**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas terumah 5771**

**Volume 2, Issue #22**

**Chassidic Story #688**

**Sensitivity**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

 Rabbi Yehoshua Kleinlehrer, a shaliach [emissary] of the Beis Yisrael , the Rebbe of Gur for the first 30 years of the state of Israel, testified to the Rebbe's sensitivity and nobility revealed in their full glory. Countless times he saw how his soft heart and desire to do good for others caused him to notice the tiniest details. He went out of his way to make sure he never caused anyone a hint of annoyance or distress.

 There were two brothers who studied in the yeshiva together. The younger brother was exceptionally brilliant; the older one was an ordinary student who did not excel in any area.

 Once, the pair arrived at the Shabbos night Tish (a rebbe's open table) just as the Rebbe was distributing wine. Amid the noise that naturally accompanied the distribution and the shouts of LChaim from all directions, the Rebbe instructed me to remember to give the older brother wine before the younger one, and to give him a larger amount, so that his extra respect for the older one would be unmistakable.

 “The younger brother is a better learner, and his brother probably feels bad about that,” the Rebbe explained. ''The older brother needs to be encouraged so that he doesn't feel uncomfortable.”

 “Do you know what a Tish is like?” Reb Yehoshua asks. “Hundreds of people standing, each one with his own personal thoughts - and the Rebbe thinks about a Chevron bachur who might feel uneasy during the distribution of wine.”

 Rabbi Yehoshua Kleinlehrer also told how the Rebbe was extremely considerate of others and went to great lengths to ensure that peoples feelings were not hurt. A certain Rosh Yeshiva who had only recently been appointed to the position once came to the Tish. Afterwards, I accompanied the Rebbe. Also with us was Rabbi Yehoshua Noach Binke, z''l, the Rebbe's outstanding faithful attendant.

 The Rebbe began complaining to Reb Yehoshua Noach. “So-and-so was recently appointed Rosh Yeshiva, and he should have received the respect due him at the Tish, but when you announced his name, you said, 'Leizer Moishe' [name has been changed], as if he were just anyone! True, that's the custom among chasidim, but he might think I don't want to acknowledge the fact that he's a Rosh Yeshiva. Don't we have to be considerate of his feelings?”

 The Rebbe then turned to me and said,” Go to his house and tell him that you heard me express my distress to the gabbai over the fact that he hadn't announced his name with proper respect. Why should a Jewfeel resentful?” he asked.

 As it was quite late at night, I suggested to the Rebbe that the Rosh Yeshiva might already have gone to bed.

 ''No, the Rebbe insisted. He hasn't gone to sleep yet. Go tell him what I told you to say, and report back to me.”

 I followed the Rebbe's instructions, and indeed the Rosh Yeshiva was still up. When I told him what the Rebbe had said, he seemed enormously pleased. I reported this back to the Rebbe.

 The Rebbe glowed. He smiled that special, broad smile of his and said, Nu, was he sleeping already?'' I confirmed that he had still been awake.

' 'Nu, the Rebbe said with satisfaction, who has ruach hakodesh [holy spirit] -- you or me? Now he's sleeping well.”

 Then, after pausing for a moment, he added, “It is forbidden to hurt people's feelings.''

 Source: As translated and posted by Yitz for heichalhanegina.blogspot.com from Shalheves Beis Yisrael, as told by R. Yehoshua Kleinlehrer.

 Connection: Seasonal - 34th yahrzeit

 Biographical Note: Rabbi Yisrael Alter of Ger (1894 - 2 Adar 1977), known as the Bais Yisroel, was the fourth Rebbe in the Gur dynasty. Following the death of his father in 1948, Ger grew under his leadership to be the largest Chasidic group in Israel. He lost his wife, children and grandchildren in the Holocaust, and although he married a second time, had no further children. He was succeeded by his brother, Rabbi Simcha-Bunim Alter, and then his youngest brother, Rabbi Pinchas-Menachem Alter.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of KabbalaOnline.org, a projectof Ascent of Safed* [www.ascentofsafed.com](http://www.ascentofsafed.com) [ascent@ascentofsafed.com](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/5?userinfo=eff1e795994608ed6885dfdeac88e827&count=1296660386&randid=1314452253)

**3,000 Chabad Women Affirm Mission: 'You Can Count on Us!"**

**By Hana Levi Julian**

 Anyone entertaining questions about whether the Chabad-Lubavitch movement treasures its women had those doubts removed Sunday night, where the security for the annual emissary banquet was as tight as for a presidential visit.

 Dozens of New York City's finest joined a like number of operatives from a private Israeli firm to provide security as thousands of Chassidic women descended on the Brooklyn Armory for the annual banquet of the International Conference of Female Emissaries.



photos courtesy of Chabad.org)

 Three thousand emissaries and their guests from 76 different countries filled the block-long facility to standing room-only capacity. A dozen mammoth video screens projected the proceedings for those seated at hundreds of tables across the hall. More than a dozen computer screens were monitored under the watchful eyes of some 35 audio-visual technicians quietly tucked away from public eyes in the balcony of the facility.

 In fact, all of the men were upstairs in a spot usually reserved for women, out of sight and mostly out of mind as the emissaries discussed what was foremost in their thoughts: how to juggle their twin responsibilities of serving their communities while taking care of their families.

 All of the speeches paid tribute to Rebetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson, the late wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, o.b.m., noting how the rebetzin managed to perfectly balance the two jobs throughout her lifetime. The event is scheduled each year to commemorate the yarzheit of the rebetzin, who was renowned for her legendary ability to remember even "unimportant" details about those with whom she came in contact.



 Dinie Greenberg, emissary to Shangai, served as emcee, introducing myriad speakers throughout the night. Of all those who spoke, however, the only men to address the gathering were the two most powerful in the movement.

 Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, secretary to the Rebbe for some 40 years, chairman of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch and head of Machne Israel, the movement's educational and social services division, who is also secretary of the Agudas Chasidei Chabad umbrella organization, and director of the Kehot Publication Society, spoke quietly and recounted his experiences with the Rebbe.

 Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, vice chairman of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, the educational arm of the movement, and head of the division that manages the emissaries, delivered a fiery speech on the merits of service to others, despite its difficulty. He told the crowd that by sending young couples out into the far-flung corners of the world on such an important mission, requiring mothers and wives to multi-task in so many ways, "the Rebbe created a league of Superwomen!"

 But it was the roll call of emissaries at the end of the evening that made it clear just how far the movement has come in its drive to ensure that Jews throughout the world will always have someone to whom they can turn for spiritual aid when the chips are down.

 From Nepal to Laos, Vietnam, and Korea, Thailand, India, Japan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Australia, Tunisia, Morocco, and the Congo, Venezuela, Brazil, Serbia, Croatia, Russia, Estonia, and dozens of others from Scandinavia, Europe, North and South America, each was called to stand up and accept applause.

