

WHISK: WHAT TO COOK WHEN YOU DON'T WANT TO COOK

AmiLiving

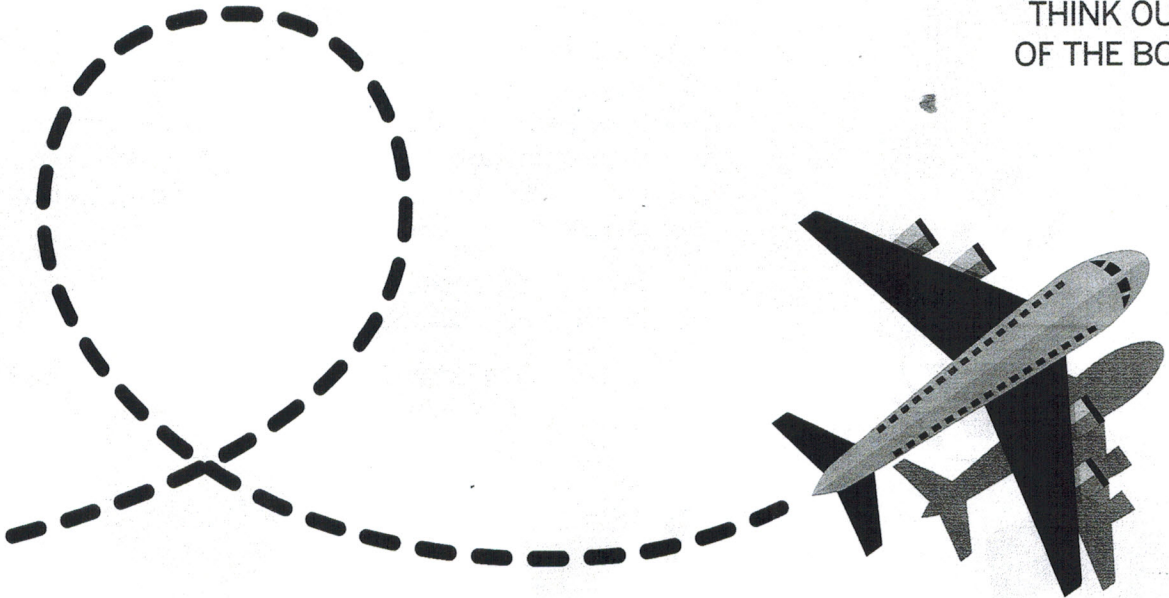
JUNE 21, 2017 / 27 SIVAN 5777 ISSUE 323

**A CURE
FOR
CANCER?**

WOMEN MAY
HAVE THE
ANSWER

**IS BUBBY
JEWISH?**

MY DAUGHTER
WANTED
ANSWERS



**RUTHIE
PEARLMAN**
THINK OUT
OF THE BOX

Making Mileage Into Mitzvos

Malky Kaufman's revolutionary idea



>>> **REBBETZIN FEIGE TWERSKI** DOES ADVERSITY BUILD YOU? >>> **RABBANIT YEMIMA MIZRACHI** THE TRAP OF RESENTMENT >>> **BYTES** A NEW WAY TO SAVE YOUR MEMORIES >>> **OUR DAYS** SOMETHING WAS MISSING >>> **A SHALOM BAYIS** SOLUTION

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I recently received a phone call from a young lady in England. As the editor of a school publication, she wished to conduct an interview with me to learn the ins and out of publishing a magazine. One of the questions she asked was who, out of all the people we've ever featured, inspired me the most. I explained to her that it would be hard to point to a single person, as one of the perks of my job is that I encounter many inspirational people on a daily basis. Some inspire me with their *chesed*, others by the way they conduct their lives, and still others by how their rise above their challenges. I consider it a privilege to then share their stories with you. What I did tell this young girl was that I particularly love sharing stories of ordinary people who do extraordinary work that impacts positively on the lives of many.

