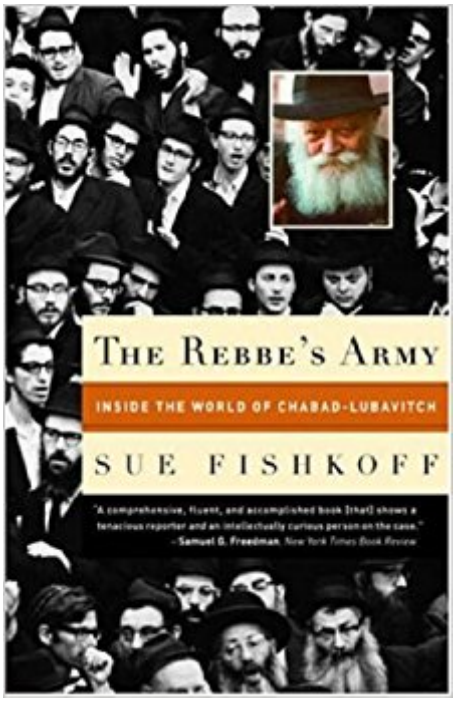
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The Rebbe's Army: Inside The World Of Chabad-Lubavitch



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Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å“Excuse me, are you Jewish?Ã¢â ¬Â• With these words, the relentlessly cheerful, ideologically driven emissaries of Chabad-Lubavitch approach perfect strangers on street corners throughout the world in their ongoing efforts to persuade their fellow Jews to live religiously observant lives. In The RebbeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Army, award-winning journalist Sue Fishkoff gives us the first behind-the-scenes look at this small Brooklyn-based group of Hasidim and the extraordinary lengths to which they take their mission of outreach. They seem to be everywhereÃ¢â ¬â •in big cities, small towns, and suburbs throughout the United States, and in sixty-one countries around the world. They light giant Chanukah menorahs in public squares, run Ã¢â ¬Å“Chabad housesÃ¢â ¬Â• on college campuses from Berkeley to Cambridge, give weekly bible classes in the Capitol basement in Washington, D.C., run a nonsectarian drug treatment center in Los Angeles, sponsor the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s biggest Passover Seder in Nepal, establish synagogues, Hebrew schools, and day-care centers in places that are often indifferent and occasionally hostile to their outreach efforts. They have built a billion-dollar international empire, with their own news service, publishing house, and hundreds of Websites.Who are these people? How successful are they in making Jews more observant? What influence does their late Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson (who some thought was the Messiah), continue to have on his followers? Fishkoff spent a year interviewing Lubavitch emissaries from Anchorage to Miami and has written an engaging and fair-minded account of a Hasidic group whose motives and methodology continue to be the subject of speculation and controversy.From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

This remarkable ethnographic profile goes behind the scenes of Lubavitcher Judaism to explore how the movement's enthusiastic young emissaries, or schlihim, carry the Rebbe's message throughout the world. Armed with pamphlets, Shabbos candles and the dream of making all Jews more observant, these idealistic young married couples set up shop in unlikely locales like Peoria, Ill.; Anchorage, Ala.; or Salt Lake City, Utah. There they will tirelessly teach and fundraise-not just for a year or two, but for the rest of their lives. Fishkoff, a regular contributor to Moment and The Jerusalem Post, draws upon dozens of interviews with these schlihim, their supporters and their detractors. Traversing the country to do her research, she attended Shabbos dinners, mikvah demonstrations, Friday afternoon street proselytizing sessions and even a star-studded Chabad telethon in Los Angeles. (The telethon, Fishkoff rightly points out, is the perfect symbol for the way these Hasids have simultaneously eschewed and engaged with American culture, using technology to further their outreach.) Most interestingly, she includes interviews with Reform and Conservative Jews who, surprisingly enough, are often the chief financial backers of local Chabad initiatives. Though Fishkoff makes an effort to include some individuals' critiques of the movement, this is by no means an expos‚; one leaves the book sharing her own tender admiration for the energetic dedication of the Rebbe's followers. Fishkoff writes robustly and engagingly, and her portrait of Chabad is not only profoundly respectful, but also poignant and full of joy.Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Although most people have not heard of the Lubavitcher Hasid, a sect of Orthodox Jewry, many are familiar with the outreach programs the group runs, such as the Chabad Houses on college campuses. Their aim is to make Jews more observant, and their inspiration comes from their now-deceased rebbe, Menachem Schneerson, who some believed to be the long-awaited Messiah. Fishkoff, a newspaper reporter, explains that her book is neither a history of the movement nor an expose. Her focus is on Chabad's outreach programs and what motivates the many emissaries who are trying to bring Jews back to their roots. Eminently readable, rather like a very long New Yorker piece, this perceptive account explains the movement by introducing those who are a part of it: the L.A. rabbi whose star-studded telethon garners millions of dollars each year; the young rabbi at Harvard whose Chabad House is surprisingly popular; the Hasidic couples who have traveled to such unlikely places as Salt Lake City and Alaska to establish a religious foothold. Mostly positive in her comments, but no apologist, Fishkoff will draw in readers of many religious persuasions. Ilene CooperCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out

