



# The World of Lubavitch

A publication of Chabad-Lubavitch, Toronto

Canada

Vol. 41 No. 2 (144)

TISHREI 5776

SEPTEMBER 2015



## Chabad Lubavitch to Honour Marty Kelman

Plans are in full swing for the upcoming annual dinner of Chabad Lubavitch. The gala celebration to be held November 19, 2015 will honour Marty Kelman. "This is a man that enjoys sharing his good fortune," said Rabbi Zalman Grossbaum, Regional Director of Chabad Lubavitch, "and the upcoming event will give us the opportunity to recognize Marty's long standing affiliation with Chabad Lubavitch."

When making the announcement, Rabbi Grossbaum attributed to Marty the testimony of the Talmudic sage Rabbi Yochanan who asserted that "A good heart surpasses all character traits." Indeed, Marty endeavours to be of help to others

and gets much pleasure in sharing his good fortune with family, friends and those in need. He is all heart! He personifies the character traits of optimism, enthusiasm and brotherhood.

Marty's generosity can be



traced to his roots in the family fur business when he entered the world of commerce and worked side by side with his father. While at times there were lean years, still Tzedaka and sharing were always viewed as an integral part of the business. This consideration for the less fortunate was taught by osmosis and made a lasting and indelible impression on the young apprentice. Today, Marty is the President of All City Storage, an immaculate and well managed downtown self storage facility which caters and provides space solutions to the ever growing downtown residential and business community.

The "battle cry" for this  
*Continued on page 3*

## Love, Marriage and Hakafot

By Yanki Tauber

Men usually don't sit over coffee talking about their marriages. That's why a particular conversation between three males stuck in my mind -- we were discussing the joys of wedded life.

"I love my wife," said Berl. "That's why I do everything she asks me to do. She says, 'Berl, please take out the garbage,' and right away, I take out the garbage."

We all agreed that Berl loves his wife.

Not to be outdone, I said: "I also do everything my wife asks me to do. In fact, she doesn't even have to spell out what she wants. It's enough that she says, 'Whew! That garbage bag is sure smelling up the kitchen!' for me to understand that she wants me to take out the garbage. Which I do, of course."

We all agreed that I love my wife even more than Berl loves his.

But in the end it turned out that Shmerl's marriage was the most loving of all. Shmerl's wife doesn't have to ask her husband to do things for her. She doesn't even have to drop hints. "I wake up in the morning" Shmerl explained, "and I just know that she wants me to take out the garbage. Or buy her a diamond ring. She doesn't have to crinkle her nose or mention the ring her cousin Sarah got for her birthday. I just know what she wants me to do for her, and I do it."

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It is with our observance of the minhagim -- Jewish customs, that we express the depth of our love for G-d

The month of Tishrei is replete with mitzvot--full of opportunities for carrying out G-d's will. For more than three weeks, our days are filled with praying, repenting, fasting, feasting, dancing, building a sukkah, acquiring a set of Four Kinds or a bundle of hoshanaot, and dozens of other mitzvot, customs and observances.

The observances of Tishrei fall under three general categories. There are biblical precepts that are explicitly commanded in the Torah, such as sounding the shofar on Rosh HaShanah, fasting on Yom Kippur or eating in the sukkah on Sukkot. There are also a number of rabbinical mitzvot--observances instituted by the prophets and the sages by the authority vested in them by the Torah. For example, the five prayer services held on Yom Kippur and the taking of the Four Kinds on all but the first day of Sukkot are rabbinical institutions.

Finally, the month of Tishrei has many minhagim or customs--such as eating an apple dipped in honey on the first night of Rosh HaShanah or conducting the kaparot in the wee hours of the morning on the day before Yom Kippur. The minhagim are not mandated by biblical or rabbinical law, but by force of custom: these are things that we Jews have initiated ourselves as ways to enhance our service of our Creator.

Most amazingly, the climax of the month of Tishrei--the point at which our celebration of our bond with G-d attains the very pinnacle of joy--is during the hakafot of Simchat Torah, when we take the Torah scrolls in our arms and dance with them around the reading table in the synagogue--a practice that is neither a biblical nor a rabbinical precept, but merely a custom.

For it is with our observance of the minhagim that we express the depth of our love for G-d. The biblical commandments might be compared to the explicitly expressed desires between two people bound in marriage. The rabbinical mitzvot, on which G-d did not directly instruct us but which nevertheless constitute expressions of the divine will, resemble the implied requests between spouses. But the minhagim represent those areas in which we intuitively sense how we might cause G-d pleasure. And in these lie our greatest joy.

# The Waking of Creation

On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, all things revert to their primordial state. The Inner Will ascends and is retracted into the divine essence; the worlds are in a state of sleep and are sustained only by the Outer Will. The service of man on Rosh Hashanah is to rebuild the divine attribute of sovereignty and reawaken the divine desire, "I shall reign," with the sounding of the shofar. (The Kabbalistic masters)

One night a year, the world succumbs to a cosmic slumber.

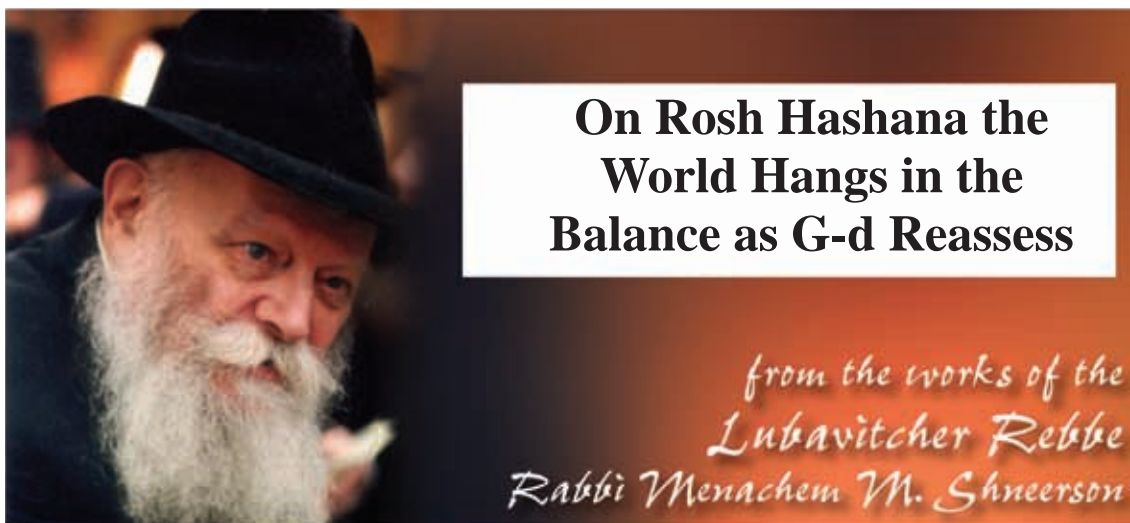
On the functional level, the sleeper's vital signs plod on: the sun still rises, winds blow, rains fall, seeds germinate, fruit ripens. But the consciousness of creation is muted. For its soul of souls--the "inner will" of the divine desire for creation--has ascended, retreated to a place from where it views its body and life with a calculated detachment. Only the "outer will"--the most external element of the divine desire--remains to sustain the sleeping body of creation.

And then, a piercing sound rises from the earth and reverberates through the heavens. A sound that awakens the sleeping universe, stirring its soul to resume its conscious, willful animation of its material shell.

The cry of the shofar resounds. A profound yet utterly simple cry, a note free of the nuances of rational music. An utterly simple cry that rouses the soul of creation to a renewed commitment to the endeavor of life.

Thus the Kabbalists describe the cosmic drama which repeats itself each year, as the world "falls asleep" on the eve of Rosh Hashanah and is "awakened" the following morning by the sound of the shofar. Indeed, it is told of certain tzaddikim that on the night and morning of Rosh Hashanah they would feel physically weak: so attuned were they to the diminution of divine involvement in the world during this time, that it affected their own souls' investment in their bodies.

What does it mean that the world is asleep? How does our sounding of the shofar restore the consciousness and vital-



**On Rosh Hashana the World Hangs in the Balance as G-d Reassess**

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

ity of creation? Why is G-d's inner will withdrawn on Rosh Hashanah eve, and why does His outer will remain behind? What, indeed, is the difference between "inner will" and "outer will"? To answer these questions, we must first examine the dynamics of "will" in our own lives. For as the Sages of the Talmud have revealed to us, "As the soul fills the body, so G-d fills the world."

### The Layers of Will

Will is the soul of deed. Ultimately, no act is ever performed that is not driven by the

engine of volition.

But will is a multi-layered thing. There is the outermost layer of will that directly drives our actions. Then there is the deeper will that underlies this external will, which, in turn, contains yet a deeper will, which is itself an outgrowth of yet a deeper will, and so on.

Thus, the relationship between will and deed is not static, but subject to changes and fluctuations. At times, the innermost level of will suffuses our actions, enlivening them with the desire and satisfac-

tion that motivate them. Other times, our deeds may be lifeless and lethargic, sustained only by the most superficial aspect of our will.

To illustrate, let us take the example of a person who owns and operates a business. Our businessman does many things in the course of the day--waking at an early hour, commuting to his office, answering the telephone, meeting with potential clients, and so on. On the most basic level, these deeds are driven by the will to

do them: he wants to get out of bed, he wants to start the car, he wants to pick up the receiver--if he didn't want to do these things, he wouldn't do them. But why does he want to do these things? Because of an underlying will that his business should survive and prosper. But why does he want his business to survive and prosper? Because it brings him income and prestige--if this were not the case, he would have no desire for a business. Delving deeper, the desire for money and status stem from deeper wants--the desire for food, shelter and acceptance by his fellows--which, in turn, are outgrowths of the desire, intrinsic to every creature, to continue to exist.

This does not mean that every time our businessman picks up the telephone he does so because he senses that his very existence depends on it. Indeed, he need not even be convinced that the act will yield a profit, or even that it is crucial to the functioning of his business. Ultimately, however, the act of

*Continued on page 18*



## Why Won't They Lock Him Up?

By Rabbi Tzvi Freeman

Question:

Shine light upon your exasperated students who stumble in the mind-boggling darkness, and reveal to us the true path out of this mess of confusion: Tell us how the Great Master, the Moshiach, shall be revealed.

Is it true that he shall suddenly appear on a main street in Jerusalem, a poor old man with a wild but angelic look, spewing forth wisdom and declaring the time of redemption has arrived? If so, why will they not lock him up?

Is it true that he shall be announced on all the media worldwide at 6 pm, along with offers for free El Al tickets? If so, who will finance this?

We are concerned and troubled as this touches the essence of our souls and allows our weakened bodies no sleep: Is there truth to that which they say, that in those enlightened days there will be only study of Torah and no more reckless fun?

Pour forth your pity upon our farblungent souls! Have patience with our questions, though they may sound foolish! Is it true that the entire order of nature will change suddenly as the Anointed One appears?

Response:

Yes, definitely a case for pity. No (aside from the media announcements)--it's not anything like what you describe.

The arrival of Moshiach and the accompanying turnabout in the World Order, is a very pragmatic ideal. In fact, much of it has happened already.

Of course, as Maimonides puts it, nobody really knows exactly what's going to happen--The Almighty-Master-Of-

All-Plans-To-Whom-All-Is-Revealed is really concerned about the suspense factor here. But allow me to let you in on a few of the key details, as I humbly understand them:

1. The first thing Moshiach does is do away with bad marketing. That's the true villain that has held us back all these years. Ask any consumer electronics or computer engineer. We could all own household robots to do our work. We could be consuming less than

10% of the natural resources we consume now--if it weren't for those nefarious busy bodies who market quantity rather than quality. Given the true needs of most people and the productivity possible with modern technology, we should all be working an average of 2.5 hours a week. What's responsible for the other 60+ hours? Bad Marketing.

Moshiach's marketing

*Continued on page 18*

### ON OUR COVER

### "The Crown of Torah"

By Loren Hodes.  
Oil on canvas, finger painted  
Three Torahs adorned with majestic silver glow with jewel like colour in the midst of an ark made by two resplendent trees. The trees represent the Torah -- the "tree of life to those who grasp it".

The intricate patterns are reminiscent of medieval illumination while alluding to the infinite beauty and detail of the holy Torah.

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### 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**

**Editor:** Rabbi Moshe Spalter

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

**Advertising:** Rabbi Moshe Spalter

**Typesetting:** Tamar Shuchat

**Circulation:** 8500  
**Subscriptions:** \$18 yearly  
**\$5 per copy**  
**SPRING 2015**

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

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*We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.*

## Camp Gan Israel Enjoys Record Enrolment

Over 1200 youngsters enjoyed a meaningful summer attending the city-wide Lubavitch Day Camp or Camp Gan Israel, our overnight camp up in Haliburton. Both programs had un-

precedented record enrollments. Being sensitive to the financial limitations of many families, assistance was offered when needed. "We feel we get great value by providing a meaningful summer experience for the youth in attendance, whether they participate as a camper or counsellor," said Rabbi Zalman Grossbaum, Executive Director of Chabad Lubavitch.



followed by swimming, sports and recreational activities. But no two days are alike and upon entering the flagship Chabad Lubavitch building you could successfully discern if it's a

field trip day (camp shirts and caps) PJ day, wacky hat day etc. This year a unique creative art program was introduced which taught the basic skills of art and design.

from all over the world. Ever since the purchase the picturesque 207 acre site along the shores of Basshaunt Lake, no effort is spared in order to create a haven for youngsters where they

will strengthen their body and nurture their soul.



