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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



A Time of Silence

A parable:

-  *A father answers the questions of his child and they are happy together, in joyful dialogue.*
-  *Then the child asks a question, and the father must think deeply—not just for the answer, but to reach to the essence of this answer so he may bring it to the world of his child. For a long while, the father is quiet.*
-  *And so, the child becomes anxious and begins to cry. “Father, where are you? Why do you no longer talk to me? Why have you deserted me for your own thoughts?”*
-  *And then the father begins to speak, but this time it is the deepest core of his mind that flows into the mind and heart of the child. Such a flow that with this the child, too, may become a father.*
-  *The child is us. The time of silence is now.*
-  *When the spirit of Man is dark, when the flow gates of Above seem all but sealed, prepare for liberation.*

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This Past November, Rabbi New was honored with the privilege of delivering the keynote address at the culminating banquet of the annual Kinus Hashluchim / Convention of Chabad Emissaries from around the world. The event was attended by over three thousand five hundred rabbis and lay-leaders and was seen online by viewers around the world. Here are some excerpts.



I live in Montreal, a city that has an established and elaborate Jewish infrastructure.

Here tonight are hundreds and hundreds of shluchim who are posted in isolated and often distant communities. Many of them face foreign languages. Foreign cultures. And some places are down-right dangerous. They live in the trenches. Self-sacrifice on so many levels. Soldiers on the front line.

But tonight we somehow come together – children returning to their father's table. Tonight, we are all equal.

When you come home you re-connect to your source. You feel your roots. Your parents. There is a deep sense that we are all one.

The theme of this year's kinus is *Ish Ubeisoi – A Man and His Home*. The shliachs family, as a unit – husband, wife, children. The Home.

What is the symbol of Chabad? A synagogue? An outreach center? Social services? A school? Adult education? Youth center?

While Chabad does all of this and much more, the overarching symbol of Chabad is the Chabad House. The Bais Chabad – bayis – the home. Irrespective of the size.

Whether it's a rented space in a shopping mall. Or a large building. Or it's the shliach's living room or basement. It's a Chabad House. A home.

A home is the place where we can be ourselves. The moment we step out of our home, we are performing. We are engaged in some kind of pursuit. It is our home therefore, that defines who we are. At home, you are simply you. Home is not about doing. It's about being. The only way to really know someone, is, to see them in their home.

Indeed, having a home is our deepest need.

Our Sages say, *Mi shein lo bais aino adam* – one that does not have a home erodes his very humanity. Because he has no place to be himself.

Man is created in the image of G-d. Our need for a home, is a reflection of G-d Himself. Because, as the Midrash says, G-d's deepest motive in creation is to have a home for Himself here in this world, and to share it with each one of us.

What is it that the world sees in Chabad? What is it that has made Lubavitch a phenomenon? A phenomenon that continues to invite books, articles and endless analysis, trying to unravel its secret?

Allow me to try and answer this question from my own past.

In 1967 I was ten years old when the Rebbe sent the first group of six Yeshiva students from 770 – Lubavitch World Headquarters - to Melbourne, my home-town. Many years later, when I was learning in 770, one of the shluchim of that original group related the following to me:

It was a few weeks after they had arrived in Australia and my father, *zol zein gezunt*, wanted to encourage them. He informed them that they had already accomplished. He said to the shluchim, "I overheard someone ask my Moische what he wants to be when he grows up. You know what he said? He said he wants to be just like you."

Now, at that point in my life, I really didn't know them. I certainly hadn't learned anything from them. It was only much later that I had the privilege of being taught by the unforgettable and legendary shliach, Leibel Kaplan *olov hasholom* – father of my colleague and fellow shliach, Zalman.

So what was I so taken by?

I was no stranger to Lubavitch. The previous Rebbe had sent my mother's father, Reb Isser Klugvant and his family, to Melbourne in 1947. They were sent together with four other Lubavitcher families. My father, at his father's behest, became the secretary of the yeshiva that they were founding. This was Australia's first Jewish day school. My father also became one of its fundraisers. And he voluntarily devoted himself selflessly to both these tasks for fifty years. And, it is my honor to add, my father was the right-hand man of Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Groner, *olov Hosholom*. The longtime, much missed, shliach to Australia.

So I was already steeped in Lubavitch. What was it about those boys that made such an impression on me that it literally changed the course of my life?

Despite being at the other end of the world – their conduct, their clothes, they way they spoke, their joy, innocence and refinement

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Editorial

(cont'd)

remained pure. There was something about them that fascinated me. They evoked a sense of envy. They operated in my world, and yet they were on a different plane.

I eventually began to appreciate, that what I was seeing, was that they were shlichim – emissaries. They reflected the Rebbe – the one who sent them. In a sense, they were always home, even when they were far away.

These young men profoundly touched my peers and me, just by being who they are.

And that is exactly what we read yesterday in the Torah.

Avrohom was the first Jew. He traveled far and wide, preaching. He convinced tens of thousands of people to abandon idol worship and to believe in one G-d. He was arguably the greatest revolutionary in history.

Yitzchok, his son, is a study in contrasts. He never ventured outside the Holy Land. He lived what appeared to be a life of austere, insular holiness. G-d Himself calls him an Oiloh t'mimoh – a pure, holy offering.

So who is the symbol of outreach – Avrohom or Yitzchok? One would assume it was Avrohom. And yet, yesterday's Torah portion begins with the words Eilah Toldos Yitzchok. Toldos means to produce. To effect. Which means that the model for effecting change in the world is Yitzchok.

So much so, that it is only Yitzchok who can affect people in such a way that they actually become like him. Toldos.

How is this possible?

The answer is, the Rebbe explains, there are two ways of making a difference in people's lives.

One way is by being pro-active. By effecting external change. You impress. You wear down resistance. You win the argument. That's Avrohom's way. That's traditionally the masculine way.

And then there's Yitzchok's way. He effects change by being true to himself. Not by doing. When you reveal the neshoma that is within you when you reveal your own G-dly spark, you naturally ignite that same spark within others.

And that's why Yitzchok's effect is so much greater than Avrohom's. Avrohom changes people externally. Yitzchok's way is to stoke the G-dly spark that was always there. How do you touch the depth in somebody else? By revealing the depth in yourself.

And that is the feminine way.

Beiso zu ishtoi. The woman, the wife, declare our Sages, *is* the home. It is the woman, more than the man whose identity is about being. Men do. Women are. The woman is the home.

Sure, people are impressed and inspired by what we do. By our teachings. But what touches them in the deepest way, is who we are. That is embodied in our wives and in our children. In our home.

It goes without saying, that our wives are community activists and leaders. In many ways much more so than the men. But what shines through in all that she does is not doing Jewish, but being Jewish. And our children, in their innocence and wholesomeness, are the most endearing of all.

For eleven years now, my sister-in-law Zeldie, and Itchy, my brother-in-law and incredible partner shliach, have been making an elegant Sukkos banquet on the first two nights of Yom Tov. 150 people each night.

This year Itchy got up to welcome everyone and share a few words. Among the guests was a very successful businesswoman, one of our good friends and supporters.

As Itchy finished speaking, I noticed that she was deeply moved. His words of Torah were inspirational. But that is not what touched her. She told my wife that it was his sincere and grateful thanks to his wife and children. He revealed how integral the shliach's family is to his purpose and his very essence.

What she witnessed in that sukkah and what Jews are experiencing in every Chabad House all over the world, goes beyond the beauty of doing Jewish. They are experiencing the beauty of being Jewish.

