**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Lech Lecha 5774**

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**The Professor and**

**The Traif Hot Dog**

**By Yossi Lew**

This is a story of a professor who got entangled with a hot dog. The hot dog lost. The professor won. Forever.

Dr. Velvl Greene was a professor of epidemiology and public health at the University of Minnesota. This was around 1960. Professor Greene was involved in the NASA program to find life on Mars. No, the hot dog was not from Mars. Hang in there.

My uncle Rabbi Moshe Feller had recently arrived in Minnesota, and was heavily on Dr. Greene’s case. They talked a lot.

Rabbi Feller called Dr. Greene and said, “Velvl, I know you’re traveling somewhere by plane. Before you take this trip, please do me a favor. Call the airline and order a kosher meal.”

Velvl replied, “What? You know I don’t keep kosher. If I don’t keep kosher in my house, why do I need a kosher meal on the plane?”

Rabbi Feller responded that when the other Jewish passengers hear that Professor Velvl Greene had asked for his kosher meal, it could inspire them as well. Why should they lose out just because he’s not there yet?

Velvl responded, “Look, I’m not so sure about all this, but if it is going to make you happy, I’ll do you the favor.”

Dr. Greene ordered the kosher meal, and boarded the plane the next day. But when the [flight](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2332780/jewish/The-Professor-and-the-Hot-Dog.htm) attendant came by, she handed him a regular, non-kosher meal. Dr. Greene was ready for this too. Clearing his throat, he declared for everybody to hear, “No, ma’am, I ordered a kosher meal!”

“Your name, please?”

“Professor Velvl Greene.”

All heads turned. Professor Greene had ordered a kosher meal! The attendant said, “Okay, I’ll be right back.”

While fellow passengers were feasting on chicken parmesan or steak, even wiping the gravy with bread, the flight attendant was nowhere to be found. The professor was hungry; his mouth was starting to really salivate. The aromas were stabbing his *kishkes*! He pushed the little button, and when the lady returned he said, “My kosher meal?”

She replied, “We’re still checking.”

After a few minutes, and after everyone on the plane had been served, the flight attendant came to his seat and said, “Um, Dr. Greene, there must have been a mistake. We don’t seem to have your meal on the plane.”

Dr. Greene was about to blurt out, “Fine, give me another meal.” After all, this wasn’t his idea. He ate all sorts of food at home. Problem was, how could he ask for that meal after he had just made such a big deal on the plane for everyone to know that Professor Velvl Greene had ordered a kosher meal? How would it look if he suddenly said, “Fine, give me a regular meal”?

But Greene was angry. He was very angry. He was angry at the airline. He was angry at himself for [listening](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2332780/jewish/The-Professor-and-the-Hot-Dog.htm) to this nonsense. He was angry at G‑d, because the least G‑d could do was arrange for his meal to be on this darn plane, especially after Greene had done something nice for G‑d! But he was most angry, fuming at Rabbi Feller for convincing him to do this. And Greene decided that he would show him yet.

He landed at Chicago’s O’Hare airport at midnight for a one-hour stopover. He arrived at the terminal, and there was still one store open: a non-kosher hot dog stand. The hot dogs looked and smelled good, plump and juicy. There was even hot sauerkraut available. Velvl Greene was very hungry, but he was even more angry than hungry. He therefore headed first to the phone booth and called the rabbi—collect. A collect call in the middle of the night was sure to invite panic. And indeed, Rabbi Feller was deeply concerned that something terrible had happened.

“This is a very upset and hungry Professor Greene calling from O’Hare airport in Chicago,” he said. “I’ll have you know that they did not have my kosher meal on the plane, and I’m starving. I also want you to know that there is a hot dog stand 20 feet away from me. Before I go ahead and buy one and eat it, I just wanted to wake you up to tell you that I’m going to eat it. I’m going to have it with mustard, onions, relish and kraut. After I finish the first one, I’m going to have a second one!”

The rabbi was quiet for a minute, and then he said, “Velvl, on many occasions you have asked me about the essence of Judaism, what it all comes down to, what it calls forth from within us. Tonight, right now, in this telephone conversation, I’m going to tell you the essence of Judaism. It’s about passing the hot dog stand and not buying one. It’s about being able to get on your connecting flight without having eaten the hot dog. That’s all of Judaism; the rest is commentary.”

The professor says, “Feller, you’re nuts. I always thought you were nuts; now I know you’re nuts. This is all of Judaism? Feller, as every bite of this hot dog goes down my throat, I’m going to be thinking of you and saying your name. I am going to eat this in your honor.”

And he hung up the phone.

He headed straight for the stand, stood in line and waited for his turn. He was about to place his order, when something very strange happened. He tried to say, “Can I have a hot dog?” He wanted it, he was hungry, he was angry, and gosh, those hot dogs looked better and better with each rotation of the grill.

But he couldn’t.

At that moment, he got it. It wasn’t that he was stronger than the hot dog. Or than the craving hunger in his gut. It was that G‑d was stronger than that hot dog. And he had to listen to G‑d. Not out of fear, not out of guilt, but out of love. And that was Judaism. All of it.

