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Chabad Center for  
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at Binghamton



SPRING 2011 | PASSOVER 5771

DEAR FRIEND,

No prophet has so captured the imagination of the Jewish people as has Elijah. His presence, even thousands of years after his time, is ubiquitous in Jewish life. We sing about him after Havdallah on Saturday nights, we designate a chair for him at every circumcision, and each time we say Grace after Meals we ask G-d to send Elijah to us with good news, solace and salvation. And of course,



as we get ready for Passover, we look forward to filling that regal cup of Elijah and opening the door for the prophet when he comes to visit our Seder.

Who is this prophet who looked evil in the eye in the form of Achab and Jezebel, who forced a dramatic showdown between the prophets of the Baal and the prophet of G-d, who brought an end to a multiyear drought by dint of his prayers, who led the Jews with fire, brimstone and with love?

Who is this man born of a woman who alighted to heaven without leaving his body on earth and keeps returning, in various guises, to help us in times of need and distress? Who is this persona who transcends time and space; who takes us back in time just as he moves us forward? And what is his connection to Passover?

Elijah is the designated messenger of hope, salvation and deliverance. He is the harbinger of the Messianic era and the eternal light in our times of national darkness. And on Passover, the festival of liberation, he comes with a specific type of healing:

"Behold," says G-d through the prophet Malachi, "I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of Hashem. And he will turn back [to G-d] the hearts of the fathers with (and through) their sons, and the hearts of the sons with their fathers" (Mal.3:24).

We live in a world beset by an aching gap that separates parents from children. So often, parents and children lead lives fueled by divergent values and aspirations; even when living together they seem to inhabit parallel universes. Too often we bemoan the youth of today and decry their inability to be like "we once were..." But when we open the door to Elijah we allow into our lives an energy of reconciliation and unity. Specifically, we open the door to the pre-Messianic dynamic of children taking the lead and returning the hearts of their parents to G-d. Many have noted that the Passover Seder is child oriented. This time honored ceremonial dinner is not only, as conventionally taught, about teaching our children about the past. It is even more profoundly about Elijah's gift: allowing our children to lead us forward. It is about our approaching the future together.

So children, don't be afraid to share your thoughts with your parents. Parents, don't be afraid to listen attentively to your children. And all of us must remember that we will be brought back to the future by listening to the child within.

With best wishes for a Kosher and sweet Pesach, and with fervent wishes that this be the last year in which we exclaim next year in Jerusalem,

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

*Rabbi Aaron Slonim*

Rabbi Aaron Slonim



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**Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life  
at Binghamton University**

420 Murray Hill Rd • Vestal, NY 13850

607-797-0015

info@chabadofbinghamton.com

[www.JewishBU.com](http://www.JewishBU.com)

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Contact us at [Hakesher@JewishBU.com](mailto:Hakesher@JewishBU.com)

Editor Rivkah Slonim

Staff Writer Alan Zeitlin

Proofreading Devora Leah Popack,  
Marlene Serkin,  
Chaya M. Slonim

Design & Printing The Printhouse

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N. Palermo

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Danny Lazarus celebrates his Bar Mitzvah  
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# Matzah After Midnight

By Yanki Tauber



**W**hen you were a child, you were blessed with faith. The world was good, people were good, and being good yourself was simply a matter of following the dos and don'ts of life which G-d had told your Mom and Dad.

Then you grew up, met some of the bad guys, and found that following the rules doesn't always pan out the way you imagined it would. Morality muddled into an amalgam of maybes, ifs and usuallys. Faith alone wasn't enough anymore: you also needed intellect, sensitivity, feeling, will and desire to navigate this thing called life.

When you first married, you were blessed with faith. Your husband/wife was the most good-hearted, intelligent, beautiful, talented, caring and loving person in the universe. Your love for each other would get you through anything. Then your marriage aged, acquiring wrinkles, an irregular heartbeat and bouts of dementia. Love alone just wasn't enough anymore: you also needed intellect, sensitivity, feeling, will and desire to maintain the relationship.

You begin in faith, and move on to experience. But there is also a third stage: a stage in which the faith reemerges. A

stage in which you discover that your spouse really is the greatest, most wonderful person in the universe. A stage in which you discover that the world is good, that people are good, that the G-d-given dos and don'ts are the formula for a meaningful life. No, it's not as simple and straightforward as your youthful faith saw it. But this mature, complex, thoughtful, willed and inspired faith has something that youthful faith didn't have: it has a density, a texture, a taste. A richness.

You've returned to that original faith, that same faith which shone so bright and hard because it wasn't saddled with knowledge and experience. Now, however, your faith co-exists with — indeed feeds upon — your knowledge and experience. The roots of your faith reach deeper than them, its crown towers higher than them, but it also leans against them and is fortified by them.

Matzah is the most basic icon of the festival of Passover. The biblical name for Passover is "The Festival of Matzahs." For eight days, this flat, "unleavened bread" displaces all leavened forms of the staff of life. And on Passover eve, the three seder matzahs, enthroned on their special plate at the head of the table, take center stage in the seder rituals.

But there's no small amount of confusion surrounding the significance of the matzah. The sages of the Talmud and the Kabbalah give it different — even conflicting — names: "The Bread of Affliction," "The Bread of Poverty," "The Bread of Humility," "The Bread of Instruction," "The Bread of Faith," "The Bread of Healing."

And then there's the matter of timing: Just when was the matzah born? At the beginning of the seder we announce, "This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt..." But later in the evening, we recite: "This matzah that we eat, for what reason [do we eat it]? Because the dough of our fathers did not have time to become leavened before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them."

Thus we have pre-Exodus matzah and post-Exodus matzah. Or, as they're referred to in the teachings of Chassidism, pre-midnight matzah and post-midnight matzah.

For matzah, the bread of faith, has two faces. It is the faith of "poverty" which thrives in pristine souls free of the tangles of intellect and the burdens of experience. And then, when it emerges from the other side of the night, it is a faith enriched by the very elements that stifled it in its years of exile. **74**

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Fighting Illness With Love

The children of Chai Lifeline are really, really, really, really (!) grateful to  
the students of  
**Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life,  
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For being our Chanukah angels.  
The toys and gifts you collected this  
year brightened our  
Chanukah!

