**Mishy Harman (narration):** Hey guys, it’s Mishy. A few weeks ago we aired a Thanksgiving bonus, in which we brought you excerpts from a conversation I had with Emad Levy, the last “rabbi” of Baghdad. It was an experiment for us, since it wasn’t a regular episode. In fact it wasn’t even really a story, but rather just a lightly edited version of one of the countless interviews we conduct that *don’t* make it onto the show. We asked you if you wanted to hear more of these unreleased recordings, and many of you enthusiastically wrote in saying “yes.” So as we work on our next episode, coming your way very soon, here we are, with another little special.

Our latest episode was called “Achi,” my brother. In it, we told the tale of two siblings and their unusual life together. And today we’re sharing another little sibling bonus – a conversation between our Senior Producer Yochai Maital and his sister Temira Finesilver.

**Temira Finesilver:** My name is Temira. I’m Yochai’s sister. I’m the oldest sister and I have three brothers. I have eight children. I’m a family physician. I work in a development town in Kiryat Gat and I work here in the area. I live in Bnei Dekalim which is a beautiful *yeshuv* in the Judean Mountains just east of Kiryat Gat. It’s quite a rural area, which wasn’t settled until a few years ago.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** After the 2005 disengagement, many of the Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip moved to this region together.

**Temira Finesilver:** Many communities decided to rebuild communities together. And this is one of these communities. The area is a beautiful area. I mean it’s in the hills, it’s all covered with vineyards and flowers and we can just walk out of the house and go take a hike on the hill. So it’s really nice. We like living here.

**Mishy Harman:** So Yochai you want to set this one up for us?

**Yochai Maital:** Sure. So a few years ago we were working on an episode that actually never materialized about the tribes of Israel.

**Mishy Harman:** Umm hmm.

**Yochai Maital:** You remember that one?

**Mishy Harman:** Yeah, of course I remember it.

**Yochai Maital:** And my family is a pretty good case study. Because we’re four siblings – each living a very different lifestyle. My sister and I are pretty close. In many respects I look up to her and I seek out her advice, but then in some other, very fundamental aspects, we’re diametrically opposed.

**Mishy Harman:** Like what?

**Yochai Maital:** Well, I’m secular; she’s very religious.

**Mishy Harman:** Umm hmm.

**Yochai Maital:** I’m a left-leaning Tel-Avivian; and she was evicted from Netzarim during the disengagement and has spent many of the years since living in the West Bank.

**Mishy Harman:** Umm hmm.

**Yochai Maital:** So, anyway, I thought it would be interesting to sort of take a look under the hood of our family dynamics. So I went over to my sister’s, it was a Friday afternoon. Her house was this chaotic mess of Shabbat preparations so we headed outside to the backyard and sat down for a chat.

**Yochai Maital:** I mean, obviously, like we have different worldviews on certain things, and we’re very similar on certain things. But we don’t really talk about the things that we don’t agree on. Is that part of how we can we can sort of all get along and be so close and everything because we just sort of like agree to disagree, and we understand that there’s no point in that? Or is there something in that kind of a denial or something like that?

**Temira Finesilver:** Maybe actually it’s something very real. We usually don’t talk about the things we disagree on. I especially don’t talk about it with Abba and Imma because then that causes complete…

**Yochai Maital:** What? what?

**Temira Finesilver:** Disagreements.

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm.

**Temira Finesilver:**It’s very difficult I mean I feel that it’s very very emotional when I talk to Abba and Imma about things that…

**Yochai Maital:** Really?

**Temira Finesilver:** We disagree on. It’s very emotional and very difficult and nothing comes out of that except for emotions.

**Yochai Maital:** Umm.

**Temira Finesilver:** So I’ve stopped doing that at all. Yochai Maital: The political or the religious, you think, aspects?

**Temira Finesilver:** Both both *davka* the religious aspects are very, very, very sensitive.

**Yochai Maital:** Ah ha.

**Temira Finesilver:** And it’s interesting that four of us are children from the same parents and we are so different from one another. Very different each one of us lives in a very different world.