Professor Greene never bought that hot dog, not then, not ever again. That trip changed his life. One small “no” for a hot dog, one great step for a man.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of Chabad.Org Magazine.*

**Story #827**

**The Asset for Austria**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[editor@ascentofsafed.com](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0000wCk0:001IKJL100001nM6&count=1381088519&randid=1971839611&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=1971839611)

The Russian Czar and the various maskilim [intellectual forerunners of the Reform Jewish movement] of the time were greatly distressed by the power the ***Holy Rhizhiner Rebbe*** wielded. Through his royal conduct the Rebbe greatly uplifted the level of the downtrodden masses.

The maskilim had long been plotting to bring about the Rebbe's downfall, but without any success. But then, when the Rebbe was forty years old, he was arrested on charges of having had a hand in a murder. An informant brought evidence that the Rebbe had ordered the execution of a second informer.

As the Rebbe was taken away into custody he paraphrased Psalm 23, "Although I walk in the valley of the shadow of death--even as I am to be locked up I fear no evil. One thing however upsets me, You [G-d] will be with meâ€--the Shechina [the manifestation of Your Presence] will also be in exile with me.”

Following the orders of the Czar himself, the Rebbe was imprisoned in the notorious Kiev dungeons. He spent twenty two months locked away under terrible conditions in a small dark and damp cellar. No charges were ever brought against him, nor was he ever put on trial.

The Rebbe was then transferred to a second prison in Kamenitz for six months until he was finally freed on Shushan Purim. A few days after the Rebbe was freed he was given a tip that the Czar had decided to arrest him on charges of rebellion and had already passed a sentence on him of life exile in Siberia. The Rebbe was left with no option but to flee Russia.

As soon as the authorities realized that the Rhyzhiner had disappeared, soldiers were sent to look for him and prevent his escape. But the Rebbe crossed the border into Austria in the middle of the night [thanks to near-miraculous aid sent by Rebbe Meir of Primishlan!],and the Russians, having narrowly missed recapturing him, returned home empty-handed. The Russian Czar, however, did not give up and demanded that Austria send the Rebbe back to Russia.

Meanwhile, 'witnesses' were produced who testified that the Rebbe was really an Austrian citizen who had disappeared many years ago and had finally returned home to Austria. The Russians, however, also had witnesses to contradict this story and insisted on his return.

The Austrian Government refused to comply. They knew that the Rebbe would attract tens of thousands of Chasidim, and this would greatly benefit the economy and businesses of the area. The Rebbe was simply too valuable an asset to lose.

When Reb Yitzchok of Vorka came to visit the Rebbe soon after he arrived in Austria, the Rebbe told him that he had not been imprisoned for his own sins, for in his life he had never transgressed even the smallest rabbinical prohibition.

The Rebbe settled in the town on Sadigur. Some years earlier Reb Chaim Kosover had promised the people of the town that one day a great tzadik would come to live there, and he would make the name "Sadigur" famous for all generations. Once again the Rebbe set up a magnificent court with a big shul. Tens of thousands flocked to Sadigur, and indeed all the people of the area became his chassidim. The Rebbe lived in Sadigur for ten years until his demise.

A few months before he passed away he started to drop broad hints of his imminent departure. Just before Rosh Hashana 1850 he told his sons that he had prepared extremely beautiful living quarters for himself and he would be moving there after the High Holidays season was over. As he walked to his *Beit Midrash* (House of Study) on Yom Kippur, he put his hands on the *mezuzah* and announced that he would be a *kapara* (atonement) for the Jewish People. Two weeks later, right after Sukkot, the Rebbe became ill and one week after that passed away on the third of the Jewish month of Cheshvan.

A few hours before he passed on he asked one of his close chasidim if he knew what Queen Esther prayed before she risked her life to go to Achashverosh. Without waiting for an response the Rebbe answered his own question, "She asked G-d that He either help the Jews or take her from this world."

The Rebbe's last words before his departure were: "Rebbe [Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi, redactor of the Mishna] testified about himself that he never had enjoyment from this world, not even the amount of a small finger, and I testify on myself that I didn't enjoy this world not even the amount of a bit of thread. The reason for my grand and royal conduct was totally for the sake of Heaven."

**Source:** Excerpted and adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from "The Golden Dynasty" by Yisroel Friedman.

**Biographic note:** Rabbi Yisrael Friedmann of Rizhin [1797 - 3 Cheshvan 1850] was a great-grandson of the Maggid of Mezritch. At a young age was already a charismatic leader with a large following of chasidim. Greatly respected by the other rebbes and Jewish leaders of his generation, he was and still is referred to as "The Holy Rizhinner." Six of his sons established Chassidic dynasties, several of which Sadigora, Chortkov, etc. are still thriving today.

**Connection:** Seasonal - the 163rd yahrzeit of the holy Rhyzhiner.

Reprinted from this week’s email of KabbalOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed.

