ourCommUNITY

Happy Chanukah

2015/5776

Jewish Community Council of Montreal

Conseil de la Communaute Juive de Montréal

Greetings

Chanukah is recognized worldwide by the lighting of the Menorah for eight consecutive nights. When one uses one candle to light another, the original candle remains bright. Its light is not diminished by being shared; on the contrary, the two candles together enhance each other's brightness and increase light.

Such is the power of the Chanukah lights.

Not only are we illuminating the darkness, we are igniting our own personal flame. The soul is compared to the wick of a candle which constantly strives to reach its source. Likewise, the source of a Jew is his or her soul. And within each of our souls, amongst many traits, lies chesed – goodness and loving kindness. Through the kindling of the Menorah we ignite this quality we all possess.

Many have the custom of placing the Menorah in a window. This enables the glow of the flames to illuminate not only the inside of our homes, but to light up the night outside, for the more goodness we share, the more goodness we will spread to the world.

Perhaps a lesson we can take from the Menorah is that it is our obligation to look for the good, for the light in every person. Each of us possesses a special quality, one character trait that no one else has. The candles serve to ignite that quality and influence those around us positively and with joy.

Let us hope and pray that we will indeed achieve our goals in unity, as one people, by strengthening those around us with goodness and kindness.

Rabbi Saul Emanuel, *Executive Director*

Many years ago during Chanukah, also called the Festival of Lights, the Jewish people experienced a twofold miracle. They miraculously won a battle of a few against many, a scraggly group of scholars fighting a massive and organized army. That in itself is reason enough to rejoice.

But it is the second miracle which we so fondly remember and cherish. It is the victory of spiritual freedom. Freedom to study and practice the religion of our forefathers without fear. Freedom to transmit Torah knowledge and wisdom to the coming generations. It is this second miracle which is symbolized with lighting of the candles. It is the triumph of light and spirituality over the evil powers of darkness and hate.

Jewish tradition has it that even young children participate in the candle lighting ceremony. Candles are lit for every baby boy and girl, unlike most commandments which normally do not apply to children.

The name Chanukah in Hebrew is derived from the word Chinuch which means education. This underscores the importance of teaching Jewish values at the youngest age. As our Sages instruct us, "As a child begins talking, His Father should teach him Torah".

This is the Jewish response to what the wicked Hellenist Greeks tried to inflict upon our ancestors. They made an effort to force assimilation upon them by causing them to forget the Torah and replacing it with their pagan beliefs.

And we respond by introducing more and more of our brethren to the wealth and beauty of Torah study. This will in turn lead us to the fulfillment of all of Hashem's commandments which is the essence of religious freedom.

We fervently hope and pray that, Ohr Chadash Al Tzion To'ir, He should shine a new light on Tzion, Venizke Chulanu Yachad Bimheira L'Oro, and we shall forever bask in His light, with the final redemption Amen Ve'Amen.

Rabbi Binyomin Weiss, *Chief Rabbi Of Montreal*

Written on the sides of the dreidel are the letters Nun, Gimmel, Hei and Shin representing the words Nes Gadol Haya Sham, "A great miracle happened there."

While the dreidle spins, the letters dissapear in a blur and are visible only when coming to a stop.
The dreidel represents how we, immerse in dizzying hustle-bustle of daily routine. We cannot always see the miracles regularly happening around us.
It is when we stop to reflect for a moment that our eyes open to the miracles that were always there.

Chanukah Customs

A custom is a traditional and widely accepted way of doing something that is specific to a particular people. Jewish people have many customs when it comes to holidays, much of them stemming from the small shtetels they came from in Europe. We present a few Chanukah customs, the majority common to everyone.

The mitzvah of lighting candles is obligatory upon everyone.

The custom is to use olive oil for the menorah. If olive oil is not available, an alternative kosher oil may be used. Candles may be used to light the menorah.

The lights must burn at least ½ hour after nightfall.

If many menorahs are being lit, there should be a distinct space between each one.

All candles or wicks should be on the same level, none higher or lower and set up in a straight line.

One should not derive any benefit from the used wicks. Some have the custom to burn them right after Chanukah, others burn the wicks with their chametz on erev Pesach.

The 'Shamash'- additional candle, is positioned higher than the other candles. The Shamash may not be lit from the other candles.

One cannot derive any benefit from the light of the menorah.

The mitzvah of Chanukah is pirsuma nisa – publicizing the great miracles that happened. As such, some have the custom of lighting the menorah on a window sill so the lights shine to the outside. As well, it is best to light the menorah in the presence of all household members.

Practical Lighting Customs

On the first night, one places the first candle on the extreme right of the Menorah (when facing it). Each night thereafter, light an additional candle to the left of the candle lit the night before.

On the first night three Brachos are recited: Lehadlik Ner shel Chanukah (or Lehadlik Ner Chanukah); She'asah Nisim la'Avosainu; and Shechechyanu. On the remaining nights, Shechechyanu is not recited.

Most communities have the custom that women do not do any work during the first half hour after the Menorah has been lit. Cooking is permitted.

The blessings should be said prior to lighting the candles. One should not speak until the Brachos are completed.

There are various times to light the Menorah depending on one's community: at sunset; ten minutes after sunset; one half hour after sunset; after the Ma'ariv service.

