

The 2012/5772 Inaugural Address of the Aleph Zadik Aleph and B'nai B'rith Girls

Sarah: *Baruchim Habaim!* Welcome everyone! We've anxiously been awaiting your arrival, and this weekend's summit, as we join together for the first time, in the same tradition that so many of our beloved and admired predecessors did before us, we couldn't be more excited. We are our generation's members of the International AZA and BBG Executive Body, and together we shall achieve great things.

We gather here tonight inspired by a powerful mission and with a deep sense of purpose. Logan and I both feel that there's something special brewing across the Order. We heard about it from across the sites of our summer experiences, and our confidence has only grown in all of you as our allies as our peers raved and celebrated your taking the reigns of your Councils and Regions.

We're on the eve of an unprecedented year for AZA and BBG. We're not coming together to simply plan for another successful year with modest increases and metrics reached, but we – feeling empowered by your energy and commitment – would like to offer a vision for a year that is defined by character, depth and accountability. We're not in this for just another successful year; we're looking to a year that makes all other years to come more successful because of the actions we take now. From now and forward, AZA and BBG will move from strength to strength.

Logan: There's a commercial that I love, featuring basketball star Kobe Bryant and Virgin Atlantic CEO, Richard Branson where Branson tells Kobe "I've successfully gone to the bottom of the ocean, and I've successfully gone to outer space and I feel like I'm already living success at success. I'm just wondering what's left?" Kobe replies "Richard Branson you've already achieved success at success but have you achieved success at success at success. You can do better, I know you can."

Although the video was made primarily to boost Kobe's ego a little more, the message is clear. Dreams expand. Quests grow longer. Plans evolve. The next chapter of AZA and BBG's future isn't a destination; we're looking to double down on ensuring a vibrant Jewish future at an entirely different height. Fueled by the experiences of those that came before us, we'll tackle our opportunities with ingenuity and innovation – and we'll do it, together.

Yes, we've engaged 36,000 Jewish teens. Yes, we're building Jewish teen life in dozens of countries around the world. Yes, we're bringing more Jewish teens to Israel than anyone else. We have achieved success at success, but now our sights are set: it's time to reach success at success at success.

Sarah: Now think about who and what matters. Ultimately, we're all universally tied to one fact, that without this same element, none of us would be here tonight. Our peers trust us. Our peers believe in us. We may have worked hard to reach this point, but it is because of those we represent, our constituents, that look to us to role model, to inspire, to protect and fortify the things they love most about BBYO – the things they love most about being Jewish – they expect us to be different than those that may have disappointed them or fell short of their expectations in the past. They're look to us to give them the best we're capable of offering. We're here and we're leading, because they empowered us. In return, we shall empower the masses.

Logan: *Chazak, chazak v'niet chazak*, from strength to strength, we strengthen one another. It's time for us to look to our past for strength, to be inspired by our Order's present potential, and to begin working toward the future we promised our Brothers and Sisters in each and every election last year.

Sarah: How can we alert Brooke Ferdi, a BBG who's active in her Chapter and Council, but who has never been exposed to the International Order to recognize that we can offer her something she can't get anywhere else. Brooke's parents are Turkish, and she has spent 5 of the past 6 summers visiting her entire extended family living in Izmir. Little does she know, that BBYO has a chapter in Turkey due to our partnership with the JDC, and we can offer her a hands-on, tangible connection to her roots through our network.

Logan: What are we going to do to get Jordan Meyers, who goes to a predominantly Jewish high school, to realize that despite his existing Jewish community, BBYO can still offer him meaning and fulfillment? Jordan is an inactive member in the biggest chapter in his region. He hasn't attended an event in years because his chapter isn't organized and the events they offer can't compete with the party up the street or the high school football game. He doesn't need BBYO to have Jewish friends, and we haven't given him much of a reason to explore AZA otherwise yet.

Sarah: What is it going to take to get Sydney Cohen, a BBG who has racked up more community service hours than any other student in her high school by volunteering with four different organizations to channel her passion through a Stand UP campaign, and to provide the outlet she craves for bettering the world?

Logan: What about Tomer Kornfeld? An Aleph who has attended every AIPAC Summit in the past three years, who has visited Israel three times in the past year, attends Jewish Day School and has yet to take any leadership role in BBYO. He's an Aleph. He's well liked and knows BBYO has a relationship to the Jewish State since before there was a Jewish State. Where's his seat at the table?

Sarah: What do we do for Matt Rosenthal who has served as Chapter S'gan for four terms and has never been offered the opportunity to expand his programming horizon? Maybe he doesn't know how to do so? Does he even know about the International Teen Leadership Network? Has he ever been encouraged to apply for IC steering? For the past two years, Matt has overseen every program in this chapter and knows the ins-and-outs to chapter programming from years of experience. He goes to summer camp, and hasn't made it to a summer experience. Where's Matt in our BBYO universe?