 Glittering attire, carefully coiffed wigs and high heels all combined to make it an evening to remember -- as did a performance by more than a hundred young girls who attend the movement's online school program for the children of emissaries in far-flung locations. Those students as well as their friends from across the United States also gathered in Crown Heights for the five-day convention for special programming sessions and a final night "on the town."

 But it was at the end of the day that emissary Goldie Plotkin of Ontario, Canada emphasized the creed of the movement, and the women responded with a roar: "Rebbe, you can count on us!"

*Reprinted from the 27 Shevat 5771/February 1, 2011 email of Arutz Sheva (IsraelNational News.com)*

The Jewish Prince of Persia

**By Sara Yoheved Rigler**

The Shah of Iran's descendant tells his story from Jerusalem.

 Moshe (not his real name, lest the wrong people read this) looks like any other religious Jewish man in Jerusalem — dark hair, dark beard, wire-rimmed glasses, poring over a Talmudic tome in a yeshiva. No one would suspect that he is the great-great-grandson of a former Shah of Iran.

 Moshe’s life has had more dramatic twists than the Disney movie. He is a scion not of the Pahlavi dynasty, which was deposed by the Islamic Revolution after two short generations, but rather of the Qajar dynasty, which proudly ruled Persia for ten generations. He remembers visiting his great-grandmother, the daughter of Mohammed Ali Shah Qajar, whom they called the “Little Princess” until her death at age 99, who used to regale him with stories of growing up in the palace, in the shadow of the Peacock Throne. He also remembers escorting his great-uncle into a room of Persian expatriates in Europe; everyone bowed to his uncle and called him, “*shazdejeun*, great son of the king.”

 It was the first of three times in her life that Mina would lose everything in a single night.

 Moshe’s grandmother was married off to an aristocrat whose fiefdom was far from Tehran. “In great aristocratic families, it’s not good to work,” explains Moshe. “All his life, my grandfather didn’t work, but he gambled and did opium.” One fateful night, when Moshe’s mother Mina was nine years old, her father gambled away everything he owned — his palace, his landholdings, his stable of Arabian stallions. The family was cast out of their home with barely food to eat.

 It was the first of three times in her life that Mina would lose everything in a single night.

 The family retreated to Tehran and was given an apartment in the palatial home of the Little Princess, Mina’s grandmother. The family had lost its wealth, but not its prestige. “People in Persia are very proud of their origin,” comments Moshe. “People respected my mother because she was high-born. Even if you lost all your money, you are still respected. Persians are very proud, and if you are aristocracy, it’s even more so.”

 But at age 17, Mina risked losing even her status. She fell in love with Charles, a European Christian living in Tehran. When she revealed to her mother that she intended to marry this man who was neither Persian nor even Muslim, her mother threatened to disown her. Mina did not back down. At the end of a raging argument in which her mother told her she never wanted to see her again, the door was closed behind Mina, leaving her on the street with a single suitcase.

 Too chaste to go to Charles’s apartment, Mina sought shelter with a friend. The friend took her to a large house filled with women and gave her a room. After some time, a French man entered the room. It turned out that the place was a brothel. She escaped and fled to Charles.

 Charles, at age 22, was a budding scientist and a man of eloquence and charisma. He went to Mina’s mother and eventually convinced her to accept the marriage. Although Mina had a strong belief in God, like most of the Persian aristocracy she was a lukewarm Muslim. She converted to Christianity and the couple had three weddings: civil, Christian, and Moslem.

Childhood and the Revolution

 They lived in Tehran and Charles launched a company based on his scientific discoveries. In 1971, their second son Henry (later to become Moshe) was born. Strangely enough, his grandmother insisted on having him circumcised on the eighth day. He was also baptized as a baby. He was not given a Persian name, nor did his father permit him to learn to read and write Persian. Charles wanted his son to feel that the world was his home; his fate was to grow up with no home.

 Charles’s business was successful, and Henry was raised in the lap of luxury: his own horse, skiing every weekend, vacations in European capitals, and an Occidental school attended by the upper class. He remembers the privileged precincts of North Tehran as “a paradise for children. People were extremely good and friendly, we had a huge family, and I watched English television.”

 His idyllic childhood was ended by the Islamic Revolution of 1979. “People were killing each other in the streets.”

 His idyllic childhood was ended by the Islamic Revolution of 1979. “People were killing each other in the streets,” Moshe recalls. “I used to go to my school in a school bus. One day one of the school buses was blown up by a rocket. All the children on the bus were killed. Two days later my brother and I were in Europe.”

 They arrived in their new boarding school in the European countryside in a chauffeured Rolls Royce. None of the locals had ever seen such a sight. They thought the boys were from the family of the fleeing Shah.

 During the first phase of the Revolution, Iranians across the political and religious spectrum were united in their desire for liberty and to get rid of the Shah. Had Mina been a Pahlavi, she would have been executed. Instead, she was from the revered Qajar dynasty. Like many of the aristocracy, she made an amiable alliance with the new government. A year later, she brought her sons back to Iran.

 For Henry’s family, the national chaos was exacerbated by personal tragedy. Unscrupulous Western concerns had been trying to buy Charles’s innovative technology, but he had repeatedly refused. Finally, two Harvard men came to Tehran and over a period of a few months implemented a carefully plotted scheme to win Charles’s confidence. One night they plied him with liquor and got him to sign his business away. Overnight, the family lost everything. A broken Charles went to Europe, where he tried to start over again. A few months later, the family was notified that Charles was found dead, apparently of a heart attack.

Protégé of the Ayatollah

 Mina was now alone, but undaunted. She approached a company that had been associated with her husband and asked to work for them. They offered her a lowly position as a salesperson. She converted a room in their small apartment into an office, and started from scratch. Her efforts, however, were undermined by rampant government corruption.

 “Any time you have a problem, just call the office of Ayatollah Khomeini and he will take care of it.”

 Mina went directly to Ayatollah Khomeini. Henry remembers the servants in his home during his halcyon childhood speaking of the coming of the Messiah. When Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Persia at the outset of the Revolution, virtually the entire populace regarded him as the Messiah. Mina, shrewd and secular, was an exception.

 But when she spoke directly with him to complain about government corruption, she became star-struck. Khomeini would not look directly at a woman’s face. Nevertheless, by the end of the interview, Mina had become his faithful protégé. Upon arriving home, she received a phone call saying, “Any time you have a problem, just call the office of Ayatollah Khomeini and he will take care of it.”

 For the rest of Khomeini’s life, even during the most violent days of the regime, Mina enjoyed his personal protection. “The government feared my mother,” asserts Moshe. Several years later Mina had become a fantastically successful businesswoman.

