**Shabbos Stories for**

**Parshas tazria 5776**

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**A Slice of Life**

**A Slap in the Face**

**By Rachel Graciela Mancusi**

I grew up in Caracas, Venezuela, in a very warm family; I went to a secular school without any religious affiliation. While my mother is Jewish, my father is Catholic, and whatever religious rituals we did practiced in our home were Catholic.

As I grew and matured, my perception of G-d was changing. I came to understand that there is one G-d for the whole world and it was very disturbing for me to be expected to connect with something physical and calling it G-d.

When I was studying at the Central University of Venezuela I took upon myself to believe in the one G-d, and also to believe in myself. Although I consciously behaved in a manner that I thought G-d would want me to, I had no interest in studying anything to do with religion.

My time in college was amazing. I was studying in the best university in Venezuela, I was getting good marks in my classes, I had amazing friends - simply put, I was having the time of my life.

As the date of my graduation neared - my degree was in Actuarial Science - I started looking for a job. Soon I was hired by an insurance company.

A few days before I started my new job, my mom and I went shopping to buy me a piece of jewelry in recognition of this milestone. Little did I know that our innocent shopping trip was going to change my entire life.

When we had chosen a piece of jewelry and were about to pay, my mom noticed that the owner was wearing a Star of David necklace. "Are you Jewish?" my mother asked.

The owner was so excited to hear that we, too, are Jewish that she actually called her daughter to tell her that she had a customer who is Jewish. I was so confused; what was she so excited about? I just wanted her to give me my jewelry so I could leave.

A few minutes later, the woman's daughter arrived in the store, eager to meet my mother and me. Before we left the store, the daughter asked me, "Would you like to come to a Jewish retreat taking place soon outside of Caracas?" I was not really interested in attending and I was sure my mother would not think it was a good idea for me to go, especially since I was starting a new job. Figuring I would get out of it easily, I asked my mother what she thought. To my surprise, with a huge smile my mother said, Of course my love why not?"

Not only did I go to the retreat, but I brought with me my brother and two of my cousins. I felt like Christopher Columbus. I discovered a whole world that I had never known about before. For the first time in my life I heard about the Sabbath, kosher food, Jewish dress, Moshiach, and more.

I came back from the weekend "shell-shocked." I was certain that I could never do all of those things the people at the retreat had said G-d wants me to do. I decided not to even try, I'll stay with math better.

In my job at the insurance company, the colleagues I worked with most closely were a Muslim man and an evangelical Christian woman. My male colleague, though a very warm and kind person, would often say horrible things against Israel and the Jewish people when the media reported conflicts between Israel and her Arab neighbors. I felt very hurt by his words and I told him, "Excuse me! I'm Jewish!"

He looked at me and said, "I'm not talking against you, you are not a real Jew."

I didn't have anything to say. Even though I knew that I am a "real Jew" and 100% Jewish, at some level I felt he was right. I didn't know anything about my people at all. I started studying Jewish history and the history of Land of Israel. After that, every time that he said something against Israel or the Jewish people I had an answer for him.

One afternoon at lunch, another conversation about the conflict in the Middle East came up and I was answering very confidently to my colleagues. In a very sincere way, my evangelical Christian woman colleague said, "Graciela, you know you're Jewish and it seems that you're not ashamed to be it, so why are you not doing anything about leading a Jewish life?"

That was the worst moral slap in the face that I had ever received. I resolved to learn about Judaism. I started studying every day and I became very excited about the Torah's approach to life. I started to keep kosher and Shabbat. It was a challenge but with a lot of work, and patience and support from my parents, we worked it out.

Over time I became fully observant, but I felt like something was missing. I wanted to develop a real relationship with G-d. At about that time I met a young woman my age who was also observant. Eventually she invited me to spend Shabbat at her Rebbetzin's home.

That Shabbat was the first time I came in contact with Chabad and my introduction to Chasidic teachings.

