



# The World of Lubavitch

A publication of Chabad-Lubavitch, Toronto

APRIL 2025

Vol. 52 No. 1 (163)

ADAR 5785



## New Torah Written in Memory of Harav Dovid Schochet

Despite heavy snowfall, the Toronto community gathered to complete and welcome a new Torah scroll written in memory of our long time rabbi, Harav Dovid Schochet A"H. During the preceding weeks the wider community and friends from afar had the opportunity to participate in the mitzvah by purchasing letters, words, verses, etc. In keeping with the Talmudic instruction to adorn mitzvot, the steering committee searched for an outstanding scribe blessed with a clear and crisp script. The chosen scribe, resides in Israel and as such the



Torah was written in Eretz Yisroel.

Writing the final letters, followed by Echaïms was held at the neighboring BAYT Synagogue. Notwithstanding the inclement weather the community showed up en masse to the siyum to witness the final letters being written. This most fitting tribute was spearheaded by Ari Rosenzweig who was honoured to adorn the newly completed Torah with a crown. The custom made silver and gold palted ornament is a replica of the crown on top of the Rebbe's To-

*Continued on page 3*

## And for the Israelites there was light in their midst

By Rabbi Z. Ahron Grossbaum

The Egyptian exodus is hyphenated to Revelation at Sinai, when the Jewish people became a Nation Apart. In addition to embracing Torah and Mitzvot, forging a link with Almighty G-d, they were charged to be a "light unto the nations." Having been liberated and in control of their destiny, the Jews were now expected to take a leading role in promoting the fundamental values of kindness and justice. This responsibility traces its origin back to our Father Abraham, who merited Divine grace because he elected to transmit these virtues to his progeny, as the verse reads, "Can I conceal My intentions from Abraham when I know he will instruct his household to do acts of kindness and uphold justice."

Although offering a helping hand seems rather simple and easily doable, still, to become "a light" and inspiration for others may require some "heavy lifting." Let me explain: after spending some five years in a DP camp my parents and their three infant children were offered an opportunity to settle in Newark, NJ. With very limited resources we didn't have a car and were always at the mercy of others for transportation to Brooklyn, to visit the Rebbe's court. As excited youngsters looking forward to an excursion, we always rushed down to the waiting car. Once my father, alav hashalom, was preoccupied and he kept his dear friend and "personal chauffeur" Rabbi Shalom Gordon waiting. As time went on, his patience was being tested to the limit. Finally he turned to me in the back seat and said, "Doing a favour for another is surely something very special, and that's why it doesn't come easy!" A life message that has stayed with me to this very day.

The new administration south of the 49th parallel has instituted the newly created DOGE and put a shrewd banker to head the department of commerce who is bent on imposing tariffs on all imports from around the world. Naturally, from a national perspective, this may be of merit and aligned with neoconservative values and may be needed to halt the spiraling and growing deficit.

Still, the Baal Shem Tov has taught, that whatever we witness, hear or see, is to serve as a lens and lesson for our personal growth and Divine service. The United States, home to almost 50% of the world Jewish population has been recognized as a Country of Kindness. This moniker was coined by the previous Rebbe of Chabad, Rabbi Yoseph Yitzchak Schneerson upon his arrival at the pier of the New York harbor in 1940. So too, throughout our Rebbe's years of leadership he continued to extoll the virtue of kindness and generosity which are the underpinning of the American way of life. Generosity and philanthropy are entrenched in our psyche and finds expression in the realm of medicine, education, and social welfare. Naturally, these virtues and sensitivity to the needs of others finds expression in all democracies, and certainly amongst us Canucks, who proudly proclaim, we are the North!

So while the general populace seems to be favouring lean governments and some belt tightening, this should not roll over to the private sector. As individuals we are taught and encouraged to be of assistance to others in spite of the prevailing mindset. In fact unstinting generosity is the spiritual currency that sustains the world as the verse reads, *Olam Chessed Yebane*, - Kindness sustains the world. Yes, to do acts of kindness may take extra efforts, but then again the reward is proportionate! Best wishes for a joyous and meaningful Pesach.

# Vaulting, Bounding and Leaping

The name of the holiday Pesach, or Passover, derives from the Hebrew words meaning “and G-d will leap over.”

Rashi explains further: “The festival is called Passover because of [G-d’s] leaping.... Therefore perform all its aspects in a manner of bounding and leaping.”

What is the particular relationship between the holiday that celebrates the Exodus, and bounding and leaping?

The Jewish people lived in Egypt for many generations, eventually descending to a state of slavery. Some became so mired in slavery that when the time came for their liberation they did not want to leave Egypt!

During the period that the Jews were in Egypt, the country was considered to be the most culturally advanced of its time in terms of knowledge, art, technology and philosophy - the things people commonly refer to when they speak of “culture” and “civilization.”

But in terms of morality and ethics, Egypt was the most depraved, degenerate and immoral of lands, so much so that it was known as the “abomination of the earth.”

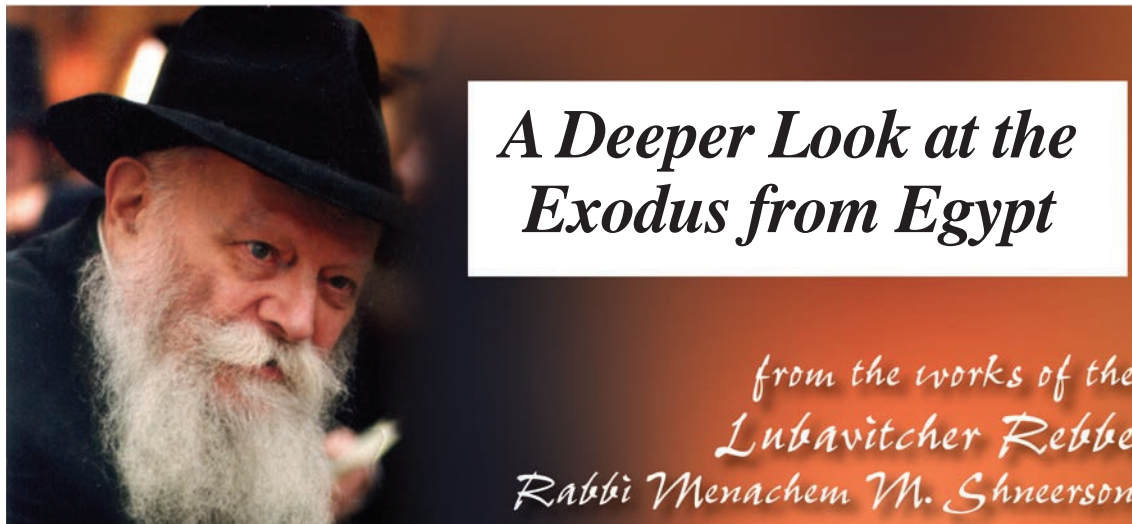
It was from such a land that the Jewish people had to attain complete physical and spiritual freedom, so that soon afterward they would be able to lift themselves to the heights necessary for receiving G-d’s Torah. For the main purpose of the Exodus was the receipt of Torah, as G-d told Moshe: “When you will take the nation out of Egypt, they shall serve G-d upon this mountain [of Sinai].”

Indeed, Rashi notes that it was in merit of their eventual service to G-d at Sinai that the Jewish people were redeemed from exile.

Receiving the Torah from G-d involved the acceptance of all its decrees, beginning with the Ten Commandments, the first of which was: “I am the L-rd your G-d, you shall have no other gods,” and the last of which was: “You shall not covet... anything that belongs to your fellow man.”

These themes of G-d’s absolute unity and the highest degree of ethics and morality in terms of man’s relationship with his fellows stood in stark contrast to the depravity of Egyptian “culture” and “civilization.”

Clearly, departing from such an abject state and achieving true inner freedom to the extent of accepting Torah and Mitzvot before fully comprehending them required the mighty leap of “Passover - in a manner of bounding



and leaping.”

All this began while the Jews were still in Egypt, when G-d told them about the Passover service, including the instruction that the entire service be done “in a manner of bounding and leaping.”

This vaulting manner of service culminated on the first night of Passover, when G-d Himself leapt over the bonds and fetters of exile, revealed Himself to the Jewish people while they were still in Egypt, released them from their captivity and established that from then on their inner state would be one of spiritual freedom.

This Passover theme of vaulting and leaping is fundamental to Jews and Judaism at all times and in all places, and is to be carried through the rest of the year.

We find ourselves exiled in a physical world, with a preponderance of our time required for physical acts such as eating, drinking, sleeping, earning a living, etc. The time remaining for spiritual affairs such as Torah study, prayer and the performance of Mitzvot is thus severely restricted.

Nevertheless, Passover tells us that as Jews we are expected

and empowered to “leap over” all physical and corporeal limitations to attain true spiritual freedom the whole year through.

### Three Matzot and Four Cups of Wine

At the beginning of the Torah portion Va’eira, four expressions are used with regard to the redemption from Egypt: “I will release you... I will save you... I will liberate you... I will take you...”

Our Sages note that the four cups of wine which we drink during the Passover Seder corre-

spond to these four expressions.

Accordingly, the following question arises:

Bearing in mind that we eat Matzah on Passover “because our ancestors were liberated from Egypt,” why do we not eat four Matzot, just as we drink four cups of wine? Why do we take only three Matzot to the Seder?

Evidently, there must be two aspects to the exodus from Egypt, one that is composed of three details and one that is made up of four.

What are these two aspects? At the time the Jewish people departed from Egypt they were not yet spiritually worthy of redemption. In fact, had they remained one more moment in Egypt, they would have become forever mired in impurity.

Notwithstanding their state of depravity, G-d in His infinite kindness revealed Himself to them and redeemed them.

This is why the completion of the exodus came about only when the Jews received the Torah, for complete liberation from Egypt required that the newborn nation rid itself of Egyptian impurity.

