

# THE PIKESVILLE TIMES

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## SHABBAT

*“And G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it He rested from all His work.” Genesis 2:3*

The Director

**Rochel Kaplan**

Dear Reader,

The last act of creation was to bless Shabbat and to make it holy. Why did G-d make Shabbat a holy day? The reading tells us it was because G-d rested on this day. Human beings require rest because humans grow tired, but why did G-d require rest? Can an indefatigable G-d grow tired? Furthermore, Shabbat is a *Yom Menucha -day of rest* and also *Shabbat Kodesh - Holy day*. “Off Days” connote vacation, rest, and relaxation. So, how can Shabbat be a Day of Rest combined with a Holy day?

After six days of creation, when everything seemed already complete, along came Shabbat, a day when creation was completed. A critical piece of the picture of creation was missing at the end of the six days-*and that was rest!* By resting, G-d’s final act of creation was accomplished. In other words, for six days, he acted, but the product of His actions was incomplete. On the last day of creation, He did the reverse: He rested, and with that, the world was complete. For the world to be complete, G-d had to stop acting. By not creating, creation became complete. By G-d retracting from creating, He introduced rest into the world.

In the book of Tanya, (Shaar Hayichud Vhaemunah, chapter 4) Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812) explains the concept of צמצום -Tzimtzum. Tzimtzum refers to G-d’s power of restraint or concealment whereby He withholds His great expansiveness and prevents it from descending and being revealed to created beings. Rather than openly animating all creation, He operates in concealment to create the impression that the created being exists independently from G-d (though no created being exists without G-d’s constant creative power- ex nihilo.) The restraining power of the omnipotent G-d conceals the spiritual life force that emanated from Him, in order not to nullify the existence of created beings.

In effect, existence is enabled by a balanced form of Tzimtzum-not too concealed and not too revealed. A helpful analogy from daily life is the sun’s light. On an average day, the sun allows us to see; on a very sunny day, the brightness of the light obstructs our sight. We do not turn off the light; we may grab a pair of sunglasses for cover to enable us to see. The light is then diluted and does not overwhelm us. In other words, in the presence of intense light, sight cannot exist. If concealed, sight can come into existence.

Similarly, G-d who is infinite- His light, His revelation- is endless, and leaves no space for you and me. To enable existence, created beings, G-d turned off our ability to see Him. He concealed His light.

Does G-d ever reverse the Tzimtzum? Does the veil ever lift where we become more aware of the fact that our life force is divine? The answer is “Yes!” Every week, the entire world fluctuates between high-

er and lower states of concealment. As the sun sets on Friday night, ushering in Shabbat, a layer of concealment peels away. The relationship between creator and created becomes pronounced. Rabbi Shalom Dovber Schneerson (Sefer Hamaamarim 5766 p. 22) expounds upon the concept of Divine Rest. “*Vayichal Elokim Bayom Hashvii - Elokim* (the name of G-d that represents His restraint and concealment) completed on the seventh day. Chassidut offers a deeper insight: not that Elokim completed the work, rather that the concealment came to a halt on Shabbat. G-d rested from the act of Tzimtzum - Divine light was revealed without the veil of Tzimtzum. By withdrawing from an act- Tzimtzum that made creation possible-He rested- because it was time to put something to rest- and rest itself rendered Shabbat a Holy day. G-d’s revelation makes this day a Holy day, a day we stand before the King of Kings. This stature is a time to bask in His greatness and receive from His beneficence. When the soul is more radiant, we must transcend our nature and bodily concerns, at which time “work” is out of the question.

[Proof of our increased measure of spirituality on Shabbat is the additional measure of “soul”-*Neshama Yitairah* (Talmud Tractate Taanit, 27B) given on Friday afternoon and removed on Saturday night, required the refreshing fragrance of Besomim at Havdalah.]

Resting on Shabbat does not mean the absence of work (Torat Menachem 5743:4). It is qualitatively different work of a higher order. Therefore, we must conclude that resting on Shabbat means to work in a manner that is restful and delightful, work that is not laborious but pleasurable. If tasked to carry a multitude of gems and diamonds, we would not spare any effort to carry the heaviest load despite strain and perspiration; the heavier the load, the greater the delight.