• • •

Allow me please, to introduce you to Eric.

His grandparents were Vishnitzer Chassidim from Sighet, Hungary. Survivors, who came to Montreal to start a new life. They had four children, one of them Eric's mother, Evelyn.

Eric's mom was, in her quiet way, a rebel. Her father finally agreed to her going to a university outside of Montreal. On one condition. That she return home for Shabbos and Yom Tov.

One Yom Tov evening Evelyn returned after Yom Tov had already begun. Her father did not allow her



into the house. And made it clear that she was never to return. He meant it. And she never did.

Evelyn married a devout Catholic. At one time, her husband had even considered the priesthood as his calling. To her credit, Eric's mother never hid the fact from him that he was a Jew.

In his teens, Eric began to develop an interest in Judaism. He immerses himself in Holocaust studies.

Eric's grandparents pass away, but Eric has no idea. His mother's background is taboo.

One day, he was working-out in the gym at the JCC. Two exercise bikes over from him was Mendy Rosenfeld, my brother-in-law. Between Mendy and Eric is an Israeli named Yigal, who Mendy knew.

It was just before Simchas Torah. Mendy invites Yigal to attend hakafos in our Chabad House, at that time still in a shopping mall. Yigal turns to Eric and says, why don't you come along too. Mendy reinforced the invitation and Eric indeed showed up.

Eric later explained what happened that night. All my life I felt like I didn't belong. In many ways, I was a stranger, even to myself. My neshama, repressed for so long, was finally set free. I belonged. I felt like I had come home.

As a child Eric had been baptized. He of course, never had a Bar Mitzvah. Now, Eric wants one. So we pick a Shabbos, one that coincides with his 24th birthday. That morning, for the first time in his life, he goes to the mikveh.

Two hours later, surrounded by his new-found family, Eric read the following words from his Haftorah, tears streaming down his cheeks:

G-d is speaking to His people Israel. "I will bring you back home from the nations, and gather you in from all the lands. I shall sprinkle pure water on you and you will be cleansed."

Eric went on to study in Mayanot, a Chabad Yeshiva in the heart of Jerusalem that caters to students with little Jewish background.

It wasn't long after, that he met Stacey his soul-mate, at a Shabbos meal in our Chabad House.

Today, Eric's uncles and aunts, whom he had never met, embrace him. A broken family is finally reunited. Their home is now complete.

Who could count, and who could place a value, on all those Yiddishe neshomas like Eric, who are finding their way back home through the doors of our Chabad Houses in every corner of the world.



To our esteemed lay leaders. You are more than just our partners. Your support goes far beyond providing the means to make our work possible. You are part of our lives.

We derive strength from you, as you share with us in the joy of a Jew putting on tefillin for the first time. Or a child being carried on his father's shoulders at a Simchas Torah celebration.

Let us hear together the Kol Dodi Doifek- the voice of Hashem - that knocks on the heart of every Jew - Pisch Lee - open to me. Please, says, G-d. Allow Me into your life. Allow me into your home.

Together let us feel, the Ba-al Habays doichek - the urgency of the master's call. Exhorting us and empowering us to complete the mission and end this golus. This long and bitter exile.

Let us share in the yearning to be reunited with our beloved Rebbe, and all of our loved ones, with the coming of Moshiach.

And may we always be there for each other.

Ribono Shel Oilom - Master of the world.

Today, on the threshold of Redemption we are not looking for answers anymore. For explanations. For why we have suffered so long. We simply want You. You as You are. We want to feel Your presence. We want to be at home with You.

Ad Mosai?

How much longer?

Your children are ready to come home. ■



May we merit true and lasting peace in Israel.

May we stand tall, resolute and proud, earning the admiration and respect of the world - our destiny ever since the first Jews, Abraham and Sarah, forever changed the nature of human discourse by exposing the false gods and revealing the truth of Hashem Echad.

Nechama, Itchy and Zeldie join me in wishing you a good and sweet year.

Shana Tovah and Chag Sameach,

Rabbi New

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All MTC activities and programs on that particular day are attributed to the day's sponsor. Each sponsorship is recognized on our website; in our weekly Mosaic Express and in this magazine. The sponsorship amount is \$1800 per day and is billed annually, creating a consistent form of annuity contributing to MTC's financial stability.

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Tishrei 7	Shmuel and Chani Gniwisch in honour of the birthday of Shaina	Teves 2	Cola Families in honour of the birthday of Edward Israel
Tishrei 12	Shmuel and Chani Gniwisch in honour of the birthday of Yosef Chaim	Teves 3	Cola and Cons Families in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. David Cola, obm
Tishrei 16	Stanley and Carole Satov in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Sam Pockrass, obm	Teves 4	Cola and Cons Families in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Franka Cola, obm
Tishrei 19	David and Laurie Puterman in honor of the yarzeit of Avraham ben Yehia	Teves 18	Frances and Gerald Kessner in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Bessie Miller, obm
Tishrei 20	Esther Deutsch in honour of her birthday	Teves 20	Frank Farkas in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Clara Farkas, obm
Tishrei 21	Rae Slomovic and Betty Gomolinsky in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Dovid ben Chaim	Teves 21	Shmuel and Chani Gniwisch in honour of the birthday of Moshe Yisroel
Tishrei 28	Arthur and Marion Levitt in honour of the yarzeit of Chaim Moshe Gedaliah ben Yakov Halevi, obm	December 15	Leonard and Terry Betnesky in honor of Matthew's birthday
September 16	Joey Adler in honour of the birthday of Louis Adler	December 19	Cola Families in honour of the birthday of Warren Paul
Cheshvan 5	Eddy and Trudy Goldberg in honor of the yartzeit of Mr. Max Goldberg, obm	December 21	Joey Adler in honour of the birthday of Simon Berdugo
Cheshvan 7	Slomovic Family in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Yakov Yehuda ben Tzvi, obm	Shevat 3	Frank Farkas in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. William Farkas, obm
Cheshvan 23	David and Laurie Puterman in honour of the birthday of Ateret Malka	Shevat 23	Joey Adler in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Lou Adler, obm
October 15	Joey Adler in honour of the birthday of Lee Berdugo	Shevat 27	Cola Families in honour of the birthday of Jennifer Devorah
October 22	Cola Families in honour of the birthday of Michelle Lindsey	January 4	Cola Families in honour of the birthday of Adam Joshua
October 24	Howard and Gloria Richman in honour of the birthday of Mr. Reuben Richman	Adar 3	Cons Families in honour of the birthday of Gabriella
Kislev 3	Barry Schwartz in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Claire Schwartz, obm	Adar 7	Corey and Karen Eisenberg in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Stanley Ralph Eisenberg, obm
Kislev 14	Cola Families in honour of the birthday of Jason Benjamin	Adar 10	Cons Families in honour of the birthday of David and Victoria
Kislev 17	Ari and Gracia Kugler in honor of the yarzeit of Mrs. Pearl Kugler, Penina bas Yehoshua, obm	Adar 14	Ari and Gracia Kugler in honor of Lauren Kugler
Kislev 17	Barry Schwartz in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Hyman Schwartz, obm	Adar 15	David and Laurie Puterman in honour of Laurie's birthday
Kislev 22	David and Laurie Puterman in honour of the birthday of Ovadia Shalom	Adar 22	Hershey and Laurie Goldenblatt in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Sarah Goldenblatt, obm
November 11	Joey Adler in honour of the birthday of Fred Berdugo	Adar 22	Michael and Elza Hirsch in honour of Elza's birthday
November 14	Evan and Osnat Feldman in honour of the birthday of Olivia Raquel	Adar 26	Martin Halickman in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Isadore Halickman, obm
November 24	Cola Families in honour of the birthday of Kimberly Stacey	Adar 26	David and Lisa Medina in honor of their wedding anniversary
		February 9	Evan and Osnat Feldman in honour of the birthday of Benjamin
		February 21	Evan and Osnat Feldman in honour of the birthday of Jack Isaac

