

HERE'S my STORY

Generously
sponsored
by the  Crain-Maling
Foundation

THE POWER TO WALK

RABBI ARON TZVI STERNBERG

The story that I'm about to tell took place in the early months of 1988. At that time, I was running the advertising department of 47th Street Photo, which then was a half-a-billion dollar company. It was considered the largest photography store for graphic equipment in the world, and it had one of the largest in-house advertising agencies in New York City. We would place hundreds of ads with the *New York Times* yearly, (at times spending in excess of \$350,000 a month!) and, as a result, we had a great deal of clout with them.

One day, I got a phone call from the owner of 47th Street Photo, Reb Chaim Yehuda Goldstein, asking me to assist Chabad Lubavitch with a special ad placement. He said, "Please help them out and make sure they get what they need. Whatever you can do will be appreciated."

Almost immediately I heard from the Chabad representative organizing advertisements, Rabbi Yehoshua Metzger. He told me that the Rebbe's birthday was approaching and that Chabad would like to honor the Rebbe with a prominent, full page ad in the *New York Times*. Previously, their ads had gotten lost in the paper, and they wanted to make sure it wouldn't happen this time.

I immediately dispatched my people to speak with the *New York Times* people, and we were successful in procuring premiere placement — the back page of a section of the paper. What's more it was at half the usual price!

I was thrilled, Rabbi Metzger was thrilled, and that was the start of a beautiful friendship between us.



It was then that he asked if I would like to meet the Rebbe — he offered to arrange a meeting for me and my family on Sunday, when the Rebbe would typically greet people and give each person a dollar for charity. It was an opportunity of a lifetime, and of course, I didn't hesitate to grab it.

I remember the appointment was set for 11 a.m. on a Sunday, and we — I, my wife and our six children — arrived an hour early. Many people were already waiting to see the Rebbe, lining up around the block. We thought to ourselves, if we get in before nightfall we will be very lucky. But, promptly at 11, Rabbi Metzger showed up and ushered us right in.

We were introduced to the Rebbe, who gave us all a blessing plus thirteen dollars to distribute to charity. As we were about to leave, I decided to be bold. I was holding our youngest, Raizy, in my arms,

continued on reverse

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 over 1200 videotaped interviews conducted to date. These stories are based on the recollection of the individuals recounting them. Please share any corrections, comments and suggestions. mystory@jemedi.org

and I told the Rebbe what was troubling me and my wife about this child.

She was eighteen months old, yet she wasn't even standing or crawling, when she should have been walking already. Because of this, our pediatrician had recommended that we take her to a neurologist, and we'd made an appointment for ten days later. I explained all this to the Rebbe, and I asked him for a special blessing for Raizy.

The Rebbe turned to me with a smiling face and said, "*Der aibershter zol helfen, du vest ir firen tzum chuppah besha'ah tova umutzlachas* — With G-d's help, you will lead her to the marriage canopy in a good and auspicious time."

We walked out treasuring the experience, and the rest of the week proceeded as normal. Then came Shabbos. This was three days before Raizy was to see the neurologist.

As was my custom on Shabbos morning, I took my four older boys with me to the synagogue. I returned around noontime, walked up the stairs into the front entrance of my house, and I called out *Gut Shabbos!* My wife was sitting in the living room with Raizy on the floor to the left of the entrance. Seeing me come in, Raizy picked herself up — never having walked or even crawled before — and walked toward me across the living room floor! She walked approximately 15 feet!

My mouth was agape. I just didn't know what to say. I didn't know what to do. I became so emotional that I was shaking.

Both my wife and I were just beyond words. We had no idea what prompted this sudden dramatic change in Raizy's behavior, but we both saw it as a miracle. There was no question about it in our minds. The child literally picked herself up and started walking, without ever having crawled before. I was so taken aback that, forever after, I felt tremendous gratitude

to the Rebbe for what transpired.

Of course, we cancelled the appointment with the neurologist. There was no reason to take her. And Raizy grew up a normal child in every way. We took her to the *chuppah* as the Rebbe promised. Today, she is the mother of a couple of children and a perfect *balabusta*. We expect to see much more *nachas* from her.

Since the time the Rebbe passed away, I make the trek to the Rebbe's resting place quite often because I have such a strong belief that he is guiding my family, and the gratitude that I feel to him for being our emissary to the Creator of the World is unbounded.

Rabbi Aron Tzvi Sternberg is the Administrator for Talmud Torah Adas Yereim in Monsey, New York. He was interviewed in the My Encounter Studio in September of 2013.

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

This week in....

- > **5738-1977**, for the first time since suffering a massive heart attack some two months prior, the Rebbe held a *farbrengen* in the main hall of 770. Until then, the Rebbe would address the *chasidim* via microphone from his private study, where he was recovering. 19 Kislev
- > **5747-1986**, the Rebbe spoke of the age-old Jewish custom to surround a new-born baby with holy objects including a copy of *Shir LaMaalot* (Psalm 121), as a blessing and protection for the child and its mother. The Rebbe urged that this practice should begin immediately upon the expectant mother's arrival at the hospital, because of the great effect it has on the child's life.¹ 19 Kislev

1. Sefer Hasichos 5747 vol. 1, p. 146

Sponsored in honor of a complete
and speedy recovery
for **Aaron Yitzchak** ben **Sara**

You can help us record more testimonies
by dedicating future editions of *Here's My Story*

A project of:



JEWISH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

mystory@jemedia.org | myencounterblog.com | 718-774-6000
784 Eastern Parkway | Suite 403 | Brooklyn, NY 11213

© Copyright, Jewish Educational Media, 2015