This year in addition to construction of another double bunkhouse, a self activated, gravity driven playground has been added. The self propulsion challenge is inviting and keeps the youngsters engaged in creative configurations. Also, through the generosity of Joey & Toby Tanenbaum, 6 gazebos were purchased and strategically positioned on the sprawling camp site. Each structure is surrounded with foliage and towering trees. These (partial) enclosures provide a most conducive environment to keep the campers focused during the designated time allotted for Torah study. So too, the gazebos are ideal for group programs and casual en-

counters. The calming breeze that flow through is always most welcome and is a G-d send on the hot and humid days.

"Still in order to maintain a balanced camper/staff ratio, an addition staff house is under consideration which is needed to facilitate the ever growing camper enrollment. Indeed, the Chabad Lubavitch Organization has always taken a strong interest in camping. In fact, our beloved Rebbe o.b.m. extolled the virtue of this endeavour some 60 years ago when Chabad in North America was still in its infancy. He recognized the value of imbuing our youth with a 'high octane' 24/7 energy boost that will remain with them for a lifetime," said Rabbi Yitzchok Grossbaum, camp director.

## New Beema to be Dedicated

An artistically designed Beema will soon be dedicated at the Chabad Lubavitch Community Centre. This magnificent work of art has been commissioned by the Marr family in memory of their dear husband and father Gerald Marr.

The project was spearheaded by his son Shawn who endeavoured to dedicate something meaningful in memory of his father that would merge his love for art and his affection for Chabad.

Indeed, some 35 years ago when Chabad Lubavitch was searching a suitable site for a city wide community centre,

Mr. Marr came to our aid. The planning, permit process, and architectural drawings for the move "up north" and construction of the 25,000 sq. ft. headquarters of Chabad Lubavitch at 770 Chabad Gate in Thornhill were all advanced and graciously provided by Mr. Marr and his team at the firm of E.I. Richman Inc.

Hence an essential dedication of this nature is most certainly a fitting tribute and well earned honour bestowed upon him. The bow shaped structure was painstakingly crafted by Moise Bensimon who ac-

cepted this project as a labour of love. He chose walnut, for its durability and rich grain which dovetail seamlessly on the larger central panels. Positioned in the center of the Shul it adds an element of reverence and aura of holiness.

The formal dedication will be held on Hoshana Rabba, the seventh day of Sukkot, Sunday, October 4, 2015. After the Shacharit service everyone will be welcomed to say L'chaim in the Sukkah as this day also marks the Yartzeit of Mr. Gerald Marr.

## Chabad Lubavitch to Honour Marty Kelman

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year's campaign is, "Continuity, a link between a point of origin and a distinct destination." The promotional material cleverly highlights this core definition by graphically enlarging the slogan under a magnifying glass. It cleverly draws attention to the primary objective of Chabad Lubavitch; to connect people with our illustrious past so that we have the wherewithal to safeguard our future.

This summer over 1200 youngsters enjoyed a meaningful summer attending either the Lubavitch Day Camp the city wide camp program, or Gan Israel the recently established overnight camp in Haliburton. Being sensitive to the financial hardship of many families, both programs made provisions for campers to attend on a scholarship basis. These endeavours were facilitated by some 300 teenagers who were offered employment in a most rewarding environment. Notwithstanding the financial burden, Rabbi Grossbaum noted, "we feel we get excellent value by providing a meaningful summer for over a thousand children and teenagers, either as campers or counsellors!"

From its flagship centre in Thornhill, the Chabad Lubavitch Organization continues to reach out to the entire Jewish community with programs that continue to educate and promote traditional values. These objectives are further augmented by some 15 satellite centres, strategically established throughout the GTA and beyond. So too, there are Chabad House student centres at all major universities along the southern rim of Ontario.

Indeed, after some four decade of public service, Chabad Lubavitch is recognized as a catalyst that connects Jews with Judaism. With an unrestricted mandate that caters to young and old alike, new initiatives are constantly being added. Most significant of late is the embrace of technology and our informative web presence on line. The cyber site: chabad.ca is a virtual reservoir of all things Jewish. In addition to numerous essays, holiday guidance, lifecycle info, the site connects the entire Jewish world. Whether you are looking for kosher food in Beijing, to purchase a mezuzah for a friend in South Dakota, map a trail of comfort (and assistance) for your son as he backpacks through Asia, the site brings it all to the screen of your iPhone, (or computer screen).



Gerald Marr meets with the Rebbe

# Lubavitch Day Camp, a Camp with a Heart

By Mark Mietkiewicz

Estee Steinmetz knows first hand that nobody forgets their Lubavitch Day Camp (LDC) experience. And not just because she's the camp's director. She realized this when her car broke down in the middle of a busy intersection – and the tow truck driver told her about the years he spent at the day camp.

And that driver's not alone. Every summer, hundreds of campers arrive at the central day camp campus on Chabad Gate in Thornhill before setting off on a path of discovery, excitement, friendship and Jewish learning.

Mrs. Steinmetz lives nearby and has just completed her 12th summer as camp director. Her ties to the camp go back a bit further, though. She started at the age of two, as a Tiny Tot Camper. Jump ahead a couple of decades and she co-directed the camp for two years with her husband, Binyomin, after which she took over the reins. Back when the camp had (only) 400 campers, she filled out the year as a schoolteacher. With the growth of the camp, being director is now a year-round responsibility.

Asked why she likes it, she answers in a contrary manner. "You are going to have to ask me why I don't like it. I don't like it because it's only two months. Otherwise I love it, every part of it."

Campers range from two to 14 years of age in seven divisions. This year, they hit a record 700 campers spread over two four-week sessions. On any particular day, they welcome about 550 campers at Chabad Gate. The day starts off with a lineup where the campers recite the Pesukim or verses which

represent the foundations of Jewish belief, along with some songs like "Ani Ma'amin."

After that, the camp flag is raised, and campers are transported to a number of satellite sites – with the youngest children at Chabad @ Flamingo and older girls at Netivot Hatorah, both in Thornhill, and boys at TanenbaumCHAT in North York.

Each week has a theme with related daily activities. "Kosher Week" is divided into Candyland Day, Brochos Fair, Kosher Supermarket and on Friday, of course, Bakery Bash. During "Ahavas Yisrael Week," they focus on Friendship Day, Big Sister / Little Sister and Cooking with Grannies. And can you imagine celebrating Pesach, Purim, Chanukah and Rosh Hashanah all in one week? That's just what they do during Jewish Holiday Week – in July!

Full day excursions include visits to Canada's Wonderland, Woodbine Centre, Toronto and Bowmanville Zoos, the Ontario Science Centre and the very popular Chicopee Tube Park. The girls love to pick fruit at Andrews' Scenic Acres. Not so much the boys. "So we don't send them" to pick fruit says Mrs. Steinmetz. Popular half-day trips include bowling, Bunch of Fun Playland, Chuck E. Cheese, Dave & Buster's and laser tag. And of course, each camper gets a box lunch for the trip.

Not complacent to rest on their laurels, the camp is always looking for ways to offer their campers new and exciting activities – many of which you'd never find in other day camps. For boys, there are tennis classes held at the Tanenbaum ww-

CHAT campus. And for young guys who want to release their inner William Tell, professional archers are brought in from Peterborough to instruct in the safe use of bows and arrows – in a supervised and safe environment.

And of course, girls will be girls. Not surprisingly, they love the painting classes where advanced instructors teach them how to transform canvasses into stunning works of art. But who says that girls don't want to work up a sweat, too? And they can – thanks to weekly Zumba classes and aerobic boxing activities.

Younger kids love the opportunity to participate in drum circles – and to even learn how to make their own instruments. And speaking of music, they're crazy about their weekly Sing-along conducted by the lively and charismatic "Rabbi B", also known as Rabbi Yossi Berklin.

## FOOD AND PLENTY OF IT

Napoleon said "An army marches on its stomach." Perhaps. But Monsieur Bonaparte never attended Lubavitch Day Camp and never saw what happens at 770 Chabad Gate.

Rabbi Moshe Spalter points out that unlike practically any other day camp, Chabad provides daily hot meals and a couple of snacks at no extra cost. As Administrator of the Chabad Lubavitch Community Centre, Rabbi Spalter is one of the many people who ensure that the Day Camp, which is OCA (Ontario Camps Association) accredited, runs smoothly and efficiently. He points out that all food is prepared on the premises.

While campers are still fast asleep, five full-time and two part-time kitchen staff report for duty as early as 6 a.m. Meals range from grilled cheese to spaghetti and meatballs to lasagna and soup to hamburgers. And kids who are lucky enough to celebrate their birthday while at camp are surprised with homemade cupcakes for all their friends.

But whatever is being served, two things never change: it's nutritious and plentiful. "We always have extra," adds Mrs. Steinmetz. "I tell the kitchen staff, 'If we don't have extra, that means you made too little.'" Surplus food is given to families in need.

Although Mrs. Steinmetz is a foe of waste, she understands that sometimes you need to spend a little extra to get the value you need. "I can spend \$380 and get cheaper apples and the kids won't eat them. Or \$450 and they're delicious and the kids eat them."

No external food may be brought onto the premises in order to ensure the highest level of Kashrus and because the camp caters to children with a multitude of food allergies and sensitivities. It's not uncommon to receive an early morning call from a parent asking if their child could please bring along breakfast because they woke up late. The answer: Sorry, no. But don't worry. There will be plenty of cereal and milk waiting for them when they arrive at camp.

## STAFF GETTING THE VERY BEST

Assembling a first class staff of 150 is a priority which begins while the winds are

blowing and snow is piling up on the same facilities where children will be playing in several months. In addition to local teens and young adults, hopeful counsellors apply mainly from the North America but from as far away as Australia and South Africa. The very best are selected and will be flown here – and given a place to live, and fed – at the Day Camp's expense. Both local and imported counsellors are typically from Chabad families. "That is our core group. We bring them because they live and breathe camp," says Mrs. Steinmetz. But the staff wouldn't be complete without a very impressive third group – alumni who do not come from Chabad homes and may not be fully observant (yet) but love camp and respect its values.

Far more than just being a job, Mrs. Steinmetz is amazed at how being a counsellor is an opportunity to grow. She has seen teenagers who during the school year are having a very hard time. "Either scholastically it doesn't work for them. Or socially it doesn't work. The And they come to camp and they're different people."

For the younger children, there is a 4-to-1 ratio of counsellors to campers with a 5-to-1 ratio for the older ones. The camp also accommodates a limited number of children with special needs depending on the severity and what their needs are. They receive one-on-one attention.

Mrs. Steinmetz may be camp director but with her own kids in most divisions, she is also a camp mother. Do her kids get special treatment? Actually, Steinmetz and the counsellors of her youngest kids



have perfected a routine she calls “Dodge the Mommie.” If her children are coming, Estee makes sure that she disappears.

As for the counsellors, Steinmetz acknowledges that it can be a bit intimidating to be responsible for the camp director’s child. But she reassures them, “I obviously picked you as my child’s counsellor because I think you’re fantastic.”

#### GETTING EVERYONE WHERE THEY NEED TO BE

With four campuses, and 550 campers and over 100 staff on any given day, getting everyone where they are supposed to be is no small feat. Those logistics fall on the shoulders of Shua Goldstein, 28, Transportation Director (as well as Boys’ Division Director – and Estee’s brother.) Originally from Thornhill, Rabbi Goldstein now lives in Florida but returns north each spring to map out the transportation plan.

He sees his role as “to make camp smooth.” Since transportation is provided, at a minimal cost, about 400 families take advantage of it. “The better the buses run, the better the camp is. The smoother the camp, the more fun the kids have.”

The Day Camp outsources a fleet of eight buses for the summer. This is preferable to owning their own buses because they need to ensure that backups are immediately available in case of breakdowns. The buses cover quite a territory. South to Eglinton in Toronto, north to Gamble in Richmond Hill, west to Keele and east to Yonge. Buses can be tracked via GPS and plans are in the works for more sophisticated tracking via tablet.

Many buses do double and even triple duty. After they’ve delivered the older kids, they



swing around to pick up the younger pre-school ones. Then they’re called on to shuttle the campers to the various campuses – and back to Chabad Gate to swim. (Chabad has a pool on location and every moment of the day is used so that all campers can benefit from a daily swim.)

#### THE BOTTOM LINE

What does all this cost? For the July session, \$935 and slightly less for August which is a day shorter. “That’s the ‘official cost,’” says Estee Steinmetz. But a family will not be turned away due to lack of funds.

Of the 700 children, about 500 attend public school. Knowing how important camp could be to a child who may have limited exposure to Jewish activities during the rest of the year, Mrs. Steinmetz adds, “I try for the most part not to turn away anyone who doesn’t

go to a Jewish school.”

Always vigilant about spending, Mrs. Steinmetz remembers the early days when she set aside several thousand dollars for publicity. No more. As the camp has grown, she has found that word of mouth is the camp’s best friend and that many age groups fill up in the spring. What about last minute pleas from parents? Mrs. Steinmetz has been known to work a bit of magic in order to make room for late applicants. (But please don’t count on it.)

#### IMPACT OF THE DAY CAMP

Chabad makes no secret that they are fostering an observant Jewish environment. But it’s never done in an aggressive or heavy-handed manner.

“The goal of the camp is to make Judaism fun,” says Shua Goldstein. They see kids coming without kippahs or tzitzis who begin to wear them by the

end of the summer. But Rabbi Goldstein adds, “it’s more than just the kippah and tzitzis. It’s the fact that they’re proud of the fact that they’re Jewish. And they’re proud of Judaism in general.”

