

# HERE'S my STORY

Generously  
sponsored  
by the



Crain-Maling  
Foundation

## A MIRACLE? NATURALLY!

REFAEL ZVI HARTMAN



After more than a year had passed since our wedding and we had not yet been blessed with children, my wife and I turned to doctors. For a long time, we went from one doctor to the next, each of them supposedly more of an expert than the previous one until, after five years of this, we found a professor who was considered to be the top specialist in his field. He looked over our medical history, performed his own series of tests, and then he dashed all our hopes. He told us in no uncertain terms that there was no chance we would ever have children naturally.

Of course, we were completely broken to hear this verdict. And we were terribly depressed as a result.

At the time I served as the principal of the vocational school in Kfar Chabad, Israel — an institution which was overseen by Rabbi Ephraim Wolff — and he suggested we travel to New York to seek the Rebbe's advice and blessing.

My wife's family members — who aren't *chasidim* — objected to this plan when we first proposed it. "There are Rebbes in Israel too," they argued. "Can't you just send

a letter?" they asked. When they saw we would not be swayed, they suggested that I go alone. "Since when do women go to see a Rebbe?" they demanded.

However, my wife knew better. So we both arrived in New York between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur of 1967, and we merited to have a private audience with the Rebbe.

Waiting outside his office was nerve-wracking. We sat and recited Psalms, while feeling anxious and tense. But the moment we went inside and saw his warm smile and gentle face, all our fears completely dissipated.

The Rebbe invited us to sit down, but in accordance with the instructions we received in advance, we remained standing. I handed the Rebbe a twenty-page letter explaining why we had come to see him, which included a report about my work in the vocational school and a summary of our medical saga of the past several years.

The Rebbe took the letter and briefly scanned the pages, leafing through them very quickly — too quickly, it seemed, to have actually read anything. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed my wife's face, which registered disappointment and confusion.

Laying the letter down, the Rebbe began to address the topics I had written about. First he said, "You work in an institution which was established by my father-in-law, [the Previous Rebbe], and this is the vessel for all the blessings that you need." Then the Rebbe gave me specific instructions to try to hire Sephardic Jews as school counselors, since most of the students came from Sephardic homes. "When they see an educational role model from their own community — who conducts himself with awe of G-d and keeps *mitzvot* — it will be easier for them to identify with this path," he pointed out.

"Now, regarding the medical matter," the Rebbe went on, beginning to address in great detail all that I had written, mentioning the various opinions, tests and treatments, including which doctor said what in which year. While he was speaking, I noticed the shock on my wife's face. In short, the Rebbe completely disagreed with the doctors' opinions, telling us, "You don't need a miracle that's beyond

*continued on reverse*



EVENTS. IDEAS.  
PERSONALITIES.

Marking 70 years from the anniversary of the Rebbe's leadership, each week, JEM will be focusing on one event, idea or personality in the Rebbe's life.



continued from reverse

nature. May it be G-d's will that you will have sons and daughters naturally."

He then referred us to a doctor in New York who, he said, would tell us what to do next. This doctor referred us to another doctor, but he was not able to help us. When we reported this to the Rebbe, he instructed us to return to Israel and see the director of the HaKiryat Maternity Hospital in Tel Aviv. "You can tell him that I sent you," he said.

We did as he instructed, and the tests and treatments at HaKiryat took about a year. During this entire time, we provided detailed reports to the Rebbe through Rabbi Wolff. At a certain point, after the doctor suggested a new form of treatment, the Rebbe's answer came: "The doctor should make another suggestion." When we told this to the doctor, he got upset. "Why is the Rebbe getting involved?" he demanded. "Did he look at the data? Either you listen to me or the Lubavitcher Rebbe!"

Of course, we also reported this to the Rebbe, who instructed us to look for another specialist. After more trial and error, we finally found Professor Polishuk at Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. He went over all the data and performed various tests, concluding that my wife should undergo surgery. The Rebbe responded to this: "Do as he advises."