This was accomplished as the Jews prepared themselves in the days between the exodus and

*Continued on page 10*



## Do We Want Moshiach Now?

By Reuven Leigh

*From the time that I was a child attending cheder, and even earlier than that, there began to take form in my mind a vision of the future redemption: the redemption of Israel from its last exile, redemption such as would explicate the suffering, the decrees and the massacres of exile.*

—The Rebbe, in a 1956 letter to Israeli President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi

At the conclusion of the Seder, Jews throughout the world will proclaim their desire to celebrate next Passover in Jerusalem. But will we really mean it?

Whether we encounter Jewish liturgy on a daily basis or once a year at our family Seder, we’ve all come across this suggestion: we’re supposed to want Moshiach now. This messianic ambition is embedded at the center of religious life. Yet, there is possibly no other tenet of Jewish thought that is more mystifying. For many, the promise of a messianic era remains a bewilderingly foreign concept, tangential to our understanding of Judaism.

Whereas we might struggle to articulate an affirmative account of Jewish messianism, we inherit plenty of opinions about what Jewish messianism is not. Discussions on the idea of Moshiach invariably focus on historical figures and the catastrophic effects provoked by pretenders to the crown. As a result of the false messianic claims of Shabbatai Zvi and Jacob

Frank, any attempt at a meaningful enquiry into Jewish messianism is often treated with suspicion. To put it in a more forthright manner, as a result of so many prior upheavals, the Jewish mainstream is heavily defended against messianic speculations.

This poses a particular challenge to those of us who

have been tasked with disseminating Jewish and Chasidic thought. The Rebbe’s teachings and directives aimed to bring messianic consciousness to the fore of Jewish life. Moreover, the Rebbe emphasized that the very purpose of Chasidic thought in general, and Chabad thought in particular, was to imbue Judaism with messianic awareness,

*Continued on page 10*



**ON OUR COVER**  
**“Fateful Holiday - Passover”:**  
 By Israeli artist **Elena Kotliarker**  
 Part of a four part painting depicting four Biblical Jewish holidays, this one captures, in bright vibrant colours, the festival of Passover. One can see scenes of the exodus/crossing the sea, Miriam leading the women in a song of thanksgiving, the seder and more.  
 You can see more of the artists breathtaking work at:  
 Website: [elenakotliarker.com](http://elenakotliarker.com)  
 Facebook: [facebook.com/elena.kotliarker](https://www.facebook.com/elena.kotliarker)

**The World of Lubavitch Chabad Lubavitch of Ontario**

**A Publication of Chabad-Lubavitch**  
 770 Chabad Gate  
 Thornhill, Ontario  
 L4J 3V9  
 (905) 731-7000  
[www.chabad.ca](http://www.chabad.ca)

**Editor:**  
 Rabbi Moshe Spalter

**Associate Editor:**  
 Rabbi Z.A. Grossbaum

**Advertising:**  
 Rabbi Moshe Spalter

**Design:**  
 Meir Szarfer

**Circulation: 5000**  
**Subscriptions: \$10 yearly**  
 \$5 per copy  
**SPRING 2024**

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

<b>Rabbi Z. Aaron Grossbaum</b> Executive Vice-President	<b>Rabbi Sholom Ber Bakshi</b> Chabad of Woodbridge	<b>Rabbi Mendel Kaplan</b> Chabad @ Flamingo
<b>Rabbi Vidal Bekerman</b> Chabad at York	<b>Rabbi Mendel Bernstein</b> Chabad of Richmond Hill	<b>Rabbi Yisroel Landa</b> Israeli Community Services
<b>Rabbi Tzali Borenstein</b> Chabad of Durham	<b>Rabbi Tzali Borenstein</b> Chabad of Durham	<b>Rabbi Sholom Lezel</b> Chabad of the Beaches
<b>Rabbi Mendel Chaikin</b> Chabad of Downtown	<b>Rabbi Nechemia Deitsch</b> Chabad of Midtown	<b>Rabbi Mendel Nakkor</b> Chabad of Barrie
<b>Rabbi Yechezkel Deren</b> Chabad of Maple	<b>Rabbi Yoseph S. Gansburg</b> Education	<b>Rabbi Avrohom E. Plotkin</b> Chabad of Markham
<b>Rabbi Levy Gansburg</b> Chabad Bayview York Mills	<b>Rabbi Menachem Gansburg</b> Chabad on the Avenue	<b>Rabbi Chanoch Rosenfeld</b> Chabad of Hamilton
<b>Rabbi Moshe Goldman</b> Chabad of Waterloo	<b>Rabbi Yitzhak Grossbaum</b> Camp Gan Israel	<b>Rabbi Mordechai Silberberg</b> Chabad of London
<b>Rabbi Yitzhak Grossbaum</b> Camp Gan Israel	<b>Rabbi Mendel Grossbaum</b> Chabad of Newmarket	<b>Rabbi Yisroel Simon</b> Chabad of Kingston
<b>Rabbi Shmuel Grossbaum</b> Chabad of the East Side	<b>Rabbi Yossi Hecht</b> Chabad of Aurora	<b>Rabbi Yitzchok Slavin</b> Chabad of Mississauga
		<b>Rabbi Moshe S. Spalter</b> Administrator & Media
		<b>Rabbi Moshe E. Steiner</b> Chabad of Uptown
		<b>Rabbi Rafi Steiner</b> Chabad of Guelph
		<b>Rabbi Yoseph Y. Zaltzman</b> Russian Community Services
		<b>Rabbi Zalman Zaltzman</b> Chabad of Niagara
		<b>Rabbi Zevi Kaplan</b> Chabad of Innisfil
		<b>Rabbi Daniel Blotner</b> Chabad of Etobicoke

## New Torah Written

Continued from page 1

rah which he held while dancing on Simchat Torah.

The large assembly braved the cold, wind, and falling sleet, to parade joyously and dance as the Torah, under a canopy, was paraded down the snow covered streets to the shul at Chabad Gate where Harav Schochet led

serve as the Rebbe's shlichim. They set up their home in the Downsview section of the city, where they quickly set about establishing a shul and Talmud Torah.

Twenty-five years later, when the Chabad Lubavitch Organization obtained a 3 acre parcel of land and established a presence in the fledgling suburb



Ari Rosenzweig placing the crown on the Torah

the community for four decades. In accordance with tradition all the Torah scrolls were taken out to the entrance to welcome the new addition, and the celebration continued with the traditional Hakafof with the added feature of live music. The day long celebration concluded with a festive meal.

The event was held on Sunday, 18 Shvat a day before Rabbi

just north of the city, the Schochet's packed their bags and moved north to the relatively undeveloped area of Thornhill. Harav Schochet served in Toronto as rov and mara d'asra of the Chabad community, as well as a halachic decisor for the wider Toronto community. Notwithstanding his scholarship the rav was known for his compassion and sensitivity to-



Schochet's first yahrtzeit, 19 Shvat, 5785. Shortly after their wedding, Harav Schochet and his wife moved to Toronto to

wards the downtrodden. People from all walks of life turned to Rabbi Schochet for guidance, and cherished his blessing.

## The Sam Ganz Men's Mikvah Nears Completion

The dictionary defines the word Chassid as; a pious individual, a person that goes beyond the norm, and often an affiliate of a Chassid sect. Although the noun describing the religiously devout finds its origin in biblical scriptures, it became commonly used to identify the disciples of the saintly masters of the late eighteenth century; Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shemtov and Rabbi Dov Ber the Magid of Mezrich. Rabbi Dov Ber encouraged his prized students to settle in towns and villages throughout Ukraine and White Russia and start communities there. Upon arrival at their ordained destination, an aura of holiness permeated their surrounding which drew ordinary folks to their court. They preached and practiced with fervor having studied the esoteric dimension of Torah under the guidance of the noted Magid. So too, they encouraged their followers to take a leap of faith and embrace the customs and conduct that until then were the domain of only a few, who intergraded different and diverse rituals and patch quilted them into their ritual routine.

Soon after, with the advent of Chassidic courts throughout Eastern Europe that broadly mirrored each other, there emerged a common framework that

put emphasis on exuberant prayer, doing mitzvot with passion, and staying anchored to traditional values by maintaining a wardrobe that remained fixed.

Amongst the more prominent and prevailing customs amongst Chassidim, is, daily immersion in a Mikvah before morning prayers. While halachically there is no obligation to do so, still it is one of the three suggested prerequisites to prepare for proper devotion in prayer. The other two are, the study of Chassidic literature and giving Tzedaka to the poor, all three

Zalman Grossbaum noted, that the late Mr. Ganz had a connection and appreciation for Chassidim and merited to maintain a life-long connection with the Rebbe of Krechinov.

With the incredible growth of the Thornhill community and more people embracing daily mikvah immersion, it was high time for an enlarged facility. When the women's mikvah moved over to its brand new home in its own building on the Chabad Lubavitch campus in Thornhill, the area which it had occupied became available for a larger



set the stage for meaningful encounter with the Creator.

Currently, Chabad Lubavitch is in the throes of completing a new and enlarged men's Mikvah. The spacious facility will be dedicated in memory of Mr. Sam Ganz, a long-time supporter of Chabad Lubavitch. Indeed, Rabbi

men's Mikvah. The state of the art facility features a larger mikvah pool, a bank of 8 shower stalls, heater floor, and more change room space. The turnstile entry access is maintained by high tech technology that reads fingerprints, and provides self-service membership renewals.

## King Charles III Coronation Medal Awarded

Mrs. Esther Grossbaum, Shlucha to Southern Ontario, for over 50 years, was amongst the 27 recipients awarded by Melissa Lantsman, MP for Thornhill the King Charles III Coronation Medal. While making the presentation Mellisa stated, "It is my privilege to celebrate a select few individuals from our community by awarding this citation. Although today's honourees come from many different fields, backgrounds and walks of life, they are united by one thing: their service to our community and their desire to help others. It is this

unique spirit of service, sacrifice, and selflessness that truly makes us Canadian. By devoting time, talent and treasure to help those in need and by looking out for others besides themselves, they leave a strong legacy for generations to come."

