



The World of Lubavitch

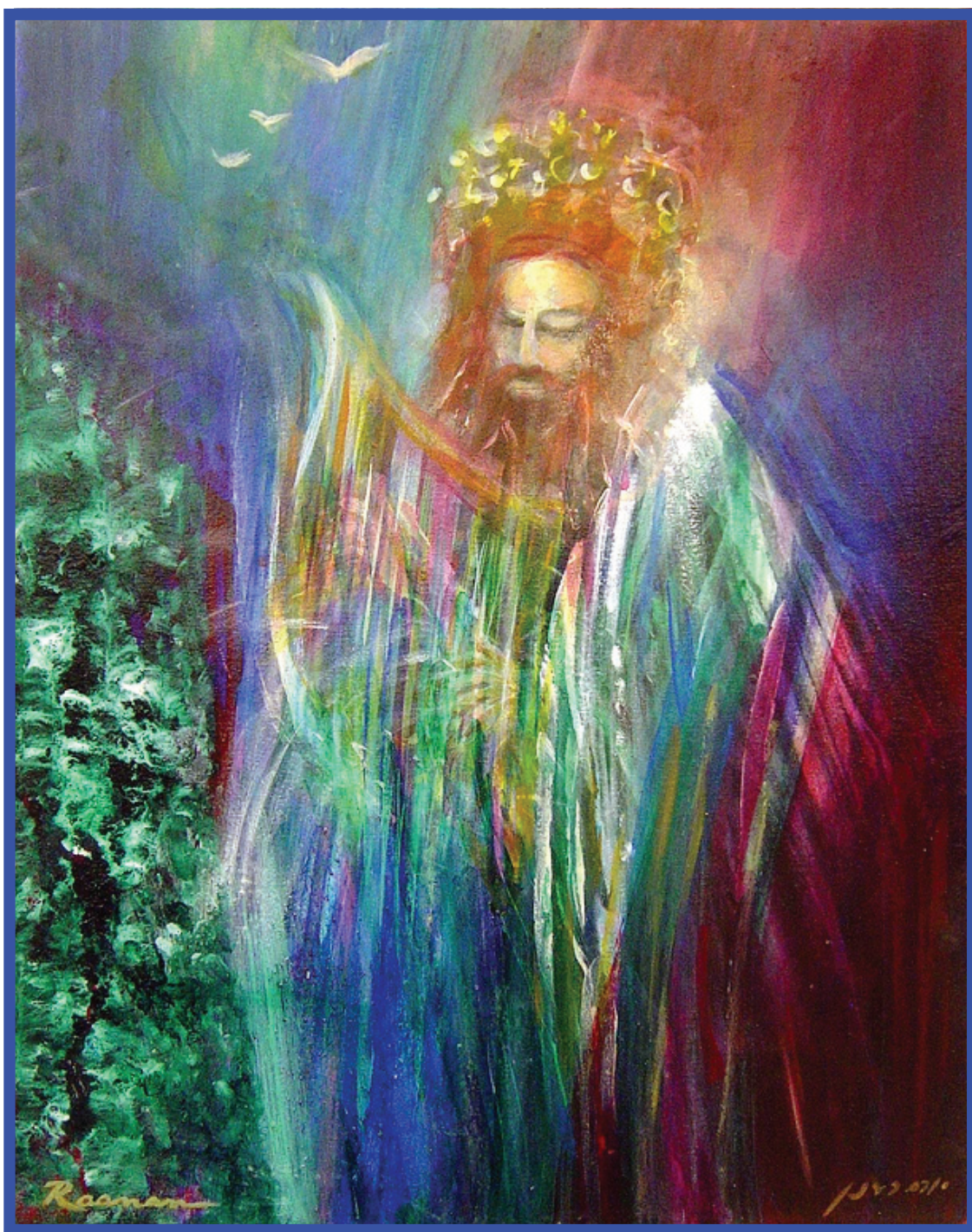
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Chabad Lubavitch to Honour Al Mintz

Plans are in full swing for the upcoming annual dinner of Chabad Lubavitch. The gala celebration to be held Wednesday, November 22, 2017, will honour Al Mintz. "This event is an opportunity for the entire community to pay tribute to a most deserving humanitarian," said Rabbi Zalman Grossbaum, Regional Director of Chabad Lubavitch. "As a chartered accountant for over 60 years Al guided, and assisted many war torn immigrants to navigate the complexities of business administration and compliance with the Revenue Canada Agency. Naturally, Tezedaka allocations was also a common subject for discussion and distri-

bution, which only heightened an awareness of the needs and opportunity to improve Jewish life in the community and in Israel. Al's relationship



with Chabad Lubavitch goes back 60 years when he elected to send his firstborn Harley, to a little fledgling shul on Edinburgh Drive for Talmud Torah classes. A few years later with the arrival of Rabbi Grossbaum to spearhead the Chabad Lubavitch Organization, the relationship was further enhanced and has subsequently rolled over to the next generation as well.

This year the campaign theme is, "We Uncover Hidden Value." The message highlights the work of Chabad as elucidated by the Baal Shem Tov. He declared, "Just as the wisest minds cannot grasp

Words, Wickedness, and Charlottesville

By Shlomo Yaffe

In classic Judaic philosophy, worldly existence is divided into four strata: The inanimate, the growing (vegetative), the living (animal life) and the speaking (human). It seems curious that we do not describe the human as "thinker" or "engineer" or by any other quality that humans exclusively possess.

The answer seems to be that the true potential of humanity, for good or evil, lies in the capacity for speech. The individual human can accomplish but little. All the accomplishments and disasters wrought by humanity are by virtue of communication. The accomplishment of the first farmer or shepherd lay in inspiring a group of people to work together to create nutrition and raiment in a new way that one person thought of.

This was through words, through communication. All of human power has always been an expression of a plurality united and directed by words. Abraham and Sarah taught monotheistic decency by words. Pharaoh enslaved the people of Israel by words of fear and prejudice directed at the Egyptians. Beliefs promulgated by words held peoples in the thrall of autocracy, and beliefs expressed in words convinced yet others to throw off those chains.

The fate of the Armenians in 1915-17 was woven of words—in hate-filled sermons and telegraphed instructions. The power of Hitler was in his words that convinced German people to join together in utter evil. It was words over radio that set in motion the Rwandan massacre. Yet, it was the power of Churchill's words that inspired the British people, against all odds, to turn back the German menace.

It was words that caused Jews in the United States—in the depths of the Great Depression—to give of their often meager resources to the American Joint Distribution Committee and many other charities, thereby saving untold numbers in Europe. It is words that have created every charitable endeavor in human history. It is words that have led to equality of human rights that we enjoy in so much of the world. It is words uniting citizens to action that have enabled these United States to be a source of so much benefit to humanity.

And now, it is words spread at the speed of light in a world where we each have more power to be heard than ever before—that threaten to tear us apart. Words of hate like those chanted by neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, Va., that not only inspire deeds of violence and even murder, but which create an increasingly fragmented archipelago of identities.

A world where smaller and smaller groups live in ever-shrinking echo chambers where we only hear ourselves and those just like us. It has been suggested that the solution is that we talk to each other, but we often do, and end up screaming at the other for being an other. Something more is needed.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory—once counseled the members of a newly formed ruling coalition in the Israeli Knesset who sought his advice. He suggested that they ought not to begin by pushing for legislation that was most expressive of their views vis a vis the opposition.

Rather, they ought to find matters that needed rectification in Israeli society that all sides could agree upon and thereby create an atmosphere of trust, cooperation and mutual respect. This is not just advice for politicians.

There is so much that needs repair in our world, so many initiatives that can help us. We ought to identify them, starting at the most local level, speak to each other across divides about them, and then act together to make them real in our neighborhoods.

This also applies to online communities, where much good can be done in very creative ways.

It is words that will create shared deeds of goodness and kindness that in turn will create more shared words, which will drive out the words of division, which will enable the world to prevail over evil.

The key is to look for goals that we agree need accomplishing and can be attained without giving up on one's core beliefs.

As Proverbs says (18:21 as per Ibn Ezra): "Death and Life are in the hands of the tongue, and one eats the fruits of that which [the type of words] we [choose to] love."

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The Prayer of Hannah

A Prayer For a Child

The Haftorah (the section from the Prophets), which is read on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, concerns Hannah. She has been childless until by prayer, she stirred divine mercy and gave birth to a son of great stature, the prophet Samuel.

The Portion of the Torah read on each Shabbat and Yom Tov has an intrinsic connection with the time it is read. The Hannah narrative is intrinsically connected to the day of Rosh Hashanah: Hannah conceived on that day. But beyond that fact, there is a more timeless connection, which can serve as a guide to each Jew in the experience of Rosh Hashanah. Since her prayer at Shiloh brought her a son, from her prayer experience we can glean guidance for our own efforts to evoke divine mercy through prayer.

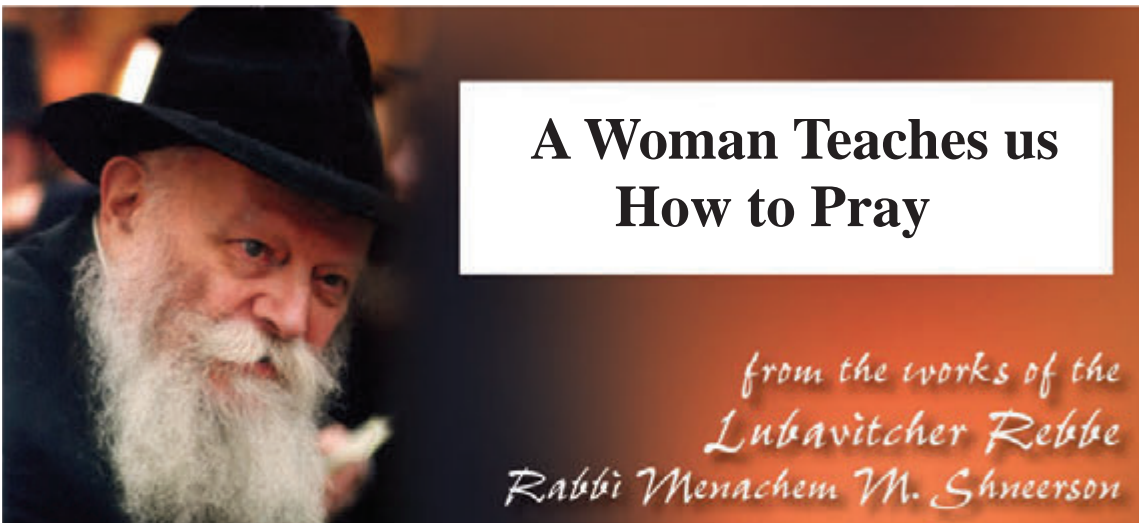
We must therefore, first deal with the puzzling response of Eli the high priest, who sees her lips moving silently. Concluding that she is intoxicated, he scolds her for coming into the sanctuary in such a state. Hannah humbly responds that she is childless and that she has come to appeal to G-d to bless her with a child.

Eli's Error

The question arises: how can Eli be so wrong about Hannah; how can he be oblivious to the intensity of her prayer? And assuming he is, why is it necessary to record this event and to thus disparage Eli? Moreover, why does Eli, believing her to be intoxicated, not scold her until after she finishes?

The Decorum of Prayer

These questions force us to conclude that Eli does not suspect that Hannah is intoxicated in the conventional sense. The unusual length of her prayers is not in keeping with the



norms of prayer, which call for simple and brief petitions. Eli believes that her petition to G-d is inappropriately self-assertive, standing as she is before G-d and in the “House of G-d”. Hannah apologetically explains that she is not “intoxicated” in sincere personal supplication, but is in fact experiencing an “outpouring of soul”.

This dialogue between Hannah and Eli provides us with a proper mode of prayer, and offers us insight into the prayers, which comprise the Rosh Hashanah liturgical

service.

The Paradox of Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah, on the one hand, is the time when Man’s material and spiritual needs are examined. Regarding this day it is written in Psalms, “For it is a *chok* for Israel, a Judgment for the G-d Of Jacob.” The Word “chok” can be understood as an allotment. This refers to the divinely ordained allotment of material needs - for life, for children, for economic gain, and also

for personal growth in the realm of spirit.

Paradoxically: Rosh Hashanah is the time of, as it were, “crowning” the almighty as our King, a motif that recurs throughout the liturgy. It is a time when Man is in a state of total self-nullification, to the point that one is totally oblivious to their personal desires and submits, without reservation, to the divine will. It is this self-nullification, which elicits acceptance of the coronation from the divine King.

These two aspects

of what is asked of us on Rosh Hashanah appear to be contradictory – mutually exclusive. The statement in the Kabbalistic work Tikunei Zohar sharpens the paradox, saying that those who pray on Rosh Hashanah for “food, sustenance, forgiveness and life” are like hounds that cry “Give!” because they think only of themselves and show no concern with the Devine Presence. Yet our Sages have incorporated these very supplications for material needs into the liturgy because Rosh Hashanah is a propitious time for such petitions to be fulfilled. Hence, our *kavana*, the devotional intention of our prayers, should include our own needs. It is, however, no contradiction to be at the same time permeated with the humbling sense of self-nullification.

