

# SHABBOS STORIES FOR THE 47<sup>TH</sup> YAHRZEIT OF HANNAH BAS MEYER

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## The Woman Who Ran Away At 12, Became a Judaic Scholar and Raised 10 Kids

By E.L. Tenenbaum



**Mrs. Sara Feigelstock at her wedding, 1948.**

Sara Esther Feigelstock probably wouldn't understand why anybody would bother writing (or reading) an article about her. She always shied away from public accolades. But in her humility, her reach extended not only to her family, but far beyond, to the many people she touched during her lifetime.

The third of six siblings, Sara was born on 7 Av, 5691 (July 21, 1931), in McKeesport, Pennsylvania—a low income, blue-collar town of coal miners and steelworkers less than 30 minutes from Pittsburgh. Home to a small but lively Jewish community, there were a number of small shuls and a local ritual slaughterer, but no Jewish schools.

Sara's father, Alter Yehoshua Winter, emigrated from Poland to the United States in 1920 to escape the rabid anti-Semitism back home. After a terrible experience in the newly formed Polish army following World War I, he knew he had to get out. Still, he was reluctant to leave his cousin and bride-to-be, Hinda Golda. But a mutual uncle living in McKeesport sent over a ticket, so Alter Yehoshua left to establish himself in America.

Hinda Golda was anything but idle while her groom was away. She became involved in a number of communal activities, going door to door to convince parents to enroll their daughters in the new orthodox Jewish girls' school, Beit Yaakov, being planned in her area. She lay the foundation of a life committed to the needs of the community, particularly in regard to Jewish education, which would be her own special legacy to her children.



**Sara's parents, R' Alter Yehoshua Hakohen and Hinda Golda Winter.**

After being away for more than six years, Alter Yehoshua finally returned for his bride, and they married in March 1927. Then they readied to move to the United States.

Hinda Golda's father, however, was reluctant to let his daughter go. He consulted with his rebbe, Rabbi Leibish Halpern, who assured him that there was no need to be afraid, "From her will come a *chassidische* family."



**Sara in grade school, sitting front row, first on the right.**

### **School, Sports and Driving in America**

The Winter parents led by example through committing to a no-compromise approach to Judaism. They made the tough decision never to eat outside their own home, and their strict adherence to *kashrut* meant that Hinda Golda had to do all the food preparation herself—baking, canning, and *kashering* meat and chicken.

She once more became involved in communal affairs, running the local *chevra kadisha* (burial society) and *bikkur cholim* (an organization which

sought to arrange medical care for those who couldn't afford it). She also often sent her daughters with home-cooked meals to elderly community members who couldn't eat in their own children's non-kosher homes. Sara Esther long remembered how her mother cried every Friday when lighting Shabbat candles, begging the Almighty to ensure her children would grow up to establish Torah-observant homes of their own.