Nisan 10	Peter and Marla Veres in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Andre Veres, obm	Sivan 15	Cons Families in honour of the birthday of Olivia
Nisan 17	Philip and Edie Friedman in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Lucy Friedman, obm	Sivan 17	Shmuel and Chani Gniwisch in honour of the birthday of Chaya Mushka
Nisan 24	Cons Families in honour of the birthday of Shimmy	Sivan 21	David and Laurie Puterman in honour of the birthday of Yisroel
Nisan 24	Michael and Elza Hirsch in honor of Rachel's birthday	Sivan 21	Shaya and Tuky Treitel in honour of the yarzeit of Eliezer Dovid ben Shlomo, obm
Nisan 27	Cons Families in honour of the birthday of Joelle	Sivan 22	Ronald Pearl in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Goldie Pearl, obm
March 1	Joey Adler in honour of the birthday of Samuel Joshua Gilbert	Sivan 27	Lawrence Gitnick in honor of the wedding anniversary of Natalie and Bernie Gitnick
March 1	Robert and Shari Kahan in honour of the birthday of Samantha	May 6	Mark Lazar in honour of the birthday of Shira Lazar
March 24	Andrew and Ali Kastner in honour of the birthday of Blake and Ashley	May 11	Cola families in honour of the birthday of Jeremy Samuel
Iyar 2	Michael and Barbara Chernack in honor of the yarzeit of Mrs. Yetta Chernack, obm	May 15	Joey Adler in honour of the birthday of Sary Berdugo
Iyar 5	Sara Eldor in honor of her birthday	May 15	Robert and Shari Kahan in honour of the birthday of Alexander
Iyar 7	Stanley and Carole Satov in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Miriam Satov, obm	May 24	Joey Adler in honour of the birthday of Joanna Adler
Iyar 9	Brian Glazer in honor of his birthday	Tamuz 11	David and Laurie Puterman in honor of the birthday of Anaelle Bracha
Iyar 12	Stanley and Carole Satov in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Dorothy Pockrass, obm	Tamuz 11	David and Laurie Puterman in honor of their wedding anniversary
Iyar 13	Cons families in honour of the birthday of Isaac Akiva	Tamuz 18	Henri Bybelezer in honour of the birthday of Peggy
Iyar 13	Julius and Terry Suss in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Marcus Suss, obm	Tamuz 22	Cons Families in honour of the birthday of Samuel
Iyar 14	Cons Families in honour of the birthday of Hannah	June 4	Ari and Gracia Kugler in honor of their wedding anniversary
Iyar 16	Martin and Joelle Sacksner in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Yaakov Dovid ben Moshe Chaim, obm	June 18	Cola Families in honour of the birthday of Mandy Sara
Iyar 19	Julius and Terry Suss in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Bella Suss, obm	June 25	Ricky and Rachelle Merovitz in honor of their wedding anniversary
Iyar 20	Hershey and Laurie Goldenblatt in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Lester Edward Goldenblatt, obm	Av 2	Tommy Schnurmacher in honor of the yarzeit of Rabbi Miklos Schnurmacher, Harav Michael ben Ephraim, obm
Iyar 23	David and Laurie Puterman in honour of the birthday of Yehuda	Av 12	David, Lisa and Danielle Medina in honour of the birthday of Amalya
Iyar 23	Arthur and Marion Levitt in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Lillian Levitt Shuchat, obm	Av 22	Norman Heimlich and Family in honor of the yarzeit of Mrs. Sheila Heimlich, obm
Iyar 24	George Galambos in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Aniko Galambos, obm	Elul 3	Cons Families in honour of the birthday of Joshua
Iyar 26	Eddy and Trudy Goldberg in honor of the yartzeit of Mr. Avidgor Pila, obm	Elul 10	Shaya and Tuky Treitel in honour of the yartzeit of Tzivia bas Yekusiel Yehuda, obm
Iyar 27	Michael and Elza Hirsch in honor of Yitzchak Laivi's birthday	Elul 12	Stanley and Carole Satov in honour of the yartzeit of Mr. Richard Satov, obm
Iyar 28	Steven and Leslie Sonnenstein in honour of the yartzeit of Mrs. Katy Sonnenstein, obm	Elul 15	David and Laurie Puterman in honour of David's birthday
April 3	Andrew and Ali Kastner in honour of the birthday of Alexa	Elul 19	Shaya and Tuky Treitel in honor of the yarzeit of Golda Gestetner
April 6	Jerry and Roslyn Convoy in honor of the reunion of brothers Jerry and Yehoshua after 63 years	Elul 26	Frances and Gerald Kessner in honor of the yarzeits of Tova Kessner, obm and Avrohom Yakov Kessner, obm Elul 28
April 8	Joey Adler in honour of her birthday	Elul 28	David and Karen Merovitz in honor of their wedding anniversary
April 15	Joey Adler in honour of the birthday of Lou Adler, of blessed memory	August 9	Joey Adler in honour of the birthday of Noah Jacob Berdugo
April 25	Joey Adler in honour of the birthday of Jarrid Adler	August 15	Joey Adler in honour of the birthday of Mitchell Adler
April 28	Robert and Shari Kahan in honour of the birthday of Zachary		
Sivan 1	Shaya and Tuky Treitel in honour of the yartzeit of Menashe ben Yitzchok Mayer, obm		

Why Do We Pray?

by YANKI TAUBER

We pray because our body requires nourishment, health, safety, comfort. We pray to acknowledge our dependency upon, our appreciation of, and our gratitude to the Source of all the needs, joys and achievements of life.

We pray because our soul is lonely. A spark of the Divine fire, it has journeyed to a world heavy and dark with "matter" – with things, forces and objects that shout forth their own reality, obfuscating their Source. So the spark yearns for the fire and strives to become reabsorbed in it. Eagerly it awaits the times set aside for prayer – those precious daily moments when the person it inhabits ceases to commune with the world and communes with his or her Creator.

So a person praying is a standing paradox, a swaying contradiction, a self divided against itself. Both body and soul are praying. The body is praying for life and existence. The soul is praying to escape life, to transcend existence.

And yet, as prayer progresses, a certain harmony emerges. As the soul prays, climbing the

heavens and shedding the husks of selfhood that encumber it with an identity with "needs" and hold it distinct from its source, the body (who's praying on the same page – there's no escaping that) learns that spirituality, too, is a need; that transcendent strivings are also a pleasure; that union with G-d is also an achievement. And the soul, who's praying on the same page as the body (there's no escaping that, either) learns that life, too, is Divine; that existence is also a way of fusing with G-d; that achievement can be the ultimate self-abnegation, if one's achievements are harnessed to a higher, G-dly end.

Why do we pray? Because the body needs the soul and the soul needs the body, and both need to be made aware that the other's need is also their own.

