

HERE'S my STORY

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ALL FOR THE CAUSE

MR. MOSHE SALZBERG

My name is Moshe Salzberg. I was raised in Lisbon, Portugal, where my parents spent the wartime years. After high school, I came to New York to study at Yeshiva University and the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, but after I got married, I immigrated to Montreal, Quebec, in order to find work. I have lived in Montreal for close to fifty years now, and I've been involved with the Jewish community here. My involvement came about mostly because of my three children and my concern for their religious education.

In 1968, when my son Meyer was ready to start school, there was a Lithuanian-style *yeshiva* in Montreal, called Yeshiva Merkaz HaTorah, and there was also a Lubavitch *yeshiva*. As a matter of fact, the founders of Merkaz HaTorah came to town at the same time as the Lubavitchers. At one time they worked together, but eventually they split.

Lubavitch made its own institution — there was a large Lubavitcher community in Montreal, and they needed a *yeshiva* for the *chasidic* children — and Merkaz HaTorah made its own. But while Lubavitch prospered, Merkaz HaTorah did not do as well. They did not have enough students to fill all the grades.

So we didn't see a future for Meyer at that school. A few of the other parents felt the same, and so we decided that maybe we should start another school, because it seemed to us that Merkaz HaTorah would eventually disappear.

That's when I started talking with the Lubavitchers, who did not want another *yeshiva* in Montreal. Instead, they invited me and the other parents to bring our children to their *yeshiva*. At that time, they had just put up a new building on Westbury Avenue in Montreal, so they were conveniently located in the area.

We met with Rabbi Sputz, Rabbi Greenglass and Rabbi



Gerlitzky, and we discussed the idea of making a *yeshiva* together. The meeting was going well until I asked: "Who decides on the teachers for these kids?"

They looked at each other, they looked at me, and they said, "Well, we already have teachers."

I said, "Yes, but maybe we want to have some other teachers, not all Lubavitch."

They did not want to agree to that. So that put an end to this attempt for us to become part of the Lubavitch *yeshiva*. But then I got the idea of going to see the Rebbe to ask him what he thought about all of this.

I had met the Rebbe once before in connection with the founding of Camp Gan Yisrael in Montreal. At that time, the Rebbe gave me a five dollar bill — not a one dollar bill as was his custom, but a five dollar bill, which I still have. So that first meeting was a special memory, and I felt that he would find a way out of this dilemma.

I came to Chabad Headquarters in New York and, after a long wait, I was invited to go into the Rebbe's office at around 1:00 a.m.

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MY ENCOUNTER
with the **REBBE**

An oral history project dedicated to documenting the life of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory. The story is one of thousands recorded in the over 1,000 videotaped interviews conducted to date. Please share your comments and suggestions. mystory@jemediia.org

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He inquired what I wanted to talk to him about. I told him I had come to discuss building another *yeshiva* in Montreal — a Yeshiva Gedolah.

He asked, "Do you have enough students for the *yeshiva*?"

I said, "We don't have very many at this time — only about five or six boys. But once we start one grade, we hope it will grow from grade to grade."

I also explained to the Rebbe that the kids want to be religious, but they don't necessarily want to be Lubavitch.

The Rebbe was quite understanding. As a matter of fact, he told me: "Listen, I want you to build a *yeshiva*. And it should be the nicest *yeshiva* that you can build. It should have air conditioning for the study hall, and

it should be attractive, because the mothers of these children want them to go to a very nice, very comfortable place."

I was surprised by that answer — that he should mention air

conditioning, because air conditioning was a real luxury in those days. I was very impressed by that answer because you would expect that, being Lubavitch, he would be touting the superiority of Lubavitch over other institutions, but he didn't take that position at all.

He was in favor of another Jewish school going up in Montreal. He understood that not everyone wants to be Lubavitch, nor has to be Lubavitch. There are other ways of serving Hashem. And that is good.

At the end of the meeting he gave me a blessing, and he wished me that I should succeed.

When I returned from New York, any opposition to another *yeshiva* from the Lubavitchers melted away, and I succeeded in founding a Yeshiva Gedolah.

And it all worked out. Five years after we founded it,



In loving memory of

Rabbi Abraham B. Hecht

התמים הרב אברהם דוב בן ר' יהושע ע"ה
Second Yahrzeit, 24 Teves 5775



Rebbetzin Lieba Hecht

הרבנית ליבא בת ר' ברוך ע"ה
Eleventh Yahrzeit, 21 Teves 5775

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by dedicating future editions of Here's My Story*

Yeshiva Gedolah and Merkaz HaTorah merged, and today 450 students attend this institution from pre-school to post-high school Talmudic studies. All thanks to the Rebbe's blessing.

Mr. Moshe Salzberg lives with his family in Montreal, Canada. He was interviewed in his home in January of 2011.

לע"נ ר' ישראל יעקב וזוגתו מרת קריינא ע"ה לאקשין
ע"י בניהם ר' נחמן ור' אברהם ומשפחתם שיחיו

This week in....

> **5745 — 1984**, following a visit to the resting place of the Previous Rebbe, the Rebbe's secretariat announced an unexpected *Farbrengen*. A short five minutes later, the Rebbe began the *Farbrengen*, honoring the 850th anniversary since the passing of Maimonides, deriving many lessons from Maimonides' conduct and teachings. He then encouraged the daily study of a portion of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*. 20 Teves

> **5749 — 1988**, the Rebbe concluded the eleven months of reciting *Kaddish* and leading the daily prayers following the passing of his wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. Following *Mincha*, the Rebbe addressed the assembled about the times of *Moshiach* and the resurrection of the dead. 21 Teves

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