

chai TIMES

CHABAD HOUSE ■ **JEWISH STUDENT CENTER** ■ **BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK**
 Serving the Community through Education and Inspiration Nissan 5765 April 2005 Vol. 19, No. 5

in the NEWS

Graduation Weekend Festivities

Chabad House will hold Friday night and Shabbat services and festive meals for Seniors and their families during Graduation weekend, May 13-15. On Friday night services will begin at 7pm followed by a full course Shabbat dinner. Saturday morning services will begin at 9:30 followed by lunch. On Sunday, Chabad House will host an open house brunch for graduates, their families and friends from 10am-2pm.

Reservations for the weekend festivities should be made by calling the Chabad House at (607) 797-0015 or e-mail asonim@chabadofbinghamton.com

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Applications are now being accepted for the Ivy League Torah Study Program, an intensive summer Jewish studies program designed for collegiates with high achievements and limited Judaic studies background. Qualified applicants earn a stipend of up to \$1200 in addition to room, board and entrance into the study program. Held on a campsite in the Catskill Mountains the program offers students a rich program of studies in subjects such as Bible, Jewish Law, History and Philosophy. The program includes lectures, peer study sessions, hand on workshops and field trips. The program for women runs from June 21 to August 1; the men's program runs from June 21 to August 4. For full details, including dates for men and women's program and to download an application, visit the website at www.iltsp.com

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Tenth Annual Shabbat 1000 at BU

For the tenth year running, the Binghamton University Jewish community is once again preparing for its most ambitious project of the year: Shabbat for a Thousand. As implied by its name, the event slated for Friday, April 8, beginning 7:00 PM in the East Gym, aims to gather one thousand Jewish students together to enjoy a Shabbat dinner. The program, which includes a free, delicious Shabbat dinner, Jewish songs, Shabbat rituals and plenty of spirit, is a joint effort of all the Jewish groups on campus: the Chabad House Jewish Student Center, Hillel-JSU and the Jewish Heritage Program. Annually, the program receives a special grant from the Elaine Heumann Memorial Foundation.

But it takes much more than those organizations and the students already active in leadership capacities to ensure the success of this project. "We are empowering each and every student who cares about Jewish life on campus to reach out — or in — to their social circles and bring their friends, many of whom might not come without a personal invitation, explained Josh Diamond and Meeka Levin, Chabad co-presidents. "We're looking for people to bring peers from their classes, fraternities and sororities, dorms, professional groups, sport teams or any other of their

varied involvements."

"Our campus has a tremendously vibrant Jewish life but there are still many Jewish men and women who are not connected Jewishly at all. This is a wonderful way to change that," said Rabbi Aaron Slonim. "When we started this project, my hope was that we would spark a national trend. We have indeed succeeded both on our campus and in the duplication of this effort by Chabad and Hillel Houses across the states. Still each year, we try harder than ever before to reach yet further out and in, in our effort to reach the thousand number goal and beyond."

"The opportunity of bringing so many students together for Shabbat dinner shows both the variety and the unity of the Jewish students on this campus", said Gary Coleman, Hillel Director.

"We don't realize what a gift we have today — the ability to freely and publicly gather as Jews to share with one another the precious gift of Shabbat. Many of our grandparents' generation, members of our own families, lost their lives because of the very Jewishness that we are able to celebrate today," said Jamie Mittleman, assistant JHP Fellow. "Last year we had close to 1200 students attend. This year we are looking to

surpass that number," stated Rivkah Slonim. "We only dreamed of this in 1995; now we are looking to reach the Chai-1800 number in the next few years!"

At Shabbat 1000, tables of ten are hosted by students who bring their group of friends to this special evening; two people can host a table together. If you are interested in acting as a host for this event, please call the Chabad office at 797-0015 or e-mail asonim@binghamton.edu.



Chabad to Host Community Seders Shmurah Matzah and Full Array of Passover Needs Available

Chabad House will host Passover Seders open to the community and BU students remaining in Binghamton over the holiday. The first Seder will take place Saturday, April 23. The Second Seder will be held on Sunday, April 24; both nights the Seders will begin at 8:45pm. The Seders will be held at the Chabad House, 420 Murray Hill Road in Vestal. The Seders will be conducted in the traditional manner with explanations of the *haggadah* and the rich tapestry of customs. It will include hand-made Shmura matzah, a variety of wines, all of the symbolic foods

and ritual items and a full course dinner. The *haggadah* will be read in Hebrew and English with participation of all present. "Our Seders are open to anyone who wants to attend a traditional Seder and no previous knowledge or level of observance is required," explained Rabbi Aaron Slonim, director of the Chabad House. "Be prepared to be welcomed just as you are, as part of a warm family."

There is no charge for the Seders; however, donations to the Chabad House (received prior to or after the holiday) are appreciated. To make reservations or for further information call the Chabad House office at 797-0015.

Chabad House is also making available, free of charge, detailed holiday guides which include forms for the sale of *chametz*. Available for purchase through the Chabad House book and resource center is: hand-made Shmura Matzah (while the supply lasts), *bedikat chametz* sets and a full selection of *haggadot*, the Passover guide by Rabbi Blumenkrantz, holiday cookbooks, video and audio tapes for children as well as

a selection of Passover Judaica, and matzah and *afikomen* bags. To order Shmura Matzah or for a gift shop appointment, call the Chabad office at 797-0015.


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Parents or friends who wish to sponsor the graduation issue of the Chai Times in honor of their special graduate should send \$36 with the name of graduate and wording for the dedication to the Chabad House 420 Murray Hill Road, Vestal, NY 13850. Dedications must be received by the Chabad House before Tuesday, April 26.

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from the DIRECTORS

The Bitter and the Sweet

Very soon, Jews everywhere, will gather around their tables with family and friends to conduct the age old Seder, the precise order of rituals interspersed with recitation of liturgy, in which we recall our exodus from Egypt.

While the Seder is a celebratory affair in which we remember our liberation from slavery, its rituals are designed to capture, just as fully, the sorrow and anguish that preceded the joyous crescendo. In Egypt, and in later generations as well, the Jews were enjoined to eat the Paschal lamb with both Matzah, a symbol of our hasty deliverance from Egypt, as well as Moror, bitter herbs, the symbol of our long and harsh oppression. This same dichotomy is mirrored in the Seder rituals today. Our Seders include festive elements: the drinking of wine, the sumptuous meal and the reclining by participants, all of these are symbols of emancipation. But they are intertwined with the poignant: the salt water which is reminiscent of the many tears shed during the slavery, the Charoset, which reminds us of the mortar with which the Jews in Egypt toiled, and of course the bitter herbs. Why the need to include the negative components; is that not overridden by our freedom, obscured by our joyous liberation? Is it not time to forget, to quit wallowing in the misery that was, and focus instead on salvation?

The answer lies in understanding the true nature of the Seder experience. A Jewish festival is much more than a time to get together with family, eat, and catch up on the news. Every Jewish holiday has a particular theme and lesson. It is a time to strengthen a distinct component of our relationship with G-d by drawing on a unique celestial energy that fills the world only at that time. Passover, however, demands even more: we are enjoined by our sages to quite literally, relive the exodus: "Each person is obligated to see himself as having left Egypt." Far from being a passive experience, the Seder is meant to be an organic, pro-active spiritual exercise in leaving our personal bondage and constraints to arrive at a place far more expansive and exalted. And that is

possible only by including the bitter along with the sweet, the bad and the good, the painful as well as the joyous.

By definition, growth implies hardship, gain presupposes an element of pain, exultation means risking and overcoming adversity. To deny this is unrealistic at best and dishonest at worst. Which is why, every year in our re-enactment of the exodus, we have at our Seder the symbols of hardship and oppression. It is not merely to remember what was; it is most importantly, to remember what is. In identifying the "negative" we accomplish two things: We acknowledge those aspects of life of which we seek to rid ourselves; we recognize that which can be harmful and that which we must work to distance from our experience. At the same time, we comprehend that life presents all kinds of challenges which if dealt with correctly, are opportunities for growth. Seen in this light, our ongoing "Seder," the order of our lives, is not at all diminished by the sting of setback or the affliction of occasional failure. In fact it is enriched by our ability to transform these situations and use them as launching pads for ever greater success and happiness.

Until the Messianic era, there will always be elements of negativity mixed in with the good, Passover is about learning how to liberate ourselves from those components by seeing each difficulty as a challenge to greater and deeper growth.

This Passover as we gather with our loved ones, let us pray for a Seder that is more than meaningful, illuminating and inspiring. We hope for the ultimate: a Seder in which the bitter herbs are symbolic only. We pray for a Jerusalem that is restored and rebuilt; Jerusalem in which all Jews are gathered in a world perfected, redeemed and at peace. Jerusalem, where there is only the festive, the joyous and the free!

