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Making the Exodus Personal

By Baila Olidort

As the UN and the EU continue to stoke the fires of anti-Semitism with their sanctimonious condemnations of Israel, here in the U.S., a spate of new books and articles examine the disconnect of young American Jews from their roots and its implications for the relationship of diaspora Jewry to Israel and to the Jewish people.

Some, like those who support BDS and encourage censure of Israel, claim that Israel's policies are to blame for the alienation of young American Jews from Israel and the Jewish people. But there is little to support this argument. Too many American Jews feel no particular bond with Israel and see themselves indistinct from the wider society not because of anything Israel does or doesn't do, but because—as the, now famous, Pew study shows—they simply were not educated or raised as Jews.

This is a slowly simmering tragedy of our own making. Ironically, some of the same leaders who blame Israel's politics for today's disenfranchised Jews are the ones who have remade Judaism in their own image. As they did with the term "Tikkun Olam"—now a catchphrase for all things universal, hijacked from its original context in the daily Aleinu prayer which speaks of our mission as Jews to repair the world "under the sovereignty of G-d," so they have done with our tradition, eviscerating it of the premise of Yirat Shamayim—"awe of Heaven" and the defining details of halakha that distinguish us as Jews.

Yet another new book by a noted Israeli thinker is guiding young Jews to "put G-d second." This, he advises, will free us of the "distraction" of G-d and make us accountable to "the highest independent moral standards." Who, we must ask, is the "independent" who commands these high standards? Is it not the same G-d who instructs us to eat matzah on Passover, who also commands us to ethical behavior? At a time when the mere mention of G-d is taboo, should we not better reinforce the Torah's teachings of ethical values as G-d's mitzvot?

We know that the idea that we can sustain Jewish identity or impart it to our children even as we deprive them of an authentic Jewish education is a fallacy. And the results of this failed experiment are coming back to haunt us as young Jews grow up indifferent to the fate of Israel and the Jewish community, to speak nothing of their own legacy. They are not even aware of their own handicap, which makes this calamity worse still.

"In every generation, one must see oneself as having left Egypt. . . ." How do we, the Jewish people, imagine our redemption today? The lessons of our ancestral exodus from slavery, from the constraints of Mitzrayim, remind us that it is for this reason we were redeemed by G-d: to become a nation of Jews, a family held together by mutual commitment to the Torah and its mitzvot—a very specific, very particular set of teachings by which we become a unique community.

There have always been Jews who, through no fault of their own, lacked the knowledge and the confidence to assert a distinct Jewish identity. We need to make sure they know that they are welcome, wanted and needed; that without them, we are lacking. And we owe them access to and the benefit of a real Jewish education, not a revised version of "universals."

Simply put, there is no substitute for a rich, Torah education. Learning to bond with other Jews in the spirit of Ahavat Hashem and Yirat Shamayim, experiencing joy in the customs, rituals, and celebrations particular to our people, provide an anchor in family and community, and foster responsibility and pride in belonging. This is how we grow to be practicing and proud Jews, dedicated to ethical piety as much as to ritual piety, invested in Israel and the future of our people.

Things are Looking Up

Construction of our auxiliary building, going up at the south east portion of our three acre site at Chabad Gate is progressing at a good pace. In fact, all those attending one of our five morning minyan would readily debunk the age old cliché, "a watched pot never boils." Day by day, they witness noticeable progress.

"Notwithstanding a rough winter, we succeeded, with G-d's help, to get out of the ground and get the steel skeleton erected. Soon after Pesach we hope to have the roof insulated and covered,

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North Elevation Rabbi Aaron Grossbaum & Murray Goldman inspect the progress of the building

Seder Insights

By Rabbi Yanki Tauber

The Third Seder

Time is a tyrant. It plants a “One Way Only” sign on the road of life, another dictating “No Stopping, No Standing”, and mercilessly enforces both rules without equivocation. It wrenches us away from our past and holds off our future behind a wall of ignorance, making compost of our most treasured moments and a mockery of our predictions.

We might overthrow political dictators, cure diseases, overcome poverty; but if we want to be free, we must conquer time. For of what use would it all be, if we remain imprisoned within a sliver of present, sliced so thin that anything we have and everything we are already was or hasn’t yet been?

That is why Passover, the festival of freedom, is predicated upon the power of remembering. Memory is our answer to the tyranny of time. Reclining at the seder, eating the matzah and the marror and drinking the four cups of wine, we ingest history into our very flesh and blood, tasting -- and becoming -- the bitterness of our slavery, the triumph of our Exodus, the faith that carried us from Egypt, and the commitment we entered into at Sinai. Time’s bounds fall away that night; the past becomes current, history becomes now.

But if only the roadblock to the past were lifted, ours would be only a partial victory. If time surrendered only one of its frontiers on Passover but maintained its blockade of the future, we’d be only a half-free people, masters of our past but prisoners of the unknowable to-come.

That is why Passover has two parts. The “first days” with its seders and its reliving of history, and the “final days” with its messianic themes -- days that herald the divine goodness and perfection which, the prophets promise us, is the end-goal of creation and the fulfillment of our present-day lives.

There is even a Chassidic custom, instituted by the Baal Shem Tov and further developed by the Rebbes of Chabad, to conduct a “mirror-seder” in the closing hours of the last day of Passover, complete with matzah and four cups of wine. These are hours, say the Chassidic masters, when time relinquishes its last hold upon our lives; when the future, too, can be remembered, and the Era of Moshiach tasted and digested as the Exodus is on the seder night.

The Fifth Question

Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh... “Why is this night different from all other nights?” our children ask us at the Passover Seder. Because, we answer, we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and G-d set us free.

Free? Are you free?

Can a person with a mortgage be free? Can a person with a mother-in-law be free? Can a



person with a job be free? Can a person without a job be free?

Freedom! Is there anything more desired yet more elusive? Is there a need more basic to our souls, yet so beyond our reach? How, indeed, do we achieve freedom from the demands, cares and burdens of daily living?

But look at your child. Observe her at play, immersed in a book, asleep and smiling at her dreams. Assured that father and mother will feed him, protect him and worry about all that needs worrying about, the child is free. Free to revel in her inner self, free to grow and develop, open to the joys and possibilities of life.

This is why Passover, the festival of freedom, is so much the festival of the child. For it is the child who evokes in us

the realization that we, too, are children of G-d, and are thus inherently and eternally free. It is the child who opens our eyes to the ultimate significance of Passover: that in taking us out of Egypt to make us His chosen people, G-d has liberated us of all enslavement and subjugation for all time.

The child is the most important participant at the Passover Seder. The entire Seder is constructed around the goal to mystify the child, to stimulate his curiosity, to compel him to ask: Why is this night different from all other nights?

The child asks, and we answer. But there is another dialogue taking place -- a dialogue in which we ask, and the child explains.

Take a good look at your child this Passover. Pay her close attention -- enter her mind, view reality from her perspective. For how else might we taste freedom?

Telling Stories

Haggadah means “the telling” and that’s what we do at the seder table--we tell a story. The oldest, most popular kind of story there is -- the Happy Ending kind. That’s how the Talmud instructs us to conduct the seder: “Begin with the bad stuff, and end with the good.”

As is usual in the Talmud, the Sages, while agreeing in principle, debate the details. Shmuel says that the bad beginning is, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt”, and the good ending is, “G-d took us out from there with

a mighty hand and outstretched arm.” Rav says our story includes the larger picture, starting with how “In the beginning, our ancestors worshipped idols” and culminating in our election as G-d’s chosen people at Mount Sinai.

(So which story do we tell at the seder? Both of them, of course, which is one of the reasons why it takes so long to get to the chicken soup.)

All living creatures communicate with each other in some way. But only humans tell stories.

Only men and women contemplate a chaos of facts, events and experiences spanning days, years, even centuries, isolate a number of them in their minds, draw lines of causality and significance between them, and thus create a story--a piece of life that means something and leads somewhere.

This is why, explain the Chassidic masters, the Talmud considers the “toil of speech” a most basic component of man’s special role as a “partner with G-d in creation.” G-d created an awesome, intricate, yet in many ways a still-undefined world; our storytelling completes the work of Creation, imparting to it coherence and significance.

Once upon a time, many years ago when we were little, we knew the importance of the story. We appreciated how cen-

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Is the Coming of Moshiach an Event or a Process?

By Yanki Tauber

[The following is Part VIII of The Skeptic and the Believer series.]

Skeptic: So when is this finally going to happen? At what point will the world suddenly be transformed into a Garden of Eden?

Believer: You know, one of the misconceptions that many people have about the coming of Moshiach is that they view it as a radical, earth-shaking event. The sky opens up, and this Divine being, whom no one has ever seen before, descends and instantaneously transforms the world.

I think that this is a Christianization of the idea of Moshiach. Obviously, a world-view that

sees the human being and the material world as intrinsically evil can envision the redemption only as a supernatural event, brought about by a supernatural redeemer.

The Jewish concept of the redemption is that it is a process rather than an event. A process in which the underlying unity and perfection of creation unfolds as the true essence of every created being is realized.

The world, as G-d created it, is perfect. Despite the fragmentation and conflict we encounter, its diverse elements are united by an intrinsic harmony and unanimity of purpose. The era of Moshiach is a time when this underlying harmony will be readily perceivable.

Skeptic: And now we’re at the end of this process? Does the world look any less fragmented and conflict-ridden to you?

Believer: Absolutely. Think of all the areas in which layers of diversity are peeling away to reveal increasingly more unified realities at their core. Take, for example, physical science. When man first began to study the workings of his world, he identified many laws and principles which explained why things are the way they are. But the more he examined and tested these laws, the more they showed themselves to be but expressions of a more underlying set of laws -- a simpler, more concise and less numerous set

of laws; in turn, these laws, too, were narrowed down to more inclusive fundamentals. Today, the stated aim of modern physics is to uncover the Grand Unified Theory that would encapsulate all of natural phenomenon in a single formula.

The same is true in practically every other field. The economies of the world are grouping into common markets which are themselves becoming more and

more integrated; the direction is toward a single global economy. Jet-age travel and the communications technologies are dismantling the barriers erected by culture and geography; we can already envision a time when all peoples of the world will comprise a single social unit.

The final frontier of divineness is that of the human character: here we are still in the

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ON OUR COVER



Hillel Sandwich
by Shoshannah Brombacher

One of the observances at the Passover Seder is the Sandwich instituted by the Talmudic sage Hillel, during the period of the second Temple in Jerusalem.

The Torah mentions (among others) three Mitzvot to be done during the night of Passover: To eat the Passover lamb offering, to eat the Matza and to eat the Marror -- bitter herbs.

Hillel taught that one should eat them all together as a sandwich.

Since today we don’t have a Temple in which to bring the Passover lamb offering, we do the sandwich of the Matza and Marror alone.

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Things are Looking Up

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which will enable us to begin all interior work with no interference from weather conditions,” said Rabbi Zalman Grossbaum, who has been spearheading the project since its inception.

The preliminary process which includes urban planning, design, and permits, has become more cumbersome, time consuming, and demanding. These hurdles 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 includes every detail from parking, entry, and access to every part of the facility. Naturally, the implementation of these features is of utmost importance and provides the infrastructure to create an inclusive setting where all feel welcome and accommodated.

The 13,000 sq. ft. building will add much needed indoor space. The ground floor will feature a new, state of the art, woman’s Mikvah with 7 luxurious prep rooms. Designed by interior decorators, and adorned with fashionable fixtures, the ambiance will elicit a relaxed and reflective feeling of spiritual rejuvenation. Special provisions are being made to accommodate mobility challenged patrons as well. In addition to a large barrier free prep room, the immersion room will include an electronic self-operating arm lift. Much effort and costs are being invested to create an atmosphere that will also appeal to the (as yet) less committed. The building has been strategically positioned to provide segregated parking and entry from Lonny Court. In gratitude for a magnanimous gift

from the Ganz family, the Mikvah will be recognized and bear the name; The Gitta Ganz Mikvah. The beloved family matriarch, who passed away two years ago, was together with her husband Sam lifelong admirers of Chabad Lubavitch and generous supporters.

