

# May The Neshamah Have An Aliyah

A Teacher's Manual  
for Students in  
Kindergarten through  
Twelfth Grade

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO  
TO PROVIDE MERIT FOR  
DEPARTED LOVED ONES



*"A beautiful book. Very well done. You treat a difficult subject with sensitivity. I especially like the stories at the end."*

– **MR. AVI SHULMAN**, a classroom teacher for more than twenty-five years, Former National Director of Torah Umesorah's S.E.E.D. program and nationally acclaimed author and speaker on numerous personal growth and parenting materials.

MRS. ROBIN DAVINA MEYERSON AND CHEVRAH LOMDEI MISHNAH



## **MAY THE NESHAMAH HAVE AN ALIYAH**

A Teacher's Manual for Students in Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade

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&

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This manual is intended for classroom use and may be used in schools by teachers.

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This manual is under the guidance of  
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*Dedicated*  
*in Memory of:*

<b>RIVKAH BAS AVRAHAM</b>	<b>1ST OF ELUL</b>
<b>LILY BAS DEVORAH</b>	<b>13TH OF CHESHVAN</b>
<b>HERSHEL BEN SHMUEL</b>	<b>27TH OF CHESHVAN</b>
<b>PINCHOS BEN CHAIM</b>	<b>14TH OF KISLEV</b>
<b>ZELDA HADASSAH BAS CHAIM</b>	<b>21ST OF KISLEV</b>
<b>CHANNAH DEVORAH BAS SHRAGA FEIVEL</b>	<b>9TH OF TEVES</b>
<b>GITTEL BAS YITZHAK HALEVI</b>	<b>12TH OF SHVAT</b>
<b>SHLOMO BEN MORDECHAI</b>	<b>4TH OF SHVAT</b>
<b>ARNOLD BEN REUVAIN</b>	<b>15TH OF ADAR</b>
<b>YITZHAK HALEVI BEN AVRAHAM</b>	<b>20TH OF ADAR</b>
<b>CHAYA BAS AARON</b>	<b>6TH OF NISSAN</b>
<b>AVRAHAM GERSHON BEN ZEV</b>	<b>11TH OF NISSAN</b>
<b>FRUMA CHERNA BAS AVRAHAM GERSHON</b>	<b>16TH OF IYAR</b>
<b>EPHRAIM BEN PINCHOS</b>	<b>1ST OF SIVAN</b>
<b>OLGA BAS CHARLES</b>	<b>19TH OF SIVAN</b>
<b>SANDY BAS MORDECHAI</b>	<b>15TH OF SIVAN</b>
<b>MORDECHAI BEN SOLOMON</b>	<b>4TH OF TAMMUZ</b>

*May this teacher's manual be an aliyah  
for their neshamos*

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# Letter to Teachers

בס"ד

Dear Rebbe or Morah עמור"ש,

**W**elcome to *May The Neshamah Have an Aliyah Teacher's Manual*. By committing as a teacher, you are reigniting the flame of a timeless treasury of education that has been lost to assimilation and other priorities. The mission and goal of this program is to implant into the hearts and minds of students the positive and caring actions we can do in this world for souls in the Next World in a sensitive and warm way. **The goal is to make these concepts of remembering those who came before us a daily habit whether it be through *tzedakah*, *chessed* or Torah study.** The loss of a loved one is one of the most difficult events in our lives. Many will ask what can be done to console the heart. There is something that cannot only bring much comfort to the living but also to the departed loved one and that is performing *mitzvos* in their merit. The Torah perspective on death is not that it is the end but rather a transition to another world. With Hashem's assistance, this manual will prove effective in educating Jews in this critical subject, which is largely unknown to many people. My sincerest wish is that teachers and students who use this manual will regain the mitzvah of taking care of *neshamos* of those who came before us and through their actions there will be a great increase in Torah study, *tzedakah* and *chessed* in the world as well as a rise in rectification for many souls. I'd like to personally thank each of you for joining in this great merit. May Hashem bless you for your efforts, as you are helping to make the future generations cognizant of these timeless traditions.

When first embarking on this project, we asked many teachers and parents their opinions of such a project and if materials already existed. There are many books, organizations and resources to help people during times of crisis but there was no teachers manual in English that focused on explaining how and what to do to provide genuine elevation to the soul of a departed loved one. Therefore this project was born as a memorial for the souls of those who didn't have someone who knew how to perform these acts for them. This teacher's manual is a guide to clarify the subject of *aliyas haneshamos*.

The following are general pointers about the project:

**1** With the passing of a loved one the relationship is not over but has rather moved from a physical relationship to a spiritual relationship that can be maintained and endured forever as long as we do our part with *mitzvos* done in their memory. We have the power to do very meaningful activities for departed loved ones. Our actions in this world maintain a spiritual connection and provide a powerful *aliyah* in Heaven to the *neshamah* of our departed loved ones.

**2** Teaching about the *mitzvos* we can do for someone who passes to the Next World *before* someone passes away is easier than teaching during a time of crisis. The time to teach about this world and the Next World and therefore death is when teaching about Avraham and Sarah – not when there is a personal crisis. All throughout the Torah we learn of our foremothers; Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah and of our forefathers; Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov – not only about how they lived, their struggles and triumphs, but also how they passed to the Next World. It is at this precious time of teaching about our foremothers and forefathers that we can gently and age appropriately teach about timeless Torah traditions on honoring our departed loved ones. The material in this manual can specifically be presented anytime during the year but is particularly appropriate during Parshas Chayei Sarah and/or Parshas Vayechi.

**3** Keep in mind the whole manual is a growing manual as our entire purpose as Jews is to keep on growing. If you ever feel like, “how can I talk about doing *mitzvos* for departed loved ones if I’m not perfect in it?” Remember that no one is perfect and that this topic is sensitive and personal. We are all striving to grow and improve in this area and when we teach others we can become encouraged to grow ourselves. We can sometimes deny the fact that death is as much a part of life as is birth. At some point all children will be confronted with this fact of life. You can even tell your students; “I’m working on this too, we’re in this together.” For students to hear this can be very inspiring as they look up to their teachers as role models. By teaching this topic, before it hits too close to home, we can prevent much pain. This manual is intended to be an inspirational and practical guide for teachers to teach their students how to remember loved ones in meaningful ways.

**4** The teacher’s manual consists of lessons for students in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade and is divided for students in kindergarten through third grade, fourth through sixth grades and seventh through twelfth grades. Obviously each age group has its own intellectual, spiritual and emotional level of intelligence and so the manual is divided up accordingly. The manual has been researched and written in a way to explain the fundamental ideas and practical hands-on guidance for providing an *aliyah* to the *neshamah*. Feel free to select worksheets and activities from alternative grade levels if you feel your students would benefit. You know your students best and this workbook is meant to be a guide only.

**5** Please jot down any inspiring stories, experiences, ideas or questions that arise during your teaching experiences. Children often share the sweetest things. We will hopefully continue to publish the teacher’s manual and would love to include your feedback in future editions. Ideas, feedback and questions can be emailed to **[Robin@peacefulreturn.org](mailto:Robin@peacefulreturn.org)** or to **[info@ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org](mailto:info@ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org)**.

**6** The situation may arise where a child is uncomfortable and does not want to participate, perhaps from a personal experience of loss. Stress to the children, from the beginning, that we have come to learn of the positive ways we can provide great merit to the *neshamos* of those who have passed away. What we are learning is not

meant to be scary or depressing but rather explain to the children that even the smallest *mitzvos* done on behalf of a departed loved one is like sending a virtual present to *neshamos* in *Shamayim*.

**7** At times, questions might come up that you either feel uneasy or unable to answer. This can happen to anyone involved in teaching any subject. It is perfectly acceptable to tell the student that you don't have the answer right now but that you will try and get the answer in a few days. Feel free to contact Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah at 732-364-7029, or at [info@ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org](mailto:info@ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org) or a Rav or someone else on how to proceed.

**8** Although preparing for these lessons does not require reading the book; *The Neshamah Should Have an Aliyah* published by Judaica Press, reading the book is helpful. Furthermore, the book includes a CD message from Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Rabbi Paysach Krohn which can be shown in the high school grades.

**9** Much effort was expended to set up the lessons and worksheets in a format that requires minimal preparation on your part as the teacher. However, it is important that some time before the lesson is given so that you have a chance to spend some time getting familiar and comfortable with the material.

**10** Most of all, put your heart and soul into what you are teaching. The most powerful lesson of all is you sharing these messages in a meaningful and personal manner. Be personal with the students, show them that this mitzvah is special and powerful. And very comforting. (It really is.) One of the greatest benefits of this teacher's manual is that the material can ease the suffering of those who have lost a loved one. It will show them that they have not lost their loved one forever, but only for a short time and that doing *mitzvos* to elevate the soul in the World to Come provides comfort for not only the living but the dead as well.