 Meanwhile the Revolution had entered a repressive phase. The religious zealots began to kill off all the other factions. Moshe remembers watching the movie *Z* in the home of the first Minister of Justice after the Revolution. Two years later, that Minister was murdered by Islamic radicals.

 “Tehran became like the Chicago of the 20s,” remembers Moshe. “People with machine guns were gunning down other people in the streets. They closed the Occidental school my brother and I attended.”

 Mina wanted her sons to become educated, cosmopolitan people. She decided that they had no future in the new Iran. A year after bringing them back, she again sent them to Europe, this time for good. Henry was nine years old when he bid his final farewell to the only home he would know until he created his own in Jerusalem.

 The boys attended a Christian boarding school. They were completely alone in a foreign country. They had no contact with their father’s relatives, who had failed to attend Charles’s funeral; Mina had severed all ties with them. Mina visited two or three times a year, taking them on vacations to the United States, Vancouver, Hawaii, Spain, etc., but even on vacation her attention was on her business.

 For high school, the boys attended the International School of Valbonne on the French Riviera. Known as “the school of geniuses,” it was the academy of choice for the sons of heads of state from every continent.

 Throughout his teenage years, Henry engaged in a quest to find ultimate Truth. He read copiously in literature and philosophy. He dabbled in Spiritualism, Epicurean philosophy, art, and theater. He experimented with Zen meditation; after just a few months he attained “a sort of Nirvana.” With shoulder-length hair and all black clothing, he walked barefoot around Valbonne’s campus.

 His quest for Truth did not take him to religion. Having been raised by monks in Christian schools, he did not take Christianity seriously. Having been exiled by Islamic zealots, he had no respect for Islam. His quest was intellectual, not religious, and God played no part in his life.

 Then one day while he was in college, Henry had a mystical experience. He was suddenly, powerfully gripped by a consciousness of God as real and immanent. This state, which was not drug-induced*,* lasted a fortnight. After it ended, Henry wanted nothing else as much as to re-experience that God-consciousness. As an intellectual, he trusted his mind and knew that what he had experienced was an unadulterated dose of Reality. But where could he find God again?

**Discovering Judaism**

 One evening while in law school, some of his secular Jewish friends mentioned that they were going to a Jewish class that evening. Henry invited himself along. As Henry attests, “Everything the rabbi said, I felt, ‘This is what I have been seeking.’” His Jewish friends soon stopped attending the weekly class, but Henry continued. He resonated completely with the teachings. In a bookstore, he found some classic Jewish texts, such as the *Kuzari* and *The Path of the Just*. Reading them, he was overwhelmed by the sense, “Yes, this is what I want.”

 *The Path of the Just,* an 18th century text describing the ascending levels of character refinement and spiritual attainment, became for Henry a map back to the God-consciousness he had known and lost.

 After law school, Henry decided that it was not enough to study Judaism; he had to live it. He made up his mind to convert to Judaism, but when he tried to make an appointment to initiate the conversion process at the city’s *Beit Din* (Jewish court), he was ignored. Finally he phoned the *Beit Din* and asked to speak to the Chief Rabbi “about something very important and private.” The secretary asked what he wanted to speak about, but Henry insisted it was private. He was given an appointment, but as soon as he told the Chief Rabbi why he had come, the Rabbi told him, “I have ten minutes, not one minute more, to give you.” An hour later, he was still engaged in an intense conversation with Henry. At the end, the Rabbi told him, “Come back in one year. In one year, I will accept you.”

 **“For an aristocratic Persian, becoming a**

**Jew is the most awful thing you can do.”**

 Henry understood that it was a test of his sincerity and persistence. The Rabbi did not know that he was dealing with the undauntable Qajar breed. A year later, Henry came back. After two years of studying how to be a Jew, Henry converted at the age of 28. Six months later, he married Noa, and they made aliyah to Israel, where he studies in yeshiva.

 Converting to Judaism meant forfeiting his aristocratic prestige, his mother’s approval, and all connection to his extended family. “For an aristocratic Persian, becoming a Jew is the most awful thing you can do,” declares Moshe. “It’s simply unimaginable. It’s shameful.”

 During the long conversion process, he never became discouraged by the prospect of losing all the privileges of his birth and upbringing. “I believed something,” Moshe attests. “I believed that Torah is the Truth, and I wanted to have it. I didn’t want to just learn about it. I wanted to reach the spiritual heights described in *The Path of the Just.*”

 After his conversion, Moshe had a conversation with his brother. “Why don’t you convert?" Moshe asked him. "You know Judaism is true.”

 Moshe’s brother replied, “I know it's true but I can’t convert. I love luxury and comfort too much.”

 Sitting in his simple Jerusalem apartment, surrounded by his wife and children, Moshe ponders the trade-off he made in choosing truth over comfort. Did he get more than he lost? Moshe’s answer is a broad smile.

*Sara Yoheved Rigler plans to come to America in May to give workshops (see* [*www.kesherwife.com*](http://www.kesherwife.com/)), Shabbatons, and lectures. To invite her to your community, please write to Shaindy at slewsi@aol.com

Reprinted from this week’s email of AJOP (Association for Jewish Outreach Programs) Update. Originally published on the Aish.com website.

**It Once Happened**

**The Humility of the**

**Great Sage Rabbi Abahu**

 During the period of Roman hegemony in the land of Israel, the great sage Rabbi Abahu was the leader of his generation. He was greatly honored, not only by his fellow Jews, but by the Roman rulers, including the emperor himself.

 Rabbi Abahu was a valued advisor and often the invited guest of the Roman emperor. Whenever he would enter the royal palace, singers would be stationed at the entrance to sing his praises. Rabbi Abahu was fluent in Latin, Greek and many other languages spoken in the huge Roman Empire.

 Rabbi Abahu had every reason to hold himself in high regard, but, in fact, he is remembered for his extreme humility. A very handsome and wealthy man, he was so self-effacing that it is written that it was hard to find his like, even in that generation of tremendous Torah giants and righteous individuals. A number of instances are noted in the Talmud which illustrate his remarkable traits.

 At that time, it was customary for the sages to address the masses with the aid of an interpreter. Rabbi Abahu would speak in a terse, abbreviated Hebrew, and his interpreter would expound on the ideas in great detail, simplifying them so that the thoughts were accessible to all.

 One day Rabbi Abahu's wife and the wife of the interpreter had an argument. In the heat of the angry exchange the interpreter's wife blurted out, "What does my husband need your husband for?! He's just as great a scholar any day, and he is perfectly capable of teaching Torah without your husband's paltry contribution!"

 Rabbi Abahu's wife was shocked and deeply insulted, for her husband was known as one of the outstanding sages of the age. Not wanting to argue further, she walked away without replying, but she was seething inside.