I fell in love with Chasidut. I learned that being a Jew is not about counting how many sins or how many mitzvot (commandments) I've done; it’s not about being scared of every move I make because G-d is going to punish me. It's not about doing mitzvot for a reward - material or spiritual. Chabad and Chassidut taught me that being a Jew is about truly connecting to G-d with every fiber of my body and soul. understanding that G-d gave me a mission that nobody else can accomplish but me and also to know that He gave me all the tools that I need to succeed. So whatever it is that I need to do, I have the power and ability to do it!

Last year I decide to study at Machon Chana Women's Yeshiva. I am trying to take advantage of every single day here to give myself the best opportunity for growth. I really have to say that this wouldn't be possible without my parents support.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Shmini 5776 edition of L’Chaim Weekly, a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization. From Rachel's speech at this year's annual Machon Chana Family Shabbaton. For more about Machon Chana visit MachonChanaYeshiva.com*

**Luxurious Kindness**

**By Rabbi David Ashear**

The Pasuk in Tehilim says: "הגדיל ה' לעשות עמנו היינו שמחים"-Hashem did so many great things for us, therefore, we were happy. When a person realizes how much kindness Hashem bestows upon him, it brings such joy. This is especially true regarding luxuries. We have so many things that we could live without. Each one of them is another expression of Hashem's love towards us.

When a parent gives a child a full, healthy dinner, the child might not feel so grateful, figuring that it is the parent's job to provide for him. However, when the parent gives the child a special treat, the child gets so excited and is very grateful, seeing how the parent went out of his way to do something extra special. When we realize how many extras we have, we will be filled with gratitude to Hashem.

There are people with difficult lives, and it is hard for them to appreciate their blessings. Nevertheless, everyone has the ability to do it. If they successfully appreciate the good, despite the difficulties, it will bring them joy in this world and tremendous reward in the next world.

A woman, who we'll call Sarah, who has a very hard life, called me the other day, singing the praises of Hashem. She told me that her daughter recently was engaged, and she is so excited to see her happy after all of the hardships she experienced. Sarah was divorced 16 years ago and had to raise six children by herself. Two years ago, she lost her 25-year-old son to cancer. She was in and out of work for eighteen months, while trying to care for her son. They were obviously struggling financially.

Although there were going to be a lot of expenses with the upcoming wedding, Sarah really wanted her daughter to fully enjoy this time in her life. After growing up without a father since the age of five and losing a brother, she wanted her daughter to be truly happy. She said, "Of course, we could borrow clothing or wait for the clearance sales, but why shouldn't my daughter enjoy this time like any other bride." Sarah prayed to Hashem for help, as she always does. Just one week ago, her Tefilot were answered.

The bride-to-be works as an assistant to a lawyer. The lawyer usually goes to a class on Wednesday mornings with her good friend. This past Wednesday, the friend told the lawyer that she was not feeling well and might not be able to attend. The lawyer asked her assistant, the bride, if she could please drive her to the class that morning.

As they pull up to the class, they see the friend, who had pushed herself to come. The friend looks in the car, noticing the driver and says, "Mazel Tov! You just got engaged, right?" "Yes," she replied. "I can't believe it. Once a year, someone comes to my house to sell beautiful clothing that she herself designed. A customer just came who loved the clothing and wanted to give the designer more business. She gave me one thousand dollars, saying, 'Please give this to a bride to shop here for her wedding.' I thought to myself, 'Where am I going to find a bride now?' A few minutes later, I see you. Congratulations! I am giving you the gift certificate." The bride was so excited at the amazing Hashgacha Peratit and called her mother to tell her.

The story did not end there. Later that day, she went there to shop. At the same time, a wealthy woman from the community was also shopping and wished her Mazel Tov. The saleswoman commented that the bride received a gift certificate of one thousand dollars.

The wealthy woman said, "Nice. But only one thousand dollars? I want to give one thousand dollars more." The bride said, "Thank you very much, but I just got everything I need." The woman replied, "Fine. So give it to your mother." The bride called her mother and told her to come shop.

