

MTc MOSAIC

A PUBLICATION OF THE MONTREAL TORAH CENTER BAIS MENACHEM CHABAD LUBAVITCH
JOANNE AND JONATHAN GURMAN COMMUNITY CENTER • LOU ADLER SHUL








BAIS MENACHEM
CHABAD LUBAVITCH

Gleanings

From the Rebbe's wisdom

Advice on Anger



-  *Prepare yourself with this meditation, and when you feel anger overcoming you, run through it in your mind:*
-  *Know that all that befalls you comes from a single Source, that there is nothing outside of that Oneness to be blamed for any event in the universe.*
-  *And although this person who insulted you, or hurt you, or damaged your property – he is granted free choice and is held culpable for his decision to do wrong –*
-  *That is his problem.*
-  *That it had to happen to you - that is between you and the One Above.*

**MONTREAL TORAH CENTER BAIS MENACHEM CHABAD LUBAVITCH
Joanne and Jonathan Gurman Community Center**

28 Cleve Road, Hampstead PQ H3X 1A6
Tel. 739-0770 Fax 739-5925
Email: mtc@themtc.com • www.themtc.com

Rabbi Moishe New Rabbi Itchy Treitel

Nechama New Zeldie Treitel
Program Directors

Velvel Minkowitz
Administrator

Joannie Tansky
Co-ordinator

Rabbi Zalman Kaplan
Adult Education Director

Fraida Malka Yarmush
Accounting

Rochel New Faigy Treitel
Youth Directors

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Torn Together

The most brilliant gems are buried in the deepest caverns;
the purest pearls at the bottom of the sea.
The most pristine beauty of the human spirit shines
at its darkest moments, if only you will look deeply
with a discerning eye.

by TZVI FREEMAN

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from Chabad.org

In mid-August of the Jewish year of 5765 (2005),
soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces together with
Israeli police were ordered to forcefully evacuate
over eight thousand of their fellow Jews from their
homes in Gush Katif, an area of the Gaza Strip.

The move threatened to tear the nation apart and
in many ways it did.

Yet amidst the rage and anger, the accusations,
the threats and the slander...here and there unfolded
a deep and mysterious drama, sparks of a truth that
cannot be washed away.

I try to imagine police and army of the country in
which I live and how they would deal with such orders.
I try to imagine people of any other country besides
Israel as the indignant evacuees.

In all of my dreams, this I could never see:

Soldiers and families together
as though they were brothers and sisters...
Making l'chaim together,
Praying together,
Speaking to each other's hearts,
Crying with one another,
Even sobbing in embrace.

Yes, there were some ugly scenes.
There was anger from both sides.
But not a shot was fired from either side, nothing close.

How can you know that something is truly one?
That it is not just many parts sewn together?

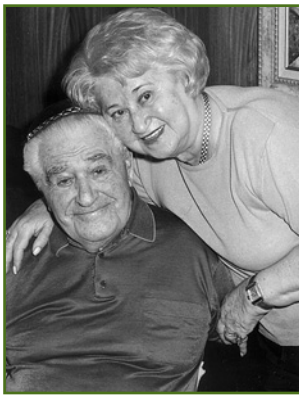
Try to tear it apart.

If the parts will cry for each other and hug each other
as they are being torn, you know they are a oneness
that no conflict can erase.

A oneness that must eventually return because
oneness is forever.

In the scrolls of the tefillin of the Master of the Universe,
what is written? A nation that is one upon earth." (Talmud, Zohar)

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Questions or return undeliverable
Canadian addresses to:
The Montreal Torah Center
28 Cleve Road,
Hampstead PQ H3X 1A6
Tel. 739-0770 Fax 739-5925
Email: mtc@themtc.com
www.themtc.com



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SIVAN 14, 5765

5:30 PM

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FOR THE CELEBRATION AND RECEPTION



LOU AND JOEY ADLER LEARNING INSTITUTE ON-GOING COURSE SCHEDULE

SUNDAY THRU THURSDAY

Between Mincha and Maariv
Rambam, Sefer Hamitzvos
Maimonides classic enumeration and description of the 613 commandments.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

SUNDAY

8:00 – 9:00 am

Rashi Sichos

In-depth textual study of the Rebbe's Rashi sichos.
Instructor: Rabbi New

9:40 – 10:00 am

Living Torah

Screening of a DVD magazine on the weekly Torah portion.

8:30 – 10:00 pm

Advanced Talmud

Textual study of Talmud with commentaries.
For men.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

MONDAY

6:45 – 7:25 am

Parsha

Textual study related to the weekly Torah portion.
Instructor: Rabbi Moishe New

12:30 – 1:30 pm

Lunch and Learn

DR. JACOB TINK
A discussion on: the Torah portion of the week, current events or holidays.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

8:00 – 9:00 pm

Basic Talmud

Textual study of Talmud.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

TUESDAY

6:45 – 7:25 am

Parsha

Textual study related to the weekly Torah portion.
Instructor: Rabbi New

8:20 – 9:00 am

Likutei Torah

Chassidic discourses by the Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

12:00 – 1:00 pm

Lunch and Learn

S.P. DIAMENT
A discussion on: the Torah portion of the week, current events or holidays.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

TUESDAY CONT'D

7:30 – 8:15 pm

Tanya

The primary, classic work of Chabad chassidus – a blend of mysticism, philosophy & psychology.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

8:15 – 9:00 pm

Halacha

The foundations of Jewish law and its practical applications.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

9:00 – 9:45 pm

Chassidus

In-depth, textual study, selected from the broad-based array of Chassidic writings. Accordingly, subject matter varies.
For women.
Instructor: Rabbi New

WEDNESDAY

8:20 – 8:45 am

Torah Class

A discussion, over breakfast, on the weekly Torah portion.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

10:30 – 11:30 am

Women's Torah Class

A discussion on: the Torah portion of the week, current events or holidays.
Instructor: Rabbi New

12:00 – 1:00 pm

Lunch and Learn

MARTINI PRODUCTIONS
A discussion on: the Torah portion of the week, current events or holidays.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

12:00 – 1:00 pm

Lunch and Learn

DIESEL/SEYMOUR ALPER INC. alternatively
A discussion on: the Torah portion of the week, current events or holidays.
Instructor: Rabbi New

8:00 – 9:00 pm

Kabbalah

Heavenly Wisdom Down to Earth
Each class is a self-contained presentation. No previous background necessary.
Instructor: Rabbi New
sponsored by the **MIRYAM & BATYA MEDICOFF LECTURE FOUNDATION**

THURSDAY

6:00 – 7:00 am

Chassidus

In-depth, textual study, selected from the broad-based array of Chassidic writings. Accordingly, subject matter varies.
Instructor: Rabbi New

THURSDAY CONT'D

12:30 – 1:30 pm

Lunch & Learn

LISAK GROUP
A discussion on: the Torah portion of the week, current events or holidays.
Instructor: Rabbi New

1:00 – 2:00 pm

Understanding Davening

Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

8:30 – 9:30 pm

Torah Class

A discussion on: the Torah portion of the week, current events or holidays. In private homes.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

FRIDAY

6:00 – 7:00 am

Chassidus

In-depth, textual study, selected from the broad-based array of Chassidic writings. Accordingly, subject matter varies.
Instructor: Rabbi New

12:00 – 1:00 pm

Lunch & Learn

C & C PACKING
A discussion on: the Torah portion of the week, current events or holidays.
Instructor: Rabbi New

SHABBOS

8:00 – 9:00 am

Chassidus

In-depth, textual study, selected from the broad-based array of Chassidic writings. Accordingly, subject matter varies.
Instructor: Rabbi New

One and a half hours before Mincha

Parsha

A discussion on the Torah portion of the week.
For women. Instructor: Mrs. Frayda Kaplan

Forty-five minutes before Mincha

Tanya

The primary, classic work of Chabad chassidus – a blend of mysticism, philosophy & psychology.
For women.
Instructor: Rabbi New

One and a half hours before Mincha

Talmud

Basic Textual study. For men.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

Half an hour before Mincha

Halacha

Textual study of Jewish law. For men.
Instructor: Rabbi Kaplan

Brothers

by ROSLYN CONVOY

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L - Shea and Jerry (Zalman)

While visiting my daughter Janice Hellmann and her family in Atlanta last spring, I chanced upon a small, obscure newspaper published (in English) in Vilna, Lithuania, called 'Jerusalem of Lithuania'. My eye was drawn to the obituary column and on the spur of the moment I decided to place a death notice regarding my recently deceased brother-in-law, Morris Convoy (father of Terry Convoy). My reasoning was, that since he was born in Kovno, Lithuania (not far from Vilna) and I chanced, by Divine Providence, on this newspaper, it was my duty to record his death in the place where he was born. The notice read: Died in Canada on Feb.21, 2004 Moishe Konvoj (Lithuanian). Born in Kaunas on Oct.13, 1929, taken from there to Dachau. Liberated in 1945.

How did a Lithuanian newspaper wind up in my daughter's home?

Initially, my husband Zalman (Jerry) and I had planned to be on a tour of Lithuania, to explore Zalman's roots with a man by the name of Howard Margol. Howard leads a tour to Lithuania once a year and we had been registered to go. However, due to Morris's death, we decided that perhaps this was not a good year to make this trip. We contacted Howard (he lives in Atlanta), who came over to my daughter's house, and we explained our situation. During our brief encounter, Howard left us a few mementos of his last trip, one of which was the newspaper that he had picked up during his tour of the museum there.

What followed changed lives forever and connected the third side of an unfinished story that spanned over sixty years...

The Mystery Begins to Unravel

Three months after the obituary notice was published, I received an email from a woman named Rachel, the custodian of the Jewish museum in Vilna. She explained that her husband had a friend by the name of Josef Convoy and wondered if we were related. Following her email I received an email from Josef himself offering his condolences and inquiring about our possible relationship.

My husband Zalman grew up with five siblings: Zelda, Moishe (Morris), Yehoshua, Yehuda and Raizel. Yehuda and Raizel were toddlers and died with their mother in the camps. The three remaining brothers were taken to Dachau. When Josef emailed us, asking if we were related, we replied by asking him questions about his childhood: What were your parents names? Your grandparents names? Did you have any siblings?

The reply we got was that he did not remember his grandparents; he remembered he lived in a house near the river, they were six children, the father was a tailor. He remembered that his father's name was 'Alter'. (Zalman remembered his father's name as Dovid until one night he woke up and suddenly recalled that his father had become very ill and they had added the name Alter.) Josef proceeded to say that he was taken from Dachau to Auschwitz and later mailed us the number on his arm, Russian identity papers and pictures. Although Josef had given us quite a number of facts, there were many intimate details of his childhood that he could not remember including his mother's name and Yiddish, which would have been his first language.

After receiving all of this information, coupled with the fact that the pictures did not show any resemblance to either Zalman or Moshe (Morris), Zalman concluded that Josef could not be his brother. The final fact in this deduction was that as far as he (Zalman) knew, no one had ever been taken from Dachau to Auschwitz. He called his sister Zelda in Israel and she concurred with him. It could not be their brother.

To complicate matters further, Zalman could not communicate with Josef and emails had to be sent via the Jewish museum in Vilna. Finally Zalman decided that the family in Israel should continue to deal with the situation as they speak Russian, one of the languages Josef speaks. They asked the same questions as Zalman, received the same answers and things went nowhere for a few months. Zalman was in contact with his sister over this time and finally suggested that to give closure to this entire affair, perhaps they should do a DNA test. All agreed and the test was done. It came back... positive. Zalman had found the brother he thought had perished in the holocaust, a brother he had not seen for sixty-three years.

En Route to Israel

So now that it was determined that Zalman and Shea were brothers it was time to see each other face to face. Israel was the chosen location as Zelda, now 83 years old, lives in Haifa.

