**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas noach 5777**

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**Meeting Milton Petrie**

**By Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein**

*בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ In the beginning of G-d’s creating the heavens and the earth (Bereishit 1:1)*

 When my father was a young man, he served in the 112th Airborne division in the United States army during the Korean War. Despite being drafted against his choice, he was tough-spirited and serious about anything he put his mind to. Particularly important to him was davening. Growing up as a young boy, I always used to sit next to him during davening. While my friends would go outside and play games, I remained inside sitting quietly next to my father. In hindsight, it was something which certainly instilled within me the value and importance of davening.

**My Father Owned a Plastic**

**Shopping Bag Company**

 Aside from this, my father owned a plastic shopping bag company. Now developed into a Wallerstein family business, many department stores which carry bags today are stocked by my family’s business.

 Years ago, my father’s biggest customer was Milton Petrie, a Jewish American-born retailer, investor and philanthropist. Owning a large chain of Petrie stores, which operated over 1,700 discounted women’s clothing stores he invested and made millions of dollars. By the time of his passing, he was worth $1.5 billion dollars, even though he had donated enormous sums of charity to various organizations.

 At one point, Milton Petrie asked my father if he could meet with him regarding his plastic bag company. Setting a time and date to meet at the Lou G Siegel restaurant in New York, my father and my mother, who served as my father’s secretary, planned accordingly. It was not too often that someone would get an opportunity to sit one-on-one with Milton Petrie.

**Asked to Be Excused**

**For a Couple of Minutes**

 Arriving at the restaurant, my father began talking about his exact business in exporting and importing bags. A little while into the meeting, my father turned to Mr. Petrie and said, “Please excuse me; I have to go out for a couple of minutes.”

 Covertly motioning to my mother to continue talking to Mr. Petrie, my father slowly walked away from the table. Making his way towards the front of the restaurant, my father walked out of the building and began walking two blocks to the nearest shul to daven Mincha followed by Maariv. Twenty-five minutes later, my father returned to Lou G Siegel and took a seat.

 Mr. Petrie, not naive in any way, could only wonder where my father had disappeared to.

 “Mr. Wallerstein,” he said, “to go to the men’s room takes a couple of minutes. Where have you been for the last twenty-five minutes?”

**Chairman of the Board of the World**

 Not hesitating, my father looked at Milton Petrie and said, “I am really sorry; you are the chairman of the board of one of the biggest companies in America, but I had to spend some time with the chairman of the board of the world.”

 Petrie was confused. “You know the chairmen of the board of world?” “Well, as a religious Jew,” my father said, “three times a day we have an appointment with the chairman of the world, and I cannot miss that appointment. I am really sorry. I wanted to make this appointment with you earlier, but it didn’t work out that way.”

 Petrie looked back at my father. “Mr. Wallerstein, until I die or this company closes, you have our business. I never met a man who talks to the chairman of the board of the world.”

 And true to Milton Petrie’s word, we received his business for years. Mr. Petrie had never met a man who walked out on him like that before. My father could have been walking out on millions of dollars and forgoing a one-in-a-lifetime chance to strike a deal with the chairman of the board of Petrie. But he realized that however much Petrie was worth, it didn’t compare to the chairman of the board of the world.

 And indeed, Milton Petrie himself understood and appreciated that quite well. We can never forget that when we stand in front of Hashem, we are standing in front of the chairman of the board of the world. That is something which is worth more than all the money we are ever offered.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Bereishis 5777 email of TorahAnyTimes*

**Join a Torah Class and**

**Share in the Great Reward**

 In Communist Russia, there was a group of people who studied Torah in a basement. It was crowded there, but they were afraid to study in the open. There was one person, who didn’t understand Torah, but he would go there regardless, to sit among the Torah students.

 Someone asked him, "Since you don’t understand, why do you come? You are just making it more crowded for us?"

 This man replied, "Years ago, I was drinking some drink in a bar. Near me, was a group of people who gathered there to plot how they could rebel against the government. The government knew they were there; and soldiers came and beat them mercilessly.

 The soldiers beat me too. I shouted, 'I wasn't part of their group. I was just sitting at a nearby table, by myself.'

 The soldiers replied, 'If you were near them, you are like them,' and they continued to beat me. I learned that when I am near a group, I am counted as part of them. I come to your Torah classes. I don’t understand anything, but I know that if I am together with you, I will be considered part of your group and I will be rewarded together with you."

