



The World of Lubavitch

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TISHREI 5779



New Torah to Honour Stalwarts

The most unifying event in Jewish life is the dedication of a new Torah scroll. It brings together young and old alike. In some mystical fashion it links us to the very first presentation of the Torah, which was held in the wilderness of Sinai. The vast open expanse draws our attention to the fact that all Jews have equal access and an identical claim to the Torah. Hence, the traditional procession is held with much pomp and ceremony and is recognized as a city wide cel-

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Not For Perks And Benefits

Chabad moved to Iceland earleir this year, marking the 100th country/territory exposed to Chabad's reach. Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, Chairman of Chabad-Lubavitch Educational/Social Services, describes the motivation behind establishing centers all over the world.

And you shall be gathered one by one, children of Israel (Isaiah 27:12)

With the opening of Chabad in the 100th country/territory and now in ever smaller communities, the idea of a future in which no individual among our people is lost, resonates anew.

It is astounding to anyone paying attention that, in 2018, new Chabad Houses open at a steady rate. That this is the case now, after all of the major cities and towns around the world are already well served by Chabad representatives, so that new appointees must travel farther afield, sometimes to places very remote, is more astounding yet.

Add to this that the men and women who vie for the privilege of lifetime appointments as the Rebbe's shlichim have never met him (most were born around the time of his passing almost twenty-four years ago)—and the astonishment grows. And if that isn't enough, there are no compensation packages with benefits and perks awaiting the Rebbe's emissaries. Still, they strive to join the ranks of those who live to realize the promise of the prophet.

The challenges are often formidable. Many of the communities that Chabad's young men and women—usually newlyweds starting their own families—relocate to, have tiny populations, and even tinier Jewish numbers. Posting an event on their Facebook page won't fill the house. They must seek out the Jewish souls in their towns, one by one. And they must raise the funds to finance the educational, social, and spiritual programs and services that they want to make available, even if only to a handful of people. But local resources are scant, so they work harder and more innovatively.

We've been asked before how the cost-benefit ratio justifies investing where there are so few Jews. To that, we say we learn from the midrash that tells us that if but one of the 600,000 Jews would have been missing at Sinai, there would have been no Revelation. Likewise, the Rebbe taught us, that our redemption will come through our efforts to reach every Jew; for him, the Talmudic statement that every soul represents a world, was more than a noble idea. That he took it quite literally, and taught his representatives the same, is obvious.

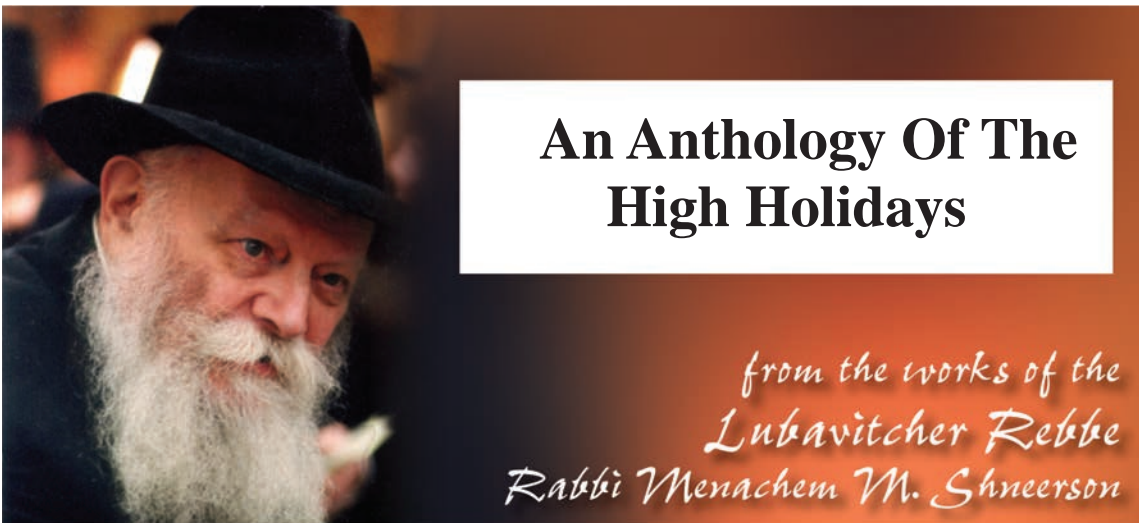
The men and women committed to sustaining Jewish life wherever it exists, even in places like Sioux Falls, SD, or Grand Baie, Mauritius, know they will never draw a crowd. Rather, they have learned to look at the individual with eyes that see each soul as a world unto itself, and have come to cherish the value of one in ways that most of us living in larger communities may not appreciate. The same is true of donors who are putting their support behind the emissaries serving in these small outposts.

In his lifetime, the Rebbe counted the people who support the work of the shlichim as partners indispensable to his project, an egalitarian arrangement, if you will, that offers emissaries and donors equal opportunity and equal responsibility to make their unique investments. Each knows that without the other, Jewish continuity and the Jewish community would not be as richly and widely served as it is by the Rebbe's vision. For there is no Jewish demographic and there is no Jewish cause that doesn't derive profound benefit from the dedication of Chabad emissaries and their partners. And soon too, as these effective partnerships continue to grow, there will be no individual Jew who will not be reached, no Jew who will be left behind.

By Yanki Tauber
 Rosh Hashana

G-d on the Campaign Trail

A US president has four years between elections, a congressman needs to renew his mandate every two years, while dictators stay in office for as long as they can keep their generals happy (or terrified). But G-d is up for reelection every year.
 Every Rosh Hashanah, we crown G-d king. According to the Kabbalists, without this annual coronation (effected by our resolve to submit to the divine sovereignty, our recitation of the “verses of kingship” included in the special prayers of the day, and our sounding of the shofar), G-d’s “kingship” would not be renewed, and the whole of creation - which derives from the divine desire to be king - would cease to exist.
 (We don’t usually think of kings requiring election to their office, but that’s because the word “king” is a rather imprecise translation of the Hebrew word melech. A melech, by definition, is a sovereign whose kingship derives from a people’s freely chosen desire to submit to his rule. A king who reigns by force or exploitation is not a melech but merely a moshel or “ruler.”)
 How does G-d prepare for His annual reelection? Does He just sit up there in His “palace” trusting in our good sense to proclaim Him king once again? Does He go after the vote, mingling with the masses, pressing the flesh, kissing babies? Here’s how Chassidic master Rebbe Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), describes the month of Elul - the month that precedes the divine coronation on Rosh Hashanah:
 It is like a king who, before he enters the city, the people of the city go out to greet him in the field. There, everyone who so desires is permitted to meet him; he receives them all with a cheerful countenance and shows a smiling face to them all. And when he goes to the city, they follow him there. Later, however, after he enters his royal palace, none can enter into his presence except by appointment, and only special people and select individuals. So, too, by analogy, the month of Elul is when we meet G-d in the field...
 While this description bears some resemblance to a politician running for office in a modern democracy, there are, of course, some significant differences. Such as the fact that a campaign promise by G-d is far more likely to be fulfilled than one that is



made by your typical office-seeker.
 The king is in the field; if you need something from Him, now’s the time to ask.

Yom Kipur

Do Jews Believe in Sin?

Say the word “sin” and you’ll evoke different things in the minds of fire-and-brimstone types, the word smells of shame and scorched flesh. To the hedonist it sounds like fun. Some

think it’s a wholly Christian concept, while others ascribe it to the ancient Hebrews. To the sages of the Talmud, sin is, above all, an act of stupidity.
 “A person does not sin,” they wrote, “unless a spirit of folly has entered into him.”
 Before I got this job I used to write manuals for various household items -- those 30-page booklets that come in the box together with electric drills, microwaves, and the like. It was pretty boring work, but it paid well and it was the kind of writing you could do with two kids on your lap. The best part was that you didn’t have to put your name on it.

Anyway, one day the consumer department of one of the companies I wrote for forwarded me a letter which, since it was the first response I had ever gotten from a reader of my work, I read with interest. “Sir,” the letter began. “I have in hand a booklet you wrote which came in the box with my new video camera. I must say that I am outraged by your presumptuousness and audacity. This is my camera, for which I paid my own hard-earned money. It has lots of buttons, switches and indicator lights -- and these are all my buttons, switches and indicator lights. How dare you instruct on what to do with them!

I shall press each of my buttons and flip each of my switches as I please. As for the indicator lights, I, not you, shall decide for myself what they indicate; indeed, if I so choose, I shall ignore them altogether. Yours truly, a very stupid customer.”
 He did not, of course, sign off that way, but he might as well had. Needless to say, I didn’t bother replying.
 The sages of the Talmud didn’t see much difference between my stupid customer and your standard sinner. As they saw it, when a person acts contrary to his Creator’s instructions on how life is to be lived, he may be doing something bad, evil, selfish, destructive, enjoyable, defiant, cowardly -- as the case may be. But above all, he is doing something profoundly stupid.

Sukkot

The Big Sukkah

Jewish life is a calendar of objects: the shofar sounded on Rosh Hashanah, the sukkah constructed for Sukkot, the oil or candles lit on Chanukah evenings, the matzah eaten on Passover, and so on and on.
 Objects need to be a certain size. A 3-inch chair is not a chair

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The Mysterious Logic of Mashiach

By Heschel Greenberg

What is the common thread that runs through materialistic, secular ideologies and religious and mystical beliefs? It is the belief in a Messianic Age. Indeed, the more on the “fringe” one is in the secular world - such as the dogmatic allegiance to Communism - the closer one actually is to an obsession with messianism. Ironically, the Jewish mystical approach to the coming of Mashiach, notwithstanding its characterization as an article of faith, can be approached and viewed from a logical vantage point as well.
 What is the basis for secular messianism? Inherent in the mindset of some secular philosophies is the notion that human-

kind is constantly evolving and that we will eventually graduate into a state that will transcend the egocentric nature of Homosapiens. When this occurs, a state of utopia will follow. Whatever the merits for evolutionary theory in the geological and biological arenas, there is certainly no scientific basis to support evolution as it relates to moral attitudes. If anything, events such as the Holocaust, which occurred in the twentieth century, militate against such an evolutionary philosophy. Yet, despite the absence of scientific and logical support, there are millions of people who have accepted secular messianic beliefs without reservation.
 Some schools of psychology will also argue in favor of a messianic belief from its frame of reference. While psychology cannot discuss whether a utopia is possible, it does recognize that when we believe that things will get better, it gives us the ability to cope with life’s difficulties. We have to have a belief in a “here-after” of some kind, in order to make the “here and now” meaningful and worth living.
 What is it then about the Jewish version of messianism that some find difficult to swallow? Could it be Judaism’s affirmation that a human Messiah will usher in this New Age that has irked some? This would hardly seem to be a problem in light of the fact that throughout history, single individuals inaugurated most, if not all, major movements for

good or evil. Is not history replete with leaders who have irrevocably changed its course? To believe that once again a great leader will ignite within us the divine spark that will inspire and challenge all of us to change the world is not unsettling at all.
 What some find radical and disconcerting about Jewish messianism, however, is the suddenness with which the world will change. The image conjured up by many believers is one of a mythical, supernatural leader waving the proverbial magic

wand that will instantaneously transform our universe, eliminate all vestiges of evil and create a utopian paradise. This image not only strains credulity, it also appears to insult our very humanity. After all, we are not robots or automatons. We do not change by a mere flick of a switch. If we did, we would not be who we truly are. And whatever good came would not relate to us. Indeed, according to Jewish theology, goodness that is not associated with human

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ON OUR COVER

The Etrog
By Chassidic painter
 Michoel Muchnik

The Esrog, (citron fruit) which to Torah instructs us to “take” on the first day of the Holiday of Sukkot must be, according to the Torah, a beautiful fruit. Throughout Jewish history, Jews have made an extra effort to seek out the most beautiful, cleanest Esrog they could find/afford.
 In this painting the artist captures the excitement felt when preforming this Mitzvah on the beautiful Esrog.

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New Torah to Honour Stalwarts

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celebration, bringing together Jews from all walks of life.

Indeed, our Sages note that there are 600,000 letters in a Torah corresponding to the stem souls of the entire Jewish nation. And accordingly each and every Jew has a distinct letter in the Torah that links him/her to G-d and to holiness.

The Torah scroll which will be dedicated Sunday, November 13, 2018, is a tribute to our generous support base in recognition of their solidarity, loyalty, and largesse. Their unstinting generosity provides the needed resources which enable Chabad Lubavitch to reach out to the entire community with programs and projects that enhance Jewish life.

For almost 40 years Chabad Lubavitch marked the culmination of the annual campaign with a gala dinner. This year it was decided to change the format, and mark the occasion with the dedication of a new Torah scroll. In keeping with tradition, distinctive passages and verses are being symbolically dedicated by Chabad patrons and support base. This would include 'Birkat Kohanin, 'Az Yashir,' and passages of blessings for health, children, and prosperity.

The gala inauguration celebration will also offer Chabad Lubavitch the opportunity to honour Sidney and Naomi Spiegel for their yeoman efforts on behalf of Camp Gan Israel. Indeed, the welfare of children has always been a priority of Naomi and Sidney Spiegel's generosity. Ever since meeting Rabbi Zalman Grossbaum, they have taken a leadership position in many children initiatives hosted by Chabad Lubavitch. Their passionate love for children and concern for traditional values is amply demonstrated by their wholehearted involvement and unstinting support to enhance the summer experience of hundreds of children from around the world. The Spiegel's ambitious drive for excellence is mirrored in their devotion and commitment to the causes they support.

The Torah Scroll is the most precious article in Jewish life. It is the focal point of the weekly Shabbat Synagogue service. In times of need, prayers are offered in its presence. It is perfectly intact just as we received it some 3300 years ago. In fact any deviation or even the smallest imperfection would deem it unfit. It is the sacred Torah scroll.

