**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas Shemos 5774**

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**The True Love of Brothers**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

The slavery in Egypt begins with the decree of Pharaoh to throw all Jewish baby boys into the Nile. The daughter of the wicked king stood at the riverbank and saw an infant in a wicker basket among the reeds. The *pasuk* tells us that she saw a child, and a youth was crying. She exclaimed, “This is a Jewish child.”

**How Did She Know**

**It was a Jewish Child?**

 Who was actually crying and how did she know it was a Jewish child? Most people assume that it was the infant Moshe in the wicker basket who was crying, but the *Ba’al Haturim* says something incredible. The child who was crying was Aharon! Now we can understand the conclusion that Batya, Pharaoh’s daughter, drew. She knew it was a Jewish child because one brother was crying for the other.

 This is our hallmark as Jews. We care, cry for, and are concerned about each other. In light of this let us share a remarkable story, told by Rabbi Pesah Krohn, that occurred in Israel a number of years ago.

**A Close Friend of**

**Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz**

 Rabbi Simcha Wasserman zt”l, the son of the legendary Rav Elchanan Wasserman hy”d, moved to Israel in the 1970’s after spending more than two decades in Los Angeles where he founded *Yeshivah Ohr Elchanan*. While in Jerusalem he became a close friend to Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz z”l, the noted member of *Kneset* representing *Agudat Yisrael*. They became *habrutot* (study partners) and learned together for years. Tragically, Rav Simcha and his wife had no children. They chose their burial place which was to be *Har Hamenuchot* in Jerusalem. They were buried in those plots one after another within a short period of time. Rav Simcha passed away on the second of *Heshvan* (1993) and his wife, Faige, passed away ten days later.

 Many years earlier Rabbi Lorincz had bought a burial plot in *Har Hazeitim*, located just east of the Old City. However, after Rabbi Wasserman passed away Rabbi Lorincz told his family that he wished to sell his plot on *Har Hazeitim* and buy one on *Har Hamenuhot* next to Rav Simcha. His reasoning was beautiful “Sadly Rav Simcha and his wife had no children,” Rabbi Lorincz told his family. “Who then will go to pray at his grave, especially on the day of his *yahrzeit*?”

 Seventeen years later he passed away on *Rosh Hodesh Heshvan*. Because the custom is not to visit a cemetery on *Rosh Hodesh*, the custom of Ashkenazic Jews is to visit on the day later. Therefore the Lorincz children always visited their father’s grave on the day after his *yahrzeit,* the second day of *Heshvan*, and then honoring their father’s wishes, they would recite prayers at the grave (right next to his) of his friend Rav Simcha, on the exact day of his *yahrzeit*, the second of *Heshvan*. True brothers and sisters care for each other, sometimes in extraordinary ways.

**A Rebbe’s Special Blessing**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

In the Chabad community in Crown Heights, there is a woman who is very active in the community (I wasn't told her name but for the sake of the story we'll call her Sarah) who told the story of how she became religious.

She and her brother were brought up in a "reform" home where Torah was of little or no importance but her brother attended a few classes at a Chabad House in New Jersey became interested in Judaism and tried to get her involved but it didn't work.

She even spent several Sabbaths there with him and although it was a pleasant experience, while there she decided to seek spirituality elsewhere.

She enrolled in a seminar of Scientology or some similar idolatry and prepared for new adventurous vistas. But because the seminar she signed up for was to begin only in two weeks time she decided to stay on for one more Shabbat at Chabad.

That Shabbat, like all the others at Chabad, was peaceful and uneventful (in fact she never was quite sure why she went in the first place) and shortly after it ended she was already heading for the front door of the Synagogue with her bag packed.

On the way out she approached the Chabad house director to say good bye but he was so busy on the phone and simultaneously arranging the room for some program that was about to happen, he didn't even notice her.

**Saying Her Good Byes**

She moved closer, waiving and smiling trying to catch his attention and said, "Rabbi, I just wanted to say thank you for the Shabbos" and turned to leave.

But he signaled for her to wait, finished his call, and said, "Hey! Why don't you stay for the lecture? It's a great speaker, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hecht from Chicago, you'll really enjoy it. C'mon, he'll only speak for an hour or so, unless you have somewhere really important to go and he tells fantastic stories."

