

CHABAD  
OF BINGHAMTON

ת"ש 5771

# הקשר

# Hakasher

the connection



MAY 2011 | IYAR 5771

# Graduation

## 2011

Seniors Speak  
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DEAR FRIEND,

**T**oday's 24/7 news cycle fueled in large measure and made even more manic by social media, gives new meaning to the old saw "today's headline is tomorrow's history." Even as CNN pontificates about tomorrow's headlines it is entirely possible that by the time the newspaper comes off the press its content will be old news.



Global events of enormous proportion are regularly eclipsed by the next such event causing us to lose perspective on words such as "big" or "important." Before we can even absorb what we have learned and ponder its ramifications, our attention is grabbed by something newer yet. The succession of popular revolts in the Middle East took center until the earthquake / tsunami and ensuing nuclear disaster hit in Japan, this was followed quickly by the audacious murder of the Fogel family. The demise of Osama Bin Laden has us exhilarated as I write, but chances are that by the time you read this something else will already be lighting up the blogosphere. The sheer pace of the news robs us also of the ability to connect the dots and ponder the ways in which events are intertwined.

There is however, a category of unreported news; the really big stuff that we pray never makes the headlines. That is, of course, the everyday aspects of our personal lives. No matter what else is going on, nothing takes up as much of our head space as our daily grind: The pain in a limb or tooth. The theft of credit cards. The promotion at work. The conversation with an old friend. These events are intensely personal, relevant and time sensitive. It's the stuff of our lives. It's big.

In this period between Pesach and Shavuot we are commanded to count each day. The Mitzvah of *Sefirat Haomer*—a reenactment of the count the Jews undertook upon leaving Egypt in preparation for the revelation at Sinai—underscores not only the importance of each day but the way in which each day affects the other. The mitzvah is completed only if 49 days are counted in uninterrupted sequence. It is the cumulative effect of each day linked with the one before it and the one after that brings us to our goal. It is these days that tie the Exodus to the Revelation; days of reflection and self growth that culminate in greatness. *Sefirat Haomer* forces us to focus on the unparalleled opportunity each day affords us; not only to count but to be accountable. To relate to time as integrated rather than incremental.

"Teach us to number our days," wrote the Psalmist. Our every day and every action truly is the "big news." Are we using these days in the most meaningful and positive fashion? Are we doing all we possibly can? Are our days cohesive? Is our story line one we return to with renewed energy and focus each day?

I wish you all a meaningful Shavuot holiday and a wonderful summer. To our graduates I say, *L'hitraot*, never good-bye. We will miss you sorely but watch you leave with pride anticipating the important ways in which you will enrich our world. *Mazel Tov* upon this milestone; may you see the fulfillment of your every dream and prayer and may we always share joyous occasions.

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

*Rabbi Aaron Slonim*

Rabbi Aaron Slonim

In loving memory of **Dovid ben Yitzchok Meir Zenilman**  
by his children **Dr. Michael and Marilyn Zenilman** and their children  
Jeremy '06, Elliot '09, Daniel '09 and Ariella '11



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the connection

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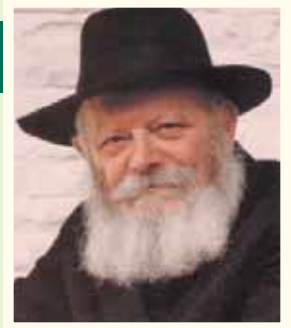
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# What do you have?

By Yanki Tauber



## What do you have? And what makes it yours?

Look around you and make a mental list of the things that are “yours”: your husband or wife; your children; your home; your job; your knowledge; your car; your socks; your friends; your reputation; your magazine subscriptions —

These things differ greatly from each other. They differ also in the meaning of the word “your” as applied to them. But they are all, in some sense, yours. How did you come to possess them?

Certain things you **earned**. You paid for them with cash, toil and derring-do. Perhaps these are the things from which you derive your deepest sense of accomplishment. You are invested in them. You have achieved them.

Certain things were **given** to you. A brand new car that is a gift from your parents. A wise man you met somewhere taught you something you would never have figured out on your own. Someone loves you, generously, more than you deserve to be loved. Perhaps these are the things that you desire most of all. After all, you could never have achieved them on your own. They are beyond you; they belong to a reality greater than yourself. Being gifted these things means that you

have transcended your limitations.

Finally, certain things are yours because they are **inherently**, intrinsically, yours. They are your birthright, your inheritance. You did nothing to earn them and no one gave them to you: you possess them by virtue of who and what you are. Your soul. Your mind. Your inborn talents. Your homeland. Your traditions.

Perhaps these things do not afford you the depth of fulfillment you get from the things you earn. Perhaps you do not experience the intensity of desire and striving for them evoked by the “gifts” of life. But these are more yours than anything else you possess.

Your earning power will fluctuate as you traverse the rises and dips of life, as

you grow or diminish in strength, mental proficiency and spiritual sensitivity. The gifts you receive will always depend on forces beyond your control. But the things that are inherently yours will be yours in all circumstances and under all conditions. Even if you reject them and disavow them, they will remain ever, irrevocably yours.


On the sixth day of the Hebrew month of Sivan in the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE), the newborn nation of Israel assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai to receive the Torah from G-d. Ever since, the event is referred to in the language of our sages as the “Giving of the Torah.” Indeed, the Torah calls itself our “gift from the desert” (Numbers 21:18).

The Torah, however, also describes itself as Israel’s “acquisition” (Proverbs 4:2), as well as “the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob” (Deuteronomy 33:4).

So which is it—gift, acquisition or inheritance?

The Torah is an acquisition for which we must struggle and toil, which becomes ours through diligent study and meticulous observance. As such, we experience the deep sense of fulfillment that only a fully-earned achievement can bring.

The Torah is a divine gift, for its wisdom is above and beyond anything our finite selves could attain. As such, it awakens our most transcendent strivings, elevating us above our temporality and mortality, making of us infinitely more than we are on our own.

And the Torah is our inheritance, our birthright. As such it is always ours. Even when we do not earn it. Even when we close ourselves to the gift of it being bestowed upon us from above. For it is of a piece with our essence. 



## FROM MURRAY HILL ROAD TO THE HILLS OF JERUSALEM

Alan Zeitlin '00

*Over the years a substantial number of Binghamton Chabad alumni have made Aliya. Below we profile just a few and hope to feature others on a forthcoming occasion.*

There are some places that taxi drivers won't take you because they think it's too dangerous. And that's exactly where **Roni Loeb ('91)** wanted to live. The taxi took her and her family from Ben-Gurion Airport to the green line and a bus transported her from there to her new home in Gush Etzion.