Each summer, parents are invited to attend a very special Friday night dinner and sample the same camp spirit that the children enjoy daily. Shua Goldstein remembers that after a Friday night family dinner last year, they received an email from a woman saying her husband had refused for years “to embrace this Friday night thing.” After their Chabad experience, they now shut off the TV for a couple of hours on Friday nights and make Kiddush over wine.

Estee Steinmetz is moved by the subtle changes in the campers. Like the kids who come to the office because of a minor scrape or cut. You give them a lollipop – and they stop and say a berachah (blessing)

before taking a lick.

Yahalom has learned the importance of respecting her elders while at camp. Yahalom who is “13 turning 14,” has been going to camp for seven years, and is now a Counsellor-in-Training. She’s pleased that after all these years as a camper, she is now beginning to look after kids. “They’re really fun. The kids love me. And I love them.”

#### CAMP NEVER REALLY ENDS

Does Estee Steinmetz look forward to Shabbos so she can put up her feet and get away from it all? It doesn’t work that way. Even when she’s shopping for her family, she can’t really get away because everyone recognizes the Camp Director. And every week, she hosts Shabbos meals for staff as well as the special Friday night dinner with parents and kids.

When camp ends in August, Mrs. Steinmetz needs to wrap up some related office work. She then has a week or so off to get her own kids ready for school “and to breathe.” September is spent making calculations about where every penny was spent, going over staff ratios. What worked, what can be improved on. In November, registration opens for the coming year and preparations begin. By January, staff applications are pouring in followed by interviews. And before you know it, summer and Lubavitch Day Camp are here again.

As if all this is not enough, Estee Steinmetz does harbour a dream. One day she is going to figure out how to gather alumni for a massive Lubavitch Day Camp celebration. It won’t be easy but that’s never stopped her before.

And of course, that will include you too, Mr. Tow Truck Driver!



## New Mesifta Opens in Thornhill

After much planning and consultation with leading educators a new Mesifta called Ohr Temimim has opened for the 2015/16 semester. The inaugural semester will be under aegis of two skilled educators Rabbi Eliezer Posner and Rabbi Dovid Bisk.

With a caring and experienced team of educators, to motivate and guide each student, the Yeshiva is ready to provide the student body with an authentic Chasidic environment, an appreciation for the values espoused by the Rebbe, and the inspiration to develop and nurture spiritual growth and good personal character.

The school will offer a comprehensive Torah curriculum, in keeping with the expectations of mainstream Chabad



Rabbi Eliezer Posner

Yeshivahs. In addition, students will make use of technology to achieve optimal learning skills. "A unique feature of the Mesifta will be the individual learning experience that we are creating for each student," the school's founder Rabbi Baruch Zaltzman explained.

A group of senior students (Shluchim) have joined the Ye-

shivah to mentor the younger students. The Shluchim will provide opportunities for an



Rabbi Boruch Zaltzman

accelerated Torah learning program. The Yeshiva administration recognizes the importance of a healthy physical outlet and will also provide additional extra-curricular activities - swim, gym, professional chess coaching and music lessons.

The School is housed in the spacious Chabad @ Flamingo building at 8001 Bathurst St. The students will enjoy a beautiful Beis Medrash (study hall), a Mikva on premises, with surrounding parks.

A well-equipped dormitory with eight bedrooms, newly renovated 4 washrooms and showers, with a large living-room area for the boys to relax after a full day of learning, provide space for a limited number of out of town students.

This project has been under consideration for many years and responds to the educational needs of many developing young men. With prayerful wishes we look forward to much success.

## You'd Be Doing The Same Thing as the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Dear Editor:

I read with pleasure your article on Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn. I had the great fortune to personally experience this remarkable rabbi's dedication to helping Jews return to the observance of mitzvot. Even today, many decades later and despite the anemia of old age, I blush when I recall the chutzpa displayed by six of my friends and I towards Rabbi Schneersohn, and how we were gently turned around.

It was in 1929, when several articles appeared in various Jewish newspapers available in Philadelphia

in those days about one Rabbi Schneersohn, the Lubavitcher Rebbe. These articles quoted the Rebbe at great length and in much detail. My friends and I read these articles and wondered amongst ourselves whether the Rebbe was actually planning to replace the Al-mighty. We discussed this with an official of our synagogue, and he suggested that we visit the Rebbe and ask him what he had in mind.

One of the articles had mentioned that he had been given the use of a house on 33rd Street by Mrs. Faggen-Miller, a woman well known for her charitable nature. Accordingly, late one Saturday evening we all piled into the car and drove to the listed address. Our intention was to confront the Rebbe and challenge him that we thought he was trying to displace G-d.

As we climbed the steps to the front porch, we saw through the window that the living room was crowded with men. We rang the doorbell and a dignified, bearded man came to the door and inquired what we wanted. One of us responded: "We'd like to speak to the Rebbe. We have an important question to ask."

All this time the man was taking notes. We subsequently found out that he was Rabbi Yehezkel Feigen, the Rebbe's personal secretary. "About what?" he said: "The Rebbe must know the question before he can see you."

"We'd like to know how he expects us to keep an old-fashioned religion in a modern country." (We knew we couldn't tell this man our originally intended question.)

"You'll have to wait," he said. "You see there is quite a crowd before you. But come in."

We told him we'd wait on the porch, as there wouldn't be room for all of us in the packed living room. In a few minutes he

returned and said that the Rebbe would see us at once.

He ushered us into the house, through the crowded living room, and up the stairs. We wondered why we had been admitted before all those people downstairs who had been there before us.

At the top of the stairs stood the Rebbe. He was handsome and saintly looking, with gleaming, bright eyes. He wore a large fur hat. His hand was outstretched in greeting. I was surprised since I never knew that Chasidic rebbes extended



Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn upon his arrival in America

their hands in greeting.

"This is the happiest moment I've had in Philadelphia," he said as he started to arrange chairs around his desk. We tried to help him, but he insisted that he wanted to do this task himself.

Once we were seated he took a long look at each one of us and then began: "You look like very intelligent young men, and therefore I must speak on your level. You are wondering about those people downstairs who were here before you. Well, here are some of the problems for which they are asking help.

"One man's daughter is seriously ill. What can I do? Nothing more than he can do, provided he approaches G-d. He should be able to ask for a complete recovery.

"Another has a lawsuit and wants me to pray that he will win. I do not know who's right, but he can pray that the L-rd will give justice. "There is a man who wants to buy a business and wants me to intercede to make sure it succeeds. If I could do that, I'd be a rich business man.

"But if I could not answer your question, I'd have no right to be a rabbi." The Rebbe smiled and continued. "First, I must admit a great secret, which I trust you will most likely keep. There are 613 mitzvot, and while the Lubavitcher Rebbe tries to keep them all, he finds it impossible

to keep them all. So what does he do? Discard 613 mitzvot? No, he keeps as many of them as humanly possible."

With these few words he removed the venom we had brought with us. Then he asked us to try and keep as many mitzvot as we could. If we kept as many as we could, then we'd be doing the same thing as the Lubavitcher Rebbe!

Then he asked for our Jewish names and the names of our mothers. We also offered our legal names and addresses but he said he had no use for them. Several of the boys put

their hands in their pockets, but he stopped them with a gesture, thanked us, and said he had no use for money; what he wanted was mitzvot.

He asked us whether we put on tefillin every day. Several admitted they had given up. Whereupon he offered them tefillin so they could fulfill the mitzvah. All of us promised to try to live up to his suggestions. He then blessed us individually and shook hands with us again, and we left. We stood on the porch for nearly two hours digesting the visit.

Everyone agreed to pray at least once a day. One said he would give up his Saturday work as a dental technician and some months later he even prevailed upon his employer to do the same. One of us, Gabriel Lowenthal, of blessed memory, attached himself to a synagogue and taught what he had learned from the Rebbe's philosophy to many others. I have lost track of some of the boys, but I'm sure that the ten minutes we spent with the Rebbe strengthened the spirit of Judaism for all of us.

The Depression and later World War II gave me little hope of ever gaining more light from Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak. However, I found continued inspiration from his son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, the present Rebbe, to keep as many of the 613 mitzvot as I can.

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 Selection 2



## First Bearded US Air Force Officer

Rabbi Elie Estrin, who together with his wife Chaya, is the director of the Rohr Chabad House for Jewish Life at the University of Washington in Seattle, graduated this summer from Officer Training School at the Maxwell Air Force base in Montgomery, Alabama. Estrin, who now holds the rank of Captain, is the first bearded officer in the United States Air Force in 40 years.

During the entire five week Commissioned Officer Training Course, Rabbi Estrin was forced to eat Kosher MRE's (ready-to-eat meals) but said that staff were fantastic about facilitating his required accommodations, some of which included his adherence to Shabbat and the 25 hour fast of Tisha Be'av.

The 4:30 am wake-ups every morning for PT were definitely "different" for Estrin, 35, as was the incessant push-ups and sit-ups, and the 1.5 mile running PT test, but for the father of five, the road to the armed services was "a logical extension of his existing service to the Jewish community."

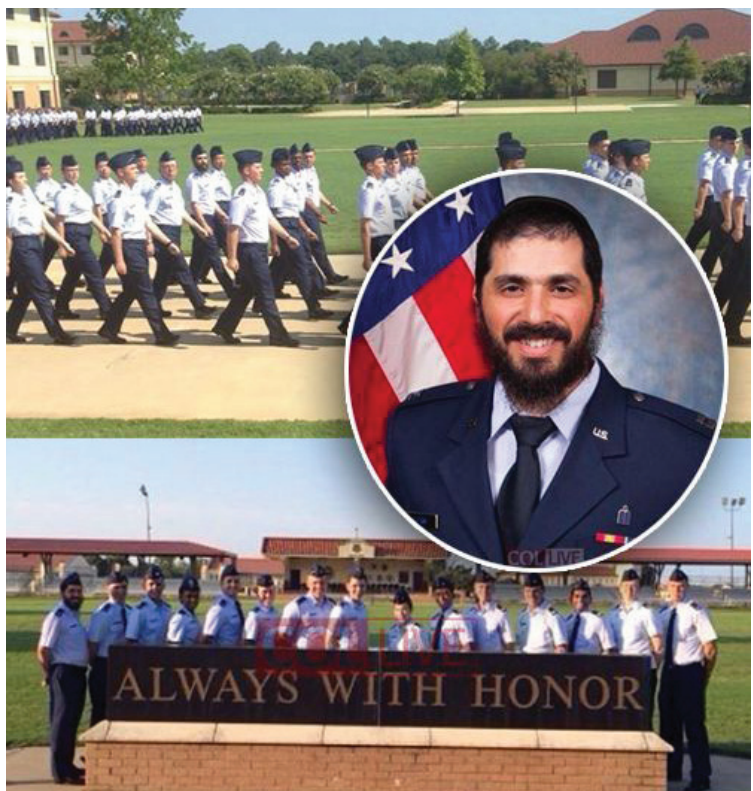
In his 11 years serving the Jewish student community at the University of Washington, Estrin notes that out of the many students with whom he and his wife had a close rapport, more than a dozen had gone on to join the military. And, after speaking with an alumnus who had served with the prestigious U.S. Army Rangers, he became convinced that chaplaincy was an ideal fit.

In January of 2014, the military ban on wearing a beard and other such displays of religious belief, was lifted by the Pentagon, paving the way for Rabbi Estrin to join the military chaplaincy.

The stop in Alabama is part of a seven thousand mile road-trip Rabbi Estrin, Chaya, and their 5 children have embarked on, making their way through 23 States. They began their journey on June 11th in the Chabad on Campus RV, known as the "Mitzvah Tank", which is generally used to service students in the outlying areas of WU's vast campus. The Estrin's traveled cross-country to attend the Chabad on Campus Director's Conference in Stamford, CT, and are currently making their way back home through the southern States.

Chabad on Campus has experienced tremendous growth since the year 2000, expanding from 77 Jewish centers, to their current status of over 230 full-time, professionally staffed centers, becoming the largest network of professional Jewish educators, serving the needs of Jewish student populations on campuses around the world.

Rabbi Elie Estrin said, "The AF leadership training was exceptional, and I believe it will assist me in my work both on campus and as an Air Force chaplain. I'm looking forward to getting back to work and applying it all in the real world."



By Menachem Posner

They sat together in the car, driving from Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, to Vienna, Austria, just an hour away. Rabbi Baruch Myers was accompanying Ivan Pasternak, a 70-year-old member of his community who was going to undergo his circumcision, finally entering into the covenant



Rabbi Baruch Myers officiates the brit milah of Ivan Pasternak in Vienna.

of Abraham.

"There are a number of such men in our community," explains Myers, who has served as chief rabbi and Chabad representative to Slovakia since 1993. "There were years of Communist rule when it was socially unacceptable and only the most devout kept this tradition alive. Over the years, many men and boys have decided to 'take the plunge,' thus earning their Jewish names and the right to be called to the Torah."

Pasternak had been somewhat of an enigma to the rabbi. A teacher by profession, he regularly attended services every Shabbat in the cozy little sanctuary carved out from the cavernous old synagogue that was far too large for a community reduced to a fraction of its prewar self, having been decimated by World War II and the Holocaust.

After his retirement and the passing of his wife, Zuzka, Pasternak took up the duties of shamash, caring for the synagogue and making sure that the books were in order.

Yet he was hesitant to undergo circumcision, even if not doing so created a barrier between him and the crusty old stalwarts who formed the backbone of the regular minyan. They would grumble in Hungarian about the younger men who lacked Jewish names and the education they carried with them from their youths.

