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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

What Chabad Does Right
(And What Mainstream Jewish Organizations Can Learn)

Approved By:

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WHAT CHABAD DOES RIGHT
(AND WHAT MAINSTREAM JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS CAN LEARN)

By

Mira Sussman

A project presented to the Faculty of the School of Social Work of the University of Southern California in co-operation with Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, California School in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work

May, 2004

WHAT CHABAD DOES RIGHT

AND WHAT MAINSTREAM JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS CAN LEARN FROM THEM

BY MIRA SUSSMAN, MAJCS, MSW

SPRING, 2004

FINAL PROJECT

WHAT MAKES CHABAD WORK

INTRODUCTION

The Autumn 2003 edition of *Contact* Magazine, the journal of the Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation, was entirely devoted to one topic: the concept of a "new Jewish American movement." Luminaries in the communal life of American Jewry such as Michael Steinhardt, Rabbi Yitz Greenberg and the Founding Director of Makor, Rabbi David Gedzelman, all contributed their thoughts on this exciting new movement's creation and its contribution to American Jewish life. They envisioned an all-American form of Jewish expression, one with pan-denominational appeal, that would meld American and Jewish values, serve as an expression of Jewish life that was not dogmatic or ritualistically bound, and that would help American Jewish adherents feel as though they were living to a higher ethical standard than they would have otherwise.

In all the magazine's articles were ironic, because nearly everything the articles' authors articulated as being necessary for this new movement had already been addressed by Chabad-Lubavitch. The need to appeal to unaffiliated and non-Orthodox Jews in an atmosphere that emphasizes "finding pleasure in Torah or fulfillment or purpose through religious life?"[1] Check. Helping Jews find "the inner capacity to maintain identity?"[2] The need for this movement to "have an ideology behind it...a theological, inspirational force?"[3] Check. A movement that will engage followers to "a higher and deeper degree of commitment, even if less consistent, because people will feel emotionally, 'this is my choice'?"[4] Check. Answers to "many of life's most important questions, like purpose and personal mission?"[5] Check and mate.

Rabbi Greenberg and Mr. Steinhardt's conversation stemmed from the dilemma that Jewish communal professionals, educators, rabbis and philanthropists have been noticing for at least a decade. The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey sparked a flurry of activity, including a wide variety of projects, initiatives and enterprises to fight

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[1] Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, *Contact* Magazine, Autumn, 2003.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Eli Valley, ibid.
[4] R. Greenberg, ibid.
[5] Michael Steinhardt, ibid.

assimilation and intermarriage, and to reenergize and enhance Jewish education, affiliation, participation and renaissance. These projects and programs include, among others, birthright Israel, Synagogue 2000, the proliferation of Jewish schools, renewed emphasis on Jewish summer camping and youth groups, and smaller, often community-based missions and initiatives. Yet, as Rabbi Gedzelman points out, "there is no sense of strong connection among these various initiatives...this past decade's various projects of Jewish renaissance and renewal, while in many ways impressive, have not constituted an inspired new movement in American Jewish life."[6] Put another way, it appears as though the efforts put into renewing Jewish American life have resulted in lackluster responses. At the very least, the efforts of many of our Jewish institutions have not resulted in the mass growth and renewal of the Jewish population that were hoped for.

Yet while most mainstream Jewish institutions have experienced stagnation in numbers and cutbacks in services, Chabad-Lubavitch has gone through a period of unprecedented growth and expansion. Chabad—a sect of Hasidism based in the Crown Heights section of New York City—has an annual operating budget approaching $1 billion annually. Chabad has more than 4,000 full-time *shlichim* (emissaries) in sixty one countries.[7] In 2000, fifty one new Chabad facilities were opened just in California. Since 1994, more than seven hundred Chabad institutions have opened, bringing the total number of institutions worldwide to 2,766.[8] These included multi-million dollar synagogues, schools, museums, Chabad Houses and community buildings, all at a time when the rest of the country was experiencing an economic recession and decreased philanthropic activity. In many rural and outlying communities, Chabad shlichim serve as the only visible Jewish presence for miles. While Chabad has no membership lists or census, it is estimated that there are roughly 200,000 Lubavitchers worldwide, but that is merely a guesstimate.

The more interesting, and more illusive number, are the millions of people who are affected by Chabad activities; the people who study with Chabad shlichim, eat at Chabad Houses, celebrate holidays and life cycle events through Chabad, and otherwise are touched by their services and outreach. Through their networking, outreach, televised

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[6] Rabbi David Gedzelman, *Contact* Magazine, August, 2003.
[7] "The Chabad Challenge." In *Reform Judaism* Magazine, Winter, 2003, pg. 16. By Sue Fishkoff.
[8] All figures from "The Rebbe's Army" by Sue Fishkoff, Schocken Books, New York, 2003. Pages 12-13.

fundraisers, public Chanukah candle lighting ceremonies and political lobbying, Chabad have forced their way into the public consciousness of American Jewry in ways far surpassed by their demographics. These numbers are impossible to calculate, yet we know that the affects Chabad has on communities across the country, and around the world, are enormous.

All the power, support and enthusiasm that Chabad elicits do not exist without controversy. Chabad has many critics and detractors, ranging from liberal Jews who dislike Chabad's conservative values and behaviors, their rejection of modern lifestyle choices and their right-wing stance on Israel-related issues, to Orthodox Jews who dislike the fact that Chabad does outreach to non-Jews and does not require all-encompassing halachic behaviors from followers, and who and perceive Chabad to be "watering down" Judaism to garner followers. Reform and Conservative leaders dislike the lack of emphasis that Chabad puts on long-term, serious commitments to synagogue participation and involvement, as evidenced by not requiring a family commitment in return for bar/bat mitzvah lessons, adult education or High Holy Day tickets. Conservative and Reform congregational leaders resent that their members donate money to Chabad, taking away funds that they could have received and, in essence, supporting a movement that runs counter to many of the beliefs that mainstream Jews hold. These include the separation of men and women, advocating positions that blur the line between church and state, "bringing Messiah" in our times, Chabad' rabbis' refusal to step inside non-Orthodox synagogues, and other ideas found to be offensive and close-minded by many American Jews.

Yet non-Chabad and some non-Orthodox Jews have come to recognize and even admire the work that Chabad has done, albeit often grudgingly. Dr. Norman Lamm, **former** president of the Orthodox movement's Yeshiva University said, "They have made an enormous contribution...wherever you go, you find Chabad Houses...We have a lot to be grateful to them for."[9] Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations added, "They were pioneers in Jewish outreach, which is now universally accepted...clearly Chabad set the

[9] "The Rebbe's Army." S. Fishkoff, pg. 16.

stage by being the first to engage it in a systematic way."[10] In his November 2003 speech at the 67th Biennial meeting of Reform Judaism, movement president Rabbi Eric Yoffie stated, "It's hard for me to say this, but I will say it nonetheless: We must follow the example of Chabad."[11]

There seems to be widespread recognition that Chabad is doing something right, in that they are growing and appealing to Reform, Conservative and unaffiliated Jews in tremendous numbers, and in ways that the mainstream movements and institutions are not. As Rabbi Yoffie said, perhaps there is something that non-Chabad institutions, Jewish communal service workers and mainstream Reform and Conservative organizations can learn from Chabad. Instead of seeing Chabad as a threat to existing mainstream Jewish institutions and organizations, perhaps there is a way that we can learn from them, to make our institutions more effective.

[10] Ibid, pg. 17.
[11] "Yoffie Emphasizes Need to Forge Links." *LA Jewish Journal*, November 14, 2003.

CHABAD IN AMERICA

BEGINNINGS OF HASIDISM, CHABAD AND THEIR IDEOLOGIES

Chabad-Lubavitch is a branch of the Hasidic movement which emerged in Eastern Europe in the mid-eighteenth century. Hasidism was founded by Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, better known as the Baal Shem Tov, or Besh"t. The Baal Shem Tov taught that one could express one's love for God through exuberant, heartfelt and often very simple prayer. He taught that *Kabbalah* (Jewish mysticism) held significant spiritual weight, and that anyone, not just Talmud scholars, could directly approach God through pouring out his soul in prayer and personal expressions of love and emotion. The Baal Shem Tov brought spirituality to the mundane and the secular by teaching that every activity could have divine significance and that religious devotion was more important than rote performance of ritual. The underlying ideology of Hasidism was recognizing the Divine in all things, and finding joy in the world due to this awareness of God's proximity.

