

# chadi TIMES

CHABAD HOUSE

JEWISH STUDENT CENTER

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Serving the Community through Education and Inspiration

Shevat 5764

February 2004

Vol. 18, No. 4

## in the NEWS

### Free Trip to Israel for Current Students and Alumni

Jewish men and women ages 18-26 (students and those in the work force alike) who have never traveled to Israel with an organized educational peer group are eligible to receive an unprecedented gift – a free ten day trip to Israel courtesy of birthright Israel and Mayanot Institute.

The ten day trip during summer break will include tours and hikes throughout Israel, meetings with Israeli students, politicians and business leaders, plenty of opportunities to enjoy the music and culture of Israel plus free time to relax with friends and the chance to discover more about the Jewish state and religion.

The Binghamton trip, scheduled to depart in late May or early June, includes a round trip ticket on El-Al airlines and accommodations at quality hotels.

Pre-registration for this extraordinary opportunity is now open, and can be done online at [www.chabadofbinghamton.com](http://www.chabadofbinghamton.com) or [www.israelexpress.org](http://www.israelexpress.org), or at the Chabad table in the Student Union on Mondays and Thursdays. For more information call 1-888-MAYANOT or Chabad of Binghamton at (607) 797-0015.

### Grants available for Israel Study

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

### chai TIMES SPONSORS

Dedicated in honor of my father's Yahrzeit  
Sion ben Gamila Dadusc  
19 Shevat 1998  
by Jeanette Dadusc '92



Dedicated in honor of our son  
Shlomo Yaakov  
born December 9, 2003  
by Malkah and Noah Hochstadt '96

## in this ISSUE

Understanding the Winter .....	3
Your Purim Guide .....	4-5
Ani Maamin .....	6
Chabad Happenings .....	7
Alumni Mazel Tovs .....	8

## Purim Carnival Extravaganza Unites BU Community; Features Battle of Bands

**T**he annual campus wide Purim carnival extravaganza will be held Thursday, March 4, beginning at 8pm in the East Gym at Binghamton University. Community members of all ages are invited to join in the fun. A \$2 admission fee includes five carnival tickets; \$5 admission fee includes all of the rides and attractions; either way entrance includes all the hamentashen you can eat.

The carnival, which attracts an average of 2,000 participants annually, will feature a wide array of game booths and unsurpassed attractions including Bungee Boxing, Basketball Challenge, Bungee Run, Boot Camp and the Pedestal Joust, plus music and dancing. Kosher hot dogs, knishes, falafel, and other munchies will be available for purchase. A grand prize will be awarded to the winner of the costume contest; to be eligible one must be a student at Binghamton University who comes to the carnival in costume. New, this year, will be a hot-dog and whipped cream pie eating contest. The Battle of Bands with multiple university student bands competing against each other, will begin at 9 pm.

The carnival is spearheaded by the Chabad House Jewish Student Center and co-sponsored by Alpha Sigma Phi, Alpha Epsilon Pi, Hillel-JSU, Jewish Heritage Programs, Late Nite Binghamton, OCC, Sodexo Marriott, most of the residential communities and in cooperation with Greek groups and professional fraternities.

"This is a project of unprecedented scope and dimension. Having so many university groups co-sponsor an event in honor of a Jewish holiday is a unique and enriching experience for all involved," stated Carnival directors, Neil Hakimi and Natalie Benhamou. "This year, because of the reputation this event has garnered, we

expect a record breaking turn-out at the event."

"This is a great way for people to celebrate a Jewish holiday, have tremendous fun with friends, and benefit a charity," said the raffle drive chair, Amy Gordon.

Proceeds from the carnival will go

towards various charities, including the local Jewish Family Services, and will be sent to the Children of Chernobyl campaign, a humanitarian health effort run by Chabad in Israel and the former Soviet Union, dedicated to airlifting children from the heavily contaminated Chernobyl area and bringing them to safety and medical treatment in Israel.

## Community Wide Purim Feast to Feature Comedic Improv Group

**T**he Binghamton Jewish community and BU students are invited to "kick up their heels" and join in celebrating Purim at the annual Purim Feast sponsored by Chabad House to be held on Purim day, Sunday, March 7, beginning 5:00pm; a "last chance" Megillah reading for those who could not hear the Megillah read earlier will be held promptly at 4:00pm. The program will be held at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Road.

The program includes a full course Kosher Chinese Dinner (vegetarian options and a kiddie menu are available), *L'chayim*, desserts, live music and spirited dancing. This year's Purim Feast will include a special treat: an interactive show by Binghamton University's premier entertainment group, the Pappy Parker Comedic Improv group.

Cost for the program is \$12.50 per person, \$10 for seniors and students and \$6 for children under 12. "This is always a wonderful way for the extended Binghamton 'mishpacha' to enjoy one of our



## Chabad Offers Shalach Manot Services for Everyone, Everywhere

### Local and National Service

Women's League for Chabad is now accepting orders for its annual *Shalach Manot* service in which Binghamton residents can send packages and greetings to local friends and acquaintances on Purim day. It also offers a service through which gourmet Purim baskets can be sent around the country. All orders must be received by February 27. For a complete information packet about this project or for additional information, please call the Chabad House at 797-0015. Volunteers are needed to assist in delivering the packages on Purim day (Sunday, March 7). If you are able to assist with this project, please call the Chabad office.

### Parents To Children

Parents of students at Binghamton University can send their children some Tender Loving Care and Purim greetings with Chabad's Gourmet *Shalach Manot* service. Orders, including a \$30 check made out to Chabad House, accompanied with the student's exact address (cross roads, apartment # and floor for off campus; dorm and room number for on campus) and cell phone, must be received by the Chabad House no later

than March 1. Orders will not be accepted over the phone.

### Student To Student

United Purim Service offers students the opportunity to send Purim greetings and goodies to each other, both on and off campus. The services is easy, inexpensive and lots of fun! Just drop by at the Chabad table in the University Union on the Mondays and Thursdays before Purim and place your order.

UPS does it all for you!