**11** Your class is your special group of students. Therefore, you can personalize the lessons as you see fit. Each lesson is geared to run about twenty to twenty-five minutes. Each lesson runs as follows: 1. Introduce the topic to the students, 2. Relate a story (as appropriate for the age group), 3. Ask a few questions to stimulate thought and discussion, 4. Present the *halachos* and customs (adapting to fit the grade), 5. Ask the students to think about a personal experience or one from the Torah and what actions they would take, 6. Each session should conclude with a quick summation of the lesson and praise for the students learning these important concepts.

Wishing you *hatzlachah* in your holy efforts to transmit this knowledge to your students. You are involved in a most precious project. It is my hope and prayer that Hashem give your dedicated efforts much success.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Robin Davina Meyerson  
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# Introduction

**T**his teacher's manual was created to fill a need. Hashem, in His kindness, gave us the Torah as an instruction manual for life. The Torah contains all the wisdom on how to remain spiritually connected to our loved ones for eternity through our deeds. During the time of mourning we can and should channel our feelings of loss into positive actions to elevate the souls of those we mourn; at the same time we will spiritually elevate ourselves. There are so many ways we can elevate the souls of those we love, namely, through performing acts of *chessed*, saying special prayers, learning Torah and so much more.

We have real power in our hands to assist the souls of those we love and miss by dedicating our lives to a Torah life through *mitzvos* and by doing this provide the ultimate comfort to our departed loved ones.

This teacher's manual will provide an overview of the soul's journey and an explanation of the primary ways to elevate the *neshamah* of departed loved ones. Of course a primary means of benefitting our departed loved ones is to live a life of good character traits and good deeds. This manual will answer questions like: why should I do things in memory of my loved ones? How can the things I do here help a *neshamah* in the Next World? What is the single most powerful tool to provide merit for the *neshamah*? Is there a difference between a child doing something and other relatives or friends doing things in someone's memory?

Please read on carefully and bear in mind the following content while teaching your students.

# Guide to the Soul's Journey

**T**hough it is hard to understand, when a person passes away, the soul actually mourns as well. After death, the soul goes through a judgment and an accounting for the life they lived. G-d rewards the soul for the good deeds and punishes the soul for the sins. No soul is perfect and all souls go through some purification process. The soul transitions to the World of Souls and realizes that it can no longer perform *mitzvos* or physical deeds in this world and this is very sad for the soul. Since the soul is so sad, we the living must try to ease the soul's difficulty with this transition and by doing so we actually help the departed one. Empathizing with our departed loved ones and striving to do as many good deeds as we can for their *neshamah* provides the soul with pleasure and comfort. The deceased can no longer perform good deeds himself to gain merit. But the living can supply merit to the deceased, which offers the soul protection, comfort, pleasure and helps the soul rise higher and higher in Heaven. As long as the deceased has left behind relatives or friends who are motivated to help, it is never too late.

The concept of helping a parent's soul attain merit is very far reaching. Even in the most extreme case – where an individual has strayed so far from the Torah to be classified as a *rasha* (wicked person) – the good deeds of the child are still able to provide a complete improvement of the parent's situation in Heaven. An example of this is from our forefather Avraham whose father Terach, was an idol worshipper. The Ramban tells us he was able to enter the World to Come in the merit of his righteous son. In addition, the Chofetz Chaim stated, “Through any *mitzvos* and meritorious acts that one's offspring fulfills after his passing, the father's soul receives atonement.” Through the power of their deeds, children have the ability to not only spare their departed parents from suffering for their sins in the Next World, but also to affect their entry into Gan Eden. Even after the parent's soul has entered Gan Eden, the child's deeds continue to elevate the soul to even higher levels of ecstasy and grandeur.

The above concept is not limited to the parent/child relationship. Good deeds can be done on behalf of other relatives including spouses, children, grandparents, cousins and others and basically anyone you choose. The living benefit tremendously by doing good deeds for departed loved ones. Every good deed that generates merit for the deceased simultaneously provides abundant reward for the individual who performs the act. Finally, when the parents – from their vantage point in the World of Truth – see their children doing *mitzvos* on their behalf, they are filled with pleasure and pray for their children. They beseech G-d to bestow upon their children long life, prosperity, honor and mercy from Heaven.

# A Practical Guide to What Students Can Do

**I**n Parshas Vayechi, before he passed away, Yaakov Avinu implored his son Yosef to transport his body (after his death) out of Egypt and bring it to burial in the same place as his fathers in the Land of Israel. When asking Yosef to do this favor, he stated, “Please do for me this *chessed shel emes* (true kindness).” Rashi explains that performing kindness for the departed – such as taking care of burial needs – is considered a true kindness since it is done completely altruistically; there is no way for the departed person to repay the kindness.

Besides burial, included here are a list of the main items one can perform in order to provide merit to the departed in ascending order of merit.

- Prayers – including Kaddish, Maftir, and leading the *davening*. Reciting Kaddish with a *minyan* on behalf of the departed brings merit to the departed because it is a public sanctification of Hashem’s name. Maftir contains a form of prayer that is similar to Kaddish and is similar to leading the *davening*. Leading the *davening* whenever possible throughout the mourning period is encouraged, particularly for Ma’ariv. The Yizkor prayer is said on Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeres, the last day of Pesach and the second day of Shavuos.
- Mitzvah acts - especially to adopt and excel in the performance of a particular mitzvah.
- Giving *tzedakah* on behalf of a departed loved one provides a powerful atonement for the *neshamah*. Some worthy *tzedakah* causes include; supporting Torah scholars or institutions, providing for a bride to get married, helping to redeem someone kidnapped, supporting people who are ill and donating Torah books.
- It’s a great thing to do acts of *chessed* for the departed’s *neshamah*. The Chofetz Chaim spoke of the value of setting up a *gemach* for any number of items to lend.
- Adopting a mitzvah is a nice choice for many people. Some ideas could include avoiding *lashon hara*, honoring parents, increased concentration of *tefillah* and *berachos*, visiting the sick, helping the elderly, paying more attention to the laws of Shabbos and Yom Tov. Choose a mitzvah to which you feel drawn. Any mitzvah will provide a powerful *aliyah* for the departed’s *neshamah*.
- Talmud Torah – Torah study.

There appears to be universal agreement among the *poskim* throughout the centuries that any form or amount of Torah study is the greatest source of merit for departed souls. Mishnah study in particular can be a tremendous source of benefit. The judgment that the departed faces is most serious during the *shivah* period; during *shloshim* it is more severe than during the remainder of the year. In order to comfort the soul, specific chapters of *mishnayos* can be selected for study. One common type of study is to choose *mishnayos* based upon the Hebrew name of the deceased. Special chapters of Mishnah are selected using the first letter of each Mishnah to match the deceased's name. If learning entire chapters is too difficult, one can learn a single chapter or a few chapters. Upon completing a significant amount of learning, you can bring increased merit to the departed, and a *siyum* can also be made. Some people like to learn the entire Mishnah. Keep in mind that any and all learning is beneficial. If one can't learn for any reason, Torah scholars can be commissioned to learn on his or her behalf. By doing so, the departed receives two merits – that of the actual learning and the *tzedakah*. Mishnah study can continue for a full year up to the *yahrtzeit*, and any time thereafter. See [www.ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org](http://www.ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org) for learning tools and charts, including Mishnah charts for *shivah* houses, *yahrtzeit* and more.

Other ways to remember loved ones include visiting the grave, lighting candles, and naming babies after the departed.

The day of the *yahrtzeit* is a judgment day for the *neshamah*. It is also an opportunity for the *neshamah* to receive a “promotion.” Doing any and all of the above practices on the day of the *yahrtzeit* is commendable.

# May The Neshamah Have an Aliyah

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO  
TO PROVIDE MERIT TO DEPARTED LOVED ONES



## Kindergarten – 3rd Grade



## KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD GRADE

**I**ntroduce the topic to the students when discussing Parshas Chayei Sarah and/or Parshas Vayechi. Right at the beginning of the *parshah* of Vayechi, Yaakov sends for Yosef and asks him to bring his body and bury him in Israel in the Cave of Machpelah in Chevron. This is a perfect time to talk about the importance of burying our loved ones and doing special things for their *neshamos*.

Alternatively, during teaching of Parshas Chayei Sarah, Sarah passes away, and Avraham purchases the Cave of Machpelah for her resting place. Either lessons are a nice way to introduce materials from this workbook.

- Ask a few questions to stimulate thought and discussion.
- Present some sample ideas – adapting to fit the grade of what students can do for the *neshamah* of the departed loved one, such as Torah study, giving *tzedakah* and doing *chessed*, adopting a mitzvah, saying special prayers, visiting the grave and lighting candles.
- Activity Details – Kindergarten through Third Grade.
- Ask the students to think about a person they know or one from the Torah who is in *Shamayim* and what actions they can take to send the *neshamah* gifts of merit. Some students might not know anyone who has passed away; as the teacher you can talk about great people from Torah whom they can remember.
- Pass around a *tzedakah* box and some coins and discuss the mitzvah of giving *tzedakah* every day for neshamos of those who came before us.
- Mention the *kevarim* of *tzaddikim* to which we go and explain what a special custom it is to visit.
- Have the children draw a picture and then go around the room and talk about what they drew.
- Have the children make a little list or draw the special things they liked about the person who passed away.

