

## A Time to Reflect

The month of Kislev is a study in contradiction. On the one hand, it is the time of year wherein the darkness of winter envelopes us, perhaps leaving us a bit low-spirited and gloomy, while on the other hand, in Kislev we celebrate Chanukah, festival of light and all of the clarity and warmth it represents. What is the message of this contrast, what are we to learn from these divergent aspects of Kislev?

Chazal teach us that the very essence of the Bayis Sheini (the Second Temple), was an exercise in training for the lengthy galus (exile) that commenced upon its destruction. Klal Yisroel knew from the start that the Second Temple was destined for ruin, and their return from the Babylonian exile (after the destruction of the First Temple) was merely an opportunity to gain the skills they would need to survive the extended exile, of two millennium, that we find ourselves in today.

The Medrash tells us that the central tool we were given to endure our dark, bitter exile, was the unique dimension and wisdom of the Torah Sh'baal Peh, the Oral Tradition of Torah. While Torah Sh'biksav, the Written Tradition, is generally forthright and easily understood, the Oral Tradition is difficult (to say the least) and requires much effort and exertion to arrive its true meaning.

This G-d given 'gift' to survive our dark galus seems perplexing. Why would Hashem give us the most difficult parts of Torah to help us endure our trying times? Wouldn't it make more sense to give us something easier, for comfort and meaning, while we suffer the sharp pangs of exile?

The Medrash continues to clarify, enlightening us with a timely notion. It says that in regard to those who labor in Torah Sh'baal Peh the pasuk writes:

העם ההולכים בחושך המה ראו אור גדול,

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“Those who (brave to) walk in darkness end up seeing the greatest light”. In order to survive our painful exile, it would not suffice the light of the written Torah, for while its light is great, it doesn’t match the extreme light of Torah Sh’baal Peh – because the light that emerges from within the darkness is much more profound and enlightening. It is only the hidden light, revealed through challenge and toil, that can truly guide and comfort us in the darkness of galus.

The darkness and the light of Chodesh Kislev are not contradictory. They compliment one another in the deepest of ways. It is only through our rising to the challenge of darkness that we achieve the lights of Chanukah. Indeed, only our trek through our own darkness, collective and personal as well, reveals to us the light, our light, the light of our souls. A light concealed, yet most potent and everlasting.

Happy Kislev and a Feilichin Chanukah!

*Rabbi Gruskin*

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# Preparing for Winter

Winter often brings unexpected weather and for many, the shorter days can lead to vitamin D deficiency, increasing chances of developing seasonal depression. The good news is that the Parkinson’s Foundation Ohio Chapter has gathered these tips to help people with Parkinson’s disease (PD) and their caregivers ensure that PD-related needs are accounted for this winter.

## Falls Prevention

Parkinson’s can affect mobility, memory and thinking skills. People with PD may experience tripping or “freezing” episodes that can lead to falls. Add snow and ice to the equation and winter can be an especially dangerous time.

### To stay safe this winter:

- ✓ Wear shoes with good traction and non-skid soles.
- ✓ Take off shoes as soon as you return home. Snow and ice attach to soles and as they melt lead to slippery conditions inside.
- ✓ Shovel the path to your door, garage and mailbox to clear them of leaves, snow or ice. If possible, ask someone to shovel for you.
- ✓ Be realistic and ask for help walking outside when you need it. Don’t let pride lead to a fall!
- ✓ Use salt before or immediately after a storm to melt icy sidewalks and steps. If you don’t have salt, cover the ice with something gritty or non-slippery (like sand or cat litter).
- ✓ Replace a worn cane tip to make walking easier.
- ✓ Allow yourself plenty of time to get where you need to go in winter weather. Taking your time reduces your risk of falling, especially if you use an assistive walking device.



# Seasonal Depression

With depression as a common PD symptom, people with Parkinson's should be conscious of their increased susceptibility to seasonal depression, which can be brought on by the cold and grey or the potential isolation of the winter months. Take these precautions:

- ✓ Ask family and friends to check in on you, either by stopping by or planning a regular phone call.
- ✓ Bring up seasonal depression concerns with your doctor. An adjustment to antidepressant medication dosages may be beneficial.
- ✓ Continue your exercise routine. Fight the natural tendency to exercise less in winter months. If the weather keeps you indoors try a new YouTube Exercise video.
- ✓ Open all blinds or curtains to allow as much natural light into your home as possible.
- ✓ Try something new. Visit a new coffee shop, read a new book, try a new support group or exercise class.
- ✓ Keep up with your routine and social activities even if you don't feel like it.