### Purim Greeting Cards

Do you want to say Happy Purim and give Tzedaka at the same time? Are

your relatives and friends receiving more junk food on Purim than they know what to do with? Women's League for Chabad's Purim Cards are the answer.

Alumni, parents and friends can now send beautifully designed Purim cards in lieu of a *Shalach Manot* package to friends and relatives anywhere in the United States and help Chabad at the same time. And it's easy! Cards can be purchased from Chabad (minimum of five per person) by sending Chabad House \$4 per card. If you would like Chabad House to send them for you, send a list of names and addresses with \$5 per name to the Chabad House by March 1.

### CHABAD HOUSE JEWISH STUDENT CENTER

420 Murray Hill Road  
Vestal, New York 13850

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
BINGHAMTON, NY  
PERMIT NO. 157



# from the DIRECTORS

## We Dare Not Forget

"Not all of the victims of Auschwitz were Jews, but all Jews were victims," said Elie Wiesel at the ceremony marking the Fiftieth year from the liberation of Auschwitz. And indeed this is all too true. All Jews are one body, and the holocaust was the most crippling assault on our system imaginable. But our enemies did not succeed in their quest. *Am Yisroel Chai*. It is our destiny – in our covenant with G-d – to live on. How to live and why to live, these are the important questions. And they must lie at the root of our quest to remember and never forget this darkest of all dark times in our history.

In little time we will be celebrating Purim. Arguably the most fun and carefree Holiday in our tradition. But Purim has a serious – even dark – side. Our enemies sought to destroy us. By Rabbinic injunction, on the Shabbat immediately before Purim there is an additional Torah portion read, it is known as *Zachor* – remember. In fact, that Shabbat is referred to as *Shabbat Zachor*.

*Zachor, Al Tishkoch*; remember, do not forget. These are the words of the Torah on the subject of Amalek. Amalek was the nation who set out to decimate the Jews while still in their infancy as a nation, as they traveled in the desert after leaving Egypt. And Amalek became the archetype of the Jews' enemy – those who sought our destruction – in every generation. The sages taught that Haman was of Amalek's seed, thus the reading of this portion in proximity with Purim. There is an old tradition that Hitler was of Amalek's seed.

Amalek, Haman, Hitler... what did they want?

In the words of Haman: "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your realm. Their laws are different from every other people's..." (Book of Esther 3:8)

In the words of Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*:

"I free humanity from the shackles of the soul; from the degrading suffering caused by the false vision called conscience and ethics. The Jews have inflicted two wounds on mankind: circumcision on its body and conscience on the soul. They are Jewish inventions. The war for domination of the world is waged only between these two camps alone, the Germans and the Jews. Everything else is but deception."

How starkly eloquent and true! Our enemies seek nothing more or less than the annihilation of the Jewish spirit. The eradication of the soul. The obliteration of the Divine. It is not the Jewish body they seek, but the spirit that lurks within.

Each one of us feels – and if we don't we should – an overwhelming obligation to keep the memory of the six million alive. Integral to that process is an understanding of our enemies' intentions and more importantly an apprehension of our ability to triumph.

To truly remember those who perished and to give honor to their memory, we must do more than build, support and visit museums and monuments. We must do more than encourage holocaust studies and fight the vicious denial movement.

Our obligation to the *Kedoshim*, holy martyrs, is ultimately far more demanding. We must remember why they died and we must embody the very ideals for which they perished. Simply put, they died because they were Jews; because they were charged with a mandate to be a holy nation and had the capacity to bring goodness and spirituality into this world. To eternalize their memory, we must go back to that which is eternal; *everything else is but deception*. We must become, and teach our children to be, better – more educated, committed and proud – Jews. Jews that celebrate Yom Kippur and Purim, Rosh Hashana and Tu B'shvat, Sukkot and Shavuot.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, who spent his years reviving and rebuilding the Jewish people after the ravages of the Shoah, was never one to look back. He spoke not in terms of victims and losses and commemoration, although few had the ability to feel a Jew's pain as did the Rebbe. He spoke rather of the need to go forward. "The Jewish people has been so heavily decimated that each one of us must be made to count, and to count doubly." And he taught us how to count: by learning and internalizing God's word, our holy Torah. By doing one more Mitzvah, one more positive action, thereby spreading goodness and kindness throughout the world.

The Rebbe told us that our long history of pain and suffering is about to end. He spoke with conviction and with a sense of urgency. He told us that soon, very soon, a new age will dawn when "Death shall be swallowed up forever and G-d shall wipe the tears from every face..." (Isaiah 25:8) and Moshiach will lead us all, each and every one, to our homeland. More than anything else, the Rebbe taught that it was up to you and me to make that happen sooner. And he exhorted us to do more than we think we should or could – to be counted doubly. Remember, do not forget.

With best wishes for a Happy Purim,

*Aaron and Rivky Slonim*

Rabbi Aaron and Rivky Slonim

# Chabad CALENDAR & NOTES

## Services

Monday - Friday .....	7:30 am
Friday Evening service, followed by Shabbat Dinner.....	6:00 pm
Saturday Morning service followed by lunch and Mincha service .....	9:30 am
Saturday Evening Ma'ariv and Havdallah at close of Shabbat .....	
Sunday.....	9:30 am

## Schedule of Classes and Events

### SUNDAYS

Men's Club Bagel Brunch (twice a month) .....	10:30 am
---	----------

### MONDAYS

Kollel - Mishna .....	8:40 am
Analysis of Rashi .....	9:15 am
<b>Kabbalah Unplugged: The Power of Prayer</b> .....	7:30 pm

### TUESDAYS

Parsha & Pizza .....	6:30-7:30 pm
Hilchot Niddah .....	9:10 pm

### WEDNESDAYS

Kollel - Mishna .....	8:40 am
Parshat Hashavua .....	2:30 pm
Beit Midrash (Great Room) .....	7-8:30 pm
"Miriam's Well" .....	8:30 pm

### THURSDAYS

Advanced Talmud .....	8:30 pm
-----------------------	---------

### FRIDAYS

Weekly Parasha .....	10:00 am
----------------------	----------

### SHABBAT

Weekly Parasha .....	4:30 pm
----------------------	---------

NOTE: Please contact the Chabad House for an up-to-date schedule, or to request a class or tutorial on a topic or for a time not covered. Call 797-0015 or 766-9694, or email [aslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com](mailto:aslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com) or [rabbiiyitz@chabadofbinghamton.com](mailto:rabbiiyitz@chabadofbinghamton.com).

