

our Community

Shavuos - May 2017

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF RUTH

A CONVERSATION WITH THREE REMARKABLE WOMEN WHO SHARED RIVETING GLIMPSSES INTO THEIR OWN CONVERSION JOURNEYS

- ▶ #EZPASSOVER
- ▶ TWO NEW RABBIS JOIN MONTREAL'S VAAD HARABANIM
- ▶ THE FRUITS OF ISRAEL
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COMPANY HIGHLIGHT ▶



GLEEDAZ



DISTRICT BAGELS



JCC Jewish Community Council of Montreal

Conseil de la Communauté Juive de Montréal

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friend,

When a Chassan and Kallah, a bride and groom get married the wedding date is set and the families and the couple start the countdown leading up to the wedding day. So too, with Klal Yisrael, the nation of Israel who commence the countdown the second night of Pesach which culminates with the Yom Tov of Shavuot. This is the day we have all been waiting for. The day when we became a true nation as we entered into the covenant of marriage between Hashem and ourselves. Hashem gave us the Torah at Har Sinai.

After all the trials and tribulations which we underwent we became an independent nation, and the Torah became the marriage contract between the one above and ourselves. Our obligation and desire is to keep all that is written in it and not waiver from that original commitment. Each year when we count the days of the Omer we reignite this commitment and reaffirm our bond.

It is incumbent upon each and every one of us to adhere to the Torah and all that is in it; everything pertaining to those commandments between Hashem and us and between us and our fellow human beings. The laws and Mitzvos in the Torah have not changed and do not change with time. It is those very Torah laws which we received and committed ourselves to at Sinai that kept us as Jewish nation and which keep us going. The Torah is eternal and so too are all of its laws.

We just need to recommit and ensure that the bond between the bride and groom is tight. We only do so by showing that we adhere to the marriage contract, the Torah. Thereby, we ensure that the marriage will last and our love remains strong.

Let's unite as a nation and give strength to one another by studying the Torah and learning all its laws. Let's educate the future generation as to what the Torah Hashem's nation is all about.

By doing this, we ensure true Continuity and an everlasting bond between Hashem, the Torah and ourselves.

*Wishing you a meaningful Yom Tov.
B'Hatzlacha.*

Rabbi Saul Emanuel
DIRECTOR

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 [instagram.com/canadakosher/](https://www.instagram.com/canadakosher/)

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WE ARE STRIVING TO SERVE YOU BETTER:

Should you have any suggestions, questions or ideas, or if you'd like to see an article written on a certain subject **email** kalmanemanuel@mk.ca

We'd Love to hear from you!





Gleedaz[®]

In January 2017, during the depths of winter, an experienced, savvy, passionate young woman took the reins of what was known as Sprinklz on Queen Mary and reopened the establishment under the name of Gleedaz.

JESSICA ASSARAF is no stranger to this location. She spent a few years as the right-hand person of the previous owner, Leah Dray. She knows every corner of the store and is familiar with all the products. So, when she found out the store was for sale, she realized that she would certainly be able to manage it and, at twenty-two years old, is now the new owner.

Jessica is of the millennial generation and looks for new, exciting and cutting edge ideas. The adage goes, if you seek something, most likely you will find it. This is exactly what happened to Jessica.

Of course, Gleedaz has soft frozen yogurt (fat-free, gluten-free and nut free), the staples of their business. Along with that, Jessica has introduced soft ice cream (Pareve, vegan and Cholov Israel), smaller containers and the oft requested cones for kids. Her menu doesn't end with these two products. She offers smoothies, crepes, Belgian waffles, lattes, cappuccino and milkshakes. The toppings are greatly improved as Jessica listened to what people were asking for.

Now hold on to your chair because Jessica found a product that is off the charts. It's called Rolled Ice Cream and it's nothing like you've ever seen or tasted. Ever!

On a freezing cold surface, liquid ice cream is mixed with the topping of your choice, such as crushed cookies or fruit. The

topping is then blended together quickly with the liquid ice cream. Because the surface is freezing cold, the mixture quickly turns to what appears to be dough but is in fact ice cream. It is smoothed until paper thin, then cut and rolled into large curls and placed in a cup. You can drizzle caramel or chocolate sauce over it and you are now holding what looks like a cup filled with cannolis.

Age is not a barrier to being an entrepreneur, which Jessica is. Gleedaz has already made its mark in the city at corporate offices and parties. Using their new, flashy and fun mobile bar, she can bring your event to another level. Schools, camps, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, sweet sixteens and birthday parties are all using Gleedaz. You can hire her to come to your event or make your party in the store.

Oh yes, what's with the name? Gleeda is Hebrew for ice cream. Jessica added the z at the end, ergo – Gleedaz.

