



The World of Lubavitch

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Shofar on the Corner.com

The most important observance of Rosh HaShana is listening to the sound blasts of the Shofar. Due to the pandemic and the numerous restrictions and regulations imposed, many people may not be attending Shul this year. While prayers under prevailing conditions may be recited in solitude, not everyone has access to a Shofar nor are they familiar with its intricate laws and customs of sounding the Shofar.

As always, in response to a need and concern, Chabad Lubavitch will be hosting OUTDOOR gatherings for the sounding of the Shofar on both days of Rosh Hashana. This year the first day and second day of Rosh HaShana are September 7th and 8th and on both days we are required to hear

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Remaining One People Despite Our Differences

By Tzvi Freeman

What do you do if you're celebrating and rejoicing with friends, and the man who opposes you in your greatest life-battles turns up at the party?

This was Simchat Torah, 1975, at Chabad-Lubavitch Headquarters, 770 Eastern Parkway. Thousands of Lubavitchers were packed in tight, along with anyone else who wished to witness the most joyous hakafot in the world on the most joyous day of the year.

The gabbaim—esteemed official administrators—of the synagogue were frantically attempting to bring some order to the ceremony, while seeking out the contingent that would come every year from the Israeli consulate.

That's when they saw Haim Cohn. And they didn't know what to do. This was just the wrong man at the wrong party.

Wrong Man, Wrong Place

Who was Haim Cohn?

To Israelis, he is still known as one of the major architects of Israeli law, a great man of thought, and as a champion of human rights. Indeed, he was in New York for the United Nations general assembly, representing Israel in the Human Rights Commission. But Haim Cohn was also well known for his fierce opposition to all things religious, especially when they concerned the Israeli State.

Cohn came from a family of deeply religious Torah scholars in Lübeck, Germany. In 1929, at the age of eighteen, Cohn set out for Jerusalem, where he studied under Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, who he came to greatly admire, and at the Hebrew University. He returned to Europe to complete his degree in law at the University of Frankfurt, marrying there a young woman who was not interested in religion.

After returning to the Holy Land with the rise of the Third Reich in 1933, he gradually turned not just away from, but against Torah Judaism, actively opposing the rabbis, both as an authority of Israeli law and as a member of the T'hila Movement for Israeli Jewish secularism.

"The Elisha ben Avuya of our generation," was the title given him by Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook, son and protégé of his former mentor. Elisha ben Avuya was a brilliant sage of the Talmud, the teacher of Rabbi Meir, who had turned to heresy. Smoke rose from his grave, the Talmud tells, for well over a hundred years—and that was after the sages prayed for mercy on his soul. "Because he knew G'd's greatness and yet rebelled."

Eventually, Cohn divorced his first wife and traveled to America for a secular marriage to a woman who had been previously married—an act that spurred the fury of rabbis in Israel. By Torah law, a descendant of Aaron, such as Haim Cohn, is forbidden to marry a divorcée.

But perhaps what concerned the gabbaim most was Haim Cohn's role in the "Who Is a Jew" controversy.

This was a topic the Rebbe had addressed incessantly for the previous five years, warning in the strongest language imaginable that compromise on such a core issue posed an existential danger to the Jewish nation. Haim Cohn, on the other hand, as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Israel, stood his ground that Jewishness, for the state, is a social construct, and anyone who personally identifies as a Jew should be embraced by the state as a Jew.

The gabbaim who beheld this man standing before them knew well the controversy, indeed, the outright condemnation in many quarters that would arise if they gave him any part in the ceremony. Small wonder they stalled.

The Weight of Torah

But the Rebbe noted the hesitation of the gabbaim and protested.

"A Jew wants to take on the yoke of Torah," he chided them, "and you won't give it to him?"

The Rebbe personally purchased the reading of the first verse of the ceremony and said something to a gabbai, who then called out, "We hereby honor the illustrious Justice of the Supreme Court, Reb Haim haKohen, with the verse,

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The Easy Mitzvah

How [does one fulfill] the mitzvah of dwelling in the sukkah? One should eat, drink, and live in the sukkah, both day and night, as one lives in one's house on the other days of the year: for seven days a person should make his home his temporary dwelling, and his sukkah his permanent dwelling

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 639:1

G-d says... "I have one easy mitzvah, and sukkah is its name"

Talmud, Avodah Zarah 3a
"In sukkot you shall dwell for seven days," instructs the Torah, "...in order that your generations shall know that I made the children of Israel dwell in sukkot when I took them out of the land of Egypt."

Our sages, noting the Torah's use of the verb "to dwell" in the above verses, define the mitzvah of sukkah as a commandment that, for the duration of the festival of Sukkot (Tishrei 15 to 21), the sukkah is to become our primary dwelling place. Everything ordinarily done in the home should be done in the sukkah.

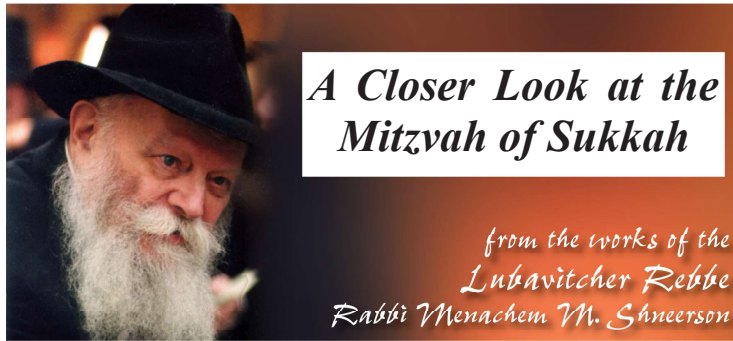
So every autumn, just as the weather is turning inhospitable, we move outdoors. For a full week, we exchange our regular home for a home which leaves us at the mercy of the elements, demonstrating our trust in G-d's providence and protection, as our ancestors did when "following Me in the wilderness, in an uncultivated land."

Dwelling in the sukkah for seven days is a beautiful and inspiring experience; however, one would hardly describe it as "easy." Yet this is the mitzvah singled out by the Talmud as G-d's "easy mitzvah!"

The Commanding Connection

"Mitzvah," the Torah's word for the divine precepts which guide and govern every aspect of our lives from the moment of birth to one's last living breath, has a dual meaning: the word means both "commandment" and "connection."

In commanding us the mitzvot, G-d created the means through which we may establish a connection with Him. The hand that



A Closer Look at the Mitzvah of Sukkah

from the works of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

distributes charity, the mind that ponders the wisdom of Torah, the heart that soars in prayer, the throat that swallows the matzah eaten on the first night of Passover -- all become instruments of the divine will. There are mitzvot for each limb, organ and faculty of man, and mitzvot governing every area of life, so that no part of us remains uninvolved in our relationship with the Creator.

Therein lies the uniqueness of the mitzvah of sukkah. While other mitzvot each address a certain aspect

of our persona, the mitzvah of sukkah provides a medium by which the totality of man is engaged in the fulfillment of G-d's will. All of the person enters into and lives in the sukkah. "Sukkah is the only mitzvah into which a person enters with his muddy boots," goes the Chassidic saying. For the seven days of Sukkot, the sukkah is our home--the environment for our every endeavor and activity.

Man and Turf

The specialty of the sukkah as an all-embracing medium of connection with

G-d is best understood in light of the significance of the "home" to the human being.

Our sages point out how deeply rooted is man's desire for a home. The desire for a home is much more than the need for shelter and security. The satisfaction of these needs alone, without a plot of land to call one's own, does not satisfy the craving for a home. The Talmud goes so far as to say that "One who does not possess a homestead is not a man." The need for a home is intrinsic to the soul of man and a defining aspect of the

human state.

Thus, a person's identification with his home is not confined to the hours he spends within its walls. Also when he is at work, visiting with friends or taking a stroll in the park, it is as the owner of this particular home that he works, visits or strolls. Since his very humanity is incomplete without it, it is part and parcel of everything he does.

For the seven days that we make the sukkah our home, it comes to form an integral part of our identity. Everything we do, including what we do outside of the sukkah, is included in the "connection" with G-d achieved by this mitzvah.

Easy as Life

Now we might understand why the mitzvah of sukkah is G-d's "easy" mitzvah.

A person can approach the fulfillment of G-d's commandments in one of two ways:

a) *As a duty.* Such an individual sees the purpose of his life in the realization of his own personal ambitions. At

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The Great Squeeze

Rabbi Yanki Tauber

What do a garden hose nozzle, a rocket, a hydraulic power plant, a shofar, and this article have in common? They all operate on the Pinch Principle.

Simply stated, the Pinch Principle works like this: take something with potential that is currently not doing much, confine it in a narrow space, squeeze it through an even narrower passage, and presto! you can send a spray of water clear across your lawn or a missile to the moon, light up a small city in California, or

transform a mouthful of air into a piercing note.

(As for this article, it's been written three hours before deadline, though whether the Pinch Principle will work in this case remains to be seen.)

The High Holiday season comes on the heels of a stretch of the Jewish calendar which the prophet calls "Between the Narrows" (Bein Hametzarim). On the 17th of Tammuz, the walls of Jerusalem were breached by the Roman legions besieging the city; twenty-one days later, on the 9th of Av, the Holy Temple was set aflame. These two events spawned twenty centuries of galut -- of physical persecution and spiritual alienation for our people. Today, these two dates stand as markers of national tragedy, with all the pain and frustration of our galut compressed into "The Three Weeks" they enclose.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe would always say that we cannot, must not, dare not, explain the galut. G-d does not need our help as "defense lawyers" to justify His ways; we do Him a greater service by pleading and clamoring for an end to

His and our exile, which is far more painful to Him than it is to us. Nevertheless, even as we refuse to accept the travesty of galut, we should still exploit its positive dividends.

The Jewish soul, a divine expanse of goodness and light, has been squeezed into the narrow straits of galut. Imagine what will come out at the other end!

Already, this cosmic pinch has wrung from the Jewish soul wells of talent and creativity, and depths of faith and commitment, that in the good old broad days were only implicit in its potential.

May we soon merit the great shofar blast of Moshiach, and the great moment of the soul's bursting free of the strictures of galut.

ON OUR COVER



"The Prayer of Rachel" by Yossi Rosenstein

On Rosh Hashana, in the Haftarah, we read that "Rachel cries for her children and refuses to be consoled for they are exiled."

G-d responds: "Still your voice from crying and the tears from your eyes for there is reward for your efforts and they will return from the lands of their enemies."