On Friday evening the Menorah must be lit before the Shabbos candles and should burn at least one half hour after nightfall.

After Shabbos some have the custom of lighting before Havdalah, others after.

Full Hallel is recited during Shacharis (the morning service) daily.

Al HaNisim is added during Shmonei Esrei and Birkat Hamazon.

It is customary for children to play dreidel (spinning the Chanukah top). The letters on the dreidel nun, gimmel, hei and shin when translated mean: A great miracle happened there.

It is customary to eat dairy on Chanukah. This is in honor of a woman named Yehudit.

To commemorate the miracle of the oil, it is a custom to eat foods fried in oil.

Fontaine Santé – The Epic Growth of a Company

By Joannie Tansky

For many, hummus is a staple in their diet. It's healthy, tasty and versatile. Recently, Montreal and North America acquired a new delicious and very distinctive hummus under the (MK) label - Fontaine Santé.

The variety of products prepared by Fontaine Santé is staggering: beet hummus, garlic hummus, roasted red pepper hummus, ginger sesame hummus, etc with many more varieties including a plethora of salads that will shortly become kosher. What is totally unique about this company is that every flavor is real, meaning, the roasted red pepper hummus has real roasted peppers, slowly cooked in their ovens until perfectly done, seeded, peeled, and pureed to perfection, then added to the hummus.

Tastes Like Homemade

We were fortunate to take an extensive tour of the facilities lasting almost an hour and was, to say the least, an experience and eye-opener. The Fontaine Santé plant is certified FSSC-22000, which englobes HACCP and GFSI, the highest food safety certifications. All of this to say the place is most likely cleaner than your own kitchen. If our sterile garb is any indication, they will take every precaution to ensure that it stays that way.

The first thing we noticed is that it's very cold in the plant, some rooms colder than others. We figured out that's because of all the fresh vegetables that come in daily. As they are used immediately, refrigeration is not necessary, but a cold room is.

We saw massive crates of eggplants, peppers, garlic, tomatoes and onions. In one room, there was what can only be described as a silo from the ceiling to the floor filling most of the room. It held the chickpeas which are delivered weekly from Saskatchewan.

Our first stop was the tomato line. Crates and crates of first quality gorgeous Roma tomatoes were checked along an assembly line. Any blemish on the tomato rendered it unusable to be returned to the supplier. From there, they are washed seven times and then sent to be cooked, diced or crushed, depending on what they are used for.

In another room there are massive ovens that roast vegetables exactly as we do in our homes. Once cooked, each tray is labeled with a date and hour and used within a day. We kept going and reached a room where onions were being caramelized, to be used as a garnish for different salads or hummus. The smell was heavenly. It must be noted that as we went from room to room we had to stop, wash and disinfect our hands and only then move into the room.

We saw the hummus being slowly cooked in huge vats, then gently mixed back and forth while someone added the spices, the recipe done by computer. As each batch of hummus or other salad is finished, it is packaged and sent via conveyer belt to the boxing department.

Fontaine Santé is a big player in the food business, shipping to California, all across Canada and now, with their (MK) certification will be in all the major kosher stores in the New York area.

The next time you buy a container of Fontaine Santé hummus know that you are getting the freshest of the fresh ingredients, made with care in the cleanest conditions possible. Enjoy!

A Holocaust Chanukah Miracle

By Yitta Halberstam and Judith Leventhal

Every year, Chanukah arrives just when we seem to need it most. When the days are at their shortest and the nights have grown unbearably long, the menorah casts its glow upon a people hungry for light. In 1938, the entire world found itself sinking into a darkness unlike any it had known in modern history. If ever there was a need for light to guide our way, it was on this cold December evening in Germany, as the eighth and final day of Chanukah was about to begin.

The Geier family was sitting in their second-class compartment on a train headed from Berlin to Holland as they watched the winter sun slip beyond the horizon. It had been a long and terrifying trail that led from Kristallnacht ("The Night of Broken Glass") to this moment. They could still hardly believe they had managed to obtain an American visa and were now finally on what they prayed would be an uneventful journey to freedom.

Judah and Regina Geier and their two children, Arnold and Ruth, spent the duration of the train ride staring out the window, nibbling on sandwiches, reading, dozing, and trying to behave as if the world were still a normal place. But unlike most of the other passengers, the Geier family remained acutely aware of the dangers that awaited them as the train approached the German-Dutch border. There, Nazis, German police, and officers of the Gestapo would all be present for a final check of passports and travel papers.

For Judah Geier, however, there was an additional heaviness that weighed on his heart. As an Orthodox Jew and a cantor, his whole life had been devoted to following the ways of the Torah. Yet, here it was, almost nightfall, when the flames of the Chanukah menorah should have been rising to spread their light, and he was forced to sit quietly in his seat with only the harsh glare of a naked bulb to illuminate the graying sky. Surrounded by strangers, he was afraid to strike a match or recite a blessing for fear of calling undue attention to himself and his family. Regina Geier, sensing her husband's inner struggle, tried to reassure him that G-d, who sees and knows all , would surely understand his situation and, no doubt, grant him many more Chanukahs to celebrate properly.

