

How To Bring Heaven To Earth



FROM LAS VEGAS To Jerusalem

By Sara Mandell, B.S.W.



How To Bring Heaven To Earth: From Las Vegas To Jerusalem

By Sara Mandell

Contact me at sara@bringheaventoearth.com

www.bringheaventoearth.com

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Re-edited copy 2008

"The Jew is that sacred being who has brought down from heaven the everlasting fire, and has illuminated with it the entire world. He is the religious source, spring, and fountain out of which all the rest of the peoples have drawn their beliefs and their religions."Leo Tolstoy

Preface

TO THE FAMILY OF ISRAEL

Those who have always eaten are not familiar with the sensation of hunger. They take their daily food for granted, not always appreciating the delicious taste of their “daily bread.” To those of the House of Israel who have always lived in a Torah atmosphere, but who don’t feel excited about such a rich inheritance, I hope to bring a fresh inspiration and perspective to their observance of rituals. Sometimes one does mitzvot by rote; not understanding the grace that accompanies those acts. Therefore, their heart isn’t in it; it’s just something they know they “have to do.” I was one of the hungry, seeking that which would satisfy my soul. I can take you step by step through your spiritual diet, and share the satisfaction of the feast table laid out in front of you. Hopefully then, you might live every moment appreciative of the joy of every mitzvah!



To those of the King’s sons and daughters who don’t know what a treasure that was bequeathed to them, it is my hope that my experience on the Golden Path will inspire them to search for their own personal inheritance, as it is written:

“It is a Tree of Life for those who grasp it...its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are PEACE. Lengthy days are at its right; at its left are WEALTH and HONOR. The L-rd desired for the sake of Israel’s righteousness that the Torah be made great and glorious.” (Morning Prayer Service when reading the Torah.)



To those who are contemplating conversion to Judaism, I offer my own conversion experience. I searched honestly and diligently for the satisfaction of my soul, and the path was strewn with thorns to test my sincerity. When I made my decision to link my eternal soul with the House of Israel, it was not based on the fact that I was married to a Jewish man. It was based on the knowledge and joyful acceptance of the 613 commandments that a Jew must always strive to do. The sages write that “righteous converts” were a part of the Souls that were at Mt.

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Sinai when G-d spoke with the Family of Israel. They were among those who said, "I will do, and I will listen." For some reason they may have been reincarnated in a body of the Nations in order to accomplish some purpose that will correct their souls in this lifetime. But when the spark of their soul comes close to the Flame of Torah, they begin to flicker and burn and will not be happy until they are a part of that Great Light. Unless you feel this way, I would advise you not to convert. There is no reason to contract upon your soul, which lives eternally, the 613 commandments instead of the 7 Noachide Laws given to the Nations. Israel already has her share of those in the Family of Israel who do not know the Paths. You may still drink of the wisdom of the Book as a Noachide without converting.

May the One G-d of the Universe bless you, whatever your Path, to satisfy your soul.

Peace & blessings,
Sara Shira Bat Abraham Mandell



This book is dedicated to the loving memory of my dear departed Mother-in-law, Fayga Malka Mandell, a"h, without whose loving example I could not have discovered the Torah of Moses our Teacher.



I wish to express special thanks to Rabbi David Hollander, who made me aware that I wasn't Jewish and who introduced me to Rabbi Maurice Lamm and his devoted Rebbetzin Shirley Lamm, who took me under their kind and patient tutelage and under the "chuppah." To our brave and faithful friend Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, we thank you for all your assistance in starting our Ba'al Tshuva Center and your sage advice through all the years. My thanks also to Tanny Tannenbaum, my nightly teacher in Kibbutz Sha'alavim, whose teachings and guidance were my inspiration and salvation, to Rabbi Schlessinger and all the "chevrah" in Sha'alavim who were the perfect example of how to maintain a

peaceful Torah community. If not for Kibbutz Sha'alavim I would never have known how to achieve the harmony of how to build our Ba'al Tshuva Center at Kedma. To all who helped my husband and I in establishing our Ba'al Tshuva Center in Kedma, especially "Moshke" Moscovitz, the Mayor of Shafir and MK Zvulen Hammer,z"l, then Minister of Religion, as well as Minister of Social Welfare Michael Chazani, z"l, I will never forget your trust and your courage. Special thanks go to Rabbi Ben Zion Sobel of Migdal Or for his encouragement to publish this book. Wherever you are Shoshana Weiss, I must say that I could not have managed anything without your love, faith, encouragement, intelligence and hard work during hard times. I will always love you. Last, but certainly not least, I thank my husband Reuven for coming with me on my "Torah Trip," for his patient, loving advice, encouragement and help while writing this book, and my wonderful children, Pinchas and Yehoshua and Heftzi-ba for their editing advice and inspiration, and for sharing their lives and homes with so many of the Family of Israel.



Ballet School with Robert Joffrey

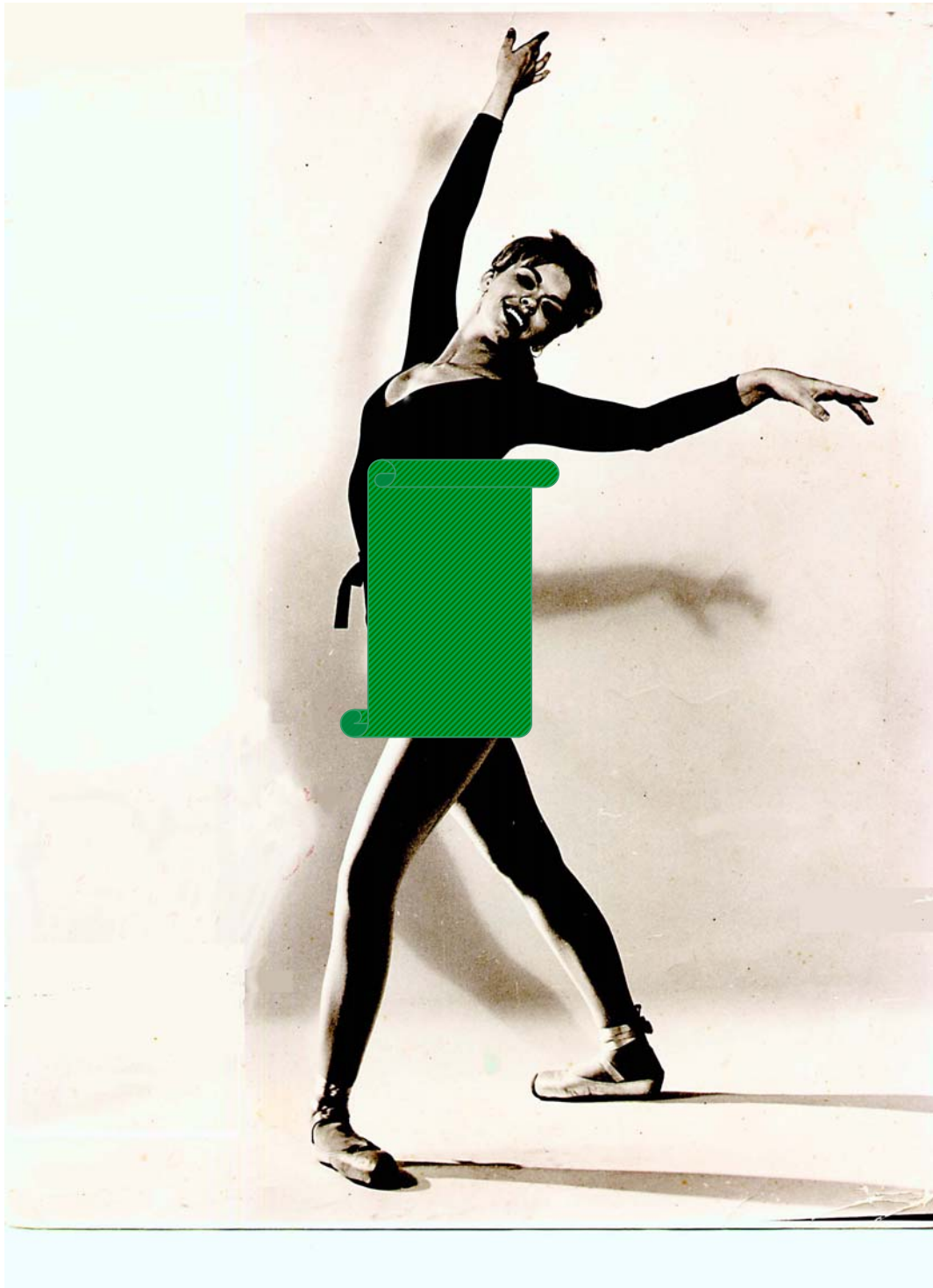


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Chapter One

IN THE BEGINNING...



I was born in Ashland, Kentucky into a Christian family. My Christian name was Sandi Kaye Vincent. My family was totally indoctrinated with the Southern tradition of prejudice against Jews. When my mother moved to Miami Beach, and met her first Jew, she was surprised that they were not green and with horns on their head, as she had been taught by her father. My grandparents brought me up, as my parents had divorced when I was six years old, and my mother couldn't afford to keep me. My grandparents were "hellfire and damnation" Southern Baptists whose rigid laws and fervent threats drove my mother to be an atheist altogether. I was baptized Presbyterian when I was eight years old, because I used to attend a Presbyterian church with a school friend whose father, a goat farmer, drove us to church every Sunday morning. I grew up on a small, five-acre chicken farm in the Everglades of Florida. You could say I was a typical American hodgepodge of a heritage mixed with Irish, English and Cherokee Indian, with the distinction of being from the Kentucky family feud of the Hatfield and the McCoy's. I was one of the "real McCoy's."

My devotion to G-d was very strong, I guess because it is written that G-d is Father to the orphan, and I felt like an orphan. I only got to see my mother once every other Sunday, and sometimes not even then. My grandmother intercepted my father's letters, and I was never told of them until I was grown. I never heard from him after the divorce when I was six years old, and I never saw him again. It was forbidden for me to even mention my father in my grandmother's home.

My grandmother hated children, especially girls, who were innately wicked in her eyes. She often told me, "Nobody loves you, you little brat. Your mother doesn't love you or she wouldn't have dumped you with me, and I sure don't love you!" It was not a very nurturing atmosphere. She was so vain that I had to call her "Mom," and never introduce her as my grandmother, because she didn't want anyone to know she was old enough to be a grandmother. Being a Leo, combined

with my wild Irish temper, I battled her verbally. She battled with me with a variety of punishments, including some very sore wounds from switches she would break off from a tree and beat me black and blue. Afterward, as I would be sobbing on the floor of my bedroom, my grandfather, Daddy Frank, would come in and apologize for her and tell me that she didn't mean to hurt me so badly. It was just that she couldn't seem to stop hitting me once she got started, and I really got her mad when I spoke to her so brashly. He said I shouldn't talk to her so. "Back talk" was strictly forbidden, and I knew it was disrespectful, but I wanted to hurt her with words the way she hurt me with words. My grandfather would gently try to comfort me, but he never stopped her. She was the ABSOLUTE RULER of our family. But I wouldn't let her kill my spirit as she had done to the rest of her family. I was the only one who dared to fight her. Now that I am older, I realize that my grandmother was tired of raising children, and now that she had raised them, she didn't want to do it all over again. She had been the oldest child in her family, and her mother was ill. Therefore, she spent her young life taking care of her 3 younger siblings. Still, she didn't need to blame ME for it. I wasn't even quite sure what a "divorce" was and when the nightmare would be over.

My grandfather was a giant of a man. He was 6'4", a wiry and muscular man, who had been a coal miner in Kentucky, and was now an electrician. His brother had been badly crushed in a Kentucky coal mining accident, so Daddy Frank was happy to be out of that dark and dangerous world of coal mining and into the fresh, clean air of Florida. In the world of men, he was not a man you'd want to tangle with, but in our house, as I said before, my grandmother was not to be argued with. I wished he would stick up for me sometimes, or interfere with her brutal beatings when they got out of hand. But he never did.

Both my grandparents worked, so after my brother and I walked the 1 ½ miles home from school, we would quickly get our daily chores done (morning dishes, house cleaning, feeding the chickens, turkeys and geese, pulling weeds from the vegetable garden), and then we would get lost until we had to come home for dinner. We collected live snakes as a hobby, baby rattlesnakes, coral snakes, and king snakes. We hid them in the corner of a table in the hallway in some milk bottles, and we caught flies and fed them. We stuck holes in the paper tops of the milk bottles so they could breathe. Once we had collected five snakes and covered the milk bottles over with a cloth, but our grandmother found them and had the biggest fit I'd ever seen! She hated snakes, which is probably why we

collected them. Both my brother and I had sore behinds from that beating. But we giggled 'til our stomachs ached when we recounted the LOOK on our grandmother's face when she realized that those snakes had been right next to the bedroom she slept in every night for 2 weeks.

Since I was always in trouble with my grandmother, my brother began avoiding me. I guess he wanted to keep from getting caught up in the aftermath of her wrath, but there must have been something more, because my brother disowned me when my mother died. I still don't really know why. It may be because of my conversion to Judaism years later.

I was left alone much of the time, and I spent hours reading the silken pages of my grandfather's Bible when I was young. I felt very close to G-d, poured out my troubles and fears to Him, and I found great comfort in prayer. G-d was literally like a Father to me, always there; and since I never saw my father either, the fact that I didn't see G-d didn't mean that He wasn't there for me.

I believed in law and order, chastity, charity and loving-kindness. Especially loving kindness, because I knew the pain caused by the lack of it, and I vowed never to be anything like my grandmother. My greatest fear, though, was that my mother would go to Hell because she didn't believe in G-d or Jesus. Her mother's rendition of religion made her feel like G-d was the boogeyman and she was going to Hell no matter what, so she decided to enjoy what she could of life on this plane.

I had never heard of a Jew. I learned in the Bible about the Israelites being the Chosen People, and how they had been exiled from their land. They had a certain kind of magic to me, having heard G-d with their own ears, and having been rescued from slavery with obvious miracles from G-d. I thought they were extinct in my days. After all, that was two thousand years ago, and how could a people remain a nation when there was no nation? Even the land of the Israelites was like a divine fairyland to me, and I thought nobody knew where it was, sort of like the Garden of Eden, a land of miracles that no longer existed. I often wished that G-d would reveal Himself again, and speak to us as He did to the Children of Israel, because I knew so many people who didn't believe that He existed, including my own mother. I wondered why He hadn't spoken to us for so long.

Then, when I was ten years old, I rebelled so much about living with my grandmother that my mother finally took me to live with her for a while in Miami

Beach. I found myself to be the only gentile in a whole school of Jews. Now I found that I was actually going to school with the remnant of this ancient race. It was a new concept for me. In my mind there was no separation of people. We were all Children of G-d, like I learned in the Sunday school Christian song, "Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight." I had a lot to learn.....

I wanted to get to know all about these people. But at first they avoided me in school, for reasons I could not discern. However, soon my high scholastic skills won them over. I found that Jews appreciate intelligence, and I soon made friends with a few of the girls in my class. I was even chosen to play the part of the Matzo in the musical Passover Play that was written by a very talented girl in my class. I don't know why, of all people, I was chosen, since I was the only "shiksa" in the school. Perhaps it was because I was so skinny and looked thin like a matzo or maybe because I could sing and dance. It was an honored part in the play, and I was proud to do my part. The loaf of bread bragged about being plump and soft, while I was a sad, skinny, hard cracker. I replied in song that I was a symbol of the Jew's freedom from slavery; that it was better to hurry to grab for freedom and eat a hard, skinny matzo than to wait for the plumpness of bread and eat it in slavery. As a proud American, that message made quite an impression on me. You've heard of a "Georgia Cracker?" Well, I was a "Miami Beach Matzo!"

When my girlfriends invited me to their homes I was impressed with their close family life and the way the Jewish parents looked after their children. They always made sure their children did their homework and took pride in their children's accomplishments. They bought their children orthopedic shoes and braces for their teeth and looked over them with love. With me it was just the opposite. Never mind orthopedic shoes, I was lucky if I had shoes to fit me at all. I was aware of my costliness constantly if I needed anything, and was made to know what a burden I was. I had a broken home, no security, little supervision (because Mother worked until 9:00 P.M.), and nobody praised me when I came home with all A's on my report card. I was chastised for B's. And my mother didn't even get to see me starring in the play as a matzo. She had to work. So I was alone much of the time.

These Jews were different people, I knew, but I didn't understand why some of my girlfriends' mothers didn't want them to associate with me. I asked my

preacher, "What is a Jew? Why are we different?" He told me, "All Jews are going to Hell because they don't believe in Jesus Christ!"

I was stricken! Going to Hell? These people who kept their families together and had such love and closeness could never go to Hell! If G-d were Love, as I had been taught, He would never send so many people to Hell for not believing in a MAN. I argued that there were, perhaps, people in China or India who had never even heard of Jesus, but were kind, loving, and good to their families and neighbors. Surely, G-d would not send them to Hell if they didn't even know about Jesus. G-d didn't send them to hell before Jesus came. Why should He do this now to people who were obviously worshipping a Loving G-d? I asked the minister, "Wasn't Jesus sent to earth to teach people who were evil and turn their hearts to a Loving G-d?" But my preacher told me that there was NO way to get to Heaven except through Jesus. This was the beginning of my gradual disillusionment with my religion. To me, it wasn't logical or consistent with the nature of G-d. I also could never totally believe in some of the tenets of Christianity, such as: How could G-d die if He is Immortal? To me, I believed secretly that Jesus was a Jewish Prophet & we are all "sons of the Creator." There is only One G-d.

At the same time, I was impressed that these Jews were the direct descendants of the Israelites I had read about in the Bible. I couldn't imagine how they could still be a separate people, having had no Nation of their own for nearly two thousand years. But then, I learned that the Jews were called the "People of the Book." They became a nation in the desert wilderness, before they inherited the Holy Land. They had to become a Holy People before they could enter the Holy Land. And that Book was portable. The Book kept them unified even without a Nation. And separate they were.



As I continued on the Junior High School, I felt the separation, as the Jewish boys were not allowed to ask me to dances or dates, and as the girls became involved in Bnei Brith Club activities after school. I wandered alone again, so I decided to go to a gentile school in Coral Gables, even though it meant traveling two hours each way every day. Strangely enough, my best girlfriend in the gentile

school was Jewish. When I began to date, it seemed it was always the Jewish men who attracted me with their intelligence, gentility and good humor, and I dated mostly Jewish men. When I entered the world of business, Jews befriended me. These Jews were not the really religious type; they only went to synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and maybe not even then. But they were always good to me. However, I could never get them to tell me enough about their religion. Jews do not proselytize and do not encourage even those who want to convert. They told me that being Jewish was dangerous, that they had been tortured and killed and driven from country to country, denied certain professions, schools and privileges for being Jewish. They discouraged me from learning about their religion, said I was lucky I didn't have to worry about such things, and that I shouldn't put an extra burden in my life. It didn't seem to me, though, that they were burdened. They looked happy, intelligent and pretty much together.....

I may not have had the close family life that I yearned for, but I had been blessed by G-d with many talents in dancing, singing, art and entertainment. Maybe my role as a "matzo" was the launching of my career. Who knows? It gave me something wonderful to do in my loneliness. I spent my high school days involved in the Modern Dance Club, the Choral Department, and the National Debating Team, filling my extra hours with something positive and fun. In my Senior Year I was elected President of the Modern Dance Club. I was the choreographer of the Choral Department's yearly production of musical plays. I created the costumes, organized fund-raising projects, and gave Modern Dance classes, danced in every "half-time" show at the football games that our school played in the Orange Bowl Stadium. I took ballet classes at the Miami Conservatory twice a week. I was ALWAYS busy! I did so many extracurricular activities that I often had to stay up 'til the early morning hours finishing essays, homework and studying for exams. Luckily, school studies were easy for me. The only difficulty was finding time. But I liked school and learning.

I also had a fervor for G-d, which caused me to seek out religiously inspiring teachers, and I sang in the Church choirs. One of my most inspiring reverends always brought home a message that we should serve G-d faithfully in whatever life choices we made. My first inspired choice was to go to the Amazon Jungle and teach about G-d to the Jivaro Indians, who were headhunters I had recently read about. I discussed it seriously with the reverend, but he laughed aloud and said to me, "No, Sandi, I don't think that is where G-d wants you, somewhere

hidden in the jungle. G-d gave you a special talent to dance and entertain people. That's what I think you should do." I didn't exactly know how I could serve G-d as a dancer, especially since my grandmother told me that dancing was wicked. I was conflicted on that, so I questioned my spiritual guide. He said that the Bible tells us that "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine." He said, "Dancing is a joyful experience. Theaters are filled every night all over the world with audiences marveling at the grace and beauty of dance. Think how we all feel after watching Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, ballerinas who make you feel you can fly!" I felt the feeling as he spoke his words. It was a world of bringing joy, laughter, a space in time that is pure beauty. But did I have that much talent? I didn't know; I just enjoyed it.

It seems that he was right, because life led me in that direction. Even though I was entertaining thoughts of a legal career, when I was 19 I met a woman who changed my life. Olga Suarez was a protégé of the great George Balanchine, the late director of the N. Y. City Ballet. She was now the new Modern Dance teacher at the Miami Conservatory, so I took one of her classes. She took me aside after class and told me she liked my style. She invited me into her Modern Dance Company as a lead dancer, and gave me a year's free scholarship on the condition that at the end of a year I would go to New York and become a professional dancer. It was only because of her encouragement that I decided to be a dancer instead of a lawyer. She believed in me. I had studied ballet from the age of eleven, but I was always so long and lanky that when I stretched out my long limbs in class, I either stepped on someone's toes or hit somebody in the face. So I began to hold back. Olga told me I had the long lines that every dancer dreamed about without even trying. She coached me for hours every day that year, yelling at me, "Stretch out! Use every inch of your body!" I could hear her echoing in my dreams. "S-t-r-e-t-c-h!" She worked so hard with me that year that I became a very strong dancer.

Of all the people who influenced my life and the direction it took, Olga Suarez takes the prize. She reached inside the depths of my soul and taught me how to bring it out in the pantomime of **dance**. She taught me that hard work, constant practice and sacrifice (of much of my social life), were the tools to get anywhere in life. And she showed me that I had more depth, height and strength of character (and body) than I ever knew I had. She spent so much special time with me in rehearsal and class, getting nothing in return but my love and respect

for her. Heaven only knows what my life would have been if Olga hadn't stepped in and offered me all her talent and know-how. I hope she was rewarded for all the goodness, success and fun she helped me to achieve in my life.

In August 1959, just a few days after my 20th birthday, I left my job as Manager of the N. Miami Beach branch of Sutro Brothers Stock Brokerage and I flew to New York to fulfill my promise to Olga. For four months I trained intensively with Robert Joffrey, Jose' Limon, Luigi, Matt Mattox, Carnegie Hall and the June Taylor School of Jazz. Then the first week of Summer Stock auditions began. For the whole first week I auditioned and got nowhere. I can tell you, my knees were knocking! So many beautiful, long legged dancers were there, looking quite confident. I hung back, thoroughly intimidated. I figured I would go last so I could learn from the others how to audition. It would also give me more time to figure out those difficult dance combinations they kept throwing at us. When I finally danced for them, all I got was a disinterested, "Next, please." It happened all that week. I got nowhere! Not even to the finals.

I had to figure out what I was doing wrong at those auditions. When 400 fantastic dancers show up for every audition, and they're only hiring six to eight dancers for the show, you have to find some way of being a "standout." I considered what the girls who had made the finals had done. Well, they were very bold, they had pushed their way up front, had gone first whenever possible, and they had danced "full out," giving it their all. I had hung back until last and had been very shy and unconfident; not dancing full out like Olga had trained me to do. Shame on me; I hadn't done it. I had been shy and frightened and didn't put that "pizzazz" into my dancing so they could see my style.

Well," I told myself; "either you are going to be a shy office person or a bold dancer. You must make a choice." I decided that I would pretend to be some one else—someone like the bold dancers I had seen last week; not like the shy, unsure person that I was.

My next audition happened to be on Monday at the famous Broadway nightclub, the Latin Quarter. The trade paper said they were forming a Road Show. What would they be looking for, I asked myself? Probably a blond with big boobs. Well, if I was going to be someone else, why not go for broke! I called the beauty parlor and asked how much it would cost to have my hair done blond.

They said \$40. Damn, I couldn't afford it. Undaunted, I went to the drug store and bought some blond hair color spray.

When Monday morning came I sprayed my shoulder-length hair blond, stuffed **two** pairs of falsies into my leotard, and set out for the Latin Quarter. When I arrived at the audition there were already about 100 girls there. I took a deep breath and determined to go through with my charade. I would be whom I wasn't—pushy, bold and nervy.

The choreographer, Ronnie Lewis, was a wiry, blond haired man in his late twenties. He began to show us a difficult jazz combination. He was very good! I picked it up quickly, maneuvering my way up front. After a few tries Mr. Lewis announced that the auditions would begin. My heart was beating quickly as I took my place, front center, in the first group of eight girls. This time I danced full out, like Olga had taught me, like the girls I was pretending to be. The choreographer picked me out of that group and told the other seven, "That'll be all, thank you."

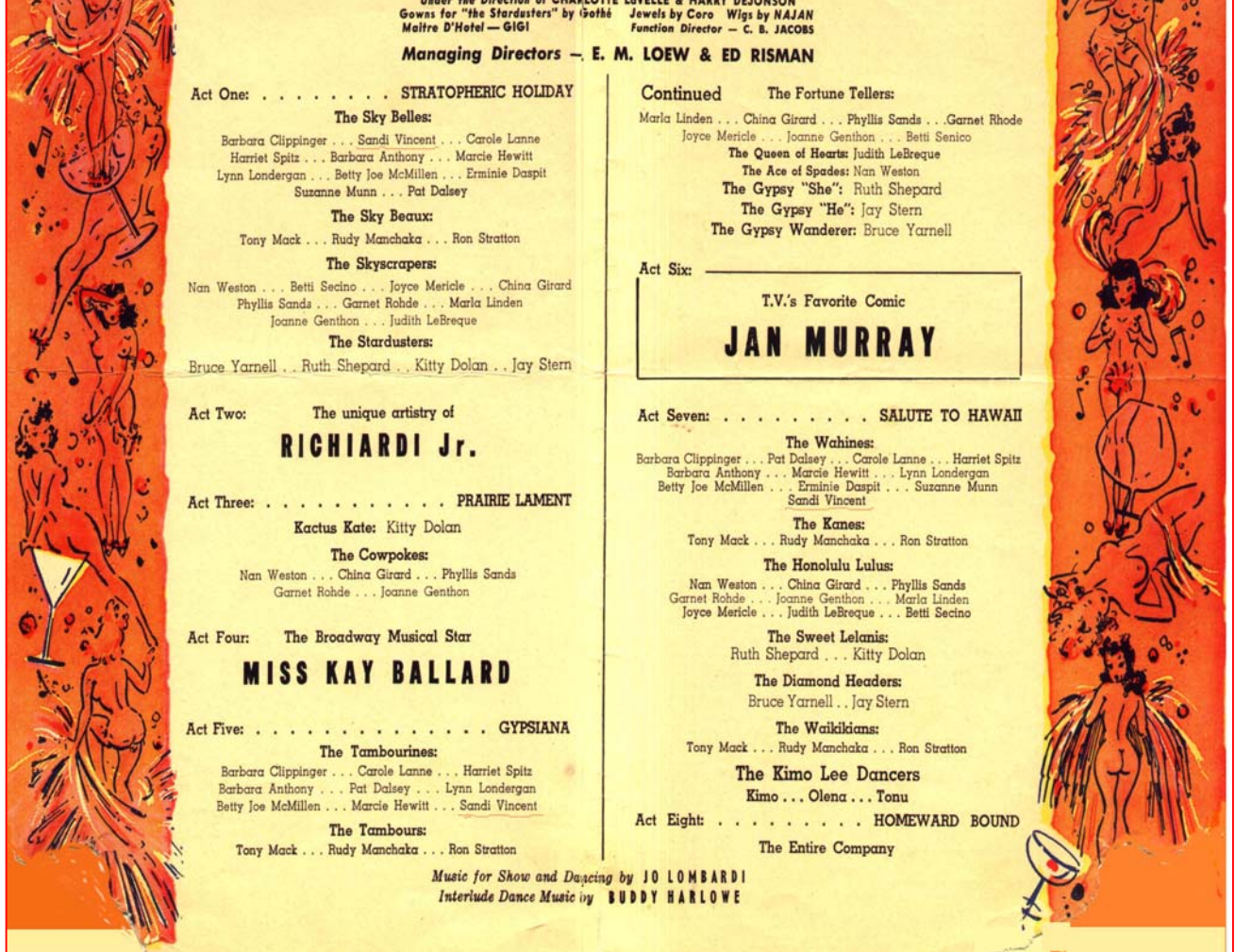
I waited until he had eliminated all but 10 girls, and then he began to show us a different jazz combination. I figured he would want to eliminate another two to four girls, depending on how many they wanted for this Road Show. I was determined not to be one of the eliminated. Again, I took my place, front center, and began going through the intricate steps. Then I blew it! My mind suddenly went blank for a couple of beats, but I picked it up again on the next bar of music and tried to finish with a flair, still smiling brightly, though I was disappointed with myself. Mr. Lewis called me forward, and I thought, "This is the kiss!"-off. He said, "Would you mind working here at the Latin Quarter to replace someone who's leaving the show? We have decided that the Road Show isn't financially feasible, but we need one replacement here." My mouth was hanging open in amazement!

He must have mistaken it for hesitation, because he continued, "It's really a nice place to work; I think you'd like it here." I laughed at his misinterpretation of my silence; I just couldn't believe my ears. I asked him how come he chose me out of over 100 girls when I blew the second combination? He told me that he had been impressed with the fact that I hadn't let it throw me, and had continued, unfazed, on the next beat. He said it showed I was a professional, and things like that were very important when you were on stage. Unfazed? It was a good thing he couldn't hear my heart thumping wildly. I guessed my whole pretense had been more successful than I could have imagined. I had made it to Broadway in

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only 4 months since I left Florida! Olga would be proud of me. All of our hard work had not been in vain.





My opening night was like something out of "I Love Lucy" and Murphy's Law (whatever can go wrong *will* go wrong) combined. I arrived early that evening with all the make-up they required. I didn't know how to put on stage make-up, and I was embarrassed to tell anyone that this was my first show. After some bumbling tries, the girl that sat next to me took pity and showed me how to cut my false eyelashes and put them on. She gave me tactful suggestions how to do my make-up, as well. I was very grateful to her. I had not had time to do a dress rehearsal, nor had they fit the costumes to me, because the girl I was replacing had worn them just the night before. She was much larger than I was and the costumes were pretty loose. The dressmaker asked me to stay after the last show so she could fit them for me for the next night.

The "five minute" curtain call came, and the girls began to go downstairs for the opening number. I hurriedly began to buckle my shoes, when the damned buckle came off! I ran to the dresser, she began to sew as fast as she could, I grabbed the shoe, put it on and ran down the steel circular staircase to the desperate calls of the girls downstairs to hurry, hurry, hurry. I was the first in line to lead the girls on stage, and I'm telling you, I didn't have a millisecond left. But, thank G-d, I made it on the first bar of music. Wow, what a beginning!

The second number was a gypsy number with tambourines. We girls all wore wigs of black, long braids with chains of coins draping over the bangs in the front. The dress was a deep V-cut to the waist; the skirt was six different layers and colors of silk. It was a pretty heavy costume. We were to run onto the stage in a blackout, turn until our skirts spun out, and then sit down in the middle of our circular skirts. The lights came on and we swayed to the song of the lead singers. At a certain part of their song, we were to get up, go to the back, and line up for a dance with the tambourines. I tried to get up, but my shoes kept slipping on some of the six layers of the silk skirts. After my third or fourth unsuccessful attempt, the audience began to snicker. I began to pray at that point. Thank G-d, my prayers were answered, and I managed to get up and run to my place in line just in time to do the first turn to the right, at which time we hit our tambourines. Only, no one had told me that in order to make that turn, one had to *throw* the heavy skirt in that direction, or one couldn't turn as fast as the music required. Additionally, my dress was too big for me. So as I started to make the turn, the dress stayed where it was, I turned, and my bare bosom was clearly exposed in the deep cut of the dress's center! By the time I turned to the right to hit my tambourine, everyone else was turning to the left. I didn't know whether to flee from embarrassment or laugh with the audience. Then I remembered why Ronnie Lewis had hired me, because I didn't let my mistake throw me and continued, looking undaunted. So I continued, trying to look like an undaunted, rather comical gypsy. All the while I was dancing I was wondering whether my opening night would also be my closing night. But Ronnie just laughed and apologized for not giving me a dress rehearsal. The girls shared with me the secret of throwing the skirt, the dresser promised me a costume tomorrow that I wouldn't come out of, and everyone was pretty good humored about it. As I learned later, it was usually a great laugh when something went wrong, because when you do the same show twice or three times a night for a whole year or more, it was entertaining to us when something crazy happened on stage.

For the first few months of work I was on top of the world! Here I was, only 20 years old, working at what I wanted to do, getting paid good money for something I would have done for free (if my landlord would stop charging me rent), and loving every minute of it. New York was mine for the asking; I was on Broadway! I loved playing the audience. There is something warm and exciting about performing to a live audience. I learned that if I fixed my smile on an

individual person, playing to them for a few moments as if I was performing for them alone, it drew them in like a magnet. They would brighten up and applaud more than just politely. I developed a habit of playing to several individuals during every number, feeling as though I was brightening up their evening just a little. It may have been this habit that brought me an experience I never expected.

One night after the first show I was in my dressing room preparing to go out for dinner between shows, when the stage manager called my name on the intercom, and said there was someone backstage who wanted to meet me. I couldn't imagine who it would be, but I quickly threw on some clothes and ran downstairs to see. It was Milton Berle! He offered his hand with a big smile and said, "I just had to tell you how much I enjoyed your performance young lady. I could not take my eyes off of you the whole time you were on stage. There is a sunshine about you that just glows, and when you are on stage there seems to be no one else up there. I will certainly be looking for you in the future. You will go far in this business, I can tell." I didn't know what to say, I was so surprised and flattered. I wished I could think of something bright and memorable to say, but all I could manage was a humble, "Thank you, Mr. Berle. I'm really quite flattered that you bothered to come backstage and tell me this." Later that night I thought how dumb it was for me not to say something constructive like, "This is my first show on Broadway and I have a lot to learn. I've just been in New York for 6 months. Maybe you could help me." He had a reputation of being a very nice man, so maybe he would have introduced me to someone who could groom me for stardom. But I was still so "green" I didn't take advantage of the opportunity. I had never *dreamed* of such a situation, and was not mentally prepared. Over the years I saw "Uncle Milt," many times in the different States we both performed in, and we always had a few laughs together. But it was many years later that my husband got a big laugh from Milton. I hadn't seen Milton for years, having converted to Judaism, given up my dancing career, gone to live in Israel for 6 years. It was 1973 and my husband and I had just finished doing an ABC Radio interview at the Beverly Hills Hotel in California. We stopped for "a cool one" at the hotel lounge, and who was there but "Uncle Milt" and a friend at the bar. Milton looked me over as I stood smiling at him, I being dressed in a maxi-skirt, long sleeves and a scarf, standing with my bearded, obviously Orthodox Jewish husband. He quizzically asked, "Sandi? Is it you?" I laughed and hugged him, and he asked, "What kind of a show are you doing now? Yiddish Theater?" I was

timely tropics

From Earth; From Las Vegas To Jerusalem

BY CEAN

Meanwhile, the Beach branch continues to pack 'em in with standing lines nightly. . . Didjano that Sandi Vincent, the new Latin Quarter beauty (in Gotham) was assistant manager of Sutro Brothers in Miami Beach last year? Which only goes to prove beauty and brains sometimes go together.

The Thunderbird Motel, one of the

Mention Gotham Guide

struggling to explain that I had converted and gone to Israel and started working with troubled youth—a long story with a big change in lifestyle. It was sort of like the Roman who went to Rabbi Hillel and asked him to explain all of Judaism while standing on one foot. My husband, who is famous

for his one-liners, explained: "She went from "pervert" to "convert." Milton nearly fell on the floor laughing.


Nightlife With George Bourke

Miami to See a Lot of Boris Morros

YOU NEED good intelligence to keep up with Boris Morros, the movie producer who served the United States as a counter-spy for 10 years while posing as a Russian agent! A few days ago we mentioned here that he'd be in town soon to call attention to the movie, "Man on a String," based on his story. But we didn't know the "soon" would be next Tuesday.

National Airlines brings him in on Monday at 9:35 p.m. but from then on the "flying" will be all his own. He's to stay at the Everglades but he'll be there only to sleep until he leaves for New York the following Saturday.

In between he'll address local service clubs, speak at schools and universities and possibly say a word or two about the picture. He's a colorful and interesting man who has led an interesting and exciting life. He may be fingering a string of amber beads if you see him. They were a reward, at age 12, for playing cello—not for the Czar, but for the Czar's confidante, Rasputin! See what we mean?




Al Richman has a new show hazarding the Friday, May 13, date by opening tonight at his Traveler's Hotel Lounge. Singer **Terry Madison**, who has been featured at the Singapore for a year, the Hi-Lites and comedian **Buddy Young** are headlined . . . Piano-vocalist **Gwen Bari** is filling the Cyrano Lounge of the Deauville with music these nights.

When **Dorothy Sarnoff** finishes her singing stint at the Americana Bal Masque this week, she'll head for New York for conferences with **Mrs. Spyrous Skouras** on her appearance at a benefit for Boys' Town of Italy at Boston on May 22.

Odds and Ends

SANDI VINCENT, who was a junior executive of a Miami Beach stock brokerage firm last year, is now a show girl in the Latin Quarter in New York . . . **Tane** and **Eleana**, exciting exponents of the Polynesian lively arts, especially the Hawaiian and Tahitian, leave for a Corpus Christi, Tex., booking on Monday. At the same time, **Eleana's** musical brother, **Lund Nelson** and the Tahitianaires move from one Gill hotel in Fort Lauderdale to the British Colonial in Nassau.



Boris Morros . . . cell

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Esquire who was he Pictures. It **Tony Benne** a forthcomin

In the fall of 1960 our show closed at the Latin Quarter, and they brought in a show from Japan. I spent most of my time in dance classes or auditioning. Auditions are like a free class, and you sometimes get to dance with famous choreographers like Gower Champion, Peter Genaro, and Jerome Robins—the BEST! Too bad you didn't always get such interesting and challenging dance combinations in a show you had to do every night for a year. Anyway, I went to every audition I could, because you need to "hone" yourself to pick up the combinations quickly and be so good that they choose YOU out of the other 400 fabulous dancers there. So one morning a friend called to tell me about an audition. I didn't even ask what the show was; I just went. This one must have been called rather hastily, because there were only about 60 girls there. We quickly got down to business and began to learn the jazz combination. I went in the first group, knowing that it made the best impression.

After the dancing, the choreographer had us do some Can Can kicks and splits to see how limber we were. The producer suddenly said, "All right, everyone leave but the redhead." That was me, a strawberry blonde.

Everybody quickly filed out, leaving me standing alone with the famous producer, Lou Walters (who was Barbara Walters' father). He said, "Can you leave tomorrow?" I asked, "Where to?" I didn't even know what the show was. He said, "Las Vegas. You are now in the famous Follies Bergere from Paris. Actually, we auditioned this show in Europe, but one of the Italian girls we hired couldn't make it. We stopped in New York just long enough to pick one girl. Rehearsals start in two days in Las Vegas. It's a 3-month contract with options for a year. If you decide not to sign the year's option, or if we fire you, we pay your airfare back to New York."

I didn't really want to do another nightclub show, nor did I want to leave New York, as my main ambition was to do musical comedy on Broadway. But I realized that if I said no, it would anger Lou Walters, who might blackball me from working in the industry. He was a big and influential producer, and was obviously in a hurry. If I said no, he'd have to wait a week for the trade papers to come out again, hire another audition hall, hang up the choreographer, and time seemed to be of the essence here. I don't think he would feel kindly toward me for that. So I said, "Give me two days to pack and clean up my affairs." I hoped I had made the right decision, because I didn't really have time to think. When I signed the contract the next day and found I'd be making twice the money I was making at the Latin Quarter, I felt better about my decision. I figured I'd just work the three months in Las Vegas, save some money and come back to New York with a little cash stash.

Actually, I didn't have to worry about Lou Walters *ever* doing anything to hurt my career. He always tried to help me, and anytime I wanted to work, he would find a place for me. He turned out to be a good friend, and I was proud that a great producer such as Lou would choose me for his shows. Actually, Lou Walters may have saved my life. I had developed a pain in my left ankle after rehearsals, which kept getting more & more painful. After several months of dancing with the pain, Lou approached me and said, "Sandi, you are such a beautiful dancer. I would hate for you to ruin yourself with this pain. Ask your doctor how long it will take for you to heal and I will give you a "leave of absence" for as long as you

need.” If he hadn’t done that, I might have died of cancer. He was a very caring boss.

As the taxi had carried me from McCarran Airport down the famous Las Vegas Strip I looked in wonder at the beautiful, bright neon lights of the famous hotels lighting up the night skies. We passed the Tropicana Hotel, into which I would go the next day for one month of rehearsal. There was a brightly lit-up fountain spewing water high into the desert air in front of the hotel, with a big neon sign above it saying, “Home of the Follies Bergere!” It was very impressive. Never had I seen so many lights glittering. But somewhere inside myself I felt uneasy, like something wasn’t quite right about this town. I put it down to nerves. What could be bad? There was beauty, good money, and famous entertainers everywhere? I could stand it for three months.

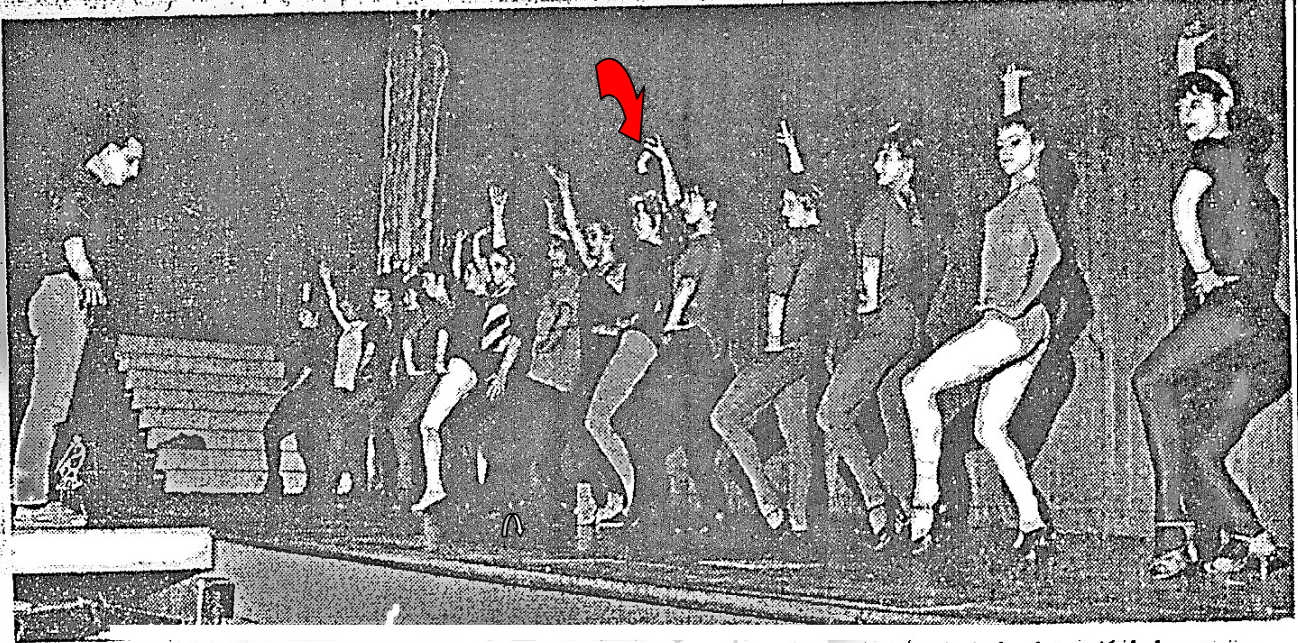
I certainly wasn’t unhappy about accepting this job. The Follies Bergere is famous for the Can Can, which is very strenuous, but it’s also fun and exciting. The costumes were Parisian creations that would make any woman drool. It was also interesting to learn French, to work with dancers and showgirls from all over the world. I met and partied with famous entertainers like Sammy Davis, Jr., Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, and Frank Sinatra. I even dated Elvis Presley for a brief time.

I was surprised to find that Elvis (the King) was really a very shy person. He often gave big parties in his suite in his Las Vegas hotel, and never showed up. He and I would just talk or play the dollar slot machines. I asked him why he paid his friends to stay around him all the time, as I heard gossip about this from several people. He explained to me, “Sandi, I travel all the time. You know how lonely it can get on the road all the time. I am not the kind of person that can just walk into a neighborhood bar and talk to the local people, sit down and have a beer, make a friend. Honestly, people see me and start screaming and tear my clothes off! So I pay my friends from the Army and my buddies from Tennessee to keep me company. They help me with my business, and I feel comfortable with them.” He invited me to join him at his home in California when I had a few days off. I promised him, but I knew I never would. I liked Elvis, but I didn’t like his friends, and they influenced his lifestyle. They were shallow men, were heavy into drugs, sex and partying all the time. It wasn’t my scene, so why bother with the relationship?

Las Vegas was a town like no other in the world. It reminded me of “Bad Boy’s Land” in Pinocchio. It was a game town to excite and encourage all your

vices. It was unreal. Curtains were pulled over the windows always, so that you didn't know whether it was night or day. It was just time for gambling and entertainment all the time, night or day, or night and day! When you were gambling, drinks were "on the house" to help deaden your senses as to when it would be advisable to quit losing your money and go to sleep. I saw people putting as much as \$60,000 on one roll of the dice and lose, shrug, and bet some more. People are broke one day and rich the next. As I said, it's unreal!

But one of the nice things about Vegas is that the best entertainers in the world perform there. World famous bands would play in the lounge, where you only needed the price of a drink to sit down and enjoy. The comics were terrific! Shecky Green, Joey Bishop, Jack Benny, Don Rickles, Jerry Lewis—I knew them all, and they were really funny. Shecky played a lot at the Tropicana Lounge, so we got to be friends. There was much laughter, the singers, dancers, and all the acts displayed the finest, most lavish sets and costumes, and all were top-notch artists. The food was gourmet cuisine. The shows were always packed, and the audiences were generous in their applause. Why not? Las Vegas supplied a dream, the very best of everything. Life was like an extravaganza.



POINT THAT TOE! — Billy Petch, Canadian-born choreographer who has designed the beautiful dance routines for both the 1961-62 Folies Bergere at Tropicana Hotel, puts his dancers through some last minute rehearsal prior to the Saturday opening of the extravaganza.

FINAL REHEARSALS HELD

New Folies Prepared for Debut

By JOY HAMANN
R-J Staff Writer

Final rehearsals for the 1962 Folies Bergere — slated to debut Saturday night at Hotel Tropicana — give all indications that this year's version will be an even bigger hit than the two previous spectaculars.

Producer Lou Walters, the man directly responsible for the magnificent productions that have graced the stage of the Tropicana theater - restaurant for the past 24 months, has assembled a cast of outstanding European and American performers.

The sets are impressive and the wardrobe can only be described

as dazzling — \$250,000 worth of dazzle, at that.

SITTING IN on a Folies rehearsal is somewhat like attempting to listen to a debate at the United Nations without benefit of an interpreter — or two — for at least a dozen nations with nearly as many different languages are represented.

"We don't have a bit of trouble though," Walters said. "Many of our European dancers and show girls, for example, speak two or more languages, and they help out with the cast members who speak only their native tongue."

Walters spent a total of three months in Europe scouting acts

and interviewing the international beauties who will have the local stage-door Johnnys — and I am assured the breed is not extinct — lined up six deep.

TO THE UNINITIATED the last two or three rehearsals of a production of the magnitude of the Folies appears to be absolute bedlam.

Carpenters are loudly engaged in last-minute alterations to sets. Electricians seem to have a penchant for shouting at each other from across the room. Wardrobe women with frantic expressions are constantly in search of some missing line girl who is late for a fitting, and the dance director

has by this point seriously considered entering the nearest monastery.

Yet despite this traditional confusion — or perhaps because of it — opening night does come, the curtain that the stage hands said would never work does go up, and the trumpet player who has developed a fever blister ignores it and hits every note smack on the button.

WALTERS, never one to dish out pre-opening predictions, did venture the opinion that this version of the Folies was "so far, in real fine shape," which amounts to an out-and-out admission that he has another hit on his hands.

**Lawmen Torpedo
Casino Dealer
For 'Submarine'**

**Three Performances
Will Open Folies Here**

Final Services For Moss Hart

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. (UPI) — Celebrities from all phases of the entertainment industry, including the two men who joined him to create "My Fair Lady"



How To Bring Heaven To Earth; From Las Vegas To Jerusalem



Comedy Feature "Pas de deux" Folies Bergere 1961



lft.-rt., Sandi, Lydia & Monique
Folies Bergere dressing room

Tropicana Post Card
Can-Can - Folies Bergere Tropicana Hotel 1960-61



Sara, front left, Folies Bergere finale 1961

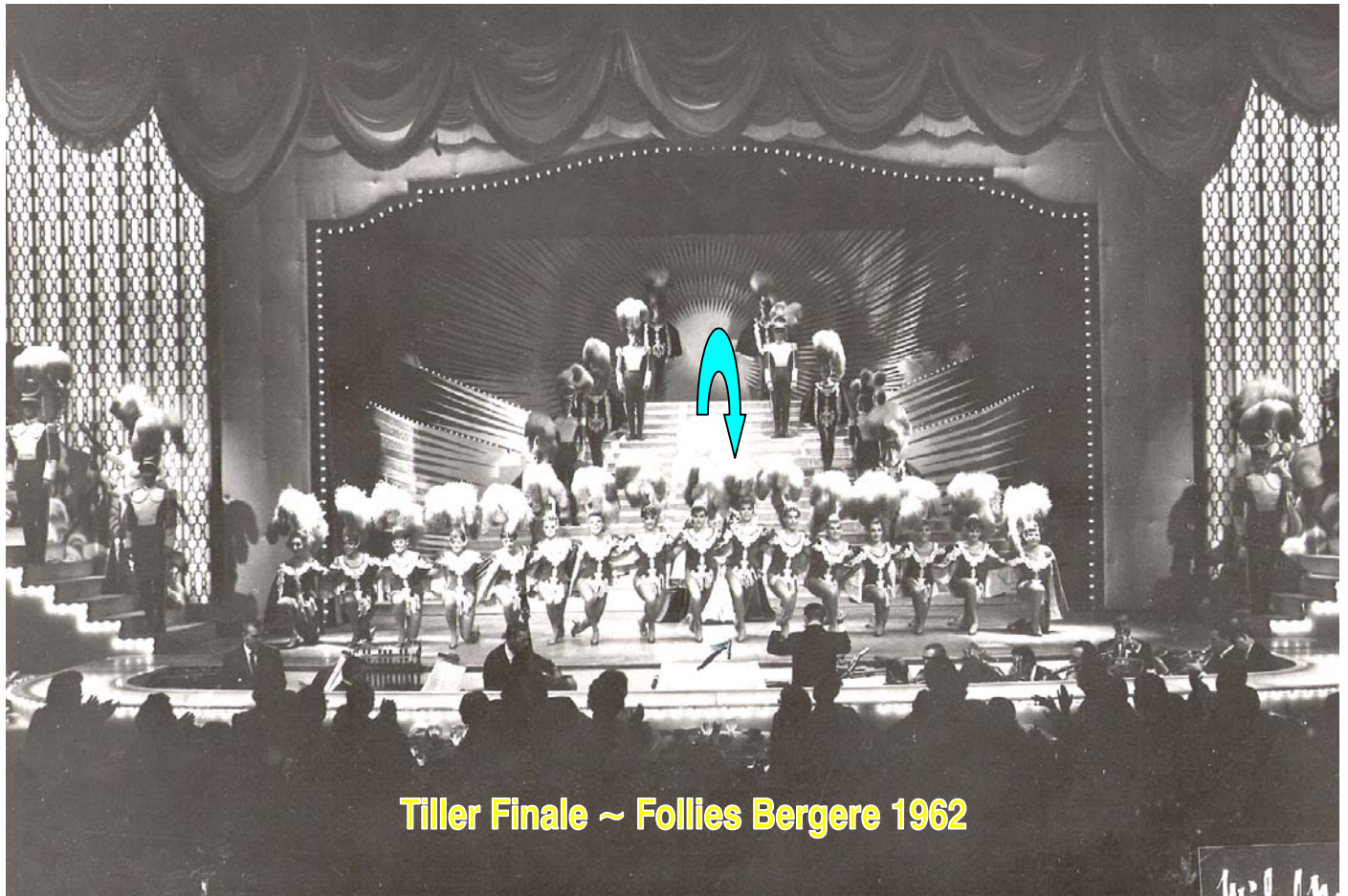


One day a showgirl asked me if I would like to join her and another girl on a date with three men who had flown in from Chicago. I agreed, and joined them after the show in the Tropicana Lounge. My date was a tall, squarely built man in his thirties. He was neither plain nor handsome, sort of average, but well groomed in expensive looking clothes. I tried to make light and witty conversation. He never even asked me my name; I was just an ornament at his table. After fifteen minutes he handed me \$200 and the key to his room and said, "I'll meet you in my room in ten minutes." By now I had gotten the drift of the way the hotel owners liked to treat their customers. I knew if I slapped his face, I'd probably be thrown out of the hotel. So I threw the money and the key in his face and stomped away angrily. I hadn't studied ballet for ten years to become a call girl! I would have hurt him more if I had smiled at him, taken the \$200 and left the hotel with his money and his key, but I was still naive and totally honest. I didn't even think that there was a Mafia influence in the town. I thought Elliot Ness had taken care of that in the Twenties. And I was working for the Mafia. But almost all the bosses that I met were kind and likable gentlemen.

