

CHABAD  
OF BINGHAMTON

בס"ד

# הקשר Hakasher

the connection



Your map for  
**Meaningful  
Holidays**

Page 7-11

**Starbucks Java**  
flavored with meaning

Page 16

Leaving **The Shtetel**

Page 23



DEAR FRIEND,

**T**he cries of a child are hard to ignore. They tug at the heart; they pierce indifference, they often catapult the listener into action. But it is the smile of a child that moves mountains. Parents of very young children will recognize this scenario with greatest ease but all can relate: The child's needs are incessant; feeding, burping, bathing, and changing.



The child's cries have no respect for the hour nor do they take note of the parent's depleted energy. And then, just when the parent feels they can take it no longer, the child smiles and something magical occurs. The exhaustion and exasperation are all but forgotten as a wave of love washes over the parent and with it, renewed resolve do anything—anything at all—for the child. Parents live for that smile, are made complete in the recognition from their offspring. No matter how old the child, the dynamic is the same; the smile of a child remains life's most powerful force.

The Baal Shem Tov taught that each Jew is like an only child to God, more precisely, an only child born after many years of barrenness. We can hardly fathom God's great love for us, and most often we are too preoccupied to ponder it. Most of us will fall short of what God wants of us (even as we have expectations and demands of Him). Distracted as we are by the world we live in, it is all too easy to forget the Creator and how and why it is that we came to be. This pains God. He desires, and has in fact made Himself needy, for our overtures. But then something happens and we remember—we do a mitzvah, we turn our minds and hearts to God in a moment of sincere *teshuva*—we “smile at God,” and His happiness and renewed love for us knows no bounds. The importance and potency of that smile is simply without measure.

For many of us, the high holidays can be a time of ambivalence. Jews go to synagogue on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. It is expected of us. But it doesn't always feel natural, it may even be discomforting. Is it hypocritical to show up on the high holidays after a long absence? Can God hear me, and if He can, does He care? Or perhaps we are regular attendees but have our doubts as to how important we are in the grand scheme of things or how urgent our personal needs can possibly be to the Creator of this vast universe.

Our relationship with God is complex and multi-faceted. God is our King. God is our Master. God is our Creator and vivifying force. But first and always, God is our Father, and each one of us, His only child. The next time we are filled with doubt or trepidation we need only think about what it feels like for a parent to experience a child's smile of recognition, a smile filled with appreciation, a smile that conveys love. In that way we can experience a glimmer, just a trace, of what God feels for us, and appreciate just how precious is our every advance in His direction. When we remember this our questions and fears fall away. Of course, our Father is waiting. Of course, we make a difference. There is nothing more important.

May God grant all of you, and all of His children, a *Kesiva V'chasima Tova*, a year filled with light, joy and every blessing.

Rivky and I look forward to celebrating with you at the 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner on October 17!

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

*Rabbi Aaron Slonim*  
Rabbi Aaron Slonim



Executive Director  
**Rabbi Aaron Slonim**

Education Director  
**Mrs. Rivkah Slonim**

Chabad Downtown and Education  
**Rabbi Zalman & Rochel Chein**

Programming and Development  
**Rabbi Levi & Hadasa Slonim**

President  
**Mr. Michael Wright**

Vice President  
**Mr. Barry Newman**

Women's League Chairperson  
**Mrs. Paula Rubin**

**Board Members**

Dr. Jerome C. Cohen  
Mr. Richard Frankel  
Mr. Charles Gilinsky  
Mr. Alfred Lavker  
Mr. Alan Piaker  
Solomon Polachek Ph.D.  
Liz Rosenberg Ph.D.  
Dr. Charles Rubin  
Mr. Brian Savitch  
Mrs. Susan Walker

**Founding Board Members**

Mr. Abe L. Piaker OBM  
Prof. Philip M. Piaker OBM  
Dr. Barrett J. Raff OBM

**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)



For information about dedication opportunities please visit [www.jewishBU.com/Hakesher](http://www.jewishBU.com/Hakesher)



**3 In Search of Awe**  
*Based on the teachings of the Rebbe*

**4 INTERVIEW**  
**Marcia Lieberman**

**6 STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**  
**Rebecca Mason**

**14 ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**  
**David Merel**

**15 Alumni News**  
*All In The Family*

**18 CHABAD IN ACTION**  
**Photo Gallery**

**20 INSPIRATIONAL VOICES**  
**I Don't Have a Dream**

**21 FACULTY SPOTLIGHT**  
**Dennis Foreman**

**23 ON MY MIND**  
**Bennett Schwarz**

**SPECIAL FEATURES: 7-11**  
**YOUR 5771**  
**Holiday Guide**

**12 TELLING**  
**Holiday Stories**

*Hakesher* <sup>הקשר</sup>  
the connection

**Issue #3**

Published by  
**CHABAD OF BINGHAMTON**

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

**Editor** Rivkah Slonim  
**Staff Writer** Alan Zeitlin  
**Proofreader** Marlene Serkin  
**Design & Printing** The Printhouse

**Cover Photo:** Dave Williams,  
**Select Photos:** Michael Weinberg





# In Search of Awe

By Yanki Tauber



**K**ings have been in rather short supply in recent generations.

Of course, there's still the Queen of England. She has a crown, a throne, a palace, guards, ladies-in-waiting--the works. Theoretically, she can even dismiss her parliament and start issuing decrees. But we all know that she'll never do that. So all the pomp and ceremony has a false ring to it. The crown on her head looks like a Purim costume.

The kings we remember from our childhood story books had majesty. They evoked fear, but also love. Their subjects trembled before them, but they wanted to tremble before them. There was lots of pomp and ceremony, but the pomp and ceremony meant something, represented something real. The crown on their head looked like it belonged there.

The essence of Rosh Hashanah, our sages tell us, is that it is the day on which we crown G-d king of the universe.

Unless you're particularly religious, "G-d" is probably not a word that you

use comfortably. Add to that "king of the universe," and that's enough to make a modern person squirm. When we go to the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah, most of us would not think of it as attending G-d's coronation.

But let us contemplate for a moment what is it that we are missing in our lives. Why it is that we still yearn for those kings of our childhood world.

What we lack in our lives is awe. **With a click of the mouse, we can purchase a meal or a house, find a job or a marriage partner. What is much more difficult to find is a source of authority in our lives.**

There are, of course, plenty of people out there who are prepared to tell us what to do, including many who, given the opportunity, would force us to do what they are telling us to do. But that's not authority, any more than Saddam Hussein is a king.


And we can, of course, appoint our favorite psychologist, pundit or fashion guru as the authority in our lives. But in the final analysis, that's just another form of take-or-leave-it advice. It's not the authority we need and crave, any more than the Queen of England is a

king. It's nice and beautiful and impressive, but at the end of the day, we're left with the same hollowness inside.

True authority is absolute. It commands, not advises. At the same time, it is not something imposed upon us, for it is fully in harmony with our quintessential will. It is something to which we submit wholly and unequivocally, but to which we want to submit wholly and unequivocally because we recognize it as the voice of our deepest self.

On Rosh Hashanah, we devote two days to the search for the voice of authority we so deeply crave, for the king of the universe we have been seeking since our childhood. But don't look for Him in the synagogue, in your prayerbook or in the rabbi's speech. Look for Him in your deepest self: in the things that no one has to tell you, because you already know them absolutely; in the commitments to which you willingly submit, because you recognize them to be expressions of, rather than impositions upon, your true will.

On second thought, do go to the synagogue, where you will be in the company of many others conducting the same search, seeking that same core of truth and source of awe. Do read the verses printed in the prayerbook, which capture humanity's six-thousand-year quest for a king.

When the shofar sounds, close your eyes. Imagine yourself in the midst of a jubilant crowd who has gathered to celebrate the coronation of their king. Hear the trumpet blasts that express the terror and joy of a people submitting to an authority that embodies their own deepest strivings and aspirations. 

