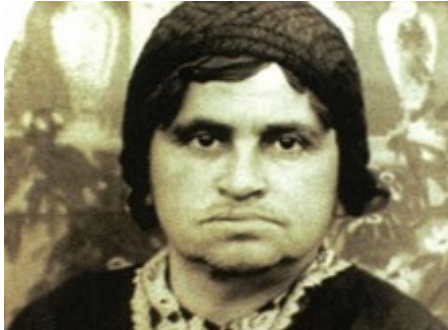
Divorced-Yet Undeterred: Sarah Schenirer's Legacy

by Dr. Leslie Klein Ginsparg

Sarah Schenirer was an unlikely candidate to be a revolutionary leader. She was a poor, divorced, uneducated woman in a society where any one of those alone would be an impediment. And yet she overcame the odds and surmounted adversity to found the educational movement *Bais Yaakov* and become a leader and role model for the ages.

In her youth, Sarah Schenirer's commitment to religious observance and love of Judaism made her somewhat of a social outcast. Her friends teased her for her piety and she oftentimes felt uncomfortable accompanying them to the popular activities of the time. But she did not waver in her commitment to Judaism. She continued to try to influence

those around her positively, even when it failed to have any effect. She did so even while enduring her own personal pain. She was what the community would have called an “older single.” After feeling that she lacked the attributes to be successful in the frum marriage mart, she married at the age of 27. Her brief



marriage was an unhappy one from the very beginning, ending in divorce at a time when divorce brought with it considerable stigma.

Seeing the assimilation going on around her, she wanted to spread her love and passion for Judaism. After spending time in Vienna and becoming very inspired by a local rabbi there, she was determined to dedicate herself to inspiring Jewish girls and women back home in Poland. Most know what happened next: she starts Bais Yaakov and becomes an immediate success, bolstered by approval from the entire community.

Except that’s not what happened at all. Sarah Schenirer’s first idea wasn’t to create a formal school. It was to create a youth society, similar to those of the secular ideological movements

(Socialism, Communism, Zionism) that were so popular with Jewish youth at the time. She convened a group of teenage girls in 1915, excited to launch her movement. And she failed. The girls mocked her. They left her speech sneering. Sarah Schenirer could have quit, but she didn’t. “Who cares about doubts? Who cares about obstacles? Who cares if many laugh and ridicule my plan,” she wrote, “What role does my personal pride play here? If the intent is sincere and the aim is pure, my goal will certainly be achieved.” She endured a number of failures before she switched her focus from working with teens to starting a school for young girls in 1917.

“Who cares about doubts? Who cares about obstacles? Who cares if many laugh and ridicule my plan?”

Even after her goal was achieved with that school’s success and the movement’s growth, Sarah Schenirer still faced adversity, opposition and social ostracization. Communal leaders opposed her. Rabbinic leaders opposed her. They stopped her from opening schools in their towns. There are stories of people throwing rocks at her in the street. “Many were the times she was ousted with disdain by frum communities,” Bais Yaakov leader Rabbi Yehuda Leib Orlean, HY”D



Dr. Leslie Ginsparg Klein

wrote after her death, “the people she turned to, especially in the beginning, turned her away.” Even after she garnered major support from Rabbinic and communal leaders, she still encountered trouble. “Even once she had achieved her hard-earned respect,” Rabbi Orlean continued, “there remained individuals who would not capitulate, and continued to place obstacles in her path.”

Sarah Schenirer faced personal troubles, disappointment, ridicule and opposition. But far from letting adversity and failure stop her, she used it to motivate herself to work harder. She persevered, and the entire Jewish world is richer for her efforts. ■

A version of this article previously appeared in Jewish Action.