*P.S. Thanks for raising money to fulfill special wishes.  
These gifts have changed lives for very sick children.*





# IN TRIBUTE

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



### Asher Strobel, of blessed memory

## TRAGIC LOSS OF STUDENT WHO PUT OTHERS FIRST

By Alan Zeitlin

**H**e loved to play basketball but didn't need to have the ball in his hands to make an impact. He enjoyed socializing at parties but didn't have to be the center of attention. He worked out in the gym every day, but the greatest strength he had was the ability to make others feel empowered when they were around him.

That's how friends and family described Asher Strobel, a 21-year-old Binghamton University student who died tragically in January after an aortic rupture following an aneurysm while in his room at a ski retreat in Wyoming. Junior Hillel Sussman was his roommate at Newing's Bingham Hall for more than a year. Sussman said he could not have asked for a better roommate.

"He was the perfect guy to walk

down the hallway with or anywhere with," Sussman said. "He would talk to random people he'd never met before and they'd love him."

He said the two enjoyed hanging out and playing basketball. He would be the shooting guard, while Strobel was the power forward, known for a trademark move. He apologized even if he didn't make a mistake. If another player messed up, he'd tell them it wasn't their fault, Sussman said.

Sussman remembers when he awoke to see his roommate waking up late at 8:25 a.m. when he had a final exam in minutes. Instead of darting to the test, Strobel calmly put on his morning tefillin.

"Most people would be flying out the door, but he was calm," Sussman said. "He said, 'it's ok, so I'll be 10 minutes late.'" He

also admired Strobel's work ethic, when it came to studying or his daily trips to the gym.

Strobel made visits to the New York Giants' summer camp in Albany. Always thinking of sharing joy with others, he called his father and gave the phone to center Shaun O'Hara.

Dr. Ron Strobel said he did not know who he was speaking to at first when his son put the football player on the phone. He added that his son called in disbelief after going to the Giants game and seeing his team blow a 21-point lead and lose to the rival Eagles 38-31 on a last second punt-return for a touchdown.

"I taught him a little about sports but I can't take credit for his athletic ability," Dr. Strobel said. "His humor, he got from his mother. Asher was a great son but what I am most proud of was that he was a terrific older brother. He really made his brothers feel special."

Eli Sitzner attended The Frisch School in Paramus, New Jersey with Strobel. The junior at Yeshiva University said Strobel was known for his humor.



C. Peter Magrath, BU interim president, Upinder Dhillon, Dean of SOM, Brian Rose, VP for Student Affairs, and Chabad staff joined hundreds of students in paying tribute to Asher Strobel at a Memorial held at the Chabad Center. Asher's parents, siblings and extended family traveled to Binghamton to attend the Memorial.

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**PASSOVER 5771**

NISSAN 15-22

APRIL 19-26, 2011

*If You're Not Doing*  
**EXODUS**  
*You Are Doing*  
**SLAVERY**

**The Existential Exodus**

*By Tzvi Freeman*



## **Egypt and Pharaoh are facts of life. To be human is to be enslaved.**

**T**o be enslaved you must be human. A computer is not a slave. Animals are not slaves. Human beings can be slaves because a human is a master. A human is essentially free. So free, that for the human being to exist is to be imprisoned.

The housecat does not feel imprisoned in its apartment, but a tiger does. The animal does not feel imprisoned in its body, but the human soul does. For some human souls, the entire universe is a prison. Why? Because, somehow, the human soul knows something beyond. Something entirely free. That which is simple reality for other creatures, for the human being is a prison.

Because the experience of every human being is an excruciating paradox. We are born with an innate sense of I. More than any creature upon the earth, we feel "I am. Nothing else is but me. All else is no more than an extension of my being."

We are all little pharaohs, as the prophet Ezekiel described him, "The big fish in the river declaring, 'The river is mine. I created it. I created my own self.'"

And yet we have a mind, a sense of awareness not only of our surroundings, but also of the I that exists within those surroundings. And that mind tells us that our innate experience is absurd.

It is absurd to believe that I am in control. I did not make this place. I have no clue what is going on over here. There is a whole world out there that seems perfectly capable of going on quite well without me. There are others out there, each of whom is an entire world, an I unto his or her self. My I is absurd.

And yet, from the time I opened my eyes and stood upon my feet, I could not fathom any other I but me, or any of this world existing without my "I".

It is not something you grow out of.

You can grow out of selfishness, greed, impulsiveness. You can overcome any vice. But ego is not a vice. It is you. It was there when you began and it is the basis of everything you do. You can hide it enough so it does not embarrass you in public. You can pretty it up so that other 'I's are not as annoyed with it. You can choose to ignore its whelps and howls when your mind tells you that it has just gotten out of hand.

But it will always be there, as the earth upon which you tread, as the air you breath, as the darkness that lurks in the background, waiting for the sun to set, to say, "I never really left. Even as the sun shone bright, I was still there. I am the default. I am the ground of all that exists. I am."

**T**his is how the master of the Kabbalah, the Ari, describes the enslavement of Egypt: It is when the mind cannot speak with the heart.

Every part of the world corresponds to a facet of the human soul. Every facet of the human soul corresponds to a feature of the human anatomy. Where is Egypt? It is the neck, that most awkward place of the human form where a massive head must connect through an agile limb to the rest of the body. The channel through which air, food, blood, data, and commands all must pass from one world to another. Egypt in Hebrew is *Mitzrayim*, meaning literally, "the straits."

And Pharaoh? His Hebrew letters are the same as the Hebrew word *Oref*, "the back of the neck." Pharaoh, as the Ari described him, stands at the back of the neck and strangles us. He hijacks all that is in the mind for himself, not allowing more than a trickle to enter the body.

And so, we are enslaved: Our mind knows a higher truth, an obvious one, to which our heart pays no more than lip service. The mind struggles to soar from its cage in futility, its wings clipped by the self-centered passions of the body and heart.