The day the DNA results came, we asked Rabbi New to come to our home. Needless to say, we, especially Zalman, were on an emotional roller-coaster. Rabbi New spent a few hours with us, and the following day, to our surprise and delight, he informed us that he would be joining us on this incredible journey.

On April 11, 2005, Rabbi New, Zalman and I left for the airport en route to Israel. Our anxiety and tension in anticipation of what lay ahead of us was mounting. Rabbi New's presence at our side helped alleviate much of our nervous state.

Upon arrival at the airport in Toronto (our flight was Montreal, Toronto, Tel Aviv) we received news that due to mechanical problems our plane would not be leaving that night. We were put up at the airport Sheraton Hotel with the promise that we would depart early the next morning. We checked into our rooms at 8:00 pm. Rabbi New joined us for dinner, kosher meals courtesy of El AL, and we talked until 1:00 am.

A few hours later we headed back to the airport to await our flight. Although the men took advantage of the time at the gate, davening the morning prayers, everyone was anxious to be on their way. Suddenly an announcement came over the loudspeaker that that we would not be leaving as planned - another delay... We were informed that we would not be departing until 3:00 pm that afternoon and we were sent back to the hotel. As Rabbi New was to be with us in Israel for a very short time - from Tuesday afternoon until Thursday evening - we were very discouraged to hear about this further loss of precious time.

Back in our hotel room Zalman and Rabbi New shared a l'chaim and then my husband opened up and more memories of the past came pouring out. They were met with Rabbi New's compassion, warmth and support. He was a tower of strength. I know that had Rabbi New not been there, Zalman would not have had the will or the strength to

board the aircraft later in that day and proceed with the next part of his journey.

The Meeting Wednesday, April 13

We hardly slept during the eleven hour flight; most of it spent in discussion. We arrived in Israel



L - R Rabbi New, Shea, Jerry (Zalman), Roslyn

at 8:30 am, having been delayed 18 hours, exhausted but at the same time emotionally peaked. Our niece and nephew, Nechama and Dovid, (Zelda's children) met us at the airport to take us directly to Kiryat Yam in Haifa, to meet Zalman's new-found brother, who we now called by his childhood name, Shea. The drive was quiet and intense. When we arrived at my niece's house, our meeting place, we were all trembling, awaiting Shea's arrival. And then the moment happened.

There were no words, only eyes locked in embrace. The shock of his brother's physical presence was almost more than Zalman could bear. He was emotionally spent and simply stared numbly. In truth, they had no other way of communication, as they had no common language. They now had to communicate through the Jewish doctor who had accompanied the frail Shea on his trip and who shared the language of Russian with Zelda and Yiddish with us.

Rabbi New broke the awkward silence by inviting everyone to the table where lunch had been prepared. At one point in an effort to jar Shea's childhood memories, Rabbi New began to sing traditional Shabbos hymns. It was evident Shea was trying desperately to connect to the song

On April 11, 2005, Rabbi New, Zalman and I left for the airport en route to Israel. Our anxiety and tension in anticipation of what lay ahead of us was mounting.

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Brothers

(cont'd)

that had been sung around his Shabbos table of his childhood. Sadly, Shea just could not seem to break through to those long repressed memories. Though the tension eased somewhat and we



Tefillin for the first time

began eating, I noticed that Shea could not stop staring at his brother. He then quietly put his hand on Zalman's, where it remained throughout the meal. Added to the tenderness of those first few moments for Zalman was the stark realization that Shea had obliterated from his memory not only his language, but his childhood as well.

Through his interpreter, Josef (Shea) went on to explain his past. Immediately after the war, from 1945-1949, more dead than alive, he was taken-in by a childless christian couple living in Czechoslovakia, whose wife's brother was a high-ranking Cardinal. Shea was given the name Josef. In 1949, his adopted family suggested that he return to Kovno to look for his family. In fact, the Convoy siblings had made a pact that when the war was over they would all meet back home, but after the war Shea was in no condition to travel anywhere.

He had no information as to what had happened to his parents, brothers or sisters and could not obtain any leads from anyone in Kovno. Unbeknownst to Shea, his sister, Zelda, was living in Kovno at the time. However she had married and changed her name and thus, Shea did not find her. She remained there until 1971 when she immigrated to Israel. Being alone in the world and discouraged, he left for Vilna, where he now lives. Tragically, for twenty-two years, Shea and Zelda lived a mere 60 kilometers apart and never knew of each other's existence.

Shema Yisroel

That night we – Zelda, her husband and children, Shea and the doctor, Rabbi New, Zalman and I – had all gathered in our hotel lobby from where we would proceed to a restaurant for dinner. Rabbi New approached Shea. The doctor was standing at his side. All conversation stopped as

everyone witnessed what transpired next. Rabbi New asked the doctor to tell Shea to repeat word for word that which Rabbi New was about to say. Rabbi New began: "Shema". Shea haltingly repeated the word back. "Adoi-noy". Again Shea repeated the word. So it went till the entire line was said. And then, to our great, and I am certain, Shea's, own astonishment, he went on to repeat the entire line of the Shema by himself, without prompting. We all stood there in awed silence. Finally, Shea had connected, somehow, to his past.

The Bar Mitzvah

The next day began, after some much needed rest, with all of us going by private van to the new Yad Vashem museum. We each proceeded at our own pace and when we met up at the end Shea turned to me and said, (through his interpreter), "What we just witnessed here was a small drop of what we went through." Zalman agreed. Those few hours led up to another highlight of our trip, a moment that Shea will never forget, one that he should have had sixty years ago – his Bar Mitzvah.

There were many people at the Kotel and when we arrived they sensed that something very special was about to happen. Rabbi New carefully unwrapped a pair of tefillin, slowly and gently putting them on Shea. Together they chanted the blessing, Shea repeating the holy words after Rabbi New. When they were done, Shea was openly weeping. He embraced Rabbi New and then turned to Zalman and did the same. The sight of the three men, weeping and embracing was a moment that no one present will ever forget. Rabbi New told Shea that this was his Bar Mitzvah. Shea listened spellbound, through his interpreter. He then went over to the wall, placed his hands on the hallowed stones and stood there for a long time.

Farewell in Kfar Chabad

From the Kotel we proceeded to Kfar Chabad. Kfar Chabad is a small town near Lod and Israel's airport, and is the nerve-center of all Chabad activities throughout Israel. We were leaving Rabbi New there, where he was, providentially, to participate briefly in a cousin's wedding and meet old friends, one of whom – Rabbi Aron Lazar Ceitlin – who would take him to the nearby airport. From there he was to catch his return flight home. Before leaving our van Rabbi New turned to Shea

He had no information as to what had happened to his parents, brothers or sisters and could not obtain any leads from anyone in Kovno.

and with the aid of the interpreter said, "Shea, you are a hero." Shea protested that he was not any kind of hero. But Rabbi New insisted that he was. "Shea", he explained, "nobody forced you to respond to Rachel's questions. Coming here to Israel has put your life in turmoil. Your wife, your children and grandchildren did not know until now, the deep dark secret that you were a Jew. It takes extraordinary courage, Shea, to acknowledge and embrace this truth now, after so many years, and after having long-buried your Jewish past." Shea's eyes filled with tears and he nodded in agreement, as if to say, indeed, it took much courage. Rabbi New went on to say to him that he was a Yiddische neshoma, a Jewish soul that has finally come back home. And now that he has come back he will never leave again. "Promise me", said Rabbi New, "that you will be in contact with Rabbi Sholom Ber Krinsky, the Chabad shliach (emissary) to Vilna. For my part I will put him in touch with you. You will undoubtedly face obstacles in your reconnection to your roots, to your family and to your true inner-self. Continue with the courage that you have displayed thus far. May the Al-mighty bless you with health and strength and true Yiddische nachas." The two of them embraced warmly. Rabbi New opened the van door and walked out into the night as the van filled with the music of a Chabad Chassidic wedding.

That night sleep did not come easy to Zalman. Only tears. He finally fell asleep at 3:00 am.

Shabbat

We spent Friday afternoon with Shea, just being together. That night our entire family came together for the Friday night meal. At Rabbi New's insistence the day before, my niece did her best to re-create a Friday night Shabbos dinner that Shea, Zalman, their siblings and their parents would have celebrated together each week before the nightmare of the Holocaust destroyed it all. We placed a white yarmulka on Shea's head and we sat down to a table set with a crisp, white tablecloth and twinkling Shabbat candles. We sang Kabbolos Shabbos and made the blessings over the wine and challah. Every step we did was explained to Shea and he listened with keen interest. Traditional Shabbat food was served; gefilte fish, soup, chicken and kugel. We were still trying to jog his memory by giving him a glimpse of his past. On some level he was connecting, but on a conscious level he still

had no recollection. Zalman told him that when they were children in Kovno, every Friday night was like this.

The evening was noisy and freilach (lively). All during the meal Shea kept thanking me for putting the announcement of Moishe's death in the Jerusalem of Vilna newspaper. He told me that he carries it with him all the time. He then went on to tell Zalman and I that the Czech couple who adopted him in 1945 very much wanted him to take on their name. His reply was always the same, "My name is all that I have left and I will never give it up." He was so happy for that decision as he realized had he given up his name the family would never have been reunited.

Yad Layeled Museum

The next few days passed by pleasantly and thankfully less emotionally. We spent a lot of time with Shea, going to markets, doing a bit of touring and introducing him to our family. Our grandson, Mordechai, who was visiting from Atlanta with his school, also got a chance to meet Shea. On Tuesday evening as we were preparing to call it a night there was a knock on our hotel door. We opened the door and there stood Shea, alone, bearing gifts from Vilna. This was a very poignant moment as we could not communicate with words but spoke through our eyes and with our hands.

The next morning Zalman, my nephew Leizer and I, departed, without Shea, for the Yad Layeled Museum. We knew that this would be another heart-wrenching day, similar to the one at Yad Vashem. But nothing could have prepared us for what happened.

We began by listening to children on audio giving their biographies before the war and then continued on touring the entire museum. I had heard that there was a person, still alive, who was with Shea and the entire group of 131 children taken from Dachau to Buchenwald and then Auschwitz.



We knew that this would be another heart-wrenching day, similar to the one at Yad Vashem. But nothing could have prepared us for what happened.

continued on page 10

Brothers

(cont'd)

Shea was wrenched from his older brother Moishe's arms and disappeared without a trace at the end of May, 1943. He was taken to Auschwitz for Mengele's, may his name be obliterated, experiments.

At the end of our tour we met a man by the name of Moishe Kravitz, part of Group 131, who happens to be the director of the museum. He had gotten wind of our story and wanted to meet us. By now much of the staff had heard about Shea and had surrounded us, also wanting to hear more of the story. A woman who works there asked permission to document our story as schools come to this museum and she wanted to share it with them. Of course, we agreed.

After hearing our part of the narrative, Moishe Kravitz then related the piece of the story that Zalman never knew – what had happened to his younger brother: 131 very young children were taken to Auschwitz. The group came together on the 'ramp' in Auschwitz, where 130 children were separated from their fathers, after having previously been separated from their mothers and sisters in Stutthof. While they were waiting, they began practice drills, with the older brother of one of the children conducting the drill. This brother decided to join them at this own initiative and thus they became a group of 131. For unknown reasons, the children were not immediately sent for extermination and survived the camp as an organized group for three months. In 1943, on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, many of them were sent for extermination. Thirty of the children survived and twenty-three are living in Israel. They keep in close contact with one another, call themselves Group 131 and once a year they have a reunion.

