



Holiday Events

Passover Guide

THE JEWISH HOLIDAY MAGAZINE

farbrenngen

Volume 12 | Issue 3

Spring 5771/2011

a little nosh for the soul

**TOP CHEF'S
ALEX REZNIK
Goes Kosher**

**Finding your
Inner**

Matza

**NEW RECIPE:
Traditional Brisket**

IN THIS ISSUE:

- New Haggadah**
- Five Star Jewish Learning**
- Glatt Kosher Music Video**
- Complete Passover How-To**





We live in a world that speaks of the indisputable right of every person to be free. It would seem that we are freer now than we've ever been.

World travel and world trade have made the globe a very cozy and friendly place. The young have conquered time and space with the World Wide Web, Internet gaming, and digital phones that send images to anyone anywhere.

But for all this prosperity and high tech, do we have that much more free time? Are you more free of your inner demons and scars, of oppressive employers or pressures? Are you more free in your relationships, free of jealousy, anger or substance abuse?

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AND INSPIRATION OF THE
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OF RIGHTEOUS MEMORY

The reality is we are all slave to something -- to work, or a relationship, to fear, or food, to a lack of discipline or too much discipline, to love or a lack of love.

The word Mitzrayim ("Egypt" in Hebrew) means limitations, and it represents all forms of constraints than inhibit our true free expression. The Jewish people's redemption from Egypt teaches us how to achieve inner freedom in our lives.

After leaving Egypt, the people had to traverse the desert for 49 days until they were ready to reach the purpose of their Exodus -- receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai. This 49 day process is the key to true freedom.

Enslavement is a habit that needs to be broken and transformed over an extended period of time -- a time that is refining and healing. So be sure to count each day, and make each day count.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, from www.meaningfullife.com

Dates, Times & Activities*

Sunday, April 17

Search for Chometz
Beginning at 8:50 pm

Monday, April 18

Burning the Chometz
(There will be a fire at The Shul
from 11:45 am - 12:14 pm)

Morning Services 7:00 am
Finish Chometz by 11:12 am
Burn until 12:14 pm
Candle lighting by 7:59 pm
Evening Services 8:00 pm

Tuesday, April 19

First day Pesach

Morning services 9:30 am followed by
Kiddush Nosh
Community Seder at The Shul 7:30pm
Candle lighting 9:03 pm

Wednesday, April 20

Second day Pesach
Morning service 9:30 am followed by
Kiddush Nosh

Yom Tov ends 9:04 pm
Evening Services 8:00 pm

Thursday, April 21

Intermediate Day
Morning Service 7:00 am

Friday, April 22

Shabbat Services

Evening Services 6:30 pm
Light Candles at 8:04 pm

Saturday, April 23

Intermediate Day
Morning Service 9:30 am followed by
Kiddush
Shabbat ends at 9:08 pm

Sunday, April 24

Intermediate Day
Sunday Morning Services 8:30 am
Sunday Evening light candles 8:06 pm
Evening Services 6:30 pm

Monday, April 25

Seventh Day of Pesach

Morning Services 9:30 am followed by
Kiddush Nosh
Evening services 6:30 pm
Light candles after 9:10 pm

Tuesday, April 26

Last Day of Pesach

Services including Yizkor

Moshiach Seudah
(A Chassidic custom to dedicate this
day to the Ultimate Redemption - may
it be speedily in our days)

Morning Services 9:30 am followed by
Kiddush Nosh

Yizkor services 11:00 am

Evening Services and Moshiach
Seudah 7:30 pm at the Shemtov
Residence. RSVP required.

Passover ends 9:12 pm

*Times are for Metro Detroit region.



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The Jewish Holiday Magazine

||>> Spring 2011

is a publication of:

The Shul-Chabad Lubavitch
Jack & Miriam Shenkman Building

Published four times a year

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West Bloomfield, MI 48322
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LETTER FROM THE RABBI <<|

Dearest Reader,

Passover is not merely the commemoration of our historical liberation from the hands of our Egyptian taskmasters, but a powerful tool to help us free ourselves from our own limitations – real or imagined – in our own daily lives.

Easier said than done. Change can be an arduous journey with seemingly insurmountable obstacles – pitfalls and pit-bulls.

So we employ strategy: I'll add this; get rid of that. I'll cut here; paste there. This for today; that for tomorrow. But for all our reckoning, we end as shreds on our own cutting floor – overanalyzed and deconstructed; therapy leaving us not just broke, but broken.

But Pesach means “pass over,” commemorating how G-d “skipped” over the homes of the Jews when plaguing the Egyptian first-born. That same non-linear energy is renewed in potent form each year on Passover and is accessible to every Jew regardless of observance or spiritual development year-round.

Pesach affords us the opportunity to tap into a higher energy, one not limited by the usual constraints of in-step progress. It enables us to skip along the path of self-liberation, making leaps and bounds in our forward growth.

Year round we can get caught up in strategy, but Pesach comes once a year to tell us: Enough wrestling with your self. Stop trying to subdue, mold and channel. Enough with the sophisticated self-help doctrines. Blockage? Obstacle? Formidable foe? Just pass over.

No explanations or modifiers. Get in touch with the pain, with the void, and simply cry.

Wishing you and yours a Kosher and joyous Passover,

Sincerely,

Rabbi Kasriel Shemtov

Spiritual Director

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Kong, China 852-2523-9770
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The four questions in Ecuador:

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www.jabad.org.ec

Bitter herbs in Kfar Saba:

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3568 www.chabadks.co.il

The afikoman in Perth:

Chabad of Perth 396 Alexander Drive
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www.chabadwa.org

DECODING THE SIGNS

In today's world, unless you live on a farm and milk your own cows, you will have to rely on commercially processed foods. Now, for those interested in buying kosher products, it is helpful to have a rabbi who is knowledgeable about Jewish Dietary Laws examine the food to make sure it is kosher. Kosher symbols assist kosher consumers by differentiating between kosher and non-kosher items. Here are a few tips on reading the signs.



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Kosher for Passover



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Cholov Yisroel



Have You Met Rabbi Pickle?