Loeb is one of a number of Binghamton grads who have enjoyed time at Chabad, cultivated a love of Israel and decided to make aliyah. To be sure, moving to Israel has its share of challenges, including concerns not only about safety, but about financial security and leaving relatives behind in the U.S.

"It's very hard because it's very cushy to stay in America," Loeb said in a phone interview from Israel. "But we figured we would never pay off our loans anyway. We sold our house and we took the leap."

Loeb said she didn't have to cook a meal for six months as the community welcomed her. She said she felt an immediate connection to the land and felt safe.

"Day to day, you don't feel it," she said of the danger. "The truth is you have a greater chance of being in a car accident. Its' not how you think it is as shown on TV in America. And you have to remember that G-d has a plan."

Loeb, a social worker, who helps run a mental health clinic working with victims of terror, said the spiritual

power outweighs other concerns that many have.

**Menucha Rothenberg ('94)** met her husband in Israel. She was reluctant to make aliyah because of her family in the U.S., but peer pressure kicked in.

"Many of our closest friends had made aliyah over the years, and whenever the next family got on that plane, we thought about it all over again," she wrote in an e-mail. "When the people we most relate to spiritually were all moving to Israel, we thought 'Is G-d telling us something here?'"

Rothenberg said when she went to Binghamton, she had no intention of setting foot in Chabad.

"I assumed a chassidic Rebbetzin was quiet, obedient, subservient and chained in the kitchen, barefoot and pregnant of course," she wrote. Instead, she found a Rebbetzin she could relate to and a Rabbi that was warm and encouraging.

**Amit Golan ('04)** said he considers the Slonims part of his family and is happy that his own family had its roots in

Chabad of Binghamton. Golan met a cool girl at Chabad who was visiting and she wanted to set him up with a girl she knew at Stern College. That date never took place, but he married the girl he met at Chabad and the two live with their four children in Ramat Beit Shemesh. It was a case where the *shadchan* became the *bashert*.

Golan, who works for the First International Bank of Israel, said that while financial uncertainty definitely scares people off, the power of the land is one that can't be measured by numbers.



Clockwise from top right: Menucha Rothenberg and family, Barak Raz, Amit Golan and family, Roni Loeb and family



“Living here, you feel like you’re a part of something so great and there’s just a tremendous sense of purpose,” he said in a phone interview. “Of course when you make a big decision there’s uncertainty. There’s risk but here, there’s great reward.”

Many who make aliyah say that Israel is often portrayed as a war zone in America and Europe and one person who is trying to make sure Israel is viewed in a positive light is **Barak Raz ('05)**. Raz, who made aliyah the year after graduating, is the spokesperson for the Israel Defense Forces to the North American press. He’s appeared on Fox News, NBC and WPIX to name a few channels.

Raz, who said he was inspired to move to Israel after a Birthright Israel trip with Rabbi Slonim, feels his mission is a crucial one.

“Us spokespeople, while not on the battlefield, are engaging in battles in living rooms, on campuses, and at workplaces around the world,” he wrote in an e-mail. “Helping provide the IDF with the ability to carry out its necessary operations—both during routine security operations and in times of war—is a difficult task. It requires me to be available 24/7 in a very high-paced and intense environment, but serving the State of Israel and the Jewish people is the ultimate reward. The *shlichut* (sense of mission) I feel in my specific role, gives me the strength and motivation to go out there and do what I do each and every single day.”

Golan said people who are worried they won’t be able to get the same food shouldn’t worry.

“I have everything here that I had in America,” he said while going through his cupboard. “Except maybe great bagels. Those are a little hard to get.”

Loeb said she is not surprised that a number of Chabad alumni have made aliyah. She said she remembers leading services at the nearby conservative synagogue and then going to Chabad for lunch. She said the Slonims were always welcoming and non judgmental.

Loeb, who is originally from Salt Lake City, Utah, said the seeds were sown at Chabad to study and it eventually came to the importance of the land of Israel some years later. Now, with four daughters, she says she couldn’t be happier.

“Along with marrying my husband, it was the best decision that I ever made in my life,” she said. “If there are people that are weighing their options and they have a desire to make aliyah, I would say they should just do it.” 🇮🇱

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

- ‘94 **Liba and Yaakov Kadar** announce the birth of their daughter, Yocheved, March 25, 2011, Adar 20 5771. She was welcomed home by her siblings Tamar Rus, Binyomin Yehuda, Yitzchok Matisyahu, Hadasa Bracha, Moshe David, and Yehoshua.
- ‘99 **Yaakov and Jennifer Babich** announce the birth of their daughter, Maya Samantha, Maya Sara, on March 21, 2011. She was welcomed home by big brother Eitan.
- ‘00 **Darren and Jessica Peller** announce the birth of Jack Chase, Chaim Yosef on April 24, 2011. He was welcomed home by big brother Brandon.
- ‘01 **Jennifer and Yaakov Babich** announce the birth of their daughter, Maya Samantha; see 1999 for complete details.
- ‘02 **Robyn Weiss** announces her engagement to Eli Reis; a November 2011 wedding is planned. Robyn sells advertisements for the New York Observer; Eli is a commercial real estate broker. They will make their home in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.
- ‘03 **Eli Reis** announces his engagement to Robyn Weiss; see 2002 for complete details.
- ‘07 **Aliza Grabel Wohl** announces her engagement to Avi Hirsh Sadiqy; a Fall 2011 wedding is planned. Aliza is completing her Masters degree in Occupational therapy at Thomas Jefferson University; Avi is a physical therapist who works for Novacare Rehabilitation in Yardley, Pennsylvania. They will make their home in Philadelphia.  
**Michal and Jamie Cepler** announce the birth of their daughter Elisheva Chana, on Sunday April 10.
- ‘10 **Josh Jasper and Jessi Klein ('11)** announce their July 10, 2011 marriage. They will make their home in Boston where they will both be attending graduate school.

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# Truth

cannot be marketed.

## It can only be lived.

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

**O**ur festivals all evoke excitement and splendor. Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Passover and Sukkot all come wrapped in festive symbols that fire our imaginations. The *Shofar*, the sacred fast, the little huts we build and the *lulav* and *etrog* we buy, matzah and the whole Seder experience – they all constitute so much of the imagery we have inside our childhood memories. Neither are Chanukah and Purim short on symbols – menorahs and *graggers* are only two of many. It is these vivid symbols that stimulate our eager anticipation of beautiful and meaningful holiday celebrations today.

