# **CHANUKAH GIFTS OF LIGHT**

Mim Senft

In a class that I took a number of year ago, the Rabbi ed us why we light candles on Chanukah. One person wered, "to fulfill the mitzvah." Another responded, to remember the miracle in the Temple." The Rabbi liked both answers but was looking for something else. He suggested that the reason we light candles on Chanukah was to create a light in the darkness. He then asked us to think about what that meant. Last year, when I made my second visit to the Jewish community in L'viv, Ukraine, I felt that I came a little closer to understanding what the Rabbi had in mind.



I've been involved in relief/outreach work with the Jewish community in L'viv since 2001. When visiting last December, just a few weeks before Chanukah, I was again reminded of the physical and spiritual darkness of this part of the world. Since my previous visit there had been during the summer, and even though I had seen the poverty and terrible living conditions of many of the Jews there, I had not experienced the bitterness of the cold, dark winters. The harsh starkness of the environment made the contrasts between my life and the lives of the Jews of L'viv even sharper.

Visiting people who have managed to hang on to their Jewish identities through the Holocaust, the Cold War, and spirit-grinding poverty, is an enlightening experience. I was deeply touched when Naftali, a 93 year old man, shared with us a little about his life. He has no living relatives and is solely supported with food, medications, and care that he receives through the Jewish outreach program organized by Meylakh Sheykhet, a leader in the L'viv community. As we sat in his fifth floor, walk-up apartment with erratic heating and little, if any, insulation, Naftali spoke of his driving dedication, and how he still walks to synagogue each Shabbat, about a mile from where he lives.

Naftali told us that during the Stalin years he and others in the community had a matzah maker that they kept hidden, moving it from basement to base-

nt any time they thought the police were suspicious. They started making matzot as early as October in order to ensure that everyone in the community would have enough for Passover. Had they been caught, they would have been arrested...or worse. For Naftali, holding on to tradition and his Jewish identity had been well worth the risk.

Just before we ended our visit, Naftali asked to sing with us, so we stood together in his kitchen and shared a few niggunim (songs). That moment brought home to me just how important community is, not only for providing food, clothing and medication, but for providing a spiritual family. I will never forget the light in his eyes as we sang together.

Naftali is just one example of the hundreds of people in L'viv who are trying to stay connected to their Judaism while struggling with day to day life. Certainly, by serving as a conduit and bringing supplies and funds to help support members of the Jewish community, Jews like Naftali, our group was attempting to create a light in the darkness of poverty and isolation. It's not hard to see how writing a check or visiting a sick friend or collecting food to be dis-

tributed to the hungry can make someone else's life a little brighter. What we often miss seeing, however, is that in so doing, we are also given the opportunity to see more of ourselves. We only have to look.

Since my involvement with the L'viv community, I've become aware of this double miracle. Giving to others lifts the darkness between people—it allows us to see the kedusha (holiness) in both them and ourselves.

Chanukah is also considered a holiday of education, and I know that this trip provided me with a most humbling lesson, as I witnessed how even small

contributions can make such a big impact. To watch someone receive a coat—not a fur coat, not a designer coat, just a simple, practical warm coat as if it is a treasure, can make one pause and recognize the experience as a chance to learn. That warm coat, for those Jews living in poverty in the Former Soviet Union, is a matter of survival. It is a dramatic contrast to life in the United States, where many of us have closets full of clothes we don't even wear. This contrast makes me reflect on the consumerism and extravagance that creates a darkness that we must overcome and illuminate in our own lives. The light we create by giving is an opportunity to bring more equality into the world by sharing our blessings with those who are in need.

Just as the lights of Chanukah increase each night, so too the light of giving expands with each act. I went to L'viv to give, and in L'viv I learned about giving. The generosity of the people in L'viv is remarkable. Despite their poverty, every person who hosted us did their best to make us feel welcome by offering us a cup of tea, a slice of apple, something from the little they had. One woman, a 90 year old Holocaust survivor, insisted that we each eat a banana, even though it was probably the only fruit she had in her home. Not only did the Jews of L'viv honor us with their stories and family photos and their interest in us, but, despite the fact that they have so little, they were determined to be gracious hosts. The light of their generous spirit inspired me, and I resolved to work at being a better hostess, to continue to be more open to people of all backgrounds, and to find more ways to treat neighbors and strangers as I want to be treated.

