

## Teshuvah

A process that, in its ultimate form, empowers us to not only transcend our failings but to also redeem them: to literally travel back in time and redefine the essential nature of a past deed, transforming it from evil to good. Teshuvah is fueled by the utter dejection experienced by one who wakes to the realization that they have destroyed all that is beautiful and sacred in their life; by the pain of one who has cut themselves off from the source of life and well-being; by the alienation felt by one who finds themselves without cause or reason to live. Teshuvah is a person's amazing ability to translate these feeling of pain, worthlessness, and alienation into the drive for rediscovery and renewal. [chabad.org](http://chabad.org)



## The Tasks of Healing

Tikvat Rachel offers these healing steps to Jews who recognize the need to deal with past abortion:

### **Remembering the Pain and Injury**

Sharing repressed feelings in a supportive, safe environment of Jews who have had the same experience.

### **Spiritual Issues of Guilt and Forgiveness**

Learning that guilt and regret have a spiritual basis and that HaShem grants unconditional forgiveness and restores spiritual integrity to all Jews.

**Identifying and Releasing the Anger** Peace of soul is restored when the anger is gone, and life becomes hopeful again.

### **Grieving the Loss**

The need to grieve a pregnancy loss, even a loss due to abortion, completes the process of healing

**Helping Others** Ongoing recovery options include supportive discussion in a private chat room and sharing your experience with new participants.

## The Hope of Forgiveness

We have learned that there is nothing in the world that stands in the way of G-d accepting repentance. Furthermore, everyone who returns to G-d is certainly received in good favor by the Holy One Blessed be He. And if they return, they are summoned to the Path of Life.

## The Promise Of Renewal

The guilt and shame after abortion don't have to last a lifetime. A safe place to share breaks the painful isolation. Connecting with Jewish people who understand the burden of regret begins a new life. A renewed and happy heart are possible once again.

## Getting Started

Contact us today to get started on your path to a better way of living. We offer special healing opportunities several times a year on a Sunday afternoon in our private zoom room. To learn more and to register, contact our facilitator at [BarbaraBeth54@protonmail.com](mailto:BarbaraBeth54@protonmail.com) or call her at 347-566-7898. We look forward to meeting you.



Since 2006 we've been seeking to save Jewish lives by promoting alternatives to abortion in the Jewish community. We provide education about the viability, development, and sanctity of unborn life, as well as traditional Jewish law regarding abortion. We inspire Jews to welcome unborn Jewish children into the inclusive movement of modern Jewish life and religion. We provide adoption and pregnancy care referrals. We teach our community about the harmful effects of abortion, and provide support to Jewish women and men who suffer after abortion.



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## Tikvat Rachel

**A post abortion healing pathway  
for Jewish men and women**



## **"Rachel's Hope For All Her Children, Both Born And Unborn."**

Tikvat Rachel offers a healing pathway for Jews who seek a confidential, safe, accepting, and Jewish program to address the deeply personal issues that arise after abortion. We honor and encourage the healing journey of every post abortive Jew, young or old, male or female, religious or secular.

We base the program on the spiritual concept of Teshuvah and its promise of healing in Judaism. For the post abortive Jew, Teshuvah provides relief from the pain, sadness, grief, loneliness and confusion after abortion.

These feelings go unexpressed in our social, family, temple, and professional circles due to the fear of being ostracized or judged. This isolates us on a personal level and leads to mental, emotional, and behavioral problems that get worse over time. Traditional drug or talk therapy has little effect without this essential spiritual component.

Our healing program is confidential and free of charge. The program is in English with Hebrew translation and captioning. Please join us in our private zoom room for our next healing opportunity.

## The Jewish Experience

If you are Jewish and have ever had an abortion, you probably feel very much alone with the memories of your experience. Observant or unobservant, affiliated or unaffiliated, secular, orthodox, or somewhere in between, our Jewish friends, family and community may speak of abortion in the political sense, but the subject of personal abortion decisions and the painful thoughts and emotions that arise from one or more unplanned pregnancies and subsequent abortions are considered 'radioactive'. Until now no opportunity for safe and honest sharing has existed, leaving post abortive Jews to struggle alone without support and understanding.

Our community offers little support for single parenting or adoption as alternatives to abortion, leaving us with no real choices. This lack of immediate support, pressure from the baby's father to abort, anticipated anger from our parents, and financial, social, or professional worries influence the abortion decision. For many Jews, abortion is framed as a completely sensible, acceptable, and preferable way to avoid the shame, embarrassment, and inconvenience that often accompanies unplanned pregnancy.