We then related to him how Shea and Zalman found one another. All of a sudden Moishe remembered Shea – being with him in Buchanwald and then Auschwitz. One day the Germans appeared, taking the youngest of the children. Shea was wrenched from his older brother Moishe's arms and disappeared without a trace at the end of May, 1943. He was taken to Auschwitz for Mengele's, may his name be obliterated, experiments. He then exclaimed that we must go back with him to the museum – he had to show us an incredible sight. He proceeded to a huge, glass, plaque listing the boys who perished from Group 131. Zalman's finger slowly went down the list, touching one name after another until incredibly it rested upon the name of his brother, Yehoshua (Shea) Convoy. There were no words – we were all numb. We photographed his name and left the room.

Since Shea was not with us, Moishe asked many times how it was possible that he (Shea) never made contact with any of them. We gently explained that in fact we were all in the same situation – no one knew for sixty-three years that he was alive.

When we took leave of the museum Zalman and I were both very emotional. Zalman had finally found out what had happened to his brother, to all of these 131 children. The blank page had finally been filled in. We spent the rest of the afternoon and evening with Shea.



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Leave-taking

We spent Shea's last day in Israel all together – Zelda, Shea, Zalman and I. In the evening Moishe Kravitz came over to meet Shea, as he had to see him in person, bringing an interpreter with him. The meeting went well, Shea answering many questions while holding Zalman's hand. I could not understand what was being said, but at one point Shea began holding his head, as though what they were saying was too much to bear. After they left the family members present said their goodbyes to Shea. Last to embrace him were Zelda and Zalman. It was a very difficult moment for everyone. Their inner pain, though not visible, was poignantly obvious.

It would be nice to say that this story is a happy one. In one way it is, as two brothers

reconnected. But in many ways it is an agonizing story. Memories, long ago buried, were forced back to the surface, causing a pain and anguish that those of us privileged to be born after the Holocaust will never understand.

For those who carry those memories, who survived and still embrace their Judaism, we must forever be in awe of them, for they are heroes in the deepest sense.

For those who survived, like Shea, robbed of their heritage and culture, we have an obligation not only to never forget the Holocaust, but to stand in front of the world as proud Jews. As Shea said, "I am keeping my name because it is the only thing I have left." In the end, all we have left is each other, our unity and our precious gift from Hashem – our Yiddishkeit. ■

Post Sinai

Before Mount Sinai – when G-d 'came down' to give the Torah – there was earth and there was heaven. If you wanted one, you were obliged to abandon the other.

At Sinai, the boundaries of heaven and earth were breached and Man was empowered to fuse the two: To raise the earthly into the realm of the spirit, and to bring heaven down to earth.

Before Mount Sinai, the coarse material of which the world is made could not be elevated. It could be used as a medium, an aid in achieving enlightenment, but it itself could not be enlightened.

The spirit was raised, but the earth remained dark.

At Sinai we were empowered to take physical objects and transform them into spiritual artifacts.

Our forefather's task was to enlighten the souls of men.

Ours is to transform the material darkness into light.

"How Many Children Are You Going to Have?"

by ZUSHE GREENBERG
CHABAD EMISSARY TO SOLON OHIO

A few years ago, I took part in a telephone conference call involving twenty-nine people. It was not a business venture, but a personal matter. Lines from Ukraine, China, France, Alaska, Texas, New York and Solon, Ohio, buzzed to Israel to wish my mother a happy sixtieth birthday.

What made this call so special was that it symbolized the profound blessings of a large family. All of the callers were my mother's children

same time was denied an exit visa and permission to leave the country.

At age nineteen, he finally tried to cross the border to Poland. He was double-crossed as his "guide" delivered him straight to the soviet police. He was sentenced to twenty-five years hard labor in a Siberian prison camp. When Stalin mercifully died seven years later, my father was set free together with all political prisoners .

He never dreamed that he would survive these events, but he did. He also never dreamed that he would find a Jewish woman who shared his dedication to Yiddishkeit and was prepared for the self sacrifice necessary to raise a Torah-observant family in Communist Russia. But he found my mother. In 1967, long before the Iron Curtain fell, my family, myself included, received permission to leave the USSR. We traveled to and settled in Israel.

"After all these miracles," my father concluded, "I should worry about a few pieces of bread? If G-d gave me the strength to survive all the hardships, surely He could give me the strength to provide the needs of my family." We all fell silent and thought about his philosophy.

Judaism teaches that children are the most cherished Divine blessing known to mankind. Not only are they a blessing, but tradition teaches us that every additional child brings a new flow of blessings to a family. Each additional child does not decrease from the material, financial and spiritual stability of the home; on the contrary, the entire family actually benefits from the Divine blessings that each child brings.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe once said that it is unnecessary for us to take over G-d's bookkeeping to figure out how many children He is able to care for. "He who feeds and sustains the whole world" the Rebbe said, "is able to take care of the children, as well as the parents."

Now that my wife and I have children of our own, I can truly appreciate the amazing dedication and self-sacrifice of my parents, as well as that of all those who are blessed with large families. I know that it takes an endless supply of laughter, tears and long wakeful nights to raise each child; I also know the nachas, the pride, joy and happiness that each child brings. I truly admire those



and their spouses: seventeen sons and daughters and twelve sons- and daughters-in-law (*b'li ayin harah*). Everyone had the opportunity to extend words of good wishes.

After this twenty-five-minute congratulatory roll call, one of my sisters asked, "What is the secret of your success? How did you manage to not only survive raising such a large family, but also raise such stable, happy, accomplished and self-confident kids like us?" My mother chuckled at the "self-confident" part, and in her unassuming and practical manner insisted that it was no great feat. "You just take one day at a time," she insisted, "and one child at a time, and do what needs to be done..." We all demanded a better explanation. How was it that she didn't worry about finances, living space, and providing the basic needs like clothing and food? At this point my father entered the conversation. "You're forgetting the full picture," he said, sharing a synopsis of his life story.

When he was twelve years old, he was fleeing from Hitler in Romania and ended up in Communist Russia. There he suffered constant persecution for his religious beliefs while at the

*How was it that she
didn't worry about
finances, living space,
and providing the basic
needs like clothing
and food?*

that willingly set aside the best years of their life and dedicate them to raising a generation of active, giving adults. Each of these future adults will make their own unique contribution to the Jewish people as well as to all of humanity. Each child represents an infinite potential, absolutely beyond prediction. Every child has his or her own unduplicated gift to present to the world, and those who bring him or her into existence are enriching humankind.

If all this was true in all generations, how much more so in our time, when our people were so cruelly decimated in the ovens of Auschwitz.

I always tell the story of a Jewish woman, expecting her fifth child, who was working in her garden when her neighbor looked over the fence and called out: "What – another one? How many children are you planning to have?"

She had heard this question many times before. She smiled and immediately replied, "Six million!" ■



Check your mail for upcoming dates for

 <p>boys & girls grade 1 - 3 & 4 - 6</p>	 <p>boys & girls ages 3 - 5</p>	 <p>Jewish Teen Connection girls grades 9 - 11</p>
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Rosh Hashana Unwrapped

by TZVI FREEMAN

Judaism is mysterious. It comes gift-wrapped from heaven with ribbons, strings and knots, each unraveling to disclose yet another mystery, an ever-widening unknown of yet more knots to untie, more strings to follow along an endless path. And with each unraveling another discovery and with each discovery a deeper wisdom.



Rosh Hashanah is one of those great mysteries. How is it that the beginning of the year appears on the first day of the seventh month? Why are we blowing a ram's horn and why do we give it such a central role? What is the cosmic drama of this day and what is our part in it?

Most puzzling is the Torah's reticence. It speaks cryptically, as though discussing something we are expected to know without it telling us.

"It will be a day of sounding for you," we are told. Sounding what? That we are not told. Kind David wrote in his psalms, "Sound the shofar at the new moon, at the hiddenness of our festival." And that is the singular biblical reference we have for our tradition that we are to sound not our voices, not a trumpet, nothing else but a ram's horn.

But then another verse tells us, "It will be a day of remembrance of sounding for you." And from this we are to understand, not to sound anything – just to remember: our tradition resolves the matter, that G-d is requesting, "Recite verses of kingship before Me to make Me your king. Recite verses of remembrance before Me, that memory of you shall rise before Me. And how? With a shofar." Oh what a puzzling tradition.

How do we know all this? And how do we know that this is the beginning of the year – something not mentioned anywhere in the five books of Moses?

The short story is, because we always knew. We knew because when Moses received the Torah, all this was clear to him as well, and he transmitted this information, even if he did not write it down. And even before we heard from Moses, we knew about Rosh Hashanah. Abraham received the

ancient teachings from Shem, son of Noah. Noah in return had received from Methuselah, who had received from Enoch. And Enoch certainly knew of Rosh Hashanah, for he received his wisdom directly from Adam, who had been formed on that day.

Rosh Hashanah then, is not just a Jewish holiday. Rosh Hashanah is the birthday of humankind.



One mystery closes and another opens. Look through the entire book of High Holiday prayers and you will find no mention of Adam's birth. What you will find is the statement, "Today is the birthday of the world." You will also find an enigmatic phrase repeated several times, "This day is the beginning of your works, a remembrance of the first day."

Suggesting a fascinating thought; indeed, one the modern scientist may embrace: Perhaps the cosmos were born only when Adam opened his eyes to observe and name each thing? After all, don't the quantum physicists and cosmologists of today tell us that there can be no events, no universe, without an observer? The universe begins, then, with the creation of the first human consciousness, "And He blew into his nostrils the breath of life and Adam became a living being."

Fascinating, but not quite satisfactory. Because, in fact, the Book of Genesis tells that Adam was formed on the sixth day of creation. There was a world before. Granted, a very different world than the one we know of, one in which matter, energy, time and space came into being and took form, in which events occurred at a rapid rate and the simple evolved to the complex within moments of time. But it was a world, nevertheless. Why then, goes the classic question, do we commemorate Rosh Hashanah on the birthday of Adam and not six days earlier on the birthday of the world?

And the classic response is: because we are not celebrating an anniversary; "Today is the birthday of the world" means today, now. Today the world is born again. This day is "the beginning of your works," reminiscent of the very first time the world was made. Only that the first time the world was born, it was a free gift. Since then, it depends on

Rosh Hashanah is one of those great mysteries.

How is it that the beginning of the year appears on the first day of the seventh month?



us, the Adam. And so, it occurs on our birthday, Rosh Hashanah. We are reborn, and within us, the entire cosmos.



The entire cosmos is on life-support. Like the glowing phosphors that form characters on a screen, like a life-like holographic image – pull the plug and the whole thing vanishes without a trace. Were G-d to pull the plug on His creation (G-d forbid), space itself would vanish. Even time would be annulled – the world would never have existed, its history would be erased. Nothing, not even a read-only memory.

There is not a particle of the universe that sustains itself. With every moment, the universe and each thing within it pulsates with the vital energy that gives it being. Our planet earth is a clock to the rhythm by which it throbs – a cycle of moments and days, of months and years. Each moment, the life needed for that moment emerges, is absorbed and then returns to its source. Each day, the energy for that day, each month for that month. This is the name for month in Hebrew: *chodesh*, meaning renewal.

But the most important renewal of life is that which occurs on Rosh Hashanah. Because that is when all life of the previous year returns to its essential source and a new life, such as was never known before, emerges from the void to sustain existence for an entire year.

The quality of this new surge of power will determine everything; as the poet of the Machzor writes, "who will die and who will live". Some years are years of plenty, others bring blessings more subtle, more concealed. Some are years of joy, others of challenge.

In the 48 hours of Rosh Hashanah, all of this makes its entry into the world. That is why every moment of these forty-eight hours counts. That is why we call it "Rosh Hashanah" – the "head" of the year, and not just "New Year's day" or "the beginning of the year": Just as the head contains within it a neuro-switch for every part of the body, so is the head of the year a concentrated preview of the entire coming year. Because it all enters here.

Any moment of Rosh Hashanah could contain the most important day of your year to come.

