

chai TIMES

CHABAD HOUSE ■ **JEWISH STUDENT CENTER** ■ **BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK**
 Serving the Community through Education and Inspiration Nissan 5764 March 2004 Vol. 18, 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 14-16. 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 aslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com

Earn while you Learn!

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 applications and full details please contact the Chabad House at (607) 797-0015 or write aslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com.

Grants available for Israel Study

Students who are interested in studying at a Yeshiva in Israel this summer can now apply for a special grant that will allow them round trip air fare and one month's room and board in a Yeshiva for the price of \$500. The Yeshivas, for men and women respectively, located in Jerusalem, offer both beginner and advanced tracks. Students can extend their tickets to spend more time in Israel at their own expense. A limited number of grants is available. To obtain an application write to: aslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com

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 In honor of the birth of our twins,
 Eliana Ita Rosa and Gil Israel
 by their parents,
 Diana (Epel) '95 and Aaron Bloom

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BU Gearing Up for Shabbat 1000

For the ninth 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, March 26, beginning 6:30 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 Karen Wisotsky, Chabad student president. "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 Chana Topek, assistant JHP Fellow. "The escalation of violence and bloodshed in Israel is again shaking the very core of our Jewish peoplehood. Shabbat for 1000 should be a time for us to come together

and stand strong, to show our love and support for Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael, and to celebrate the gift of Shabbat — each in our own way — together."

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 aslonim@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 on the first two nights of the Passover holiday. On the first night, services will begin at 7:00 followed by the Seder at 7:45pm; on the second night, services will begin at 7:45pm followed immediately by the Seder. Both 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 Hagaddah 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 Shmurah 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 Shmurah Matzah or for a gift shop appointment, call the Chabad office at 797-0015.

JLI to present Seasons of the Soul *The Jewish Life Cycle in Light of Kabbalah*

The Jewish Learning Institute, recently accredited by the National Board of Licence, announces its Spring course offering, Seasons of the Soul; the Jewish Life Cycle. Beginning April 26, classes will be held on consecutive Mondays at 7:30 pm in the Chabad House great room. The Chabad House is located at 420 Murray Hill Rd in Vestal. The cost for the course is \$54 which includes the text book. The course will include units on birth, education, bar/bat mitzvah, marriage, the golden years, death and mourning and the after life. Beyond that, however, drawing deeply on a full array of Jewish sources — law, philosophy and mysticism — the course will highlight life, love, family and renewal from a uniquely Jewish perspective.

It will provide perspective and tools for living Judaism in our modern, busy world.

Registration for the course is now being accepted and can be done on line

at www.JLIcentral.com or by writing to: rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com

For further details please call course instructor Rivkah Slonim at 797-0015.

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from the DIRECTORS

Passover Questions: Something Old, Something New

Dear Friends,

A classic joke about Jews concerns our tendency to answer one question with another. We are a people in constant quest and our tradition nurtures that mode – never more than on Passover.

The most famous of all questions is the *Ma Nishtana*, 'Why is this night different from all others?' We would like to suggest that the answer lies in asking a more basic question: How will we make this night different? A meaningful Passover experience hinges on the thought and preparation that precedes it. Which is why it is so important to pause midst the pre-passover shopping and cleaning to actually think, even study, about the holiday.

The Passover *Seder* (lit. order), a sacred ceremonial rite, revolves around the children. The Biblical mandate concerning Passover exhorts the Jews to recount the story of their exodus to their progeny. The *Hagaddah* (lit. recounting) is a response to the queries of four types of children: the wise, the rebellious, the simple and the apathetic. The Talmud states that many of the *Seder* customs are designed to pique the curiosity of the young ones. The *Halachah* indicates that the evening should proceed in such a manner that the children, even toddlers, be awake and aware. And of course, the asking of the 'four questions' puts the spotlight on the next generation.

On the most essential level, however, we are all children; the precious daughters and sons of G-d. The *Seder* teaches us to approach our father in heaven in constant quest and query, and with the passion and tenacity children bring to their seemingly infinite need to understand more.

The young have open minds and hearts; their consciousness is porous and receptive to new ideas. In reliving our exodus from bondage to freedom, we seek to find that child within and bring it to the fore. We seek freedom

from the veneer and pretension that adulthood sometimes brings. We seek to uncover that unaffected part of us, pure of cynicism and doubt. We want to be as kiddush cups; open and able to receive the flow of bounty from above.

The *Seder* not only allows, but begs that we ponder and challenge; that we become intimately and completely engaged by the process of redemption. Even in our purest, child like moments we can be complicated beings. Most of us are actually a composite of the four archetypes described above; we have our moments of wisdom and instances of rebellion, we can slip into a mode of simplicity, even apathy. The *Hagaddah* invites and addresses the questions of all types, the *Seder* is not complete without the participation of all. Each one lends depth and breadth to what should ideally be a real and transforming experience.

Each year when we reconvene for the *Seder* – that timeless rite and journey through time – we bring a cumulative knowledge from years past, but we must also bring a new sense of wonder and query and receptiveness. In this way we can make the night different, and more importantly, a night that will make a difference and affect every other night and day of the ensuing year.

The Rebbe taught us that we must strive to bring the fifth daughter and son to the *Seder* Table, that is the Jew who shows not interest in the *Seder* at all but who through our loving effort can "be there" if we reach out with a welcoming gesture. Let us do what we can to bring all of the "fifth sons" home and may this year be the final one in which we exclaim *next* year in Jerusalem!

With our warmest wishes that you and yours enjoy a Kosher and joyous Passover,

Aaron and Rivky Slonim

Rabbi Aaron and Rivky Slonim

chai
TIMES

Published by Chabad House of Binghamton
420 Murray Hill Road, Vestal, NY 13850
(607) 797-0015 • Fax: (607) 797-0095
E-mail: aslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com
Web Page: www.chabadofbinghamton.com

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Editor: Rivkah Slonim

Proofreading and Technical Assistance: Marlene Serkin

Production and Layout: Rabbi Yitzchak Creeger

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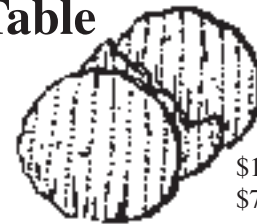
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In Tribute To The Lubavitcher Rebbe

On the 102nd Anniversary of his birth Nissan 11 – April 2, 2004

Smaller than celestial bodies, not nearly as powerful as black holes, the sun has won our attention. Where others direct the energy they emit inward-back to themselves, the sun radiates light and warmth outward-for the entire planetary system.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, of Righteous memory, once made this observation. The light of the sun, he said, is a metaphor for divine light. One singular ray of sunlight can dispel dense darkness. In our own lives, he taught, we must emulate the sun. As the sun shares its light and warmth, we too, must be willing to give of ourselves, to radiate light for the benefit of others.