The Baal Shem Tov's teachings were revolutionary, in that they went against the dominant orientation of Jewish leadership at that time. Most Jewish leaders believed that Talmud-study and ritual adherence was the only true and acceptable path to knowing God. The Baal Shem Tov's followers behaved in ways these leaders saw as horrifying, such as dancing in forests and singing wordless songs in states of religious ecstasy. Yet by the early nineteenth century, Hasidism had taken root and was the dominant force in Eastern Europe. Those who rejected Hasidism were called *Mitnagdim* ("oppositionists"), and the two sides continued to battle for decades.

Following the Baal Shem Tov's death in 1760, Hasidism split into many different groups. Each group set up a court around the personality of a revered Hasidic teacher, a *Rebbe*. One of those Rebbes was Rabbi Schneur Zalman, the Alter Rebbe, founder of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. The movement got its name from Lubavitch, the town in White Russia where four of its Rebbes were based. "Chabad" is an acronym for the Hebrew words *chochmah* (wisdom), *binah* (comprehension) and *da'at* (knowledge). The words "Lubavitch" and "Chabad" are used interchangeably to describe both the movement and its followers.

The Alter Rebbe was born in 1745 in White Russia, and was known for his vast intellect. Stories abound of how he had mastered the entire Talmud and its commentaries by his bar mitzvah, and spent his teen years studying Kabbalah. He wrote many commentaries on Jewish law and mysticism, the most famous being the *Tanya*, published in 1796. The Tanya is a mystical theology and systematic approach to individual moral and spiritual development, and has become one of the central texts of Chabad Hasidism. What set Chabad apart from other Hasidic sects was its emphasis on applying the rigorous Lithuanian methods of text study to mystical Kabbalah texts. While other Hasidic Rebbes were known for their piety, exuberance or for being miracle-workers, the Chabad Rebbes were recognized for their intellect and emphasis on serious study.

The Tanya describes Chabad ideology by explaining how each Jew acts as a link between God and creation; Chabad Hasidim are concerned less with getting themselves to heaven than they are with bringing heaven down to earth by revealing God's purpose in the details of everyday life. This worldview is deeply rooted in the Kabbalistic teachings of the sixteenth century rabbi, Isaac Luria, the Ar"i. the Ar"i taught that before the world was created, God filled the universe with light. In order to create the world, God had to pull back some of his light, creating a vacuum. When that Divine light re-entered the world, everything was shattered, scattering sparks of Divine light throughout the universe. Those sparks became trapped in physical shells—the objects that make up our world. The world yearns to return to its pure-light form while remaining in its physical form. That on-going tension is the cause of the world's troubles. It is the duty of every Jew to let free that Divine spark that exists in all people and objects, as a way of restoring harmony to the universe.

For Chabad, this worldview plays out in very concrete terms. Lubavitchers see every human being as a shell, within which that Divine spark is waiting to be released. These sparks exist in Jews as well as non-Jews, which is why Chabad services and programs reach out to all people. However, Jews have a special obligation to act with urgency for fellow Jews. This special relationship to each other goes back to the Chabad understanding of creation, when all the Jewish people were one body and one soul. To Lubavitchers, all Jews are intrinsically, unavoidably Jewish, no matter what their ritual beliefs or practices. This belief means that they recognize only one legitimate form of

Judaism, the Orthodox one. However, Chabad are also open to accepting non-Orthodox Jews on an individual basis. They believe that all Jews are responsible for each other. If one Jew sins, we are all affected. When one Jew does a mitzvah (commandment), the merit is shared. To this end, Chabad works ceaselessly to ensure that each Jew fulfills as many mitzvoth as they can. In their worldview, this is speeding the arrival of the *Moshiach* (messiah). The fifth Lubavitch Rebbe, Dov Ber Schneersohn, described the Hasid's role as a "lamplighter," one who carries God's fire and lights other souls' "lamps." He went on to emphasize the importance of this obligation by stating that "even if the lamp is in the middle of an ocean, the Hasid must jump into the sea and light that lamp."[12]

Hasidism emphasizes the need for studying Torah as a way towards understanding the world and God's purposes. However, good deeds (*gimilut chasadim*) takes precedence over Torah study, as only action can manifest the Divine spark. Chabad teaches that helping other Jews is the purest expression of one's love for God. They believe that helping a single individual is a step towards redemption of the entire Jewish people. As Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh and final Rebbe wrote to a Jewish leader in New York in the 1970s;

> The Alter Rebbe saw no contradiction in interrupting his prayer to God in order to help a woman in need. On the contrary, such help is the best expression of being attached to God. So how can you—and I say this with all due respect to you—sit by idly in this city, surrounded by thousands upon thousands of fellow Jews who are starving for guidance and direction towards the right path in life, the way of the Torah?...Surely you should wish to dedicate all your energies and capacities to this life-saving work.[13]

The combined emphasis on rigorous study, combined with energetic, messianic-tinged outreach to uncover the Divine sparks in both Jews and non-Jews, are the core qualities of Chabad-Lubavitch.

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[12] "The Rebbe's Army," pg. 21.

[13] *Chassidic Dimensions*, vol. 3 of *The Mystical Dimension*. Brooklyn: Kehot Publication Society, 1990, pg. 198. By Jacob Immanuel Schochet.

HISTORY OF CHABAD IN AMERICA

The first Hasidim arrived in America with the great migration of Jews from Eastern Europe that took place at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. The largest number of Hasidim arrived right before, during and immediately after World War II, when many Hasidic Rebbes moved their courts from Eastern Europe to New York. Unlike previous waves of Jewish immigrants, these Hasidim did not want to assimilate. They preferred living in Jewish enclaves, re-creating in Brooklyn the towns and shtetl life that they had left behind.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, arrived in New York in 1940 with his entourage. Already there were handfuls of Lubavitchers, perhaps several dozen, living in New York, Detroit, Pittsburgh and Montreal, but with the Rebbe's arrival, their numbers began to grow.

The Rebbe established his court in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, a neighborhood that already had a large Jewish population. During the 1960s, however, increasing crime led to many Jews and other white people fleeing to the suburbs. The Rebbe told his followers to stay in the neighborhood, and Lubavitchers were the only whites to do so. Today, the white population of Crown Heights is almost entirely Lubavitch. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, they number roughly 11,000 people.[14] Outside of Crown Heights, it is estimated that there are roughly 30,000 Lubavitchers in the United States, with an additional 80,000 to 100,000 worldwide.[15] Still, for Lubavitchers around the world, Crown Heights remains the spiritual and administrative center of their movement. Chabad's offices at 770 Kingston Avenue are their version of the Western Wall, a holy site. While he was still alive, Lubavitchers and non-Lubavitchers alike would make pilgrimages to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe, or to meet and speak with him, or to attend a *farbrengen* (a gathering where Chabad Rebbes speak and teach). Crown Heights remains the base of the Chabad community and its movement, despite economic hardships, housing shortages, and especially despite on-going tensions with the African-American community and a series of race riots and violence that has spanned decades. Despite the lack of the Rebbe's presence, 770 Kingston Avenue remains the center of world Chabad.

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[14] "The Rebbe's Army," pg. 25.
[15] Ibid.

THE REBBE

In an effort to spread its mission of bringing about the arrival of the Moshiach, Chabad works through its *shlichim* (emissaries). Shlichim believe that they are spreading the Torah, reaching out to Jews and helping them fulfill mitzvoth. The first shaliach in the Bible was Abraham's servant Eliezer, who was sent to find a wife for Abraham's son, Isaac. A shaliach is an "agent" who acts on behalf of their patron. In the case of Chabad shlichim, they are acting on behalf of their Rebbe.

In order to understand the significance of that statement, and hence the dedication, energy, humility and particular behaviors of Chabad shlichim, one must first understand the relationship between a Hasid and his or her Rebbe, and their understanding of his power.

