

## women's impressions

What women are saying about Bais Chana's study retreats ...

Edie, Chicago, IL

Summer 08, Minnesota

It was a wonderful, challenging experience that every woman ought to have.

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Sara, Chicago, IL

Summer 08, MN

It was good and informative &ndash; it really made me think. Some of the things that made a deep impression on me were about how G-d has a definite plan and there are no coincidences; and the concept of intimacy according to Chassidic teachings, the deep connection you make. I feel like I was given a gift and now I need to take it all in. Thanks so much!

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Marva, New York, NY

Summer 08, MN

Bais Chana is grounding, intense, unique, educational, and vital! I feel much stronger in my Judaism because of the learning and I was so inspired by everyone in the group. Some of the most memorable things I learned had to do with the idea that we need to live, not just exist. That life is about giving and receiving, but never about taking. And that sadness is never ok because it&rsquo;s a lack of feeling &ndash; it&rsquo;s like not being alive.

Judaism isn&rsquo;t just spiritual to me, it&rsquo;s how I lead my life. Having learned so much and having clarity in the matter makes me feel emotionally stable and that my life is more focused. I feel together and I hope I can retain this mindset - if I can, then this experience at Bais Chana will affect my whole future.

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Kimberly, IA

Summer 08, MN

I came to Bais Chana for the first time over 20 twenty years ago &ndash; and hadn&rsquo;t been back again until this summer. I was missing something in my life&hellip;the week gave me new direction &ndash; and it was fun to make new friends.

I learned that I have a lot to learn and that it&rsquo;s ok for everyone to be at different levels of learning. Watching my fellow mothers I&rsquo;ve learned I need to become a better mother. I&rsquo;ve learned that anger expressed is a form of idolatry and I need to be more merciful in disciplining my daughter. I want to be more patient. I also really enjoyed the class on the ten sefirot and how they relate to physical and emotional health and how each aspect needs attention.

Bais Chana is my refuge and place of hope; it&rsquo;s my home for retreat and blessing. I didn&rsquo;t expect to want to do more after coming back again&hellip;

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Sara, Miami, FL

Summer 08, MN

I really want to thank you for allowing me the privilege of attending this last Bais Chana retreat! Retreat might be the incorrect description for this amazing event - as there was so much energy and expansiveness that it was not so much a retreat (a haven - a sanctuary) but that of a process of enlargement of Life with a CAPITAL L.

There are no adequate words to say how grateful I am for the teachers you brought together: R Friedman, Malka, Freidy, Aarah (what an amazing technique she taught - one which I hope to share with others) and the young women - not just those who taught officially like, Chani Z, Tzippy, Adina and Miriam but also those who taught just by being around - that is most all of your incredible attendees; those who taught me not just challa baking, script writing and Hebrew reading but those who taught generosity of spirit and of finances, those who taught about sharing and laughter, those who showed us humility and love of life - those who showed us that no matter how we try not to be judgmental and are - in fact are nothing like the assessment we impose upon them - and then there are those who showed us that doing laundry can be 'fun' and those that allowed us to be part of the cooking, setting tables, organizing a real 'family' type of living and except for the many attributes of others I can not remember right now and the people I have left out in my head so have not referred to them - there is last and by no means least - Sara - her way of being - not just for me - but to many, many others - how perfectly wonderful for those of us who profited from her attention.

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Peninah, Chicago, IL

Summer 08, MN

It far exceeded my expectations! I was unprepared for how warm and nurturing the environment was, and what I enjoyed most was chatting with others on the same path. I solidified my identity as a Jew.

The three most important things I learned: that sin is a distraction, it's a form of temporary insanity; that modesty isn't sexist but rather it's a higher concept (which is amazing because I was very skeptical!); and that the soul is what connects Jews - it isn't a cultural connection based on similar backgrounds.

I gained a more grounded sense of what it means to be observant in that it does not have to feel like a split of secular vs. religious life but may be incorporated in all that I do.

I'd like to express my profound gratitude to all the staff and the other women who attended. What an enlightening experience!

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A, S. Diego, CA

Summer 08, MN

I learned I can do things that are difficult, and rise above them and grow as well. I learned that a Jew is a Jew, that people are different and have different opinions and I can genuinely respect them. Being compassionate doesn't depend on the other person being the same to you. There are different realities for different people

This was a difficult, yet purposeful two weeks. Although what I gained was not at all what I expected, I have a feeling I'll keep learning from the experience even after I go home

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Alanna, Montreal, Quebec

Summer 08, MN

Bais Chana is full of amazing people who are dedicated and work hard to make the experience special for all people regardless of religious affiliation. I want to thank you all &ndash; especially the madrichot who really took the time to make me feel welcome!

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Chaya, Iowa City, IA

Summer 08, MN

I came with a group of women from my community because I wanted to offer them an intense education and some answers. It was an opportunity for us to meet others from across the Jewish spectrum&hellip;and to find support for difficult Jewish ideas and experiences. I&rsquo;m so happy we came.