Access to the two upper levels will be from the north side of the building which is directly across from the entrance of the flagship building. The 8 large multi-purpose rooms are to be facilitated by two stairwells and an elevator. These 9,000 sq. ft. of space are a life line to Mrs. Estee Steinmetz, director of the Lubavitch Day Camp who has been scrambling every summer to find sufficient indoor space for some 600 campers. So too, the Friendship Circle, under the administration of Rabbi Yitzchak Grossbaum is looking forward to implement new initiatives. The added space will allow us to design and dedicate a large therapy room with sensory components. This therapeutic area will feature an assortment of equipment that provides youngsters with special needs personalized sensory input and help them stay calm and focused.

The building project is estimated to cost approximately 8 million dollars. This undertaking would not have been possible without a most generous gift from Mr. Murray Goldman who has followed and offered unstinting support to Chabad Lubavitch for over four decades. We are delighted to be dedicating the youth centre in his honour. Still, there remains a considerable shortfall needed to complete the project and a capital campaign is in full swing to bridge the gap.

Innisfil Now Home to Chabad Shluchim

What was once no more than a quaint and quite resort town, has now become a viable alternative for young families to settle and raise a family. Although, the rural municipality of Innisfil is 50 miles north of Toronto, the high cost of home ownership within the GTA has prompted many people to think “out of the box.” Indeed, home buyers can get a large home on a bigger parcel of land for a notable difference in price. The northbound leap, can also be attributed to Covid, when many firms and individuals have successfully made the adjustment to work remotely.

With the town opening large swaths of land for development, numerous developers have seized the opportunity to build homes and shopping plazas. So too, a Go Transit train station is on track to be built on the 6th line in the very near future. “On my first fact finding trip up north I saw new homes sprouting up on newly serviced blocks of land, and I knew that the town is ripe and ready for a Chabad presence,” said Rabbi Zalman Grossbaum. While the town is still in its infancy, city planners are forecasting and projecting the population to reach 100,000 in the next ten years.

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 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.

The young couple awarded the opportunity to engage as Shluchim to Innisfil are Rabbi Zevi and Mussi Kaplan. Zevi is the son of Rabbi Mendel and Faygie Kaplan, who serve as Shluchim of Chabad @ Flamingo for over twenty years. His wife Mussi is the daughter of Rabbi Yehuda and Leah Teichtel, the lead Shluchim to Berlin, Germany. Having been educated in Chabad schools and raised from infancy in an environment permeated with the spirit of outreach, they are cognizant of the challenge which lies ahead, yet they are equally imbued with the excitement of creating an environment where Yiddishkeit will grow and flourish. “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 holiday programs,” Rabbi Kaplan observed, as he reflects on the warm welcome he and Mussi are enjoying.



Rabbi Zevi & Mussi Kaplan & their daughter Chana

Naturally, arriving in town on the eve of Chanuka, presented an ideal opportunity to meet with the Mayor and arrange for a Public Menorah lighting ceremony,

limited to 25 families due to covid protocol. So too, the Kaplan’s hosted a number of Purim events where the Megilla was read.

City of Vaughan to Mark Education Day

The City of Vaughan has proclaimed April 12, 2022 as “Education and Sharing Day in Vaughan” in recognition of the crucial importance of ethical and moral education. The day will be a time to focus on education after a year in which the pandemic took a tremendous toll on education, with in-person schooling widely curtailed for months. Against this background, the Education Day proclamation seeks to highlight the emphasis that must be placed on education for each of Vaughan’s young people.

Education and Sharing Day will bring to the forefront the importance of morality in education, a cause championed by the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. For more than 40 years, presidents, houses of congress and local governments have recognized the date corresponding to the Rebbe’s birthday on the Jewish calendar as Education and Sharing Day, honoring an individual who brought education to the forefront of public discourse. This is the second time the City of Vaughan has recognized this day; the 11th on Nissan as Edu-

cation day.

The Rebbe emphasized the importance of schools paying more attention to the building of character and emphasizing moral and ethical values, accentuating the values of personal rights and responsibilities and principled, just behavior. “Education must be more than factual enlightenment—it must enrich the character as well as the mind,” said President Ronald Reagan in his 1982 proclamation for the day, echoing the Rebbe’s sentiments.

In commemoration of the anniversary, City of Vaughan, Hon. Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua has proclaimed April 12, 2022, as “Education Day” in the city of Vaughan, and called all the residents observe this day.

Rabbi Shalom Bakshi of the Chabad Jewish Centre of Woodbridge-Kleinburg who is standing behind this intuitive, reports that, with much effort and inspired by the City of Vaughan, more than 7 cities and regions in Ontario, in addition to other provinces around Canada – are currently working on adopting this tradition to their respective locations.



South Elevation L to R Mindy Ganz , Howard Ganz, Rabbi Aaron and Esti Grossbaum



Last year’s proclamation

Purim With Chabad in the GTA

Purim is a busy day at Chabad. Hundreds of Megillah readings for shut-ins and in public gatherings. Thousands of Mishloach Manot packages distributed. And dozens of themed Purim Festive Meals, celebrated in the many Chabad centres around the GTA. This year The World of Lubavitch brings you a sampling of Purim Scenes at Chabad in the GTA.



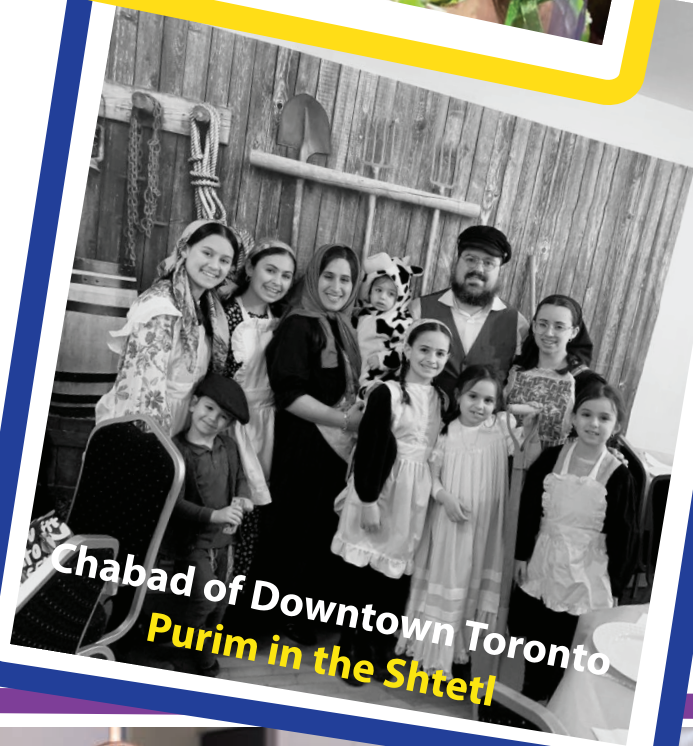
Chabad Israeli Centre
Purim Festive Meal



Chabad of Aurora
Purim in the Shtetl



Chabad Newmarket



Chabad of Downtown Toronto
Purim in the Shtetl



Chabad Flamingo
Purim in the Metaverse



Chabad @ York University
Purim in NY

Purim With Chabad in the GTA



Chabad of Guelph
Purim in Canada



Chabad Lubavitch Thornhill



Chabad Danforth Beaches
Purim in Person



Chabad of Woodbridge
Purim In Israel



Chabad of Richmond Hill
Purim in England



Chabad of Markham
Purim in the Wild West



Chabad on the East Side
Purim at the Circus



Chabad of Durham Region
Purim in the Shtetl



Chabad Rabbi Murdered in Terrorist Attack in Beersheva

Rabbi Moshe Krivitski, a Chabad-Lubavitch emissary in the Nachal Beka neighborhood of Beersheva who ran a local soup kitchen for more than 10 years, was among the four victims of a terrorist attack in Israel on Tuesday March 22. He leaves behind his wife, Miriam, and four children.

In his youth, Krivitski was educated in the Nachlat Har Chabad suburb of Kiryat Malachi. As a young rabbi, he devoted himself to caring for and learning with the renowned Chassid, Rabbi Zalman Leib Estulin, who stood on the front lines of preserving Torah study and practice

Zalman Gorelik, director of Chabad of Beersheva. “He was beloved by G d and by man, and was completely devoted to the community.”

Duchman called Krivitski “one of the kindest and most compassionate souls,” and prayed that his charitable work with Israel’s most vulnerable would bring a measure of comfort to his family and his community.

According to eyewitnesses, the lone assailant intentionally rammed into Krivitski, who was riding his bicycle, as the terrorist drove away from a gas station near a large shopping center, where he had stabbed three people.



Rabbi Moshe Krivitski, pictured here with his wife, Miriam, and two of their four children at the Colel Chabad soup kitchen he ran in Beersheva, was among the four victims of a stabbing and car-ramming attack in Israel on March 22.

in the former Soviet Union, and was known as a model of Torah scholarship, piety and humility there, and later in Bnei Brak, Israel.

In recent years, Krivitski served as the director of Colel Chabad—Israel’s oldest continuously operating charity—in Beersheva and oversaw the day-to-day management of their soup kitchen, in addition to the decade he served as a Chabad emissary and rabbi in the Nachal Beka neighborhood in the city.

“He was the gentlest of souls whose entire life was about giving to others,” said Rabbi Sholom Duchman, director of Colel Chabad. “Each and every day, he would manage Colel Chabad’s local food-distribution service for the needy in Beersheva, distributing thousands of meals over the years, going above and beyond to serve the hardest-hit in his community during Covid.”

“He was a modest, unassuming person,” said Rabbi

He then jumped from his vehicle and ran to two other areas, where he continued to slash at passersby. He was shot and killed by a bus driver and another Israeli civilian at the scene. Also among the victims was Doris Yahbas, a resident of Moshav Gilat and a mother of three; Laura Yitzhak, 43, also mother of three; and Menahem Yehezkel, a 67-year-old resident of Beersheva.

The attacker was a resident of the Bedouin town of Houra. He was released from an Israeli prison in 2019 and was known to have been a sympathizer of the Islamic State, and had unsuccessfully tried to join them in Syria.

The rampage was the deadliest attack on Israeli civilians since June 2016, when two terrorists opened fire at Tel Aviv’s Sarona Market, killing four and wounding 16.

The Jewish Community worldwide mourn the 11 deaths of Israeli Citizens killed recently.

Jewish Pride: Thousands of Teens Converge on Times Square

The annual CTeen weekend convention culminated in a Manhattan Street Concert

By Mendel Super

NEW YORK—On double-decker buses and packed subway cars, 2,500 exuberant Jewish teens from 650 chapters of the Chabad-Lubavitch teen network CTeen, converged on Manhattan’s Times Square for a concert and musical havdalah ceremony marking the end of Shabbat, Feb 26 2022. Saturday night’s mass display of Jewish pride was the culmination of the annual CTeen weekend retreat when thousands of teens—from 26 countries and 400 cities—soak up Jewish inspiration, learning and camaraderie with friends new and old.

In a cacophony of languages, the teens wound their way down the city streets, singing refrains of Jewish pride and connection, as they made their way to the fenced-off area of Times Square. The night’s theme, “Whenever, wherever,” kicked off with a diverse group of teens each sharing their story of ‘doing Jewish’ in whatever environments they find themselves, whether for Eli Rosin from San Antonio, Texas, on the tennis court with his kippah or Jac Copeland from Skokie, Ill., an aspiring chef adapting his fare to only cook kosher, whenever, wherever.

As the teens continued to throng into the square, they were whipped up into a dazzling blur of color as they danced—boys on one side, girls on another—shoulder to shoulder with Chassidic music star Beri Weber’s energy, blending the multitude of national flags—Israel, the Union Jack, Argentina, Ukraine, Brazil—into one cohesive mass of international Jewish pride. Outside the square, onlookers stood and watched, some even dancing along, while inside, the fervor only grew.

Addressing the 14th annual CTeen convention, Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, vice chairman of Merkos L’inyonei Chinuch—Chabad’s education arm—spoke about the guiding principles of the Chassidic philosophy and the call of the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory—to print its foundational text everywhere there are Jews. Kotlarsky then ceremonially concluded the printing of a Tanya right there in Times Square.

The impact the CTeen con-

vention has on teens lasts far longer than a weekend. For some, it begins even before they set foot in New York. A Houston teen gave up his position on the lacrosse team after his coach told him he’d either have to skip

It’s something you never see, especially coming from a small community like I do. It really brought the Jewish community to me.”

