

CHABAD
OF BINGHAMTON

ת"ס

הקשר Halesher

the connection



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chabad in action
photo albums page 14

DEAR FRIEND,

Welcome to the premiere issue of *Hakesher*, the Chabad of Binghamton magazine. In conjunction with the celebration of 25 years since our founding, we are proud to introduce a more evolved version of our in house organ, *The Chai Times*, published since 1986.

Why the introduction of a print magazine in the year 2010? It's a fair question with what we believe to be a compelling answer.



25 years marks a generation. 25 years is about coming full circle only to begin again, with G-d's help, in a whole new way. We have grown over the years from an organization to an eclectic, large and vibrant community. But first and foremost it is about the *Kesher*, the personal bonds. This magazine is part of an ongoing conversation that spans the years and transcends the miles between us. It springs

forth from that which defies temporal and spatial designation. The Zohar states *Oraita, Kudsha Brich Hu, Viyisroel kula Chad*. The Torah, G-d and Israel are one, united, indivisible. It is our ties with the Torah, with G-d and with our fellow Jews that link us. It is the common bond with our glorious heritage that fuels our mission: to provide a living and meaningful Jewish experience. The Baal Shem Tov taught: there is no future if the past is not vitally present. It's all about tying that knot.

Consider this magazine a personal shout out to you and your family; we hope it informs, inspires and engages. Through these pages we hope to connect to all of you and connect you to each other. Current students. Alumni. Local community members. Far flung supporters and friends. Parents of current students. Children of former students. There is so much we share.

As this is our first issue, we very much welcome your feedback and ideas.. *HaKesher* is a work in progress; please do let us know if you would like to write for us, can assist with placing/soliciting advertisements or help us grow in any other way.

N'hiye B'kesher, let's stay connected and be in touch!

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Rabbi Aaron Slonim



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The Exodus, Part II

By Yanki Tauber



Some people experience freedom canoeing across a pristine lake in the unspoiled wilderness. I feel free when my excuses run out.

There's something I very much want to do. But I also don't want to do it. So I blame my wife, my kids, my age, my youth, my childhood, my landlord and my employer. It works for a while — a day, a month, a year — but finally, inevitably, there comes the point at which there are no excuses left.

What a relief! I take a deep, exhilarating breath. I feel fifty pounds lighter. Now it's just me and me in the ring — my inner self and my outer self, my motivated self and my inert self — and let the better man win.

In the Torah, we read how the last of the Ten Plagues finally broke the

spirit of the Egyptians and, after four generations of slavery, the Children of Israel marched triumphantly out of Egypt, *matzahs* baking in the sun.

Time for the credits to start scrolling up the screen? Not quite. Instead we get a frame reading "Seven Days Later" and a new opening scene. The Israelites are walking serenely through the desert, when they look over their shoulders to see the Egyptians chasing after them. Seems that marching out of Egypt is not going to do the trick. We're going to have to split a sea first before we can proceed on to Sinai.

What's going on? Haven't the Egyptians been decisively defeated, their gods shown to be worthless, their proud Pharaoh utterly humiliated? Hasn't he come running in his pajamas in the middle of the night, literally begging Moses and Aaron to take their people out of his land as quickly as possible? Who, then, is this mighty Pharaoh materializing like a mirage in the desert, hot on our heels with an army of war chariots and horsemen?

Chassidic teaching explains that there are, indeed, two distinct stages to the human quest for freedom. That's why we have the first and latter days of Passover. That's why we have the Exodus from Egypt and "The Exodus, Part II" — the Splitting of the Sea.

There are two types of slavery. There's a kind of slavery in which the chains that shackle our souls are externally imposed — like when your boss fires you, your landlord raises your rent and your mother-in-law invites herself for the weekend. Then there's the internal slavery that comes from our own, self-imposed shackles — our anger, our vanity, our laziness, our greed.

It's easy to think ourselves free when we overcome an externally-imposed limitation. We're shocked and surprised to discover Pharaoh pursuing us after we've escaped his Egypt. But the Pharaoh we see closing in on us in the desert is a Pharaoh that we took out of Egypt with us. We've been freed from the Egypt that closed us in from without, but we have yet to transcend the Egypt in ourselves.

To do that, we have to split open our sea, penetrating the depths of who and what we are to uncover our truest self. [🔗](#)

Transcending Stress

By Rabbi Shlomo Yaffe



A recent *Wall Street Journal* article discussed the results of a fascinating study. People who work under high pressure conditions will often take time off to get away from it all, relax and “decompress”; this, common wisdom assumes, is the way to alleviate the accumulative effects of stress.

Alas, the study’s findings indicate that a cycle of intense stress followed by utter relaxation does nothing to counter the deleterious physical and mental health effects of chronic stress. The only thing that really helps is learning to respond in effective ways to stress-inducing situations as they arise. Relaxation is not what heals stress, but reshaping our day-to-day behavior in a way that makes for a less stressful life.

Passover is a celebration of our capacity to attain freedom in “every generation” (as the Haggadah challenges us), to leave whichever “Egypt” our souls languish in. Yet when we think of freedom, we usually think in terms of being free of care, worry and the burdens of life — in other words, freedom equals “relaxation.” Passover seems to contradict this with its laws on banishing every crumb of leaven from every nook and cranny of our home, with the

requirement to eat precise amounts of matzah and drink a certain measure of wine with each of the “four cups.” Religiously speaking — without eating and drinking the specified amounts, we have not really celebrated the Seder.

Is this focus on detail freedom? Indeed, there is no other true freedom. We are physical beings living in a world of myriad details and minutia. If we say, “I can only spread my wings and feel uplifted when I transcend the body, the earth, and all its petty details,” we are basically saying that G-d cannot be felt here in our world. In this model, G-d is imprisoned in the sublime, and we are imprisoned in the petty. Escaping the petty won’t help either — sooner or later we’ll need to return from the vacation, and then we’re back to square one.

Passover responds by telling us that if we truly want our spirits to soar, we must find G-d in the details of the world we live in — in the same way that stress is not eliminated by escaping our life-frameworks, but by remaining within them and transforming them from within. At the Passover Seder, the ordinary act of eating embodies the will of the infinite, packaged in a few mouthfuls. G-d is not imprisoned, and neither are we. G-d can be wherever G-d chooses to be, even in the act of eating a piece of matzah or the sounds of a small child asking the Four Questions. And we, too, are set free, as we discover the transcendent in the stuff of everyday life. 🌿

After flirting with rocket science and WWII history, Shlomo Yaffe turned his prodigious mind and booming voice to the mastery and teaching of Talmudic law and Chassidic philosophy. Today he is the scholar in residence at Chabad at Harvard University and lectures nationwide to appreciative audiences.