 Even if one doesn’t understand Torah, or even if one is very tired after a day's work, and he falls asleep at shiur, it is still worthwhile going there. If you are among people who learn Torah, you will be counted as one of them.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Bereishis 5777 email of Torah Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.*

**The Maggid of Mezeritz’s Unusual Shabbos Lecture**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

 The Maggid of Mezeritz (the successor of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Chassidic movement) as well and being a great mystic and miracle worker was also an unusually gifted Talmudic scholar. In fact there was no commentary on the Talmud that he had not set to memory. However on Shabbat he would usually speak and teach only the mystical and spiritual ideas of Chassidut.

 One Shabbat, however, he unexpectedly gave a long and complicated Talmudic dissertation explaining and unifying several apparently contradicting legal passages. This was very surprising to his pupils who nonetheless dutifully repeated and memorized every word.

 The day after Shabbat the Maggid told one of his great pupils, Rabbi Zusia of Annipoli, to set off on a journey without giving him any destination or even telling him in which direction to travel. Rab Zusia dutifully packed a small knapsack and began walking, certain that his feet would take him on the right path.

 A week later he stopped for the night at a small Jewish owned inn just outside the city of Hamburg but got a cold reception.  "Well," said the owner of the inn wincing at Rab Zusia's dusty garments, "there is one bed available but you can't have it. The room is being occupied by the great Talmudic genius Rabbi Refoel and I certainly can't put you together with him. Not only that but he doesn't like Chassidim like you."

 This Rabbi Refoel was on his way to Hamburg to vie for the position of chief Rabbi of the city which became vacant when the previous rabbi had passed away a few weeks earlier. But he was also a devoted follower of the foremost enemy (Mitnaged) of the Chassidic movement; the 'Gaon of Vilna' the grandmaster of Talmud and the undisputed leader of Lithuanian Jewry.

 In order to be chosen as Rabbi he would have to present a 'Pilpul' (Talmudic dissertation) before the elder scholars of the city and then answer all their questions satisfactorily; then if he found favor in their eyes he would be chosen as the next chief Rabbi.

 But Rabbi Refoel was not worried. His genius and erudition were almost unmatched as were his credentials, especially his closeness to the Vilna Gaon. So now he was sitting in this simple hotel room calmly repeating the Pilpul one last time before he went to sleep. It was very long and complex and he wanted to make sure it would go smoothly tomorrow in Hamburg.

 Meanwhile, in the lobby, Rab Zusia was trying desperately to convince the owner that he no longer wanted a bed, all he wanted was a peek at the great Rabbi Refoel; he was certain that this had something to do with his mysterious mission, and finally the owner agreedâ€¦ but only for a moment.

 Rab Zusia quietly opened the door (Rabbi Refoel was so deeply involved in repeating he didn't even notice) and was startled to hear that what he was reciting was the exact subject that the Maggid had unexplainably spoken about on Shabbat!

 Then suddenly Rabbi Refoel stopped and let out a groan "OY! The Tosefos in Ksuvos!! It wrecks the entire thing!! It seems that as soon as Rab Zusia peeked in, Rabbi Refoel remembered a commentary in the Talmud he had overlooked which completely destroyed the entire line of reasoning of his presentation! Not only would his 'Pilpul' not succeed, even worse…it was wrong!¦ he was wrong!!

 Rab Zusia cleared his throat. Rabbi Refoel, turned around surprised to see this beggarly looking Jew and wanted to have him thrown out. But when Rab Zusia offered his help in his confusion and desperation he agreed.

 "But only on one condition," said Rab Zusia. "The answer I'm giving you now I heard from my master, the Maggid of Mezeritz, I want you to promise that if and after you are chosen tomorrow, you will go to visit him."

 Rabbi Refoel shuddered. The Maggid?! The head of the â€¦ heretics!!! But something made him hesitate. After all there really was no evidence for these charges of heresy. Perhaps they were empty.  In fact he never heard one solid reason why to hate the Chassidim. Not only that, but this was his only chance â€¦ he agreed.

 Rab Zusia repeated what he heard from the Magid solving all Rabbi Refoel's problems and the next day Rabbi Refoel appeared in Hamburg, made a perfect impression and was chosen as chief Rabbi!

 But he was afraid to keep his part of the bargain. So he traveled to Vilna to ask the Gaon what to do. "If you gave your word you must keep it." He answered. "You must go to this Maggid. But only on two conditions; first that you come back immediately and report to me everything you hear and see there and second that you swear that you don't tell anyone there who you are."

