



The World of Lubavitch

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TISHREI 5783



Chabad Expands Westward to Etobicoke

“Although much needs to be done to develop the infrastructure of Jewish life in Etobicoke, we do have the Humber River for Tashlich,” so quipped Rabbi Daniel Blotner, the newly appointed Shliach to the municipality. Having assumed the post in close proximity to Rosh HaShana, when we observe the tradition of gathering in the outskirts of town, at a body of water, to pray for Divine grace and mercy, the newly appointed rabbi is already planning an event

which will unite some of the scattered Jewish people he has already met. Indeed, on numerous occasions the Rebbe noted, “Our objective in reaching out to all Jews, which includes remote communities, both in distance and in size.” Heeding the Rebbe’s call, Rabbi and Mrs. Blotner, made numerous visits to the leafy boulevards of Etobicoke. While pounding the pavement, they were pleasantly surprised to find many homes adorned with a Mezuzot. Stopping to talk, at

the door or in a coffee shop, they became convinced that there was much potential to bring organized Jewish life along the western edge of metropolitan Toronto. Etobicoke, is an old established municipality with mature trees that cantilever over the streetscape. Flanked on the west by the Humber River, it is abundantly enriched with native wildlife both on land and in the flowing river.

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A Cry is Heard in Ramah

by Rabbi Mendel Kaplan

In the emotionally charged story of Mother Rachel weeping for her children, which we read in the haftorah on the second day of Rosh Hashanah, there is a passage about G-d’s promise of redemption.

Unique among her compatriots, it is Mother Rachel who is hailed in Jewish liturgy and source texts as the Jewish people’s principal intercessor of redemptive comfort. In prayers, songs and biblical stories, she serves as the guarantor that the Jewish people will ultimately be redeemed from their suffering and diaspora.

Why is Rachel the only one of our patriarchs and matriarchs whose prayers on behalf of the Jewish people are heard? Because only she—who had allowed her husband to bring a rival, her own sister, into their home and marriage against the desires of her heart—could finally ameliorate G-d’s fury after his people brought an idol into the Holy Temple. Only Rachel’s petition could elicit Divine mercy towards the nation that had brazenly consorted with foreign deities.

Furthermore, Rachel, alone among the matriarchs and patriarchs, is buried on the road to Bethlehem, not with her husband and the others in the Cave of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs in Hebron. Our sages have long understood her tomb’s unusual placement as a strategic one, situated in anticipation of the terrible day when the Jewish people would be exiled from Israel under Babylonian rule. So it happened that as they passed by Rachel’s roadside tomb, they prayed that she plead to G-d on their behalf.

To me, this moving narrative underscores the significance of making our own personal petitions to the Divine in conjunction with prayer visits to the Ohel, the sacred resting site of our beloved Rebbe. I go often, and encourage others to do the same. This rousing Rosh Hashanah reading reminds us of the powerful spiritual bond we share with our righteous ancestors and teachers whose eternal spirits live on, and it reminds me of the profound connection with our saintly Rebbe that so many of us feel and know.

As we begin the Jewish New Year, I contemplate the bond we share with those who have come before us, those who lived lives of holiness. It is comforting to know we aren’t in this alone. Together, we can harness the blessings, the promise and the potential of a new year in which we hope to see the realization of our greatest dreams with the coming of Moshiach.



The Month of Tishrei

Rosh Hashana
The 48-Hour Brain

by Yanki Tauber

Today’s neurology has caught up with yesterday’s science fiction. Maps have been drawn up of the interior of our skull. Virtually every hillock and groove has been tagged: tweak this neuron-transmitter, and you’ll hear lyrics of a song you haven’t heard or remembered in 30 years; pinch that nerve ending, and you’ll zap your craving for potato chips and lose 15 pounds in a month. Well, not quite. But we’re getting there.

The year, a body of time with 365 organs and limbs, also has a brain -- the 48 hours of Rosh Hashanah. That’s what the Hebrew words Rosh Hashanah literally mean -- “head of the year.” On Rosh Hashanah, we crown G-d King. On Rosh Hashanah, G-d is aroused, once again, with the desire to create the world. Channels of vitality and awareness connect the 48 hours of Rosh Hashanah to each of the hundreds of days, thousands of hours and millions of seconds of the year, like those that join the brain to its body.

That’s why the two days of Rosh Hashanah are so special: the impact of our every action, word and thought increases thousand-fold. If we’re kind on Rosh Hashanah, we’ll be kinder people throughout the year. If we weigh our words carefully during these two days, our speech will be more refined throughout the year. If we focus on a certain weakness of ours and resolve to make a stronger effort, we’ll find our resolution translating into action far more effectively than resolutions made at other times.

If you can access the brain, you can do just about anything. You can waken memories, restore lapsed talents, alleviate fears, magnify joys, abolish prejudices, stimulate interest and charge up motivation. You can basically re-program your life, at least for a year.

Yom Kippur
Moment

When Elazar ben Durdaia (a notorious sinner) found that all his appeals for assistance had been turned down, he said: “It all depends entirely on myself.” He placed his head between his knees and wept until his soul departed from him. A voice



from heaven then announced: “Rabbi Elazar ben Durdaia is destined for life in the world to come!”

Hearing this, Rabbi [Judah HaNassi] wept: “There are those who acquire their world in many years, and there are those who acquire their world in a single moment.”

Talmud, Avodah Zarah 17a

In this world of ours, more is less and less is more.

Quantitatively, the earth is but a tiny speck in a vast

universe; in significance, it is the focus of G-d’s creation. Of the earth itself, inanimate matter constitutes virtually all of its mass, only a minute fraction of which are living cells. Plant life is more plentiful than animal life, and animals far more numerous than humans. Within the human being, the head, seat of man’s most sophisticated faculties, is smaller than the torso or limbs. In a word, the greater the quality, the lesser the quantity.

The same is true of man’s most precious resource: time.

Quality time--time that is most optimally and fulfillingly utilized--comprises but a quantitative fraction of the time we consume. How many minutes of each day do we spend on truly meaningful things? The bulk of our hours are taken up with earning a living, sleeping, eating, and fulfilling a host of social and other obligations--worthy pursuits them all, but secondary to the purpose of our lives.

The very structure of time, as designed by its Creator, follows the “less is

more” model. There are six mundane workdays, leading to a single day of spirit and tranquillity. Yom Kippur--the “Sabbath of Sabbaths” whose twenty-six hours bring us in touch with our deepest, most essential self--occupies less than 0.3 percent of the year. Everything we do takes time, but the greater the quality of our endeavor, the less the quantity of time it consumes.

The most potent of human deeds is teshuvah--our ability to rectify and sublimate past wrongdoing by returning to the timeless, inviolable core of self which was never tainted by sin in the first place. And teshuvah is the least “time-consuming” of events: the essence of teshuvah is a single wrench of self, a single flash of regret and resolve. “There are those who acquire their world in many years,” says the Talmud, building it brick by brick with the conventional tools of achievement. Then there are those who acquire their world in “a single moment”--in a single, timeless instant that molds the future and redefines the past.

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The Big Day Has Arrived!

We say “Next year in Jerusalem” every year at the end of Yom Kippur and the Seder. We pray that Moshiach should come and G-d will gather us all back to the Promised Land. So my question is, why would you spend so much time, energy and money on building a shul in the diaspora, if any day now Moshiach will come and we will all leave for Israel?

Answer

You remind me of the story of poor Yankel, the unluckiest man in the Shtetl.

Yankel could never succeed at anything. He had this special touch, any work he tried, he failed. Poor Yankel just couldn’t get anything right.

The townsfolk felt sorry for him, so they offered him a job he couldn’t possibly get wrong: he would be the Moshiach Watcher. His responsibility would be to sit on top of the town hall and look out for the arrival of the Messiah, with a bugle at the ready to alert the town as soon as Moshiach appears. He would be paid a generous daily wage for his services.

Yankel heard the job description, and politely declined the offer. “It’s a great job, but I’m worried. What if Moshiach does arrive? I’ll be out of work again...”

Let’s not worry about what might happen when Moshiach comes. That will be the end of all of our worries. And anyway, the new shul will come to great use, even once we all return to Israel.

The Talmudic sages taught that when Moshiach comes, all the shuls around the world will be transported to Israel, and become exten-

sions of the Temple in Jerusalem. This means that what we have built is not temporary, it is one stage of the ultimate and eternal building project of Jewish history, rebuilding Jerusalem.

Some understand this idea as a metaphor rather than a literal transportation of a building. The atmosphere of our local shuls, the air and the

holiness they generated, will come along to Israel with us and contribute to the holiness of the Temple.

But others take it quite literally. The Third Temple will be surrounded by all the shuls of the world. But the question is why? If we have the Temple, what will we need shuls

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ON OUR COVER

Joy - Chasidim Dancing

A painting expressing the energy and joy of a Chasidic dance.

Simchat Torah is the holiday when we celebrate the Torah with spirited dancing.

Make sure you and your family join the celebration.

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New Chabad Inspired Day School in York Region Opens

A new Jewish day school with a unique educational method is opening in the York Region of Ontario.

After closures of Jewish day schools in the York region in the past few years due to the Covid pandemic, Tamim Academy YR has responded and has begun for senior kindergarten and a combined Grade 1 and 2 class.

Tamim Academy is a collaboration of two accomplished directors of Pre-schools in York Region, Toby Bernstein of Gan Shalom - Chabad of Richmond Hill, and Goldie Plotkin, of Torah Tots - Chabad of Markham.