But what about Shavuot? Does it not seem somewhat orphaned and bereft of imagery? Where is there a strong symbol for Shavuot? What prominent image do we hold aloft to represent the season of the Giving of the Torah? Yes, there are the Ten Commandments, but they are studied and observed all year long too. Why do all the other festivals seem to have specific signs, vivid emblems or icons to capture our attention and Shavuot does not?

The 19th century German rabbi and thinker Samson Raphael Hirsch suggests that for something as special as Shavuot, the holiday which represents the Giving of the Torah, i.e. the very foundation of Judaism, a mere symbol would be utterly inadequate. What are Jews without Torah? What is Judaism without Torah? To reduce Torah to a symbol is to violate its

sanctity. The only way to represent Torah is to live by it. Torah is measured by substance not by symbols. Can Torah be contained or encapsulated in a logo or symbol?

In the language of the Chassidic masters, the Torah is higher than mere symbolism; it is beyond depiction or embodiment. It is not only wisdom or law. The Giving of the Torah was not merely an event or a historical experience. Torah is the very essence of everything.

So when we need to remember the Exodus and the miraculous protection in the wilderness, we do things to keep that memory alive and to help us relive those experiences. But Torah is not limited to memories. Remembering Sinai, the Ten Commandments, and the thunder and lightning, is not good enough. The only way we can plug into Torah is by living it. There are no shortcuts. We need to study Torah, learn its ways and live by it.

That's why the great Torah teachers through the centuries have not necessarily been outwardly charismatic, at least not in the popular sense. Nor have they needed to be tall, larger than life personalities. Some of our greatest spiritual leaders have been small in size but giants in stature. They were humble, unassuming and pious. It wasn't their

## SHAVUOT: Commemorating 3,323



powerful baritones or handsome features which attracted the people, but their nobility of character that commanded respect. Sure, their deep wisdom was an outstanding quality but, more importantly, it was their flawless behavior that made them stand out. Those who were academically brilliant at Talmud but whose conduct did not match their scholarship did not become the Torah leaders of their generation. The truly great ones who stood out were those who became "Torah personalities." The genuine Torah leaders of history weren't seeking fame or fortune. They hired no publicists to mount PR campaigns.

They were men of truth and, intuitively, the people flocked to them.

And the same holds true to this day. Because Torah is truth and truth must be lived truthfully and consistently, otherwise it's a lie.

So Shavuot has no dominant symbol. Torah is too powerful, too awesome and too sacred to be slickly packaged or labeled with a logo. Torah is truth. And truth cannot be marketed. It can only be lived.

Rabbi Yossy Goldman is the Senior Rabbi of the Sydenham Highlands North Shul since 1986, president of the South African Rabbinical Association and a frequent contributor to Chabad.org.

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# Rules

By Yanki Tauber

**B**efore you switch on your laser printer, read this:

A laser is a device that produces an intense beam of light of a very pure single color. This beam can be made potent enough to vaporize a diamond, and precise enough to deposit a dot of ink 1/600th of an inch across in exact juxtaposition with tens of thousands of similar dots to produce your office memo in 12 pt. Times New Roman (captions in 14 pt Arial Narrow). Even more precise (and more expensive) are devices that yield a beam exact enough to perform eye surgery.

A laser beam is a beam of optic light—basically the same light produced by the flashlight you keep in the glove compartment of your car. The difference is that



while the excited atoms in your flashlight bulb each emit light independently of each other and in many different wavelengths, a laser device stimulates a great number of atoms to emit their light in a single frequency and in step with each other, thereby producing a light beam of great potency and accuracy.

As a rule, people don't like rules. We don't like being told that a food palatable to our taste buds is unhealthy for our body. We don't like being told that something desirous to ourselves is hurtful to another person. We don't like being told that a convenient habit is damaging to our environment. In other words, We don't like being told what to do. We don't like restrictions.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

years from the revelation at Sinai.

## RULES

— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

When the Children of Israel came out of Egypt, they were told that, in seven weeks' time, they would be given the Torah. They were so excited that they literally counted the days. At Mount Sinai, their souls flew from their bodies in ecstasy when they heard G-d proclaim the Ten Commandments.

On the face of it, their joy seems somewhat misplaced. After all, these were a people just emerging from several generations of slavery. The last thing they would want—one assumes—is a set of restrictions on their lives. Basically, that's what the Torah is. Seven of the Ten Commandments are "Thou Shalt Not"s, as are 365 out of the Torah's 613 mitzvot (the rest are "Thou Shall"s).

But the Jews *wanted* the Torah. The Midrash relates how G-d went to all the nations of the world asking them if they want a copy. "What does the Torah contain?" they asked. "Thou shalt not..." said G-d and He was met with a no-thank-you before He could finish the sentence. The Jews, however, understood that this was no ordinary set of rules: this was a life regulator designed by the One who invented life, and knows how it is best applied.

At Sinai, all the peoples of the world were given a choice. Take box A, and you get a life that expends its energies every which way, in whatever color or frequency that strikes your fancy at any given moment. It'll even be able to do many useful things, like projecting animal shapes on the wall of a darkened room or finding those car keys you dropped in the bushes. Take box B, and you get a life that focuses its energies on the purpose to which it was created.

Many took the flashlight. We opted for the laser.

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# ***Noblesse Oblige***

*Jose Ortega y Gasset, a Spanish philosopher and sociologist wrote a book titled **The Revolt of the Masses** in which he says that nobility is best expressed by the French expression **noblesse oblige, nobility obligates.***

***Nobility is not about rights or riches.***

***It's about obligations.***

***The higher someone's noble rank, the more obligations one has.***

***Being Jewish means that we have obligations from the moment we open our eyes to the moment we go to sleep, from the day we are born to the day we are buried.***

***They never leave us, not for one moment.***

***There is no time in which we can say, "Ok, dear G-d, now we'll part ways. We'll meet again sometime."***

***Being a Jew means that G-d intervenes in our pocketbooks in our kitchens, in our bedrooms.***

***It doesn't mean that we're not allowed to do anything.***

***We're allowed to do lots of things.***

***But always with the notion that Somebody is there, and He's keeping track.***

***Rabbi Adin Even-Yisroel Steinsaltz***

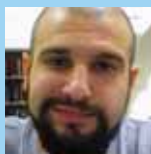


A SPECIAL HAKESHER GRADUATION FEATURE

# SENIORS SPEAK OUT

**After 4 years the graduates know it all!**  
We asked our graduates to share their thoughts, feelings and hard earned wisdom:

## SOME OF OUR GRADUATES:



**Levi DeFilipp**

**MAJOR:** Integrated Neuroscience

**FUTURE PLANS:** Post Baccalaureate Program at The University of Pennsylvania



**Gabriel Etessami**

**MAJOR:** Economics (Financial) and Philosophy



**Lavinia Fefer**

**MAJOR:** Philosophy, Politics, and Law & French

**FUTURE PLANS:** Israel for a year and then Law School



**Heather Fink**

**MAJOR:** Psychology

**FUTURE PLANS:** Research Technician for a study on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder at the Boston VA



**Rachel Graff**

**MAJOR:** Human Development

**FUTURE PLANS:** MS in Exercise Physiology at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill



## #1:

# How my time in Binghamton impacted my Jewish identity and feelings of connection to the Jewish community...

“I have always had a strong connection to Judaism growing up but it wasn’t until I started at Binghamton that I was able to independently explore my own identity. Chabad’s services, Friday night dinners, programs, and study sessions have enabled me to make Judaism an even more important part of my life. I am confident that the experiences and relationships I have built here will prepare me for the next step.” — *Arielle S.*

“Coming from a strong yeshiva background I was very shocked my first day in Binghamton. Not having a dress code seemed like the greatest thing ever. Then I went to Chabad my first Friday night and saw that this school really had it all. I never enjoy Shabbat dinner as much as when I am in Binghamton and it’s because of the amazing atmosphere that is created by everyone there. Having started off freshman year without the new Chabad center building I can say that I am truly amazed by the power of Chabad and the strong influence it has on everyone. I see the strong signs for positive growth and can’t wait to come to the ribbon ceremony for the next, bigger Chabad house. I

highly doubt I would have been able to maintain my strong ties to Judaism without Chabad.” — *Joshua K.*

“I never wanted to be on E-Board, and I certainly NEVER wanted to run or create an event. But now, four years later, the thing I will miss most when I leave is the ability to work for the betterment of the Jewish community. This lesson, probably the most important one I have learned in a long time, is thanks entirely to the Chabad of Binghamton. Watching their tireless devotion has taught me that we cannot just be happy we have an amazing community; we have to fight every day to make it a better and stronger community than the day before.” — *Saryah S.*

“As a freshman coming into Binghamton University, I had forgotten to check to see if there was any way for me to continue my practices and beliefs that I was brought up with in terms of Judaism. This had struck me the minute I had arrived to Binghamton. I was upset with myself since I had been brought up as an Orthodox Jew. The entire first week of school had gone by, and I felt as though a huge part of my life was missing, but could not find what it had been. After finding

out from senior students about Chabad—a place which welcomed all students with outstretched arms—I found myself in the synagogue davening after a full week of stress. At that instant, I felt as though I had just entered my own home once again. This feeling always exists, even after four years have gone by. Every Friday night, the second I walk through the doors, I can smell my own home and feel as though I am about to walk into my family. In fact, I do walk into them, the difference is that the Slonim family is my family in college. I will forever be thankful for what Chabad has done for me and my future. Shabbat will never be the same after I leave Binghamton.” — *Rodney N.*

“I was raised in a home where important values like Jewish identity, education and *tikkun olam* were essential. When I came to Binghamton, I was determined to find an environment where I could continue to foster these three values. Luckily, I didn’t have to look far. When I walked into Chabad for the first time three and a half years ago, I never could have guessed the impact it would have on me. Between the events, classes and volunteer opportunities, Chabad has helped foster and mold the person I am today.” — *Laurie H.*

“Growing up in a public school in Brooklyn, I always had Jewish friends but like me they were ultra reform and uninterested in their Jewish identities. I lived my life not caring if I ate

a cheeseburger or if I went to synagogue on Yom Kippur. It was an easy life, sure, but it was not fulfilling. I knew something was missing and I found that something when I came to college. For a lot of people, college is a time of freedom when they can leave their parents and forget about their traditions. For me, it was an awakening of sorts. Being around so many Jewish students really helped me to understand the importance of my religion and of being a part of a Jewish community. Everyone at Chabad is so warm and welcoming and they really made me feel at home. I am proud to say that not only did I receive an amazing education from Binghamton but I also found my religious identity and embraced it and that is something that will stick with me for the rest of my life.” — *Rachel K.*

“Growing up in a Jewish community my whole life made me overlook how lucky I was to do so; how easy it was to keep kosher and live in a typical Jewish environment. Only once I got to Binghamton did I realize how hard it is to keep your Jewish identity, as well as how small the Jewish population really is. Chabad taught me a few things about myself and the meaning of Judaism. No matter where we come from we are all Jews. We all have the same purpose in life which is to fulfill our obligations to the best of our abilities and in order to do so we need each other. Thus, building a Jewish community and maintaining its being is crucial. Chabad made me acknowledge that by reach-



**Laurie Hutt**

**MAJOR:** Biological Anthropology  
**FUTURE PLANS:** Graduate school for Doctorate in Physical Therapy



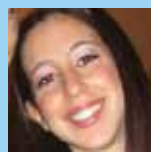
**Raviv Jackier**

**MAJOR:** Mechanical Engineering  
**FUTURE PLANS:** MBA program at Binghamton University



**Rachel Katz**

**MAJOR:** Judaic Studies  
**FUTURE PLANS:** Hofstra Law School



**Nicole Kazav**

**MAJOR:** Sociology  
**FUTURE PLANS:** Masters in Childhood/Special Education



**Joshua Khakshoor**

**MAJOR:** Finance and Management Info System  
**FUTURE PLANS:** Working at KPMG



## #1 continued...

ing out to others, doing acts of kindness, giving in any way, or overall being an active member of a Jewish community is the only way us Jews can keep our community alive and strong. Being a member of Chabad truly made me change my perspective in how I want to live my life and raise my own family someday.”

— Nicole K.

“Although I came from a strong Jewish community at home, I was unsure how my general college experience would affect that life. Rather than having to reconcile the two, it was at my first few Shabbat dinners and lunches where I met my closest friends. Chabad’s hospitality and large number of weekly activities allowed me to build my college identity and personal life around my Jewish core, not the other way around.”

— Maxwell V.

“When I came to Binghamton, I knew how to be Jewish and felt good about it. After my four years here and my experiences at Chabad, I know how to help others be Jewish and help them feel good about it as well.”

— Evan L.