Our sages tell us that Rachel was not buried in the Double Cave in Hebron, together with the other Patriarchs and Patriarchs, but on the side of the road in Bethlehem, so that when the Jewish people were exiled, passing by her gravesite, she would pray on their behalf and elicit from G-d his promise to redeem them.

Rosenstein captures this poignant prayer rising up from the iconic Kever Rachel and breaking through any obstacles to reach into the heavens.

For more of Yossi Rosenstein's art please visit yrfineart.com

The World of Lubavitch Chabad Lubavitch of Ontario

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We cannot take responsibility for the Kashruth of the items advertised in this publication.

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Camp Gan Israel Enriches Maryland Farming Community

It's a tradition that began in 1978, when the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, called for the printing of the Tanya all over the world. This philosophical treatise penned by Rabbi Scheur Zalman of Liadi presents the basic tenets of Chassidic thought and practice. Since the first edition was published in the year 1757 by the famed Slavita Publishing House, more than 7000 editions have rolled off the presses around the globe. During the last 50 years, the magnum opus of the founding father

Additionally, the very act that the Tanya was to be printed in so many locations would further the goal of having the wellsprings of Chassidism "flow" from every part of the earth and would help usher in the Final Redemption as the Moshiach himself revealed to the Baal Shem Tov in a prophetic dream.

And so began a campaign to print the Tanya in every locale where Jews live and can be found.

"While country after country was being covered, there were some locations that need-

ed unique attention due to their delicate circumstances," relates Rabbi Sholom Jacobson, who has coordinated the campaign for decades. "In the case of Communist China, the government censors refused to allow the Tanya's publication without their review. Upon the Rebbe's instruction to Rabbi Fishel Katz [a traveling businessman who printed many editions of Tanya at the Rebbe's behest], they were given an English translation of the Tanya, and after a significant wait, the printing was approved and allowed to move forward."



found reason for the upheaval. A few weeks into the boys session, medical supervisor, Avremel Okounev, from New Haven, CT, realized that a Tanya was never printed in the city of Darlington. His first call was to Shmuel Jacobson who e-mailed the files, facilitated and expedited the entire procedure. "The success of this monumental endeavour would not have occurred without him," Avremel emphatically stated. Avremel then went 'full steam' ahead, raised the money, got the printing presses rolling and had the sacred text bound in Monsey, NY. Within three days the project was executed with the assistance and financial support CGI head staff.

The launch of this initiative was celebrated and honored Mrs. Esther Grossbaum who spent considerable time at camp to ascertain a seamless flow in the daily flow of camp life. Selected Torah verses were recited by the campers followed by Avremel Okounev's introduction to the significance of printing Tanyas and the Rebbe's request to print wherever possible. "We are camping in the 7,731st city where a Tanya is being printed, and hopefully the final one prior to Moshiach's arrival, Avremel noted." He recalled his fond memories as a camper when a Tanya was printed in Haliburton. Cheers and clapping ensued as Avremel told the assembled that each person will receive a Tanya. He then introduced the camp Rabbi, Menachem Schechter of Chicago who taught a passage from the freshly printed pages. Staff and campers eagerly awaited the closing Gala Banquet when they were gifted a freshly bound copy. "This edition of Tanya was dedicated in honour of the Antebi and Cohen Families of Toronto and the Gorowitz Family from CA, who graciously and generously contributed funds to help ascertain that CGI Toronto could once again provide a meaningful and enjoyable summer for the campers and staff," said Camp Director Rabbi Yitzchok Grossbaum.

Well, if Covid brought Camp Gan Israel of Haliburton to Darlington, MD, most certainly there was a deeper and spiritually pro-

Shofar on the Corner.com

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tion and time closest to your home.

This service will be advertised on 680 News during the week before Rosh Hashana in order to reach as many people as possible. The ad campaign is graciously sponsored by Steeles Memorial Chapel.

Lubavitch Day Camp Exceeds Expectations

This year Lubavitch Day Camp took on a new appearance and seemed to mimic the look and feel of overnight camping. In keeping with Covid protocol, each unit as-

sumed its own identity by sticking together as a cohort into itself. Although there were no sagging bunk houses, each group enjoyed their own designated sheltered space under a canopy tent. And to create the "personal responsibility" feel each camper was gifted a belly bag which contained a hand sanitizer, a personalized LDC facemask and necklace band.



There was constant excitement with many special outdoor activities such as yoga, archery, drumming, and Tae Kwan-do. A new feature at LDC this year was the introduction of silent disco headphones that had the campers dancing to their "own drummer" by choosing their preferred personalized tune, beat, and rhythm. Indeed, a sight to behold; a full room of dancing youngster while silence prevailed in the room.

With a capped enrollment the campers were able to enjoy more time at our spacious

Wonderland and a trip to Eden n' Wild. Keeping the children fed and hydrated, presented its own set of novel initiative that included boxed lunches and individually packaged snacks.

The CIT division, in addition to an exciting tailored program, dedicated time to study CPR and First Aid. In addition to the formal manual learning, the participants also received visual hands on training from community "first responders."

For many campers, the most outstanding feature LDC this summer was the successful re-integration into a social structure from the chaotic and isolation school year. In planning the summer and at the camp staff meetings, camp director Mrs. Esty Steinmetz stressed the importance of being extra sensitive to some of the unforeseen challenges and discipline issues which may arise as a result of the school closing. As the summer progressed noticeable improvements were clear to be seen.



SIMCHAT TORAH HAKAFOT



All are welcome to come & join the Celebration SHMINI ATZERET

Monday, September 27		Tuesday, September 28	
Candlelighting	6:47 p.m.	Shacharis	10:00 a.m.
Mincha	6:55 p.m.	Yizkor approx.	11:30 a.m.
Maariv	7:35 p.m.	Mincha	6:45 p.m.
Hakafot (followed by Kiddush)	8:00 p.m.	Candlelighting after	7:46 p.m.

SIMCHAT TORAH

Tuesday, September 28		Wednesday September 29	
Maariv	7:40 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.

Construction About to Begin

Finally, after many years of planning, consultation, public hearing, and review, Chabad Lubavitch is about to begin construction on an additional 13,000 sq. ft. building at the south east corner of our 3 acre site. While the preliminary process may have been more cumbersome and time consuming, the demanding provincial standards are in place to protect the environment and focus on sustainability and efficiency. So too, much emphasis is placed on accessibility, necessitating many additional features to accommodate those with mobility limitations. This would include every detail from parking, entry, and access to every part of the facility.

designated “foot print,” the building, with frontage on the Lonny Court cul-de-sac, will include two additional floors. Access to the upper levels will be from a separate and independent entrance on the opposite side. The eight large activity rooms above will provide much needed space for the citywide Lubavitch Day Camp and the Friendship Circle.

The much needed added space will allow us to enhance the program and projects on behalf of special needs children. A large room is being designed as sensory space. This therapeutic area will feature a variety of equipment and components that provides youngsters with special needs



Architect Yisroel Idels and Rabbi Aaron Grossbaum review the final draft of the drawings.

Naturally the implementation of these features is of utmost importance and provides the infrastructure to create an inclusive setting where all feel welcome.

The primary objective is to build a “state of the art” free standing Women’s Mikvah with spacious and ample prep suites for the growing number of users. One of the seven prep rooms will be constructed and fashioned to accommodate mobility challenged patrons. So too, the spacious immersion room will include an electronic self-operating arm lift.

In order to maximize the

personalized sensory input and help them stay calm and focused. The Friendship Circle which we launched some 15 years ago, provides a circle of support where all participants benefit. The children gain a friend and widen their orbit, the teenage volunteers come to recognize that they can make a difference, and the parents are offered a respite and an opportunity to network with others.

“We are exceptionally eager to begin construction and complete the external frame before the onset of winter,” said Rabbi Grossbaum, spearheading the project.

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”.

Plan for the Future

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.

Camp Gan Israel Completes Another Successful Season

“When life gives you lemons, make lemonade,” this cliché summarizes the trials and triumph of Camp Gan Israel circa 2021. Although vaccinations had curtailed the spread of covid, and society was slowly coming back to normal, Health Ontario was reluctant and hesitated to “Green light” overnight camps until the month of June, merely days before the scheduled opening. The protracted announcement and the long awaited protocol was of no value to Yitzchak and Goldy Grossbaum, directors of our overnight camp in picturesque Haliburton. In order to provide a fun filled four weeks and meaningful experience day after day, for girls in July and then boys in August, the work begins while there is still snow on the ground. Indeed, preparations and planning for the upcoming year begin soon after the campers board the buses to return home and the staff leave to recuperate at the end of the summer.

Last spring just after the lockdown was lifted, health officials permitted day camps to operate, but with strict and stringent guidelines. But no allowance or consideration was given to overnight camps. This year Yitzchak and Goldy waited with bated breath, month after month for government guidance with respect to opening overnight camp



outdoors, and at the pool, the campers, counselors, and staff all need to eat three times each day, hence a well equipped kitchen is needed to prepare one thousand meals each day. So too, Kosher food purveyors needed to be found and engaged who would be agreeable to supply and ship. Still, pots, pans, cutlery, and cooking utensils, virtually the entire kitchen, save for the sink and stove had to be imported from the Haliburton campsite to farm country Darlington. The good news is the kids had a blast, notwithstanding the heat and humidity common to this region.

Indeed, from a philosophical perspective the move made

sense. Throughout our lifetime we are all in transit. Wherever we travel, whether for business or pleasure, it is ordained from Heaven, with the intent of bringing holiness down to our surrounding at our destination. This is certainly highlighted in camp where the youngsters are encouraged to be at their best for prayer, study, and during numerous field trips to places of interest. Still, notwithstanding being cognizant of the Master plan, we certainly look forward to being back home next summer in Haliburton and draw down holiness in our own back yard!



for this summer, but regrettably the regulators remained uncommitted until June. But with an enrollment that brought campers from all over the world a decision had to be made no later than April. Being cognizant of the impact overnight camping has on youngsters, especially with a camper clientele that included many youngsters from distant and isolated communities, the administration was committed to operate the camp under any and all circumstance. They could not disappoint the campers and staff again, and were keenly aware of the significance the Rebbe placed on overnight camping.

After much soul searching it was decided that it was of utmost importance to open in light of all the hardships we, and especially youngsters endured.

By mid February when there was still no guidance from medical officials and the situation still looked bleak, the directors began searching for a suitable campsite south of the 49th parallel. After visiting a few cities and sites and in light of the limited options, Yitzchak and Goldy settled on a site (under duress) in Darlington, MD. Despite the huge costs, and the challenges this would present “they forged ahead” with conviction and determination. While much camp activity is conducted

The Campers, Counselors, Staff, and Administration of The Sidney & Naomi Spiegel Camp Gan Israel, Haliburton

extend our heartfelt and sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Sidney Spiegel. We will forever remember his keen interest, unstinting generosity, and hands-on involvement to establish, safeguard and enhance this magnificent complex and wonderful oasis where children strengthen their body and nurture their soul.