Mr. Sami Rohr obm was a refugee in Basel during the Holocaust. Having been invited to join a study class early Shabbat morning at 7:00 am, Mr. Rohr refused, saying, “I have one day a week to sleep, and you want me to come and learn?” The Rabbi looked him in the eye and replied, “You have one day in the week to learn, and you want to sleep?” The Rabbi won.

*As we embrace the beautiful days of summer, when the sun is out in abundance, let us take note. Summertime is essential for taking a break to rejuvenate. Moreover, the sun is Hashem’s more significant emanation. Let us avail ourselves of an opportunity to “see” what is good and to provide rest in service to our Neshama, G-dly soul. A healthy body is a healthy soul, and a healthy soul is a healthy body.*

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# The Value of a Friend

Part 2

by Ruti Rosenbloom

Gavi Rosenbloom obm

## Love has tremendous power to transform.

As parents, teachers and leaders in various roles, we share a common dedication to refine all entrusted in our care while enriching our environment. Theories relate methods and relativity to optimize care. However, three essential approaches in dedication can be found which carry varying results. Tolerance allows space for everyone, yet they remain separate cells detached and indifferent from each other as they develop separate interests. The care parents have fosters growth for everyone without discrepancy, although this direction is limited to the view of the caretaker. Deep love recognizes individual sovereignty with compassion to guide not dictate. Love appreciates individual qualities and preserves their dignity as they see the holiness in someone else. The person loved feels dignified and appreciates the compassion. Continuous growth is thus achieved. Acceptance allows their growth on their terms, including compassion for the challenges they may face. Full acceptance in loved ones allows them to travel any path and flourish into their ultimate potential.

I thought the reader would appreciate another view. Gavi left me cherishing many good memories. I find myself often longing for more and never satisfied. So essential to Gavi was how deeply he cared for others. One of my daughters shared with me what she misses most. Everyday, Gavi would take her aside and ask how her day was. "He would look right at me and listen carefully. He filled me with confidence." So, I thought it would be strengthening to listen to friends share and recollect their time with Gavi. Here is (part two) of Special friends: reflections and stories.

### Shuly Katz:

Shuly describes his childhood friend as a gem of a person and Gavi was specifically a diamond. Megillah explains a lost diamond can be confused with glass as they look the same.

If you apply pressure to glass it breaks and a diamond cannot be crushed. Gavi was exactly true to himself- a high energy person, as the saying goes, "What you see is what you get."

A king acquired many diamonds he wished to display on his crown. The largest diamond had scratches. Due to this flaw it was not fitting for a crown. Yet the king saw its potential and searched for a diamond cutter talented enough to remove the flaw. After a lengthy search he realized only one cutter has the ability to remove the scratches and make the diamond acceptable. This cutter had not worked in twenty years, yet he decided to take on this challenge and repair the diamond for the king. Instead of removing the scratches, he developed and shaped a design with the scratches. This became the king's most cherished stone. This represents Gavi. No matter the pressure he still remained kind and loyal; full of light and a limitless individual. He was out of the box because his energy and Yiddishkeit could not be contained in a box. Yiddishkeit is not a box. Reb Bronstein quotes: *Pischu Li, זה השער, קה, אודה בם אבה-בם אודה קה, זה השער, פתחו לי שערי צדק אבה-בם אודה קה, זה השער, לדי צדיקים יבאו בו* - "Open the gates of the Righteous so I may enter the gate

of Hashem, this is the gate of Hashem which the righteous enter through" Tehillim 118:19-20.

At first this passuk mentions many gates and then only one. Why?

There are many different types of avoda-service, however if you believe with a pure heart and full commitment, this is your path, then this is the gate of Hashem. The path is straight. This is why Gavi could not be contained in a box, he knew his way, and he infused this lesson into me.

