

# In It for the Long Run



**Ayelet**  
MAG

# Ayelet Tour

**Letter from the Editors— Sacrifice now, but reap the benefits later! {pg 2}**

**Kitchen Krazies – Enough muffins to go around {pg 3}**

**Against the Tide – She knows it's wrong...but will she have the courage not to join in? {pg 6}**

**Star Bright Spotlight – Ayelet Mag interviews a writer for Mishpacha Magazine! {pg 8}**

**Songspot— A heartbreaking but gorgeous song by Sara Hecht, called “Chana” {pg 10}**

**Journey to Me – Join We Guys In Charge on our journey inward! {pg 12}**

**Serial—Avigayil composes a new piece on her violin but can't think of a name for it yet {pg 13}**

**Pocket Message—Sometimes we forget the true meaning of courage {pg 17}**

**Poetry— A poem about society and a fun poem about life's inner dance {pg 18}**

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## *Dear Readers,*

Hey everybody, what's up? Hope you all are managing to stay safe and positive during this hard time!

The woman we're celebrating this issue is Chana, the mother of the seven sons who sacrificed themselves rather than serve avodah zara during the time of the Chanukah story.)

I (Sara Kayla) just wanna start by saying that there is absolutely no way I'm elaborating on this a lot because I am a 16 year old highschooler, Batsheva is 17, and there is just no way either of us can even begin to comprehend the incredible sacrifice of both the sons and Chana herself.

So instead we're gonna talk more about our theme: The english one is "In It for the Long Run" (Again, credits to Leah Langsner of Kitchen Krazies, I don't know what we'd do without your knack of coming up with good phrases) and our hebrew theme is the quote from Aishes chayil, "kamu vaneha v'ashruha" "her sons rise up and praise her." (That part is pretty self-explanatory, considering our hero.) Basically, what we wanted to discuss and focus on in this issue is, essentially, the

concept of long-term versus short-term. This comes up in a myriad of ways during daily life and also not-so-daily-life. We see it in our interactions with others--do I yell at my sister and cause a potential fight or swallow and let it go, thereby keeping the atmosphere pleasant; with ourselves--do I forsake my comfort to exercise or just stay on my couch and, ultimately, lose out; and with Hashem as well--"I don't really want to get up and daven Mincha now...is it really that important?"

In our avodas Hashem we are often faced with such choices, some much more serious than others, like Chana's story. This issue is called "In It for the Long Run" because as Jews we pledge ourselves to a higher purpose than our own mere lives, or wills. Beyond our own desires, because we realize and acknowledge that there IS a reason, and one day, whether it's soon or not for many years, we'll see that. 🌟

*Sara Kayla and  
Batsheva Miriam*



# Kitchen Krazies

I love these muffins so much! Even though they are milchig they are definitely worth it! These recipes are from tasteandtell.com, but have been slightly adjusted by yours truly;)

## Lemon Muffins

### Ingredients

1 cup plus 1 tablespoon granulated sugar, divided

Zest of 2 lemons

½ cup butter, at room temperature

1 cup ricotta cheese

1 large egg

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

### Directions

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners. (Alternately, you can spray the cups with nonstick cooking spray.)

Place 1 cup of sugar and the lemon zest in a large bowl. With your fingers, rub the sugar and zest together until the sugar is moist and fragrant.

Add the butter to the bowl and beat with a hand mixer until light and fluffy. Beat in the ricotta, followed by the egg, lemon juice and vanilla extract.



Add the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt to the bowl. Stir until blended – the batter will be thick.

Divide the batter evenly between the prepared muffin cups. Sprinkle with the remaining 1 tablespoon of sugar.

Bake the muffins in the preheated oven until they are golden and cooked through, 18-20 minutes.

Cool slightly before serving.

## Blueberry Muffins

### Ingredients

½ cup softened butter

1 ¼ cups sugar

2 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups flour

½ teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons baking powder

½ cup milk

2 cups blueberries, washed, drained and picked over

3 teaspoons sugar

### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375.