Chabad Lubavitch of Southern Ontario





In New Jersey, Three Generations of Firstborns “Redeemed”

A Pidyon Haben ceremony turned out to be a multi-generational affair

By Mendel Super
Michael and Hannah Mandler, proud first-time parents, had another less common mitzvah to do after circumcising their bundle of joy, whom they



Newborn Zev Mordechai Mandler, center, with his father, Michael Mandler and (at right) grandfather Raul Mandler, who all took part in “pidyon haben” ceremonies conducted by Rabbi Aryeh Weinstein, left, a kohen, and Rabbi Yitzchak Goldenberg, spiritual leader of the Young Israel of Lawrenceville, N.J., and co-director of Chabad of Lawrenceville.

had named Zev Mordechai. They had to redeem their firstborn son from a Kohen, in a ceremony known as pidyon haben, or the redemption of the firstborn.

Redeem their own son? The ritual harks back to the time when all firstborns had been designated to serve as Kohanim, or priests, in the Holy Temple. After the privilege was bestowed exclusively upon the descendants of Aaron the High Priest, a firstborn male must be symbolically redeemed from a Kohen 31 days following his birth—or any time after, if he hadn’t been redeemed on time.

The Mandlers, new to Lawrenceville, N.J., contacted Rabbi Yitzchak Goldenberg, spiritual leader of the Young Israel of Lawrenceville synagogue and co-director of Chabad of Lawrenceville with his wife, Dina.

“We’d never celebrated a pidyon haben in our community,” Goldenberg tells Chabad.org. In fact, according to Young Israel’s president, Charles Miller, this would be the first in the synagogue’s half-century history.

For Goldenberg, the timing couldn’t have been better. “Our community hadn’t come together since the pandemic, and this presented the perfect opportunity.” Together with the Mandlers, they planned an outdoor, community-wide barbecue to mark the occasion.

Goldenberg recruited his colleague Rabbi Aryeh Weinstein, adult-education director at Lubavitch of Bucks County, PA., to serve as the Kohen from whom the baby would be redeemed.

As the day neared, Michael Mandler realized that he, as a

firstborn male, had never had a pidyon haben himself. “I was raised traditionally,” explains Mandler, “I had a brit, but we never did a pidyon haben.” Mandler’s family, Argentine émigrés to the United States, settled in Albuquerque, N.M., where they first became

acquainted with Chabad at Chabad of New Mexico, led by Rabbi Chaim and Devorah Leah Schmukler.

But it was when he met his wife, Hannah, from an observant New Jersey family that he began to become more familiar with the traditions. “I love my son more than the money,” he chuckles, “of course, I wanted to redeem him!”

Mandler’s father, Raul, wasn’t going to make it to the ceremony, but at the last minute, plans changed, and it turned out he would be attending. That’s when Michael realized there would be a third generation being redeemed that day: Raul, too, was a firstborn son.

On June 2, a warm summer’s day, Lawrenceville made history not once, but three times, as three generations of Mandlers were redeemed in an age-old rite, in exchange for five silver coins.

“My Israelite wife has borne me this firstborn son,” Michael informed the Kohen, Rabbi Weinstein.

“Which would you rather have—your firstborn son, or the five coins which you are obligated to give me for the redemption of this your firstborn son?” asked Weinstein.

“I want this, my firstborn son,” declared Michael (much to his wife Hannah’s relief), “and here you have five coins which are required of me for the redemption.”

The symbolic exchange carries special meaning to Michael. “It’s a choice you make,” he muses. “To me, it’s about valuing your child more than material possessions. These traditions are so important to carry on; we need to be the spirit of Judaism.”

By Mendel Super June 17, 2021

A Florida law that requires a one- to two-minute Moment of Silence at the start of each day in public schools was signed into law by Gov. Ron DeSantis.

The law, which was passed by the Florida Legislature in April, prohibits teachers from making suggestions to students about what to think about or do during the Moment of Silence, and instead encourages parents or guardians to discuss with their children how the student can best utilize the moment of silence.

“It’s something that’s important to be able to provide each student the ability, every day, to be able to reflect and to be able to pray as they see fit,” DeSantis said at the signing ceremony.

The new law, which took effect on July 1, will be in place by the start of the school year. Until now Florida law permitted, but did not require, that schools set aside up to two minutes each day or each week to give students the opportunity for silent prayer or meditation.

During hearings in both Florida Houses earlier this year, proponents asserted that a Moment of Silence—currently mandated in 15 states and on the books in dozens more—can be effective in giving children an opportunity for introspection and contemplation in a chaotic world.

The Moment of Silence bill was sponsored in the House by Rep. Randy Fine (R-Palm Bay) and in the Senate by state Sen. Dennis Baxley (R-Ocala), and passed both Houses with overwhelming bipartisan support.

“Who knows what may be changed simply because the children of Florida will have the opportunity of quiet reflection?” Baxley said at the signing, which took place at The Shul of Bal Harbour, Fla. and was hosted by Rabbi Shalom B. Lipskar, the synagogue

and community center’s rabbi and executive director.

The wheels were first set in motion after Baxley met in 2019 with Rabbi Shneur Zalman Oirechman—co-director with his wife, Chanie, of Chabad-Lubavitch of the Panhandle—at the Capitol building in Tallahassee. After meeting the rabbi, Baxley discussed the proposal with Rabbi Yossi Hecht, co-director of Chabad-Lubavitch of Ocala, which Baxley represents, and resolved to sponsor a bill enshrining a Moment of Silence into law.

Fine sees the bill as a non-denominational effort regardless of faith or background: “Every child will benefit from this time to be centered before the beginning of the day.”

Oirechman’s work on the bill was directly inspired by the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory—who was a long time champion of moral education in schools, both public and private, noting that while schools must obviously teach basic general education, they have an imperative to imbue moral values in their students as well.

Beginning in 1983, the Rebbe spoke increasingly about the concept of a Moment of Silence in America’s schools in the face of rising crime rates and societal dysfunction across the nation.

“The Rebbe passionately encouraged a Moment of Silence in all public schools,” said Oirechman. “He spoke of how it will put society on a better path by giving children the awareness of something greater than themselves.”

Better Behavior, Academic Achievement and Social Skills

Highlighting the universal nature of the proposal, the Rebbe insisted that parents be the ones who instruct their children regarding what to reflect on during a Moment of Silence—and not the school or the teachers—providing parents with a framework for

meaningful dialogue with their children. While parents often pack a sandwich for their child’s lunch, he explained, they must also send them off with “spiritual food.”

“Knowing that school time is devoted to education,” the Rebbe explained in a 1986 address, “the child realizes that the moment of silence must be dedicated to the most important things in his life: his outlook on life, and his belief in the Creator and Ruler of the world—as per the instructions which his parents will give him.”

Indeed, research cited by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that increased parent engagement in schools is linked with better student behavior, higher academic achievement and enhanced social skills.

The Florida Moment of Silence bill reads, in part: “... in today’s hectic society too few persons are able to experience even a moment of quiet reflection before plunging headlong into the activities of daily life. Young persons are particularly affected by the absence of an opportunity for a moment of quiet reflection. The Legislature finds that our youth, and society as a whole, would be well served if students in the public schools were afforded a moment of silence at the beginning of each school day.”

A moment alone with one’s thoughts disconnected from technology is perhaps more important than ever; a 2013 study commissioned by Nokia showed that on average, people check their phones every six minutes—or 150 times a day.

Sen. Victor Torres (D-Kissimmee), a supporter of the bill, recalled observing a Moment of Silence as a child in New York. “I feel that it gives the teacher and the students a chance to reflect, and whichever religion you believe in, that’s your right,” he said.

Moment of Silence Bill Signed Into Law in Florida



Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida after signing the state’s Moment of Silence bill into law, at Chabad’s The Shul.



Wimbledon Rabbi Serves Up a Brief Guide for Humanity

By Menachem Posner

Sometimes, the deepest and most important messages are found in the simplest of packages. Bearing just the word “One” on its cover, a small booklet of 40 pages released in the United Kingdom has been widely shared, bringing with it a vision for a universal code that every human being can adhere to. Its lessons, all short and easily relatable, are based on the Seven Noahide Laws, Judaism’s creed for humanity.

The booklet and companion website, oneuniversalcode.org, are the brainchild of Rabbi Nissan Dovid Dubov, director of Chabad Lubavitch in Wimbledon and prolific Chabad.org author and lecturer.

Written during the extended coronavirus lockdowns in the United Kingdom, the rabbi says he had been toying with and refining the idea for decades.

His involvement with the Noahide Laws began when he was pursuing advanced rabbinic studies in 1987 in Brooklyn, N.Y. He, together with Rabbi Levi Garelik, was called to a meeting with Rabbi Dr. Nissan Mindel, author and senior aide of the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory.

“Rabbi Mindel told us that he was working on a guide to the seven laws, and he needed us to research the relevant texts and sources,” recalls Rabbi Dubov. “He told us that the Rebbe had said it was a three-day project. We got to work and discovered that the literature was so vast and spread out, it could take three years.”

Based on the Rebbe’s reaction to their work (which was never published), as well as that of others, he understood that it was important to make sure that the Seven Noahide Laws do not become regarded as a religion of their own, but serve as basic moral and ethical guidelines that anyone could embrace and adopt as guiding principles in their lives.

After writing, revising and rethinking, the rabbi distilled his work into 30 short, uplifting teachings. Laid out in an aesthetically pleasing manner, they read more like poetry than instruction and are eminently digestible.

For example, the entry titled “Relationships” reads:

Seek a partner who offers love, respect and works on their self-improvement.

Intimacy is a relationship of the soul.

Lasting relationships are founded on the qualities of loyalty, trust, commitment and unconditional love.

You can’t change others, but you can change yourself.

Appreciate what you have.



‘Yes, dear’, ‘I’m sorry’ and ‘I love you’ are great words.

Under “Time,” it offers: ‘The world says, “time is money”. In truth time is life.

Life is too short to waste.

Gossip, envy, anger and unfounded criticism all waste valuable time.

A day with some good in it is a day used well.

We all juggle with priorities — make time for what is truly important.

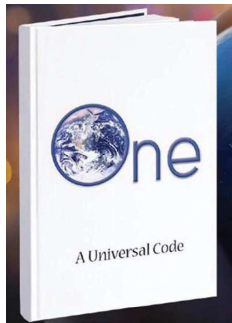
Use your time well — make every day count.