After the abortion, sometimes immediately or even decades later, Jews face monumental barriers to processing their feelings of guilt, depression, rage and grief. The normal pathways to healing don't work, which precludes the ability to process the loss of the baby.

The pregnancy is denied due to the absence of pictures, conversation or a memorial service for the baby.

Peer pressure to maintain a positive attitude about abortion despite negative consequences doesn't allow acknowledgment or support for grieving.

In some congregations, rabbis endorse the use of abortion. These rabbis attempt to alleviate guilt by supporting the abortion decision. This does nothing to heal a broken heart and often causes more distress.

Secular Jews, immersed in the 'right to choose' culture and encouraged to utilize abortion, are uninformed of the possibility of emotional and spiritual issues afterward. They don't accept that abortion hurts and harms women. They are not available to listen.

Observant Jews, whose tradition encourages childbirth and large families, face disapproval and rejection if they attempt to confide in Jewish friends and family.

## Misinformation

We were told that Judaism allows abortion for any reason, and that we were doing the right thing.

We were told that we had a legal right to choose to end our pregnancy and that because it was legal it wasn't wrong.

Our own mothers and sisters encouraged us to have our abortions.

Rabbis told us abortion was legal in Judaism. Therapists counseled us that abortion was our only option, that it would fix our problems.

We were told that our careers and our lifestyle were too important to risk them by having a baby.

Our boyfriends told us they would leave if we kept the baby, but they left anyway after the abortion.

We felt we had to end our pregnancy or risk the anger and judgement of our parents, especially if the father/mother of the baby wasn't Jewish.

The nurse at the clinic said it was just a 'blob of tissue' or 'the product of conception'.

We were told that 'It's not alive until it's born.'

We were told that we would be glad that we had the abortion, and that we would soon forget about it, but years later we still deeply, secretly regret having the abortion.

No one told us the scientific fact that life begins at conception, and that the abortion would end the life of an innocent child.

No one told us that abortion changes everything about our lives - our relationships, our health, our work, our self image, and our future.

No one told us that we would wonder about that child for the rest of our life, nearly every day for the rest of our life.

No one told us that abortion is a dangerous procedure, and that it always has unintended negative consequences. These include infertility, as well as psychological, emotional, mental, and behavioral problems.

No one told us that we would feel guilt, shame, and depression as a result of our abortion, and so we denied and minimized our feelings for years, feeling victimized, isolated, angry, abandoned, and unloved.

## After Abortion

**Suicidal Ideation and Attempted Suicide** Aborting women are 6 times more likely to commit suicide in the following year than are delivering women).

**'A part of me died'** feelings after the abortion.

**'My abortion ruined my life'** feelings.

**Guilt** results from violating one's own sense of right and wrong).

**Anxiety** (headaches, dizziness, pounding heart, abdominal cramps, muscle tightness, difficulty sleeping, etc.).

**Decision making** becomes difficult due to a lack of confidence caused by the negative results of abortion.

**Sleep disorders** (women are more likely to be treated for sleep disorders after having an abortion compared to giving birth).

**Avoidance behaviors** (of anything remindful of pregnancy and children).

**'Numbing'** (the unconscious vow to never let anything hurt this badly again can hamper the ability to enter fully into an emotional, intimate relationship).

**Relationships** with family, friends, and future partners suffer from our low self esteem and secret torment.

**Re-experiencing events related to the abortion** (persistent thoughts and flashback memories or nightmares involving themes of loss or dismembered babies).

**Preoccupation with becoming pregnant again** (representing an unconscious hope that a new pregnancy will replace the baby that was aborted).

**Anxiety over fertility and childbearing issues** (being convinced that God will punish by withholding future pregnancies).

**Interruption or disruption of the bonding with present and/or future children** (under-bonding or over-bonding with other children.)

**Self abuse/self destructive behaviors** (eating disorders, alcohol and /or substance abuse, cigarette smoking, abusive relationships, failure to take care of one's self medically, social isolation).

**Sexual Dysfunction** (promiscuity, loss of pleasure from intercourse, increased pain, and aversion to sex and/or men).

**Anniversary reactions** (increased symptoms around the time of the abortion or due date of the aborted child).