“As a Jewish girl from Long Island I didn’t think coming to Binghamton would be any different. The school is known for its growing Jewish community and practically everyone you meet here is from Long Island

or Westchester. I figured I went to yeshiva my whole life—I knew all the rules, what more could I possibly learn from this reputable “Chabad house”? I guess you could say that I had to be a little different and a little difficult. I didn’t want to go to Chabad because I was a Jewish girl who went to yeshiva her whole life and I didn’t want to go to Chabad because I felt guilty NOT going. Going to Chabad, for me, was supposed to mean more than going because it’s Friday night and Shabbat. I began to go to Chabad with these thoughts in my head, as if I was searching deep down for a reason to continue going. It didn’t take long to realize that what Chabad really means is pretty much surface-deep. As a place that serves as a break from college-life and that has the unique ability to bring someone who davens every day and someone who never even learned how to read a word of Hebrew together, Chabad helped me realize that there isn’t one right way to be “a good Jew,” and even made me proud of the Jewish background I have. Even after years of growing up in an Orthodox home and an Orthodox community, I learned the true meaning of being a part of the Jewish community from my four years here at Binghamton. When it came to getting through all the painful times and tragedies and the sharing of some happy news, there was a community

here I knew I could rely on. I felt like I was a part of something truly special every time I walked through the front doors of Chabad.” — Ariela Z.

“I came to Binghamton primarily to attend an educational institution, and am graduating with two degrees, but I have learned as much, if not more, within the walls of Chabad as I have in any of my classes. Through the endless Jewish opportunities Chabad provides, I have transformed for the better as a Jew and as a person. Chabad has not only impacted and strengthened but completely redefined my Jewish identity in the best way possible.” — Lavinia F.

“I’ve been told that many kids who go away to college lose a lot of their Judaism. It must be the case that Binghamton is an anomaly in this respect, because I don’t believe I speak only for myself when I say - not only did I stay in touch with my religion, I grew and excelled while I was here. It goes without saying that this is due to Chabad. Chabad’s weekly events alongside their warmth and understanding are not only the reason I keep Shabbat today (something I did not do before coming to Binghamton), they are the reason I am at all connected to Judaism in any respect whatsoever.” — Gabriel E.

“Our actions define us and create the mold for the charac-

ter we one day grow into. The goal is to act virtuously, to live life through kindness. Secular college is an increasingly tempting place, one teeming with distractions and decadence. How do we stay noble? What gives us the strength of resistance? Life presents multiple paths, and Chabad of Binghamton represents the path of true good. Chabad is selflessness and graciousness.” — Alex T.

“I’ll never forget the very first time someone asked me, “Are you coming to Hayes?” It was my first Shabbat in Binghamton, my first time at Chabad, and the only person I knew was my roommate. I remember we sat at the very end of our dinner table, closest to the door so that we could make our escape should the opportunity arise. I had never felt so overwhelmed and impressed at the same time- it was incredible to see 400 students of all types and ages crammed into one giant hall hugging and kissing each other ready to celebrate Shabbat. It was only a matter of minutes until people slowly started to say hello to me too, although they had never seen me before. And before I knew it, they were asking me to come into their homes in Hayes, where “the party is.” I had never felt more comfortable with people I barely knew. The only way to describe it is family, and Chabad was our home.” — Esther L.



**Jessi Klein**

**MAJOR:** English, Russian Minor  
**FUTURE PLANS:** Graduate School for English Education in Boston



**Sara Levy**

**MAJOR:** Biology  
**FUTURE PLANS:** Physician Assistant School



**Esther Liberman**

**MAJOR:** Economics, Minor: Judaic Studies



**Evan Lieberman**

**MAJOR:** Math  
**FUTURE PLANS:** Medical School



**Rodney Nassimian**

**MAJOR:** Mechanical Engineering  
**FUTURE PLANS:** Graduate School



**Robert Nussbaum**

**MAJOR:** Philosophy  
Politics and Law  
**FUTURE PLANS:** St. John’s University School of Law



## #2: My favorite / most meaningful / most important Jewish experience at Binghamton university was...

🗨️ “Simchat Torah.” — *Arielle S.*

🗨️ “Maasim Tovim visits.” — *Deborah S.*

🗨️ “Watching how hard everyone worked on every single event Chabad ran to make sure that the Jewish community only got the best.” — *Saryah S.*

🗨️ “Going with Chabad’s Ma’asim Tovim Mitzvah Corps to visit the Jewish residents in the local nursing homes. Every visit was special and it was the perfect way for me to conclude my week and prepare for Shabbat.” — *Laurie H.*

🗨️ “Shabbat Dinners.” — *Nicole K.*

🗨️ “Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot with Chabad. It was the first time that I felt a true connection with my peers and the congregation during these pivotal services.” — *Maxwell V.*

🗨️ “My most meaningful experience at Chabad spans over the course of four years and follows the cultivation of **friendships and relationships**, attendance at dinners, classes, events, and speakers. Chabad has been a big part of my college experience, and the friends I’ve made there have made my years at Binghamton great. And it all started here...” — *Jessi K.*

🗨️ “Singing Kabbalat Shabbat at Chabad.” — *Rodney N.*

🗨️ “Friday Night Dinners at Chabad. All the events were great and unforgettable, but what can be better than having Shabbat Dinner with all of your friends every week? I will miss these for a long time when I leave Binghamton.” — *Lavinia F.*

🗨️ “Baking rugelach and hamantaschen for Purim.” — *Rachel S.*

🗨️ “Going to Israel on birthright and spending time connecting with my Jewish heritage.” — *Sara L.* 🇮🇱

## #3: Advice to remaining students...

🗨️ “Make the most of every minute. There is no reason not to get out of your dorm and do something new. Also eat the rice crispy treats at Shabbos dinner.” — *Arielle S.*

🗨️ “If you want something done go out and do it. There are plenty of ways to make our community stronger and it’s too late for us seniors; we tried our best but now it’s up to you. So don’t be afraid, if you have an idea you think people will like, talk to the Rabbis and Rebbitzens and get it done.” — *Saryah S.*

🗨️ “Even though it is intimidating, getting involved in Chabad

gives you a chance to meet more people and makes you feel connected with Jewish life on campus. Go to events, take leadership positions, and help out in the kitchen. Not only will you be giving back to an organization that does so much for you, but you will make amazing friendships with fantastic people, and you’ll be a part of something bigger than yourself.” — *Eve R.Y.*

🗨️ “I would suggest to all freshman and sophomores to be aware of the ones they surround themselves with. One will always find him/herself doing all the right things when the ones around them are doing the same.

