

chadi TIMES

CHABAD HOUSE

JEWISH STUDENT CENTER

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Serving the Community through Education and Inspiration

Kislev 5768

November 2007

Vol. 22, No. 2

in the NEWS

Alumni Women to Gather with Rivky in NJ

By popular demand, a special program will be held Sunday, December 16 for women alumni of Chabad and their friends. The event will begin at 11am and will be held in the home of Leah (Tratt) '97 and Kevin '95 Eisenberg located at 237 Harding Drive in South Orange, NJ 07079.

Rivky Slonim will address *Raising a Mentch: Thoughts on Parenting and Personal Growth*. Discussion will follow the presentation with plenty of time to catch up and shmooze. Brunch and desserts will be served.

There is a \$10 suggested donation for the program; program sponsor is \$54. Reservations can be made to Naomi Rosenfeld at Naomi.Rosenfeld@kraft.com, Rikki Holtzman at rikkiholtzman@optonline.net or directly to Rivky at rslonim@chabadobinghamton.com

"We are so excited about this special program for alumni and friends", said Rikki Gelfarb Holtzman '04. "It will be wonderful to spend time reconnecting with old friends, but I suspect that most of us are especially looking forward to sharing and receiving inspiration in a warm and intimate environment. During my years at Binghamton, I remember the Slonims making me feel as if they were there just for me! How much more amazed am I that, 13 years later and now a wife and mother, we are continually in touch. This program is just one more way that Chabad shows how much they care about us, long

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chai  **TIMES**

SPONSORS

In honor of the birth of our son
Micah Gabriel
by Jane ('01) and John ('00) Brophy

BU lights up for Chanukah

The Chabad House Jewish Student Center has mounted a campaign to ensure that each Jewish student will have a Menorah and candles to light for the Chanukah holiday. Student leaders will be manning Chanukah Kiosks in each housing community during lunch and dinner hours, as well as in the Library, Lecture Halls and Union. Students will be able to pick up their free "Chanukah kits" including dreidels, chocolate "gelt" and a sheet with instructions and blessings for Menorah lighting. "We don't want any Jewish student to be without a menorah and candles for the holiday," said Iris Feinberg, project chair. "We are going to light up the nights!"

Chabad's Can Menorah to Light up Lives

The Chabad House Jewish Student Center in concert with the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity and the Alpha Phi sorority is bringing Binghamton University an innovative and meaningful way to celebrate Chanukah. Dubbed "You can light up a life", the project calls for the collection of two tons of canned food which will be donated to CHOW. The twist in this humanitarian effort is that the cans will be used to construct a Menorah in the center of campus (near the Dickinson Amphitheater) which will be lit in a ceremony on the first night of Chanukah, Tuesday, December 4 at 6:15pm. The celebration will include free delicious Chanukah treats, music and entertainment by the Crosbys as well as exciting prize drawings for which anyone who contributes to the can project will be eligible. After the ceremony, the Menorah will be disassembled and the cans will be driven to the food pantry for distribution to the poor and homeless in the area.



The Can Menorah created at BU in 2003

The Menorah, which will stand fifteen feet high, will be constructed primarily of #10 cans (institution sized)

which is why in addition to cans, donations are being accepted towards the purchase of these large size cans. Receipts in the form of coupons will be given to participants who donate towards this project. Project captains in each dorm and from various social groups will coordinate the collection of cans and sale of coupons at various points on campus as well as in the Student Union.

Community members are urged to contribute to this project as well. Cans may be deposited at the Chabad House (in the entrance way of the Great Room) and donations earmarked for this project can be mailed to the Chabad House 420 Murray Hill Rd Vestal, NY 13850. "Chanukah is all about light, warmth and celebration. This way we will be including hundreds of people less fortunate than ourselves in our festival of lights. We are very excited about and proud of this effort. We hope that everyone will contribute!" said Toby Lass and Michael Sokol, project chairs.

Community invited to Cafe Comedy Night

Chabad House will host a Chanukah Cafe Comedy Night featuring comedian Marc Weiner on Saturday December 8 beginning 8pm. His show is titled Jewber Jabber: Sharing the Guilt 5768. There is a \$6 admission charge; Chanukah treats and coffee will be served. Reservations are necessary and should be made by calling Chabad House at 797-0015 or writing aslonim@chabadobinghamton.com. Marc Weiner is a comedian and television producer.



The New York Times calls Marc Weiner "a gifted comic" and "absolutely charming."

His life story was told in a NYTimes Magazine article, Of God And Weinerville which focused on the story of the talented comic who became religiously observant.

His TV credits include appearances on HBO, Showtime, Comedy Central, and Nickelodeon's "Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide", as well as his own show, Nickelodeon's "Weinerville." He was also a regular cast member of and writer for Saturday Night Live and he

currently is the voices of Map, and Swiper the Fox, in the Dora the Explorer show on the Nickelodeon network. Marc has performed at the Comic Strip, Catch a Rising Star, the Comedy Cellar and scores of venues around the country.

Most recently Marc has been a student of Nonviolent Communication (NVC). He completed the 2006 BayNVC Leadership program, and is creator of the Empathy Labyrinth. Marc is currently traveling the world, performing his one-man comedy show, and giving workshops on the Empathy Labyrinth, a powerful communication tool with which he trains people to improve their personal and organizational relationships.

"Weiner brought down the house when he was here in the Spring for our

Weiner Illuminates Shabbat Chanukah at Chabad for Students

By popular demand, Marc Weiner will return to Chabad House this time to spend Shabbat. On Friday Night, December 7 he will present a comedy show with all new material. He will also speak at lunch and present a workshop on Non Violent Communication on Saturday afternoon. "Weiner was a huge hit when he presented his comedy show at a Chabad Cafe night in Spring '06 and there is tremendous excitement about having him back," explained Rabbi Slonim. "We traditionally do something special at Chabad for the Shabbat of Chanukah and we are delighted to make this year extra special.

students," said Rivkah Slonim. "By popular demand we are bringing him back for a Shabbat with our students and are offering this program to the general community on Saturday night. When Marc performed in the Spring I laughed so hard, I cried! I can't wait to enjoy him again on Chanukah with all our friends in the community."

Guideline for Lighting your Menorah in the Dorm Room

The Chabad House has obtained the following statement from Residential Life concerning students lighting Menorahs in their dorm rooms:

Permission must be obtained by students from the Resident Director to burn candles in observing religious holidays. Approved candles must never be left burning unattended. Failure to obtain permission to burn candles may result in judicial charges. Residents are liable for damage or injuries resulting from the use of candles.

Please be sure to notify your RD in advance of Chanukah.

<p>CHABAD HOUSE JEWISH STUDENT CENTER</p> <p>420 Murray Hill Road Vestal, New York 13850 Change Service Requested</p>	<p>NON-PROFIT ORG U.S. POSTAGE PAID BINGHAMTON, NY PERMIT NO. 157</p>
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from the DIRECTORS

The Eternal Flames of Chanukah

Dear friend,

This year Chanukah comes "early" but nobody's complaining. Chanukah is a time of joy and fun, presents and parties – a winning holiday with young and old.

Many believe that Chanukah enjoys such universal appeal because it mimics the "holiday season" culture around us, but of itself, holds little religious significance. While the first part of that position may be true, the latter is decidedly faulty.

Chanukah is of course a post Biblical holiday. As such it does not rank with the three pilgrimage festivals, nor with Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur, all of which are clearly mandated in the Torah. Still, a study of sources related to the holiday's history and mode of celebration will reveal its place in Jewish life as venerable indeed. Maimonides describes the precept of Chanukah as "...an exceedingly precious one and one should be careful to observe it...even if one has no food to eat except what he receives from charity, he should beg or sell some of his clothing for the purpose of oil and lamps to light..."

More intriguing, however, is Nachmanides' (Ramban) statement in which he asserts, "The lights of Chanukah will never be nullified." The Kabbalistic and Chassidic masters understood the words of Nachmanides to mean the following: In the Messianic era the spiritual light (significance) brought to the world

through most holidays will be almost lost in the luminous radiance of Godliness which will fill the universe. In that age, Godliness will be manifest, no longer shrouded and obscured, and the holidays will be eclipsed by this "blinding light."

The spiritual light of Chanukah (and Purim) however, will remain visibly bright even against this backdrop. Unlike the other holidays whose observance was commanded by God and devolve upon the Jewish people as an obligation, these holidays which were legislated by the Jewish sages embody the overtures and spirit of the Jewish people. They spring forth from the pure essence of the Jewish soul, from the light which refused throughout the generations to be extinguished. As such their luminance is unparalleled.