Judah nodded gratefully, but did not seem comforted. In a place and time of such spiritual darkness, the light of the menorah seemed more important than ever – especially on this eighth night of Chanukah, which represents the culmination of the holiday, when all the candles are lit simultaneously to proclaim the miracle of Jewish survival. Under these dangerous circumstances, how could he possibly light the menorah? But, then again, how could he possibly not?

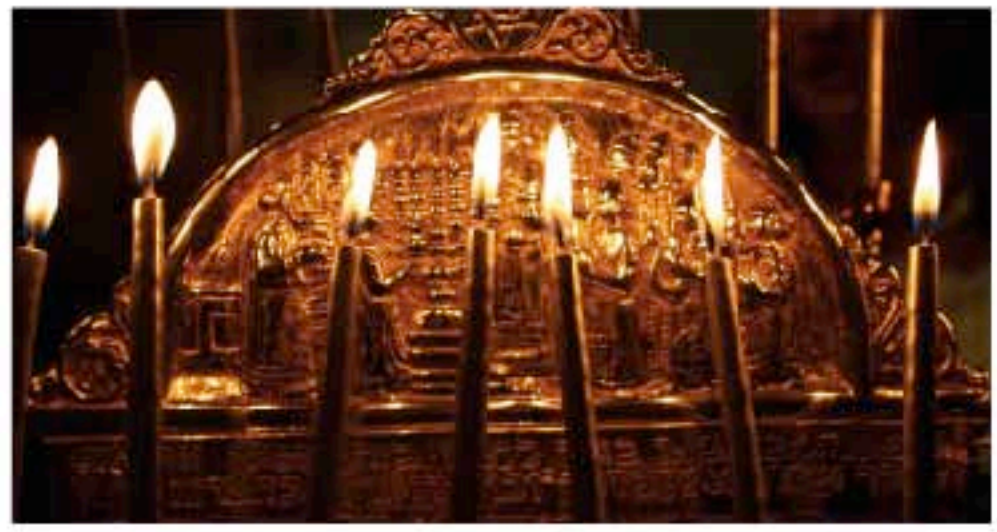
Judah turned the issue over and over again in his head as the train continued onward. Suddenly, the train screeched to a halt at the German-Dutch crossing, where it sat in the station for the longest ten minutes of Judah's life as the border police and the Gestapo prepared to check everyone's documents. He felt his wife's body go still next to his, and even his children sat frozen in fear. One wrong answer, one nervous twitch, could mean the difference between escape and imprisonment, between a new life and certain death.

Then, it happened. With no warning, the entire station and every corner of the train was thrust into total darkness. All the lights were extinguished at the very same instant, leaving the passengers and the approaching officers groping in the darkness.

Without a second's hesitation, Judah seized the moment and reached for his overcoat on the luggage rack above. He put his hand into one of the pockets and pulled out a small package. Before anyone realized what was happening, he struck a match, lit a candle, and quickly warmed the bottom of eight other candles. He then planted them firmly in a neat row upon the windowsill and, in a breathless whisper, recited the Chanukah blessings. As his family looked on in amazement, Judah carefully lit each candle and placed the ninth one – the shamash – off to the side. In the bright warmth of the menorah, his face radiated joy and peace for the first time in months.

Seeing the unexpected light in the window, the Gestapo and the border police came running. The sound of their boots striking the pavement with intensified blows echoed throughout the stillness.

Nevertheless, Judah continued to focus his thoughts on the Chanukah lights while his heart pounded as loudly and rapidly as the quickening footsteps.



When the officers burst through the door, Judah was braced for the worst, perhaps even the end. However, instead of responding with rage to this brazen display of Jewish ritual, the officers only noticed the opportunity that it provided. By the light of the flickering candles, they would now be able to see clearly enough to begin checking passports and papers, and so, with characteristic Nazi efficiency, they set to work. As soon as the process was completed and they were about to leave, the chief officer of the border police turned to Judah and thanked him personally for having had the foresight to carry "travel candles" on his trip.

Meanwhile, the Geier family sat in stunned silence for close to half an hour, unable to take their eyes off the windowsill. Just as the candles were beginning to grow dim, every light in the station suddenly flashed back on. Judah, still in awe at what he had just witnessed, put his arm around his twelve-year-old son. With tears in his eyes, he drew him close. "Remember this moment," he declared softly. "As in the days of the Maccabees, a great miracle happened here."

Inaugurates Kosher Kitc

At the end of June 2015, with great pride and fanfare, El Al inaugurated Boston as one of the cities it flies from in North America, a very prestigious feather in Logan Airport's cap. El Al is one of the world's premium airlines and Logan is quickly becoming one of North America's biggest hubs, all in all a great combination. Departing Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays to Tel Aviv with packed flights, this match is something that has been in the making for years.

Simultaneously with El Al's inauguration, a kosher kitchen was inaugurated at Logan Airport, as big a coup as getting the airline. Ⓜ Canada's Kosher Certifier together with Gate-Gourmet, a multi-national company and one of the biggest suppliers of airline food worldwide, opened their specially constructed kosher kitchen in Boston's Logan Airport for EL Al on the same day as the first flight departed for Israel.

Gate Gourmet and Ⓜ

Montreal and Toronto's airports both use Gate Gourmet to host their kosher kitchens, both under the supervision of the MK. Gate Gourmet, a Swiss-headquartered company that caters to 14 major airlines at Trudeau, is able to supply up to 1,000 kosher meals a day.