Sarah said to me, "Baruch Hashem, we both got such nice clothing that we are happy with. However, more importantly, we saw Hashem giving us these extras that we could have gotten by without; it makes me feel so loved. He is giving my daughter the joy I wanted her to have. It feels like Hashem, as it were, is giving us a hug, saying, 'Don't worry. I am taking care of everything."

Her words are so beautiful. After all that she has been through, to be genuinely happy and appreciate Hashem's kindness is a precious service of Hashem. This will bring her joy in this world and tremendous reward in the World to Come.

*Reprinted from the March 28, 2016 email of Daily Emunah.*

**Story #957**

**Signs of a Kosher Host**

**From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles**

[editor@ascentofsafed.com](http://webmailb.juno.com/webmail/new/21?folder=Inbox&msgNum=0001GIG0:001MyuHA000014xW&count=1459343926&randid=1307181492&attachId=0&isUnDisplayableMail=yes&blockImages=0&randid=1307181492)

Two Chassidim whose rebbe had passed away traveled to visit the *tzadik* Rabbi Meir of Premishlan in order to decide whether or not to choose him as rebbe for themselves and for their fellow Chassidim. They arrived at Premishlan just in time for candle-lighting, on the eve of a Shabbat on which the weekly Portion of Shemini was read. They did not even have enough time to order meals for Shabbat at a hotel, but went straight to the synagogue of the rebbe.

After prayers each of them was invited to the home of one of the local householders. One of the hosts was accustomed to eating very little, so his guest, though ravenously hungry, could hardly bring himself to eat a square meal in his presence. The other host ate, but did not slice the *challah* that was on the table, and since his guest did not take the liberty of slicing it for himself, he too remained hungry.

After the meal they both came to the *tish* [Yiddish: table-i.e. After-meal gathering] of the Rebbe at which he presided until after midnight. When it was over, they went to one of the local hotels and asked the proprietor if he had anything for them to eat. He explained that he only had a place for them to sleep, but since there were hungry he would give them some leftovers that required no preparations.

After the Shabbat morning prayers they went home with the same hosts, and exactly the same story repeated itself. In the afternoon they came to the synagogue of the Rebbe for the Shabbat Afternoon prayer, but Rabbi Meir was not yet there. Assuming that he was doubtless studying Torah in his room, they went to his house, but his attendant told them that he was out in the courtyard. They went out and, sure enough, Rabbi Meir was there - telling his attendant to feed the geese and chickens. When that was done, he said: "Let us go and pray Mincha."

The guests were stupefied: throughout the entire Shabbat they had heard not a solitary word of Torah from his mouth. To make things worse, they had now seen what kind of spiritual preparations he made for his afternoon prayer. Besides, they were hungry, so they decided not to go to the Third Meal of the Rebbe, and to try their luck once again at the homes of their respective hosts. Their hosts were not at home though: they had gone to the *tish* of the rebbe, so their would-be guests had no option but to go there too.

As soon as they arrived the Rebbe said: "Where are the two young men who are seeking a rebbe who is possessed of divine inspiration?"

There was no answer.

Again the Rebbe asked: "Where are they? Why are they hiding from me?"

Not a word in reply.

The third time he said: "if they don't come before me at once, they will regret it."

The two guests approached him shamefacedly, and he greeted them and asked: "Where did you eat your Shabbat meals?"

When they named their hosts, Rabbi Meir called them to him and said softly: "The Torah gives us a *mitzvah* of hospitality - but one has to know how to conduct oneself when one has guests. When one invites a guest, the host should slice bread generously on the table so that his guest should not be obliged to do so or be too embarrassed to help himself. And even if a host does this, if he himself does not eat, his guest will not feel comfortable eating in his presence.

"There is a hint of this in today's Portion of the Torah: "the pig, for he does slice the bread" [actually, 'divide the hoof,' but here punningly mistranslated: *parsa* means 'hoof'; *parusa* means 'slice']; "but does not chew the cud," that is, he himself does not eat; he is unclean unto you"; "the camel does chew the cud, but does not 'slice the bread'; he is likewise unclean unto you."Only one that does both is a kosher creature!