You can reach Jessica at the store, 5328 Queen Mary, via email (Mygleedaz@gmail.com) or the old-fashioned way by phone 514-379-4379 or 438-889-3453. Store hours are Monday thru Thursday, 3:00 – 10:00 pm, Saturday night, one and a half hours after Shabbos and Sunday 1:00 – 10:00 pm.

Look out for the LED lights around the balcony that will be your guide to one of Montreal's best kosher establishments.



#EZPASSOVER

The creative minds at Canada's Kosher Certifier coined this year's theme #ezpassover, focusing on helping consumers across Canada keep Passover in a Kosher and simple way. Although Passover comes along each year, except for the Seders and Haggadah which don't change, everything else is up for grabs. Many products, from food to medicine, to lipsticks fluctuate and change from year to year. Enter Canada's Kosher Certifier and #ezpassover, the umbrella for this year's Passover experience.



PESACH IN A NUTSHELL

Pesach in a Nutshell was held on Sunday March 26th, exceeding all expectations in both the attendance and vast array of questions. Montreal's Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Binyomin Weiss, world-renowned for his expertise in medical issues responded to questions in his field; Rabbi Uri Deutsch explained the story of Passover; Rabbi Aryeh Posen dealt with Halacha; Rabbi Berel Bell deftly negotiated non-medicinal products; and Rabbi Yoel Chonon Wenger presided over the general 'Ask The Rabbi Your Passover Questions'.

THE PASSOVER MAGAZINE

The Passover magazine was truly innovative and cutting-edge due to its new, user-friendly size and vastly expanded lists. It was gratifying to receive positive feedback from every corner of the country.



CANADA'S PASSOVER HOTLINE

Canada's Passover hotline was buzzing until hours before the onset of the holiday. Over 4,000 questions were fielded from across Canada with an inordinate amount of calls from Toronto and its environs. As Canada's Passover Magazine is available online, it created an awareness of the MK's hands-on service and calls were answered from across North America and other continents.

FLIP HAGGADAH

This year, the MK & JCC launched the first-ever flip Haggadah. Created in memory of Lynn Eltes, A"H, the standing triangle style allowed Seder participants to flip the pages and follow along the Seder in English or Hebrew. Together with the Eltes family, the JCC believes that keeping children engrossed in the Seder is one of the links to Jewish continuity and were proud to be a part of this endeavor.



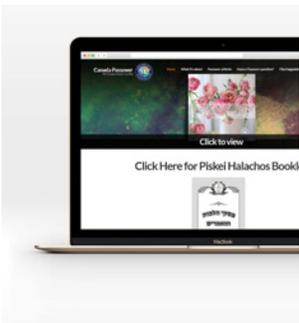
CANADA'S PASSOVER APP

Canada's Passover App, with its thousands of downloads kept consumers in the loop in our everchanging, fast-paced world. The all new #urpesachanswers responded to the most frequently asked Passover questions. It was constantly updated on both Facebook and Twitter, often preempting the questions of the MK's many, many followers.



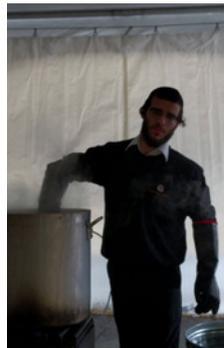
PASSOVER WEBSITE

Canadapassover.ca was designed for those who keep Passover and was spectacularly received, with greater numbers visiting the site. Many hundreds of Jews used the Mechiras Chometz services and sold their Chometz to a gentile through the MK.



KASHERING SERVICES

The Kashering services held in the MK Parking lot is always well attended. This year was no exception. Under the strict supervision of Rabbis, hundreds of Montrealers were able to cook and come to their Seder tables with clean, freshly Kashered utensils, pots, pans, silverware and anything else that could be Kashered. This is truly a community service done by a community-minded organization.



ON SITE

The MK dedicates hours for phone calls to 'Doctor-on-Site' and 'Pharmacist-on-Site'. Consistently knowledgeable doctors and pharmacists have, over the years, fielded hundreds of questions. This year, the MK was truly 'out there' with their #ezpassover concept, creating an energizing Passover awareness. The result? Many more people called with questions, truly grateful at receiving on the spot answers.



#ezpassover's focus was helping its valued consumers from one end of the globe to the other. It is the privilege of the MK to be able to bring Passover into thousands of homes, making the lives of communities globally less stressful. Next year in Jerusalem!

PICS OF THE MONTH



Rabbi Saul Emanuel answering tens of Kosher questions to hundreds of children at The Toronto Cheder.



Mr. Steinfeld answering a Pharmaceutical question at our "Pharmacist on Site" service.



Rabbi Uri Deutch & Rabbi Peretz Jaffe at this year's Koshering Service.