From our house to yours we extend our very best wishes for a *Chag Kosher V'sameach!*

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TORAH thoughts

Adapted from the Works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

The Vegetarian Era

Rabban Gamliel said: *Whoever did not speak of the following three things (at the seder) on Passover, has not fulfilled his obligation (to relate the story of the Exodus). These are: the Passover offering, matzah, and maror.*

- Haggadah

On Passover we were freed from the taskmaster's whip and set on the road to becoming a people sovereign in their land. But the Exodus was more than a transition from slavery to independence: it was a liberation from the confines of the corporeal to the infinite expanses of spirit.

We were taken from the most materialistic and promiscuous society on earth ("the depravity of the land") to a covenant with G-d as His "kingdom of priests and holy people." We were not, however, transformed into a flock of angels or a community of disembodied souls. We remained physical beings, inhabiting a body and indentured to its needs.

How, then, is the Jew to regard his own physicality? Is it a mere tool, to be used but never indulged? Should it be provided only with the bare minimum it needs to hold the soul and support its spiritual pursuits, or is there value or even virtue in the experience of physical pleasure and the enhancement of physical life with objects of luxury and beauty?

The Torah's view on the matter appears to be mixed.

On the one hand, we find expressions of a decidedly "ascetic" approach to life. The Talmud interprets the verse, "be holy," as a commandment to "abstain also from that which is permissible to you," and warns against being "a hedonist with the Torah's permission" who indulges in every permissible pleasure.

The Ethics of the Fathers declares: "This is the way of Torah: Eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure, sleep on the ground, and live a life of hardship." And the first thing that chasidim coming to study under the tutelage of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi were told was: "What is forbidden, one must not; what is permitted, one need not."

On the other hand, the Torah admonishes the *nazir* (one who vows to abstain from wine), "Is what the Torah has forbidden not enough, that you assume further prohibitions upon yourself?" and calls him a "sinner" for having deprived himself of one of G-d's

blessings. "Man," says the Talmud, "is obligated to say: 'The entire world was created for my sake; and I was created to serve my Creator.'" So not only the necessities of life, but the entirety of creation - including those elements whose sole human utility is to make life more pleasurable - can, and should, serve a life devoted to the service of its Creator. Our sages go so far as to say that "a person will have to answer for everything that his eye beheld and he did not consume."

Bread, Vegetable and Meat

One approach to the resolution to this paradox can be found in the three primary symbols of the Exodus: the Passover offering, matzah, and maror (the "bitter herb").

All three are foods, and - eating being the most physical of human departments - can be seen as representative of the various areas of physical life.

Matzah, the humble "bread of poverty," represents the bare necessities of life. The Passover offering, a yearling lamb or kid slaughtered in the *Beit Hamikdash* (Holy Temple), roasted whole, and eaten at the seder - luxuries whose function is solely to give pleasure. Maror, a vegetable, represents a middle ground between these two extremes: more than the minimalist bread, less than the sumptuous meat.

A further examination of the three seder staples yields another interesting distinction between them.

Ever since the *Beit Hamikdash* was destroyed, we have been unable to bring the Passover offering; today, it is present at the seder table only in the form of the uneaten, purely commemorative, *zeroah* ("shankbone") placed on the upper right-hand corner of the seder plate. We eat the maror, but it, too, is not the fullfledged Passover mitzvah it was at the time that the *Beit Hamikdash* stood in Jerusalem. According to Torah-law, the bitter herb is to be eaten as an accompaniment to the meat of the Passover offering; when there is no Passover offering, there is no biblical commandment (mitzvah *mide'oraita*) to eat it. Nevertheless, our sages decreed that the maror should be eaten on the first night of Passover in commemoration of the "real" maror commanded by the Torah. The only one of the three Passover foods that has the full status of a mitzvah *mide'oraita* today is the matzah.

"From the day that the *Beit Hamikdash* was destroyed," say our sages, "it was decreed that the homes of the righteous should be in ruins... The servant need not be better off than the master." As long as G-d remains homeless, expelled from His manifest presence in the life of man, the Jew, too, is a stranger in the material world.

In essence, matter is no less a creation of G-d, and no less capable of

serving and expressing His truth, than spirit; but in times of dimmed divine presence, the substantiality of the physical all too readily obscures rather than reveals its G-dly essence. In such times, we must limit our involvement with the material, lest our immersion in its density dull our spiritual senses and blur the divine objectives of our lives.

Thus, no Passover offering is possible in the spiritually opaque world we presently inhabit: dealing with the bare bones of physicality is challenge enough without the meat of opulence clogging our lives. Indeed, as seen from the most basic vantage point on life (i.e. the *mide'oraita* perspective), only the austere matzah is needed; anything beyond that is a foray into hostile territory whose risks rival its potential rewards.

Nevertheless, our Sages have opened a tract of this territory to exploration and development, empowering us to make positive and G-dly use of much of physical life. While steering clear of the overtly superfluous "meat," they broadened our physical fare to include "vegetables"-physical goods and experiences that, while not of the strictest necessity, are more of a need than a luxury.

"Meat," however - pleasure for the sake of pleasure - remains out of bounds, constituting a degree of involvement with materiality that cannot be dealt with in our era of spiritual darkness.

Indeed, a clear distinction must also be drawn between the "bread" and "vegetable" realms: maror is a bitter vegetable, emphasizing the fact that whenever our material involvements extend beyond life's strictest necessities, they constitute a most difficult and trying challenge, demanding a greater degree of vigilance not to allow the means to obscure the end.

Where Are We Heading?

None of this means that the Jew regards the physical as evil or irredeemable.

On the contrary, he knows that "meat" was, and will again be, a basic component of the seder. He knows that in the proper spiritual environment, the



The Rebbe

most physical of experiences can be as pure an expression of the G-dly essence of existence as the most sublime prayer. And it is this knowledge that enables him to keep the proper perspective on whatever aspect of physical life he is able to handle under his present circumstances.

The story is told of the visitor who, stopping by the home of Rabbi Dovber of Mezheritch, was outraged by the poverty he encountered there. The great chassid's home was bare of all furnishing, save for an assortment of rough wooden boards and blocks that served as benches for Rabbi Dovber's students during the day and as beds for his family at night.

"How can you live like this?" demanded the visitor. "I myself am far from wealthy, but at least in my home you will find, thank G-d, the basic necessities: some chairs, a table, beds for the children..." "Indeed?" said Rabbi Dovber. "But I don't see any of your furnishings. How do you manage without them?"

"What do you mean? Do you think that I carry all my possessions along with me wherever I go? When I travel, I make do with what's available. But at home? A person's home is a different matter altogether!" "Ah, yes," said Rabbi Dovber. "At home, it is a different matter altogether..."

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In Tribute To The Lubavitcher Rebbe On the 103rd anniversary of his birth Nissan 11-April 20, 2005

Lubavitch Today: Who/Where is the Rebbe?

By Tzvi Freeman

My mother, G-d bless her, told me there are men and women that come to this world, but stay above it. My mother's mother told stories of the *tzaddikim* of Baghdad, where she was born.

If your mother never told you these things, let me tell it to you now: A world without holy men and women is a house without windows. A tightly plastered cistern of a universe that offers no escape.

Of course, you could always paint pictures on the walls. Perhaps even illuminate them from behind. Or use mirrors, even a battery of television screens. You would imagine you see beyond while staring at your renditions of what is within.

And so we need our precious mothers and other pure souls of simple faith to tell us, "Don't be a fool. There are windows, and you can tell them easily from paintings on the wall."

Your mother may have told you this as well, as mine did: That the most important quality of a window is how there is nothing there. It shelters you, as a mother bird shelters her infants from the great blue sky for which they are not yet prepared. But it provides of itself only that which you need. If it screams out, "Here I am! I am a window! I am teaching you about the great outside!" it is a painting on the wall. A painting is a statement that someone felt a need to make. A window is no more than a passage of light.

There are windows and there are windows. Windows to the north, to the south, to the future, to the past. A window could be a lens, finely shaped without distortion, to magnify the details before you. Another window projects your vision to the details of the distant hills. Yet together, the many windows present a single, consistent view. One may show you the rain that bounces off its surface while the other filters the rays of the sun. One looks out over a magnificent precipice, while another to the truth of your own backyard. But together, it is all one view. Because all the windows share a single truth. The truth of what is there.

So too, all the holy men and women, they are all one. They receive from one another, passing down a holy fire that has never extinguished since they received it from Abraham and Sarah, and they from Noah and Na'amah, and they from Adam and Chava. From them we know what is beyond and where we are going, where we stand and what we must do to move ahead. Without them we might as well be those blind creatures who are born and die beneath the earth and never see the light of day. With the guidance of those holy souls, we look outside and know our journey, an amazing odyssey through a vast, fantastic cosmos.