In presenting the Medal to Esther Grossbaum, Mellisa thanked her for her involvement and leadership role at Chabad and initiating the Friendship Circle program in Toronto some twenty years ago. The ceremony was held



Esther Grossbaum receives a medal from MP Melissa Lantsman

Sunday, March 16, with family and friends in attendance.

The Friendship Circle is all about sensitivity, altruism, and community. This spectacular program provides the valuable gift of friendship to children, teens and young adults with special needs. It is a priceless gift that every person deserves. The primary program which was first launched by Chabad in Detroit, Michigan some thirty years ago pairs teenagers with a special needs

youngster, who then meet and interact on a weekly basis.

It is always good to network and exchange ideas, but for the moms of children with special needs, the interaction is a breath of fresh air. This is noticeable at the weekly drop-off and pick-up for the Sunday morning program when the parents stop and chat, albeit for just a few minutes. Indeed, this was the impetus for the Friendship Circle to add the periodic Mom's Night Out, to the growing roster of programs. Getting

Continued on page 4



## In Aruba, Chabad Assists in Purim Miracle at Sea

**Rabbis provide crucial support after Jewish tourists become lost at sea**

By Tzali Reicher

In a dramatic turn of events, two Jewish tourists were rescued off the coast of Aruba by the Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard after a jet ski excursion went awry on



One of the tourists is airlifted to safety.

March 11. Chabad-Lubavitch of Aruba, led by Rabbi Ahron and Chaya Blasberg and their team, played a pivotal role in coordinating the rescue efforts and providing assistance to the stranded visitors.

The incident began around 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday March 11 when two of three friends from Rockland County, N.Y., on vacation flipped their jet ski far from shore. As one at-

tempted to help the other, large waves separated them from both watercraft, leaving them stranded and drifting apart in the open water as daylight began to fade. Meanwhile, the friend who had stayed behind grew concerned when he didn't hear from the men. Family members in the United States soon shared his worry.

With the help of friends, the family quickly connected with Chabad of Aruba. "We received a call as evening approached from a family member of one of the missing men, and immediately mobilized our local contacts to assist," says Rabbi Blasberg.

What could have ended tragically was averted thanks to quick thinking by the jet ski rental company, which contacted the Coast Guard directly rather than following the standard procedure of calling local police first. This decision proved crucial, expediting the rescue operation by over an hour, ensuring the search began while it was still light outside and before the setting sun made search and rescues exponentially more difficult.

After several hours, both men were found miraculously a short while apart in good condition, alive and showing signs of shock and cold, but no hypothermia.

## King Charles III Medal Awarded

Continued from page 3

Night Out, to the growing roster of programs. Getting together as a group is not only helpful on the practical level but is also therapeutic. The attendees have the opportunity to share concerns, recount achievements, and exchange ideas in a relaxed setting. The program usually includes an inspirational speaker and giveaways.

Monday, March 27, the moms gathered for an evening where each one created a resin Seder plate, which

they each took home to use at the Pesach Seder. The participants enjoyed light refreshments, which included wine and a cheese charcuterie board. The board's accompaniments comprised crackers, olives, fresh fruits and nuts, thus creating a splash of colour. The success of the event was best summarized by Jason's mom who told Goldy that she is looking forward to many more evenings of this nature, saying, "us Mom's need a night out more often."

"It's a real Purim miracle that this story ended as well as it thankfully did," says Rabbi Levi Bisk of Toronto, a member of the Chabad of Aruba

team. "Generally speaking, people lost in the water are not found alive, if they are found at all. I can't overstate how many miracles we saw here."



Rabbi Levi Bisk teaches Hebrew to Jewish children in Aruba.

## A Little Boy Who Lit up His Town A preschooler's insistence for representation changes the holiday season for his town.

By Ashira Weiss

Five-year-old Brandon Rein was done.

He clicked the yellow lego piece into place atop his carefully constructed menorah and sat back to survey his handiwork. His winter scene looked perfect. The houses were topped with snow, and his menorah stood tall, the shamash aglow with a special lego light.

That's when he noticed it. Through his living room window, he could see the annually decorated tree at the crest of the hill, just inside the entrance of the Chadwick Lake Park. But something was missing. "How come the park has a tree and no menorah?" he asked his dad, David. Impressed with his son's thoughtfulness, David said, "Maybe you should ask the man who takes care of the parks."

David had grown up in Newburgh, New York, alongside Rob Petrillo, who was now the city's Recreation Department Commissioner. So David made a call, and the next day, father and son paid Rob a visit.

"Why is there no menorah in Chadwick Lake Park next to the tree?" Brandon asked the commissioner. Rob was stumped. "Well," he said, "if we purchase a menorah, will you take responsibility for lighting it?" And that's how one little boy lit up his city.

For the last thirteen years, Brandon, his brother Noah, and his sister Chelsea, have lit the public menorah on each of the eight nights of Chanukah. Sneaking into the park after nightfall may be something that other kids do for mischief, but for these

three children, their dad, and their mom Aileen, this has become a holiday tradition borne with pride.

"It's worked out well for our community," David says. "We've had Jews unaffiliated with any religious organization reach out and join us for the menorah lighting." With a population of 28,000, David estimates that Newburgh, a small city in Upstate

Following their rescue, the tourists were airlifted to the local hospital where Chabad representatives were waiting for them with fresh kosher meals.

Chabad of Aruba, established 11 years ago, serves the several hundred Jewish people that live on the island year-round, and the tens of thousands of tourists that pass through annually. The Chabad center is located within walking distance of major hotels in the Palm Beach area. In February 2024, the Blasbergs were joined by their sister and brother-in-law, Rabbi Levi and Mimi Bisk, who have helped run Chabad operations on the island since.

been in touch with officials at public spaces in the group of small towns all around East Orange and none of the others had a menorah, so how had this one come about?"

The Serebryanskis eventually met up with the Reins, and the families have been friends ever since.

"Brandon is an incredible young man," says Rabbi Shmuel. "He was our first



Brandon, Noah, and Chelsea Rein lighting the Town of Newburgh Chanukah Menorah at Chadwick Lake Park (2016)

New York, is home to around 600 Jewish families.

When Rabbi Shmuel and Faige Serebryanski, Chabad representatives to East Orange County first arrived in the area ten years ago they reached out to the Recreation Department of Newburgh, for permission to put up a public menorah in Chadwick Lake Park. "We already have one," they told him. "And the local Jew lights it." "I was surprised," Rabbi Shmuel shared. "We had

CTeen leader."

Brandon is now at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, studying biochemistry with aspirations of becoming a doctor. He returns home for Chanukah in order to ensure that the Chadwick Lake Park menorah continues to shine. "At the time I didn't really understand the significance," he reflects. "I just knew that it was my park and that I wasn't represented. Now it's something I'm very proud of."



## Chinese Translation Requested by the Rebbe Hits the Shelves

By Menachem Posner

Forty years ago, an American professor traveling in Asia wrote a letter to the Rebbe about his encounter with locals eager to learn more about their Jewish heritage. The Rebbe instructed his staff to charge a certain traveling busi-



Matt Trusch delivers a copy to the Rebbe's library in Brooklyn.

nessman with the task of compiling a list of Jewish works to consider translating into Chinese, and to oversee their subsequent publication.

The businessman was Rabbi Fishel Katz, a dealer of gemstones who traveled the globe. An emissary of the Rebbe, Katz used his business trips and extensive contacts to also fulfill missions for the Rebbe, including printing Tanyas in Africa and across the Far East, arranging holiday services in distant communities, and, of course, organizing Jewish programs in his hometown of Miami.

Katz eagerly submitted his recommendations, and the Rebbe confirmed his selection—two books containing many fundamental Jewish concepts, both written by Dr. Nissan Mindel, a noted scholar and aide to the Rebbe: *The Divine Commandments*, a brief treatise organized into seven segments, and *My Prayer*, a much longer book that explains the function and significance of Jewish prayers.

Katz immediately contacted David Buxbaum, a lawyer based in Asia who was fluent in Chinese, to prepare the translation of *The Divine Commandments*, and by 1989, the pair presented the Rebbe with a Chinese edition of the treatise.

But *My Prayer* proved to be more of a challenge. The text was much longer, and delays cropped

up. Katz doggedly refused to give up, and in the early 1990s he proudly submitted a translation of 86 pages to the Rebbe. But the draft remained unedited and uncompleted for decades.

For the final push, he needed the assistance of Mattisyahu Trusch, a Jewish Texan, entrepreneur, and real-estate fund manager trained at Harvard in Chinese Studies, who was spearheading a translation of the Tanya along with native speaker Elisheva Martinetti.

When Trusch learned of the Rebbe's outstanding request for a Chinese edition of *My Prayer*, he enlisted the help of translator Aaron Yehoshua Ben Avraham in Israel to complete and prepare the manuscript for publication.

The decades of effort have finally come to fruition, and the 272-page hardback is now available, published by the Kehot Publication Society—their first Chinese language offering. Chabad.org is also publishing an e-version online, affording Chinese readers across the globe free access to this classic work on Jewish prayer.

"Every Jewish home should own at least two Chinese copies of *My Prayer*," says Trusch with pride, "one to show off on your coffee table, and one to give to a Chinese-speaking colleague or friend."

While publishing Torah in Chinese is now picking up steam, the Rebbe's interest in the matter is nearly 80 years old. In a post-war 1946 letter written to yeshiva students living in Shanghai, the Rebbe encouraged them to find out if there were any local Jews who could only speak Chinese, and if so to translate pamphlets on Shabbat, tefillin, and the Torah for them.