2. Cream the butter and 1 ¼ cups sugar until light.

3. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

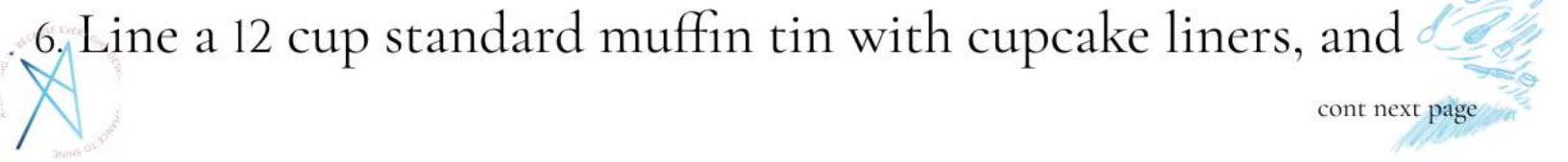
Add vanilla.

4. Sift together the flour, salt and baking powder, and add to the creamed mixture alternately with the milk.

5. Crush ½ cup blueberries with a fork, and mix into the batter.

Fold in the remaining whole berries.

6. Line a 12 cup standard muffin tin with cupcake liners, and



fill with batter. Sprinkle the 3 teaspoons sugar over the tops of the muffins, and bake at 375 degrees for about 30-35 minutes.

7. Remove muffins from tin and cool at least 30 minutes. Store, uncovered, or the muffins will be too moist the second day, if they last that long 🍷





# Against the Tide

I won't. I can't. I won't. I can't. The words pound in my head, almost obscuring the world from sight with their intensity. As I watch Sarah and Aliza's heads bend together, discussing everything, punctuating their unheard words with little giggles, I close my eyes tight.

I won't. I can't. I've always been best friends with Aliza. And then Sarah came along, joining our class in the middle of last year. She never really had much to do with me, and I intended to keep it that way.

Sarah was a bit too...funky for my taste. But this year, she somehow latched on to my crew, and now everything has changed. The world as I know it is spiraling out of control, like a runaway train, careening faster and faster until it's off the tracks, tumbling down to a rocky demise. It's only the end of October, and already, Aliza has changed so much.

But the funny thing is, Sarah's not this obviously evil, mean girl. She's actually really normal. And when she's with us, she's funny, entertaining, and enjoyable to be around, usually making everything into

a party. But she's made it clear she doesn't like the 'frummies.'

I'm not that ultra-frum myself. But although everything with Sarah is fun, I have been noticing when things start to raise red flags. Like when all three of us made up a dance in middle of the mall. Or when Sarah and Aliza blasted booming music at the bowling alley last week and sang along at the top of their lungs. I haven't started to fall. Not yet. But tonight will be the ultimate test.

I close my eyes. Sarah has roped Aliza into going to a nightclub. A nightclub! I know it's not okay. Like, totally, completely, make-your-mother-faint-in-horror kind of not okay. But

I want to go. Like, really, really. With Sarah, a nightclub would be a blast. We would eat, dance and sing.

And we wouldn't stay there for so long. Besides, if Aliza's doing it, it had to be okay. Her mother's the principal of the local Bais Yaakov!

But I know, in the deepest recesses of my heart, that if I were to go to this nightclub, then everything I've worked so hard to uphold will come crashing down and any hope will be destroyed.

"Hadassah? Are you with us?" Petite, soft-spoken Mrs. Goldstein blinks her eyes at me.

I nod quickly, and fumble for a pen as Mrs. Goldstein turns back to the board, her blonde sheitel swishing.

Sarah and Aliza turn to me, Aliza still laughing.

"So? Are you with us tonight?" Sarah's tone is friendly, but her green eyes are steely. This is it, she's saying. If you're out, then you're done. You don't belong with us anymore. I've put up with you for long enough. This is the deciding test.