I knew there must still be windows to our universe, that not all the shutters had been sealed. I found many paintings, perhaps a few apertures in the wall, but when I found a window I sat before it and soaked in its light, its warmth, its panorama. Its stunning revelation of what is. What is beyond and what is within—for the tiny capsule that held me had transformed as well.

Let me tell you about the Rebbe's

words: They are not poems for the lips. They are not pretty ideas for intellectual games. They are not necessarily nice, nor particularly palatable. They are answers. They are meant to drive people into life with all they've got, squeezing out every moment and facing every challenge. To show purpose in each thing.

Where are all the great leaders when we need them most? Now, with our disillusion, confusion and apathy, now we need someone transcendent to show us that God is still possible. Yet now we are more alone than ever...

They are answers because they are for someone who has a question. Someone who experiences life and comes up against brick walls, things that seem futile and pointless. They are meant to open windows, to shine light on each of those things and reveal its meaning.

Answers are never easy, they come to those who make room for them.

Eventually everybody asks, What now after the Rebbe has passed on?

First of all, you must know—even though it doesn't answer our question—that the Rebbe is still here with us. Just as a parent who leaves this world is still with his or her children—but much, much more so. Just as any *tzaddik*, for whom death is no more than a passing from the confines of the body to a freedom to work within this world without such limitations. But even more so.

For a *tzaddik* as transcendent as the Rebbe, none of the events of this world, not even death, effect any real change. His life is truth, and truth is constant. He guides those who are bound to him as he guided them before, and continues to channel light and blessing into our world and for those in need, as he always has. The only change is for us, that our flesh eyes looking out of a coarse world, cannot see a *tzaddik* before them. And that is our question: How can we be expected to carry on with our window shades down?

The question is really a larger one: Where are all the *tzaddikim* when we need them most? Once upon a time, people lived a simple life and had clear direction from their teachers and parents. They believed with simple faith that wonders and miracles could happen, and that G-d could speak with Man. What need did they have for *tzaddikim*? Now, with our disillusion, confusion and apathy, now we need someone transcendent to show us that G-d is still possible. Yet now we are more alone than ever.

The answer is that each one of us must find our window now. The *tzaddik* within. The place where the *tzaddik* and the student are no longer two beings.

That is the whole purpose. For all of time and all of creation was directed to this point: a point when the people no longer look above for G-dliness to pour down from the heavens but search for



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that G-dliness within themselves, within the people of the earth who belong to the earth. When heaven has reached earth and speaks from within it. From within each one of us.

The *tzaddik* has shown us where to look. Now he hides so we may discover.

Soak in the wisdom of the Rebbe, not as words, not as ideas, but in attempt to feel the *tzaddik* within them. Find a place where the teacher and student merge.

Once enough of us have done this, it will be time for the blind to be pulled from over our eyes, for all the walls to be dissolved and we will see the world for what it truly is. We will know wisdom

once again from the Rebbe's mouth -- until there will no longer be a teacher and a student. We will have arrived.

May that be sooner than we can imagine.

Tzvi Freeman is the author of a number of highly original renditions of Kabbalah and Chassidic teaching, including the universally acclaimed "Bringing Heaven Down to Earth." Much of his writing can be found at chabad.org and theRebbe.com. Rabbi Freeman's books are available by contacting him at tzviFreeman@sympatico.ca

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Your Passover Guide

**April 23
- May 1
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PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR PESACH

What is Chometz?

Unique to Pesach (Passover) is the eating of matzah*, and the stringent prohibition of eating or possessing *chometz*.

Chometz is a general term for all food and drink made from wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt or their derivatives, which is forbidden on Pesach because it is leavened. Even a food that contains only a trace of *chometz* is prohibited and must be removed from our homes.

Getting Rid of Chometz

Obvious *chometz* – both food and utensils used throughout the year (and not koshered for Pesach) – should be stored in closets or rooms which are not easily accessible (locked or taped shut). This *chometz* should be sold to a non-Jew, as will be explained. Clean the entire house thoroughly to remove all crumbs and small pieces of food. Also check for *chometz* in the car and office (desks and drawers, etc.), clothes, pockets (especially the children's), pocketbooks and attache cases. Vacuum cleaner bags should be discarded or cleaned.

*Note: Matzah used all year round is not for Pesach use. Only matzahs baked especially for Pesach may be used on Pesach.

SELLING THE CHOMETZ

Since it is prohibited to possess *chometz* on Pesach, we need to sell to a non-Jew all *chometz* that will not be eaten or burned before Pesach and all *chometz* utensils that will not be thoroughly cleaned by then. These are stored away in closets or rooms while preparing for Pesach. Then we lock or tape shut the closets or room, and they are leased to a non-Jew at the time of the sale.

Since there are many legal intricacies in this sale, only a competent Rabbi should be entrusted with its execution. The Rabbi acts as our agent both to sell the *chometz* to the non-Jew on the morning before Pesach starts and also to buy it back the evening after Pesach ends. Please see and use the "Sale of *Chometz*" form on page 9. Alternatively, you can use the form found on our website at www.chabadofbinghamton.com

SHOPPING FOR PESACH

While shopping for Pesach we must be careful that the foods we buy are not only kosher but are also kosher-for-Pesach – that is, *chometz*-free.

Starting 'From Scratch'

All fresh fruits and vegetables as well as all kosher cuts of meat and kosher fish are kosher for Pesach – provided they have been prepared in accordance with Jewish law and have not come into contact with *chometz* or *chometz* utensils.

The prevailing custom is that on Pesach we do not eat rice, millet, corn, mustard, legumes, (beans, etc.) or foods made from one of them.

Commercially Prepared Products

Nowadays, there are many kosher-for-Pesach packaged foods available. However, care must be used to purchase only those packaged foods that have **reliable Rabbinical supervision which is valid for Pesach**.

Obviously, all leavened foods made from wheat, barley, rye, oats or spelt are actual *chometz* and are prohibited on Pesach. Examples are bread, cake, cereal, spaghetti, beer and whiskey.

Check that Medicine Cabinet!

Many medicines, sprays and cosmetics contain *chometz*. Consult a competent Rabbi as to which ones may be used on Pesach. The same applies to pet food.

PREPARING THE KITCHEN

To prepare the kitchen for Pesach, we must kosher it from *chometz* that has been cooked in it.

Dishes and Utensils

Have special sets of dishes, silverware, pots, pans and other utensils for Pesach use **only**. (If necessary, certain 'year-round' utensils may be used provided they are koshered for Pesach. To do so, consult a Rabbi.

Stove

Thoroughly clean and scour every part of it. Heat the oven to the highest temperature possible for 1-2 hours. Heat the grates and the iron parts of the stove (and elements if electric) until they glow red-hot. It is suggested that the oven and stove-top should be covered afterwards with aluminum foil.

Microwave Ovens

Clean the oven thoroughly. Fill a completely clean container, that was not used for 24 hours, with water. Turn on the microwave and let it steam heavily. Turn it off and wipe out the inside. To use the microwave during Pesach, use a flat piece of styrofoam or any other thick object as a separation between the bottom of the oven and the cooking dish. When cooking, the food should be covered on all sides.

Sink

Meticulously clean the sink. For 24 hours before koshering it, do not pour hot water from *chometz* pots into it. Afterwards, boil water in a clean pot which was not used for 24 hours, and pour it 3 times onto every part of the sink, including the drain stopper. Afterwards, line the sink.

Refrigerator, Freezer, Cupboards, Closets, Tables and Counters

Thoroughly clean and scrub them to remove any crumbs and residue. Afterwards, cover those surfaces that come into contact with hot food or utensils with a heavy covering.

Tablecloths and Napkins

Laundry without starch.

HOW TO SEARCH FOR CHOMETZ AND BURN IT

Note: This year Passover starts

on Saturday night. Therefore to maintain the sanctity of the Shabbat, we do certain things on the Thursday night or Friday before Passover which would ordinarily be done on the eve of Passover.

There is a custom to distribute ten small, individually wrapped pieces of *chometz* throughout the home before the search. After nightfall on the Thursday evening before Passover, April 21, 2005, gather the household together and light a candle.

The Blessing

Recite the following blessing before the search:

Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sher Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Vi-tzi-vo-nu Al Be-or Cho-metz.

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

The Search

Next, hold the lit candle and search for *chometz* in every room, as well as any other area of the home that may have *chometz*, such as the basement, attic, garage or car. Even once a house is thoroughly cleaned, there is often still a bagel crust or a cheerio hiding in some overlooked cranny.