Logan: There are opportunities within the Matt Rosenthals and the Brooke Ferdis. It's the Sydney Cohens and the Jordan Meyers we as an Execs Body need to keep at the very front of our minds and as the focus of each one of our goals. These are the kids that are going to move our Movement. They are matched by thousands of peers, that spend the majority or the entirety of their AZA and BBG experience at the chapter level – all they know is the chapter, all they care about is the chapter, and they're growing into Jewish young adults and future Jewish leaders because of their chapters. It's through their chapter, that we'll empower them.

Sarah: Our organization is 36,000 Jewish teens strong. 36,000 minds who have ideas, passion, and strengths to bring change to the world through their Jewishly inspired values, passions, and tradition. In this room today, there are 85 of us. 85 of us who were elected to represent the thousands upon thousands of Jewish teens that we speak of tonight. They're looking to us to be their voice.

Logan: August Execs doesn't end the planning process of the year; it sparks one. Our effectiveness as leaders, the legacies that are formed for us, and the distinction between being a Movement that changes the world in actual ways or whether we allow ourselves to be 'just another youth experience' is defined by how we go home and light the fire for every member. Our assembly's name is intentional. We are a Body. We are our healthiest, when we are all healthy. We work to make stronger every branch of ourselves. The Chapters we represent are what sustains us – without them at their best, AZA and BBG do not thrive.

From the Roots We Build and from the Chapters we grow.

Sarah: Over the past couple of years, AZA and BBG have matured significantly. Stand UP, Speak UP, and an always-expanding global family offer platforms for our brothers and sisters to feel great about doing great things together. From the outside looking in, we're doing it big. We're making impact, we're molding the world we wish to inherit, and we're building a community that will be sustainable for generations of Jewish teens to come. We have made our International Order vibrant and strong, and each year more and more Regions and Councils emerge as communities stronger than the year before.

Logan: Now it's time to bring our energy to our base. There are thousands of Sydney Cohens and Jordan Meyers out there. They have passion, they have drive, they have something to offer our Order. Both we and they will be stronger together.

Sarah: In our 88th and 68th year we will grow. BBG is on the cusp of crossing 10,000 members for the first time in decades. AZA is on the verge of exceeding 8,000 brothers. Together we can ascend past the Jewish milestone of 18 – 18,000 – and make our Execs Body's legacy a declaration of healthy life for the future.

We will bring AZA and BBG to more teens, by bringing AZA and BBG to more places with a focus on starting new chapters in new communities. New chapters bring energy to all neighboring ones in a Council or Region, we can share our Movement's momentum with more peers if they too can see our Order growing up close.

One of the biggest ways in which we'll achieve this quickened expansion will be by not only owning, but by embracing BBYO Connect. Every Region and Council – and hundreds of Chapters – will plan programs and create relationships with their future Alephs and B'nai B'rith Girls. By making our intake strategies compelling, and our AZA and BBG recruitment processes warm, inviting and accessible to all, we will position our Chapters for waves of thousands of excited 8th graders ready to join our ranks.

Logan: In our 88th and 68th year, our programs on an international, regional, and most importantly chapter level, will distinguish us from any youth group – Jewish or otherwise. We will provide stimulating resources, housed and distributed via our new AZA and BBG website. By standardizing our traditions, retraining our programmers so that they employ smarter planning systems, and by sharing our best practices we'll bolster our program across the BBYO plane. And

because the International Board will be reaching directly to our Chapter counterparts for the first time, the Matt Rosenthals of the world will be able to contribute at any level of our organization. The Chapter experience should be as strong in Boston as it is in Los Angeles as it is in Calgary and Paris as it is in Jerusalem and Buenos Aires.

And it's the guys and girls like Jordan Meyers that we'll see en masse. Regardless of the demographics of any Jewish community – small or dense and large – they will want to participate in BBYO because it brings reward, friendship and meaning to their lives.

Sarah: 850 teens attended our International Convention this past year. 850 Alephs and B'nai B'rith Girls came together to represent their Chapters at our Movement's largest annual gathering. And, we're just getting started.

This year we're going to host well over 1,000 teens at our International Convention in Washington D.C for the first time. Hundreds and hundreds of teens from hundreds of chapters joining hands to celebrate our community. With a goal of having every chapter in the Order represented at Convention, we look together to a brighter future than ever. More on IC will be unveiled later this weekend.

Logan: One of the reasons I am passionate about BBYO is because AZA has given me a platform from which I can make a difference in the world. I know that I may never be a part of something this big ever again. As the next generation of Jewish leaders, we feel passionately about elements of society that warrant change, to stand up and voice our opinions, and repair the world in any way that we can. We are afforded countless opportunities to make a difference, and in our 88th and 68th year, we will champion community service, philanthropy, and advocacy in both local and global forums. With the launch of our new Stand UP website, Alephs and B'nai B'rith Girls will be able to track the service they do while empowering Chapters to share tools and align campaigns to create the most effective Stand UP efforts we've seen yet. This is the chance for Sydney Cohen not only to bring her community service to BBYO, but to connect with other Jewish teen activists that share her values. We, BBYO, will also continue to deepen our work with North America's other leading Jewish youth organizations through the Coalition of Jewish Teens. By uniting NFTY, USY, NCSY and Young Judaea, we will model to our elders that we are driven by *tikkun olam*, pluralism, inclusivity and wish to inherit a Jewish world that is far more united than divided. International Stand Up week will evolve from a call to action into a celebration of how far we've come and highlight how capable we are at making change.