# Chicken Soup, Candles & Peace of Cake

## An interview with Marcia Lieberman on the spirit of Shabbat



**Mrs. Marcia Lieberman** (1905-2005) was undoubtedly one of America's most high-profile Jewish mothers.

She was the mother to two daughters and a son, Senator Joseph Lieberman.

In a 2001 interview she shared her memories about Shabbat with *Farbrengen Magazine's* Joyce Brooks Boqartz:

**JBB.** Everyone knows Mrs. Lieberman, the senator's mother, but we'd like to learn about Marcia Lieberman, the Jewish mother. Can you share some of your Shabbat memories?

**Marcia Lieberman:** Mostly, I remember my mother, sisters and brothers sitting down at the Friday night table, enjoying the welcoming of Shabbat. At that time there were no automatic clocks or timers to turn the lights on and off, so we sat around the table reading until the Shabbat candles burned out. One of the things I learned from my mother is, when lighting the Shabbat candles, to always keep in mind the souls of our dear ones who aren't with us—this is one thing I've shared with my daughters and Hadassah [Mrs. Joseph Lieberman]. I have a pair of candlesticks that were my grandmother's. She died at 97, about 60 years ago, and they belonged to her parents. I also have my mother's candlesticks. They will go to one of my grandchildren, whom I am sure will observe the

Shabbat. That is how they are passed down.

**JBB.** What will be some of your children's Shabbat memories?

**Marcia Lieberman:** Walking into the house and smelling the chicken soup, the dill and the parsley. The dill is the secret. About 11:00 Friday morning, the aroma is going strong. My kids say I "hold court" on Saturday afternoon. I come home after shul, have lunch, take a nap and then around 4:00 people start to knock on the door. Any number of women—a few weeks ago there were 15 unexpected—come

for cake, tea, nosherei. My mother did that in her home; women would come for tea and honey cake. I don't know why, but everything tastes so special on Saturday. It's like the house has a different spirit on Shabbat. I wish I could bottle and sell it, or bottle and keep it for the rest of the week. I could have the house just as neat during the week, but it never feels like it does on Saturday.

**JBB.** What do you think your family and guests expect from your Shabbat?

**Marcia Lieberman:** The best answer to that question is a compliment I received from one of the women who comes every Saturday—a very bright woman. She said to me, "When I come to your home on Shabbat, I come away with such peace."

**JBB.** What happens when you are away for Shabbat?

**Marcia Lieberman:** I rarely go elsewhere for Shabbat. I don't usually leave the house on Friday nights. But when I do, I always cover my table with a tablecloth to honor the Shabbat.

**JBB.** Does being in the national spotlight affect your Shabbat?

**Marcia Lieberman:** I don't feel any different. It hasn't affected me at all. I enjoyed every minute of the campaign. The greatest thing was when Friday night came, with all the work and all the running around we did, everything stopped, and we were all together. Joe, Hadassah, all the children that were out campaigning, the friends and families that were observant—some of my friends aren't, of course. But we were able to shed everything and just enjoy the Shabbat. Those hours, from Friday night to Saturday night, gave us time to just relax and enjoy.

**JBB.** Thank you for sharing your Shabbat with our readers. Any final thoughts?

**Marcia Lieberman:** I wish the whole world would learn the peace of Shabbat. If more people participated in Shabbat, there would be more peace in the world.



# *Chabad of Binghamton*

takes pleasure in inviting you to its

## *Gala 25th Anniversary Dinner*

**Sunday, October 17, 2010**

Cheshvan 9, 5771

**Gotham Hall 1356 Broadway — NYC**

Reception 5pm — Dinner 6pm

### *Guests of Honor*



Lori Ben-Ezra '87  
and  
Marc Ben-Ezra '87  
Representing the years  
1985-1990



Steven Katz '91  
Representing the years  
1990-1995



Naomi Rosenfeld '97  
and  
Ari Rosenfeld '95  
Representing the years  
1995-2000



Stacy Mayer '01  
and  
Stuart Mayer '00  
Representing the years  
2000-2005



Meeka Levin Natanov '05  
and  
David Natanov '05  
Representing the years  
2005-2010

Make your Reservation and send in your Journal Ad today at  
[www.JewishBU.com/Celebration25](http://www.JewishBU.com/Celebration25)

*A Quarter Century... and it's just the beginning*



# STUDENT

## SPOTLIGHT



Rebecca Mason

## LOVER OF MATH AND LIFE DEFIES THE ODDS

By Alan Zeitlin '00

Rebecca Mason's body gives her a two second warning when a seizure is about to hit. Those two seconds are crucial, as they allow her to sit down and prevent a fall. But there was no warning when she suddenly took ill in 1994 and was found to have advanced leukemia and suffered a prolonged seizure and a stroke.

"The doctors said the next 24 hours were crucial to know if she'd survive," said her mother, Carol. "At first she didn't recognize her family but her memory came back. She's a survivor. She's my miracle."

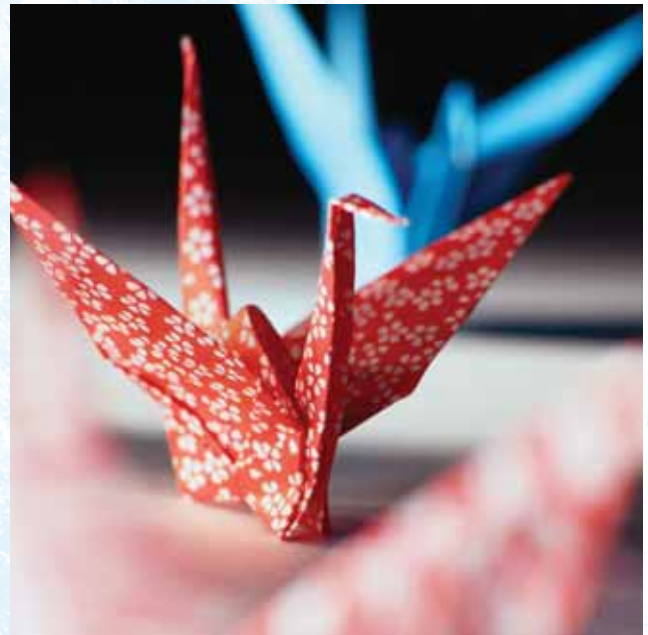
Mason, who was home-schooled by her mother since her immune system was weak, is also on the autistic spectrum. Part of the curriculum was teaching humor, as those who are autistic have difficulty discerning literal and figurative language. But Mason remembers secretly ripping off ID badges from her nurses when she was hospitalized so that once they got to the parking lot, they had to return and give her another kiss goodnight. And she has no problem showing off her humor when speaking about her recent Birthright Israel trip. The Kotel and Massada were great, but there was one problem with the Bedouin tents.

"It was a minefield dodging the camel droppings," she says with a laugh.

The determined 25-year-old has not let her challenges get in the way of doing what she wants to do and expects to graduate from BU in two years.

"I cope," she said. "I just evaluate each situation and make the adjustments that I need to make."

At the kosher kitchen, she sits with her back to the wall so there are fewer stimuli. As for her classes, she has a notetaker and interviews her teachers before she signs up for their classes. She also gets a front-row seat in the center of her classrooms. For her trip to Israel, her mother packed clothing for each day in individual bags. As for the hustle and



bustle and large crowds at Chabad dinners, she said she's used to the routine and there are a number of benefits there.

"Rivky (Slonim) has been like a second mother to me," Mason said. "And I like the students and I've made some good friends. And part of a result of my treatments is that I sometimes forget to eat, and that's kind of hard to do there."

Mason, who is known for giving people origami cranes that she makes, excels in Math and can analyze geometric shapes even on something as mundane as a brick wall. She is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Honors Society and tutors for the Math department. But one subject gives her problems, she said.