Every human struggle, every illness, physical and psychological, can be

traced to this underlying pathology. Everything we do is a gambit to escape this slavery. One who surrenders has surrendered to death. One who escapes, even for a day, has tasted true life.


**H**ow do I escape the bondage of my I if my I is me? Not with love, because then there is still I that loves. Not in meditation, because there is I meditating. Not with any striving for enlightenment, because in every striving there is I again, searching for that which will make me a greater, more enlightened I.

But only by exchanging this bondage for a greater one. The ultimate bondage.

The I has a jealously guarded secret, wrote the Maharal of Prague. It is that the I is no more than G-d breathing within me.

Why does G-d wish to breathe within me? Because G-d desires communion with a being that is also an I. That is why I am an I: Not because that is the truth, not because it cannot be otherwise—but because G-d so desires. That is the drama of the universe, played and replayed within each of its creatures, the drama of I and Other drawn towards each other while remaining separate beings. At the core of the universe lies the paradigm of it all: The love affair of G-d and the human I.

The separateness of these two beings is a prison. Their communion is freedom. And how is their communion? Through a betrothal of my I to that original I. As we did when we bound ourselves to Him through His Torah, saying, "We will do."

And so G-d told Moses, "When you will take the people out of Egypt, you will serve Me on this mountain." Because there is only one path to leave Egypt. Not by being this or striving for that, but by bondage to an Infinite I, a bondage that knows no bounds. 

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](http://www.JewishBU.com/Passover)

**April 15, 2011, corresponding to the 11th day of Nissan, 5771 marks 109 years since the birth of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory.**

*His leadership changed the landscape of modern world Jewry and inspired thousands of individuals—those who identify as Chassidism and many who do not—to dedicate their lives to the fulfillment of his vision: a world perfected and healed, a Jewish nation whole and at peace. Many remarked upon the Rebbe's charismatic leadership and wondered about his powers to catapult others into action. To mark the Rebbe's birthday we bring our readers the ruminations of one Chasid.*



# A Spiritual Moment

By Rabbi Manis Friedman

It's past midnight. I'm alone in a cemetery in Queens. I'm not literally alone; hundreds of people come and go all night. But I'm alone with my reflections, trying to compose my note to place on the Rebbe's grave.

I ask myself, "Why am I here?" Because I am a Chasid? But what is a Chasid? I know the familiar definitions: piety, kindness, religious fervor, disciple of a Rebbe, but I need something more this night. I need to get in touch with what makes a Chasid.

A picture comes to mind. I'm 12 years old, living in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, rooting for the Yankees to win the World Series, betting on center fielder number seven (Mickey Mantle) to make it happen. It's Wednesday afternoon. I wander into 770 Eastern Parkway, home base for Chabad Chasidim. An energy draws me there. A small minyan is saying Mincha prayers. I see Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He has square shoulders and a large forehead. He wears a large brimmed hat and his broad shoulders stretch the cloth of his kapota. This much-revered leader of an international movement, a prodigious scholar and mystic, then bows.

He was saying the Modim in the Amidah and he bowed. This picture haunts me all these years. He bowed with his head and shoulders only. It was dignified, elegant, and something more. Unschooled in such matters, I naturally did not understand the significance of the act, but it moved me like an inside-the-park home run in the House that Ruth Built.



Chassidim pray at the Ohel, the Rebbe's resting place. The Rebbe's grave is to the left of his father in law and predecessor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson.



Later I realized that I was stunned by the Rebbe's unabashed humility. Humility, I learned, is a great virtue—a spiritual quality, not so much in those who have no alternative but to be humble, but in those gifted, powerful people who bow their heads reverently to that which is greater than they. I had seen a bigger-than-life hero, and discovered his awe of something to which he bowed his head. What humbles such a man?

I understood—no, I felt—what Almighty means, and G-d became real to me. A heady experience for a 12-year-old. These memories don't satisfy me. The image continues to haunt me. One day while counseling a very unhappy couple, I heard myself saying to the husband, "It's not about you. It's about the family."

The ability to admit that my life is not about me, for me that is true humility. Yes, we are humbled by the Grand Canyon or the number one billion. But true humility is more than an admission of smallness. It is the realization that reality exists independently of me; I cannot control it by my will. I must live with it, submit to it. This I saw in the Rebbe's bow. From the communists and the Nazis

moving the world toward Divine perfection, and we are asked to freely participate in making His will familiar to His creation. The Rebbe, it now seems clear to me, was bowing to G-d's will, to the desire, the very urgency of G-d's wants.

Five decades later, I think I understand that as a 12-year-old I was awed by, but not comfortable with, the Rebbe's humility; it disturbed me. We are intelligent beings who can make things happen. Why be intimidated by what is greater when you have your own greatness? What use are our human endowments if we merely submit and surrender to the "Big All?" I realize now that the Rebbe was not bowing in submission to an ineffable Being. It was not surrender to fate or destiny, but rather an unconditional dedication to satisfy the divine hunger; not to be good or holy, but to do right by G-d's vision of His world. We are His people because we bow to His plan, not His power or size. His plan, not ours.


His desire, His plan, His need for *tikkun olam* becomes our mission. This humility of purpose should

**"We are humbled by the Grand Canyon or the number one billion. But true humility is more than an admission of smallness. It is the realization that reality exists independently of me; I cannot control it by my will."**

to the new world, he never faltered. Because it is "not about me." One does what must be done.

I still am not satisfied. I see myself at age 16 speaking to a group of teenagers about the importance of Mitzvot. "They are not only good deeds; they are G-d's will." I say the words but miss the significance. Martin, a 17-year-old asks, "When did G-d begin to want these Mitzvot?" Five decades later, I ponder Martin's question. When did G-d begin to want? At Mount Sinai? With Adam and Eve? When did He consider all that He had made and realize that some of it pleased Him and some did not? G-d wants. All creation began with His wanting a world that would please Him. His will is the oxygen of existence. It is eternal, ineluctably

produce a Chasid who is obedient, not meek; affectionate yet unsentimental; tolerant yet not permissive; an advocate without being dogmatic; pious yet not officious; proud, not haughty; a pursuer of dreams yet not a dreamer; principled yet not judgmental; funny but not frivolous.