**Yochai Maital:** Yeah, for sure.

**Temira Finesilver:** It’s interesting because my… the older kids – Aharon and Romema – talk to you a lot about ideology and things you disagree on. They don’t have the emotional part. And so they can feel free to discuss these issues and I feel really good about that, that they can discuss these issues freely with you.

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm.

**Temira Finesilver:** And on the other hand, I think that the fact that that’s not the central issue that we have to discuss all the time when we can agree to disagree enables us to spend time together and just have fun together. Our ideology is very important, and we live by it on one hand. On the other hand, our day-to-day lives are built of very many little things. And I think that’s something very important and we have to put a focus on that. There’s much more in common than there is not in common. But we’re Jews. So two Jews, three opinions? So we have to…

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm. *Ken.*

**Temira Finesilver:** Speak our opinions all the time. *[Yochai laughs]*. I’m an observant person, orthodox Jew. And even if we think of the commandments – there are six-hundred-and-thirteen commandments – not one person can fulfill all of these commandments. You need all the people of Israel in order to fill all of these commandments. Some are meant for women, some are meant for men. Some commandments have to do with birth, with death, with times of the year. Not one person can fulfill all of this.

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm.

**Temira Finesilver**: Only the whole people can fulfill all of the commandments. And I think that’s maybe an ideal even, in which we have to find not only what’s in common, but what we have to learn from the other. Because in each of us, there’s a lot of good, but we don’t have all the good. We don’t have…

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm.

**Temira Finesilver:** Everything we need in order to live in a wonderful country and have a… do everything we need to do. Not one person can do everything. And I feel…

**Yochai Maital:** So you wouldn’t… you wouldn’t say like that you want more and more people, or everybody essentially, to become orthodox?

**Temira Finesilver:** I would say it in my sort of sense. I think we have to speak in a much, much broader sense. I think going to the army is very big *mitzvah*. Some of the… the *mitzvot* are social things. And there are many people I know, who aren’t observant, who keep these *mitzvot* better than I, maybe. For sure. *[Temira and Yochai giggle]*. It’s much easier and maybe even childish, to want to be friends with people who are like you. And each of us needs our comfortable area. I’ll send my children to a school that I feel comfortable with in terms of the education, but I don’t want everybody to be exactly like me, no. No.

**Yochai Maital:** You send your kids (now they’re old enough to send themselves also) to my house in Tel Aviv, obviously a very different environment and world than over here and the way you raised them and stuff like that but do you ever… is there ever like something in you that says maybe like that environment or the world could be could be a bad influence? Is there any like fear in that?

**Temira Finesilver:** I think fear is not the right word. I’m very happy with our family. And one of the things even being orthodox, which is very important to me, is to keep close contact with the family. To be in touch with the family to be part of the family. There are challenges, OK? If we have to be in a certain situation and it’s a difficult situation for us in terms of what we feel comfortable doing or not doing, sometimes it’s a challenge.

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm.

**Temira Finesilver:** And then… so we have to meet the challenge. Life is full of challenges.

**Yochai Maital:** Yeah.

**Temira Finesilver:** And these are good challenges. These are challenges which help build character and build connections. And build the importance of family connections, even if you have challenges, so I think this is really important.

**Yochai Maital:** Would you still say that if one of your kids would change his lifestyle or something like that, do you think?

**Temira Finesilver:** It would probably be difficult for me if one of my children changed their lifestyle completely. But I hope that I would be acceptive. And it’s interesting because I think I also see it in my big kids who are… travel on their own and go… and they’re really really happy with their connections also, with you as, as an uncle and, and going to see Tel Aviv and not staying in a very closed world but being sort of open to the world.

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm.

**Temira Finesilver:** I think that’s also something very important that build[s] a lot in them.

**Yochai Maital:** Do you feel that because of the way you look – which is like an orthodox woman – people have like a very strong first opinion of you when you go to places, as a doctor, are people like surprised?

**Temira Finesilver:** Sometimes they are. And they are even more surprised when I say I have eight children. There are a lot of ready-made assumptions. In the academic world, it’s very very obvious. On the other hand, when you’re who you are, and after people get to know each other, then I think it’s easier to accept each other and…

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm.

