

# INSIDE SCOOP

## INFORMAL SURVEY OF TEENS AND MOMS

Conducted by Menucha Ceitlin

**L**et's face it. Teenagers. We're complicated. Energetic, spontaneous, emotional, passionate? Yes, yes, yes. This stage of young adult is kind of strange. We're incredibly energetic but somehow still want to sleep All. The. Time. We're spontaneous but feel unsettled without routine. We're passionate but sometimes we don't even know what we're yelling ourselves blue in the face about. That's because we're still figuring it out, we're becoming friends with the person we are and discovering our personalities, likes and dislikes, responses and needs. Life is a learning experience and we're just getting to the most important lessons. Get to know us:



## What is the hardest mitzvah for you to do and why?

*Davening*, because it takes sitting down and putting everything else aside and that's when thoughts come rushing.

(*Rochel, 15, Crown Heights*)

I would say *tznius* is probably one of the hardest *mitzvos* for me to do. Although I don't consider myself to be on the lowest level, I definitely have work to do in this area. In the sense of clothing, I find it difficult to not wear something that has a "slight" problem with it when I think it looks so good.

(*Chaya, 16, Florida*)

It's *hachnasas orchim*, because it's so hard for me to give to others what is "mine," or what my parents paid for with their own money. It's giving without getting anything in return, which seems unfair. I worry if I give too much there will be none left for me. Guests can also be inconsiderate or messy, and I can't help but let it get on my nerves.

(*Raizy, 18, NY*)

*Kibud av v'eim*. I'm super sweet and nice to my peers, teachers, and friends, but for some reason when I talk to my parents, a really *chutzpadik* side of me comes out and I don't like it. Sometimes I feel like I can't help it.

(*Chavi, 17, California*)

*Lashon hara*. Because everyone around me says it and it brings up "good" conversations (I wouldn't necessarily call them good, but interesting).

(*Chana, 15, Canada*)

*Ahavas Yisroel/lashon hara*. *Baruch Hashem*, it's not so hard for me to do most *mitzvos*, since I do feel a strong connection with Hashem, but when it comes to other people, it's very easy for me to get caught up with externalities, and to forget how

everyone is truly a part of Hashem. As much as I try to remind myself, most of the time I slip and judge others and get annoyed if I don't like the way that they are treating me.

(*Chana, 15, NY*)

*Ahavas Yisroel* because I am an introvert and I don't always enjoy doing the right thing people-wise.

(*Chaya, 18, LA*)

*Davening* and not speaking *lashon hara*. It's hard for me to really focus on talking to Hashem while I'm also reading prescribed Hebrew words. Also it's difficult to set aside time during your day if it's not already in your routine. However, I have found that times like *Shema Koleinu* in *Shemoneh Esrei* and that minute after you light candles when your eyes are still covered are really helpful and personal.

(*Fraida, 19, Australia*)

*Tznius* because it's not just about something you do or don't do, it fully represents who you are and your confidence. Also, I find that certain *tznius* norms have become a little blurred so it's easy to just say "it's fine" for clothes that aren't fully *tzniusdik* since "everyone" is wearing it.

(*Chana, 14, Chicago*)

*Davening* 45%

*Tznius* 12.5 %

*Ahavas Yisroel/Lashon Hara* 20%

*Kibud Av V'aim* 12.5 %

*Other* 12.5%

## Do you feel your parents understand you? Why or why not?

Yes, mostly, over the years they've gotten to know me better, definitely, through many DMCs and phone conversations.

(*Hadassah, 17, California*)

Not always. But that's okay because they are from a different generation and have gone through different challenges.

(*Rochel, 15, Crown Heights*)

They really, really try and I appreciate it.

(*Shaina, 14, Minnesota*)

Yes, I feel like they really allow me the open space to talk and be listened to without judging. and of course giving so much awesome advice and love in the process.

(*Sheina, 18, Crown Heights*)

They took the time, they put in the effort and they still do—to do their best to understand me.

(*Sara, 15, Brooklyn*)

I do feel my parents understand me. Especially my mother. My mother is someone I go to when I need to speak about something that is bothering me, when I need to have an honest conversation, or when I need a hug. I feel my mother understands me based on how she responds to whatever I speak to her about.

