

montana's jewish voice

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Shana Tova!
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FROM BALI TO BOZEMAN

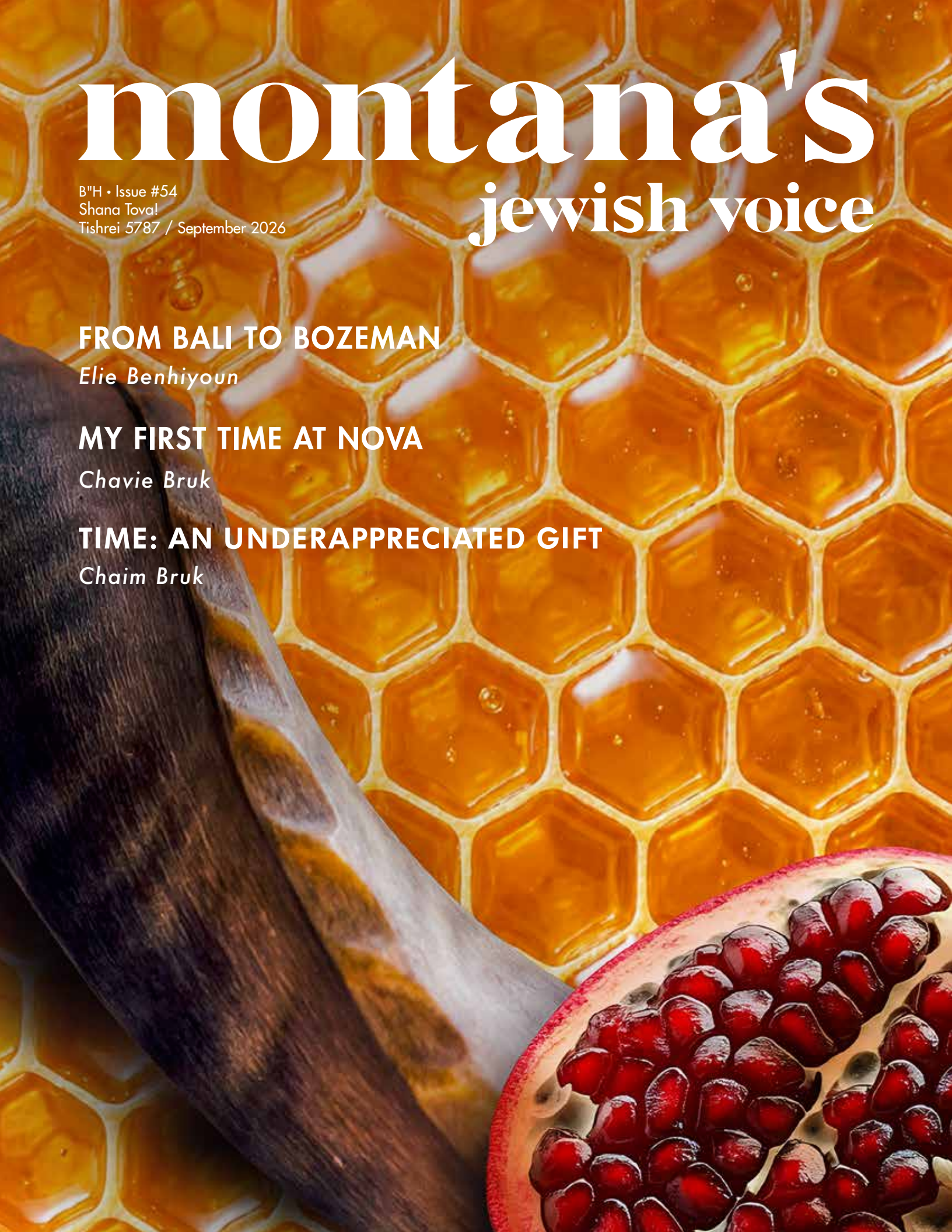
Elie Benhiyoun

MY FIRST TIME AT NOVA

Chavie Bruk

TIME: AN UNDERAPPRECIATED GIFT

Chaim Bruk





DEAR FRIENDS,

The High Holy Days are upon us. We will pray, we will eat traditional foods, and we will usher in a new year filled with new blessings. The primary mitzvah of Rosh Hashanah is

to hear the shofar blast emanating from an authentic ram's horn. The Rebbe, of blessed memory, guided us not only to hear the shofar ourselves, but also to bring its sound to every Jew we can reach, allowing them to be uplifted by the Divine energy of the day.