In accordance with tradition, when Moshe ascended

Mount Sinai he was shown the Torah, "written with black fire over white fire," with all its unique demarcations. From that fiery Torah, G-d verbally dictated the words to Moshe which he transcribed. This very first sacred scroll was awarded to the Levites. An additional twelve scrolls gifted to each of the twelve tribes.

Soon after, additional Torahs were transcribed, in precise detail. In fact, even the spacing between paragraphs and chapters were painstakingly duplicated, for indeed each and every feature was prescribed by G-d.

During the course of history, in spite of dispersion, hardship and human error every effort was made to maintain these exacting standards. Thus, Maimonides in his classic code of law, describes how he laboured assiduously to write and replicate a Torah scroll with exacting precision to the scroll of "Ben Asher" of Tiberias, which was highly regarded and widely accepted as a result of its accuracy.

The Torah which begins with the word Braishis and ends with the word Yisroel constitutes the "Written Torah", while the details, allusions, depth and extension form the all inclusive "Oral Torah." The Torah scroll from beginning to end, forms one entity, thus should even one letter fade or become defective, the entire Torah scroll is unfit for use, until it is repaired. So too, all Jews collectively form one cohesive entity and every Jew regardless of their level of affiliation is of utmost importance and constitutes an integral part of Klal Yisroel.

While all 613 Mitzvot, find their origin in the Torah. The very last recorded Mitzvah is the divine imperative to write a Torah scroll, "Write for yourselves this song and teach it unto your children" (Deuteronomy 31:19). Fundamentally, each person is obligated to write his own Torah scroll and thus heighten awareness to its significance and importance. Yet, due to the myriad halachic specifications one may delegate this responsibility to an expert scribe who will write it on his behalf. Hence, throughout the ages people blessed with inspiration and sensitivity elected to commission a pious scribe to write a Torah on their behalf. It is usually entrusted to a Shul or Yeshiva where it is read regularly.

It is our prayerful wish that this project in fulfillment of the last Mitzvah of the Torah will bring about the conclusion of the Galut so we may witness, the arrival of Moshiach, without delay.

Friendship Circle Brings Buddy Baseball to Toronto

The baseball diamond at the Irving Chapley Park was buzzing with excitement as some of the children of Friendship Circle put on their personalized baseball jerseys and took up their positions on the field. The others swung the bats for the pre-game practice.

The game was about to begin, but not before some formalities with greetings from Peter Kent, MP and Gila Martow, MPP on behalf of our government. With everyone standing at attention Noah Wilansky walked up to the mic and led the assembly with the national anthem.

Divided into 2 teams the youngsters stepped up to the plate, hit the ball and headed towards first base notwithstanding their various challenges. The children were assisted by their buddies. The excitement in the air was palpable.

"The youngsters practiced for a number of weeks prior to the game and eagerly showed their skills to the crowd, which included parents, volunteers and supporters," said Esther Grossbaum, coordinator of Friendship Circle.

The concept of the All Star Game was initiated in December by Chicago businessman Dean Klassman, a philanthropist and founder of Klassman Financial Services, who introduced "Buddy Baseball" in his city and approached the international Friendship Circle with an offer to help launch the program throughout North America. Upon the recommendation of Rabbi Zelik Moskowitz of the Friendship



A Friendship Circle participant at bat

Circle in Illinois, Dean readily and wholeheartedly reached out to the organization in Toronto.

"We embraced this offer with great enthusiasm," said Goldy Grossbaum the Friendship Circle co-coordinator. "In addition to benefitting the children, the Buddy Baseball program offered an opportunity for the organization to raise some necessary dollars from event sponsorships", remarked Yitzchok Grossbaum the director.

Conceived in 2002, Buddy Baseball is a program that enables children with special needs to play the fantastic game of baseball like in the "big leagues." In fact it was held in

Chicago's Wrigley Field and in the Kraft stadium in Jerusalem. Indeed, the administration of Roger's Stadium had offered us to host the game where the Blue Jays play but regrettably a suitable date could not be secured.

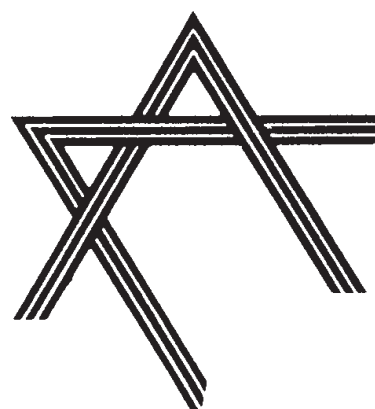
Buddy Baseball has modified the game to include children with a diverse range of special needs, such as cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorders and down syndrome, including children who are both verbal and non-verbal. Players are aged 5-18, who learn to enjoy baseball while developing athletic skills of batting, catching and running (or driving their wheelchair). Buddies simply assist the player, rather than playing the game for them.

Since the inception of the Buddy Baseball concept, the league has expanded to other cities throughout the U.S. and was introduced in Israel two years ago with great success.

The outdoor park setting was an ideal opportunity to also acknowledge the Friendship Circle volunteers. Meeting up with a child with special needs on a weekly basis, the dedicated brigade of teens demonstrate their commitment and sensitivity beyond the call of duty. Each year in addition to a gift of recognition bearing the Friendship Circle logo the teenagers receives citations from all levels of government.



L to R: Goldy & Itchy Grossbaum, Dean Klassman, Peter Kent, MP, Gila Martow, MPP, Sidney Spiegel, Rabbi Zalman A. Grossbaum



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Chabad’s New Prison Chaplaincy

A tattooed male figure in an orange jumpsuit is escorted through the double steel doors. Suddenly he is struck with an intense light. He hurriedly attempts to shield his eyes from the blinding rays. However he struggles in vain to lift his hands towards his face. He is handcuffed. The light that he is shielding himself from is the sun.

Kevin, as the guards refer to him, is lucky. He is partaking in history. This is the first time that a Sukkah has ever been erected in Toronto South Detention Centre. In fact it could be the first time that a sukkah has been put up in any Toronto prison, ever.

Kevin begins to shake and then tears begin to form in his eyes.

“I got nervous.. I thought he was on something,” says Rabbi Michoel Csillag.

The guards proceeded to uncuff him and he is now free to walk into the small pop-up sukkah that Rabbi Csillag erected only a few minutes earlier. He sits down slowly with tears in his wide eyes while staring up with a look of awe on his face.

That’s when he drops his bombshell confession.

“Rabbi, It’s the first time I have actually seen the sky in over two years...”

There are approximately 200 Jewish inmates in Ontario’s prisons. Rabbi Michoel Csillag is on a mission to reach them all.

“Most Jews don’t know that we are out there and that there are Jewish religious services available if they request it. It’s part of their Human Rights to receive it,” explains Csillag.

Jewish Services of Canada (JSC) was formed about two years ago.

Csillag elaborates on it’s founding.

“I was concerned about a friend who got in serious trouble with the law and was incarcerated. I was struggling with the question of how deeply to get involved with his problem. In my search for inspiration I opened a book of Igros (The Igros is a compilation of thousands of letters that the Rebbe had written to individuals throughout the years, full of advice on every conceivable subject) I was shocked to find that the page I opened to contained a specific letter that the Rebbe



Ronnen Lederman right Daniel Maizels centre and site chaplain Melva Lewis left ready to serve the inmates a Purim Seuda arranged JSC through the institution

had written to a certain prison chaplain. It was 3 pages long and its main point was that even though a Jew can be physically imprisoned, they can never truly be spiritually imprisoned... This is especially true when people on the outside help them observe Torah and Mitzvos... I showed my friend, and now partner in this endeavor, Ronen Lederman the letter and knowing that Rosh Hashanna was coming up we both quickly mobilized to try and get a shofar to our incarcerated friend. It wasn’t easy, but after days of pushing and speaking with higher ups they relented and at the 11th hour they allowed the shofar in. He was probably the only Jew in Ontario that blew the shofar that year inside prison walls. But he wouldn’t be the last.”

Since that day, a full-fledged organization has been born. In a short time JSC has clocked over 1000 hours of chaplaincy visits to Jews across the province.

Every week an army of Chabad Shluchim and volunteers drive to far off places to visit inmates who are most grateful for something that most Jews take for granted; to simply see another Jewish face.

Rabbi Yosef Gansburg has been an active volunteer since the beginning. On any given

week he puts on Tefilin on 12 individuals at the Toronto South Detention Centre. He can sometimes walk several kilometers indoors as he navigates the halls of the enormous facility getting to and from each unit.

“You have to be there at least four hours minimum to be able to reach every Jew. There is no other way. Sometimes there are Jews who are in the SEG (solitary confinement). All you can do is talk through the metal door. Cheering people up is so important since depression is the number one ailment in prison. We try to arrange challah buns and grape juice for Kiddush on Shabbos,” says Gansburg

On the opposite end of the spectrum you have Rabbi Avraham Zaltzman who travels to Lindsay every week to see only one lonely Jew.

“When he sees me his eyes light up. It’s like my visits keep him going under his harsh reality....he really can’t wait to be reunited with his family. In the meantime we are his family,” explains Zaltzman.

Harsh conditions they are. Every Ontario Provincial institution has the equivalent security level of a supermax US prison. Regardless of the seriousness of the crime everyone is housed together. There are few distinctions made. To make matters worse 72% of the inmates have not been convicted and are just awaiting a trial.

For Passover, hand made Shmurah matzah was sent out to the inmates. Last year 40 boxes were sent. This year that number hit 200.

This year JSC conducted a communal Seder inside the prison. Two volunteers spent the first days of Passover away from their families and then walked an hour and then up and down 24 flights of stairs in order to celebrate the Passover Seder with the inmates. Thanks to them ten Jews in TSDC had a full Seder this year on both nights.

Ariel Lutin, one of the Pesach volunteers explains what an inmate told him during the Seder. “What took you so long? I was praying all day that you would come and when supertime came and you were not here, I almost panicked. I thought I would not have Pesach this year.”

According to Jewish law the Passover Seder cannot start until it after dark which lead to the inmates confusion.

On Purim JSC sent out 10 volunteers to institutions across the province. They performed 14 Megillah readings and at least 28 Jewish inmates fulfilled the mitzvahs of Purim including trading Shalach Monos gift packages and giving charity.

For Chanukah the programs included actual menorah lighting for all eight nights. JSC sent menorahs to every institution in Ontario this year.

Real dedication is seen by the onsite staff as well. On one of the nights of Chanukah the on duty chaplain, Meredith Lewis, traveled for over an hour to pick up kosher donuts from the Kosher bakery so that the Jewish inmates would have food to celebrate with.

“It’s a partnership with the facility staff. We work together to make things happen. I’ve noticed that the facility staff enjoy organizing the programs too and learn a lot. It’s a win-win situation for everyone involved,” says Ronen.

JSC has begun helping families of the incarcerated. Sending and sponsoring children to summer camp and helping families who are often struggling without a bread winner.

Rabbi Aaron Lipskar of the Aleph Institute, Chabad’s prison chaplaincy program in

the US, is part of the advisory team for JSC. He is often in contact with Csillag either giving advice or strategizing how to solve new problems.

“JSC is doing a phenomenal job in my opinion. In a very short time they have gone from zero to a full-fledged organization helping so many isolated Jews. It’s my pleasure to offer my support,” Lipskar enthused.

When Csillag was asked if he has any reservations about the job he answers straight to the point. “It’s the Rebbe’s work and I’m proud to be part of it.”

Jewish Services of Canada is fundraising for their high holidays programs. They are looking to raise \$20,000. Please help by donating to their go fund me campaign.

<https://www.gofundme.com/start-of-the-jewish-year-fundraiser>

All donations are tax deductible.

To contact Jewish Services of Canada to donate or if you know a Jewish inmate that needs help:

Jewish Services of Canada
770 Chabad Gate
Thornhill ON L4J3V9
905-763-1000
jewishservicesca@gmail.com
<http://www.jewsinjail.com>

“Chalk for Kindness” Planned for Danforth

On Sunday, September 16th at 12:00PM Chabad of Danforth – Beaches, in conjunction with the Danforth BIA, will be bringing children together at the Parkette on Danforth & Logan to spread kindness & tolerance through street art.

Consistent with Chabad’s philosophy; to counter darkness with light, this event, conceived by Chabad emissaries to Danforth-Beaches, Rabbi Sholom and Rebbetzen Devorah Lezell, is a response to the recent tragic killing rampage in Greentown.

Designed for children and their families, ‘Let’s Chalk for Kindness’ combines creative visual arts with greater impact, engaging kids in a discussion of the things we can do together as a community to build a better world.

Complete with photo-station and supplies, participants will design and decorate a large, neighborhood mural, crafting exploding chalk-bombs to infuse their work with Pollock-style graphics. In addition to the mural, the children will also create a “Wall of Kindness” with practical ideas to pay it forward and cultivate goodness and kindness.

It has been said that children



Rabbi Sholom Lezell surveys the Alexander the Great Parkette

are the greatest force for change in the world. To this end, it is essential to provide them with opportunities to discover and develop their impact while they are still young. The event will be an exciting way for these young minds—and hearts—to come together and learn what they can do right now to bring light into other people’s lives.

To get involved in the project or to learn more please contact Rabbi Sholom Lezell at 416-809-1365 – Rabbi@Chabaddb.com



Sukkah program left is Scott Large TSDC superintendent in charge of programs site chaplain meredith lewis Rabbi Michoel Csillag and a participating correctional officer

Two Semesters of Hebrew Reading Courses Completed



Two groups of students recently completed Hebrew reading crash courses at Chabad Lubavitch. The courses, part of Chabad's Jewish Learning Institute (JLI), were arranged and presented by Rabbi Shalom B. Bakshi an experience educator & Hebrew reading specialist.

