

# HERE'S *my* STORY

## THE REBBE'S CHILDREN

**MRS. SHULA KAZEN**

It was 1967, right after the Six Day War. I had just come home to Cleveland, Ohio from the Chabad women's convention to find that the electricity was out. My husband told me that a new neighbor had moved in across the street who was an electrician, and I decided to ask for his help.

The new neighbor was outside, cutting his grass. I said, "It's so nice to see new people on our street... My husband tells me you're an electrician, maybe you could help me?"

He said he would. Before he came into our house, he asked me for a *yarmulke*. So I said, "It's nice to have a neighbor who wants to wear a *yarmulke*."

He said, "I don't. I'm not religious. But when in Rome, do as the Romans."

We continued to chat, and I asked him, if he heard what happened in Israel.

He said, "Yes, I would do anything for Israel."

"There is something you could do, and it's not a lot," I said. I told him what the Rebbe said before the war started - that Jews should put on *tefillin* because this will help neutralize the enemy. I also told him that Chabad women were distributing *tefillin* for \$18 a pair.

His response to me was: "I served in the Israeli army, and I would do anything for Israel, but not this - not *tefillin*."

A short while later, my daughter Henya arrived with her little girl, and I encouraged her to go across the street to talk to him. When he saw her, he remarked, "You have such a beautiful child!" When Henya asked if he had any children, his only answer was: "Go talk to my wife."

Henya went inside, and spoke to his wife, who told her the whole sad story. This man had been married before,



but his first wife died in childbirth along with the baby. He was very heartbroken, but four years later, he remarried. Since then, they had tried to have children but, although she became pregnant three or four times, each pregnancy ended in miscarriage. They lost hope of having children of their own and were planning to adopt.

So Henya said to the wife, "We have a Rebbe in New York - why don't you write to him for a blessing?"

"No, no, no." The wife would have none of it. But Henya persisted and finally she told Henya to talk to her husband. Surprisingly, he was receptive. "If it will help, why not?"

So Henya wrote a letter to the Rebbe on their behalf. The Rebbe responded: "You wrote to me about the doctors that they say it's impossible to have a child because of a medical problem... Jews are higher than nature. Report good news in a special time."

When we got that letter, I said to him, "*Mazel Tov! Mazel Tov!*"

*continued on reverse*

"Are you normal?!" he asked me incredulously.



I said, "Don't you believe?"

He said, "I believe, but not like you."

"That's already enough. If you believe, you will have a child."

About three months passed by and she became pregnant – and this time it was a successful pregnancy. They had a baby girl.

A few days after the birth, he came to our house with a beautiful pair of *tefillin*, and he asked my husband how to put it on. Then he ordered *tefillin* for his relatives – his brother in law, his father in law – and all of his friends.

Later, he said to me, "This is the Rebbe's child. When she will be a year-old, I'll take her to the Rebbe."

Meanwhile, Passover was coming, and my children were going to spend the holiday with us. We couldn't fit all the children and grandchildren into our house, and the man invited them to stay at his house. I thanked him, but explained, "They need a kosher house." So he and his wife decided to make their house kosher for Passover, but after Passover was finished, they did not take on any other *mitzvos*.

After a year, he and his wife went to New York together with the baby, for a private audience with the Rebbe. The Rebbe tried to persuade them to keep *Shabbos*, to keep the laws of *kosher* and to keep the laws of family purity. But they would not be persuaded.

So finally the Rebbe said, "If you at least keep the laws of family purity, then I promise you that your little girl will have brothers and sisters."

To this they agreed. After a little while, the wife became pregnant again, and this time she had a boy. Following this, she got another blessing from the Rebbe, and she had twins.

In a way, what he said about the first baby – that it was the Rebbe's child – must have been true for all of them, because today all of their children and grandchildren are Lubavitcher Chassidim.

*Rebbetzin Shula Kazen and her husband, Rabbi Zalman Kazen, of blessed memory, served as Chabad emissaries in Cleveland, Ohio, since 1953. She was interviewed in March 2009.*

הוקדש ע"י

ר' מיכאל הכהן וזוגתו מרת לאה כהן

מנשטטר, אנגלי

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## This week in...

- > **5728—1968**, the Rebbe appointed a committee of delegates from all Chabad institutions in Israel to renovate and reestablish the *Tzemach Tzedek Shul* in Jerusalem's Old City.<sup>1</sup> 2 Nissan
- > **5734—1974**, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein visited with the Rebbe for about an hour. That same night, Rabbi Pinchos Menachem Alter, the future Gerer Rebbe, spent an hour-and-a-half in *yechidus*.<sup>2</sup> 1 Nissan
- > **5741—1981**, the once-in-28-years *Birchas Hachamah* – Blessing of the Sun, was held in front of 770. The Rebbe treated it as a monumental event, requesting that children recite the 12 Torah passages, addressing the occasion, and requesting that special melodies be sung.<sup>3</sup> 4 Nissan
- > **5747—1987**, the first of thirty volumes of the Rebbe's personal correspondence, called *Igros Kodesh*, went to print. The set would eventually contain 12,000 letters, spanning the years 1925 through 1975. 1 Nissan

1. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 25, p.122. 2. *Yoman Divrei Sholom* 1974, p.65.  
3. *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 22, p. 191.

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