When I was nine years old, I came to 770, the Rebbe's shul, about an hour before services began. I saw groups of guys heading out on a mission to blow the shofar for Jewish brothers and sisters who were spending the holiday in hospitals, nursing homes, and rehabilitation centers. I joined Rabbi Yoske Mayzlesh, today the Chabad shliach in Mexico City, and walked forty-five minutes to Brookdale Hospital, located at the corner of Linden Boulevard and Rockaway Parkway. Shofar in hand, we spent two hours going from room to room in search of Jewish patients. Each of them was so grateful and filled with joy that, even while hospitalized and struggling, they too could connect with the day and with their heritage.

The sweetness of Torah and its mitzvos is too good to keep to ourselves. We must do everything in our power to study its depth and then share what we have learned with the fellow Jews in our lives, who were also gifted these ideals at Sinai and deserve to receive it.

Wishing you and yours a happy, healthy, and sweet New Year.

Shana Tova!

Rabbi Chaim Bruk

MONTANA'S JEWISH VOICE

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Chabad-Lubavitch of Montana

A mashup of thoughts, ideas, news, and stories from this unique outpost of Jewish life in the West. Remote Jewish communities are as old as time, but this remote Jewish community is young, vibrant, and growing. Our saga draws on age-old Jewish values, quintessential Western grit, and the idealistic fire of five Chabad families. Curious, complex, and committed, they model the highs and lows of being human, the relevance of being Jewish, and a simmering, lasting courage to persevere.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I really enjoyed the Pesach edition of Montana's Jewish Voice. I felt a sense of freedom after reading Chavie's stream of consciousness and a sense that, at least in my thoughts, let it flow: be unstructured and trust it. I was deeply moved reading Adam's story for how his spark brightened in Montana and how he too became a lamplighter, inspiring me in my home in Hillside, NJ to grow a little, to feel more pride in my Judaism and to remember you can live a balanced life. Will share the article on dressing well with my husband. Keep rocking it.

Mushka Caplan
Hillside, New Jersey

Regarding the April issue of Montana's Jewish Voice. I finally just had time to read it. I really enjoyed the articles and the recipes. I liked your perspective on the dignity of clothing. It was a huge change for me when I first moved to Bozeman. I think I still overdress a little bit. I know when I come to your home or the center, I consider what I should wear. I mourn the loss of awareness of the younger generation and the importance of self-awareness. I hope maybe next year at this time you'll do a short follow up with Adam Mendelsohn, and how his time in Israel and the yeshiva has shaped his young life. Enough of my stream of consciousness.

Debbie Kreindler
Bozeman, Montana

HOLIDAY GUIDE

Rosh Hashanah: The Jewish New Year

Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on Friday, September 11, and concludes at nightfall on Sunday, September 13, 2026.

Overview

Known as the “Head of the Year,” Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the Jewish year. It commemorates the creation of Adam and Eve and celebrates the special relationship between G-d and humanity. The holiday is a time for reflection, renewal, and recommitment to our spiritual purpose.

How to Observe the Holiday



The Sounding of the Shofar

The central observance of Rosh Hashanah is hearing the shofar, a ram’s horn. Because the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbos this year, the shofar is sounded only on Sunday, the second day of the holiday. Its blasts call us to awaken spiritually, reflect on our actions, and recognize G-d’s sovereignty over the world.



Candle Lighting & Kiddush

Women and girls light candles on both evenings of Rosh Hashanah and recite the appropriate blessings. This year, candles are lit before sunset on Friday and, using a preexisting flame, after nightfall on Saturday. Kiddush is recited over wine before the evening and daytime meals, followed by challah and a festive meal.



Simanim: Symbolic Foods

Rosh Hashanah meals feature symbolic foods known as simanim. Apples dipped in honey express our hope for a sweet year. Other traditional foods include pomegranates, round challah, and the head of a fish, each representing prayers for blessing, abundance, and growth.