Chanukah is a manifestation of Jewish steadfastness in the face of great challenge. It speaks to us about the triumph of light over darkness, spirit over might, Torah over Hellenization. It is the story of our people, our mission and our struggle to fulfill it -- then as now.

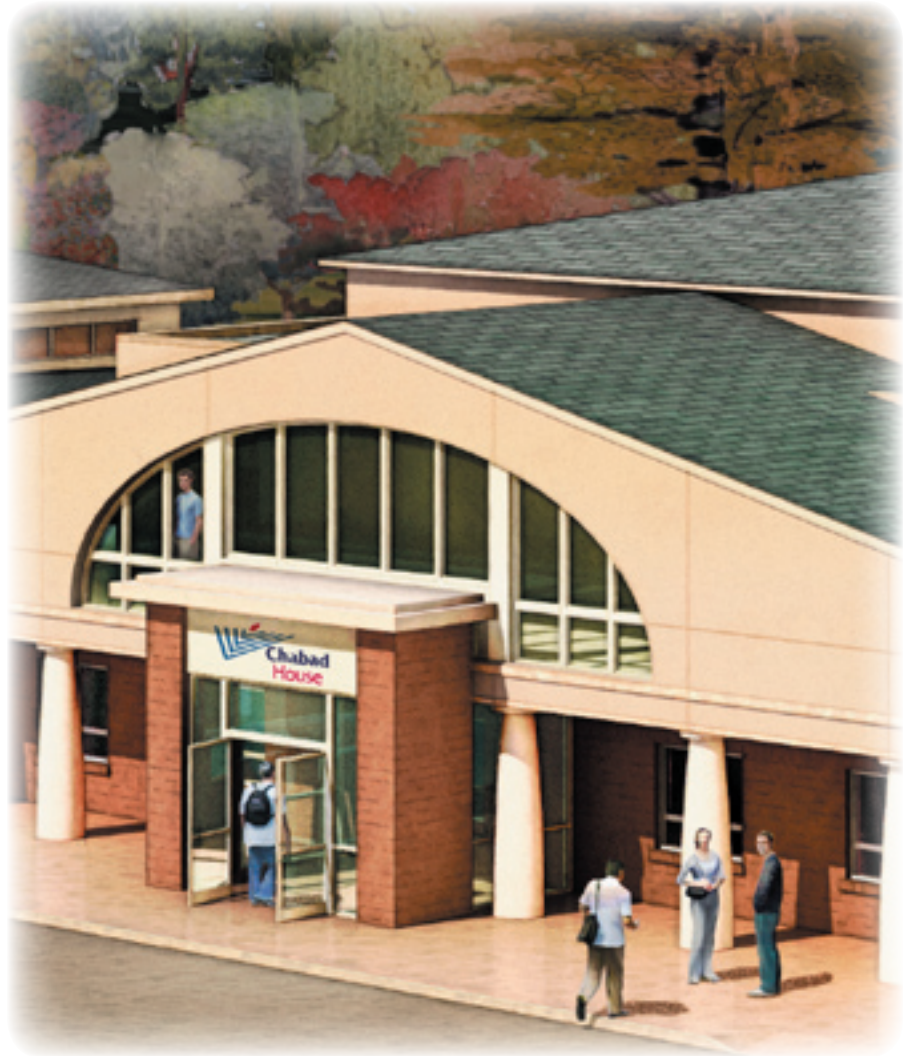
The small flames of Chanukah have great power. They have guided us throughout the generations and continue to illuminate our present until we come to a brighter tomorrow.

With best wishes for a joyous and inspiring Chanukah holiday,

Aaron and Ricky Slonim

Chabad House Jewish Student Center Capital Campaign

Campaign Objective: 3 million dollars



Dedication & Memorial Opportunities

Building Dedication	\$500,000	
Social Hall	\$360,000	
Student Lounge/Cafeteria/Game Room	\$150,000	
Library/Research Center/Computer Pod	\$120,000	
Main Kitchen	\$100,000	
Fitness Room	\$75,000	
Main Entrance/Lobby	\$50,000	Reserved
Atrium/Second Floor Student Lounge	\$50,000	Reserved
Conference Room	\$36,000	Reserved
Guest Suite	\$36,000	
Rabbi's Study	\$36,000	Reserved
Cafeteria Kitchen	\$30,000	
Classrooms (2)	\$25,000	Reserved
Guest Rooms (3)	\$25,000	
Multi-media Entertainment Center	\$25,000	
Offices (3)	\$25,000	
Outdoor Student Lounge/Deck	\$18,000	
Main Entrance Mezuzah	\$18,000	Reserved
Kiyor-Ritual Hand Washing Station (2)	\$10,000	Reserved
Mezuzah (25)	\$5,000	(5) Reserved

Builder's Tablet Opportunities

Chai Builder	\$18,000	Builder	\$10,000
Pillar	\$5,400	Benefactor	\$3,600
Chai Sponsor	\$1,800	Sponsor	\$1,000

Please help us make this dream a reality!

To discuss major gift options or dedication opportunities please contact Rabbi Slonim at (607) 797-0015 or aslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com

All major gifts can be paid over a period of 3-5 years. Gifts can be made on line at www.chabadbuilding.com.

**For up-to-date pictures of the construction,
visit www.chabadbuilding.com**

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TORAH thoughts

Adapted from the Works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Nightlight

by Yanki Tauber

The mitzvah of kindling the Chanukah lights begins at sunset.... They are to be placed in the outer doorway of one's home; if one lives on the second floor, one should place them in a window which looks out to the street.

Talmud, Shabbat 21b

Evening comes early in winter, filling the streets with darkness and cold. One by one the lights come on. Amid the electrical glare, a warmer, purer glow asserts itself. It is the last week of Kislev, and from the doorways and windows of Jewish homes, Chanukah lights illuminate the night.

"For a mitzvah is a lamp, and Torah, light" (Proverbs 6:23). The essence of our mission in life is to shed light: every time we fulfill a mitzvah we are lighting a lamp, illuminating a world darkened by ignorance and strife with the wisdom and harmony of the Creator.

Every mitzvah is a lamp, but there are two mitzvot whose actual form mirrors their quintessential function. These are the two mitzvot whose fulfillment involves the generation of physical light: the lamps of the menorah, which the Torah instructs to be lit each afternoon in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem; and the Chanukah lights, kindled at nightfall each evening of the eight-day festival of Chanukah.

Indeed, the Chanukah lamps are the offspring of those of the menorah. The mitzvah of lighting the Chanukah lights was instituted by our sages to commemorate the miraculous rebirth of light in the Holy Temple after its suppression, in the 2nd century BCE, by the Hellenist rulers of the Holy Land.

The Temple's menorah was a five-foot high, seven branched-candelabra made of solid gold and topped with seven oil-burning lamps. Its seven flames, fueled by premium olive oil prepared under special conditions of spiritual purity, were the physical expression of the spiritual light which emanated from the Holy Temple. For the Holy Temple in Jerusalem was the epicenter of G-d's manifest presence

in the life of man, the point, says the Talmud, from which light went out to the entire world. In their endeavor to supplant the spirituality of Israel with the paganism of Hellene, the Greeks invaded the Temple, defiled it with their decadent images and rites, and contaminated the oil designated for the kindling of the menorah.

But one family refused to yield to the darkness. Matityahu the Hasmonean and his sons (the Maccabees) rallied a small but determined group of fighters and drove the Greeks from the land. After liberating the Holy Temple and rededicating it to the service of G-d, they searched for ritually pure oil with which to light the menorah. They found a single cruse of oil that had survived defilement by the Greeks. Miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new pure

Chanukah transforms the menorah from a tool that disseminates the light of day into a tool that extracts the luminous essence of darkness itself.

oil could be prepared.

Every winter of the more than 2,100 winters since, we remember and reenact the triumph of light over darkness with the eight flames of the Chanukah menorah.

A Different Menorah

There are, however, several marked differences between the Chanukah menorah and the menorah in the Holy Temple:

a) The Temple menorah was lit during the day (no later than 1-1/4 hours before sunset) and burned through the night. The Chanukah lights are kindled at night. (Immediately after sunset according to the custom of some communities, or after three stars come out, according to the custom of other.)

b) The original menorah stood well indoors, in the inner sanctum of the Holy Temple (called the *Heichal*). The Chanukah menorah is placed at the perimeter of the home, on the outer doorway of one's home or, if one lives on the second floor... in a window overlooking the street.

c) Seven flames burned in the Temple menorah. The Chanukah menorah holds eight lamps, all of which are kindled on the eighth and culminating night of the festival.

Why these dissimilarities? In Torah law, there is a rule-of-thumb that all rabbinical institutions are modeled after their biblical prototypes. So why, in instituting the practice of kindling the Chanukah lights, did our sages so differentiate between them and the lights they come to commemorate?