Chabad has been the reason I am able to keep my faith in Judaism as I have always been taught at home. Everyone should find a way to go to Chabad once a week, whether it be for Shabbat or one of the many programs that are run there day in and day out. This will keep everyone in check without any force.” — *Rodney N.*

🗨️ “Take advantage of everything that is offered and appreciate it while you can because you will most likely never have an opportunity like this again. Don’t be afraid to step out of your comfort zone and try something new! Before you can blink an eye, your four years will be up and you will

be grateful for the experiences you had, the friendships you fostered, and the knowledge you gained.” — *Laurie H.*

🗨️ “Don’t miss out on Chabad. By going to events, dinners, and services, you will find some of your best friends at Binghamton. You will never question whether you will have somewhere to eat, stay, or study. Most of all, you will honestly be able to call Chabad your “home away from home.” — *Maxwell V.*

🗨️ “Chabad provides a way to live a Jewish life while away at

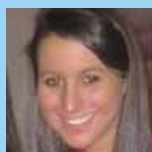


**Katie Rein**

MAJOR: French/Arabic

FUTURE PLANS:

Move to Israel for a year to teach English



**Samantha Richmond**

MAJOR: Philosophy, Politics and Law



**Eve Rickles Young**

MAJOR: Art History

FUTURE PLANS:

Gallery Internship followed by Grad School

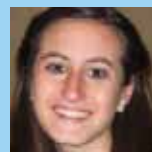


**Debora Sason**

MAJOR: Anthropology and Judaic Studies

FUTURE PLANS:

An educational Fellowship in North Carolina



**Arielle Schweitzer**

MAJOR: Nursing



**Saryah Sober**

MAJOR: Political Science

FUTURE PLANS:

Cardozo School of Law



## A SPECIAL HAKESHER GRADUATION FEATURE

### #3 continued...

college. Take advantage of the time you have here by participating. Dinner Friday nights is a can't miss event, and the other occasions and barbecues are always a great time. Chabad plays an important role in helping the Jewish community at Binghamton, and shouldn't be taken for granted." — *Raviv J.*

🗨️ "Take advantage of all of the classes, events, programs, trips, etc. that Chabad provides or can lead you to! There won't be another time in your life where you will have this many opportunities for Jewish growth and learning, so make sure to jump at these experiences while you can." — *Lavinia F.*

🗨️ "Be proud of being Jewish. No one can take your Judaism away from you, especially if you hold on to it. Wear a kippah to class, or whatever else you do to show your Jewish pride. We are all fortunate to be Jewish, so don't be embarrassed about it. If you remember this your Jewish identity will be strengthened throughout college, coming out stronger at the end than at the beginning." — *Evan L.*

🗨️ "Try something new and do your own thing. College is about figuring out who you are and who you want to be. When it comes to being a Jew, the Chabad house is there to help you figure out what works for you, and will be there when you

realize what you think you might want isn't truly making you happy. There are events for everyone and every personality. You don't have to learn if you don't want to, and you may just enjoy the "hanging out" aspect of Friday night dinner, but the best advice I can give you is to use your time at the Chabad house to help you find out who you truly are." — *Ariela Z.*

🗨️ "Branch out from the beaten path. The classes offered through Chabad and Jlearn are really small and personal, interesting, and a nice break from lectures. My days felt more meaningful when I had even just an hour or two of learning fit in. Also, try something new. Sit at a different table, go to a new event, or try out the scene Downtown. Even though Chabad is big, it can be cozy and personal as well." — *Jessi K.*

🗨️ "Take advantage of every opportunity that is presented to you! Join clubs, get involved, and make an impact on your community. These will be some of the best years of your life, so make them the best they can be." — *Esther L.*

🗨️ "My advice to Jewish underclassman would be to definitely take advantage of all of the things Chabad has to offer throughout the semester. There are so many wonderful events that are more than welcoming. Whether Reform, Conservative, or Orthodox, I can guarantee that you will not only feel wel-



come but that you will have an amazing time! From regular Shabbat meals to amazing events such as the Chabad Mock Wedding, Chanukah Bash, and the Purim Carnival, there is always an opportunity to enhance your knowledge about Judaism, meet other Jews you may not have met otherwise, and to make amazing memories that will last a lifetime! So the next time you hear about one of Chabad's events, check it out! I promise you will only thank yourself later...I know I did." — *Robert N.*

🗨️ "Make sure you take advantage of all of the Jewish opportunities Binghamton has to offer. It feels good to know that there are so many other people here who share the same beliefs as you. If you have not gone on birthright you should definitely go! It is an amazing experience that you will remember forever." — *Sara L.*

🗨️ "My advice to underclassmen regarding Jewish life is to take full advantage of it. Chabad has so many opportunities for you to take part in that really allows you to be a part of a close-knit Jewish community. Don't be afraid to go to Rivky or any-

one and ask for help. You'll come to realize that the Slonims are a part of your family too and connect you with the Jewish life that you may or may not have at home. Also, don't be afraid to help out at Chabad as well. You'll come to realize that the food does not just magically appear out of the kitchen every Friday night and Saturday morning. Give back to the community that gives so much to you." — *Rachel S.*

🗨️ "The most important thing you learn and discover in college will not be taught to you in class. You will learn them around the shabbat dinner table at Chabad on Friday nights. This is something you don't want to miss out on. This is where you want to be." — *Gabriel E.*

🗨️ "Be true to yourself, and maintain your unique identity. Don't be someone you're not. Take advantage of every opportunity." — *Alex T.*

🗨️ "The only regret I have from my four years at Binghamton is not becoming involved with Chabad until my senior year. Go to Friday night dinners and get involved with Chabad as early as you can." — *Rachel K.* 🌟



**Arielle Sokoloff**

**MAJOR:** Political Science  
**FUTURE PLANS:**  
Volunteering Abroad



**Rachel Szalkiewicz**

**MAJOR:** Chemistry and Economics  
**FUTURE PLANS:**  
To be determined



**Alex Tafet**

**MAJOR:** English-Creative Writing/Cinema Minor  
**FUTURE PLANS:**  
To find the road less travelled by.



**Maxwell Vidaver**

**MAJOR:** Geography  
**FUTURE PLANS:**  
Masters in Urban Planning at Politecnico di Milano



**Ariela Zenilman**

**MAJOR:** Biology  
**FUTURE PLANS:**  
Medical School



## #4: Chabad is...

“Something to look forward to every week.” —*Deborah S.*

“A place that I will always be able to come back to.” —*Eve R.Y.*

“A palace set for kings and queens, but utilized by the laymen, the students who flock there for sustenance to fill their souls. Chabad brings spirituality to Binghamton, holiness to the young men and women who crave meaning from its presence...” —*Chavi S.*