## Upcoming Events

- Thursday, Feb. 26 - **Chabad Women's Cabaret** – 8:00 pm
- Friday, Feb. 27 - **Chabad Off Campus** (Chabad on the West Side) – Carousel Inn, 65 Front Street, Services start at 6:15 pm. Please RSVP 766-9694.
- Sunday, February 29 - **Hamantashen and Rugelach Baking** – 2:00 pm
- Monday, March 1 - Trip to U.S. **Holocaust Memorial Museum** - RSVP now for only \$25

## Purim Schedule

- **Purim Carnival Extravaganza!!** Thursday March 4 – East Gym, starting 8:00 pm.
- Saturday Night, March 6 - Megillah Reading at 7:45 in Room 133 – Old Union.
- Sunday, March 7 - **Hear the Megillah at one of these times and locations:**  
10:00 am - at Chabad House  
1:00 pm - East Lounge in the University Union  
4:00 pm - Jewish Community Center  
5:00 pm - Festive Meal - **Kosher Chinese Buffet Dinner** at the JCC

chai  
TIMES

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

## Chabad Of Binghamton

**Rabbi Aaron Slonim**  
Director

**Mr. Michael Wright**  
President

**Mr. Abraham Piaker**  
Vice President

**Rivkah Slonim**  
Education Director

**Secretary/Treasurer**

**Rabbi Yitzchak Creeger**  
Program Director

Mr. Bruce O. Becker

**Dr. Jerome C. Cohen**  
Past President

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

**Honorary Chairman of the Board**  
Dr. Israel J. Rosefsky

**Honorary Past President**  
Prof. Philip M. Piaker, OBM

### Board Members

Mr. Richard Frankel  
Mr. Seymour Klionsky  
Mr. Alfred Lavkar  
Mrs. Elizabeth Langley  
Mr. Herbert Levine

Mr. William Levine  
Mr. Barry Newman  
Dr. Barret Raff  
Dr. Liz Rosenberg  
Dr. Charles Rubin

Mr. Brian Savitch  
Mr. Jack Serkin  
Mrs. Lillian Sommer  
Mr. Kenneth A. Wilson  
Mrs. Susan Walker

**Editor:** Rivkah Slonim

**Proofreading and Technical Assistance:** Marlene Serkin

**Production and Layout:** Rabbi Yitzchak Creeger

We are not responsible for the Kashruth of any advertiser's product or establishment.  
The Chai Times is published monthly during the Fall and Spring Semesters at B.U.



**10% OFF**  
with student I.D.

**Pat's  
Florist  
& Gifts**

Full Service • Wire Service  
Fruit Baskets • Balloons, etc.  
(607) 798-1600 • (800) 798-7287



**The Jewish  
SUPERPHONE**

Education and Inspiration at  
your fingertips anytime, any day

Call **607-770-8595**  
to learn all options for the entire family!



# TORAH thoughts

Adapted from the Works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

## Winter

**A**nd no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet grown; for G-d had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not yet a man to work the land. And there arose a mist from the earth and watered the surface of the land. (Genesis 2:5-6)

In the land of Israel, the rains are confined to the half-year from Tishrei to Nissan (roughly, October to March). This six-month period is therefore referred to by the Talmud as the “Season of Rains” (*Yemot HaGeshamim*), while the six months from Nissan to Tishrei (April-September) are called the “Season of the Sun” (*Yemot HaChamah*).

The calendar is more than a measure of time: it is a cycle that charts our inner life and our relationship with our Creator. And this spiritual cycle is comprised of two basic parts -- a Season of the Sun, and a Season of Rains.

### A Rising Mist

Sunlight and rain are both critical to the sustaining of life on earth. Indeed, there is a certain similarity in the manner in which these two sources of nourishment are bestowed upon us – both rain down upon the earth from above, drenching it with energy or moisture. In both cases, we seem passive recipients to a showering of blessing from the heavens.

But a closer examination reveals a significant difference between them: while sunlight is a unilateral gift from above, rain originates as moisture which rises from the earth, forms clouds, and returns as life-giving waters. So the earth is not, in truth, a passive beneficiary of the rain falling from the heavens: it is she who generates it in the first place, raising columns of mist from her oceans and lakes to water the soil of her land-masses.

The earth, of course, could not do this on her own. It is the sun who stimulates the release and ascent of her watery stores; it is the sun who causes the weather patterns which carry them through the atmosphere and impel them earthward. In other words, the sun, ultimately, is the force behind both sunlight and rain. But the sun's nurture of life on earth takes two forms: a) nourishment which the earth simply absorbs from her benevolent provider, such as the sun's light and warmth-purveying rays; b) nourishment, such as rain, which the earth generates herself, with the sun serving as the catalyst that awakens her potential for self-nurture and assists in its realization.

All of the above also applies to the miniature world that is the soul of man. Here, too, there is sunlight and rain; here, too, the soul is dependent for both upon her sun, yet differs in her relationship with these two purveyors of her nourishment.

Ultimately, everything we possess, including our potential to initiate and create, is granted us from Above. Yet G-d sustains our inner lives in two ways: a) with direct and unilateral bestowal of enlightenment and experience (sunlight); b) by enabling and assisting us to gravitate upward in our own search for truth and meaning in life, and thereby generate a spiritual nurture of our own making (rain).

**The calendar is more than a measure of time: it is a cycle that charts our inner life and our relationship with our Creator.**

Both divine gifts are crucial to the spiritual life of the soul. On the one hand, we recognize our inherent limitations. We understand that if there is to be anything that is absolute and transcendent in our lives, we must open ourselves to a higher truth—a truth to which we can relate only as a wholly passive recipient, for it is beyond anything we could possibly generate by ourselves.

