

# כאן צוה ה' את הברכה Crown Community Newspaper heights

JANUARY 25, 2008 | SHEVAT 18, 5768

WEEKLY VOL. I | NO 12

פרשת יתרו | יח שבט, תשס"ח | בס"ד

## Crown Heights hosts International Conference of Chabad Women Emissaries



Photo Credit: Crownheights.info

# WELCOMING THE SHLUCHOS

## "Hi, Mrs. Schneerson from President Street speaking."



# Nancy to Penina

Ohel Miracle • Page 10

# SILENT UNDER TORTURE

Rabbi Avrohom Boruch Pevsner • Page 15

## For Women only: Frum Hollywood Movie in Crown Heights • Page 20

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Rabbi Y. Heller is available daily at 788 Eastern Parkway #210 ♦ 10:30am - 11:30am ☎ 718-604-8827  
2:30pm - and after 8:00pm ☎ 718-756-4632

Rabbi Y. Raitport is available by appointment. ☎ 718-604-8000 ext 39

Rabbi A. Osdoba: ☎ 718-771-8737 9:30pm to 11:00pm

Rabbi y. Zirkind: ☎ 718-604-8000 ext 39

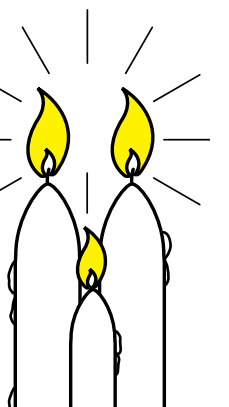
Rabbi s. Segal: ☎ 718-360-7110

### Candle Lighting

Jan.25	Lighting	Motzei	Shabbos
Brooklyn	4:46	Brooklyn	5:49
Yerushalayim	4:26	Yerushalayim	5:45

הפ' ישעי' ו -

עבדו את ה' בשמחה





# THE VAAD HAKOHOL

## RABBI SEGAL ON 15TH OF SH'VAT

By Rabbi Shlomo Segal

Member of Crown Heights Bais Din

For the 15th of Shvat, the Rosh Hashana for Trees, we will discuss many questions relating to the relating to the blessing of Shehechiyonu.



1. Question: Which blessing do we make first, the Shehechiyonu blessing or the blessing on the fruit?

Answer:

The Baer Hetav (Orach Chaim chapt. 225:6) writes that the blessing on the fruit is made before the Shehechiyonu blessing. In Hilchos Ktanos (Part I chapt. 236), he explains that it is similar to the Mitzvos of Lulav and the Chanuka Menorah where we first make the blessing on the Mitzva and then the Shehecheyonu blessing because the Mitzva blessing is made more often made and therefore has priority. The same applies to new fruits-- we make the blessing on the fruit first and then the Shehechiyonu blessing. This is also cited in Derech Hachaim and Kaf Hachaim [chapt. 225], Machazik Brocho (chapt. 22:3).

But the Alter Rebbe in his Seder Birchas Hanenin (11:12) writes, "He should first make the Shehechiyonu blessing and then the blessing of Boreh Pri Hoetz or Boreh Pri Haodama."

The reason could possibly be as the Pri Megadim writes (Orach Chaim chapt. 225:7 in Eishel Avrohom) that in reality one would have to make the Shehechiyonu blessing, as soon as he sees the fruit. It is not similar to blessings over the Mitzvos which are to be recited not when ones sees them, but when one does the Mitzva.

This can also be derived from the Alter Rebbe words when he writes, "When one sees a fruit that is being renewed

from year to year... and enjoys seeing it, he then makes the Shehechiyonu blessing. The custom of the people is to make the blessing when one eats the fruit in order not to differentiate between when one enjoys seeing it or when one does not have a special pleasure seeing it."

It also states that when one does make the blessing when eating the fruit, one should also have the intention that his blessing is for having seen the fruit in the new season.

2. Question:

Could one who ate the fruit and did not make Shehecheyonu blessing recite the blessing in middle of eating or after he has eaten the fruit?

Answer:

Regarding the Shehechiyonu blessing after the eating, the Magen Avrohom writes (Chapt. 225:9) in the name of the Radvaz that after he has eaten the fruit, one does not recite the Shehechiyonu blessing anymore, although it was not fully digested.

If he does eat the same fruit again (on which he did not recite Shehechiyonu blessing), the Alter Rebbe writes in his Seder Birchas Hanenin (11:13) that he would need to recite the Blessing without mentioning Hashem's name (בני שם ומלכות).

In the sefer K'zos Hashulchan, Reb Chaim Noeh (63:12) derives (from the Alter Rebbe's words: "If he did not recite Shehecheyonu blessing when he has first eaten the fruit, then he would need to recite the Blessing without mentioning Hashem's name (בני שם ומלכות)": "this implies that as long as he is still involved in eating the fruit for the first time, which means that he did not interrupt with something that would obligate him to make another blessing, it is then considered as he is eating the fruit for the first time, and therefore he will be able to recite the Shehechiyonu blessing.

3. Question. For fruits that are different from each other in taste or appearance, does one need to make separate Shehechiyonu blessings on each fruit?

Answer:

If all the fruits are not in front of him, then he can make Shehecheyonu blessing for each fruit separately. It is cited in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch (chapt. 225:14) that even when the fruit are different in appearance, he recites the Shehecheyonu blessing for each one separately. The K'zos Hashulchan adds that this also applies when one eats black grapes and white grapes. A person would need to recite Shehecheyonu blessing on each of them respectively.

Regarding dried fruits, the poskim advise not to recite Shehecheyonu blessing, since there is no difference between new and old.



The Vaad Hakohol of Crown Heights joins the community in mourning the loss of Reb Yisroel Rosenfeld. He was an 'Osek Betzorchei Tzibur', a great Baal Chesed and never turned a person away who asked for help. He was the director of the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council for many years and contributed countless and devoted hours to the community.

The Rosenfeld Family will be sitting shiva after the passing of their father Rabbi Yisroel Rosenfeld OBM, at 698 Empire Blvd, [between Albany and Troy Ave].

Shacharis: 7:00am, 7:45am, 8:30am and 9:15am - Mincha: 4:30pm

Ma'ariv: B'zmanoi

Condolences can be emailed to [atis86@aol.com](mailto:atis86@aol.com) or call (718) 778-1947

## NIGHTLIFE!

### Upcoming Events

Thursday January 24 8:00 pm

Dating - Meeting Face to Face

Guest Speaker: Mrs. Chana Rochel Shusterman

Motzei Shabbos January 26

Chof Beis Shvat Event and Melava Malka 8:00 pm

If not Now then When? -

From Reactive to Proactive in an Instant

Guest Speaker: Mrs. Rivky Kaplan - Tzfat, Israel

Monday January 28 8:00 pm

Chof Beis Shvat

Mosiach BAS Dovid -

They say women will make it happen, How?

Guest Speaker: Rabbi Asher Crispe

Thursday January 31 8:00 pm

The Best Kept Secret - Finding and Keeping your soul mate

Guest Speaker: Mrs. Esther Piekarski - Israel

Motzei Shabbos February 2 8:00 pm

Learn your Rhythm - Dance and Nutrition Workshop

All programs are held at The NIGHTLIFE Lounge:

Rubashkin Residence

1349 President Street

email: [CrownHeightsNightLife@gmail.com](mailto:CrownHeightsNightLife@gmail.com)

check out our Blog: [www.CHnightlife.wordpress.com](http://www.CHnightlife.wordpress.com)

NightLife programs are a project of THI coordinated by BYIT and sponsored by the CHJCC

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# FROM SHEDLITZ TO SAFETY



## A YOUNG JEW'S STORY OF SURVIVAL

By Rabbi Shimon Goldman

*Excerpted from the book with the author's permission*

*Continued from last week*

Meanwhile, groups of German soldiers surrounded the crowded courtyard. They seemed to be awaiting further instructions from their superiors, who also appeared at a loss of how to proceed. I stood in a corner, trembling in fright and wondering what the future would bring. Suddenly a German officer approached me. "You look like a young boy," he said. "You can leave and go home."

"I'm too scared," I replied shakily. "There are hundreds of soldiers between here and my home. When they see me walking alone, they'll think I escaped, and they'll punish me terribly." The officer seemed stunned by my answer. Turning to the soldiers guarding the main gate, he roared off a string of instructions in German, warning them not to impede my departure. I was thus able to leave the group and return home.

Back in the jail yard, the Germans ordered the Jews to start marching toward Sokolov. It was a heartrending sight: German beasts astride motorcycles rode alongside the marchers, screaming and cursing the weakened Jews as they tried desperately to keep up with the pace of the soldiers. When they arrived in Sokolov, the group was ordered to continue marching until Wengoravo. In better times, this village was famous for local expertise in producing battim, the black leather boxes that house the parchment scrolls of the tefillin, but now the city looked ominous and desolate.

The Nazis had cordoned off a large field on the outskirts of the village, turning it into a huge jail for their captives. The Jews walked around dejectedly in their new ghetto, still unsure about their future, wondering among themselves what the Germans intended to do with them. Adding to their misery, the heavens suddenly opened and a drenching deluge began falling on the poor Jews. The prisoners had no means of protection against the rain. It seemed they would all become soaked to the bone, heightening their odds of becoming seriously ill.

Just then an amazing thing happened: the young teenagers amongst the prisoners — not necessarily religious Jews — threw themselves on top of the elderly people of the group, trying to shield them from the soaking rain. In addition, the Jewish women of Wengoravo used the cover of night to approach the fence and throw bundles of blankets, coats and pillows over to the hapless prisoners — a courageous

act that could have brought instant death. These articles helped the Jews protect themselves until the storm passed. After Yom Kippur, the Jews were suddenly informed that they were free to return home. It was an absolute miracle, an unexpected kindness that I cannot explain even today.

I still remember our joy when, on the day before Succos, my father returned home from the prison camp. Although he just experienced a traumatic and frightening week, he had immediately began thinking about how to build a succah for the upcoming holiday. This was typical of my father. It was simply inconceivable for him to spend the festival without a kosher succah. After considerable thought, my father came up with a novel idea. Every house in our village had a small storage hut in the back, normally for hoarding coal and other necessities. My father decided to remove the roof of our hut and use it as a succah.

That night my father spent hours working in the dark hut. He removed the roof, cleaned out the hut, and turned it into a succah. Apparently, my father had shared his idea with the Biala Rebbe, who lived near our home, and he came over on the first night of Yom Tov. My father and the Rebbe ate their meal in the succah while I stood watch outside, ready to warn them in case German soldiers approached.

The Biala Rebbe survived the horrors of the Holocaust, spending the rest of his lengthy years in Israel. During my trips to the Holy Land, I often visited the Rebbe in his home. Regrettably, though, I never met with his son Reb Hirshel, one of my best childhood friends in Shedlitz and my study partner as well. I did manage to meet Reb Dovid, the Rebbe's second son, when he was in America. After the passing of the Biala Rebbe, all his sons became Chassidic leaders of their own, thus perpetuating the legacy of their saintly father.

### Yeshiva Studies

Due to the poverty prevalent at home, my father did not have enough money to pay for a private cheder, and I was sent to learn in the local Talmud Torah instead. Street-lamps did not exist in Shedlitz, and during the winter, when school ended after dark, it was pitch black on our way home. The richer children carried kerosene lanterns,

encased by glass windows that kept the wind out. The lanterns cast a soft glow on our surroundings, and we walked with these children, carefully making our way across large drifts of snow left by the winter storms. A small mound stood near the Talmud Torah, providing us with ample skiing during our walk home in the winter. After school, many children took along their crudely crafted toboggans and skis, shrieking with enjoyment as they slid across the hardened snow, and up and down our "mountain."

On freezing winter days, I had the responsibility of lighting the stove at home. I soon became an expert at this chore. In order to start a lasting fire, I first placed many smaller pieces of wood and thin twigs among the logs, so that the fire would catch and later spread to the larger logs and coals.

My parents soon began thinking of sending me away to yeshiva. Our one-room abode did not adequately house a large family and, as the eldest of the three children still living at home, I was old enough to start learning out of town. Moreover, this would free up some much-needed space. Soon we decided on Levertov, a small town situated near Shedlitz and Lub-

lin. I had an aunt living in Levertov, and this was additional reason for my parents to choose this particular location. "Your aunt will take care of you," they comforted me. "Besides, Levertov is very close by; you can come home quickly and easily."

I packed my meager belongings and traveled to Levertov. True to my parents' prediction, my aunt — my mother's sister — welcomed me warmly into her home and cared for me throughout my stay. A warm and kind-hearted person, my aunt made me feel like part of her family, and did everything she could to ease my transition. During the time I spent in Levertov, I truly felt like a welcome guest in my aunt's home.

I learned in the only yeshiva in Levertov — the Nvardoker yeshiva. Though the rav of Levertov was a Chassid of Gur and the local dayan was an Amshinover Chassid, the only yeshiva operating in Levertov was that of Nvardok. The rav, who did not have any children, decided to have a sefer torah written in his name, in order to perpetuate his memory. I still remember when the

sefer torah was completed and joyously carried through the streets of Levertov, accompanied by musical instruments and the traditional chuppah. Saddened by the rav's childlessness, the Jewish community came out in force to rejoice with the rav and participate in the parade.

Before I left home, my father took an important step toward easing my stay in Levertov. He went to the rav of Shedlitz and asked him to write a letter addressed to the Rebbe of Levertov (whom people referred to as "the Partzover Rebbe"), requesting his help. The rav was more than willing to write such a letter: He described how I was a young boy from Shedlitz, all alone and far from home, and learning now in Levertov. The letter went on to ask the Rebbe for his assistance in ensuring that I remained happy in the yeshiva.

The letter made a favorable impression on the Rebbe and brought back warm memories of his youth. The Rebbe's father had lived in Shedlitz for a while and was even buried there. (In fact, we were distantly related, both being descendants of the Yid Hakodosh.) The Rebbe lived on the outskirts of Levertov, some distance from the yeshiva, but he invited me to come visit him every Shabbos. Hence, throughout my stay in Levertov, I walked to the Rebbe's home every single Shabbos.

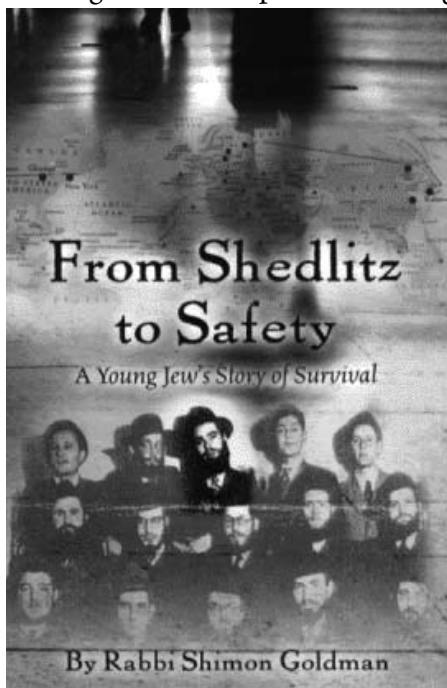
As customary in all yeshivas, the out-of-town students ate at different homes, rotating according to the day of the week. This arrangement was called *essen teg* (literally, "Days of Eating"). One of our favorite pastimes was to compare notes when we returned to yeshiva at night, comparing various menus and trying to ascertain who had enjoyed the tastiest meal. The rosh yeshiva and our teacher, Reb Elazar, both made a favorable impression on me, but I did not stay there too long.

(I did not see Reb Elazar again for a long time — not during the war, nor during the many years that followed. A few years ago, when I was attending a wedding in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn, I suddenly noticed a familiar face. It was my old teacher from Levertov! Shaking with astonishment, I approached him and tapped him on the shoulder. "Excuse me," I said, "Aren't you Elazar Kametz?")

Now it was his turn to look astonished. "Who are you?" he demanded. "And how do you know my name?"

"But don't you remember me?" I replied. "I am Shimon Goldman from Shedlitz. You were my teacher when I learned at the Nvardoker yeshiva in Levertov."

Reb Elazar was delighted to meet me again. He told me that here, in America, he continued to work in areas associated with Yiddishkeit, and now worked for a Kashrus organization.





## OUR HEROES

### RABBI SHMUEL DOVID RAICHIK OBM PART TWO

Head Shliach of California

In honor of his tenth *yahrzeit* on the eighth of Shvat (1918-1998)

By Rabbi Michael Seligson

[Continued from last week]

In regards to Reb Shmuel Dovid and his trips on behalf of the Rebbe, Reb Shmuel Levitin recalled: "After the *histalkus* of the Previous Rebbe, there was a feeling that the funds contributed to Maamad, for the use of the Rebbe's household, would decrease. It was therefore decided that different pairs of Chassidim should travel to central locations of Anash and encourage the contribution of Maamad. Reb Shmuel Dovid traveled with another Chossid to a small city. To say the least, the inn where they stayed was not the most beautiful, comfortable place. Reb Shmuel Dovid was used to such accommodations, but his companion complained to him, "How can anyone sleep on such a bed?!" Reb Shmuel Dovid responded, "What is the commotion? It is only a few nights' sleep."