THE FRUIT OF ISRAEL

By Rabbi Uri Deutsch

The Yom Tov of Shavuos, in addition to its primary significance as the day of the giving of the Torah, is also associated, like the other Yomim Tovim of Pesach and Succos, with a particular phase in the agricultural cycle. Thus the Torah calls Shavuos the 'Chag Hakatzir', the festival of the harvest.

THE YOM TOV of Shavuos is referred to in the Torah as 'Yom HaBikkurim' the day of the first ripened produce, due to the fact that on Shavuos, an offering is brought from the new wheat harvest and 'Bikkurim', the first ripened produce of the 'Shivas Haminim', the seven species, begins to be brought to the Bais Hamikdash as a gift given to the Kohanim.

Furthermore, the Mishna tells us that on the Yom Tov of Shavuos we are judged as to how bountiful the fruit harvest of that year will be.

These associations of Shavuos with produce of the field, make the upcoming Yom Tov an opportune time to review and discuss the Halachos pertaining to produce from Eretz Yisroel.

This article will highlight certain Halachos (laws) associated with produce from Eretz Yisroel which are commonly overlooked or erroneously assumed to be of no concern.

In general, regarding all produce grown in Eretz Yisroel, it is important to note, that besides the requirement to take Trumos and Ma'asros (tithes), as will be discussed below, there may be other Halachic concerns which may prohibit their consumption entirely.

The first, which applies to tree fruit, is the prohibition of 'Orlah', which forbids any use of the first three years of a tree's production. There is a prevalent misconception, that since trees do not usually produce high quality fruit until they have matured, we need not be concerned with the possibility that the fruit may have come from such a young tree.

While this is correct in theory, in practice, many young trees are replanted once they are sturdy enough to grow

in an orchard. The replanting restarts the reckoning of the Orlah years, thus a five year old tree may only be in its second Orlah year.

The second, which applies to any produce, is the prohibition of fruit grown during the Shemitta year (sabbatical year). While the Shemitta year is only one out of every seven years (the last one was in 2015), fruit affected by the complex Halachos of Shemitta may be on sale up to two years after Shemitta.

It is therefore advisable not to assume that fruit from Eretz Yisroel can be eaten just as long as Trumos and Ma'asros have been taken. A Rav should be consulted to ensure that there are no other concerns which may apply.

As to Trumos and Ma'asros, it is commonly assumed that all produce exported from Eretz Yisroel has had Trumos and Ma'asros removed by the Rabbanut of Israel as they bear a responsibility for the Kashrus of all produce exports.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. The Rabbanut does not bear any such responsibility nor do the exporters make any claim as to the Halachic status of the produce they export. Thus, produce from Eretz Yisroel which does not have Rabbinic supervision regarding its Terumos and Ma'asros must be considered possible Tevel (produce that has not had tithes removed), not merely as Dema'i (produce acquired from someone who is suspect as to his observance of the laws of tithing).

Whereas detailed instructions on the procedure and laws of taking Trumos and Ma'asros (tithing) are beyond the scope of this article and will be addressed in a separate publication of the Jewish Community Council of Montreal dedicated to

this subject, there is a particular area of these laws which merits some clarification.

There are four tithes which must be separated from all produce, prior to use. However, while three of the four, namely, Truma, Ma'aser and Trumas Ma'aser, apply to all produce, the fourth tithe varies according to which year of the six-year Ma'aser cycle the produce is associated with.

The six-year Ma'aser cycle begins with the year following Shemitta. Thus, the first and second years following Shemitta require the tithe of Ma'aser Sheni be taken from the produce. The following year, the third of the Ma'aser cycle, Ma'aser Ani is taken. This sequence is repeated for years four and five (Ma'aser Sheni) and year six (Ma'aser Ani).

Ma'aser Sheni and Ma'aser Ani are entirely different from each other. Ma'aser Sheni, according to Torah law, has a certain sanctity and must be eaten, in a state of ritual purity, within the walls of the city Jerusalem. As we cannot achieve ritual purity nowadays, the sanctity of the produce is transferred to a coin, which must then be disposed of.

Ma'aser Ani however has no particular sanctity but is a gift given to an 'Ani', someone who is destitute. This can be done even nowadays and must be done if Ma'aser Ani is taken from produce which is certainly Tevel. Since, as stated above, produce that is bought is possible, but not certain, Tevel, the Ma'aser Ani may be kept.

The year in which the produce is bought is not sufficient to determine, by itself, which of the two tithes, Ma'aser Sheni or Ma'aser Ani, should be taken. This is because different forms of produce are associated with a particular Ma'aser year in different ways.