 Early the next morning Rabbi Refoel put on the garments of a simple wanderer and set of for the Maggid and was very impressed with what he saw. The prayers of the Chassidim had fervor and depth he had never experienced and so it was with their Torah learning. But what most impressed him was the Maggid. He had never seen anything it; the man was simply G-dly!

 Nevertheless he kept a low profile, stood in the corners, head down, spoke to no one and was certain beyond any doubt that no one there possibly recognized him.

 Later that morning a woman brought in a slaughtered chicken to the Synagogue for the Maggid to decide if it was Kosher or not. He called his pupils over to debate the law. The question was a difficult one that had already been debated about by the Ramba'm, the Ri'f and the Raava'd hundreds of years earlier but the Maggid's pupils concluded that the bird was permissible according to all opinions.

 The Magid then explained the entire question according to the Kabalistic views of the Ar'i, the Rama'k and the Chayya't and also concluded that according to Kabala the bird is also kosher.

 Then he added. "But standing right there in the corner is Rabbi Refoel, the chief Rabbi of Hamburg, let us hear what he has to say.

 When the Magid called his name he felt something in his soul open up, his life had been changed. Not only had he been recognized, he recognized something new in himself He immediately ran out of the room a different man.

 But when he returned to the Gaon his enthusiasm was not shared.

 The Gaon gathered ten of the elders listened to the entire report and concluded that it was all done through deception and evil.

 "But how do you know that your refusal to even speak to the Maggid or listen to my report is not from evil?" He asked the Gaon and received no answer.

 Rabbi Refoel did not dare travel to the Magid again from respect to the Gaon but he left the camp of the Mitnagdim completely and became a clandestine Chassid.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Bereishis 5777 email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*

**The Great Payoff for Guarding One’s Eyes**

 At a Friday night tisch, the Beis Avraham of Slonim zt'l said fervently, "It is written: “Don’t ask, what happened that the days before were better than today, because this isn't a wise question …” (Koheles 7:10)

 People think that there were tzaddikim in the past, and not today, but it is not so. If a yungerman or bachur walks on the street and guards his eyes, he is holy. He is almost as great as the tzaddikim of years ago…"

 A few moments later, the Rebbe stood up a second time, and fervently announced: "When a yungerman or a bachur guards his eyes in our generation, he becomes sanctified just like the tzaddikim of years ago."

 A few minutes later, the Rebbe repeated this lesson a third time. This time, the rebbe said that one who guards his eyes becomes greater than tzaddikim of the past.

 The tzaddikim of Lubavitch zt'l said that even the malachim in heaven are jealous of someone who walks in the street and fights with the yetzer hara to guard his eyes.

 Reb Shalom of Shotz, zt'l, said to a chassidic yungerman, "Do you know what chassidus is? It is to be cautious with what you say and with what you see." Rebbe Yitzchak of Boyan zt'l taught that guarding one's eyes and speech purifies a person more than fasts can. Because fasting makes people weak, so how much can one fast? But one can always be careful with his speech and with his eyes. With every test that he passes, he becomes sanctified and purified again.

 To express this, he told the following mashal: A poor person was collecting money from poor people. Someone told him that he would be better off collecting money from the wealthy. "Because, how much can a poor person give you? And even if he does give you tzedakah, you can't go to him again and again. However, if you go to the wealthy, they will give you more money, and you can go to them repeatedly."

 The nimshal is that fasting brings atonement, but a far better approach is to afflict oneself simply by controlling what he says and what he sees. This affliction can be performed over and over again, and each time he earns more purity, and more holiness.

**Approaches**

 The question is how does one guard his eyes? The tests are so frequent, it seems almost impossible to be cautious. Reb Gad'l Eisner zt'l answered this question with a mashal:

 Someone is standing by the bus stop waiting for bus number 3 to come. Someone comes and asks him, "Did the bus number 310 pass?" He replies that he doesn’t know. He's been standing by the bus stop for some time, but he honestly doesn’t know whether the 310 bus passed or not, because his mind was trained on the number 3 bus, and nothing else mattered to him.

 Reb Gad'l Eisner taught that the first step towards guarding one's eyes is to be focused on other matters. Even if he chalilah sees something forbidden, it will not make a serious imprint on him, because his mind is elsewhere.

 As we asked above, how can one overcome desires? The answer is that every morning and every night, we announce and we drill into our conscious that Hashem is One, He does everything, there is no other, and we are ready to give our lives for Him.