## Preparing for Electrical Outages or Being Snowed In

Harsh winter conditions can lead to electrical shortages and unpredictable interruptions. The best time to prepare for a winter storm is now. Follow these tips:

- ✓ Write down or print a full list of your medications (not just PD medications). Include medication name, strength, times taken and dosages. This customizable medication schedule can help.
- ✓ Stock your Aware in Care kit in the event you need to educate an emergency responder or health care professional about your PD needs. Order one at [www.awareincare.com](http://www.awareincare.com).
- ✓ Make a list of your doctors. Be sure to include contact information and take it with you if you need to evacuate your home.
- ✓ Purchase extra water and food. In the event of a big storm, calculate five gallons of water per person per day and buy enough food to last three to five days. Remember to factor in that some medications require they be taken with a meal and water.
- ✓ The stress of possibly losing power can make anyone anxious, but stress can worsen PD symptoms. Try to relax by reading a book by candlelight or practicing deep breathing.

Annie Wallis, MSW, LSW, is the Program Manager at the Parkinson's Foundation Ohio Chapter, where she leads their support, education and community granting programs. As a licensed Social Worker, she is passionate about making sure that Ohioans with PD and their loved ones have all the support and tools they need to live well with Parkinson's.



# Monsey Caregivers' Event

The success of the caregivers event in Lakewood\Toms River and the feedback we received prompted us to consider branching out and replicating the event elsewhere. On August 29th the caregivers of Monsey were treated to a beautiful buffet lunch, while Mrs. Elizabeth Kurtz presented a pre-yom tov cooking demo; a timely presentation for those emboldened to try new recipes. We were honored to have Rebbetzin Geldzhaler tell of our Emunah and Bitachon in Hashem's ability to change anything in a moment. Also, attendees were presented with a choice of gifts to enhance their Yom Tov. The gifts were sponsored in part by Walterdale Collection. Much thanks to the Lichtstein family for hosting the affair.





# The Run

October 10th, 2021, was a cloudy day with rain forecasted, yet hundreds of people showed up at Rockland Lake to run together and show support for Power Up 5 for Parkinson's disease. There was a fun carnival for juniors and adults, as well as bike races around the 3.4 mile lake. There were gifts galore, including sweatshirts, towels, baseball hats, water bottles, t-shirts etc. All were treated to a delicious barbecue, including hot dogs and hamburgers with all the fixings, French Fries, sodas etc. One of the bikers, 11-year-old Yoni Nisenbaum, a 6th grader in Yeshiva of Spring Valley, described the run as "fun, exciting but hard". It took him 30 minutes to complete the race. He raised \$305.00 for Power Up 5 for Parkinson's disease and said that he would definitely 'do it again'. He won a prize of a drone. Power Up 5 for Parkinson's disease is a worthy organization that, among other things, provides financial help for those with Parkinson's disease to obtain Physical Therapy.



# Raintree Parlor Meeting

Our annual Lakewood Parlor meeting took place on October 10th 2021. The awareness the event raised is portrayed in the letter sent to us by an attendee.



Dear Rabbi Gruskin,

Thank you for the beautiful and memorable Sparks of Life event this year in Raintree. I am still on a high from such an inspiring evening.

The energy and excitement was palpable. Everyone there was so giving and happy to show support to a worthy cause. The food and ambience was superb, thanks to the host, Yehudah Miller and Mimi's Events.

Rabbi Celnik's words were unforgettable. He told of the pain of someone suffering from Parkinson's and how your work makes such a huge difference in their lives. He then charged the clam to help Sparks of Life because H-shem sends us opportunities to do chessed so we ourselves can grow from them.

A grateful Raintree resident

## EVERYONE HAS A STORY IN LIFE

A 24 year old boy seeing out from the train's window shouted...

"Dad, look the trees are going behind!"

Dad smiled and a young couple sitting nearby, looked at the 24 year old's childish behavior with pity, suddenly he again exclaimed...

"Dad, look the clouds are running with us!"

The couple couldn't resist and said to the old man...