Standard Operating Procedure

G-d saw the light that it is good, and He separated between the light and the darkness. And G-d called the light day and the darkness He called night; and it was evening and it was morning, one day.

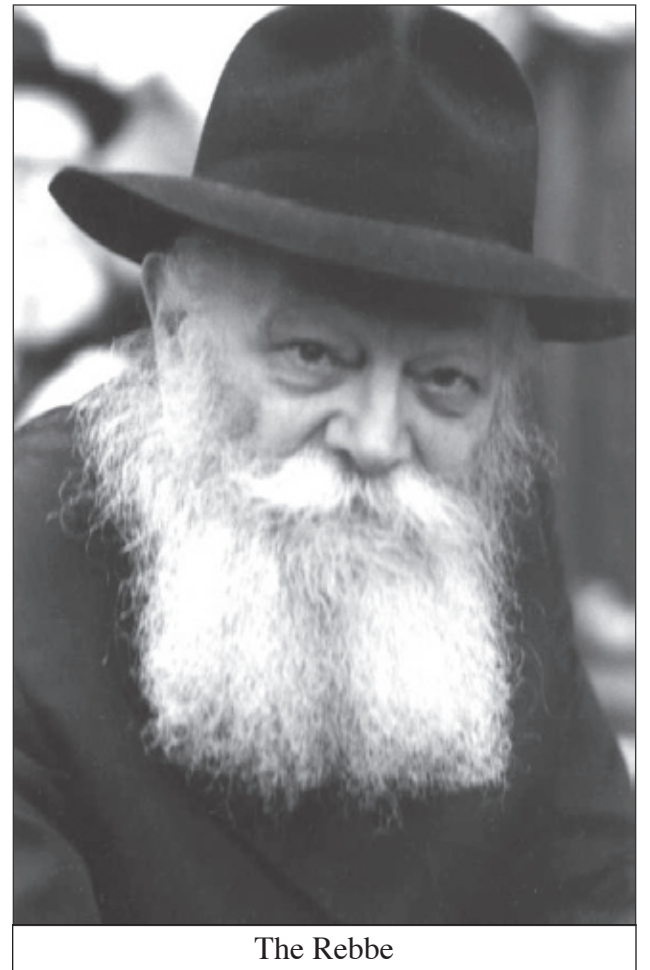
Genesis 1:4-5

In the beginning, darkness and light were one — a single, seamless expression of the goodness and perfection of their Creator. But G-d wanted contrast and challenge in His world. So He separated between light and darkness, between revealed good and concealed good, challenging us to cultivate the day and sublimate the night.

On the most fundamental level, our task is to harness the light of day so that it extends to illuminate the night. We strive to preserve and develop all that is good and G-dly in our world, and to direct these positive forces to overcome and transform the evil and negativity of the dark side of creation. This process was exemplified by the menorah in the Holy Temple: kindled in the light of day, its rays reached deep into the night; kindled in an inner sanctum brimming with divine light, it radiated its glow to the mundane world without.

But there are times when this standard operating procedure is no longer operative. Times when darkness invades the divine lighthouse, extinguishing the menorah and defiling its oil. Times when we can no longer draw from the day to illuminate the night.

At such times, we must turn to the night itself as a source of light. We must search for the hidden single cruse of pure oil, for the undefiled and undefilable essence of creation. We must delve below the surface realities of day and night to unearth



The Rebbe

the primordial singularity of light and darkness.

Therein lies the significance of Chanukah, when the menorah moves from within the Holy Temple out into the street, and from the daytime to the evening. Chanukah transforms the menorah from a tool that disseminates the light of day into a tool that extracts the luminous essence of darkness itself.

More specifically, the lighting of the Temple and Chanukah menorahs, together with the third light-generating mitzvah, the lighting of the Shabbat lights, chart a three-phased progression of light through space and time.

The Temple menorah stood in the holiest place on earth, in the edifice that was the seat of G-d's manifest presence in the physical world. The Shabbat lights find a source of light in a less sacred environment — in the home, a place that embraces both our holy endeavors (Torah study, prayer, acts of charity, etc.) as well as our more mundane activities. Yet the home is our private sanctum; here we are in control, making the task of achieving harmony between the spiritual and material components of home life, if not always easy, then within reasonable reach. The Chanukah lights, however, test the very limits of our light-generating capacities. Placed in the doorway or in a window, they straddle the private and public areas of our lives, the boundary between the home and the street.

In terms of their placement in time, the Temple's menorah was kindled in early afternoon, the Shabbat candles are lit eighteen minutes before sunset, and the Chanukah lights are kindled at or after nightfall. This also corresponds to the sequence of their appearance on the macro-historical level. The Temple menorah came first, in the luminous years when G-d still communicated openly with man; commanded by G-d at Sinai, the mitzvah to kindle the Temple menorah was written into the Torah (Exodus 27:20-21). The Shabbat lights came in later, spiritually darker times, a rabbinical institution designed to foster harmony in the home on the holy day. Most recent in linear time are the Chanukah lights, instituted 21 centuries ago in commemoration of the miracle of Chanukah.

Continued on Page 5

With great sadness Chabad of Binghamton extends heartfelt condolences to our esteemed friend and supporter

Mr. George Rohr,

noted philanthropist and driving force behind the National Chabad on Campus Network, and his father, Mr. Sam Rohr and the entire family, on the loss of their mother and wife,

Mrs. Sarah Rohr *obm*

a true Aishet Chayil.

May you find strength in the continuation of your great deeds and be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

May you enjoy much Nachat, Simchas and Good Health always.

The Rebbe's Army Gathers

The International Conference of Shluchim

In the Courtyard of the Rebbe

B. Olidort

Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz likes to tell about the time he had seven projects on his table, and felt he needed to drop some of them. He wanted the Rebbe's advice on how to prioritize, as he couldn't possibly work on them all.

"In answer to my dilemma," said Steinsaltz, his eyes crinkled with delight at this trenchant anecdote, "the Rebbe gave me yet another project."

If the creative energy of the individual is a reflection of the Divine, it should come as no surprise that the Rebbe saw endless creative potential in the eyes of every human being.

The more they achieved, the more he expected of them. And he demanded this of his *shluchim*, daring them to accelerate their own personal drive to do more, reach higher, probe deeper, always appreciative of their achievements, never satisfied.

The numbers have increased, venues outgrown, and the scope of the program is broad, comprehensive and sophisticated. The issues are more complex today, and the challenges more nuanced. But in substance, the Conference is still about stock-taking and reexamining the interior landscape of the Chasid, the Shliach....

...It's about integrating the love of G-d, of Torah and of the Jewish soul, in every dimension of life.

Productive disquiet of this kind is characteristic of Chabad-*shluchim* and is translated day after day into the wide variety of their activities within disparate and scattered communities everywhere.

Once a year, *shluchim* are offered a bird's-eye view of their collective creative output. Once a year, at the annual International Conference of Chabad *Shluchim*, they get to feel the reverberations of their aggregate energy, and see the dazzling mosaic they complete, unveiled for just a few moments before they move on to a new challenge.

Shluchim choose from a four day menu of thoughtfully planned and professionally presented sessions. They participate in workshops by leading experts in the entire gamut of community building, education, spiritual and social outreach. They learn new strategies and take home a wealth of new applications.

Yet there's an introspective dimension to the Conference as well. *Shluchim* come, they say, to draw and drink from the fountain of their spiritual sustenance. In the courtyard of the Rebbe, the ambient warmth yet inspires those who remember and even those too young to remember. So this year's conference dedicated more time to traditional Chasidic study and "farbrengen" type opportunities, with senior *shluchim* leading.

Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, Chairman of the educational and social services division at Lubavitch Headquarters and of the Conference, remembers the

Rebbe's holiday mood when *Shluchim* would come for the Conference. "He took it very much as his simcha; it was to him as a family reunion." And as family simchas go, the Rebbe was specific about the "family" photograph. He wanted all the *Shluchim* to be in the photo, and he wanted it taken against the backdrop of Lubavitch Headquarters.

Like a proud father, the Rebbe kept the photos on his desk. "The Rebbe saw the Conference — specifically the unity of the *Shluchim*, as a potent mass of spiritual energy with the power to move mountains," Rabbi Krinsky says.

In 1983, Rabbi Manis Friedman, Dean of Bais Chana, the women's yeshiva based in S. Paul, Minnesota, was one of 70 Chabad representatives in the U.S. who had come for a Shabbos with the Rebbe, the first Conference of *Shluchim*. It was relatively, an intimate experience; the issues were more local, the program simpler, the presentation unembellished.

Twenty four years later, Friedman says the focus has not changed.