Hasidic Rebbes have an elevated status from a non-Hasidic rabbi. The later are teachers, experts in Jewish legal and ritual matters, and trained to serve communities in a variety of capacities. They are expected to have higher spirituality than regular people, and be able to counsel and share their knowledge with students. Rebbes have these qualities, but also the additional quality of a *tzaddik*, a righteous person. A tzaddik is a person who is considered to be a tangible manifestation of the Godhead; someone who had done more good deeds than bad ones, who is faithful God and has a special, inseparable connection to God. In recent times this definition has taken on supernatural aspects; the tzaddik is a source of holiness himself, not just connected to God, but often possessing some of the miraculous qualities of God. A tzaddik is believed to be able to intervene directly with God. Hasidim often believe that associating with a tzaddik, eating with him, touching his possessions or receiving a blessing from a tzaddik are all blessed events and are actions that connect regular people to God through the person of the tzaddik.[16]

Hasidic Rebbes are not only tzaddikim, but also intellectually superior teachers and motivators who draw courts of followers to their cult of personality. A Rebbe is a tzaddik whose authority grows due to his popularity with the masses, who can guide his followers socially, politically and economically. Therefore, the Rebbe serves both

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[16] "Leadership in the HaBaD Movement." By Avrum M. Ehrlich. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc. 2000. Pgs. 30-31.

spiritual and practical roles, melding social and charismatic elements together. While a tzaddik need not be a Rebbe, a Rebbe must be a tzaddik. The Rebbe's words are considered holy; his speeches are written down and studied alongside traditional Jewish texts such as the Torah and Talmud, because they too are seen as containing divinity. The Rebbe is a combination of high priest, scholar, president and prophet. The Rebbe combines the priestly duties of healer, leader of rituals and instruction in daily life matters with the intellectual endeavors of a wise man, the logistical skills and duties of the leader of a large movement, as well as the moral and spiritual charismatic leadership and sense of zeal and mission of a prophet, all into the being of one man.[17] The Rebbe truly is an authority figure on all levels.

Lubavitchers yearn to serve their Rebbes, as a way of serving God. They believe in the transference of Divine authority from God, through the Rebbe, and, as his shlichim, through them to the people they serve. For shlichim the Rebbe is an immediate presence watching over them, acting as a sort of tangible conscience, despite the fact that the last Rebbe has been dead for over a decade. When the Rebbe was alive, Lubavitchers could meet and talk with him, ask for advice and get direct guidance from him. Now that the Chabad Rebbes have all passed away, Lubavitchers claim to feel a distinct loss in being able to continue that experience. However, they claim that they still feel the presence of the seventh and final Rebbe in their actions, serving as a guiding angel in all their actions. They claim that the Rebbe is proud of their successes and admonishes their missteps.

[17] Leadership in the HaBaD Movement. Pgs. 70-73, 81-85.

HISTORY OF SHLICHUT

The first shlichim were sent out by the sixth Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak Schneerson (1880-1950). It was he who, fleeing Russian political and religious oppression, moved the Lubavitch court from Eastern Russia to Crown Heights and consolidated the international movement under his leadership authority. In New York he set up the institutions to support the Americanization of the movement, and recognized its transference of body and spirit from the Old World to the New World. During the last ten years of his life, from his arrival in the U.S. in 1941 until his death in 1950, he oversaw the expansion and growth of authority of Chabad, including building *yeshivot*, the *Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch* educational arm, girls' schools and Kehot Publication Society.[18]

The first shlichim were sent out in the mid-1940s to open Jewish day schools in Pittsburgh, New England and the New York metropolitan area.[19] Then in 1948 the Rebbe sent Shmuel Dovid Raichik out as a roving emissary to California. Raichik spent the 1950s and 1960s traveling across the country, laying the groundwork for Chabad Houses through the West and Midwest. In 1949 the Rebbe sent Zalman Posner to Nashville, Tennessee to serve as a pulpit rabbi in an Orthodox synagogue.[20]

It was the seventh Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who began the process of vastly expanding the scale and scope of Chabad shlichut. He brought a sense of urgency and purpose, as well as a new activism, to the movement. During the first years of active *shlichut* (ambassadorship) in the early 1960s, the main focus was their operations in Europe, South America, Australia and Israel. North American growth did not begin until after the Six Day War, in 1967. It began with the first of many "mitzvah campaigns" that the Rebbe initiated as a way of focusing efforts and as an outreach tool. Every decade since the 1960s has seen the number of Chabad Houses, and the scope of Chabad operations, mushroom. Some shlichut couples (shlichim are usually married couples) go out to work in growing communities as deputies. Others set up brand new outposts in remote areas such as Idaho and Montana. Others go out with the intention of teaching or running a pre-school or an expanding adult education center, and while this

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[18] Challenge: An Encounter with Lubavitch-Chabad. Lubavitch Foundation: London, England, 1970. Pg 54.
[19] The Rebbe's Army, pg 112.
[20] The Rebbe's Army, pg. 112.

trend is still smaller in the U.S. than in other countries, some rabbis are sent out to fill pulpits at nominally Orthodox synagogues.[21]

While the seventh Rebbe was alive, each couple or individual sent out on shlichut was either personally directed to their final destination by the Rebbe, or received his blessing once it had been decided upon. Today, shlichim still visit his grave to get his "permission."[22] Younger shlichim now being sent out still feel as though they are doing the Rebbe's bidding, but not with the same direct connection that shlichim sent out during the 1960s and 1970s experienced. Today's shlichim also have a wealth of resources and institutional backing, from annual conventions, to prepackaged educational materials to elaborate holiday programs, all sent to the shlichim either free or at cost.[23] Shlichim are no longer isolated, as transportation becomes easier, long distance phone calls are cheaper, and technology brings the world to remote Chabad outposts.

[21] Ibid, pg. 111.
[22] Ibid, pg. 111.
[23] Ibid, pg. 114.

HOW CHABAD BEGINS OPERATIONS

What is the process by which Chabad establishes a new outpost? There is no master plan for setting up a new outpost, or of expanding a program. However, some experiences and tactics have become more common.

First, a young couple, usually within the first few years of marriage and under the age of twenty five decides that they want to go on shlichut. Sometimes the shlichim have an idea of where they want to move after visits made during volunteer travels while they were still yeshiva students in their late teens. (During these visits the youngsters would do outreach in places that have no permanent Chabad Houses. The boys would hand out literature, catch people on the street to tie *t'fillin* (ritual phylacteries), speak in local synagogues or JCCs, *kasher* homes, and the like. While on these trips, these students would also look into local telephone books and try to make personal connections with the people they met to gauge the level of potential support in that locale.) Sometimes the potential shlichim put their names into a list with the Shlichim Office in Crown Heights. The Office serves as a job placement service, and since it opened in 1986 has been placing roughly half of all shlichim in their permanent positions. The shlichim research each potential new community; they try to find out approximately the size and demographics of the Jewish community and what resources already exist.

In some expanding communities, the approach is slightly different. The first shaliach sent to a state becomes the "head" of that region and hires all future shlichim in his territory. In this case, the shlichim would have to contact him, or he would contact them, and arrangements for employment and moving would be made directly.

A growing trend in Chabad is that shlichim must raise the initial seed money to cover expenses for their first year of operation, approximately $90,000.[24] A typical shlichut couple budgets $36,000 for their own needs. Until recently, shlichim received the equivalent of one or two years' budget from Chabad headquarters. Shlichim begin making calls, door-to-door petitions and contacting whatever networks and friends they already have in order to raise this money. This usually takes place while the couple is still in Crown Heights or wherever they lived prior to shlichut.

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[24] The Rebbe's Army, pg. 108.

Once they have raised the funds and moved to a new outpost, they follow four principles or directives for living in that community: do not cause friction, make sure you have a financial base for the first year, build a *mikvah* (ritual purification bath) if none exists, and avoid countries on the verge of revolution.[25] These principles are not necessarily taught or clearly articulated, but are understood and learned by watching others' experiences. Chabad insists that they do not come into a town without an invitation, but that "invitation" sometimes can be as trivial as a comment made by one or two marginally friendly people.[26] According to Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, director of development for Chabad's international shlichut network, each shaliach in a new town tries to "meet with the Federation, the Jewish Community Center, local rabbis, and potential donors. We have warmer responses in some places than others."[27]

Once the new shlichim have found a place to live, they write a press release announcing their arrival. It is mailed to their collected mailing list (culled from phone books, purchased mailing lists, people whom they have met) and begin planning their first event. Often they start with a large, public holiday celebration. The press is invited and the shlichim make sure that it causes a splash and receives attention. This work is made much less time-consuming, as they can send to the Shlichim Office for prepackaged holiday goods, such as pre-wrapped *mishloach manot* (bundles of food) baskets for Purim.