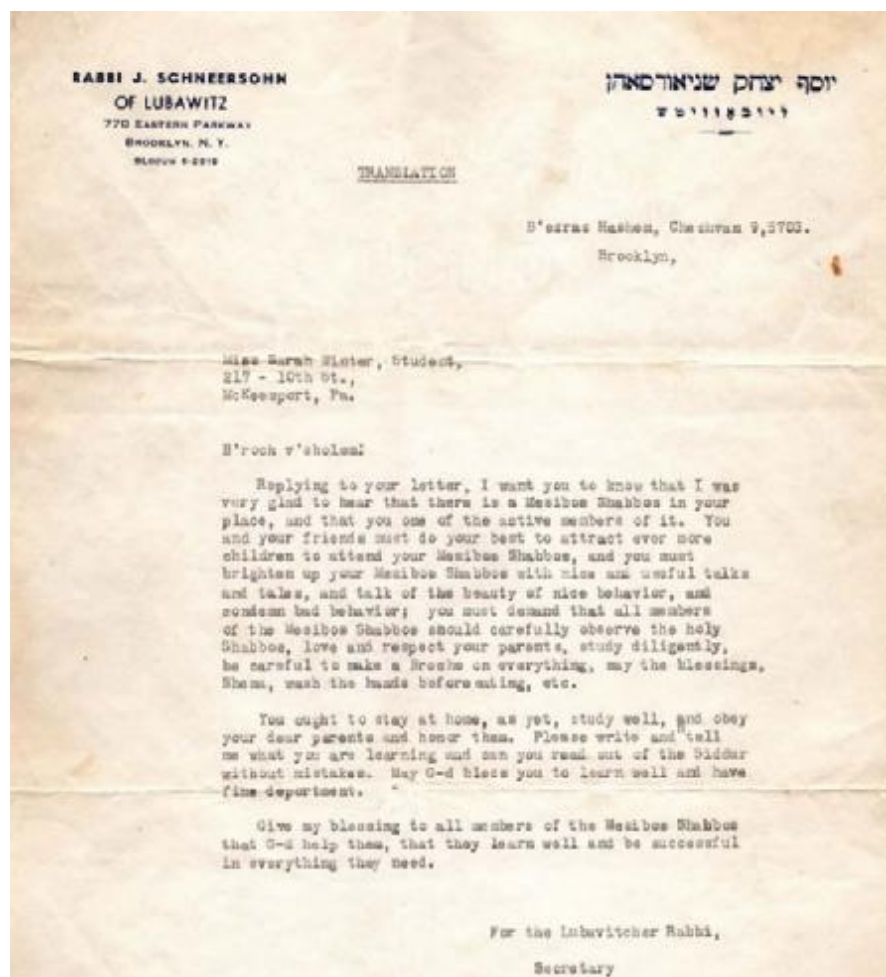
**Sara (center) with her sister Chana Goldstein & brother Yaakov Winter.**

For his part, Alter Yehoshua became a peddler to avoid the threat of losing his job each week when he had to take off for Shabbat. Working in a town like McKeesport, selling goods for 25 cents meant returning to his customers each week, as they could only pay in 5-cent installments. At first, he could only sell what he could carry on his back, as despite his wife's urging he refused to get a car. When she decided she would take driving lessons herself, Alter Yehoshua

finally gave in, learned to drive and invested in a car, which helped his business immensely.

The Winters didn't have any Jewish neighbors, and Sara was the only Jew in her public school class. Sometimes, the neighborhood kids threatened to beat her because she was a "dirty Jew."

Still, she was a lively, happy girl who enjoyed school, especially sports. Despite being so small, she won a medal in basketball, was an avid swimmer, and loved to play baseball so much that years later, as a married mother of four, she met up with old friends on a visit to Pittsburgh to play a rousing game of baseball. An elderly *schochet* taught her to read Hebrew and navigate the *siddur*, but that was the extent of her formal Jewish education through the age of 11.