Gavi would bring me to Young Anash as if I was one of the members. We would bring food. This formula of warmth, energy, and ingenuity, made everyone around him comfortable and time seemed to disappear. The chashivus (importance) he gave others like me, reminded me who I was throughout the ups and downs. Reb Braka asked Eliyahu HaNavi in the שוק, like a marketplace; "Who most deserves olam haba (world to come)?" Eliyahu HaNavi pointed to two men bringing simchat hachaim (life joy) to everyone they met and through this merit had the most reward. This exponential energy which Gavi made a kinyan, is what gives him a high place in olam haba and gives me the strength to follow the legacy of his life mission.

Another part of this legacy was Gavi's loyalty. He shared with me how much he wanted to make his parents proud and be a big brother to his family. I remember walking together as teenagers on Shabbos, Gavi pushing his baby brother in a stroller because he was loyal to this idea. This concept made him a true brother and friend. A boy asked his father;



Shuly Katz (l) Gavi a'h (r)

"What makes a true friend?" The father shared a story about a man from Spain. He became entangled in a life of crime. The Spanish king sentenced him to death. The man pleaded to leave so he can see his family one last time. The king asked how he could trust the condemned man to come back. The man replied, "I could put a guarantor in my place." The king agreed. The criminal called his loyal friend with this request and he readily accepted to switch places with the condemned man. The deadline came and an hour passed. They took the friend to the courtyard in the other's place. As the friend was being prepared

and the last moment came, the criminal returned and announced his arrival. The friend argued to be taken instead of the condemned man; both argued who it should be as both readily accepted the sentence. Finally, the king announced he would pardon them both on one condition- He the king- would become their friend, too.

This is the meaning of Ahavat Yisrael, just as loving a neighbor as yourself, Gavi was by definition a good friend. He stood by me and his friends through good times and hard ones, too. He drew people close. When we look at Ahavat Yisrael as an obligation then it does not last. We need the rush; like a song or niggun brings out. This song of Ahavat Yisrael emanated from Gavi throughout the eight years I knew him. It attracted everyone around him to his song. I was magnetized by his tune and his depth as I have never seen in another person and probably will not again. Hashem calls His Torah a "Shirah" -song. As a Torah is being written in Gavi's name, he will not be forgotten. I imagine the day he will physically be back when together we will rejoice while we hold the Torah, singing and dancing. For now, I have written a sefer, "Pri Binyamin", in which a page is dedicated to Gavi.

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*Thank you!*



## Life and Career: Integrating for Success & Happiness

An Interview  
Alysya Gertner (nee Bergman)

**TPT:** Please share with our readers the nature of your schooling, career/job description.

**AG:** I have been in school for as long as I can remember. Originally, I had plans to attend medical school. Therefore, I received an undergraduate degree in Biology. I attended York University in Toronto then moved to NYC where I completed my undergraduate studies in Touro and NYU. When I got married and moved to Baltimore, I decided to change my focus to nursing (with plans to obtain an eventual NP degree). I knew that with a nursing degree I would still be able to work and raise a family with somewhat of a more predictable schedule and future. I received my BSN from Johns Hopkins University. A week prior to graduation, I gave birth to my first son who was, unfortunately, admitted to the NICU. Of course, this was G-d's plan and it ultimately led me to my first nursing career. Because I was so well liked as a parent on the unit, I was offered a job and have worked as a NICU nurse there ever since. A year after working as a nurse, I began University of Maryland's 4-year DNP program. Once I pass my NP boards, please G-d, I hope to work in a pediatric urgent care setting. The degree I hold is pediatric specific.

**TPT:** What is your family dynamic?

**AG:** Thank G-d, I am married and have been blessed with two wonderful sons. My husband is self-employed which has made my rigorous schedule somewhat easier to manage. Being that I am from Toronto, Canada, and my husband from New York, we do not have any family in Maryland. However, we have been extremely lucky that my parents have been able to help us out in Maryland. Often, my mother has stayed to help for months whether it be babysitting, cooking and beyond. Without her flexibility, I am truthfully unsure if I would have been able to complete my degree.