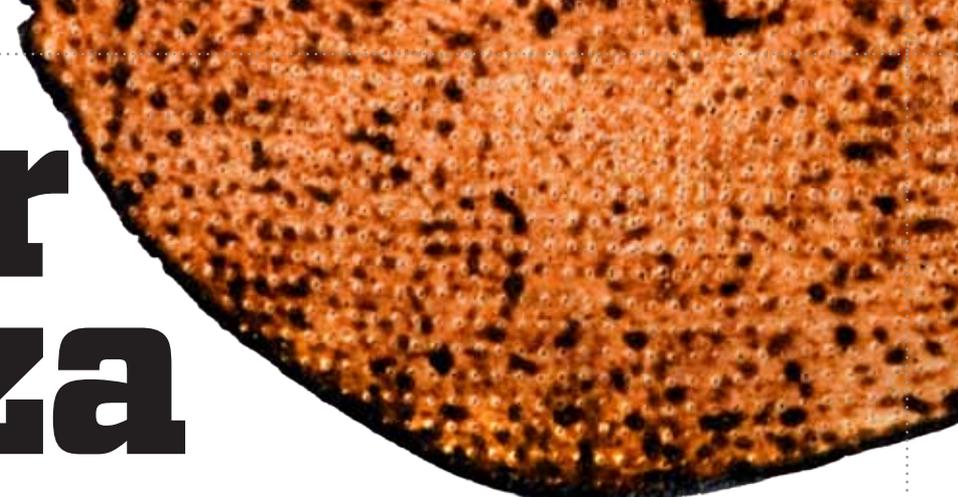
The OK Kosher Certification is one of the world's most respected symbols. Under the leadership of Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, the OK symbol can be seen on Snapple, Kraft, ConAgra and Tropicana. Among various different community programs, the ok has sponsored an educational program to teach the basics of kosher to thousands across the country. Joining up with Rabbi Pickle and the Traveling Kosher Pickle Factory, the OK plans to bring kosher education to a kitchen near you. For more information visit RabbiPickle.com or www.ok.org



A KOSHERIN UN FREILACHEN PESACH!

Passover is almost here. That special time of year that brings your family together just wouldn't be the same without the traditional matzah balls, gefilte fish and macaroons. But Passover doesn't have to be limited to just these staples. Kroger has more variety than ever this Passover so you can save big on all the kosher essentials and specialty items for your holiday Seders and meals. Visit a Kroger near you, today.





FINDING YOUR

Inner Matza

BY URI LAIO

An avid fermentation hobbyist walks us through the basic “Leavening” process and explores the holiday of Passover in a whole new way.

Passover is the one holiday on which Jews are required to become obsessed with food.

This is actually a unique opportunity, since as modern Americans we usually do not have to think about where our food comes from, or the far-reaching effects of our food choices.

For instance, when I buy a hamburger, I don't think about how the grain that fed the cow was grown on a vast monoculture farm using synthetic fertilizers.

I don't dwell on how the runoff from these fertilizers and the waste from the cow farm are creating a massive dead zone off the coast of Texas.

I don't even want to think about how my hamburger bun is made from those same grains. In short, most of us don't usually analyze our food choices.

Which brings us back to Passover.

On Passover we are commanded not to eat any leavened bread (chametz) or even to own any leaven. Some people don't eat any processed food during Passover for fear that a small amount of leaven might have inadvertently entered the food production process.

But what is leaven exactly? The leaven of Passover is yesteryear's yeast; or as Henry David Thoreau described it in Walden “the soul of bread, the spiritus which fills its cellular tissue.”

More accurately, leaven is yeast and bacteria in the form of a wet, bubbly mixture of flour and water used to make traditional leavened bread; or what we today refer to as sourdough. Coincidentally, the ancient Hebrew word for leaven is “se'or,” which sounds very similar to the word sour.

However, it is interesting that the yeast, which ferments dough into leavened bread, is basically the same yeast that turns grape juice into wine. Yet leavened bread is forbidden during Passover, while wine is an essential element of the Passover Seder.

As an avid fermentation hobbyist, having a deeper understanding of bread and wine helps me understand this difference.

Leaven is constantly bubbling as the yeast within it metabolizes the simple sugars in the mixture into carbon dioxide. This is what causes bread to rise. On Passover, we approach this air-filled bread as a metaphor for our own egos, while the flat matzah represents humility.

There is a well-known phrase from Ecclesiastes 1:2: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” In Hebrew, the word for vanity (hevel) also means breath or breeze, emphasizing the connection between vanity and airiness. On Passover, we try to rid ourselves completely of any self-serving ego.

On the other hand, the winemaking process is a process of refinement. Yeast produces carbon dioxide bubbles during the wine fermentation process as well ...but those bubbles escape.

What remains is a cultured drink, much more complex and refined than the original grape juice. For this reason, our sages teach that the four glasses of wine we drink at the Passover seder are in memory of the four phrases of redemption that G-d used when taking us out of Egypt.

Out of these four phrases, wine is especially connected to the fourth when G-d said, “I will take you to Me as a People.” The fulfillment of this level of redemption only came about at the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, an event for which we had to prepare and refine ourselves.

Paradoxically, the same yeast affects both the bread and the wine, but engenders a totally different change. And perhaps this is the message.

Our sages teach that we have a powerful energy within us, which naturally pushes us in the direction it wishes to go. If we feed into it, we end up with a bloated ego.

If, on the other hand, we use this energy for our own self-refinement, we develop fine character traits and we merit that the Torah should be given to each one of us personally.

Here's another paradox!

If bread is bad and represents an inflated ego, why did we offer two loaves of leavened bread in the Holy Temple on Shavuot – only 50 days after Passover?

Because Shavuot commemorates the giving of the Torah, which corresponds to the fourth phrase of redemption, “I will take you to Me as a People.”

On Shavuot, the bread is synonymous with self-refinement to the point that even the ego itself has been refined and is now used for holiness.

This Passover, may we experience our own personal redemption from any and all parts of ourselves; from those negative emotions which hold us back from achieving our full potential.

May our personal redemption lead to the full and final collective redemption of our people ... with the coming of Moshiach very soon.

Laio is a UC Santa Cruz graduate and Mayanot Yeshiva alumnus. He has volunteered on numerous organic farms and participated in Adamah: The Jewish Environmental Fellowship. In his spare time, you can find him fermenting or gardening.

Lauri Burns is the author of *Punished for Purpose* and the founder of The Teen Project. She lives in Southern California.

Slavery to Freedom

BY FAY KRANZ GREENE

This woman was beaten and left for dead, yet, miraculously, she turned her life around and became a source of life and inspiration to thousands. Meet a nice Jewish girl named Lauri Burns.



If it takes an entire village to raise a child, how many people does it take to save a child?

Sometimes, it takes just one ordinary person, one young woman, one kindred soul who cares enough to make a difference.

Lauri Burns, 47 was raised in a typical middle class home on Long Island. "I was a skinny little thing" she says "I grew up Jewish, went to Hebrew School, became Bat Mitzvahed. We looked like a normal family on the outside."

But, behind the fancy double doors, away from public view, the little girl was being re-

her childhood abuse and with that freedom, came the realization that she no longer needed drugs.

Upon her release, Lauri started a support group for women with addictions in her home. She offered to care for one little girl while her crack-addicted mother got clean, but the woman never came back for the child. So Lauri applied to be a foster parent and after a long seven year wait, she was awarded custody.

"After that, people just started bringing me more children" she says. "I got a larger home,

darkest places."

"I realized that my working with the kids was not only a desire, but a responsibility, and that when I asked people for help, which I didn't really like to do, I was giving them an opportunity to do a Mitzvah."

Rabbi Marcus helped her put a Mezuzah on the Teen Project house and a few weeks ago, Lauri visited '770', the world headquarters of Chabad, where she "prayed and made a commitment to light Shabbat candles."