Boston's kitchen proved to be more of a challenge due to space constraints. Gate Gourmet together with Hamasbia, Foods of Israel, world renowned for their quality meals which are manufactured to the highest standards of Kashrus, joined forces at Logan airport to service the new El Al flights.

Gate Gourmet receives the food prepared. It must then be divided into milk and meat with the appropriate utensils placed on each tray, which is then sealed. Those trays are then brought to the waiting plane where all the used utensils and trays are unloaded and then the new trays reloaded. Everything is also carefully labelled: meat, dairy, special kosher, vegetarian kosher, Glatt kosher etc.

The kitchen receives a list of passenger's requests and must make sure that the appropriate meals are allocated for each flight. As EL flies in and out of Logan three times weekly, There are six flights with over two hundred and fifty people on each flight including passengers and crew. They serve 1500 passengers two meals per flight on a weekly basis. That would add up to 3,000 meals, no mean feat!

As this is a kosher facility, Rabbi Levi Liberow a mashgiach, is present at all times and they are closed from Friday sundown until Sunday morning.

Back to El Al's Inauguration

In Logan Airport, when a new airline comes on board, they raise the flag of that country which is added to the long line of flags already present. Israel's flag was proudly hoisted at a star-studded ceremony with about two hundred guests present in the main hall of the airport. Together with the CEO of El Al, David Maimon, Rabbi David Grossman founder and spiritual leader of Migdal Ohr, the head of Logan Airport Mr. Thomas Glynn, the Bostoner Rebbe, Rabbi Saul Emanuel Executive Director of Ⓜ Canada's Kosher Certifier and Rabbi Peretz Jaffe, MK Kashruth Director, both the airline and the kitchen were warmly welcomed to Boston.

The following day there was an elaborate breakfast in the Young Israel of Brookline to formally welcome El Al to Boston, which is one of the highlights of Boston's Jewish community. Rabbi Grossman from Migdal Ohr had brought a Sefer Torah from Israel and following the speeches there was enthusiastic singing and rejoicing with Mr. Maimon helping to inaugurate Israel's beloved airline.

Induction of the New Kosher Kitchen

That same afternoon, Logan's first kosher kitchen was formally opened with a mezuzah affixed to the door. Mr. Doug Goeke, Gategroup Airline Solutions and Yehudit Grisaro, EL AL Deputy President cut the ribbon to open the kitchen which had already started preparing meals for both economy and business class passengers.

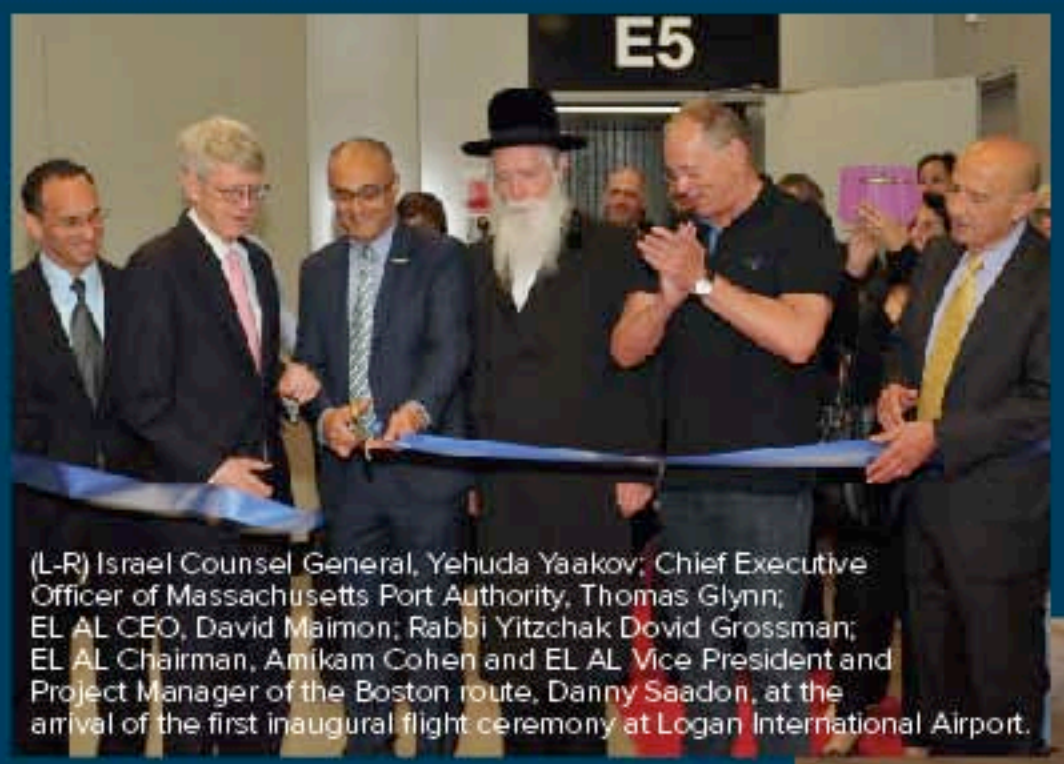
Menus are carefully and thoughtfully created and given to Gate Gourmet whose task it is to prepare them according to both kashruth and strict taste guidelines. The mashgiach supervises the baking of bread, the cleaning of the lettuce and other vegetables and fruit, watches what goes out, making sure it's labeled correctly and that it reaches the right plane at the right time. In other words, he must make sure the kitchen runs like a well-oiled machine. There is no room for error.