I really shouldn't have blamed my date, though, for thinking that way about me. How was he to know what my morals were? There were many beautiful girls in Vegas who worked as showgirls so they wouldn't be picked up for vagrancy (another word for "call girl"). Their real interest was to mix in the lounge or casino and lure men to the tables to gamble. The bosses loved it. Men would pay pretty girls hundreds of dollars just to stand beside them and bring them luck! They also gave the girls money to play the tables, so many nights these girls made a bundle. They stashed chips in their bras, boots and purses when the men weren't looking. Many had even sewn concealed pockets in their fur stoles for stashing chips. The bosses encouraged us all to mix and supplement our incomes. If the guy was a good "John" some girls would even "oblige" them for \$200.

Our Union had gone through a long and costly "strike" two years before, because the bosses in Las Vegas forced the dancers and show girls to "mix" with men in the Casino between and after shows and encourage them to gamble. The Union won, and now the girls thought the problem was over. However, one evening between shows Lou Walters called us all down to the stage for a "lecture" on the good points of "mixing." He looked uncomfortable, and I intuited that he had been given this unpleasant "job" because nobody else would do it. Lou told us that it gave us opportunities to meet famous people, producers, rich prospective husbands, etc., plus and opportunity to made extra money gambling. He then closed the meeting by saying that whomever did not "mix" would be replaced!

Most of the girls were shocked! Some of them were just resigned to it. Our Union was not that strong, nor did it fight for our rights in those days. Many of the Showgirls wanted to mix. I called the dancers to a meeting back in our dressing room. I told them, "If you will be unified on this matter, there is no way they can make us do it! First of all, our contracts read that if they fire us they have to fly us back to our point of destination. You are all from Europe; I am from New York. It would cost them a fortune to fly us all back home. Then it would cost them millions to put together a new show, which would take them two months to put together. Meanwhile, the casino would lose millions because there would be no show to draw people to the Tropicana. If we stick together, they can't do anything to us." Fortunately the dancers listened to me, and we didn't have to mix. But the showgirls didn't stick together, so they got stuck with it.



Tiller Finale ~ Follies Bergere 1962

As for me, I was neither willing to buy my way to the top sleeping with stars or rich men, nor was I interested in drugs. My body, my health and strength were necessary for my career. Drugs were synonymous with poison to me. Oh, I enjoyed sharing a good joint once in a while with friends, but these drugs were “serious” drugs, like heroin, pills, cocaine, opium, and speed. I didn’t want to space out or use any crutches to get me where I wanted to go. I wanted to explore all of my potential using a clear mind. I wasn’t even sure where I wanted to go with my career. I had no overriding compulsion to become a STAR, although I could see that it might be a possibility. Milton Berle had told me I had the qualities, and in the Follies Bergere I had been recognized as a top performer, given the lead dances and my own little comedy “pas de dues” in the show. I had also been chosen to co-host the late-night movie on a local Vegas TV Channel doing the commercials and making witty conversation with the host during movie intermissions. I was known by everyone in Vegas from the TV Show and offered a

show of my own. But it interfered with any social life I might have, as I had to go directly to the TV studio after doing two shows every night and didn't finish until 5:00 A.M. So after a few months I resigned from the TV show, which everyone told me was a big mistake. They said that I was becoming famous, that everyone thought I was funny and interesting and could have a big career in Television. I just knew I was having fun dancing and performing, and it was enough for me for now. I was only twenty-one years old and just beginning to discover who I was. At that point in my life I really didn't know what I wanted to be. Oh, someday, when Mr. Right came along, I wanted to get married and have a little girl who looked like Shirley Temple, with her curly locks of hair (which G-d gave me!). But between now and then there was a lot for me to learn.

When one leaves the home to go out into the world, one is confronted with so many different philosophies than the one taught in the home. It's sometimes very confusing to a young person who is groping for wisdom, discovering what life is all about. Who is right? Everyone pitches their beliefs like a religion. Which philosophy should one choose? Las Vegas was a mind-blower for me in many ways. It was a town where everyone let it "all hang out," as they say. I suppose what was being done in public in Las Vegas was also going on all over the world, only behind closed doors. But it was all rather new to me.

I watched my colleagues in theater, many of them pretty, young girls from Europe who had never seen so much money! Most of them fell prey to the lure of the tables, the money, the men who could give them money, etc. It seemed to me like there had to be something of a natural conscience in the girls, because even though they smiled plenty out in the casinos and lounges, they seemed to get more and more unhappy with their lives as they sacrificed more and more of their souls for money. I met prostitutes, BEAUTIFUL GIRLS! I had never met a prostitute before I went to Vegas, and at first it was hard for me to relate to them—their way of life was unthinkable for my mind. But as I got to know them as just people, and learn of their personal thoughts and lives, I saw a pattern that 97% of them follow. They all had boyfriends, pimps or husbands (whichever) who played out a totally sadistic role in their relationship. It seemed to me that the girls needed and wanted to be punished. That would clear the guilt of their profession, getting beat up; and their men got all of their money. Then they could reason that they had to do what they were doing to bring their "old man" the money; in this way

their guilt could be expunged. "I have to do it or he'll beat me," would be their own excuse—an excuse that they always set themselves up with by the way they chose their men. They lived in posh houses and cried miserably and got beat up and broken hearted all the time. Many of those I knew got thrown out of their posh houses by their men and ended up with nothing! What a life....Only about 3% of these kinds of women ran their own lives the way they wanted it. But they were tough and very cunning women with a special style.

Being unsure of the whole truth of my own religion and discouraged by my Jewish friends from learning the Jewish religion, I began to search for a religion or philosophy I could agree with in my heart. I wanted to find some philosophy that was in harmony with my own reason that I had gained through my own experience and logic. Over several years I studied Bahai, Zen Buddhism, Yoga. I read Philip Wylie, Kant, Camus, Ayan Rand and, of course, Sigmund Freud. I listened to the hedonistic philosophy of many of my friends. Everyone lived life according to some BELIEF, whether false or true. Since it is their belief, and they believe they are right, they support their beliefs like they were a RELIGION. Even ATHEISM is a religion, because it is a belief. I got to the point where I wasn't even sure if G-d was there or if He listened to private prayers. I read in Sigmund Freud's works that religion was a "national obsessive neurosis." Freud contended that G-d was an invention of our fears. When we see the mortality and fallibility of our earthly fathers, we invent a "Super Father" who never dies and is perfect in every way, in order to cope with our fears.

When the craziness of life in Las Vegas confused me, with its many tugs and pulls in directions that might lead me to fame and riches or disaster and degradation, I would head out to a peaceful place I had discovered with some of my friends. This enchanted desert wilderness was called the Valley of Fire. It was about 35 miles outside of Vegas on the road to Utah. One had to drive about five miles through the desert on a dirt road, sometimes spotting wild Mustangs on the way. Suddenly, as we rounded a corner on a high, narrow mountain road, there was before us an incredible sight. It was like coming onto a different planet, or some hidden Shangri-La. The rocks and the dirt were all red, and the sagebrush was turquoise instead of green. Some of the rocks had been blasted by time and winds into huge, beehive shaped sculptures. There were ancient petroglyphs carved there on stone walls by a race of Indians extinct for a thousand years. On

top of one mountain there was a rock shaped just like an Indian head. We never knew if the Indians had carved it there, or if it was an accident of nature. But the thing that drew me again and again to the desert paradise was the SILENCE. It was so quiet and peaceful there that you felt you should whisper so as not to disturb the sanctity of the silence. It gave me a feeling of awe unlike any church that I had ever been to in my search for answers to G-d's nature or my purpose as a human being.

I would separate from my friends and climb to the top of the high rocks, perching on a summit quietly, trying to commune with Nature or G-d or whatever Higher Power had formed all life. Surely, I thought, there must be a path and a purpose for human beings just as every form of life, including these rocks I sat on, had a set law and a purpose. What was mine? Should I play the game of life like some girls I worked with and exploit my good looks and talent for money, fame and position? Men didn't seem to care about anything in me besides my looks. No one seemed interested in my brain or my personality or my soul (if I had one). Did I set my moral standards unrealistically high? I was definitely a minority. Maybe such moral people don't exist. Was I asking for too much perfection in my species? What was love, I asked my Maker? Would there be such a thing as "Mr. Right," or Prince Charming for me, or would my marriage end in divorce like so many in my career of vanity and travel and dedication to the arts? Would it end like my mother and father's marriage and cause my children to suffer the pain I had suffered, never again to belong to a home and family? I vowed I would never marry until I knew the answer to this question. I never wanted my own children to have to struggle with such a life!



Sandi by Millard Thomas - Harry Belafonte's Composer

I had so many questions to ask. Who was I asking? Was G-d really there? Could he hear me? How would I hear His answers? How could He hear my prayer at the same time as millions of others' praying to Him? Some said there was no G-d. Some said that there had to have been an "Uncaused Cause" in order to start the old Earth ball rolling, but He didn't intervene in our personal lives anymore. Some said, "Thou art G-d." If I was, then why didn't I know the answers to my questions? So many people believed so many different things, and some people scorned belief at all. So I would sit for hours on my quiet mountaintop in the silence of that desert of red and try to communicate with my Creator, listening, listening to hear some answers to my many questions. Nothing dramatic ever happened, except I seemed to hear a still, small voice within me saying, "Stick to the moral code you have been taught in the Bible. Don't let the temptations of Las Vegas change you. Only look and learn....."

FRONT PAGE LAS VEGAS SUN - MISS ST. PATRICK'S DAY

EXT

Tuesday Las Vegas

SOUTHERN NEVADA'S ONLY HOME OWNED DAILY NEWSPAPER

VOL. 77, NO. 249

EV 5-3111

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 1961

WHERE I STAND

By HANK GREENE

The lineup

I never knew a doll yet who wasn't anxious to get her picture in the paper. Women somehow seek the questionable fame of getting in the newspapers more than men. Perhaps it is the latent hope that Hollywood would discover hidden talents or that it is a measure of social success—but the stockpile of women's pictures fills every wastebasket in the newsroom, for far more are rejected than find space within our editions.

The boys in the newsroom are always seeking good art to liven up front pages. And nothing is more eye-catching than a lineup of dolls, especially in scanty costumes.

Being a family newspaper, it is a continual quarrel between the front office and the back room to drop the slides or cover vital spots which the photographer overlooked in his rush to shoot the picture.

I happened to spot a picture the other day showing 14 women in assorted shapes and sizes posing in a lineup at sheriff's headquarters. These were the so-called ladies of the evening who were picked up in various raids around the Strip by the sheriff's department in a clean-up measure.

They weren't the most glamorous looking dolls, and I for one couldn't imagine anyone in his right mind paying the going prices for what the gals had to offer. But sex price is an indication that the poor chap buying the services left all there in the bed.

It was my judgement that

Legislative Warning To Nevada Vets

SUN LEGISLATIVE BUREAU, CARSON CITY—Leaders of the American Legion in Nevada and members of the Assembly Taxation Committee yesterday expressed concern that lobbyists for veterans organizations "will do more harm than good" in efforts to influence legislation concerning the floor property tax exemption to the state.

Last week, the committee introduced AD 315, which would limit the exemption to veterans who entered the service in Nevada. However, the committee members are almost unanimously agreed that this person will be amended.

L. E. Tyson, Las Vegas Democrat, told the SUN that he had been contacted by individuals and organizations interested in the measure. And "I have advised them not to attempt to pressure tactics on this bill, as it will harm their cause more than help it."

(Continued on Page 1)

SULLIVAN, PAAR CALL OFF DEBATE

NEW YORK (UPI)—Jack Paar and Ed Sullivan angrily called off their "great television debate" scheduled for last night because they were unable to agree on the ground rules for their argument.

Paar accused the other of backing out, and moderator Benihl Oef ended his participation in the matter by declaring "Oh, my God," and returned to his book publishing business.

The start of the quagmire CBS' Ed Sullivan



THE JIG IS UP—Follies Bergere Dancer Sandi Vincent marks St. Patrick's Day with an Irish jig atop Hotel Tropicana, where she puts Erin-born celebration on a high plane.

WHITE HOUSE SAYS

Senator Says Making Drunks

WASHINGTON (UPI)—S.C. said yesterday the Washington's cocktail circuit the and representative isn't in holism.

Johnston, a clear-eyed people have "a merciless cocktail hours before every in the nation's capital.

As a result, he said "in a roaring din of convy fuzzy-minded over cocktail Johnston's disorientation habits was included in a Chairman of the Appropri considering a supplement

Arrest In Con With L

Las Vegas police last 1 year-old Parolan in connec of a visiting Beaverion, O

BURGLARS ACTIVE IN VEGAS

Residents and tourists al lost out to burglars and clemers during the week. A Meadows, Ida, man pugled the largest single yesterday, police said, w he told them jewelry, a tol, and other items worth total of \$194 were stolen fr his car. The report came fr L. W. Whitney.

Frank H. Rogers, 2881 P. Est., said he lost \$75 in c two bottles of liquor an pair of alligator shoes du the weekend when a bur entered his home while he was out of town.



Bob & his horse Feau Pas

CHAPTER TWO **MY PRINCE CHARMING**

I was twenty-one years old when I met my husband, Robert (Bob) Mandell, a 31-year-old assimilated, Hellenized, American Jew from the Bronx. We met in Las Vegas where I was dancing in the Follies Bergere. My show was in the Tropicana Hotel, and his offices were also in the Tropicana. He was the Manager of KRAM Rock Radio, who had just divorced his Jewish wife of ten years. His ex-wife took his 2 daughters to Las Vegas to get her boyfriend's divorce, leaving him alone in their home in New Jersey. Bob's daughters were so depressed that the older one (they were 5 and 8 years old) threatened to walk off into the desert and die. So Bob moved there to be with his little girls. That's how fate brought us together in Las Vegas.

He hadn't eaten kosher since he had left his mother's kitchen. His mother was an incredibly wise and kind orthodox woman, who kept kosher and lit Sabbath candles. His father was a war hero who taught his two sons to survive in the streets of the Bronx in Depression times. The streets of the Bronx in those days were pretty rough. Bob fought his first knife fight in the street when he was only four years old. It was a good thing his father was a trained killer, as he taught his sons all he knew. Without that training, Bob probably wouldn't have made it to adulthood. His nickname in his High School Book was "K.O." Bob had a left shot that I have seen. One shot, and his opponent would fly through the air and land semi-conscious on the floor. But he also had a knack for bringing peace to violent situations. I have seen him stop a Gang Fight just by raising his hand and smiling. Bob's father stressed American patriotism, having been a military man all his life. He had fought in several wars, with many Medals for heroism in battle. He believed in God; he knew the G-d who accompanies men in battle. He taught his sons to keep G-d close to themselves in all situations, especially if he was not where he ought to be. "That's where you need G-d the most," he said, "to bail you out of trouble." This concept was just the opposite of my own "mind set." If I was in a situation I knew I shouldn't be in, I didn't feel G-d would rescue me, nor did I have the right to pray that He would rescue me, so I mentally put Him out (as if I could hide from G-d!). Unfortunately, Bob's father died of a heart attack when Bob was only 15. His father was a 56-year-old taxicab driver who suffered his heart attack while driving alone in the cab, only 2 blocks from a hospital. Nobody came to help him. He might have been saved if they had; but no one came to help. Someone did come and rob him of his day's pay. The police came in the middle of the night to invite Bob down to the morgue to identify his father's body—very cold, very matter of fact. Bob was angry for years over this event. His anger took one good outlet. He began to bang out his anger on the swing drums and became an excellent drummer, exceedingly talented. Our second date, as a matter of fact, was my first lesson on the bongo drums.

Our first date was rather informal. I had met him through an acquaintance who sold me a car which blew up three weeks after I bought it. Since I was quite angry over that, I sat through the date totally bored. I found out later that Bob thought my roommate was supposed to be his date, so he was just polite to me, as a gentleman should be to his friend's date. I saw him around the nightclubs for a couple of months after that, always surrounded by beautiful girls. One night I

happened to see Bob sitting at a nearby Black Jack table in the Tropicana, as I came out of the dressing room after the show, and a bunch of us were going to a special showing of the “Holiday in Rio” show that was being performed just for performers. Since we all worked during “show time,” once in a while a hotel would do a show for the benefit of all the artists, which would really be special. When artists perform for other artists, they really give it their ALL! So, when I saw Bob sitting there, I casually invited him to come along with us. Some of our group of Follies Bergere performers sat together at one big table, and Bob sat next to me. Jerry Lewis and his companions sat behind us. Jerry insisted on autographing my plaster cast which had been put on the day before for what they thought was a sprained ankle. It was a great show, as these kinds of shows usually were. [Once Jack Benny did a special performance just for performers, and it was the BEST show I have ever seen! It remains the “big winner” in my memory to this day.]

Anyway, it was just a casual date. But when Bob drove me home at the end of the evening (or should I say, morning), he was the first man who didn’t try to kiss me or get himself invited in for a “cup of coffee.” That impressed me. Maybe I had found a real gentleman who was not just interested in my looks, but treated me like a lady. So I invited him to come back the next afternoon for some homemade brownies, and he said he would bring his bongos and teach me to play them.

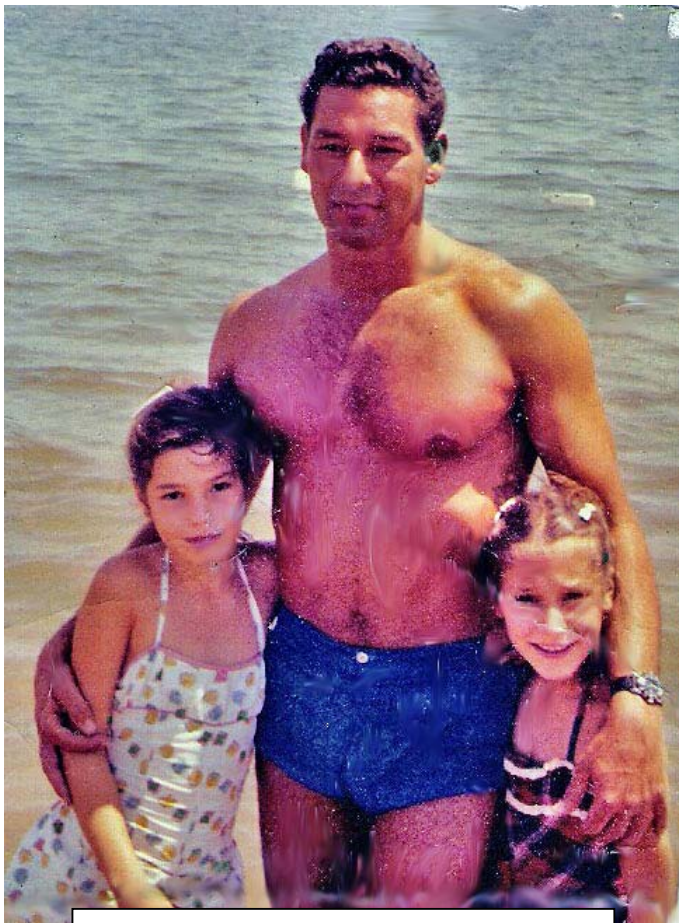
Bob and I dated for a year before we decided to get married. He was so different from anyone else I had dated. He had it ALL! He was tall and handsome, with dark, curly hair. He was a body builder with the physique of an Adonis. He was strong and he was tender. He was sophisticated when he needed to be, and street smart when the occasion called for it. He was wise, though he didn’t read all the philosophy books the way I did. Everyone came to him for advice, which he gave with compassion and understanding. All the girls ogled at his picture stuck on my dressing-room mirror—a picture of him standing in his scuba gear on the Ramapo River in New Jersey where he was a rescue diver for the Special Police Force. That was just like him—a rescue diver, a volunteer fireman, a Little League Sponsor—always helping someone, rescuing someone, a kindhearted man.

Bob was a man of many talents and experiences. He was so absolutely “boss” on bongos and swing drums, that all my musician friends thought he was a

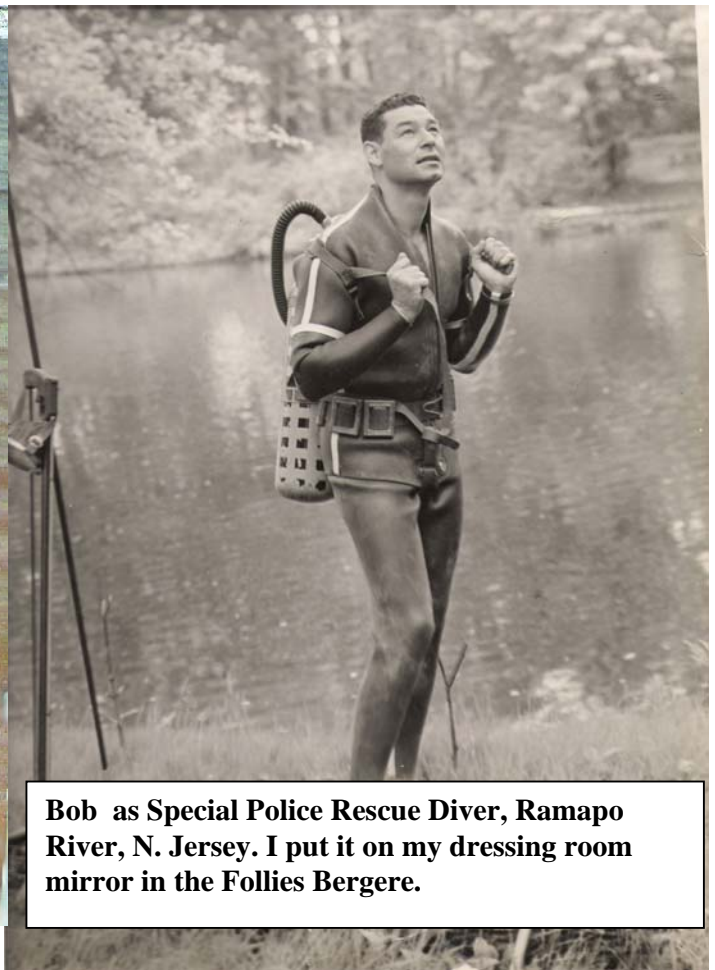
How To Bring Heaven To Earth; From Las Vegas To Jerusalem

professional musician. He was often invited to play bongos with the different famous Spanish bands that played in Las Vegas, such as Perez Prado and Tito Puente and with the Black Jazz Bands in the West Side clubs. He once did a Twist act for two months at the Nevada Club, so that many of my dancer friends thought he was a dancer. He was actually the best Sales Manager that KRAM Radio ever had. His personality was so interesting that people liked to do business with him. And he had an imagination that was without bounds; he was so creative. His imagination was sometimes zany and outrageous, causing people to fall down laughing. Bob could always sum up a situation with a keen one-liner that was humorous.

How did an advertising man become a nightclub Twister in the first days after the Peppermint Lounge made the Twist the most popular dance of the early 60's? Well, one night as I was warming up behind the curtain while the orchestra



Bob & his 2 daughters, Jewel & Eve



Bob as Special Police Rescue Diver, Ramapo River, N. Jersey. I put it on my dressing room mirror in the Follies Bergere.

was playing the overture of the opening of the Follies Bergere, I saw Sandro, one of the Italian male dancers, doing a new and interesting dance. I quickly asked him what he was doing and he showed me the **Twist**. That night I showed Bob, who picked it up quickly. By chance, that day he was selling radio time to the owner of the Nevada Club, who told him that they were going to do a new show featuring the Twist. The audition was the next day. Bob asked if he could try out, and the owner said, "Why not? It's so new that I don't think many people even know how to do it yet." When Bob told me that day about the audition I playfully challenged him to go. Bob was not for it. He said, "I am not a dancer or a performer, and I am too shy." That night between shows we were having dinner with some of my fellow dancers, and I asked them to encourage Bob to audition. They all did encourage him with great enthusiasm. So he did a very brave thing. The next day he went, and, of all the dancers at the audition they chose 2 men and 2 women. One of the men was Bob! Of course everyone in the Follies wanted to see him perform. It was also tempting to hungry dancers to come and eat the free, delicious Chinese food that the Nevada Club provided. When Bob started dancing, Sandro began a frustrated diatribe against the attitude of Americans towards male dancers all being gay. In his dramatic Italian way, he fumed, "It's a terrible shame on the Americans, *this man should have been a dancer! His talent is remarkable*. How many American men with talent will not dance because of this stupid and untrue idea?!"

For the next 2 months Bob performed 4 shows a night, finishing about 5:00 A.M. Then he went to KRAM to work a full day. He slept only 2 hours a day, wore out 2 pairs of shoes and lost 14 pounds. Although I had started the whole thing with my encouragement, now I begged him to leave the show. He had proved he could do it, which was enough for me. It certainly made me proud of him, and now he was really a part of the "privileged club" of working dancers, having never taken a lesson in his life. I thought it was a really brave thing to do. All my dancer friends had a different respect for Bob. Very few of **us** got a job on our first audition, and we had all studied dancing **for years!**

Many girls tried to lure him away from me. Our romance was the talk of the town. Bob watched the show every evening from the sound engineer's booth, always leading the applause, affecting the audience with his enthusiasm so that they clapped harder. Many of the girls told me that when he wasn't there, they just

didn't care to do the show. He was Las Vegas's Most Eligible Bachelor. And he was my best friend.



Bob Twisting at the Nevada Club with
cast of Follies Bergere at his Opening Night

Bob, me & friends from Follies Bergere at Nevada Club
Where Bob is dancing in the Twist Show

There was only one problem. According to his doctors he had only three years to live at most. He had been diagnosed with acute cirrhosis of the liver. I knew it at the beginning of our friendship. I had told myself I wouldn't fall in love with him. I certainly would never marry him. After all, becoming a young widow wasn't what I wanted any more than becoming a young divorcee. But after being with him for several months, I realized that a love like this was something I'd never had, nor would have again. My mother had told me that she loved me, but she was hardly ever around and I did not experience that feeling of being loved, of knowing that someone would BE THERE for me when I needed a comforter, a friend, a helper. Other men I had dated were nothing like Bob. I decided that most people never have the opportunity to experience a love like this, and no matter how short of a time we would have together, I'd be a fool not to seize this opportunity. So we set a date to be married on March 24, 1962. My acceptance of his proposal was conditioned upon us moving back to New York after the wedding. I wanted to do musical comedy on Broadway, and all of the best dance and drama masters taught in New York. In those days all Television resided in

New York. Besides, Bob's mother was dying of cancer. He and I both wanted to spend as much time with her as she had left.

It was a difficult decision for Bob, as he had been offered a partnership in KRAM Radio Station when Ted Oberfelder, the sole owner, heard that Bob was thinking of returning to New York. That meant a lot of money and security for us, and Bob wanted to be with his daughters. That's why he came to Vegas in the first place, to be with his little girls. We were a very popular couple, and people treated us with great respect everywhere we went. He loved working for KRAM Radio and Ted Oberfelder was a Master Mentor. But Bob was very gallant, in that he gave up his career for mine. I must admit that I didn't realize what a sacrifice it was for him and his daughters. I had a fear of staying in Las Vegas, because it is a most tempting place to give in to unwise behavior of all sorts. I don't believe that we could have reached the spiritual level that we ultimately did, if we had remained there.

There was another point that we had not known about when I put my foot down about moving to New York. That point was that I hadn't known that I might not have two feet to point with. I only found out one month before the wedding that cancer was trying to work its nasty way up my left leg. I wouldn't have advised Bob to turn down the KRAM Radio partnership if I had known that in a couple of months I was going under the scalpel and wouldn't even be able to walk for 6 months.

Chapter Three

IN SICKNESS & IN HEALTH

In February 1962 I stopped dancing in the Follies Berger because of a lingering pain in my left ankle that had been plaguing me since I had begun rehearsal for this show a year and a half before. The Producer, Lou Walters, had given me a leave of absence for 3 months several months before, since doctor's treatment for what they thought was a bad sprain had been ineffective. I was the lead dancer and assistant choreographer of the show, and a favorite of Mr. Walters. He had advised me to take whatever time the doctor felt necessary, because he admired my talent and didn't want me to ruin my career. Actually, it could be that Lou Walters saved my life by giving me that 4 months off. Although I had put my leg in a cast twice, undergone physical therapy, and re-entered the show, the pain kept getting worse. When the 1961 show finished, I was one of only 4 dancers re-hired from a cast of 80 women for the '62 Follies Bergere. The rest of the cast was all from Europe. It was tough doing two shows a night, plus rehearsing the new show 10 hours a day for a month. Two months into the new show, I was in so much pain that even the *weight of the bed sheet* on my ankle was unbearable. I had already been to 4 doctors, and **nothing** helped, so I gave up trying and quit the show.

Bob insisted that I change doctors again. The last doctor had told me it was psychosomatic. I had lost confidence in doctors by his time and despaired of going to yet another doctor, but I finally gave in and saw a new orthopedic doctor. He was a kindly, elderly gentleman who told me quite frankly that he didn't know what was wrong, but felt sure that I should go to a hospital in Santa Barbara where there was a specialist who would know. Needless to say, with my wedding only a month away, and feeling quite distrustful of doctors by this time, I wasn't willing to make the trip to California! Despite my protests, Bob insisted, and it just "so-happened" that Ronnie, a friend of mine who was a Jewish male dancer in the Follies was driving to Los Angeles for a three-day holiday. They argued that it would be worthwhile for me to go with Ronnie, see the doctor in Santa Barbara, and continue on to Los Angeles to shop for my **wedding gown**. I had to agree that it was a sensible plan, so I went with Ronnie to Santa Barbara.

It was a hot and dusty ride across the desert in Ronnie's little Triumph sports car. We got lost, were late, and arrived tired and feeling wilted. I told the surgeon my symptoms; he felt my ankle and said he felt a "spur." He assured me that a very simple surgery was required, and sent me for X-rays. As I waited for the results, I joked around with the technicians, when the doctor stormed into the room waving the X-rays and said, "Why didn't you do X-rays before?" I assured him that I had had them done by five different doctors already! He roared, "So why didn't they see **THIS?**" as he slapped the X-rays with his hand. "See what?" I asked. "These tumors!" he replied as he stormed back out of the lab. I sat stunned; then asked the nurses what it meant. They replied ominously, "Only the doctor can tell you. You must wait for him to return."

As I waited for what seemed an eternity, but was probably two hours, I tried hard not to panic. I told myself that I had absolutely no knowledge and should not assume the worst. I went through several other tests, and finally the doctor returned and invited me back into his office. His face was very grim. He was very matter-of-fact. "Miss Vincent, you have a few tumors growing in your left tibia, the bone that goes from your ankle to your knee. The tumors are of the type that can be malignant. You must have immediate surgery. I am arranging for your admission to the hospital in the morning, and surgery will be at 4:00 tomorrow afternoon.

All I could think of was that this couldn't really be happening. I said, "Doctor, I am getting married in four weeks. I am driving to Hollywood tonight to shop for a wedding gown early tomorrow. I have to go back to Las Vegas in two days and take care of wedding plans. Couldn't it wait until after my honeymoon?"

He answered, "Miss Vincent, if these tumors are not already malignant, they could turn malignant overnight. I have here a consent form for you to sign that will give us permission to amputate your left leg below the knee, if we find that these tumors are malignant."

All the tension that had been building over the hours exploded. The tears flowed uncontrollably. "Doctor, I am a professional dancer on my way up. I am only 22 years old! What about my career? What happens if the tumors are not malignant? Will I be able to dance again?"

Stony cold, his voice raised, he said, "Miss Vincent, there is no practical sense in crying. It won't do you any good. You must face the fact right now that

you may lose half your left leg tomorrow before you sign this consent slip. On the other hand, if it's not malignant, you will only have a small scar on your ankle, no more than 3 inches. As for your career, I can say nothing until I see what's happening in there. Here are the papers that you must sign before you leave tonight. I strongly advise you to act immediately or you may even have a life-threatening situation."

I asked him, "What is the latest time I can check in tomorrow? I need to call my fiancé, and I would like to drive into L. A. tonight, shop for my wedding gown in the morning and take a bus back to Santa Barbara in the early afternoon."

He smiled the barest grin and said; "I think we could accommodate this plan for you. We've already done all the tests." I signed the papers and tried to pull myself together, because from the way I felt I knew I must look freaked out! I was like it couldn't really be happening, but I had to face the fact that it could be a very serious reality.

My friend Ronnie, who had waited for hours, arose anxiously and grateful that his long wait was over. "Well," he asked, "What's up?" I told him what the doctor had discovered and that I had to have surgery tomorrow afternoon. He said, "Oh my G-d, Sandi! What will you do if they take off your leg? You'll never dance again! Damn! I was hoping it was psychosomatic, as I've heard from some of our catty, jealous girls. You know, anyone seeing you perform would not believe you were in pain."

When I perform for an audience I enter into a different realm. It's as if there is another dimension to life for an artist. When I performed I felt light as a feather, floating on the waves of the musical notes curving through the air, at one with the music, the rhythm, the movement and the audience's energy; the pain was somewhere in the background, not allowed an entrance into this "other realm" of beauty, harmony, oneness. But when the musical notes ended and set my earthbound gravity back on my left ankle, the pain could not to be ignored. If I lost my leg tomorrow would I ever be able to capture that beauty, that oneness again? Well, there were other things to think of now. I had to call Bob in Las Vegas.

I had Ronnie drive me to a phone booth, one that was situated away from any people. I had no idea if I could maintain control of my tears, and I didn't want a bunch of people staring at me. I called Bob collect. I tried to sound unworried as I told him what the doctor had said, but when I came to the big question my

heart was beating a very uneven and vulnerable rhythm, ready to stop if I got the answer I didn't want to hear. "Bob," I asked, "if they take off my leg tomorrow, do you still want to marry me? Please tell me the truth. I know there are plenty of beautiful, two-legged women in Las Vegas who would love to marry you, and I don't want you to regret being married to me. I would be a cripple all my life. I would understand your decision not to marry me."

"Of course I want to marry you, you silly goose," he replied. "Don't worry about it. You go buy your wedding dress tomorrow. Be positive. Hey, you'll come through this smelling like a rose! What time is the surgery?" I told him 4:00 P. M. The doctor said surgery would take about an hour. So we estimated that I could probably call him by 7:00 P.M. to let him know how it worked out. I hung up the phone, leaned on the glass wall and cried with relief.

Ronnie and I had arranged to spend the night with Susie, a really nice dancer who had worked with us in the Follies for a while, but had quit and moved to Hollywood. When we arrived and she saw my face she said, "My G-d, Sandi, what's the matter?" I told her. We all cried, smoked nervously, and wrung our hands, when Susie said, "O.K. gang. If this is going to be the last night you can do something on two legs, then, by G-d, let's DO IT! So I took two pain pills, we went bowling, and I bowled the highest score I'd ever made! Susie had the perfect medicine. We enjoyed the night, and by the time we got back to her house I was so tired I dropped off to sleep immediately.

In the morning Ronnie drove us to the fanciest Department Store in Beverly Hills, and I spent hours trying on wedding gowns that dazzled and dizzied. Susie and Ronnie helped me to choose my gown and my wedding crown. The dressmaker did a fitting, and arrangements were made to send my gown to me in Las Vegas. Ronnie dropped me off at the bus station, I took the bus to the hospital feeling that everything was working out well, and just left the rest in G-d's hands.

I registered, was assigned my room, and the operation began on schedule. However, when I awoke in my room it was already 10:00 P.M. There was a nurse standing nearby. You can guess the first question I asked her. "Is my leg still on?" She nodded affirmatively. My prayer of gratitude was so genuine. "Oh, thank You, thank You, thank You dear Heavenly Father!" I quickly grabbed the phone to dial Bob, who must be very worried by now. I dialed a number and heard my

mother say hello. I was still heavily sedated, but I hadn't realized it. I guess my first primitive feeling was to talk to my mother, and I had dialed her instead of Bob. But I had made the decision not to tell Mother anything about the operation beforehand so she wouldn't worry. Now I said, "Don't worry, Mother. I'm all right."

"All right from what? Sandi, what's happened? Where are you?" I hate to think of what I put my poor mother through during that call, because I started howling uncontrollably from the intensity of pain that suddenly welled up in my leg. Then I passed out. When I came to I could hear my poor mother yelling into the receiver that had dropped on my pillow, "Sandi, what's happening, speak to me, please, what's wrong?!" I tried to explain where I was and what had transpired, but between the sedation and the excruciating pain upon coming to, I kept either passing out or howling. Finally the nurse took the phone from me and explained the situation. Mother wanted to talk to me again, but the nurse told her that she had to give me a shot of morphine now. She told Mother that I would call her tomorrow when I was more clear headed, that I had still not come completely out of the anesthesia.

The nurse gave me the shot of morphine. The pain was not like anything I'd ever imagined, and there was no controlling my four responses: moaning, howling, screaming or passing out. As soon as the nurse left, I grabbed the phone again to call Bob. When I heard my mother answer the phone again, I gave up and passed out.

I awoke again about 1:00 A.M. After explaining to the nurse on that shift about my promise to call my fiancé, and what had happened, she was nice enough to arrange the call for me even though the hospital cuts off patient calls after 11:00 P.M. I finally got to talk to Bob and tell him the good news, that I still had two legs! He was so glad to finally hear from me and know that it was good news. Between the fact that the nurse had just given me more morphine, and the sweet, comforting voice of the man I loved, I floated off to sleep. The nurse must have hung up the receiver for me.

When I saw the surgeon the next day, I asked him why the surgery had taken so much longer than he expected, as I had learned that it took over four hours. He was very curt. He told me that he didn't want to discuss what the operation was all about until he got all the results back from the lab. As I opened my mouth to ask the million more questions I had, he simply turned on his heel and left the room.

Damn! I couldn't believe how cold he was. I mean, here I was, a young girl alone with so much of my life and career hinging on what he'd found. How could he be so unfeeling?

On the third day the surgeon entered with another doctor. Together they cut the bloody bandage that went from my toes to my knee. As they pulled back the bandage, I saw that instead of the three-inch scar he'd told me I'd have, I had stitches going from my ankle to just below the knee! My total surprise at what I saw made me demand angrily for him to tell me what the hell was going on! So he reluctantly explained that when he opened the area he saw that the entire tibia was filled with tumors, except for a small area at the very top and bottom. Consequently, he had cut out my entire tibia except for the small margin at top and bottom leaving a thin sliver of tibia in the back that was also free of tumors. It was his hope, he said, that after some time the bone would re-grow. I asked if it was cancer. He said he didn't know yet, that these kinds of tumors had only been seen once in a racehorse and once in a football player. The tumors were similar to "osteoid osteoma," and they were still being examined in the lab. I asked if there was still a possibility of losing my leg, and he replied that there was still a possibility depending upon further lab reports. I closed my eyes for a second, and took a deep breath to calm myself. When I opened my eyes again, he was gone.

A nurse came in with all the "fixings" to rewrap my leg. I cried out to her in my frustration with this doctor who seemed to be so unfeeling. I wanted to strangle him! Why wouldn't he stay with me and comfort me with answers to the many questions I wanted to ask? The nurse explained to me that my doctor was an excellent surgeon, brilliant actually. But when he was the ship's doctor in the Navy during the Korean War, his ship received a direct hit. Most of the crew died. My surgeon had survived with terrible burns and very noticeable facial scars. She said, "Who can see all of the emotional scars within him that formed during that time? I guess after all that death and pain, he just quit feeling, or he quit showing it. In addition, most patients who come for surgery have their regular doctor who referred them for surgery. They are usually the ones who do all the explaining. But in your case, your doctor is in Las Vegas, and he can't come to see you."

For the next two weeks I endured every emotion that runs the human gamut. But, thank G-d, I left the hospital with both legs; one in a cast, walking with crutches. Bob had driven in from Vegas to pick me up. It was a beautiful,

sunshiny day as we drove down the Pacific Coastal road. We stopped for lunch at a seafood restaurant that overlooked the sea. It was so good to bask in the warmth of the sunshine and the love of this wonderful man who stood by me in my time of crisis.

When we returned to Las Vegas I visited my doctor who had sent me to Santa Barbara, so that he could answer all the questions the surgeon wouldn't. The doctor repeated what the surgeon had told me. This was an unknown and rare kind of tumor, so there was no way of knowing what the final prognosis would be. I asked him what about my career as a dancer. He said, "Sandi, you are getting married next week. Just be a wife and mother, and forget about your career. You'll be lucky if you can ever walk again normally, let alone dance."

This was pretty hard to swallow. Eleven years of intensive dance training, and now I'd be lucky to walk normally? Bob said to me, "Sandi, my Dad was blown up in the war, mustard gassed, lost a lung, had a steel tube in one leg, and I could hardly keep up with him walking, he walked so fast and strong. I spent years with my Dad in the Veterans Hospital, and I saw men there who did so much with what they had left of themselves that it was amazing. You WILL DANCE AGAIN! I will help you, but you must believe it yourself and work very hard to build yourself up again. I will help you."

And he did help so much. If not for his encouragement and constant message, I would never have healed as well as I did.



Tropicana Publicity Photo for our Marriage

Chapter Four

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE

Back in Las Vegas again, with only a week until the wedding, there was so much to do. Mother was flying in from Florida the next day. The Hotel Tropicana was going to loan me all the fancy serving dishes I would need for the reception. A bartender friend from the Aku Aku (a very fancy Polynesian restaurant) was donating his services for the evening, making his famous Scorpion, a delicious, fruity drink served in a large bowl with gardenias and two straws in it. It was so strong, though, that only one bowl was allowed to be served to a couple in the restaurant.

We were getting married at 3:30 A. M., because all our friends worked in shows until then. We chose the Little Chapel of the West to be married in because

it was so picturesque, with a tall steeple and a cute little bridge built over a small stream. I had wanted to be married by a rabbi. I had been studying with the rabbi in Las Vegas before I had to go for surgery, and I studied all the while I was in the hospital. But the rabbi said that there was no time for me to convert because of my unexpected hospital stay, and he therefore would not marry us. I suspect that he was unwilling to convert me, as most rabbis are. They are usually very careful about converting people to Judaism if they are marrying a Jewish person, thinking that their reasons are not for the sake of Heaven, but only a whim. So, we were married by a Justice of the Peace.

Two of my best girlfriends from the Follies Bergere, Lillian (Danish) and Morag (Scottish) came over to help. They wrapped my crutches in white satin ribbon and twisted in colorful flowers. I sewed lace around the stocking foot that went over the cast. The photographer from the Tropicana was doing our wedding photos (my friend Lillian married him later). The lead singer from the famous Les Chevaliers De Espania from Spain sang at the wedding. They were currently playing in the Follies. It was a big wedding, with the entire cast of the Follies Bergere, many friends from the Lido de Paris and entertainers from all over Vegas joining us in a hearty “mazel tov.” I had also flown my mother in from Florida.

At the reception people were drinking the “punch,” not knowing that under that delicious fruity flavor lay a **Scorpion’s punch**. One friend came over to say good-bye early in the evening, as she was putting one arm in her coat. I saw her walking around four hours later with that same one arm in her coat, looking glassy-eyed. A guy passed out On the chaise lounge outside, and the gardner woke him up at 11:00 A.M., because by that time the Las Vegas sun had turned him into a “red lobster.” After we dropped my mother off at the airport, we returned to our apartment as Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lee Mandell. Two days later we drove to New York to make out new home.



Arrival at Wedding Chapel with Maid of Honor, Lydia Kalugine, French CanCan Dancer, & Tropicana photographer.



**Bob & Sand's Wedding in Las Vegas, March 24, 1962
Little Chapel of the West**



Sandi Vincent Mandell
Central Park Reservoir - 1962
Just Married

When my husband had earlier called his mother in the Bronx to tell her he was getting married again, he said, “Ma, I’m marrying a shiksa,” she said, “Well, you’re not such a rabbi yourself.” Still, he had come from a strong Jewish home, the kind that had impressed me so much when I was young. After we married and moved to New York and I first met his dear mother, Fayga Malka, instead of disappointment that her son had married a non-Jew, she showed me love. She said to him, “This woman really loves you. She will be a very good wife.” I was surprised that she just tucked me under her wing and loved me like a daughter. I was expecting some disappointment from her that I wasn’t Jewish, because the more I learned about her, the more I realized that she was a learned and observant Jewess. I felt closer in spirit to Mother Fayga than to my own mother. She knew how to give love, which was the very reason that Bob also knew how to give a love like I had never experienced before.

G-d rewarded me greatly for my decision to marry Bob despite the doctor’s grave prognosis. Before we were married and still in Las Vegas, I prayed with all

my might every evening over his diseased liver, prepared only the food that would be healthy for him, and convinced him to stop drinking any alcoholic beverage. This was difficult in Las Vegas, as one drinks a cold beer at the pool, wine with dinner, drinks during the entertainment, and drinks are served for free when one gambles. Drinking is a way of life in Vegas. Even *I drank*, which, having had an alcoholic father, was something that I was afraid of for many years. After a year my husband returned to the doctor who had predicted his early death. The doctor's partner, who explained to him that Bob's doctor had tripped down a staircase and broken his neck, resulting in his tragic accidental death, greeted him. When the doctor examined him, he exclaimed, "I can't believe this! When my partner examined you nearly two years ago your liver was enlarged and hard. Now it is soft and of perfectly normal size! I have never seen this happen in my entire medical career. What did you do?" We happily reported that we had prayed incessantly and he had followed a healthy diet. We expressed great joy that G-d had answered our prayers, but the "strictly scientific" doctor was not convinced that a prayer had been answered. He expressed a thought that they may have misdiagnosed Bob's problem. Praise G-d, my husband and I just celebrated our 45th Anniversary! It's a good thing I didn't let this problem stop me from deciding to marry him, and it almost did. And how strange is the fate of the perfectly healthy doctor who predicted Bob's early death, who died from an accident.

The first Friday night that I was preparing to move from our honeymoon hotel into our new Central Park West apartment, my mother-in-law gave me two candlesticks and wrote out the blessing for me to say in phonetic Hebrew. I asked her and her friend, Mrs. Lieber, what did it mean? Mrs. Lieber said, "I don't know, but it's good!" Like Rabbi Hillel of Biblical times, this was her "thumbnail sketch" of G-d, Judaism and Sabbath to one who knew nothing (me). Since that time I have learned that many Jewish families "sit Shiva" (like a funeral) when there is an intermarriage. I understand the reason for this now, particularly when the gentile spouse is a woman. Since Jewish lineage only recognizes children of a Jewish woman as Jewish, any children of such an intermarriage would not be Jewish. Having just lost six million Jews in the Holocaust, one third of the entire Jewish people, it's like another death in the family—the termination of the Jewish line. I didn't know this at the time, however; and probably there are many assimilated Jews who don't know either. In those cases the hostility of the family might be

interpreted simply as prejudice, something most modern Americans disdain. It certainly has caused a lot of heartache. I wonder how many couples would flourish under a “chupah” of love, instead of being driven out of the family? I’m sure that each case needs to be decided on it’s own merit. In some cases, as in mine, it may be that this person really has a “Yiddisher neshama “ (a Jewish soul), which is why they were attracted to fall in love with, or marry a Jew. The sages state that all Jewish Souls heard G-d pronounce the Commandments at Mt. Sinai, and if for some reason they were reincarnated in a gentile family, they will always be attracted to the flame of Torah, even as a moth is attracted to a light. Perhaps in a former lifetime I was a Jew who didn’t appreciate my royal treasure of being a daughter of the King of Kings, so I was reincarnated in a gentile world to see how dark it is without the light of Torah in my life. In my case, as I learned more about Judaism, my husband also became more knowledgeable about his own religion, eventually becoming an observant Jew. One should never convert just because they are in love with a Jew. One should only convert for love of G-d’s Torah. Anyway, I have always been grateful to my mother-in-law that she embraced me as a daughter. Unfortunately, she died of cancer after our first year of marriage, so I didn’t have the advantage of her company for very long. I could have learned so much from her. Did she know that the candle lighting ceremony she gave me would change our lives so much as it did?

There was so much love in my husband’s home that he grew up to be an incredibly loving man who taught me the meaning of a kind of love I had never known in my life. But what was the secret of keeping love strong in this day and age?

Needless to say, my husband and I were surrounded by a totally hedonistic world. In my business (show business) nobody stayed married, and my main goal in life was to never put my children through what I had suffered as a divorced child. My husband, as well, had no desire to suffer through another divorce, which put his two daughters and himself through such misery. We both agreed that we needed to find **wisdom** in order to get through the confusion that surrounded us and pulled us this way and that. We wanted to get the right answers **before** we had children, so we could teach them truth with less confusion. Happiness obviously didn’t lay in the direction of recognition, fame, talent, financial success, parties, travel or swapping partners. This we knew because all our friends were

rich and famous, had talent, recognition, etc., but they were alcoholic, drug addicted, divorced many times, with children who were really mixed up, and who had tried all of the above to find satisfaction without success. They couldn't seem to find a *personal inner peace*. Fortunately, we learned most of this vicariously from our acquaintances and didn't need to try it *all* ourselves. So we decided to pursue truth and wisdom to try to avoid all the pitfalls we saw before us. We studied books on the physiology of the brain, thinking it could tell us how to use more of it. It didn't. We studied all of the standard philosophies, and much of psychology.

While I was stuffing all this knowledge into my head, I was also trying to regain strength in my left leg. When they had taken off my cast at Sloan-Kettering Cancer Research Hospital in New York, Bob and I gasped at what we saw. My beautiful dancer's leg was now so scrawny; it looked like the leg of those pictures of people who starved to death. There wasn't even a whole bone inside to give it form. Additionally, my leg was purple, usually my favorite color, but not in my leg. They showed me a new X-ray, and I saw how they had cut the tibia out. It was not a pretty picture. The doctors assured me that the bone would grow back in time, that already there was new bone forming. It was pretty scary.

Two days later, just my ankle bloated up like a balloon. I couldn't bend my foot at all. Bob would not let me succumb to despair. He massaged my leg every day. He slowly manipulated my foot, combined with massage, until I could finally begin to move it on my own. Many times a day a terrible pain would begin from inside the bone that would totally disable me for moments. I still didn't know what the final outcome would be with this rare and unknown condition, so it was frightening as well. But Bob was always there, encouraging me, massaging me, getting the healthy new blood into circulation. As soon as I could walk again without crutches, I went back to dance class and worked slowly, very slowly, to build strength and suppleness.

