

HERE'S *my* STORY

SELFLESS LOVE

RABBI SHOLOM BER LIPSKAR

In 1970, my wife Chani and I went down to Florida to be the Rebbe's emissaries in Miami Beach. At that time, the Rebbe gave us some wonderful blessings, and he told us in Yiddish "*Ich fuhr mit eich* - I am traveling with you." And we have always felt the Rebbe's presence with us during the entire forty year period that we have been working in Florida.

When I first started out, I was young, I was gung-ho, and I tried to do as much as I could to bring Jews back to Judaism. For example, when I purchased a car, I made friends with the car salesman and convinced his manager to invite me in to share words of Torah and put on *teffilin* with all the Jewish men who were working at this dealership.

Both Chani and I were always cognizant of our mission, and while we were walking home from *shul*, we made sure to interact with any Jewish people that we met. On one occasion, we got into a conversation with a young Jewish girl, and she agreed to join us for Shabbos lunch.

We invited her again and, slowly, she became more involved - she came to *shul* with us, she started to keep Shabbos, and she became more observant in her daily practice. As we got to know her, she told us about her background - that her biological parents were divorced, and her mother was now with someone else.

At this time, I would report to the Rebbe on a regular basis, and in one of my letters, I mentioned this girl and her story. In response, the Rebbe instructed me to make sure that the girl's mother had a proper Jewish divorce, which is critical for a married woman if she wants to enter into a new relationship.



I immediately asked the girl, and we tried to contact her mother, who was then travelling in India somewhere. But we couldn't find her. I became involved in other matters and forgot to follow up.

After a year passed, Chani and I had an opportunity to visit the Rebbe personally in his office and receive his blessings. We were very proud and very thankful that we had been successful in our mission, and we wanted to share our *nachas* with him. So in preparation for the meeting, I wrote up an overview of the activities and important accomplishments of that year, and I asked the Rebbe for his blessings.

The Rebbe had a little pullout shelf on the side of his desk, where he would read people's letters. He had a system of speed-reading where he would read down the lines, and he used a little pencil to mark things that he wanted to respond to.

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While he was reading, I was standing there with my wife, feeling – not exactly “smug,” because standing in front of the Rebbe was an intense experience, but – I would say, filled with a sense of inner satisfaction that I had fulfilled my mission properly. And then the Rebbe picked up his head and asked, “What about the young girl and her mother?”

For a moment, I didn’t recollect who he meant, and then I started literally shaking because I had realized what the Rebbe was talking about, and I remembered that I had never responded to him, because I hadn’t fulfilled his instructions.



At that moment I felt so ashamed. This girl, her mother, her issue had fallen through the cracks. I had forgotten, but the Rebbe – who had the whole world on his head and who had thousands of emissaries like me in thousands of places all over

the world, with thousands of issues... medical issues, business issues, personal issues – *the Rebbe* had remembered!

I couldn’t wait to get out of the room because I was so embarrassed. My wife later told me – because I didn’t hear anything after that point – that the Rebbe had given us great blessings. As soon as I left the Rebbe’s office, I immediately got on the phone, made the right contacts, and within a twenty-four hour period tracked down the mother. And I made sure that she had a Jewish divorce.

But it took the Rebbe to bring me to that kind of awareness of what it means to care about another person selflessly and unconditionally. He had never met the girl nor her mother – he only heard about them from me – yet he cared about them both because they were like his children. A person who has fifteen children knows each one of them in the same way as a person who has one child, because they are his children.

He cared about every single Jew that much; that personally and that deeply.

Rabbi Sholom Dovber Lipskar has been a Chabad emissary in Florida since 1969. In 1982 he founded The Shul of Bar Harbour, as well as The Aleph Institute, an organization dedicated to the welfare of prisoners and their families.

In honor of
**Chayeles Tzivos Hashem
Menucha Rochel bas Chaya Feigl**
By her parents

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This week in...

- > **5710—1950**, upholding the practice requested of him by his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rebbe held a *farbrengen* at 770 on Shabbos *mevorchim* Adar – his first after the Rebbe Rayatz’s passing two weeks earlier. 24 Shevat
- > **5712—1952**, the Rebbe delivered the monumental discourse titled, *Lo sihye meshakela* over 55 minutes. During the *maamar*, the Rebbe cried profusely as he spoke about the obligation to use one’s every moment to serve G-d. At one point, consumed in tears, he placed his head on the table until he was able to continue. 27 Shevat
- > **5729—1969**, in a telegram, the Rebbe gave his consent and blessing for a new Chabad village named ‘*Nachalat Har Chabad*’ to be built in the Israeli town of Kiryat Malachi. 23 Shevat.¹
- > **5750—1990**, tractors arrived at 770 to begin excavation to expand the library near 770. 27 Shevat

¹. Igros Kodesh 26 p94

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