I still struggle, and it still smarts when I fall short of these virtues. But to fail is not an option. With this thought in mind I am ready to write my note to place on the Rebbe's grave. 

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World-renowned author, counselor, lecturer and philosopher, Rabbi Manis Friedman is the dean of the Bais Chana Women International Institute.

# Warmest wishes as you celebrate Passover



Grilled Salmon with Cucumber  
Dill Salad over Field Greens



Grilled Balsamic Chicken Breasts

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# Next Year in Jerusalem – Really!

By Aron Moss



## QUESTION:

Here's one I always wanted to know. We traditionally end the Passover Seder with the wish, "Next Year in Jerusalem!" What if you're living in Jerusalem? Do you say, "This year in Jerusalem!", or just leave that line out?

## ANSWER:

You can be miles away from Jerusalem even while living there. And you can be on the other side of the world but only a step away. Because Jerusalem is much more than a city. It's an ideal that we are struggling to reach.

The Jewish story can be summed up as a long journey from Egypt to Jerusalem. Beyond being just geographical locations, they symbolize two opposite spiritual states. The journey from Egypt to Jerusalem is a spiritual odyssey. Both as a nation and as individuals, we have always been leaving the slavery of Egypt and heading towards the freedom of the Promised Land. By analyzing the psychological Egypt and the inner Jerusalem, we will see how this is a road that we are still traveling.

The Hebrew name for Egypt is Mitzrayim, which means limitations, restrictions, obstacles. It represents a state in which our souls are trapped in our bodies, enslaved to material desires and tied down to physical limitations. It is a world in which righteousness, justice and holiness are held captive to corruption, selfishness and egotism.

Jerusalem means "the city of peace"--a place of peace between body and soul, heaven and earth, the ideal and reality. When our body becomes not a prison for the soul but rather a vehicle for the soul's expression; when we live our lives according to our ideals rather than our cravings; when the world values goodness and generosity over selfish gain, then we are in Jerusalem, we are at peace with ourselves and the world.

Imagine you are in your car, stuck in heavy traffic. You are late for an important meeting, and you see someone struggling to enter your lane from a side street. You are faced with a choice: to be kind and let them in,

or to remain preoccupied with your own pressing needs and drive on.

If you do not allow them in, justifying yourself by thinking of how late you are, then you're still in Egypt; your selfishness has overtaken your goodness.

If you overcome your concern for your own needs and let them in, you have just left Egypt. You allowed your innate goodness to prevail over your instinctive selfishness. You're out of Egypt, but you're not yet in Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem, you would automatically want to let them in. Your important meeting would pale into insignificance in comparison with an opportunity to do a favour for another person. You wouldn't have to conquer your selfish nature; your nature would itself be kind and selfless. There would be no need for a battle to do good in the city of inner peace; it would come naturally. I don't know about you, but I am not there yet.

The Jewish people were born in Egypt, in slavery. But they were told that on the other side of a vast desert lies their destiny, their Promised Land. As our forefathers walked out of Egypt--3317 years and some odd weeks ago--they were taking the first steps of a long journey to Jerusalem. Every generation since has pushed further forward along the road to Jerusalem.

The journey continues

with us. But we have not gotten there yet. Even if you are living in the city called Jerusalem, as long as there remains suffering, injustice and unhappiness in the world, we haven't reached the Promised Land. As long as we remain slaves to our own negative instincts and selfish desires, we are still struggling to truly leave Egypt.

As we sit at the Seder, we note that another year has gone by, and we have yet to complete the journey. But we are getting there. We are that much closer to the Promised Land than we were last year. We have advanced a few more steps in a march to freedom that has spanned generations.

Perhaps this year, our efforts to better ourselves and our world will bring the fulfillment of the words of the Hag-gadah:

This year we are here, next year we will be in the Land of Israel. This year we are slaves, next year we will be free.

**Next year in Jerusalem... literally.**

# Cleaning with a purpose

*Sherri Mandell*

**R**ecently, a friend opened my silverware drawer and said: "I haven't seen a drawer that looks this bad since college."

"Listen," I said. "There's a reason." She gave me a skeptical look.

"I am cleaning challenged," I said. "It's a disability, especially when you've got 4 kids and a messy husband."

It's not that I don't like order. I just have a hard time creating it. I'm not the kind of mother or housewife who spends her time ordering and cleaning. I'd

rather write. Or even better, lie on the couch and read a novel.

I am prone to laziness and self indulgence, neither of them great weapons in the war against dirt. And space management is not my strength either: in elementary school when I was tested for spatial relations, I scored in the 8th percentile. All in all, I fail domestic engineering.

When I have a cleaning lady, I look to her as a god.

On those rare days when I do clean, and the house is for a moment perched on the edge of order, it's like I'm on a ship sailing on tranquil Caribbean

seas. Then, as my kids and I and my husband go about our ordinary routine, it's as if I'm watching the sky darken, hearing the first murmuring of thunder. And when the inevitable storm of crumbs and dirt and chaos begins to descend, I feel the terror and disappointment of a pilot watching her ship smash onto an unforgiving shore.

And yet, despite the difficulty of keeping a clean home, I think it's important to clean for Passover with my husband and my kids. Not that I wouldn't rather go on a Passover cruise, mind you, and forget about the whole thing. But Passover allows me to dwell in the nexus between order and chaos, central themes in my life.

**"Passover cleaning comes to clean us out from the inside and teach us: we are not in charge."**





Think of it. Passover is the holiday of freedom. Passover commemorates the most dramatic moments of the Jewish people. Imagine yourself, for a moment, a Jew in Egypt. You are told to mark your door lintels with blood so that G-d will know not to kill your first born. You leave Egypt in the middle of the night and walk for 7 days until you come to the Red Sea. Then when you think it's over for you, with the Egyptian chariots bearing down and no place to run but into the sea, the waters part and you walk on through.

And what do we do to prepare for the holiday that marks this awesome event?

We clean.