Every ingredient of every kind of food is verified from its source to the time it is cooked. Even produce must meet exacting standards. All meals leave the kitchen wrapped and bearing the Ⓜ label. As well as tasting delicious, the food must be appealing to the eye.

Next time you fly and ask for a kosher meal, you now know the machinations and attention to detail that must be done.

As far as flying to Israel...you now have an option other than Toronto or New York. Wherever you decide to fly from, have a safe trip and enjoy the food on the plane!

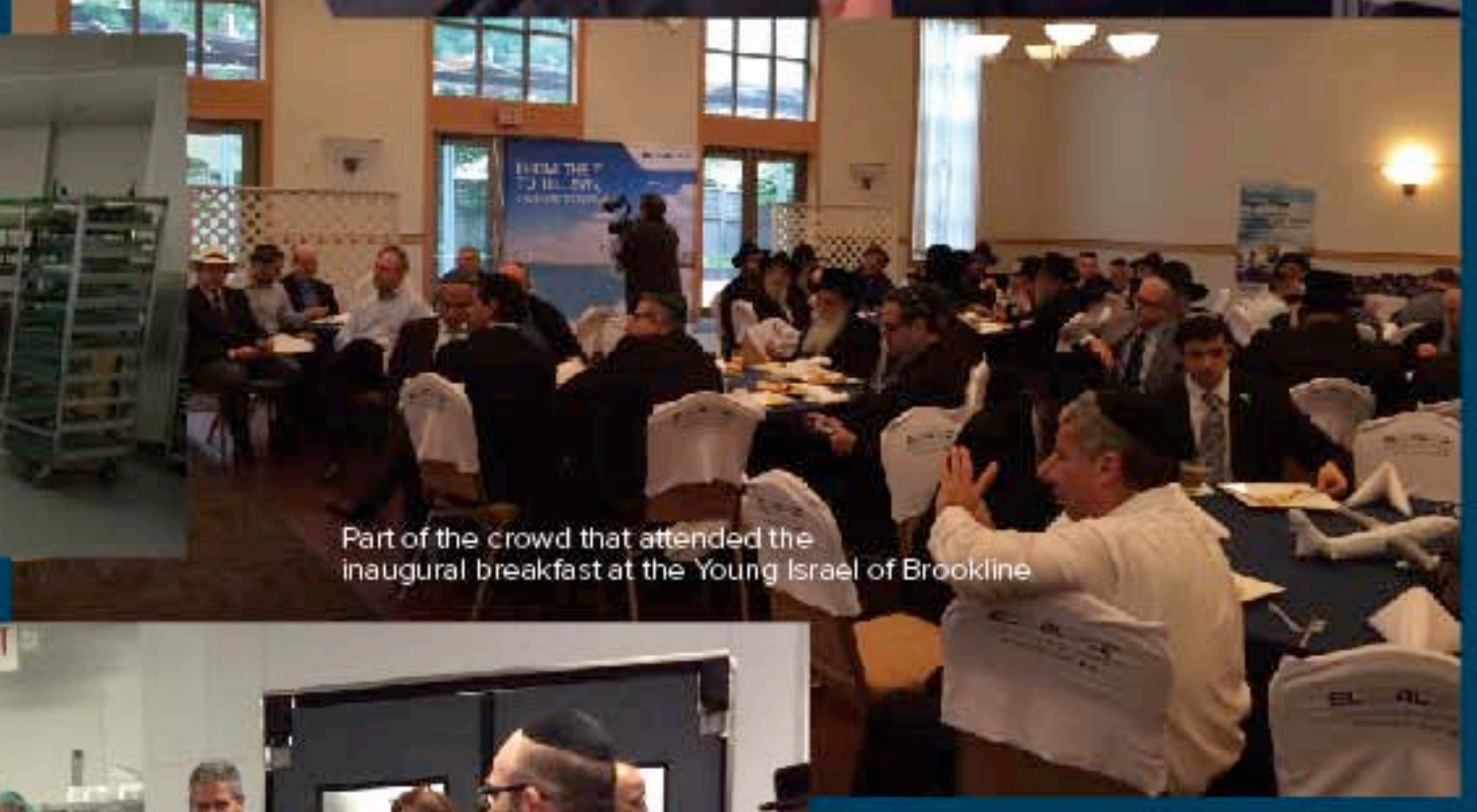
hen in Boston's Logan Airport



(L-R) Israel Counsel General, Yehuda Yaakov; Chief Executive Officer of Massachusetts Port Authority, Thomas Glynn; EL AL CEO, David Maimon; Rabbi Yitzchak Dovid Grossman; EL AL Chairman, Amikam Cohen and EL AL Vice President and Project Manager of the Boston route, Danny Saadon, at the arrival of the first inaugural flight ceremony at Logan International Airport.