Tashlich

Tashlich is usually performed on the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah. Because the first day falls on Shabbos this year, Tashlich is performed on Sunday, the second day. Many people visit a river, lake, or other natural body of water and recite special prayers. Through Tashlich, we symbolically cast away our misdeeds and express our desire to begin the new year with spiritual clarity.



Synagogue Services

Much of Rosh Hashanah is devoted to prayer from the machzor, the holiday prayer book. The services focus on repentance, Divine sovereignty, and the hope for a year filled with life, health, and blessing.

Yom Kippur: The Day of Atonement

Yom Kippur begins at sunset on Sunday, September 20, and ends at nightfall on Monday, September 21, 2026.

Overview

Yom Kippur is the most sacred day of the Jewish year. It commemorates the day G-d forgave the Jewish people following the sin of the Golden Calf. After Moses pleaded on behalf of the nation, G-d granted His forgiveness, establishing the day as an eternal opportunity for repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual renewal.

How to Observe the Holiday



Preparing for Yom Kippur

The hours before Yom Kippur are filled with meaningful preparation.

It is customary to eat festive meals before the fast, seek forgiveness from others, give additional charity, bless one's children, and light holiday candles before sunset.

THE KABBALAH OF TASHLICH

One of the most meaningful customs of Rosh Hashanah is Tashlich, when we gather beside a river, lake, or other natural body of water and recite special prayers. The ceremony is commonly understood as symbolically casting our sins into the water, based on the verse: "You shall cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Michah 7:19).

But Chassidic thought sees something deeper. Spiritual growth is not as simple as throwing away our mistakes. Tashlich calls us to reconnect with the pure essence of the soul, which remains untouched by sin.

Water occupies a central place in Kabbalah. It has no fixed shape of its own. It flows and adapts. The soul, too, longs to return to its Divine source. Standing beside flowing water on Rosh Hashanah reminds us that beneath the failures and distractions of the past year is a deeper self that remains connected to G-d.

The Alter Rebbe explains that every Jew possesses an intrinsic bond with the Divine that can never be severed. Sin may conceal that bond, but it cannot destroy it. Tashlich is therefore not an act of self-condemnation. It is an act of self-discovery. We are not only casting away our shortcomings. We are releasing the layers that prevent our true selves from shining through.

The Chassidic masters also draw attention to the fish

that live in the water. Fish are completely immersed in the source that sustains them and cannot survive outside it. Similarly, the soul flourishes when it remains conscious of its connection to G-d. Tashlich asks us to consider what our lives might look like if we carried that awareness throughout the year.

The lesson of Tashlich extends far beyond Rosh Hashanah. We all carry regrets, disappointments, and habits that shape how we see ourselves. Tashlich teaches that growth begins not by obsessing over our failures, but by remembering who we truly are. When we stop allowing the past to define us and reconnect with our deepest purpose, we become capable of beginning again.

This may be the deepest message of Tashlich. Teshuvah literally means "return." It does not ask us to create a new self, but to uncover the one that has always been there. Returning to G-d is also a return to our truest selves.





Easy Apple Crumble

An original recipe by Rivky Markossian.

Apple crumble is one of those timeless desserts that comes together with simple pantry ingredients and fills the house with the comforting aroma of cinnamon and baked apples. It's a crowd-pleaser that's perfect for Rosh Hashanah, but so delicious and effortless that you'll find yourself making it all year round. Trust me.

Ingredients

Crumble Topping:

- 1 cup brown sugar
- ½ cup oil
- 1 cup flour
- ¾ cup rolled oats
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Filling:

6 apples, peeled and cut into cubes

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F). In a bowl, mix together the brown sugar and oil until combined. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, oats, and cinnamon, then add the dry ingredients to the sugar and oil mixture. Stir with a fork until a crumbly topping forms.
2. Place the cubed apples into an oven-safe baking dish and spread them into an even layer. Sprinkle the crumble mixture evenly over the apples, covering them completely.
3. Bake uncovered for 40–45 minutes, or until the topping is golden brown and the apples are soft and bubbling around the edges.
4. Serve it warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

Happy baking!

Rivky



The Fast

For approximately twenty-five hours, we abstain from eating and drinking. By setting aside our physical needs, we can focus more fully on prayer, self-examination, and strengthening our connection to G-d.



