

ABOUT A HUNDRED AND TWENTY PEOPLE have gathered in this book to express their deep connection and gratitude to Rabbi David Zeller, author of “The Soul of the Story—Meetings With Remarkable People.”

In honor of Rabbi Zeller’s 60th birthday, people from all parts of his rich and broad life happily share their fond memories of encounters with Rabbi David, deep insights they learned from him, and melodies they heard him sing in his angelic voice.

This book is their special gift to you, David, and their sign of love and joy on this special occasion. *AD ME’AH V’ESRIM!*



THE STORY OF A SOUL

Meetings With a Remarkable Person

The Story of a Soul

MEETINGS
WITH A REMARKABLE
PERSON

Written by David Zeller's Friends



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“
I used to laugh a lot
that's why my face is wrinkled,
that's why my teeth are chipped
by sandy winds.

Sometimes it's easy,
sometimes it's not so easy,
sometimes I feel like I can't go on...

Then I remember
what really makes it easy—
being with you
and when I'm singing my song ---

Everybody's got to have 'em some Happies!

”
— Hoyt Axton

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PREFACE

G-D CREATED THIS WORLD USING STORIES, AND BY CREATING MAN in his image, he gave us the same gift. So we too can tell stories. We too can create worlds.

Abba, the seed for this book was planted years ago, when as kids you would have us all gathered around you at bedtime, waiting to hear your stories. On every Shabbat and holiday, when our table would be transformed into the Ba'al-Shem-Tov's wagon, as you would transport us to far away magical places. We received from you a love of stories. When you learn something, if you are lucky it is in your head. But when one receives—it is part of you, from head to toes. I have come to realize, that people become the stories they are told. I remember discovering that. I was speaking to a friend, desperately trying to get an idea across. I tried words. High, proper, academic words, that end with all kinds of 'isms'. I just couldn't get it across. It is a painful experience, a feeling of being in exile, when your mouth can not truly express what your heart knows. It hurts. And in that place of deep frustration I finally said: "it...it is... it is like a story I once heard from my father." That is who I am. That is who we are.

All stories have a life of their own. They are born from those actions coming from the depths of one's soul and the bottom of one's heart. Perhaps we have loved your stories, because they speak to us of worlds so distant, yet so familiar, we can recognize them as our own. In a way, we, your children, are your deepest never-ending stories.

After your book of stories, about all the remarkable souls you got to meet, it became clear to us that another book of stories



needed to be written. Stories about meeting you. When we sent out the initial request, we were asking people to do us a favor by writing personal stories they remembered. We were overwhelmed by the amount of responses we got, and by the joy people took in giving you gratitude. Friends and family were so glad to have an opportunity to give thanks. You have taught us that the root of being a Jew, יהודי, is to thank, להודות. The essence of being a Jew is to have enough empathy to give to another.

So thank you Abba.

You have always taught us, that each and every soul chooses its parents in order to be its true teachers in life.

We chose you, and are so thankful for it.

With love, Mordechai

—In the name of all of us—

Meera, Manya, Esther-Emunah and Sha'arya

Shlomi, David, Yedidya

Mizmor, Elijah and Asher

* * *

About one hundred and twenty people took part in this project. We tried to reach whoever we could think of. However, we are sure there are countless more (for your 70th birthday...) and of course there are those whose stories are to be told in the world to come...

We would like to apologize for all the mistakes and misunderstandings, whether we dropped the appropriate title for any of the writers who humbly only wrote their names. This whole project was done in less than a month and a half. We

want to thank each and every one of you for the time and effort put into this book, and also for the effort to keep it a surprise!

A special thank you to our dear friends the Lees, for generously and joyfully holding the Birthday party in their home.

May we all share many more *Simchas*,
Countless moments of connection and love,
Endless stories and teachings,
Listening deeply to our heart's songs,
Now and forever more.



Lore Zeller

“THERE WAS NO DOUBT IN HIM THAT HIS SELF WAS WITH HIM”

OFTEN ON SUNDAYS WE, LIKE MANY OTHER LOS ANGELENOS, would feel the pull to go to the beach. Sandwiches would be packed, blankets, towels, bathing suits, books, pails, shovels and balls. We would go in the Studebaker, all five of us.

On the morning of departure, the big inflated ball would be missing and the little yellow watering can would be stuffed with the other belongings. Everybody was ready but our two introverts. We pulled out into 5th Street and then into Santa Monica Boulevard and joined the traffic through Beverly Hills towards Malibu, our favorite beach. It was still quite empty so we could spread out and spread out we did.

Now came the big decision. Should we go into the water first and be sandy for the rest of the day, or eat the sandwiches before they became sand-wiches? One minute we were a coil of ten legs and ten arms and then the next minute David was gone. In the midst of by now hundreds of people around us, I was stunned, I was flustered, I was in a panic. We all ran in different directions.

When I found him, that little blond four year old, he said, “Why did **You** move!?”

There was no doubt in him that his centrum, his Self was with him. And I am sure that he is living still now with the same Self as 50 odd years ago.

With love, Mom

Hannah-Sara Zeller

Dan Zeller

“THE STRENGTH TO NEVER GIVE UP”

DAVID IS MY SOUL MATE. WE SHARE A HOME, CHILDREN, A garden, and community in Efrat. Shlomo Carlebach married us and helped us return to Torah and the land of Israel. Inspired by his spirit of love and joy and his gift of awesome *niggunim*, we helped start a *minyán* in Efrat, Shirat Shlomo. Music, art, and dance, meditative disciplines and Chassidut enrich our lives.

I thank David for Shlomo, the Ba'al-Shem-Tov, the *Me'or Eina'im* of Chernobyl, the Maggid of Mezritch, and Rebbe Nachman. You uplift our Shabbos table with stories and songs that have given me the strength to never give up no matter how many times we have failed and fallen short of our high aspirations.

Now we have planted roots in Efrat in the Judean hills. We enjoy our grandchildren with gratitude to Hashem for the incredible journey. May you be blessed David with health and strength to continue being with all of us who love you. From Woody Guthrie and the American folk music to Indian bhajans to Shlomo and Breslov, your spirit has given me a holy home.

You travel and return again and again and again. From the 60's in California to the humble age of 60, peace, joy, love, and light. May Hashem be with you.

A STROKE OF DUCK

OR: (FOOTPRINTS FROM THE PAST) MAKING TRACKS

A LONG (PARDON, NOW THAT HE IS 60), LONG TIME AGO—possibly before he knew he was to become *Sabba Ruach*, a boy named David Paul Zeller was peaceably splashing in his wading pool. Oliver, the family duck, who stood as tall as seated David, came from behind—wings flapping to jump over the rim of the wading pool. He flew in the pool and gave David a peck on the back.

David covered the distance from pool to back door, through the back porch, the kitchen, dining room, front hall and was halfway up the stairs before his footprints were dry...



Jacqueline Zeller-Levine

MY BABY-BROTHER

I FIRST MET DAVID ZELLER THE DAY HE WAS BORN, OR MAYBE A couple of days later when he was brought home-to my home. I was the older sister; I was two and a half years old. He was and still is my little brother. Even then he was a remarkable person. He was small and very cute, and very noisy.

We shared a room until we were well into our teenage years, having built a divider to separate us to some degree when we were teens. We usually had the sliding doors open so we could share secrets and happenings. David was remarkable because he had an amazing collection of stuffed animals and he would tell long stories to them and about them and I would try to hear what he was saying. He was remarkable because every day he had the same thing in his lunch box once he was old enough to go to school: he had a baloney sandwich on white bread spread with butter, and fruit and a chocolate bar. If the chocolate bar got broken before he got to his lunch he refused to eat it.

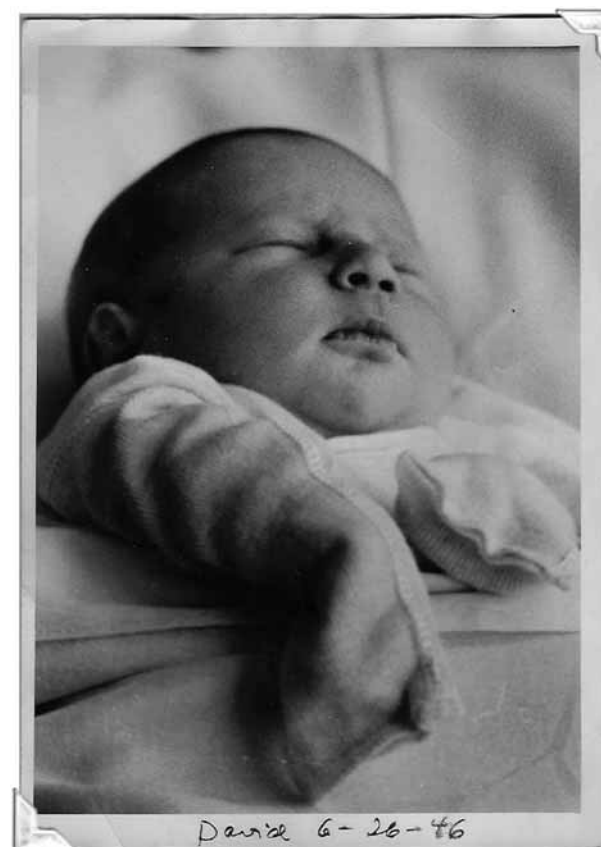
David had a love affair with hats, first a sailor hat, and then a Davey Crockett hat. He lived in these hats. And now he wears a *kippah* full time. I think it's connected in a remarkable way.

We were and are remarkably close. When we were in schools in Switzerland, he would fix me up with boys from his school and I would comfort him when he was homesick, with the excellent tea at my school.

From these stories you can tell that David was as intense and focused as a little boy as he is now as a rabbi, and a spiritual leader as well as a remarkable father, grandfather, son, brother, uncle, and friend. We are close, as sister and brother and as

friends. He inspires me and teaches me. We still share stories and life. I know I would not be who I am and where I am as a person, a mother, wife and psychotherapist without my remarkable little brother.

Thank you David for all your love and connection,
and for always being a part of my life.
Happy 60th Birthday!



Nancy Zeller

OH, THAT HIPPY DAVID...

OH, THAT HIPPY DAVID JUST CAME BACK FROM INDIA ALL HIGH and mighty. The year was approximately 1971 and we were traveling north moving Jackie and Barry and family to the great white north. And he was too “holy” to do dishes at the campgrounds, or to help with the cooking or the set up or takedown of the campsite. And naturally he had no money to help with the provisions or the gas.

But he had fabulous stories from India and songs. He grew on me (us—although since it was his sister, of course she loved him). We said our goodbyes to J and B outside of Vancouver and headed slowly back to Southern California. I remember stopping at a real “commune” outside of Eugene, Oregon. They fed us, gave us our part to contribute towards the “home-grown” dinner—great people. Maybe he wasn’t so derelict as I first thought, ‘cause he sure knew some interesting people.

The only thing I remember from the rest of our trip south is that my respect and love for him kept growing.

So as the “gal” married to your older brother, I offer you my congratulations on your 60th. And being only 3 days older than you, I welcome you into a new decade with new ventures for us both.

Much love and a **Big** Happy Birthday,
Nancy

Aaron Mendelsohn

“UNCLES ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO CALL YOU ON YOUR BIRTHDAY”

I REALIZED RECENTLY THAT DAVID IS MY FAVORITE UNCLE. THIS wasn’t always the case, at least not consciously.

When I was growing up as a secularly-oriented child in the very non-Jewish wilds of Alaska, David would come visit us (his older sister Jacqueline is my mother), and for some reason, probably because he feared for my heritage-denying, wannabe-Catholic soul, he would offer up lessons in Jewish culture and ritual. I sat there and fidgeted and bristled and counted the minutes until he went back to Santa Rosa or Clara or Cruz or whatever crazy California-Jewish kibbutz he came from.

After he’d do his spiel, he would listen patiently as I rejoined with an indignant “You want me to wear those little boxes on my head?! Are you **nuts**?!” then ran off to conspicuously consume a bacon cheeseburger with a side of clams. I was not what you’d call an ideal student.

Years later, I had the pleasure and terror of having David preside over my wedding. Being then a reform-oriented adult living in the very-Jewish wilds of the San Fernando Valley, I was certainly more in touch with my Jewishness—but not **that** in touch. Although I was thrilled that my uncle was going to “do” the wedding—on a basic level, it was nice having someone marry us that actually knew my wife and I and didn’t have to make stuff up—I feared that perhaps Uncle David was, dare I say, **too** Jewish. Which is to say, too Jewish in an Orthodox-Israeli way, which, to my Southern California-based friends and family, many of them gentiles, might as well be like saying “too

Jewish in a Martian way.” Would he want us to do weird ritualistic things? Would he speak Hebrew in some strange ancient dialect? Would the ceremony drag on for eight hours? What would he wear?

Fortunately, we were able to iron out the details to everyone’s satisfaction ahead of time, and the wedding went off without a hitch. Although there was a tense moment when the ceremony drifted past the half-hour mark, and my father-in-law, who is from the tougher part of Hoboken and is not used to things running longer than an episode of “All in the Family,” leaned in to David and prodded him to “speed it up, Rabbi.” But aside from that, it all went swimmingly. There was none of the Efrat-meets-East Valley, Orthodox-meets-Reform awkwardness I was so worried about, and everyone, including my gentile friends—**particularly** my gentile friends—raved about the “guy with the long beard and the flowing white robes” who married us. A friend from Orlando even asked if he was Jesus.

I remember on my tenth birthday, Uncle David called to tell me that he was three times as old as me, and that in ten years he would only be twice as old as me. That concerned me, because I started thinking that I would eventually catch up and pass him. Which, believe it or not, is actually in the process of happening. This year I’m turning forty and he’s turning sixty, which means I’ll catch up to him sometime around our 100th birthdays, which means we could do a joint party and save money.

But there was something that was more significant to David’s phone call which I wasn’t able to recognize when I was ten, something more amazing than the fact that our ages were multiples of each other—and that was that he called me on my birthday at all. I was too young to appreciate the fact that uncles are not **supposed** to call you on your birthday. They are only supposed to give you footballs at Chanukah and beat you at

Scrabble and do “pull my finger” jokes. But David was never one to settle for the normal uncle attentions, or lack thereof. He always had to be more involved, more “connected.” And now, with the luxury of hindsight, I am able to see how connected he actually was.

Like the fact that when he visited us in Alaska, which in and of itself was amazing, he’d always have picked up some new sign language terms so he could speak to my brother Josh, who is deaf. And that he cared enough about me that he’d spend time teaching me about Judaism when I’m sure he’d much rather be doing something else, like eating raw vegetables. And that he brought his children to the States ever so often so they could have a relationship with their cousins. And that he came out for my *Bar Mitzvah*, and my wedding, and his mother’s 85th birthday, and my mom’s wedding in Santa Fe, which he also presided over, even though each flight from Israel cost something like \$800, and that was only one way.

The point I am trying to make is, Uncle David always found the time and wherewithal to be connected to our lives. And what might have seemed intrusive and annoying and embarrassing to a heritage-denying, wannabe-Catholic kid back in the day, to a guy pushing forty actually seems kind of great. And now I actually look forward to his visits, very much so, because I know he’s a guy who gives a damn about me and my family, who not only remembers my kids’ names but knows what’s going on in their lives, who listens almost as good as he talks, who feels terrible because he “only” remembers 37 words in sign language, and who always has something interesting to say, even if it’s kind of “Jewishy” at times. He is that rare kind of uncle. He is an uncle who cares. He is an uncle who loves.

And that's why he's my favorite uncle.
Happy 60th, Uncle David. You are now only 1½ times older
than I am.

Much Love and Respect,
both Presently and Retroactively,
Aaron

Josh Mendelsohn

“...AND YOU WERE SAD THAT IT WAS NOT
ENOUGH...”

DEAREST UNCLE DAVID, AS I WRITE THIS, I HAD JUST SPENT SOME
time with you over the past weekend. I have always treasured
the time we spend together. And I'd always admired you all my
life. Why? Because you had taken the time to learn how to
sign—so you could communicate with me, your deaf nephew.

And I'd admired you even more for actually remembering
just about all the signs you had learned, even 20, 25 years later.
Last weekend, you shared with me how sad you were that you
couldn't sign as well as you used to. I was astounded: of all my
uncles, nay, of all my living relatives on both sides of my family
other than my immediate family, only you took the time and
energy to learn signing, and you were sad that it was not
enough.

I think that speaks volumes of just what kind of person you
are; a sensitive man who always strives to know more, to
communicate better, and to share with others.

Thank you, dear Uncle David, and I love you

מזמור ואליה הלל

לסבא רוח !

מזל טוב !!

שיהיה לך כיף ביום הולדת !

אנחנו אוהבים לבקר אותך, ולשחק איתך בקלפים ובדמקה,
ולספר סיפורים.

וגם לשמוע את השירים של סבא בלילה.

שתרגיש טוב, ותהיה בריא לעוד הרבה זמן.

באהבה,

מזמור ואליה

נ.ב. אני זוכר שלקחת אותי לטיול וראינו פסל גדול של גורילה. אני רוצה
שתיקח אותי לעוד טיולים סבא !

מזמור









Rabbi David Aaron

“YOU HAVE INSPIRED COUNTLESS SOULS TO RECLAIM HASHEM’S LOVE”

PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL STORIES I EVER HEARD WAS Reb David’s story about his meeting with a Shinto priest. It boggles my mind to know that in Shinto tradition Hashem chose Am Yisroel to take responsibility for the whole world—the spiritual and the material.

I can so clearly see Reb David telling over the story with so much sweet humor and *chen*. And then of course after Reb David’s great Torahs and stories he knows how to sing our hearts till they are wide open to heaven’s grace.

David, you are indeed a truly remarkable soul—you always exude love and warmth. And you have surely inspired countless souls to reclaim Hashem’s love. I know no one like you whose voice sounds like a mal’ach.

Happy birthday David!
With much love and admiration,
David Aaron

Debra Alderman

“INSTINCT FOR PEACE AND HARMONY”

IN THE MID-90'S I LIVED IN EFRAT WITH MY FAMILY FOR A FEW years. We frequently attended what we called “The Happy Minyan” (actually it’s “Shirat Shlomo”). This was, and probably still is, the place to go for very spirited Davening, including wonderful dancing and singing, on Friday nights and holidays. Whether or not Rabbi Zeller was the official rabbi of the shul, I’m not sure. But certainly most of us that davened there felt that he was the spiritual leader of the congregation.

Probably my first *Simchat Torah* in Efrat, I was at the Happy Minyan and there were a number of us women that wanted to dance with the Torah. One of the very kind men in the congregation brought one of the sifrei Torah up to the women’s section and, as I recall, women were holding it and dancing with it.

Apparently there was a very hot-headed young man present who found out that the Torah scroll was up in the women’s section and he became extremely upset and felt that this was very inappropriate. I just remember feeling the mood in the building become very tense and the *simcha* starting to drain out of *Simchat Torah*.

And then I remember Rabbi Zeller dealing with the problem in a very sensitive way that wouldn’t hurt the sensibilities of the man who was complaining, and yet at the same time wouldn’t allow him to ruin a very beautiful, meaningful holiday for the women of the congregation.

As I remember, he came up with a compromise. He suggested that the Torah be put on a table in the women’s section and the women would dance around it.

I’m not sure how I felt at the time about this compromise, but now looking back on it, I think that Rabbi Zeller was demonstrating his wisdom and instinct for peace and harmony that not many other people have in the world today.

Helping a disparate group of people come together as a holy congregation is undoubtedly much more difficult than helping a family get along, but to that challenge Rabbi Zeller applied the same principles of *sh’lom bayit* that he so beautifully demonstrates with his own family.

Having read Rabbi Zeller’s book this year and learning about his amazing journey to where he is today, I feel privileged to have learned more about the challenges and lessons he’s experienced throughout his life that have helped him develop his courage and wisdom.

I wish him much blessing and joy as he moves into this next part of life—as he takes his place as an Elder. I pray that he has many more healthy and active years in which to teach people throughout the world the wonderful lessons and insights that I have so appreciated, *Ad me’ah v’esrim!*

Sharamine Amselem

“THAT EVENING, RABBI ZELLER WAS MY ANGEL...”

I HAVE TWO STORIES I WOULD LOVE TO SHARE ABOUT RABBI DAVID Zeller.

Somewher in the 90's, I was doing my *gerut* and had just been to India to visit my family. My family were distraught by my decision (as only a parent can imagine) and were trying every means to dissuade me. My parents invited my aunt, who is a very learned Hindu sanyasi (a rare commodity these days!) to convince me from a religious prospective. The discussion continued all night and at day break, my aunt claimed that even the Aurobindo matha (“The Mother”, a well known female Hindu guru) was a Jewess who had been enlightened by Hinduism.

However, my heart held strong to Hashem, I left India quite emotionally worn out and when I got to London, I heard that Rabbi Zeller from Jerusalem was visiting Yakar. I made a few inquiries and was told that it would be an easy going evening with soothing songs and Chassidic tales... I couldn't think of a better way to rejuvenate my soul, so I went along.

Yes, there was a guitar strumming and Rabbi Zeller started recounting his early spiritual quest that lead him to India and to the Aurobindo matha... I was, as you can imagine, shot back into my reality, curious, and holding my breathe... and he continued, on how he had arranged for a meeting with her, and while he was waiting outside... he heard “Shema Yisrael!” which surprised him. Only afterwards he discovered she was Jewish. At this point I walked out of the room, as I couldn't

contain myself, outside Yakar, I looked towards heaven and burst out laughing... what a cycle! Hashem sends you angels when you need them, that evening Rabbi Zeller, without him knowing, was my angel.

My second story is connected with Yogaville, which is dear to me in many ways. Its founder, Swami Satchidananda was my family's guru and was dear to me as a grandfather and a wonderful spiritual guide. My grandma and aunts still live on the Ashram and Rabbi Zeller and his family knew them. This made me feel quite close to the Zellers (even though I didn't see them that often or tell them) as I felt they understood where I was coming from and weren't afraid of it.

Anyway, back to the story, this time, it was after I had made *aliyah* and was living in Jerusalem. It was a period when, although I was blessed with many dear friends, I was beginning to miss having family, someone who really understood the roots of me, my make up... but who could also respect my journey (yeah, tall order, I know). Just then, Rabbi Zeller invited me for a Shabbat meal as I was going to be in Efrat. It was perfect timing. While I was there, I noticed a tiny photo of Swamiji and Rabbi Carlebach hugging each other... wow!—Rabbi Carlebach was someone else who popped into my life when I needed guidance, and here my two spiritual guides were hugging each other, they had actually met!

I turned around to Rabbi Zeller, and told him I wanted a copy of the photo for my family album. Rabbi Zeller and his wife looked amused and informed me that they had had a guest the week before, and he had said exactly the same thing! Thus, I got to meet my younger brother (in a spiritual sense). He had also just got to Jerusalem, and when we met, we found family (even my grandmother knew him since he was a kid!), we were

there for each other and didn't have to explain ourselves or our journey.

A year later, we both found our respective partners, got married and made our own families... we just needed that little bit of family support, to know who we were to find our *besherets*! Thank you Rabbi Zeller, again you had no idea, that you were Hashem's agent!

Judy Beck

"THE PIED PIPER OF SEEKERS"

RABBI DAVID ZELLER, RABBI OF RABBIS, TEACHER OF TEACHERS and the pied piper of seekers.

My favorite recollection... a Sunday in March, a JCC location in New Jersey, USA... a room filled with people of all ages and all levels of Jewish affiliation. A young man, a teacher of Yoga... unaffiliated, disconnected—until that moment—with anything Jewish, transported by Rabbi Zeller, the meditation, the experience.

His life was changed forever.



Avram Ber

“IN THE PRESENCE OF A HOLY BROTHER...”

IN JULY OF 1999, MY WIFE, BETH, AND I, WERE VISITING SAN DIEGO and met with one of our beloved friends, Rebecca Heisler. Rebecca told us that Rabbi Dovid Zeller was in town and asked if we would like to meet him. Of course, I said yes, and we met him at another of Shlomo's *chevra's* homes.

It was for me, love at first sight. For here, I was in the presence of a holy brother, who was carrying on the Shlomo tradition of kindness, sweetness and gentleness.

So, we have stayed in touch ever since, and I have become one of his faithful supporters and admirers.

Five years ago, my wife and I spent a beautiful Shabbos with him and his lovely family in Efrat. The memory of that Shabbos lingers on in my heart.

Reb Dovid Zeller is a sweet singer, a meaningful author, a dedicated spreader of the Light; and for all that, I love him. But, above all, I feel a profound connection with him because of the sweetness of his soul.

May he grace us with his presence for many years to come.

Your soul brother,
Dr. Avram Ber

Maryse Berdah

“FOR THE FIRST TIME I COULD SEE HOW WONDERFUL AND BRIGHT JUDAISM IS”

IT WAS IN CAMPRA, IN THE ALPS, DURING THE SUMMER CAMP OF PIR Vilayat Khan Sufi Order, in 1997 (or 1998?). I was 32 years old. I don't really know why I had chosen this week with David Zeller, but I'm sure that it has been one of the most important moments in my life.

I still remember often the face of Rabbi Zeller, his voice (speaking or singing), the stories he told us, and many things he taught us. When life is too hard, I sing to myself: “All the world is just a narrow bridge” ... or another song. And it begins to be easier.

I'm now living in Africa, in Senegal, I divorced, changed of work, did a lot of things, have two children, and this meeting is always like a light. The meeting with Rabbi Zeller was especially important, because it was my first time to meet a rabbi, to hear from Jewish mysticism and to celebrate Shabbat. You may say that most of the people never meet a rabbi, hear from Jewish mysticism or celebrate Shabbat. Yes, but... I have a Jewish father! Thanks to Rabbi Zeller, I could for the first time understand why my father never told us anything about his religion, and how wonderful and bright Judaism is. I'm very happy from this part of me.

When I was in Campra, I was Muslim and I still am. I try to follow the way of Sufism with the Tariqa Alawiya whose master is another wonderful man, Cheikh Khaled Bentounes, who is living in the south of France. And I dream of a wonderful meeting that could happen, between David Zeller and him.

Before ending, just a little story, like a joke: During the Camp, a woman told Rabbi Zeller: "Has anybody told you that you look like Woody Allen?" Rabbi Zeller answered: "Oh, I know, but I'm much funnier... But he gets much more money than me!"

Well, I can only say: Meeting Rabbi Zeller was one of the most important and happiest gifts that G-d gave me. So Thank you, my G-d, and thank you, dear Rabbi Zeller!

Asher Blachman

"YOU FEEL AND LISTEN TO YOUR HEART"

I HAVE QUITE A FEW WONDERFUL MEMORIES, AND WOULD LIKE TO share a few of them with you now. I truly feel blessed to have had close contact with you Dovid, for the past eighteen years or so, though I wish that it had been more frequent over the years.

The first one goes back to the summer of 1987. The place was Ruach. I think that it was the first time that I met you and heard you speak. We had an incredible Shabbat with Reb Shlomo and you and all the other special people that were there. On Sunday afternoon, there was a "panel" of rabbis and teachers that included Shlomo and Rabbi Fund and you and Belima Feinstein, that answered questions that were directed towards them from the participants in Ruach. I remember having been especially struck by the way you answered the questions and in particular by two specific answers that you gave that day. I even have a tape of the whole afternoon and have listened to it over the years and played it for our kids.