This is surely a recurring theme in the life of the Rebbe. A genuine luminary, the Rebbe seemed always to think of people in terms of light, of diamonds-potentially brilliant ones. And he taught us to think of ourselves as lamplighters. Actions speak louder than words. That was the Rebbe's lifelong refrain. As we celebrate the 102nd anniversary of the Rebbe's birth on Friday, April 2nd, this year; the legacy he shared with us, and his immeasurable gift to the Jewish community and the world, let us incorporate in our lives his teachings of goodness, unity and upgrading our standards by doing an additional mitzvah: tzedaka, tefillin, lighting Shabbat and Yom Tov candles, etc.

To mark this occasion, we present a fascinating story about the Rebbe's care for a searching young woman.

"During the first years that I lived in Sydney, Australia," related Rabbi Chaim Gutnick, "I was contacted by the Jewish community in Adelaide. The high holidays were approaching, and their Shul had no Rabbi. The Chief Rabbi of Sydney sent them to me, but I could not see leaving my wife and four young children alone for the holidays."

The Shul committee asked the Chief Rabbi what to do.

Listen, he told them, "Rabbi Gutnick is a Lubavitcher. Write a letter to the Lubavitcher Rebbe stating that you need a Rabbi for the High Holidays. If the Rebbe tells Rabbi Gutnick to go, he will."

I soon received a special delivery letter from the Rebbe, expressing surprise that I did not consent, and advising me to spend the High Holidays in Adelaide. At the bottom of the letter, the Rebbe added, 'While in Adelaide, concern yourself with the needs of

Egyptian Jews living there.'

I arrived in Adelaide the day before Rosh HaShanah and went to the Shul. As I was surveying the sanctuary, a woman entered and asked me, 'Where is the most sacred part of the synagogue?' I was surprised by her question. I pointed to the Aron HaKodesh (Holy Ark in front of the synagogue).

Before I could say another word, she rushed out, led a blind teenage girl straight to the Aron HaKodesh, and then departed. The girl kissed the curtains of the ark and burst out in tears. She remained there for several minutes; after which the woman came back and escorted her out.

I described the entire baffling scene to the Shul secretary. 'Don't give it another thought,' the secretary said. She's one of the Egyptians. They don't get along with our community.



Her parents don't even come to Shul on Rosh HaShanah, so she probably decided to visit before the holiday.'

All I could think of was the Rebbe's words 'concern yourself with the Egyptian Jews.' I tried to ignore the secretary's degrading tone. I rushed out to find the girl, but she had disappeared.

On Rosh HaShanah, I felt the gulf between the local community and the Egyptian Jews. I tried to befriend some Egyptian Jews, and asked about the blind girl.

After the holiday, she too tried to contact me. The phone in my room rang. 'Hello, I'm Betty, the blind girl.' But an abrupt dick assured me that someone was determined to keep her from speaking to me.

On the night before Yom Kippur, I was finally able to obtain her address and phone number. My calls were

fruitless, for as soon as I identified myself, the line went dead. I would not give up. Despite the late hour, I took a taxi to her home. Her family was reluctant to allow me in. Please,' I said, 'I have traveled a great distance, and I would like to speak with you.'

The door opened, and I was invited to enter. Slowly, I developed their trust. After a while, the rest of the family left, and I gently asked Betty to tell me what was troubling her. In an emotional tone, she told her story:

My family arrived in Australia last year. They sent me to the only school in this city for the blind, a Catholic school. The people in the school are very nice, and my parents were pleased, because I had been given a full scholarship. After five months, the local priest began lecturing me about Christianity. I ignored him until he told me bluntly that I must convert. At the same time, my parents received a letter from the school: "Due to lack of space in our school, we are forced to turn away prospective students of our own faith. We will agree to provide free schooling for your daughter only if she converts to Christianity."

One day, I overheard my agitated parents discuss the issue. They had reconciled themselves to the harsh reality that I must convert. Although I know very little about our religion, I know that I am Jewish. I know that there is a G-d and I decided to pray to Him for guidance. I also knew that the Jewish holy days were approaching. On the day before Rosh HaShanah, I told my mother that I did not feel well and could not go to school. When I was alone in the house, I knocked on the door of my Gentile neighbor. 'Tomorrow is the Jewish New Year,' I told her. 'My parents do not attend the synagogue so I would



The Rebbe

like to ask you a favor. Please take me to the synagogue today so I can pray. I will only stay for a few minutes.' My neighbor agreed. In the synagogue, I cried and prayed to G-d to give me a sign. I returned home and waited.


Guests joined us for the holiday dinner. One of them laughed at me: 'Betty! What have you been up to lately? A Rabbi from Sydney came to Adelaide and he is asking about you. How do you know him?' I knew this was a G-d given sign to me. I tried to call you, but my mother didn't allow it. She was afraid that you would convince me not to convert and that I would have to leave school. But somehow, I knew that you would help me.

The girl's parents then came in and tearfully told me, 'We really don't want her to convert, but we have no choice. We are concerned about her welfare.' I promised to do my best to help them.

The Rebbe's words echoed in my ears as I pondered what to do. I phoned the secretary of the Jewish community, told him the story, and asked him to come immediately. "He was obviously startled by my request. "Have you gone mad?" he gasped. "It's half past midnight!" "If you want a Rabbi for Yom Kippur, come here now," I told him. "Come in your pajamas if you must, but come."

He arrived in twenty minutes. I told him that the community must accept the responsibility for the girl's tuition so that she would not be forced to convert. Without enthusiasm, yet with sincerity, he made the financial commitment.

The girl continued writing to me over the years. She graduated high school with honors, went on to study in Jerusalem, married, and now leads an exemplary Jewish life in Israel.



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The JetBlue Minyan

A "Must Read" Story!

By Rabbi Zvi Konikov

In honor of the first Yahrzeit of my mother of blessed memory, I would like to share this story reflecting my year's journey to recite *kaddish* three times a day in my home town of Satellite Beach, Florida.

Upon my mother's passing, I was faced with the dilemma of how to say *kaddish* in a town where there's no daily *minyan* (quorum). There's no traditional shul except our Chabad Center and our primary focus is adult education. Nevertheless, with my mother's merit and example of determination, and my dear wife's marathon phone calls, we put together daily morning and evening services which are going strong for over a year now, though not without challenges. Besides the great feeling of accomplishment, we received a bonus from our local Bell South Telephone Company for signing up so many new Caller ID customers! (Just kidding.)

So here I am on Jet Blue flight 46 from Orlando to JFK, on the first leg of my journey to Israel. I had figured that my arrival in New York would be early enough to catch a *minyan* for *Mincha* (afternoon service). I had covered all the possibilities - or so I thought. In Yiddish, there's an expression, "*Ah mentch tracht un G-t lacht.*" "Man proposes and G-d disposes." This was a perfect example.

My Jet Blue flight was scheduled to depart Orlando at 4:15 P.M. However, as soon as we got on the runway, the captain announced a 90-minute delay on all flights into New York due to bad weather. In an hour and a half, we would know more. But for now, we had to sit on the plane.

