

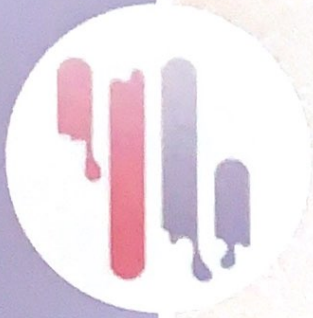
By Penina Steinbruch



SWEET DREAMS

yummy
blessings





Have you ever thought of opening your own business but had some really good reasons not to? Certainly you would agree that being eight or ten years old is a very good reason to delay opening a business! But for Racheli and Bracha Rosenthal, the only reason they waited until they were eight and ten to open their business, was because it took time to convince their mother to let them! Otherwise we'd be reading about two girls who opened a business when they were seven and nine!

What on earth could give such little girls the idea to open a business?

"It all started when our friend's mom had a little baby girl. We wanted to go to the Kiddush on Shabbos, but couldn't make it. So we made a big tray of chocolate covered pretzels and sent it over, tells Bracha, the elder of the sisters.

After Shabbos, their friend's mother called to thank them. She'd hired a party planner who set up lots of attractive and yummy goodies, but they couldn't compete with the Rosenthal girls' pretzels! Despite all the other treats at the Kiddush, everyone kept asking her about those pretzels. She insisted the girls should open up a business and the girls thought it was a great idea.

Mrs. Rosenthal wasn't quite as convinced, but after months of nudging and cajoling from her daughters and their friend's mom, she agreed. Their business, "Yummy Blessings" was born.

"It was right before Chanukah, so I suggested they make packages for their teachers and take pictures. I had about a hundred followers on my Instagram account and let them take it over. They posted pictures and let everyone know they were taking orders," their mother shares.

That Chanukah they got two orders. For Purim they got orders for 500 packages. That was four years ago. This year for Purim, they had orders for about 3,000 packages! The girls try very hard not to say no to any order, but every Purim they have to turn down a bunch of people. "We get crazy busy and can't physically take on more than what we already do," Bracha tells us. For less busy times, unless someone gives them a very specific order and it's too last minute, they can usually accommodate their customers.

How did they come up with the name "Yummy Blessings"?

"We'd already chosen a name we loved", says Bracha, "but it was already taken. To register our business legally, we had to pick a name that no other business had registered."

So, their mom handed each girl a sheet of paper and told them to list all the names they could think of that they may want to call their business.

"I was very determined that our name would have 'Yummy' in it, and I wouldn't give in," says Rachelli. "My name is Charna Rachel, which means black sheep - so I wanted to call it 'Yummy Black Sheep'. I'm laughing about that now, but at the time, I was very insistent."

"Finally we convinced her that we couldn't call our company 'Black Sheep' and Rachelli agreed we could name it after me instead, choosing 'Blessings', the English for Bracha. We still used the 'Yummy' Rachelli wanted and 'Yummy Blessings' was a name that no other business had registered, so we could use it", Bracha tells us.

How on earth do girls still in school full time, manage to run a business?

"We come home from school, eat supper, do our homework and get to work!" says Rachelli.

Bracha has just started high-school, which presents new challenges. The work is a lot more serious and there's more of it. "I have to make sure I get enough sleep to wake up for school in the morning. But Rachelli takes over when I have a test or something. When Rachelli can't do it, I take over for her."

For really busy times of the year, when two girls are not enough, the whole family steps in. Their cousins and siblings roll up their sleeves and jump in to lend a hand.

"We have three younger brothers ages nine, five and two. Based on what's going on, we give them different jobs. They can build boxes, bag things that need to be individually wrapped, and dip Oreos if we need. They don't usu-



ally complain. They feel proud to help, but even more proud when they can give some stuff out. Sometimes, they give us very specific orders for what they want." Their parents handle the bookkeeping and filing tax returns.

Has their school ever objected to having their students run a business?

"Just the opposite!" both girls insist. The school has always been very supportive, even interviewing the pair for the school newspaper.

To show their appreciation, Bracha and Rachelli have always given their teachers chocolate packages before the chaggim (hey, do you think I could get a



teaching job at your school? I'd love a chocolate package!) They've also given demos in their school - to four hundred girls at a time!

Running any business can be stressful, but are there any specific challenges that come along with being a kid?