Rosh Hashanah Prayer and Prayer During The Year

This seeming contradiction becomes apparent not only in the Rosh

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Cholent

By Yanki Tauber

The story is told of a simple, unlettered Jew who kept a tavern on a distant crossroads many weeks’ journey from the nearest Jewish community, who one year decided to make the trip to the Jewish town for Rosh Hashanah.

When he entered the shul on Rosh Hashanah morning, it was already packed with worshippers and the service

was well underway. Scarcely knowing which way to hold the prayerbook, he draped his tallit over his head and took an inconspicuous place against the back wall.

Hours passed. Hunger was beginning to gnaw at his insides, but the impassioned sounds of prayer around him showed no signs of abating. Visions of the sumptuous holiday meal awaiting him at his lodgings made his eyes water in pain. What was taking so long? Haven’t we prayed enough? Still the service stretched on.

Suddenly, as the cantor reached a particularly stirring passage, the entire congregation burst into tears. Why is everyone weeping? wondered the tavern keeper. Then it dawned on him. Of course! They, too, are hungry. They, too, are thinking of the elusive meal and endless service. With a new surge of self-pity he gave vent to his anguish; a new wail joined the others as he, too, bawled his heart out.

But after a while the weeping let up, finally quieting to a sprinkling of exceptionally pious worshippers. Our hungry tavern keeper’s hopes soared, but the prayers went on. And on. Why have they stopped crying? He wondered. Are they no longer hungry?

Then he remembered the

cholent. What a cholent he had waiting for him! Everything else his wife had prepared for the holiday meal paled in comparison to that cholent. He distinctly remembered the juicy chunk of meat she had put into the cholent when she set it on the fire the previous afternoon. And our tavern keeper knew one thing about cholent: the longer it cooks, the more sumptuous your cholent. He’d looked under the lid on his way to shul this morning, when the cholent had already been go-

ing for some eighteen hours; good, he’d sniffed approvingly, but give it another few hours, and ahhh . . . A few hours of aching feet and a hollow stomach are a small price to pay considering what was developing under that lid with each passing minute.

Obviously, that’s what his fellow worshippers are thinking, as well. They, too, have a cholent simmering on their stovetop. No wonder they’ve stopped crying. Let the ser-

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ON OUR COVER



King David
By acclaimed artist
Yoram Raanan

King David is author of the beautiful, poetic book of Psalms.

In this biblical volume, which contains 150 liturgical prayers, supplications and songs, the author pours out his heart and soul to the creator.

It has been a tradition for millennia that when a Jew finds themselves in a time of need, one reads the Psalms of King David, to gain strength, encouragement and trust in G-d. Many read the Psalms regularly – finishing the entire 150 chapters each month.

This painting by Yoram Raanan captures the transcendence and eternal nature of King David as expressed in Psalms

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Chabad Lubavitch to Honour Al Mintz

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the vast natural resources that G-d has embedded in the ground, so, too, no one can assess the treasures that lie hidden within each Jew. He then added, “My objective is to uncover the latent propensity within each person so that they may realize their potential in a maximum measure.” This objective finds expression in its vast network of programs under the administration of Chabad Lubavitch.

From the flagship centre in Thornhill, Chabad Lubavitch continues to service the entire Jewish community with programs that educate and promote traditional values. These objectives are further augmented by some 15 satellite centres, strategically established throughout the GTA and beyond. Most recently another “outpost” has been established in the neighbouring village of Newmarket. So too, there are Chabad House student centres at all major universities along the southern rim of Ontario.

This summer over 1200 youngsters enjoyed a meaningful summer attending either the Lubavitch Day Camp the city wide program or Gan Israel the overnight camp in Haliburton. Being sensitive to the financial hardship of many families, both programs made provisions for campers to attend on a scholarship basis. These endeavours were facilitated by some 300 teenagers who were offered employment in a most rewarding environment. Notwithstanding the financial burden, Rabbi Grossbaum noted, “we feel we get excellent value by providing a meaningful summer for over 1000 children and teenagers, either as campers or counselors!”

Chabad Lubavitch is proud to be honouring Al Mintz for his work in the Jewish community and for his commitment to pass on the importance of giving back to the community in order to safeguard future generations, M’dor L’dor. Dinner reservations may be arranged by calling Chabad Lubavitch at 905.731.7000 ext.222



Justin Lesnick of Justin's No Frills presents a check for \$4500.00 for the Chabad Terror Victims Project to Rabbi Mendel Kaplan of Chabad @ Flamingo. The donation came at the culmination of a successful campaign which a percentage of Kosher sales at the store donated to the charity.



For the first time in its 106 year history, Wilfrid Laurier University will begin offering fresh kosher meals on campus. Following the successful example set by Chabad of Guelph, university chefs will have supervised access to the kosher kitchen at the Chabad House, and the meals prepared there will be sold on campus. This obviously makes a huge difference in the lives of Jewish students, enabling them to easily remain faithful to their heritage even when away from home.

Pictured: Chef Nick, Chef Dennis, and Rabbi Moshe Goldman.

Camp Gan Israel in Pictures



LDC in Pictures



Lubavitch Day Camp

*Boys
Division*



*Preschool
Division*



*Girls
Division*



Emerging From the Flood Waters: True Kindness

by Chava Leiba Sneiderman - Houston, TX
SEPTEMBER 3, 2017

Exhausted from a long day's work helping Harvey survivors begin to clean up their wrecked homes, some 150 college students from campuses across the country met at Aishel House Chabad center in Houston Sunday evening. Getting to know each other, exchanging notes on their volunteer activities and kicking back after hours of "hard labor," the students want to send a message of love and support for Houston's residents.

As the city begins to emerge from the flood waters, residents face a daunting clean-up. Some will find more damage and loss than they had expected and the experience is bound to take

My Muslim neighbors a few doors down were here a few minutes after the flood cutting out my sheet rock. We're coming together as a community in incredible ways."

The Jewish community is pulling its weight. Sunday saw a relief effort mobilized by Chabad on Campus made up of hundreds of college students from seven universities, as far as Boulder, Colorado, and Kansas, Missouri, helping residents with a painstaking recovery. Coordinated in conjunction with Chabad of Rice University, the students were dispatched to community homes to help people clean up. According to Rabbi Shmuly Slonim, as soon as word went out, groups from other campus Chabad centers volunteered. "Word spread

to get rid of the mess, save what we can, try to prevent mold in the houses."

More than the work they actually contribute, Seth observes, is the message this sends to Harvey survivors. "When someone needs help we don't care how difficult it is to get there, we'll be there. So if some students put in more time traveling than they will have on the ground, the message they are sending is that 'we stand with Houston, we stand with Chabad at Rice.' And any of us would do the same for them."

First Responders

It will be some time before survivors can process events of the past week. But for people whose lives were in peril, like Nancy Reingold, the gratitude will be there to mitigate the difficult aftermath. Nancy was used to floods. The torrential downpours following Hurricane Harvey would come and go quickly, the Houston resident thought. As the water level rose in her house, she grabbed some food and went upstairs to wait out the hurricane. But the water level kept rising.

Alone, she grew concerned. This was beginning to look different from the other floods she's weathered. "This is life-threatening," she realized. She called her closest relative: her son in London.

He called a friend who called another friend. Menuchi Cagan, a former London resident who now lives in Houston, was out of town when she received the call. But recognizing the danger, she quickly forwarded a plea for help to the Chabad Harvey Relief Whatsapp group. Within hours Nancy was rescued by Tomer Benshushan and his friend Moshiko, both former IDF soldiers who

quickly and everyone wanted to join." Students traveled as much as 16 hours to get to Houston, where they delivered food supplies and participated in clean-up.

"There's no better use of my time today then to go out and help people in this city,"

an emotional toll on even the hardest. Softening the blow are the hands that are reaching out from across the country in a dramatic volunteer effort that many say has been bringing out the best in people.

Esty Zaklikofsky is the Chabad representative to Bel-



In Bellaire, Texas, where many homes were devastated and all were impacted by floods from Hurricane Harvey, children were given a much-needed break, while their parents dealt with storm logistics, at a pop-up school at The Shul of Bellaire.

laire, one of the hardest hit areas of Houston. Speaking on Facebook this past Friday in a Shabbat message from her flooded house, the young mother had this to say: "This past week has been so surreal, challenging, and overwhelming. I almost can't remember what life was like before Harvey hit. Despite all the terror and exhaustion, one thing is crystal clear: there is no leadership crisis. Every single person in this city has picked themselves up by their bootstraps and reached out to help people of all backgrounds. We've witnessed how many people have been coming together for the relief efforts.

said Seth Kimmel, a junior studying mechanical engineering at Rice University, Sunday. Seth recently got involved with Chabad on his campus. A transfer student, Seth was new to the city but determined to roll up his sleeves. "Everyone here has to play their part."

Chabad of Rice connected Seth and his friends to community members in Houston who could use the help, "but wouldn't be comfortable asking." The efforts snowballed. Students have gone visiting homes, packing up anything that is salvageable and throwing out damaged and waterlogged furniture. "We're here

are part of the Chabad community in Houston.

On record as the worst disaster in Texas history, Hurricane Harvey, the tropical cyclone that made landfall on August 25, dumped more than a trillion gallons of rain in the greater Houston area, putting an entire major city under water with a death toll now at 50. More than 200,000 people have sought emergency FEMA assistance; 32,000 have been evacuated to shelters around the state. The National Guard --all 14,000 troops have been activated to handle rescue missions--not nearly enough to help the staggering number of



people in distress.

Rabbi Chaim Lazaroff has been coordinating Chabad activities on the ground in Houston, where the state's 11 Chabad centers have now all turned their resources and efforts toward providing rescue and relief to survivors. "We have an 'army' of over 500 volunteers clocking 1000's of hours, to try to reach everyone who needed

tense life-saving missions, the two friends rescued over 100 people in the Meyerland and Bellaire areas.

Dr. Jorge Raichman, a local Jewish doctor, was stuck in his car for 20 hours without food. Victor Grinshtein and Daniel Cotlar, who belong to Chabad of Houston, rowed through floodwaters for several hours before reaching him.



Rabbi Chaim Lazaroff, left, co-director of Chabad of Uptown, hands containers of baby formula to a father in Houston. Chabad-Lubavitch Texas Regional Headquarters has been coordinating rescue and relief efforts since the start of Hurricane Harvey.

to be saved from rising waters," he says. The efforts are comprehensive. After numerous life-saving rescue missions, Chabad has been helping place families in shelters and providing evacuees with warm kosher meals.

"The entire city went into 'how can we help?' mode," says Basya Benshushan, Tomer's wife. Through his work as an engineer, Tomer's friend Moshiko had access to a Vietnamese military vehicle that was parked 45 minutes away at George Bush International Airport. But the rainfall was so heavy they couldn't see the roads. Risking their lives, they plodded through, "relying on Waze, intuition, and G-d." people trapped in precarious situations.

They reached the waterlogged army truck. Moshiko used his mechanical expertise and after three hours of intense work, they managed to jumpstart the engine and get the truck up and running so they could start rescuing stranded people. Basya coordinated their rescue efforts from her flooded home. "I kept getting calls from mothers and grandchildren. We tried to get help for everyone who reached out to us." With the coastguard maxed out, there were people who had been treading water in their homes for days, waiting for help.

At one rescue site, Tomer didn't have the equipment needed to transport an 85-year-old dialysis patient who was stuck with his wife and two dogs. "Within hours of posting on Facebook, a medic was there," says Basya. "Thank G-d, they safely made it to shelter." During those days of in-

Multiply that by 500 volunteers coordinated by Chabad, plus all the others including state, city, religious and social organizations, and there's no overstating the scope of this effort. When danger and damage such as unleashed by Harvey take so many by surprise, survival often hinges on the goodness of people like the Benshushans and Moshiko.

International Network

Once the immediate danger of the flood subsided and the storm's peak passed, Chabad moved fast, providing aid for some of the tens of thousands displaced persons. "Many of our community members were stranded in shelters or hotels," says Rabbi Mendy Feigenson of Sugarland. "We had to evacuate our Chabad house."

Chabad Headquarters worked with local emissaries to address the affected areas' needs in an organized efficient, and comprehensive manner. "We are lucky to have a vast network of leaders who are on site in so many of these areas" says Rabbi Mendy Sharfstein, who led the central crisis management team from his office in New York where a relief website was launched and social media accounts were dedicated to the relief activities. "It's been amazing to see how quickly each Chabad emissary stepped up to the plate."

Using Chabad's social media platforms, calls for volunteers went out, a supply bank was put together, and host families were identified. Those in need could fill out forms to have volunteers help them re-

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Emerging From the Flood Waters: True Kindness

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pair their homes from the hurricane's damage or find a temporary place to sleep. Offers of help from all over the country came in, some in monetary forms and others through volunteering.

Post-disaster, food is hard to come by, especially kosher food. Aishel House, an organization that provides meal accommodations to Jewish patients and their families at Texas Medical Center, was enlisted to help provide kosher food for evacuees. Their commercial kitchen and professional staff prepared meals for over 1000 hungry, desperate people. "I can't tell you how much we appreciated the delivery," writes Rachel Goodman on Facebook.

At the Lazaroff Chabad Center, community members arrived to help prepare meals. When they ran low on kosher ingredients, Rabbi Dovid Goldtsein of Houston, arranged for a fresh supply which arrived Thursday evening.