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Graduation Weekend Festivities @ Chabad

Friday, May 14

Services 7pm, Dinner 8pm

Saturday, May 15

Shabbat Services 9:30am, Lunch 12pm

Seudat Shlishit 7:30pm

Sunday, May 16

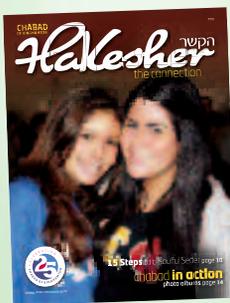
Open House Brunch 10am-3pm

For complete details and to make your reservations for these events please visit

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Hakesher, the newly launched Chabad of Binghamton magazine has a circulation of 5000 with most recipients in the Tri-State area. Binghamton alumni, their families, current students and their families,

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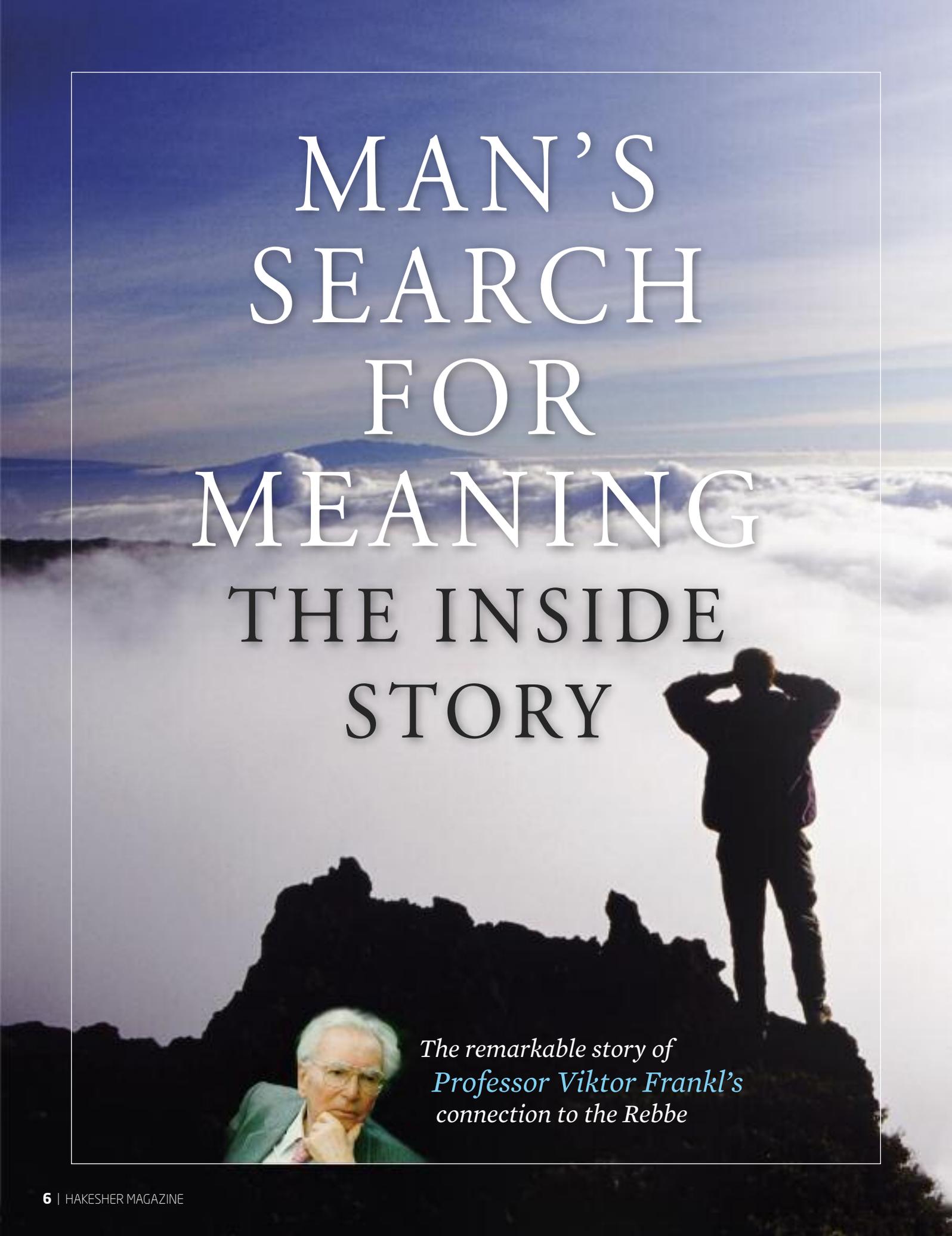
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The next issue of Hakesher will be published in close proximity to graduation.

Parents and friends, you can honor your graduate with a special dedication in *Hakesher*! Please send your check for \$50 with the full name of your graduate to **Chabad Center, 420 Murray Hill Rd Vestal, NY 13850**. Please note that it is for the magazine dedication.

STILL UP AHEAD AT CHABAD:

- April 10** Cholent Cook Off
- April 12** Guys Night Out
- April 14** Girls Night Out
- April 16** Shabbaton with actress **Mayim Bialik** of *Blossom fame*
- April 21** Challah Baking Workshop
- April 23** Italian Shabbat at Chabad on the West Side
- April 25** Yeshiva for a Day
- April 29** Dessert Bake Off
- May 2** Lag B'Omer BBQ Celebration
- May 7** Good Bye Shabbaton
- May 11** Midnight Madness Breakfast
- May 12** Wine & Cheese Reception for Graduates



MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING THE INSIDE STORY



*The remarkable story of
Professor Viktor Frankl's
connection to the Rebbe*

March 26, 2010, corresponding to the 11th day of Nissan, 5770, marks 108 years since the birth of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory. This year also marks 60 years since the Rebbe assumed leadership of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement and began to change the landscape of world Jewry. We bring our readers the following story as an illustration of the Rebbe's enduring gifts to us all. Every detail of the story has been authenticated by Rabbi Jacob Biederman, the Lubavitcher Rebbe's head shliach (emissary) to Austria.