In addition to English, the book has thus far appeared in German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Russian. A Chinese version is currently in the final stages of editing.

The rabbi is open about the fact that the book is sourced in Jewish tradition. Yet, he reports that he has received very positive feedback from a diverse range of religious leaders, who see their beliefs and traditions within its teachings.

At the vaunted championships that took place in his town of Wimbledon this summer, the rabbi is glad to report that the thousands of tennis spectators had the opportunity to consume something more substantive than strawberries and cream: their own complimentary copy of “One.”

Paper and ebook copies can be purchased online at: oneuniversalcode.org.



The short and easily relatable lessons in “One” by Rabbi Nissan Dovid Dubov are based on the Seven Noahide Laws, Judaism’s creed for humanity.

Granddaughter Named for Surfside Victim Alongside IDF Officer Who Located Body

By Menachem Shlomo

The Israeli officer who found the body of Itty Ainsworth and her husband, Tzvi, in the building collapse in Surfside, Fla., stood by the Torah scroll on Thursday as her granddaughter was named after her.

When IDF Col. Golan Vach paid a visit to the shiva of the Ainsworth family, his main goal was to assure them that based on the body that he had located, Itty and Tzvi Ainsworth had died on impact and had not suffered.

While he was there, however, he also partook in an uncommon event.

When he arrived, the family was preparing to mark the naming of a baby girl, who was born to Itty’s son Dovy and his wife, Sheva, on the day before the building fell on June 24.

Traditionally, baby girls are named with a special prayer following the Torah reading on Monday, Thursday or Shabbat. It is customary among Ashkenazic Jews to name children after loved ones who have passed on.

To thank Vach for his team’s efforts in locating and identifying the bodies of the parents of seven, he was called to the Torah for the prayer that announces the new baby’s name.

“It is with deep gratitude that I share the birth and naming of our daughter, Itta (Itty) Ainsworth, named after my mother, a’h,” the baby’s father wrote on Facebook. “My daughter should follow in my mother’s ways, connecting deeply with so many around the world in a positive, uplifting and spiritual way.”

The father of the baby also shared his gratitude for Vach.

“We were honored to have the IDF [officer] responsible for my parents search efforts attend at the Torah reading and naming ceremony,” he wrote. “Thank you Col. Golan Vach and the IDF, who have been critically helpful and comforting through this process. Col. Vach is a special soul we will never forget.”

Itty’s brother-in-law, Rabbi Raphael Tennenhaus, director of Chabad of South Broward in Hallandale Beach, Fla., presided over the service.

“I was the gabbai, and at her father’s instruction, I gave the baby the name Itta after my late sister-in-law,” Tennenhaus told Chabad.



IDF Col. Golan Vach receives an aliyah to the Torah, as Dovy Ainsworth, center, and other family members look on.

org, referring to Itty’s full Yiddish name. “The celebration is a reminder of how life goes on. How there is joy despite tragedy.”

The rabbi also explained the specific relevance of this message to the day the baby was named.

“The section of Tanya that was learned on the day the baby was named discusses a specific quote from the Zohar: ‘Weeping is lodged in one side of my heart, and joy is lodged in the other side of my heart,’” said Tennenhaus. “I shared that with the family—that the joy is not compromised because of the tragedy and that G-d grants us the opportunity to experience both emotions simultaneously.”

Vach, who led Israel’s National Rescue Unit, arrived in Miami following the collapse of the 12-story

building in order to help with the desperate and heroic rescue mission. A week later, he was part of the team who found and identified Itty, 66, and Tzvi, 68.

On Sunday, the Israeli unit bade farewell to their fellow rescue workers before their return home. The group received an emotional send-off with the mayor of Miami-Dade County, Daniella Levine Cava, thanking them for their help.

“Miami-Dade County and the Town of Surfside will never ever forget what you have done for us here,” she said.

Videos show the crowd singing “Ani Ma’amin” as the unit walks through the street. The song details one of Maimonides’ 13 principles of Jewish faith: the belief in the coming of Moshiach.

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Eight Teens Awarded For Remarkable Leadership

By Ashira Weiss

What do an eighteen-year-old Canadian political activist, an altruistic seventeen-year-old Parisian, and a vivacious, first-generation American teen have in common? They were all crowned winners of CTeen's inaugural Eight Under Eighteen award.

In 2020, CTeen, the Chabad Teen Network and the world's fastest growing Jewish teen network, announced the establishment of the Eight Under Eighteen: Yisroel Fund Leadership Award. The award seeks to spotlight "teens who have demonstrated remarkable dedication, engagement, and leadership," in their communities.

Nominations flooded in from around the world, with high school principals, community youth leaders, and the teens' peers penning letters of recommendation in support of their nominees. By early 2021, the field was narrowed to thirty-six finalists. After a grueling final selection process that included interviews and trans-national conference calls, the eight winners were chosen.

In March of last year, after hearing of the terrible isolation elderly members of his Grandpa's community were suffering under lockdown, **Michael Mandel**, 17, of Toronto, discovered a federal grant program that supports youth in bettering their communities. He successfully applied for a grant, and with the money he purchased tablets and accessories, loaded them with games and communication apps, and delivered them to ten lonely seniors. Michael taught each one how to use their device and recruited peers to hold a monthly program dubbed Senior Pals, at which teens and seniors play games, chat, and watch entertainers.

Gaby Guigui, 18, a Sephardic Jew growing up in Knoxville, Tennessee at the

buckle of the Bible Belt, felt lonely as she declined invitations to church and Friday night football games and parties, and excused herself from school on Jewish holidays. So, along with her Rabbi and Rebbetzin, Gaby founded a CTeen club and helped connect thirty of her peers to their Jewish heritage. "I never shied away from being a proud Jew, Gaby says, "But now I have a family of fellow Jews who share my experience and give me strength to share my Judaism with others."

Based in Bucks County, PA, **Andrew Belder**, 17, is a runner and swimmer who found his cross-country running career in limbo during COVID lockdowns. So he decided to arrange his own marathon. He mapped out a 13.1 kilometer course, and despite the twenty two degree Fahrenheit weather on the day he had chosen, ran the course to complete a marathon. In doing so, he raised thousands of dollars for the Travis Manion Foundation, which supports military veterans and their families. In addition, Andrew, who began to wear tefillin daily two years ago, formed a weekly tefillin breakfast together with two of his best friends, at which they gather seven to ten guys to put on tefillin and bond over their Judaism.

Shayna Solkowitz of Woodcliff Lake, NJ, began to show up at her high school in modest dress as she educated herself about Jewish law, and found that answering the Judaism-related questions it elicited from teachers and peers wasn't enough for her. So she started baking fresh challah every Thursday and seeking out Jewish peers and faculty to whom to give the traditional treats. This spawned the creation of a Jewish club that had twenty participants at its first meeting.

Sam Virine, 17, is a first generation Canadian, as the

child of Russian immigrant parents who chose Calgary, Alberta as home. He attends a large public high school where there are just tens of Jewish students. "I thought it was too bad that they had nothing Jewish going on in their lives," he says of his peers. Sam cold-called members of Calgary's small Jewish community until he raised enough money to bring JText to town. JText sends out a weekly trivia question to Jewish teens via text message and offers prizes for those who answer correctly. Hundreds of teens participate each week.

A first generation American, **Shai Fichtelberg** is one of six Jewish kids in a Sonoma County, California, school of two-thousand. When the making of Holocaust jokes became a trend at her school and on social media, she started a Jewish Heritage Club, which has become a forum for educating Jewish and non-Jewish peers and faculty about Judaism, Jewish history, and antisemitism.

The other award-winners included **Sasha Rubinsky**, who responds to misinformation and accusations against Israel at her Coachella, California, high school and her job as a Starbucks barista, and **Rachel Arrouas** of S. Maur, France, who instituted an SOS Grandpa campaign that motivated hundreds of teens to call their grandparents each week.

These eight teen winners were awarded a plaque commemorating their win, a book of daily thoughts gleaned from the wisdom of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and a partial scholarship to a CTeen-approved gap-year program in Israel of their choice.

Since the announcement of the winners, many of the teens have been featured in their local newspapers and interviewed on NBC, NPR, and other local stations.



'They Know I Won't Play on Shabbos' Says Washington Nationals Draft Pick Elie Kligman

By Yosef Kaufmann & Dvora Lakein

On a bus with his teammates on Israel's Olympic baseball team heading to Hartford, Conn., 18-year-old Elie Kligman received a call he had long been hoping for. The Washington Nationals had just selected the Las Vegas native in the 20th round of the Major League Baseball draft. In doing so, Elie became the first Jewish player to be drafted by a major league team with the understanding that he would never play on Shabbat.

"The Nationals were fully aware that I won't play on Shabbos," Elie told Chabad.org. I have always been very clear about that.

cept," he muses. "The mind needs to control the emotions. There's no place on the field for throwing helmets and bats."

Indeed, Marc believes, failure is often G-d's way of throwing you a better pitch. Elie first joined a Little League team when the family lived in San Diego, but he ended up missing 60 percent of the games, as most are played on Friday evening and Saturday. Though Marc tried to convince the league to adjust their schedule, they would not. Eventually, Marc discovered the North City Youth Baseball, a smaller league that was thrilled to have young, high-caliber players like Elie and Ari, and eagerly made the sched-



18-year-old Elie Kligman became the first Jewish player to be drafted by a major league team with the understanding that he would never play on Shabbat.

That is not going to change. Keeping Shabbos is for G-d. There's no argument about putting baseball first and G-d second." Elie is an observant Jew who keeps a kosher diet and prays daily. And he has never played on Shabbat.

That's not to say it's easy, Elie candidly admits. "It's always hard. I don't get to be with my team. I don't get to help them out. But still," he declares, "Shabbos comes first. That's just how I roll."

Elie inherited his attitude from his father, Marc, an attorney and sports agent. The fifty-one-year-old dad, who played baseball as an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins, taught Elie and his younger brother Ari the game when they were tots. He coached their youth league teams for years.

Marc played his heart out in college, but it was in law school that he discovered his soul. While earning his J.D. at Tulane, he encountered Chabad and chose to make his an Orthodox lifestyle. He and his wife, Leah, also an attorney, raise their children with a strong Torah identity and a passion for baseball.

On the diamond, Marc trains his two boys with the same philosophy as his pro clients. "I teach all my players that they will, at times, fail. They need to embrace failure, learn from their mistakes, and push on to succeed at the next thing. It's really a Chasidic con-

cept. They played on better fields, had better rules, and better uniforms," Marc says. "G-d was clearly sending us to a much finer place." Ten years later, last spring, teammates, parents, and coaches rallied successfully to change a game scheduled for the second day of Pesach.