"The center of the Jewish community got hit hard," says Rabbi Yossi Zaklikofsky of Bellaire, Texas, whose own house was flooded wall-to-wall. His family moved to their second floor to wait out the storm.

"The Meyerland area always gets the brunt of bad weather, but the severity of this storm was totally unprecedented and reached Bellaire as well."

With 11 Chabad branches in the Greater Metro Area of Houston, each coordinated a different aspect of the relief effort: treasurer, community liaison, media spokesperson, supplies, public information and other sectors. Says Rabbi Yossi Zaklikofsky who coordinated

media coverage: "We knew we could have the biggest impact if we banded together." With the help from Chabad on Campus, the relief efforts got another shot in the arm.

Leah Sherman from Memphis Tennessee is grateful to be where she can "tangibly contribute to the recovery after such a massive disaster." A senior studying bioengineering, she has been acting as the group leader and liaison between the



A volunteer at Aishel House at the Texas Medical Center in Houston prepares kosher food for flood victims. With stores that typically carry kosher-food items under water, staples and supplies are not available.

I Just Became a Bar Mitzvah at Age 70 on Top of the Rockies

Rabbinical students Mendel Teifenbrun, left, and Mendel Liberow, right, celebrated the Jewish milestone of Christopher (Bienbrech) Bonebrake this week in Telluride, Colo.

I Just Became a Bar Mitzvah at Age 70 on Top of the Rockies

By Christopher (Bienbrech) Bonebrake | August 16, 2017

Let me tell you a little story. It was a cloudless day on Monday in Telluride, Colo., a small Western town high in the Rocky Mountains filled with forests and rivers. This is my eighth year visiting my son Matthew in Telluride, and I have made many friends there over the years. I was on my way into town to run a few errands—mail some postcards home, have lunch with a friend and do some shopping at the market.

Telluride is full of tourists this time of year. As I passed the busy town park, I saw two young men in the crowd. Their appearance was very distinctive, and I immediately recognized them as Jewish men. Neatly groomed with beards, they were wearing handsome black suits and broad-brimmed hats. Without hesitation, I called out the window: "Shalom, my brothers, shalom!"

I came to a stop in the street as one of them quickly approached my car.

Without hesitation, we clasped hands. The first words from his mouth were: "Are you Jewish?"

I replied: "No, but my mother is."

He asked: "Is your grandmother Jewish?"

I said: "Yes." And he said

emphatically: "Then you are Jewish."

At that moment, I knew I had to talk to these young men, sent by Chabad of Southern Colorado to perform mitzvahs with Jews in the area. I made a hasty U-turn in the street and quickly parked my car. They were standing on the curb watching me as I walked across the street. We shook hands, and I was introduced to Mendel and Mendy. I wanted to know more about them, so I suggested that we walk into the park a bit and sit down for a talk.

I told them the story of my Jewish grandparents and how they had crossed Europe in the early 1900s to escape the pogroms of Belarus and Lithuania. They settled in the East End of London, and made a life for themselves and their four daughters in the Jewish community. Their homes were bombed and destroyed during the Nazi blitz of 1940, but they survived. My father was an American sailor stationed in London. He met my mother and her family, and after the war, he sponsored their journey and settlement in America.

Then Mendy asked me the most poignant question: "Did you celebrate your bar mitzvah?"

No, I had not had a bar mitzvah ceremony when I was younger. My father's family were American Methodists, and everyone seemed to get along nicely without much talk of religion. And what would a 10- or 12-year-old boy know about such things? But talking with these rabbinical students, a host of memories came flooding

back to me.

"You can be bar mitzvahed here, now, today in the park," they said.

I couldn't believe it! I had never been asked or offered the opportunity. My beautiful mother had expressed regrets to me on several occasions at not having raised my brother, sister and me in the tradition of her Jewish ancestors. But that was many years ago; she's 90 and I'm 70—two lifetimes nearly gone with so much that has happened over the years.

Again they offered, and I couldn't say no. I noticed a striking black bag with Hebrew letters etched in gold. It was quickly opened. A yarmulke appeared and was placed on



Chabad campus rabbi and rebetzin and the students.

The student volunteers will also dedicate Monday, Labor Day, to the cleanup, before returning to their respective col-

leges in time for the first day of classes.

"It warms my heart that we have such a nationwide strong Jewish community nationwide, that students are willing to give up their time to help people they've never met." Students are coming this way to help people they'll never see again. It's true kindness. "Definitely bringing out the best of a lot of people, near and far."

With the worst danger behind them, everyone now, says Basya, "is in massive rebuild mode." Basya used her marketing skills to create a video for Harvey relief. Her husband has put together a team of 6 construction workers from his business to help citizens recover homes from the destruction.

"Destruction, loss, and sadness are all around us," finishes Basya, her voice choked up with tears, "People lost everything. At the same time, though, there is an incredible amount of giving. It feels like a miracle."

my head as the scroll boxes, or tefillin, were put into place. Before I knew it, I was reciting prayers in Hebrew and recalling the words my zayda had used at Passover. The world seemed to melt away for a moment as I gained confidence in reciting the words. Soon we were holding hands, singing and dancing in the town park, taking no notice of the people walking by.

I remember Mendy teaching me about a Divine spark and my relationship to G d. Then, as quickly as it happened, I was hugging Mendel and Mendy, and saying "shalom" over and over again. I thought: Am I crazy? Is this really happening? I quickly got

my mother on the phone and introduced her to Mendy, who explained that now she had a son who was a proper Jew—well almost, without the years of study and practice. We soon parted, and I promised to stay in touch and come to see them in New York after returning to my home near Washington, D.C.

And there I was. Standing in the bright light of day having just had a bar mitzvah at 9,000 feet with two Jewish men I had met minutes earlier. I called my dearest Uncle Saul in Florida and told him that I just become a bar mitzvah in the town park. With his usual sense of wit, he said the next knock on my door would be the mohel.



Rabbinical students Mendel Teifenbrun, left, and Mendel Liberow, right, celebrated the Jewish milestone of Christopher (Bienbrech) Bonebrake this week in Telluride, Colo.

Wilderness Rabbi Leads Teens from Rugged Yosemite Trails to Pacific High Seas

By Menachem Posner | As a writer for Chabad.org, I've interviewed rescue workers chopping around Nepal, student rabbis traversing the Amazon jungle and Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries battling rising floodwaters up on the Rockies.

Yet one of the hardest people to reach was Rabbi

me where you are. And who's with you?

A: We are between Alamosa and Blanca, Colo. I am with 31 students and five staff members, all of whom participated in YOA as students. We just climbed Blanca Peak. It took us two days to reach the top. When we got there, we learned Torah and had a *farbrengen*. We then hiked

mentor at a high school in Melbourne, Australia. At one point, we took the boys out to a bush and I observed the most wonderful thing: Boys who were not academically well off and may have even gotten made fun of by their peers blossomed into leaders. Suddenly, boys who had been lagging behind became very productive, and everyone else was benefiting



Rabbi Michael Harari, right, founded and directs Camp Yeshiva Outdoor Adventure, which takes high school boys deep into the wilderness for weeks at a time. (Photo: Camp YOA)

Michael Harari.

An accomplished educator in Miami, the 35-year-old is founder and director of Camp Yeshiva Outdoor Adventure (YOA), which takes high school boys deep into the wilderness for weeks at a time. In an interview that spanned nearly a month (he typically sees his phone once a week and often loses service even in those rare instances), we discussed the inspiration and grit that goes into creating life-changing summer.

Q: I know that you're busy out there, so why don't you begin by telling

down to a lake for morning prayers and hiked another 14 more miles to where we are now.

Our students come from all over: New York, Florida, California. Over the years, we've been to British Columbia near Alaska, up in Maine, to Yellowstone and Yosemite, and every state and national park that comes to mind. Last year, we even went out to sea on the Pacific for four weeks.

Q: Sounds like the adventure of a lifetime. What inspired you to do this?

A: As an older *yeshivah* student, I served as a

from their leadership.

Later on, I taught Jewish teens in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, and I saw the same thing when we took our students on a two-week camping trip in Romania.

Once I saw the beauty of young people being transformed by living out in nature, it was something I have done every year. This is the 11th year that we have been running Camp YOA, and we see the same dynamic play itself out with boys from many different backgrounds.

Q: Are you selective about who goes out with you? What do you do if there is a boy who cannot hack it?

A: We do a lot of research, but we are not selective in the traditional sense. We don't really look at academic accomplishment, physical abilities or even leadership qualities. Instead, we look for people who are sincerely open to growing and stretching themselves beyond what they think possible. We look at the attitude, heart and mind. We've had strong kids who fail and weaker ones who did the program.

Being out in the back country together—often relying on each other for our very lives—we grow into an incredibly close unit, and the boys are open to changing in



As part of the program, the boys hike, swim, climb, steer, row, rappel, pray and celebrate Shabbat. (Photo: Camp YOA)



ways they would have never have considered.

Q: Have there been times that you have feared for the boys' lives?

A: First of all, the staff and I are heavily trained for all kinds of emergency responses. I am an EMT, wilderness EMT; have trained in search and rescue; and volunteer for Hatzalah in Miami, among other things. Among our staff members this year we have EMTs and a former medic with the special forces in the Israeli Army. We generally make sure that our staff is trained in CPR and wilderness first aid as well.

We also have an intense period of training before camp. In fact, we spend 10 months researching and preparing so that we are ready for the challenges that come our way. All possible contingency plans are also laid out.

Yet nothing can be scripted, and weather is a factor. We once had a blizzard in Wyoming in July that covered our trail, and there was no way for us to see the path back.

Through dead reckoning (and Divine help), we came out of it, but we were covered in snow for two days. One kid (who is an athlete and a leader) told me that until that moment, he had always felt like a big shot. But out in the wilderness covered in snow, for the first time in his life, he felt insignificant. It was a defining moment for him.

Q: What is Shabbat like in camp? How do you create a Jewish atmosphere when you are so far away from synagogues and family?

A: We try to get a roof over our heads for Shabbat. But even when we are out in the back country, it's different. When you work so hard all week and lead such a rigorous routine, the very fact that you are not working

gives you an intense feeling of rest. Once a week, we allow ourselves to stay up late and sleep in past 5 a.m.

Of course, we dress up in our Shabbat suits and eat catered food that we get shipped up from Miami. A big part of this program is learning how to be true to ourselves, no matter where we are and what circumstances we may be in.

Q: Do the kids grow in their Yiddishkeit?

A: They grow in all areas. In this program, you know the people with you as well as your own siblings. We had kids who were classmates but told us that they did not know each other as well as they did after four days of camp. The entire environment is one of growing and advancing; it uplifts everyone.

They're outside of their comfort zone on many levels—growing, exploring and changing. They signed up for that.

That's what inspires me as well—knowing that we are changing lives. This is also what motivates my wife to put up with my absences—knowing that I am off helping real people improve in real ways.



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Rabbinical Student's Vision Yields 300 Pairs of Glasses for Kids in Nigeria

By Faygie Levy Holt
Hundreds of Nigerian children have their first pair of eyeglasses, thanks in part to a rabbinical student, a New York City eyeglasses store and Chabad of Nigeria. For years, Mendy Sternbach would visit the Cohen's Fashion Optical branch on Seventh Avenue in the Chelsea neighborhood of Man-

were sitting around and not being used," he continues. "They, in turn, called their friends. We got more glasses than I was able to bring for that trip!" That's when the vital work of Rabbi Israel and Haya Uzan, co-directors of Chabad of Nigeria, came into play. Living in the most populous country in Africa—

al humanitarian projects the Uzans have undertaken since establishing their Chabad House in 2013. Among other projects are programs for children with special needs, helping local orphanages and developing technology classes for local residents. The Uzans also opened a brand-new mikvah this past March in the capital city of Abuja. Uzan estimates that they donated a total of 300 pairs of glasses and plan to give away more thanks to the partnership with Cohen's Fashion Optical, which continues to collect used eyeglasses from other outlets as well. As for how many more they may need, the rabbi



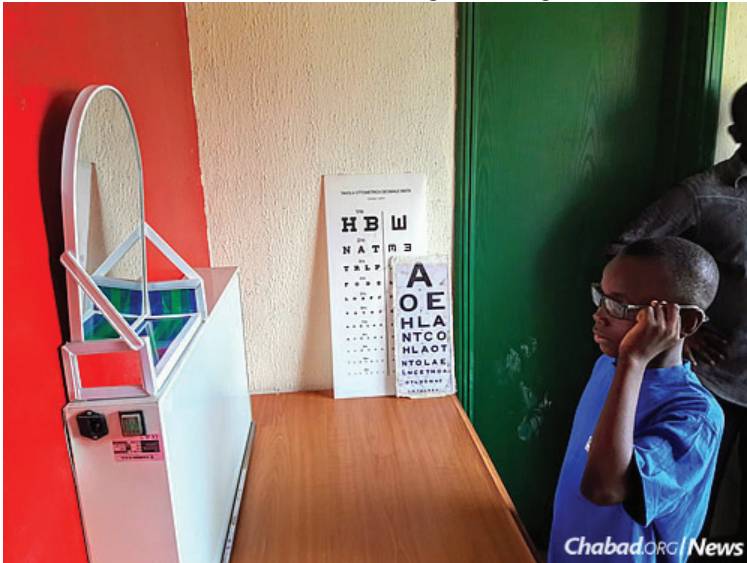
Mendy Sternbach with Agnes Olaor, the director of a local orphanage where children got their eyes tested. (Photo: Chabad of Nigeria)

hattan each Friday to wish employees a good Shabbat and put tefillin on with some of the staff. One Friday, he mentioned that he was going to Nigeria to help with Jewish programming for an upcoming holiday. "The store manager said that he had a big box of used glasses and asked if I had any use for them in Nigeria," says Sternbach. "Realizing the potential, we discussed some of the practical aspects of glasses, like getting the children checked by an ophthalmologist and how to best fit used glasses on them. "Then I called my friends and family asking them for their old pairs of glasses that

and also where an estimated 71 percent of residents live on less than \$1 a day and 92 percent on less than \$2 a day—they knew there was a definite need for the glasses. The couple contacted some organizations they had worked with before, including a local school and orphanage, and found they would welcome the gift of improved sight for their youngsters. To make sure the kids got what they needed, explains Rabbi Uzan, doctors from the College of Medicine at the University of Lagos—Nigeria's largest city—came to test their eyesight. The eyeglass-distribution program is one of sever-



replies: "We're not sure people don't even know they because in many villages, might need glasses."