(*Chaya, 16, Florida*)

No. I sometimes make decisions (not bad/harmful ones) which my parents don't support. They then try to push me to go against my decision, and just don't understand my thought process, or why I'm deciding to do this. I can explain it but they still won't get it. They also don't know the pressure that is put on us in all areas (school, socially, grades, etc.) and don't understand that the reason we do some things is just to meet the expected standard. When that happens it's aggravating. We also try to be perfect children, but our parents never seem to think we're good enough and don't understand how hard we're trying.

(*Esti, 16, NY*)

Yes, *baruch Hashem*, both my parents are

really amazing and I feel like I can talk to them openly but I know that's not the case for everyone. The reason why I feel comfortable is because they don't get mad at me right away if I do something not necessarily good. They talk to me and walk me through it. I don't feel like I have to put up a defense. But this wasn't always the case. I only started feeling this way a few years ago.

(Chana, 15, Canada)

Mostly. I have a strong connection with my parents and I really admire and respect their opinions, because I think they understand me most. But for certain small things I don't think they fully understand me because they are older than me and it's something they never experienced at my age.

(Chana, 19, NY)

I would probably have a different answer for every year of high school but today I would say that they definitely try their best to understand me although there will always be a disconnect because of the generation difference but that's just how it is.

(Rivka, 19, Pennsylvania)

Yes 54%

No 12.5%

Sometimes 25%

## AND THEN, MOTHERS WERE ASKED: Do you feel you understand your teenage daughter(s)?

My teenage daughter thinks I'm too old to understand her.

(Bina, 59, NY)

Sometimes I feel like a teenager myself. Hahaha!

(Devorah Leah, 45, Florida)

I was a very different teenager 30 years ago. I can't relate to so much angst. Though I try to understand and support.

(Faigy, 46, California)

Sometimes teenagers are a mystery.

(Goldy, 52, New Jersey)

Understanding them doesn't mean they make sense or that their perspective is rational.

(Chava, 35, Crown Heights)

## Mothers, what is your favorite mitzvah and why?

My favorite *mitzvah* is helping my children. It's hard for me to see them work so hard and I love doing whatever I can to make their lives easier.

(Dini, 63, Montreal)

I would say my favorite *mitzvah* is making *brachos* before food. For me it gives me a minute to take a breath and know that I'm here for a greater purpose.

(Sara, 35, Chicago)

I love the *mitzvah* of *tznius*, because it properly protects the dignity of a woman.

(Rochel, 44, NY)

I'd say dropping a coin in the *pushka* every day. I don't know if I'd call it a favorite but it's a priority every day.

(Chani, 46, Cleveland)

I'd probably say *tzedakah*. It's the most meaningful and you don't need to give a lot to get the *mitzvah*. There are so many *segulos* and *schar* you get for giving *tzedakah*.

(Nechama, 52, Boro Park)

That's a question that makes me think. I would say *hachnasas orchim* is one that I like. It's tiring but I feel the hard work is what makes the *mitzvah* important.

I'll say *bikur cholim* as well, because it makes others happy and feel that they matter.

(Chaya, 48, New Haven)

My favorite *mitzvah* is definitely *davening*. I've always loved it and feel like I can't leave my house without *davening*. I don't know how much Hashem needs the connection with me but I definitely need the connection with Him. It just grounds me and helps me face my day.

(Devorah Leah, 34, Crown Heights)

*Mikvah*. It's not the easiest but it's something I treasure because of what it brings out of me.

(Miriam, 37, NYC)

For sure, *challah*. It makes me feel like a *balabusta*.

(Rivka, 51, Florida)

## Teens, what is your favorite mitzvah and why?

My favorite *mitzvah* is Shabbos because it helps me focus on what's truly important and connect to Hashem.

(Chava, 16, Crown Heights)

I love learning Torah because it helps me stay motivated and inspired and it keeps my brain stimulated.