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Tziporah, Los Angeles, CA

Summer 08, MN

The women were great fun and the teachers were mind-blowing. Chassidus is about joy and the fact that most of us will never be perfectly righteous is ok; you can&rsquo;t be mad at G-d for the way He made you. It&rsquo;s a divine thing and now that I understand this I don&rsquo;t feel as much shame about my past. I&rsquo;m trying to stay conscious, to keep telling myself that my mind is in charge and to think things through, to work on my gevurah, my severity&hellip;to not be so reactive.

I feel kind of &ldquo;peeled,&rdquo; like layers of nonsense and the false illusion of beliefs got peeled away.

Bais Chana is my manna!

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Shayna, New York City, NY

Summer 08, MN

Bais Chana envelops the students in a warm, haimishe world where we rediscover our special roots. Freidy Yanover&rsquo;s classes were without a doubt my favorite part of the retreat and I absolutely loved being around Rabbi Feller on Shabbos.

In addition to the wealth of Torah/Chasidut that comes with every B.C. session, I learned about how strong all of these women are, which was so inspirational. The Bais Chana experience is so transformative and not at all. Basically, you&rsquo;re transformed into yourself.

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Anika, London, UK

Summer 08, MN

I hoped to gain spiritual awareness by coming here and I did by listening to Rabbi Friedman. He taught about life, love and living. I&rsquo;d like to read more of the Torah.

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Miriam, NJ

Summer 08, MN

I learned way more than I expected &ndash; R. Friedman constantly shocked me in class. Two of the things that made a very big impact on me were the concept of becoming &ldquo;one&rdquo; with your husband and that I can&rsquo;t talk back to or ignore my mom. Now I feel more prepared for marriage &ndash; I feel like an enlightened Jew. Bais Chana is awesome!

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Nurith, CA

Summer 08, MN

I feel like I went two levels deeper into the core of Judaism. I found joy here &ndash; the beauty of the women attending (inside and out) is something I hadn&rsquo;t encountered before and I felt G-d through these women, which in turn made me feel that the Divine presence was tangible.

I was struck by the beauty of being a Jewish woman - with all the obligations that are G-d&rsquo;s gifts to us, which need to be taught, lived and experienced.

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Miriam, Postville, IA

Summer 08, MN

It&rsquo;s an experience every woman should have. I hoped to be able to connect with my higher self and to better my lower self by that. Bais Chana is about women being women, inside and out.

Thank you for having me!

What a wonderful place of learning and community. Just amazing. Warm, soulful, enlightening, deep, nurturing. I feel blessed to be a part of this.

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Menucha, MA

Summer 08, MN

I attended the college program in Key Largo and this time around I was hoping for some more inspiration. It far exceeded my expectations. It rekindled my love of Torah and reminded me of why I&rsquo;m here. I honestly didn&rsquo;t expect to be so blown away!

I feel like a stronger Jew. I came here in dire need of an inspiration boost and got more than I ever imagined. What I&rsquo;ve learned will affect ALL aspects of my life. I&rsquo;m inspired, feel more confident, will be more pleasant, and have more love for my fellow Jews.

This summer was unbelievable - life-changing.

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Leila, Philadelphia, PA

Summer 08, MN

The program surpassed my expectations. The instructors were amazing and the program was very well organized. About 98% of what I learned was unexpected and my favorite part of the whole experience was Rabbi Friedman&rsquo;s classes. I didn&rsquo;t know anything about the Tanya or the majority of what I learned&hellip;

My love for Judaism and the Torah has grown, and my respect and admiration for Judaism and Torah have also grown. I've gained more insight on how learning and practicing the Torah can strengthen my morals, values and overall quality of life. I've begun to understand the meanings of the prayers&hellip;

Before I came to Bais Chana, I was desperately seeking someone and somewhere to learn about Judaism, learn about the Torah, learn how to pray correctly. I was truly blessed to find Bais Chana. I couldn't have asked for or found more perfect teachers or such an amazing environment.

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Julie, Iowa City, IA

Summer 08, MN

Lovely people, intriguing and enlightening classes, and not much sleep.

It's actually hard to describe&hellip;I think that besides the information I received in classes, discussions, just being here surrounded by "channels of divine energy" added to my being. I enjoyed everything I learned, especially the class on the Kabbalistic explanation of why women cover their hair (Freidy's); and the class about how we're in the diaspora in order to collect, return and reveal the G-dly sparks. I've already told all my friends about Bais Chana&hellip;

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Dina, Stockton, CA

Summer 08, MN

So profoundly meaningful and worthwhile for all Jewish women!

I didn't expect the depth and esoteric level of what we were taught. I've deepened and strengthened my connection to G-d. I have a better understanding of what it means to have a relationship with my "bashert" and with G-d. And I learned that we have so much work to do &dash; on ourselves. I look forward to my challenges and to growing in strength and clarity.

All the topics that were taught I found to be a perfect balance to where I am holding in life. So many of my questions and the challenges I face in life were addressed in the lectures and dialogue in the classroom. My soul has truly been nourished, my will re-filled. My experiences without a doubt will serve to sustain me. As well, I am truly inspired to continue my learning.

