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brain, develops at a different rate than the prefrontal cortex, which is more of the couscous part. This is where conflict and frustration occurs.

As children mature and reach the stage of puberty, we want them to learn independence but also have a hard time letting go. Teens need to feel in control and be given space. No one likes being controlled. Teenagers want to make good choices and handle responsibility. How you speak and treat your teenager will impact the type of response back. Many times, we get angry at our teens not realizing that they may not understand what we are telling them. It's important to make sure your teen understands, and for this to work we must understand how they think.

The teenage years are clearly a transformation period filled with challenges, triumphs, and growth opportunities. Teenagers aren't bad and don't want to be rebellious. These years are the years that will create the path to their future. These years are a gift. Embrace your teen and allow them to go through the process.

**Sora Kitay**

**Dear Editor,**

Rabbi Hoffman wrote a comprehensive article last week showcasing the struggles and some of the many supports in our community to help single mothers. As Rabbi Hoffman wrote, divorced single mothers are very much the invisible group. Most are preoccupied with survival and often do not have the ability to participate in the community. However, most are fluent in the language of advocacy and are warriors for their children. When referred to Success Space for Women, these women find tangible assistance in the form of caring, compassionate social workers. Success Space provides skills to ensure that women are empowered with skills such as financial

literacy, career counseling, life coaching, and more. Single mothers need more support from our community in the form of immediate financial cash assistance. There are limited opportunities for the single mom struggling to make ends meet for basic necessities. The financial stability of these homes needs to be an immediate priority of all organizations.

**Malka Sweet**

**Director of Success Space for Women**

**Dear Editor,**

Excited as I was to see my letter in print, I was also horrified by my stark negative stance I took about my husband. For myself, and perhaps other wives out there who follow these chains, I feel that I must share a caveat to that horrible list of things I spat out about my husband. Yes, my husband has his struggles (as do we all). Yes, some of them are exasperatingly difficult. I'll validate that.

But he has so many good qualities. My husband is so sensitive to the needs of those around him, he is always pointing out some nuanced way to offer help, and then allows me to take all the credit for it. He loves learning. He shares such a geshmak in teaching, both in raising our kids, and in any and all venues he employs in which he relays Torah with both adults and children alike. He has such a wise and gentle way of responding to the kids. He is so thoughtful; I can see how he takes what I say seriously (even when it hurts), and thinks of creative ways to make me happy. There are so many times that I've seen him be a true *gibor*, keeping calm in the face of my rage. He knows how to listen and validate, and he believes in me – he truly encourages me when I share with him my hopes and dreams. I am truly lucky to have him as my life partner.

So, with regards to my husband, I only shared a few black dots (atop a beautiful white sheet). Ashamed at my critical atti-

tude, I had to share another side.

But also, I wanted to share with you my story of hashgacha pratis with regards to my resentment towards the therapist. Hashem heard my desires, and relieved me of my anger! Hashem sent me a means to forgive.

There was a day my husband had to cancel therapy the day of. I saw how cool the therapist was (and is, in general) about last minute cancellations, which made me feel like he does care about our money. The cloud of anger lifted and was replaced by this light of appreciation.

*Biderech she'adam rotzeh lelech...* Hashem has led me.

**Thank you!**

**Dear Editor,**

Rabbi Mordechai Aderet, a master in Shas, halacha and kabbalah, has a powerful explanation into the words of the Gemara (Yevamos 62b) that state that Rabbi Akiva's talmidim perished because "*she-lo nahagu kavod zeh bazeh* – they didn't give respect to each other." He notes that the death didn't come because they actively denigrated each other but rather because they failed to place each one of their peers on a pedestal and give them the necessary kavod in concert with what the Mishna (Avot: 2:10) says, "Rabbi Eliezer said: Let the honor of your friend be as dear to you as your own."

There's no question that one has an inner built-in mechanism to feel his own self-worth. It's nature, it's survival. Your friend must be honored in the same way that you honor yourself. And, as a literal result of failing to do this, another Mishna notes (Avot 4:22), "Rabbi Elazar Hakapar would say: jealousy, lust, and [desire for] honor remove a person from the world."

The fact that this happened with Rabbi Akiva's group of 24,000 students, who were likely similar in some ways in talent, means that one's spiritual competitors must be especially honored by you. That's the real challenge. And it really comes down to bitachon, because if you know that you have the precise talent you're supposed to have, you can give great honor to others, because you realize their talents are needed to perfect this world as well.

In *bein adam LaMakom*, the Rav notes that we have a partnership with G-d in this world, as the verse (Genesis 2:3) says, "G-d rested from all the work which G-d created to do." To do, *la'asot*, is extra, and it gives us a charge to perfect the world with G-d. We must be trustworthy partners, though, that abide by the bylaws.

The perfection of the world was destroyed by Adam and Chava who made

individual calculations and looked where they weren't supposed to. This is why Yosef is the first Moshiach in the future, because he rose above the eyes. He knew what happened to him was part of G-d's plan and that is why no *ayin hara* could ever affect him. He reached a level of spiritual perfection. We also must rectify Adam's sin every day and not look around or wonder why we are in our particular situation. We must realize we have exactly what we need to succeed in our mission and any questioning is tantamount to the sin of Adam HaRishon.

The final Moshiach, of Davidic lineage, has to also come outside the glance of the eyes, but for a different reason, to avoid the Angel of Death. In Moshiach ben David's lineage, there had to be suspicions and questions with notions of imperfections. Ideas of cohabitations with daughters, such as by Lot, and questionable connections, such as with Tamar, deflected the Angel of Death from suspecting any potential holiness. The Angel of Death looks to kill absolute purity; he gives no credence to a future Messiah wrapped in suspicion. G-d conceals Himself as well in today's times, which Rabbi Frand notes is to teach us to remain below the radar as well, in humility.

The imperfection of Yehuda and the perfection of Yosef meet each other when we say, "*Hashem Hu HaElokim*" on Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is the highest day man can reach and it is then we say that in fact the G-d of mercy will become one of judgement because ultimately the world will be perfected.

As we see in this week's parsha, the Torah is a *chok*, and we follow it because G-d commanded us to. But there is a treasure relating to the Torah that gives us the chance to gather an enormous amount of mitzvos through studying it. A good partner tries to follow as many commandments as possible. The Chofetz Chaim did a calculation and said that every letter of the Torah studied is one mitzvah from the Torah. Therefore, in one hour, one would gain 60,000 mitzvos, and if one were to say study ten hours a day, he would gain 600,000 mitzvos. Indeed, *Talmud Torah k'neged kulam*.

If we shower kavod on every person we know, both competitors and others, we are showing complete faith in G-d that we have exactly what we need to succeed and if we don't ask questions about our situation in life but accept it with full belief that it's exactly attuned to what we need, then we can bring a final fusion between perfection and imperfection to reveal G-d's glory to all of humanity.

**Steven Genack**



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