The Rebbe also taught that translating Torah texts into different languages elevates each language and brings it into the realm of holiness.

"The Rebbe had the foresight to see that there would one day be an international market for books about Jewish culture and traditions in Chinese," remarks Trusch, "and it is humbling and exhilarating to bring this effort to fruition, hopefully increasing global awareness of the Torah's universal values, and bringing us one step closer to the Ultimate Redemption."

## 4,000 Jewish Teens Say: "We Are the Persevering Nation" Chabad's CTeen Shabbaton Brings Jewish Pride to Times Square



By Tzemach Feller

With the giant screens perched above Manhattan's Theater District flashing images of their beaming faces, thousands of Jewish teens radiated contagious joy as they danced to the music and declared, "We are not the persecuted nation. We are the persevering nation."

Alan Krasnov, a twelfth grader from Buenos Aires, Argentina who has few Jewish classmates back home never felt more comfortable. "I'm usually explaining who I am and why I do things differently," he said. "Tonight, no explanations were needed."

Krasnov joined four thousand precocious teens who met up in New York the Shabbat of March 1st for the annual CTeen Shabbaton, a weekend of inspiration and bonding that culminates in a Havdalah ceremony and concert in Times Square.

With 841 chapters around the globe, Chabad's CTeen is the largest network of Jewish teenagers in the world. Eli Tzives connected with CTeen in Shanghai, China, before coming to the U.S. for college. After a video of his confrontation with masked, anti-Israel protestors at UCLA went viral, messages of support poured in from other teens who'd faced antisemitism.

After a year of adversity, says Eli, "I realized I wasn't alone—and none of you are alone either." Speaking at the weekend's closing event, he added, "Even one small flame can light up a whole room of darkness. That's why I'll never hide my Jewish star. I'll never hide my face."

Her hometown of Asheville, North Carolina, devastated by Hurricane Helene, Rosemary Acker and other Jewish teens joined Chabad of Asheville in volunteering to clean up homes and lift up their community. "Being a proud Jew isn't only about what you say," Rosemary told the crowd. "It's about the way you show up. Want to fight hate?" she challenged her peers. "Do something helpful. Visit a hospital, help rebuild a house, hang a mezuzah. Show what being Jewish looks like through action."

And speaking for his peers from São Paulo, Brazil, Rafael Heilborn, an eleventh grader, said: "This year, especially, we all feel how important it is to stand proud. The world is watching how young Jews respond—and this Shabbaton is our answer. We're proud, we're united, and we're bringing that strength back home."

### SUE'S

THORNHILL  
FRUIT MARKET LTD.  
7241 Bathurst Street  
905-731-2132/3

Quality Fruit &  
Vegetables

Fresh Cut Flowers and  
Potted Plants  
Have a Happy Passover!

### MY ZAIDY'S PIZZA-FALAFEL



441 Clark Ave. W.  
(Spring Farm Plaza) Thornhill

(905) 731-3029  
We Deliver

HAVE A HAPPY PASSOVER!

...SO MANY FANTASTIC  
BOOKS, VIDEOS AND TAPES;  
YOU'LL WANT TO  
BORROW THEM ALL!!

(You can, a few at a time.)

THE JERRY AND FANNY GOOSE  
JUDAICA LIBRARY  
at the Chabad Lubavitch Community Center

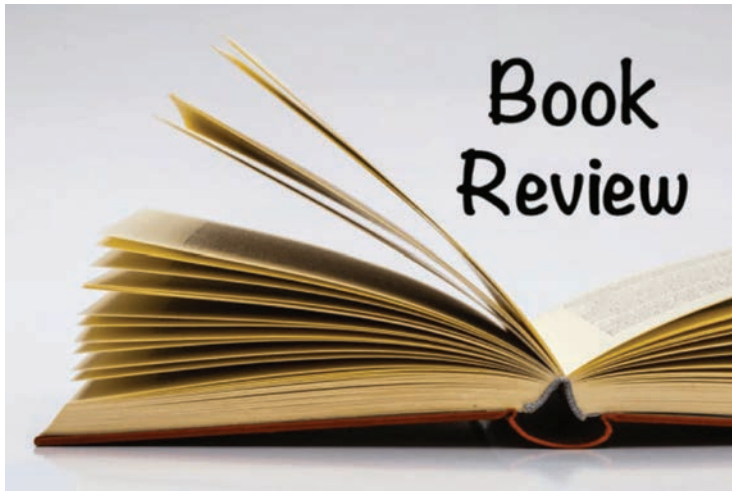
- Books, videos & Torah tapes •
- Large selection of children's books, videos & tapes •

OPEN:

Sunday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm  
Monday & Wednesday 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

905-731-7000 ext. 231





An anthology of the classic Poem Aishes Chayil, written by King Solomon to honor the Jewish woman.

A beautifully illustrated coffee table book exploring the 22 verses in the poem. Drawing on commentary from the Midrash, Talmud, classic Rabbinic texts, and Chabad Chasidus. This work is a magnificent historical study of the women heroines in the biblical texts, all of whom are alluded to in the text of Aishes Chayil.

Soon to be published by Kehot Publications copyright 2025.

260 pages illustrated by Lia Baratz, the book will be available at Kehot.com and at your favorite bookstore soon.

We present an excerpt of the introduction for your enjoyment:

Many have waxed poetic about the unlikely survival of the Jewish people, and as many theories have been proposed to solve the mystery.

Yet perhaps the answer has been hiding in plain sight: the Eishet Chayil, the Jewish woman.

***At every critical juncture of our long and challenging history, you will find the fearless and wise Eishet Chayil, shepherding us towards our destiny.***

The arc of Jewish history can be seen as a drama in four acts. In each one, the Eishet Chayil is at the forefront:

- 1) The Exodus
- 2) Receiving the Torah
- 3) Entering the Land of Israel
- 4) Ultimate Redemption.

**From Egypt to Sinai**  
ותקם בעוד לילה

During the Egyptian exile, as despair sets in among the men, the Eishet Chayil remains the master of hope. The Jewish women overcome the malaise that had gripped their husbands and gently coax them into having more children, the multitudes that will leave Egypt in the Exodus. In the merit of the righteous women, the Jews are liberated from the Egyptian bondage and head to Sinai. There they will receive their mandate, the life manual for the Jewish people and for the entire world.

At Sinai, G-d instructs Moses to speak to the women first, and only then to the men. Not only will the Eishet Chayil be the sole determinant in the Jewish status of the children—regardless of the father's status—she will ensure that the Torah is kept and followed for generations. The Jewish women will carry the foundation of Judaism, pure and unshakeable faith in G-d, upon which all of Torah rests.

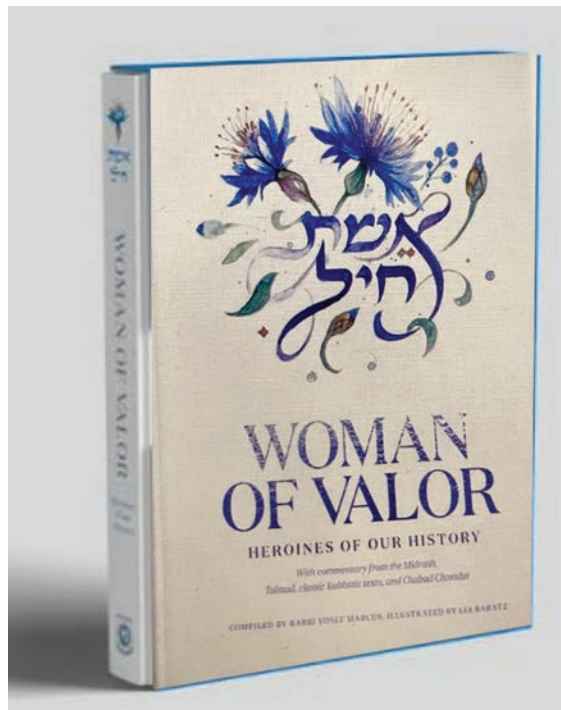
It wouldn't take long for this faith to be put to the test. Despite the unprecedented Divine revelation at Sinai, the people soon gather gold to form a Golden Calf. The men donate in a frenzy, but the women remain unmoved.

Yet later, when fundraising would begin to build a Tabernacle for G-d's presence, the women are the first to contribute, surpassing the donations of the men. They put their heart and soul into making a "dwelling for Divinity" out of the physical realm, a microcosm of the *raison*

d'etre of all existence.

### Entering the Land זממה שדה

When Moses returns with a new set of Tablets and G-d's forgiveness, the Jews are ready to move on, to Canaan. There they will implement Torah in the land that G-d had promised. The men hesitate and fumble. They accept the pessimistic report of the spies—all men—that the land is unconquerable. They believe that Torah only works in an environment detached from human living, that they must remain in the desert to remain a spiritual people.



The women reject the report, and the pessimism. Their faith in G-d's promise is never shaken. And in their view, the material world poses no contradiction to G-dly life.

It was Sarah, the first Eishet Chayil of our people, who took the initial step to actualize G-d's promise of the land. She identified the Cave of Machpelah for purchase and encouraged Abraham to buy it. This was the first act of Jewish ownership in the Land of Israel. Sarah's great-granddaughters follow in her path, rejecting the report of the spies, and, like the daughters of Tzefafchad, show great affection for the Promised Land.

The men of the Exodus generation are barred from crossing the Jordan because of their lack of faith. But the women who left Egypt and danced at the sea merit to enter the Land.

### Home & Exile נטעה כרם

After eight and half centuries in the Holy Land, the Jewish people are exiled to Babylon, where after seventy years, they face a plot of complete annihilation. A woman named Esther restores their relationship with G-d and facilitates G-d's miraculous rescue.

The Temple is rebuilt and many Jews return to their homeland. When the Assyrian Greeks begin to oppress the Jewish population, the Maccabees rise up to fight, culminating in the miracles of Chanukah. This unlikely uprising is inspired by the women, and it is a woman named Yehudit whose heroism saves the day.