Goldie Plotkin

Not An Ordinary School

Tamim Academy has allied with the Tamim Academy Network of elementary day schools, in the USA, offering an innovative “Whole Child” approach to Jewish Education.

The York Region start-up was tapped to join the “Whole Child” network as it looks to expand upon its schools in New York, NY; Burlington, Vermont; Greenwich, Connecticut; Boca Raton, Florida; Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Whole Child Approach

Our “Whole-Child” approach assures that significant attention is given to the many disparate planes upon which a well-rounded education is



Toby Bernstein

dependent. The social, emotional, physical and the spiritual are interlinked. Toby Bernstein noted, “The philosophy of the school is to provide for the whole child, to help the child grow on every level:

spiritually, physically, emotionally and academically. But it all has to work in sync. The child has to feel emotionally healthy to open up to learn. A child must have any learning issues resolved so that they can grow.”

The “Whole Child” philosophy ventures beyond the traditional paradigm of separating our real lives from our Jewish live, or the physical/emotional from the academics. Interdisciplinary units are melded with the general and Judaic studies, connecting students to the real-world application of their “Whole Child” knowledge towards individually meaningful lives.

Goldie Plotkin elaborates, “Preparing students for life requires more than just transferring a baseline set of facts and information. Tamim Academy will ensure that each student has active goals that are related to their respective skills and dispositions. This will be the focus of our curriculum and how we assess each child.”

Immersive Hebrew Language

The early acquisition of Hebrew as a second language is essential for Jewish textual literacy and for Jewish identity. In addition to formal language instruction, we will incorporate Hebrew throughout the non-academic parts of the day for real-life applications and interactions.

As our principal Sarah Lowenthal breaks it down: “Tamim’s pedagogical structure will teach students to monitor their own goal setting, including conflict resolution. The students will

negotiate and work in groups and have various partner activities.

This will help to develop self-discipline and self-motivation through independent work.”

Tamim will nurture a community of kindness. We will have morning check-ins: asking, ‘how are you?’ and have a trusted social-emotional curriculum, which builds their social-emotional vocabularies.”

Future Forward

Tamim Academy helps prepare our students to gain admittance to the high school of their choice.

Chabad of Richmond Hill and Chabad of Markham care deeply about every Jewish child in the community. We are delighted to become a part of the Tamim Academy Network and look forward to opening the Tamim Academy of York Region

Join the school to give



Sarah Lowenthal

your children the deep knowledge, experience, and opportunity to express their whole selves, materially and spiritually.

For any questions and inquiries feel free to reach out to Toby Bernstein @ Toby@tamimyr.org and Goldie Plotkin @ Goldie@tamimyr.org

Chabad Expands Westward to Etobicoke

Continued from page 1

Duni as the red bearded Rabbi is affectionately called, grew up in Worcester, Massachusetts where his parents serve as Shluchim for almost 50 years. His wife Chaya, nee Gorman, is a native Torontonion. Coming from families dedicated to the Rebbe’s vision, they are cognizant of the challenge which lies ahead, yet they were equally imbued with the excitement

holiday programs,” said Rabbi Blotner.

No doubt, the continuing expansion of Chabad Lubavitch branches can be attributed to the living legacy of Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe of blessed memory. His inspiration continues to motivate young and energetic couples to join his forever growing brigade of Shluchim. During the course of some four



The Blotner Family

of creating an environment where Yiddishkeit will grow and flourish. Having been educated in Chabad schools and raised from infancy in an environment permeated with the spirit of outreach, they are grateful for the opportunity to further the Rebbe’s objectives. Duni and Chaya have both served as interns in many locations around the world. “Notwithstanding a relatively small Jewish presence, there is a silver lining where everyone welcomes the opportunity to express their Jewishness and participate in Torah classes and

decades the Rebbe extolled the importance and obligation of promulgating Torah values amongst all Jews wherever they may be. Furthermore, he noted, that engaging in the dissemination of Yiddishkeit will be a most rewarding experience for those that respond to his clarion call, notwithstanding the hardships that may be associated with reaching out to the unaffiliated. Indeed, today the universal network of Chabad Lubavitch centres around the world bears witness of the Rebbe’s far reaching vision.

SIMCHAT TORAH HAKAFOT



All are welcome to come & join the Celebration
SHMINI ATZERET

Sunday, September 16		Monday, September 17	
Candlelighting	6:14 p.m.	Shacharis	10:00 a.m.
Mincha	6:20 p.m.	Yizkor approx.	11:30 a.m.
Maariv	7:00 p.m.	Mincha	6:10 p.m.
Hakafot (followed by)	7:30 p.m.	Candlelighting after	7:14 p.m.
Kiddush			

SIMCHAT TORAH

Monday, September 17		Tuesday, September 18	
Maariv	7:00 p.m.	Shacharis	10:00 a.m.
Kiddush	7:30 p.m.	Hakafot	11:30 a.m.
Hakafot	8:00 p.m.	Torah Reading	12:15 p.m.
		Grand Kiddush	1:00 p.m.



Creative Camping at Lubavitch Day Camp

It's no secret that to have youngsters come back year after year the daily program at camp has to be creative and full of surprises. Indeed, this objective keeps Mrs. Ester

year was different and certainly more challenging. Although the onset of construction for the 13,000 sq. ft. auxiliary building was held off until after the camp season of 2021, it



Steinmetz, the long standing director of the Lubavitch Day Camp, living the camp experience all year long. But this

soon became evident that due to winter weather and supply chain delays, the new facility would hardly be enclosed by



Rabbi Aaron Grossbaum With Councillor Alan Shefman at the border of Lubavitch Day Camp and Construction



the summer. Furthermore, the most fitting spot for the new structure was on southeast corner of our 3 acre property, and necessitated dismantling the existing playground. And yet, the 44th season of LDC was turning out to be a banner year in which 755 youngsters were registered to attend.

Still, with much creativity and sparing no cost to ensure a safe and meaningful summer experience the Lubavitch Day Camp had a most successful experience. Building on the theme of travel, the construction site was enveloped and screened with large banners which read LDC Airlines. The oversized colourful banners deflected the ongoing construction. Online deal platforms were thoroughly searched in pursuit of makeshift playground equipment which we acquired and proved to be quite popular. But the biggest challenge was creating space for over 600 campers in attendance on any given day. Here again it was proven that where there is a will, there's a way. A large portion of the parking lot was fenced and covered with artificial turf. The dedicated space took on a park like identity and was furnished with numerous

canopies for each bunk. Naturally, at the center of all this was the famed LDC flagpole where the camp assembled on a daily basis.

Although the camp enrollment includes children from many countries, diverse backgrounds, and different schools, the common objective of providing children

oriented activities. The well planned program under the guidance of counselors and instructors provides a live and learn opportunity to heighten an awareness of fundamental mitzvot and appreciation for Shabbat.

Needless to say, while the administration was able to "take lemons and make lem-



Popular Chassidic Rap artist Nissim Black inspires the campers at Lubavitch Day Camp.

with a fun filled day and a meaningful experience, unites them all. They enjoy nutritious lunches, field trips, daily swimming, and theme

onade," we are looking forward to next summer when the new building will provide much needed indoor space for the Lubavitch Day Camp.

Gan Israel Finally Comes Back Home

Finally, after a two year hiatus we were heading back to our beloved oasis in picturesque Haliburton. But before we could open Camp Gan Israel, an exploratory visit was needed to assess the grounds and the structures. What a sigh of relief when camp director Yitzchak Grossbaum did his first walk around and reported back that all the facilities were in perfect shape. Indeed, after a two year absence we were eager to get back home and to "normal."

The intense Covid lockdown had us all sequestered indoors and at home thru the summer of 2020. Going for-

ward it became quite evident that for the wellbeing of our young clientele both physically and mentally, it would be of utmost importance to host a summer experience the following summer. But with rigid Covid regulation still in place a year later, we knew we had to become proactive and think "out of the box." After much soul searching and in consultation with community leaders it was decided to host the Sidney & Naomi Spiegel Camp Gan Israel south of the 49th parallel where the virus protocol was less restrictive. It would not be easy; all kitchen utensils and sports equip-

ment would need to be shipped. Try as we may we couldn't obtain conclusive information from Customs Canada about shipping used equipment south of the border even with a professional broker.



Gan Israel Finally Comes Back Home

To find a location, Goldy Grossbaum began an online search for a feasible facility. It soon became evident that a suitable site could not be found unless we were prepared to endure many inconveniences, incur additional expenses, find supply ven-

dors, and absorb a huge cost. Wasting no time the administration committed themselves to lease the Ramblewood Resort in Darlington, Maryland, notwithstanding subjecting the children to the legendary humidity of the region. So it was with much joy

and excitement to be back home in Haliburton for this summer. Still, most important was to witness the fulfilment of the sagacious Talmudic passage, “The reward commiserates to the hardship.” This was witnessed by the high enrollment, beautiful weather, and outstanding culinary meals and treats. It was our tenth season and served as a testament of sustainability. The high quality program consisted of Judaic learning competitions, competitive sports leagues, on-site special activities such as laser tag, Kangoo jumping shoes, entertainers and many more incredible activities. Whether it was the Shabbat atmosphere, a late night campfire, or the prevailing camaraderie, the endless excitement and positive reinforcement cemented lifelong friendships. This experience,

as usual, imbued our youth with a ‘high octane’ 24/7 energy boost that will stay with them for a lifetime. Still, one of the most outstanding features of the great outdoors is spending time at “the lake and in the lake.” For this we are most grateful

to Oren and Neely Antebi for turning our shore line along Basshaunt Lake into a water-park. They provided aquatic equipment that offered fun and fitness whether it be on the water kayaking, surfing, peddling, or in the water climbing, jumping, or diving.