The therapist calmly asked: "When did you first become suicidal?"
It was precisely at that moment that I realized that I had no recollection of ever wanting to live. As far back as I could remember, I wanted to die.

Excerpt from *Punished for Purpose* (Savannah Star Publishing) by Laurie Burns.

peatedly beaten by her father. "The abuse escalated then and a neighbor saw it happening" said Lauri. "My father told the police I was trying to kill him. I was too scared to object and I was taken to a mental hospital and put into a straightjacket. By the time I left the hospital, my spirit was broken."

Lauri began a downward spiral; juvenile hall, IV drugs. One night she was severely beaten by two men and left for dead on the side of a canyon road. She never wanted anyone's help, but that night, completely broken, she finally accepted it.

Her 'angel' took her to a recovery home where she was at long last able to speak about

got married, had a daughter of my own and our family just kept on growing."

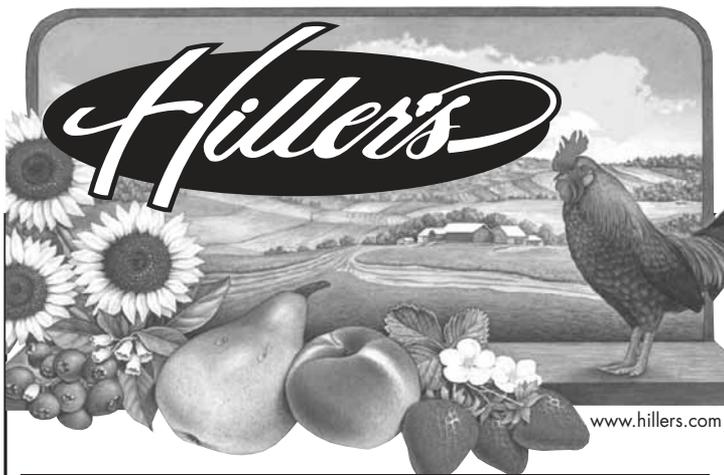
And so, the Teen Project was born. Lauri started asking friends for money to create resources for teens in need. "The Teen Project is a parent to the parentless" says Lauri "and with G-d's help, we will bring them all home."

Invoking G-d's name comes naturally to Lauri these days. Two years ago, Rabbi Zalman Marcus of Chabad in Mission Viejo invited her to come to a beginner's class. "I started going every week" says Lauri "and I learned so much from him. He told me that every time I do a Mitzvah, I bring G-d's light down and that we all have a responsibility to bring that light to the

One of Lauri's foster children, a pre-med student, is Jewish. Raised by a Spanish family, she never even knew she was Jewish. When she saw Lauri going to Chabad, she asked if she could come along. "Now she always wants to come" says Lauri proudly "and she wants a Bat Mitzvah."

I asked her what she would say to a teenager who is in that same dark place she was in those many years ago?

"I would tell them, know that you are perfect and everything you went through was for a reason. Know that you have not walked this path in vain. G-d will use you to help others that have fallen,and you will be their angel."



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YOUR COMPREHENSIVE PASSOVER GUIDE

YOUR TOTAL SEDER KNOW-HOW



THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU PASSOVER

Before Passover

It is forbidden to eat Chametz—all leavened foods that contain wheat, barley, oats, rye or spelt—on Passover. So collect products containing Chametz and isolate them in a designated “Chametz Closet.” Then clear the house of any possible remaining Chametz: empty clothes pockets, vacuum cleaner bags, even the pet food goes into the Closet. Since you’ll use a separate set of dishes for Passover, the Chametz dishes get locked up too. Now stock up on Kosher-for-Passover items; for good leads on Passover foods check out www.ok.org.

Chametz for Sale Because it is even prohibited to “own” Chametz during Passover, lock your “Chametz Closet” and sell its contents to a non-Jew by filling out a “Mechirat Chometz” form. Sound complicated? It is, so ask your Rabbi to make the arrangements. Or log on to www.chabad.org to sell your Chometz online.

4/17 Search for the Chametz

At nightfall begin the “formal search” of the house for Chametz. Traditionally, we use a candle to light the way, a spoon (as a shovel), feather (as a broom) and a paper bag to collect any Chametz found. After the search, place everything you found in a conspicuous place to be burned in the morning.

4/18 Fast of the Firstborn

When G-d slew the firstborn of Egypt, he spared the firstborn sons of Israel. Out of gratitude all firstborn sons fast on this day.

// **PREPARE TO CELEBRATE** Stock up on Seder foods well before Passover begins. But wait. To build an appetite for the Seder abstain from eating any Seder plate foods today, especially Matza. So if you’re a lover of bitter herbs and raw onions, stay out of the kitchen.

// **BURNING OF THE CHAMETZ** In the morning burn all the Chametz found during the previous night’s formal search.

// **MAKING NOTHING INTO A BIG DEAL** After cleaning the house, and selling

continued at end of guide

“Maror alludes to the wicked, while matza refers to the righteous. Hillel, the great Jewish sage known for his compassion, instructed the righteous to reach out and draw the wicked closer.”

THE 15 STEPS OF THE PASSOVER SEDER

A CHASIDIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE SEDER



*The Footsteps of Faith:
Elijah will herald the
good tidings of the
coming of Moshiach,
may it be soon,*

Amen.

THE FOUR SONS

A Personality Assessment



STEP 1: KADESH (SANCTIFY)

Bless the first cup of wine. // Kadesh, which means “set aside,” begins the Seder by affirming our desire to elevate this night above all that is mundane. With it we declare to ourselves and all that are present that this is “The Season of Our Freedom.” To stress this point, we recline to the left when drinking, as only free people did in ancient times. // The blessing is a spiritual wake-up call placed with the hope that we will open ourselves to the divine possibilities that await us.

STEP 2: URCHATZ (WASH)

Wash the hands (in the ritual manner but without reciting a blessing). // As the first step on the journey to freedom, we sublimate spiritual distractions by purifying our hands, the most active part of our body, with water. // The Kabbalah teaches that hands represent expressions and attributes, while water epitomizes intellect and purity. Washing refines our attributes with intellect, enabling restrictions to turn into benevolence, hate into love, and personal slavery into freedom. // The observance, one of many during the Seder intended to pique the interest of children, awakens the innocence within each of us.

STEP 3: KARPAS (VEGETABLES)

Recite the appropriate blessing for vegetables, then dip the Karpas vegetable in saltwater before eating it. // In the saltwater we can taste the tears of anguish and despair our ancestors shed as their spirits were crushed in Egypt. // When rearranged, the word Karpas alludes to the word Perech, or “crushing labor.” Our people were forced to perform senseless tasks in Egypt, endless drudgery without meaning, purpose or goal. // Why, some 3,000 years later, do mindless routines and habits, or careers driven by the need for status, still dominate our lives so often?