The lesson should conclude with a quick summation of the lesson and praise for the students learning these important concepts.

# Worksheet

Things We Can Do To Give the Neshamah an Aliyah in Shamayim



**Draw a Line to the matching word.**

Chessed

צדקה

Tefillah

קבר

Tzedakah

חסד

Yahrtzeit

תפילה

Kever

תלמוד תורה

Neshamah

יארצייט

Torah Study

נשמה

Candle

נר

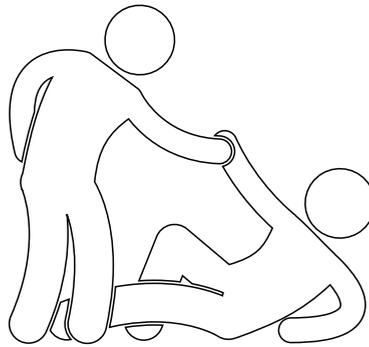
# Worksheet

Things We Can Do To Give the Neshamah an Aliyah in Shamayim.



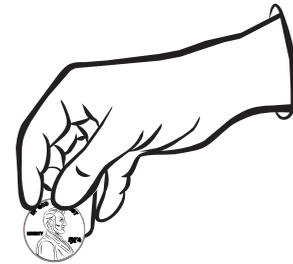
**Draw a Line to the picture that best matches the word.**

Candle



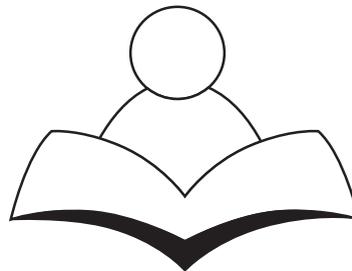
Chessed

Kever



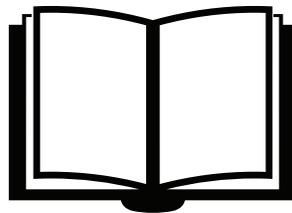
Tefillah

Torah Study



Tzedakah

Yahrtzeit



# Worksheet

Things We Can Do To Give the Neshamah an Aliyah in Shamayim.

**What are your ideas of *chessed*?  
Draw a picture and write about it.**



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**What are your ideas of *tzedakah* projects?  
Draw a picture and write about it.**



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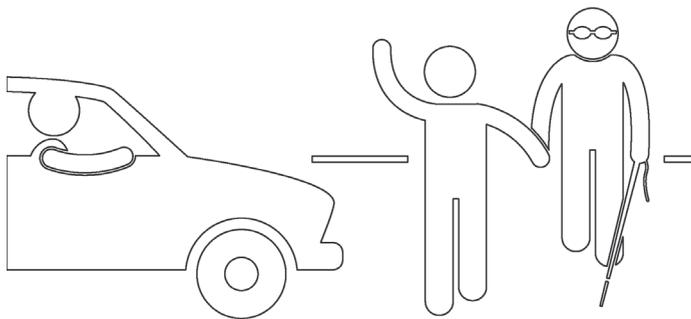
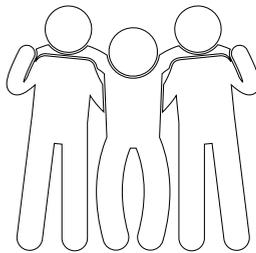
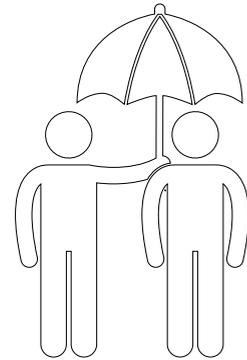
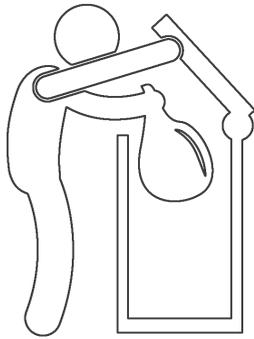
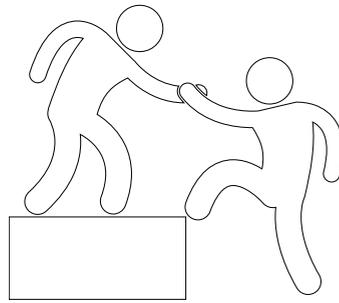
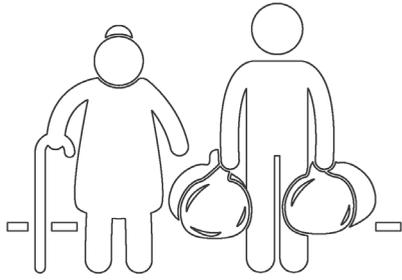
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# Worksheet



Circle the *chessed* ideas you could do.