I was inspired to keep trying, not only because of Bob's encouragement, but also because of one of my Jazz teachers from New York, the famous Luigi. Luigi had been crushed so badly in a car accident that nobody thought he would even live. Every bone in his body had been broken. But Luigi wouldn't take "no" for an answer either. He not only danced again, but also became one of the most famous Jazz teachers in the world. I had studied in his Professional Class in New

York after his accident, and, believe me; nobody who didn't know about his accident would ever believe anything was ever wrong with him! Professional Classes could only be taken by "working dancers," so it was a very demanding class, and I had to bust a gut to keep up with him. (To my delight, Luigi, now in his late sixties, also taught my daughter to dance when she was eighteen.)

Being realistic, I also studied more acting and singing just in case I couldn't dance anymore. I won't tell you it was easy. Sometimes the pain was so bad I got frightened and cried. I didn't know if it was hurting because I shouldn't be trying to dance (as the doctors said), or if it was a part of a painful process of healing, or if more tumors were growing. But I kept training, and Bob kept encouraging and massaging. Four months after my surgery, I auditioned for Harold Minsky as a showgirl instead of a dancer. I only needed to walk gracefully as a showgirl, not dance. Fortunately, I am tall enough to be a showgirl, and had been asked many times to be one, but it was too boring for a dancer. Now I welcomed the opportunity.

We had to go back to Las Vegas, as Minsky's show was at the New Frontier Hotel in Vegas. I felt like family to the famous producer now, because my mother-in-law's maiden name was Minsky.

Fortunately, a friend of mine that I had studied with at Carnegie Hall in N.Y.C. was in town doing "Bye, Bye, Birdie" at the Riviera Hotel. He gave dance classes every day, and there was also a voice and drama coach teaching the cast, which I joined. So I steadily gained strength during the four months I worked for Harold Minsky, and didn't miss the drama, music and jazz classes I worried I'd miss because I left New York.

Harold made me his "swing girl" (the girl who does every girl's different part, as girls take their night off), and I was happy for the raise in pay that gave me, because we were paying rent on our villa in Vegas and rent on our Central Park West apartment in New York.

It was fun to be back in Vegas again, and all our friends welcomed us back with enthusiasm. They said they hadn't been to a good party since Bob and I had left for New York. We were known as the "ultimate party hosts," as Bob played "boss" bongos, his friends included Latin drummers from Perez Prado's and Tito Puente's bands, and the dancers could really cut loose among friends. So we had lots of parties and lots of fun most of the time, great times, great meals, saw the

How To Bring Heaven To Earth; From Las Vegas To Jerusalem

best entertainment , and I even began to gamble a little Black Jack, winning most of the time. We could also spend more time with Bob's two lovely little daughters, Jewel and Eve. We laughed a lot, loved a lot. Life was like an ongoing Honeymoon.

Minsky's Follies - New Frontier Hotel Las Vegas 1962



Sandi Vincent, left end, New Frontier Hotel, Minsky's Follies, 1962



Unfortunately, however, Bob's mother was getting worse. We felt that we should return to New York. However, I was now more confident that I would be able to return to my dancing career, as I had gained much more strength and the pain was nearly gone.

Once again back in our Central Park West apartment, through an Israeli friend of ours, we met an exciting man named Guild, a multimillionaire Boston socialite, a genius, who was Vice President of a major advertising corporation. He was also a great lover of Broadway Shows, having always wanted to be a writer of plays instead of advertising. Being that we were both such fans of Broadway plays and I longed to do musical comedy, Guild and I became close friends. He wanted to help me accomplish my goals. He was married to a former Texas showgirl who had worked for the famous Zigfield Follies. I never met her, unfortunately, as she had become addicted to the pain medication she had to take for a painful blood disease, so she was in a rehabilitation center, and she died a few months after we met Guild.

York. Guild, being a fervent supporter of Broadway, was upset that none of the new shows would be written about by the theater critics, so he did an *impossible thing!* He got all seven major critics and the famous caricature artist, Hirshfield, to agree to write up their critiques for a newspaper that he published during the long

strike. It was to be called "First Night." He asked Bob to help him produce and distribute the newspaper, which Bob was happy to do.

Guild put a Rolls Royce chauffeured limousine at our disposal all the time. Bob put the whole thing together instantly, hiring a printing firm in Brooklyn that was open at night, supervising the proper production of "First Night," and distributing them in the morning from the Rolls Royce. It was an exciting time, because if the News Critics could not evaluate a new Broadway Show (or off Broadway), nobody would know whether it was worthwhile going to see. That could effect the success of all the Broadway and off-Broadway productions. Sardi's would be wild with impatience to see Bob pull up in his limosine with Guild's Great Dane, Bragie, sitting tall in his seat. All the stars wanted to know what the critics had written about them, of course; and the producers wanted to know if they had a success or a bomb on their hands.

During this time I landed an acting role in "Car 54, Where Are You?," as a Chicago gun moll named Bubbles. My boyfriend, the Chicago gangster, was Tom Bosley of "Happy Days" fame.

I was also hired to star in my own special act with 4 male dancers at Jack Silverman's Night Club on Broadway. The show was opening on January 1, 1963. So this was the woman who was supposed to FORGET HER CAREER? NO WAY! Only ten months after my surgery I was on my way up again.

SUNDAY

1:00 **2** **3** **ED SULLIVAN**—Variety
Ed's guests include Patti Page, Bill "Jose Jimenez" Dana, the Three Stooges, and actor-impressionist Hal Holbrook. Also on hand are comedian Dave Madden; Fred and Angela Roby, ventriloquist act; and the Bob De Voe Trio, dancers. Patti sings "If I Were a Bell." Hal Holbrook appears in a scene from the off-Broadway revival "Abe Lincoln in Illinois." Hugh Lambert dancers, Ray Bloch orchestra. (Live; 60 min.)

5 **R.C.M.P.**—Adventure
"Husband Trouble." Vera Cord's evidence sent her husband to jail. Now that his term is over, she fears revenge. Gilles Pelletier, John Perkins, Don Franks. Vera Cord: Katherine Blake.

Last show at this time.

7 **8** **MOVIE**—Drama
COLOR Sunday Night Movie: "The Naked Maja." (1959) In the turbulent days when Napoleon's brother sat on the throne of Spain, painter Francisco Goya and Maria, Duchess of Alba, fall in love. But court intrigues soon interfere with their romance. (Two hours)

Cast

Maria	.....	Lea Padovani
Francisco Goya	.....	Anthony Franciosa
Manuel Godoy	.....	Amedeo Nazzari
Carlos IV	.....	Victor Cavari
Queen Maria	.....	Lea Padovani
Sanchez	.....	Marilyn Secrest
Juanito	.....	Carole King

Ch. 8 will not colorcast this program.

9 **ON STAGE**—Drama
"Riel," Part 2. Louis Riel returns to Canada after a long exile to lead a sec-

FEBRUARY 10

Evening

ond rebellion against the government. Riel: Bruno Gerussi. Sir John A. MacDonald: Robert Christie. Mrs. Riel: Ruth Springford. (60 min.)

11 **BEST OF GROUCHO**—Quiz
George Fenneman introduces Margaret Nicholson of Oklahoma City, Okla.

8:30 **4** **CAR 54**—Comedy
"The Star Boarder." To make up for Lucille's extravagance, the Toodys take in the Rev. Mr. Peterson as a boarder. They don't realize that the dignified "clergyman" is actually a notorious counterfeiter. Toody: Joe E. Ross. Muldoon: Fred Gwynne. Lucille: Beatrice Pons. Block: Paul Reed. Schnauzer: Al Lewis. Nicholson: Hank Garret. Omar: Ossie Davis. McBride: Jimmy Little.

Guest Cast

Peterson	.....	Tom Bosley
Rhoda	.....	Paula Stewart
Potter	.....	Dana Elcar
Bubbles	.....	Sandi Vincent

5 **OPINION IN THE CAPITAL**
In a tribute to Lincoln, Mark Evans interviews Rep. Fred Schwengel (R., Iowa) and Rep. Paul Findley (R., Ill.).

Last show at this time. Next week "Opinion in the Capital" will be on at 11:40 P.M.

11 **PEOPLE ARE FUNNY**
Art Linkletter asks a young mother to pick out her baby from a group of three.

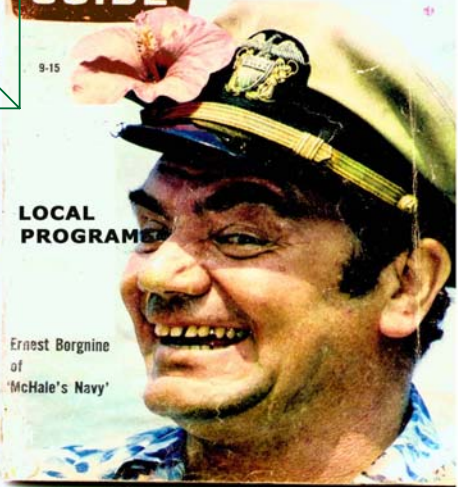
9:00 **2** **3** **REAL MCCOYS**—Comedy
"Luke in the Ivy League." Luke's folksy phrases impress ad executive Conrad Phelps when he stops at the McCoy fruit stand—so Phelps hires Luke to write

TV GUIDE

9-15

LOUD COMMERCIALS—
their cause and cure
SEE PAGE 6

LOCAL PROGRAM



Ernest Borgnine
of "McHale's Navy"

How did I get a speaking role on one of America's top TV Comedy Show, when I was a "nobody" actress? It was a tale that sounded like a "burlesque slapstick comedy." Strangely enough, we often have occurrences which seem a

little short of disastrous, when in actuality these occurrences are angels in disguise. I was still working in Vegas for Minsky's Follies and had dressed up in a lovely, forest green silk "flapper" style dress on this particular night because Bob and I were going to a party after work. Between shows Eva, a showgirl from Spain, invited me to the Sands Lounge for a drink where a good Jazz Band was playing. We were ushered to a table. We ordered our drinks. I asked for a Bacardi Cocktail; Eva ordered a bottle of Club Soda and some Scotch. Eva was dramatically **Spanish**, using her hands a lot when she spoke. She accidentally spilled my drink all over the front of my silk dress! I stood up, hoping a waiter would at least rescue me with napkins or a tablecloth, when Eva *threw the bottle of Club Soda all over me!* I asked her incredulously, "Why did you **do that?**" She said, soothingly, "Darling Sandi, everybody knows that if you put Club Soda on wine and silk, it will not stain."

I sat there looking like a wet green silk frog out of place, freezing in the air conditioning in my sopping wet green silk cocktail dress, which stuck to my body everywhere. There was, fortunately, a gentleman in the Lounge sitting near us, who graciously placed his suit jacket around my soaked form. He asked if he could replace my drink and join us, to which Eva enthusiastically agreed. She was nearly *always enthusiastic*. We found that he was a New Yorker, to which I responded that I **loved New York**, and especially was anxious to return there for a career in *musical comedy*. That's when we really hit it off, because he also loved musical comedy. We had a good time talking, but Eva and I had to leave to go back and do the second show at Minsky's. The gentleman gave me his card and told me to call him when I got back to New York. His name was Oscar Katz, and he was the V. President of CBS-TV! When I got back to N.Y. a few months later, I called, said "hi, I'm back." I gave him my phone number. He called back that week and asked, "How would you like to play a "gun moll" opposite Tom Bosley on "Car 54 Where Are You?" He told me where to go, when, etc., I read for them and they said, "Study your lines and come back next week for the shoot." This was really a new one for me. The whole thing took maybe an hour, I didn't sweat one drop, I wasn't competing with 400 other girls (actually I don't know who I competed against). I rehearsed at home, did the shoot in one take, and every time they played that film I got some money. Acting was certainly not as demanding as dancing. At least it isn't as demanding if G-d puts kind and helpful angels in your

path. Oscar Katz was my angel and a friend behind the scenes for many years, even when I didn't realize he was following my adventures years later in Israel.

I rehearsed my number staring at Jack Silverman's International for a month. We were opening New Years Night, 1963. Guild, who was a personal friend of the famous entertainment columnist Earl Wilson, had invited Mr. Wilson to his ringside seat for a champagne party opening night for the second show. Guild was convinced that this was really going to launch my career into high gear. In addition, he had invited Bob and I to a New Year's Eve party in New Jersey at the home of a gentleman very high up in the Sicilian Family. He was sure that this gentleman would want to further my career. I was not keen on this idea. I had already seen acquaintances of mine who were managed by the Family, and they had lost control of their lives. I wanted to maintain my independence and I didn't ever want to compromise my ability to choose the roles and the image that I wanted to project.

The last day of rehearsal was total chaos! Costume fittings were late and adjustments had to be done at the last minute. There was not even time to do a dress rehearsal. I arrived home late and weary. As I sank into a hot bath, the chauffeur arrived to take us to the New Year's Eve party. Bob and I looked each other in the eye, I shook my head "no," and we laughed. Bob sent the chauffeur away, proffering our apologies to our host and wishes for a Happy New Year.

The next night, ***opening night***, I arrived at the Club in my limousine. My dressing room was filled with beautiful flowers of every kind and color. The air was filled with the aroma of flowers and an aura of excitement. I had my own dressing room with my name on it and a Star on the door. This was to be an evening like none other. Or so I thought. You see, I was staring in the kind of act that I had never done before. My performance was to be myself and four handsome male dancers dancing to the tune of "My Sweet Little Alice Blue Gown" played in a "beguine" rhythm. I was dressed in a beautiful blue long gown with big puffy sleeves and a lovely blue hat with a large brim. The dance was very lyrical, with beautiful lifts. I looked so sweet and innocent in my "Alice Blue Gown." But at one point two of the male dancers pulled off both sleeves, then one removed my skirt, another the bodice, another snatched the wide brim of my hat, and I was left with a black sequined corset and a little cap. The music switched to "The Stripper," which is Jazz, and the whole mood of the dance was changed from sweetly lyrical to provocative. At the very end of the music, I was to unhook my

corset, wearing only sequined “pasties” and a fancy sequined G-String with black net stockings. Immediately, I was to turn and slowly dance to the back of the stage and perch on a tall stool on the top of a small staircase.

The moment arrived for my performance. I put all that nervous adrenaline into my performance, and the audience loved me! But when the time came for me to remove my corset, a woman who was sitting at the center ringside table dropped her mouth open so wide I thought her jaw would fall off. I felt the same way she did, and wondered how I would feel during the second show, when I had to do it in front of my husband, my friends and Earl Wilson. The applause was still going on when there was a blackout, our cue to get off stage. Only I had never rehearsed the blackout, there never was any black velvet on the stairs before, and as I stepped down the few black velvet stairs in the dark, my high heels slipped out from under me. I went down hard. I tried to get up, but my left leg hurt too badly to put pressure on it.

I was carried to my dressing room by the male dancers. As I sat there hoping against hope that the pain would stop, the bosses, who had not seen the fall, rushed in with big smiles, hugs and congratulations! Boots McKenna, the producer, pulled them aside and told them about the fall. The bosses refused to believe I couldn't go on for the second show. The audience had **loved the first show!** They knew Earl Wilson was coming and who was backing me. They were planning on making plenty of money with the success of this show, and I was a big part of it. I told them not to worry. I would go home between shows, soak my ankle in Epsom salts, and maybe I could go on.

When Bob opened the door and saw our chauffeur carrying me, he knew something was wrong. He ran me a hot bath, poured in the Epsom Salts, and we prayed for an instant healing. I tried to keep my ankle mobile and kept moving it around. But after returning to my dressing room and putting on my costume, my ankle would simply not move anymore. Boots signaled the orchestra not to play my music and announced that I would not do my number that night.

After the show we all went to Guild's apartment. Everyone was extremely disappointed. I was in agony! Guild had some Demerol that his wife used to take, and he gave me an injection. I floated off into a painless, delicious feeling, and after awhile I fell asleep. A few hours later when I awakened, Guild asked if I wanted another shot. My immediate thought was, “Yeah! That shot made me feel great!” Then I thought about his dead wife and how she had become addicted to

this drug. Wow, how easy it would be to want to feel so good all the time. I decided to go without the Demerol and endure the pain.

The next day I went with Bob to Sloan-Kettering Cancer Hospital to the doctor who had taken my cast off 8 months ago after the operation. I needed to know how bad the damage was. The doctor looked at my leg and began to exclaim excitedly, "My G-d! Look at this leg! This calf! I can't believe the difference. It looks BEAUTIFUL! How did you ever accomplish this?"

I was glad he thought my leg was beautiful, but it wasn't feeling beautiful right now. I wanted to know what the damage was. He examined me and told me that I had ruptured my planteris tendon, the inside tendon that ran from the ankle to the knee. He said I would have to have surgery to sew it back together. I stiffened at that word, SURGERY. I had just worked for eleven months to get this pitiful leg to look beautiful. I just could not face another surgery, plus more months of painful therapy and training. I asked the doctor what would happen if he didn't sew the tendon back together. He said, "The tendon will shrivel up and disappear, and you will have a dangerous weakness because of it. If you try to dance again this weakness could cause your Achilles' tendon to rupture and then you DEFINITELY WON'T EVEN BE ABLE TO WALK."

At that moment I felt as if I was as exhausted as I would be if I had trained for eight months with no pause, no rest at all. I was drained. "How long of a rest would you recommend before I begin walking? I will NOT have surgery. I just couldn't go through it again." He recommended that I walk with a cane for five months and give up all thought of a dancing career. This was the second time in one year that a doctor gave me this unwanted advice.....

I went back to Jack Silverman's to tell the bosses the news. They didn't want to accept it. Hey, I didn't want to accept it either, a lot more than them. They said, "We'll wait for you. Take a couple of weeks to rest. Sandi, they loved you out there. No one else can take your place." I told them that it was all wishful thinking, I wouldn't think of dancing for another five months—maybe not even then.

For the next couple of weeks I felt like someone had just stuck a pin into me and I deflated like a shriveled up balloon. I wondered **why this kept happening to me** every time I started to get my career going somewhere. Did G-d not want me to dance? Was it because I had done something more immodest than ever

before? I hadn't been comfortable doing it, but that was what was being done in all the nightclubs everywhere. Everyone wanted you to wear as little as possible, if not to strip nude altogether, which I refused to do. After I had done the TV Show "Car 54 Where Are You?" my Agent had gotten me a starring role in a movie called "Sin In The Suburbs," which had such an immoral script that even though my husband had not objected to it, I felt so disgusted by the character that after rehearsing it for a month, I called the day before we were to shoot the movie and told them I just couldn't do it. When one plays a character in a movie or a play, in order to do it convincingly, one must really live the role and become that person. I just couldn't live in that role; it was so against my own moral code! My Agent was furious with me, but I told him not to call me unless he had something in musical comedy. That was what I was good at, wanted to do, and well trained for. At first he argued with me that Shirley McLain and Simone Signore' were doing these roles, that this would make me rich and famous. I told him my family would disown me. He then vowed that the picture would only be shown in Europe. (It played on Broadway and 48th Street in New York a few months later.) I still refused. He never called me again. Good riddance.

I needed to figure out why I kept getting hit in the leg. I believe that G-d guides a person's life if He is invited into their life, and I was always questioning G-d, which was an invitation for direction. Show business is a difficult business to call your own shots in, because there is lots of competition, many beautiful women who will do **"anything"** to be famous. My agent would invite me to a party to meet a producer or someone important to my career, and tell me, "Don't bring your husband." I always had to stop and think which was more important to me—my marriage or my career. What direction should I take? What moral values were most important to me? Was money and fame more important than my values? Billy Petch, the choreographer of the Follies Bergere had offered me 2 jobs: one in Paris or one in London, whichever Country I wanted. But what about my marriage? New York was the capital of Advertising. What would Bob do in Europe? Even in Bob's advertising career, I was being coached by Guild how to be the perfect hostess, how to act at parties, how to insult people in order to be judged by them as superior. He would tell me, "Never say 'wealthy,' even though it may seem to be a more cultural word, it is only used by the 'nouveau riche.' You must say 'rich,' because rich people can afford to be vulgar." It went against my grain to be insulting and vulgar, and I would question him if this were really

necessary especially if I wasn't yet rich. He would ask, "Do you want your husband to be successful in the advertising world?" Of course I would reply to the affirmative. Then Guild would tell me that I must do these things in order for my husband to get rich. I would ask him why Bob couldn't just do a good job in the advertising world from nine to five, and we wouldn't have to socialize with these people? He would tell me that the advertising world just didn't work that way; if I didn't party with them, flirt with them and insult them, Bob just wouldn't go up in the advertising field. It sometimes seemed to me that G-d was testing me all the time by putting these "devil's advocates" in my path while Bob and I were searching for the healthiest path.

Even though the doctors told me to rest for five months, I have never been a person to sit idle. I had a lot of thinking to do, so if I had to refrain from dancing for five months, why not make it nine months and have a baby! I approached Bob with the idea. At first he was shocked, because we had formerly planned to wait at least three years until my career got going solid. We had only been married one year. But then he warmed up to it. "This is a job," he said, "that I could really get into and enjoy!" And so, this is when our first son, Frederick Henry Mandell (Pinchas), was conceived. It was also when my dear mother-in-law lost her battle with cancer.

Mother Fayga knew I was pregnant before any of us did. She told me that I was pregnant with a son, and she called him her little "Moshe Pipick" as she laughed with happiness. My mother-in-law, of blessed memory, laughed up until the last four days of her life. Despite her terrible pain, she never complained. I learned from her this important lesson. Nobody really wants to know how you **really feel** when he or she asks how you are. This was a very important lesson for me especially, since I then contracted a rare neurological and painful disease that took 20 years to even diagnose, with no cure; but she taught me by her example to bear it with dignity. Mother Fayga never spoke about her cancer, and it was medical policy in those years not to tell the patient that they had cancer and were dying. They did, however, tell the family, and we kept up the facade that, please G-d, there would be a healing. I felt very uncomfortable with this situation, but I had no experience with death, and I didn't know how to handle it. I knew she knew, but we all kept up the pretense. The doctors had all told us for a year that they didn't know how she was still alive; they felt she was living on sheer will

power. I believe she desperately wanted to live to see her son Bob happily married and healed from his distressing divorce experience.

I wish we had been more educated about impending death of a loved one. With hindsight, and now that I am an experienced social worker with a degree in Psychology, I feel that we should have been more open and honest with the situation. There was so much to be said, but we never said it, and then those last four days came when she was in so much pain that she wasn't able to converse, all we could do was sit with her and try to comfort and care for her, and watch her die. I kept putting off any final speeches about my love for her, or how much she had taught me, and so did Bob. The last night we sat with her as usual until 2:00 A.M. Her pain was exhausting to watch. We took a cab home to Manhattan from the Bronx to take a little nap, expecting to return in the morning. We had hired nursing care 24 hours a day for the past 2 months. We had just fallen asleep when the phone rang. It was Jackie, Bob's brother; calling to say that she was gone. We weren't even there to say our last goodbye. It's always a shock when it happens, even when you know it's happening. Grief hits you, and you don't even know how to handle it emotionally. I wish we had known a rabbi at this time in our life, to help us through that time, to sit "Shiva," (the traditional seven days of grieving after death in the family) but we didn't have a rabbi.

We returned to the Bronx immediately and began to make the burial arrangements. As usually happens when a "tzaddeket" (a righteous person) dies, the heavens cried with rain. The whole family gathered at her gravesite, wet and forlorn. I tried to look calm and brave for Bob and Jackie's sake, but shuddered with uncontrollable tears. They stood in unspoken silence, refusing to cry. So many things left unsaid—last day, something to say—never did say. I had so hoped she would be there to rejoice with us for the birth of her first grandson. She passed away exactly on the "yartzeit" of her dear husband 18 years before.

At about this same time, the New York Post decided to break the newspaper strike that was going on, causing most of the Unions to boycott the Advertising Department of the New York Post, and additionally making it no longer necessary to publish the Firstnight Theater Critic Newspaper that Bob was running for Guild. So he went to the New York Post to volunteer to bring in advertising that this newspaper desperately needed. The Manager of the Advertising Department was searching for someone to bring back all the major department stores in New York

who had joined the advertising boycott. Bob said he could do it. Everyone else on the Post's present staff was intimidated and afraid to volunteer for the job for fear of failing. The Manager asked Bob what kind of salary he was looking for. When Bob told him, the guy nearly fell off his chair! But Bob was a top salesman and was used to pulling in high commissions, so he asked the Manager, "Why should I lower my standard of living to work for you?" Perhaps it was this "chutzpah" that landed him the job. He was successful in bringing back Macy's, Lord & Taylor, A & S Department Store and many other large accounts.

A few months later the man who had hired him retired and a new Manager was appointed. Many men were jealous that Bob was the Head of the Department Store Division, for they had been working for the Post for many years. So they did something that really broke my husband's heart. As soon as the new Manager took over, they demoted Bob to the Classified Department, where his earning capacity was severely reduced. He tried to take it in stride, but I could see his depression and disappointment. It was so unfair.

Another disappointment happened to him when Guild showed himself to be a traitor to what we thought was a close friendship. When Bob was producing Firstnight for Guild, he was riding in the back of the limousine one night at 3:00 A.M. (since the newspaper went to press late at night after the critics had written their opinions of the new Broadway Theater openings) and Bob took out his last cigarette, only to find that it was broken at the filter. Undaunted, he held the filter with his fingers to the cigarette, and was surprised to find the cigarette to be cooler as he smoked it. The next day, with a new pack of cigarettes in hand, he began to experiment by poking holes around the bottom of the filter. After a time he succeeded in perfecting a filter that reduced the tar that showed up in the tip of the filter, as well as getting a cooler smoke that was less harsh on the throat. Since one of Guild's accounts in his large advertising firm was a major tobacco company, he took his invention to Guild to see if he could be influential in selling it to them. Although Guild's eyes seemed to light up, he pooh-poohed the innovation, saying that there was already a patent in the tobacco shops that you could buy to stick holes in the filter. However, as Bob showed his innovation to some friends and they tried it, they liked it and thought it was a good idea.

One night when I was about four months pregnant we got a call from our Israeli girlfriend, awakening us out of a sound sleep in the middle of the night. She

was in a panic! Guild was extremely drunk, something he often was, but this night he was experiencing “delirium tremens,” hallucinating horrible monsters on the walls and all over the place. She couldn’t help him or control his screaming, so she begged us to come over and help her with Guild. We quickly dressed and took a cab over to his Park Avenue apartment. Bob worked with him until the “monsters” left and he became more lucid. It was then that the truth about Guild’s feelings about me came out. He said to Bob, who had just worked for hours to deliver him from his self-induced Hell, “Bob, I’m going to make you an offer you can’t refuse. I will give you right now \$100,000 to divorce Sandi and let me marry her.” Bob and I looked at each other in disbelief! I thought, however, that maybe he was still very drunk and making stupid babble. He couldn’t be serious. I laughed slightly and said to Guild, “You know I’m pregnant with Bob’s child, Guild.” He said, “I know, Bob can keep the baby, I just want you. You know I can give you much more than he ever can.”

I knew that Guild was a manipulative man, using his money to influence many people to do what he wanted. But I didn’t know he could be so absolutely cold and calculating as to try to “buy” me from my loving husband, thinking that I would want to give away my own baby to be the wife of an alcoholic multimillionaire. I could have married many multimillionaires if I had only wanted money. But I loved Bob rich or poor. How could Guild think I would ever conceive of accepting this kind of proposal? I thought he was a friend of both of us. I didn’t know, frankly, whether Bob was going to punch him out, as I felt like slapping his face. It was insulting to me. But Bob was the ultimate gentleman, probably excusing this nonsense as the babbling of a drunken idiot. So he simply said, “No deal, Guild, Sandi is worth more to me than all the money in the world. Forget about it.” Guild was still presenting his arguments to Bob as we both turned and left the apartment. We didn’t visit him after that.

Our beautiful son was born on a **blizzard night**, December 23, 1963 after an extremely difficult labor. Although Bob had continuously assured me that it didn’t matter to him whether we had a son or a daughter, as he dearly loved his two daughters, when he came to see me after the birth of his first son he was happier and more excited than I had ever seen him! You could have scraped him off the ceiling; he was so high. He came into the room where I was recovering from the birth, with mountains of flowers. He said, “This is so wonderful! We have to do

this every year!" I groaned. At that point, after having gone through 13 hours of the final stages of whacking labor contractions before our son was born, I felt like someone had beat me from the inside with a baseball bat. Every year?! I wasn't willing. However, the incredible love that flowed into me after holding our dear little infant that was made through our love made me forget all the pain in an instant. As I looked into his new little eyes, I saw an ancient soul there. That was my first impression of him, honestly.

I said to him, "I know you are an ancient soul. I hope you will be patient with me. I don't know the first thing about raising a baby."

The next day was the day before Christmas, a day usually filled with joy. Bob excitedly went to the office of the New York Post with a box full of cigars to pass out in celebration of the birth of our son. The men in the office were strangely silent. Confused, Bob went into the Manager's Office, where instead of taking the cigar from Bob, he gave him his "pink slip." Bob was fired! Their jealousy had come to the point where they rewarded him for bringing the Post out of a potentially bankrupt situation by firing him! It was a crushing blow, especially a slap in the face on his day of special joy over the birth of our son. He tried to take it in stride, feeling that he would overcome it and get a better job. But it hurt...

A few weeks later on a Friday, as he was making his rounds trying to locate another job, several of his acquaintances came up to him, patting him on the back soundly, congratulating him on the outcome of the production of his new cigarette. Bob was confused.

He learned then that the cigarette he had invented had just come out. And the company that put the cigarette out was the very company that was Guild's account....I will not mention the name of the cigarette here for fear of legal ramifications, but it is an extremely famous and profitable cigarette.

On Saturday Bob called Guild and said, "I see that you did use my idea for the cigarette. I hope you wrote me in for some profit in it." Guild replied, reluctantly, "Yes, I guess we have to talk. Why don't you and Sandi come over tomorrow morning?"

Sunday morning we strolled across Central Park with the baby, going from our West Side apartment to the East side of the Park. As we arrived at Guild's building we saw police cars and a hearse downstairs. Just as we stepped off the

elevator on his floor, they were wheeling out a stretcher with a sheet over Guild's dead body. He had taken an overdose of pills the night before and had been found dead by one of his four sons (all of whom were in Yale University). Even though Guild's friendship we found to be traitorous, we were shocked and saddened. Although, why he would deliberately steal Bob's cigarette when he had millions of dollars and didn't really need to steal was an enigma. He didn't **need** the money, and it certainly wasn't worth **dying** over. Maybe he wanted to get back at Bob for not accepting his offer to "buy" me. I know he was jealous that Bob had me for a wife, even though he wasn't a multimillionaire. Maybe it was the dead end of a life lived pursuing vanity. At any rate, here was a 45 year old Boston Socialite multimillionaire with everything and more than most people have--4 handsome, intelligent sons, prestige, genius and dead. This was another blow to my poor husband that affected him with occasional bouts of depression, understandably.

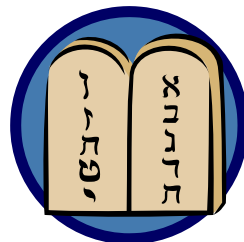
All the lectures and advice Guild had given me over the past year took on a new meaning. Should I listen and learn from a genius who killed himself and treated trusting friends in such a manner?

Chapter Five

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Backtracking a little, when I was in the early part of pregnancy with my first son, for some reason one night we were thumbing through the Bible and turned to the writings of King Solomon in Ecclesiastes. It is in this Chapter that Solomon was asking all of the same questions that Bob and I were asking. After all, he was a big swinger; he had 300 wives and 700 concubines, the table of kings, royal parties. We could identify with him, his lifestyle, and the people at his parties. And he concluded that it was ***all vanity***, the same conclusion we had come to from our own experience. The only thing that King Solomon found worthwhile in his entire search for wisdom was to love G-d and to serve Him in all things. I could believe this, but I still had many questions. What was G-d? How were people to serve Him? How could He hear the prayers of millions of people at the same time, and be there to help them all at once? As a Christian I had been taught that Jesus and G-d were One, which gave me an image of a corporeal G-d. So how could a material (corporeal) being be in many places at the same time? And how could G-d have been killed if He and Jesus were One? If He was dead at any instance wouldn't the world end, or chaos ensue? How could G-d be a man, when He told us in His second commandment not to ever worship Him in any image, of what was in the heavens above, or on the earth below, and to have no other G-d before Him? Wasn't worshipping Jesus breaking the second commandment? And why should there be, in this age of enlightenment (sic) additional religions after the Creator displayed his wonders to the entire House of Israel and Moses, the Prophet, and gave them the law of the universe, of worship, of social harmony, of farming, resting, addressing whatever situation that might arise in your life: The Jewish

B_{asic} **I**_{nstructions} **B**_{efore} **L**_{eaving} **E**_{arth}



I had asked these questions of my ministers and many more, but they could not satisfy me with answers. The Wise King Solomon wrote (Ecclesiastes 3;14) "Whatever G-d decrees shall be forever; nothing shall be added to it, and nothing shall be taken away." Christianity had added to it and taken away from it. Why? Since there was One God, then Truth (which is one of G-d's names) was One. Logic would lead to this conclusion. I would also logically reason that I could believe something that was witnessed by the *the entire House of Israel* than by **one man** who said G-d gave him a different law, be it Jesus or Mohammed or Buddha. Customs of worship might culturally be different, but the LAW was ONE. And the Bible says that we must not add or subtract from it, and whichever Prophet tells you different is not to be believed.

The story of the Virgin Mary bothered me also. If the only way to have a really holy son was to be a virgin, then were all of us conceived in sin since we were made through copulation? Was the theory of original sin true? Did sex make us dirty? Look in the dictionary. The antonym of virgin is "sullied," "spoiled," "impure." If a woman was no longer a virgin, was she forever "spoiled, impure, dirtied, even if she were married?" I would certainly NEVER enjoy sex if I felt that I was being dirtied every time my husband made love to me! If the first commandment G-d gave to mankind was to be fruitful and multiply, how could it be both a commandment and a sin?

I had studied 3 years of Latin in school, and had learned about all the myths of Roman and Greek gods. They, and the surrounding nations had legends of gods copulating with mortals and having super, godlike sons. Could this be a corruption that was added by the idol-worshippers in early Roman Catholic days? I knew that the New Testament had not been canonized until 500 years after Jesus died, so the possibility of the true story being tampered with was great. The early Christians were Jews, but the early Church was built by Romans and others who had been idol-worshippers and warmongers. Perhaps they had incorporated some of those legends and customs into Christianity. Jesus didn't write anything; he was a preacher. He learned all he knew from his Jewish teachers. So, it seemed that Paul (Saul), who never met Jesus, wrote 17 books of the New Testament for the gentiles that he was preaching to. If there were any additions or changes in the Law, that would be **against the law!** If there were no changes (which there were), then what was the purpose of the New Testament other than some history?

I really needed to figure out this dichotomy. Once G-d gave the Law to Moses and the Children of Israel, why would there be a change? Did G-d change His mind? Of course not. Were people different? Not a big change. What did we need with another religion? Yes, the Law was given to the Children of Israel as a priesthood for G-d. As a priesthood, the Jews had 613 laws to carry out in the service of G-d to be an example of holiness to every nation. But what did G-d want from non-Jews. If you were not a Jew, you only had the 7 laws given to Noah. But nothing in humanity had changed.

There didn't seem to be any change in the Roman Empire's mentality in the early Church. Tales of slaughter and cruelty in the name of G-d swept through the world during the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, pogroms and the Holocaust. The message of Love that impressed me in learning of our Creator in the Old Testament seemed to have escaped them. I had visions of Emperors who couldn't seem to quell the spread of Christianity in Rome, so they decided it was better to join them than to fight them. However, they must have said, "O.K., you can be a Christian, and so will I, but I am the Pope, this nobleman is a Cardinal, and you have to obey everything I say in the name of G-d or *off with your head!*."

But how could I start tampering with the Bible, believing in some things, but not others? Was I wise enough to choose? I knew I was not. But King Solomon spoke to me in the language I could understand through my own experiences, and the things I was chasing and my friends were chasing seemed to end in emptiness of spirit. I was inspired to take a new look at the Bible that I had put away some years ago, but I wanted to look at it from a fresh viewpoint; one of an adult, and a curious adult, at that, with questions that needed to be answered. I didn't want to go back to the Christian ministers who glared at me every time I asked a question to which I wanted a logical answer, which they couldn't provide. I didn't want lectures that my ETERNITY would be threatened if I didn't accept on faith alone some facets of religion that I wanted to understand more deeply. Being raised as a Christian, I had only now realized that Jesus was a Jew, and what he would have taught would be the Jewish wisdom of his forefathers. If I could learn more about Judaism, I would understand more.

I do not disregard or have no respect for FAITH. Faith is important, especially when dealing with metaphysical matters, for you cannot SEE the metaphysical world. But I do know that there is a logic to everything, and if you

pursue it long enough and hard enough, you will come to an understanding of sorts in this physical world and in the metaphysical world. Because I was a “muse” I had to *feel* harmony in something before I could incorporate it into my “belief system.” So I began to read more of the “Old Testament.” I wanted to begin at the Beginning and try to understand what G-d told the People of Israel to do.

Chapter Six

REFORMED JUDAISM

After thinking through all that I had read I came to the conclusion Judaism was the root of all religion, that Jesus was a Jew, King David was a Jew, King Solomon was a Jew and so was Moses and all the Prophets whose faith and vision had inspired me. G-d had given the Law to Moses and the Children of Israel. So why not find out how they worshipped as Jews? Why not learn about the unadulterated religion that was the mother of all the great religions? Despite the discouragement of some of the rabbis I had spoken to, I decided to learn Judaism. But I was so innocent I didn’t know about the fact that there were three kinds of Judaism in those days. (Now there are more.) I just went to the synagogue nearest me, which was the Steven Wise Free Synagogue on upper Central Park West. It was a Reform synagogue, and it offered a fifteen-week course for converts on Judaism. All I learned was Jewish Philosophy and Jewish History, which is very interesting and humane. But I didn’t learn anything about G-d, nor did I learn how to serve Him. I didn’t learn any Law, and I didn’t learn much Bible. I was taught that kosher laws were no longer necessary, due to modern refrigeration and sanitary laws; that Orthodox Jews are fossils of history who had nothing to offer for a modern person. I considered myself a modern person, so I took their word for it. But I wanted to make Sabbath a special day, and pouring a glass of wine and eating challah didn’t make it that much different. I still didn’t know how to serve G-d.

I asked the rabbi what was considered “working” on the Sabbath. I gave a “for instance” of my husband’s newest weekend project, which was making a stereo cabinet. The rabbi said that if my husband were a carpenter, working on the cabinet would be considered “work.” But since he was an advertising man, and this was just a hobby, it would be permitted. So my life didn’t really change

drastically becoming a Jew. It wasn't any different, really. Going to synagogue on Friday night was a friendly meeting of Jews, and Bob and I enjoyed praying with the congregation, and the atmosphere was sort of like a Country Club social gathering. People were nice. But I still didn't know anything about the G-d of Israel or how to really serve Him. I wasn't learning anything.

When our first son, Frederick, was born on December 23, 1963, our doctor advised us to have him circumcised in the hospital on the 4th day, before we left the hospital. Since Bob's parents weren't alive, and since my family wasn't Jewish and all lived in Florida, there was really no one to invite for the "Brith" so we decided not to have one, and to have the doctor, who was Jewish, to do the circumcision in the hospital. So, even this holy ritual and "simcha", the Covenant of G-d with the children of Abraham, was denied us. We didn't know any better, because reform rabbis don't teach respect for the importance of what is written in the Torah. For them, Torah is very arbitrary. Therefore, it is very arbitrary for their congregates as well. Sort of like "Do What You Want" Judaism.

Ten weeks after my second son Joseph was born, I went back to work for Lou Walters, who was producing a show at the Latin Quarter. I was nursing Joseph, Frederick was a toddler, still in diapers, and six weeks after Joseph was born my husband's two daughters Jewel and Eve came to live with us. So I went from one child, to four children in six weeks. It was very tiring. I was a lead dancer with a short special dance, and a showgirl for the other numbers in the show. The girls in the show knew that I had converted to Judaism, and they were so kind to me and respectful that I had converted that they offered me Friday night off. This was the most desired night for everyone as their night off. But Saturday night we had to do three shows instead of two, so I declined their offer of Sabbath and took off Saturday night instead. The attitude I had learned in Reformed Judaism made me feel that it was not that important. I am ashamed of that decision today, but I was so tired all the time that after a few months, when the spotlights were shining in my eyes, my eyes teared so much that my makeup ran. Working until 3:00 A.M., then getting up at 8:00 A.M. to care for my newborn son whom I was nursing, my toddler son of 1 1/2 and Bob's two young daughters who needed a lot of emotional support was extremely tiring, and doing three shows on Saturday night was too much for me to handle. And I wasn't taught to respect the Sabbath the way it should be respected.

I now believe (with perfect hindsight) that this is a disservice to many people who sincerely wish to learn what Judaism is all about. I was sincere, yet I was not taught about the wisdom of the Torah and the Jewish Sages' commentaries, nor did I learn how to serve G-d, blessed be He; and I was given a prejudiced view of Orthodoxy without knowing any better. It pains me that the Family of Israel is so separated into sometimes slightly hostile groups, when we need so much to be united, especially when it comes to Faith, for we ***are an endangered race!***

I happened to be in a discussion with a Reform Rabbi many years after I converted to Orthodox Judaism, at a meeting in Lexington, Kentucky. Another woman in the audience asked the Rabbi just what Judaism believed in? He replied that "We" (as if he were speaking for all Judaism) don't believe that the Five Books of Moses were written by Moses in Divine Revelation, but that they were written over a period of many hundreds of years by "wise men" (***unknown and unmentioned***) He also stated that "We" don't believe that G-d listens to mankind today, but that He Created the World and now it runs on its own without any intervention from G-d. I was shocked because I didn't know that this was the "official philosophy" of the Reform Movement! I felt outraged that so many searching people in that audience might go through life thinking that THIS IS JUDAISM! I could not embarrass this "rabbi" in front of all these people by standing up and stating that this was NOT Judaism. But I did ask him a question that he could not answer. I asked him why should any of his congregation pray (which they do)? Obviously, they could not expect their prayers to be answered if G-d does not intervene nowadays, so why bother to pray? It would be an exercise in futility.

One woman who was kind enough to critique my first draft of this book made a remark that she thought I didn't consider Reform Jews to be "authentic Jews" because of my critical observations of that "conversion experience." I want to make it very clear that this is ***not the impression*** I wish to give! Any person who is born Jewish remains Jewish no matter how he or she worships. Many Jews I have met are second and third generation assimilated! They don't know much about their own religion, but that doesn't make them any less Jewish. What should be clear is that any person ***converted*** to Judaism in any branch but Orthodoxy is not "halachically" (legally) recognized to be a Jew. I just think it's a shame that people who attend Reform Synagogues don't have the opportunity to

learn the full beauty of their authentic religion, and that they are taught that certain things in Judaism are nonsense, when they are far from nonsense. They are beautiful and fulfilling and full of deep wisdom that could help them with their lives.

I believe that there are many Jewish people who go to Reform or Conservative Synagogues because they are not, themselves, totally observant of all the laws of Orthodox Judaism. Maybe they live too far away from a synagogue, and have to drive there, which they might not do to visit an Orthodox synagogue. So they pray in a less observant place.

But I do not think that many Jews are really aware of exactly what Reformed Judaism's philosophies are. I know many Jews who pray in Reform Synagogues and sincerely believe that G-d is listening to them. They believe in reward and punishment, and try to live a life filled with charity and good deeds. For some reason they don't observe some of the mitzvot, but they have a relationship with, and a love of G-d. Or maybe they really wish to pray together as a family in a Conservative Synagogue, because they don't know the beneficial reasons for separating the genders.

There are many cities where there are no Orthodox Synagogues, or no synagogues at all, and they must travel to another city in order to have **any contact with other Jews** for their families to worship and socialize with. There are many reasons why Jewish people pray where they do.

I remember how naive I was about the hostilities between the different sects of Judaism when I was studying Orthodoxy. I thought that my Reform Rabbi would be proud that I was becoming more observant, and I called him and told him that I was studying Orthodox Judaism and was considering becoming Orthodox. I didn't understand his cool reception to this news for a long time. I am very sorry about the hostility that exists between Jews. There is certainly more than enough hostility among the nations toward the Jewish People, and it is sad to see hostilities toward our own small remnant. It is written that if the Jewish People would only UNITE, that the Holy One, blessed be He, would help us, *even if it were an evil thing we were united for*.

Many of assimilated Jews are very aware that we are living in an age where ancient prophecies are being fulfilled (i.e. the rebirth of the Jewish State of Israel, the return of our people from the four corners of the earth, including now, thank G-

d, the Russian Jews, the recent events in the Persian Gulf War, etc.). If G-d paid no attention to His Creation after creating it, who or what is rearranging the world now according to the ancient prophecies? These are obvious miracles, not chance happenstance that 42 Scuds lobbed by Iraq to heavily populated civilian areas in Israel killed only two people (from heart attack, fright), while one Scud missile aimed at a Saudi Arabian barely populated desert killed 28 American soldiers, G-d rest their souls. One bomb did all that destruction! The G-d of Israel guards His People, "He neither slumbers nor sleeps." But I think the People of Israel are walking in their sleep. How could the Government of Israel allow their people to live under NO SECURITY when it is their job to SECURE THEIR CITIZENS? How could our Ally, Mr. George Bush, leave us in such a dangerous situation? For "oil," that's how. And that is how the situation remains until today. Israel is an inconvenient ally when you are trying to make oil deals for your family and friends.

Think of the devastation that could have happened in Israel without this special protection! I saw on TV during the Scud attacks a man crawling out of a complete pile of rubble that one minute before was his home. There was just a small opening in the roof surrounded by total ruination. And he crawled out with minor scrapes. A miracle!

What disturbs me most is that such a philosophy as described by that Reform rabbi in Lexington destroys FAITH instead of inspiring FAITH! What could possibly be, then, the purpose of this "religion?" Faith in what?

The division of Judaism into several denominations seems to me to be detrimental. When Christianity divided the Protestant sect from Catholicism; when subsequently the Protestant movement divided into Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Seventh Day Adventist, etc., etc., these divisions were recognized as acceptable religions and given the respect due to religions. But there is a definite difference here that cannot be compared to what has happened in the division of Judaism. Although these Christian divisions disagreed on certain aspects and interpretations of the Bible, they did not **deny the Divinity of the origin of the Bible**, nor did they believe that G-d would not answer their prayers. They have passionate faith in the L-rd of Creation. So they are recognized as legitimate "religions." We see today, however, that some

Christian sects are trying to cut out some parts of the Bible. I believe this will be very detrimental to society.

However, when Reform Judaism divided itself from authentic Judaism, they threw the Holy Torah away! They even burned Torah scrolls, Talmud's and holy books in Europe. They said all those laws were unnecessary nowadays. They did not even pretend to be following a *contemporary prophet* who had convinced them that G-d no longer considered these laws necessary. They were people who were born Jewish, but didn't like to be "different" than the gentiles around them. They wanted to be able to fit into the society around them and not be constrained by Jewish law not to eat their food, drink with them, party with gentiles on the Sabbath or work on Sabbath. They didn't want to be kept out of secular universities and occupations that barred Jews. They didn't want to look so different than the gentiles in their manner of dress. So they formed a "social club" which was devoid of any authentic religion or faith and made up their own rule which must have been something like, "You only need to have been born Jewish, but you can do anything you like and still be religious." Then they even changed the rules of what makes one Jewish by accepting children born of Jewish fathers and gentile mothers. Authentic Jewish law holds that only a child who is born to a Jewish **mother** is recognized as a Jew. The wisdom of this is that everyone knows who the mother is, but must accept on the word of the mother who the father is. The one benefit that has been derived from Reformed, Conservative and other non-authentic Judaism is that, at least they still identify themselves as Jews, which many Jews deny, change their names, convert, totally assimilate out of the Jewish world completely.

The nations of the world, and the assimilated, uneducated Jew could accept a different denomination of Judaism because they had accepted so many forms of Christianity. I don't think they understood the diabolical nature or consequences of this "reform religion" which denied the divinity of the Torah, and the necessity to follow anything written there.

This was the actual beginning of the Holocaust. Before Hitler started anything, the Reform Judaism destroyed the Jewish souls who were lured into it. However, no matter how far they ran from being "Jewish," in order to play in the gentile society, their good German gentile friends recognized them as Jews as they turned them over to the Gestapo.

Before Reform Judaism was dignified with recognition as a “religion,” one was either:

- 1) An observant Jew or
- 2) A non-observant Jew.

Nobody called non-observance a religion, as the Reform do now. There was no such thing as Orthodox, Conservative, Reform or Deconstructionist (whatever that means). There was only Torah Judaism, one religion, one G-d, one Holy People, the children of Israel, no confusion, and no division. We recognized our saints, who were perfect in their observance, and there were scholars and those who were more and less educated. But the less educated didn’t believe any less in G-d and His Mercy, and they did not make up their own rules, or throw out rules, and call it “religion.” They just admitted that they weren’t very religious. Many of them loved G-d very much.

Those who had a great deal of love for G-d, but who weren’t really scholars, found great comfort in joining the early Chassidic movement.

Joy was the key word in Chassidism! Being a *learned* Jew was not most important, and there were many hard-working and poor Jews who had neither the time nor the money for becoming scholars. But the “deeds” of “chesed,” of loving kindness, were accessible to all who love the King of the Universe. Serving G-d in joy was something they **could do!** I have met so many Chassidim in my life who are so “high” on love of the “Most High,” that they seem unreal; they are so sweet to others.

The fact that there is hostility between Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Jews today is disturbing, because we are commanded to “love your brother as yourself.” If some Jewish people cannot carry the entire “oul” (or yoke) of Torah, I can understand that.

But they should not negate the Jews who **do**, or say that they are outdated, old-fashioned, and not modern or other uncomplimentary things. There is a big world of Orthodox scholars, doctors, quantum scientists, top technologists, lawyers, professors, entrepreneurs, who bring holiness into their modern professions, tackle social and medical emergencies in the community, are bringing together Kabalistic metaphysical knowledge together with quantum science to heal cancer and find cheap, non polluting energy resources, solve social emergencies,

rule on scientific breakthroughs. They are on the **cutting edge** of the modern world. They just stay away from hedonistic life-styles and live a holy, Torah, family and professional life. There is nothing unmeritorious about this life-style. It really bothers me that every media broadcast I see or hear calls the Orthodox "right-wing or ultra-nationalist extremist. Orthodoxy means "accepted belief." It's the "real thing." It is not extreme. It is **correct**. I do not see Christians calling Evangelistic or Born Again Christians extremist. It is simply "wholehearted devotion."

I have also met some Orthodox Jews and Chassidim who stay far away from any Jew who is assimilated, for fear of being contaminated by foreign doctrine. I appreciate their "yirat hashem;" (awe of G-d) but the original intent of the early Chassidic leaders was to bring close to the G-d of Israel those members of the House of Israel who didn't know Him, through showing the joy and love that pervades a Jew's holy way of life. We should strive to be a "light to our own," if not a "light unto the nations," which is our Universal task. We are not proselytizing in this situation—these are our **own family**, the Family of Israel. We need to show the love and joy of mitzvah-loving families to those who are uneducated about their glorious inheritance, and awaken the spark of the flame of Torah that burns within them.

I know that there are some people who's fear of sinning or being influenced in some negative way is so strong that they just don't have the kind of personality to relax enough to relay the kind of loving ways of Torah Judaism to a person whose way of life abhors strict discipline. It takes a special personality and experience in life for one to be able to go into a world of hedonism and come back holding hands with a few Jews who were in that world, without getting a little "shmutzy." It is even more difficult still to have the patience, insight and the knowledge of how to relate to each individual in the language that each different personality's experience in life can relate to, so that they aren't thinking of Judaism in terms of deprivation, too much strictness, self-denial, guilt, etc. which many runaway Jews conceive of as Judaism. The only answer to all of these problems is "love." But not foolish, naive or physical love; I'm speaking of the love of the Bestower of all; love that is constantly flowing, and of helping a person to tap in to all this love, because this is something so many people desire, need, but they

never understood it exactly, nor do they all experience love. And that's sad, because that Love is always there for the taking. That is one of HaShem's names.

