**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas acharei mos 5776**

Volume 7, Issue 36 29 Nissan 5776/ May 7, 2016

**Printed L’illuy nishmas Nechama bas R’ Noach, a”h**

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**The Final Chance**

**By Rabbi David Ashear**

 Rabbi Elimelech Biderman told a story about Rabbi Yosef Palech, from Kiryat Harim Levine, who gave a Gemara shiur to a small group every night in Tel Aviv. The participants were extremely committed to the class, however, one night the weather was so bad, Rabbi Palech was the only one who showed up.

 The Rabbi had been giving this shiur for years, without missing a single night, and he didn't want to start now. He went out to the street in an attempt to find someone to teach. However, nobody was outside. He said, "Please Hashem, help me find someone."

 He crossed the street and approached an unkempt house that bore a Mezuzah and knocked on the door. A man who was clearly not observant opened the door, exposing the foul-smelling untidy interior. Nevertheless, the Rabbi politely asked, "I was wondering whether you would be interested in learning Torah with me tonight."

 The man opened his eyes wide and tearfully shouted, "Who brought you here? Come in!" The man began to cry, telling the Rabbi his life story

 "After the war, I was a lone holocaust survivor. I wanted nothing more to do with Judaism or Hashem. My life has been one long chain of misery. I have nothing in this world. No wife. No family. No Money. Nothing!"

 He then pointed to the ceiling where a rope was dangling. "Tonight, I was ready to put an end to my misery. Before I took this drastic step, I cried out, 'G-d in heaven, if You  are here with me and You really want me, show me that You need me and I will come back to You.'

 “ Since the day I moved into this house, no one has ever knocked on my door. Just moments ago, when I finished my prayer, you came. Yes, I want to come learn with you tonight, Rabbi. Please guide me back to Hashem."

 When Rabbi Palech passed on, this man, who by then was fully observant, came to the Shiva and shared this story with the Rabbi's family.(I just had this story verified by somebody who was close to Rabbi Palech)

 Hashem loves all of us, and He is always with us. Life can be difficult; if we realize that everything is planned by Him for our benefit, we would be so much happier.

*Reprinted from the April 8, 2016 email of Daily Emunah.*

[**A Jew with Idealism**](http://www.mayanyisroel.net/templates/blog/post.asp?aid=2792698&PostID=60036&p=1)

**By Rabbi Yoseph Vigler**



 I drove past Shaar Shchem on Sunday this week and I couldn't help but think about Hadar Cohen Hy"d who was martyred there amongst so many other attacks lately. And yes, we stayed away.  But then I drove to Shaar Yafo and was thinking of Rabbi Reuven Biermacher  Hy"d who was martyred there, in the "safer" part.

Nu, so we are proud Jews and even as our hearts bleed, we keep walking right in the old city, in the Jewish Quarter at least. You don't feel any fear bh, but it's always in the back of your mind.

 I was wondering though what about all the Jewish families who live in the heart of the moslem quarter. Were they still there even through the last few months?!

 At a subterranean tour of the Koisel, we meet a guide called Udi. Udi excitedly showed us a 3000 year old mikvah and how it was most likely used for keilim because it was too narrow for people.

 He showed us a newly discovered huge elaborate chamber, and explained why he thought it must have housed the Sanhedrin after they were exiled from the Bais Hamikdash proper.

 I couldn't help but marvel how he was truly living what he taught. And then I asked him where he lived. He pointed up above the ground, that is, to the Muslim quarter on top of us.

 Are you not afraid? I enquired. "Afraid, no.  Cautious, yes.”  He revealed his gun under his untucked shirt and explained how his finger is by the trigger all the time as he walks home.

 He has five kids and they don't move anywhere without a soldier accompanying them.

 His good friend, Rabbi Nechemya Lavi  Hy"d, lost his life on Hoshana Raba a few months ago trying to save the life of a couple who were under attack.

 No, Udi is not afraid. "Wouldn't you prefer to live in Florida?" I couldn't help but ask him. But Udi an idealist, He believes in a cause.  He loves Am Yisroel and he feels this is his G-d given mission. “America is too cold,” he said.  Too easy to assimilate into the culture, too easy to lose touch with what's genuine.