“Definitely my home away from home.” —*Arielle S.*

“A place where people can come to grow and explore their Jewish identities. I feel lucky to have been able to join this Jewish community and take part in an ongoing process to connect to Judaism.” —*Deborah S.*

“The prospect for a better, brighter future.” —*Alex T.*

“A very welcoming environment that allows students from all different backgrounds to come together to share in food, friendship, and Jewish tradition.” —*Samantha R.*

“A place for me to discover my Jewish identity and to connect with other Jewish college students... a place where I know I can go to find love and caring and whatever else I may need at any given time. Chabad provides the opportunity for every Jewish student here at BU to rediscover themselves and to form new bonds that will likely last a lifetime. Whether it was going to Shabbat dinner on Friday nights, or attending one of Chabad's many events and programs, I always managed to learn new things and meet new people.” —*Rachel G.*

“Our home” —*Rodney N.*

“An opportunity not to be passed up.” —*Laurie H.*

“The backbone of my four years in college.” —*Maxwell V.*

“Always there” —*Rodney N.*

“A place of peace and acceptance.” —*Nicole K.*

“The ultimate Jewish resource at Binghamton.” —*Maxwell V.*

“Where I can have a meal and

not have to worry about what I need to do later.” —*Evan L.*

“Not a factory, but a family—it's not just the place where we eat dinner, it's a home that has been opened up to us with wide-arms and helped us discover ourselves and become proud of our Jewish identity.” —*Ariela Z.*

“An experience, enjoy the ride!” —*Katie R.*

“Magnificent.” —*Evan L.*

“Our comfort zone.” —*Ariela Z.*

“Always changing. Even the events that happen each year are improved upon to make them bigger and better. The building expands as the community grows. There will always be room for more at Chabad, and there will always be something new and fun to do.” —*Jessi K.*

“My adopted family.” —*Rachel S.*

“Always open.” —*Esther L.*

“My source of knowledge.” —*Gabriel E.*

“Harmony.” —*Alex T.*

“A powerful and enthusiastic leader of the Jewish community at Binghamton University. I am proud to be a part of such an amazing community and will never forget the experiences and knowledge I have gained. Just as Chabad has always been there for me, I will always be there for Chabad.” —*Levi D.*

“My matzah ball soup away from home.” —*Katie R.*

“A place for students to grow exponentially. Chabad's nurturing environment allows students to feel safe to pursue many different opportunities. Chabad has allowed me to make lasting friendships, have meaningful Shabbat dinners, give back to the community, gain leadership experience on the E/G-board. In addition to everything mentioned above, Chabad has provided me with the opportunity to further explore what it means to be a Jew.” —*Heather F.*

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# FACULTY

## SPOTLIGHT



Dora Polachek

## THE FRENCH CONNECTION

By Alan Zeitlin

**T**hough she wasn't born in the United States, one French professor has become a staple of the college, helping students feel at home even while studying abroad. Born in Bucharest, Dora Polachek moved to Israel and when she came to the United States as a child, she didn't speak English. However, she quickly learned the language.

In junior high school, French captured her heart and led her to a career where she's been recognized as one of the top teachers in the state. Not satisfied with simply teaching students a language, she has developed an extra dimension to the France study-abroad program that has allowed Binghamton's students to gain prestigious internship experience.

In 2004, Polachek was the recipient of the Chancellor's Award For Excellence in Teaching, the highest teaching award in the SUNY system. Four years later, she received the Lois B. DeFleur International Development Award, titled "Developing Extracurricular and Volunteer Opportunities for Study Abroad Programs."

The French professor, who got her Ph.D in French Literature from UNC-Chapel Hill, said she takes pride in helping students gain invaluable experience working or volunteering in France.

"It's extremely satisfying to help students to achieve their goals and to expand their horizons in the process," she said. "It's important to show that language is dynamic and enriching. It is alive and can be used both inside and outside of the classroom."

Katie Rein is a student who interned at Paris's Memorial de la Shoah and described the experience as the experience of a lifetime.

"Not only did I have the opportunity to work in a bi-lingual environment and immensely improve my French, I was

also able to work for something that is extremely important to me - remembering the innocent lives lost during the Holocaust," she wrote in an e-mail.

Polachek has received numerous awards and has also published on several topics, including gender, power and humor as well as the role of aristocratic women during the sixteenth century.

It was when she was giving a presentation about the role of the prophetess Deborah and the incident where Yael killed the general Sisera, that she enlisted the aid of Rivky Slonim.


"Rivky was having a hard pregnancy and there was a snowstorm that day," she recalls. "Rivky said 'come over' and we were sitting on the floor because that was a more comfortable position for her. She helped me find sources to support my viewpoint, and that was the beginning of our friendship. Over the years I have been touched to see the many ways Rivky and the Slonim family enrich the lives of our students and our community; they are all so open, giving, and welcoming."

She added that the university provides a number of options for Jewish culture and learning and that Chabad allows students an "incredible panoply of possibilities."

Polachek, who is a favorite among students, said she has a passion for teaching.

"Being approachable is a crucial factor," she said. "If a student knows they can come to you and that you'll be receptive, it goes a long way."

The Barnard graduate, who has been teaching at Binghamton since 1997 and whose husband teaches Economics at the school, said she is proud that Binghamton has earned a stellar reputation both here and abroad.

"I love BU because of the wonderful environment it provides for both faculty and students and for the way it encourages us to interact in significant ways with students and each other," 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.





# SHABBAT 1500



The crowd in the brightly lit, over sized gym was huge but the atmosphere was warm and inviting and the food home cooked and delicious. Once again, Binghamton University celebrated **the largest Shabbat dinner to take place on any campus.**



The first ever **flash mob freeze** to take place at BU publicized Shabbat 1500.





## PURIMANIA 2011



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is *not* in session!)



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# CHABAD IN ACTION

**CELEBRATING** ANOTHER  
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OF **JLEARN STUDY**



## WHEN **TOO MUCH** IS TOO MUCH



Over five hundred students packed the room to hear **Daniel Tratt '02** speak on the **dangers of binge drinking**. The program was sponsored by the Chabad Center and the Office of Greek Life at BU.



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



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Amanda Winer '12

## OUR VERY OWN SUPERWOMAN

By Alyx Rimberg '13

Shakespeare wrote, “Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon ‘em.” Amanda Winer, a junior at Binghamton University has managed to accomplish much, and understand Judaism in a way that many cannot in a lifetime.