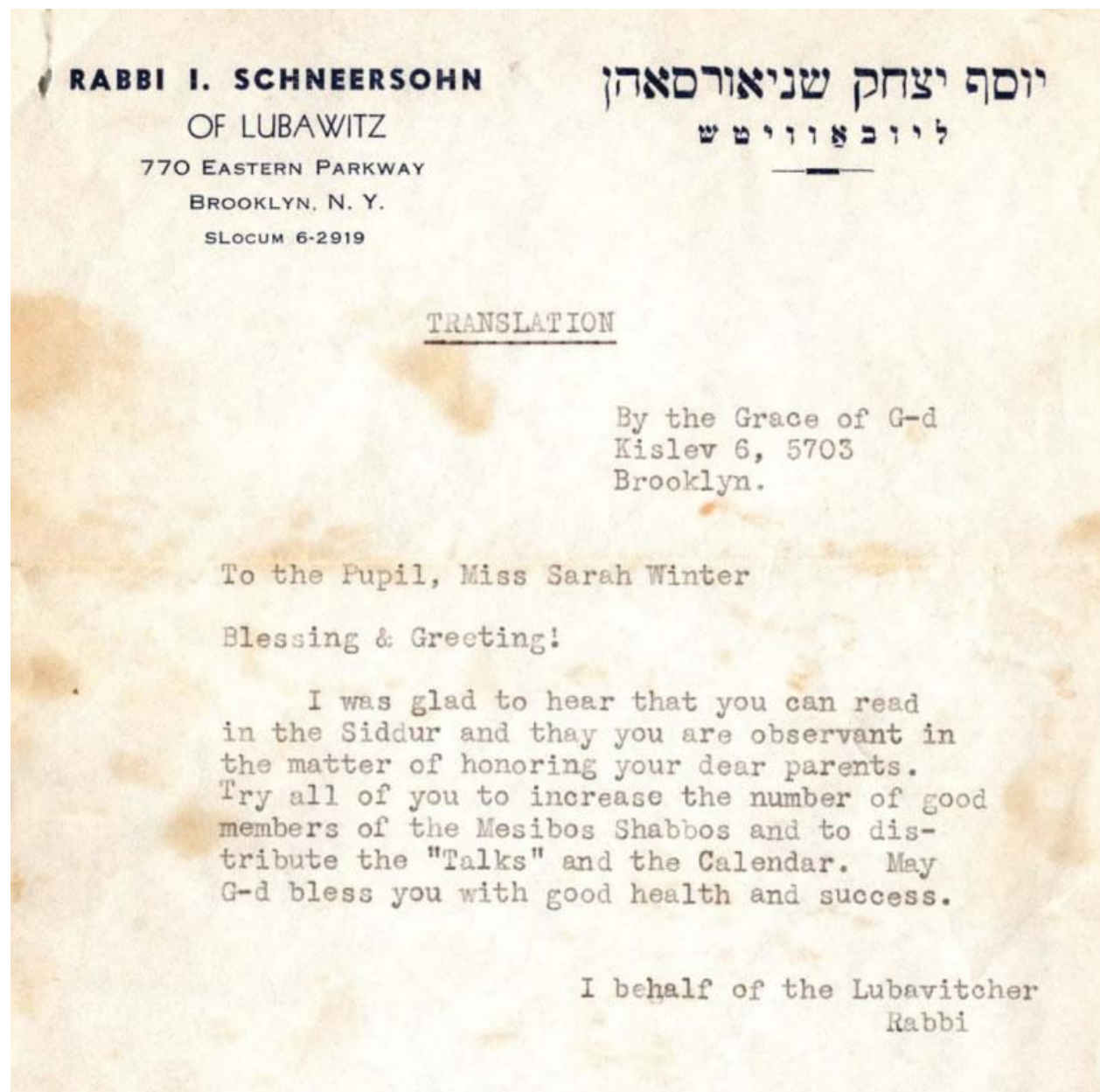


## Jewish Education

When Sara's parents felt her older sisters needed more formal religious instruction, they were sent to study at an Orthodox girls' school, Beit Yaakov, in New York. Because the school didn't yet have a class for their ages, they attended

public school during the day followed by two hours of special classes at Beit Yaakov each afternoon. This was still preferable to staying in McKeesport, where they wouldn't even have that.

When Sara's younger brother Yaakov turned 8, he was also sent to New York to study in Yeshiva Torah Vodaat. On one occasion when Alter Yehoshua was visiting his son, he heard that the Previous Chabad Rebbe—Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn—was accepting individuals for *yechidus* (private audiences), so he immediately arranged to go. The Rebbe invited Alter Yehoshua to move his son to the Chabad *yeshivah*, and he readily complied. That was the Winters' first contact with the Chabad-Lubavitch movement.



In 1941, the Previous Rebbe sent two *yeshivah* students, Rabbi Mendel Feldman and Rabbi Mottel Altein, to McKeesport. The Winter family took to them immediately, and also took care of them during their time there. In turn, they introduced the family to the Chabad way of life.

When the Previous Rebbe arrived in the United States, he declared that *America iz nisht andersh!* (“America is not different!”), meaning that Judaism could be kept here just as it was in Europe. That message resonated with the Winters, who had been stubbornly successful in their commitment to raising a Torah-observant family.

### **Weekly Shabbat Gatherings**

When Sara was 10 years old, the family had a private audience with the Previous Rebbe. At that first meeting, Sara received a warm smile and a conviction that he cared deeply about her well-being. From then on, she wrote to the Rebbe frequently and received many answers in return.