"And now," added the *tzadik*, "these two young men are no doubt very hungry. We should give them something to eat."

With that, he gave each of them a slice of his Shabbat loaf with a piece of fish on it.

He went on to deliver a discourse, in the course of which he intimated to the two guests the mystical explanation for his having fed the poultry during the afternoon. None of those present understood his references to the cloven hoof and the chewed cud, nor his abstruse discourse - except the two hosts and their guests.

And on Saturday night, when the holy Shabbat had drawn to a close, the two visitors to Premishlan recounted the whole story, and concluded: "Here we have found a rebbe on whom rests*ruach hakodesh*, the spirit of G-d."

*Source*: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from A Treasury of Chassidic Tales (Artscroll), as translated by R. Uri Kaploun from *Sipurei Chasidim* by Rabbi S. Y. Zevin.

*Biographical note:* Rabbi Meir of Primishlan [of blessed memory: ? - 29 Iyar 5610 (? - May 1850 C.E.)], lived in abject but uncomplaining poverty, yet exerted himself tirelessly for the needy and the suffering. His *ruach hakodesh* (prophetic spirit) and his ready wit have become legendary. He wrote no works, but some of his teachings were collected and published by his chasidim after his death.

***Connection*:** Last Week’s Reading -- "Cud-chewers and Hoof-splitters"

*Reprinted from last week’s Parsha Shemini 5776 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed.* [*www.ascentofsafed.com*](http://www.ascentofsafed.com) *ascent@ascentofsafed.com*

**The Danger of Eating**

**Non-Kosher Foods**

“But this is what you shall not eat.” (Vayikra 11:4)

Every action has a reaction. Just like eating bad food has a negative effect

on one’s body, eating non-kosher food has a similar effect on the soul. Apart from the sin of transgressing Hashem’s commandments, the effect of eating non-kosher food is timtum haleb, a contamination of the heart.

It is not only the person himself who is affected through eating non-kosher food. The Vilna Gaon was once asked why the laws of kashrut immediately precede the laws of childbirth. He answered that it comes to teach us that when a pregnant mother eats non-kosher food, it not only affects her heart, but the heart of her [unborn] baby too.

To illustrate the effect of timtum haleb, Rav Isaac Bernstein quoted the following story:

The Rambam was once in Yemen and came into contact with an extraordinary Talmid Hacham. Their friendship developed and this Talmid Hacham would write Rambam questions and the Rambam would respond.

One day, the Yemenite Rav sent a certain philosophical question. After the

Rambam read it, he said, “A believing Jew cannot ask such questions” and he refused to write back.

Years went by and the Rav from Yemen did not know why the Rambam refused to answer his questions. Eventually, after many letters beseeching the Rambam to reply, he wrote back the following, “Investigate your shochet (slaughterer).”

Shocked at having received this response, the Yemenite Rav immediately investigated his shochet and found that he had been feeding the community non-kosher meat for the past thirteen years!

The Rambam was not a Prophet. And yet, he knew that someone of the Yemenite Rav’s caliber of learning could only ask such a question if a seed was implanted within him that went contrary to Torah beliefs. When the Rambam thought about it, the only conclusion was that he was unknowingly eating non-kosher food.

It is a sad fact that today, especially in Israel, there are many Christian missionaries pretending to be religious Jews. Claiming to be a religious Jewish charity

organization, they send Glatt Kosher food packages to poor widows and orphans. However, after a short time, once their trust is established, they begin to send non-kosher food in kosher wrapping. This way, they claim that a Jew’s mind becomes more receptive to non-Jewish ideas when they are presented to them at a later date. Even they acknowledge that without non-kosher food suppressing their heart, a religious Jew would never abandon his beliefs so easily!