During Simchat Torah of

## Slovakian Man Fulfills His Father's Dying Wish, 70 Years later

2014, something changed. Exuberant with dancing, Pasternak told the rabbi that he was ready. He would have a brit milah and take the Hebrew name "Ilan," which sounds similar to Ivan and is quite popular in Israel today.

As they drove towards Vienna, Pasternak told the rabbi the other reason he chose that name.

everything.

"But three weeks after I was born, we were discovered. We were taken to a small concentration camp. Three days later, my father was sent off to Auschwitz and then Dachau.

"My mother and I were fortunate. She managed to bribe a Slovak night guard to turn a blind eye towards us, and she ran, holding me for 15 kilometers, to safety. My mother and I then hid with a gentile family. There were roundups very often; we were in constant danger of being discovered. I never cried all through those terrible times, my mother would tell me.

"When the war ended, we went back to Prešov, but nothing was the same. My mother waited patiently for my father to come home, hoping to hear that he was alive. But alas, we received word from the Red Cross that he had been killed in Dachau, as had been so many of my mother's friends and relatives.

"We settled in Bratislava. My mother would tell me about her family, how large it had been and how almost everyone had been killed. Occasionally, I would ask her about my circumcision, knowing that it was something every Jewish male should have. She told me that she believed it could only be done for an eight-day-old baby, and it was impossible for me now.

"For years, I knew that my father had chosen a Hebrew name for me, and I was haunted by the fact that I had never taken the name.

Upon their arrival in Vienna, Ivan Pasternak underwent his brit and took the name Ilan—the very same name his father had chosen for him before being taken away by the Nazis.

"Today, I am more than 70 years old," he reflects, "and I feel that my parents and my grandparents are looking down from somewhere above, and they are satisfied knowing that everything is in order."

"My family is originally from Prešov," he began. "My parents, Marta and Teodor Pasternak, were married there in 1940. It was not long after that Jews were persecuted in earnest by Czechoslovakian Nazi sympathizers. It was the first city where Jews had to wear special white arm bands, and it did not take long before many people, including my grandparents and many other relatives, were deported, never to be seen again.

"Realizing that Prešov, where they were well-known, would be a death trap for them, my parents decided to run to Pressburg [now Bratislava] using a false non-Jewish identity. Marta and Teodor Pasternak became Mr. and Mrs. Paulovič.

"I was born in the summer of 1944, and of course, there was no way they could have me circumcised under those circumstances. So they waited, hoping they would be able to do it when I got older. My father had a Hebrew name picked and

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## 36 Orphaned Girls' Bat Mitzvahs in Jerusalem

By Faygie Levy

Smiles were intermingled with a few tears and plenty of laughter as 36 girls from across Israel came together in Jerusalem recently for a joint bat mitzvah celebration, complete with a celebratory dinner, speakers, singing and dancing.

However, this wasn't your typical celebration. For one, each of the girls celebrating this milestone in a Jewish child's life had lost a parent—in nearly all of the cases, their father. Secondly, the arrangements and the costs were handled by the Colel Chabad social-service organization to make things as easy on the families as possible.

"Family milestones can be much more stressful and difficult, both financially and emotionally, without a parent," explains Rabbi Amram Blau, director of Colel Chabad's Widows and Orphans Project in Israel, known at Chesed Menachem Mendel. "It's heartwarming to see the joy on the faces of these young women and their families in reaching this momentous occasion."

Established in 1788 by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement—Colel Chabad is the oldest continuous operating charity in Israel. The Widows and Orphans Project is just one of many programs in its vast network of services, which includes soup kitchens, children's camps, senior needs and more.

"When Colel Chabad called me last year before my son's bar mitzvah, I was overcome with emotion," said Almira, a widow and mother of six. "I couldn't even imagine how I was going to plan for the ceremony. And now, with my daughter's bat mitzvah, we

are overwhelmed with thanks, and in awe that there are people who are so generous and thoughtful to children who lost their fathers."

The day's festivities included a trip to Rachel's Tomb, located between Jerusalem and Bethlehem; and



Entertainment was on tap for 36 orphaned girls from across Israel who celebrated their bat mitzvahs earlier this year. The program included speakers, singing, dancing, and, of course, a celebratory meal.

separating and making challah—separating the traditional Shabbat loaves being one of three mitzvot specifically for women (the others are lighting the Shabbat candles and going to the mikvah as part of family purity.) Addressing the birthday girls, Rebbetzin Yemima Mizrahi, a popular Torah scholar and speaker in Jerusalem, said: "The world gains strength from you young women. When we see your beautiful smiling faces, glowing from this special celebration, and we know all the hardships you have been through, we can't help but feel that we must smile and be happy as well." This was the fourth year that Colel Chabad has offered a bat mitzvah program; it also runs an annual bar mitzvah ceremony for boys who have lost a parent.

When asked why the organization began offering such affairs for the young girls and boys, Rabbi Menachem Traxler, the organization's director of volunteering, responded rhetorically: "Why not?" More seriously, he added: "We look for every way we can help during their childhoods, especially during the school years, so they will be able to grow and lead their own lives successfully."

By Mordechai Lightstone  
Experiential learning has long been at the core of Jewish education. Think of brushing the letters of the aleph-bet with honey or directly engaging children in the Passover seder.

Along those lines, the relatively new fourth-floor exhibit of the Jewish Children's Museum in Brooklyn, N.Y., represents yet another building block for young minds. Called "A Voyage Through Jewish History," the goal is to learn through entertaining and engaging activities.

Designed by Work With Your Brain—a museum and exhibit design firm, and built in part thanks to a donation from philanthropist David Slager and a grant from New York City—the themes of the floor present visitors with a powerful experiential survey of Jewish history.

Spanning the time of Abraham through modernity, the exhibit offers not just a survey of Jewish history, but a chance for guests to actively participate in exploring such history. Guests are not merely spectators to the past, but put squarely in the center of it.

The various sections include "Patriarchs and Matriarchs," "Mount Sinai Experience" (including the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai), "Temple and Tabernacle," "Land of Israel," "Sages Through the Ages," "Jewish World Today," "The Holocaust" and "One Good Deed."

In the midst of it is a massive replica of the Western Wall (Kotel), where visitors can write down their prayers on notes and insert them into the wall, just like in Jerusalem.

Recreating the Midrashic

narrative about Abraham's Tent—a refuge to desert wayfarers that afforded them food and water, and a chance to bless G-d—a stand at the exhibit lets children assemble the blessings said over food. A bank of phones on a nearby wall allows them to record their own personal prayers.

An exhibit about the Tabernacle in the desert doesn't merely suffice to show a diorama of the structure, but provides the chance for kids to build it themselves.

Entering the hall of Jewish sages, a copy of the Talmud lets guests literally peel back the text, showing the layers of commentary and the

Brooklyn's Museum Row on Eastern Parkway in the Chasidic neighborhood of Crown Heights, welcomes some 200,000 children every year.

Chaya Serebryanski, the museum's program and marketing director, says "children should be able to experience their rich heritage, and see the continuation of the Jewish people and their role in reaching a greater Jewish future."

By example, she points to the final aspect of the exhibit. In a room connected with the arrival of Moshiach and the Messianic era, guests are given the chance to carry on their experience outside the museum walls, encouraging



A replica of the Western Wall (Kotel) in Jerusalem, complete with handwritten prayers and notes.

historical context.

The seven-story museum, which opened its doors to the general public for the first time ten years ago in 2005, is the largest Jewish-themed children's museum in the world. It primarily serves elementary-school-age kids and their families.

According to its directors, the museum, along

them to take a lesson or action from Jewish history and tradition, and implement it into their lives.

"We hope that by encouraging everyone to do a good deed," she says, "we can unite our guests as active members in the tapestry of Jewish history."

For more information, visit <http://jcm.museum>

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## A Contest with Real Spin: 145 Special-Needs Kids Get Brand-New Bikes

By Mindy Rubenstein

No one really had to reinvent the wheel for this particular contest. In fact, it spun off from one good deed and picked up motion from there.

The Friendship Circle of Michigan recently donated 145 bicycles—the majority of them adapted in specific ways—to children with special needs throughout the United States, two-thirds of whom are not Jewish. To do so, it partnered with 10 large bike companies, each of which donated two bikes to the contest.

“Providing adaptive bikes to children with special needs can provide a sense of belong-

run organization created the bike donation program four years ago in honor of Michaela Noam Kaplan, who was a participant there. She passed away in her sleep in 2009 at the age of 5. It is in her memory that the contest is named “The Michaela Noam Kaplan Great Bike Giveaway.”

“Despite her physical limitations due to cerebral palsy, Michaela adored life, traveled the world, went to school—and loved her adaptive bicycle,” recounted her parents, suburban Detroit residents Gabriella Burman and Adam Kaplan. “While this therapeutic benefit was important to us, being on



Rabbi Tzvi Schectman, director of the Friendship Circle program

but she was able to pedal on the bike, strengthening and increasing flexibility in her legs and hips.

Manufacturers of special-needs equipment build adaptive bicycles with proper head and chest supports, harnesses, foot plates and Velcro strapping to keep a child safe while riding

The bicycle program has grown steadily, starting with 18 bikes given away during the first effort in 2011. This year, some 1,870 people registered for the contest from every U.S. state, versus 153 registrants the first year.

While adaptive bikes can run from \$300 to \$5,000, the average bike given away in the contest was priced at about \$2,000.

“Families of special-needs children have a lot of therapies and expenses,” explained Schectman. “Insurance doesn’t pay for bikes. Parents just cannot afford to buy them.”

As part of the contest, which was publicized mainly on social media and through word of mouth, families chose bikes that best suited their children—for example, “Mobo Cruisers,” “Buddy Bikes,”



Striders,” “Triads”—then entered that contest by submitting a photo and description of the child, and why he or she needs an adaptive bike.

Each individual needed 50 votes to be entered into a drawing. The child with the most votes in each category received a bike, as well as one selected by the drawing.

Families solicited votes and donations to go towards a particular category for their children; that gave the Friendship Circle the ability to add more bikes to the categories.

In all, more than 6,000 donors participated.

According to the Friendship Circle, the real beauty of the annual contest is not only being able to give away so many bikes; equally important is the awareness it raises.

“People have no idea that it’s such a crucial need for a family,” said Schectman. “It really resonates with them. Even if they don’t win, they may end up getting a bike anyway because of the generosity of family or friends. “The organic growth is tremendous.”

In fact, of the final tally, at least 100 bikes were given away as a direct result of donations sent in by those voting for and giving to the contestants.

The giveaway was born from an initial mitzvah and then a desire to “pay it forward.” It all started with a phone call to the Friendship Circle in the summer of 2011 from an individual who wanted to give a bicycle to a needy child because he himself had once been one.

Donor Mikhail Reytsman came over with his family from Russia as part of a refugee program; the Jewish commu-

nity helped them resettle in the United States. An anonymous individual donated a brand-new bicycle to be given to a refugee child, and he turned out to be the recipient.

“Somehow, I got volunteered for that,” recalled Reytsman, now an engineer for the Ford Motor Company who lives in Ann Arbor, Mich.

“I picked a bike, and he told me his story: When he was a little kid, he really wanted a bike and couldn’t afford one. One day, his stepfather just presented him with a bike out of nowhere as a gift. That was the highlight of his childhood. That bike allowed him to go anywhere. He could visit his friends. And so, he promised himself that before the age of 30, he would return the favor and give another kid a bike.

That turned out to be me. The only condition was that I promise that before I turn 30, I would give someone else a bike as well: It’s important to keep their tradition going.

“I never heard from him again, never saw him again, never knew his name, but his only request was to make sure that the tradition keeps going. When I was getting close to 30, I started asking around, ‘Is there anybody who would actually want a bike?’ I was told to check with the Friendship Circle.

History was made. Administrators called Reytsman back, telling him “We just started a huge bike giveaway.” “I learned that you can turn something into a bigger tradition,” he said. “To me, it is this amazing story about how one guy so many years ago got a small gift from his stepfather and created a ripple effect well into the future.



Robert Seaberg from Iowa, one of last year’s winners of a brand-new bike given away as part of an annual contest run by the Friendship Circle of Michigan.

ing, inclusion and confidence,” said Rabbi Tzvi Schectman, family coordinator at the Friendship Circle who directs the program. “By riding a bike with their families and friends, children with special needs can experience freedom and joy.”

The Chabad-Lubavitch-

the bike also meant that she could be a kid, too, and that we as her parents could celebrate those precious moments with her.”

Michaela’s spastic quadriplegia did not allow her muscles to move fluidly on their own, explained her parents,

## Israel’s Chief Rabbinate Revises Tablet Logo

By Dovid Zaklikowski - Jerusalem, Israel

Israel’s chief rabbinate updated the design of their logo in which the Ten Commandments will now be depicted in a square rather than the familiar rounded shape.

To many Israelis, it is merely a curious change of design. For others, it is a return to authentic Jewish tradition. The two tablets, or luchot, as recorded in the Talmud (tractate Baba Batra 14a), formed a square. But it is the cylindrical design that has become familiar to most.

Historians point out that the familiar rounded top of

the tablets was introduced by the Roman order, derived from their architectural style prevalent at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple in the year 70 CE. “The Roman desire to eradicate everything Jewish, included even the shapes of our most holy symbols,” wrote the late Michel Schwartz, a famed artist of Judaica works.

Schwartz recalled when he first began drawing Jewish art was for the Chabad educational arm in the early 1940’s. At the time, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, headed the educational arm and instructed him to draw the tablets as two

rectangles that together, form a square.

To the Rebbe, a Jewish symbol should be drawn according to Jewish sources. The Rebbe explained that, more so, in the case of the tablets, since the rounded style was introduced with the intention to do it contrary to Jewish tradition, one should refrain from drawing the tablets in that way. In the 1980’s the Rebbe spoke publicly on this issue.