Shane Goldstein, from Charlotte, N.C., says he left his



Thousands of Jewish teens from 26 countries and 400 cities—from Paris to Rio de Janeiro—soak up Jewish inspiration, learning and camaraderie with friends new and old at the annual CTeen weekend convention .

the CTeen convention or lose his spot on the team. But for many, the energy, inspiration and unity they experience over the weekend are catalysts for long-term Jewish commitment. “What I’m taking home with me, what I’ve decided, is that the night before my marriage I want to go to the mikvah,” Eliana Tesler, 15, from St. Johns, Fla., tells Chabad.org about her resolve to create a Jewish home for the next generation.

Tesler says that her highlight of the weekend was “meeting different people from different backgrounds and having one thing in common, that we’re all Jewish and connecting with them on a religious level.” Her friend, 16-year-old Auriel Henderson, another teen from the St. Johns chapter, says she’d like to bring the Shabbat spirit she experienced in New York back home to her family. “In my household, we don’t always do Shabbat and Shabbat candles,” Henderson says. “I’d like to bring that home and start doing it with my family and celebrating our Judaism more.”

Over the din and screams of excited girls yelling the refrain, “I’m proud to be a Jew!” Gabby Vainshelboim, 15, a third girl from St. Johns, says that what struck her was “seeing so many Jews, all together in one place.

hometown “kind of apprehensive to wear a kippah in public. And now, I’m going back and I have no such feelings.” Goldstein says he loved every moment of the weekend. “It was jam-packed. We went from place to place, walking with your friends is the best thing. We were never bored. We got to see all these awesome people. It was pretty great.” What he enjoyed most, though, was the Times Square concert. “We took over the middle of one of the biggest cities in the world and just partied.”

Heading back by subway to the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, where the program continues, Shai Kaszynski, 16, and Walter Belenkiy, 15, both of Deerfield, Ill., share their experience. “I’m having so much fun,” Kaszynski laughs, as he stands in the crowded subway car filled with teens. “It was crazy; there were so many teens there all sharing the same experience.” He says he’ll take that “outward pride of being Jewish” home with him by wearing a kippah at school.

“I really liked the whole Shabbos experience, hearing all the speakers; it was really inspirational,” Belenkiy says. He says he’s come away more committed than ever, “commitment to doing mitzvahs.”



Thousands of Teens Packed Times Square

Why a Muslim Diplomat From Azerbaijan is Helping Rebuild a California Synagogue

Tale of a Shared Childhood Courtyard

By Mendel Super

In the wee hours of the morning of Dec. 22, 2021, an intentionally lit fire tore through the building of Chabad-Lubavitch of Almaden Valley, Calif. In the hours that followed, a GoFundMe page created by community member Maryann Barsky garnered support from the wider San Jose community, with tens of thousands contributed by people of all faiths and backgrounds. Yet when Chabad's of Almaden Valley's co-director Rabbi Mendel Weinfeld was contacted by the Consul General of Azerbaijan, it wasn't something he was expecting.

More than 7,000 miles away and on a vastly different continent, Azerbaijan doesn't match the typical Californian synagogue

same courtyard as him. The consul notes that these Jewish connections aren't new; Jews have been part of the

nature of the country. Under his leadership, the community's pride and joy, the Ohr Avner Chabad Jewish



Rabbi Kalman Weinfeld, a member of the executive rabbinical council at OK Kosher; Rabbi Mendel Weinfeld; Consul General of Azerbaijan in Los Angeles Nasimi Aghayev; and David Taban, a philanthropist on the Chabad building committee. The four met this month to discuss Azerbaijan's support for the Chabad House.

nation's fabric for more than 2,000 years. "[The Jewish people are] an inseparable part of Azerbaijan's history," the consul says. "Jews have been living here free of

Day School, which counts more than 175 students, was nominated as one of the country's 20 top schools.

"Seeing this generosity extended overseas—that our government extends help to the Jewish people even in America—demonstrates this good nature of the Azerbaijani people," says Segal. "Azerbaijan can export more than just oil to the world, we model tolerance and harmony," he adds.

"On our end," says Weinfeld, "we're very appreciative. It's heartwarming to see a country stand behind Jewish causes. With G d's help, and with the support of generous friends such as the nation of Azerbaijan, we will rebuild our synagogue."



An intentionally lit fire tore through the building of Chabad-Lubavitch of Almaden Valley, Calif.

supporter's profile. But for Nasimi Aghayev, Consul General of Azerbaijan in Los Angeles, it makes perfect sense. "I initially saw the news on my Facebook feed, and it saddened me to see the images of an utterly destroyed house of worship," he told Chabad.org. "I reached out to some friends in the Bay Area and asked them to connect me with the fire-damaged synagogue. I truly believe that people of different religious backgrounds should come to each other's help and share solidarity in times of crisis. It's true especially with regard to sacred sites, houses of worship. That's how a genuinely harmonious society can be built."

When Weinfeld traveled to Los Angeles to meet the consul and express his gratitude, Aghayev explained how he—and many in Azerbaijan—have close ties to their Jewish neighbors. In fact, Aghayev grew up with Jewish people sharing the

antisemitism and persecution, alongside their Muslim and Christian brothers and sisters, in peace and harmony."

And within Azerbaijan, Jewish communities are supported, too, despite Azerbaijan being a secular nation, he says. "All our Jewish communities receive annual funding from the Government of Azerbaijan, to support their synagogues and organizations... We see helping and supporting different faith communities as a strong component of our effort to foster interfaith harmony and multiculturalism."

Rabbi Shneur Segal, chief rabbi of the Ashkenazic Jewish Community of Baku, attests to the generous and welcoming spirit of the Azerbaijani people and leadership. Segal, who together with his wife, Chavah, is part of a team of six Chabad emissary families across the country, says that this attitude is part of the



Saved from Cremation, Man Receives Jewish Burial in New Mexico Desert

By Howard Blas

When Rabbi Chaim Schmukler of Chabad of New Mexico in Albuquerque received a call from a Jewish man telling him that his homeless brother was in the city morgue in Amarillo, Texas, awaiting imminent cremation, the rabbi knew he had to act fast.

He immediately called his brother, Rabbi Bery Schmukler, in Las Cruces, some 225 miles to the south and just 45 minutes from the Texas border. The clock was ticking as the time for cremation approached, and Rabbi Bery moved into action.

"The man thought maybe we could say Kaddish for his brother," Rabbi Bery said. "He wasn't expecting that we would actually bury him."

But the rabbis knew that a proper Jewish burial was essential. Rabbi Bery called a funeral home in Amarillo to have the body transferred to the Jewish section of a natural burial ground in Belen, N.M.—a five-and-a-half-hour drive. He then set out on the three-hour drive from Las Cruces to meet the hearse driver.

Schmukler, of Chabad of Las Cruces, sees Divine Providence at work throughout the whole process. Pinchus Sudak, a yeshivah student from London, was staying with the Schmuklers for a few days while on his way to the National Parks. The rabbi included the young man in the mitzvah of

chesed shel emet—a mitzvah for which there is said to be no repayment in this world, only the next. "We packed the car with 20 gallons of water, cloth, a shroud and soil from Israel—all needed for a kosher burial—and we set out on the 230-mile drive," said Schmukler.

The rabbi notes that people often chose this burial site since no coffin is required, it is in a natural desert setting, and the cost is lower. The deceased was laid to rest in the Jewish section of the cemetery.

"We did the purification on site, cleaned the body and did the taharah on the desert floor," recounted Schmukler. "We dressed him, said the prayers, and buried him in a shroud and tallit. The driver was watching in awe. He just had to see what we were doing. He even took my phone to take pictures."

While this was the first time that the rabbi supervised a burial in the desert, he has organized funerals for elderly Jews in Las Cruces, a well-known retirement community given its warm weather and affordable cost of living. "We have a lot of seniors here and have saved some from cremation," he said.

"It felt like we were able to help a Jew when nobody else could," said Rabbi Bery Schmukler. "It is about being there for another person. I hope it will inspire people to know that there are mitzvah opportunities out there."



Rabbi Bery Schmukler and Pinchus Sudak, a rabbinical student from London, drove hundreds of miles to provide a proper Jewish burial for a homeless man who was about to be cremated.



March 3, 2022
By Mendel Super
 Not since the Holocaust have there been this many Jewish refugees in Europe.

As humanitarian agencies sound the alarm on what may become the continent’s worst refugee crisis in 80 years, with the U.N. reporting that more than one million refugees have fled embattled Ukraine for safer ground, Chabad-Lubavitch in Europe has activated a network spanning the continent to absorb and assist the thousands of Jewish refugees running for their lives. Arriving with little more than a carry-on bag, their lives have been upended with no word on when—or if—they’ll ever return.

From cities like Zhitomir, Odessa, Kiev, Kharkov and Dnipro, Chabad emissaries on the ground have been evacuating the most vulnerable members of their communities en masse to safety.

As he sent off the tenth bus from the city he’s called home since 1994, an emotional Rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm of Chabad-Lubavitch of Zhitomir called on the Jewish community to storm the Heavens in prayer. “Men, women and children are leaving their homes, why?!” the rabbi cried. “Why must we watch little children cry? What have we done?! Say a chapter of Psalms, do another good deed, give charity, beseech G d! We want Moshiach now!”

The massive operation to bring Ukraine’s Jews to safety will cost millions, and concerned people from around the world are contributing to the effort via Chabad’s Ukraine Relief Fund, which is working in close coordination with the Federation of Jewish Communities (FJC) of the former Soviet Union. At the same time, residents of European cities are dropping off supplies and providing funds to their local Chabad centers, as the thousands of refugees begin to flood the continent.

The routes of escape are few: Poland, Romania and Moldova—as well as the shorter Hungarian and Slovakian

borders—though as many as 160,000 Ukrainians are internally displaced according to U.N. estimates. Among them is a contingent from shelled Kharkov, where the Chabad emissaries have evacuated together with 50 community members headed for Dnipro. “Missiles and bombs have been hammering the center of the city, and they were raining down all night. We were told this might be the last chance,” a tearful Miriam Moskovitz, who together with her husband, Kharkov chief rabbi Moshe Moskovitz, has directed Chabad of Kharkov since 1990, reported.

First Port of Call is Romania

For many refugees, the first port of call is Romania. “We’re getting at least 250 refugees coming to our Chabad center every day,” reports Rabbi Naftali Deutsch, co-director of Chabad Lubavitch of Romania, from Bucharest. “Most are Jewish, some are not. We help everyone. Every five or ten minutes, another group comes through our doors.”

Chabad’s kitchen is cooking nonstop for the flood of refugees and Deutsch is assisting them with finding accommodations, tickets to Israel for those with citizenship and help making aliya for the many who wish to immigrate to the Holy Land. He’s taken 20 refugee children into Chabad’s preschool already, and says they’ll be hosting several hundred people this Shabbat.

Closer to the Ukrainian border—about 200 miles southwest—Chabad of Cluj-Napoca (Klausenburg), Romania, is also providing aid to the massive influx of refugees. In the wee hours of Wednesday morning, a group of 140 orphaned children from Zhitomir arrived, and another bus from Zhitomir arrived early Thursday morning. Many smaller groups and individuals are also passing through Chabad’s doors, says Rabbi Dovber Orgad, who directs Chabad of Cluj-Napoca with his wife, Fraidy. “Every minute I get another call or

message, people in the city, non-Jews, offering to help with funds and toys for the children. From rural areas, farmers are offering fresh produce,” Orgad says, acknowledging that it’s difficult to source so much food all at once. “Our kitchen has been working non-stop. Tomorrow we have a shipment of meat and chicken arriving from Budapest.”

A Children’s Home on the Run

Esther Wilhelm, co-director of Chabad of Zhitomir, shepherded a 40-person-strong group, including a dozen children, from Zhitomir via the western Ukraine’s Carpathian mountains, where they spent days before managing to cross the border into Romania. After days on the run, they finally arrived in Cluj-Napoca early Thursday morning, joining up with Malka Bukiet’s group of 140 children from Zhitomir’s Chabad-run Alumim orphanage. Wilhelm says the entire group plans on flying to Israel following Shabbat, where Chabad will continue to care for them until the next steps become clearer.

Speaking late Wednesday night, Malka Bukiet recounted her lengthy ordeal, transporting her charges from Zhitomir to safety in Romania. Her group left the orphanage in Zhitomir last Thursday, as the war broke out, and headed to the Carpathian mountains for Shabbat. They headed to the Romanian border on Monday afternoon. It was a long, treacherous journey. Bukiet says that she sent a family member in New York to pray for their success and safety at the resting place of the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory. “We prayed that every single child would be able to cross the border,” she says, noting that some children were lacking proper documentation due to the harried escape and their disadvantaged backgrounds.

