

Good Shabbos Everyone. We are now in the final approach to Judgment Day, AKA Rosh HaShanah which starts next week Wednesday evening. ""On Rosh Hashanah it is written; on Yom Kippur it is sealed. Who shall live and who shall die... etc." The gravity of the moment is tremendous.

In order to prepare for Rosh Hashanah, it is appropriate and fitting that each and every Jew do an accounting of his deeds from the past year. And if, heaven forbid, after doing this accounting, a Jew discovers that he has violated the Torah in any way whatsoever, he must do the following: confess to Hashem his wrongdoings, feel shame and regret for the misdeeds, and accept on himself never to repeat those misdeeds. A Jew who follows such a formula, is assured that Hashem will forgive him for all but the most serious of violations. As far as violations in our relationships with others, we must seek out those whom we have wronged and ask for their forgiveness.

Let us now tell an inspirational true story which recently took place, which will inspire us all to mend our ways before the Big Day.

Reb Rafael Gross, Shlit"a is the rav of the Kerestirer Shul in Miami Beach, Florida. During the winter time, Reb Rafael's brother Reb Michuel from New Square, comes down to Miami Beach to also serve as the rav of the shul. The Grosses are descendants of the great Rebbe Reb Shayala Kerestir.



Rebbe Yeshaya Steiner of Kerestir, (1851-1925), was the founder of the Kerestirer Hasidic dynasty. He was born on Iyar 3, 1851 in the town of Zbarav, Hungary. Later Reb Yeshaya started traveling to Rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz. After the passing of Rabbi Chaim of Sanz, Reb Yeshaya became a disciple of Rabbi Mordechai of Nadvorna. The Nadvornier Rebbe suggested that he move to the town of Kerestir, then part of Hungary, In Kerestir he became a famous Hasidic Rebbe and became known as a miracle worker. In 1925 he was succeeded by his son Reb Avroham.

One day this last winter, a Jew named Moshe Brown stopped into the Kerestirer Shul in Miami Beach and told his interesting story to Reb Michuel Gross. Moshe Brown grew up "Morris" Brown. In fact, until about 10 years previous, Moshe "Morris" did not even know that he was Jewish. Morris went on to tell his amazing story:

Several years ago, Morris was between jobs and decided to fulfill a lifelong dream of becoming a chef. So, he enrolled in a famous cooking school which was located in a big city. Every day, he and his colleagues would prepare all sorts of fancy dishes. They would taste the dishes and then throw the remainder in the garbage. From the get go, this practice of throwing away so much food bothered Morris very much. One day, Morris decided to do something about it.

At the end of the day, Morris gathered together all the food and baked goods from the day's activities and he arraigned it nicely on a long folding table on the busy street in front of the school. As is unfortunately the situation in most big cities in America, there are many homeless and hungry people in the area where the cooking school where Morris worked. Thus, the food was consumed in short order by hungry people.

One day, as Morris was setting out the food, a passing businessman, who was impressed by Morris' display of kindness, asked Morris if he was Jewish. Morris told him no, and asked the man why he was asking him. "Because, I see that you like to do acts of kindness for others, and that is a Jewish trait!" (See the Talmud, Tractate Yevamos 79a) With that, the businessman kept walking and Morris promptly forgot about the exchange.

Several weeks later, the businessman passed by again and he and Morris had the same discussion as before. This time though Morris started thinking. His mother had come from Hungary and never spoke about her past. That night, Morris contacted his mother and asked her if he was Jewish. At first, Morris' mother hemmed and hawed, not wanting to answer the question directly. After some prodding however, Morris' mother told him that he was in fact a Jew! Little by little, Morris become Moshe, a fully observant Jew!

Why did Morris stop into the Kerestirer Shul? And now, for the rest of the story... Moshe's mother came from Hungary. And from what city did she come? Kerestir. And what did she do for a living? She cooked. And where did she work? In Reb Shayala Kerestir's house, a house which was known for feeding all those who nowhere to eat!

Thus, when Moshe was walking down the street in Miami Beach and he saw a sign for the Kerestirer Shul, he just had to stop in to take a look! **Good Shabbos Everyone.**