Rabbi Dovid Lau, chief rabbi of Israel, said that when he was recently made aware of the Jewish sources and the Rebbe’s words, he arranged for a new logo to be drawn and new

stationary to be printed and the new logo to be affixed in the chief rabbinate’s new offices.

“This is the true way it should be according to the

Torah,” Lau said. “This was not only incumbent upon me in my position; it is a privilege for me to be the one to make this change.”



The current location of the offices of the chief rabbinate and the new logo (inset).



## Rabbi Borrows a Chopper and Rescues Stranded in Nepal

By Faygie Levy

When Chabad of Nepal got word that about 50 Israelis were stuck in several re-

self in a Nepali helicopter to reach the stranded.

Since the quake had first happened, Lifshitz communi-



Rabbi Chezky Lifshitz—co-director of Chabad of Nepal with his wife, Chani—took to the skies himself in a Nepali government helicopter to reach the stranded.

mote villages with no food, electricity or water, after the earthquake in late April, they sprang into action, organizing an effort to try and reach them. But a rescue mission to deliver food and a satellite phone to them by motorcycle yesterday ended after a 10-hour journey that met with blocked roads and no way to get through to them.

So the next day they tried again. This time, Rabbi Chezky Lifshitz—co-director of Chabad of Nepal with his wife, Chani—took to the skies him-

self with many of the Israelis stuck in the mountain regions in remote areas like Dhunche and Syrabrubesi, using satellite phones fixed with GPS that the hikers are carrying. He then relayed their locations to the Nepalese government.

It was an earlier tragedy that made the use of the satellite phones possible. The family of Nadav Shoham, a hiker killed last year in a freak blizzard, donated the phones to ensure other hikers could be reached in case of emergency.

The phones were handed



Israeli President Reuven Rivlin with the three young children of the Chabad emissaries to Nepal

out to some backpackers when they left the Chabad House so they could stay in touch and became vital link in those critical days after the earthquake.

When the Rabbi touched down in Dhunche with food and water, he found the group cold, tired and hungry. The relief was clear on their faces as they gathered up their personal belongings and backpacks. Most were eager to head back home, though the Chabad House in Kathmandu would be the next best thing in the short term.

Twenty five were airlifted to Kathmandu and about the same number remained in various regions of the mountains waiting for their chance to be rescued. Bad weather delayed some helicopter rescues near Mount Everest, and a second attempt had to be made.

While the rabbi was out rescuing the stranded, his wife Chani was serving up 2,000 meals a day to Nepalis back at the Chabad center in Kathmandu.

Four days after the 7.8 magnitude quake that struck the impoverished South Asian country on April 25, the couple decided to send their children to their home country. Shmuel, Rivki and Yitzchak Lifshitz,

all under age 6, were sent with their Nepali nanny to stay with their grandparents in Israel.

Meeting with the president, who greeted them with a hug and kosher chocolate, they were able to call their parents in Nepal.

During the course of the conversation with Rabbi Lifshitz, Rivlin praised the humanitarian work the couple was doing there, together with their team of rabbinical students and Israeli volunteers.

“What you are doing for the world, and certainly for Israelis who are [in Nepal], is remarkable. Your activity, in

opened your home to the entire world, we have opened our home to your children here in Israel.”

“With the kindness of Gd, they succeeded in saving 25 friends today,” his wife wrote on their Facebook page.

“They are weak after full days [without supplies] in the wilderness. We brought them all to the Chabad center. The crew here greeted them with tremendous emotion. They’ve now had a hot meal, and received warm clothing and supplies. They are all here for the night.”

In response to the photos of the rescue operation, one



the Jewish, Israeli and universal spheres—and the way you opened your home to people in times of need—is amazing,” said Rivlin. “Just as you

woman posted: “Thank you very much for extracting from my brother and his girlfriend, there are no words to thank you for all you are doing.”

## Pedi-Sukkahs to Plow Through Manhattan Once Again

Chabad-Lubavitch teens on “Pedi-Sukkahs” will once again parade through Manhattan during the intermediate days of Sukkot, Wednesday, September 30 - October 4. The cycles are modified pedi-cabs with an attached sukkah—a hut-like structure covered with bamboo—attached in the back.

The “Pedi-Sukkahs” are the newest version of the well-known Chabad Sukkah Mobile which, for the last 50 years, have been offering Jews in downtown or remote areas the opportunity to perform the Mitzvoh of eating in the Sukkah and shaking the Lulav and Etrog.





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## Collegian Finds Inventive ‘Sandy Koufax’ Solution for Shabbat Commencement Speech

By Carin M. Smilk

They might come up with a new word for Don Greenberg’s commencement speech at Binghamton University in Upstate New York. Something like ... “valedictation.”

year’s commencement speaker for the school’s Watson School of Engineering on May 16. However, when the 22-year-old learned that the ceremony was on Saturday—the Jewish Sabbath—it appeared that it would

phone.

After consulting with a number of rabbis, Greenberg told administrators at the New York state campus that according to Jewish law, he could not use the microphone at the ceremony.

“I’m reminded of when Sandy Koufax refused to pitch during the first game of the 1965 World Series, which coincided with Yom Kippur eve,” said Rabbi Aaron Slonim, executive director of the Rohr Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life at Binghamton University, a Jewish campus organization where Greenberg is an active member. “His courage gave many Jews the strength to be unabashed about their Judaism.”

“I was considering not speaking,” acknowledges Greenberg, who noted that during his four years there, he did no schoolwork on Shabbat. He would work right up until Friday night and then stop for the weekly holiday. “I wasn’t sure what the protocol was or what would be right for my graduating class. I went out on a limb, and the school made it work.”

With the help of university administrators, Greenberg found a way to deliver the speech—a rather innovative



way at that. It was taped on Wednesday at a podium in front of a blue background as he stood in full graduation regalia.

“So ... this is awkward,” began Greenberg, in the introduction to his talk. “I know this is sort of an interesting arrangement, but I want to first and foremost express my tremendous gratitude for the school for making it happen.

“The problem is that Saturday is the Jewish Sabbath, a day that as a central part of my Orthodox upbringing is free of all electronics, like, say, a microphone, as well as writing, driving, cooking and lots of other things,” he explains. “It’s a time to relax with family and friends, and forget about the week. And iwt’s a big part of my life.

“My family walked here this morning, and we will walk to Chabad at noon for the traditional Shabbat lunch.”

Indeed, Chabad has been an important part of his college life. He was involved there from the get-go, attending weekly Friday-night Shabbat dinners, holiday programs and other events. “I met most

of my friends through Chabad at Binghamton. It’s just one of a kind here, just terrific! The amount of programming and vibrancy of the Jewish community here is on a different level than other places.

“And the school itself,” he continued, “is very cognizant and accommodating to different groups.”

On Saturday, when some 2,500 students and their families gathered on campus for the engineering ceremony, they watched Greenberg’s pre-recorded commencement speech on jumbo screens on either side of the stage.

“Don’s unwavering commitment to Shabbat and to Judaism is a source of great pride and strength to Jewish students here at Binghamton University, and in particular, to Jewish college students around the world,” said Slonim. “I also want to express my gratitude to everyone at Binghamton University who did not make Don choose between his religious conviction and this remarkable opportunity. This incident only highlights this outstanding truth about our campus culture and its values.”



Greenberg’s commencement speech was taped on Wednesday at a podium as he stood in full graduation regalia. (Photo: Jonathan Cohen/Binghamton University/RNS)

The graduating college senior was nominated to be this

not be possible. The issue surrounded the use of a micro-

## Indian Chief Set a Jew Straight

By Eli Federman

We recently commemorated the yartzeit of my father - Yitzchok Leib (Lyle) Federman, HY”D. I think about him at least once a day. He lived his life humbly searching for meaning - and helping others along



Eli Federman

the way. Never dogmatic and always intellectually honest. I strive to embody - even if a modicum of - those virtues.

Here’s one little story of how his humanitarian work on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation reminded him of his own heritage.

My father grew up with little to no Jewish tradition. He

celebrated the High Holidays. Was culturally Jewish and remembered going to Shul with his grandfather Binyomin.

He spent much of his life searching for an identity. He eventually discovered and embraced his Jewish heritage at an Oglala tribal meeting on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

He strived for a belief system that was all-inclusive, connected with nature with a social justice mission. Those values were reinforced by his exposure to the counter-cultural and environmental movements of the late ‘60s.

He found those values in the Native American way of life. His began his journey by providing aid for food and clothing, and teaching computer skills on the poverty stricken Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

He also volunteered at the sobriety meetings to fight the rampant alcohol and drug abuse.

Soon he started practicing Native American rituals like the sweat lodge (or ceremonial sauna) and learning the traditions



In 2006 Oliver Red Cloud, now 94 years old, sits in the back of the pickup leading the annual Oglala Nation Pow Wow parade in Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

and history.

Eventually, he was called to a tribal meeting where he would be formally inducted into the Oglala Lakota tribe. At the meeting, the tribal elders asked my father what he had observed on the reservation.

“I observe two kind of Indians,” my father explained. “One with short hair, head down, drunk and ashamed of who he is; and one with long hair, head up, sober and proud of his people.”

The elders nodded in ap-

his ancestry. My father explained that he was Jewish.

The tribal leader paused, squinting in thought, and said: “There are two kinds of Jews. One with his head down, ashamed of who he is; and the other with his head up and proud of who he is.” He continued, “Be that Jew who is proud of who he is.”

My father said that was one of the most transcendent moments in his life.

I share this family story with the hope

that it inspires others to embrace their heritage with humble pride.

proval.

They asked my father about





## Deaf Boys and Girls Experienced Summer Camp Steeped in Judaism

By Menachem Posner

For most of his childhood, 12-year-old Joel Pennington was unique. He was the only

child in his Houston, Texas, neighborhood who was deaf, and one of the only Jewish students in the special school for the deaf that he attended in Austin.

“Joel has a very special soul and was always drawn to Judaism,” says his mother, Orit Pennington. “But we really had no way of teaching him beyond what he picked up at home.”

Orit made her son a special Sign Language Haggadah for Passover and another booklet for Rosh Hashanah, but was stymied when it came to finding a synagogue or Hebrew school where he would be able to interact with Jewish peers and experience Jewish tradition firsthand.

“His soul was thirsty for something more that I was able to give him,” she acknowledges. “He knew it was there, but he could not access it.”

Orit describes what happened next as a “miracle.” In the spring of 2014, she attended a ceremony in an Orthodox synagogue. During the reception that followed, she met a person who put her in touch with Rabbi David Kastor, a deaf rabbi; she never even knew one existed.

The two began learning on a weekly basis over VP (video phone). During one of their sessions, Kastor introduced his young pupil to Rabbi Yehoshua Soudakoff of the Jewish Deaf Foundation, who is Deaf and was busy organizing a Jewish overnight camp for Deaf boys within the framework of Camp L’man Achai in Upstate New York.

At the camp last summer, Joel found himself among 10 other deaf boys from throughout the United States and Israel for a first-of-its-kind experience. Soudakoff, 23, and other deaf staff members led discussions on Jewish topics, organized sports activities and took the kids on excursions, many of them focused on nature.

“For the first time, Joel was able to be part of a group—a Jewish deaf boy among Jewish deaf boys like himself,” says his mother. “There he was making challah, being fully engaged in a communal Shabbat dinner

and just living Judaism in a very warm environment with boys like him.”

One of them was Elian Zfati, from Frederick, Md., who also relished the opportunity to interact with other Jewish deaf boys. “My son especially enjoyed learning foreign sign languages from the children from Russia, Israel and other countries,” says his mother, Simi, who is also deaf, in an interview conducted via an interpreter. “He also gained tremendously in his Jewish engagement, learning how to read the Hebrew alphabet and so much more.”

Simi Zfati learned about the camp from internal networking within the Deaf community, which she describes as close-knit. She says that many more of her friends sent their children there this year after hearing of last summer’s success.

“I myself went to Jewish camp when I was a child,” she says recalling her own childhood in a Deaf Orthodox Jewish home. “I loved going to camp, but I felt very alone a lot of the time, not able to understand what was happening and why.”


But this summer came full-circle for her. Ninety miles to the south of where Elian attended camp, his two sisters, aged 10 and 12, joined with other deaf girls for their own camp experience within Camp Gan Israel of the Poconos in Dingmans Ferry, Pa. This is the first time such a program has taken place there.

“They were so looking forward to the experience,” says their mom. “It is so special for them to meet deaf girls, and learn about Judaism and their common Jewish heritage in their own way.” Altogether, 30 children participated in the two programs, including eight boys and two girls from Israel, and two counselors who flew in along with them.

“For me, it is amazing to see how the program has grown,” said Soudakoff. “As more and more children and their families become involved in this project, the more the Jewish deaf community grows—in numbers, involvement and cohesiveness. Our community is thinking more about Judaism, talking about it more and doing more.”



Signing updates of their days to their parents back home via computer.