Leslie Ginsparg Klein is the Dean/Chief Academic Officer of Gratz College. Her book, *Bais Yaakov Girls: Agency, Identity, and Education in Jewish Orthodox Girlhood* will be released in 2027. Read more of Dr. Klein’s work at LeslieKlein.com

Halachic FAQ's for Single Men and Women: Pesach

by Rabbi Moshe Walter

Allow me to begin by acknowledging the stress that often exists in preparing for Pesach. I would like to share a simple but important point that has helped mitigate the pre-Pesach pressure for many individuals. Those who ask questions and reach out to their Rav with Pesach shaylos and related inquiries are often pleasantly surprised to discover that things can be streamlined and made easier than they imagined. Those who do not ask shaylos often wind up doing more than necessary. This approach creates heightened strain and detracts from the joy of Yom Tov, which is certainly not the intended goal of the holiday. Contacting your Rav with your concerns will make your preparations for Pesach easier, thereby making Pesach even more enjoyable. Please be sure to reach out to your Rav with your questions. I am sure he will be happy to help, and you will be glad that you did.

The following is a small sampling of some of the hundreds of questions that are asked of Rabbanim in advance of Pesach. It is our hope that these questions can serve as a springboard for you to reach out to your Rav with your own specific inquiries.



By way of introduction to the halachic shaylos, it is critical to articulate an important point at the outset. The only places in one's home that require bedikas chametz are those locations where food is brought. If there are parts of the home where food is not brought, one need not clean or search for chametz. Similarly, any part of the home that was sold through mechiras chametz with your Rav is no longer required to undergo bedikas chametz.

The answers to the forthcoming shaylos are based primarily on Shulchan Aruch and Mishnah Berurah, siman 433. For further analysis, applications, and source material, see The Making of a Minhag, Chapter 18: "Arduous Cleaning for Pesach."

I rent a room in someone else's home. Am I obligated in bedikas chametz?

Yes. Any residence in your possession, whether rented or owned, must be checked to ensure it is free of chametz, and bedikas chametz must be performed.

I share an apartment with a friend; we each have our own room and share the other areas. How should we divide bedikas chametz?

As noted above, your personal space is your responsibility. Regarding shared areas, since they are jointly used, you should come to an agreement to ensure that all shared spaces are properly checked and free of chametz.

I will be away for Pesach, staying at my parents' home. Do I still need to perform bedikas chametz? If so, when?

Depending on your circumstances, there are several options. It is important to remember that bedikas chametz is a mitzvah that you should try to fulfill.

If you will be in your home on the

night of the fourteenth of Nissan before leaving, you are obligated to perform bedikas chametz there. If you prefer not to check your entire residence, you can discuss with your Rav the option of selling your home, which would exempt it from bedikas chametz since it is no longer halachically yours. Ideally, you should retain one space that you do not sell so that you can perform bedikas chametz in at least one area that remains in your possession.

If you will not be home the night before Pesach, you should perform bedikas chametz the evening before you leave. In this case, a berachah is not recited, as it is only recited on the night of the fourteenth. The suggestion of checking only one room applies here as well. You should still check your room and belongings at your parents' home on the night of the fourteenth and participate in the bedikah there.

I am a single adult who lives with my parents. Do I need to do my own chametz sale, or can I rely on theirs?

If all of your chametz is clearly included and specified in their sale document, that is sufficient.

It is common for chametz sale forms to include multiple family members or even multiple residences, as long as everything is clearly understood by all parties and the Rav.

I am a single adult who receives

some financial support from my parents. Do I need my own chametz sale?

Financial support does not affect the obligation of bedikas chametz or the execution of a chametz sale. If you live independently, you are obligated in bedikas chametz. Regarding the sale, you may either complete your own form or have your residence included in your parents' document.

My Rav is only available for mechiras chametz at times that do not work for me because I need to care for my young children. What should I do?

Please contact your Rav and ask if an alternative time can be arranged. Many Rabbanim are happy to accommodate such situations and will work with you to ensure you can properly execute your sale.

I am spending part of Pesach at my parents' home and part at a hotel. Do I need to check for chametz when I arrive at the hotel?

Yes. While bedikas chametz is ideally performed on the night of the fourteenth, if you arrive at a location afterward, you are required to perform it then. However, if the hotel confirms that the room was already checked on your behalf, they may serve as your proxy, and no further checking is required.

Do I need to put out ten pieces of

bread when performing bedikas chametz?