Of course, the numbers have increased, venues outgrown, and the scope of the program is broad, comprehensive and sophisticated. The issues are more complex today, and the challenges more nuanced. But in substance, says Rabbi Friedman, the Conference is still about stock-taking and reexamining the interior landscape of the Chasid, the *Shliach*.

"It's about how we answer our indebtedness to the Rebbe," says Friedman.

How do we return our debt to the Rebbe?

Rabbi Friedman quotes from the statement by the Baal Shem Tov promising that redemption will follow when certain mystical unifications are achieved.

It's not about letters and numbers and mystical configurations.

It's about integrating the love of G-d, of Torah and of the Jewish soul, in every dimension of life, he explains.

"It's about learning to look at a Jew the way the Rebbe did; to value what is precious and Divine in every individual."

The possibilities thus become truly endless.

And the Conference in the courtyard of the Rebbe becomes an occasion for celebration.

Courtesy of Lubavitch.com



A small portion of the group photo of all the *Shluchim* gathered in front of 770 Eastern Parkway, headquarters of Chabad-Lubavitch

Lubavitch Lay Leaders Gather in New York for Their Own Conference

By Goldy Cohen

"My rabbi is magic," exclaimed Wirley Weiler at the lay leadership portion of the International Conference for Chabad-Lubavitch Emissaries on Sunday.

The annual convention, which ran from Nov. 8 to Nov. 12, drew thousands of emissaries from across the globe to Lubavitch World Headquarters in Brooklyn, N.Y. Before the event's grand banquet, supporters of the emissaries gathered at a Manhattan hotel for a day of workshops, lectures and engaging conversations.

According to the lay leaders themselves, not only were they treated to a delicious luncheon at the Marriot Marquis, but they feasted on a buffet of inspiration.

"I know something about leadership," stated outgoing Israeli naval commander David Ben Ba'ashat, one of the attendees, "and I would recommend [my fellow leaders in the Israeli Defense Force] to come here and see what leadership is. On behalf of the IDF we salute you."

As the crowd broke into a thunderous standing ovation, the sense of unity in purpose and Jewish pride was palpable.

"I know something about leadership," stated outgoing Israeli naval commander David Ben Ba'ashat, one of the attendees, "and I would recommend [my fellow leaders in the Israeli Defense Force] to come here and see what leadership is. On behalf of the IDF we salute you."

"We work together," explained Robert Rosenblum, a supporter of Rabbi Avrohom and Maryashi Sternberg, co-directors of the New London-based Chabad-Lubavitch of Eastern Connecticut. "I'm in the money business and [Rabbi Sternberg] is in the rabbi business. It is my pleasure to feed Chabad's work with as much as I can."

All the visiting community members have found various ways of supporting their Chabad Houses back home, but

one common denominator among them was their affection for the *shluchim*, or Chabad emissaries. "He is like a son to me," added Rosenblum of Sternberg.

Weiler, whose description of the S. Paulo, Brazil-based Rabbi Yosef Motl Malowany may have appeared as rooted in hyperbole, explained that he was serious in calling him "magic." Malowany, he said, gives the rich and the less fortunate equal treatment, displaying a love of every Jew that is rare in today's world.

In a speech to fellow lay leaders, Bozeman, Mont., resident Quincy Daniel OrHai said that his friendship with Rabbi Chaim Bruk, co-director of Chabad-Lubavitch of Montana, has led him in new directions in Jewish observance.

"Twenty years ago, I prayed for direction," recounted OrHai. "Jews everywhere are praying for direction, and *shluchim* are the answers to our prayers."

According to many, their attendance at the conference gave them a new appreciation for the global reach of Lubavitch and the vision of its leader, the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory.

"I am getting a deeper understanding of the Rebbe's world and the job of an emissary," said Sam Shwartzman of West Hills, Calif. He supports Rabbi Avi and Dena Rabin, co-directors of Chabad-Lubavitch in his city.

Adan Shochet of Brussels agreed: "I got a feeling for what Chabad is about in Brussels, but now I get to see the real thing."

For his part, Eli Arnaldes of Tarzana, Calif., said that the conference gave his life a little boost. It "gives a spiritual strength to continue doing the hard work," he said.

Courtesy of chabad.org

From Darkness to Great Light

B. Olidort

On Sunday, November 11 the cavernous space at Pier 94, draped in black velvet with hundreds of tables elegantly decked out to serve 4,300 dinner guests gathered for the banquet session of the Annual Chabad-Lubavitch *Shluchim* conference, and more than a dozen 30-ft flat screens that allowed the guests to follow events on the podium, offered an illustration in brilliant contrast.

It was nearby at Pier 97 some 68 years ago, that the Chabad leader responsible for transferring the headquarters of the war-ravaged Chabad-Lubavitch movement from Europe to the U.S., disembarked the Drottingholm at the New York Harbor, to a small, waiting entourage of Chabad Chasidim.

The name Chabad was then barely known to anyone outside of the observant Jewish community. Upon his arrival in the U.S. Rabbi Joseph. I. Schneerson sent a few of his Chasidim—there were only a few at the time—to begin the arduous task of seeking out Jewish children, and as was often the case, pleading with their parents to allow them to devote a few hours a week to Jewish education.

Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky announced the opening of new Chabad Centers in Anatolia, Turkey; the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; Jackson Hole, Wyoming; the Dominican Republic; Belgrade, Serbia; Iasi, Romania; and Seoul, South Korea.

Few Chabad *Shluchim* find themselves pleading with parents today. Instead, they are constantly expanding and building to accommodate ever growing numbers of Jewish children enrolling in their outstanding pre-schools, Hebrew schools and day schools around the world.

Back then, the Jewish world was still reeling from the Holocaust, and financial support was hard to come by. This year's banquet guests included an eclectic who's who in Jewish philanthropy among them Michael Steinhardt, Gennady Bogolubov, Eduardo Elzstain, Kenneth Abramowitz and many more. Mr. Lev Leviev, the international diamond and real-estate magnate was guest speaker. The subject of a recent New York Times magazine feature, Leviev is the financial

backer of the network of Chabad Ohr Avner schools in the CIS and beyond.

Back then, you could count the number of *Shluchim* on one hand; achievements were measured in the tiniest baby steps. Today, there are roughly 4,500 *Shluchim* worldwide. Growth happens in leaps and bounds: During his speech, Mr. Leviev pledged to add another 100 *Shluchim* in the following year, bringing the number of *Shluchim* in Russia to 400.

Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, Vice Chairman of Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch and Director of the conference, announced the opening of new Chabad Centers in Anatolia, Turkey; the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; Jackson Hole, Wyoming; the Dominican Republic; Belgrade, Serbia; Iasi, Romania; and Seoul, South Korea. He also announced a pledge by the Rohr Family — a three-year commitment to sponsor an additional 50 new Chabad *Shluchim*.

Speaking in Hebrew, Leviev talked of his debt to Chabad-Lubavitch, its Rebbes and its *Shluchim*. "100 years ago," he told his audience, "the Rebbe Rashab [Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber 1860-1920] sent a *Shliach* to Samarkand, to strengthen Jewish life there." But the local community would not cooperate, and turned the young Chabad Chasid away.

"He knew he couldn't return to his Rebbe empty handed," said Leviev. "So he began to collect Jewish children, and formed a *cheder*, with 10 youngsters."

Eventually, most of the Jews of Samarkand were lost through assimilation during the regimes of Lenin and Stalin. But those 10 children remained firmly rooted in their yiddishkeit.

"My grandfather was one of those 10," said Leviev.

"If not for the Chabad *Shliach* at the time, I would not be standing here with you today."

The banquet dinner formally closed the annual four-day conference.

Courtesy of Lubavitch.com

Nightlight, from Page 3

So goes the journey of light: a journey through time and space to ever duskier vistas, to increasingly alien environments; a journey from midday in Jerusalem to the darkest reaches of a world awaiting redemption.

Cycle and Circumference

This is also the significance of the difference between the number of lamps in the Temple and Chanukah menorahs.

Seven is the number of creation. G-d created the world in seven days, employing the seven divine attributes (*sefirot*) which He emanated from Himself to serve as the seven spiritual building blocks of the created reality. Seven is thus the dominant number in all natural cycles and processes. Hence, the standard operating procedure to bring light to the darker corners of creation is associated with the seven-branched menorah of the Holy Temple.

If seven is the cycle of nature, the number eight represents the circumference (*shomer hahekef*) that defines and contains it, the pre-creation reality that both transcends and pervades the created reality. If the seven lamps of the Temple menorah embody the normative process of overriding darkness with light, the eight lamps of the Chanukah menorah represent the endeavor to access a higher reality — a reality in which darkness is but another ray of divine truth.

Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com



Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe disembarks at Pier 97 in Manhattan upon his arrival in the United States in 1940.



Diamond magnate, Mr. Lev Leviev, addresses the crowd at the Banquet session



The *Shluchim* and guests at the banquet burst into exuberant dancing.

The Next Generation



The group photo of the children of *Shluchim* gathered in front of 770 Eastern Parkway. Parallel to the *Shluchim* conference a conference for their sons "the *shluchim* of tomorrow" was held. 500 children from all parts of the world — many from remote locations in which they are the only observant children — gathered for a few days of inspiration, a sense of community and some good old fashioned fun.

CHANUKAH I

Light Up Your Home – Menorah Kindling Calendar and Guide

Kindling the Menorah

Kindle the Chanukah Menorah on each of the eight nights of Chanukah.

Use olive oil or candles large enough to burn until half an hour after nightfall.

Use a Shamesh (service candle) to kindle the lights, and place it in its special place on the Menorah.

Before kindling recite the blessings, and after kindling recite *Hanairos hallolu...* (We kindle these lights...)

All members of the family should be present at the kindling of the Chanukah lights. Students and singles who live in a dormitory or in their own apartments, should kindle a Menorah in their own rooms.

The Chanukah lights are kindled either in the front window or by a doorway.

On Friday afternoon the Chanukah lights (which should burn until 1/2 hour after nightfall) are kindled before the Shabbat candles are lit. From the time the Shabbat candles are lit until Shabbat ends and the Havdalah (separation between Shabbat and week-day) prayer is recited the Chanukah Menorah should not be relit, moved or prepared. After this time the Chanukah lights for Saturday night are kindled.

After kindling the lights recite:

We kindle these lights to commemorate the saving acts, miracles and wonders which You have performed for our forefathers, in those days at this time, through Your holy Kohanim. Throughout the eight days of Chanukah, these lights are sacred, and we are not permitted to make use of them, but only to look at them, in order to offer thanks and praise to Your Great Name for Your miracles, for Your wonders and for Your salvations.

This page contains sacred writings. Please do not desecrate it.

Menorah Kindling Blessings

Before kindling the lights, recite:

1 *Bo-ruch A-toh A-do-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sheer Ki-de-sho-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Ve-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Cha-nu-kah.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Chanukah.

2 *Bo-ruch A-toh A-do-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom She-o-so Ni-sim La-avo-sei-nu Ba-yo-mim Ho-heim Bi-z'man Ha-zeh.*









Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in days of old, at this season.

The following blessing is said only on the first evening (or the first time one kindles the lights this Chanukah):

3 *Bo-ruch A-toh A-do-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom She-he-che-yo-nu Ve-ki-yi-mo-nu Ve-higi-o-nu Liz-man Ha-zeh.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has kept us alive, and has preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Nightfall Dec. 4 - 11 at 5:18 p.m.
Shabbat candle lighting Dec. 7 before 4:14 p.m.
Shabbat ends Dec. 8 after 5:18 p.m.

	Tuesday, Dec. 4 After Nightfall Blessings 1, 2 & 3
	Wed., Dec. 5 After Nightfall Blessings 1 & 2
	Thursday, Dec. 6 After Nightfall Blessings 1 & 2
	Friday, Dec. 7 Before Shabbat Blessings 1 & 2
	Saturday, Dec. 8 After Shabbat and Havdallah Blessings 1 & 2
	Sunday, Dec. 9 After Nightfall Blessings 1 & 2
	Monday, Dec. 10 After Nightfall Blessings 1 & 2
	Tuesday, Dec. 11 After Nightfall Blessings 1 & 2



The festival of Chanukah is about light overcoming darkness. Our world is currently experiencing a particularly dark time. We have become apprehensive, even about opening the letters in our mailbox. Our sons, daughters, friends and neighbors are half way around the world, fighting an enemy that has no borders.

“The soul of man is a lamp of G-d” (Proverbs 23:27). Our challenge,

whether we are on the front lines or fighting rush hour at home, is to bring light into the world. The reason the Chanukah candles are lit after nightfall is to remind us that even in our darkest moments, we have the potential to illuminate if we kindle a flame.

The Greeks were great philosophers. They acknowledged the mitzvot as part of a great culture, and the Torah as a great work of Jewish literature. What they would not tolerate was that “G-d, Creator of the Universe, ordained the practice of these mitzvot.” In the words of the prayer recited on Chanukah, the Greeks set out to have the Jews forget “[G-d’s] Torah,” and to cease observing “[G-d’s] commandments.”

Whenever we do a mitzvah, we become G-d’s autograph on His masterpiece, declaring for all that this is not a jungle where the strong devour the weak. It is a beautiful garden, filled with the light of its Creator.

King Solomon wrote, “Everything has its season ... A time to be born, a time to die ... A time for war, a time for peace” (Ecclesiastes). In Judaism, peace is the ultimate goal. Yet, if one is being attacked, Jewish law forbids a passive stance. Peace and the sanctity of human life requires, at times, that one must defend one’s self, one’s family and one’s country.

Despite the fact that the Maccabees were fewer in strength and in numbers, they stood up against the oppressor with complete faith in G-d’s mercy. One lesson of Chanukah is that when we resolve to introduce spirituality into our lives, G-d assists us well beyond our limitations. G-d tells His children, “Make for Me a small opening, like the eye of a



needle, and I will open for you an opening through which caravans can enter” (Midrash). We simply need to begin the process for G-d to help us attain that which we perceived as unattainable.

Though a person might have a burning desire to be spiritual, a concrete action is needed to ignite a flame. Lacking the oil of genuine substance, one’s passion can quickly fade, failing to introduce any enduring light into the world. A life without mitzvot is like a wick without oil — it yields little or no light.

There are nine branches on the Chanukah menorah, even though Chanukah is celebrated for eight days. The ninth branch is the *shamash*, the “servant” candle, which stands apart from the other candles. This candle is lit so that when we make use of the Chanukah light, we do so from the *shamash*, and not from the eight Chanukah flames. “...These [eight Chanukah] flames are *kodesh* (holy). We are not permitted to make use of them, only to gaze at them” (Chanukah liturgy).

The Hebrew word *kodesh* literally means separate and beyond. In Judaism, although we can appreciate holy objects and observances on many levels, they are essentially higher than our finite understanding and perception, since they are rooted in the Infinite. It was this “holiness” that the Greeks failed to destroy. And it is this holiness that is manifested in the lights of Chanukah.



On Chanukah we celebrate two miracles: the victory of the Maccabees over the forces of Antiochus IV in the battlefield, and the miracle of the oil, which burned for eight days. The victory in the battlefield was miraculous, but it was physical, limited by time and space. The

AN INSIGH



ILLUMINATED

Light Up Your Friends

Do a latke party with a dreidel gaming room and a menorah lighting ritual. It's ethnic, it's hip and it's a great way to assert our identity in a season inundated by the dominant, majority culture.

How to Play Dreidel

The Story: When King Antiochus prohibited the study of Torah, Jews were forced to teach in secret. If one of Antiochus' soldiers would be heard to approach, they would quickly hide their scrolls and take out their dreidels, pretending that all along they were simply gambling.

Fortunately, we don't need to hide and we can use nuts, raisins or Cheerios instead of cash.

The Rules: On the sides of the dreidel are four Hebrew letters: *Nun, Gimmel, Dalet, Hay*.

These stand for the Hebrew words, "*Ness Gadol Haya Sham*." That means, "A great miracle happened there."