Rosh Hashanah, one could say, is the new year's birth canal.



Curious, isn't it, that a shofar with its narrow mouthpiece and wider opening resembles a birth canal? In fact, the Bible mentions a great woman with a name of the same etymology: Shifrah. She was the midwife of the ancient Hebrews who left Egypt. Her name means, "to make beautiful," and that is what she did: She ensured that the babies would emerge healthy and viable, then swaddled and massaged them to foster their strength and beauty.

The shofar is the midwife of the new year. Into its piercing cry we squeeze all our heartfelt prayers, all our tears, our very souls. All that exists resonates with its call until it reaches the very beginning, the cosmic womb. And there it touches a switch: The Divine Presence shifts modalities from transcendence to immanence, from strict judgment to compassion. In the language of the Zohar, "The shofar below awakens the shofar above and the Holy One, blessed be He, rises from His Throne of Judgment and sits in His Throne of Compassion."

New life enters our world and takes its first breath. It is our own life, as well, and it is in our hands.



Isn't this strange, that a created being should take part in its own creation? Imagine cartoon characters participating with the artist in their own design. Imagine them pleading with the broadcasting corporation for air time in the coming season. Imagine the figments of your own imagination telling you what to imagine.

Now imagine us, the created beings, pleading with our Creator, "Grant us life! Good life! Nice things! Be out there, in the open! Get more deeply involved with your world!"

How could it be, in the inner chamber of the Cosmic Mind, where it is determined whether we

continued on page 16

*Curious, isn't it, that
a shofar with its narrow
mouthpiece and wider
opening resembles
a birth canal?*

Rosh Hashana

(cont'd)

should be or not be, that there we are, pleading and participating in that decision? There must be something of us that lies beyond creation, something eternal. Something G-dly. We call it "the G-dly soul".

But only the soul

That is why we can call G-d both a king and a father:

of Man can argue

A king, in the most ultimate sense of kingship, because He determines whether we will be or not be.

on His behalf.

So we do that.

A father, because there is something of Him within us – and therefore we can take part in that decision.

And we are the child. Your child is not like everyone else. Your child is you. And yet, your child is not you. Your child is his own person. So too, each of us has an inner soul that is the breath of G-d within us. We are the connection point between G-d and His universe. And so we are called His children. And we can call Him our Father.



If so, on Rosh Hashanah, G-d takes Himself to court.

He looks down from above at this world and, as I'm sure you may realize, it doesn't always look so good. But G-d is not just beyond the world; He is within it as well. He is found in every atom of this world. But only the soul of Man can argue on His behalf. So we do that. It may sound strange, but this is what is happening: He as He is above takes Himself, as He is present within this world, to trial.

We are the lawyers for the defense. We acknowledge that all His complaints are well founded and just. We plead guilty on all counts. But we demonstrate sincere regret and declare that we now truly accept upon ourselves to clean up our acts and make this coming year a much, much better one than the past. Above all we make sure to speak only good about others and give them our blessings for a good and sweet year. For how we judge others is how we ourselves will be judged.

The spark of G-d within us below connects with the Infinite Light of G-d above. The circuit is complete and the universe is rebooted with a flow of energy for an entire year. ■

PRAYER SERVICES

WEEKDAYS

Morning Service - 7:30 followed by breakfast

Evening Services (Mincha and Maariv) – Schedule varies, please call our office or visit our website.

SHABBAT & HOLIDAYS

Evening Service at Candle Lighting Time

Morning Service – 9:00

Followed by a Kiddush/luncheon

SUNDAY MORNINGS & LEGAL HOLIDAYS

9:00 followed by breakfast

SHABBAT & HOLIDAY YOUTH PROGRAMS

9:30-12:00

Stories, games, songs, prayer, snacks – ages 3-11

Couscous aux Sept Légumes

INGREDIENTS

- 6 cups chicken stock or water
- 6 carrots (2 1/2 cups) - cut into chunks
- 3 onions - quartered
- 2 turnips (3 cups) - peeled and quartered
- 2 stalks celery - sliced
- 2 sticks cinnamon or 1 tsp ground cinnamon- (3 inch sticks)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin, up to 1
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Pepper
- 1 butternut squash or small pumpkin prepared and cut into 2 inch pieces
- 3 medium, sliced (6 cups)
- 1/2 head green cabbage, shredded (5 cups)
- 2 cups cooked or canned chickpeas or fava beans
- 1 tablespoon chopped coriander or parsley
- Couscous, (see package directions)
- 1-2 cups chicken stock, warmed

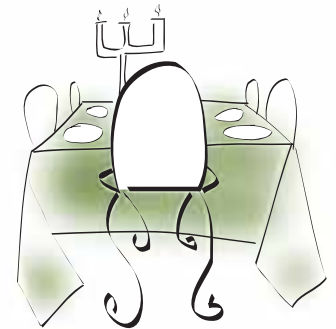
DIRECTIONS

Bring 6 cups stock to a boil. Add carrots, onions, turnips, celery, cinnamon, cumin, turmeric, salt and pepper to taste. Cover, reduce heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes. Add squash, cabbage, chickpeas and coriander. Cook until tender, about 20 minutes.

To produce a thicker sauce, use a potato masher or the back of a wooden spoon to mash some of the chickpeas or squash against the bottom of the pot.

Spoon cooked couscous onto a large deep-sided platter or individual serving plates. Make a well in the centre and fill it with vegetables. Pour 1 to 2 cups stock over couscous. Serve warm.

Yields 6 servings.



Fish Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package kosher Pollock or whiting (found in frozen kosher food department)
- 4 stalks celery
- 1 red pepper
- 1 green pepper
- 1 yellow or orange pepper
- 1 small onion
- 1 tin corn niblets
- 1 tin hearts of palm

DRESSING

- fresh dill
- mayonnaise
- salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS

Dice all the vegetables. Defrost the fish and cut into chunks. Thoroughly wash the dill and dry very well. Add to the fish/vegetable mixture. Add 3 heaping tablespoons of mayonnaise (more or less to taste), 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon pepper. Mix together very well. Best served when stored for a few hours in the fridge. **As an appetizer serves 6-8.**

MTC WISHES A HEARTY MAZELTOV TO

- Lorna and Hy Burack on the birth of granddaughters to:
Rabbi Menachem and Debbie Burack and Randi and Elyahu Feitelberg
- Debbie and Ronnie Cons on the birth of their son, Shmuel David
- Susan and Kenny Corber on the birth of their granddaughter Jaclyn Haley
- David and Lori Diner on the birth of their son, Jacob
- Berl and Breindy Gansbourg on the birth of their son Shneur Zalman
- Jason and Lori Kraft on the birth of their son Ryan
- Carole and Stanley Satov on the birth of their grandson, Ryder Samuel to Amy and Vaughn Chittock
- Guido and Deborah Setton on the birth of their daughter, Nicole Tamara
- Levi and Kreina Staal on the birth of their daughter, Chana
- Karla and Steven Lach on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Adam
- Susan Greenspan on the Bar Mitzvah of her son Yosef Yitzchak
- Berl and Breindy Gansbourg on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Levi
- Lizzy and Johnny Schachter on the marriage of their son Ari to Stephanie Nagus
- Stacey Letovsky and Eric Howard on their engagement

MTC EXPRESSES ITS DEEPEST SYMPATHIES TO

- Nancy Benamore on the passing of her mother, Mrs. Suzanne Benamore
- Claude Choueke on the passing of her mother, Mrs. Simone Ouknine
- The Diamond, Eisenberg and Karel families on the passing of Mrs. Lily Karel
- The Diner family on the passing of Mr. Melvin Diner
- The Feldman and Hirsch families on the passing of Mrs. Katie Hirsch
- The Goldberger and Shtull families on the passing of Mr. Leslie Goldberger
- Mikey Gottesman on the passing of his sister Darlene Rubenstein
- The Grzywacz Family on the passing of their mother and grandmother, Mrs. Bronka Grzywacz
- The Hockmitz family on the passing of Mrs. Mollie Hockmitz
- The Kashetsky and Cons families on the passing of Mrs. Sandra Kashetsky
- The Kendall family on the passing of Howard Aaron Kendall
- The Levine family on the passing of their mother and grandmother, Mrs. Estelle Levine
- The Levine and Bell families on the passing of Ryan Levine
- The Rosenblum and Weinstock families on the passing of Mr. Bernard Rosenblum
- The Routtenberg, Tannenbaum and Zelman families on the passing of their mother and grandmother, Mrs. Tess Routtenberg
- The Sirzyk family on the passing of Mrs. Roz Sirzyk
- The Spicer family on the passing of Mr. Allan Spicer
- May they be spared further sorrow and know only of simchas.*

If You Could be G-d for One Week, What Would You Do?

QUESTION:

If you could be G-d for one week, what would you do? Who would you help? What punishments would you mete out? How would you handle this awesome responsibility?

Answer:

A small book was written by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan in 1983 called "If You Were G-d" posing the exact same scenario.

The question posed is a theoretical one: **if** you could be G-d what would you do? But according to Jewish thought this is not a hypothetical; it is the reality!

G-d has endowed each of us with a Divine spark, a piece of Himself, which we usually refer to as 'the soul'. This Divine spark is our true identity; our body and the 'personality' that comes with it are merely the vehicles through which our soul expresses itself.

Our bodies are human. But our souls are Divine. From a soul perspective, we have the same attributes as G-d Himself. We are made in His image.

1) We have free choice.

In truth, only G-d can have free choice. Because to have truly free choice you have to be above any influence that may sway you to choose one path or the other. If one chooses something out of peer pressure, ignorance or habit, one is not making a *free* choice.

G-d alone is above any influence. From a body perspective, a human being is influenced by environment, education, genetics and mood swings. That means we aren't truly free in our choices. Scientifically, we are essentially machines that will make predictable choices based on external or internal influences. But that's only according to nature. From a spiritual perspective, we aren't so one-dimensional. G-d has given us a piece of Himself, a soul, and that is the core of our being that is above any influence. Our soul allows us to rise above even our own nature and be free to choose.

So, like G-d, we have free choice. Our destiny is in our own hands.

2) We are creators.

Apart from the fact that we can invent, build and even reproduce (which animals can also do), we humans are, in our very essence, creators.

The Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) teaches that every action we do not only affects the world around us, but also creates new spiritual forces. When we perform an act of goodness we create a 'good angel', a positive energy force. On the other hand, when we act selfishly or destructively we create a 'bad angel' - negative energy. Throughout our lifetimes we accumulate legions of these creatures that are our own creations, and they hover around our souls. The negative energy can be destroyed and even transformed to goodness if we regret the evil we have done and right the wrongs. These angels are ours, and we decide their fate.

Like G-d, we are creators, and our creations are in our hands.

3) We can influence the direction of the entire world.

The soul's power is unlimited. My thoughts, words and actions can push the entire world towards its ultimate purpose, or delay the realization of that purpose. The Talmud says that one should see the world as exactly balanced between good and evil. My next move will determine which way the scales are tipped - will I bring more corruption, pain and sorrow into the world, or will I promote peace, happiness and harmony?

So just like G-d we have free choice, we create and control our creations, and the destiny of the entire world is in our hands.

G-d could have created us otherwise. He didn't have to give us such power. But He took a gamble. He placed the world in our hearts; in us He invested His very self. Because He trusts us to do a good job.

So the question is not "What would you do **if** you were G-d?", but rather "G-d has given you His power; what's your next move?" ■

by ARON MOSS

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from Chabad.org



G-d could have created us

otherwise. He didn't have

to give us such power.

But He took a gamble.