When you're done, take all the *chometz* that was found in the search, wrap it securely and place it in a conspicuous spot, to be burned in the morning. Food intended to be sold or eaten later should similarly be carefully put aside. You'll need to do this search in your place of business, as well.

When the search is completed, recite the following:

All leaven or anything leavened which is in my possession, which I have neither seen nor removed, and about which I am unaware, shall be considered naught and ownerless as the dust of the earth.

Burning the Chometz

On the morning of April 22, 2005, the Friday before Passover, burn the *chometz* that was found during the search and all other *chometz* which is not stored away to be either sold to the non-Jew or eaten later on Friday or on Saturday morning. See the Passover Calendar for the deadline for burning it.

THE DAYS BEFORE PASSOVER

It is customary for all first-born to attend a Synagogue celebration concluding the study of a book of the Talmud, which this year is done on Thursday, April 21. Since this year the eve of Passover is on the Shabbat, we do the following: We make our home kosher-for-Pesach by Friday afternoon, April 22. We prepare food for Shabbat using only kosher-for-Pesach pots, pans and other utensils and only kosher-for-Pesach foods. We don't eat matzah, though. We're saving that for the Seder. The only *chometz* we keep for this Shabbat is a small amount of bread and cake, which we keep completely separated from everything else in our home. Each time we eat this *chometz*, we afterwards wash our hands and mouths. We are careful to not let any of this *chometz*, even crumbs, fall onto our kosher-for-Pesach foods,

utensils or home.

On Shabbat morning, Saturday, April 23, 2005, we can still eat *chometz* in the early hours of the morning, until the time indicated on the Passover Calendar. Once that time is up, we are careful to eat only foods which are kosher for Passover. All crumbs of bread and other *chometz* left-over we flush down the toilet before the time indicated on the Passover Calendar, found on page 8.

After the *chometz* has been flushed down the toilet, recite the following:

All leaven or anything leavened which is in my possession, whether I have seen it or not, whether I have observed it or not, whether I have removed it or not shall be completely considered naught and ownerless as the dust of the earth.

SEDER PREPARATION

Before sunset on Friday, make sure to prepare the chicken neck, horseradish, salt water and charoset for both Seder nights. For the first Seder, you'll need to wait until after Shabbat ends before setting the table and preparing the meal; for the second Seder, you'll need to wait until after the first day of Yom Tov ends. See the Passover Calendar for the exact time.

We do not eat any kind of roasted meat on either Seder night.

SHMURAH MATZAH

Shmurah means watched, and is an apt description of this matzah (unleavened bread). The wheat used is carefully watched (protected) against any contact with water from the moment of harvest, since water would cause leavening, and thus disqualify the wheat for use on Pesach.

These matzahs are round in form, kneaded and shaped by hand, similar to the matzahs baked by the Children of Israel on their way out of Egypt. They are baked under strict supervision to avoid any possibility of leavening during the baking process. Shmurah matzah should be used on each of the two Seder nights for the three matzahs of the Seder plate.

To enhance the observance and beauty of your Pesach Seder table, we are making available, at cost price, tasty, handmade Shmurah matzah.

For a more meaningful and happy Pesach, have Shmurah matzah at your Seder table.

Call us to order Shmurah Matzah.

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\$13 per pound
\$7 for 3 Matzahs

The first two nights of Pesach, we conduct a Seder — a festive yet solemn event. At a table royally set with our best crystal and silver and the finest of kosher wines, we reenact the exodus from Egypt in ancient times. We also pray for the forthcoming redemption speedily in our days.

In Our Forefathers Footsteps

At the Seder, each person considers himself as if he were going out of Egypt. We begin with our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; we are with our people as they descend into exile, and suffer cruel oppression and persecution. We are with them when G-d sends the ten plagues to punish Pharaoh and his nation, with them as they leave Egypt, and with them at the crossing of the Sea of Reeds. And we witness the miraculous hand of G-d as the waters part, allowing the Israelites to pass, and then return, thundering over the Egyptian legions.

General Note: Whenever we eat or drink during one of the 'acts' of the Seder, the leader of the Seder should give to each person present the required amount(s) of wine, matzah and/or bitter herbs. See page 8 for the exact amounts.

KADESH — SANCTIFICATION



The Seder service begins with the recitation of *Kiddush*, proclaiming the holiness of the holiday. This is done over a cup of wine, and on this evening it is the first of four

cups which we all drink, reclining, at the Seder.

THE FOUR CUPS OF WINE

Two of the explanations of the four cups: Four expressions of 'freedom' or 'deliverance' are mentioned in the Torah in connection with our liberation from Egypt (Ex. 6:6, 7). The Children of Israel, even while in Egyptian exile, had four great merits: (1) they did not change their Hebrew names; (2) they did not change their Hebrew language; (3) they remained highly moral; (4) they remained loyal to one another. Wine is used because it is a symbol of joy and happiness. Every journey begins with a separation. You've got to leave somewhere to get somewhere else. In this way, separation is the first step to freedom. By ignoring the negative voice of Pharaoh's mockery that says, "Who are you to begin such a journey?" we're ready to leave Egypt behind.

Separation is the first meaning of the word *kadesh* — to transcend the mundane world. Once you've set yourself free from those things that hold you down, you can achieve the second meaning of the word *kadesh* — to return and sanctify it. Spiritual freedom is achieved through sanctifying the material world, using its elements as physical expressions of a higher purpose. The first two steps of the Seder, *Kadesh* (to separate/sanctify) and *Urchatz* (purify), describe what we set out to accomplish through this night: to rise above the restraints of our world in order to elevate it.

WHY WE RECLINE

When drinking the four cups, as during most of the 'acts' of the Seder, we lean on our left side to accentuate the fact that we are free people. In ancient times only free people were allowed to recline while eating.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

Look, I'm a down-to-earth kind of person. I'm trying to manage real

life. I can't get into this spirituality stuff. Let's just get to the matzah.

Freedom Mentality

I can master my world by staying above it. I come to the Seder to get that strength.

URCHATZ — PURIFICATION



We wash our hands in the usual prescribed manner of washing before a meal, but without the customary blessing.

The next step in the Seder, *Karpas*, requires dipping food into water. Such an act calls for purification of the hands by washing, beforehand. This observance is one of the first acts designed to arouse the child's curiosity.

Hands are instruments that allow the mind to interact with its environment. Our hands reflect our mental state, and act according to our emotions: love, fear, compassion, the urge to win, to be appreciated, to express ourselves, to dominate. But too often the aspects of our psyche sit compartmentalized, detached from one another. The mind sees one way, the heart feels another, and our interface with the world is disoriented.

Water symbolizes wisdom. Flowing downward from on-high, everything in its stream is affected by its pure and simple essence. We pour water over our hands so that our heart and emotions may be touched by wisdom, and from there shape our interaction with the world.

A wise rabbi asked, "Wouldn't it make more sense to wash first and then say *Kiddush*? To first purify, so you can then sanctify?"

Then he answered, "First you need to get out of the pit, and then to clean up your act. That's why G-d first took us out of Egypt and only then had us purify ourselves for 49 days in the wilderness to prepare us for the revelations at Mount Sinai."

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

Just react. Let your instinct be your guide.

Freedom Mentality

Count to ten. Let your mind and heart talk things over with one another.

KARPAS — THE APPETIZER



A small piece of onion or boiled potato is dipped into salt water and eaten. Before eating, the

blessing over vegetables is recited.

The dipping of this 'appetizer' in salt water is an act of pleasure and freedom which further arouses the curiosity of the child.

The four letter Hebrew word *karpas* when read backwards connotes that the 600,000 Jews in Egypt (the Hebrew letter samech = 60, times 10,000) were forced to perform back-breaking labor (the other three Hebrew letters spell *perch* — hard work).

The salt water represents the tears of our ancestors in Egypt. In order to liberate ourselves from Egypt, we need to taste its harshness again, because this harshness prepares us for freedom. This labor gives us the humble spirit to accept wisdom.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

I owe, I owe, so off to work I go.

Freedom Mentality

Through my work I appreciate the higher things in life.



YACHATZ — BREAKING THE MATZAH

The middle matzah of the three placed on the Seder plate is broken in two. The larger part is put aside for use later as the *Afikomen*.

This unusual action not only attracts the child's special attention once again, but also recalls G-d's breaking the Sea of Reeds asunder, to make a path for the Children of Israel to cross on dry land. The smaller part of the middle matzah is returned to the Seder plate.

This broken middle matzah symbolizes humility and will be eaten later as the 'bread of poverty.'

Why is so much broken in this world? Why did the Creator make a world where hearts break, lives shatter, beauty crumbles?