An additional resource is a book first published in 1991, *Shlichus: Meeting the Outreach Challenge*. The book is a collection of essays by Chabad teachers and shlichim, and the closest thing that Chabad has to an operational manual.[28] It includes advice such as how to make that critical first impression a positive one, how to maximize publicity and visibility, how to use the media, the need to quickly build a *minyan* (quorum required for prayer and many rituals) and need to set up nursery schools. It also advises how to make personal connections ("Share in family *simchas*, be there in time of need, call from time to time just to say 'hello.'")[29]

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[25] The Rebbe's Army, pg. 113.
[26] Ibid, pg. 118.
[27] Ibid, pg. 113.
[28] Ibid, pg. 120.
[29] Ibid, pg. 121.

In some cities with an established Chabad presence, the task is to constantly expand programs and build new schools and facilities. There is a need to recruit shlichim based on specific needs, such as someone to fill the position of school principal, or of teachers. Operations in these larger cities often involve many shlichim, each in charge of their specific area. Despite the size of these larger operations, each individual shaliach has enormous autonomy.

Often in cities with established Chabad presences, the greatest need is that of building new spaces and raising funds. In these cases, donors are cultivated over time. Generally, the head shaliach of that city or region has already established a personal relationship with the wealthy Jews of the community and knows which ones are the most likely to donate in order to construct a building. Donors are made to feel that their contribution is truly appreciated, and that their donation is a personal favor to the shaliach.

While the above outline articulates what often happens in establishing or growing Chabad endeavors, these methods are not guaranteed to be effective, and do not occur in all situations. Oftentimes the shlichim are rejected, given a cold shoulder both by the institutional Jewish leadership and by the Jewish community. Sometimes the hostility comes in the form of anti-Semitism from non-Jewish opponents. Sometimes there are different challenges that larger cities face than raising money and building structures. Each city and town has its own story. There is no guarantee that shlichut's tactics will work.

UNIQUE QUALITIES OF CHABAD

In many ways, Chabad is a unique institution, completely unlike other Jewish institutions. In some ways this is a source of strength and appeal to unaffiliated or disaffected Jews; in other ways, it hurts their credibility, their standing within the larger Jewish community, and their ability to reach out even further to even more American Jews. The following is an examination of some of the qualities possessed by Chabad which other Jewish institutions cannot and would not share with Chabad, due to their own beliefs and values.

First is Chabad's ideology. It is decidedly pre-modern, in that it subscribes to a worldview that is objective and defined. In Chabad's weltanschauung, there are clearly defined boundaries of right and wrong, good and bad. Lubavitchers live in a degree of insularity, shunning higher education, secular interests such as TV, radio, movies and pop music. They often live in religious enclaves, and as the children attend yeshiva and generally socialize with other Orthodox or Hasidic children, there is little opportunity for them to encounter non-Jewish people or others whose lifestyles are significantly different. This often changes as the children grow up and begin to do street outreach, but the fact remains that they do not generally make close friendships or even get to know other ways of living, and are even less likely to study multi-culturalism or anything secular. Chabad, in effect, tells its adherents that absolutes *do* exist, and that a certain amount of insularity is not only possible, but a good thing.

American Jewish institutions and movements operate in a more modern or post-modern framework. The modern world, American Jews included, is one that exists in an overall acceptance in the reality of subjectivity. American democracy is based on the idea that individuals have varying opinions and ways of achieving self-actualization. American Jews do not live in a world of absolutes, but in a world of personal choices. America values having options and has accepted the reality that differences exist and must be faced with a degree of tolerance. American Jewish institutions cherish the concepts of coalitions, partnerships and alliances with other groups who are often quite different (i.e. other religious institutions, race-based coalitions, etc.). These are seen as fundamentally American ways for organizations and individuals to work and live, and exist because of the widespread acceptance and tolerance of differences. Mainstream

Jewish institutions and movements, so bent on encouraging the full participation of Jews in the larger American society, would not fit into the pre-modern mindset.

Chabad also has a clearly defined mission, and its followers have dedication and a sense of purpose that is hard to imitate. The movement is messianic; Lubavitchers believe that every mitzvah that a Jew fulfills brings humanity one step closer to the arrival of the Moshiach. They believe they are saving souls through this work, and their devotion to the Rebbe is what keeps them motivated to continue their efforts, despite frequent setbacks, rejections and angry responses by Jews and non-Jews alike. Every Lubavitcher in the world is united in this messianic urgency and sense of purpose. Together, they know what their ultimate goal is—to bring the messianic age to the world.

Mainstream Jewish institutions and movements have mission statements and goals. They have charismatic leaders and well-thought out strategies. Most American Jewish organizations do not have the sense of urgency and clearly articulated end-goal to their efforts that culminates with anything as dramatic as the end of days. American Jewish organizations operate under a premise of perpetuating what already exists, with little more than minor modifications. They are not messianic, and would probably be embarrassed by any mission such as that. The overall mission, most mainstream Jewish leaders would argue, is to maintain the Jewish people. Most of them would add that this is enough, that this is the long-term goal and purpose for their existence. The concept of the end of times or of global revolution is excessively romantic, illogical, and frankly, frightening. Continuance of the Jewish people, whatever that means to the individual movement or institution, is the long-term goal, and with that, there is less a sense of urgency. Jews have been around for a long time, and despite all efforts to stamp us out, including our own efforts towards assimilation and ignorance, Jews still exist. The urgency of the mission is lost.

Shlichut, and the work of Chabad, are often described by insiders in militaristic terms. They say they are fighting "a spiritual war" against secularism, atheism, materialism, "and all the other 'isms' that draw young Jews away from tradition."[30] Shlichim call themselves "soldiers of the Rebbe," and the Chabad youth group is called *Tzvios Hashem*, "the armies of God."

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[30] The Rebbe's Army, pg. 240.

To most Jews (with the possible exception of some Zionists), the idea of militant Jews is very aversive. Jews have historically prided themselves on more passive qualities, such as being studious, judicious, peace-loving, clever and non-confrontational. In addition, America is a country that aspires to a degree of harmony and unity. The national motto is "*E pluribus unum*," emphasizing the American desire to live with fellow citizens, rather than engage them in war, spiritual or otherwise. While this is not always true in reality, American Jews have by and large made a point out of emphasizing the desire to blend in with the rest of society, not cause civil wars, and have embraced the very "isms" that Chabad rejects. Even more so, American Jews have managed to find ways to make some of the "isms" such as materialism and capitalism work for them. They have already found ways to respond to these "isms" without losing tradition, and without excessive confrontation with the mainstream.

Fundamental differences exist in where leadership is based and how it is organized. Chabad was historically led by a charismatic Rebbe. In effect, the entire global organization still operates under his watchful, if imagined, eye. All efforts are dedicated to him, all decisions in his lifetime were made with his approval. The structure is very centralized on one man. While the individuals within the organization have free will and maneuverability, there also exists a boundary beyond which they know they would not pass. No Lubavitcher would consider doing something that they thought would offend their Rebbe, to whom they have complete dedication and regard as being nearly infallible, an emissary directly from God.

No such concept exists in mainstream Jewish institutions and movements. Our leaders are recognized as being regular human beings who are hired, appointed or elected to their positions and who can resign or be fired. While leaders can be respected based on admirable personal qualities they possess, rare is the leader who is considered a tzaddik, to the degree that their word will never be questioned. Mainstream American Jewish institutions are not set up for life-long appointments, because these institutions follow the American government's system, one which developed out of the belief in "government of the people, by the people, for the people." Democracy, which Americans idealize so much, means that all people are given the chance to be equal to one another and no one is deified. There is no lifetime appointment or sense that our leaders are nearly divine.

These are just some of the key elements that make it impossible for mainstream Jewish institutions and movements to fully meet Chabad. Fundamental differences will continue to exist and separate the two, mostly spawning from divergent values' priorities that arise when confronted with addressing American values. In their conversation recorded in *Contact* Magazine, Mr. Steinhardt and Rabbi Greenberg emphasized that their "new Jewish American movement" would incorporate American values such as autonomy, self-expression and free choice. These values are common among the existing American Jewish institutions and movements, and are highly prized, even central elements to these operations. While these concepts certainly exist in Chabad, they are not necessarily the first that come to mind when a Lubavitcher lists his priorities for a Jewish institution. Yet these are qualities which mainstream American Jewish institutions would not, and should not, concede.