It sounded harmless enough and she really wasn't in a hurry, so she put her suitcase in a corner and began helping everyone set up the room.

Just as she was beginning to have second thoughts about staying the Rabbi arrived. He was an older man, perhaps in his late sixties, but he had a contagious smile and warm eyes that made her forget her qualms. Everyone took their seats and the lecture began.

He was really an excellent and friendly speaker. But after just a few minutes

he suddenly interrupted what he was saying and changed the subject,

**Recalling a Strange Thing**

**That Once Happened to Him**

"My dear friends please excuse my changing the subject but I just remembered, for the first time, a strange thing that happened to me and I want to share it with you.

"A long time ago, about a year after the World War Two, I flew to New York from my home in Chicago to have a private audience with the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of blessed memory (who passed away in 1950).

"I entered into his room, gave him a letter upon which I wrote all my questions but instead of reading it he held it in his hand, looked at me and said: 'Rabbi Hecht, do you know who was just in here to see me? Rabbi Boyer the well known philanthropist'

"The Rebbe's holy eyes were red as though he had been crying.

"I remember thinking to myself that this was very strange because the Rebbe would never reveal to others what was told him in private. But he continued; 'Rabbi Boyer told me that he had just returned from a tour of refugee camps in Europe. He said there are thousands of Jews in these camps; broken souls, all that remains of European Jewry.' The Rebbe began weeping aloud. He dried his eyes and continued:

"'He explained, that even though he is a Misnagid (opposer of the Chassidic way) he came to visit me because of a young boy he met there wandering through one of the camps.

**A Twelve Year Old Boy**

"'The boy was about twelve years old, wearing a 'kippa (Yarmulke) and his clothes, even his shoes, were so old and torn that he looked like a truly lost sheep. So he went up to him, took out a ten dollar bill from his wallet and offered it to him.

"But the boy shook his head 'no' and said in Yiddish that he didn't take gifts and that he didn't need anything.

"'When Rabbi Boyer insisted, the boy looked up at him and said, 'If you want to give me something, then buy me a ticket to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe in New York! I want to see the Rebbe!'

"Rabbi Boyer was astounded. Here is a young boy who probably had been through hell, lacking even clothes, and what is going on in his mind? What is he thinking about? He wants to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe! Just imagine what an education he must have had to teach him that.

**Promised to Mention**

**His Name to the Rebbe**

"Of course Rav Boyer couldn't afford to give him such a gift but did promise him that when he arrived back in New York he would go see me and mention his name to me.

"Then I asked him to tell me about the various refugee camps and when he finished (here the Rebbe began weeping almost uncontrollably) I asked him if there is anything he wanted. He answered that he wanted me to bless him. So I blessed him that he should have 'nachas' (satisfaction) from his offspring.' Then the Rebbe turned to my letter."

Rabbi Hecht apologized again to the crowd for telling a story out of context, and he continued his lecture.

When he finished and everyone applauded, thanked him and left he noticed that one girl was remained sitting in her seat, her face in her hands weeping; it was Sarah.

He and the Chabad House Rabbi approached her and asked if anything was wrong. She dried her eyes. Smiled a smile of thanks and said,

"I'm sorry for crying, excuse me but I couldn't help myself. You see…. that Rabbi you spoke of in your story, Rabbi Boyer …. He was my grandfather.

"That blessing the Rebbe gave him must have been for me! G-d wanted you to tell that story tonight so I would hear it."

She changed her mind about the cult and decided to give another chance to becoming the type of Jew that would give her grandfather (and hundreds of generations of grandfathers before him) 'nachas'.

 *Reprinted from last week’s email of Yeshiva Orh Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*

**Stairway to Heaven**

**One long, dark, memorable night I discovered my mother.**

**By Rabbi Yaakov Salomon**

“Why are you coming to the wedding?”

“What kind of question is that?” Mom answered. “I'm going because I was invited.”

Mrs.Leah Salomon

If you knew my mom, you'd understand why the conversation ended right there. My brother-in-law's daughter was getting married (no relation to her), in a wedding hall that was a good hour from her home (she didn't drive), on the hottest day of the summer (she was 93 at the time).