In this week's issue we bring you one such account, that of Malky Kaufman, a young mother who came up with an idea about how to help a friend with a sick family member. Realizing that she was onto something, she then took this idea and catapulted it into an organization that helps greatly reduce the anxiety of families in such situations. Part of my intention in sharing stories like these is to inspire young girls, like the one who called me, for the greater good, and to make them realize that every one of them can be a Malky Kaufman!

Sheva Schapira's "Clean Bill" this week, "Got Milk?" is fascinating on many levels, not the least of which is how truly amazing the human body that Hashem created is. To give you some perspective, did you know that the average adult's body is composed of approximately seven octillion atoms? By contrast, there are only a "measly" 300 billion stars in our galaxy. And how about this: Our bodies produce 25 million new cells each second. This means that every 13 seconds we produce more cells than there are people in the United States. Sheva's article is particularly intriguing because it allows us a glimpse into how Hashem has created inside our bodies the potential cure for illnesses that can destroy them—yet another example of how He prepares the *refuah* before the *makkah*. May Hashem quickly bestow upon the world the knowledge of how to fully harness these cures.

Many articles in this magazine touch upon the subject of home. "Home, Sweet Home" is a song written almost 200 years ago that was so popular in America that 100,000 copies of its sheet music were sold when it first came out! These are its lyrics:

Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
Which seek thro' the world, is ne'er met elsewhere.
Home! Home!
Sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home
There's no place like home!

An exile from home splendor dazzles in vain
Oh, give me my lowly thatched cottage again.
The birds singing gaily that came at my call
And gave me the peace of mind dearer than all.
Home, home, sweet, sweet home
There's no place like home, there's no place like home.

Despite the passage of time, this song still speaks to us. That's because home is more than just where we live; it's a place of family, love and support, a haven in which we feel secure. Even as adults we ache for that special oasis. As Miriam Abraham writes in "The Sounds and Smells of Home," there are two kinds of homes: the one you grew up in and the one you make for yourself, and that place of peace begins with peace in your heart. Ruthie Pearlman's story, "Swallows," gives us insight into one way to achieve that.

Here's to a happy, healthy and peaceful home!

Rechy Frankfurter
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Women to Know

LIVES: Kiryas Joel, NY

AGE: 33

CHILDREN: 6

DAYTIME OCCUPATION:
Kanfei Chaim (milesfor-
life.org)

Malky Kaufman

“I am constantly awed by how much chesed I witness on a daily basis.”
—Malky Kaufman

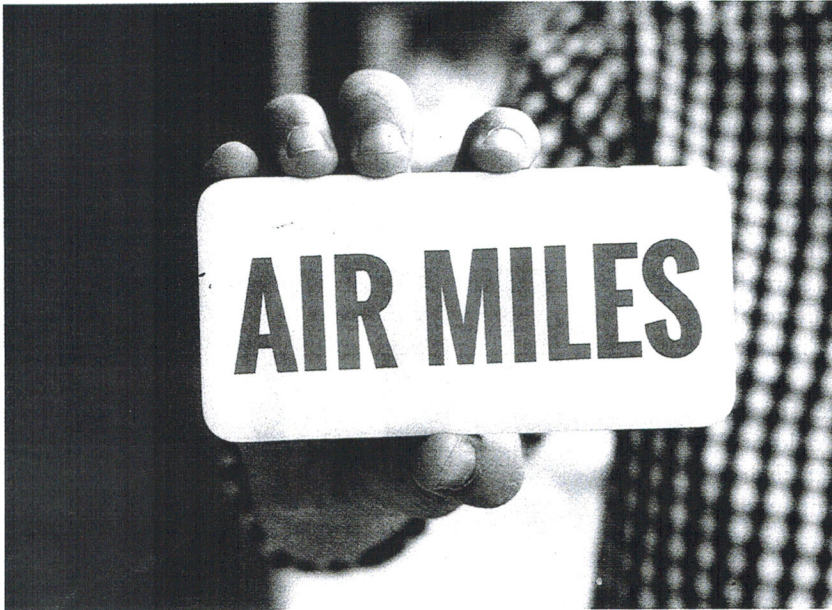
Two years ago, Malky Kaufman, then a young mother of four daughters, had a rewarding career as a home-buyer consultant, helping people improve their credit in order to increase their chances of obtaining a mortgage. So she was already quite busy when she was approached by a family friend whose father was seriously ill and needed to fly to Cleveland for treatment, along with several family members. Would Malky be able to help arrange the flights?