Under the Rebbe’s guidance, Sara began to host a weekly Shabbat gathering—*mesibat Shabbat*—for local children. To help, the Rebbe sent *Talks and Tales* Jewish magazine and some money to buy treats for the party. The Rebbe also urged Sara and her friends to do their best to “attract ever more children to attend,” and advised Sara to “brighten” the gathering with useful talks and stories, to speak of the beauty of good behavior, and to teach members to carefully observe Shabbat. The Rebbe encouraged her to love and respect her parents, take her studies seriously, and remember to recite blessings and the *Shema* prayer.

Around that time, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hecht why there was no *mesibat Shabbat* program in his shul in Chicago. The Rebbe specifically mentioned that two Winter sisters, ages 11 and 13, arranged one every week in their home, believing that sharing such details would “ignite the hearts of mothers and daughters” in the community to follow their lead and organize similar gatherings their community.

When Sara was 11, she asked her parents’ permission to leave home and enroll in Beit Yaakov in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, N.Y., like her older sisters. Her parents refused. She wrote to the Rebbe who instructed her to “stay at home, as yet, study well, and obey your dear parents and honor them.” The Rebbe also inquired about what she was learning and if she could read from the prayer book without mistakes.

Sara deferred to her parents, but a year later decided she couldn’t wait any longer. She arranged to travel to Brooklyn with the help of her uncle, who only broke the news to her parents after the train was well on its way. Recognizing her determination, her parents relented and made the necessary arrangements for their

daughter to stay in New York, where she attended Rabbi Neuhaus' Beit Yaakov in Williamsburg.

Even though she was already 12, she was placed in a class with 8-year-olds because her Jewish education wasn't up to par. She took it all in stride and caught up enough the following year to take Judaic studies with her peers.

Sara excelled in high school. Not only did she run for class president and win, but on the advice of her principal, Rabbi Gershon Kranzler, she took the 11th- and 12th-grade regent exams in the same year and graduated early at the age of 16. The next year, she became a preschool teacher at the Chabad school, Yeshivat Achei Tmimim in Pittsburgh, where her family now lived.



**Sara at her high school graduation.**

### **Sara Becomes a Bride**

When Sara was 17 years old, a match was proposed between her and Rabbi Reuven Tzvi Yehuda Feigelstock, a young yeshiva student from Vienna and descendant of the Chatam Sofer. He was several years her senior, already 26 at the time, but the general consensus was that an age gap was less relevant when there were so few people committed a Torah lifestyle from which to choose.

The Winters wrote to the Rebbe to ask about pursuing the engagement, considering that their daughter was still rather young. The Rebbe gave his blessing to move forward, but advised the family not to rush the wedding date. In the end, the wedding took place a year after the couple first met. On top of all that, Sara Esther lived with her family in Pittsburgh while Rabbi Feigelstock lived in Montreal. Their limited communication was through mail—telephones were not a viable option then, nor a common household item—and, in all, they met in person only twice before their engagement and twice after.



What impressed Rabbi Feigelstock most about Sara was that she didn't try to be anyone but herself. She didn't wear makeup or dress up for their dates. Even when she was older, she only wore lipstick on special occasions and left her daughters to make their own decisions about cosmetics.

She had a similar disinterest in fashion and really disliked shopping for herself, so her husband often shopped for her. He once ordered two robes—one for summer and one for winter—but couldn't convince her to go for a fitting. Eventually, he enlisted the help of their children to talk her into trying them on. When Sara saw the two robes, she shook her head.



**Mrs. Sara Feigelstock at her wedding, 1948.**

“I don't need two,” she insisted. “One is enough.”

The woman who owned the store burst out laughing. “Usually, when a wife comes with her husband, he's the one who says, ‘It's enough, enough.’ ”

### **Finding a Home in Montreal**

The young couple planned to live in Montreal, but struggled to find an apartment in the post-war housing crisis. They wrote to the Rebbe, who told them, *a palatz darf men nisht*—“a palace is not needed.” Those few words would remain with them, a testament to a way of life, a choice to refrain from indulging in physical luxuries.

Their first home was just a rented room in someone else's house, where they shared the kitchen and bathroom. The following year, they finally rented their own

small apartment in a house, equipped with an icebox and an oil stove in the hallway that was meant to heat the whole house. A horse and buggy were stabled behind the house.

Despite all this, Sara often referred to her first year of marriage as the best year of her life. Whenever she had time to spare, she and her husband would study Torah and chassidic teachings.