But her attendance was never in doubt. It was a joyous occasion, she loved life, and... well you heard her -- she was invited.

She looked beautiful that sweltering August night in 2003 and the guests were, as usual, drawn to her. People lined up to speak to Mrs. Lea Salomon. It was worth the wait.

**News of the Major Blackout on the East Coast**

It was a few minutes after the soup. The news filtered into the ballroom lobby in incremental waves. Much of the East Coast had been blanketed with a major blackout. Millions were plunged into sudden and crippling darkness. News outlets were reporting that repairs did not seem imminent. A state of emergency was declared in eight states and parts of Canada.

But inside the hall, the trumpets blared, the chandeliers shone brightly and the dance floor laughed. Inexplicably, in the midst of a vast sea of supreme darkness, this one wedding hall was a festive oasis of unremitting delight.

The buzz among the guests was uni-focused.

“Did you hear about the blackout?”

“Can you believe we have power here?”

“Do you think there will be looting?”

“Where are you going to sleep tonight?”

**A Most Stubborn Woman**

It was that last question that troubled most of us. Many of my friends (myself included), were on their way to summer bungalows in the mountains which, while without power, at least afforded us a bearable sleeping climate. And it was there that I proposed to take Mom after the wedding. Going back to her Manhattan apartment was not an option. Without lights, an elevator (she lived on the 7th floor), or air conditioning, Mom basically was left with two choices -- our cramped, but cooler bungalow, or a night in nearby Monsey with one of my wife’s brothers.

Her response, as always, was clear and definitive: “I want to go home.”

Mom reveled in the impossible, but now she was crossing the line.

I could tell you I was surprised, but I’d be lying. Mom reveled in the impossible, but now she was crossing the line.

“You know I’d be glad to drive you home, Mom, but tonight is just not going to work. The bungalow is really not so crowded. You’ll be fine.”

My logic was quite powerful -- just not quite as powerful as this 70 pound giant.

“I’m not a young woman. I need to sleep in my own bed. Take me home. Now.”

What would you have done? Think about it. You know that home was clearly not feasible, yet here was my totally autonomous 93-year-old Champion Mom insisting that she would not take ‘No’ for an answer. Predictably, minutes later I caved.

“Whatever you say, Mom. It’s a wasted trip to the city because we’ll just have to come back, but you need to see that for yourself. I understand.”

We strode to the car, sans flashlight. I knew we’d be returning soon.

**Into the Darkness**

The trip to Manhattan was eerily uneventful and uncharacteristically traffic-free. Apparently people feared driving on unlit highways or chose to remain near loved ones. It was, after all, a legitimate crisis. We rode mostly in silence. My thoughts centered on what time we would get back -- it was already close to 1 a.m, Who knows what Mom was thinking… but thinking she was. Thinking was her greatest life passion. I would soon find out.

We exited the Hudson Parkway at 96th street and were abruptly engulfed in full-scale darkness. The highway had been partially lit by the headlights of other cars, but the side streets were pitch-black. I swallowed hard and flashed my bright lights on, while proceeding at about 10 mph. I stole a glance to the passenger seat -- no reaction… at all.

**“Where Do You**

**Think You Are Going!”**

A few minutes later we arrived. The clock read 1:16 a.m. I squeezed into a surprising parking space and shut off the engine (and the car lights), accentuating my point. We were now submerged in total darkness. Eerie is not the word. The seven-floor apartment building stood proudly to our left, I suppose. I couldn't even see it. I turned to Mom with a triumphant expression, as if to say, “I told you so.” She was no more than four feet away from me, but I couldn't see her face.

But my ears were operating quite well. I heard her shuffling and then I heard a click. She was unlocking her seat belt.

“Where do you think you are going!?” I asked with a tinge of irreverence and incredulousness.

“To my apartment,” she answered matter-of-factly.

“Mom, don’t be ridiculous. We can’t even see the building!”

There was no response.

Next thing I knew the passenger door swung open, the car dome light went on, and darned if she wasn’t bolting her way, cane in hand, on to her destination. I flew out myself and grasped her forearm as she crossed the abandoned, darkened street. I was hoping to re-direct her back into the car, but she would have none of that.