"Whenever I have an English paper, I feel like I want to bang my head against the wall," she says. "The thing is, I don't know how you know when you're finished. There are infinite ways in which you could always make the paper better."

Mason is trying to make the world better by going to

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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



# Your Holiday Guide THE BASICS

## **ROSH HASHANAH** SEPTEMBER 8-10

Unlike a typical New Year celebration, the Jewish New Year is a time of awe and solemnity. Rosh Hashanah means, “head of the year.” Just as the head controls the body, Rosh Hashanah contains the potential for life, blessing and sustenance for the entire year.

On Rosh Hashanah, the birthday of Adam and Eve, we renew our relationship with G-d and are evaluated, together with all of humanity. The words we read in the Machzor, the holiday prayer book, help us channel our feelings. The Shofar awakens our hearts to the awesome power of the day and trumpets our acceptance of G-d as our Master.

Our actions on Rosh Hashanah set the tone for the year to come. During the Tashlich service, we symbolically “cast” our sins into the water. We eat apples dipped in honey, wishing for a good and sweet year, and eat new fruits symbolizing new beginnings. This is reflected in the words that we say during Rosh Hashanah, “May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year.”

### **Checklist for Rosh Hashanah:**

- ☐ Make an Eruv Tavshilin on the afternoon before start of holiday
- ☐ Candle lighting, both nights
- ☐ Kiddush and festive meals, both nights and both days
- ☐ Apple dipped in Honey, first night
- ☐ New fruit is enjoyed, second night
- ☐ Hear the Shofar both days
- ☐ Visit a body of water for Tashlich, afternoon of first day (or any time before Yom Kippur)

## **YOM KIPPUR** SEPTEMBER 17-18

After the sin of the Golden Calf, Moses fasted and prayed for 40 days on behalf of the Jewish people. On Yom Kippur, G-d proclaimed, “I have forgiven.” Yom Kippur means “day of atonement” and is the holiest day of the year.

Before Yom Kippur, we observe the Kapparot service by rotating a fowl, fish or money over our heads, which we then give to the poor. On Yom Kippur, we do not eat, drink, wash, use perfume, have marital relations or wear leather shoes. It is a custom to wear white, symbolic of purity.

Yom Kippur begins with Kol Nidrei, expressing our timeless commitment to G-d. We ask for G-d’s forgiveness, enumerating our shortcomings with the resolve to strengthen our connection to Him. The prayers are phrased in the plural, for all Jews are considered one soul, responsible for each other.

Yom Kippur reveals the essence of the Jewish soul, a spark of G-d united with its Source. The final prayer of Yom Kippur, when our judgment for the coming year is sealed, is called Ne’ilah. “closing the gate,” which culminates with the final sounding of the Shofar.

### **Checklist for Yom Kippur:**

- ☐ Kapparot and charity, before Yom Kippur
- ☐ Two festive meals, before the fast
- ☐ Yahrzeit memorial candle is lit before Yom Kippur (if applicable)
- ☐ Candle lighting, before sunset
- ☐ Fast, from before sundown until after nightfall
- ☐ Yizkor memorial prayers, during daytime services
- ☐ Break the fast after the Havdalah service, marking the end of the holiday





## **SUKKOT** **SEPTEMBER 22-29**

**S**ukkot, the season of rejoicing, means “huts,” reminiscent of the temporary shelters in which the Jewish people dwelled in the desert. Also called the Festival of Ingathering, Sukkot is the time that the produce from the field, orchard and vineyard is collected. It is one of three Pilgrimage Festivals when Jews would travel to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, demonstrating their unity. We express this unity by blessing the Four Kinds: The *lulav* (palm branch), *etrog* (citron), *haddasim* (myrtle) and *aravot* (willow).

During the seven days of Sukkot, we eat our meals outdoors in the *sukkah*. The *sukkah* is the only mitzvah that encompasses us, symbolizing the “clouds of glory,” which surrounded and protected the Jewish people upon leaving Egypt.

Hoshanah Rabbah, the last day of Sukkot, means “great salvation,” and marks the end of our judgment period, which began on Rosh Hashanah. We traditionally tap the floor with a bundle of willow branches, and ask G-d to seal our inscription for a sweet year.

### **Checklist for Sukkot:**

- ☐ Make an Eruv Tavshilin on the afternoon before start of holiday
- ☐ Candlelighting, first two nights
- ☐ Kiddush and festive meals, first two nights and first two days
- ☐ Eat all meals in the sukkah
- ☐ Bless the Four Kinds each day, except Shabbat
- ☐ On Hoshanah Rabbah, eat festive meal and tap the aravot (willow branches)

## **SHEMINI ATZERET/ SIMCHAT TORAH** **SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 1**

**S**hemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are the culmination of the holidays of Tishrei. On Shemini Atzeret, which means “the eighth day that concludes the festival,” some customarily eat their meals in the *sukkah*. In the synagogue, we dance *Hakafot* with the Torah-processions amid singing and dancing—and pray for rains of blessing.

Simchat Torah, which means “rejoicing with the Torah,” is celebrated with exuberant dancing. Completing the annual cycle of reading the Torah, we read the final section of the Torah, after which we immediately start to read it again. The rest of the year, we approach the Torah with serious study. On Simchat Torah, we approach the Torah with joyful dance.

This holiday emphasizes that the Torah is the inheritance of every single Jew. By starting to read the Torah anew, we demonstrate that learning never ends, especially when it comes to the Torah and its infinite wisdom.

### **Checklist for Shemini Atzeret/ Simchat Torah:**

- ☐ Candle lighting both nights
- ☐ Kiddush and festive meals, both nights and both days
- ☐ Dance Hakafot, both nights and second day
- ☐ Yizkor memorial prayers, first day

## **MORE ONLINE**

For complete details  
about observances  
please visit the

**Chabad.org**  
holiday site.





# Your Holiday Guide THE SOUL

Similar to a shopping spree at the mall, where we'd pick up all sorts of merchandise, **the month of Tishrei enriches us** with a whole collection of deep experiences from which we can draw sustenance all year long. We just need to unpack the merchandise and put it to use.

## THE SHOFAR

### Your Personal Wake- Up Call

**Blown both days of Rosh Hashanah and at the end of Yom Kippur**

**"A**fter the blowing of the shofar, a new, more sublime Divine light descends, so sublime a light as has yet never shone since the Creation of the world."  
(*Tanya*)

One hundred sounds are blown from the shofar each day of Rosh Hashanah. The shofar is a ram's horn, the oldest and most primitive of wind instruments, yet its call touches the innermost chords of the soul. Its sound is simple and plaintive—a cry from the heart, like that of a lost child for its parent. It is a call to evaluate our actions and improve our ways, as expressed in the verse: "Awake sleepers from your sleep; slumberers, arise from your slumber—examine your deeds, return and remember your Creator." The shofar proclaims the coronation of G-d as King of the Universe and brings to mind great events that involved a ram's horn. After the binding of Isaac, Abraham sacrificed a ram in place of his son; this ram's horn was blown 363 years later when the Jewish people gathered at Sinai to receive the Torah; its horn will also herald the coming of Moshiach and the final redemption of the Jewish people.

## TASHLICH

### Fishing for Wisdom

**Performed before sunset on the first day of Rosh Hashanah (or any day until Yom Kippur)**

**"T**he earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean floor."  
(*Tashlich liturgy*)

Before sunset on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, Tashlich ("cast away") is observed. We visit the bank of a river, lake, or any stretch of water containing live fish, and recite special prayers. The words of the prophet Micah, which are recited at Tashlich, contain the meaning behind this custom: "[G-d] will cast our transgressions into the depth of the sea." The Kabbalah teaches that water symbolizes kindness, and fish remind us of the ever-watchful eye of G-d's providence. Fish have no eyelids, so their eyes are always open.