Sukkos Warmth in Igloo Sukkah

Rabbi Dovid Pinson, Shliach in Edmonton, Alberta, shakes the Lulav in his igloo sukkah, bringing the warmth of Sukkos into the cold. Although many of us enjoy wonderful weather around the world during Sukkos, harsh weather brings inches of snow upon Edmonton, making it difficult to stay outdoors for long.

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A Cry up to Heaven is Answered in Rural Denmark

By Mendel Danow and Levi Loewenthal

It was Wednesday afternoon, and we had just finished meeting with several Jews in the city of Aarhus.

Previously, we had been driving around Denmark, visiting communities without any Jewish presence whatsoever. We helped people strengthen their personal connections with Judaism by putting on tefillin with them, hanging mezuzahs on their doors and speaking with them about Yiddishkeit.

here, that He cares.”

He stopped and looked at us. “And then I see an unknown number calling,” he told us in wonder. “Someone called Mendel is on the phone. He is calling from Chabad, and he wants to come over and say hello. There was no clearer sign for me. This was Gd’s way of reaching out to me, of telling me He is here with me in this struggle.”

We spoke with him at length, comforting him. We encouraged him to be more joyous, to focus on the positive, to try and see all the good and

Gd, as well how Gd watches over everyone, connecting it to the mitzvah of mezuzah. He then said he wanted to put up a mezuzah on his door.

Before we left, he told us that he had a Jewish Danish friend called Casper, a philosopher, and he had a feeling that he would be very interested in meeting us. Chanan called him to invite him over, but he couldn’t make it. Instead, we made plans to meet the next day.

When we arrived at Casper’s apartment in the city center, he started off by telling us a bit about his background. He informed us that his grandfather had been very involved in the Jewish community in Copenhagen; he had even started the Jewish school there. Casper himself had no affiliation with Judaism, although he was very interested in Kabbalah and the likes since he was a philosopher.

We spoke to him about different topics in Judaism, and he was very attentive. One of the topics that came up, of course, was tefillin, which he had never heard about before. When he heard what it signifies, the power it holds and what a special mitzvah it is, he was more than happy to put them on.

So we put tefillin on Casper for the first time in his life.

“Casper, this is your bar mitzvah!” we exclaimed.

He was so overjoyed that he started dancing with us right there in the middle of his apartment. We made a heartfelt l’chaim for his bar mitzvah at the age of 47 on a regular Thursday morning.



Chanan, right, puts on tefillin for the first time in many years with the assistance of rabbinical student Mendel Danow.

At that point, we felt we had met the Jews within reach and had completed what we had set out to do. We contemplated whether or not to return to Copenhagen, the capital city, and assist the Chabad emissaries there.

As we were driving along the streets, unsure how to continue, we looked over our list of Jewish names and noticed that there was one person we still hadn’t contacted—someone who lived two hours from where we were. We weren’t sure if we should call him since he was so far away. However, every Jew counts, and we dialed the number.

His name was Chanan, and he lived in Aalborg. “We’re from Chabad,” we told him. “Would you like us to come over, and we can discuss Judaism for a bit?”

“Chabad?” he asked with a pause. Then he said, “Please, come over.” He sounded excited.

So we drove up north and arrived at Chanan’s house as he was in middle of eating supper. He felt bad that he couldn’t offer us anything to eat, aside from fruit. We assured him that it was OK and sat down.

“No Clearer Sign”

As we were talking, he started to open up to us, saying, “I was married to a non-Jewish woman, and we had two girls. Recently, I divorced her.” He sighed heavily, pained. “Unfortunately, she has custody of the girls. I’m not allowed to have any contact with my own daughters.”

“This morning,” he said, “I was at work and feeling particularly low and upset by my state. So I spoke to Gd. I told Him how hard this is for me, how lonely I feel, and I asked Him to please show me His presence, to show me that He is

beauty that Gd has given him in his life. Then we offered to put tefillin on him.

“I haven’t put on tefillin in years,” he said.



Casper, right, celebrates his bar mitzvah after putting on tefillin for the first time, at age 47, with rabbinical student Levi Loewenthal.

He became very emotional as we helped put them on; he started crying.

Afterwards, we explained the purpose of our visit to Denmark, and how hundreds of Chabad students visit thousands of Jews in all parts of the world. How this effort was initiated by the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory—many years earlier and continues ever so strongly today. We spoke about the Rebbe’s care and love for every Jew, no matter where he may be or his affiliation to Judaism. We also encouraged him to write a letter to the Rebbe, and send it to the Ohel to get the Rebbe’s blessing and help in his troubles. Gladly, he took the email address from us to send his letter.

We stayed for a while longer, discussing belief and trust in

We spoke to him about the importance of a mezuzah, and he immediately wanted to put one up on his door. So we did. He very much enjoyed our visit, and after we left sent us a warm email expressing his thanks, as well as an inquiry as to where he could purchase a pair of tefillin. We are right now in the middle of buying him a pair in New York and sending them over to Denmark.

Later that day, he posted on social media: “Today I became Bar Mitzvah—an adult Jew.”

From there, we continued on the Rebbe’s shlichus throughout Denmark, touched by the inner spark that lies within the depths of every Jew and the special connections we formed with our fellow Jews in such forsaken places.



Survivor Moshe Holtzberg Pledges to Return to Mumbai

“I want to ask you something from all my heart... please continue to remember my parents.”

The appeal to India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi by 11 year-old Moshe Holtzberg was heartrending. On his first official visit to Israel, PM Modi met with Moshe, who was left orphaned at age three when his parents were murdered by Islamic terrorists in his home in Mumbai.

Mumbai,” he told Moshe to a round of applause.

Chabad’s representative to Mumbai, Rabbi Israel Kozlovsky, was reached at the Chabad House in Mumbai. “I look forward to the day when Moshe comes to India and continues the great work his parents did here.”

Moshe was just a toddler when terrorists stormed Nariman House, the Chabad house in Mumbai where the Holtzbergs were headquar-



Indian Prime Minister Modi hugs Moshe Holtzberg as his grandparents and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu look on

“My parents lived in Mumbai, and they helped every person—Jewish and non-Jewish alike,” Moshe said in his prepared remarks. “Their house was open to everyone.”

Moshe, his grandparents Rabbi Shimon and Yehudit Rosenberg, and his former nanny Sandra Samuels met Modi and Israeli prime minister Bibi Netanyahu on July 5th, in Jerusalem.

“I live in Afula, but I always remember my connection to Nariman House,” Moshe said. When he gets older, he said, he plans to live in Mumbai and “be the director of our Chabad House with G-d’s help. This is my house, a house of goodness.”

Prime Minister Modi extended a warm, open invitation to young Moshe. “If you would like to come stay in Mumbai, you are most welcome. You and your family members. You can come anytime and go anywhere.”

Prime Minister Netanyahu promised to make it a joint trip. “Prime Minister Modi invited me to come to India, and you will come with me to

tered, and took the occupants hostage. They later killed his parents, Rabbi Gavriel Noach and Rivkah, as well as six other tourists. Rivkah was six months pregnant at the time. The attack on Nariman House was one in a series of five coordinated attacks that killed 166 people.

Moshe was saved by Samuels, who heard his cries as she was hiding downstairs. She grabbed him and fled the scene. When Moshe later moved to Israel to live with his grandparents, she moved there as well and received honorary citizenship for her heroism.

Today, Moshe lives with his grandparents in northern Israel, where Samuels often visits them on the weekends.

Modi’s trip marks the first visit to Israel by an Indian prime minister, and commemorates 25 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Modi was accompanied by Israeli Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu for the majority of his three-day long tour.

Dear Rebby

By Rabbi Aron Moss



Countdown to Save Your Life

We Jews are funny. The new year is the most solemn day of the year. No fire-crackers or all night parties, just praying. Where's the fun? Shouldn't new years be a reason to party, and not be so serious?

Answer:

Your question was answered for me by the traffic light on the corner.

New York is famous for its swarms of pedestrians crossing the street, often ignoring the lights and oblivious to oncoming cars. Not only will people start crossing when the lights are already flashing red, but even when the red hand stops flashing and sternly warns them to stop, they will start dashing across en masse, blocking traffic and risking their own lives.

So the City of New York came up with a new antidote to kamikaze crossers. At certain busy intersections when the light starts to flash red, at the same time a number is displayed right next to the red light, counting down the seconds that remain before the cars will get their green light. The crossers now know exactly how long they have to make a dash.

It seems to work. Tension is built by this dramatic count down. You feel as if you are passing over the track of a grand prix just before the starter shoots the gun, or walking the streets of Spain moments before the bulls are about to be released. If you see you have three seconds to cross a wide street, you may think twice before making a suicidal dash. This system is now standard in many cities around the world.

The funny thing is, this system is not so different to the usual way traffic signals work. You always get a warning when the light flashes red. The difference is, here you know exactly how long you have. Every second is accounted for.

How different would we live our lives if we knew exactly how long we have? How much more urgently would we rush to do good if we could actually see the seconds ticking away? How much less time would we waste on foolishness if we could see that every moment is numbered? Moses said it like this: "Teach

us to number our days, so that we may acquire a heart of wisdom." (Psalms 90:12)

We have entered the last week of the Jewish year. Next week is Rosh Hashanah. A year gone by, another one about to arrive. The clock is ticking away. We have far to go, and precious little time to get there. Maybe now is a good time to start taking life a little seriously...

Cool Nidrei?

(from Batya age 8)

Why do we wear tennis shoes or crocs on Yom Kippur? It used to be a luxury to wear leather shoes in the olden days, but today it's not such a big deal to wear leather, and anyway non-leather shoes are just as comfortable, and quite cool. So why can't we just wear leather shoes?

Answer:

Shoes are what connect us to the earth. And so footwear represent what life on earth is all about. Sometimes we can wear leather shoes, sometimes we shouldn't.

Leather is animal skin that has been processed and refined. A coarse piece of rawhide is stretched and boiled, treated and purified, to make a final product that is smooth to touch and comfortable to wear.

The human being is like an animal in many ways. We eat and drink, and spend a lot of time worrying about our own survival. Our soul's mission on earth is to take the animal within us and tame it, to smooth out the rough edges of our personality, to transform our leather into shoes.

We do this work every day of the year, except one.

One day a year we withdraw from the physical world and retreat into a world of pure soul. Because while the human being may be similar to an animal, we are also similar to angels. We each have a deeply spiritual side, a side that is pure and holy. It can sometimes get lost beneath our animal side. So one day a year we shed our animal-like exterior and become angelic, connecting to our soul and letting its light shine.

That day is Yom Kippur. Adults do not eat or drink, and we do no physical work. We escape for a day to a

spiritual haven. And we don't wear leather shoes. We are not taming any animals today. We are singing with the angels.

By the end of Yom Kippur, your body may be tired, but your soul is refreshed. You will be ready to put your leather shoes back on, and begin again your task of taming the animal. Because your mission is not to be an angel, but to be a good human being, by refining your own inner animal and revealing your unique soul. No one else can fill your shoes.

Can I Miss My Soulmate?

A friend and I have been going back and forth in regards to dating. She is in no rush to get married, but feels pressured to "get out there" lest she miss out on her soulmate. I say what will be will be, and if it is meant to happen then it will. Can one's soulmate be "stolen" if they don't act in haste?

Answer:

It is most certainly possible to miss out on your soulmate.

The Talmud discusses certain times of the year when Jewish law does not allow weddings to take place. One of them is during a festival, like Pesach, as we do not want to mix celebrations together. However the Talmud says that while you can't perform a wedding during a festival, you can make shidduch - a match between prospective mates with a view to get married. The reasoning the Talmud gives is that while a wedding can wait until after the festival, if you delay making a match someone else may beat you to your soulmate.

But how can one person take a soulmate destined for someone else?

Through raising your soul to a higher level.

If you work on yourself, improve your character and refine yourself to a new spiritual plane, then your soulmate changes. A new improved soul gets a new improved soulmate.