The second Temple stands for 420 years, and once again the Jews are exiled. For thousands of years, they move from land to land, taking the light of Torah "on the road," testifying to the world by their existence and by their morality that the world has a Creator, that the world was created with purpose.

### Yearning for Return לא יכבה בלילה נרה

They face persecution, but also times of prosperity and the allure of assimilation. Yet through it all, they never forget the promise conveyed by their prophets of old—the promise of days when nation will not lift sword against nation, when humans will not hunger for bread nor thirst for water, but to hear the sublime words of their Creator.

Throughout this exile, their matriarch Rachel, buried alone at the side of the road in Bethlehem, cries out on their behalf. Her tears and prayers preserve the inherent and critical unity of the Jewish people and prevent it from unraveling. By her merit, they receive a taste of the consolation they will one day receive in full, like drops of water for a parched traveler, enabling them to survive the Exile.

Wherever they wander—from Barcelona to Berlin, from Aleppo to Amsterdam—their eyes and hearts face Jerusalem. At every wedding, they break a glass, declaring their celebration incomplete as long as G-d's revealed presence has not returned to Jerusalem.

Even in their darkest moments, when the sword is literally upon their throats, they declare: *"I believe in the coming of Mashiach... I await him, every day..."*

### Catalysts of Redemption ותשחק ליום אחרון

And who is the catalyst behind this yearning, the tenacious belief that, despite everything, the world is G-d's world, and so it must be, at its core, a place of goodness? The Eishet Chayil. And just as the women were first to receive the Torah at Sinai, so will they be first to receive the sublime Torah insights that will be revealed in that future time. And it is then that the inherent spiritual eminence of women will be fully revealed.

**From the times of Abraham and Sarah to our time, the engine of history is powered by a formidable force: the Jewish woman of valor, the Eishet Chayil.**

Through her inspiration and impact, the world will reach its intended destiny, the time when knowledge of G-d will fill the world, like the waters cover the sea.

# Dear Rebbby



By Rabbi Aron Moss

## What's Wrong With Your Wife?

**My family very much enjoyed being at your Shabbos table, thanks again for the invite. I meant to ask you a question that has bothered me for years. It's about prayer. Does G-d have such an ego problem that he demands his creations to pray to him 3 times a day, telling him how great he is?**

**Answer**

We loved having your wonderful family over. You should be very proud of them all.

But one thing disturbed me. Your children behaved really well, but I am a little concerned about your wife.

Every time your wife gave your son anything, like a piece of chicken, a drink, or a toy to play with, she insisted that he say thank you to her.

Your son acquiesced, and each time she told him to, he said thank you. This went on throughout the meal, at least a dozen times.

This is a worry. Is your wife so insecure that she needs her son to constantly acknowledge her? Is it normal to almost force someone to thank you, for even basic needs like food and drink, just to build up your own ego?

I think you get my point...

Your wife was being an exemplary mother, teaching her children gratitude and humility. When you are given something, big or small, you must acknowledge the giver. Her request to be thanked was not for herself, it was for her children. She got nothing out of her son's thanks, other than the pride in seeing her child developing his character. But your son was learning a precious lesson.

G-d trains us to thank Him, like a devoted parent who wants the best for His children. He doesn't need our thanks as much as we need to thank Him. Because everything we have, including life itself, is a gift. The minute we forget that, the minute we take even the simplest pleasures for granted, we stop living a life of wonder.

Parents who do not impart the trait of appreciation to their children are not only making life difficult for themselves, they are robbing their children of a basic tool for life. Only when I see everything as a gift, can I be happy with what I have rather than miserable about what I don't have.

So we should thank G-d for everything, even for asking us to thank Him. Gratitude is a gift too.

## Hide Jewishness to Keep My Job?

**I am having a debate with a friend. He has a good job in a big company, but he has not told them he is Jewish. He thinks his boss is an anti-semite, and by hiding his Jewishness he is able to get away with things. Like Friday afternoons the staff all go out for a drink, and he leaves early. He says it's because he doesn't drink alcohol, so they let him off the hook. If he said it was for Shabbos they wouldn't accept it. I just think it's wrong to hide who you are just to keep your job. Don't you agree?**

**Answer**

As a rabbi, I have never had to hide my Jewishness to keep my job. That probably wouldn't work out so well.

But I'm not sure that is what your friend is doing either. Perhaps he is hiding his Jewishness not to keep his job, but to keep his Jewishness. There could be a clear precedent for that.

Esther is the hero of the Purim story. She was a good Jewish girl who was forcibly taken to be queen by the Persian tyrant Achashverosh. Her cousin Mordechai, head rabbi of his time, instructed her not to tell anyone in the palace that she was Jewish.

Why did he tell her to do that? Some suggest that Mordechai wanted Esther to hide being Jewish in order to protect her position as queen. But this doesn't fit the story. Esther did everything she could not to have to marry this heathen buffoon of a dictator.

If saying that she was Jewish would disqualify her from being queen, that would be good news, not bad.

Rather, Mordechai knew that she would never be allowed to openly observe Judaism in the palace. As long as no one knew that she was Jewish, she could surreptitiously keep her religion and no one would notice.

Esther couldn't ask to be served only kosher food. So she claimed that she was on a new radical diet and only ate seeds and beans. This she could get away with. She couldn't be seen to be observing Shabbos, so she requested that seven different maids serve her each day of the week. That way she could keep Shabbos without anyone noticing that her habits were different from one day to the next. Her weekday maids were never there to see that she did no work on Shabbos, and her Shabbos maid, who only saw her on Shabbos, thought she was just a spoiled non-Jewish princess who never lifted a finger.

Esther managed to keep Judaism under the very noses of those who would not have tolerated it. She is a precedent for all those Jews throughout the ages who were forced to hide their identity in order to preserve it. Perhaps your friend is in the same predicament. It would be easy to tell him that he should either come clean about his Jewishness or get another job. But maybe, like Esther, he doesn't have that choice.

But Esther also teaches us that this charade can't go on forever. When a decree was signed by the king to annihilate the Jewish people, that was Esther's cue. Mordechai told her, "Maybe this is why you ended up as queen in the first place - to save your people!" She could hide no longer. She took off her mask and revealed her true identity. Her single act of bravery saved the Jewish nation.

There comes a time when a Jew has to state openly and proudly who they are. That time will come for your friend too. He may be able to fly beneath the radar for a while.

As long as he is still being true to who he is, it may serve him better to keep his identity to himself.

But there will be a moment, when someone makes a snide remark about Jews, or when a job candidate is rejected just for being Jewish, or when his coworkers are piling scorn on Israel for its so-called crimes. At that time, keeping silent would mean not being true to who he is. That's when he will do what Esther did. He will say, "I am a Jew, and I will stand for my people." Maybe this is why he ended up in that job in the first place.

## Can We Really Be Happy?

**My mature five-year-old asked me a series of questions about happiness that I could not answer:**

**How can I be happy if my friend is hurt and I can't help him?**

**How can I be happy if I did something bad?**

**What if you are in the army and you had a sword, and you accidentally killed your friend, can you be happy?**

**What if I gave all of my food to a poor person and I have nothing left, can I be happy?**

**I would like answers to these questions for myself... Any thoughts?**

**Answer**

We can feel two conflicting emotions at the same time. Sadness can fill one side of our heart, while joy fills the other.

In all of these examples, you need to feel both joy and pain. It's not always easy, but when we work on being happy even when there's reason not to, our happiness has the power to heal some of the sadness.

Let's look at each question:

How can I be happy if my friend is hurt and I can't help him?

You can help him. Be sad about his pain, but also be positive and happy. That may help ease his pain. You can give him hope and cheer him

up. You can't change what happened, but you can change the mood. Joy is contagious.

How can I be happy if I did something bad?

You should regret doing bad, but you shouldn't get depressed about it. Our yetzer hara, the devil inside us that gets us to do bad things, also wants us to feel depressed about it, because when we're depressed we end up doing more bad things. Rather say sorry, regret your mistake, be happy and move on. Happy people do more good.

What if you are in the army and you had a sword, and you accidentally killed your friend, can you be happy?

This is a very painful situation. It will take a lot of hard work for the soldier to find happiness again. But if we could ask his friend who died, what would he say? He would say, please don't stop living a happy life because of me. Find joy and do good things for my sake. It will be good for my soul if I see you happy. Living with joy in this world helps the souls in the next world.

What if I gave all of my food to a friend who is hungry and I have nothing left, can I be happy?

This is the greatest happiness - to give to another. Our stomach gets full from eating a good meal, but our heart gets full from giving it away. You need to eat too. But you should feel the joy of seeing someone else happy. Joy grows best in a heart that gives.

Your five-year-old may not understand these answers now. But one day he will. Introduce him to the idea that his heart has two sides, so next time he is feeling sad, he can choose to be happy too.

## Faith After Bibas Tragedy

**I'm struggling with faith after the Bibas tragedy. How do we reconcile a kind G-d with the killing of innocent babies? I know this atrocity was committed by human beings (if they can be called that), but how does G-d allow it? It just doesn't**

# Dear Rebbby



By Rabbi Aron Moss

**make any sense.**

**Answer**

No one can answer that question. No matter how smart we think we are, some mysteries are beyond our human comprehension. Even the wisest of all men, King Solomon, could not fathom the suffering of innocents.

In his deeply pain-ridden book of contemplations, King Solomon spoke of “the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them.” (Eccl. 4:1).

The Zohar, an ancient kabbalistic work, explains what King Solomon meant by “tears of the oppressed”. The Zohar is commenting on the Torah portion for the week our nation experienced the unfathomable loss of Shiri, Ariel and Kfir Bibas. The words sound eerily relevant to the tragedy.