The creatures of the sea symbolize unity with the Divine. Righteous people are termed "fish of the sea"—just as fish are encompassed by the sea, the righteous are absorbed in the waters of the Torah, completely united with G-d.



# TESHUVA - "Repentance"

## Return to Sender

### Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

"Teshuvah redeems the Source of the soul from its exile and returns the flow of the Divine manifestation to its proper place." (*The Zohar*)


Although often translated as repentance, teshuvah really means "return"-a return to the true inner self that is always connected to its Source. The path of teshuvah begins with sincere regret for our transgressions and the resolve to abandon those ways. It is also the desire to come closer to G-d through prayer and increased performance of mitzvot, particularly the giving of charity to the poor, which "redeem" the soul from spiritual captivity. In the words of *The Zohar*, teshuvah returns the Divine presence, the Source of the soul, from the exile to which it was banished by transgression.

# KOL NIDREI

## Look at our Hearts, Not our Clothes

### Heard the night of Yom Kippur

"Let our vows not be considered vows; let our oaths not be considered oaths." (*Kol Nidrei*)



The first prayer of Yom Kippur, as the sun is setting, is Kol Nidrei, the cancellation of vows. The significance of this prayer dates back to the persecution of Jews during the Spanish Inquisition of the 15th Century, when Jews were forced to convert to Catholicism under the threat of death.

Outwardly, the Jews behaved like their Spanish neighbors, but in private they remained devout. Once a year they would gather in secret, declaring Kol Nidrei to vow their commitment to Judaism, despite their seemingly Catholic lives. Kol Nidrei was their proclamation that their external behavior was not who they were.

Our souls are cloaked in external garments, which are simply not us. Though we may think, talk and act in ways incongruous to our Jewishness, that is not who we truly are. On Yom Kippur, we hope to transcend our outer garments and reach our inner souls.


# THE SUKKAH

## Seven Days Under His Roof

### Sukkot is a seven-day festival

"It is fitting that all of Israel should dwell in a single sukkah." (*Talmud*)

A sukkah is an outdoor structure, where we dwell during the Festival of Sukkot in symbolic demonstration of our faith in G-d's providence. Its roof is composed of vegetation such as evergreen branches, cornhusks or bamboo stalks.



"Sukkah is the only mitzvah into which a person enters with his muddy boots," goes the Chassidic saying. The sukkah, its walls and roofing, encompass us entirely. Our whole being—from our intellect and emotion down to the tips of our toes—is involved with this mitzvah. The *Zohar* teaches that on each of the seven days of Sukkot, we are joined in our sukkah by seven spiritual *Ushpizin*, honored guests: Abraham, representing the divine *sefira* (attribute) of *chesed*, kindness; Isaac, representing *gevurah*, restraint; Jacob, representing *tifferet*, beauty and balance; Moses representing *netzach*, eternity and perseverance; Aaron, representing *hod*, splendor; Joseph, representing *yesod*, spiritual foundation, and King David, representing *malchut*, sovereignty. The sukkah encompasses its visitors in unison. In this way, the sukkah reveals the simple and beautiful oneness of a people rooted in the oneness of their Creator. When all of Israel dwells in a single sukkah, our unity transcends our differences.



# THE FOUR KINDS

All Four One  
and One for All

Performed each day of Sukkot,  
except for Shabbat.

"G-d says, 'Let them be bound together in one bond, and these will atone for those.'" (Midrash)

The unity of the Jewish people is expressed by blessing the Four Kinds:

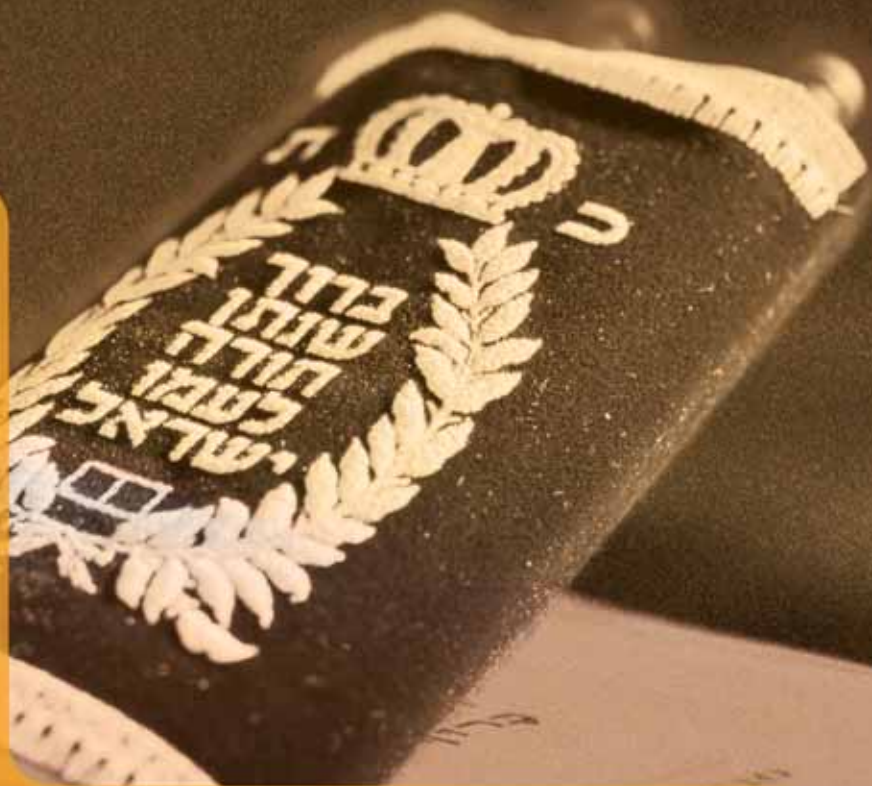
The *etrog* (citron) has both a pleasant taste and smell, representing one who is both knowledgeable in Torah and proficient in the observance of mitzvot.

The *lulav* is the branch of the date palm, whose fruit is tasty but has no scent, representing one who is accomplished in Torah, though less so in mitzvot.

The *hadas* (myrtle branch) is tasteless but aromatic, representing one who, though lacking in Torah knowledge, is observant in mitzvot.

The tasteless and scentless *aravah* (willow branch) represents the individual who lacks in both Torah and mitzvot.

When we are bound together, each individual makes up for that which is lacking in the others. The Four Kinds also represent four personas within each individual: *Lulav* is the intellectual within, who does not allow feeling to cloud the purity of knowledge; *hadas* is the emotional self, where feelings comprise the highest ideal, even at the expense of intellect; *etrog* is the force that strives for balance of mind and heart, while *aravah* is the capacity for setting aside both intellect and feeling in commitment to a Higher ideal.



## DANCE WITH THE TORAH

Feel the Beat

Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah.

"The Torah wants to circle the *bimah* and dance; since it cannot, we become its 'feet' transporting the Torah around the reading table, just as feet transport the head." (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch)

All reserve disappears in the exuberant dancing of Simchat Torah. Every Jew, learned and unsophisticated, feels a natural desire to take a Torah in his arms and dance. Simchat Torah taps a point in the soul that defies the differences that exist between one Jew and another. The source for this happiness is of course the Torah. Yet throughout the entire Hakafof dances, the Torah is never opened; we dance holding it wrapped in its mantle. Though the Torah is usually associated with disciplined study, on Simchat Torah we approach it differently, singing and dancing in a manner that bears no apparent relationship to understanding.

We are lifted beyond the realm of our individual identities and become the "feet of the Torah." These celebrations reveal that our bond with G-d and the Torah is unconfined by the limits of intellect. Moreover, this celebration anticipates the ultimate celebrations that will accompany the coming of Moshiach and the advent of the Era of the Redemption. May we merit it now.