Rabbi Feigelstock was a teacher and subsequently the principal of the local Chabad yeshiva. He helped establish Gan Yisrael of Montreal—an overnight camp for boys, and Sara came on as the camp mother even though she was only 26 years old and caring for her own four young children with another on the way.



**First year of Camp Gan Israel Montreal. Sara is sitting, first on right, second row from bottom. Her Husband, Rabbi Herschel, is sitting in the center second row, with Rabbi Berel Mochkin.**

She embraced the position as whole-heartedly, even checking the boys' fingernails before lunch to make sure they'd washed their hands well. Rabbi Feigelstock once remarked, "Most men who are rabbis, their wives become

rebbetzins. I am a rabbi because my wife is a rebbetzin.” Not that his wife ever allowed anyone to call her “Rebbetzin”; she was only Sara to whomever she met.

Sara’s parents, however, weren’t immediately taken with the idea of their daughter living in a faraway community, with an even smaller school, yielding a paycheck that was smaller yet. They wanted her to move back to Pittsburgh, where she and her husband would find better teaching positions. But the Rebbe told them that their son-in-law’s success there was worth more than money, and that not only was their daughter where she was supposed to be, she was also “successful with whom she speaks about Judaism and *mitzvot*.”



**Sara, front left, leading the first Lag B’Omer Parade in Montreal, Canada.**

### **A Home Open to Guests**

At a private audience on the day of their wedding, the Rebbe instructed Sara to emulate all that she had observed in her parents’ home, especially when it came to the mitzvah of having guests.

Sara took this directive to heart.

Although when they arrived in Montreal Sara didn't know anyone except her husband, that didn't stop her from quickly becoming involved in the community. Miryam Swerdlow, today a mentor herself, fondly remembers how the young girls of Montreal were "in awe of her."

"She built us. She sang with us, she danced with us. She taught us the way even though she was a very young person herself. She made us what we are. We are all made of little pieces of our yesterdays, and she was a very big piece of mine and of all the little girls in Montreal."

The new Feigelstock home was always open to guests—those who stayed a few days and those who stayed a year or two. For their 10 children, this was a normal part of life; they never questioned why there was a parade of people coming through their door, never wondered that everyone knew "the Feigelstocks never lock their door, even at night." Many guests became part of the family in their own way; it wasn't just the prospect of an open house and hot meal that drew them in, but the people who welcomed them.

A young foster child who'd been taken in by an elderly couple was one of those who spent a lot of time in the Feigelstock household. Years later, she said that she learned how to be a mother through being part of their family. Another example was Yaacov Magalnic, a young man who'd been learning in the *yeshivah* in Montreal when he was asked to be head counselor of the day camp over the summer.

Construction had recently been completed on a new *yeshivah* building, and although the camp would be there, the *yeshivah* hadn't officially moved in yet. As the commute between the old and new buildings wasn't short, Yaacov was sent to stay at the Feigelstock home which was close to the new building. He was immediately made to feel part of the family.

After a trip to New York to be with the Rebbe, Yaacov returned feeling under the weather. Sara took one look at him and called a doctor.

"Young man, you have chicken pox," the doctor diagnosed.

Yaacov wanted to get out of the house and stay in the *yeshivah* until he was better, especially to prevent being a risk to the younger children in the house.

"No," Sara firmly informed him, "you're staying here."

He was confined to his room for two weeks, and every day she brought him breakfast, lunch, and supper until he was allowed out again.

These examples are indicative of the Feigelstocks' exemplary hospitality, yet each example remains unique, as each guest was made to feel like the most important one in the bustling household. No one was lost, no one was forgotten, and all remember the warm and personable way Sara treated them.

## A Loving, Popular Teacher

Like her husband, Sara taught in the Chabad *yeshiva*, and there, too, she left an indelible impression on everyone she met.

During the seventies, Avraham “Allan” Schaeffer, executive chef of Hotel Sonesta, who lived in Côte Saint Luc, Montreal, with his wife and two kids, started becoming more interested in Judaism and decided to enroll his children in an Orthodox school even though he hadn’t yet fully committed to living a Torah-observant lifestyle.