Because a whole vessel can only contain its measure, while a broken one can hold the Infinite. Matzah is called the poor man's bread. He is low and broken. And it is this being broken that allows him to open his soul and escape his Egypt. As long as we feel whole, there is no room left for us to grow. When we realize that we are just a fragment — that we need the others around us, that so much of ourselves is missing — then miracles begin.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

I know who I am. Look what I have achieved.

Freedom Mentality

There is so much that I am lacking. I have only started to grow.

MAGGID — THE HAGGADAH

At this point the poor are invited to join the Seder; the Seder tray is moved aside; a second cup of wine is poured; and the child, by now bursting with curiosity, asks the time-honored question: *Mah nish-tah-na hah-lailo hazeh me-kol hah-leilot?* Why is this night different from all other nights? Why only matzah? Why the dipping? Why the bitter herbs? Why are we relaxing, leaning on cushions, as if we were kings?

The child's questioning triggers one of the most significant mitzvot of Pesach, and the highlight of the Seder ceremony: the Haggadah, the telling of the story of the exodus from Egypt.

The answer includes a brief review of history, a description of the suffering imposed upon the Israelites, a listing of the plagues visited upon the Egyptians, and an enumeration of the miracles performed by the Al-mighty for the formation and redemption of His people.

The Exodus is not simply an event that happened to us. It is an event that we became. It is who we are. It is the life of each one of us, occurring again and again, in our wrestling match with the world, in our struggle with our own selves. We embody freedom in a constant mode of escape. Perhaps that is why Jews have always been rebels of society.

The experience of leaving Egypt left such an indelible mark on our souls that we never stop doing it. A Jew who

Going Out of Egypt is Step-B- A Soulful Seder

stops leaving Egypt ceases to allow his soul to breathe.

To tell the story is to bring our essential self into the open, and to come face-to-face with who we really are.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

I'm free already. I live in a land of freedom. Who needs more freedom than that?

Freedom Mentality

My body is free because my soul is free.

ROCHTZOH — WASHING BEFORE THE MEAL

After concluding the first part of the Haggadah with the drinking of the second cup of wine (reclining), the hands are washed this time with the customary blessings, as usually done before eating bread.

As long as we live in the world, freedom remains elusive. While moving forward, we are free. Stop, and we are fettered again.

That is why freedom is something that you cannot buy or steal. Never can you put freedom in your purse and say, "Freedom is mine forever!"

Spiritual freedom is like a marriage between our finite selves and the Infinite, providing the power to transcend the material world while working inside of it. It is a marriage of heaven and earth, spirit and matter, soul and body. And like my marriage, it is kept alive through constant renewal.

Our release from slavery was only the first step of our Exodus. We were granted eternal freedom — the power to perpetually transcend Egypt.

That's the order of the Seder tonight: *Kadesh*, *Urchatz* — Transcend and Purify. Over and over. Rise higher, then draw that into deeds. Rise higher again, draw even more. Never stop rising. Never stop applying.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

Passover? Been there, done that!

Freedom Mentality

Each year at the Seder, I discover new things that I just never saw before.

MOTZIE MATZAH — EATING MATZAH

Taking hold of the three matzot, the broken one between the two whole ones, recite the customary blessing before bread. Then, letting the bottom matzah drop back on the plate, and holding the top whole matzah with the broken middle one, recite the special blessing *Al Ahchelas Matzah*. Then break at least one ounce from each matzah and eat the two pieces together, reclining.

We feel an affinity with foods we eat: we too are a miracle out of the earth. We share a common journey with bread. The bread begins as a seed buried beneath the ground. And then, a miracle occurs: as it decomposes and loses its original form, it comes



In Every Generation: A Step-by-Step Companion

alive, begins to sprout and grow. As Spring arrives, it pushes its way above the earth to find the sun, and then bears fruit for the world.

We too begin buried in Egypt, our identity all but lost. But that furnace of oppression becomes for us a firing kiln, a baker's oven, and the womb from whence we are born as a nation in the Spring. In our liberation, we our fruits of freedom to the world.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

I'm stuck here under the ground. Life is rotten.

Freedom Mentality

My challenges in life help me discover the strength of my soul.

Since the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, matzah is the only opportunity we have to actually eat a mitzvah. That's right, the matzah you are eating is pure G-dliness.

The Zohar calls matzo, Bread of Faith and bread of Healing. "Faith?"

Well, actually, that's a rather feeble translation. "Emunah" is a word in Hebrew, and it means a lot more than "I believe." Faith can often be something people claim when they don't care to think too much. *Emunah* is when you go beyond thinking to a place your mind could have never brought you.

Emunah means touching the place where your soul and essence of the Infinite Light are One. It's a place that nothing can describe.

Where there are no words. No doubts, no uncertainty, no confusion, nothing but a magnificent Oneness before which nothing else exists and the challenges of life withdraw.

Eating matzah is a way of tapping into that reservoir. Your physical body digests the *Emunah* of your soul, everything is integrated back into One, and your body and soul are whole and harmonious.

How on earth can a mixture of water and wheat baked in an oven contain such a spiritual cure? Welcome to Judaism, where there is no dichotomy of spirit and matter, soul and body. Where the spiritual transforms into the physical, and material objects become spiritual in a perpetual chemistry of exchange. Where the body is healed through empowering the soul, and the soul is nourished with the rituals of the body. (After all, we live in the world of One G-d.)

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

Sure, I'll eat a little matzah because that's the tradition.

Freedom Mentality

I can't get enough of this stuff! Feed me matzah! Feed my soul!



MORROR — THE BITTER HERBS

Take at least 3/4 ounce of the bitter herbs. Dip it in the *charoset*, then shake the latter off and

make the blessing *Al Ah-cheelas Morror*. Eat without reclining.

We can never get used to Egypt. We never belonged there. We can never say, "They are the masters and we are the slaves and that's the way it is." It must remain something we remain bitter about,

something that is unjust and needs to change.

If we get used to Egypt, it is very hard to leave. In fact, many Jews said, "Egypt is our land. How can we leave it?" And they stayed and died there.

As for the rest of us, when Moses came and told us we were going to leave, we believed him. It was our bitterness alone, without any direction, is self-destructive. Add some life and optimism to it, and it becomes the springboard to freedom.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

Look, this is what I'm used to. I can't change.

Freedom Mentality

I don't belong to my habits.

KORECH — THE SANDWICH



In keeping with the custom instituted by Hillel, a great Talmudic rabbi, a sandwich of matzah and morror

is eaten. Break off two pieces of the bottom matzah which together are at least one ounce. Again take at least 3/4 ounce of bitter herbs and dip them in *charoset*. Place them between the two pieces of matzah, say: "*Kein ah-saw Hillel. . .*" and eat the 'sandwich' reclining.

The world, when viewed from within Egypt, looks to be a mass of fragments. It's a "Passoverly Challenged" perspective. Plain materialism.

Mitzvahs appear to be a mishmash of dos and don'ts; the Jewish people are a collection of irreconcilable individuals; daily life is a cacophony of hassles and just, well, stuff.

Once we escape materialism's gravitational pull, we can look back and see a whole new perspective. Mitzvahs are multiple expressions of a single spiritual path; Jews are multiple faces to a single soul; elements of today's journey harmonize together as a symphony playing a delicate melody.

After we make ourselves into a temple for the Divine, then the bitter, the sweet and the tasteless responsibilities of life wrap together in a single package.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

I have to take care of career, family, health, hobbies, handball, friendships, parents, taxes, the house, the car, the cat.

Freedom Mentality

I am a conductor and the world is my orchestra to play a symphony for its Creator.

SHULCHAN OREICH — THE FEAST



The holiday meal is now served. We begin the meal with a hard-boiled egg dipped

into salt water.

A rabbi was once asked why Jews eat eggs on Pesach. "Because eggs symbolize the Jew," the rabbi answered. "The more an egg is burned and boiled, the harder it gets."

Note: The chicken neck is not eaten at the Seder.

This step, along with *Korech* before it, marks the re-entry we mentioned at the beginning (in *Kadesh*), we've escaped Egypt and reached a higher vision. But freedom consists of more than escape. Complete freedom is when you can turn around and liberate all the elements of your world from their pure material state, and make them transcendent as well.

That's what we do when we eat every day—we take foods grown from the earth, say a blessing over them and bring them into our journey as human beings. And when it's a Jewish holiday or Shabbos, we elevate them further, into the realm of pure spirituality. As for tonight, this meal is going to be truly Divine.

So don't imagine we're just feasting. We're reaching a higher state. And it's a great way to do it.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

I am a slave to food. I live to eat.

Freedom Mentality

I am a food liberator. I eat to live.