(Esti, 17, Detroit)

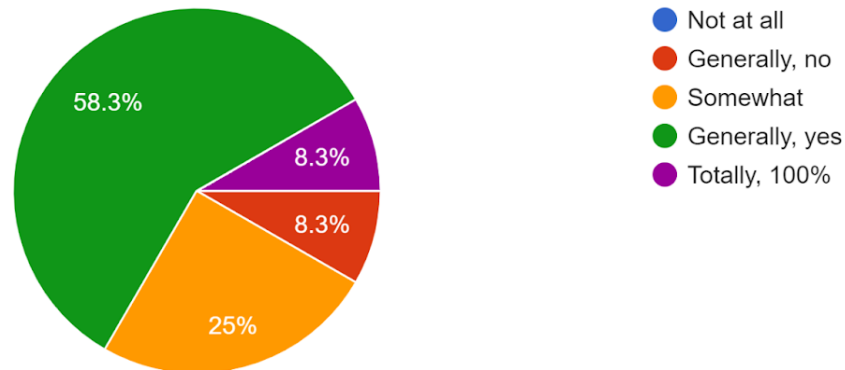
The *mitzvah* of Shabbos is one of my favorites, and lighting candles is the most beautiful part to me; bringing light into my home, reflecting on my week and talking to Hashem.

(Hindy, 16, Arizona)

My favorite *mitzvah* is Shabbos, I love that Hashem gave us a day away from our phones to focus on Him and our family.

(Miriam, 15, Florida)

## Do you feel like you understand/understood your teenage daughter/s?



SHABBOS!! I love that feeling right after I uncover my eyes after I light. I can literally feel the difference between Shabbos and weekdays in myself, and all around my house. The vibe completely changes, from pre-Shabbos chaos to complete calm, as if I've been suddenly transported to a special universe made just for me.

*(Brocha, 16, West Bloomfield)*

My favorite *mitzvah* is *davening* because it's not something that's necessarily easy to do but when you realize how it affects you, it means so much more.

*(Rochee, 18, San Jose)*

I'd say my favorite is *ahavas Yisroel*. I feel like it really encompasses why I was created.

*(Leah, 17, Dallas)*

The *mitzvah* that resonates most with me is giving *tzedakah/maaser* because you never know how many people you can help with it, and it also feels good to do it.

*(Nechama, 17, San Diego)*

Challah because I like making challah and then I get a *mitzvah* for it!

*(Chaya, 18, San Antonio)*

Saying *Krias Shema* at night. It gives me a chance to think things over and reconnect after the whole crazy day.

*(Mushka, 17, Massachusetts)*

I love doing *chessed*. I love helping people and it really can make a person's day even when we do the smallest things.

*(Chani, 16, Hawaii)*

*Modeh Ani* is my favorite *mitzvah* because it reminds me that each day is a fresh start. No matter what happened yesterday, Hashem gives us back our *neshamah*, offering us a new chance to live, grow, and appreciate the gift of life.

*(Leba, 16, Philadelphia)*

My favorite *mitzvah* is *derech erez*. Because in school it is extremely hard to be respectful to teachers, especially to those who you feel aren't so good, but I still try.

*(Mussie, 16, Tel Aviv)*

Lighting Shabbos candles. It's my favorite *mitzvah* because Hashem entrusted the women with the responsibility and privilege of lighting up the world.

*(Rivka, 16, Phoenix)*

The *mitzvah* of Shabbos candles deeply

resonates with me. After a long week of tests and schoolwork, and Friday's rush to get everything done and light on time, I get this magical moment to light a candle and make the *brachah*. As soon as I light, I feel like a holiness brought a new energy into me. It's a time I treasure, to *daven* for Moshiach and all my needs.

*(Baila, 16, Houston)*

I love doing *mitvza'im* and giving out *neshek*. I used to visit my grandmother *a"h* in Israel in the summer and go with her to old-age homes and give out *neshek* and Shabbos treats to the elderly. I miss her dearly and think of her every time I do *mitvza neshek* in her honor. May her memory be blessed and may her *neshamah* have an *aliyah*.

*(Devorah, 16, Chicago)*

When you *bentch licht*, you can ask Hashem anything and everything. (Sounds like *davening*, but some people, me included, have a hard time *davening*. Lighting candles is different.)

*(Chana, 16, Los Angeles)*

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