While there are definitely areas on which neither side is willing or able to back down, perhaps there are still some elements of Chabad's success from which other Jewish institutions and organizations can learn, and pieces which they can adapt fit their particular needs. Instead of rejecting Chabad outright due to ideological differences, perhaps there are elements of the movement from which we can learn. It is worth further examination, without throwing out the good with the bad.

The following "Ten Commandments" are intended to be guidelines or ideas. While it is understood that not everything done by Chabad can or should be incorporated by mainstream Jewish organizations, there is potential to learn specific ideas, tactics or concepts from them. This section is intended to draw attention to some of the things that Chabad does well, minus in-depth criticism or discussion of controversy, in order to shed light on potential areas for change or adaptation in mainstream Jewish organizations.

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF WHAT CHABAD DOES RIGHT (AND WHAT OTHER JEWISH PROFESSIONALS CAN DO, TOO)

CHANGE THE DEFINITION OF "PROFESSIONALISM."

Webster's Dictionary defines "professional" as "following an occupation as a means of livelihood or for gain." This definition begs the question of what is meant by "gain," and if there is more to professional work than pursuing it as a means of livelihood. It would be cynical and wrong to presume that Jewish professionals work within the Jewish community solely for financial gain. "Jewish professional work" implies a passion and dedication to Judaism and the Jewish people. Yet how are "Jewish" and "professional" held in balance within the title of "Jewish professional?"

In the training of Jewish communal professionals (i.e. rabbis, educators, Federation workers, social workers, etc.) there is much talk about how to organize one's time between "personal life" and "professional life." Curricula include discussions on "professional boundaries," and there is a sense that "professional" and "boundary" are, in a way, synonymous. In the workplace it is known that if these boundaries are violated, the worker might be asked to leave. Every piece of literature associated with professional training internships mentions the development and understanding of professional boundaries, expectations and behaviors. Again, there is the sense that "professionalism" means knowing how to divide the Jewish professional's time, psychology and knowing what is within and what is without the jurisdiction of one's job. There also looms in the background of any job is the threat of removal of "means of livelihood."

In addition, there is a degree to which Jewish professionals pride themselves on specialization; rabbis often wear many hats, but other professionals focus their skills on finance, management, counseling, public relations, advocacy, education, and so on. Most

large mainstream Jewish organizations and institutions run similar to businesses, in that they are divided into departments which are staffed by people who specialize in one particular field. Often the people in different departments are detached from the work of other departments, or not intimately involved in their operations.

No such departmentalized ethos exists for Chabad workers, and little conception of the difference between personal and professional interests. The only professional boundaries that exist for them are those of Chabad ideology and *halacha* (Jewish law). The boundaries of family priorities, personal time concerns or the concept that "this is not my job or specialty" do not exist. A Chabad shaliach can be found in a classroom, a drug rehabilitation facility, city council office, on Skid Row, in the White House, or at the bank. Often, the shlichim are the only paid employees for their organization, and as such they must take on all job descriptions; principal and sole teacher, employee and financial manager, spiritual leader as well as logistical coordinator. Chabad shlichim are involved in every aspect of the organization's management and processes.

Observers look at Chabad shlichim and see their energy; it is palpable, and the results are immediate. While many mainstream Jewish organizations say their professionalism is necessary for efficiency in running a large organization, observers look at these organizations and often see wasted time and unfulfilled promises, while experiencing long waits for service. There is often the feeling that the mainstream Jewish organization is more concerned with its own maintenance or making money than serving people. Often clients feel that they are entangled in bureaucratic red tape as they are shuffled from staff person to staff person in an effort to find the "right" person. The feeling that clients often get is one of frustration and the sense that they are not valued or important to the organization.

Meanwhile, story after story is told of Chabad shlichim arriving at clients' homes in the middle of the night, or taking the next flight to meet a needy Jew, of personally visiting sick people in hospitals, making *shiva* calls (visiting houses of mourning), and being the first Jews to welcome newcomers to town. These actions might not be possible at larger Jewish institutions, where there are rules or customs at the agency dictating hours one is expected to work. In mainstream Jewish organizations' contexts, flexibility with attendance or work hours is usually less rigid, less accepting of excuses such as "I

was visiting with a sick child." Yet these are exactly the behaviors and characteristics that endear Chabad shlichim to their clients.

Mainstream Jewish organizations' definition of professionalism can roughly be summarized by its strict boundaries between personal and professional, with a sense of aloofness towards incorporating the two, while maintaining access to "means of livelihood." Chabad's definition of professionalism roughly equals "get the job done right and quickly," with far less conception of the boundaries between personal and professional. Chabad expects its shlichim to go "out of bounds."

What can mainstream Jewish organizations do? Secretaries, receptionists and front office workers should be trained so that they can be friendly, welcoming and knowledgeable of the organization. This could help reduce the Jewish professionals' aversion to blurring professional and personal boundaries. Supervisors should be trained to recognize and appreciate their supervisees efforts to reach out to clients, even if these are time-consuming, so long as the supervisees can maintain their workload. Flextime for workers to make *shiva* or hospital calls should be a regular institutional practice, as well as having representatives from the institution or organization sent out to make personal "mitzvah visits." These visits could include welcoming newcomers to town or visiting with new mothers. In addition, periodic personal phone calls to donors and invitations might be appropriate. All these efforts can be seen as positive public relations efforts, community building activities, as well as cultivation of donors. These changes would not require additional cost on the part of the organization, but might require some changes in training and updates in contracts or office guidelines.

EVERY DAY IS "BRING YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY."

For Chabad shlichim, the work is all-encompassing. Husbands, wives and children are all involved in the outreach work, and each family member is necessary for the work to be accomplished. From a very young age, shlichim's children are active participants in the work of their parents; they serve food at events, hand out Shabbat candles, do home and *bikur cholim* visits with their parents, and serve as mentors to younger siblings. Most importantly, children's involvement in their parents' work is seen as necessary and vital—children see that they have a role in the success of their parents' endeavors. Children not only know exactly what their parents jobs are, the children are intimately involved and invested in the work and its outcome.

Chabad recognizes the central role that the children play in conveying *yiddishkeit* to the community. Chabad shlichot mothers know that their children are "onstage" (as many mothers describe it) and that others see that their children are home-schooled, well-dressed, modest, do not talk back to adults and spend a lot of time with their parents. Friday night dinner at a Chabad House would include a typical shaliach family scene, with a shlicha mother supervising her children in the kitchen while they prepare and serve the meal. Chabad children's formal schooling at yeshivot include not just Talmud, Hebrew and Yiddish language and subjects required by state regulation, they also learn the Rebbe's teachings and how their lessons are supposed to affect the outside world. Shlichut, Judaism and their mission to spread *yiddishkeit* are ingrained in their upbringing; at school, at home, and in practice.

The children of many Jewish professionals not only cannot say what it is that their parents do, often they do not play a large role in their parents' jobs. The children of Federation workers, synagogue employees and Jewish organizations' administrators rarely go to work with their parents and often play no role in the success of their parents' work. They have little personal investment in their parents' jobs or the institutions for which they work. Some even feel resentment towards their parents for the lack of time spent with them as they grow; parents are "too busy" attending meetings and functions to always be there for the children.

This characterization of non-Chabad Jewish professionals is hardly universal. Many children of Jewish professionals attend the schools and synagogues at which their

parents work, and there is a special section of Super Sunday for teenagers to which families carpool and work together. There are family Missions to Israel and special holiday packages and events that are coordinated as families. However, these are often isolated (if frequent) events, not seen as the child's duty or as an occupation that will be passed down to the child. There are fewer expectations that the child will definitely follow in the parents' footsteps.

What can mainstream Jewish professionals do? Both lay leaders and Jewish professionals should include their children in as many of the parents' Jewish activities as possible, be it fundraising events, parlor meetings, or dinners. Dinner conversations can inform children of all ages about the work that the parents are doing, its progress and significance.

Children should be present in the building where the Jewish institution is housed; they should be seen and heard throughout the institution. Flex-time or allowances for parents to be with their children should not be viewed as unprofessional, but as part of the greater message, that children are important to the parents, just as parents (and subsequently parents' work and values) should be important to the children. Children's efforts should be incorporated alongside the parents' work; children should be allowed to contribute ideas at meetings, to go to events with parents and, if possible, sit on their laps while parents present to groups.