I started to worry. Since my mother passed away ten and a half months ago, I had not missed a single *kaddish*. And now this! Still, there was time; and if there is one thing that I have learned from living in a small town like Satellite Beach, and trying to get a *minyan* every day, it's not to panic. After all, I had encountered a number of close calls over the year, but each time I had managed to get my *minyan* and say *kaddish*. However, as I reflected on my situation, I realized that there was a great difference. There, I could move around, pick people up in my car, call on friends, and call on friends of friends. Even on Shabbos when we cannot use the phone, I could always walk down the road to the shopping center and search for a Jew (or two). But here on the plane, I was stuck with nowhere to go. Worry set in, and I began looking for a solution.

Suddenly, I thought of an idea. I'll demand to exit the plane! I will miss the flight but I won't miss *kaddish*. I was determined. I knew it would be hard to get off the plane since we were already far from the terminal. Nevertheless, I had to try.

"Excuse me," I said to a stewardess. "I have an important meeting in New York and if I cannot make it in person, I must leave the plane now."

"I'm sorry," she replied politely. "We cannot return to the gate. We are on the runway waiting to take off. There are planes ahead and planes in back of us. We cannot move. It's impossible." Oh, well. I tried.

About 30 minutes passed and we were going nowhere in a hurry. The stewardess began handing out refreshments. Then the pilot came out and offered his cell phone to let passengers call their family and friends.

Every few seconds, I looked at my watch and calculated our earliest possible arrival time. I called my brother,

Rabbi Yosef Konikov, of Chabad of South Orlando. At this point, my problem was not finding a *minyan* at his Chabad Center (25 minutes from the Orlando Airport) or even at the airport. My problem was simply getting there! I looked at my watch again. Another 15 minutes had passed. I realized it was time for action. I must do something and now. But what?

Suddenly, a crazy thought dawned on me. Maybe there are enough Jews on this flight to make a *minyan*! After all, we're flying to New York, and although I hadn't noticed any religious Jews, it was my only hope.

"Before I make a scene, I'll check my chances of success," I told myself.



Trying to be inconspicuous, I got up from my seat "to stretch" and walked up and down the aisles looking for "Jewish faces". I reached the back of the plane. Alas, only the guy in the last seat had a "Jewish face". And I wasn't even sure about him. Was I dreaming or was I so desperate that I imagined that he looked Jewish? I gathered my courage and asked him straight out. "Are you Jewish?" I almost hit the roof when he answered, "Yes!" Quickly, I explained that I had to say *kaddish* for my mother and needed a *minyan*. He understood. "Count me in when you get ten," he replied. Then he resumed his reclining position in front of the TV, nodding his head slightly to wish me good luck.

Bolstered by my success, I identified the next "Jewish face." Before I knew it, we were up to four! Each one commented, "I'm not religious," or "I don't know how to pray." Still, they were willing to help.

The minutes continued to tick by, but I had run into a brick wall. That was it for Jewish faces. How many people who looked Hispanic could possibly be Jewish? Should I give up? I couldn't return to my seat as something (or Someone Above) kept pushing me. Aisle by aisle I made my plea, but this time a little bit different than before. "Excuse me," I asked people, "Is anyone in your party Jewish?" I asked. And the unbelievable was happening. Once in a while, the answer was "Yes, he is," or "Yes, I am."

By this time, I had seven! Only three more to go. Surprisingly, one of Jet Blue's managers was sitting in a regular seat. "Can I help you?" he asked. I thought that he was just following the customer service routine. But when I explained my predicament and he immediately sprung into action to help me, I started to sing the Jet Blue advertising jingle in my head. Amazingly, he offered to make an announcement asking for volunteers over the PA system!

"Thank you," I answered. "But I'm going to try to do this low profile."

"Excuse me," the man across from the aisle spoke up. "I overheard your conversation. I am Jewish." Now we had eight! I was beginning to believe it would happen. I continued my search. I began to get excited at the prospect of a miraculous *minyan*. But a bunch of people saying "sorry" and "no" brought me back to reality. One passenger who really wanted to help but wasn't Jewish said to me, "My buddy is half Jewish." Hopefully, I asked his friend, "Are you Jewish?" "No. Not really," he answered. Disappointed, I turned to walk away. "But my grandmother was Jewish!" he added.

I turned and asked, "Your mother's mother?"

"Yeah, but that doesn't make me Jewish, does it?"

"You bet it does!" I told him.

"Neat! Just like that, I find out I'm Jewish! Maybe the delay was worth it, just for that!"

At "T Minus One Jew And Counting," I was roaring down the aisle with confidence now, ready to launch this nearly made *minyan*. By this time, no one on the plane had any doubts as to what was happening. Every so often the manager would call out to me "How many are we up to?" When I told him we were at nine, he radioed to the cockpit and asked if any of the crew was Jewish. "Negative," came the reply.

At this point, everyone wanted to help, but the situation seemed hopeless. I had already gone through every seat twice and the dark reality seemed to be settling in that there were only nine male Jews over the age of 13 on this plane.

As I was making my way back to my seat, crestfallen, someone who felt very sorry for me stopped me and said: "I have a Jewish friend in Georgia who I can call on my cell phone; will that work?" I explained that it wouldn't and thanked him anyway. (As if I didn't know a few Jews myself that I could phone!)

I called my brother Yosef again. "You won't believe this: we've got nine! But that's really it," I said anxiously. "You're a chaplain in the Sheriff's Department. Maybe you can get a police escort to the plane, or maybe you can get someone Jewish from security to come out here and get onto the plane with us." Yosef said he would try, but he didn't sound too hopeful. Time and the odds were both working against us.

"If I don't make this *minyan* after getting nine Jews on this flight, what a let-

down it will be," I said to myself... and to the One Above. Mentally, I was preparing myself for exactly that letdown because I had run out of options. I returned to my seat, just waiting to see what would happen next.

A few seconds passed before the passenger right behind me cleared his throat and confessed, "I'm really sorry but earlier, when I told you I was not Jewish, I wasn't telling the truth. I was just very intimidated. I really am Jewish." My eyes became as wide as saucers. At first, I thought that he was pulling my leg. Either that, or he was just trying to be nice because he saw how desperate I was. I was suspicious, and I knew I had to do a little questioning. "Is your mother Jewish?" I asked conversationally (as if I had all the time in the world!).

"Absolutely," he responded. "Her maiden name is Horowitz. You can't get more Jewish than that!" Then he added, "There's no question, I even know *Boruch Atoch Ad-ney - Borchu es Hashem...*"

Everyone around me became giddy with excitement. I signaled my loyal and devoted Jet Blue manager who was sitting about ten rows behind me. "It's a go!" I cried, "We've got ten!" You would have thought he had just won the lotto, that's how happy he was for me.

The manager invited me to meet with the stewardesses at the back of the plane. He wanted to make sure that the *minyan* would go smoothly. I went back and told them that there really wasn't much that I needed, and that I did not want to inconvenience them whatsoever. I suggested that they finish serving the beverages before we started so we wouldn't get in their way. Other than that, I told them that the afternoon prayer would take between seven and nine minutes altogether. I also thanked them for all their help and understanding.

The manager offered to let me know once they finished making their rounds through the plane. He would also help me gather my nine volunteers. As soon as I got the word from the manager, I started going down the aisles "picking up" people. (I was hoping I'd remember who they were! I did.) It didn't take very long before a line of Jews was walking behind me towards the back. About three rows before the end of the plane, I noticed a face that I had missed. "He certainly looks Jewish," So I stopped and asked him, "Are you Jewish?"