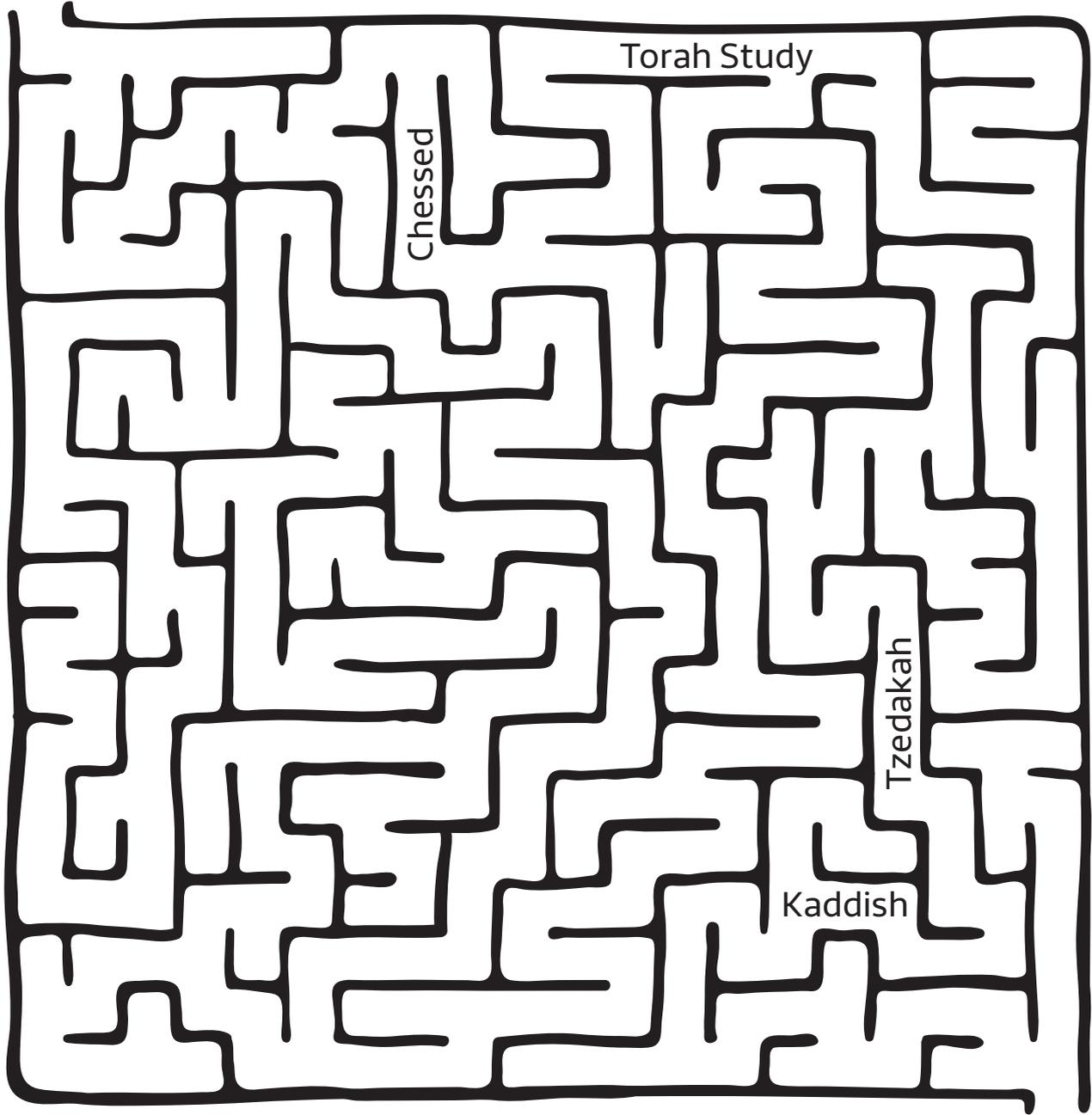


# Worksheet

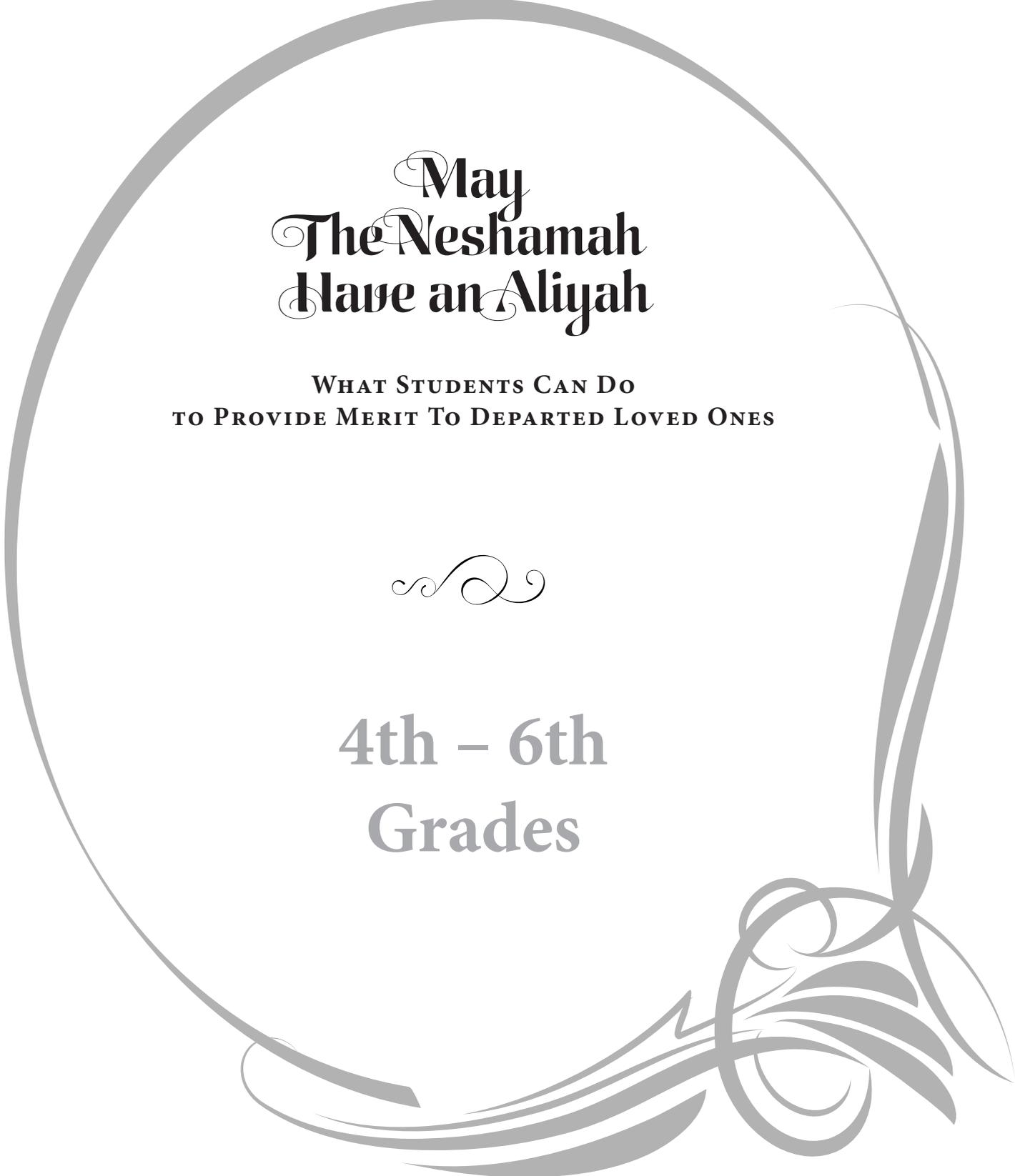


Help the *neshamah* get an *aliyah*.

Aliyah



Neshamah



**May  
The Neshamah  
Have an Aliyah**

**WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO  
TO PROVIDE MERIT TO DEPARTED LOVED ONES**



**4th – 6th  
Grades**



## FOURTH THROUGH SIXTH GRADES

**W**hile teaching the *parshah* of Vayechi and/or Chayei Sarah, discuss the main concepts of the *parshah* and then explain to the students the terms and concepts below. You can engage the students to give examples as relevant to the topic. After familiarizing the students with these new terms and ideas, let the students do the worksheets on the next pages.

- The word *yahrtzeit* means the Hebrew date of passing away. You could ask, “Does anyone know the *yahrtzeit* of someone in the Torah?”
- A *yahrtzeit* candle is a small candle that is customarily lit the evening of the anniversary of someone passing away and the candle stays lit for almost 25 hours. You could ask, “Has anyone seen someone light a *yahrtzeit* candle?”
- The *neshamah* is the soul and exists for eternity. Ask the students, “Are you a body or a soul?” And explain that we are all souls and are using our bodies to do *mitzvos*.
- *Kaddish* is the prayer said in synagogue by mourners in praise of Hashem. Ask the students if they have seen or heard anyone say *Kaddish* at synagogue.
- *Mishnah* (משנה) is the Oral Torah and when the letters of *Mishnah* are rearranged they spell *neshamah* (נשמה).
- A *gemach* is a place to share items for free or for a small donation. Ask the students if they know of any *gemachs* and brainstorm what type of *gemach* would be useful for school. (For example, pen and paper *gemach*, first-aid kit with bandaids *gemach*, etc. )
- *Aliyah* means to rise. Explain that while we are alive we are so lucky that we can do so many good deeds, but once someone has passed away they don’t have a body to do *mitzvos* so their soul can’t do the same good deeds we do here on Earth. By all of us doing *mitzvos* in the merit of someone who has passed away, we can give souls an *aliyah* in *Shamayim*.
- *Yizkor* is a special prayer recited on Jewish festivals for departed loved ones.
- *Gan Eden* is another word for Heaven.
- *Gehinnom* is a place most souls go to cleanse their souls – kind of like a hospital for souls. Just like we go to the doctor if we have a broken bone and our bone gets fixed, the soul has a place to go to fix up mistakes that were made.

## Worksheet



Fill in the appropriate word.

Before he died, Grandpa Goldberg asked to be \_\_\_\_\_  
in \_\_\_\_\_. His full Hebrew name was  
\_\_\_\_\_. His son Benyamin said  
\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ months. On grandpa's  
\_\_\_\_\_, Benyamin lit a \_\_\_\_\_. Uncle  
Sam studied \_\_\_\_\_ for his soul, and Shayna  
gave \_\_\_\_\_ to the yeshivah in his merit.  
Cousin Miriam set up a pencil \_\_\_\_\_ to help her  
friends when they would need to borrow pencils, as a  
\_\_\_\_\_ for her friends. The whole family helped  
grandpa's \_\_\_\_\_ get an \_\_\_\_\_ within  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### WORD BANK

Kaddish • Tzedakah • Candle • Buried  
Chessed • Eleven • Gan Eden • Mishnayos  
Shamayim • Aliyah • Yahrtzeit • Eretz Yisrael  
Neshamah • Gemach • Hershel ben Yitzchak

## Worksheet



**Yaakov asks Yosef to promise to bury him in Eretz Yisrael. See how many words you can find.**

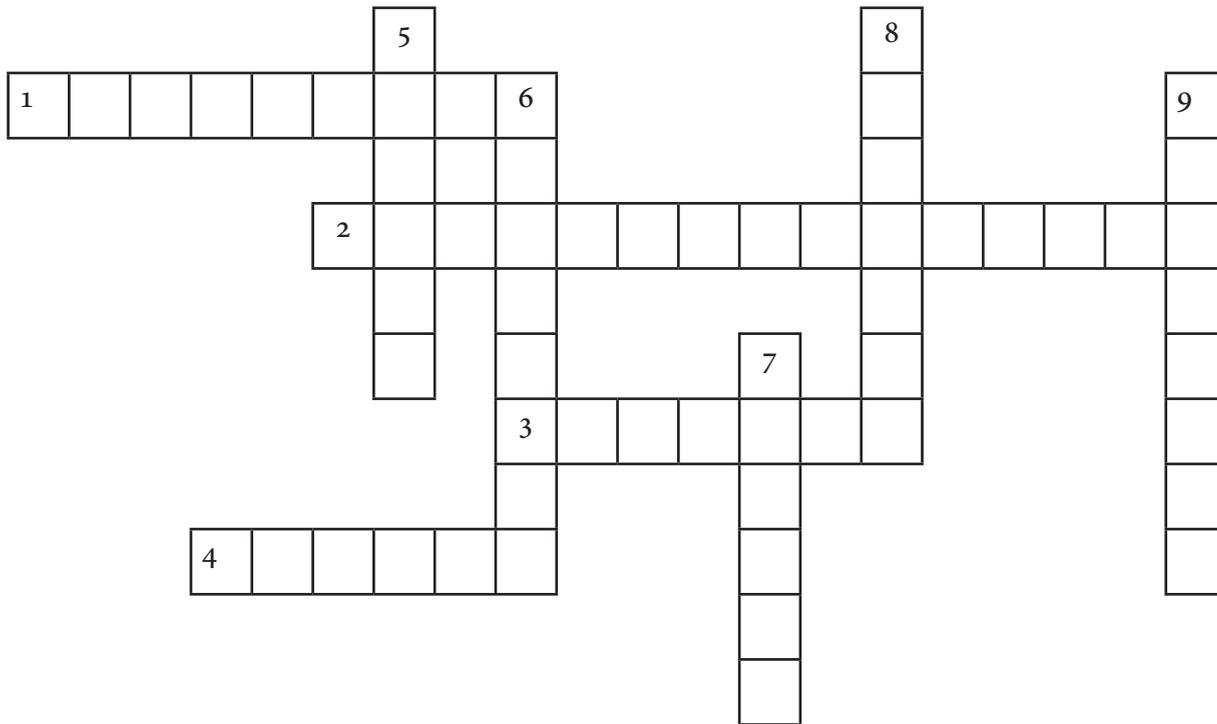
R A J O R Y A Z R T U E G R F W U Y N L U F  
E B N S P M R P V S W S T H T E A E B Y V R  
A L U W M I S H N A H S T U D Y S S T L J S  
R V D A D A S A O K R D S S R H H R I T L G  
U M B N L B K L E P F W P U A V L T A A Y W  
O S I L A I Y E U T P M W M R G A Z S Y K C  
L A H P O C R P V F L R A U T R F E S O Y H  
J W D E S S E H C E V H F O A I T D T I M V  
Y M G K L V P C Y A R Y B T R E B A H P C R  
A U J Y C S S A A K I H S I D D A K K K F B  
A C Y A Y U P M B M S W L L C Y M A D D V L  
K T I H W M U F D D E M E U E A P H V O G W  
O S T O Y O Y O T S F R A V D H M K S S V I  
V D Z G I K Z E R E T Z Y I S R A E L M H T  
I R R H Z U W V I B P D A S R T W S A K R C  
S U P Y K O P A A C D B K T V Z P B N F O N  
U N T S O V Z C G N C W V A W E U K O G W H  
K O Q E R G R L B H K E O A R I T S S D S P  
Y W M I F O Y K I U N G H F I T I H M P V S