There was a young man there who ultimately identified himself as Eliahu, who said that he had been a spiritual searcher for many years and had never found a teacher who was able to bring him to as high a point as a particular non-Jewish teacher that he had found. He of course wanted to know if there was a Jewish match for this teacher of his. In your answer to him you mentioned Rebbe Nachman's teaching: that one needs to know whether there is a purpose in creation, to his being here, and if there is (since there is!), how does he fit into that and fulfills his role in the whole purpose.

In addition to this, there was a question raised there by someone about aliyah and why more Americans don't make

aliyah. You spoke about your successful aliyah and mentioned that by your nature, you don't calculate and plan and reason through as much as you act based on your feelings. You said that you had not exactly planned to "come on aliyah" as to come to Israel, and then, the way things developed and according to what you felt, you ended up staying. The reason that I mention this, is that I once heard you speak about Shlomo and about his message to us, and you said that one of Shlomo's messages to all of us was that we should always stay in touch with our souls... with what we feel inside, and that this should be an important factor in our decision-making. What you mentioned that day at Ruach sounded to me just like that. In your answer to the question about aliyah, you stressed that you **feel** and listen to your heart and then act. I thought to myself, "I feel the same way about myself and it's so nice to hear somebody whom I respect so much saying the same thing!" Ever since then, I have listened more and more to my internal voice and the feelings it expresses.

Regarding the first question that you answered regarding a purpose in creation, I myself was on my way back to Judaism. Your mentioning of what Rebbe Nachman says rang in my ears for many months afterwards. For me, it was important to contemplate and investigate this issue of purpose, and the more I dealt with it, the more I felt pulled towards becoming more Jewish.

Before I mention a couple of very special moments that I remember with you, Dovid, I just want to thank you for something that you gave me and that I know you gave to many, many other people. During Reb Shlomo's last years, he did several days of teaching at Yakar and at people's homes in Jerusalem. I remember your tireless efforts in organizing and helping to run these learnings. Thank you so much for having helped to bring Shlomo to the people during his last years.

Since I mentioned Shlomo, I personally have an incredibly special memory of something that happened to me at Shlomo's *levayah*. It was at the end, although the truth is that the *levayah* even at this point had not ended. I think that there were still hundreds of people STILL singing next to the *kever* even at this point! In any case, at the point when I was about to leave, I suddenly saw you and Hannah-Sarah in the parking lot. Of course you and I gave each other a hug... a very long long long and emotional hug. I immediately broke down and began to sob, and soon enough I was *mamesh* weeping. I remember having felt SO comfortable that I was weeping on YOUR shoulder! Hannah-Sara looked on with great empathy as if to say "I know exactly how you feel."

Sometimes, a person can get really down and begin to feel desperate... it should not happen. However, if it does, I bless us that we have someone to turn to who is as understanding and uplifting as you, Dovid, as it happened to me a few years ago. For a few months I had been having a very hard time, and one morning when I felt like I really didn't know if I could go on or not, I called you, and you said that at that moment you were about to teach a class. Of course, you heard my cry for help and simply brought me slowly back to a point from which I could really see things more clearly and get a grasp on things. Thank you for having been there for me and for having given me what I needed to return to myself.

I could continue with many more memories, but it's getting late... We wish you a wonderful wonderful birthday, and may you be blessed with many more years of good health and joy together with Hannah-Sara and all of the family. May you be *zocheh* to continue to teach and enlighten and uplift everyone that Hashem sends your way. Hoping to be together with you soon.

Love, Asher and Hannah Blachman

Randy Blindman-Chipman

“...NURTURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MY SPIRITUALITY”

DURING MY COLLEGE YEARS I DID *CHAZARA B'TSHIVA*, BUT LEFT when I met my ex-husband. After making aliyah, I was taking yoga, but when they introduced meditation, which included singing songs of praise to the guru, something did not sit right with me.

Then I was told about “Jewish Meditation”, taught by Dovid Zeller. I became an avid participant for many years of study, meditation, singing and Chassidut. At one point, I realized that I'd just have to go to shul on *Rosh HaShana*—and I've been going ever since—completely returning to observance.

And then, 8-1/2 years ago I met Yehonatan—and Dovid agreed to be one of the *mesader kiddushin*. Thank you Dovid, for nurturing the development of my spirituality!

Shmuel Bowman

“I THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT BE TOO MUCH FOR YOU!”

I WAS THE HILLEL DIRECTOR AT TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY FOR several years in the late 90's and early 00's, and David was a frequent visiting educator. We launched a workshop series on meditation, and David came out to Tel Aviv to initiate the series by leading the first meditation session. The students were very excited. While Tel Aviv University is far from a religiously observant population, they are very much spiritual seekers.

The students prepared for David's arrival and set up the room with mats and cushions on the floor, darkened windows, and candles—dozens of them! By the time David arrived there were over a hundred candles flickering inside the Hillel office and even lining the entrance to the room. It was a remarkable sight.

After David arrived and settled into a comfortable sitting position, he smiled and pulled out a single candle from his bag. “You know,” he whispered to the overflow crowd of tentative students, “I brought this single candle today, and even then I wasn't sure whether to use it. I thought that it might be too much for you! But I see that you are quite fine with it.” Everyone smiled. David was so sensitive and aware of not pressuring non-religious students, that he did not anticipate that these students were so hungry for what David offered; they went overboard in creating a spiritual space for him.

Doug Boyd

**“A FAR-REACHING CAPACITY FOR EMPATHY
AND INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING”**

I HAVE KNOWN DAVID—AND KNOWN HIM WELL—FOR somewhere beyond 30 years. We crossed paths often, over the years, at the annual Council Grove Conferences. Back in the 70’s and early 80’s we made several presentations together.

Through David I had the opportunity to meet several leading and influential Rabbis. In a major gathering sponsored by our Cross-Cultural Studies Program in 1979, David Zeller played a major beneficial role. He and I were in regular communication regarding details of preparation and accommodation. (This was a “round table” dialog with spiritual leaders of many faiths and ethnic connections.) David’s references and communications as well as his advice to us were important and valuable beyond description. David also assisted me in my own presentations at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology.

I will remember David as having a far-reaching capacity for empathy and intercultural understanding. I’ll also remember him as one willing to acquaint and share Jewish custom and celebration to non-Jewish persons in a gentle and respectful way. I believe that it is owing to his awareness and comfort with his own being that others—all others—are comfortable with him. In addition, I will always remember David’s empathetic understanding and support of this land’s oppressed Native Peoples.

Indeed, Rabbi David Zeller has been a valuable friend to me personally, and a great benefit to my work and to the mission of our foundation, the Cross-Cultural Studies Program. I think often of this friend and guide and will always be wishing him the very best.

David and Shoshana Cooper

“HOW MANY LIVES HE HAS TOUCHED...”

TWENTY YEARS AGO, SHOSHANA AND I HAD MADE ALIYAH AND lived as new immigrants on HaBikkurim street in the Old City. One day, we were visited by a friend of a friend whose name was David Zeller. David was in Israel to search out housing for his family and he needed a temporary place to stay in Jerusalem. Our living room couch was offered this busy young man and in a matter of a couple days, this person—whom we had never met before—became one of our dearest friends.

During the years that Shoshana and I lived in Israel, we became an extended part of the Zeller family. We shared in the joys and sorrows. We were together at the Shabbos table so many times. After Elana passed away, it seemed that David and the kids were with us for almost every major Hag for a number of years.

I learned with David as I had learned with Shlomo, true love is hearing the same story told many times while never interrupting the teller because each time something new shows up. David proposed marriage to Hannah-Sara in our home one of those *Hagim* and a new era began in the Zeller household.

Every time David and I have walked on public streets together, whether in Israel or the USA, I have been astonished to discover how many lives he has touched. Out of the dozens of times we have walked together, I can hardly remember a time that we have been able to go for more than a block without someone approaching David with a smile of joy and gratitude. Invariably, this was someone who had attended an event or evening with David that had touched their hearts. Based on this

experience, it is obvious that David has touched many thousands of people with his teachings and his music.

So, now, David, sixty years have gone by since you entered this world. In our tradition, the blessings suggest that you are only half way, *Ad me'ah v'esrim*. While very few human beings have physically attained the hundred and twenty years, I am confident that the gifts you have offered will indeed last that long and probably for many generations beyond. The world has been blessed with your presence; may it continue for a long time to come.

Shoshana and I hold you in the deepest part of our hearts, always; we are delighted to be part of the family. We send you love and blessings for good health, happiness, and lots of flowing *parnassah* in the many years ahead.

B'Ahavah Gedolah,
David & Shoshana

Randy Craig

“I HAVE BEEN ON FBI LISTS MY WHOLE ADULT LIFE BECAUSE OF DAVID”

DAVID SANG IN “THE MABEL SHAW BRIDGES MEMORIAL SKIFFLE Society”, our jug band, and played kazoo. He told me of hitchhiking and getting a ride from a guy who found out that David played kazoo. The guy made David a kazoo out of rosewood and sent it to him.

I am most grateful to David for making me see the madness of the Viet Nam war and of our government at the time. I was apolitical, just an artsy, theatre person. David and Tim (Walker) Ryan, also of the Jug Band, made me start thinking politically and affected my thinking and my life from then on. The fact that I have been on FBI lists my whole adult life is because of David.

Peace, Randy Craig

Cathy Dinovitz

“THE ONLY TIME THAT BABY WOULD CRY WAS WHEN THE TAPE STOPPED!”

WHEN MY DAUGHTER MIRIAM WAS ONE AND A HALF YEARS OLD, we were in the park playing with my good friend Etty and Miriam’s little friends Manya and Mordechai. Miriam came down a slide and landed poorly and we realized she had really hurt herself, so we rushed her to the hospital where she was diagnosed with a broken femur bone, and our poor little baby was put in traction.

There she was flat on her back, with her little legs up in the air, wailing piteously and continuously! She was totally inconsolable and it certainly did not help that her parents were weeping with and on top of her!

Into this pathetic scene, stroll David and Etty... they tell me “go take a break, we’ll take over from here”...and to our shock and amazement, proceed to pop a tape into a tape recorder and David’s voice came out soft and soothing and singing his chants. Our baby became totally quiet and totally calmed. Well, of course we listened to his tapes around the clock and the only time that baby would cry was when the tape stopped!

For years after that, whenever any of the kids were cranky or nervous, all we would have to do is pop in the tape and miracle of miracles, calmness would ensue.

This is a priceless memory for us and we are forever grateful! Happy, happy Birthday and many many more in health and happiness

Love, The Dinovitz’s

Esther Dunn

“WHAT A DELIGHT IT WAS TO SEE YOU
THERE!”

THIS IS TO GREET YOU ON YOUR 60TH BIRTHDAY AND WISH YOU many fulfilling years ahead. My memories of you, David, are from way before your journey into the meetings with ‘remarkable people’. I remember you from the early birthday parties (1950s) of Richard and Peter. Jay took 16mm films of the children then, and we have beautiful shots of you, Dan and Jacqueline smiling and innocent at their birthday parties. So you see we go back a little.

Another thing that stands out is the time of my grandson Aaron’s *Bar Mitzvah* in Israel when you came to greet us at our hotel with a huge bouquet of roses.

What a delight it was to see you there!

And not so long ago, I had the pleasure of reading your book about your journey and meetings with remarkable people and was deeply moved and impressed to learn about your experiences and path through life.

My warm wishes to you and Hannah-Sara and all your beautiful children and grandchildren,

From all of my family
Love—Esther

Robert Eidus

“IT WAS MY LUCK...”

I HAD JUST COME BACK FROM AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY THROUGH the Southwest, with Kachina ceremonies in the oldest Hopi village in the four corners, to powerful experience in Sedona, Arizona and the awesomeness of the Grand Canyon; then I passed through a snow storm to arrive in Santa Fe, New Mexico and met David for a weekend of Kabbalah and song.

It was my luck that David was visiting his sister and a wonderful experience for me to learn more with the book recommendations from David. The book “The Thirteen Petalled Rose” was one of the recommendations which changed the way I look at life, now. I have even taught a one hour class on Adin Steinsaltz’s chapter “Worlds” in this book. In addition, David shared some of my tonic medicine when he came to our little congregation in the mountains many years later.

Alexander Engel

“YOU HAVE BROUGHT ABRAHAM’S TENT WITH YOU...”

[Translation below]

MEINE SEHNSUCHT SUCHTE IRGENDETWAS HINTER MEINEM VATER und meinem Großvater. Das fühlte ich, als ich mich meinen väterlichen Ahnen näherte. Da kam eine Kraft, die mich berührte und ich erahnte: dies war die tiefe Frömmigkeit meines Urgroßvaters, dem Kantor aus Ratibor im heutigen Polen. In diesem Moment fühlte ich: in meinem Herzen bin ich Jude.

Jetzt war ein Tor für mich offen und ich wollte jüdische Menschen kennenlernen und ich wollte eine Synagoge besuchen.

Übers Internet erfuhr ich, dass die nächste Synagoge in Graz ist und dass die nächste Veranstaltung „Mystik im Alltag“ von Rabbi David Zeller sein würde. Ich meldete mich an, fuhr nach Graz und betrat zum ersten Mal in meinem Leben eine Synagoge—dies war vor einigen Jahren und ich bin nur ein Jahr jünger als Du.

Am Eingang der Synagoge traf ich Aron. Irgendwer in mir sagte zu ihm: „Ich möchte heimkommen“, er lächelte mich an und sagte: „Das wollen wir doch alle!“ und er gab mir eine *Kippah*.

Ich habe viel geweint jenes Wochenende mit Dir. Dann bin ich wieder zurückgefahren zu meiner Frau und meinen Kindern und ich war so erfüllt und voller Liebe.

Meine Frau sagte: Du hast Abrahams Zelt mitgebracht.

Alles Liebe Dir zum Geburtstag

[Translation]

MY LONGING SENSED SOMETHING BEYOND MY FATHER AND grandfather. I felt it when I approached my ancestors’ age. There came an energy that touched me and I recognized this was the deep belief of my great grandfather, the Cantor from Ratibor in today’s Poland. At this moment I felt: in my heart I am a Jew.

Now the gate was open for me. I wanted to meet Jewish people and I wanted to visit a synagogue. Via the internet I learned that the next synagogue was in Graz and that the next presentation would be “Mystic in Everyday Life” by Rabbi David Zeller. I registered, drove to Graz and entered for the first time in my life a synagogue—this was several years ago and I am only one year younger than you.

At the entrance of the synagogue I met Aron, somebody in me said to him: “I want to come home.” he smiled at me and said “that’s what we all want” and he gave me a *Kippah*.

I cried many tears at that weekend with you. Then I returned again to my wife and children and I was so fulfilled and full of love.

My wife said: you have brought Abraham’s Tent with you.

Much love to you on this birthday.

[Translated by Lore Zeller]

Karen Engel

Norm Enteen

“SHOMER YISRO’EL”

I HAVE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL. DO YOU REMEMBER at the first workshop you conducted in Graz a man attended from Germany who lives in Austria and whose last name was also Engel? He is Alexander Engel and his great-grandfather was a Chassidic rabbi in Poland long before the war. Since we met at your workshop we have kept in touch, visited each other, explored our possible shared family ties (still unclear at this point) and our families have become friends.

Anyway, Alexander has six children, all of whom are independent, smart, artistic and talented. Janina, Milena and I visited his family out in the country, near a small village near St. Veit, a small town near Klagenfurt in southern Austria this summer. One evening after a wonderful meal, five year old Elea, the youngest starting singing a melody that sounded very familiar. It was *Shomer Yisro’el*—and she was singing it in tune, and exactly as you do. She does because Alexander gave her your children’s cassette and she knows the whole thing by heart. Imagine—in the middle of rural Austria, in a family that despite intermarriage, secularism, the Sho’ah and its aftermath, somehow maintains its ties to Judaism, and somehow that holy *ruach* manages to persist or reappear in the most unlikely places.

Karen Engel Leiterin

“LIFTS ME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF MY HIGHER SELF”

DAVID IS A REMARKABLE AND WONDERFUL, HUMAN BEING WHO has been an important influence on my personal journey. I have been his student for many years—both at weekly and special occasions at Yakar and on Shabatons. David has enabled me to strengthen my Jewish meditation practices and has deepened my love for and connection to Judaism.

I was especially moved by his teachings of Rav Menachem Ekstein, as we studied and meditated through his book, “Visions of a Compassionate World”.

I continue to play David’s music, which facilitates my process of connecting to *HaShem*. His song, “Return Again” is one of the many that lifts me to the knowledge of my higher self. I recently read his personal biography and felt as if I was vicariously experiencing his variety of encounters with so many other aware travelers.

Thank you, David, for enriching my life and easing my path.

Tsvi Epstein

CONTINUE TO OPEN GATES

WE HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY DOVID IN LARGE AND SMALL WAYS for what now, looking back, is really a long time.

I just returned from davening... everytime I put on my *talit*, I sing “*Ki imcha mekor chaim*” with a tune from Dovid and often think of him. In larger ways Dovid and Reb Shlomo—to whom he introduced us—opened gates for us to connect with *HaShamayim* in “conscious-traditional” ways. A big piece of our library comes from the bookstore in his garage in Santa Clara, Ca.

We first touched with Dovid in Palo Alto in his class on “trans-personal Judaism” at the JCC. This sounded like something we might be able to connect with. It was followed by a Jewish Meditation class with Estelle Frankel.

Elaine, not yet ETTY or married to Dovid, was also in that class. Later came the Network of Conscious Judaism and meditations in their house on Los Robles in Palo Alto. In one session, my wife Bonnie—now Navah—saw that it was time to make our home kosher. We shared learning with Reb Shlomo at their houses in P.A and Santa Clara.

They were blessed with holy children, Manya and Binyamin-Mordechai, and then the pregnancy that brought holy Esther Emunah and with it concerns for the well-being of the holy mother ETTY. ETTY was so holy and yet so grounded. We all knew that if anyone could bring down Heavenly help to fight the decrees coming from the doctors she and Dovid could. Even today Navah and I cannot hear “Let Go” without tears of happiness and sadness over our dear friend.

We are still close with the Hellers and Linda Paul from the board of the Network. Collectively, we were all so *b’simcha* as Dovid joined in holiness to Hannah-Sarah. We were also struck in admiration before this when he resisted the pressure to continue into a relationship that was not quite right, even as the wedding guests were arriving.

Dovid, you have been a holy friend and teacher for us. May you continue to open gates and may we continue to walk in many of your footprints.

Navah Bonnie Epstein

“DEFUSING THE POSSIBLE HOLIER-THAN-THOU PERSPECTIVE”

A TEACHING OF R. DAVID’S I PASS ON AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH, still 25 years after learning it:

An orthodox lifestyle, observing the many could-be-challenging mitzvot, is an avenue for those of us needing tools for spiritual elevation.

A close member of David’s family, he told us, didn’t (at that time) observe orthodox mitzvot but was at such a high natural spiritual level that he was already at or above where David was spiritually as an orthodox person. David’s awe and respect for that person was evident.

Telling this story to persons outside of orthodoxy has the effect of defusing the possible holier-than-thou perspective.

Doug Erwin

“DON’T YOU WANT A CHRISTIAN FRIEND?”

I COULD WRITE ALL NIGHT ABOUT DAVID... WE MET AT A FRIEND’S house in San Francisco. He was tired having flown from the East and was preparing for one of his musical events. I had heard of him numerous times and asked him to make a special attempt to come to Shabbos Meal. He replied he would only stay up until 21:00 because he was tired and only doing this as a favor... he was a bit grouchy and really had little interest in meeting me... at least that was what I felt.

We sat down to eat and I told him how happy I was to meet him... He asked “why?” I told him I was interested in having a Jewish friend as a close friend, like a brother. I asked him if he didn’t want such a friend of a Christian?... like a brother? He hadn’t thought of it and that was the beginning of a long and wonderful friendship. We stumbled into bed at 3:00 AM.

In 1989 I came to Israel for the first time. Two partners and myself had developed a program promoting peace between Jewish and Palestinian children via the arts... that is Arts with a capital A. David was part of that celebration that took place in Ma’alot-Tarshicha. We had over 200 children of both ethnic groups that worked together making the start of the “Carpet of Peace,” a children’s sculpture that over time became as large as a football field with over 5000 hands traced out of brightly colored paper and joined together to make a visual statement of PEACE.

The “Carpet of Peace” went around the world and showed in United Nations Celebrations, in museums, schools, hospitals, to mention only a few venues. David sang, told stories and

performed with Palestinian musicians... He had just married Hannah-Sara and over the years we became close as any two men and families could. In 1991 I came back to Israel to be a part of a conference and celebration David organized with Ram Dass and other men who are well known but my memory for names is worn... what an experience that was!

Over the years, David and I have stayed in touch with each other, me usually joining him with friends in San Francisco. Often I was the only *Goy* in the group, yet my dear friend remarked that I was more Jewish than anyone he knew... He had a big part in teaching me of the Jewish ways and for this I will always be grateful. Even though my traditions are Christian, my soul has always felt Jewish. It was David who brought that magic out in me, making my being on this planet more meaningful and pleasant.

I miss not seeing him more often. I treasure every minute we do spend together and thank -*- that we are friends... better yet, brothers...

The stories I have are many, but like every good friend, I am already late in sending this short story... So, with many blessings for a **long** life, full of meaning and purpose... sprinkled every now and then with joy.

Happy Happy Birthday my dear friend! You are a gift to the world and personally to me...

Much love,
Doug Erwin

Estelle Eugene

“THE ATMOSPHERE THAT DAVID CREATED”

I SO REMEMBER OUR FIRST MEETING WITH DAVID. IT WAS AT THE wonderful Yoga for Peace Seminar held at Hotel Ma’ale HaChamisha, Jerusalem In January 1995. Throngs of people from all over the world hastened to partake in sessions taken by world famous yogis, eager to participate in the spirit of love and compassion to share blessing, light and the desire for peace in the Middle East and the world.

There was a delightful tiny synagogue on the site. There David sat and held a group of us in thrall with his wonderful stories. As he talked, the setting sun cast its deep orange hues into the darkening space in which we sat enhancing the atmosphere that David created.

It was an unforgettable experience and for many years afterwards, brought together, not only by our mutual association with Yakar, but with the sheer joy of knowing each other, we have shared times not of quantity but of great quality.

We love you David, and we wish you a wonderful happy birthday in your sixtieth year.

Many many blessings on your sweet, sweet nature.

Michael Eugene

“HE SO HUMANELY CHANGES MIND STATES”

APART FROM MY SON AND MY FATHER, I HAVE LOVED TWO MEN IN my life. The first was my best friend who died nearly twenty years ago; the second is Dovid.

Firstly, let me say that I agree with every word Estelle has set out in her appreciation of Dovid. Secondly, I must qualify what I have just said by emphasizing that this love for Dovid was put to the greatest test when I used to pick him up from Heathrow Airport. As a result of our greetings and hugs, I found myself afterwards when driving away, picking out from my mouth, the hairs of his beard, an occupation with which I was fully engaged for the next few days. Then I had to go through the whole experience again when taking him back to the airport when he left the country.

I must say the main reason that I love Dovid is because he so humanely changes mind states. He changed mine for which I shall forever be grateful, so—I love you Dovid.

See you soon (I hope) I miss you.

Mimi Feigelson

“BEYOND ANYTHING WE WOULD MEET IN THE WHITE SPACES BETWEEN THE WORDS”

“THE PEOPLE YOU KNOW THE MOST, YOU KNOW THE LEAST”. I heard this sentence for the first time in the early eighties, in a small classroom in Kiryat Moshe, when Midreshet Lindenbaum was still Midreshet Bruria and it occupied a residential apartment on rehov Ben Zion 2. My notebook, that I still have, says on it, “Rabbi Dr. David Zeller—Jewish Meditation” and weekly I would make my way from Har Hatzofim to hear a shiur. It was not only a learning opportunity; it was also a life line—a life line to life, to Torah, to Hashem.

I apologized as we went around the room and introduced ourselves: “You may have to explain things to me again; I have never learned Torah in English and though I have an American accent I may not understand all that you say.” He assured me that I wouldn’t get lost, but when he translated the word “constellation” as *mazal* I felt that there was something that I wasn’t getting, and I knew that beyond anything we would meet in the white spaces between the words. We always do.

David touched my heart and my soul. I knew he was meant to be my teacher when he said that while we are in our mothers’ womb each and every one of us is taught the Torah that we need for our lifetime. I had grown up with that teaching, but it was always taught as if to say we all learned the Torah—the same Torah. No one, till that moment, definitely not a Rav, had come out and articulated something that I had always felt but didn’t know that our tradition could embrace: we each carry within us a unique Torah—the one we need to

live in G-d's world. And it is this individual and unique Torah that we're to learn in preparation for serving Hashem in this world. This teaching that David shared brought peace to my heart, assurance to my soul and coined the nature of the mission I had set out on from the moment I was born till the moment I leave the world: to uncover and share the unique Torah that I was given. It has molded my work in the world as a teacher and Rav: to help my students do the same for themselves, as David, so skillfully had done for me.

"The people you know the most, you know the least" has never left me. David taught that at some point we stop listening to the people we are closest with. We think that we know them, and as time progresses we only hold on to the friend, or sibling, we once knew, but not necessarily the person sitting in front of us. It has continuously demanded of me to listen time and again. It has seasoned my eyes to look differently at the people I am close with—what has changed since the last time we were together—are they taller, or G-d forbid, a bit smaller; do they look like they're having a hard time being here, or actually they look like they are dancing in their seat! When I sit with my *chavruta* and learn I try not to complete his sentences, but rather allow for the wonder to seep in. It is David's voice within me that repeats with every encounter, "The people you know the most, you know the least" and I wait to learn something new. David's Torah has kept my life new, fresh, full and ever evolving. It has kept my mind, heart and soul open, young and learning. It has kept the mystery of Hashem's world ever unfolding. It has kept my lips praying, "Master of the World, please grant me the ability to never cease to live the glory of your world, the glory of your Torah, the glory of my life."

As the constellations began to shine and become clear, the walls of classroom became limiting. It was then that David became not only teacher but also colleague and ever-lasting friend. It is in these unfolding white spaces between the letters that we continue to meet and hold each other with infinite love, respect and gratitude.

Helaine Finkelstein

“MY FAVORITE FRIDAY AFTERNOON RITUAL...”

THE ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE SHABATON READ: “NOURISH Your *Neshamah* in the Judean Hills” and nourished it was! That was my first encounter with the gentle, generous soul named David Zeller. I was a newly separated arrival from Canada and felt more than slightly displaced so that announcement really spoke to me. The Shabatons were fabulous... my *neshamah* felt as if it had come home and David Zeller was the welcoming committee.

I became a regular at David’s Wednesday meditations at Yakar and it was exactly the balm that I needed to assuage the pain of separation from my family. When I joined in with his chant “Return again, return again, return to the land of your soul” the tears began to flow while at the same time my soul began to take flight. I loved those meditation evenings. David tenderly guided us to touch the deepest places in our collective Jewish Soul. His insightful teaching always inspired and uplifted. I looked forward to Wednesdays and the opportunity to soar on the wings of his songs, coaxed aloft by his sweet voice.