This is a well-documented Ashkenazic minhag cited by the Rema and supported by later authorities, and it should be followed if it is your custom (Rema 432:2). However, if you are checking only one room or performing bedikah on a night other than the fourteenth, it is not required. Additionally, if fulfilling this minhag presents difficulty, it is not obligatory. Notably, several major authorities, including the Vilna Gaon, Chayei Adam, Chazon Ish, and Rav Moshe Feinstein, did not follow this custom (see Mishnah Berurah 432:13).

I will be eating all my meals with others but staying at my own home. Do I need to make an eruv tavshilin?

If you plan to light Shabbos candles at home on Yom Tov for Shabbos, you are considered to be preparing for Shabbos. The Shulchan Aruch cites differing opinions on whether an eruv tavshilin is required in this case. Due to this uncertainty, one should establish an eruv tavshilin without a berachah (Shulchan Aruch 527:19 with Mishnah Berurah).

If you perform additional preparation for Shabbos at home, such as boiling water on Yom Tov for Shabbos use, then an eruv tavshilin should be made with a berachah, which will also cover candle lighting.

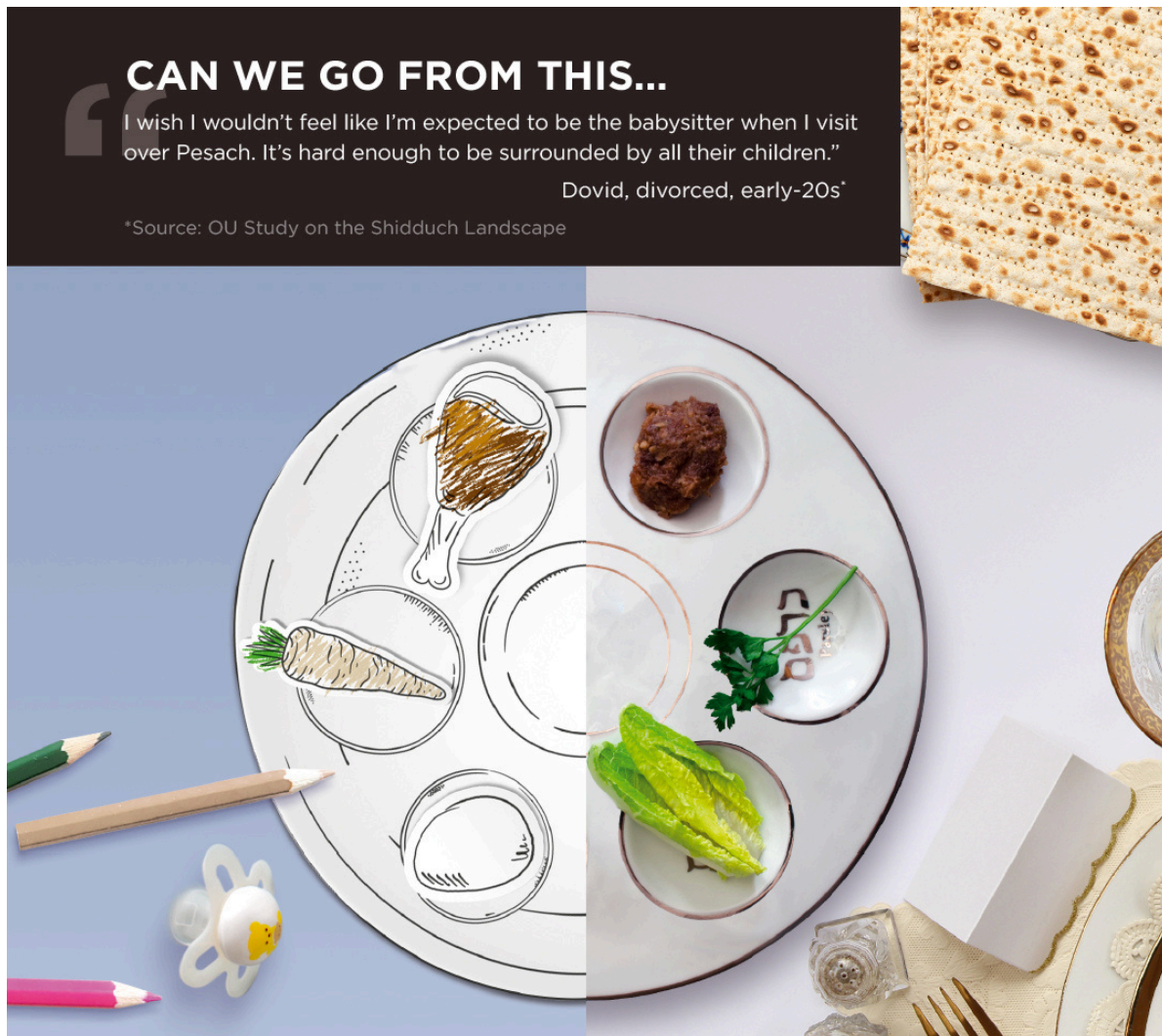
While there is certainly much to do in preparation for Pesach, those who insist on being overly machmir in their preparations may arrive at the Seder exhausted, detracting from their ability to properly experience and fulfill the mitzvos of the evening. Pre-Pesach pressure can reach