Reb Shmuel Dovid's daily davening would take several hours. On Shabbos, he davened a whole day. *Krias Shema al Hamita*, his reciting the *Shema* before retiring for the night, was a sacred *avoda* that also continued for many hours.

Reb Shimon Goldman relates a personal experience: "On one of the trips, Reb Shmuel Dovid arrived in Buffalo, New York. At that time, I stayed with HaChassid Reb Sholom Eidelman in the same hotel as Reb Shmuel Dovid. I remember, at a late hour of the night, after we had *farbrenghened* together and gone to sleep, we heard Reb Shmuel Dovid's voice begin reciting the *Shema* for a long time before retiring. The hour he began was 3:00 A.M.; but when he ended and went to sleep, if at all--this I don't know."

In 1946, Reb Shmuel Dovid was sent as an emissary to the West Coast of the U.S., and from then on, continued his missions there for the benefit of these institutions: *Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch*, *Machne Israel* and *Kehot*. One can find in the Rebbe's correspondence to Reb Shmuel Dovid many details referring to these missions.

In 1949, advised by the Previous Rebbe, Reb Shmuel Dovid settled in Los Angeles, California. For *Simchas Torah 5709*, late 1948, Reb Shmuel Dovid traveled to the Previous Rebbe and was invited for the *Yom Tov seuda* to the Previous Rebbe's table. Reb Shmuel Dovid merited a special *kiruv*



from the Previous Rebbe, who personally handed him a plate of food. At that time, the Previous Rebbe appointed him as his personal emissary and said to him the following, "As my emissary, when you go anywhere, it is as if I have arrived there. If I would come, they would place me in the *mizrach* (front) side of the shul. The same is valid for you, where ever you go, you should sit in the *mizrach*." The last words he heard from the Previous Rebbe were, "Constantly be *b'simcha* (joyous)."

When the Rebbe ascended to the leadership in 1951, Reb Shmuel Dovid connected to the Rebbe with all the threads of his soul. From then on, his whole life was totally committed to *hiskashrus* and devotion to the Rebbe.

Reb Shmuel Dovid was amongst those Chassidim who immediately after the Previous Rebbes' *histalkus* connected to the Rebbe. He made no decisions about his life without consulting the Rebbe. On the 24th of Av 5710, in the summer of 1950, the Rebbe appointed him and informed him of his primary function. The Rebbe wrote to him, "Regarding your question from the past about founding the shul *Nusach HoAri* in your community, although it is appropriate, your function and work is not to be involved with only one shul, because your net needs to be spread out over the whole city and its surroundings."

Reb Shmuel Dovid was the one who established the foundation of the great Chabad presence and activities that exist today throughout the length and breadth of California, directed by the head Shliach Reb Shlomo Cunin *sheyichye*. Reb Shmuel Dovid accomplished this with his shining spiritual personality which captured Jewish hearts. When he came in contact with *Bnai Torah*, Reb Shmuel Dovid utilized his Torah knowledge in the revealed part of the Torah (*Nigleh*) in order to bring them closer to Chassidus. It is interesting to note that the Rebbe refers to Reb Shmuel Dovid in a letter with the title "*Horav Hagaon*,"

the Rabbi the Genius. And indeed, he received special reverence from all types of people in Jewish circles, and many benefited from his Torah and advice.

In Los Angeles, he built up the yoke of Torah and Chassidus, and reflected rays of light from his Torah and Chassidus upon thousands of Jews that he brought closer to Torah and holiness. In 1951, the Rebbe had already had the intention of sending a group of *yungeleit* (young men) to coordinate Anash and *mkurovim* in California. At that time, it did not take place in a practical sense. However, over the course of many years, based on the work of Reb Shmuel Dovid, tens of Chassidic centers and hundreds of Chabad Houses were established in the state of California. Hundreds of Rabbis and community leaders, the Rebbe's *shluchim*, brought a spiritual revolution to this state.

Reb Shmuel Dovid personally was *mkarev* many *Yidden* to Torah and *Mitzvos* who eventually became authentic *Baalei Tshuva*. His spiritual image as a role model contributed a lot to his success.

In a letter from 1952, the Rebbe wrote to one who was *niskarev*, or brought closer, by Reb Shmuel Dovid, "You wrote that until now you didn't have an opportunity to receive *hashpoa*, or guidance, to enable you to study Chassidus and develop good personal character traits. Now by seeing the Rabbi and the Chassid who is involved in public affairs etc., Reb Shmuel Dovid *Halevi Raichik*, when you study his conduct, you develop a yearning to connect to the living tree which is Chassidus, and you are requesting a blessing for this."

All the Rebbe's sacred *Mivtzoim*, or *Mitzva* campaigns, were considered by Reb Shmuel Dovid as *Kodesh Hakodoshim*, Holy of Holies. He constantly involved himself personally in the *mivtzoim* activities and would encourage others to carry out the *Mitzva* campaigns, participating in the activities themselves.

A story is told about the wedding day of one of his children. It was almost time to go to the wedding, and Reb Shmuel Dovid was still not home. A while later, Reb Shmuel Dovid arrived home and began preparing himself for the wedding. When asked where he had been, he responded that there was a person with whom he usually put on *Tefillin*, and he had remembered that on this day the person hadn't put on *Tefillin* yet...

Reb Shmuel Dovid never worried about his livelihood. When he arrived with his family in LA, the city did not yet have people who were Torah and *Mitzvah* observant. His family members recount that for many months, when Reb Shmuel Dovid would travel to New York, he would return home with some small package of food which was *mehudar*, had a good kosher supervision. This was sufficient for him. Although Reb Shmuel Dovid himself was satisfied with very little, his home was open at all times, and every person who arrived in LA knew that if he wished, he could stay with Reb Shmuel Dovid.

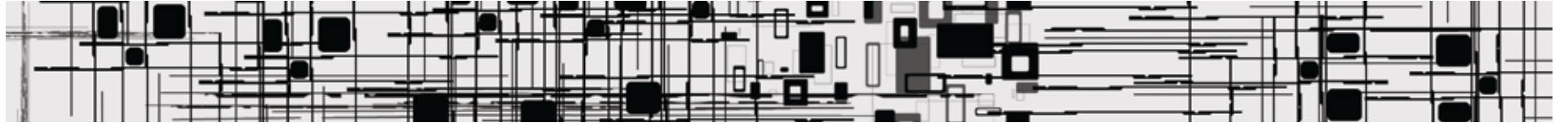
Reb Shmuel Dovid fasted quite often and lived with restrictions. Over a certain period of time, the Rebbe commented many times to him to take care of his health and also advised him to eat before davening.

In a letter dated the 4th of Teves 5712 (published in the Rebbe's *Igros* vol. 21), the Rebbe wrote: "Surely you are taking care of your health appropriately, and based on what we have discussed, please inform me about this and not in partial." On another occasion, the Rebbe told one of the Chassidim who traveled with Reb Shmuel Dovid that he should see to it that Reb Shmuel Dovid eats appropriately--not according to Reb Shmuel Dovid's standards but according to this Chossid's standards.

All of Reb Shmuel Dovid acquaintances noted his *Ahavas Yisroel*, which was true and genuine for every person. Reb Shmuel Dovid never spoke negatively about others and when one would try to share gossip with him, Reb Shmuel Dovid would not want to hear it. In essence, one of his functions was to make peace where ever it was needed. Reb Shmuel Dovid would also travel to cities where young *shluchim* lived in order to strengthen and support them.

The Chossid Reb Berel Weiss of LA relates his personal experience with





Reb Shmuel Dovid:

“I arrived in California in 1948 and Boruch Hashem, got married and built a home. A year later, Rabbi Raichik arrived on a mission for the Previous Rebbe. In a short time we became connected to him. It was then known to us that Reb Shmuel Levitin had suggested Rabbi Raichik as the most appropriate person to travel as an emissary to California. But Rabbi Raichik did much more than he was required to. As soon as Rabbi Raichik arrived, he began strengthening all matters of Judaism. For example, in the terms of kashrus, there was nothing in California before he arrived. Rabbi Raichik began with Cholov Yisroel, supervising the production of milk. He would also make egg Challos, so as not to use non-kosher eggs, and so on with other matters.

“When we looked at Reb Shmuel Dovid, we remembered the old home, the life before WWII. His whole behavior was full of Torah and Chassidus, and what especially excited us was his long Chabad davening. I recall that we did not understand why he did not daven with a minyan on Shabbos. He would daven a long time (with “avoda”) until four o’clock. We looked at him as a holy Jew. Rabbi Raichik would not want to be described as a miracle person. However, I will tell you a story that took place on Simchas Torah 5711 (late 1950). It was after the histalkus of the previous Rebbe, when the Rebbe had not yet accepted the leadership formally, and the community did not allow Rabbi Raichik to travel to New York for Simchas Torah, so he remained in LA. One of the community members, Reb Heshel, of Jewish Hungarian and Chasidic descent, who until then only had girls, insisted that he would not allow Rabbi Raichik to go to Hakofos until he promised him a boy. This is the impression Rabbi Raichik made on the public...”

“Rabbi Raichik with an embarrassed smile and with Chassidic modesty promised – saying, “What do you want from me?” That person had a boy. Rabbi Raichik was then working on the building of Mikvos, and they delayed the Bris until Rabbi Raichik returned, in order that for him to be Sandek.”

“On one summer day, towards evening, I stood outside with my son, a young child at the time. Los Angeles is a beautiful city with grass in front of the houses. We were watering the lawn when Rabbi Raichik walked by. I knew that it was Reb Shmuel Dovid’s custom to travel to the Rebbe on Rosh Chodesh Elul and remain until Chanuka.”

“When Rabbi Raichik walked by, he would greet every person with a special affection. If a woman would be standing in the street and felt that she was not modestly dressed, she would run away.”



Reb Berel Weiss on the left and Rabbi Raichik on the right

“I said to Reb Shmuel Dovid, “You are soon traveling to the Rebbe, please come into my house. I want to write a kvitel. Please inscribe me in the Books of the Righteous. This was the phrase used when writing a kvitel to a Tzadik, and the Tzadik would look at the kvitel before the sounding of the Shofar.”

Rabbi Raichik entered. This was Elul 5717 (late 1957). I wrote the kvitel and gave eighteen dollars. In those years, it was considered a significant amount. When Rabbi Raichik returned during the Chanuka season, he brought me lekach from the Rebbe which over the course of the months had dried up and I think, also an orange. We said L’chaim, ate, and drank with special enthusiasm.”

Reb Shmuel Dovid was one of the leaders of Agudas Chassidei Chabad and accomplished much for the benefit of the Chabad yeshivos and institutions in Israel. In the last years, when Reb Shmuel Dovid heard about the difficult financial situation of the Central yeshiva 770, he traveled together with Reb Dovid Raskin, may he live and be well, to raise funds in Brazil.

Reb Shmuel Dovid merited many kiruvim from the Rebbe. Beginning from 1975, after the passing of Reb Shmuel Levitin, the Rebbe sent Shlach Monos to Reb Shmuel Dovid as the Levite. In 1950, the Rebbe appointed new members for the central organizations, Agudas Chassidei Chabad, Merkos L’inyonei Chinuch, and Machne Israel. Reb Shmuel Dovid was chosen to be a member in all three organizations.

Reb Shmuel Dovid was a great Baal Chesed (very generous), in a very outstanding way. Until the last days of his life, he worked with his limited energy to help fund brides and other charitable funds. Every year before Pesach, he would walk to distant places to supply Jewish prisoners with Matzos for Pesach.

Through the course of the years, Reb Shmuel Dovid was the chairman of the second part of the Universal Tzach gathering which took place annually on Chal Hamoed Sukos. Students from different Yeshivos would attend this gathering to hear words of Torah and

Chassidus from Reb Shmuel Dovid. Reb Shmuel Dovid would also be amongst the distinguished speakers at the Kinus Hashluchim. His words were listened to attentively. At the last Kinus, about two months before his passing, Reb Shmuel Dovid exerted himself in order to participate.

His hiskashrus to the Rebbe knew no bounds. He would travel very often to the Rebbe and did not miss a Yom Tov or Chassidic commemoration. For many years, he merited to eat at the Rebbe’s Yom Tov meals. After the seuda, Reb Shmuel Dovid would relay what the Rebbe had said at the table.

Even after Gimel Tamuz, Reb Shmuel Dovid would travel to 770 and visit the

Ohel. During the last period of his life, when he was already very weak, frail and could not walk without support, he traveled to 770 and the Ohel.

On the eighth day of Shvat in 1998, Reb Shmuel Dovid was nifter.

Jews in the thousands from LA, Rebbes, Rabbis and Roshei yeshivos, participated in his levaya which took place on a Thursday. They gave special honor to a great man amongst giants, prominent and admired, a remnant from a knowledgeable generation, a representative and entrusted Shliach of the Rebbe, who succeeded in converting this big city to a spiritual center of Torah and Chinuch. Reb Shmuel Dovid was flown to New York where a crowd of thousands of Chassidim and students attended his levaya in Crown Heights, and he was interred in the Montefiore Cemetery near the holy Tziyunim of our Rebbe’im.

He left a generation of children involved in Torah, Chinuch, and spreading Yiddishkeit, who serve as shluchim and Rabbonim in the United States and Israel for long and healthy years.

With the passing of this great Chassid, the Chabad movement lost a pillar, a legend of inner service of Hashem and total hiskashrus to the Rebbe. The Jewish nation lost a distinguished image of Chassidus and modesty, from which very few are found in this generation.

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### How to Use Your Foreign Degree in the US: Career Information for University-Educated Immigrants

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Come to our free info-session to learn skills and strategies to use your degree and your experience to continue your career in the US.

This session is open to any recently-arrived immigrants, refugees, or asylees who came to the US with at least a Bachelor’s degree, some professional experience and who are currently working outside their trained career field.

**Date: Wednesday, 30 January 2008**

**Time: 06.30 p.m. – 07.30 p.m.**

**Location: HIAS**

**The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society  
333 Seventh Avenue, 16th Floor  
New York, NY 10001-5004**

UPWARDLY GLOBAL is a non-profit organization that provides assistance to **underemployed and unemployed** foreign-born, educated professionals, especially immigrant women, refugees, or asylees.



## RCCS

## ROFEH CHOLIM CHAYIM SOCIETY

## "IT'S NOT ABOUT SURVIVING; IT'S ABOUT THRIVING!"

*A message from Bela Rubashkin read at the RCCS Melave Malka.*

It was ערב ראש השנה, September 2, 2002, when I was נישט היינט געדאכט, diagnosed with a meningioma, a benign brain tumor. ברוך השם, I had a successful surgery on תשרי ה' with a very caring ערב יום, Dr. Kalman Post. רפואה של יום, כיפור, I returned home to be with my family.

I now had a long road to recovery ahead of me. סוכות was around the corner, and so were my many guests. And now the challenge "Should we be busy recuperating on יום טוב or should we expand the joy of יום טוב by sharing it with guests?" My children's response was unanimous. We will host all of our invited guests א"ה.

סוכות arrived, and all the women lined up in the סוכה ליינט ליכט to סוכה.

"שהחיינו וקימנו והיגענו לזמן הזה", we all said in unison. "Thank you ה' for granting us life and enabling us to reach this occasion."

As the guests walked into the סוכה, so

did the יום טוב שמחה of שמה that comes from the unity of souls; from אחדות. Then came the singing, from the depths of their hearts to the depth of ours. Yes, Simcha Poretz Geder, joy breaks all boundaries. This indeed was the most joyous Sukkot celebration we ever had. This was the first step in my recovery.

Now Sukkot had passed, and I was faced with the long recovery from brain surgery. I knew that I would have to train myself to focus only on the positive, I would have to view the cup only as half full.

But I needed a tool.

I started a "journal of recovery". I composed a little poem of sorts, reflecting my new heightened sense of appreciation, by adding on little signs of improvement as I experience them. These were abilities I used to consider small and minor, but in reality are monumental. I learned to think again and thank again, and so I name this poem: Think Again & Thank Again,

We take life for granted,

Thank G-d

Recuperating from brain surgery,

Retrained me to

Think again

and thank again.

Even before I could move, immediately following the surgery,

I opened my eyes and expressed Modeh Ani ... שהחזרת בי נשמת.

Thank you G-d for returning my soul.

I used to think that sitting up in bed without getting dizzy was normal,

Or getting up from a chair without holding on for support was normal,

Or turning sideways without losing my balance,

Now I think again

and I thank again.

I used to think that lifting my pots off the stove was normal,

Or even getting dressed from head to toe,

Or walking up a staircase without holding on,

Now I think again

and I thank again.