THERE ARE THREE BASIC WAYS IN WHICH THE MA'ASER YEAR OF PRODUCE IS DETERMINED:

- 1.** For tree fruit, the Ma'aser year begins on the Tu b'Shevat (the fifteenth of Shevat). Furthermore, the stage of growth which determines the fruits' Ma'aser year is when they begin to recognizably form on the branches, such that fruit that began to bud before Tu b'Shevat are associated with the prior Ma'aser year and vice versa.
- 2.** For grains and legumes, the Ma'aser year begins on Rosh Hashana (the first of Tishrei). However, the growth-stage that determines their association with a specific Ma'aser year is different to the above-mentioned stage of budding which applies to trees. In the case of grains and legumes, if they have reached a third of their full growth prior to Rosh Hashana they are associated with the previous Ma'aser year and vice versa.

3. Vegetables are a third category of produce and whereas their Ma'aser year begins on Rosh Hashana, like grains and legumes, the growth-stage which determines their Ma'aser-year association is different. In the case of vegetables, the Ma'aser year is determined by when they were harvested, thus vegetables harvested before Rosh Hashana are associated with the previous Ma'aser year and vice versa. If the correct Ma'aser has not been taken, the produce remains Tevel even in a case where we are in doubt as to which of the two tithes is necessary. Clearly therefore, we must incorporate both tithes in the procedure of taking Trumos and Ma'asros.

Seeing as the laws governing transfer of the sanctity of Ma'aser Sheni to a coin are complex, it is best to consult a Rav before beginning the tithing process. As mentioned, the Jewish Community Council of Montreal is preparing a printed guide to assist with this process and is also establishing a service which will enable the tithing of Ma'aser Sheni using coins in the possession of the JCC. It is hoped that this will encourage the scrupulous observance of these laws, in whose merit Klal Yisroel enjoys Divine beneficence.



RAV DEUTSCH & RAV WOSNER JOIN VAAD HARABBONIM OF MONTREAL

An exciting event recently took place at the offices of the JCC where two new Rabbis were inducted into the Vaad HaRabbonim, the JCC's Rabbinical Council.

Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Wosner, the son of the wellknown Skverer Dayan (judge in Montreal) Rav Yochanan Wosner, is known for his approach to assisting every member of the community, solving problems and showing much warmth to every individual. Having witnessed firsthand and having received experience at home, he's a perfect match for the Vaad HaRabbonim and will no doubt add much to the growing needs of the wider community.

Rabbi Uri Deutsch learned in Yeshivas Kol Torah, Israel and has fast become a household name through his many Shiurim that he gives across the entire city. He was also inducted and has already commenced work together with the other Rabbonim, in many different spheres. The needs of the Montreal community have grown over the past few years.

During the induction, Dayan Wosner, praised his son, mentioning that he worked and served for over 20 years together with the Vaad HaRabbonim. It is extremely important to have a fresh new group of Rabbis joining. He added that the services of the Vaad HaRabbonim and all its activities are pivotal to the success of Yiddishkeit and true Torah Judaism in Montreal.

Rabbi Weiss, the Av Beth Din and Chief Rabbi of Montreal praised those involved in bringing in these two new esteemed Rabbonim. Rabbi Weiss added, with the heavy workload there was a strong need for further assistance on the Vaad HaRabbonim. He had no doubt that both Rabbi Deutsch and Rabbi Wosner would be an extremely good fit and will greatly service the Montreal community.

The crowd was then treated to a short and welcoming note by Rabbi Deutsch and Rabbi Wosner and all present wished each other Mazel Tov on this great achievement.





> RUTH INSTITUTE

The Ruth Institute program run by the Jewish Community Council of Montreal has been in existence for over 40 years.

The process of conversion is never an easy one and a potential candidate needs the support and assistance from those who are taking them through the process. The Beth Din for Geirus of the Ruth Institute meets every Wednesday with those who are going through this process. In addition, classes are held every week both in French and in English, giving a foundation to the candidate in the process of Torah true Yiddishkeit and a perspective on Jewish life as a whole. It's no surprise that the Ruth Institute's reputation, both locally and internationally, is world renown. Universally accepted for their great standards and attention to detail, the Beth Din for Geirus consults with other Batei Din on a regular basis. The Chief Rabbinate of Israel endorses the program.

It's never a simple process and it's a process which requires total commitment. However, the journey once taken and with true and honest intent, is an enjoyable one and very satisfying. Many have passed through the doors of this program and today have beautiful families amongst the Jewish Nation, built on Torah true values. This is thanks to the efforts of those who lead this program and who have given a great foundation to future families of Klal Yisrael.



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF RUTH

By Faigie Becker

IN THE BOOK OF RUTH, we read about the Moabite princess who shunned a life of prestige and privilege to embrace a life of commitment to Hashem and Torah. Through her total devotion and sincerity, she merited becoming the ancestress of King David and the Messiah.