I think that every Jew should get back to that way of thinking, of showing "chesed," loving kindness, to those who have strayed far from Judaism. This authentic, Chassidic precedent would definitely win over those who would be attracted to the "love bombing " that Jews for Jesus offer. All of the evangelical missionaries love bomb their target population. And it works! A revival of that early Chassidic rapture could save our lost ones who are assimilating and intermarrying at the alarming rate of 52%! This could help us to keep in the Jewish world more of our people than Hitler destroyed. It would most certainly be a nice society to dwell in.

We, as Jews, are the luckiest nation in the world. We have more proof than any existing religion on this planet today of the authenticity of our Torah. The giving of the Ten Commandments was witnessed by 600,000 men between the ages of 20 and 60, plus old men, the wives, daughters and young sons, as well as the "mixed multitude" that came out of Egypt with the Israelites. So millions of people witnessed this extraordinary event. Not only have the ordinances written in the Torah proven their long-lasting value to humanity, but also recent archaeological findings in the Middle East have proven every historical event mentioned in the Bible. The wars between nations, the kings who ruled at the time, the work of the Jews as slaves building the pyramids of Egypt, the ramp for the sacrifice that the L-rd commanded Joshua ben Nun to build in Jericho as he led Israel into the Promised Land, all evidence has been verified in recent digs. The Dead Sea Scrolls were the very same holy books that we have today, letter for letter, no change. The very Cave that Abraham bought to bury his beloved wife Sara, in which he and his sons and their wives were also buried, is the Machpela where Jews in Hebron go to pray every day. The Tomb of Rachel on the roadside of Bethlehem, where Jacob buried her when she died in childbirth with Benjamin is there for all to see. Do people not understand that these events that were written thousands of years ago, and here for us to see with our own eyes today, are obviously true facts? Nobody changed the Bible and nobody changed the sites to fit the story.

Every event that G-d prophesied that He would do to, and for, the Children of Israel has come about, including, thank G-d, the return of His People to the Land

of Israel. The only thing that remains for us to wait for is the coming of Messiah. Only we shouldn't "wait" for it, we should "work" for it. This is a Book and a G-d that we can witness for. So why should certain Jews who don't believe in the Book invent a kind of Judaism that calls itself a religion and denies everything we've witnessed? I say let us keep our eyes open and learn on.....

Chapter Seven

THE REAL McCOY!

It wasn't until three years after my Reform conversion, and two sons and four years of marriage, that I found out that my reform conversion didn't really make me Jewish and my two sons were not considered Jewish. My husband's two daughters from his first marriage were living with us in the Bronx and my youngest stepdaughter Eve (eleven years old) was going to Talmud Torah classes at the Mt. Eden Center in the Bronx, an Orthodox synagogue. We all attended a Hanukkah play of the Talmud Torah class, when Rabbi David Hollander spotted my small Irish nose and asked me where I was converted. I told him, and he replied that I wasn't Jewish, my children weren't Jewish, and according to Jewish Law, my husband and I weren't married! I was totally shocked, as I had considered myself a Jewess for 3 years. I asked him then if my children were considered illegitimate. He laughed and said, "No." He told me that if I wanted to find out more about it, I

should meet him in his office Tuesday night. He, himself, never dealt with converts, but he knew a rabbi who would help. We met on Tuesday night, and I was introduced to Rabbi Maurice Lamm, who offered to teach me what it was all about. I was given an address and a list of books to pick up there. They were books on Kashrut (kosher food preparation), Taharat HaMishpacha (Family Purity Laws of Married Sexuality), and Sabbath and Holidays. After reading these books, I realized how much I didn't know about being a Jew, and what a responsibility it imposed upon my soul if I did convert. My whole life had to change. I was working at the Latin Quarter since 10 weeks after my 2nd son was born, starring in a dance. Would I have to quit? Being a Jew meant to be totally holy, to live life as an example of holiness to all who saw me, to serve G-d with my whole heart, soul and might always. I wasn't sure if I could do it, or would like it, or if I wanted to do it. If there is one thing I hate, it's hypocrisy! I wasn't going to say I would do all this, have them convert me, and then not do the mitzvot (commandments). That would weigh heavily on my soul in the next world, as well as damage the trust put in me by the rabbis who were vouching for my sincerity. The rabbis, I learned, would also be culpable for binding my soul to observance of all these commandments. If I didn't convert, I would only have to keep the seven Noachide Laws given to Noah after the Flood. To be a Jewess meant to be responsible for 613 laws. I decided to try it for a while before I made up my mind, to incorporate one new mitzvah at a time into my life and see what benefits it might bring to my family and me. I wasn't quite sure how Bob would like it. He was proud to be a Jew, but he already was a Jew. He hadn't eaten kosher since he married his first Jewish wife. Would he want to wrap tfillin, wear tzitzit, pray 3 times a day, really OBSERVE Shabbat? And what about the laws of Family Purity? It took several months before he would read the pamphlet on that!

What about my career? How could I harmonize that? Friday and Saturday were the big nights for show business. What about "modesty?" What about my present job? Well, one thing at a time. Nobody was forcing me to do this. I could always change my mind. Maybe I could also learn something that would benefit me and the family without converting. And maybe Bob could benefit from this. He had been through a lot of pain, deception of his wife, partner, had lost all he had worked so hard for those many years of his first marriage. He didn't complain about it, but I felt the pain inside of him that he bravely tried to hide.



*Sandi Vincent starring at the Latin Quarter 1965
(10 weeks after 2nd Son was born)*

Chapter Eight

KOSHER LAWS

I started by koshering the kitchen and cooking only kosher food. My dear little stepdaughter Eve had complained to me that she couldn't invite her friends to my home if I didn't keep Kosher. So I felt that this was the first most important mitzvah I could start with, because if not for her going to Talmud Torah classes, I would never have even known that I wasn't Jewish.

I was amazed at how it organized my life in the kitchen. I learned from Rebbetzin Lamm how to kosher my kitchen, my oven, some pots and pans. I bought new milk and meat dishes, silverware and utilities, which was a little bit expensive, but it was worth it. Everything sparkled and everything had its place according to whether it was milk or meat.

I learned by reading such books as "The Royal Table," by Jacob Cohen, the many purposes for the laws of kashrut. "You are what you eat" holds very true for kashrut, and everyone in this day and age knows how chemistry effects thought and action. If one is striving to live a spiritual life, one should eat a diet that doesn't put a bloodthirsty chemistry into one's system. The chemistry of a bloodthirsty lion would put bloodthirsty cravings and bring out one's more bloodthirsty characteristics. You'd be working against yourself in your struggle to sanctify your life and make decisions for your life that will affect your spiritual plane.

For instance, all of the permitted animals are domestic animals, and most are vegetarian. Even of the foul, one is advised to eat the hen rather than the rooster because of its more gentle temperament. The animals must chew the cud and part the hoof. These ruminating animals have more than one stomach, so by the time they finish their food it is totally digested, making their meat more easy for us to digest. Of the food that is not permitted, there seems to be more than one reason. For instance, in the case of bottom fish, such as shrimp, lobster, clams, who eat all the waste that sinks to the bottom of the water, one would not want to put into one's system food that eats garbage. A good analogy might be one of putting diesel fuel into a car that must use unleaded gas. It's just going to gunk up the whole system, and it won't run right.

Additionally, if we remove hoards of them from the ocean floor for food, there is nothing left to clean the ocean's bottom, resulting in pollution of the waters and

an imbalance in the ecology. If one eats kosher, domesticated animals, and fish with scales and fins, one is not disturbing the ecology, nor eating garbage.

The laws concerning not mixing milk and meat are more than just the humanitarian laws of not “boiling a kid in its mother’s milk.” Milk and milk products are easier to digest than meat. If the milk is eaten first, it will digest quickly, so it is permissible to eat meat directly after milk. But in the case of eating meat first, the process of digestion is more difficult and time consuming. If one has milk products after meat, the milk product must sit and wait until the meat has digested, causing the system to have to work harder, and according to some research, may even cause anemia, not to mention indigestion.

There is a science called “trophology” which concerns the effect on human health from the mixing of foods and the order they should be eaten in order to achieve the healthiest benefit from the foods. I actually learned about trophology when reading a book on Tao in the chapters about diet, and the author, a gentile, specifically mentions the “wisdom of the kosher laws in the Bible.”

There is also something to be said for the self-discipline you develop when you realize that everything in the world your eyes meet isn’t for you to put in your mouth! Not every creature has to die to satisfy your palate, either.

We are now finding out that pork not only can be infected by trichinosis, but that pork is also a carcinogen. This has nothing to do with refrigeration or sanitation. Pork is also very high in saturated fat, which causes heart disease. Even of permitted meat, the Bible warns us not to eat the fat. Bottom fish eat the garbage that sinks to the bottom of the ocean. Who wants to imbibe a food that eats garbage? At certain times of the year lobster is poison.

Surely, since G-d made us, he knows what kind of fuel is the perfect food for our bodies and our souls, so it makes sense to follow the commandments G-d gave us concerning which is meant for food and which is not. It wasn’t at all difficult to adapt most of my favorite recipes to be kosher. I have always disliked pork and all fatty meats.

So, what they taught me in Reform Judaism about the reasons we don’t need to keep kosher was simply not true. This was a diet that, among many other good things, was for making harmony and balance between the body and the soul. What would be the good of studying holy books and striving to improve one’s

spiritual strength and discipline, and then feed oneself a chemistry that was too hot, leading you away from spiritual pursuits?

My husband reacted to my keeping kosher with surprising joy. I had thought that he might feel denied, as we had eaten for years in fancy Continental Restaurants, and Lobster Cantonese was one of his favorite Chinese foods. But it seemed as if the contentment and familiarity he had experienced in his beloved mother's kitchen returned to him. He still misses Lobster Cantonese, to be truthful, but it is a small sacrifice for the many other benefits he has obtained through the harmony of living a Torah Life. It must be his favorite place, the alter, the table where we bless G-d for our daily sustenance, because the dining room table is where he studies every day. I put more books away from off the table than dishes nowadays.

Actually, I could adapt most of our favorite recipes to be kosher. It most certainly doesn't interfere with having delicious food. It was also surprising to me to learn how my infant and toddler sons responded to sanctifying food. There seems to be an inborn sweetness of recognition and love of their Maker in small children, because the expressions on my sons' faces when we taught them to recite the blessings over their food before they ate it can only be described as "holy joy." They actually shined. They were proud to recite the proper blessings as they learned so quickly. My infant son Joe, while sitting in his highchair, dropped his yarmulke accidentally and refused to eat until it was again resting on his head. It must be the "sensus numinous" that Carl Jung found existent in every society he researched, the feeling within of love of one's Creator.

Chapter Nine

A PEACEFUL HOME

Another book that had a great influence on my life was “A Jew and His Home,” by Eliyahu Kitov. This man has a way of presenting his views with a great deal of understanding and love. He taught in his book, how to achieve “Shalom Bayit” (a peaceful home), which is the most important thing to me. If your home isn't peaceful, then where can you go for comfort or succor? Although my husband and I loved each other very much, I will not pretend that it was ALWAYS peaceful. I have never known a home where there were **never** disagreements. Many times I had been confused as to how to settle an argument or how to convince my husband not to offend my sensitivities with loud arguments. This offended my ears and frightened me, as it was not something I was used to. My grandfather never raised his voice in our home. My husband, however, was born in the Bronx, where he grew up in the streets battling for his life since the age of four. People yelled in fights, people yelled six floors up to call their friends out to play or tell them they had a phone call at the candy store. Yelling was natural for Bob, but not for me. I very much desired to achieve a serene atmosphere in my home.

When I learned about Zen Buddhism, I read an account of a lovely Indian princess who loved G-d and wanted to serve Him by entering the Buddhist monastery as a nun. She was told by the priest that her “karma” was to bear a son to inherit the crown. She dutifully married, had a son, and then, feeling that she had fulfilled her duty, she shaved her head (!), disfigured her face (!), and entered the monastery to become a nun. My reaction to this story was:

1. Why did she have to disfigure herself to serve G-d? If He created her beautiful, why would He want her to destroy that beauty in order to serve Him? Vanity is one thing, but disfigurement is entirely another story.

2. Who was going to raise her son if she entered the monastery? Wouldn't her child feel abandoned? Wasn't it easier to be sinless if one lived away from others and was not tempted by the world?

I needed a religion that taught me how to live in the world, and deal with a husband and children and dirty diapers. I didn't want to go off and live on a mountaintop alone. Kitov, on the other hand, gave me answers to how and why to

put up with family pressures and problems. I recommend this book highly to anyone curious to see what a Jewish home is all about? It was the beauty of the Jewish home that had attracted me to the Jewish people in the first place.

A source of quarrels between my husband and myself was virtually eliminated when there was a difference of opinion. Now that we were both appreciative of G-d's Mastership and the divine law that He gave to His People, Israel, instead of arguing over who was wrong or right in a situation, we tried looking into the Torah and related commentaries to find the RIGHT WAY FOR BOTH OF US. Our egos didn't get in the way of seeking peace with one another (most of the time). Of course, it takes time to re-habituate one's self, but it was definitely a BIG step in the right direction.

Most of the time our egos and our personal beliefs cause us to argue with our mates, and the natural desire of everyone is to WIN the argument and prove their point, but not necessarily SOLVE the problem. If "shalom bayit" (a peaceful home) is your aim, your goal is changed to that of *solving the problem* instead of *winning an argument*.

Discussions of dissension are aimed at *understanding one another*. This is more of a win-win situation than something that can lead to domestic violence, screams, resentment, grudges, frightened children, abused children, battered wives, accusations, hurt, pain, confusion, the cause of the divorce of half of all who marry these days. As a social worker and counselor over the past 30 years I can witness that this pain is growing worse every year.

When you begin to live in a holy world where you learn such values as honor, consideration for others, a desire to do good deeds for the sake of pleasing your Maker, you begin to live in a "higher world" of "reason." You begin to "think" instead of "react" to situations. If you and your mate are both striving to build a "bayit ne'eman b'Yisrael" (a home with faith in G-d), you get smarter. You become higher beings, striving for holy behavior, not brutish behavior. If things get out of hand, you can ask the one who is out of control, "How do you think the Holy One, blessed be He, wants you to handle this?" It may help you both to bring the Holy Spirit into the situation and calm it, working it out according to the wisdom of the Torah instead of arguing who is right or wrong. Try to think this through honestly and don't let your ego and your inclination for denial keep you deaf to reason .

Forgiving foolish behavior instead of keeping anger, tension, grudges also adds to the peace of the home. I have known couples who walk around for days not speaking to one another, or speaking angrily because of ONE MOMENT in time that has already passed, making for much more time spent feeling bad. Shalom Bayit must be pursued as your aim, so stop sulking and adding to your misery. If your goal is the *win the argument* instead of find "shalom bayit" (a peaceful home), then you are both losers.

Let's talk about time for a moment. Time is an interesting phenomenon, as once it ticks away every second, it's gone. It's history. We can never get it back. We can't change it. Once it's spent the only reward you will have is your memory of it. And you will **reap** what you **sow**. Did you spend your time wisely? Will the memory of how you spent your time make you feel happy and satisfied with your life, or sad, disappointed, angry, confused, in trouble, sorry? Did you get something valuable for what you did when you spent that moment? Or did you waste it? Or make it miserable? Did you get what you wanted? Your present is going to be your past as soon as tomorrow. Time is precious and should be spent wisely, don't you think? So pursuit of wisdom should be a worthwhile goal. Would you think it smarter to study *moronics*?

How you habituate yourself to handling domestic situations and problems will affect your past, present and future. Make your time on earth *precious time*! So you must keep your mind on what you want out of life, aim towards it; spend your time and words towards accomplishing those goals.

Words are also something like time, in that once a word has gone forth it cannot be taken back. Did you hurt someone with your words, or inspire, encourage? Sometimes we find ourselves lost in a mire of unfavorable outcome from "freaking out" and acting crazy, throwing adult tantrums, so to speak. That's not what you wanted the outcome to be. Most people mimic what they saw their own parents do, whether it was helpful and effective or not. So you have to think that your goal is "shalom bayit" (a peaceful home). When one of you is acting "hot" it doesn't pay to throw gasoline on the fire. You know it's going to blow up.

Mankind has two natures: his **best**, and his **beast**. The "a" in beast we may imagine that it represents our "animal soul," which is a part of our "second nature." However, when Adam was created as a G-d realized man, we acquired our first nature, our reasoning powers. But note that when we say we have done

something that was “second nature,” we allude to the fact that we did it **without** thinking! In many homes the “beast” prevails, at least a part of the time, resulting in abuse, fear, hurt feelings, confusion, unreasonable behavior, even to violence, murder, divorce, and certainly not “shalom bayit.” A Torah lifestyle teaches us to transform ourselves into our **best**, and control the **beast**, by striving for thoughtful, reasoning behavior. We seek wisdom and self-discipline in our performance of mitzvot. Through these mitzvot we learn holy conduct, lovingkindness, peace of social intercourse and inner peace that comes with pleasing our Creator. Inner peace causes a person to be less likely to “strike out” upon significant others because of one’s own feelings of disgust with themselves.

A good and simple exercise to practice when fights break out between you and your mate, or children or parents or siblings, is to take a deep breath before reacting. Take a relaxing breath, draw in the Shechina (Holy Spirit), and ask G-d for help in this problem to solve this situation peacefully, to bring reason to our “first nature” and not make this a combat; but an effort to understand someone we love and work it out with loving kindness in our heart.

Let’s face it; life is not always “a bowl of cherries,” as they say. The second largest cause of death in young people from the age of 14-24 is suicide. Lots of people are depressed and confused, frightened, dissatisfied, or angry. Half of all marriages end in divorce. Society is suffering a grave illness. I can witness from counseling over the past 26 years that nearly everyone has his or her own “inner pain” at one time or other.

Every act you do is a decision you make which will affect your life in the present, and become your past, which is unalterable once done. Consider it. Is it going the way you want? Did you yell at your child this morning for no other reason than that you were angry or hurt over something someone else did to you? Did you throw a childish fit or do unreasonable things, or do you strive to calm yourself, your spouse, your children, your siblings?

The inner peace gained by living a life of holiness, or striving toward that goal, is a “wellspring of strength” that assists you to overcome daily stress. If you become that wellspring, your own self image will not suffer, because you will look back on all the good deeds you have done over the past week and it will make you feel better about yourself. You will be calmer, which helps you to reason better; and instead of battles and insults in your home there will be encouragement, inspiration, love, communication, an ever present goal to strive to be holy in your

thoughts, your words and your deeds. If you make your home a sanctuary, life won't drive you crazy because you have created an environment that refurbishes the spirit every day. And I had learned, by studying about "shalom bayit," that it was my job as the woman of the house to create in my home an atmosphere of a spiritual sanctuary.

Whereas Jewish men have the obligation to do 613 commandments, women have only 3. These are lighting the Sabbath and Holiday candles, observing the laws of Family Purity and separating the dough from the bread they make for the Priesthood. Even though we don't have the Third Temple yet for the Priests, we still separate the dough and burn it in the oven. Women are excused from any mitzvah that requires her to do them at a certain time, because we know that the duties of taking care of her children and her household are many, and at times for certain prayers she may not be able to pray because of her important duties. She can, however, pray when she has the time to do so, and she should, because she is then an example to her children. Children tend to play house the way their parents do, so you can expect them to pick up both the good and the bad habits their parents exhibit.

Although she is only obligated to do 3 commandments, a woman actually does many more in the course of her day. She will teach her children the prayers they should say over foods she gives them and thank G-d for her daily sustenance. She will most likely be the one to visit the sick among her friends when they're in the hospital. She will give charity and teach her children to give charity as well. She will teach her children honesty and modesty, respect for holiness and parents and elders.

When Moses came down from the heights of Mount Sinai after being given the Ten Commandments, he went first to the women's tent to teach it to them. We know this because it is written that he went first to the "Tents of Jacob," which is always the term used in our holy writings for the women's tent. Why, one might ask, would he do that? In this way, G-d gave women the chance to redeem the sin of Eve's disobedience. The women were to feed their children from the Tree of Life, which is the Torah, whose fruit was not forbidden, and which was also in the midst of the Garden. It was important for the children to be fed on the "mother's milk" of the Torah, for then the creation of mankind would evolve into a civilized world. It is the woman who brings the Holy Spirit into her home when she lights the Sabbath or Holiday candles. She sets the holy atmosphere in her home by

preparing kosher food, teaching her children the proper blessings, behaving in a modest manner. When a woman brings the holy atmosphere to her home, she is making it easier for herself to influence her husband and her children to upright behavior, because she brings all the power of G-d to help her. And I don't know a woman in this world who won't admit that she needs all the help she can get when it comes to raising up a husband and children. It's not an easy job. But it is of enormous importance, because you are forming children who will be the future of the World and families that are the society we must all live in.

Chapter Ten

MARITAL SEX

There is also written in Kitov's book a chapter about the Niddah laws concerning marital sex. There is much good to be said of the Niddah laws which I learned gradually. The law is that a couple should restrain themselves from physical contact during the woman's menstrual flow, and for seven clean days afterward, at which time the woman bathes, washes her hair, does a careful manicure and pedicure, brushes her teeth, and immerses herself in a ritual baptismal pool (mikvah), blessing G-d for this beautiful mitzvah. She prays for holy and healthy children to be born of this union. She is also blessed by the woman who supervises her immersion. Then she is free to make love with her husband until her next period.

I saw in this mitzvah the big difference between Christianity and Judaism concerning sex. Whereas Christianity only **sanctions** marital sex, ("It's better to marry than to burn.") Judaism **sanctifies** sex. Judaism talks about sex openly, and tells a woman how to be hygienically clean in all her parts. The Niddah laws keep sex alive and new throughout all the years of one's married life. By the time two weeks have gone by without touching each other, a couple is anxious to get back together, and it is like a marriage ceremony every month. Couples don't over-satiate their sex life until it is old, stale and untempting.

The G-d of Creation is aware how he created the woman, and the laws of the Torah protect her from being used at will by a dominant, lusty husband. Even as all creatures have a "season," so does Homo sapien woman.

I later read a very interesting Time Magazine article about medicine in 1969 that addressed the problem of deformed and retarded births. It said that the Catholics, who use a form of contraception called the "rhythm method" that puts

couples together early, right after the period, and late, a week before the period, have birth defects at a rate of 6%. Protestants, who have no particular system (hit or miss), have a 2% birth defect rate. But Jews have only a .002% birth defect rate. After the “*” below was written, “Because of the Mosaic Laws of Niddah.” The article went on to explain how the system of woman works: That in the first week after a woman’s menstrual flow a lining begins to grow inside her womb for the fertilized egg to attach itself to for nourishment. If a couple comes together too early, there is no lining for the egg to attach itself to, and should it attach, it would not have a good hold for proper nourishment, and may abort or become defective. If the sperm has been in the womb early and the egg comes down when it’s supposed to (14th day approx.), the sperm is stale and weak, and should it fertilize the egg, it will be defective.

The Niddah laws put a couple together at the optimum time for healthy conception. The article also remarked how low a percentage of Jewish women contracted cervical cancer, and attributed it to the Niddah laws and to the circumcision of Jewish males. Uncircumcised males who aren’t meticulously clean get “smegma” under the foreskin, which can cause infection in his mate. It amazes me that these laws are of ancient time, yet medicine is just now catching on to the healthy reasons for these Biblical laws.

Sex between married couples is, therefore, sanctified in the Jewish religion, as the first commandment of G-d in Berashit (Genesis), is “Pru orvu,” (“Be fruitful and multiply,”) and Chazal (the ancient sages) interprets that to mean that a couple should not stop having children until they have born a boy and a girl child.

The Zohar teaches that if a man is about to take a journey, the Shechina (Holy Spirit) will only abide with him if he makes love with his wife the night before he departs on his journey. Then She (the Shechina) will stay with him on his journey and bring him home to his wife in peace.

The Holy Scripture teaches that it is the duty of the husband to reward his wife, especially on the Sabbath; for it is then that the Holy Spirit rejoices with them as they “sing aloud upon their beds.” We are taught that procreation is the only commandment (mitzvah) in which G-d participates as a partner with us. All of the other mitzvahs are either between man and man, or between man and G-d. In this relationship, though, G-d is a partner with a man and his mate, providing the mind and soul for the child, while the couple provides the physical vessel for the holy soul. The late Kabbalist, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan of blessed memory, writes in his

book "Jewish Meditation," "A male and female have the power to do the most Godlike thing possible, namely, to create life. The power to conceive a child is so Godlike that the Talmud states that when man and woman create a child, G-d Himself is their third partner.

"Therefore, a husband and wife should see each other as being a reflection of the Divine. When a woman looks at her husband, she should see him as a reflection of 'the Holy One, blessed be He,' the male aspect of the Divine. Similarly, when a husband looks at his wife, he should see her as the Divine Presence (Shekhinah), the feminine aspect of the Divine.

"When a person attains this goal, he will fully appreciate his wife's beauty and see it as a reflection of the Divine. He will then also be aware of her inner beauty, which is a reflection of the beauty of the Shekhinah. When one can contemplate this, one is filled with a love toward one's spouse that parallels the supernal love between the masculine and feminine forces of the Divine."

There is even an opinion among some Hassidim that when a Jewish couple makes love and a child is not conceived; special souls are then made for the righteous converts.

If a couple keep their minds centered in holiness, love, and bring their Creator into this union, they can experience all of the rapture intended in this holy union. Love abounds, sensational passion, energy release and satisfaction, relaxation, all of the wonderful feelings G-d created for us, a necessary, healthy relationship between you, your partner and your Creator. When you are centered in this "mind set," this is the first impression upon the child's DNA imprint that may be conceived, both bodily and spiritually. A child created in this way is going to be more receptive to holy stimuli in its perception and reaction to society. The Baal Shem Tov (1700-1760) said, "From every human being there rises a light that reaches straight to Heaven. And when two human souls that are destined for each other find one another, their streams of light flow together and a single brighter light goes forth from their united beings."

Rabbi Kaplan writes in Jewish Meditation that the sexual act is a form of meditation for which several guidelines are found in the Talmud and Kabbalah to enhance the meditative aspects of the act. He writes: "First, the experience is meant to be primarily tactile, involving the sense of touch. Therefore, it should be performed in a room as dark as possible. Each party should have nothing distracting him or her from the experience.

"It is also taught that there should be no clothing intervening between the two bodies. The Torah speaks of man and woman becoming "one flesh" (Gen.2:24). This indicates that flesh should be in direct contact with flesh, so that the tactile experience is maximized.

"The Kabbalah teaches that the sexual act should begin with words of endearment and then progress to kissing, hugging, and caressing, and finally to total intimacy. It is as if the process begins with the head and mind in speech and kissing. It then is drawn down to the hands and body in hugging and caressing. Finally, it is drawn to the reproductive organs, which are the seat of the greatest sexual pleasure. The sexual energy can be felt traveling down the spine and through the body, leading to the most sensitive areas. God created the sexual act as one of the greatest pleasures that a human being can experience. For one thing, the act had to be pleasurable so that human beings would be drawn to it and thus perpetuate the species. But on a much deeper level, it is so great a pleasure because it allows man and woman together to emulate the Divine."

It was refreshing to get away from the Christian concept of "born in sin, live in sin" mentality. It certainly made sense to me that a loving Creator would not put such a strong urge with such pleasant sensations into his creatures, and be mad at them for "sinning" when they follow the very nature that He created within them.

The Creator told Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiply." When Noah and his small family alighted from the Ark, again the Creator told them to be "fruitful and multiply." Therefore, it is a "mitzvah" to do so, and could not be a sin unless it is simply fornication or, G-d forbid, adultery.

The Torah teaches that the joyous sensations of the reproductive process are a blessing from our Creator that are sanctified and subject to certain holy laws and guidelines in order to achieve the most satisfaction in this sexual relationship.

Scientific research has even shown that the chemistry of the body during intercourse shows that there is an increase of the strength of the immune system, and an increase of endorphins, a morphine-like chemistry that decreases pain in our bodies. It also relieves stress. It is healthy for us and keeps love alive.

My husband made the night of my mikvah immersion a special romantic affair. While I went to the mikvah after sundown, he would put the children to bed, cook a lovely dinner for us, cool the wine, put flowers and candles on the dining room table, light incense, so that when I returned home I felt his special love and care. I could relax, with no responsibilities to worry about. While at the mikvah I

could take a relaxing bath and groom myself. Many women find it hard to find time for grooming themselves after becoming mothers. So she does a manicure and pedicure and refreshes herself. This is her night to relax and have a sweet, loving time....

So we see that the Torah advocates a healthy married sex life. But being led around by one of the smallest of your organs, having your entire life dictated by the desires and demands of your sexual instincts without using your "higher nature," your intellect, is considered very foolish. It destroys family unity and society as a whole, as well as it destroys the individual who pursues sensuality for its own sake. Anything except holiness, pursued to an extreme is unhealthy. But when practiced in harmony with the divine guidelines, it is a loving gift.

On the other hand, anthropology has discovered that all through time and its different societies, when "procreation" becomes "recreation," it becomes **wreck creation!** Our present society should think about this deeply. When divorce is more than half, child suicide is #3 in cause of death, education no longer educates our children, domestic violence is high, crime is too much for the prisons to hold, then we lose our peace in society and it rots. We don't want to live in a rotten society, but the choice is ours.

Now I would like to touch upon a very delicate subject which has been the cause of much sorrow, divorce, assassinations; but which is permitted by the Torah....and that is polygamy. Even though polygamy was forbidden over 500 years ago, it was a "rabbinical ruling," which has caused many men to *rationalize* that it must be permitted, because the Torah permitted it. Therefore, many men take mistresses or have affairs. I would like to point out that in olden times, when civilization was much different, and women were not protected unless they belonged to a man, polygamy was a way of life. Men wanted to have many children to build up their clan, to take care of their large flocks and business enterprises. But I would also like to point out a few facts that the men may have overlooked. When G-d created Adam, he only created Eve for his wife, and tradition holds that a man and his wife are *one soul*. The sages teach us that each of us is really only *half a soul* until we marry our soulmate, after which we become united as **one soul**. How, then, can a man be married to more than one wife? Can he split his soul into many pieces?

Men could have concubines, who weren't considered as full wives. A king could have as many as 18 wives. However, King Solomon went way beyond that

and took 300 wives and 700 concubines. I suppose he considered that as his “peace plan,” as he felt that if he married the princesses of all the surrounding countries, their fathers wouldn’t attack Israel because their daughters were living there as princesses. This resulted in King Solomon complaining that he never found **one woman** that he could really love. I believe the reason is because he couldn’t devote enough time to *one woman and her children to really develop a close relationship*. It also resulted in his giving permission to his wives to build temples to their idols in their own palaces, which angered G-d (and confused his children)! And King Solomon, who loved G-d so much that he built the Holy Temple with great glory, didn’t have one single son to inherit the kingship, who loved the G-d of Israel with the faithfulness that Solomon and his beloved father, King David had. Even Solomon the Wise told the story of the man who was given one field and another man who was given ten fields. The man who was given one field worked very hard to develop his one field and was successful. However, the man who was given ten fields tried to develop all ten at once, and it proved to be more than he could successfully handle. He did not succeed, and lost it all.

After King Solomon's time the Kingdom was split, it became Judah and Israel with a King for each kingdom, another temple was built in Northern Israel, a different priesthood was established that was not always Cohenim or Levi'im, we lost the unity of our country and our brotherhood, and all that King David fought for (to bring unity and peace to Israel) and the Holy Temple King Solomon built with such love for the Holy Spirit to rest in Jerusalem was shattered. Perhaps if he had chosen to study with a few sons whom he had noted that they would **absolutely carry** on the tradition of our Torah, this wouldn't have happened. The point is family unity. It is very difficult to achieve it with more than one woman in your love life. There is only so much time in a day. And don't forget about jealousy. Ouch!

If we go back to the history of Abraham and Sara, we find that when she lost faith that G-d would bless her with her promised child, she gave to her husband her maid, Hagar, who bore Abraham Ishmael. Hagar immediately began treating Sara with dishonor, and “shalom bayit” was lost. After Isaac was born to Sara, Ishmael began to attack Isaac, and Hagar and Ishmael had to be sent away. Today we are suffering terrible bloodshed because of this. Even though Ishmael has 22 enormous lands filled with rich oil, they will not suffer the children of Sara to live in their own, very small, inherited land of Israel.

Jacob had two wives and two concubines, who gave him 12 children. But Jacob's special love for his son Joseph, the long awaited child of his favorite wife, Rachel, caused his other sons to plan murder against Joseph. He ended up enslaved and imprisoned for 12 years, and Jacob's loss of his beloved son Joseph caused him to grieve for 20 years. King David's sons of different wives assassinated one another, each one wanting to be King, with Abshalom not even waiting until his father's death, resulting in Abshalom's death and David's heartbreak. All through the Bible we find that the children of one mother were jealous of the children of another mother, that the wives planned intrigue and many assassinations resulted. It is difficult enough to maintain peace among the siblings of just one man and wife. How much more difficult when there is more than one?

I understand that the nature of man seems to be that he sometimes desires more than one woman. But it always destroys the marriage! It destroys the mutual trust between mates. It destroys trust. Nobody is happy, not the men, their wives, mistresses or children. If "shalom bayit" (a peaceful home) is what you want, you'll never get it if you don't remain faithful to your soulmate. If extramarital sex is more important to you than being faithful to your mate, I would say that you are not ready for marriage and advise you not to marry yet and break someone's heart (and your own). Because it always ends up in emptiness of spirit, guilt, fights, divorce, economic disaster, unhappy children and loneliness. To me, it just doesn't seem worth it just to gratify a sexual urge that only lasts for a few moments, yet causes total devastation to the family. I do not pretend to have the answer as to why G-d created men with this strong urge. A probable guess would be that men are constantly programmed to be fruitful and multiply, whereas women have seasons. But I would advise men who still hold to the idea that they can have more than one woman if they are married, that they will not attain happiness when all is said and done. It just hurts your wives too much! If there exists such a thing as **love**, and I believe that men do crave the love of a woman, if you find a woman you love and who loves you in return, I would strongly advise you to resist your *yetzer hara*, and not spoil a good thing. Love is a difficult gift to find, so if you have found it, *cherish it and nourish it*. You won't be sorry, and you won't miss anything but grief. When you marry, you develop a bond of trust and intimacy with one another that makes you like *one soul*. When that exclusive intimate relationship has been compromised, how can the other spouse feel safe

in sharing those most intimate feelings again? When one partner breaches this exclusive intimate relationship, something dies in the relationship. There is no more trust and there is a fear of allowing oneself to be that intimate again.

In our own time, since the 1990's, we must live with the threat of AIDS, a disease that we are all aware of and we all fear. Unfortunately, I have had to counsel several young adults in recent years whose parents have died because one of them was unfaithful, contracted AIDS, and gave it to their spouse, both of them dying. The children go through Hell, loving but hating the parent responsible for making them an orphan.

It seems a cruel joke that we might DIE for making "LOVE!" As a matter of fact, the old line, "**I'm dying for sex!**" is now true. The "bottom line" after medical experts' advice is that the safest sex is abstinence. The riskiest sex is having multiple partners. For those whose sex life with their partner is growing stale (a problem with many couples) the laws of Niddah may save not only their relationship, but also their very LIFE! One may not be tempted to be with someone else, because their sex life is not only totally satisfying, but it is *sanctified*.

One big mistake that has been caused by misinformation is that condoms protect you from AIDS. Wrong! Naturally occurring microscopic holes in condoms allow the tiny HIV virus to pass through condoms, similar in size to comparing throwing a golf ball through a basketball net. Add to this the fact that condoms do break on occasion, allowing for a 10% pregnancy rate per year of use. Then consider that if there is a 10% pregnancy rate, how many condoms break when a woman isn't even fertile? Do you want to take that chance?

You should also know that, contrary to popular belief, saliva contains more HIV virus than semen. The HIV virus has also infected healthcare workers through osmosis when blood was splattered on unbroken exposed skin. This plague of our time is a lot more dangerous than we have been led to believe.

The laws of marital sex were not even mentioned in the course that I took in Reform Judaism. This is a great disservice and deprivation of information that could benefit every couple seeking a satisfactory, long-lasting sexual relationship.

I also learned that the Jewish concept of the coming of Messiah was that he would be born of the natural union of man and woman, even as Moses or David was. There is no encouragement of celibacy in Judaism. Moses and David were considered to be Messiah, yet they were both married and so were all the

Prophets and Priests. One can not be a Judge if one is not married with children, because one cannot empathize with the hardships of providing and raising a family without experiencing it personally. These concepts were in line with what I believed through logic. One didn't need to be born of a supernatural coupling to be a holy man. As it is written, "the soul that G-d created within you is *pure*!"

Chapter Eleven

HOW TO CHOOSE A SOULMATE

How to choose a mate was something my mother never told me. You meet someone that you fall "in love with" and you get married. But what is love? How does it feel? What do you look for in the person? What's most important;; their looks, their behavior, their place in society, economics, character traits, family background, religious belief, sexual attraction? Maybe because my mother never did marry to her satisfaction she didn't know how to advise me. Her first husband, my father was an alcoholic, although lots of fun! He loved to dance and party and so did Mother. But he partied all the time and didn't work. Her second husband was simply not exciting, a couch potato, although a kind and responsible man. So maybe she just didn't know what to look for in a mate.

Is it true that there is somewhere for everyone—a true "soulmate" that is destined only for them? Where will you find this person? How do you know when you've found them? Do sparks go off? Is it love or lust? Is it friendship? Does it feel alive and exciting, or are you worried, jealous, and unsure? Do you really know this person, or are you projecting an image of your own onto this person? Do you think you'll be able to "change" them later of some personality disorder that bothers you now?

Are you in love with the idea of being in love, or really in love with this person? Just remember that if you choose the wrong person, you are going to bring a nightmare into your home. Home is supposed to be a place of safety, peace, friendship, nourishment of body and spirit, a safe haven. But if you marry the wrong person, it won't be any of that. A little more than half the people who marry nowadays divorce. It's a sad fact. It is good to keep in mind that "love" is a two-way street. If you feel that you are "in love" with someone, but they don't

return the feeling, this is NOT LOVE. This is only your fantasy. Love is supposed to make you happy, not miserable and unrequited.

So, HOW DO YOU PICK THE RIGHT ONE?

Our sages teach that there IS a special soulmate destined for each person which G-d Himself decrees before they are born, that this soul is destined to marry this soul. Kabbalists teach that each person has a “soulmate,” but in a this incarnation (gilgul) we must merit to meet our soulmate, and that until we reach a certain spiritual plane, or at least an opening in the direction of aiming for self-improvement, our “soulmate” will not appear. Kabbalists further teach that this is the meaning of how the Creator created Eve for her husband as “ezer ki negdo,” literally his “helper, but against him.” What do these opposites mean? How can she be both his helpmeet and be “against him?” They explain that if a man is a fair husband and conducts himself in an honest and loving manner with his family she will be “ezer,” or helper. But if he is not fair-minded and abuses his family and doesn’t strive for holiness, she will be “negdo,” against him. And she will make him miserable. It’s a law. That’s how women were created, guys. That’s their nature. So if you have that kind of wife, the Kabbalists explain that this is your “tikun” or correction in this lifetime, and her’s as well. Improve your character and she may become your helpmate, making for “Shalom Bait” in your home. Don’t wait for your next incarnation to get it right.

I really didn’t think much, myself, of the importance that religion or spirituality plays in choosing a proper mate. Of course, I was a gentile, and matchmaking was not for this century in my world. Luckily, most Jewish young people **do** think about the level of spirituality they want in their marriage. But, if one is from a totally assimilated background, maybe that characteristic is not on the top of the list. I don’t think I just “got lucky” with my choice of a husband. It was no accident that I was sent to Las Vegas, and no accident that Bob’s wife went to Las Vegas to get her boyfriend’s divorce, so that Bob’s daughter’s terrible depression over the divorce caused Bob to leave New Jersey and come to Las Vegas to comfort his children. So many unusual occurrences caused us to meet that there is no question in our minds that G-d brought us together. I know he is my soulmate. And both of us were open to seeking answers to what was the purpose and direction to a healthy life. So G-d put us together. And we both followed together our pursuit of higher wisdom. But ours is an unusual case. If my son came home

and told me he was marrying a gentile dancer, and I was the typical Jewish mother, I'd be very upset! G-d bless my mother-in-law, may she rest in peace, that she looked at my character and not my racial or religious origin. But not every intermarriage turns out the way ours did.

After looking at many marriages over the years as a friend, counselor and married woman for 39 years, I am sure that the most important factors to look for in a prospective mate are **spirituality** and **friendship**. And spirituality was not one of the factors that I even thought about as being crucial to a good marriage when I was young and single. Friendship was something I had never really experienced before either. I most often found that those whom I thought were friends were not there when I needed them, but they used me for their own interests only. But I experienced faithful friendship for the first time in my life in my relationship with Bob. He carried me in his strong arms when I couldn't walk for so long. He was even willing to marry me if I had lost my leg, which I didn't, thank G-d. He made me laugh when I was in a bad or sad mood. He went without sleep to be with me. He was a true friend, and that was the main reason I married him. He was also handsome, sexy, funny, kindhearted and a lot of other good things. I guess I really DID get lucky.

But, as I said before, spirituality was not one of the qualities that I had put at the top of my list. I didn't realize it should even BE on the list. And yet now, with perfect hindsight, I see that it is most important, because there won't be any growth in one's maturity, marriage and children if there is no spiritual growth. And if a person has no rules and no ruler, my friend, you'd better believe you won't like some of their rules, and you'll have no higher authority to appeal to in an effort to bring fairness or justice to a controversy between you and your mate in any disagreement. And when you will be blessed with children, there will be no UNITY between you and your mate; an advantage which I assure you your children will use to everyone's detriment. The children will "pit" one parent against the other to get their own way. If parents are unified in their approach to raising children, there is no other source to turn to. And children may grump over the rules, but at least they will learn that there are rules that must be obeyed. This will lead to honor of parents and to their own self-discipline. Self-discipline is extremely important and should be learned early, for without self-discipline one can be led to extreme or obsessive behavior, which then causes guilt and subsequently impacts on one's

own self-image to the negative. Living a life of doing mitzvot inculcates self-discipline. After all, the general goal of marriage is to build a healthy, loving family. It's not just the starry-eyed feeling you have when you "fall in love."

I began dating at age 16. I was even engaged to a young man when I was 17 who turned out to be an alcoholic. After a painful breakup and return of the engagement ring, this young man was killed in an auto accident at age 24. He was drunk and driving. I relate this information because I want to impress upon those looking for their "soulmate" that it takes time to really get to know someone; usually a minimum of 4 months. I can remember feeling "starry-eyed" over someone when the relationship began, and 4 to 6 months later, feeling uncomfortable about how to get rid of them without hurting them terribly. I also learned from my engagement to an alcoholic that there is little chance to "change them." This experience also gave me an understanding of what my mother went through during her ten years of marriage to my alcoholic father.

What you see is what you get, so you'd better be satisfied with their character to begin with before you decide to marry. Very often people project their own desired image upon someone, which has nothing to do with who they really are. Someone may look good to you at first, but then, many of us have had the experience of buying a nice looking pair of shoes, but when you wear them awhile, they pinch, aren't comfortable and end up sitting in the closet unworn. However, you can't just closet your mistake in a marriage. A spouse isn't as easy to get rid of as uncomfortable shoes.

This is one of the reasons why Orthodox Jews have the custom of "matchmaking." They feel that at least there is "common ground" in that both the young man and woman are interested in building a "bayit ne'eman b'Yisrael," a home where belief in the G-d of Israel and respect for His commandments is shared. In this instance, spirituality is of prime importance. Passion may fade somewhat after some time, but friendship and spiritual growth can be the glue that will cause a man or woman to stick to their marriage vows, as it is written in Genesis II;24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." The literal translation from Hebrew of "**v'debek b'ishto**" is "and be **glued** to his wife."

Many men may be surprised to find that a man who is spiritual is a real "turn on" to most women. For him to take his strength and devote it to something noble

and holy is so admirable to many women, and I have heard so many women complain that they can't find a man who has fine spiritual qualities. What can be better than to find a man who has noble qualities? And a woman who is not interested in her spirituality can be vain and selfish, critical and unkind—a nightmare to live with. She may have pretty eyes and a great body, but what are her character traits? Does she have a kind heart? Is she honorable and trustworthy? What better woman to choose but a daughter of Israel who is striving to fulfill G-d's Commandments.

Even though Adam and Eve were created for one another, when Eve was beguiled into eating the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, she fed it to Adam and brought death upon mankind and expulsion from the Garden of Eden. As is common with mankind, when questioned by the Creator, Adam blamed it on Eve and even placed blame upon the Creator, saying, "The woman **You** created for me." Eve blamed it, of course, on the serpent. Neither took the blame for their own actions, and neither expressed remorse nor asked for forgiveness, which (who knows?) might have brought a more merciful decree upon them. We see in this instance a clear example of the nature of mankind, denial instead of acceptance of responsibility. Nobody wants to admit they were wrong, even to G-d Who knows our every action and thought. Imagine the quarrels and misunderstandings that occur in every home because of this human trait. This is why it is so important that a couple have spiritual growth as a common goal, and have a belief in the same "rule book," the Torah, as the manual He gave us for Mankind on Planet Earth.

To this day there are many who blame womankind for what Eve did. Many women object to this, including myself. After all, we weren't even born yet, so how can we be blamed? Maybe if it had been me, I wouldn't have done it. Or maybe I would have eaten, but wouldn't have given it to my husband. So, why blame all womankind? But one day as I pondered this, I had a flash of revelation! I recalled reading a commentary by Maimonides that the Tree of Life, also in the midst of the Garden of Eden, whose fruit was permitted, is the **Torah**. Maimonides goes on to explain that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is the world of secular learning, i.e. science, math arts, astronomy, etc., which we know can be used for good **or** evil. Many interesting thoughts came to my mind upon reading this, one of which is that the Creator forbade eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge & Evil at that time but maybe not forever. If they had first eaten of the

Tree of Life (Torah), perhaps they would have been able to deal with the world of secular knowledge without bringing harm upon themselves and their progeny because they would have **first** had the wisdom and self-discipline to choose good instead of evil. But we'll never know, because that isn't what happened.....

The blame that was forever placed upon womankind for eating the forbidden fruit, and then giving it to her husband always seemed a shame to me, because I'm a woman and I don't like to be blamed for something I, myself, didn't do. But when I considered the commentary of Maimonides, I suddenly had a striking thought! How many women drive their husbands to spend long hours in the "material (secular) world" in order to earn lots of money for their material needs? Like the singer, Madonna, lots of women are "material girls." If spirituality is the one of the most important qualities to look for in a husband, wouldn't it be a kind of redemption for a wife to encourage her husband, instead, to learn Torah, to pray daily and to make spiritual growth a more important goal for her husband and herself than to continuously strive to make more money, to hang out at parties for the social elite in order to climb the "material" ladder of life? In this way, she would be encouraging her mate to eat from the Tree of Life instead of pushing upon him the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and thus, in a way, redeeming the mistake of Eve. Otherwise, she would be guilty of making the same mistake of the first woman. So, every woman *could be guilty* of making that same mistake or correcting it.

A common statement I hear from nearly all young adults is, "I'm trying to get it together." I ask them, "What are you trying to get together? You seem to be in one piece. I don't see one part of you going in one direction, while another is walking in another direction." They usually reply that they don't even know what they're trying to get together, because if they did they would probably be able to do it. I would like to clarify here that what I see is confusion in the conflict between the desires of the body and soul. What needs to be gotten together is harmony of the body and soul. Before one chooses a mate and marries, one will have a clearer idea of what one wants if they **marry themselves first**, which means that they unify the purpose of body and soul, (male & female) to sanctify their own lives by serving their Creator in all they do. This creates a quiet and peaceful inner harmony so that they can take a clearer look at what is going on outside them and make better decisions about their direction.

Have you ever realized that you have had several conversations with someone, and later you find that they *didn't hear a word you said*? So many people have a noise going on inside of them because of their own inner turmoil that they are constantly thinking of themselves, their problems, nervousness, their sadness, their obsessions, desires, etc., and even though they are there with you, they aren't *really there*!

It's no wonder so many of these people feel lonely. Even when they have company they are really alone with their own inner turmoil. Unless they do "get it together" these people will definitely not make for a good mate, because you will be alone and so will they. How can two souls merge if one of them is not really there with you? So look carefully to see if your candidate for a mate has a quiet confidence, is self-assured, has a good self-image (without being conceited), and listens to what you say. Look to see if they remember what is important to you, care about your ambitions and needs, try to help you to achieve your aims, respect your feelings. This is the *friendship* quality that is one of the two most important qualities to look for. If the person you think you love doesn't return the feeling, it isn't love. This is not to say that there is no love for another unless you get something in return. You can have love for humanity without expecting any return; you can love a *small child* selflessly without them being aware yet that it would be nice to return the feelings. You can do acts of lovingkindness for those in need without thought of getting anything but a good feeling inside about yourself for being a good person. But when it comes to marriage, it takes "two to tango." The other person should be as anxious to be with you as you are to be with them. If they leave you sitting at the phone waiting for it to ring, and it doesn't, time after time, forget about it.

If you find yourself feeling nervous, jealous, suspicious, anxious, sad and lonely, that's the kind of life you will always have with this person if you succeed in "roping them into marriage." Remember, if you find your real **soulmate**, it's going to make you **happy**! If you aren't happy, this may not be your soulmate.

One more piece of advice that I wish to share with you is that you shouldn't rush into marriage, because it takes time to really get to know someone. They can be on their "best behavior" for a certain time; but after awhile, when they relax, you will get to know how they are when they aren't putting on a show for you. Unless a shidduch has been made by a competent matchmaker, approved by all parents,

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and you are very happy, it's best to get to know one another well. If you are still happy, then **mazel tov!**

Chapter Twelve

SANCTIFYING LIFE

One by one I began learning mitzvoth (commandments). I kept in mind that as long as I hadn't converted, I was not obligated to do any of it, but I would try it and see if it made me feel good. If not, I wouldn't have to do it again. No sweat.

After a while, I began to realize that my life was sweeter than it had ever been. I saw that by doing these little mitzvoth throughout the day, it kept my life totally sanctified! I was also developing more self-control, and I was living my life thoughtfully—not just reacting habitually to things. I was rebuilding my life and the life of my family in a very positive and satisfactory way. Suddenly I realized that I was now doing what King Solomon had said was the only worthwhile thing in life—to love G-d, and to serve Him in all things. I had entered the world of the “divine” in my search, not realizing beforehand that once you enter this world, your life becomes knit up with the Divine.

One is constantly reminded throughout the day that he is standing in the presence of G-d, as we are taught in the Shema Yisrael:

- a) (“and you shall speak of them, etc.” Deuteronomy 6;4-9): By speaking of Him and His Lovingkindness, encouraging your family and acquaintances to trust in the Eternal One;
- b.) (“When you are going on a journey,” *ibid.*): By kissing the mezuzah when one goes out into the world, one should think that one is now entering a world for social or commercial purposes, and should conduct oneself in a G-dly manner. The Torah laws concerning commerce are quite clear: honest weights and measures, your word is your bond, etc. Social laws require speaking kindly, not embarrassing anyone, giving the benefit of the doubt to a G-dly person, not speaking evil gossip or carrying tales, endowing charity to those who are in need, not coveting what your neighbor has;
- c) By kissing the mezuzah as you enter your home, you remind yourself that you are entering a holy home, and should conduct yourself accordingly, by speaking pleasantly to your spouse and children, by studying Torah every day, by blessing the Merciful One

for your food, teaching your children the blessings, by filling your house with the mellow and peaceful sound of your daily prayers.

d) By looking upon the tzitzit (fringes) a man wears like a spiritual armor. In this way throughout the day one has these little reminders to be holy, to sanctify each act, every relationship, every word, each bite of food, not to “walk after the way of the heart and the eyes, which can lead you astray.” After many days spent in holy and sanctified behavior, how could one fail to be happy with himself?