TZOFUN — 'OUT OF HIDING'

After the meal, the half matzah which had been 'hidden' — set aside for the *Afikomen* — 'dessert', is taken out and eaten. It symbolizes the pascal lamb which was eaten at the end of the meal.

Everyone should eat at least 1 1/2 ounces of matzah, reclining, before midnight. After the *Afikomen*, we do not eat or drink anything except for the two remaining cups of wine.

There is the body, there is the soul, and then there is the essence. If the soul is light, then that essence is its generator. The kabbalah teaches that this essence remains elusive. It is called "*Tzofun*," meaning hidden, concealed, locked away and out of reach. It is unlikely to experience it.

We dance around the essence-core, like a spacecraft in orbit, unable to land. We can be inspired, we can meditate, we can pray, but to touch this inner core—the essence of our soul—takes a power from beyond.

On Passover night, we have the power. But only after all the proper steps: destroying our internal *chometz*, preparing our homes for liberation, the previous eleven steps of the Seder. Then, when we are satiated with all we can handle, connecting every facet of ourselves to the Divine, that's when the power comes to us. Whether we sense it or not, tasteless as it may seem, the matzo we eat now — the matzah of *Tzofun* — reaches deep into our essence and transforms our very being.

Those things you find inspiring and nice may take you a step forward. But to effect a real change, you need to do something totally beyond your personal bounds.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

Seeing is believing.

Freedom Mentality

Believing is seeing.

BAIRACH — BLESSINGS AFTER THE MEAL



A third cup of wine is filled and grace is recited. After grace we recite the blessing on wine and drink the third cup while reclining.

Now we fill the cup of Elijah and our own cups with wine. We open the door and recite the passage which symbolizes an invitation to the Prophet Elijah, who is the harbinger of the coming of *Moshiach*, our righteous Messiah.

The theme of the Grace After Meals is confidence. Confidence in a Higher Force that is with us in our daily lives. Why did miracles happen in Egypt? Because we believed they would. Those who didn't believe in miracles saw only plagues. To see a miracle, you need an open heart and mind, open enough to receive the Infinite. That is the opening we make when we thank G-d for the miracle of our food.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

I thank G-d for giving me what I need.

Freedom Mentality

I thank G-d for letting me know what He needs.

HALLEL — SONGS OF PRAISE



At this point, having recognized the Almighty, and His unique guidance of His people Israel, we go still further and turn to sing His praises as L-rd of the entire Universe.

After reciting the *Hallel*, we again recite the blessing for wine and drink the fourth cup, reclining.

The ancient rabbis clued us in on a key principle in the cosmic function: whatever G-d tells us to do, He does Himself. Of course, there's a difference. We do it in our little human world, while He does it on a grand cosmic plane. He told us to open our door on the night of Passover. So, tonight, He opens every door and every gateway of the spiritual cosmos to all of the Jewish people. To each one of us, regardless of what we have been doing the rest of the year, tonight is our chance to reach the highest of spiritual levels.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

Since it's Passover, I'll make a little change.

Freedom Mentality

Since Passover, I totally changed.

NIRTZOH — ACCEPTANCE

Having carried out the Seder service properly, we are sure that it has been well received by the Almighty. Then we say "*Leh-shah-na Hah-bahah Be-ru-sha-law-yim*" — NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM!

If G-d wanted us to be perfect, why did He create such imperfect beings? Because what He wants of us is our very humanity. Sometimes we do good. Sometimes we fall. But we keep on struggling, and eventually make some real change in order to create a perfect world.

And then, once we have done all we can, like a kind parent helping with the homework, He makes sure to touch up our work and make it shine.

For 3,300 years we have been leaving Egypt. For 3,300 years we have been doing our human job of transforming the darkness of His world into light. And now it is His turn to banish darkness forever, to make our work shine.

Personal Application

Bondage Mentality

Yaaaawwn! Well, there goes another Passover night under the belt.

Freedom Mentality

I'm done with Pharaoh; I'm through with Egypt. Take me to Jerusalem!

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE SEDER

The Pesach Seder is not just to be observed symbolically. Each of its physical 'acts' has great significance and should be fulfilled properly to make the Seder a meaningful and truly spiritual experience.

The Main Mitzvot

The main mitzvot (commandments) of the Seder are:

1. To eat matzah.
2. To tell the story of the Exodus (the reciting of the main parts of the Haggadah).
3. To drink four cups of wine.
4. To eat *morror* — bitter herbs.
5. To recite — praise to G-d (found towards the end of the Haggadah).

MATZAH, THE "FOOD OF FAITH"

We left Egypt in such haste that there was no time to wait for the dough to rise, and we ate matzah, unleavened bread. With only this unleavened food our ancestors faithfully relied on the Al-mighty to provide sustenance for our entire nation of men, women and children. Each year to remember this, we eat matzah the first two nights of Pesach and fulfill the commandment of "Matzahs shall you eat..."

THE HUMBLEST OF FOODS

The Matzah itself symbolizes faith. For in contrast to leavened food, the matzah is not 'enriched' with oil, honey, etc. It is rather simple flour and water, which is not allowed to rise. Similarly, the only 'ingredients'

for faith are humility and submission to G-d, which comes from the realization of our 'nothingness' and 'intellectual poverty' in the face of the infinite wisdom of the creator.

HOW TO PREPARE THE SEDER PLATE

The K'ahrah — The Seder Plate

Three matzahs are placed on the table one on top of the other. They are symbolic of the three types of Jews: Kohen, Levi and Yisroel. They also commemorate the three measures of fine flour which Abraham told Sarah to bake into matzahs when the three angels visited them. And when we later break the middle matzah, we are still left with two whole loaves for *lechem mishneh*, as on all Sabbaths and Festivals.

On a cloth spread over the 3 matzahs, or on a plate, the following items are placed:

1. *Z'roah* — the roasted chicken neck. (PREPARATION: remove most of the meat from the neck of a chicken and roast it on all sides.) It is symbolic of the pascal sacrifice brought at the Holy Temple in Jerusalem on the afternoon before Pesach.

2. *Baytzah* — the hard boiled egg. It is symbolic of the festival sacrifice brought at the Holy Temple, in addition to the pascal lamb.

3. *Morror* — bitter herbs. It is symbolic of the suffering of the Jews in Egypt.

4. *Charoset* — the mixture of chopped apples, pears, walnuts and a small amount of wine (red, if possible). The mixture resembles mortar, symbolic of the mortar used

other matzahs are used, the weight of the box of matzahs divided by the number of pieces shows how much matzah equals 1 ounces.

The Wine

For each of the four cups at the Seder it is preferable to use undiluted wine only. However, if needed, the wine may be diluted with grape juice. Of course, someone who can not drink wine may use straight grape juice.

One drinks a cup of wine four times during the Seder:

1. After *Kiddush*.
2. After telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt, before eating the matzah of *Motzie Matzah*.
3. The conclusion of the Grace After Meals.
4. After reciting the *Hallel*.

It is preferable to drink the entire cup each time. However, it is sufficient to drink just the majority of each cup.

How large a cup should be used? One containing at least 3½ fluid ounce.

The Morror

The *morror* is eaten by itself after the matzah, and then together with the matzah in the 'sandwich'. One should eat 3/4 an ounce of morror.

Any of two different types of *morror* may be used at the Seder, individually or in combination:

1. Peeled and grated raw horseradish. ¾ ounce has a volume of 1 fluid ounce.
2. Romaine lettuce. It is suggested that the stalks rather than the leafy parts be used because of the difficulty in properly examining and ridding the leafy parts of commonly present very small insects. ¾ ounce of stalks cover an area of 3 x 5".



by the Israelites to make bricks while enslaved in Egypt.

5. *Karpas* — the cooked potato or raw onion.

6. *Chahzeret* — more bitter herbs. Used as morror in the 'sandwich' later in the Seder.

The Matzah



On each of the two Seder nights Shmurah matzah should be used. Matzah is eaten three times during the Seder:

1. After telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt — *Motzie Matzah* — 2 ounces of matzah are eaten.
2. For the 'sandwich' — *Korech* — 1 ounce of matzah is eaten.
3. For the *Afikomen* at the end of the meal — *Tzofun* — 1½ ounces of matzah are eaten.

In each instance the matzah should be eaten within 4 minutes.

How much is 1 ounce of matzah? Half a piece of Shmurah matzah is generally 1 ounces. If

THE CONCLUDING DAYS OF PESACH

The eighth day of Passover is traditionally associated with our fervent hope for the coming of Moshiach. The Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chassidus, instituted the custom of eating on the last day of Passover a special third meal, complete with matzah and wine, called the "Meal of Moshiach". Passover is eight days long. The last two days of Passover are also Yom Tov. Passover does not end until the night of Sunday, May 1 — you'll find the actual time on the Passover Calendar. Take care not to eat or buy any *chometz* until that time.



