



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
יעקב פישל שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו ב' אייר ה'תשע"ט

Dedicated by his parents
Bruce and Rochele Backman

I'm Supposed To Be Here

AS TOLD BY RABBI YEHUDA TEICHTAL (BERLIN, GERMANY)

It was a few weeks before Pesach 5760* and I had set up a Chabad table at the WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization) annual fair in Berlin. Since there were no *bochurim* available at the time to man the table, I stood there for close to 10 hours engaging Yidden and trying to encourage them to put on tefillin and to take greater interest in Pesach.

The first day was very demoralizing. No one accepted my offers for tefillin and in general the fair-goers were not receptive to our work. In fact, towards the end of the day an elderly gentleman approached me and said, "Young man, this is Berlin, not Brooklyn... We don't do tefillin tables

here, we don't need this nor do we want this. Please leave and don't come back!"

After an internal struggle, I summoned up the courage to return the next day and for 10 hours it seemed that the whole experience would be a repeat of the previous day.

At 7:50 p.m., 10 minutes before the fair closed, a man named Pedro walked up to me and agreed to put on tefillin. As we were chatting he said, "Rabbiner, I heard you do good things. What do you need? I want to help you."

I invited him to come over to the Chabad House the next day to discuss our activities.



The next morning Pedro was very clear. “Rabbiner, I want to sponsor your entire Pesach budget. I will cover every single one of your Pesach *sedarim*.”

Thus began a long and fruitful relationship with Pedro who became a tremendous partner of the Rebbe’s work in Berlin.

In 5764*, we started constructing a 10 million dollar Chabad Community Center. Two years into the project we ran out of funding and construction came to a halt.

At the same time Pedro was diagnosed with several large tumors and his prognosis was grim. The doctors advised him there was nothing to be done and that he should go home and enjoy his last few weeks of life.

Pedro was heartbroken and he approached me for guidance in how to best prepare himself for the end.

I understood the reason for his overwhelming sadness and in the face of his dejection I initially hesitated to be optimistic, but I immediately reminded myself that I am a shliach of the Rebbe and my mission is to bring Yidden to the Rebbe. I looked him straight in the eyes and said, “Pedro, we need to stop with all this negativity. Let’s take a flight to New York together and ask the Rebbe for a *bracha*.”

Although hesitant at first, he finally agreed and a few days later we arrived at JFK Airport and went directly to the Ohel. Pedro held his medical files with the doctors’ bleak prognosis and I held the final plans for the new building that was stalled due to lack of funding.

As we prepared to enter the Ohel I said to Pedro, “We can’t come to the Rebbe empty handed. You need to give the Rebbe something in return.”

“Rabbiner, I will tell the Rebbe that if I ever become healthy again—which I highly doubt—I will sponsor the building of the *mikveh*.”

We wrote our *panim*, davened at the Ohel and arrived back in Berlin the next morning. Pedro went straight to his doctors and I immediately called all the contractors to begin working on the construction site.

Three days later Pedro was shocked to hear that all the tumors had miraculously disappeared! He went to several hospitals to do more tests and every one of them confirmed that he was perfectly healthy!

Needless to say, Pedro kept his part of the deal and a year later we dedicated the beautiful *mikveh* in the Chabad Community Center of Berlin.

At the joyous inauguration of the Chabad Community Center on Chai Elul 5767*, an emotional Pedro shared the story with all the celebrants and concluded: “Yehuda always said, Hashem and the Rebbe will help! Well, I was not supposed to be here anymore and neither was this building supposed to be here right now. But dear friends, Hashem and the Rebbe helped.”

This episode had a major impact on our community and since then many Yidden from Berlin come to the Ohel on a regular basis knowing that we have a loving father who takes care of us. **T**

YOUR STORY

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