All of the mitzvot that you surround yourself with are like putting yourself into a protective circle of peace. When you arise in the morning the first thing you are bidden to say as you open your eyes is, “I render thanks to thee, everlasting King, Who has mercifully restored my soul within me; thy faithfulness is great.” (Morning Prayer Book) If one has developed a depressive habit from childhood, as I had, this is a re-habituating mind-set. Instead of waking up and thinking, “Oh hell, another damn day. I don’t want to wake up, face another stressful day,” one develops with this very first thought a gratefulness for LIFE, BREATH, A CHANCE to have another day to do something better, make a better life. You could have died in your sleep, you know. So you bless HaShem for another day, for your very breath of life. Then you wash your hands, so that you can utter the “name” of G-d in purity, as you are full of dead cells and uncleanness from sleeping for hours, and should wash you hands and face and bless HaShem for giving us the commandment (the gift of knowledge that we should be clean). We should not utter the actual **name** of G-d (Adonoi) until our hands are clean. The prayer is, “Blessed art Thou, Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, who has **sanctified** us with thy commandments and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.” Again, notice the word “sanctified.” The Holy One has blessed the House of Israel with many sanctified acts to make our life a happy, healthy one. Every prayer is a gift, and every mitzvah is sanctified knowledge to make our lives happier, more constructive, wiser lives.

The 613 mitzvot surround us like our own personal bodyguards, 613 soldiers of the King’s army, always protecting us from harm, from errors that would make us open prey to our enemies, including our WORST enemy, the “yetzer hara” (evil spirit) who dwells within. The 613 guardians shield us from pain, keep us from becoming too haughty, remind us to share our wealth, bring order and sanity into a chaotic society, teach us to be clean, from clean hands

to a clean heart, urge us to have honor, love and concern for our parents, teachers and neighbors. Imagine having such an army about you!

I found that my husband and I were acquiring an inner peace that we had never before experienced. I more inner peace, as I had been influenced by the mitzvot to put my trust in G-d, and not to worry so much. I had developed a depressive habit because of the unhappiness and insecurity of my childhood. I found these depressive thoughts being replaced with joy in the treasure of knowledge that the Torah was bringing into my life. Everything was becoming clearer to me; my lifelong questions were being answered by exposure to the ancient wisdom I was finding in the writings of Jewish Sages. All of the abstracts that I had seen before were forming into a clear picture, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The universe and my place and purpose in the universe were becoming clearer to me.

My husband, as well, as he began to pray, began to recover from the depression that sometimes plagued him from all of the unfair and cruel happenings of his life. He began wrapping tephillin every morning at home and reciting the soul-healing prayers from the prayer book. We used to laugh, though, at the incongruity of my coaching him in the Hebrew prayers that he found hard to remember, as he had never learned a foreign language in school. I had studied Latin in school, learned French in the Follies Bergere, and didn't find it difficult to learn Hebrew, as languages came easily to me. It was just funny that his "shiksa" wife was coaching him in Hebrew.

As to my first "knee jerk" reaction to being opposed to being "confined" by so many commandments, afraid of losing my personal freedom and spontaneity, especially being a "free" thinker and an American, I found that my mind felt freer because I had found more wisdom, was making less mistakes in my conduct, which, consequently, made for less trouble that I had to deal with. I didn't need to grope with many decisions with which I had no previous experience or expertise because the Torah covers just about everything you will encounter in life as a human being. It made decision-making easier. And when the results come out right, you begin to trust more and more, until the wisdom contained in the Torah just amazes your mind! How could such perfect wisdom be written so long ago when we consider ourselves to be so much more advanced in this age? Only because it is Divine Wisdom, and the world was set to run in this harmony from the Beginning. After all, the Jews were blessed by the actual manifestation of G-d,

being given the Divine Commandments, and after looking at all the other religions that were an “outcrop” of Torah, I could find no truer wisdom than the original.

Many people object to the idea of being “restricted” by RELIGION. However, if one is searching for ***truth, understanding and spiritual fulfillment***, then, when learning Torah, one should keep in mind that Torah simply means “instruction” -- not religion. Instead of feeling restricted, I felt freer and more in harmony in body, spirit and with the universe around me.

In order to continue to learn and to pray, Bob and I went to two different synagogues on the Sabbath, as he wanted to honor Rabbi Lamm, whose synagogue was too far for our little sons to walk. I attended Rabbi Hollander’s synagogue which was only two blocks away. I must say that I was shunned at the synagogue, the only person who ever bid me a “Gut Shabbos” was my stepdaughter’s Talmud Torah teacher, Mrs. Bitter, (G-d bless her) and of course, Rabbi Hollander and his Rebbetzin.

None of the children would play with my sons. It did hurt me, but I always kept in mind that I was not considering conversion because of “people,” but rather because of what the mitzvot would do for my life and the life of my family. I think it important to mention this in my book, because although people will very often disappoint you, G-d rarely does. It is the holy books and your relationship with The Holy One, blessed be He, that is important, and one should not look to PEOPLE for inspiration, or one may be quite disappointed. Keep in mind that many Jewish people live the life they were taught, and may not live their life thoughtfully but only habitually. Observant Jews are taught to stay away from “goyim” so as not to be influenced by them. They didn’t know me, didn’t know if I was sincere or just going through this process because I was married to a Jewish man.

But I must say that I always enjoyed Rabbi Hollander’s lessons and learned much from him in his weekly lessons, and I enjoyed praying and bringing my children into a Holy atmosphere.

Many newcomers to an observant Jewish lifestyle have complained to my husband and I that they sometimes feel uncomfortable in synagogue because well-meaning people see you on the wrong page, and they interrupt and put you on the right page. So they can’t feel the “kavana” (total attention) they feel when they pray at home. They say they were just really getting into a rapture of praying

to G-d when suddenly some well-meaning congregant interrupts the *relationship that they're just developing with their Creator*. This is a common problem in the beginning. Our advice is that one should pray at home sometimes, and sometimes go to synagogue. Praying at home at first develops the "love bond" and evokes the strong feelings between you and G-d, which is the whole purpose of prayer. But, when one is not yet disciplined to pray three times a day, one can get lazy and put off praying until your "yetzer hara" (evil inclination) keeps you from praying at all. You should consult your rabbi if you have this problem, and he will arrange for you to learn with someone. One should search diligently for a rabbi to whom you can go with **any question**. Pray for your spiritual guide, and G-d will help you to find the person for **you**.

It is also a very big mitzvah to pray in a minyon, and praying in the synagogue teaches you the order of prayer and enables you to become part of the community where you will learn many important things about Jewish family life and customs that will delight you. It is important to the community you live in to participate in a minyon, because, unfortunately, there are times when one must pray Kaddish for the souls of their departed family members, and if there are not 10 men in the congregation, that person will suffer. The Sages also teach that a person praying alone may not have a perfect prayer and their prayer *may not* be answered; but when praying with a congregation one is assured that altogether during the prayer, someone was praying perfectly, so the entire congregation's prayer will be accepted. G-d knows the intention of the heart and **that is what counts!** Soon you will feel comfortable everywhere you pray. And you will see your prayers being answered regularly.

Chapter Thirteen

PRAYER POWER

Through prayer and through reading the prayers of G-d's people I learned courage, faith, and hope. I never felt alone with my own frustrations anymore. Reading Psalms, which permeate the entire Prayer Book, taught me, inspired me in the ways that G-d is with us, protecting us, correcting us, like a loving Father. In the prayer that we say after eating bread, I quote Psalms 34:10-11, "Blessed is the man who trusts in the L-rd, the L-rd will be his trust." Through meditating further on the Hebrew wordage, I came to the understanding that, metaphysically, this was a ***certain law of nature***. Like a mathematical equation, in direct proportion to the strength of energy put out by the ***trust we have in the L-rd***, that is the amount of energy (or bestowal) that the L-rd will return to us; cause and effect, "middah k'neged middah," (measure for measure.) Again, an example of the law of physics that opposite forces strive to achieve Equilibrium, because "opposites attract" the finite man and the Infinite One.

One begins to live life in a more positive "mind set," which is in harmony with one's body and one's soul. What is too troublesome for you to fix, you give it to G-d in prayer, and trust totally that G-d will help you to accomplish your goals, or inspire you in the direction you need to go in order to solve your dilemma. So, your troubles don't weigh you down completely. You feel more inspired, and your inspiration becomes infectious in your personality, affecting everyone within your sphere of life. No matter what difficulty you may be experiencing; you feel that you can get through it, with G-d's help. You begin to accomplish more with your life, because you're not afraid to try to do the things you are inspired to do.

My Christian upbringing had taught me to pray from my heart to G-d, or to say "amen" to whatever the minister had prayed for the congregation. I had never prayed from a book before. So, to pray from the Siddur (Daily Prayer Book) of Orthodox Judaism was entirely new to me. I had heard criticism from those who were unfamiliar with the Siddur, that they felt that praying from a book is just prayer by rote, not prayer from the heart. However, when I began to pray from the Siddur with an English translation, I found language that was so profound in its wisdom that it helped me to say everything I wanted to say. It taught me so much that I wouldn't even have thought of saying, but I wanted to say, in such eloquent language. It taught me how to pray with the proper awe, respect, honor and

humility that should be accorded to the Most High. It imbued me with such high and lofty ideals that made me want to strive to be perfect in my love and service to the Creator. It taught me to pray for others, not just for my family and myself. The language in the Siddur is more beautiful than any of the most beautiful poetry or prose I have ever read. As far as feeling that my prayers were said "by rote," it was just the opposite. My soul felt thoroughly comforted. And even now, 40 years later, the prayers are as effective in soothing my soul, inspiring and strengthening me, as they were from the beginning.

Our charity foundation was very honored by a visit to our Baal Tshuva Center at Kedma in 1971 by Rabbi Philip Birnbaum, whose English translation of the Siddur (prayer book) is a delight. When we first started our Center we had **one siddur** of Philip Birnbaum's which we used to pass like a joint from person to person to read. Only we all got higher than with a joint. It was "divine." Rabbi Birnbaum gifted us with 50 of his Siddurim and 25 Soncino Bibles, may his memory be blessed. In his Introduction he writes, "If you cannot concentrate when you pray, search for melodies and choose a tune you like. Your heart will then feel what you say, for it is the song that makes your heart respond."

Many Jews are taught to pray in Hebrew from a very young age, but they don't understand what they are saying. Therefore, they may not receive the inspiration of the words. I have been taught by the rabbis that one may pray in any language, so if you don't understand Hebrew, I would advise that you pray in a translation of the language you understand in order to develop the trust, love and inspiration one needs from prayer, because that is the reason for prayer. After some time, when one knows the Hebrew by heart, it even helps to pray the words in Hebrew while looking at the translation, and the thoughts enter the heart. Of course, Hebrew is the best language to pray in if one understands it, because it is a very deep language, some words just cannot be translated in the same way, and the "roots" of every Hebrew word bring more total understanding to the essence of the thought. Many of the prayers are Kabbalistic formulations, which have their desired affect on the cosmos.

The Psalms of King David, the great lover of G-d, has inspired millions of brokenhearted or frightened souls for millennia. For one to understand the inspiration of the Psalms, one must understand a little about the author of most of the Psalms, King David, of blessed memory. Here was a humble shepherd of flocks, shunned by his family, mocked by his brethren. David was a young man

strong and brave enough to kill a bear and a lion with his bare hands, because they threatened the lives of the sheep in his charge. When the Holy One saw how meticulous David was for his flock, he knew that here was a man who would diligently look after a Nation, the Nation of Israel, and the Lambs of G-d, to unify them and protect them. The Holy One then sent his Prophet Samuel to anoint the young shepherd. From then on, one would think that David would be blessed. But he was tried in such ways that would cause lesser men to lose their Faith in G-d. Even though he killed the giant Goliath and married King Saul's daughter, his father-in-law began to hate and distrust David, and was jealous of him. But David lovingly sang and played on his lyre to soothe the unrest of King Saul's soul. When the King began to actively try to kill David, he was forced to hide in caves and forests like an animal, chased everywhere by the King's soldiers. He was forced to beg for food. Yet even when he had the opportunity to kill King Saul when he came upon him sleeping in the forest, he would not harm the King because he was a King anointed by G-d whom David would not touch to harm. He merely cut a piece from King Saul's clothes to show that he was there, but to give him the message that he didn't want to harm him. David was brave in battle, and succeeded in defeating the enemies of Israel that surrounded them. After King Saul and David's best friend, Prince Jonathan, died in an unsuccessful battle with enemies, David was proclaimed King of Israel. Despite all the betrayals, all the battles, all the setbacks in his life, David never lost faith that G-d would help him. Most of his Psalms reflect this solid faith. Some are heartfelt prayers of life and death, beseeching G-d for protection or solace. Other Psalms are witnessing the sure and certain rescue that G-d gave him throughout all his struggles and battles. David's Psalms have comforted and inspired millions of people throughout the world for the past 2,500 years. He is, indeed, the sweet singer of Israel. I only pray that soon his ancestor, King Messiah, will sit on his rightful throne in Israel and inspire us as King David did, to be a unified and Holy Nation.

Chapter Fourteen

DOES HE ANSWER YOUR PRAYERS?

Does G-d answer your prayers? I will give you the same advice I've given many of my students. Jump in His lap and see if He catches you! How will you know if it works unless you try it? Later, in my next book I will relate incredible miracles that were done for our cause when my husband and I completely jumped into G-d's lap in 1968 with only G-d as our "umbrella organization" and financial guarantor to create a healing center in Israel for all those "lost ones" who were looking for their spiritual heritage in Israel. We had some revelations, many hardships, lots of adventure, lots of laughs, and we had some tears. But one can only be inspired by the faith that G-d, blessed be He, kept with us! He did so many miracles on behalf of our cause that we learned to depend on them as a regular resource.

I will relate here one of G-d's little miracles, one immediate answer to my prayer of desperation. The bigger miracles I'll relate later. It was the spring of 1970. I was living in Netanya, Israel with my two small sons Pinchas and Yehoshua, and my toddler daughter Heftzi-ba. My husband Bob (now Reuven) had been in America for three months fund raising for our Ba'al Tshuva Center, and also counseling families with problems. He was "in-transit" from California to New York to Israel, arriving in four days.

I could not get in touch with him, and I was totally broke. There was no food and no money to buy food for the children and me.

My good friend, Ruta, a beautiful Latvian girl whom I had worked with at the Latin Quarter right after my younger son Yehoshua was born, had come to Israel for three months to stay with me and help me with the three children. She was leaving the next day for New York. All she had was money enough to pay the port tax and get home from JFK Airport by taxi. We were kind of wringing our hands over the situation, when I said, "Oh G-d, if only I had \$25.00 it would last from now until then." Interestingly, I said "dollars" instead of "liras"(the Israeli money that I used). My friend Ruta was upset because she had no money to leave with me, but there was nothing she could do. When she began to shower in preparation for her trip home, her expression was troubled. While she was still showering there was a knock on the door. A strange gentleman introduced himself as Mr. Weiss,

who had heard my husband speak of our project for young adults in his synagogue in New York. He said, "I am in Israel for a vacation, so I thought I would drop by and give you a small donation for your worthwhile work." The Beneficent One had provided for me before I had even asked. He handed me exactly five \$5 dollar bills, the \$25 I had asked for. I thanked him, and invited him in for a cool drink, but he said he couldn't stay. After I closed the door, I jumped up and squealed with delight. Not even 10 minutes had passed from the time I made my prayer. I knocked on the bathroom door, stuck my hand through the shower curtain to show Ruta what was in my hand, and fanned out the five \$5 bills. She screamed, "Where did you get this?" I told her what had happened. Then she said, "Schlemiel! You should have known G-d would answer your prayer. Why didn't you ask for more?"

Sometimes we are disappointed if G-d doesn't give us what we pray for, and we feel abandoned or unheard. However, it has been my experience during my long spiritual trek that what happens does work out for the best. Sometimes what we pray for is not what is best for us. So when we feel that our prayer has not been answered it is good to keep an open mind and trust that He is helping in a way we don't yet understand. As Rabbi Akiva used to say, "Gam zu l'tova." ("Also this is for the good,") as G-d is only GOOD and all His ways are good.

It is a cardinal principal of faith in Judaism that G-d does answer your prayers, as Moses Maimonides writes in the "Thirteen Articles of Faith," in the 10th and 11th Article:

"I firmly believe that the Creator, blessed be his name knows all the actions and thoughts of human beings, as it is said: 'It is he who fashions the hearts of them all, and notes all their deeds.'

" and "I firmly believe that the Creator, blessed be his name, rewards those who keep his commands, and punishes those who transgress his commands."

A story is told of Rabbi Akiva, who was once traveling in a foreign land. All he had with him was his donkey, a chicken and a lantern. As dusk began to fall, he arrived in a small town, and requested lodging for the night. But no one would offer their hospitality for any price. So, being a man who trusted completely in G-d's ways, he said, "Gam zu l'tova." (Also this is for the good). Rabbi Akiva continued on this journey and settled for the night in the outskirts of the town, with no hard feelings about the town's ungracious lack of hospitality. As he prepared to

cook his meager meal, suddenly a snake frightened the donkey, which bolted away. The donkey stomped on the chicken accidentally, killing it; and knocked over his lantern, blowing out the light. Any other man would have been very unhappy about this situation. The donkey ran off with the goods that the rabbi had gotten to sell, not to mention his bedding and blanket. The chicken was to be his meal, but since it was not killed in a kosher manner, he could not eat it. He had no fire with which to cook it if it had been kosher. And with no fire to keep him warm, he shivered through a cold night. But, having perfect trust in G-d, he said, "Gam zu l'tova." There must be a good reason why this had come to pass. In the morning he discovered that a band of murderous robbers had come into the town and had killed everyone there and robbed all their valuables. Then he understood how his Merciful Protector had saved him from a terrible fate. If the townspeople had been hospitable, his fate would have been the same as theirs, death. If his donkey had brayed, or his rooster had crowed, or the thieves had seen his light, they would have discovered him and killed him as they had killed all the townspeople. Sometimes we don't understand how it is for our good, but in time we learn why. It may take only a while or it could take years, but ultimately, we will find out why.

After my own conversion, when my husband and I had established a Residential Center for helping troubled youth to find the G-d of their Fathers in Israel, we took over an abandoned kibbutz that had no water, among other things. We waited for 20 months before we finally got water. We had attached a small rubber hose from the very distant field pump which provided very little water pressure so that if we washed dishes, we couldn't water the horses; if someone took a shower, we couldn't water the small garden we had planted, etc. Once, when my dear disciple, Shoshana, and I were about to commence doing the dirty dishes of fifty people, the water was cut off, as it often was, by a tractor running over the rubber hose in the field. Shoshana and I walked into the Beit Kneset (prayer room), knelt before the Holy Torah Scroll and prayed for water to do all those dishes. It was then that we learned that you should be **very specific** when you pray, because instead of the water coming out of the faucet, it began to rain. Being resourceful, Shoshana and I ran outside with buckets, put them under the rain troughs and collected enough water to do the dishes.

You can be sure He will answer your prayer, but be careful what you ask for. Because that's what you'll get, and you need to be careful that this is really what you want and that it will be good for you.

For twenty months I looked at the brown fields of our Center and longed for the day I could plant grass and alfalfa for our horses and cattle, which we had acquired to provide meaningful work for our residents. After nearly two years when the water tower was finally finished, I borrowed 5,000 liras to hire tractors to plow, buy fertilizer, irrigation pipes and alfalfa seed. But the tractor didn't come on time, the fertilizer was delayed and by the time everything was prepared, Rosh Hashanah had arrived and it was a "shmita year," (sabbatical) the seventh year in which we do not plant in Israel. Since nothing had been planted at our ranch for 14 years, and since I had already begun the project, borrowed the money and our horses and cattle needed the good food, I got special permission from the Chief Rabbi of Kiriath Malachi that if I could get a non-Jew to sow the seeds, it would be permissible since the fields were already prepared before the Shmita year began. So I hired my friend Juma, a Bedouin who lived in our fields, to come and sow the seeds. He said he would come on Monday, but he didn't show up. I saddled up my horse and rode out into the fields to find out why. His elderly father said he was in Jericho and wouldn't return until Wednesday. By now, farmers were telling me that the season for planting was ended, and if I didn't get the seeds planted by Friday, the crop would be no good. I was getting worried. Wednesday came and went and Juma didn't come. Reuven and I rode out into the fields again to find Juma or his father. His father said he hadn't come back from Jericho, but on G-d's Honor, he promised that Juma would be there on Sunday to sow the alfalfa. By this time I was having a rebellious conversation with G-d. I said, "Look here now, you know I have served you faithfully, I waited nearly two years for water, I have tried to do everything according to the Holy Law, but I have a responsibility to feed my horses and cattle and to pay back the loan I borrowed to plant this crop. If Juma doesn't come on Sunday *I am going to sew the seed myself!* I will take the sin upon myself if You don't help me." However, Juma showed up, thank G-d, on Sunday and sowed the seeds. I was saved from my foolish lack of faith. But before we could finish setting up all the irrigation pipes over the five acres and water the seeds, the Main Pump for the entire area broke and there was no water anywhere in the area! It wasn't fixed for 5 days. If we had been

successful in watering the seeds even that day, they would have soured in the ground. *If they had been planted the week before, they would have shriveled up and died, as many farmers' crops in the area unfortunately did.* But since our seeds were still dry, when the Main Pump was repaired 5 days later, my seeds began to come up green despite the warning of the surrounding farmers that the season for planting was over. So, here I was, railing against G-d, pushing, pushing, pushing, threatening to plant the seeds myself, which was against the "shmita" law, being impatient, while all the while the Merciful One was protecting me against a ruined crop. He knew that Main Pump was going to break. I watched in wonder as those formerly brown areas became little green blades of alfalfa—each little blade was like a beloved child to me. But I did feel remorse that I had lost faith and considered breaking halacha (law). I try to remember this incident whenever I'm in doubt.

One of the most impossible prayers that filled me with the most awe and thankfulness when it was answered was the prayer that Reuven and I prayed one evening in our humble abode in Netanya. After trying unsuccessfully for two years to find a yeshiva or rabbi to teach the hundreds of young people who came to Israel knowing nothing about their Jewish heritage, but thirsting for knowledge, we decided that if nobody else wanted to do it, we would try to do it ourselves. But we had no money, no place to put the young people, no political connections, and no degrees in social work, psychology or a rabbinical ordination. Everyone said it would be ***impossible for us to do!*** We needed a philanthropic partner in order to do it. Since the "establishment" generation was fed up with the "hippie generation" and their rebelliousness, they didn't care if they disappeared from the planet, so donations were rare and small. Reuven said to me, "It says in the Tanach that 'a threefold cord is not easily broken.' There are two of us, so we will ask the Benefactor of the Universe to become our 'partner' in this undertaking and we will be three." So we sat down, joined hands, bowed our heads and prayed, "Please, Father of 'Mishpachat Yisrael' (Family of Israel), join with us in a partnership to teach Your lost ones Your Holy Torah and their purpose in life and in Israel as Jews. Yours is all the wealth, You own all the real estate, and only You can do the impossible, which is what everyone says this project is. Be with us in this project and we will be Your willing partners." When we finished our prayer we looked at each other with a smile of relief, and felt the burden lift from our shoulders. This was in the summer of 1970.

By Passover 1971 we were standing at the head of several long tables filled with kosher for Passover food, at our 50 acre Center, looking at the excitedly expectant, smiling faces of 50 young people who had never been to a Seder in their lives. My heart overflowed with love and gratitude for our “partner” and my eyes moistened with emotion at the miracle that I was viewing. It was an extremely emotional moment for me, as no one but Reuven really understood how our “partner” had moved **mountains** to make this all possible. The Passover of the year before, which was only for our own small family, was difficult to finance. However, after asking the Creator to be our partner in this mission, we were given provision and housing for every thirsting soul who came to our Seder. Of all the prayers I have made, this one stands out in my life as the most remarkable one that G-d answered beyond our wildest dreams.

Will G-d answer your questions, you ask? Judaism impressed me so, because there is NO QUESTION YOU CAN'T ASK! For those with a curious nature, Judaism knows that every question asked will only bring you closer to knowledge of all the mysteries of the created Universe, and more in awe of the Creator, Who's Wisdom is vast beyond vastness. It is not a religion that tries to scare you out of your ETERNITY if you can't logically accept some of the precepts on faith alone. I do not purport to believe that faith is not an important part of religion, but it is a faith born of assurance and satisfaction. Where knowledge ends, faith begins. Its hindsight is also its foresight. Those who want to know their Heavenly Father need to just ask honestly of the Merciful One to guide them, and suddenly they may have a book fall off a shelf and land on their head that leads them to the next step. One of the Creator's many names is “Ezer,” (Help). Just cry out, “Help!” and something will happen for you. A cry for help triggers the mechanism of help. Perhaps it will be a person who comes into your life that teaches you something revealing that leads you to the next step. One is always growing, and it is a process that takes a whole lifetime. But even looking back over a short time one can look back with delight and satisfaction on what one's experiences along this path has brought them, and feel that confidence that one's path is sure.

As I reflect back over the years from the time that I climbed the cliffs in the Valley of Fire in Las Vegas to sit on a high rock in the middle of a quiet desert, I realize now that G-d *answered all my **questions** and fulfilled my **prayers***. I was a

confused 21 year old girl who no longer knew for sure that there was a G-d, or what was the nature of G-d, the purpose of mankind, my purpose as an individual, whether or not He was listening to me, what kind of morality should I follow in the midst of a hedonistic world, whether or not my standards and ideals were unrealistic, whether or not there was a real soulmate for me to marry. Now I can look back and know beyond a reasonable doubt that He heard every word, answered all my questions and led me through a path, step by step, to enable me to fulfill my destiny. He was there in the desert, He was with me throughout my worldwide journey, leading me from Las Vegas to Jerusalem, and I know that He will be there for **you, too**, if you earnestly seek to know Him. It is a Beloved Relationship of Emunah (Faith), Love, Help, and even Miracles! So pray away and see the blessings, count the answered prayers, be in awe of the miracles, large and small, and bring blessings and G-d's merciful bounty into your lives. You will see that G-d is there when you give your trust to Him. Anyway, it doesn't hurt to ask. If you don't pray for blessings, you may not get all that is in store for you.....

How do I recognize the path, you ask? "Halacha," the Hebrew word for "law," takes its meaning from "holech," meaning, "to walk." One only needs to walk down the path of life according to the "halacha" set forth in the Torah, and one is on the "Golden Path." One need not fear or worry whether he will fall off a cliff, or trip when he puts his foot down on this path, because the Torah teaches us to build a parapet around a dangerous height so none will fall, and not to put a stumbling block in front of the blind (not necessarily the physically blind). One can feel relief that one's quest for wisdom in Torah has protected them from having to look back over painful mistakes one could have made if not for the advice of the Torah. One can feel genuine love for the Protector who rescues us from our mistakes, willful ones as well as innocent ones.

Chapter Fifteen

CAN I HEAR HIM?

In Kings I; Chapter 39 we read that the Prophet Elijah fled to the desert after the wicked Queen Jezebel had murdered all the Prophets. He was very depressed, feeling like a total failure for he couldn't get the people to be holy, and

the Jezebel had been victorious over him. He wearily fell onto the hot sand and begged the Merciful One to take his life. Up until then Elijah had been a pretty wrathful Prophet, serving G-d zealously, even holding back the rain for seven years because the people were following in the path of the wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. He felt he could do no more, he had done all he could, but it didn't help. He tells G-d, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the G-d of Hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine alters, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." At that time we learn something very important about G-d as He reveals Himself to Elijah. I continue the text, "And He said: 'Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the L-rd.' And behold, the L-rd passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord; *but the Lord was not in the wind*; and after the wind an earthquake; but *the Lord was not in the earthquake*; and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; *and after the fire a still small voice.*"

The Commentary on this excerpt in the Soncino Pentateuch edited by Dr. J. H. Hertz is so beautiful. He writes:

"This narrative is one of the profoundest in Scripture. In a magnificent acted parable, Elijah is taught the error of his methods. 'A still small voice,' or, 'a sound of gentle stillness.' The wind, fire and earthquake are often spoken of as heralds of G-d; and while they are His agents and subservient to His will, they do not disclose Him so perfectly as the calm which follows the storm. The vision is in the nature of rebuke to the impetuosity of Elijah, and the passion of despair that brought him to this place. He must not imagine that good is vanquished because evil is mighty, loud, and triumphant. And evil cannot most successfully be overcome by storm and fire. Rather is the Spirit of G-d manifested, and the purpose of G-d furthered in that which is represented by the still small voice; i.e. the gentle operation of spiritual forces, the calmness and patience of quiet and indomitable faith, and the persistent work which is the fruit of that patience and faith. To later generations, Elijah was not the Prophet of storm and fire, but the healer and helper, the reconciler and peace-bringer..."

Even though G-d is the Omnipotent (all powerful), yet He is so gentle and meek, always there for us helping, guiding, providing for all our needs even when we are not aware of Him—even if we don't pray to Him or acknowledge that He

exists, or even when we are angry at Him, even when we never thank Him. He patiently waits for us to learn, to become aware of His bountiful love and care, to become a channel for His Beneficence. One does not conceive of the “all powerful” G-d as meek. He is Omniscient! It’s almost a dichotomy of terms. Yet it is so.

Those wishing to hear answers to prayers should realize that the communicator they can use to communicate with G-d is their soul, whose essence is spiritual and can both communicate to the Creator, and hear the still, silent voice of G-d. In “Guide for the Perplexed,” Maimonides teaches that there is a broadcast wavelength called the Active Intellect, which is the voice of Wisdom (one of G-d’s names), floating through the air. One must quiet the noise within and practice becoming tuned up to receive this Wisdom through the Active Intellect. It is there, as surely as there are radio waves passing through my room right now that are being picked up by the receiver in my radio. Just like you hear static on the radio if it isn’t tuned right on to the wavelength, you may hear a little “static” at first, until you have learned to quiet your mind and focus on the Father/Mother of creation. You tune yourself by prayer and meditation. Just don’t give up. It is most certainly worth striving for. I have heard it many times since learning of its existence, and the wisdom gained thereby has saved my life and my sanity. It was that “still small voice” I had heard while sitting on the high rocks in the Valley of Fire, when I meditated; when I questioned my Maker over which path to take. G-d had answered me then, saying, “Stick to the moral code you have been taught in the Bible. Don’t let the temptations of Las Vegas (or anywhere) change you. Only look and learn.”

Our brains are complex organisms, which are both receivers and transmitters of electromagnetic energy, which permeates space at the speed of light. These thought patterns are intercepted by the Creator in His Abode where space, time and motion have no sway. Prayers and mitzvot (good deeds) are like cables that are connected to the Heavenly Abode. They draw down the Beneficence of the Creator, which is always flowing. Because G-d created us with our “will to receive,” all we have to do is turn on the cable through prayer. And instead of having to pay the Cable Station for hooking up the service, we get, instead, all the Beneficence, which the Merciful One, blessed be He, has to impart to us FOR FREE. When we are connected to this constantly emitting, bestowing cable, we must, in the image of G-d, share the Beneficence. When we restrict the flow, by

choice of the “free will” given to mankind, we become **spiritually constipated!** Does constipation feel good? Is it beneficial to our physical organs? No. Neither is “spiritual constipation” beneficial, because that’s how you get the **”kaka-mania.”**

When we keep all this beneficence flowing from the Beneficent One to ourselves in a gluttonous lifestyle, we poison our own selves FROM THE INSIDE. So, foolish and unnecessary. And the energy level of Beneficence decreases its energy to the entire PLANET because of this restriction. Only by sharing our good fortune with others will we inherit the harmony that most people seek. How many people do you know, or have you heard about, who have acquired great riches in this world, but live an unhappy, inharmonious life? We know about crashing at the bottom, but why do these people **”crash at the top?”**

These unfortunates may be suffering from spiritual constipation, or kaka-mania. They are not “receiving for the purpose of bestowing.” Their interpersonal relationships are not fulfilling because they may not know how to receive or impart love. Lovingkindness is not like material things of which you have only “so much” and when you run out of it, it’s gone. Lovingkindness is of such a nature that the more you give of it, the more you have!

Chapter Sixteen

GESTATING HOLINESS & RAISING HOLY CHILDREN

When a woman is pregnant she is advised to study Torah during her entire pregnancy, and the chemistry of “holiness” will be imprinted upon her child’s nature. Modern science has discovered in recent medical research that the child hears in the womb, responds to quiet music and rock & roll in different manners, and knows the voice of those in the household at birth. They can hear in the womb. We are only just beginning to understand the make-up of the development of a human being, physically, chemically, emotionally, spiritually, and environmentally. Scientists have proven that chemistry produces behavior changes, and that thought produces chemical changes. Therefore, one could logically conclude that the mother’s thoughts and words affect the chemical make-up in the fetus’s brain. This will definitely be a determinate in the way that child will react to life. Environment doesn’t start with the child’s first breath. The womb is its first environment. The mother’s diet of food and thought, the sounds that the fetus

hears in the household, the amount of harmony within the mother and between members of the household all has an affect upon the fetus.

Kabbalists go even further than that, and teach that the very thoughts that run through a man's and his mate's mind while they are coupling determine the kind of soul that will inhabit this child. If your mind is not dwelling on holiness you create a negative flow, which is opposite to the life force of creation, which is mercy. Then the entire female system will become discomforted, having to bear fruit that is opposite to the Creator's will to create peaceful beings. My husband often counsels men that if they have something foolish on their mind, like feeling, "I'm going to f___ her brains out," that they'll have a f___g idiot for a child." It sounds pretty crude, but these thoughts sometimes cross the mind of young men. Marital sex is a sacred act, and a couple should invite the Creator into this coupling so that your child will be created not for foolishness or a disaster, but to be a holy soul.

Many people ask me, "What should I think when my mate and I are making love? Should I concentrate on a Biblical passage, or pray? How can I concentrate on making love this way?" Many people are also so steeped in sex and guilt that it is difficult for them to conceive of sex and G-d at the same time. My only suggestion is that one should thank the Heavenly Creator for these pleasurable sensations that he has created within us during the act of love. We should thank Him for having found a "soulmate" with whom to share these wonderful feelings, rejoice with the Celestial Beings, who rejoice with you in your joy of pleasure, and invite the Holy Spirit into your lovemaking so that should the Holy One, blessed be He, decide to bless your lovemaking with a child, the soul of that child will be conceived through Holy Joy. You may practice this, and certainly I invite you to use your own imagination! You may think of some more wonderful and creative Holy thoughts, as this act of love is one of the most personal and sacred acts in life.

I know that Torah study definitely works on the character of the infant through personal experience. When I was pregnant with my third child, my daughter, was during the time I spent learning Torah every night with a scholar in Kibbutz Sha'alavim in Israel. She was born with no pain, and her first word was "Amen." She never gave me cause to spank her; she is to this day a holy and wonderful young woman. My two sons are, thank G-d, also holy and wonderful due to the

gift of Torah. But they were born through much pain, and I believe their characters would have been a little easier to mold in a holy way if I had possessed Torah wisdom earlier. I realize that boys have a different “energy” than girls, and their curiosity often gets them into more danger and trouble. This is another very valid reason why a prospective family would want to imbue their sons with holiness from the womb. It will give them more protection from their own curiosity and love of adventure. We women can be especially thankful for this curiosity, because I believe that it is this very sense that is the cause of inventiveness. It is mostly men who have invented such labor and time saving machines as the sewing machine, washers, dryers and other technical devices that allow us to devote more quality time to our children instead of working from dawn to dusk on household chores. I remember when my oldest son was only one year old and was playing with a little girl of the same age. She was pushing a baby carriage with a doll in it.

Frederick turned the carriage upside down to see what made the wheels work. I said to myself then, “Who says there is no difference between the way men and women think? This seems to me to be something innate.” That very same son built the computer that I’m writing this book with today.

My younger son Joshua’s first word was “Batman,” a totally different “mind-set” than my daughter Heftzi-ba’s first word. Still, thank G-d, at least Batman is a “hero image,” and Joshua is always willing to come to someone’s rescue. He is devoted to Torah and to Israel, and was a special commando Paratrooper in the Israel Defense Force and a gifted and talented diamond manufacturer. His 6 children are all precious, holy children, and his wife is righteous and kindhearted (thank G-d). My eldest son Pinchas, an engineering genius and inventor, is dedicated to utilizing knowledge of G-d’s creation to clean up the environment by using free, non-fossil fuel energy, and is in the process of negotiating to bring a Healing Center to Israel, using new technology that reminds one of the Star Trek generation. My lovely daughter is the mother of 4 darling daughters (may they all be blessed), and all of my children and grandchildren live a life of Torah and mitzvot (thank G-d). All of my grandchildren are in yeshiva schools (except the tiny ones). My children are my most precious riches, as most mothers I know will testify. But I have also counseled many a mother who wishes her children had never been born. There is nothing sadder in the world than this, and parents in this situation usually feel that they have nothing but pain to show for their love and

devotion to their children. I thank G-d daily for the gift of Torah when our children were young enough grow up with this heavenly wisdom.

I do not promise that if one studies Torah all during the making of their infant, thinks holy thoughts, raises their children with Torah and mitzvot, that they will never have trouble with their children. That is simply a dream. G-d gave to every one free will, and your children will have to decide for themselves what they will do with their lives. Every person has a yetzer hatov (good inclination) and a yetzer hara (evil inclination). These inclinations pull one this way and that, and sometimes the evil inclination will cause your children or yourself or your mate or parent or friend to do some things that you and/or they wish they had not done. But you can **arm** your children and significant others by teaching, encouraging and being an example of a good servant of the Holy One, blessed be He. Even if your child does err, he or she will learn from it, and with your good example and guidance will be more easily returned to the path that will bring your child ultimately to a path of peace and worthwhile endeavors. Life isn't over until it's over. We (hopefully) continue to grow, physically, mentally and spiritually our entire life. So if there is a period of difficulty in raising your children, not only in adolescence, but any time, patience is a virtue. Just be consistent, loving, coaxing and **never give up** on someone you love.

You may have to punish your child. King Solomon said, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." This does not mean that you must *hurt* them badly. The sages even advise that when one corrects his child that he hold the child with his right, or stronger hand, and spank with the left, or weaker hand, so that his anger will not get out of bounds and accidentally abuse the child. Other punishments might be to withhold privileges or a favorite toy, or send them to their room for a "time out" to think about what they have done. Ask them to come back and apologize when they are ready. Or give them a task to do that they don't like to do as penance. Maimonides writes that there are times when a "show" of anger is appropriate. You don't really allow yourself to become **angry**, but you "act" out the part so that your child will definitely know that s/he has displeased you. Some might call it "righteous indignation." It depends upon the innate personality of your child and how they respond. I have known some parents who are so gentle and holy that their children feel extreme remorse and shame just to see a certain "look" on their

parents' faces. Unfortunately, however, this is not everyone's luck. As they say, there are different strokes for different folks and I have found this to be very true.

My husband and I had a client in Israel, a teenage daughter of a Cohen (the Tribe of Priesthood), whose family was kind, well-educated and good parents. The young girl, however, ran away from home, lived on the beach, slept with several "beach bums," delivered drugs for one of them, and generally drove her parents crazy and broke their hearts. The parents appealed to us to help them with their daughter, a pretty young thing, but very rebellious. My husband warned her, in front, that if she didn't behave she wasn't going to like what he would do to her. It was just a threat, but it worked. She was always well behaved at our Center, and very helpful to those who came after her. She even named her little puppy "Knuckle," as my husband was in the habit of calling those who messed up "knuckleheads."

After six months of meritable behavior, we suggested that her parents take her home. They came to a final conference with us, and as we all sat in my office, she again took an offensive manner to her father, lowering her head and refusing to look at him.

My husband sensed that there was some unfinished business here, so he told her, "Look at your father and honor him." She refused, still deliberately looking at her lap in defiance. My husband said to the father, "I think she wants you to slap her. So slap her." This gentle man looked at us in surprise. He said, "I have never slapped her in her life. It's just not my way." Again my husband said, "I think she wants you to slap her. So slap her and get it over with. You really want you to. She's hurt you so. You will help her to expunge her guilt if you slap her." So he slapped her, she cried a little, her father looked surprisingly relieved, as if he had just gotten rid of a big load he was carrying. Then they hugged, cried a little more (from happiness) and kissed and went home together. They called us later to report that she was attending University, dressing modestly, getting excellent grades in her art (which I had helped her to see her talents in), and that she was dating a fine young man. It may sound strange to those of a gentle heart, but sometimes a slap is in order. Children need to know RESPECT. Honor for parents is the Fifth Commandment, and it is very important, "that your days may be long upon the earth."

My husband is always coming up with picturesque sayings that make confusing matters clear. About children he has taught many others and me that to

see how children are, one should just look at cattle grazing. The cattle may have 200 acres to graze in, with shady trees, cool ponds, but you will always find many of them grazing right on the **EDGE OF THE FENCE!** And if you moved that fence out, they would move out to that edge. And if there were no fence or a break in the fence, they would be out in the middle of the road and either get hit by a car or get lost. Children are a lot like this. They need boundaries. They need to know how far they can go before you will stop them. They will test you and test you and test you and test you *ad infinitum*, hoping you'll give up and give them their way—not because their way will be healthy for them, but ***just to get their way***, to be master of their own ship, so to speak. Well, there will be time enough for them to be master of their own ship when they have proven to their parents that they can be **RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR INDEPENDENCE**. That is the key factor.

King Solomon says, “Teach them in the way they should go when they are young, and they will not leave it when they are old.” (Even if they may divert occasionally.)

Chapter Seventeen

SABBATH - SOME REST FOR THE WEARY

I learned how a Sabbath should be celebrated, not with just wine and challah, but with heart and soul. It was difficult at first to remember all the unfamiliar tasks that I needed to prepare for the Sabbath before I lit the candles. It would have been easier if my mother-in-law, may she rest in peace, would have still been alive, because I felt the need of an observant woman to show me how she did it. Later, when I lived in Israel at Kibbutz Sha'alavim, I was privileged to learn many beautiful traditions, recipes and songs from the observant families there, and to learn the practical techniques to keeping food hot and what is best to prepare.

Sabbath is a day that you take to pleasure your body and your spirit. All of the weekdays are spent in preparing for the needs of your body. Sabbath is the day you take to nurture your soul, to reap your reward, to feast on your best foods, to wear your best clothes, to really get into your family, listen to your children, dwell with the Holy Shechina (Holy Spirit), comfort and delight your soul with prayer and closeness to the Most High, learn from the wisdom of the Torah, rest your weary body. It adds another 1/6th to your life. And its sweetness pervades the rest of the days of the week. Looking forward to it and preparing for it makes the feeling stay with you. Those who do not taste of the sweetness of Sabbath, when the Most High gave it to them as a day of rest, are truly cruel taskmasters to their own soul. It is like denying your spirit her conjugal rights.

All of the weekdays are spent in trying to deal with the material needs of life. One would think that spending only one day of the week in communion with one's soul wouldn't be a fair apportionment of time. However, the strength of the spirit is so strong that it can take us another six days down the road of life before it needs a refill. But if you don't refill on the Sabbath day, you lose your balance. Life becomes too hard to bear. Not enough time is spent thinking about the week before and analyzing it through communion with your soul to see if you have lived the past week congruently with your beliefs.

The sages tell us that we should never put off studying the Torah, saying, "When I have time I will study." One never knows when life will be over, but Sabbath comes every week. This is the day one reserves for feasting your soul on holy food, the Torah.

Torah is something to be lived every day, not sometime down the road. For when you look down the way you have come you will find many pitfalls that you have fallen into because you haven't learned the wisdom your Creator has given you in His Book. Sabbath is a day to take the time to study holy works and discuss them with your family, sing songs, let your heart rejoice in all of the blessings that you have. You can feel the extra measure of soul that you are given for this day!

After my conversion to Judaism and my family's move to Israel, I was preparing for Shabbat, (the Hebrew word for Sabbath) in our apartment in Netanya. I had a few minutes to wait for the coffee water to begin boiling before I turned off the fires and lit the Shabbat candles. As I rested a moment, I began to fret over the fact that I had wanted to do, or finish, many other tasks during the week, and here it was, the end of the week, and I hadn't been able to accomplish it all. I suddenly realized how beautiful Shabbat was, with a depth of understanding that I formerly lacked. "See what a taskmaster you are to yourself!" I said. If not for Shabbat I would never stop! There would **always** be more and more tasks that would need to be done, but they will certainly be there waiting for me after Shabbat. With Shabbat I had a legitimate reason to make myself stop at some point and rest. No one could call me lazy or irresponsible for stopping. I had been **COMMANDED** to stop by my merciful Maker. Who could argue with that?

Most everybody loves to party. So we have a party every week! We put on pretty clothes, we invite the people we love best (our family and others), we drink wine, eat our favorite yummys, the house sparkles with cleanliness and with the light of the Sabbath candles. Shabbat brings cohesiveness into your life. It gives the gift of **FAMILY UNITY** to you and your children. During the week everyone is running to do their tasks, go to work or school, children are busy with their friends or homework. The family doesn't have time to really sit down and **BE TOGETHER** in a relaxed atmosphere. Shabbat gives the most valuable, yet inexpensive treasure to your children—beautiful memories of family tradition and closeness. In today's world especially, our society is experiencing tragic family breakdown. Even in the few families that do stay together, so many children complain that their parents don't listen to them, don't understand them, and they don't feel close with their parents. From the parents we hear that their children don't listen to them,

don't communicate with them, and don't give them the proper respect or honor. They sometimes complain that they don't even feel any love from their children.

When a child can look back to the precious moments they have shared with their family, that funny incident that happened during Passover, the joy of singing songs together at the table after Shabbat meals, the first sweet prayer they learned from a parent, the way their parents put them to bed singing the night prayer together, the respect they received from the adults when they expounded on a portion of the Torah as is the custom during Shabbat and holiday meals, this gives them a solid family foundation. This gives them self-esteem and a sense of BELONGING, of ROOTS. It doesn't cost a thing, but it is the greatest treasure one can give to his children.

Then, when your children are going through adolescence you worry about them, and how they will behave when all this hormonal CHEMISTRY is shooting through their system. They want independence, but can they handle it? If you have raised them in the wisdom of Torah they will have the tools to get through that difficult period with fewer "goofs," more self-control, and stronger moral values. The 613 mitzvot that surround and embrace them will keep them more on center.

You won't be finished with all your work until the end of your life, but G-d has given mankind, and even working animals, a day of rest every week of every year. Be as merciful to yourself and family as the Merciful Creator, and take a holy rest. You *need it!*

Your Soul needs it. The continuity of your understanding of what G-d wants from us as Jews needs it. Your heart needs it. How good it feels to be loved by the Creator of the Universe, to be rescued from the slavery of Pharaoh and from the slavery of our own material pursuits..

THE RUSSELL COUNTY NEWS

Since 1913

Published each Wednesday at Jamestown, Kentucky 42629. Publication number 473500. Entered as second class mail at Jamestown, Kentucky. Subscription rates \$4.40 in Kentucky, \$10.45 out-of-state.

2 The Jamestown, Ky., RUSSELL COUNTY NEWS, Wednesday, March 22, 1978—

GOODTALK—

Alternatives to violence

By Sara Mandell

If you were fighting for a cause for the betterment of America, 9,000,000 bright, able-bodied people could really help get the job done. If you needed to raise funds for a drive, a one dollar bill from 9,000,000 caring people would set you well down the road to success. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to muster an unified mass of people for good. But for 9,000,000 Americans alcohol has become a habit forming, addictive drug; and alcohol is the hardest drug of all. Most of these people are not skid row bums, but confused teenagers, weary businessmen, and frustrated women. They are not bright or able-bodied when drunk, nor do they care about a cause. Because of their alcoholism they not only cannot dedicate themselves to a cause, but cannot even apply themselves to their own families or their own troubled selves.

Perhaps by reading the devastating facts you will be inspired to open up to and help someone you know who is becoming an alcoholic or who already is. Sixty per cent of the men involved in wife battering events are under the influence of alcohol. Nearly 8,000 young Americans are killed in one year in drunk driving accidents. About fifty young Americans will be killed today; nearly two hundred and fifty will be maimed or disfigured. Not from drugs or disease, but from alcohol.

Alcohol is much more serious than heroin addiction in this country and requires your immediate attention. Statistics show that there are 300,000 heroin addicts in America as compared to 9,000,000 alcoholics. Alcoholics also lose control of themselves and drop out of life, and they also steal to support their habit. But because so many alcoholics are family people whose problem affects loved ones, their alcoholism has a more far reaching affect than the

heroin addict. These people are addicted to alcoholic beverages. Can you imagine the waste of a special, individual's life being dependent on a man made liquid?

Shouldn't our lives be dependent on spiritual inspiration and strength, on love from family and friends, and on ethical and moral understanding? Most alcoholics were lacking in one or all of these areas before coming to depend on a drink. Their souls cry out in agony when no one can help them to cultivate these important qualities.

We must all strive to be worthy of the gift of free will by choosing a life guided by inner strength, mercy, and justice to all. No matter where you live, there are people who really care and want to talk to you about being a strong, healthy individual: counselors, ministers, teachers, family and friends. But first you must share your worries and troubles and don't give up if the first person you talk to doesn't have all the answers. No problem is too big or too terrible that it cannot be worked out. You will find that if you get what's weighing down your heart out in the open first thing, it will be a thousand times easier to deal with than if you let it "drive you to drink." Nothing is worth being driven to drink about because instead of that problem being only yours, it becomes a problem of everyone who knows and cares about you.

Care enough about yourself to take measures before you are driven to drink. Associate with people whom you know are spiritually strong and healthy; stay away from trouble makers and low-lives. Be honest with yourself and others. Be moderate in all things and consult someone wise and trustworthy when you're feeling blue. You will succeed in health and happiness if your desire is sincere, and you really try. +

Russell County News, Wednesday, January 11, 1978



Somerset, Kentucky



PULASKI HIGH SCHOOL students gathered in the school's multi-purpose room for a "Good Talk" program presented by Reuven and Sara Mandell, who were assisted by their two sons, and other band members. +

Mandells address Pulaski students

January 4th and 5th Reuven and Sara Mandell initiated their "Good Talk" program to the student body of Pulaski County High School.

The program is aimed at developing a sense of one's self worth through peer counseling and extracurricular activities involving the arts.

The Mandells and accompanying musicians including Jim Roy and Harold Wilson of the "Free

Electrical Band" were well received by the students and the majority of others in attendance.

After the program was outlined by Reuven and Sara, the students were welcomed on to the stage to jam with the band. The whole affair seemed to be a huge success judging by the number of students waiting to talk to Reuven about the outlined "Good Talk" program. +

Chapter Eighteen

CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS

The laws concerning washing the hands and feet, and of proper sanitation methods given in the desert by Moses over three thousand years ago, only recently in history have begun to make an impression on the medical profession. Just a hundred years ago doctors went from Typhus patient to childbirth without washing the hands. Therefore, plagues among the gentiles were rampant because of poor sanitation laws. Yet the Jews lived through it all, and were sometimes even accused of causing the plague through magic, and killed because they were largely unscathed by the plagues since they obeyed the hygienic laws of the Torah. They washed their hands before meals, making a blessing on the commandment to wash their hands. They washed their hands after relieving themselves, and thanked G-d for keeping their tubes clean and thanked the Healer of All Flesh for keeping the right ones open and shut so that it would be possible to stand before His Throne and praise Him. It was a Jewish doctor who led the medical profession to wash their hands.

The Children of Israel were taught when they were in the Sinai Desert that when they relieved themselves, they were to go “without the camp” and to carry a spade to cover up their waste. This was taught to us 3,300 years ago. Yet cholera and dysentery and other plagues caused by open sewage and unclean habits still cause death throughout the less civilized nations today.