The Five Prayer Services

Yom Kippur is the only day of the Jewish year with five prayer services:

- **Maariv** – begins with Kol Nidrei.
- **Shacharis** – the morning service.
- **Musaf** – recounts the Temple service performed by the High Priest.
- **Minchah** – includes the reading of the Book of Jonah.
- **Neilah** – the concluding service, when the gates of heaven are closing and the year's judgment is sealed.



Additional Restrictions

In addition to fasting, Yom Kippur is observed by refraining from bathing for pleasure, applying oils or lotions, wearing leather footwear, and engaging in marital relations. These practices allow us to move beyond physical concerns and focus on the spiritual purpose of the day.



Breaking the Fast

As Yom Kippur concludes, families and communities gather for a celebratory meal. The end of the fast also turns our attention toward preparing for Sukkos, the next festival on the Jewish calendar.

Sukkos, Shemini Atzeres, & Simchas Torah

Sukkos begins at sunset on Friday, September 25, and ends at nightfall on Friday, October 2. It is followed immediately by Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah, which conclude at nightfall on Sunday, October 4, 2026.

Overview

Sukkos commemorates the forty years the Jewish people traveled through the wilderness after leaving Egypt. Throughout their journey, they were protected by miraculous “Clouds of Glory” that surrounded and sheltered them. To remember this Divine protection and strengthen our trust in G-d, we spend the holiday in a sukkah, a temporary outdoor structure covered with natural vegetation.

How to Observe the Holiday



Living in the Sukkah

Throughout the seven days of Sukkos, we eat our meals in the sukkah. Many people also spend time there studying, socializing, and celebrating. During the festival, the sukkah becomes a center of Jewish family and communal life.



The Four Species

Another distinctive mitzvah of Sukkos is taking the Four Species: the lulav, a palm branch; the esrog, a citron; the hadassim, myrtle branches; and the aravos, willow branches. After reciting the blessing, we wave them in six directions, symbolizing G-d's presence throughout creation. Our sages explain that the four plants represent different types of Jews, emphasizing the importance of unity among the Jewish people.



Holiday Meals & Candle Lighting

Women and girls light holiday candles on the first two evenings of Sukkos and again for Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. Families gather for festive evening and daytime meals accompanied by Kiddush, challah, songs, and words of Torah.



Chol Hamoed

The intermediate days of Sukkos, known as Chol Hamoed, are semi-festive days when some forms of work are permitted. Many families use this time for outings, gatherings, and special activities that add to the joy of the holiday.



Hoshana Rabbah

The seventh day of Sukkos is called Hoshana Rabbah. According to tradition, the judgments written on Rosh Hashanah and sealed on Yom Kippur are finalized on this day. Special prayers are recited, and the congregation circles the bimah seven times while holding the Four Species and praying for blessing and success in the coming year.



Shemini Atzeres & Simchas Torah

The final days of the festival season are devoted to joy and spiritual celebration. On Simchas Torah, we complete the annual cycle of Torah reading and immediately begin it again, demonstrating that our connection to Torah never ends. Communities celebrate by singing and dancing with the Torah scrolls, expressing gratitude for this eternal gift and recommitting themselves to Torah study in the year ahead.



totally unexpected!

My First Time at Nova

Originally published on
www.totallyunexpected.blog on Nov 12, 2024.

by Chavie Bruk

Yes, I went to Israel for just two days, and I'm so glad I did.

Let's back up and chat about how I ended up in Israel and why for such a short time. My husband's family does this beautiful thing: they have a very large extended family with people all over the world, and since it's impossible to attend every simcha, for each wedding, the adults in the family are entered into a raffle. The person who wins represents the family at the celebration.

I was the lucky winner.

Knowing I only had two days, I thought carefully about what I wanted to do, while, of course, leaving time for the wedding. I knew I wanted to go to the Nova site—I couldn't imagine being in Israel and not paying my respects to that place and those people. It's a location that breaks every beating heart and tells the devastating story of October 7.

I did have some concerns and insecurities about going.

What if I'm numb and don't feel anything?

What if I feel too much?

What if I can't connect?

What if I do it all wrong?

Throughout this last year, I've struggled with feeling inadequate, wondering if I'm experiencing the

"right" amount of pain for all the tragedies we've seen. I worried that maybe going to Nova would amplify that.

