

HERE'S my STORY

Generously sponsored by the  Crain-Maling Foundation

LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTION!

LARRY CAROLINE



As a left-wing radical in the 1960s, I was advocating an anti-war revolution, until I met the Rebbe who drafted me into an entirely different revolution — and, while doing so, changed my life.

I grew up in the 1940s, in the home of my Yiddish-speaking grandparents. It was a kosher home, respectful of Judaism, but not a Torah-observant home. For my Bar Mitzvah, I didn't put on *tefillin* although I did learn the Hebrew alphabet, but that was about it.

As a kid, I was constantly picked on, and I discovered the connection between being picked on and being Jewish. That's when I decided that I would help other people who were being picked on and discriminated against. When I went to college at the University of Rochester in upstate New York, I joined the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). I became the president of our NAACP chapter and launched a campaign to remove racist fraternities from campus. As a result, I earned a name as a radical, a reputation which was further enhanced when I became involved in the protests against nuclear testing, and later against the Vietnam War.

I was majoring in philosophy and reading the early writings of Karl Marx, the Jewish originator of Communist theory. His writings appealed to me because Marx was very much in favor of kindness, very pro people, and very anti letting

those in power take advantage of the poor. And due to his influence, I became an atheist because, as Marx famously declared, "religion is the opiate of the masses."

As a graduate student, I received a fellowship from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and went to teach at Kentucky State College in the midst of the black civil rights struggle, to which I was very much committed. Even though civil rights workers were being murdered and my own life was threatened, I took some big risks in the name of the cause.

In 1966, I got married, and both my wife Dina and I were hired to teach at the University of Texas in Austin. As a left-wing philosophy professor, I was invited to speak at an anti-war demonstration in front of the State Capitol. I told the crowd of demonstrators gathered there: "It's a very lovely Saturday. It's nice to have a walk and to go marching around, but if we really want the war to end, we have to have a revolution."

I certainly didn't have in mind a violent revolution; I just meant that there was no way to end the war in Vietnam without radical change in America. But the next day on the front page of every single newspaper in the State of Texas, headlines proclaimed that a professor at the University of Texas was advocating a revolution.

At that time, the president of the United States was Lyndon Johnson, a Texas native who was a good friend of the chairman of the Board of Regents at the University of Texas. Needless to say, the Board of Regents was not pleased with my remarks, and the university decided I had to go. And that was the end of my teaching career at the University of Texas; in fact, it was the end of my career as a philosophy professor, since now I was considered a liability by prospective employers.

We returned to upstate New York — to Buffalo — where my wife suggested we attend Yom Kippur services. I was not interested, but I didn't oppose it. We heard of a little place near the university which didn't charge for seats and where they let you bring your kids. So we went. It turned out to be a Chabad House newly opened by Rabbi Noson Gurary. The services were an eye-opening experience for me because for the first time in my life I saw people acting like they should act if they *really* believed in G-d.

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 over 1,500 videotaped interviews conducted to date. While we have done our utmost to authenticate these stories, they reflect the listener's recollection and interpretation of the Rebbe's words.



continued from reverse

That was the beginning of my involvement with Judaism and the beginning of a religious life for me. I started attending classes, and that's when I heard about the Rebbe. I didn't believe all I was told until Shavuot of 1972 when I came to New York and saw the Rebbe for myself. It immediately became clear to me that he was a great man, a true *tzaddik*.

In 1974, I had my first private audience with the Rebbe. I told him about all my left-wing activities, and how that led to my dismissal from the University of Texas. In response, the Rebbe said to me, "You used to make propaganda for the revolution. Now you will make propaganda for the other revolution."

This meant to me that I had to take all the energy that I had been putting into civil rights, into anti-war and other left-wing activities, and channel that energy into Judaism. I was to continue being a radical, but the kind of radical that the Rebbe was.

The Rebbe also urged me to finish my doctoral thesis, but I never got around to it. Instead, I took a job in Philadelphia at the Beth Jacob School, initially as a fundraiser and later as director.

During the twelve years that I was running the school, a large number of Russian Jewish immigrants came to Philadelphia; they were all not religious, as practicing Judaism was forbidden in the Soviet Union, and I felt strongly that I had to do my part to restore their heritage to them. Making propaganda for the Rebbe's revolution, I printed leaflets in Russian, and I got 120 Russian kids to enroll in the school, which had a total enrollment of 400. They were all on scholarship and this caused a lot of financial problems for the school, but I felt that I was following the Rebbe's directive to make sure that kids who had no prior exposure to *Yiddishkeit* were given a chance to attend a Jewish school. This was indeed revolutionary — a radical idea which the Rebbe had championed — that *all* Jewish children receive a Torah education.

Still, I knew I needed to do more, which is why I decided to write a book about the foolishness and arrogance of atheism. This is what I am doing now — I am analyzing the writings of three prominent, self-proclaimed atheists, showing the mistakes in their reasoning and their gross philosophical and logical errors. I'm actually having a lot of fun writing it and, hopefully, I'll get it finished soon.

I don't know if the Rebbe would have agreed with the philosophical arguments I present in this book, as I never discussed philosophy with him because I felt the subject was just not worth his time. The Rebbe was all about the truth of Torah and all about the love of every Jew. And I

לזכות

ישראל בן איטא ומשפחתו שיחיו

לברכת ה' ית' לכתובה וחתימה טובה לשנה

טובה ומתוקה

In honor of our dear friend **Larry**
With love, **Allen Rothenberg** and Family

You can help us record more testimonies by dedicating future editions of *Here's My Story*

am brought to tears just thinking that I have this chance to relate my story of how the Rebbe affected my life, to be a small part of this remarkable effort to collect the remembrances of the Rebbe. I feel privileged and grateful to be able to participate as my whole life would never have turned out this way if it wasn't for him.

Larry Caroline is a philosopher who has worked as a freelance fundraiser and a school administrator. He presently resides in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, where he was interviewed in May, 2015.

Exclusive for women and girls:
a new audio My Encounter WhatsApp series!



OUR STORY

Listen to a beautiful story each week

Send a WhatsApp message to

718-604-4690 to SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

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

This week in...

> **5716 — 1956**, in a letter to an educator who had complained that despite his greatest efforts many of his students veered from Torah, the Rebbe explained that although one is not always as successful as expected, hard work always leads to positive results. Sometimes it takes years for the education a student received as a youngster to have an impact. Furthermore, all the effort will have been worthwhile even if a teacher is successful with only a few students.¹ 4 Tishrei

1. Igrot Kodesh vol. 12 page 4



Download the app today at Tefillinwrapp.com

Let's get Am Yisroel Wrapping!



Supported by members of

THE
JEM FOUNDATION

ואתה תצווה... להעלות נר תמיד

Generously printed by  PRINTHOUSE