Remember the lessons of the Four Children from the Pesach Hagadah; while children will undoubtedly respond to the parents' work in different ways, all children must first be somehow appropriately engaged by parents.

MAKE IT FINANCIALLY POSSIBLE FOR JEWISH PROFESSIONALS TO REMAIN IN THE FIELD.

Financial considerations are an important part of any adults' choice of occupation. For many mainstream Jewish professionals, financial issues are usually of continuing concern and play a large part in their ability or desire to stay in the field. It can be difficult for Jewish professionals to maintain a Jewish lifestyle. Much has been written about the high cost of living Jewish, which may include Jewish schools, summer camps, kosher food, synagogue membership, and other financial burdens, not to mention health care, day care for young children, mortgages for homes, and so on. Often these professionals live far from their families of origin, and must rely on babysitters and paid help for daily support. The support systems of people to whom they can turn in times of crisis are often smaller, or require payment. The lure of higher paying secular jobs is a constant possibility.

Chabad shlichim, meanwhile, generally have a wide support network. Chabad families are usually large, which means that quality, affordable child support is almost always available in the form of extended family or siblings. This extended family network can also support shlichut families with daily tasks by providing meals, chauffeuring duties, and qualified workers who can do shlichut tasks, such as substitute teaching a class.

Most important are the fundraising connections that exist in the Chabad community. In general, the couple must raise the funds for their first year's budget from friends, family and their local community connections. Nearly all shlichut couples succeed in finding their own funding sources through this network of support.

All Chabad shlichim and fundraisers support each other and share resources. There is no shame, only honor, in helping others do the Rebbe's work. This means that Chabad shlichim, while constantly concerned about fundraising, always know that they have ample resources and a large network of support into which they can tap in times of need or crisis. Chabad shlichim work in an environment in which they often believe that their work will be able to continue, regardless of financial concerns. Mainstream Jewish organizations' workers often do not have this sort of assurance. They know that in economic downturns, when scandals occur, or when donors' funds dry up, their jobs are

often at risk. This lack of job security and financial assurance can lead some to forego their ideological motivation or passion for entering the field of Jewish service for the more stable and lucrative secular world.

What can mainstream Jewish organizations do? Remove the logistic difficulties that exist with working families in Jewish professional service, in particular those that surround family life. Jewish institutions should 1) provide resources for employees (such as reduced cost, free or on-site child care, reduced cost or free Jewish education vouchers); 2) encourage employees to develop support networks. Resources could include employee health care and other financial benefits will help keep workers in the field. Support network development could include institutions' encouragement of workers to develop cooperative babysitting systems for evening or weekend supervision of children (or for use by employees for maintaining personal time). While many workers become frustrated with the structures of their institutions and loss of motivation due to disillusionment with the field, these may be combated with an institutional environment that rewards them, makes them feel appreciated, and responds to their financial, familial and personal needs.

In addition, the American Jewish community must face the position that Jewish professionals have in the community in relation to other occupations which are often more prestigious. Often Jewish professionals are seen as ideologues, people with a particular passion or drive, but "suckers" for working for low pay and high stress and workload. Better pay and benefits for Jewish professionals may help younger Jews consider entering the field and older professionals to remain in it.

MAKE JEWISH EDUCATION A BREEDING GROUND FOR JEWISH PROFESSIONALS.

Ask any fourth grader at a Jewish Community Center or Religious School what they want to be when they grow, and the answers are likely to include doctor, actor, lawyer, ballerina, teacher, marine biologist, wrestler, and a variety of other answers. Ask any Chabad fourth grader what they want to do, and invariably they aspire to be a shaliach for the Rebbe. Even the ones who do not really want to go on shlichut would not dare admit it. The position of shaliach is highly revered within the Chabad community, considered the highest aspiration and honor. There is a significant honor and credibility gap between the mainstream and Chabad Jewish communities regarding how they view their professional leaders.

Children develop their imaginings about their futures from many places. Non-Chabad children can attend any number of different types of schools; public, private, secular or religious. There they may encounter a wide variety of people, friends, opinions and ideas, all of which provide an environment for children to explore a variety of outlooks. In addition, children are influenced by their parents' occupations, desires and interests. These two factors, in part, help determine a child's preferred future.

Chabad children have a more standardized, insular upbringing. While their experiences in the world outside of home and school can vary greatly, within those confines their influences are relatively regulated and do not vary greatly between Chabad families. All Chabad children either attend Chabad schools or are home schooled. Either way, they receive a similar education, one that focuses on Chumash, Talmud, Tanya and other Chassidic and Lubavitch writings, Yiddish, Hebrew and *halacha*. For girls there is an emphasis on practical skills such as pedagogy, computer science and business skills. Wherever a Chabad child attends school, they are taught the Rebbe's message of outreach, the imperative of serving him through shlichut and divinity in all people.

Even if these children do not want or intend to do shlichut, training for it is part of the expected school culture and routine. During school vacations, most Chabad students do volunteer shlichut work, such as staffing giant Seders in Bangkok, street outreach such as giving out Shabbat candles or helping men lay *t'fillin* (wrap phylacteries) in Portland,

assisting families in isolated regions to set up logistics and helping newer shlichut families gather membership, teach classes and get their Chabad centers started.

Mainstream Jews generally are encouraged to explore a variety of occupations; Jewish professional service is usually not the highest consideration. In part this is because Jewish professionals do not have the topmost consideration in mainstream Jewish society, or at least not the high regard that other, more secular occupations may have. In part this is because Jewish professional service is not part of mainstream Jewish children's education, where many other skills are emphasized. Meanwhile, Chabad children are constantly told that there is no more honored profession, and the skills to do this job are part of their upbringing.

What can mainstream Jewish professionals do? Jewish educational institutions should talk openly with youngsters about pursuing careers in Jewish professional work. Jewish values, history and ethics should be taught in the context of how it applies to children's futures; when students discuss possible future professions, teachers and other Jewish professionals should press them to explore how that profession can incorporate Judaism. Indeed, the topic of practicing and finding Judaism in daily life should consciously be part of any Religious or Day school curriculum. Discussion of Jewish values and ethics should not be isolated to specifically Jewish topics such as holidays or mini-lessons on values, but should be taught as all-encompassing elements in children's lives. Jewish teachers should be well-trained so that their authority is highly regarded.

All Jewish professionals should consider themselves as emissaries for the profession of Jewish service. Throughout their young lives, Jewish children often encounter many Jewish professionals—camp counselors, teachers, rabbis, parents' friends who are also Jewish communal lay leaders, etc. Being visible, conversing with children and letting them know what professional Jews do can be very persuasive in helping children see that the field is vast, and that Jewish professional work is a viable option in the cornucopia of potential career futures to which they may aspire.

EXPECT AND ENCOURAGE GREATER JEWISH KNOWLEDGE FROM ALL JEWISH PROFESSIONALS, AS THEY ARE "THE FACE OF JUDAISM."

In the context of most Jewish professional settings, it is rare for employees to have opportunities for Jewish learning or to share their Jewish knowledge with coworkers. Other than rabbis and certain Jewish educators, Judaic knowledge is rarely a prerequisite or criterion for employment. Rare is the organizational meeting that begins with a study session, and opportunities for employees to study or observe Jewish rituals are rarely built into the day or structure of the organization. The ability to communicate in Jewish languages, familiarity with Jewish texts and history, and intimate knowledge of Jewish traditions are not required for employment.

While these skills are not always necessary in day to day tasks, it affects the culture of the institution and perception of it by outsiders. Jewish professionals usually have a deep commitment to Jewish people, and experience in one aspect of Jewish life (i.e. Israel advocacy and politics, Jewish music, American Jewish politics, etc.), but not overarching knowledge about Judaism's roots and practices. Most Jewish professionals do not have adequate knowledge of Jewish sources to validate their positions or actions to outsiders, despite having passion for Jewish causes. Sometimes Jewish professionals lack authority in Jewish matters due to ignorance of text sources or lack of answers to far-ranging Judaic questions from clients and members. This can be unfortunate in Jewish organizations, whose professionals are seen as "the face of Judaism" by observers.