Passover comes to redefine cleaning. Our work is so mundane: scrubbing, dusting, sweeping. We work, burdened with an incredible amount of self inflicted labor, as stressful as moving house or painting all the rooms. Jewish law tells us to remove all bread and crumbs from our midst. Passover comes to tell us that no matter how high we have risen in this world, we have to bend to clean. In bowing, we begin to acknowledge our humility. Like the Jews of Egypt, who when the chips were down, had to be saved through Divine intervention, when all is said and done, we are dependent on others and dependent on G-d. Cleaning itself is not the point. Cleaning itself can be a futile exercise in control, an unsuccessful means of dealing

with chaos, of keeping the beasts at bay. Look what happened in *Four Letters of Love*, a wonderful novel set in Ireland. When Nicholas's father runs off to paint, his mother, in fear of how the family will survive without money, cleans: "Then the house was set, poised for a moment on that precipice of perfect cleanliness, and my mother would be almost happy – standing there in the fragile instant of stillness before the next particle of dust arose and softly fell." To combat her sadness and impending madness, she cleans. And then she kills herself.

Cleaning is a paradox. It contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction. But cleaning for Passover can be an exercise in spiritual growth. Passover cleaning comes to clean us out from the inside and teach us: we are not in charge. During that moment right before Passover, we perch on the achievement of order for a short while, search for all of the crumbs in our home with a candle and make a blessing. For this moment I've gotten rid of all of the dirt. I've imposed order on the world.

But we are not the ones who create order in this world. G-d is the ultimate cleaner, the one who gives and takes away. He returns you to dust and lets the dust return to earth. He sends down the rain to clean, the wind to blow the dirt away.

So we are ultimately humbled in

our cleaning. In fact: we clean and clean and then comes the holiday of matzah which is one of the messiest things you can eat: one bite and those crumbs are all over.

The freedom of Passover is in recognizing that G-d is in control, right here in our homes, in our cleaning and our cooking and in our sitting around the table discussing an event that happened thousands of years ago.

The beauty of Passover is that we can reach G-d by dwelling in the domestic details, in the everyday ordinary world around us. For a short time each year, cleaning holds a place of honor; it becomes a means of spiritual growth. It reminds us that even something as insignificant as a crumb can be infused with holiness.

So this Seder night I'm going to invite my friend over to inspect my silverware drawers and when she exclaims how clean and orderly they appear I'll smile and say: "It just goes to show you there is a G-d in this world."

**Sherri Mandell** is the author of *The Blessing of a Broken Heart* (Toby Press 2003) and co-president of The Koby Mandell Foundation.

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](http://www.JewishBU.com/Passover)



# FACULTY

## SPOTLIGHT

Professor Arie Ullmann

## PROF SAYS LIFE SHOULDN'T BE ALL BUSINESS

Alan Zeitlin

**I**s bluffing the same thing as lying? What if you are in intense negotiations and millions of dollars are at stake? What if the investor might walk away from the deal? Do you say that you have other investors waiting to get in on the action, even though you really don't? Is this ethical? These are some of the questions Arie Ullmann poses to students at Binghamton University.

The professor, who came to the School of Management in 1981, says that it is important to work hard but it is also important to maintain the proper perspective.

"I tell my students to have fun," he said. "When I ask a student what they did over the winter break and they say they vegged out, that's great. Some students rob themselves of their youth and think they have it all planned out. They are only about work, work, work. Their aim is to spend every second of their lives to launch a company sell it and have a net worth of a million dollars by the time they're 25. By 40, they will have a midlife crisis."

The associate editor of Case Research Journal also says he tells his students there is no need to be cut-throat, like Donald Trump on "The Apprentice."

"If every CEO was like that, nobody would work," he said.

But what does work is people that are passionate and care about what they are doing.

Ullmann said he is impressed with the passion of the staff at Chabad and added that it is a pleasure to visit.

"Chabad provides a warm and soulful experience for students of all backgrounds. It is an inclusive and non-judg-

mental environment," he added.

Ullmann is the president of the Jewish Federation of Broome County and a past president of Beth David Synagogue. Ullmann said the major challenge facing Broome County is the aging Jewish community and the loss of manufacturing jobs which once served as an attraction to the area. Ullmann, who grew up in Zurich, came to Binghamton after working as a research fellow at The Science Center of Berlin in Germany.

The professor says he tells his students the difference between himself and Wal-Mart. Unlike the store, he doesn't do business 24/7; he often receives e-mails at 2a.m. but he is usually asleep at that time. In his spare time, he reads

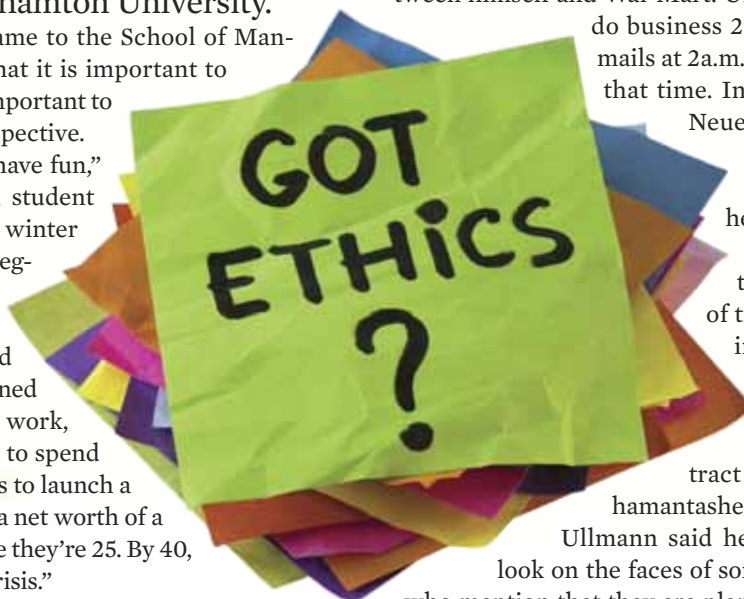
Neue Zürcher Zeitung online and says that while he isn't a whiz of pop culture, he is always abreast of current events. He added that the economic impact of transforming governments in the Middle East may come up in class. And he encourages debate, whether it is about contract negotiations or whether hamantashen are better than latkes.