STEP 4: YACHATZ (BREAKING)

The middle matza (of the 3) is broken in two pieces. The larger piece, designated as the Afikoman, is wrapped and hidden away for the children to discover. // The smaller broken piece, the “bread of poverty,” takes center stage while retelling the story of the Exodus. It personifies the spiritual



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Despite his intelligence, the Wise Son insists on asking the same question year after year. He's also obsessive about the discussion thing, making it rather difficult to get on with the Seder. // A fun guy to have around, the **Wicked Son's** cynicism is driven by his need to fit things into his down-to-earth world. Sitting next to his wise brother, he injects spice into the evening with his snide and provocative comments. // Out there in a world of silent amazement, the **Simple Son** is a transparent channel for the Infinite. If only he could tell us about it. // **The Son Who Doesn't Know How to Question** probably thinks he is the wise son. When you know it all, there's nothing left to ask. He's not in the photo, because he doesn't even know it's Passover. // **The Fifth Son** is the most important one. He's the son who has yet to experience the freedom of Passover.

and material destitution our people endured in Egypt once they no longer grasped the meaning of true freedom. By relating to their plight, we feel what is broken in our own humanity. At the same time, when the children hide the Afikoman we sense the larger dimension of our being, the part of our soul never touched by slavery that waits to be discovered.

STEP 5: MAGGID (TELLING)

“Tell your children G-d took you out of Egypt.” Fill the second cup of wine, then retell the story of our rise from the depths of bondage to the heights of redemption. // Maggid begins with the children asking, “Why is this night different from all other nights?” The question can put us in touch with the innocence of children as we contemplate the dynamics of liberation. // Are we eating the matzah out of habit, or because we are ready to embrace its significance? Are we observing these rituals to assuage guilt, or to actualize the desire to live a more meaningful life? // When we allow the events in the Maggid to touch us to the core, we reveal the candor that children hold dear. At the conclusion of Maggid, we savor the second glass.

STEP 6: RACHTZAH (WASHING)

Wash the hands and recite the blessing, Ahl Netilat Yadayim (on the lifting of the hands). // We prepare to internalize the humble nature of matza by uplifting our extremities and expressions. // In its literal sense, the word netila means to move something from one place to another. With this blessing we remove the physicality and vulgarity that may dwell in and around the hands, raising them up for what is to follow.

STEP 7: MOTZI (BLESSING OVER BREAD)

Hold the broken half-matza and two whole ones while reciting the appropriate blessing for bread, hamotzie leh-chem min ha-aretz. // The word lechem (bread) contains



the same letters as lochem (war). Food is raw energy that holds the potential for either good or evil. Thus, a spiritual battle ensues every time it is consumed. If the purpose in eating is solely to gratify physical cravings, evil prevails. However, when eating to gain energy with which to better serve G-d, good prevails.

STEP 8: MATZA (BLESSING THE MATZA)

Return the bottom matza to the Seder plate. Holding the remaining one and one-half matzot, recite the blessing for eating matza, ahl ah-chilat matza. // Our ancestors fled Egypt with inconceivable haste, leaving no time for the dough that would nourish them to rise. Once

free, their first taste was the “bread of poverty,” matza. From a mystical viewpoint, matza exemplifies a selfless ego. It was with this trait, rather than arrogance, that they accepted G-d-given freedom. Humility allowed them to appreciate the gifts of life. After the blessing, recline to the left and eat at least one ounce of matza.

STEP 9: MAROR (BITTER HERBS)

Take at least 3/4 ounce of bitter herbs and dip it in the charoset, shake off the excess, and recite the blessing ahl ah-chilat maror before eating. // Having meditated on the bitterness of exile during Maggid, we now physically experience its force. The impact further clarifies the significance of our exile. // Before we can experience true freedom we have to internalize the might of our hardship—and accept that when we make the right choices, hardship exists only to make us stronger.

STEP 10: KORECH (SANDWICH)

Break off two pieces of the bottom matza (at least one ounce). Take 3/4 ounce of maror, dip it in charoset and shake off the excess. Place the maror between the two pieces of matza and say, “Thus did Hillel do in the time of the Holy Temple...” Recline while eating. // Maror alludes to the wicked, while matza refers to the righteous. Hillel, the great Jewish sage known for his compassion, instructed the righteous to reach out and draw the wicked closer. // Likewise, now that we have felt what it means to break free of slavery on a personal level, it is our obligation to share the experience with others.

STEP 11: SHULCHAN ORECH (FESTIVE MEAL)

In many traditions the meal begins by

dipping the hard-boiled egg from the Seder plate in saltwater to symbolize our constant mourning for the destruction of the Holy Temple, and to allude to G-d's desire to redeem His people. "Ess, mein khind!" // Across the community and throughout the world, we are together at the Seder table. The wise, the wicked, the simple and the innocent, all equal in the eyes of each other and the eyes of G-d. And we remember the fifth son—he who has not yet experienced the freedom of Passover. We are united as one in the common goal of redemption.

STEP 12: TZAFUN (HIDDEN)

At the conclusion of the Passover meal, children return the Afikoman. Eat at least one ounce of this matzah. Nothing else except the remaining two cups of wine is consumed thereafter. // It was necessary to partake in every step, every ritual, every taste and every thought before the Afikoman is revealed; then, we can become one with its Divine potential. We eat it only when completely satiated because it fulfills a need higher than the hunger for freedom, and we eat nothing afterward so that its taste remains with us. // In the Seder, as with everyday life, there are no shortcuts to the greater dimension. Yet we are always aware that it is present and yearns to reveal itself when we seek with a pure heart.

STEP 13: BEIRACH (GRACE AFTER MEAL)



Recite the blessing over the third cup of wine, then drink while reclining. In anticipation of our Ultimate Redemption, we now fill a special goblet, the Cup of Elijah. We then open the door to the house and, holding a lit candle, recite the passage inviting the Prophet Elijah to appear. // Imagine all of creation in a state of spiritual and material freedom. Think about a world free of pain and suffering, war and struggles. Imagine all of existence at this level. Imagine yourself, the light of a single candle, ushering in the era of our redemption.

STEP 14: HALLEL (SONGS OF PRAISE)

We offer praise to G-d for his mercy and compassion in redeeming our people from Egypt, and in anticipation of our own ultimate redemption. // Why does G-d need us to praise Him? He doesn't, we do. As the Kabbalah explains, when we praise His kindness we reveal His compassion. When praying for our needs, we evoke His desire to give.

STEP 15: NIRTZAH (ACCEPTED)

The Seder concludes with the wish, L'shana Ha-ba-ah Bi-Yerushalayim. We hope for each other that which our forefathers prayed for while enslaved in Egypt, "Next Year in Jerusalem!" // Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi omitted the passage, "The order of Passover is concluded," from his Haggadah because the Seder's message remains timeless. Every day, one leaves Egypt by transcending his limitations, to reach higher levels of holiness.

and burning the Chametz, the head of the household says the appropriate prayers, verbally disowning any Chametz that might have been overlooked.

4/18 Time to Seder At sundown candles are lit. At nightfall the Seder begins.