Even some of the women that I have counseled over the years, including some of the young women on my Residential Center, have not been clean. Some have been disgustingly bizarre in their personal hygiene and the way they leave their filth in their bedrooms. This from supposedly “civilized education.” However, in these cases I realize that some are mentally unbalanced, and this is a part of their poor mental hygiene, not that they haven’t been educated, nor because they don’t have sanitation and plumbing, as in poor countries. But fortunately, the Israelites have been given the gift of health for thousands of years already, if they follow the sanitary laws given in Mount Sinai—the laws of sanitation, washing of the hands before eating and after leaving the bathroom, washing the hands upon arising in the morning before being permitted to bless the name of the Holy One, immersing in the mikvah, cleansing themselves after a seminal emission, the laws

of kashrut of their food, making sure to wash vegetables and fruit of tiny insects before eating them, and the laws of cleansing the hands before prayer.

Knowing the laws of cleanliness is purely a “gift of life” from our Creator; it is not always something that just comes naturally. As you know, if a child drops something he wants to eat in the dirt, he will pick it up and eat it anyway if you don’t stop him in time. So cleanliness is a habit that must be taught. Teach your mind to “think clean.” Especially in this day and age where Hepatitis and AIDS can be passed easily from person to person. Think about where your hands have been before you pick your teeth or wipe your mouth or eat. Think about the gift of the wisdom of cleanliness that has kept our people alive and healthy over the millennia, and bless the Holy One for this wisdom.

When we rise up in the morning, we do not pronounce the Holy Name of G-d until we have washed our hands, and blessed Him for the wisdom of this sanctification. Then we may use His Blessed Name. If you could see in a microscope what dirt gets on your hands during a day or night, you would say that prayer with a very special feeling of grace!

Today we are being shown on television health documentaries and on the News channels that we should be careful not to even touch door knobs, elevator buttons, etc., because there are so many deadly viruses in our society. We should be careful to use paper towels for each person when washing our hands before eating bread at Holiday gatherings, so as not to pass germs. Touching the mezuzah and kissing it is a tradition that could pass germs. I now put my fingers a couple of inches away and then kiss my fingers, and my whole family does this as well. We need to be more careful these days lest we, G-d forbid, spread a plague.

Chapter Nineteen

METAPHYSICAL ENERGIES & THEIR EFFECTS

I began to learn that every deed and action in the physical world has its metaphysical effect. Even as there are laws of physics, I began to understand that there are laws of metaphysics, which are affected by the negative and positive moral actions of mankind. My husband had bought a little book on Kabbalah, the mystical interpretations of the Torah, which was very inspiring. This book had accidentally (?) fallen out of a high bookshelf and landed on his head when he was browsing in a bookstore for a good book. The books on the Kabbalah teach one to look into the universal “whole” of creation, into the symbiotic harmony between

all created lives. It is written that there isn't a blade of grass on earth that doesn't have its corresponding influence in the realm of the stars. Everything has its own form of energy, and these energies interact with one another as "cause and effect" (midday ki'neged middah).

The Kabbalists teach that the entire Universe was created with the 22 letters of the Hebrew Aleph-Bet, each of which has its own Energy Intelligence. If one considers what a computer can do with a binary system of only 1's and 0's, imagine the complexity and immense intelligence of a system run on 22 letters (which also each have a numerical equivalent)! The Hebrew letters are a "cosmic code," and they do much more than just spell words. However, this is a very deep subject, and one that you can read about by authors much more learned than myself.

I want to speak about metaphysical laws merely to bring to your attention the laws of "cause and effect." For every action there is a "reaction," not just in the physical world, but also in the metaphysical world; a world that is not visible, but nevertheless, impacts upon your life in ways that you may find difficult to understand. Now, some people don't think much about their *soul*, their spirituality, which you cannot see. Most people are very busy just satisfying their *body*. I think it's terrific that people have become much more aware and involved lately in aerobics, bodybuilding, respiratory strengthening. Building a strong body is good health, and according to Moses Maimonides, one cannot understand one's learning of the Torah clearly if one neglects to keep the body strong. But think a moment, and you may agree that we all know when the soul leaves the body, the body is DEAD. Ignoring the needs of your soul causes grief to your soul, which afflicts your conscience, your self-image and your physical well-being. You begin not to function in harmony and balance. We've all been in those moods sometimes, so we know it's not a good feeling. Despite whatever physical strengthening you may have achieved, if you don't keep up those "spiritual pushups," those soul-satisfying deeds, you will never achieve equilibrium. However, the Book that our Creator gave us is the formula for correcting disharmony and imbalance: of the individual, of society, of the ecology. It is truly the Owner's Manual for the Human Mind, Body and Soul, as well as the Universe. Students of physics understand that there is a "law of opposites" that opposing forces constantly strive to achieve Equilibrium. This effort produces powerful energy. In "body and soul" these opposite forces are **gross matter** and **refined**

matter. In order for these opposites to achieve equilibrium, the Creator imprinted upon the Soul a “conscience” to know right from wrong, and upon the Body a “will to receive.”

A. **BODY** (*gross matter*): This “will to receive” is written about in a Kabbalistic (Jewish mysticism) work called “Ten Luminous Emanations,” by Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag. It is about the nature of mankind and about his purpose in life, which is about the most important thing one can learn. This book teaches that the only new factor which was revealed in the Creation of mankind was the “will to receive,” for this is not something that is found in the Creator, for from whom would He receive?

The Beneficent One is always in a state of Bestowal. In the human being, however, G-d imprinted on our physical nature the love of “receiving” various pleasurable sensations. The “will to receive” is not necessarily degrading, nor is it considered a vice by the Creator. On the contrary, it is the vital import and pivot of all creation. There could never be a “creature” if it were not for this “will to receive.” It is when the recipient performs the divine service with the motive of delighting his Maker, as he acts altruistically, a man’s “will to receive” is transmuted into a “will to bestow” or share. When one begins to **receive** in order to **bestow**, then one has evolved into the kind of human being that the Creator intended. For how can we please our Creator except by bestowing acts of lovingkindness to His creatures, even as our Creator bestows lovingkindness upon us? In this way, we become “in the IMAGE of G-d,” which is mankind’s purpose. In this state of being, the BODY is in harmony with its opposite SOUL, and has achieved the Equilibrium that opposites strive for, adding tremendous energy and more verve to life, as well as achieving “inner peace.” This is the rewarding result of that equilibrium in life, to achieve a healthy balance, not to be extreme in our behavior...

B. **SOUL:** In Hebrew, the gender for the Soul is Feminine, again the opposite of Body (masculine). The “breath of life” which the Creator breathed within the vessel (body) is the Soul. Imprinted upon the Soul is a “conscience,” like a DNA imprint, which knows good (healthy), and it knows evil, (unhealthy). This chemistry was introduced into mankind when we ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil in the Garden of Eden. We, as humans were given the power of choice between doing good or doing evil, unlike any of the creatures G-d

has created—even the Angels, who do only what the Creator has commanded. Having freedom of will makes us similar to our Creator.

Two inclinations were given to us in opposites—the good inclination (yetzer ha tov) and the evil inclination (yetzer ha ra). Dr. Freud was right when he said that everyone has a strong “death wish.” That is the job of the evil inclination. It’s job is programmed for death—every way that is wrong and disturbing to life is the “yetzer ha ra,” the inclination toward death. The good inclination is, therefore, your **life force**, programmed with all that is good and leads to longevity and contentment (Let all your thoughts and deeds be for the sake of Heaven.”). When G-d created the good inclination He said it was “tov” (good). When he created the evil inclination He said it was “tov me’od” (very good). There is great passion and strength in the “yetzer ha ra.” If you can train this strength and passion until it is under your control, you can use it to serve G-d “with all your strength” (im kol me’odecha), sort of like a watchdog at your door who will only attack at the command of its master. In this way, you can reverse the word “evil” to “live,” which is evil spelled backwards. So get used to asking yourself this one question when your mind receives a thought. Ask yourself which impulse put that message into your mind - your death wish or your life force? Will this act be pleasing to G-d? This stops you from acting on impulse or simply *reacting* to stimuli by habit without thinking. If you forget to do this and respond to the message of the yetzer ha ra, then pay attention to what happens after the act is done. When your conscience begins to bother you, when you begin feeling guilty or ashamed about something, this is a “balancing mechanism” to check the evil impulse. The “good inclination” monitors the “evil inclination” and vice versa, in their strive to create Equilibrium. One must ask oneself if he is doing a dastardly deed in order to acquire what he wants for his body at the expense of his conscience. One must examine whether he is living his life congruently with his beliefs. In this way one’s soul balances the body’s “will to receive” so that the servomechanism of the soul (body) is transmuted to the “desire to receive in order to bestow, (healthy balance). If this flow is interrupted, it causes a restriction in the flow, otherwise known as “negative feedback.” This negative feedback can be used in a positive way, however.

It’s the Creator’s way to give mankind their ability to “self-correct.”

An analogy might be a missile that is programmed to reach a certain target. Its onboard computer monitors the deviation from the true course. This negative feedback causes the proper reaction to correct the deviation, and allows it to reach

its goal. During the course of its travel it would have made thousands of such corrections in order to reach its intended target. So too, must man make thousands or many, many thousands of corrections in his life in order to reach his goals. In this way the Soul strives to achieve the Equilibrium with her opposite. So, contrary to Freudian psychotherapy theories, guilt and shame can be a positive corrective in the human personality. If, however, one doesn't make the correction in the deviation that the "negative feed back" informed one of, one is in the SELF-DESTRUCT mode.

The brain which the Creator implanted in us is a servomechanism acting out our commands. If we don't set goals we have nothing to aim for. We flounder around, going nowhere, not even knowing where we are going or aiming for. We must use this servo-mechanistic brain to make a plan. Our brain will automatically carry out our plans. Even if we fall a bit short of our goals, we have still benefited from the effort. We have taken control of our lives. We should not just flounder around in a world where we don't know our purpose. We shouldn't let others control us and lead us in directions we don't want to go in. We shouldn't just "react" to people's stimuli, based on past programming that may not have matured into adult, reasoning behavior. By programming ourselves with the lofty aims of the Omniscient One's Torah, in this way we reach higher and higher levels of communion with the Holy One, blessed be He.

As I wrote above about physics, when two opposites strive to create Equilibrium this creates powerful energy. So, when Body and Soul are in this state, one possesses enormous powers, both physical and spiritual, to overcome the difficulties, maladies and challenges which we all must face in life. In addition to physical power, the combination with our "inner resources" or spiritual powers, can get us through just about any difficult situation life may hand us. Solomon says in Proverbs XVII;14, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" and again in Proverbs XVII;22, "A merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones."

It is the spirit which, although unseen and nonphysical, can break the heart of a mighty athlete or make strong the physically broken and help them to heal. Ask any doctor if he hasn't had a patient for whom the surgery was a success, but the patient died; or for whom the situation seemed hopeless, but the patient recovered. Their inner strength (spiritual power) pulled them through. For those who are searching for personal mental health, and for the mental health

practitioner seeking methods to help heal mental illness, to neglect the **power of the spirit** is to ignore the most crucial, beneficial and powerful element in humankind.

Our species has more senses than the 5 physical senses. These other senses are spiritual, and include a sense of humor, ("A merry heart does good, like a medicine." Proverbs XVII;22), a sense of honor, a sense of courage, intuition, a sense of decency, a sense of justice, and how about just "common sense" (sechel)? We could all use more of that. There is also "extrasensory perception" which all people have in varying degrees of strength. Being aware of the usefulness of these senses, and utilizing these senses can get one through life difficulties with more understanding. There is much more to life than all of us yet know.

My son Pinchus recently brought to my attention an incredibly interesting book called "The Secret Life of Plants," written by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, which is a report of scientific study of the *physical, emotional and spiritual relations* between *plants* and man. One researcher, Cleve Backster, who was America's foremost lie-detector examiner, teaching the art of lie detection to policemen and security agents from around the world, entered into this research *on impulse*. He decided to attach electrodes of one of his lie detectors to the leaf of his dracaena, a tropical plant in his office, curious to see if the leaf would be affected by water poured on its roots, and if so, how, and how soon. To his amazement the polygraph showed a tracing on a moving graph of paper showing a reaction very similar to that of a human being experiencing an emotional stimulus of short duration. He wondered if the plant could be displaying emotion. Since the most effective way to trigger in a human being a reaction strong enough to make the galvanometer jump is to threaten his or her well-being, Backster decided to do just that. He thought of burning the leaf to which the electrodes were attached. The instant he got the picture of the flame in his mind, and before he could move for a match, there was a dramatic change in the tracing pattern on the graph although Backster had not moved, either toward the plant or toward the recording machine. Could the plant have been reading his mind? Continuing with his experiment, he learned that if a plant is threatened with overwhelming danger or damage, Backster observed that it reacts self-defensively in a way similar to an opossum—or, indeed, to a human being—by "passing out," or going into a deep faint. Further experimentation helped to bring Backster to the realization that

plants could “intentionally be put into a faint, or mesmerized, by humans, that something similar could be involved in the ritual of the slaughterer before an animal is killed” ***in the kosher manner***. Communicating with the victim, the killer may tranquilize it into a quiet death, also preventing its flesh from having a residue of “chemical fear,” disagreeable to the palate and perhaps noxious to the consumer.” (quoting Backster) This brought up the possibility that plants and succulent fruits might *wish* to be eaten but only in a sort of loving ritual with a real communication between the eater and the eaten....instead of the usual heartless carnage. “It may be,” says Backster, “that a vegetable appreciates becoming part of another form of life rather than rotting on the ground, just as a human being at death may experience relief to find himself in a higher realm of being.”

In other words, if a food is eaten with a blessing, or an animal slaughtered with a blessing, it seems contented to have completed its purpose in life—it has been blessed and sanctified and utilized to continue the life of mankind. What Cleve Backster discovered, along with many other scientists before and after his research, confirms what King David knew, as he wrote in Psalm 96;11, “...the field and everything in it will exult, then all the trees of the forest will sing with joy—“ Backster’s research proved inconclusively that plants respond to love, hate and danger, and can even detect and respond to the pleasure of its caretaker over long distances. The Creator of the Universe instilled intelligence and emotion, as well as a reaction of all elements of nature to the deeds of mankind. Indeed, research has shown that even what is termed “non-living matter” such as rocks and metals, are not **non-living!**

As Einstein taught us in his time, ***everything is relative***. Everything responds to its environment by sending off certain emanations, which promote the harmony or disharmony of the Universe. And every act we do can tip the scales of the Universe to harmony or disharmony of the planet and everything in it. It’s up to us, which is an awesome responsibility and one we should always keep in mind. We each have an important purpose in the evolution or devolution of the Universe.

Mother Nature will attack or bless mankind according to the morals that they live by. THIS IS AN EMPIRICAL TRUTH which is recorded in Scriptures since the beginning of time. Blessing or Curse.

Chapter Twenty

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

You have probably all heard the line about the man who felt so bad about having no shoes until he saw the man who had so feet. There is also the Yiddish tale about the man who couldn't bear his "bag of troubles" until he saw the contents of others' "bags." He then happily picked up his own little "pakela," thanking G-d for it. We can all find things in our lives to cry about. But we can also find much about our lives to be thankful and happy for. Who makes the decision which thoughts run through your our minds? Which thoughts take up the most space in your mind; the happy or the sad? O.K., now this is not something you can blame on someone else. I want to point out a truth that you shouldn't try to snow yourself about. Only **you** can allow certain thoughts to dwell in your mind. **Are you kind to your mind?**

Do you think happy thoughts? Or do you feed yourself so much gloom and doom that you feel depressed or hopeless too much of the time?

Life happens to all of us. Some of it is great. Some is really hard to take. When I was 16 years old I suddenly realized that I had wasted the last 10 years being depressed. About what? Well, I was unhappy that I had to live with a grandmother who didn't love me, who was very mean to me; that I hardly ever got to see my mother; that I never heard from my father again after my parents' divorce when I was only six years old. We can all find depressing incidents to grieve over. But for how long is it healthy to be depressed? ***It can get to be a habit.*** Sometimes depression is the only strong emotion one has had, and the physical nature craves strong sensations. So it can even happen that one gets oneself into such crazy habits that one is only happy when he's depressed. Do a mental checklist to see if you fall into that category. Write down a list of things that depress or frighten you. Try to rate it on a percentage of time you spend feeling depressed or frightened. Add it all up, and whatever the percentage is, that's the amount of time you are wasting! It would be far better to occupy that space in your mind thinking of the blessings you have.

Think of all the gifts that G-d has bestowed upon you, instead of what *depresses or frightens* you. I could have better occupied those 10 years from 6 to 16 being happy that I had a home to live in with my own private bedroom, with lots

of good food, a really smart dog, five acres of orange groves, bananas, chickens, geese, turkeys, plus the whole countryside to roam and play, Snapper Creek to fish in, living in the Florida Everglades and Miami Beach where hardly any crime ever happened. I got to attend excellent schools, learn interesting subjects, I was blessed with talent in all the muses, and I was not retarded, deformed, neglected, sick or ugly. Once you get started on the positive checklist you may be surprised how many blessings you can count. As my husband Reuven is fond of saying, "Sadness is madness, and gladness is the antidote."

Even better, if you think about it, how many of the factors that depress you still exist? Are you still crying over things that happened years ago, but need not influence your state of mind today? Throw all that junk out of your mind and forget about it. **Be kind to your mind!** Once you grow up and leave home it is **your** responsibility to guide your life where you believe will bring tranquility. Leave all that negative that you can behind you and begin to re-habituate yourself to happier, more positive thoughts. What remains as a troublesome situation that you don't know how to solve, give to G-d in prayer, and ask G-d to guide you, assist you, heal you from despair, calm your fears. Try substituting being "concerned" for "worry." Substitute "situation" for "problem." Concern denotes doing something about a "situation." If you **do something** you don't feel so hopeless, as you have the situation in hand. Eliminate "problem" and "worry" from your mind and pray for help. Prayer does work.

One of the sweetest mitzvot (commandments) I know of is "to serve G-d with joy." (Psalm 100;2) It can whittle away nicely on one's depressive habits. I remember the first night of Hanukah in 1972. I was in New York fundraising for our spiritual healing center in Israel, my whole family was in Israel, and I was lonely. I looked at the Hanukah candles and my eyes began to moisten over because I didn't have my three children with me. I had never been away from my children before on Hanukah. Children's faces at Hanukah are the most fun part of the Holiday. With every new candle for each of the eight days the children would receive gifts. Not necessarily big gifts, but small things. My children's faces would light up more and more in delight with each candle as they received a new gift for EIGHT WHOLE DAYS! They were so cute, eating themselves stupid with jelly donuts, playing dreidel, playing with their new toys. What delight could I have doing the mitzvah of lighting the Hanukah candles without my sweet little children's

faces before me? Then I thought, hey, girl, you are commanded to serve the L-rd in joy! Thank G-d for your children that they are alive and well in the Holy Land enjoying Hanukah. Thank G-d by serving Him in Joy! So I lit the first candle, said the blessings and began to sing a Hanukah song. I poured a glass of wine for myself and began to eat a jelly donut. Then I laughed to myself. This was fun; just me and G-d having a party. My depression lifted, and an important lesson was learned. We are never alone, and G-d just loves to party! He gave us many yearly Holidays and Shabbat every week to party.

In order to serve G-d with joy, one must have a “loving” relationship with one’s Creator. When we pray the “Shema Yisrael” we say, “And you shall **love** the L-rd your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.” This is the pivot of all we do in our service to G-d and our fellow man.

LOVE seems to be most important in everyone’s life, and we all have a Loving Creator, even if we live alone, haven’t married yet, have no children, etc. Most of the books and novels people read are about people striving for **LOVE**. However, the emphasis seems to be on love among **people**. Unfortunately, people often disappoint you and give you heartache instead. (Not that I am not eternally grateful that I have a loving husband and three loving children and ten wonderful grandchildren that I adore!) Also, people are not always around. G-d is always there. When a man wraps tefillin he says the prayer, “I will betroth you to myself forever; I will betroth myself in and in justice, in kindness and in mercy. I will betroth myself in faithfulness; and you shall know the L-rd.” This is G-d saying this to the man winding the tefillin around his middle finger—a betrothal-- a LOVE BOND between the man and the Creator of Rapturous Love. YOUR Creator. G-d **betroths Himself** to you, and all the Love is there all the time. What a wonderful feeling!

This love impacts upon your total personality, especially when you arrive at the level of being “in the image of G-d.” Remembering that we were created with the “will to receive,” we naturally crave MORE, resulting in spending much of our life dissatisfied with what we have. This is because we have not yet arrived at moderating our desires, extremes, compulsions, which results in mental confusion and disturbs personal tranquility.

Maimonides advises us to avoid all “extremism” and seek the middle “Golden Path.” Thanking our Beneficent Bestower is not always in one’s “mind set.” But prayer makes everyone aware of each daily bounty, every blessing, and the breath

of Life. Because if G-d takes that breath away, you're history. All you have to take with you when your breath ceases is your DEEDS and your Love of G-d. With every breath of life you have a chance to enjoy life. So why not enjoy it? Instead of worrying constantly about what you don't have, or what you're trying to get, take time out in every day to reflect on the Goodness of G-d, and how life could be if He didn't bless us with occasional "mazel tov," and even miracles, in this "dog-eat-dog" society in which we dwell. Wow! We could be even **more** miserable than we are making ourselves, with good reason.

Nervousness and worry are the largest cause of physical and psychological stress, which results in dis-ease and even suicide. So ease up on yourself, and feel the love of the Beneficent One and just give yourself a nice dose of tranquility.

Maimonides tells us that physical and mental illness are caused by "bitterness of soul," and that, even as one has a physical doctor, one should have a "soul doctor." Even if the physical doctor succeeds in healing your illness, if the bitterness of soul remains within you, another disease will pop up, or the original disease will reoccur. So seek to eliminate that bitterness of soul, and you will have health, tranquility and G-'s ever present Love. Your relationships with others will be more loving, because you will be "in the image of G-d" which is loving. This will also bring more blessings into your life. You are here for a reason. That is why G-d is keeping you alive. So, make the most of it while you are here.

Chapter Twenty-One

HARMONIOUS BALANCE OF NATURE

Did you know that plant life bestows MORE than it RECEIVES? That is the nature of the symbiotics of creation. The plant life doesn't say, "I've had enough sunshine today for myself, and I don't want to share my output of oxygen with humans," and quit taking in the sunshine. Nature is very exact, it does not resist the rules of its nature, it was given no free will and *no moral judgment* or mercy. If a child falls off a cliff, G-d forbid, the laws of gravity are going to take that child down. But the Law of Mercy travels faster than any speed in creation, being that G-d's abode is not subject to time, space or motion. If the Heavenly Father wishes that soul Mercy, it is immediate! The child's clothes may catch on a branch, or something unusual in nature will happen and that child will be saved. G-d's Mercy holds back nature.

Then why do bad things happen like floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, plagues, and draught? As I wrote in a previous chapter, these are the Heralds of G-d. This is Nature. It seeks to balance the Universal Organism. When the deeds and prayers of the people on Earth are in Harmony, G-d's Mercy shines. When He "turns His Face away" Nature rules, G-d's Mercy does not intervene and Nature strikes back at the disharmony. "God called Heaven and Earth to witness." And they do.

Sometimes the rebuke of nature is slight. This could be because G-d wants you to think, "Why did the blow fall?" and *get the message to correct yourselves*. G-d is patient and long-suffering. Even so, why would one want to delay his own redemption? The correction is easier to bear than the disharmony in one's life.

So we seek to self-correct. An analogy might be the wheels on your car. If you don't balance your wheels, your trip down the road of life is bumpy. That car is going to shake until your wheels fall off! You may only go a short distance, but never get to where you want to go. Or you may have to drive very slowly, you're very wobbly, and the trip is rough. You may get there and you may not. It depends on the "tikun" (correction) that your own soul needs to achieve.

Sometimes bad things happen to good people **because** they are trying to do something very good for the world. I had this revelation at a time when evil had been triumphant over all the good efforts of our charity organization to bring help to helpless people. Despite all the hard work, the backing of important people, the

proper licensing, the government funding, our program had been attacked by the Klu Klux Klan who objected to the possibility that we might “Judaize” the young people placed in our care by the Kentucky Department of Human Services. Even though I went to Washington D.C. with a woman member of our Board of Directors to protest our civil rights, tried to get help from the A.C.L.U. and the A.D.L., we lost the battle as people crumbled under the pressure of threats from the KKK. The F.B.I. said they wouldn’t dare to come into rural Kentucky to help us. They were scared. They said I should be, too. When all my resources were exhausted, and I was exhausted, discouraged and confused, I turned to stand before the beautiful Sefer Torah we acquired for our charity in Israel. I asked the L-rd of the Universe, “Why, oh Father, have these evil forces come against us and triumphed? Have I done something wrong? Is there something I didn’t do? Please give me understanding, so that I will not repeat a mistake.” A voice clearly answered me, “When you go forth to do **good**, evil forces will naturally come against you, for were you to succeed, they would be destroyed. Good is an **antithesis** of evil, and evil’s nature is to destroy good, for good destroys evil.” I was so happy to have been answered. So, I really hadn’t been doing anything wrong; just doing good was dangerous. But then I asked, “How do you conquer evil, when there is **nothing** they will stop at to destroy you, but I have a limit to what I can do?” Regretfully, I received no answer to that question.

If anyone reading this book knows this answer, I would appreciate this valuable piece to the puzzle, for I have been puzzling this over for many years. It has seriously slowed my progress in our charity’s efforts to right some of the wrongs of our society.

The House of Israel has the obligation to be a “light unto the Nations,” an example of peace and harmony in the Universe. This isn’t easy to do, even if every Jew was aware of his or her purpose. We have barely been a light to our own; hence, the assimilation and intermarriage rate of 52% today. The House of Israel is not yet “on center,” so it is causing a lot of vibrations around the world. We are taught that a quorum (a majority) of Jews who know their purpose on Earth and strive to live in harmony with G-d, Nature and their fellow men, will bring Messiah. It will take that much electro-magnetic force to trigger the mechanism for salvation of the Planet. Are you in for it? We are taught to picture our people as if we are all in a scale of balance with all the good people in one side and the bad people in the other. Each opportunity we have to do a mitzvah, we can tip the balance of

How To Bring Heaven To Earth; From Las Vegas To Jerusalem

the world for good or for bad by what we do. We should realize that each of us as an individual could tip the world for blessings or curses.

Think how nice it would be to live in a balanced harmonious world, the days when will be unified, as it says in our Prayer Books, "On that day, the Lord shall be One, and His name One." (Proverbs) When we say the last word in this prayer "Echad" or "One" we meditate and merge with the "One," and in this way we become One with our fellow man and with G-d.

Las Vegas Dancing Girl Now Heads Israel Colony

By Ehud Yonay
Heritage Exclusive

KEDMA, ISRAEL — A dozen years ago she hoofed her way from New York's Latin Quarter to Las Vegas, where she danced with the Follies Bergere at the Tropicana — and later at Minsky's.

But it all seems like ancient history to the still-shapely, 32-year-old blond, who is even reluctant to mention her former stage name.

Nor are her present quarters in Israel anything like the plush casinos and the luxurious yachts in which she spent much of her life in the company of the international jet-set.

The deserted kibbutz of Kedma is an Israeli-style ghost town, located somewhere between Tel Aviv and Beersheba, on the northern edge of the Negev Desert.

Its original colonizers left it in 1963 after losing money for years. Kedma's white, cubic houses are cracked and crumbling, hidden behind masses of weeds, thorns and wild flowers.

It was exactly the kind of place Sarah Mandell and her husband, Reuven, were looking for when they came to Israel shortly after the Six-Day War.

All along, they wanted to build a place for young Jewish people who wanted to get their heads straight — and return to proper Judaism.

Kedma seemed like the ideal answer.

Sarah's interest in Orthodox Judaism didn't start until after she met Reuven in Las Vegas in 1962.

She was a swinging dancing girl. He was a "Hellenized," totally assimilated New York Jew, who dabbled in advertising, publicity, ghost writing and engineering.

They were married at "three o'clock in the morning" in the Little Chapel of the West. Shortly thereafter, she was converted to Judaism by a Reform rabbi, and they had two children before they found out that in the eyes of Orthodox Jews they weren't married at all.

It was then, Sarah says, that she

Continued on Page 6



FROM VEGAS TO TORAH — Once Sarah Mandell danced in the glittering spots of Las Vegas. Now she and her husband, Reuven, lead a colony of "hippies" back to Torah and productivity in Israel. *Exclusive Photo by Ehud Yonay.*

FERTILAGE

Southwest JEWISH PRESS

PUBLISHED SINCE 1914

Heritage Combined Paid Mail Subscriptions are First in California

Vol. 5731 2130 S. Vermont Ave. Second Class Postage Paid at Los Angeles, Calif. 90007
\$7.50 per year Los Angeles, Calif. 90007

Single, 15¢

Within Soviet Union

Savants Voice Pleas to Pardon Captives

LONDON (JCN) — The three founders of the Human Rights Committee in the Soviet Union have written to the president of the USSR Supreme Soviet with a plea for the pardon of Soviet Jews sentenced in Riga and in the two trials in Leningrad.

script endorsing the contents of the letter.

The letter was sent to the Supreme Soviet on May 20.

A copy of it was brought to London by a Riga Jew enroute to Israel from Moscow, Yair Kogan. In the letter, the three managers

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE



THE RUSSELL COUNTY NEWS

Since 1913

Published each Wednesday at Jamestown, Kentucky 42629. Publication number 473500. Entered as second class mail at Jamestown, Kentucky. Subscription rates \$4.40 in Kentucky; \$10.45 out-of-state.

Paul Hayes-Editor, P.

Ike Scholt-Jamestown Editor

Katherine Andrews-Contributing Editor

Bettie Dulworth, Advertising Director

Composition Manager, Sharon Heim; Proofreader, Edith Reed; Ad designers, Brenda Huckaby, Valerie Loy, Judy Claywell, Jane Hardwick; Typesetters, Diane Wilson, Kathy McClister, Marilyn Bardin, Kathy Hadley, Cindy Goodin, Vicky Goodin.

Russell Springs Office 666-3886

Jamestown Office 343-4545

2 The Jamestown, Ky., RUSSELL COUNTY NEWS, Wednesday, March 1, 1978

EDITORIAL

Good talk: alternative to violence

This is the first in a series of articles on drug and alcohol abuse and family breakdown by the Family Spiritual Growth Center. Anger has been chosen to be the first in this series of articles since it is believed to be the greatest cause of abuse of drugs, alcohol, family and self.

The greatest alternative to violence is forgiveness. Quick to forgive and slow to anger is the attitude that will prolong your life and make the lives of others much more pleasant. Regrettably many of us are quick to anger and slow to forgive. Anger becomes a drug; it gives such a fiery rush that you become drunk on anger. Every time you become angry and explode out at the world, you are potentially endangering your life, the lives of your loved ones and the lives of people you will never know.

Every day innocent people are

struck and killed in automobile accidents. Many of the cars are driven by men and women who have stormed out the front door in a fit of rage over something that could have been handled with a peaceful mind. Anger has never solved a problem, soothed a soul or cleared anyone's mind. Anger is blinding and destructive and must be replaced by peace.

People who always seem cross and angry have usually become habituated to it, like a drug. These people must strive constantly to break the habit. They hurt themselves each time they lash out at others and fill their hearts with guilt for being so uncaring. Have faith! The habit can be broken; we can all work together to make a better world full of happier people, if we strive to replace anger with peace, worry with calm, tears with laughter.

Begin your day on a positive note. Think of all the good qualities you have and the good qualities of others. Look out the window and see something beautiful in creation: a bird's song, a flower, a diamond crystal of snow, the playful sparkle in your child's eye, or the sweet smell of flapjacks freshly slapped on your griddle. Use your will not to allow angry thoughts to fill your mind. If you could make anger a habit, you can also make peace a habit, then the world can only get better. You're alive and that's wonderful, because each new day is an opportunity to improve and enjoy. When you first begin to try not to be angry but peaceful you will have to stop yourself nearly every minute of the day and find a calm center. Take a deep breath, and as you let it out, scatter your anger to the winds. Talk out your feelings plainly with people who

care about you enough to let you open up completely. You will come to understand yourself and see that your problems are not unsolvable or nearly as terrible as you imagined.

You must be the first to forgive yourself for your mistakes and angry outbursts, then you will find it easy to forgive others, and be forgiven.

Peace & blessings,
The Family Spiritual
Growth Center

(The above article is printed as a service to the public. The article does not reflect the opinions of the newspaper in either way, but does contain pertinent information that is of interest. Any opinions of others on any subject are welcomed by the paper as long as it is signed and is in no way damaging or libelous.—EDITOR)

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CASEY COUNTY NEWS
Liberty, Kentucky 1976



SARA AND REUVEN MANDELL

Drug Abuse — How Are Jews Affected?

By SARA MANDELL

In recent months articles have been written in all the Jewish newspapers about the problem of assimilation and cults. But nowhere have I seen mention about the enormous problem of drug abuse among our people. Most religious Jewish people that I talk to ask innocently, "Do we have any Jewish addicts?" Surely, we should realize that if our people are assimilating into the culture of the nations, they are being affected by the plague of drug abuse that has insidiously crept into the life-style of the nations.

In a recent report to the Task Force on Drug Abuse of the Federation by Dr. Steve Levy and Lester Futernick, the chairmen of those bodies, statistics were given showing that 40% of the members of the Manhattan Alcoholics Anonymous are Jewish, with 77% of those being female. In light of these statistics, and due to the untiring efforts of a few dedicated people, like Rabbi Trainen of the Commission on Synagogue Affairs, the problem of drug abuse has been prioritized by the Federation recently. This article will be one of many that will be published in an effort to bring community awareness to the project of helping to bring about a residential treatment center for Jewish Addicts.

To this date there is no facility on the Eastern Seaboard for a residential treatment center for Jewish addicts. Christian centers for drug abusers abound, and if a Jewish addict wishes to use the Higher Power to bring him through his addiction, it is to a Christian center that he must go, because we have not yet risen to this occasion. It has been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that a spiritual approach is what heals these addicts. Salvation Army, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous are only three of the most effective organizations using spiritual guidance to help addicts. In a recent article in Time Magazine, a Harvard research psychiatrist doing research on substance abuse concludes 16 years of research into the cure of drug abusers by saying, "Although it is terribly unscientific, the only approach that seems to work is a spiritual approach, and one which improves the self-image of the abuser."

In 1971 my husband and I began a marvelously successful experiment in Israel on an abandoned kib-

butz, in the Northern Negev. Using a technique that the doctors in Israel termed "Soul Therapy," we began healing young Jewish addicts and restoring them to their families and to the tradition of their fathers. Maimonides teaches us that the body is meant to run harmoniously, and that if one becomes ill, it is sometimes a bitterness of Soul that is the problem. If we do not sooth the bitterness of Soul, the illness will pop out somewhere else, even if we heal the physical problem. He advises that one should have a Soul Doctor as well as a Medical Doctor. Interestingly enough, the word for "psychiatrist" Hebrew is "rofai nefesh," which literally means "soul doctor." Unfortunately too many psychiatrists today use the Freudian concepts which deal with the physical senses instead of the spiritual ones. As a result only 6% of those treated in psychiatric institutions are healed. By using Soul Therapy, as many as 80% have been healed.

We have many more senses than the five physical senses usually attributed to man. These are our inner resources, and they must be utilized in order to navigate our way through the stresses of life. To name a few of the spiritual senses, there is a sense of courage, a sense of humor, a sense of honor, as well as common sense. By teaching addicts to be in touch with these inner resources, and by putting them in touch with the Most High, these people are able to find the courage to face life without the crutch of drugs and alcohol. By rehabilitating them to a life of doing mitzvahs (good deeds), they find a vastly improved self-image, for they can look back over the weeks of doing good deeds and be proud. Our holy books are filled with "spiritual recipes" by the Rambam, Ibn Paquda, Rabbenu Yona of Carona, Luzzatto and others, which teach us how to rehabilitate persons with poorly developed character traits. Addicts are habituated to very negative life-styles, and they must have a total environment, like a residential center, in order to relearn new and positive habits. They must experience the peace of Shabbat in a controlled environment in order to know what calm can prevail in their lives.

The Family Of Israel, Inc. is presently in the process of setting up a central Manhattan office, where

until a residential center is established, they will set up a counselling center and a vocational work-therapy program for addicts. The program plans to work towards financial independence by using a system whereby addicts can produce products to be sold by the charity to pay for their counselling, thereby busying productively the recovering addict and providing himself/herself with a nominal income while working in a positive environment.

This program has not only proven itself to be viable, but is a necessity, since by the time abusers come to us for counselling, they

have already spent their life's fortune, their parents' life fortune, as well as maybe having stolen some of your life's fortune to support their habit. Public services have been cut drastically by the present Administration, so we need to utilize every method possible and request the support of the Jewish public.

If there are any interested readers of this newspaper who may have a problem in their family or who wish to volunteer or to send donations, please contact Reuven or Sara Mandell the Family Of Israel, Inc. 1380 E. 13th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11230. 375-0969

"Goodtalk! Alternatives to Violence" was financed by a Grant to our Foundation from the Kentucky Department of Human Resources. It was published in Newspapers all over Kentucky in a Prevention Program. Visit my site at www.bringheaventoearth.com for more published articles.

GOOD TALK...

Alternatives to Violence

Your tongue is the weakest of your organs, and, yet, it can get you into the most trouble. How many times have you let something slip out of your mouth, and then could have bitten your tongue? The weakest of organs, and yet the hardest to control! No—not hard if you work on it. Like every exercise, the more you practice, the stronger you'll get. Like doing "spiritual pushups," if you strengthen your resolve not to do evil with your tongue, then with practice and the ever increasing joy you will feel as you grow stronger, you will be able to control that little "blabbery thing."

When is the best age to begin practice? Ecclesiastes 12:1 tells us, "Remember then thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days (or habits) come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say: 'I have no pleasure in them'". For surely you cannot feel good in your soul when you know you have just destroyed someone with your mouth. A person should be quick in developing good habits

being, "Thou shalt not bear a false report" (Exodus 23:1). Even if it is not a false report, but true, what will it gain you to pass it on?

The tongue—so weak and fickle, so humble, so hidden, and yet—so flexible, so treacherous, so perilous! It is the source of both good and evil: when it is good, there is nothing better; and when it is bad there is nothing worse. This is why we are introducing GOODY GOODTALK in our Statewide CLEAN UP YOUR MOUTH campaign. Like Smokey the Bear, he should be a reminder not to set fire to your town with firey gossip. Nor to set fire to your home. GOODY GOODTALK should become a reminder when you see him, or wear him on your T-shirt, not to lie, not to gossip, not to say an unkind thing. Speak only good things. How many times has someone come up to you and said, "I heard something GOOD about you?" Probably very rarely. You never know what they'll come up with next.

Gossip and slander are two of the most harmful activities of the

deadly venom. They are dangerous, too, because things uttered by the tongue can never be recalled, just like an arrow which has been shot that cannot be retrieved.

Finally, gossip and slander are destructive because they ruin not only the victim, but the utterer and even the one who listens to it. It is to be compared to murder, because it causes the victim to suffer shame, perhaps commit suicide, maybe have a stroke—certainly it murders a person's human potential when she/he feels laughed at and put down. Especially, in school, while you're young, teach your tongue to speak kindly and you will probably find that you are bringing much peace to your place.

As the good King David sings to us in his Psalms, "Who is the man who desires life and loves a long life of happiness? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking falsehood. Shun evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."

Peace and blessings,
The Family Spiritual
Growth Center

Superintendent Sees Need Among Students

Hall Supports County Drug Program

By LARRY TROXELL
Supt. Charles J. Hall has called for a drug abuse and prevention education program in the Pulaski County School System, but he says it must have faculty and student support to succeed.

The superintendent told the Pulaski County Board of Education Thursday night that he supports the type of program being conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Reuven Mandell. The program, which is approved by the

state Department for Human Resources, has encountered controversy thus far, Hall observed.

Several area school systems have declined to participate in the Mandells' program. The Mandells, who are Jewish, have claimed that anti-Semitism has been used to keep their drug abuse program out.

Hall said he had carefully examined the drug education program approved by the state and the persons operating it. "I feel

they will fill a void in our schools...in our guidance counseling program," Hall observed.

The superintendent said he has asked the Mandells to present their program to the faculty at Pulaski County High School. It must be approved by the teachers and student representatives before being implemented, Hall said.

"If this does not have their blessing, it is doomed for failure from the beginning," Hall commented.

At the request of board member Lowell Wilson, Hall said he would bring the proposal back to the board for consideration after the faculty examines it.

Chapter Twenty-Two

ANDROGYNY OF G-D

"And G-d created man in His own image, in His own likeness created He him, male and female created He them." (Genesis 1;27) Since we know that G-d has no form or physical matter, we understand that the physical likeness of G-d is not being referred to here, but the "attributes" of G-d, and not how He looks. Some of His/Her attributes are masculine, and some feminine. Mankind, as well, being created in the image of G-d, has masculine and feminine attributes. People, whether male or female, are androgynous in their attributes. This is a balancing mechanism in the human personality, as in the Equilibrium principle of the Law of Opposites.

G-d is referred to by most observant Jews as "HaShem" (the Name), because He/She has many names in Hebrew, some masculine and some feminine. These names reflect His/Her essence, such as HaRachaman, the Merciful One (masculine) or Messiah, Savior (feminine), Love (feminine), Rock (masculine), Wise (masculine), Understanding (feminine). In Hebrew Prayer Service we address G-d in both genders, depending upon which attribute we are calling on. Addressing G-d in the masculine gender is merely anthropomorphism used to describe the incorporeal Creator in terms of human understanding.

Taken one at a time, each of the names of G-d (Love, I, Fire, Justice) could be an idol. Love without Wisdom could end up as Venus worship (such as what we see much of on M-TV). Justice without Mercy would eradicate mankind, for who can stand sinless before the Throne of G-d? Without His Mercy we would all be judged for some punishment. "I" becomes the "Thou Art G-d" philosophy of idol worshipping one's self, like Pharaoh, Hitler and the various tyrants over the ages that have tried to rule the world. One must take the whole "essence," all the attributes that are in the names of G-d, and worship the entirety of the entity that is G-d. Otherwise we fall, again, into idol worship and imbalance. By understanding all of the names of the Creator, we know how to be "in the image of G-d" by imitating His/Her Attributes.

The "body" of mankind is masculine in the Hebrew language; the "soul" of mankind is feminine. The body is the action vehicle to carry out the Will of one's Creator. The soul is the Will of the Creator, which gives life to the body. When body and soul are unified in carrying out the Will of the Creator they are in harmony and balance.

The Hebrew language is a fascinating language, in that it is hieroglyphic and numerical. The Kabbalists “play” with the letters in the Torah by permuting words to find a deeper meaning, adding up the numerical equivalents and comparing other words that add up to the same numbers. Since G-d created the world through the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet (Aleph-Bet), there is great understanding to be gained in these exercises. One that I am fond of quoting is an exercise in understanding the essence of the words for “man” and “woman” In Hebrew the word for “man” is “ish,” spelled aleph, yud, shin. “Woman” is “isha,” spelled aleph, shin, hey. The spelling for the Name of G-d (Yah) is yud, hey. If you look at the letters of G-d’s name contained in the two words for “man” and “woman” you will find that “ish” contains the yud; “isha” contains a hey. Remove those letters of G-d’s name, and you will have, in both cases, aleph, shin, which spells the Hebrew word for “fire” (aish). If one ponders on the lesson that can be learned in this permutation, one might get an insight into the nature of man and woman and G-d. When the first two words contain the mitigating factor of G-d’s Holy letters, man and woman have a warm and loving relationship. But once the mitigating factor of G-d is deducted, all that remains is “fire,” which will scorch and harm. This teaches the solution to the problem of the “battle of the sexes,” which has plagued mankind since the beginning of time. One might also conclude from this lesson that putting the attributes of G-d in all relationships, business as well as personal, will benefit all parties instead of harming them.

One of the *high* moments in my life concerned this lesson. I was visiting the home of Dr. Culture, who was the Head of Psychiatry’s at Tel HaShomer Hospital in Tel Aviv. Dr. Culture was a typical Freudian psychiatrist, in other words, an atheist, because classic Freudian psychiatry claims G-d to be a superstition. Dr. Culture was also very much into the popular philosophy of the Sixties of not being a ***chauvinist***, particularly because he had a great deal of love and respect for his wife. As we were sipping tea and discussing the project that my husband and I were trying to get going (a project in which G-d played the main role), Dr. Culture stated emphatically, “I could never believe in G-d simply because He is masculine, and my wife is smarter than most of the men I know!” I was amazed, because I was not yet familiar with the fact that most Israelis, although they speak perfect Hebrew, don’t connect their language with their religion in a very thoughtful sense. And perhaps they have not prayed from a Siddur (Orthodox Prayer Book) so they don’t realize that we pray to G-d in both genders.

I explained the androgyny of G-d to him and his wife as they listened with great interest, and gave them the little example of “ish” and “isha.” Dr. Culture exclaimed with delight, “Now *this* is a concept that I could embrace, and I have never heard it before. If G-d can be feminine as well as masculine, I could respect that.”

Dr. Culture and his lovely wife began to have more respect for their religion and the role that spirit plays in the healing of mental illness, as my husband and I showed them the writings of our great sages, particularly Maimonides, Luzzato and Joseph Ibn Paquda. He wrote us a letter of reference to the Department of Mental Health recommending that our experiment with healing drug addiction and other emotional problems be given a chance. And after we were successful in establishing a healing center, he was responsible for getting Dr. Klein of Eitonim Psychiatric Hospital to contact us to see if we could help an emotionally retarded young man that they had not been able to help for ten years. This young man was 19 years old, but with an emotional and functional level of a three year old. He was our most spectacular success, with G-d's help, and soon we were having patients referred to us from six different mental hospitals in Israel. The doctors even coined a new name for our techniques in healing, calling it “Soul Therapy.” We helped them to learn that G-d is “Rofay Kol Basar” (Healer of all Flesh). In Hebrew the word for “psychiatrist” is “rofoy nefesh,” literally “soul doctor.”

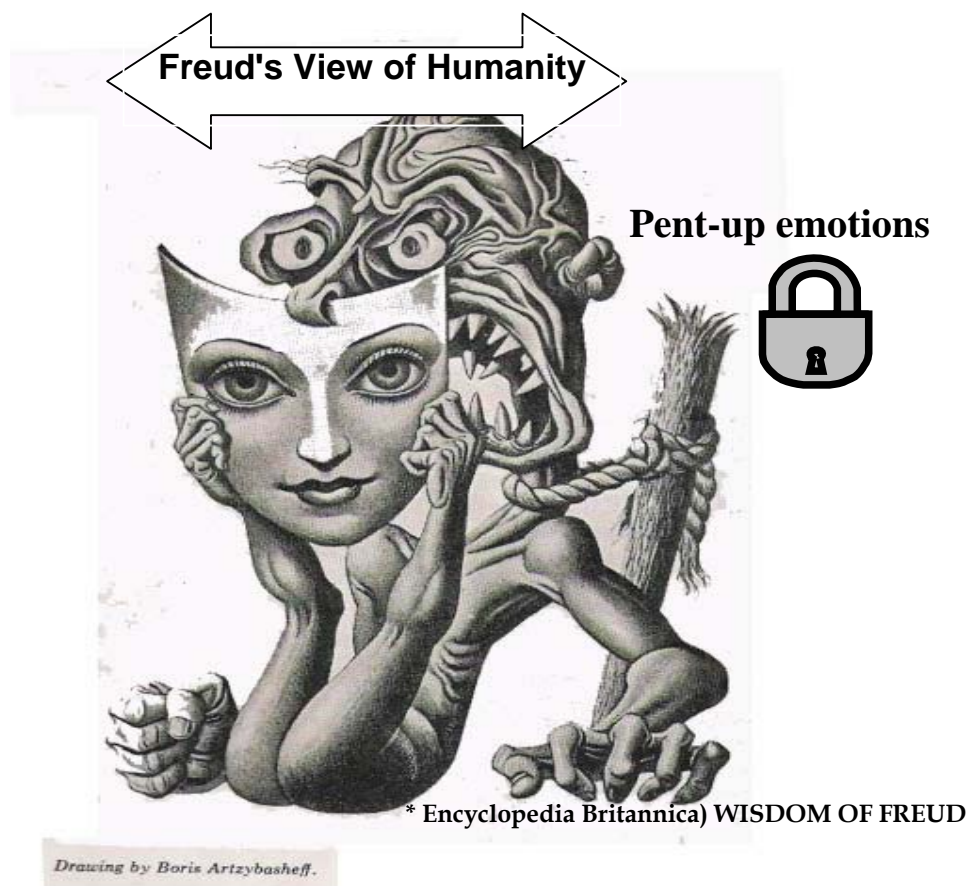
One of our goals, besides helping the young people who came to us for help, was to give mental health professionals the strongest tool that can be used in helping others to be more mentally healthy. Even though famous psychiatrists like Carl Jung had written such great things about the revivifying transformation of the divine experience in psychiatric therapy, it was either overlooked, or it had not been proven to the satisfaction of the field of psychiatrics. We wanted to prove him right by establishing a Center to show them how it works.

Carl Jung disagreed with Freud about the divine experience. Freud believed that religion was a “national obsessive neurosis.” Jung says that, “this experience must be taken seriously if one wants to live at all. They can only choose between the devil and the deep blue sea; the devil, or something equivalent to it, and the deep sea, their neurosis. The devil is at least somewhat heroic, but the sea is spiritual death...Religious experience is absolute. It is indisputable. You can only say that you have never had such an experience, and your opponent will say,

“Sorry, I have.” And there your discussion will come to an end. No matter what the world thinks about religious experience, the one who has it possesses the great treasure of life, meaning and beauty, and that has given a new splendor to the world and to mankind. He has peace.

“Where is the criterium by which you could say that such a life is not legitimate, that such an experience is not valid and that such pistis is mere illusion. Is there, as a matter of fact, any better truth about ultimate things than the one that helps you to live? And if such experience helps to make your life healthier, more beautiful, more complete and more satisfactory to yourself and to those you love, you may safely say; “This was the grace of G-d.”

One cannot say that this experience was a masculine or a feminine experience. It is a divine and indescribable experience **because** it is non-corporeal. But it is so beautiful and powerful that your life becomes changed.



This Freudian picture has been very helpful to me as a counselor. What you see on the outside is not always exactly what is going on inside your client.

I learned also not to believe in everything I read in the newspapers. This funny clip from the Las Vegas Review Journal was given to me **9 years** after I

"fled" from Las Vegas by an old friend of ours who was in the Italian "family." He took the news clipping from a Bible that my husband had given him on a fundraising trip a few years before.

16 Las Vegas Review-Journal Sunday, February 7, 1971

Dancer flees Vegas for Kibbutz

By Jacques Clavin

KEDMA, Israel (UPI)—A one-time Madison Avenue ad man and a former Las Vegas burlesque dancer—now man and wife—came to Israel in search of the God of their fathers.

Today they are finding their answers in the Kibbutz of Kedma south of Tel Aviv. And helping others do the same.

Once a bustling communal settlement, Kedma nestles in the gently rolling hills of Judea. Its founders abandoned it in 1963, unable to make a go of things. Until a week ago only dismantled houses and rusting machinery testified to its ambitious beginnings.

This January a group calling themselves Mishpachot Yisrael (Family of Israel) undertook Kedma's revival. Posters in uni-

versities, newspaper ads and word of mouth spread the message that Kedma was to be "A home for those seeking God through Torah (Jewish religious law) or spiritual escape from Drugs."

In the first month about 30 persons have answered the call. Under the guidance of the ex-ad man and former burlesque girl, Reuven and Sarah Mandell, they have cleared Kedma's abandoned barracks of debris, and started to bring the community to new life.

Dining quarters, classrooms, workshops and cottages are replacing the old barracks.

"Here we lay a heavy path for the feet and a heavy path for the mind," the bearded, 42-year-old Mandell said.

Jeff and Linda Paige, 23-year-old newlyweds from Los Ang-

les, came seeking "spiritual fulfillment."

"The (United) States is no place to raise kids—especially Jewish kids," Linda said.

For the Paiges, Kedma is an "ideal Jewish community."