That, ultimately is the essence of prayer: to know our needs, understand their source, comprehend their true objectives. To direct our minds and hearts to He who implanted them within us, defined their purpose, and provides us with the means to fulfill them. ■

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MTC Celebrates Draw 2011

Over \$475,000 was raised through the combination of the sale of all tickets plus corporate and event sponsorships.

A heartfelt 'Yasher Koach' to our co-chairs Armand Benmoha, Marissa Sidel and Michael Zukor, our captains, Michael Chernack, Sara Eldor, Howard Epstein, Evan Feldman, John Finkelstein, Mark Kimmel, Velvel Minkowitz, Joannie Tansky and Jacob Tink, our canvassers, corporate and event sponsors, whose combined effort and dedication made the MTC DRAW 2011 an outstanding success.

The Team:

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

Jessica Abudulezer and Marc Laurent split the grand prize of \$18,000 and the second prize of \$1800. Norman Raicek and Jerry Sidel won the third prize of \$500 each.



Twelfth Sellout!



Ours thanks & appreciation to Omega Photo.

Love and Judgment

by DAVID AARON

There is a part of me that really dislikes Rosh Hashanah.

Rosh Hashanna is called Yom HaDin, the "Day of Judgment" – and I simply dread being judged.



*Who enjoys feeling fear,
feeling threatened, or
thinking about possibly
being punished?*

Who enjoys feeling fear, feeling threatened, or thinking about possibly being punished? It is also referred to as Yom HaZicharon, the "Day of Memory." On this day G-d remembers everything – every little it'sy bitsy tiny weenie little thing that I did last year – and then decides my fate for the upcoming year.

There is, however, another part of me that feels much love for Rosh Hashanah. It is an opportunity to take inventory of my actions, reflect and make changes to improve myself and my relationships with others. Judgment is actually empowering. It tells me that G-d cares about my choices and that I make a difference in this world.

There is a verse from the book of Psalms that summarizes my ambivalence. The sages associate this verse with Rosh Hashanah. It states "Serve G-d with awe, rejoice in trembling." This seems to be a paradox – either I am happy and rejoicing or I am frightened and trembling. How can I be doing and feeling both? Yet on Rosh Hashanah somehow I am rejoicing about my trembling.

On Rosh Hashanah when I acknowledge that G-d is the one and only King and Judge, my ego feels frightened and overwhelmed. My illusion of being self-contained without any accountability to a higher power is shattered. This egotistical illusion is what the Kabbalah calls *klipah* – the hard shell. When the shell is broken I realize that I cannot do whatever I want, whenever I want or wherever I want. I am not independent and self defined. There is someone that I am responsible and accountable to. That is very frightening for the ego, but also very reassuring for the self.

The self wants to feel accountability because if I am not accountable then I don't count. Therefore, on Rosh Hashanah, while my pained ego shatters into little pieces, my true inner self, the soul, is encouraged and rejoices.

On Rosh Hashanah we tremble with joy because we know that G-d's judgment is actually an expression of great love and care.

The Shofar

When we blow the shofar (ram's horn) on Rosh Hashanah, we start with a long blast announcing the coming of the King and the establishment of His ruling power. Then the shofar is sounded again, but this time it is a few shorter, fragmented blasts. The sound of this second blast reflects the breakdown of the ego. The King's presence overwhelms the ego and it breaks down. Then, strangely enough, out of the breakdown comes this new strength, another longer blast, and that hints to the establishment of the self. This is one interpretation of the variation in the blasts of the shofar.

The first sound is called in Hebrew *tekiah*, which means to sound a horn, but it also means to drive a stake firmly into the ground. In other words, it signals to us that we must firmly establish in our hearts the truth that G-d is the one and only King and true Judge.

The next set of sounds is called *shevarim* which literal means "breakings." This is hinting to the breakdown of the *klipah* – the hard shell – created by our ego which claims that we are independent of G-d. However, after the ego is shattered we once again blast the sound of *tekiah*, now expressing the establishment of the soul. We now know that we are strong and confident, standing in the loving presence of G-d. G-d's judgment actually affirms our power to make a difference, the truth that we matter and that He loves us.

The sounding of the shofar accompanies three themes that we express in the prayers on Rosh Hashanah: *malchiot* (kingship), *zichronot* (memories) and *shofrot* (shofars).

Malchiot means that G-d is the King. He is our King, He rules over us all because He created the

world and He created us. This world is His Kingdom and we are His subjects.

Zichronot means "memories." Even though He is our King and next to Him we may feel comparatively minute, zichronot reminds us that we are great in the eyes of G-d. He remembers us and watches over us. G-d takes note of everything we do because each and every one of us is significant and noteworthy to Him. He is our King and we are His subjects, not His objects. He is like a King who cares about us and therefore, we are the subject of His rule and love. He only wants whatever is in our best interest, unlike a tyrant or dictator who treats his people like objects to be used for his own interest and pleasure. Zichronot affirms that G-d remembers us and never forgets us. Even though there are times in our lives when we feel forgotten, that's only from our perspective. G-d always remembers us, watches over us and cares.

The third theme expressed in the Rosh Hashanah prayers is shofrot, which literally means "sounds of the shofar" but symbolically refers to the sounds of the shofar heard at the giving of the Torah at Sinai. This affirms our belief that G-d not only loves us and cares about us, but He gave us a way to love Him and care about the manifestation

of His presence on earth; through the mitzvot (Divine commandments) of the Torah we are able to love and bond with Him. This is the meaning of the teachings of the Torah and the ultimate purpose of fulfilling the mitzvot.

When the people of Israel heard the blast of the shofar at Sinai they were literally blown away (forgive me for the pun). The Midrash teaches that the immensity and the intensity of the revelation were so overwhelming that everyone's souls flew from their bodies. Therefore G-d, so to speak, sent angels to push the souls of the Jews back into their bodies and revived them. Although we were totally devastated by the revelation of G-d, He gave us the strength to maintain ourselves in His presence.

These are the same dynamics at work on Rosh Hashanah. On the one hand, we feel frightened and threatened, and on the other hand, there is something very affirming to know that the King cares, that our choices matter to G-d and that His judgment will guide us towards choosing the greatest good, a life of Torah and mitzvot so that we can enjoy the greatest pleasure – to love and bond with G-d. ■

G-d takes note of everything we do because each and every one of us is significant and noteworthy to Him.

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Rabbi Moishe New



Mazel tovs

The Adler, Aslatei, Cohen and Schwartz families on the engagement of Mitchell Adler and Lauren Aslatei

Efi and Tamara Bar on the birth of their son Jacob

Nechamale and Zalman Bendet on the birth of their daughter Chaya Mushka

Vered and Nadav Avisar on the birth of their son Samuel

The Birenbaum family on Sasha's Bar Mitzvah

Perry and Alexis Caplan on Spencer's Bar Mitzvah

Michael and Barbara Chernack in honor of the marriage of their daughter Joelle to Mikey Karp

Sholy and Faigie Cohen on the birth of a son Menachem Mendel

Julio and Koral Coifman on the birth of their daughter Noa Sarah

Jack and Brenda Cola on the engagement of their daughter Kimberly to Robert Deckelbaum

Jack and Brenda Cola and Philip and Elaine Levi in honor of the engagement of their children Mandy and Jeremy

Jeffrey and Yona Corber on the birth of a son, Max Oliver to Ben and Carey

Yossi & Natalie Davis on the marriage of their daughter Leah to Menachem Eliyahu

Kelly Goldenblatt and Daniel Shooter on their engagement

Michael and Avital Goldenblatt on the birth of their son Dylan Jake

Mikey Gottesman & Leah Gottesman on the engagement of their son Moshe to Avital Simon