I close my eyes and inhale. I know – I know – that if I refuse, Sarah will cut ties with me. So will Aliza.

I'll be alone for the first time in my life. I've always been close with Aliza, but if I don't have her any longer, I'll have no one. But then I realize, Aliza hasn't been all that close to me these past few weeks anyway. She's always been with Sarah, never calling, texting or coming over.

It's always been me doing all that. I think back to that time in the mall. I hadn't been invited– I'd only come along because Aliza happened to mention it and I didn't want to be left out. And I realize I've been playing their game only to only to convince myself that my friendship with Aliza was still strong, was still unshakable. But it's not. I see that now. I can't go with them. I can't.

But still. This is so, so hard. I open my mouth, about to say no. Then I close my mouth and swallow the words. I can't say them.

Instead, I take the cowardly way out.

"I'll let you know later tonight."

"Okay, but we won't wait forever for you."

And then Sarah turns back and she and Aliza start giggling again.

I'm sitting at home on the couch, staring at the phone in my hands. I haven't told my mother yet –she'll obviously not allow me to go– and I've been stewing about my dilemma ever since I've arrived home...an hour ago.

Should I call? I wonder if I just 'forget' to call, they won't count it as the final straw. But how can they not?

In the end, the decision is taken out of my hands. There's a knock on the door. Sarah is standing there with Aliza, hands on hips.

"So, Hadassah? You coming or not?" Sarah's eyes are hard and merciless.

I close my eyes for a second, and then reopen them. And then, I make the most difficult choice of my life. Taking a deep breath, I look straight into Sarah's eyes, which are daring me to defy her, and say,

"No." 🌟

*-Shira*





# Star-Bright Spotlight

## Ayelet Mag interviews a writer for Mishpacha magazine....welcome, Alex Fleksher!

**How would you describe what you do in one sentence?**

*I am an op-ed columnist for Mishpacha Magazine and local community volunteer.*

**How has your relationship with Hashem/Judaism changed through your writing?**

*What a wonderful question. I have become more acutely aware that I have a huge responsibility as a writer. My words count. The Mishpacha readership is over half a million people worldwide, so I must weigh my words carefully. I understand more than ever that my words can either bring people closer to Hashem and Yiddishkeit or further away. So my relationship with Hashem and Judaism has changed through my writing because I now take role as an agent and representative of Torah Judaism more seriously.*

**How did you grow up? Did that affect your dreams/work?**

*I dabbled with writing creative short stories in middle school in my free time and would show them to my English teacher who read each page and always commented, encouraging me to continue my writing. I had an excellent high school English teacher who really pushed me to do my best work, still never giving me more than an A- on my essays. When I was the only student in my class to receive the highest possible score on my AP English exam, I was shocked, because I didn't think I was the best writer in the grade. Then I understood my teacher's tactic to never allow me to rest on my laurels and be satisfied with my work, but to always push to do better. She inspired me to become an English teacher, which I did for 15 years. In addition to teaching, I have found writing professionally*

*to be extremely gratifying. When I write, I feel like I'm doing what I'm meant to be doing.*

**Did anybody in your family's history make a decision that affected you specifically?**

*My father converted to Judaism when I was 12 years old. This had a major effect on our family, obviously! I switched from public school to day school in 6th grade and have never looked back. Because of my father's huge decision to convert when he was 54 years old, I am who I am today!*

**What kinds of things do you write? Why?**

*I like to write opinion pieces on matters pertaining to contemporary Orthodox Jewish life. I like this style of writing because I like to share my opinion! I also like to express thoughts, struggles and feelings that are on many people's minds, to sort of represent them in print. I am grateful to have the platform that I do in the opinion section of the main Mishpacha magazine to start conversations on some very important topics that are relevant to Orthodox Jews.*