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**I Slept in Hitler’s Room and Germany Went Ballistic**

**By Tuvia Tenenbom**

Three years ago I was contacted by an editor of Rowohlt, one of the biggest book publishers in Germany. She said she loved my articles in the Zeit, the prestigious German newspaper I’ve been writing for, and would like me to come to Germany for a few months, interview people and write about them “in the same style you write for the Zeit.”

It didn’t take long to convince me and soon enough I showed up in Germany.

Unbelievable landscapes, delicious food, shiny museums, celebrated intellectuals, tireless farmers, sleepless artists, blasphemous zealots, faithful atheists and a highly modern society welcomed me. All I had to do was to befriend everybody.

Germany, I sadly found out, was obsessed with Jews. Even those who claimed to like Jews had very strange thoughts about them. I interviewed people from all walks of life.

From the famous chain-smoking iconic Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, to the forlorn heroin addicts on the streets of Frankfurt; from the publisher of the largest European daily, Bild, to obscure bloggers; from the Prime Minister of Saxony, to bored museum guards; frail WWII veterans, to sporty high schoolers; radical leftists who want to overthrow the government, any government, to neo-Nazis who won’t settle for anything less than Adolf Hitler; top officials of Mercedes and Volkswagen, to street sellers of cheep necklaces; educated and illiterates; rich and poor; on the east and on the west, in the north and in the south.

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Unbelievable landscapes, delicious food, shiny museums, celebrated intellectuals, tireless farmers, sleepless artists, blasphemous zealots, faithful atheists and a highly modern society welcomed me. All I had to do was to befriend everybody.

We ate together, drank together, and they talked.

Hardly a day passed by without at least one interviewee talking to me about the “rich Jews,” the “shrewd Jews,” the Israelis who eat Palestinians for breakfast on a daily basis, the “manipulating Jew,” or anything else “Jew.”

[](http://www.jewishpress.com/indepth/opinions/i-slept-in-hitlers-room-and-germany-went-ballistic/2013/07/08/)  
Jewish bestselling author Tuvia Tenenbom is

obsessed with the German obsession with Jews.

Germany, I sadly found out, was obsessed with Jews. Even those who claimed to like Jews had very strange thoughts about them. Some told me that all Jews knew each other, others said that all Jews helped each other, and still others claimed that all Jews were “very good” with money.

The people thus talked and I wrote down what they said, word for word. I submitted the book, a testimonial to the rampant anti-Semitism in today’s Germany, to my editor.

We met a week later and she told me that she cried and laughed when reading the book and that it was even better than what she had expected it to be. But the head of the publishing company, who comes of Germany’s top families, went into a rage. He told me that I couldn’t write and that the book needed serious editing.

I asked him to show me what good writing was.

He did.

If there was a line in the book about people not liking “Jews,” he demanded that I change the word to “Israel.”

A chapter about a club that preached the killing of all living Jews had to be erased, he ordered. If somebody told me in an interview that the Jews were “the real Nazis,” their words had to be changed or cut. Only if I obeyed him, I was led to understand, would I become a “good writer.”

He didn’t stop there. He went really low, at one point calling me a “hysterical Jew.” And then he broke our contract.

No American publisher I approached agreed to give the book life. No matter what evidence at hand, mainstream American publishers were not willing to take on Germany. Taking on a Western ally, I guess, is not on the agenda of present-day publishers.

Fearing that the book’s findings would get forever lost, the Jewish Theater of New York decided to make the book available to Americans and published it under the title “[I Sleep in Hitler’s Room](http://jewishtheater.org/Jewish%20Theater/I-Sleep-in-Hitlers-Room..htm).”

In December of 2012 one of the most prestigious of German publishers, Suhrkamp, made the book available in Germany, under the title “[Allein unter Deutschen](http://www.suhrkamp.de/buecher/allein_unter_deutschen-tuvia_tenenbom_46374.html).”

Initially, German critics went ballistic, passionately denying the book’s findings that most Germans today hold anti-Semitic views.

One of them, in the highly regarded Liberal newspaper, Süddeutsche Zeitung, didn’t shy away from going racist, shamelessly referring to me as “the Jew Tenenbom.”

Responding to the growing claims against me, I offered to face any intellectual willing to debate me in public.

Standing before the people who demanded honesty, it soon became very clear that my staunchest critics assailed the book without actually reading it.

Happily, other critics took a closer look at the book and published glorious reviews. Tens of thousands bought the book, sending it to the top 10 of Spiegel magazine’s best sellers list (equivalent to the New York Times best sellers list in the U.S.), and thousands of the book’s fans attended public readings across Germany.

At its conclusion, I ended my journey into Germany having many more friends than when I started it.

This makes me happy, as having new friends is always good, but this doesn’t mean that I’m not worried. I am, and much more than I ever was.

Germany is a wonderful, beautiful country, its society one of the more sophisticated of our time. Germany’s cultural institutions, such as museums, theater and journalism, are the most advanced in the Western world — which probably explains why its society’s stars are not movie actors but intellectuals.

To me, and as far as I could witness, most of those intellectuals are pseudo intellectuals: they are brainy beyond repair, full of themselves, have a very narrow view of the world, lack a healthy sense of reality and, worse yet, suffer from acute anti-Semitism. Again and again, history teaches us where this senseless hate will lead.