1. Everyone contributes equally to the kitty.
2. Take turns spinning the dreidel.

If it lands on:

Nun — do nothing

Gimmel — take the whole kitty

Hay — take half the kitty

Shin — pay into the kitty

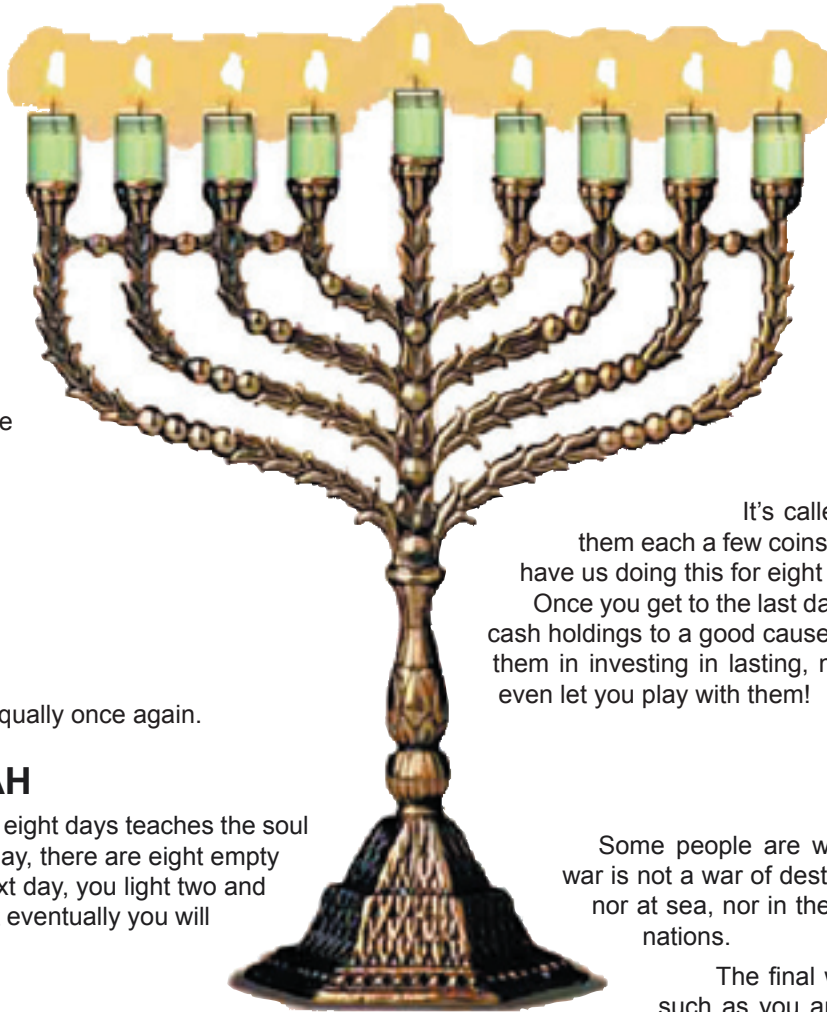
3. If the kitty empties out, everyone contributes equally once again.

THE MENORAH

Just the simple act of lighting a menorah for eight days teaches the soul a deep, wise lesson. Think about it: On the first day, there are eight empty lamps before you. But you only light one. The next day, you light two and the next day yet another. All along, you know that eventually you will light them all.

So here are your lessons:

1. We are lamplighters. Our job in this world is not just to bring in light, but to make others shine with their own light.
2. Each day, we have to bring in more light than we did the day before. Never stand still. Never say, "Now I've made it."
3. Real growth happens step by step.



Lighten Up Your Latkes

Your latkes don't have to be as drenched in oil as your menorah, but we still haven't figured out how to make a real light latke.

Nevertheless, we've miraculously survived this long eating them every year. So keep up the tradition.

You'll need:

- 5 large potatoes, peeled
- 1 large onion
- 4 eggs
- 1/3 cup matzo meal
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/3 cup oil for frying

Grate potatoes and onion on the fine side of a grater, or in food processor, or in blender with a little water added to it. Add eggs and mix well. Add matzo meal and seasoning and mix well. Heat oil in frying pan, then add mixture one tablespoon at a time into frying pan. When golden brown, turn over and brown other side.

Light Up Your Kids

It's called Chanuka Gelt. The kids line up and you give them each a few coins. Parents do it, teachers too. And nowadays, they have us doing this for eight days straight!

Once you get to the last day, teach your kids how to give ten percent of their cash holdings to a good cause. Then take them to a quality toy store and guide them in investing in lasting, meaningful acquisitions. Who knows, they might even let you play with them!

LAST WORD

Some people are waiting for a final, apocalyptic war. But the final war is not a war of destruction and doom. It is not fought on battlefields, nor at sea, nor in the skies above. It is not a war between leaders or nations.

The final war is fought in the heart of each human being, such as you and me. It is fought with the weapons of simple, good deeds and acts of kindness. It is the struggle to fill the

world with inner wisdom as the waters cover the ocean floor, to bring the Moshiach and enlighten humankind.

The final war is the battle of Chanukah and the miracle of light. It is happening now and victory lies at the door.

AT A NIGHT



so many mitzvot in the Torah, all of them involving physical action. When the physical is engaged for spiritual purposes, the conflict is transformed into peace and harmony. A world of peace begins with inner peace. When one makes peace within, it has an effect on his or her home, environment and eventually the entire world.

What does a soul look like? Look at the flame of a candle. A flame is bright, jumping, never resting; the natural desire of a soul is to "jump up" to G-d, to break free of physical limitations. The wick and candle anchor a flame; a physical body grounds the soul, forcing the soul to do its job, to give light and warmth. The human body, precious and holy, is likened to the holy Temple. The Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chassidism, always advised against asceticism, fasts and hurting the body. Better, he would say, to use your body to perform a deed of kindness.

Kindness is contagious. When our soul tells our body to do a kind deed, both the soul and body are affected. Even more, other souls around us awaken and influence their bodies to do the same. Before long, we can create an international epidemic of kindness. This is one reason why the Chanukah menorah is placed where it can be seen from the street, either in the doorway across from the mezuzah or in the window, reminding us of our duty to share the spiritual light of warmth and wisdom with our surroundings.

Chassidic teachings explain that despite any entity that tries to sever our connection to G-dliness, the essence of a soul can

miracle of the oil, which enabled the Jewish people to resume the service in the holy Temple, was spiritual. Jews around the world emulate this miracle and spirituality today by observing Chanukah.

The Chanukah struggle is found within each of us. Chassidic teachings explain that we have two souls. One soul is drawn to the spiritual, the other to the material. We may reconcile this duality by being involved with the material world, but toward a spiritual end. This is one reason why there are



never be defiled. This spark of holiness continuously burns and longs to be fanned into a great flame. The universe was created to perpetuate light, and it is inherently good (Genesis). But there are times when darkness invades G-d's world. At such times, we search for the hidden "single jar of pure oil" (Chanukah liturgy), the pure and indestructible spark of Creation, which radiates goodness and holiness.



However miraculous their victory, some would attribute the Maccabean military success to their superior strategy.

The last night of the holiday is called *Zot Chanukah*, "This is Chanukah." Our Sages explain that "*zot*" refers to something when it is revealed and tangible, "when it can be pointed to with a finger." When the Jewish people witnessed a scientific impossibility, the miracle of the oil, there was no denying G-d's Presence.

Why does G-d perform miracles? Without "miracles," such as the oil found in the holy Temple, one might believe that the laws of physics define reality. However, once we see the inexplicable, we witness a transcendent reality and attain a higher consciousness. We can then look back at physics, point with our finger and realize, "This too is a miracle."

The Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism, teaches that the ultimate miracle is the arrival of Moshiach. At that time, nature itself will uncover its miraculous essence. What is now perceived as a wall between the physical and spiritual will be revealed as a bridge. How can we bring about this miracle? With the light of our collective mitzvot.



Chanukah Eyes: A Mother's Diary

by Ruchama King Feuerman

The fourth night of Chanukah, my husband is late for the candle lighting. My children's unlit clay menorahs are positioned precariously on the radiator. My second daughter, Elana, stares across the street at the neighbor's lawn. The Healys have draped their cedar tree with electric blue lights.

Next door, a deer stands poised with one hoof lifted prettily, as if about to break into a prance. Nearby, a bloated, inflated snowman sways drunkenly in the night air. My six-year-old daughter chews on the end of her plastic dreidel. A wistful look crosses her face. "Why can't we have decorations like that?" she asks.

I remind her how we go "all out" on Sukkot. We have fancy lights, murals painted on the walls, and assorted fruit and tchotchkes hanging from the rafters of our Sukkah. But on Chanukah, I tell her, the menorah is all we've got.

"Can't we have something big?" she begs. "Something pretty, maybe a lamb or a sheep?"

Oh great, I think: a paschal lamb on our porch. But that's the wrong holiday. I gaze down at our rickety display of homemade menorahs. I know they can't compete with Mrs. Healy's Christmas tree, the dazzling strings of light and the candy canes and wreaths dangling from telephone poles, not to mention jolly Ole Santa and all the treats in his mysterious fat bag. I guess my daughter wants a swankier holiday.

Across the street, I see a family at the window putting a match to their oil menorah. I look at my watch. It's time to light, but my husband won't be home for a good half hour.

"Come on, kids," I suddenly decide. "Let's go on a menorah hunt."

I want to tell my daughter how the world tries to grab you with its fancy big lights. They are powerful, and they'll dazzle you for sure. But the light of the menorah is subtle, it gradually envelops you, and the more you look at it, its inner loveliness will sneak up and take your soul by surprise.

The kids are game. We pack into our minivan. "Fifty menorahs," I say. "After we find 50 lit menorahs, we go home to light our own." There. That'll pass the time. They press their faces to the window. "There's one," my daughter Elana points. My son easily spots another two. "I see it, I see it," my youngest one crows, waving her fist. The numbers quickly add up. No surprise there. We live in a Jewish neighborhood in New Jersey. My son hits the jackpot with five menorah houses, back to

back, belly to belly.