**Was any experience particularly motivating/inspiring?**

*I have a mentor who pushed me to reach out to Mishpacha. I came to them; they didn't reach out to me. I am not a risk-taker by nature, nor do I feel very comfortable putting myself out there and selling myself. But she knew that I could do this, and felt that Mishpacha was the right venue for my writing. Thanks to her, I emailed one of the editors, and the rest is history!*

**Did you have a role model when you were trying to make your dreams work?**

*Yes, the mentor who told me to make a pitch to*

cont next page



*Mishpacha is herself a writer and a very accomplished professional. I admire her drive and her idealism. She helps me realize the potential I have and gives me the push I need to take action.*

**Did you ever face any opposition/criticism?**

**How did you push past it and keep going?**

*It's always fun reading letters to the editor! Most letters are positive. When I read a negative letter I remind myself that every person has a huge history of life experiences and perspectives which impact their view on the world, and even their reading of an article! Some people are not happy that I write for Mishpacha since they do not print my headshot. They feel that I am now part of the problem of Orthodox media not printing pictures of women. When I face opposition, I try to understand the other perspective. Then I strengthen myself about what I believe. In this case, I believe that while it would be ideal for me to have my face and my writings, at this point that is not a reality. I feel that my "voice" is more important than my "face" and feel privileged to have the opportunity to share my voice and thoughts with so many readers.*

**What practical steps do you take to get your writings published?**

*I first have to pitch my idea to my editor along with an outline. My editor then gives me the yay or nay. She will also give me some direction based on the outline. I will then write my first draft, wait for my editors response, and then wait for the rabbinic board to approve the article. I'll make any necessary changes. After that, my draft will go to the proofreader. The proofreader thankfully sends it back to me and you bet, the English teacher in me proofreads the proofreader!*

**What advice do you have for Jewish girls with a dream?**

*Take small steps now to get you on the track to fulfill that dream. Do whatever you*

*can do at whatever point in your life to start developing yourself and your talents in the area you want to pursue. Find a mentor who can give you advice, encouragement, constructive criticism and most of all, a push to pursue something. (I still need that vote of confidence from my mentors sometimes to "go for it.") If you ever doubt if you're worthy or good enough to pursue something, get those thoughts out of your head. You ARE good enough. Do your homework, make the necessary efforts, and don't let self-doubt get in your way. And if you don't achieve what you're aiming for at a particular moment in your life, take it as experience learned and try for the next thing. 🌟*

*-Batsheva Miriam, Sara Kayla, and Alex*



Intro: Bb F Gm Eb

Gm Eb  
Within Judea's gates they stand  
Bb Dm  
Subject to the king's command  
Gm Eb  
A widow and her seven sons  
Bb Dm  
Tall and proud, she raised each one  
Gm Eb  
He calls the eldest to his throne  
Bb Dm  
"Abandon what you call your own"  
Gm Eb  
The boy stands firm, he will not break  
Bb F  
With faith he's put his life at stake

### CHORUS

Dm  
And she says,  
Gm Eb  
"Go my son, don't look behind  
Eb F  
The answers we don't need to find"  
Gm Eb  
She wants to break down, hold him tight  
Eb F  
The scent of death, the pain, the fright  
Gm Eb  
The soldiers shout, she shields her eyes

Eb F  
How can a mother watch her child die  
Gm Eb  
"It's all for You," she whispers low  
Eb F  
"My son," she cries, "I can't let go  
Gm  
I can't let go"

Gm Eb  
The endless nights, the long hard years  
Bb Dm  
She's fighting back the flood of tears  
Gm Eb  
To each she whispers, "be strong my boy  
Bb Dm  
You were my life, my pride and joy"  
Gm Eb  
Six handsome sons now torn away  
Bb Dm  
Her youngest left, he turns to say  
Gm Eb  
"You've taught me that our G-d is One  
Bb Dm  
And now I know what must be done"

### CHORUS

Gm Eb  
From sun-tipped rooftops, a mournful cry  
Bb Dm  
A woman stands, her head held high