# TELLING HOLIDAY STORIES

## Yom Kippur in Kano

David Ben-Dor

**D**o you know where Kano is? Look it up on the map of Nigeria in West Africa. 1963. Fall. But who in that climate of eternal heat, on the border of the Sahara Desert, knows whether it is fall or spring? Only the vultures are circling above, settling on the low, thatched roofs, waiting to come down into the courtyard for a morsel of abandoned meat. The plane leaves only in three days. And I still have to make my rounds in the market of this Moslem town, where everybody but me prostrates himself whenever one of their chieftains rides past in flowing robes on a coal black horse. The sun is hidden by clouds of sand blowing in from the Sahara, restricting vision to a few yards. It is still early in the afternoon and suddenly I remember. G-d in heaven! It is Yom Kippur. How on earth did I get stuck in this forsaken place? Why couldn't I have waited for another week to make my tour to sell those tires? I had completely forgotten. There I was, at the colonial rest house, watching the fan on the ceiling turn round and round; thinking about atonement...

I got up, walked into the British manager's office, and asked him, "Mr. Walker, could you please tell me if there are any Jews in Kano?"

"Jews?"

"Yes, sir, Jews."

"Well, now let me see. There is Mr. Rokach, but he doesn't want anybody to know that he's Jewish. Then there is Mr. Sidki, but for some reason his store is closed today."

"Where does Mr. Sidki live?"

"He lives above his store."

"Could you tell me where his store is?"

"Of course, sir. Walk down the main street and you will find the house on the second corner to your right. It is the only two-story house on the street. You can't miss it."

I started walking. The sand blew into my face. I hardly saw the people in the street, but I finally reached the house. The shutters of the store were rolled down. Everything was closed and quiet. I started banging on the shutters with my fist, and suddenly a window on the first floor was opened.

"Who's there?" a man asked from above.

"*Shalom aleichem*," I said.

"*Aleichem shalom, baruch haba*. Come up the stairs behind the building. We are all waiting for you."

I didn't understand. They were all waiting for me? I never had met the man. Until an hour ago I didn't know that there were Jews in Kano. What made him say that? Slowly, lost in thought, I



climbed the stairs. When they opened the door, I beheld nine men with tallitot (prayer shawls) on their shoulders, all greeting me "baruch haba", welcome.

## The Sixth Dimension

As told to Nechama Dina Hecht

**I** was at the corner of Grove and Baldwin, just minutes away from my mid-afternoon coffee, when they stopped me. Two boys, in conservative but rumpled suits, big black hats shielding their faces from the sun.

They wanted me to light a candle.

But not just any candle, they wanted me to light a candle for G-d. To change the world. To bring perfection. I wondered if soon they'd tell me it was the key to wealth.

I said no.

I was searching for meaning all my life.

I knew money was not the key. Even the citi ads agreed.

I needed more. Fulfillment. Career. A sense of self worth. A group of friends. A part in changing someone's life. And I got it all, but it wasn't enough.

On that day, I knew I needed more. But I was prepared to give more community service, a more challenging job. Not G-d.

I don't need G-d in my life. I live in this world, not in nirvana. I don't need ritual, repetitive cultish behavior to give color to my world. I certainly didn't need a plain white tealight to replace my lavender scented pillar.

I needed meaning.

So I said no.

Weeks later, they stopped me again.

This time, they were carrying branches and fruit. They wanted me to wave them in the air, to shake them in all directions. For G-d. For world peace. For unity.

What a ridiculous way of avoiding reality.

I said no.

But the next day, I said yes.

Now I knew why they had all been waiting for me. I was the tenth man to complete the minyan, the prayer quorum.

I figured, what harm can come from a little foreign culture? So I shook the fruit. And there were no fireworks, no visions of G-d, no glow of accomplishment. Just like I expected.

But later that night, there was something different. Nothing big, nothing I could quite put my finger on. Just a very slight feeling of good.

So the next day, I waved the branch again. I repeated the strange syllables, and waved the fruit around. But not for world peace. Just to catch that elusive feeling.

Now, I light candles every Friday night. I stopped putting milk in my chicken a la King. I read words of praise daily from a little book. To G-d.

What changed?

Oddly enough, it hasn't changed the things I do. I still have my career. I still have my friends. I still volunteer at the women's shelter. But it's more.

Nothing has changed. Nothing has changed in my 5-dimensional world.

But I've discovered a sixth dimension I never knew existed.

I would never have believed it if I heard it. Reading about it would make no difference. Sound can only be understood in the context of other sounds.

Not until I shook a branch could I have reference for that dimension. And not until I began doing more could I really feel its presence.

Those boys could have talked me blue in the face, but it would be meaningless on its own. I had to actually do it myself.

And now, I know why they stopped me.

Nechama Dina Hecht serves as a Chabad emissary in Des Plaines, IL



# ALUMNI

## SPOTLIGHT



## David Merel '95

# TECH INNOVATOR HAS BRIGHT IDEAS

By Alan Zeitlin '00



While AT&T's motto was "Reach out and touch someone," one Binghamton grad who founded his own phone company and technology company took the tactile component more seriously. After founding ThinkBright, ([www.thinkbright.net](http://www.thinkbright.net)) David Merel decided that it was nice to help people make calls but it was his calling to help people get with the times.

The CEO of Merel Technologies has garnered praise in the high-tech gadget-world and from TV networks by coming up with an eye-popping product.

His mTouch multi-touch table is stacked with media and kiosk apps and boasts objection recognition technology. Merel is competing against the Microsoft Surface, which sells for approximately \$12,500, while his unit retails at \$4,200 or \$3,200, based on the 32 or 42-inch LCD screen (available through [mereltechnologies.com](http://mereltechnologies.com)). The interactive table allows users to download information to their phones by laying it on the table and allows for 20 hands to use the screen at the same time. It is ideal for restaurants, hotels and organizations, he said.

"This is the future of direct marketing," said Merel, who grad-

uated from BU in 2002. "Businesses and organizations are looking at how to market themselves in the new era and there's Facebook and Twitter and that's great, but this allows a customer to actually touch and interact with an advertisement or a brochure, where they can flip or rotate an image and make it larger or smaller. There's definitely a wow-factor."

But Merel also wanted for there to be a wow-factor relating to learning Torah. With a grant from Birthright Israel Next, he has started a nonprofit called jTouch. The 30-year-old, who is set for an October wedding with his fiancée Samantha, said the marriage of Torah and technology makes perfect sense. The mTorah will allow a student to touch a screen and be able to get a translation of a word or phrase, a commentary, and even Haftorah or Torah trope.

"My mission is to help enhance Jewish education through technology," he said "With all the technology around us, you need something a little more stimulating. Kids are not being stimulated."

"Eventually we hope to enable someone to hear the correct chanting of their Haftorah or Torah portion," he said. "This way, someone without access to a bar or bat-mitzvah tutor could benefit greatly from it. But we don't have the technology to follow them around and nag them to practice."

Merel said his iPad application called mIsrael allows people to touch the screen to show a location in Israel and then, that area's biblical history, as well as tourist information. Merel, who is raising funds for the nonprofit, said there are a range of practical uses for the technology.

As a freshman at George Washington University, he felt something nagging him and felt he needed to transfer. It was one meal that would change his life.

"I visited Binghamton and came to Chabad for a shabbos," Merel recalled. "It was really amazing and that was the difference maker. It was Chabad that sold me on Binghamton."