I can probably credit my decision to make aliyah at least in part to David. I was on a quest to find my place in the orthodox world and David showed me that what I was searching for existed here in Jerusalem. There was a spiritual community of orthodox Jews here where I could be happy and build a new life.

Over the two and half years since then there have been other Shabatons and classes and David continues to be an inspiring teacher and role model for me both personally and

professionally. Many of my therapy clients have benefited from the teachings I have gleaned from him. My favorite Friday afternoon ritual is to sit quietly and listen to David’s music as part of my preparation for Shabbat.

I am grateful that David has touched my life in such a significant way and I extend my best wishes to him on this special birthday for continued good health and many more years of inspired teaching.

Judy Fox

“MY HEALING PROCESS WAS MUCH FASTER...”

I MET RABBI ZELLER IN 1998. I FLEW TO ISRAEL WITH TEN OF MY fellow graduates from Temple Chai’s three year adult advanced study program in Phoenix, Arizona. We were planning to study in Jerusalem, at the Hartman Institute, and at Yakar where Rabbi Zeller was teaching. It was through his remarkable teachings I began a journey that would change my life forever.

We boarded the bus at the hotel. Rabbi Berk told us about his friend Rabbi David Zeller, but we really didn’t pay much attention. First impressions are an interesting thing. I thought to myself it’s another one of Rabbi Berk’s hippie friends from his Berkley days. Little did I know this beautiful man with a guitar and gentle but brilliant voice was going to play such a tremendous role in my life. I listened to his music and felt a calm that I hadn’t felt in a very long time. David sang, and shared a little bit of his meditation methods combined with stories of Reb Shlomo Carlebach, and I fell asleep! I should have known then just how powerful he was. We saw him a few more times in Israel and if I didn’t have children to go home to I don’t think I would have ever left Israel. My Judaism has always been a very big part of my life but there I felt so connected to life and to myself. I connected with David on a level I had only connected with one other person in my lifetime: Rabbi Morris Adler from Shaarey-Zedek in Southfield, Michigan. He was my Rabbi as a child. He was the kind of Rabbi you only read about in books; just like David he truly cared about his congregants,

and it wasn’t just a job. He also shared my passion for Israel and used to tell me wonderful stories I will cherish always.

David came to the states to teach and hold meditation workshops and I was on a mission to get him to Phoenix. I wanted my family to meet him and I wanted the Phoenix to experience the joy his words, music and meditations brought to me and so many others.

I have 3 beautiful boys. Evan is 21, Seth is 14, and Justin is 11. I was diagnosed with Lupus in 1985 after the birth of my first son. Living with a chronic illness isn’t easy but I learned to cope and found strength in my family and in my Judaism, most people never even knew I was ill because I was so strong

My life changed drastically in 1999, my doctors informed me I needed a bi-lateral mastectomy. My husband of 18 years moved out 8 months later and as they say the rest is history. Justin lives with me, and I take care of my ill parents. Justin goes to Jewish Day School. He is a beautiful soul. After a very long battle Seth is finally coming home and my beautiful Evan is in college living at my brother David’s and has finally found inner peace.

You wonder where Rabbi Zeller fits into all of this. When I was in the hospital in 1999 I received a call while I was in the waiting area prior to taking me in for my mastectomies. I wasn’t scared—I was numb. It was David. They were just about to put me under and he sang to me. I am crying as I write this. Rabbi Zeller’s voice was the last voice I heard before I went under and it was the first voice I heard when I woke.

My doctor’s were astonished that anyone would take the time and call from Israel! I told them that he was my Rabbi. A real Rabbi, my Rabbi and my friend. The doctors told me because of the calls they felt my healing process was so much

quicker almost twice as fast as the average patient. This was just an example. He would send me books of prayers, and he always seemed to send a message or call at the right time. It's been a rough few years but David has seen me through each and every moment from Israel. I live in Arizona, I belong to a Synagogue but the strength that his prayers and teaching and strength have given me when I needed a friend have been more than words can express. I have shared David's CDs with people that needed them and they touch every soul in a different way. Most importantly he has managed to share his compassion through his music and his meditations for the whole world to experience. I only hope every one is as lucky as I am to call him my friend. You know the funny thing I don't think he has a sense of how powerful his words are. He is in every sense of the word a Jewel to our people.

I wish Rabbi David Zeller the most wonderful birthday wishes. I send my love to his beautiful wife; I wish them peace in their home, and in Israel. Most of all David, May G-d give you strength, health, happiness and long life and may all the kindness and goodness you've blessed so many others with come back to you my friend tenfold. There is no one like you; it is an honor to call you my friend, my Rabbi, my teacher.

I love you,
Judy Fox

“SOMEONE WHO IS ALWAYS THERE”

WHERE TO START? OR, ACTUALLY, HOW TO START? IT SEEMS THAT my connection to Dovid is much deeper than the years we have known each other.

We first met when he was my teacher at Yakar, guiding me into spirituality and meditation in class as well as my taking part in Shevet evenings and retreats. Although born into a Jewish family, I had minimal experience in anything related to Judaism and nothing regarding spirituality and meditation. It was an instant love affair!

Not only did my mind expand during those years but my connection to *HaShem* became an integral part of who I am today, a close bonding which has stayed with me and has been a support during the good times and difficult periods as well.

Along the way, Dovid became a dear friend, my guru, someone who is always there, at times not setting boundaries to protect himself... but then he wouldn't be Dovid.

My horizon, my life, my very being has been enriched and blessed since meeting Dovid. May this friendship continue until...

How grateful I am for being invited to share in this special celebration! At least, until 120 dear Dovid.

Miriam Futterman

“THAT HALLEL WAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST
HALLELS WE HAD EVER EXPERIENCED”

THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS TO SAY ABOUT DOVID AND HOW HE has touched our lives during the past 25 years, But we are going to single out one particular area...

When our first son Yehudah Eli was a baby, we would have music playing most of the time in our home. When he began to crawl, I noticed that whenever I would play Dovid's tapes, he would crawl towards the tape player and stay there to listen. When Yehudah Eli turned 3½ years, he was ready to leave this world. During the last 2 months of his life, he had pain from the cancer. Whenever we would play Dovid singing *Lulei Toratcha*, Yehudah Eli would relax and find comfort, so we made a 90min continuous tape of that song. That was the music that eased his transition into the next world.

Psachiyah, our second son, was 2¾ at that time. This last summer, *Rosh Chodesh Av 5765*, was Psachiyah's *Bar Mitzvah*. We had asked him to choose the people he would like to daven on Shabbat. When he said that he wanted Dovid to daven *Hallel*, we were surprised. We knew that he had heard Dovid sing, but could not remember where he had heard him daven. That *Hallel* was one of the highest, most other-worldly *Hallels* we had ever experienced. Somehow, Psachiyah knew Dovid's ability to transport people, and lift them to higher and more G-dly realms.

This is a tribute to you Dovid, an acknowledgment to the voice of your soul, your soul song, your soul music. May your voice, the specific and the metaphor, be the thread that connects

all of your gifts and may it continue to be the conduit that transports the more invisible worlds to us all.

Mazal tov on your 60th Birthday, We love you.

Nachman, Miriam, Psachiyah and Moshe

Deena Garber

“THE SIMPLICITY OF THE PROCESS OF CONNECTION”

INTEGRATING THE JEWISH SPIRITUAL WITH THE PSYCHOLOGICAL, music and meditation, Chassidut and the humanistic approach, Dovid was weaving this medley together nearly twenty years ago when such modalities were rarely experienced in creative conjunction.

I first went to a class on the Four worlds one hot summer Sunday evening in Yerushalayim in the late eighties. His teaching was intriguing, because it was so much a part of the language of the intuitive, through hints and metaphors, music and experiential modes. With the nuances of the lyrical imagination, that Rav Kook so beautifully praises, he talked of the *neshamah* and the psychological in easy vivid reference and connection. With these excursions into the language and song of the unconscious I learnt from Dovid the simplicity of the process of connection. .

This weaving between layers of consciousness pointed the way to a usually more separate and silent aspect of the inner world. Little did I know that this evening was the beginning of a long process of using our very different backgrounds and experiences for teaching and projects bringing together learning and the experiential/ psychological. The most consistent venue was working at Yakar for over a decade from its early days in Yerushalayim when it was but a vision in Rav Mickey's mind. At the beginning, in the mid nineties, we worked at pioneering the Bet Midrash learning model for Chassidut and psychology.

We and our families have shared many aspects of the life cycle, Intifada, and other aspects of living in Eretz Yisrael over these years. We all thank you for the presence, for the insights, for the gifts and the friendship which you have shared. May your Torah be the Torah of Life. Thank you so much.

Mazal tov,
Bracha and Health Until Me'ah V'Esrin
Deena Garber

Jeremy Gimpel

“A LIFE OF SPIRITUALITY AND CLOSENESS TO G-D CAN BE LIVED EVERYDAY!”

I MET RABBI DAVID ZELLER FOR THE FIRST TIME AT HIS SHABBAT table. As Mordechai’s best friend in highschool, I spent many Shabbat meals at the Zellers. I still remember the sensation of seeing beauty in action through Torah for the first time. His teachings and songs were the first Light to hit me on my voyage towards a life dedicated to Hashem and to Israel.

Thank you for always having the time to talk. Thank you for the endless Shabbat meals, the Torah you taught, and the example you set for me throughout our friendship. You have been a Rabbi, a Rebbe, and in many ways a father to me. You have taught me that a life of spirituality and closeness to G-d can be lived everyday by everybody, and through your example I have seen the potential that such a man has. Your family, your students, and your friends are all testimony to your admirable life and lifestyle.

Thank you.

Sam Glaser

“THE SWEETEST VOICE IMAGINABLE”

I’LL NEVER FORGET MEETING REB DAVID. THE CAJE CONFERENCE was in Israel in the mid 90’s and I was performing in this amazing amphitheater. I had a few days to take classes and schmooze and there he was, teaching in the most soulful, endearing manner. I was swept up by his words but then knocked out by his singing. He concluded the talk with a rendition of Reb Shlomo’s Return Again in the sweetest voice imaginable. I couldn’t believe this soprano sound was coming out of this man. I memorized the song and taught it to my audience that night and have performed it at special moments ever since. I feel grateful that our paths often cross and we have had many chances to make music together. Happy Birthday David! You are an angel!

Love, Sam Glaser

Reuven Goldfarb

“THERE WAS A PRINCIPLE AT STAKE”

ONE SUNNY AFTERNOON IN BERKELEY IN—OH, ABOUT 1975 OR '76—when Yehudit and I were still courting and I lived in San Francisco, the three of us were in Yehudit's living room on Ensenada Avenue, chatting. But with David, there was no such thing as merely chatting. I made an offhand, mildly dismissive, and possibly relativistic remark about something or other. I don't remember at this time what it was. But David responded immediately and challenged my casual attitude. There was a principle at stake, and David lost no time in standing up for it. I'll always remember and be grateful for his commitment to clarity and refusal to accept vague and blurry statements as benchmarks of truth.

Ora Goldman

“THESE WORDS MEANT THE WORLD TO ME”

RABBI ZELLER FLEW FROM ISRAEL TO MARRY MY HUSBAND AND I in Los Angeles. I confided in Rabbi Zeller before the wedding—I was crying—I had embroidered a *tallis* for my husband-to-be and I had finally finished it after 2 years of work. My heart was broken because all the time I was working on it, in my mind I had seen something exquisite, something shining, something full of light. When I had finally put the last stitches on it, I straightened it out and viewed it and fell into tears because it didn't measure up to my vision.

I told this to Rabbi Zeller and I was really broken up about it. I will not forget what he said at the wedding—it went right to my heart. He told all of our friends and relatives of my work on the *tallis* and my vision and how heartbroken I was. And then he said that he was astounded when he actually saw the *tallis* because “...It was the most beautiful *tallis* I had ever seen...” and he said something about how special my vision must be. These words meant the world to me.

Thank you Dovid and Happy Birthday

David and Melissa Goldstein

“DOVID HAS BEEN LIKE A SUKKAH FOR US”

OUR CONNECTION WITH DOVID, OUR BELOVED FRIEND AND teacher, has close connections to *Sukkot*. In the fall of 1988 a young 24 year old wandering Jew named David Goldstein, was picked up at the Kotel on *Erev Sukkot*. Bewildered and intrigued by his first encounter with traditional Judaism, David went to the home of the Rigers for *Yom Tov* lunch and met a kind man who looked into his eyes, took a breath, and advised him to go to the Isralight Institute in the Old City, thereby launching this young Jew’s entry into his Jewish identity.

Now fast forward 17 years to *Erev Sukkot* 2005 in Efrat. David, Melissa and Ranya Matana Braverman Goldstein are celebrating *Sukkot* with the Zellers, our family in Israel. It is the first time that Ranya is meeting Mizmor Elnatan, Dovid’s grandson who was born on the same day and the *exact* time of day as Ranya—the 5th of Sivan, the 49th day of the Omer.

Watching Dovid interact with his holy family—Hannah-Sarah, his children and his grandchildren—is an incredible pleasure and privilege for us. Dovid recites *Kidush* and passes out grape juice in the sweetest way possible! Holy Ki-Tov the parrot perches on Dovid’s shoulder, dispensing love (and other things) freely. As *Yom Tov* ends the Zellers transition into a modern day rendition of the Von Traap family—all playing instruments and singing everything from Reb Shlomo tunes to American folk music, all effortlessly.

In all of these years, Dovid has been like a *Sukkah* for us. His Torah, his music and his being provide shelter, protection and guidance in our journey through life. He is unafraid to be in the

storm because of his grounding in consciousness and unconditional love. His universal soul guides us much like the *Korbanot* for the nations that were offered in the *Beit HaMikdash* on *Sukkot*. His stories beckon us to come closer and be more of who we really are.

With a gigantic *Todah* to you, Dovid, for all that you have been, all that you are, and all that you are still yet to become, and a *Bracha* that Hashem should shower all of His goodness on you, your family, all Israel and the entire world.

Love, Melissa, David and Ranya

Juliet Goldstein

“PUT THE ELF BACK IN SELF!”

I FIRST GOT TO KNOW DOVID IN 1980 IN CALIFORNIA BUT WHO knows; really we met lifetimes ago, maybe at Mt Sinai and many times since! Dovid feels like a true brother through the centuries.

In 1980, I believe Manya was 2 or 3 at the time. I spent *Shabbosim* and *haggim* with Dovid's family in California and when Shlomo came to town we would all cram into the family living room for music and teachings.

At the Shabbos table Dovid would bring stories to life, acting out the parts, wildly gesticulating with his hands, riveting our attention and making us guests laugh. Once he told us the great story of how he first met Shlomo at the Berkeley Film festival, *gevalt!* Some non-Jewish friends of mine saw Dovid and Shlomo at an ecumenical gathering at Stanford University They said they were the most alive and engaging of all the speakers.

Then there were seminars at Mt Madonna Retreat Center with Shlomo and Dovid teaching. I still have the recordings. You can hear Mordechai as a little boy in the background.

Not long after, through Dovid and his Network of Conscious Judaism, I was able to get my green card. I am always so very grateful for this. During those years I had the great blessing to spend time with his children who were, and still are so very special. What a special gift that was to me. Dovid and Eti (May she rest in peace) graciously opened their home to me and I helped them out in whatever way I could.

When Dovid lived in Santa Clara, Ca, I attended his meditation group. The house always felt holy and the

meditation group very pure. Dovid would begin and end each session with a *niggun*.

Over the years we met at *haggim* and other events in LA. I was able to arrange some seminars, concerts and Shabbosim for him in both New York and Santa Cruz Ca. as I lived for a while in both these places.

The New York Shabbos was at the Open Center and was filled primarily with Jewish yoga students. I remember Dovid went round the circle asking each one to introduce themselves and share their current experience of *Yiddishkeit*. Needless to say it was all negative. I have to tell you by the end of that Shabbos, they couldn't get enough of Dovid and begged him to come back the following year!

Shortly after Shlomo's passing I was able to arrange a one day seminar at UC Santa Cruz. Dovid movingly shared the text of the *hesped* for Shlomo by Rabbi Israel Lau which brought tears to the eyes of my friend and I. Dovid went on to teach from the *Me'or Eina'im*, very beautiful.

Lastly in 2001 with *Hashem's* help I returned for a visit to Jerusalem and spent a little time catching up with Dovid in his office at Yakar. Dovid then very kindly came and shared with an International peace group that I was helping to organize.

It was on that trip that I met Hannah-Sara and their eldest daughter Meera at the Ritchies. Later I met Hannah-Sara again when she was leading a program for *Rosh Chodesh* at Modiin. I am so glad I was able to meet both of them. So beautiful.

I will end by mentioning that at some point in California, Dovid and Etty (may she rest in peace) gave me an Art Scroll *Siddur*, a lovely old *Challah* knife and some books Dovid was giving away. Among the books I found a bumper sticker maybe from Dovid's student days which said 'Put the Elf back in Self!'

I know this isn't a very Jewish reference but I bless you Dovid on your Birthday and all the years to come that the 'elf' inside of you will always remain very much alive!!

With peace and all blessings
to you and all your family
Juliet

Michael Golomb

DA-VI-D

DALET—DARING EACH SOUL TO REACH ITS HEIGHTS, DELVING into the depths of each heart, Dancing to the tune of Mashiach in the King's courtyard;

VAV—Victoriously mastering the language of the soul, Vacillating between worlds creating a space for everyone to come close, Varying his techniques to approach the King and His people;

DALET—Delighting in the joys of prayer and meditation, Drawing upon all his resources to attain his service of Hashem, Directing the divine Flow to its safe home...

This is the **David** we love, this is the David we cherish, and this is the David we respect. Here is a story:

When G-d gave me a chance to walk into a new space of the world of Festivals in the regular Israeli world, I was hoping and looking for those jeweled souls that have the vision and the stamina to walk in the minefields of the other side. David, with your sweet charisma and heavenly song, you have the talent to return all that hear you to their primal source. It is like a dream, everything is there and all you need to see, and all you know is true. And when we finished the first festival Boombamela, you said to me "Thank you for including us in your dream!"

Anya Gordon

I bless you with the eternal dream that our holy planet becomes the priestly planet of the whole cosmos. I dream the day that our families, our tribes love each other for no reason at all. Thank you so much, David, for letting me share in your dream too.

Much, much, much love,
Michael and the Golomb Gang

“WE MUST HAVE THE COURAGE TO TRAVEL DOWN THE BIRTH CANAL”

DURING A PRIVATE ‘INTERVIEW’ AT A SILENT WEEK MEDITATION Retreat at Eilat Chayyim in 2000, I was wrestling with the pain and legacy from the murders of my grandparents and almost entire extended family during the Holocaust. This pain (and all of our murdered relatives), was hardly ever spoken about in my home. They were a taboo subject, and my parents would become angry if I wanted to talk about it. So, they weren’t spoken of.

Rabbi David responded by telling me the story of Jacob and Essau’s birth, and their ‘imagined’ conversation amongst themselves during the birthing. “Imagine,” the first baby despairing, “That our lives as we know them are coming to an end—we are about to be expelled from the warmth and protection of our mother’s womb—to be pushed out through a narrow birth canal to a likely death. This is a disaster of the largest order!”

The second twin may have responded, “It is true that this wonderful life as we know it is ending, but I know that on the other side of this expulsion is also a wonderful world, every bit as terrific as this world in our mother’s womb. We must have the courage to travel down the birth canal to emerge and experience the new life on the other side.”

This image, gently shared with me by Rabbi David over five years ago, still mystifies me. But, yet it somehow provides a passage way for me to come to terms with my ancestors’ pain, which live on through the life I am living.

Arthur Gordon

“FROM EGO TO SOUL, THE JEWISH PATH”

IN THE EARLY 1990'S, I WAS IN MY EARLY 40'S, NEWLY DIVORCED and busy running my restaurant business. My hobby was drumming and the previous summers I had taken drumming workshops at the Omega Institute in New York State. Looking over their brochure for the coming summer programs, I noticed a course called “From Ego to Soul, the Jewish Path.” Although I had been raised in a Conservative Synagogue in Durham, NC, at that time I was totally disconnected from Jewish life.

I don't know why I was motivated to stray from drumming and take Rabbi David's course, but I did, and it changed the direction of my life. The realization came from David's loving presentation of the Kabbalah and guided meditation, that Judaism is a real path, a tangible practice with **answers**. While taking the course, I looked around at the other Omega Institute participants and saw them asking questions. There I was getting the answers!

When I returned to North Carolina, I began to attend the local Conservative synagogue and take other courses by Rabbi David and other Jewish Renewal teachers around the United States. This path led me to meet my second wife, and together we visited Rabbi David in Efrat for Shabbat in November 1997. Rabbi David came to our Synagogue about five years ago and gave us a wonderful weekend of teaching. We hope to see him this August when the CAGE Conference is in Durham.

Rabbi David has truly been a blessing in my life.

Leah and Menachem Gottesman

“WITH A SONG IN MY HEART...”

FOR US—MENACHEM & LEAH, TOVA, ZE'EV & SHLOMO—DOVID Zeller is all about song, of bringing lilting, uplifting melodies into everyday existence. The music that distinguishes Dovid could even be felt in his words: “You can only truly love... once your heart is broken in two.”

That insight was shared with us as Dovid broke the *matzot* into two at the Seder of his first Pesach in Efrat, his last with his beloved first wife, Ilana (Elaine) z"l. We had the honor of hosting the Zeller family at that Seder, as did we, as well, in experiencing the indescribable sense of loss when Manya, Mordechai and Esther Emunah's mother slipped into a coma on her way to relinquishing her *neshamah* to the Almighty.

During those ‘forever’ moments, soothing recorded music could be heard in the background, Dovid's songs, set to Reb Shlomo's melodies, in love and devotion. As Ilana had whispered, Dovid's voice was like that of angels.

Ad me'ah v'esrim, Dovid, making beautiful music with your beautiful family!

Ruth Broyde-Sharone and Ahuvah Gray

“THANK YOU FOR INTONING THE WORLD THE WAY IT COULD BE”

WE REQUESTED THAT DAVID SPEAK AND SING AT OUR THIRD annual Universal Freedom Seder in Jerusalem in 1995. More than 150 participants, representing diverse religious, ethnic, and nationalities were present, joining our group of peace pilgrims from America—led by Rabbi Stan Levy.

David began by singing a Shlomo Carlebach favorite:

Because of my brothers and friends, Because of my sisters and friends, please let me ask, please let me say Peace to you.

David’s lilting, angelic voice held the room at an elevated vibrational level that reverberated again and again throughout the evening.

“This is the house, the house of the Lord,” David intoned. We accepted his statement, as if it were the most obvious fact and, hearing his unique voice, no one doubted it. Then we joined him in unison: “I wish the best for you.”

Mazal tov on your sixtieth, thank you for intoning the world the way it could be...

We wish the best for you!

Ruth Broyde-Sharone Ahuvah Gray
co-founders, Festival of Freedom

Moshe Chaim Gress

“FOR HIM, THEY WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN THE WORLD AT THAT MOMENT”

IT WAS AN IMPRESSIVE LIST OF GUEST LECTURERS WHO WERE TO teach at the Ascent Institute’s 2-day seminar, entitled “Cults, Voodoos and Gurus”. And yet the building’s main hall was filled to capacity, not so much with the usual mixed batch of American college students and hippy back-packers, but with the English-speaking house-holders of Tsfat’s Old City and Artist’s Quarter.

I suppose that must have seemed odd to the few arrivals who were receptive enough to feel the tension between different sides of the room. Cliques of people stood together like wary herd animals, and might have wondered what was going on here. However, so far, none had voiced such an inquiry, and each lecturer stood before the assemblage and spoke on the topics of *Avodah zara*, foreign religions and the needs and responsibilities of the Jewish Soul.

Rav Dovid Zeller was my teacher of Chassidut and musical meditation back when I was in the 5 month IsraLight Program in Jerusalem’s Old City a few years before, and here he was walking into Ascent’s lecture hall in Tsfat’s Old City and my recent home. We shook hands in a half embrace and he looked me deeply in the eyes and asked very seriously, “Can you tell me what’s going on here?”

“This entire seminar is a thinly disguised attack on an elderly couple named Shimshon and Hedva,” I told him.

I showed him a copy of an insert into the program packet, which claimed that these white-haired grandparents might

entice Jewish students off of buses to their home, with promises of sex and hashish (neither of which, I later joked with the Stahls, had they **ever** offered to me after a dozen Shabbats with them) to begin the brainwashing techniques to turn them into followers of their Guru.

“Did anyone here actually speak with the Stahls about these charges?”, Rav Dovid asked, getting to the crux of the matter.

“Not a one”, I assured him. Including those who had put the information pack and its false charges together and pressed forth with some initial accusations, no one had spoken face-to-face with the Stahls.

Rabbi Zeller spoke softly: “Do you know the way out to their home?”

“If you have a car.”

“Let’s go,” he said.

On the way out to Biryá, the suburb outside Tsfat where Yosef Caro once wrote the *shulchan aruch*, avoiding a plague in the city, I filled Rav Dovid in on a few facts, as I knew them.

Shimshon and Hedva, both in their 60’s, met in America following their own divorces and during their subsequent personal growth. They were interested in spirituality, G-d and His miracles and, in pursuit of these, traveled to India (as many Israelis do) and visited the Ashram of the guru, Satya Sali Baba. There they had a private audience with him where he asked them: “What have you learned of Religion and G-d?”

They said they had studied Christianity and Hinduism and practiced some meditations.

“Very good,” he said. “Very commendable. And into which religion had you each been born?”

“Judaism,” they both said.

“And have you studied Judaism?” asked the Guru.

They had not. Shimshon had once admitted to me that he had been sent to *heder* when he was a child, but felt that the rabbis were mean and humiliated him, so after his first year he refused to return.

The guru laughed loudly. “I don’t understand you Westerners,” he guffawed. “G-d, through the use of Karma, has seen fit to teach you certain soul-lessons by reincarnating you into a particular family and religion—and you do everything possible to learn **everybody else’s lessons, except your own!**”

The Stahls, very confused by this comment, asked: “What shall we do, Baba?” “Study your Torah,” commanded the Guru, “and keep your Sabbath.”

They backed out of his presence, thanking him, and when they got outside they asked themselves “How do you keep a Sabbath?”

The ashram had a very extensive, multilingual library which had long since been abandoned by any librarian, well-organized or otherwise. Shimshon and Hedva searched the shelves, through French, English, Spanish and German texts, ordering as they went, until they eventually struck gold with Aryeh Gruenwald’s “Shabbath”, Adin Steinsaltz’s “*Teshuva*” and a dog-eared copy of Aryeh Kaplan’s translation of “The Living Torah.”

I am not sure if they “studied”, as much as “practiced” Shabbat. They showed me Polaroid’s once of their shabbatons. They had invited eclectic, yet balanced representations of people; for example, a Muslim, a Hindu, and a Christian, all at their Shabbat table at once. No joke; they were true Universalists.