At the same time, however, human nature dictates that we identify

the tension between these two needs is crucial to our growth in all areas – intellectual, emotional or spiritual.

### Seasons of the Soul

In the cycle of the Jewish year, the six months from Nissan to Tishrei are the Season of the Sun, and the Tishrei to Nissan months are our Season of Rains.

During the Season of the Sun, we celebrate and re-experience the great unilateral acts of divine involvement in our destiny: the Exodus on Passover, when G-d descended to Egypt to take for Himself a nation from the womb of a nation, amidst trials, signs, wonders and battles; the giving of the Torah on Shavuot, when G-d came down on Mount Sinai to grant us His blueprint for life and our charter as His kingdom of priests and holy nation.

The Season of Rains, on the other hand, is a half-year characterized by human endeavor and initiative. The

month of Tishrei—the month of Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur and the Ten Days of Repentance – is a time of *teshuvah*, of soul-searching and self-improvement. The “Season of Rains” also contains the two rabbinical festivals of the Jewish year – Chanukah (Kislev 25 to Tevet 2) and Purim (Adar 14). Unlike the biblical festivals, which were unilaterally commanded by G-d, these are humanly initiated festivals, instituted as our response to the milestones in our relationship with G-d which they commemorate.

Another winter festival is the New Year of Chassidism celebrated on the 19th of Kislev. The teachings of Chassidism emphasize the need for intellectual appreciation and emotional experience in our fulfillment of the mitzvot (as opposed to mere mechanical observance of the divine commandments). Chassidism thus belongs to the rainy area of our spiritual lives—our capacity for involvement and initiative in our relationship with G-d.



The Rebbe

### Sometimes More, Sometimes Less

The Jewish calendar is based upon the lunar cycle, with the beginning of each month falling within a day or two of the new moon. Since the moon completes its orbit of the earth every 29.5 days, the Jewish month alternates between 29 and 30 days. A thirty-day month is called a *malei* (full month), and a twenty-nine-day month is called a *chasser* (lacking month).

Generally speaking, the months follow a set pattern: Nissan is always full, Iyar always lacking, Sivan full, Tammuz lacking, and so on. However, two months, the months of Cheshvan and Kislev (the second and third months after Tishrei), have no fixed length: in certain years both are full, in other years both are lacking, and in others still, Cheshvan is lacking and Kislev is full.

In other words, the summer months are fixed and unvarying, while the months of the Season of Rains are subject to changes and fluctuations.

In this, too, our calendar reflects the dynamics of the seasons of the soul. The sunlight aspect of our spiritual lives is fixed and unvarying. When we surrender ourselves to higher truth, we also surrender our human frailties and inconsistencies. We surrender to what is infinite, perfect and unequivocal, and what we receive is likewise infinite, perfect and unequivocal.

But when we turn to our rainmaking self, our initiatives and achievements are subject to the rises and falls of a finite, imperfect self. This is a season with fluctuating months, sometimes lacking, sometimes full, reflecting the vacillating nature of everything human.

Therein lies the weakness of our rainy season as well as its strength. By all objective criteria, this is the lesser half of our internal cycle, plagued by the instabilities and deficiencies of the human state. But it is also our more flexible half, where a lack might be transformed into a gain and a vulnerability exploited as a source of blessing.



more with what we ourselves have achieved: that something earned is more appreciated than a gift, that an idea independently conceived is more meaningful than a teaching from the greatest master. That for an experience to become real to us—for it to be grafted into our nature and personality—it must stem from within.

The real or the ideal? Mine or more? We need them both. Indeed,



## Holiday Observances

We start with the mitzvahs we observe on Purim eve and Purim day, but please read on for additional observances that begin even before Purim!

### 1) Listen To The Megillah

To relive the miraculous events of Purim, **listen to the reading of the Megillah (the Scroll of Esther)** twice: once on Purim eve, Saturday, March 6, 2004 and again on Purim day, Sunday, March 7, 2004.



It is crucial to hear every single word of the Megillah!

At certain points in the reading where Haman's name is mentioned, it is customary to twirl *graggers* (Purim noisemakers) and stamp one's feet to "drown out" his evil name. Tell the children Purim is the only time when it's a mitzvah to make noise!

### 2) Give to the Needy (*Matanot La'evyonim*)

Concern for the needy is a year-round responsibility; but on Purim it is a special mitzvah to remember the poor.

**Give charity to at least two, (but preferably more) needy individuals on Purim day, March 7, 2004.**

The mitzvah is best fulfilled by giving directly to the needy. If, however, you cannot find poor people, place at least several coins into a

charity box. As in the other mitzvahs of Purim, even small children should fulfill this mitzvah.

### 3) Send Food Portions to Friends (*Mishloach Manot*)

On Purim we emphasize the importance of Jewish unity and friendship by sending gifts of food to friends.

**On March 7, 2004, send a gift of at least two kinds of ready-**

# Purim

## Adar 14 - 15



# Harry Potter & The Jews

The current wave of Pottermania will probably turn out multitudes of cloaked Purim masqueraders waving wands, broomsticks, whosists and whatnots.

Do not despair; this is not yet another literary review of the best seller. We're not here to engage in magical thrills and tricks, and now's not the time for theological discussions on the Jewish view of the occult, or the struggle of good and evil. This certainly isn't the place to tackle a menagerie of ghastly goblins, macabre monsters, owls, frogs, mice, slithering snakes and spinning spiders, or to open a Pandora's box of Gobbledygook potions and spells.

### PURIM IS A NATURAL

But Harry does have connections to Purim, and it's not just because the Megillah is written with quill on parchment, or because "You-Know-Who" sounds like Haman.

It should be noted that in the Purim story, it was the evil wizardly Amalekites who engaged in divinations, and the wicked Haman who cast lots to destroy the Jews.

By contrast, the Purim 'miracle' itself is very natural. Unlike other holidays that celebrate supernatural events, Purim follows a natural course of events; Mordechai exposed a plot that saved the king's life, and Esther interceded with the king to save the Jews. Purim shows us that beyond the supernatural, G-d also directs the natural flow of events.