And who will be that new improved soulmate? Someone whose original soulmate has either fallen to a lower spiritual level and doesn't deserve them anymore, or is dithering around, wondering if they are ready to get married...

This teaches us an amazing principle in soulmate

searching. The two things that can cause you to lose your soulmate are spiritual decline, or lack of real effort. And the two things that will most help you find your soulmate are self-improvement, and determined effort.

Sit around and nothing will happen. But as long as you are out there, and as long as you are working on yourself, you will find him.

A Lopsided Wedding Ceremony?

I am getting married in two months from now, and last night we had a meeting with the rabbi who will be conducting the ceremony. Something came up which I am quite uncomfortable with: the issue of only the groom giving the bride a ring, and not vice versa. This essentially represents to me that I am being purchased. The idea that there is a problem with the bride also giving the groom a ring seems absurd to me. Surely I have as much say in the agreement to be married as my husband-to-be?

I know I am allowed to give the ring after the ceremony. However, I want to exchange rings during the ceremony. Gender equality is a very important issue to me. I am a highly educated woman, and I also value my Jewish identity, but I am quite upset about this. I would like to hear your opinion...

Answer:

I fully understand your concern. Many couples have asked me the same question. Coming from a modern perspective, it does seem a little lopsided for the man to give the ring exclusively. But I believe when you understand the meaning of the ring giving, you may feel differently.

The chuppah is an exact spiritual operation to join your souls together. It is not just a ceremony celebrating your already existing relationship, it is a life-changing event that creates a new relationship. Before the chuppah you are two souls. After the chuppah, you are one. Still two individuals, with two minds and two hearts, but a united soul.

We can understand how two souls can become one by observing how two bodies can become one. The act of reproduction is the physical union

of man and woman. In this bodily union, the man gives and the woman receives. Only this way can new life be created, a child conceived. That child is an actual manifestation of the unity of the parents. Man and woman have literally become one flesh.

The physical world is a mirror image of the spiritual world, and the workings of the soul are reflected by the workings of the body. Just as physical intimacy is the union of bodies, the wedding ceremony is an act of spiritual intimacy, uniting souls. And so in this act of spiritual union the man, expressing the male power of bestowal, gives the ring to the woman, the feminine receiver, making them one.

An exchange of rings doesn't create unity, just as an exchange of seed for egg would not produce a child. Only when the groom gives the ring and the bride receives it, then this singular act of his giving and her receiving produces oneness. Any attempt to alter that process would be, quite literally, counterproductive.

We can't play around with the facts of life. The spiritual life has facts too. May you and your partner be blessed with true oneness, and from that oneness may many little ones come.

Why Can't My Husband TELL ME He'll be Late?

My husband just doesn't seem to get it. He came home over an hour late last night without so much as calling to tell me that he won't be on time. This is the fifth time he has done this and we are only married three months! It may seem petty but it upsets me greatly. I don't want him to see me as a nagging wife. What should I do?

Answer:

There is something you need to know about men. They are loners. Being in a relationship is unnatural to them. They do not automatically think about how their actions affect someone else. The default emotional state of a man is loneliness.

This is not true of women. A woman has an innate sense of relationship, of connection to others. A woman naturally shares of herself and bonds with others, a man does not. She is a relationship being, he is a lonely being.

Dear Rebby

By Rabbi Aron Moss



Of course, it is a huge generalisation to say that all men are loners and all women are connectors. Generalisations are never accurate. But to say generalisations are never accurate is itself a generalisation, and thus not accurate either.

So let's generalise: Man's natural state is to be single. Woman's natural state is to be in a couple.

There is a solid base for this theory. It stretches all the way back to the beginning of time, to the first man and the first woman, Adam and Eve.

Adam was created alone. His original state was that of a bachelor. But Eve was created from Adam. She was never single. Eve by her very nature was a relationship being, because she was created with her partner next to her. She had an inborn sense of interconnectedness, she intuitively knew that we are not alone in this world, that our actions impact others and that we must be sensitive to those around us. This was innate to her psyche, for she was never alone.

But all this was new to Adam. He had to learn what a relationship means, and how to be aware of another, for at his core he was a lonely being.

Adam is the essential man, and Eve the essential woman. And so until today women are relationship beings and men are lonely beings. Not that all women are good at relationships, and not that all men are hopeless hermits. Rather, women are more likely to know how to bond with others, and men are more likely to need to learn how to connect.

So your husband has no idea why you are upset when he comes home late. He may be thinking, "Why can't she occupy herself until I get there? Is she so insecure that she can't look after herself for an extra hour or so?" What he doesn't yet understand is that while he is a loner, you are a connector. You don't need him to be physically with you all the time, but emotionally, he must be with you all the time. If he would just call to say he is late, you will not be feel alone, because he showed that he cares, he has bonded with you.

Eve's mission was to help Adam come out of his isolation and learn how to connect. You need to do this too. Explain to your husband that it is not his lateness that upsets you, it is that he wasn't considerate enough to com-

municate his lateness to you. Help him understand that he is no longer alone, and show him how beautiful the world is when shared with someone else.

Give it time. You can't cure existential loneliness overnight. But if you persevere, with gentleness and love, he will open up that lonely place inside him and let you in. Then you can share your lives in your own Garden of Eden, and never be lonely again.

Do You EVER Get Angry?

I've had a question for a while now and no one has been able to give me a satisfying answer. I want to know why it sometimes seems that we depict G-d as a tantruming little child. For example, many times in the Torah it says that we should not say or do something that is forbidden since that will make G-d very angry. What am I supposed to make of that? How can I respect a G-d who is on the edge of blowing up if we don't follow what He says?

Answer:

Imagine being married to a man who never gets angry. Ever. About anything. You insult him and he shrugs. You are rude to him and he is nice back to you. You give attention to others and he isn't the least bit jealous.

Would that be a wonderful marriage?

Well, on one level, yes, it would be fantastic. No tension, no issues, no arguments or fights or silent treatment.

But in truth, it wouldn't be good at all. It wouldn't be a relationship. If he never gets upset at you, it means that you don't really matter to him. If nothing you do moves him, it means he doesn't care enough to be impacted by you.

Being in a relationship means affecting each other. For better or for worse, your heart is intertwined with someone else's. If you aren't getting a reaction, then you aren't connecting. You may be married, but you are really alone.

G-d created the world so He could have a relationship with us. He made a huge gamble, creating humans with

free choice to do whatever we want, and He invested Himself in us, allowing Himself to be impacted by our actions.

So when the Torah says that G-d will get angry if we do wrong, that is the most beautiful statement of love. G-d is saying, "You matter to me. Your actions touch me. I have invested myself in you. This relationship is real."

We only get upset at people who matter to us. When your husband gets annoyed at you, take it as his way of saying you matter to him. You matter to G-d too.

Does Cremation Honour Holocaust Victims?

I need an urgent answer. I am right now by the bed-

side of a dying man who told me that he wants to be cremated to show solidarity with all the victims of the Nazis that were burned. I know it is an emotional argument, but how can I explain him that the opposite is true?

Answer:

The sentiment is sincere and I am sure coming from a good place. But it is a big mistake.

If we could ask the victims their opinion on this, they would scream NO, don't honour me by being cremated. They would have wanted to have a proper Jewish burial. It was the Nazis who chose cremation, not the victims. By voluntarily opting for cremation you are not perpetuating the victims wishes, but rather the nefarious wishes of their evil murderers.

There is a better way to show solidarity with our dear brothers and sisters lost in the death camps. Have a traditional Jewish funeral, be buried in the community cemetery, and have inscribed on your grave a dedication to victims of the Holocaust. Thus you will be permanently honouring their memory, and in some symbolic way giving them what they truly wished for, a dignified Jewish burial.

While their bodies were destroyed, their holy souls were untouched. They died, but their Jewishness lives on in us. We honour them by living Jewishly in our lifetime, and by being buried Jewishly in our death.

You have the choice when they did not. If you want to do something for them, choose the option that they would have chosen.

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Celebrate Your Differences

Question: My wife does many things that irritate me. For example, she never seems to be ready on time, she gets very emotional, or she insists on long conversations before we go to sleep. I find this all very irritating. Sometimes we even fight about all of this. This is not what I want from my partner. I don't see a way out! Help?

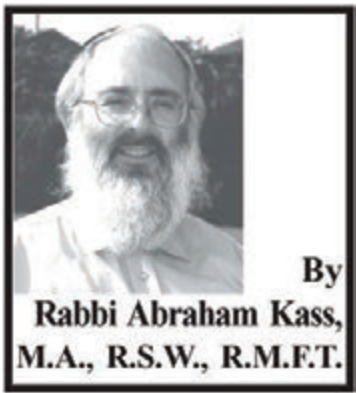
Sincerely,
Desperate for a solution

Answer: Marital relationships blossom when a husband and wife not only tolerate, but actually celebrate the differences between each other. People need different things in life. Beyond the basics, some people need extra portions of respect, others; affection, while some people cherish autonomy and independence, etc. Celebrating differences provides the opportunity for each individual within the relationship to secure, without conflict, what he or she wants or needs.

Cooperating with your partner in his or her efforts to attain his or her unique physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual goals creates a relationship imbued with genuine acceptance that lead to feelings of being understood, appreciated, and loved. Individual goals certainly must be reasonable, ethical and not injure anyone. If they meet this standard,

it becomes the partner's privilege to support these goals in every possible way.

A selfless attitude brings with it not only peace and harmony, but also creates feelings of being loved and cared for



by your partner. When you both take a position of acceptance with each other, you will both feel as if you are receiving daily gifts of love. This will then generate affection and friendship.

I would suggest to "Desperate" that you lower your expectations of what you want from your spouse as much as possible. Be honest with yourself. A relationship has certain basic requirements that cannot be compromised. The following are some useful strategies to help you achieve an accepting attitude toward your partner:

1. Understand that you and your partner are unique—and that this is a good thing. If you had married someone exactly like yourself you would have very quickly become bored.

2. Nobody is perfect. Not your spouse, nor you. As you want to be accepted, quirks and eccentricities included—so does your spouse. If you "accept" your partner, you increase the likelihood that he or she will in turn "accept" you.

3. By learning to adapt to your partner's special ways of doing things you become a better person. You learn humility, patience, and how to love unconditionally. All valued character traits and necessary ingredients for a healthy and happy life.

Strive to create pleas-

ant interactions—actions devoid of criticism, anger, or judgment. For example: Talk about topics that are of interest to both of you, spend time together working on valued project, or take turns sharing meaningful feelings and future goals. Doing so will make both of you feel good being together and will create an atmosphere in the home of genuine peace and harmony. When you and your wife emot acceptance and appreciation, soon your feelings of "desperation" will be transformed to feelings of being "loved."

A person's relationship with G-d includes how he or she relates to others. This applies in particular to how we treat our marital partner. You have an opportunity

to perform the greatest mitzvah of Ahavat Yisroel (love for another) specifically with your husband or wife. Why? Because no one else is in the unique position to help, comfort, or love him or her as you are.

The Torah teaches us a universal lesson: "Who is a happy person. The one that is happy with their portion in life." Your greatest portion in life is your husband or wife. When you are "happy"—you celebrate—how your partner is special.

===

Rabbi Kass, MA, RSW, RMFT, CCHT, is a registered Marriage and Family Therapist, Social Worker and Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist. Currently Rabbi Kass

operates a successful private practice in personal, couple and family therapy.

Before working as a therapist, Rabbi Kass was successful educational Rabbi working for many years in various Yeshivas and Seminaries. The New York Jewish Board of Education has honored him for his dedication and excellence in Jewish education.

He and his wife Golda live in Thornhill, Ontario and have been blessed with children and grandchildren.

For more information or to arrange an appointment he can be reached at (905) 771-1087 or visit his websites at: www.AbeKass.com or www.RabbiKass.com.

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AS. How long have you been involved with the Chabad Mikvah?

FS. I started working in the Mikvah after I moved to Thornhill in 1989. Since then I have worked at the south Mikvah at Edinburgh, alternating between the two throughout the years. For the past seven years I have been working at the Chabad Mikvah, 770 Chabad Gate.

AS. Whenever a new Orthodox shul is being built, the mikvah is always an integral part of the plan. Why?

FS. Most Jews consider their synagogue central to their religious life style. The Jewish law states that constructing a mikvah takes precedence over building a synagogue. In fact, a group of Jewish families living together only attain the status of community after they have created a mikvah so it an essential component in conducting day to day business. A mikvah is also used for utensils, pots and pans, as well welcoming a convert into the fold.

AS. Can you outline briefly to us what the “laws of mikvah” entail?

FS. The concept of family purity, Taharat Hamishpacha, is fundamental to a deeper understanding of Jewish marriage. Jewish law forbids a husband to approach his wife during specific times of the month. Throughout this time, husband and wife are expected to act toward each other with respect and affection but without any physical expression of love. At the end of this restrictive period, the woman immerses herself in a body of water, a mikvah, and recites a special blessing. In a most profound symbolic manner, the husband and wife are acknowledging that their relationship is sanctified and pure.

AS. How many women visit the 770 mikvah each month?

FS. About 240 ladies use the 770 Mikvah each month and G-d willing the numbers will increase as more couples realize how these laws can enhance their marriage.

AS. How do you make a bride’s first visit special?