"Why don't you take your son to a good doctor?" The old man smiled and said..."I did and we are just coming from the hospital, my son was blind from birth, he just got his eyes today."

Every single person on the planet has a story. Don't judge people before you truly know them.

The truth might surprise you.



## SHAKE OFF YOUR PROBLEMS

A man's favorite donkey falls into a deep precipice. He can't pull it out no matter how hard he tries. He therefore decides to bury it alive.

Soil is poured onto the donkey from above. The donkey feels the load, shakes it off, and steps on it. More soil is poured.

It shakes it off and steps up. The more the load was poured, the higher it rose. By noon, the donkey was grazing in green pastures.

After much shaking off (of problems) And stepping up (learning from them), One will graze in GREEN PASTURES.

## CRUMPLED, YET VALUABLE

A popular speaker started off a seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. A crowd of 200 had gathered to hear him speak.

He asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?"

200 hands went up.

He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you but first, let me do this." He crumpled the bill up.

He then asked, "Who still wants it?" All 200 hands were still raised.

"Well," he replied, "What if I do this?" Then he dropped the bill on the ground and stomped on it with his shoes. He picked it up, and showed it to the crowd. The bill was all crumpled and dirty.

"Now who still wants it?"

All the hands still went up.

"My friends, I have just showed you a very important lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20. Many times in our lives, life crumples us and grinds us into the dirt. We make bad decisions or deal with poor circumstances. We feel worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value. You are special - Don't ever forget it!

## DBS Event

LifeSpark's recent DBS event was extremely informative. Sponsored by Abbott Pharmaceutical, Dr. Elana Clar spoke of DBS eligibility, described the actual procedure in regards to safety, length of time, recuperation period, etc, and held real-live patient testimonials, in which one could view the difference of pre and post-surgery effects on the patients gait and posture. Dr. Clar answered numerous questions from attendees, and kept the info clear and concise.

Due to patient confidentiality, LifeSpark was not permitted to record the zoom webinar. Based on demand, we may host another such zoom event, so please e-mail [info@lifesparkpd.com](mailto:info@lifesparkpd.com) to request.

DBS or Deep Brain Stimulation is a safe and effective 2-step surgical procedure in which thin electrodes are implanted into parts of the brain that control movement. The electrodes deliver tiny electrical pulses to these brain regions. This allows the brain to maintain normal movement activity with a lower dose of levodopa. This portion of the procedure is an in-patient procedure, of which Dr. Clar has never seen any adverse effects.

The second part of the procedure entails electrodes being connected by a wire to a pulse generator that is implanted under the skin in the chest. The electrodes and the wire are also under the skin, so that no part is visible externally. This is a simple outpatient procedure.

The device can even be controlled wirelessly from the doctor's office, without the need for an in-person visit.

Based on Dr. Clar's advice, DBS should be discussed approximately 4 years after initial diagnosis. Patients should not wait until the severity of the disease takes over, before contemplating the procedure. DBS is not a cure for Parkinson's, but it may help control motor symptoms while allowing a reduction in levodopa dose. This can help reduce dyskinesias and reduce "off" time.

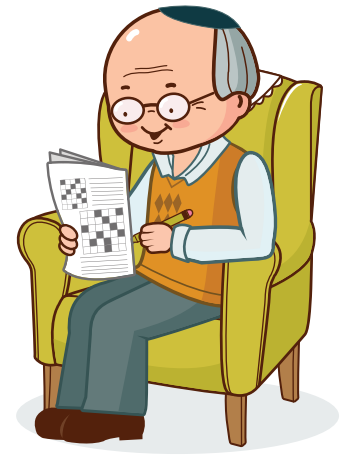
Dr. Clar clarified that the best levodopa response before DBS is a good indicator of the best response after DBS.

Also, please note that if a symptom does not respond to levodopa, it is not likely to respond to DBS. For additional information on DBS, please reach out to our office at 732.534.6388 or [info@lifesparkpd.com](mailto:info@lifesparkpd.com), where we can forward some literature on the subject.