"This is too easy," he scoffs. I think he's right, and I make a left and a right, and go on a long stretch that turns into a different, more ritzy—dare I say WASPy?—neighborhood. Here, electric lights blaze forth from every house. Multicolored reindeers poke their hooves into welltended zoysia grass. There are elves or maybe fawns lurking near Holly bushes, and Santas and

like the Maccabees who found that one last vial of oil to light the menorah, we all whoop and cheer. As we make our way back home, we spot another two menorahs, each one a victory. In our own neighborhood, we easily pick up six houses here, seven houses there, surpassing the number of 50 by the time we arrive home.

When we come inside, my husband is pouring olive oil into



sleighs clumped around rhododendrons. There are unusual shadow and light displays; some are actually artistic. My kids grow silent at all the holiday splendor.

"Where are all the menorahs?" my son wonders out loud.

"So many Santas," Elana observes. I wonder when it was she stopped calling Santa the big red Zeide.

"Keep looking," I say tersely. I turn left, then right.

Aren't I setting up the kids for disappointment? Christmas is everywhere. They're at the age when they're starting to realize how few of us we are. And in fact, my older daughter says, "How come there's so little of us?"

"Yes, we're little," I agree. "So what? Chanukah celebrates the victory of the few over the many. The few are also strong."

But my daughter, steeped in a Jewish education, counters, "God said we'd be many. 'You shall be as numerous as the stars of the heaven,'" she quotes.

Suddenly Elana shouts, "I see a menorah!" Our heads turn. "Where, where?" and she points proudly. There indeed it is, sitting in the window of what looks to be someone's kitchen. On either side of the house is a fantastic network of lights and sleighs and an illuminated nativity scene. And in between sits a dignified little menorah on a Jewish window sill. Feeling

like the Maccabees who found that one last vial of oil to light the menorah, we all whoop and cheer. As we make our way back home, we spot another two menorahs, each one a victory. In our own neighborhood, we easily pick up six houses here, seven houses there, surpassing the number of 50 by the time we arrive home.

I sit now on the couch and try to keep my gaze on the lights. It's amazing to me how dreidels and sufganiot and potato latkes can keep my kids happily occupied. It feels restful here, watching. While the candles burn, women aren't supposed to be working anyway—to honor the extra role women had in the miracle of Chanukah. I let my eyes take their fill while my husband fries more latkes.

Elana wanders over to the radiator and looks across the street at the neighbor's fancy holiday decorations.

I say to her in a quiet voice, "Look at our candles, look closely and tell me what you see."

She stares for a long time, her big brown eyes grave and finally tells me. The flames are shaped like arrows, they point upward, there's a dark blue in the center, the flames keep moving here and there but are held in place by the wick, they're tiny and they're beautiful to look at. Then she adds, "The flames are arrows pointing to heaven."

The image delights me, and she seems pleased, too, but then I see her eyes return to the window, to the pretty lights across the street.

I want to tell my daughter how the world tries to grab you with its fancy big lights. They are powerful, and they'll dazzle you for sure. But the light of the menorah is subtle, it gradually envelops you, and the more you look at it, its inner loveliness will sneak up and take your soul by surprise. That's what I want to say, but why say anything? She's only six.

She'll find out. "The fact is, Christmas lights are pretty," I say out loud.

She nods, taking in my words, relieved, it seems, that I agree with her.

My husband likes to say about fireworks that no matter how spectacular, you can't look at the show for more than an hour. At a certain point the fireworks seem gaudy, a little much for the eyes. But you never get tired of gazing at the stars.

My daughter yawns and I pat the space on the couch beside me. I realize I have let my eyes drift away from the candles. "Come back, let's look at the menorah," I say. She curves in next to me, her eyes tired and a little dreamy, while my own eyes blink and strain to see what she saw, little arrows of light pointing to the sky.

Ruchama King Feuerman is a novelist, book coach and writing instructor.

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**Are you a Parent who is CURIOUS?
An Alumnus who is NOSTALGIC?
A Friend who wants to LEARN MORE?
A Student who wants to check what's up
NOW?**

Visit our Chabad Website at
www.chabadofbinghamton.com

A Miracle In The Seventh Year

We work six days, and the seventh day, Shabbat, is consecrated to G-d, a day to spiritually refresh and reconnect with our Creator.

In a similar vein, every seventh year is holy; the Shemittah (Sabbatical) year is a year devoted to strengthening our bond with G-d, and specifically to honing our faith in His omnipotence and our trust in His kindness.

This year, the year 5768 since creation (Sept. 13, 2007-Sept. 29, 2008), is a Shemittah year. Below we present the first hand account of shemita observance as related by a farmer in Israel.

My name is Dov Weiss, and I was one of a group of about thirty young men that started the moshav (agricultural settlement) of Komemiyut, in the south of Israel. It was in 1950, after we had completed our army service. I was still a bachelor then. Among the founders was also the well known Torah scholar and rabbinical authority, Rabbi Benyamin Mendelson, of blessed memory. He had previously immigrated to Israel from Poland and had served as the rabbi of Kfar Ata.

At first we lived in tents, in the middle of a barren wilderness. The nearest settlements to ours were several kibbutzim associated with the left-wing Shomer Hatzair movement: Gat, Gilon, and Negvah. Several of our members supported themselves by working at Kibbutz Gat, the closest to us, doing different types of manual labor. Others worked in our fields, planting wheat, barley, rye and other grains and legumes. I myself drove a tractor. Our produce, which grew throughout the 15,000 or so dunam (nearly 4000 acres) allotted us, we sold to bakeries and factories.

That year, the rains were late in coming. The farmers from all the kibbutzim and moshavim gazed upward longingly for the first rain. They began to feel desperate, but the heavens were unresponsive, remaining breathlessly still and blue.

Finally it rained. When? The day after we completed planting our thousand dunam of wheat fields with those wormy seeds, the sky opened up and the rains exploded down to saturate the parched earth.

At that time, there were not yet water pipes reaching our moshav. We had to content ourselves with what could be grown in dry rugged fields. Every few days we would make a trip to Kibbutz Negvah, about 20 kilometers distant, to fill large containers with drinking water.

The second year we were there, 5711 on the Jewish calendar (1950-1951), was the shmittah year which comes every seventh year in which

the Torah commands to desist from all agricultural work. We were among the very few settlements in Israel at the time to observe the laws of the Sabbatical year and refrain from working the land. Instead, we concentrated on building and succeeded that year in completing much of the permanent housing. The moshav gradually developed and expanded and more and more families moved in, as well as a number of young singles. By the end of the year we numbered around eighty people.

As the Sabbatical year drew to its completion we prepared to renew our farming activities. For this we required seed to sow crops, but for this purpose we could only use wheat from the sixth year, the year that preceded the shmittah, for the produce of the seventh year is forbidden for this type of use. We went around to all the agricultural settlements in the area, near and far, seeking good quality seed from the previous years' harvest, but no one could fulfill our request.

All we were able to find was some old wormy seed that, for rea-

some dark, murky corner.

"If you really want it, you can take all that you like, and for free, with our compliments," they offered in amusement.

We consulted with Rabbi Mendelson. His response was: "Take it. The One who tells wheat to sprout from good seed can also order it to grow from inferior wormy leftover seed as well."

In any case, we didn't have an alternative. So we loaded all the old infested seed that the kibbutz had offered to us free of charge onto a tractor and returned to Komemiyut.

The laws of shemittah forbade us to plough and turn over the soil till after Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the eighth year, so we didn't actually sow the seed until sometime in November. This was two or three months after all the other farmers had already completed their planting.

That year, the rains were late in coming. The farmers from all the kibbutzim and moshavim gazed upward longingly for the first rain. They began to feel desperate, but the heavens were unresponsive, remaining breathlessly still and blue.

Finally it rained. When? The day after we completed planting our thousand dunam of wheat fields with those wormy seeds, the sky opened up and the rains exploded down to saturate the parched earth.

The following days we were nervous in anticipation but we turned our attention to strengthening our faith and trust in G-d. Anyway, it did not take a long time for the hand of the Al-mighty to be revealed clearly to all. Those wheat fields that were planted during the seventh year, months before the first rain, sprouted only small weak crops. At the same time, our fields, sowed with the old infested seed and long after the appropriate season, were covered with an unusually large and healthy yield of wheat, in comparison to any standard.



The story of "the miracle at Komemiyut" spread quickly. Farmers from all the agricultural settlements in the region came to see with their own eyes what they could not believe when they heard the rumors about it.