Campers enjoy the water park at Camp Gan Israel



Wisdom to Heal the Earth

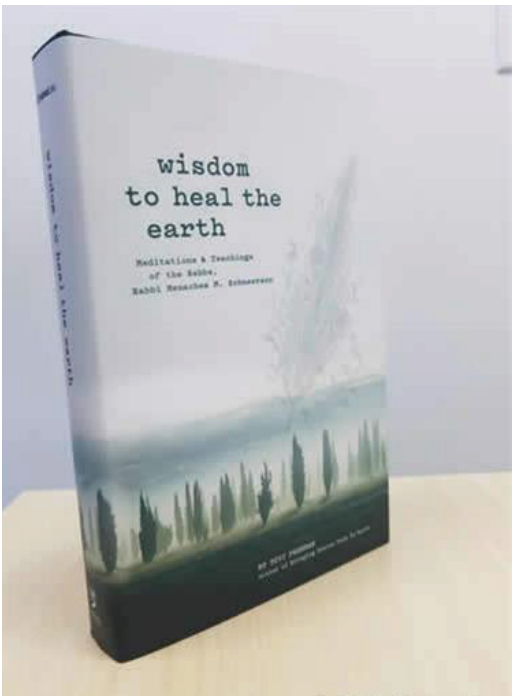
By Tzvi Freeman
Reviewed By Aharon Loschak
In recent years, a number of new books in multiple languages have brought the teachings of the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory—to an ever-expanding audience, making the Rebbe’s profound message for humanity more accessible than ever. When Tzvi Freeman, a senior editor at Chabad.org and acclaimed author, set out to write his fifth book on Rebbe’s teachings he never thought the finished product would ultimately win a gold medal. But win it did. Freeman’s latest book, *Wisdom to Heal the Earth*, produced by Chabad.org and published by Ezra Press, an imprint of Kehot Publication Society, was selected as the Gold winner from among three other finalists in the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) Benjamin Franklin Award™ Program as best book in the religion and spirituality category for 2020. Regarded as one of the highest national honors for independent publishers, the award was presented by Terry Nathan, COO of the IBPA, as he slid the winning ticket out of an envelope on YouTube at a unique live-streamed ceremony dubbed as the “Shelter-in-Place” award ceremony, due to

the coronavirus pandemic. Freeman’s book was recognized, in the judges’ words, as “elegant, insightful, pulsing with deeper meanings that transcend any single belief system and reminds us of the true power of faith.” The author notes that if there is a single, overarching theme that has been at the center of Jewish thought and practice throughout all time and across all borders and denominations, it is the desire and hope that the physical and spiritual universe should be brought to a state of complete and everlasting perfection, once and for all. This great, mystical drive and goal, known as *Tikun Olam*, he writes, has been manifest in Jewish thought and practice in myriad ways over the past four thousand years, not the least in modern Jewish life through social activism—the concern for and practical help to people and things in need—which from the time of Abraham and Sarah has been a signature drive of the Jewish people. A self-professed child of the ’60s who was drawn to the Rebbe’s message amid the destabilization of society and personal searching that marked that era, Freeman is noted for his unique talent in making the Rebbe’s messages that so inspired him accessible to every human being. Guided by the belief that with proper articula-

tion, the Rebbe’s messages are universal in scope, Freeman has successfully made the Rebbe’s teachings accessible to the widest possible audience. While he has already written a number of books on these topics, including the best-selling *Bringing Heaven Down to Earth* series, Freeman felt that his previous works were limited to the genre in which they became so popular: bite-size “meditations” for people to digest and ponder on their own. Eager to present larger messages so necessary to heal the world, Freeman penned this new volume, including within it some longer prose that fleshes out core ideas. The key thesis upon which the book rests, in Freeman’s words, is the notion that to heal the world, people must look beyond “Band-Aid” solutions and “live at a whole new level of health, beyond the state that allowed illness to begin with.” How do we do that? Well, Freeman argues, “The core issue is our attitude, our state of consciousness. We look at our world and we say, ‘This is a wild jungle with neither master nor meaning. How

can I get all I can out of it before some other beast does? How do I avoid being eaten by some beast bigger than me?’ As though all of life is a zero-sum game. “One of the Rebbe’s strongest points was that the world is not a meaningless jungle. It’s a masterfully exquisite garden. And we are both students and partners of its Creator. “So a healed world, first and foremost, is one whose every inhabitant sees this world for what it truly is: A divine garden. And so, of course, we treat it that way. And we live in harmony with that divine beauty.” How can one help but not be drawn by such compelling, universal ideas? Indeed, it is such ideas—

and others—that prompted one of the judges to say: “Most of the book is presented as short poetic bursts that allow the reader to contemplate what is being said without pushing a specific ‘right’ answer.” “*Wisdom to Heal the Earth*” can be purchased online and at fine Jewish bookstores everywhere.





Steeles

Memorial Dignity
Chapel Comfort
Compassion

350 Steeles Avenue West
Thornhill Ont. L4J 1A1 - (905) 881-6003
Established 1927
C.P. Saucier, Managing Funeral Director



CTeen Summer Inspires Jewish Pride for Public School Students

By Yoni Brown
A few years ago, while outside the White House in Washington, D.C. with his public school class, **Yakov Vinnik** was approached by a Chabad rabbi who asked if he'd like to put on tefillin. This July, Yakov was in Warsaw, Poland, on a very different kind of trip, when he surprised himself by offering the mitzvah to a Jew he'd just met.
Yakov is a sixteen-year-old competitive ballroom dancer from Atlanta, Georgia, where he's also an active member of Chabad's local CTeen youth chapter. This summer, he joined 250 other Jewish public school students for CTeen's Heritage Quest, a traveling summer camp, which includes an action-packed tour of Jewish sites in Poland and Israel.
On the first leg of the journey, Yakov was touring the old Warsaw Ghetto when he encountered a fellow Russian speaker who turned out to be a fellow Jew. Yakov asked the man if he wanted to perform the mitzvah of tefillin. "I'd never asked anyone that before," Yakov says. "I was emotional, thinking of all the Jews who lived here and were murdered here. I wanted to carry on their heritage."
While Yakov's outburst of Jewish pride surprised even him, it was befitting of the atmosphere on CTeen's eleven separate Heritage Quest trips this summer. One staff member, **Rabbi Levi Harlig**, says Yakov wasn't the only one to deepen his connection to Judaism. "It's

a three-week trip," he says, "and the whole time, you see teens completely revamping their relationship with their Jewish identity."
CTeen nearly tripled their numbers this year, compared to the four trips they operated last summer. This incredible growth comes thanks to generous grants from the Jewish Educational Project's RootOne initiative and support from the Meromim Foundation. But it's also thanks to last year's teens, many of whom urged friends to sign up. "Last year's teens came home with a new passion for Judaism," says **Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky**, Vice Chairman of Chabad's educational division, "and they passed that excitement on to their peers."
This summer, Heritage Quest gave the teens a roller-coaster ride of fun, exposed them to Jewish history and heritage, and encouraged them to embrace their Judaism. In the time since he wrapped tefillin with that Chabad rabbi in D.C., Yakov has begun wrapping tefillin regularly; but it was the atmosphere on Heritage Quest that inspired him to encourage others.
After the pair said the Shema prayer together, surrounded by what remains of the Warsaw Ghetto, Yakov pointed to a sign on a nearby excavator that read, "We Build, We Remember." "The Nazis tried to destroy us," he told his CTeen friends. "We're putting on tefillin, we're remembering our heritage, and we're building back."



C Teens at the Cave of the Patriarchs (Mearat Hamachpela) in Hebron

Netflix Founder Dances As He Celebrates Bar Mitzvah

It wasn't another day at the office.
American tech entrepreneur Marc Randolph was recording another episode for his business podcast "That Will Never Work" and ended up celebrating a personal milestone.
Randolph, a Silicon Valley investor who co-founded the Netflix video streaming service, welcomed to his show the Lubavitch brothers Yossi Chayo and Levi Chayo.
The two founded and

operate Bellissimo Custom Hats in Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood and are behind a line of fedoras made of rabbit fur felt. They spoke with Randolph about their founding and growth.
Following their interview, the Chayos inquired about Randolph's background. He was born as the eldest child to a Jewish family in Chappaqua, New York.
Asked about Tefillin, the 64-year-old Randolph said he has never

put them on. So the Chayo brothers offered him to put them on then and there. He agreed and thus celebrated his Bar Mitzvah.
With their help, he recited the blessings and the "Shema Yisroel." Following that, the three broke into a Chassidic dance to celebrate the special occasion.
"He was very emotional and grateful," they reported.
The episode with the brothers is expected to be released this month.



The Chayo brothers with Netflix founder Marc Randolph

Teffilin at the Pyramids

Chabad photographer Yisroel Teitelbaum helps fellow traveler and photographer Israel Ben-Asher with putting on Tefillin and davening in front of the iconic pyramids and sands near Cairo in Egypt this summer.