Rabbi Yitzchak Dovid Grossman, Chief Rabbi of Migdal HaEmek with the fulltime Mashgiach, Rabbi Levi Liberow


Picture of kitchen


Part of the crowd that attended the inaugural breakfast at the Young Israel of Brookline


Mr. Doug Goeke, Gate Gourmet, Rabbi P. Jaffe, head of Kashrus, Canada's Kosher Certifier, and Chief Rabbi Weiss, Montreal. Mr. Azriel Tauber-Hamasbia. Ms. Yehudis Grisaro-VP Customers & Service El Al, Rabbi Saul Emanuel, Executive Director of Canada's Kosher Certifier.


Chief Rabbi of Montreal, Rav Y. B. Weiss, Doug Goeke-Gate Gourmet

Forging Ahead Despite the Odds

Delicious without gluten® is a new company with a name that reflects exactly who they are and what they do. No guessing here.

About six years ago, when Miriam Pearl's son was five years old, his level of activity dropped. He became lethargic and had severe stomach aches but never a gastro. Being a diligent mother, Miriam ordered blood tests from the doctor to check Jake for a deficiency in iron or possible problems with his stomach. Imagine Miriam's surprise and shock when the diagnosis came back as celiac disease. Life as she knew it changed forever that day.

When people with celiac disease eat gluten (a protein found in wheat, rye and barley), their body mounts an immune response that attacks the small intestine. These attacks lead to damage on the villi, small fingerlike projections lining the small intestine that promote nutrient absorption. When the villi get damaged, nutrients cannot be absorbed properly into the body. Miriam's son was eating but getting no nutrition from the food.

Lifestyle Changes

To deal with her son's disease, Miriam had to become very creative. No more cereal, bread, bagels, cake, muffins or pasta. As most parents will attest, it is those exact foods that often make up the diet of a young child. Since celiac disease is hereditary, Jake's sister was also tested and was diagnosed with the disease as well. She already had a peanut allergy and Miriam was used to making her own food in order to ensure safety. At the time there was virtually nothing gluten-free and peanut-free on the mass market, so Miriam had to start from scratch, searching out gluten-free flour and other ingredients that would not exacerbate both of her children's condition and experimenting with recipes. Slowly things fell into place. Miriam left her peanut free bakery to start anew.

While her bakery was successful, it did not address her real issue: how to make her children (and subsequently other children) feel normal when attending parties or other kids events. They could only eat food prepared by their mother who by this time had mastered many gluten-free recipes. It was at that moment that Miriam made one of the biggest decisions of her life. She would try to mass produce her recipes and sell them to stores.

Her kitchen could not produce the quantities needed, so she hooked up with a company who was under the Ⓜ with dairy certification. While she had a place to produce her products, many people wanted a pareve product - not meat and not milk. After a while Miriam realized that Pareve was really the way to go and that's when she took the plunge and Delicious without Gluten was born.

As she was now in control she made her new facility gluten-free, peanut-free, nut-free and dairy-free. She began experimenting with different ingredients compatible with the disease and soon had a wide range of products: white and brown bread, challah rolls, hamburger buns, baguettes, pita bread, birthday cake, muffins, cupcakes, cookies, brownies and cake loaves.

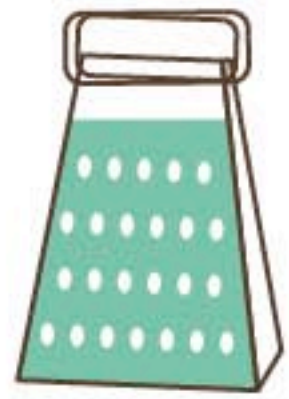
We toured her facility and admired both the cleanliness and sophistication of the place. Although not that large by bakery standards, she is able to produce large batches of her products to supply stores in the Quebec and Ontario areas.

Miriam has opened the door for those with celiac disease to a whole new world. She has allowed them to partake of what the rest of us take for granted. Her next feat is to find as many stores as possible to carry her product. Given the initial reaction to Delicious Without Gluten, we know that she will be successful.

Vegetable Latkes

1 potato
3 carrots
1 zucchini
¼ cup chopped spinach
1 onion—diced and fried
2 eggs
½ cup flour
1 tbsp. kosher salt
Olive oil for frying

Dice and fry onion



Grate potato, carrot and zucchini

Mix all ingredients together

Fry 2–3 minutes on one side, flip and do the other side for 1–2 minutes

Remove from oil and place on a paper towel
Repeat until all batter has been fried.

Serve immediately.

Traditional Potato Latkes

1 onion
2 tbsp. oil
3 tsp. kosher salt, divided
1.5 lbs. Yukon Gold potatoes
2 eggs
¼ cup flour
Oil for frying

Dice the onion and sauté it in 2 tbsp. oil and 1 tsp. salt until golden.

Grate the potatoes (by hand or in a food processor). Immediately transfer the grated potatoes to a bowl of cold water.

Place the eggs, flour, fried onion and 2 tsp. salt in a separate bowl. Drain the grated potatoes well, add it to the rest of the ingredients and mix immediately.

Heat 2-4 tbsp. of oil in a frying pan, over medium heat. Test the oil by dropping a tiny bit of the mixture into the pan. When the oil sizzles upon contact, it is ready.

For uniform latkes, use a 1/4 or 1/8 cup measuring cup. Scoop the batter and gently drop it into the oil. Press down gently with the back of the measuring cup to flatten. Fry 2-3 minutes until golden, then flip the latkes and fry 1-2 minutes on the second side. Repeat until all the mixture has been fried. (You will need to add more oil to the pan every couple of batches.)