It was a strange phenomenon. The famed professor Viktor Frankl, author of the perennial best-seller, *Man's Search for Meaning*, and founder of Logotherapy, would send a check to Chabad of Vienna each year before the High Holidays. Nobody in the Chabad center or in the larger Jewish community could understand why. Here was a man who was not affiliated in any fashion with the Jewish community of Vienna. He did not even attend synagogue on *Yom Kippur*. He was married to a religious Catholic woman. Yet, each year he sent his contribution to Chabad before *Yom Kippur*.

I AM THE FIRST EMISSARY

The enigma was finally explained in 1992 when Margareta Chajes walked into the office of Rabbi Jacob Biederman, the Lubavitcher Rebbe's emissary to Austria. Margareta, an 85 year old, stylishly dressed woman, appeared youthful and energetic. She told Rabbi Biederman: "I know you think you are the first *shliach*, emissary, of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to Vienna but that is not the case. I have served as the first ambassador of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to the city, many years before you."

She began to relate her story: Margareta's maiden name was Hager; she was related to the famed Chassidic Hager family from which emerged the Rebbes of the *Vishnitzer* Chassidim.

As a young girl, she left her home in Chernowitz and travelled to the cultural center of the world, Vienna, where she became an opera singer. Margareta performed during the

1930's in the Salzburger *Festspiele* — The Salzburg Festival — a prominent festival of music and drama, held each summer in the Austrian town of Salzburg, the birthplace of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

On March 12, 1938, German troops marched into Salzburg. The *Anschluss* — the annexation of Austria by Germany — was now complete, and Nazi ideology immediately began to affect the

Salzburg Festival. All Jewish artists were banned, the leading Jewish conductors and composers were "deleted." Yet Margareta Chajes nee Hager was still performing.

For the *Festspiele* in August 1939, Hitler himself made an appearance at two Mozart operas. He did not know that one of the young women singing so majestically was a Jewess, a scion of a Chassidic family, Margareta Chajes.

Shortly thereafter, the general management made a surprise announcement that the Festival would terminate on August 31, a week ahead of the scheduled finale on September 8. The reason was, supposedly, that the Vienna Philharmonic was required to perform at the Nuremberg Party Convention.

The true reason became apparent on September 1 when the German army invaded Poland and unleashed the Second World War which exterminated a third of our people, includ-

ing much of Margareta's family.

From Austria close friends smuggled her and her husband (a grandson of one of the most famous 19th century Polish Rabbis and Talmudic commentator, the *Maharatz Chayos*) to Italy, and from there she managed to embark on the last boat to the US before the war broke out just a few days later. Margareta and her husband settled in Detroit where they were blessed with a daughter.

Years passed and Margareta's daughter married a prominent and philanthropic Jewish doctor, Dr. Stallman. Dr. Stallman became involved in Jewish causes and in 1959 was the guest of honor at a dinner benefiting *Yeshivat Tomchei Temimim*, the Lubavitch Yeshiva in NY. Margareta attended the dinner and a much coveted audience with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, was arranged for her.

"I walked into the Rebbe's room," related Margareta to Rabbi Biederman, "I cannot explain why, but suddenly, for the first time since the Holocaust, I felt that I could cry. I — like so many other survivors who had lost entire families — never cried before. We knew that if we would start crying, we might never stop. But at that moment, it was as though the dam obstructing my inner waterfall of tears was removed. I shared with the Rebbe my entire story: Innocent childhood; leaving home; becoming a star in Vienna; performing in front of Hitler; escaping to the US; learning of the death of my closest kin.

The Rebbe listened. But he not only listened with his ears. He listened with his eyes, with his heart, with his soul, and he took it all in. I shared everything and he absorbed everything.

That night I felt like I was given a second father.”

TWO REQUESTS

At the end of my meeting with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, I expressed my strong desire to go back and visit Vienna. The Rebbe requested from me that before I make the trip, I visit him again.

A short while later, en route to Vi-

enna, I visited the Rebbe. He asked me for a favor: to visit two people during my stay in the city.

the Rebbe’s request; the Rebbe’s urgency did not let her rest. Finally, she decided to throw caution to the wind and violate common protocol. She looked up the professor’s private home address, traveled there and knocked at the door.

A woman opened the door. “May I see Herr Frankl please?”

“Yes, please wait.”

“I saw a room with a cross hanging

of the most famous Jews of the time, Dr. Sigmund Freud, the “Father of Psychoanalysis.” The “Final Solution” did not spare the Frankl family. Viktor’s mother and father were murdered in Auschwitz; his first (Jewish) wife, pregnant, was murdered in Bergen-Belsen. All of his siblings and relatives were exterminated. Professor Frankl was a lone survivor (he had one sister who immigrated to Australia before

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The first was Viennese Chief Rabbi Akiva Eisenberg. The Rebbe asked that I give the Rabbi his regards and said that his secretariat would give me the details and literature to give to Rabbi Eisenberg. The second person he wanted me to visit I would have to look up myself. The Rebbe said that he was a professor at the University of Vienna and his name was Dr. Viktor E. Frankl.

YOU WILL PREVAIL

“Send Dr. Frankl my regards,” the Lubavitcher Rebbe said to me, “and tell him in my name that he should not give up. He must remain strong and continue his work with vigor and passion. If he continues he will prevail.”

The Rebbe spoke for a long time about the messages he wished to convey to Dr. Frankl. The central point was that Frankl should keep on working to achieve his goals with unflinching courage and determination.

Margareta traveled to Vienna. Her visit with Rabbi Eisenberg was simple. Meeting Viktor Frankl proved far more difficult. When she arrived at the University they informed her that the professor has not shown up in two weeks. After a few more failed attempts to locate him at the University, Margareta gave up. It seemed that there was no way she could meet him.

And yet she felt uneasy not to fulfill

on the wall,” Margareta continues her tale. “It was obvious that this was a Christian home. I thought to myself, that this must be a mistake; this can’t be the person whom the Lubavitcher Rebbe wanted me to encourage.”

Viktor Frankl appeared a few moments later, and after ascertaining that he was the professor at the University, she said she had regards for him. “He was extremely impatient, and frankly looked quite uninterested. It felt very awkward.”

