

Sixth Annual Temech Conference for Women a Smashing Success

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Temech's conference is billed as "a game-changing day of learning, networking and fun for entrepreneurs and self-employed women," and as a newly self-employed woman I'm all ears!

The conference is well-organized, and I wait on line just a few minutes before watching my name tag print. I listen to the background buzz of bantering and greetings around me as approximately 700 women catch up with old friends and meet new ones.

Our first speaker is Rabbi Dovid Kaplan, who forces us to think and makes us laugh, sometimes simultaneously. "Be careful with your speech," he advises. "What a person talks about tells you what's important to him, while *lashon hara* and improper speech can deprive a person of revenue."

Next up is mayor of Jerusalem Nir Barkat. "I was an entrepreneur before I became mayor," he says, "and I would like to help young business owners and other elements for the economic growth of the city." He tells us about his plans for a new business center near the entrance to the city, with towers and offices and more, and I think of the words of Rabi Yochanan in *Shemos Rabbah* that "*asidah Yerushalayim le'asos metropolin l'chol haaratzos* — Yerushalayim is destined to become a metropolis for all the lands."

The mayor is impressed with us, too:



MK Rabbi Moshe Gafni speaks at the Sixth Annual Temech Conference for Women in Business in Jerusalem's Ramada hotel on Monday.

"It's possible to live in Jerusalem 50 years and not understand what's going on here until coming to the Temech conference and seeing what's really happening." Nice, right?

Fittingly, master storyteller Rabbi Nachman Seltzer discusses storytelling — the theme of this year's conference. "The Torah teaches us through stories," he explains. "Storytelling is very powerful, and stories of our forefathers teach us how to act." He gives two pieces of advice, illustrated by stories in *Tanach*: 1. Bring inspiration down to *l'maaseh*. "When you have an idea, make it happen!" and 2. When we take action, Hashem helps —

but we have to take that first step.

Argh, my netbook crashes! I head to the back of the room and someone sends me to Bryna Lee Jacobson of MyTechTutor. Thanks, Bryna! She just donated her expertise gratis to a stranger who needed help.

I step out into the lobby for a breather and look at the products and services on offer: artisanal soaps, business loans, travel insurance, Tiltan campus courses, business consulting services, kosher smartphones ... and then buttonhole Shandy Babad, CEO of Temech. "How special it is to be part of this, all these women coming together," she says. "It's

said that if two people exchange apples, each walks away with one apple. But when two people exchange ideas, they both continue on with two ideas. Temech's goal today is to get people together and network, in addition to getting skills and tips. This gives each of us so much more."

I breathe in the atmosphere, noncompetitive and building, as I type on my now-working netbook and nod in appreciation.

I buy a few books from speaker Chaim Walder to thank my kids for cooperating on this day out, and head to lunch. Later, I hear from business consultant Eli Shine ("Your business is a crucible for personal growth") and Rabbi Issamar Ginzberg ("When your product is excellent and in demand, you can charge accordingly").

I don't know how Temech managed it, but in addition to these speakers and more, we hear from Rabbi Aryeh Deri, the new economy minister, who speaks about the importance of *chareidi* women in the workplace, and asks that any women who are being underpaid due to their gender please email his office. MK Rabbi Moshe Gafni, the new head of the Finance Committee, mentions that we need to work on reversing the discrimination now found. "I see a lot of will and ability here," he says. "Now we just need to make things possible."

The day draws to a close. I learned a lot and even had fun. I'm very grateful — and eager to put it all into practice!

Around Israel



Rav Abuchatzaira at a community *Chumash seudah*. The Rav plays an integral part in the education of every *talmid*.



Rav Abuchatzaira flanked by his sons. The Rav's grandfather, the Baba Sali, expected him to know the entire *davening* by heart by the age of nine, yet wanted him to *daven* every single word from the *siddur*.

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didn't only mean guarding all our limbs; he also demanded pure thoughts during our Torah and *tefillah*. We understood from him that there is no such thing as learning Torah without *kedushah* and *taharah*."

Sadly, tragedy struck again when Rav Yekutiel was doubly orphaned with the *petirah* of his father Rav Meir on Chol Hamoed Pesach 5743/1983, and the Baba Sali, the next year, on 4 Shevat.

A Community Evolves

After the Rav's marriage to his cousin Mazal — a granddaughter of Rav Yitzchak Abuchatzaira, known as the Baba Chaki, *zy"ta*, a brother of the Baba Sali — the young couple settled in Ashdod.

It wasn't long before a group of followers gathered around Rav Yekutiel, mostly

disciples of his father Rav Meir, who saw Rav Yekutiel as their Rav's successor.

"I used to go to Rav David in Nahariya," says Rav Yachin Halevy, "until he told me to *mekasher* with his younger brother, Rav Yekutiel. Interestingly, of all the children, Rav Yekutiel is most similar in appearance to Rav Meir."

Finally, around 20 years ago, the *kehilla* was officially founded, made up of *avreichim bnei Torah* and *baalei batim* who were followers of Rav Meir, as well as a handful of *baalei teshuvah*.

The Rav has hours for the public twice a week, on Tuesday and Motzoei Shabbos, in his room on the side of the *beis medrash*. But in an emergency, he can be reached at home.

The Rav also has *talmidim* abroad. Aside from a large community in France, he has groups of *talmidim* in Belgium, Mexico, New York and Morocco, and has

traveled to these *kehillos* to be *mechazek* them.

What is it that attracts so many people to the Rav?

Rav Yachin gives the matter thought, and offers several answers.

"He is a *poel yeshuos*, and his *tefillos* tear the Heavens. In addition, his warm character is overflowing with *ahavas Yisrael*, and the Rav's advice, due to his intelligence and deep understanding, has proved to be the best solution to any problem.

"That is why many secular Jews also flock to him."

The Rav usually *davens* in his *beis medrash* below his home in Rova Hei, although he often goes to the shul of his *avreichim* in Rova Zayin.

The community revolves around the Rav. The decision-makers are the Rav, his sons and sons-in-law, and the *gabba'im*.

"The community members are ready to jump into fire and water for their Rav," says Y.L.

"The Rav is involved in every detail of the family," says Rabbi Halevy. "We don't do a single thing without asking him, and we listen to everything he tells us."

But while the community numbers just several hundred families, the number of Jews flocking to the Rav from all spheres of Judaism reaches the tens of thousands.

"Before Harav Ovadia Yosef, *zt"l*, was *niftar*, he told Aryeh Deri that he should consult with Rav Yekutiel concerning Ashdod," says Rabbi Halevy. "Deri is a frequent visitor here, as are many other MKs — from Rabbi Yaakov Litzman to Yisrael Beiteinu's Avigdor Lieberman."

Next Week: Demanding Mesirus Nefesh