I used to think that whipping an egg was normal,

Or just lifting the coffee pot to make a cup of coffee,

But now,

I think again and I thank again.

Every morning when I say מודה אני, I think again and I thank again,

ברוך השם

What better way to show gratitude than to encourage others that are being challenged, and to strengthen them in the believe that והסירותי מחלה מקרבך is real. It will happen ממש א"ה בפועל ממש

בביאת משיח צדקנו

And that we are here to help them until then.

Bella Rubashkin

## RCCS GETS A STANDING OVATION IN CROWN HEIGHTS

Over 1200 people from all spectrums of the Crown Heights and Greater New York Jewish communities attended a first-ever annual fundraising dinner Melaveh Malkah organized by RCCS at the RAZAG ballroom on Mostei Shabbos Shirah. Every seat in the ballroom was taken and hundreds stood on the sides to participate in the uplifting program.

The evening had a twofold purpose: to capitalize on the unique power of song and joy to generate positive energy for health and well-being and to raise money for the Crown Heights chapter of RCCS

Principal patron Rebbetzin Tema Gurary and family dedicated the gala event in memory of Rabbi Noson Gurary, their late husband and father, who left a legacy of quiet charity upon his passing in summer of 2005.

As Rabbi Moshe Klein explained, "RCCS helps over 30 patients in Crown Heights who suffer from the disease whose name the Rebbe would not mention by paying their health insurance. Over 7 million dollars has been paid in the last 7 years for Crown Heights patients and over 20 million dollars were paid out by insurance companies."

Several members of the Gurary clan took the podium to speak lovingly of their late patriarch. Honoree Dr. Yashar Hirshaut quoted Chazal impressively

on effort and reward upon receiving the Ahavas Yisroel Humanitarian Award, and the affable Avremel Lokshin, collecting the Anshei Chesed Award on behalf of his wife and himself, delighted the crowd with a mere "Thank you!" Awards were presented to Rabbi Moshe Klein and Yossi and Bella Rubashkin for their outstanding work on behalf of RCCS. Dr. James Speyer received the Chesed award for his dedication to the community.

Rabbi YY Jacobson, the master of ceremonies, highlighted the potential of Simchah to overcome challenges. He described the cherished place Heichal HaNeginah, "the palace of song," had in the hearts of the Lubavitch Rebbeim, illustrating this theme through stories.

The classical orchestra, directed by Avremi G. played several Chabad Nigunim. The vocalists, Levy Kaplan and Benny Friedman, were able to give expression to the full range of emotions the melodies evoked. Also featured was Gershon Wachtel, a Toronto-based virtuoso pianist, who presented a unique assemblage of Chabad melodies and a Chasidic A-Cappella group Hamizamrim..

Uriel Abromof, a patient helped by RCCS through illness and recovery, related the personal miracle he experienced, sharing a message of Ahavas Yisroel and Achdus.





## OPEN LETTER TO VOLUNTEERS, STAFF AND SUPPORTERS

I would like to share my recent experiences with you, and to convey my personal feelings of gratitude to RCCS.

I vividly remember that fateful day last May. I had just returned from some pre-Yom Tov shopping and checked my answering machine. A woman with a sweet and gentle voice asked that I return her call as soon as possible to discuss something very important.

Without giving it much thought, I dialed her number. She answered and with a kind but direct voice told me of a problem. It was about a child who had just been diagnosed with cancer. Although the exact diagnosis was not certain, the prognosis was certainly not good and required immediate attention. She provided me with several phone numbers and wished me good luck.

I hung up the phone and let the information sink in. I was busy raising my lovely family and was anticipating the upcoming birth of my seventh child. I could not possibly comprehend such devastating news: Could it really be that a child so young and so innocent should be facing such difficult trials?

But who was this child? A child I never met, never knew, and whose name I never heard of. Yet this child was already so close to my heart and constantly on my mind.

You see, it was the child I was carrying inside of me!

Now, instead of looking forward to

a joyous birth, we were thrown into a confusing medical maze of uncertainty. We dutifully followed every lead and all medical recommendations. Yet, our best efforts were stifled by the lack of proper health insurance. We were unable to explore the best that modern medicine had to offer. We then heard of a team of doctors in an out-of-state hospital whose success rate with this sort of tumor was remarkable.

I called the doctor's office and discussed the problem with the receptionist. She seemed so nice and caring...until I told her that the only insurance I had was a Medicaid-based HMO. She curtly informed me that they would not accept that type of payment and that if I wanted to meet with the doctors for a consultation, they would require a down payment of \$10,000 in cash, just for the initial visit! With that, she hung up the phone.

So with little choice left, we decided to seek treatment with a local surgeon. It was then that we received the second bombshell: the doctor explained that shortly after our baby will be born, he will perform a delicate but critical surgery, and then the baby will be transferred to an oncologist who will probably care for the baby for many more months. We felt terribly lost and overwhelmed, but we had no choice.

My husband is a hard working and devoted father, but he could not possibly undertake to pay for the exorbitant fees of proper health insurance. And the thought of reaching out to strangers

for help was completely unthinkable.

One day, when I was feeling especially low, and my husband was not home, I decided to call Rofeh Cholim Cancer Society (RCCS). I thought it would be the most difficult phone call I ever had to make. How wrong I was. I immediately felt the understanding and compassion travel through the phone lines. Besides offering to pay for the proper insurance policy, they encouraged me and gave me reason to look forward to the birth of our baby. Not for a moment did I feel uncomfortable or intimidated.

From that moment on, I was able to see the bright side of things. RCCS was the perfect messenger that HaShem sent us to help us, to hold our hands throughout this difficult chapter in our unborn baby's life.

As a result, with their encouragement, blessings, and of course financial assistance, we went to the Center for Fetal Diagnosis and Treatment in Philadelphia. After many tests and examinations, a course of treatment was decided upon.

With tremendous help from Above, we decided to follow their recommendations and to stay in Philadelphia for the duration of the pregnancy and the impending birth of our baby.

It was a very special day when our little baby girl made her appearance. She was so beautiful, and in our eyes, so perfect, too.

Soon after birth, a team of doctors operated on her to remove the tumor and surrounding tissue. The surgery was, B"H, a complete success. The method they used eliminated the need for further oncological treatment. We were overjoyed and overwhelmed with gratitude to our Creator.

Although I know that the human language is too limited and inadequate to express my heartfelt gratitude and complete indebtedness to such a noble organization, I nevertheless thank RCCS from the depths of my heart for putting the simcha (joy) into our simcha.

Our baby has since been doing very well and her prognosis is B"H excellent. Our appreciation to RCCS knows no bounds.

Your grateful friend,

Mrs. Esther T. Goldbaum\*

*\*name changed to protect privacy*



## RCCS IS GRATEFUL

**WITH DEEP GRATITUDE WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR SPONSORS WHO MADE THE MELAVE MALKAH A SUCCESSFUL AND INSPIRING EVENING:**

### MOTTY AND LEAH GURARY AND FAMILY

The Printhouse

Yossi Laine and Family

Shalom Laine and family

Shlome Klein-Shaya Gordon @ Mr. Greens

Heshy Jacobowitz & the Scoop company

Moshe Rubashkin & Yosef Kanofsky from CH Community Newspaper

Yehuda L. Ceitlin

Levy Liberow @ photo by levi

Zev Markowitz from the Chasidic Art Gallery

"One of a Kind" florist

Mimulo Flower Shop

*We also would like to thank:*

Rabbi YY Jacobson

Avremi G.

Gershon Wachtel

Moshe Schmukler and the staff at the Razag

Zev Feldman

Levy Kaplan

Benny Friedman

Mendy Wilhelm

L&M

Seema Goldstein

Tiki Dean

*And all the dedicated volunteers for their time and efforts*

Rabbi Yosef C. Golding  
Executive Director

Mendy Coen  
Director of Development

Crown Heights Chapter

Moshe Klein, Chairman

Committee

Ruthe Backer

Rachel Chitrik

Batya Goldberger

Naomi Pinson

Bella Rubashkin



# CHOF BEIS SH'VAT

## THE REBBETZIN CHAYA MUSHKA SCHNEERSON

[Adapted from the book "Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson"

by Shmuel Marcus]

### Birth

Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka (Moussia) Schneerson was born in Babinovitch, near the Russian city of Lubavitch, on Shabbat, the 25th of Adar, in 1901. She was the second of three daughters of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak and his wife, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina Schneersohn.

When she was born, her grandfather, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Shalom DovBer, was travelling abroad and he telegraphed her father, "...Mazal tov on the birth of your daughter ...if she has not yet been named, she should be called Chaya Mushka (the name of the wife of the Tzemach Tzedek [the third Lubavitcher Rebbe])."

From her earliest years, the Rebbetzin absorbed the purity and holiness that surrounded her, both in the house of her grandfather and that of her father.

In the autumn of 1915, during World War I, Chaya Mushka and her family fled Lubavitch and settled in Rostov. While in Rostov, Rabbi Shalom DovBer became ill, and nineteen-year-old Chaya Mushka affectionately cared for her grandfather, spending nights at his side. Before his passing in 1920, Rabbi Shalom DovBer blessed Chaya Mushka and left several Chasidic classics to her in his last will.

Her early twenties saw the intensification of the Communist war against the Jewish soul and the beginning of her father's heroic struggle. During those dark Soviet nights, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak had his daughter Chaya Mushka at his side.

Cognizant of her wisdom and strength, her father involved her in much of his work. Young Chaya Mushka was asked to secretly transport food and supplies to Rostov's underground Yeshiva, in the knowledge that she could be relied upon for her discerning judgment.

Life became increasingly dangerous for the Jews of Rostov, and in the spring of 1924 her family moved to Leningrad, where Chaya Mushka's involvement continued.

In a recently discovered document dated December 4, 1924, her father wrote:

I hereby empower citizen Chaya Moussia Yosepovna (daughter of Yosef) Schneersohn, residing at Machovaya Street 12/22, apartment 10, to receive monies on my behalf or documents that are addressed to me, in all forms,

from the government bank and all of its branches and offices, and from other banks, government or communal, or from other organizations or private persons or by telegraph.

Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka was 23 years old at the time.

The persecution was relentless, and in 1927 the notorious communist police came to arrest her father in their Leningrad home. Maintaining her composure, she brilliantly managed to alert the Rebbe (her husband-to-be) who was in the street, calling out:



Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka's Shabbat candlesticks

"Schneerson, guests have come to visit us!" Understanding her message, the Rebbe was quickly able to notify others to take the necessary precaution and begin the international campaign for his release.

Following his arrest and imprisonment in Leningrad, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak was exiled to Kostroma. Upon his request, she was allowed to join him for the journey. On the 12th of Tammuz, she was the bearer of good news when she notified her family in Leningrad of her father's release.

In the autumn of 1927, on the day after Simchat Torah, the Schneersohn family left the Soviet Union and moved to Riga, Latvia.

### Her Marriage

Before leaving Russia, Chaya Mushka was engaged to marry the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson.

The actual marriage was delayed until 1928, when, on the 14th day of Kislev, their marriage was celebrated in Warsaw, Poland.

On the day preceding the wedding,

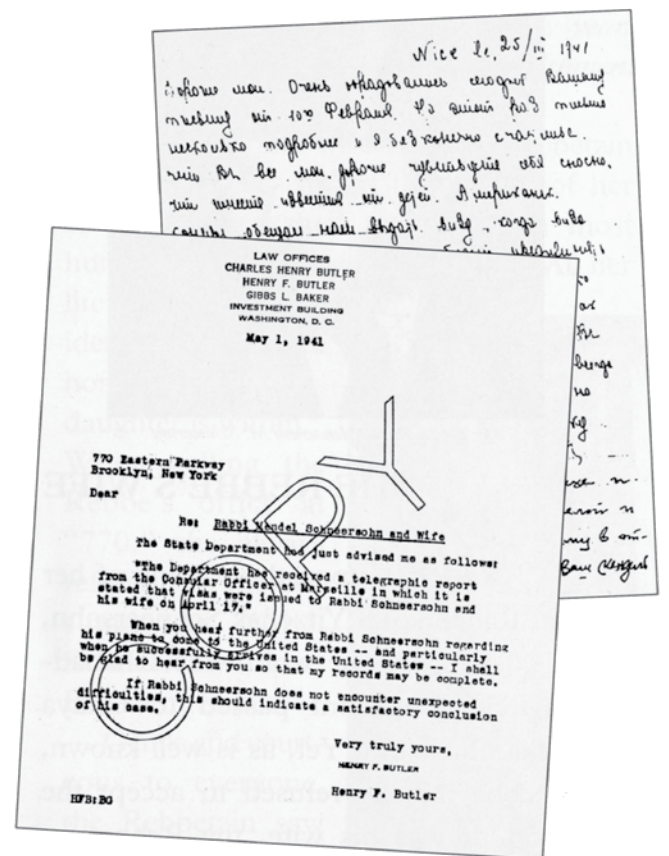
thousands of Jews flocked to the railway station in Warsaw to welcome her father and his family. During the course of the day, a multitude of Chasidim, hailing from all of Poland, Lithuania, and Russia, arrived in the capital.

At eight o'clock that evening, in the presence of the students of the Yeshiva Tomchei T'mimim, her father celebrated the meal of the "chosson mohl." In the middle of the meal her father delivered a ma'amar [Chasidic discourse]. Midnight came and went, and the meal was still in

### The War Years

Following their wedding, the young couple lived in Berlin until 1933. When the Nazi regime took power in the spring of 1933, they fled to Paris. The Rebbetzin was known to have taken university courses while also assisting the Rebbe with his.

In 1939, Germany triggered World War II by launching a blitzkrieg (lightning attack) against Poland. Chaya Mushka's father, aided by international intervention spearheaded by



progress. Her father expressed his desire to rejoice with the Yeshiva students, and they at once formed a circle, in the center of which he danced a good while.

The next day, the 14th of Kislev, at five in the evening, the "kabbalat panim" began. Ushers were placed at the entrance of the Yeshiva, and only guests with official invitations were allowed to enter. Thousands of people surrounded the building and there simply wasn't enough room for them all.

Hundreds of miles away, in Russia, in Dnepropetrovsk, (Yekaterinoslav), another wedding celebration was taking place. The Rebbe's parents, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana, unable to attend in person, organized a festive meal and farbrengen in their own house, to which hundreds of local Jews flocked.

On the 14th of Kislev, 5714, twenty five years later, the Rebbe said to his Chasidim: "It was this day that bound me to you, and you to me..."

"The State Department has received a telegraphic report from the Consular Officer in Marseilles... that visas were issued to Rabbi Schneerson and his wife on April 17"

Americans, managed to leave early in 1940 while Germany was still officially at peace with the United States. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak and some family members miraculously arrived in the United States on the last boat to cross the Atlantic ocean before the U-boat blockade began. Once in New York City, her father set in motion efforts to rescue his family from the impending cataclysm in Europe.

In May 1940, France was invaded by German forces and surrendered within four weeks. A French puppet regime led by Marshal Philippe Petain and Pierre Laval was established in Vichy, and the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin, like most Jews, fled to Nice in southern France, choosing to live under Petain's government rather than direct Nazi occupation in Paris and the surrounding areas.

In the course of their flight, there was a devastating bombardment. As people ran in every direction, she noticed an explosive shell heading towards a man next to her. Quickly pushing him to





the ground, the Rebbetzin saved the man's life. Recounting this story the Rebbetzin characteristically said, "True, I saved his life, but for pushing a Jew one must do teshuvah."

### America

Escaping The Nazi onslaught, in 1941, the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin boarded the Serpa Pinto and set sail (from Marseilles, France, via Lisbon, Portugal) for the United States of America.

On the 28th of Sivan, they arrived safely on the shores of America, and took up residence in New York, where her father had settled in 1940.

True, Chaya Mushka herself had escaped the Nazi claws, but she would not escape the nightmare of Europe. Her younger sister, Sheina, and her husband, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Horenstein, were still trapped in Poland when the United States declared war on Japan in December, 1941. All contact with them was lost. It was not until after the war that she and her family learned for certain that the Horensteins had all perished in the gas chambers of Treblinka.

### The Rebbetzin

It is well known that in 1950, upon the passing of her father, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, leadership of the worldwide Chabad-Lubavitch movement passed to Chaya Mushka's husband, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory.

Less well known is the fact that despite the Rebbe's initial adamant refusal to accept the mantle, it was his wife, the Rebbetzin, who, notwithstanding the great personal sacrifice this would entail, finally prevailed upon him to accept the position with all its public and private hardships. She was steadfast: It is simply unthinkable that father's thirty years of total self-sacrifice and accomplishment should, G-d forbid, come to naught...

An erudite and wise woman, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka carried the mantle of her revered and exalted position in a most humble and unpretentious fashion. All her life she fulfilled the ideal of the psalmist, "The entire honor of a king's daughter is within." When calling the Rebbe's office at "770," or calling a high school girl ill

in her dormitory, she always referred to herself simply as: "Mrs. Schneerson from President Street."