“It was a miracle,” she says. Ukraine didn’t allow their bus driver to cross the border, so they were dropped off at the checkpoint, where the entire group had to walk over the border, luggage in tow. “We crossed with tears of joy. Recalling it now, I’m almost crying.” At the Romanian side of the border, they were greeted by the Israeli consul to Romania who assisted them in entering the country. After several hours waiting at the border and arranging onward travel, they left for Cluj-Napoca.

Welcomed with Open Arms

“We were welcomed with open arms by the Orgads and their student volunteers [the Orgads serve a large student population],” Bukiet says. By 4 a.m., the children were in their hotel rooms, “smiling and happy. We felt the embrace of the Jewish people.”

Bukiet says that they’re arranging the last steps of their flight to Israel on Sunday. “G-d willing, we’ll be able to fly out

on Sunday. We don’t know how long we’ll be in Israel for.”

In Germany, Chabad of Berlin is preparing to receive a group of 120 children and staff from Odessa’s Chabad-run Mishpacha orphanage, in addition to the many other refugees making their way northwest to Germany. “Locals have been coming to Chabad all day, dropping off clothing, toys and other supplies,” says Rabbi Dovid Tiechtel from Berlin.

“Part of Chabad’s Yeshivah in Dnipro will find a safe haven in Dusseldorf, Germany, tonight while some students are still en route after their bus experienced mechanical issues in Moldova,” said the yeshivah’s director, Rabbi Chaim Chazan.

Besides for the longer borders with Poland, Moldova and Romania, Ukraine also shares southwestern border with Hungary and Slovakia. The Hungarian border, at 84 miles long, is seeing several hundred Jewish refugees cross daily, estimates Rabbi Boruch Oberlander, director of Chabad-Lubavitch of Hungary. 100 miles from Ukraine, Rabbi Shmuel Faigen, co-director of Chabad of Debrecen with his wife, Riki, says they’ve been welcoming a steady stream of refugees heading towards Budapest and other cities. “We’ve been providing accommodation and meals for them,” he says while welcoming a family from Kiev that had just arrived.

Oberlander says that on Monday, a community member approached him and offered a vacant home to house refugees. “Three hours later, it was filled with a family from Kiev.” One family that passed through made a deep impression on the rabbi. “A woman came with

her two young boys, about nine and 10 years old,” he says. At the synagogue, Oberlander watched the boys pray. “Tears came from my eyes, they were praying with so much feeling. These boys got such a good Jewish education in Ukraine.”

A member of the Chabad community in Budapest traveled to the village of Kerestir, which has an established hospitality infrastructure as it hosts Jews from around the world



Refugees arrive at Chabad of Romania for a hot meal after a long trip.

who come to pray at the resting place of Rabbi Shayale of Kerestir, a revered early 20th century Hungarian Chassidic rabbi. He’ll be providing support for the refugees that now occupy the pilgrimage center.

In Slovakia, which shares a 60 mile long border with Ukraine, Rabbi Baruch Myers says that while not many refugees have contacted Chabad yet, as Jews flee western Ukraine due to the moving war front, he is ready and waiting to accept them and provide necessary support. Close to midnight, Myers will drive a carload of sandwiches, cakes and water to a highway near the border where he’ll meet a bus from Odessa’s Mishpacha orphanage on its way to Germany. “We need to stop to restock our food supply,” says Rabbi Mendy Wolff, 25, who’s chaperoning the bus full of young girls. They can’t stop in Bratislava itself, because the group is racing against the clock; they need to be in Berlin before Shabbat.



More than 140 students and staff arrived in Romania from a children’s Chabad Orphanage in Zhitomir

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.

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 All information will be kept strictly confidential.

“I’ll do anything to make their lives a little happier,” says Myers.

On the Ukrainian side of the Slovakian border, Chabad of Uzhgorod is welcoming hundreds fleeing the larger cities of Ukraine, such as Dnipro, Zaporozhye, and Kiev, says Rabbi Mendel Wilhelm, co-director of Chabad of Uzhgorod with his wife, Sarah. Wilhelm himself is currently in Israel, he had to leave Uzhgorod a week before the war broke out for urgent personal matters. But he’s worked with community members to welcome the many refugees at the Chabad center, where they’re fed and helped with accommodations. Most people he says will continue on to Romania or Hungary, though some without their documents will need to stay in Uzhgorod for longer.

Some refugees are fleeing as far afield as Cyprus, where

Rabbi Zushe Neymark of Chabad of Ayia Napa, in eastern Cyprus, prepared to receive 100 refugees, many from Kiev. They’re flying from Moldova and Romania to Ayia Napa, where the Jewish community includes a number of Ukrainian expats. Neymark says his community has come together to help. “We’ve arranged a team to handle the hotel accommodations, and another to source essential supplies,” he says. “We’re helping in every way possible, collecting medications, food, toys, everything.”

Neymark says that while some will go on to Israel, many of the refugees will be in Ayia Napa for the long-haul. “They might be here for months.”

Bukiet sees her own miraculous escape as a precursor to the ultimate journey: “May it be a roadmap to our final redemption, with Moshiach’s coming very soon.”

loving embrace from people of all walks of life. It feels incredible to be here.”

Bukiet says that while the children were traumatized by the evacuation from Zhitomir, they’re thrilled to be in the Holy Land. “This is their life’s dream, for the entire children’s home to visit Israel together. Sadly, it had to be under such circumstances. G-d willing, next time we’ll visit for happier occasions.”



5,000 Hebrew-School Students Pray for Ukraine’s Jews It was Always the Sincere Prayers of Jewish Children that Aroused Heaven’s Mercy

March 7, 2022

By Kayla Rosen

Some 5,000 children from 210 Hebrew schools across the United States gathered in their schools and online this week to show their support of Ukrainian Jewry through prayer, charity, and acts of kindness.

The children tuned in with their fellow Hebrew school classmates using the power of prayer. The children recited Psalms and gave charity in the merit of Ukrainian Jewry and were reminded of the strong power their words have, as they recited “Shema Yisroel” in unison, led by the students of Chabad Hebrew School of Potomac, Maryland.

The children were given a lesson in faith, heroism and hope by Cherry Markovitch a Chabad-Lubavitch emissary in Kyiv (Kiev), Ukraine, who shared her family’s story of finding safety during the war.

“This week,

Hebrew Schools learned the story of Purim,” said Rabbi Zalmy Loewenthal, Loewenthal director of CK-ids, the Chabad children’s network, which organized the event. “They learned

how Mordechai gathered the Jewish children to learn Torah and pray, showing our students that they too have the power to help those in need, with Torah and prayer.”



140 Refugees From Ukraine Children’s Home Arrive Safely in Israel End of a perilous journey from Zhitomir to Romania to Tel Aviv

March 6, 2022

A group of 140 refugees from a children’s home in Zhitomir, Ukraine, including 90 young children, arrived at Israel’s Ben-Gurion Airport, where they were greeted by Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and other cabinet ministers, ending a grueling, five-day journey through a deadly war zone.

The children, ages 2 to 12, were evacuated from Zhitomir’s Chabad-run Alumim children’s home on Feb. 24 as sirens began to wail and missiles exploded near the children’s home. Chabad fled westward to the Carpathian Mountains, where they found refuge from the constant shelling until March 1, when they escaped the war-torn country for the safety of Romania. There, they were assisted by Chabad of Cluj-Napoca (Klausenburg) in finding temporary accommodations while they planned their flight to Israel.

During their stay in Romania, the children recovered from their difficult ordeal with Chabad arranging local children’s entertainers to perform for them, and taking them to various playgrounds and attractions in the city.

On Sunday, March 6, the

140-person group—led by Chabad of Zhitomir’s directors, Rabbi Shlomo and Esther Wilhelm, and which included several dozen parents and staff members—boarded a charter flight to Tel Aviv, where they received a hero’s welcome from dignitaries and elected officials.

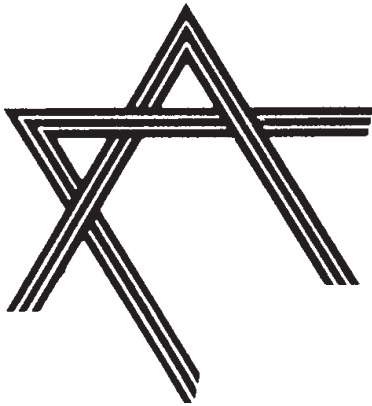
At the airport, Bennett acknowledged the people who helped ensure the children’s safety. “For a week-and-a-half now, they have been moving on the roads, fleeing battles and shelling without parents, but with the wonderful and dedicated Chabad emissaries who accompany them here,” said the prime minister.

“Thank you to the Chabad emissaries and all those involved in the sacred work of saving lives—the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Absorption, the Friendship Foundation and the Jewish Agency. “Anyone who saves one soul is as if he had saved the whole world,” Bennett concluded, quoting the Talmud.

“I’m simply overwhelmed,” Malka Bukiet, the director of the children’s home who led the evacuation, said shortly after landing in Israel. “We’ve been welcomed by a



Prime Minister Naftali Bennett of Israel and Rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm of Zhitomir, Ukraine, with two of the 90 children who were evacuated from Zhitomir’s Chabad-run Alumim children’s home on Feb. 24.



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March 7, 2022

By Mendel Super

German President Steinmeier Greets Ukraine Children at Berlin Chabad

The children arrived in Berlin on Friday after a 52-hour bus ride across seven countries

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a close friend of Chabad-Lubavitch of Berlin who was instrumental in securing the passage of 120 children from Odessa's Chabad-run Mishpacha Children's Home, paid the kids a visit on March 7. Arriving at Chabad of Berlin, Steinmeier had lunch with the children and their staff and toured the grounds with Rabbi Yehuda Tiechtel, director of Chabad of Berlin.

Speaking about his role in facilitating the children's passage through six international borders, Steinmeier said, "We would like to stand by them and make our contribution so that they can find peace here and have the opportunity to process the experience of their flight to safety."

"It was very moving that the president of Germany and his wife came today to spend time with the children, visiting the Chabad center," Rabbi Yehuda Tiechtel said after the

visit. "It shows how important these children are. Together, we will overcome all challenges; we will be there for our brethren with love, care and dedication."

The grueling 52-hour journey took place in two buses that left Odessa at 7 a.m. on March 2. They didn't arrive in Berlin until Friday midday after passing through seven countries. From Odessa, they fled to Moldova, where the children played outside and ate before continuing on to the longer leg of the trip: Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czechia, and finally, Germany.

"We were racing against the clock to arrive in Berlin before Shabbat," Rabbi Mendy Wolff, 25, said as he explained that he became the director of the orphanage overnight when Chabad-Lubavitch of Odessa, directed by his parents Rabbi Avraham and Chaya Wolff, made the difficult decision that their children's home needed to evacuate immediately.

The younger Wolff was a teacher in Chabad's school before the war, but when his parents needed to stay behind in Odessa to help evacuate other parts of the community, Rabbi Mendy Wolff took on the responsibility of shepherding 120 children ranging in age

A Song of Thanks Amid a Rescue in Moldova
Voices of Children from Odessa, Ukraine,
Drown Out Fears from War

March 8, 2022

A group that included 140 women and children who evacuated last week from Odessa, Ukraine, gathered in Moldova, clapping and singing "Spasiba Hashem, Thank you G d" for their rescue.

After leaving Odessa en route to Germany, the group stopped in neighboring Moldova for Shabbat and were cared for by Chabad of Kishinev and Moldova, including Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Abelsky, the chief rabbi and one of the Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries there.

Chabad of Moldova has helped tens of thousands

of refugees in recent days, stretching their supplies as they work to make sure everyone who comes through their center is given a warm meal, a place to rest and needed supplies. They also maintain a hotline for people in need of immediate aid.

The evacuation of the women and children—the men remained in Ukraine—was coordinated by Rabbi Avraham and Chaya Wolff, the Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries in Odessa. The Wolffs have chosen to stay in the southern Ukrainian city to care for members of the Jewish community who have not been able to evacuate.



German President Steinmeier Greets
Ukraine Children at Berlin Chabad
The Children arrived in Berlin on Friday
After a 52 Hour Bus Ride Across Seven Countries

from one-and-a-half-month-old Tuvia—who was left in Rabbi Avraham Wolff's arms at just four days old—to almost 18-year-old Shoshana, a university student who grew up at Mishpacha children's home and, still legally under their guardianship, fled Odessa together with the rest of the 60 boys and 60 girls in Chabad's care.