“Be reasonable, Mom,” I pleaded. “You live on the seventh floor. There are no lights in the whole building and no elevator! It’s just not safe!”

My words swiftly drifted into the moonless night. She bounded forward, walking with a resolve and a determination that was alien to me. In seconds, we were touching the building’s exterior glass door. It was heavy. I usually opened it for her. Not tonight. Tonight was reserved for powers I had never before witnessed.

**Mom Thrust the Big Door Open**

Mom thrust the big door open while simultaneously shoving me aside -- just in case I continued my intrusive efforts. The dark somehow got darker. The vestibule covered about 16 feet until we reached the next roadblock – the interior…LOCKED…glass door. I heard her fumble in her pocket for her keys. This was getting very crazy. Valiantly, I made one final attempt.

“PLEASE, MOMMY! YOU CAN’T GO IN THERE! IT’S DANGEROUS! THERE ARE NO LIGHTS ANYWHERE AND NO ELEVATOR AND NO AIR CONDITIONING! PLEASE RE-CONSIDER!”

The only answer I got was the sound of the key entering the lock. We were now in the lobby. I couldn’t see an inch in front me. I shuddered thinking this is what blindness must be like.

It was time for me to surrender. I worried terribly how this saga would end. What possible plan could she have? But a strange semi-calm was on its way. It comes with a resignation and an awareness that something very sublime was now in control.

**Knocking on the Super’s Door**

Knock…knock…knock…

“What are you doing?” I called out.

“I’m trying to find the Super,” she said.

She banged again, a little harder. She knew that the building superintendent lived in the first apartment on the left. Somehow she had found her way to what must have been his door. Seconds later, we heard a frightened voice, with a Spanish accent.

“Who's there?”

“It’s Mrs. Salomon, from 7D,” she answered.

Still seeing nothing, I heard the door squeak open. The Super knew Mom. Everyone knew Mom. With the door now open, I could see Mr. Lopez in the shadow of a kitchen candle that flickered in the background. He was wearing Shorty pajamas and a befuddled, but half-grinned expression. As I said…he knew Mom. Still, even he was surprised.

“Mrs. Salomon! What can you be doing here??”

**Demanding a Candle**

His English was less than polished, but his amazement was more than clear.

I peered over at Mom. Due to the faint flicker from inside the apartment, I could finally see her. There she stood at the threshold; a hunched 4 foot 10 figure, thin as a rail but tall as a monument. The scene was beyond incongruous. There was Mom, bedecked in perfectly coiffed and stylish brunette wig, adorned by a stunning gold wedding gown with beige trim and fabulous shoes, facing (at 1:30 in the morning), in total darkness, half-naked Mr. Lopez.

“I need a candle,” she quipped. Mom never minced words. No explanation was forthcoming.

“But Mrs. Salomon,” argued Lopez, “you cannot go upstairs. We have no electricity…no elevator!”

“Just give me a candle,” she insisted.

Lopez knew enough not to mess further. He returned in a minute with a large and lit candle.

**The Heat was Unbearable**

“Thank you,” she said and turned toward the elevator, candle in hand.

“You’re not walking up seven flights of stairs, Mom. No way.”

But she didn’t stop at the elevator. She kept on walking. I found myself a couple of steps behind. The heat was unbearable, but only I seemed to be sweating. I watched her advancement, but hardly believed what I saw. She was headed for the sweltering stairwell.

“You’re not walking up seven flights of stairs, Mom. No way.”

She was.

One proud step at a time she climbed this giant mountain of pride and determination. The flame danced before her. Holding her bony arm and walking beside on her right, I breathed heavily and sweated some more. I wasn’t quite sure who was helping whom. The stairwell shone brightly that magical August night and I held back a torrent of tears that were generated from awe, dignity, and unmitigated respect.

The pace slowed around floor number four and I began to fear for her health. This was serious stuff and I considered my very few options. No matter – she just kept going, throwing caution to the wind. But by the time the fifth floor appeared, I noticed the wobbling. She IS human, I remember thinking.

She gently placed her petite frame on the landing…smiled…and spoke to me.