“I have regards from Rabbi Schneerson in Brooklyn, New York,” Margareta told him. “Rabbi Schneerson asked me to tell you in his name that you must not give up. You ought to remain strong and continue your work with unflinching determination and you will prevail.” “Do not fall into despair. Carry on with confidence,” Rabbi Schneerson said, “and I promise, you will achieve great success.”

Suddenly, the uninterested professor broke down. He began sobbing and could not calm down.

“This Rabbi from Brooklyn knew exactly when to send you here.” Dr. Frankl said. “I cannot thank you enough.”

He then proceeded to share his story with Margareta:

IN THE CAMPS

Viktor Frankl was born in 1905 in Vienna. The young Frankl studied neurology and psychiatry and in 1923 became part of the inner circle of one

the war.) He returned to Vienna where he taught neurology and psychiatry at the University of Vienna.

THE GREAT DEBATE

Even before the war, and more so during his three years in the Nazi death camps, Viktor Frankl developed ideas which differed radically from Freud. His colleagues, all staunch Freudian scholars, derided him, referring to his ideas as “pseudo-science.”

Freud believed that humans are vulnerable, selfish animals governed by past, subconscious frustrations and haunted by neuroses, complexes and psychoses.

Viktor Frankl disagreed vehemently. “If Freud were in the concentration camps,” Frankl later wrote, “he would have changed his position.” Beyond the basic natural drives and instincts of people, he would have encountered the human “capacity for self-transcendence.” “Man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz; however, he is also that being who entered those chambers upright, with the *Shema Yisrael* on his lips.”

“We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: The last of the human freedoms — to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circum-

stances, to choose one's own way."

Of course, there are many things about our life we have no control over. But there is a dimension of the human self – the essence of human identity – which nothing and nobody can control. A person, Frankl taught, was not a son of his past, but the father of his future.

But in the University in the 1940s and 1950s they defined Frankl's ideas as fanatic religiosity; unscientific notions of conscience, faith and obligation. It was unpopular for students to attend his courses.

"I could survive the German death camps, but I could not survive the horrific derision of my colleagues at the university who would not stop taunting me and undermining my ideas and research," Frankl told Margaret.

"The pressure against me was so severe, that I decided to give up. It was simply too much to bear emotionally. I was drained, exhausted, depressed. I fell into a melancholy. I was watching all of my life-work fade away right before my eyes. One day, sitting at home, I began drafting my resignation papers for my University job.

And then suddenly, you came with the message from the Rebbe. Somebody in Brooklyn, no less a Chassidic Rebbe, knew about my predicament? And what is more – he cared about my predicament? And what is more – he sent someone to locate me in Vienna to shower me with courage and inspiration?

I was so moved. I felt like a transformed man. That is exactly what I needed to hear. Someone believed in me, in my work, in my contributions, in my ideas about the infinite transcendence and potential of the human person and in my ability to prevail.

That very moment I knew that I would not surrender. I would tear up my resignation papers."

Indeed the Rebbe's words came true. A few months later, Viktor Frankl was awarded a chair at the University.

And a short while later, Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* was translated into English. It became an ongo-

ing bestseller and is listed by the Library of Congress as one of the 10 most influential books of the 20th century.

The professor's career began to soar. The once-scoffed-at professor became one of the most celebrated psychiatrists of a generation.

Man's Search for Meaning was translated into 28 languages and sold over 10 million copies during his life time. Frankl became a guest lecturer at 209 universities on all five continents, held 29 honorary doctorates from universities around the world, and received 19 national and international awards and medals for his work in psychotherapy.

His school of thought inspired thousands of other books (Scot Peck's *Road Less Traveled* and Steven Covey's *Seven Habits* to name a few), seminars, workshops, new-age and spiritual groups. "So you see Rabbi Biederman," Margareta completed her tale. "I have been an emissary of the Rebbe to Vienna many years before you came around."

FOREVER GRATEFUL

Rabbi Biederman was intrigued. Viktor Frankl was at that time 87 years of age, (he passed away five years later in 1997) and was an international celebrity. He had written 32 books which were translated into 30 languages. "I called him immediately to verify the story," Biederman recalls.

"Do you remember Margarete Chajes?" Rabbi Biederman asked Dr. Frankl. "No," the professor responds. Well, he can be forgiven. More than 40 years had gone by.

"Do you remember regards she gave you from Rabbi Schneerson in Brooklyn?" Rabbi Bieder-

man asked the professor.

Suddenly, a change in his voice. "Of course I remember. I will never forget it. My gratitude to Rabbi Schneerson is eternal."

Not knowing who he was talking too, Frankl added: A number of years ago Chabad established itself here in Vienna. I became a supporter. You too should support it.

"After that conversation," explained Rabbi Biederman, "I understood why we were getting a check in the mail each year before Yom Kippur. I also understood that we will never fathom the length and breadth of the Rebbe's reach." ❧

5 QUOTES & INSPIRATIONS

from the works of **Viktor E. Frankl**

"Everything can be taken from a man or a woman but one thing: the last of human freedoms to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

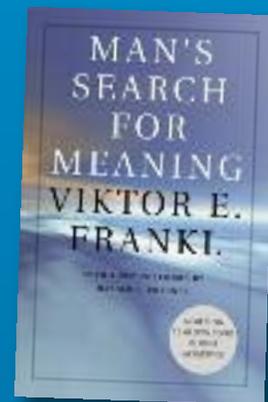
"Ever more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for."

"I recommend that the Statue of Liberty be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the west coast."

"Life can be pulled by goals just as surely as it can be pushed by drives."

"What is to give light must endure burning."

"When we are no longer able to change a situation - we are challenged to change ourselves."



A Seder

Guide for the Seder

You know *what** to do at the Seder, here is the *why*:

By Tzvi Freeman
based on the teachings of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe



KADESH

Make the Kiddush on a cup of wine

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: to sanctify. 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.

URCHATZ

Wash your hands.

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 messy and discombobulated.

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 dirt, it ain't gonna help much."

KARPAS

Eat a small piece of some edible vegetable (potato, onion, parsley) that has been dipped in salt water.

We need to taste the bitter salt water reminiscent of our people's tears shed in Egypt. We need to re-taste the back-breaking 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

* For a step-by-step Seder Guide and extensive information about the Passover holiday including the Sale of *Chometz* form and calendar times, log onto www.JewishBU.com/Passover

“Prayer without intention is like a body without a soul”

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.

YACHATZ

Remove the middle matzah, break it in half, put the smaller piece back and hide the larger piece to be eaten as the Afikomen.