I recently had the pleasure of meeting three remarkable women who shared riveting glimpses into their own conversion journeys; journeys fuelled by a burning sense of purpose, enthusiasm, strength and determination. Sarah, Leah, and Shoshana converted through the Ruth Institute Conversion Program

(known as "The Vaad Program"). They each have individual backgrounds, discovered Judaism through different avenues and faced many challenges along the way. However a common thread is a clear sense of personal mission and responsibility, along with true love for G-d, Torah and Mitzvot.

> SARAH*

AN ENERGETIC, ARTICULATE TWENTY FOUR YEAR OLD, CONVERTED A FEW MONTHS AGO.

Prior to connecting to Judaism four years ago, she had no real exposure to Judaism.

Her father, a French Quebecer, grew up Catholic and somewhat connected to G-d, while her mother didn't believe in G-d. Sarah didn't attend church though she did attend a Catholic high school where an influential religion teacher led students towards Catholicism. After high school, Sarah's interest waned.

Sarah had a happy, smooth childhood. She wasn't searching for religion. Believing in G-d and knowing she was connected were enough. That changed when Sarah went through some personal life challenges. After coming through that period of darkness, she thought, "I didn't get through that alone. I felt so thankful, I needed an organized, structured way to give thanks to G-d."

Sarah tried going to church but realized she was forcing herself to embrace Christianity only because it was the norm. Giving herself permission to explore other religions, she read about Islam and also went through a Buddhist phase.

Her introduction to Judaism was through reading the Old Testament. Impressed by the intensity, she mentioned it to her religious Jewish friend. He told her, "There's so much more to it than you see." This concept drew Sarah in. "Behind every letter in the Torah there's an ocean. Every single word, every single dot, so much depth. There's no way this could be written by anyone other than G-d!"

When Sarah's friend invited her for Shabbat dinner, she was terrified. "Maybe I wouldn't wear the right

attire. At synagogue, people might look at me as though I don't know what I'm doing." Suddenly she started laughing. She realized that G-d knew she didn't know these things. And G-d is all that matters.

At prayer service, Sarah felt incredible joy. She had an epiphany. She thought, "This is it. This is what I've been looking for. I'm going to convert. I'm going to be Jewish."

Understandably, everyone in Sarah's life discouraged her from becoming Jewish. Sarah has always been sensitive to what other people thought of her. This was the first time she had ever been so certain about a decision, that she found the strength to stand up for what she believed in despite the lack of support.

Things were difficult with her family. Her mother was ok with the Jewish part but not the observance. It wasn't easy yet Sarah took it in stride. Over time, her parents became more comfortable. Finally, after years of struggles, after her conversion, they acknowledged how happy she seemed. This was a powerful moment for Sarah. "It was incredible to finally get to a place where they knew this choice was truly right for me."

Sarah works in a field where it's rare to encounter orthodox Jews. Although it's difficult to be religious at peak times, she's grateful her boss and colleagues have been understanding. She feels her place in this world is to bring Judaism and Mitzvot into the secular environment. "G-d put me here for a reason and I'm going to do my best to fulfill that responsibility."

On a recent business trip, Sarah was housed on the 26th floor. Every Shabbat she had to climb 26 flights of stairs. It became a running joke among her colleagues. They didn't understand it, but they respected her greatly. Another time, on a Friday

afternoon, her boss kept her on the phone until the last minute. She eventually had to hang up on him. She tried not to worry over Shabbat but it was difficult. After Shabbat, life went on. "That's when I realized this is going to be ok."

Sarah is thankful for where she is now. "It's the hardest yet the best thing I've ever done." She had expected a dramatic epiphany when she finally became Jewish. But coming out of the Mikveh, she sighed a deep sigh, feeling her soul finally settled and peaceful after four years of yearning to be Jewish.

Much of the Vaad Program revolves around learning the laws, Kashrus, Shabbos, etc. Though Sarah loved that, the program also provided tools for the internal work. She learned to consciously think from a Jewish perspective. "To me, that means being grateful to Hashem for everything that happens, recognizing and addressing the Yetzer Hara, she continued learning."

After her conversion, Sarah noticed an internal shift identifying the Yetzer Hara and actively bringing G-d into daily life. "In Christianity, the Evil Inclination means you're bad. Really it's trying to get you to remove the holiness." Sarah had come out of the Mikveh thinking she would be perfect. However, the next day she forgot a blessing, and later that week, her first Shabbat as a Jew, was running late for candlelighting. "That was perfect in a way, because I'm like everyone else and that's ok. It's about trying again each day and having a relationship with Hashem which is special, different and nurturing - and I have 613 ways to do so."



> LEAH*

AN AMBITIOUS, SPIRITUAL TWENTY ONE YEAR OLD, CONVERTED THREE YEARS AGO.