He said, "Yes, but look, you're holding up the aisle! All these people want to get by!" I said, "These people are my *minyan*!!" Astonished, he quickly got into the spirit: "Well then, I'm coming too!"

The atmosphere at the back of the plane was electric. The Jewish men were giving each other "high fives." You would have thought they had just won the NBA title! We packed into the tiny galley/kitchen in the back of the plane.

Before the *minyan* started, I briefed the members of our group about what we were going to do. From their blank looks, it appeared as if only three of the eleven people had ever participated in a *minyan* before. While my main objective was to say *kaddish*, I didn't want the experience for these Jews to be just a "lip-service." So I took the opportunity to give a brief explanation on the concept of prayer.

"Prayer is not restricted to a particular place but can be done anywhere, from the privacy of your own room to a Jet Blue plane that is stuck on the runway," I told them. Then I got to the nitty-gritty. "Since Jet Blue does not, as yet, have 10 prayer

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**Nissan
15-22
5764**

Your Passover Guide

**April
5-13
2004**



PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR PESACH

What is Chometz?

Chometz is any food or drink made from wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt or their derivatives, which is forbidden on Passover because it is leavened or fermented.

If a food contains any of these ingredients and is not certified as "kosher for Passover", it's considered chometz. If a food contains even a trace of chometz, we don't eat it, we don't sell it and we make sure not to have any of it in our possession for all the days of Passover.

Getting Rid of Chometz

You don't need to destroy all the chometz in your house — you just need to make sure it no longer belongs to you. Take all the chometz — both the food and the utensils used throughout the year (and not koshered for Passover) — and store it all away in a closet or room that you will lock or tape shut. You're going to sell this chometz temporarily to a non-Jew — we'll get to that later.

For now, clean your entire house, purging it of all crumbs and small pieces of food. Also check for chometz in your car and at the office — don't overlook desks and drawers, etc. Other spot to be investigated include: 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.

SHOPPING FOR PESACH

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

Starting 'From Scratch'

All fresh fruits and vegetables are kosher for Passover. So are all kosher cuts of meat and kosher fish — 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 Passover we do not eat rice, millet, corn, mustard, legumes, (beans, etc.) or foods made from one of these. Consult your community's rabbi for any variance.

Commercially Prepared Products

Nowadays, supermarkets are full of kosher-for-Pesach packaged foods. Processed foods that are under kosher supervision will display the insignia of the supervising agency on their package. Alongside this should be a letter "P" or "Kosher for Passover".

Obviously, all leavened foods — such as bread and cake — made from wheat, barley, rye, oats or spelt are actual chometz and are out of the question on Passover. Some of the less obvious examples are breakfast cereals, licorice, most candy bars, pasta, vinegar, 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

Since the kitchen has been used the whole year long for chometz, it's going to need some working over to prepare it for Passover use.

Dishes and Utensils

Today, most Passover savvy homes have special sets of dishes, silverware, pots, pans and other utensils for Passover use only. If necessary, certain 'year-round' utensils can be used — provided they are koshered for Passover. This gets rather complex — you'll need to consult a competent rabbi about your particular utensils.

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

Launder without starch.

HOW TO SEARCH FOR Chometz AND BURN IT

There is a custom to distribute ten small, individually wrapped pieces of chometz throughout the home before the search. After nightfall on the evening before Passover, Sunday, April 4, 2004, gather the household together and light a candle.

The Blessing

Recite the following blessing before the search:

Bo-ruch A-toh A-do-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-she'r 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.

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.

After the chometz has been burnt in the fire, 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.

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.

Burning the Chometz

On the morning before Passover, Monday, April 5, 2004, burn the chometz that was found during the search, or that was left over from breakfast and not stored with the chometz which will be sold to the non-Jew. See the Passover Calendar (page 8) for the deadline for burning it.

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 *moror* — 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.

SHMURAH MATZAH

Shmurah means protected. Shmurah matzah is protected from water. What's so terrible about water? Plenty, if you're a kernel of wheat or a bag of flour and want to be a matzah for Passover. One drop of water could start the fermentation process and — zap! — you're chometz before you've even started!



When we left Egypt, we kneaded unleavened dough into round matzah by hand. Today Shmurah matzahs are made just the same way. They are baked under fine-tooth supervision to avoid the slightest possibility of leavening during the baking process. That's why Shmurah matzah should be used on each of the two Seder nights for the three matzahs of the Seder plate.

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

Continued on page 8

A Holiday Pull-out section for your inspiration!

The unique seder guide below, written by celebrated author Tzvi Freeman, takes the reader through the Seder, step by step, explaining what to do at each point in a comprehensive yet accessible manner. These portions of the guide address the "body." The guide also illuminates the deeper dimensions of the Seder, providing Kabbalistic explanations which address the "soul."

1. KADESH — TRANSCEND/SANCTIFY MAKE THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT.

BODY

It's been a crazy week. The world with all its worries and bothers is still clamoring for your attention. The first step is to forget all that.

Leave it behind. Enter into a timeless space, where you, your great-grandparents and Moses all coincide.

Begin with a full cup of sweet red wine. A full cup of hundreds of generations of rejoicing and tears and celebration and wisdom and...of doing just what you are going to do tonight.

Fill cup with wine. That's cup #1.

Have someone else fill your cup. Return them the favor. This way, we are all like nobility, whose cups are filled by someone else.

Make sure your cup holds at least 3.5 ounces.



Everyone stands and says the kiddush together.

The rest of the year, one person says kiddush for everyone else. Tonight, each man, woman and child recites every word together.

Drink. And get ready for some serious relaxing: Recline on a cushion to your left side.

Remember the ancient times, when we used to recline on couches while stuffing down grapes? That's what we are dramatizing by reclining now. We are not just free, we are masters.

SOUL

The beginning of all journeys is separation.

You've got to leave somewhere to go somewhere else. It is also the first step towards freedom: You ignore the voice of Pharaoh inside that mocks you, saying, "Who are you to begin such a journey?" You just get up and walk out.

This is the first meaning of the word,

"Kadesh" — to transcend the mundane world. Then comes the second meaning: Once you've set yourself free from your material worries, you can return and sanctify them. That is when true spiritual freedom begins, when you introduce a higher purpose into all those things you do.

In this way, this step, Transcend, and the next step, Purify, are a description of all that we set out to accomplish through the rest of the seder: We plan to transcend the chains of our world so that we can purify and elevate it.

2. URCHATZ — WASH/PURIFY

BODY

Fill a cup with water

Many Jewish homes have a large

two-handed cup especially designed for this. You could leave the table to go to the kitchen.

What? We just sat down and now we have to get up and leave already? Well, that's a fairly normal migration pattern for Jews.

On the other hand, you could bring a basin and towel to the table.

Pour the water to cover your right hand.

Repeat. Repeat again. Ditto for your left hand.

That's how the Priests did it when they entered the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

Dry hands.

The rest of the year we say a blessing at this point. When we wash the second time before eating the matzah, we'll say it then. But not now.