"Reuven offers the rhyme and reason of Torah," Jeff Paige said. "But unlike in most orthodox communities it is not rigidly imposed."

The Paiges, both graduates of San Fernando Valley State College, have a chance to practice their skills in Kedma.

Jeff Paige intends to travel 32 miles each day to Jerusalem's Hebrew University to prepare

for a master's degree in Mathematics. His wife, an arts and crafts major, is setting up a ceramics workshop.

Although Kedma is a religious community, many come seeking a pioneering life-style.

"Kedma promises to be a place where I'll wake up to work for myself," said Sammy Cohen, a 24-year-old English teacher from Rio de Janeiro. "I naturally identify with a community I'm building."

Cohen has a lot of building to do. Kedma lacks toilets, water or electricity. Food prepared according to Jewish dietary law is cooked on kerosene stoves do-

nated by well-wishing neighbors.

The Mandells are not ordinary pioneers. The son of a career soldier, Mandell grew up "an assimilated Americanized Jew," as he put it.

After starting out on Madison Avenue in New York, he later managed KRAM Radio station in Las Vegas, where he met Sarah, who then was dancing under the name Sandi Vincent.

"God put the sugar where the heart was at the time," Mandell said. "She was converting, and she revealed Torah to me." "And I had said I would

never marry a man I met in Vegas," the 31-year-old Sara added, smiling.

Looking back on his days as a "motivation analysis" expert Mandell said "Advertising was a sick business. It lulls people into a false sense of being."

twenty-three



HOW ARE WE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF G-D?

To know exactly what G-d is, is impossible, but we know from reading Exodus xxiv; 6-7 that G-d has thirteen attributes: "The Lord, the Lord is a merciful and gracious G-d, slow to anger and abounding in kindness and truth. He extends kindness to the thousandth generation, forgives iniquity, transgression and sin, and clears the guiltless." The traditional interpretation of this verse I quote from "Jewish Concepts" by the late Rabbi Dr. Phillip Birnbaum:

"The repetition of the Lord's name signifies that G-d is merciful to one about to sin but not yet guilty of sinning, **and** to the sinner who has repented. This represents the first two divine qualities.

The third attribute is inferred from the word 'El,' meaning 'powerful' to act as his wisdom dictates. The term 'merciful (Rahum)' denotes that G-d acts like a father to His children, preventing them from falling (fourth attribute). The fifth, 'He is gracious (Hannun)' to assist those who have fallen and cannot rise. The sixth, 'He is slow to anger,' patient and hopeful that the sinner will repent. The seventh, 'Abounding in kindness,' both to the righteous and the wicked. The eighth, 'Truthful and faithful' to carry out His promises. The ninth, 'He extends his mercy to the thousands of generations, placing the merits of the fathers to the credit of the children (zechut avot). The tenth, He 'forgives all iniquity,' sins committed with premeditation. The eleventh, He 'pardons all transgression,' sins committed in a spirit of rebellion. The twelfth, He forgives sins committed inadvertently. The thirteenth, He clears those who repent. "G-d's attributes are to become the standard of man's morality. This is defined as imitation of G-d."

With this interpretation of the Holy One, blessed is He, I wonder why New Testament believers consider the "Old Testament G-d" to be wrathful and unforgiving. Just think, every relative in your family who ever did a good deed has the merit that the Merciful One, blessed be He, is going to bless you and your children with down to the thousandth generation! And every good deed that you do will also bring blessings to your own descendants to the thousandth generation. That should be good encouragement to us when we enrich our lives with kindness, that this goodness will go on and on and on.....

G-d has no physical image, as He commanded us in the Second Commandment not to worship Him in any form or image of any created thing. One

of His names is “Ain,” which is translated from Hebrew as “nothing.” It is interesting to note that in this Atomic Age we are discovering that the smaller the atom or essence, the more power there is contained in this microscopically tiny form. The Almighty, who consists of NOTHING is All Powerful, Omnipotent!

So since there is no physical image that we can claim to be “in the image,” then how are we created in the “image of G-d?” When we *behave* in the “attributes” of G-d, when we are merciful, forgiving, powerful to do good, gracious to our neighbors and our family, other nations, assisting those who need help, patient, slow to anger, kind, truthful and faithful, then we are a people and a society that is “bringing heaven to earth.” When we bestow the blessings we have been given, we are acting in G-d's image.

Knowing mankind's nature, the Creator understood that someone would try to knock Him off His Throne, so the All Wise doesn't really sit on a throne. That is an anthropomorphism to describe His Majesty & Greatness. He doesn't sit, He is everywhere and consists of nothing corporeal.

Chapter Twenty-Four

EDUCATION

My admiration for the intelligence of most Jews I have met, I found was also due to the commandment in the Torah which Jews pray three times daily in the “Shema Yisrael (Hear, O Israel).... “and you **shall teach them diligently unto your children**, and you shall speak of them when you are sitting at home and when you go on a journey, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them for a sign on your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. You shall inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy.. 6:4-9) Learning is so important to the observant Jew that children in religious schools are already learning Gomorra at the age of six.

In order to learn the Torah and the Talmud, one must first know the letters of the alphabet, how to read and write. Consequently, every Jew was commanded to give the children an education so that they could “teach them diligently unto your children.” No wonder Jewish parents are so involved in helping their children with their homework. It is an ancient tradition to pursue knowledge of the wonders of HaShem's created world, to educate your children to know and understand the

world they live in, and their purpose in life. Not too long ago, only noblemen were given an education; the rest of the mass of people couldn't even read. Education of women is still forbidden in some areas of the world. No wonder why so many outstanding achievers and discoverers are Jewish. Learning has been their tradition for so long that intelligence is a part of the DNA make-up. The "Shema" also keeps our minds focused on holy conduct as we go out into a world of distractions from holiness, as it bids us to "speak of them.....when you go on a journey." We need these constant reminders to center our lives and our actions in the home and outside the home, for one is constantly besieged with temptations and compulsions that can destroy our inner peace and self-respect, not to mention our important relationships.

What did I find for myself in studying the wisdom of Torah? I found the literary works of the Jewish Sages were composed of answers that satisfy a "thinking, reasoning person" who has honest questions about G-d, His Creation, His purpose for putting us here, and how one can carry on one's mission in life without making a mess of it. For a practical, thinking and intelligent student of life, one can draw a straighter line from "here" to "there" and save time and pain in their life. As a social scientist, I have never found a better plan for the individual or the society as far as mental health, less crime and peaceful homes. The Kabbalah equates the word "evil" with "pain." Who wants pain? Wouldn't it be better to get it right the first time, pass the test and go on to the next exciting challenge with joy and satisfaction that the job was well done, with no pain? Well, we all know that it is nearly impossible to get everything right the first time. We **zig** and we **zag** as we aim at our goals, when we see (whoops!) we went too far in one direction, then we self-correct.

But one of the reasons I believe you will find Jews in every facet of science, medicine, philosophy, art and entrepreneurship is that Judaism is based upon a strong foundation of education. Intelligent people need to have a religion that allows them to ask any question and search for Truth knowing that through learning Torah and related wisdom they will appreciate with ever more wonder the wonderful and harmonious works of creation. These intelligent people will love their wonderful Creator Who has made such beauty as this. It seems the more you learn, the more you realize you **don't** know and need to learn. It can be a humbling experience, but will encourage you to continue the habit of learning your

whole life long. It also teaches your brain to work faster, better and helps your memory.

I also believe that the wisdom passed down through the ages to the Jewish People has enabled them to survive and accomplish all the wonderful things they have accomplished. Despite exile, Crusades, Inquisition, pogroms, Holocausts, discrimination and prejudice, which would drive most people “bonkers” through such stressful lives as Jews have been subjected to, they have less crime, alcoholism, divorce and their societies are comparatively peaceful. This says a lot for the mental health of a Jewish lifestyle.

I am saddened by the fact that in the United States that I grew up in, where we pledged allegiance, said a little prayer at the beginning of each school day, that now the very **word, God**, is forbidden. In the very Halls of Knowledge, the Source of all Knowledge is a *forbidden topic*. It seems that the world is going crazier and crazier. The **Ten Commandments**, the only WORDS that **G-d** ever spoke to an entire assemblage of people, are forbidden in our Houses of Knowledge and our Government buildings. Yet, all kinds of vile words are plastered on our Billboards and T-shirts, We need to clean up our educational values before our cities are torn down with the violence that is taught.

Chapter Twenty-Five

MODESTY

During the time I was learning all about Judaism I was tested once more to see if I would really be faithful to the tenets of Judaism. The famous Producer, Harold Minsky, whom I had worked for once before in Las Vegas at the New Frontier Hotel, called me and asked me to be the lead dancer for a new show he was opening in Minneola for a summer-stock production. I had only recently learned the meaning of modesty from Rebbetzin Lamm, having never really thought about it before. I grew up in tropical Florida in shorts and halters, bikinis, etc., and in show business costumes are made to make you look sexy. I had never known another way. Now I realized that especially as a married woman, I could not dress in a way to make another man lust after me, and put adulterous thoughts in his mind.

I called Rabbi Maurice Lamm and asked him if I could take the job. He, knowing that we were saving up money to go to Israel, said that if Minsky would let

me wear a costume that was a little more modest than the rest of the girls, that it would be permissible. I put down the phone and thought about it. Rabbi Lamm was trying to be helpful, but he was naïve. No matter how much more covered I might be, I would still not be modest, and the dance steps would be provocative. I then realized that my dance career was over. I have never performed since my conversion, although I continued to teach dance and Yoga relaxation to many girls and women since then.

In learning to dress more modestly and play down my physical essence, I solved a problem that had distressed me since I had developed into a curvaceous young lady. I had fumed inside many a time at men who related to me sexually instead of relating to my essence as a thinking, spiritual human being, while at the same time not realizing that I was **provoking** those very thoughts by the way I dressed. After I began to dress more modestly, most men began to relate with more respect for my intelligence rather than to flirt and play silly games I didn't want to play.

By the way you dress, you put out a message. Only so many of us get mesmerized by the latest "fashion fad" that we forget what kind of an image we want to project. I see so many young girls and grown women wearing the latest fashion and some don't even seem comfortable to be wearing it, but they do anyway. My husband called me to the window the other day to observe a pretty young lady walking down the street wearing a very short spandex mini-skirt. She was walking with a man, and every 10 steps she gave a nervous tug down on her skirt, which kept creeping up as she walked. She was obviously uncomfortable, but fashionably "in." My husband says, "If you wrote "WOMAN" on a barrel, every man would want to peek in." So, no matter what you wear, men just naturally want to peek. That is his nature of "pru u'ravu" (be fruitful and multiply). But men also appreciate modesty, and will treat a modest woman with more respect, because she is putting out a message, "I'm not here to provoke or seduce you, clearly; so let's get down to our business at hand." So, dear sisters, if you've been suffering a life of no respect, try dressing modestly. You don't have to look "frumpy" to be modest. There are tasteful, classic fashions that express your artistic sensibilities. Especially in today's world, where women have entered the business world in greater numbers, it is important to keep your mind on business and not to put out the wrong message in the workplace. It would probably decrease the amount of

sexual harassment in business, as well. And it would most likely decrease extra-marital affairs and divorce in our societies, which is causing so much unhappiness and social problems. If a woman is dressing with the intention of looking her sexiest, her mind and behavior will follow in that vein (or **vain**) as well.

I have heard on many an occasion from husbands that they like their wives to dress sexy so they can show the world what a beautiful treasure they have for a wife. Some women have also told me their husbands feel this way. But if you think about it, you will realize that this causes many false impressions in other people's minds, and it also causes arguments and fights at parties and at home after such gatherings. You don't need to show off every curve in order to look beautiful and fashionable. Today, in the year 2006, women are wearing less than what I wore on stage! Belly buttons show, low-riding pants show even MORE. Some women just don't have the bodies that make this fashion look good. Even if you do have the body, what are you trying to say? And I have heard from many men that they are embarrassed to see this nakedness. It isn't fair to the men. As a matter of fact, the many men I have questioned about this are embarrassed and would prefer women to dress modestly. The men dress much more modestly than the women and they tell me that they think modest women are more mysterious and interesting. And fashionable hats have always been a beautiful accessory to an outfit. I usually *loved* the hats they created for our costumes in show business, which they always did. It is a bit like ornamentation, like jewelry.

My dear husband says; "If you see the fabric of your nation growing thin, then put more fabric on your women. You'll see more blessings, and less sin."

He also made up a "Confucius said" of his own. Confucius says, 'Nation who runs with skirt up, soon gets caught with pants down. Crack up.'

A woman should always strive to bring out the more noble instincts of men—their first natures, rather than their second nature. It's far easier to deal with men's rational minds than with their testosterone.

Chapter Twenty-Six

ART AS DIVINE REVELATION

Joseph Ibn Paquda, a Jewish sage who wrote during the eleventh century in Spain, is another of my beloved teachers. In his book "Duties of the Heart," Ibn

Paquda writes about the “inward duties” that motivate one to the “physical duties” of the Torah laws, for without the inward feeling, why bother?

Without the inward feeling of the heart, one cannot properly perform the commandments of G-d, for we are taught that our Creator delights in “wholehearted” devotion, not just empty acts done by rote. Ibn Paquda then describes clearly the “duties of the heart” such as Trust, Wholehearted Devotion, Humility, Repentance, etc. I strongly recommend this two-volume edition for a clear concept of these inner duties.

Another concept that Ibn Paquda delighted me with was that he says that ***all art is divine revelation***. He explains that one must learn the fundamentals of one’s art form, but once these are learned one finds oneself receiving revelation far beyond the fundamentals. This, he says, is divine revelation, communion with G-d. I knew this to be a fact as soon as I read it. I had felt this feeling many times while performing. It was then that I realized that this was probably the reason why so many performers and artists get lost in drugs, alcohol and other pursuits that bring strong stimulation. They feel this ***divine*** feeling when they are performing, but, not realizing that it is communion with G-d, they seek to find this same high feeling off stage. They make the sad mistake of seeking stimulation in the ***material world*** instead of letting their spirits soar in glad communion with their Creator, and they can never find satisfaction like that in the ***material world***. That is why they try more and more physical stimulation, because they never get fulfilled in the same way as they would in a spiritual way. I was sorry that I didn’t get this lesson clearly before I left the theater world, in order to share this knowledge with the extremely talented people I knew. Perhaps some of my friends would not have committed suicide (as some did, Elvis Presley included), and perhaps they would have seen more clearly how to balance their artistic, spiritual natures in their lives. That way they could have had it all: the talent, the money, the fame, and the gratitude to the Beneficent One who endowed them with all the talent and inspiration. The world of the ***muses*** is **amusing!** But without a spiritual balance, it can become confusing.

After all, who has not gazed at the grace of a swan or a dolphin and murmured a thanks to the creator of such art. Who has not looked at the many varieties of flower designs and colors and *aromas*, which are *alive* and *reproduce themselves*, and has not thought how easy it might be to paint it; but to conceive of

the design, aroma and make it *live* could only be done by the Almighty, the Greatest Artist.

G-d is not just a “potato and beets” kind of Creator. He went really wild with imagination! Think of all the different fruits there are in the world. Have you started salivating yet? And vegetables; all with just the right nutrition for our good health! Have you ever been scuba diving in tropical waters, or to an Aquarium? What a beautiful world it is under water. It is breathtaking in its beauty and variety. Who set the luminaries in the heavens like the brightest jewels, and creates sunsets and sunrises that are each an original work of art every day? And it is all harmonious, mathematically correct, a perfect art form of a symbiotic Universe. “The heavens declare the glory of G-d and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.” (Psalms 19:2) Only man wanders out of sync, looking for his purpose, yet sometimes refusing to accomplish it even after he discovers it. We Homo sapiens are silly and stubborn critters. But, at the same time, we are another of the Creator’s great works of art, able to try to copy His art, recreate some of G-d’s wonderful ideas, but unable to make them live and reproduce.

We are, however, bidden to be the caretakers of all this beauty. We should all work to keep this world beautiful and not spoil the symbiotic grace of this beautiful Universe G-d created. This is why the Creator gave us the Book of Instruction, the Torah, or Bible.

Twenty-Seven

HOW DOES ONE FACE SHAME FOR FORMER MISTAKES?

In His Holy Torah, the Merciful One, Blessed be He, has given us a way to take yearly stock of our behavior, our thoughts our deeds. This is the time of the High Holidays; Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succoth. Then we are given the formula for sincere repentance for wrongs done. During the month of Elul, the month before Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year), we examine ourselves, and are exhorted by our sages to try to behave during this month in the manner we should always behave during the whole year. For this is the time that our Heavenly Father descends Seven Heavens to be close to us and look at how his Children of Israel are behaving. How do we know this? The letters for the month of Elul are aleph, lamed, vov, lamed, which are an acronym for "Ani l'dodi v'dodi li" (I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine). So G-d comes very close to us.

For the sins we committed against G-d, we pray humbly and sorrowfully for G-d to forgive us, and we resolve to be stronger this year to observe and do as we have been commanded and taught. We must sincerely resolve not to repeat the behavior we are sorry for, for only that is true repentance. One who thinks that he can obtain forgiveness, then repeat his sin again and again and be believed by G-d is a fool.

In "Duties of the Heart," by Yoseph ibn Paquda he rights, "Let not the penitent suppose that he is kept far away from the degree attained by the righteous, because of the iniquities and sins that he had committed. This is not so. He is beloved by the Creator, desired by Him, as if he had never sinned. Moreover his reward is great; since, though having tasted sin, he renounced it and overcame his evil passions. The sages say, 'Where penitents stand, the completely righteous cannot stand.' This means, that the degree attained by penitents is higher than that of those who had never sinned, the reason being that the former have had to put forth a greater effort to subdue their passions and former habits than the latter.

For the sins we committed against our friends, family, neighbors and business associates, we must go to them personally and humbly ask

forgiveness for any hurt and harm we may have caused them. G-d cannot forgive these sins, for they are not against Him, but others. It is traditional to forgive someone if they ask for forgiveness, even if it is very difficult, for it is considered a great sin to embarrass someone, akin even to murder. We know how difficult it is for that person to admit their wrongs and to ask forgiveness, for we must do it ourselves to those whom we have sinned against. Nobody is perfect, right? Discussions of misunderstandings, arguments, hatred, hurts are appropriate, but not for argument's sake...only for the sake of peace and forgiveness.

In this way we do not carry on feuds for generations, we learn not to bear a grudge against our neighbor and our close ones. The feud between the Hatfield's and the McCoy's is a famous American example, and this was a feud that started over a sow (pig) belonging to the McCoy's, who went through a fence to the Hatfield land and gave birth. The Hatfield's claimed ownership of the sow and her piglets, and during the quarrel someone shot someone to death and they've been shooting each other and carrying on the grudge for decades. It would have been a lot easier to make amends from the beginning instead of years of hatred and murder over some **pigs**. Of course, since I come from the McCoy family, this is the version that was told to me by my grandfather. I don't know the Hatfield's version of the story. Thank Heavens, I heard on the TV News a couple of years ago that the Hatfields and McCoys have ended their feud.

We learn the important lesson of being truthful with ourselves (What? Denial? Me?), of facing up to our mistakes, of changing to better habits, of being humble, sorry, of strengthening ourselves into better people year after year.

(In a recent discussion my daughter Heftzi-ba and I were having about the Jewish People being in "denial," Heftzi-ba remarked, "Why do our people still insist on being in denial when HaShem took us out of "de Nile" [the Nile] thousands of years ago?)

After my conversion, I made it a family practice to call the children together every Rosh Chodesh Elul (the 1st of Elul), and remind them that HaShem was coming very close this entire month, to watch us, to strengthen us, and that this was our family's opportunity to take a strong hold on the weaknesses that caused unhappiness and strife among the family. We would discuss each of our problems, the ones that got the children spanked, or in trouble in school, or the tones of voice that set off arguments between the "all of us," and help each other

with suggestions as to how to do it better the next year. Only these New Year's resolutions were not like the gentile's New Year's resolutions. We were serious.

We didn't promise to stop biting our fingernails this year, and then run out and get drunk and freak out for two days. We go to synagogue and pray for hours, go home, feast and rejoice, return to synagogue and pray for more hours, go home, feast and rejoice, sleep a night, get up and go to synagogue and pray for hours, etc. until the second day is finished. For ten days we do "tshuva" (repentance) until the day of Yom Kippur. On this day we feast our souls, we fast our bodies, and we pray fervently for a year of blessing, health, prosperity, peace (for us and the whole world), we ask to be written in the Book of Life, to be given another year to correct our mistakes. We cry and purge ourselves of our evil inclinations. And after we hear the sound of the Shofar (ram's horn), we leave for home feeling clean and pure, forgiven, with more resolve to live a holier life.

When our father Abraham proved that he loved G-d so much that he would be willing to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac, G-d provided a ram caught in a bush for the sacrifice instead of Isaac. At that time Abraham saw into the future that his descendants would sin. So he asked G-d to do him a big favor because of his faithfulness. He asked that G-d forgive every child of his in the future who would hear the sound of the Shofar (ram's horn). This is how the custom began to blow the Shofar every New Year and Yom Kippur.

I recall the year that I converted in the Reform. I was so ignorant of what the High Holidays were about that instead of fasting on Yom Kippur, we celebrated the Holiday by *eating dinner* with our next-door neighbors, also assimilated Jews. To make matters even worse, we ate **veal Parmesan** (meat and cheese). Oy! I still blush until this day over my ignorance.

After I began to learn authentic Judaism, as I began to prepare myself for the fast I began to search myself to ask forgiveness for my sins, **but I couldn't think of any**. As I did a mental check-off of the Ten Commandments, which was all I knew of G-d's law, I felt free of sin. After all, I didn't worship idols, I tried to honor my mother, I did not lie, steal, murder, commit adultery nor covet my neighbors' belongings. So what could I repent for? Then I picked up the Machsor (Yom Kippur prayer book), and began to read the different sins for which we ask forgiveness. Wow! I was guilty of contempt for others, for slander, speaking gossip, being haughty, selfish, obstinate, swearing, tale bearing, passing judgment against others, not properly honoring elders, giving bad advice, getting angry, etc.,

etc. It was then that I realized how ignorant I was, and how much I had to learn before I could acquire a pure heart, or even begin to repent.

A person should never put off repenting saying, "when I grow old I shall repent," for he may die before he becomes old. And when a person habituates him or herself to not put off all of those bad dispositions, and to live a life that brings oneself a better self-image, that person will live a life of more inner peace, satisfaction and joy. And each year they will have less to repent for and more self-respect.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

FRUM (OBSERVANT) FROM BIRTH

Many people raised in Orthodoxy want to know how could I desire a restrictive tradition that they were longing to break out of, instead of remaining in the world of "bright lights," the fast lane, sensual indulgence? The answer: I had found, like King Solomon, that this world of "vanity" was the "fast lane to Hell," that there was never any end to sensual gratification, that the true "bright light" is the Torah light, the light of G-d, that the only indulgence that fully satisfies is the spiritual—not the sensual.

For those FFB'S (Frum From Birth) who wish to throw off the restrictions of the Torah, think with your heart. Could it be that you wish to corrupt yourselves a little? Do you wish to end up like so many I know who have no Torah and no self-respect, wishing that you could stand in your own shoes and not hate yourself and be disgusted with yourself? Do you wish to pursue sensual indulgence freely, without care? Let me tell you, friend, there is no such thing as "without care."

People, all people, Jews and Gentiles, have sensitive feelings, and we all have a conscience. We know good and bad, and it's all there, right in the language: good feels good, bad feels bad. Very simple. You who have been born in the holy houses of the Princes of Judaism have a wealth and treasure that cannot even be counted, for the Grace of G-d towards those who love Him is to the thousandth generation! The holy fathers in your lineage **have you backed up for millennia**. Your King is the King of Kings Who orders the entire Universe and your portion in it. Why would you want to throw away this wealth, this protection, this special relationship that only Jews can share with their Heavenly Father? He didn't choose any other nation for this inheritance. I know that it is hard to be a

Jew sometimes, especially in a world that is so different. But that difference is so delicious, so wise, so peaceful, a tranquility that is born of an easy conscience and of being *in harmony with the Universe*.

For those who wish to find a peaceful space in this world of trial and turmoil, there is an “inner space” that one can escape to, not by becoming a monk and leaving the world of challenge altogether, but with “Jacob’s Ladder,” (Torah guidance) which provides an ascent and a descent for those times when you need spiritual refreshment to give you the strength to carry on IN the world. One of my clients who had tried psychedelic drugs to reach that spiritual realm said it very well. He told me that with psychedelic drugs one may reach into that spiritual realm, experiencing “out of body” trips, but one may get lost and not be able to come back, getting stuck in an “other worldly” state of mind. (My husband and I took one such poor soul out of an Israeli prison psychiatric ward suffering from “acid psychosis,” lost in a world of his own and unable to make any sense. With G-d’s help and lots of work and time, he was healed.) But with Torah wisdom one may safely climb up the ladder and may climb down again into the world that they need to be in, with a refreshed spirit and the strength needed to take control of one’s life. They have learned the STEPS, up and down. They won’t get lost.

Here I would like to share some prose that my husband was inspired to write after such a Torah Trip to the “inner space.”

“The L-rd saveth! All who wait for the L-rd are saved from death, for the battle is not with man or beast or nature; it is with time. By leaving the world of time, which is finite, and transcending space, which is finite, entering into the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven, all barriers to freedom disappear. Torah is a magic carpet lifting aloft its passengers to take them to the palace of the King. Being that time and space are no longer factors, there is no waiting and the journey is instantaneous. Life abounds everywhere, and joy is the song of the day.”

During the last 40 years of being a Jew, I have met many people all over the world who, although being raised in an observant home, don’t feel the rapture of our special relationship with the Almighty. Even as the Prince of a country doesn’t see anything uncommon in his father, the King, taking him for granted, those “frum from birth” have not experienced the spiritual poverty that those who haven’t had their advantages have experienced. The saying, “Familiarity breeds contempt,” comes to mind.

When I lived on Kibbutz Sha'alavim, an orthodox kibbutz in the Ayalon Valley near Jerusalem in 1967-68 I was so moved by these people's kindness and the many caring deeds that they did for each other. One of the women I most admired came to my apartment one day shortly after my daughter was born to help me with something.

As she was leaving, I told her that I was very moved by everyone's exemplary behavior in this very special community. She turned to me with a sigh and said, "We don't do it because we want to, Sara. We do it because we **have to**." I was shocked at her answer. I have tried to understand all that was behind that answer for many years.

I do understand that "fear of G-d" (yirat HaShem) was the motivating factor, which is incumbent upon every Jew. However, I deduced from her answer that she didn't feel the beauty, the tranquility and the satisfaction of living an observant life. She had never lived another kind of life, and didn't have the experience of living in a very confusing world. Had she experienced a world without Torah guidance she would have hated it! Morality is sadly lacking outside of a Torah world. People think nothing of cheating, lying, manipulating, extorting, perverting justice, stealing, gossiping, raping, promiscuity, even murder. Although some religious people slip (on occasion), very few do so in a community like Sha'alavim, which is like an almost perfect community.

Without a commitment to morality, some people will only help you if you pay them for it. Charity is abhorrent to them; their hearts are hard to people who have come into misfortune, and they covet others' good fortune. These are qualities that are **quite natural** to all people, which is why G-d gave us the Ten Commandments. He wouldn't command us not to do that which we had NO TENDENCY to do; what would be the sense of that? So we see that this is natural for a morally uneducated person to act in these ways. It is not civilization, and it is a confusing world in which to make choices that will bring harmony to our lives.

For someone like me to experience living in a Torah community is to enter a world so harmonious and considerate that it seems like a Paradise compared to the world I had forsaken. No world is perfect, and even with Torah commandments to guide us, you will find Torah observant people who sometimes fall into temptation.

My husband often reminded me to imagine how these people would behave *if they had no Torah!* But the percentages are much lower than in the society of

the Nations. I pray that those “frum from birth” Jews could feel the joy that I feel, the newness, kindness and harmonious difference in a life where we separate the “holy” from the “profane,” as it is written in the Havdola ceremony we do after the Sabbath ends. In this prayer we bless G-d who separates between the holy and the profane, between light and darkness, between the Holy Sabbath and the other six days of the week, and between Israel and the Nations. This ceremony is very meaningful to me, as life for me before I learned Torah wisdom is like the difference between darkness and light. We now live in El Ad, a religious yishuv near Petach Tikva, all done in beautiful Jerusalem Stone with interesting architecture. We have never been so happy. Everyone in the community LOOKS for mitzvot to do for others. The children are imbued with honor from birth. Like all children, they are full of energy, but their energy is guided into holiness. The children don't scream to an extreme, they laugh a lot, ask if they can carry your groceries. Neighbors and store owners are kind and helpful. This is the Israel that we have been yearning to live in since we discovered Torah. There are many communities like this in Israel.

When I was searching for Truth, I studied all of the religions. I sat for hours staring at a candle trying to “find Nirvana” and nothing ever happened. I never had an “out of body” experience while trying so hard. It happened totally by surprise. I had just finished cleaning up the kitchen after putting the children to bed when I was living in Netanya in 1969. Reuven was snoozing on the couch, as I sat down in my favorite rocking chair and looked with enjoyment at the beautiful flowers that Reuven always bought for Shabbat. I always got a special enjoyment arranging the beautiful flowers one can buy in Israel for a bargain, especially for Shabbat. I was looking into the delicate intricacy of a periwinkle when I suddenly found myself in a different world. I didn't see myself, but felt myself, in a world of total harmony. The **sound** was so incredibly beautiful that it is impossible to describe, but it seemed that the whole universe was singing in harmony the praise of their Creator. I was enraptured, yet frightened. This was a different world. I hadn't expected this “trip,” hadn't been trying to get into the metaphysical world. It was a gift from the flower that I was loving, but I didn't know it at the time. I heard a feminine “voice of words” telling me not to be frightened, that HaShem wanted to show me something. The beauty of the harmony was more beautiful than any orchestra or choral that I had ever heard, and I wanted to stay, but I was surprised and frightened.

I was still nursing Heftzi-ba and had two little boys to care for. I guess I was just too earthbound to take a chance, so I “hopped” back into this world. I am sorry to this day that I did not see what HaShem wanted to show me. I should have trusted the voice, not to be frightened. If I ever get the “gift” again, I will stay to see the whole show.

As for those who were born into a holy family, it may seem that there is more freedom and gaiety in the world of hedonism. But it is all a mask. The greatest freedom one can have is freedom from *compulsions*. Those raised in a holy home have learned self-discipline and holy teachings. They are not *driven* by compulsions, phobias or unreasonable fury, as a general rule. They have all of the tools to get through life with more composure, and they should be so happy to know that G-d always leads us in the right direction when we remain close to Him.

Chapter Twenty-nine

THE BIG LEAP - CONVERTING

After studying and living for a year and a half of incorporating more and more mitzvot into our daily lives, my husband and I realized that we were becoming very different than we were before. Our friends thought we were totally crazy! But we were enjoying this new purity, this new feeling of being in harmony with our whole being:, body and soul. We stopped going to parties. We never enjoyed them anyway. Lately we had only ended up arguing with our hedonistic friends about the existence of G-d, the purpose of life, fidelity to one's mate, everything. Even though it seemed that everyone was living a hedonistic life, and nobody we knew was going in our direction, we were steeled by the commandment, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.” We swam against the current of society, like salmon fighting their way upstream to HOME. We stopped watching TV and began reading Torah books and discussing life's important issues.

We had started learning Aleph-Bet at Rabbi Lamm's synagogue, and we learned how to read and write beginner's Hebrew. We became active in synagogue affairs. There was no question about my converting now; I was sold on this new way of life. I had never been happier, more sure of my life, more

content with my marriage and my two sons. My mind had never been so clear. I told Rabbi Lamm, and he arranged for me to be questioned by a Beth Din (Jewish legal tribunal) at the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. I passed the scrutiny of the Beth Din, and arrangements were made for me to go to the mikvah with my two sons. On February 9, 1967 I became an Orthodox Jewess. I was no longer Sandi Vincent, but Sara Shira Bat Abraham Mandell.

My oldest son Frederick had to go through another ritual circumcision (just a small spot of blood), because a Jewish doctor had circumcised him on the fourth day instead of the eighth day. He was very brave about it, although he was only three years old, and I was very proud of him. My younger son Joseph had been circumcised by a mohel on the eighth day, so he only needed to immerse in the mikvah. He was just nineteen months old and didn't really understand what was happening. I told him the mikvah was a swimming pool, so he was looking forward to it, but he had to be completely pushed under the water three times and the poor baby came up sputtering for breath three times. The look on his face made me feel terrible, because he looked at me with such confusion, like I was trying to drown him. Actually, it was a rather stressful day, as there was a bad blizzard with about three feet of snow. The three witnesses who were supposed to witness the immersion were three hours late, I had already taken the necessary bath and shampoo and bathed my sons, but remained rather wet and cold for three hours until the witnesses came. My little sons became impatient. My maid called and asked me what was delaying me. She wanted to go home before she got snowed in.

I explained the situation and begged her to stay, as my husband and I were getting married by Rabbi Lamm under the "chupah" after the immersion and I needed her to watch my children until after the wedding ceremony. So, being in such a hurry, I didn't even take time to dry my hair, but ran out in the cold, snowy blizzard directly after the immersion. We dropped off our little boys, I jumped into the crème silk wedding suit that I had made, put on the wedding veil that I had been married in five years before in Las Vegas, and went to Rabbi Lamm's apartment where his dear wife, Shirley, had set up wedding bells and cake, and my husband and I were married under the chuppah. And I contracted pneumonia.



Second Wedding at Rabbi Iamm - Feb.9, 1967

**2nd WEDDING
UNDER
CHUPPA**

I didn't know that I had "walking" pneumonia, however, for a month. I just thought it was a lingering flu. My temperature suddenly went up one night to 104 degrees and I went to the emergency ward. They admitted me immediately, and the next day I went into a coma for two weeks. My poor husband and sons were so worried about me. They didn't allow children to come into the hospital in those days, so my sons went through Hell. They were too young to understand where their mother was (my poor sweet babies). Bob left a prayer book under my pillow, and every time I came to for a few moments I would open the prayer book and pray for my life until I dropped into unconsciousness again. It was a viral pneumonia that penicillin couldn't help, and my lungs kept filling up with mucus, causing me to cough until my entire body ached. The nurses told me later that my fever was so high that they had to change my gown and sheets several times a day because they were so wet. Then when my fever finally broke and I became conscious, it was an enormous task to just to breathe. I was in the hospital for over a month. So I can't say that my conversion experience was an easy one. But all conversion experiences are not like mine, so if you are considering it please don't let me frighten you! I'm still glad I converted. My only suggestion to others would be to definitely dry your hair, even if you feel rushed!

One problem that, to my sorrow, I never resolved to my satisfaction was with my gentile family. My mother would call from Florida all day every Saturday. When I would finally answer the phone after Havdola, the ceremony that ends the Sabbath, Mother would chastise me severely for not answering the phone on Shabbat. I tried to explain that this was a day of serene, spiritual pursuit, that we could talk on the phone the other six days of the week. But she would argue, "What if something terrible happened in the family, someone died, or some emergency?" I asked her if she had a phone in her little fishing boat when she and my stepfather went fishing in the Florida Keys on some weekends. She said, "What does that have to do with not answering the phone on Saturday?" I replied, "Just pretend that Bob and I have gone away on our 'spiritual yacht' on Saturday and there is no phone." It only angered her more. She said, "A fish is a fish and it can't be a camel. You are not a Jew and you will never be a Jew." My brother told me I was crazy to raise my children to be hated and despised as Jews. He said I wasn't thinking of their future or their welfare; that being Jewish would hurt their careers and personal lives. With my grandparents I realized that any practical discussion about it would just be futile, so I refused to discuss it with them. What was really strange about it all was that my stepfather was Jewish, but was only finally accepted into the family because, "he isn't like those other Jews." I think what they meant was that he wasn't religious; he was an atheist, as was my mother. I never figured out why it was okay for them not to believe in G-d, but was not okay for me to believe in the Jewish concept of G-d, not Christianity's concept. But then, I could never make sense out of prejudice anyway.

I consulted Rabbi Lamm about what I should do about this problem. I knew that it was a commandment to honor your parents, but how could I honor them and still honor the mitzvot of Judaism if it meant a constant fight? Rabbi Lamm taught me that one should honor one's parents. However, if your parents told you to do something forbidden by Torah, your first obligation is to honor G-d and Torah. The way he taught me seemed like a simple thing to do, but in reality it wasn't. Actually, in situations like mine, where there is great objection from the gentile parents, one is advised to distance oneself for a time from one's family until the convert is strongly steeped into the proper habits of a Jewish life. The halacha (law) is that the convert has joined a different family, the family of Abraham, and may have to leave their birth family altogether. That was what I finally had to do. But I have known a few sincere converts whose families didn't harass or belittle

their child's religious decisions and they were still able to keep their religion with their parents' respect for their differences. This is another factor to consider for anyone considering conversion to Judaism. You may lose your birth family, as I did.

I was seeing a psychiatrist at the time to try to figure out why I could never please my mother. Having studied a lot of psychology, I was aware that sometimes we do things we are unaware of and I wanted to get to the root of something I might be doing that I was unaware of in an effort to make peace with my mother. I shared my letters to Mother with Dr. Miller, a kindly Jewish psychiatrist who was so overloaded with clients that he often dozed as I poured out my heart to him. I also shared the letters my mother wrote to me and reported our telephone conversations. I related an instance that had happened when I was featuring at the Latin Quarter after my second son was born. I was called to the phone backstage as I was putting on my stage make-up for my performance, and it was my older brother Joe calling me from Florida to tell me that my mother had just tried to commit suicide, she was in the hospital from an overdose of tranquilizers and it was ALL MY FAULT! I asked him how it was my fault; what had I done? He said, "You don't write her often enough." I told him, "Joe, I write Mother every week, at the least every two weeks. You know I have two sons in diapers, I am also caring for Bob's two daughters, (who were living with us at the time), I work until 3:00 A.M., get up at 8:00 A.M., and I am so exhausted that my make-up is running down my face when the spotlights shine in my eyes. I only have time to write once every week or two. Besides, Mother calls me three times a week! What more does she want from me?" He told me I was sick in the head and should go to a psychiatrist. I said, "I'm sick in the head? Mother is the one who tried to commit suicide. **She** should go to a psychiatrist!"

He repeated that it was all my fault, Mother didn't need a psychiatrist and then he hung up on me. Needless to say, I did not go on stage for my number during that show, because my makeup was smeared all over with tears. So, I went to a psychiatrist.

After sharing all this information with Dr. Miller for about six months he told me, "Despite the fact that you say mother is an atheist, it appears to me that she has a 'cross to bear' and that she has put you up on that 'cross' with the nails in your hands. I suggest that you remove yourself from your mother's life for awhile and she will either put down her 'cross' or put someone else up on it. But you

should no longer allow her to nail you up there. I don't see that you are doing anything subconsciously to hurt your mother; I think she is hurting you. Perhaps she feels guilty for abandoning you after her divorce and sending you to live with her mother, whom she hated!

She can't live with that, and it seems to me that your mother is neurotic. I don't believe you can help her; she needs to seek counseling for herself." This was very true. Mother had often accused me of not loving her because she had abandoned me, but I honestly loved her. I told her each time she said this that I understood her situation, that she couldn't find a new husband in the Everglades on a chicken farm to make a new home for us. I understood why she moved to Miami Beach. Unfortunately, however, it took nine years for her to get married, because every time she and my stepfather set a wedding date, my step-grandmother faked a heart attack and went to the hospital. She offered to buy my stepfather a hotel on Lincoln Road in Miami Beach if he wouldn't marry my "shiksa" mother. She was engaged to my stepfather for six years! By the time they got married I was fifteen years old and a very depressed teenager who still never got to spend time in a family setting because my mother and stepfather worked in their business 12 hours a day. But I didn't harbor any hatred toward her or resentment. I loved my mother with all my heart. She never believed that, we could never resolve it, and it certainly caused me a lot of frustration that I could never get it right with my mother. She did, however, many years later, admit that it seemed as if my observant Jewish lifestyle made me very happy.

I relate a rather interesting story of something that happened several years later after my family and I had gone to Israel and established a Residential Center where we healed drug addiction, emotional problems, problems with families and delinquency, using the spiritual recipes handed down from our Torah Sages. My step-grandmother, who had rejected my "shiksa" mother and had never had much to do with me, came to Israel for a visit. She had read newspaper stories and seen TV broadcasts in America of our work in Israel, and she came to visit our beautiful Center located in a serene country setting on Shabbat. She was extremely impressed with what she saw, young adults who were very kind and mannerly to her, a peaceful community enjoying the Sabbath day.

After a tour of the Center at Kedma, which, as a real estate owner she really appreciated our 50 acres, the beautiful dormitories, the workshops, the huge dining hall, a huge kitchen with separate milk & meat steel sinks and work tables,

the Beit Knesset (prayer hall), the stable and corral which housed our 11 pure Arabian horses which we bred, the steel cattle corral which housed our 12 Cherolet beef cattle, the view from the hill upon which Kedma was perched, of miles and miles of growing fields of the kibbutzim surrounding us, the Judean hills in the distance where Reuven and I used to gallop out to for fun and serenity. The most touching moment was when we stopped in the dining hall and I asked her if she would like to make a Kiddush for Shabbat. She said she would love to, but she didn't remember; she hadn't heard Kiddush since she was a child. My son Pinchas, who was seven years old at the time, recited it for her and she said a tearful and emotional, "Amen." This was the grandson of the "shiksa" she had rejected for so long. It was a very moving moment for me and probably something she had never dreamed of happening when my mother married her son. She was nicer to my mother after that occasion.

My best consolation to the problem of what to do with my relationship with my mother occurred in Israel, and it was a moment I will never forget! I had decided when I came to Israel that I would take the advice of my rabbi and my psychiatrist and not write to my mother because of the constant stress of our relationship. I didn't even write after my daughter was born, which was very hard for me not to share with her. Some of my new found friends in Israel thought that this was wrong, and they expressed their feelings very strongly. I, being ambivalent about it anyway, began to feel guilt and confusion. One night as I lay upon my bed saying my nightly prayers, I poured out my heart to G-d and asked His advice. Was I doing the wrong thing? I pleaded and pleaded for advice, feeling such confusion and remorse that tears ran down my face. I didn't want to do the wrong thing. Something then happened that has never since happened to me. Suddenly a weight submerged upon my entire body, actually pushing me down into the mattress so that I couldn't have moved if I wanted to. There was such a heavy Presence in the room that it was AWESOME! Then I heard a "voice" which said very clearly to me, "I am your Father and Torah is your Mother. Do not fear." The weight slowly lifted and was gone. I had gotten the message, and even though my mother passed away at the young age of 58, and I had never seen my earthly father since the age of six, I still feel that I am blessed with Eternal and Holy Parents. I will never be alone.

It was five years before I contacted my family again, but it seemed that the message G-d had given me was true. It was always a fight, it never turned out

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right, and I could never honor her the way I wished to. We were both speaking English, but somehow she was hearing a different message than the one I tried to impart.



Sara & Reuven at Kedma 1971

Chapter Thirty

MOVING UP (ALIYA)

It was during the time of the last year of my Jewish studies that I realized there was an Israel, the newborn Jewish State that the Eternal had promised His holy people. I began to read about the history of the new State, and I became aware of Israel's place in the news. To me this was definitely a sign of the prophecies coming true, a sign of G-d's faithfulness to the promises He made to His Chosen People. I felt very lucky to be living during this incredible time when faith was easier to keep. I imagined how many Jewish forefathers and mothers had prayed for the past two thousand years to return us from the four corners of the earth to the Land of Israel, and died, never seeing it happen. But they faithfully kept up belief and prayer all that time, and encouraged the next generation to have faith. How much easier it was for my generation to have faith, when we were living with the fulfillment of G-d's promise.

By now I realized that Israel had become a Nation of the Book in the desert wilderness, that the law did not grow out of the Nation, the Nation grew out of the law and for the law. That is how the Jewish People could remain a Nation without a land for so long.

My husband and I had questioned many people about Israel to see if today's Israel was growing according to the Torah in answer of the prophecies. We learned that Israel consisted of many differing ideologies—some socialist atheists, or at least non-observant Jews people who had given up waiting for G-d to bring them home to their land and decided to do it without His help (as if there was such a thing). Some were angry over the Holocaust and confused with questions of how could a Merciful G-d allow it to happen. We also learned that Israel was quick to pick up on all the fads of America, not all of which was healthy for the society. There were also religious communities and numerous political parties reflecting various ideologies. We began to realize that now was the time for all concerned faithful to go to Israel and try to build her up to be a "Light unto the nations," as Isaiah had prophesied.

If Israel did not evolve this time into a Holy Nation, not just a Jewish Nation, we would be vomited out again, as we had been twice before. Only the first exile lasted just 70 years. This second exile had been a long and horrible 2,000 years!

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It would be terrible if we blew this opportunity. HaShem never told us that we should be Jewish; He said, "Thou shalt be Holy, for I the L-rd y our G-d am Holy."



**Reuven & Sara on their Arabian Horses at Kedma` Photo by Rubinger,
Time Magazine 1973**



*Reuven at Kedma on Akabar, our stallion from King Hussein's Royal Stable
Photo by Rubinger - Time Magazine*

That's what being a Jew really means, only so many Jews are born and ~~raised~~ not having a knowledge of that. They are not aware of their importance in the Great Scheme of Life.

Even though Bob was now working as a fund-raiser for the Jewish Agency, there were those in the office who objected to him wearing a yarmulke in the office. So we already knew that there was a large dichotomy here. We began to prepare to go to Israel in hopes that in some small way we could be influential in helping the new Israel to be Holy and "love every minute of it," as Maxwell Smart of the "Get Smart" TV Show used to say.

We applied to the Jewish Agency for boat tickets for our family and also applied for our American Passports. It was, however, May of 1967, which some may remember as a time when all the Arab Nations surrounded Israel with their armies and vowed to drive every Jew into the sea, rape their women and kill their little ones. The Arab Navy closed the Straits of Tiran in the Red Sea, the United Nations sat on their hands, debating what to do every day for two months, but doing nothing. Things looked disastrous for poor Israel, and I wondered why nobody in the world government body was doing anything to help. Our American Passports came back stamped "Void in Sudan, Egypt, **Israel**, Jordan, Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia." So, the ship left without us.

I had been having trouble breathing after my near fatal bout with pneumonia, so Bob sent me to the Catskills to rest and get some fresh air, take sauna baths, finish some oil paintings I was working on and swim a little. I wanted to get my strength back so that the challenges of being in a new country wouldn't tax me. It was during my stay at the hotel that I realized that I was once again pregnant. Although I wasn't in the best of health, I was very happy, as I had had a miscarriage two years before. We had been praying for a little girl, and we were both very saddened when I lost the baby. I decided to tell Bob when he came to visit that weekend with our two sons. He was concerned for my health, but we were very happy and looking forward to having a first generation Israeli baby in the family.

Everyone in the hotel was sitting around "oy va'voying " about the doom that was going to happen to poor Israel. They were convinced that this was the end! The Egyptians closed the Straits of Tiran to Israel and told the UN Troops in the Sinai (who were there to protect Israel from Egypt) to get out! So they left. The Arabs surrounded Israel on every side and broadcast every day for at least a

month that they were going to drive every Jew into the Sea, rape, kill and destroy every Jew; while the UN sat on their hands and did ***nothing!*** Someone said that Israel was surrounded by so many Arabs that all they had to do was ***spit*** on Israel and they could drown them. Bob told them not to worry. He said, "Not only will Israel win this war, but *they will get back all of Jerusalem.*" Bob was always amazing me with his ability of precognition, but this was hard for even me to believe. Everyone else also said it would never happen. Israel was doomed! Bob said to them all, "If this comes to pass, then will you believe that G-d will never again abandon us to the Nations?" They all said if this happened they would certainly believe.

The day the war started, I had to take my youngest son Joseph to the pediatrician. Everywhere there were radios constantly broadcasting the news of the war in Israel. I wish I could tell you that my faith sustained me, but my legs were shaking uncontrollably. It was embarrassing, as I sat in the pediatrician's waiting room. However, it soon became clear that Bob's prophecies were coming true! Israel finished off five Arab Nations in only Six Days! And we won back all of Jerusalem, just as Bob predicted! We regained the Tomb of the Patriarchs (Machpela) in Hebron, where Abraham, Sara, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, Leah, and Adam and Eve are buried. All the Arabs had run away, and we had the Temple Mount, the Western Wall (Wailing Wall) of the Temple of Solomon where the Arabs had forbidden us to pray since 1948. All of Israel was ours again! It was time for the rebuilding of our Holy Temple. G-d had given us an unbelievable miracle and an unexpected victory in only six days.

However, the government of Israel at that time wanted to prove to the world that we Jews aren't like the Arabs and the Christians who forbade us to worship freely, that Jews believe in freedom of religion. The Temple we had prayed for G-d to return to us so that we could worship Him as we had before the Exile, was handed over to the Arabs by a Jewish General who was an atheist. So even though they had just tried to murder all of us, had not permitted us religious freedom, had pissed on our holy tombstones from the Mt. of Olives, using them to pave their latrines, we invited them all back, gave them back the Temple Mount (where they forbid us to pray), the Tomb of the Patriarchs, where our forefathers and mothers were buried, and threw G-d's gift back in His face. We have been paying for this with our blood, our lives and tears ever since. Now we are being forced to give all this land back to the losers, who still preach "Jihad" (Holy War)

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against us, an act unequaled in the history of Nations. It appears that not enough of us are ready for the Redemption, so it was delayed again.

However, Bob and I were still politically naive' at that time and just happy that Israel wasn't wiped out as the Arabs had threatened. We were happy that there was still an Israel for us to go to. When the American State Department allowed Americans to go to Israel, we packed up our things and boarded the Queen Anna Maria with our two sons and one "in the basket" on August 10, 1967 to begin our new life in the Holyland. But that will be another story.....



TAKEN ONBOARD
"Queen Anna Maria"

**Arrival in Israel August 1967. Yehoshua 2 yrs.
Reuven behind me, Pinchas 3 1/2 yrs. & me, 4 1/2
Months pregnant with daughter.**

Chapter Thirty-One

WHO GETS THE CREDIT?

Many people ask us WHO brought us back to Torah. We say, "King Solomon and his wonderful writings." They say, "Well, yes, but which Rabbi?" "Moshe Rabbenu." we reply. They ask again, "Are you Chasidim or Agudat Yisrael or Mizrachi?" We answer, "We're all of that; we feel as though we're at a banquet, and a feast of many different tidbits were laid out to taste. We sample and enjoy many different customs that our Family has brought back with them to the Holyland. We are Observant Jews, part of the Family of Israel" Then they ask, "But who inspired you to become observant?" The real answer is that G-d gets all the credit. We asked Him for Wisdom, which is one of His names, and then, having been invited into our lives, He began the "tikun" (correction) we needed.

You must have heard the old proverb, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears." HaShem's angels took human form, and there were so many who helped us through the process. I would like to thank them all sincerely, especially Rabbi David Hollander, who went against his own stated philosophy and came up to me in his synagogue instead of shunning me, and told me I wasn't a Jew. I could have remained ignorant of this fact for many more years, and my whole family would have been impoverished of Torah wisdom for however much longer! How good it would have been if I'd learned even earlier. My husband was so assimilated that when Rabbi Hollander told us after Friday night services that he had arranged an appointment with Rabbi Maurice Lamm to speak with me on Tuesday night in his office, my husband took a pen out of his jacket and started to write down the information. Rabbi Hollander's eyes nearly popped out, as he excitedly told Bob NOT TO WRITE ANYTHING DOWN ON SHABBAT! (We were so uneducated!) And yet, again, he went against his own policy not to include intermarried families in their Holidays, and honored us in the springtime to be guests at his own Passover Seder with our two little sons. His lovingkindness to include my family at his own Seder table changed our lives.