Before WWII, just as now, Germany was very advanced for its time, proudly holding one of the best human rights records. But then as now, the people had hate inside their hearts at the same time their mouths were uttering the loveliest words of freedom.

It was Adolf Hitler who knew to their deeper thoughts and he turned them into the most sadistic known to humanity.

If today Germany doesn’t wake up to its inner hate, a more sophisticated Adolf will appear and nobody will be powerful enough to stop him.

It is time to tell Germany, in the clearest of words: People who suffer from cancer can’t afford to ignore it. Germany must wake up to its cancer, before it will be fatally consumed by it.

Telling Germans the truth is not hate but the purest form of love. I deeply love them, and therefore I deeply care.

*Tuvia Tenenbom is a Spiegel bestselling author and columnist for Die Zeit, Germany*‘*s prestigious weekly newspaper. He is the author of “*[*I Sleep in Hitler’s Room: An American Jew Visits Germany”*](http://www.amazon.com/Sleep-Hitlers-Room-American-Germany/dp/098393990X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1369153362&sr=1-1&keywords=i+sleep+in+hitler%27s+room)*which was published in Germany as “*[*Allein Unter Deutschen*](http://www.amazon..de/Allein-unter-Deutschen-Entdeckungsreise-taschenbuch/dp/3518463748/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1369153433&sr=1-1&keywords=allein+unter+deutschen)*.” In addition to his work for Die Zeit, his writings have been published in newspapers such as Corriere della Sera of Italy and Yedioth Ahronoth of Israel. He holds advanced degrees in both fine arts and science and is the founder and artistic director of* [*The Jewish Theater of New York*](http://www.jewishtheater.org/)*.*

*Reprinted from the July 19, 2013 edition of The Jewish Press.*

**BMG in Lakewood**

**Where Jewish Life**

**Thrives in America**

**By** [**Noah Feldman**](file:///C:\view\bios\noah-feldman\)

Forget the teeth-gnashing already occasioned by a new [study](http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/) on Jewish identity in the U.S. by the Pew Research Religion & Public Life Project. The only thing every generation of Jews has in common is the conviction that it will be the last. What matters for the continuity of Jewish life is quality, not quantity.

And in today’s America, Jewish intellectual, cultural, spiritual and religious life is flourishing. Case in point: [Beth Medrash Govoha](http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-life-and-religion/133643/lakewood-redefining-orthodoxy) of Lakewood, [New Jersey](http://topics.bloomberg.com/new-jersey/), known as BMG or simply “Lakewood” -- one of the two biggest yeshivas, or Talmudic colleges, in the history of the world.

At Lakewood, 6,700 undergraduate and graduate students pursue a curriculum focused on the Babylonian Talmud, the compendium of legal argument and ethical narrative that has informed traditional Judaism for a millennium and a half. Even at the height of the golden age of yeshivas in pre-war [Europe](http://topics.bloomberg.com/europe/), it is doubtful if that many people were studying the Talmud full time. The once-famed yeshiva at Volozhin (modern Valozhyn, now in Belarus), the progenitor of the modern yeshiva movement, had no more than 300 students, and perhaps as few as 150; only 60 were [officially registered](http://www.leimanlibrary.com/texts_of_publications/106.%20Three%20Lists%20of%20Students%20Studying%20at%20the%20Volozhin%20Yeshiva%20in%201879.pdf).

Then there is the mode of instruction at BMG, which presents a strikingly disruptive model of higher education. Every term, each student must sign up for a chabura (essentially, a semester-long seminar group) presided over by a fellow student who functions as the faculty member. A free-market system governs the organization of the seminars.

There’s only one way to become a seminar head: to be nominated by your peers who sign up to join. If you don’t have enough sign-ups, you lose your faculty position. If you’re good, students will keep signing up each term and you keep your post.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:BMGMap.jpg)

A colored map hanging in one of the study

halls designating where each *chaburah*

(study group) sits.

**Lakewood Model**

Tenure doesn’t exist, except for a handful of senior faculty. The seminars can range in size from as few as 15 students to as many as 200. The members meet for lectures by the seminar head and guided discussions several times week. The rest of the time, they engage in analysis, debate and discussion with assigned partners. Senior faculty are available for guidance and help as needed. Subject matter, too, varies, with some seminar groups focusing on specific sections of the Talmud and others pursuing a wider range of topics addressed by Jewish legal tradition.

In essence, the students are running the institution. Traditional Jewish education is usually thought of as intensely hierarchical, and in some ways it is -- respect for rabbis and teachers runs deep. But when it comes to the intellectual heart of the yeshiva, the core activity of Talmud study, the Lakewood model is astonishingly egalitarian and democratic.

That egalitarianism doesn’t extend to women. The yeshiva doesn’t ask anything about the private lives of its students (though it requires that they not date during their first term in residence, the so-called “freezer”) -- but it is resolutely, unabashedly single-sex.