 That night Abahu noticed that his wife was not her usual self.

 "What is wrong?" he asked her. She told him the whole story of her encounter with the interpreter's wife, sure he would be upset at the woman's rude and coarse remarks. Perhaps he might even want to hire a different interpreter.

 "Is that a reason to be so upset?" he asked her. "And even if she was speaking the truth, her husband and I both have the same goal. We are both teaching, not for our own honor, but for the honor of Heaven." Rabbi Abahu was so great that his own personal honor had no meaning to him.

 Once, it was necessary to choose a new Rosh Yeshiva (spiritual leader and chief instructor of the Torah academy) for the great yeshiva in Caesarea.

 On account of his great scholarship and remarkable personal qualities, the Sages wanted to appoint Rabbi Abahu but he refused the honor, suggesting instead Rabbi Aba, a poverty-stricken sage who lived in the city of Acre.

 Rabbi Abahu hoped that with the appointment to the honored position of Rosh Yeshiva, the poor rabbi's financial hardships would be lifted. In making his recommendation Rabbi Abahu said, "Rabbi Aba is the most humble man I know. Why, when I see how he conducts himself, I cannot even compare to such a man!"

 It happened once that Rabbi Abahu and another great scholar, Rabbi Chiya bar Aba, were visiting the same town. Every evening they would meet to learn and discuss Torah thoughts, and afterward Rabbi Chiya would walk Rabbi Abahu home, as an indication of respect. That Shabbat they decided to deliver their discourses at different study halls.

 Rabbi Abahu spoke about Aggada, the stories of the Torah, while his colleague spoke about Jewish law. Many people attended both lectures, but when they heard that Rabbi Abahu was speaking about Aggada, they left Rabbi Chiya and swarmed to hear Rabbi Abahu. When Rabbi Chiya realized what had happened, he was crestfallen.

 Word of Rabbi Chiya's reaction reached Rabbi Abahu and he at once set out to the lodging of his colleague. "The people came to my lecture only for one reason, and I will illustrate it with a story," began Rabbi Abahu.

 "Once, two peddlers came to the same town. One was selling precious stones, while the other was selling all sorts of household miscellany. The second man had so many customers he couldn't keep up with the demand, while the man selling the precious stones sold nothing. Was it because his wares were unworthy? No, the deficiency was entirely on the part of the customers. Not only did they lack the money to purchase jewels, they didn't even have an understanding of the value of gems. Common household items were all they knew about.

 "You and I have come to a town where there are very few learned people. The majority find it easier to listen to the stories of the Aggada (without even realizing that they understand very little of them). So, you see, it isn't that they prefer my discourse to that of my learned colleague, they just find the topic more compatible with their unsophisticated level of understanding."

 After Rabbi Abahu spoke to him in this consoling manner, Rabbi Chiya felt somewhat better, but Rabbi Abahu sensed that he remained unconvinced. As a further indication of his esteem, Rabbi Abahu changed the usual order and accompanied Rabbi Chiya to his residence, to show the great honor in which he held him.

*Reprinted from this week’s issue of “L’Chayim,” a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.*

**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas terumah 5770**

**Story #638**

**Saturday Afternoon Soccer**

 Fifty years ago or so in Jerusalem, there lived a not-so-observant boy from an observant family whose father was a simple Jew. The family eventually emigrated from Israel, but one day the boy was seen again in his old neighborhood. When asked what brought him back, he said, I came to the Rebbe.

 ''Which Rebbe?'' his former acquaintances asked in surprise. No one knew of any connection between him and any Rebbe, especially not the Beis Yisrael. This is the story he told: As a youth, he used to play for one of Israel's soccer teams. It was top-secret; nobody, not even his parents, knew about it. Once, when the Rebbe was in Zichron Yaakov, the boy and his father were there, too. The Polish-born father said to his son, The Gerer Rebbe is here, let us go to him to receive shalom [greet him]. When they approached him, the Rebbe inquired where they were staying, and the father mentioned the name of the hotel where they were guests.

 Ten minutes later there was a knock on their door. The Rebbe wanted to speak to the boy, a messenger reported. They assumed it was a mistake, but if the Gerer Rebbe summons you, you go.

 In the course of the conversation the Rebbe said, You're already a mature 15- or l6-year-old boy, you have to do something for the sake of your Yiddishkeit [Judaism]! Learn, pray, behave like a Jew!

 And then the Rebbe dropped another bombshell. And of course, you shouldn't be playing soccer for your team. Here the Rebbe mentioned the team's full name, as fluently as if he were an avid fan.

 The boy was shocked. He had never shared this secret with anyone, and just like that, his secret was out in the open. He nodded his head, unable to utter a word. It's not enough to nod your head, the Rebbe told him. Think carefully about what I told you, and accept upon yourself to improve your ways.

 The teenaged boy accepted upon himself to change his ways. As he left, the Rebbe presented him with a plate of fruit as a sign of encouragement.

 As soon as the door closed behind him, the Chassidim fulfilled the custom of taking shirayim, ''leftovers,'' from the tzaddik, leaving the boy with nothing. His loud cries of protest could be heard inside the room too. All of a sudden the Rebbe stepped out and consoled him by preparing another package of fruit. This one he sealed well, while saying, The most important thing is that you become a good fruit.

 From that day on, his life changed completely, and he became fully observant in every aspect. Some time after the passing of the Beit Yisrael he became a chasid of a different Rebbe, but every time he comes to Israel, he visits the Rebbe's gravesite on Har HaZeisim [Mount of Olives].

Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from heichalhanegina.blogspot.com

**Connection:** Yahrzeit

**Biographical note:** Rabbi Yisrael Alter of Ger (1894 - 2 Adar 1977), known as the Bais Yisroel, was the fourth Rebbe in the Gur dynasty. Following the death of his father in 1948, Ger grew under his leadership to be the largest Chasidic group in Israel. He lost his wife, children and grandchildren in the Holocaust, and although he married a second time, had no further children. He was succeeded by his brother, Rabbi Simcha-Bunim Alter, and then his youngest brother, Rabbi Pinchas-Menachem Alter.

[**The Human Side of the Story**](http://ohr.edu/yhiy.php?seriesid=17&archive=1)

**Mystery of the Stolen Car**

**By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach**

 When a shiny new car driven by an Arab pulled up at the Erez checkpoint on its way to Gaza, the soldiers on duty made their routine inspection to determine that it was not a stolen vehicle. The driver produced the proper documents and the soldiers were about to let him drive into Gaza when they suddenly heard the checkpoint commander order them to wait.