Gentle and courteous to everyone, the Rebbetzin saw her role as one wholly devoted to the work of her husband. Even when she relayed advice to those seeking his guidance through her, she would repeat his wording with precision, making sure that it was understood exactly as the Rebbe intended.

### Her Name

Chaya means life; Mushka, an aromatic spice.

On the significance of naming a child after the Rebbetzin, the Rebbe once said: "...We can demonstrate that 'her children are alive,' by our taking a lesson from her conduct, and conducting ourselves in her spirit, in a manner of self-sacrifice.

"This is even more so when naming a child after her, and training the child to follow her example. After all, this is the most basic aspect of 'her children are alive, so too is she alive.'..."

The Rebbetzin had no children of her own, yet when a child visiting her at home asked her, "where are your children?" she answered that the Chasidim were her children. Thousands of little girls around the world proudly bear her name.

### Her True Greatness

The extraordinary respect that the Rebbe accorded to the Rebbetzin gives us a glimpse of her true stature. For although the Rebbetzin declined all public recognition, the Rebbe frequently referred to her with reverence.

Once, the Lubavitch Women's Organization sent her a bouquet of flowers, together with a list of individuals for whom blessings were requested. Setting aside the flowers for the Rebbetzin, the secretary passed on the letter to the Rebbe who, observing that it was addressed to his wife, asked his secretary to give it to her, saying, "She too is capable of giving blessings."

The Rebbe once commented to a friend of the Rebbetzin, "You have a good lawyer on your side..."

This was evident during a crucial time in recent Lubavitch history, during the legal proceedings to establish the ownership of the books in the Lubavitch library.

When the defendant's attorney asked her: "To whom did the books belong?" the Rebbetzin famously answered: "My father himself,

and everything he had, including the books, belong to the Chasidim.

Her words, spoken with such sincerity and conviction, with all the bearing it had on her own life, made a profound impression upon the judge and helped to sway the judgment in favor of Agudas Chasidei Chabad.

### Her Passing - The Funeral

The Rebbetzin passed away on Wednesday, the 22nd of Shevat, 1988, after a brief illness. Her burial took place a few hours afterwards at the Chabad cemetery in Queens, New York.

Shortly before her passing, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka requested a glass of water. After reciting the blessing, "... by Whose word all things come into being," she returned her soul to her Maker.

In a farewell to a true queen, the funeral procession was fifteen thousand strong, led by an official police motorcade.

She was interred next to her grandmother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, and near her father, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak.

The Rebbe pointed out that Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak passed away in Shevat, as did his grandmother, Rebbetzin Rivka, his mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, and his daughter, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka.

### Her Legacy

The afternoon following the funeral, the Rebbe called in his secretary, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, and among other things instructed him to establish, as quickly as possible, a tzedakah-fund to be named for the Rebbetzin, of righteous memory.

Before the end of Shiva, "Keren Hachomesh" was established (an acronym of the first letters of the names Harabonias Chaya Mushka Schneerson) at Lubavitch World Headquarters, which continually serves a variety of needy causes, primarily women's social and educational purposes.

During the following years, the Rebbe distributed significant sums from this fund to both institutions for women as well as individual women in need of help all over the world.

Sunday, the 24th of Adar, 1988, was marked by the laying of the cornerstone for "Campus Chomesh," in memory of the Rebbetzin. Near the conclusion of the momentous event, the Rebbe himself suddenly arrived.

From the car window the Rebbe handed Rabbi Avraham Shemtov 470 dollars (numerically equivalent to "Chaya Mushka") saying, "I am on the way to the Ohel, and I shall visit her (resting place) as well. Tonight is her birthday, and this (sum) is my participation and her participation in this new edifice."

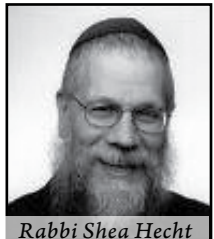


The Rebbetzin's tombstone. At the bottom there is a memorial for her sister Sheina who was murdered by the Nazis





# MUSINGS



Rabbi Hecht, is chairman of the board of the National Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education (NCFJE), continuing the tradition of social services management and outreach that began with his father, the Rabbi Jacob J. Hecht A'H. He is a Rabbi and activist in the Jewish community, focusing on family crisis intervention, guiding and advising troubled youth and their families, marriage counseling, and drugs and cults counseling and consultations. He can be reached at rabbishea@aol.com. ✉

## FACILITATING YOUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL GROWTH

The old school of thought was that even when children had complaints about school, the teacher was always right. That philosophy may be considered extreme, but today most parents operate at the other extreme.

Parents must be in tune with what happens to their children in school. They should listen to their children's complaints and problems, empathize and sympathize with their children for the difficulties they face. However, when children confide their school issues to their parents, parents must understand that if they speak disparagingly of their children's teachers, in addition to showing a lack of respect and proper backing for their children's school, they are also on some level showing a lack of respect to their children.

In today's day and age when disrespect for authority is so rampant, the best thing a parent can do for their children is to support their teachers. When a child's teacher says something that doesn't seem to make sense to a parent and the parent comments on how dumb the teacher is, are the parents then expecting their child to learn from that 'dumb' teacher? Children will have no respect for the authority that their parents disparage.

Unfortunately, this is part of a greater problem. Parents don't seem to respect

their children and their needs. Children need to use life as a learning experience. If a parent depreciates their child's main instructor, how can that child learn properly? Imagine if the tables were turned and teachers told their students about their parent's foibles? Every parent would be outraged at a teacher showing such a lack of respectfulness.

Why then is it considered fine when a parent mocks and destroys their child's teacher? What mixed messages a child must get; what mixed feelings a child must have when the central figures in their lives are diminished by their parents, whose opinions matter so much! How can a child learn from a teacher they don't respect, and how can a child respect a teacher that their parents belittle?

On the other hand, a parent that respects their child will allow their child to learn comfortably, without cynicism, from those that teach them. If problems arise, a child's complaint should be legitimized and then the problem should be solved in a manner that does not belittle the teacher or the child. As parents, we are required to think twice before we do or say anything that might show our child a lack of respect for their authority.

Recently, a school was sued by the family of a child who was bullied for several

years. The parents, feeling the school and the district didn't do enough to protect their child, took their fight to court. The parents now say that their child is emotionally damaged and doesn't trust older people because of the lack of action on the school's part. Perhaps the accusation is correct, but the guilty party is not necessarily only the school.

Yes, maybe the school should have been on top of it; maybe they should have done something more! However, what lesson did the parents teach their child? Did the parent who saw their child was being bullied go down to the school and try to solve the problem by speaking to the administration? No! They went and sued the school. They told their child in so many words, through their actions, that adults can't

be trusted,

can't be reasoned with or talked to, and now they are shocked and angry that the child learned the lesson well?

If parents respect their children, they will teach them to respect those in authority. This will allow their children to learn from their teachers without complication. However, if parents show their children that those whom they learn from are not worthy of their respect, they are showing a lack of respect for their needs as children, as well as cheating them out of an invaluable education. Nobody is perfect, but we all need to learn to work together, within the system, for our children's sake.

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## NISSEI NISSIM

By Penina Metal

The call, when it came, was shocking. My daughter, Rivkie, who is living in England, informed me that she was expecting twins. Naturally, discussion of her condition was kept private, and a lot of Tehillim was said.

Knowing that twins tend to arrive early, I got four medical opinions as to when would be the most propitious time for me to go to England because my daughter wanted me to be with her when she gave birth.

My departure date, coincidentally, was the exact date on which I was informed that I was expecting Rivkaleh, my bechora, after 5 years of marriage. So I took this as a good omen.

Well, as the saying goes: "Man plans

and Hashem laughs." My daughter went into early labor at the end of her eighth month. Even if I changed my ticket, there was no way that I could attend the birth.

Rivkie asked me to go to the Ohel for her.

The Ohel bus was not running. I was in a quandary. I could not tell anyone why I had to go to the Ohel. Rivkie was counting on me to go to the Rebbe. I didn't know what I was going to do.

Baruch Hashem, I got a car ride but I went with a very heavy heart. I berated myself (unnecessarily), questioning what sort of mother I was if I was not by my child's side, especially at a time like this!

My parents, who lived one state over, would drop everything when I needed them. What good was I? But okay,

to the Ohel I would go, but I felt like a washout in the Motherhood department.

I davened by the Rebbe, but I needed to see him to get some inspiration, so afterwards, I went to watch a video.

A woman named Nancy was featured in the video during Sunday Dollars. She asked the Rebbe to give her a Jewish name. The Rebbe replied that Nancy has two "n's", so the Rebbe decided that her name should be "Penina," which has two "nun's."

The Rebbe concluded with the bracha that she should have "Nissei Nissim" in her life.

I rushed to the phone to call my husband. I asked him how our daughter was doing, and how the labor was progressing. One of the babies was

transverse, and the team was preparing for a possible surgical delivery.

I told my husband that the babies would be born in the normal way because the Rebbe told me so!

And indeed, our "Nissei Nissim," Chaya Mushka and Miriam, were born Baruch Hashem, without intervention.

I kept to my original travel plans, and by Hashgocha Protis, the day that I arrived, the hospital released my daughter and her precious little ones with their newly-minted Bubby, proudly at their side.

Miracle of Miracles, indeed!

Good Shabbos!

With love to my "Delicious" and "Yummy" birthday girls, who turned 10, B'Ezrat Hashem, on Ches Shvat.



# PARSHAS HASHAVUA

## VEDIBARTA BAM ~ YISRO



“וישמע יתרו כהן מדין חתן משה”

“Yitro the High Priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard.” (18:1)

**QUESTION:** Why does the Torah now cite Yitro’s already-mentioned relationship to Moshe and his position?

**ANSWER:** In the times of King David and King Shlomo the Jews did not accept converts because the Jewish people were then at the height of their glory, and it was suspected that the motivation of the would-be convert was not Torah and mitzvot, but rather to share in the prosperity and glory of the Jewish people.

If so, why did King Shlomo accept the daughter of Pharaoh as a convert and then marry her? The answer is that she was an exception to the rule. As the daughter of a King, she did not lack glory, and therefore her only interest in converting was her love for Torah and mitzvot (Yevamot 24b, see Tosafot).

When the Jews left Egypt and the sea split, the entire world witnessed the greatness of the Jewish people. From all over people wanted to convert and become part of the Jewish nation. They were motivated by the glory of the Jewish people rather than by sincere love for Yiddishkeit, and so were rejected.

However, when Yitro decided to convert, he was accepted because, as the famous High Priest of Midian, he could not be suspected as a seeker of glory. In addition, it was not likely that he was converting out of fear of the Jewish people, because nobody would harm the father-in-law of Moshe.

(ילקוט האורים)

“ויחד יתרו על כל הטובה אשר עשה ה' לישראל אשר הצילו מיד מצרים”

“Yitro was happy for all the good that G-d did for the Jews for saving him from the hand of the Egyptians.” (18:9)

**QUESTION:** Why did Yitro use the singular expression “hitzilo” — saving him — and not the plural “hitzilam” — “saving them”?

**ANSWER:** Pharaoh had three advisors, Job, Yitro and Bilam. Considering

the Jewish people a serious threat to him and the land of Egypt, he called his advisors and consulted with them. At the conference, Bilam suggested the idea of drowning all newborn Jewish boys. Job was silent. Not wanting to be present when plans were being made against the Jewish people, Yitro ran away. In the end, Bilam was killed, Job endured his famous sufferings, and Yitro was rewarded to have Moshe as his son-in-law and his descendants as members of the Sanhedrin (Sotah 11a).

When Yitro heard of the rescue through the drowning of Egyptians, he was happy for the good Hashem did for the Jewish people. In addition, he was happy and grateful that Hashem had given him the idea to run away from Pharaoh. Thanks to this, he was prevented from suffering or perishing with the Egyptians.

(באר מים חיים)

“עתה ידעתי כי גדול ה' מכל האלהים”

“Now I know that G-d is the greatest of all deities.” (18:11)

**QUESTION:** To say that Hashem is the greatest of all the gods is heresy because it implies that other gods have some kind of greatness too. Why would Yitro say such a thing?

**ANSWER:** This statement is not one of relative comparison, but of total rejection. Yitro was the High Priest of Midian and a prominent theologian. He was familiar with all the gods the pagan world worshipped. After learning of the miracles Hashem performed, he was convinced of the worthlessness of all the other deities and that Hashem is the one and only G-d of the world.

Hence, he proudly proclaimed, “Now I know that G-d is great! I have reached this conclusion, ‘mikol ha'elohim’ — through realizing the falsehood of all the gods of the pagan world. I know that they are indeed nothing and that Hashem is omnipotent.”

(אלשיך)

“ומשה עלה אל האלקים”  
“And Moshe went up to G-d.” (19:3)

**QUESTION:** According to the Gemara (Shabbat 86b), when Moshe came up to heaven to take the Torah, the angels objected: “Tenah hodecha al hashamayim” — “Set your glory (Torah) above the heavens.” Hashem told Moshe to inform them why Torah was not for them. Moshe said, “The Torah says, ‘I am G-d, your G-d, who brought you out of Egypt’ — were you ever in Egypt? It says, ‘You shall

not murder’ — Do you have a yeitzer hara?” The angels conceded, but why did they think the Torah was for them to begin with?

**ANSWER:** Once a great Torah scholar assumed the position of Rabbi in a large city. After a short while, he realized that the position would not leave him sufficient time for his own Torah study. He therefore decided to resign his position and look for a small city. He approached a nearby small city and, as soon as the residents were convinced that he was serious, he was hired. Concerned that his townspeople might object to his leaving, he returned home to seek their permission. Realizing that he was adamant about dedicating more of his time to Torah study, they reluctantly agreed to let him go.

When the small community received word that their new Rabbi was ready to come, they sent an entourage of the most prominent people to bring him to the city. Upon arrival in the large city, the townspeople met them with sticks and stones and assaulted them for having the audacity to take away their Rabbi. In amazement, the Rabbi asked, “Why are you hitting them? Did I not discuss my leaving with you and receive your consent?!”

The townspeople told their Rabbi, “If we did not show our opposition to your leaving, they might think us dissatisfied with you and happy to see you leave. Consequently, they would not hold you in the high regard you deserve. When however, they notice that we are fighting over you and not wanting to let you go, they will regard you in high esteem.

The angels really knew that Torah was appropriate for human beings and not for them. However, to ensure that man keep Torah in the highest regard and dignity, they fought over it so that when a man acquires Torah, he will cherish it dearly.

(מצאתי בכתיבי אבי הרב שמואל פסח ז"ל באגמילסקי) (שער בת רבים)

“כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישראל”

“Thus say to the House of Jacob and tell to the Children of Israel.” (19:3)

**QUESTION:** It would be sufficient to say only “Beit Yaakov” or only “B'nei Yisrael.” Why is the redundancy necessary?

**ANSWER:** Women are usually in the home. They see to it that their children go to yeshivah and encourage their husbands to study Torah, so they receive merit from the study of their husbands and children (Sotah 21a).

“Beit Yaakov” refers to women who are akeret habayit — the foundation of the

home. Hashem told Moshe to speak to the women and tell them that, “vetageid livnei Yisrael” — every woman should tell her sons to study Torah. In addition, every woman should tell her husband that the spiritual aspects of life are more important to her than the material and thus encourage him to set aside time for Torah study.

(מהרש"א)

“אתם ראיתם אשר עשיתי למצרים ואשא אתכם על כנפי נשרים ואביא אתכם אלי”

“You have seen what I did to Egypt and that I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to me.” (19:4)

**QUESTION:** Why did Hashem single out the eagle as an example of his connection with the Jewish people?

**ANSWER:** In Hebrew an eagle is known as “nesher,” because the word “nesher” means “falling off.” The eagle’s feathers are constantly falling off and being replaced (Psalms 103:5 Rashi). Therefore, the choice of the eagle to symbolize Hashem’s relationship with the Jewish people alludes to the fact that even if a Jew should, G-d forbid, “lose his feathers” — fail in his observance of Torah and mitzvot — his case is not hopeless. He always has the opportunity to do teshuvah and grow “new feathers.”

(ר' לוי יצחק זצ"ל מברדיטשוב)

“ויענו כל העם יחדו ויאמרו כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה”

“And all the people answered together and said, ‘All that G-d has spoken we will do.’” (19:8)

**QUESTION:** Each individual Jew should have responded “e'eseh” — “I will do.” Why did they all answer in the plural, “na'aseh”?

**ANSWER:** When the Jews heard about the Torah and realized its beauty and importance, each individual took upon himself not only to observe it, but also to be responsible for all other Jews doing so. Each one responded in the plural “na'aseh,” meaning “I will do, and also see to it that other Jews will do.”