By the end of the first year or two, most students are married and have children. The wives overwhelmingly work outside the home, supporting the extended graduate study of the men. As a result, the women of Lakewood pursue careers, and the study schedule is set so that the men can participate in child care during what would otherwise be the workday.

An extended community of roughly 55,000 has grown up around the yeshiva, bringing investment, construction -- and political clout. In 2012, the New Jersey Legislature earmarked $1.3 billion for the state’s public and private universities -- and BMG was awarded just more than 1 percent of that amount, $10.6 million, to build a library and academic center.

The state [American Civil Liberties Union](http://topics.bloomberg.com/american-civil-liberties-union/) has sued to challenge that allocation and a much smaller grant to the Princeton Theological Seminary. But because the funds were available to all institutions of higher learning in the state, and recipients include Catholic as well as single-sex institutions, the challenge is on shaky constitutional grounds and will probably fail.

**Authentic Experience**

But the yeshiva shows that one kind of authentically Jewish experience is flourishing in America -- and that it is autonomous and independent. Its identity isn’t focused on the Holocaust or on [Israel](http://topics.bloomberg.com/israel/), but on intellectual engagement with the Talmud. The yeshiva is neither Zionist nor anti-Zionist.

Only 5 percent of BMG alumni become congregational rabbis. And 25 percent become educators. The rest are engaged in study for its own sake. They will enter the workforce when they are done; armed with skills of logic, formal reasoning and a type of critical thinking, they largely succeed after training in a professional field or going directly into business.

Graduates of institutions such as BMG won’t solve the demographic challenges to American Jewry highlighted by the Pew study. But BMG matters. It matters for the future of Jews in America precisely because it matters for the future of Judaism in America. By privileging ideas and thought over identity, it proudly stakes out a position of genuine durability.

([*Noah Feldman*](http://topics.bloomberg.com/noah-feldman/)*, a law professor at* [*Harvard University*](http://topics.bloomberg.com/harvard-university/) *and the author of “Cool War: The Future of Global Competition,” is a Bloomberg View columnist*.)

Excerpted from the October 3, 2013 edition of Bloomberg Reports.

**From the Gray Lady to Columbia University: An interview with Professor Ari L. Goldman**

**By Dovid Margolin**

*From a young age, Professor Ari L. Goldman felt that journalism was his calling. After 20 years with The New York Times, Prof. Goldman has spent the last 20 years teaching his trade at Columbia University.*

[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&source=imgres&cd=&docid=aBNyLwnuc91hDM&tbnid=EVS_H2Tx-GIz2M:&ved=0CAwQjRwwAA&url=http://www.randomhouse.com/acmart/catalog/author.pperl?authorid%3D10392&ei=N6U4UsH3C63l4APVvYCwCw&psig=AFQjCNFO1hySb8lvlc8Lg1lMMOSUjl9Ndw&ust=1379530423224454)

*Ari L. Golman*

It was 10:15 a.m. as I bounded up the steps of the 116th St. and Broadway subway stop, a few minutes late for my interview with Prof. Ari L. Goldman. Rushing through Columbia University’s square, I quickly passed by the manicured lawns and monumental structures that make up the main campus, and a few minutes later found myself in Prof. Goldman’s light-filled and book-lined office on the sixth floor of the Columbia School of Journalism or, as it’s known, the j-school.

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For 20 years, Prof. Goldman worked as a reporter at *The New York Times*, covering local and state issues and later working as a religion writer. In 1985, while at the *Times*, he took a year off to study at Harvard University, penning *The Search for G-d at Harvard* in 1991, a best-selling book about his experience. It was Prof. Goldman who wrote the *Times’* obituary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, *zt”l*, as well as Harav Yosef Ber Soloveitchik, *zt”l*, and Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, *z”l*.

When he left the paper in 1993 he came to Columbia University to teach a new generation of reporters, and today he is the director of the Scripps Howard Program in Religion, Journalism and the Spiritual Life at Columbia.

Prof. Goldman’s office in Pulitzer Hall is smaller than I had expected, but inviting. The wall behind his desk is dominated by a large window, allowing the room to be flooded with natural light. Almost anywhere else I look I see shelves packed with books, among them Prof. Goldman’s own — *The Search for G-d at Harvard*, *Being Jewish*, and *Living a Year of Kaddish* — as well as many other Jewish and non-Jewish volumes. Behind me is an old Vilna *Shas*. “It was my father’s,” explains Prof. Goldman when he sees me eying it.

**Life at Home**

“I was born in Hartford, Connecticut,” he begins. “My parents divorced when I was six years old and after that my two brothers and I moved with my mother to Queens; I grew up there and in Manhattan. At first I studied at Dov Revel, then RJJ (Rabbi Jacob Joseph School) on the Lower East Side, and finally the Crown Heights Mesivta under Rabbi Chaim Segal, *z”l*.”

Prof. Goldman explains that he was very much affected by his uncle — his late mother’s sister’s husband — Rabbi Norman Lamm, the past president of Yeshiva University and the school’s outgoing chancellor. “I’m very close to YU. While I don’t claim to represent YU — I represent myself — I was certainly influenced very much by my uncle and by YU.”