### WORD BANK

Eretz Yisrael • Kaddish • Kever • Yosef • Yizkor  
Mishnah Study • Tzedakah • Neshamah • Yahrtzeit  
Candle • Chessed • Yaakov • Cave of Machpelah

# Worksheet

## May the Neshama Have an Aliyah: What are all the things we can do?



### Across:

1. The anniversary of someone's death
2. The place where Yosef buried his father Yaakov
3. Prayer said for the departed for eleven months
4. A rise or "promotion" of the soul in Heaven

### Down:

5. A chessed organization that provides a community service
6. Charity
7. Prayer said on certain festivals
8. Special part of the Torah studied for someone's neshamah
9. The place where souls are cleansed of their sins after death

### WORD BANK

Tzedakah • Mishnah • Gemach • Yahrtzeit • Aliyah  
Cave of Machpelah • Yizkor • Kaddish • Gehinnom

## May The Neshamah Have an Aliyah Project

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

- 1] Write down the Hebrew name of someone you know who has passed away and the Hebrew name of their father (or mother, when the departed is from Sephardic descent).

\_\_\_\_\_ ben/bas \_\_\_\_\_

- 2] Research the date of their *yahrtzeit* by asking at home and then looking up Hebrew date if unknown.

English Day \_\_\_\_\_, Month \_\_\_\_\_, Year \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Day \_\_\_\_\_, Month \_\_\_\_\_, Year \_\_\_\_\_

- 3] Write the name of the cemetery and city and state of their burial location.

Cemetery name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

- 4] Remember and write some special memories about this person.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 5] Make a list of some special things you could do to provide merit for this person's *neshamah*.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## YAHRTZEITS AND BURIAL PLACES FROM TANACH

**B**egin with a pretest, game, quiz or discussion during which students learn the *yahrtzeits* of people from Tanach. This can be extended to cover contemporary *gedolim*. Whose *yahrtzeits* do we know and what do we do as a *klal* on their *yahrtzeits*?

Famous Torah Personalities:	<i>Yahrtzeit</i> dates	<i>Kevarim</i>	Why are they buried in each particular place?
<b>Sarah Imeinu</b>	1 Tishrei	Cave of Machpelah, in the city of Chevron	see Bereishis 23:17 – 20
<b>Rachel Imeinu</b>	11 Cheshvan	in the city of Beis Lechem	see Bereishis 35: 19, 20 and also 48:7
<b>Yosef HaTzaddik</b>		in the city of Shechem	see Yehoshua 24:32
<b>Moshe Rabbeinu</b>	7 Adar	Unknown	see Devarim 34:7
<b>Aharon HaKohein</b>	1 Av	Hor HaHar	see Bamidbar 20:24 – 28
<b>Miriam</b> <i>[sister of Moshe Rabbeinu]</i>	10 Nissan	Kadesh, in the Sinai Desert	see Bamidbar 20:1
<b>Yehoshua Bin Nun</b>	26 Nissan	Timnas Serach	see Yehoshua 24:30

