

Four Problems, One Solution

Over 500 women every week are taking charge of their lives—growing and truly learning to enjoy life. Rabbi Aryeh Nivin's Personal Development Chabura was named as one of the six most ambitious spiritual initiatives by Family First (Sept. 12, 2012, "Making an Impact").

Balance in all Things

Mrs. Rikva Katz* was on her way to becoming a household name. A sought-after lecturer and teacher, she presents meaningful, riveting talks and classes for a variety of venues, locations, and audiences.

But though Mrs. Katz was guiding thousands of people, she also had her own human frailties and complications.

Additionally, her life was intense, and she needed to learn balance and time-management techniques. She needed a system that was deep enough for a person of her scope and intelligence yet down-to-earth enough to integrate her into the community at large.

"People think that because I can lead and teach and lecture, I'm finished growing. But I also need a way to constantly challenge and push myself forward."

Mrs. Katz found Rabbi Aryeh Nivin's Chaburas to be just what she was looking for. The material was simultaneously deep and user friendly. "It is wonderful to be a 'civilian' again for an hour a week, where I can share my struggles and needs in a safe, meaningful environment. I enjoy it immensely."

Mrs. Katz is just one of many community leaders, *rebbetzins*, and professionals that participate (some of them anonymously) in Reb Aryeh Nivin's weekly Chaburas.

Getting off Life's Treadmill

Miriam Smith* enjoyed being a mother and housewife. Married for ten years, her home was filled with the delightful sounds of children of all ages. But she missed the more "spiritual" seminary days and the deep discussions she'd shared with her seminary mates until the wee hours of the morning. She missed going to *shul* on Shabbos. She missed the intensity

of the *Yomim Nor'aim*.

So much of her life was seemingly mundane. She loved being a mother and *eishes chayil*; she knew this was her *tafkid* (role in life). But she was confused by the competing parts of her. How could she make the more mundane parts meaningful, spiritual, and enjoyable?

Miriam needed perspective; but even more, she needed a systematic approach to unifying the seemingly contradictory parts of her life.

The Chabura provided what she was lacking. "The Chabura system taught me there was no contradiction in my different roles. I gained tools that showed me, in real-time, how it's all meaningful. We learned the classic sources that showed us how to bridge the gap between the mundane and the highest spiritual heights."

She adds, "I also learned practical management principles that enabled me to take more time for myself when I needed it."

Long-Term Life Challenge

Everyone faces challenges. But when one is facing a more profound, intense, or long-term challenge with no easy answers, one needs a different type of coping system.

The Chabura system deals with this challenge directly.

Sara Reich* was the top girl in her class. Naturally, she was the offered the "best *bochur*" from the "best *yeshivah*." He was checked out by the most reliable people, and their engagement soon followed.

Not long after the wedding she noticed that things weren't all roses. Yes, her husband loved learning; he was truly a *masmid*. But emotionally, he seemed to be missing something. It took some time to figure out that her husband was lacking the most basic understanding of human emotions—and all the more so of

female emotions. Her *masmid* husband swam well the in Sea of Talmud but floundered in the world of humans. He didn't know how to spend time with his wife and couldn't relate to her on a deep level.

Over time, Sara grew frustrated and bitter, and her marriage started going downhill. They went to counseling, and the therapist told her that he would need years to acquire the people skills needed to satisfy her emotional needs—if, indeed, he could acquire them.

She didn't want to get divorced, but she felt so lonely and neglected and hurt, and she didn't know where to turn.

The Chabura system gave Sara coping skills. She learned how to stop complaining to her husband and instead support him in his journey. She was able to utilize her challenges to build herself.

"I had so wondered why G-d did this to me. I was the girl who stayed out of trouble. I never gossiped, always did my homework. I couldn't stop asking, 'Why me?' The Chabura system showed me the proper approach to deal with the test handed to me, and to navigate it in the long term. Being with a group of fellow growth seekers supported me on journey as well."

The Power of Finding Your Life's Mission

Leah had a warm and supportive husband and a well-adjusted family. She taught in a local school, earning almost enough to support her husband in learning.

She had every reason to be happy—and was troubled that she was not. She felt guilty that with all the blessings she had she was still searching for the missing ingredient. She had heard that the weekly Chabura dealt with deeper life issues, but she was very skeptical that there was an answer to her yearnings.

Leah discovered the missing ingredient after only a few classes. She learned that everyone has a positive life's mission. She heard the classic sources, from the Ramchal, Rav Dessler, and Alei Shur to the Arizal and the Slonimer Rebbe, and she began her exploration.

"I never knew that everyone has a special light or mission to bring to the world, either within their global responsibilities as wives and mothers or out of the home. I did the exercises in the

course, and before long uncovered that I had a deep passion for working with troubled youth. I started to spend a few hours a week working with these girls, and today I am actively involved with several organizations. My life became much more energized and meaningful.

"The Chabura system taught me that my deeper inner yearnings for 'something' was not an immature, irresponsible

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whim. The Chabura showed me that finding fulfillment was not a contradiction to my role as wife and mother; doing so enhanced and nurtured it. My former skepticism is long gone, and now I clearly see the direction I need to follow."

What is the Chabura?

Chabura members meet once a week for an hour via conference call. The curriculum is divided into modules that explore the purpose of life — *your* life. The practical tools help you better understand yourself and enable you to grow as you overcome challenges.

The Chabura, which begins in Elul, opens with a three-month initiation, in which you will uncover your main personality flaw and how to go about rectifying it, and how to identify your life purpose. You will create an individualized long-term plan for achieving steady growth. When you see the impact the Chabura has on your life, you can sign on for another three months. Soon you'll be learning how to keep your plan alive and make sure it's authentic for you. You'll learn what to do when you hit a brick wall. You'll learn how to find an appropriate mentor, *rav*, *rebbetzin*, or confidant. You'll learn how to enjoy life, how to live without harboring endless complaints about others.

*Names and identifying information altered.

Two new chabura groups for women are starting in time for Elul (Aug 5th and Aug 6th). Register now for the 3-Class No-Obligation Trial and for a limited time receive a bonus 3 CD Series, "The Jewish Woman's Introductory Guide to Achieving Vitality" for \$1. For more information go to www.newchabura.com, call (646) 863-4123 from the US or (02) 580-6406 from Israel, or email newchabura@gmail.com. If you're traveling this summer, there will be a special review session after the Yomim Tovim so that you can make up any missed classes.