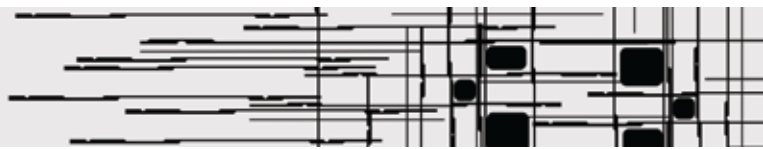
This may be an additional source for the Talmudic dictum “kol Yisrael areivin zeh lazeh” — “Each Jew is a guarantor for his fellow” (Shavuot 39a).

(חידושי הר"ם)





## THE REBBE'S SICHA: YISRO 5740



### LESSON ON HOW TO STUDY TORAH

[Published by Sichos in English]

The Alter Rebbe explained that we must live by the lessons of the weekly portion. This week's portion Yisro, describes the giving of the Torah. The Haftorah adds further emphasis, in describing Isaiah's vision of the "Divine Chariot"; when the Torah was given, G-d descended upon Mt. Sinai and revealed Himself and His chariot (Shemos Rabbah 29:2).

Three times each year we read the description of the giving of the Torah: in Parshas Yisro, on Shavuos, and in Parshas Vaeschanan. Though they are similar in context, we derive different lessons from each of these three readings.

On Shavuos, which is a Yom Tov (festival), special prayers and customs apply to us, and work is forbidden. The words Yom Tov mean "a good day"; that is, it is a day singled out for rejoicing. Therefore, when reading the description of Matan Torah on Shavuos, it is with a festive air.

Not so the other two readings. Parshas Vaeschanan is read directly after the three weeks of mourning, when the service of the Jewish people is characterized by Teshuvah. On the other hand Parshas Yisro is read when the Jewish people are immersed in their daily service of G-d; that is, a service related to that of Tzaddikim (rather than Ba'alei Teshuvah).

Parshas Yisro describes the events

directly before the giving of the Torah, when the Jewish people were on the level of Tzaddikim. This occurred before the sin of the golden calf.

Parshas Vaeschanan, on the other hand, describes the service of Ba'alei Teshuvah, following the sin of the golden calf. Therefore it is a description of the giving of the second tablets.

The first tablets were given with "thunder and lightning," with noise. Our sages proclaimed that "just as there (at Mt. Sinai), there was awe and fear, trembling and sweating, so now (in our Torah study) there must also be awe and fear, trembling and sweating." The Alter Rebbe explains that, although there were open miracles at Mt. Sinai, which are not present during our Torah study, still that fear must remain with us, since the Torah that we receive is G-d's Torah. Our approach to Torah must parallel that of the Jews at Mt. Sinai, and also be accompanied by "noise."

A similar point is brought out by the Tanya which declares that Torah must "rest within all 248 limbs of the body." On the surface, Torah is an intellectual study. It must be approached with "peace of mind and peace of body." An effort to integrate it within the entire body would disturb one's concentration. Yet, Torah teaches that "my entire being shall declare it." Torah must permeate the totality of our existence. A story in the Talmud (Shabbos 88a) relates that Rava, while once studying, was so involved in his learning that he

placed his fingers of his hand under his feet and ground them down until his fingers spurted blood. Similarly, Torah must affect us to the point where we are totally involved with our studies.

From the above, we can learn an important lesson. We must become involved with spreading Torah, particularly the wellsprings of Chassidus, and we must do so with "noise," with excitement and tumult. One might argue that "the words of the wise are heard with quiet," that we must consider carefully, and begin working slowly, step-by-step, when we are involved in spreading Torah. However, such an approach runs contrary to that of the Previous Rebbe, who stressed immediate action. He pointed out that we have only a "few moments" left before the coming of Mashiach and that now is the time to "grab and eat, grab and drink." We must utilize every moment possible, creating a great commotion and tumult for Torah. Furthermore, this commotion and tumult is not only applicable on holidays, but even during weekdays. To emphasize this point, Parshas Yisro, which speaks about the giving of the Torah, is read not only on the holiday of Shavuos, but also during the present week.

The Midrash tells us that the "noise" of Mt. Sinai brought an undesirable effect, "the influence of the evil eye." In view of that influence, how can we then demand noise in regard to spreading Torah? The answer lies in the concept of the sin of the tree of knowledge, the source of all undesirable influences in the world. The Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 21:7) relates that Adam's sin

was in the eating of the fruit the wrong time. Had he waited three hours he could have made wine from the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and used it for Kiddush. That is, the eating of the fruit, at the right time, would have been a positive act. The same principle applies to the "noise" that must accompany the spreading of Torah. We are now at a time when such an approach is necessary. We must learn Torah and spread Torah, particularly the wellsprings of Chassidus, with "noise," with excitement. If an objector argues that the source of noise is in Yisro, i.e., that only Tzaddikim, but not Baalei Teshuvah should be involved with "noise," then we must point out the declaration of Isaiah the prophet: "Your nation are all Tzaddikim." Further, one who objects to the spreading of Torah in such a manner should visit the Previous Rebbe's grave, or should consult a Rav. He will surely be told that "Your nation are all Tzaddikim," and that the Torah must be spread with "noise" to the point where it effects, not only those whom one knows, but even those with whom one has no connection.

We must be careful, however, not to derive false pride and egotism from our activities; and when others are accomplishing something valuable, we must not react negatively. Rather, the task must be approached with true unity. In short, we must work to spread Torah with enthusiasm and excitement, through joint effort and with common goals. These efforts will hasten the revelation of the third Temple, the Temple that was built by G-d, with the coming of Mashiach speedily in our days.

## PHASES IN THE ISRAEL-ARAB CONFLICT ISRAELI APPROACHES & SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES

Published by Sichos In English

After the Six-Day War, the Arab hostilities against Israel continued. Across the entire stretch of the Suez Canal, bloody artillery battles were fought between Israeli and Egyptian troops.

At that time, the Nixon administration expended considerable effort to broker a cease-fire between the two sides. During the lengthy negotiations the Rebbe warned Israel against entering into any agreement, explaining that Egypt wanted a cease-fire only to begin preparing for the next war. "Before the ink is dry on the agreement," the Rebbe warned, "the Egyptians will violate it. And who knows how many lives will be lost in the next war because of these violations."

The Israelis had the upper hand. Their armies were at the banks of the Suez Canal and by preventing its use put a stranglehold on the Egyptian economy. Nevertheless, in the negotiations, the Egyptians made demands with bravado. At first the Israelis hesitated, but

as the negotiations continued, Israel acceded to every one of the Egyptian demands.

What was the agreement's saving grace for the Israelis? There was to be a cease fire: although the Israelis would pull back, the Egyptians solemnly promised not to move any heavy guns across the Suez.

What actually happened? The day after the treaty was signed the Egyptians violated it, moving their artillery and anti-aircraft batteries across the Suez and entrenching them in the Sinai Peninsula. The transfer of equipment was photographed and publicized by news media throughout the world.

What did the Israelis do? They lodged a few feeble hearted protests and then carried on as if nothing had happened. They could have launched an artillery attack that would have destroyed the Egyptian guns before they could be positioned. No one in the world could have protested, for

the Egyptians had flagrantly violated the agreement before its ink had dried. But Israel's army was silent, and even her diplomats did not voice constant and outspoken protests.

What was the rationale motivating the Israelis? First of all, the hope that the agreement would be a first step toward peace, and second, the perception that signing this treaty would win American favor and enable Israel to receive American arms.

Neither of these perceptions had any basis in reality. To imagine that Nasser could have been at all prepared for peace with Israel, one would have had to be an incorrigible dreamer. Yet when the parents of the soldiers who had been killed in the three previous years asked the government why the concessions to the Arabs were being made, this is the answer that was given them.

Nor was it necessary to make these concessions to receive American arms. America did not desire Israel's

position to be weakened. Just as she expected the Arabs to make demands, she expected Israel to reject them, because they were harmful to her security. How was she to know that Israel would capitulate to every single Arab demand?

What happened as a result of the Israeli redeployment mandated by the treaty? The Egyptians were able to cross the Suez without difficulty in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, and their anti-aircraft batteries in the Sinai inflicted losses on Israeli planes. Although the treaty did give the Israelis a temporary respite from battle, in the long run it cost many more lives.

And most importantly, had Egypt not been given these strategic positions, it is very possible that the Yom Kippur War would never have been waged. It was only because Egypt had been granted a foothold in the Sinai that she had the position and the confidence to launch an attack.

*To Be Continued.*



# THE REBBETZIN CHANA OBM

(1880-1964)

In honor of her birthday on the 28th of Teves

[Adapted from the book "Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson"

By Shmuel Marcus and Avraham D Vaisfiche]

## Departure and Return

Five months after joining her husband in exile, Rebbetzin Chana decided, in desperation, to return home to Yekatrinoslav. This would allow her the opportunity to send him food regularly and eliminate the need to obtain another portion of food in Chi'ili. Furthermore, living at home would ensure that the government would not appropriate her apartment and give it to someone else.

In the month of Elul, after arranging for another Jewish exile to move in with her husband, Rebbetzin Chana departed with a heavy heart. On her way to Yekatrinoslav she traveled to Moscow, where she filed petitions to commute his sentence of exile. Her relentless efforts on behalf of her husband's release were met by deception and cruel indifference by the authorities. The situation remained unchanged.

During the winter of 1941, after spending five months back home in Yekatrinoslav, Rebbetzin Chana courageously decided to rejoin her husband in exile. She once again journeyed to Chi'ili, arriving two weeks before Passover. There, she found her husband in a desperate situation. The government had cut off his daily allotment of bread, leaving him famished and debilitated. Always resourceful, Rebbetzin Chana struggled to improve the critical situation. Through Rebbetzin Chana's remarkable ingenuity, they somehow managed to survive.

## Refugees

With World War II ravaging Europe, many refugees and displaced people ended up in the Kazakhstan region where Rebbetzin Chana and her husband lived.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana soon became well-known among all the Jewish refugees. Large groups of men and women, especially those women whose husbands were taken away for the war effort, would visit the esteemed Rabbi and his wife, seeking counsel on various matters.

With meager resources at their disposal, and facing a constant threat to their very lives, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana heroically reached out to their brethren in need, helping in every which way—materially and spiritually.

## Brush with Death

The winter of 1942-1943 was extraordinarily frigid. Rebbetzin Chana fell ill with a high fever. Fearing that her illness might be contagious, Rebbetzin Chana asked no one for help. Her condition deteriorated from day to day.

Postcard sent by Rabbi Levi Yitzchak

and Rebbetzin Chana to their oldest son, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, in 1943. The postcard was sent from Chi'ili, Kazakhstan, to Brooklyn, New York. Though marked 'express,' the postcard took more than three months to arrive.

One day, a couple visiting with Rabbi Levi Yitzchak observed him struggling at the stove trying to cook a pot of kasha (buckwheat). The woman realized that her help was needed, and stayed for several days. As she nursed the Rebbetzin back to health, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak prayed for his wife's recovery. Soon she regained her health.

## Alma Ata - Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's Passing

In 1944, as Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's sentence was nearing its end, his physical condition began to deteriorate. Though unaware of this, a serious illness was spreading through his body, severely weakening him.

Meanwhile, friends in nearby Alma Ata resolved to secure the Rabbi's release. They contributed thousands of rubles, giving of most of their wealth, in order to acquire the proper permits for the relocation. After six weeks fraught with setbacks and obstacles they were finally able to obtain the release documents.

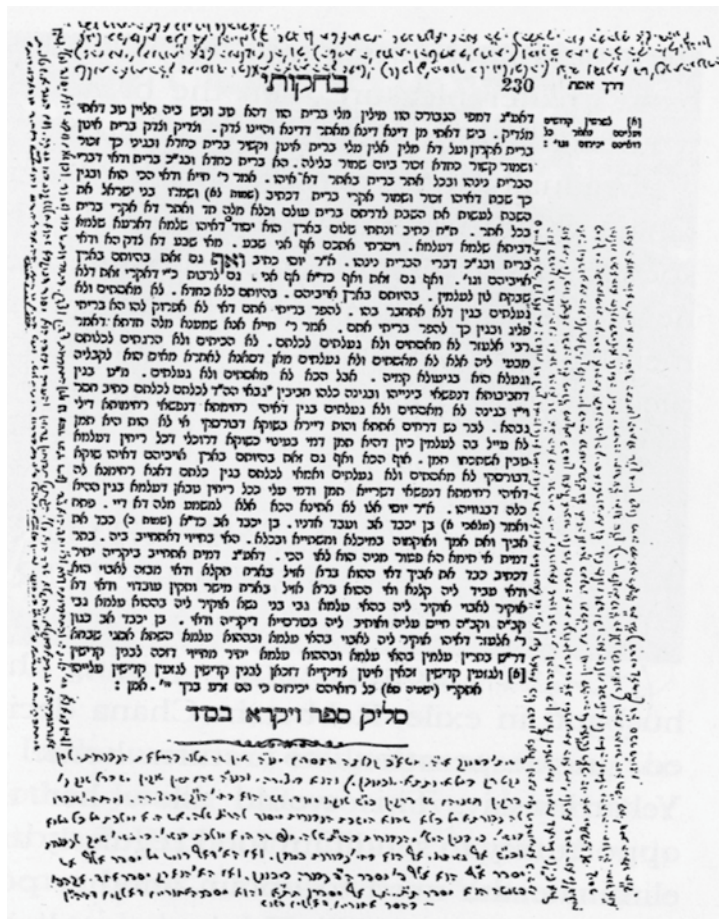
Immediately after Passover, his sentence completed, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana left Chi'ili, and arrived in Alma Ata. In this large city, their living conditions improved somewhat, and they worked more vigorously to help others in need. Yet, through the summer, the Rabbi's illness grew worse. A young friend made a special trip from Leningrad to Alma Ata, together with a well-known doctor. The doctor did not have a good prognosis for the Rabbi. He had no cure for his ailment.

Rebbetzin Chana endured those heart-breaking days with exceptional strength and fortitude. Despite the dire conditions, she continued to welcome into her home any depressed or broken person, attending to his or her specific needs, and providing food when necessary. She retained her dignified manner and grace throughout—even wearing gloves and an elegant hat when receiving guests—and would converse with the doctors on a variety of topics, whether worldly or spiritual in nature. Rebbetzin Chana would take particular interest when the discussion turned to her husband's scholarship and piety.

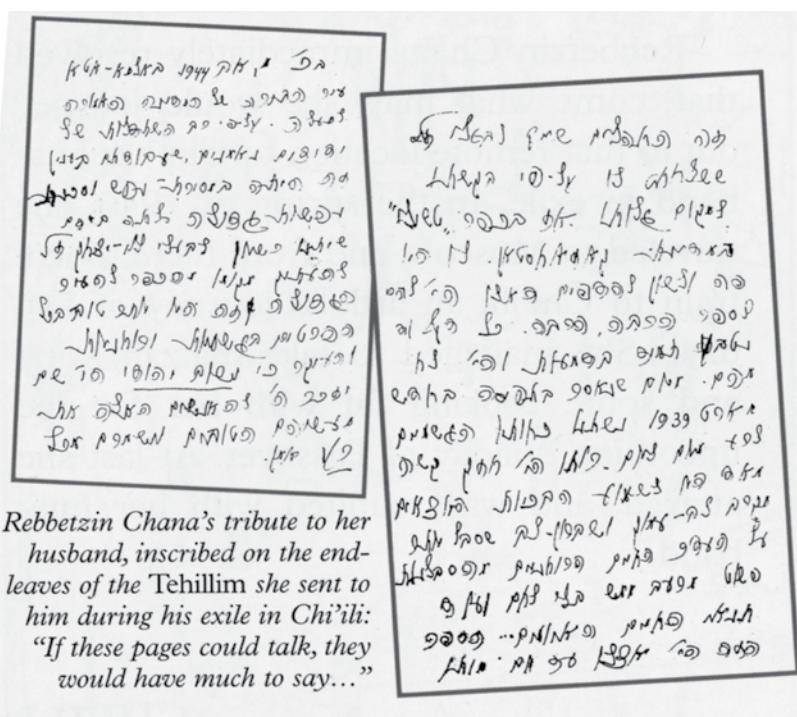
On the 20th of Av, her husband's condition turned critical. Although he was no longer able to speak, he still continued to murmur words of Torah or Psalms. That evening, Rebbetzin Chana took a short rest so that she would have the strength to continue caring for him; when she awoke, she found the house filled with people. Her husband had returned his pure soul to its Maker.



Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's headstone in Alma Ata.



A page of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's notes on Zohar, written with ink secretly prepared by Rebbetzin Chana. On the original one can see the various colors of the homemade ink.



Rebbetzin Chana's tribute to her husband, inscribed on the end-leaves of the Tehillim she sent to him during his exile in Chi'ili: "If these pages could talk, they would have much to say..."