SOUL

Our hands are the primary tools to interact with our environment. They generally just obey our emotions: Love, fear, compassion, the urge to win, to be appreciated, to express ourselves, to dominate. Our emotions, in turn, reflect our mental state.

But, too often, each faculty of our psyche sits in its cell, exiled from one another. The mind sees one way, the heart feels another and our interface with the world ends up one messy tzimmes.

Water represents the healing power of wisdom. Water flows downward, carrying its essential simplicity to each thing. It brings them together as a single living, growing whole. We pour water over our hands as an expression of wisdom pouring downward passing through our heart and from there to our interaction with the world around us.

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 yourself?"

He answered, "You need to first get out of the pit, and then clean up your act. That's why G-d first took us out of Egypt and only then had us spend 49 days purifying ourselves in the wilderness to prepare for Mount Sinai. You can wash yourself all you want, but if you still haven't pulled yourself out of the shmutz, it ain't gonna help much."

3. KARPAS

BODY

Take a small piece of some edible vegetable (potato, onion, parsley)

The rest of the year, at this point we would be getting down to the meal. But we're doing things differently tonight, principally to spark questions from the small children. If they say, "Hey mom and dad! Aren't we supposed to eat real food now? Why the funny green stuff?" — then you know you're doing things right.

That's a distinctive mark of Jewish education: More than we teach our children how to answer, we teach them how to ask — and how to be patient in their search for answers.

Dip it into saltwater.

These are our tears, and all the tears of our people beginning with the tears of our labor in Egypt.

Say the blessing and munch it down.

Munch good. You're not going to get much more for a while.

About the Seder and the Child

On that night that we left Egypt, we were a newly hatched chick, breaking out of our egg to discover life and the light of day. It was with those fresh eyes that we were able to experience wonder, to travel forth with faith and innocence, with trust. So tonight, again, we enter the mind and heart of a child.

That is why the child is the most important participant at the Seder. In fact, the entire seder with all its customs is focussed around the child. The mitzvah of the Hagada is "to tell the story to your child." The child asks, we respond.

But more than the child learns from us, we learn from the child. The mystical child within us awakens, the place that is still raw and fresh and able to grow, to be amazed, to sense awe.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchaak of Lubavitch once said, "If you want to know what it is like to be a prophet, to experience the Divine Spirit resting upon you, remember how you saw as a child."

SOUL

We need to re-taste the backbreaking labor of Egypt to liberate ourselves from it once again. It was this labor that prepared us for freedom. It was this labor that gave us a humble spirit to accept wisdom.

Today, as well, you can choose to achieve this humble spirit by enduring the battle to survive the rat race. There will be plenty of futile, hamster-wheel tasks to bring you to your knees.

Or you could choose another path: achieving true humility with the realization of just how small we earthly creatures are. That will free you from the need to experience materialistic futility.

4. YACHATZ — BREAKING THE MATZAH

BODY

Remove the middle matzah.

We need the top matzo to remain whole. We'll be making a blessing on it later on.

Blessings are said on whole things. Break it in two. Put the smaller piece back between the two complete matzos.

The piece you put back is the "poor man's bread" over which the tale of our slavery is said. Poor people only eat a small part of their bread — they need to save the rest in case tomorrow there is none.



Hide the package until the end of the Seder when it will be eaten as the Afikoman, or dessert.

In many houses, the children hide the afikoman and the adults have to find it at the end of the meal. In others, the adults hide it and the children find it. Either way, it keeps the kids up and in suspense until the end of the meal.

Many Sephardic Jews have the tradition of tying the afikoman under the arms of the children, who carry it like that all night, just like when we left Egypt.

SOUL

Why is there so much broken in this world?

Why did the Cosmic Designer make a world where hearts break, lives shatter, beauty crumbles?

A whole vessel can contain its measure, but a broken one can hold the Infinite.

Matzah is called the poor man's bread. He is low and broken. And it is this

YOUR STEP-BY-STEP



For Body

Based on the Kabbalah of Lubavitch

brokenness 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. It is when we realize we are but a fragment, that we need the others around us, that so much of us is missing — that is when miracles begin.

5. MAGGID — TELLING THE STORY

This is it, folks. This is why it's called a Hagada. Now we get to the meat and potatoes of the Seder your soul is longing for.

BODY

Fill the second cup of wine.

The second cup corresponds to the second child — the wicked (make that "morally challenged") child. This is the cup the story is told over. The morally challenged child is the one who needs this story the most, and the one who can most appreciate it.

Children ask the Four Questions.

Of course, they can always ask more.

No children? Let an adult ask. There's just you? You be the child, and G-d will be the father. While you're at it, ask Him a few other difficult questions for us all.

Continue with the telling of the story, as written in your Hagada.

Hey, you're not limited to the Hagada's version!

That was written so that everybody would have something to say. But now is your chance to get creative. Tell every story you know about the exodus. Examine every word of the hagada and get into the deeper meaning. Keep it real, make it profound.

Basic Rules of telling the story:

STEP SEDER GUIDE



and Soul

istic Teachings of the
er Rebbe

- Get the children involved.
- Tell it in first person, in the now. Don't say, "Long ago, the ancient Hebrews..." Say, "When we were slaves in Egypt, the perverse socio-bureaucratic system thoroughly crushed every individual's sense of self-worth!"
- Everything that happened there parallels something in each of our lives. We are truly living it now. We are simply examining our own lives in the dress of ancient Egypt.
- Start with our roots as polytheists and work your way through the Egyptian scene until we receive the Torah at Mount Sinai.
- It's all about miracles. Moses and his signs and wonders. The Ten Plagues. The splitting of the sea. All those miracles happened so that we would look at the events of our daily life and recognize that these too are miracles.



Tell it like it is: We are a people born of miracles. We endured by miracles. The very fact that we are here now telling this same story to our children in an unbroken chain of 3,313 years is an abrogation of natural law.

We drink the second cup at the end of this step.

SOUL

The exodus was 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 the rebels of society, the ones who think out of the box.

The experience of leaving Egypt left such an indelible mark on our souls, we never stopped doing it. A Jew who has stopped exiting Egypt has ceased to allow his soul to breathe.

To tell the story is to bring that essential self into the open, to come face to face with who we really are and resuscitate it back to life.

6. RACHTZA — WASHING/PURIFYING (AGAIN)

BODY

- Fill a cup with water
- Again? Yes, again.
- Pour the water to cover your right hand.
- Repeat. Repeat again. Ditto for your left hand.
- Say the blessing concerning the washing of the hands. Dry your hands.

SOUL

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

That is why freedom is something you cannot buy nor steal. Never can you put freedom in your purse and say, "Freedom is mine forever!"

For freedom is a marriage: Freedom is the bond our finite selves with the Infinite, the power to transcend the world while working inside it. It is a marriage of heaven and earth, spirit and matter, soul and body. And like any marriage, it is kept alive only by constant renewal. Like the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea, suspended in its state of paradox by a continuous, other-worldly force. Yet, in our exodus, we were granted eternal freedom. Not because we were released from slavery. But because we were given the power to perpetually transcend.

