

HERE'S my STORY

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MY MIRACLE NEEDS A MIRACLE

MR. JAY GOLDSTEIN

Back in the early '80s, I owned a bookbinding business in New York and had a few regular Chabad customers. They would tell me about their Rebbe, and around Passover time, they told me about a special gathering he would have before the holiday which they invited me to join.

I went, and I was very impressed. There were a lot of people there, and the Rebbe sat at a long dais in the center of a cavernous room. There were some prominent Jewish leaders in attendance as well as some local politicians, some of whom were not Jewish.

The Rebbe spoke in Yiddish, but I was given a transistor radio that could play in my ear a simultaneous English translation of what he was saying. Every once in a while, shot glasses with wine were passed around and when the Rebbe was between talks, everyone would say *l'chaim*. You would hold up your cup, and the Rebbe would give you a toast. At one point, I made eye contact with him, he smiled, and I made a *l'chaim*.

It would be a long time before I had a real face-to-face with the Rebbe. In the meantime, in 1983, I married my wife Rebecca. We wanted to have a child, but it wasn't happening. After a while, we began going to fertility clinics and trying out different medicines. When that didn't work, we became a little discouraged.

"It's not so bad," my sister told me. "You can adopt."

Well, one day in 1989, I was watching TV in the living room with Becky, when out of nowhere she said, "Jay, I want to go to the Rebbe to get a blessing. Maybe he can help us."

I hadn't seen the Rebbe since that gathering, and had never actually met him, but I knew that he received people every Sunday. You could go tell him what your problem was and he would give you a blessing.



We got there the next Sunday to find, much to my amazement, a long line of people extending down Eastern Parkway for as far as the eye could see. Standing on that line, we found people from Europe, South America, and Australia. They were from all walks of life — some weren't even Jewish — but they had all heard about the Rebbe and wanted to speak to him.

After a long wait, we entered 770. Women went one way, and men the other, and soon it was my turn.

"My wife and I want to have a child, but it's not happening," I told the Rebbe. He listened, gave me a blessing and handed me a dollar to give to charity while saying, "This is for your wife."

I thanked him and walked off with the dollar, when one of the bodyguards called out, "You, you, you!"

"Me?" I asked, turning around.

"Yes, you! The Rebbe wants to speak to you again."

I was a little nervous, but I went back to the Rebbe. The Rebbe looked at me, and he seemed very excited, almost

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

agitated. He gave me a second dollar, said “this is for the children,” and I was on my way again.

I told my wife what had happened, and we hoped that it was all a good sign. Sure enough, my wife got pregnant that same year, and gave birth to our son, Yonasan Asher.

Yoni was born prematurely, however, so the hospital had to keep him in the NICU. Then it became apparent that he had some trouble eating — there was a problem with his esophagus, so that when he swallowed, the milk might go into his trachea, but it wouldn't go all the way down into his stomach. Eventually, they had to put a tube through his nose, and feed him that way.

The doctors kept trying all sorts of methods to get his esophagus to work, and he ended up spending a month or so in the hospital. Finally, they said to my wife, “Look Mrs. Goldstein, we can't keep him here anymore.” They explained that they would make a little slit by his stomach and put in a funnel type of instrument with a cap that could be flipped open. “We'll send a therapist over to help get it working, and then you'll feed him that way.”

Becky made a ruckus. “No. I'm not taking a sick baby out of this hospital, and that's that!” she screamed. “He's going to stay here until he gets well.”

Then she turned to me. “Jay, I want you to go back to the Rebbe and tell him what's happening.”

When my father heard that I was returning to the Rebbe the next Sunday, he gave me a picture of Yoni in the NICU, suggesting I show it to the Rebbe.

I waited on line again, and then it was my turn. “I don't know if you remember me,” I began, “but I was here a while back asking for a child. You gave me a *bracha* and thank you — Becky had a boy. But, there's a problem. He was born prematurely and now he's sick.”

I showed the picture of Yoni to the Rebbe. Without saying anything, he looked at the picture, and looked at me. Then he looked at the picture again, then at me, and finally he gave me a blessing.

“Thank you,” I said.

The very next morning, I went back to the hospital to see how my son and wife were doing. As I arrived, I saw that my son's bassinet was surrounded by doctors, talking among themselves. *Oh boy, now what?* I said to myself nervously. I figured there was another emergency. “What's the problem?” I asked one of the doctors.

“No, Mr. Goldstein, there's no problem here. It's just that your son has suddenly started swallowing. Everything's working now — you can take him home.”

“The thing is,” he continued, “we're wondering why he suddenly started swallowing. So we're just exchanging notes, trying to figure it out.”

Of course, I knew what the answer was. But what am I going to do — tell the doctors about the Rebbe's blessing? They would think I'm nuts.

But when we walked out of the hospital, I remembered how the Rebbe gave me that second dollar before Yoni was born. Perhaps that was because he spotted something unique in the son that we would have, maybe that he would need a little extra help, or that he was going to be a special person.

Today, my son is living in Florida with his wife and children. And I'm sure that the Rebbe's blessing is the reason he is around.

I ended up going back to the Rebbe a few more times, and I continue to go to the Rebbe's resting place today, to pray, to say some *Tehillim*, and to ask for a little help with anything troubling me.

After running a bookbinding business for twenty-two years, Mr. Jay Goldstein became a New York City public school teacher in the year 2000. His wife, Rebecca, passed away in November 2022, and he shared this story in her memory during his January 2023 interview.

This week in....

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

> **5728-1927**, a short time after his departure from the Soviet Union, the Rebbe participated in a two-day meeting for leading rabbis and activists called by the Previous Rebbe in Riga, Latvia. The purpose of the meeting was to expand the work of the Committee to Strengthen Torah and Judaism in Russia, and to establish Riga — where the Previous Rebbe had recently settled upon his own departure from the USSR — as its new center.¹
20 Cheshvan

> **5751-1990**, the Rebbe handed out 7,000 special-edition copies of a 1917 *chasidic* discourse by the Rebbe Rashab. The discourse, the Rebbe explained, had been lost for many decades, but by Divine Providence, had been discovered near the author's birthday which was five days earlier.²
25 Cheshvan

1. *Early Years* p. 265 2. *Sefer Hasichot 5751* vol. 1 p. 138

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Joe and Bella Shapiro

by their family

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