I talked about it in therapy and shared how confused and unsure I felt. My therapist encouraged me to show up, reminding me that there are no right or wrong feelings. We all know this, but I need reminders all the time. To be present, to touch the ground, to close my eyes and listen, to open my eyes and take it in, to use all my senses to absorb the experience without any expectations.

Whatever happens, whatever comes up, is okay.

My husband arranged for a tour guide to drive me to Re'im, where the Nova festival took place, and then

on to the wedding. It was a full day in the car, lots of driving, but I am so grateful I did it.

First, driving south past all the kibbutzim and locations we've been hearing about on the news was surreal. When we arrived at the memorial site, I felt it in my body. I spent an hour walking through, stopping at each name, reading about these beautiful souls, and practicing the sensory experience we talked about in therapy. I didn't rush or visit every stop along the way because I knew I couldn't do it all. Whatever I did, I wanted

to do it wholeheartedly.

It's hard to explain what it felt like. The thought that keeps coming back to me, that bounces around my head every time I think about it, is that I was on sacred ground. I felt the energy and pure holiness of these souls, who were murdered just for being Jewish. I can't fully explain it, but it was so impactful that I felt humbled in the face of greatness.

Everyone will have a personal and unique experience in places like this. We've been inundated with



ONLY IN MONTANA

I truly encourage you to visit the Nova site. It will leave a profound, lasting impact. I know it's not easy or comfortable to face such a mass tragedy head-on. I felt like I needed to. I only had two days, and I'm so glad I took one of them to do this.







ON BEING HUMAN

An Underappreciated Gift

by Rabbi Chaim Bruk

Time management has long been a popular topic in business circles and, more recently, in the life coaching world. Experts are paid a lot of money to write books on the subject, and people sign up in droves for seminars promising to teach them how to master it.

I'll give you my two cents for free.

I want to clarify at the outset that I am fairly skilled at managing my time. It's in my genes and was part of my upbringing. My parents were both very good at using their time productively, and my maternal grandparents, who lived nearby throughout my childhood, epitomized this way of life.

My Zayde was a butcher on Coney Island Avenue at Simon Goldman Butcher, between Avenues J and K. Somehow, he also found time to attend shul three times a day, operate an interest-free

loan society, a gemach, to help those in need, study Torah each day, serve on the board of the Beth Rivkah girls' school, serve on the board of Agudas Chasidei Chabad at Lubavitch World Headquarters, and, on behalf of the Rebbe, of blessed memory, raise funds for Maos Chittim, which provided Passover assistance to those in need.

My Bubby was just as skilled. She worked in the city for the amazing Deitsch family, regularly hosted a house full of guests, including many

from South Africa, cooked lavish meals, helped with Chabad's central women's organization, partnered with my Zayde in running the gemach, and still had endless time for her four children and many grandchildren.

I believe that time management is foundational to a successful life and to living in sync with G-d's plan for each of us. I admit it: wasting time drives me crazy. I don't judge people who waste time; I just don't understand them.

I once read, "Time is the only currency you spend without ever knowing your balance. Spend it wisely." G-d has given each of us a set amount of time on this earth. We don't know when it will run out, so the idea of not using every moment to its fullest feels wrong to me.

The prevailing philosophy in America, and perhaps throughout Western civilization, is that escaping work, stepping away from productivity,

and finding an outlet in "chilling" are inherently valuable. This worldview is instilled in us from a young age. Long weekends, early retirement, four-day workweeks, AI doing the work for us, and Mondays made optional by endless "holidays" all reinforce a "play hard" mentality, with "work hard"

serving mainly as a means to that end.

Judaism values a healthy work ethic, but this article is less about work itself than about the laziness that has crept into our psyche.

It is extremely hard to manage your time if you don't value it. I am an early-to-bed, early-to-rise kind of guy, but that's just me. I don't think everyone needs to follow my schedule or live according to my body's constitution. Whatever your waking hours may be, they should be used for productive work, self-refinement,



Rabbi Chaim, on his wedding day, with his grandparents, Rabbi Shimon & Esther Goldman, of blessed memory.

connecting with G-d, and being present with your family.