As they were spending so much time at it anyway, they let Sali Baba put them in charge of the Library, where they organized shelves by language, religion and subject, complete with a new system of card catalogues. I laughed at this; how Jews get in and take over the management of most systems eventually. Maybe that is why the guru sends them all out eventually.

After a time, Sali Baba had audience with them again. He asked them what fruit were their studies bearing. They told him about their practice of *teshuva* and repairing the hurts of their past with constant good deeds today. They said they were lighting candles and resting on the seventh and avoiding the *melachot* that they understood. They asked him what else they should do to learn their karmic Jewish lessons.

“Go to the land of your people,” he told them. “Go to Israel.”

They came right to Tsfat; primarily for the wedding of a semi-adopted daughter, where I first met them. They rented an apartment in the Artist’s Quarter, became instant mitzvah-makers and adopted grandparents in a city that has very few real grandparents for the Anglo-Baal-Teshuva children, and, after a while, settled in Birya in large 3-bedroom apartment on a nice piece of land with a stunning view of Mt. Meron. There, they hosted shabbatons in a grand and warmly welcoming fashion.

I related to Rav Dovid a story one of these shabbatons, and its central guest, also sent to Israel by Satya Sali Baba.

Michael was a true New Yorker; little impressed him. But he had had some sort of “religious experience” that caused him to hit pause on an up and coming career in the stock market, and travel to India to seek further enlightenment. I don’t know the

details of what he and Sali Baba spoke about, but perhaps he wanted to be put in charge of the Ashrams bookkeeping or something, because the guru, pretty swiftly, advised him to go to Israel, and told him of Shimshon and Hedva in Tsfat, so he came as their guest for a week or so.

I sat next to Shimshon and Michael in shul on Saturday (I was living in Birya, with Avraham and Sarah Novick and their beautiful children, for that entire summer).

I overheard the two of them whispering during the *aliyot* to the Torah. Michael complained about the Jewish/religious necessity for Form and procedure, and was making comparisons to looser religious systems and Shimshon softly instructed: “Well that’s good and fine for them. All spiritual paths aim at the same place. But G-d brought **you** into the world *as a Jew* and perhaps Structure is something He thought you needed.”

At the Shabbat meal, Michael was telling all at the table what the guru had last said to him as they parted.

“Go to Israel... and dig a well... for the waters of G-d’s Wisdom and Knowledge,” he had said. “Don’t stop at 3 feet, or at 10. Do not quit at 20 feet, or at thirty. Dig a full fifty feet without surrender.”

David Baruch, a student of Rabbi Ashlag and Shimshon and Hedva’s landlord, paused as he was serving his Persian cholent to Michael.

“Don’t you realize where you are right now?” he asked the startled young man with great enthusiasm. “You are in **Birya!** *Be’er-Yah* means **Well of G-d!**”

After a moment’s consideration, Michael the New Yorker responded: “cute coincidence.”

It was my next time visiting the Stahls on Shabbat that we received the first hint of the pogrom to come. A guest at their table told of her visit to a prominent home in the old city of Tzfat. The head of the family had himself met Sali Baba and spent quality time with him and claimed that Sali Baba practiced “dark magic” of *tum’ah*. He himself had traveled that *tum’ah* path and knew it well. He had become something of a *saddhu*, a holy man in India and a guru with followers in the States. Eventually, he (and one of his followers) drifted to Jerusalem where he was *mekareved* by Chabad.

When he heard that there were followers of Sali Baba’s in Tzfat he spoke against them and then arranged this very seminar at the hostel/education center, Ascent, where he was also invited to speak.

The Stahls didn’t look intimidating enough to cause such a big stir. Except for Shimshon’s shoulder-length hair, the two of them looked like someone’s sweet and frum grandparents. Hedva was in purple and violet toned ankle-length skirt and wearing a tichel; Shimson had a *tallit katan* sticking out from under his shirt and a rainbow skullcap; glasses and beard. I made introductions as Rav David and I were invited in and served iced tea and lemonade.

I was very impressed by how Rav David listened to Hedva as she spoke of what had happened to them. How rumors had spread into threats. How they had been spat upon in the street. How they had received late-night phone threats. David Zeller listened intently, as if they were the most important people in the world at that moment, a quality I’ve only witnessed one time since: by the Dali Lama.

“We have been living a totally Torah life, to the best of our knowledge.” said Shimshon Stahl. He pointed to a picture of a dark man in an afro. “But we love and honor the man who set us on our path. This has really set us back in our faith in Judaism.”

Rav Zeller said to the still-in-*teshuva* couple, “Please don’t judge Judaism poorly because of these few extremists. The Torah mentions ‘be kind to the stranger’ more often than any other mitzvah because it is an important challenge for Jews.”

“But it **Is** Judaism,” said Hedva. “Fear and mistrust of other teachings is all through Judaism.”

Whether out of partial or whole agreement, or merely in compassion, Rav David nodded solemnly. He even apologized to them, on behalf of Orthodoxy.

Back at the Ascent, not every voice was raised against the supposed “missionaries.” One Rabbi said “If you want to enjoy Hinduism, you must learn Judaism.” He also admitted of the Israelis who go to the East, “In India you can learn a lot of things.”

After some others spoke against mixing and matching ideas and philosophies, David Zeller introduced himself as “an Orthodox Jungian and a reformed Jew who became an Orthodox Jew and a reformed Jungian.”

He spoke of Reb Nosson on Avraham’s revelation when the patriarch was “*sitting in the tent*.”

“Why sitting? *Yoshev*, as in *yeshuv*, implies sitting for a long time; to settle.

“Why did Hashem appear to Avraham while ‘he sat at the *opening* of his tent’?”

He said “The closer you get to *The Opening*, the more the **forces** come against you.”

I wished Shimshon and Hedva had heard him say that. Rav David made eye-contact with me, as if saying this was especially for them.

Quoting Rav Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, Rabbi Zeller said: “When we are Close... we feel close. But when we have a Fall, why do we feel we should be miserable until we ‘get back up there’? When we fall, do we **remember** [being close] or do we *kvetch*? When in the pits of depression, we can still tune in and say: ‘*Am I not alive?*’ This isn’t a quick thought to engage—this is a meditation! ‘*Am I not alive?*’ The idea that ‘G-d gave me Life’ is really ‘G-d gave me *Livingness*.’ This requires constant practice.”

Then he led us all in the *Meshiach Niggun*.

Years later, at age 69, Shimshon Stahl passed away from complications following a revolutionary new heart operation at Hadassa Ain Kerem. Holding his Soul mate’s hand, he was laughing with joy as he passed.

At his funeral, Hedva remembered the silliness surrounding the Witch Hunt in Tsfat with humor and with no bitterness. She also fondly remembered Rav David Zeller, as the one Orthodox Rabbi who dealt with them straight and sincerely.

Reuven Gruber

“YOU MEAN THAT I CAN JUST DO THAT?”

I WAS RAISED IN A “CONSERVATIVE” JEWISH HOUSEHOLD ON LONG Island (New York). In my 20’s I began drifting away from Judaism until my only connection was not eating on Yom Kippur. Fifteen years later, my life was a mess; my goal of raising a family had not been realized; it was as if I had lived for nothing. I sat down and used my engineering skills to determine what had gone wrong and how to fix it.

After eliminating a host of potential causes, I was left with the remote possibility that my problems may have been due to my distance from Judaism. So in 1980 I joined a non-religious Jewish singles group in Palo Alto, California, and took on the job of finding things for our group to do on Friday nights.

The Jewish Federation maintained a list of “Jewish activities.” While browsing the list I came across an entry: “Rabbi David Zeller—Mystical Shabbats.” While I thought that I knew what Shabbat was all about, I didn’t have a clue what “mystical” was, but it sounded entertaining, and it was free, so I signed our group up.

When we arrived at the Zellers’ I had my first of what over the years would become many, surprises with Dovid; the Rabbi I expected to find (clean shaven, fashionable suit, well trimmed hair, older) had disappeared and was replaced with a bearded, suitless, longish haired, younger person. Dovid’s other guests, when compared to our group, were conservatively, if not severely, dressed.

After introductions, the women gathered around a silver-covered table and one-by-one lit Shabbat candles in a somewhat

David Heller

darkened room. As each candle was lit, its glow added to the others, reflected off the silvered surface and filled the room and all those in it with an awesome light. I was deeply affected by this light of Shabbos; it brought to my consciousness feelings of warmth, contentment and joy, which I had all but lost.

Candles were followed by *Kidush*, the meal and what I found out later was Shlomo Carlebach singing. After the candles I spent the rest of the evening “someplace else.”

After the *bentching*, when most of the guests had left, I went over to Dovid and told him that I had really enjoyed the evening, but it was not really for me. I mean, no phones, no TV, no driving, no... Dovid asked me, “So what did you like most about the evening?” “The candles and the wine, they were really something.” “So next Shabbos, light the candles and make *Kidush*.” “You mean that I can just do that?” “Sure.”

So today it is almost 30 years later, and our modern orthodox family is thriving in the land of Israel.

Thank you, Dovid.

“TIME WOULD DISAPPEAR...”

THIS IS NOT A STORY OF EARTHSHAKING EVENTS OR MARVELOUS meetings, no unbelievable coincidences or surprising turn of events, just the simple sharing of place and time creating a different space. I met David Zeller about 24 years ago. He was teaching a series of Kabbalah classes at the JCC. It was a time during which I had returned to school and was changing careers. School was from 8:30 AM till 5 PM including clinics. No longer a youngster, the schedule was tiring. The classes were largely taught by non native English speakers trying to convey difficult concepts from a very foreign culture. There were very few clearly written papers or texts available to support the nearly unintelligible lectures. At the end of the day, a light supper and an attempt at a half hour break had to suffice to recharge my batteries and tackle homework and home business.

Wednesday evenings were different. David’s classes were different. He presented teachings geared for learning and living—a little story, a juicy concept, a little *niggun*, a little quiet time. Time would disappear along with the nagging ache in my shoulders and the tiredness of my mind. Week after week, 10 PM Wednesday nights after David’s classes felt like the new beginning of a new day—expectant, quiet, and hopeful.

Happy Birthday David. I love you.

Michael Kagan

I HEARD THE NEWS FIRST FROM DAVID

HANNAH-SARA PHONED ME UP AND ASKED IF THERE WAS ANY story that I could relate about a significant meeting with David. My first response was negative—David and I are good friends and that's it. He (and Hannah Sara) came to the first workshop on Holistic Judaism that I ever gave in Israel; we were together when he started *Pitchei Olam* in *Yakar* and we've been close ever since. So nothing that goes beyond that came to mind.

And then... yes... there was something. One morning David phoned me. His voice was choked with tears. I could hardly make out what he was saying. "Shlomo died. Shlomo's dead." It took me a moment to make sense of the senseless. Reb Shlomo had died. I doubt if I was the first that David rang and I'm sure that I wasn't the last. But I heard the news first from David and for that I am eternally grateful.

Charlie Kalech

FIND YOURSELF A TEACHER...

I WAS RAISED STEEPED IN THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT; A posterboy for almost all of their activities—regularly attending synagogue, Hebrew and day schools, having been both a camper and staff member at Camp Ramah, a regional officer in the youth group USY and receiving a BA from the flagship academic institution JTS. Ultimately I, together with some others, founded *Tnuat AM* (*Tnuat Aliyah Masortit*) the aliyah Movement of the Conservative Movement. Together we made aliyah as young single adults in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Among my fellow pioneers, and among the first of our group to make aliyah, was Alan (later he became Eliyahu) who was a little older than the rest of us and had decided to move to Israel after spending time on an ashram. Alan was the first person I had become close to who meditated and practiced yoga. In fact he once told me that of our *chevra*, I was the only one with whom he could discuss the spiritual experiences he had had on a different plane who did not think he was crazy and accepted at least the possibility that they might be real. Eventually Eliyahu became my first yoga teacher; we explored healing and guided meditations together, as I began to explore a different way to reconnect with my self.

After two years of living in Israel, I backpacked up the West Coast of America for half a year, traveling from L.A. to the Canadian border. During that time, I did a lot of self-exploration through varied experiences, reading, writing and meetings with people. Two of my friends got engaged in Jerusalem and as I had promised them, I made aliyah to attend their wedding. Had

they not given me a reason to return at that time, I might have continued my journey across the Pacific to the East. However, I made aliyah, served in the IDF and got married, fulfilling one side of me; that which since a very young age had wanted to raise a family in Jerusalem.

Now rooted in Jerusalem with a family, a mortgage and the beginnings of my own Web design studio, another side of me was floundering: that part of me which sought to explore the world, to travel in space and mind, to grow in spirit. My “religious” life was very institutionalized, as it had always been, and my spiritual life seemed separated from it. My spiritual growth seemed to come from the East and on the rare occasions that I found a Jewish book that spoke to my spiritual side, it was usually someone trying to force Eastern practices into watered down Judaism which was not authentic for me. Jewish spirituality, as I knew it was Kabbalah and that was also alienating to me. Kabbalah seemed like a lot of mental masturbation with *sephirot* and complex worlds unto itself—making things more complicated when what I was searching for was something very natural and basic.

The closest alternative which spoke to me was the Chassidic and spiritual world of Zalman Shachter and Shlomo Carlebach, to which I had limited exposure growing up. However, it seemed to me that I fell between the cracks—communities who celebrated life in that way seemed to either reject *halacha*, or take an Orthodox view of it, neither of which felt comfortable to me. I remained between two worlds—institutionalized religion in the Conservative Movement and a solitary path of spiritual growth through my own isolated meetings and experiences.

My friend Eliyahu followed his path back to the US along with a mutual friend of ours, Levy. Although not a professional Web designer, Levy had put up a few basic Web sites for clients with

whom he worked as a computer technician. When he left Israel, he handed these sites over to me. One of these sites was davidzeller.org. It took about a year before David Zeller called me to update his site. I had never heard of him and, as I do with all new clients, I invited him into my office for a free initial consultation. The day before the meeting, I decided I better look at his Web site.

What I found was a site that spoke about what I was seeking. Jewish spirituality rooted in Judaism, but not necessarily Kabbalah. True, having been ordained by Shlomo Carlebach, David was an Orthodox rabbi affiliated with an Orthodox synagogue, but his classes were open to all, and his openness attracted people of all backgrounds; men and women of all ages and levels of observance. After our initial meeting, when we discussed his work, his Web site and my stalemate between spirituality and religion, David and my relationship quickly moved beyond a client/service-provider dynamic. We became each other’s teachers and friends.

I went from reading books outside of Judaism like “Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance” to those which tried to force East and Western religions to meet like “Torah, Tarot, and Tantra: A Guide to Jewish Spiritual Growth” to traditional Jewish sources steeped in spiritual insights like “The *Sefat Emet*.” For two years I found a community within his weekly classes which answered my needs. People would ask what the class is about and I would answer that it is about Jewish meditation—then I would laugh at how used to I was at separating myself from what I was learning in my academic studies, correcting myself saying, “It is not ‘about Jewish meditation.’ We meditate.” What had captivated me at Camp Ramah so many years ago was what I was now doing in a very different way: experiential education. While we studied texts,

we also learned through our own experience of guided imagery, meditation, study, discussion, song and by sharing our personal revelations, growing together. We learned by doing.

Of course this circle extends outward, and I have taken some of what I have learned into my mainstream Conservative synagogue in Jerusalem and as a representative of the Conservative Movement serving as an *Aliyah shaliach* helping people to get to know themselves. I have discovered that there is a hunger and need for many within this community to go beyond the standard synagogue service or weekly lesson on parshat hashavuah. People want to grow, they want to express themselves and get to know who they are by reconnecting with the Oneness that connects all of us, our past and our future in the moment that is now. However, rather than learning about our history, our texts and our traditions, as is the general practice, the ability to learn about oneself through teachings and mediations from our traditions, meets this need in a much more fulfilling way. Just as experiencing Shabbat is a totally different experience than learning about Shabbat, connecting to the Oneness in each of us is a much different experience than talking about G-d. Using our liturgy to meditate or create communal experiences that generate a "high" is a much different experience than singing prayers by rote as mandated by tradition and regulated by scheduled services.

David has told me that when he started teaching, he was way out there. He promoted new ideas after returning to Judaism through Shlomo Carlebach and following his adventures as a long-haired hippie from California who had traveled to India after leaving a Reform home immersed with Jungian influence. However, unlike others, David does not force Eastern influence into Judaism. He is bringing back that side of Judaism which has

been downplayed since the enlightenment. His texts, songs and messages are rooted in Judaism.

He has taught me how to pray, to believe in a G-d that is part of my daily life, to appreciate life, to reconnect with and understand Judaism in a more meaningful way, to see good and feel a connection with my fellow man, and most importantly to have better tools and a better ability to know my self.

Pirkei Avot 1:6 teaches, "Find yourself a teacher, acquire a friend for yourself and judge everyone favorably." The last phrase is usually dropped when this verse is quoted, but it is essential, requiring the understanding, the awareness and mindfulness which one can only achieve after fulfilling the first two items. I thank David for helping me to fulfill this commandment, the last part of which I am still working on with his help

I offer my blessings to my teacher and my friend, that through the knowledge and acceptance of the gifts you have given to others, you will learn more about yourself and come closer to the realization of just how lovable and capable you are.

Kim Keller

“BE THANKFUL FOR YOUR BREATH”

HMMMM... MEETING DAVID... SEEMS LIKE SO LONG AGO...

The Sufi camp at the Swiss Alps—2003 was it? It Was very surprising for me to meet a rabbi in a Sufi camp!

I felt an expectation from my brother in law to immediately get along with David since we are both Jewish... or maybe it was just me...

I remember that after some awkwardness, the conversation started to flow and we discovered some mutual acquaintances through the festivals in Israel where I spent some time working.

Then came the unforgettable night where David did his songs and we (me and some 200 people) flew on the wings of the music in to the night... “I la la lai la la lai la lai I am alive...” a song that my wife and I still play and sing together.

And The Kabbalat Shabbat that David held. A memorable moment was when David started throwing the *challa* to the people at the back of the main tent so they could enjoy it too, and when someone asked if that’s how its traditionally done David said “no, but this way is a lot more fun.”

Then there was a meeting of the three “religions”—Buddhism, Sufism and Judaism, which were represented by three masters each in his/her practice and each gave their interpretation of the divine. David gave a very special insight (in my point of view) in to what Moses saw when the burning bush appeared before him.

These episodes I remember and carry with me.

For a while, we stayed in contact through email.

At one point while Nathalie and I were still living in Barcelona we were going through a rough time, with no job and no money, a lot of bills to pay and a baby on the way.

I remember sending David a desperate letter about the situation, and about the bitterness of my fate.

The answer I got was short and to the point, “Relax Kim,” he said “Take it a day at a time and be thankful for your breath!”

This is something David has given me that I feel will stay with me through my life.

Thank you David!

And Happy birthday!

Simma Kinderlehrer

“MY SOUL SOARED AND TEARS CAME...”

I FIRST MET DOVID AT A RUACH RETREAT IN COPAKE, NEW YORK in the mid 80's. At the time I was busy raising three daughters and trying to find a way to feed my spiritual hunger.

When I arrived there and sat under a tree, by the lake, drinking in the teachings of Rabbi Carlebach, Yehudis Fischman, Rabbi Dovid Din, Bahira Feinstein and Rabbi Zeller, I knew that I had found an oasis, and my soul rejoiced. When Dovid picked up his guitar and began to sing so gently and sweetly, my soul soared and tears came. My soul was soothed, and every hungry space was satiated. His Torah teachings also moved me incredibly. His teachings opened doors and inspired me.

We began to talk, and get to know each other and Rabbi Zeller became a friend. When I went through my dark night of the soul, he was there for me. He was always there when I needed a guide, a light in the darkness. He always knew just what to say, when I thought that there were no words to help me get through. I will appreciate this forever. Rabbi Zeller also took the time to spend a Shabbos in our home in Massachusetts and provided spiritual food for my small Jewish community. My friends finally understood why I loved this man so much.

I was able to take *Ruach* home with me, with Dovid's music and lecture tapes. I studied Judaism on my own, while my daughters were young and Dovid's tapes were invaluable to me. I have been passing on his teachings ever since. I can often be heard saying, "Rabbi Zeller teaches..." And when I do, people always react with a wow, or that's perfect!

I am now beginning a new career as Director of Education at Temple Beth Shalom in Santa Fe, New Mexico and I am so very grateful that Rabbi Zeller will be back in my life when he comes to visit his family.

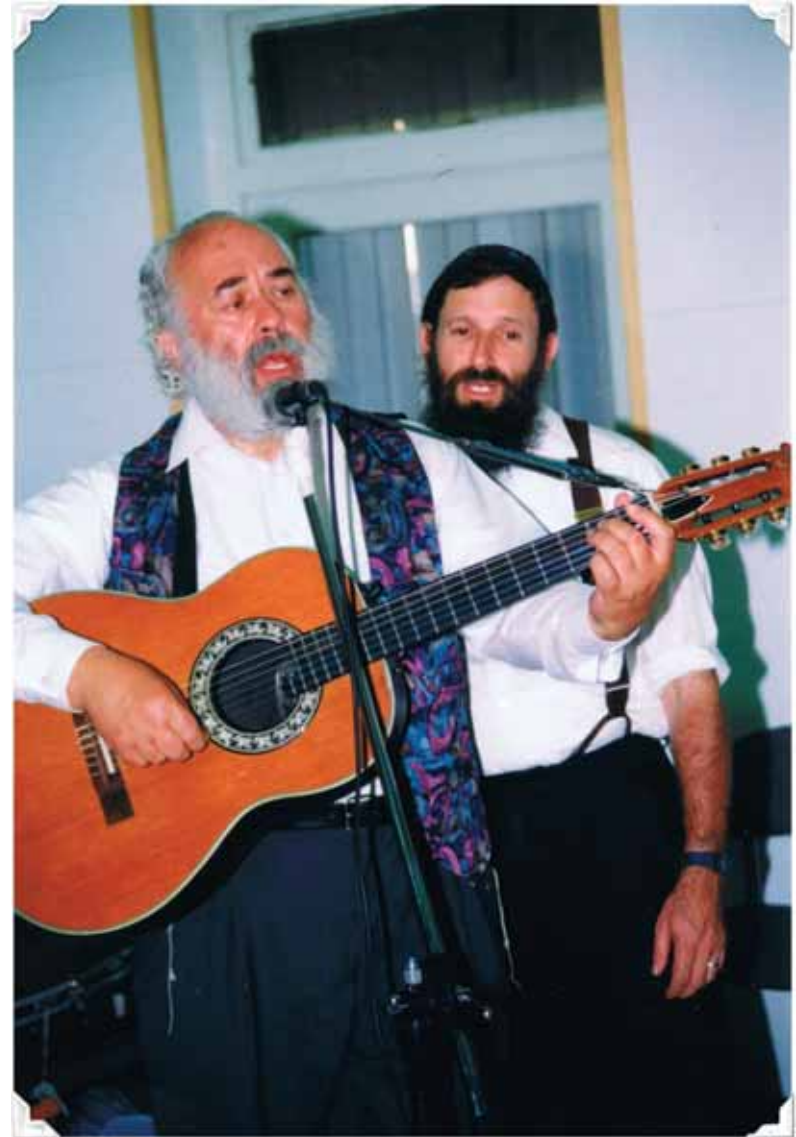
Mazal tov to all, and thank you, the zellers, for sharing your remarkable and beloved father and husband with us. May you all share many, many more years together.



Photos











Yocheved Koplowitz

“IT IS YOU WHO BROUGHT ME HEALING”

DEAR RABBI ZELLER,

The sweet healing sounds of your voice have permeated my soul and have restored my wholeness from the pain and the devastating loss of my daughter Batsheva Sara Koplowitz. I lived for 10 years in Jerusalem and met you at meditation sessions at Yakar. You took me on a soul journey over the many years that I lived and breathed the spiritual essence of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

On one memorable night in Jerusalem at the home of a dear friend, of blessed memory, on the *Azkara* of Batsheva, for the first time in 12 years since she had passed away I was able to speak of her, celebrate the gift that *HaShem* gave me for the seven years that she was on this earth and remember with over 90 friends, the joy that she brought to my life, as you made sweet music with your beautiful melodic voice, to make my soul whole again. Not once but twice you joined me in sweet celebration of Batsheva.

From then on I each year I have in a special way celebrated the life of Batsheva on her *Azkara*—the knowing that it is you who brought me healing is forever imprinted on my soul.

As we celebrate your birthday, we celebrate the joy and healing that you bring to our lives. May you be blessed, may you continue to touch the souls of all whom have the privilege and the merit to encounter you on soul journeys.

Joy Krauthammer

“MY LIFE BECAME DEEPLY SPIRITUAL, MY CONSCIOUSNESS SHIFTED”

YOM HULEDET SAMEACH! HAPPY 60TH BIRTHDAY REB DOVID!

Let me start by quoting from my University of Judaism (UJ) MBA 1994 thesis,

Thank you to my dear Jerusalem Rabbi David Zeller. It was through your Kabbalah teaching and music in Rabbi Joshua and Lilliane Ritchie’s home that I first received Hashem’s Light so brightly. It is through you that I was brought to my Los Angeles Rabbi Stan Levy and B’nai Horin, and all of my beloved spiritual Renewal community.

Was that first meeting with you, 1990? I found a flyer then, maybe at the UJ, maybe posted by another student Lolly S. writing of an evening event at a street numbered 613. Knowing no one, but with this number in hand, I drove to over the hill to Los Angeles from Northridge, the San Fernando Valley, to be Divinely guided in meeting you, Reb David Zeller.

I recall coming to the Ritchie’s home for that first time of many and noticed the auras surrounding Lilliane’s paintings. (On a later visit when I went to hear Reb Shlomo Carelbach zt”l, the entire room was bathed in golden Light, and it was awesomely only the Light which was visible.)

I had traveled meditatively inside of a crystal with a teacher, but you, Reb Dovid, offered a Kabbalistic meditation with the Hebrew letter “Koof.” I remember sliding down the form of the Koof. You probably offered the following: “Koof of

the Hebrew Alef-Bet. First see it as a pictograph of shape and symbol; then as a letter and the shapes of letters within the letter; the name of the letter, and the letters that spell the name; the meaning of the name; its number, and so much more.”

Life was not the same for me any longer. My life became **deeply spiritual**. My consciousness shifted. Feminism had first tuned me in to my needs. In you, I had met my first Rebbe and who remains my #1 Rebbe. If you have groupies, I am one. I had met G-d not long before that. You were my next step in my awakening spiritual journey along the path to the Tree of Life, which led me to “who, what and where” I am today on a joyous journey and that is good. I have traveled far from the Koof into the whole Alef-Bet, and I can “Return Again.”

After #613, I was Divinely guided by my Jewish Calendar Magazine publisher, David Epstein, who advised me to call Yael Taubman, whom I did not know, and who was in LA, readying for her move to Jerusalem. Yael was due to be at Rabbi Stan Levy’s home for a Shabaton with, yes, **you**. But Yael was ill and invited me to take her seat at Reb Stan’s table where my *neshamah* is still nourished today. I knew no one in this community. I became a member immediately without being asked. I was in my *makom*. Even last Shabbat for Shavuot, 16 years later, I davened with many of the very same spiritual seekers who were there on my first night in Renewal. I have since joined every Renewal shul in LA encouraging them to affiliate with Aleph if they were not already.