The Torah portion discusses the laws of justice and fairness. In that context, the Zohar questions G-d’s fairness, explaining that this was King Solomon’s painful question. The Zohar says:

The “tears of the oppressed” refers to those children who die in the bosom of their mothers. They cause a flood of tears from all people of the world. There are no tears from a broken heart like these tears.

The Zohar goes on to express the ultimate question, why?:

All people of the world wonder and say: The laws of G-d are truth, and they go in the path of truth. Why did these poor innocent infants die? Where is the true judgment that the Lord of the world makes? If they are cut off from the world because of the sins of their fathers – why?

These questions remain unanswered. The Zohar quotes King Solomon:

Surely there is no one to comfort them.

Having established the fact that we have no explanation for G-d’s system of justice, the Zohar reveals that nevertheless, the death of these children is not in vain:

The “tears of the oppressed” also refers to those infants’ tears in heaven, which protect the living. For

we know, there is a place set aside for them in heaven that even the most righteous cannot reach. And G-d loves them, holds them close, and establishes His high residence with them.

These pure and innocent souls have a reserved place in heaven, closest to G-d. And they continue to cry there - not tears of pain, but tears of prayer, prayer for the living. And those prayers protect us. As the Zohar explains:

About these souls it is written (Psalm 8:3): “From the mouth of babes and sucklings You have established strength”. What benefit do they achieve there (by crying), and why do they go up there? The Psalm continues, “for the sake of those who afflict you, to destroy the enemy and to avenge them.”

We have no answers, and we have no explanations. But we have our prayers, and we have our tears. There is no more powerful prayer than the tearful request of these holy souls. Their prayers protect us, and their prayers will vanquish the enemy and bring peace.

## Can I Pray with ADHD?

**I have an attention issue. While other people can block out peripheral noise, I hear every sound in the room equally, and can’t layer things to give attention to one noise and ignore others. There is no background for me, only foreground. This hyper-attentiveness makes prayer very hard for me. I am taking medication and seeking professional help, but wanted to know if there is any Jewish wisdom to help me pray with focus, when focus is the hardest thing for me?**

**Answer**

Your struggle is everyone’s struggle. We all battle to focus, especially when it comes to prayer. You just have a more acute case than most. But maybe that makes your prayers even more powerful.

Here is some advice from the great mystic and soul master, Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov. He reminds us that prayer is more than just asking for our needs. It’s about connecting to G-d.

G-d is the source of everything, and G-d is one. This means that every experience comes from the one source. Our joys and celebrations, our challenges and struggles, are all from the Oneness. Our friends and supporters, as well as our enemies and obstacles, are all from the Oneness. This is our life, the life that G-d designed for us. Some things are there to help us in an obvious way, others in a less obvious way. But it’s all one.

As you pray, you are trying to connect to G-d, but disturbing noises all around you get in the way of your devotion. But hang on. If it’s G-d you want to connect with, isn’t G-d the one source of all? So those noises are not disturbances. They are G-d too. The child running across the room, the car honking outside, the wind blowing and the people chattering are all voices of G-d. They are not interrupting your prayer. They are adding to it. Don’t fight them. Invite them in. Let them flow and meld into the oneness of your prayer. They are your choir, not talking over you, but singing with you. So sing with them.

You can apply this to every

area of your life. Whatever comes your way is a divine gift - sometimes obviously so, sometimes not. Don’t fight it, flow with it.

Perhaps you can connect to G-d better than most. Your hyper-attentiveness is a reflection of G-d’s attention to each one of us. He hears us all, big and small. No one is in the background. You are centre-stage.

## Did You Ignore My Email?

**I have been studying the Book of Tanya and find it fascinating. But I am stuck on one idea expressed there. Tanya says that a person has control over our thought, speech and action. I don’t agree. We can usually control what we do, and also what we say. But can we control what we think? I can’t help what pops into my head! Aren’t some thoughts impulsive?**

**(just resending this question I wrote to you two weeks ago. I didn’t hear back so maybe you didn’t receive it the first time?)**

**Answer**

Apologies for not responding sooner to your message. I actually did receive it the first time. But I ignored it. I didn’t even open it.

I decide which messages I open, and which I don’t. Just because an alert pops up on my

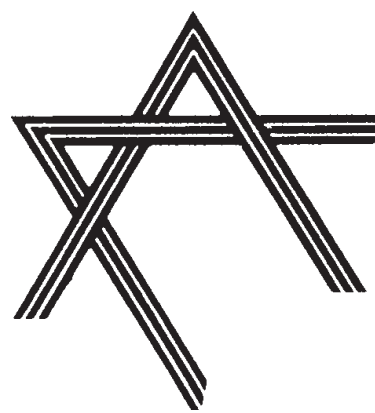
screen does not mean I have to react to it. I can’t control what messages arrive in my inbox, but I can certainly control whether or not I open them. And I didn’t open yours.

My not answering your question is the answer to your question. Indeed, you can’t control the thoughts that pop into your head. But you most certainly can control your reaction to them. If an inappropriate thought enters your mind, you have the choice to entertain it or reject it.

And that is the challenge we are given, to take the reigns of our brains and push away negative thinking. When you reject a bad thought, you don’t allow it to become yours, you don’t identify with it. You become the master of your inbox.

Unless you are a very holy person, you will experience bad thoughts on a regular basis. Sometimes they will be about yourself - “I am a loser, I will never accomplish anything.” Sometimes they will be about others - “I could kill that guy”. Some of those thoughts may be pretty ugly. You have no power to stop them flashing through your mind. But you do have the choice to leave those thoughts unopened.

Bad thoughts popping up into your head? That’s normal. Delete and go to next message.



**Steeles Dignity  
Memorial Comfort**

350 Steeles Avenue West  
Thornhill Ont. L4J 1A1 - (905) 881-6003

Established 1927

C.P. Saucier, Managing Funeral Director



# SHIURIM & CLASSES AT 770 CHABAD GATE

● MEN

● WOMEN

● MEN/WOMEN

## WEEKLY CLASSES • SUMMER SCHEDULE

### SUNDAY

10:30 AM TALMUD (AVODA ZARA) RABBI SPALTER

### MONDAY

7:45 PM THE WEEKLY TORAH REVIEW RABBI GANSBURG

### TUESDAY

11:00 AM TORAH STUDIES - PARSHA RABBI GANSBURG (ALSO VIA ZOOM)

11:00 AM THE JOY OF JUDAISM RABBI SPALTER

2:00 PM LIKKUTEI SICHOS RABBI GANSBURG (ALSO VIA ZOOM)

8:00 PM TALMUD (BAVA METZIA) RABBI SPALTER (ALSO VIA ZOOM)

### WEDNESDAY

11:00 - 12:30 PM THE JEWISH LEARNING INSTITUTE RABBI GANSBURG (ALSO VIA ZOOM)

7:30 - 9:00 PM THE JEWISH LEARNING INSTITUTE RABBI GANSBURG (ALSO VIA ZOOM)

### THURSDAY

8:15 - 9:15 TALMUD (PSACHIM) RABBI SPALTER

### SHABBOS

9:00 AM CHASSIDUS RABBI GANSBURG

9:00 AM CHASSIDUS (INTERMEDIATE) RABBI WILHELM

1 HR BEFORE MINCHA CHASSIDUS RABBI GANSBURG

1 HR BEFORE MINCHA HALACHA RABBI SPALTER

### DAILY CLASSES

SUN - THU 8:15 - 9:30 PM KOLLEL CHAVRUTA PROGRAM ALTERNATING

SUN - THU 9:00 PM RAMBAM ALTERNATING

SUN - FRI 7:10 AM CHASSIDIC THOUGHT RABBI GANSBURG (ALSO VIA ZOOM)

MON - FRI 10 AM - 12 PM KOLLEL TIFERES ZEKEINIM LEVI YITZCHOK  
TALMUD, MISHNAH, HALACHA & CHUMASH - RABBI CHAIKIN

## Vaulting, Bounding and Leaping

Continued from page 2

the receiving of the Torah; they achieved such heights that by the time the Torah was given they could justifiably be called a “holy nation.”

The difference between the symbolism of “Matzah” and “wine” will be understood accordingly:

Matzah emphasizes the aspect of the exodus that came about as a result of G-d’s redemption from the impurity of Egypt.

It is for this reason that Matzah is called “impoverished bread” bread that lacks taste - for it is a remembrance of spiritual impoverishment.

“Taste” refers to something a person can appreciate in some way.

Since the liberation from Egypt originated from Above rather than from the spiritual preparation of the Jewish people, it is understandable that it lacked “taste” - the Jews were compelled to leave.

Wine, however, has taste and is enjoyable.

It is a “remembrance of the liberation and freedom” ultimately achieved by the Jews, i.e., it was through their own service that they were redeemed from the evil of Egypt.

The reason for three Matzot vis-a-vis four cups of wine now becomes clear:

There is a difference between the first three expressions of liberation and the fourth, in that the first three - “I will release you... I will save you... I will liberate you” - are aspects of redemption that took place immediately upon the departure from Egypt; they came from Above.

The fourth expression - “I will take you unto Me as a Nation” - however, depended on the Jewish people; they had to become worthy of being called G-d’s nation. This was accomplished when they received the Torah.

Thus, Matzah is equated with the number three, corresponding to the first three expressions of liberation, inasmuch as Matzah commemorates the redemption as it came from Above.

The cups of wine, however, allude to the liberation accomplished by and within the Jewish people.

The cups are therefore equated with the number four, for they denote the

fourth expression of redemption - “I will take you unto Me as a Nation.”

Believers and Sons of Believers

At the beginning of the Torah portion Va’eira the verse states: “And the L-rd [Elokim, the Name symbolic of strict justice] spoke to Moshe and said to him: ‘I am G-d.’”

Rashi comments: “G-d spoke sternly to Moshe because he [Moshe] was severe in speaking and saying [to G-d]: ‘Why have you dealt badly with this nation?’”