Male Chabad shlichim are all yeshiva graduates and have received *smicha* (rabbinic ordination). Both men and women have studied Jewish texts, history and languages since their childhoods, and have lived lives immersed in *yiddishkeit*, Judaica, Jewish traditions, rituals and *halacha*. They are not only very knowledgeable about Jewish topics and behaviors, they constantly incorporate Judaism into their daily lives. They are not reticent about sharing their Jewish knowledge, and are usually viewed as living role models for Jewish living. If an observer or client has a question about anything Jewish, they know they can go to the shaliach and he will undoubtedly have an answer available from Jewish texts. This is less assured from most mainstream Jewish professionals.

What can mainstream Jewish organizations do? While recommending that mainstream Jewish organizations require Jewish knowledge from all its professionals might be impractical, illegal or unadvisable, there are ways for organizations to allow for its Jewish professionals to expand their Jewish knowledge. Jewish institutions and organizations should provide a Jewish environment in which to work. This may include answering phones with "*shalom*," allowing paid leave for Jewish holidays, allowing for/providing kosher meals and kitchens at the places of work, providing employees access to Jewish activities through the institution and organizing them to participate in Jewish events throughout the community.

Professionals who desire to expand their Judaic knowledge could be granted reduced or free adult education classes at local synagogues or universities. They could be rewarded with pay increases for higher Jewish education, or Jewish background such as youth group participation, Israel trips or the like. Having employees and professionals who are knowledgeable in Jewish topics can only benefit the Jewish image that an organization possesses by presenting professionals who are educated, authoritative Jews. Often, increased Judaic knowledge translates into increased moral authority in the community. This could benefit organizations that work in outreach and politics, as well as with clients or members within the Jewish community.

HIRE PROFESSIONAL STAFF BASED ON THEIR PERSONALITY, NOT JUST CREDENTIALS.

The majority of mainstream Jewish organizations hire their professionals based on resumes, past experiences, and references, as well as an interview process that attempts to assess the person's personality traits and ability to integrate into the organization's existing structures. There are generally opportunities for career development, or for acquiring new skills relative to the specific job that one is currently doing. This is a perfectly legitimate system, proven to be effective in hiring qualified people for certain jobs. In particular, large mainstream Jewish organizations require people with certain fields of expertise, such as accounting and law, to do certain tasks. This is necessary to ensure effectiveness of the agency, for legal reasons, and to ensure credibility in comparable organizations.

Chabad operates differently. Shlichim decide that they want to do the job, and then often create the positions to fill. Or, if applying to work in a pre-established Chabad House or institution, they are interviewed and appraised not based solely on their resume and past experience, but primarily on their intelligence, capabilities, capacity to learn new skills and flexibility within existing structures. For specialized tasks such as accounting and law, Chabad often hires people to do these such tasks that are beyond what Chabad shlichim are capable of mastering.

The Chabad shaliach usually has specific personality traits that make him a good candidate for successful shlichut. These include a ready smile and sense of humor, flexibility and the ability to listen. Many shlichim were educated or come from New York, and their outgoing New York attitude appeals to many Americans. Chabad shlichim are known for their charisma and personal charm.

What can mainstream Jewish professionals do? While there is little that needs or can be changed in this respect, there still remain some things for mainstream Jewish organizations to consider. First, hire secretaries, receptionists and front office workers with particularly engaging personalities. They are the first people that members and clients encounter in most mainstream Jewish institutions. The initial contact person must be dynamic, warm, welcoming, friendly and engaging as well as intelligent and informed, in order to not discourage, frustrate or intimidate people.

Changes can also be made in the hiring process for new Jewish professionals. Applicants can be encouraged or required to include a section on their hobbies and interests on their resume, and interviews should include more in-depth questions regarding the applicant's personality. This would allow the organization to better know the applicants, to see if there are ways in which the applicant's personal history, nature and undocumented skills can best be used within the organization.

DON'T BE SHY. CHUTZPAH WAS INVENTED BY JEWS.

Imagine driving to work every day along the same route and seeing the same woman walking up the hill, rain or shine, from the bus stop to her job. Or imagine seeing a teenage boy curled up on a bench, head down, obviously distraught and alone. Or the rich, crotchety old man who is known for being rude, intimidating and suspicious of all who try to talk to him.

How would a mainstream Jewish organization respond?

Most likely, the reaction would be silence, to look the other way, ashamed, embarrassed and feeling guilty. It would be acknowledged that someone should "do something," but most people, Jewish professionals included, are not sure how to reach out and respond to needy people. Most Jewish organizations require people to come seeking them, as opposed to going out on the streets to find people to serve. Often they require potential clients or members to call, schedule appointments, or otherwise arrange their own logistics for communicating with the Jewish organization.

Chabad shlichim would usually respond to those above situations quite differently. Chabad trains its yeshiva students, as part of their Friday afternoon pre-Shabbat routine, to do street outreach. Often this involves the male students stopping people in busy pedestrian areas and asking them if they have put on *t'fillin* that day, or Chabad girls offering candles and instructions for lighting them. From there, they will often engage perfect strangers in conversations, asking them if they have a place to eat for Shabbat, offering free literature and other needed resources. Chabad shlichim are particularly adept at doing so to people who are vulnerable or the neediest. Their strategy is to reach out to people who might need their services, instead of waiting for people to find them. A central maxim for Chabad outreach of all kinds (educational, fundraising, etc.) is to make it as easy as possible for Jews to live more Jewishly. This means finding clever ways of reaching out to potential members and clients.

Chabad's publicity tactics are equally clever, visible and designed for maximum impact. Big holiday parties, public Chanukah candle lighting ceremonies, "Mitzvah Mobiles" (cars specially outfitted with sound systems to advertise various mitzvot), and the famous Los Angeles-based, nationally televised Chabad Telethon fundraiser were all

Chabad creations intended to get attention, as well generate interest and spread awareness of Chabad's presence and messages to as wide a population as possible.

Their political machinations are also considered unconventional and "in your face." They include the famous Chanuka ceremonies, but also efforts by some Chabad leaders to lobby politicians, as well as to push for ballot and legislative initiatives that would be in their favor (i.e. school vouchers, promoting pro-life politicians and legislation that lowers barriers between church and state).

Chabad follows recruitment and publicity tactics that they find to be effective, regardless of cost or "appropriateness," as regarded by other Jewish organizations. For Chabad, the ultimate goal is getting people to participate and be aware of their presence, as well as establish themselves as legitimate, even preferred representatives for the Jewish community. Chabad's outreach work and unconventional tactics are one of the main complaints that mainstream Jewish organizations often have about Chabad, but the fact remains that their tactics are effective in drawing people to participate and donate, increasing awareness of the organization's presence, and increasing their political clout with local, national and international leaders.

What can mainstream Jewish organizations do? Take risks. Chabad's tactics, while now often more standardized or accepted within the organization, began as enormous risks involving tremendous chutzpah. Doing something unconventional and unexpected in and of itself can draw attention and admiration among some potential members and donors, in particular if the risk is aptly calculated.

Chabad has learned that in order to grow, they must be where Jewish people are. Other Jewish organizations must send representatives out where their target populations frequent, be that nightclubs, community events or certain restaurants. Jewish professionals, as emissaries of their organizations, should not be shy about making the first move and approaching potential members. Organizations must reach out to potential members via email, phone trees and advertisements in local newspapers.

Jewish organizations must be open to committee and employee feedback and suggestions on how to make the organization more effective, even if these suggestions appear to be impossible, cost prohibitive, or outside the scope of what is generally done. Leaders should remain open to the possibility that radical ideas may work.

HAVE A CLEAR STATEMENT OF MOTIVATION. EXPRESS YOUR PASSION.

Ask any Chabad shaliach why they do the work that they do, why they are so passionate, and you will most likely hear a response that touches on the following points: 1) I believe doing mitzvot brings the imminent arrival of the Moshiach; 2) The Rebbe directed me to reach out to others and help them release their Divine spark; 3) I feel *ahavat Yisrael* (love for the people of Israel) that demands service to them; 4) I want to share the beauty and joy that I feel within Judaism with others.

Ask any mainstream Jewish professional, and they might not have as clearly defined a response. Mainstream Jewish professionals usually have less messianic drive or cult-like devotion to a leader that Chabad shlichim express. They know that their work is important and can help the people whom they serve. They often will describe their feeling of *ahavat Yisrael*, and often they will have a sense of sharing the joys of Judaism.