The Pesach Calendar 5765-2005

Times shown for Binghamton

Date	Activity	Time
April 21	Formal search for Chometz	after 8:15 p.m.
April 22	Burn chometz	until 11:44 a.m.
April 23	Eat chometz	until 10:40 a.m.
	Flush Chometz	until 11:43 a.m.
	Light Yom Tov candles.**	
	Say blessings no. 1 & 2	after 8:41 p.m.
	Start the seder. Eat at least 1 oz. of matzah within 4 minutes	after 8:41 p.m.
April 24	Light Yom Tov candles.**	
	Say blessings no. 1 & 2	after 8:42 p.m.
	Start the seder. Eat at least 1 oz. of matzah within 4 minutes	after 8:42 p.m.
April 29	Light Shabbat & Yom Tov candles.*	
	Say blessings no. 3	at 7:43 p.m.
April 30	Light Yom Tov candles.**	
	Say blessing no. 1	after 8:50 p.m.
May 1	Yizkor memorial prayers.	
	Pesach ends	after 8:51 p.m.

Wait one hour before eating chometz to allow time for the Rabbi to buy it back for you.

* Do not light after sunset.

** Do not light before the time indicated. Light only from a pre-existing flame.

A pre-existing flame is a flame burning continuously since the onset of the festival, such as a pilot light, gas or candle flame.

- 1) Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sheh Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Vi-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Yom Tov.
- 2) Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom She-heh-che-yoh-nu Vi-ki-ye-mo-nu Ve-he-ge-o-nu Liz-man Ha-zeh.
- 3) Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sheh Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Vi-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Sha-bos V'shel Yom-Tov.

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Ask the Rabbi

By Rabbi Aron Moss

Why Do Rabbis Discourage Conversions?

Question:

I am a bit confused. I have many Jewish friends, but they are mostly indifferent and sometimes even hostile towards their own religion. I myself am not Jewish but I have studied Judaism and love it and am very excited about converting.

My confusion is this: when I went to speak to a rabbi about conversion, he discouraged me from converting, saying that it is more serious than I think, and that I can live a fulfilled life without becoming Jewish. I told him how excited I am about Judaism but he still pushed me away.

What is going on? I am thirsty for Judaism and I am pushed away, while so many Jews are not even open to learning more about their own religion!

Answer:

There is a Jewish belief that Judaism is not just good for the Jewish soul, it's natural for the Jewish soul. The soul feels at home when it says Hebrew prayers, experiences a Shabbat table, or puts up a mezuzah. These acts are what makes the Jewish soul comfortable. A Jew has an innate affinity towards Judaism.

So why do so many Jews not seem interested in their religion? Because there is another Jewish belief that every energy has a counter-energy. If the Jewish soul is attracted to Judaism, there must be an equal and opposite force that drives the Jew away from Judaism. Materialism, cynicism, laziness, apathy -- all these and more conspire to drive the Jew away from connecting to his/her Jewishness. In fact, the more powerful the Jewish soul, the more intense this resistance will be.

And it must be this way. Otherwise the spiritual life would be too easy -- a Jewish soul would just naturally fall into Judaism. And G-d wants us to be challenged. When Jews engage in Judaism, they are taking upon themselves the life-long challenge to overcome these internal obstacles and find their deeper self.

When a non-Jew approaches Judaism, it is a whole different story. He or she has no "baggage," so he's open to what Judaism has to say. He may be attracted, he may not be -- but he doesn't have the emotional resistance that a Jew does. This is why many non-Jews come to respect Judaism when they actually study it. They are coming with an open heart, unlike the Jew who has an automatic resistance to anything Jewish.

This is fine -- until the non-Jew considers conversion. He may feel that Judaism has a depth and warmth that he seeks, he may feel good

going to synagogue and celebrating festivals, and this may lead him to think that it would be so easy to just become Jewish and make it his spiritual home. But there is one factor that he's not aware of.

Now it all seems so nice and comfortable because you're just visiting. It's not yours yet, so you can look at it objectively and just enjoy it for what it is, without any resistance. But the minute you become Jewish, everything changes. Conversion means not only you receive the Jewish soul, but you also receive the Jewish baggage that weighs you down and tries to hold you back from being an active Jew (again, in order to retain balance and give you a challenge).

This is one reason why we push away converts. We set obstacles in their way so they can taste what it's really like to be Jewish. So that it should be clear from the outset that a Jewish life is not an easy one. There will always be obstacles. The only difference is, before conversion the obstacles are from without -- stubborn rabbis who tell you "don't bother with Judaism." After converting, those same rabbis will welcome you with open arms, and there will still be a voice telling you to not to bother -- but then it will be a voice from within you.

If you can overcome the resistance set up by the rabbis, then you have a good chance of being able to overcome the inner resistance that is the struggle of every Jew.



Do You Believe in the "Evil Eye"?

Question:

I was given a red string by a friend -- she called it a "Kabbalah bracelet" and says it brings success and protection and guards against the Evil Eye. Is this for real?

Answer:

There is absolutely no doubt that red strings have brought astounding success -- to the people selling them for \$29 a pop.

The question is what they do for everyone else.

Although not written in any Kabbalistic source that I have seen, the red string is an old tradition. A thread is wrapped seven times around the tomb of Rachel in Israel, and then cut into little cords. It is then said to give protection from the "Evil Eye" for one who wears it on his or her wrist.

The Evil Eye is the name given to harmful negative energy which is created by people looking at you with envy or ill-feeling. The red string is supposed to deflect this energy.

This is a widely accepted belief and whatever its source it seems pretty harmless. But the Talmud says that the Evil Eye can only affect you if you worry about it, whereas it leaves you alone if you ignore it. So a more effective (and cheaper) way to avoid the Evil Eye is to forget about it.

If you are concerned that some sinister power has designs on you, there are other solutions. The most powerful protection against evil forces is the force of goodness. Whether a red string helps or not I do not know,

but it is definitely not a replacement for sincere prayer, generous charity and moral conduct.

It is certainly easier and less demanding to just buy a piece of string. But the world does not become better as a result. There is still negative energy, it just hasn't caught you. But when you increase in positive energy by doing more selfless and holy acts, rather than just deflecting those forces you are combating them and diminishing their power.

For someone who lives an ethical life, a red string is nothing more than an accessory.

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Artwork by Sara Kranz

Rabbi Aron Moss teaches Kabbalah, Talmud and practical Judaism in Sydney, Australia.

Aron Moss served as a Rabbinic intern at Chabad of Binghamton during the Fall '99 semester.



The Sale of Chometz

Fill out this form and mail it to:

Chabad Of Binghamton
420 Murray Hill Road
Vestal, NY 13850 Or Fax: **607-797-0095**

Return this form early, as responsibility cannot be accepted for forms received after Thursday, April 21, 2005.

CERTIFICATION AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF CHOMETZ

Please Print Neatly Or Type

I (We)* _____
 hereby authorize Rabbi Aaron Slonim to dispose of all chometz that may be in my (our) possession wherever it may be -- at home, at my (our) place of business, or elsewhere -- in accordance with the requirements of Jewish Law incorporated in the special contract for the sale of chometz.

Residence:
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 Apt. No. _____ City _____

Business:
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 Suite No. _____ City _____

Signature(s): _____

*Husband and Wife, specify names.
 Must be signed by head of household, and preferably by all parties.

Alternatively, use the form found on our webpage: www.chabadofbinghamton.com

Chabad HAPPENINGS

Photos by: Aliza Ainsberg, Leila Nehmad, Chana Topek and Jeremy Zenilman



PURIM 2005

And for the Jews of Binghamton there was light and joy and lots of fun!

Over 1500 students had a blast at the Purim Carnival and helped raise \$3,000 for important charities, both locally and in Israel... The elderly in area nursing and retirement homes were visited and touched by the Purim spirit... And young and young at heart enjoyed the community Purim Feast/Shabbat Dinner, unwilling to let Purim go!



Chabad HAPPENINGS



Avi Liberman performing at Chabad



Avi shares a light moment with Mendel Slonim before the show



Part of the large crowd at the Comedy show



A group of graduate students at the Cafe

As part of Chabad's "Focus on Alumni" program, in which one alumna/us returns to the Chabad House each semester as a scholar in residence for a weekend, Avi Liberman '93, a nationally known comic was at the Chabad House for the weekend of Feb 25-26.

Avi spoke to a full house on Friday night during Shabbat dinner, sharing with the students his experiences as an observant Jew in the entertainment industry.

On Saturday night, Avi performed before a packed house of community members and BU students. "By all accounts he 'brought down the house' with his mix of Jewish and topical humor – much of it mined from his life experiences," said Rivkah Slonim. "Everyone had a great time!"