The first course titled "Shana Tova" was delivered last summer – as a preparation to the High Holidays.

This course is designed for beginners in Hebrew reading, it is divided into two semesters: In the first, participants learn to recognize and identify the Hebrew letters while discovering the meaning behind the holy letters with Chassidic insights. The course uses Power Point presentations designed by JLI's – Read It In Hebrew (RIIH) program.

In the second semester the course covers the Hebrew vowels and includes mastering tools and tips to be able to become a proficient Hebrew reader.

Participants noted that the course inspired them to join the prayers in synagogue during the holidays and to be able to follow the services more than they had ever been able to experience.

The obvious dedication and excitement of the participants prompted Rabbi Bakshi to continue to the next level and teach returning students a more advanced course during the

following spring.

The second course, in the spring of 2018, was titled "Chag Same'ach." In this course participants learned important exceptions in the rules of Hebrew reading and language, as well many more tools & techniques to become an independent, fluent Hebrew reader.

The dozen people who joined the two semesters and mastered the required learning materiel including reviewing and completing homework – received a certificate in recognitions for their accomplishments.

One student summed it up this way:

Rabbi Bakshi is a very engaging and insightful instructor. He is truly passionate about both the subject matter as well as the learning outcome of each individual student. His in-depth knowledge of Torah concepts as well as his mastery of both biblical and conversational Hebrew enables him to provide his students with an outstanding learning experience and results."

Rabbi Bakshi, currently teaching at Cheder Chabad elementary school, also gives evening classes and private lessons in Hebrew reading. He also teaches Bar Mitzvah lessons and gives lessons in various other topics in Judaism. He can be reached directly by his email: RabbiBakshi@gmail.com or by phone at 647-982-3419

Reflections of My Visit to Camp Gan Israel

By Rabbi Z. Aaron Grossbaum

Camp Gan Israel, in picturesque Haliburton, is a village in its own right. For the two months of summer a comprehensive infrastructure has to be in place with provisions made for every possibility including the unexpected. This all assumes greater proportion when the needs include kosher food and the regulations related to Shabbat observance. Try buying a bottle of kosher wine in nearby Haliburton or Minden!

Last summer on a Friday afternoon, the weatherman called for heavy rain and there was little we could do but "wait and see." Sure enough after the girls gathered in the assembly hall to welcome the Shabbat, torrential rain began to fall accompanied by booming thunder and periodic flashes of lightning. Soon after the power went down, resulting in total darkness, and the entire food supply in the walk-in cooler, and freezer in "count down" mode. I'll spare the reader the three hours of anguish and the hastily arranged backup plan put into effect. On the positive side I'm sure the unplanned experience provided exciting memories for the campers.

The experience must have made an indelible impression on me because when I related the drama to camp benefactor Mr. Sidney Spiegel, without a moment's hesitation he graciously instructed me to install automatic generators to facilitate the "Village" of Gan Israel.

Having that sense of security is certainly reassuring but it assumed much greater proportion last week. As I drove into Haliburton on Thursday evening, the entire region was in the "dark" (read: shut down) due to a fire at the Power Plant. From the village of Minden up to Huntsville you couldn't pump gas, you could not buy groceries, or use any appli-



ance that is operated by electricity.

What a relief it was, to drive into Camp Gan Israel and see all the facilities humming under the power provided by the newly installed propane generators. In the kitchen they were cooking and baking for Shabbat and in the assembly hall the youngsters were enjoying the fun filled "night activity."

Indeed, just like any municipality, most of the organized activity goes on during conventional hours, yet the infrastructure operates 24/7, so too, in the



village of Gan Israel. Upon my arrival "after hours" with a truckload of provisions and supplies which included, pizza dough and gluten free bread, the kitchen staff was busy preparing sushi; a treat for the staff as a show of appreciation so they can party and celebrate another great week at

camp.

As on any typical day in camp, while the staff may have worked late into the night, the campers, having retired and gone to bed at a reasonable hour, wake up at a not-so-reasonable hour. As I roamed the grounds at 6:30am there were some 50 youngsters shooting hoops, as others were engaged in fierce tetherball battles at three specially erected posts. The tetherball court seems to be a favoured spot in camp, as long as the maintenance people have the patience to keep on re-tying the forever snapping cords.

As much as I enjoyed seeing their excitement, it was the sound of children davening that caught my attention. Following the sound led me down to the lake from where I could see a fleet of canoes and kayaks, anchored on the other side of the lake. The children of a few bunks were enjoying a predawn outing. This included davening under the sky with the rising sun, eat what you can "scramble" breakfast, and (I guess) some fishing.

Still, the ultimate experience in Camp Gan Israel is on Shabbat. The passionate davening spirited singing are unmatched in any Shul. The food and Shabbat delicacies are "over the top. Yes, somehow the campers manage to come home with their Shabbat white shirts beyond hope, but they do bring home memories that will last them a lifetime!

Pratt Student's Thesis Leads to Newfoundland Mikvah Commission

By Ariel Dominique Hendelman

The spaces that house mikvahs have a plethora of different aesthetics, ranging from the bare bones functionality of a European shtetl to an opulent spa at the Four Seasons. But after spending a summer in Israel in which she visited many ancient and historic mikvahs in Safed and around Israel, recent art-school graduate Rachel Udkoff decided to design a reimagined mikvah space for her senior thesis project at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y. Not only did the project impress and educate her professors, it led to her first professional commission designing a new mikvah in Newfoundland

Udkoff has been interested in designing spas for some time, but after working with an interior designer in Brooklyn who suggested she look into making mikvahs her niche, Udkoff was intrigued. She returned to Safed last summer to work at the Ascent Learning Institute and began researching the area's ancient mikvahs. She met with local mikvah expert Rabbi David Rothschild. "He told me about the many in Safed, including one that's been covered by an abandoned mall. He



Rachel Udkoff at Lubavitch World Headquarters on graduation day.

told me there are seven mikvahs that 16th century sage, Rabbi Isaac Luria (the Ari Zal), went to, and he even mapped them out for me. I visited one in a cave, and it was incredible. I took elements of it for the mikvah I designed. To visit this ancient mikvah and bring that intangibility into a concept for a new mikvah was really meaningful."

When Udkoff returned to Pratt in the fall, her teacher asked the class: What are you obsessed with? Udkoff's answer: abandoned buildings. While she was in Safed learning about mikvahs, she also developed a habit of exploring abandoned buildings and

discovering their histories. "It's the sense that you're in this moment suspended in time. That's what I wanted to bring into my mikvah design."

Since the mikvah is a sacred place, Udkoff felt compelled to define the word sacred. She polled friends through social media to ask their definition of sacred, and received responses such as, "hidden" and "separate." These elements would serve as the building blocks of Udkoff's design.

To begin designing the mikvah, Udkoff first chose the space: an abandoned building in Gowanus, Brooklyn, which sits on the Gowanus canal, among the most polluted waterways in America. The contrast between impure and pure waters, and all the necessary steps to get from one to the other felt important to Udkoff. The building is also a graffiti landmark and is currently being turned into an art space.

Udkoff's conceptual proposition was to turn part of that art space into the mikvah. The entrance to the mikvah is made of rammed earth, about three feet thick.

A long hallway continues

around the circumference of the mikvah space until the exit on the other side. Once you go from the changing room, you're escorted into this hallway that again has rammed earth on one side. There are small cuts in the earth that are not readily noticeable, but behind them is a light source. As you continue around the hallway, you start to notice that these lines of light form Hebrew letters. The experience of uncertainty leads to the recognition of Hebrew letters as you continue around the hallway as more light filters in.

Udkoff describes the process as a metaphor for enlightenment and a reminder that the world was created with Hebrew letters. From the hallway, there is a preparation room, the first transformation area. "Submerging in the mikvah itself is not the only purification process that you go through; the preparation room is the first step whereby you purify yourself in order to be able to accept the purification of G d. That's something else that I wanted to bring in: first you purify yourself before G d purifies you."

The mikvah space itself, im-

parts the feeling of a cave. There is a large, circular skylight above. On the ceiling, Udkoff added mirrors to bring in the light of the moon. These mirrors reflect the light to a series of acrylic tubes that transfer it into the space of the mikvah through fiber optics. If that sounds complicated, it is! The mikvah project represents countless hours of both research and design for Udkoff. She hopes the Gowanus mikvah will become a reality someday, but for now, it remains conceptual.

Meanwhile, Udkoff is designing her first "real" mikvah, which will be built for Rabbi Chanan and Tuba Chernitsky in their recently established Chabad House in Newfoundland. Unlike her design for her honor's thesis, this mikvah will be small, simple and in the backyard of the emissaries' home. Udkoff is excited about the opportunity and hopes to design more mikvahs in the future.

"Creating spiritual sanctuaries for women could really elevate their mikvah experience. We can encourage women to go to the mikvah by beautifying the space and bringing spirituality into it. That's really my goal."

Forty Fantastic Years of Fun!

A Homage to Lubavitch Day Camp



By Yosef Zeldman

This year Lubavitch Day Camp (LDC), celebrating its 40th season, had its biggest year yet, serving 800 kids from over 450 diverse families under the care and commitment of 185 staff members. This is a far cry from the camp's humble beginnings back in 1978, when they first opened serving just 30 kids and 9 staff members. Evidently, LDC's popularity increases rapidly each year as more and more kids and parents become aware of the quality LDC consistently delivers, culminating in the biggest summer yet this year! If you were to say that LDC "Upped

and memorable experience. My journey with Lubavitch Day Camp has been long and extremely unique. When I was far younger, during the summers of 2007, 2008 and 2009, I vividly remember attending Lubavitch Day Camp and having the best time a kid my age possibly could. I still remember my first day ever attending the camp. I accidentally had been following the wrong bunk around for the first few hours of the day, as I got confused with another Yosef. Once I realized I was in the wrong place, I started to panic, not knowing where to go or what to do (As a kid I may have been a bit of a catastrophizer)! But sure enough, almost on cue, a head counselor calmly and warmly walked up to me, asking what was wrong. He immediately pointed me in the right direction, and made sure I knew where to go, ensuring me that I was going to have the best summer of my life. With this being my first experience, a head counselor devoting all of his attention to making sure I was feeling comfortable in the camp, I knew right away that Lubavitch Day Camp was a very special place. I had amazing summers back at Lubavitch Day Camp that I still remember

the most amazing turn of events occurred. Mrs. Steinmetz took note of the fact that I had some experience in photography and videography. She proposed that I be brought on as Lubavitch Day Camp's first ever full time photographer and videographer! I was overjoyed at this proposal, accepting it immediately, and starting that July with a job I could not be happier to perform. My experience in 2016 was so amazing that it's kind of hard to put it to words. I instantly became friends with individuals I still hold very dearly to this day. In terms of my actual skills as a media oriented individual, Lubavitch Day Camp offered me a platform to learn new things about the craft each day, and expand upon my skills in unique ways that I would never be able to achieve at any other place. One of my fondest and most delightful experiences



as photographer, relating very closely to my journey through the years in Lubavitch Day Camp, was being able to produce the Babaganewz. For those who aren't aware, the Babaganewz is a weekly comedy-oriented news segment that the counselors put together to show the campers, showcasing all of the events that transpired that week in camp. I fondly remember watching the Babaganewz as a CIT, immensely looking forward to its release week after week. Then, when I became a staff member, I actually got to film and edit the Babaganewz. This was an absolutely marvelous experience, and the upgrade from watching to producing the Babaganewz was exceptionally satisfying. I hold my job as photographer and videographer to this day, a job I love with all my heart, remaining as the Camp's photographer

and videographer for the summers of 2017 and 2018 as well. In addition to just having fun at Lubavitch Day Camp, with a more mature mindset, I was able to truly appreciate all of the effort Lubavitch Day Camp goes through to reward its campers with a fantastic summer, a herculean task that I feel only this camp can truly accomplish. From my own perspective, as opposed to other summer camps where some kids might reluctantly be attending, every camper in Lubavitch Day Camp truly loves being there. The uplifting Jewish environment the camp is able to facilitate is most definitely one of the biggest contributing factors. Lubavitch Day Camp succeeds in instilling every child with a true, deep love of Judaism, establishing a connection that will remain with many of the campers for the rest of their lives. I know; I've seen it. I mean, what other camp offers a program where counselors will come to your house and throw a personalized kosher barbecue and party for your child after hours, as they do every evening for another camper! The camp handpicks their senior staff from across North America every year, and somehow they never fail to pick the best of the best. The senior staff at Lubavitch Day Camp, in any given year, are some of the nicest, most mindful people I have ever met in my entire life,

not to mention overtly humorous and pleasant! This kindness from the staff goes up to the highest level, as Shua and Esty are the kindest, most welcome employers I could ever ask for. My experience with them has been truly wonderful. I will never forget my years working here, and I don't think they will ever be topped. So, as the second session of 2018 rolls on, I celebrate and appreciate every moment that I will be spending here in my final summer at Lubavitch Day Camp. Representing the camp that I love so dearly, as best as I can, through pictures and video has been an honor and a privilege to do for the past 3 years. I use this article to reflect on my journey in the 8 years I've been here, share my own genuine non-hyperbolic view of the camp, and convey to any and all people reading just how incredible Lubavitch Day Camp really is. Although, if you're a parent of a child attending this camp, I'm sure you already know exactly what I'm talking about. I look forward, with G-d's help, sending my children to Camp Lubavitch, and I can't wait to watch it's exponential growth as it continues another 40 years.

*"I'm making a promise,
Your lessons I will not forsake!"*

*A much better person
Of me they will make.
Goodbye Camp Lubavitch."
~ Yosef Zeldman*



the Ante" in 2018... that would simply fail to capture the 40 year celebration activities.