An only child, she was raised with a few Jewish traditions by her Moroccan Jewish father and her non-Jewish mother (whose father was Jewish). Totally secular and unaffiliated with any Jewish community or Shul, they fasted on Yom Kippur and had festive meals and family gatherings on Rosh Hashanah and Passover. Leah never went to Jewish school and barely had any Jewish contact. However, she always felt Jewish attachment and belonging.

At the age of fifteen, Leah was unhappy at high school. Though young, she felt a need to connect with her roots. Her mother convinced her to volunteer at the Jewish Community Center. It was there that Leah met and became friends with a Jewish Moroccan girl who attended a Jewish school. "She introduced me to the rules and traditions and brought me to an outreach weekend up north with a Rabbi from Israel and local Rabbis."

There were classes about Torah, science, the Messiah, End of Days - topics that fascinated Leah and moved her to the very core. She thought, "If this is Torah, I want it." Leah had always been very deep, truth-seeking, wondering why she was here, what was the purpose of life. Blown away by what she had discovered that weekend, Leah decided to convert.

Wanting an Orthodox conversion, Leah joined the Vaad Program. From there, things proceeded at lightning speed. "I made friends easily, Baruch Hashem. I met all kinds of people in the program, also families and Rabbis. I went to homes for Shabbat and Holidays. Orthodox people were so open to me and welcoming. I was amazed!"

With an unquenchable thirst for Torah knowledge and a desire to delve deep, Leah supplemented the weekly Vaad classes, reading and learning as much as she could.

Every week, she read the weekly Torah portion with all the commentaries. She learned and grew and took more things upon herself at an astounding rate. At the age of eighteen she became Jewish. "It's not normal—in three years I've evolved so much! It's all G-d."

Leah's biggest hurdle has been her family's reaction. Her father was initially surprised by her decision to convert, though he did encourage it. Becoming religious was a different story. "My Jewish relatives took it badly. They were shocked because nobody is religious. It was foreign. They're strong-minded Sefardis, so it wasn't soft. There was confrontation. It was not easy because I had no support making the transition."

Despite the challenges, Leah feels her family is proud of her. "They admire me because I'm studious, ambitious, organized. I have several projects. They're proud of the whole picture of who I am."

The internal process has also been difficult. "It was something I was in love with and striving to achieve, and I adjusted well, but three years later it's still hard. I'm still integrating the fact that I'm religious. The more actions we do, the more it gets into us. It's working, but it's a long process, not from one day to the next."

The whole process was a growth experience but the peak, the most beautiful day, was the Mikveh day. It was Rochel Imeinu's Yahrzeit, which held special meaning for Leah because her Jewish grandmother was named Rachel. "I felt I did some kind of Tikkun for her. It was an intense moment spiritually. Cheshvan is a spiritually empty month, we have to invest all the spirituality we can into it, and I feel like all my life is about that. I'm surrounded by a lot of Tumah and my mission is to reveal G-d's light."

Leah loves talking about Torah. "It's really my essence. One of my biggest dreams, the way I'll really grow and fulfill my potential is to teach Torah in a seminary one day. For me, that would be the biggest achievement."



> SHOSHANA*

A CONSCIENTIOUS, HUMBLE THIRTY SIX YEAR OLD, CONVERTED ALMOST THREE YEARS AGO.

Her French Canadian parents raised her with Catholic traditions and she was baptized, but it never felt important to her. She had religion classes in high school, but couldn't relate to the teachings.

As she grew older, Shoshana had some unpleasant experiences with people and began to lose faith in humanity. Spending time in nature was her ultimate joy. She wanted to learn about nature and share it with people. "Being in nature felt harmonious and peaceful and true and that's how I felt G-d was."

By the time she met Jeff, at age thirty, Shoshana was feeling a little lost. "I felt I was hitting a wall. There was no direction and I couldn't understand the meaning of life. Unfortunately a lot of people are lost because they don't have G-d, and it's scary. And that's how I felt."

Jeff, a descendant of Holocaust survivors, was a secular Jew with strong faith. It was ultimately Jeff's non-observant mother who drew Shoshana into discussions about Judaism that piqued Shoshana's curiosity. She joined the Vaad Program to discover Judaism and to see whether it would feel relevant to her. Making no promises, she told Jeff, "If it's not for me, we'll end this relationship because I want you to have Jewish children."

Shoshana connected to the classes instantly and wanted to become an orthodox Jewish woman. "They say a baby receives Torah in the womb and forgets it at birth, but it's still in you and it resonates. That's how I felt going through the Vaad Program."

As Shoshana advanced, adopting a religious lifestyle more and more, it wasn't easy on Jeff, who had never been observant. Shoshana was fully committed to the conversion process and eagerly anticipating the day she would become Jewish. She thought, "If Jeff isn't my Bashert, he'll leave and I'll find somebody who is right for me."