FS. Brides are treated with special care. First they can book an appointment so they don’t have to wait . Also we have a beautiful suite for brides to use. We try to pamper them with extra attention, hoping they will have a wonderful experience and continue to visit us after the marriage. Also we present each with a Kallah basket that contains beauty and body products as well as a book about



By: Ahava Spilman
In this issue we interview Mrs. Frumey Shubov, long time Mikvah Hostess at Chabad Lubavitch in Thornhill

family purity.

AS. Does anyone else accompany the bride?

FS. The laws of family purity are often passed down from generation to generation. Young women, although unobservant in other areas, like keeping kosher or Shabbat are often taught the laws of Mikvah by mothers and grandmothers. This is especially true in the Sephardic community where many family members insist on sharing the moment with the bride. They bring food, throw candies, hoot and holler, sing and dance and make it a memorable celebration.

AS. Privacy is important to the goers. How is this maintained?

FS. Mikvahs are always situated in an inconspicuous part of the shul. Although there is always a light over the mikvah door and always a lit path to the parking lot, it still maintains an unobtrusive presence. Members of the synagogue are aware of its location and generally avoid treading nearby during mikvah hours. Waiting husbands are careful to avoid interacting with women leaving the “spa” and traditionally women return home as quickly as possible.

AS. When women are waiting, what do they discuss?

FS. Oh my!! When women are together they discuss anything and everything but I have discovered that conversations in the waiting room are more subdued. They speak quietly and discreetly sharing the day’s events or a newly discovered recipe, but still there is an aura of holiness that permeates even the waiting room.

AS. Why is this a spiritually uplifting experience for women?

FS. It should be uplifting. This is the most profound example (also a Sukkah but much less dramatic) where a person is completed surrounded by the mitzvah. The laws of

mikvah revolve around a woman and her relationship with Hashem. After immersion she returns back to the state of purity that surrounded Adam and Eve at the beginning of creation when they were naked but unashamed.

AS. I once explained to a gentile sexologist the basic laws of family purity. His comment was, “brilliant!” Does this surprise you?

FS. Not at all. Unrestricted accessibility can lead to over indulgence. This constant familiarity is a direct cause of marital strife. Getting married is easy but staying married is definitely more difficult. Our laws of family purity create a never ending honeymoon and your friend was insightful enough to appreciate its significance.

AS. Share a moving or funny story



**HIGH
HOLIDAY
SERVICES**

R O S H H A S H A H	Wednesday, September 20	Y O M K I P P U R	Friday, September 29
	Candlelighting 6:59 p.m. Mincha 7:05 p.m. Maariv 7:50 p.m.		Mincha 3:15 & 4:15 p.m. Candlelighting 6:43 p.m. Kol Nidre 7:00 p.m.
	Thursday, September 21		Saturday, September 30
H A S H A H	Shacharis 9:00 a.m. Shofar approx. 11:30 a.m. Mincha 5:30 p.m. Tashlich 6:00 p.m. Maariv 7:55 p.m. Light Candles after 7:58 p.m.	K I P P U R	Shachris 9:00 a.m. Yizkor 12:00 p.m. Mincha 5:00 p.m. Neilah 6:30 p.m. Maariv 7:42 p.m.
	Friday, September 22		Yom Tov & Shabbos Services
	Shachris 9:00 a.m. Shofar approx 11:30 a.m. Mincha 6:40 p.m. Candlelighting 6:56 p.m. Kabalat Shabbat 7:40 p.m.		Shacharis 10:00 a.m.

**SIMCHAT TORAH
HAKAFOT**



All are welcome to come & join the Celebration
SHMINI ATZERET

Wednesday, October 11		Thursday, October 12	
Candlelighting	6:22 p.m.	Shacharis	10:00 a.m.
Mincha	6:25 p.m.	Yizkor approx.	11:30 a.m.
Maariv	7:10 p.m.	Mincha	6:15 p.m.
Hakafot (followed by)	7:30 p.m.	Candlelighting after	7:21 p.m.
Kiddush			

SIMCHAT TORAH

Thursday, October 5		Friday, October 17	
Maariv	7:15 p.m.	Shacharis	10:00 a.m.
Kiddush	7:35 p.m.	Hakafot	11:30 a.m.
Hakafot	8:15 p.m.	Torah Reading	12:15 p.m.
		Grand Kiddush	1:00 p.m.

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<div> <div>◆</div> MEN <div>◆</div> WOMEN <div>◆</div> MEN/WOMEN </div>			
WEEKLY CLASSES - WINTER SCHEDULE			
SUNDAY			
8:00 AM		CHASSIDIC THOUGHT	RABBI GANSBURG
10:00 AM		PARSHAT HASHAVUA	RABBI SCHOCHET
10:00 AM		LIKKUTEI SICHOS	RABBI GANSBURG
11:15 AM		TALMUD (MOED KATAN)	RABBI SPALTER
6:45 PM		CHASSIDIC DISCOURSES	RABBI GANSBURG
8:30 PM		SHULCHAN ARUCH	RABBI CHAIKIN
MONDAY			
11:30 AM		THE JOY OF JUDAISM	RABBI SPALTER
7:45 PM		THE WEEKLY TORAH REVIEW	RABBI GANSBURG
TUESDAY			
11:30 AM		TORAH STUDIES - PARSHA	RABBI GANSBURG
8:00 PM		TALMUD (CHULIN)	RABBI SPALTER
8:30 PM		HALACHA ADVANCED	RABBI E. SCHOCHET
WEDNESDAY			
12:00 PM		THE JEWISH LEARNING INSTITUTE	RABBI GANSBURG
7:30-9:00 PM		THE JEWISH LEARNING INSTITUTE	RABBI GANSBURG
8:30 PM		TALMUD (PESOCHIM) ADVANCED	RABBI WILHELM
THURSDAY			
6:20 AM		CHASSIDUS	RABBI A. WAGNER
12:00 PM		TANYA (HEBREW)	RABBI GANSBURG
8:00 PM		IN DEPTH PARSHA STUDY	RABBI Z.A. GROSSBAUM
8:15-9:15 PM		TALMUD (BAITZA)	RABBI SPALTER
SHABBOS			
9:00 AM		CHASSIDUS	RABBI GANSBURG
9:00 AM		CHASSIDUS	RABBI WILHELM
1 HR BEFORE MINCHA		CHASSIDUS	RABBI GANSBURG
1 HR BEFORE MINCHA		HALACHA	RABBI SPALTER
DAILY CLASSES			
SUN-THU	9:00 PM	RAMBAM	ALTERNATING
MON-FRI	5:00 AM	CHASSIDIC THOUGHT	RABBI YARMUSH
MON-FRI	6:30 AM	TALMUD	RABBI SCHOCHET
MON-FRI	7:10 AM	CHASSIDIC THOUGHT	RABBI GANSBURG
MON-FRI	10AM-12PM	KOLLEL TIFERES ZEKEINIM LEVI YITZCHOK TALMUD, MISHNAH, HALACHA & CHUMASH - RABBI CHAIKIN	

Are Solar Eclipses Proof of G-d?

By Eric Metaxas Published August 20, 2017

On Monday August 21 something happened in North America that should startle — or at least perplex — anyone who gives it any thought. I am referring to the full solar eclipse you may have seen. To be clear, thinking about what happened has little to do with the sheer visceral experience of being amazed by it, as we must be. Before thinking about it, we should perhaps first simply goggle at it, at the monumental majesty of these monstrously large heavenly orbs, both of which we typically take mostly for granted.

Is it not remarkable that these ever-present objects — though separated by nearly one hundred million miles — should once in a very great while perform this curiously perfect dance? But to what end?

But what might make us start to think a bit about this event is that this celestial pas de deux is being performed only for us. Anywhere but here on this planet on that Monday, the view of these two objects was nothing special. It is only what we see from our terrestrial vantage point that is special. It's almost as though what we must marvel at was artfully arranged specifically for our benefit. Which brings us to the curious and startling part of the story.

About fifteen years ago an odd idea popped into my head. Google was just a gurgling infant. But I happened to have a sturdy Britanica nearby and I pulled out a dusty volume and

quickly discovered the diameter of the sun. It is precisely 864,576 miles. The diameter of the moon was listed at 2,159 miles. I then looked up the distance from Earth to the sun, which varies slightly, but is generally given as 93 million miles. And then I found the distance from Earth to the moon. That varies slightly too, so the average is given as 239,000 miles.

Armed with these four figures, I did some simple math. I divided the sun's

similar. It certainly did. My calculations yielded 389.121. And there it was. I stared at the numbers, amazed. Was the correlation in these ratios mere coincidence?

Of course what this all meant was simply that these immemorially ancient and vast objects, though as different in size as a single BB and a super gigantic beach ball — one that was over six feet in diameter — would from our perspective here on Earth seem almost

ets in our solar system have no moons or many moons (Jupiter has 60) of incredibly varying sizes. So this sort of thing doesn't happen anywhere else in our solar system. But our planet has just one moon that happens to be just the right size and just the right distance from Earth.

I found the precision necessary for all of this unbelievable. The more I thought about it, the more I knew that there was no way this could be a mere coin-

diameter beach ball as far down the beach as necessary — until it appeared precisely the same size from our perspective as the tiny BB. Keep in mind our beach ball is six-feet in diameter while a normal large beach ball is less than two feet in diameter. Our friend would have to hike 400 feet before the giant beach ball and the tiny BB matched up in size. That's about the distance from home plate to the centerfield fence in most major league baseball stadiums.

So can the sun's and moon's diameters — and distances from Earth — be merely coincidentally matched up this perfectly? Everything about it makes that seem ridiculous. But of course you can decide for yourself.

Three thousand years ago a man in Israel wrote: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." That man didn't have a telescope or a Britanica, but he saw something many of us today still do not see. He saw a God behind it all. It may be true that seeing a Grand Designer behind these breath-taking events requires what we call a leap of faith; but it may also be true that seeing mere coincidence behind them requires an even greater leap of faith. In my mind, much greater. But, you may be the judge.

Eric Metaxas is the author of several bestselling books, including "Bonhoeffer" and "Amazing Grace." His latest book is "If You Can Keep It: The Forgotten Promise of American Liberty"



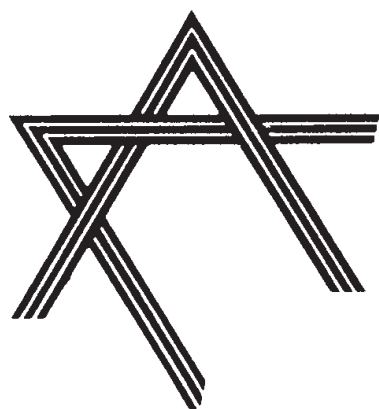
diameter (864,576) by the moon's (2,159) and got 400.452. If my strange hunch was correct, dividing the distance from the Earth to the sun (93,000,000) by the distance from the Earth to the moon (239,000) should give me something

precisely the same size. So if they ever just happened to align in the sky, they would match up perfectly. Not almost perfectly. But perfectly, and bizarrely so.

What might be the odds of this just happening randomly? Almost all the plan-

cidence. It seemed almost planned. In fact, it seemed utterly planned, as all things of such precision must be.

To bring this closer to home, imagine holding a BB twelve inches from our face and then asking a friend to carry the six-foot



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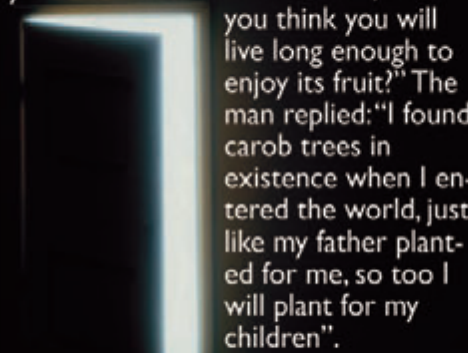
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The Prayer of Hannah

Continued from page 2

Hashanah liturgy, but in the daily *Amidah*, the prayer said three times each day, recited as “one who stands before the king” in such self-abnegation that making the slightest untoward gesture would be deemed an act of sacrilege. Yet, in the twelve intermediate benedictions, the Sages have ordained supplications for our most mundane needs.

This question can be resolved, however, by distinguishing between the prayers of the High Holy Days and those of the entire year. During the course of the year, subsequent to the coronation Rosh Hashanah, G-d the King, is metaphorically speaking, conducting the everyday affairs of His state.

However, Rosh Hashanah marks the onset of G-d’s sovereignty, when the Jews must crown G-d as King by submitting to His authority. At that time He is exalted and transcendent, above guiding the world, as it were, and greater and more profound self-nullification is required. Therefore this problem is specifically linked to Rosh Hashanah: how can Man be in such a state of total humility and yet pray to the King for his personal needs?

Crowning the King

The explanation of the above problem is that the prayer of a Jew for one’s needs on Rosh Hashanah is not due to a quest for personal gain, nor great material possessions, or even lofty spiritual qualities. One’s striving is totally derived from the endeavor to fulfill the spiritual service of “Coronate Me as king over you.”

The prayerful plea of “Reign upon the world in Thy Glory,” that G-d’s majesty should be manifestly perceived in the world, is actualized by means of a Jew’s concerning oneself specifically with **worldly** matters and transforming them into an abode for His Divine Presence.