 Coming from behind the car the commander approached the Arab and demanded to know whether the vehicle was his. When the suspect insisted on the validity of his documents, he was warned by the commander that if he did not immediately admit to theft his punishment would be more severe. His self-confidence thus shattered, the Arab confessed that he had stolen the car and its documents in Ma’aleh Adumim.

 "What are you, sir", asked the surprised soldiers of their commander, "some kind of prophet?"

 "I'm no prophet," he replied, "but come here behind the car and look at the bumper sticker."

 What they saw were three Hebrew words that explained everything:

 *“Ein od milvado*”(There is no one else but Him.)

A Slice of Life

**Going Kosher**

**By Jill Lerner**

 I remember it like it was yesterday: a team of strangers descending upon my kitchen, looking at every dish, pot, knife, spoon...everything my kitchen housed. The "team" leader, Rabbi Bentzion Chanowitz, efficiently delegated each item in my kitchen to the "kashering" box or the discard bag. I wasn't always sure of the reasons for the fate of particular pieces, but I was sure I was making the right decision when I decided to make my house kosher. I could also see that I was in for quite an intense, life-altering event.

 "Going kosher" can be a pretty tough decision. When one is accustomed to doing anything in one particular way, change can be difficult, especially when dealing with the very food one likes to eat! I really knew little about keeping kosher when I made my decision, but I did it anyway. After all, the Jewish people had been keeping kosher since receiving the Torah, but knew little about it when they first accepted the mitzva (commandment). Initially they had to agree to perform all of the mitzvot before truly understanding all about them, and subsequently they learned.

 I, too, ended up embarking on this mitzva without any background and began to learn from that time on. Indeed, this fact was to become part of my own personal connection to the Jewish people, for I was privileged to have a part of my journey parallel the history of our people! It was really an extraordinary journey, and one for which I will always be grateful.

 During the kashering process, I learned how to determine what could be made kosher and what could not, how to make something kosher, how to maintain a kosher home, and how and why dishes, cooking vessels, and cutlery are immersed in a mikva for ritual purification. It was an awesome experience that provoked innumerable questions. (Sometimes, it still does!) The kosher "team" was amazingly helpful, conscientious, and understanding. While it was difficult to discover that some of my kitchen items couldn't be made kosher, the excellent explanations and consideration I received on the spot genuinely elevated the occasion from an ordinary discarding of useless merchandise to an advancement of the level of observance that demonstrated progress, learning, and adherence to the commandments for me.

 I was particularly intrigued when my countertops were actually "ironed" using an ordinary clothing iron to steam the water poured on them, resulting in kosher counters! I learned about foods that weren't always obviously meat, milk, or parve, and how and when to keep them separate, both in the kitchen and in me! Most importantly, I learned of the importance of keeping kosher and its tremendous benefits to the Jewish soul. I was happy to finally be participating in this basic, long-standing, identity-defining tenet of Judaism. Thankfully, there were several people who offered me their phone numbers for any follow-up questions that were certainly going to arise. Though there were definitely a lot of changes that had to occur in my life to become and maintain kosher, any difficulties that had to be overcome were met with innumerable benefits that overshadowed the hardships.

 So, when my dear friend Andrea called me last week to tell me she was finally going to kosher her kitchen in honor of her youngest daughter's Bat Mitzva, I was delighted. She had spoken to me over the years and on many occasions about undertaking this venerable mitzva, but somehow kept putting it off. Because she wished to make the Bat Mitzva a more meaningful experience for both her daughter and herself, she sought something that would have a spiritual and lasting effect. Taking on another mitzva is always a terrific idea, but which one would have significance and sustainability? She thus knew the time was right to begin keeping a kosher home.

 At last, after speaking at length and through various contacts, I was fortunate to be able to assist her in getting the job done. I really knew exactly what she was going through, what her feelings were, and what steps she would have to take, as 14 years ago I, too, had been in that very same situation. Now, though we are presently living a thousand miles apart, it was as if we were sitting at her kitchen table discussing kosher and all of its ramifications.

 We spent a lot of time on the phone, sometimes until well after midnight, discussing every aspect of kashrut (keeping kosher), from practical advice to deep dissertations on kashrut's role in spiritual fitness. We spoke of the link we have with those who first learned about kashrut so long ago and our commitment to preserving the instruction handed down from G-d to Moses all the way to us. We chatted about customs and traditions related to kashrut as Andrea shared stories from her youth about her grandmother's kosher kitchen and the delicious food she prepared there.

Before long the discussions concluded with a plan of action to make the kosher concept a reality. Without wavering, Andrea and her daughter completed the steps necessary to kosher her kitchen.

 Finally, Andrea has joined the ranks of Jewish households around the world who keep kosher, and she couldn't be happier! I look forward to remaining supportive of her choice and being part of the "cheering squad," encouraging her along! Surely, becoming kosher is a major decision that requires much education, patience, and practice, but the end result is greater than the effort it takes to get there. Mazel tov, Andrea, on your newly koshered kitchen. Let's exchange recipes sometime!

**RABBIS' MESSAGES**

**Why Ya’akob Planted**

**Trees in Egypt**

**By Rabbi Reuven Semah**

“*They shall make me a sanctuary – so that I may dwell among them*.” (Shemot 25:8)

 The Mishkan was built from the most beautiful materials. The wood used for the Mishkan was shittim wood. Where did they get it? Rashi explains: “From where did they have shittim wood in the wilderness? Rabbi Tanhuma explained, our forefather Ya’akob foresaw through Divine inspiration that Israel was destined to build a Mishkan in the wilderness. He brought shittim trees (a type of cedar wood) to Egypt and planted them there, and he commanded his sons to take them with them when they departed from Egypt.”

 Ya’akob Abinu was worried about how they would obtain the wood necessary for the Mishkan in the desert. Why wasn’t he worried about food and drink for those same people in the desert? Obviously, He was certain Hashem would provide all their material needs in the desert. But, if so, it only stood to reason that He would also provide them with lumber where no trees grew. Why then did Ya’akob Abinu plant trees in Egypt to take care of their future construction needs?

 Rabbi Naftali Reich answers that the Mishkan was far more than a physical home for the Divine Presence in this world. It was also meant to symbolize the spiritual home each Jew constructed in his own heart and soul where Hashem would dwell. In this light we can understand why they had to bring their own lumber. In order for the Mishkan to retain its fullest meaning, it needed to come entirely from the Jewish people. It had to be an invitation from us to Hashem to come among us. Therefore, it would have been inappropriate to ask Hashem to provide the lumber for construction. Hashem could provide food and drink, but for Him to provide the lumber it would have diminished its symbolic significance.