Rabbi Chaim Ozer Metal of Chabad of Summerlin, Nevada, where the Kligmans are members, is a Mets fan himself. The rabbi says he has "great respect for the way Elie pursues his drive and commitment to the game while remaining strong in his Judaism." Metal can often be found in the bleachers watching Elie play at Cimarron-Memorial High School. He wears a fitted baseball cap and personalized jersey bearing the nickname "Rally Rabbi" (the team attributes some of their late-game wins to his presence).

Elie's refusal to play on Shabbat is reminiscent of Sandy Koufax, the legendary Dodgers pitcher who benched himself on Yom Kippur during the 1965 World Series. "It's pretty cool to be in the same sentence with him," Elie says.

Elie believes the Majors are ready for an observant Jew. "The world is ready for it," he says, and he'd like to be the one to show others "that you can do what you love, without compromising who you are."



Inaugural annual award spotlights teens who are making a difference in their communities

AS. When I first heard that you are spending your days visiting prisons, my first thought was, “how many Jewish prisoners could there possibly be?” So, how many Jewish prisoners are there and where are they?

MC. There are correctional institutes across the province. From Thunder Bay in the north to Windsor in the south. We also provide spiritual resources to prisons across Canada, but most of our clients are housed in the larger institutes that are close to the GTA. As far as numbers, it's hard to say as many don't reveal their Jewish identity until they meet us. But a guesstimate is around 200 in Ontario.

AS. How did you become involved with this challenging activity?

MC. In 2016 My friend Ronen Lederman and I tried to help a Jewish individual who was incarcerated at a maximum security prison in solitary confinement. We kept on hitting dead ends while trying to provide him with Jewish resources, even Jewish books and matzah became a battle. We were out of options when, just before Rosh Hashanah, I came across a moving letter from the Rebbe that strongly encouraged the assisting of Jews in prison. The Rebbe said that a Jew in prison is in gallus (exile) within gallus and it's up to us to help them. That spurred us into action and with tireless advocacy and endless requests, we did manage to get this incarcerated Jew a shofar, siddur, yarmulka, learning materials and a lulav and etrog. However, we failed to get a sukkah inside the prison that year. They denied it for security reasons but we remained tenacious, and today, Baruch Hashem, inmates in that institution and others have a sukkah. In fact, I have a storeroom full of sukkahs that we use in institutions across Ontario.

AS. What surprised you most about the inmates and their attitudes?

MC. The inmates are genuine in their search for spiritual growth. They are at a time in their lives when they start thinking about their mistakes and searching for answers. They are active in davening, putting on tefillin and participating in our programs. They have a passion to learn more and to become more involved as Jews. They are also very appreciative that we visit them. Some of them don't receive visits from family or friends, so our volunteers are a welcomed sight. Several inmates have expressed that their whole day changes with our visits, their mood improves and gives them the strength to continue moving forward.

AS. Can you describe what it was like, the first time you went into a prison?

MC. Staff and Security were not pleased. They were unaccustomed to rabbis visiting regularly, but a lot has changed since then. We explained so many things to them to help them understand our needs. For example, why would a Jew need to wear a kippah all the time? The beginning was challenging. There are still challenges but so much is easier.

AS. How often do you visit a prison? Do you go to different prisons? Are there many volunteers?

MC. Including me, we have a team of eight full-time chap-



In this issue we interview Rabbi Michael Csillag; Head Chaplain of the Chabad Prison Chaplaincy Service

By: Ahava Spilman

lains that visit prisons including many seasoned hluchim like Rabbi Gansburg, Rabbi Grossbaum and Rabbi Zaltsman. During holiday programming we have police clearance for more than 40 volunteers to help on a temporary basis. We try to visit at least once a week sometimes twice. During the holidays we are there more often, on Hanukkah, nightly to light candles. Sometimes an inmate is in trouble or going through a crisis and we will make special emergency trips to see that inmate more often. We are regulars in five supermax prisons across Ontario and before Covid, we were just about to be cleared in more.

AS. What surprised you most about the inmates and their attitudes?

MC. The inmates are genuine in their search for spiritual growth. They are at a time in their lives when they start thinking about their mistakes and searching for answers. They are active in davening, putting on tefillin and participating in our programs. They have a passion to learn more and to become more involved as Jews. They are also very appreciative that we visit them. Some of them don't receive visits from family or friends, so our volunteers are a welcomed sight. Several inmates have expressed that their whole day changes with our visits, their mood improves and gives them the strength to continue moving forward.

AS. What are the hardest challenges for a Jewish inmate?

MC. Depression, despondency, and loneliness are the biggest. Prison is a very dark and dangerous place. These people have lost most of their friends and family and can't communicate with the outside world. Imagine: no cell phones, emails or internet allowed. All phone calls are monitored by the staff and must be collect calls to a landline.

AS. How often do you visit a prison? Do you go to different prisons? Are there many volunteers?

MC. Including me, we have a team of eight full-time chap-

AS. Do you see the same prisoners regularly and do you meet them as a group?

MC. Yes. We create an ongoing rapport with them. We are on a first-name basis and work at a relationship based on trust and growth. The Jewish community is small so we usually do some Jewish geography with them too. Each prison is divided into dozens of units. Each unit is self-contained, meaning that if you are a prisoner in one unit, you will have no clue who is in the unit right next to yours. Most units consist of around 30 to 40 inmates. It's very unusual to have more than one Jew in the same unit. This creates a silver lining where we can have more personal one-on-one dis-

cussions without interruption. During holiday programming several units will mix together in the program room or the chapel to participate.

AS. Is prison life more difficult for observant prisoners? How?

MC. Yes and no. Well, it's more challenging in the sense that you need to advocate more to get your needs met as a Jew. However, the peace of mind that comes with realizing that Hashem is with you even inside prison and is watching over you is very comforting while incarcerated. The challenge is that you have to struggle to do every mitzvah and help from the outside is essential. That's where we come in.

AS. What services do you offer that help them?

MC. We offer weekly visits, counselling, holiday programming including shofar, menorahs, shmurah matzah and haggadahs, weekly Torah newsletter, Jewish learning materials, Chayenu magazine, Torah classes, mp3 players, family support services, legal referrals, advocacy, financial aid resources, rehabilitation services for post incarceration, homelessness, and addiction help. Our next big program is to build a Canada wide Torah lending library to send to inmates across Canada.

AS. Have any prisoners become closer to Yiddishkeit during their stay?

MC. Yes definitely. Most of the inmates we've met have grown tremendously in their yiddishkeit. Many have become frum (observant) in prison davening 3 times a day, keeping Shabbos properly, even learning chitas, a daily learning regimen. Some learn Torah all day and some yearn for Moshiach more than most of us.

AS. How do non-Jews interact with you?

MC. We visit non-Jews who request to see us. I visit a gentile on a weekly basis who has spent more time inside prison than outside. He genuinely wishes to come closer to Hashem in his own way. I teach him the 7 laws of Noah. They are respectful and want to grow spiritually. They don't want anything else from us except to reconnect to Hashem. They see Rabbis as a guide to help them in this path.

AS. Do you or the Jewish prisoners encounter anti-Semitism?

MC. No. Basically none. Actually, there are people who want to be Jewish so they can get kosher meals or other perks like our visits.

AS. What is the most challenging part of your work?

MC. Finding volunteers in the community and advocating with the government for Jewish needs. It takes hours of phone calls and emails to get something small done: to get permission for one man in northern Ontario to get his tefillin could take three days of work. It's difficult because the government who is slow doesn't like to change the status quo. There are a few adversaries who attempt to curtail our activities but be assured we will prevail.

AS. Do you keep in touch with inmates when they leave?

MC. We have a team that deals with inmates once they are released. They learn with them and try and help them. We try to encourage them not to reconnect with the negative influences that got them there in the first place.

AS. Can prisoners get kosher food? How does this work?

MC. Yes almost anywhere in Canada you can get kosher food in prison. There was a case of an inmate in the Yukon who wanted kosher. They had it shipped from BC. We are trying to increase the kosher standards of the kosher food as there have been some challenges with the supervision once it leaves the factory. Improvements have definitely increased since we arrived. More improvements are in the future

AS. What mitzvahs are the easiest and the hardest to observe in prison?

MC. Human rights mandate that whatever a person observes on the street they must be able to observe while incarcerated unless it is an undue hardship on the prison system. To that end we are there to ensure that this mandate is followed. Legally every mitzvah must be accommodated by the government but it takes advocacy to get the government to comply

so that is where we help get that accomplished.

AS. Do you make it possible for prisoners to observe Jewish holidays?

MC. Yes, we provide programs for all nights of Chanukah, Purim night and day with a full festive meal, Megillah and Mishloach Manot, Rosh Hashanah, Shofar blowing and Sukkot for the Sukkot holiday. On Passover, we organize a full kosher Seder each night. For the last several years two yeshiva students walked 3 hours each way on Rosh Hashana to blow shofar for the Jewish inmates.

AS. Are you in touch with the prisoners' families?

MC. Yes, we help them in any way possible. We have sponsored summer camp for their kids and made sure they were taken care of for the holidays. We presently send weekly Torah newsletters to the families as well.

AS. I am sure this experience has changed you. How?

MC. I am definitely wiser than when I first started doing this. My learning curve has stretched from eye opening conversations with inmates to the necessity for understanding corporate psychology when dealing with provincial red tape. I am sure my personal growth surpasses those I hope I help.

AS. If you were to give advice to parents on how to keep their children out of prison, what would you tell them?

MC. Make sure they marry Jewish and have proper friends. Almost every Jewish prisoner has a common denominator: each has a non-Jewish girlfriend or spouse. Almost none has a Jewish partner. 72% of the inmates have addiction issues that exacerbated the initial issues of hanging out with the “wrong crowd”.

AS. If someone wants to assist you, with what resources or support could someone reading this help you?

MC. We need funds to grow and we need volunteers. Contact info: 647 686 7355 Jewishserviceca@gmail.com

To donate *Via etransfer: send to jewishservicesca@gmail.com *Via check: Send to “Jewish Services Canada” 770 Chabad Gate, Thornhill On L4J 3V9

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Dear Rebbby

By Rabbi Aron Moss



A Kabbilistic Kiddush

I make Kiddush over wine every Friday night, but I would like to know a deeper meaning behind it. Is there some mystical ideas you can share that I can meditate on when I say the Kiddush?