I have adjusted my own schedule over the years. I used to begin my day at around 5:00 a.m.; recently, that has shifted to around 6:00 a.m. It may change again at some point. It isn't about the particular schedule. It is about filling your waking hours with meaningful experiences.

The Kotzker Rebbe once said, "I don't want you to sin, not because it is forbidden to sin, but because you will be so busy that you won't have time to sin."

Chassidus teaches that every moment, down to the millisecond, is being created anew by G-d. The minute available to me right now was just created for me. Why would I squander the time I was just given?

I am a hypochondriac. That, combined with losing my mother to cancer when she was fifty-four, has kind of made me think about death more often than most people do. The upside is that when you aren't sure how long you're going to live, you become determined to make every moment count.

I have always marveled at the presidents of the United States and how densely packed their schedules are. A president might wake up in Washington at 6:30 a.m., campaign in Florida at 9:30, meet with NATO officials over lunch,

attend a grandchild's birthday party at 2:00 p.m., step into the Situation Room to deal with a crisis in Sudan at 2:45, host the president of Romania for a state dinner at 5:30, meet with congressional leaders over dessert at 6:30, stop at Walter Reed for a checkup at 7:15, and board a flight to Asia at 9:00.

We may not have access to Air Force One or professional gatekeepers and schedulers, but the life of a president demonstrates that time matters. When we are focused and at the top of our game, we can accomplish an extraordinary amount.

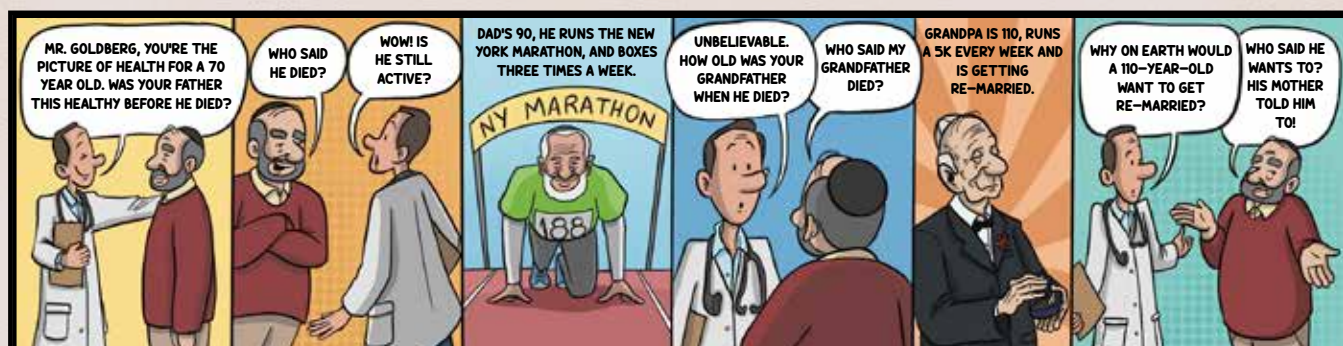
I know we all enjoy a good vacation. Most of us enjoy watching or attending a great sports game, and sometimes we need to space out to clear our heads. But those should be exceptions to our general perspective: time is a blessing, a gift to be valued and celebrated.

The Rebbe was once notified that morning prayers would begin a little later than usual, at 9:10-9:15 a.m. He responded, "Which one?"

The Rebbe's father-in-law, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, was not prone to exaggeration. He once said, "In the eyes of my son-in-law, one minute is an entire year."

As the Chassidic saying goes, "A summer day and a winter night are an entire year!"

CHOSEN COMIC





From Bali to Bozeman

*An interview with Estee Glickman
by Elie Benhiyoun*

If you would have told me that I'd end up in Bozeman, Montana, I would have been like, "What are you talking about?" But here we are.

I grew up in Kew Gardens Hills, Queens, in an Orthodox community and went to Bais Yaakov. It was a traditional, pretty intense way to grow up. Most of my high school friends got married at twenty-two, and that was definitely not my path. I was constantly asking myself: What's my role? I didn't feel like I fit into the community, so I had to find a new way of living, essentially.

After high school, I went to Israel for seminary, and while I was there, my mother was diagnosed with cancer. I came back to Queens, and it was ten years of chemo. She died when I was twenty-eight.