# Worksheet

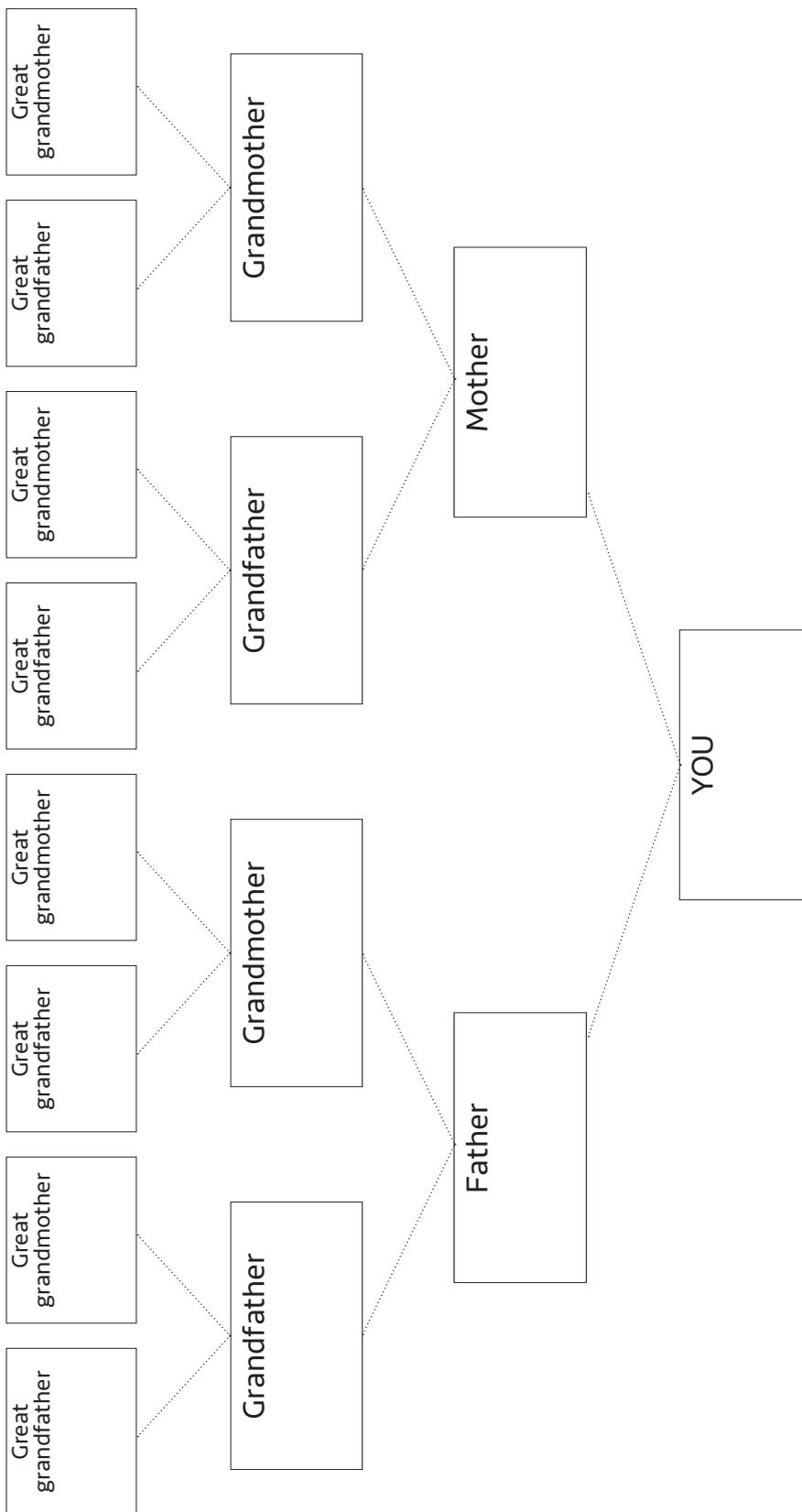


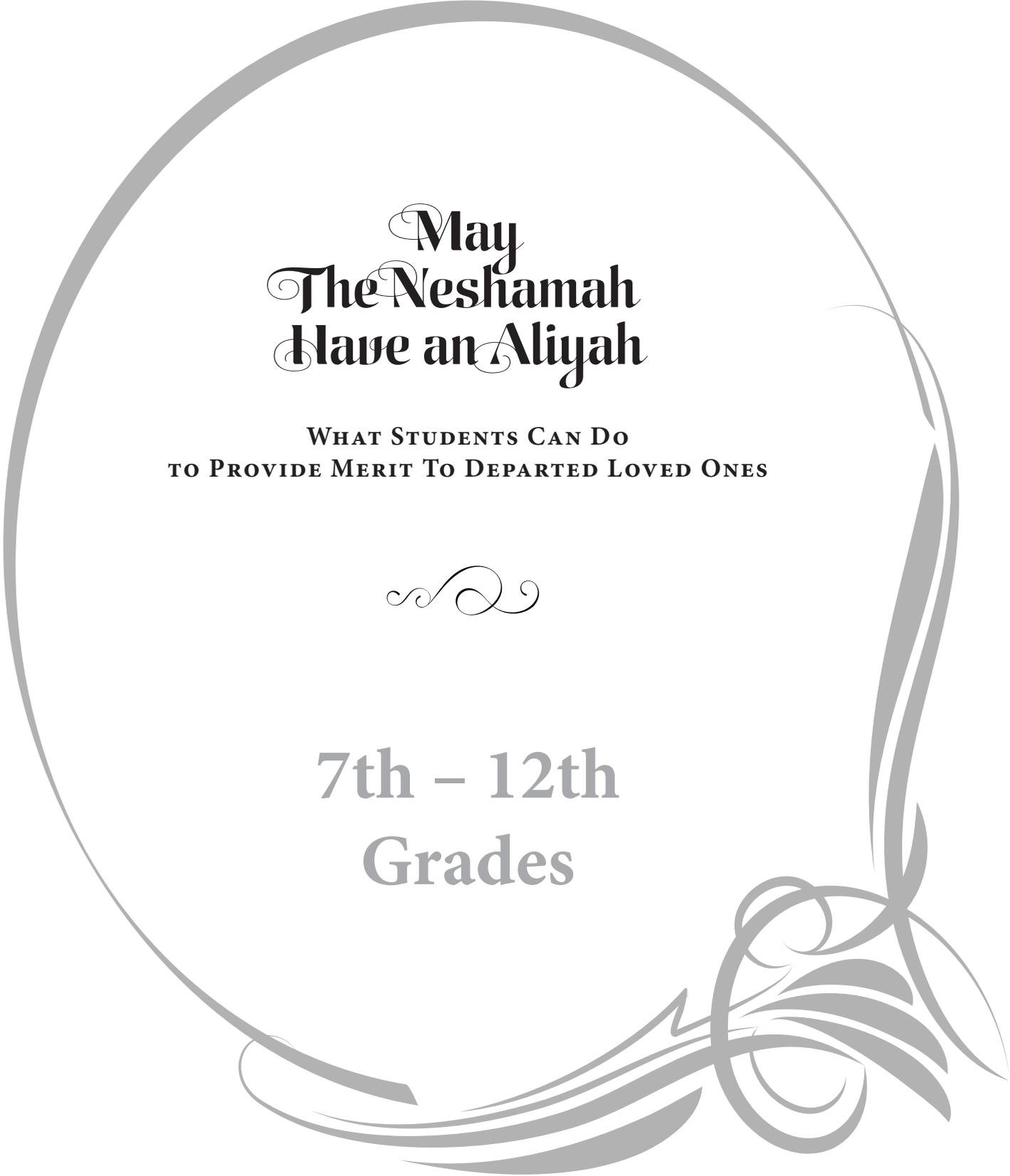
Fill in the *yahrtzeit* and burial place for each of these people.

	<b>Yahrtzeit</b>	<b>Burial Place</b>
Sarah Imeinu		
Rachel Imeinu		
Yosef HaTzaddik	_____	
Moshe Rabbeinu		
Aharon HaKohein		
Miriam <small>[sister of Moshe Rabbeinu]</small>		
Yehoshua Bin Nun		

## Your Personal Family Tree

Create a family tree going as far back as you can. Research about the grandparents that have *yahrtzeits*. You can interview a relative who knew them, find out where they are buried and when their *yahrtzeit* is, etc. You can mark the *yahrtzeit* on your calendar and choose an extra mitzvah you would like to do on that day. Perhaps your teacher can dedicate the learning you do on that day as an *aliyah* for their *neshamos*.





**May  
The Neshamah  
Have an Aliyah**

**WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO  
TO PROVIDE MERIT TO DEPARTED LOVED ONES**



**7th – 12th  
Grades**



## SEVENTH THROUGH TWELFTH GRADE

**B**y middle and high school, young men and ladies can begin to understand the extremely important concept that providing the *neshamah* the greatest merit is by walking on the righteous path as a Torah observant Jew. The learning program could be more detailed and on a higher level regarding the *halachos* and customs for these topics including the *halachos* of *shivah*, visiting the grave, prayers and procedures, Kaddish prayer meanings, Yizkor explanations, Maftir, leading *davening*, *levayah* details, and how and why *mishnayos* are studied.

*DISCLAIMER: Please consult with your head of school before embarking on specific activities for these grade levels to ensure your instructions are acceptable. Some schools will feel comfortable with these concepts, while other schools might feel less comfortable with some of these lessons.*

### Sample activities:

- Show segments of the DVD – *To Comfort and Be Comforted, A Guide to the Mitzvah of Nichum Aveilum* – about comforting mourners with segments for men and women.
- Discuss when we mourn for individuals/groups of people as a *klal* [Tzom Gedalyah, Sefirah (students of Rabbi Akiva) Tishah B'Av, Asarah B'Teves].
- Pass out sample stories that are included in the back of this manual, and have students read and reflect.
- Show CD – *Providing Eternal Merit* by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and/or Rabbi Paysach Krohn included with *The Neshamah Should Have An Aliyah*.
- Have the class divide into two groups. Have each group come up with a list of ways to help the family with various *chessed* activities and then compare and contrast ideas.
- Obtain names of neshamah's who don't have anyone to learn for them from Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah and set up a learning program
- Show the Kaddish prayer and discuss the translation.

- Discuss what happens at a *levayah* (funeral).
- Teach the phrase to say to the mourners at the end of a *shivah* visit (or phone call); “המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים.”
- Divide the class into groups and have students conduct meetings using the template worksheet (page 28).
- For boys see the insert for: the listing of Mishnah Chapters for Each Letter of the Alef-Beis (*The Neshamah Should Have an Aliyah*, page 152). Or download from the following link: <http://www.ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org/Mishnah%20Listing%20According%20to%20Alef%20Bais.pdf>
- For boys see the insert for: A Mishnah for each letter of the Alef-Beis with English translation (*The Neshamah Should Have an Aliyah*, page 153-164).
- Discuss the power of taking on a mitzvah with extra care as a wonderful *aliyah* for the *neshamah* and have students reflect on the various *mitzvos* that could be enhanced such as *shemiras halashon*, *Shabbos*, *chessed*, *tefillah*, *kibbud av v'em*.
- If someone in the community has passed away, have the boys study the appropriate *mishnayos*.
- A concept to share is the idea of moving on and not over-mourning. It's important to recognize that the Torah has *halachos* for mourning and it is not our job to add to them.
- Learn about the days when people do not mourn or days when we do not give *hespedim*.
- Discuss the topic of *hespedim* and how to give *kavod* (honor) to the *niftar* (person who has passed away) by saying things that are praiseworthy and *emes* (truth).

## A Sample Meeting Agenda - Special Things You could do for this Person's *neshamah*

Name of *Niftar* \_\_\_\_\_ ben/bas \_\_\_\_\_

*Yahrtzeit* Date \_\_\_\_\_ Burial Location \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:** *Dvar Torah* – discuss the importance and impact of doing things for the departed *neshamah*

### Brainstorming session on things the family can do:

**LEARNING:** Can we make a *siyum* on a certain learning project in time for the *yahrtzeit*? \_\_\_\_\_

Can we divide up the learning with family and friends? \_\_\_\_\_

Should we contact others to help us to do the learning? \_\_\_\_\_

Can we sponsor a *shiur* on or near the *yahrtzeit*? \_\_\_\_\_

**CHESSED:** What types of *chessed* can we do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Should we establish a *gemach*? \_\_\_\_\_

**TZEDAKAH:** Where and how much should we give or raise? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**DONATING SEFARIM:** What should we donate and to whom? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