“I don’t think I can continue,” she admitted.

I sat down beside her and draped my sweaty arm around her suddenly broad shoulders. Like two wounded soldiers on a historic battlefield, we embraced. It was a moment that would be forever etched in a loving canvas.

**Defeat was Not in**

**This Heroine’s Lexicon**

But defeat was not in this heroine’s lexicon. She could smell the finish line and would not be denied. She fumbled for her keys again. She always loved those keys. They were personal symbols of her prized independence. She handed them to me.

“Take the keys,” she said. Her voice was faint, but her resolve was unyielding.

“You go upstairs. Go into my apartment and bring me a glass of water -- room temperature. (Even now, she would not miss a beat.) I’ll wait here. I’ll be fine.”

“But Mom, I need the candle to go up. I can’t leave you here in total darkness.”

“I’m fine. I’m fine,” she reassured. “Just go.”

**Returning with a Glass of Water**

I bumbled up the last two flights, entered the pitch-black apartment and filled a glass with water -- room temperature. When I returned to the fifth floor, she was waiting patiently. Sip by sip she downed the water and smiled at me.

“I’m ready,” she declared.

The final two flights were no match for this champion. She had climbed her Everest and planted her flag.

She was home.

\* \* \*

We didn’t get much sleep that night, but the dream had already occurred before we went to bed. Power was restored the next morning.

 We never again spoke about the events of the night of August 14, 2003. In the rare time that I broached the topic, she shunned the discussion. I wasn’t sure if she was embarrassed or just too modest…or maybe both. No matter. To me it was a defining declaration of the power of the human spirit.

It was that remarkable strength that allowed her to survive two World Wars and a lifetime of incessant hardships and challenges. No wonder that when she finally succumbed nearly five years later, no one could believe that she died.

If there are weddings in Heaven, you can bet Lea Salomon is there.

And why not?

She was invited.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of Aish.com*

**Caterer, Matchmaker,**

**And Talmid Chacham**

**By Daniel Keebler**

**Rabbi Shalom Katz**, **age: 58**

**Home: Har Nof, Jerusalem**

**Education: McMaster University – major: B.A. in religion**

**Occupation: Catering Business**

**Ohr Somayach alumnus - 1979**

Young Shalom Katz started as a busboy and worked his way up to manager of a three-story gourmet restaurant of French cuisine. When his culinary talents led him to Los Angeles, he was working for a top caterer in Beverly Hills, including catering the bar mitzvah of a Jewish Hollywood star.

But for young Katz, the excitement at that time was not the food he was putting out to the rich and famous, but the Torah he was taking in from a local synagogue. He decided to come to Ohr Somayach to study Judaism more seriously.

Rabbi Katz says he never spent one penny on advertising since he became observant. Yet, less than one month of his arrival at Ohr Somayach, a neighborhood *rebbetzin* was determined to organize groups of women to take cooking classes taught by young Katz. He was soon asked to do a catering job for a famous neighborhood family, and from there he began catering about once a week.

Rabbi Pindrus used to tell young Katz and his peers at Ohr Somayach that they need to *learn* the Torah, not just “learn *how* to learn.” Rabbi Katz feels he has lived up to those words over the years. After Ohr Somayach, he joined a *kollel* (advanced Torah study institution) in Har Nof, where he learns to this day — morning, afternoon, and evening — taking time off to cater as he needs.

 “Earning a living is totally Divine Providence, and a fine balance with Torah learning,” says Rabbi Katz who has married off five of his seven children

so far and completed four cycles of the Babylonian Talmud with the worldwide Daf Yomi (literally: “daily page”) program.

He is currently a study partner with the future Chief Rabbi of India and is helping him prepare for his rabbinical exams. Despite his busy schedule, Rabbi Katz spends 30 minutes a day on the phone as matchmaker for English speaking *ba’alei* *teshuva* (returnees to traditional Jewish observance), and teaches marriage preparatory courses to young bridegrooms. Rabbi Katz says that he enjoys participating in the process of G-d’s bringing together two souls.