**TPT:** Can you elaborate on your background and lifestyle in regard to Jewish observance.

**AG:** I am very lucky to have had an extremely wholesome and loving orthodox Jewish upbringing. Growing up, my father always taught us that being Jewish was a privilege and to this day, I still feel the same. My parents never viewed anything in Judaism as burdensome. Thus, this genuine affection for G-d and His commandments have been instilled in my siblings and I since birth. Because my mother was, for the most part, a stay-at-home-mom, it was hard for me to reconcile raising my child(ren) without constantly being there for them. I really didn't want to rely on paid help to remain with my children. Who would say Brachot with them? Who would say Shema with them on nights my husband was unable to? Who would cook, ensuring kashrut was kept? Who would perpetuate the same love for

Yiddishkeit that I was brought up with?

**TPT:** How do you see your career vis a vis motherhood/your life goals?

**AG:** Though my dream to be a part of the medical field began when I was young, my desire to be a mother always surpassed it. My family and children are constantly my first priority. The emphasis on family, particularly that of the woman's role, is strong within Judaism. "Chachmat nashim banta baisa" – the wisdom of women builds the house.

Yes, I sacrifice on a lot of sleep (as a night shift nurse) but being home for the kids is more important to me. Of course, sometimes my absence at home is inevitable. I thus made it a point to take my older son for "coffee dates" prior, to play catch up.

**TPT:** Do you find Shabbat/Holiday observance a difficult gap to breach with career goals?

**AG:** Shabbat and Jewish holidays are my breath of fresh air. That is to say, I am able to spend uninterrupted time with my family. It is also our time to socialize.

I do not work or study after sundown on Fridays. In fact, my husband and I have made conscious efforts to take both of our boys to Shul every Shabbat since they were months old.

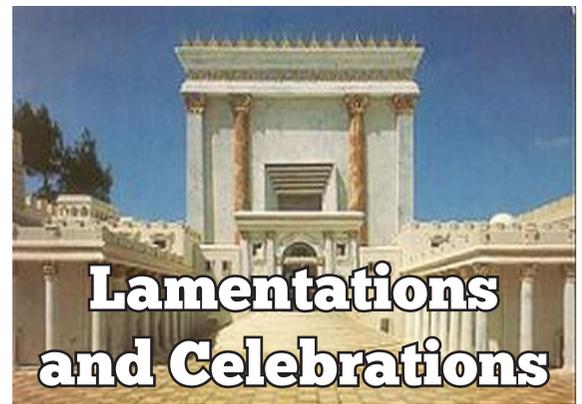
In school, many professors were accommodating in terms of due dates for coursework. However, many were not. This meant that if a paper was due over a holiday or Shabbat, I would have to have it done early. Many a time, there were exams scheduled during Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur etc. I would need to request religious observance exemptions months in advance in order to reschedule exams and secure proctors for the alternative dates.

**TPT:** What are some of your hobbies?

**AG:** During my free time, I love to spend time with my children. I love to read and exercise at the gym. I played piano for 9 years and still like to play, though I don't get the chance to play often anymore. I also love to cook and bake and entertain. One of my favorite things to do is create "tablescapes" with floral arrangements and matching tableware.

**TPT:** Please share a message that you have gleaned to benefit others regarding life and career.

**AG:** To all those trying to build a family and a career – ask for help. It is impossible to do it all. Don't feel guilty for buying takeout or for not hosting Shabbat meals each week. You may have to sacrifice; you may miss family gatherings or holidays spent abroad. Just know, that's okay. It is the price one pays to turn dreams into reality. Currently, with the help of G-d, I am living my dream. I am a wife, a mother, and a career woman. It may not have been the easiest road, but I have no regrets. If you've never had a dream, how can you have a dream come true?



## The Month of Menachem Av

The month of Av encapsulates two extreme states of human emotion. The name of the month alone, **Menachem Av**, points to the many tragedies that befell our people on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Av-**Tisha B'av**: The Jews who left Egypt with Moses were condemned to wander and die in the desert for 40 years; the destruction of both Holy Temples by the Babylonians in 423 BCE and by the Romans in 69 CE; and the Jews of Betar who were killed. Later in history, in 1290, the Jews of England were expelled by King Edward; and the Jews of Spain were expelled by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1492. In 1942, the deportation of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to the Treblinka extermination camp began.