Eric & Stacey Howard on the birth of their daughter Reva

Marc and Jill Kimmel on Jamie's Bat Mitzvah

Howard and Ricki Lapkovsky on the marriage of their son Jared to Rena Rosenek

Lorne and Chaya Lieberman on the birth of a son Tobias

Rissa & Eddy Mechaly, Sondra & Martin Schwartz on the marriage of their children Naomi and Andrew

David and Lisa Medina on the birth of their son Levi Yitzchak

David and Karen Merovitz on the birth of their daughter Brooke Lily

Velvel and Baila Minkowitz on the birth of their daughter Rivkah Dina

Danny and Judy Perras on the birth of their daughter Rochel Simcha

Lucy and Shmarya Plotkin on the birth of their son Yitzchak Tzvi Mesod

Sholom Ber and Shoshana Polter on the birth of their son Naftali Tzvi Sender

Michael & Chana Refson on the birth of their son Levi Yitzchak

Mendy & Shterni Rosenfeld on the marriage of their daughter Rivky to Eli Hurwitz

The Rosenthal and Klauber families in honor of the engagement of their children Jordan and Andrea

The Sacksner family on Jordan's Bar Mitzvah

Rosa and Eitan Seidenwar on the birth of their son Shmuel Nadav

Ephram and Julie Shizgal on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Akiva

Noah and Johanna Sidel on the birth of their daughter Jacqueline Scarlett

Aron and Terry Steinman on the birth of a son Noah, to Adam and Deb

The Segal and Strasser families on the Bar Mitzvah of their son and grandson, Aidan Strasser

Sam and Chana Suss on the birth of a daughter, Bella Tziporah to Matthew and Naomi Kemeny

The Sztern and Schnitzer families on the marriage of Jordan and Aimee

Ellen and Shmuel Spicer on the marriage of Esther Miriam to Chezky Wertheimer

Shmuel and Raizel Stenge on the birth of their son, Menachem Yishai

Lorne and Faygie Sztern on the birth of their son Avraham Yehuda

Benzion and Faygie Treitel on the birth of their son Levi Yitzchak

Chaim and Bassie Treitel on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Menashe

Michael and Leechen Zukor on the birth of their daughter Ayala Emuna

Rabbi and Nechama New and the whole mishpocha on the birth of a daughter, Chaya Mushka, to Isser and Lea New and on the marriage of their son Levi to Ita Raskin

Rabbi Itchy and Zeldie Treitel on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Menashe

MTC would like to acknowledge and congratulate **Joey Berdugo Adler** on receiving an Honorary Doctorate from Concordia University

Sympathies

The Aberman and Koifman families on the passing of **Mr. Sam Aberman**

The Barr and Gelerman families on the passing of **Mr. Moshe Gelerman**

The Besner family on the passing of their son **Matthew**

Isaac Bettan on the passing of his mother **Fanny**

The Burack family on the passing of **Mr. Hy Burack**

The Caplan family on the passing of **Mr. Stanley Caplan**

The Cola, Kuchinsky, Benderoff, Assayag family on the passing of **Mr. Irving Kuchinsky**

The Faigen, Goldberg and Harrison families on the passing of **Mr. Manuel Goldberg**

The Fersten family on the passing of **Mr. Julius Fersten**

The Gimple family on the passing of **Mrs. Lilian Gimple**

Abe Gonshor on the passing of his wife, **Shirley**

The Greenglass family on the passing of **Rabbi Menachem Zev Greenglass**

The Kessner and Miller families on the passing of **Mr. Joe Miller**

The Liebman, Lydynia, Markowitz and Prizant families on the passing of **Mrs. Clara Prizant**

Mrs. Terry Lisak on the passing of her brother **Mr. Fred Peters**

The Nash family on the passing of Allan's daughter **Monica**

Bruria Natanblut on the passing of her brother **Mr. Yehuda Essebag**

The Ohana and Mamane families on the passing of **Mr. Alain Ohana**

The Svarc family on the passing of **Mrs. Rose Svarc**

Levi Staal on the passing of his father **Mr. Abraham Staal**

Jacob and Gloria Tink on the passing of **Mr. Bruce Tirer**

Chaim and Bassie Treitel and the Shemtov families on the passing of **Mrs. Sarah Shemtov**

The Wilk, Bornstein and Feinstein families on the passing of **Mr. Manny Wilk**

May they be spared further sorrow and know only of simchas.

Simchat Torah Celebration for Children

Thursday Evening,
October 20

6:30 pm

The first
'Hakafo'/dancing with the Torah
will be especially for children.

Each child will receive a gift
of a beautiful plush Torah.

6:30 pm Children's 'Hakafo'
7:15 pm Grand Kiddush/Dinner
8:15 pm Continuation of the 'Hakafot'



MTC Moments





The Moscow Wedding

by RABBI ELKANAH SHMOTKIN

Rabbi Elkanah Shmotkin, finds poetry in the Moscow wedding of Blumi Lazar and Aizik Rosenfeld, where 2,000 guests celebrated where Judaism was once hidden.



Early on the morning of June 15, 1927, members of the Russian secret police and the Jewish Communist Party (Yevsektzia) arrived at the Leningrad apartment of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, to arrest him for the counterrevolutionary crime of spreading Judaism.

Shortly after the agents arrived at his home, his future son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, approached the house. Before he entered, Chaya Mushka – daughter of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, and Rabbi Menachem Mendel's future wife – ducked into a side room and, unaccompanied by the authorities for a moment, opened the window and called out: "Schneerson, guests have come to visit us!"

Rabbi Menachem Mendel, understanding that the long-feared arrest was finally playing out, hurriedly turned around and rushed to the home of the Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's secretary, who – knowing that his own arrest couldn't be too far behind – immediately proceeded to burn the incoming mail and other evidence of their "crimes."

Several nights ago, I had the opportunity to participate in the wedding, in Moscow, of two young people – Blumi, daughter of Rabbi Berel and Chani Lazar, and Aizik, son of Rabbi Yehoshua Binyomin and Rivka Rosenfeld of Bogota, Colombia.

The poetry was especially poignant.

If one knows anything about the history of Jews and Judaism in the USSR, he knows that the entire notion of this wedding was surreal – actually, unthinkable.

Over 2,000 people from around the world – I noted participants from South Africa, South America, and every country in the former Soviet Union—had flown into Moscow to celebrate a Jewish wedding, aided by the Russian authorities. Food and drink were plentiful (especially drink – it is Russia...), and the words of Torah were flowing. As the master of ceremonies explained every step of the Jewish wedding ceremony to those as yet religiously uninitiated – many of them young people newly interested in learning about their Judaism – the crowd observed and participated with excitement.

You don't need to add an exclamation point to a scene like that, and each person can find his or her own "wow." But here's my personal exclamation point: The wedding took place on the fifteenth of Sivan – 84 years to the day after Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's arrest in Leningrad.

In the winter of 1927, several months before his arrest, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak took a train from Leningrad to Moscow to conduct some of his underground activity – among other things, receiving reports from several of his traveling clandestine shlichim about their work. In a riveting diary entry, he relates how he was shadowed to the train station by the Leningrad Yevsektzia and, after arriving in Moscow, was spirited from the hotel by a friendly attendant who recognized the impending danger. Eventually he made it to a prescheduled meeting with an elderly gentleman at the Stara Varvarskaya Hotel.