Israel's President Herzog Presents Chabad-Lubavitch with Katz Prize

By Mendel Super

Citing the life-saving activities of Chabad-Lubavitch in Ukraine as a prime example of an ongoing contribution of Jewish life around the world, Israel's President Isaac Herzog presented Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch—the educational arm of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement responsible for the 5,000 emissary couples worldwide—the 2022 Katz Prize. The coveted annual award is given to individuals and organizations that bring Judaism into contemporary life.

The Katz Prize, awarded by the Katz Foundation established in 1975 by philanthropists Marcos and Adina Katz, sponsors a yearly awards ceremony, held this year on July 28 at the Presi-

saries, saying that the emissaries fulfill the Talmudic dictum, "All of Israel are responsible for one another" in "a most outstanding way."

They also commended the work of Chabad in Asia and around the world for providing material and spiritual aid and support to young Israeli travelers.

Accepting the prize on behalf of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch—in place of his father, Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, vice chairman of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch—was Rabbi Mendy Kotlarsky, director of Merkos's Suite 302, which initiates and provides centralized services for Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries and organizations worldwide.



Rabbi Mendy Kotlarsky, left, presents Israel's President Isaac Herzog with an album on Chabad's activities. (Credit: Israel GPO)

dent's residence in Jerusalem.

Committee members Professor Menachem Ben-Sasson, chancellor of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Rabbi Shlomo Dichovsky, former justice on Israel's Supreme Rabbinical Court; and Rabbi Haim Sabato, rosh yeshiva and novelist, wrote of the immense contribution by Chabad-Lubavitch emis-

The \$25,000 prize will be contributed to a central emergency fund for emissaries in need.

"I was humbled to accept this award on behalf of the Chabad emissaries worldwide," Kotlarsky said. "The genuine appreciation expressed by the Katz family, the committee members and President Herzog was heartwarming."

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.

Ukrainian Refugee Camp for 700 Rising in Abandoned Hungarian Resort

By Menachem Posner

When war broke out in Ukraine, Kherson was one of the first cities to fall. Yasmin, a 22-year-old dentistry student, fled with her family to faraway Georgia. Cut off from her friends, her education, and everything else she had known, she says she questioned her purpose in life.

This summer, she has been singing, dancing, laughing, and just experiencing the joy of life as a Jew at a once-abandoned resort on Hungary's Lake Balaton which Chabad Lubavitch emissaries have converted into a sprawling refugee camp for Jews from Ukraine.

Alina Teplitskaya, who directs an organization aiding the Jews of Ukraine, is herself among the camp's residents. She speaks longingly of Ukraine, where she had a career and a community, and where her parents still live. Yet, like many of the 350 people living in the camp, she has no idea when she will be able to return to the life she once took for granted.

"It's very hard for people here," Teplitskaya, who lives in the camp with her two children, tells Chabad.org. "We are all waiting, waiting, waiting for the war in Ukraine to end so we can return home."

But until then, the camp is the closest thing to a home that many of them have.

The sprawling campus, which belongs to the Hungarian government, has 180,000 square meters (1,937,500 square feet) of indoor space, including a dining facility that can accommodate up to 1,000 guests, many detached bungalows and ample room for activities, prayer, and entertainment.

The lakeside resort in Bucolic Balatonöszöd, about 130 kilometers southwest of Budapest, had been abandoned for several years and needed significant restoration before it was able to become a functional home for hundreds of refugees.

Rabbi Slomó Köves of Chabad of Hungary and chief rabbi of EMIH (United Hungarian Faith Community), says that the funding for the camp comes from EMIH, the Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine—which camp resident Teplitskaya directs—the Hungarian Government, as well as generous donors from the United States.

Major Restoration Underway

He explains that many refugees had been crammed into small apartments in Vienna or elsewhere for the past several

months but needed to leave the city for the summer, when school is off and the children could not remain home all day with no structure and no outlet.

With onsite swimming and sports facilities and regular trips to local entertainment, the children go to sleep each night after a full day of activities and entertainment.

Torah classes, prayers and all other religious activities are overseen by Rabbi Dov Axelrod of Chabad of Cherkasy, Ukraine.

In the first weeks of the war, as refugees streamed over the

When it became apparent that the war would continue on through the summer, staff of both the boys and girls camps decided to open in two locations: A site in Kfar Hasidim, a village in northern Israel, would serve the children who are in Israel, while a European site would serve the children whose families had fled Westward, as well as those still in Ukraine.

This year, with so many former campers displaced, Hanoka also opened a division for university-aged girls, who—like Yasmin—craved the camp expe-



Focused play provides a healthy outlet for children who have endured significant trauma in the past few months

border, many ad-hoc refugee camps were set up in Moldova, Romania, and Poland. But those were always short-term solutions, and as the war grinds on with no end in sight, new programs to deal with the refugee problem are taking shape.

Teplitskaya says that the lake-side site, home to 350, is running at its current capacity, as ongoing renovation and the installation of mobile homes will soon allow them to house and feed 700 people at any given time.

Hosting Children from a Number of Camps in Ukraine

The resort also hosted a number of Jewish Ukrainian summer camps, which were obviously unable to open in their usual locations this year.

Camp Yeka was founded in 2001 by American Chabad rabbinic students. Located near Dnipro (whose Czarist-era name, Yekaterinoslav, gave the camp its moniker), it served Jewish children from across Ukraine, with a heavy concentration on those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Yeka Girls was founded in 2014 by Menucha Hanoka.

rience they took for granted during peacetime.

Yasmin had been a camper and then a staff member at the camp for many years, and says that her time in camp has given her "a reason to live again."

"The campers are having a blast here," says on-site manager of the university program Mendel Borodkin, who fled Dnipro along with his family and the students of the Bais Chana Seminary in the early weeks of the war. "Especially for the kids whose families had remained in Ukraine, this is such a breath of fresh air. They are singing, laughing, learning and having fun—just like they did before their childhood was stolen."

The site was also home to the Tzeirei Hashluchim Camp, formerly held in Ukraine, which serves the children of emissaries from all over Europe.

"No one can predict how long the war will continue," says Köves. "But as long as these people are not able to return to their homes—and many of their homes have sadly been destroyed by bombs—we intend to provide them with this home away from home."



For refugee families with small children, many of whom had been cooped up in cramped city apartments, spending a few weeks on the shore of Lake Balaton has been a game-changer.

Chabad shluchim are known for their pioneer spirit and legendary devotion to expanding Jewish interest, growth and observance. Rabbi Zalman Aaron Grossbaum arrived with his wife, Ester, in 1974. Is it possible enthusiasm still increases as so many years unfold? When I asked, “what’s up?” he replied, “overwhelmed!”

AS. With life?

RG..... with Chabad! Right now there are several extraordinary projects happening. This morning I gave a tour of our day camp to Melissa Lantsman the MP for Thornhill. We were led by Ester Steinmetz the camp director. Of course, I have passed by the goings on, on a daily basis, but this close up scrutiny was quite a different experience. To see how devoted and caring the counsellors are and how much energy they contribute, daily, to each happy task was quite the eye opener. Also, to hear the enthralled reaction of Ms Lantsman as she observed all the different activities and age groups. There are about 600 children and over 140 counsellors and staff every day at LDC. We also encourage children with special needs aided by their shadows to attend Lubavitch Day Camp. They interact daily with their bunkmates and participate in as many activities as possible. It’s a positive experience for everyone and one of the many exceptional aspects of the camp program.

AS. Tell us about the counsellors’ home visits

RG Home visits are another distinctive feature of the Lubavitch Day Camp’s expanding program. At the beginning counsellors would ask a camper if they’d like a “home visit”. After choosing an agreed upon evening, the counsellors arrive with a basket full of evening activities, treats to eat and interesting material about Jewish customs and lifestyles. The discussions, which include the entire family, are lively and feedback positive. Then families began to call the office inquiring how to arrange a home visit. They too want to see the camp mascot, a red PT Cruiser packed with counsellors pulling into the



In this issue we interview Rabbi Z. Aaron Grossbaum, Executive director of Chabad Lubavitch of Southern Ontario

By: Ahava Spilman

driveway. Some have asked if grandparents or cousins could join the festivities. Of course everyone is welcome. Think about the impact this visit could have. Think about the counselor’s dedication; after a full day’s work they are ready for another few hours of entertaining.

AS. I know the overnight camp is in Haliburton. It’s been a fabulous season weather wise. Tell us about Camp Gan Israel.

RG This is the tenth year for the overnight camp despite being closed for one year because of COVID. July is the time for the girls, and they were packed to the rafters and still there was a waiting list. Living and learning together, away from home and experiencing so much in such a short time, creates memories that last a lifetime. In August the boys take over. There are about 150 boys who play hard, learn Torah and discover getting along with each other is a desirable life lesson.

AS. In the last forty-five years, amazingly, numerous satellite branches and Chabad House student centres have been established across the GTA and beyond. What’s next?