Merel, who is slated to appear on CNN, showcased his mTouch at ESPN's X-Games after the sports network invited him. And while Merel cannot do flips on a dirt-bike, he often rides his bike to work from the Upper West Side to downtown Manhattan. He hopes students will be able to do a lot of cool tricks that will enhance their learning through use of his technology. 🚲



# MAZEL TOVS


- '87 Michael Fuller and Lisa Lebowitz** announce the Bar Mitzvah celebration of their son Jared on Monday, September 6, 2010.  
**Leonard and Michelle Reback** announce the birth of their son, Isaac Gary, Gershon Hizkiyah on August 18, 2010. He was welcomed home by big sister Samantha and the entire family, among them three aunts, all Binghamton graduates: Billie '89, Felicia '99 and Stephanie '11.
- '94 Ari and Samantha (Simcha Perel) Mendelson** announce the birth of their son, Daniel Moshe. He was welcomed home by big siblings Leah Yocheved and Eliyahu Dovid.
- '95 Marc ('96 MBA) and Shira Brown** announce the birth of their son, Dovid Yisrael (David Ian) on June 29, 2010.  
**Rob and Tricia Hoff** announce the birth of their son, Eli Alexander, Eli Heschel, on July 19, 2010. He was welcomed home by big brothers Benji and Jonah.  
**Hadassa (Schenkel) and Emanuel Behar** announce the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Avraham Yitzchak, on July 21, 2010.
- '96 Jeremy and Suzanne Crane** announce the birth of their daughter, Nechama Talia, on July 18, 2010. She was welcomed home by big siblings Jonathan, Moshe and Farrah.
- '97 Linda (Fani) and Farzin Rahmanou** announce the birth of their son, Jacob Aharon, on May 7, 2010.  
**Jeff and Diane Rosenberg** announce the birth of their daughter, Arielle Elizabeth, Ayelet Elisheva, on April 14, 2010. She was welcomed home by big siblings Andrew and Lilah.  
**Alyse (Berger) and Ken Heilpern** announce the birth of their daughter, Jasmine Ayla Heilpern, on August 12, 2010. She was welcomed home by big sister Charlotte.
- '98 Shoshana (Sperling) and Joel Tennenberg** announce the birth of their son, Dov Shimshon, Alex Jacob, on April 26, 2010. He was welcomed home by big siblings Sam and Emily.
- '99 Michael and Irina Kimyagarov** announce the birth of their daughter, Mazal Tov, on June 16, 2010. She was welcomed home by big sisters Batya and Tamar.
- '00 Ari and Danielle Mark** announce the birth of their daughter, Ayla Ruby, on April 22, 2010.  
**Mickey and Debra Glaser ('01) Oralevich** announce the birth of their daughter, Lily Eden, on June 20, 2010. She was welcomed home by her big siblings Maya and Jack.
- '01 Debra Glaser and Mickey Oralevich** announce the birth of their daughter, Lily Eden, on June 20, 2010. See '00 for further details.  
**Adam and Laurie Feit ('02) Stern** announce the birth of their son, Aharon Yitzchak, on June 1, 2010. He was welcomed home by big brother Gavi.  
**Shari (Sperling) and Ari Katz** announce the birth of their daughter, Yakira Leah, Keira Charlotte, on June 17, 2010.  
**Ron and Enbar (Joudai) Elimelekh** announce the birth of their son, Rafael, on July 10, 2010. He was welcomed home by big sisters Aela Sara and Naomi.

- '02 Zvi Hollander** announces his engagement to **Jodie Shulman**; a Winter wedding is planned. Zvi is currently a corporate/securities attorney in Manhattan and Jodie is a teacher working in New Jersey. They plan to make their home in the NY-metro area.  
**Enbar (Joudai) and Ron Elimelekh** announce the birth of their son, Rafael, on July 10, 2010. See '01 for complete details.
- '03 Richard and Aliza Mayer** announce the birth of their daughter, Perri Rose, Pnina Rut, on June 22, 2010.  
**Carly Becher** announces her marriage to **Sean Haber** on October 14, 2010. They will make their home in Toronto, Canada.  
**Alisa (Berman) and Jeremy Weiser** announce the birth of their son, Yonatan (Jonathan) Barak on Av 24, August 4, 2010.
- '04 Michelle (Pomerantz) and Yonah Singer** announce the birth of their son, Judah Dov, Yehuda Dov, born on May 19, 2010.  
**Amy (Gordon) and Simcha Weinberg** announce the birth of their daughter, Leah Shima on August 23, 2010. She was welcomed home by big brother Schneur Zalman.  
**Nir and Hallie Pollack ('05) Gadon** announce the birth of their son, Elitzur Boaz, Eric Bryan, on June 26, 2010.
- '05 Hallie (Pollack) and Nir Gadon** announce the birth of their son, Elitzur Boaz, Eric Bryan, on June 26, 2010.  
**Meeka (Levin) and David Natanov** announce the birth of their daughter, Ahuva Suri, on August 13, 2010.
- '06 Dina Gottesman and Daniel Reznick** announce the birth of their daughter, Fradel Malkah, Emily Lilliana, on July 1, 2010. She was welcomed home by older sisters Ellie and Rochel.  
**Arin and Julia Lipman** announce the birth of their son, Shmuel Alexander, on August 3. He was welcomed home by big brother Chaim.  
**Jon and Ruthie Hecht** announce the birth of their son, Eugene Dylan, Yaakov Yitzchok, on June 7, 2010.
- '09 Elan Noorparvar and Lauren Roditi ('10)** announce their engagement. A summer 2011 wedding is planned.

## CONDOLENCES

Chabad mourns the untimely death of **Joseph Ash, Avraham Yosef ben Yoel Halevy**, father of Erica Ash '04, on July 23, 2010.

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

**מזהל מומחה**

**Rabbi Moshe Klein**

*Expert Mohel*

**Comes highly recommended by Rabbi, Rivky and all of the Slonim boys!**

**718-773-2626 • 718-221-2222**

# A BLANKET OF TRUST

BY HOWARD SCHULTZ  
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF GLOBAL STRATEGIST OF  
STARBUCKS

I grew up in federally subsidized housing in Brooklyn. I was part of a generation of families that dreamed about the American dream. My dad had a series of blue-collar jobs. An uneducated man, he was kind of beaten by the system. He was a World War II veteran who had great aspirations about America, but his dream was not coming true.

At the age of seven, I came home one day to find my dad sprawled on the couch in our two-bedroom apartment in a full-leg cast; he had fallen on the job and broken his leg. This was way before the invention of Pampers, and he worked as a delivery driver for cloth diapers. He hated this job bitterly, but on this one day, he wished he had it back. In 1960 in America, most companies had no workers' compensation and no hospitalization for a blue-collar worker who had an accident. I saw

That experience had a significant effect on how I see the world. When I got into a position of responsibility at Starbucks, what I wanted to try and do was build a kind of company that my father never got a chance to work for.

We at Starbucks have been trying to create an industry that did not exist, and a kind of brand that was very unusual. One real anomaly is that we have spent very little on advertising. We've had corporate executives try and understand how a

firsthand the plight of the working class.

brand could become so powerful and ubiquitous with so little promotion. The truth is we had no money to advertise, so we had to figure out a different way. We said to ourselves that if we wanted to build a large enterprise and a brand that had meaning, relevance and trust for all its constituencies, then we first had to build trust with our employees.

So we tried to co-author a strategy in which those who worked for the business were really part of something. As a result, in 1989 we began to provide equity in the form of stock options to our employees.

When we did this, we had a couple hundred employees and fewer





# **"It's about honoring the human spirit, honoring the people who work in the business and honoring the customer"**

than 50 stores. Today, we have close to 50,000 employees, whom we call partners, and we will open up our 3,500th store at the end of this month. We have built, I think, an enduring business upon a premise that says the experience that we create inside our company will be the defining mechanism of building our brand. We said we must first take care of our people.

It's critically important in building a business that every single strategic decision go into the imprinting of that brand. If you don't tell the truth to some constituency, you can't later say that decision just didn't matter. Everything matters. A business must be built on a set of values, a foundation that's authentic, so you can look in the mirror and be proud of what's going on.