As they met, members of the Moscow Yevsektzia finally caught up with him, burst into his room, pulled out their revolvers, and demanded that the rebbe and the other individual show their identification.

The individual with whom the rebbe was meeting was himself a member of both the Sovnarkom (Council of People's Commissars) and OGPU, the state secret police of the time. He pulled rank on the young bullies, demanding to see their search warrant. The tables were turned dramatically, and they now needed to provide some answers of their own.

In his diary, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak continues: "Affected by the event and the divine providence that G-d had shown, I walk to Kremlin Square...

*If one knows anything
about the history of
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wedding was surreal...*

Although the hour is late, my emotions are intense and my head is hurting. I think the good air and the light of the moon will calm me. I decide to take a walk. I chanced upon a good taxi, and I went to Sokolniki Park. At 1:30 AM, I arrived back at my room in the Stara Varvorskaya Hotel."

As it turns out, the beautiful forested area in the middle of Moscow where the wedding had taken place was...Sokolniki Park. And yes, the air was still fresh, and the full moon was radiant.

On a personal level, as I observed Rabbi Berel and Chani as they married off their daughter, I thought of the difficult circumstances under which they went out on shlichus some 21 years ago. With literally nothing in hand, they rented an apartment where the only furnishings, for many long months, were two mattresses and a crib for their baby.

The other night, I noticed that their struggle now was a bit different. Berel strove — mostly successfully — to welcome each guest with a smile and a moment of individual attention. The Who's Who of Russian Jewry, hundreds of shlichim from across the former Soviet Union who had flown in with their own supporters and friends, and untold other friends who had arrived from around the world, were each vying for a brief moment to speak with him and convey their wishes. The Speaker of the Russian Parliament obviously knows him well; in his remarks, he wished the bride and groom that they have as many children as the Lazars — a large and beautiful family, thank G-d. The mattresses and baby crib have been replaced by a presentable apartment with many beds.

As I traveled home, I realized not so much has changed in 80 years... On the fifteenth of Sivan, in Sokolniki Park in Moscow, the Lazars, shlichim across Russia, and Russian Jewry welcomed Jews who had arrived from across the world — proclaiming, "Schneerson, guests have come to visit us!" ■

Rabbi Elkana Shmotkin is the Director of Jewish Educational Media (JEM), and is the co-author of the upcoming book, "The Rebbe's Early years."



Roving Rabbis

Each summer, Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, the educational arm of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, dispatches hundreds of rabbinical students to small Jewish communities around the globe. Rabbinical students and young rabbis spend their summers on the road, sharing their passion for Jewish life and bringing Jewish awareness and observance wherever they go. These dedicated students, chosen for their rabbinic proficiency and people skills, vie for the honor of assisting the most faraway and isolated communities. These summer assignments also afford them with an invaluable on-the-ground experience in Jewish outreach and a unique appreciation for the diverse needs and colorful makeup of our nation.



Posted from Maryland
My Prayer
by Eli Cowen and Eli Tsvik

After a long and tiring but successful day, Eli and I (we are both named Eli) headed to our lodging to retire for the night. After making something quick to eat to fill our starving, food-deprived stomachs, we prayed the afternoon service – a prayer like none I had ever experienced before. The extreme gratitude to G-d for helping us find and connect with so many of His people had really moved me. But when I got to the Shema Koleinu blessing – where you ask for your own personal request – I was stumped: What could I possibly need? I'm here doing what I love, helping Jews connect with their Judaism.

Then it dawned upon me: It just so happened that, although we had met many people, for various reasons we weren't able to help any Jewish men put on tefillin that day. So with all my heart and concentration I asked G-d that before the day ends we should be able to help at least one fellow Jew with tefillin. After we finished praying, although it was late and we were both exhausted, we decided to go back out there and try to meet with at least one or two more Jews. So Eli jumps into the driver's seat, while Eli takes up the shotgun duties and plugs the next address into the GPS.

A few minutes later we arrive at a house. We ring the bell. A lady approaches. We greet her warmly, and she returns warm greetings. Then we ask the million-dollar question: "Are you Jewish?"

She tells us that she is not, but she wonders if there is something that she could help us with. I ask her if there is anyone living here who happens to be Jewish, and she responds, "Why, yes, my husband is Jewish."

After greetings and a short explanation as to why we are here, his story tumbles out:

"I went to yeshivah as a kid, but had a bad experience with an overly harsh teacher who turned me off from the whole thing. I left Hebrew school before my bar mitzvah, and have always felt terrible about not having gotten one. When I moved to Bel Air I looked into the synagogues, hoping to find somewhere comfortable where maybe I would complete my studies as an adult and celebrate a late bar mitzvah. Unfortunately, none of the local places were what I was looking for, so here I am: a Jew who has never had a bar mitzvah."

Seizing the opportunity, I tell him it's never too late to have a bar mitzvah. "Whenever a Jewish man over the age of 13 dons tefillin for the first time, it is his bar mitzvah. As a matter of fact, we can do one right now!"

"Really!?"

Wearing tefillin for the first time in his life, he carefully read the Shema in Hebrew and English before even considering taking them off. As we removed the tefillin, the sun sank in the west, and we wished him a mazel tov on his bar mitzvah.

He wanted to do more, and asked what he could do for us. We spoke about the blessings we recite before eating as a way of thanking G-d for the food we have. I gave him a card with all the blessings for the various foods, and showed him how it works.

When he said, "What else can we do?" I pulled out a mezuzah. We put up the mezuzah on our way out.

It was tough, but we said goodbye for now.

Reaching the car, I turned to Eli and said, "You know what happened to me as we were praying before?" Now he stared at me and said, "What do you think I was praying for?" ■

*I asked G-d that
before the day ends
we should be able
to help at least one
fellow Jew with tefillin.*

Posted From Panama
Panamanian Panorama
By Yaacov Sebbag and Lipa Binyominson

We are in Panama. Here are the highlights of our first few days:

Someone upstairs is certainly looking out for us. Bugged down with extra luggage, we made our international flight within 45 minutes of takeoff. The guy who checked us in told us that he "never does this" and then proceeded to whisk us past the 300 person security line.

Shabbat in the local synagogue was beautiful. It was the Shabbat before a major wedding in this community, and the excitement was palpable. It was inspiring to see how joyous everyone was in anticipation.

On Friday night we hosted 150 Israeli backpackers for a Shabbat dinner, replete with spicy salsa, stirring songs and suspenseful stories. People were very moved. Some of the guests joked that

if they had only known how "damaging" such a dinner would be for their secular lifestyles, they would have never come.

Last night was the wedding. We sang under the chupah (wedding canopy), mingled with people, and made ourselves useful. We also helped open the new kosher kitchen in the Riu Hotel - the kitchen will remain kosher for all upcoming Jewish events.

Tomorrow we are starting a two-week day camp for some lucky Jewish kids. We plan to do some cool projects with them. One idea is a tiled unity mural. With G-d's help we'll keep you posted.

After camp we plan to explore other parts of Panama to find more Jews.

We hope to send you pictures when we are able. ■



Spanning the Panama Canal.

Photo credit: Dirk van der Made

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Purim in Mexico



Am I Ready?

by ELISHA GREENBAUM

Hear, O, Israel, the L-rd us our G-d, the L-rd is one.

Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom for ever and ever.

G-d is the L-rd.

As the Neila service (the ultimate prayer of Yom Kippur) draws to its conclusion, we engage in a group ritual simultaneously thought-provoking and inspiring.