RG. Let me describe how Chabad entertains growth. Traditionally, Jews gather and establish a presence and then search for a rabbi to lead them. There are many tales of small towns searching for a spiritual leader to help them through the travails of life. Chabad has chosen a different approach. We go to an area with (even) a small presence of Jews, start programming even when the clients are yet unaware that they want these programs. For example, Zevi Kaplan (my grandson) has recently been stationed in Innisfil, Ontario. The response to his outreach has been extraordinary and young couples and families who elected to live in this resort town, an hour north of Toronto, with little regard for a Jewish infrastructure, are most pleased to be blessed with a religious leader. Rabbi Zevi Kaplan truly exemplifies the well-known idiom “a light unto the nations.” Another trailblazer is Rabbi Daniel Blotner who is moving to Etobicoke. As he was conducting his primary research of the neighbourhood, he was

astonished to see how many “members of the tribe” are living in Etobicoke, despite the fact that there is no Jewish infrastructure in the area. Wherever he looked, he found homes with a Mezuzah. The timing is perfect. He will establish his base around Bloor and Royal York.

We know that the blessings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, inspires us to never stop growing and real-

izing that our avodah (service) as lamplighters is a privilege, we embrace it with enthusiasm. We are always looking to post Shluchim even in “remote” environs. Currently we are exploring the feasibility of bringing Chabad to Scarborough and Collingwood.

AS. You first occupied a building at Bathurst and Edinburgh, then portables graced the site in Thornhill until the initial Chabad Centre was inaugurated in

The Month of Tishrei

Continued from page 2

Sukkot The Big Sukkah

Jewish life is a calendar of objects: the shofar sounded on Rosh Hashanah, the sukkah constructed for Sukkot, the oil or candles lit on Chanukah evenings, the matzah eaten on Passover, and so on and on.

Objects need to be a certain size. A 3-inch chair is not a chair (you can’t sit on it), nor is a 30-foot chair. That’s why Halachah (the code of law that defines the Jewish way of life) is full of specifications -- the minimum quantity of matzah to be eaten on Passover, the maximum height of the Chanukah menorah. For a thing to be the thing it is, it cannot be too small, and it cannot be too big.

The sukkah is defined as a “temporary dwelling” which, for the duration of the seven-day festival of Sukkot, becomes the home of the Jew. The sukkah therefore has a minimum height -- under ten tefachim (about 40 inches) it’s not a “dwelling” but a crawl space. It cannot be too high either -- if its ceiling is more than 20 amot (about 30 feet) above its floor, the sukkah is too massive to be considered a temporary dwelling. Torah law also specifies the sukkah’s minimum length and width, its minimum number of walls, the maximum of space allowed for gaps in the walls, under the walls and above the walls. And on it goes -- certain portions of the Talmudic tractate of Sukkah and the corresponding chapters of the Code of Jewish Law read more like a builder’s manual than a religious text.

All these specifications have one exception: there is no limit to a sukkah’s length and breadth. You can build a sukkah the size of a city, or the size of a continent -- it’ll still

be a kosher sukkah.

This law flies in the face of everything we’ve said about objects and dwellings. But the Talmud derives it from a verse in the Torah, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe explains its centrality to the theme of the festival of Sukkot which the sukkah serves.

The verse (Leviticus 23:42) reads as follows: “In sukkot (huts) you shall dwell for seven days; all citizens of Israel shall dwell in sukkot.” In this verse, the Hebrew word sukkot, which is the plural of sukkah, is spelled without the letter vav, meaning that the word can also be read as sukkat, “the sukkah [of].” Thus the verse is also saying (under the Torah’s system of multi-meaning exegesis) that “all citizens of Israel shall dwell in the sukkah.” Explains the Talmud: the Torah wishes to imply that “it is fitting that the entire people of Israel dwell in a single sukkah.”

Each of the festivals is an “appointment in time” imparting its particular

1982. Since then, there’s been a few impressive renovations. Now there’s more construction at 770 Chabad Gate. Why?

RG. It’s needed. The added 13,000 sq.ft. of space will house a new women’s mikvah. In addition to 7 prep rooms we made special provisions to accommodate physically challenged patrons and includes, a self-operating electronic arm for immersion. Once this extraordinary footprint was authorized, we decided to maximize the footprint by adding two more floors. The added space will enable us to provide more and better facilities for the city-wide Lubavitch Day Camp and the Friendship Circle. There will also be space dedicated as a “sensory place,” designed for relaxation and calming therapy for our Friendship Circle members.

AS. Kol hakavod. We can see you truly are overwhelmed with Chabad. We wish you Hatzlacha in all your future endeavours.

spiritual quality to the Jewish life cycle: freedom on Passover, wisdom on Shavuot, and so on. The quality imparted by Sukkot is unity. Our interdependence and oneness as a people is expressed by the four kinds taken on Sukkot, and by the sukkah’s embrace of every Jew -- every type of Jew, and every individual Jew -- within its walls.

Thus it is indeed most “fitting that the entire people of Israel dwell in a single sukkah.” The big sukkah -- the sukkah large enough to house all Jews together -- cannot be a violation of the definition of “sukkah”, since it is actually its most fitting expression.

We, of course, construct sukkot of significantly smaller size. Finite beings that we are, we are limited in time, resources and capability. But whatever size sukkah we build, we must ensure that it should be a “big sukkah” in essence -- a welcome home to each and every one of our brethren.

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Dear Rebby

By Rabbi Aron Moss



What if You Made a Huge Mistake?

If Shavuot is the festival of giving the Torah, why do we dance with the Torah on Simchas Torah and not Shavuot?

(From Felix, age 11)

Answer

Great question Felix!

You are absolutely correct. G-d spoke the Ten Commandments to the entire Jewish nation on Mount Sinai. This happened on 6th Sivan in the Jewish calendar, which is the day we celebrate every year as the festival of Shavuot.

But do you remember what happened straight after that? Moses went up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments written on two stone tablets. While he was up there, some of the Jewish people started worshipping an idol, the Golden Calf. Seeing this, Moses smashed the tablets. He didn't exactly want to give those tablets to the people who already broke one of the biggest commandments, to not worship idols. It wasn't a great start to the Jewish people keeping the Torah.

They realised they made a big mistake and wanted to change their behaviour. So Moses went back up the mountain and begged G-d to forgive the Jewish people. G-d did forgive them, and then invited Moses to come back a third time to have the Ten Commandments written on a replacement set of tablets.

Finally, four months after he had first gone up the mountain, Moses came back down with the second set of tablets. By then it was the month of Tishrei. And so in that month, we have another festival celebrating the Torah, called Simchas Torah.

Now to your question. Why do we do the dancing and bigger celebration on Simchas Torah, when the second tablets were given, and not on Shavuot, when the first were given?

There is something more powerful about the second tablets than the first. They came after we made a huge mistake, and worked hard to fix it. It's a great achievement when after you fall down, you get back up, dust yourself off and keep on going. Every mistake is a chance to become smarter. Every slip up is a lesson to be learned. And when you don't give up, but face your wrongdoing and make amends, you are a better person than you were before your error.

We celebrate the first tablets on Shavuot, because that's

when G-d gave the Torah. But the celebration is bigger for the second tablets on Simchas Torah, because that's when we earned the Torah. We fell. We got up again. Let's dance!

Would You Date an Old Friend?

If I ever want to find a wife, I think I have to move to another city. I know all the Jewish girls here from school days, and none of them interest me. I don't go to synagogue to meet people, because I was never very into Judaism. But I do go to parties, and see the same old faces every time. What can I do if I already know everyone?

Answer

You remind me of the guy who was walking down the street and saw a familiar face. "You're Mark, aren't you? Remember me? We went to kindergarten together!"

"I don't know you," was the response.

"Listen, I haven't seen you in thirty years, but you look exactly the same. Are you sure you're not Mark?"

"My name isn't Mark."

He couldn't believe someone could look so much like Mark but not be Mark. Then it dawned on him. If that was Mark, he would have grown up too...

Our minds have this funny way of believing that people remain exactly as we remember them. But they don't. People change. The fact that you knew someone ten years ago has little relevance to today. You are not the same person today as you were when you were sixteen, and you wouldn't appreciate people seeing you now as you were then. You've grown up. Well, everyone else has grown up too.

And you can't always rely on your views from back then either. As you develop, you may find the friends of your youth have little in common with you, while you may have become more aligned with the very people you used to avoid. The things that excited you ten or twenty years ago are not the things that still excite you now. Otherwise we would all be firemen and ballerinas.

As we mature, so must our view of the world around us. We have to be ready to drop outdated opinions, and take a fresh look around us.

Another example of this is our view of Judaism. There are many adults who hold on to a negative view of Judaism developed in their youth. This may have been based on bad experiences - a boring He-

brew teacher, a hypocritical rabbi, or a mean religious relative. Or we may simply have not enjoyed studying Torah and going to shul; it just didn't grab us, or it felt like a burden forced upon us by our parents. So at some point we opted out of Jewish life. That may have seemed like the right reaction at the time. But that doesn't mean it is still right.

As a mature person, we can re-engage with Judaism with fresh eyes. We can come to realise that bad experiences of the past can be left in the past, and individuals don't necessarily represent the whole. What seemed irrelevant and uninteresting then may be inspiring and uplifting now. The view of Judaism we developed at age twelve is probably due for a review. As a mature person, we may realise there really is something there for us.

So when you see an old face, don't forget that they grew up too. Meet them as the person they are now, not the way you remember them. And approach Judaism in the same way. You can revisit it, like an old acquaintance that you never really appreciated. Who knows, you might just fall in love.

A Sign the End is Near

I have a question for you it's a little trivial but here goes anyway....

A non-Jewish colleague refuses to say 'Bless-you' after I sneeze. He says it's because I am Jewish. Where did the 'bless you' ritual originate from and is it purely a Christian thing? What is the Jewish equivalent?