Ullmann said he laughs at the surprised look on the faces of some of his Jewish students who mention that they are planning on going to Israel in the summer and hear his offer.

"I tell students to let me know if they need a place to crash," he says, referring to his apartment in Haifa. "So far, nobody has taken me up on the offer yet."

And he insists, he's not bluffing. 

Alan Zeitlin '00 teaches English and Journalism at a Brooklyn public high school. As a freelance writer for the past 10 years, his articles have appeared in *The Jewish Week*, *The Journal News* and other publications.





## BAR/BAT MITZVAH BASH 2011

Amidst great joy and emotion, four BU students celebrated their coming of age Jewishly.



If you have not yet celebrated your Bar or Bat Mitzvah and would like to celebrate in 2011-2012 with a meaningful experience at Chabad please be in touch with Rabbi Levi at [lslonim@JewishBU.com](mailto:lslonim@JewishBU.com)

## FASHION FOR A CURE



**Chabad, Alpha Phi and SDT team up to raise money for SHARSHERET**  
(breast cancer support & services) and enjoy a fun and educational day.





## COMING HOME TO ISRAEL



Fortunate BU students aboard **Mayanot Birthright # 217** enjoyed 10 unforgettable days of touring, bonding, inspiration, fun & connecting to the Jewish homeland during the Winter Break. A record number of BU students will be filling Mayanot buses this Summer to enjoy their turn.



## GIRLS NIGHT OUT

Mamamia, Pizzeria, A Slam Dunk Hit!



For a full gallery of pictures of these events and others please visit: [www.JewishBU.com](http://www.JewishBU.com)



# CHABAD IN ACTION

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## CHABAD TAKES TO THE SLOPES



The **ANNUAL SKI TRIP** was enjoyed by one and all.



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ON MURRAY HILL ROAD



# CHABAD IN ACTION

## THE GREAT DEBATE

To celebrate **"the small Purim"** held during the first month of Adar in this leap year, the **Oy Gevald Think Tank**, a division of the Chabad Center, sponsored a debate on **Latkes vs. Hamantaschen** that provided participants with a delicious evening of humor and satire.



Professors David Bosnick and Arie Ullmann debated while Professor Dora Polachek moderated.

## CAN'T TOUCH THIS

BU students were treated to a pre-screening of the soon to be released documentary film on the topic of **"shomer negia."**

A spirited feed-back session with **producers Tali Miller and Yocheved Sidoff** followed the screening.



## MARKING ASHER STROBEL'S SHLOSHIM



For a full gallery of pictures of these events and others please visit: [www.JewishBU.com](http://www.JewishBU.com)





**T**here once was a public debate in Ottawa, Canada between the Israeli ambassador to Canada, the late Rabbi Dr. Yaakov Herzog, and the famous historian Professor Arnold Toynbee. Dr. Toynbee insisted that Israel is not truly a nation, and does not deserve a state. The Jews, he claimed, are a religious sect with a mission to guide mankind in monotheism, morals and ethics in the Diaspora, but are not a nation. Permit me to use an imaginary voyage to develop a point made by Dr. Herzog.

An Olympic aircraft lands at Athens airport, and a customs official asks an elderly passenger the purpose of his visit.

"I'm Socrates, and I've come back to see my home town."

The excited official tries to converse with him; they both speak Greek but have no common language, so they call a translator.

Socrates asks, "Can I see the Acropolis?"

"Sorry, it's in ruins."

"The Temple of Zeus?"

"There's no Temple of Zeus here. We have a Greek Orthodox Church, but it's Christian. We have no Neptune, no Mars, no Aphrodite, no Helen. Only Christianity."

"How many countries are under Greece?"

"None. Greece is a small country in NATO."

"What do we excel in? The Marathon? The Olympics? Philosophy?"

"Sorry, Sir, none of the above. The only thing we have in common with the Greece of Aristotle or Plato is geography."

An Alitalia flight stops at the Fiumicino airport near Rome, and an old fellow deplanes. A customs official approaches him. "Your name, please?"

"Julius Caesar. Veni, vidi vici."

"May I help you?"

Caesar doesn't understand the question. Latin and today's Italian are not the same.

"Will you please take me to the Temple of Jupiter?"

"Who is Jupiter? We have the Vatican here."

"What is a Vatican?"

"It's a church. Catholic. This Pope's from Germany. His predecessor was from Poland. Not Italian. No Jupiter."

"What's on in the Colosseum today?"

"Sorry, it's in ruins."

"Gallia still belongs to Roma?"

# MOSES RETURNS

By **Rabbi Yisroel Meir Lau**  
Former Chief Rabbi of Israel

"No. France is Chirac. Rome is Parodi. Yesterday Berlusconi."

"What countries do we control? Abyssinia? Angola?"

"None. Italy is a NATO state."

"What are we number one in?"

"Car production, maybe."

"Car?"

"Cars are robotic chariots without horses."

At Ben Gurion airport, a customs officer welcomes an elderly man with a white beard: "Shalom Aleichem!"

The man answers, "Aleichem Shalom. My name is Moshe."

"Really? I'm also Moshe! I was born in Tbilisi, Georgia."

"And I was born in Egypt."

"Did you visit Israel before?"

"Unfortunately never."

"So it's not your homeland."

"This is my homeland. I personally know of the Divine promise. Are you Jewish?"

"Of course I'm Jewish. Ani Mosheke m'Gruzia."

"I'd like to sightsee, but I didn't take along tefillin. Do you perhaps know where I can get tefillin?"

"Tefillin? I'll give you mine."

"You have tefillin?"

"Of course I have tefillin. I davened Shacharis an hour ago."

"You also have a tallis with tzitzis?"


"Of course!"

"Do you have a quiet place for me to pray?"

"Sure! We have shuls here in the terminal. Sefard and Ashkenaz."

"And what Nusach is your Torah scroll?"