At this point my wife's family began to pressure us again. They were worried about the risks associated with the surgery, but we were determined to do what the Rebbe advised. The night before the anticipated surgery, we arrived for pre-op tests. When the results came back, Professor Polishuk came to see us. He was clearly in shock, as he addressed my wife: "I don't know what happened. I have never seen such a miracle. You are pregnant! Without surgery!"

My excitement was so great that the doctor was worried about me driving back from Jerusalem to our home in Bnei Brak, but I promised that I would be careful. When we arrived home, we found in our mailbox an air mail envelope — a letter from the Rebbe! In all the nine years that we had been married and writing to the Rebbe, we had never received a letter from him — he always responded via his secretariat. And here, on the very day that we heard about the pregnancy, a letter from the Rebbe arrived, at the end of which the Rebbe had written in his own hand: "Good news!"

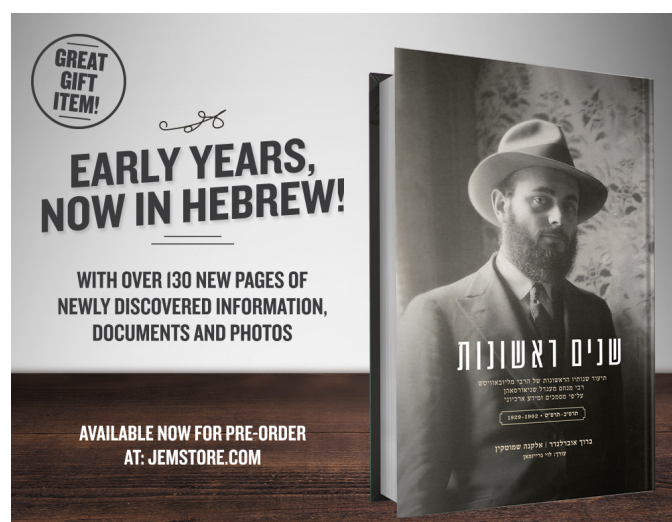
Nine months later, our first son was born, and we named him Menachem Mendel after the Rebbe. Within six years, all five of our children were born — first three boys and then two girls — and we were reminded that the Rebbe had said "sons and daughters." All were born naturally.

I can't explain any of this. I think it must be that the Rebbe wanted the blessing for children to come down to us in a natural way, and when he saw that it wasn't working out with one doctor, he sent us to a second, and then a third,

until we found the one that believed my wife could bear children and was willing to make the effort to achieve results.

But as the Rebbe told me, the real conduit for us to receive the blessings we needed was through my educational work. In fact, when all this was going on, I agreed to direct two schools at once — one in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. The workload was tremendous, but the fact is, that when I broadened the vessel to receive the blessing, it did come!

*Rabbi Refael Zvi Hartman serves as a spiritual mentor of the Chabad community in Beit Shemesh. Previously, he worked as a principal in various Chabad schools in Israel, receiving the "Yakir Hachinuch Hadati" award for excellence in Jewish education in 2014. He was interviewed in his home in Israel in July of 2016.*



## This week in....

לע"נ ר' ישראל יעקב וזוגתו מרת קריינא ע"ה לאקשין

> **5716 - 1956**, in response to a father who asked whether to give his children routine immunizations, the Rebbe referenced the Mishnah which states, "*Al tifrosh min hatzibor* — don't separate yourself from the community," and recommended doing what the majority of the children's classmates had done.<sup>1</sup> 2  
Sivan

1. Igrot Kodesh vol. 11 page 137

In honor of **Shloimie Litzman**  
50<sup>th</sup> **Yom Huledes, 24 Iyar.**

May he continue to have the strength to distribute the *Here's My Story* on a weekly basis to the Greater Monsey community.

Sponsored by his wife **Shternie**  
and children **Mendel, Reuven, Chaya Mushka,**  
**Yossel, and Mariasha Litzman**

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

MY ENCOUNTER  
with the **REBBE**

While we have done our utmost to authenticate these stories, they reflect the listener's recollection and interpretation of the Rebbe's words.

Supported by members of

THE **JEM FOUNDATION**

ואתה תצוה... להעלות נר תמיד

Generously printed by PRINT HOUSE