 One should consider, "If I am ready to give my life for Hashem, shouldn’t I be able to give away a taavah (physical desire) for Hashem? If a taavah is forbidden or improper, shouldn’t I refrain? Holding back is far easier than sacrificing one's life…"

 With this thought in mind, it shouldn’t be too difficult to guard one's eyes. He should think, "I would even give my life to Hashem, shouldn’t I give my eyes to Hashem? The sacrifice is so much less."

 The Sfas Emes says that when one is ready to make sacrifices such as this to keep the Torah, he is living with mesirus nefesh. The sefarim describe the great purity and perfection that one attains, when he sacrifices his life for Hashem's honor, and he dies al kiddush Hashem.

 An even higher level, the Sfas Emes says, is when one lives his life with mesirus nefesh. The Midrash says, "A person doesn’t die from breaking a taavah." When one is accustomed to giving in to his temptations, it often feels like mesirus nefesh to refrain. The Midrash promises us that you won't die from refraining from a taavah. It will be hard at first, but nothing will happen except that you will become purer and holier. Overcome temptation, and you will see that you will survive. Keep it up for some time, and it will even be easy for you.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Bereishis 5777 email of Torah Thoughts from Rabbi Elimelech Biderman as compiled by Rabbi Boruch Twersky.*

**Thoughts that Count**

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*I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh (6:17)*

 Why did G-d choose a flood with which to punish mankind? Could he not have chosen another method to destroy the wicked?

 Another purpose of the flood, however, was to purify the world which had become unclean and defiled by its inhabitants. This is alluded to in the duration of the flood, forty days, and the requirement that a purifying mikva contain at least forty sa'a [a measure] of water. *(Rabbi Shneur Zalman)*

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5753/1992 edition of “L’Chaim Weekly.”*

**Local Bed-Stuy Residents Livid Over Shul’s Loud Siren**



 A Bed-Stuy shul has been blasting a siren every Friday to signal the beginning of Shabbos, and neighbors say their ears can’t take it anymore, reports Reuven Fenton for the [**New York Post**](http://nypost.com/2016/10/26/this-synagogues-absurdly-loud-siren-is-pissing-people-off/).

 60-year-old Robert Prichard lives about 100 feet from the Congregation Bais Yaakov Nechemia D’Satmar at 144 Spencer Street and told Fenton that he has to wear earmuffs he bought from a gun store at the hour the alarm is sounded.

 Prichard said the shul installed the new, blasting alarm this summer after building an additional wing to accommodate more people.

 Aaron Graubart, 48, a food photographer said the sound registered 106 – which is close to a chain saw – from his window.

 In response, Fenton reports that Rabbi Moshe Dovid Niederman, president of Satmar’s United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg and North Brooklyn, said the neighbors should calm down.

 “The sounds of houses of worship, whether it be a church bell, Islamic call to prayer or Shabbos bell make up the tones that are the anthem of the City of New York,” Niederman said, adding that the city’s noise code gives religious organizations an exemption. The congregation offered the city – and still look forward – to sit down with the city and the neighbors to deal with this issue, and I hope that this will be resolved amicably.”

*Reprinted from the October 27, 2016 website of Matzav.com*

**The Unique Beauty of**

**The Gift of Shabbos**

“And –G-d completed, on the seventh day, His work which He had done, and He abstained on the seventh day from all His work which He had done” (Bereshis 2:2).

 R’ Samson Rafael Hirsch (Bereishis 2:2) writes, “The visible world was completed on the sixth day; but only on the seventh day, with the establishment of Shabbos for the sake of man’s education, did G-d truly complete His work. Only with the establishment of Shabbos, ensuring the education of mankind, did G-d cease from all the work that He had made. With the establishment of Shabbos, all the work of the visible creation - not only man - attained final completion and perfection. Shabbos was the final touch that the Creator put on all His work. For the very existence and destiny of all the work of Creation depend on the realization of Shabbos among mankind.

 “There is no gulf between physical nature and the moral world of man. Shabbos was placed in the very midst of the natural world as its goal and crowning perfection… The land blooms and rejoices with the moral blossoming of man; the land withers and mourns at the moral degeneration of its inhabitants… With man’s Shabbos, G-d completed the creation; the teaching about man’s Shabbos was the final touch that G-d put on all His work.”

 R’ Soloveitchik, zt’l, says, “Once again, I return to my childhood memories. In Warsaw we lived three houses away from a Modzhitzer shteibel. Generally, I would go to this Modzhitzer shteibel for seudah shlishis (the third Shabbos meal). Poor Jews would be seated around the table in the shteibel. The Modzhitzer shteibel was located in a poor district in Warsaw. My father could not afford to live in a more affluent area.