Malky recalls, “Thanks to my experience working with credit cards and large companies, I knew how the system worked and was computer-savvy. I agreed to find flights for this desperate family. Their budget was \$2,000 and they needed six tickets. But when

I checked the prices, I saw that this amount was woefully inadequate. Then it occurred to me to use airline miles. I’d already accumulated some miles from various credit cards, and I collected the rest from family members. We pooled our points and booked the tickets.”

Then, just a day before the surgery, the man’s condition deteriorated and the surgery was suddenly canceled. “The tickets weren’t used, but they didn’t get wasted either. Had they been ordinary tickets, the family would have lost a lot of money, but since they were purchased with miles, we were able to cancel them. A month later the surgery was rescheduled, and we used the same miles again.”

It was then that Malky made the decision to help others in similar situations.



“The father thought he was helping a random person when in fact he was helping his very own child!”

I had a family to take care of,” she says. So she eventually rented an office and hired an assistant—and then another and another. (Their salaries are paid by private donors.) Today, Miles for Life maintains two offices, one in Monroe and the other in Williamsburg, both of which are staffed until 10 p.m., when commercial airlines’ business offices close for the night. (Of course, Malky has a private cell phone, which rings constantly.)

She tells me that Miles for Life has always run on pure miracles. But the greatest miracle of all is that this large-scale operation runs solely on donated miles, with no cash involved!

It was a Sunday afternoon on the 30th of the month, when airline points often expire. Although the office is officially closed on Sundays, Malky Kaufman decided to stop in to check on some urgent cases.

The answering machine was full of messages, including several from the same person. Mrs. Sharon Friedman* from Flatbush was desperate to speak to someone about her miles, which were about to expire. “Please call me back as soon as you can!” she said rapidly into the phone. “It’s a shame to let them go to waste when there are so many people in need.”

Malky returned the call right away.

“I have 12,500 miles that expire tomorrow morning,” Mrs. Friedman explained. “I read about your organization a while ago, and I knew that this was something I wanted to do. As soon as I got the letter from United Airlines on Friday, I called your office. You need to use these miles today!”

Malky quickly logged in to the woman’s account and realized that Mrs. Friedman was mistaken; the miles would expire at the end of the following month, thus giving them another four weeks to find a “customer.”

“I told Mrs. Friedman the good news and reassured her that we would find someone. Then I put the information into our database with a notation that the miles were expiring soon.”

What happened next seems like a fairy tale, but every detail is true.

“The next morning the phone rang. It was an RCCS employee informing me that she was calling on behalf of a family coming in from Israel. The young man was scheduled to be treated at the Mayo Clinic and would be calling me for help. A few minutes later I got a call from Eretz Yisrael from a *yungerman* who identified himself as Motty Freedman* and asked if I could

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"I realized that we were on to something. I contacted RCCS [Rofeh Cholim Cancer Society] and asked them if they had any patients who needed to book flights and wanted to use mileage points, and the response was overwhelming. The phone calls started coming and haven't stopped since. Nowadays we get referrals from Chai Lifeline, Refuah Helpline and the Lakewood Bikur Cholim, among other organizations."

What Malky proposed was a simple "*shadchan*" service. Those who needed to fly domestically for medical treatment would be paired up with people who had mileage and wanted to donate their points. The donors would "arrange" the trip on their accounts, and Malky would take care of the logistics—all without charging a dime.

One satisfied "client" referred the next, and soon the demand was so great that Malky realized it was time to establish a formal organization. She and her husband, who is Miles for Life's executive director, spoke to a lawyer and set up an official nonprofit. They also established a relationship with Isaac Lieder, the CEO of VitalOne, a private air transport service for seriously ill patients, which sometimes provides a paramedic to accompany a patient who cannot travel alone. In turn, Malky's team sometimes refers patients to VitalOne who are too ill to fly on a commercial airline.