unnecessary and overwhelming levels, diminishing one's excitement and anticipation.

Please keep this in mind, and do not hesitate to reach out to your Rav with your shaylos. I am confident that doing so will be

beneficial. ■

Rabbi Moshe Walter is the rabbi of Woodside Synagogue Ahavas Torah in Silver Spring, Maryland, and executive director of the Vaad HaRabanim of Greater Washington.



CAN WE GO FROM THIS...

I wish I wouldn't feel like I'm expected to be the babysitter when I visit over Pesach. It's hard enough to be surrounded by all their children.”

Dovid, divorced, early-20s*


*Source: OU Study on the Shidduch Landscape

...TO THIS?

I look forward to spending Pesach with my family. My young nieces and nephews are adorable, but my parents and married siblings also cherish and support me.”

Dovid, divorced, early-20s*

REDEMPTION STARTS WITH YOU.

 **kolechad**

When a Marriage Ends, the Family Doesn't

by Yaakov Langer

Divorce rarely begins with a dramatic moment.

By the time it becomes visible, something has already broken between two parents.

What follows is often a process focused on the adults: their decisions, logistics, and separation.

And somewhere in the middle of it all are the children, quietly trying to make sense of a world that no longer feels stable.

For Rechy Zolty, that fragile space between two parents is where much of her work now lives. Through Arches for Families, the organization she founded in New Jersey, Zolty helps couples navigate one of the most painful transitions a family can face. Her goal is not to repair marriages that have already broken. Instead, she helps parents build something new: a way to move forward as co-parents, with their children at the center. But the work she does today began almost by accident.

A Boy Who Changed Everything

During the early months of COVID, a message circulated through the community about a



Rechy Zolty

fifteen-year-old boy who needed somewhere to go for Pesach. His father was hospitalized. His mother could not care for him. There was nowhere for him to stay. Zolty remembers the moment clearly.

“My husband came over to me and said, ‘I think we should take this boy in,’” she recalls. “And I said, ‘Oh, that’s what you think? That’s so nice. But no.’”

At the time she and her husband were already raising a large family. Bringing a teenage boy into the house during a pandemic felt overwhelming. But her husband reminded her of something from his family’s history. “He told me this story about his grandmother in Poland,” Zolty says. “She had ten kids and one small apartment. A

mother and son came through the town with scarlet fever and nowhere to go. She took them in.” The mother recovered and returned home. The boy stayed with the family for nearly two years. “My husband said, ‘This is what our family does.’” So they said yes.

The boy stayed with them for four months. During that time, his father passed away.

Watching the situation unfold forced Zolty to confront a question she had never really thought about before. “What happens when kids in our community don’t have a stable place to be?” she wondered. She started asking around. “In Brooklyn we had organizations like OHEL,” she says. “They handled these kinds of situations. But when I started asking what existed here, people kept saying the same thing: nothing.”