# SHIDUCHIM



## VEDIBARTA BAM ~ MARRIAGE

Many of the things done at a Chuppah ceremony are derived from the way Hashem gave the Torah to the Jewish people since that event was also termed as the marriage between Hashem — the Chatan — and the Jewish people — the Kallah (see Tashbatz Katan #464,5). For instance, the suspended mountain which was lifted over the Jewish people resembled the Chuppah and it was under the open sky similar to your Chuppah tonight.

In lieu of a ring, Hashem gave the Jewish people the Luchot — Two Tablets, and just as you, Chatan, declared the Kallah as sanctified unto you, Hashem declared us His chosen people.

I would like to share with you a reason why Hashem gave the Ten Commandments on Two Tablets instead of on one.

There is a popular joke about this that goes as follows:

Based on the pasuk “Hashem came from Sinai and He shone forth to them from Seir, He appeared from Mount Paran and He came with myriads of the holy — from His right hand He

presented a fire of law to them” (Devarim 33:2), the Gemara (Avodah Zarah 2b) says that Hashem went around offering the Torah to the nations of the world. They all asked “What is written in it?” He gave it to them to review and after careful scrutiny they rejected it since it was not compatible with their lifestyles. Then He offered it to the Jewish people.

The Jews being parsimonious asked “What does it cost?” and when Hashem told them “It’s free,” they responded, “If so, give us two.”

This, of course is only a joke. Permit me to share with you what may be the real reason why Hashem wrote the Ten Commandments on Two Tablets.

Each of the Two Tablets contains five of the Ten Commandments. After



careful analysis it is evident that the five on the first Tablet, starting with “I am G d your G d,” till “Honor your father and your mother” are items which are in the category of bein adam laMakom — between G d and man. Even to honor parents is in the category of bein adam laMakom, as is evident from the statement in Gemara (Kiddushin 30b), “There are three partners in the creation of a person: Hashem, his father and his mother. When a person honors his father and

his mother, Hashem says, ‘I consider it as if I had lived among them and they had honored Me.’ ”

The other five commandments, starting with “You shall not kill” until “You shall not covet” are in the category of bein adam lachaveiro — interpersonal relations.

There are many people who separate between the two. They are very involved in charitable endeavors that help their fellow-man. They will altruistically help people in need or experiencing a difficult period in life, but are unobservant when it

comes to doing mitzvot which are between man and G d.

On the other hand, there are those who are meticulously religious when it comes to praying and studying Torah but selfishly unattentive when asked to extend acts of kindness to another person.

Likewise, there are Jews who are careful about kashrut, tefillin and davening etc., but very unethical in business. However, there are Jews who do not observe Torah and mitzvot, yet they are extremely honest when dealing in money matters with their fellow man.

Hence, Hashem wrote the Commandments on Two Tablets because they fall into two different categories. Nevertheless, by pairing the Two Tablets together, Hashem sent a message to the Jewish people that a person must excel in his relationship with G d and with man and that both are inseparable.

Dear Chatan and Kallah, I pray that you will be a model couple throughout your long marriage. A couple who will be, as we say in Yiddish, “tzu G-ut un tzu leiten,” one that will excel in interpersonal relations and also between man and G d. And both G d and people will praise and bless you.

## FINDING A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK

By: Sarah Junik  
*Continued from last week*

For the past few weeks I have been writing about making a list. It might sound obsessive, but I cannot stress enough how important it is to start a shidduch search after having narrowed down and isolated the non-negotiable character traits that our children cannot live without.

First of all with the list, our children have provided us with clear black and white directions on what is necessary for them to build a Beis Neeman B’Isroel. As explained earlier at length, we as parents were fully involved in the list-making, so we’re now on the same page as our kids.

This list will help us tell the shadchonim, our family members, our friends, and our entire network precisely what we are looking for.

It may be compared to going to a trade show where there are hundreds of vendors. Some vendors we must see; some we will pass by if we have time, and others we can skip altogether. We only have 6 hours at the show, so our time is precious. We look at the catalogue of the show and plot our way, listing all the vendors we must visit in their order of importance. Subsequently, we list the ones we would like to see if we have time. Now with our plan, we will accomplish the most we can in the time we have.

Similarly, we do not want to go aimlessly looking for a “good” boy or girl. We want to be specific, and we want the search to be as quickly and as easily accomplished as Hashgocha protis lets us do it.

Therefore, yes, it is a painstaking job, and it will take quite some time. It may be acrimonious at times until we all agree on the goals we are all working for, but it is absolutely and unequivocally necessary to do this at the beginning.

Furthermore, when our child will go out on their first date, they will have a frame of reference to see how close the date came to what they really are looking for. How many of those indispensable character traits were matched? What additional pleasing traits did they find? Which trait can be compromised on?

The list becomes a signpost to our destination, and anyone who has driven in a strange city where the streets are not well marked, knows exactly how helpful clear directions are.

A caveat to us parents at this point. We wish the best for our children, and often they will pleasantly surprise us with what they can accomplish or with what direction they want to take. The shidduch is theirs; the life is theirs, and the Bais they will build is theirs. I mentioned it before, but it bears repeating, the list has to be of

their requirements, not of ours. The character traits have to match our children characters and goals, not ours. If the list we have arrived at reflects more our wishes than theirs, we have wasted our time and theirs.

I personally know of a case where the parents on both sides liked each other so well that they did not even look at how compatible their children were. The important thing was to be mechutonim. I do not have to tell you how that marriage turned out.

As we go about our search for a shidduch for our children, we should be aware of how much society at large has infiltrated our thinking. Yiddishkeit believes in giving: Klal Yisroel are responsible one for the other. We give tzedokah. We look out for each other. We try not to talk Loshon Hora and hurt others. We do Hachnasos Orchim and so on.

The world lives by a diametrically opposite mantra: “What’s in it for me?”

By making the list, we walk a fine line between what we give and what we take. Our children must be ready to give of themselves selflessly to build a marriage, but they have to know what qualities they need to take in order to be able to give. That is why they must make a cheshbon nefesh and come to understand themselves very

well before embarking on a shidduch search. They should think: “I have this quality which will be employed in the most positive way if my spouse has this other quality.”

Keep in mind and tell your child that the end result is not a shopping list. We cannot always find every single item that we want. And even if we do, marriage takes work from both sides. Only if both partners put effort in the marriage will it be successful. Marriage is work, but we can make it as pleasant as possible if both sides are willing to GIVE.

Here are some adjectives that might ring a bell for you:

Emotionally stable, hard-working, charitable, even-tempered, born leader, generous, flexible, agreeable, ‘aidel’, strong-willed, outgoing, patient, reserved, playful, humorous, kind, meticulous, low-key, ambitious, perceptive, open-minded.

*A Needle in a Haystack is a book of advice for parents starting to look at shidduchim written on the occasion of one of Mrs Junik’s daughters wedding.*

*Any constructive comment is welcomed by the editor. Write to CHPS768 @gmail.com or directly to the author at Mazaltov@junik.us.*



## OUR HEROES

# RABBI AVROHOM BARUCH PEVSNER HY"D

By Penina Metal and Batsheva Browd

Based on a several hour interview of Fruma Junik conducted by Penina Metal.

Penina relates "The first time I met her she breezed into the shaitel macher like a whirlwind. She brought along her two lemons for fixing. Lemons? Why would she be so cheerful about fixing defective merchandise? Little did I know that "Lemon" was the name of the shaitel. I couldn't help smiling. That is the effect that Mrs. Fruma Junik, wife of the esteemed Rabbi Berl Junik, zt'l, has on those with whom she comes into contact. She is poetry in motion. She doesn't stop for a moment."

Mrs Junik was kind enough to spend time with me discussing her memories of the war years as well as some family history. Mrs. Junik's father Rabbi Avrohom Boruch ob"m, was born in 1890 in Potzip, Ukraine. It is known that he was 10 years older than his wife, Alte Sora Tzertel ob"m, and that is how we know what year he was born.

Mrs Junik recounts:

"My Zeide was the Chabad Chassid Rabbi Hillel Pevsner ob"m, and Bubby was Fruma Sarah. I am named after this grandmother.

Rabbi Avrohom Boruch, my father, was a brilliant child and a very strong minded person. He learned to read and write Russian. His grandmother, Yehudis heard that Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim of the Rebbe Rashab could offer a wonderful Yeshiva education, and although the family was not Lubavitch, he went.

On his first Shabbos there, his outstanding abilities were revealed. The custom was that after Ma'ariv the elite Temimim would gather and review the Ma'amar that the Rebbe Rashab had expounded. On Shabbos morning, the bochurim would go to the Rebbe's room where they would orally review the Ma'amar in front of the Rebbe. The Rebbe would then correct and explain the Ma'amar to them.

The first Shabbos that Reb Avrohom Boruch came to the Yeshiva he joined the bochurim reviewing the Ma'amar and soon became known as the top "Chozer" (reviewer.) While he in Yeshiva, Rabbi Avrohom Boruch was called "Avrohom Boruch Potziper", a reference to his place of birth.

Some of the Ma'amarim included as an addendum in the "Sefer Ma'amarim" of 1920 are not found among the Ksav Yad of the Rebbe Rashab. They are published from the notes of Rabbi

Avrohom Boruch.

The Rebbe Rashab wrote to his son the Rebbe Rayatz in 1914:

"After Shabbos Kodesh I will, please G-d, send you the general letter that I wrote regarding the learning of Chassidus. It is necessary to have copies of the Mamar Kuntres Eitz Chaim until Chapter 22 for those who travel to distribute the Ma'amar to the cities. Who should you choose to travel? Generally, it is preferable for the young married men whose mouth and tongue is with them (i.e., those who express themselves articulately) and who have the ability to arouse people concerning this... You can also choose the good bachurim such as Yerucham, Elya, and Avrohom Boruch, they should live and be well."

Aside from being known as a "Chozer", Rav Avrohom Boruch Pevsner was also known as an "Oved", one who's divine service is done at length with the proper Kavonos and dedication. Rabbi Avrohom Boruch had an established corner in which he would daven at length and meditate for many hours daily. Due to his great intellectual capacities, sharpness of mind, and the tremendous time and effort he applied to his learning, Avrohom Boruch excelled equally in Nigleh and Chassidus.

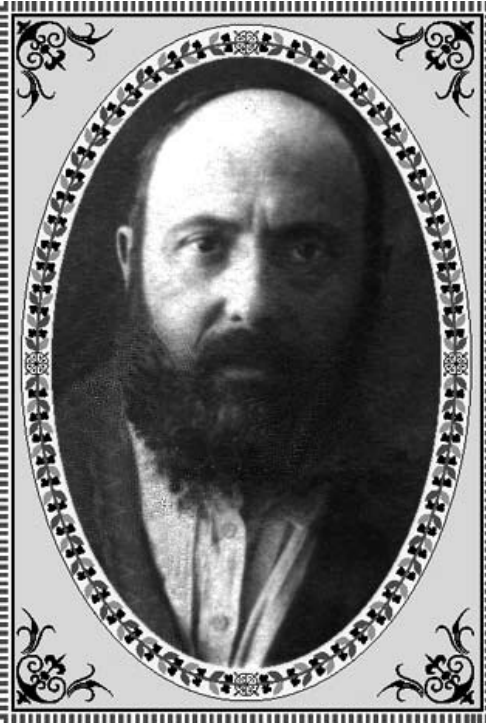
It was no great surprise therefore, when Rabbi Menachem Mendel Hilewitz ob"m came to the Yeshiva to choose a suitable shidduch for his daughter Alte Sora Tzertel ob"m, he chose Rav. Avrohom Boruch Pevsner.

My maternal grandfather, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Hilewitz ob"m was the Rabbi of Zhebin (after his father in law, the esteemed Rabbi and Chassid Rav Avremke Zhebner). He himself also came from a line of esteemed Chassidim and Rabbeim. Because of his standing, he was able to choose from among the finest bochurim and Avrohom Boruch was the chosen one.

Previously he had come to Tomchei Temimim to choose a husband for his older daughter, Guta Bela, and had also handpicked the best bochur of the time, the renowned mashpia Rav Shilem Kuratin. Unfortunately, because of World War I and the Rus-

sian Civil war, my parents had to postpone the marriage until 1921, when he was 31 years old.

Rabbi Avrohom Boruch was very close to the Rebbe Rashab and merited to serve him in the last days until the Rebbe passed away, as well as serving the Rebbe Rayatz during the first period of the Rebbe's leadership. Rabbi Avrohom Boruch's notes regarding the final days under the guidance of the Rebbe Rashab are recorded and gathered in the sefer Shmuesn V'Sippurim,



Rabbi Chitrik was a boy of thirteen years when he went to the Lubavitcher Yeshiva in 1911. He knew Avrohom Boruch Pevsner, who was then around twenty years old, personally. He recounted that Rabbi Pevsner would sometimes sleep in the Rebbe Rashab's house so that he could

be available when the Rebbe would need him. During the period of World War I, Avrohom Baruch would read the Russian newspapers aloud to the Rebbe Rashab so that he could be informed of the war news.

When the Rebbe Rashab moved from Lubavitch and settled in the city of Rostov, Rabbi Avrohom Boruch joined the Rebbe there at his first opportunity.

I remember Rabbi Chitrik relating that Rav Avrohom Baruch was once traveling with Rebbe Rayatz in Rostov, and as they passed the prison where the Rebbe had been imprisoned, the Rebbe pointed out which window belonged to his cell and where he was brought to be interrogated, etc. Then, the Rebbe and Rav Avrohom Baruch discussed the Halachic implications of reciting the blessing 'Blessed are you G-d our Lord, the King of the world that saved me from a bad circumstance' upon being released from prison.

Rabbi Benzion Shemtov ob"m related that the Rebbe Rashab had a specific routine when he would say Chassidus: the Rebbe Rayatz would stand in front of him, and for the duration of the Ma'amar, they would look into each other's eyes.

After the Rebbe Rashab passed away, the Rebbe Rayatz asked Rabbi Avro-

hom Boruch to stand in front of him during the recitation. This continued for many ma'amarim. Mrs Junik remembers she was told that once after the recitation, the Rebbe told Reb Avrohom Boruch, that during the recitation, a mundane thought had entered into his mind, so he should not stand in front of the Rebbe any longer. Rabbi Shemtov ob"m told us what this stray thought was: Rabbi Avrohom Boruch realized that, the Ma'amar the Rebbe was expounding was based on a particular Ma'amar that the Rebbe Rashab had once said. This was considered a stray thought! After this no one else stood opposite the Rebbe during the recitation of a ma'amar.

My father went to great lengths to be by the Rebbe as described by Rabbi Yehuda Chitrik. In the year 1921, 5682, when the Rebbe Rayatz was in Rostov, there were no visitors for the month of Tishrei as traveling was virtually impossible. (Rostov is 100 miles from Minsk, over 160 miles from Lubavitch, and 371 miles from Charkov) One needed a special permit to travel. Even with a permit, travel was very dangerous, as Russia was then in the midst of a tumultuous civil war, during which, outlaw bands and thieves had free reign. If one was a Jew and his clothes and manners showed it, the hoodlums would throw the person off a moving train.

The sole Balei Batim that made it to the city of Rostov despite the dangers were my father and Rabbi Leib Shainin from Zhebin. They carried legal working papers that claimed that they were traveling on business for their factory in Rostov. In addition to these men, on that Rosh Hashana of 5682, 1921, four bachurim, including Rabbi Chitrik, managed to travel to Rostov.

After their wedding, the Rebbe sent my parents on shlichus to Minsk. The Chassidim in Minsk did not wish to accept Rabbi Avrohom Boruch as a Mashpia, probably due to his young age. Despite strong opposition, Rabbi Avrohom Boruch persevered and succeeded in his shlichus. His lucent method of expression and pleasant demeanor turned the Lubavitch shul into a house of learning and a place of Chassidic gatherings, even for those who were not Lubavitch.

In Minsk, my parents lived in an apartment which was actually a partially submerged cellar. From the high narrow windows it was possible to see only the feet of the people coming and going in the streets. In the winter, the apartment would fill with slush and damp mud. They did everything with mesiras nefesh..

*To be continued.*



# LADIES CORNER

## SIMCHA BREAKS THE BARRIERS

By Esther Rachel Russell

Can you remember the last time you had a thoroughly hearty belly laugh? You know, the kind that has you laughing so hard you feel as if your sides could split? Maybe glimpses of these moments are stored in the archives of your memory bank and that's where they stay. Perhaps your life has become so serious that you've actually forgotten how to laugh or sadly, you look at the world around us and just don't find much to laugh at. In fact, you may even believe that laughter is frivolous and for those of lightweight character.

If this sounds like you, then think again, because there is nothing shallow about laughter. Laughter may be the single most important ingredient to a healthy life, on many levels. Just ask Dr. Norman Cousins who discusses in his book, *The Anatomy of an Illness* how he laughed his way back to health after being diagnosed with a terminal illness. Numerous medical studies indicate that laughter and joy boost the immune system and are essential to emotional and mental well being.