I graduated college at twenty-five and started practicing as a dietitian at thirty. I moved into the city around that time and started hustling, working three jobs to build up my clinical hours: one in a school, one in a nursing home, and one in private practice.

Eventually, I had all the things I thought I wanted: a closet full of clothes and a beautiful apartment in Lincoln Square. And I was still so unhappy.

So I thought Bali was going to be the answer. Because that's what we do when we're struggling, right? We fantasize. For two years, I was like, "Bali, Bali, Bali, Bali." I got there, did my yoga training, and all the things that

had been "struggle city" for me; my job, my apartment, my this, my that, were gone.

It was just me, you know?

I guess I wanted my own version of Eat, Pray, Love, but I went and was miserable. Nothing I tried worked out. I was lonely and couldn't make friends, which is not typical for me. I stayed for three and a half months and really tried to make it work, but G-d was like, "No."

So I went back to New York, sold all my furniture, and decided, "Okay, Bali didn't work out. Portugal is going to be the answer."

I went to Portugal for three months and, once again, nothing worked out. I tried to build a business and network with people, but nothing gained traction. I was so committed that I even started applying for residency. I paid a lawyer and opened a Portuguese bank account. I still get invoices every month saying that I have zero euros.



Eventually, I moved back to New York. It just didn't seem like G-d wanted me in these places. I was forcing it, and it wasn't working.

I lived in sublets and eventually moved to Williamsburg. I had a great life, but I was still really unhappy. New York City is just not great for my nervous system. So I took a travel job in Indiana and then another one in Montana. I expected to be there for only thirteen weeks. I had no idea what I was signing up for, and I

definitely didn't expect to stay.

But Montana felt different. When I had left New York before, it usually felt like I was running away. Coming to Montana felt like I was moving toward something, even though I didn't know what that "toward" was.

I thought Montana might eventually lead me to Colorado because I didn't think there was a community there. I moved to Billings because that was where the job was.

I moved to Billings because that was where the job was. Immediately after I accepted the job, I looked up the closest Chabad and was so relieved to find one in Billings, just fifteen minutes from where I'd be living. I spoke with Rabbi Shaul and Mushky Shkedi, and their warm, comforting way of speaking put me at ease right away. I spent many holidays and Friday night dinners at Chabad of Billings, and it was such a comfort to have a place to go, even though I was so far from home.

I worked as a travel dietitian at a rehabilitation hospital. The job was great. I started nutrition education classes and fun activities like bingo and hat decorating. It was like my dream.

Billings itself was not immediately "it" for me. I still had an apartment in New York, but as I spent more time in Montana, I realized I didn't want to go back. So I kept extending my contract. Eventually, they told me I either had to sign on full-time or leave. I was like, "Fine, if I must, I'll sign on full-time."

Around that time, I started making friends in Bozeman and connecting with the Jewish community. I began coming in for the holidays, building a network, and spending time with Rabbi Chaim, Chavie, and their family. That made everything a lot easier.

In June, I went back to New York, sold all my stuff, and returned to Montana. For a year and a half, I kept trying to figure out how to move to Bozeman. Then I got a virtual job that allowed me to live anywhere, and I chose Bozeman.



Estee with her mother, Shiffy Glikman, in Israel in 2010.

I cannot stress enough how much of that is because of Rabbi Chaim and Chavie. Montana is beautiful, but if I didn't have a Jewish community here, I would be lost. Talk about being unmoored.

They welcomed me into their family. I became friends with Chavie, and I take her kids out to get manicures, hang out, go to Target, and buy them presents, like an aunt. Without that sense of family and community, I never would have stayed. They make Judaism accessible, open, and

loving in all the ways I had been searching for in New York but couldn't access there.

The craziest part is that I recently found out my mother and Rabbi Chaim's mother were friends. I knew they had gone to the same oncologist, but I had no idea they knew each other. What are the chances of that? It felt like a G-d shot: You're exactly where you're supposed to be.

You couldn't have paid me to go to shul in New York. Now I love going.

It's also interesting that the women I love working with most are Jewish women. I didn't plan that; it just evolved that way. I started

getting Jewish clients, and those were the women I connected with most.