4/19 Brighten Up Before the second Seder begins candles are lit after nightfall from a pre-existing flame. Tonight we begin to count the Omer, which lasts for 49 days. What's the Omer? In the Holy Temple the Omer was an offering of barley taken from the first grain of the new crop. We count seven weeks, from the bringing of the first Omer offering (Passover) until the day we received the Torah (the Festival of Shavuot). The 49 days between Passover and Shavuot represent the 49 steps of mystical self-purification and preparation our people went through between leaving Egypt (Passover) and receiving the Torah (Shavuot).

Four Intermediates Only In between the first two and last two days of Passover, go ahead and function relatively normally. The only exception is, like your mother keeps telling you, you shouldn't work too hard. But keep the wine flowing; it's a custom to drink a glass of wine every day of Passover.

4/24 And On The Seventh Day At sundown light candles. This day marks the Miracle of the Splitting of the Sea and our total liberation from Egypt. In commemoration, we stay up all night studying Torah.

4/25 The Finals After nightfall light candles from a pre-existing flame. This day, the final day of Passover, emphasizes an even higher level of freedom. It is dedicated to our imminent and Final Redemption.

4/26 Last But Not Least Yizkor memorial prayers are recited during services. Following the custom of the Ba'al Shem Tov, Passover concludes with a "Feast of Moshiach"—a festive meal complete with Matza and, yes, four cups of wine. It begins before sunset and is designed to greet Moshiach, offering us "a glimpse of the Messianic age." Nightfall marks the official conclusion of Passover. Wait an hour to give the Rabbi enough time to buy back your Chametz and then, eat Chametz to your heart's content.

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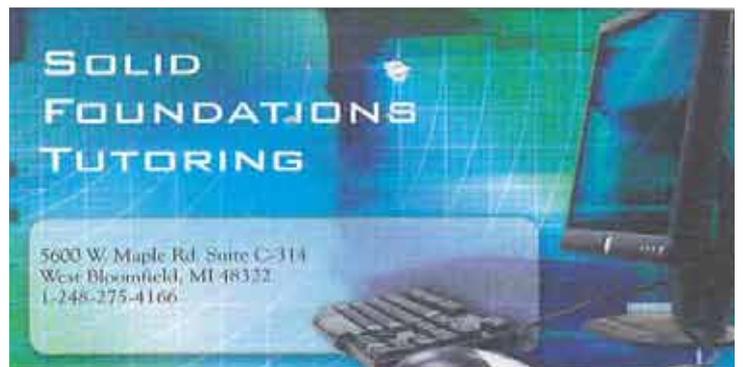


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Brisket Anyone?



BY RASHI BRASHEVITZKY



Many people complain and kvetch as Passover rolls around. They grumble about cleaning their homes, they whine about all the cooking and they fuss about the lack of their favorite foods. While I don't like cleaning anymore than the next person, I truly love Passover.

Each year when Passover comes to visit, it gives me an opportunity to reflect on the great miracles G-d performed for the Jewish nation in Egypt and throughout history. When I read about the slavery of the Jewish people, it is a good reminder to be thankful for our freedom.

When the Passover story took place, G-d commanded the Jewish people to clean their homes of Chametz (leavened foods). He also commanded that forever after Jewish people should eat no Chametz and of course eat Matzah during the Passover holiday.

While it is true that our regular diets contain lots of Chametz, Passover foods don't need to be boring or tasteless. In my family we use very few prepared products and primarily use eggs, fish, meat, chicken and lots of fruits of vegetables. With all of the restrictions, we still manage to find foods we love and eat more than necessary.

One of our favorite Passover foods is brisket.

Here's the recipe. Enjoy!

Traditional Brisket

- 1 whole brisket
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Salt to taste

Place brisket into a large pan. Chop onions and add to the pan. Drizzle the olive oil, balsamic vinegar and lemon juice, sprinkle some salt onto the brisket. Cover tightly with aluminum foil.

Bake on 325 for 4 1/2 hours

Rashi Brashevitzky loves to cook, but hates following recipes. That's why she started her popular website www.unrecipes.blogspot.com. Rashi lives in Norfolk, Virginia.

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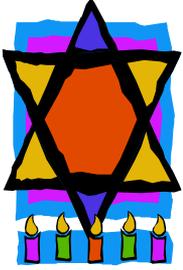
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Rich Insights Into Poor Man's Bread

Kehot Publication Society has released a new edition of the Haggadah with commentary covering “the body and soul” of the ancient text and rituals. Bedecked with original artwork and modern design, this new edition provides a basic understanding of the Haggadah as well as Midrashic and mystical insights.

Just before the telling of the Exodus story, we break the middle matzah in two, a larger piece and a smaller piece. These two pieces embody two starkly different realities. The small piece is the “poor man’s bread” reminding us of our enslavement; the larger piece is the afikoman, which must be eaten at the end of the meal, like a desert, in the manner of the rich who continue eating even after having eaten their fill.

This duality of the middle matzah reflects the duality that runs throughout the Seder: On the one hand we are celebrating freedom—drinking wine, reclining—yet at the same time reliving the bitterness of the slavery. The matzah itself is both the bread of slaves and the poor, and at the same time “the bread of faith” and “bread of healing.” But it is in the middle matzah that this contrast is most stark, since the same matzah contains two seemingly contradictory elements.

How is it that these very different elements—poverty and wealth—should find a home in the same matzah? The answer is that it is precisely the poverty and the struggle, the small and broken pieces of life, which bring “the larger piece” to the fore.

When we look around the world today, or at times even at ourselves, we may see spiritual poverty and brokenness. We may find it hard to imagine that there is another piece to this very “matzah”—a hidden piece ready to emerge. But the story of the Exodus tells us to be optimistic: For despite the depths of darkness that engulfed us in Egypt, we were, in a matter of moments, transported into the historic and unparalleled spiritual revelations of the Exodus. In truth, despite the darkness that we perceive, there is an undercurrent of goodness and Divine awareness that permeates the world.

We have studied the “poor man’s bread” for long enough; it is time for the afikoman of history to make its appearance.

—From a 1960 address by the Lubavitcher Rebbe

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TOP CHEF Goes Kosher

Meet the man who brought Borscht to Bravo's award-winning "Top Chef." Fay Kranz Greene talked with Alex Reznik about his Jewish roots and how a young Russian Jew made it to Primetime TV.

Q&A with Chef Alex Reznik ■■■

Your Russian grandmother was a strong influence in your life. Did she also impact your love of cooking?

Watching my grandmother cook in our Brooklyn kitchen was an integral part of my early life. She prepared the traditional Russian/Jewish dishes; gefilte fish, kasha varnishkes, borscht, lots of traditional dishes for the Holidays. I can't make them as well as she did, but I keep trying.

It's quite an accomplishment to get selected to appear on Top Chef. What's the process like?

More than a year ago, when I was the executive chef at Ivan Kane, they came into the restaurant and asked if I wanted to be in the competition. Thousands of people apply and it's a rigorous process. You meet and you talk and you send them a video, kind of like 'a day in the life of' and you fill out forms and background checks and answer endless questions. And you also have to prepare good food. In the end it comes down to only 18 applicants and I got chosen. You had to live with those 17 other people in pretty close quarters for several weeks.