Sacramento, California

Most All American City

by JOANNIE TANSKY

Most people who travel to California go to the better-known vacation spots - Los Angeles or San Francisco. Not too many people venture to the capital of the state (do you know your geography?) - Sacramento. Due to this reality there are no direct flights to this destination, so I flew to Sacramento via Dallas, also a place I had never visited. There was, to put it mildly, an eclectic group of people at the airport waiting to board the plane with me in Dallas...



State Legislature, Sacramento

Sacramento, which means exactly what it sounds like, 'sacrament', is a city of one and a half million people (including the small surrounding suburbs). It is located in

Northern California and has the lushest land I have ever seen, potentially able to feed all of America. Sacramento is the point of Government, meaning that it is the capital of California and their Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger rules over 32 million people, more than the population of Canada.

*He had a friend who
was selling his farm
and wanted to donate –
fifty sheep and seventy-
five goats to the Rabbi
and his wife!*

Being a Jew in northern California is another thing. Sacramento is, as Rabbi Mendy Cohen described, a typical white-American small city, and because of its location, far from the much more Jewish southern part of the state, had, until 1994, very little in terms of Yiddishkeit. According to the local Jewish Federation there are now 20,000 Jews in Sacramento and the surrounding suburbs. According to Rabbi Mendy 80% of those Jews have assimilated – a staggering number.

The ever-smiling Rabbi Mendy (who was born and brought up in Montreal and whose parents, Rabbi and Mrs. Eli Cohen still reside here) and Dinie Cohen arrived in Sacramento in 1994. They went there not with grandiose expectations, but with a very real, grounded view of life. Their objective was to simply build up Jewish awareness. Given the above description of Northern California it is no wonder that the local Federation and rabbis showed some resistance to a young, very obviously Jewish couple moving into town. The community was, to put it mildly, shocked.

Although they had no synagogue that first year, Rabbi Mendy realized that he had to have

some kind of service for the High Holidays. So he rented a party room in a local hotel, put an ad in the paper and, much to his surprise over 100 people attended that first year.

Rabbi Mendy and Dinie decided that if they were having services then they should also provide a Kiddush. They needed a total of \$5,000 to cover the cost of the room, supplies for the shul and the food. This doesn't sound like such a huge sum of money, but given the fact that they were new in town, there was not a soul they could ask to help them finance this venture. It was at that time that they put in place a philosophy which they live by to this day. Just do it. Hashem has his ways of making sure things get taken care of.

A few days after the High Holidays Rabbi Cohen received a phone call from someone who had attended the services. He had a friend who was selling his farm and wanted to donate – fifty sheep and seventy-five goats to the Rabbi and his wife! When he recounted the story to me I burst out laughing. I asked him how large his backyard was to be able to take these animals. Then I thought to myself it sounds like a Biblical story. He explained to this city slicker that in fact he was told to accept the offer and then sell the livestock, which he did. The sum he received for the animals - \$5,000!

Just before the High Holidays of that year Rabbi Cohen was asked to speak in the California Senate. Being a relatively new Rabbi, he felt that this was not yet his forte so he asked that if instead of speaking could he blow the Shofar. At the time California was in a deep recession and Rabbi Cohen, in his gentle, boyish manner suggested that the sound of the Shofar would blow the recession out of California. In fact, a few months after he blew the Shofar the recession, for that period, ended.

On the way to Stockton, California

On the afternoon I arrived, Dinie informed me that we were going for a drive to Stockton for a BBQ. The shluchim, Rabbi Avremel and Nechamie Brod (Nechamie is Rabbi Cohen's sister) have been there for one and half years. Also at this BBQ were going to be the 6 counselors who help Dinie run her summer camp (attended by over 80 children, ranging in age from 5 – 13).



During the ride with Rabbi Mendy, together with Tzemach who is a year old, Mushka 4 and Raizel 6, I had a chance to speak to Dinie, who is an upbeat, fun, former New Yorker. Our trip took us past a number of supermarkets and I casually asked her how far she has to go to get milk, cheese and other dairy products for her children. She told me, in a very matter-of-fact way that she has to go 400 miles away to Los Angeles. Her children drink rice milk unless her uncle Naftali comes to visit from Los Angeles and he brings 'real' milk, affectionately called 'Naftali's milk'.

For Dinie, the issue of education is the most difficult of her shlichus - she must bring in girls to home-school her children. This past year she sent 9-year-old Peretz to Los Angeles where there is a Yeshiva. She felt however, that for him it was too early to leave home, so this year she thinks she will send him and his brother Moshe, who is 8, for two weeks at a time LA and bring him home for two weeks and so on.

And then she said something that in all my travels I have not yet heard. She was telling me about different families she has become close to, and how these families are coming closer to Yiddishkeit. She then looked at me and said, "In other Chabad Houses or any synagogue, you measure your success by how many members you have. Here, we measure our success in how many people we have sent away." Because of the schooling situation, if a family wants to send their children to a Jewish school they are forced to move to Los Angeles. And many do.

You have to be a very strong, committed person to meet people, eventually become very close with them, knowing all the while that if they become serious about their Yiddishkeit, they must move away.

The BBQ

If I thought that Sacramento was a small city then Stockton is small-town America. And, it's hot, very, very hot. I am not one of those people who like the heat - wet or dry. To me, 75° is hot. So when we got out of the car in Stockton I nearly fainted. The heat hits you like a wall, especially after the air-conditioner in the car has been blasting in your face for an hour.

The house in Stockton reminded me of a New-England style home. I entered the house via the hallway leading on the right to the kitchen/living area. Then to my surprise I looked towards what was the garage and saw a synagogue, complete with a mechitza made of trees, a bimah, a Torah, chairs etc. A regular shul.

I asked Avremel who looks much younger than his already young (for me) 25, how he got going in a place like Stockton. He smiled and said, "We look different and people realized that something was going on here." He then went on to tell me, "When we were moving here I asked people where the Jewish community was. They responded - the Jewish community is where you will be." I asked if people take him seriously as a rabbi, given his youthful appearance. He laughed and told me that once someone rang the bell and when he answered the door they asked to speak to the Rabbi. He told them he is the Rabbi. After their initial shock and once he began to speak to them, they realized that appearances can be very deceiving.

A Miracle Story in Stockton

At one point Nechamie pulled me aside and said that something had occurred this past Shabbos, which she had to tell me. The story began a few months ago when Avremel got a call from a man in Modesto, a town close to Stockton, looking for a mohel. His wife was having twins, a boy and a girl. Avremel gave him the information he needed and told him to call when they had the babies. The person who called did not divulge his name.

This past Shabbos morning someone knocked on Nechamie's door at 10 am, earlier than the usual 10:30 when services begin. She opened the door to find four Sephardic men looking for their synagogue. "Is this Chabad?" they asked. "Yes," she replied. "Please come in." The men were from Mexico City and had gone to the Conservative synagogue on Friday night. They usually daven in an Orthodox shul so they requested of the people on Friday night to give them the address of Chabad. Along with the address they were given a description of the house. It turned out that the address was wrong but because of the description they were able to locate the house.



Governor Schwarzenegger

"In other Chabad Houses or any synagogue, you measure your success by how many members you have. Here, we measure our success in how many people we have sent away."

continued on page 24

Sacramento

(cont'd)



Lombard Street, San Francisco

During the course of the meal, Dinie had occasion to speak to Governor Schwarzenegger. He made a bit of small talk and then said, quite loudly and with a bit of humour in his voice, "Tell me Dinie, what's with the women not shaking men's hands?"

And then the rest story came out. One of the men's wives had just given birth to twins, a boy and girl and they wanted to name the little girl at the Torah. It was the same man who had spoken to Avremel a few months earlier! The entire shul, about 30 people was buzzing. They could not believe what was happening. When the father went to the Torah it was as if the entire Chabad House became his family. When Avremel asked him the baby's name he said Jessica. He had not chosen a Hebrew name. A woman who was listening

suggested the name Yael and so the baby was named Yael. Someone went up to Nechamie during the Kiddush and said, very emotionally, "What would have happened to these people if you were not here...?"

Chanukah

The first year they were in Sacramento, Rabbi Mendy tried to put up Menorahs in all seven shopping malls in the area. Not one shopping mall allowed him to put up a Menorah. So, being resourceful, he went to the Senate and asked if he could put up a Menorah in front the Capital Building. Although he was given a green light by the government, every single Rabbi in the city came out against it. Rabbi Mendy persevered and that year Sacramento had its first public Menorah lighting. (As an aside, every single one of those Rabbis has now left Sacramento and Rabbi Mendy has the distinction of being the youngest 'senior' Rabbi in Sacramento's history.) This year, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger lit the Menorah with 11 million people watching on television.

Following this year's Menorah lighting, Rabbi Mendy and Dinie had a luncheon called Nachas and Latkes for the Governor, Assemblymen, Senators and their wives and other local rabbis. Before the dinner, the dignitaries were instructed, to avoid any embarrassment at the event, that Orthodox women do not shake men's hands.

During the course of the meal, Dinie had occasion to speak to Governor Schwarzenegger. He made a bit of small talk and then said, quite loudly and with a bit of humour in his voice, "Tell me Dinie, what's with the women not shaking men's hands?" The room became absolutely silent. Dinie, in her forthright, direct manner said, "It's a Jewish thing, Governor, not to shake hands with the opposite gender. Not to get anyone into uncomfortable situations." The Governor laughed and then said, "That's a wonderful thing that you do." Dinie not only diffused what could have been a very uncomfortable moment, but brought to light, in a non-apologetic way, the inner-beauty of Judasim's Laws.

The Office of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger... and me

Monday morning, the first full day of my two-day visit, Rabbi Mendy asked me if I was in the mood to meet with 'Saddam Hussein'. I looked at him as though he were slightly off, but then he smiled and said that he had set up a meeting with a lobbyist who could and does double (in movies) for Saddam Hussein.

Jerry Haleva is a paradox. On the one hand he looks very Jewish, on the other he looks like Saddam Hussein. His discovery came about by accident but the doubles business is serious and he has an agent for all his movies.

Twenty-five years ago Jerry met Rabbi Boruch Shlomo Cunin, the head shliach to California, which currently boasts over 200 Chabad Houses. (Rabbi Cunin also coined the name Chabad House). Jerry's connection deepened ten years ago when he met Rabbi Mendy and Dini.

Jerry has a 20-year career in the California Legislature and in 1990 opened his governmental consulting firm called – Sergeant Major Associates. His firm quickly became one of the top 25 lobbying firms in California representing Fortune 500 companies such as Pfizer and BMW and now...Chabad. He is one of Rabbi Mendy's most powerful lobbyists throughout California.

From Jerry's office we walked across the street to the very impressive State Legislature, where Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has his office. The grounds are immaculately manicured, the trees

perfectly swaying in the scorching hot breeze and the stone building looks as though it was sand-blasted yesterday. On the way into the building Rabbi Mendy met a man by the name of Darryl Steinberg who happens to be the assemblyman-chairman of the budget committee. Rabbi Mendy spoke to him as though he had an office right next to Mr. Steinberg, discussing the latest developments on the budget crisis in California.

We then entered the stately building, which has security as tight as any airport. Just after the entrance we saw many cameramen and newsmen and were told that we had just missed the Governor. For Rabbi Mendy however, this is not a problem. He is friends with the Governor and with many of his staff including Bonnie Reiss who is the Governor's closest senior advisor and a proud Jew. As soon as Bonnie heard that the Rabbi was waiting, she came out to personally greet him. She graciously escorted us into her office saying that she was just about to run to a meeting. But before she left she told me that "The Governor is behind everything that Chabad wants to do. The Governor lit the Menorah just days after he was inaugurated, and we want to make the Nachas and Latkes luncheon an annual affair." She continued to say that everyone is particularly impressed with "Chabad's emphasis on education."

