

HERE'S my STORY

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HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO YOU?

MR. BENTZION RADER



Before my first visit with the Rebbe in 1966, I'd had no contact with him. At the time, I was facing difficulties in my business as a result of the tragic death of my partner.

I had heard a lot about the Rebbe, and when a friend suggested I consult him, I jumped at the chance.

I flew from London — where I lived and worked as an accountant — to New York, and my audience began at 2 a.m.

Before the audience, I had asked Rabbi Faivish Vogel, who accompanied me on my trip: "How do I explain my business affairs to the Rebbe? They are highly complicated!"

He said, "Write it all down before you go in and let the Rebbe read it." So the day before the audience, I wrote it all down — about thirty pages of it! Now I know it was a great *chutzpah* for me to expect the Rebbe to wade through thirty pages of explanations, but Rabbi Vogel told me to put it in writing.

When I entered the Rebbe's office, the Rebbe took up the thirty sheets of paper and started to read them. It took a while.

While the Rebbe was reading, I was thinking to myself: "Why am I wasting the Rebbe's time? He can't possibly understand all these business issues. It's too complicated."

My concerns were exacerbated by the fact that the Rebbe never stopped to ask me any questions — he just kept reading. And so the longer it took, the more doubts I had in my mind about whether the Rebbe could possibly understand what it was all about.

When the Rebbe finished reading, he turned to me and asked me a question that went directly to the heart of my field of expertise: "In England, when a company is being floated on the stock exchange, how is it valued?"

I explained what was involved, and in response, the Rebbe said, "That's not the way we do it in America..." And he proceeded to explain to me the way a company was floated on the New York Stock Exchange.

When he'd finished explaining, he asked me another question and then another. And I began to realize that the Rebbe had sensed my doubts, and by asking me these questions and providing the answers, he was showing me that he fully understood the world of business and my particular problem.

The Rebbe then said to me, "Do you know what the difference between *emunah* and *bitachon* is?"

I said, "No."

He said, "Let me explain it to you. People think that *bitachon*, trust in G-d, is a higher form of *emunah*, faith, but it's not. *Bitachon* is a whole different way of relating to G-d. If one is faced with a problem and one has *emunah*, then one has faith that G-d will help him overcome his problems. But if one has *bitachon*, one doesn't think there is a problem at all, for he understands that G-d doesn't send problems, only challenges."

And then he proceeded to give me down-to-earth practical advice on how to deal with what was concerning me. His advice was invaluable to me. It was much better

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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@jemedi.org

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advice than I got from many of the professionals to whom I'd paid lots of money.

And then he said to me, "And you should recite Psalms ... If people realized what Psalms do for the individual who recites them, they would be reciting Psalms continuously ... And also, I think you should have your *tefillin* checked."

I protested, "But I have very good *tefillin*!"

The Rebbe smiled, "I think you should have them checked anyway."

After morning prayers, I went together with Rabbi Vogel to a scribe, who told me: "The verses in your *tefillin* are beautifully written, the boxes are excellent, but the parchments have been placed in the wrong order!"

I was totally overwhelmed by this. How did the Rebbe know?!

On the subject of *tefillin*, I would like to relate another story. This happened some ten years after my initial meeting with the Rebbe, and it taught me an invaluable lesson.

I was on business in Detroit, and there I met a man who asked me all sorts of question about *tefillin*: "Why must they be black? Why are they square? Can't they be round?"

After a while, I asked him, "Do you put on *tefillin*?" He said, "No." So I said, "You should."

His response to me was: "Well, if you feel it's so important, then meet me at the bakery where I work at 6:30 in the morning, and I'll put them on."

This was a challenge and, though it was difficult, I went to his place of business, and very early the next morning, amongst sacks of flour, I helped him put on *tefillin*.

I was amazed to see that he really didn't need my help. He knew exactly what to do, what blessings to recite, and he could read the prayer-book fluently.

So when he finished, I asked him, "Why don't you do put on *tefillin* regularly?"

He said, "*Tefillin* are expensive, and I don't own a pair. But if someone gave me a pair I would put them on regularly."

So I promised him that when I returned to Detroit next time — which I anticipated to happen in six weeks' time — I would bring him a pair of *tefillin*."

That night, I flew into New York, and I wrote a note to the Rebbe telling him about what had happened in Detroit.

Immediately I got a response. The Rebbe wrote: "Do you think it's right that a Jew who has put on *tefillin* for the first time in twenty years, should wait six weeks to do it again? You should buy him a pair today. And if you can't get them to him as soon as possible, you should go back to Detroit yourself to make personally sure he gets them without delay."

I heard the Rebbe's words. And even though I had to overcome all kinds of difficulties in the process, I found a pair of *tefillin* — which I bought on credit — and sent them to him via American Airlines. I didn't leave New York for London until I knew for certain that he had received them, and I reported to the Rebbe that the mission had been accomplished.

Six weeks later, I went back to Detroit as planned, and I met this man again. I asked him, "Do you put on *tefillin* regularly now?"

"Yes," he said, "and let me tell you this: Once, when I was coming home from work, I got caught in traffic and it looked I would miss the time for doing it, so I ditched my car and went home by foot. I had to put them on because it meant so much to you to get these *tefillin* to me."

His words echoed the very words that the Rebbe had written, "When this Jew sees how much it means to you that he has these *tefillin* straightaway, this *mitzvah* will have a special importance to him."

Mr. Bentzion Rader was a practicing chartered accountant in London, England for almost forty years. He enjoyed a personal relationship with the Rebbe from 1966 and was interviewed in his home three times between 2007 and 2010.

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This week in...

> **5740 — 1939**, honoring thirty years since the Rebbe assumed leadership of the Chabad-Lubavitch Movement, Rabbi Yosef Ber Soleveitchik joined the Rebbe's annual Yud Shevat *Farbrengen* in 770. Rabbi Soleveitchik was in Berlin in the late 1920s, during the time the Rebbe resided there. That year's *Farbrengen* was a milestone *Farbrengen*, with many thousands of people in attendance.¹ 10 Shevat

¹ Kovetz Hashishim, p. 53

In memory of

Mrs. Chana Breina Friedman, OBM

מרת חנה בריינא ע"ה
בת הרב יצחק דוד שלום הי"ד

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