A Problem No One Wanted to Touch

Zolty began researching the issue seriously. She met with therapists, askanim, clinics, and community leaders. The answers were discouraging. “Everyone told me

the same thing,” she says. “The liability is too big. The cases are too complicated. Nobody wants to deal with it.” Some people warned her directly not to get involved. “They said, ‘If you do this, you’re going to get sued. You’re going to get killed.’” She shrugs slightly when she repeats it. “I said, okay. Then I’ll get sued and I’ll get killed. And if that happens, I’ll stop.”

Instead, she opened Bridges for Families, an organization that helps children whose homes have become unstable because of crisis, addiction, mental illness, or other severe challenges. But as Bridges grew, something else began to emerge. “A huge percentage of the families we were dealing with were going through divorce,” she says. And the children were suffering.

The Hidden Crisis

Divorce itself is not new. But Zolty began noticing a pattern that deeply troubled her: high-conflict divorces where communication between parents completely broke down. “When parents are in that place, the kids fall into the cracks,” she says.

The research backed up what she was seeing. Children whose parents experience intense conflict during divorce face dramatically higher rates of anxiety and emotional distress. However, both within the frum world and beyond, there were no structured resources designed to guide couples through divorce in a healthy way. So Zolty decided to

build one and started yet another organization.

Teaching People How to Divorce

Arches for Families began with a simple idea: most couples enter divorce with absolutely no preparation. “People get chassan and kallah classes before they get married,” Zolty says. “But before

“They said, ‘If you do this, you’re going to get sued. You’re going to get killed.’” She shrugs slightly when she repeats it. “I said, okay. Then I’ll get sued and I’ll get killed. And if that happens, I’ll stop.”

divorce? Nothing.” So Arches offers pre-divorce consultations. Couples who know their marriage is ending can sit down and learn what lies ahead: the legal process, the role of beis din, the court system, mediation, and the emotional realities they will face. “People walk in completely blind,” she says. “They don’t know who the players are. They don’t know the different routes they can take.”

Zolty strongly encourages mediation whenever possible. “In mediation, someone calm sits with you and helps you figure things out,” she explains. “You’re not signing your adulthood away to courts or outside decisions.”

But even when mediation isn’t an option, education helps couples make better choices before conflict spirals out of control. Still, the most difficult work often begins after the divorce itself.

When Parents Can’t Speak

Divorce may end a marriage, but it doesn’t end a family. Parents still have children to raise together. They still have school issues, schedules, holidays, and everyday decisions. And when communication has collapsed, those interactions can become explosive. “I’ve seen the most sane, normal, balanced people become completely unrecognizable during divorce,” Zolty says. She describes people forgetting basic responsibilities, repeating the same arguments endlessly, or becoming unable to communicate at all. “It turns people inside out,” she says. That is where Arches’ parental coordination program comes in.

Coordinators serve as neutral intermediaries between divorced parents, helping them manage communication and co-parent effectively. Sometimes that means helping parents schedule weekends or resolve disagreements about holidays. Sometimes it means teaching them how to write an email that won’t ignite another fight. “You’d be surprised how often we’re just helping people learn how to communicate softly again,” Zolty says.

A Small Miracle

One family that came through

Arches left a lasting impression. The parents had spent years locked in conflict. Even seeing each other's texts would trigger immediate anger. "They couldn't even be on a three-way text," Zolty says. "Smoke would come out of their ears." So their coordinator started slowly. At first, she communicated with each parent separately. Eventually she introduced shared emails. Over time, the tone began to soften.

One day something unexpected happened. The mother wrote to the father thanking him for paying for their daughter's trip to Poland after seminary. "She said the girl came back glowing and happy," Zolty recalls. "She said it couldn't have happened without him." The father responded with gratitude and warmth. "It was such a beautiful exchange," Zolty says. In Bridges staff meetings, the team shares what they call 'miracle moments.' "This was one of them," she says. Not because the divorce had disappeared. But because two parents who once could not communicate had found a way to share pride in their child again.