# PUZZLE TIME

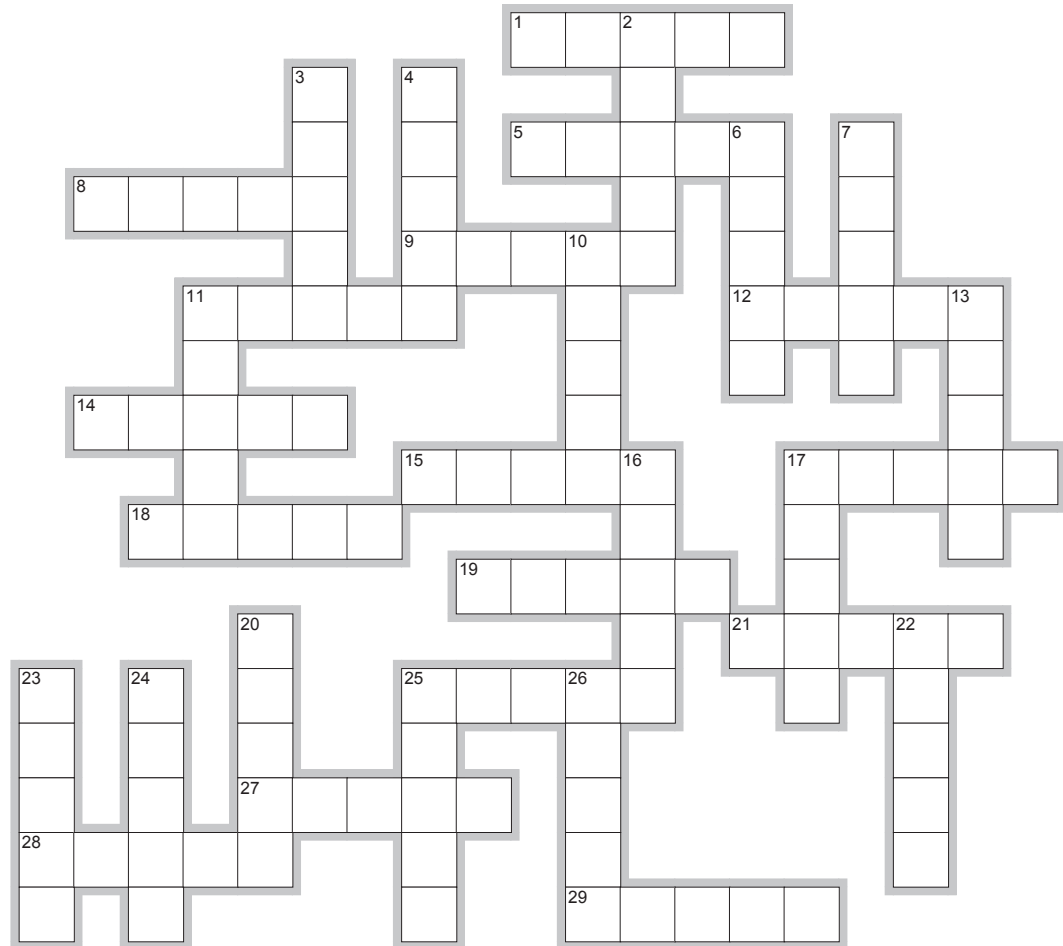
## 5-Letter Anagram Crossword

In this challenging, fun crossword puzzle, you must find the correct anagram for each five-letter clue. Some clues have more than one anagram, so you will need to work back and forth between the clues and the puzzle to find answers that fit. Be sure to use a pencil!



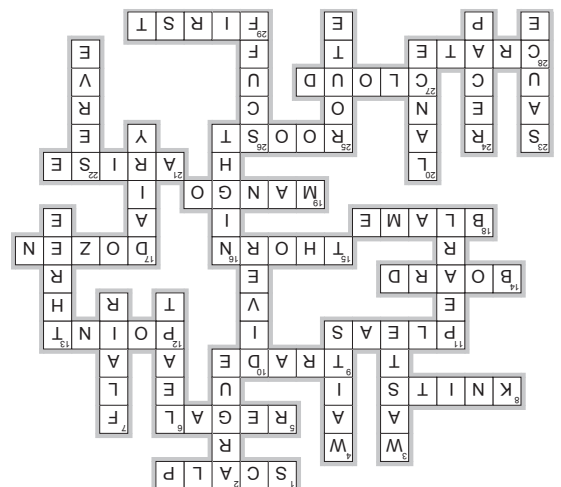
### Across

1. clasp
5. large
8. stink
9. tread
11. lapse
12. pinto
14. broad
15. north
17. zoned
18. amble
19. among
21. raise
25. torso
27. could
28. react
29. rifts



### Down

- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| 2. auger  | 17. diary |
| 3. sweat  | 20. clean |
| 4. waist  | 22. verse |
| 6. petal  | 23. cause |
| 7. frail  | 24. caper |
| 10. drive | 25. outer |
| 11. paler | 26. cuffs |
| 13. there |           |
| 16. thing |           |



# ONE STEP AT A TIME...

A cliché, a phrase or opinion that seems overused and worn out. Yet, for the Parkinson's patient it is a reality.