We proclaim in unison the Shema (once), Boruch Shem (three times) and then, as the dramatic finale, we cry out seven times "Hashem Hu HaElokim" – G-d who created all existence, is the L-rd who rules and watches over us.

As we pronounce these sentences we are asserting our readiness and willingness to lay down our lives for G-d and His Torah.

Yom Kippur a few years ago I caught myself wondering how ready am I? If I was called on tomorrow to make the choice between embracing the cross or death by firing squad, would I really choose the bullet? If the forces of Islam came rampaging through the streets of Montreal, would I have the courage to lay down my life, just to stay true to my ancestors and my G-d?

Untold millions of martyrs for Judaism have graced our bloodstained history. Rich and poor alike, educated or ignorant, religiously inspired or hereto untouched by Judaism, they all found that grace and courage to make the ultimate sacrifice in the face of all logic and compulsion to the contrary. Where did they find that supreme dedication which persuaded them to sacrifice all for an undefined and improvable ideal?

I don't believe that self-sacrifice can be practiced. The only possible source for such awe-shattering faith must be instinctive and not developed. Within every Jew wells a font of belief, which is drawn on only when the only available choice left is between commitment to Judaism or rejection of G-d (G-d forbid). With a choice so stark and the stakes so manifest, the innate nature of a Jew is truly revealed.

Perhaps our making this proclamation; at the conclusion of Yom Kippur, after a long day spent fasting and reaffirming our connection to G-d, is the closest we get to exhibiting this faith out a choice and not necessity.

To die like a Jew?

The sacrifices I am called upon to make are more prosaic. I live in a blessed country, which provides

freedom to practice and preach my religion with impunity. I needn't run a gauntlet of Katushyas to get to the Supermarket, and the local Parishes are anything but rabble-rousers. But because my back isn't against the wall, sometimes I find it harder to summon the clarity and sense of purpose I need to do the right thing. No one forces me to get out of bed and act like a Jew, and without the reaction, I often struggle to get the traction going on my journey through life.

A while ago I was approached by a teenager with a dilemma. She 'desperately' wanted to indulge in a tattoo, but had been informed that doing so would preclude her ever being buried in a Jewish cemetery. Was this true?

I didn't answer her directly, but related a story.

The town miser was dying. A blood disorder had left him with a dangerously high fever. The doctor's diagnosis was that his last slim hope of survival would be if he could somehow manage to perspire and thus lower his temperature.

He'd tried steam baths, eating jalapeno peppers, nothing worked. He was condemned to die.

He called in the Rabbi and gasped, "Rabbi, all these years when you've approached me to contribute to various charitable causes, I've always answered 'No'. Today, I say 'Yes'.

"Rabbi, take a pen and record my last will and testament.

"To the town orphanage, I leave twenty five thousand dollars. To the free-loan fund, I leave fifty thousand. To the yeshiva.... to the yeshiva... rabbi, give me back that paper, I'm shvitzing."

You care so much about dying as a Jew, that as a 16 year old you are already obsessing about where you'll be buried, but what are you prepared to sacrifice in order to live as a Jew?

If I can center my values on Torah values, living my life of mitzvot and good deeds, not out of fear, or the possibility that I might be forced into it at the end of a sword, but because I know it to be the right thing to do, that is my sacrifice, and that is my commitment to the future. ■



*He'd tried steam baths,
eating jalapeno peppers,
nothing worked.*

Deciphering G-d's Messages?

by JOANNIE TANSKY

A daunting title, n'est pas? The peaceful measure of this piece is that it is written by a layperson, as opposed to a Talmud scholar. So this means that most of us are on a level playing field. The tricky part...deciphering G-d's messages lies within each person. Perhaps after reading this short introduction you want to flip the page to the next article. But...that would be taking the easy way out. Truth is, deciphering messages is not as overwhelming as it seems.

How does one perhaps not conquer, but overcome obstacles in life that seem insurmountable?

How does one find the answers that lie within each and every one of us? How do we decipher what G-d is trying to tell us? How does one perhaps not conquer, but overcome obstacles in life that seem insurmountable?

Knowledge.

One did the best they could and things did not go their way, or the deal fell through or that person *still* doesn't like me. We have basically two choices when things happen that we don't like: Continue plodding ahead or lie down, curl up in a little ball and stay there indefinitely.

Knowledge brings a modicum of comfort. But from where does this knowledge come and how do I get it? How is it possible to move on after G-d throws us a curve ball? And finally, how does one find that place in their soul where G-d resides, giving us the strength to move ahead?

In the Beginning...

You were not born 'religious'. You did not have a formal Jewish education. Your parents were traditional and whatever they did felt warm and fuzzy but it stopped there. And then, one day from out of nowhere – wham! – you got hit with something in your life that rendered you inert, unable to take a step forward. The details are immaterial but the result is the same. How in the

world could G-d have done this to me? And the even bigger question: why me?

To even begin to answer these monumental questions, one must start with the most basic question of all: What is my purpose in this world? Why was I born? As I once asked my son when he was in his late teens (a time when as a mother you think that their brains will never return!), and he was particularly obnoxious – buddy, why do you think G-d put you in this world? To have fun, fun, fun till daddy takes the Tbird away? Not. He put you here because you have a purpose to fulfill, one which only you can do. And the best part? You don't know that purpose and you don't know when you've fulfilled it.

The deal is that you do good and kind things, fulfill as many mitzvahs as you can and somewhere in your lifetime G-d will present a time and place for you to fulfill your purpose. But here comes the kicker...you never know where and when this will happen so you continuously have to do these acts of goodness and kindness throughout your lifetime! But wait – there's more.

And Then There Was Light!

What light? The light of faith. Although faith is innate, it often is brought to the fore via knowledge. And it is through this faith and knowledge that we can unlock the mystery of our purpose.

Faith covers a lot of territory. It is obscure yet real. It is a safety net yet cannot be seen. It is focused but elusive. And, it is in our DNA. It's part of our make-up. G-d gave us all faith. He also gave us all the ability to uncover that faith if we so choose. And yes, He also put stumbling blocks in our path to see if we will falter. He made us human and gave us challenges. He also gave us the Torah from which we can learn to deal with



our challenges – the big ones and the small, day-to-day ones. Our task is to uncover whatever dustings are preventing us from realizing that we have this faith and then use it. And that's where knowledge creeps in.

Even if at a young age you were not steeped in the world of Torah, G-d made sure that Torah is accessible to everyone for the taking. All we have to do is reach out and He will take it from there. The very fact that you are reading this article which emanates from a Chabad house is testimony to this truth.

So by now you must be saying to yourself so give me a bit of this knowledge. Give me a taste of this safety net. And herein lies the ultimate paradox of the Torah: The more we know, the more we know that we don't know. But the only way that we can learn this axiom is by learning. And by learning, we unlock that little part of our soul that is a part of G-d, triggering our inborn faith.

By learning we begin to figure out that hey, I don't run the world, G-d does. By learning we

grasp that if something is going to happen in our lives, no matter how we try to avoid it, it will happen. That's not to say that one can just sit back and say G-d will provide. We have to do our job and He has to do His job.

And so, when the really big questions arise one does not feel like they are falling into an endless abyss. We don't like what happened. We cry out in protest. We shed many tears. But in the end, we know that we don't know. And that is what one learns. Not to accept blindly and say that's the will of G-d. But rather challenge G-d, be angry with G-d, storm Heaven's gates – Hashem! have pity on your children.

