



# דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות הורינו  
 הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' משה  
 זוגתו מרת פערל שיחיו הערסאן  
 הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם  
 זוגתו מרת ח'ל בלומא שיחיו אזדאבא

לכבוד ימי הולדתם ולהצלחה רבה ומופלגה  
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 ומתוך שמחה והרחבה!

נדפס ע"י בנם ובתם  
 הרה"ת ר' אשר זעליג  
 זוגתו מרת שרה - ומשפחתם - שיחיו  
 הערסאן

# The Much Needed Wake Up Call

AS TOLD BY RABBI YITZIE MAGALNIC (PALOS VERDES, CA)

My wife and I got married in 5750\* and we were blessed with twins, a boy and a girl, on 18 Adar II 5760\*. Needless to say it was a tremendous *simcha* for us. That summer was our first opportunity to bring our twins to the Ohel.

The night before we visited the Ohel, I received a call from a member of our community with whom I had just recently begun to develop a close relationship. "Rabbi, my daughter is turning twelve in November and we would like you to help prepare her for her bas mitzvah and officiate at

the celebration." As his wife had not done a proper *giyur*, I knew it was impossible for me to grant his request.

When we first met, they had wanted to enroll their kids in our Hebrew school. As with all parents in that situation, I try to be as transparent as possible. I told them that I could not do any bar or bas mitzvah for their children as his wife did not have a proper *giyur* and therefore their children are not Jewish. At that time, it seemed to me that they were very understanding of our decision and they did not

enroll their children in our Hebrew school. The issue was never raised again. Therefore, I was quite surprised when I received this call. I realized I was being tested, especially as he had recently given a substantial contribution to our Chabad House.

I was at a loss of how to respond to him.

I needed to figure out how to respond without distancing him from Yiddishkeit. I explained to him that I was traveling and that I would call him the next day. This would hopefully buy me some time.

That night I hardly slept, thinking that once I spoke with him, I would most likely be losing a big supporter. At this point I did not discuss this with anyone. I hoped I would find the right words to keep up the friendship and maintain his involvement in Yiddishkeit without causing any hard feelings.

The *yetzer hara* always has a way to create doubts and rationalizations. I came up with what I thought might be a solution and decided that I would ignore that this was a *bas mitzvah* and would consider it a twelfth birthday party and nothing more. Obviously I knew this was a very bad idea and it was completely wrong on every level, but nevertheless I hoped for a resolution.

The next morning we left for the Ohel. It was a hot and muggy summer day. We wrote our *panim* and entered the Ohel. As we entered the *Tziyun* my wife realized that she forgot the babies' hats which she had prepared to protect them from the extremely hot sun. My wife asked if I could go back to the car to retrieve the hats and of course I did so. When I returned, I used the entrance of the house which welcomes all visitors to the Ohel. In the first room there is a big screen where videos of the Rebbe are continuously playing. Typically I don't stop to watch the videos. Especially now, as I was in a hurry to get back to the *Tziyun* to bring the hats for the babies and to read my *pan*. As I was getting ready to leave the first room to go into the tent, I heard the Rebbe speaking very passionately. The Rebbe seemed to be very pained by what he was saying. This of course caught my attention and I wanted to hear what the Rebbe was talking about in this unusual manner.

I returned to the screen to listen to the *sicha*. I was shocked to the core! I heard the Rebbe saying, "You are fooling them, their children and grandchildren for all eternity." It felt as though the Rebbe was speaking directly to me. The Rebbe was speaking about *Mihu Yehudi*, addressing rabbis who tell people who aren't Jewish that they are Jews, misleading and thus harming them for all generations.

I could not believe my ears! Here I was, entertaining foolish thoughts of putting up a charade of a *bas mitzvah*



and the Rebbe was sending me a direct wake-up call. What was I even thinking?!

When I walked into the Ohel moments later, I was on an entirely different plane. I had never felt such a strong *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe and I tearfully thanked the Rebbe for the much needed clarity.

That evening, I phoned my *baal habos* to clarify and boldly tell him the truth. In a nice but firm way I told him I could not have any part in the so-called *bas mitzvah* celebration. I explained to him that since his wife is not Jewish, neither is his daughter. I was expecting him to hang up the phone and sever his ties with me. Of course I had made peace with that, were that to be the case. Yet after I finished explaining everything, he said in a polite way, "Then why don't you call my wife and please explain it to her." Of course, I took the time to call her and explained everything in a most compassionate way. I wasn't sure how she would react so I again expected the worst. To my surprise, she said, "Rabbi you are absolutely correct. When I completed my conversion I never really did anything to be Jewish, I knew it was not a real conversion."

A few months later after the party, which I was not a part of, the family started taking very big steps towards accepting more mitzvos including *kashrus* and Shabbos. We explored the possibility of doing *giyur kehalacha*!

Baruch Hashem we have remained close. Together with his family, our friend continues to be instrumental in the success of our *shlichus*. I am forever grateful that I was able to summon the courage to overcome this *nisayon* with the Rebbe's direct intervention. 🕉

## YOUR STORY

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