The first nine days of Av are a period of mourning. Day 9, Tisha B'av, is commemorated as a day of fasting and mourning and the reading of the Book of Lamentations (מגילת איכה).

Its message is the concept of consolation for our loss as a people, followed by our journey into exile. Commentaries point out that we are also consoling Almighty G-d (Av-father) for the loss of His Temples.

Contrarily, the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av is known as one of the happiest days in Jewish History. This day, **Tu B'Av**, signifies rebirth after destruction and is a day for new beginnings. On this day, the daughters of Jerusalem would borrow linen garments, in order not to embarrass others who did not have beautiful clothing, and dance in the vineyards to find prospective grooms.

The Talmud considers this day the greatest festival of the year, followed by Yom Kippur, as its essence represents the future redemption.

The astrological sign of Av is the lion, which represents both tragedy and potential for redemption. Our sages teach, "The lion [Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar] came, under the constellation of lion [Leo], and destroyed the Lion of G-d [Jerusalem] . . . so that the Lion [Moshiach] shall come, under the constellation of lion, and build the Lion of G-d [Jerusalem]."

The Talmud relates that Moshiach was born on the very day when the Temples were destroyed: the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av. Moshiach was born from the tribe of Judah, whose symbol is the lion. This teaches us that the tragedies and suffering associated with the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av will ultimately be transformed into joy with the coming of Moshiach.



## Life and Career: Integrating for Success & Happiness

An Interview  
Mr. Charles Givre

**TPT:** Please share with our readers the nature of your career/job description:

**CG:** My current job is CEO and co-founder of a new, venture backed startup called DataDistillr, which is a data analytic platform which makes it easy to get more from data.

With respect to my career, my career has not followed a linear, pre-planned path as someone who sets out to become a rabbi, or doctor does. After graduate school, I joined the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) where I worked as a counterterrorism analyst and followed al-Qaeda in the Persian Gulf and Syrian support for terrorism. After about five years, I left the CIA and joined Booz Allen Hamilton—a government consulting firm—where I worked on government contracts at the NSA, DHS and other agencies. In case you were wondering, yes, I worked with Edward Snowden.

After about seven years at Booz Allen, I wanted a change, left the intelligence community and joined two international banks where I led analytic efforts in their cyber security groups. I also am a partner in a cyber security training company, where I have taught cyber security courses for large companies around the world.

In October of this year, I co-founded my new company after raising venture capital from a Silicon Valley based venture capital fund. I also am an adjunct professor at UMBC where I teach classes about data management.

**TPT:** What is your family dynamic?

**CG:** I am extremely fortunate to have an amazing wife and four incredible children ranging in ages from 25 to 6. It was always very important to me to raise my children in a Jewish community and give them a proper Jewish education.

**TPT:** Can you elaborate on your background, and lifestyle in regard to Jewish observance.

**CG:** I was raised in what you might call a traditional Jewish home. I was born in Riverdale, NY, and my parents were married in the Sephardic Center of the Bronx. We observed most of the holidays and attended a modern orthodox synagogue. In my early teens, my mother passed away and we moved to a small town in Arizona (when I was four years old), that did not have a Jewish community to speak of.

When I was in university, I tried to reconnect with Judaism. Over the years, I attended the conservative minyan at our Hillel house, but it was alien to me. In my last year at the University of Arizona, I got involved with Chabad of Tucson, met my amazing wife, and the rest was history. One of the aspects of Jewish communal life that always impresses me and is very important to me is how the community will come together in times of need. We celebrate together, we grieve together, we pray and learn together. As someone who grew up without that, I place a lot of importance in that.

**TPT:** How do you see your career vis a vis your life goals. How do you make things work?

**CG:** I see my career as a vehicle to provide for my family and to be able to give tzedakah to support the community. I do enjoy my work,

but at the end of the day it is important to remember why we work.