The older I get, the more drawn I am to Judaism. I've metabolized a lot of the anger that blocked me from connecting with it for so long. Don't get me wrong—there's still more—but a lot has shifted, especially over the past two years and even more over the past year.

My life is better with faith in it. My life is better with community. Without those things, I feel unmoored. For the first time, the different parts of my life are coming together. I work remotely as a nutrition supervisor for an eating-disorder program in New York City, teach yoga for a trauma program, and write two columns for the Bozeman Daily Chronicle. In "Estee's Sound Bites," I talk about health, wellness, nutrition, and all the crazy nutrition myths out there. In "The Wellness Beat," I interview women committed to the wellness of Bozeman.

My dream is to coach Orthodox Jewish women who feel stuck and then bring them to Montana so they can breathe. I think happiness is a constant choice. If we're wired a certain way, it means constantly coming up against that wiring. But I'm happier and more grounded than I've ever been. That doesn't mean I don't have hard moments. Of course I do. But I'm able to move through them more easily.



Estee zip lining with Zeesy and Menny Bruk at Gallatin Gateway.

I want people who are struggling to feel hope. If they feel stuck and miserable and can't find the light, there is light. It's probably not going to look the way you want it to look or the way you think it should look.

I think recovery or healing is a choice. That's it.

It doesn't mean everything is perfect. I could get everything I want on a silver platter, and if my perspective is skewed, I'll experience it as a burden: "Oh my G-d, I have so much to do, so many responsibilities."

It's about how we meet what's given to us.

totally
un*expected!

with Chavie Bruk

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OUR REBBE

Hospitals as Centers for Healing, Not Illness

Adapted from Chabad.org

By Mordechai Shani

After the death of Professor Chaim Sheba, with whom I worked for a number of years, I became the director of the Sheba Medical Center at Tel HaShomer Hospital, the largest hospital in Israel. In my capacity as a director, I came to the United States periodically, and on one such occasion in 1976, a friend invited me to a farbrengen.

It was Simchas Torah, and the farbrengen was attended by several thousand Chassidim, who were dancing and joyously celebrating the holiday. But when the Rebbe walked in, everyone stood still – you could hear a pin drop.

At some point during the night, I was introduced to the Rebbe, and he asked me why, in Israel, we called a hospital a *beit cholim*, meaning "house of the sick." He expressed the opinion that it should be called *beit refuah*, "house of healing." He then invited me for a discussion on the subject after the holiday.

The meeting proved very friendly. In his remarks, the Rebbe voiced an opinion that every person has the responsibility to take care of their own health. Yes, doctors have a role to play, but the primary responsibility lies with the individual. Give a person the best doctor in the world, but someone who does not take care of himself, does not eat well, sleep enough or exercise enough will impair his health.

Today, there is a push in medicine toward "patient empowerment," where we try to convince people that they must take responsibility for their health and not just rely on doctors. The Rebbe was speaking to me

about this thirty years ago! Today it may seem obvious, but it has only become a basic rule of medical thinking in more recent years – that preventive medicine requires the individual to take responsibility. The doctor can help, but he cannot replace the patient's own effort.

Another issue that we discussed was the place of technology in medicine. At that time, at the dawning of the age of the personal computer, technology was not yet a central nor dominant component of the medical world. The problems related to technology in medicine would not become apparent for years to come. But, here too, the Rebbe was forward-thinking. He said to me, "It is up to you, the doctors, to determine the outcome; whether this technology will be used for the benefit of the people."

He expressed the worry that technology might distance the doctor from the patient: "At the end of the day," he explained, "the emotional support of the doctor, the human being, is most important, and while technology can be a very helpful tool, it cannot become a replacement for listening and caring."

Unfortunately, he was right to worry. Today, for many doctors, technology has become the central means of practicing

medicine instead of a helping tool, sometimes to the detriment of the patient.

Returning to the point he made at the farbrengen, the Rebbe offered this advice to me as a doctor and director of a hospital, "Don't sanctify illness, sanctify health. Make the hospital a place that an individual goes to improve his health, not a place where he goes to because he is sick."

I walked out of the meeting with the Rebbe, extraordinarily impressed. I believe that meeting has had not a small influence in shaping my own thinking, my own approach to these issues and my own vision of the role of medicine in society.



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