The material world at large contains “sparks of sanctity.” Each individual Jew is charged with refining and uplifting those sparks uniquely designated to him/her, these being their specific “share” and responsibility as their spiritual endeavor. Therefore, the Jew prays for G-d’s material blessing, for only in this way can they accomplish G-d’s “Reign upon the whole world” in relation to the specific spiritual mission assigned to him/her.

Thus, a Jew’s self-awareness does not compromise the purity of his Rosh Hashanah prayers, for she pleads with the sole intention of fulfilling G-d’s Will.

Individual Needs

The question can

still be posed: the prayers of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy were fixed by our Sages for all Jews, regardless of their level and status; and among them are surely some whose pleas for both material and spiritual acquisitions are not solely motivated by a desire to fulfill G-d’s will, but to some degree from anxiety over their own needs. They pray with the basic hope that G-d will fulfill their mortal needs from His “full and generous hand.” Indeed, the commandment to pray is, in essence, that one ask for one’s personal needs, as is obvious in the blessings of the silent prayer, each being an explicit request for fulfillment of a specific need. This is, in fact, the unique and surpassing effect of prayer that through prayer the sick person is cured, and the needed rain actually does fall.

Hunger for Holiness

This enigma can be resolved by bearing in mind the Baal Shem Tov’s interpretation of the verse, “Hungry and thirsty, their soul prayerfully yearns within them”. He explains that the hunger and the thirst of the body for food or drink are rooted in the fact that “the soul prayerfully yearns.” The soul desires to refine the spark of sanctity within food and drink which is specifically granted to that person and which “he must set right.” In other words, although a Jew experiences physiological hunger, the true “hunger” is the longing of the soul for the sparks of sanctity in the food, which are uniquely related to him.

Although prayers on Rosh Hashanah; that G-d grant material and spiritual needs, may appear to result from selfish personal desire for “children, health and economic prosperity,” nevertheless, within even a simple Jew, the inner force behind the prayer is the “outpouring of soul”; the hunger and yearning of the spirit to fulfill G-d’s will for “the creation of an abode for Him in mundane world.”

This, therefore, is the reason that the most intense feelings are experienced specifically during the prayers for ones personal needs: the inner motivation of these prayers is the soul’s basic drive to fulfill the divine purpose of creation, transforming the world into an abode for the Almighty.

To return to our original question, we may conclude that the haftorah of Hannah, describing her heartfelt prayer and Eli’s challenge, “how long will you be drunken,” was designated for the day of Rosh Hashanah in order to underscore this spiritual concept.

Eli’s argument was that while one stands “before G-d... before the Holy of

Holies”, there should be no outer distractions; the sole concern should be profound awareness of actually being “before G-d” It is then wholly inappropriate to ask for material matters and personal needs, even so heartfelt a plea as “Give your maidservant a child.” In addition, Hannah prayed “at length” in a state of spiritual “intoxication”, impelled by desires which, in Eli’s view, were essentially self-centered. Eli believed that Hannah’s desire to have a child was so powerful that she was not adequately mindful of where she stood “before G-d.”

To these words of Eli, Hannah replied, “I poured out my soul before G-d.” Her prayer for a child was not an expression of “intoxication” and selfish obsession. On the contrary, it was an outpouring of the innermost aspect of her soul, specifically related to her “standing before G-d.”

It is thus clear why concurrent with her plea Hannah vowed that if “You will give Your maidservant a child, then “I will give him over to G-d for all the days of his life.” His entire life would not be for personal endeavor, but from yearning to serve G-d, a drive, which she experienced within the innermost realm of her soul.

This, then, is the spiritual implication for every Jew from the Rosh Hashanah prayer: If only the inner essence of a Jew is dedicated to G-d that is not sufficient. This essence must emerge and manifest itself in day to day material life. Thus, when a Jew prays on Rosh Hashanah, beseeching G-d for his material needs or even spiritual needs, the “high priest Eli” within his soul contends: “How long will you be drunken?” At this time of G-d’s coronation, it is utterly inappropriate to think of worldly matters and personal needs.

Notwithstanding this, a Jew must still ask for these needs, for indeed it is this very challenge, which evokes the reply from the “Hannah” within each Jew. Even someone who, on the conscious level, is only aware of his personal needs has within him the essential yearning for “I poured out my soul before G-d.” This is the true desire of he essence of the soul, which is “bound and united with You.” joined in oneness with G-d.

Just as Hannah’s response totally resolved Eli’s challenge and caused him to offer his own blessing and assurance that “the G-d of Israel will grant the plea that you have pleaded of Him,” similarly, G-d will fulfill every Jew’s request for a good and sweet year, even in the most literal sense, for “children, health and economic sustenance,” and all of them in a generous and abundant manner.

Cholent

Continued from page 2

vice go on, he consoled himself, the longer the better.

And on the service went. His stomach felt like raw leather, his knees grew weak with hunger, his head throbbed in pain, his throat burned with suppressed tears. But whenever he felt that he simply could not hold out a moment longer, he thought of his cholent, envisioning what was happening to that piece of meat at that very moment: the steady crisping on the outside, the softening on the inside, the blending of flavors with the potatoes, beans, kishke and spices in the pot. Every minute longer, he kept telling himself, is another minute on the fire for my cholent.

An hour later, the cantor launched into another exceptionally moving piece. As his tremulous voice painted the awesome scene of divine judgment unfolding in the heavens, the entire shul broke down weeping once again. At this point, the dam burst in this simple Jew’s heart, for he well understood what was on his fellow worshippers’ minds. “Enough is enough!” he sobbed. “Never mind the cholent! It’s been cooking long enough! I’m hungry! I want to go home . . . !”

Jewish history is a cholent.

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The Talmud states that “the people of Israel were exiled amongst the nations only so that converts may be added to them.” On the most basic level, this is a reference to those non-Jews who, in the centuries of our dispersion, have come in contact with the Jewish people and decided to convert to Judaism. But chasidic teaching explains that the Talmud is also referring to the many other “souls” which we have transformed and elevated in the course of our exile—the “sparks of holiness” contained within the physical creation.

The great Kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria (the “Ari”) taught that every created entity has a spark of G dliness within it, a pinpoint of divinity that constitutes its soul—i.e., its

spiritual function and design. And when we utilize something to serve the Creator, we penetrate its shell of mundanity, revealing and realizing its divine essence.

It is to this end that we have been scattered across the six continents—so that we may come in contact with the sparks of holiness which await redemption in every corner of the globe. So that a printing press in Boston should print a work of Torah learning on paper manufactured by a Pennsylvania mill from a tree which grew in Oregon. So that a forest clearing in Poland should serve as the site for a traveling Jew’s prayers, and that a scientific theory developed in a British university should aid a Jew in his appreciation of the divine wisdom inherent in the natural world.

And the holier the spark, the deeper it lies buried. The Kabbalistic masters employ the analogy of a collapsed wall—the highest stones are the ones which fall the farthest. By the same token, when G d invested His will in His creation, He caused its loftiest elements to descend to the most distant and spiritually desolate corners of the earth. Hence our galut—our exile from the Holy Land, our subjugation to alien governments and cultures, the cessation of G d’s open and direct involvement in our lives, and our seeming abandonment to chance and fate. All this is a “descent for the sake of ascent,” a mission to the most forsaken points of earth—spiritually as well as geographically—to extract the exceptionally lofty sparks they contain.

Thus, the more painful the galut, the more challenging its trials, the lowlier the elements it confronts us with—the greater its rewards. Every additional minute of galut represents more sparks of holiness redeemed, and its every further descent brings a deeper dimension of the divine purpose to fruition.

But there comes a point at which every Jew must cry out from the very depths of his being: “Enough already! The cholent has been cooking long enough! We want to come home!”

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The Missionary Mogul

Continued from page 20

the instincts of a tiger and the moxi of a panther.”

There’s no need to cry for De Beers, which still controls a major share of the world’s uncut diamonds. But the syndicate no longer sets the worldwide market value of diamonds or decides who can manufacture and sell them.

Neither can Leviev. But he has become the world’s largest cutter and polisher of diamonds and one of its major sources of rough diamonds — the gelem he dreamed of.

On a shelf in Leviev’s Ramat Gan office sits a framed photo of Vladimir Putin. Leviev describes him as a “true friend.” The offices of many Israeli business magnates feature photographic trophies, grab-and-grin shots with (in ascending order of importance) the prime minister of Israel, the president of the United States, Bill Clinton and A-list Hollywood stars. Leviev has a different collection. Aside from the Lubavitcher rebbe and Vladimir Putin, there are photos taken with the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Kazakhstan, for which he serves as honorary consul in Israel. (“Yes, I saw ‘Borat’ ” Leviev told me wearily. “Yes, I thought it was funny. But silly.”) Leviev’s picture gallery reflects his status as the president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the former Soviet Union, an organization he has led since 1998. Nobody knows exactly how many Jews live in the former Soviet Union, but estimates range from 400,000 to upward of one million. Leviev leads them with his checkbook.

“When it comes to contributing to the Jewish people, Lev Leviev is in a class by himself,” says Natan Sharansky, the former Soviet dissident and former Israeli deputy prime minister. “I know a lot of rich people who give money. But Leviev is on a completely different level. He’s building entire communities.”

More than this, he is a power broker and intercessor on behalf of beleaguered Jews throughout the former U.S.S.R. Take, for instance, the case of the Jewish private schools in Baku, Azerbaijan. Three years ago the government, concerned about the influence of neighboring Iran and the spread of local madrassas, decided to close all the private schools in the country. This, of course, included the Jewish school in Baku, Azerbaijan’s capital. The community elders petitioned the government, but to no avail.

“They even tried to get American Jewish organizations to intervene,” Leviev recalled. “But the Jewish organizations couldn’t do a thing.” He smiled thinly. He has a generally low opinion of American Jewish activists, especially his fellow billionaires.

And so Leviev decided to ride to the rescue. He flew to Baku on his private plane, parked at the airport and went straight to the synagogue.

“The Jews were all gathered there,” he recounted in what is obviously a favorite story. “I told them to wait while I talked to the president.” At the time, that was Heydar Aliyev. “There were journalists in his outer office. Everyone was excited to see me there, because they thought I had come to invest money in the country. Heydar thought so,

too. He said: ‘Just tell me what you’re interested in — oil? Gas? Tourism? What can I do for you?’

“I asked him, ‘How can I invest in a country that doesn’t like Jews?’ Heydar got very upset when I said that. He began telling me how many Jewish friends he had and how much the Jews had contributed to his culture and the country and so on.

“ ‘But you’re closing down the Jewish school,’ I told him. ‘I’ve come to ask you to allow it to remain open. Right now the Jews of Baku are gathered in the synagogue, awaiting your answer.’ ”

Leviev paused at this point in the story. Dramatic tales of peril and salvation are part of the Chabad oral tradition.

“Heydar consulted his advisers,” Leviev said. “Then he returned to me and said: ‘The school can remain open. All right?’ ”

Leviev paused at this point in the story. Dramatic tales of peril and salvation are part of the Chabad oral tradition.

“ ‘Yes,’ said Heydar. ‘Is that all?’ ”

“ ‘Not quite. I’d appreciate it if you would personally open the school next year. That way there will be no misunderstandings about what the government’s position is.’ ”

“Heydar said: ‘I’ll do that. Are you satisfied now?’ ”

“I told him: ‘Just one last thing, sir. Those journalists in your outer office? Would you mind announcing our agreement to them?’ ”

After Aliyev’s press conference, Leviev remembers returning triumphantly to the synagogue to deliver the good news. Shortly thereafter, Aliyev died and was succeeded by his son, with whom Leviev is on friendly terms.

“And did you invest after that?” I asked.

Leviev smiled. “No,” he said. “Azerbaijan has so many natural resources they don’t need my investment. But I told them that they would get a blessing from God.”

Leviev insists that he maintains a strict division between his community leadership and his business dealings. Perhaps this is so, but the republics of the former Soviet Union are not famous for their transparency. At any rate, business depends to a large extent on personal and political access. “A big part of our analytical value depends on the perception that we can get anything approved in Russia,” says Jacques Zimmerman, the vice president for communications of Africa Israel, Leviev’s international holding and investment company.

This perception has been strengthened by public displays of affection between Putin and Leviev. In 2000, the Russian president was the guest of honor at the opening of the Jewish Community Center in the Marina Roscha district of Moscow, which Leviev played a major role in building. It was a gesture widely interpreted as a sign of good will not only toward Russia’s Jews but toward Leviev himself.

Putin also took Leviev’s side in a dispute over the post of chief rabbi of Russia, backing Leviev’s candidate, Berel Lazar for the position. The Kremlin’s endorsement of Lazar was a final confirmation that Leviev had achieved a typically audacious and improbable victory — putting Chabad in effective control of the assimilated, mostly

irreligious Jewish communities of the former Soviet Union.

Modernity comports with Leviev’s personal style, which is, in its outward aspect, Chabad-lite. He once made headlines by closing his upscale mall in Ramat Aviv — a bastion of WASP Israel — on the Sabbath, and officially his businesses are closed on Saturday. But abroad, some of the businesses Leviev owns an interest in work seven days a week, and his American 7-Elevens sell nonkosher food. Leviev himself strictly observes the Sabbath, but he has been known to interrupt his weekday prayers for important phone calls.