From you, Reb Dovid, I immediately met Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi and Eve Ilsen at B’nai Horin’s *Simchat Torah* and continued to learn from him locally at Makom Ohr Shalom and Aleph sponsored retreats. Following that *Simchat Torah*, in Jerusalem I was Divinely guided and I met my beloved Reb Shlomo Carlebach, zt”l and soon became Shlomo’s

percussionist, disciple, and *shlepper* and co-agent here in Los Angeles. I met Collette, zt"l in Jerusalem. In LA I met Rabbi Jonathan Omer-Man of (meditative) Metivta, and later Rabbi Judith HaLevy and became a founding member of my beloved Sarah's Tent, and joined other teachers (currently Reb Toba August of Lev Eisha) in ecstatic communities in which to study, learn, play, pray, create, perform, transform, and transmit. All of these magical, mystical experiences have enlivened my heart, ah, all Four Worlds.

From there across the country I learned from all Renewal teachers; Kallahs and Elat Chayyims, and National Havurah Institutes, and Ruach HaAretz. And yes, I too have taught from the fire where my passions have been lit. Reb Zalman taught us to teach whatever "little" we have learned. I have shared teachings gleaned from you, On Four Worlds, and Sephirot. All this birthed from my being in your light, Reb Zeller.

A few years later, I went to Yakar, to be with Rabbi Zeller during Reb Shlomo's zt"l first *yahrzeit*. It was *Simchat Torah* and for the first time I danced in the street with Yakar's Torah. My sweet spiritual sister in the Old City, Ruthie Fogelman, brought me to Yakar, your organization, and I learned for the first time with Mimi Feigelson (and others), who thankfully the last few years is in Los Angeles at my alma matar.

In the evenings, I would go to the Israel Center, listen to Reb Shlomo and Reb Zeller together and watch Reb Zeller late into the night, walking and wheeling home his baby in the baby carriage.

Another article I wrote on My Journey, "As Rabbi David Zeller's song goes, 'The whole world is just a narrow bridge.'" I wrote about my trip to Thailand's synagogues in 1991. *Beshert* of course, I got to the shuls because I played Reb Zeller's tape to a stranger in a restaurant local to my home. I made the stranger

come to my car and listen to "Because of my Brothers/Sisters and Friends". He connected me to the people in Bangkok.

On October 1991's JCM's issue, I find a Cassette Tape Review: Let Go by David Zeller.

Immediately I was struck with the maternal sketch by Reb Zeller's wife of Let Go on the cassette tape cover, knowing the tape then had to be nurturing. The words are in Hebrew, but for me transcend language barriers...

...I first experienced David Zeller at a house concert and allowed myself to be drawn gently into the meditational sound of his healing voice. Since my "sixties" days and dancing in Central Park in Strawberry Fields with the Hari Krishnas, I have not chanted mantras. I have now opened up to a special sound, which is available at all times in my home and car with the help of a playback machine. I use this tape for relaxation, tension reduction and for feeling closer to G-d. Sometimes I just listen, and sometimes, I sing along and feel as if I can help bring the world closer. Zeller teaches—psychologically and spiritually—through meditations, stories and songs...

When I was feeling lost in Italy in 1992 after my luggage filled with my Israel's photos and memoirs disappeared, I sat in the women's upper chambers of a shul in Florence crying and chanted "Ribonno Shel Olam." I had learned this prayer from Reb Zeller and it comforted me; and the police could not help. Days later, the luggage reappeared. Feeling better and in some other Italian town where I was visiting, a woman unknown to me came to me and asked, "What was the matter? I saw you crying in the shul."

Whenever I would drive on the I-5, 7-12 hours up Northern California to a Jewish Renewal spiritual retreat and then return

back from a stay at Esalen, it was Reb Zeller that I would listen to over and over and over in the car. (I played repeatedly also Shlomo, Hannah Tiferet Siegel and Leonard Cohen for all those hours.) When I am asked to lead a *niggun*, I offer to the community, "Ruach." I also sing Reb Zeller's rendition of Shlomo's song, "Return Again." Even now, with my husband's recent death, I sing this to myself. I sing again, "Listen, listen, listen to my heart's song..." Reb Zeller's music makes a huge impact on my heart, my *tiferet*, my *lev*, and my harmony. I can chant "Shalom" forever.

When I was a guest host with Cantor Michael Russ on his LA's "L'Chayim" NPR-KCSN radio program, I would play Rabbi Zeller's music. He always let us know that we could call him "David." I would not but I loved sharing his music with the world.

From your world, I loved listening to a tape of you—Reb Zeller and rabbis Schachter-Shalomi and Carlebach on Jewish Mysticism at the seventh International Transpersonal Conference, February 1982 in Bombay, India.

I loved having an opportunity to share with Reb Zeller. One Shabaton outside LA at the mostly vegetarian retreat center, St. Andrews Priory in Vallyermo, it was raining and I was happy to give over my disposable raincoat and probably an umbrella. I was thrilled that I was chosen to bring snacks to the rabbi's room up the hill. I receive in my heart and soul, so much from my #1 Rabbi and I am happy when I can do something for him.

In a letter to friends dated November 1992, telling of my husband Marcel's zt"l condition, I wrote:

On his last short trip to LA, Reb Dovid Zeller came to visit my husband, Marcel, Menachem Elimelech ben Tova

Mateal, during his cancer treatments. Rabbi Zeller was my first rabbi of Light. I was led to him by Divine Providence. "In Your Light do I see Light." I felt that Reb Zeller with his prayers in the Holy Land kept Marcel's health in the "temple of his heart."

My husband was being discharged from Cedars-Sinai Hospital and Reb Zeller who had been making prayers for my husband for years, agreed to meet us in Pico-Robertson—the 'Hood', not far from his mother's home and just before leaving for the airport. Reb Zeller put his hands on Marcel's heart and I took a photo of them together. It meant a lot to me. We met at our favorite Pico-Kosher Deli, which we had used since Marcel and I were married. I felt badly because I had not thought about Reb Zeller being a vegetarian.

Another JCM story dated 7/20/02 speaking about my Rabbi:

How does Rabbi David Zeller's song go about the wrinkle on the face? "I used to laugh a lot; sometimes it's easy, sometimes not so easy. Everybody's got to have 'em some happies. Sometimes I feel like I can't go on..." He's coming to town beginning of August. When he forgets where he is supposed to be for a concert he calls me even though he knows that I probably can't make it (while caregiving). I love my rabbi and he knows it. Reb Zeller was my very first rabbi over a decade ago. I used to hang with him while he pushed his baby carriage and with dear Reb Shlomo zt"l, walking them home at 3 AM after a concert in our Holy Land, Jerusalem. Do you love your rabbi? Let's pray for our teachers to have safe travels and be well.

I sang Reb Zeller's songs to stay balanced during what were our 18 years filled with continual cancer medical crises. "I circle

around.” Reb Dovid’s songs are supportive, healing, filled with energy and peacefulness. “It’s a joy to get to know you.” Is that the song on Reb Zeller’s web site where I can see him strumming in a video on his guitar? I love looking and listening even for a moment. It makes me feel good.

Knowing that Reb Zeller was coming to town, I would call and write to everybody. I would try to help him with possibilities of gigs. I used to always learn with him when he was at his dear mother’s filled to capacity, Jung Institute library on Pico. (Not long ago, Mrs. Zeller moved out of town to be with her daughter.) Once when entering the library to sing and to teach, Reb Zeller saw a circular medallion on my neck which I had purchased at a Kallah. Inscribed are the words, “In Your Light Do We See Light” and the Menorah and on the reverse side, “The Compassionate One Seeks the Heart” and the Sephirotic Tree of Life. I was so happy that Reb Zeller liked it, that I immediately removed it and gave it to him wanting him to have a gift from me, something he liked and insisted on him receiving the gift. I now wear, especially for *Parsha BaHa’olotecha*, a T-shirt with the same Hebrew words, and a menorah design.

Another very tiny gift that I gave to Reb Zeller was a sticker of a blue hand. I was visiting Jerusalem and in a park for a celebration and he was there wearing a happy hippy tie-dye shirt, and with his family, so that I got to meet his dear wife. I felt the little sticker represented the hand of G-d. Reb Zeller allowed me to place one on the band of his watch, as a symbol to me as G-d’s hands on his clock. In LA a year or so later, Reb Zeller related a funny story to me about how he had just met a follower (aka groupie) in Boston. The man told Reb Zeller that he had curiously witnessed in a park in Jerusalem someone (me) putting a sticker on his watch. Next time Reb Zeller came to

town I made sure to find in a store a whole package of little colorful hand stickers so that he too could share them on his travels. Timing was perfect as his watch sticker was wearing out. They are like little “blessings of G-d resting upon you.”

I loved taking pictures of Reb Zeller and Rabbi Stan Levy whenever he came to B’nai Horin. I loved it when I could accompany Reb Zeller’s singing and guitar on my soulful Djembe drum at the Happy Minyan, at Beth Jacob, or at Metivta or...

I bought all of Reb Zeller’s song tapes and meditation sets. I would give extras as gifts. One of my favorite tapes is *Path of the Heart*. I should have been listening during the last year while my late husband was struggling to stay alive. My machines were broken.

A cute story that I recall is when Rabbi Zeller was coming to town and to the San Fernando Valley for a concert. I invited a group of friends to come that evening to a shul. We were the very first ones to arrive and saved the whole front row for ourselves, of course. A single man walked in and wanted a little of the pew for himself. No way, there is a whole shul where he could sit. Rick Sklar went on to share with us that Rabbi Zeller had stayed at his, Rick’s home, in Santa Barbara, 90 miles away. Where ever Rick wanted to sit in the front row was now his. We have been good friends ever since. Funny thing that in the car going home, one of the gals in the group in the pew asked me who my long time old friend was as she had never met him before. “New friend,” I declared, “never knew him before.” Reb Zeller brought our friendship together, “like the spirit together, like a rainbow ‘round the sun.” “Love, love, our love, watch our circle grow” and we will share the temple pews.

"Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free. To come round where we ought to be... We'll be in the Valley of love and delight. To bow and bend, turning we come round right..." I believe that Rabbi David Zeller's songs are bringing Moshiach sooner, and all of us closer. Reb Dovid, "You are a blessing of the universe." L'Dor V'Dor. It is a blessing also that my daughter Aviva has received your light, and she sings beautifully. She sang to her father, may he rest in peace, while he was on life-support in the ICUs. Aviva received blessings for her chuppah twelve months ago from my dear Rabbis Stan Levy and Judith HaLevy. We "Circle Around..."

I could keep writing about the impact of Reb Zeller's *neshamah* on me, but it would be another Jewish thesis.

I love you. Happy 60th birthday.

With blessings for *Shalom*, health and joy,

May The Source of All Blessings, shower you with a *shefa* of sweetness, song, love, Torah and health and joy especially on your 60th birthday.

You have shared your soulful gifts with us all these years, particularly your gift of song, which I continue to treasure and appreciate with all my heart. I bless you that all the gifts of goodness, which you have bestowed upon us, seek to return to you and for you to feel the love in receiving that you have shared in giving from your Four Worlds.

I bless you with all levels of joy—*Gila, Rina, Simcha, Sasson, Deetza, Chedva.*

May you look forward to a good and blessed year.

Ad me'ah v'esrim. May you live until one hundred and twenty.

With lots of light, love, and

JOY

Lisbeth and Gideon Kressel

"WE WERE DELIGHTED TO BE KEPT AWAKE"

IN LOS ANGELES OF THE 1960S THE JUNGIAN ANALYSTS MADE UP A busy group, engaged in joint activities of their society and club, and in personal exchanges. Dr. Max Zeller and his wife Lore, who had escaped from Germany at the last moment, were Jewish by their inner awareness, but it was the Nazi regime of the 1930s Germany and later the Jungian approach in psychology that moved the Zellers back to their forgotten religious roots. Still they were insecure how to inculcate Jewish spiritual values as a living Torah to their three children, Danni, Jackie and David.

The youth David as we knew him was fond of asking questions and answering back. Inquisitive, curious, eager to listen and argue he would enter into exchanges of views with his superiors who largely tolerated this style. Some even enjoyed it. These were the days when folk songs were being rediscovered in America and later in Europe. The simple and deep felt songs and ballades and the Jewish holiday melodies went right to the heart of the musical youngster. and the guitar would be his steady companion.

David's first visit to our home in Kibbutz Nezer Sereni several years later stays in our memory, because of his distinct non materialistic attitude to life. He paid the taxi driver who brought him to our door with a 100\$ bill and in his joy at our meeting he forgot to bother about the change. The driver, sensing the spiritual quality of his passenger nevertheless tried to warn him: "Young man, the land may be holy but the people are not holy."

Peter Lackner

“THE CROWD ENJOYED HIS INTERLUDES MORE THAN OUR ACTUAL MUSIC”

AT POMONA COLLEGE AROUND 1966, DAVID’S TALENT AND passion for amusing and entertaining people was already in full force. He was a key member of the jug band called “Mable Shaw Bridges Memorial Skiffle Society”, playing a mean kazoo and filling the higher registers of our twangy country harmonies with angelic vibrations. Between songs, when the band fumbled with changing and tuning instruments in a somewhat chaotic manner, David would tell jokes and anecdotes and keep the audience hopeful that a next number would eventually take place.

Sometimes I thought the crowd enjoyed his interludes more than our actual music. At any rate, I know all the band members were grateful for his instant stand-up-comedy storytelling, but little did we know at the time that this talent would expand into a veritable calling and profession! Life is full of wonderful surprises that in retrospect aren’t so surprising at all.

Happy Birthday, Dear David!

But not the least we remember this first visit because of the guitar. We were of simple means at the time, and he was not better off. But in spite of his hippie modes David had not lost his love for reason and spirit, and he would talk a lot. His concern for the future of the country added a touch of seriousness, even anxiety to his else carefree bearing, but the smile came back when he picked up my guitar. His accommodation was a corner in our tiny home and for the rest of the night we were delighted to be kept awake by the quiet strumming accompanying the sweet voice of our guest.

The song Changes by Phil Oaks especially touched us that night. And like the song David’s further course of life was marked by changes, from the kibbutz to the period with Hindu Avatars in India and back to the US and his acquaintance with Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach in Berkley. Our contact during these years with him was often coincidental. When he finally showed up in Israel to stay we found his inner self unchanged, but added this time was a determination, which said that he had finally found the path he had to go.

Determination led David through the long proceedings of building a home in Efrat, raising a family and establishing himself professionally. Inner strength was so much in need to overcome the period of Ilana’s illness and invigorating the home foundation with Hannah-Sara after Ilana’s death.

Soft—spoken in talking and singing, and inner strength, this is David, the modern-traditional rabbi and the man we love. Still water running deep is the impact he leaves on his audience.

With love,
Lisbeth and Gideon Kressel

Martin J. Lee

“IT BECAME IMMEDIATELY CLEAR THAT OUR
NEXT DESTINATION WAS MORE STUDY
WITH DOVID”

I REMEMBER OUR FIRST CONTACT WITH DAVID. I HAD LEFT MY unfulfilling pseudo-orthodox background long ago, and amid anger at my parents and teachers over the meaningless Judaism of my childhood, I had spent much of my adult lifetime exploring Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Renewal and *Chavurah* style Judaism. Each had something of merit, but all of them left me wanting, frustrated and seeking something more. I did not even dream of the depths of love and intensity inherent in Chasidut and popularized by the late Reb Shlomo Carlebach. Actually I once had attended a Shlomo concert in my twenties, but was unprepared for the intensity and energy of the experience.

Then came Dovid, with his *niggunim*, and songs—with his soft voice and beautiful stories. I had been studying and the intellectual part was making an impression; but Dovid opened up a world whose existence I had not even imagined. Also, if I may speak for my wife Chavi—she came from the American Reform tradition. She had become more observant for me, but her real religion was psychology. Then, along came Dovid—the former orthodox Jungian and Reform Jew, who now advertised himself as a Reformed Jungian and Orthodox Jew.

Of course we had Dovid come to our hometown of Asheville, North Carolina for a weekend Shabaton. I was due to sell my business and retire soon, so it became immediately clear that our next destination was Jerusalem and Yakar and more study with

Dovid. I learned much at Yakar from both Dovid and the other teachers. I learned skills and better Hebrew, but much more I discovered the Carlebach family. Our family found ourselves home in Yerushalayim. I found a very good friend in Dovid, and we—as a family—found ourselves with good friends in Hannah-Sara and Dovid and the Zeller family.

I cannot end this birthday reflection without adding that I also found in Dovid a soul mate. A man who had not only traveled India barefoot, and explored hippie directions of which I had only dreamed, a man of meditation and introspection that far surpassed my patience, skills or ability; but also I found a man with a temper who could get angry. And for this especially I appreciate Dovid, for he is a friend I can relate to with my imperfections and my occasional loss of temper. So, Dovid as you reach this milestone of 60 years let me thank you in the name of our entire family for sharing the journey with us, for your friendship and warmth, and for your love.

Happy Birthday, and many, many more—to 120.

Marty Lee
(aka Reb Tanchum)

P.S.: speaking of 120 years, what do you say to someone on his 120th birthday?

Answer: Have a nice day.

Rabbi Zvi Leshem

“...AT THAT TIME THE IDEA OF A BET-MIDRASH FOR WOMEN WAS FAIRLY UNIQUE...”

LOOKING BACK UPON TWENTY YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP I COME TO the realization that Reb Dovid has had a profound impact upon my life, for which I am most grateful.

Typically, we first met in a health food store near the shuk. Dovid was then living on the Moshav and grappling with two crucial decisions, where to learn and where to live. For him these were decisions that could not be taken lightly, for they would no doubt have a major impact on his spiritual development and that of his family. In the end he came to Efrat and to Yeshivat HaMivtar. We became both neighbors and learned in the same Bet Midrash.

In Efrat Dovid and I shared common interests and frustrations, which led us to collaborate upon a number of projects. We made several early abortive attempts to start an alternative *minyan* for slower, quieter Davening. The response was very poor. I guess we were ahead of our time.

After the death of Dovid's first wife, Elana z"l, we worked together to establish *Machon Elana*, a center for Torah study for women. The program was co-sponsored by the Gush Etzion Matnas, and met two mornings a week at the *Magen Avraham* shul in Efrat. We learned Mishna, *Hilchot Shabbat*, Maharal and Rambam. Dovid would give special classes on Chassidut, usually on *Rosh Chodesh*, and we brought in a variety of guest speakers for special occasions. Women came from as far away as Chevron for the studies. At that time the idea of a Bet Midrash for women was

fairly unique. Eventually the Matnas continued the program together with *Michlelet Herzog*. *Machon Elana* was actually the forerunner, not only of the *Herzog* programs for women, now centered at *Migdal Oz*, but also of the *Women's Bet Midrash* of Efrat.

Dovid and I for a number of years gave *shiur* together in Chassidut at the Bedein's house on Shabbat afternoon. This was also a first for Efrat. I don't think anyone in Efrat had ever really studied Chassidut before and many people would come to hear us taking turns saying over *wortlach* from Rebbe Nachman, *Mei HaShiloach* and the *Sfat Emet*. At a certain point the two of us began a *chevruta* in *Mai HaShilo'ach* on Shabbat afternoons that eventually grew into a *chabura* of about six men. We studied for many years, learning, among other works, *Mai HaShilo'ach*, *Tanya*, *Likutei Moharan*, *Sippurei Ma'asiot*, *Me'or Eina'im*, *Aish Kodesh*, *Netivot Shalom*, and *Pachad Yitzchak*. Looking back, it is incredible how much we actually accomplished on those Shabbat afternoons, and there is no doubt that my own development in Chassidut benefited very greatly from these sessions. It was here that I was first exposed to the writings of the Piaseczner Rebbe, to whose works I have devoted myself for the last ten years.

Of course, this *chabura*, including Rav Natan Siegel, Rav Yaacov Fuchs and Ed Levine, eventually became the nucleus for one more attempt to begin a new *minyan* in Efrat. After careful planning and advance publicity, *Shirat Shlomo* met for the first time on the first night of *Sukkot* 5754. Our motto was the three "shins", *shtika*, *shira* and *Simcha*. This time Efrat was ready for a spiritual revolution and almost 100 people packed the library that night. The rest is history.

I am proud to have Reb Dovid as a friend. I have learned much from him over the years. I bless him on his 60th with another 60 years of *Tora* and *avoda*, surrounded by his loving family and friends.

Rabbi Shelly Lewis

“I PERSONALLY LEARN FROM YOU EVERY TIME WE MEET”

DAVID, WHEN WE FIRST MET, YOU WERE JUST BEGINNING ON YOUR journey back to your roots. I was privileged to be your teacher for a brief period; but very, very soon the roles were reversed and have been that way ever since.

David, I relish providing opportunities for others to learn with you in Israel or in Palo Alto. The truth is, however, that I personally learn from you every time we meet. I am reminded by you of the wonder and spirit that pervades our tradition; of the healing powers of Torah which you exemplify in your own life; of the ability of our tradition to lift one up to a much higher place; of the wisdom that is borne by ancient texts as you help us to understand them; and the sheer pleasure of the music and tales that you play and retell.

I always go away from our meetings with a renewed commitment to prayer and to spirituality. And all of these gifts are embodied in a most accessible and warm body and soul! You are indeed one of our most treasured spiritual guides today!

On this special milestone, may Hashem richly bless you and give you the strength to continue the invaluable service you offer to Klal Yisrael.

Linda Levee Paul

“MEDITATE IN A ‘KOSHER’ ENVIRONMENT”

IN THE EARLY 1980S, I WAS LIVING IN FOSTER CITY, A BEDROOM community about half-way between Santa Clara and San Francisco. At the time, I belonged to a Reform Temple one town over in San Mateo. The rabbi there had asked me to teach an adult education class on Jewish homemaking, and despite having very little knowledge of Jewish tradition, I reluctantly agreed. I taught it out of a big red book called “The Jewish Catalog.”*

Across the hall from my classroom, there was a young man with a beard teaching a class called “Chassidic Songs and Stories.” My class lasted only an hour, while his ran for two. When mine was over, I began to sit in on his.

His heartwarming stories and gentle voice began to penetrate through the klippah I’d been accumulating for some 40 years. After I’d sat in on David’s class for a few weeks, he invited his students to a Chanukah party in Los Altos. Curiosity got the best of me, and I decided to go.

I walked in, and he was sitting next to a cherubic-looking man with a salt-and-pepper beard twisted under his chin and held in place with a bobby pin. He was Shlomo Carlebach z”l. He and David sat by the fireplace, strummed their guitars and

* “The Jewish Catalog” was produced by members of *Havurat Shalom*, a “traditional-egalitarian” community founded in 1968 in Somerville, Massachusetts. One of the young men who participated in the early days of that community is now the rabbi of the *shul* where I hope to bring your father this fall. Life sure goes in interesting circles, doesn’t it?

sang. Shlomo gave over some of his wonderful Chassidic teachings about Chanukah. I was hooked.

When David's course was over, he invited us to come to his home and join a Jewish meditation group. During my early adulthood, many Jews my age had become involved in Transcendental Meditation ("TM") and, tempted as I was to learn the techniques, I was a good little (Reform) Jew and was not about to start uttering the names of foreign G-ds just so I could learn to relax.

David had offered me an opportunity to meditate in a 'kosher' environment. Wow, where do I sign up!

That meditation group stayed together for a few years, and became the nucleus of the Network of Conscious Judaism, a non-profit which we set up to support David's teaching. He also operated a mail-order bookstore out of his garage, from which I obtained my first *siddur*. In addition to making some of my lifelong friends (such as Tsvi and Nava Epstein), that group gave me an opportunity to get to know his wife z"l. Etty, as she was known then, was completely devoted to David's *derech* and stood firmly behind him in his struggle to turn his many talents into a *parnossah*. To this day, I hold the memory of Etty up as the *Eshet Chayil* I've striven to emulate.

When the Kerem Yeshivah community in which they were living fell apart, they moved to the North Bay (I think somewhere near Sonoma). We remained friends, and when Etty became ill, I remember taking Manya and Mordechai, along with my pregnant stepdaughter, her husband and baby, to Golden Gate Park for the afternoon while David and Etty sought medical help.

My stepdaughter and her husband (neither of whom were Jewish) had loved David's music, and had been playing his (pre-

CD) tapes to their first baby to lull her to sleep. When they met little Mordechai, who at that time was still called Benyomin, he made such an impression on them that they decided to name their next child Benjamin, after him (Benjamin Grey is now finishing his first year at the University of Arizona). I always found it ironic that Benyomin started calling himself Mordechai shortly thereafter.

I've seen David here and there, on and off, through the years, and we've always remained friends. Once after his family moved to Israel, he came to the Bay Area for a visit. On the Shabbos he was there, Rabbi Herschel Yolles, the Samborer Rebbe, was coming from New York to lead a Shabaton in Marin County. Somehow, we managed to get David to join in the Shabaton as well. David and Rebbe Yolles hit it off immediately, and we had the privilege to daven and learn with both of them together. With the slow, dreamy Davening, the delicious food and inspirational words, I'm quite sure that, like me, anyone who attended that Shabaton counts it as one of the highest Shabbos experiences of their lives.

I've been working on getting David a "gig" at the *shul* where I belong here in Scottsdale (Arizona) next fall. His combination of soothing voice, Carlbachian tradition (as it's called nowadays) and Jungian outlook, which he received from his father a"h, remain—to this day—the "magic" combination that can cut a straight path through to my soul.

David, May you enjoy many more joyous birthdays to 120.

Linda

Miriam Maslin

“DISCOVER A WHOLE NEW WORLD”

I RECEIVED THE EMAIL FROM THE ZELLER FAMILY DURING MY stay in Washington, DC. This was my fourth stop on my third US Speaking Tour. Speaking Tour? How did that happen??

I was never interested in traveling. Speaking Tour? What could I possibly have to share with people?? Birthing, Polarity Therapy, Storytelling—how did all this come about?

Wednesday evening meditation classes... “Neshomology”... teachings of the Four Worlds that led me to discover a whole new world... all those metaphors about birth... nine months as miriam(zena)@davidzeller.org... the *Me’or Eina’im* and Rebbe Nachman and *Lech Lecha* ...

We never know...

Dovid, may you always know the blessings of the Ribono Shel Olam, the Master of All Hidden-ness, and may you continue to bring His Light into His World for another 60 years.

Stuart Matlins

“THE BEAUTIFUL SOUL THAT TELLS THE STORY”

DEAR DAVID,

Our first meeting was so long ago that I cannot even remember where or when it was. Jerusalem? A CCAR or URJ Convention? 15 plus years ago. But I can remember that I felt immediately that I had found a companion for my own spiritual journey—and I hoped that one day you would find the time and strength to write “The Book.” Well, you did, and my hope was fulfilled. Now so many people who are beyond the reach of your person can share in and benefit from the beautiful soul that tells the story. They will be helped in their journeys. Thanks for letting me share in it.

