

HERE'S *my* STORY

TRUST IN ME

MRS. GOLDA JACOBS

My father was a very unusual man. Although he was quite successful in his business and quite prosperous, you wouldn't know it by the frugal way he lived. The bulk of the money he made, he gave away — and we only found this out later, after he passed away. He gave because he thought it was his duty to do so. He believed that this is why he was given certain advantages — everything that happened to him, happened for a purpose; there was no coincidence. He lived his whole life this way — he had no real worries because he trusted in G-d, and when he needed advice, he got it from the Rebbe.

The Rebbe was an integral part of his life, and there wasn't anything that happened to him or his family that my father didn't tell the Rebbe about.

There came a time when I was 16 years old — I had finished high school early and was ready for college — that I decided I wanted to go to a school away from home, away from Chicago. In particular, I settled on Stern College in New York. My father's response to this was to send me to see the Rebbe. He said that, after I talked with the Rebbe, the decision would be made if I would be allowed to go or not.

I wasn't happy about it — in fact I was resentful. I didn't understand what this was about. I mean, if I wanted to go to Stern College, why shouldn't I go? My friends had gone? I really didn't grasp the significance of having an audience with the Rebbe.

My father bought me a plane ticket and I was sent to New York by myself to see the Rebbe.

My father told me not to sit in his presence but, as soon as I walked in the door, the Rebbe invited me to sit down. He immediately put me at ease. I began to feel that that he really cared about this matter — he asked me why I wanted to go to Stern, what I hoped to accomplish by it, what attracted me to that particular school. I had not given very much thought to any of this, because my main motivation was getting out of the house and living on my own.

I was a determined, strong-minded girl, and he knew just how to handle me. He challenged me — but with great



kindness, smiling all the while — to make the best decision. He challenged me to convince him that this is what I truly wanted. And in retrospect, I'm not so sure that I totally wanted it.

There came a point in our conversation when he asked me if I would be willing to accept certain conditions and make certain promises regarding living away from home, and I answered him that I wanted to rely on myself — I didn't want to rely on having made a promise to another human being. I said I was strong enough to watch out for myself. His response was "Gut ge'entfert — Good answer." He congratulated me on my spirit.

It was arrogant of me to speak to him in the way I did, but I meant no disrespect. He had put me so at ease that I felt totally comfortable with him. What I was trying to get across was that he could trust me on my own in the big city, despite my age, because I had good judgment.

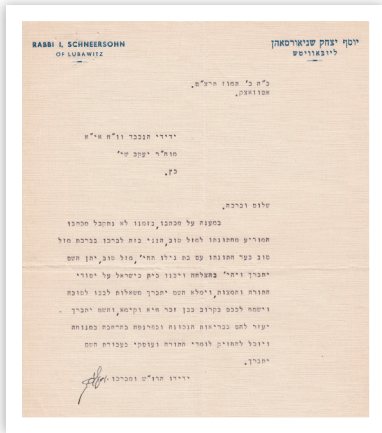
But, by the time I got home, I knew there was no chance in the world that I would be permitted to go. And I was surprised at my own lack of unhappiness about it. I wanted to be angry about it but, in the back of my head, there was a niggling idea that this man had seen through me. And that this decision was the best thing for me.

continued on reverse

MY ENCOUNTER
with the REBBE

An oral history project dedicated to documenting the life of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory. The story is one of thousands recorded in the 800 videotaped interviews conducted to date. Please share your comments and suggestions. mystory@jemedi.org

So, I stayed at home and went to college in Chicago. I did well in my studies and everything worked out for me in every way. As he undoubtedly knew it would.



A letter from the Rebbe Rayatz to Reb Yankel Katz

My next meeting with the Rebbe was three years later. I was 19 years old and I had almost finished college. I wanted to go on a vacation to Israel. In particular I wanted to go by boat because I had a friend who had gone on the Israeli-owned Zim Lines, and she told me that the trip was great fun — they had danced on board and she had had a great time.

My parents had no objection — I would be going with another girl — but an uncle told my father that this wasn't a good idea, and so again I was sent to New York to talk to the Rebbe about this.

The Rebbe greeted me in such a friendly way, making me feel that he was happy to see me. And he asked me about the trip to Israel: "Why is it so important for you to go on Zim Lines?" He didn't question the fact that here were two girls going by themselves, he didn't question the fact that it might not be safe, he just wanted to know why going on Zim Lines was so important to me. And I said, "Can you imagine coming into Haifa on a Jewish boat? Can you imagine what that would be like? I would love to be able to do that."

He thought about my answer for a while and didn't say anything. And then he said he would be in touch.

About a week later, I received a very long letter from him, citing principles of technology or engineering, saying that Zim Lines' ships were technically operating on Shabbos outside the rules of *halacha*. Not a word about my trip or that I shouldn't go, just that the Zim Lines shouldn't be used on Shabbos.

And shortly after came another letter with the name of a Zim Lines ship — it was called the *Moledet* — which left Naples, Italy on Saturday night and arrived in Israel before Shabbos of the next week. And this time the Rebbe said that this was the ship I and my friend could go on, and that we could stay in Naples with the rabbi who supervised kashrus for the Zim Lines, and who just happened to be an emissary

of the Rebbe. He wished me a successful and happy trip.

And that's what we did. We went to Europe and on Friday we made our way to Naples, where we spent Shabbos with this wonderful rabbi and his wife. And later we learned that this rabbi had threatened the ship with taking away their kashrus certificate if it left on Shabbos without us. He escorted us to the ship and made sure we were safe, as the Rebbe wanted.

I don't know who made all these arrangements, but it was all clearly done at the Rebbe's behest. When I connected the dots, I came to believe that the Rebbe had put me to the test three years before and had concluded that now I was capable of taking care of myself. And that level of attention and caring was just amazing to me.

Mrs. Golda Jacobs lives in Silver Spring, Maryland. She is the daughter of Reb Yankel Katz, who was a pillar of support to the Previous Rebbe and the Rebbe, especially during their early years in the United States. Mrs. Jacobs was interviewed in Manhattan in June, 2012.

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> **5748 — 1987**, the Rebbe sent a delegation of rabbinical students to bolster the *yeshiva* in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Rebbe gave each student a booklet with a collection of his talks on the subject of *Hakhel*. *11 Cheshvan*

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