7. MOTZI — SAY A BLESSING FOR THE BREAD

BODY

- Get ready, seder leader: Technical matzah instructions to follow:
- Hold all three matzahs — the top one, the broken middle one and the bottom one — and pick them up a little.
- Say the blessing: Blessed... Who brings bread out of the earth.

The point of this blessing is to realize the wonder: He makes bread come out of the earth — with all the nutrients a human being needs to survive. The substance that powers our thoughts, creativity, music, art, philosophy, meditation, prayer... And where does it come from? From this very earth upon which we tread. And let us all say: "Totally Awesome!"

Hold on... more instructions to follow in the next step...

SOUL

We feel an affinity with the food we eat: We too are a miracle out of the earth.

We and the bread share a common journey.

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 alive, begins to grow sprout and grow.

As spring arrives, it pushes its way above the earth to find the sun, and then bears its fruits for the world.

We too began buried in Egypt, all but losing our identity. But that furnace of oppression became for us a firing kiln, a baker's oven, the womb from whence we were born in the month of spring. In our liberation from there, we brought our fruits of freedom to the world.

8. MATZAH — SAY A BLESSING FOR THE MATZAH

Hold it! Didn't we just do this? I mean, the bread is matzah, right? And we said a blessing on the bread already!

Yes, but that was a blessing of praise and thanks for giving us what to eat. Now we go on to bless and praise for connecting us to Him with His mitzvah of eating matzah.

BODY

Technical instructions continued: Carefully release the bottom matzah. Recite the blessing on the remaining whole matzah and the broken matzah: Blessed...and commanded us concerning eating matzah.

Break off a piece from each of the two matzos for yourself and for each of those sitting at your table. Pass them around.

Everybody swallows down at least two thirds of a matzah. They will need to help themselves to an auxiliary reserve of matzah as well.

Don't forget to lean to the left while you munch — just like with the wine.

SOUL

Since the destruction of the 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.

In fact, it has enough G-dly energy to blast your soul out of the deepest ditch into the highest heights.

The *Zohar* calls matzah "Bread of Faith" and "Bread of Healing". Did I say "faith?" Well, actually, that's a rather feeble translation.

Emunah is the word in Hebrew, and it means a lot more than "I believe, brother!"

Faith can often be something people rely upon when they don't care to think too much. *Emunah* is when you go beyond thinking and you get somewhere your mind could have never brought you to.

Emunah is when you touch that place where your soul and the essence of the Infinite Light are one. It's a point that nothing can describe. Where there are no words, no doubts, no uncertainty, no confusion — nothing else but a magnificent oneness before which all the challenges of life vanish like a puff of vapor.

Eating matzah is a means of plugging your entire self into that reservoir. Your physical body digests the *Emunah* of your soul, everything is integrated back into one, your body and spirit are whole and harmonious.

How on earth, you may ask, can a mixture of water and wheat from the ground baked in an oven contain a spiritual cure?

Well, welcome to the Jewish People, where there is no dichotomy of spirit and matter, soul and body. Where the spiritual transforms into physicality and material objects rise to become spiritual in a perpetual chemistry of exchange. Where bodies are healed by empowering the soul and souls are nourished by the rituals of the body. After all, we live in the world of a single G-d.

9. MAROR — EAT A BITTER HERB

BODY

Grab some of that bitter herb,

enough to make the size of a small egg if you would crunch it into a ball. Some have the custom of mixing horseradish with lettuce.

Dip the bitter herb in the charoset. Shake off any excess.

It's a careful balance: You want bitter herbs, but you want to sweeten the bitterness a little.

But it's still got to be bitter herbs — not a sumptuous charoset hors d'oeuvre. Look, you can try that later at the meal. We'll get there — don't worry.

Say the blessing: Blessed... and commanded us concerning eating bitter herbs.

SOUL

We never got used to Egypt. We never felt we belonged there. We never said, "They are the masters and we are the slaves and that's the way it is." It always remained something we felt bitter about, something that was unjust and needed to change. If it hadn't been that way, we probably would never have left. In fact, tradition tells us that 80% of the Jews said, "This is our land. How can we leave it?" And they stayed and died there.

But as for the rest of us, when Moses came and told us we were going to leave, we believed him. It was our bitterness that had preserved our faith.

Everyone has their Egypt. You've got to know who you are and what are your limitations. But heaven forbid to make peace with them. The soul within you knows no limits.

This is the sweetness we apply to the bitter herb: Bitterness alone, without any direction, is self-destructive. Inject some life and optimism into it, and it becomes the springboard to freedom.

10. KORECH — EAT A SANDWICH

BODY

Break off two pieces from the bottom matzah. If you've followed instructions until now, it should still be whole.

Take an olive-size volume of the bitter herb and place it in between those two pieces.

Again, some mix together the horseradish and lettuce. Ask your bubbe (grandma) for your family custom.

Now you know what that second pile of bitter herb at the bottom of the seder plate is for.

Dip the bitter herb in the charoset. Shake off any excess.

Say the words: "This is what Hillel did, at the time that the Temple stood. He wrapped up some Pesach lamb, some matzah and some bitter herbs and ate them together."



And you thought it was because they packed sandwiches to leave Egypt. Well, it is fast food.

Hillel read the words of the Torah about the Pesach lamb, "on matzah and bitter herbs you shall eat it," and he took it literally. And so the sandwich was invented.

Or maybe we should be calling it a "hillel"?

Lean to the left while you eat.

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Continued from page 7

SOUL

In the view from within Egypt, this world is a mess of fragments. It's called "The Passoverly Challenged Perspective." Plain materialism. Where mitzvahs are a mishmash of dos and don'ts, Jews are a collection of irreconcilable riffs, daily life is a cacophony of hassles and, well, just stuff.

Once we blast off far enough to escape materialism's gravitational pull, we look back down and see a whole new perspective: It's all a single landscape.

From up there looking down, mitzvahs are multiple expressions of a single spiritual path, Jews are multiple faces to a single soul, all the artifacts of today's journey harmonize together as a symphony with a single conductor playing a single melody.

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

11. SHULCHAN ORECH — LET'S FEAST!**BODY**

Don't forget to eat the boiled egg, dipped in salt water. Most do this at the very beginning of the meal.

A boiled egg is a sign of mourning. On every festive occasion, we remember to mourn for the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem.

SOUL

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 — take foods which grow from the earth, a blessing over them and bring them into journey as human beings. And when it's Shabbos or another Jewish holiday, we elevate them further, into the realm of pure spirituality. As for tonight, this meal is going to be truly Divine.

We're reaching a higher state. And what a great way to do it!

12. TZAFUN — EAT THE HIDDEN MATZAH (THE "AFIKOMAN")**BODY**

Retrieve that hidden matzah.

If you can't find it, you may have to enter into negotiations with the kids to get it back.

Accepted limit for parent-extortion is a brand-name bicycle.

Eat another two-thirds of a matzah. Lean.

With the first matzah, we fulfilled our obligation to eat matzah. This one is in place of the Pesach lamb that is meant to be eaten on a full stomach.