Jeff ended up slowly becoming religious. "He did amazing! He did it on his own merit and we grew together. It's still hard. We always have to get better and be as good as we can be. I ask Hashem that we continue growing, slowly. It has to be small steps in order to keep it."

Shoshana recounted the day she became Jewish. "When the Rabbi said the prayer with my Hebrew name for the first time, I felt an immense energy coming into my body. That was the moment. I said, I know I'm Jewish now. I really felt something special. I was so happy, so serene. Now life could start."

Being Jewish meant Shoshana could do Mitzvot and they would count. The first thing she wanted to do was to make a lot of blessings. She didn't normally eat bread during the week, but it was important for her to wash and say Birkat Hamazon.

Jeff was out of town that day. When he phoned later, she told him she was now Jewish and shared her Jewish name. After Jeff returned, he asked her to marry him. Shoshana and Jeff married and were soon blessed with a beautiful daughter. They hope to have a large family, G-d-willing.

Shoshana works in a predominantly French area where people aren't familiar with religious Jews. She believes Hashem put her there for a reason and consciously works on bringing more G-dliness to the secular world. She also tries

to demystify Judaism, to break misconceptions and prejudices, and to make a Kiddush Hashem. "Dressing modestly and covering my hair with a scarf reminds me I have a mission in the world. We're all obligated to be the best we can be. Being so visibly Jewish and knowing people are watching motivates me. I have to be a good Jew."

Shoshana's mother adjusted considerably well. Her father, who lives far away, had to overcome his initial shock at seeing the drastic change from one visit to the next. Shoshana's brother, who had harbored conflicted feelings about Jewish people since his youth, had the hardest time with it. "Shabbat and Kashrut are not easy. They don't understand why in the year 2017 we have these restrictions. We see it as a gift! The important thing is they really love my husband and see how happy we are. Overall they respect me and are happy because I'm happy."

Although Shoshana has tremendous inner strength, it's vitally important for her to stay in touch with a group of friends she refers to as sisters. These women converted at the same time and had children at the same time. They understand and support one another. "My sisters help me stay strong. We elevate ourselves and each other. My main ambition is my family life and growth as a Jewish woman. There are lots of challenges but I'm really happy. And that's my goal, to serve G-d with joy."

It's difficult not to be moved by these extraordinary Jewish converts who have voluntarily turned their lives upside-down to embrace Torah and Mitzvot. Let us be inspired by them and emulate their wholehearted dedication, enthusiasm and joy.





DISTRICT BAGEL

QUALITY & AMBITION

by A. Y. Stein

AT THE NEWLY RENOVATED District Bagel in Mont-Royal, ambition and creativity is always at the forefront of everything that the bakery strives to do. With just less than a year of operating experience under its belt, District Bagel has quickly become one of Montreal's largest suppliers in providing quality food and catering across the Montreal area. However, the success of Montreal's latest restaurant is not one that happened overnight, and yet while the road to District Bagel may have been a long-time coming, the seeds for its ambitious growth were planted many years before its very conception.

WHEN MONTREAL'S FORMER LANDMARK BAKERY, Mont-Royal Bagels went up for sale in 2015, it took less than twenty-four hours for the beloved bakery to find a new owner. Almost immediately, Sandwich Plus owner Shulem Greenwald recognized the potential of expanding the business that Mont-Royal had proudly built up and quickly jumped at the opportunity to bring his creative vision to provide the Montreal community with quality food and service. Ever since purchasing Sandwich Plus in 2016, Shulem Greenwald has been a major impact on the consumption and development of the Montreal Kosher food industry. Striving to deliver high quality sandwiches and catering to the Montreal Jewish community, Sandwich Plus, another proud subsidiary of Canada's Kosher Hasgacha grew to enormous

success. They are a proud provider of quality food to the Montreal Jewish community. Since joining the food industry, Shulem had a dream of taking his ambition even further, with a dream of one day opening his own full service café and bakery. While District Bagel was hardly yet a concept for Shulem, the seeds to his vision had finally been planted.

While Greenwald's vision of the future of his newly purchased business venture was full of originality and creativity, he wanted to ensure that the integrity of the beloved Mount-Royal bagel store was not forgotten. Therefore, while the bagel shop underwent changes to create a stylistic and contemporary, yet classic design, one thing that would remain important was keeping the talent of the original chef and the creative team that allowed Mont-Royal Bagels to become such a renowned part

of Montreal, and that was providing Montreal with quality, great-tasting bagels. For that reason, one of Shulem Greenwald's priorities was to ensure that District Bagel would continue to proudly provide the Montreal area with the same great tasting bagels that Mont-Royal Bagel's team had done for nearly a decade.