### LESSONS, LESSONS, EVERYWHERE

The famous Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov taught us to listen carefully to life's hidden messages, for all that we see or hear

contains a Divine communication and lesson.

Right now, in the Purim spirit and in Harry's merit, let our fantasy soar and our



imagination fly! Let's dress up, pretend and impersonate! But instead of getting distracted by all the high flying sorcery, witchcraft and wizardry, why not focus on Harry himself! What better time than Purim for us to enter Harry's head, get into his frame of mind, and put ourselves in his shoes? Let's empathize with our youthful hero as he struggles to find freedom from the mediocre and materialistic Muggles.

### LIVING WITH THE MUGGLES

In his humble beginnings, we find

Harry confined to a dark, cramped cupboard under the stairs. The orphaned boy lives with his odious and stodgy aunt and uncle, the narrow minded Dursleys, who have no appreciation for his 'otherworldliness.' They hide and suppress any association with his 'weird' background, so poor Harry has no idea of who he really is and where he comes from.

Constantly despised and chastised by his Muggle hosts, Harry's abominable cousin Dudley delights in poking him with his fancy Smelting stick. Taunted and tormented, starved Harry wears broken taped-together glasses and is dressed in ragged hand-me-down clothes. Harry is persecuted and mistreated, and never appreciated for all his amazing wonder- and talent, that even he himself knows nothing about.

### HIDDEN POTENTIAL

Harry's worst predicament is not his physical deprivation but his spiritual limitation. Deep within, Harry is endowed with great potential powers that are as unique as the distinct mark of lightning on his forehead. But kept in the dark, he is totally ignorant of his lineage and his background. Many attempts are made to contact Harry, but the Muggles intercept all his mail, blocking any and all communication from reaching him.

But once the message gets through, Harry realizes that he isn't just like any other Tom and Dick. Discovering his real

origins, Harry learns that he has nothing to be ashamed of, and much of which to be proud. He traces his roots to find his true identity. Throughout his adventures, Harry explores his past and dreams of his future, looking forward to his destiny.

### OUT OF THE CUPBOARD

Unfortunately, many of us Jews find ourselves in similar situations. The pressures of the prevalent Muggle culture suppresses our Jewish origins and values.

Unfortunately, today's media singles Israel and Jews out for criticism. A biased world is constantly chastising us, finding fault with whatever we do, and applying outrageous double standards. We are condemned for defending ourselves, and expected to turn the other cheek. Why, some people even think we have horns!

To make matters worse, many of us don't even know where we come from, and are uninformed about our rich, spiritual tradition and wonderful heritage. Indeed, too few Bar Mitzvah boys know to appreciate how the phylacteries, Tefillin, are our 'sign between the eyes.'

J.K. Rowling may not have meant it this way, but the message is clear. Each of us should take heed and realize our calling in these crucial times. Let us learn to recognize the power and potential of Israel and Judaism, regardless of what the Muggles think or say. By standing tall, free and proud of our Torah, Mitzvos, and Israel, G-d will enable us to climb out of the dark and cramped cupboard of exile, into the freedom of Redemption with Moshiach, speedily in our days.

@ 2001 Rabbi Israel Rubin  
albanychabad@knick.net



# 2004

## March 6-7



to-eat foods (e.g., pastry, fruit, beverage), to at least one friend on Purim day. Men should send to men and women to women. It is preferable that the gifts are delivered via a third party. Children, in addition to sending their own gifts of food to their friends, make enthusiastic messengers.

**After Meals.** In the morning service



### 4) Eat, Drink and be Merry

Purim should be celebrated with a **special festive meal on Purim Day**, at which family and friends gather together to rejoice in the Purim spirit. It is a mitzvah to drink wine or other inebriating drinks at this meal.

### 5-6) Special Prayers (*Al HaNissim*, Torah reading)

On Purim we recite the *Al HaNissim* prayer in the evening, morning and afternoon prayers, as well as in the Grace



there is a **special reading from the Torah Scroll** in the synagogue.

## Additional Purim Observances

### 7) Torah Reading of "Zachor"

On the Shabbat before Purim, this year March 6, 2004, a special reading is held in the synagogue of the Torah section called *Zachor* ("Remember"), in which we are enjoined to remember the deeds of (the nation of) Amalek (Haman's ancestor) who sought to destroy the Jewish people.

### 8) The Fast of Esther

To commemorate the day of prayer and fasting that the Jewish people held at Esther's request, we fast on the day before Purim, this year on Thursday, March 4, 2004, (because we don't fast on Shabbat) from approximately an hour before sunrise until nightfall (approximately 40 minutes after sunset).

### 9) The "Half Coins" (*Machatzit Hashekel*)

It is a tradition to give three half-dollar coins to charity to commemorate the half-shekel that each Jew contributed as his share in the communal offerings in the time of the Holy Temple. This custom, usually performed in the synagogue, is done on the afternoon of the "Fast of Esther," or before the reading of the Megillah.

### 10-11) Purim Customs: Masquerades and

### Hamantashen

A time-honored Purim custom is for **children to dress up** and disguise themselves—an allusion to the fact that the miracle of Purim was disguised in natural garments. This is also the significance behind a traditional Purim food, the *hamantash* – a pastry whose filling is hidden within a three-cornered crust.

### 12) Shushan Purim

The fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar are celebrated as Purim. The specific day on which Purim is celebrated depends on the location; in places where Purim is celebrated on the fourteenth, it is not celebrated on the fifteenth and vice versa.

Why were different days established as Purim in different cities? Why wasn't one day chosen as Purim in all cities, just as other festivals are celebrated on the same day in every city? In Shushan the battle took place on the thirteenth and fourteenth of Adar and the people rested and celebrated only on the fifteenth. It was therefore proper that only the city of Shushan should celebrate on the fifteenth of Adar, for it was only there that Purim was celebrated on that day.