Yields: 16 latkes

Low Fat Potato Latkes

3 teaspoons vegetable oil, preferably canola
2 pounds russet potatoes (about 4 or 5), peeled
3/4 cup finely chopped red onion (about 1 medium onion)
1/4 cup all-purpose white flour
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 large egg white, lightly beaten

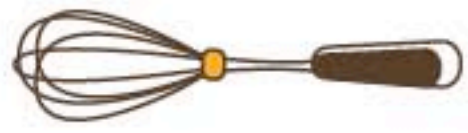
Set oven racks at middle and lower positions of the oven. Preheat oven to 450° F. Prepare 2 baking sheets by brushing with 1 teaspoon oil on each sheet.

Grate potatoes using hand grater or shredding blade of food processor. Place in a large bowl and add onions, flour, salt and pepper; toss to mix well. Add egg, egg white and remaining 1 teaspoon oil; toss to mix.

Drop onto prepared cookie sheets by the tablespoonful and press lightly to form cakes. Bake for 10 minutes, or until golden brown on the bottom. Flip latkes, switch position of baking sheets, and bake about 5 more minutes, or until golden brown.

Transfer to a platter, arranging browned-side up, and serve with no-fat sour cream or applesauce, or both. May be made ahead and stored overnight in fridge. Reheat at 350° F for 10 minutes.

Yeilds: 24 latkes.



Yehudit – The Chanukah Heroine

The story of Chanukah took place during the time of the Second Temple, when the Holy Land was ruled by the Greeks. The Greeks were philosophers and thus the battle of Chanukah, while very physical, was also a spiritual battle.

The Greeks accepted the Torah as a book of wisdom, but not as something holy that connects us to Hashem. Torah learning became illegal and mitzvoth like Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh, Brit Milah, and the holiness of Jewish marriage were banned. In other words, as long as the Jews viewed the Torah as just another philosophy, the Greeks were happy. Sadly, many Jewish people succumbed to the Greek way of life until the brave Mattisyahu and his sons rose above the fray and began to awaken the Jewish people.

Yehudit, the daughter of Yochanan the High Priest, was a young widow. While she was beautiful and wealthy, Yehudit was also known for her piety and good deeds. Holofernes, the Greek commander let it be known that he desired the beautiful widow.

The town of Bethulia where many Jews lived, including Yehudit, was surrounded by the Greeks. Basic necessities were not allowed in. It did not take very long before the people began to suffer from severe hunger and grew very discouraged. Out of despair, the town gathered together and the elders announced that in five days when they ran out of food, they would surrender.

It was at that meeting that Yehudit spoke out, expressing her disappointment in their lack of faith in G-d. As the meeting ended, Yehudit told the elders that she had a plan that would deliver the enemies into their hands, but they must not ask her what it was. They must simply have faith in her. Because of Yehudit's reputation for wisdom and piety, they agreed.

Yehudit's Courageous Plan

Taking with her one maidservant and a large basket of cheese, bread and wine, Yehudit left the city and was immediately stopped by the soldiers. She told them that she wished to speak with their commander, Holofernes. When she was brought before him, he welcomed the beautiful woman.

Yehudit told Holofernes that she worried for those in the city who were suffering under the siege. To ease the pain of her people, she had decided to come and tell him how to capture the city and, hopefully, receive, in return, mercy on her people.

She explained that the people's faith in G-d remained strong. So long as they had faith, they would not surrender; and, G-d would not allow the army to take the city. On the other hand she added, before long, every scrap of kosher food would be gone, and in desperation they would begin to eat the flesh of unclean animals, and then G-d's anger would be turned against them and the town would fall.

She proposed to stay with Holofernes in the camp of his army, but would return to Bethulia each day in order to find out how low the supplies were. Then she would tell Holofernes when the time to strike was. Eager to spend time with the beautiful widow as well as to end the siege victoriously, he agreed.

After several days of Yehudit relaying that the people in Bethulia were almost out of supplies, she felt that she and her maidservant had gained the trust of the army. They came and went as they pleased. It was time to implement the second half of the plan.

The Second Half of the Plan

Yehudit informed Holofernes that the Bethulia was now out of food and there remained only to wait a few days until they would be eating the non-kosher animals. He invited her to come alone to his tent that night to celebrate. She agreed, insisting that he partake of her 'renowned' goat-cheese.

As he ate the salty cheese, he grew thirsty and Yehudit plied him the heavy wine she had brought with her. While Yehudit pretended to eat and drink, Holofernes became sluggish from imbibing and eating. Shortly thereafter, he was in a deep sleep. Calling her maidservant in, Yehudit took Holofernes' sword and slew him. The two women wrapped evidence of Holoferne's demise in a cloth and returned to Bethulia.

The elders were surprised to see her. Yehudit showed them the evidence of the death of the commander and told them that the men of the city must attack the Syrian-Greeks now. When the soldiers would go to wake their leader they would find him dead. The elders followed her advice and, sure enough, the Syrian-Greek army fled at the surprise attack and after learning that their commander was dead. Thus Yehudit was the heroine of the Chanukah story.