	<b>HIGH HOLIDAY SERVICES</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Sunday, September 13</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Tuesday, September 22</b>
		<b>O</b>	Candlelighting 7:13 p.m.	<b>O</b>	Mincha 3:15 & 4:15 p.m.
		<b>S</b>	Mincha 7:20 p.m.	<b>M</b>	Candlelighting 6:57 p.m.
		<b>H</b>	Maariv 8:06 p.m.	<b>M</b>	Kol Nidre 7:10 p.m.
		<b>H</b>	<b>Monday, September 14</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>Wednesday, September 23</b>
		<b>A</b>	Shacharis 9:00 a.m.	<b>I</b>	Shachris 9:00 a.m.
		<b>S</b>	Shofar approx. 11:30 a.m.	<b>P</b>	Yizkor 12:00 p.m.
		<b>H</b>	Mincha 6:00 p.m.	<b>P</b>	Mincha 5:30 p.m.
		<b>A</b>	Tashlich 6:30 p.m.	<b>U</b>	Neilah 6:45 p.m.
		<b>N</b>	Maariv 8:05 p.m.	<b>R</b>	Maariv 7:55 p.m.
<b>A</b>	Light Candles after 8:12 p.m.	<b>S</b>	<b>Yom Tov &amp; Shabbos Services</b>		
<b>H</b>	<b>Tuesday, September 15</b>	<b>S</b>	Shacharis 10:00 a.m.		
<b>H</b>	Shachris 9:00 a.m.				
<b>A</b>	Shofar approx 11:30 a.m.				
<b>H</b>	Mincha 6:45 p.m.				
<b>A</b>	Maariv 8:10 p.m.				

<b>SIMCHAT TORAH HAKAFOT</b>					
All are welcome to come & join the Celebration SHMINI ATZERET					
<b>Sunday, October 4</b>		<b>Monday, October 5</b>			
Candlelighting	6:35 p.m.	Shacharis	10:00 a.m.		
Mincha	6:40 p.m.	Yizkor approx.	11:30 a.m.		
Maariv	7:30 p.m.	Mincha	6:30 p.m.		
Hakafot (followed by)	7:50 p.m.	Candlelighting after	7:34 p.m.		
Kiddush					
<b>SIMCHAT TORAH</b>					
<b>Monday, October 5</b>		<b>Tuesday, October 6</b>			
Maariv	7:25 p.m.	Shacharis	10:00 a.m.		
Kiddush	7:45 p.m.	Kiddush	11:00 a.m.		
Hakafot	8:45 p.m.	Hakafot	12:00 p.m.		
		Torah Reading	12:45 p.m.		



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## *Le Parisien*: Chabad High School Ranks No. 1 in France

By Faygie Levy

When the French daily newspaper *Le Parisien* came out with its annual list of best high schools in the country, many people probably did a double take at the No. 1 ranked school—Beth Hanna, a Chabad-Lubavitch girls' school in Paris.

Not surprised were members of the Jewish community who are familiar with the school, noting that it is a welcoming place that builds strong dedication to Jewish life and values, and has graduated many girls over the years.

Among those who were pleased but not surprised is Rabbi Chaim Shneur Nisenbaum, who works at the preschool-through-grade 12 Complexe Scolaire Beth Haya Mouchka, which includes Beth Hanna.

Three of the rabbi's

wife, Yakuta, teaches Judaic subjects there.

Remarking that the school has been highly rated for several years, Nisenbaum says "it's very important that



Rabbi Chaim Shneur Nisenbaum

the Jewish school should rank high—not only on the media list, but also on the Ministry of Education list because

for their preparation for the national French exams."

"In France," he continues, "the national exams and diplomas are central to the people and the culture, as they play a major role in ensuring the future of the students.

The Chabad school system in Paris was founded by the late Rabbi Shmuel "Moulé" Azimov, who left a profound imprint upon the Jewish community of Paris and beyond.

He grew it so extensively that today more than 1,500 girls are enrolled in the different divisions of Beth Haya Mouchka, with some 700 students in the high school alone. It is the largest Jewish school in France and one of the largest in Europe.

According to *Le Parisien*, what made the Beth Hanna a particular standout this year and led to the school receiving "added value" points—and thus, the stellar ranking—were a high proportion of matriculation exam-takers, grade-point averages, exceptional attendance rates and other significant factors.

Nisenbaum credits the high school's director, André Touboul, with the school's academic success.

"The school has remained faithful to the methods which have proved effective over the years," explains the rabbi. "Furthermore, the fact that it is a fully Jewish school, with a Torah program during half of the day



every day, gives the school a special atmosphere of work and respect, which eases the learning, and creates a close relationship between the students themselves and with their teachers."

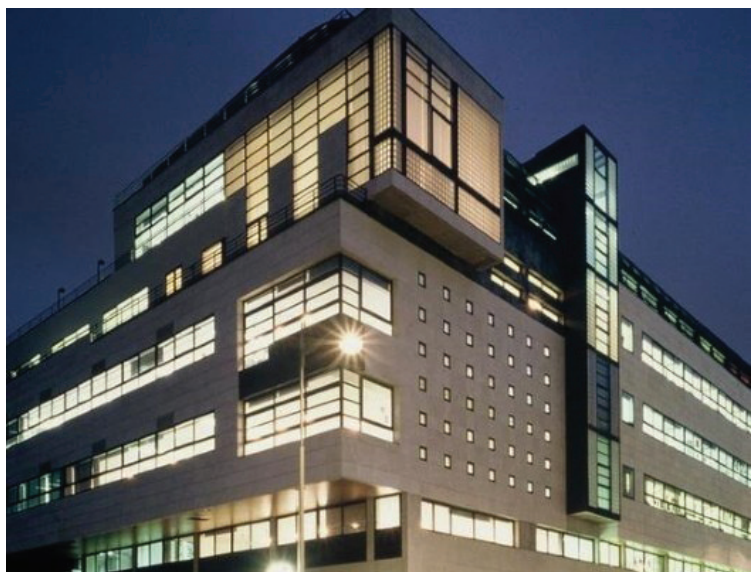
This comes despite the fact that Jewish school children there have some added stress to their day.

They now attend classes under armed guard due to a week of violence that occurred in Paris earlier this

year—namely, the Jan. 9 terror attack at the Hyper Cacher kosher grocery, where four Jewish men were killed.

That is no mere coincidence, says Nisenbaum.

"The schools and their directors have an intense motivation. They know they have the future of the French Jewish community in their hands," states the rabbi. "If the world outside looks less beautiful now, we have to magnify the inside that much more."



Beis Chana, high school for girls in Paris, beat out France's other 4,300 high schools.

daughters have graduated from the high school and his

many parents choose schools not for their Jewishness, but



Even Mickey takes a moment to Shake the Lulav. While visiting a theme park on Sukkot of 2014, Chabad's Yossi BenShimon discovered that (this) Mickey was Jewish and offered him the opportunity



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# Dear Rebbby

By Rabbi Aron Moss



## Want Good Return on your Honey?

Every year on the night of Rosh Hashana, I like to share with my family a new thought about why we dip apple in honey. I am starting to run out of novel interpretations. Even Rabbi Google didn't help. Can you tell me one I haven't heard before?

### Answer:

Honey is a miraculous substance. It can do the impossible. Just try this experiment with your family at the Rosh Hashana table:

1. Dunk a slice of apple into a bowl of honey
2. Lift the apple out of the honey
3. Hold the apple over the bowl and allow a shaft of honey to drip back down into the bowl
4. While it is oozing downwards, quickly lift the apple until the shaft breaks
5. Watch carefully. The honey on the apple starts to fall a little, and then *climbs back upwards towards the apple*, defying the laws of gravity
6. Say "Wow!"

The upward climbing honey gives us a moving message for the new year. Even if you have fallen, you can always climb back up. Even if you have become disconnected, you can reconnect. You may have become estranged from your people and from your G-d. You may have lost your way in life and fallen to a very low place. But you can always pick yourself back up. No force in the world can stop a Jew coming home.

The honey may fall downwards, but at a certain point it turns around. In fact, it is the falling down that causes the bouncing up. The further you have strayed from Judaism, the more rebound energy you have built up for your return.

A Jewish soul wants to be Jewish. Materialistic distractions can only hold us back for so long. Our inner pull towards G-d is stronger than the pull of gravity towards the earth. Honey always bounces back. So can we.

## Why Are You Waving Branches Around?

Someone asked me why we wave the Lulav in six directions - right, left, forward, up, down, backward. I didn't really know how to answer. Is there a simple way to explain this?

### Answer:

The four species that we bless on Sukkos correspond to the four letters in G-d's Hebrew name. Waving them in all six directions signifies our faith that G-d is everywhere. Specifically, we are saying that on every level, at every stage of life, in all that happens to us, G-d is there.

**Right and left** represent *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, the power of love and the power of discipline. G-d, like a parent, can be loving and can also be strict. Sometimes G-d's light shines on us, other times we feel left in the dark and have to find our way through on our own. Whether things are good in life or things are tough, it is all coming from G-d. He knows exactly what we need, and that's what we get.

**Up and down** symbolize the highs and lows of life. When we feel we are on top of the world, we need to remember that G-d put us up there. When we feel down in the dumps, we need to have faith that G-d is with us there. There is no success without help, and there is no failure without hope.

**Forward and backward** stand for the future and the past. We don't know what tomorrow holds, but we have faith that G-d will guide us through whatever lies ahead. And as for the past, all that has happened to us is a part of the plan. All our past experiences, even those that we would rather forget, made us who we are today. We are where we are now because that is exactly where G-d wants us to be. Our entire past was a lead up to this moment. G-d brought you here for a reason.

So the four species are waved around, to recognise that G-d is everywhere, in the good and the bad, in the ups and the downs, in the uncertain

future and the turbulent past. And in the middle of all that is you. You are doing the waving. Because ultimately, G-d will be there for you in all you do, if you only let Him in.

## We can't even agree on a name

**Our baby is now almost six weeks old, but we haven't officially named her. We have a problem. I always wanted to name her after my grandmother. But my wife doesn't like that name because she says it sounds ugly. She wants some other name which is nice, but I think it lacks any real meaning for the family. Doesn't it say somewhere that the father has the right to choose the firstborn's name?**

### Answer:

I'm not sure you want to know the answer to that. There is indeed a custom in some communities of alternating the right to name a child between the parents. According to one Ashkenazi custom, the mother names the firstborn child, the father the second and so on. But some Sefardi communities have the father choosing the name for the first son, and then the mother the second son, while all daughters are named by the mother.

In your case, following either system, your wife gets to name this child.

But there is a different approach. These systems were only enacted to avoid intractable arguments between parents. That's not the ideal way to name a child. It is far better that both agree on a name together rather than one having to reluctantly concede to the other's wish.

The need for consensus is indicated in the writings of Kabbalah, which state, "When a father and mother give a name to their child, they are given a prophecy to choose the right name to fit the soul of the child." This implies that the prophecy comes when there is agreement between the parents, and both are happy with the name.

This is just the first of many disagreements you will have

with your wife in parenting your child. Inevitably there will be times when you will want to do things one way, and your wife will have a different approach. You could alternate the decision making, so one day you get your way and the kids are allowed to drink Coke, and the next day your wife is in charge and they only get water. One day bed time is optional and the next it is strictly enforced.

But think what this will do to your child. She needs parents who are united and working as a team, with one voice and one standard. When there are cracks in the parents' unity, kids slip between those cracks.

Consider your child's needs before your own, and give her a name that is meaningful, comfortable, and acceptable to you both. May this be the first of many harmonious compromises you make for your children.

## Are Rabbis Too Ethnocentric?

### Dave Asks:

**The problem with rabbis like you is your narrow view of the world. You always talk about the Jewish future, Jewish continuity, Jews marrying Jews, having Jewish children. What about the rest of humanity? Why do we have to always divide between people? Can't we speak of humans rather than Jews?**

### Rebbe answers:

You have a good point. Maybe I should broaden my perspective and be concerned about more global issues and not so pre-occupied with Jewish particularism. So if you don't mind, I would like to hear your point of view on one such issue: The hairy-nosed wombat.

I have been approached by an organisation that is dedicated to saving endangered species. They are campaigning to save the hairy-nosed wombat of northern Queensland in Australia, which is on the verge of extinction. They say if we don't do something soon the wombats will be gone forever.

Do you think this is a good cause? I could write about it in my weekly article but am not sure if it is worthy of promotion. This is not a Jewish issue. Should it really bother me if there are no more hairy-nosed wombats?

### Dave replies:

Now you're talking. I would love to see a rabbi promote conservation and eco-awareness. And by the way, it is a Jewish issue! If the hairy-nosed wombat is lost, we all lose. Every species is an integral part of the whole ecosystem. I would much rather you wrote about something like that than the usual myopic Jewish stuff...

### Rebbe responds:

I have no doubt that the hairy-nosed wombat makes an important contribution to the world - otherwise G-d would not have created it. But I happen to think that the Jewish people are at least as worthy of preservation as the hairy-nosed wombat.

While the contribution wombats make to the world may not be obvious, the Jewish contribution is. From Moses to Maimonides to Marx, from Philo to Freud to Forbes, Jews as individuals and as a community have given much to the world, and I don't think we have run out of ideas. I think we have more to give.

This is not to put down any other nation and their achievements. Just as the attempt to save the hairy-nosed wombat is not insulting to any other animal, so too the desire to continue the Jewish legacy of four thousand years in no way belittles the gifts of other people.

My work is to try to keep Jewish souls Jewish, because I believe Judaism is an idea that is yet to have its time, and you can't have Judaism without Jews. So I will continue to try to preserve Jews, whether or not they are hairy-nosed.

## Can an Agnostic Meet G-d?

**I am just back from my big trip to Israel. I thought I'd never get there. I think it's the first Jewish thing I've done since my bar mitzvah**

# Dear Rebbby

By Rabbi Aron Moss



(which wasn't so Jewish either).