 Whether you agree with his philosophy or not, you cannot help but be awed by his sense of purpose and mission. He lives daily with a glorious vision of Am Yisroel. His issues are a lot more real than many of ours. He breathes Emunah.

Halevai we should be zoche to experience a little inkling of that conviction, that Emes and Emunah.

 Udi, we need your spirit in America.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Metzora 5776 email of Mayan Yisroel Center in Flatbush.*

**The Lesson of the**

**Israeli Cab Driver**

 Rabbi Chatzkel Abramsky, z”l, was once riding in an Israeli cab and the driver told him a story.

 “After our IDF military service was over,” said the cabbie, “some friends and I went on a hiking and camping trip [in East Africa.] In the middle of the night, we heard shouts and awoke to find a large snake wrapped around one of my friends. It was squeezing him so hard he could not breathe.

 “We didn’t know what to do, as it slowly killed him, and one of my friends said, “You’re going to die, say ‘Shema Yisrael!’”

 As he did, the snake uncoiled and slithered away. He was so moved that he became a baal Teshuva [a penitent Jew,] studied Torah, and is completely religious today.”

 R’ Chatzkel asked him, “And what about you? Did you become more religious too?”

 “Me?” replied the taxi driver, “Why should I have become more religious? The snake wasn’t wrapped around me!”

 As the cabbie in the story showed, sometimes you just don’t get the message until it happens to you.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5776 email of Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk.*

**The Rebbe and the Miser**



 Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi was raising money to ransom Jewish prisoners. The first city he went to had a famous miser. Despite his considerable wealth, this stingy man was loath to share his blessings, no matter how worthy or urgent the cause. Rabbis and beggars avoided his home. Anyone who unwittingly ended up at his door was offered a single rusty copper coin, which even the most desperate pauper refused.

 When the Rebbe arrived in the town, the elders of the community graciously received him. When he announced that he wanted to visit the miser, and he wanted two rabbis to accompany him, he was met with serious resistance. The Rebbe was adamant, however, and they finally acquiesced and gave him an escort.

 The next afternoon the three of them stood in front of the miser's mansion. Before knocking, the Rebbe turned to his companions and requested that they not utter a word, no matter what. Several moments later they were sitting in the luxurious front room. The Rebbe related the sad story about a family in jail. After listening, the owner left the room and returned from his safe with a small velvet money pouch.

 "Yes," said the rich man. "A touching story indeed! Widows and orphans in captivity. Ah, the suffering of the Jewish people! When will it all end? Here Rabbi, take my humble donation." He gave the Rebbe the "famous" rusty copper coin.

 To the miser's surprise, the Rebbe seemed pleased by the gift. He was actually smiling at him warmly as he put the coin into his pocket and said, "Thank you Mr. Solomon. May G-d bless and protect you always." The Rebbe then proceeded to write him a receipt, adding all sorts of blessings in a most beautiful script.

 "Thank you again, my friend," said the Rebbe as he stood and warmly shook the man's hand, looking at him with admiration. "And now," he added, turning to his two companions, "we must be on our way. We have a lot of collecting to do tonight." As the rabbis walked out, the Rebbe turned and bade his host another warm farewell.

 "You should have thrown it back in his face," hissed one of the rabbis after they heard the door close behind them. "Don't turn around and don't say a word," whispered the Rebbe as they walked down the path to the front gate.

 Suddenly they heard the door open behind them and the miser calling: "Rabbis, rabbis, please come back for a minute. Pleaseâ€¦ please come back in."

 In a few minutes they were again in the warm, plush drawing room, and the rich man asked, "Exactly how much money do you need to ransom these prisoners?"

 "About five thousand rubles," the Rebbe replied.

 "I want to give one thousand rubles," said the miser as he took a tightly bound stack of bills from his pocket and laid it on the table. The other rabbis were astounded. They stared at the money and did not look at the miser, lest he change his mind.

 But the Rebbe again shook Mr. Solomon's hand, warmly thanking him, and wrote him a beautiful receipt replete with blessings and praises, exactly like the first time.