Yehudit – L'Héroïne de Hanouka

L'histoire de Hanouka a eu lieu pendant la période du Deuxième Temple, où la terre sainte été gouvernée par les Grecs. Les Grecs étaient philosophes et donc la bataille de Hanouka, bien que très physique, était aussi un combat spirituel.

Les Grecs ont accepté la Torah comme un livre de la sagesse, mais non pas comme quelque chose de sacré qui nous relie à Hachem. L'étude de la Torah et des mitsvot est devenu illégal comme Chabbat , Roch Hodech , la Brit Mila , et les lois de sainteté du mariage juif ont été interdits . En d'autres termes, tant que les Juifs considéraient la Torah seulement comme toute autre philosophie, les Grecs étaient heureux. Malheureusement, plusieurs juifs ont succombé à la mode de vie grec jusqu'à ce que le courageux Mattityahu et ses fils ont pris l'affaire en charge et ont commencé à réveiller le peuple juif.

Yehudit, la fille de Yochanan le Cohen Gadol, était une jeune veuve. Alors qu'elle était belle et riche, Yehudit était aussi connu pour sa piété et ses bonnes actions. Holopherne, le commandant grec a fait savoir qu'il désirait la belle veuve.

La ville de Béthulie, où de nombreux Juifs vivaient, a été entouré par les Grecs. Les Grecs n'ont même pas laissé entrer des besoins fondamentaux. Bientôt, les habitants de la ville ont commencé à souffrir d'une faim sévère et été vraiment très découragé. Par désespoir, les habitants se sont réunis et les ainés du village ont annoncés que dans cinq jours, lorsqu'ils manqueront de nourriture, ils renonceront.

C'était à cette réunion que Yehudit se prononça, exprimant sa déception dans leur manque de foi en Dieu. Vers la fin de la rencontre, Yehudit informa les ainés qu'elle avait un plan qui permettrait de livrer les ennemis entre leurs mains, mais qu'ils ne doivent pas lui demander ce que c'était. Ils doivent tout simplement avoir confiance en elle. Puisque Yehudit été réputée pour sa sagesse et piété, les ainés ont acceptés.

Le Plan Courageux de Yehudit

Emportant avec elle une servante et un grand panier de fromage, du pain et du vin, Yehudit a quitté la ville et a été immédiatement arrêté par les soldats Grecs. Elle leur a dit qu'elle voulait parler avec leur commandant, Holopherne. Quand elle lui a été apporté, il accueilli la belle femme.

Yehudit dit à Holopherne qu'elle s'inquiéter pour ceux de la ville qui souffraient à cause de l'état de siège. Pour soulager la douleur de son peuple, elle avait décidé de venir lui dire comment faire pour capturer la ville et, elle espérait recevoir en retour, pitié envers son peuple.

Elle a expliqué que la foi du peuple en Dieu était toujours restée forte. Tant qu'il avait la foi, il ne se rendrait pas et Dieu ne permettrait pas à l'armée de prendre la ville. En d'autre part, elle ajouté, avant longtemps, il ne resterait plus un morceau de nourriture cachère, et en désespoir de cause, les Juifs commencerait à manger la chair des animaux impurs, ce qui mettrait Dieu en colère, et causerait la ville à tomber.

Yehudit a proposé de rester avec Holopherne dans le camp de son armée, mais de repartir à Béthulie chaque jour, afin de connaitre le niveau d'approvisionnement. Elle aller informer Holopherne du moment propice pour attaquer. Désireux de passer du temps avec la belle veuve ainsi que victorieusement mettre fin à l'état de siège, Holopherne a accepté.

Après plusieurs jours ou Yehudit a transmis a Holopherne l'information concernant la diminution des approvisionnements des habitants, elle sentait qu'elle et sa servante avait gagné la confiance de l'armée. Ils allaient et venaient à leur guise. Il était temps de mettre en œuvre la deuxième partie du plan.

La Deuxième Partie du Plan

Yehudit informa Holopherne que maintenant les habitants de Béthulie n'avaient plus de nourriture et qu'il ne restait plus qu'attendre quelques jours pour que les habitants mangent des animaux non-cachère. Ce soir-là, Holopherne invita Yehudit à venir seul dans sa tente pour célébrer. Elle a accepté, insistant qu'il goute son fameux fromage de chèvre.

Au fur et à mesure qu'il manger le fromage salé, il avait de plus en plus soif et Yehudit lui versa plusieurs verres de vin fort. Yehudit a fait semblant de manger et de boire pendant que Holopherne est devenu somnolent du faite de ce qu'il avait mangé et bu. Peu de temps après, il tomba dans un sommeil profond. Yehudit appela sa servante, a pris l'épée d'Holopherne et le tua. Les deux femmes ont enveloppées Holopherne dans un drap et sont retournés à Béthulie.

Les aînés été surpris de la voir. Yehudit leur a montré la preuve de la mort du commandant et leur a dit que les hommes de la ville devaient maintenant attaquer les Syriens-Grecs. Lorsque les soldats allaient réveiller leur chef ils le trouveront mort. Les aînés ont suivi ses conseils et après avoir appris que leur commandant était mort, l'armée syrienne - grecque a fui à l'attaque surprise des hommes de Bethulie. Ainsi Yehudit était l'héroïne de l'histoire de Hanouka.

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