Holding Two Truths

One of the most important lessons Zolty learned early in this work is that divorce rarely has a single clear narrative. "I remember meeting one husband and thinking, wow, this man married someone impossible," she says. The next day she met the wife. "And I thought, wow, this woman married someone impossible." That moment

changed how she approached every case. "In divorce, both people have their truth," she says.



Yaakov Langer

The role of Arches is not to determine who is right or wrong. It is to create enough stability for parents to raise their children responsibly. "One of the biggest problems is that everyone around them takes sides," she explains. "Friends, family, everybody becomes emotionally involved." Arches tries to remain neutral. "We hold the space for both truths," she says.

Finding Hope in Difficult Work

Given the stories she encounters, people often ask Zolty how she manages to keep doing this work. "People say to me all the time, 'How do you stay sane doing this?'" she says. Her answer surprises them. "I actually feel hopeful," she says. Part of that hope comes from the fact that she can act. "When most people hear these stories, they feel helpless," she explains. "For me, I can do something."

But there is also a deeper perspective guiding her. "I believe every soul comes into this world for a purpose," she says. "Some lives have more struggle than

others." That belief helps her maintain compassion without feeling responsible for erasing every hardship. "Our job isn't to take away all the pain," she says. "Our job is to support people through it."

Structure at Home

Zolty's path into this work may seem unlikely. Before founding Bridges or Arches, she built a career as a professional organizer, training more than 150 organizers around the world. That instinct still shapes everything she does. "When I see a problem, I see how it can be fixed," she says simply. That same clarity helps her manage a busy household as well. Zolty is the mother of eight, including a baby. "I try to run a very tight system," she says.

Work happens while her children are in school. Evenings belong to family. Calls are filtered through her organization rather than her personal phone. Her husband, she says, plays an important role in helping her maintain those boundaries. "He gives me enough rope to hang myself," she says with a smile. "But he also knows when to pull me back." The structure keeps everything moving.

In many ways, the work she does for families mirrors the work she does in her own life. Looking at something that feels tangled. And slowly, patiently, helping untangle it. ■

Yaakov Langer is the founder of Living L'chaim and the "Inspiration for the Nation."

Making Space for Every Single Voice at the Seder

by Rabbi Elliot Schrier



“Grandchildren are the crown of the elders,” Shlomo HaMelech teaches us in Sefer Mishlei. It’s an adage that has been echoed by countless others – through wisdom, wit, and whimsy – through the ages. “Perfect love sometimes does not come until the first grandchild,” declares an oft-cited Welsh proverb. Louisa May Alcott once said that “every home needs a grandmother in it.” Or, as my own parents are fond of saying, “Grandchildren are G-d’s gift for not killing your children.”

Collectively, the quips and aphorisms capture a sentiment with particular resonance on the holiday of Pesach. And yet, embedded within these feelings lies a subtle but important risk.

At the very beginning of Parshas Bo (Shemos 10:2), the Torah makes a point of emphasizing that the imperative to share the story of Yetzias Metzrayim – and to transmit its underlying

theological values – is not limited to just one’s children.

וְלַמַּעַן תִּסְפָּר בְּאַזְנוֹי בְּנֵךְ וּבֵן בְּנֵךְ אֶת
אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלְלָתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־אֶתְנִי
אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי בָּם וַיְדַעְתֶּם כִּי־אֲנִי יְקֹוֹק:

“You shall transmit to your children and to your grandchildren all that I have done in Egypt, the miracles that I performed there, and you shall know that I am Hashem.”

The story of our people is not meant to stop at a single generational handoff. It is meant to echo forward.

And, to be sure, the spiritual significance of the grandparent-grandchild relationship is hardly confined to the night of the Seder. At the very beginning of his Hilchos Talmud Torah (1:2), the Rambam emphasizes that the year-round obligation to teach Torah to one’s children extends to grandchildren as well:

כַּשֶּׁם שְׁחִיב אָדָם לְלַמֵּד אֶת בְּנוֹ כִּךְ הוּא
חִיב לְלַמֵּד אֶת בֶּן בְּנוֹ

“Just as one is obligated to teach their child Torah, so too are they obligated to teach his grandchild.”