SOUL

In Kaballah, it is explained that there is something deeper than the soul. There is the body, the spirit, and then there is the essence.

If the soul is light, then that essence is the source of light. If it is energy, then the essence is the dynamo. It is called tzafun, meaning hidden, buried, locked away and out of reach.

Whatever we do, we dance around that essence-core, like a spacecraft in orbit, unable to land. We can meditate, we can be inspired, but to touch the inner core, the place where all this comes from, that takes a power from beyond.

On Passover night, we have that

power. But only after all the steps before: Destroying our personal chametz, preparing our homes for liberation, the eleven steps of the Seder until now. Then, when we are satiated with all we can handle, connecting every facet of ourselves to the Divine, that's when that power comes to us. Whether we sense it or not, tasteless as it may seem, the matzah we eat now reaches deep into our core and transforms our very being.

In general, it is this way: Those things you find inspiring and nice may take you a step forward. But if you want to effect real change, you need to do something totally beyond your personal bounds.

13. BERACH — THANK G-D FOR THE FOOD**BODY**

It's late now. Adults are falling asleep. Kids are having a great time taking advantage of that. But it's not over. There's songs and wine and Elijah the Prophet is on his way...

Pour the third cup of wine. All the way to the tip, just like the other ones.

Say the Grace After Meals as printed in your Hagada.

Say a blessing on the wine and drink it all down. Lean.

SOUL

The theme of grace after meals is confidence.

Confidence in a Higher Force that is with us in our daily lives. With that confidence you don't just see food before you. You see a river of life travelling from Above onto your plate.

When we say this out loud, with joy and sincerity, we initiate a reciprocal current. The energy we receive is bounced back with even greater force, replenishing all the higher worlds and ethereal beings through which it passed on its way here. The channels of life are widened and their currents grow strong.

Miracles happen when Divine energy from beyond the cosmos enters within. 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.

14. HALLEL — PRAISE G-D FOR THE MIRACLES**BODY**

Pour another cup of wine (#4). Yes, you can handle it.

Now pour another cup and set it in the middle of the table. You won't drink this cup — it's for Elijah the Prophet.

Send some kids to open the door. Recite the lines, "Pour out your wrath..." from the hagada. Watch Elijah the Prophet enter. Can't see him? That's precisely why you need another cup of wine.

Elijah the prophet comes to announce the imminent arrival of the final Exodus.

Tonight is a night of protection — "Leyl Shimurim" we call it. Tonight, we are not afraid of anything, for we are carried securely in His holy, gentle hand. We open the door in the middle of the night and we show that confidence, that deep trust that no harm will befall us.

On that very first night of Passover in Egypt, we were redeemed on the merit of our trust that He would redeem us. Tonight, we will be liberated from this Egypt of the soul. Again, we must show our trust.

It's all there, in your hagada. Sing whatever you have a song to.

At the end, say a blessing and drink the wine. You guessed it: Lean. But try not to fall over.

SOUL

The ancient rabbis clued us in on a key principle in cosmic functions: Whatever He tells us to do, He does Himself. Of course, there's a difference: We do it in our little human world.



He does it on a 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 every member of the Jewish People. To each one of us, regardless of what we have been doing all the rest of the year. Tonight is the chance to reach to the highest of spiritual levels.

Prophecy, divine spirit, wisdom and insight — take your choice and jump a quantum leap.

There's nothing stopping us.

15. NIRTZAH — G-D PRAISES US FOR THE MIRACLES: WE DID IT AGAIN!**BODY**

Do nothing. This is His job now.

Look up from your wine. The table's a delicious mess. Uncle Irving looks so serene, snoring into his hagada, serenaded by the first chirping of dawn. As you carry the little ones to their beds, the sound of matzah crunching beneath your feet, you wonder, "And who will carry me

to bed? Who will wake me in the morning to go to shul?"

Was it the best Seder that could have been?

Look, it had its highlights. A few times, the kids got a little over-excited. And the horseradish and chicken soup didn't mix too well in little Miriam's stomach.

But Grampa told some great stories. We all had fun with the songs. We told the tale again, with new enhancements and flourishes, just like we have for 3300 plus years.

We did what we are supposed to, in our own human way.

And now, let Him do what He has promised to do: A re-run. A modern exodus of liberation.

Starring us. With lots of miracles. But this time, forever.

And this time, if anyone has any unleavened dough in their house, please...please...

SOUL

Some people think we are meant to make a perfect world. But if that is what our Creator wanted, why did He make us such imperfect beings?

Rather, what He wants of us is our very humanness. Sometimes we do good.

Sometimes we fall. But we keep on struggling, and eventually we make some real change.

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

For 3300 years we have been leaving Egypt.

For 3300 years we have been doing our human job of transforming the darkness of His world into light. And now it is His turn to lift us up, to banish the darkness forever, to make our work shine.

**The Pesach Calendar 5764-2004****Times shown for Binghamton**

Date	Activity	Time
April 4	Formal search for Chometz	after 8:15 p.m.
April 5	Stop eating chometz	before 10:52 a.m.
	Burn left-over chometz	before 11:52 a.m.
	Light Yom Tov candles.***	
	Say blessings no. 1 & 2	at 7:16 p.m.
	Start the seder. Eat at least 1 oz. of matzah within 4 minutes	after 8:10 p.m.
April 6	Light Yom Tov candles.**	
	Say blessings 1 & 2. Start the seder. Eat the matzah again	after 8:20 p.m.
April 9	Light Shabbat candles.****	
	Say blessing no. 3	at 7:21 p.m.
April 11	Light Yom Tov candles.***	
	Say blessings no. 1	at 7:23 p.m.
April 12	Light Yom Tov candles.**	
	Say Blessings no. 1	after 8:27 p.m.
April 13	Yizkor memorial prayers.	
	Pesach ends	after 8:28 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.

*** If lighting after sunset, light only from a pre-existing flame.

**** Do not light after sunset.

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-sher 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.

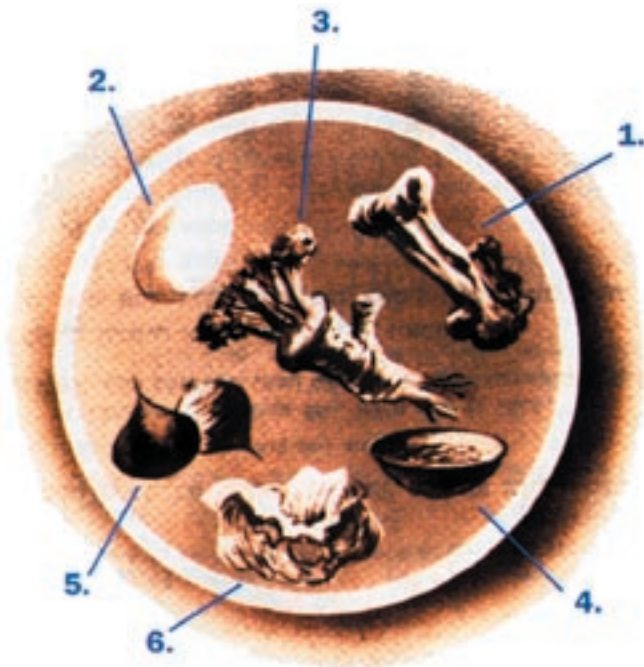
3) Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sher Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Vi-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Sha-bos Ko-De-sh.