The hour I spent at the Legislature left me breathless for many reasons. The only time I had been in the parliament buildings in our capital was during the summer when everything is closed. Here, things were buzzing, busy, happening and Rabbi Mendy is part of the whole scene. Everybody, but everybody, knows who he is.

The Australian Connection

In 1996 Rabbi Mendy and Dinie had grown enough to warrant a synagogue/community center. He found an appropriate half acre of land, which had two houses on it. The money issue again reared its head. He received \$5,000 for a down payment from a local supporter but had three weeks to come up with \$60,000.

He made a call to Rabbi Yosel Gutnick (Rabbi New's brother-in-law) who is a most generous philanthropist, recounted his story briefly over the phone and then... flew to Australia to personally meet with Rabbi Gutnick. It was Rabbi Gutnick's

munificence that enabled the Cohen's to begin to grow in earnest. A few years later they bought an adjoining half acre of land from the nearby fire station. Today their vision continues to be realized with; the building of a new synagogue, the establishment of a Hebrew School, the addition of the largest summer camp in northern California, Bat Mitzvah Club, and on the day I arrived, they broke ground for the new mikvah.

The Mikvah

Mikvah is an issue all to itself. Right now Dinie and anyone else who uses a mikvah, travel to Berkeley. The Cohen's decided, with the urging of a few of their members, that the time had come to build a state-of-the-art, elegant, mikvah. According to Dinie, "I envision the mikvah an oasis, both physical and spiritual." Upon my arrival Rabbi Mendy proudly showed the construction site of the new mikvah, next door to the Chabad House. They had broken ground just the day before. Soon after that he set up a meeting for me with one of the key supporters of this project, Sandra Bear.

Monday afternoon, Sandra, a thoughtful, spiritual woman, and I spoke quietly and intensely for over an hour. She explained that she had been searching, most of her life, for a spiritual connection. She instinctively knew that it was somewhere out there, but for many years it had eluded her. In 1994 she heard from Federation that a new, small shul that had just opened in Sacramento and decided to check it out. At the time there were about 10 people attending Shabbos services.

Sandra explained that Sacramento's Jewish community, as the rest of the city, was very quiet and laid-back. But since the arrival of Rabbi Mendy and Dinie, the Jewish community is blossoming. "I tell people that the doors have been thrown open and what was kept secret, for the elite, has now been given to everyone." She is totally devoted to the Cohen's, having the great merit to be included in the inception of the mikvah.



Golden Gate Bridge

*Monday afternoon,
Sandra, a thoughtful,
spiritual woman,
and I spoke quietly
and intensely for
over an hour.*

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Sacramento

(cont'd)

After we spoke I told her that I was thinking of taking a bus to San Francisco the next day. Her eyes lit up and she explained that she used to live there and still maintains an apartment. She would love to take me.



China Town & The Kosher Restaurant

In the Pick-up Truck en route to San Francisco

On Tuesday morning at 11:00 am, Sandra came to get me. When I stepped outside, all I saw was a pick-up truck. I looked around and quickly realized that in fact, this was Sandra's mode of transportation and ergo the vehicle I was going to be in for

the next few hours. Never mind San Francisco, I couldn't believe that I would be driving in this truck! What a hoot! The open cargo space in the back held 2 sun chairs, which she was taking to her apartment in San Francisco. I kept telling her that they would fly out during the trip. She kept reassuring me that they were just fine where they were.

I also had the merit to be in the company of Bernie, Sandra's erstwhile dog. In case you have never been in a pick-up truck, the layout is that there are only 2 seats in the front. Sandra occupied one and Bernie the other. But now there were three of us. Bernie was not going with us to San Francisco, he had an appointment for a shampoo and haircut at the dog spa. However, I was in the front seat beside Sandra, usurping Bernie's place, so... Bernie and I shared the front seat for the 15-minute ride to the spa.

San Francisco was, thank G-d, very cool. After the intense heat of Sacramento and Stockton I just stood outside for about ten minutes letting the heat dissipate from my body. It was very, very refreshing. We ate lunch in Sabra's, one of the two

kosher restaurants in San Francisco, located in the heart of Chinatown. Go figure. We did a bit of shopping after our meal, but quickly realized that every store carried exactly the same tacky trinkets so we left the area and Sandra gave me a car-tour of breathtaking San Francisco. We ended the day at the Holocaust Memorial, which, although relatively small, is extremely powerful.

Not to forget Bernie, we picked him up, spic and span from the spa. It did not take him long to realize that we were sharing seats again...

Montreal, Sacramento, Montreal

As stated at the outset of the article, Rabbi Mendy was born and raised in Montreal. He still maintains many of the friendships of his youth (Itchy being one of them). This past year, at their Third Annual Awards Dinner, the Cohen's honoured Mayer Gniwisch, one of the rabbi's closest friends and an unceasing supporter. Mayer, a successful businessman, explains his support this way, "Our spiritual lives and our regular lives are one. The money we make goes back into communities all over the world."

And Finally...

We live in a small world. Everything is seconds away. And yet, people must still physically live apart from each other, creating challenges in their day-to-day lives. How we deal with them is each one's individual test.

Together, Rabbi Mendy and Dinie are a powerhouse of energy, inspiration and motivation, driving an entire community. While in their presence I felt as though no obstacle was too big to conquer no mountain too high to climb. I returned to Montreal with a heightened sense of renewal and enthusiasm, looking at my own tests in life with a more positive and optimistic attitude. ■

We ate lunch in

Sabra's, one of the two

kosher restaurants in

San Francisco, located in

the heart of Chinatown.

Go figure.

People of the Book

Back and forth the polemics fly, across the reaches of Cyberspace.

We debate everything, from gay rights to Israeli politics. But for the most part, we deconstruct the Bible. Our differences in perspective could not have been starker. For one, I believe that the Torah is the absolute word of G-d and an instructor and guide for everyday life. My friend Carol believes that it is an eclectic collection of wisdom and fanciful legends, penned by many diverse individuals over time. I believe that the characters in the Bible are real people, my ancestors in fact. She insists that most are mythical heroes, and the events described mainly metaphorical.

I question why she takes the word of an archeologist at face value while rejecting the historic testimony of an entire nation. For her part, she can't comprehend how this ancient document filled with puzzling statements serves as my guide for 21st century living. She does not understand my gullibility – how I credulously accept Bible stories as perfect truth. I try to explain the need to study the oral Torah – the interpretations handed down to Moses on Sinai, passed from one generation of sages to the next. Carol doesn't understand why the group decisions of men who lived centuries ago should be followed with such scrupulousness today.

As we play round after round, I think bemusedly of how easily our roles could have been reversed. The divergence of the Jewish nation into separate paths is a relatively recent historical phenomenon. My great-grandparents, as well as hers, were devout Jews; our grandparents had lost their Jewish observance somewhere in the immigration shuffle; my baby-boomer parents reclaimed theirs in their teens. The awareness that I am where I am is only due to a quirk of history leads me to tone down my rhetoric, to think before I speak. I imagine us doing a role swap, with Carol patiently teaching me the Torah that my parents never knew. The switch seems so natural, in my imagination. It reminds me that I do not speak for Torah; the Torah speaks for us.

Slowly, we find common ground. I accept some of her metaphorical interpretations of Torah's stories, although I still insist that the events described in the Torah did in fact take place. She begins to incorporate more mitzvot in her personal life, lighting Shabbat candles, performing a havdalah ceremony. Her children learn about their Judaism, and are proud of it.

Eventually the battle winds down; we both tire. When I sense an edge to our conversations, I back off, sometimes for months. I don't want to push too hard; I value our friendship too highly. Our dialogues turn to more mundane topics. Our kids. Trips to the zoo.

After some months, she hesitantly admits that she misses our discussions. Somewhere inside, she tells me, through all our exchanges, she felt something come alive. I think I know what she means. Her challenges had ignited that very same passion in me and sent me diving into books for hours deep into the night. It's our stubborn Jewish soul asserting itself, screaming for expression. We debate, we grope, and we struggle to define the eternally relevant message of Torah. Beneath the surface disagreements, we share a deeply embedded, unbreakable bond with the Book that made our nation famous.

It is Simchat Torah. In the synagogue, we take out the Torah scroll, unopened, wrapped in its mantle. Holding it aloft, we hug it close to our hearts and dance. We embrace its totality, as we celebrate our unique relationship with this scroll that has kept us and molded us into the People we are today. Reaching back through history, forward for eternity, the Torah is ours, and we are hers. ■

by CHAYA SHUCHAT

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Our differences in perspective could not have been starker.

MTC DRAW A SELL OUT!



On Thursday evening, August 18, the Montreal Torah Center held its sixth draw and cocktail party attended by over 400 guests. The raffle raised over \$300,000 through ticket sales and corporate sponsorship. Corey Eisenberg and Leslie Greenberg were the draw's co-chairs.

A heartfelt 'Yasher Koach' to the entire team of captains, canvassers and corporate sponsors, whose combined effort and dedication made the MTC DRAW 2005 an outstanding success.

The Team:

Jarrid Adler, Joey Adler, Mitchell Adler, Elliot Alper, David Applebaum, Yaram Bar, Marilyn Belzberg, Mort Besner, Robert Bishin, Hymie Blankrot, Allan Bloom, Henri Bybelezer, Marvin Chankowsky, Michael Chernack, Rona Cohen, Jack Cola, Louis Cola, Philip Cola, Stanley Cons, Mikey Cons, Ronnie Cons, Jerry Convo, Rick Cytrenbaum, Murray Dankoff, Richard Dermer, Esther Deutsch, Stewart Diament, Avie Dolgy, Lionel Dubrovsky, Corey Eisenberg, Karen Eisenberg, Sara Eldor, Norma and Ronnie Elkin, Murray Epstein, Martin Farkas, Evan Feldman, Osnat Feldman, Michael Felner, Berel Fersten, Lou Flam, Jean Fleishman, Benny Freidman, Charles Friedman, George Friedman, Ron Friedman, Steve Glazer, Hershey Gold, Eddie Goldberg, Anna Sue Greenberg, Gail Greenberg, Leslie Greenberg, Jonathan Gurman, Helen Hakak, Meir Hakak, Yoeli Hakak, Mircia Hascalovici, Warren Hill, Gordon Kadonoff, Debra Kahan, Robert Kahan, Stewart Kahan, Marc Kakon, Lee Karls, Mark Kashetsky, Andrew Kastner, Gerald Kessner, Jeff Kirstein, Ari Kugler, Mark Lazar, Philip Levi, Arthur Levitt, Earl Levitt, Eddie and Rissa Mechaly, David Merovitz, Rachele Merovitz, Ricky Merovitz, David Migicovsky, Lynda Milstein, Shirley and Allan Milstein, Velvel Minkowitz, Dario Montoni, Jackie Ohayon, Shulie Polter, David Puterman, Howard Richman, Mendy Rosenfeld, Joelle and Martin Sacksner, Carole Satov, Stanley Satov, Johnny Schachter, Mark Schick, Barry Schwartz, Barry Segal, Gaby Segal, Joel Segal, Jerry Sidel, Daniel Slomovic, Lorne Smart, Shmuel Spicer, Aron Steinman, Mark Strohl, Julius Suss, Lorne Sztern, Avi Tansky, Freddy Tansky, Joannie Tansky, Gloria Baronowski, Jacob Tink, Chaim Treitel, Shaya and Tuky Treitel, Jeffrey Wagman, Allan Vosko, David Wajcman, Allan Weizmann, Sigal Weizmann, Bruce Welik, Issie Wiseman, Dov Wolman, Aubrey Zelman, Hershel Zelman



Mark Strohl, CA of Perrault, Wolman, Grzywacz audited the draw and oversaw the legalities.

Hershey Gold and Jackie Ohayon shared the grand prize of \$18,000. William Gottlieb won 2nd prize of \$1800. There were four winners of \$500: Frankel Enterprises, Richard Landry, Tean Schultz and Martin Sulsky.