Chabad students make Hamantashen and Rugelach to be distributed to the elderly in local nursing homes and assisted living centers in honor of the Purim Holiday.



Close to ninety community members enjoyed a Purim feast/Shabbat dinner that began with a late Megilla reading and a Purim feast punctuated by Shabbat candle lighting and a service before the feast resumed with Kiddush and a full course Shabbat dinner.



Rabbinical students fanned out to all area nursing homes and assisted living centers to read the Megilla to residents on the day of Purim.



A partial group of participants in the Spring Semester JLI course that focused on Men, Women and Kabbalah.

Thank You!!

Chabad House extends its appreciation to the many volunteers who helped make Purim 5765-2005 the special holiday it was!

For their outstanding devotion and successful execution of their projects we thank:

Marlene Serkin, coordinator of the Women's League for Chabad Mishloach Manot service and the individuals who helped out with the packing and the delivery.

For the fantastic, campus-wide Purim Carnival Extravaganza, we thank coordinators **Neil Hakimi** and **Josh Diamond**; **David Natani**, **Harris Ringelheim**, and **Morris Pahuskin**, and **Michelle Bloom**, **Jeri Rubin**, **Rebecca Goldstein** and **Elise Schmelzkopf**, Greek life coordinators; **Ilana Sitkoff** and **Natalie Benhamou**, prize drawing chairpersons; **Adam Romanoski** and **Michal Falk**, food concession chairpersons; **Jessica Zalkin**, publicity chairperson; and the many – too many to name – students who helped out in countless ways and the many sponsoring groups who made this mammoth effort a huge success.

Special thanks to all who bought raffles and T-shirts – we raised \$3,000 for charity!!!

Chabad Alumni News

Mazel Tovs!

Class of '91

■ Steven and Nicole Katz announce the birth of their son, Jonah Eli, Yonah Eliahu, on February 15, 2005. He was welcomed home by his brothers Matthew, 3 and Ethan, 2. The Katz family make their home in Delray Beach, Florida.

Class of '93

■ Michael and Naomi Knopf announce the birth of their son, March 14, 2005. He was welcomed home by big sister Alissa.

Class of '95

■ Leonard and Mila Kundel announce the birth of their daughter Leah, born October 15, 2004, Lenny is an Holistic Dentist in Stamford, Ct; Mila is a Medical resident at South Shore Hospital. They make their home in Bronx, NY.

Class of '98

■ Beth Applebome announces her marriage to Avi Cohen on November 21, 2004; they make their home in Cedarhurst, NY. Avi is a corporate lawyer and Beth is an associate production editor at Fairchild Books.

Class of '99

■ Levi M. Dulitz announces his marriage to Jessica Gerson on January 8, 2005. Levi completed his MBA in Finance at Baruch College and is currently a senior consultant and head of operations at KOE Connections. Jessica is completing her Masters in Elementary Educatin from Adelphi University. They reside on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

Class of '02

■ Jonathan Parker announces his engagement to Rina Goldberg; a July 18, 2005 wedding is planned. Jonathan currently teaches English at Yeshivat Or Chaim in Toronto; Rina will graduate with a degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Toronto in May.

**Send us your Mazel Tovs so we can share them with the world!!
Get your Mazel Tov pictures posted on the website by E-mailing
them to rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com**

With pain, Chabad House expresses condolences to
Shari Bloomberg '90 and Andrea Alexander '94

upon the untimely death of their father,
Stanley Tellerman, of Blessed Memory

*May Hashem comfort you among the mourners of Zion
and Jerusalem.*

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ALUMNI MUSINGS

Noches Difarentes (Not Only During Pesach)

by Elie Reiss '03

What're you gonna do with your life? How's that ridiculous liberal arts degree gonna help you find a good job? Do you even know what type of job you'd like to find? If these questions, whether self inflicted or parentally imposed, are getting you down, do what I did and flee the continent. If you have yet to spend significant time in Israel, go there, but if you decide that those third cousins from Haifa you met once on your Bar Mitzvah trip make Israel not remote enough, allow me to suggest a trip to South America, because those who say you can't run away from your problems have apparently never heard of passports, credit cards, and plane tickets.

After spending five months in Chile, learning Spanish and forgetting Hebrew (but it'll come back), I decided to punish the family even more for asking me about future work issues, and travel by land from Venezuela to Ecuador fully passing through Colombia. In Santiago de Chile I had enough time to set up a life: I had my friends, my school, my Sunday park, my shul, and my favorite bar. I went to countless shabbos dinners with wonderful families and young couples alike who really started to take me under their wings once we were able to communicate, because those first couple months were filled with a lot of "si"s and giggles while having no idea what people were talking about.

But I left that life behind to go on my mini South American adventure. I started by visiting many small Venezuelan towns, all of which had churches, which were all amazing in different ways, but I quickly began missing shul. The big cities in Venezuela are dirty, so I never spent any time in them. I mean, it's very convenient that you can just throw your garbage where ever you want, but it makes for some stinky inner city life so I stuck to the beaches on the beautiful Caribbean coast. Bogota, Colombia is different. As soon as I got here, I knew I was going to spend Shabbos so I Chabad-dot-org'd it, clicked the map, got the name and phone number. 2 minute phone call: "Here's the address of the shul, get there by six, you're coming to my house for dinner," and that was that. Took a motorcycle taxi to shul, because they're cheaper, while smoking my last cigarette before Shabbos and thinking of how many dirty heads had been in this helmet before mine. Arrived at a beautiful synagogue with a gorgeous chandelier peeking through of the windows of a big domed roof, with, of coarse, plenty of security surrounding. The Chabad Rabbi greeted me right away and I felt at home - finally, a spectacular house of prayer that I can call my own. Davening was the same, and just as comforting, as it is anywhere in world. The only difference was this one prayer we said in Spanish towards the end, right after the prayer for the State of Israel, which was a prayer for Colombia. I thought I heard a *brachah* in there for the crops of Colombia... but aren't the main Colombian export crops... anyway... don't take my word for it because, by that point, I was too busy peeking over the *mechitzah* to try and translate advanced Spanish, because the only thing better than a nice, pretty-smiled, *hamesha* Jewish girl from Long Island, is a nice, dark-skinned, *hamesha* Jewish Colombiana who subconsciously does a merengue step during *Alainu*.

After services, we walk to the Chabad House, which is exquisite, and is warmly set up for the Shabbos meal for about 30. Rabbi Rosenfeld introduces me to everyone and we sit down. I make the common Chabad mistake of

eating too many appetizers (how could I not? there were about a dozen different dishes ranging from Israeli eggplant, to American salads, to Colombian fish) and was thus only able to put down 2 pieces of chicken. (As I write this, I am doing the Yom-Kippur-kick-myself of "Now I'm hungry: I shoulda eaten more back then when I had the chance.") But, of course, it did not lack Colombian culture as the soda in front of me was this awful soda called "Colombiana" that they love here, which in my opinion, makes Adirondack Orange Soda seem like finely aged wine. But, speaking of wine, the Rabbi filled up my cup up with a great red wine (a couple of times), which was a needed change from the cheap beer I had been drinking in the Carnival at Barranquilla up north where the locals were as unimpressed with my salsa as they were with my explanation: "But put on a Hora and I'll show you how to dance."

It was drizzling a little, and, after firmly insisting to the Rabbi not to give me a rain jacket, I walked outside smiling. How do I explain to my Irish Catholic friend who I'm traveling with that it's not about putting on a little hat and getting a free meal? It's *mishpacha*. I'm in the middle of Colombia, and, go figure, I have family - warm people who want nothing more than to share some laughs and stories over the Shabbos meal.

Knowing that there is a Chabad at every corner of the world waiting for you with open arms is one thing, but experiencing it is another. Meeting the unbelievable Chabadniks who cover this globe, and comfort it for us, is enough to keep anyone going. Whether it be in Switzerland or Santiago, Binghamton or Bogota, the warmth Chabadniks exude never withers. Believe me, traveling gets tiresome: the bag gets heavy, the belly gets hungry, the legs get exhausted, the heart gets lonely, and the body just doesn't want to sleep in another dirty hostel. But the incredible eye-opening experiences tell the mind that it's all worth it. But it's different for everyone: traveling is subjective and a city one loves can be another's nightmare. But, for us, part of the whole traveling experience, as is true for any experience, is doing it as a Jew. And while the Cathedrals are not ours, nor is much of the history, we have something no else has: we have a Chabad House in every place imaginable - a *mishpacha* with whom to spend Shabbos.



Elie Reiss was an English Literature major.

Dear Alumni: If you have an interesting experience to share please write to rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com. You too can be published in this space!