

SHIVITI

Be'er Sheva 15, Jerusalem, Israel

Remarkable Souls:

Meet a Shiviti Student - Abigail Hirsch of Montreal

I will be forever grateful for having had the privilege to be part of the first class of Shiviti, in 2018, learning with mostly female teachers of the highest calibre, five mornings a week for several months. My previous formal Jewish education had stopped at Talmud Torah elementary afternoon school in Montreal. As an adult, I had participated in lots of synagogue lectures and classes, but here was an opportunity to learn how to study Chumash, the structure of prayer, the deeper meaning of Halachah, biblical Hebrew, the role of Aggadah, Jewish history, and even understanding zemirot.

I received the foundation I had been missing, a structure for further learning and the classes together opened a vista on Jewish depths that was a total revelation. Another class that Yehudis taught was "the way of the teacher." At the time, I did not think that this would be very relevant to me, but as Yehudis would say, "It's not enough to learn. One has to teach, as well." During this pandemic, I have begun to see how my time at Shviti has influenced how I perceive the world.

I am a filmmaker and writer and have reorganized my blogs under the title, "A Jewish Lens." I have started a newsletter for my [website](#) and invite you to [read](#) and [subscribe](#) and share your own insights. Looking forward to continuing this very special opportunity to learn with all of you on zoom and, of course, in person when time allows.

Yehudis adds: *"Full disclosure. When Abigail first approached me and asked if she could join us in our learning at Shiviti as a full time student, we were just starting out and our age cohort skewed mid-to-late-twenties. Abigail was at a very different stage of her life, and I had to make a decision about admitting her to the program. I remember going for a walk near Machaneh Yehudah with her and hearing her deep desire to learn, and her sense that had she only had the opportunity to pursue Torah study when she was younger it would have made a very big difference to her in her life. How could I say no? And I have since felt that the broad spectrum of ages, stages, backgrounds, and experience that our women bring to their learning is one of the most chein-dik elements of Shiviti. I see our learning together not only as an immersion in Torah, but as a celebration of our Jewish womanhood, sisters learning and growing together, across all boundaries. Ashreinu, mah tov chelkeinu!"*