Unlike many Chabad men, Leviev is clean-shaven, wears stylish business suits open at the collar and sometimes lounges



in jeans, and his small black skullcap is barely visible. He is also something of a feminist. Leviev’s two eldest daughters have been brought into the business as senior executives. Zvia, a mother of four who runs international marketing and mall businesses for her father, is frequently mentioned in the Israeli press as a potential successor. Leviev is proud to have raised his nine children in B’nai B’rack, Tel Aviv’s ultra-Orthodox suburb, but he is planning to move to an estate in Saviyon, the equivalent of going from Borough Park to Scarsdale.

A few years ago, concerned Bukharan Jewish immigrants in New York reported to Leviev that their children were being corrupted by the public schools of Queens. “The kids were going out with Pakistanis, Puerto Ricans, all sorts of people,” I was told by one of Leviev’s intimates. Leviev would have been equally horrified to learn that the Bukharan Jews of Queens were hooking up with descendants of the Mayflower.

In response, Leviev donated the money for a private school in Elmhurst. He picks up the tuition tab for the entire student body — about 800 kids at an estimated \$18,000 a pop. Leviev regards this as a pilot project. His goal, I was told by his assistant, Shlomi Peles, is to make a free Orthodox Jewish education available to every Jewish child in United States.

The educational project is just one part of Leviev’s recent discovery of America. After 9/11, he and a partner bought the JP Morgan building near ground zero at a bargain price (a reported \$100 million), converting it into luxury condominiums and clearing a very handsome profit. It made him a believer in New York.

“Every building is half a billion dollars,” he told me. “All you need is a global perspective. I knew New York would come back.”

Jacques Zimmerman, who handles communications for Africa Israel, told me: “Lev’s natural tendency, his home court, is Israel and Russia. But he is constantly looking to expand.”

The engine for this growth is Africa Israel. The company is publicly traded on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and handles Leviev’s businesses, not

“All you need to do business in America is a good name, and banks will lend you all the money you need,” Leviev told me with enthusiasm.

Israel is a society in which successful people are rarely praised. But I encountered very little criticism of Leviev there, even from members of the Jewish WASP business establishment. “He’s still an outsider,” one high-powered Tel Aviv lawyer told me. “We don’t know anything about his personal life. But from what anyone can tell, he’s clean. You read about him in the business pages of the newspaper, not the gossip columns.”

One of Leviev’s greatest admirers is Eitan Raff, chairman of Israel’s Bank Leumi, from which Leviev bought Africa Israel in 1996. The sale was controversial at the time. “He was a Russian,” Raff says. “We didn’t know him or anything about him. We thought he might be some kind of oligarch. I hired two or three investigators to check him out. He came up clean.”

There were a number of foreign suitors for Africa Israel, but after fighting broke out in Jerusalem between Israeli and Palestinian gunmen, they became skittish and withdrew, leaving Leviev as the sole bidder. The asking price was \$400 million, and Bank Leumi had to sell; it had been ordered by a court to divest itself of nonfinancial holdings, including Africa Israel, by a certain date. Leviev had the bank over a barrel. “What would you say to \$330?” Leviev asked Raff.

“No, it’s worth four, that’s the fair price,” Raff said.

Leviev stuck out his hand, diamond-business style. “Four,” he said.

“He acted with great probity,” Raff says. “He didn’t try to take advantage or squeeze. His word is his bond,” he says. “Look, I’m a kibbutznik. Leviev and I aren’t from the same world at all. But I consider him a friend, and I think he’s an example of what the head of a public company should be.”

Leviev has thus far steered clear of Israeli politics. That doesn’t mean he lacks influence, however. He meets from time to time with the nation’s leaders, mostly to discuss the economy. He owns Israel’s Russian-language television station, which reaches about 15 percent of the population. The first time I spoke to Leviev, he denied that he had any personal political aspirations. Three days later, he wasn’t so sure. “Would I like to be prime minister?” he mused. “I might. When I turn 60.”

That’s nine years off. At Leviev’s pace, nine years is a lot of time — time enough to make his way into the Forbes “starting 10,” time to complete the Chabadization of Soviet Jewry and time, perhaps, to make a run at becoming Israel’s first Russian-Bukharan-mohel-mogul prime minister.

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The Missionary Mogul

Excerpted from an article
By Zev Chafets in The New
York Times in 2007

Gates, whom he says he hopes to eventually join in what he calls, in Russian-accented Hebrew,



When Lev Leviev’s first son, Shalom, was born in 1978, Leviev decided to circumcise the baby himself. He was only 22 years old. He had never studied the art of circumcision and never performed one. But he had seen it done. His father, Avner, had been an underground mohel in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbek Republic, at a time when performing any Jewish ritual act could get you in trouble with the Soviet authorities. The family had been in Israel for eight years. There were plenty of trained ritual mohelim in Tel Aviv. But Leviev regarded the act of circumcising his own son as both a religious duty and the fulfillment of a family tradition.

“I knew what I was doing,” he told me when I spoke to him recently at his office in Yahud, a suburb of Tel Aviv. “I was a diamond cutter, after all. It’s not all that different.” He extended his hands, palms down, for my inspection and smiled. “I’ve got steady hands.”

In the years since he introduced his son into Israel’s blood covenant with the almighty, Lev Leviev has performed more than a thousand ritual circumcisions — many on the sons of employees in his ever-expanding business empire. In those years, Leviev has gone from impoverished immigrant to the man who broke the De Beers international diamond cartel. His companies build vast shopping malls, housing projects, highways and railways throughout Israel, the former Soviet Union and Western Europe. He owns everything from diamond mines in Angola to a string of 7-Elevens in Texas. More recently he has been buying up iconic American properties, including the former New York Times Building in Manhattan for a reported \$525 million.

Lev Leviev is probably Israel’s richest man. Forbes ranks him 210th among the world’s wealthiest people, with an estimated personal net worth of \$4.1 billion. (People close to Leviev put that figure closer to \$8 billion.) However much Leviev has, he is hungry for more. His business role model is Bill

“the world’s starting 10.”

Leviev admires not only Gates’s wealth but also his activist style of philanthropy. “A lot of very rich men wait too long to give their money away,” he told me. “Warren Buffett, for example. He’s in his 70s now, and he should have started earlier. But Bill Gates is a young man, and he’s already giving to help the world. That’s the right way to do it.”

Leviev, who is 51, is a legendary philanthropist, too — he refuses to say how much he gives away each year, but he did not dispute an estimate of \$50 million. He does not share Gates’s universalist outlook, however. Leviev is a tribal leader, a benefactor of Jewish causes, particularly in the former Soviet Union, where he underwrites Jewish day schools, synagogues, orphanages, social centers and soup kitchens for more than 500 communities. To make this vast philanthropic enterprise run, Leviev subsidizes an army of some 10,000 Jewish functionaries from Ukraine to Azerbaijan, including 300 rabbis.

Most of the 300 rabbis are Chabadniks, adherents of the Brooklyn-based Hasidic group Chabad — fundamentalist, missionizing, worldly and centered on the personality and teachings of the late Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher rebbe. In Israel, it has supported right-wing Greater Israel candidates. Lev Leviev’s loyalty to Chabad is unquestioning. “The rebbe is my role model, and my values are his values,” he says.

Lev Leviev arrived in Israel as a teenager in 1971, at a time when Moshe Dayan, hero of the Six Day War, was the legendary embodiment of the Israeli WASP (Well-born/Ashkenazi/Secular/Paratrooper). Immigrants were classified by their potential to attain this ideal. The Leviev family — unconnected, uneducated, not even real Russians but Bukharan Jews, primitives from the steppes of Central Asia — were classified as “bad material” and dispatched by government authorities to the dusty “development town” of

Kiryat Malachi.

Avner Leviev enrolled his son in a Chabad yeshiva. It was a match that didn’t take. “I’m not a born yeshiva scholar,” Leviev admits. In Tashkent he had finished 10th grade. He left the yeshiva after a few months, ending his formal education. If Leviev regrets this, he doesn’t show it. “I just wanted to make money,” he told me.

Through a family friend, Leviev found work as an apprentice diamond cutter. It was industry practice not to teach anyone all 11 steps of the diamond-cutting trade, but Leviev paid his fellow workers to show him every facet of the process. By the time he finished an undistinguished stint in the rabbinical corps of the army, he was ready to go into business for himself.

“I never doubted that I would get rich,” Leviev told me. “I knew from the time I was 6 that I was destined to be a millionaire. I’d go with my father to shops, and while he was talking business, my eyes automatically counted the merchandise.”

Leviev chose a tough industry. “The diamond business is usually a family business,” says a Tel Aviv diamond merchant. “People accumulate wealth slowly, over generations. When Leviev started out, all he had was an amazing amount of ambition and the ability to understand the stone. Understanding the stone — that was the key.”

The headquarters of Leviev’s U.S. diamond company, LLD USA, is located at the mouth of the Manhattan diamond district, on the corner of 47th Street and Fifth Avenue. To get up to his office, you need to be both photographed and fingerprinted by a very high tech security system.

People who handle gems are cautious and security-conscious, and Leviev is no exception.

Perhaps for that reason, many of his closest associates are relatives or longtime friends, most of them also Bukharan Jews. Paul Raps, the general manager of LLD USA, has known Leviev since they were both young diamond merchants in Ramat Gan. “One day we were sitting there, just chatting, and suddenly Leviev said to me: ‘You know what we need? We need to get our hands on the gelem.’ Uncut diamonds. I thought he was kidding. Nobody could find uncut diamonds back then.”

Before Leviev’s epiphany, the world’s diamond market

was strictly regulated by De Beers, a company founded in the 19th century to mine its first shaft of diamond-bearing kimberlite. In 1930, De Beers established a cartel that over the next few decades came to dominate diamond mining in the Soviet Union, Africa and the rest of the world. It regulated the market through a system of “sightholders,” handpicked producers of rough diamonds and dealers of finished diamonds, who were allowed to buy quantities of unfinished diamonds at fixed prices, via De Beers.

When Leviev started out, there were about 100 sightholders around the world. They came to London several times a year and, at syndicate headquarters, were offered diamonds on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. Those who left it too often were decertified, and new sightholders were selected.

Small diamond cutters and merchants like Leviev couldn’t afford to buy from sightholders. They were allowed to buy rough diamonds from “secondary dealers” who managed to get their hands on small, smuggled quantities. It was a limiting arrangement, and Leviev didn’t like limitations. He applied to become a De Beers sightholder.

“There was resistance to him at first,” recalls the Tel Aviv diamond merchant, who knew Leviev at the time. “A lot of people thought he was uncouth, not really civilized. This wasn’t anti-Semitism. Most of the people who rejected him were European Jews themselves. Leviev was an outsider, a Bukharan. But he was so industrious, so ambitious, such a good businessman, that eventually they had no choice. They had to accept him.”

Soon Leviev became a rising star in the De Beers syndicate. He brought his extended family into his business, leveraged their resources and prospered. But he chafed under the control of the

syndicate.

In the late ’80s, Leviev saw an opportunity. De Beers had encountered antitrust problems in the United States. In South Africa, the apartheid government that had worked with De Beers was losing political power. At the same time, the Soviet Union, whose leaders had long had a mutually profitable partnership with De Beers, was nearing collapse.

Leviev has a complicated relationship with his former homeland. In our first meeting, when I asked him about his boyhood memories, he surprised

me by saying: “Fear. I grew up in fear.”

Tashkent is a Muslim city, and although there wasn’t much overt anti-Jewish violence, there was a climate of mistrust. “Many times I was beaten up in school,” he recalls. But his biggest fear was of the Communist government.

“As a boy, they used to make us stand at attention and salute the statue of Lenin,” he told me. “I’d curse him and the other Communists under my breath. They sent my grandfather to Siberia. They wouldn’t let us keep the Sabbath — we had to go to school on Saturdays. Just being Jewish was dangerous.”

Still, he saw business potential in Russia. He spoke the language, knew the local customs. His father, sensing danger, begged Leviev not to go. So Leviev traveled to Brooklyn, to the headquarters of the Lubavitcher rebbe, for a second opinion.

It is a meeting that has become folklore, both in Chabad and in the diamond industry. Leviev tells the story with obvious relish: “I spoke to the rebbe in Hebrew. I asked him, Should I go or not? He answered me in a kind of antique Russian. He said: ‘Go. Go to Russia and do business, but don’t forget to help the Jews. Remember your family tradition.’

This was more than good advice. The rebbe’s blessing gave Leviev the keys to the Chabad network in the former Soviet Union at a very dangerous time.

Officially, Leviev was invited by the Soviet minister of energy in 1989, which was exploring ways of ending the De Beers grip on the country’s diamonds. “When I got there, Gorbachev was still in power, but you could sense that things were coming apart,” Leviev says. “Everything was unsettled, and I

felt the fear again.”

There were other risks, too. To do business with the Russians, Leviev had to give up his position as a De Beers sightholder. This shook the international diamond business.

“It was unbelievable,” says the Tel Aviv merchant. “He was breaking the rules, going after the source. When he succeeded in Russia, and then in Angola, others saw it and were suddenly emboldened. That’s how Leviev cracked the De Beers cartel. With



Lev Leviev with Russia’s chief rabbi Berel Lazar affix a Mezuzah at the opening of the largest Shopping Mall in Moscow