The importance of eating kosher food was demonstrated by the Hatam Sofer when he was asked by the father of a mentally ill child if he should send his daughter to recover in a specialist school where they do not provide kosher food, or is it better for her to stay at home where she will never regain mental stability, but will only eat kosher food?

The Hatam Sofer answered something that only someone on his level could answer. He answered that even though it was perfectly permissible to send his daughter there according to Jewish law, he would advise against it for the following reason:

If the girl would become stable enough to be required to perform misvot, it is likely that she will eventually reject the misvot and live a life of sin due to the non-kosher food suppressing her heart for all those years. Therefore, it is better for her to remain in her current condition where she is not obligated in misvot, instead of becoming obligated and then rejecting the Torah and misvot. (Short Vort)

*Reprinted from the Parashat Shemini 5776 email of the Jersey Shore TorahBulletin.*

**How Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerback Came to Rejoice in His Time of “Great Sorrow”**



Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, OB”M, was a master of human interactions. In all situations, he greeted every Jew with his wide, never-ending smile. This feature was a part of his face which always beamed with a strong light some would label supernatural.

Reb Shlomo Zalman’s wife passed away on a Shabbos. He was told the terrible news as he left the synagogue on Saturday night, and he fainted. He immediately went to the morgue of the hospital and sat for a while with the wonderful woman who had shared his life for so many decades.

When he emerged from that depressing room, he was broken and deeply grieved. Suddenly, a young man, who had no idea that the Rebbetzin had passed away, noticed Reb Shlomo Zalman in the corridor of the hospital. The young man ran over to share the good news that his wife had just given birth to a healthy boy with the Rav.

As if one had just switched on a lamp, Reb Shlomo Zalman’s face instantly lit up and he wished the happy father a “Mazel Tov” and told him that he be privileged to perform his son’s bris (circumcision) on time. He also blessed him that he and his wife raise the boy properly with lots of true, Jewish Nachas. Reb Shlomo Zalman’s face beamed the entire time, until the young man left him to his agony.

Later that day, everyone heard the tragic news, including that young man. The fellow was beside himself. How could he have bothered the Rosh Yeshivah with his personal celebration when the Rav had been suffering so, he kept thinking. Finally, he decided that he would go to be Menachem Avel (a visit of consolation) the Rabbi and beg his forgiveness at the same time.

When the young man apologized, Reb Shlomo Zalman could not understand for what. “What does your happiness have to do with my sadness?” he asked. “I was very happy to share in your Simcha, and to bless you and your wife; even at a time that I was mourning the loss of mine!”

**Comment:** What a level to aspire to! To be able to compartmentalize our emotions is no easy feat, but this is what special people like Rav Auerbach do.

*Reprinted from last week’s Parshas Shemini 5776 email of Reb Mendel Berlin’s Torah’s Sweets Weekly.*

**Rabbi Yonason Eibeschutz and The Catholic Bishop Debate the “Seichel” of Kashrus Laws**

**By Rabbi Dovid Hoffman**

In an attempt to belittle him, a Catholic Bishop once accosted R’ Yonason Eibeschutz zt”l and asked him a question. “Your religion makes no sense. Why is it that if a live chicken eats an entire liter of butter he remains kosher and Jews can eat it, but if that very same chicken is then cooked in a pot and the tiniest smidgen of butter falls into the pot, it becomes forbidden? If you people are so intelligent, how do you reconcile this?”

R’ Yonason quickly replied. “What? And your religion is any better? If you were to take a pig and cook it in a pot and the tiniest smidgen of dung or dirt falls in, you would throw that pot out in a second and not touch the food. You would consider it disgusting!

“And yet, when this very same pig is alive, it rolls around in the most disgusting piles of manure, ingesting dirt, dung and every other form of detestable abomination - and that you have no problem with?”

There is probably no animal as disgusting to Jewish sensitivities as the pig. It’s not just because it may not be eaten: there are plenty of other animals that aren’t kosher either, but none of them arouse as much disgust as the pig. The swine is the ultimate symbol of loathing; when you say that someone “acted like a chazir (pig),” it suggests that he or she did something unusually abominable. Chazal tell us: “Ten measures of plague came to the world and pigs took nine of them.” (yn ihaushe) The Rambam writes that pigs wallow in the muck and eat revolting things. Were Jews allowed to eat pork, they would raise swine and thereby introduce filth into their homes.