 In our own lives we find ourselves slipping into mechanical observance of the misvot. We need to be inspired. It would be a good idea to look into the temples of our hearts. Perhaps they have been neglected. The roof may have sprung a leak and the walls may be in need of repair. We should reaffirm our commitment to Hashem and our desire to have him dwell within us. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

**The Symbol of**

**Continuous Growth**

**By Rabbi Shmuel Choueka**

"*Make an Ark of cedar wood...and cover it with gold*." (Shemot 25:10-11)

 The Aron (Ark), which held the two Tablets in them, had to be made out of cedar wood and covered with gold from within and from without. Since this is one of the most important vessels in the Mishkan, shouldn't it be made totally out of gold? What is the significance of the wood between the layers of gold?

 The answer is that the Torah must be kept in something wooden because wood is a substance which symbolizes growth. The scholar and the layman both must be like wood in the sense that they are constantly growing and improving. The gold covering symbolizes the midot, the character, which must be sterling and pure like the pure gold in the Mishkan, but the main substance which can hold the Torah is wood. The lesson for us is that no matter what our level of understanding is, we must try to increase our learning and be constantly on the move towards perfection.

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

**Good Shabbos Everyone**

**Return to Base**

 Anyone who has ever been to Yerushalayim can testify to the strong feelings a Jew experiences when visiting the holiest city in the world. The center of holiness in Yerushalayim is the Har Habayis, where the Bais HaMikdash stood. Yerushalayim is the main pipeline through which all prayers go up to heaven. And the Bais HaMikdash was the faucet for that pipeline.
Unfortunately the Bais HaMikdash was destroyed and we speedily await its rebuilding every day. Thankfully, Hashem has promised us that even without the Bais HaMikdash, we can still reach Him with prayer. The primary place for prayer is now with a minyan in our shuls.

 Our shuls are mini-sanctuaries which temporarily take the place of the Bais HaMikdash in Yerushalayim. As the Prophet Yechezkel tells us “Thus said the L-rd Hashem/G-d: Though I have removed them far away among the nations and though I have scattered them among the lands, yet I have been for them a small sanctuary…“(11:16) The commentator Metzudas Dovid explains the verse to mean: Even though we may be exiled among the nations and we are far away from the Bais HaMikdash in Yerushalayim, we should build small sanctuaries - shuls so that Hashem may dwell among them. Just as the Bais HaMikdash was a dwelling place for Hashem’s holy presence, so too are our shuls the dwelling place of Hashem.

 The idea that we must build shuls for Hashem is hinted to in a verse in this week’s Parsha Terumah: "Make for Me a holy house and I will dwell in them." (Shemos 25:8) The simple meaning of this verse according to Rashi, is that the Bnai Yisroel must build the Bais HaMikdash.

 Grammatically, it would seem to make sense that verse should say: "Make for Me a holy house and I will dwell in it." Commentators note from the fact that the verse states: “and I will dwell in them," that the verse is hinting to Hashem’s desire to dwell not only in the Bais HaMikdash, but in every holy house that we build for Hashem, namely shuls. That is why the verse uses the plural “them.”

 Just as the Bais HaMikdash was a dwelling place for Hashem’s holy presence, so too are our shuls the dwelling place of Hashem. Therefore, walking into a shul we should keep in mind that we are walking into a Mikdash Me’at, a miniature version of the Bais HaMikdash in Yerushalayim. The Bais HaMikdash was so great that merely seeing it had the power to put a Jew on the proper path in his service of Hashem. (Rav Avrohom Shorr) We should therefore be struck with awe (moirah) when coming into Hashem’s house.

 After the passing of Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotsk, his Chassidim took upon themselves the leadership of Reb Yitzchak Meir of Ger, who lived at the time in Warsaw. After a few years in Warsaw, Reb Yitzchok Meir thought it preferable that he move to a small town. The number of Chassidim coming to visit him and to hear his teachings had grown to thousands, and he did not think it advisable that the younger scholars should spend long periods in a big city.

 The word spread like wildfire, and from all directions came requests from representatives of communities that Reb Yitzhok Meir become their spiritual leader. None of these invitations were accepted, until an invitation came from the small town of Ger (Gora Kalwaria) near Warsaw, and this the rebbe accepted at once.

 At first the rebbe lived in the house which the people of Ger kept for the local rav, and his Chassidim studied and prayed in the community's beis midrash. Seeing, however, that this building could not accommodate the thousands of Chassidim who streamed there from all parts of Poland, the more prosperous amongst the Chassidim undertook to build a fitting residence for their rebbe, and next to it a spacious shul for his Chassidim. At the festive dedication of the Shul the rebbe entered the grand edifice for the first time, surrounded by huge crowds of Chassidim, and his joy at the completion of the mitzvah was beautiful to see. His address for the occasion spoke of what entering a beis midrash can do for a Jew.

 He began with the Mishnah which explains: that on the day that Rabban Gamliel was removed from the office of nasi, they removed the guard from the door of the House of Study, and permission was granted to all talmidim to enter. When Rabban Gamliel had been nasi, he used to announce: “Any talmid whose inside does not match his external appearance - let him not enter the Bais Midrash.” On the day that Rabban Gamliel left office, many benches were added in the Bais Midrash, because many students who had been denied admission were now let in. Rabban Gamliel saw this and was in distress.

 Why was Rabban Gamliel in distress? "Rashi," continued Reb Yitzchak Meir of Ger, "explains this last phrase by saying that Rabban Gamliel was worried that he would be punished for not having allowed those talmidim - students to enter while he was in charge. The question, though, still stands: what changed Rabban Gamliel's thinking? What made him regret his earlier policy of not letting in talmidim who were not inside as they appeared outside?

 And the answer is as follows: Rabban Gamliel watched what happened to these latter talmidim as they entered the study hall: their very entry there made them immediately fix their avairas. And this explains Rabban Gamliel’s worry. He regretted not having let them in earlier, for then they might have done teshuvah long before.” (A Treasury of Chassidic Tales on the Torah, p. 264 Reb S.Y. Zevin, Meir Holder, trans.)

 With all the turmoil going on in the world, we can look to our shuls and our study houses as “safe houses” where we can go to learn Hashem’s Torah and talk to Hashem.

 And as we pray towards Yerushalayim in our shuls, we ask Hashem to answer our prayers and bring better times. As Yishaya prophesied: “And it shall come to pass in the end of days that the mountain of Hashem’s house shall be set over all other mountains and lifted high above the hills and all the nations shall come streaming to it. And many peoples shall come and say: Come let us go up to the Mountain of G-d to the house of the G-d of Jacob and He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths. For out of Tzion shall go forth the Torah and Hashem’s word from Yerushalayim.” (2:2-3) Good Shabbos Everyone.  Based on this week’s Good Shabbos story email

As Heard from Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt”l

**When Adar Enters,**

**Joy is Increased**

 In order to increase our simha and pleasure in life we must examine the joys that are already in our possession. The gift of being able to see all of the wonderful and splendorous creations which Hashem created just for our enjoyment. “And Elokim said Let there be Light…and it was Good“  (Beresheet 1:3)

 The question is posed that since Hashem made the light than certainly it is ‘Good’, so why is Hashem telling us that the Light is ‘Good’?  Because He wants us to see and realize how good this gift of light is that He is giving us. Like a father who loves his child, when he brings him a new bicycle he wants his child to get maximum enjoyment. Therefore the father tells his child how excellent the bicycle is and how much he will enjoy it.