At the first school Schaeffer tried, the principal listened to his story and told him that he wouldn’t find what he was looking for there. At the next school, the principal excitedly explained to Schaeffer how lucky his son was to be in a class with the sons of many great rabbis. All Schaeffer could think was that his son would not feel very lucky at all.

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מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן  
ליובאוויטש  
770 איסטערן פארקוויי  
ברוקלין, נ.י.

By the Grace of G-d  
7th of Tammuz, 5715  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mrs. Sarah Esther Feigelstock  
4905 Clark Street  
Montreal, Que.

Blessing and Greeting:

After the long interval, I was pleased to receive your letter of 18th of Sivan, in which you report on the activities of the Mesibos Shabbos in recent months. I trust that you will continue to report on these activities, though at shorter intervals.

It is surely unnecessary to call your attention to the need of making the proper plans for activity during the summer months. Though many children may be away in camps, making it more difficult to keep contact with them, others, on the other hand, have more time on their hands and are within easier reach, being free from school. The Mesibos Shabbos and Agudas Nshei Chabad should therefore make suitable plans for the utmost possible activity during the summer months, and time is of the essence.

With prayerful wishes for success in your work,

With blessing,

By *Avraham Schaeffer*

His third visit was to the Chabad yeshiva, where he was warmly greeted by Sara Feigelstock. “You’re a chef?” she asked when he’d finished recounting his story, “How did you make such a decision?”

Schaeffer was taken aback. Instead of listing the merits and respected genealogy of all the other students, she was making him feel like he himself

someone to be admired! She even encouraged his idea of introducing more gourmet food into the kosher food market.

As if that wasn't already enough, she invited Schaeffer and his wife to her house that night for her daughter's *sheva brachot*. He was hesitant to go; he didn't have a gift, nor was he comfortable intruding on the home of someone he'd just met, no matter how much she made him feel like he belonged.

But she persisted, and he relented. When the Schaeffers arrived at the Feigelstock home, Avraham was given a place of honor at the head of the table right beside Rabbi Feigelstock, and Sara proudly introduced him and praised his accomplishments.

When a newspaper later printed the story of how Avraham Schaeffer gave up his chef position to keep kosher, Sara posted it outside her office for students to read.

### **Continuing Shabbat Gatherings in Montreal**

In addition to her work in the school, Sara Feigelstock also focused on implementing *mesibat Shabbat*—afternoon Shabbat gatherings for children—like she had in McKeensport. For one of the first ones, Rabbi Bentzion Shemtov happened to be staying in her home, and on Shabbat afternoon, he threw open the window and announced, “Jewish children, come upstairs! There's a party going on here!”

Like the group she was used to in McKeesport, the Montreal girls came from various backgrounds. Sara would tell stories, and the girls would sing and dance together. The Rebbe encouraged her to keep the program running in full force throughout the summer months, as the kids who weren't going to overnight camp had more time on their hands and were more accessible.

Eventually, the group outgrew her house, so the party was moved to the basement of the *yeshivah* on Park Avenue. As the girls grew older and the groups expanded, they became group leaders in shuls across the city.

### **Organizing a Purim Play**

In the winter of 1955, Sara began work on a Purim play for children. Usually, such a program could draw a few hundred children, so there was a lot riding on its success. Shortly before the performance, the girl playing the main character fell ill, and her mother told Sara that even if her daughter were to recover in time, the strain was too much for her to be part of the performance.

In Rabbi Feigelstock's words, his wife was terribly disappointed. There was simply not enough time to find someone else to take on such a big role, but with all the effort that had been put into staging and organizing and advertising, the show had to go on. So his wife decided to seek guidance and a blessing from the Rebbe.

Sara hopped on a train to New York, but when she came to 770, Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Aizik Hodakov told her that the list of names for private audiences had already been given in to the Rebbe, and he couldn't add anyone else. But Sara Esther Feigelstock wasn't just anyone else. She was the girl who at 12 years old sent herself to New York so she would have the kind of Jewish education she so desperately needed and craved. She had turned her home into a beacon of Judaism and gave her children a role model they could emulate. Sara had traveled hours to see the Rebbe, and she would not leave until she had.

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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d  
The 6th of Adar II, 5722  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Purim Youth Rally  
5596 Park Avenue  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to be informed about your rally in connection with the forthcoming Purim.