Your first challenge on the show was to 'bring your history to your plate'. That's a lovely concept.

Yes, it's the first thing we had to think about. How to celebrate our differences and how our lives af-

fect the foods we prepare. I decided to duplicate my Russian ancestor's cooking but with a twist. I did my mother's borscht, but I deconstructed it. So instead of soup, it became braised short ribs with beets. It was one of the judge's favorites.... I almost won that round.



With the recent opening of La Seine, your new, gorgeous, ultra chic, glatt kosher meat restaurant in Beverly Hills, you've taken on another major challenge. How scary is that?

When the owner came to me with the concept, I was skeptical at first. I was thinking 'can kosher food be good?' But then I thought, hey, my mother's food is delicious and it's kosher. We don't mix meat and milk in the traditional Russian dishes I was brought up on, so 90% of the food is pretty much kosher by nature. I began to come up with concepts that don't utilize butter or cream, I cut down the amount of salt because kosher meat is sometimes too salty and decided to use fresh,

seasonal products only. Some restaurants don't change their menus seasonally and some never change their menus at all. I like to eat home grown food in season that's bought from local vendors and local farms and I like my fish to be the freshest in town. In the end, we developed a California bistro kosher cuisine.

Pareve desserts were more of a challenge, but we came up with a few amazing choices using coconut and soy milk, everything natural. Chocolate soufflé, challah bread pudding, warm apple crisp...everything completely new and different. We've only been open a short while so far and people have already come back a second time. Baruch Hashem, it will be great.

You've said that you were a skinny kid growing up, but you loved to eat and that's how you became a chef. Is that good advice for young people today - to do what they love?

Absolutely, I would tell them if they have a passion, pursue it. My mother wanted me to be a doctor or a lawyer. I'm really glad I didn't listen.

Russian born Alex Reznik 33, was a contestant on the popular show "Top Chef" on Bravo. He is currently the executive chef at La Seine Bar & Grill, a brand new glatt kosher restaurant in Beverly Hills



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For Robin Guttman, an attorney from Dix Hills, NY, it was a truly life-changing experience. "The accommodations were breathtaking and I was enthralled by the teachers. They were so giving of themselves. There were amazing programs. They

even had a comedian – I don't remember ever laughing so hard. I learned how to make Challah, which I had never done before. And there was a Havdalah service with 600 people!"

"So many things have changed in my life just from the knowledge that I've gained there and from being in that atmosphere for five days." says Robin. "They teach you how to elevate yourself and everyone you love. That's something I've taken home with me."

The 2011 Jewish National Retreat will take place at the luxurious Hyatt Regency in Old Greenwich, Connecticut, August 16th through the 21st, 2011. For more information or to register, visit www.jretreat.com or call (877) JRETREAT.

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HOW TO ESCAPE YOUR PERSONAL EGYPT

BY RABBI SHAIS TAUB

National Public Radio dubbed Rabbi Taub as the “Expert in Jewish mysticism and the Twelve Steps” for his work with the Jewish recovery community in Milwaukee where he lived for six years. He was recently selected to deliver the keynote address “G-d and Recovery” at the First Annual Conference on the Evolution of Addiction Treatment in Los Angeles.

There’s a saying in recovery, “Don’t tell G-d how big your addiction is; tell your addiction how big G-d is.”

Addiction – like all emotional dysfunction – is essentially an obsession with power. A created being wants to have Creator-like power and finds it in the altering of his or her state by indulging in the addictive behavior.

In simple terms which I think apply to all of us – we don’t like the way reality is treating us so we use all of our talents and skills to try to get reality and everyone in it, to behave the way we would like them to.

But if we are honest with ourselves, and addicts rarely are, our quest to exert G-d-like control of people, places and things breeds chaos rather than order, contempt rather than harmony, self-hatred rather than self-respect.

The solution of course, is to surrender the desire for control. But surrender to what? Ask yourself the following question: Is the G-d I believe in powerful enough for me to rely on, so I can stop relying on myself? Recovery from addiction is all about surrendering to a Higher Power.

Just the other day, I received a call from a young man who had been in and out of recov-

ery for about a year but had not managed to stay clean for any significant length of time. He told me that he desperately needed to believe in a Higher Power but that he lacked the background to be able to figure out who or what that was.

I asked him to describe for me the G-d of his understanding. He said that G-d was compassionate, just, and wise. “Yes, G-d is all those things” I said “but you left out the most important one.” He grappled mightily to find the magic word that I was waiting to hear, but to no avail. So I finally said to him: “You say that you came to me because you wanted to find your Higher Power. If your Higher Power is G-d, then why don’t you mention that G-d is powerful?”

I explained to him that the mystical teachings of Chassidus are replete with analogies and examples illustrating how G-d did not just create the world but that He continues to exert absolute control over every detail of reality.

I told him about the Jewish mystical concept of “ongoing creation,” that even now, G-d is bringing the universe into existence out of absolute void and nothingness. In the lingo of recovery, “Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in G-d’s world by mistake” (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 417).

Unfortunately, my young friend could not accept G-d as Power. The last I heard from him, he was still trying to figure out G-d—and he was still trying to get sober!

I think this may be the reason that the practice of religion by itself is usually inadequate in treating addiction. One can be religious, believe in G-d and even practice some form of devotion to Him, but if one does not see G-d as Power, then there is nothing to which the addict can surrender control.

While there may be many religions or belief systems that view G-d as the archetype of such abstractions as Love, Wisdom, and Peace, the G-d that relieves us from the obsession to control reality must be a G-d of Power.

G-d Al-mighty

My teacher, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, of blessed memory, delivered most of his public addresses in Yiddish. But whenever he spoke in English, he would refer to G-d with the somewhat unusual phrase “G-d Al-mighty” although this was not a direct translation from the Yiddish.

I think the Rebbe was trying to tell us something!

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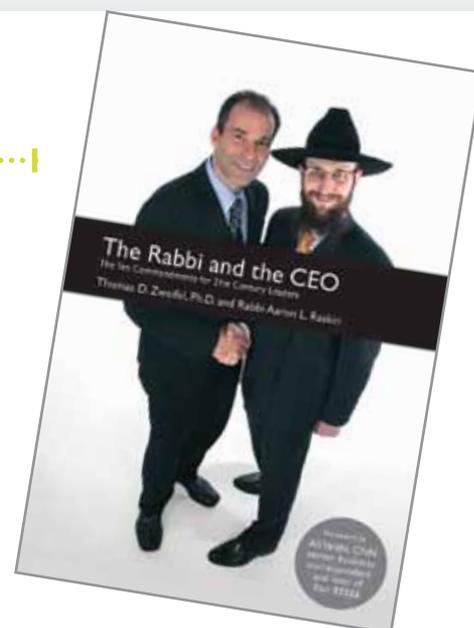
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The Rabbi & the CEO

BY THOMAS D. ZWEIFEL, PH.D. AND RABBI AARON L. RASKIN

On the day immediately following the September 11 attacks in 2001, Dr. Zweifel and Rabbi Raskin met at an informal public memorial on the Brooklyn Promenade. Though both men came to mourn and to connect with their fellow New Yorkers, the two forged an especially close bond thanks to Zweifel's decades of cross-cultural and communications experience and Raskin's dynam-

ic representation of Chabad's renowned Jewish outreach program. They soon found themselves collaborating with and coaching each other: the Rabbi helping the CEO step back to maintain focus, the CEO helping the Rabbi with strategic direction and leadership challenges. This friendship soon produced *The Rabbi and the CEO*.