**But here's the weird part. I went to the Wall in Jerusalem, and you know me, I'm the last person to have a "spiritual experience". But as I approached the Wall I started to cry uncontrollably. I felt this strange magnetism towards the Wall, almost as if G-d was pulling me. What do you think? Not bad for an agnostic, huh?**

**Answer:**

You have a powerful Jewish soul, and you caught a glimpse of its power at the Wall. The Wall is the last remnant of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. While ransacking Jerusalem 2000 years ago, the Romans burnt the Temple, and knocked down its stone walls. But one wall refused to budge, the Western Wall. The sages predicted long ago that the Western Wall will never be destroyed. It represents a holiness that no foreign power can ever touch. They can destroy the Temple, but there is something that is beyond their reach, a di-

vine presence that never leaves Jerusalem.

The Kabbalists teach that man is a microcosm. Whatever exists in the world, can be found within ourselves. If there is a Wall that is so holy that it can never be destroyed, then within us must also be a spark of holiness that can never be lost. This is our spark of Jewishness, the essence of the Jewish soul. Our soul may be surrounded by foreign invaders - skepticism, ignorance, scars from negative Jewish experiences - but it nevertheless remains intact. Nothing can extinguish the Jewish spark, it is always there waiting to be ignited.

Even an agnostic Jew who has been dislocated from his spiritual heritage for generations, is Jewish at the deepest level of his being. Nothing can take that away. Eventually, if he allows it, that innate Jewishness will surface.

Everyone has a different catalyst that ignites this spark. In your case, the microcosm met the macrocosm. Your Jewish spark, the indestructible pres-

ence of G-d within you, was awakened at the Wall, the indestructible presence of G-d in the world. I guess it's not surprising that many have had that experience.

Now it's up to you. You have been given a gift. You have come face to face with your soul. These experiences don't happen often. But once you have discovered the Holy Wall within yourself, you can start to rebuild your inner Temple around it, so that sense of holiness will never be lost again. That's the secret of faith. You don't get it from the outside, you discover it within yourself. It was always there.

## Is Your Wife Insecure or Something

**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.

*L' Shana Tova Tikatevu!*  
*We wish the Jewish Community*  
*a Happy, Healthy, Prosperous and Sweet New Year!*  
*- Mark & Stephen -*

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**STEPHEN HARPER**

Ahava Spillman interviewed Rabbi Sholom Lezell who is the Shaliach of Chabad of Danforth - Beaches.

**A.S. Is it true that prior to your arrival you had already been introduced to the Beaches neighborhood? Tell us when and why?**

**S.L.** Yes, it is true. When, in 1997, the Riverdale Shul on Danforth Ave needed, at the last moment, a chazan and someone to lead the High Holiday Services, they turned to Chabad. As rabbinical students in New York, a friend and I volunteered to help and we met the local gathering of Jews. What we found was a warm and welcoming community with pure Jewish souls thirsty for more Torah and Yiddishkeit.

**A.S. When I mention Chabad in the Beaches, the usual response is "Wow! Are there Jews in the Beaches? What convinced you to move in and establish a Chabad House in the Beaches?"**

**S.L.** We maintained a close friendship with our friends in the East end, We would visit them during the various holidays over the years. This gave me an inside view on how underserved the Jews in these neighborhoods were. Our Rebbes taught us that the Jewish soul is engraved in us like letters engraved in stone, even if they are filled with dust and cannot be seen from the surface, they are still there in all their glory. All that's needed is a bit of scrubbing and polishing and it will shine!

**A.S. How were you chosen to stand at the helm of this new frontier?**

**S.L.** The Jewish community here was always close to my heart and I would try to arrange, from a distance, for a Rabbi to serve this community. So when, by divine providence, we found ourselves in a position to serve the community and make our home in the Beaches, we volunteered and happily embraced the opportunity.

**A.S. The Beaches is typically known as a breeding ground for young professionals, food festivals, local pubs, and hip artsy types. It certainly isn't renowned for its Jewish population. How many Jews do live there and how did you find them?**



**S.L.** I find the Beaches to be made up of all types. It's a friendly, respectful and family oriented neighborhood. The area is often compared to a lovely small town but the Jewish numbers will astonish you. The known Jewish population is in the high hundreds, and in the surrounding neighborhoods, approximately three thousand

**A.S. I recently read a survey that stated dog owners are the best neighbours. Not only are they caring and empathetic, but they are constantly out and about (walking their pets) and alert to the happenings around them. The Beaches have more dogs per capita than the rest of the GTA. Are your neighbours the friendliest?**

**S.L.** Beachers are certainly friendly. Last Chanukah, I went to the store to replace a burnt out bulb for the large outdoor Menorah, only to return and find that one of those kind neighbours beat me to it! And the survey is true; there are certainly plenty of adorable dogs of every size and breed. It is difficult for the kids to keep up with so many names.

**A.S. Tell us about your family?**

**S.L.** I am the 5th in a family of 14. Devora is the eldest of 5 children. We married in 2003 and moved to Toronto with our first daughter, Esther. Now, thank G-d, we are the proud parents of 6 children.

**A.S. Can you tell us of some of your achievements to date?**

**S.L.** In the 8 years since we moved to the Beaches we have established educational programs for all ages with weekly Torah classes, Shabbat and Holiday Services and family Programs, as well as a Hebrew School, Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program and a thriving

Preschool, "Ganeinu".

**A.S. I read about a wonderful youth program too. "Kids in Action," "Kids Night Out", "Mummy and Me". Are there other weekly classes?**

**S.L.** There is a Weekly Torah Portion class, a Jewish Mysticism class, a Talmud and Mishnah class. Also Hebrew reading crash course and guest lectures.

**A.S. Many Chabad houses wait years before a building is acquired. How did you accomplish this so early in the game?**

**S.L.** We were very fortunate to have dedicated friends and neighbours who shared our vision for this community. So when, at the right moment, by divine providence, a rare opportunity presented itself that would satisfy all our needs, we were able to purchase the property that serves as the Shul and Preschool, all programs as well as our family residence. It's at 2273 Queen Street East.

**A.S. I've heard about your annual barbecue at the Beach. It's quite an event. Describe it for our readers.**

**S.L.** Yes, it's a fun event. We serve great kosher food and I get to do some cooking.

It's usually right when the weather is changing for the better.

It allows different segments of the community to meet and socialize in a fun, casual environment and introduce new friends to our community.

**A.S. How far do you travel for a kosher loaf of bread?**

**S.L.** Interestingly there are many kosher products available locally including Kosher bread, it's meat and dairy that deserves a special trip. From where we are it's about 30 minutes to Bathurst and Lawrence. We love to make the short jaunt and in-

vite all of you in the city and Thornhill to come visit us at Chabad in the Beaches.

**A.S. I am sure that there are many beards roaming the streets in your neighborhood, but are there any other yarmulkes?**

**S.L.** The streets are filled with all kinds of beards. I get nods of acknowledgement from them. Common ground is a great way to start a conversation and facial hair has initiated many. I look forward to the day when other "yarmulkes" will give me that same knowing nod.

**A.S. Do you always get a minyan?**

**S.L.** We generally have a Minyan Shabbat morning. Sometimes when we are short, we have in reserve Jewish neighbors who are willing to help when needed. One neighbor is a survivor. When we knock on his door he will attend, but only after making it clear he is an atheist etc. but wants to help because he remembers how the Nazi's came knocking... Last week, he showed up in Shul on his own, "just to make sure we were okay with a Minyan." A Yid is a Yid.

**A.S. What are your plans for Tishrei? Do you have reserved seats?**

**S.L.** Tishrei is a busy month, We bring in help to handle the extra crowd, thank G-d. Everyone is welcome, Membership is not required. We do suggest making a reservation as it gets full quickly and we post a suggested donation to help cover the expenses.

Every Chabad house is financially independent. It is built by the community for the community. So we have to raise all of our funds through donations, program fees and tuition. Every dollar donated goes directly to the service of our Jewish community.

**A.S. What are your personal objectives? What's in store for the coming year?**

**S.L.** Our personal objectives are to create the environment where every Jewish family and individual has the opportunity to explore and enhance their Jewish identity and observance in a meaningful way. To this end we are putting emphasis on meeting as many of our Jewish neighbours as we can.

And in addition to the ongoing programs we are working on expanding our very popular Preschool to accommodate more students, as well as building on our 'Building Bridges' teen program.

**A.S. It is so commendable that you have decided to devote your time and energy to spreading Yiddishkeit to a neighborhood enjoying the spiritual taste you provide. Kol Hakavod! If any of our readers would like to send you a well deserved donation, where should they send it?**

They can send a check to:  
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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.



# SHIURIM & CLASSES AT 770 CHABAD GATE

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## WEEKLY CLASSES

### SUNDAY

7:45 AM	TANYA	RABBI YARMUSH
8:00 AM	CHASSIDIC THOUGHT	RABBI GANSBURG
10:00 AM	PARSHAT HASHAVUA	RABBI SCHOCHET
10:00 AM	LIKKUTEI SICHOS	RABBI GANSBURG
11:00 AM	TALMUD (AVODA ZARA)	RABBI SCHOCHET
11:15 AM	TALMUD (KERISUS)	RABBI SPALTER
7:00 PM	CHASSIDIC DISCOURSES	RABBI GANSBURG
8:30 PM	SHULCHAN ARUCH	RABBI CHAIKIN

### MONDAY

11:30 AM	THE JOY OF JUDAISM	RABBI SPALTER
7:45 PM	THE WEEKLY TORAH REVIEW	RABBI GANSBURG

### TUESDAY

11:30 AM	TORAH STUDIES - PARSHA	RABBI GANSBURG
8:00 PM	TALMUD (CHULIN)	RABBI SPALTER

### WEDNESDAY

12:00 PM	THE JEWISH LEARNING INSTITUTE	RABBI GANSBURG
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### THURSDAY

12:00 PM	A TASTE OF CHASSIDUS (HEBREW)	RABBI GANSBURG
8:00 PM	IN DEPTH PARSHA STUDY	RABBI Z.A. GROSSBAUM
8:00-9:30 PM	CHAVRUSA-LEARN WITH YOUR PARTNER	
8:15-9:15 PM	CHASSIDIC DISCOURSES (ADVANCED)	RABBI GANSBURG
8:15-9:15 PM	TALMUD (MAKKOT)	RABBI SPALTER

### SHABBOS

9:00 AM	CHASSIDUS	RABBI GANSBURG
1 HR BEFORE MINCHA	PARSHA THOUGHT	RABBI GANSBURG

### DAILY CLASSES

SUN-THU	9:00 PM	RAMBAM	ALTERNATING
MON-FRI	5:00 AM	CHASSIDIC THOUGHT	RABBI YARMUSH
MON-FRI	7:10 AM	CHASSIDIC THOUGHT	RABBI GANSBURG

MON-FRI	10AM-12PM	KOLLEL TIFERES ZEKEINIM LEVI YITZCHOK TALMUD, MISHNAH, HALACHA & CHUMASH
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# The Waking of Creation

*Continued from page 2*

lifting that telephone receiver “contains” the entirety of the will that drives it, including its deepest cause of causes.

This “inner will” is the soul of his action, suffusing it with a life and vitality that reflect how deeply its origins lie in his innermost self. Thus, there is a quality to the way that the owner of a business picks up the phone that shows a desire and commitment deeper than that of the most devoted employee.

## Assessment

There are times, however, when the soul of a deed ascends a notch, to view its body and life with a calculated detachment.

There are times when a person reassesses what he does. Is the business indeed turning a profit? Is it meeting my needs? Is this what I want to do with my life?

His actual involvement with the business continues as before. He continues to get out of bed in the morning, continues to drive to the office, continue to answer the telephone. He continues to “want” to do these things on the most external level of will. But the deeper elements of his will are no longer in it. The business can be said to be “asleep,” animated only by the most external layer of its soul.

Then something happens to rekindle our businessman’s desire. Perhaps he sees a lucrative figure on the year’s balance sheet or a most promising projection for the future. Or a certain deal materializes that embodies everything he loves about his business, everything about it that reaffirms his self-vision and furthers his goals. His deeds, dry and mechanical in his contemplative interim, are reinfused with life and vitality. The business awakens from its slumber.

## King of the Universe

Once a year, the universe enters into a state of suspended animation.

G-d reconsiders His creation. Is it turning a profit? Is it realizing My goals? Do I still desire to invest Myself in the role of “Creator”?

The sun still rises, winds blow, rains fall, seeds germinate, fruit ripens. G-d’s desire for a world continues to sustain and drive the universe. But G-d’s desire for a world is but the most external layer of the universe’s soul.

Why does G-d desire a world? There is a deeper motive beneath this membrane of will, and yet a deeper motive

beneath it, and so on. The Kabbalistic writings abound with various divine motives for the creation of the universe: the desire to express His infinite potential; the desire that He be known by His creations; the desire to bestow goodness; among others. Each of these “motives” relates to another layer of the divine will, describing the soul of the universe as manifested on another level of reality.

At the heart of it all lies the very essence of the divine will to create: G-d created a world because He wanted to be king.

## Defining Sovereignty

G-d is all-capable and all-powerful. So it would seem a relatively simple matter for Him to make himself king: all He has to do is create a world, populate it with creatures, and rule over them. But this alone would not make Him a king, at least not in the ultimate sense of the word.

A shepherd who drives a herd of a million sheep is not a king. A tyrant who rules an empire of a billion terrified subjects is not a king. A benevolent patriarch who extends his authority over dozens of his descendants is not a king. A teacher with a thousand devoted disciples is not a king. All these have one thing in common: their subjects are compelled to submit to them. They may be compelled by their reliance on the shepherd’s devotion to their needs, by their ruler’s power over them, by their filial bond to their father or by their appreciation of their master’s wisdom--the bottom line is that they are compelled. And true sovereignty cannot be compelled.