*Reprinted from last week’s email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine of the Internet.*

**Story #837**

**Eighteen Equals Life**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[editor@ascentofsafed.com](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=ABC&msgNum=0000hwk0:001IdjJl00000BZA&count=1387163226&randid=1940494626&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=1940494626)

**By Chaya M. Klein**

SPRING OF 1944 brought the terror of the Nazi horror to Northern Transylvania, including the province of Marmurese and town of Leordina. The Nazis rounded up all the Jews, killing many in the process, and deporting the remainder to the infamous death camp of Auschwitz.

Yechezkel Klein, his wife, Devorah, and their two young children, a boy and a girl, were among those viciously torn from their homes and their lives. The Nazis were ruthless in their cruelty; arrival in Auschwitz brought immediate death to the young mother and her children, and tragic horror to Yechezkel, a young man of 28 years old. A chasid and talmudic scholar who had sat and learned in the yeshivas of Sigit, his hands that were accustomed to turning the pages of classic Torah texts day and night knew nothing of hard, manual labor.

**Put to Work Breaking Stones in a Quarry**

Choosing among the young, strong men to partake in grueling, backbreaking work, the Nazis put Yechezkel Klein on a work force breaking stones in a quarry. He was forced to work long hours on end with barely bread and water as sustenance. His heart heavy with the loss of his wife and children, Yechezkel, like so many others, labored hard, mindlessly following orders, existing on the basic instinct of survival. And yet, amidst all the horrors, he strove to fulfill the mitzvot as best he could, living each day knowing it could be his last.

He hid his tefillin well and rose early each day to put them on, praying for G-d to let him and his fellow Jews somehow survive the misery each hour was sure to bring. His tefillin were large and rather unwieldy, difficult for him to keep concealed. He did his best to hide them, wrapping them in rags, desperate to ensure that they did not fall into beastly hands.

**Caught Wearing**

**Tefillin by a Nazi Guard**

One day, as a weak and weary Yechezkel stood swaying slowly, his arm bound in the straps of his tefillin, one of the Nazi guards stormed into the barracks. Shouting and screaming at the sight of this Jew, gaunt and pale, wrapped in his tefillin, the Nazi began beating Yechezkel over the head with the butt of his rifle. Over and over, kicking and bashing him on the head and body, the Nazi did not stop until Yechezkel lay bloody and unconscious on the floor. Miraculously, he regained consciousness sometime the next day, realizing what a close call he had had and knowing that he had to find a better way to hide his tefillin.

Each day brought new deaths among the inmates of Auschwitz. Killed at the whim of the brutal Nazis, dying of disease and hunger, suffering from broken hearts and broken bodies, the list of the dead grew at an alarming rate. One such death left behind a pair of tefillin that were small, and easier to hide than the bulky pair Yechezkel had since his Bar Mitzvah.

Leaving behind all sentimental attachment to his own tefillin, he rescued the smaller pair from the martyr who had left all worldly pain behind. He continued to wrap them in non-descript rags, and hid them wherever he could find a secret place, while he continued to seek a moment each day to put on the tefillin and pray for Mashiach to come and release all of them from this hell on earth.

**Tens of Thousands of Jews**

**Forced onto Death Marches**

JANUARY 1945 brought the advance of Russian troops. The commanders of Auschwitz hastened to clear out as many of the camp’s inmates as they could, sending over 58,000 prisoners on forced death marches. The last few days of January brought the Russians to liberate Auschwitz, finding 600 corpses the Nazis had murdered in their frantic efforts to evacuate the camp and retreat from the oncoming Russian forces.

The Russians also found 7,650 surviving prisoners, ill, diseased and starving. Of these survivors, the Russians took all those who were on the work forces, claimed they had conspired with the enemy, and marched them off to Siberia as prisoners of war, along with any German officers or soldiers left behind.

Yechezkel Klein was among those unjustly accused of such conspiracy and collusion. Worn and weary, broken and weak, he was held captive along with 200 other Jews, prisoners of the Russian army.

The journey to Siberia in the cold harsh winter was long and hard. Food was scarce and warm clothing nowhere to be found. As bodies fell in illness and death, their clothing was taken to cover those barely clinging to life. Prisoners scrabbled over crusts of moldy bread, eating snow melted in their hands.