 To see, in full color, the blue sky, yellow sun, red apples, golden oranges, the kind face of your mother, father, wife, husband, child, colorful flowers, blue sea, starry sky, birds, animals…This is a tremendous Joy in life. Other pleasures include eating/tasting, walking, sleeping, thinking, clothing, living in a free country, breathing, speaking, hearing, teeth, water, heartbeat, life, being Jewish, Torah.…

 And now that we are focusing on some of the Gifts that we possess, we can smile (all day) and realize how wealthy we are right now. This is simha/happiness, to be aware of our possessions. It is the Awareness of our wealth that makes us rich. We are wealthy!  Sometimes we just don’t know it.

 “Happiness is a state of mind.  You cannot buy it in any store or find it on a vacation. Happiness is in the mind. And it is peace of mind that is the only true happiness in this world.

 When a man has nothing to worry about and his mind is completely at rest, that is the ultimate form of Happiness in this world/Olam Haze’.

 An idealist cannot have peace of mind unless he is making progress in learning Torah. Unless he is able to perform more Mitzvot. Unless he can have more children to bring up in the ways of the Torah.Accomplishments are necessary for obtaining peace of mind.

 Happiness is accomplishing something worthwhile. This is wealth that lasts forever.” Peace of mind (Menuchat Ha-Nefesh) is the common denominator. Bitachon (Trust in Hashem) is one of the great forms of Peace of Mind.

 Bitachon: To know that Hashem is in charge of the Universe. And in charge of the affairs of mankind. And in charge of our private individual history. Hashem is constantly thinking about it and is planning the very best for us. Therefore, whatever has happened in the past to us has been for our maximum benefit”.

*The above remarks by Rabbi Avigdor Miller, zt”l, is based by his close talmid Sam Gindi from Rabbi Miller’s Thursday night Tape #466 titled “Introduction to Bitachon.”*

**Boruch Dayan Ha'emes.**

**By Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel**

**Executive Vice President of Agudath Israel of America**

 I am writing to share with you the sad news that Martin Grossman, Michoel Yechiel ben Avrohom, olov hasholom, was executed this evening (Tuesday, February 16th/Adar 3) in Florida.

 It would be understandable for any of us to feel not only sorrow but frustration that all our efforts didn't result in the result for which we were mispallel.

 But I personally choose, even amid the pain and sorrow, to focus on the tremendous ahavas Yisroel, shtadlonus and achdus that was demonstrated by our tzibbur over recent days. I want to personally thank all of you who telephoned Governor Crist's office, or sent him e-mails and faxes, or participated in the ultimate act of ahavas Yisroel: tefilla on a brother's behalf.

 Your reaction to the impending tragedy was remarkable. May it stand as a zechus for his neshoma, and for all of Klal Yisroel, and hasten bi'as go'el tzedek, b'mheira biyomeinu.

**Seemingly Unanswered Prayers**

 Based upon all of the tefillos and hishtadlus of the tens of thousands of individuals and dedicated tzibbur the world over, it would seem to have been Derech HaTeva for Michoel Yechiel Grossman’s a’h life to have been spared--at least for now. Hashem, for reasons known only to Him did not will it, and the unworthy puppets below performed. To put matters in further perspective, for those who did not immediately turn there for guidance, we reprint below Day 77 in the daily program of Praying With Fire, the monumental work by Rabbi Heshy Kleinman, Shlita (Artscroll, footnotes have been omitted):

 “Sometimes, unfortunately, despite sincere prayers, a seriously ill family member or close acquaintance passes away. There is a natural tendency in such a situation to feel that one’s prayers were for naught. However, according to the Steipler Gaon, comfort should be drawn from the knowledge that our prayers do have a significant effect; the prayers remain a source of merit because through them, Heavenly compassion was aroused. These merits will stand by the departed in the World to Come and may also protect their children in the future.

 “These prayers may also bring salvation to other individuals and to the community as a whole. At the End of Days, when all will be revealed, we will see the redeeming power of each and every tefillah that has ever been prayed.

 “When Rav Shneur Kotler, Rosh Yeshivah of Beis Medrash Gavoha of Lakewood, was suffering from his terminal illness, a group of his students and admirers journeyed to Bnei Brak, Israel, to implore the Steipler Gaon to intensify his prayers on Rav Shneur’s behalf. They confided to the Steipler that they were discouraged because prayers were pouring from tens of thousands of Jewish hearts, yet the Rosh Yeshivah’s condition continued to

decline.

 “The Steipler responded, ‘Do not be dismayed. There is no such thing as a sincere prayer that goes unanswered. Any heartfelt request addressed to G-d must be answered. It cannot be otherwise. If it is not answered today it will be answered tomorrow. If not tomorrow it will be answered in a week. If not in a week, in a month. If not answered in a month, it may be answered in a year, or in ten years, or in one hundred years or more.

 If your prayers are not answered in your lifetime, they will be answered for your children or for your children’s children. We cannot say for sure when a prayer will be answered, but we can rest assured that every prayer will be answered somehow, someday.’

 Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus, Shlita, explains that while each prayer evokes a corresponding reply from Heaven, Hashem alone perceives a situation in its full complexity. One cannot always understand the logic or justice in His response. Seemingly unanswered prayers are sometimes like the rain and snow. They appear to sink out of sight, accomplishing nothing, but in fact, they saturate the Heavens just as rain saturates the earth and brings forth its blessings. The bounty of Heaven, just like the bounty of earth, waits for its proper season.

 “Only Hashem knows when that season will be. For example, a loved one might be involved in a serious accident, G-d forbid. Nobody in the family knows of the accident as the ambulances race to the scene. No one is there to pray while the victim hangs tenuously onto life. In such a case, Rav Pincus says, Hashem “takes out” a heartfelt prayer that a family member uttered years ago -- a prayer that was unanswered at the time -- and showers its merit upon the current situation. That prayer, held in reserve for so long, may now become the injured person’s salvation.