At the end of the day, when business is really good, it's not about building a brand or making money. That's a means to an end. It's about honoring the human spirit, honoring the people who work in the business and honoring the customer.

When I was in Israel, I went to Mea Shearim, the ultra-Orthodox area in Jerusalem. Along with a group of businessmen I was with, I had the opportunity to have an audience with Rabbi Finkel, the head of a yeshiva there. I had never heard of him and didn't know anything about him. We went into his study and waited ten to 15 minutes for him. Finally, the doors opened.

What we did not know was that Rabbi Finkel was severely afflicted with Parkinson's disease. He sat down at the head of the table, and, naturally, our inclination was to look away. We didn't want to embarrass him. We were all looking away, and we heard this big bang on the table: "Gentlemen, look at me, and look at me right now." Now his speech affliction was worse than his physical shaking. It was really hard to listen to him and watch him. He said, "I have only a few minutes for you because I know you're all busy American businessmen." You know, just a little dig there.

Then he asked, "Who can tell me what the lesson of the Holocaust is?" He called on one guy, who didn't know what to do—it was like being called on in the fifth grade without the answer. And the guy says something benign like, "We will never, ever forget..". And I felt terrible for the guy until I realized the rabbi was getting ready to call on someone else. All of us were sort of under the table, looking away—you know, please, not me. He did not call me. I was sweating. He called on another guy, who had such a fantastic answer: "We will never, ever again be a victim or bystander."

The rabbi said, "You guys just don't get it. Okay, gentlemen, let me tell you the essence of the human spirit. "As you know, during the Holocaust, the people

were transported in the worst possible, inhumane way by railcar. They thought they were going to a work camp. We all know they were going to a death camp. "After hours and hours in this inhumane corral with no light, no bathroom, cold, they arrived at the camps. The doors were swung wide open, and they were blinded by the light. Men were separated from women, mothers from daughters, fathers from sons. They went off to the bunkers to sleep. "As they went into the area to sleep, only one person was given a blanket for every six. The person who received the blanket, when he went to bed, had to decide, 'Am I going to push the blanket to the five other people who did not get one, or am I going to pull it toward myself to stay warm?'"

And Rabbi Finkel says, "It was during this defining moment that we learned the power of the human spirit, because we pushed the blanket to five others." And with that, he stood up and said, "Take your blanket. Take it back to America and push it to five other people." 🚶

*Howard Schultz is chairman and chief global strategist of Starbucks. Through CARE and the Starbucks Foundation, the company works to give back to the communities in which it does business. Schultz received the Columbia Business School's Botwinick Prize in Business Ethics in September 2000.*

*This article is excerpted from his acceptance speech. Reprinted from Hermes magazine, Columbia Business School, Spring 2001.*



# CHABAD IN ACTION

## BU STUDENT LEADERSHIP GOES TO WASHINGTON



Three BU student leaders attended a **Chabad on Campus National Leadership Conference in Washington DC** where they interacted with politicians and Jewish leaders such as **Senator Joe Lieberman, Elie Weisel, Rabbi Yona Metzger, Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel** and others. Students also convened in caucus sessions to discuss Jewish life on campus and trade ideas on how to strengthen Jewish identity and pride among students on their respective universities.

## COMING HOME TO ISRAEL

Fortunate BU students aboard Mayanot Birthright bus #96 enjoyed 10 unforgettable days of touring, bonding, inspiration, fun and connection with the Jewish homeland.



Apply today for the trip of your life time at: [mayanotisrael.com](http://mayanotisrael.com)



**REGISTRATION** for the winter trips opens on September 14th for new applicants and September 13th for returning applicants.



## THE FRESHMEN ARE COMING... THEY CAME... BY THE HUNDREDS...



and the returning students were not to be outdone either! Welcome weekend was a whirlwind of activity with a pizza party on Thursday night, a packed to the rafters Friday night services followed by dinner, dessert buffet, Shabbat lunch, Seudat Shlishit and Havdallah, Knock out Bagel Brunch, games and cool tie dying of Chabad t-shirts. It was a rip-roaring start!



## 50 FOR 50

Fifty plus special friends surprised Rabbi Aaron Slonim for a minyanaire party to celebrate his birthday.

# I Don't Have a Dream

by Rabbi Shlomo Yaffe



**W**hy is it that in the space of one hour we can be full of faith and then skeptical, kind to one stranger and abrupt with another, deeply inspired to seek holiness and then be drawn to the basest desires?

We are so accustomed to this phenomenon we do not often question it, but we should. Do we desire to live a G-dly life or not? Do our negative inclinations and deeds prove that our convictions and commitments are only a sham? If our commitment to "do the right thing" is not superficial, why does the opposite draw us in so easily on a moment's notice?

There is a powerful metaphor in Psalm 126 that can help us understand -- and more importantly, do -- something about this state of being. It begins, "When G-d will return the exiles of Zion we will [see our experiences in

exile] as having been dreamers". The nature of sleep and its unique attendant experience -- dreaming -- holds the key to understanding galut, exile.

The Talmud says that "Sleep is one sixtieth of death." Death is the complete withdrawal of the soul from the body, permanently disconnecting them. In sleep, the soul remains within the body, giving it life -- but at a distance. The primary life force of the soul that vitalizes the mind and the higher faculties withdraws, leaving behind only a trace of vitality -- just enough to keep the body and basic brain functions going.

In the absence of higher rational thought, various memories fill the mind at random, and from the confluence of these memories, we create most of our dreams. Since the rational powers are not there to "police" what we see, we conflate different and contradictory ideas to create visions of the impossible.

In a dream, we can be simultaneously old and young, in two different places at the same time, or in the presence of two people one of whom died before the other was born. When we dream, irrelevant facts can loom large, because we lack the needle of reason to deflate them. All contradictions "fit" in a dream. It is only when we wake up that we realize that what we saw could never be or have been.

This is the essence of the galut experience. The withdrawal of G-d's revealed presence from our world leads to the capacity for self-delusion and self-contradiction. Because the Soul of the Universe (the vivifying force of G-d) is not engaged with its "body" (our world) in a revealed manner, we are able to do things that contradict and deny G-d's will and presence. Just as in a dream contradiction is rampant, so, too, in galut we can reject G-d without perceiving how this contradicts the most fundamental fact of our being -- the reality that our very existence is an expression of G-d's power and will.

This is why we accept the inconsistencies in our life and behavior. The deepest part of us remains attuned to the truth of who we are and what we truly desire; but our deep-seated convictions co-exist with an alienated and confused self that is ignorant or in de-

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 22





# FACULTY

## SPOTLIGHT

Professor Dennis Foreman

## ACCIDENTAL TEACHER GIVES STUDENTS A PURPOSE

By Alan Zeitlin



If you're a spy posing as a student at Binghamton University, it would be a good idea to avoid any of Professor Dennis Foreman's classes. Foreman, who has taught computer science at Binghamton University for 25 years, now teaches a class in Multimedia, where cutting edge graphic options are taught, including methods of steganography, or hiding messages in pictures.

Foreman shows students how text messages can be hidden inside digital images.

"It's fairly complicated mathematically," he said. "But think about a pixel, just one pixel, red, blue or green. It takes eight bits to represent different shades of red, yellow or green. If we take all those eight bits and we knock off just one of them to represent a bit in a message, you would proceed until it was encoded. You wouldn't notice anything except maybe one red dot in the picture was not as red as the other."

Foreman teaches graphics similar to those used in

"Avatar," and "Shrek." He did not take a direct route to teaching, as he first served as a programmer for IBM. He began teaching one course at BU and after he retired from IBM in 1994, he was given a full course load to teach.

"I kind of fell into it by accident but I enjoyed teaching and felt I could be good at it," he said.

A year later, layoffs began at IBM, which eventually closed.

"It was very tough on the community," he said.

