



The Journey BEGINS

BY SHOSHANA SCHWARTZ

It can almost be called a spiritual revolution. Six years ago, Rabbi Aryeh Nivin, with over 20 years' experience in the field, combined life coaching strategies with a Jewish development curriculum to create the first chabura in a system now called Reb Aryeh Nivin's Chaburas. The success of that first chabura brought requests for many more, with over 2,000 participants to date.

One of the most important concepts worked through in the chaburas is yeud, finding one's personal mission in life. Everyone has a global yeud, such as living according to halachah and fulfilling the tasks of a Jewish woman. Besides this global yeud, there is also one's personal yeud. The two work in tandem, and one can never come at the expense of the other.

How does one discover his personal yeud? As the Slonimer Rav said, "One needs to discern the special talents with which Hashem has bestowed him and through which he is given the opportunity to draw closer to Hashem.... If someone is blessed with an exceptional talent in Torah, it is a sign that his mission is to succeed in Torah; if someone loves to be generous, it is a sign that this area is connected to the root of his soul."

The word yeud comes from the word ya'ad, destination. If yeud is a destination, then it takes a journey to get there. Here are three women's stories of their incredible journeys to find their yeud.

Rivky's Story

After my third child was born, the doctors said I couldn't have any more children. Nevertheless, I spent many years trying. Baruch Hashem, I did, and after more boys I finally had a girl. I was holding my baby, staring into her eyes... and I was struck with how sad I felt.

My confusion wasn't due to postpartum blues. For years, I'd been working toward this goal. It wasn't only physical efforts I'd invested; I'd worked on being a better wife and mother, on having more kavanah, on making myself worthy of having more children. And now that I'd finally achieved this goal, I felt sad? I loved being a stay-at-home mom! Yet it still felt like something was missing, that there was a part of me I wasn't utilizing.

I turned to Hashem. "I just want to connect to You, to bring what I'm supposed to into this world. But I have no clue what that is!" A friend introduced me to Reb Aryeh Nivin's Chaburas. My first reaction was negative. I'd been working on myself for years — I didn't need help with that! But I tried out one class, and almost immediately, Rabbi Nivin asked, "Do you want to find your unique purpose?" I got chills.

It took me a year to figure out what I thought my unique purpose — my yeud — is. As Rabbi Nivin suggested, in order to discover my life's purpose, I made list after list of things I enjoyed, things unique to me. But I kept crossing off things that were "too spiritual." Because I came from an intellectual family, I viewed non-intellectual pursuits as unworthy. I crossed off dancing, crossed off reading for entertainment. Stuck on what I "should" enjoy, I couldn't see what I truly enjoyed.

To let go of societal and familial expectations, I had to unpeel the layers of my real motivations. When I dropped certain chesed

activities, my friends were shocked; if I could be involved with these organizations, didn't that mean I had to?

Actually, no. There are no "shoulds." I have a unique soul, and I have to create kiddush Hashem in my own way. It's not necessarily doing this particular chesed, or teaching this Torah class. Once I let go of the shoulds, I started to be real, and to live a life full of vitality. Today I give teleconferences on various seforim, and yeud workshops. Instead of being locked inside my academic upbringing, in which "being spiritual" was almost an insult, I am living my yeud, helping people connect to G-d.

Rivky teaches, does private coaching, and runs workshops on yeud and the Six Constant Mitzvos.

Sarah's Story

I was the perfect Bais Yaakov student who followed the rules. I got married at 19 to a ben Torah who's still learning.

I come from a special family. We had a way to do everything. I made my home into an exact replica of the way my mother ran hers. Despite the many years that passed since I'd lived under her roof, I was still doing everything Mom's way.

Hashem sent me many children, one after the other, and I was happy. But I always had this nagging feeling that something was missing.

That something was me.

I was never trained to express my individuality. I never thought to put my stamp on my home and my children. There was "a way" to do everything, and without thinking I followed the all the routines, down to making sure the kids' teeth were brushed before they put on pajamas.

I started participating in Reb Aryeh Nivin's Chabura. Not only did I begin to know myself, I began to be able to express myself. I learned about the concept of having a personal mission in life and bringing a special light to the world.

I discovered the light I wanted to shine with my family. And what's more, I gave myself permission to do it.

Sarah, mother of eight, happily runs her home with her individuality fully expressed.

Hudi's Story

I always wanted to make a difference — I just didn't know how. I related to Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz's idea that every person feels an obligation to fulfill a special task, and when he doesn't know what it is and can't act on it, he has no rest.

My husband had a dream to do kiruv, build a community, and make an impact on Klal Yisrael. We ended up in an out-of-town community with many nonobservant Jews. We opened a kiruv and learning center, and I started teaching.

Then I joined the Reb Aryeh Nivin's Chabura. As suggested in order to find my unique purpose, I isolated ten of my most fulfilling experiences. At the top of my list were working with special-needs kids, speaking about Shabbos and Eretz Yisrael, and coaching. I came up with a mission statement: To empower Jewish women to tap into their inner wealth through a Torah medium. I knew this was my yeud, because while actively pursuing this I felt incredibly energized, in touch with my purpose. This understanding helped me prioritize my time and energy; it also helped me realize why certain aspects of my job left me depleted.

People often think that discovering your yeud is a quick realization. But you don't have to get it right the first time; it's a journey. I soon discovered that I had even more in me. I hooked up with new organizations and projects, giving me a huge sense of vitality that spilled into all areas of my life.

The Chabura became invaluable to me. I was connecting to other women who understood the importance of finding your yeud, and balancing family life with outside obligations. I was flying.

All the parts of my life had pulled together. I was empowering women, bringing dveikus with Hashem to the world.

Hudi is a mother of five. She runs a kiruv center and trips to Israel with the JWRP.



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