

# RESTORING FAITH

*Amazing hashgacha pratis led to two children leaving public school and registering in a Jewish school*

BY OHEL BAR-SELA



It was a quiet summer night in the Flatbush neighborhood of New York. Lights were still on in a home where about twenty Jews sat and eagerly listened to a class given by Rabbi Rachamim Nimni.

Rabbi Nimni has been giving classes around the New York area for a number of years now. He has a special connection with the local Israelis, amongst whom he spreads his teachings. He teaches Chassidus interspersed with Chassidic stories, and he prepares people for the imminent Redemption.

*Chinuch* for Jewish children is an especially important topic. Rabbi Nimni has a lot of experience in getting Jewish children to switch from public school to Jewish schools. He conveys the message by explaining the importance of studying Torah and the vital need for Jewish education at the youngest ages. He repeats what the Rebbe has said about *chinuch* and about the obligation of guarding the pure souls of young children.

At the end of this particular class, a woman approached Rabbi Nimni.

She was a new participant in the class, and was very interested in Chassidus and the stories told about the Rebbe MH"M. Mrs. E. told R' Nimni that she and her husband had gotten involved in *Yiddishkeit* over the past year and had begun to slowly add in *mitzvos*.

"We took our first steps in Judaism with the guidance of people from a particular *kiruv* organization. At a certain point they asked us for large sums of money. They explained that they needed it for their work. At first we agreed, but after they insisted on more and more money and even used threats and fear tactics, saying that if we didn't give them these donations we would suffer in Hell, we realized they were frauds who took advantage of the innocence of *chozrim b'tshuva*. My husband took it very hard, and he decided to cut off, not only from them, but from all religious Jews. So he left the Judaism which we had just begun exploring.

"The worst thing of all," concluded Mrs. E. sadly, "is that he took our children out of the Jewish school they were in and registered

them for public school. I tried to talk him out of it, and even sent some *rabbanim* to talk to him, but it didn't work. My husband refuses to be involved with religious Jews and will not let our children go back to the Jewish school."

Rabbi Nimni sighed. Mrs. E. begged him to talk to her husband and gave him their home phone number, while warning him not to dare mention that she had been the one to give him the number. Rabbi Nimni promised to try his best to get her children back into a Jewish school.

He got into his car, and all the way back to Crown Heights he thought about the woman and her story. He was familiar with the tactics of the *kiruv* group, and knew what awaited him in a conversation with the father, especially one so opposed to the whole idea. He jotted down the information, adding it to the long list of items he had to take care of the next day.

The next day R' Nimni called the E's. He introduced himself and realized he was talking to Mr. E.

himself. He began talking when Mr. E. cut him off coldly and said, "We're not interested, thanks."

Rabbi Nimni was taken aback by the unpleasant response and after a few seconds he heard a click and a dial tone. After another failed attempt, Rabbi Nimni decided it was enough for one day and he went to daven *Mincha* in 770.

He tried his luck with Mr. E. for a few more days, but the father was stubborn. He tried talking but always got to a dead end when he was hung up on. The frustrated father warned R' Nimni and even uttered some threats to clarify his position. He repeatedly said that he no longer relied on rabbis.

That evening, the phone rang in R' Nimni's office. Mrs. E. was on the line. She told R' Nimni that her husband was nervous because of the phone calls, and he didn't want to discuss it anymore. She thanked him for his efforts and said she had practically given up. Maybe it paid to drop it so as not to quarrel with her

***We realized they were frauds who took advantage of the innocence of chozrim b't'shuva. My husband took it very hard, and he decided to cut off, not only from them, but from all religious Jews...***

husband.

R' Nimni decided to write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* and do whatever the Rebbe told him to do. He asked for the Rebbe's guidance and who he should consult with in this complicated situation.

In the letter he opened to, the Rebbe spoke about the request for a

*bracha* for a *refua* for Rabbi Yaakov Katzin, who had undergone some medical treatment at the time. The Rebbe blessed Rabbi Katzin with a *refua shleima* in the merit of his devoted work in disseminating Judaism to his congregation.

R' Nimni had heard about Rabbi Yaakov Katzin who had passed away a few years earlier. His son, Rabbi Shaul Katzin had taken his place as Chief Rabbi for the Sephardic communities in New York. R' Nimni knew him well and had a warm relationship with him thanks to his work in the Israeli community. R' Nimni understood the Rebbe's letter to mean he should consult with Rabbi Katzin.