Wish I could be with you. Best regards.

Stuart M. Matlins, Publisher

Gedalya Persky

“RUACH’ BECAME THAT NAME”

I MET DOVID IN THE MID 70S. I WAS LIVING IN A SUFI COMMUNE IN the states. Dovid was one of a number of Rabbis traveling around the circuit of ashrams and religious communes to retrieve the large number of lost Jewish souls. I had met Reb Zalman first, and he started the spark. I think Reb Shlomo had visited. I was fascinated by these teachers and what they had to say about my soul. All of this was new to me. I was reading every book about Kabbalah (only with a Q) I could find. I then started inviting people to dinner on Friday night. I didn’t know what to do with them when they arrived, but the spark had been lit.

By 1982, I needed more. Naomi and I started doing kiruv shabatons in the Sufi commune (not terribly popular with the leadership). We needed a name for them, and somehow *Ruach* became that name. Dovid had sung *Ruach*, a Shlomo *niggun*, on one of his tapes. It had filtered through to the two of us who named the seminars.

Dovid also became one of the regulars at *Ruach*. *Ruach* became a gathering place for Hippelas who wanted to find a way back into *Yiddishkeit*. And Dovid continued to be one of the Rabbis that they felt safe with and inspired by. *Ruach* went on till the mid-90s.

All of this time, Dovid also became a close friend. First he was on the West Coast, and then he was in Israel (a far away place we only knew from books). On our first trip to Israel, we visited the Zellers in Efrat.

I wish him the happiest birthday in the world. May it be a good springboard to the joy of the 90th and the 120th.

Jeffrey Reiss

“GEVALT, GEVALT, OY SUCH A SIMCHA”

DEAR DOVID,

Welcome to the Wise Elder’s Circle, now that you are turning 60 years young. Somehow, you have been in this circle for many years by now, though not officially.

On this special occasion of your assuming the official role of an Elder of Zion, let me remind you of just a few of the truly meaningful and memorable times we have spent together and the knowledge, insight and wisdom you shared with me on these occasions.

We first met in March of 1988 at a weekend Shabaton which you led. You introduced me and the rest of the group to the *niggunim* as a spiritual experience, which elevates one’s soul, my soul, to such great heights and depths that hither to I had not even imagined, let alone experienced.

Factually, you were the second Rabbi I had met as an adult in a religious or spiritual setting. Three months earlier I had met Reb Zalman, had an out of body experience which was actually a past life experience in the death camps of Europe and felt G-d’s presence within me as a golden shaft of light, all before lunch that day. Reb Zalman’s advice was to either forget the whole thing and go on with my life as it had been before or further explore my Jewishness to see if I can learn more about that profound unexplainable experience. Your Shabaton was my first step into exploring Judaism and my Jewish *neshamah*.

On the final day of the Shabaton, you had us sit in a meditation circle, as you sang a particularly mystical *niggun*, as only you can do. This time I traveled deep within my soul and

apparently out into the cosmos. When you asked each of us to share our experience of the meditation, at first I recalled nothing but absolute silence, darkness and serenity and I saw a very distant, very small bright light. The light began to move towards me until eventually I could see a feminine form within the light; this form hovered before me, said nothing, although I felt clearly She, It, was blessing me and all of us with Her Presence.

When I remembered this vision, I shared it with the group; suddenly, the woman sitting to my left screamed out that it was her mother bringing her a message through me. I was so startled it took me a moment to realize she had begun to weep and her head was now on my right thigh. As we ended the day, said our good-bye's, she approached me and asked if I would join her for coffee to discuss her mother's message. I tried to politely demure, but she insisted, so off we went.

As we drank our coffee and explored if there was anything else I could remember, she placed her hand on my leg, kept it there, and then invited me to her home. This time I was stronger in my resolve and suggested we part and perhaps meet again at another Shabaton.

I share this awkward moment, because it seems now in hindsight, I was being introduced to the power of spiritual experiences and the boundaries and disciplines necessary to avoid the potential dark side and to learn how to sift the wheat from the chaff in my Torah pursuits.

The next time Reb Dovid and I met was in June of 1988 when he and Reb Shlomo Carlebach z"l, led a weekend retreat in a camp in the Catskills. On this occasion we came together to share a true Shabbos experience of singing, dancing and storytelling. On Shabbos morning, after a very late night of all I just described, I awoke determined to put myself in a spiritual place prior to services. I donned my head-phones, placed one of Reb

Dovid's recordings into my Walkman and proceeded slowly to shul meditating and elevating; as I entered the shul, a young Chassid asked me what I why I was wearing my headphones. I explained I was listening to Reb Dovid's *niggunim*; he very gently and politely told me that was not appropriate for Shabbos, as we are not to do any sort of work, including turning on or off any electrical devices, portable or otherwise.

Somewhat embarrassed I entered the shul, sans my Walkman, and slipped into the last seat at the end of the last row. Somewhere midway through the services, the same young man stood at the beginning of the row and sent a whispered message to me to please come to him in the aisle so I could go up to the *beema*. I sent back a whispered message saying "no thank you, as I knew nothing of the proceedings." The man next to me asked if I was a *Bar Mitzvah* to which I answered yes, thus resulting in his standing up, and like a wave, so did everyone else in the last row. I was nudged, encouraged and basically passed hand over hand to the young man waiting in the aisle; I was terrified at this point.

As I approached the *beema* I was asked my Hebrew name, which I knew was Chaim Ziskind and my father's Hebrew name, which I did not know, but since his English name is Samuel they used Shlomo (I have since learned my parents' Hebrew names are Sholem Fayvish and Chana Shifra, May They Rest In Peace in Olam Haba). They asked me if I could read Hebrew, I replied affirmatively and with great fear, in fact, I was trembling yet I somehow managed to recite the *brachas* without falling off the *beema*.

When I was through, I left the *beema* to return to my seat in the last row, along the way men on either side rose to shake my hand and say things in Hebrew I did not understand. The moment I sat down my mind flashed back to my Zaidy,

Davenning on Shabbos at my parents' table and I broke down sobbing. As I wept I remembered the shame I felt at my *Bar Mitzvah*, reciting by rote, my Torah portion, just one Parsha and my Haftorah, none of which I understood or felt any connection to other than this ritual which was somehow going to make me a man at the immature age of thirteen. By age fourteen, I concluded there was no G-d and going to shul was a waste of time. For over thirty years I had little or no official relationship with religious or spiritual Judaism.

After services Dovid came over to me and asked me to walk with him so we could get to know each other better; all I remember of that walk and our talking was the beauty and love I felt and saw in this man's eyes, heart and soul.

From then to now Dovid has played a special role in my life, as friend, teacher, guide and mentor. My gratitude is boundless, my love, deep and eternal. It has been 18 years since we met and began to share our journeys; may we continue for at least double *chai*. I miss you very much and think of you and the wisdom you shared with me so very often.

I particularly remember some key teachings that have transformed my life: Purim is the holiest day of the year because we let go of our inhibitions and conscious minds and come closer to G-d's conceal presence; the Book of Esther is where G-d 'reveals' his concealment, by His Name not being mentioned, not even once, but clearly He is the "Hidden" force behind the salvation of the Jewish people. Dovid's answer to a very challenging business situation was simply stated, "Be like Mordechai, sit at the Gates of the City" which I knew meant sit, meditate, speak to Hashem, let my enemies plot and scheme. Then, at the precise moment that they believe they have me, reveal my true identity, my integrity and most of all, what I had done for the King (CEO) twenty years earlier.

Finally, on our first trip to Israel as a family, where my wife, two sons and I stayed with Dovid and his family in Efrat and studied and davened in Yerushalyim. This is where we discovered the true experience of Shabbos, the shul in Efrat, the people walking in the streets, no cars, no noise but laughter and joy. To quote Reb Shlomo, "Gevalt, gevalt, oy such a *simcha*."

I pray that you and your wonderful family may enjoy 60 more years of health, happiness and service to Hashem. As you always blessed me when we departed from each other, I bless you, may G-d grant you peace and a throne in Gan Eden.

Love, blessings and Mazel Tov,
Jeffrey, Shira, Tory and Elie Reiss

Libby Reichman

Meira Rice Golbert

“WE JUST HAVE TO LET GO”

ONE ONLY HAS TO BE WITH DAVID FOR A VERY SHORT WHILE TO realize that this is a person who is drawing on many different and varied sources for inspiration and guidance.

During one of our discussions, he started talking about his belief that there are times in life where we just have to let go and trust that we will be guided down the right path. To illuminate this point, he told me of an amazing experience he had during his year as a sadhu in India.

The sadhus have to walk without shoes—which is difficult enough when you can see where you are going, but imagine what it is like in the dark. And yet, right at the beginning, the novices were taken for a night-long walk in the dark. He said that initially he kept trying to watch where he was walking, and because he could not see, he kept hurting his feet by stepping on all kinds of painful stones and other objects. But then, the guru who was guiding them told them to let their feet take them and not try to tell their feet where to go. From that point on, his feet magically found their way painlessly, knowing where to step and where not to step all on their own.

Although David told me that story many years ago, I often find myself remembering it and being grateful to him for sharing it with me—it is such a wonderful advice with many valuable applications. Typical David...

“OH, I KNOW YOUR MUSIC!”

IN 1986, I BECAME ONE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF *CHAVURAH!* of South Florida, under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Mitch Chefitz. Song and *niggunim* were essential unifying elements that he gave us to create an atmosphere of “family” and spirituality amongst 200 strangers. I remember the happiest *niggunim* we learned were created and sung by Rabbi David Zeller. Every time we gathered together as a large havurah, we sang David’s songs and we learned them all by heart—all of the English ones and even some Hebrew ones. Our families Shabbatot were richer for these melodies.

As the years passed, I wanted more *Yiddishkeit* in my life and finally decided to leave my comfortable group in Miami and go to Israel to learn at Pardes for the year. It was 1993 and I heard about Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach giving a concert at a place called Yakar in Jerusalem. When I walked in the door, sitting at the table where the tickets were sold, was a bearded man with a sweet smile. I read his nametag and was stunned! “Are you Rabbi David Zeller?” I asked. “Yes, I am”, he replied. “Oh, I know your music!” I said excitedly. I couldn’t believe it. Little did I know, at that first meeting with David, that we would one day be colleagues.

By the end of my first year at Pardes, I was clear that I could never leave, that I was home. A friend of mine told me that Yakar needed someone to do fundraising. I went there for an interview with Rabbi Rosen and who should be there but Rabbi David Zeller? I was told that my primary responsibility in the

new job was to help Rabbi Zeller with his fundraising. David and I spoke at length, and came to a meeting of minds.

For seven years, I worked with David as his fundraising consultant and we developed a special and precious friendship, built on understanding of our common goals, appreciation and deep respect. On occasion, I have presented with him to a Jewish meditation class and have had the opportunity to sing his songs with him on many occasions.

In recent years, I have had the pleasure of getting to know Hannah- Sarah and enjoying her friendship as well.

As David always signs off—Peace and Blessings —to you on your Birthday!

With love and friendship,
Meira Rice Golbert

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

“BROUGHT THOUSANDS TO FEEL THE UPLIFTING WINGS OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE”

DAVID ZELLER, A FAITHFUL DISCIPLE OF REB SHLOMO CARLEBACH z”l, is gifted with a significant portion of his teacher’s spirituality and profound love of humanity.

His soulful songs and his compelling words have brought hundreds if not thousands to feel the uplifting wings of the Divine presence. And like his Rebbe, Reb David has the capacity to create intense relationships with many individuals. How well do I remember the hours he spent at the bedside of our beloved Dassi Rabinovitch, singing to her, his music having provided much greater relief for her from her pain than she could ever receive from any medical palliative.

Reb David is also an individual who proved his deep inner strength especially in times of personal tragedy and adversity. When he had to tend to Elana z”l, suffering a painful and mortal illness, and when he had to serve as both father and mother to a burgeoning family, he found the great inner strength to do what had to be done with majestic concern and sensitivity. He also had the faith and fortitude to forge a new and wonderful life with his very special life’s partner Hannah-Sara, and see the development of a marvelous family, each member of which sharing his exalted values.

May the Almighty grant Reb David, Hannah-Sara and the entire family many years of continued strength, well-being and loving commitment to every Jew wherever he or she may be.

Lois Rose

“DAVID SANG FOR A WHOLE EVENING JUST FOR MILTON...”

I FIRST MET DAVID AT AN ASSOCIATION FOR HUMANISTIC Psychology Conference in the 1970's, and was so taken with him that I invited him to Cleveland to present for our local AHP chapter. In 1980, he needed a place to stay for a few nights, so we offered a room at our condo with my family when his new baby (now all grown up Mordechai) was in hospital.

We kind of lost touch for quite a few years, but then a funny thing happened. My good friend Deborah and I were riding together in my car and she had a tape with her. She was very excited about it, and wanted me to hear it. She had been listening to it and some others for a few months, thought they were terrific. I heard a few seconds of it and I said, “That’s David Zeller.” She couldn’t believe I knew who it was, and that I knew David. She had wanted to invite him to Cleveland, and I told her that I could get his number in Israel. She contacted him, and he began coming to Cleveland regularly. It was such a treat to catch up after so many years.

Deborah held David’s sessions at her house for the most part. Deborah’s father, Milton, was quite ill during the years that David was coming here, and he was eventually unable even to walk or move around the house. One of the most touching moments I can remember occurred when David and Milton and my husband and I were alone in the house, and David sang for a whole evening just for Milton. Milton sang along, kind of danced in his wheelchair or in his bed. He loved hearing David,

and David brought a great deal of love and comfort to him during the last part of his life.

It has been such a privilege to get to spend time with David. I have learned a lot, been inspired and comforted by his singing and teaching. We have shared raw food, fun and jokes, as well as difficult moments.

I wish you, David, the best as you reach this milestone birthday. Much love from Lois and Doug, and from our children, Joel and Stephen (who you helped with his *Bar Mitzvah* portion.)

Michael Rose

“NO ONE HUGGED ME IN SUCH A THOROUGH MANNER BEFORE”

I FIRST MET DAVID WHEN I JOINED THE YAKAR LEARNING community about 5 years ago. i was in and out of classes for a number of months while fighting a GI problem that no one knew about. Finally, after nine months it was time for me to return to NY. when I said goodbye to David he embraced me in a hug that was so warm, so encompassing that my *neshamah* felt his warmth—no one, before or since, hugged me in such a thorough manner.

I have never told him how that hug had felt and I appreciate the gift that you have just given me. He is a very special person, who should live and touch people for another 60 years, with health, warmth and success.

Mark Rosen

“HIS TEACHINGS WENT RIGHT PAST THE INTELLECT INTO THE HEART”

AFTER PRACTICING TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION FOR ALMOST 20 years, I went on my first trip to Israel in 1989 to attend my brother’s wedding. I had a mystical experience at the Kotel, and things were never the same after that. I had been to India and nothing like his had happened. I realized that I needed to explore my Judaism and began to read and study in Boston with several teachers.

In preparation for a subsequent trip to Jerusalem, in the early 1990s, I spoke with Nehemia Polen in Boston, one of these new teachers. He gave me a list of people to look up, and David was on the list. I duly contacted him using Nehemia’s name, and showed up at Yakar.

Here was a rabbi who actually respected my years of meditation practice and who had been on his own journey in the East. There was an instant connection. David asked me if I would help him with gigs in Boston, and I readily agreed.

Over the next few years, as I explored Judaism in the Jewish Renewal movement, I arranged various events for David. Some had modest attendance while others were big successes. David always moved people deeply. I never got tired of seeing him even though I heard some of his clever one-liners a number of times. He had a wonderful presence about him when he was teaching and his teachings went right past the intellect into the heart. I always enjoyed being his chauffeur because I was able to spend time with him.

Rabbi Mickey Rosen

“IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE IN YOUR FEET”...

I remember one event where a woman came up to me and explained she was just returning to Judaism and the event had inspired her. She is now the rabbi of a major Boston Reform temple.

Although I was exploring Judaism avidly at the time, it was all intellect and inner experience—I had not taken on any Jewish practices. David once chided me about it. A simple offhand remark he made has stayed in my mind all these years. He said something like: “With all of your interest in Judaism and your mystical experiences, it’s surprising to me that you aren’t exploring Orthodoxy.”

His remark did not affect me then but he did plant a seed. Several years later, when my mother died, I took on the daily obligation of saying *Kaddish* at an Orthodox shul, and slowly became observant. That was nine years ago.

I am now fully observant, and married to a lovely woman who comes from a prominent Chabad family. David and I haven’t managed to stay in touch for the past few years, but I know his influence on me was very profound.

Now that my brother has just bought land in Neve Daniel, across the road from Efrat, I hope to visit the next time I am in Israel.

OVER THE LAST 10 TO 15 YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN A QUIET revolution in the educational agenda of institutions in Jerusalem. This has been an incremental change so that only in retrospect does one realize what has happened.

Today it is accepted that Chassidut is part of the normative educational agenda. Today it is accepted that the affective has equal validity with the cognitive. Today it is accepted that the quality of being is equally valuable with the quality of knowing.

When the cultural historian comes to analyze this change they will note the significance of certain individuals. They might mention Buber, Agnon, Reb Shlomo. They will mention Lubavitz and Breslav and they will mention David Zeller.

I remember when David first started his Pitchei Olam here in Yakar. On one occasion he did a meditation in preparation for Mincha and he started by saying “imagine that you are in your feet”. At that moment a famous Rabbi educationalist got up and left the room at protest. Nowadays no one would bat an eyelid and that Rabbi would be one of the first to endorse such an approach. David’s Center for Spirituality at Yakar was the first such center and we all owe him a deep debt of gratitude.

Rabbi Yehoshua Rubin

John Ruskay

“ONLY PEOPLE CAN TRANSFORM OUR WORLD’S DARKNESS INTO LIGHT”

DEAR DOVID,

Your wisdom has enlightened my soul.

You showed me a derech in Davening which has helped me climb the ladder to Heaven.

I practice your style of lofty singing and have experienced how it opens people’s hearts. I look forward to our duets of Ki LiShuatcha (כי לישועתך) which bring so much healing to my heart and to all those hear it.

Our Rebbe taught that the Holiness of Angels is that they perfectly obey G-d so when G-d tells them to bring light to the world, they do so perfectly. Yet the Holiness of People is that only people can transform our world’s darkness into light.

Thank you for being a holy person and sharing your holiness with others.

I love you for who you are
Your friend
Rabbi Yehoshua Rubin

“WHO DIES LIKE THIS?”

ABOUT 9 YEARS AGO, I MET DAVID. I WAS THEN THE VICE President for Program Services at the UJA-Federation of New York and David sought support. After many cancellations, we met but we did so in the first weeks after my late wife had received a terminal diagnosis. Instead of the meeting being about providing support, clearly shaken, I shared where I was and David opened his heart and gave me a tape of song and prayers which he had recorded for his wife when she was undergoing chemotherapy. I brought the tape home, shared it with Shira z”l who found David’s voice “*Min HaShamayim.*” Shira had two or three rounds of chemotherapy and for each we brought this magnificent cassette which helped Shira center herself for the ordeal.

When David returned to New York four or five months later, we met again and he inquired about Shira. I told her that things were grim; that although Shira had maintained incredible spirit sustained through family, friends, and extraordinary healing services with her closest friends conducted by Debbie Friedman and now Rabbi Tamara Cohen, and she had been able to maintain most of her life until recently, in fact, things had taken a turn and the doctors felt that we were likely in the final stages. Shira was bedridden. Although her mental and emotional powers remained strong, she could not move. I asked David if he would be willing to come to the apartment and possibly sing to her for his tapé’s had and continued to nourish her so deeply.

David rearranged his calendar and one afternoon, only 10 days before Shira died, David came to our apartment. He

entered her room and they immediately connected. Shira welcomed David: “You have been an angel for me...” and David held her frail hand gently. Finally, I asked “David, would you sing...” David took his guitar, began to strum, and his magnificent gentle voice filled the room.

Shira’s face lit up and she exclaimed: “Who dies like this! How lucky I am to have an angel accompany me in my journey.”

And David accompanied Shira. With two tapes alternating lightly, her room had been transformed into a sanctuary accompanying Shira in her final hours. I stayed in the room to the end and at times, at night, I would wake and hear Shira humming to David’s music. Song and prayer, *shirah* and *tefilah*, were providing comfort and solace.

My last conversation with Shira was a few mornings later. I asked: “how do you feel?” Shira replied, “Compared to what?”

I attribute that awareness to many things, to be sure, but what David shared—of himself, of his experience, of his prayer and song—were no doubt and important part. And an incredible gift to Shira.

Who dies like this?

“DEEP AND TOTAL CHESSED ”

A FEW DECADES AGO, A FRIEND GAVE ME A TAPE CALLED “LET Go.” I started playing it as I prepared for Shabbat, kind of like background music. Within moments I was transfixed and stopped everything to really listen and hear music and song that went right through to my soul. “Who is that singing” I asked my friend, “is it a man or a woman?” My friend, a normally very sane musicologist, said: “neither, it’s an angel.”

A few months later I was in Israel and called Dovid...I told him that I had to meet him, that I had to learn to daven with *kavanna*...”Do you know that that is what I teach?” he asked, “no, not really, but I guess I did.” I traveled to Efrat to have tea from a broken cup with a young widower who managed not to be broken. We spoke long, and I received advice in using all the activities that consumed the day of a mother to weave into a prayer.

Thank G-d, Dovid came very often to the USA and we shared some amazing, moving, mind opening shabatons with the late Reb Shlomo. Each time I spoke with Dovid or heard him teach and sing, my connection to him and to *HaShem* grew stronger and my affection for myself and my soul grew. I began to take me and my *Yiddishkeit* much more seriously. I couldn’t keep getting away with just doing *mitzvot* mindlessly; at least I became aware of when I let rote take over from real reaching to *d’veikus*.

Dovid and Hannah-Sara Zeller were there for me at a very tough time in my life. It was a miracle and one that helped sustain me when I thought I couldn’t live in this world for

Ruth Sager

another minute. My husband died suddenly, though he had been ill a long time. My two sons, two daughters and son in law boarded an El-Al flight to Israel to bury him in the holy land. I went to my seat... Dovid Zeller who had just happened to change seats, in hope of spreading out and getting a little rest, was in the seat next to mine... He spent most of that endless trip speaking gently with me, and hearing and absorbing my pain into himself. Hannah-Sara met us at the airport, I think, expecting to have a joyful reunion and a good time with her husband. Instead, they escorted us to the burial and Hannah-Sara walked, holding me as I followed my husband's body to the grave. I will never forget the deep and total *chessed*. Dovid continued and continues till today to help me be strong and open.

May he and all his family be blessed to be able to keep loving and giving in the unique Zeller style.

I love you so much
Cecilia "Tzilia" Sacharow

"MY FEMININE SIDE IS MUCH MORE DEVELOPED THAN THEIRS!"

DAVID BECAME A TEACHER AT FIRST SIGHT TO ME WHEN I MET HIM at Yakar in the autumn of 1998.

It helped that he was so connected to the Transpersonal Psychology movement because I thought I would have to give up this interest as I became more observant. He could connect the spiritual adventures I had had in Australia with the road ahead.

That year at Yakar we latched our learning onto a theme of Forgiveness and Compassion, but David never let himself be limited by the theme. He also found difficulty keeping to the exact timing for our *havruta* sessions.

His unique contribution for me was his wonderful voice of a singer and song-writer who explored the boundaries between Judaism and Psychology... who explored just being human.

I appreciated that he was a family man, as I always felt that I needed teachers like that to help me avoid becoming more singular through my studies when what I wanted was to be a better wife, mother, daughter, and sister.

With gratitude I accepted David's *tochacha*... rebuke... when he considered the way that I spoke of my daughter to be counterproductive.

He made me laugh when he objected to my attaching myself to women teachers, claiming that his feminine side was much more developed than theirs.

I loved the Shabaton at Kibbutz Almog, the result of great effort by the whole family and Shevet team.

Some of my favorite memories are from the Summer workshop David did at Yakar...was it the summer of 2002? The Intifada in full swing did not prevent David with complete equanimity planning meditation sessions in the Rose Garden, in the Mall, in the Old City. However, an inconsiderate driver who got in our way could provoke a heated response. David's teaching is for real because **he** is for real... so it seems to me.

Thank you
Ruth S. Sager

Avraham and Leah-Rivka Sand Soetendorp

“IT’S A JOY TO GET TO KNOW YOU...”

LONG BEFORE I REALLY MET YOU, DAVID,
you were our companion
in our vw-camper,
day in day out
through rain, storm, tears and laughter,
we would travel on I-5, the highway,
but actually we would follow the real path:
“The path of the heart.”
Your old tape that covers universes of wisdom,
light, love and openness.
No matter how many clouds would hover above us:
“this too shall pass;”
How many misunderstandings and knots in Shalom Bayit:
“From you I receive, to you I give.”
And when the questions became so big:
“Why oh why oh why,
because, because, because, because,
good bye, good bye, good bye.”

You created, you chose, you eternalized,
you crystallized the gift Hashem bestowed upon you.
And everyone who *mamesh* hears, is grateful.
Your velvet vibrating tones
tiptoe gently through our minds into our souls...
Your clear wording even erases the language-barrier,

and I could sing along
and the crying babies behind me would become aware,
they would gaze at their fingers
and experience their first meditation...

Last year at Boombamela,
we were standing with thousands of people,
staring at a huge statue that was lit and burning away:
“what a waste of accumulated energy,” we thought.
I ran downstairs to find out that the mike would still be on
for one more minute.

I ran up the hill and said:

David! The mike is ON,
you can say what you feel needs to be said...!

You went down, climbed over the barrier, took the mike
and gave over your teachings of love, peace and Emunah.

We don't know who heard your words,
even if it was only one—you know how to make that one
count...

May G-d bless you with many “peek-experiences,”
as you say: “peeking into the world beyond.”

May you be blessed to share them with us,
our world so yearning for sparkles of answers,

“May the blessing of G-d rest upon you,
May His Peace abide with you,

May His Presence illuminate your heart,
Now and forever more...”

Charlotte Saunders

“AND JUST REMEMBER TO WALK THROUGH!”

I FIRST MET DOVID MANY YEARS AGO WHEN HE WAS STILL teaching in California. The Association for Humanistic Psychology ran an annual conference and I was involved in contacting workshop leaders and helping them with workshop accommodations. I remember speaking to Dovid at the conference and finding him warm and friendly and easy to deal with. He was one of the presenters at the conference.

In addition, I also belonged to the Carlebach Shul in New York, where Dovid often visited and performed. We shared a love and deep respect for Reb Shlomo Carlebach, his *niggunim* and his teachings. When Reb Shlomo was *niftar*, Dovid gave over some beautiful teachings in his memory at Yakar, which I attended, having come from New York to Eretz Yisroel for Reb Shlomo's *levayah*.

Knowing Dovid all these years has been a special gift for me that I will always cherish. Talking with him is a joy.

Happy 60th Birthday. May Hashem bless you and open up all the gates for you, and keep them open...

And just remember to walk through!