"Nusach???!!! We all have the same Torah, each word carefully transcribed back to Moshe Rabenu!"

Same religion. Same language. Same homeland. Same commandments. Same faith. If this is not a nation, what is? 

# ALUMNI

## SPOTLIGHT

### Shira Verbit Richman '93

## A SPECIALIST IN BREAKING THE ICE

By Alan Zeitlin

Shira Richman had dreams of being a professional ice skater. After making five-egg omelettes and washing down the servers for her kosher kitchen shift, she'd get friends to go skating with her. While she didn't become the next Nancy Kerrigan, and couldn't perfect the triple axel jump, she has made a career helping children who sometimes feel they are on thin ice.

Richman is the author of *"Raising A Child With Autism: A Guide To Applied Behavior Analysis For Parents."* The book has been translated into five languages including Czech and Japanese. After getting a master's degree in Psychology from New York University, the behavior therapy consultant said that in her work with children on the autistic spectrum, she realized there was a need to help educate families. She drew upon her field experience for her book.

"There was really a need for a book that addressed the need of parents; to give them tools to help in daily life," said Richman, who did her first work with children with autism while at Queens College for graduate school. "A little support can make a big difference for both the child and the parent."

Richman now has three children of her own after meeting her husband on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. But she remembers her Binghamton days well, including Chanie Slonim's sixth birthday party which she helped run. Richman, who graduated in 1993, remembers that on Friday nights, Chabad drew 100 students.

"If you look at the picture of my graduating year, there's maybe 20 people," she said. "They've come a long way since then but some things stay the same."

"I was in a car accident and I hurt my back and I never told them about it," Richman said. "The next time I saw Rabbi

Slonim, he asked how my back was. To this day, I have no idea how he found out but it shows that even after you graduate, they don't stop caring."

Richman, a reading specialist who also taught Hebrew at Ramaz, said a common misconception is that children with autism are incapable of modifying their behavior or are not able to improve their capacity to perform certain tasks.

"No two children are exactly alike but most can make improvements. It is important to be informed of different methods that can be useful," she explained.

Richman also wrote *"Encouraging Important Behavior for Children on the Autism Spectrum: Frequently Asked Questions."* She said one of the most common questions she gets is whether or not to punish children for negative behavior.

"While parents think it might be helpful to punish their children, positive reinforcement for good behavior is more effective," he said.

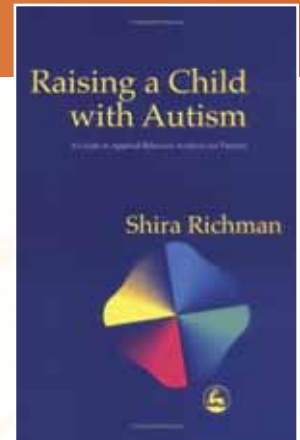
She added that Applied Behavior Analysis is useful because actual behavior is graphed and measured where changes can be seen as real data instead of conjecture.

One of every 54 boys has autism, said Richman. Aside from her work for public schools in Long Island, she also does private consultations and makes home visits.

She said the biggest challenge for students with autism is effectively communicating. For those higher functioning students on the autism spectrum, their body language may be off and they might not know when to end a conversation. She said her heart is warmed by helping parents of these children learn how to deal with challenges.

"It means a lot when you see a parent take joy in seeing how a child can achieve things they thought they never could before," she said. 🎉

Alan Zeitlin '00 teaches English and Journalism at a Brooklyn public high school. As a freelance writer for the past 10 years, his articles have appeared in *The Jewish Week*, *The Journal News* and other publications.





# MAZEL TOVS

'96 **Gary and Janie Zeitlin** announce the birth of their daughter, Ella Sophie, Mindel Susel, on December 13, 2010.

**Michelle and Brian Major** announce the birth of their daughter, Orly Zahava on 3 Tevet, 5771. She was welcomed home by big siblings Tzivya, Chavi, Aron, and Mordechai.

**Binny and Beth Taksel** announce the birth of their son, Uri Yehuda, Jonathan Henry, on March 4, 2011. He was welcomed home by big brother Jack Abraham.

'97 **Ari and Michelle Lifschitz** announce the birth of their son, Ethan Harrison, Eitan Asar Henech, on January 11, 2011, Shevat 7, 5771. He was welcomed home by big sisters Tzipora and Daniella.

**Avi and Eleana Jorisch** announce the birth of their son, Eiden, on February 1, 2011.

'00 **Jon and Michele Gross** announce the birth of their daughter Emily Sophia, Tziporah, on January 15, 2011.

'01 **Michele and Jon Gross** announce the birth of their daughter Emily Sophia, Tziporah, on January 15, 2011.

'03 **Lisa (Antzelevitch) and Evan Einstein** announce the birth of their daughter, Sophie Lilly, Chava, on June 18, 2010 corresponding to Tamuz 6, 5770.

**Michael and Jessica Chorzewski** announce the birth of their daughter, Lily Faith, Penina Lilach, February 3, 2011.

'04 **Jessica (Gold) and Michael Chorzewski** announce the birth of their daughter. See ('03) for details.

'06 **Leila (Nehmad) and Elliot Safdie** announce the birth of their son, Edward Elliot, Ezra Eliyahu, on November 22, 2010.

**Ariel (Aric) Joudai** announces his marriage to Dana Dachbash on January 24, 2011.

**Kevin Kashani** announces his engagement to Alissa Estreicher; an August 11, 2011 wedding is planned. Alissa is a Store manager for American Eagle Outfitters in Union Square, NY; Kevin owns FAME New York, a women's clothing boutique in Soho. They will make their home in NYC.

**Daniel Benamy and Leat Mechlovitz** announce their engagement; a June 26, 2011 wedding is planned. Daniel is currently doing contract work for WNYC (radio station) and doing freelance projects in the field of computer science; Leat is in her third year of medical school at Downstate University Medical Center. They plan to make their home in New York.

'07 **Leor Wolf and Arielle Harary** announce their engagement; a December 2011 wedding is planned. Leor works at Goldman and Sachs and Arielle works in online advertising at AOL. They will make their home in NYC.