Answer

It all goes back to the very first Friday of history. Adam and Eve were created on Friday afternoon, the time when all last minute things get done, like making humanity.

On that first day, they were told not to eat from the fruit of one tree, the Tree of Knowledge. The mystics teach that this fruit was a grape vine, a fruit that contains the potential for great good and great evil. Over a glass of wine friendships are made and lost, lives are enhanced and destroyed, hopes are created and dashed. It is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The prohibition was only to last until nightfall that day. Once the holiness of Shabbos came in, they would be allowed to eat from the fruit. When holy people on a holy day have holy intentions, indulging in the fruit of the vine can do no harm.

Had they done what they were told, Adam would have made Kiddush on the juice of the Tree of Knowledge on that first Friday night. But they didn't wait until Shabbos. Eve squeezed the grapes, drank and gave Adam to drink too. And that was the cause of all the problems in the world ever since.

We correct this mistake by making Kiddush on Friday night over wine or grape juice. It reminds us that we can only enjoy the pleasures of this world if we can also defer our enjoyment. If you can wait, then you are the master of your desires. If you can't, then you are slave to them. The key to being a good person is the ability to control yourself. It starts with the way we eat, and extends to every choice we make.

Adam and Eve didn't wait. So the Torah tells us to learn how to wait. We wait between meat and milk. We wait to go to the mikvah. We wait for Kiddush so we can eat. And we wait for Moshiah, the ultimate Shabbos. May the waiting be over, so we can make Kiddush on the holy wine

from the Garden of Eden.

He Just Won't Commit

He Just Won't Commit... You may find it strange that I am writing to you, rabbi. You know I am not very involved in Jewish life. I am very spiritual, but not religious. I am turning to you because you know my boyfriend very well. We've been so long together and he still won't commit. He says our relationship is fine as it is, and we don't need to be married. Maybe you can give him a little nudge and explain that a relationship needs commitment to be real?

Answer

I would be glad to try and bring him around. You are a great couple and he would be a fool to lose you. But I must say, you can't blame him for not committing. You are doing the exact same thing as he is.

When he says, "I love you, but I don't want to marry you," it means he wants the benefits without the obligations. He likes the feeling of being in a relationship, but doesn't want the commitment that marriage demands.

It sounds great, which is why more and more people are choosing love without marriage. But what it really means is he is stuck in himself. He is looking at what he can gain from the relationship, but isn't willing to make himself vulnerable and put himself out for it. That's not love, that's convenience. I would tell him, If you really mean it when you say I love you, then commit. Do it for her.

That's my speech to your boyfriend. But I could give the same speech to you.

When you say you are spiritual but not religious, you sound exactly like him. You are open to spirituality, but not open to the discipline of religion. It's like saying to G-d, "I love You, but I am not ready to commit to You. I will do what feels good to me, but it has to be on my terms. My meditations, my fixing the world, my way. Just don't ask me to do things Your way."

True spirituality is not about feeling good. It's about doing good, no matter what you feel. You aren't limiting yourself when you commit to observing divine command-

ments. You are opening yourself to the infinite, transcending your limits, committing to a higher purpose. There can be nothing more liberating.

And getting married is not limiting yourself either. It is expanding yourself, because your life is not just about you anymore. By committing, you are making yourself vulnerable, answerable to another person. Your life is not just about you. What you do matters to someone else. That is at once humbling and exhilarating.

So here's the deal. I will talk to your boyfriend, and explain to him the beauty of a committed relationship. And you back me up as a living example of just that, by doing a mitzvah and committing to G-d. Maybe he will do it for you, if you will do it for Him.

Which Political Party is Correct?

I am a staunch libertarian, and my wife is a big time socialist. We are happily married because we don't talk politics. But I do wonder, what is the Torah's viewpoint on political issues? Which political ideology would Judaism espouse?

Answer

It's refreshing to hear that you and your wife can disagree on politics and stay together. If only more people could put their differences aside and celebrate what unites them, the world would be in a much better place. You are a model for that better place.

There is a story of a group of Jews in the 1920's who were debating this very topic: which political philosophy aligns with the Torah? Each was able to quote the Torah as support for their preferred ideology.

One argued for monarchism, as the Torah itself condones rule by a royal family. Another argued for socialism. Doesn't the Torah command us to share our wealth with the poor? A third insisted that the Torah is communist. We don't really own any property, it all belongs to G-d.

No one could win the debate, as each side presented strong Torah proofs for their case. So they turned to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, to adjudicate.

The Rebbe told them:

"You are all right. Every political platform, indeed every man-made philosophy in the world, is a mixture of both good and evil. Only the holy Torah, G-d's wisdom, is pure goodness. You can find the positive elements of every other philosophy in the world somewhere in the Torah."

These profound words teach us the true position of Torah when it comes to politics. There is no political party that doesn't have some good points. Each one in its own way is trying to save the world. But among those good intentions will always be mixed in some bad ideas. Politics is man-made, and people are a mixture of good and evil. Nobody is perfect, and no political body is perfect.

We need a political system. So we go with democracy, "the worst form of government, except for all the others." So too, when it comes to voting, we have to choose the worst party, except for all the others. But it would be wrong to say that any one party or platform is completely aligned with Torah. The messy game of politics can't live up to that ideal.

We should feel free to argue for our political ideologies. But as the Rebbe said, we are all right, and therefore all wrong. Let's learn to disagree, and still stay married.

Cancel Culture in Shul?

My friends have been asking me to join them for a synagogue service for months. I don't believe in G-d. I never pray. What could I possibly gain from attending synagogue?

Answer

You are implying that people go to synagogue to pray. Where did you get that idea from?

True, you will often see people praying in synagogue. But people also pray at home, in the street, at an airport or in a foxhole.

You don't need a synagogue to pray. And you don't need to pray to go to synagogue. This is clear from the very name "synagogue."

Synagogue comes from the Greek sunagoge which means "bring together." And if that's all Greek to you, the original Hebrew term is Beit

Kneset, a house of gathering. It is not called a house of prayer, but a house of community connection.

The synagogue is where we meet old friends and make new ones. People who would otherwise never cross paths interact and get to know each other. It is one of the few places where everyone belongs. Young and old, rich and poor, familiar and strange, politically left and right, all are welcome in the synagogue.

When it comes to people with opposing views, the post-modern world has cancel culture, where other opinions are excluded. The Jewish world has kiddush culture, where we mix with all types, and become enriched by the experience. We create community just by being together under one roof.

That's why in Yiddish, the term for synagogue is shul, which means school. Shul is a place of learning about ourselves and others: who we are, what we are here for, and what really matters in life. These lessons may be picked up in formal classes taught by the rabbi, informal discussions with fellow congregants, or in silent moments of reverent self-reflection. Some might call that prayer.

Of course, prayer does play a central role in synagogue life. And during prayer services is not the time to socialize. Even if you aren't sure about G-d, you can participate in that silent reflection. But by never attending synagogue at all, you miss out on the group energy, community spirit, collective identity and shared experiences that only a house of gathering has to offer.

If you think synagogue is all about prayer, you should go to shul more often.

Israel's Hidden Weapons

It's a lovely idea to do a mitzvah for Israel. But honestly, why would my lighting candles or giving charity make any difference to Hamas? They will keep on sending rockets no matter how many mitzvahs I do. Is the mitzvah campaign there just to make us feel like we are doing something?

Answer

We feel far away and helpless when we see Israel under attack.

Dear Rebbby



This is not the case. We are never far from Israel. And we are never helpless.

Israel is a land like no other. It is called the Holy Land by all peoples. So while we may not be physically in the land, we are always connected to it. Because holiness is everywhere, and holiness is beyond the limits of physical space.

Most of us can do little to help protect the land militarily. That is the job of the IDF and the Israeli government. We pray that they have the strength and vision to defend the land and its people.

But our sages teach that each one of us is a microcosm. There is an entire world in each human being. So just as the world has one country called the Holy Land, so too we all have a Holy Land inside us. That is our spiritual life.

The mitzvahs you do, the Torah you learn, the pockets of holiness you create in your home and in your day, that is your Israel, your Holy Land. During those sacred moments, no matter where you are, you are in Israel.

Your Israel, like the land itself, needs secure borders, a clear resolve and an unquestioning sense of purpose. That means now is the time to reinforce our Jewish pride and Jewish practice. If our enemies want less Jews, we will respond by being more Jewish. If they wish to break our resolve, we will redouble it.

When we boost our own Israel, our spiritual life, we send strength to Israel, our spiritual homeland. There is a collective Jewish spirit that we are all part of. When we

fortify ourselves, we fortify the whole.

This is not just a mystical concept. It's scientific. The greatest defensive weapons are faith, determination, positivity and belief in your cause. When we display our solidarity with Israel, by being prouder and more active Jews, we lift the morale of the soldiers, leaders and citizens of Israel. They can face this testing moment with extra confidence, knowing that millions around the world are behind them.

Israel is under attack. We need to help secure it, by strengthening our own Holy Land. Let's add a new mitzvah, or improve one we do already. Learn an additional piece of Torah in our day or our week, give more charity, and deepen our love for our fellow.

May G-d bless Israel with peace

Judaism Doesn't Turn You On?

Judaism doesn't do it for me. I've been there done that. I was star pupil of my bar mitzvah class, spent my teenage years at a Zionist youth group, did the Israel thing after high school, even took Judaic Studies in college. And after all that, nothing has turned me on. What do you say to people like me who simply are not inspired by Judaism?

Answer

You remind me of the story of the poor man's cheese blintzes.

A poor man was once walking the streets, feeling hungry, when he was struck by a delicious aroma. From the kitchen window of a huge mansion wafted the smells of a rich man's breakfast. Looking through the window, he watched carefully as the cook mixed the ingredients and prepared a pile of cheese blintzes. He had never seen or smelled anything so appetizing in his life.

He ran home and told his wife, "We must have some cheese blintzes for breakfast. They are delicious. Can you make me some? All we need is French pancake mix, milk and eggs, some butter to fry them in and cheese for the filling."

"Certainly my dear husband," the kind woman re-

sponded. "I will whip up the best cheese blintzes anyone ever tasted."

But when she looked into her pantry for the ingredients, she was greeted by empty shelves. An industrious and resourceful woman, she wasn't phased. "We will have to be a bit creative," she thought to herself. "I haven't got any French pancake mix, but a little potato flour should be just as good. We are a little low on milk. I'll just use water. Eggs... I don't have any eggs, but I can throw in a few potatoes. We certainly can't afford butter for frying, but I have some old oil that I used last week, I am sure it can be used again. And cheese costs a fortune these days. We will have to settle for some mashed potatoes instead of cheese, that will be close enough."