LDC went above and beyond to make sure that 2018 would be the best year yet, more field trips, more activities, more BBQs and late-night events. Director Ester Steinmetz, assisted by Shua Goldstein, spared no expense making sure that LDC would be a fulfilling and deeply gratifying experience for all! Whether it be the 181 extra large pizza pies ordered every Friday, the complete renovation of the full size (and heated!) swimming pool, the wide array of staff members suited for every child's needs, or the increasingly diverse sports activities.

This is an extremely pivotal and emotional year for me personally with Lubavitch Day Camp, as after 8 wonderful years I have spent at this camp, I will sadly be leaving the camp at the end of this summer. Knowing that this is, sadly, my final year with this extremely special camp, I have been given the opportunity to reflect on all of the amazing times that have been facilitated for me by Lubavitch Day Camp, a camp that made every summer into an uplifting

fondly, with memories that I still cherish to this day. Later in my life, I returned to Lubavitch Day Camp for the summers of 2014 and 2015 as a CIT. My experience as a CIT was nothing short of incredible, and I still look back on these summers as the genuinely best summers of my life. Great friends, over the top trips, fun and attentive counselors, I felt like a camper again, but in a more mature and thoughtful environment. I even took away some important life lessons from my summer of 2015, as my counselor Levi Katzman taught me some really key lessons about maturity and conscientiousness, lessons that helped me immensely through my first year of high school and served as a critical building block for who I am today. I couldn't be a camper forever, however, and when 2016 rolled around, I knew the only place I would want to spend my summer at would be Lubavitch Day Camp. So, naturally, I applied to be a junior counselor.

When I went to my interview with Mrs. Steinmetz in June of 2016, I fully expected to come out of the office with a job as a junior counselor... but then,

showcasing all of the events that transpired that week in camp. I fondly remember watching the Babaganewz as a CIT, immensely looking forward to its release week after week. Then, when I became a staff member, I actually got to film and edit the Babaganewz. This was an absolutely marvelous experience, and the upgrade from watching to producing the Babaganewz was exceptionally satisfying. I hold my job as photographer and videographer to this day, a job I love with all my heart, remaining as the Camp's photographer

Simchas Bais Hashoevah



Wednesday, September 26

5:30 PM - Rides, Food & Lots of fun!

8:00 PM - Live Music, Dancing & Fireworks

Chabad Lubavitch Community Center

The Woman In the Photo

By Baila Olidort

What happened on that flight?

We were on a connecting flight via Brussels, returning from chaperoning a Birthright Israel trip. About an hour into the flight we heard wailing. It was the cry of a nonverbal child. This went on for fifteen minutes. It was getting very tense in the cabin. Flight attendants were rushing back and forth and the plane's phones kept ringing.

What were you thinking?

I was sure that if this continued we'd have to make an emergency landing. We had seven hours of flying time ahead of us. All I could think of was the poor child. I couldn't take it. I got out of my seat to find the kid. He was standing two rows behind me by the window. Tears were streaming down his face. I put out my hand. He gave me his hand and he was quiet. We walked up the aisle together. I sat down on the floor in front of the emergency exit. I put him on my lap and hugged him. I rocked him and we drew pictures on air sickness bags.

I was really hyper-focused. People were finally relaxing and going to sleep, and I wanted to keep him calm.

We played with my phone. One of the Birthright teens gave me a fidget spinner to use. He played with that. He laughed. I'm pretty sure he had autism. At some point he jumped into my arms, I held him. I gave him cookies. And after two hours, he got up and went back to his mom. That was it.

What made you act?

I was there, so there must have been a reason for that. I also wondered what must it be like for the mom. When things like this happen we tend to think that it's her responsibility. But she must have been so exhausted. It doesn't help to stand and stare in disdain waiting for the mother to "fix it." Sometimes she can't fix it. When you are in a situation that's uncomfortable for everyone, the only thing to do is try to help.

I know the photo went viral, and I suppose it must have been a strange scene—me holding a boy dressed in traditional African garb, but it wasn't a big deal. We need to remember that, as cliché as it sounds, it really does take a village—we don't live on an island. There's a reason why people with special needs live amongst us in our community.

You've done something extraordinary in your own community, raising the profile and awareness of people with special needs through ZABS Place. How did you, a Chabad representative, come to open this unique thrift shop?

I'm not a business woman, but several years ago, when a number of young adults with special needs graduated high school, their parents were at a loss. They had no structure for them, so they asked us if we'd open a group home for them.

We didn't like the idea. In these homes, everything is generally done as a group. That's an unfair and unrealistic expectation. Why should someone have to do something because everyone else is doing



She's the woman in the photo sitting on the floor in front of the emergency exit of the plane on a transatlantic flight, with an 8-year-old African-Muslim boy in her arms. The photo went viral, and Rochel Groner, director of Chabad's The Friendship Circle and ZABS Place in Charlotte, North Carolina, went back to doing what she does best.

that?

I knew there had to be a better way. So I started to look around to see what employment opportunities there are for people with special needs. We saw baggers, janitors, and people watering plants. Which is all fine, but if that's not what you want to do when you grow up, why do it?

What kind of employment do you make available at ZABS Place?

It depends on what they want to do. Some of our young adults feel anxious in social situations, so we have positions that allow them to do what they are comfortable doing. It's not their needs that are special, it's their talents. We have someone who cannot tell you her name, but she makes bath bombs and loofah soaps. She actually grows the loofah plant, cuts it up and puts them into bars of soap that she makes with essential oils, and we sell them. Another makes semi-precious jewelry, and another paints his interpretation of Van Gogh.

It's so easy to discount someone with special needs but these young adults are so talented. We've developed a microbusiness incubator program where we help young adults who have a passion but haven't figured out how to use it. We have five young adults in that program now.

Are all the people working at ZABS Place paid?

We have twelve paid employees at the moment. The others cannot get paid because there's a so much bureaucracy and red tape. Typically-

developing people don't realize just how fortunate they are to have the luxury of working and getting paid for it. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 allows people with special needs to work and get paid pennies on the dollar because their productivity is compared to that of a typically-developing worker. That makes it legal to pay individuals with special needs as low as \$0.34 an hour for the same work someone else is paid \$7.25.

There are other rules which dictate how much money someone receiving SSI and health care benefits can make before losing them and having to pay a penalty. So for some it just isn't worth it to get paid. But they want to do something meaningful, so we have opportunities for them too.

Why a thrift shop?

The thrift aspect mimics our mission and philosophy. We believe that everyone and everything has a purpose. When placed in the right environment and nurtured, both shine. We are committed to seeing the value of every person and every donation. We polish and sew and tweak our displays until the beauty in everything is illuminated. We upcycle things that others have discarded. We take torn jeans and make them into crossbody purses. Stained men's shirts get their sleeves cut off and are made into wine bags. This is how we encourage our customers and community to see beyond the here-and-now and recognize potential inherent in everyone, and everything.



Video of Deaf Rabbi and Student Saying Shema in Sign Language Goes Viral

By Mordechai Lightstone

A video of Rabbi Isser Lubecki, a 27-year-old Chabad rabbi from France, helping a Deaf Jewish man put on tefillin and say the Shema in sign

Deaf Jews each week, to teach a Torah class, tell Jewish stories, help men don tefillin and distribute Shabbat candles to women.

Recently, Rabbi Yaacov Elbaz of Beth Loubavitch Paris



language, recently went viral. Viewed tens of thousands of times across various social networks, the video shows Lubecki helping the man with the mitzvah.

Lubecki works with Jewish students as part of Chabad's Beth Loubavitch Étudiants in Paris's 5th arrondissement, an area known for its universities and colleges, including the Sorbonne.

Deaf from birth, Lubecki has long focused his energy on reaching out to Jews in the Deaf community. In 2010, he traveled as part of the Merkos Summer Visitation program to Rochester, N.Y., home to one of America's largest Deaf communities.

In Paris, he visits the Association Culturelle des Sourds Juifs de France (or ACSJF), France's central association for

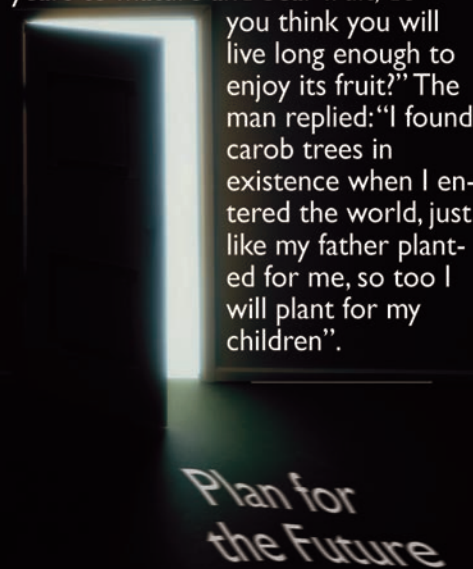
17 contacted Lubecki about a Deaf Jew in his community.

The two met at ACSJF, and since then, the man has returned weekly to take part in Torah class. During the meeting, Lubecki helped the man put on tefillin and shared it with Lankar. The video was shared to WhatsApp and Facebook, and rapidly took off across the web.

"I don't know the reason why we are so special—that only Hashem knows," Lubecki told Chabad.org. "It's important that people see the video, see how Deaf Jews can pray with sign language and connect to Hashem in this unique way."

https://www.chabad.org/news/article_cdo/aid/4056678/jewish/Video-of-Deaf-Rabbi-and-Student-Saying-Shema-in-Sign-Language-Goes-Viral.htm

The Talmudic Sage, Choni Hamagle once noticed a man planting a carob tree and inquired: "It will take seventy years to mature and bear fruit, do you think you will live long enough to enjoy its fruit?" The man replied: "I found carob trees in existence when I entered the world, just like my father planted for me, so too I will plant for my children".



When planning for the future or writing a Will please consider the Chabad Lubavitch Organization of Southern Ontario. For further information and to arrange for special bequests.

Please call: Rabbi Zalman Grossbaum at 905-731-7000. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

Colleges Across U.S. Offer Alternative Graduations for Jewish Students

By Tzipora Reitman
When Rebecca Roffe walked proudly across the commencement stage to receive her diploma from Binghamton University in Upstate New York, she was filled with gratitude—not only for having reached this milestone, but also for being able to celebrate it on a day that is suitable for her and her family.
Roffe was one of 48 students participating in Binghamton University’s first-ever alternative graduation ceremony for Jewish students on Friday morning, May 18.
Roffe, of Skokie, Ill., earned a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and is headed for Hofstra Law School. Ordinarily, she would have graduated with her fellow science students on Sunday, May 20. This year, Shavuot occurred on Sunday and Monday, making it complicated for observant Jewish students and their families to

our needs.”
At Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y., where Rabbi Shmuly Lieberman is co-director of the Chabad Jewish Student Center, students and their parents asked the administration to reschedule both the undergraduate and law school graduation ceremonies, which coincided with Shavuot. Both Hillel and Chabad echoed the students’ concerns. Rather than reschedule the ceremonies, the university agreed to offer an alternative graduation ceremony on Tuesday, May 22. Approximately 30 students participated. “Some of the participants even included students who didn’t necessarily observe Shavuot but wished to show solidarity with their fellow Jewish students,” reported Lieberman.
Rockland Community College, part of the State University of New York, in Suffern, N.Y., also responded to concerns raised

and gowns, and received their diplomas from the provost, and the college president addressed the graduates and guests.
While it’s nice to have a crowd at events, each person constitutes an entire world, according to the famous Talmudic dictum: “He who saves one life has saved a whole world” (Sanhedrin 4:5).
Indeed, the University of Rochester held an alternative graduation on Wednesday, May 16, for just one student, Jacob Niebloom, who earned a B.S. in computer studies and a B.A. in business. Months ago, when he realized that Sunday’s commencement coincided with Shavuot, Niebloom himself approached the university administration to ask for an alternate ceremony.

“They were very supportive, and even though I had hoped other students would participate, the university was very willing to do it just for me,” he said. During his sophomore year, Niebloom, of Livingston, N.J., on a quest to fill in missing gaps in his Jewish education, became close to Rabbi Asher Yaras, co-director of the Rohr Chabad House at University of Rochester.

“I’m very proud of Jacob for standing up for what is right, even if it is not necessarily the most convenient. Students often have a dream of what their graduation will look like, but Jacob knows what’s important,” said Yaras, who attended the alternative graduation along with Rabbi Nechemia Vogel, co-director of the Kessler Family Chabad Center, and Rabbi Ari Kilimnick of nearby Congregation Beth Shalom, as well as Niebloom’s parents and grandmother.

In Binghamton, Amanda Nussbaum of Teaneck, N.J., who received a B.A. in economics and hopes to work in data analytics, expressed her gratitude for Chabad. “I feel totally taken care of by Chabad,” she said. “They worked out everything about graduation before we even knew about it.”

“They always go above and beyond to help us,” she continued, “and they’re even making a fancy dinner for us and our families the night before. Chabad being here is a huge part of the reason I chose Binghamton. And just



Jacob Niebloom receives his two bachelor’s degrees from Dean Wendi Heinzelman, Dean of the Hajim School of Engineering and Applied Sciences at University of Rochester at an alternative graduation ceremony arranged just for him.

participate. To avoid traveling on Shabbat and the holiday, which is prohibited by Jewish law, families would have needed to come up on Friday and remain in Binghamton until Tuesday.
Last summer, Rabbi Aaron Slonim, executive director and senior rabbi at the Rohr Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life at Binghamton, learned that all eight of the university’s 2018 graduation ceremonies were scheduled for the weekend of Shavuot.

“As I fielded calls from anxious parents, I felt strongly that I had to help make this joyous event less stressful for these families,” Slonim told Chabad.org. Having heard from fellow Chabad rabbis that other colleges had arranged alternate graduations, Slonim approached Binghamton’s president, Dr. Harvey Stenger, to propose that Binghamton do the same. “I was overjoyed and deeply grateful when he responded positively and put the pieces in place to make this happen.”