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 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.

MAGID

Tell the Story of the Hagada

Fill the second cup of wine and let the telling begin.

Children ask the Four Questions. 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.

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 re-suscitate it back to life.

ROCHTZA

Wash the hands again, this time with the blessing

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 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. 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. 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, then draw that down even more. Never stop rising higher. Never stop applying.



The Seder
and the

CHILD

On the 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 focused 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.”



MOTZI

make the blessing over the Matza

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.

MATZA eat the Matza

The *Zohar* calls matza "Bread of Faith" and "Bread of Healing". Did I say "faith?" *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 some-

where 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 place 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.

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.

MAROR

eat the bitter herb

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 your limitations are. 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.

KORECH

eat the Matza and Maror dipped in charoset sandwich

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.

SHULCHAN ARUCH

enjoy the holiday meal

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.

TZAFUN

Retrieve that hidden matzah and eat it for Afikomen

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.

On Passover night, we have that power to touch the inner core. But only after all the steps we take in



preparation: 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.

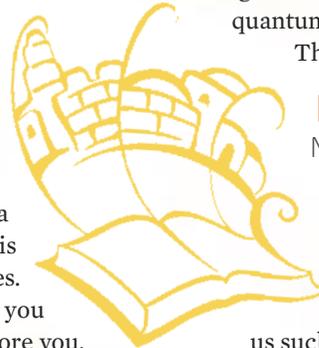
BERACH

Grace after meals

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.



HALEL

Open the door for Elijah and praise G-d for the Miracles

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

G-d 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.

NIRTZAH

Next year in Jerusalem!

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 well.

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. ✨

CHABAD IN ACTION

CHABAD TAKES TO THE SLOPES for annual ski trip



GIRLS NIGHT OUT

Month of Adar welcomed with salsa dancing and Ice Cream Sundaes at Rosh Chodesh Event



SIMPLY TSFAT IN CONCERT!



KNEAD DOUGH?

Challah Baking Workshop with Hadassah



SUSHI, SALAD AND SOUP



Meet and Greet at Chabad on The West Side

Preparing for Greek Shabbat

CHABAD IN ACTION



PURIMANIA 2010



Purim with Chabad included:

- **The Carnival Extravaganza;** an outrageously huge and fun filled event that raised funds for charity.
- **The Purim Feast;** a truly unforgettable celebration.
- **Visitations** to area elderly and infirm through the Raff Maasim Tovim Foundation.
- **Mishloach Manot** sent student to student through United Purim Service, Parents to Students, and Community wide through Chabad's Women's League.
- **Multiple Megillah Readings**
- A hilarious, original **Purim Shpiel**
- **Hamantashen Bake Off**



JLEARN TAKES BINGHAMTON BY STORM

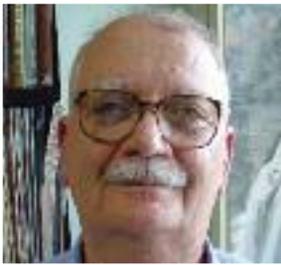
With Identity and Empowerment through Jewish Knowledge as its slogan, this new program has drawn a large and enthusiastic group of students to its six offerings.



WEDNESDAY SUPPER & STUDY

Wednesdays find a large, spirited group at Chabad enjoying Supper and Study; a light dinner followed by good old fashioned, *chevrutah* style, peer study.

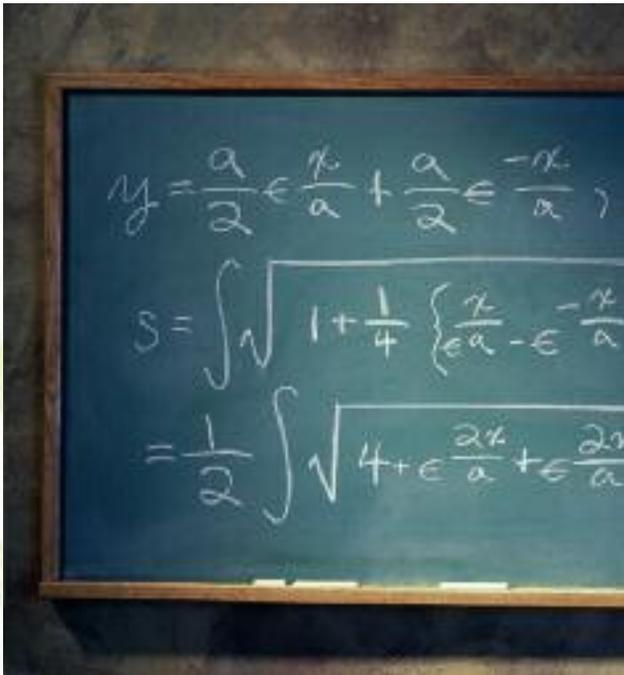




Professor Shelmayahu Zacks

A PROFESSOR YOU CAN COUNT ON

By Alan Zeitlin



As a soldier trying to make sure that Israel would not fall victim to its enemies, he didn't analyze the probabilities of how the tide of the wars would turn. Shelemyahu Zacks focused on survival.

"We always believed that things would be alright," he said. "We had no alternative. We had to win."

Zacks said he remembers his time spent in Israel before coming to the United States.

"There were always wars and we had to help in the creation of the state of Israel," he said. "I remember World War II. I remember the terrible news we got about the Holocaust. I remember the war of Independence. It is always a fight to remain a strong state. It's like a miracle."

Born in Tel-Aviv in 1932, the professor has devoted his life to probability and statistical analysis. Since coming to Binghamton in 1980, he has served as the Chairman of the

Math Department as well as director of the Center for Statistics, Quality Control and Design. He has written seven books, including the landmark "The Theory of Statistical Inference."

Professor Zacks, who received his Ph.D from Columbia University in 1962, was a co-winner of the Abraham Wald Prize for his paper, "Distributions of Sequential and Two-Stage Stopping Times for Fixed-Width Confidence Intervals in Bernoulli Trials: Application in Reliability." The paper was published in *The Sequential Analysis Journal*. Zacks' work has also earned him contracts with the U.S. Army and Navy. He has had editorial positions for numerous statistical journals.

While many experts say America is in trouble when it comes to keeping up with the world in Mathematics, this professor does not agree with this assessment.

"The great mathematicians are in the US, Russia and Japan," Zacks said. "I don't think we are doing any worse."