Moreover, Rashi, quoting the Midrash on the verse “And I revealed Myself to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov...” writes that G-d said to Moshe: “Alas for those who have passed on and whose likes are not to be found. I mourn the passing of the Patriarchs.... They did not question My actions as you question My actions.”

How is it possible to say that Moshe, the “select of mankind,” questioned G-d’s actions, and to compare him unfavorably with the Patriarchs?

Rashi comments on the statement “And I revealed Myself” and says: “To the Patriarchs.” Many commentators on Rashi ask: what does Rashi add? The verse itself goes on to say that G-d appeared “to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov”?

By stating “To the Patriarchs,” Rashi is in effect saying that the clear and unequivocal revelation of G-dliness to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov - for which reason they did not question G-d’s actions - stemmed from the very fact that they were the Patriarchs of the Jewish people.

In other words, such revelations were granted these three in order that they bequeath them to their descendants, for “A father bequeaths his son... wisdom.”

Accordingly, the question becomes even greater:

Since every Jew enjoys the revelation of G-dliness as an inheritance from the Patriarchs, how was it possible for Moshe to be critical of G-d’s actions?

Our Sages tell us that the exodus from Egypt came about in the merit of and as a reward for the Jews’ belief

in G-d.

This means that the revelation within the Jewish people of this essential aspect of their Jewishness made them worthy of redemption.

Even in the midst of the most severe Egyptian oppression, the Jews were called “believers, the children of believers.”

But this inherited, almost unconscious belief - this “baseline belief” - was not yet fully developed and revealed within them. In order to be redeemed in their own merit, it was necessary that the Jews’ natural belief in and unity with G-d be consciously recognized - that it become wholly theirs.

This is what Moshe was able to accomplish, for herein lay the difference between him and the Patriarchs:

As bequeathed by the Patriarchs, the essential hallmarks of Jewishness is something every Jew has as a natural consequence of being a child of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.

Moshe, however, in addition to being one of the “Seven Shepherds that draws down vitality and G-dliness to all Jewish souls,” is also the “sum of them all, and is called the Faithful Shepherd.”

Moshe causes the faith possessed by every Jew to permeate all aspects of his being.

Moshe’s question: “Why have you dealt badly?” and G-d’s response: “I have revealed Myself to the Patriarchs” will be understood accordingly:

Since the time for the Jews’ liberation from Egypt was fast approaching, and Moshe was acting as G-d’s emissary to redeem them, it was necessary that the people’s inherited belief in G-d come to permeate them completely.

Moshe’s question “Why have you dealt badly?” elicited G-d’s revelatory response - va’eira - which brought the Jews to so believe in G-d that faith penetrated every fiber of their being.

Even the lower levels of their intellect - the levels that give rise to doubts - would now be permeated with unquestioning belief in G-d.

**The redemption came about as a result of Moshe’s question and G-d’s response.**

## Do We Want Moshiach Now?

Continued from page 2

preparing us for an ultimate redemption.

However, we find ourselves at a certain impasse, which the Rebbe himself bemoaned many times. If the phrase “Moshiach Now” makes people think of the harrowing images in “Apocalypse Now,” then we need to reframe the conversation.

How can we develop a discourse on Moshiach that is understanding of reservations while simultaneously being bold and creative? The formulaic declaration of a wish for the coming of Moshiach at the end of a sermon or its inclusion as a symbolic postscript at the bottom of a wedding invitation is most definitely not what is called for. As the French Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas put it, “There is nothing more hypocritical than the messianic prophetism of the comfortable bourgeois.”

In order for the full ramifications of a statement such as “We want Moshiach now” to become sensible across the spectrum of Jewish life, I believe we need to come to some common understanding that Judaism and being Jewish is a project with a goal. I doubt we will ever come to agree on the exact nature of that project and what the anticipated goal should be; however, if we can just agree on this alone, we have the basis for a meaningful discussion about the future. If we allow ourselves a moment of brutal honesty, until we embrace the possibility of a different future, in one form or another, we will want Moshiach neither now nor ever.

Moreover, not just Judaism, but the entirety of creation is valued and appreciated as part of a project with a goal. For all the talk of Maimonides as the thinker who brought Aristotelian philosophy into the Jewish world, it is precisely in that moment where he rejects Aristotle that our Jewish messianic orientation is secured. Aristotle imagined an eternal existence, but Maimonides argues that the world was chosen into existence. If the world was chosen into existence, then it

was chosen for a purpose. If we then acknowledge Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi’s addition, that the choice was made not long ago, but is being made continually, then each and every moment becomes pregnant with purpose, and our ambivalence is shaken to its complacent core.

And while a discussion on the future can no doubt include a full examination of the wide-ranging components of Jewish messianic beliefs, from the identity and role of the messianic king to the apocalyptic visions found in the books of our prophets, those details rely on a more elemental premise: that Judaism and being Jewish is a project with a goal. I firmly believe that this awareness is at the core of Jewish survival.

If Judaism and being Jewish were not a project with a goal, then why would it be so essential to so many to preserve it, even to the point of self-sacrifice? After more than twenty years on shlichut, and being engaged with Jews of all stripes and colors from all over the world, I can say with confidence that every Jew is subconsciously aware of this project. I have yet to meet a Jew who doesn’t have a red line, a point of no return. The absolute obliteration of their Jewishness is not an option, even if it means hanging on by a shoestring. On the whole, these are matters that run deep within the self, far beyond any rational considerations, but they speak of an enduring purpose, an eternal flame, that even the tumultuous waters talked of in the Song of Songs cannot extinguish.

When thinking about how to conceive of this messianic project of Judaism, I am always drawn back to what, at first glance, appears to be a slightly banal Chasidic aphorism I once heard from the Chasid Reb Nachum Shmaryahu (Reb Shmeryl) Sasonkin (1889-1975):

When Moshiach comes, don’t expect the world to look drastically different from the way it looks now. The most significant change will be how the realm of the sublime and the profound

## Do We Want Moshiach Now? *The Heirs of Asher Lev*

*Continued*

become natural and normal. Someone will be able to ask their friend which profound idea they had meditated on that morning, and the friend will be able to reply without any sense of awkward pride or piety.

In our current state of exile, there is a disconnect between the mundane, ordinary aspects of life and our more spiritual pursuits. This disconnect works both ways: we might attribute a higher value to our soulful activities while ignoring the profundity of the daily routine. Reb Shmeryl's insight was that, in the milieu of Moshiach, we will be able to move beyond these tensions.

This down-to-earth and very personal evaluation of exile and redemption might look like escapism from more global concerns. However, to be exiled from one's self, unable to blend together the body and the soul, is our first-hand experience of broader societal dysfunction, of which war and violence are just the most disturbing examples.

This dilemma of soul-body dualism has preoccupied Jewish thinkers throughout the ages. Some have leaned towards emphasizing the undesirability of bodily and material things, while others have focused on the superiority of the spiritual. In both instances, the oppositional binary of soul and body becomes hardened, potentially exacerbating our state of inner exile. By contrast, Chasidut values both and seeks to integrate them. The goal is for the two to be so thoroughly fused that one

cannot detect where either of them begins or ends, for only both of them together will complete the perfection desired by the Creator.

The study of Chasidic thought thus becomes a necessary prelude to, as well as an instantiation of, a messianic era when the purpose of all aspects of existence are realized. When early morning contemplation on the wonders of creation exists harmoniously with breakfast, such that an inquiry about one or the other will be responded to by the same self, then the individual journey out of exile has begun. Being the change that we want to see in the world is not escapism, but the necessary groundswell that can overcome and overwhelm the current order.

Messianic speculations can sometimes be damaging and harmful, but a Judaism drained of any awareness of what it is for and how it can get there is possibly even more dangerous. Our recent and ongoing exposure to war and violence is an urgent wake-up call that our world desperately needs to realize its purpose and not further descend into depravity and corruption. Wanting Moshiach now is not an empty slogan but our commitment to a different future and our rejection of the status quo. While the vision of the redemption that began to take form in the Rebbe's mind as a young child may not resonate with everyone, the importance for us all to appreciate the need for such a vision should be uncontroversial.

*Continued from back page*

the window on the upper left may not exactly be the light of Rembrandt, yet it too is a heavenly light. While nothing could be more dramatic than the miracle of bringing someone back to life, Halberstadt conveys a quiet and intimate

artist. Halberstadt explains, "One of the challenges for a contemporary Jewish artist is that we don't have an artistic tradition. We once had the decorative art of the Beit HaMikdash and the Mishkan, but it's been lost to us, and all

brand of artistic and religious angst may not quite apply to Halberstadt sitting in his home studio in the Judean Hills, a more suitable heir might be found on his own home turf of Brooklyn. Hendel Futerfas is a Jewish artist and father of a



Artist Hendel Futerfas poses with a mural painting of a Chasidic gathering

scene. Prophet and child are cloaked in the soft, healing light of a G-d who both creates life and takes it away. In this work and others, Halberstadt is restrained and suggestive, capturing the complexity of the human response to revelation, without reducing or even attempting to depict the revelation itself.

It was only in Halberstadt's mid-twenties that he began his formal art education, waking up early each morning before yeshiva to study art in Jerusalem with the prominent Moldavian-Israeli artist Leonid Balaklav. Balaklav initiated Halberstadt into the world of Western art. Eventually he studied illustration for a year at the prestigious Bezalel Academy. Halberstadt acknowledges that some tensions did arise during

we have left is the sefer Torah and the holy books." Regarding his vision of Jewish religious art, he says: "We need to create something new, or to recover this artistic past. It's essentially a journey into an unknown land."