**Helping a Nazi Soldier to Die**

One day, one of the Nazi soldiers fell to the snow covered ground in the throes of fever. Craving drink in his feverish state, he begged those around him for water. Everyone knew that with this illness, drinking water brought quick and painful death. Filled with grief and helplessness at his own personal situation, Yechezkel found snow and fed it to the fallen soldier. Let him have what he wants and let him die, he thought.

Not long after, the soldier did indeed die. To remember this soldier who had killed so many, to never forget the tragedy he had helped perpetuate, Yechezkel kept the soldierâ€™s small wooden brush. (His son to this day keeps this brush as a memento of all that his father suffered).

Reaching the deep winter wilderness that is Siberia, the Jews struggled to survive. Yechezkel Klein managed to hold on to his tefillin through all of these tumultuous times. No matter how hungry, weak or frozen he was, he found the strength to bind the sacred straps upon his arm and around his head. He had to hide in a deserted and abandoned building each day to fulfill this commandment of the Al-mighty who had helped him survive this far.

**Prayed with Tears**

**Streaming Down His Face**

ONE MORNING, TOWARDS THE END OF 1946, as Yechezkel stood wrapped in his tefillin, eyes closed, praying with all his heart, he suddenly heard the heavy stomping of boots echoing down the empty corridors of the old deserted building. There was nowhere to hide in this building bare of furniture, walls broken and windows smashed. Hearing the footsteps grow louder and nearer and knowing there was nothing more he could do, Yechezkel closed his eyes and prayed fervently, tears streaming down his face, the words of Shema Yisroel coming from his lips as he prepared for what must surely be the end.

The footsteps came into the room where he had concealed himself. Time stood still. The silence was absolute. Yechezkel kept his eyes squeezed shut, waiting for the blow or the shot.

What he felt though was a soft stroke upon his cheek. “Shh ¦I will not hurt you. You will be alright” He heard the words, spoken softly in Russian, and thought he must be dreaming. He opened his eyes and found himself face-to-face with a Russian officer who was gazing at him with a smile upon his lips and tears in his eyes. Realizing this officer must be another Jew, Yechezkel began to weep openly. The officer, too, wept, saying he remembered his grandfather standing thus with tefillin upon his head and his arm.

**Offers to Help His Fellow Jew**

“Tell me how I can help you, my brother” the officer implored.

“Can you help us, free us? There are only 18 Jews still alive of the 200 that were taken from Auschwitz over a year ago. We only wish to return home to live some sort of life. Can you help us go home?” asked Yechezkel hopefully.

The officer promised to try his best. Two weeks later, Yechezkel Klein and the other 18 Jews who had survived were freed from the Siberian wasteland. Wearily they made their way home to begin to rebuild life from the ashes of tragedy.

YECHEZKEL KLEIN WENT HOME to Leordina where he married his second wife, Leah. Together they made their way to Israel. While they were detained en route in Cypress, their daughter Chaya Baila was born. Their son Moshe was born in the holy land, where Yechezkel spent every moment that he could spare immersed in the holy texts of Torah.

Yechezkel had the merit and the pleasure of seeing his children grown and married, although his health was never fully regained and for the remainder of his life he was frail and thin. Unfortunately, he did not live to see all 18 of his grandchildren born. Yechezkel Klein passed away on 2 Tevet 5745 (1984).

Today there are, praise G-d, numerous Yechezkel grandchildren and great-grandchildren, proud to carry the name of this simple yet holy Jew. With the blessing of the Al-mighty, may there be many more.

Eighteen grandchildren, 18 lives saved; you do the math¦.

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**Source:** Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from an article by Chaya Klein, as told by Yechezkel Klein, her father-in-law of blessed memory, to his children. Chaya Klein is the wife of Moshe, son of Yechezkel Klein, and also the daughter of an important ASCENT staff couple, Chana (o.b.m.) and Zalman Tornek. Her original version of this story was first published at //Mikveh.org.

Connection: Last Friday was the Fast of the Tenth of Tevet, which has become also the date to say Kaddish for those martyrs of the Holocaust (and all the others through the centuries) whose date of death is unknown.