Experientially, the power of intergenerational transmission is

perhaps most vivid and poignant on the night of the Seder. A single Seder table can often feature three or four generations celebrating our heritage together. It is a living embodiment of Mesorah. Not an abstract concept, but something we can see, hear, and feel.

But the power of the intergenerational Seder experience ought to come with a note of caution: while the Torah places great value on the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, it never intended for that relationship to come at the expense of the generation in between. Sadly, far too often it does.

This dynamic is often felt most acutely by adult single children. When grandchildren enter the family picture, a family’s center of gravity can quickly begin to shift. The excitement of grandchildren – their energy, their innocence, their messy hands and adorable cheeks – naturally draw attention. Their school projects cover the refrigerator, and their pictures occupy every spare inch of wall space. And in all the festivity and hoopla, others can begin to feel... less seen.

Adult single children celebrate their siblings’ marriages with genuine joy. They delight in their nieces and nephews with love, adoration, and, at times, a spoiling extra candy or two. And they often simultaneously find

themselves navigating their own complex journeys through the fraught world of Jewish dating, with all its uncertainties and challenges.

As they do so, they can experience a quiet but profound shift: a sense that their place within the family has changed. Where they were once central, they are now peripheral, that the attention, the conversation, the emotional energy has moved on, that within their own homes, they feel almost invisible.

The congregants who have expressed this sentiment to me know full well that the slight is never intentional. It is never malicious. They know, cognitively, that their parents love them no less than they ever did. And yet, the impact is real. It manifests in countless subtle

ways. Look, for example, at the pictures that adorn our homes. Are they exclusively of our grandchildren? Or do they also reflect meaningful moments shared with adult children? A hike? A fishing trip? An outing to a Broadway show or just some quiet time together at home?

Consider the conversations around the Shabbos table. Do they revolve entirely around school schedules, carpools, and milestones of the youngest generation? Or is there space carved out for the lives, interests, and thoughts of the adults in the room?

And perhaps most immediately, consider the Seder night itself. There is, of course, a well-deserved spotlight on the child who sings the Mah Nishtanah. It's an immediate Seder highlight, a

beautiful and cherished moment. We love hiding and searching for the Afikoman, and listening to the Divrei Torah the children learned in school.

But is there also space for the adult child who no longer stands on a chair or negotiates for an Afikoman present? The Haggada is certainly rich and deep enough to speak on many different levels. Do we allow it to? A true Seder table is not one that revolves around a single generation, but one that holds all generations at once. The Torah's emphasis on grandchildren is not meant to narrow our focus; it is meant to broaden it.

Finding the right balance is no easy task. Different generations have different needs, and the oldest generation is, at times, unfairly expected to possess the Solomonic wisdom needed to navigate it all. Never are we perfect. Inevitably, mistakes are made.

This is the task of parenting. The task of building homes - and Seder tables - where every generation feels seen, heard, and valued. Where no one is overlooked or passed over. Where every link in our chain feels connected to the link that came before it and to the one that comes after. And where the crown of grandchildren brightens the entire family it adorns. ■

Rabbi Elliot Schrier is the mara d'asra of Bnai Yeshurun in Teaneck, New Jersey.

Three Day Yom Tov: Devotion and Despair

72 hours without my devices, no tweets, no texts, no calls.
72 hours with my community; my wife, my children, my G-d.
72 hours with unhurried prayer, with seders late into the night,
72 hours of unhurried meals, when body and soul reunite.

Just down the block, maybe in the same home, the time is tracked differently.
Anxious and worried, a contrasting story, dreading prolonged misery -

72 hours without needed distractions, facing a void called

despair.
72 hours with no one to connect to, alone, does anyone care?
72 hours with a G-d I'm estranged from, aimlessly sitting through shul.
72 hours, how much food can I devour, as I drown out the screams of my soul.

May Hashem grant us all, wherever we find ourselves, all alone or feeling alone, empty or full, down or anxious, an uplifting, strength-filled, meaningful, and connection-filled 72 hours of Shabbos and Yom Tov!