 "That was a miracle!" whispered one of the rabbis to the Rebbe as they left the house and were walking toward the gate. Once more the Rebbe signaled him to be quiet. Suddenly the door of the house again opened behind them. "Rabbis, please come in once more. I want to speak with you," Mr. Solomon called out.

 They entered the house a third time and the miser said, "I want to give the entire sum needed for the ransom. Here it is. Please count it to see there is no mistake."

 "What is the meaning of this?" wondered the Rebbe's astonished companions after they had left the rich man's home for the third time that evening. "How did you get that notorious miser to give 5,000 rubles?"

 "That man is no miser," said Rabbi Shneur Zalman. "No Jewish soul truly is. But how could he desire to give, if he never in his life experienced the joy of giving? Everyone to whom he gave that rusty penny threw it back in his face!"

 What did the Rebbe do for this man? He showed him his success, he showed him that he could give and that his giving was meaningful. By doing that, the Rebbe triggered the desire in this person to succeed even more by giving even more.

 When you make someone feel like a failure by throwing the penny back in his face, he will become an even greater failure. When you show a person his success story, he will achieve yet greater success. Show your child how much he has to fix, and he will tell himself it is pointless, because he is a failure. Show your child how successful he truly is, and he will build on that to become yet more successful.

 Now we can understand the law about the poor donor who commits himself to bring the sacrifices for a rich man: When you take it upon yourself to bring the sacrifice for a rich man, even though he is rich and you are poor, we don’t say, "You are a poor man, so bring the meager offering." No! We already see you as a rich man. You are already in the right mind set. And that itself will generate the wealth, so that you will be able to afford the rich man’s sacrifice!

 Sometimes in life you can’t wait until everything is set in place. Sometimes you have to put yourself in the mindset of wealth, material or spiritual. You have to make a commitment that is beyond your present means. That in itself will transform your condition and the wealth will flow.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5776 email of Chabad of Great Neck [NY.]*

**L’Maaseh A Tale to Remember**

**The Mother Who Thought That Learning Torah**

**Would Protect Her Son**

 Nachlas Tzvi relates a powerful story that demonstrates the devotion and commitment which a young Yeshivah student demonstrated, as well as the reward he achieved for his sacrifice in order to study Torah.

 During World War I, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, zt”l, decided to close his Yeshivah in Kletzk, stating that he could not take responsibility for the safety of his students. He therefore sent everyone home for their own benefit.

 Upon returning home, one young student was asked by his mother, “Why have you come home?” He said, “The Rosh Yeshivah sent everyone home for their own safety.”

 The mother began to raise her voice, “Do you think that you are more safe here than in the Yeshivah? I want you to return to the Yeshivah to learn Torah!” The boy said, “But Mother, I have no money to purchase a ticket for the train.”

 She responded, “Then you will walk. Return immediately to the Yeshivah. The Torah will protect you!”

 The young student listened to his mother, and he began to walk the few hundred kilometers back to the Yeshivah. After almost a week of walking, the young student appeared before Rav Isser Zalman and said, “Rebbe, I have come to study Torah!”

 Rav Isser Zalman said, “Why are you here? I sent you home for your safety!”

 The student related his conversation with his mother and how he walked back to the Yeshivah. Hearing this, Rav Isser Zalman was overcome with emotion. He was impressed with a Jewish mother’s selfsacrifice to risk her child’s life for the sake of Torah. To have such amazing faith in Hashem was incredible! To see this devotion transmitted to her son, who was willing to walk hundreds of kilometers to learn Torah, was overwhelming.

 Rav Isser Zalmen said to the student, “I would like to buy your shoes from you. I will treasure the shoes that were worn by a young Yeshivah student who displayed such remarkable devotion for Torah study!”

 Hashem repaid this student for his unparalleled devotion to Torah, as he eventually became the Gadol Ha’dor, the preeminent Torah sage of the generation— Rav Elazar Menachem Mann Shach!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5776 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**Pearls of Wisdom…**

**The Klausenberger Rebbe and Prime Minister Ben-Gurion**



 A Word for the Ages Having survived the Holocaust, the Klausenberger Rebbe picked himself up from the ashes and built a thriving community in Eretz Yisroel, and established the well-known Laniado Medical Center.