'08 **Leat Mechlovitz and Daniel Benamy** announce their engagement; see above ('06) for complete details.

**Arielle Harary and Leor Wolf** announce their engagement; see above ('07) for complete details.

**Danielle Skurnick and Abie Mizrahi** announce their engagement; a September 1, 2011 wedding is planned. Danielle is a clinical social worker working for the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services

and Abie is a consultant for Ernst and Young. They will make their home in New York.

**Rebecca Levitan and Andrew Lillian** announce their engagement; a Summer 2011 wedding is planned. Rebecca is the Librarian for the Center for Jewish Education (CJE) in Baltimore and Andrew is a MAT graduate student at Goucher College. They will make their home in Baltimore, MD.

**Melanie Rub** announces her engagement to Eric Himy; a May 23, 2011 wedding is planned. They will make their home in Brooklyn, NY.

'09 **Abie Mizrahi and Danielle Skurnick** announce their engagement; see above ('08) for details.

'10 **Andrew Lillian and Rebecca Levitan** announce their engagement; see above ('08) for details.

## CONDOLENCES

Chabad mourns the deaths of

**Allen Lederman**,  
father of Lori Lederman Ben-Ezra '87, on November 24, 2010.

**Albert Levine**,  
father of David Levine '87, on December 20, 2010.

**Bruce Greenfield**,  
father of Danit Greenfield Taub '04, on December 12, 2010.

*May the family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.*




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Dedications will appear on page 2.

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## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

"It's hard to remember exactly what he said but they were the kind of things that were only funny because he said them," Sitzner said. "It was classic Asher."

Another person who knew Strobel from his days at Frisch is one of his teachers. Rabbi John Krug, the dean of student life and welfare at Frisch and a psychologist, taught Advanced Placement Psychology.

"He had a deep sense of kindness," said Krug, who also knew Strobel from his time at Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh in Jerusalem. "He was the sort of person who would leap to open the door for someone who was carrying something heavy. Throughout the time I knew him, he had a great sense of joy."

Elana Streim said Strobel's joy was infectious and he was a loyal friend. In social settings, he always wanted to make sure everyone else was having a good time, she added.

Jody Ezratty, another fellow student at Binghamton, said Strobel made an enormous impact on her.

"He was the funniest person, he would do anything for you and he could boost anyone's confidence," she said. "Even if someone did or said something rude to him, he brushed it off and ignored it. He was the type of person you knew would always be there when you needed him." 🌟

Alan Zeitlin '00 teaches English and Journalism at a Brooklyn public high school. As a freelance writer for the past 10 years, his articles have appeared in *The Jewish Week*, *The Journal News* and other publications.

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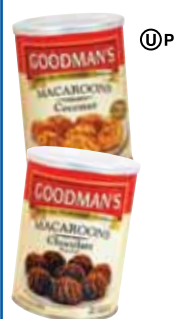
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Alyx Rimberg '13

# In the Least Expected Place

**S**habbat. The day possesses an uncanny ability to unify people across the globe. No matter what earth-shattering events might unfold during the week, the sun will set on Friday and Jews will take a step back from their routine and enjoy a day of rest. When I was a little girl, I was told that in every part of the world, there were Jews celebrating the seventh day of creation, Shabbat. I know it may seem naïve, but I believed it. To my core.

Over winter break, I went to Iceland, a country shrouded in myth and mystique but surprisingly, closer to NY than Los Angeles.

When I got off the plane, I entered the magical world of Reykjavik, Iceland's capital. My eyes took in a lush countryside dotted with houses in effervescent colors of red and yellow. It was as if someone had taken a brush and painted a perfect scene upon a white piece of paper. The landscape included ice and fire, powerful waterfalls and steaming volcanoes. The country's unique beauty is in its oxymoronic nature. Every angle was breathtaking, yet distinctive.

Iceland with a population of 317,000 is approximately the size of Kentucky. Yet, in the entire country, there is not one Jew to be found. It was an odd and overwhelming sensation: being surrounded by immeasurable beauty, mystery, and adventure; yet feeling so alone. Who celebrated

Shabbat in this part of the world when I wasn't here, I wondered.

On my one Friday there, Shabbat started at 3:15. It was the most peculiar yet empowering feeling. I stopped my day, literally at its climax, for Shabbat. No matter where in the world I was, despite who was—or was not—around me, I was connected to a community that now seemed like a distant memory.

As I performed the Friday night rituals, I was struck by their ability to comfort me. I felt enveloped by traditions and practices that have linked generations of Jews throughout the centuries. I felt a part of something greater than myself, yet, as I recited the familiar words of Kiddush I felt isolated.

As per family tradition, I took a walk after my meal. I wandered through the magnificently lit streets of Iceland; I became fully engaged in the exotic Icelandic culture. As I

turned a dark corner, the reflection of flickering lights bounced off my glasses. My brain sped up, and paused at the same time. The excitement I felt, the joy that coursed through my veins, was unlike anything I had ever felt before. For an instant, I thought maybe I was not alone. Maybe the Internet was wrong; perhaps there was a Jewish family in Iceland.

As it turned out, the flickering lights were in almost every window on the block, I had just been too distracted to notice. They were the traditional Christmas lights of Iceland, not Shabbat candles after all. But the twinge of hope that I felt for that instant was the most remarkable feeling.

In the middle of Iceland, I internalized the power and meaning of the Jewish community. We lean on each other in times of happiness and sorrow. We rely on each other for so many of our observances. A Shabbat meal alone is in fact not a Shabbat meal at all. You can eat Challot, savor grape juice, and enjoy the most delectable meal, but a true Shabbat is filled with song, shared words, and friendship. A Jew is only as great as the community to which he or she is bound. Ironically, it took being so far away from my community to realize this. 🕍

Alyx Rimberg '13 is an English Rhetoric and Global Studies Major. Alyx did an internship with *The Jerusalem Post* in the Summer of 2010. Currently she pens the "Word on the Brain" column in the *BU Free Press*.



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Binghamton students led by  
Rabbi Levi enjoying a camel ride.  
For more photos see page 16  
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