**Temira Finesilver:** And look one another in the eye. And not at the clothes. *[Temira sighs]*.

**Yochai Maital:** Yeah, that’s what’s good about radio now there’s no image.

**Temira Finesilver:** That’s what I told you at the beginning, that I’m very happy that..  I’m not I’m not photogenic in any case, but I’m very happy not to be photographed. But just my voice and then you can really hear what’s being said and not the picture with it.

**Yochai Maital:** Yeah.

**Temira Finesilver:** Maybe if we use our ears more would be helpful.

**Yochai Maital:** Any other questions you think I should have asked you, or you want to ask me maybe?

**Temira Finesilver:** I wonder, wondering how you see us sometimes. I mean, we very much have what we think are our opinion about things…

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm.

**Temira Finesilver:** And it doesn’t always get along with what you think.

**Yochai Maital:** Yeah.

**Temira Finesilver:** And still, you come. You come for a whole Shabbat, you spend *Shabatot* with us. I really respect that. And I wondered how that works for you?

**Yochai Maital:** Yeah, you know, I just had a kind of… I mean it wasn’t like an argument or something… we were just talking about our different points of view with with somebody that I, I… that I’ve been working with on Israel Story. He also has a sister who lives in the *shtachim*. But emmm… he was telling me that he basically doesn’t visit there unless it’s like a *Bar Mitzvah* or something like that. And even though like politically me and him are pretty much on the same side, I couldn’t imagine that. It never even crossed my mind like something like that, let’s say not to come visit you guys when you were living in Efrat or… I mean, I always came to visit you wherever you lived in Efrat, in…

**Temira Finesilver:** Netzarim.

**Yochai Maital:** In Netzarim. You know, I helped you guys take stuff out of Netzarim and stuff like that. It never even crossed my mind because… I don’t know, maybe like what you said the love and the connection is deeper than ideology and… and also like, I feel like you’re such beautiful and amazing people that I like I’m proud to be, you know, your little brother and connected to you and the family you’re… you’ve created.

**Temira Finesilver:** I appreciate a lot the fact that we have good connections, it’s not *muvan me’elav*, it’s not…

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm.

**Temira Finesilver:** Something I take for granted. And sometimes it is… being the only girl in the family with three brothers. And all of you living in the Tel Aviv area, and being the oldest, and being religious. So sometimes it does feel a little bit lonely. Because I know that I’m on my own there. And the fact that we do live in a very, very nice community, a very connected community is very helpful. And also the fact that I know that no matter what, there’s something much stronger than the ideological differences. And I really appreciate this and I think it’s… that’s the way things should be. In general, I think, I think that. I work with many different people in my work as well. Our pharmacist is an Arab Beduin guy, I work in the university with very, very many different people. I think when you connect to the, to the person themselves, and I think as a family when we connect to each other, and not to the ideology. I think that’s… that’s real. It’s not just to

*letate et ze mitachat la la…*It’s not just to…

**Yochai Maital:** Like denying the fact…

**Temira Finesilver:** Deny it and put it aside. No, it’s very real.

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm.

**Temira Finesilver:** And a family maybe is a microcosmos of… of what it should be like in general. The tribes of Israel, were always very, very different. And when you look at the description in the *Tanach*, also each tribe had very different characteristics. They even fought each other quite fiercely. Maybe that’s one thing we have to learn – how to take the advantages of the different…

**Yochai Maital:** Umm hmm.

**Temira Finesilver:** The different tribes. Even within the family.

**Yochai Maital:** Toda Temira, I’m glad we did this. It was really one of the best uses I’ve done of myself being a radio reporter is using this chance to get us to talk about these things.

Temira Finesilver: Wow. *Toda raba gam*.

**Mishy Harman (narration):**Yochai Maital and Temira Finesilver. We hope you enjoyed this little peek into another one of the many interviews that don’t end up on the show. Once again, this is an experiment for us, so let us know if you’d like to hear more of these, or less, or none at all. Either way, we’ll be back very soon with a brand new Israel Story episode. Till then, as always, you can find us on social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram – all under ‘Israel Story.’ I’m Mishy Harman and from all of us here at Israel Story, shalom shalom and yalla bye.