The purity of Klal Yisroel, both on a hygienic and spiritual level is distinguished from the other nations, and avoiding such abomination is what sets us apart.

*Reprinted from last week’s email (Parshas Shemini 5776) of Torah Tavlin.*

**These Orthodox Jews Use Karate to Defend the Faith**

**By** [**Lucy Cohen Blatter**](http://www.jta.org/author/lucy-blatter/)

NEW YORK ([JTA](http://www.jta.org/)) — On a recent Sunday evening at a Jewish center in Brooklyn’s Midwood section, dozens of boys and men — ages 5 to 40-something — practice their kicks, strikes and jabs. They are clad in the usual all-white uniform, tied at their middles with cloth belts — mostly white, but some yellows and greens, too.



Mordechai Genut, founder of Frum Karate [off to the side on the right], instructing some beginners’ students. (Courtesy of Mordechai Genut)

As is traditional martial-arts fashion, their feet are bare. But their heads are not — most are covered with black velvet yarmulkes. Some have curly payes hanging underneath.

At the head of the class is Mordechai Genut, a third-degree black belt and founder of [Frum Karate](http://www.frumkarate.com/), a class geared toward Orthodox, even Hasidic, Jews.

While “regular” karate classes often include rituals like bowing in honor of ancestors or burning incense as a gift to the gods, Genut removes any and all “avodah zarah” — foreign worship — aspects from the practice.

His goal: To help members of his community train their minds, bodies and spirits.

“We try and focus on physical exercise and relaxation, and we use martial arts as a vehicle to connect to G-d,” Genut says. “And we remove anything that’s contradictory to the Torah.”

Genut is a karate master in the Tora Dojo system (the name is a play on tora, the Japanese word for tiger, and the Torah; a dojo is a school of martial arts). The system was founded in 1967 with a mission to teach martial arts to the Jewish community.

Though his class is geared to religious Jews, Genut recognizes that some who lean more conservative may be turned off initially, try as they might to live strictly according to the Torah and stay away from secular society.

“The word karate can be a big no-no because it’s associated with fighting,” he says. “I understand that. But the truth is we see in the Torah many places where G-d says that you should protect yourself.”

In addition to running Frum Karate, Genut is also a licensed acupuncturist and expert on Qi Gong meditative breathing.

And though often associated with Eastern religions, meditation doesn’t contradict Judaism, says Genut, pointing in particular to the works of [Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan](http://www.jta.org/1983/02/02/archive/rabbi-aryeh-kaplan-dead-at-48), a 20th-century rabbi and kabbalist who wrote extensively on meditation.

Genut has learned much from Eastern practices, but is able to sift through them to borrow aspects with which he feels comfortable as an Orthodox Jew.

“Everybody has the same body and same internal energy,” he says. “The only thing that’s different is the philosophy. I don’t need to be able to believe in Buddha to do these things.”

Genut began practicing martial arts as a teen in Brooklyn after some near-violent, anti-Semitic-tinged incidents in his neighborhood. Upon earning his black belt, Genut was given a Japanese name, as is standard: Jian Guo, meaning “to invigorate a nation.”

Through his role as a teacher, Genut is trying to do just that — though to his students he’s now known as Sifu Mordechai, which translates into “master.”

And though it may sound counterintuitive, Genut stresses the importance of avoiding violence to his pupils.

“If, Chas Ve’shalom [G-d forbid], someone is coming after you, you run away,” Genut told the younger of his two classes, which are split between 5- to 11-year-olds and 12 and up. He also teaches safety tips, like not having yarmulkes embroidered with their names, lest strangers fake familiarity with kids. (It’s a classic police tip, though usually applied to backpacks.)