Stuart Schnee

“IT IS REALLY A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH SOMEONE LIKE DAVID”

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING THINGS ABOUT WORKING WITH David as his manager, is seeing the impact he has on people.

Since I handle much of David’s correspondence, I receive many emails for David from people who have been impacted significantly and positively by meeting him. It is impressive to see how David makes such a deep impression on all sorts of people.

But what makes it amazing is three things: that David impacts all sorts of people—Jews, non-Jews, older, younger, religious, less religious.... Americans, Israelis, Italians, Swiss—you name it.

Secondly, the impact David makes on people is so often long term. I get emails and CD orders from people all the time who write that they first met David or heard his music over 20 years ago—and now that their well worn cassette of David’s music has given out—they want to order a CD. When David goes on tour, it is only a question of time before the emails start rolling in—with descriptions of how David’s recent teaching or concert was a turning point for them. Or there will be the email from the person who drove David to the airport—thanking David for the wonderful conversation and advice.

Lastly, but surely not least important, is how David seems to be able to connect Jews, who are disconnected from their Jewish heritage, back to Judaism. Is it the music, the teachings or his new book? From what I have seen it is different things for different people—but the effect is always the same—a Jew who

felt that the Jewish tradition had nothing of value, discovers through David that Judaism actually has so much wisdom and life.

Some other last things I think important to mention; family is a very important value for David. He never hesitates to make time for his family, to stay up late, travel long distances or change plans for the family. This is a given for him, and it is something that I have taken into account since I started working with him.

Also, David is rigorously honest in all his business dealings. He also has a great sense of humor. Thus it is really a pleasure to work with someone like David—he is making an amazing impact on many people, doing it honestly and with a smile!

I wish you health, happiness, fulfillment and prosperity with much joy and time with your family at least until 120!

Sarah Yehudit (Susie) Schneider

“A REAL LIGHT TO HIS FELLOW SEEKERS”

DAVID ZELLER IS MY FAVORITE BOSS OF ALL TIME. HE FOUNDED A learning and meditation center in the 90's and I was fortunate to teach in that program. I can honestly say that I learned as much as I taught, and much of my learning came from observing how David moved through the world with his humble and generous heart.

David would attend nearly all the classes of his teachers and participate like the other students. Not because he was “checking up” on them but because he wanted to experience the program from the inside. His contributions in the classroom were always gently stated and welcomed. There was never a controlling or one-upmanship attitude to them. In fact, one of the main things I learned from David came from his unselfconscious modeling of how to be an open, welcoming, non-competitive professional. Unfortunately, this is a rare thing, even in the “spiritual” world, and I am very grateful to David for being a living teacher in this regard, for walking his talk, and for being a real (and generous) light to his fellow seekers.

Dear David, I wish you the best and the deepest satisfaction in this next chapter of your blessed and G-d serving life.

Rabbi Joe Schonwald

“THE BEGINNING OF HIS LIBERATION FROM THE HIPPIE DRESS CODE”

MY EARLIEST RECOLLECTIONS OF DAVID GOES BACK TO 1967, shortly after the Six-Day War, when we were at the Tel Aviv University Overseas Students Program. We were housed in Herzliya Pituach at the Hotel Dekel, and also at the former Cuban Embassy villas, which had been evacuated after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion a few years earlier.

The students, some of whom came from experimental schools, brought their 60's culture with them, so we had hippies and pot smokers among the students who were ostensibly there to study. Among other events, I remember from that summer was a nude relay race, but that's another story.

Among the students was a small group of spiritual seekers looking for their Jewish roots. Although David and I soon realized we were in the wrong place to actualize our spiritual yearnings, the saving grace was when David brought Reb Shlomo to play for us in Herzliya. Shlomo asked what we were doing there. David had some kind of responsible position with the group, so he stayed on. I left for the Diaspora Yeshiva, where I was among the first group of students on Mount Zion.

Our paths crossed again back in California, where David was the Jewish chaplain at Claremont College. I had returned to LA after getting *smicha* and taught at Hebrew High. Whenever Shlomo came to town, we would see one another again, at David's campus, or at Rabbi Rottenberg's, the Ritchies, or Or Chadash.

A few years later, after we were both married, I was living in Prairie Village, Kansas, where I served as rabbi of Congregation

Ohev Shalom. David was established in the movement for transpersonal psychology, then an emerging field that spawned a network for conscious Judaism. He had become a rebbe for the new psychology institutes and movements that had sprung up all around. One of the more prestigious of these institutions was the Meninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas. David was popular there as the minstrel and storyteller who came in to create the spiritual atmosphere (*ruach*) at what would otherwise have been dry, academic conferences. He would come in and lead some singing and chanting and tell Hasidic stories, creating the desired ambiance.

Usually he would fly into Kansas City and stay with us en route to Topeka. Once, before Passover, I invited him to speak in my synagogue. He gave a lecture on the meaning of freedom from the human potential movement point of view.

There was only one problem. For credibility in the Midwest in the mid-seventies, David just did not look the part. He had long hair and wore colorful shirts, beads and sandals. He didn't own a white shirt or a tie. David thought he should be accepted for what he had to say, not for how he dressed. I tried to convince him that he needed to relate to people on their own level to be of influence.

After much ado about nothing, David reluctantly accepted a white shirt, which was the beginning of his liberation from the hippie dress code of the time. On some level, he felt he was selling out to the establishment we all so resisted.

David, blessings to you on your 60th birthday. May this be a time like the sixties when we met, full of mind-blowing, spiritually liberating growth, *nachas* from the kids, grandchildren and your friends. *L'Chaim!* May every moment be full of blessings, love and light.

Larry Seidman

“DAVID THE RABBI MIXED IN WITH DAVID THE SADDHU”

DEAR DAVID,

It is a pleasure to have a small role in contributing to your 60th birthday.

I am one of your earliest Chassidim! I still own some of your early, transitional tapes that include musical elements of David the Rabbi mixed in with David the Saddhu.

I remember Santa Clara, the bookshop in the garage, and “The Network of Conscious Judaism”. I remember your struggling with the abbreviations in Talmud.

I also remember the weekly sessions with music, meditation, and study. These were beginnings, for me, of Jewish meditation. The beginnings of the realization that there was more to Judaism than the rationalistic, materialistic side. This was truly an eye opening series of teachings.

You were truly a pioneer. It's hard to explain how important you were in my Jewish and spiritual development.

The fact that I am now in rabbinical school at AJR-CA is only a small indication of some of your impacts and how slowly they can ripen.

Mazel Tov.
Larry Seidman

Rav Natan and Leah Siegel

THE BA'AL TEPHILLAH

THE BOSTONER REBBE RELATED THE STORY OF HIS RENOWNED ancestor, REB Shmelke of Nikolsberg, who was also a Cantor. Before the High Holidays he prepared his choir for the *niggunim* he was planning to sing. To their surprise when the High Holidays arrived, the Rebbe used entirely different melodies. The singers, who struggled to harmonize and innovate, asked the Rebbe after the holiday what became of the planned tunes. He answered that as he began singing and being carried away by the beauty of the prayers, he heard the most exquisite tunes coming from above him, so he just joined in.

I met David Zeller as a classmate in the Kollel of Rabbi Brovender's yeshiva in 1985-1986. Though one of the students, he was called on by Rabbi Brovender one *Seuda Shlishit* to tell a story and lead a *niggun*. He told a lovely tale, the punch line of which has the Zaddik, Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk, who had saved a poor inn-keeper's life, saying: "I could see past the troubles." He then sang one of the most haunting tunes that I ever heard. I would later come to know and love this tune as the "Moshiach's *Niggun*" of the Sanzer court. The entire yeshiva was swept up in the song of yearning for redemption.

With the love for Chassidic tales and music in common, David and I became close friends. Together we have been friends and neighbors and among the founding members of Kehillat Shirat Shlomo, the Efrat Happy Minyan. We have watched each other's families grow and have shared guidance and *simcha* with David always having an intelligent psychological perspective. As the Shul took shape and the

community formed around it, David found his natural niche, not only as one of the teachers but as the shul's *Ba'al Tephillah*. This position, though less formal than a cantor, relies more on heartwarming devotion and joyous *niggunim*. The *Ba'al Tephillah* encourages *kavanah*, not by trying to impress with a cantorial "shtimmer" (strong voice), but by bringing people into his own *avodat Hashem*. Rebbe Nachman, in his story "The *Ba'al Tephillah*" (The Master of Prayer) shows how such a master repairs the broken vessels of creation. As a caring guide, David has helped repair broken souls and raised a following of students who benefit from his meditative teachings.

David remains the image of our Shul's *Ba'al Tephillah*. With his rich musicality, perfected over years with Reb Shlomo, while not imitating him, David brought his joy to our Shul and introduced his *nusach* to our community. His strong yet stratospheric falsetto in *Hallel's*: "*Anah HaShem Hatzlichah Na*" is unforgettable.

If I were to dream of aspiring to a prayer experience like Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg's, I am sure that the angelic voices I would wish to hear from on high would sound like David Zeller's soulful singing.

Bruce Silverman

“THEN YOU DREW THE DOOR PRIZE TICKET AND I WON!”

HAPPY BIRTHDAY DOVID!

It is hard to believe that it's almost 30 years since we met. I still remember going to an evening presentation of upcoming classes in Jewish Studies somewhere in Palo Alto. Someone at the door handed me a ticket “What's this for,” I asked, “The door prize” she said. Ok (strange but OK). I took a seat listened to a bunch of people talking about the class they would be teaching.

Then it was your turn. By the time you were finished I was hooked, I knew I wanted to learn with you. Then you drew the door prize ticket and I won. It was a beautiful etching of a Chassid, I had never won anything in my life and thought this was a message from Hashem.

I started taking your classes in Palo Alto and followed you around wherever you taught until you left for Israel 10 years later. My journey back to Judaism really begins with you. I had 8 years of yeshiva education in grammar school but my family was not religious. It was difficult growing up knowing what G-d wanted and what we did. I, like you, also sought out the eastern philosophies and studied meditation, yoga and all of what goes along that journey. But somehow it was not satisfying. It wasn't Jewish and I was.

In that first class you gave us all an essential tool, **The Dogma Scraper** (I still have mine), teaching us how to “See what is really going on” not just what was being said. Then in one of your first few classes you were teaching about creation and the

story of “It doesn't really matter if the World was created in six day or six million years? Who Cares? The only question that matters is—‘IS there a Creator?’ And if there is a creator, ‘What does the creator wants and expects from me? What is My Purpose?’” From there you showed me how all I knew and had learned was only from a child's level, it was only the *pshat* level.

You then took us to deeper and deeper levels. I knew about these deeper levels only intellectually I had never experienced them. You took this concept and explained what was really going on with Avraham and Yizchak and The *Akedah*—and it took on a whole new meaning for me. You taught us that meditation wasn't just an eastern concept but that it was deeply imbedded in Judaism. You taught about the holidays and what the mystical meaning of each one was. (I am still waiting for the Shabbos Lecture). You taught about the *siddur* and how the davening was structured and prayer took on new meaning.

Suddenly the religion that I was somehow connected to, became a completely new experience. After each class I went to, I wanted to become more observant. Those classes became the benchmark for my studying. If a class inspired me to learn more and study more I knew I had learned something valuable.

What more can I say. You have been an integral part of who I have become. Having had the privilege of having your teaching and music tapes in my home to study from and then to actually teach from was a great gift. Knowing that I was a part of sending those teachings around the world gave me great joy. I pray that someday soon they are available again. They were a major source of my learning and much too precious to be lost. (I miss not being able to go and get your thoughts on this subject or that or to listen to a tape on whatever holiday is coming up next.)

Rebbe, may you live to 120, grow from Strength to Strength, and continue to teach and inspire countless more of us who are searching for deeper meaning in our all too often mundane lives, **all the days of your life.** *Kol HaKavod!*

your student always,
Baruch Shalom Silverman.

Rabbi Zalman Shachter-Shalomi

“A VISION OF A JUDAISM THAT THEY HAD NEVER BEFORE IMAGINED POSSIBLE”

IN 1982 THE SOCIETY FOR TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY organized a meeting in Bombay. There were teachers and representatives of spiritual practices present including Dom Bede Griffith, Swami Mukhtananda and Mother Theresa. The Dalai Lama was to be there but had taken sick. (We made a *mishebeirach* for him as part of our presentation). There were many teachers of Buddhist meditation, many of them Jews, but none of them made presentations on the transpersonal consciousness of Judaism.

When it looked that there would be no Jewish representation, you, Reb David created the possibility for Reb Shlomo, you and me to participate. Holy beggars like we were had no funds to pay for participation and travel expenses. You found the funding for us and guided us about India.

With great joy I look from time to time at the pictures that were taken of the three of us that Wednesday night, when we had Jewish mysticism night and presented to the people. Your gentle contemplative music opened hearts for the message you offered and created the atmosphere in which Shlomo, you and I were able to present to that global, cosmopolitan, sophisticated audience of consciousness professionals a vision of a Judaism that they had never before imagined possible.

I remember this with fondness. May the merit that still lingers from that night bring you blessings in your life for a long, healthy and prosperous creativity that yet awaits you.

Reb Zalman

The following teaching, containing a special insight from you, is part of a talk I gave in the 70's in Berkely:

WE SUBSTITUTE FROM THE WRONG SOURCES

Reb Dovid Zeller likes to give an insight in the form of this story.

A child is born. It grows, it cries, and mother puts it to the breast. When the child is hungry, the mother puts it to the breast. When it is cold and lonely, the mother puts it to the breast. When it can't understand what's going on, is frightened and bewildered, the mother puts the child to the breast. And, in each case, going to the breast does make the child feel much better!

And what do we do when we get older? When we feel hungry, we go to the fridge. When we feel cold, we go to the fridge. When we feel lonely, we go to the fridge. When we don't understand what's happening in the world, we go to the fridge. When we're depressed, we go to the fridge. When we want to be touched in our essence, we go to the fridge.

Reb Dovid points out so beautifully that, while it was appropriate for the baby to go to the breast for all those needs, because the breast actually did give an answer to loneliness, bewilderment, cold, and affirmation as well as physical hunger. Even when we consider those energies for which we don't have names, what we call 'tender loving care,' without which babies can die, the answer is still coming through this breast to the baby. But that doesn't mean that for the adult, all these needs can be satisfied through the same oral channel. And all my extra fat, my adipose tissue is a result of not going to the right source for the corrective I needed for things I was missing in my life.

I went only to one source when I should have gone to different sources. Because in our economy of our lives we have needs that are at the level of *Asiyah*, the lower triad; basic, food, clothing shelter air, basic needs. And then we come to other needs, like energy, and warmth and so on. And then we come to needs that are at the heart space that have to do with affirmation, with friendship, with sharing, with social stuff. And then we have needs that are in the heart space and you say, oy, I need to know, I need to know. And we have needs oy do we have needs in the center of the upper body, the heart triad.

We were talking about needs that are up here in the head, and what are these needs about? Here, in the upper mind triad, are needs to know and here at the heart level are needs to love. The best way I can say it is: it's a gift that friends give you at first because you can't have it any other way. That's the gift of a loving space to be. In *Yiddish* you say: *fargin*.

Let me tell you about *fargin*. There is a word that is the opposite of begrudge. If begrudge is minus two, then *fargin* is plus two. Plus two is when I say I want you to have it with all the blessing and I'll make you space for that. So if somebody for instance wins a million dollars, that sort of moves us to our topic, there are people who come over as they shake his hand and they say *mazal tov* and behind that *mazal tov* there lurks envy so that say why him and something that we call *nisht farginnen*, he is not making space for that human being's total development.

So, for instance, if I were to say to you tonight: How can I find out what I really feel like?, I can't find out what I really feel if there sits a person who waits for specific results of my feeling and hopes they will be positive in his direction. That's why we need friends, people with who we can be open, to who we can be transparent and speak our truth as we feel it. At the same

time friend is also one who can challenge us and say 'you're full of it. But only after giving you that kind of attentive listening that makes you hear what your own soul teaches. To become aware of the souls and the G-d within her reveals is an *Atsilut* need which is a very high need on this level.

Dennis (Dovid) Shuman

THE PEACEMAKER

I FIRST MET RABBI DAVID ZELLER AT THE RUACH RETREATS IN upstate New York during the 1980s. There were many rabbis leading these retreats, each with their many Torah insights and strong opinions. Sometimes these opinions would bump into each other at the scheduled panel discussions, especially when the subject turned to the State of Israel and its relations with its Arab neighbors.

I remember Rabbi David, always in his soft-spoken manner, trying to make peace among the teachers and recognizing the value of all human beings. His heart was so big as it tried to encompass everyone.

This was especially true during those retreats conducted after Reb Shlomo Carlebach of blessed memory had passed away. While many try to follow in Reb Shlomo's footsteps, his caring and honoring of all, Jew and non-Jew alike, has led me to believe that Rabbi David Zeller is truly Reb Shlomo's spiritual heir.

Happy Birthday dear Reb Dovid and may you always light the way towards Shalom.

Renee Hoffinger

“HIS WAY OF BEING IN THE WORLD”

THE FIRST TIME I MET REB DOVID WAS AT RUACH ABOUT 22 YEARS ago. My husband Dennis and I were there on “work study” and tent camping. He was helping with the sound system; I was helping in the kitchen, and very pregnant. By the time the eagerly anticipated event began it was raining, my feet hurt, I was tired and wet, and wasn’t feeling terribly friendly or spiritual. In retrospect, Reb Dovid probably was not at his most joyful as his wife was obviously very ill. But as Shabbat began in the “tent of meeting” his beautiful voice filled the wet air, harmonizing with Reb Shlomo, and I wept.

Through the years our paths have crossed many times. Due to my family’s location at the crossroads of the world (Gainesville, Florida), we’ve had the privilege of hosting and hanging out with many wonderful teachers, and Reb Dovid is one of my all time favorite rebbes. Yes, his teachings are transformative. But even more so is his way of being in the world. His generosity of spirit, graciousness, respect for everyone, and sense of fun are teachings as well.

A good example of Reb Dovid’s *menschlikeit* in my book, are the discussions we have had about “the situation”. Between myself, an activist who spent much of the 70’s opposing settlements in the occupied territories and facilitating Arab/Israeli dialogue, and Reb Dovid, as a resident of such a settlement, one might expect our political views to often diverge. Nevertheless, we can disagree and even have a good heated discussion, yet it is respectful and our friendship can remain intact.

Reb Dovid’s most frequent appearances, both planned and spontaneous, in Florida seem to come around Chanukah (a favorite time here for many teachers). So here is one of many Chanukah teachings—given at the Congregation for Liberal Judaism (which had since changed its name) in Orlando probably in 2004 (my mother lives there, so I came down, brought her to the program, and then drove R. Dovid up to Gainesville to visit Mickey Singer and teach at the Temple of the Universe).

As we all know, in the story of Chanukah, the Greeks conquer and defile the Holy Temple. Legend has it that the remaining cruse of oil was the same one from Creation, that surfaced again at the time of Noah, untouched and pure. The word *neshamah* (soul, נשמה) contains the same letters as shemen (oil, שמן). The essence of each one of us, and the essence of olives—both give us light.

During a time of darkness (choshekh, חושך) one can forget (shocheakh, שוכח) a lot: that there is good in the world, that there ever was a time of light, and even one’s own essence/origin/G-dliness. The miracle of Chanukah isn’t just that the oil remained but that we used it to rekindle our own light/soul/joy. Although things may look dark and dirty on the outside, the inside remains pure.

The possibility of returning to who you really are is built in and indeed existed before anything else. We all have the potential to ignite that spark in ourselves and in everyone around us. And now more than ever, we need to say “No!” to the forces of darkness, within and without...

In my own work with veterans suffering from PTSD and substance abuse, this is a lesson to share (and I have) to give hope and facilitate healing and transformation.

And Gainesville's favorite Reb Dovid song? "I am Alive."
So blessings on your birthday! May the light you spread
reflect back to you many fold...

Thank you Reb Dovid and L'hitraot!

Joel Smolen

"YOU ARE A SUN RAY ..."

I HAVE SUCH FOND MEMORIES OF YOU DAVID AND YOUR LIFE HERE
in California; Strong memories of good talks, mutual support,
and kindness.

David, you are "a one of a kind guy" special to me, and to
many in this difficult world we live in. You are a sun ray and
beckon to us all. It is my honor and privilege to know you and
to have known you these many years. You have been as close in
spirit to me as my arm and my soul, even though you have been
far away in place.

A Happy Birthday David, May you live to be 120 and
beyond.

Love to you, and thank you for your many kind words, love
and support.



Devorah Spilman

“DAVID TALKED AS NO ONE ELSE IN THE JEWISH WORLD EVER HAD”

IN 1979, AFTER MY FIRST TRIP TO ISRAEL, I WAS SEARCHING FOR meaning and I heard that a Rabbi named Shlomo Carlebach was leading a retreat at Mt Madona, the center of the silent Guru Baba Hari Das. In Israel I met my Religious relatives and argued with them and cried. I felt something powerful and deep in Israel but it didn't seem to fit me and my life. At Mt Madona I immediately saw the Zellers, Eti was dressed in a long dress and a scarf wrapped around her head. David had on a *Kippah*. I made a bee line for Eti and asked her, “How can you, a modern American woman be Orthodox?” She said, “Would you like to come to our house for Shabbos? You could come on Thursday. My husband teaches a class in Jewish Mysticism.”

The very next week I went to the Zeller's on Thursday and stayed through Sunday. I have been close friend and an Orthodox Jew ever since. That night David talked about G-d and Judaism in a way no one else in the Jewish world ever had. I had always believed in G-d and felt G-d's presence in my life. I just never heard anyone at my Temple talk about G-d in a way I could relate to. It seemed to me that according to Judaism G-d was a Man in the Sky with a beard and a book. David talked about the spiritual and mystical aspects of Judaism and it changed my life forever and gave me back my own tradition and some of my dearest friends in the world.

I asked David what I could do to live a more Jewish and spiritual life. I told him I was thinking of moving to Berkeley. He told me about another single woman who wanted to start a

Jewish house in Berkeley. Her name was Jody. The very next Shabbat I spent with Jody. We became instant friends and are still close to this very day. We did live together and she was one of my other great teachers.

I spent many weekends with the Zeller's and they became like family to me. I was at their house when Esther was born. Manya and Mordechai have been my best storytelling fans since the beginning. Now they are carrying on the storytelling tradition in their own ways. I remember telling Manya that one day it would be like we were the same age. And now we are both parents raising young children. And Mordechai is a storyteller and Esther is married too.

My connection to David is spiritual and familial. When I came to Israel there he was at the airport to meet me and off we went to their home and their community which became my community both in Efrat and in the Moshav. So much of my Jewish life today was formed and supported and inspired by David, by his love, his faith, his family and his community. I can truly say I wouldn't be where I am today without having shared a path with this remarkable man.

As I write this tears come to my eyes for the deep love and gratitude I feel. I have watched David weather many struggles and not all of them gracefully but all of them with honor and honesty and love. I have watched his beautiful children grow up and become remarkable people themselves. I watched the grace and beauty and wisdom of Elana as she nourished us all until she was called to leave this world. I watched Hannah-Sara come in and bring new life and love and support to this wonderful and yet wounded family. And as I write this I am so proud of them all and I miss them and the land of Israel so much that I am crying over my computer.

David, may you enjoy fully this time of life, the time of being *Sabba Ruach*. You have brought so much *ruach* to me and to so many others. I can't help thinking how proud Shlomo would be and how he would agree that you are a remarkable person and is singing and dancing for joy at this very moment. May you continue to be a blessing to others and may we all be a blessing to you.

Much love,
Devorah Spilman (aka Debra deVries and Dilly Zoozilly the clown)

Daniel Stambler

ENCOUNTERS OF THE MOST PROFOUND KIND

THERE ARE A COUPLE OF MEETINGS I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE THAT I had with David, though I wouldn't want to call them simple meetings—they were more encounters of the most profound kind. I would first like to express just how fortunate I consider myself to have been able to know David and feel his influence in my life. You will understand as you read.

I first encountered David at a meditation group I attended while a student in Montreal. I met a rabbi who was holding a Jewish meditation group in his home, and he invited me to attend. At the time I had no experience with meditation other than a couple of Zen Buddhist tries, and knew even less about Judaism. Upon entering this rabbi's house, who himself was—disturbingly to me—orthodox, I heard the soft music of some sweet singer of what seemed like Hebrew chants coming from a tape machine. Yes, we began every evening meditation with the songs of David. In a sense, then, I encountered David in my first exposure to a more inspiring and spiritually gratifying Judaism. I borrowed the tape and listened to it at home; this was fifteen years ago.

My second meaningful encounter with David was at Yakar when he taught a group I was part of Chassidut accompanied by his singing. This was not the learning program, but the prototype for it, created for a few of us who had just finished a study-work program in Tzfat, and wanted to continue learning. For six weeks we learned with Yakar teachers, including David, who was by far the favorite of the lot. I was trying to understand my place in this tradition, having at that point come from

significant time in the Far East, and David's example reassured me that I didn't have to sacrifice what I had gained from there. He was, in fact, the only teacher I had met who embraced much more of life than rejected; the East continued to be an inspiration for him, and by that example I felt more able to embrace my contrasting needs.

After moving to Israel I began to attend David's Shevet evenings at Yakar, though not regularly, as I lived outside of the city. I had wanted to participate in one of the weekend retreats, but missed a couple of them due to what was important karma, as it was the retreat I did manage to attend which would change the course of my life. The retreat at Kibbutz Ma'ale Gilboa was well attended; there were over 85 people, and many different sorts. I didn't get much of a chance to speak with David, but the retreat was very well run and led. At the end of the retreat I returned the keys of my room to the lobby of the hotel, and there was a young woman who was doing the same. She was Batya, a very close friend of David's daughter Manya, and, as I learned later, considered the Zeller family her spiritual home while she grew up. Well, three weeks after that meeting we were engaged, and married half a year later. We now have a beautiful three year old boy, Om Yikrat, and another child is expected in under a month. I guess one could say that David was the unintentional matchmaker, and we have always felt indebted to him for that retreat some six years ago. He brought us together in both physical and deeply spiritual ways; we continue to sing his *niggunim* together. David sung and led the "*bidekin*" of our wedding, and his presence there provided the most memorable moments of the evening; he sang at the *Brit mila* of Om Yikrat, bringing in a spirit that we so hoped for.

That retreat was fateful not just for that one tremendous reason, but for the beginning of my journey here in meditation

as a student and teacher. I was so excited about what David was doing, that I went to his house with Batya afterwards and explored with him how he could expand. Well, he expanded by bringing me into his Shevet staff as a teacher and coordinator, giving me the opportunity to mentor under him and learn wonderful skills and wisdom from his example. My ability to work in meditation in Israel was the fulfillment of a dream I had in India when I was pursuing meditation in intensive Buddhist retreats—I wanted to explore meditation from a standpoint of my own tradition and help others discover it. This was my realization after meeting so many Israelis there on the same retreats, and who were so thirsty for a contemplative Judaism. The work I did with David and Shevet was a wonderful foray into that journey. The opportunity David gave me to work in meditation here gave me the courage and inspiration to continue to pursue my passion for meditation as a life path even after Shevet discontinued.