Answer

Your friend may have a point. The bless you response to a sneeze was enacted by one of the popes during the bubonic plague. So it definitely has non-Jewish whiff about it.

But long before that, Jews blessed each other upon sneezing. The Talmud records that in the earlier generations, people didn't get sick before they died. They simply sneezed and their souls left their bodies. So it was customary to wish a sneezer "To Life!" for fear that their sneeze was a herald of death.

Things changed in the times of our forefather Jacob. He prayed that one should rather get sick some time before dying, in order to have a little warning and time to prepare for leaving this world. His request was granted, and so sneezing alone was no longer a sure sign of impending

death. But it still could be a symptom of illness, so the custom arose to wish a sneezer good health - Assuta in Aramaic, Tzu gezunt in Yiddish, or Labriyut in Hebrew.

Fascinatingly, one source says that after being blessed with health, the sneezer himself should respond to the one who blessed him "Bless you!" (Baruch tihyeh in Hebrew). Another interesting note: the sages taught that one does not respond to a sneeze while in the middle of studying Torah. Torah study is too holy to be interrupted, and anyway its power will protect the sneezer from harm. Also, a sneeze during prayer is a good sign, that your prayer will bring relief just like your sneeze did.

Indeed these days most people survive a sneeze without any major consequences. But that doesn't mean we should no longer wish each other good health. Words have power. The more we bless each other the better. A sneeze is as good an excuse as any to bless someone.

G-d bless you,

Bris or Surgical Circumcision?

Our baby boy was born yesterday and we are deliberating whether to do a traditional Bris with a mohel, or have it done by a surgeon in hospital. Now the question I have is, would you accept me and my son into your community if he is not snipped by a mohel?

Answer

Mazel tov on becoming a father! I hope your wife is doing well and wish you both only happiness and much nachas!

Let me say outright, you and your son will always be welcome, no matter what you choose. I don't put any barriers up for someone to be a part of our community.

As a parent, you need to make many decisions that will impact your child's future. This is one of them. Here are the things you need to know before deciding what to do:

- A surgical circumcision is not a Bris. Apart from the missing blessings and prayers, the actual cut may be different. Which means one day when your son realizes that he didn't have a Bris, he may require a rather unpleasant procedure to get it fixed. At the very least he will need some blood to be drawn and a blessing said. No big deal when you are a baby, but not quite as easy when you're older.

- A Mohel is not an amateur. Quite the opposite. The average surgeon might do a few of these every now and then. An experienced mohel

does them almost daily, and has performed hundreds, or possibly thousands, over the years.

- Many Mohels are also medically qualified. Some are themselves surgeons, who will perform a Bris in their rooms if you prefer.

- The risks involved with either procedure are minimal, but surgical circumcision could arguably be riskier than a traditional Bris, as more complications can arise from giving a baby an anaesthetic than from just a clean cut alone.

- The Bris is a tradition that stretches back almost four thousand years. It connects us and our child with all past generations of Jews, who gave their children a Bris under all circumstances. Your son will enter the covenant that started with the first Jew, Abraham, and continues to this very day. The spiritual power of a Bris cannot be matched by a surgery that is essentially cosmetic.

Think it through carefully. You don't want your son turning to you years from now and asking, "Why didn't you give me a Bris with a Mohel? Now I have to go and get it done properly!" On the other hand, if you do it the right way now, he will never turn to you and say, "Why didn't you circumcise me in hospital? Now I have to go and get a local anaesthetic to make up for it!"

Give your son a Bris, and you give him four thousand years of Jewish identity that will stay with him forever. Don't leave it for him to fix later. This is one of those things you only want to do once.

Should I Care What People Think?

In my Torah studies I've learnt about the law called Maris Ayin: not only should you do the right thing, but you should also be seen to be doing the right thing. The example that I was given was that an observant Jew shouldn't enter a non-kosher restaurant to use the facilities, lest someone think that he/she might be eating there.

At first glance this seems absurd. Why should anyone be so suspicious? What is it their business anyway? Should we be more concerned with the "appearance" of doing right (or wrong) or the actual practice??

Answer

Certainly you are correct, we should be more concerned about what we do than how

Dear Rebbby



we look. But this does not mean that we can completely ignore the way things appear to others.

We cannot be invisible. Nobody lives in a vacuum, unless you are a vacuum cleaner bag. Our actions impact others, whether we like it or not. Every individual contributes to the social fabric, to the moral atmosphere, and to the collective energy that makes up a community. We are not only responsible for our actions, but also for the impression they make, because we are responsible for the morality of others, not just our own. Any behaviour that may counteract the furtherance of goodness is a moral problem.

It isn't about my reputation as much as about my influence. When I do something that looks wrong, even if I have a perfectly good explanation as to my innocence, the damage is done.

If I enter a non-kosher restaurant to use the facilities, while I have not broken any law of keeping kosher, I have crossed a certain divide between kosher and not kosher, which could invite others to break that barrier. If I take shelter from torrential rain under the awning of a house of ill-repute, just my presence gives credibility to that place that it does not deserve.

But there's a deeper reason not to do something that just looks wrong, even if it isn't wrong, and even if no one is looking. Not only can such activity affect others, it can affect me too.

Stage actors know that when you play a character, you in some ways become that character. The self we project to others can sometimes be absorbed in our own identity. And so by looking like you are doing something wrong, you may come to actually do it. By feeling comfortable in a place that you don't really belong, you may end up think-

ing you do belong there. You can't remain immune from your surroundings.

This law teaches some powerful lessons. You affect your surroundings and your surroundings affect you. We build a community together, and so we are all responsible for it. Your morality is my business.

Who Created Atheists?

As a rationalist and an atheist, I'm sick of hearing believers argue that there must be a G-d because otherwise "who made the Big Bang?" I readily concede that science does not yet have explanations for the origins of matter before the Big Bang. But I also have no doubt that, in time, science will work that out too. Is it not a weak argument to say that we must believe in G-d simply because we currently don't have answers?

Answer

These debates between believers and atheists are often quite unnecessary. There is so much common ground between the two factions, their positions are almost identical. The area of disagreement is quite minimal.

Whether you are an atheist or a believer, you agree that creation is a mystery. There is a certain point in any discussion about the origin of the universe when all sides must admit, we have no rational explanation. Our intellect is currently incapable of fathoming how existence began.

Whatever ingredients went into creating the universe must themselves have come from somewhere. But how did that start? We have no clue.

So what do we do when our minds have reached their limit? Both believers and atheists do exactly the same thing. We humbly submit to an infinite, all-knowing being.

For believers, that all-knowing being is G-d. A believer says that G-d created the original matter from nothing. There was absolute nothingness, and then there was something. Only an infinite being can do that. Creating something from nothing is a feat completely beyond any human. (Although you should see what my wife can do with leftovers.)

Just like the believer marvels at G-d's infinite power to create the universe, the atheist, too, looks up to a higher source to explain the mystery of creation. When faced with the unanswerable question of where it all began, the atheist expresses their unbreakable

faith, not in G-d, but in science.

As you said, no one currently knows how matter first came into being. But you have no doubt that science will work it out one day. That is faith in an infinite power. I believe G-d has all the answers. You believe science does. You are as religious as I am.

But there are some differences between my faith and yours. My G-d expects us to live by a higher moral code. And gives our life purpose and meaning. And gives us festivals, when we get to eat interesting foods.

Scientific discoveries have given humanity many blessings. But science can't answer all our questions. It can't give us morality and meaning. And it doesn't give us any festivals to eat interesting foods.

Like all creations, including you and me, even science has its limits. We must thank science for all it has given us. And thank G-d for giving us the brain to discover it.

When Families Split Apart

Every family is a mixed bag. It's not always easy to get on with everyone, and inevitably people say things and do things that annoy or upset each other. Sometimes it leads to serious rifts and arguments. Many people I know don't talk to certain family members because of 'this' or 'that'.

In Jewish life, what is it that keeps families together? How do Jews stay connected despite the conflicts that typically happen in family life? Is there a secret sauce that makes Jewish families special? Or am I blind, and they are not?

Answer

Jewish families are not immune to conflict. Sadly, there are plenty of split families in our community. We even have our own word for family feuds - broiges.

But I do believe that the very concept of family is still strong in our community, far more so than in the general community. Which is why the Jewish family is a formidable force.

A quick look at the basics of Jewish life will show how central the family is to being Jewish.

The Jewish calendar is full of family events. We have our weekly Shabbos get-togethers, regular Yomtov gatherings, Seder dinners and Rosh Hashana lunches. The Jewish year is experienced around the family table.

Jewish ideals and values all point towards the family.

We encourage marriage, not just for old-fashioned romantics, but as the ideal relationship for all to strive towards. Having children is more than a biological urge, it is a mitzvah, a moral obligation. Honouring parents is one of our highest ideals, and respect for the elderly is ingrained into our collective psyche.

Our Holy Book, the Torah, tells the story of the beginnings of Judaism as a family tale. The Book of Genesis is a narrative of the dramas faced by couples, parents and siblings. The founder of Judaism, Abraham, is called "our father", and Sarah, the first Jewish woman, "our mother." The Jewish people are not an order or a sect, we are a family.

This emphasis on family is unique to Judaism. Some other religions idealise celibacy, which is not exactly great for families. Others make heroes out of warriors or lonely saints. Our heroes are mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters.