During this year's Festival of Lights, I will be thinking of my friends in L'viv. I am continually thankful for the different "lights" that we have shared with each other, and for the light that they continue to bring into my life. I hope that all of us take the time to bring some of that symbolic light from our menorahs into the world in the coming year-each in our own way, a donation to a worthy cause, a smile to a stranger, a day spent volunteering at a shelter or soup kitchen, an hour spent delivering food to a shut-in...or whatever mitzvah opportunity is presented to us by Hashem. Unlike other gifts, this gift of light does not come wrapped in paper and ribbons, and will never be lost or broken or outdated. It will always shine.

Mim Senft, a member of the Lincoln Square Beginners Service, works in private equity investment. She would like to add a special thank you to Shlomo Ben-Yaacov.

# CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV

#### **ENGAGEMENTS**

Akiko (Leora) Ike and Abraham Altman Lori Paul and Robert Schechter Elaine Witty and Lawrence Komito



Megan Fisher and Ilan Aboody Carol Levin and Ron Gonsher Debbie Monroe and David Relkin Michelle Nadata and Heath Matyjewicz Yael Tamar (Yulia) Vladymyrova and Yoni Vacalakis

#### <u>BIRTHS</u>

Hadassah and Gerald Blitzer, on the birth of twin boys, Michael and Matthew

Donna and Bernard Broome, on the birth of a boy, Joshua David

Donna and Yitzchak Gluck, on the birth of a boy, Alter Zusha

Mazal Tov to grandparents Miriam and Sam Gluck Miriam and Ephraim Osgood, on the birth of a boy, Moshe Yehuda

Mazal Tov to grandparents Marilyn and Armin Osgood Sang and Jamie Propp, on the birth of a girl,

Olivia Im Propp

Maura and Leonard Shaykin, on the birth of twins, Joseph Lawrence and Emma Rose

## BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Dorian Yisrael Ehrlich,

Mazal Tov to parents Norma and Dr. Jerome Ehrlich Jonathan Furer

Mazal Tov to grandmother Suzanne Daws Ariela Channa Greenbaum

Mazal Tov to parents Hadassah Gerber and Bill Greenbaum

Yehoshua Leib Relkin

Mazal Tov to parents Vivian Lerner Glass and David Relkin

Nesanel Mordechai Simon

Mazal Tov to parents Toby and Bruce Simon

# CONDOLENCES

Akiva Lane, on the loss of his father, Walter Lane David Relkin and Leslie Drucker,

on the loss of their father, Donald Reikin

Bruce Simon, on the loss of his mother, Helen Simon

#### CONGRATULATIONS

Paul Kaufman, upon celebrating his 100th birthday (10/17/04). Greetings may be sent to him at 24 Coventry Road, Livingston, NJ 07039

#### TZEITCHEM L'SHALOM/FAREWELL (To live and/or study in Israel)

Rebecca and Isaac Herzog Miriam and Akiva Lane and family Miyuki and Mark Shapiro

## THANK YOU

Bob Novig, for serving as chief usher at the High Holiday service, and Norton Goodman and Irv Elias, for serving as Gabbaim.