**TO THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

We extend our best wishes to the Jewish community of Montreal for a good and sweet year. May G-d bless each and every one of us, amongst all our fellow Jews, with nachas from our children, good health and prosperity.

May G-d protect our brothers and sisters in our beloved Israel. May we merit true and lasting peace in Israel and the world over in a world perfected and redeemed.

Shana Tova,

Rabbi Moishe and Nechama New
 Rabbi Itchy and Zeldie Treitel



Ours thanks & appreciation to Omega Photo.

A Brief History of Shabbat

by YANKI TAUBER **1. Creation**

"In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth..." (*Genesis 1:1*)

For six days G-d created. "And G-d saw all that He had made and, behold, it was very good..."

".... It was evening and it was morning, the sixth day. And the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their host. And G-d completed on the seventh day His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

"And G-d blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because in it he rested from all his work which G-d had created, to make..." (*Genesis 1:31-2:3*)



Hebron, 18th Century BCE
2. Sarah's Shabbat Lamp

Thirty-eight centuries ago, Abraham and Sarah embarked on a journey to bring the idea and morals of monotheism to a predominantly pagan world. Their journey took them from their native Ur Kasdim to Charan (Mesopotamia) and from there to the Land of Canaan, where they settled first in Beer Sheba and later in Hebron. They pitched their tents at the desert crossroads, and offered food, drink and lodging to all wayfarers of every tribe and creed. Wherever they went, they taught the truth of the One G-d, creator of heaven and earth. (*Genesis ch.12; Talmud, Sotah 10a; Midrashim*)

In Sarah's tent, a special miracle proclaimed that Divine presence dwelled therein: the lamp she lit every Friday evening in honor of the Divine day of rest miraculously kept burning all week, until the next Friday eve. When Sarah died (1677 BCE) the miracle of her Shabbat lamp ceased. But on the day of Sarah's passing, Rebecca was born. And when Rebecca was brought to Sarah's tent as the destined wife of Sarah's son, Isaac, the miracle of

the lamp returned. Once again the light of Shabbat filled the tent of the matriarch of Israel and radiated its holiness to the entire week. (*Midrash Rabbah, Bereishit 60*)



Sarah and Rebecca's descendents are now in Egypt, slaves of a cruel king. Moses, their destined leader, is rescued from the river by Pharaoh's daughter and is raised in the royal palace. "Then it came to pass in those days that Moses grew up and went out to his brothers, and saw their suffering" (*Exodus 2:11*)

The Midrash relates: "Moses saw that they had no rest, so he went to Pharaoh and said: 'If one has a slave and he does not give him rest one day in the week, the slave will die. These are your slaves - if you do not give them one day a week, they will die.' Said Pharaoh: "Go and do with them as you say.' So Moses ordained for them the Shabbat day for rest." (*Midrash Rabbah, Shemot 1:32*)



Marah, Nissan 24, 1313 BCE
4. Mitzvah at Marah

G-d appears to Moses in a burning bush and empowers him to take the Children of Israel out of Egypt. After ten plagues and much nudging, Pharaoh finally lets them go. They cross the (miraculously split) Sea of Reeds and come to Marah. "There G-d gave them statutes and laws" - including the commandment to observe the Shabbat. (*Exodus 15:25; Talmud, Sanhedrin 56b*)



Zin Desert, Iyar 15, 1313 BCE
5. Double Manna

A month after the Exodus, the matzah that the Children of Israel took with them from Egypt was finished. For the next forty years, the Israelites were sustained by the manna. "In the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. The layer of dew went up, and behold, on the surface of the desert, a fine, bare substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, 'It is manna,' because they did not know what it was. And Moses said to

them: 'This is the bread that G-d has given you to eat.'" (*Exodus 16:13-15*)

The manna came each day and provided that day's precise needs. "Whoever gathered much did not have more, and whoever gathered little did not have less; each one according to his eating capacity, they gathered." Indeed, it was forbidden to leave manna from one day to the next. (*Exodus 16:18-19*)

Every day, that is, except Friday. "It came to pass on the sixth day that they gathered a double portion of bread, two omers for each one. The leaders of the community came and reported it to Moses. And [Moses] said to them: 'That is what G-d has said: Tomorrow is a rest day, a holy Shabbat to G-d. Bake whatever you wish to bake, and cook whatever you wish to cook, and all the rest leave over to keep until morning.' So they left it over until morning... And Moses said, 'Eat it today, for today is a Shabbat to G-d; today you will not find it in the field.'" (*Exodus 16:22-26*)

"See, G-d has given you the Shabbat. Therefore, on the sixth day, He gives you bread for two days. Let each man remain in his place; let no man leave his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day." (*Exodus 16:29-30*)

Today, we place two challah loaves on the Shabbat table and cover them with a cloth, to represent the dew-covered, double portion of manna that came down from heaven in honor of Shabbat.



Mount Sinai, Sivan 6, 1313 BCE

6. "Remember" and "Keep"

"Moses brought the people out toward G-d from the camp, and they stood at the bottom of the mountain. And the entire Mount Sinai smoked, because G-d had descended upon it in fire... and the entire mountain quaked violently. The sound of the shofar grew increasingly stronger... And G-d spoke all these words, saying..."

Ten Commandments were spoken that day at Sinai, ten mitzvot that form the core of the Torah. The fourth commandment concerned the Shabbat:

"Remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it. Six days may you work and perform all your labor; but the seventh day is a Shabbat to the L-rd your G-d: you shall do no work – neither you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your beast, nor your sojourner who is in your cities. For [in] six days G-d made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, G-d blessed the Shabbat day and sanctified it." (*Exodus 19:17-20:1; 20:8-11*)

When Moses reviews the Ten Commandments (in Deuteronomy 5), the fourth commandment begins: "Keep the Shabbat day..." The Talmud explains: "*Zachor* ('remember') and *Shamor* ('keep') were said by G-d in a single utterance – something which the human mouth cannot articulate and the human ear cannot hear..."

We **remember** the Shabbat by proclaiming its sanctity over a cup of wine in the Kiddush and Havdalah rituals; we **keep** the Shabbat by abstaining from work. But the "positive" and "negative" aspects of Shabbat are one – two faces of its singular essence – as demonstrated by the two-as-one Divine utterance.

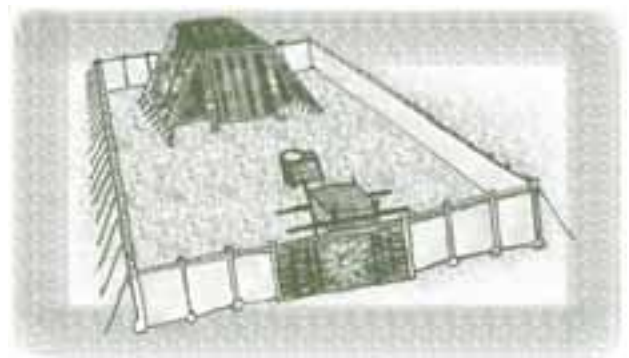


Sinai Desert, Tishrei 11, 1313 BCE

7. The Tabernacle: Work Defined

"You shall do no work" was the Divine command. But what constitutes "work"?

Four months after the revelation at Sinai came the request from G-d, "They shall make for me a sanctuary, and I shall dwell amidst them," accompanied with detailed instructions as to how this sanctuary is to be constructed. And on that same occasion, the commandment to keep the Shabbat was reiterated – "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day you shall have sanctity, a day of complete rest to G-d" (*Exodus 35:2*). Teaching us – explain our sages – two things: 1) That the work we



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Shabbat

(cont'd)

are enjoined and empowered to do six days a week is, in essence, the work of making a home for G-d out of the materials of our physical lives; 2) That this work is the work we must cease on Shabbat.

Studying G-d's detailed instructions to Moses for the making of the Sanctuary, the Mishnah (Talmud, Shabbat 73a) identifies thirty-nine *melachot* – categories of creative work – that were involved in the making of the Sanctuary. These include: all stages of agricultural work from plowing and sowing to reaping and winnowing and baking; weaving and sewing, writing, building, and lighting a fire.

The 39 *melachot* and their derivatives form the basis and core of the laws of Shabbat rest.



Sinai Desert, Tishrei 11, 1313 BCE

8. Shabbat Torah Reading Instituted

To convey G-d's instructions regarding the making of the Sanctuary and the observance of Shabbat, "Moses gathered together the entire community of the Children of Israel." in doing so, "Moses instituted for all generations that Jews should gather in their synagogues to read from the Torah on Shabbat" – as Jews throughout the world do to this very day. (*Exodus 35:1; Yalkut Shimoni, on verse*)



The annual Shabbat Torah reading cycle is more than a weekly lesson; it's how we "live with the times" – finding in the current week's Torah portion ("parshah") direction and inspiration for every event and action in our daily lives. (*Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi*)



The Holy Land, 2nd Century BCE
9. The Invention of Cholent

No one knows who was the first person to put up a pot of *cholent* on Friday afternoon. But this trademark Shabbat dish has its origins in the dispute between the Torah-faithful Jews and a breakaway Jewish sect called the *Tzedukim*.

The *Tzedukim* (also known as the Sadducees) accepted the Written Torah but rejected the *Torah She-Baal Peh* ("Oral Torah") – the traditional interpretation of the Torah which Moses received at Sinai and which was handed down through the generations from teacher to disciple. When the *Tzedukim* read in the Torah, "You shall not burn any fire in all your homes on the Shabbat day" (Exodus 35:3) they understood the verse literally – and spent the entire Shabbat in the cold and dark. Their Shabbat meals were bereft of the glow of candlelight, and while the food cooked before Shabbat may have retained some of its warmth for the Friday night meal, their Shabbat day meal consisted of cold food only. The traditional interpretation, however, is that it is forbidden to light a fire on Shabbat (the creation of fire being one of the 39 *melachot*), but one can certainly derive benefit from fire that was lit before Shabbat.

Thus, the Jews who were faithful to the Sinaitic tradition made it a point include at least one hot dish in their Shabbat daytime meal, which was cooked and placed on the fire before Shabbat and simmered on a covered flame all night long – both to honor and pleasure the Shabbat, and to express their rejection of the *Tzedukim*'s false interpretation. Hence cholent: a stew (typically of meat, beans and potatoes, but also made with a great variety of stewable foods) that is eaten in the daytime meal.

"Caesar asked Rabbi Joshua ben Channanya: Why do Shabbat foods smell so good? said he to him: We have a special spice, 'shabbat' is its name..." (*Talmud, Shabbat 119a*)



Israel and Babylonia, 100 BCE - 300 CE

10. Preparing for Shabbat

By instruction as well as by personal example, the sages of the Talmud taught to honor and pleasure the Shabbat.

"It was said of the sage Shammai that all his days he ate for the honor of the Shabbat. How so? For when he found a prime specimen, he would say, 'This is for Shabbat.' Then, if he found a better one, he would set aside that one for Shabbat and eat the first one..." (*Talmud, Beitza 16b*)



"Said R. Judah in the name of Rav: So was the custom of R. Judah bar Illa'i: On Friday, they would bring before him a tub filled with hot water, and he would wash his face hand and feet; he then wrapped himself in fringed sheets and would have the appearance of an angel of G-d." (*Talmud, Shabbat 25b*)

Rava would personally prepare the fish for Shabbat. Rav Chisda chopped vegetables. Raba and Rav Yosef chopped wood. Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak would be seen running about on Friday carrying bundles on his shoulders. Many of these were wealthy men who had numerous servants to do their work; yet they insisted on personally toiling in honor of the Shabbat (*Talmud, Shabbat 119a; Shulchan Aruch, Laws of Shabbat*)



Worldwide, 151 BCE to Date

11. Sacrifice and Martyrdom

Shabbat is the eternal soulmate of the people of Israel, and our source of strength and endurance. This was recognized by friend and foe alike. Throughout the generations, our enemies have repeatedly attempted to take away the Shabbat from us.