The Jewish view also contrasts greatly with the modern secular outlook, which is certainly not encouraging of family. The icons of pop culture are rarely in stable and loyal relationships, nor are they portrayed as attentive and devoted parents. That stuff is simply not cool.

Beliefs have consequences. When your value system views family as central to building a good society, then families will be strong. If family is not seen as important, it won't be.

And when you lose family, you lose a lot. Family is where we learn identity, where our life gains a context and a history, where we learn how to get on with people, where we are given responsibility to past generations and future. It is through the family that we become a mensch.

Jewish families, like others, can be overbearing, annoying and stifling. And yes, some families are dysfunctional, and you may need to seek family support from others. But it is a tragedy when a good family is split by broiges.

It can happen to anyone. But it helps to remember just how precious family is. Living Jewishly makes that hard to forget.

How Do I Get My Kids to Listen?

My two-and-a-half year old son is really playing up. For example, yesterday he climbed on a chair to get himself up on the kitchen counter and started eating

the raw chocolate cake mix straight out of the bowl. I caught him and pulled him down, telling him sternly that he's not allowed to do that. He knew he was doing something wrong. But as soon as I turned my back, he did it again. This time he picked up a sharp knife and tried to cut a carrot on his own. So I took him down again and gave another stern rebuke. This stuff happens about ten times a day. Is this normal? Do I need to be doing discipline differently?

Answer

Here is a formula that I have observed to be very often true:

Wild Child + Attentive Parents + 20 Years = Good Adult

We all know people who as kids misbehaved terribly, but turned out to be wonderful adults. It could be that they ended up that way not in spite of their childhood cheekiness, but because of it.

You see, rambunctious kids get reminded of what they should and should not be doing more often than quieter children. It may not have immediate results, but the oft-repeated messages eventually sink in.

As parents we sometimes forget what the goal is. It isn't about having well behaved children (though that would be lovely), it's about rearing well behaved adults. Childhood is the time to test boundaries and discover the do's and don'ts of life. Every naughty little episode is one such test, giving the parents another opportunity to define those boundaries.

You are lucky. You get ten teaching moments every day. Your repeated chiding of your child, when done calmly and firmly, will help reinforce his sense of right and wrong. Even if he continues to break those boundaries, he knows where they are. That will help him later in life.

Your toddler is doing what toddlers are supposed to do - climb on the counter. You are doing what a parent is supposed to do - gently remind him, again and again, that he shouldn't do that. And you'll see, it will work. When was the last time you saw an adult climb on the counter? In the meantime, keep on doing what you are doing, you are a great father. And put the knives away.

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The Science of Marriage

by Family Therapist Abe Kass, MA, RSW, RMFT.

Marital researchers can predict with an 80-85% accuracy which couples will have serious relationship problems based on self-reporting information about themselves and their partner. These experts identify five personal and relationship dynamics that measure the likelihood of relationship success or failure. They are:

1. Realistic expectations
2. Communication
3. Conflict resolution
4. Personality
5. Religious orientation

Couples that fight or drift apart score low on these scales. Happily married couples score high.

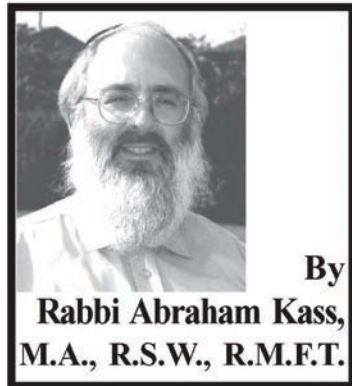
REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

When “expectations” are unrealistic (either too high or too low)—frustration and disappointment is imminent. When expectations are balanced and realistic, it is relatively easy to feel content.

It is essential to marital contentment that expectations are aligned with to one’s partner’s aptitude. “He may never be the best communicator, but it is ok.” “She may never be well organized and tidy, but I can live with it.” Adjusting one’s “expectations” to the reality of one’s partner contributes directly to relationship harmony.

As well, all successful couples and families must adapt to changing circumstances. Be they changes that are

predictable—like the birth of children or advancing age—or changes that are unanticipated—such as unemployment or serious illness. All these “challenges” require an adjustment of one’s expectations.



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

COMMUNICATION

Satisfying conversations between a husband and wife builds closeness and trust. Research has shown that there needs to be at least 5 positive interactions to each negative one for there to be feelings of closeness. Even one criticism, or angry outburst, can undo the value of many positive interactions. (The mind remembers negative interactions longer than positive ones!) Understanding this highlights the importance of continually engaging in positive and pleasant communication, while trying to minimize negative interactions. The challenge is to produce the greatest number of positive verbal interactions with the fewest negative interactions.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The goal in marriage is to live together in peace and harmony. However, for

many couples, marriage will at times include occasional disagreements or conflicts. When this happens it is essential to keep the conflict small and contained.

Successful conflict resolution requires three primary criteria. 1) Stay respectful: No name calling, expressions of strong anger, bullying, or attempts to humiliate. 2) Stick to one topic: Stay focused exclusively on the issue at hand. Resist dragging into the conversation other areas of disagreement or disappointment. 3) Keep it small: The disagreement should only last a few minutes and then be quickly set aside and efforts should be made to restore positive feelings and constructive interactions.

PERSONALITY

It is important that you are comfortable with your partner’s personality. He or she doesn’t have to be exactly as you—in fact if this were so, it would probably work against you. Remember, during courtship there was attraction. You chose to marry each other! Even after many years of marriage, that attraction it is still there—at least in potential.

True—years of misunderstanding and conflict can create deep resentment. This accumulated negative emotion can actually change your perception of your partner, leaving you unable to accurately see who he or she really is. For this reason, as much as possible, conflict should be avoided, or at least you should try to look past it when it does occur and seek out the parts of your partner’s personality that you like.

RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION

Dissimilar spiritual and cultural differences can stress relationships. Religious orientation includes a set of rules that guides the couple in setting goals, making decisions, and raising children. When religious orientation and culture are similar, this becomes a set of shared values that contribute to a healthy and cohesive family.

YOUR TAKE-AWAY

Even though formal training in these personal and relationship dynamics are not readily available, you and your partner can work toward achieving a high score. The more you achieve, the closer and more comfortable you will feel with each other and the greater the likelihood your relationship will last the distance.

Take a few moments and review these five scales. Together with your partner, generate a list of suggestions that when implemented will give you the loving relationship you seek. Unlike what many believe, relationship harmony is not “chemistry,”—rather its hard work leading to concrete relationship skills . . . so roll up your sleeves and get started!

In Perke Avos (A Jewish ethical classic) the question is asked: “Which is the right path a person should choose?” Answer: “That which is honorable and brings honor from others . . .” Thus, the “honorable path” is a path that is good for both individuals.

A high score in these five scales are all honorable meeting places where partners can create

relationship happiness.

Research shows that couples that score high in these five areas, although not necessarily perfect in every way, share happy and meaningful lives.

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Rabbi Abraham Kass, MA, RSW, RMFT, is a registered Marriage and Family Therapist, and Social Worker. Currently Rabbi Kass operates a successful private practice in personal, couple and family therapy.

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

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

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

The Big Day Has Arrived!

Continued from page 2

for?

The Chassidic master Rabbi Moshe of Kozh-nitz explained: Every shul is like a miniature Temple. When we attend services now, we are preparing ourselves for the bigger and holier version we will experience in the real Temple in the future.

But not everyone goes to shul. For many and varied reasons, there are Jews who never step into a shul. They are wonderful people and do many good deeds, but haven’t connected to shul yet.

When Moshiach comes, truth and goodness will prevail. All resistance will fall away, and all reasons not to go to shul, valid and otherwise, will disappear. Even those Jews who refused to go to shul will want to come to the Temple.

But the light of the Temple will be too intense for someone who didn’t do the basic training by coming to shul, the miniature Temple. So before they can experience the holy light of the Temple, they will need to

enter the shul they didn’t go to. The shuls will serve as antechambers to the Temple, where you can acclimatise your soul to the even greater light that shines from the Temple.

So let’s not wait. Let’s right now make our shuls a taste of next year in Jerusalem, where everyone feels at home, where each person can grow, and every soul can connect on their level.

And let’s pray that Moshiach should come already. We will still have a shul, Yankel will be out of a job, and there’ll be nothing to worry about.

KADDISH

OUR TIE TO THE PAST.
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.

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Rifka's Hot & Cold Journey to Judaism

After her stormy teenage years, Rifka Chilungu gave up on atheism, got hooked on Judaism, and missed her college graduation to attend a Brooklyn seminary

By Yoni Brown

By the time twenty-year-old **Emily Couch** walked across the plaza to the ancient

"I never entirely shook off my belief in G-d, but I envied the people who could be sure that there wasn't one," she says.

In particular, Emily mocked anyone who displayed any religious feelings. "I pushed everyone out of my life and decided that if I felt rejected, there was no reason for it — everything is

niably supernatural," she says. "I didn't decide then that I had to become a Jew. It was just that I knew I had to be a part of this people."

After a brief stint in art school, Emily began attending Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. There, for the first time, she met rabbis and visited several temples and synagogues. When Ms. Couch learned of an Orthodox Rabbi who gave informal classes on campus, she showed up. After class one day, she walked up and told him she wanted to convert. At first, he rebuffed her a few times, but when he realized she was in earnest, he arranged for her to study with a rabbi from the Beis Din of Cleveland.