Amanda, enthralled with the origin of religion, is currently completing a triple major in Judaic studies, history, and classical civilization. Her Jewish journey started when she was just a young child and her passion and determination to learn more about her people has never waned.

When only eleven, Amanda acted well beyond her years, making a decision that would ultimately govern the rest of her life. At the time, her family had to move from Long Island to Massachusetts. Knowing her deep dedication to Judaism her father allowed her to make the decision about the community the family would join. With her father in tow, Amanda went on a search to find the Temple in which she would become a Bat Mitzvah.



Unlike most eleven year olds, pretty houses and landscapes did not distract her; she was on a mission. In order to ensure that she would have the opportunity to make a difference, she chose a small town, with a temple of five hundred families. The programming and opportunities that her new temple

provided were just a teasing taste, intensifying her cravings to be an educated and knowledgeable Jew. “The best decisions you can make are those which you are educated and passionate about,” says Amanda.

Full of zeal, she entered Binghamton ready to make a difference. Currently the President of the junior class, Amanda’s involvements span the gamut: she is a TA, a tour guide for the university, on an intramural Volley Ball team and a published writer. Especially close to her heart are the Jewish causes she is involved with. She is an active member of both the Binghamton chapter as well as of the International team of Challah for Hunger. She is also the co-founder with Sophie Bass ‘12 of the Jewish Environmental Initiative on campus, Shoreshim. Amanda has surely left her mark.

Her involvement with Challah for Hunger—a student group that bakes and then sells Challah, hoping to ease world hunger with the funds they raise—was instigated by her own love for baking. The program is all about educating those who are unaware about hunger stricken areas in the world. Both challah baking and repairing the world require time and persistence. “Baking is about putting your hands in something and carefully kneading,” it is about patiently waiting for it to rise, “and placing chocolate chips as a pleasant surprise.”

The organization of the Jewish Environmental Initiative on campus has its roots in Amanda’s experience at the Jewish Farm School. She attended begrudgingly, ready to withstand any difficulty in order to demonstrate to her mother that she could in fact “rough it.” Once there, Amanda fell in love with the Jewish agriculture movement. Untangling the complex vines of Judaism and the environment was inspiring. Learning the intricacies of Kashrut, and other Jewish practices, left Amanda once again craving more.

Amanda is particularly interested in the progression of Judaism since antiquity. Her studies have helped to enhance her appreciation of Jewish customs and rituals. Understanding the challenges that the Jewish people have withstood throughout the generations has intensified her appreciation for Judaism. Although many take its continuity for granted, each Chabad Friday night dinner holds a special place in Amanda’s heart. She says, on the one hand the sheer magnitude of the gathering can be overwhelming but on the other hand you can really feel the power and unity in the number.

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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# Are You Man Enough?

Paul Brick '12

I'll be upfront with you—as I write this, I'm eating couscous out of the pot it was made in. I acknowledge the hypocrisy of my writing an article about what it means to be a man when I still have plenty of growing up to do. Still, the concept of manhood has fascinated me for years, and in my studying this topic, I've noticed a disturbing misconception.

It seems that a lot of young men my age don't know what manhood is. They seem to think it's the opposite of womanhood. Thus the ability to eat and drink more and lift heavier things makes them men. In reality, the opposite of manhood is childhood. It is a move from dependence to independence, from incompetence to ability.

Obviously, that means that a lot of proper virtues of manhood and womanhood should overlap. And yet, the practice of being *shomer negiah* (refraining from physical contact with a member of the opposite gender with exception of relatives) is more often than not discussed as relating to women, despite the many manly virtues it encourages.

So, ladies, if you'll excuse us, I'd like to talk to the young men about *shomer negiah*, and three of the manly virtues it fosters.

## Discipline

Discipline is the gateway to cultivating every other virtue in your life. You could have a flawless understanding of what to do to forge yourself into a man of greatness, but without the discipline to carry yourself down the path, you're

just a dreamy child.

But how is discipline cultivated? It's the same paradox as looking for a flash-light in the dark: how can you train yourself to be disciplined if you're not disciplined already? The answer is constant challenges. Each time you push yourself beyond your comfort zone and survive, you become a stronger man for it. Plus, you get an extra boost of confidence for your next challenge.

*Shomer negiah* is the ultimate such challenge. Go a day without physical contact, a week, a month, two months... when you can finally manage, you'll have the discipline of a U.S. Marine.

## Respect for Women

While being *shomer negia* in a relationship is probably harder than digging to China with a plastic spoon, it has taught me a great deal about having respectful relationships with the fairer sex.

First of all, you'll never really appreciate something until you're faced with its scarcity. How many of us see courtship as a contest, a game amongst our boys to see who can rack up the most points? When you step back, stop abusing the resource for a moment, you'll remember something you knew when you were a kid: women aren't a commodity, they're people, and the million differences between us and them are amazing.

Second of all, when you're *shomer negiah*, all the touching is replaced with talking. Hiding from issues is no longer an option. Boys, you have to talk about your feelings. Admittedly, it's annoying, but you'll never be surer of your own wants than when you have them constantly examined, and that will make you honest.

## Principle

Children are discovering who they are; men have their principles.


But no one can become a man of prin-

ciple if external forces control him. How can a man maintain the principle of honesty if his alcoholism forces him to lie to his friends? And how can he maintain a principle of defending the defenseless if he's controlled by the approval of others? Any external force that usurps a man's self-mastery will prevent him from being the man he desires.

I was controlled by a drive to attract women. After years of unpopularity with the fairer sex, I started doing whatever it took to appear attractive. I changed my appearance, my attitude, my entire behavior. Even after selling myself into that slavery, I couldn't be satisfied; as long as there were women who weren't into me, I continued to struggle and sacrifice my identity.

When I became *shomer negiah*, things changed. With no addictions, no distractions, I was finally able to be myself. If someone didn't find me appealing, it was suddenly okay—I didn't have to be any more than I already was.

Once I removed the external forces, I could see exactly who I was. And when you can do that, you can start working to become the man you want to be.

That said, gentlemen, I have a challenge for you. You want to know if you have what it takes, if you can make the cut between the boys and the men? Then go without that physical contact ...for one hour. Even if you have no intention of ever becoming *shomer negiah*, try to last one hour and I guarantee you'll start to feel its effect. Too easy? Try it for a whole morning, or a whole day. Try it for two days, or three if you're Superman. Take a taste boys, and see if you're man enough. 

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