"Sometimes people take advantage of us because we're kids. Many times we've been asked to "donate" our stuff to different events or to bloggers. They tell us they'll post our stuff or send us professional pictures, but most of the time, they don't do what they say. That gets pretty upsetting or frustrating to us. It's like, because we're kids, they think it's okay to take advantage. Also, when we started, people made fun of us and told our parents that they were crazy for letting us do this. That was pretty hard. But we believed in ourselves and what we were doing, and our parents always supported us"," Bracha says.

As you see from the pictures, the girls make some beautiful creations. How did they expand from chocolate covered pretzels to other tempting treats?

At first they only did pretzels, slowly adding different flavors; sprinkles, cookie crunch, coconut, butterscotch, strawberry shortcake. Bit by bit they started experimenting with other ideas.

"We really learn everything by trying. We're not afraid to try and take risks and we've created so

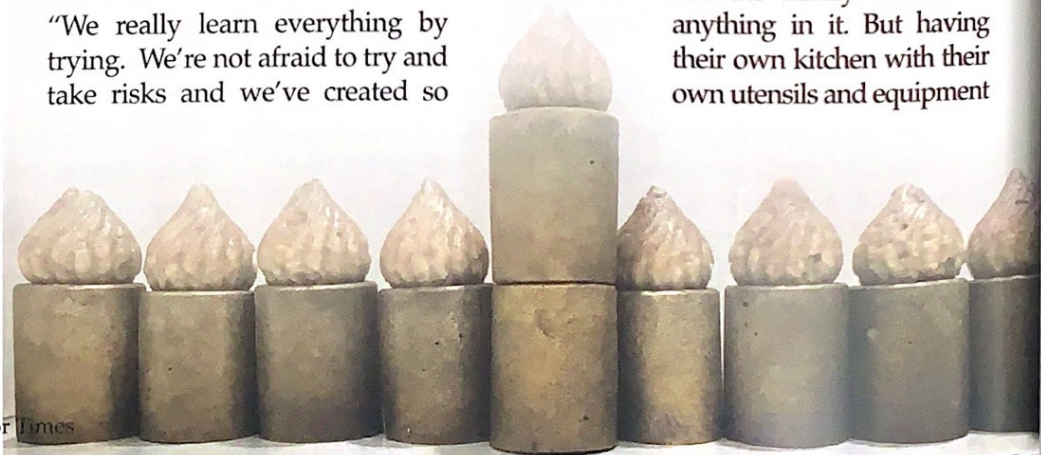
many of our best designs that way", says Rachelli.

Some of their creations come with a story. A year after they started, their parents saw how successful the girls were, and thought they should get a hashgacha. Most rabbanim were reluctant to give a hashgacha to children working out of their own home. Finally, it looked like they were about to sign a contract with someone, but it fell through the day before. The girls were devastated. To cheer them up, their father took them to two of the stores they buy supplies from, and told them to buy anything they wanted. They bought their first log molds. A week later they signed with the mashgiach that they're still using, and they've been making log molds ever since.

They started making peanut chews because neither of them really likes chocolate, (did you know that there was someone who didn't like chocolate?!) but they both love peanut chews. "Even though you see every dessert person doing peanut chew pops today- we actually created the concept and we're the first ones to make them!"

Neither one of the girls can remember what gave them the idea to make chocolate covered Oreos, but they were a huge hit right away.

Having a hashgacha means they can't use the family kitchen or anything in it. But having their own kitchen with their own utensils and equipment





gives them the freedom to experiment and keep coming up with new ideas.

Do they have any plans to expand their business even further?

For the time being the girls plan to continue as they've done until now, slow and steady. Maybe after they're finished with school, they'll think of more extravagant ideas!

The girls' business actually began with tzedakah. They started making their pretzels with a hot cocoa machine they won from a Chai Lifeline fundraiser. Since then, they are very generous with their business, making sure that a lot more than ten percent ends up going to tzedakah. They do fund raisers, as well as do-

nating packages to a long list of worthy causes. (They got in contact with their main chocolate wholesaler through a fundraiser they did for Strivright.)

Both girls feel that as much as they give, running a business has given them plenty too. "I think running a business has given me a lot of confidence so I've been able to better handle the challenges I've faced," Bracha tells us.

If any adults reading this are feeling intimidated by a twelve and fourteen year old who manage to go to school, run a successful business and give lots of tzedakah, I can assure them, that despite their long list of accomplishments, neither girl has gotten a driver's license yet! ☒