Rabbi Maurice Lamm and his lovely Rebbetzin Shirley Lamm taught me for a year and a half. Later, in Israel, Rabbi Schlessinger, Tanny Tannenbaum and all the members of Kibbutz Sha'alavim enveloped us with the sweet ways of living a real Torah communal life. These were all acts of lovingkindness - not of

“shunning.” As a result of the first act of kindness, the circle began to spread, like a drop of water will make many larger ripples. Through their assistance in helping my assimilated husband and myself to learn Torah, we then went on to Israel and taught hundreds of spiritually thirsty souls how to know and love their Creator, and to use their “spiritual strength” to get more out of life. These people had no “substance” in their lives, just a lot of “substance abuse.” A Torah life-style gave them purpose, direction, courage, and hope, so many of the inner resources that our spiritual strengths turn on in our characters. And as these hundreds of people married and raised their children, the outer circle of ripples increased ever more....

Can you see the IMPACT of that one small act of kindness? There were also difficulties and disappointments in people's attitudes. We met saints and sinners. We even met a few devils. But looking at people to find out what is a Jew is may not always inspire you. If you want inspiration, READ THE BOOKS. You will always find your hypocrites, but this should not be your excuse to shun looking into the wisdom of your noble forefathers. My husband says to people who look at one who may be wearing a religious costume, but is acting like a jerk, “Yes, I see why that might turn you off from liking this person, but just imagine what this person might be if he DIDN'T have any Torah? A character like this with NONE of the restraints that Torah teaches you could be a REAL MONSTER!” A good observation, I think....And you may also find “Esau in Jacob's clothing,” those who put on the garb of the religious only to rob you of your property and your trust. After all, Jacob put on Esau's clothing to fool his father Isaac, and what goes around comes around, measure for measure, “midda k'neged midda.” The fact remains that your own relationship with your Creator will be sweet, as the wisdom that drops like honey from the Torah He gave to us through Moses makes your life sweeter and sweeter. People may disappoint you; G-d never will.

For a potential convert to learn the way to become a Jew can be, and should (to a certain extent) be difficult. You need to prove your devotion to Torah tenets before a rabbi takes you seriously. Converting to Judaism because one is married to a Jew is not a reason to convert. If one is trying to unify one's family, there is no better way than to be unified in G-d, so I'm not saying don't consider it. For the wisdom gained therein can only help you whether you convert or not. There really is no word for “religion” in Hebrew. The word used is “da'at,” meaning “knowledge.” One can use the knowledge as a Noachide or a Jew. But what may

happen in your case, as it did in mine, is that you could be an inspiration to your spouse to look into the wisdom of their forefathers and bring them back to the Covenant which is incumbent upon their soul. Our forefathers gave their children as guarantors in order to get the Torah at Mount Sinai, so Jews are covenanted for eternity. If you do have a “Yiddisher neshama,” and you bring your spouse and your children to an awareness of the wisdom and happiness that dwells in a Torah life-style, you and your family will be content and unified, and you will not raise your children for a disaster. You will have saved not only the soul of your Jewish spouse, but also the generations that proceed from you. The sages teach that to save one soul is as if one has saved an entire world.

Jews have a tradition that **everyone** who observes the seven humane Noachide laws has a place in Heaven. G-d gave the Heavenly gift of Torah to our ancestors at Mount Sinai only after we offered up a guarantor that G-d would accept in return for the treasure of the Holy Torah. We offered up the deeds of our holy forefathers and mothers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sara, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, but for various reasons these were not acceptable as guarantors. What G-d finally did accept as the guarantors were **our children**. So that the soul of every child born of a Jewish mother has been covenanted since the giving of the Torah 3,300 years ago. This obligates every Jewish child and adult to observe many, many hundreds of times more commandments in order to inherit the next world. Being a Jew is a mission, a special love affair, a separate and holy existence of priesthood. By our example of pure, honest devotion to the Laws of the Lord of the Universe, we are supposed to inspire the peoples of the other nations who will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people, for what great nation is there that hath G-d so nigh unto them, as the L-rd our G-d is whensoever we call upon Him? And what great nation is there that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law.....(Deuteronomy IV;7-8) In this way we bring about the Unity and Peace that our One Father desired, to civilize this planet and use its gracious bounty for a blessing for all mankind.

We all are extremely aware in this age that our **spiritual evolution** is lagging far behind our **scientific evolution**. Without the moral unity that is needed to keep diabolical minds from turning new technology into newer ways to kill us, ruin the ecology and life as we know it on this planet, we leave a frightening world to our children. At the same time we are entering into quantum science, we have forbidden the mention of G-d or any quote from scripture to be mentioned at

school or any government functions in our desire to separate church from state. Our schools offer our children condoms, but they don't teach the children how to love. The morals and ethics that are needed to balance technology and "civilization" were thrown out of school in America when prayer was forbidden. The arguments about "which religion's prayers were acceptable to all" were a reason to throw out G-d altogether, not to pray at all, not to be aware of moral, respectful behavior. At that moment, in my opinion we robbed our children of the entire purpose of their education! To remove G-d from the educational system is absurd, because it is G-d who made it all, knows all, is the source of ALL KNOWLEDGE, ***which is what we are supposed to send them to school to get.***

Yes, we need to be careful not to press "religion" in the school system; but G-d belongs to us all, created us all, and people of all religions only live and breath because of the Creator's Mercy. Keeping this sense of honor and nobility in schools molds our youth and affects the school society, their respect for teachers and for learning, and affects their business and family decisions when they leave school. Since G-d was thrown out of school, the rates of violence, vandalism, murder, teenage pregnancy, truancy, drug abuse and high school drop-out has soared, while the educational level has plummeted, despite great increases in expenditures. Yes, we must be careful not to impress a particular "religion" into the children's minds, but "values education" is extremely necessary to inculcate into the curriculum in order to reduce the chaos that has become the campus norm. Who can learn in such chaos, anyway?

What are we here for, anyway? Isn't it ***important*** to instill in the young minds of those who will inherit our earth, what the purpose of life is all about? It's not about hedonism, for every hedonistic society we read about through history is destroyed. We must learn from history and anthropology (the study of a people's culture) how each extinct society began to go downhill until it was extinct by reason of its society's totally hedonistic behavior; and more important, we must learn from Torah. The People of the Book are still around, while most of the other "civilizations" are extinct. And that's what it's all about. There is no other time in the history of the world as we know it when it has been of such utmost importance for every Jew to become aware of his/her special mission to be a moral, ethical, loving, honorable, holy example of what our Heavenly Father wants of us. The more we know and observe, the closer we will bring about the Messianic era of peace that we all crave, the more we will push away the dreadful consequences of

what a mess we can make of all the wonderful toys our Heavenly Father has given to us to play with.

Chapter Thirty-Two

HOW CAN WE TURN THE TIDE OF ASSIMILATION?

We have just been given a statistic of assimilation and intermarriage of American Jews, which is causing much consternation among all of us who care about our Jewish Family. It hit 52% in 1992. In a recent symposium on Intermarriage, Assimilation and Conversion composed of prominent Orthodox leaders and thinkers held in December 1995 it was noted that intermarriage among Jews under age 30 is above 70%! Many Rabbinical groups are meeting to discuss whether we should “rethink” our custom of “shunning” assimilated Jews and their non-Jewish spouses, not including them in minyons, simchas, holidays. Some rabbinical leaders feel that we should hold to the tradition of shunning, because if we don’t the errant Jew may well feel no pain of rejection from the family and community. There would be no deterrent, for one would be treated in the usual manner, which might be misconstrued as approval. They feel that being very strict about this has kept us a unified people over millennia. This is a fact to be seriously considered. Others argue that we just don’t have that many Jews left in the world since the Holocaust. **A loss of over half of our population is a loss of even more than Hitler murdered.**

So some of our leaders want to devise a plan to try to save at least some of our assimilated brethren. THEY DON’T WANT TO LOSE ANY MORE OF US, THIS TIME IN A “SPIRITUAL HOLOCAUST.”

We all complain that everyone looked away during the European Holocaust, that they knew what was happening, but didn’t do enough to stop it. Let us not make a similar mistake! Let us say “Never Again” and mean it. O.K.? So, I propose, for the purpose of discussion, a Torah solution. “V’ahavta et ra’echa komocha.” “And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Leviticus 19:18) “Ethics of the Fathers” teaches us that the World stands on Three Pillars: Torah, Worship and Lovingkindness. The Second Temple, they say, was destroyed because even though there was Torah and Worship, there was not enough Lovingkindness; there was “causeless hatred.” They say it will only be rebuilt

through “causeless love.” Since we are taught that in the merit of showing “causeless love” we will bring about the rebuilding of the Third Temple and the Messiah will come, it seems that this is a very powerful mitzvah. I suggest that we view our Family as, “Those who were kidnapped and know nothing of their heritage, and they are consequently not held responsible for their behavior.” Our people have been wandering all over this globe for nearly 2,000 years, picking up the customs of the nations wherein we wandered. So many get lost just through circumstance, not on purpose. It is a miracle, anyway, that there are any that have continuously lived in The Book, without the comfort of their own Nation for millennia. No other nation has survived these conditions but the House of Israel. Consider the Russian Jews who were forbidden for 70 years to observe their religion, where even learning the Hebrew language could put them into the “gulag.” We don’t shun them. There is a big movement involved in reaching out to our Russian family to show them the beauty of our Jewish faith. We don’t know these Russian Jews, but we are extending them “causeless love,” taking them into the Holy Land, housing them, educating them in Hebrew and the traditions of our holy forefathers. In this merit, may the Merciful One send us our Redeemer! Amen!

I was discussing this issue with my son Frederick some years ago when he was 28 years old, and with my husband, and eliciting their opinions. As I queried them, my husband Rebbe Reuven (Bob) expounded on how, according to the Midrash, 80% of our people died in the 3 days of darkness during the plagues of Egypt. They were also assimilated, without faith in the promises of the Creator to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So the Angel of Death took them. The reason this plague lasted three days was so the Jews, who could see, could bury their dead out of sight and not embarrass our Family of Israel that so many of us had died as “faithless ones.” Only a “remnant” remained, which are the prophecies of all of the Prophets. My husband reminded me of another of our experiences in our long history; that only 42,000 of our people came back to Jerusalem with Ezra and Nechemia after the Babylonian Exile, and even THEY had intermarried during their 70 year exile. They obeyed the ruling made by Ezra and Nechemia to divorce their gentile spouses and devote themselves totally to the task of rebuilding the Second Temple. Again, only a “remnant.” The rest were more comfortable with the life they had built in the Diaspora. Only a “remnant” went to modern day Israel to build her in this time now that the Third Temple period has arrived. There are more Jews in America than there are in the

whole State of Israel. My husband reasoned that from previous long history of our people, it appeared that maybe that's just how percentages go; maybe we just have to expect and accept this fact and not worry over the 52% (plus) intermarriage rate. Usually, only 20% of our people were the surviving remnant in past history anyway.

My son Pinchus (Frederick) then reasoned that perhaps this was G-d's way of finding who was truly a **devoted Jew**, separating the "men from the boys" as the expression goes. I gently chided my son for not perceiving that "there but for the grace of G-d he, himself, could be." I said, "Look back just 4 generations in your own family history. Your father's Bubba, of blessed memory, was totally observant Jewess, who married only Torah Scholars (she outlived 3 husbands), but your grandmother was the only daughter who kept kosher so that her mother would eat in her house. Her other daughters and sons were not as observant as their parents were. Even though your grandmother was observant, lighting Shabbat candles, keeping kosher, her husband was a military man, an American patriot, a wonderful and loving husband and father. But his two sons didn't go to yeshiva. Who could afford it during the Depression years? His two sons were proud to be Jewish AND proud to be American. They helped their Mama to kosher the house diligently for Passover, retaining happy memories of the hustle and bustle, the anticipation and excitement of the Passover Seder. But they didn't always eat kosher outside their home. Now, I reminded my son, your father's first wife was a Jewish girl, but this girl **and** her family were assimilated. She didn't keep a kosher home for her husband, nor inspire any spiritual atmosphere in her home. All that she felt about Judaism was what most assimilated, uneducated Jews feel; that it's damned inconvenient and old-fashioned. So, after ten years of marriage your father divorces his Jewish wife, she marries a **gentile** man and takes your father's two unhappy daughters to Las Vegas. Your father goes to Las Vegas to comfort his daughters, and there he meets a "shiksa" dancer in the Follies Bergere. After a year's whirlwind romance he decides to marry her.

Would you believe that this "shiksa" dancer would have made a rabbi and a righteous man out of this assimilated Hellenized American Jew, your father? You can thank G-d that I was on a serious search for truth and understanding of G-d, or you wouldn't be sitting here with a "cipa" on your head. What were the percentages of that? Can you see what happened in your own family over just 4

generations that caused the downslide of Torah education and observance in America? **Nobody in your Jewish family deliberately set out to destroy their Jewishness. It was not a malicious plot.** Just because you see a mother in front of you whom you know to now be a Jewess, and you *have* the gift of Torah that HaShem in His Mercy gave to the Children of Israel, don't think that you would even BE A JEW if certain factors didn't intervene!"

I understand what my son was referring to when he spoke of G-d proving which of His People were truly devoted. There is a quote from the Prophets that in the End of Days G-d will go through His People with a "sifter," and only the "whole ones" would remain in the sifter. The rest would be as "chaff in the wind." Those who are assimilated would not be "whole," as they are spiritually emaciated and would, therefore, slide right out of that sifter. Certainly, insincere converts, who don't even realize what they were supposed to be obligating their Souls to, wouldn't be "whole" (wholeheartedly devoted to holiness). I have met converts of every sort over the 37 years I have been an Observant Jewess. Unfortunately, in my experience I found only a small minority of sincere and educated converts, especially among couples where the spouse converted only for the sake of marrying a Jew. This is why rabbis, in their wisdom and according to tradition, discourage would-be converts. They push them away to see if they are interested enough to come back and learn what it **really means to be a Jew**. Do these would-be converts know that by converting to Judaism it becomes incumbent upon their soul to do 613 commandments instead of the 7 Noachide Laws in order to inherit the World to Come? Are they converting for G-d's sake out of love of the Holy One and the wisdom contained in the Torah? Judaism isn't a Social Club that you join; to be a Jew means to "be holy, for I the L-rd your G-d am Holy." (Leviticus 19;2) It's a **mission**, contracted between G-d and the Children of Israel 3,300 years ago at Mount Sinai, with their children offered as guarantors in exchange for the GIFT OF TORAH. No other nation was asked to do this, and no other nation accepted this very dedicated life concerned with being "holy." That other religions have been inspired to take upon themselves the Ten Commandments and civil and social laws contained in the Torah is very commendable and is, incidentally very healthy for their society.

It hasn't been easy or popular to be a Jew throughout the millennia of Jewish History, as my own brother told me when I announced to him that I was marrying a

Jew, “Do you realize what you will be doing to your children? People will hate them and keep them out of certain jobs and opportunities! Why would you want to put all this hardship upon your own children?” So why would someone want to put all this complication into his or her life? And the Observant Jews say, “Hey, we’ve already got enough Jews who don’t obey the Commandments! Why should we invite a gentile in to also flaunt in society’s face that Jews are not faithful to their G-d and their own religion? And on a metaphysical level, it’s a serious offense for a rabbi to accept a convert, thus obligating this person’s soul to these many commandments, knowing or suspecting that this person has no serious intention of living a holy, Jewish life. This weighs heavily on the rabbi’s sense of responsibility, as well as causing serious implications for both the rabbi and the convert in the World to Come.

On the other hand, if a person is interested in learning and observing, they will enter into a world of beauty, inspiration, sanctification, satisfaction and tranquility of soul, and love that is the constant connection of one who lives with the Most High. It has given me and my family great joy and I highly recommend it!

As I have already written, when we are not ghetto-ized, when we are free to participate in society, we do! America has been a country that has graciously allowed the Jews to participate more freely in their country. It is only natural that we have assimilated. I know. How else could my Jewish husband end up married to a Follies Bergere “shiksa” dancer? Thank G-d, in this case it worked out all right. But I can tell you that in my own case, if my own mother-in-law, G-d rest her soul, had shunned me instead of bringing me under the wings of the Holy Spirit and teaching me to light the Shabbat candles, I would not have understood the reasons for her rejection. I would have been hurt; I would have missed out on all the wisdom and love she taught me in the short year we spent together before cancer took her from us. I wouldn’t have continued to search in authentic Judaism for the reasons why my dear mother-in-law, Fayga Malka, had gained so much wisdom and possessed such fine qualities that one would aspire to be like her. Thank G-d she didn’t shun me!

Although there is a commandment to “rebuke your neighbor” if you see behavior in a family member or friend that needs correction, the sages teach us that a rebuke without kindness will fail to have a good affect. Lovingkindness is the pillar that needs to be shored up in order to restore an unstable, wobbly world

to a balanced center. A stool cannot stand on two legs; there must be three. The three Pillars that the world stands on we know are Torah, Worship and Lovingkindness. We have Torah and we have Worship, but is there enough Lovingkindness? There are endless quotes, laws and prophecies supporting the importance of lovingkindness. Orthodox Jews do shun intermarried couples. Couple this with the fact that Jews do NOT proselytize (they very strongly discourage conversion, with good reason which I have explained). Compound it even more with the fact that the assimilated Jew and their spouse don't know anything about real Judaism in order to evaluate it intelligently. Further complicate the situation with the fact that when people **SHUN YOU** it doesn't exactly promote love and understanding and a desire to be together. It causes great pain, anger, humiliation, disappointment, rejection trauma and disunity in many families.

So how do you get around all the pain and misconceptions caused by this VERY REAL PROBLEM that is happening to more than half of our people? **Where do you think we will find one another?** If we shun the assimilated and intermarried when they do come to an Orthodox minyon, and the Orthodox refuses to be involved in a conversion "co-council" with the Reform and Conservative movement, how will the serious candidates make an EDUCATED decision to become involved in a Torah lifestyle? How will they learn what Torah Judaism is all about? Certainly the Reform and Conservative will not educate them in all the mitzvot. This is not an easy answer, and I would never be so bold as to tell such an ancient and wise race to abandon former traditions. However, it seems to me that if an assimilated Jew is feeling enough of a hunger to learn of his/her heritage by coming to pray in an **orthodox synagogue**, we should be an example of lovingkindness to that person. We should welcome them to the opportunity to learn and show them the beauty of a real Shabbat festive family atmosphere. If that person then begins to desire to return to their tradition they will share our Torah's beauty with their spouse. If their gentile spouse rejects these tenets, the Jewish partner may realize that this spouse is not really their soulmate; he or she may opt to come closer to their holy inheritance and drop out of a relationship that is empty of shared values. I have seen this happen. If, however, their spouse is drawn to the beauty of the light of Torah, that spouse may be a "Yiddisher neshama" (Jewish soul), and become a righteous convert, thereby unifying their family and removing them from the statistics of the death of over half of the Family of Israel. Either way, it's a "win-win" situation. We are commanded, incidentally,

to “be a light unto the Nations,” and we are barely a light unto ourselves. On the other hand, if we shun the intermarried and assimilated who do step forward to see what Judaism is all about, it only natural that **they will not step forward again!** This is definitely a losing situation—NOT a “win-win.!”

As I mentioned before, I am only putting forth a proposal for discussion, as I would not dare to be so bold as to tell the ancient faith that I have adopted to do something harmful to Judaism. But I am a convert who married an assimilated Jew. I went through all the doors. My husband and I **experienced** all that those who may be trying to get their foot in the door are experiencing today. So my suggestions are based on the experiences of a family that ignored all the slights and hurts, who kept their minds and spirits in a framework that focused on learning about the G-d of Israel, not the People of Israel, who very often hurt our feelings and our children’s feelings. Those who are more timid than my family are more delicate, and I don’t believe they should be judged and condemned to ignorance because of shunning.

Centers should be formed by Orthodox volunteers or staff specifically to encourage assimilation and intermarried Jews to learn the beauty of the UN-EDITED RENDITION OF JUDAISM. Everyone is out there on the street trying to entice our holy ones into their own philosophy. The Jews for Jesus “**love-bomb**” them. **And it works!**

Everyone is searching for love and acceptance. So “causeless love” is what our lost ones need. If it also happens to result in the bringing of Messiah and the rebuilding of the Third Temple, **why should we complain?**

We should not ask ourselves, “How do I know if they are deserving of my help?” We should rather say, “I don’t know anything about this person that should inspire me to help him/her, so the help that I will give will be out of “perfect causeless love!” HaShem has commanded us to love one another, and the Pillar of the World is shaky because the Pillar of Lovingkindness needs shoring up. So this must be what He wants us to do—acts of lovingkindness. It is said that those who have no kindness in their hearts cannot really be of the seed of Abraham our forefather, who was a prime example of hospitality and kindness. In this way he taught thousands of idol worshipers about the One G-d.

How To Bring Heaven To Earth; From Las Vegas To Jerusalem

I know from experience that love is a healer, for my husband and I established a residential healing center in Israel for the “lost ones” in the Family of Israel. They were suffering from drug abuse, chronic psychiatric illnesses, family breakdown and broken spirits. They were told when they arrived that their job was to welcome and help the person who comes tomorrow, for they are already “one day better.” And they tried to do that. The result was that people came to Mishpachat Yisrael at Kedma from all walks of life, from every level of society, to experience the beauty, love and tranquility that was the atmosphere there. They were greeted and served food and hospitality by people who could formerly not function socially with family or society. I don’t know many **mental hospitals** where people go to find happiness, tranquility and peace on their day off. What they find there are unhappy, drugged, frustrated people who don’t communicate love and tranquility. At our Center, ***in every instance*** the guiding principles of love that the Rofey Kol Basar (Healer of All Flesh) has taught us healed these suffering souls. The psychiatrists who took an interest in our work went so far as to call our new (ancient) techniques “Soul Therapy.” So I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Love will heal the Family of Israel.



A regular work day at Kedma, ceramics, learning Torah, weddings, caring for livestock and singing.

How To Bring Heaven To Earth; From Las Vegas To Jerusalem

*So many young people come to Israel to search for the answers to universal peace. The answers, as old as time, as pure as the Creator, are in the Torah. We show them the Torah, we show them Life, and give the broken a reason to live. The future is already written. We need merely fill in the middle....acts of loving kindness, service to our fellow-man, the daily work of our hands, physical strengthening of our bodies and **practice** of the Torah, and endless Faith in the Eternal.*

"I will seek the Lost One, and that which has been Cast Out, I will bring back, and the Broken One I will Cure." (Ezekiel xxxiv)



You shall not murder
You shall not commit adultery
You shall not steal
You shall not bear false witness
You shall not covet thy neighbor's belongings

I am the Lord. Thy God
Thou shalt have no other God's beside me
You shall not utter the name of God in vain
Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy
Honor your father and your mother

A SOUND CODE FOR PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR IS A SURE
FOUNDATION FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING



**Sara with daughter Heftzi-ba
2yrs. old.**

BROCHURE OF MISHPACHAT YISRAEL-KEDMA

MISHPACHAT YISRAEL-KEDMA (Family of Israel)

D.N. Lachish Tzafon

Israel

LOST YOUTH – FOUND CURE TORAH THERAPY

Dear Friend,

Drugs are available everywhere. The new generation lives so fast and dies so young, old before their time, derelicts at 17. How tragic...

This generation has inherited a world of uncertainty, a planet capable of destroying itself at the push of a button. Consequently, youth are beginning to identify as "earth people" in a Universal sense, rather than citizens of different countries, or of the Jewish race. They seek the answers to international peace as well as "inner peace", so that there may be a world and a future instead of atomic and inner chaos. They try drugs, free love – all the aids to gratify the body and free the mind. But what about the Soul? Everyone cries for "women's liberation!" So what about her – poor Soul, struggling quietly to complete her mission of reminding all mankind of the Divinity within him. A Jew's mission! The covenant of our Ancient People.

There is one dedicated community in Israel whose sole mission is to help those youth who have sought and are seeking the answers to the Universe. This community is MISHPACHAT YISRAEL (Family of Israel), at Kedma, an abandoned kibbutz in the northern Negev. We help the broken ones as well as strengthen those whose mission is to bring peace, understanding and lovingkindness to the world.

MISHPACHAT YISRAEL has patched up the scores of young people and given them hope, even while patching up the abandoned and broken-down kibbutz, Kedma. When we opened our doors in January, 1971, the youth learned Torah by candlelight, huddled together against the cold, for there were no windows left, no electricity, we carried water in buckets from the fields a kilometer away. We slept on the floors for 2 months. They cleared the shoulders-high weeds by hand, repainted the repairable buildings and tore down the ones that were irreparable for usable lumber and bricks. Furniture is still scarce, apart from beds and chairs. We need closets, tables, lamps. A tractor and truck are a must!

The cost is small when compared to the cost of the broken hearts of parents, and the waste of young lives on drugs or in hospitals or graves for lack of direction or motivation. But cost, it does. The budget for food, lodging, materials, tools, teachers, books, holy articles, medical insurance, etc., is IL4,000.00 (\$1,000) per person a year, or about \$50,000 a year for 50 people. Besides this expense is the one of rebuilding and equipping a new place. Won't you send a check today? Help us fight for the lives of our generation! Help us fight for Israel's future! Help us to protect the lives of our children and Share with us the emotional and financial responsibility which is necessary to rehabilitate, re-educate and relocate our youth in a positive environment in Israel. Give generously!

MISHPACHAT YISRAEL
Rechoc Slav 2, Yad Benyamin,
P. O. B. 549, Israel
c/o Reuven & Sara Mandell

A
nd

Peace & blessings,
Reuven & Sara Mandell, Directors

Sadly, our Center was destroyed by anti-religious political power, but is still a Center for troubled youth (without mezuzas). Our work has gone on in California, Kentucky, Tennessee, New York and Israel. Your donations are sincerely appreciated.

CHOSEN FOR WHAT?

What were we “chosen” for? Is it a privilege or a duty? The answer: Both. “And thou shalt be for me a holy nation and a kingdom of priests.” (Exodus 19;6) No other people in the world but the children of Abraham are obligated to be “holy.” The Almighty never commanded the nations even to do the Ten Commandments. G-d didn’t take them out of Egypt to be His holy people, as is written in Exodus 20;2, “I am the L-rd thy G-d, Who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” Only the Children of Israel were rescued thus, shown numerous miracles, spoken to directly by the Almighty and covenanted to be an example of G-d’s Holy Law to the Nations. By using the wonderful laws of legal and social justice that we follow in the Torah, we demonstrate the harmonious alance that can be achieved in the societies of other nations, as it is written in Deuteronomy IV;6-8 “...for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that, when they hear all these statutes, shall say: ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people,’ For what great nation is there, that hath G-d so nigh unto them, as the L-rd our G-d is whensoever we call upon Him? And what great nation is there that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?”

These statutes and ordinances so impressed the forefathers of America that they framed the Constitution of the United States from the statutes of our Holy Bible, thus forming one of the greatest, most freedom-loving societies in the history of nations. It would be wonderful if the modern State of Israel adopted these same laws today, but, sadly, Israel has no Constitution and is not a real democracy. Its political system is a mess that needs serious restructuring. Unfortunately, the majority of Israelis have never lived in a democracy and don’t know what it really is. Since the government **says** it’s a democracy, people believe this to be true, but it’s just a word, not a reality as yet. Even so, Israeli society reflects the blessings that G-d bestows on those who endeavor to bestow the grace that they receive upon others. When mankind achieves a true understanding of the affect of his actions on the universe, he will learn to flow with the universe toward a principle of using this understanding to benefit mankind instead of destroying it. The mission of the Jewish people is to demonstrate and influence mankind toward this understanding. One of the most important missions

of our “choseness” is to come to Israel and build her into the kind of Nation that The G-d of Israel has commanded us in His Torah.

Israel is a tiny nation of people, composed of Jewish refugees from all over the planet. When the first Zionist pioneers came over from Eastern Europe in the late 19th Century and the early 20th Century, Israel was a barren wasteland, as G-d had prophesied when we were exiled so long ago. G-d said that the land would never bloom for any other people than His beloved Children of Israel, that any other people would reap thorns and thistles for their labor on that land. That was so for two thousand years. Israel is now a Garden of Eden. Although the early pioneers fought malaria in swampland, and desert heat in Israel's arid wastelands, now she is again a land of milk and honey. Despite the drain of constant security problems, constant war and terrorism, high taxes for defense and for settling refugees, Israel feeds herself totally without any need for importing food. Indeed, she is a source of innovative agricultural inventions in the field of growing successful yields where nothing would grow before, and Israel sends her experts to help other arid countries learn to produce food using her discoveries. Israel is responsible for producing geniuses in every field imaginable, for we are now entering an age where G-d is revealing all the secrets of the Universe.

Quantum physics is opening doors in science that some are frightened of; perhaps a Pandora's Box full of doom and destruction, or a world without illness and early death. In a world whose scientific knowledge is growing far ahead of its spiritual, moral, ethical level, we could be heading straight for the Apocalypse. Or, as the Kabbalists say, we can change it all into a happy ending by the sheer metaphysical force produced by our thoughts, prayers and deeds.

I recently read in a commentary written by Rabbi Dr. Marcus Lehmann on the Passover Hagadah that the enslavement of the Children of Israel was not a punishment for selling Joseph into slavery, but a blessing, for it formed them into a cohesive nation. They had gone to Egypt at the invitation of their brother Joseph, and the Pharaoh. They were only 70 souls, they were free, and slavery wouldn't come upon them until all the sons of Jacob were dead. So surely G-d wouldn't punish the children of the perpetrators instead of the perpetrators themselves. But the slavery kept them from assimilating into the Egyptian society; it kept them separate and made them a large, variegated multitude of people. Though their forefather Abraham was promised the Land of Canaan, in his time the measure of the sins of the Canaanites had not been reached. In the time of Jacob there were

only 70 souls in his entire family. They could never have conquered that land, nor could they have occupied it. There were not enough people yet to fill the land. So what some may see as a curse may really be a blessing. The enslavement of the Children of Israel certainly kept them from assimilating into the debaucheries of Egyptian society. Had they been free they would not have remained a cohesive Nation in a strange land.

The miracles that G-d performed for the Redemption of an enslaved people were also necessary in order to plant the recognition of G-d in the hearts of the descendants of Jacob. But the main purpose of the Redemption was to give the Israelites the great gift of Torah, a whole people endowed with divine revelation, so that any suspicion of deception, falsification or error could be ruled out entirely. This was the great blessing. The giving of the Ten Commandments was witnessed by 600,000 men between the ages of 20 and 60, plus older men, the wives, daughters and young sons, as well as the “mixed multitude” that came out of Egypt with the Israelites. So **millions** of people witnessed this extraordinary event. This is not a religion that was begun by **one Prophet** who *claimed* to have had a G-dly revelation. These millions of people lived for 40 years in the desert with a pillar of a cloud to protect them from the intense heat during the day and a pillar of light to guide them by night. They were fed Manna from Heaven every day and given water from rocks. We have just recently seen during the Gulf War how less people than Moshe took out of Egypt escaped into the desert from Kuwait and Iraq and were dying of thirst, hunger and exposure in a **few days**. The entire World Red Cross had to mobilize a massive Rescue Mission to save them. And they didn’t get there in time to save them all. But the Children of Israel were protected under the wings of G-d. And dear, patient, modest Moshe, our Teacher, led us and taught us to be a Holy People **for 40 years** before we inherited our Holy Land.

Our Creator gave us this Manual in order for us to be a “Light unto the Nations,” and that Book is the Mother of all later religions. As a result of ***not practicing the commandments***, the Israelites were exiled to the four corners of the Earth, according to prophesy, where what the Jews believed reached people who believed in polygods like Zeus, Mars, Venus, Aphrodite, Molech and other mythical gods. These pagans now learned the Ten Commandments, honest weights and measures. Did you know that in Roman Society children were regularly murdered at the will of their fathers, who believed that since they sired

the children, the children were theirs to do what they wanted? People who believed in Molech sacrificed their infants by fire to appease Molech when luck was running bad for the family. We are taught by the Sages that everything that happens comes from G-d. So, instead of belief in all these polygods and their cruel and pagan lifestyles, more and more of the world population now has been influenced by the Holy Bible, believes in the Ten Commandments and looks forward to the Final Redemption. Even if the Early Christian Church took a long while to evolve into the morality of the Bible and continued their warlike personalities and persecutions of the Jews, there are many Christians today who pray for the welfare of Israel and the Jewish People. There is even a large group developing now who call themselves “Bnei Noah” (the children of Noah) who study religious Jewish books and who look forward to soon coming to sacrifice at the Third Temple on the Pentecost Holiday (Succoth), when we sacrifice 70 sacrifices representing all the Nations of the world. This all according to prophecy. We all hope and pray that no matter what different customs we may have adopted throughout humankind in our worship of the One Creator of the Universe and all that exists in this Universe, that we can respect each other’s devotion to the One G-d and learn to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Unfortunately, even now, there are at least 40 wars going on right now where people are killing each other because of religious differences. Most unfortunately for the Jews, one of those ongoing wars is against the Jewish State of Israel.

This is another reason for the Holy One having given this Law to the Children of Israel. It has taken the world community thousands of years to incorporate the moral and ethical message of Our Book into their civilizations and their own personalities. And there are still many brutes and despots in this world who murder, rape, steal, terrorize and make war for the sake of power and glory, riches and **G-d** (*sic*).

There are so many Jews who have no idea how important they are to the salvation and inspiration of the world to make it a better world, to really “take care of the world” and each other.

I remember one evening at our Center in Israel we were visited by a crowd of local people who were curious about what we intended to do at Kedma. I was conversing with a modest, simple woman from a moshav. She was a good-hearted woman, a pioneer of Israel who had worked hard all her life on a farm. When I spoke to her of the “mission” of the Jewish People and explained that the

whole world was aware that the birth of the new State of Israel was an answer to the prophecies they had all been waiting for. I told her that the Nations of the World were all looking to see if Israel was going to evolve into a Holy Nation that would inspire the Redemption for everyone. She looked at me with such wonder in her eyes and asked, "You mean **I** am that important in the scheme of the whole world? Me, a simple farmer woman?" I replied that she was very important because she was a Jewess. The smile on her face, the wonder and joy that I saw in that woman that evening is a moment I shall never forget. I know that from that moment on she felt a more special purpose in her life. She was important in the scheme of the **whole world**. And so is every Jew. This is what you were "chosen" for—to be a "light unto the nations."

However, the Children of Israel in all the Western World are free to assimilate. Every time we get out of the ghetto or encampments, we assimilate. That is what is happening to over half of American Jewry. What we thought was our blessing, our freedom, was really the cause of this loss. But now, again, TIME becomes an important element of what happens to our people. The TIME has arrived for the FINAL REDEMPTION. According to the rabbis the world over, the prophecies are reading like the daily newspapers.

It is TIME to go home to Israel. Our Merciful Creator has given Israel back to His People. Even though this is something we have never ceased to pray for in so many generations, we have not all gathered our belongings and left our Western comforts to go and live in Israel. HaShem has given us 53 years now to make that decision of our own volition. I believe that right now the G-d of Israel is anxious to bring about His Word, and needs us to all assemble in Eretz Yisrael. At that time He will, according to the prophecies, perform miracles greater than those in Egypt.

Already we have seen the miracle of the incredible protection of the Guardian of Israel from 42 Scud missiles, the collapse of Communism, the huge influx of Russian Jews to Israel, the swift transfer of nearly all the Ethiopian Jews to Israel, countries who formerly didn't recognize Israel or trade with her are now anxious to establish diplomatic and economic relations. So many signs of the prophecies we have already seen, including the prophecy that it will snow in the desert. Tel Aviv had two inches of snow in the winter of 1992, a first. (Of all winters, that was when my son Yehoshua was crawling around in this cold mud during his Paratrooper training!)

In 1971 my husband and I were discussing how nearly 1,000,000 Sephardic Jews were ejected from Arab lands after the establishment of modern Israel, allowed to take nothing but their toothbrush. The Arabs confiscated **100,000 square kilometers** of Jewish owned property and **over \$100 billion of Jewish assets**. We have never even asked for reparations for these Sephardic Jews. Reuven and I thought it would be such a good time for Americans to make aliya to Israel, because they were free to sell their businesses, their homes, and come to Israel with much more comfort than their Sephardic brethren had. We wondered how long G-d would wait for them to come to Israel willingly and comfortably, until He began making it too dangerous and uncomfortable to stay in the lands of the Nations. Would our Heavenly Father have to “beat our backsides” in order to shoo us out of the Diaspora and into Israel? We all see the signs now, or we *should* see them. September 11th, Bin Laden, Saddam, David Duke, Pat Buchanan, Papa Bush, Baker, George W. Bush, skinheads, KKK, pogroms in Brooklyn, Farrakhan and his anti-Semitic Nation of Islam, neo-nazism rising again in Unified Germany, Europe and in America, militant groups in the U.S. with anti-Semitic leanings, the world trying to take away the little bit of land Israel has and Iran calling for the nuclear eradication of Israel. Terrorist acts claim many lives every week in Israel. Our “Peace Partners” send their children to blow up civilians everywhere, anytime, in a new kind of **human sacrifice**. Now it isn't safe *anywhere in the world* with **jihad** being screamed from every mosque and media.

The doors of Israel may not always be open! Times like these people are afraid to go through those doors. When your country is in peril, which Israel is now, **that is the time we must pack our bags and go to Israel or we may not have a Jewish Country once more, G-d forbid!** But Psalms tells us that “when the wicked thrive like grass, it is that they may be destroyed forever.”

There is no other time in the history of the world as we know it when it has been of such **utmost importance** for every Jew to become aware of his/her special mission to be a moral, ethical, loving, honorable, holy example of what our Heavenly Father wants of us. The more we know and observe, the closer we will bring about the Messianic Era of Peace that we all crave, the more we will push away the dreadful consequences of what a mess we can make with all the wonderful toys our Heavenly Father has given us to play with.

It is, indeed, miraculous that there remains a Jewish People, because we had no nation for two millennia. The People remained a Nation without a nation by living in The Book. It is a sad fact that now that we have the Nation of Israel, most Israelis have thrown away the Book and are pursuing a mad race to be a Nation like all other Nations.

We are living witnesses to the fact that G-d's Word does not return to Him unfulfilled, as He promised to return the Children of Israel to their Promised Land from the four corners of the earth where He had scattered them. I am living in the Promised Land with most of my family right now, enjoying her delicious fruits, flowers, beaches, speaking to people in the Holy Language of the Torah, feeling the nearness of the Holy Spirit that dwells here eternally. Unfortunately, I see that there are numerous Israelis living here who were not taught the traditions of their People, or were taught that the Torah is an old, outdated book that has no relevance to modern living. They don't know their purpose in life as a Holy People. They're happy just to finally feel that they have their own place on this planet where people won't discriminate against them because they happened to be born of Jewish parents. Yes, we are witnesses to the fulfillment of the prophecy of return to the Holy Land. However, we seem to have forgotten the ***reason for the Exile!*** G-d warned us of what curses would fall upon us if we did not follow His Commandments. We didn't listen, and the curses fell upon us so horribly that it is rather amazing to me that we haven't become extremely CONSCIOUS of the cause of our suffering. We HAVE the Manual given to us at Mt. Sinai, a shortcut from trial and error. If we follow the Manual that the G-d of Israel revealed to us, we would have an end to the constant terror and war that has hounded us for the 53 years of Israel's modern existence as a Jewish State. G-d keeps His promises, whether for blessing or for curse; of that we have been witnesses for thousands of years. We are now witnesses to another of G-d's promises—that if we do not put out the enemies of Israel from our State, that what G-d thought to do to our enemies, HE WILL DO TO US! We are being diminished daily, by our precious, tiny land being given away to those who tried, and still try, promise and succeed to murder us, and officials of our present government, which wishes to make Israel the “Hongkong of the Middle East,” state that they “can't find a single reason to argue why their children shouldn't marry out of their religion.” A confused generation, indeed. It would be a shame if we were “vomited out” again for an indeterminate Exile. Maybe they should read this book and, hopefully, be inspired

to take another good look at their own Holy Book. They would find many reasons to be proud to be a purely Jewish State.

To Israel's merit, though, is something you won't find in any other country of the world. On Yom Kippur you will not see one, single car on the road. There is no radio or TV broadcast. On the evening of Yom Kippur you see hoards of people walking down the roads and highways greeting each other with wishes for a "good writing for the New Year", little children on their tricycles and bicycles and skates riding down the highways, the little ones taking furtive looks at their mothers as if to ask, "Can I really go into the street and you won't yell?" One hurtful insult in Israel is for someone (even irreligious) to say, "I have a feeling that he/she doesn't even fast on Yom Kippur." So, one can see that there is still this **one very important mitzvah** that Israel is conscious of—the Big Day when we come to G-d for forgiveness at least once in the year. I pray that we don't wear out His patience by pushing things too far, and we all come home soon to love and worship our Great Benefactor.

My fervent hope is that soon the many observant American Jews will fill Israel and be a good example of holiness, kindness and the kind of freedom and true **Jewish** democracy Jews have been privileged to have in America, a country founded upon the principles of our Holy Torah. Israel **is a Jewish State**, after all! Just about the only time the United Nations ever agreed to vote anything positive for the Jews was when they declared Israel a Jewish State in 1948.

However, it seems that we are so used to being pushed around by the world that now we accept "No Jews Allowed" signs in areas of our own inheritance, and *democracy* has become more sacred than the Torah and G-d's promise to return us to all the borders of our inheritance. Even though we suffer weekly, horrible suicide bombings and attend many funerals every week, we still think the Arabs will love us if we give, give, give. Their very **religion** teaches them to kill us, wherever we are, and everything bad in the world they blame on the Jews. If people knew what they teach the Palestinian children from below kindergarten, they would be **horrified!** Anyone taught these things would hate the Jews, and it's their very own family telling them that it's true. It is only natural to believe one's own parents. And their parents teach them from the cradle that it is the greatest "mitzvah" to be a human sacrifice and kill as many Jews as they can. That is why the Arabs, in my opinion, should be relocated to another Arab country or countries. There will never be peace in our borders with Arabs among us, and I, for one,

don't want to fear that every day any of my family leaves that they won't come back, G-d forbid. We must stand up to the world and declare our righteous inheritance of the entire Land of Israel as given to us for eternity by the Creator of the Universe, and by reason of conquering an attacking Arab Army 5 times. I understand that Israel is always held to a higher standard than the rest of the world, but these so-called "peace plans are ***absolutely ridiculous and suicidal***.

My husband wants to found a movement called ARK (Abraham's Returning Kinder). Would you care to join and help? This ARK would need to bring the whole Family of Israel back home where they are desperately needed ***at this time***. As it now stands, there are an equal amount of Jews and Arabs under the age of 14. So, as a "democracy," by the time these people are of voting age in just 4 years, the Jewish character and rights of Israel will disappear, especially since we are a docile people and the Arabs have vowed to destroy us, no matter what papers and agreements will be signed.

Most of all, the good people of the earth are waiting for the day that Jews pray every day, as is written in the Daily Prayer Book (Siddur), "We hope, therefore, L-rd our G-d, soon to behold thy majestic glory, when all the abominations shall be removed from the earth, and the false gods (tyrants) exterminated, when the world shall be perfected under the reign of the Almighty, and all mankind will call upon thy name, and all the wicked of the earth shall be turned to Thee. May all the inhabitants of the world realize and know that to Thee every knee must bend, every tongue must vow allegiance. May they bend the knee and prostrate themselves before Thee, L-rd our G-d, and give honor to thy glorious name; may they all accept the yoke of Thy kingdom, and do thou reign over them speedily forever and ever. For the kingdom is Thine, and to all eternity Thou wilt reign in glory, as it is written in Thy Torah: 'The L-rd shall be King forever and ever.' And it is said, 'The L-rd shall be King over all the earth; on that day the L-rd shall be One, and His name One.'"

The journey to understanding G-d is a lifelong growing experience with new revelations along the way, as one learns through experience and trial and error. What matters most, as the wise Rabbi Hillel told a man desiring to convert to Judaism, is "What is hurtful to you, do not do unto others. The rest is commentary. Now, go forth and learn." (Ethics of the Fathers) It is my hope that my journey towards understanding the G-d of Israel, which I have shared with you in these pages, has helped you to learn what you may not have known or understood

How To Bring Heaven To Earth; From Las Vegas To Jerusalem

about Judaism. Now, may you be inspired to experience the peace and satisfaction of incorporating this knowledge into your own and your family's life, and of looking into the books that I have mentioned to "go forth and learn."

As for my decision to convert to Judaism, I would like to say that I feel that my husband and I have benefited more with the treasure of Torah knowledge than we would have if we had stayed in America, and I had striven to be famous in theater and made millions of dollars. I'm so glad that I learned the Path to walk so that I didn't go in too many wrong directions. "Holech" (walk) is the root word for "Halacha" (Biblical law), and makes your decision-making less confusing, less stressful, more successful and blessed.

If I died tomorrow, G-d forbid, I would feel completely fulfilled, and I know that my bequeathal of a Torah life-style is best inheritance I could leave for my children. I know that a lot of the "nachat" (comfort, pleasure) I am getting from my children is only because I was lucky enough to learn from my Heavenly Father and my Torah Mother how to raise them to be holy children. And this is a Heavenly Treasure.



Pinchas, Heftzi-ba & Yehoshua with Shembones (10 Mts. old)

How To Bring Heaven To Earth; From Las Vegas To Jerusalem

Here is the Treasure that I have inherited. From my conversion to Judaism, here are *all the children and grandchildren that my husband and I have the pleasure of seeing grow up to be observant Jews*. From just **2 people**, look what happened!

Son, Professor Pinchas Mandell



Son, Joshua Mandell with 1st born son, Yedidya



Daughter, Heftzi-ba Mandell Chase (model)

Joe Mandell

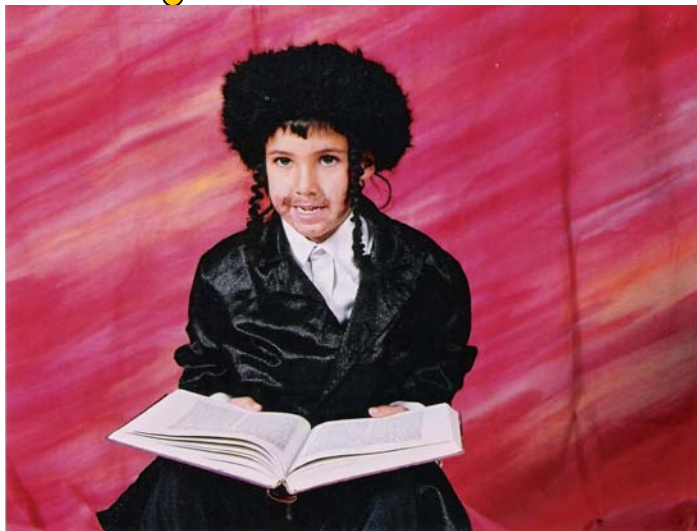


Yehoshua Mandell, Paratrooper (Dr)



Wedding of Yehoshua & Tehilla 1999. At his side is my son Pinchas & the other side, my daughter Heftzi-ba, granddaughter Hila (standing) & granddaughter Ariella

**Yehoshua & Tehilla's children, Yedidya, Yagel, Oriya,
Eliav & Avigail''**



Yedidya Mandell - Purim



Yagel Mandell - Purim



Oriya Mandell -



Eliav - Purim

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HEFTZI-BA'S WEDDING WITH DAD & MOM
Central Park N.Y.



Mark Chase married 1990 to Heftzi-ba
They have 4 lovely daughters ages 4-15.

Hila Chase, Ariella Chase, Daniella Chase , Elia Chana

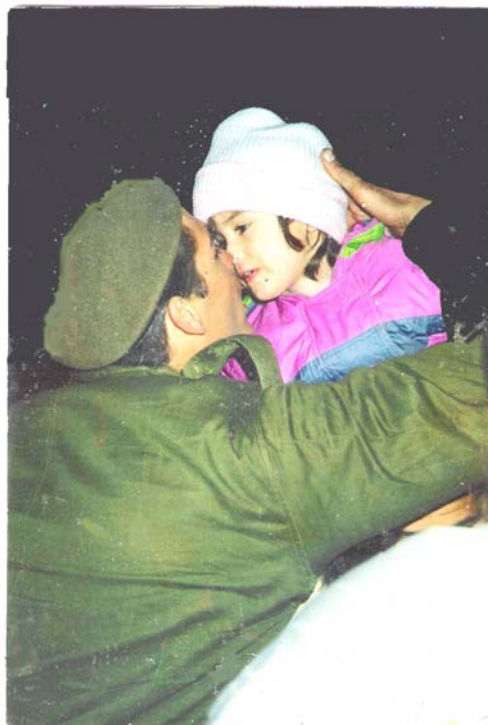


סטודיו ששון משה



Pinchas & Karen Mandell's Wedding

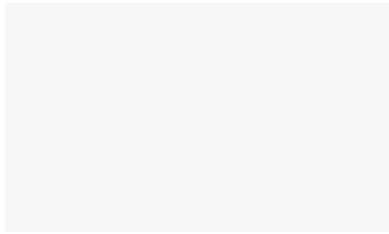
החתונה של קרן ופנחס
כתר-הרימון
19.12.2004



Yehoshua Mandell & daughter Sivan
Israeli Paratrooper



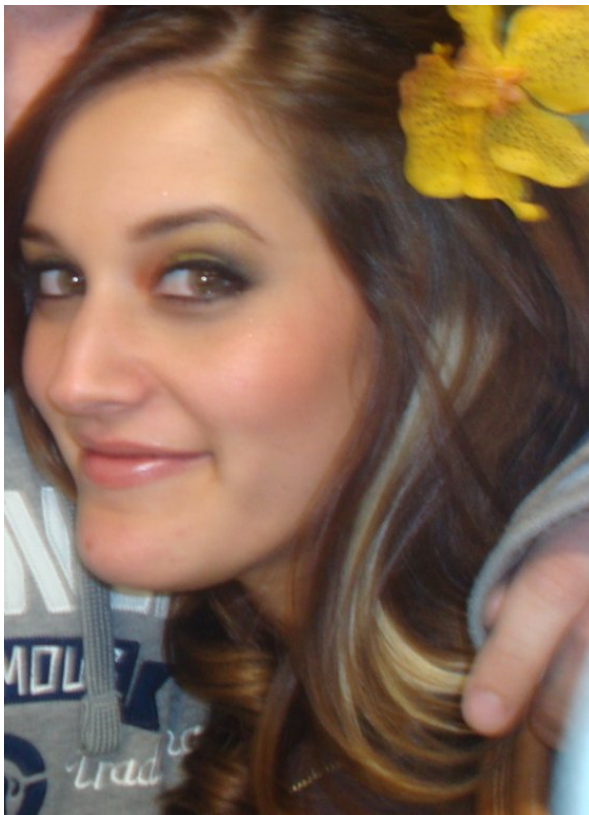
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**Miranda (Rina) Heaton
(Reuven's granddaughter)**



**Reuven's Granddaughters, Jennifer, Miranda
& Dana Heaton**



Jewel Mandell & John Rush Wedding



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**. How To Bring Heaven To Earth; From Las Vegas to Jerusalem,
by Sara Mandell re-edited edition 2006**

. 2001 Bookcover Artwork by Sara Mandell

**This is the re-edited copy of my book in 2008. Please feel free to
visit my Web Site at www.bringheaventoearth.com You are also
welcome to contact me at: sara@bringheaventoearth.com
Your comments are helpful.**

In Memory of Rebbe Reuven Mandell z'l

I dedicate this book to the memory of my beloved husband Reuven ben Fayga, z"l, who gave up all the hours that he would have liked to be with me instead of me at the computer, in order to share our adventure as Servants of the Most High, blessed be He, with my readers. I learned so much from this great tzaddik. He was hospitable like Avraham Avinu, he was loving, brave, humble & totally dedicated to The Family of Israel. I thank G-d with all my heart that he allowed me to be the wife of such a great man for nearly 49 years. Rest in your Heavenly Abode, dear Reuven. You earned it. I'll see you when HaShem calls me or when Mashiach comes, whichever happens first.



Sara Mandell

I will seek the Lost
One,
And that which has been
Cast Out
I will bring back,
And the Broken
One
I will cure.

(Ezekiel 34:16)

www.bringheaventoeearth.com

Sara@bringheaventoeearth.com

Bookcover Art by Sara Mandell