Zacks, who is an expert at crunching numbers, said he isn't surprised that more and more young Jewish students are flocking to Chabad.

"I support them because Chabad does great work," he said. "If you haven't seen the new building, it's definitely something you should come and see."

He said one of his nice experiences at the Chabad building was the Passover Seder.

At 77, Zacks is going strong and still attends international conferences. He uses the treadmill and said he tries to keep a healthy diet. He added that he is fueled by a passion for working with his graduate students.

"I was never tired of teaching," he said. "Those who get tired retire early. I am still doing research and teaching so I don't get tired. "I enjoy it at Binghamton," he said. "The students are excellent. I give them a lot of work and they work hard."

Zacks' work includes how to get maximum information in an efficient manner, while sampling from finite populations. He currently teaches "Time Series Analysis." 

Alan Zeitlin teaches English and journalism for the New York City Department of Education. He is also a freelance writer.

ALUMNI

SPOTLIGHT



Mike Boxer

FOR ONE SINGER, THE SHOWS MUST GO ON

By Alan Zeitlin

Most Jewish mothers would be thrilled if their son could play an instrument or two. **Mike Boxer '04** can play six, but interestingly, he's made his mark in the one musical arena that requires none, a cappella. At Binghamton, he helped take *Kaskeset*, the Jewish a cappella group, from a fringe group to one that filled lecture halls. As a graduate student, he helped the Crosbys, Binghamton's all male and premier a cappella group, take first place at the *International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella*. But while many simply wish they could continue to pursue their music after college, the 29-year-old made it a reality.

Boxer founded the professional Jewish a cappella group, *Six13*. Besides arranging and producing *Six13*'s award-winning albums, he's performed in more than 100 shows, including performances at Madison Square Garden, Citi Field, Dolphin Stadium and simchas across the country.

"This is a way I remain connected to my heritage and I know my ancestry is proud of me," he said. "And it doesn't hurt that I get to travel the country and make money doing it." Boxer has arranged for and recorded a number of Jew-

ish artists with his company, *Halfway Coherent Productions*. His most recent project is the debut CD of the *Yeshiva University Maccabeats* and he has started "*The Kolcast*," a podcast featuring the best of Jewish a cappella. Boxer has become known for his vocal percussion and a knack for fusing traditional sounds with modern ones. As a result, Boxer has taken music that is kosher for *sefirah*- the period between the holidays of Pesach and Shavuot when listening to live music is prohibited by Jewish law and many rabbis opine that one should not listen to recorded music with instruments- and made it fashionable all year round.

Boxer said his time at Chabad had a significant impact on him.

"Chabad was a principal force in the fact that Judaism is such a part of my life and I've done so many things in the Jewish world," he said.

The Rockland County native also said he thinks Chabad has continued to grow in numbers due to connecting with young Jews regardless of their religious background and preferences.

"It's kind of like those Crunch gym advertisements," he said. "It's totally judgment-free."

One judgment that wasn't hard for Boxer to make occurred when he met a fellow Chabad of Binghamton alumna fittingly named Shira'06. He would later propose in New York City after singing their song, Idan Rachel's "Mi-ma'makim." Several of Boxer's arrangements have won awards, including the recent "Ne'ilah," a parody that features Rihanna's "Umbrella." Boxer, who founded *Six13* with some alumni including this writer, said he couldn't pick one fondest memory of the building on Murray Hill Road.

"It's a state of mind," he said. "It's the whole experience. It's being there and the feeling that you get. There's no difference in the enjoyment I had from taking a bite of Rivky's challah or that I got from singing Shabbat songs with a three-year-old Slonim, or chatting it up with friends or davening Friday night. It was all just great." 🎵



Mike Boxer (far right) leads Six13 in a pre-game performance at Madison Square Garden on February 9th when the New York Knicks hosted Jewish Heritage Night. Also shown are Eric Dinowitz (07) and Alan Zeitlin (00) third and fourth from left.

MAZEL TOVS

- '90-'91 **Sandy Bodzin ('90) and Shoshana Gross ('91)** announce the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Adin Zadok, held on Shabbat Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudei, March 13, 2010.
- '92 **Neil and Chantel Kupferman** announce the birth of their daughter Valentina (Mati) on March 4, 2010. She was welcomed home by big sisters Julia and Adina.
- '97 **Tracy (Newhouse) and Dovie Spitz** announce the birth of their daughter, Jolie Paige, Batsheva Rachel Chaya, on November 19, 2009. She was welcomed home by big sisters Bailey and Riley. **Michael and Marni Berg** announce the birth of their daughter, Isla, January 29, 2010.
- '02 **Rebecca Tenenbein** announces her engagement to Aaron Weitman; a Summer 2010 wedding is planned. Rebecca is a learning specialist at SAR High School; Aaron is a stock analyst at Appalossa, a hedge fund in Short Hills, NJ. They will make their home in Hoboken, NJ. **Lynne (Kalker) and Arie Sztularwark** announce the birth of their daughter, Elisheva Leora, Elizabeth Rose, on December 18, 2009 (the 7th night of Chanukah). She was welcomed home by big brother Ryan. **Michelle Dardashti and Nathan Sher** announce the birth of their daughter, Eden Bina, on January 26, 2010, Shevat 11.
- '03 **Eric Forti** announces his engagement to Robin Hasson; a Labor Day weekend 2010 wedding is planned. Eric is the director of Camp Canadensis (an overnight children's summer camp in the Poconos), Robin is an elementary school teacher. They will make their home in Philadelphia, PA.
- '05 **Jennifer Baker** announces her March 13, 2010 wedding to Eric Blaustein. Jennifer works as a speech pathologist at Tompkins Square Middle School; Eric works as a researcher and trader for a hedge fund called Lionstone. They will make their home in NY City. **David and Emily Natani** announce the birth of their son, Benjamin Isaac, Baruch Yitzchak, on November 27, 2009.
- '06 **Lauren (Muntz) and Alex Nizhikov** announce the birth of their son Adam Lev, Ezra Chaim, on Tu B'shvat, 5770.
- '07 **Melissa Miriam Mayer** announces her March 14, 2010 wedding to Eli Meltzer. Melissa is currently studying at Hostos for dental hygiene and Eli will begin architecture school in the Fall.