Can we decipher G-d's messages? Sometimes they are very clear. But when we cannot understand, cannot fathom how a good G-d can bring evil into the world the answer is not to give up but to move ahead, with more learning, more energy, more passion, more fortitude, more mitzvahs, more goodness and kindness. And to do this we must log into our own heart and soul. That takes strength and that comes from knowing. ■

*And so, when the really
big questions arise
one does not feel like
they are falling into
an endless abyss.*

Release

Beginnings are hard - and for good reason.

*If they were easy, we would prowl into
each new venture like a smug, fat cat.*

When you begin pent up in an iron cage, a new life emerges.

*A tiger that breaks through the door of its cage
and pounces with a vengeance.*

*Bless those cages, those impossible brick walls,
those rivers of fire that lie at the outset
of each worthwhile journey.*

Without them we would be only as powerful as we appear to be.

MTC Kids





Shabbat Shalom

by RIVKAH SLONIM

New friends are puzzled, even dismayed, when they hear about the way I observe the Shabbat. They are surprised to learn that I do not write, flip an electric switch, use the telephone, cook or engage in a host of assorted everyday activities for twenty five hours each week, starting Friday night at sunset until Saturday at nightfall.

After that brief pocket of time, I am back on track, rushing along on that same fast-paced corporate treadmill. No one who sees me in the throes of my hectic life would ever believe I take such a prolonged hiatus, and on such a regular basis. "How can you afford to do that?" they ask. When they hear that my observance also precludes shopping, theater-going and a wide gamut of recreational activities, they'll raise an eyebrow and say, "Why would you want to do that?"

This reaction is not at all surprising. It comes from the natural assumption that to cease our everyday pursuits is not only difficult, but impossible. Think of the advertisements with the harried climber perched precariously on the mountaintop, logging in on a laptop to check for e-mail; or the sunbather on a remote island clinching a last-minute deal even as she professes to be on vacation.

"You shall work during the six days and do all your tasks. But Saturday is the Shabbat to G-d your Lord. Do not do anything that constitutes work." (Exodus 20:8-10.)

Everyone seems to take this fourth of the Ten Commandments quite seriously. The part about working for six days, that is. But, of course, the whole commandment is relevant: Shabbat is rendered meaningful by the work days and the work days are elevated by Shabbat.

The Kabbalah teaches that G-d spent six days creating a stage on which we are all the actors. He did this by contracting His energy and pulling back,

thus creating an "empty place," an arena we call "the world." G-d remains hidden to allow us our freedom and the ability to choose. He's hoping we will choose Tikkun Olam, perfecting the world. He's hoping we will validate His plan by spending six days each week elevating this world, unmasking the G-dliness inherent in all matter and unleashing the Divine spark of energy that gives life to all things.

As we become submerged in our work, however, it becomes a struggle to remain above it. In the endless conflict between earth and spirit, sheer weight often wins out. It is easy to forget our source, our reason for being, our point of departure for this journey we call life. Shabbat is a potent reminder that takes us back to the beginning. It is a reunion with our inner selves; a return to the primal oneness our souls enjoyed with G-d before being sent to our present existence. It is a return to the perfection that existed after the six days of creation, before sin.

That I don't cook, shop, or fax on Shabbat is a statement as much as it is a way of life. On Shabbat I will desist from harnessing this world's energies and forces. I will suspend my efforts to master and transform. In mirroring G-d's original pattern – ceasing after six days of invention and innovation – I will lift the veil and come face to face with my self and my G-d.

So think again, this time about the advertisements for glamorous vacation options to exotic, sun-drenched islands, and their promise of escape from the everyday din and commotion. Not only are you hundreds or thousands of miles from home, but the plug is pulled on the phone, fax and e-mail. What a relief! And that's what I experience each week when on Friday, just as the sun is about to set, I disconnect myself from my everyday summonses. I light the Shabbat candles and something changes as I clear my mind and take a deep breath, knowing I am in a place where I could never have arrived on my own. ■



After that brief pocket of time, I am back on track, rushing along on that same fast-paced corporate treadmill.

Honey Apple Cake

INGREDIENTS

- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 1/4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 1/4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 extra-large eggs
- 1 cup honey
- 3/4 cup brewed coffee, cooled
- 2 large McIntosh apples, peeled, cored, and finely chopped

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease the bottom and sides of a 10-inch angel food cake pan. Cut a piece of parchment paper to fit the bottom and line the pan with it. Do not grease the paper.
2. Onto a large sheet of wax paper, sift together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg.
3. In the bowl of a standing electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the sugar,

vegetable oil, and eggs. Beat on medium speed until combined.

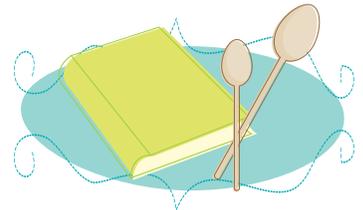
4. Turn the machine off and add the honey. Beat on low speed until blended. Increase the speed to medium and beat for 30 seconds.

5. Turn off the machine again and add the dry ingredients, alternating with the coffee, until the batter is combined. (The batter will be loose.)

6. With a wooden spoon, stir in the chopped apples.

7. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Bake for 1 hour 20 minutes, or until the cake is deep golden on top and a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove the pan from the oven to a wire rack and let it stand for 5 minutes. Remove the sides of the pan and carefully remove the cake from the bottom. Let the cake stand right side up on a wire rack to cool. Store the cake, covered in plastic wrap, in the refrigerator for 1 week.

To Freeze: Make the cake as directed in the recipe, let it cool completely, then wrap it well in plastic wrap and place it in a large freezer bag. Freeze for up to several weeks.



Moroccan-Style Chicken and Root Vegetable Stew

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 12 ounces skinless boneless chicken breast halves, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 1/2 cups chopped onion
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 cups 1/2-inch pieces peeled sweet potatoes
- 2 cups 1/2-inch pieces peeled parsnips
- 2 cups 1/2-inch pieces peeled turnips
- 1 cup 1/2-inch pieces peeled rutabaga (yellow turnip)
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1/4 cup dried currants or raisins
- 1 cup drained canned diced tomatoes
- Chopped fresh cilantro - optional

DIRECTIONS

Heat oil in heavy large pot over medium-high heat. Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper. Add chicken to pot and sauté until light golden but not cooked through, about 1 minute. Transfer chicken to bowl.

Add onion to pot and sauté until golden, about 4 minutes. Add garlic and stir 1 minute. Add curry powder, cumin and cinnamon stick and stir 30 seconds. Add sweet potatoes, parsnips, turnips, rutabaga, broth and currants. Cover and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes. Add tomatoes and chicken with any accumulated juices to pot. Simmer until chicken is cooked through and flavors blend, about 5 minutes longer. Sprinkle with cilantro and serve.

KNOW YOUR STRENGTH

From your challenges you may know your strengths.

You did not make yourself. You did not choose your parents,
nor did you design the environment that nurtured you.

The One who brought you to this world, you knew you before
you were conceived and who fashioned you in the womb –
He knew intimately all the challenges you would meet,
your faults, your struggles.

He was the one who designed they should be there.

For each brick wall, He provided you with a ladder.

For each chasm, a bridge.

For each mountain, a deep reserve of
superhuman strength to surprise even your own self.

When one of those challenges arises, you need only imagine
what it must take to overcome – and you can be confident
that just that strength is within you.