In a sicha from Shabbos parshas Ki Seitzei 5748, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, tells us, "Simcha breaks through all barriers,

including the barriers of exile and has the unique potential to bring about the Redemption. This joy will surely lead to the ultimate joy, the rejoicing of the Redemption, when our mouths will be filled with laughter (Psalms 126:2)." The question is: how do we generate more joy in our lives and break through barriers?

Lets take a closer look at the nature of laughter. For infants and children, laughter is an organic, universal response to the sheer joy of being alive. Just watch an infant cooing and giggling spontaneously in the crib. What is a birthright for youngsters requires a far more sophisticated trigger mechanism in adults. An examination of laughter shows that what causes us to laugh is an improbable juxtaposition of opposites. When a process moves in one direction and then suddenly and unexpectedly changes to its opposite, laughter is generated. It's this SURPRISE element that comedians use all the time as one of many techniques to generate audience laughter.

On an even deeper level, the juxtaposition of extremes is the root of spiritual laughter and is the meaning of Az ye'malei s'chok pinu "then our mouths will be filled with laughter". When the world is turned upside-down at the

Redemption, the "true" or spiritual laughter will be the cosmic response to real change. We somehow sense that this is not as things are supposed to be and the deepest response to that will be laughter.

These ideas of Redemption, or geulah apply to our own personal lives. We need to break all of our personal barriers that keep us stuck in old limiting patterns. As an improvisational comedy actress I recognized that at the heart of comedy improv lie skills for more joyful, elevated living: the art of taking risks, allowing for possibilities to open up in your life, the belief in transcendent assistance and getting out of your own way. Comedy requires a spirit of fun that insists a person come out of themselves, breaking barriers and inviting more joy and possibility into life. Where there is less of you, then there's more room for Hashem! Reclaim your G-dly state of sheer joy, sidesplitting laughter and plain ole' fun!

*Esther Rachel Russell, MA, is an actress/comedienne, screenwriter, producer and laughter therapist and creator of Comedy Improvisation Workshops - To Break through Barriers. She is available to facilitate women's workshops of diverse backgrounds, as well as mixed groups, teenagers, students and children.*

## LADIES FIRST

By Yanky Tauber

Even in this day and age, most women graciously accept the traditional "ladies first" rule, whether it's getting off a sinking ship or going through a ballroom doorway. Commonly perceived as a concession to the weaker sex by the stronger, the rule is actually founded upon a very different rationale, at least in the Jewish tradition.

When G-d instructed Moses to prepare the people of Israel to receive the Torah at Mount Sinai some 3,313 years ago, He said: "Speak to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel" (Exodus 19:3). The "house of Jacob," our sages explain, are the women; "the sons of Israel," the men. In other words, speak first with the ladies.

Up until that point, the rule was "men first." Adam, as we all know, was created before Eve

Up until that point, the rule was "men first". Adam, as we all know, was created before Eve. Noah and his sons entered the ark first, followed by their wives -- at least that's the order they're listed in Genesis 7:13 (a "sinking ship" situation in the reverse, if you will). When Jacob traveled with his family, the males rode up front and the womenfolk behind them (Genesis 31:17) while Esau placed the women before the men (ibid. 36:6); the sages make note of this difference and see it as an indication of Jacob's moral superiority

over his hedonistic brother.

So why did G-d give the Torah first to the women? The Midrash offers several explanations. For one thing, women are more religious than men (turns out that certain things haven't changed in all those centuries); get them to agree to accept the Torah, and the men will fall in line, too (another thing that hasn't changed). According to Rabbi Tachlifa of Caesarea, it's the other way around--the women are the rebellious ones, so they have to be won over first: "G-d said to Himself: When I created the world, I commanded Adam first, and only then Eve was commanded, with the result that she transgressed and upset the world. If I do not now call upon the women first, they will nullify the Torah."

Chassidic teaching delves deeper and finds the explanation in the essence of manliness and womanliness

Chassidic teaching delves deeper and finds the explanation in the essence of manliness and womanliness. Man derives from the "line of light" (kav) that penetrates the vacuum (makom panui) formed by G-d in which to create the world. But it turns out the that the makom panui is not an absolute "vacuum" -- a residue of divine light remained behind, forming an invisible ether of G-dliness that pervades and underlies our existence. It is from this "residue" that the female component of creation derives.

So man is an actor, a conqueror; his

role in creation is to banish the earthly darkness and bring down light from the heavens. Woman is a nurturer, relating to what is rather than what must be done, finding G-dliness within the world rather than importing it from without.

Both are integral to the Creator's plan: our mission in life is to bring G-d into the world (the male role) and to make the world a home for G-d (the woman's specialty); to vanquish darkness (male), and to uncover the light implicit within the darkness (female).

For the first twenty-four centuries of history, humanity had its hands full battling darkness. So the male component dominated. But then came the day when G-d, yearning for the home He desired when He made the world, prepared to reveal Himself on a mountaintop in the Sinai Desert and transmit to His chosen people a Torah outlining the plans for His home's construction. Man will still have to do battle, but all his battles will henceforth be founded upon the principle that, underneath it all, the world is a G-dly place.

Time to have a word with the ladies, said G-d to Moses.

*This article is Based on the teachings of Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe. and reprinted with permission from Chabad.org.*

## A Holy Garden

By Chaya M. Klein

A family is a magnificent garden  
It must be cultivated with great care,  
It is the most valuable, holy place  
A couple may be blessed to share.

The home is the garden's soil  
Water it with Torah and great love,  
Feed it with peace and happiness  
Cherished gifts from the One Above.

Into this fertile and wonderful  
garden  
Nestle each new life's tiny seeds,  
Carefully nurture and tend every  
one  
Be attentive for the wicked weeds.

Each seedling will yield a flower  
Unique in color and in scent;  
Treasure the varieties among them  
Each exclusive and heaven sent.

As the garden grows so vividly  
Across the flow of passing years,  
Hold it dear and protect it well  
Pray it yields much joy, not tears.

It is a task that once has started  
Will never truly be complete,  
As each flower reaches maturity  
New buds blossom - so very sweet.

Some day, some time in the future  
Gaze upon this garden, see how it's  
grown,

Thank Hashem for its fragrant  
splendor  
Reap what has been so  
attentively sown.

This labor of love will bear splendid  
fruit

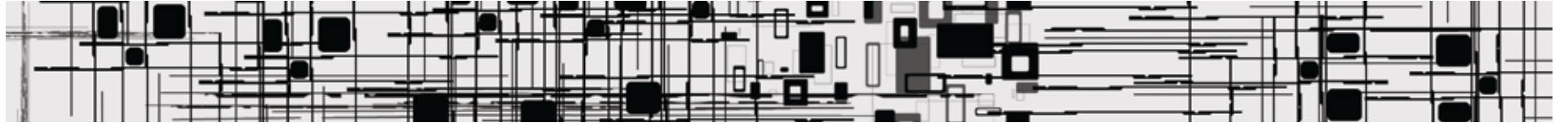
The result of much painstaking care,  
An abundant nachas to fill the soul  
This garden most precious and rare.

The dazzling color and perfume  
Grant glory to our Father Above,  
He prizes this great nachas as well  
From the people He has  
chosen to love.

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## Imamother.com

In the course of a busy day, or maybe in the evenings after the children are finally in bed and the "I am thirsty", "I have to make", "I am hungry" parade is finally over, I get to sit at the computer and find out what is new in cyberspace.

Just like all of you, I have heard what a dangerous place it is, so I have taken all possible measures, with kosher net and parental programs to limit sites and times of access, anti-virus, anti-spy ware, anti-pop ups, pop under, pop sideways, what have you.

The web is a fascinating world, and like any world it has two sides; so we try as best as possible to block one side while enjoying the benefits of the other side.

It is amazing how I can now find out the meaning of a word in a second instead of looking for my dog-eared and much abused dictionary, which was usually very absent any time I needed it. Or if I forget what an over-the-counter medication tube was for, all I need to do is a quick check in the medical sites. Of course, if it still does not shake my memory loose, I have to call the doctor hoping he wrote down why I bought it.

I love putting on music while I cook or listening to mp3-taped lectures at Chabad.org or many other sites that give us food for Kosher thought and shiurim on any subject under the sun.

So here I want to share a recent discovery. On Shmais a few days ago, there was an intriguing ad that caught my eye: "Before you buy a sheitel come to Imamother.com."

Well I am not in the market for a sheitel, but I figured that with such a name I certainly would find some interesting topics on this site.

Let me quote you from the site itself:

"Imamother.com is a place where you can come to relax, chat, debate, share tips, and ask questions. We are a growing community of frum Jewish married women. We offer members the opportunity to post questions anonymously. We enable you to find answers, support, and advice for the mundane to the most thought-provoking questions. We feel frum women all across the world deserve a place to connect, socialize, share advice about raising kids and interacting with our husbands, and talk about issues that are important to us."

It is indeed a very interesting site full of advice on a myriad of topics such as: emotional health, pregnancy and childbirth, household management, parenting, recipes, etc.

Give it a try. You might find priceless advice.

## The Rebbe's Talk on the 22nd of Shvat 5752:

*The yahrzeit-Hilulo of the Rebbetzin  
[Published by Sichos in English]*

Tonight marks the conclusion of the 22nd day of the eleventh month. As mentioned on a previous occasion, the number eleven is associated with the phrase, "an eleven day journey from Choreb." This implies that after the experience of Choreb, the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, there is the need to proceed to a higher rung, "an eleven day journey."

This teaches that one should not content himself with the service of the ten conscious powers of the soul, but should also involve our encompassing powers, including the power of yechidah whose transcendent nature is symbolized by the number eleven. Furthermore, both these dimensions of service should be fused together.

The fusion of ten and eleven relates to our present time, the time when all of our energies are directed towards "bringing the Era of the Moshiach." This will be the tenth redemption. Simultaneously, there is a connection to eleven for the "the new [dimensions of the] Torah that will emerge from Me" represents an increase beyond the Ten Commandments and thus relates to the number eleven.

The 22nd day of the eleventh month is associated with the verse, "Through you (the numerical equivalent of 22), Israel will be blessed." This is associated with the blessings which each Jew gives every one of his fellow Jews. These blessings, in turn have their source in the 22 letters of the Torah.

The transmission of these blessings begins on the 21st day of the month, a day associated with the verse, "Only (the numerical equivalent of 21) good for Israel." May this verse be realized in the most literal manner in the immediate future with the revelation of open and apparent good, the ultimate good of the Era of the Redemption. At that time, "the spirit of impurity will be removed -- i.e., totally and utterly nullified -- from the earth." (The number 21 also shares a connection with the Previous Rebbe, for his yahrzeit is on the tenth day of the eleventh month. Ten and eleven equal 21.)

The fusion of ten and eleven mentioned above relates to the two Torah portions connected with the present week, Parshas Yisro and Parshas Mishpatim. As mentioned above, the Ten Commandments of Parshas Yisro express the quality of ten within the Torah. The transcendent quality of eleven is alluded to by the opening verse of Parshas Mishpatim, "These are the laws which you shall place (tasim in Hebrew) before them." Tasim shares a connection with the Hebrew word simah, which means "treasure,"

referring to P'nimiyus HaTorah, the aspect of the Torah associated with the number eleven.

After the giving of the Torah, approaching this level required "an eleven day journey." At present, however, it is possible to fuse the levels of ten and eleven together immediately, without any passage of time. Even after the giving of the Torah, there was a potential for this level to be reached quicker than usual. Thus in his commentary to the above verse, Rashi relates that the Jews traveled this eleven day journey in three days.

This hastened pace was made possible by the fact that the Ark traveled before the Jewish people. In this context, it is worthy to note that at times the two verses beginning "And it came to pass when the Ark set out" are considered as a separate Book of the Torah, and thus the Book of Bamidbar is composed of three Books, bringing the total of all the Books of the Torah to seven.

Generally, the Written Torah is associated with the number five, the five books of the Chumash, and the Oral Torah with the number six, the six orders of the Mishnah. The division into seven, however, alludes to the seven general divisions of the Jewish people as reflected in the seven branches of the menorah.

Although the menorah had seven branches, it -- including its leg -- was made of a single piece of metal, reflecting the unity of the Jewish people. The leg (yerech in Hebrew) of the menorah descended downward, indicating that this division relates to the Jews as they are involved in the observance of the mitzvos, the realm of Torah that is involved in worldly matters.

The concept that the leg reflects an involvement in worldly matters is also reflected in the fact that when Yaakov was wrestling with Esav's archangel, the angel wounded him in the leg (yerech). And indeed, the effect of that wound was such that as a result, the Jews were prohibited against eating the 'gid hanasheh', the nerve within the thigh.

[In this context, the question arises: Will the prohibition against eating the 'gid hanasheh' apply in the Era of the Redemption? On one hand, the performance of the mitzvos will not be nullified in the Era of the Redemption (and definitely not in the first period of that Era). On the other hand, since all negative factors will be nullified at that time, it is hard to conceive that this mitzvah which is the reflection of a negative influence will still be in effect.]

The positive dimension associated with the 'gid hanasheh' will be revealed in the Era of the Redemption, for then the "body of the Holy King," the 248 positive commandments and the 365 negative commandments, will reach its ultimate state of completion. And it will be revealed how even the 365 nega-

## FOR YOUR SAFETY

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tive commandments reflect positive forces as embodied in the 365 sinews. All these qualities will be reflected in the actual physical bodies of the Jewish people whose 613 components reflect the 613 mitzvos of the Torah.

When the seven Rabbinical mitzvos are added to the number 613, the sum 620 is reached. 620 is numerically equivalent to the Hebrew word kesser, "crown." Herein, there is a point of connection to the House of David to whom the monarchy has been granted as an eternal heritage.

Through giving tzedakah, we will hasten the coming of the Redemption and the revelation of "the new [dimensions of the] Torah that will emerge from Me." In that era, all the Jews will be gathered to Eretz Yisrael. Herein, there is a connection to the present year, "a year of wonders in all things," 'niflaos bakol'. For 'bako'l is associated with the threefold expression of blessing associated with our Patriarchs, 'bakol mikol kol' which is numerically equivalent to the word 'kabetz', meaning "gather in."

And in the immediate future, we will be gathered into Eretz Yisrael. This will be hastened by taking on good resolutions in regard to the study of P'nimiyus HaTorah which is associated with our encompassing powers that relate to the sense of smell. (Herein there is a connection to the name Mushka which is associated with the sense of smell.) And also by taking on resolutions for the study of Torah law and the performance of the mitzvos [which are connected with the name Chaya, for the Torah and its mitzvos are "our lives (chayenu) and the length of our days"]. Through these activities, we will merit the fulfillment of the mitzvah, "And you shall make Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell within," with the construction of the Third Beis HaMikdash. May this take place in the immediate future.



# CHJCC



## ARE WE GOING TO HIDE OUR HEADS IN THE SAND?

By Sheiny New

The Orthodox assume it happens amongst the Reform. The Reform assume it happens amongst the Orthodox. The Conservative look in both directions. The young blame the old saying, "This is the way they were raised. They don't know any better." The old shake their heads at the young. Those who live in the city say it happens in the suburbs where people lead lives of desperation, and those living in the suburbs say it happens in the ugly city. Middle and upper income people say it happens amongst the poor. No one says it happens amongst the wealthy, but it does. Who better to have the power and privacy to abuse? The truth is that all of us who are pointing fingers at other groups are right-it does happen there. But, so are those pointing at us.

--Sherry Dimarsky, domestic violence expert and attorney, Oct. 1994

The Jewish Taskforce against Family Violence was established 10 years ago in Melbourne, Australia. This group of dedicated and committed volunteers worked long hours to put Domestic Violence on the communal agenda. When we first started, skepticism was always the initial reaction of anyone we encountered, "Surely family violence does not exist within the Jewish community!" There was disbelief that abuse and violence could be taking place behind the picture perfect image of the often envied icon "the nice Jewish family. After all, every one knows that Jewish men make the best husbands! But it does happen. Just ask Hatzolah, the Jewish Medical Emergency Response Team. They'll tell you about being called back time and time again to the home of the woman who burns herself with a hot iron – on her back. Or the mother who cannot explain how she keeps falling down the same flight of stairs. But over the years we have chipped away at the doubt by organizing forums on domestic violence for the wider community, by taking creative programs into our primary and high schools and reinforcing with our teenagers that a healthy relationship is one of mutual respect especially when spouses are having a disagreement. We have worked with Rabbis, Jewish Care (The Jewish services provider here in Melbourne), the schools, doctors, and psychologists and slowly, very slowly, this group of dedicated volunteers has been able to, if not end the denial, certainly reduce the stigma of family violence so that a woman or man who finds themselves in an abusive relationship should not be too filled with shame to seek help. Because if the perception is that it is not possible that Jewish men hit their wives (I refer to the man doing the hitting because although it does happen in the reverse MOST crimes of abuse are

perpetuated by men) she asks herself, "What is wrong with me? What did I do to create this nightmare? Obviously it is my fault." As a community now we tell her, "It is not your fault. You haven't done ANYTHING wrong." It is never OK for a spouse to raise a hand against the person they have sworn to love and protect, nor is he permitted to insult, denigrate or intimidate her. We can reassure her that she is not alone. It happens in our community, and with appropriate assistance, things can and have changed for the better.