Continued from page 5

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

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".

THE CONCLUDING DAYS OF PESACH

Pesach is eight days long. The last two days of Pesach are also Yom Tov. Pesach does not end until the night of Tuesday, April 13. The actual time is indicated on the Pesach Calendar. Until that time no *chometz* should be bought or eaten.



The JetBlue Minyan

Continued from Page 4

books for in-flight services, I will lead the service in Hebrew. The only thing I ask is that you say 'Amen' at the right time."

"How will we know when it's the right time if you're saying it in Hebrew?" one passenger asked logically. It was a good question. "I will give you the thumbs-up when it's time," I responded.

I took my yarmulke from under my hat and handed it to one of the men nearest me. The rest of the men made themselves at home in the kitchen and distributed *kippas* (napkins) compliments of Jet Blue. The scene was awesome.

A stewardess asked if she could take a picture of us in prayer and I told her I had no problem with that at all. Without further delay, I launched our *minyan*. Outside, I felt like a million bucks when I gave my first thumbs-up! Inside, I was all choked up in gratitude to G-d.

The Amens were loud and emphatic. This bunch was definitely not shy or embarrassed of their heritage. The whole plane was buzzing. Napkin covered men shouting amen at each thumbs-up of this ancient-looking Rabbi as a stewardess snapped pictures... It was definitely not the typical scene in a Jet Blue advertisement!

Despite the obvious humor of the situation, the men seemed quite touched, and stayed focused and serious throughout the prayers. I finished the davening quickly and thanked everyone profusely for their time. Then we returned to our seats.

Almost immediately, the pilot announced that the hold was over! In minutes we would be departing for JFK. The feeling was incredible. It was almost as if the *minyan* was part of the schedule. Clearly, the *minyan* was part of the

schedule that G-d keeps for us.

After the plane was in the air, one of the Jews from the *minyan* came over to my aisle seat. With tears in his eyes, he said, "I am totally uninvolved in Judaism and I want to thank you deeply for this awesome reminder of my heritage!" Now it was my turn to be humbled. How one Mitzvah leads to the next! What an unbelievable way to start my trip to the Holy Land!

Later, my wife and I discussed the incredible story. We agreed that although this year of *kaddish* had a number of novel stories and extremely close calls, this one was on a "plane" by itself!

My wife didn't hesitate to tell her sisters in New York what had just happened. They of course repeated it to their husbands. One of them, Rabbi Levi Baumgarten, serves as the Mitzvah Mobile Rabbi in Manhattan. He had scheduled to meet one of his steady "clients," an associate with Cushman & Wakefield, a week later in the Mitzvah Mobile.

As he stepped into the Mitzvah "Tank," he said to Rabbi Baumgarten: "Do I have a story to tell you! I just heard from my Jet Blue associates. They were returning from a big corporate meeting in Orlando last Tuesday and a rabbi was on the plane..."

Levi smiled. "Let me finish the story..."

"But how?" he asked, dumbfounded by the rabbi's certainty.

Rabbi Baumgarten replied, "All Jews are connected; the Jewish world, and especially the Chabad world, is very small, and we are all brothers. Actually, the rabbi who needed the *minyan* on Jet Blue last week is my brother-in-law!"



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 April 2, 2004.

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: Address _____

Apt. No. _____ City _____

Business: Address _____

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



PURIM 2004

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

Close to two thousand students had a blast at the Purim Carnival and helped raise funds 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, dancing the evening away, unwilling to let Purim go!



Photos by Yitzi and Dina Creeger

Chabad HAPPENINGS



BU's Annual Jewish Women's Cabaret

On February 26, BU women gathered for an evening of entertainment and bonding at the Annual Jewish Women's Cabaret. A wonderful time was had by one and all as participants enjoyed the acts, the desserts and each other's company!



Thank You!!

Chabad House extends its appreciation to the many volunteers who helped make Purim 5764-2004 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 **Natalie Benhamou**; **David Natani** and **Morris Pahuskin**, and **Lisa Friedman** and **Mirie Mauskop**, Greek life coordinators; **Amy Gordon**, prize drawing chairperson; **Eric Katz**, food concession coordinator, 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 **Meeka Levin**, coordinator and her committee – **Shelly Levin**, **Harris Ringelheim** and **Michelle Bloom**, for a very successful UPS service, and to **Karen Wisotsky** and **Amy Gordon** for coordinating the parent-to-child Shalach Manot, and to all who helped them table, pack and deliver.



Project Talmud for Women

On Feb. 17, a group of students from the Chaya Mushka Teachers Seminary in Montreal visited Binghamton for Project Talmud, a Chevruta (peer) study program held in conjunction with women from the local community and Binghamton University. After studying together the women enjoyed a free dance session.



Chabad Alumni News

Mazel Tovs!

Class of '94

■ Liba (Jill Zerwin) and Rob, Yaakov Kadar announce the birth of their daughter Hadassah Bracha on March 12, 2004, corresponding to Adar 19. Hadassah Bracha was welcomed home by her older siblings Temmy, Binyomin and Yitzie.

Class of '95

■ Diana (Epel) and Aaron Bloom announce the birth of their twins Eliana Ita Rosa and Gil Israel on March 4, 2004.

■ Lisa Wolk announces her marriage to Stu Stein, August 24, 2003. Stu teaches High School; Lisa is a social worker doing program planning for Young Judea in NYC. They live in Farmingdale, NY.

Class of '99

■ Nina Schwartz and Adam Kantrowitz announce their engagement; a June 13, 2004 wedding is planned. They will make their home on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

Chabad HAPPENINGS



Hamantaschen and Rugelach Bake-In

Delicious treats were produced by the hundreds in the Chabad kitchen on

Sunday, February 29. Working under the direction of Marlene Serkin and Ilene Goldman, a full house of students enjoyed rolling, filling and pinching, not to mention tasting! Students took home some of the pastries leaving the rest to be distributed by Chabad House to grateful residents in area Nursing Homes and Assisted Living complexes.

What a sweet deal for all involved!



Class of '00

■ Michael Weltz announces his engagement to Janine Kaplan of London, England; a summer 2004 wedding is planned. Micheal operates the Park East Grill restaurant on the Upper East Side of Manhattan; Janine works in the fashion industry. They plan to make their home in NYC.

■ Darrin Peller announces his engagement to Jessica Rachel Isaacson; a June 26, 2005 wedding is planned. Darrin is pursuing his MBA at Georgetown University; Jessica is a Speech Pathologist. They plan to make their home in the NY/NJ area.

Class of '01

■ Allison Weinstein announces her engagement to Isaac Krieger; a June 2004 wedding is planned. Allison is pursuing her Masters in Art History at JTS while attending NYU for a degree in Museum studies. Isaac graduated Columbia University with a degree in Computer Engineering. They will make their home in Kew Gardens.

**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 rabbiyitz@chabadofbinghamton.com**

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?**

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