

**Good Shabbos Everyone.** This week's parsha begins with the word Tzav. Rashi explains that "Tzav" indicates "zerizus" - alacrity. Alacrity - moving quickly - is an important aspect of serving Hashem. Because, one who does mitzvahs with an eagerness, will be able to do more mitzvahs and do the mitzvahs more completely. Furthermore, one who is lazy in his spiritual life, will accomplish little..

Rabbi Schuster is one Rav who exuded "zerizus" throughout his 40+ years in Kiruv - bringing Jews back to "the fold." Rabbi Schuster and his Rebbetzin, the former Esther Garfinkle of Monticello, New York, were married in 1967, six months after the Six Day War. Three months later, in March 1968, they came to Israel, for a year of Torah study in the Mir Yeshiva. As if to foreshadow the kind of impact the Schusters would eventually have on so many young Jews, they decided to extend their stay—for four decades! The Schusters settled in the Ezras Torah neighborhood of Jerusalem and had four children.

Not long after moving to Israel, Rabbi Schuster and his old friend Chaim Kass were at the Kosel where they saw a young man wearing a backpack who was obviously deeply touched by his encounter with the Wall.

Reb Chaim went over to the young man and asked if he would be interested in learning about Judaism, and the young man responded that he was. Unbeknownst to anyone at the moment, that young man who had been moved to tears at the Kosel, represented the beginning of a revolution.

For the next two weeks, Reb Meir and Reb Chaim kept returning to the Kosel to try to interest more people in exploring Judaism. By nature, Rabbi Schuster is particularly quiet and reserved, an introvert not naturally given to conversation, and so Reb Chaim initially did the talking. Within a couple of weeks, however, Rabbi Schuster began to take the lead, and he never, ever looked back.

Rabbi Schuster, in his unassuming yet confident way, would walk up to people and begin by engaging them with the simplest of questions; "Are you Jewish?" These questions became doorways to conversations that eventually led to other questions; "Have you ever experienced a Shabbos meal?" "Would you like to meet a wise man?" And so Rabbi Schuster would meet people—first dozens, then hundreds and eventually thousands—and he would arrange for them to be hosted for a Shabbas meal, or to take their first taste of Judaism at Aish HaTorah, Ohr Somayach, Neve Yerushalayim, Dvar Yerushalayim, the Diaspora Yeshiva or wherever he felt was the appropriate place for that particular young man or woman.



For forty years, day in and day out—day after day and night after night—Rabbi Meir Schuster was a fixture at the Kosel. The following is a true story told in the first person by one person whose soul was touched by Rabbi Schuster...

"As part of a trek across Europe, I detoured to the Middle East, wandered through Israel and made my way to the Kosel one summer afternoon. In the Kosel Plaza area, I was confronted by a friendly, rather thin gentleman who spoke somewhat hurriedly and asked me just one question, "Are you Jewish?"

To this day, I do not know why I felt so secure in answering that question, considering how Orthodox he looked with his long, wiry beard and his jacket draped over his shoulders. But I answered in the affirmative and before long we were chatting about Toronto, from where I hail. Eventually, he asked me if I'd be interesting in having a Shabbat meal the next weekend. I accepted the offer thinking that it would be one of those experiences I could share with my friends and family back in Canada. ("Hey, I had a Shabbat meal with a real live Orthodox family!") I must have changed my mind a dozen times before Friday came along. When it finally did, I felt I had no choice but to show up.

The rabbi had set me up with a young family of ba'ale teshuvah living in the Ma'alot Dafna area of Jerusalem, with whom I spoke for hours that night, while enjoying the heimishe food and lovely hosts.

That led to my visiting Ohr Samayach for a few days the next week before resuming my trip across Europe. But the die had been cast. Little did I know when I left Israel that I'd be back in yeshivah the next year and, in time, living an Orthodox life in Israel and helping out in the area of outreach as well. And all because someone had the strength, conviction and courage to ask me one simple but profound question: "Are you Jewish?"

For years, I enjoyed bumping into Reb Meir at the Kosel and telling him what I was up to, reminding him of his part in all that I was doing - including raising my own Torah-observant children and affecting others through my writings and lectures. In typical Reb Meir fashion, he would smile and encourage me but gave all the credit for his accomplishments to G-d. I also delighted in hearing him lead a minyan which he did with all the energy he had, unabashedly letting G-d know how much he loved Him and appreciated all that He did for him. Rabbi Schuster has unfortunately ceased his outreach efforts of late. He needs a refuah sheleima - a speedy and full recovery from a debilitating disease which has crippled his mind and body, Hashem should protect us all. Please daven for Reb Meir Tzvi ben Merka! For more information and to help support his family: see <http://www.rebmeirschuster.org/> **Good Shabbos Everyone.**