But there is a subject that is so ugly and so insidious that it is unthinkable.



To acknowledge its existence makes us question all that we hold precious. It shakes our identity as "a light unto nations" to the core. It makes us doubt the love of a parent to its child, the adoring gaze of a youngster into the eyes of its Bubba and Zaida. It subtly changes how we perceive aunts, uncles and cousins coming for Seder night, not to mention the orchim we welcome into our homes and hearts and know nothing about. Suddenly, the extended network of family and friends takes on a whole new dimension. Then, of course, there is our teacher, mentor and spiritual guide, our Rabbi. Our family, close friends and spiritual leaders; these are the people we love and even more significantly, these are the people we trust. They make up our universe and give us our sense of self worth. They give our lives flavor, texture, and color. But what happens when the flavor is acid, the texture feels like shards of broken glass, and the color is black? Unthinkable.

During her recent visit to Melbourne, Debbie Gross, the founder and director of the Crises Centre for Women in Jerusalem stated that domestic violence is a very serious issue but child molestation is an epidemic. Is she for real?

If child molestation is an epidemic, why do we hear so little about it? Why is there so little public awareness of the

issue? And why has it taken this long for us to finally start talking about it?

We hear so little about it for many reasons but primarily because we don't WANT to believe it. That is what victims come to understand very quickly and what perpetrators are counting on. The 1995 Child Maltreatment Report states that "over 80 percent of abuse where physical contact is made is perpetrated by either family members or people in the community who are trusted by the family." Our lives revolve around familial celebrations and life-cycle events, whether we gather for a

shalom zachor Friday night, circumcisions, bar and bat mitzvahs, weddings, for apples dipped in honey on Rosh Hashana, latkes on Chanukah, matzoh on Pesach--you get my point. Zaida sits at the head of the table beaming with naches. This is his dream. This is what sustained him through the horrors of the Holocaust. Hitler destroyed his first family. Is his granddaughter going to destroy his second one by claiming that his son, her uncle indecently touched her? Or worse, that her father assaulted her? Or even that her Zaida did? What about Bubby? How will she survive the shame of these accusations? Studies show

that victims of molestation who have the courage to come forward are either disbelieved and accused of lying to stir up trouble or hushed up not to bring shame on the family's good name. After all, what good would it do anyway? Victims are afraid to speak up because they know that they may be ostracized rather than the perpetrator. In the frum world the match making system is a very real part of day to day life. "Is it a nice family?" comes before specific inquiries about the young man or young lady in question. Violence, abuse, and indecent assault do not a nice family make.

"To be molested as a child makes you different. Suddenly, you are 'outside' yourself and those around you. Nothing is the same. You are not the person you were the second before it began. To be compelled to keep this secret widens the gap between you and everyone and everything else." These are the words of author, survivor and therapist Rachel Lev.

She continues, "To be a Jewish child makes you different. Already 'outside' the dominant culture we are taught the importance of not drawing attention to our 'differences' not to bring shame or danger to our families or community. Whether molested or not, the message is clear: It is not safe to be noticed too much. We learn, often indirectly, a responsibility to reflect positively

upon our people. We are taught to respect our people, teachers, rabbis, and elders. But what are we to do when one of them is molesting us? If we start to tell, who will listen? Without compassionate listeners to believe us and help us, the gap between us and other widens. For a Jewish child to be molested adds to any feeling of being alone. Our loneliness is often profound."

What about the young boy or girl looking for added spiritual meaning in his or her life? What happens when she enrolls for shiurim with the charismatic Rabbi and youth director who is adored by all students on campus, and he makes inappropriate advances towards her? Or worse. Can she take him on? It becomes her word against his. In the past, the whitewashing defense of prominent Rabbis have sounded something like this:

"Isn't she that troubled kid who was always attention seeking? It was probably her fault! It is our responsibility to ensure that the institution's good name is not sullied. And for heaven sake, what happens if the newspapers catch wind of this! What a scandal! What a Chilul Hashem, What a transgression of God's name. It is best for everyone if we hush it up quickly."

Tragically, very often nothing is done, and the offender is free to continue to commit these crimes against children and teenagers. Sometimes he is spirited out of the community into another unsuspecting kehilla with no warning of what he is capable of and is once again free to continue taking advantage of children. It has actually been said that, "We can't ruin his reputation. Who will provide for his family? Besides, if we disclose our suspicions, aren't we guilty of speaking Lashon Hora?" And so a misguided conspiracy of silence descends with those who have chosen to remain silent, now complicit in the crime.

Parents, as Chassidim we encourage our sons to go to Mikvah daily, but did you stop to think that perhaps not every other mikvah-goer is there for Chassidishe reasons? In all fairness, your response might be a horrified "No!", but it is so important and so simple to protect your child by gently warning him that no one is allowed to invade his privacy in any way. We want to believe that everyone lives by the same moral code that we do and therefore we have denied for too long that sometimes even Jews can do terrible things to each other.

We deny this ongoing offense against our children because as Jews we are all too historically aware of the precarious position we maintain in any host country. Anti Semitism wafts along behind us, rearing its nasty head just





often enough for us never to be able to fully ignore its presence. Therefore, we want to be able to say, don't look at us; we are different; we don't have any of that kind of ugliness. But, as Lev so poignantly asks, "What could be more anti-Semitic than letting Jewish children be destroyed by their families or communities?" We deny because it protects us from having to figure out how to fix it. We can't solve what we don't know exists.

Lev says, as a survivor she understands why the community denies. It is a defense against pain. She says, "Victims deny. Survivors deny. Witnesses of abuse deny. Family members deny. Perpetrators deny. Helpers deny. Friends deny. And anybody I missed denies."

Looking away is the greatest gift we can offer child molesters. Therapist Bob Gluck states, "In the 10 years of counseling abusive men, I learned that the single most powerful factor contributing to family violence is the ability to get away with it." (Lev, R., p31)

After being so betrayed twice, first by the trauma of the assault itself followed by reactions ranging from disbelief to minimizing the experience when reaching out for help, a molested child's self esteem is so decimated, their shame so great, they start to believe they are not worthy. Not worthy of assistance, not worthy of a normal life enriched with the love of a spouse, sometimes not worthy of life.

But they are, and it is our responsibility to remind them. Each and every one of us contains chalek Eloka mimal mamesh. We are all created with the spark of Hashem, and we carry Godliness within us. If a crime is inflicted on our body, it in no way diminishes our worth; it only diminishes the humanity

of the abuser. But believe it or not, even a child molester carries a spark of Godliness within him. Although we may recoil from him in horror, we cannot discount him as the devil because every person, no matter what the crime they commit, is given the opportunity to do Teshuvah. We do not write the offender off. What he has done is evil, and often it is because evil has been done to him. We tell mothers who find themselves in abusive relationships that although they think they are doing the right thing for their children by staying in the marriage, "After all the children need a father", they are almost guaranteeing that their sons will become abusive husbands, that their daughters will look for abusive partners. Many abusers lash out because they themselves have been wounded and carry terrifying scars. Abuse is very much a cycle that will continue unless deliberately interrupted by a process of healing. There must be a process of healing, first for a victim and then for an abuser.

Debbie Gross told us about a program she coordinated in Israel just a short time ago. She had been approached by a few women of a community who felt it would be wise to inform themselves about domestic violence and child indecent assault. They were hoping it would be "Refua lifnay hamaka" roughly translated as "providing the cure before the disease strikes." Five women were trained by Debbie herself and she admitted to us that she couldn't help wondering why they were putting so much energy into this community which had never really shown any indication of either problem. Within weeks, a Mom was having a chat to one of the five women and relayed something her son had mentioned to her during bath time which sounded a bit worrisome. As you have already figured out with just a little bit of gentle

but professional questioning, it came to light that 70 little boys had been molested by a very popular 'kinder' aid over a number of years. Counselors were brought in, and these young boys are going to get the help they need to develop into healthy young men capable of healthy relationships. If this awareness program hadn't been initiated by these mothers and the children wouldn't have received appropriate assistance- not even to mention any additional

victims the offender would have continued to have had access to - each one of those boys could have potentially gone on to molest other children. Seventy boys. You do the math.

Where and how can healing begin?

What is our responsibility as a community? How can we make sure it doesn't happen?

To be a community, to be a parent, to be a mentch means that it is our responsibility to make sure our children are safe. We must think about the unthinkable, talk about it, and know about it so that we can prevent it. Silence and denial are not going to protect our children.

As members of The Melbourne Jewish Taskforce, we know that the only way to break the silence, end the denial, and work towards prevention is community education and awareness. Although the issue of child physical assault might seem overwhelming, an excellent and vital beginning could be:

A. Training programs for communal leaders, Rabbonim, principals, teachers and medical health care providers about the realities of child indecent assault and how to provide a proper and sensitive response. If a victim does not get the support that they so desperately need from one of their own, chances are they will look outside the Jewish community and may never recover from their feelings of rejection.

B. Age appropriate sessions for children in schools incorporating good touch/bad touch, respect, healthy relationships and good secrets/bad secrets. Children can be made to understand that no long term secret from a parent is a "good" secret, and who to contact for help if necessary.

We have a difficult decision to make. Are we going to protect our children from this insidious crime against their bodies and souls? As parents, are we going to do everything in our power to shield our children from these sinister offenders? Or are we going to hide our heads in the sand because the whole issue is simply too ugly and painful to confront and deal with? Just be warned. If you don't do it for your children, nobody else will.

Sheiny New graduated Bais Rivkah High School, Crown Heights in 1983. With the Rebbe's brocha, Sheiny and a friend became the first two student shlucho's to Sydney, Australia. Sheiny has a degree in Media and Politics with a special interest in women's issues. She speaks to a wide range of audiences about the role of women in Judaism. Sheiny has been an active member of The Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence for the past 12 years lecturing about the issues of family violence. Sheiny and Chaim New live in Melbourne, Australia and they have KY"H 7 children.

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**Tuesday, January 29, 2008**

@ the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council, 387 Kingston Avenue (corner Crown St.), **9:15 AM - 3:30 PM.**

Please come early -- First come, first served



# A NIGHT OUT

## ORTHODOX HOLLYWOOD MOVIE FOR WOMEN ONLY COMES TO CROWN HEIGHTS

By Sara Trappler-Spielman

The tops of moon-illuminated palm trees hovered above hundreds of Orthodox girls and women that drove through the enormous gates of Paramount Studio's lot to The Sherry Lansing Theater on a recent Saturday night in Los Angeles.

Actresses from the premiere of "A Light for Greytowers" - Robin Garbose's groundbreaking feature movie musical for women only - sauntered across the bright red carpet leading to the theater. In long, modest dresses, they greeted camera crew, photographers and media. Most had never seen the film that was shot four years ago during 23 summer days at Chabad's Rohr Jewish Student Center at USC, an authentic Victorian home protected under the California Preservation Act.

According to Garbose - an Orthodox director whose credits include off-Broadway plays, performances at The Juilliard School and television shows - the location was perfect architecturally and offered a kosher kitchen, synagogue and shofar blowing during the month of Elul by Rabbi Dov Wagner, Chabad Director at USC.

Nearly all the young actresses are alumni of Kol Neshama Performing Arts Conservatory, which Garbose created eight years ago in Los Angeles to provide professional artistic training and performance opportunities for Jewish girls in a Torah-observant setting.

After four years of post-production work, this is the first full-length theatrical release for Kol Neshama, which also produced eight original plays, a series of three musical DVDs and two CDs - all intended for women only.

"Greytowers" will have its Crown Heights premiere at the Jewish Children's Museum on Saturday night, February 2nd at 8 and 10 pm followed by a discussion with the director. The movie was directed under rabbinic supervision, especially scenes with the only three male actors in the film who deliberately don't appear in the same frame as women. It will only be shown to female audiences and to women's groups through Chabad on Campus because there are observant women singing and dancing in the film.

At the Dec. 29 premiere, lines gathered at kosher carts offering hot peanuts, popcorn and pretzels. The premiere mostly drew members of the Los Angeles Orthodox community, but included some Hollywood industry women "who have a positive association with Judaism," Garbose said.

As women entered the theater, finding a seat proved to be a challenge. All 280 seats were quickly filled, leaving a few people standing.

On an expansive screen in HD format

at the theater with a reputation for the best sound in Hollywood, the movie began playing for an audience that doesn't usually attend movies. The audience attended substantially because of the film's approval by Rabbi Yoel Bursztyn of the Bais Yaakov girls high school in Los Angeles and Rebbetzin Baila Stern of the Bais Yaakov girls high school in Passaic, N.J.

Based on the Jewish novel of the same title by Eva Vogiel and Ruth Steinberg, the story is set at the fictional Greytowers orphanage in 19th-century Victorian England and follows the journey of a young girl Miriam Aronowitch. Miriam and her mother, Anya, seek refuge in England from Czarist Russia and its Cossack pogroms. But after her mother falls critically ill, Miriam lands at the orphanage at the mercy of its cruel matron, Miss Agatha Grimshaw, who forbids the observance of Shabbat or kosher. It's only by clutching on to her faith that Miriam is able to unite the girls and bring light to the surrounding darkness.

Outside the theater, songwriter and musician Levi Yitzhaq Garbose manned the tables and greeted guests. Although he wrote the song lyrics and music and co-produced the film with his wife, he was unable to enter the theater; but he waited in what he described as "the perfect night" for a show.

"Just as the light of the Baal Shem Tov should permeate the world," Garbose said, "the film's plot of goodness and kindness should permeate the world."



Miss Grimshaw confiscates Miriam's precious Shabbos candlesticks



Anya (Rivka Siegel) and baby Miriam fleeing Czarist Russia.

Garbose was drawn to Chabad 36 years ago by Isaac Bashevis Singer's mystical stories. Searching for a world like Singer described, Levi arrived in Crown Heights as "a wannabe filmmaker" and years later moved to LA, where he met his wife eight years ago.

Like her husband, Robin Garbose said that she drew inspiration from Chabad teachings and the lifelong dedication to Jewish education exhibited by the Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka.

She became observant 17 years ago after co-writing a Jewish themed screenplay that was developed at the Sundance Institute. As a professional director for 24 years she feels empowered to bring both the religious and professional worlds together.

She saw the Rebbe in 1992 as a newly observant woman, which "moved her deeply." She said she went from 770 to meet John Kennedy Jr. for dinner at Levana's restaurant in Manhattan. Friends as drama students at Brown University, Garbose directed a play called "Winners" in 1985 at the Irish Arts Center that received critical acclaim thanks to Kennedy, who starred in his first professional acting role.

More recently, Robin directed "Roots," a musical play based on the Memoirs of the Friediker Rebbe.

In the spirit of Chassidic teachings, Robin says she wants "to light up the world through the medium of light and darkness, which is images. Movies

have the potential of being a Messianic vehicle if it's in the right hands."

Robin sees her film as cutting edge with its use of modesty in a world obsessed with exposure. "The Rebbe recognized that beauty of the Jewish woman had to emerge in its proper protection of modesty," Robin said.

Robin believes the film presents "a more authentic image of the Jewish woman."

"There's never been a young heroine [on film] like Miriam fighting for Shabbat and kosher. It's a voice that hasn't been heard before."

She's passionate about offering young, religious girls a movie that contains images of themselves that resonate with their perspectives of life. At the same time, she is creating a venue for girls with a "burning desire to perform" who had limited opportunities.

Bracha Leeds, co-director of the Chabad Jewish Center at the University of California at Berkeley, was hired as choreographer for the film and ended up filling an opening in the cast. Before becoming observant as a student at Berkeley, she grew up as a professional singer, dancer and actress. After the premiere, she shared how special it was to be back at Paramount Studios, where she came every day as a child to rehearse for live stage shows.

"I never thought there would be a place for this in my life when I became religious," Leeds said. She heard the Rebbe speak about using one's talents for holiness and after seeing one of Robin's plays she realized her performance talents "didn't have to go to waste."

Leeds plans to help Robin bring the film to Berkeley. "The film is exactly what I envisioned," she said.

Esther Perel Marks, a Chabad actress in "Greytowers" who grew up in LA, said after watching the film, "The Rebbe always wanted the media to bring out a positive message. Hollywood is usually not associated with holy things and through this film we are making it holywood."

"A Light for Greytowers" will screen Motzei Shabbos, February 2nd at 8 and 10 pm at The Jewish Children's Museum at 792 Eastern Parkway. Tickets: \$36 Reserved Seat, \$18 Adult, \$12 Student/Children For purchase/information (310) 659-2342 [www.kolneshama.org](http://www.kolneshama.org)

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