Cheryl and Irv Stein of Buffalo, N.Y., arrived in Binghamton on Thursday night, May 17, and join their daughter Mariah at a dinner sponsored by Chabad. On Friday, after Mariah received her B.A. in Human Development, the family returned to Buffalo in time to observe Shabbat and Shavuot.

“Upon seeing the original date for graduation, I was disappointed and surprised,” said Cheryl Stein. “I am so impressed at how the college has been so accommodating, thanks to Rabbi Slonim making them aware of

about commencement falling on Shavuot. The college typically holds one ceremony, scheduled this year for Sunday, May 20, the first day of Shavuot. Rabbi Dov and Shevy Oliver, co-directors of Hillel of Rockland, which is affiliated with Chabad on Campus, approached the administration. “We are gratified that RCC’s senior administration was receptive to our proposal to accommodate observant Jewish students by offering an alternative graduation ceremony,” said Shevy Oliver. The alternative graduation ceremony was held on Thursday evening, May 24; eight students and their guests attended.

The ceremony at RCC, simi-



Mariah Stein, left, and Sammi Plotsker prepare for their alternative graduation ceremony at Binghamton University

lar to alternative graduations at other colleges, mirrored the college’s standard commencement ceremony. Graduates wore caps

like I felt cared for by Chabad as soon as I arrived here, I’m leaving college with the same feeling about Chabad.”



Invocation at U.S. Embassy Opening in Jerusalem Delivered by Chabad Rabbi From Long Island

By Dovid Margolin

— Fifty-one years after the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces entered the gates of the Old City of Jerusalem, reunifying the holy city after almost two decades of Jordanian occupation, the United States of America officially moved its embassy to Israel’s capital city. The move, a perennial presidential campaign promise supported by U.S. leaders on both sides of the aisle for decades, was announced by President Donald J. Trump in December 2017. The opening took place on May 14 in the presence of U.S. Ambassador to Israel David M. Friedman, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and American and Israeli dignitaries.

The gathering was addressed by Rabbi Zalman Wolowik, director of Chabad-Lubavitch of the Five Towns in Cedarhurst, N.Y., and a longtime Torah-study partner of Ambassador Friedman.

Emphasizing Jerusalem’s place as the eternal capital of the Jewish people, Wolowik noted that “truth is not determined by popular opinion—it is eternal not ephemeral, unchanging not relative. Truth stands the test of time. While empires, ideologies and philosophies rise and fall, the Jewish people’s attachment to this holy city has never waned or faltered—it is truth. King David imagined a Temple here, and his son Solomon built it here; the Prophets pleaded, cajoled and thundered here. From cradle to grave, for thousands of years, Jews of every extraction



Rabbi Zalman Wolowik, co-director of Chabad of the Five Towns in Cedarhurst, N.Y., and a longtime friend and Torah-study partner of U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman, delivers the invocation at the historic opening of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem.

have had the beautiful name of this beautiful city on their lips, Yerushalayim. Jews have lived here, and when they didn’t, they directed their prayers here. That is truth.”

Thanking President Trump and the United States for “standing for this truth,” he prayed that other countries follow America’s example in “affirming the Jewish people’s eternal bond with this holy city.”

Peace, Wolowik pointed out, is a quintessentially Jewish idea and aspiration, symbolized in the very makeup of Jerusalem. “The beauty of Jerusalem,” Wolowik said, quoting the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, “... is that its walls are unifying walls. Within the confines of Jerusalem, every man, woman and child became part of something greater than themselves.”

But peace is the twin of truth, and the rabbi concluded by praying that “from today’s exalting of truth, there flow to Jerusalem, her neighbors and to the entire world, a true and perfect peace. ... In the words of the Psalmist who sang his longing for peace not far from right here, ‘Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, may those who love you be at peace ...’”

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When Politics and Religion Don't Mix: Chabad at Oberlin College

Talking about Judaism, Israel, and anti-Semitism on one of America's most liberal campuses

By Sarah Ogince

Last October, fliers calling for an end to “Jewish privilege” appeared all over the Oberlin College campus. It was only the latest such incident at the school, which has become so injured to them that its administration announced in November it would no longer notify students about offensive fliers, as it had done in the past. The fliers represent one voice in a larger dialogue going on at the college, which has drawn attention as a hotbed of anti-Israel activism, and where roughly one third of the students are Jewish.

Oberlin made national headlines in the spring of 2016, when Joy Karega, an assistant professor of composition and rhetoric, wrote on Facebook that ISIS was a creation of the CIA and the Mossad. She also posted a meme with a picture of the banker Jacob Rothschild next to the words, “We own your news, the media, your oil and your government.” The school’s president initially defended Karega’s academic freedom, but in November, the board stepped in and fired her. A week later, the home of a Jewish professor was vandalized, and a note left under the mezuzah with the words “Gas Jew Die” spelled out in letters cut from newspapers.

Promoting Jewish observance in that kind of environment might seem a daunting task, but Rabbi Shlomo and Devorah Elkan are not intimidated. Chabad representatives to the Ohio college town since 2010, they would get to know Oberlin’s long history of progressive politics on the job. The learning curve was steep. Rabbi Shlomo recalls one of his first forays onto campus: “It was the first day of Sukkot and I was out, like a good Chabad campus rabbi, with my lulav and etrog. I turned a corner and bumped into a mass of students protesting, with police cordons and everything.” It turned out that Republican political operative Karl Rove was speaking. When the speech was over, Rabbi Shlomo says, a group of students attempted a citizen’s arrest of Rove for “crimes against humanity.”

After that first culture shock, the Elkans adapted quickly to their new environment. In addition to Shabbat dinners and Torah classes, they developed programs like “How Do You Jew?” an arts collective that encourages students and faculty to express their Jewish identity through the spoken word, photography, and music (Oberlin is famous for its conservatory). The rabbi also hosts a radio program on the college station called “Nasal Gazing,” a Jewish take on the stereotype of Obies as navel-gazers. In each episode, he talks in depth with one Jewish student about their experience at the college and what their concerns are. Not surprisingly, the conversation often turns to Israel and anti-Semitism.

It’s not always a comfortable discussion, but it’s certain-



Devorah Elkan studies Torah with young women on campus. In this safe space, politics don't have credence.

ly not one the Elkans can avoid. “We engage daily with students who are anti-Israel,” says Rabbi Shlomo. “We’re here to serve the Jewish people regardless of any political affiliation.”

Senior Ari Rosenblum, 21, began attending Shabbat dinners at the Chabad House during his freshman year. The psychology and politics major grew up Reform and participated in Jewish youth groups throughout high school, but never considered himself a Zionist. He thinks that some of the discourse around Israel on campus is “very misguided.”

“It’s almost become a leftist version of the Elders of Zion conspiracy. They don’t realize that they’re perpetuating tropes that have contributed to the oppression of Jewish people.”

Karega was an important advisor to the Black Lives Matter group on campus, and many students were upset when she was fired. “There was a time on campus when either you were with the Jews or you were with the black students,” says Rosenblum, “which was completely unnecessary, especially because we all had the same opinions.” He says Rabbi Shlomo addressed the issue in a way that made sense. “I remember around the time of [the protests in] Ferguson, he said some really good stuff about how it’s our responsibility as Jews to fight oppression. Not only is it commanded of us, but because of our history, we need to stand in solidarity with oppressed groups.”

Whenever they can, the couple encourages students to view their heritage as a source of spiritual and cultural riches, rather than a morally fraught burden to be defended or renounced. “We want them to see that there’s all this wealth in the text and the practice, which is way more than what modern society has defined it as,” Devorah

says. She teaches a course called “More than Matzo Balls,” which uses the traditional foods of different Jewish ethnic groups as a lens to explore the holidays and kosher laws.

The Elkans do their best to make it clear to students that they can safely disagree on politics, even as regards Israel, and still participate in Jewish life. “We emphasize that being Jewish doesn’t mean you cannot disagree with Israeli government policies,” says Devorah, who grew up in Israel. “But your Jewish identity can be linked to the heritage and history of the land.”

Devorah knows a lot about that history, having worked as a tour guide in Israel before she married. She acknowledges that “Israel is a huge part of the core and essence of who I am,” and that “being on a campus like Oberlin’s leads to some inner tumult.” Even if they don’t see eye to eye on all the issues, students can sense the strength of her family’s convictions, and they respect them, she says. “We’re respectful and non-judgmental, but we know what we stand for, and the students appreciate that honesty much more than the masks and fluff that people put on to appease them.”

On their own turf, the couple keeps things as non-political as possible. “We have a rule at our Shabbos table,” Devorah says, somewhat facetiously. “We can talk about anything except politics and religion.” The warm family atmosphere seems to be a relief for everyone. Freshman Caleb Knapp attends Shabbat dinners at the Chabad House most weeks. “We usually talk about something that happened on campus, or how we’re feeling,” he says. “Rabbi Shlomo just wants us to feel good about ourselves and about Oberlin. He’d be willing to talk to you about anything.”



Shlomo and Devorah Elkan with parents and students at a graduation party.



Raised in the Congo, She Will Now Start Up Chabad in Ivory Coast

By Dovid Margolin

Debbie Bensaid has lived in the Central African city of Kinshasa, Congo, for most of her life. She was three months old in 1991 when her parents moved to what was then called Zaire to establish Chabad-Lubavitch of Central Africa, growing up blocks away from

ria. A center opened in Uganda at the end of 2017, and one in Tanzania earlier this year.

Ironically, with a three-and-a-half-hour flight connecting Abidjan and Kinshasa (albeit only three times a week), Debbie Bensaid’s new home won’t be all that far from her old one. Beyond the benefit of



Debbie and Rabbi Yerah Bensaid are moving to Ivory Coast to open Chabad-Lubavitch's newest outpost in Africa. She grew up in the Congo.

the majestic Congo River and amidst the occasional civil war. Different, you might say, from the life of a typical Chassidic girl anywhere else in the world. Yet for her, Africa is home.

“Africa is all I know,” says Bensaid. “The people are friendly; the Jewish community is close and safe. I love it here.”

She remembers what is sometimes called the Second Congo War, in 1998, when as a 7-year-old she and her family took the last plane out of the country that August. “I don’t remember being scared, but you could feel the tension in the country. The streets were empty.”

Her family returned to Congo, but experienced other periods of instability afterwards. Nevertheless, as a Jew, she never felt afraid. “Congolese people are very friendly and nice,” says Bensaid. “They love Jews and have always respected us. We feel comfortable as Jews in this country.”

Now, with her Paris-born husband Rabbi Yerah Bensaid, the young mother of two is preparing to open Chabad-Lubavitch’s newest outpost on the continent: Later this year, the Bensaid family will move to Abidjan and establish Chabad of Ivory Coast. Their center in West Africa will be the seventh permanent center under the umbrella of Chabad of Central Africa, joining the neighboring countries of Ghana and Nige-

knowing what life is actually like in Africa, Bensaid says she will draw on the lessons she learned in Congo, where she watched her parents, Rabbi Shlomo and Miriam Bentolila, build a vibrant and loving Jewish community.

“The example I look at is my mother. She created a beautiful Hebrew school, where children learned to read and write Hebrew, and celebrate Shabbat and all the Jewish holidays in a warm atmosphere,” she says. “I hope that my children and all the children of the Jewish community in Ivory Coast gain that same sense of Jewish pride and enthusiasm.”

Rabbi Bensaid, who first visited and met with Jewish community members in Ivory Coast several months ago, says the former French colony (also known as Côte d’Ivoire) is a growing place, drawing businesspeople and investors from around the world. The Jewish community numbers between 200 and 300 people—a mixture of Israelis, Americans and Europeans, especially French Jews, who are involved in a host of businesses, from infrastructure development to oil and gas to commodities.

“We are looking for a suitable place to open Abidjan’s first synagogue, which will also serve as the base of Chabad activities,” he says. “Ultimately, our top priority will be to build a mikvah.”

They Came for the World Cup and Stayed for Shabbos

By Dovid Margolin

Until two weeks ago, Alberto Galante had never been to Russia. The 2018 FIFA World Cup drew him to Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Rostov-on-Don, where he cheered on Mexico’s national soccer team as they advanced through the competition. While Galante—who traveled with his son and friends—was thrilled to see Mexico stun the world in its upset win over defending World Cup champion Germany, that was not the only happy surprise of his 12-day trip: He also got to see living, breathing Jewish life in Russia, which not only left him impressed, but inspired.

“It was a very spiritual experience, even though it wasn’t supposed to be,” says Galante, 49, who lives in Miami but is originally from Mexico. “I expected to see Chabad, but I didn’t expect what we experienced; it was uplifting.”

There were at least 10,000 Israelis among the 1 million soccer fans who descended upon Russia for the World Cup, but that number does not reflect the thousands of Jewish visitors who came from all around the world, especially from Latin America.

“We had people from New Zealand, Canada, Argentina,” says Rabbi Mordechai Weisberg, director of Chabad-Lubavitch of Moscow, located in the Moscow Jewish Community Center (MJCC) in the Marina Roscha neighborhood of the capital. “People have been flocking here for kosher food, to pray, or just to spend time. They just type



Enjoying a kosher meal and a Torah thought with Rabbi Shlomo Deutch in Samara.

‘Chabad Moscow’ into their GPS, and they are led straight here.”

They are also directed by apps released for iPhone and Android devices, and a website with all relevant Jewish tourist information, set up to orient visitors.

Weisberg met with FIFA president Gianni Infantino in the runup to the games, sharing with him the Jewish community’s World Cup plans throughout Russia. MJCC, the seven-story heart-beat of Jewish life in Moscow, has a dedicated, multi-lingual information center for visitors, and is home to multiple kosher restaurants, including Shtetl. A pleasant outdoor restaurant seating area with screens showing games throughout the country was set up on the property of the Jewish center, where fans were able to sip a kosher cappuccino while keeping up with the matches. Each Shabbat saw hundreds join for big Shabbat meals, and more than 1,000 joined for the Shabbat before the finals.