CONDOLENCES

Chabad mourns the death of

- **Marvin Master**, Mordechai ben Benyamin, father of Susan Master '98 on August 24, 2009.
- **Michael Ira**, Mordechai Yitzchok Hecht, father of Michelle Hecht '04, on February 22, 2010.

May the families be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.



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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Alexa Klorman

SORORITY SISTER/SCHOLAR STEERS STUDENTS ON 'SMART' PATH

By Alan Zeitlin

Alexa Klorman doesn't think there's anything wrong with being beautiful. But she does think that young girls sometimes learn to focus too much on their looks and aren't encouraged to hit the books. As the national campus director of *Smart Is Cool*, the senior is hoping to spread the word to females who might fear being called a nerd or a bookworm. Klorman, 21, said she would prefer females looked up to Natalie Portman instead of Paris Hilton.

"There's a lot of pressure from the media and from peers in school so that's exactly the mold we want to break," she said. "We want to give girls a new type of role model to look at. Instead of girls flaunting their bodies, we want to give them girls who are flaunting their minds and their intelligence."

Recently chartered on the Binghamton campus, Smart Is Cool enlists female college students who run women's empowerment workshops at local elementary schools and high schools. There are plans for a book, a reality show and a clothing line, Klorman said.

As a vice president of her sorority, Alpha Epsilon Phi, Klorman, has attended her share of mixers. But she said nobody should get mixed up about her desire for academic prowess. She is the president of the Phi Eta Sigma National Honors Society. The psychology major said stereotypes of sorority girls aren't always based in reality.

"We don't kid around," she said, adding that her sorority has the highest grade-point-average on campus.

As an expert on Binghamton University and as someone with a charismatic enthusiasm, it makes sense that Klorman is a tour guide. Her older sister also attended BU and Klorman saw the recommendation was a good one.

"My friends joke that I was a tour guide before I was a tour guide," she said. "If you have a passion for something you should let people know about it."

Just about the only thing missing from BU is something she can get in the mail — her mother's mandel bread.

The graduate of Syosset High School on Long Island has won awards for photography and has snapped pictures for Pipe Dream as a freshman. As a junior, she found her way to Chabad of the West Side, in search of a home-cooked meal after she moved off-campus. She attended almost every Friday night and in her senior year, she continues to do so. Klorman said she is especially proud of organizing the Greek Shabbat, when more than 60 people joined Rabbi and Rebitzen Chein for Friday night dinner.

"Chabad of the West Side is something that is really close to my heart," she said. "I want people to experience the great things I experienced. It would be really nice to come back after I graduate and see that it has grown larger."

Klorman said she is pursuing a career in marketing or advertising and may continue to work with Smart Is Cool in some capacity. ❧

She can be reached at alexa@sicmovement.com

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The Jewish *Champion* of The World

By Alan Zeitlin

There's a fine line between bravery and insanity. Only seconds away from becoming the first Jewish boxing champion in 30 years and the first professional Israeli boxing champion, **Yuri Foreman** was winning on the judges' cards. He could have played it safe and milked the clock. His opponent was a hard-hitter with 23 knockouts under his belt. But Foreman traded punches with Daniel Santos, sent his Puerto Rican opponent to the mat and took home the World Boxing Association Super Welterweight Championship.

"He came right at me," Foreman said. "I had to come back at him and be aggressive."

Foreman remembers the Israeli-Arab boxers he faced when training in Israel, after moving from Belarus. They didn't trash-talk, but their eyes spoke volumes.

"I knew they wanted to beat me," he said. "I definitely got stares."

These days, Foreman is getting noticed for another reason. He's a year and a half away from becoming a rabbi. While his worlds might seem like a complete contradiction, Foreman says it's not the case, as both jobs require focus, determination, discipline and strategy.

Foreman became more religious as his grueling schedule took a toll.

"It was very tough physically and mentally and I just felt I needed something more spiritual," he said.

Keeping kosher was easy, while observing the Sabbath was a gradual process, he said. He studies with Rabbi DovBer Pinson at the IYYUN Institute in Brooklyn.

"He doesn't have that boxing personality, at least in the perception of what a boxer is," Pinson told *The Daily News*.

Foreman is undefeated at 28-0 but there was one fight where millions saw Foreman get knocked unconscious. Luckily, that was only in the film "Fighting," starring Channing Tatum. Would Foreman ever consider taking more film roles? Might he one day consider being

a pulpit rabbi?

"You never know," Foreman said. "If an offer comes my way, I'll see."

The 29-year-old, who is 154 pounds and stands at 5'11, was passed over for a shot at the legendary Manny Pacquiao. Foreman was too tall, Pacquiao's camp said. Foreman will instead fight the powerful Miguel Cotto in June at Madison Square Garden. Foreman said he won't shy away from tough opponents.

"To be the best, you have to beat the best," he said. "And I want to be the best."

Foreman's stick and move style had been mocked by one writer who dubbed him "Boreman." But the pugilist said he isn't perturbed.

"I was aware of it, but you can't worry too much about writers," he said. "I don't fight to make the writers or people in chat rooms happy. I fight to win."