I hope you know what an important part Jewish children had in bringing about the miracle of Purim which we celebrate every year and which we will soon celebrate again.

Our sages tell us that when the intention of the wicked Haman became known twenty-two thousand Jewish children rallied around Mordechai who began to teach them the Torah. So attached did the children become to Mordechai and to the Torah and Mitzvoth that they were ready to share his fate, and were prepared to give their very lives. We are told that even Haman, who had no knowledge of the value and holiness of the Torah, realized at once that his wicked plans must fail in view of such loyalty and devotion of the Jewish children to their true leaders and to their faith.

I hope that the story of Purim and the part played in it by the Jewish children will inspire every one of you to similar devotion and loyalty to the Torah and Mitzvoth and, for your sake, that all our people will be blessed, together with you, in the words of the Megillah, with "light, joy, gladness and honor".

Wishing you all and all your leaders a happy and inspiring Purim,

With blessing,

*M. Schneerson*

She positioned herself at the door to the Rebbe's room and waited for the person inside to exit. Then she slipped in before anyone could stop her, and the Rebbe graciously accepted her. The Rebbe gave a blessing that the girl would completely recover and the performance would be a success, which it was.

Still, before Yom Kippur of that year, Sara felt a little guilty about the way she had “barged” in to see the Rebbe. She wrote a letter of apology and sent it by special delivery so it would get to the Rebbe within the next day or so.



**Sara (left) with her mother-in-law, Mrs. Gitel Feigelstock, and her children, Yossi, Shterna Greisman (right), Rivkah Teitelbaum (left).**

The answer she received from the Rebbe was dated the day after Yom Kippur. In short, the Rebbe told her, “You have nothing to worry about, everything’s fine.” Then the Rebbe gave her a blessing for *nachat* and all good things, and suggested she make a gathering on Chol Hamoed Sukkot, which she happily did.



### **Heavily Involved in Communal Work**

Beyond the open-door policy at home and her work with school-aged girls, Sara was heavily involved in the community, arranging classes and speaking at all kinds of shuls and events for a variety of audiences. She didn't just teach either, but helped women learn how to study on their own.

Well into her 70s, she was approached by a group of young women who wanted to learn with her once a week about how to build a proper Jewish home in the merit of finding their soulmates. She happily obliged, and sure enough, all the women became engaged, most of them within the year. One even married Sara's grandson!

She was also deeply involved with the Institute for Brides & Grooms, spearheaded by the late Rebbetzin Golda (Ola) Schwei. They contacted caterers, photographers and wedding venues to compile lists of couples with upcoming weddings. They reached out to these couples, often by creating programs featuring marriage therapists and chefs, to teach them about setting up a proper Jewish home. Many couples committed to keeping Shabbat, kosher and the laws of family purity because of their efforts.

Sara also played an important role in the production of "The Sanctity of Jewish Marriage," a 50-minute film about *mikvah*, which has since been translated into French, Hebrew and Russian.

But she rarely took credit for her work. It wasn't about getting her name on one more letterhead or adding to an already long list of achievements; she saw there was work to be done and happily did it. Once a program was up and running, she focused on the next one.

She employed similar logic with the countless people she helped over the years. She didn't dwell on how many she brought closer to Judaism and didn't waste time counting the number of problems she had solved. She simply viewed these individuals as equals—dear friends she was assisting however she could—and her children only found out about many of them after her passing.

### **Raising and Being an Example to Her Children**

In addition to the work she did within the community, Sara also had her hands full raising a family of 10 children, seeking to be an example to them as her own mother was to her. Household skills, such as cooking and cleaning, didn't come naturally to her; she would rather be teaching or learning. Still, like most other things, she did what she had to in the best way she knew how. She also often combined her duties, like counseling someone over the phone while cooking or washing the dishes. And if something was told to her in confidence, she kept it that way—not even sharing it with her husband, even if that meant going to the other end of the house so absolutely no one could overhear.

She made sure meals were healthy and served on time, staying away from processed foods as much as possible. She took care of herself, eating three times a day, going to sleep on time and eventually picked up water aerobics.