A true sovereign is one whose subjects freely choose to submit to him. Not because they need him, not because they fear his power, not because they love him, not even because they appreciate his greatness, but because they choose him as their king.

So to become king of the universe, G-d created man--a creature endowed with free choice. He created a being that is both the furthest from Him and the closest to Him of all His creation. Furthest from Him in that man is a free and independent being--free even to rebel against his maker. Closest to Him in that man is a free and independent being--as only He is free and independent. In the words of the first man, Adam, “First and last, You created me.” G-d created man, “dust from the earth,” the last and lowliest of His creations, and

“blew into his nostrils a breath of life” that is the very “image of G-d.”

There are many aspects to our relationship with G-d. We relate to G-d as our shepherd, expressing our gratitude for His providence over and sustenance of our lives. We fear and revere Him, ever mindful of His majesty and power. We love Him with the boundless love of a child, recognizing our intrinsic bond with our Father in Heaven. We gain a student’s unique appreciation of his master by studying His wisdom, implicit in His creation and revealed to us in His Torah. Each of these relationships realizes another aspect or “layer” in the divine motive for creation, intensifying and enlivening G-d’s involvement with His world.

But once a year, “all things revert to their primordial state” as G-d reevaluates the very core of His desire for a world, the underlying “why” of His involvement with us as shepherd, ruler, father and teacher. Once a year, G-d asks Himself: Why create a world?

## The First Coronation

The timing of this cosmic audit is not arbitrary: Rosh Hashanah is the day on which G-d’s sovereignty of the world was first realized.

Rosh Hashanah is the sixth day of creation, the day on which man was created. G-d had already created the heavens and the earth, the animals and the angels; He already presided over a world that submitted to His rule, over creatures who feared and loved Him and appreciated His wisdom. But the world was still in a state of suspended animation: its soul of souls had yet to be evoked. Then G-d created man, the only one of His creations with the freedom to choose or reject his maker.

Moments later, G-d was king. “When Adam stood up on his feet,” the Zohar tells us, “he saw that all creatures feared him and followed him as servants do their master. He then said to them: ‘You and I both, come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before G-d our maker.’” When the first man chose G-d as his king, the primordial purpose in creation came to fruition, infusing G-d’s work with life and vitality.

Every year, “all things revert to their primordial state” as G-d again relates to His creation as He did prior to Adam’s crowning Him king. On Rosh Hashanah eve, the divine “inner will” for creation is retracted

and the world is plunged into a state of “sleep.”

Then, a piercing sound rises from the earth and reverberates through the heavens. The cry of the shofar resounds: an utterly simple cry, reflecting not the fear of the subject, not the love of the child or the sophistication of the student’s understanding, but the simple trumpet blast of a people’s coronation of their king. A cry that reflects the simplicity of choice--true choice, choice that is free of all external motives and influences.

A cry that rouses the soul of creation to a renewed commitment to and involvement in the endeavor of life.

# Why Won’t They Lock Him Up?

*Continued from page 2*

people will get people’s minds back on the right track. Thinking about real quality of life. About their relationship with the earth and with their bodies and their souls and the people around them. Once that’s done, just about everything else we need to create paradise is here already.

2. The people will come up with a real wise individual and make him their mentor and leader--not the other way around like in the fairy tales. As you put it yourselves: how else can he avoid being locked up? This is stated clearly in numerous sources, for example, “They will search out David their king...”, “They will make for themselves a king and rise out of the land”. It just seems pretty obvious that it’s the people who make the leader -- a self-declared leader is little more than just another nut-case.

Even the Kabbalists agree that Moshiach isn’t planning on a sudden appearance. Rather, the people will slowly wake up to the fact that he’s already here. Just not in places people generally look.

3. The arrival of Moshiach is not much of a greater miracle than the sudden fall of the communist dictatorship. True, there will be a couple of big Signs-and-Wonders-scenarios--some that’ll make the Ten Plagues and the Crossing of the Red Sea look like kid’s play. Like, how about the splitting of the Euphrates, for one? But, who says glitz makes a miracle? Personally, I think Moses would have been pretty impressed by the kind of miracles that happened in Eastern Europe and on the Internet over the last few years.

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4. You appear concerned that the World to Come may be a rather boring affair. Actually, Moshiach is when the real fun starts. There will still be the same sports, entertainment, and good, clean shopping sprees. But kicking a ball or buying clothes will be a form of meditation on the Oneness of Creation. Come to think of it, so will all human activities.

5. Hi-tech is only here now as a preparation for the technological applications of the times of Moshiach. M.I.T., IBM, Xerox-Parc--you guys ain’t seen nothin’ yet! When finally we become masters over our own tools--rather than the other way around--we shall start to utilize them to discover the G-dliness within Creation and within ourselves.

Wake up! There has never been a time in the history of the Jewish people like this before! In 2000 years of Exile, the last few years have been the only time that Jews in every part of the globe are free to follow the Judaism of their ancestors. Sure, there are still those who cannot leave their place of exile, but compare this to the horrible oppression of past times! As our sages put it, “There is no difference between our world now and the times of Moshiach, except for the oppression by the nations.” The greatest oppression remaining is that of the materialistic (un)consciousness of the modern world.

So who, pray tell, is stopping us?



# What a Married Woman Needs to be Happy

By Family Therapist Abe Kass MA, RSW, RMFT, CCHT

If you are a woman, you need the following feelings that come from your relationship with your husband to feel emotionally fulfilled. As the body needs particular nutrients, so too, your emotional side needs particular feelings to feel fully happy and content. You get these feelings when you feel your husband: Cares about you, chooses you, and protects you.

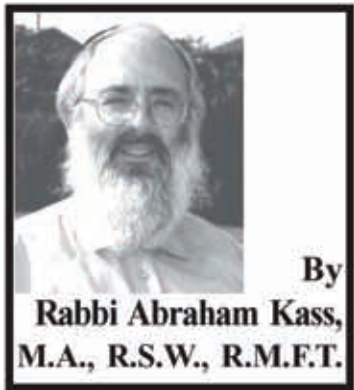
Here is how to increase the likelihood you will receive these emotional gifts from your husband:

**Cares for you.** Encourage your husband to show he “cares” about you by expressing your appreciation for the help and attention he does give you. Tell him what you like, not what you don’t like. Let him know you need his help and involvement in your wellbeing to feel good about yourself and your relationship with him.

**Chooses you.** Your husband will choose to be with you when he feels good around you. Be interested in him. Ask him questions. Don’t give advice unless he asks. Let him know you value his opinions and decisions. Don’t push him away with anger expressions, criticism, irritation or meanness. Make yourself pleasant and attractive and you will make it easy for him to choose to be with you. Always remember, marriage is a voluntary arrangement. Marriage is a choice. Reward the choice by being positive and pleasant to be around.

**Understands you.** When you talk with your husband, check to see if he understands what you are saying. You may discover you need to talk slower, express simpler ideas, or choose a better time to talk. Guide by telling him you just want him to understand, not react, comment or advise. As well, your husband will be more willing to listen to you when you take the time to also understand him.

**Protects you.** You are competent and you can take care of yourself. Still, you want your husband to “protect



you.” You want a man that is strong. This means he can deal with emotional problems, provide materially for the family and take responsibility to fix both material and emotional problems. But even a strong person can be broken. If you criticize and shame your husband with harsh words, it’s possible he will become weak. Treat him with respect and acknowledge his strength and when you seek his protection, you increase the likelihood he will be there.

In total, when you consistently experience the feeling generated from the above behaviors, you will feel “treasured” by your husband. This is the feeling you need to be fully happy and content. I know this because many women, in my work as a family therapist, have told me.

Here is what to do if you are a man:

Treat your wife in such a way that she feels she is your priceless “treasure.” Learn from the words above and or from your wife’s guidance and enthusiastically embrace these relationship ideals. When you do, your payoff will be that she will devote herself to your wellbeing. You will feel “respected” and “valued”—emotional nutrients that, as a man, you need.

As well, acknowledge all your wife’s good efforts and thoughts on your behalf. Express your appreciation with a gift, kind words, and a helping hand. When your wife feels “treasured” by you, she will give you her admiration and love and together you will

create peace and harmony in your home.

The formula is simple: When you treat your wife as a queen, she will treat you as a king.

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

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## SLICE of Life

# At Ease! Pioneering Jewish Army Chaplain Retires After Nearly 40 Years

Thirty-eight years ago, Rabbi Jacob Goldstein enlisted in the U.S. Army as a chaplain. After serving with distinction as the highest-ranking Jewish chaplain for decades, he recently retired amid pomp and circumstance in Fort Myer, Va. While the ceremony is normally reserved for those on active duty, the chief chaplain made sure that Col. Goldstein was included in the proceedings. On his way back home to Brooklyn, N.Y., he shared some highlights of his colorful and very necessary career.

**Q: Nearly 40 years in the army is a very long time. Did you plan on doing this for so long?**

**A:** Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would serve for so long—nor did I ever see myself in the military in the first place.

**Q: Why did you choose that particular branch of the military?**

**A:** Because Army is the best, of course. In all seriousness, it began in 1967 when the Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory—initiated the *tefillin* campaign. I began visiting a military base and putting on *tefillin* with the Jewish fellows. This continued after I got married in 1969.

At one point, a chaplain—a Roman Catholic priest—asked for the address of my bishop so he could request that I enlist. He didn't end up writing to the Rebbe, but I consulted with the Rebbe, and the rest is history.

**Q: How involved was the Rebbe in your career?**

**A:** I would say that I never made a major decision without the Rebbe's knowledge and guidance.

There were times when he would give me very specific missions. For example, in 1983, I was in Grenada over Chanukah. The Rebbe requested that I inquire about the welfare of the Jewish residents of the island, make an effort to lay *tefillin* on every Jewish soldier and, if possible, give Chanukah *gelt* (monetary gifts) to the soldiers. I was also tasked with printing a Tanya there.

And then there was the well-known example of how the Rebbe predicted what would happen to me during the first Gulf war in 1991.

[Iraqi President] Saddam Hussein was threatening to bomb Israel, and there was talk of Jews being gassed in Israel. My mother, who lived in New York, was a Holocaust survivor, and she was very agitated. I had just gotten mobilized and decided to bring her to the Rebbe to see if he could calm her down. Before she could say a word, the Rebbe told her that there was nothing to worry about; Israel would be safe.

Then, the night before I was called up, I went to the Rebbe again. I had been called up for a whole year and was supposed to go to Saudi Arabia. It was just before Chanukah. Thinking ahead, I told the Rebbe that I was taking along a Megillah to



Getting a dollar from the Rebbe in December 1990, shortly before the first Gulf war. (JEM Photo)

read on Purim. The Rebbe told me: "A Megillah will be there, and you will not need to read it." And he gave me a blessing. I had no idea what that meant. How would there be a Megillah in Saudi Arabia, and who would possibly be able to read it there besides me?

The next morning, I was told that I had been reassigned to Israel.

At a later point my father-in-law, the late Rabbi Dovid Edelman, asked the Rebbe that I return home soon. The Rebbe looked at him and said: "What is the rush? He's bringing the Sons of Noah close [to Gd]!"

**Q: Looking back, what are some accomplishments that you would single out?**

**A:** When I originally enlisted, I had quite a difficult time because of my refusal to shave my beard. Thank Gd, we've overcome that challenge, and there are a number of bearded chaplains, including Rabbi Menachem Stern, who's on active duty.

Beyond that, another thing that comes to mind is that we now have kosher MREs ("meals ready to eat") for Jewish servicemen and women.

And there are the many people whose lives a chaplain touches in ways you can only

imagine.

**Q: Can you share an example?**

**A:** This takes us back to "Operation Iraqi Freedom," when I was in Iraq in 2003. I was going through Basra, which is hot, very hot, and uncomfortable. In Camp Bucca—a huge prison for Iraqi prisoners of war—there were

welcome, and that opened the door for her family's entrance to Jewish observance.

**Q: After such an involved and fulfilling career, why did you remain in the reserves, not enlisting for active duty?**

**A:** After my service in Grenada, the Grand General asked the Rebbe the same thing (there was correspondence



Rabbi Jacob Goldstein recently retired amid pomp and circumstance at a ceremony in Fort Myer, Va.

Jewish military police, and I had gone to visit them. In the morning, we gathered together a *minyan* of guys and began services. All of a sudden, a Jewish female soldier showed up and wanted to participate. We were outside in the desert, with no walls or anything that could possibly serve to separate males and females as *halachah* (Jewish law) requires. I was at a loss for a moment. Then I asked my assistant to go to the ammo dump and bring back a load of artillery shells. We took the shells and fashioned a *mechitzah* (partition), and she was able to join the services.

Today, that woman recently retired from the military and is a fully observant Jew. Her children live in Israel, and she plans to join them there. She told me that she knew nothing about Judaism when she showed up that morning in Basra, and it was the determination to include her that changed her life. We made it our business to make her feel

between them, as the Rebbe thanked him for facilitating the publishing of the Tanya there). The Rebbe replied that my parents were elderly Holocaust survivors, and they needed me close by. From that I understood that my mission was to be near my parents—something I did until my mother passed away two years ago.

**Q: Is there a specific assignment that you would say is most memorable?**

**A:** Every one is different. Each experience is different. Some are more dangerous, and others were touching in other ways. I was in Bosnia, which touched me in one way, and then I went to the U.S. South after Hurricane Katrina and oversaw 200 chaplains there, which was a whole different world. Then there was 9/11 and "Ground Zero," where I was the chief chaplain, impacting people in a whole different way. Each mission was unique, and each was significant at that time.



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