Halberstadt has engaged with this theme directly. Some of his paintings feature Biblical figures—Abraham, Moses, Hagar and Ishmael, and the Israelites—entering vast, barren landscapes. The contrast of small human figures dwarfed by sweeping natural panoramas is familiar from Western art: Thomas Cole and other members of the American Hudson River movement famously explored humans' limited attempts to conquer and settle the natural world. But Halberstadt's biblical paintings shift this equilib-

young family who grew up in Crown Heights and is named after his great-great uncle Hendel Lieberman, a legendary Chabad artist who had a close relationship with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Futerfas describes reading *My Name Is Asher Lev* as a child and being delighted by the many allusions to his family. (Aspects of Potok's Asher Lev are arguably based on Lieberman, and other relatives of Futerfas's, such as his grandfather Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, appear in the book in fictionalized form.) Yet while some parallels are there, Futerfas's career as an artist would take another trajectory entirely, integrating his artistic passion and Chasidic spirituality in a fluid and organic manner, almost echoing the organic forms in which he works.

Futerfas, who now lives in Melbourne, Australia, describes a childhood surrounded by art, and Lieberman's paintings in particular. His parents sensed an artistic inclination early and brought him for lessons with the prominent Chasidic folk artist Michael Muchnik starting at nine years old. Muchnik kicked off a creative process for Futerfas that would include formal study at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology. On considering his status as a "religious artist," Futerfas reflects: "My art always operated from a place that was in tune with spiritually. Whatever I'm philosophizing in my head, concepts of G-d that I'm trying to wrestle with, I've always tried to incorporate in my art."

Like Halberstadt, Futerfas works in a wide range of media. He has produced vividly realistic images of the Rebbe.



this time in his development as an artist. "I see, for example, among secular artists that I greatly admire, that their connection with art is a kind of deep covenant (he used the word *brit*), where art comes before everything," he says. But a religious artist is one for whom "art is not the supreme value."

The conflict between individualism and commitment to a greater cause is not the only challenge faced by a religious

rium, as we see in these small individual figures the grandeur of their future potential. The natural world here is not the main story, but something that awaits transformation and redemption. The potential of people to enhance, and not only contaminate, the world is a theme in Halberstadt's art—it is the story of Judaism, and it is embodied in the artistic process itself.

Giving Letters New Life While Asher Lev's specific

## KADDISH

OUR TIE TO THE PAST.

OUR LINK TO THE FUTURE.

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

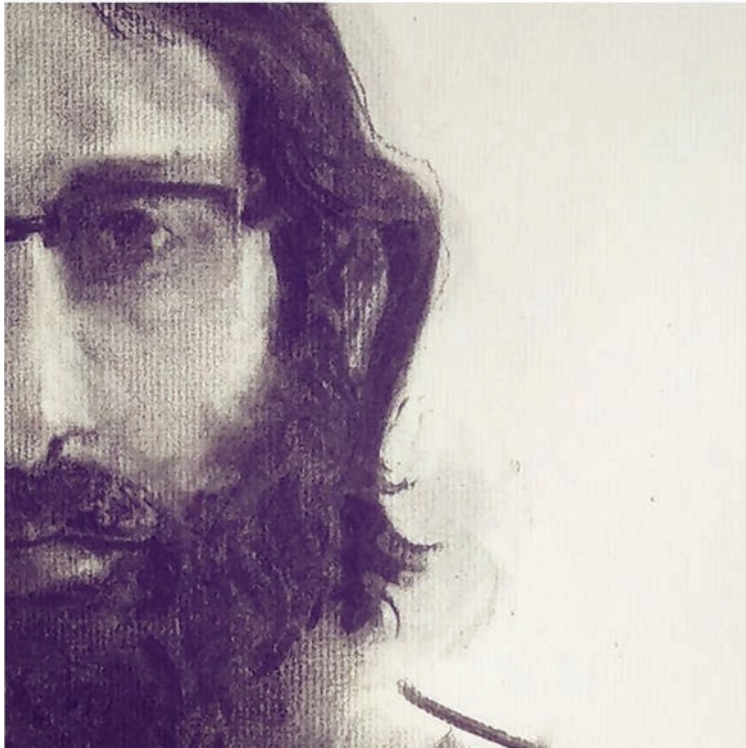
For further information call 905.731.7000



# SLICE of Life

## The Heirs of Asher Lev

By Sarah Rindner



Menahem Halberstadt - Self Portrait

In Chaim Potok's classic novel *My Name Is Asher Lev*, a young Chasidic boy tries to integrate his religious faith with his prodigious artistic talent. In school he scribbles on the margins of his sacred books. On weekends he takes clandestine trips to view Renaissance art at the Brooklyn Museum. Throughout the novel he grapples with the question: Is art something that brings us closer to G-d and to the Jewish people, or does it operate on another plane entirely?

Asher Lev is a member of the Ladover sect, a thinly disguised stand-in for Chabad-Lubavitch, and the beloved Ladover Rebbe gently explains that it makes no difference whether a man is a shoemaker or a lawyer or a painter; rather, "a life is measured by how it is lived for the sake of Heaven." Yet, despite the Rebbe's encouragement, ultimately Potok's book in-

sists that the chasm between the life of a Chasid and that of an artist is impossible to fully bridge.

The role of visual art in the religious Jewish worldview has always been somewhat tenuous. This may be rooted in the Torah itself: the second of the Ten Commandments prohibits the creation of graven images and the "likeness of any thing that is in the heavens above, that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." But it may also be an accidental by-product of history: the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem in all its aesthetic glory, the exclusion of Jews from artistic guilds, and the overwhelming dominance of Christian iconography in the history of Western art. While Jewish decorative arts abound—micrography, illuminated manuscripts, silver Judaica items—Jewish representation in the fine arts, at

least prior to the modern era, is decidedly less pronounced. And while Jewish individuals have achieved prominence as modern artists, they tend toward secularism and individualism in both worldview and artistic language. We have yet to see a uniquely Jewish artistic idiom arise—that is, a path forward for an artist who wishes to tie him- or herself to a Jewish tradition in visual art.

In the twentieth century, however, two Jewish leaders articulated an important role for visual art in religious life.

Upon visiting the National Gallery of London, Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook, the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of British Mandatory Palestine, once famously reflected that Rembrandt was among the few "great men" privileged to perceive the spiritual reality of the universe: "The light in his paintings is that light which G-d created on Genesis day," he wrote. Throughout his tenure he championed the work of Jewish artists and writers, and supported the founding of the Bezalel Art Academy in pre-state Israel.

In America, the Lubavitcher Rebbe strongly supported the development of a Jewish artistic culture in both theory and practice. He encouraged the opening of the Chassidic Art Institute in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, in 1977, urging the gallery owners to keep going even when the public showed little interest and offering them financial assistance out of his own pocket. In a 1962 letter to the cubist sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, with whom he had a long correspondence, the Rebbe wrote that artistic talent is "the ability to transform, to a certain extent, the material into spiritual, even where the creation is in still life, and certainly where the artistic work has to do with living creatures and humans." The Rebbe added that the highest form of art is when it is used "to advance ideas, especially reflecting Torah and mitzvahs."

Great art that elevates our religious conscience exists in one sphere, but the Rebbe's point about the greatness of art which engages with Jewish ideas, "with Torah and mitzvahs," occupies another. One is not likely to find this art in the National Gallery of London or the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but rather nestled well within the Jewish community, in small galleries or tucked-away home studios. These sorts of artists are not churned out by prestigious art schools. In fact, they probably have a conflicted relationship with them altogether. The Chasid-artist, by his or her nature, lives torn among various commitments—to faith, to family, to an artistic vision that may at times be difficult to fulfill in its purity. But rather than dilute one's art, the Rebbe suggests that these allegiances actually make it greater.

### Translating Torah Into Visual Terms

In a practical, postmodern

world, the conflicts described in Potok's 1972 novel may feel like relics of another era. But the Asher Lev conundrum was recently revived by the hit Israeli television series *Shtisel*, centering on the life of Akiva Shtisel, a young Haredi man with immense artistic talent. Behind some of Akiva's paintings that appear on the show is a real-life Israeli artist—an Orthodox illustrator named Menahem Halberstadt—with a wide-ranging oeuvre.

A father of five who lives

and works in Tekoa, Israel, Halberstadt attempts to translate some of the Torah's most profound narrative moments into visual terms. One image, a digital painting published in the Shabbat insert of the Hebrew newspaper *Makor Rishon*, depicts a scene from the book of Kings II: the prophet Elisha bends over the body of the son of the Shunamite woman, the child he once prophesied would be born to her. The light streaming in from

*Continued on page 11*

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.

Then \$54.00 was considered a worthy donation.

His son-in-law Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson became the seventh leader of Chabad and

1950..

encouraged his disciples to serve as Torah ambassadors throughout the world. During

..1994

those 44 years, more than 1500 Lubavitch Centres were established throughout the world, serviced by some five thousand Shluchim (Emissaries) who have dedicated their lives to help enhance the quality of Jewish life.

Then too \$54.00 was considered a worthy donation.

2025..

Indeed  
3 Times  
Chai Can  
Make a  
Difference!

Please make your cheque payable to:  
CHABAD LUBAVITCH  
and send to:  
770 Chabad Gate  
Thornhill, Ont. L4J 3V9  
You may wish to call 905-731-7000  
and contribute via your Visa card

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.

Today too \$54.00 is considered a worthy donation.

Round, Hand Baked  
Matzoh Shmurah  
Available at \$45.00 per lb.  
at Chabad Lubavitch  
Community Centre

Should you wish to sell your Chometz for the duration of Pesach, please complete the form below & mail it at once to:  
CHABAD LUBAVITCH  
770 Chabad Gate,  
Thornhill, Ontario L4J 3V9  
so that it reaches us no later than Thursday, April 10, 2025.

### Certificate Authorizing the Sale of Chometz

#### Delegation of Power of Attorney

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 2025.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

BEST WISHES FOR A KOSHER & ENJOYABLE PESACH



Elisha the Prophet resurrects the child