

L'Chaim

The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson ז"ל

נוסד תוך ימי השלושים

SLICE OF LIFE



Reaching Out

Ed.'s note: These letters appeared in "Reaching Out," a publication of the Prison's Department of the Lubavitch Youth Organization. Rabbi Shmuel Spritzer, to whom most of these letters are addressed, is amongst those who are at the forefront of outreach to Jewish prisoners.

Dear Rabbi Spritzer,

You were so right. I was kvetching [complaining] big time and I was so wrong. G-d knew where I was being sent. I now get kosher meals three times a day. Plus my kosher diabetic snack once a day. It is so much better here. I get to go to the chapel on Friday before sunset to light the Sabbath candles. They give me grape juice for Kiddush. There are other Jewish women here.

Montana did ship my religious books and a few of my hygiene items. But they wouldn't ship my TV, my stereo or craft items.

It was a very pleasant surprise last week to be called to the chapel to find two of your Rabbinical students here to see me. Thank you very much for sending them. Thank you for standing by a lone lady (me) in the middle of Montana and for fighting and helping me every step of the way. Lori-Corr Center for Women, Gig Harbor, WA

Dear Rabbi Spritzer,

...You asked what kind of positive purpose can come out of the exile a Jew finds himself in and is there is something positive I see coming out of my stay in prison. Yes there is. For me, I have developed a new sensitivity to the needs of the oppressed to the extent that I want to word with a prison advocacy program after I am released, either full time or part time. This will be

a part of my life that I will always remember and never forget.

Gary-Brunswick Corr Center, Lawrenceville, VA

Dear Rabbi,

I find myself in a very difficult situation. The US Government plans to keep me in prison 'til Dec. of 2053! I wanted you to know that *Reaching Out* each month and the *L'Chaim* weeklies you send me, it is keeping me alive. Suddenly things that I read in *L'Chaim* come back to me. I should "wage war" on the system that is confining me, by performing more *mitzvot* [commandments] and by getting others to do it too.

I can tell you first hand that nothing upsets the forces of evil, and evil people who do good. It also protects the people who do good. It also protects the people doing, in this world and in the world to come.

You know there is one mitzva that is really special and easy. It is the mitzva of *tzitzit*, which each of us, even me in the maximum prison, can wear it under our shirts. They are very inexpensive (about \$10) and are more discreet than a *yarmulke*. They take less effort than *Tefilin* and can be easily explained to non-Jewish staff. It even fits with rehabilitation that the prisons are seeking a way of returning to: that you should look at the *tzitzit* and remember the commandments (as stated in Num. 15:39-40).

As I look at my own *tzitzit* each day, they remind me that I remain a Jew, even while in the SHU area of this maximum prison. They also remind me to try and do another mitzvah. I wait every day for Moshiach and am doing everything spiritually that I can in order to hasten it up
Hillel-US Penitentiary, Beaumont, TX

Dear Rabbi Spritzer,

Just a short letter to thank you for the very nice *yarmulke*. I wish you could have seen the big smile on my face as opened your letter and found it. You have filled my heart with much thankfulness to G-d and you and your organization. Thank you for all you do for inmates. People outside would never believe the

hardships a Jew has in prison, but you do not forget us. With much love and respect,
Larry-US Penitentiary, Atlanta GA

Dear Rabbi,

It has been ten months since I wrote you. I just arrived home (Israel) and immediately notified you about my happy return. I hope you never thought that I would ever forget all what you have done for me. Under no circumstances can I ever forget you, dear rabbi. The help you extended, not just in getting transferred back here, but also do much while inside. There was not a religious problem that you avoided. If I wrote you, the issued were addressed.

I am working for my father who runs a successful and big business. He is training me to become his second in command; he has offices all over Israel. I am again living with my wife and family, they waited for me the entire time.

...May the Creator bless you, dear Rabbi, for all your help and support for the Jewish inmates. In know that you will not stop helping these desperate people. I cannot forget all my own suffering and I will promise to be in touch with you. I want to help the Jews that are still in and will call you soon.

Yaakov-Petach Tikvah, ISRAEL

Dear Rabbi Spritzer,

I apologize in the delay in writing. I have for a time been in an emotional wilderness, but in a period of spiritual growth. Every day I thank G-d for being in jail with G-d being the great physician. I have been looking at my life through a microscope and have seen what a sinner I had become, besides the humble crime that brought me to prison. Aspects of my personality were very unpleasant. Bit by bit, through study and prayer, meditation and mitzvot, I am attempting to cleanse my past and start on a new path. If only I had followed G-d's ways as a young man instead of worshipping at the alter of academic pride.

Thank you for the book *The Ladder Up*. I learn something new every time I read it.
David-Men's prison, New Zealand

etc.

New Centers

If you're visiting the Grand Canyon or anywhere near **Flagstaff, Arizona**, make sure to stop in at the new Chabad-Lubavitch Center headed by Rabbi Dovie and Chaya Shapiro. The young couple recently arrived to serve the needs of the local Jewish community as well as the thousands of Jewish tourists who visit the Grand Canyon.

Makeyevka, Ukraine, a large industrial city in the Donbass Region, located in the country's eastern portion, now has it's own Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries. Rabbi Eliyahu and Haddasa Kramer are already loooking at a facility to house a center that will offer cultural, educational and humanitarian activities. Makeyevka is one of the largest cities in the Donbass Region of Ukraine.

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The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe, *shlita*.