 “This was a neighborhood where many of the Jews worked as porters. There was a large iron gate in Warsaw where all the porters looking for employment gathered. I always say that in Warsaw I saw sights that I never saw since. You would see a large closet or a buffet that seemed to be walking on its own. The Jewish porter who was carrying the furniture was totally bent over. It seemed as if the furniture was walking along with feet coming out of the closet.

 “I knew these Jews well and I constantly spoke with them. They were sincerely pious Jews who willingly sacrificed for their spiritual commitments. I once spoke with one of them who was frail and short. He constantly carried heavy metal pieces and I wondered where he got the physical strength to support this weight. His load was always tied around him with a thick cord.

 “On Shabbos, I saw this very Jew and I did not recognize him. He came over to me in his tattered kapote. It was covered with endless patches, and even the patches had patches. Yet his face shone with the joy of Shabbos.

 “I recognized in a tangible fashion that a person’s Shabbos countenance is totally different than his weekday appearance. “So I asked him (one Shabbos after Seuda Shlishis), ‘When will we daven Ma’ariv?’

 “He answered: ‘What is with you? Are you already longing for the weekdays to being? What do you mean when will we daven Ma’ariv, are we lacking anything now?’

 “…The Jews could not depart from Shabbos… They only wanted to remain with Shabbos…”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Bereishis 5777 email of Mrs. Michal Horowitz.*

***Thoughts that Count***

*A window shall you make for the ark (Gen. 6:16)*

 The Hebrew word for "ark" is "tayva," which also has the meaning of "word." A Jew's job is to make a "window," as it were, for the words he utters in prayer or in the study of Torah, and to let them illuminate, as the sun shines at midday. *(Baal Shem Tov)*

*Reprinted from the Parshas Noach 5753/1992 edition of “L’Chaim Weekly.”*

**Trump Yarmulkas Outselling Hillary Yarmulkas**



Posted with permission from WND

WASHINGTON – The campaigns of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton are looking for signs anywhere and everywhere that might suggest who will move into the White House in January.

 A company that makes Trump and Hillary kippas or yarmulkes has some good news for one of the presidential hopefuls – Trump head coverings are winning in a landslide among the Orthodox Jewish clientele.

So far, the company, [Pic-A-Kippa,](https://picakippa.com/)has sold 331 Trump yarmulkes to 65 for Clinton.

 "My kippa (yarmulke) company sells Trump and Hillary kippas and are keeping track of who is selling more," Uri Turk, founder and "chief kippa officer," told WND. "We see it as an early exit poll of the Orthodox Jews, a type of bellwether of where this important community is leaning. Once the first debate came around, the orders started flying in, with much more interest in the Trump kippas."

 Pic-A-Kippa is the brainstorm of two former elite red beret IDF soldiers from Miami. Turk says the company is the leader in the kippa market and has been selling Trump and Hillary custom kippas on its site since August, all the while keeping a running tally of which one has sold more.

"Our mission is to help Jews everywhere show and wear their Jewish pride, with our beautifully unique and completely customizable picture kippas," the company says on its website.

 It donates 10 percent of every kippa sale to the Lone Soldier Center in Israel, assisting young lone soldiers during difficult times.

 Turk said while American Jews have leaned heavily Democratic for decades, the past few presidential races have seen Orthodox Jews, who make up over 10 percent of American Jewry, vote Republican in ever increasing numbers. He attributes that fact to the Democrats putting "daylight between America and Israel."

 A number of influential Jewish pro-Trump organizations have emerged, chief among them "Jews Choose Trump" and "Jewish Democrats For Trump." A recent poll of Florida Jews showed Orthodox voters are leaning toward Trump by a 3-1 margin.

 According to Turk, Pic-A-Kippa has sold many Trump kippas to a congregant of Ivanka Trump's synagogue on the liberal Upper East Side of Manhattan and has gotten orders for Trump kippas from Israel, Australia, Britain and even Mexico. Pic-A-Kippa has also gotten hate mail from Jews unhappy they are selling the Trump designs, he says.

*Reprinted from the October 27, 2016 website of Matzav.com*

**Jewelry in the**

**Eyes of the Beholder**

 Rebbetzin Dessler, wife of the Michtav MeiEliyahu, was in Lithuania together with her young daughter (the future Rebbetzin Geltzeiler) when World War II broke out. They could not return home to England since their host country was at war with Germany. As a result, they were displaced to Australia, which was neutral. This became their home for the duration of the war years.