“Jews value life, we don’t glorify violence,” Genut says. “And we don’t encourage fighting.”

“I have no shame in running away from a situation,” chimes in Jack Newman, a fifth-degree black belt who has been involved in Tora Dojo since the early 1980s and came to help Genut with his classes that Sunday night.

“But sometimes you can’t run away. In that case, you have the knowledge you get from your sensei,” says Newman, using the Japanese word for martial arts teacher. Newman credits his karate practice for helping him stay sane during his 30-plus years on Wall Street.

The recent rash of stabbings in Israel, along with hate crimes around the world targeting Jewish people, have made it even more important for members of the religious community to have knowledge of self-defense, Genut and Newman add.

“The problem in religious communities is that there’s not enough education on self-defense,” Newman says. “Because of what’s happening now, in Israel and here, the yeshivas on every level should have some sort of program to show people the essence of how to protect themselves.”

A woman named Orlit is among several wig-wearing mothers who have brought their sons to the Sunday-night class. One of her sons has ADHD, “and for him it’s about fitness and focus,” she says. Another son, who is in the older class, gets nervous on the streets in their Flatbush neighborhood.

“I want him to be more confident,” she says.

Moishe Blumenthal, who is waiting for his son to finish class, says he appreciates the activity — mostly for the exercise, but also for the discipline. While he describes his son’s school as “yeshivish,” he says he suspects some Hasidic people might not be interested in the class for fear that it’s too far away from the world of religious learning.

“Though the fact that girls and boys are separate definitely helps,” he adds.

Earlier this month, Genut launched the first separate — but concurrent — class for women and girls in the same location, which is run by Sensei Ellen, a female first-degree black belt. (Orlit says she’ll consider sending her girls there, too).

While religious women often take female-only exercise classes like Zumba or kickboxing, Genut wanted women to have an opportunity to hone karate’s concentration and focus, he says.

And as someone who also organizes self-defense seminars for women, he also sees the importance in teaching frum women — and all women for that matter — how to protect themselves and avoid becoming victimized.

One Hasidic man, typing at his laptop while his 9-year-old son practices his kicks, jabs and bows, says Frum Karate has become a regular routine for them.

“We have a lot going on on Sundays,” the man says, “but my son won’t let me out of it. He loves it.”

*Reprinted from the JTA (Jewish Telegraph Agency) news service release of March 13, 2016.*

**The Legacy of Rabbi**

**Mordechai Dubin, Zt”l**

**By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton**

Rabbi Mordechai Dubin was a well-known devoted follower (Chassid) of the Sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe; Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak. He was an extremely talented man and at one period of his life he held two high positions in the Lithuanian government that he used his to help save the Rebbe's life, free him from communist prison and get him out of Russia.

But his talents made him a target of communist suspicion as well that brought him several close encounters with death. Here is one of them.

Once he was arrested for no clear reason and imprisoned in one of the several thousand 'correctional' facilities in communist Russia. His cell was a dim, cold, concrete room with eight or nine other 'criminals'

Death waited every second, the air smelled of it and it reflected in everyone's dulled eyes.

Suddenly the iron door of his cell opened and an official shouted, "DUBIN!"

Two guards stood at the open door behind the official who took one step into the room and was reading from a paper. "Mordechai Dubin? On your feet! Come with us!"

Was this the end? Would he never see his family or friends again? He stood upright, walked to the door. It was pointless to argue or to plead. He had nothing to fear - death would be a macabre blessing to end the cold, bitter uncertainty.



Exactly the opposite, his only chance was to show them that he was not afraid, fear would only draw their contempt.

He said words of Torah by heart as he walked down the corridor and with every step he became filled with a strange pride. He was far superior to his captors. They were animals, worse than animals, living a lie; they were really dead. But he was attached to life… to infinite, undying truth. He was a follower of a true servant of the Creator; the only man in the Russia to defy Stalin; the Lubavitcher Rebbe!