 The Rebbe was once meeting with the Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben Gurion, who asked him what his expectations of the newly founded State of Israel were.

 The Klausenberger Rebbe replied, “I have both maximal and minimal expectations for Israel. I’d love to see you wearing Chassidic clothing, but at the very least, I hope that you’d let me wear mine!”

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5776 email of Torah U’Tefilah: A Collection of Inspiring Insights compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.*

**Cast Your Bread... #42**

**Discovering the Origin of Sholom’s Miraculous Rescue From a Doomed Pan Am Flight**

 On Thursday, December 21, 1988, Pan Am flight 103 crashed over Scotland [after exploding from a bomb placed aboard the plane], one hour after it departed from London to New York. All 258 people on board perished.

 Sholom carries his airline tickets from that flight in the shirt pocket over his heart, as witness to the miracle of his rescue. On Monday before that flight, Sholom suddenly suffered terrible pains in his back. He was forced to enter the hospital to undergo a routine two-day treatment for a slipped disk. In this way he could make his flight on Thursday to attend a family simcha in New York on Thursday night.

 Sholom was quite surprised when R’ Chaim, the Rav of his shul, came to visit him in the hospital on Tuesday. Sholom, who was already feeling better, and was ready to be discharged, was surprised that Reb Chaim should take the trouble to visit. He was, after all, not really ill.

 As they spoke, R’ Chaim strongly advised Sholom to change his flight to Wednesday, the day before his scheduled Thursday flight, so that he could arrive early and leave himself time to rest. Then he could properly dance at the simcha, without being overly exhausted.

 Sholom changed his flight, in deference to R’ Chaim’s care and concern for him. Later, R’ Chaim himself admitted that he could not explain why he had suddenly gone to visit Sholom in the hospital, who was only in for minor treatment. This in itself is enough of a miracle.

 But the miracle of Sholom’s rescue really began many decades before. When the Nazis (yemach shemam) were rounding up men and boys to send to forced labor camps, a certain young yeshivah student hid in a double hideout in an apartment. He spent his days learning Torah.

 A woman in the apartment across the hall, whose husband had already been taken away, supplied the young man with all his needs. She saw it as a privilege to protect him since he was learning Torah. She would warn him to remain in his hiding place when she saw soldiers approaching to conduct searches. Once the young man was standing in the hallway when he heard stomping boots running up the steps. His blood froze!

 The woman motioned to him to come into her apartment, pointing to a seemingly ridiculous hiding place – behind her opened front door. When the SS men entered, the woman opened her door wide, standing calmly while leaning on the door. They had come to search for any men who might be in the home.

 The woman insisted there were only small children at home. They overturned the house, ranting and raving all the while. They threatened repeatedly to kill her and her children if she was hiding anyone. The young man almost died from fright. He wondered why she was sacrificing her life and that of her children for him.

 She kept calmly insisting that only she and her children were there. Finally the SS left. The young man endured the horrors of the war, but came out alive, thanks to the self-sacrifice of the remarkable woman.

 The young man? R’ Chaim.

 The woman? Sholom’s grandmother.

 Decades later it was R’ Chaim’s turn to save his savior’s descendant. (There Is No Such Thing As Coincidence) } Without consent from the Creator, no living being has the ability to benefit or harm himself or anyone else. When a person internalizes this notion that no creature can help or harm him unless Hashem permits it, he will no longer fear or hope in others, and will trust only in the Creator.~ (Chovos Ha’Levavos)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shemini 5776 email of the Weekly Vort.*

**The Skulener Rebbe and Senator Henry Jackson**



 Although Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson was not Jewish, his dedication and respect for the Jewish people were remarkable. Reb Moshe Londinski, who was a rabbi in Seattle, Washington, worked close with Senator Jackson. Reb Moshe helped with fundraising and often spoke to help gain the Senator support in his political career.