In no time the delicious breakfast was ready, a pile of home made cheese blintzes. The good wife brought them before her excited and grateful husband, who eagerly bit into the first cheese blintz he had ever tasted in his life. After chewing on the first blintz, his face quickly turned from eager anticipation to bitter disappointment.

"I have to be honest," he said, "I don't really get what those rich people see in cheese blintzes. They really are nothing special..."

The Judaism you have tasted is about as authentic as those cheese blintzes. You may think you have been exposed to the Jewish way of life. After all, you sat through a year of bar mitzvah classes, crept into the back row of a synagogue on Yom Kippur every year and even spent three months on a kibbutz in Israel when you were 18.

This is all very nice. But these are not the ingredients of a true Jewish experience.

If you have never racked your brain over a page of Talmud, if your soul has never been touched by the deeper meanings of the Torah, if you have never felt the embrace of a warm and spiritually committed community, if you have never experienced the peace and holiness of keeping a Shabbos fully and correctly, then you have never had an authentic taste of Judaism.

Enough of the cheap imitations. Go eat a genuine cheese blintz.

How to Explain Death to Kids

My seven year old is asking a lot of questions ever since her grandfather died. What happens when you die? Where do you go? Is it scary? Can you explain death to a seven year old?

Answer

Remember when your little brother was born? After being in your mother's tummy for such a long time, he finally came out to be with you and the family. How exciting. You'd been waiting for so long to meet him and play with him, and then he finally arrived.

Your baby brother was very comfortable inside mummy's tummy, where it's warm and he had everything he needed. But he couldn't stay there forever. When it was time, he came out to be with you.

In a strange way, death is similar to birth. We leave the world we know and enter the great unknown world outside. All the people who have passed away are in that peaceful and happy place. Just as you were waiting for your brother to come and be with you, the souls of past generations were waiting for your grandfather to join them. Now they are all together. We miss them. But there's nothing to be scared of.

Remember you used to talk to your baby brother, even before he was born? He heard you, though he couldn't answer and you couldn't see him. You can talk to your grandfather too. And you can send him a present. Every time you do something good, listen to your parents, do a mitzvah, give charity, learn Torah, think how proud your grandfather would be. At that moment, his soul in heaven gets a good feeling, a gift from you.

Just like he smiled every time you visited him, his soul

smiles every time you think: "Grandpa would love seeing me do this." So keep on making him proud.

Do You Dare Answer This?

I read your response to a question about what happens to souls after they die. I think it's ridiculous that you claim to be able to answer such a question. Why should I believe that you, Rebbi, knows about the afterlife and the reincarnation of souls?

Answer

I would answer you by simply rearranging the words of your question.

You asked:

"Why should I believe that you, Rebbi, knows about the afterlife and the reincarnation of souls?"

My answer:

"You should know that I, Rebbi, believes in the afterlife and the reincarnation of souls."

It is unfortunate that many people don't know the difference between belief and knowledge.

Knowledge is the purview of science, the study of the visible, measurable universe.

Religion goes further, venturing into those realities that lie beyond the scope of science, the realms of metaphysics and infinity.

We limited humans can grasp those realities with our power of belief: the art of suspending self in order to connect with something higher than self.

Scientific knowledge and religious belief need not conflict. In fact, we need them both. When we embrace one at the expense of the other, we are missing a part of ourselves. Faith without knowledge may be blind. But knowledge without faith is deaf, unable to hear the music of infinity.

Now a suggestion. Don't be one of those people who accepts only that which is scientifically proven. You may end up being reincarnated as a religious fundamentalist in order to correct your mistake.

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Jewish FAMILY Life

Marriage is Built With Kindness

By Family Therapist Rabbi Avrohom (Abe) Kass, M.A., R.S.W., R.M.F.T.

Be kind to your spouse. Not a single person in the entire world would marry if he or she thought their partner would not treat him or her with kindness. Kindness is the fertile soil in which affection can grow. Kindness is the foundation upon which a strong and healthy family can be built.

Torah teaches that the world was built with "kindness." And that "kindness is rewarded in this world and the next." Kindness is kindness; whether donating a million dollars to a charity or opening the door for an unknown stranger. Kindness is available 24/7 and the reward is immediate. What a wonderful Mitzvah!

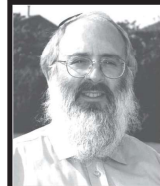
Marriage is a voluntary institution; a married individual must continually choose to stay with his or her partner. This is relationship reality whether we agree with it or not. When kindness is abundant within the relationship the choice to stay together is easy. Kindness ensures shalom bias and Hashem's presence in the home.

Showing kindness to your spouse is fundamental to marriage. Without "kindness" your relationship will sour, G-d forbid. Fortunately, it's easy to be kind. Here are some examples of everyday opportunities:

- Say good morning.
 - Ask how he or she slept.
 - Make something for him or her to eat.
 - Help find something your spouse misplaced.
 - Check with your spouse to make sure they have everything they need for the day (money, food, information, etc.).
 - Call during the day to say hello.
 - Pickup something at the store.
 - Listen and comfort your spouse if he or she is upset.
 - Help your spouse with his or her tasks at home.
 - Speak gently and respectfully.
 - Do favors.
 - Spent time together before going to sleep.
- There are many more ways, planned and unplanned, to behave kindly toward your partner and he or she toward you. The more you do, the closer and healthier your

family will be.

On the other hand, a kindness deficiency is the source of marital conflicts and the cause of most divorces. Anger, selfish and irresponsible behavior, and criticism, push away "kindness" and lead to relationship breakdown. The fact that the perpetrator of these hos-



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

tile feelings and actions feels justified makes no difference. Little by little, lack of kindness chips away at the very foundation of the relationship and everyone in the family suffers.

Think back to the time when you and your spouse were courting. When your husband or wife was only your date, how did he or she treat you? With "kindness," or otherwise? Certainly your answer is, "with kindness." I know this because otherwise you would have run the other way. You would have ended your contact immediately never wanting to see them again.

You only married your partner believing that the kindness you were shown during the dating period, during your courtship, would last forever. And for a fortunate few, this actually turns out to be true. Sadly, for far too many people, kindness slips away and the relationship becomes a painful struggle. But it needn't be that way. You can easily be kinder to your partner. Make a decision to be kinder and begin behaving that way.

Being "kind" is actually very simple. The difficulty is starting and not stopping. But if you do, you will have a wonderful marriage with the benefits far outweighing the effort. When you are "kind" to your spouse, and he or she to you, both of you will reap many rewards. Kindness will guarantee happiness.

Kindness is remembered.

Each act of "kindness" toward your spouse creates for you a relationship credit. These credits are saved-up like dollars in a bank account. When you hurt your partner's feelings—intentionally or unintentionally—these "relationship credits" can be used to reestablish harmony. They stand as advocates mitigating your partner's hurt feelings, negative judgments, or thoughts to retaliate. The more credits you have, the easier it is to get beyond relationship mistakes.

Research has shown that it takes on average five positive interactions to eliminate one negative one. Thus, the more "relationship credits" you have, the more relationship mistakes you can survive. For example, if you say good morning daily, but one day forget, either your spouse won't notice or just will casually mention it. However, if you never say good morning your spouse will likely conclude you don't care about him or her.

Jerry and Susan were clients of mine (details changed to protect privacy). Once Jerry and Susan had extinguished their anger, they were now ready to work in a positive way on their relationship. I instructed: "Make a list of kind behaviors that your partner has done in the past, is currently doing, and could do in the future, that would make you feel loved and cared for." When they had finished making their lists, they took turns discussing what they had written. Then I told them to exchange lists. Jerry had Susan's list and Susan had Jerry's. I suggested they pick from their partner's list each day two acts of kindness and then do them. I explained that these were "gifts," given without any conditions. They went home. The next time I saw Jerry and Susan in my office they were both beaming and happy. They didn't look like the old Jerry and Susan I had first met six weeks ago. "What happened," I asked. "Simple," Susan answered, "I did what was on Jerry's list, and he did what was on mine."

Kindness is contagious. Being "kind" to your spouse creates goodwill and cooperation. When you are kind, your partner is far more likely to be, in-turn, kind to you. Emotional closeness, appreciation and love will grow stronger and stronger with each act of kindness and your partner show each other. You don't need to go to therapy to increase your marital acts of kindness. You know yourself what you can do to make your husband or wife happy.

Kindness is essential to a happy marriage. If you are not prepared to be "kind" to your spouse, you are writing for yourself a prescription for a failed relationship. You cannot replace kindness with money, good looks, a big house or exotic trips. Kindness is an attitude that manifests itself in all situations. Being "married," means behaving with "kindness"—it's just that basic. There are no substitutes for kindness. There is a saying, "What goes around, comes around." When you give "kindness," you get "kindness." Kindness is something you can't give away—it always comes back.

Have a sweet life; behave kindly toward your partner.

Remaining One People Despite Our Differences

Continued from page 1

"Atta Hareisa."

Haim Cohn bellowed out his verse, loud and proud, and the Rebbe, the gabbaim, and the crowd of chassidim echoed him in full chorus.

The episode had not ended. When the gabbaim took out the Torah Scrolls, the first and the heaviest—the one known as "Moshiach's Sefer Torah"—was heading straight towards Haim Cohn.

Again the gabbaim hesitated. This was a very heavy scroll after all, and Haim Cohn was no young man. It would make more sense to hand him one of the smaller, lighter scrolls.

The Rebbe looked Cohn straight in the eye. He asked, "Are you ready to accept upon yourself the weight of the yoke of Torah?"

If you never experienced that look, it's difficult to relate. Two sharp blue eyes pierce through your flesh down to your bone and deep into your soul. There is nowhere to hide and nothing of you that remains hidden before those eyes.

Haim Cohn answered in the affirmative. The gabbaim relented.

When the singing and dancing began, Haim Cohn was still clutching his Torah, singing and dancing along with the consulate members and chassidim for a full three-quarters of an hour. Even as the Rebbe sang and clapped and encouraged the crowd with explosive joy, his eyes never left Haim Cohn.

That night, Cohn returned to his hotel. He returned to Israel, to his post, and to his opinions. Ten years later, he was still writing about "Who Is a Jew," without any deflection from his original stance.

Looking Deep

If you never met the Rebbe, if you didn't know his ways, you might misinterpret this story.

You might say, "The Rebbe was very smart. He knew how to deal with his detractors. He knew that rather than arguing with a Jew, better to befriend him. That way, you have a far better chance of enlisting them to your cause—or at least, mitigating their gunfire. Too bad it didn't work in this case."