He explained that while they have received many offers from families willing to adopt the children, especially baby Tuvia, whose precocious image has captured the hearts of Berlin, they cannot give any children up for adoption under Ukrainian law.

"It feels so

good to be here," Shoshana declared from Berlin. While she said she misses Odessa, she plans to use her time well in Berlin. "I want to learn German, and I want to improve my English," she said in almost-fluent Hebrew. "And I'm helping those who helped me;

I help with the little children, I help in the kitchen."

The teen acknowledged that the war was terrifying: "I was very afraid. In my heart, I knew I needed to leave Ukraine. Now I'm here with my community, my family."



German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, left, meets young refugees from Odessa, along with their chaperones, as Rabbi Yehuda Tiechtel, seated to his right, looks on. (Credit: Chabad of Berlin)

54 Busloads of Desperate Ukranian Jews
Evacuated in a Single Day
Worldwide Chabad Effort Secures
Transportation for Those Fleeing the War

March 9, 2022

By Menachem Posner

Sitting in the ad hoc crisis center in Kfar Chabad, "Chaim" has been on the phone with Jews in war-torn Ukraine for nearly 14 hours. In call after call, he has been reiterating the same point: "Get out while you can. We will help you leave Ukraine and bring you to Israel if that's what you want, but you must leave now!"

Sometimes he succeeds, but other times he is met with resistance. Some people cannot bear to leave home-bound relatives, some do not wish to leave the comfort of home, and others just don't believe things will get much worse.

For some, it is too late. It is impossible to leave Kherston, which is in Russian control. The humanitarian situation in Mariupol is even worse. The coastal city is under siege by Russian troops and is being bombarded night and day. Its population of 400,000 is without electricity or water, and food is running out.

Where escape is possible, the numbers of those leaving are growing every day. Chabad-Lubavitch has mobilized a network of buses and rail cars to get people out of the country safely and quickly.

On Tuesday alone, 54 buses carrying Jewish refu-



Refugees from Berdichev, Ukraine, flee the country on a bus provided by Chabad. Thousands like them have been encouraged and enabled to find shelter from the war's destruction.

gees from all over Ukraine have been dispatched to the border, heading to Moldova, Romania, and Poland, where they are housed in refugee camps until they are assisted in relocating toward Western and Central Europe or placed on chartered flights to Israel.

The buses are often staffed with armed security guards and generally can cost up to \$20,000 per trip. One trip, which brought a busload of orphans and support staff to Germany, cost \$40,000.

In some instances, buses are commissioned but are then unable to reach the dispatch depot (most often the city's Chabad center) due to fighting. And in other cases, it is deemed too dangerous to leave the city. But no matter what the difficulty, no one is giving up. They just try

again.

As a result, day after day, busloads of people are brought to safety by Chabad emissaries, some of whom are still in Ukraine and

MYZAIDY'S
PIZZA-FALAFEL

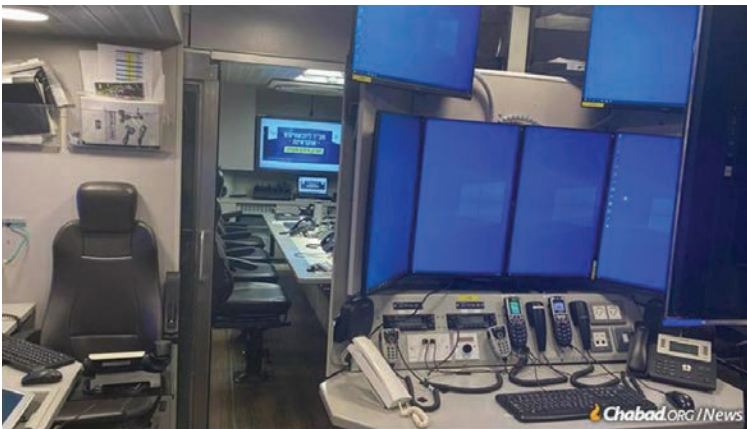
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some of whom have stationed themselves in bordering countries or even Israel, where the command center has been set up in conjunction with Israeli aid organi-



A mobile command center has been established in Kfar Chabad, Israel, to assist the refugees wherever they may be.

zations. Thus far, an estimated 185 coach buses and 300 minibuses have carried 15,000 Ukrainians to safety, and an additional 7,200 have been transported by train. Many of the buses (as well as the food and shelter provided to the refugees) have been paid for by Chabad's Ukraine Jewish Relief Fund, which has raised \$2.3 million in online donations, coupled with several million dollars from major donors and organizations. The work is expected to continue as long as necessary and organizers are lining up buses for an expected 250



trips over the next ten days, with the understanding that the situation remains fluid and the shifting facts on the ground may severely impact their work. For his part, Chaim and his peers at the call center are continuing their work unabated. "There are lives to be saved, and there's no way we can live with ourselves if we don't do our best to help everyone we come in contact with!"

25 Chabad Rabbinic Interns, Dispatched Towards Ukranian Border They Welcome Refugees, Distribute Food and Lead Religious Services

March 16, 2022
By Menachem Posner
As soon as a river of Jewish refugees began streaming out of Ukraine, it became clear that Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries in Europe needed more manpower—and fast. In response to the urgent pleas for help, the Ukraine Jewish Relief Fund opened a relief desk, which as part of a variety of services for refugees and those helping them, has sent 25 young rabbis to Romania, Poland, Moldova, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Germany and even into Ukraine proper, where they are as-

the western border town of Lviv. They are working alongside the Chabad representatives in each country, as well as the Ukrainian emissaries who have accompanied their communities out of the war-torn nation and are now assisting them in acclimating to their new lives as refugees. "Every refugee has his or her own heartbreak," says Shneur Elberg of Brooklyn, who first assisted in the ad hoc refugee camp in Iasi, near the Ukraine-Romania border, before being called to

have abandoned their careers, mothers of small children who left their husbands behind, and elderly people who never thought they would leave Ukraine. We listen, provide sympathy and supplies, and connect them to Chabad rabbis at their destination." According to Rabbi Mendel Banon of the Ukraine Desk, each group of rabbinical students—they typically travel in pairs—is tasked with a wide range of duties. Some are supplying logistical support, visiting refugee camps and distributing food. In other areas, their assistance is more "rabbinic" in nature, such as on the Slovakian border, where they will be conducting Purim services for the members of the Israeli consulate who are stationed there to assist Jewish refugees with immigration to Israel.

Elberg explains that in Iasi, where people come directly from the border, he and his "partner" concentrated on providing hot meals and fresh beds to people who had just made it out of Ukraine. In the capital city of Bucharest, the work also includes providing them with new wardrobes, luggage, toys, and whatever else they may need as they figure out where to go next. He says that their focus is on giving each individual what he or she needs. Upon learning that it was the birthday of an autistic refugee child, they brought him a gift and sang and danced with the boy. "The



When a bus of hungry refugees from Zhytomyr arrived to Iasi at 3 a.m., Rabbi Shneur Elberg met them with a hot meal and a warm welcome.



In Iasi, young rabbi in discussion with Alexei, a refugee who had not eaten for six days, and had not had a conversation in two weeks

sisting with the influx of Budapest. "Academics and refugees funneling through professional musicians who

mother did not know English or Hebrew," says Elberg, "but she repeated spasiba ("thank you") over and over again with tears in her eyes." And from there he went on to take an elderly couple shopping for slippers, phone chargers and other things they needed. Chabad's lifesaving work inside and outside of Ukraine has been critical in evacuating more than 35,000 civilians and feeding tens of thousands left inside the war-ravaged country.


The student visitation program has been a flagship program of Lubavitch World Headquarters since 1943. Known as "Merkos Shluchim," or more informally as "Roving Rabbis", young rabbis and rabbinical students typically travel to far-flung locations to assist Jews in smaller communities, whether in the summer months or during the holiday season.

"In the current state of affairs, the rabbinic students are performing a dual role," commented Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, vice chairman of

Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, the educational arm of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. "They are providing much-needed material assistance to the refugees while also seeing to their spiritual well-being." Banon reports that in addition to rabbis, his desk has sent chefs and doctors to Europe as well, ensuring that refugees be afforded the very best care, spiritual and physical.

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Dear Rebby

By Rabbi Aron Moss



The Meanest Father in the World

A question for you that I have been wrestling with. Much of the liturgy praises Hashem for kindness, compassion etc. In what way is Hashem kind? Looking around the world I can see a lot of evidence to the contrary.

Answer

It is a great question. How can we call Hashem kind when He seems so cruel?

My children say the same thing about me. My four-year-old calls me the meanest father in the world. He wants to exchange me for a new one.

And he has several good reasons for disapproving of my fatherhood.

Often he asks me for lollies, and I say no. For every ten requests he makes for treats, maybe once do I let him have one. Yesterday he was begging and screaming and crying just for one lolly, and I coldly refused to give it to him. How could I not be moved by his tears? Mean.

The other day I grabbed his hand as he was about to run onto a busy road. I pulled him so hard that his arm hurt. What type of father does that? Mean.

I took him to a doctor to get his vaccinations. And I just sat there as the doctor poked a big needle into him. I did nothing to stop this attack. Should a father and protector sit passively and watch his child being hurt? Mean.

And the worst thing of all, I put him to bed earlier than his brothers and sisters. They get to stay up and play while he has to go to sleep and miss out on all the fun. What did he do wrong to deserve that? Why am I punishing him unfairly? There can only be one explanation. Mean.

There is no justification for any of this in the mind of a four-year-old. He can't understand that I do it all out of love and care for him. He doesn't consider the fact that I also feed him, dress him, take him to the park, and provide all his needs. He can't see the irony of calling his parents mean, when it was his parents who gave him life in the first place.

A little kid can't be expected to appreciate all this. A child lacks perspective, doesn't see the full picture, and can only react to his narrow experience of reality. It's not his fault. That's how it is meant to be. A child is supposed to have a child's view. Maybe it's good that he thinks I'm mean. Maybe it will make him stand up and prevent the suffering of others. I don't mind when he protests my apparent cruelty. But I can't explain it to him either.

So I will continue to love him, and do what's best for him, even if he calls me mean. Hopefully, he'll keep me on as his father. And one day in the future, he will understand what he can't imagine now, that I'm not so mean after all.

Who is Lilith?

I have heard that Adam had a first wife before Eve called Lilith. She refused to subordinate herself to him, and so she was replaced with Eve. I see no mention of this whole idea in the Torah, so is it true?

Answer

Yes it's true, but not quite as you say.

Authentic Jewish sources speak of a demonic spirit who preceded Eve as Adam's female companion. She was not a physical person, and so she can't be called his wife. But she is still around to this day.

You see, before Adam had an actual relationship, he had the desire for a relationship. This desire begins as a physical urge, a selfish need for gratification.

This base desire is personified by Lilith, Adam's imaginary first partner. She represents the desire for relationship that is impersonal, animalistic and pleasure driven.

But that is not a true relationship. Because beneath our desire for gratification is a deeper desire to connect, to give and to love. Adam could only find Eve after he first overcame his selfish desires. He had to banish his woman of fantasy to make way for a real relationship with a real person.

Only when he saw a relationship as a holy union of souls, as an opportunity to give as well as to receive, to care and love as well as to be cared for and loved, only then was he ready to meet Eve, a real woman, his soulmate.

For Adam, the first man created by G-d's hand, overcoming selfish desires was not such a challenge. But for most men, and many women too, it can be a big one. Lilith is lurking in our fantasies and on our screens, ever trying to lure us into her distorted version of love. But in the end, a relationship with Lilith only produces more demons. Only Eve, a real, loving and lovable person, can be the mother of life.

Is Climate Activism a Jewish Issue?

I am a climate activist

trying to galvanise support for sustainable living from the Orthodox Jewish community. My question is, are there any no-go areas, red lines, or issues I should be careful to avoid when approaching religious Jews on the topic of sustainability? I want to be sensitive to people's beliefs while raising awareness about this vital cause.

Answer

The Torah observant community should be your easiest customers. Our tradition is clear about the responsibility we have to care for our world.

Every child attending a religious Jewish school knows that the Torah forbids us to waste any useful resources.

The kabbalists taught that every leaf on every tree has a soul, and must be treated with respect.