 One Sunday afternoon in early June, several years ago, Reb Moshe received a phone call from the gabbai of the Skulener Rebbe, Reb Eliezer Zisia Portugal, of blessed memory (1896-1982). "I am calling on behalf of the rebbe," the gabbai told Reb Moshe. "The rebbe must see Senator Jackson tomorrow at nine in the morning. Can you arrange an appointment?" Miraculously, Reb Moshe was able to arrange a meeting with the busy Senator. The Skulener Rebbe had requested that Reb Moshe act as an interpreter between the Rebbe and the Senator, so Reb Moshe took the next plane to Washington, D.C.

 The rebbe arrived with his gabboim (attendants) to Washington, D.C. They met Reb Moshe in the outer office, and they entered the inner office of Senator Jackson together. But instead of speaking to the Senator, the rebbe whispered something to his gabbai who in turn whispered something to Reb Moshe. Reb Moshe turned pale. He looked helplessly at Senator Jackson.

 "What is the problem?" The Senator asked curiously.

 "WelI ah. .." Reb Moshe took a deep breath. "It seems that the rebbe has not had a chance to say his morning prayers. He needs a place where he can concentrate. Would he be able to use your office for a little while?"

 "Of course, no problem!" Said the Senator. The Senator immediately stood up and walked with Reb Moshe out of the inner office. The two of them stood in the hall, waiting for the rebbe to finish.

 Twenty minutes went by. By this time, both men were pacing the hall. Reb Moshe did not know what to say to the Senator. After all, it was his office! Fortunately, the office door opened just then, and the rebbe himself beckoned them back inside. Senator Jackson once again seated himself behind his desk. "Now," he said with a smile. "What can I do for you?"

 Reb Moshe stood next to the rebbe, ready to interpret every word. The rebbe opened his mouth to speak. But the Rebbe said just two short words and then the holy man burst into tears. "What is wrong?" the Senator asked in concern. "I do not know," Reb Moshe said in bewilderment. The rebbe was trying to speak through his tears, but Reb Moshe could not understand a single word. He stood, waiting for the crying to stop, but the tears continued to pour down the face of the rebbe.

 Senator Jackson beckoned Reb Moshe over. "Tell the rabbi that I know what he wants," he said abruptly. "You do?" Reb Moshe said, startled. "How?" "Just ask the rabbi what he wants me to do about it," the Senator told him.

 Reb Moshe stared at the Senator for a moment, but then he obediently turned to the rebbe and relayed the statement of the Senator. The rebbe stopped crying. "I want it stopped immediately," the Rebbe told Reb Moshe. Reb Moshe translated the statement of the rebbe. "How does he want me to stop it?" the Senator asked. Again Reb Moshe relayed the question to the rebbe. "The Senator knows which buttons to press," the rebbe replied.

 The Senator reached for the phone, punched in a number and began to speak. And as Reb Moshe listened, the story slowly became clearer to him. It seemed that a few days before, the Romanian government had arrested twenty Jews and falsely accused them of currency speculation. They were imprisoned and due to be executed in a few days.

 The whole situation was a ploy by the Romanian government to pressure the United States into giving them Most Favored Nation status, which would bring the country great financial gain. The Senator, as the head of the Foreign Relations Committee, was also very involved with Soviet Jewry, and he knew of this action by the Romanian government. He had immediately understood what the rebbe had come for.

 The Senator was speaking to the Romanian ambassador. "As head of the Foreign Relations Committee, I strongly suggest that you immediately call the Prime Minister. Tell him that if those twenty prisoners are not released within forty-eight hours, I guarantee that Romania will never see a cent of American aid. Hair will grow on the palm of their hands before they ever receive the Most Favored Nation status." The Senator put the phone down and looked up at Reb Moshe. "Tell the rabbi that it has been taken care of."

 The rebbe smiled and warmly shook the hand of the Senator. Within forty-eight hours, all twenty prisoners had been released and brought to Eretz Yisroel. Once again, Reb Moshe had seen the concern that Senator Jackson had for the Jewish people. Reb Moshe was curious about this, and one time he took the opportunity to ask the Senator why the Senator cared so much about the Jews.

 Senator Jackson smiled. "Three reasons: One, I was a prosecutor during the Nuremberg trials. I saw how much the Jews had suffered in the concentration camps, and I resolved to do whatever I could to help them. Two, my mother a widow, was a housekeeper for a Jewish family in the town of Evret, Washington. They treated her very well. They gave her extra food and money during the Depression years to help her raise her family. In her will my mother asked that her children should always be good to the Jews. And finally, when I was a young boy, there were a few Jews I would always help out on Saturday. They always treated me nicely..."