When the Syrian-Greeks ruled the Holy Land, they forbade Shabbat observance. Many Jews fled the cities to live in the caves of the Judean hills so that they could keep the day of rest. Many were discovered and killed. Finally the Jews revolted and fought for the right to keep their religion. Their miraculous victory is celebrated to this day with the festival of Chanukah. (*Book of Hashmoneans; Talmud*)

The Jew continued to sacrifice for Shabbat throughout the long night of exile. In Rome, Jewish slaves were beaten for refusing to work on Shabbat. In Inquisition-era Spain, secret Jews ("marranos") gathered in underground cellars to light the Shabbat candles and make Kiddush. Under Soviet rule, Jews suffered hunger, imprisonment, exile to Siberia and worse for being a "religious parasite" – i.e., one who wouldn't work on Shabbat. Even in Auschwitz, Jews went to superhuman lengths to sanctify the holy day.

And yet it has also been said that, "more than the Jews have kept the Shabbat, the Shabbat has kept the Jews."



United States, 1920-1950

12. The Shomer Shabbat Movement

In the decades that closed 19th century and opened the 20th, hundreds of thousands of Jews fled the pogroms, persecutions and crushing poverty in Eastern Europe in search of a better life in America. But the "New World" offered its opportunities at a steep spiritual price. Shabbat was still a regular workday in the United States; "blue laws" forbade the opening of businesses on Sunday; and the "melting pot" credo preached the abandonment of "non-American" religions and cultures. A primary casualty was the Shabbat. Many Jews felt that they could not earn a living in America without working on Shabbat; others saw it as a hindrance to the dream of assimilation within, and acceptance by, American society. The Jew's thousands-year tenacious hold on the Shabbat was slipping.

In the 1920s and 30s the tide began to turn. Jewish labor leaders campaigned for a five-day workweek. Rallies were held in support of Shabbat observance. Consumer groups formed pledging to support businesses that kept the Shabbat; soon *Shomer Shabbat* ("Shabbat Observant") signs were being displayed in shop windows. Shabbat clubs were conducted for Jewish children. Slowly, the momentum built, laying the groundwork for large-scale return to Judaism and Shabbat observance in the decades to come.



Israel, 1948

13. Shabbat Goes Legal

Though conceived as a "secular" state, the modern state of Israel passed a law, shortly after its establishment, declaring Shabbat the official day of rest. In most localities, commercial businesses are closed and public transportation does not operate on Shabbat; government agencies and government-controlled corporations are officially Shabbat observant.

continued on page 34

Shabbat

(cont'd)

New York, 1974

14. The Shabbat Candles Lighting Campaign

In 1974, the Lubavitcher Rebbe launched a world-wide Shabbat Candles campaign to encourage Jewish women and girls to bring the light of Shabbat into their home by fulfilling the mitzvah of lighting Shabbat candles on Friday evening, 18 minutes before sunset. In particular, the Rebbe campaigned to restore the age-old custom (dating back to the matriarch Rebecca) that young girls, too, should light their own candle. In a time of increasing darkness, the Rebbe declared, we must respond with an increasing of light.

In the years since, the Rebbe's followers and emissaries across the globe have distributed millions of Shabbat candle-lighting kits and have introduced countless thousands of Jewish women and girls – and their families – to the beauty and holiness of Shabbat.



The Immediate Future, Everywhere

15. The World to Come

Shabbat, our sages tell us, is "a taste of the World to Come." As the six-day workweek culminates in Shabbat, so, too, will the six millennia of our work and toil to make to world a home for G-d culminate in the Messianic Era – "the day that is wholly Shabbat and tranquility, for life everlasting." (*Talmud, Berachot 57b; Nachmonides on Genesis 1; Grace After Meals*)

"And at that time, there will be no hunger or war, no jealousy or rivalry. For the good will be plentiful, and all delicacies available as dust. The entire occupation of the world will be only to know G-d... For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of G-d, as the waters cover the sea..." (*Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings 12:5*)

May it be now. ■



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Prayer

(cont'd)

*With a broken heart
he blew the shofar, all
the while feeling that he
must have truly not been
worthy of the sacred task
and therefore this tragedy
had befallen him.*

Needless to say, the disciple spent several intense weeks of purifying himself and poring over kabalistic texts to be fully prepared. He made notes that he intended to have with him at the shofar blowing.

Alas, the great moment arrived and the trembling chassid reached into his pocket to extract his notes when he realized that the paper on which he had jotted them down was gone.

His rebbe and the entire crowd were all huddled under their *tallitot* waiting for this overwhelming moment when humans and G-d merge in spiritual ecstasy as they listen to the supra-human sound of the shofar. There was no time to begin searching for the lost paper. With a broken heart he blew the shofar, all the while feeling that he must have truly not been worthy of the sacred task and therefore this tragedy had befallen him.

After the service he approached his rebbe, crying bitterly and apologizing profusely for having let him and the whole community down. Much to his amazement, there was a glowing smile on the rebbe's face. "The sounds of the shofar," the rebbe explained, "are like keys, each individual note a key that opens another gate in the path to the most inner chambers of G-d.

"I asked you to be the shofar blower, as I knew you had the ability to study and prepare and utilize each key and usher the congregation through each gate of the heavenly palace until the royal chambers would be reached.

"However," continued the Rebbe, "there is a master key, a key that opens all doors. That is the

key of a 'broken, humble and subdued heart.' That is the key that you were using when you blew the shofar, and thanks to your efforts, the shofar blowing accomplished its goal in the most efficient manner possible."

Besides being a nice story, to me this highlights the point that my teachers attempted to convey to me, and which my friend succeeded in doing. It says that prayer is not mine. It is not there for me to enjoy and derive instant pleasure. It is G-d's, and He rewards us with a "fringe benefit" of a feeling of fulfillment and relief and hope. However, this depends on the way in which we enter prayer. Is it about me or Him?

My editor friend himself answered his own question. The whole premise of not finding a place of prayer or a specific prayer that "does it for him" was misguided. Indeed, prayer has all of these liberating qualities, but they are born out of intense humility and lack of expectation for the self. True prayer is about divestment of self and unification with G-d, and this unification gives us the G-dlike quality of tranquility and fulfillment. Not the other way around.

Indeed the Talmudic word for prayer is *avodah*, translated literally as "work." It is a job to pray right. And it is a reward to connect through prayer and receive it's therapeutic properties.

May G-d bless us all that we be written and inscribed for a happy, healthy and successful new year full of meaningful prayer. Find a shul, find a prayer, and this year let us all connect. ■

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The Meaning of Beshert

A chance encounter and a man of many hats

While studying at Yale for her Ph.D. in Jewish studies (specializing in Talmud), my daughter Elizabeth became involved with a Palestinian physician. When that relationship ended, she decided that she would marry only a Jewish man.

Some time later my brother-in-law, who plays the banjo, invited her to join him for a week at a bluegrass camp. Liz had learned the Dud in Morocco and also played the guitar, so she was delighted to accept the invitation. There she met an instructor, Drew, to whom she was attracted and, more particularly, he was attracted to her. When she returned to New Haven, he continued to pursue her. She quickly explained that she did not want to get involved with anyone who wasn't Jewish because she wanted to marry a Jew. Which meant one of two things: Either Drew would have to convert, or the two would have to go their separate ways.

As Drew explains it today, he had been on his own spiritual search, but had never considered Judaism. But as fate would have it, it was not the first time that Judaism had considered Drew.

Drew had grown up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and attended the University of Michigan where his father was a professor. While he was there Drew was a member of the University's Radical Arts Troupe that put on plays by the likes of Athol Fugard and Edward Bond.

Drew would regularly represent the group in its requests for funds from the Student Council. One of the other supplicants was a Chabad rabbi. This man appeared to request funds for some event or other as frequently, it seemed, as Drew. Sometimes the Chabad rabbi and Drew would chat while waiting for their turn to appear before the Council. At the time, Drew was driving a taxicab to earn extra money and often amused himself by wearing different kinds of hats and caps. The rabbi asked him about his different hats and Drew tried to explain. He was not sure the rabbi understood, but the rabbi replied, "Maybe someday you'll wear a hat like mine."

It would be two decades later, and only after he met my daughter Liz, and she having made her requirements clear to him, that something inside Drew clicked. He promptly decided to become

Jewish. He studied, was converted by a Jewish Renewal rabbi in Colorado, then immediately moved to New Haven, where he continued his pursuit of Liz and Judaism. They were soon married.

by HERSHEL SHANKS,
Editor emeritus of
Moment Magazine



It would be two decades later, and only after he met my daughter Liz, and she having made her requirements clear to him, that something inside Drew clicked.

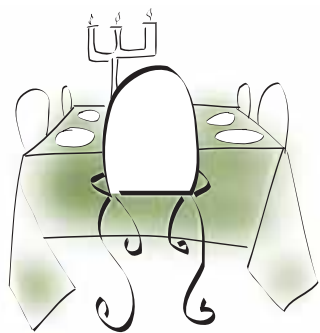
Next Drew decided to commute from New Haven to New York to study for a master's degree in Jewish education at the Jewish Theological Seminary. By the time he graduated, however, he found Conservative observance too thin. He wanted an Orthodox conversion, so he continued studying and was eventually converted by his Orthodox teacher.

Still later, he became Chabad. He even assumed the garb of a chabadnik-black suit, open-throat white shirt and a black fedora, rim turned down – just like the Rebbe.

Liz and Drew had already had one child, and another was on the way when Drew's brother-in-law died. He went back to his hometown of Ann Arbor, Michigan, for the funeral.

While in Ann Arbor, he called one of the town's Chabad rabbis, asking where he could get kosher food. The rabbi was very friendly and invited Drew to his home, where, as Drew recalls, he dined sumptuously. He and the rabbi had long talks. Drew told the rabbi about his time at the University, mentioning that he was once in the school's acting troupe.

In a strange twist of fate, the Chabad rabbi – now white-haired – was in fact the same rabbi who, decades earlier, had once remarked that a Chabad hat might suit Drew best. ■



Honey-Baked Apples

INGREDIENTS

- 6 strips (3 inches long) orange rind
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup white dessert wine
- 1/2 cup liquid honey
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 6 tart baking apples

DIRECTIONS

In saucepan, bring orange rind and juice, wine, honey and nutmeg to boil; reduce heat and boil gently for 10 minutes or until reduced and slightly syrupy.

Meanwhile, core each apple almost to bottom, leaving base intact. Pare off 3/4-inch wide strip around top; cut five 1-inch deep vertical slashes in peeled part. Trim base to level. Place in 11- x 7-inch (2 liter) baking dish.

Remove orange rind from syrup; curl each and stuff into apple hollow. Pour juice mixture over top. Cover with foil; bake in 375 degree Fahrenheit oven, basting twice, for 45 to 60 minutes or until tender. Let cool to room temperature in dish on rack, basting often with sauce. **Yields 6 servings.**

Honey Chiffon Cake

INGREDIENTS

- 4 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup oil
- 1 1/2 cups honey
- 3 cups flour
- 3 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 cup cold tea
- 1/2 cup golden raisins (optional)
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

Beat eggs 'til light and fluffy. Add sugar and continue beating. Add oil and honey and blend well. Combine dry ingredients and add alternately with cold tea. Blend in cinnamon. Stir in raisins.

Pour into an ungreased 10" tube pan. Bake at 350 for 15 minutes – reduce heat to 300 and bake for an additional hour. Some stoves may require longer baking time. When cake is done, invert and cool completely before removing from pan. Before serving, you can dust cake lightly with icing sugar.

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