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Chasidic Fiction

by Moshe Friedman

Friday's snow had turned to slippery ice. // You know, you could get a ticket for not shoveling the sidewalk in front of your house. // And it was already Sunday night. // It was a cold night in Brooklyn. // I had spent all day at the yeshiva studying Torah. // I better work fast. // Water can get pretty tough when it freezes. // Whack, Whack.

I was making little progress. // The vibrations of metal smashing chipped rock tingled my hands. // Whack, Whack. // The brick houses in the background were slowly fading away. // Whack, Whack. // The parked jeep and lamppost were already gone. // Whack, Whack. // The voices were getting louder. // Work Jew. // Work! // The soldiers barked at me from under their warm fur hats. // Whack, Whack. // I needed the Kleenex from my jacket

pocket. // But it was gone. // The KGB officer had taken it from me last week. // Juvenile delinquents don't deserve it he said. // Whack, Whack. // C'mon Moshe hurry up or I'll make you use your hands. // My name is not Moshe. // My grandfather's name was Moshe. // In 1928 he was caught learning the forbidden Torah and was sent to Siberia. // Whack, Whack. // I began to pray. // I did not ask for liberation or a hot coffee. // I prayed that my grandchild would continue the fight. // I did my eight-hour work shift in fifteen minutes. // The labor camp disappeared and I went back inside. // Sipping my steamy drink I wondered how they did it. // They the prisoners. // They the soldiers. // Moshe never left Siberia. // But he's a survivor. // I'm living proof.



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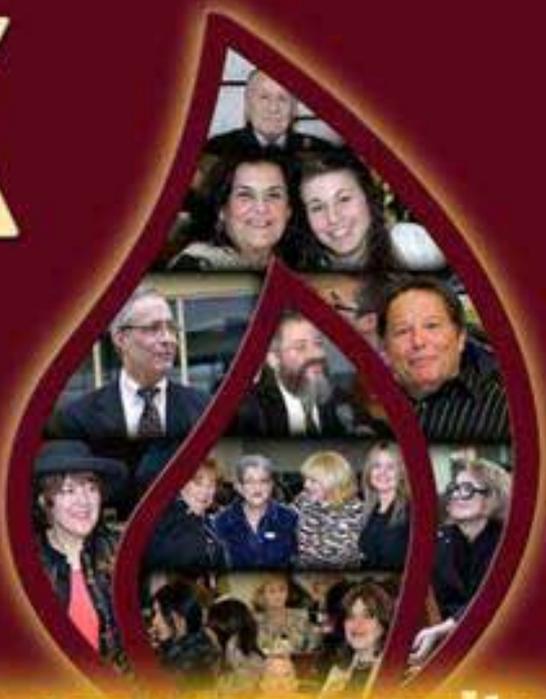
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A Chassidic Seder
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Tuesday, April 19th at 7:30 pm

Adults: \$48

Children: \$25 (under 12)

Program Sponsorship
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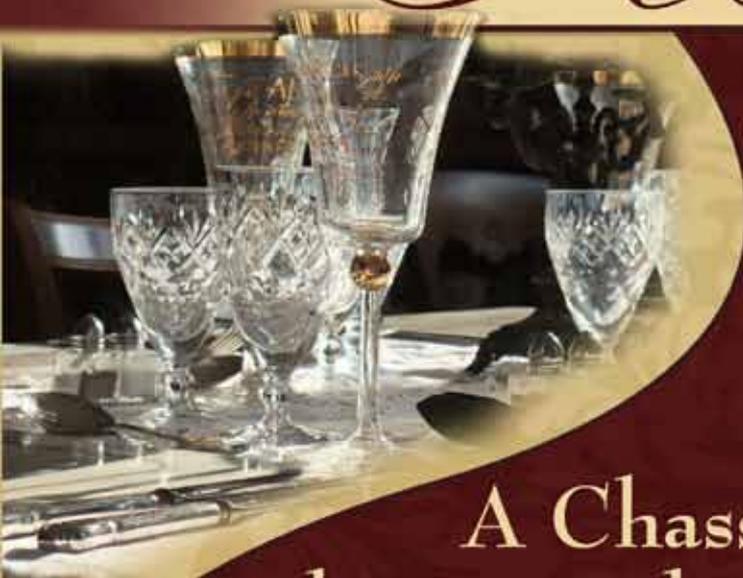
Sponsors to date:

Matzah - Alon and Shari Kaufman

RSVP Required, by April 13th

Call 248-788-4000 or
visit www.TheShul.net to reserve

*If you or someone you know has financial limitations that prohibit you from joining us, please do not hesitate to contact our office for assistance.





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Pesach is right around the corner and removing all of the chometz can be overwhelming. Remembering all the places we stash it, like the crackers in the baby's diaper bag, or the purim treats in your 3rd grader's desk! This does not need to be an overwhelming task! Let **Floorsavers** lift the couch and get the popcorn crumbs out! Don't stress and let **Floorsavers**