 But, Senator Jackson did not stop there; he was not satisfied to help merely those 20 Jews in Romania. Soon after, Senator Jackson along with Congressman Charles Albert Vanik of Ohio introduced an amendment to the trade bill, linking emigration to most favored status. Ultimately the Jackson-Vanik Amendment of the 1974 Trade Reform Act become law. The implementation of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment made one of the first cracks in the Soviet Iron Curtain.

 Later, when Russia suffered a famine, and had to purchase millions of tons of American grain, the evil Communists had to allow tens of thousands of Jews to leave the country. The doors of freedom had been thrust open and the seeds of freedom began to sprout in Communist Russia. It is the opinion of many historians that the Jackson-Vanik Amendment significantly contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union, thereby forever changing the course of history! (Visions of Greatness, R.Y.Weiss, p.73 and Reflections of the Maggid, R. P.J. Krohn, .104)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Tazria 5776 email of Good Shabbos Everyone.*

**Who Was Two-Gun Cohen?**

**The Chinese President’s Jewish Confidant who Mustered Chinese Support of the Creation of Israel.**

**By** [**The Cape Jewish Chronicle**](http://www.aish.com/authors/374763871.html)



 Despite the various accounts written of this powerful and colorful figure of the early part of the last century, few people have actually heard of Morris Abraham ‘Two-Gun’ Cohen. A glance into the Encyclopedia Judaica reveals that he really did exist, offering but a brief description of his origins and his life.

 It is an article that was passed on to the Chronicle written by the American Rabbi Marvin Tokayer that details what he describes as a “truth is stranger than fiction” story of a man “frequently and referred to as ‘the uncrowned Jewish king of China’.”

 Moishe Abraham Cohen was born in London’s East End in 1887, to poor Orthodox Polish immigrants. “Fat Moishe” was a bad youngster, a pickpocket and street kid who ended up in a reformatory, but stuck to his criminal ways.

 Indeed Moishe was such an embarrassment to his family and the community that at age 16 he was shipped off to a relative in Saskatchewan, Canada, in the hope that he would come right. But that didn’t happen. Instead he became a peddler and gambler, and even potentially violent gun-toting crook.

 In 1908 Dr Sun Yat-sen, the charismatic Chinese revolutionary leader, befriended Morris Cohen in Canada.

 It so happened that at that time, the beginning of the 20th Century, a number of poor Chinese immigrants came to Canada to work on the railways and to seek out a better life. They suffered much discrimination and misfortune and Morris, as he was now known, having lived a similar experience as a Jew in England, felt a sympathy and close cultural bond with these people, becoming something of a protector to them.

**

***Two-Gun Cohen, in the white suit, seated with President Chiang Kai-Shek on his right***

 In 1908 Dr Sun Yat-sen, the charismatic Chinese revolutionary leader who was striving for the independence of his people from the corrupt Imperial system, came to Canada to enlist the support of the Canadian Chinese community. In Morris Cohen he found a trusted ally and a mutual bond was created, with Morris becoming his personal bodyguard in Canada.

 Their friendship deepened and Morris – who had with the passing of time become a very wealthy real estate speculator – was instrumental in providing the Chinese with arms and ammunitions and support for their cause.

 In 1912 the Chinese Imperial Government had been toppled and a few years after World War 1 (in which Cohen fought in the Canadian army), in 1922, Sun Yat-sen persuaded him to come to China, where he made him his aide-de-camp, bodyguard, arms buyer and friend and promoted him to the rank of colonel.

 After grazing his right arm during a battle, Cohen realized that he had to become adept at shooting with both hands and thereafter toted an automatic in his shoulder holster and a Smith & Wesson on his hip. Hence the nickname ‘Two-Gun Cohen’.

 The Chinese, however, had come to regard him with immense respect, referring to him as Mah Kun, or General Mah.

 During this period, according to Rabbi Tokayer, Morris Cohen played an instrumental role in advancing the economy, political status and intelligence arm of the Chinese Republic.