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I read the review by "brooklynboy" and found it to be very negative and untrue. I consider it to be more of a personal attack on Chabad rather then a review. I have found "The Rebbe's Army" to be inspiring and a great insight to my almost lost Jewish Heritage. I purchased this book after meeting Rabbi ShmuelFuss, his charming wife, Tzipora (also an awesome cook) and their young son Mendel. They were given my name and number from a mutual friend, they called, came over and the rest has changed my life in a very positive manner. Contrary to "brooklynboy's" review I have never heard a negative word from this Chabad Rabbi who I now consider it an honor to call "Friend" & "Teacher." I will go further to say that if every leader of every country thought as the members of Chabad do or treat others as they do everyone they meet the world would be a much better place. The book writen by a non-Orthodox Jew touches the hear and soul with her experiences and interviews. The book has depth and tells us of Chabad's determination & dedication to reach & teach Judaism to every Jew they meet. It has been very helpful with my weekly studies with Rabbi Fuss. Sue Fishkoff's book is "food for thought" and a must read for all Jews and those interested in learning about the Jewish faith.Sincerely & Respectfully,Manuel (manny)Blancomasontruth@aol.com

The Rebbe continues to amaze

This is a sympathetic snapshot of a Hasidic Jewish community in Crown Heights, a community within Brooklyn, New York. You learn about the history of Hasidic Judaism, but mostly about the distinctives of Chabad-Lubavitch. You learn about the seven rebbes that have led the movement through the years, including the seventh and final rebbe, Menacham Mendel Schneerson. He stated that he would be the last rebbe before the coming of the Messiah, and even though he died in 1994, a number of Lubavitchers think that Schneerson may someday return as the Messiah.Lubavitchers stres the importance of reaching other Jews and helping them to get back in touch with God and with their Jewishness. Although they steadfastly maintain that they are not trying to convert all Jews to their particular brand of Judaism, they nevertheless feel that the power of the rebbe is working through them as they convince male Jews to put on tefillin or to recite the Shema and the VieHaftah.It surprised me to discover that Lubavitch-Chabad believes in reincarnation, and that the Exodus generation must come back and fulfill the rest of the 613 commandments left undone before the Messiah can come.I was impressed to read about how many baal-teshuvah (Masters of

repentance) there are in Chabad-Lubavitch. Many non-practicing Jews have embraced a Torah-true lifestyle and have converted to the movement.You will also read in this book about how the rebbe has inspired people to leave the comforts of New York for far off mission fields to inspire and guide small numbers of Jews in places like Anchorage, Alaska and Shanghai, China, and Gurnee, Illinois.I was also interested to read about the importance of the mikvah (the women's ritual cleansing center. The rebbe feels that this is so important that a Jewish community should be willing to sell its Torah scroll and its synagogue in order to build or renovate a mikvah if necessary. Why? Because a woman cannot be cleansed from her monthly flow unless she enters the mikvah, and they cannot have sex. I guess I can see why men would want to make sure that there is a mikvah nearby!There are some things about Chabad-Lubavitch that won't appeal to everyone: The excessive veneration of the rebbe, the unwillingness to read literature other than ultra-conservative Jewish literature, the separation of men and women in the synagogue, the lack of openness to the existence of a Palestinian state, the reluctance of Chabadniks to recognize no-Orthodox forms of Judaism, etc.But you will be impressed by the love and the sincerity of heart that Chabad-Lubavitchers display in their ministries to other Jews. You will also applaud their efforts at starting drug treatment centers and prison ministries that reach non-Jews on occasion as well.You will also marvel at the amount of money that non-Jews and liberal Jews give to the movement. This is a great look at a special group of people. Highly recommended.

This comprehensive and detailed review of the Chabad Lubavitch Movement's outreach in the United States once again reveals the secret of the success of all such social change movements: a charismatic leader whose power is so generative that it extends beyond his physical presence, and a large group of selfless, dedicated followers. We've seen this over and over again on the national and world scale, yet the present book has a great deal to add to our understanding; it presents the details and process of many of the thousands of individual emissaries of the Lubavitcher Rebbe as they move to their communities of service and reach out, at what some would call great personal sacrifice but which they regard as an inspiring lifetime committment, to perfecting the world according to the teachings of the Rebbe, Chasidism and love of one's fellow man, and the values of the Torah. These values drive and inspire each husband and wife team's actions from the first years of their marriage through the mature years of their social and spiritual services to individuals and the community.Despite the modesty of the author, she has also captured the essence of the Chabad philosophy of man's existence in a tightly-written first chapter thought worthy enough to be excerpted by the New York Times Book Review.The organization, though Jewish in philosophy and

rabbinical in leadership, serves non-Jews as well with its focus on the abiding Noachide ethics given to all mankind, and with msny non-sectarian institutions, including drug treatment centers, nursery schools, and other social services.With deep insight and considerable close study, Sue Fischkoff has provided an admirable description and tour that can be a guide and inspiration to the reader. The book is both highly enjoyable and eminently readable and carries my highest recommendation.

Every page is packed with much information, both pro and con! I underlined more per page than I can ever remember.Was frankly surprised it'd be so compelling. As much as I could never live that life style, I am certainly able to give credit to the Chabad Lubavitch movement for all the good they've accomplished. A great book for those curious about them!!!

I purchased this as a gift, and the recipient loved it! She had made friends with some of the "Men in black", who were de-mystifying traditional Jewish culture in our community, and who regularly held events at the local Chabad. She reported that this book was enjoyable to read, and enhanced her understanding of diversity and tensions within American Judaism.

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