**Sara, with her husband Herschel, at the wedding of their daughter Devorah Lea Davidson.**

She was a similar example when it came to the spiritual health of her family, praying three times a day, reciting Psalms often, studying the weekly Torah portion and making time to learn Chassidic teachings. She left her children plenty of room to grow and experiment, delighting in their creativity, even if it meant that her family had adopted chickens, or her girls ruined more than one recipe with cooking experiments, or her boys turned the basement into a haunted house to entertain the neighbors.

Most remarkably, her children can't remember their mother ever raising her voice to them; her husband is sure that in all the years they were married, he never once saw her angry. She also never bore a grudge, even if it seemed justified.

Sara Feigelstock didn't rely on miracles, but that didn't mean G-d didn't bless her with a few ones every now and again. Often, just after a donor gave a large sum towards her Lending Fund or a borrower repaid a loan, she gleefully told her husband, "Just wait, someone will call needing exactly that amount." And that's usually what happened.

### **Solving a Passover Crisis**

On the eve of Passover in the 1980s, a rather busy day in the Feigelstock home, a cousin from Israel called because two of his friends had been arrested in Bermuda en route to New York for Passover. The cousin turned to the one person he figured could help.

Sara stopped her Passover preparations and began making calls, finally reaching a well-connected individual, Rabbi Shloime Besser. She asked him to get in touch with Schreibers, the only kosher caterer servicing the airlines at the time, to find out if Passover food and Seder packages were still available.

After many hours and much effort and endless red tape, Schreibers managed to complete an urgent delivery to an airline, which, in turn, assured that the food would get to its destination, even if the pilot had to hold it on his lap. They somehow even persuaded the prison in Bermuda to send a special courier to meet the plane on the tarmac so it would get to the men on time.

Just before sunset, the call came that the package had been received. The joy in the household was immense.

### **Involved in International Affairs**

This wouldn't be the only time Sara's reach extended into international affairs.

In the local Jewish bookstore, she once struck up a conversation with Rebbetzin Ushpal, who began to pour her heart out about her brother in the Soviet Union. Mr. Zobin was married with teenage children, and the family had just been refused exit visas. The Rebbe had advised that they work to bring the family to Canada and instructed Rebbetzin Ushpal to make the request at the highest levels of government, but she admitted she was floundering because she was an immigrant without connections.

Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was also sympathetic to the Communist leaders at the time and didn't think well of the refuseniks. However, that sort of detail couldn't deter Sara Esther Feigelstock.

At the time, she was teaching a young woman, Rochelle Sallop. Rochelle's mother, Lily Katz, was on a first-name basis with Trudeau having been one of his earliest supporters and a close friend who continued to stand by him throughout his career. Sara asked Lily to use her contacts on behalf of the Zobin family in Russia. When Russian First Deputy Premier Alexai Kosygin came to Canada for a formal visit in 1972, Trudeau asked that he grant the Zobins exit visas.

Undoubtedly, the head of immigration in the former USSR was shocked when his earlier decision was overridden. Shortly thereafter, the Zobins immigrated to Canada, and their daughter, Chana Sirota, is now a *shlucha* for the Russian community in Montreal. Like so many other matters, Sara's actions had ripples of success long after her work was done.

### **Returning Her Soul**

Unsurprisingly, Sara considered herself an ordinary person. She thought herself blessed and privileged in her life, and never found reason to complain. Rather than focusing on what she needed, she honed in on what she was needed for. To her, Judaism was alive and meant to be celebrated. Her joy and enthusiasm to serve G-d overflowed to everyone she met.

On the day of her wedding, Oct. 25, 1949, at 11 a.m., Sara had a private audience with the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe. Sixty-seven years later, on Oct. 25, 2016, at the age of 85, Sara collapsed in her husband's arms walking into shul on Simchat Torah morning.

Although the date of her wedding and the date of her passing on the Jewish calendar were not the same, her husband would later explain that the spice offering in the Temple was prepared according to the days of the solar year, proving there is significance in the dates of the secular calendar as well.

Her body was prepared for burial according to Jewish law on the same night that had seen her wedding 67 years prior.

Sitting next to her at the fateful moment when the doctors confirmed his wife had passed on, Rabbi Feigelstock's first response was, "Thank You, G-d, for the most wonderful 67 years You gave me."

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