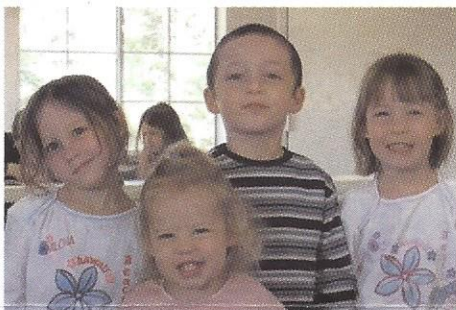


## SLICE OF LIFE



Chana, Moshe and Rochel with their little sister, Bessie

### Inspiration Times Three

by Steve Hyatt

Inspiration can come in all shapes and sizes. A little while ago, during a gathering at Chabad of Northern Nevada, a visiting rabbi told a story of a wagon driver who considered his job mundane and uninspiring.

One day he went to his rebbe (the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe, known as the Rebbe Maharash) for some words of inspiration. When he finally had a chance to speak with the Rebbe privately, he was so nervous, all he could say was, "I am a simple wagon driver."

The Rebbe Maharash looked at the man and told him that his job afforded him a unique opportunity each day to lift his eyes to the heavens and to recognize G-d in everything.

Given the fact that our shul is located at the base of the magnificent Sierra Nevada Mountain range, the entire group seated around the table could relate to the Rebbe Maharash's insightful words. Despite the enormity of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range and the unmatched splendor of nearby Lake Tahoe, three of the most inspirational examples of G-d's blessings in Northern Nevada may be Moshe, Chana and Rochel Cunin, five-year-old triplets of Rabbi Mendel and Sarah Cunin.

Recently, on the first night of Passover, when it came time for the "Mah Nishtana," the three popped up to stand on their chairs and beautifully and melodically chanted the questions that Jewish children have been asking their parents for over 3,300 years.

The Cunin triplets are members of Northern Nevada's first-ever Jewish pre-school. Despite the fact that they are just beginning to read and write, the triplets and their classmates have memorized myriad songs, prayers and passages as part of their daily lessons. Each member of this fledgling pre-school is an inspiration to their parents, friends and neighbors in our small Jewish community.

Some of the parents of the students, who previously were uninterested or unaware of their Jewish heritage, have watched their children flourish in the warm embrace of the Gan Sierra Pre School. Their young children inspire them to cultivate and build stronger Jewish roots at home.

During the Seder when the Cunin triplets stood up on their chairs, with smiles from ear to ear, and gleefully sang their songs and asked the Four Questions, I watched the reaction of the adults around the packed room. It was as if everyone of them was suddenly transported back in time, to a moment when they were the little ones standing on their chairs, singing for their Zaydes, Bobbes, Moms and Dads. As Moshe, Chana and Rochel sang each question from memory, the adults at the table let their minds drift back to a much simpler, loving, time in their lives.

In today's busy world, many of us think it is too late, too difficult, or too embarrassing to go back to our Jewish roots, to explore the teachings of Torah, and to live more observant lives. But in reality, it is never too late to take the first step toward a more spiritual, Torah-based life. A simple call to any Chabad House in the world will be met with an open, sincere, accepting invitation to learn at your own pace, information about our people, traditions, and rich heritage.

On the day before the first night of Passover, a Reno resident sent a letter to the local newspaper in which he questioned the ability of modern-day Jews to follow the Torah and its teachings in today's turbulent world. The writer

stated clearly that he felt the commandments that G-d gave to Moses and the Jewish people are simply too difficult, challenging and unrealistic for "modern" human beings to follow. He was arguing that people simply do not possess the capacity to follow ten commandments, let alone 613.

After reading the letter to the editor I immediately realized that the writer had obviously never been to a Chabad House, that he had never sat down at a Shabbat table illuminated by the ambient glow of candles, and that he had most definitely never seen three inspirational members of the Reno Jewish community, who because of their parents and wonderful teachers, demonstrate daily just how easily one can make Torah part of one's daily life.

The Cunin triplets serve as inspiration for our entire community. As I watched them at the Seder I asked myself, if three five-year-olds can learn to honor Shabbat, eat kosher food, say *kiddush* on wine, light Shabbat candles, celebrate holidays, say blessings before and after eating, why is it so difficult for an adult to do so as well. If a five-year-old can see G-d's wondrous hand in the world around them, why can't we? If a five-year-old can proudly jump up on her chair and belt out the Four Questions, why are we so frightened to let a boss know that we need several days off to celebrate Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur or Passover? We don't want to be embarrassed or admit our ignorance about subjects of which we are unfamiliar. Sometimes it takes a little inspiration to capture our attention, motivate us and refocus our efforts in the right direction.

Inspiration can come in all shapes and sizes. Sometimes we can be inspired by the glories of nature. Sometimes by inspirational community leaders and sometimes by three small members of our community who live, breathe and sing the joys of our heritage. ■

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### New Emissaries

Rabbi Chesky and Chani Tenenbaum will be arriving soon in Gaithersburg, Maryland, where Rabbi Tenenbaum will serve as administrator and program director for Chabad of Upper Montgomery County.

Rabbi Yehuda and Faya Lipskier are establishing a new Chabad-Lubavitch Center on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, in the West 60s.

Rabbi Mendy and Tzipi Lipskier are moving to Chandler, Arizona to start a new preschool, Camp Gan Israel summer day camp and spearhead youth and teen programming at Chabad of the East Valley.

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