As a child from a divorced home, his youth was a turbulent one and because of that, his grades in school suffered. Writing eloquently in *The Search for G-d at Harvard*, Prof. Goldman explains that those who divorce neglect to consider the opinions of the people who will be most affected by the split: the children.

*“But didn’t my parents spare me an unhappy home where fighting and angry confrontation were the mode of communication?”* writes Prof. Goldman. “*I believe not. I believe that they — as incompatible as they were and remain today — could have learned to stop shouting or slamming doors. At least they could have learned all that more easily than I learned to be a child of divorce.”*

**A Subway Discovery**

As a 12-year-old boy growing up in Jackson Heights, Queens, Prof. Goldman would take the two-hour-long round-trip subway ride to and from RJJ in Manhattan. It was on those rides that he began picking up and reading discarded newspapers —the *New York World-Telegram*, the *Daily* *Mirror* or the *New York Journal-American.*

The *New York* *Herald Tribune* was his favorite. Through the pages of those now-defunct newspapers, the boy learned about the Nixon-Kennedy presidential campaign of 1960 and the great Space Race that had begun with the Soviet Union. It was the start of a lifelong love for newspapers and a passion for journalism.

Today Prof. Goldman is a sort of news junkie, reading newspapers from around the world and from different communities on a daily basis. When I interviewed him on a Wednesday morning, he had by that time already read the weekly edition of *Hamodia*, which he had received that morning.

“I once heard… that a woman cannot pass a shoe store without looking in the window,” Prof. Goldman said during a presentation to a group of reporters. “Well, I cannot pass a newsstand without buying a newspaper.”

Although he struggled through school, Prof. Goldman was accepted to Yeshiva University where he studied English, simultaneously learning in the pre-*semichah* program at Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan (RIETS). But more than his classes, what really interested him was the school’s student newspaper, the *YU Commentator.*

“I enjoyed writing from a very young age,” Prof. Goldman tells me, “and I was successful at it. I expressed myself well and got a lot of positive feedback. In YU, I began writing for the college paper and when I was a sophomore I wrote an article about *The New York Times*’scampus stringer at Yeshiva University. When he graduated he recommended me for the job.”

Campus stringers were students at universities who would report stories of interest that were happening on campus. In large part due to the student riots and protests that were affecting many universities in the tumultuous late 60s, knowing what was going on at any particular university campus was of interest to the newspapers. When Prof. Goldman wrote an article explaining why the *Times* wanted a stringer at YU’s campus, he got noticed.

“There was a yeshivah student who was on a plane that was hijacked, so I wrote about that. Most of the stories I wrote for them were about Judaism, student demonstrations and Soviet Jewry.”

**‘All the News That’s Fit to Print’**

Graduating from YU in 1971, Prof. Goldman got a job with *The New York Times* as a copyboy, “which is the lowest level in the newsroom. They had these big Gutenberg presses then, and the copyboys would go running each time a reporter or editor called out ‘copy!’ When I was there, it was right before computers came into the newsroom so we had 30 copyboys on the night shift. Today there are two.”

After leaving to attend the Columbia School of Journalism — where he was particularly affected by one of his teachers, Melvin Mencher — and graduating with the class of ’73, Prof. Goldman came back to the *Times*. Initially only rehired as a copyboy, he soon became the clerk for A.M. Rosenthal, the celebrated executive editor of the *Times*, and in 1975 was promoted to reporter.

Throughout his time at the paper, Prof. Goldman tried to the best of his ability to stay true to his Orthodox roots, something that was sometimes a challenge for him in the high-stress atmosphere of one of the world’s most important newspapers.

While proud of his two decades of work at *The* *New York Times*,and of the paper as a whole, Prof. Goldman does point to some events where he felt the *Times* bent over backwards so much in an attempt to appear evenhanded and objective that the truth was distorted. One such case was the reporting on the infamous 1991 Crown Heights riots.

“I was sent to Crown Heights, where I saw the story unfolding in one way and the *Times* reporting it a different way. I was one of several reporters there doing the legwork, and while I was seeing blacks rioting in the streets, *The New York Times* was reporting that blacks and Jews were both rioting in the street. It was almost as if they had a scorecard that they had to keep track of.

“Nowadays reporters can post stories directly from their BlackBerries, but then you had to get to a payphone and give your notes to a rewrite man who would put the story together. I was yelling, ‘Jews aren’t rioting, they’re the victims here!’ And then when the story appeared it would be completely distorted.

“In that case it wasn’t the Jewish side of me being in conflict with the *Times*; it was the sense of what was right and what was good journalistic process. They eventually did listen and got it right at the end, but it took a few days.”

**Entering the Ivory Tower**

Prof. Goldman’s office overlooks Columbia University’s beautiful main campus square. On one side of the square rises the granite-domed Low Memorial Library and directly across from it stands the massive, columned Butler Library. Looking down at the calm and collegial grounds, it is hard to believe that they were once the center of the student riots of 1968, when large groups of students occupied a number of university buildings to protest the Vietnam War and other issues. Now in the middle of the summer break, the campus is even quieter than usual.