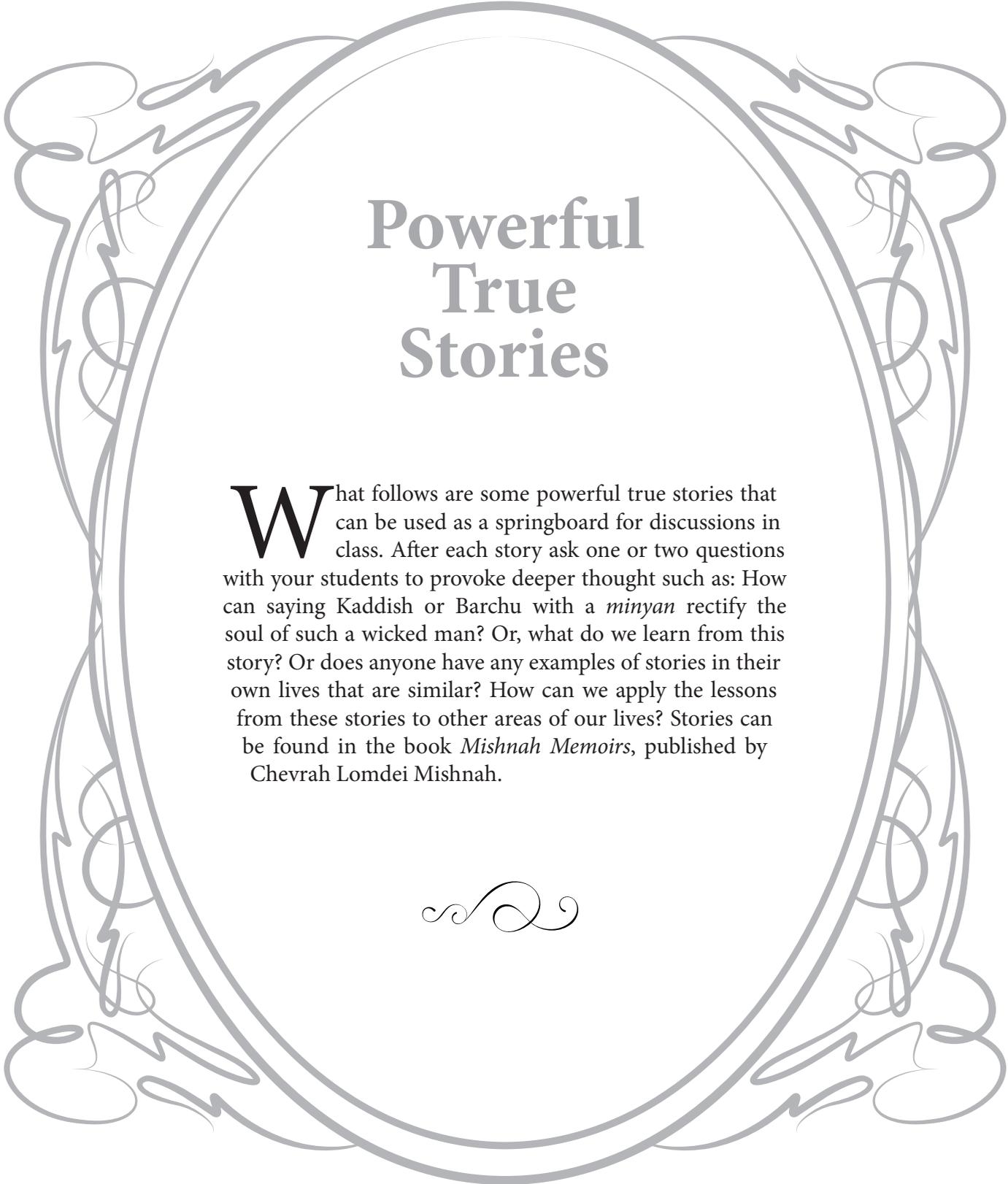
**ADOPTING A MITZVAH:** What mitzvah should we think about doing to strengthen ourselves? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SCRAP BOOK:** Should we make a scrap book? \_\_\_\_\_

Who should do it? \_\_\_\_\_





# Powerful True Stories

**W**hat follows are some powerful true stories that can be used as a springboard for discussions in class. After each story ask one or two questions with your students to provoke deeper thought such as: How can saying Kaddish or Barchu with a *minyán* rectify the soul of such a wicked man? Or, what do we learn from this story? Or does anyone have any examples of stories in their own lives that are similar? How can we apply the lessons from these stories to other areas of our lives? Stories can be found in the book *Mishnah Memoirs*, published by Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah.



# A Penance for the Sinner

Rabbi Akiva once saw an unclothed man who was as dark as coal, carrying a load heavy enough for ten men on his head, while running as fast as a horse. He commanded the man to stop, and asked him, “Why are you performing such difficult labor? If you are a slave, and your master forces you to work like this, then I will redeem you from him. If you are poor, I will make you wealthy.” The man replied, “Please do not delay me, because I am afraid that my masters will get angry with me.”

Rabbi Akiva asked, “What is this, and what do you do?”

He responded, “I am really a dead man, and every day they send me [from the Next World] to cut trees. They then proceed to burn me in them.”

Rabbi Akiva asked, “What did you do in this world?”

He answered, “I was a tax collector, a leader of men. I favored the rich, and killed the poor.”

Rabbi Akiva said, “Did you ever find out if there is a way to rectify your judgment (*tikkun*)?” He replied, “Please don’t delay me, for I am afraid that the deliverers of punishment (*ba’alei pur’aniyos*) will be angered; I have no means of rectification (*tikkun*). I heard from them that it is impossible in my situation. But if I had a son who would say the Bor’chu or Kaddish prayer in a quorum of ten men, and the quorum would respond, then I would be released from this punishment. However, I left no sons in this world. I departed from my wife while she was still pregnant; I was unaware if she had a son. In any case, who would teach him? Nobody likes me in this world!”

Rabbi Akiva accepted upon himself to investigate if a son was born to this man, so that he could teach him Torah, and get him to lead the prayers.

---

***Rabbi Akiva  
asked,  
“What is this,  
and what do  
you do?”***

---

---

***Soon  
thereafter, the  
dead man was  
released from  
his tortures***

---

Rabbi Akiva asked, “What is your name?”

He responded, “Akiva.”

“And your wife’s name?”

“Shushbeena.”

“Your city?”

“Ludkiya.”

When Rabbi Akiva reached the city, and asked about this man, he was told, “May the bones of that wicked man be pulverized!”

When he asked about the man’s wife, he was told, “May her name be obliterated from this world!”

When he asked about the son, they said, “He is uncircumcised, and he never made sure to circumcise himself!”

Immediately, Rabbi Akiva circumcised the son and fasted for forty days, to enable himself to teach him Torah. At the end of the forty days, a heavenly voice declared, “Go teach him Torah!”

Rabbi Akiva taught the son Torah and other prayers, placed him in front of a quorum where he recited the Bor’chu and Kaddish prayers, and the quorum responded accordingly.

Soon thereafter, the dead man was released from his tortures. He came to Rabbi Akiva in a dream and said, “May it be the will of G-d that you shall have a great reward in the Next World, for you saved me from my afflictions of Gehinnom (Purgatory).

*(Ohr Zarua, Second Part, Laws of Sabbath, 50, Menoras HaMaor, First Candle, 1:2:1)*

## A Debt Repaid

The following story is told regarding Rabbi Yosef Chayim Sonnenfeld, the famous rabbi of old Jerusalem. The story occurred while Rabbi Sonnenfeld, then referred to as Chayim, was still a young man in Europe.

While in Pressburg, Chayim once played a role in an amazing story involving kindness. A certain couple in Pressburg operated a successful business and contributed generously to the yeshivah. The wife founded a fund specifically to pay students of the yeshivah to recite Kaddish for people who had died without leaving behind anyone to say the prayer for them.

After many years, the husband died and the business began to decline rapidly. His widow was soon completely bankrupt with no means of support. To make matters worse, her two daughters had reached marriageable age and she did not have a penny with which to make their weddings.

The broken-hearted woman went to the K'sav Sofer (Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer) and told him of her sad plight. She said that as far as her own needs were concerned, she had faith that G-d would provide her with money to support her family and marry off her daughters. She was concerned, however, that the saying of Kaddish, for which she had always paid the students, would be discontinued because she was penniless. She tearfully pleaded with the K'sav Sofer to continue to fund the practice and she promised to repay the money when her situation improved. The K'sav Sofer was greatly moved by this noble woman's request and he readily agreed to do as she had asked.

The woman left the office with a smile on her face. As she walked home, she was startled by the sudden appearance of a very dignified elderly gentleman with a long white beard, walking slowly across her path. Since the man was a total stranger, she was surprised when he struck up a friendly conversation with her, politely inquiring as to how she was managing financially. When she told him of her sad situation, he asked her how much she needed to marry off her daughters. Bewildered by the entire conversation, the woman delineated the large sum. The man drew out his checkbook, wrote a check for the full amount, and told her that it could be cashed at the local bank. The man suggested, though, that he sign the check in the presence of two witnesses,

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*she was startled  
by the sudden  
appearance of  
a very dignified  
elderly  
gentleman*

---

---

***The bank owner took one look at the bank check and collapsed in a faint***

---

since the sum was quite large, and the bank might accuse the woman of forging the check.

The two then went to the Pressburg Yeshivah where they asked Chayim and a friend to serve as witnesses. The man signed the check in their presence, gave the boys another slip of paper bearing his signature as an added assurance, and then hurried on his way.