And our sages record G-d's words to the first man, Adam: "Look at the beautiful world I have created. I have created it all for you. Take care not to corrupt and spoil My world, for if you do, no one will come after you to fix it."

Nevertheless, some overzealous climate activists do hold positions that clash with Jewish values. If you espouse these extreme positions, you have little chance of success.

Here are some examples:

"The end of the world is near."

Jews are not big fans of apocalyptic prophecies and doomsday predictions. Other religious groups may be getting ready for Armageddon, but we have always believed in a happy, bright and peaceful future. The claim that "we have five years to act or it will be too late" was said five years ago too. People, including scientists, are notoriously bad at predicting the future of a dynamic and ever-changing world. We can still be inspired to live responsibly without being scared into thinking that the world is about to end.

"This is THE issue of our time."

The Torah does not allow us the luxury of being single-issue activists. Caring for our world includes not only preserving the physical environment, but it also includes tending to the spiritual, emotional and moral environment around us. While we all have our passions and topics of particular interest, we cannot focus on material survival and ignore other threats to humanity. We don't really know which issue is the most pressing. Moral depravity may pose a greater risk to human life than carbon emissions. We have to be holistic in our activism.

"Overpopulation is a ticking time bomb."

People may cause problems. But people also find solutions. Those climate activists

who portray humans as the enemy, lose the support of we who believe that every person is an irreplaceable gift. The argument that population growth is the greatest threat to our future, does not go down well with proponents of G-d's command to be fruitful and multiply. Every soul that is born is precious. An ideology that wishes to limit human reproduction is anathema to everything Jewish. We can't save the world for our children by not having them.

So if you want Torah-observant Jews to be on side, you need to present a non-alarmist, balanced and pro-human platform for sustainable living. And one more thing. Don't push the vegan thing. You will get a very pareve response.

Chicken Soup Jews

I want to increase my Shabbos observance. I have resolved to light candles at the correct time, starting this week. One question I had. Why do we light specifically two candles?

Answer

A lot of people call themselves "culturally Jewish." They feel connected to the Jewish people, are active in the community, advocate for Israel, and may attend shul on major festivals. But they don't keep Jewish law.

For example, when it comes to Shabbos, they will argue that the laws are not important, it is all about family time. If you come to Shabbos dinner, whether you walk or drive doesn't make a difference. As long as you eat chicken soup, it doesn't matter if it was cooked before Shabbos came in or after. These people believe it's all about the feeling, not the little details. Let's call them Chicken Soup Jews.

On the other side of the spectrum, there are some Jews who are scrupulous in their observance of Shabbos, keep every law down to the last dot, but do it without joy. They keep Shabbos neurotically, obsessing over what you can't do and making the day of rest into a day of stress. Let's call them Chicken Coup Jews.

Both are missing something. Chicken Soup Jews have their heart in the right place, but Jewish feeling without observance is wishy-washy and short lived. And the Chicken Coup Jews are indeed truly committed, but their robotic observance can become dry and uninspiring.

The only Judaism that survives and thrives is a Judaism of passionate commitment, ob-

servance with feeling, the forest and the trees. When I am Jewish in my heart and in my head, in my kitchen and in my office, in what I do as well as what I say, that is living, breathing Judaism.

That's why we light two candles, to symbolize the duality of Shabbos. There are the laws we have to keep, as well as the meaningful messages we have to remember. There is the technical side of Shabbos, its rules, as well as the meaning that those rules are supposed to bring and the feelings they arouse. There is structure, and there is soul.

When you study the laws of Shabbos and appreciate their deeper meaning, you have the best of both worlds. You really can have your soup and eat it too. The Shabbos rules are not there to make you feel couped up, they are there to free you from the mundane, so your soul can fly.

Is Euthanasia Dignified?

I visit my 92 year old mother every day in her old age home, and every day I look around at the seniors there and ask myself the same question: Why does G-d leave these old people to die without dignity? Every one of them needs someone to feed them, wash them, even take them to the bathroom. I have faith, but this thing really makes me angry. Why can't they die with dignity?

Answer

It is so hard to see a loved one fade after living a vibrant and active life. How we approach this painful stage will depend on our perspective. And the Jewish perspective on the end of life differs greatly to much of mainstream thinking today. To approach life and death the Jewish way, we need to make sure we have that perspective very clear.

It often happens that immoral ideas creep into the minds of even those who have otherwise good values. Usually, the way these concepts infiltrate is via catch phrases and clichés. First they enter our vocabulary, then they become a part of our mentality.

One example is "dying with dignity."

That phrase is poison. It originates in the movement promoting euthanasia. This is a phrase that deserves to die.

True dignity comes from the soul. The good deeds we do in our lifetime, the meaning we bring to our days, the beauty and joy we bring to those around us all come from

Dear Rebbby



the soul.

Our body is the vehicle for our soul. It is through the body that our soul achieves goodness in this world. And this goes both ways. We do good for others with our body, and others can do good for us. We give and we receive.

Towards the end of life, as the body's strength wanes, we become more dependent on the care of others. There may be some rather unpleasant tasks required in order to bring comfort to the body. Those who are charged with these tasks should view them as an honour. There is no greater dignity than to serve another human being in need.

This is not to belittle the pain of seeing a loved one suffer. The body's deterioration can be extremely hard to witness. But some of the most awe-inspiring displays of selfless and uncon-

ditional love happen in these final stages of life. These acts of pure giving are among the highest examples of the goodness of the human spirit. That is living with dignity. That is making the world a better place.

We end our life in the same way we started it, dependent on the love of others. Your mother is blessed to spend her final days in good care, surrounded by those who love her. That is a most dignified departure from this world to the next.

Is this Story About You?

My non-Jewish friends and colleagues often ask me: What is Judaism?

They are not looking for a complicated thesis, just a

simple response. How would you sum up a 4000 year old culture in a few words?

Answer

'Judaism' and 'simple' are not often found in the same sentence. But to attempt to answer this, we first need to define what Jews are, then we can define what Judaism is.

The Jewish people can best be described as a spiritual family. We are connected by our souls, and every Jew is a part of this invisible web by virtue of our Jewishness. You can either be born into the family or join by choice. But once you are in, you are family, no matter what.

If Jews are a family, the Torah is the family rules. It recounts the family history, defines the family identity, and lays out the expectations of how members of the family should behave and the good they can contribute to the world.

Some of the Torah is universal, but much of it is about our particular family and its relationships - with our brothers and sisters, our ancestors, our homeland and the Head of the family - G-d.

If you break the rules, you are still a member, because family is family. But those who keep the rules keep the family together. Those who reject the rules usually find their children or grandchildren will drift away from the family entirely, not even knowing what they are leaving behind. But they can always come back. You can never really leave the Jewish family.

So if the Jewish people are a family, and the Torah is the family rules, what is Judaism?

Judaism is a story. The story of a family.

Every family has its story - its joys and its conflicts, its high moments and its not so high moments. Parents are sometimes proud of their kids or disappointed at them; children follow their parents' ways or rebel against them. But throughout the family dramas, they remain a family.

Judaism is our family story. But not a story to just read, a story to live. We are the characters of the story. The story is bigger than you or me or any one person. But it is about you and me and every individual Jew. Each one of us, through our relationship with G-d and the Jewish people, continues the story that is Judaism.



In Pursuit of Meaning

Creating a Life That Matters: How to Live and Love with Meaning and Purpose

Manis Friedman & Rivkah Goldstein

It's Good To Know Publishing

By Dr. Chana Silberstein

To paraphrase the punchline of an old Chasidic story: the difference between a window and a mirror is a thin coat of silver. The affluence of our society affords us opportunities that our grandparents would not have dreamed of. But while the opportunities are vast, our view is narrow. Indeed, our prosperity seems often to result in us seeing nothing but ourselves.

We live in an age that is more concerned with self-help, self-development, self-empowerment, self-actualization, and self-care than any other age in history, but we are no happier.

Despite the wealth of opportunity and relative ease of our society, the freedom from war, hunger, and displacement, the free availability of teachers, texts, and other avenues of self-education — the many things we take for granted — too often, our experience is intensely dystopic. There is hunger, malaise, and unrest. We seek more.

Set against this backdrop, in *Creating a Life That Mat-*

ters: How to Live and Love with Meaning and Purpose, co-authors Rabbi Manis Friedman and Rivka Goldstein explore the search for meaning in our contemporary society, drawing on the teachings of Kabbalah and Chasidut.

Friedman begins with an exploration of the journey of the soul, which serves as a paradigm for the pursuit of meaning in life and love. After all, explains Friedman, the soul is the part of ourselves that does not simply exist — taking up space and resources — but that is eternal and transcendent, truly alive and in consonance with its mission and its G-dly source.

Friedman's insights are most useful if they are read as suggestive, a way of playing with new ideas and paradigms and seeing how they might expand our thinking.

The beginning of the soul's journey is G-d's decision that He desires a world, a relationship with something "outside Himself." Friedman brings this point to demonstrate that, contrary to popular belief today, a relationship does not begin with love. It begins with a choice.

G-d's first act is not love, but the decision — perhaps we may call it the need — to create. And only then, as reflected

in the Kabbalistic Sefirot, does he create love on the first day of creation, as a tool and support for the success of His creation. When it becomes clear that love alone is not sufficient to sustain His relationship with the creation, He adds severity, compassion, and loyalty to the mix. The days of creation mirror these Divine attributes, unfolding in creation as emotional stances unfold in a relationship. But it begins with a commitment freely chosen.

The first section of the book also explores the distinction between "facts" and "truth." For example, a person is in a car accident and nearly dies. That is a fact. But the person deserves to live his life to the fullest. That is "truth." As Friedman notes, when facts surrender to truth, we call it a miracle. The belief in Moshiach, or the Redemption, he explains, is the conviction that one day, there will be no division between facts and truth. In the meantime, we live in a world of facts, not truth, with all the pain and injustice that entails. Yet this is a necessary state in an imperfect world. For if we saw only truth and did not experience "facts," we would not be motivated to improve and change the world, and that is our purpose.

In the second and third sections of the book, Friedman applies these general concepts to marriage and parenting. It is easy to see how these ideas challenge contemporary mores of dating and marriage. Marriage, Friedman argues, is not primarily about finding love, but about making a commitment. Love is a gift given freely to spouses, children, and parents, rather than the prerequisite for a caring and constant relationship. We need to "look" at each other less and "listen" more — to be more concerned with our inner connection to a spouse and less concerned with

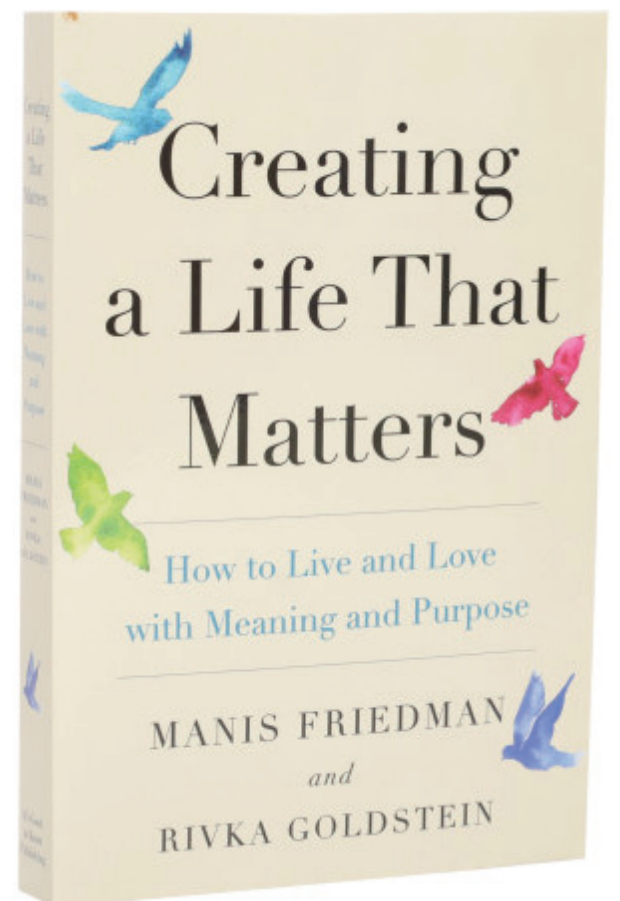
externals. In a culture obsessed with maximizing pleasure and boosting the "wow" factor of our relationships and love, this is a fresh perspective that allows us to think differently about what it means to live with and maintain our commitment to imperfect people.