Prof. Goldman left *The New York Times* to teach journalism at Columbia in 1993, and has remained there ever since.

If you loved working at *The New York Times* so much, I ask, why did you leave?

“I left for a variety of reasons. I had a family with three children, thank G-d, and the stress of daily journalism is very great. The hours are unpredictable and I wanted to be there for my children.

“Second was — this might sound funny — by that point I had been there for so long that I felt I was smarter than my editors, who were sometimes relatively new at their jobs. So I left to teach at Columbia.”

At Columbia Prof. Goldman has taught a variety of classes, from magazine writing to a course on covering religion. He finds that instead of decreasing in importance, religion has become an ever more important subject in our post–9/11 world. “It’s become more important in politics, in global conflict, and in the news in general. Religion is a very powerful factor that motivates people’s decisions, and journalists tend to be very cynical and skeptical about it.”

**Objectivity and Fairness in the Media**

Oftentimes we hear about objectivity and fairness in media, but the results seem to be anything but. Is it possible for objectivity to even exist in the news media?

“Objectivity is an impossible ideal. Of course everyone has their own way of looking at the world and that will come through. Even the way writers will order a story can have some sort of bias; they’ll put one point above the other. But I do think that itpossible to be fair. That’s not to say that both sides are equal; they shouldn’t be. You don’t let the story weigh towards the murderer; it should be towards the victim. But you have to tell the story of the murder, and you have to do it in a way that the story is told honestly.”

The world has changed so much and the way people get their news nowadays is so different than when you were a journalist. How do you keep yourself relevant in this day and age?

“I constantly try to stay in touch with that world and keep up to date with all of the newest innovations. A few years back I spent a summer in *The New York Times*’snewsroom. I constantly visit newsrooms to see what’s going on and Columbia is a leader when it comes to educating about new technologies.”

**The Future of Journalism**

With seismic shifts occurring in the world of journalism, and many traditional newspapers and magazines going the way of the telegraph, the future of journalism stands uncertain.

“We’re in the middle of this revolution, and no one knows where it’s going. The newest thing is that people are now receiving the news on their phones and that is actually shaping journalism content. I think we have to be somewhat humble and understand that we really don’t know what the future holds.”

There are, however, aberrations in the general trend towards the new forms of media, and Prof. Goldman points out that Orthodox newspapers such as *Hamodia* are one of them.

“I think the development of papers such as *Hamodia* is a very positive one. Observant Jews can read a newspaper that speaks to them and doesn’t distract them with things that they don’t want to read.

“When you go into some communities, you can see how thin and flimsy their newspapers are. *Hamodia,* on the other hand, is a big, thick paper, full of color and advertisements. Religious Muslims and Christians can always get their news from the internet on Fridays or Sundays, but *shomer Shabbos* Jews cannot. Observant Jews will always need paper.”

Although it’s the summer and the hallways are relatively empty, I feel that my time is up with Prof. Goldman. Before I leave I ask him if he has any advice to share with *Hamodia*’s readers.

“The advice I give is to do something you love. Being an observant Jew shouldn’t restrict you; it should challenge you to share what you have with the world, to be an *or lagoyim* — a light unto the nations — not just within our own community, but to bring the beauty to the outside world as well.”

*Reprinted from the September 16, 2013 edition of Hamodia.*

**How to Become a**

**Berachah to Others**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

“*I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.*” (*Beresheet* 12:2)

In this week’s *perashah*, Hashem says to Abraham *Abinu*, “I will make your name great,” and then adds “*v’heye berachah.*” Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch zt”l writes that these words are a directive to all of us to “become a blessing, bring happiness and inspiration to mankind.”

Rabbi Pesach Krohn says, you might ask “But how can I be a *berachah*?” Well, many surely remember the ill-fated flight of US Air 1549, which left Laguardia Airport on a freezing afternoon in January 2009. Within a minute of takeoff, Captain Chesely Sullenberger realized that he had no power because a flock of birds had been sucked into the engines. He would have to crash land his plane someplace. He could land on the streets of New York, where those on board, in addition to people on the ground, would no doubt be killed – or he could try to set his plane down in the Hudson River.

Incredibly, and with great skill (and of course, with help from Hashem), he landed the plane perfectly on the Hudson and everyone on board survived. A year later, he visited the site, where he was asked, “Where did you get the inner strength to accomplish that remarkable feat?”

What he replied is illuminating. He said that his father had died when he was in his early teens, and that the anguish, fear and loneliness he had experienced were excruciating. “As I was flying over the Hudson, all I could think of was that if I don’t land the plane perfectly, relatives of those who perish will feel the terrible pain that I felt, and I wanted to avoid that.”

That’s how he became a *berachah* to others, and that’s what you can do to emulate the directive given to Abraham *Abinu* – “become a blessing.” Look into your life. Have you gone through a financial crisis, a difficult marriage, a divorce, a severe problem with a child, a health issue? If you have made it through any of these crises, reach out to someone who is going through the same thing. Reassure the person, tell him or her that there is hope. Discuss, listen and advise. Become a berachah!

