

HERE'S my STORY

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ENCOURAGEMENT ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

MRS. VALERIE SHORE



In 1989, my husband Scott decided to run for U.S. Congress on the Republican ticket. This meant challenging the incumbent Democrat, Congressman Harry Johnston, in Florida's 14th district, which includes Boca Raton, where we were living at the time.

When our Lubavitcher friend, Rabbi Yossi Biston, heard about this plan, he immediately advised my husband to seek the Rebbe's guidance and blessing. Although we were not Lubavitch ourselves, we were deeply connected to Chabad, and so we decided to follow Rabbi Biston's advice.

On March 27, 1989, we travelled together to New York in order to meet the Rebbe. When it was our turn, Scott told the Rebbe, "I am considering running for United States Congress, and I would like to know whether or not it is proper for a Shabbat-observant Jew to do so."

The Rebbe answered, "Not only is it proper, in many ways it is a sanctification of G-d's name. If you are in Congress and everyone knows that you observe Shabbat, those gentiles who respect the Noahide Laws will be inspired to be more observant as well."

As soon as we returned to Florida, my husband moved forward with the campaign, and he received the Republican nomination virtually without opposition. But then came the hard part. We were young and naïve and did not realize the amount of money that would be necessary to keep the campaign afloat. We had to hire expensive political advisors, and we took out substantial loans to pay for them. After a while, we began to question if we could raise enough money to make it till the end.

In addition to the fundraising problems, we were also facing nasty and libelous attacks in the press due to Scott's opposition to abortion on demand. Almost every day there was another terrible comment about him. It was not a positive experience at all, and we were debating whether or not we should continue.

So again, we decided to seek the Rebbe's advice. With the help of the local Chabad emissaries, we sent a fax to the Rebbe, but received no reply.

Then one day my husband flew three famous pollsters down from New York for a dinner meeting at our home. During the dinner, the phone rang. Now, Scott never answers the phone, but for some reason — while in the middle of this important meeting — he excused himself and picked up. It was Rabbi Leibel Groner, the Rebbe's secretary, who conveyed the following message: "The Rebbe feels that if there will be financial strain and emotional

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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 over 1200 videotaped interviews conducted to date. These stories are based on the recollection of the individuals recounting them. Please share any corrections, comments and suggestions. mystory@jemedial.org

continued from reverse

distress involved, then it is not worth it for you to continue the campaign.”

Thinking back, it was just incredible that he called exactly at that time. The only problem was that now we were too deep into it to back out. We pressed on, even though we shouldn't have.

One good thing that happened during the campaign was that Scott really got a chance to assert his religious ideals. There came a time when President George H. Bush — came down to Florida and a photo-op was arranged. But because it was Shabbat, Scott said, “No thanks. I can't do it.” It could have helped him a lot, but he just wouldn't violate Shabbat.

Many religious Jews go through life saying that Shabbat is more important to them than the President of the United States, but my husband actually got to prove it. So that was one positive highlight.

Other than that though, it was horrible. Scott won only one third of the vote and lost in a landslide to Congressman Johnston. As a result, he became despondent. He had viewed politics as a means of instituting lofty ideas, so the reality was greatly disillusioning to him. It was a very difficult time for all of us.

In order to improve his mood, we got the kids out of school and took a trip to visit his parents in the Berkshires. We thought that getting away from everything would help, but it didn't. Scott was just too depressed — he had lost a lot of money and he didn't even have a job to go back to. He also felt very alone — during the campaign he was constantly receiving visits and phone calls; after he lost, there was nothing.

It seemed hopeless, until one day, out of the blue, the phone rang. It was Rabbi Groner again. I watched my husband as he held the phone to his ear and, suddenly, I saw his entire demeanor change.

Rabbi Groner called to convey another message

from the Rebbe: “Be happy. It was a good thing that you ran. And, because of it, you will have many more opportunities in the future to make contributions to the Jewish people.”

We were stunned. We did not have any specific connection with the Rebbe to speak of. I have no idea how the Rebbe knew we were in a rut. We had not spoken to his emissaries after the campaign. Yet, somehow, he knew.

The thought that the Rebbe cared about Scott — whom he had met only once and called him to see how he is doing — energized him. From that point on, Scott's entire viewpoint changed and his entire way of thinking changed from negative to positive. It was incredible.

And, in the end, all turned out well. Scott was hired by the Bush administration and served in several high profile positions, including working on Israel's Arrow missile defense project.

It's been more than twenty years now, and I am still grateful and amazed how the Rebbe knew to do just the right thing at just the right time to help a fellow Jew.

Mrs. Valerie Shore presently teaches in Hebrew Academy Community School in Margate, Florida. She was interviewed in Chabad of Boca Raton in March of 2011.

לע"נ ר' ישראל יעקב וזוגתו מרת קריינא ע"ה לאקשין
ע"י בניהם ר' נחמן ור' אברהם ומשפחתם שיחיו

This week in....

> **5701 - 1941**, the Rebbe Rayatz received the news from attorney Henry Butler, that the Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka received visas to come to the United States two weeks earlier, on April 17th (20 Nissan). *4 Iyar*

Dedicated in loving memory of

Mrs. **Rechyl Rappaport**

in honor of her first *yahrzeit*, 2 Nissan 5776

By her family

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