As someone who is visibly Jewish, I always felt wherever I worked, that it was my job to be an ambassador for Judaism. When I was at the CIA, I gave out Matzah and Menorahs to non-observant fellow employees. I've explained Passover to Egyptian intelligence officers, and what tzitzit are to US special forces soldiers.

I think for anyone there is a balance you have to strike between a career and family, but I've thankfully never been put in a position where I've felt that my beliefs or practices have been challenged. Government related positions and large enterprises have very well established non-discrimination policies and go out of their way to accommodate religious practices.

The principal issues I've had, if you could even call them that, were around travel, specifically dealing with travelling on Shabbat and getting kosher food in strange places. The flip side of this is that by keeping kosher for business travel, I've had a lot of interesting experiences relating to food. I've found it is easier to get kosher food in Amsterdam or Frankfurt, than in Silicon Valley or Seattle. I went on a business trip to Dubai two years before the Abraham accords, where I discovered a clandestine Jewish community there and managed to get kosher food delivered to my hotel for my entire trip. Keeping kosher also affords you networking opportunities. I've met people with whom I am still in contact who I met at the "kosher table" at a conference.

**TPT:** Do you find Shabbat/Holiday observance a difficult gap to breach with career goals?

**CG:** When I started my career, I was very self-conscious about leaving early on Fridays in the winter and taking time off for Yom Tov. I tried to balance this out by always volunteering to work during the Christian holidays. I was very concerned that my colleagues would think I was a bad worker or lazy. Over time, I realized that the best thing to do was to be open with my superiors on the first day and explain Shabbat, Yom Tov etc. Once you do that, there's no question and as long as I was getting my work done, I never had any issues.

Personally, Shabbat is very important to me from a mental health perspective. In today's world, there is a lot of pressure on people to be "on" 24/7. People feel genuine pressure to post constantly on social media and generally be always immersed in the secular world. In my view, Shabbat is a weekly reminder that these things are not in charge of your life.

**TPT:** What are some of your hobbies?

**CG:** I've always liked cars. I have a 1958 MGA which is a small British sports car that I've restored. I also enjoy going camping with my family. I also play trombone.

**TPT:** Please share a message that you have gleaned to benefit others regarding life and career.

**CG:** I will conclude with two themes from Pirkei Avot, the first: Shammai says, "Set a time for study of Torah, say little and do much." (1:15) The second, is about learning and teaching. "Who is wise? He who learns from every person." (4:1) I've found that one should always be willing to teach and mentor others and at the same time, you should be constantly learning.

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Kabbalah of Marriage

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### Intimacy

Look closely at the fabric of the universe, examine it from any angle, probe any cell of its form and you will find the same motif again and again: two opposites in fission and fusion, parting and reuniting to give birth to change, movement and life. Matter and anti-matter, positive and negative, nucleus and periphery, information and chaos, life and death, mind and body, self and other—will it ever cease to amaze us that these opposites somehow harmonize to create a glorious world?

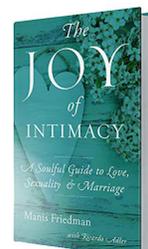
If we could find the molten core of this paradox and know its secret we could control all of reality. We could make life as beautiful as we wish and realize our sweetest dreams.

Where is that core? The Kabbalists tell us it is in the union of a man and a woman in body and in spirit. When that union is made under the conditions it deserves, with the right preparations and mindful focus, its waves ripple outward through substance of reality. No facet of the cosmos is left untouched, unaltered. Every voice of the Creation resonates in unison as an orchestra plays back the soloist's melody. And so the lives of that man and woman, their children and their children's children are filled with the music of the heavens down on earth.

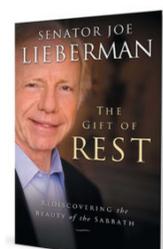
Nothing is more sacred than this union, the very fount of life itself. And nothing is more crucial to our mission in this world. All of life, all of being, depends on the harmony of male and female, a harmony placed in our hands and hearts. That it is why, for most of us, it presents the greatest challenge we ever face.

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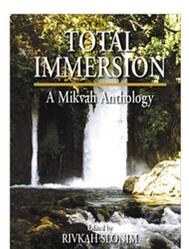
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