Almost 30 years have gone by from the first time that I accompanied my father, Rav Yaakov Celnik z'l, to a neurologist. We had gone to see "The Best, the Top in the Field", Dr. Melvin Yahr at Mt. Sinai in NYC. Dr. Yahr was the man that transformed L-dopa into the most common treatment for PD patients and helped devise the Hoehn-Yahr scale which breaks Parkinson's into 5 stages of progression. That day it was not Dr. Yahr that impressed me but my father sitting right next to me. I remember the Doctor asking "So, Dr. Celnik, as a graduate of Columbia University and M.I.T, as an accomplished nuclear physicist, what is it about this illness that effects your life most"? Without skipping a beat my father responded that at times he feels weak after a multi-hour session of intense Talmud study. I can still hear the chuckle as Yahr said "Surely you can't be serious" and my father once again declared... "more serious than you will ever know".

YES, Parkinson's caused a deterioration of dopamine cells in my father's brain, but it also fortified and intensified the resolve and determination in his heart and soul. There were many steps over the years. The experimental drugs, a "Double-Blind" study which included transplanting brain cells (ultimately placebo), to an eventual DBS (Deep Brain Stimulation) implant while being followed by Dr. Stanley Fahn at Columbia. The treatments may have changed but the courage and willpower remained steadfast.

I have clear and vivid memories of my father standing, frozen and rigid, not able to move. He would shut his eyes tight and then it would happen. A slight shuffle to the right and a small step to the left and then he would grab my hand and say LETS GO! And we were on our way. When I think about those moments I wonder if he was holding my arm for balance or was it I holding his hand learning how to face adversity and the challenges of life.

In Parshas Lech Lecha, Hashem tells Avraham Avinu to step outside and count the stars. He then benched Avraham with "*Ko Yeheya Zaracha*". Rav Meir Shapiro z'tl explains that it says "*Vayomer*" twice in the Posuk, to teach us that Avraham actually began counting the stars. Although an impossible task, waiving the white flag to surrender in defeat is never an option. This Rav Shapiro explains that this is the bracha given to our people: A nation blessed with unwavering perseverance.

YES, when we see a Parkinson's patient we see a weakened body, but we look beyond that. We see a remarkably strong human being. We see tenacity and valor.

If you are reading this newsletter I imagine that you may have PD or possibly a caregiver.

To you I say "YOU ARE A HERO".



## THE ELEPHANT ROPE

As a man was passing the elephants, he suddenly stopped, confused by the fact that these huge creatures were being held by only a small rope tied to their front leg. No chains, no cages. It was obvious that the elephants could, at anytime, break away from their bonds but for some reason, they did not.

He saw a trainer nearby and asked why these animals just stood there and made no attempt to get away. "Well," trainer said, "when they are very young and much smaller we use the same size rope to tie them and, at that age, it's enough to hold them. As they grow up, they are conditioned to believe they cannot break away. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free."

The man was amazed. These animals could at any time break free from their bonds but because they believed they couldn't, they were stuck right where they were.

Like the elephants, how many of us go through life hanging onto a belief that we cannot do something, simply because we failed at it once before?

Failure is part of learning; we should never give up the struggle in life.





## Recent Events

Read about an unforgettable event for caregivers.  
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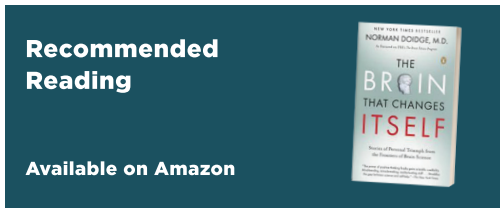


## Winter

Stay safe and cozy all winter through.  
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## One Step at a Time

You are a Hero!  
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*Stay Tuned!*

Look out for  
upcoming information  
about our

**BROOKLYN WOMEN'S EVENT**