The third section of the book is the most loosely structured, dealing with parenting issues and questions. It reiterates many of the earlier themes and emphasizes the role of morality in parenting. Perhaps the most significant insight here is its exhortation to parents to have the courage to take on the role of parent (rather than peer or best friend) and to have confidence in that role.

To be sure, some of the discussion feels at times like an oversimplification or a semantic game (e s p e c i a l l y w h e n c o n d e n s e d i n t o a s u m m a r y s e n t e n c e). Other bits of advice are too general to be usefully applied in all cases. Friedman's insights are most useful if they are read as suggestive, a way of playing with new ideas and para-

digms and seeing how they might expand our thinking. As with many discussions of Kabbalah and Chasidut, there is danger and frustration in reading them too concretely. Friedman's style is provocative and playful, and it is best received in that vein.

Those who have heard Rabbi Friedman speak before can expect this will be another engaging presentation of the foundational ideas of Kabbalah and Chasidut. What is more, his co-author, Rivka Goldstein, has done a masterful job at moving beyond the abstract and the provocative, making it more grounded and practical. For those to whom the work of Rabbi Friedman is new, prepare to be surprised and delighted — and at times incredulous — as you rethink some of the truths that you have taken for granted.



Passover Parade Takes Place in Toronto on Sunday April 3rd

With Passover taking place this year from the evening of April 15 through April 23, Chabad Lubavitch of Southern Ontario will kick off the celebration with a unique parade of 15 decorated RV campers, led by a mobile LED screen truck broadcasting music and video clips about the Jewish holiday.

As the vehicles — called Mitzvah (Good Deed) Tanks —make their way up Bathurst Street, parade organizers will make stops along the way to hand out hundreds of boxes of matzah (traditional unleavened flat-breads eaten on Passover), and invite passersby into the campers to enjoy educational displays and learn about the holiday. After the conclusion of the Parade the 15 Tanks will take up station at strategic locations around the GTA to continue to distribute holiday guides and Matza.

“Current global events, from the lingering pandemic to the catastrophic situation in Ukraine, can and should be a wake-up call for us all to increase our own acts of loving kindness and goodness. Handwringing aside, there’s always something we can do to add light in the face of darkness to help make our

world a kinder, gentler and holier,” said Rabbi Mendel Kaplan, Spiritual Leader of Thornhill-based Chabad @ Flamingo. “The holiday of Passover recalls and commemorates the Jewish People’s birth as a nation through miraculous redemption from Egyptian slavery more than 3,300 years ago. It’s a perfect opportunity to reflect on the gift of freedom and our innate capacity for selflessness and spirituality by sharing the light and inspiration of the holiday in the Greater Toronto Area.”

The Toronto initiative is one of dozens of similar parades taking place around the world this Passover honouring the 120th anniversary of the birth of Lubavitcher Rebbe — considered one of the most influential Jewish leaders — with crowds in the tens of thousands expected globally.

According to Shmuly Wudowsky, a 19-year-old student at Yeshivas Lubavitch Toronto, who is spearheading the Toronto parade with his classmate, Kasriel Taurig, after two years of lockdowns, restrictions and school closures, the city of Toronto can use some positivity and encouragement.

Is the Coming of Moshiach an Event or a Process?

Continued from page 2

dark ages of fragmentary thinking. “What’s in it for me” is still at the fore of our motivations. However, this is but the most external layer of the human self. If all aspects of creation ultimately reflect the unity and oneness of their Creator, how much more so the soul of man, which was formed in the image of G-d! Beneath our most external self and its narrow concept of self-fulfillment lies a deeper and truer self. A self that does not define itself in terms of the material and its gratifications, but in terms of its spiritual identity and quintessential function

On this level, self-fulfillment means the fulfillment of one’s *raison d’être*, the purpose to which one was created. It means the deepening of the focus of one’s life from the superficial and divisive selfish “I” to an “I” that is defined in terms of the unified purpose of all creation.

Skeptic: And what about this “last frontier”? It seems to me that this is the greatest and most difficult challenge of all. We obviously still have a long way to go before the human being redefines his or her identity.

Believer: You’d be right if we were starting from scratch to build a better world. But this is an ongoing process, a process whose realization has been maturing as long as man has walked the earth. Throughout the generations, man’s every positive act has been an assertion of the intrinsic goodness of G-d’s creation. The good which has been achieved has been accumulating, the light intensifying and the darkness fading away. We are therefore in the position of a

“midget standing on the shoulders of a giant,” of a bricklayer setting the final brick of a magnificent mansion. The coming of Moshiach will not “change” the world any more than the final straw breaks the camel’s back or the 212th degree of heat boils the water in the kettle.

Skeptic: Nevertheless, when you speak of Moshiach you mean more than a gradual change for the better. You do speak of an “event,” of some point in time at which a certain individual, Moshiach, arrives on the scene and effects some very marked changes in the way things are.

Believer: Certainly. Let’s go back to that final straw or that final increment of heat. The transformation is achieved by the combined effect of all the stalks of straw in the load and all the calories of heat produced by the fire. And yet, it is that final cumulative increment that serves as the catalyst for the change to actually take place.

Skeptic: But why must it be this way? Why must we be in the dark, unable to truly see the fruits of our labor until the entire “process” is complete?

You are forever comparing good and evil to light and darkness. So why can’t we actually see the light growing brighter and brighter? Why must darkness prevail until some “critical mass” of good has accumulated?

Believer: Ah, the dream of every man! To know everything, including the ending! To make sense of it all, to see the pieces of the puzzle falling into place! But if each positive act on our part would translate immediately into a perceptible change for the better on the universal scale, would we be faced with any real

choices on how to lead our lives? To do good and to refrain from evil would be as obvious as the need to eat and to protect oneself from danger. Man would be little more than a trained hamster who jumps through a hoop for the anticipated morsel or a cow who learns to avoid the electric fence.

G-d created man to be His “partner in creation,” not a robot who follows a predictable course through a programmed life. So he placed us in a world in which chance and haphazardness superimpose the order and meaning implicit in our lives. In such a world, we are truly partners to His endeavor, “creators” as He is a creator: our efforts to move the world toward the fulfillment of His plan in creation are products of our choice and volition. We choose whether to live our lives by instinctive reaction to the material reality, or to use our capacity for insight and abstraction to see beyond the surface reality to our underlying purpose and mission.

So this is the way it must be. Until the moment that the accomplishments of all generations of history culminate in the fulfillment of the Divine design, they must remain obscured by the veil of darkness and mundanity which conceals the accumulating light.

Skeptic: But you just ruined it all.

Believer: Me?

Skeptic: Yes, you. You messed up the whole Plan. You just explained to me that the whole point is not to know what’s going on. But you’ve been let in on the secret. And you just spilled the beans by telling me. So now it won’t work....

Seder Insights

Continued from page 2

tral the act of storytelling is to who and what we are, to our job to make sense of our world and take it somewhere. Then we got old, and tired, and lazy, saying to ourselves: “What is, is. It means nothing; let it be.”

Which is why we need lots and lots of kids at the seder.

The Pilfering of Infinity
And they embittered their lives with hard labor, with mortar and bricks and in all manner of work in the field; all the work to which they subjected them was crushing labor.

Exodus 1:14
The phrase “crushing labor” (*avodat perech*) appears repeatedly in the Torah’s account of the Egyptian galut (exile and enslavement), in the text of the Haggadah, and in the symbolism of the seder observances.

What is crushing labor? Maimonides defines it as “work that has no limit and no purpose.” Work -- even most difficult work -- that has a defined end-point and a defined objective is not as demoralizing as endless, futile work. The Egyptians, whose aim in enslaving the Jewish people was to break their spirit, refused to impart any schedule, logic, efficiency or utility to their work.

They worked them at the most irrational hours, gave to each of them the task most ill-suited to his or her abilities, and repeatedly destroyed what they had built only to order them to rebuild it again and again.

Pharaoh had whip-wielding taskmasters to enforce his work edict. Today, our world has progressed to the point that millions voluntarily subject themselves to work that has no limit and no purpose: work that spills over from its official work-hours to invade

every moment and thought of the day; work that is dictated not by the capabilities and resources of the worker but by status and vogue; work that is not a means to an end but a “career” -- a self-perpetuating enterprise that becomes its own aim and objective.

(Therein lies the deeper significance of Pharaoh’s decree, “Every son that is born you shall cast into the Nile.” The Nile, which irrigated the fields of rain-parched Egypt, was the mainstay of its economy and therefore its most venerated god. Throwing one’s child into the Nile, in the spiritual sense, means to immerse him in a culture which defies the career -- which worships the earthly vehicles of material sustenance as an end in itself.)

Endless Lives
By nature, the physical self is finite and pragmatic. So what drives it to, and sustains it in, such infinite labor? What can be the source of its perseverance in pursuit of the ever-receding goal of material success?

Such boundless commitment and energy can only have one source: the spark of G-dliness that is the essence of the human soul. Only the soul, which draws upon the infinity of its divine source, can exhibit such vigor; only the soul, whose commitment to its Creator is an end unto itself, not contingent upon enviable goals and calculable objectives, can be the driving force behind work that has “no limit and no purpose.”

The soul of man is thus subjected to a galut within a galut: not only is it prevented from expressing its true self, but it is forced to express itself in ways that are contrary to its true desires. Not only is it constrained by a material self and world -- it also suffers the usurpation of its

quintessential powers to drive the material self’s mundane labors. Not only is the soul’s capacity for infinite and objectiveless commitment inhibited and repressed -- it is distorted into an endless quest for material gain.

The Discipline of Freedom
The road out of Egypt passes through Sinai.

The Torah regulates our involvement with the material world. It instructs that we may -- and should -- work, create, and do business six days a week, but that on the seventh day, not only must all work cease, but we should assume a state of mind in which “all your work is done.” On a daily basis, it tells us to set aside inviolable islands in time devoted to Torah study and prayer. And at all times, a multitude of Torah laws define the permissible and the forbidden in business and pleasure.

The Torah also enjoins us to “eat of the toil of your hands” -- to invest only our marginal faculties in the business of earning a living, leaving our choicest talents free to pursue more spiritual goals. And it insists that all material pursuits should be but a means to an end, but a vessel to receive G-d’s blessings and a tool to aid us in our life’s work of bringing sanctity and G-dliness into our world.

In so restricting our physical lives, the Torah liberates our souls. By limiting the extent and the nature of our material involvements, Torah extricates our capacity for infinite commitment from its material exile, freeing it to follow its natural course: to serve G-d in a manner of “no limit and no purpose” in the positive sense -- in a manner that transcends the parameters of self, self-gain and our very conception of achievement.





Five Ingredients to a Happy Married Life

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

Here are five Torah teachings that can be used to increase Sholom Bias (Marital Harmony):

1. Respect: In Ethics of Our Fathers we learn: “Who is strong? He who controls his inner impulses.”

Respect starts with self-discipline. Put simply: The ability to control one’s own selfish urges. When a person can do this, only then can he or she behave respectfully toward another. Marital respect means setting yourself aside and recognizing your partner’s intrinsic value and then follow with actions that express this belief. A respectful person is a “strong person.”

Examples of “respectful” behavior:

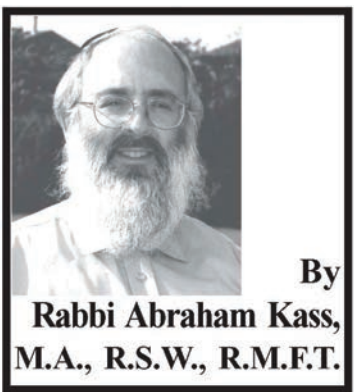
- Let your partner influence you.
- Accept your partner’s right to make decisions.
- Emphasize your partner’s value in speech and deed.

2. Commitment: In the Book of Genesis it says: “...a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave (be one) unto his wife.”

This Torah passage teaches that your marital partner must be the most important person in your life—your number one priority. Taking this position expresses itself through “commitment” to your marital partner. Some individuals find being fully “committed” to one’s marital partner difficult. Being committed to one’s husband or wife over and above parents, friends, work, or selfish personal interests can be challenging. Step back for your busy life and ask your partner: “Do you feel you are the number one person in my life?” If the answer is “no,” ask why. Once you have the answer . . . get to work fixing the problem. Bottom line: A healthy marriage is made up

of two individuals “committed” to each other. This means being “one” with your marital partner.