"DUBIN!" Another voice broke his thoughts. He looked up to see he was standing near the main entrance of the penitentiary. They would probably take him outside and shoot him. Just throw him in the snow somewhere for the wolves and dogs to drag him away.

"YOUR NAME IS MORDECHAI DUBIN?"

"Yes" he answered firmly.

A smile came across the face of the officer speaking to him. "Congratulations" He said as he handed him an envelope "Your period of correction is over. Here are your papers of discharge and a few other things."

He nodded to the guards at the door and they began to open the massive iron structure.

"But, my clothes? My clothes? At least a coat?" As the words came out he knew it was a mistake.

"Ahhh! He wants to stay." Smiled the officer. "Close the..."

"No, no!" he whispered as he moved toward the door. They opened it a bit more and he slipped out into the bitter cold grabbing the envelope in his fist. It was ten below zero.

The iron door closed behind him muffling the laughter of the guards. It must have been one A.M. In the distance he could vaguely see the outline of a nearby town, lucky the moon was full.

He put the envelope in his shirt and began to run. He had to keep moving, it was his only chance to keep from freezing. The snow wasn't too deep...another stroke of fortune, a blessing! He hugged himself to keep warm and ran.

He wasn't used to running; in Yeshiva there was no running, but he ran. The night was spinning around him, he ran out of breath quickly, he couldn't breathe but he ran. He tripped rolled on the ground, his nose was bleeding, his knee hurt but he stood up and ran again.

Finally he reached the first hut. Who knows how many times he had fallen. He knew that his only chance was to find a Jew. No one else would open the door, especially not at two in the morning. He was shivering uncontrollably. A Jew. A Jew would open for a Jew. It was his only hope! He ran from house to house looking at the right door post of each one until…  
Aha! A door with a Mezuza!!!

He began knocking, pounding. His head was spinning. But he mustn't wake the neighbors, they could kill him. "Ratavet! Ratavet" (Yiddish for save me). He pressed his mouth to the door and whispered as loud as possible "Ratavet!!".

He was going numb. He didn't feel his feet at all and his legs were buckling under him. It must be twenty below zero, up to now he hadn't noticed wind. He gave thanks to G-d for that, no wind up to now. And with his last ounce of strength he knocked for the last time.

A small hole opened at the side of the door and closed. He heard the man say to his wife in Yiddish, "A Drunk meshuga in prison clothes with no coat … probably saw our mezuzah and pretends to be a Jew.

Rabbi Dubin slid slowly down, he couldn't stand, face pressed to the door until he was huddled up in a ball on the ground near the door. His strength was gone. He would go to sleep. It wasn't so hard. He stopped shivering, closed his eyes and said his last "Shma Yisroel" thankful to G-d that at least he wouldn't die in jail. Maybe he'd get a Jewish burial. Maybe...

Suddenly he opened his eyes and a horrible thought entered his mind. Wait a minute!!!

"When this Jew opens his door tomorrow morning and sees me dead at his doorstep and realizes that I'm Jewish… he'll realize that because he didn't open the door he killed a Jew. Could be he'll never forgive himself!

I can't do that to another Jew!"

He stood like a madman, pounding the door with renewed life and yelling in Yiddish "I'm Mordechai Dubin. My mother's name is such and such and my father's is such and such… let me in! Let a Jew in!! Shma Yisroel HaShem Elokeinu..."

The door opened and he fell in the house, almost unconscious but alive and safe.

His love for another Jew actually saved his own life!!!

*Reprinted from the Parshas Shemini 5776 email of Yeshiva Ohr Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel.*

**The Pig Will Do Teshuva?**

The Pasuk says regarding the kashrus of a pig, "Vihoo Gairah Lo Yigar; Apig may not be eaten because it does not chew its cud."

The Or Hachaim Hakadosh explains, that these words are telling us that as long as the pig does not chew its cud it is prohibited; but when it starts chewing its cud it will be Mutar to eat.

This will take place LeAsid Lavo - in the time of Mashiach.

That is why the pig is called a Chazer. Because it will return (Chozer) and become kosher in the future.

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