SONG  
SPOT



Gm Eb  
 “City of gold, you are my breath  
 Bb Dm  
 Your dawn has witnessed a thousand deaths  
 Gm Eb  
 I've never seen the sun so strong  
 Bb Dm  
 A moment has never felt this long”  
 Gm Eb  
 She walks ahead, a steady stride  
 Bb Dm  
 A strength of steel from deep inside

Interlude: Bb F Gm Eb

Gm Eb  
 Seven noble princes slain  
 Eb F  
 A sunrise never saw such pain  
 Gm Eb  
 A life the world will not forget  
 Eb F  
 Torn, she leaps; a sun has set  
 Gm Eb  
 The heavens tremble as she dies  
 Eb F  
 The angels sing, the sages cry  
 Gm Eb  
 A soul that gave can now ascend  
 Eb F  
 She's dancing with her sons again

CHORUS

Dm  
 And she says,  
 Gm Eb  
 “Go my son, don't look behind  
 Eb F  
 The answers we don't need to find”  
 Gm Eb  
 She wants to break down, hold him tight  
 Eb F  
 The scent of death, the pain, the fright  
 Gm Eb  
 The soldiers shout, she shields her eyes  
 Eb F  
 How can a mother watch her child die  
 Gm Eb  
 “It's all for You,” she whispers low  
 Eb F  
 “My son,” she cries, “I can't let go  
 Gm  
 I can't let go”

**We've heard her story before, but never fully recognized the incredible sacrifice she made. Brought to life by Sara Hecht, this is the story of a woman of unfathomable strength:**

# Chana

Words and music  
 by Sara Hecht





# *Journey To Me*

*Each hero. Each theme. Join the Ayelet Mag co-editors on our journey to bring the themes of each issue into our daily lives with this exclusive, this-year-only column.*

*The destination? Ourselves.*



*Goal: Light up  
someone's life once a  
day for a week*



# Sara Kayla:

## Day One

I went to one of my best friend's vorts, does that count? I was there basically the whole time and I had a blast.

Then that night, I heard some... hard news. While I was scrabbling with the pieces of my newly fractured world, I remembered the theme of this column.

No, I thought, *how can I do this?*

I saw a pin on Pinterest once, saying basically that everyone has a bit of that desire to save the world in them, and it's okay if you save just one person....and it's okay if that person is you. And as I was thinking about what to do with this column, I realized, of course I'm going to try. I'll try to make people happy, light up someone's day, life, etc. But you know what?

Someday, maybe the day I'll light up is my own. And that's okay too.

## Day Two

Not so much today. Someone lit up *my* day by taking interest in *my* random interest in Hawaiian. (As in the language.) (Don't ask.) Batsheva said this doesn't count though, so oh well. I complimented a girl on her wristbands, but I doubt that exactly made her day much. Not much else.

## Day Three

Ooohh!! I have a good one for this! I went to my chessed house and I made a book with the kid!! It's my own version, using a cardboard cover, hole-punched and held together with rings of pipe cleaner, it ends up really cute and, I always thought it looked great. Baruch Hashem, it worked out, and she loved it! Seeing how happy she was with it made me feel really good.

## Day Four

Now, really, what do you call lighting up someone's life? What counts as doing that?

And is it lighting up someone's *life* or someone's *day*? I really need to ask Batsheva this.

Oh wait, I remember--we asked about changing the date of our school Production (long story why) and Mrs. Zelasko said they might actually do that!! For a couple reasons. So I think that made my friend happy, because she worried about missing it.

## Day Five

Roizy says I light up her life every day.

So.

That's that.

Also, I felt better mentally and physically than I had for a bit, so, you know.

## Day Six

IT'S REALLY HARD TO LIGHT UP SOMEONE'S LIFE, OKAY?!

Actually, though, I do think that I managed it at least a little bit, just by being a friend today.

## Day Seven

#ILightUpMyOwnLife

No really though, I didn't hang out this shabbos 'cause I needed some rest and relaxation. And Baruch Hashem, I think I succeeded!