Foreman, who got his master's degree from BU in 1984 and his PhD in 2002, said that being a student at the university helped make the transition to teaching there a bit easier. Foreman, who holds two programming patents, said students are sometimes reluctant to ask questions.

"They're a little bashful," he said. "They're afraid for people to think that they're dumb. Probably half the class has the same question. I tell them there's no such thing as a dumb question. Actually there was one... a student asked when the final exam was even though it was right there in the syllabus."

While some say playing with a computer is a waste of time, for Foreman it was a good move in 1960 as an undergrad. He said he knew there would be a bright future in computers and relates a famous story he heard to his students about how the phrase "there's a bug in the program," came to be.

"One morning the computer wasn't working," Foreman said of an event in the 1940's. "They searched around, trying to find out what the problem was. They found a dead moth across one of the circuits. It had been electrocuted. So when they reported what the problem was they said there was a bug in the computer."

The Vestal resident said students try to stump him but haven't yet been successful. And he hasn't succeeded in catching any spies, though he has caught students watching movies in class.

"I ask them to turn it off," he said. "But most of the students focus and know why they're there." 📺

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



## INSPIRATIONAL VOICES

— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

nial of them. It's not that we deny or abandon our source and innermost self. We do something that is, in a certain sense, even more destructive: we simultaneously know and ignore, commit and shrug off, believe and deny.

What do we do when a bad dream becomes too horrible to bear? We make ourselves wake up, and all the impossible predicaments and disturbing contradictions of the night disappear as if they never were.


This will be the collective experience of humanity when galut ends and redemption comes about. However, this collective redemption is the sum of many individual redemptions. For the cosmos to awaken we each need to wake ourselves up.

We awake when the pain and contradiction of our dreams becomes too intense to bear. If we accept and internalize that we are G-dly beings, if we understand our lofty potential, if we understand that G-d is everywhere available by a simple choice to connect to G-d by doing another Mitzvah—we can wake up.

Every time we insist that each moment of our life can, and should, reflect our essential potential rather than the force of habit and social convention—we are waking ourselves up.

By these acts of awakening we shatter the one-way mirror and enter a world in which we see G-d as clearly as G-d sees us.

This is the world awoken from the nightmare of human suffering, emptiness, and petty hatreds. This is the world envisaged by all our prophets: a world free of hunger, disease, and jealousy, a world in which all humankind will focus together on the ever-exhilarating experience of knowing G-d and living accordingly.

This wonderful world is not a utopian dream. Our world is the nightmare. All we have to do is wake up. 

**Rabbi Shlomo Yaffe is the permanent Scholar-in-Residence to Chabad at Harvard, and Dean of the Institute of American and Talmudic Law in NY, NY. Rabbi Yaffe has lectured and led seminars throughout North America, as well as in Europe and South Africa.**

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6


schools and speaking with students and parents about being autistic and going to college. She said she was inspired after meeting Temple Grandin, a noted autism advocacy speaker, whose life with autism was highlighted in an HBO film starring Claire Danes.

Mason who is a fan of the “Back To The Future,” films, said she will likely attend graduate school. But there was one moment, she feared she might have a blemish on her record.

“I don’t drink alcohol, but one of the characteristics of my seizures is that afterwards, I look like I’m drunk and my speech

is slurred,” she said. “So I was hanging out with a friend one night and the next day I went back to let the RA (Resident Advisor) know that I wasn’t drunk. I didn’t want my friend to get in trouble.”

Her father, Jim, said he is proud of the way his daughter has dealt with adversity, while her mother echoed that sentiment.

“We never felt, ‘Why did this happen to us, why did this happen to her?’ she said. “We just felt... This is Rebecca. She is a complicated young woman and we could not be more proud of what she has accomplished and what she will accomplish.” 

# White Rose

## Day Spa & Hair Design



CREATED BY STYLISTS  
WELLA PROFESSIONALS

**See what's new for  
Fall & Winter**

**644-9123**

We are located 5 minutes  
away from campus.

**WhiteRoseDaySpa.com**

## Connect to our readers through

**Hakesher**   
the connection



### Advertise in or sponsor

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, friends and supporters of Chabad of Binghamton and the Binghamton Jewish community comprise the community of Hakesher readers. Get

the word about your business to this highly primed audience.

We also offer Hakesher sponsorship opportunities from individuals and/or businesses.

For details and rates please visit  
**JewishBU.com/Hakesher**



# Outside the Shtetel

By Bennett Schwarz '07

A year and a half ago my wife and I moved to Erie Pennsylvania. “Erie, how’d you end up there?” is a constant refrain. Most of my acquaintances, being native New Yorkers, would never want to move to another city, never mind one they have literally never heard of. Most of them are legitimately surprised when I tell them how many people live here. So I smile at their looks of chagrin and indulge them with a bit of deprecating humor about the town, I tell a story about the 300 ice fisherman floating out on lake Erie on a sheet of ice or provide some pretty metaphors to describe the remote desolation that the city has become.

While this draws a chuckle and allows for a clean segue to a new topic, it doesn’t really do Erie justice. For those of you who don’t know the place, imagine any steel town you have ever heard of where all of the jobs are long gone. Now add to that empty shell of a place 100,000 medical professionals with another 100,000 people living there to cater to their needs; car dealerships, Walmarts, Wegmans’ and everything in between.

An average American would say not only is Erie a city, but a fairly large one. So why does it seem so remote? There are plenty of people, restaurants, movie theaters, clubs

and mansions. So why hasn’t anyone heard of it? More importantly, how is it that despite all of these people and things my wife and I feel so very isolated?

The answer is: the Jewish lifestyle. We are a communal people. I know, it seems a contradiction in terms, literally thousands of doctors in one city and not a handful of Jews to be found. There is no minyan, no kosher food, and

most importantly, there are no people like us. In New York City, when you tell someone you are Jewish, they have some inkling as to what that means. They may not know all the rules but they understand you can’t eat in their house or go to a movie on Friday night. People in Erie don’t understand Shabbos and take insult when their third meal invitation is refused. We live in a city of 200,000, but in some ways we are all alone.

Our friends wonder at such an existence. “How do you get kosher food?”, “where do you daven?”, “what do you do for the holidays?” The answer to all of these questions is, you do what you have to.

You drive a hundred miles for kosher food and learn to stock your freezer well, you travel as much as you can for the holidays and on shabbos, your living room is your shul. Most importantly, you learn to take comfort in each other and do your best to bring Judaism to a place where the few who share your birthright have no knowledge of what it means.

It shouldn’t seem that there are only negatives. This lifestyle, like any other, has its consolations. Shabbos here is like none I have found elsewhere, a true celebration of indolence. Just two people, some good food, wine, and a comfortable quiet in which to read for as long as one cares to stay awake. Best of all is davening; one can spend a summer attending Carlebach minyanim in the Catskills and never experience the satisfaction of listening to their wife singing lecha dodi on a Friday night.

Together we have learned that while community is important, being Jewish is all about what you make of it. It is in each of us; you take it with you wherever you go. It may be easier in some places than others but if you stay true to your beliefs, it will always carry its rewards. Go far enough, and you may just discover something new to love. 🦋

Bennett Schwarz '07 is a technology consultant. His wife, Rachelle Noorparvar '06 is a second year Medical student at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine.



420 Murray Hill Road  
Vestal, NY 13850

*Change service requested*

NON-PROFIT ORG.

US POSTAGE

**PAID**

BROOKLYN, NY

PERMIT # 1235

# Mayanot Birthright

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

420 Murray Hill Rd. Vestal, NY 13850

**Chabad Downtown**

27 Bennet Ave. Binghamton, NY 13905

**607. 797.0015**

[info@chabadofbinghamton.com](mailto:info@chabadofbinghamton.com)

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



**Bus #96/ Summer 2010**

Apply today for the  
trip of your life time at:  
[mayanotisrael.com](http://mayanotisrael.com)