Emily made a few Jewish friends, and they surprised her by inviting her on a trip to Israel. "But I'm not Jewish," she resisted. Still, they insisted, and off she went. By now, Ms. Couch couldn't help but wonder if she'd lost her mind. The conversion process was dragging on, but this feeling that she had to become Jewish was propelling her. It was on that trip that she begged G-d at the Western Wall to either take that feeling away or allow her to become a Jew.

Eleven months later, with her hair still wet from the mikvah, a very Jewish Emily — now **Rifka** — stood outside on

ees. At 1:00 am, she caught a Greyhound bus to New York for an experience unlike any other. "It was tremendously fun," she says, "I made friends with amazing people from all around the world." But from the start, it was clear Crown Heights operated "from a different owner's manual," and it often seemed it was all held together by an unreasonable amount of cheerfulness.

Rifka explains she had never come to Judaism looking for feelings of closeness to G-d. "I didn't have any time for spiritual growth," she says, "to me that seemed silly." And she still had a hair-trigger response whenever people displayed emotion towards G-d or Judaism. "For me, Judaism was about duty, 'I'm a Jew, so this is what I'm going to do,' it didn't bother me that I didn't feel anything emotionally, and I was still a cold person." Still, she loved the people in Machon Chana and enjoyed the learning.

As the seminary year wound down, she was sitting in the basement with friends, drinking coffee and chatting, when the payphone rang. "Does anyone want to teach?" the caller wanted to know. When nobody else volunteered, Rifka thought, "that could be an adventure." As it turned out, she had an absolute blast. On her first day at Beis Rivka

got engaged, her students at Beis Rivka surprised Rifka by fundraising for her wedding expenses and outfitting the young couple's new apartment. "I don't know where my class of 2004 is now, but they will forever have a place in my heart," Rifka Chilungu says.

The Chilungus lived in Brooklyn, then in Cleveland. They welcomed four children into their family before settling in Rochester, New York, where Shalom Chilungu is an assistant professor of neurology and a neurohospitalist at the University of Rochester Medical Center.

Raising a Jewish family, Rifka felt the cold intellectualism that had always defined her relationship with Judaism begin to thaw. "I saw my kids growing up, and I want them to love G-d," she says, "I can't possibly transmit that to them unless I can feel a warm connection to Judaism myself." She realized it wasn't only for her children, asking herself, "Don't you think there's also more in it for you?"

"It's hard because you never want to be a fool," Rifka says. "It sounds petty, but it can be scary to let yourself feel that connection because, 'what if I'm wrong?'" So on the advice of her old mentors from Machon Chana, she began to study Chabad Chassidism, always a passion of her husband's. Rifka listened to audio classes online, and to help her focus, she sketched in a notebook. Soon she was creating full-blown art, and now she teaches art in a local school and occasionally to friends.

"That's been the project for the past few years," she says, "allowing my guard down enough that I can feel emotion towards G-d, instead of viewing him as some distant being." As Rifka has grown more comfortable with an emotional Judaism, she looks back on her seminary year differently. "There was a wonderful rabbi who taught a Chassidus class every morning," she says, "I never attended, but now I wish I could apologize."

For Rifka, part of this project means sharing her story. When a mentor advised her to help others, she was unsure how to proceed. Soon after, she was asked to speak publicly about her story and thought, "maybe this will help someone." Nervously, she agreed. Today, she talks and writes about her experiences for Jewish audiences.



Left: Rifka Chilungu. Right: Shalom & Rifka Chilungu at their wedding.

stones of the Western Wall, she was exasperated. Despite having no Jewish family and only a few Jewish friends, she somehow found herself desperate to become a Jew. Yet feelings of self-doubt had been growing stronger. Was she trying to fill a void and going about it all wrong? "I wasn't sure if I'd lost my mind," she says.

As she touched the stones of the sacred wall, Ms. Couch prayed, "G-d, if I don't belong here, please take this feeling away; because if you don't, I will go through with this, and that scares me." She flew back to Cleveland and carried on with her college education, but the feeling wasn't going anywhere. College was just background noise. After years spent with no clear direction in life, Emily was laser-focused on converting to Judaism. "I was on a runaway horse," she says, "it was all so irrational."

Growing up in a tiny town in rural Ohio, Emily's parents left her with mixed messages about religion. Each Sunday her father drove the family to the same Catholic church he'd attended all his life, and during the week, Emily attended Catholic school. But her mother remained a Methodist at heart, and her father often ridiculed religiosity.

As she watched her classmates confirm into the Catholic faith in sixth grade, Emily knew she didn't belong. "I told my parents it was not for me," she recalls. Emily transferred to public school, where her isolation and loneliness only grew.

"It seems absurd," Emily says, "but I looked around and felt I didn't belong." Feeling rejected and out of place, she saw the world as an awful place, and became angry at G-d. In high school, the young Ms. Couch committed herself to atheism.

chaos; just look at the world!" Hoping to drown out any residual faith inside, she saw a kind of freedom in atheism. "It meant I'd be free from those nagging questions," she says. When a classmate told her, "you're the most miserable person I've ever met," it sounded like a badge of honor.

But anger takes energy, and she could feel a black hole growing inside. "Anger is fire, but I was the fuel." By the time she narrowly graduated high school, Emily was out of fuel and burnt out. She asked herself, "Do you even know who you are angry at?" And then it dawned on her. "I had no idea who G-d even was!"

"I began searching, but I wasn't looking for a spiritual high. I had locked spirituality out of my life." She spoke to Satanists, neo-Pagans, and Christians of all stripes. She explored Eastern religions, and met people on unique journeys. She wanted to know why people believed what they did and why. "Most people were very open, and it was always an entertaining conversation," she laughs.

But after all her exploration, Emily says, nothing called her name. "Every religion said something I agreed with," she says, "but I wanted to devote my life to something worthwhile, and just agreeing with a religion wasn't going to make me marry myself to it."

Unable to find the spark she sought, Emily began aimlessly flipping through her history-major father's countless books. Soon, she noticed a theme. "I realized, 'Oh my gosh, what is happening with these Jews.'" Seeing they had never been a large group, she marveled that they had survived history despite many attempts to extinguish them. "I had to admit that I finally found something unde-



Rifka with two of her children

a sunny November day. "There I stood, a complete failure as an atheist."

The following Shabbat, Rifka walked to an Orthodox synagogue near her apartment on campus. "I met nice people, but it was hard because I always felt a little out of place," she remembers.

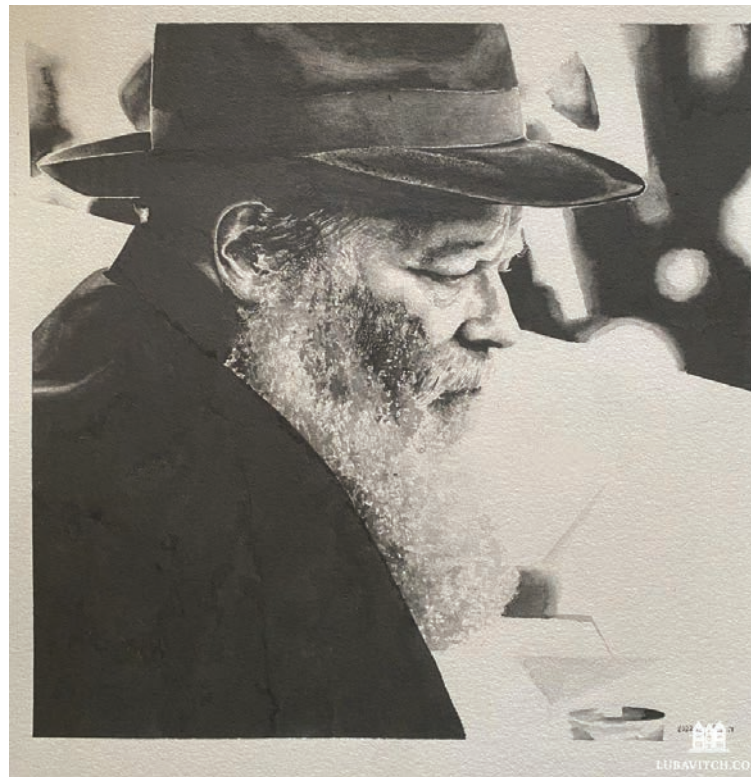
Rifka tried another synagogue each week, but when she trekked across town to a small Chabad synagogue in a storefront, she found the front door locked. Russian letters adorned the back door, but she walked inside. "It was loud," she says, "I could hear Hebrew songs and people yelling in Russian, and I thought, 'this is it!'" It was tiny. She sat down, and a woman turned around to introduce herself. "Hi, I'm Lois. Do you have a place for lunch?"

Rifka happily accepted, and from that week on, she walked forty-five minutes to the small shul, where Lois became her Jewish family. "I am blessed that the right people were there for me when I needed them," Rifka says.

Rifka was about to graduate college with honors when she called home with news, "I'm not graduating. I'm moving to Brooklyn." She wanted formal Jewish learning and signed up for a year at Chabad's Machon Chana, a seminary in Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood geared for Jewish return-

High School, the sound almost knocked her over when she opened the door. "Girls laughing, yelling, and singing, it was the most amazing thing I've ever seen," she laughs, "it was pure life all bottled up about to explode."

While teaching that second year in Brooklyn, Rifka met a soft-spoken professor's son turned yeshiva student named **Shalom Chilungu**. When they



Rifka's drawing of the Lubavitcher Rebbe