This is not to say that either Chabad or mainstream Jewish professionals have "the right answer." Judaism speaks to individuals in myriad ways, and each person is drawn to the profession for their own reasons. Chabad shlichim might simply be asked more often why they behave in such an unusual manner, and therefore their response has become finely tuned, whereas mainstream Jewish professionals usually only need articulate their passion and drive if they are required to do so in a speech or for an interview.

There is often a sense of reassurance that comes with Chabad shlichim because of their unswerving passion and how assured shlichim are in their belief that their answers to life's questions are correct. There is often a sense that Conservative and Reform Jews do not exude the same self-assurance or firm convictions. For better or for worse, Chabad's lack of flexibility in their beliefs of right and wrong offer some people the sense that Chabad must know truths that other Jews do not have.

What can mainstream Jewish professionals do? Jewish professionals, as well as Jewish institutions, must remain in touch with their passion, their reason for becoming a Jewish professional. This motivation will likely change over time, but it should be a constant question in the back of one's head; "Why am I doing this work? What is my motivation?"

Devise a personal mission statement. The same process that institutions and organizations go through when creating their mission statements can be followed by individuals. This mission statement is intended to guide Jewish professionals through their careers and help them maintain authenticity and focus. Personal mission statements, like institutional mission statements, should be allowed to evolve with time.

FOCUS ON INDIVIDUALS.

This is probably Chabad's single greatest strength, the characteristic that its clients and non-members respond to and remember the most. There are many stories of people who do not like Chabad on principle or disagree with their cult-like ideology and odd behaviors, but who say that their Chabad rabbi is an exception, that the rabbi *they* know is "cool."

Documented and anecdotal stories abound of Chabad shlichim making personal calls, visits and individual invitations to events. Shlichim are known to take time to respond to each individual client's needs, respond accordingly, and follow up with clients afterwards. Shlichim give this kind of individual service to the single mother who is looking for free Bar Mitzvah lessons for her son as well as the wealthy donor who welcomes yeshiva boys into his office on Friday afternoons to help him wrap *t'fillin*. Chabad shlichim insist that they are not taught formal outreach tactics, but rather are taught truths—Torah and Jewish soul, how to smile and be nice. They insist that it this to which people respond.

This individualized focus that Chabad provides stems from their overall theology, that each individual Jew contains within him or her a spark of Divine light. To that end, they truly believe that connecting with even one person at a time has Divine worth and meaning, that each person they encounter is a small road to being with God. This is also why their outreach efforts focus on one person at a time. While Chabad does send out mass mailings and sponsor huge events, the bulk of shlichim's work is spent in one-on-one efforts to reach people where they need help and service the most.

What can Jewish professionals do? Most Jewish organizations try very hard to find out what services their target communities most need to have met. They send out surveys and questionnaires, have lay committees that keep provide community feedback, and so on. However, these are still efforts to reach the maximum number of people within a group context. Chabad often operates outside of a group context in one-on-one situations. This milieu is less common among larger mainstream Jewish organizations, whose professionals often feel limited in terms of time and cost-effectiveness in their ability to communicate one-on-one with constituents.

Some organizations, such as synagogues, have committees responsible for outreach, *bikur cholim* (visiting the sick as well as *shiva* houses), and other more personal outreach and one-on-one work. Other, larger organizations might consider setting up such committees, or having a rotation wherein board members or professional leadership makes calls or visits to lead supporters.

All professionals within mainstream Jewish funding and service organizations should be required to do some work for the agencies that they sponsor. This could occur within the context of a Mitzvah Day or more regular paid volunteer work. For example, Federation workers should be encouraged or required to participate in organized work for Jewish Family Services, the Bureau of Jewish Education, Sova, Koreh L.A., or any one of the myriad other services which Federation dollars help to sponsor. This will allow recipients of funds as well as the Federation workers who generate the funds to connect one-on-one and begin to develop mutual individual understanding and relationships.

The idea is for each organization to maintain the concept of how best to reach out to all its potential members and clients, not just the majority, in order to fulfill the entirety of their mission statements, as well as the Talmudic concept that "he who has saved one life is as if he has saved the world." (Sanhedrin, 37:a)

EXPAND THE FACE OF FUNDRAISING.

In most mainstream Jewish organizations, there are specific people designated to fundraise, and their efforts occur often during specific times—i.e. the president of a synagogue petitions the congregation during High Holiday services, development department professionals send out pledge cards at certain times during the year, agencies have fundraising events that become annual affairs, and so on.

It is a common misconception that Chabad has a bottomless pit of money that is accessed through Chabad headquarters in Crown Heights. In fact, each Chabad center must provide for itself. Chabad's decentralized organizational structure means that money raised by each shaliach goes directly back to his Chabad center's programs. This means that there is almost no accounting for how much money Chabad raises each year. The worldwide budget of roughly $1 billion does not include capital campaigns or special projects. It is known that Chabad shlichim spend the barest amount on personal expenses, as is obvious in the modest means by which they live.

Most Chabad shlichim have perfected the art of asking for funds. Although most shlichim insist that fundraising is their least favorite part of the job, they believe that they are presenting Jews with the opportunity to participate in a wonderful mitzvah, that of supporting the Jewish people and allowing it to continue and flourish. Each shaliach has a large pool of small donors, with one or two main anchor donors. These wealthier anchor donors are expected to give more, not because they "should," but because they "get to." For Chabad, this translates as the richer donors are allowed to play a bigger role in bringing the Moshiach. To this ends, they are unapologetic in asking, sometimes insisting, that donors contribute.

One of the keys to their fundraising capacity is how Chabad goes about cultivating donors. Again, the concept of releasing Divine sparks by performing mitzvot plays a large part in the cultivation process. Shlichim cultivate donors through the one-on-one relationship. Personal meetings, lessons, spiritual guidance and assistance during illnesses or hard times are just some of the ways that Chabad shlichim cultivate wealthy donors. For these donors, they often view donating money as returning a favor to a friend.

Donating to and supporting Chabad appeals to donors for various reasons. Some donors like the fact that Chabad's social services are non-sectarian. Some donors are

sentimental for their own Jewish upbringings and memories of childhood. Some, particularly older donors, are motivated by a sense of guilt, that these Hasidim lead a purer life, one that the rest of Americans have forgotten or left behind, but that Jews "should" lead. Some donate because they have received Chabad's free or low-cost services (such as education or camp for their children) and feel that they owe back. Some donors see the success that Chabad has (in its service programs, in drawing other donors) and want to join the bandwagon.

Like mainstream Jewish organizations, Chabad knows to reward its donors. Shlichim used to take its major donors for private meetings with the Rebbe, but since his death has had to settle for visits to his gravesite. Buildings are sometimes named by wealthy sponsors, and public ceremonies are held to honor specific programs or projects that these donors helped to fund. In addition, there is the appeal of positive publicity. Many wealthy donors enjoy the networking Chabad allows them to do with famous celebrities and politicians, as well as the positive press that can be associated with charity work.

What can mainstream Jewish organizations do? In each Chabad center there is often little division of labor as it exists in mainstream Jewish organizations. As both logistics managers and main employees, shlichim wear multiple hats, as though they themselves were all the positions of a large mainstream Jewish organization rolled into one person. The shaliach is a teacher, a counselor, the man who *kashers* the kitchen, provides clients with reading material and accompanies people to the hospital.

This translates, for mainstream Jewish organizations, into the concept that all professionals at all levels of the organization's hierarchy, can be potential fundraisers. Perhaps the people who provide these services at other Jewish organizations, both lay and professional, can also take on the role of fundraiser. This would mean that Jewish teachers, service providers, office managers and so on can all participate in solicitations.

Chabad excels in targeting specific donors for specific causes; the wealthy man who has survived cancer is asked to contribute $1 million for a Chabad medical clinic, or the family whose children attend camp are asked to contribute $100 to a camp scholarship fund. Knowing who your donors are and what interests them is key to any

fundraising. General appeals may work for some donors, but attention to individual donors, even small donors, for personal appeals can generate larger future donations.

Jewish professionals should not be embarrassed to use their passion in these outreach efforts, or to be frank about what they want from members. If the Jewish professional believes in the work that the organization is doing, there is no need for the Jewish professional to be ashamed or embarrassed to ask for donations. If the professional has developed a rapport and relationship with the member or client, the professional should show some chutzpah in asking for the member or client to take the next step. This could mean raising a donation, participating in a committee, or in some other way giving back to the organization that has served them.

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