# Achieving Inner Happiness

By Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

*Editor's Note: The Jewish Sages taught that with the month of Adar comes an extra measure of joy. Below, we offer insight as to how we can extend the joy of the Purim season to every month of the year.*

Many years ago I heard a wonderful story about a great Jewish sage. Someone had written him a letter on the following lines. "I am in a state of deep depression. I wake up each morning dreading the day ahead. I find that nothing lifts the clouds of gloom. I try various distractions but nothing seems to work. I pray, but inspiration does not come. I need the rabbi's help and advice."

The rabbi sent him a brilliant reply without using a single word. He simply circled the first word of each sentence of the letter and sent it back. The word was "I."

One of the strange findings of contemporary economists is that the vast increases in wealth, choice and life expectancy during the twentieth

century do not seem to have made much of a difference to our sense of happiness, of a life well lived.

To the contrary, especially among the young there have been major increases in depressive illness, suicide attempts, eating disorders, drug and alcohol abuse and other symptoms of unhappiness. Materially we have more than any previous generation, but psychologically, spiritually, we seem to have lost our way.

I suspect that the answer to our malaise is the same as the rabbi gave to his questioner. It is that pesky, insinuating word "I."

It is there at the very heart of our consumerist culture. Buy this, wear that, go here, eat there, and the world will suddenly explode into rainbow colours. People will stare at us with undisguised envy. Indulge, because you're worth it. Or so the marketing myth goes.

The trouble is that the myth can only promise us happiness by making us unhappy to begin with. Until now

I never actually knew what I was missing by not having a mobile phone that can also take photos, or a DVD instead of a VHS. Life seemed to go pretty well, or so I thought, but now I know I am missing out on the real essentials. Or so someone wants me to believe for the sake of the greater glory of corporate profits.

Actually, though, there's a better way of celebrating the festive season and it consists of three simple rules. The first is to say a silent thank you for what we have rather than worrying about what we don't. The things that really make life worthwhile - family, friends, the love we get by sharing it with others - aren't for sale in any shopping centre, but we are surrounded by them much of the time. It's just that we don't notice them without taking time out to pay them attention. There is much wisdom in the ancient Jewish custom of thanking God, each morning, for simply being alive.

The second is to reach out to those who are lonely, especially at this

time of the year when there is so much celebration going on. If you are having a party, invite one or two people you know live alone - and make a fuss of them. You will never know what a difference you will make to someone's life. Think of the old Jewish idea that by offering hospitality to a stranger you may be welcoming an angel, unaware.

And thirdly, let's share a little of what we have with those who have so much less. While we suffer indigestion, a fifth of the world starves. Now is the time to make a donation to a charity offering help to parts of the world suffering desperate poverty. The old rule of tithe makes sense. Take one tenth of what you spend on yourself and friends and give it to those who have little or nothing.

What these things have in common is that they're about the "We" not the "I." They help us remember what so much conspires to make us forget - that happiness lies in what we give, not what we get.



# Burning Faith From the Midst of Ashes

## — Ani Ma'amin —

By Yitzchak Dorfman

The Rebbe of Moditz, Rabbi Shaul Yedidya Elazar, had Chassidim throughout the major towns and cities of Poland. One of these was Reb Azriel David Fastag, who was noted for his exceptional voice throughout Warsaw. Many came to the shul where Reb Azriel David and his brothers, who were also blessed with lovely voices, would pray on the High Holy Days. Reb Azriel David would lead the prayers, while his brothers accompanied him as a choir. His crisp, clear and moving voice had a profound effect on all who heard him.

Reb Azriel David lived simply, earning his livelihood from a small clothing store, but his happiness and fulfillment came from another source – the world of Chassidic music. His moving tunes made their way to Otvoczka (a suburb of Warsaw), where his Rebbe, Rabbi Shaul Yedidya Elazar appreciated them immensely. The day a new *niggun* (melody) by Reb Azriel David arrived was a festive day for the Rebbe.

Dark clouds began to cover the skies of Europe – the clouds of Nazism. In spite of the terrible decrees, the yellow patch and the ghettos, most Jews could not fathom what was about to befall them. Only a few managed to escape the clutches of the Nazi occupation to safe havens. One of them was the Moditz Rebbe, Rebbe Shaul Yedidya Elazar, whose Chassidim made a

the clatter of the cattle cars' wheels, rose the sounds of people gasping, sighing, weeping and dying. One could hear the stifled cries of children crushed together. But in one such car, headed toward the infamous death camp Treblinka, the sound of singing could be heard.

It seems that an elderly Jew, wrapped up in his ragged clothing, his face white as snow, had made his way over to his neighbor on the death train, begging him to remind him the tune of *Ma'areh Kohen* sung by Moditz Rebbe during the Yom Kippur service.

"Now? Now, what you want to hear is *niggunim*?" answered the other, with a hard look at the Chassid, thinking that maybe all the suffering had caused him to lose his mind.

But this Moditz Chassid, Reb Azriel David Fastag, was no longer paying attention to his friend, or to anyone else on the train. In his mind, he was at the prayer stand next to his Rebbe on Yom Kippur, and it is he who was leading the prayer before the Rebbe and all the Chassidim.

Suddenly, there appeared before his eyes the words of the twelfth of the Thirteen Principles of Jewish Faith: *Ani ma'amin b'emuna sheleima, b'viat hamoshiach; v'af al pi she'yismamaya, im kol zeh, achakeh lo b'chol yom she'yavo* – "I believe with perfect faith in the coming of

Jewish People. He was unaware of the silence in the cattle car, and of the hundreds of ears listening attentively in amazement. He also didn't hear the voices as they gradually joined his song, at first quietly, but soon growing louder and louder.

**There, amidst the death and despair on the train to Treblinka, the Chassid was transformed into a pillar of song, bringing forth out of his bloodied lungs the song of the eternity of the Jewish People.**

The song spread from car to car. Every mouth that could still draw a breath joined in Reb Azriel David's *Ani Ma'amin*.

As if waking from a dream, Reb Azriel David opened his eyes to the sight of the singing train. His eyes were red from crying, his cheeks wet with tears. In a choked voice, he cried out: "I will give half of my portion in *Olam Habbah* (the World to Come) to whoever can take my song to the Moditz Rebbe!"