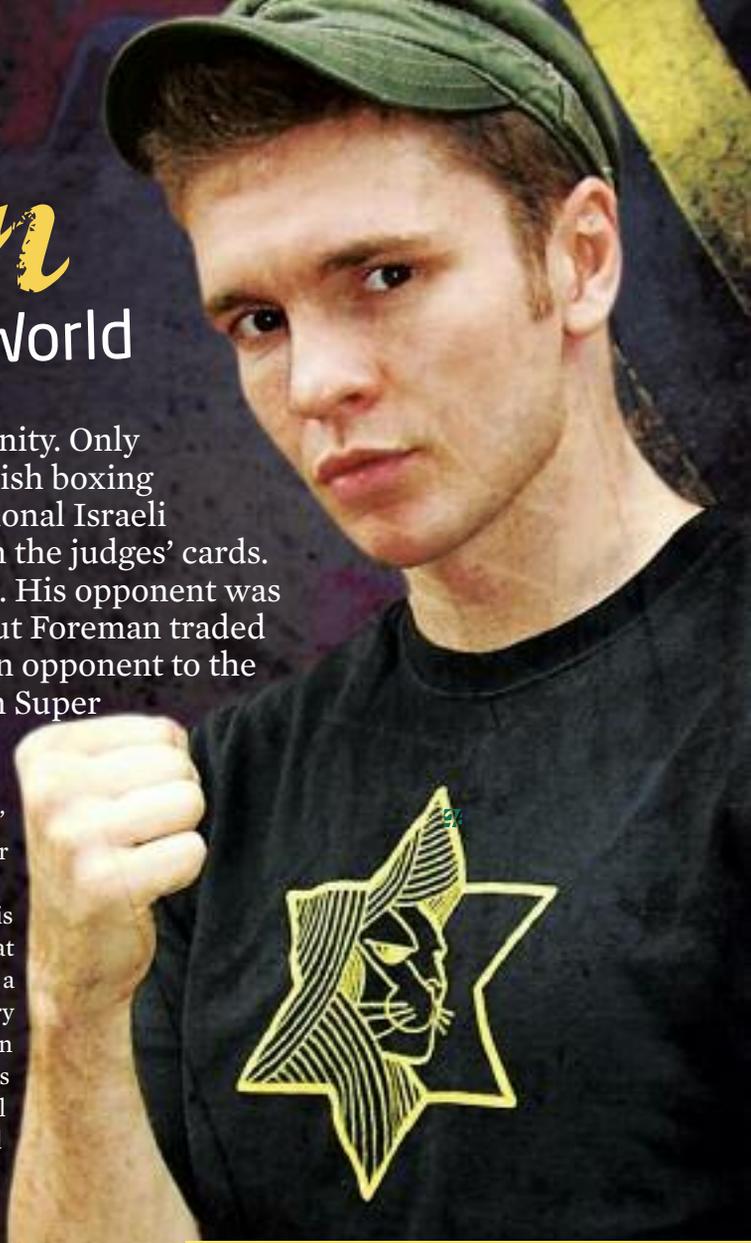
The 29-year-old said part of his desire to become a rabbi was to help people discover a world of thought and purpose as the Torah helped him when he felt a bit lost.

Foreman found his wife, Leyla, at a boxing gym of all places. Asked if he was worried about a wife who could give

him a black eye, he said he was neither brave nor crazy, just putting a new spin on an old Jewish teaching. Citing the Biblical phrase "*ezer kenegdo*," he sounded like he'd already gotten his rabbinic ordination.

"Those words mean a helper against him," he said, referring to the description of Eve as wife of Adam. "The question is how can she be a helper if she is against him? This teaches that a man should have a wife that helps him, not by saying that everything is great no matter what, but one that challenges him. Through challenging him, she is helping him and making him better." ❧

While some Jewish boxers over the decades have hit a wall, Yuri Foreman has broken through, becoming the first Jewish champion in 30 years





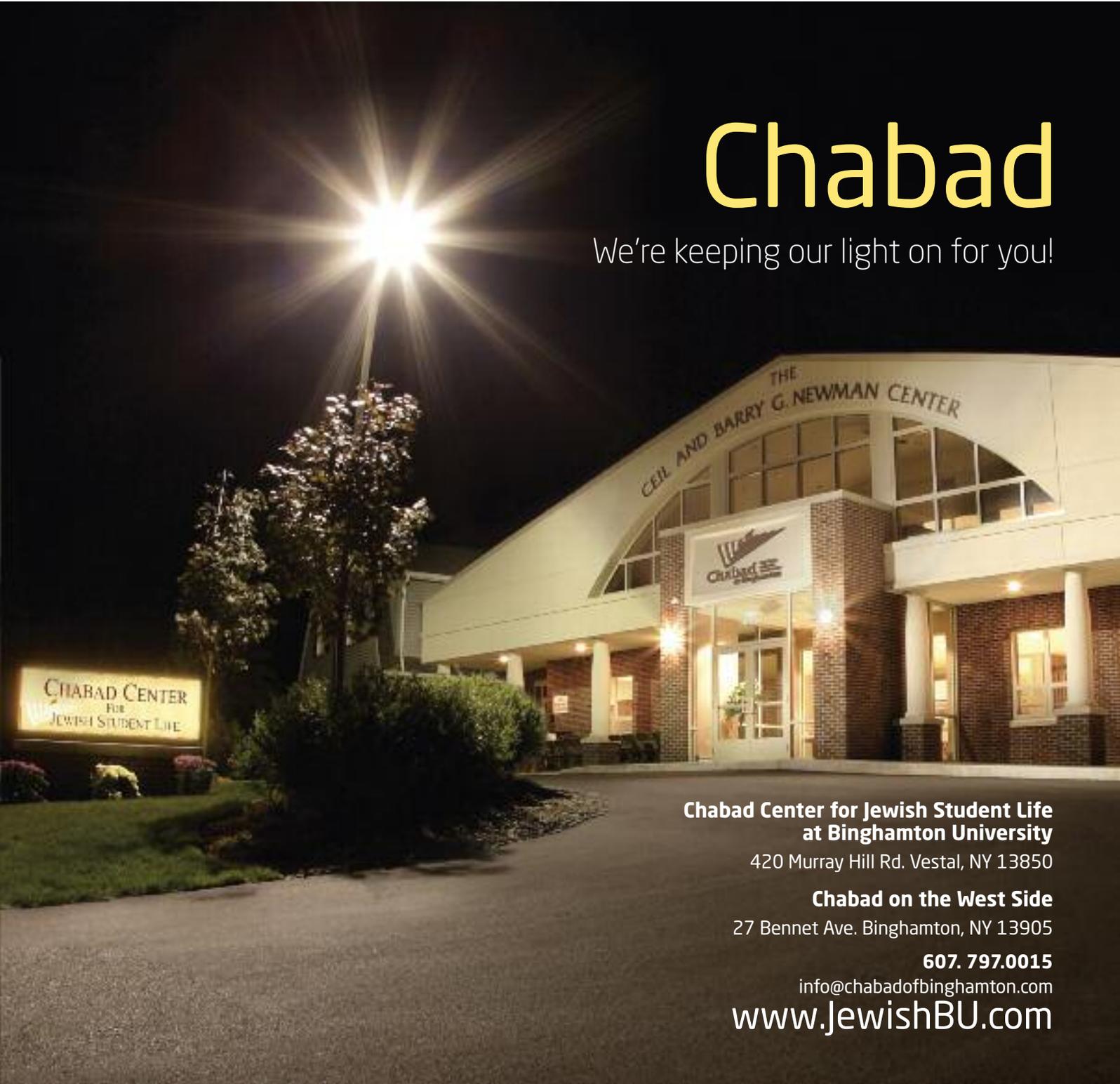
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