 One day, mother and daughter took a walk and passed a pawn shop which had a number of jewelry pieces displayed in its picture window. When the young girl oohed and aahed over the jewelry, her mother responded that while it was true that each piece was quite beautiful, even captivating, every item in the window had a history.

 Someone had been forced to sell her jewelry for economic reasons. This might have been a cherished family heirloom, but the family had fallen on hard times and bread had become more important than jewelry. “We should not take pleasure from someone else’s misfortune,” the Rebbetzin told her daughter.

 The simple lesson to be derived herein is how far one person’s sensitivity for another human being can extend. She saw a necklace in the store window and was immediately aware that it represented another human being’s misfortune. Others saw dazzling jewelry. She saw the history of the jewelry. It represented a person’s economic fall. It reflected someone’s need.

 This is how this special woman viewed a piece of jewelry in a pawnshop. Ayeca? How did it get here? Everything/everybody has a history. Take it into consideration.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Bereishis 5777 email of Peninim on the Torah as compiled by Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum in conjunction with the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland.*

**Story #986**

**Preferable to Silver**

**By Rabbi Shmuel Lew**

**From the Desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

**editor@ascentofsafed.com**

My father-in-law, Zalman Jaffe (of blessed memory), born in Manchester, UK, was a proud descendent of Chabad Chassidim. He and my mother-in-law Roselyn were introduced to **the [Lubavitcher] Rebbe** in the early days of the Rebbeâ€™s leadership. Eventually this acquaintance developed into personal friendship, and each year my in-laws merited regular visits, especially during Shavuot, which were recorded and published annually in my father-in-law’s popular diary, the “My Encounter with the Rebbe” series.

 It was during one of those annual visits that my wife Hindy got a peek at the Rebbe’s ornate silver *menorah*. In spite of its size and beauty, the Rebbe didn’t use it. He preferred a small and simple one for the *mitzvah* of lighting Chanukah candles.

 My father-in-law, remembering the sight at *farbrengens* of the Rebbe being handed a plain bottle of wine in a paper bag for the *kos shel brachos* (the cup of blessing from which the Rebbe would personally distribute small cups of wine to whomever filed by him), decided that something more fitting was needed. Therefore, for the Rebbe’s 80th birthday -- 11 Nissan 5742 (4 days before Passover 1982) he wanted to present the Rebbe, on behalf of the Manchester community, with a lovely silver decanter.

 But worried the Rebbe wouldn’t use it, my father-in-law first wrote to the Rebbetzin (the Rebbe’s wife), explaining his community’s desire to honor the Rebbe with an impressive gift but his own reluctance to do something if it would be against the Rebbe’s wishes. He asked the Rebbetzin to consult with her husband and promised to call a week later for the answer.

 A week passed. Then, courageously, my father-in-law phoned the Rebbetzin.

 The Rebbetzin replied that the Rebbe had not reacted. However, a day or so later, my father-in-law received a letter from the Rebbe, at the end of which lay the Rebbe's response.

 P.S. Mrs. Schneerson told me about the request about the bottle and the paper bag. Forgive me, but while we will accept the thought as though it actually happened, I prefer a bottle with a paper bag more than a beautiful, silver bottle.

 The Rebbe added:

 There are many reasons, but I'll tell you one of them that I hope you will understand. I do not want to make a barrier between my way of life and the way of life of those around me.

 He gave an example:

 I have many silver**esrog**boxes, but I prefer to use a cardboard box.

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***Source*:** Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from a 2013 email of the Avner Institute (Rebbebook@gmail.com).

***Biographical note:***Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe [11 Nissan 5662 - 3 Tammuz 5754 (April 1902 - June 1994 C.E.)], became the seventh Rebbe of the Chabad dynasty after his father-in-law’s passing on 10 Shvat 5710 (1950 C.E.). He is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest Jewish leaders of the second half of the 20th century. Although a dominant scholar in both the revealed and hidden aspects of Torah and fluent in many languages and scientific subjects, the Rebbe is best known for his extraordinary love and concern for every Jew on the planet. His emissaries around the globe dedicated to strengthening Judaism number in the thousands. Hundreds of volumes of his teachings have been printed, as well as dozens of English renditions.

*Reprinted from Succos 5777 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed.* [*www.ascentofsafed.com*](http://www.ascentofsafed.com) *ascents@ascentofsafed.com*