*Reprinted from this week’s email of the Jersey Shore Torah Bulletin.*

**Update on Jewish 2013**

**Nobel Prize Winners**

[**Two Jews Win Nobel Prize in Medicine**](http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/two-jews-win-nobel-prize-in-medicine/2013/10/07/)

**By:** [**Jewish Press News Briefs**](http://www.jewishpress.com/author/newsbriefs/)

**Published:** October 7th, 2013

Two more Jews, both from the United States, and a German non-Jew won the Nobel Prize in medicine in Monday, while two Israel contenders lost out.

The newest Jewish Nobel Prize winners are James Rothman of Yale University and Randy Schekman of the University of California. The Israeli hopefuls were Hebrew University professors Howard Cedar and Aharon Razin.

The third winner Monday was Dr. Thomas Sudhof of Stanford University. All three scientists shared the $1.2 million for their research on how tiny bubbles are carriers inside cells, making sure that the right elements arrive at the right place and at the right time.

This year’s Nobel Prizes in other fields are to be announced within the next two weeks.

[**Jewish Professor Win Nobel Prize in Physics**](http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/jewish-professor-wins-nobel-prize-in-physics/2013/10/08/)

**By:** [**Jewish Press News Briefs**](http://www.jewishpress.com/author/newsbriefs/)

**Published:** October 8th, 2013

Professor Francois Baron Englert (80) shared a Nobel prize in physics with Professor Peter Higgs of Britain, for their discovery of the Higgs mechanism.

Englert is a Belgium Jew and Holocaust survivor.

Englert is Professor emeritus at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) where he is member of the Service de Physique Théorique. He is also a Sackler Professor by Special Appointment in the School of Physics and Astronomy at Tel-Aviv University and a member of the Institute for Quantum Studies at Chapman University in California.

[**Three More Jews Win Nobel Prize in Chemistry**](http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/three-more-jews-win-nobel-prize-in-chemistry/2013/10/09/)

**By:** [**Jewish Press News Briefs**](http://www.jewishpress.com/author/newsbriefs/)

**Published:** October 9th, 2013

The three man team of Professors Arieh Warshel, Michael Levitt and Martin Karplus just won the Nobel Prize in chemistry.

All three men are Jewish.

Warshel is an Israeli, born in Kibbutz Sde Nachum, while Levitt, who also holds Israeli citizenship was born in South Africa.

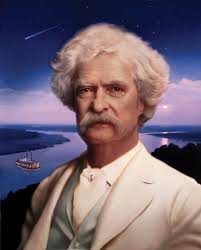
Karplus was born in Austria in 1930 and fled to the United States in 1938.

The trio won the prize the the development of multiscale models for complex chemical systems.

More than 20 percent of the 800 Nobel Prize winners so far have been Jewish although Jews represent only 0.2 of the world’s population. (Editor’s Note: Actually so far, 75% of the announced Nobel Prizes for 2013 have been awarded to Jews.)

*Reprinted from the October 13, 2013 email of The Jewish Press.*

**Mark Twain Commenting On the Jews**



“...If statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of stardust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk.

His contributions to the world’s list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world, in all the ages; and had done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it.

The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed; and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished.

The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?”

*Reprinted from Mark Twain’s essay (“Concerning The Jews,” Harper’s Magazine, 1899)*

**The Golden Column**

**Rabbi Dido Hakohen zs"l**

Rabbi Dido, the son of Rabbi Berechyah Hakohen zs"l was admiringly known as simply, "Rabbi Dido," and taught Torah to small schoolchildren in the famed city of Garba. In this city, the position of schoolteacher was considered more distinguished than the position of head of the Jewish court.

When the author of "Sha'ar Ssiyon," who was the head of the court, passed away, it was suggested to appoint in his place one of the teachers of small children who was a brilliant and proficient scholar. Rabbi Kalfon Moshe Hakohen zs"l strongly opposed the appointment, as the scholar in question was remarkably successful with small children, and removing him from his position would be too grave a loss.

Rabbi Dido Hakohen zs"l devoted all his energy to the sacred education of his students, and he invested endless time and effort into the children in his class. He never kept records of which parents paid tuition and which did not, or whether or not the tuition was paid in full. Whenever someone would pay him, he would immediately put the money in his pocket without counting, so as to emphasize the point that the critical factor was the teaching of Torah, not his salary.

An admirer once asked the great rabbi what was his secret, why was he so successful as an educator while so many others had tried and fell short of his success?

He answered that among all the grocers in the marketplace there is only one expert who determines the appropriate price of the produce. Why? Why is his word authoritative? Because he has the skill to look at a fruit and know immediately what lies inside, whether the fruit is sweet or sour, whether or not it has ripened. Furthermore, he can immediately determine the stability of the fruit, whether or not it will soon begin to rot. This is the entire work of the man in the market.

The educator, however, has an added responsibility - he must strengthen the child's weaknesses, he must have his student stand on his own two feet. This is the most awesome responsibility in the world!

*Reprinted from the Aram Soba Newsletter from Parshat Bereshit 5774.*