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Helen, Iowa City, IA

Summer 08, MN

I hoped to gain a renewed connection to my own spiritual awareness and mental stimulation, and to gain food for thought and deed. I found insight, enlightenment, positive energy and more, on an intellectual level as well. I am awestruck by the knowledge that was shared by so many &hellip;meaning to say by the amount of knowledge so many seem to possess&hellip;which actually made me realize I need to learn!

I loved the classes, especially on Shabbat, observing other women's interactions, not sleeping and meeting

extraordinary people. Bais Chana is family&hellip;Thank you, Hinda Leah, for making it possible for me and my daughters to attend. Thank you for your gift of time and heart.

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Laurie, Miami,

Summer 08, MN

Bais Chana is an intense learning experience that brings women closer to G-d, teachers and friends. My own experience was very challenging but rewarding to the soul.

From Rabbi Friedman&rsquo;s classes I began to internalize that it&rsquo;s not all about me, that we need to do for others and stop worrying about ourselves. Understanding the importance of actually doing the mitzvot &ndash; and feeling comfortable in my observance &ndash; was also a huge part of the experience.

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C, Birmingham, AL

Summer 08, MN

Bais Chana opens my mind and heart in ways you can never imagine.

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Shirley, Panama City

Spring 08 - Panama

In analyzing the meaning of the seminar for myself, there are several qualities that stand out. There were lessons which I learned and simply refreshed in my mind, and there were those which were totally new, such as the introduction to Tanya. However, the most meaningful were those which I thought I knew, but were reintroduced to me in a positive light. Perhaps the most difficult position to find oneself in is the middle, where one is neither a nonbeliever, nor a totally convinced believer, because that brings with it feelings of doubt, of guilt, of loss. All of these imply a certain negativity, and any introspection automatically brings with it a desire to evade, to elude. The belief, so loudly and emphatically affirmed by all the speakers, that just being a Jew is something to be celebrated, has pushed aside the curtains of negativity that I have often felt, allowing me to explore without fear, the questions I have about my beliefs.

I certainly am convinced that this is but a first step, and that the way is long, but to know that the road in and of itself has value makes the walk that much pleasurable, even exciting. We have become so used to labeling everyone and everything, and of course this brings with it the next step, which is judging everyone and everything. How refreshing to remove those labels, to simply enjoy "being" without concern of somehow being able to "live up" to the expectation of those around us. But this does not imply languishing and simply existing, not by a long shot.

If there would be one word to describe Malka's talks, it would have to be "dynamic", and that is what we are motivated to be. Actively and above all, positively, thinking, questioning, learning.

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Sylvia, Panama

Spring 08 - Panama

The seminar was of great value and content. The speakers were very well-versed on their subjects and their delivery kept one&rsquo;s attention at all times.

I can only wish your group all the best, to continue to do the job you do for the improvement and well-being of those you teach. Thank you for all your efforts in making us better people!

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Heidi, New York

Summer 2007 - Minnesota

One of the things i find most exciting and rewarding about being together with others who are honestly seeking truth and authenticity in their lives is that just as I can see my own flaws reflected back to me from those around me, I can also recognize other aspects of myself when those around me honestly share their perceptions and experiences of themselves and their world.

This is particularly helpful when I inevitably (periodically) get disconnected from my inner self. Being a part of a group of others who are honestly sharing their experience, strength and hope helps revive and reconnect me to myself, my goals, the Rebbe, and ultimately to G-d when I temporarily lose my ability to recognize who and what I am and can be.

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Patricia, New York City

Summer 2006 Minnesota

I've returned home to New York and the "24/6" work world after the most memorable week of my "adult" life entirely rejuvenated and enlightened thanks to both Rabbi Friedman's lectures and the other very informative and inspiring lectures which I had the great fortune to attend last week! Even though I'm learning on a one-to-one basis with my conversion rabbi both here (twice/week) and in Florida (twice/month), what I EXPERIENCED with a great group of gals at Bais Chana only reinforced my love of Judaism's practices. For it's not only belief and philosophy that is so true in Judaism, it's putting those beliefs and philosophies into action that makes it real, true, and new each and every moment!

Chani, Ellie, and Estee's enthusiasm and knowledge were truly inspiring and I hope to return for a longer period next year! Many thanks!

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Joanne, Kansas City

Israel, Spring 2007

Recently I was asked to speak at our Chabad House about our trip to Israel and I was so pleased to tell about our wonderful hours spent in class; about the high caliber of women who went on the trip together; how our schedule never remained fixed but was always a moving target; about re-experiencing some places (i.e., Dead Sea, Ein Geddi, Acco, the western Wall tunnel, and others) was never boring and provided me time for reflection, or for seeing the same thing in a new way. I hope Bais Chana does this trip again. What a unique experience!

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Myriam, Miami

Winter 2007 &ndash; Key Largo, FL

Emotional healing with Fraidy Yanover was incredible, Rivky Slonim was amazing, and of course all of Rabbi Friedman's lectures were unbelievable. I can't describe how and what I've gained. It was just so filling and amazing. Count me in next year.

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Anna, Toronto

May 2005 - Berkshires

My thinking was challenged and I came away with a clearer understanding of my place in G-d's world.

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