Wondering whether the whole incident was a miracle or a cruel hoax, the dazed woman went to the bank and asked that the check be cashed. Seeing how large the sum was, the teller asked her to wait while he spoke with the owner of the bank. The bank owner took one look at the bank check and collapsed in a faint. After being revived, the shaken banker asked that the woman be brought into his office. There, he asked her if she could identify the man who had written the check. The woman answered that she could, and added that there are two students of the yeshivah who had seen the man. The banker withdrew several photographs from a drawer, one of which the woman immediately identified as that of the man who had given her the check. The banker then ordered the teller to give the woman the money.

In a trembling voice the banker said, “The man who gave you the check was my father who has been dead for ten years! Last night, my father appeared to me in a dream and said, ‘I want you to know that from the day you departed from the path of Torah and married a gentile woman and stopped saying Kaddish for me, my soul knew no rest. Then a certain woman arranged to have Kaddish said for me by a student of the yeshivah, and my soul finally found peace. Tomorrow, this woman will come to your bank with a check that I am going to give her to cover the wedding expenses for her two daughters.’

“When I awoke this morning, I was shaken by my dream. I told it to my wife, who calmed me and assured me that it was pure nonsense. But when the woman presented the check, the dream came true before my eyes.”

The banker returned to the path of Torah, becoming a complete *ba'al teshuvah* (repentant sinner). His wife became a sincere convert, and together they raised a fine religious family.

*(Reproduced from The Story of Reb Yosef Chaim by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, pp. 34 – 36. With permission of the copyright holders, ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications, Ltd.)*

# Long Distance Kaddish

The late Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, accompanied by eight of his students, was on his way to the wedding of a student at his yeshivah. The groom had arranged a flight for the group that was scheduled to arrive with plenty of time before the wedding.

Despite their planning, fierce storms at the airport of their destination made it impossible for the plane to land. The plane was forced to detour to a distant airport in a different location entirely. Dismayed at the turn of events, Rabbi Gifter and his students realized that they would be missing the wedding completely. They would not even be able to recite the Minchah prayers with the requisite quorum of ten men; their party of nine was just one man short.

The group approached a supervisor at the airport, requesting a quiet place in which to pray. The supervisor directed them to a side room, and then quietly watched from the doorway as the Minchah service unfolded.

When the group had completed their prayers, the supervisor asked them, “Why didn’t you say Kaddish?”

Surprised at the question, the students explained that they were missing the tenth man for the quorum.

The supervisor retorted in Yiddish, “And am I not a Jew, too?”

The clearly overwhelmed man explained that he was by no means religious; he never prayed at all. But this day was a day like no other.

“Today is the day of my late father’s *yahrtzeit*,” the supervisor said.

“Last night, my father appeared to me in a dream. He told me that today is his *yahrtzeit*, and he demanded that I say Kaddish in his merit. I told my father that I never pray; and even if I would want to say Kaddish, from where would I find a *minyan* (quorum of ten men)?

“My father replied in the dream, ‘I will make sure that there is a *minyan* for you. You just be sure to recite Kaddish.’

“When I woke up this morning, I thought to myself, ‘There is no way that I will say Kaddish!’ But now, when I see how my father’s words came true, and nine Jews from far away came straight to me, I can’t ignore my father’s words.”

With that, the airport supervisor emotionally recited the Kaddish prayer.

*(Otzros Acharis HaYamim, Vol. IV, p. 130)*

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*fierce storms  
at the airport  
of their  
destination  
made it  
impossible for  
the plane to  
land*

---

# Unfathomable Comfort

**A**nna Preisand was a single woman from Atlanta, Georgia. For many years, Anna devotedly cared for her ill sister. After her sister passed away, Anna approached Rabbi C., the principal of her local day school, requesting that he arrange Mishnah study in her sister's merit.

Rabbi C. turned to a teacher in the school, who agreed to undertake a course of Mishnah study in the deceased woman's merit.

Sometime later, Anna Preisand disappointedly asked Rabbi C. why the Mishnah study was not being completed. Nonplussed, the principal spoke to the teacher.

"How did you know?" the teacher asked in astonishment. "The truth is, lately I've been lax in studying the Mishnayos for Ms. Preisand's sister."

Rabbi C. then asked Rabbi Y. to stand in for the teacher. Rabbi Y. agreed gladly, and once again Mishnayos were studied in the merit of Ms. Preisand's sister. Each time Rabbi Y. met Anna Preisand, she thanked him from the bottom of her heart, saying, "You don't know how much I owe you for studying Mishnayos for the sake of Heaven."

One day, Rabbi Y. curiously asked Anna, "How did you know that the teacher had stopped studying the Mishnah for your sister? And how are you so sure that it is being completed now?"

Anna replied, "At the time that the Mishnah study was discontinued, my sister appeared to me in a dream. She was dressed in grotesque clothing, and her expression was grim.

"I depended on you for the Mishnayos,' my sister told me, 'and it's not being done.'

"After Rabbi C. arranged that you would resume the Mishnah study where the teacher left off, my sister once again appeared to me in a dream. This time her face was radiant.

"You have no idea what a comfort this is for me,' my sister said.

"And that is how I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Mishnah is being studied properly in my sister's merit," Anna concluded.

*(As heard from Rabbi Y., Atlanta, Georgia.)*

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***At the time  
that the  
Mishnah  
study was  
discontinued,  
my sister  
appeared to me  
in a dream***

---

## Right Time, Right Place

Mr. Jeff Borell of Highland Park, New Jersey had only recently become observant when his father passed away in January, 1994. Sadly, his father was cremated. Although the custom for a son of the deceased is to recite Kaddish daily for the entire first year, as well as on every subsequent *yahrtzeit*, Mr. Borell was under the impression that he could say Kaddish, but that he was not obligated. For the next few years, Mr. Borell would only occasionally recite Kaddish and eventually stopped saying Kaddish altogether.

Due to the circumstances of his profession, Mr. Borell was not always able to make it to a daily *minyan* (prayer quorum). As a result, several *yahrtzeits* of his father passed, without Mr. Borell reciting the Kaddish.

One winter morning in 2005, Mr. Borell inexplicably woke up at 4:30 AM. Though he twisted and turned, he was unable to fall back asleep. Exhaustion notwithstanding, Mr. Borell told himself, “This morning, I have no excuse to miss praying with a *minyan*. I can’t sleep anyway.”

In due time, Mr. Borell arrived at the synagogue. He noted with curiosity that some of the men were busy setting out food and fruit for after the services. In reply to his query, the men told him that the unaccustomed collation was in honor of the fifteenth day of Shevat, New Year for the trees. The fifteenth of Shevat?! Mr. Borell was stunned—the fifteenth of Shevat was the day of his father’s *yahrtzeit*.

Some messages can’t be ignored. Following an emotional Kaddish, Mr. Borell took upon himself a renewed commitment to recite Kaddish for his father on the fifteenth day of Shevat, every year thereafter.

*(As heard from Mr. Jeff Borell, Highland Park, NJ)*

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***One winter  
morning...  
Mr. Borell  
inexplicably  
woke up at  
4:30 AM***

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# Additional Resources



## BOOKS:

- *The Neshamah Should Have an Aliyah*, Rabbi Tzvi Hebel, published by Judaica Press



## CD AND DVD:

- *Providing Eternal Merit*, Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Rabbi Paysach Krohn, included with the book *The Neshamah Should Have an Aliyah*
- *To Comfort and Be Comforted: A Guide to the Mitzvah of Nichum Aveilim*, published by Chevrah Lomdei Mishnah and the National Association of Chevra Kadisha (NASCK)



## WEBSITES:

- [ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org](http://ChevrahLomdeiMishnah.org)
- [JewishDeathandMourning.org](http://JewishDeathandMourning.org)
- [Neshamahproject.org](http://Neshamahproject.org)
- [AISH.com](http://AISH.com)

# May the Neshamah Have an Aliyah

The goal of this program is to implant into the hearts and minds of students in a sensitive and warm way the positive and caring actions we can do in this world for souls in the Next World. The loss of a loved one is one of the most difficult events in our lives. Many will ask what can be done to console the heart. There is something that can not only bring much comfort to the living but also to the departed loved one, and that is performing *mitzvos* in their merit. This teacher's manual will prove effective in educating students in the mitzvah of taking care of *neshamos* of those who came before us; through the students' actions there will be a great increase in Torah study, *tzedakah* and *chesed* and a rise and rectification for many souls.

Mrs. Robin Davina Meyerson, one of the editors of the well-received book *The Neshamah Should Have An Aliyah* by Rabbi Tzvi Hebel (Judaica Press), now introduces these concepts in a manner carefully designed to allow teachers to share them with students of all ages.

A Teacher's Manual for Students in Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade includes the following:

- Basic, vital information for the Jewish student
- Hebrew-to-English translation worksheets in large, easy-to-read format
- Engaging crosswords and word finds to bring the words and concepts to life
- Easy-to-create family trees and *yahrtzeit* worksheets, which students can use together with family members
- Website links to *Mishnayos* Charts for older students
- Amazing, true short stories that will spark the imagination and touch the students in deeply meaningful ways

This teacher's manual introduces young people in a sensitive way to these profound concepts, which will remain important to them for the rest of their lives.



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