Along with their dedication to great food and service, District Bagel instantly transports its customers to a golden era of quick-service dining, offering a classic New York style dining experience, a first in Montreal Kosher dining. District Bagel doesn't stop its dedication to old-style perfection at its layout though. Behind the scenes, all of District Bagel's bagels and bread are baked in a classic wood oven without any gas or electricity, keeping their food fresh and resulting in great tasting bagels unlike any other in the Montreal area. Don't take our word for

it, District Bagel also gives customers the opportunity to take a peek behind the scenes and watch their order being baked and prepared, viewable from a large window that gives guests a look into District Bagel's unique kitchen. Blending classic dining experiences with newly designed innovation is one of the many things that District Bagel is proud to set itself apart from the competition.

District Bagel is full of variety, with over twenty different unique bagel options to choose from. Whether it be the ordinary sesame or all-dressed bagel, to the far more obscure flavors like chocolate, pumpkinnickel or jalapeno, there's no shortage of great variety and options for customers to choose from and experiment with. District Bagel also offers a wide selection of sandwich options to fill your bagel with, including cream cheese, spicy tuna, egg salad, avocado and lox, just to name a few. Beyond bagels, the restaurant serves everything from baked goods, wraps, soups, and salads, both available ready made or from a selection from their in-store salad bar. Early morning risers can get their day started on the right foot with the special breakfast menu, with options that include omelets, cheese omelets, coffee, and of course, the restaurant's very own signature bagel. Late risers will also be glad to hear that District Bagel's signature breakfast menu runs far beyond the early morning hours and into the early afternoon ending at 2 pm. For the coffee aficionados looking to start their day, worry not: District Bagel has a wide selection of coffees to give your morning a boost and start your day on the right foot. From cappuccinos to lattes and iced coffees or any of their six flavors of slush, you don't need to be a morning person to enjoy this delicious breakfast offering.

For those looking to bring the great tasting quality to their next event

or business meeting at an affordable price, District Bagel proudly offers a wide variety of catering options to suit your needs. Whether it be a business meeting for five or a Bar Mitzvah breakfast for five hundred, you can rest assured knowing that your event will remain convenient, cost-efficient, and of course, certified Kosher. District Bagel offers everything from platters, spreads, salads, wraps and more, to add flavor and variety to your next Simchah.

As a prominent figure in the Montreal food industry, District Bagel's distinct Montreal work certainly hasn't gone unnoticed by the local general public. The bakery has since been featured in major prominent Montreal news sources and outlets recognized for its work of being a proud provider of great-tasting bagels. In the past two years, District Bagel has been featured in the likes of CTV News, TVA News, the Journal de Montreal and their 24h subsidiary, as well as the Metro newspaper, marking it as one of the best bagel shops in Montreal, Kosher or otherwise. With such a proud influence on the entirety of Montreal, the only thing that both Anglophones and Francophones can certainly agree on, is that District Bagel has truly left its mark on the entire Montreal community at large.

District Bagel is based on a dedication to quality and a quick service cuisine experience that marks it as one of the first of its kind in the Montreal area. With its great tasting food, attention to detail and originality, the restaurant is proud to leave its powerful influence in Montreal's food consumption and changing the way that Montrealers eat. District Bagel began as an innovative dream, but if there's anything for certain, it's that you can taste their ambition and creativity in everything they do.





Canada's Slurpee & Slush Kosher List 2017

We are pleased to list below the Kosher flavors used in frozen carbonated beverages manufactured by Coca-Cola Canada which bears our certification.



Barq's Red Cream Soda
Barq's Root Beer
Coca-Cola
Fanta Banana
Fanta Banana Pineapple
Fanta Blackberry Lemonade
Fanta Blood Orange
Fanta Blue Raspberry
Fanta Blueberry Lemonade
Fanta Cherry Limeade
Fanta Cranberry
Fanta Dragonfruit
Fanta Grape
Fanta Light Mango Passionfruit
Fanta Lime Vanilla
Fanta Mango Melon
Fanta Orange
Fanta Orange Lime

Fanta Pomegranate Passionfruit
Fanta Sensation Berry
Fanta Sour Apple
Fanta Sour Green Apple Watermelon
Fanta Strawberry Citrus
Fanta Super Sour Cherry
Fanta Watermelon
Fanta Watermelon Grapefruit Mint
Fanta Watermelon Lime
Fanta White Peach
Fanta Yumberry Blackcurrant
Fanta Yumberry Cherry
Fanta Yuzu Berry Punch
Minute Maid Orange
Powerade Ice Berry Blitz
Powerade Twisted Blackberry
Powerade Watermelon Strawberry

Slush Puppie

Bubble Gum Flavour
Cherry Flavour
Grape Flavour
Kiwi-Strawberry Flavour
Lemonade
Lime Flavour

Orange Flavour
Punch Flavour
Raspberry Flavour
Shocker
Strawberry Flavour
Watermelon Flavour



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