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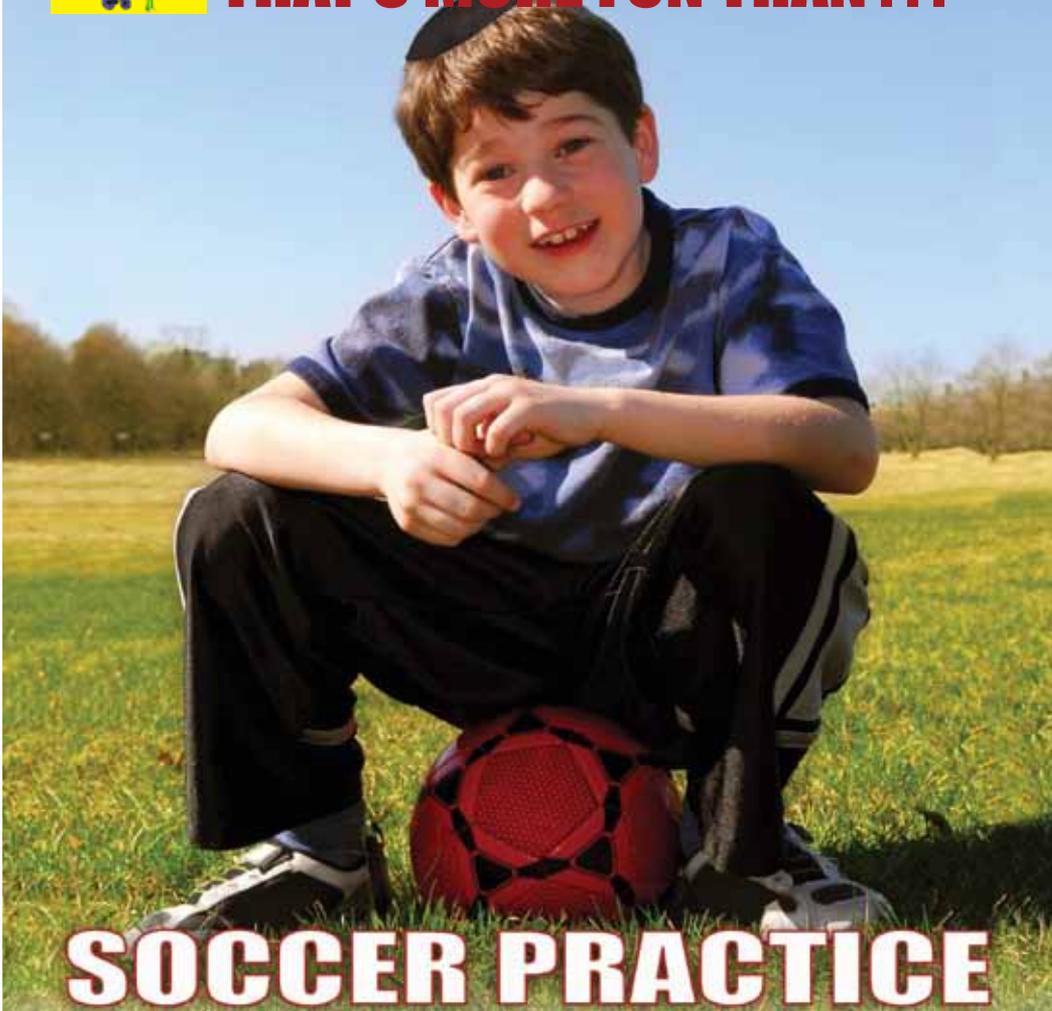
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Tuition: \$600

Synagogue Membership

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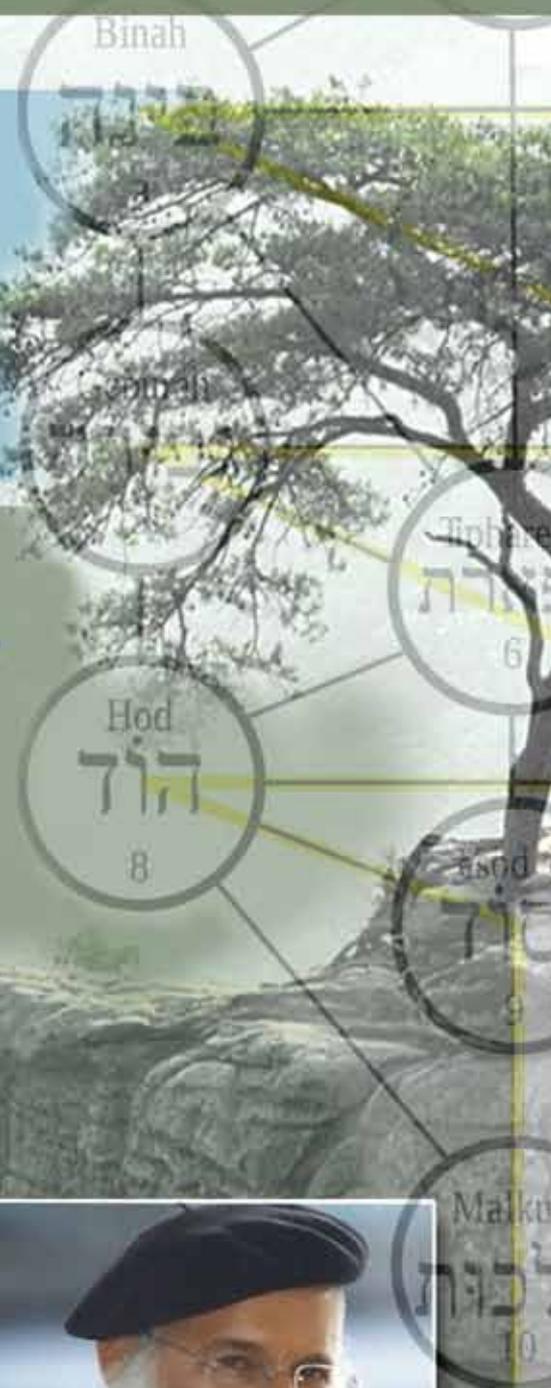
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Strength & Resilience

a Shabbaton Weekend with Laibl Wolf

The world is changing fast. We feel helpless in the face of economic and political uncertainty. This is the time to draw on your inner strengths and cultivate spiritual skills to cope with the stress and pressure of life in the 21st century. It is time for us to leave behind our fears and insecurities, our personal obstacles and growth-stunting mindsets. It's time to release the powerful yearning you have to unleash your inner gifts – your inner soul. Join us for an incredible Shabbaton with best-selling author, Rabbi Laibl Wolf, as we explore these very issues and more.



Friday, May 13, 2011

Elegant Shabbat Dinner

Services 7:15 pm - Dinner 8:15 pm

Reservations Required for Friday evening Shabbaton
\$22/adult , \$10/child (ages 3 - 12)

****Youth programming offered****

Shabbaton sponsored in part by Ralph Greenberg and Mindy Sobie Greenberg
Additional sponsorship opportunities available.

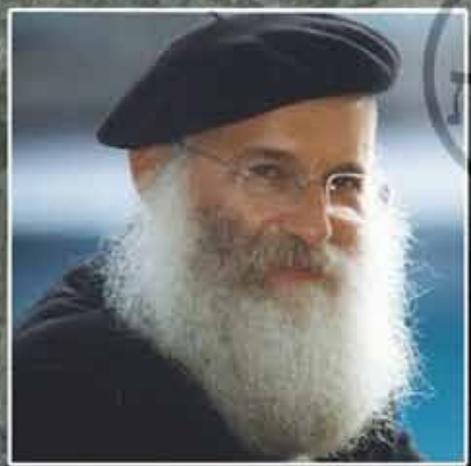
Saturday, May 14th

Pre-davening Meditation:
Pre-davening 9:00 am, Services 9:30 am

The Art of Jewish Meditation Theory and Practice

Shabbos Kiddush and talk with Rabbi Wolf.

Laughter and Tears: Tales and Songs of Restless Souls



The Shul, Jack & Miriam Shenkman Building, 6890 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield, MI 48322
Visit www.TheShul.net or call 248.788.4000 for further details and to register for the Shabbaton.
* In the spirit of the sanctity of Shabbat we can offer accommodations. Please call for arrangements.

Save the Date and Join Us at The Shul!

LAG BOMMER



Community BBQ
Sunday, May 22
4:30 pm

Ember Sponsors: Mark & Deborah Druck

SHAVUOT



Ice Cream Party!
Wednesday, June 8
5:30 pm



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