When the farmers from Kibbutz Gat arrived, they pulled a surprise on us. After absorbing the sight of the bountiful quantity of wheat flourishing in our fields, they announced they wanted payment for the tractor-load of old rotten wheat they had scornfully given us for free only a short time before.

Even more startling: they said they would file a claim against us at a beit din, a rabbinical court, and with Rabbi Mendelson himself, no less! They must have figured that in a secular court such a claim wouldn't have even the slightest possible chance of gaining them a single penny.

Rabbi Mendelson accepted their case seriously, and in the end judged that we should pay them. He explained that the reason they gave it for free was because they thought it worthless for planting, while in truth it really was excellent for that purpose. We were astonished to hear his ruling, but needless to say, we complied.

The whole story became an extraordinary kiddush Hashem (glorification of G-d) in the eyes of Jews across the country. Everyone agreed it was a clear fulfillment of G-d's promise in the Torah (Leviticus 25):

Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruit. But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath for G-d...

And if you shall say: "What shall we eat in the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our produce!" But I will command my blessing upon you...

Editor's note:

Today, Komemiyut is world famous for its high-quality shmura matzah (lit. "matzah that has been watched") -- round, hand-made matzah prepared under exacting supervision from the time the wheat is harvested through the end of the baking to guard against the minutest moisture.

Translated-adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the Hebrew weekly Sichat HaShavua. Rabbi Tilles is co-founder of ASCENT OF SAFED, and editor of Ascent Quarterly and the Ascent and KabbalaOnline websites.

Courtesy of Chabad.org

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Chabad HAPPENINGS



Supper with Soul

Chabad House is alive with the sounds of learning Torah at the numerous classes offered every day, all day.



Knead a Break? The **Challah Baking** workshop is a perennial favorite!



The Chabad House on the West Side has been enjoying special themed Shabbat including **Shabbos Sushi, Mexican Shabbat** and an **Italian themed Shabbat** for which this team was hard at work preparing.



Chabad students enjoyed a glorious day **Apple Picking!**



Chodesh Circle Events

Chabad ladies enjoy a special time together each month at our Chodesh Circle events. For Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan participants enjoyed make-overs, lots of samples and a thought provoking presentation on inner beauty by Yael Lewin.

On Rosh Chodesh Kislev participants enjoyed a multi-media presentation on the evolution of courtship and dating practices in America and a thought provoking discussion on the topic of the dating scene on campus today. Joy Mushabac, MSW, presented and led the discussion.



Ashkefardic Night – an evening of cultural delight took Chabad House by storm!

A large and enthusiastic crowd enjoyed a dazzling array of ethnic foods, music, dancing, henna tattoos and the special ambience. Students spoke of their family backgrounds relating the history of the Jews around the world through a personal lens.



Chabad HAPPENINGS



Chabad Games It!

On Saturday night, October 13, Chabad took over a Game-It gaming complex evening for an event that featured Laser Tag, a blazing fast batting cage and ever-popular miniature golf. Air hockey was also a huge draw, with heated matches throughout the night. Some nostalgic gamers enjoyed the tunnels, tubes and slides. All in attendance had a fantastic time.

Putting up the **biggest, coolest and warmest Sukkah** in Broome County took a lot of work and effort which was all worth it as hundreds of students enjoyed meals, Jazzukah and hanging out under the stars during the Sukkot holiday, not to mention the popular **Pizza in the Hut** on Monday and Thursday!



Jazzukah!

Hundreds of students filled the Chabad Sukkah for an outstanding evening of great food, music and fun. Mouth-watering Ribs and side dishes, music and jamming plus good old fashioned shmoozing had everyone agreeing that this is a MUST repeat.

Students enjoyed the post **Yom Kippur Break the Fast** co-sponsored with Hillel.



Chabad's Sukkahs on the Move

Shakin' it up on Campus!

Hundreds of students at BU shook the Lulav and Etrag each day at the Chabad pop up sukkot which were set up around campus and in the Sukkah Mobile which travelled across the university and to off-campus housing locations. Shake, shake, shake; we're bringing mitzvos on the spot to people on the go!

For many more pictures of these and other Chabad activities, please see our website:

www.ChabadofBinghamton.com

Chabad HAPPENINGS



The twelfth annual **Piaker Memorial Lecture** featured a talk by journalist **Barbara Sofer** titled *Jerusalem beyond the Matrix: Hope and Healing Amidst the Paradoxes*. Sofer, a Jerusalem resident, spoke with deep feeling, humor and keen observation about

the uniqueness of Israel, especially Jerusalem, and the unrivaled beauty to be found in life there even amidst the darkness of the political turmoil. Sofer kept her audience spell bound and presided over a lively question and answer exchange.



The **Annual Women's League of Chabad's Salute to Jewish Womanhood** featured a presentation by noted Talmud scholar **Dr. Deena Zimmerman** of Jerusalem, Israel.

Titled "Tasting from the Tree of Life; Women and Torah Study Today," Zimmerman's talk was a guided study in Talmudic texts spiced with personal observations and experiences. The program also served as this year's Inter-sisterhood event for Beth David and Temple Concord. "It was a delightful evening of community and bonding as well as a stimulating and informative talk," said Rivkah Slonim.

Chabad Alumni News

Mazel Tovs!

Class of '90

■ Chaya (Cindy Schwartz) and Ed Harris announce the birth of their daughter Ahuva Adele on August 16th, 2007. She was welcomed home by older siblings Aryeh Moshe, Kayla, Yaakov, and Tehila Bracha.

Class of '95

■ Marc Brown announces his engagement to Shira Pringle; A late spring/early summer 2008 wedding is planned. Marc is currently working as a senior associate at Phillips Lytle LLP in Buffalo, New York. Shira works as a family physician and hospitalist at North York General Hospital in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. They will make their home in Buffalo, New York.

Class of '97

■ Jeff and Diane Rosenberg announce the birth of their daughter Leah Yocheved (Lilah Jessica) on October 9, 2007. She was welcomed home by big brother Andy.

Class of '98

■ Michelle Glater announces her engagement to Rabbi Avi Epstein; a wedding is planned for December 30th 2007. Michelle is a Clinical Pharmacist Specialist for Pediatrics and Neonatology at Saint Vincent's Hospital of Manhattan. Avi is the Rabbi of Congregation Beit Hillel of Flatlands and also teaches at Shaare Zion in Queens. They will make their home in Brooklyn.

Class of '99

■ Dr. Eleanor Spumberg announces her engagement to Larry Gold; a November 2008 wedding is planned. Eleanor is completing her psychiatry residency at Westchester Medical Center; Larry is working as a financial accountant for American International Group in New York City. They plan to make their home in Westchester.

Class of '00

■ John and Jane Brophy announce the birth of their son, Micah Gabriel. He was welcomed home by older siblings Samuel Eitan and Aaron Yehuda.

Class of '01

■ Jane and John Brophy announce the birth of their son Micah Gabriel. See '00 for complete details.

Class of '03

■ Pamela Szalavetz and Eric Pollock announce their marriage on July 29, 2007 in Brooklyn, NY. Pamela received her MA in Dance and Dance Education from NYU and is a Dance Educator at Poly Prep Country Day School in Brooklyn, NY. Eric is the Director of Market research for Kinray Inc. in Whitestone, NY. They have made their home in Brooklyn Heights, NY.

■ Dudi and Erica Fish announce the birth of their son Lev Yamin, on August 25th, 2007.

Class of '04

■ Mike Boxer and Shira Axelrud announce their engagement. Mike is an Administrative Director at Transcontinental Music Publications and a freelance musician. Shira teaches Hebrew at Rodeph Sholom School and is completing a Master's degree in School of Psychology at Touro College.

■ Jasmin Kovarsky announces her marriage to Austin Hai on November 4 2007. Jasmin works at Empyrean Capital Partners in Operations. Austin owns a remanufactured fitness equipment business. They will make their home in Los Angeles.

■ Yaron Markfeld and Natalie Benhamou announce their engagement. Yaron is a third year Medical student at St. Matthew's University; Natalie is a third year student at the St. Louis School of Law. They hope to get married in Spring '09.

Class of '06

■ Natalie Benhamou and Yaron Markfeld announce their engagement. See '04 for full details.

Class of '06

■ Shira Axelrud and Mike Boxer announce their engagement. See '04 for complete details.

■ Justin Myrowitz and Rebecca Robart announce their engagement; a June 2008 wedding is planned. Justin is in a joint program at Baltimore Hebrew University for an MA in Jewish Communal Service and at University of Maryland Baltimore County for an MA in Public Policy. Rebecca is currently at Johns Hopkins's School of Public Health for Nutrition. They plan on making their home in Baltimore.

Send us your Mazel Tovs so we can share them with the world!!