But it was Galante’s visit to Rostov, where Mexico beat South Korea, that struck him



Rabbi Chaim Danzinger shows visitors around the restored Rostov synagogue.

most. “Where else do you meet a Jew who made the decision to have a brit milah at age 63?” he marvels. In Rostov, Galante met many more Mexican Jewish fans, some of whom he knew and others he didn’t.

“It’s definitely brought a lot of excitement,” says Rostov’s chief rabbi Chaim Danzinger, who also directs Chabad of Rostov. Prior to the games, Danzinger recorded a short video welcoming Jewish visitors to the historic city that he and his fami-

lar laypeople, on their vacation, come to synagogue, put on a tallit and pray.”

Two thousand miles separate Kaliningrad, Russia’s European outpost, and Ekaterinburg, its gateway to Siberia. In both cities, Chabad emissaries have opened their doors to welcome Jewish fans.

Since 1998, Rabbi David and Avital Shvedik have been a key part of reestablishing Jewish life in Kaliningrad, which was the East Prussian city of Königsberg until the end of World War II. The city has a long and lustrous Jewish history, but was utterly destroyed during the war. The choral synagogue was ravaged on Kristallnacht, and the Jewish community deported in 1942. Recently, the Jewish community received the land upon which the choral synagogue once stood, and a full reconstruction of the historic structure is underway. A new 23-ton dome was lowered onto the structure earlier this year, which is timed to be completed this November—80 years since the events of Kristallnacht.

“We have been seeing a constant stream of visitors coming in for kosher food and to put on tefillin,” says Shvedik, who notes that Kaliningrad, a Russian island of sorts, almost never gets foreign visitors.

At the other end of the World Cup map, in Ekaterinburg, Rabbi Zelig Ashkenazi, the chief rabbi of Russia’s fourth-largest city, has experienced a similar phenomenon.

“Hundreds of Jews from France, Uruguay, Peru, Mexico, Japan and other countries came to Ekaterinburg to participate in the World Cup,” he says. “Most of them come to the community center to participate in prayers and Shabbat meals and take advantage of the kosher cafeteria.”

Ekaterinburg’s impressive Rohr Chabad community center is located in the center of the city and includes a synagogue, men’s and women’s mikvahs, and a soup kitchen.

Galante, who returned home to Miami, sums up the general feeling he, his group, and the other Jews he spoke with felt regarding Jewish life in Russia: “It is extraordinary.”



Anti-Semitic Vandalism At Oxford U. Chabad Draws Condemnation

By Menachem Posner

There was a palpable sense of relief when a suspicious-looking powder that accompanied two hateful notes left at Chabad of Oxford was identified as harmless talcum powder.

Chabad of Oxford is a hub of Jewish life at the University of Oxford in England, providing students with kosher food, Shabbat celebrations, prayer services, a city-center student center, as well as a mikvah, nursery and more. It is particularly well-known for its acclaimed lecture series, which attracts world-class academics and personalities who present on a wide range of Jewish topics (www.oxford-jewishlectures.com).

“The powder that was left today was not part of a trend,” Rabbi Eli Brackman, who co-directs Chabad of Oxford with his wife, Freida, since 2001, told Chabad.org. “While the notes tell us that the perpetrators were clearly acting out of anti-



A note left by anti-Semitic vandals.

police took the matter seriously, cordoning off the street and cautiously investigating until they determined that the powder, which had been left in the front of the property, turned out to be harmless.

“This incident,” says the rabbi, “will no doubt inspire Oxford Chabad to only increase in providing for the needs of the Jewish community at Oxford.”



Chabad of Oxford is a hub of Jewish life at the University of Oxford in England

Semitism, all indicators, including video footage, indicate that it was an isolated incident.”

The incident drew widespread condemnation from the university and the community. Oxford West and Abingdon MP Layla Moran, a Member of Parliament representing Oxford, said: “It is shocking and deeply distressing to hear reports of an attack on the Oxford Jewish Centre. I wholly condemn this attack; we cannot tolerate anti-Semitism of any kind in Oxford.”

The powder was initially discovered over the holiday of Shavuot, together with the hateful notes, which had been left on the vehicle gate.

The rabbi reports that local



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Dear Rebby

By Rabbi Aron Moss



Inspiration on Training Wheels

I am feeling a major lull in my spiritual motivation. I started getting into Jewish things around a year ago, but now I just don't have the passion for it anymore. Rosh Hashana is coming - last year I was all inspired, this year I don't feel any drive whatsoever to attend services. Is there something I can do to revive my enthusiasm?

Answer:

Do you remember how you learnt to ride a bike? Your first bike was fitted with training wheels on each side, to keep you from tipping over. The training wheels allowed you to get the feel of riding the bike and build confidence. You felt so good, speeding along and never falling.

Then, just as you started to get comfortable, your parents removed the training wheels and told you to get on the bike and ride. So you got on, rode for half a second and then lost balance and fell flat. "How can I ride without training wheels?" you thought. But your parents insisted that you try again. So you did, and again you fell.

Your frustration built up, to the point that you were ready to give in. You may have wondered why your parents took the training wheels off in the first place. But had they not, you would never learn to ride your bike all on your own. It's harder to ride without training wheels, but only then is it really you riding the bike, using your own skill rather than depending on outside help. You may fall a few times, but as long as you get back up and keep pedaling, eventually you get your balance and the bike rides smoothly along the road.

When someone gets in touch with their Jewishness for the first time, there is a thrill and an excitement unlike anything else in the world. This initial inspiration is a little helping hand from G-d; spiritual training wheels that help us start our journey. But once we get the hang of it, once we have advanced along the spiritual path and are ready to go deeper, the training wheels are removed and we have to ride on our own. The inspiration disappears, the motivation fades, and we are left dangling.

Here's the real test. When the excitement wears off, many drop out of the spiritual life. They think that the fun is over, this spiritual stuff isn't for me, and they move on. If we do that, then we miss out the chance to go to the next level, to connect to our souls through our own efforts. Precisely the moment when the inspiration fizzles out is when the real soul work begins. Rather than being propped up by divinely created inspiration,

we have to look within and start riding on inspiration that we create ourselves. The spiritual path has to become ours, something we work for and earn.

We will fall again, but every fall brings a chance to take things to a new level. Keep on pedaling, inspired or not, and you will advance further and further in your soul's journey.

Feeling uninspired? Your training wheels are off. You don't need them anymore. Get up and ride.

Can We Have the Temple Mount Please?

I know that we pray for Moshiach to come and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. But isn't there a slight technical problem with that? Currently there is a building which stands on the Temple Mount that belongs to another religion. I somehow can't imagine that they would be willing to give up the real estate and knock down their house of worship to make way for ours... So what's the plan with this?

Answer:

The rebuilding of the Temple is not just about renovating and landscaping. It's a complete renovation of the world's spiritual landscape.

The Messianic era, which we have been waiting for ever since the Temple was destroyed 2000 years ago, will usher in an unprecedented reign of peace. All nations will unite under one G-d with a singular moral purpose. There will be no more war, no famine, and no slow internet. While religious and national identities will remain, the hatred between them will be gone.

No blood need be shed to achieve this. The force of ideas, not the force of weapons, will bring about the redemption. This means some ideologies will need to be adjusted and certain beliefs rejected. But this can be done through introspection from within rather than attacks from without. When truth shines, falsehood falls away.

Sounds impossible? Look at history. Cultures do change. Even religions can reform. Within living memory Germany was a murderous terrorist state, and Japan was a mortal enemy of the west. Those two nations are nothing like that today. Okay, it took losing a World War to get there. But go back a bit further in history. Christianity once condoned the slaughter of non-believers, and that changed without a war. Had you lived in pre-war Germany or medieval Christendom you would have never believed that such change is possible. But it happened.

The Jewish people have always known that the impossible just takes a bit longer. After 2000

years, the time is ripe. We are living in an age of surprises. So don't be surprised if Moshiach comes and renovates the landscape. Those who were previously classified as enemies will become allies. They will willingly and joyously watch the rebuilding of the Temple on its ancient site.

Jewish Position on Spiritual Healing

What's the Jewish position on spiritual healing? I have come across an eastern treatment that looks amazing. It requires me to connect to particular angelic forces and recite incantations in order to activate the healing. As a Jew is there any issue in utilizing these healing practices?

Answer:

Spirituality and healing are deeply intertwined. Modern medicine recognises the power of the mind to help heal the body, and the impact of a patient's spiritual state on the healing process. Any attempt to improve our physical health should be coupled with an upgrade in our spiritual health. On many levels, the body and soul are in parallel.

A medical treatment will only be effective if it is compatible with the patient. Factors such as blood type, genetic make-up and family history will determine whether a particular treatment is appropriate for a particular person. A practitioner would be derelict in their duty if they did not first investigate the patient's background before deciding how to treat them.

The same applies to spiritual remedies. Your soul's family history must be taken into account before embarking on any spiritual path. If your soul make up is Jewish, it needs Jewish spirituality to be healthy.

Healing practices can be borrowed from any culture. Stretches and exercises, breathing and relaxation techniques, herbal remedies and natural medicines, if they have been tried and tested and pose no danger, may be helpful, no matter where in the world they come from. These practices don't need to come from a Jewish source in order to heal a Jewish body.

But once a remedy crosses over into the realm of the soul, requiring us to connect with spiritual energies, pray to higher beings, focus on names of angels or channel invisible powers, then we must beware. We have only one G-d who does not work through intermediaries, and we have the Torah as our spiritual health manual. If it doesn't jive with Torah, then it clashes with our family history.

A healthy organism is one connected to its roots. Study Torah and plug in to your soul's source. You need it for your

health. Your doctor doesn't have to be Jewish. Your spirituality does.

Where is My Father's Soul Now?

There is something that has been eating at me since my father's funeral. Immediately after the burial, everyone came to wish me and my family condolences, then after a few minutes, we all left the cemetery. For me this was the hardest moment of the whole day. I felt as if we were leaving my father behind all by himself. Was his soul lonely? Is it as hard for the dead to part from the living as it is for the living to part from the dead? Or has he moved on? What does Judaism say about the soul right after burial?

Answer:

There is a striking parallel between a soul's journey to its place of rest in heaven, and the grieving process experienced by the mourners down here on earth. Both the departed soul and the loved ones left behind have to walk a slow and measured progression towards a new reality.

For seven days after a funeral, the family stay home in mourning, what is called sitting Shiva (Hebrew for the number seven). The kabbalists describe the departed soul during this time as being in a state of flux between the world of the living and the world of the dead. For that week, the soul commutes back and forth from the grave to the house of mourning and back again. It fluctuates, sometimes being in the home with the family, other times returning to the gravesite.

This explains the roller coaster of emotions often experienced by grieving relatives. At one moment they feel as if nothing has happened, as if their loved one is about to walk into the room. At the next moment the pain of loss hits, and they feel the void left by the death of their beloved. The pendulum of emotion is a reflection of the to and fro of the soul of the departed. The feeling that he may walk into the room is real, for his soul is there in the home. But then the soul leaves, and the sharp feeling of separation returns in its place.

On each day a part of the soul is left behind at the grave, and less of the soul returns to the home, until a week has passed, and the soul stops its commute. It then begins its journey upwards to higher realms. But a part of the soul always remains at the gravesite.

After your father's funeral, as the family was leaving the cemetery, you were not leaving your father's soul behind. His soul accompanied you home. Just as you could not let him go all at once, he could not leave you so suddenly either. The Jewish mourn-

ing process - seven intense days, thirty days of lesser intensity, and an entire year of subdued remembrance - is not only a way for you to gradually adjust to the new reality, it is a mirror image of the steps your father's soul takes towards reaching final rest.

So don't feel guilty as you slowly make your way back into life. It is a sign that your father's soul is finding peace. You will never leave him behind, and he will never leave you.

Trust Your First Impressions?

I met a lovely girl on a blind date last week. We went to the art gallery and had a wonderful conversation. She has everything I am looking for. But she is not for me. There is nothing wrong with her, but I am a very good judge of character and my intuition can quickly assess people. I know when it is right and this time it just isn't. I would meet her a second time just to be polite, but wouldn't that be leading her on?

Answer:

There is a popular theory that we can know all we need to know about a person in the first few seconds of meeting them. It is a great theory. There is only one problem with it. It is rubbish.

A person is more than meets the eye. We are multi-layered. We have thoughts and feelings, memories and dreams, quirks and foibles. Everyone has a story and everyone has a soul. You can't see all this at first glance.

How many times have you been impressed by someone's first impression, only to be disappointed after a few conversations? And the opposite too, how many people have you met and not particularly appreciated, only to be pleasantly surprised after getting to know them better? Even looks are deceiving. A person who you find unattractive at first can grow on you as their full picture unravels.

I am sure you would agree that no one can know what you are all about by meeting you once. The same goes for others. Don't always trust your instincts. They can easily lead you astray.

Maybe I am wrong. Perhaps you do have an amazing sixth sense and can read people on the spot. But is it foolproof? What if you are right 99% of the time? What if you get it wrong only once? Imagine what you could miss out on...

I commend you for taking the plunge and agreeing to meet her the first time. It is not always easy to put yourself out there. But I think you should give it a second chance, and this time switch off the intuition and see what you find. You may discover that you are actually meeting her for the first time.

By Rabbi Levi Welton
I'm a millennial with a short attention span so I thought it'd be fun to briefly interview three Chabad "thought-leaders" who preach a global message that is relevant to the experienced & novice alike. As a caveat, let me be clear that when I asked these Rabbis if they'd be willing to be interviewed as a "thought leader of Chabad", they each responded with "The only thought-leader in Chabad is the Rebbe." (For those who are close to their Chabad Rabbi, you know exactly what I'm talking about).