 “Reuven is a confident, energetic little boy who runs everywhere he goes. One morning, his mother calls him to come downstairs for breakfast, and he dashes to the stairs in his typical, high-speed style. This time, however, he trips on his shoelace and begins a headlong descent down the stairs. His mother hears the child’s startled shout and then the sickening thump-thump of his body landing heavily on step after step. She runs to the scene just as he crashes to the floor. He lies perfectly still for a moment, and her heart fills with cold fear. Just as she approaches him, he begins to move. He gets up, adjusts his rumpled shirt, collects his yarmulke and says, 'What’s for breakfast?'

 “The boy’s mother has prayed many times for many things, and sometimes, her prayers were not answered as she had hoped. At this moment, however, she can appreciate that not one word has gone to waste.

 “We pray for certain aspects of good to come into our lives, yet we have no real way of knowing if our vision of good is accurate from the true perspective of Heaven. The man praying to meet his household’s expenses may always have to struggle for money, but his prayers might keep his children securely upon the path of Torah. The couple praying for children may not ultimately succeed in their quest, but the merit of their prayers may help save their entire community from some terrible decree.

 “We do not always know what good a prayer will bring. We do know, however, that all sincere prayer is answered with good.”

*Reprinted from the 3 Adar 5770/February 17, 2010 Hakhel E-Mail Community Awareness Bulletin*

**Opinion:**

**Supporting the Supporters:**

**A Case for Martin Grossman**

**By S. Friedman**

 There were many points brought up as reasons for not supporting Martin Grossman’s stay of execution, and would I like to address some of them.

**He was a murderer**



**Martin Grossman, a”h**

 Martin did not commit a premeditated act.  For some strange reason, Governor Crist felt that the fact that Martin tried to cover up the act after he committed the crime somehow equated that.  He committed murder as a 19 year old while under the influence of drugs, was he expected not to try to get caught?

 The issue of his IQ is not a minor one. That seems to have been what prompted Christian groups, including even the Pope to intervene on his behalf as well. Did he commit murder? Undoubtedly. Was he someone who was such a monster that society could not even tolerate his existence in a jail or mental institution? I think not.

**How can you consider him a martyr and say Hy”d?**

 I personally wouldn’t, and if I cared to get caught in phraseologies such as that, I would ask Daas Torah if he indeed was considered one. People obviously felt compassion and pride that he had seemingly returned to his yiddishkeit instead of rotting out and further degenerating in jail.

**If he had been a non Jew you wouldn’t care**

 Care? Actually, we wouldn’t even know about it. If you are such a person that concerns themselves with wrongdoings the world over, then perhaps his cause would appeal to you too. But he is a Jew, and we look out for our own. That’s not something to be ashamed of.

**We’re in Golus, don’t make waves and**

**try to tell the government what to do**

 We are in Golus, and it isn’t proper for Yidden to make a ruckus and in general we do not try to draw attention to ourselves.  But we are a talking about saving a Jewish life.  Should we give up on Jonathan Pollard so as not to seem prejudiced in the media’s eyes?

**It is a tremendous Chillul Hashem**

**in the eyes of the victim’s family**

 Firstly, the Gedolim that signed onto this were well aware of that factor, and obviously deemed saving Martin’s life to take precedence. Also, I once saw a comment on a goyish newspaper explaining the concept of an eruv, and how the religious Jews try to (chas v’sholom) “trick G-d” into “thinking” that a public domain is really a private one.  If we have something to do that is right, then we can’t change that because some anoy yehudim will condemn us for it

**Stop saying everything is Anti-Semitism**

 I wouldn’t say that the execution had anything to do with Anti-Semitism. The judgment was handed down many years ago, and when the time came to actually carrying out his sentence, then people came in to try and save his life (not pardon him). I would say that if anything other than the judicial system influenced this case, it was that the victim was a government worker, and they feel they have to take an extra harsh stand (which I can’t blame them for doing). If people are caught up with faulting the government, then I believe they are wrong.  We had to try out best, and we did.

 After reading so many people’s comments to the effect of “being embarrassed,” and “he got what he deserved,” and to the general bitterness of those who themselves deemed Martin as unworthy of saving(living), I came to the following conclusion.

 You can’t tolerate being moved. You can’t acknowledge a cause to be worthy of making your heart sink, or conversely to open your hearts to inspiration. Instead you come up with “brilliant” comments and rebuttals, and prefer being complacent on your high loft and not having to actually feel or do anything as a response to any situation.

 It is the same commentators who try to dismiss any happening that stir emotions amongst those in our community as being “naïve” or “fanatical.” The notion that anyone should have to improve, take action, or change seems to abhor you. If you choose to live your life tightly protected by layers of denials and mockery, then ultimately it is you who lose.

*Posted By Matzav Editor on February 17, 2010*

**Always Giving Charity**

**With a Full Heart**

**By Rabbi Berel Wein**

 The Torah in this week's parsha dwells upon the giving of one's wealth, assets, time and talents for an altruistic public cause - in this case the construction of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle of Israel. The Torah lists a prerequisite for being able to givesuch a donation of effort and wealth.

 First the donor's heart must be willing and compassionate. Though charity is eventually realized in the actual act of giving, it begins within the heart of the giver. Charity is an emotional and oftentimes gut-wrenching experience, both for the donor and the recipient.

 The Talmud indicates that the giving of wealth alone is insufficient to meet the true demands of charitable behavior and action. "G-d wants our hearts" is the Talmudic phrase that is applicable to charitable giving, as well as to most of Jewish life and law.

 Giving without passion and sympathy is still giving, but it is imperfect. The heart must want before the hand signs the check. The Torah sets no goal or specified amount as to what one's donation to the Mishkan should or would be. Some people brought gold and silver, others gave items that would be considered to be less expensive and not as valuable.

 The Torah makes no reference to these obvious differences. The copper and bronze mirrors that plated the altar, donated by the women of Israel, are given the same prominence in the Torah as the gold that was donated for the Holy Ark and the other artifacts. The Torah measures the giving by the intent of the heart of the giver.

 As someone who has been engaged in Torah and Jewish fundraising for many decades, I can testify that when the emotion is present in the heart of the giver, the check is correspondingly larger. While I was in America recently I met a Jew from Israel who was collecting money to help a destitute family cope with a very serious medical issue. While in Los Angeles, he was robbed at gunpoint and the few thousand dollars that he had collected was stolen from him.

 Later, when I met him in a different American city, he told me that people were more generous to him after they knew what had happened, even though the purpose of his collection had not changed. I told him that it was the emotion of the unfairness of his loss that now touched the hearts of people and that naturally their donations increased

 The nation of Haiti required enormous financial and social support from the rest of the world long before the devastating earthquake ravaged it. But it took the earthquake to reach the hearts of individuals, organizations and governments worldwide.

 The measure of the truly righteous is how open their hearts are to others' problems and needs “normally.” This, in essence, is the lesson of Parshat Terumah – though the original Mishkan constructed by Moshe no longer exists amongst us.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Terumah edition of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.*