Rabbi Nimni called Rabbi Katzin and arranged to meet with him that very same evening. Within a few hours they were sitting and talking about the E. family. At first, Rabbi Katzin was afraid to get involved since Mr. E. wasn't interested, and he didn't want to cause any family trouble.

In the course of the conversation, R' Nimni asked Rabbi Katzin whether his father had undergone medical treatment in 5730. Rabbi Katzin, surprised by the question, said he had, and asked how R' Nimni knew about it. R' Nimni told him about the *Igros Kodesh*, and how people ask the Rebbe questions in this way. He told Rabbi Katzin that the letter had contained *brachos* for his father in the *z'chus* of his communal work.

Rabbi Katzin agreed to get involved in the case. He wrote a personal letter to Mr. E. in the hopes that his position among Sephardic Jews would impress him.

The next day, R' Nimni met with Mrs. E. He told her that he had written to the Rebbe on their behalf and from the answer he had understood he should consult with Rabbi Katzin. He further informed her that Rabbi Katzin, who held a



Rabbi Shaul Katzin (right) with Rabbi Nimni

special position among Sephardic Jews and was completely reliable, had sent them a personal letter in which he asked them to send their children to Jewish schools.

The woman was somewhat encouraged, and she took the letter and gave it to her husband. At first he refused to look at it, but his wife begged him to read it.

“Who is this rabbi?” he asked.

“This is the Chief Rabbi of Sephardic Jews. He’s a serious individual, at least read what he wrote to you.”

Mr. E. read the letter but since he didn’t know Rabbi Katzin personally, he refused to believe this was a serious and reliable rabbi. His wife finally convinced him to consult with his friends and ask them what they knew about Rabbi Katzin.

Mr. E. works in importing and marketing products from various countries, and recently began dealing with a new company and had developed a personal friendship with its owner. They decided on merging the two companies, and had signed a contract to that effect half a year before.

The next day, when Mr. E. arrived at the office, he met with his partner. He showed him Rabbi Katzin’s letter and asked about him. To his surprise, his partner said he could rely on Rabbi Katzin 100%, for he knew him personally – Rabbi Katzin was his grandfather!

After such amazing *hashgacha pratis*, Mr. E. had to give in. He spoke with R’ Nimni, and a few days later, he and his wife went to R’ Nimni’s class. After the class they spoke at length. R’ Nimni explained the importance of *chinuch*, and the parents registered their two children for the Chayalei Moshiach day camp, which is run by R’ Nimni. The two E. children began the year in a Jewish school.

### CAMP CHAYALEI HA'MOSHIACH

This was the third year that Rabbi Rachamim Nimni ran a summer camp for children in Flatbush. Many of the children do not attend Jewish schools. Throughout the year, R’ Nimni works among Jews in the metropolitan area. Many dozens of families begin learning about *Yiddishkeit* thanks to him.

This summer, the camp had 120 children who absorbed a Jewish atmosphere. The activities and crafts contained messages of Torah and *Yiddishkeit*, and each day there was a class on various Torah topics. The children thoroughly enjoyed the programs and trips. The children learned, many for the first time in their lives, about basic concepts in Judaism, thanks to the devoted staff.

The camp, called Camp Chayalei HaMoshiach, teaches about the era of *Geula* with songs and games. Despite the great amounts of money needed to run a camp such as this one, R’ Nimni is fully devoted to the project. Right after Pesach he receives dozens of phone calls from parents who want to make sure R’ Nimni is making a camp that year, and that their child is registered. There is only a token fee, with many children receiving scholarships so that they will be able to attend a Jewish camp.

The best part of camp was perhaps when Rabbi Levi Goldstein, veteran *melamed* in Oholei Torah, comes to visit. Rabbi Goldstein tells the children stories about the Rebbe and runs a special program for them about *Yemos HaMoshiach*.

The children also went to visit 770. There too, Rabbi Goldstein ran a special program for them. The children learned about Elul, when the King is in the field, and how each of them can ask and demand the *hisgalus* of the Rebbe MH”M.

It was moving to see a child from the day camp, who is not from a Chabad family, sing “*Yechi*,” with his friends joining in. The children of the E. family were in camp, too.