A hushed silence descended upon the train. Two young men appeared, promising to bring the song to the Rebbe at any cost. One of them climbed upon the other, and finding a small crack of the train's roof broke out a hole from which to escape. Poking his head out under the open sky, he said, "I see the blue heavens above us, the stars are twinkling and the moon, with a fatherly face, is looking at me."

"And what do you hear?" asked his companion. "I hear," the young man answered, "the angels on high singing *Ani Ma'amin*, and it's ascending to the seven firmaments of heaven!"

Bidding farewell to their brothers and sisters on the train, the two proceeded to jump off, one after the other. One was killed instantly from the fall. The other survived, taking the memory of the song with him. He eventually found his way to Land of Israel (perhaps to the

Moditz Rebbe's son, the author of *Imrei Aish*, who was in Tel-Aviv), and the notes were sent by mail to Rebbe Shaul Yedidya Elazar in New York.

Upon receiving the notes and having Reb Azriel David's *Ani Ma'amin* sung before him, the Moditz Rebbe said: "When they sang *Ani Ma'amin* on the death train, the pillars of the world were shaking. The Almighty said, 'Whenever the Jews will sing *Ani Ma'amin*, I will remember the six million victims and have mercy on the rest of My People.'"

It is told that on the first Yom Kippur that the Moditz Rebbe sang the *Ani Ma'amin*, there were thousands of Jews in the shul. The entire congregation burst into tears, which fell like water into the pool of tears and blood of the Jewish people. The tune soon spread throughout world Jewry.

"With this *niggun*," said Rebbe Shaul Yedidya Elazar, "the Jewish people went to the gas chambers. And with this *niggun*, the Jews will march to greet Moshiach."

*Rabbi Shaul Yedidya Elazar Taub (1886-1947), the second Moditz Rebbe, succeeded his father, Rabbi Israel, in 1920. At the outbreak of World War II he escaped Poland and made his way eventually to New York in 1940. He traveled extensively in the USA, bringing Torah and niggunim to many communities. He may have been the most prolific Chassidic composer of all time, with the total output numbering close to 1000 compositions. Some of them may be heard on the Moditz website ([www.moditz.org](http://www.moditz.org)). He was also known for his extraordinary love for the Holy Land. On his fourth and last trip there in 1947 he intended to remain and settle, but he passed away that same year. He was the last person buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem until after the Six Day War.*

*Excerpted from Yitzchak Dorfman's translation of P. Flexer's The Singing Train and Zalman Ruderman's rendition for the Hebrew weekly Sichat Hashavuah, as presented by Yrachmiel Tilles of Ascent; published and © by [www.moditz.org](http://www.moditz.org).*

The Ani Ma'amin niggun, in RealAudio format, can be heard at <http://www.moditz.org/media/animaamin03.rm>



tremendous effort to save him. As the Nazis entered Poland, the Chassidim smuggled him out of Poland to Vilna, in Lithuania, and from there he made his way across Russia to Shanghai, China, eventually arriving in America in 1940.

Meanwhile in Poland tens of thousands of Jews were being shipped off daily to their death in cattle cars that were part of the railway system. Roused from their warm beds in Warsaw in the middle of the night, husbands were separated from their wives, children wrested from the arms of their parents. The elderly were often shot on the spot, in front of their loved ones. Then the Jews were gathered and sent off in those trains to a place where their existence would no longer trouble the Nazis – to Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek.

Inside the crowded cars, over

the Moshiach; and even though he may tarry, nevertheless, I wait each day for his coming." Closing his eyes, he meditated on these words and thought, "Just now, when everything seems lost, is a Jew's faith put to the test."

It was not long before he began to hum a quiet tune to these words. There, amidst the death and despair on the train to Treblinka, the Chassid was transformed into a pillar of song, bringing forth out of his bloodied lungs the song of the eternity of the

**Are you a Parent who is CURIOUS?  
An Alumnus who is NOSTALGIC?  
A Friend who wants to LEARN MORE?  
A Student who wants to check what's up NOW?**

Visit our newly designed Chabad Website at  
[www.chabadofbinghamton.com](http://www.chabadofbinghamton.com)

Enjoy the near daily announcements, photo albums and archives, the alumni Simcha section, daily Torah thoughts and weekly magazine.



# Chabad HAPPENINGS

Israel Photos By:  
Jeremy Zenilman



## Going Home To Israel

Despite the current situation in the Middle East, Chabad of Binghamton brought one of the largest groups of students to visit Israel, this Winter break, through birthright. The students enjoyed an incredibly packed schedule of touring, fun and some study during their ten day trip. The trip is free; the experience is priceless! Students interested in Summer trips should visit [www.isralexpress.org](http://www.isralexpress.org) for application and full information.



## Kaballah Unplugged: The Power of Prayer

The Jewish Learning Institute, now in its second season at Chabad of Binghamton, is exploring the depth and power of prayer as illuminated by Jewish mystical teachings. For information about the upcoming JLI course to be offered in the Spring, contact the Chabad House.



## BU Students Help Save Lives

As part of ongoing efforts to show solidarity with the Jews in Israel, Binghamton University students, under the leadership of the Chabad House, raised \$3600 for Hatzalah in Israel, through a special raffle drive organized for this purpose. The funds donated to Hatzalah enabled the purchase of a much needed Emergency Medical Volunteer Kit which contains cutting edge equipment for emergency trauma response.

Hatzalah is one of the largest national volunteer organizations in Israel and is staffed by 1000 medics and paramedics trained by MDA professionals and other emergency medical specialists. Their goal is to respond within minutes to medical emergencies and thus help save lives. They provide urgently needed medical aid until other medical care arrives as well as evacuating injured to accepted meeting points with civil ambulances or directly to the closest hospital. They also organize first aid and CPR courses for various population groups, organize blood drives, and facilitate the receipt of rare blood rations for needy recipients. In recent years they have responded to terrorist attacks with record speed and have helped save countless lives. In response to the terror they have also undertaken a program of training civilians populations in the proper response to terrorist attacks.