Malky began on a relatively small scale, placing ads in local papers, asking people if they had extra miles to donate. Another ad offered to help find miles for patients who needed them. The couple was inundated with responses. "Within months we were busy around the clock booking flights," says Malky. "I decided to devote myself to this full time because the need was so great."

Over the past two years she has arranged thousands of flights. Based in a small office in Kiryas Joel, her organization helps people all over the country. There are also patients who come to the United States from Eretz Yisrael and need to travel to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, or to the Cleveland Clinic for treatments. Malky helps them find mileage for all their domestic travel.

Naturally, there are certain requirements that must be met. The situation has to be a true medical emergency, and it has to involve a recognized medical center. The organization does not fund trips for alternative or holistic treatments.

"It's actually pretty straightforward," Malky explains. "I verify the time and date of the appointment and record it in our custom-made database. The trip is then sponsored by the donor, not by me. Every donor sees how his or her miles are spent; there's 100 percent transparency. But if the patient prefers to remain anonymous, the miles are placed in a separate account to preserve confidentiality."

Soon the calls became so overwhelming that Malky couldn't handle the volume of calls. "There are only 24 hours in a day and

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with transportation to and from airports and finding hotels, it does not cover these extra costs—but the hope is that it will do so in the future.

Malky explains, “Families facing the challenges of life-threatening illness are stretched to the limit financially, emotionally and physically. The additional monetary burden of purchasing airline tickets is just too much. Yet how in the world can anyone deny a loved one lifesaving care solely because money is tight?”

“The impact you create by donating your miles is profound. For example, by donating as few as 7,500 British Airway, Chase or Amex miles, you are actually providing a patient with a one-way trip to Cleveland, Ohio, where the world-renowned Cleveland Clinic is located. That’s why donating miles is such a powerful way to help the sick.”

How does Malky keep finding new donors?

She admits that it’s not always simple since the need for miles far exceeds the supply. Many patients awaiting transplants need constant flights back and forth for family members. But she is blown away by the sheer generosity of some people. There are even several repeat donors who consistently give away all of their hard-earned mileage.

What happens if there aren’t enough miles to meet the demand?

“Sometimes, if there is not enough mileage available, I’ll offer a travel voucher that is good for a certain amount, and the family will pay the rest,” she says. “Other times I have miles that can’t be used. But most of the time, with a lot of *siyata diShmaya*, we somehow make it work.”

How soon after they are donated are the miles used?

“It depends on when they expire. Usually, if there is no activity on a credit-card account for 18 months, that’s the end of the miles. If someone gives us points that expire in a few days,

we use those first. But most of the time we try to use them in a way that maximizes their value, so that not a single point is wasted. It’s like putting together a puzzle.”

Malky prefers British Airways or Delta because they’re easier to work with; American Airlines charges a \$75 booking fee and gives less value. Still, she never knows how things are going to work out, as is evident in the following story.

“One day, a woman called with a huge number of miles from American Airlines that were about to expire. I told her I’d put them in my database and see if I could use them. ‘If it was *bashert* for you to call us, then there must be someone who needs your miles,’ I said. And in fact, just a short time later we got a call from the family of a heart transplant patient. They had booked flights on American Airlines and needed additional points for other family members. I called the woman back and told her that her points would be used the very next day!

“I see this time and again. Whenever a patient or his family needs airline points, Hashem puts the idea in someone’s head to make that phone call.”

Malky relates that her own babies, a set of twin boys, were born after a blessing given by a prominent Rebbe whose *gabbai* had received assistance from the organization. “The *gabbai* was very grateful to us and offered to ask his Rebbe for a *brachah*. So when I mentioned that I had only daughters, he wrote it in the *kvittel*. Ten months later we were blessed with twin boys.

“I am constantly awed by how much *chesed* I witness on a daily basis. Anyone with an account and over 10,000 points can sponsor a flight for someone in need. All you have to do is call us or go to our website to start the process.” ■

*Names have been changed.

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