

HERE'S
my
STORYGenerously
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RABBI SHOLOM BER LIPSKAR

In the mid-'70s, I was diagnosed with a murmur in my heart. A certain procedure had recently been developed for my condition, and the chief cardiologist at Miami's Mount Sinai Hospital was going to perform it on me.

I went into the hospital, and everything seemed to go very well. Since the procedure required general anesthesia and I was still out, the doctor informed my wife that I was in recovery. In the meantime, she went home to get some things. At the time, we lived just three blocks from Mount Sinai on North Meridian Avenue.

After enough time had passed and I was supposed to be out of recovery, she decided to call me in my room to ask me how I was. She called, and there was no response. So she hung up and tried again.

I was sharing the room with another gentleman, and eventually he woke up and picked up the phone.

"What's going on with my husband?" she asked him. "Where is he?"

I was right next to him, sleeping.

"Well, wake him up."



The guy tried calling out to me by name, but got no response. "Listen," he told her, "your husband is not waking up."

"Something must be wrong. Get the nurse, get the doctor, please," she urged him, and then ran over to the hospital.

Apparently — of course, I wasn't aware of any of this — a nurse tried waking me up, and then when that didn't work, she put out a Code Blue. Doctors and nurses began coming in with their emergency medical paraphernalia and they told my wife to leave.

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 1,700 videotaped interviews conducted to date. While we have done our utmost to authenticate these stories, they reflect the person's recollection and interpretation of the Rebbe's words.



continued from reverse

My wife rushed over to the nurses' station, told them that she needed to make a long-distance phone call, and dialed the Rebbe's office.

When one of his secretaries picked up the phone she anxiously filled him in on what was going on. The Rebbe already knew about the surgery, she told him, and had given a blessing for its success, but something was wrong: "Please help and go to the Rebbe. It's an emergency!"

"What number can I reach you at?" Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe's secretary, asked. A few minutes later, he called back: "I need to speak to your husband."

"My husband? Did you hear what I said? They're still trying to wake him up. You can't speak to him!"

"Did you hear what I said? I have directions from the Rebbe to speak to your husband," he repeated. "The Rebbe has a job for him."

At that, she calmed down a little bit. If the Rebbe has a job for him, he's going to be okay, she thought.

My wife, who can be very assertive when things are critical, decided she was going back into the room she had just been asked to leave. She arranged for the Rebbe's secretary to call the phone in my room and she put it next to my ear. The first thing I remember hearing was Rabbi Hodakov's voice.

At that time, there was a well-known refusenik physicist named Professor Herman Branover. He was the most prominent Jewish scientist to be let out of Russia during that period, after having to pay a ransom to do so, and was a Nobel Prize candidate for his work in the field of magnetohydrodynamics.

"The Rebbe said that you should call the university in Winnipeg to organize a reception for Professor Herman Branover, when he visits there," said Rabbi Hodakov. I could hear the

Rebbe's voice, in the background, instructing Rabbi Hodakov what to tell me. Apparently, the professor was on a tour of North America, and would be coming to Miami from Canada. He then went on to tell me that once Branover was in Miami, I should make sure that he is put in contact with the proper scientific resources, fellow physicists, and so forth. The idea was to help give him and his work more exposure to other people working in the field.

And with that, I woke up. I mumbled a few questions, and that was it. When I repeated to my wife what I was told, she was in disbelief.

I can't say exactly why I woke up, but all I know is that I was in a bad state, we reached out to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe took care of it. It was an interesting episode, and an illuminating look at how the Rebbe looks out for his emissaries around the world.

Rabbi Sholom Dovber Lipskar has been serving as a Chabad emissary in Florida since 1969. In 1981, he founded The Shul of Bar Harbour, as well as The Aleph Institute, an organization dedicated to the welfare of prisoners and their families. He was interviewed three times in 2009 and 2011. His wife, Mrs. Chani Lipskar was interviewed in 2021 and her recollection of the events has been incorporated into this account.

This week in....

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

- > **5711-1951**, in the afternoon before Passover, the Rebbe handed out *matzah*. In the coming years, he continued this custom. 14 Nissan
- > **5738-1978**, since the Rebbe was recovering from a heart attack, he sent out word that instead of personally distributing *matzah* to everyone, he would only give *matzah* to certain individuals and the young men studying in the *kolel* would distribute to everyone else on his behalf. This system continued in the following years. 13 Nissan

In honor of the Rebbe's birthday

י"א ניסן

Wishing everyone

א כשרן און פריילעכן פסח

Rabbi **Moshe** and **Libby Lazaros**

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