Examples of “committed” behavior:



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

- Demonstrating loyalty through standing together with your partner during difficult times.

- Daily, choosing, with speech and deed, your partner, as the most valued person in your life.

- Feeling your partner’s pain as your pain.

- Staying far away from wrong relationships.

3. Caring: In Vayikra it says: “You should love your neighbor like yourself (*Ahavat Yisroel*).”

You have a unique relationship with your marital partner that is unlike that of anyone else’s. Often, you are the *only* person that can perform a particular *Ahavat Yisroel Mitzvah*, a simple act of kindness, for the benefit of your spouse—and it is your obligation to do so. Your responsibility to care for your husband or wife supersedes your own personal feelings (as do all *Mitzvos*). For many, the proper fulfillment of this *Mitzvah* requires “caring” even during those times when you don’t feel like it. A healthy marital relationship requires “caring” all through the marriage. The *Ahavat Yisroel Mitzvah* is the foundation of Torah and the foundation of a healthy marriage.

Examples of “caring” behavior:

- Warmly greeting your partner.
- Nurturing your partner.
- Comforting in sickness or emotional distress.

- Expressing your appreciation for what your partner does for you.

4. Closeness: The Torah Commands us to affirm our fundamental relationship with G-d by reciting twice daily, the “*Shema Yisroel*.”

Shema means to listen, or more precisely to *comprehend*. Through “listening” we come close to Hashem—an important goal in saying the *Shema*. So too, listening can bring a husband and wife close to each other. It is human nature to want to feel understood—especially by one’s marital partner. Effective listening is one of the most powerful relationship tools that can be used to achieve relationship closeness. However, “listening” is a special skill that for many people requires practice and effort. The letters that spell “listen” are the same letters that spell “silent.” Effective listening requires setting aside judgment, commentary, and advice—being silent—and just hearing what your partner says. Listening creates a safe and supportive relationship where your partner can express dreams, fears, and goals. This will lead to feelings of closeness for both the listener and the speaker. Feeling close keeps the marriage healthy.

Tips on how to be an effective “listener”:

- Don’t interrupt when your partner speaks.
- Let your partner know that you have “listened” by summarizing what you heard.
- Ask your partner questions about how he or she feels.

5. Accepting differences: In the book of Deuteronomy, before Moshe died he blessed each of the twelve tribes. The tribe of Zevulun was blessed with, “going out.” The tribe of Issachar was blessed with, “in your tents.”

Members of Zevulun where merchants and members of Issachar were Torah scholars—one opposite from the other. Each tribe had very different responsibilities, life styles, and needs. Yet they were instructed to “work together” in harmony. Zevulun was told to support Issachar’s Torah learning, whereas Issachar was to share the rewards of their learning with Zevulun. You are very different from your marriage partner—in many different ways and for many different reasons. Yet marital success requires you “accept” these differences and work together to successfully build your family. Marital success does not depend on being the same; rather it depends on discovering the value in diversity.

Examples of using differences to increase marital success:

- Valuing that you and your partner have different talents and letting this knowledge lead to delegating primary responsibilities according to individual strengths (parenting, finances, problem solving, etc.).

- Avoid attempts to make your partner like yourself.

- Praising your partner for his or her special talents or efforts.

From Catholic Woman to Chassidic Scholar

Continued from page 16

energy,” worked in the Career Center at Pace University for ten years. She now teaches at Monsey Bais Chaya Mushka high school, near her home in Pomona, NY. Ani and Zechariah have four children, ages 18 months through eight years old.

Ani is inspired by learning Torah, especially Chasidic philosophy, or Chasidut, and applying it to aspects of daily life. At her own website, geulavision.com, and YouTube channel, Geulavision, she and guest lecturers share Chasidic insights with an eye to practical application.

In what may be her crowning achievement thus far – aside from her beautiful family – Ani recently published a book, **Tanya Companion**, based on the seminal work of Chabad Chasidic philosophy, Tanya, by **Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi**. Tanya Companion takes the reader through the daily portion of

Each one of these five characteristics of a healthy marriage is supported or sabotaged by any one of the other four. For example, a relationship with not enough “closeness,” can cause a deficiency in “commitment.”

Establishing a healthy relationship almost always requires hard work. Whether “the work” is talking together and sharing feelings, reading books on how to build a harmonious marriage, or consulting with a professional relationship expert, the rewards—Sholom Bais—are worth the effort.

Without Sholom Bais, all other successes; financial, professional, community leadership—although important—will have little personal value. Only a happy marriage creates personal contentment and peace.

Rabbi Abraham Kass, MA, RSW, RMFT., is a registered Social Worker, registered Marriage and Family Therapist, certified Hypnotherapist, and an award-winning educator. He has a clinical practice working with individuals, couples, and families throughout the world. For more information visit his website: www.AbeKass.com.

Tanya in easily understandable English while preserving the Chasidic terminology in its original Hebrew. A thorough glossary helps even the beginning reader understand the concepts.

Pesach: Going Out of Limitations

For Ani, celebrating Pesach as a convert is not about nostalgia or a continuance of family traditions. She focuses on the Exodus from Egypt, Yetziat Mitzrayim, as an opportunity for personal “exodus” from one’s own limitations. (The Hebrew word for Egypt, Mitzrayim, is related to the word for limitations, “metzarim.”)

“Going out of my limitations was all about coming to my essence, coming to my true identity as a Jewish woman,” she said. “Eating matzah is a chance to internalize the truth that none of us is limited by our human narratives.”

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In Memory
By Simcha Wasserman

First time seeing them
together in 28 years;
my father's yarhrzeit, today;
my mother, left to meet him, only weeks ago...

Very nice how they meet and mingle in the holy light
of memorial candles.

My mother, an ascending flame,
My father, steady, waiting; finally able,
To introduce his family lost, before they were married;

May the A-mighty allow all generations, to dwell together,
Not, merely, in the pristine glow of Gan Eden;
But on earth, in the rugged, immortal garden,
Flourishing, fragrant in the wind of the Days to Come....

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From Catholic Woman to Chassidic Scholar

By Tzipora Reitman

Ani is a statistical outlier. She has sustained an 80 pound weight loss for more than a decade, a feat less than three percent of the population can claim. And in her winning essay on ChasidusApplied.com, entitled, “Short but Long: Why Diets and Other Lifestyle Changes Fail,” she explores the Chasidic approach to making life changes last.

Whereas most diets talk about simple approaches (keto, Paleo, and others that tell you what to eat and why and promise the achievement of short-term objectives – feel better! Look great! Improve your health!), they basically consist of a quick and easy fix to symptoms. Almost everything can work for a while, but one day the pressure of repressing our instinctual desires gets to be too much... and one is back to being a statistic.

Ani argues that the only approach that can work in the long term is deeply internalizing why to lose weight. This is an existential why—who am I, what kind of person do I really want to be? It is not a quick process. Yet, as she explains, those who are successful in the long term must be able to tell themselves with conviction, “This is not who I really am! I am not a slave to my cravings. I am not subservient to food.

My truest self is not sluggish or lazy. My truest self is full of life and energy and discipline. My truest self is a part of G-d, and I am ready to honor and



embody that self.”

The Long Road to Change

Indeed, this is an approach that has successfully led Ani through other dramatic life changes. Born to an Italian Catholic family in Binghamton, NY (yet one with little emphasis on religion), Ani briefly attended Sunday school and took her first Communion, until dropping out of church, with no objections from her parents.

Her mother was a full-time homemaker for Ani and her two younger sisters. Her father, a dentist, was more spiritually inclined. Ani listened to New Age music and meditated with him.

When she began middle school, trouble was brewing in the Lucia home. Her father entered rehab for an opioid addiction. Her parents separated and eventually divorced. (Her father recovered, and went on to counsel other dentists with substance abuse problems.)

“The dissolution of my family was very painful,” said Ani.

“I Can’t Live Without You”

Still emotionally raw from her family’s trauma, Ani went off to Ithaca College, where she studied filmmaking and, she said, “made a lot of really bad student films.”

And then she embarked on the “long shorter way.”

Seeking a connection to a Higher Being, she tried living as a hermit in the forest outside the college.

Finally, during the summer between her freshman and sophomore college years, she discovered that she could actually have a rapport with G-d.

“I was in the depths of existential despair,” Ani describes. “I told G-d, ‘I cannot live without You anymore.’ Suddenly I felt as if a veil lifted. I felt myself emerge from the darkness I was in. I was able to see that every aspect of life has a purpose, and that G-d is intimately involved in directing and expressing Himself through everything that exists.”

Her spiritual awakening relieved a lot of her emotional pain, leading her to forgive family members who had caused her trauma. “I realized that G-d had orchestrated everything I had been through, and that I needed to experience it,” she said.

Upon returning to college, Ani continued to seek spirituality, skipping class to meditate in the woods. “While it was sweet floating around the clouds, my deepest self was yearning to get back into the world. My prayers went from begging for transcendence to pleading for a path that would anchor me to this world.”

“Is That a Pickup Line?”

Ani’s prayers were answered, and the path soon emerged, when an acquaintance, **Bradley Lipitz**, invited Ani to a class at a Chabad House taught by **Rabbi Dan Lewin** in Binghamton, her hometown.

Ani was fascinated by Rabbi Lewin’s class, which focused on the concept, “Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the World to Come” from Ethics of the Fathers. The theme resonated with her drive to fuse spirituality with “real life.”

Ani engaged in intense online learning at Chabad.org and started attending Shabbat dinners with the Lewins. “I fell in love with Shabbat. I could actually feel the elevated spiritual consciousness of the day.”

Speaking of love, Bradley was confident that Ani was his soulmate. “He told me that I had a Jewish soul,” said Ani. “Skeptical, I asked him if that was a pickup line. Turns out he was right!”

Ani began to get serious about converting. As a non-Jew, she had the option to simply follow the Noahide Laws, the seven universal laws for all humankind.

“At times during the conversion process, I wondered if I was crazy,” said Ani. “I would be shedding my whole orientation to reality and giving up my family, which by then was in a much healthier state.”

Ultimately, Shabbat was the dealbreaker. “I couldn’t imagine living without Shabbat,” she said. That clinched her decision to become Jewish.

Her fear about losing her family connections turned out

to be unfounded. Since Ani became Jewish, her parents, step-parents, and sisters have been loving and supportive.

Sustaining Change

Less than a year after her conversion, Ani married Bradley, who by then was using his Hebrew name, Zechariah, and was Torah observant. Ani, who had earned a master’s degree in Student Affairs from Binghamton University, and “adores youthful

Continued on page 15

1940...

Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneerson, o.b.m., came to America, to bring the light of Torah and warmth of Mitzvas to a spiritual wasteland.

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Today, the Shluchim, Chassidim and supporters of Chabad Lubavitch are indebted to the Rebbe for his unconditional love towards every Jew, his monumental endeavours on behalf of Klal Yisroel and for having had the opportunity to share in the fulfillment of his vision. We pledge to rededicate ourselves to his teachings and continue his sacred work with renewed enthusiasm and vitality. May we soon witness the rewards of these efforts with the imminent arrival of Mashiach.

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This is to certify that I, the undersigned, fully empower and permit any of the Rabbi's under the administration of Chabad Lubavitch of Ontario, to act in my place and stead and on my behalf to sell all Chometz possessed by me (knowingly or unknowingly) as defined by the Torah and Rabbinic Law, including chometz, doubt of chometz and all forms of chometz mixture. In addition, chometz that tends to harden and adhere to the inside surface of pans, pots or any usable cooking utensil are to be considered as above. I hereby delegate authorization to lease all places wherein the chometz may be found by me, especially in the premises located at:

_____ and elsewhere.

The said Rabbi has the full right to sell and lease by transaction, as he deems fit and proper and for such time which he believes necessary in accordance with all detailed terms and detailed forms as explained in the general authorization contract which the said Rabbi will use to detail the sale of Chometz.

This General authorization is made a part of this agreement. Also do I hereby give the said Rabbi full power and authority to appoint a substitute in his stead with full power to sell and to lease as provided herein. The above given power is in conformity with all Torah, Rabbinical regulations and laws and also in accordance with the laws of the Province of Ontario and the Confederation of Canada.

And to this I hereby affix my signature on this _____ day of _____ in the year 2022.

Name _____ Signature _____

Address _____

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Ani with her husband and children