But that is not the Rebbe. And the proof: In this case, the risk was too big to fake.

With utter confidence, the Rebbe declared that this Jew was here for one purpose: "to accept the yoke of Torah." And he even took the gamble of publicly asking a man who had fought against Torah for 30 years—with no sign of regret, "Are you ready to accept the yoke of Torah?" What if Cohn had said "no?"

And even if he didn't say no, what if he didn't mean what he said? The Rebbe was certainly a stickler when it came to halachah. How could he permit handing a Torah Scroll to a man known for his fight against things sacred to the Jewish people—and asking him to lead an entire congregation in prayer (as indeed the Rebbe's critics demanded to know upon hearing the story)?

But the Rebbe didn't see before him an opportunity to win at a game. Or to gain a new adherent. Or even to gain some ground.

The Rebbe saw before him a Jew. And he believed in that Jew.

He believed that, regardless of everything this Jew had said and done for the past thirty years, a Torah Scroll remained for him the most precious, sacred object in the world. And that his innermost, deepest desire was to carry and

embrace that Torah.

Did it help? Let's say it didn't. But, as the first rebbe of Chabad wrote in his classic work called the Tanya, when you see a Jew who is not doing the right thing, pull that Jew in with thick cords of love. Perhaps he will change his ways, perhaps not. Either way, you've fulfilled the mitzvah of loving another Jew.

But I believe it did help.

You see, years later, a certain Chabadnik befriended a certain Israeli who lived in Manhattan. Before Simchat Torah, he invited him to come to 770 and celebrate with the Rebbe.

But the man refused, adamantly. "I have a friend," he explained, "who went there one year. And it changed his mind about many things. I am not interested in changing my mind about anything. I'm not coming."

The friend, as you may have guessed, was Haim Cohn.

Outwardly, perhaps, at least in the immediate, nothing changed. But then, Maimonides writes in his Laws of Repentance that if a Jew has regret in the recesses of his heart, even if he remains recalcitrant, his repentance is accepted and his share in the World To Come reinstated.

And eventually, as Maimonides writes in a famous letter to the Jews of Yemen, this Jew will come to a complete repentance. As the verse goes, "Return, wayward children, and I will heal your returning."

Judaism as Belief in Jews
Some people today have lost faith in their fellow Jews. With the conflation of politics and religion and the intensely polarizing pull of social media, some have gone so far to declare that we have become, G-d forbid, two separate peoples.

Such a perception can only arise when our eyes do not see beneath the most external presentation of a Jew. When we judge people by their behavior, by their stated opinions, by their choices at the voting polls that go against our own.

But that is not Judaism. Judaism is not an ideology or even a set of practices that determine whether we keep you as a Jew or chuck you out as a stranger.

Rather, Judaism is a divine wisdom, known as Torah, that, when presented in all its authenticity, has the unique capacity to awaken the inner spark of a Jew, thereby connecting all of us together as one people with one Torah and one G-d.

Connect with that other Jew and you will see the good that's there. It's likely not so far from the surface. You may even find there's far more you agree upon than you disagree upon.

As with Haim Cohn and the Rebbe. Cohn was a champion of human rights, something I imagine the Rebbe admired in him. He was also known for visiting the prisoners he had sentenced to jail, to ensure they were being well-treated.

"If I had my way," he once said, "I'd scrap prisons." Interestingly enough, the Rebbe said pretty much the same to Justice J. B. Weinstein.

So when you see another Jew at your party, even if he's not the person you want to see there, even if you think he's a sinner, even if you believe he is actively destroying the most sacred, essential elements of our people, even if he voted for the party you most despise, look deeper. Believe in that Jew.

As much as you believe in G-d, believe in that Jew.

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OUR LINK TO THE FUTURE.

The recital of Kaddish is the bond which unites the generations from the immemorial unto eternity. It is the way we show our timeless devotion to our parents and loved ones. In the event you cannot personally observe this hallowed expression of love for the duration of eleven months, alternate arrangements can be made through the Chabad Lubavitch Organization. You may also consider placing bronze name plates of your departed ones on our Memorial Board which will insure The Observance of Yahrzeit in perpetuity.

For further information call 905.731.7000



SLICE of Life

After I Was Stabbed I am More Determined to be Proudly Jewish

By Shlomo Noginski for the Boston Globe

In 1990, my mother, a celebrated composer from St. Petersburg, won a competition to perform her music at the Kremlin. A few nights later, she got a phone call: "Jew, if you sing in our Kremlin, we'll murder you and your children." I was 10. A short while later, I was playing basketball with friends when a group of young-adult thugs came over and beat me bloody. "Tell your mother we say hi," they taunted me as they left.

That was the moment my family decided it was time to get out of the Soviet Union, a place where Jews were both openly persecuted by the government and where day-to-day antisemitism was condoned. We knew our future could be secure only in a place where the rights of the Jewish people were protected like anyone else's. A place where Jews would be respected for their faith and who they are, not attacked for it.

This search led our family to Israel, after illegally fleeing the Soviet Union by way of Helsinki. Two years ago, together with my family, I relocated to the United States. While this move was in order to accept a position as a rabbi and teacher at the Chabad-Lubavitch Shaloh House Jewish Day School in Brighton, Massachusetts, it was a continuation of our dream back in Russia: to live, teach, and share Judaism with my fellow Jews in safety and freedom.

I believed in America's promise — and that hasn't changed one iota.

On July 1, I stepped out of Shaloh House to take a phone call. It was loud inside the building, where some 100 Jewish children were enjoying another day of fun and learning at our Camp Gan Israel, an experience in Jewish pride. I sat down in front of the building where it was quieter.

As I spoke on the phone, a man I didn't recognize walked up to me and produced a gun. He demanded I take him to my



Rabbi Shlomo Noginski

car, parked nearby. I immediately offered him the keys to my minivan — not something worth dying for — but then he tried to force me inside. I had cash and credit cards in my pockets and a phone in my hand, but he didn't want them.

I realized this wasn't a simple carjacking. If he wanted my vehicle, why did he need me to come along? I knew that if I got in, I might never see my wife and 12 children again.

The next thought that crossed my mind was of all the young campers inside Shaloh House. When a person walked by, my assailant quickly hid his gun. I took advantage of his momentary distraction and made a mad dash across the street and away from my synagogue. If he'd catch up to me, I remember thinking; at least the children would be safe.

The stranger pulled out a knife and followed me, swinging and thrusting his knife at and into me again and again and again. I saw hatred in his eyes, and realized that this man would not be satisfied until his weapon found my heart. I started kicking him and tried deflecting his arm with mine. His blade struck me around my shoulder, arm, and ribs about eight times.

At the same time, I started making a commotion to call attention to the attack, and my assailant finally fled.

Since that day, I believe that the young man who tried killing me in broad daylight in front of the giant menorah outside a synagogue in Boston was motivated not by theft, but by hate. Hate for the Jews as individuals, hate for us as a people. He had loitered outside the synagogue the day before, acting so suspicious that a bystander took a photo of him. He has since been charged with hate crimes for his vicious attack that day.

He had planned for this. He had armed himself. But he missed something crucial about our matchup. He had a gun, a knife, and venom in his heart. I had my bare hands, a background in martial arts, and, most important, faith.

When I saw that gun pointed at me, something else flashed through my mind. It was the story of the Sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, who was arrested by the Communists in 1927 for the "crime" of sustaining Jewish life in the Soviet Union. During brutal interrogations, an

Sixth Rebbe to death before ultimately releasing him and allowing him to leave Russia. In 1940, he escaped war-torn Europe and arrived on American shores, where he set about re-establishing the center of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement amid this country's promise of freedom and foundation upon trust in God.

Building on this foundation, his successor as Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, launched a global campaign to engage Jews from all backgrounds wherever they may be. It was at Schneerson's direction that Shaloh House was established in 1962.

America is a haven for all, and it's up to each of us to keep it that way. We cannot allow attacks on our faith to cow us into hiding our Judaism. And we're not.

I am determined now, more than ever, to continue

living my life as a proud Jew and encouraging and teaching my fellow Jews to do the same. I have committed to opening a new Jewish educational center in Brighton, where I will be ordaining eight new rabbis.

In the days since I was stabbed, I have likewise been heartened by the countless messages I've received from people expressing their conviction that this attack will not dampen their Jewish pride, learning, or practice. This is the attitude we all need.

I am proud to live in this country, one in which trust in God is on the currency. It is trust in God that enabled me to survive this attack, and it is trust in God that empowers us to uphold America's promise of freedom and liberty for all.

Rabbi Shlomo Noginski is a Chabad-Lubavitch rabbi serving at Shaloh House in Brighton, Massachusetts.

The Easy Mitzvah

Continued from page 2

the same time, he recognizes that G-d is the master of the universe and is the one who created him, granted him life, and continues to sustain him in every moment of his existence. So he feels duty-bound to obey G-d's commandments.

b) *As the purpose of his existence.* This individual understands that "I was not created, but to serve my Creator." He recognizes this as his true "I" and as the ultimate fulfillment and realization of who and what he is.

If we assume the first approach, regarding the observance of a mitzvah as a duty, there will be both "difficult" and "easy" mitzvot. We might fulfill them all, perhaps even willingly and joyfully, but some will be more pleasant and inspiring, others more tedious and toilsome. The expenditure of time, effort or money that a mitzvah requires will also affect the degree of difficulty we experience in its fulfillment.

But when we see the fulfillment of the divine will as the very stuff of our life, the concept of a difficult

mitzvah is nonexistent. All mitzvot are "easy," for they do not constitute an imposition on our life—they are our life. Indeed, there will be no division between the mitzvah and "non-mitzvah" areas of our life. When we live to implement G-d's purpose in creation, our entire life—including those activities which are not explicit mitzvah acts—becomes a single, seamless quest to connect to our Creator and serve His will.

If all mitzvot could be observed in either of the above ways, there is one mitzvah whose terms of observance call for nothing less than the second approach. The mitzvah of sukkah does not tell us to do something; it tells us to be something—a sukkah-dweller. The way to observe this mitzvah is to make the sukkah our home—our environment, our roots, our very identity—for seven days of each year of our life.

And when we apply the model of the mitzvah of sukkah to our observance of all of G-d's commandments, they, too, assume the all-embracing quality of the sukkah. They, too, become as "easy" as life.



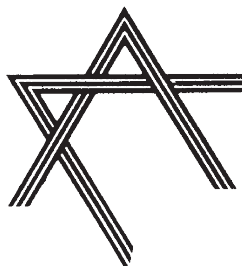
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