Plus, motzei shabbos I sent an email to a good friend that I think really helped her.

So there we go! Seven days! I'll admit it: I struggled with this one. But it was still interesting. Until next time! 🌟

# *Batsheva Miriam*

So I actually did my Journey to Me assignment during the first full week of quarantine, which is either very smart or very not smart, depending on how you look at it. I've been trying to work on my bein adam l'chaveiro for a while, and I figured working on how I interact with my family is as good a starting point as any.

My first instance of "light up someone's day" was to my little brother. I walked into his room during bedtime and said, "It was so amazing to see you learning with your Rebbe over the phone today." He proceeded to completely ignore me and start telling me about quantum something or other. I was a little disappointed that he didn't positively react to my compliment, but maybe it affected him somewhere deeper down.

On Shabbos night, my other brother picked up a yedios klalios packet and teasingly started quizzing me. Instead of rolling my eyes and telling him to let me bentch and go to sleep, I answered his questions. It turned into an hour-long session of laughing and learning. Why

does this incident get mentioned here? Because I usually ignore this brother; when I'm tired I snap at him before anyone else and he doesn't (usually) deserve it. But just sitting there and laughing good-naturedly at his antics felt good for me – and I could see that it made a difference for him, too.

I know this isn't a very long article, but I really learned one lesson from this week: it's surprising how something that you might consider insignificant can really make someone's entire day. Especially if you're in a position of power (babysitter, older sibling, mentor), what you say can impact them hugely. And honestly, it isn't that hard to find something nice to say. You can start with superficial compliments, and eventually, you'll find that you have plenty of good things to tell even that annoying sibling to light up his/her life. 🌟





# STARDUST

BY SHIRA MOSKOWITZ



"I'M HOME!" I call out. I must have sounded more cheerful after school than I have in years, because as I walk into the den, little heads glance up to stare at me.

"Hi, Avigayil!" chirps Chaya Gitty, who's seven. She's working diligently on a twelve piece puzzle of a scarlet macaw. Chaya Gitty slides the parrot's head into place as my four-year-old brother barrels toward me.

"Gayil, Gayil, come look, we built a Magna-Tile tower!" Yitzchak Yaakov tugs at my uniform skirt while three-year-old Moishy grins proudly in the background.

"So nice!" I say.  
After taking a look at

his tower (which is leaning precariously towards the right), I dump my briefcase on the couch and head into the kitchen to look for a snack.

I find a pack of sesame pretzels and take a few. Just then, as I take a bite, a cyclone appears in the kitchen.

It's my seventh-grade sister, Aviva, whose wavy brown hair, which is thrown into a messy pony, is somehow wind-swept, even though she's been in her room for over an hour. She's just that kind of girl.

"Avigayil!" gasps Aviva dramatically. "I desperately need your help!"

"What?" I crunch a sesame pretzel.

"I cannot remember what 'affluent' means!" wails Aviva. "Mrs. Polchik is gonna kill me!"

I roll my eyes; Aviva can be a bit overdramatic. "It means rich."

"Thank you!" Aviva gushes and then she whirls out of the kitchen.

I take a few more pretzels and then run upstairs, feeling it call to me.

Flinging open the attic door, I bound up the stairs, taking two at a time. After shutting the door carefully, I reach under my bed and slide out a black, oblong case.

Placing it gently on my bed, I carefully remove the gleaming, chestnut violin. I stroke the beautiful instrument

cont next page



# UNABLE TO RESIST THE PULL, I THRUST MY HAND DEEP INSIDE MY NIGHT TABLE DRAWER AND YANK OUT A THICK NOTEBOOK WITH AN ORDINARY GRAY COVER

and then, after placing it perfectly under my chin, I take out my bow.

With relish, I slowly slide it across the strings. A high, beautiful sound emits and I shiver with delight.

I repeat the motion again, absently, as a new tune begins to form in my mind. I just can't get the opening sound... suddenly it strikes me.