 Cohen helped foster Chinese support for the Zionist movement towards the creation of the State of Israel.

 Another vital role of our Jewish hero was his fostering of Chinese support for the Zionist movement towards the creation of the State of Israel, as reflected when, in 1920, Sun Yat-sen wrote, “I express my sympathy to the movement which is one of the greatest movements …” offering support “to restore your wonderful and historical nation which has contributed so much to the civilization of the world and which rightly deserves an honorable place in the family of nations.”

 When SunYat-sen – the first President of China – died in 1925, Two-Gun Cohen, as a close family friend, was the only foreigner present at the private funeral, even (in top hat and tails) leading the procession of tribute.

Thereafter, Chiang Kai-shek, Sun’s successor, continued the ‘romance’ with Cohen, who, as his adviser, helped the leader organize his Kuomintang Army. For this he elevated Cohen to the rank of general – “Not only the first Jew, but the first person of European descent to hold such a post in the Chinese military,” writes Rabbi Tokayer.

 From 1926 to 1928 Cohen functioned in all but name as the Nationalists’ war minister, taking part in campaigns both against the Communist rebels, which began in 1927, and also the Japanese. He undertook several secret missions to Europe to purchase arms and organize support for the Nationalist forces.

 In the full on civil war between the two Chinese factions – the Communist People’s Republic of China, led by Mao Zedong, and Chiang Kai-shek’s Republic of China – amazingly, General Cohen was the only one trusted by both leaders, and was called on by both sides to become their ‘middle-man’ or ‘conduit’, traveling between Taipei and Beijing.

 In the war with Japan, Cohen was captured in 1941 and incarcerated in the notorious Stanley Prison in Japanese-occupied Hong Kong, where he was tortured, but refused to give any information to his captors.

 He was ultimately released in a prisoner exchange in 1942 and repatriated to Canada, where he was well received.

 Yet with all that, writes Rabbi Tokayer – and certainly for us Jews – Two-Gun Cohen achieved his greatest triumph after he had retired to live quietly in Montreal.

 This involved the vote by the 5 member Security Council on whether the motion for the partition of Palestine into two states – one Jewish and one Arab – should be put before the General Assembly. One veto would “scuttle the debate’, and while the USA, the Soviet Union and France were for it and no veto from Britain, the “entire Arab orbit’ would be trying to secure the veto of the 5th member, the Republic of China.



Two-Gun Cohen in his old age

 The outcome was by no means certain, with intense last-minute lobbying on both sides.

 General Wu was leading the Chinese delegation to the UN. Cohen smiled. It was he who had appointed Wu a general.

 “Zionist leaders in San Francisco were desperate to meet with the Chinese delegates to present their position, but were refused. Rabbi Israel Goldstein, an astute member of the Zionist group, made a quick phone call to Montreal, bringing Cohen to San Francisco for an emergency meeting.

 “When informed that a diplomat by the name of General Wu was leading the Chinese delegation to the UN, Cohen smiled knowingly and announced that it was he who had appointed Wu a general. Cohen met with Wu the following morning – and the rest is history. China did not vote against the partition, but instead abstained, contributing to the passage of the motion.

 “After 2000 years of exile, the [State of Israel](http://www.aish.com/jw/s/Harry-Trumans-Lifelong-Jewish-Friend.html) would now become a reality.”

Some years later Two-Gun Cohen returned to England, where he died in 1970 at the age of 83.

 And a final note from our source: “His funeral was attended by representatives from both Chinas – who were still at war with each other – demonstrating their deep respect for the loyal friend of China. His tombstone was etched with traditional Kohanic and English inscriptions …

 But what sets this tombstone apart from all the others in the austere Manchester cemetery is an inscription in Chinese characters that a grateful Mme Sun Yatsen, the vice-Chairman of the Republic of China penned, acknowledging Mah Kun as a hero of China. It is a tribute to the man who was, if not by birth, then certainly at heart, a true brother to the Chinese people.”

*Reprinted from the website of Aish.coim This article originally appeared in*[*the Cape Jewish Chronicle*](http://cjc.org.za/)