Sarah: And while we meet here in Waynesboro, PA as a North American Executive Body, we acknowledge that our Brothers and Sisters in the United Kingdom and Ireland are opening their National Veida – Convention this weekend; and our friends across Eastern Europe are celebrating their BBYO friendships from across 9 countries at the JDC's renowned summer camp Szarvas in Hungary; and our new friends in South Africa are beginning to meet in Capetown to plan for their first participation in AZA and BBG Shabbat in more than 25 years. And so on, and so on.

We're in a mobile era; we are no longer restricted by distance, language or technology. The Execs Body of the last few years worked to ensure that our Order would fulfill its original vision, to span the world. Now, we will take their efforts one step further and function as a united entity. Hungry for a vibrant "kehilla" – community – we're shifting the way we talk about and connect with our peers from beyond North America. As Jews, as we have been for millennia, regardless as to where we live on this earth, we are a global people – all of us. Each of us. We – even us, in this room – are global Jews. We can learn from one another's strengths and we can strengthen one another by working together. We will see our globalization plans reach new heights by joining together as equals. Little does Brooke, our Turkish-American BBG, know that the new Global Networking Committee will bridge our teen Diaspora in a bold new way.

In our 88th and 68th year, for the first time in history, members from three different countries were elected to serve on the international boards. Inspired by ILTC 2012, and the BBYO Reach campaign that raised \$4,300 virtually in 11 days, we will significantly amplify our Order's commitment to the International Service Fund by seeking the participation of our Order's Chapters. If 200 teens can raise \$4,300 in 11 days via Twitter, imagine what more than 36,000 teens can raise in a year if focused? Just like it is for so many of our North American friends, BBYO is the only Jewish outlet so many of our international teens have available to them. ISF and the GNC will foster new relationships, share resources, and make the global Jewish community stronger.

Logan: Israel faces more challenges than it has ever faced, and yet, Israel has never been more accessible. The Middle East is in a fast-paced spiral of change, bringing unknown threats to the safety and security of Israelis, and to the Jewish people, from several different fronts. As Iran inches closer to nuclear capabilities, Israel needs the support of AZA and BBG and the entire Jewish teen community. This year, we'll get serious about Israel education, Israel exposure, and for those that are motivated, Israel advocacy. With new platforms on the web to share thoughts and visions for Israel, and a new full-time professional joining the AZA and BBG staff team to bolster BBYO's Israel content, we're looking to a year of rich resources, new program templates and much needed training on how to innovatively and meaningfully share Israel with more teens – most importantly, at the Chapter level.

And, this year will see the launch of BBYO's first GAP Year experience. Launching in Fall of 2013, at Tel Aviv University, we will offer the most dynamic and enriching pre-college Israel experience available to Jewish teens worldwide. Entitled BEYOND, BBYO's move to offer this program experience only further displays our unwavering commitment to the Jewish State. Now maybe there are a few things that that Tomer Kornfield will find exciting coming his way.

Sarah: It's time to take the tools we've been given, and chart our own course. This whole weekend is about ensuring that each of you have an arsenal of knowledge, allies and tools to bring back to our members in each of your communities.

(Pause)

Logan: Meshuganahs AZA #2172

Sarah: Dafna BBG #1110

Logan: Where I led my first service since becoming a Bar Mitzvah, even though I wasn't sure I remembered all of the prayers.

Sarah: Where through programs and community service surrounding our Stand UP campaign I was able to find a cause I want to devote the rest of my life to supporting.

Logan: Where I garnered the courage to stand before a room of my peers, grow my skills and apply my energy in fun, meaningful and important ways.

Sarah: Dafna BBG #1110

Logan: Meshuganahs AZA #2172

Sarah: My heart and home.

Logan: My roots.

Sarah: This year, let's give Jordan, Sydney, Brooke, Matt, Tomer the experience we all know so well. We're going beyond the 'core'; beyond the Perlman crowd. Success at success at success is achieved when it comes together at the Chapter.

Logan: We're counting on you to inspire your Chapters to be the engine of the Jewish future. This weekend, you will learn about our past and make history. You will determine moves for our Order that will affect your Regions, Councils, and most importantly, your Chapters for years to come. Just wait and watch us define success in a whole new way.

Sarah: My Brother Alephs and my Sister B'nai B'rith Girls, this weekend we won't determine what our legacy will be; we'll set the plays into motion that will over the course of the year ahead. We can be an entirely new kind of Execs Body, new breed of Aleph and B'nai B'rith Girl. We get it, we want it, we just have to do it.

Logan: Submitted with undying love and dedication to the first 88 years of the Aleph Zadik Aleph

Sarah: The first 68 years of the B'nai B'rith Girls

Logan: And the next 88 years of the Aleph Zadik Aleph

Sarah: And the next 68 years of the B'nai B'rith Girls

Together: We remain

Logan: Aleph Logan Scott Miller your 88th Grand Aleph Godol

Sarah: and Sarah Elizabeth Minion your 68th International N'siah