THE RELATIONSHIP GURU

Rabbi Manis Friedman is the co-founder and dean of the Bais Chana Institute of Jewish Studies and a world-renowned public speaker and marriage counselor. His teachings have been cited by many authors including Barbara Holstein's



Rabbi Manis Friedman

"Enchanted Self: A Positive Therapy" and Syliva Fishman's "A Breath of Life: Feminism in the American Jewish Community". Additionally, from 1984-1990, he served as the simultaneous translator for the live televised talks by the Rebbe and went on to publish "Why Doesn't Anyone Blush Anymore?" in 1990 and, most recently, "The Joy of Intimacy" with co-author and award-winning filmmaker Ricardo Adler.

RLW: "Both your books are about relationships. Is there a difference between them?"

RMF: "Well, a lot of my experience comes from the years of teaching hundreds of women in Bais Chana about relationships and family - so I'll often joke that it took me 46 years to write these books. My first book is about "Tzniut" or the abstract concepts of modesty that could be summed up in the idea that if you help yourself to the benefits of being married when you're single, you're likely to help yourself to the benefits of being single when you're married. But happily married couples kept coming to me with a deluge of complaints about the essentials they were missing in their marriages and that motivated me to write "The Joy of Intimacy". With divorce rates on the rise, it's scary how imperative it is to redefine intimacy, truly understand it and get past pop-psychology so that couples stop feeling alone and experience what it means when "a man and woman... become one" (Genesis 2:24)

RLW: "What are 3 quick messages about intimacy from your book?"

RMF: "That intimacy is sacred. It's not soup. Soup is something you enjoy but it's not sacred. Being intimate with someone is not about the enjoy-



"Thought-Leaders of Chabad"
By: Rabbi Levi Welton

ment between the two of you but about creating that sacred space. Secondly, being intimate is not a thing you do but a state you're in with a person you're with. As it states in the Mishna "Any love that is dependent on something—when the thing ceases, the love also ceases. But a love that is not dependent on anything never ceases." (Pirkei Avot 5:16) Without intimacy, you're alone in the world no matter how many likes or followers you have. A third message is not to worship love. Love by itself is not the relationship; it's the flavor of the relationship. If you're two separate people on two separate paths, love is not the answer. Intimacy is.

RLW: "How does this express the unique spiritual flavor of Chabad?"

RMF: "One of the fundamentals of being a Chabad Chassid is to work daily on your humility through meditation and losing your ego in the "other". Cultivating intimacy in your terrestrial relationships is exactly like cultivating intimacy in your celestial relationship. Many of the ideas in The Joy of Intimacy are derivations from the Kabbalistic ingredients for one's spiritual relationship with our Maker. For example, if your spirituality is based on your desire to gain entry into Heaven, then it's like marrying someone for money. Marrying someone for love would be when you serve your Maker not for what you need but for what you're needed for. The third Rebbe of Chabad, the Tzemach Tzedek, once shared: The love expressed in Psalm 73:25 means that one should desire nothing other than God....as was expressed by my master and teacher Alter Rebbe (first Chabad Rebbe) when he was in a state of intense meditation and exclaimed "I want nothing at all! I don't want Your Gan Eden (Heaven), I don't want Your Olam Haba (Messianic World to Come), I want nothing but You alone." Now imagine the power of that type of love in the intimate relationships of this generation.

RLW: "Do you think that's the most important message for our generation?"

RMF: "No, I actually think the most important message for our generation is that G-d needs you more than you need Him. I'm afraid that in our "selfie"-generation, we're drowning in our selfishness and entitlement. People are sick and tired of promotion of self-interest and the constant messaging barrage of what we deserve, what we should have, and what's good for us. This has even crept into

our spirituality where we often hear how G-d needs nothing and religion is just for our spiritual needs. But the truth is that G-d needs us and the proof is found in the very first verse of the Torah. "In the beginning, G-d created the Heavens and the Earth" (Genesis 1:1). It is G-d who created the world, not us, and whenever someone creates a narrative, the logical question to ask is "what do you need?"

I find it fascinating that all the commencement speeches over the past decade included messages like "go out and be your best, succeed beyond your norm, chase all your dreams, etc." but this year almost everyone speaking, from professors, comedians to even a general in the army, is preaching "go out there and fix the world, go make the world better". It's like they're all Chabad! I find it a very positive development from the selfishness that has festered since the 80's.

The Talmudic sage, Rabbi Elazar Hakapar, said "against your will you were created". I think this teaches us that life is not a competition between what we need and what our Creator needs. Rather, we must stop putting G-d on the back-burner and start seeing what our gifts, talents and souls can do to make this world a better, more loving and more G-dly place."

"THE INREACH RABBI"

Rabbi YY Jacobson is one of the most mesmerising & sought after speakers in the Jewish world today, lecturing to audiences on six continents and in forty-five states, and serving as teacher and mentor to thousands across the globe. Rabbi Jacobson was the first rabbi ever to be invited by the Penta-



Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Jacobson

gon to deliver the religious keynote to the US military Chief of Chaplains and to the National Security Agency. Rabbi Jacobson founded and serves as dean of TheYeshiva.net, teaching, via the web, one of the largest To-

rah classes in the world today and is the author of "A Tale of Two Souls"—a 150 audio series on the teachings of the Chassidic classic, the Tanya.- "Although many people consider Chabad to be an "outreach organization", I was intrigued by the tremendous success Rabbi Jacobson has seen doing "inreach" with the Orthodox & Strictly-Orthodox Jewish communities.

RLW: "On YouTube and other social media channels, I've seen how popular you are amongst Jewish communities of vastly different religious affiliations ranging from the unaffiliated to the "black hat" strictly-Orthodox. What is your secret?"

RYY: "Well, first of all, permit me to correct you by suggesting that "popularity" is not the goal and neither is fitting people in their specific and proverbial boxes of affiliation. Rather, we are all members of the same tribe and same global "mishpocha" ("family"). One commonality which I've seen in my travels is how easy it is to be cynical when you see the amount of corruption, abuse, and dishonesty in one's own community. No matter what their background is, I get how people want to shy away from the highly polarized and politicized society, in which we find ourselves, just enjoy life to the best of their ability. But regarding this the Baal Shem Tov (Founder of Chassidic thought) would teach that cynicism is a form of fear and you're either part of the problem or part of the solution. The universe is a constant flux of "ratzo" and "shuv" ("give and take"). Plants take sunlight, air and water and convert it in order to give energy and oxygen to the planet. So too, within every community, there's a "ratzo" and "shuv" that is unique to their situation and I try to empower citizens of G-ds' world to "take" the problem, transcend cynicism, and become ambassadors of love & light."

RLW: Is your vision of an "Ambassador of Love" a derivation of the Chabad mandate?

RYY: "Well, it's important to remember that Chabad is a branch of Chassidic teaching in general which contains many priceless gems of wisdom that can enrich the imagination on a daily basis. Yesterday, I shared an insight of the Alter Rebbe who interprets Job 19:26 "and from my flesh I see Elokim" to mean that we must "see our flesh" until we can perceive the divine inherent in it. Unlike stoics who disregard the body and

felt religion must take us away from physicality, Chabad philosophy focuses on finding a holistic model which basically sees the human being at the vortex of the cosmos with the power to reveal the Unity within the physicality. In other words, in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth and then created humans to become that bridge between them. It is teachings like this one that propel Chabad "shluchim" to sacrifice their own physicality for someone else's spirituality for we have been cultivated with the mindset that we can do the impossible; to bring Heaven down to Earth."

RLW: "This may be random but, when I hear you talk, a part of me wonders if you write poetry?"

RYY: "No, I'm not a poet. I love studying the world whether its botany, cosmology, biology, whatever. When I see a bee pollinating a flower and then doing her "bee dance", I find it marvellously inspiring. The Baal Shem Tov taught that there are spiritual lessons to be learned from everything you see. Sometimes when I'm counseling parents struggling with a defiant teenager, I'll show them an apricot pit and I'll tell them how that pit is so hard that one's teeth can crack when trying to bite it but if you gently place the pit into the warm soil, not only will it open up but a magnificent tree will spring from inside it."

RLW: "If you had a message for the youth of today, what would it be?"

RYY: "There are two features required for today's social activist, thinker, professional or whatever is their chosen vocation; Absolute Integrity and Relevance. Absolute integrity is a must because people are exhausted from hearing half-truths and camouflaged messages interwoven into the deluge of information we consume daily. Today, if you don't live what you're teaching and are not honest about your shortcomings, the youth will reject you. Without communicating on that level, we will lose their souls. They may pledge allegiance with their bodies, maybe even write a check once in a while, but all types of hypocrisy are loathed. Relevance is the second requirement because the global marketplace is being dominated by the best storytellers and trendsetters. One must become a "Rabbi" of your business and if the story you're selling speaks to a certain standard or beautiful dogma but doesn't address the real dilemmas and curiosities of peoples souls, you'll lose them. They may respect you from afar but they won't become your real "students" unless you can illustrate how the wisdom you preach has a message uniquely tailored to them.

RLW: "How do you know what message they need to hear?"

RYY: "Just listen. If you can quiet the mind long enough to truly listen to someone else, they'll tell you all you need to know. Their silence will speak! Even the pauses between their sentences will speak volumes. That's why the verse states "Hear O' Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4) for it is more often
Continued on page 14

SHIURIM & CLASSES AT 770 CHABAD GATE

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WEEKLY CLASSES - SUMMER SCHEDULE

SUNDAY

8:00 AM	CHASSIDIC THOUGHT	RABBI GANSBURG
10:00 AM	PARSHAT HASHAVUA	RABBI SCHOCHET
10:15 AM	LIKKUTEI SICHOS	RABBI GANSBURG
11:15 AM	TALMUD (CHAGIGAH)	RABBI SPALTER
7:00 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

6:20 AM	CHASSIDUS	RABBI A. WAGNER
11:30 AM	TORAH STUDIES - PARSHA	RABBI GANSBURG
8:00 PM	TALMUD (BAVA METZIA)	RABBI SPALTER
8:30 PM	DUTIES OF THE HEART	RABBI JACKS
9:00 PM	HALACHA (ADVANCED)	RABBI ELISHA 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 (PSACHIM)	RABBI SPALTER
8:30 PM	LEKUTEI SICHOS	RABBI B. LANDA

SHABBOS

9:00 AM	CHASSIDUS	RABBI GANSBURG
9:00 AM	CHASSIDUS (INTERMEDIATE)	RABBI WILHELM
1 HR BEFORE MINCHA	CHASSIDUS	RABBI GANSBURG

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	

Jewish FAMILY Life

The Best Way to Build Peace in the Home

When you and your partner strive to be givers and not takers, doing so generates positive feelings. Giving attracts. Conversely, selfishness repels.

After two individuals have lived together for a long time, physical attraction is gradually overshadowed by emotional appeal.

When you and your partner appear in each other's minds as "emotionally attractive," you will enjoy being with each other and you will automatically judge each other favorably.

Successful "giving" pushes your partner's love triggers. He or she feels and perceives that you love and care for them.

When you partner perceives that you love and care for them, they will naturally be attracted to you in all ways.

Giving seems simple, but it isn't always. Successful giving is measured not by the giver, but by the receiver.

A startled husband says to his wife, "I thought you wanted a toaster." She replies, "Yes, but not for my birthday."

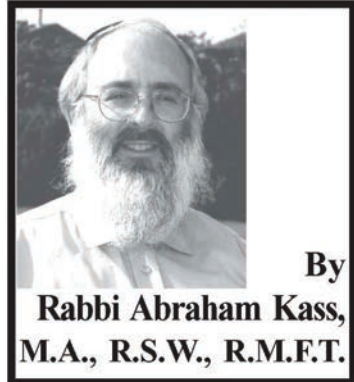
People have "love triggers." If you want to succeed in giving, make sure you push a love trigger. Pushing a "love trigger" makes your partner feel loved and cared for.

For example, one person may feel loved if they are taken to a pleasant place, another receiving a gift, another person when you give them a helping-hand, and another providing them with a delicious meal. These are all acts of "giving" and each one when matched to the desires of the recipient pushes a love trigger.

In my Marriage Improvement Clinic, I have seen countless well-meaning individuals confuse what they want with what they assume their partner wants. However, we are all individuals and what you want, likely is not what your partner wants.

She bought him a beautiful tie because she loves clothes. He doesn't like clothing. For him, putting on clothes is a chore

and not something to focus on. A silk tie had no value for him. In his mind, the fact that his wife bought him a tie means she doesn't know him, and so he was now upset with her!



By
Rabbi Abraham Kass,
M.A., R.S.W., R.M.F.T.

He bought her an exercise bike. He knows being overweight is unhealthy and that it bothers her. She was insulted thinking he was upset with her weight. She wondered that perhaps he no longer finds her attractive. Instead of pushing a "love trigger," he pushed the "rejection trigger!"

She always makes it a point to ask him detailed questions about his day at work. She appreciates when he asks her. He gets angry when she asks him. He wants to forget about his work experience when he comes home and feels when she asks about his day, she is insensitive to his feelings.

Sometimes failing to push a love trigger is because of poor communication.

He looked at a tourist brochure and asked, "Do you want to go to the Wood Working Museum." She said, "Fine." After investing travel time to and from the Wood Working Museum and a couple of hours in the museum itself, to his surprise (and horror) she told him she really didn't want to go to the Wood Working Museum. When he had asked her if 'she wanted to go to the Wood Working Museum,' she thought that meant he wanted to go. When he asked her if she wanted to go to the Wood Working Museum, what he really wanted to know was if she wanted to go, and if she did, he

would take her as a gift of kindness, as a way to push her love trigger. He had no interest in going to the Wood Working Museum. He was responding to an earlier complaint when she said he 'never takes her anywhere.' Each thought they were giving to each other, in the end, each got nothing except frustration, irritation, and unnecessary loss of time.