Unable to resist the pull, I thrust my hand deep inside my night table drawer and yank out a thick notebook with an ordinary gray cover.

I flip the cover open and race through the pages of my compositions till I get to a new page. Grabbing a pencil, I begin to scribble down notes feverishly.

When I finish, I place

the notebook on my stand and take a deep breath.

Positioning the violin, I draw the bow across the strings. Beautiful music emerges and slowly, as I get into the piece, I move the bow faster until it is blurry with motion and I am flying, flying across the skies with my violin and the music... notes rising from the rapidly vibrating strings... nothing else matters...my bow is skimming, skipping across the strings... and the music is enveloping me until nothing is left...nothing...only the rainbow notes...

I come to the last measure and, savoring the feeling, I slide the bow across the strings with finality...slowing down...getting softer... and just at the end, I

yank the bow...and thus my piece ends.

I sit on my bed, breathless with the excitement. My mother will love this new piece...what should I name it?

I was never good with names...I frown. I'll think of a name later.

Just then, Aviva barges into my room. "Avigayil! You have to see what Moishy's doing!"

I follow her, where I see my little brother covered from head-to-toe in marshmallow fluff. My mother is shrieking in horror, while my siblings roar with laughter.

I join in, though for the first time, I wonder—what would this scene look like if I had a friend over?

**TO BE CONTINUED...**



**COURAGE IS NOT THE  
ABSENCE OF FEAR, BUT THE  
DECISION THAT SOMETHING  
ELSE IS MORE IMPORTANT**



Society is tyranny, what it rules we will become  
External trappings  
Are prisons of the mind  
Illusional whims  
Evolve into bars of steel

Society is tyranny, what it rules we will become

Blazing forces create  
Uncontrollable constraints  
Alluring magnetic fields  
Trap unknowing passerby

Society is tyranny, what it rules we will become

Radical deeds transform  
Into the “must” of norm  
Binding its victims  
With indomitable rusted chains

Society is tyranny, what it rules we will become

Rationality of today  
Is the alien of yesteryear  
Yet swathed in layers of satin  
To fool the eye

Society is tyranny, what is rules we will become

But bars of steel  
Can yet be bent  
With enough toil  
One can squeeze himself through

Society is tyranny, what it rules we will become

Victory from chains  
Locks smashed and stamped upon  
Their shattered fragments  
Now but shameful specks of dust

Society is tyranny, but I'll break through to freedom



# STEEL BARS

By Mushka  
Pinson



# Sprouting Dandelions

It's at the time when the dandelions silently shed their seeds  
And the soft-spoken wind woefully whistles its tune  
And the two-legged population so absorbed with their weeds  
While in the velvet sky curls a shy hint of moon

The watercolor gardens won't be seen for a while  
And I watch the squirrels seek shelter and furrow within  
When the inexplicable happens and my mouth meanders into a  
smile

And for some reason it widens, splits my ears with the grin

And I know I can't give logic to whatever's going on –  
Why my heart flutters into a scintillessent feathery song  
But I'll take it and I'll fly with it; this phenomenon  
I'll sprout a few more dandelions and hop right along

And if people's eyes read scorn or convey confused askance  
I'll beam to them more brilliantly, encompassing wide  
And to the tune of the wistful wind, continue my rapt dance  
Beckoning the whole two-legged population to join me inside

By Mushka Pinson



# CREDITS

## **We Guys In Charge (Editors In Chief)**

Batsheva Miriam Altose, Sara Kayla Singer

## **Hashkafic Mentor**

Mrs. Rochie Berkowitz

## **Authors**

Batsheva Miriam Altose, Leah Langsner, Shira Moskowitz, Mushka P.,  
Sara Kayla Singer

## **Techno-Savvy Entities**

Batsheva Miriam Altose, Shira Moskowitz, Sara Kayla Singer

## **Cover Credits**

Basya G.

## **Logos**

Peninah Adler, Devorah Fertel