**From Hungarian Neo-Nazi**

**To Orthodox Jew**

**ByTova Dvorin**

 A film is being made on the life story of reformed neo-Nazi Csanad Szegedi, who made headlines last year after [discovering his Jewish roots](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/157310). The film will be produced by production company AJH Films and seasoned documentary and non-fiction company Roast Beef Productions.



Csanad Szegedi

 Szegedi's career in Far Right politics was [cut short](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/158521) by the revelation that his grandparents were Holocaust survivors and that he was Jewish. As a leading member of the Jobbik party, Szegedi’s politics were characterized by his anti-Semitic and anti-Roma comments. His rise through the party ranks took him to his current position as a Member of the European Parliament in Brussels.

 Along the way, he achieved notoriety for re-establishing the Magyar Guarda (Hungarian Guard), a reformation of the Arrow Cross, which was responsible for the murder of thousands during WWII. This paramilitary group, who were promised powers of public authority in the event of Jobbik coming to power, was shut down by order of a Budapest Tribunal in 2009.

 He was also condemned by watchdog organizations like the Anti-Defamation League, who warned the public of Szegedi's anti-Semitic views as he rose to power.

 Political parties within the Far Right have gained popularity in recent years throughout Europe. In the 2010 General Elections, Jobbik increased its number of seats in the Hungarian Parliament to 47, becoming the third largest party despite having been established a mere eight years previously. This rise has been mirrored by an increase in anti-Semitic and anti-Roma attacks.

 The crisis of heritage has placed Szeged in a unique position. Once Szeged's Jewish heritage was revealed, his position in Jobbik was cut short and he was forced to resign. Despite this, he has kept his position in the European Parliament as an independent politician; Szegedi also bravely [asked for forgiveness](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/158666) from the Jewish community for his actions in 2012, after meeting with Hungarian Orthodox Rabbi, Rabbi Slomo Koves.

 “Had I made any comments in the past years that offended the Jewish community, I ask for forgiveness,” Szegedi told Rabbi Slomo Koves. “Now that I have been faced with my Jewish roots, that I do not regret at all, keeping in touch with the leaders of the Hungarian Jewish community has become especially important for me,” he said.

 Szegedi also reportedly has been living as an Orthodox Jew since the revelation, slowly taking on observances like keeping kosher and the Shabbat, according to *Ha'aretz*. *CBN* notes that he has also visited Israel, including the Yad V'Shem Holocaust museum and the Western Wall.

 The revelation has elicited mixed reactions from the political and Jewish communities alike. Szegedi's story has made headlines on both news sources and Jewish websites as a source of inspiration and reform.

 Unfortunately, however, the politician's past continues to follow him; just six days ago, the former Jobbik official was deported from Canada, just 24 hours after arriving to speak at a Chabad Lubavitch event in Montreal, according to *Global News*.

 “I acknowledge that I have a lot of sins. And this is why I understand those people who are not happy me being here. But these sins I try to rectify not only at the verbal level but at the level of my actions,” said Szegedi in a taped message to the Jewish community there.

 “I have to tell the Canadian Jewish community… that I am exactly such a Jew as they are. I cannot help it – as you cannot help it," he concluded.

*Reprinted from the December 17, 2013 email of Arutz Sheva*

**Ostreicher Released from Bolivian Prison**

**By the Jewish Telegraph Agency (JTA)**

 Jacob Ostreicher, a New York businessman held in Bolivia since 2011, is back in the United States.



**Jacob Ostreicher**

 Two Jewish news websites, JP Updates and Algemeiner, reported Monday that Ostreicher returned Sunday to New York, although the circumstances of his departure from Bolivia are not clear.

 Ostreicher, who had a flooring business in New York, invested money with a group involved in a rice-growing venture in Bolivia and was managing the business when he was arrested on suspicion of money laundering. He also was accused of doing business with drug traffickers.

 However, in June, Bolivian authorities arrested 15 people — including government officials — on charges of engineering his arrest in hopes of extracting cash payment.

 Despite those charges, Bolivia did not release Ostreicher, a haredi Orthodox father of five, and his case drew the attention of leading lawmakers in Congress, including Reps. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) and Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), and Sean Penn, the movie actor and human rights activist.

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