You can make your marriage great. Learn your partner's love triggers; ask questions, observe, learn from experience. Pushing love triggers is what makes you emotionally attractive and desired by your partner.

If you and your partner have been in conflict and there is tension between the two of you, pushing each other's love triggers is an excellent way to leave the past behind and restart your once happy marriage.

How do you achieve a marriage reboot? Become a "giver."

Being givers consistently will create a momentum that will culminate in positive thinking about each other which is at the core of a happy marriage.

To quicken the positive results of your decision to be givers, try this simple exercise:

At a time when you and your partner won't be disturbed, take a pen and write at the top of a sheet of paper, "I feel loved and cared for when you:" Now list the things your partner can do to make you feel loved and cared for. Your partner should do the same. After you have completed your list, the two of you should exchange them. With your partner's list in your hands, use it as a reference guide and do for your partner at least one item each day as a gift. The more love triggers you push; the quicker and more complete your relationship will be rehabilitated.

When you continue to push your partner's love triggers over many months and years, you will have a loving, passionate, and long-lasting relationship.

Torah teaches that G-d is present in a person's life when there are peace and harmony in a person's home. In other words, blessings come when a family is at peace. Being a "giver" is one of the best ways to achieve this spiritual goal.

Your marriage is your greatest investment. Protect it by making sure the love remains alive throughout its duration — be a giver!

==

Rabbi Kass, M.A., R.S.W., R.M.F.T., is a registered Social Worker, registered Marriage and Family Therapist, certified Hypnotherapist and award-winning educator. He has a clinical practice working with individuals, couples, and families in Toronto, Canada. Office, phone, and Skype appointments can be arranged. For more information or to arrange an appointment he can be reached at, (905) 771-1087 or visit his web at, www.AbeKass.com.

The Mysterious Logic of Mashiach

Continued from page 2

endeavor is not good in the most precise sense of the word. What good is there in a messianic belief system that speaks of instant, supernatural change?

From the perspective of Kabbalah and Chassidic thought, messianism is, in fact, the very opposite of sudden transformation. It is a process that has taken as many years as humans have inhabited this planet to effect radical changes in the world. Humankind's collective efforts over the course of centuries and millennia have paved the way for a New Age. These changes occur through the observance of good deeds that are referred to in the Jewish lexicon as a mitzvah, G-d's Divine prescription for a good life. Whenever we perform an act of kindness, for example, it leaves an indelible imprint on the world. In their aggregate, these acts have the capacity to utterly transform the world.

If there is a sense of mystery, it is not nearly as much about the Messianic Era as it should be about the nature of a solitary act of kindness. When we reflect on the power of a divinely ordained mode of behavior, it will become clear that there is more energy contained in this act than in any other phenomenon, natural or man-made. This can be demonstrated from several vantage points.

First, the word mitzvah (which we usually translate as commandment or good deed) actually contains another nuance - connection. By performing a mitzvah we create a connection between G-d who is infinite and ourselves who are finite. There can be no greater revolution than bridging that which is unbridgeable. Judaism believes that every time one does a mitzvah, one transforms an intrinsically finite experience into an infinitely divine experience.

Second, the Talmud states and Maimonides affirms that a solitary mitzvah is endowed with the power to alter the balance of the entire universe. If we were to unleash all the fury of all our nuclear arsenals, we could not effect a change as profound and as cosmic as the performance of one solitary act of kindness. In this light, we can hardly imagine the cataclysmic results of all the times people have performed acts of kindness since the beginning of time, particularly those who have lived since G-d revealed Himself at Sinai with the giving of the Ten Commandments. To be sure, people have also acted cruelly and unleashed untold evil. But, as the masters of Kabbalah have affirmed, evil, by its very nature, does not enjoy the same longevity as the forces of goodness. With the passage of time, the evil of yesterday has already been dissipated, whereas the positive energies endure forever.

From this perspective, the question we should be asking ourselves is, How is it, in light of all the unleashing of positive energy, that the world still appears to be the same? For one who cannot comprehend the possibility of the world changing instantly and who would deem the eventuality of this occurring to be utterly irrational, let him/her reflect

on the real enigma instead. How is it that the thousands of years of goodness that the world has experienced have not made the world look drastically different? If there is something irrational about Mashiach, it is not how can we imagine his coming so suddenly, but the reverse. Why hasn't it happened already? Why has the world that has been bombarded with so much positive energy not yet exhibited the changes associated with the messianic utopia? Jewish messianism is thus the final resolution to the enigma of good not carrying its weight. It is no wonder that Maimonides, the great rationalist, considered the belief in the coming of the Messiah to be one of the principles of Judaism. Despite Maimonides' attempts at reconciling Jewish beliefs with rational thought, he did not feel compelled to reconcile Mashiach with logic. Belief in a messianic outcome is the corollary of all the other theological foundations of Judaism. Once one believes in G-d and His system of cause-and-effect (that good actions leave a positive imprint on the person and the world), it is logically imperative that the world will change.

If the Messianic Age takes us by surprise, it will certainly not be because of some waving of a magic wand. Rather, it is because we are so accustomed to a world that does not follow the rules of logic and our inability to sense the transformations that have been occurring since the beginning of time. The recent collapse of the Soviet Union can serve as an illustration. Outwardly, it appeared as if there was a virtual instant transformation. In truth, the seeds for the demise of the Soviet system had been sown years and decades earlier. While even experts were taken by surprise, we can now all look back and analyze the dynamics of the collapse that have been in motion since the very birth of communism. Similarly, despite the way the onset of the Messianic Age will take us by surprise, we will all be able to look back at the myriad actions that were chipping away, from underneath, at the very roots of evil.

Judaism's view of the Messianic Age, then, is that it is not some fairy tale or a psychological crutch. It is the most rational consequence of centuries and millennia of human efforts that will finally bear their fruit.


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Vegas Show Headlined by Boy With Disabilities

By Howard Blas
Sometimes what happens in Vegas shouldn't just stay in Vegas. Levi Harlig's extraordinary bar mitzvah is one of them.

Levi gave a flawless reading of Parshat Naso, the longest Torah portion of the year, and delivered a Chassidic discourse in Yiddish and Hebrew last Shabbat morning at Chabad of Green Valley/Henderson in Las Ve-



Father and grandfather listen to the bar mitzvah boy. (Photo: Norina Kaye)

gas. The following evening, the 13-year-old sang and drummed for three hours with entertainer Avraham Fried at a community-wide celebration at the Four Seasons Hotel on the Las Vegas Strip.

That would be an exciting experience for any bar mitzvah boy. But for members of the community who have known Levi since birth, the accomplishment was nearly miraculous.

When Levi was 15 months old, his mother, Chaya Harlig, co-director with her husband, Rabbi Mendy Harlig, of Chabad of Green Valley/Henderson, realized that something was not quite right about their son. "He wasn't making eye contact or following directions. We got him into all kinds of therapies right away—occupational therapy, speech therapy and more." Three months later, the Harligs learned that Levi had autism. He has difficulties with personal space and reading social cues, and he often focuses on topics of interest to him but not necessarily to other people.



Levi Harlig sang and drummed for three hours with entertainer Avraham Fried at a community-wide celebration at the Four Seasons Hotel on the Las Vegas Strip. (Photo: Norina Kaye)

"My husband took it a lot harder than I did," said Chaya. "I think women have more bitachon [faith]. We set out to make Levi the best Levi he can be!"

In response to her husband's concerns about where Levi would go to school, whether he would have a bar mitzvah and other issues related to Levi's future, Chaya reassured him. "He will have a bar mitzvah, he will

get married, and he will use his talents. He is really special!"

Harlig quickly realized that his wife was right. Levi has extraordinary talents, including perfect pitch and what his parents refer to as "audiographic memory." Levi is able to remember essentially anything he hears, including songs, speeches, conversations he has heard in synagogue or around the Shabbat table.

Rabbi Harlig began including Levi in the life of the synagogue from an early age. "Each Yom Kippur, I would give my talk and then find a song in English connected to the sermon for Levi to sing. There was not a dry eye in the shul!" Levi regularly leads the congregation in prayer, and he greets congregants by name, upon arrival—often in a loud voice from up on the bimah!

Levi's important role in the synagogue has allowed members of the community to become comfortable with a person with disabilities. "Levi is bringing people into the Henderson

Chabad. He has a warm smile and welcomes everyone!" reports his father.

Wayne Krygier, a member of the Las Vegas Chabad community since relocating from Canada in 1989, concurs. "Levi is the heart and soul of the synagogue. The shul is his life—he feels so at home here!" Krygier jokes that Levi's greeting everyone in a loud voice as they enter serves as an incentive to arrive on time.

Dr. George Harouni, a local dentist and regular Chabad of Henderson attendee, observes, "People are now accustomed to seeing someone like Levi. He has been part of the community since birth; no one thinks of him as being different."

When Levi's bar mitzvah approached, his grandfather, Rabbi Kalman Shor, who also serves as a rabbi for the Chabad of Henderson community, taught him Torah cantillation and sat with him for regular practice sessions. He notes that Levi's musical talents made his job "much, much easier—once he learns it, he remembers it." The congregation was clearly moved at the bar mitzvah. "They thought it was beautiful and emotional. And they were impressed that he made no mistakes."

Jeff Berkow, a retired South African-born businessman and longtime active volunteer in Chabad of Henderson reports: "Levi was flawless! He sang the trope [cantillation] like a chazan with 30 years of experience. People were amazed!"

High Praise From a Noted Singer

Levi's bar mitzvah celebration continued with an Avraham Fried concert, attended by 300 people, a natural choice given Fried's musical talents and personal qualities. Harlig explains, "He is a beautiful singer, a caring person, and he always showed love for Levi. I figured people would see them sing together, love it and get inspired. They were on a high."

Fried reflects on the special Shabbat and evening noting, "I knew this bar mitzvah would be very special and memorable but, boy, this was out of the park! Levi loves music. He sings beautifully, and has a great ear and rhythm. He knows all my songs exactly as they appear on the CD. Every musical line and harmony, every place where the song modulates, and the intros and endings, not to men-

tion every special inflection that I sing! We sang so many songs together—Hebrew and English. Levi was conducting the orchestra and was totally in charge. I am lucky to have met Levi years ago. I'm lucky he invited me to his special celebration. I'm very happy he has such good taste in music!"

The community's embrace of Levi and inclusion of people with disabilities extends beyond one special Shabbat. The Harligs and the community dream of making Chabad of Green Valley/Henderson the "central address" in Las Vegas for including people with disabilities. "Going forward, we hope to continue showing the importance of inclusion, which Chabad has been doing for many years—unconditional love for all humans," says Harlig.

Harouni is excited about Chabad's potential to become even more welcoming to people with disabilities. "Inclusion will be a great addition to our shul. We could be a real center to offer people with disabilities a sense of belonging and an opportunity to be a part of the community."

Berkow, who assists Harlig in running Chabad, proudly notes, "I want our Chabad to be the shul of inclusion, the place that caters to people with special needs and where inclusion is the centerpiece." He also hopes Chabad of Green Valley/Henderson will serve as a satellite to the already successful Friendship Circle 15 miles to the north.

Chaya Harlig notes that Chabad recently purchased land, and future plans include Levi's Place, where people can come for homework help, tutoring, programming and friendship. "We will have a community center serving many families. We will be inclusive and work together with all children on all levels." She continues to hear of

the impact that Levi has had on the Las Vegas Jewish community. "Because of him, people are becoming more religious, closer to the synagogue and Hashem." She notes that she knows other shlichim families with children with disabilities, and that Chabad offers resources and support.

Inclusion Initiative a Welcome Partner

Rabbi Harlig has found a natural partner in his mission towards greater inclusion the Ruderman Chabad Inclusion Initiative (RCII), directed by Dr. Sarah Kranz-Ciment. RCII is dedicated to building on the philosophy and mission of Chabad-Lubavitch by providing Chabad communities around the globe the education and resources they need to advance inclusion of people with disabilities. RCII engages Chabad's network of resources to create a culture of inclusion so that all Jews feel welcomed, supported and valued throughout their entire lifecycle.

RCII is producing a song, a music video and an inclusive mural that shows that everyone belongs. It has also developed an online bar and bat mitzvah guide, titled "Practical Ideas for Inclusive Bar and Bat Mitzvahs."

Kranz-Ciment is proud of the work of the Harligs, their community and of Levi's bar mitzvah, which she notes was "an opportunity to publicly show and make a statement about his many talents." She continues, "Every Jewish soul is meaningful, and is obligated to be Jewish in the best way he or she can. The Rebbe said, 'Your birthday is the day Hashem decided the world can't exist without you. Inclusion is a chance to bring this to the forefront and show that what each person can do is valuable.' All of us have a place in Judaism."



Singing with Avraham Fried. (Photo: Norina Kaye)

SIMCHAT TORAH HAKAFOT



All are welcome to come & join the Celebration
SHMINI ATZERET

Sunday, September 30		Monday, October 1	
Candlelighting	6:42 p.m.	Shacharis	10:00 a.m.
Mincha	6:50 p.m.	Yizkor approx.	11:30 a.m.
Maariv	7:30 p.m.	Mincha	6:50 p.m.
Hakafot (followed by)	7:50 p.m.	Candlelighting after	7:40 p.m.
Kiddush			

SIMCHAT TORAH

Monday, October 1		Tuesday, October 2	
Maariv	7:35 p.m.	Shacharis	10:00 a.m.
Kiddush	8:00 p.m.	Hakafot	11:30 a.m.
Hakafot	8:30 p.m.	Torah Reading	12:15 p.m.
		Grand Kiddush	1:00 p.m.