Pictured above are a small group of the BU students who traveled to Israel through the Mayanot / Birthright Israel trip this winter, Rabbi Slonim and two representatives from Hatzalah that met with the students in Jerusalem to thank them and show them the Emergency Response Kit they had sponsored. The kit will be labeled the BU kit; its log will be available upon request for Binghamton students to view when they visit Israel.



Above, Josh Diamond and Meeka Levin, Chabad e-board members, call out the winning ticket numbers during the raffle drawing. In the foreground is one of the prizes, a Menorah built and donated to Chabad House by community member Niesen Luks.

Pictured (below, l-r) Gil Efrati, Raffle drive coordinator, Josh Diamond, Eric Katz, Chabad treasurer, Meeka Levin and Neil Hakimi, project coordinators.



**WAGNER'S**  
CAKES & COOKIES

46 SEMINARY AVE., BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK  
Under Rabbinical Supervision

Jim Wagner - President

**724-5550**



# Chabad Alumni News

## Mazel Tovs!

### Class of '89

■ Debbie (Kornfeld) and Adam Marchuck announce the birth of their son, Samuel Harris, September 12, 2003. He was welcomed home by older brothers Noah Miles and Jeremy Aaron.

### Class of '92

■ Paula (Safier) and Mitchell Jayson announce the birth of their daughter, Hallie Sydney, on November 25, 2003. She was welcomed home by big brother, Harris Andrew.

■ Cindy (Moskowitz) and Neil Goldstein announce the birth of their son, Ryan Barak, Shimon Reuven, on January 12, 2004.

■ Neil and Chantel Kupferman announce the birth of their daughter, Adina Rachel, February 5, Shvat 13. She was welcomed home by big sister Julia.

### Class of '94

■ Joshua David and Denise Glatter announce the birth of their daughter, Daphne Aviva, July 31, 2003.

■ Ariella (Feld) and Ari Levine announce the birth of their daughter, Michal Avital, on November 28, Kislev 3, 2003.

■ Daniel Margolis announces his engagement to Kara J. Gross; a June 2004 wedding is planned. Daniel is currently a New York based attorney, Kara will be doing a fellowship in Pediatric Gastroenterology at Harvard. They will make their home in Boston.

■ James Romano announces his engagement to Heather Posner; an August 7, 2004 wedding is planned. James is the CEO of Style Master, a New York based home furnishing business; Heather is a certified social worker who is a clinical case manager working for an insurance company. They will make their home in Queens, NY.

■ Darin and Devorah Zaga announce the birth of their son, Yissachar, on December 16, Kislev 21, 2003. He was welcomed home by siblings Yaakov, Moshe and Tova.

### Class of '95

■ David and Lisa Sakhai announce the birth of their daughter, Jessica Ilana, December 13, 2003.

■ Devorah and Darin Zaga announce the birth of their son Yissachar. See '94 for complete details.

### Class of '96

■ Noah and Malka Hochstadt announce the birth of their son, Shlomo Yaakov, on December 9, 2003.

■ Heather Posner announces her engagement to James Romano, see '94 for complete details.

### Class of '97

■ Kara J. Gross announces her engagement to Daniel Margolis, see '94 for complete details.

■ Amir and Michelle Herman announce the birth of their son, Moshe Zeev, Mason, on December 8, 2003.

■ Sherri (Zinger) and Chaim Katz announce the birth of their son, Moshe Yosef, Max, December 20, 2003.

### Class of '98

■ Adrienne (Sobel) and Aaron Shlagbaum announce the birth of their son, Chaim Yitzchak, Monday, December 1, 2003.

### Class of '99

■ Levi Dulitz announces his engagement to Jessica Gerson; a January 2005 wedding is planned. Levi is currently working as the Head Business Consultant for KOE Connections while he earns his MBA from Baruch College. Jessica graduated from Muhlenberg College with a double major in psychology and sociology and is currently earning her Masters in Elementary Education from Adelphi University. They will make their home on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

■ Lori Marin announces her engagement to Scott Bookspan; a Fall 2004 wedding is planned. Lori is an elementary school teacher, Scott has a position in sales. They will make their home on Long Island, NY.

### Class of '02

■ Shani Hauptman announces her engagement to Michael Weiss. Shani is a second year student at Brooklyn Law School, Michael works on the New York Stock Exchange. They will make their home in the NY area.

■ Abe Zicherman announces his engagement to Dana Friedman.

■ Amit and Devorah Golan announce the birth of their first-born son, Avraham Eliyahu, on January 2, 2004

**Send us your Mazel Tovs so we can share them with the world!!**  
**Get your Mazel Tov pictures posted on the website by E-mailing**  
**them to [rabbiyitz@chabadofbinghamton.com](mailto:rabbiyitz@chabadofbinghamton.com)**

## Chabad House Enjoys Memorable Shabbat with Rabbi Yaffe

For the weekend of February 6-7, Chabad House hosted Rabbi Shlomo Yaffe of West Hartford, CT. Rabbi Yaffe, a well known and beloved speaker and teacher, spoke to a full house on Friday night on Astrology, Dreams and Coincidences. On Shabbat he led a Tu B'shvat Seder based on the customs of Jewish mystics for the students. Rabbi Yaffe led a Seder again on Saturday night for members of the community.



## Chabad Goes Paintballing

A group of hardy BU students went paintballing on Sunday, February 15. the weather was cold but sunny, and a fun time was had by all!



# Get a higher score anytime, anywhere.

LSAT GMAT GRE MCAT DAT

Enroll with Kaplan and study at any of our 160 Centers nationwide—or online at [kaptest.com](http://kaptest.com).

Classes are filling fast! Call today!

World Leader in Test Prep

**KAPLAN**

1-800-KAP-TEST  
[kaptest.com](http://kaptest.com)

## Bingo Night at Chabad Cafe

Chabad's Cafe started up again this semester with Bingo Night on Thursday, February 12. Meeka Levin, Tamara Weisman and Michal Falk were some of the winners.