LSS NEWS LSS NEWS LS	S NEWS LSS NEWS LSS NE		LSS NEWS LSS NEWS LSS
		OF SERVICES	•
Tue December 7, 2004 - 24th of Kislev Chanukah Candles after 4:59 PM	Fri January 7, 2005 - 26th of Tevet Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Sat Febuary 12, 2005 - 3rd of Adar Rishon Terumah	Thu March 24, 2005 - 13th of Adar Sheni TA'ANIT ESTHER
	Candle Lighting 4:27 PM	Daf Yomi 7:00 AM	Fast Begins 4:41 AM
Wed December 8, 2004 - 25th of Kislev CHANUKAH	Mincha4:30 PM	Bible Class	Morning Services 7:00 & 7:30
Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM	Sat January 8, 2005 - 27th of Tevet Vaera	Talmud & Bible Class 4:20 PM	Mincha
Chanukah Candles after 4:59 PM	Daf Yomi	Mincha	Fast Ends
Thu December 9, 2004 - 26th of Kislev CHANUKAH	Morning Services, 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM	Daily Mincha & Maariv5:15 PM	Maariv & Late Megila Reading 9:15 PM
Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM	Talmud & Bible Class 3:35 PM Mincha 4:20 PM	Fri Febuary 18, 2005 - 9th of Adar Rishon	Fri March 25, 2005 - 14th of Adar Sheni PURIM
Chanukah Candles after 4:59 PM	Shabbat Ends 5:27 PM	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Morning Services 6:15 & 7:30 AM
Fri December 10, 2004 - 27th of Kislev CHANUKAH	Daily Mincha & Maariv4:35 PM	Candle Lighting 5:16 PM Mincha 5:20 PM	Extra Megila Reading 9:00 AM Candle Lighting 5:55 PM
Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM	Tue January 11, 2005 - 1st of Sh'vat ROSH CHODESH	Sat Febuary 19, 2005 - 10th of Adar Rishon	Mincha 6:00 PM
Chanukah Candles before 4:10 PM Candle Lighting 4:10 PM	Morning Services , 7:00 & 7:40 AM	Tetzaveh	Sat March 26, 2005 - 15th of Adar Sheni
Mincha 4:15 PM	Fri January 14, 2005 - 4th of Sh'vat	Daf Yomi 7:00 AM	Tzav SHUSHAN PURIM
Sat December 11, 2004 - 28th of Kislev	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Bible Class 8:30 AM Morning Services . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM	Daf Yomi
Miketz CHANUKAH Daf Yomi	Candle Lighting 4:34 PM Mincha 4:40 PM	Talmud & Bible Class 4:25 PM	Morning Services . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Bible Class	Sat January 15, 2005 - 5th of Sh'vat Bo	Mincha	Talmud & Bible Class5:05 PM Mincha5:50 PM
Morning Services . 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM	Daf Yomi 7:00 AM	Daily Mincha & Maariv5:25 PM	Shabbat Ends 6:55 PM
Talmud & Bible Class 3:20 PM Mincha4:05 PM	Bible Class	Mon February 21, 2005 - 12th of Adar Rishon	Daily Mincha & Maariv6:00 PM
Shabbat Ends5:10 PM	Talmud & Bible Class, 3:45 PM	PRESIDENTS DAY  Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM	Fri April 1, 2005 - 21st of Adar Sheni Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Chanukah Candles after 5:10 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:15 PM	Mincha	•	Candle Lighting 6:02 PM
Sun December 12, 2004 - 29th of Kislev	Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:40 PM	Wed Febuary 23, 2005 - 14th of Adar Rishon PURIM KATAN	Mincha 6:05 PM
CHANUKAH	Mon January 17, 2005 - 7th of Sh'vat	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Sat April 2, 2005 - 22nd of Adar Sheni Shmini PARAH
Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM Chanukah Candles after 5:00 PM	MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY	Fri Febuary 25, 2005 - 16th of Adar Rishon	Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
Mon December 13, 2004 - 1st of Tevet	Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 5:24 PM	Bible Class 8:30 AM
ROSH CHODESH CHANUKAH	Fri January 21, 2005 - 11th of Sh'vat Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Mincha 5:30 PM	Morning Services . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Talmud & Bible Class 5:10 PM
Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM Chanukah Candles after 5:00 PM	Candle Lighting 4:42 PM	Sat Febuary 26, 2005 - 17th of Adar	Mincha 5:55 PM Shabbat Ends 7:02 PM
Tue December 14, 2004 - 2nd of Tevet	Mincha 4:45 PM	Rishon Ki Tisa  Daf Yomi	REMEMBER to set your clocks forward
CHANUKAH	Sat January 22, 2005 - 12th of Sh'vat Beshalach	Bible Class8:30 AM	Daily Mincha & Maariv7:10 PM DST
Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM Chanukah Candles after 5:00 PM	Daf Yomi	Morning Services. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Talmud & Bible Class 4:35 PM	Fri April 8, 2005 - 28th of Adar Sheni
	Bible Class	Mincha 5:20 PM	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Earliest Candle Lighting 6:08 PM
Wed December 15, 2004 - 3rd of Tevet CHANUKAH	Talmud & Bible Class 3:50 PM	Shabbat Ends 6:24 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 5:30 PM	Candle Lighting 7:10 PM
Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM	Mincha		Mincha 6:45 & 7:15 '
Fri December 17, 2004 - 5th of Tevet	Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:50 PM	Fri March 4, 2005 - 23rd of Adar Rishon SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA	Sat April 9, 2005 - 29th of Adar Sheni Tazria HACHODESH
Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 4:12 PM	Tue January 25, 2005 - 15th of Sh'vat	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
Mincha 4:15 PM	TU B'SHVAŤ	Candle Lighting 5:32 PM Mincha 5:35 PM	Bible Class 8:30 AM Morning Services . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
Sat December 18, 2004 - 6th of Tevet	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Sat March 5, 2005 - 24th of Adar Rishon	Talmud & Bible Class 6:05 PM
<b>Vayigash</b> Daf Yomi 7:00 AM	Fri January 28, 2005 - 18th of Sh'vat Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Vayakhel	Mincha
Bible Class8:30 AM	Candle Lighting 4:50 PM	Daf Yomi	Daily Mincha & Maariv7:15 PM
Morning Services . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Talmud & Bible Class 3:20 PM	Mincha	Morning Services . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM	Sun April 10, 2005 - 1st of Nisan
Mincha 4:05 PM	Sat January 29, 2005 - 19th of Sh'vat Yitro	Talmud & Bible Class 4:40 PM Mincha	ROSH CHODESH Morning Services , 7:00 & 8:30 AM
Shabbat Ends 5:12 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:20 PM	Daf Yomi7:00 AM	Shabbat Ends6:32 PM	Fri April 15, 2005 - 6th of Nisan
Wed December 22, 2004 - 10th of Tevet	Bible Class	Daily Mincha & Maariv5:40 PM	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
ASARA B'TEVET	Talmud & Bible Class4:00 PM	Fri March 11, 2005 - 30th of Adar Rishon ROSH CHODESH	Earliest Candle Lighting6:10 PM Candle Lighting7:17 PM
Fast Begins 6:05 AM Morning Services 7:00 & 7:30 AM	Mincha	Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM	Mincha 6:45 & 7:20 PM
Mincha 4:00 PM	Daily Mincha & Maariv5:00 PM	Candle Lighting 5:40 PM Mincha 5:45 PM	Sat April 16, 2005 - 7th of Nisan Metzora
Fast Ends	Fri Febuary 4, 2005 - 25th of Sh'vat	Sat March 12, 2005 - 1st of Adar Sheni	Daf Yomi
Fri December 24, 2004 - 12th of Tevet Morning-Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 4:59 PM	Pekudei ROSH CHODESH SHEKALIM	Bible Class
Candle Lighting 4:15 PM	Mincha	Daf Yomi	Mincha 6:20 PM Shabbat Hagadol Drasha 6:45 PM
Mincha	Sat Febuary 5, 2005 - 26th of Sh'vat	Morning Services . 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM	Shabbat Ends 8:17 PM
Sat December 25, 2004 - 13th of Tevet Vayechi LEGAL HOLIDAY	Mishpatim Daf Yomi	Talmud & Bible Class 4:50 PM Mincha 5:35 PM	Daily Mincha & Maariv7:25 PM
Daf Yomi 7:00 AM	Bible Class8:30 AM	Shabbat Ends 6:40 PM	CATE THE STATE OF
Bible Class	Morning Services. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Talmud & Bible Class4:10 PM	Daily Mincha & Maariv5:45 PM	SAVE THE DATE
Talmud & Bible Class3:25 PM	Mincha 4:55 PM	Fri March 18, 2005 - 7th of Adar Sheni Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Beginners Shabbaton - \$30 Fri-Sat, Dec 10-11, 2004
Mincha 4:10 PM Shabbat Ends 5:15 PM	Shabbat Ends 5:59 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 5:05 PM	Candle Lighting 5:48 PM	April 15-16, 2005
Daily Mincha & Maariv4:20 PM	•	Mincha5:55 PM	Beginners Shabbat Luncheons
Fri December 31, 2004 - 19th of Tevet	Wed Febuary 9, 2005 - 30th of Sh'vat ROSH CHODESH	Sat March 19, 2005 - 8th of Adar Sheni	Saturdays 12:30 PM- \$15 Jan 8, Feb 5, March 5
Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 4:20 PM	Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM	Vayikra ZACHOR Daf Yomi	Beginners Schmooze - Mon, 8:15 pm - Free
Mincha ,	Thu Febuary 10, 2005 - 1st of Adar Rishon	Bible Class8:30 AM	Jan 3, March 7
Sat January 1, 2005 - 20th of Tevet	ROSH CHODESH Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM	Morning Services. 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Talmud & Bible Class 5:00 PM	Beginners Chanukah Party \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door
Shemot NEW YEARS DAY Daf Yomi	Fri Febuary·11, 2005 - 2nd of Adar Rishon	Mincha 5:45 PM	Mon, Dec 13, 7:00 PM
Bible Class8:30 AM	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Additional reading of Parshat Zachor after Mincha	Purim Party
Morning Services . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Talmud & Bible Class 3:30 PM	Candle Lighting 5:08 PM Mincha 5:15 PM	Shabbat Ends6:48 PM	\$20 in advance, \$25 at the door
Mincha 4:15 PM	minoria	Daily Mincha & Maariv5:55 PM	Thurs, March 24, 8:15 PM Shabbat Across America/Canada
			Dimooni ricios America/Canada
Shabbat Ends 5:20 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:25 PM			Fri, March 4, 2005