I have been blessed to count David in my life for the time that I have been living in Israel, and before. He is one of those extremely rare teachers who inspires and transmits his message through his entire being. The writing, teaching, singing, and honesty that David brings into his life is with an integrity that is the fruit of his own nature and his own struggles—he is not above being a human, but knows that this very human being has unlimited possibilities. The example David sets of a person not afraid to be on a search, to find a path in life and to keep searching, while encouraging others to search as well, is a true gift that he has given to me, and I believe to all those who know him. All I can say is thank you, so much.

Leah Strauss

“OUR CONNECTION WAS BEYOND TIME”

MANY YEARS AGO, LILLIAN RITICHIE KEPT TELLING ME THAT there a family that I really must meet. She would go on to say, “You four have so much in common. They are in Palo Alto. I am sure that won’t deter you.”

Time passed. Our connection with our Rebbe Shlomo Carlebach became even stronger. My daughter, Avra was born and the smog in L.A. seemed to get more prevalent. Jerry convinced me that the conditions in L.A. were not healthy for raising my daughter. So off we came to Santa Rosa with my dear Mother. As we were driving up Lillian gave us a tape. She said, “You must listen to this, it is so beautiful.” It was David. All the way up to Northern California there David was with us. I knew that Lillian was right! David and us were connected. That is if G-d permitted, I would be fortunate to meet him.

G-d granted me the greatest honor of having another child shortly after arriving in Sonoma County. Playing David’s tapes became the backdrop to our days. Then one night after reciting the Night Time prayers the phone rang. It was David. He was inviting us to come to Santa Clara for Pesach. David and Elaine were bringing our Rebbe for Pesach. Our response was, “of course we are coming!” even though our newly arrived family member, our dog Mazel was just about to deliver puppies. We allowed her to stay home alone in our kitchen with the door open.

The connection was made beyond the beyond!

We arrived and immediately knew that we were being humbled by meeting our sincere Soul sister and brother: Elaine

and David. Time did not matter; we all knew that our connection was beyond that.

As you might expect, that Pesach was the beginning of a life time friendship with David and Elaine. Little did I know how this honor would enrich and change my life. Lillian was right; this meeting was one of the greatest gifts. We passed out of some of our personal and group bondages with our dear Rebbe and entered into a life time relationship with two other Jews who are obviously our sister and brother as well as ten wonderful puppies and the best dog-mother in the world!

Tragedy Hit! Elaine was diagnosed with breast cancer in her eighth month of pregnancy.

As you all know shortly afterward Esther-Emunah was born. Everyone was in awe of the strength Elaine demonstrated as well as the beauty of Esther.

David and us would share many phone calls Finally, it went something like this: “Elaine wants to be someplace that is peaceful within a natural setting that would be conducive to her healing.” I am sure that you have all experienced times when you have been able to hear that small voice within yourselves. This definitely was one of those times for me! I knew that the Barn conversion in our home was the place for Elaine and David. Jerry called and shared this with David. The reply was, “We can come over on Wednesday.”

I remember all four of us sitting around the pool and talking about what it would mean for us to be sharing space and support for each other as the wonderful sound of Manya, Benyomin, Avra and Talya were running around getting to know each other better. It didn’t take much time for all of us to realize that it was the right thing for us to share our lives more intimately in Santa Rosa. Within a short time the Zellers and the

Strausses would be sharing two very significant years of their lives!

Within those two years not only did Elaine go into remission but also we all found that bond that G-d gave us. Manya and Avra were un-separatable from each other as well as having their little sister and brother tagging along. Esther Emunah grew into a vivacious, energetic delightful little girl. I also remember Binyomin sharing his little horse with Ariel when he was born. David became the Rabbi and Head Master of the Tree of Life Day School in Santa Rosa.

The house that they all lived in was a large yellow barn that was converted into a home. There was a large room downstairs with a little kitchen, bath and bedroom. This bedroom was for David and Elaine. Upstairs encompassing the entire size of the structure was a large room. This space was a joint bedroom for Manya and Binyomin. The windows facing West looked past a gravel driveway through a fenced area with a kidney shaped pool with strawberries growing around the redwoods which shaded it in the summer. On the other side of the redwoods was a commercial vineyard. To the East of your country home was a large field and our neighbor's steer who used it as its munching ground. As time passed your content munching neighbor shared this field with our new family members Lavan who was a long haired white sheep, and Malka our Apline goat. On the North side of our home was Elaine's garden and a picnic table where she did her art. Passed that was our special babbling creek and chicken house. As Esther became able to maneuver herself she was drawn to those chickens! It was ideal place for all of us as well as being a physical support for Elaine's healing.

These were times of excitement, beauty, commitment to a new School and most of all Elaine's fight for her survival. Through my kitchen window across the field I heard every

night David's melodic singing as he put all the kids to sleep with tenderness and love. There was not a night that passed that I was not privy to this delectable relationship between a father and his children. The lullabies caressed each evening. The mornings were greeted with the canary which David and Elaine delighted in its welcoming song.

David couldn't hide his tenderness, commitment and love for the whole family.

On the outside all appeared beautiful. In actuality David as well as wonderful Elaine were dealing with life's immediate issue which is survival. When they moved to Santa Rosa David gave up his lecture and teaching circuit in order to be there for his wife and children. What a man and human being he is! I am sure that there are not too many others who honor that title of father and husband with so much loving sincerity and conviction.

Not only was David there for the kids but also Elaine. Each day went by as David was the support for his family emotionally, spiritually and financially. I must say, that there was not much money coming from the Tree of Life School. He took on the lead as the director as well as the rabbi for this exciting adventure which Reb Shlomo gave us his blessing to begin. Each morning he would get up to feed and clothe his children as Elaine stayed with her baby. Then, the car-pool van would come, and filled with my adopted family plus Avra going off to that school of magic.

These were obviously good times. They were filled with the passage of the Yomim Tovim which we shared in song and joy as Elaine's cancer went into remission. **Thank you G-d!**

When that happened Elaine knew that it was time to leave and move closer to her family. That decision was clear. Within a

short time the music on our property had changed the Zellers had moved on to the place of their souls.

Those two years spent with each other are some of the most sacred of my life. I became close with all of them and got to know more intimately David Zeller—my Soul Brother—a true human, husband, father, son and one who honors his existence in G-d's light.

I send you, dear David, blessings for a miraculous complete healing for Lore. May G-d keep you healthy for many more decades. May we be granted time to live near each other again and share many laughs, songs and adventures.

Even as "My face is wrinkled and my teeth are chipped by sandy winds" I will always smile as I think of you with love.

HAPPY 60TH BIRTHDAY! Jerry and my family send you blessings that this birthday enables you to be more of what you were in your 20's with the wisdom of the 60's in health and joy.

Forever your soul-sister,
Kuki-Leah and Family

Yael and Micha Taubman

"DAVID HAS BEEN AN INSPIRATION TO BOTH OF US"

MICHA AND I WANT TO WISH DAVID A VERY HAPPY AND HEALTHY 60th on the way to 120. David has been an inspiration to both of us in our *Yiddishkeit* and a wonderful teacher, especially through his magical music.

I met David at Ruach at the same time he met his lovely wife, at the time, called Wendy! I was called Adrienne and both of us had our jewish names given to us under the Shabbat *chuppa* with Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach z"l. That was about 20 years ago.

And here we all are, in Jerusalem now.

Micha met David about 5 years before that at a retreat somewhere in California, with Rabbi Carlebach z"l and Rabbi Zalman Shachter and wound up assisting them all to go to India to meet with the Dalai Lama.

David, be blessed with strength, health, and inspiration to continue your work, music and giving *Yiddishkeit* to all who seek a spiritual path.

Avraham ArieH Trugman

“NOT ONLY DIGNITY, BUT ROYALTY”

ALTHOUGH I HAVE MANY SWEET MEMORIES OF REB DAVID singing and teaching, as well as listening to his beautiful tapes, the two memories that are engrained in my soul was the *levayah* and *shiv'ah* for Ilana z"l and the Shabbos of Mordecai's *Bar Mitzvah* in 1993.

I remember Reb Shlomo saying it's not really customary to sing at a *levayah* but how can we not sing *Eshet Chayil* to Ilana one last time? The singing and the tears were from another world. I remember Reb David's quiet and yet spiritual dignity through it all, especially at the *shiv'ah* when he told us all about the last precious days. It left a deep impression of not only dignity, but royalty.

We were living in Denver for 5 years already when we came back in 1993 and were checking out how to make it back to Israel. We heard in the last minute about Mordechai's *Bar Mitzvah* and that Reb Shlomo would be there, and we called to see if we could come. Even though we were not expected and it was pretty last minute, all the Zellers went out of their way to make us feel welcome and make room for us. It was way beyond the call of duty.

That Shabbos was so deep with such beautiful energy. It was such an example of how to do a *Bar Mitzvah* in a spiritual and meaningful way. It was that Shabbos which gave impetus to an ongoing Shlomo *Minyan* in Efrat. "Everything goes after its beginning."

I bless you, Reb David, with many more years of inspiration and strength to transmit the meditative, spiritual and mystical aspects of Torah to the farthest reaches.

Rachel Trugman

“THERE ARE GREATER DIAMONDS TO MINE”

HERE'S A LITTLE BIT OF GRATITUDE TO YOU, REB DAVID, IN HONOR of your 60th birthday. "שישים לזקנה - זה קנה חכמה". Many thanks for your soothing music, which I've listened to during many traffic jams.

Your songs and heavenly voice calm the nerves and remind me to "Let Go". We watched you let go of precious treasures in your life with trust in Hashem that there are greater diamonds to mine within each seemingly endless cavern of the depths. You are truly rich in your ability to stay forward striding into the light with greater strength, with good health and ever increasing vigor.

תודה רבה
Rachel

Simcha Wachtel

“DOVID’S MUSIC HELPED ME GET MARRIED”

DOVID’S MUSIC HELPED ME GET MARRIED.

I first met Dovid about twenty years ago when we were both learning at Yeshivat Hamivtar. When I left the yeshiva and Israel to explore the possibility of marriage with Sara Tropper, I took “Let Go” with me. Once I got to New York, I had to let it go. Sara had a long commute on the BQE and found Dovid’s music helped keep her sane and relaxed on the drive. I think I benefited from the shared glory of having brought this gift of music.

Years later, Sara labored to the same tape for the births of both our older girls. Perhaps because of the in-uterus exposure, Dovid’s music helped keep mother and daughters relaxed and happy in the early years.

By the time I made a pilot trip seven years later, the tape was completely worn out. I made a special effort to buy another one from Dovid while I was in Efrat. I remember bumping into him as I left shul after a weekday Mincha. Avraham Schriger pointed him out as one of those people who is “more interested in talking about the parasha than baseball on Shabbos.” Since I was looking for a community like that, you could say that Dovid Zeller helped bring me back to Efrat.

Sara Wachtel

A PERSON CAN “LET GO”

SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO (NEARLY TO THE DAY) I FIRST HEARD THE music of the man who I would choose again and again to help Simcha and I do the nearly impossible: birth our children in peace and calmness.

Simcha had returned to the States to court me and he’d brought Dovid along in his pocket. “Let Go” made it’s debut (for me) in a NYC traffic jam. I played it until the cassette broke many traffic jams later. (Actually, the tape lasted much longer than the car.) And we got another tape to play over and over.

Then it was time to help us bring children into the world. Labor, postpartum, you name it, that cassette was there. Even when our third child was born on Yom Tov, I moved a candle into my space and “Let Go” into my mind. And there’s really only one thing a person can do, physically to help at such a moment. A person can “Let Go.”

Kvod Wieder

“YOU SPOKE DIRECTLY TO MY SOUL”

DEAR REB DAVID,

A few months ago I finished your book—“The Soul of the Story” and I was moved to write you about how you’ve touched my life and been a part of my journey. I was so pleased to find out that your family was putting this book together for you—giving me the kick in the butt to write this letter.

Over the years, you have been my teacher, colleague, and friend. When I was first coming back to Judaism in 1994 after being turned on by yoga, Buddhist meditation, and transpersonal psychology, I found you through recorded talks you had given at ITP on Jewish mysticism and of course, your deep deep music. It was incredible for me when, as a graduate student, I reached out to bring you to a Shabaton in Santa Cruz and ITP again, that you came. The way you share your gift—the language you use, your stories, music, warmth and openness spoke directly to my soul and always has. Like hundred of others, I’m sure, you showed me a path to Judaism that my soul longed to take.

In 1997, I started working for *Chochmat HaLev*, and organized two of the meditation conferences. It was here that you became a colleague for me, as well as a teacher. It was thrilling to be a part of a conversation with you and others—about the direction of Jewish Meditation in the United States. It was also here that I saw your humanness. I remember when you got angry and ranted and raved a bit because something didn’t go the way you wanted it to. Now, you weren’t just the elevated teacher, but a real person on your own path of growth. This made me love you more.

I don’t know at what point I knew you were my friend. At some point, I realized that the love and appreciation I had for you was returned. I also felt seen and loved. Maybe it was invitation to visit you at your home in Efrat. Or the land of Israel pendant that you gave me at the NAA Conference in Tel Aviv in January 2005. Or having lunch together at the CAJE conference in Long Island a couple of years ago and sharing pictures of our families.

When I read your book, I found so many parallels to my own journey, it was striking. I grew up in Los Angeles, moved to the Bay Area, got involved in Jungian and Transpersonal Psychology and Eastern Meditation practices before coming back to Judaism and religiously observant. While I have a deep appreciation for all the ways in which the spiritual traditions of the world have deepened my life and the lives of my fellow Jews, I am also called to offer my own journey as a pathway back to Judaism.

A new chapter of my life is opening. My family and I are moving back to Los Angeles where I will begin rabbinical school at the University of Judaism. I’m finally fulfilling a deep longing to immerse in traditional sources and “break the *sefer* barrier.” My third year will be in Jerusalem and my heart is filled with the possibility of sharing our lives more.

I often wonder whether certain individual souls could share a similar branch of the Great Tree. If we can conceive of it that way, I am blessed to share a branch with you. May the Holy One of Being turn his face towards you in the way that you have shown your true face to the thousands of souls you have touched.

With love and deep respect,
K’vod

Emuna Witt

“UNBELIEVABLE KIDUSH HASHEM”

SWEETEST DOVIDLE HAS BEEN MY FRIEND FOREVER. I’M BLESSING him that on his life’s journey which has taken him to the highest holiest places, he will continue meeting the highest holiest souls.

I remember when he was privileged to travel with Reb Shlomo to India and made an unbelievable *Kidush Hashem* bringing back so many *Yidden* to their roots.

Reb Dovid once organized the most amazing summer learning program at Yakar. Reb Shlomo learned with us—Gemara, Chassidut and Halacha. We sang, we danced, we laughed, we flew up to heaven and we learned with the angels. Thank you Dovidle. What a special memorable experience!

And thank you always for your sweet music. May your life be blessed with so much joy and only good health. May you continue connecting to the depth of peoples hearts.

Bracha and *Hatzlacha*, my precious friend!

Larry Wolfe

“JOY AND JEWISHNESS COEXISTING”

DEAR FRIENDS,

Although I have never spoken to Rabbi Zeller directly, I have contacted him by e-mail and listened to his audio recordings. I almost met him at Paradise Island two years ago, but that was not meant to be.

Hearing Rabbi Zeller describe Jewish Life and meaning from his most profound and holy perspective allowed me to loosen my image of *HaShem* as the frightening punisher I met in my childhood or the distant spirit detached from individual life. Instead, even without speaking to the Rabbi directly, I met the pervasive Holiness alive in my mind and all people and all life and all things. The possibility of joy and Jewishness coexisting arose for the first time....

With deep appreciation,
Larry Wolfe

Ora Yanai

Alan Yaniger

“SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT WILL HAPPEN MOTZEI SHABBOS”

DEAR DAVID,

Everything about you is a direct connection to Shlomo zt”l. You take me back many years. Your coming to live in Efrat was Shlomo’s idea. He came to Motke and me and said that there is a family that is “GEVALT”—David, Ilana, and 3 children. They have traveled a lot, tried many things and now is the time for them to settle down.

The right place is Efrat, and of course—we are the right connection.

Only years later did I understand! Shlomo in his wisdom, understood not only that the Zellers would find in Efrat what they needed, but that Efrat needed them.

Through David 20 years ago, he planted the seeds of what is today called “The Happy Minyan.” A few years later, Shlomo was here in our home and told Motke that something very important will happen Motzei Shabbos and we should stay home. In the evening David came and Shlomo made a simple ceremony to ordain David with *Smichah*. He said to Motke who was a bit surprised that David had been learning and learning and knows even more than he learned. I am sorry I did not pay more attention to what was going on, because I was in the kitchen...

For all these years, I am grateful to have you and your family as friends! Efrat has benefited from your presence so much. I love you and wish you more happy years.

“DOVID CELEBRATES GOOD”

FROM THE MANY TIMES I HAVE DAVENED WITH DOVID, I’VE BEEN unfailingly impressed that his prayers were not just ritual, but also communication. They were always an invitation to join him in the spiritual circle that included Shlomo, the Chassidic masters, and Hashem himself, all of whose spirits were present through him right there during the Davening.

Thanks to Dovid, I don’t just **say** hallel, but I sing it to myself, even when others aren’t singing.

Many times, in “empty,” drifting, moments, I think of Dovid’s musical meditation on the words “*Ribono Shel Olam*,” and it helps anchor me in the world of spirit and meaning.

Natan Siegel once mentioned that Dovid celebrates good, regardless of whether it comes from him or anyone else. It is absolutely true. I have made this wonderful attribute of Dovid a goal worth reaching.

Dovid, keep going for another 60!

תחיה הרמן

“הדרשות והתורות הפכו לסיפורים מהחיים”

שמעתי מדוד לראשונה מתישהו בשנות השבעים, מדודה שלי שעלתה לארץ מארצות הברית. היא השמיעה לי קלטת שלו עם השיר Return again וסיפרה לי שאת השיר הזה היא שמעה בארה"ב. הוא נכנס לה "ישר ללב" ועורר בה געגועים ורצון לעלות לארץ.

כעבור כמעט עשרים שנה, השתתפתי במפגש ב"קול הנשמה". אחת מסדנאות הבחירה הייתה מפגש עם דוד זלר; נזכרתי בסיפור של דודתי והצטרפתי לסדנה. דוד העביר את השיעור על אברהם היושב בפתח האוהל כחום היום – שיעור שמאוחר יותר שמעתי שוב ושוב. דוד ביקש שנעצום עיניים והחל לנגן ניגון. הרטט שהוא יצר, השקט והעומק, פתחו אותי לחוויה בלתי רגילה. חשתי איך הגוף שלי מתרחב ואני יושבת כמו אברהם אבינו בפתח האוהל, במדבר רחב הידיים מאופק עד אופק, מעלי משתרעת כיפת השמים, ואני הופכת להיות אחת עם המרחב כולו, עם העולם כולו. החוויה ארכה דקות ספורות בלבד, אך היא הייתה עצומה כל כך, חוויה עמוקה של חיבור ושל היפתחות. זו הייתה הפעם הראשונה שערכתי מדיטציה.

כעבור שנים מספר, כשהשתתפנו, הדסה יעקובוס ואני, בסופשבוע עם טיך נאט האן, פגשתי שוב את דוד ואת חנה שרה, שהיו היחידים בעלי מראה דתי בין מאות האנשים שהשתתפו בסופשבוע הרוחני הזה. אני זוכרת את קבלת השבת בליווי ריקודים ושירה שדוד והמשפחה קיימו על הדשא – שם בתוך האווירה הבודדהיסטית.

בסוף ההרצאה של טיך נאט האן עמד דוד ושאל שאלות ממקום זקוף, אמתי ונוקב, ויחד עם זה כל כך מכבד. באותו מעמד נפעמתי מול האומץ וזקיפות הקומה שדוד מסוגל להציב מול מורה דגול מתרבות אחרת. הנזיר הפנה את הקהל לחפש את המדיטציה בשורשים הרוחניים של אבותיו הקדומים, של היהדות.

כמה ימים לאחר אותו סופשבוע, פנתה אלי ג'נין, שעסקה יחד אתנו בהבאתו של טיך נאט האן לארץ, ואמרה לי שדוד מחפש שותפים על-מנת להקים ביחד מסגרת של דתיים וחילוניים של מדיטציה, שתישען על מקורות יהודיים. אם כל כך הרבה אנשים באו לשמוע נזיר בודהיסטי – מדוע שלא נתקל מדיטציה יהודית? דוד חיפש אנשים "חילונים" הקרובים למקורות היהודיים וקרובים למדיטציה, ומצא אותי ואת הדסה.

מהרגע שנפגשנו התפתחה בינינו ידידות מופלאה המבוססת על כבוד הדדי ופירגון. דוד, שהיה מורה למדיטציה ולחסידות בעל שם וניסיון, עם כל העומק והיכולות שלו, קיבל אותנו בפשטות ובענווה כשותפות מלאות. הקמנו ביחד עם שחר זיידר את "שְׁבֶת – מדיטציה יהודית" ובחנוכה הזמנו את הקהל ליום של מדיטציה. הזמנו מורים נוספים כמו יובל דור, מייק קגן ואחרים והרמנו ערב של שירה, הדלקת נרות וסדנאות...

"שְׁבֶת" המשיך לגדול ולהתפתח. עם הזמן קיימנו פגישות מדי שבוע ביקר, ויצאנו לסופי שבוע בנגב ובגליל. הגיעו אלינו קהלים שונים ומגוונים מכל קשת הצבעים. עברנו יחד חוויות רבות כל כך, שאפשר לכתוב עליהן בלי סוף, כמו המדיטציה בקבר האר"י ז"ל בערב שבת בצפת; הריקודים על המצוק במצפה רמון; המפגשים שערכנו, הצוות של "שבת", בסוכה של דוד וחנה שרה באפרת. ועוד ועוד חוויות רבות ומיוחדות.

אחת החוויות הזכורה לי במיוחד היא תפילת שחרית בסופשבוע בשדה בוקר. האולם היה מלא מפה לפה באנשים מכל הסוגים, כאלה המורגלים בתפילה וכאלה שזו להם הפעם הראשונה ליטול בה חלק. דוד הוביל את הקהל לאורך התפילה עם הסברים ומדיטציה שלב אחר שלב, מפסוקי דזימרה ועד תפילת העמידה, ובכל שלב חלחל שקט רב יותר לעומק ונבנתה חוויה יוצאת דופן של התעלות וחיבור של קדושה. זו הייתה התפילה העמוקה ביותר שחוויתי בחיי.

שחר התרחק ודניאל הצטרף ל"שְׁבֶת" בעקבות סופשבוע במעלה גלבוע, שבו הוא הכיר גם את בתיה שנהייתה אישתו. יחד עם דניאל הגיע גם הנבל שלו ונוסף גוון חדש למדיטציה של "שבת".

אתי קקון

“בעל המפתחות הקדושים”

המפגש שלי עם דוד החל לאחר מסע חיפושים ללימודי מדיטציה יהודית. מצאתי באינטרנט, באתר של יקר, את המידע אודות המפגשים עם דוד, והגעתי.

מיד במפגש הראשון הבנתי שלא הגעתי לעוד הרצאה או חוויה מעניינת ושהחיפוש שלי, שנשא את הכותרת התמימה ‘מדיטציה יהודית’, היה רק תירוץ למשהו הרבה יותר עמוק.

היה לי ברור שהשם כיוון את המהלך הזה באופן כה מדויק.

במהלך המפגש הראשון עיני זלגו נחלי מים כמעט ללא הפסקה.

זו הייתה שמחה גדולה מהולה בכאב של געגועים עצומים

לאותה ‘אני’ שלא העזתי לפגוש כל השנים.

לדוד היה את המפתח,

והוא פתח לי את אותו שער.

זה פחות או יותר מה שסיפרה לי חברתי כשהשתתפה בערב סיפורים של דוד ואני בטוחה שיש עוד הרבה סיפורים דומים, על בעל המפתחות הקדושים...

הייתי מאוד רוצה להודות לך עמוקות על האוצר העצום הזה שהענקת לי,

על השמחה ששימחת אותי,

על העומק והמודעות שנודעתי אליהם,

על הדלתות והשערים שנפתחו לי,

על הרוך והחן שנוספו לי,

על קרבת השם שהתקרבת,י,

על האהבה שלמדתי לאהוב,

לאורך השנים שבהן היינו שותפים ב”שבת” למדתי מדוד כל כך הרבה חכמה. דוד הכיר לי את ה”מאור עיניים”, הוא לימד מדברי הבעש”ט ותורותיו של ר’ שלמה קרליבך. אך הדבר שבעיניי היה המיוחד ביותר הוא הדרך שבה כל דבר חכמה הפך להיות דיבור מלב אל לב. הדרשות והתורות הפכו לסיפורים – סיפורים מהחיים של כל אחד מאתנו.

ועם זאת, העוצמה הגדולה ביותר בעיניי הופיעה כאשר דוד הניח לדיבור והתחיל בניגון. אז נפתחו שערי שמים ונפתחה הדרך להתחבר לנשמה. הקול של דוד והתדר המיוחד שבו הוא שר, חיברו את כולם מיד אל הלב.

גם כאשר דוד היה לאחר יום קשה או מעייף, כשהוא התחיל לשיר נפתח ממד אחר. הקול שלו, מעבר למילים, היה פוגש בעולמות עליונים ומביא אותם ישר לתוך הנשמה. גם המנגינות שדוד חיבר יש בהן יופי ועומק ונעימות. זהו אוצר ייחודי ומיוחד שדוד מביא לעולם.

אני רוצה להודות לך, דוד, על כל ההזדמנויות שפתחת בפניי, על כל התורות שלימדת אותי, ועל כל הדכים הרבות שבהן התחברתי לנשמתי בזכותך. תודה על שותפות דרך, שהיא זכות גדולה עבורי.

אני מברכת אותך דוד ליום הולדתך, שתזכור את העוצמה והיופי שלך שהם יחידי ומיוחדים,

שתחיה בנחת רוח – הן כשהרוח שקטה והן כשהרוח סוערת,

שתשמח בעשייתך,

שתשמח במשפחתך היקרה, בילדיך ובנכדיך.

מאחלת לך עוד שנים רבות של יצירה והשפעה

שהשפע יתקיים במעונך. ותראה ברכה בעשייתך ובחיך.

והכל בזכותך.
תודה!

ברוריה רבינוביץ

מי יתן ותוסיף עוד שנים רבות וטובות
לשמח ללמד לפתוח לקרב לאהוב
ממוקירתך באמת
אתי קקון

כנגז המנגז

יום שישי, ערב שבת. ערב ראש השנה תשנ"ז.

דסי רבינוביץ, בתנו, הזמינה אותך, דוד, לבוא עם הגיטרה: תבוא בארבע אחר הצהריים. אמא שלי תגמור כבר את ההכנות לחג ונכין את עצמנו מבחינה רוחנית...

הגעת עם הגיטרה לבקשתה, ובמשך שעתיים ישבנו סביב המיטה של דסי ושרנו. אתה שר ומגן, ואנחנו אתך.

על השעתיים האלה אני רוצה לכתוב ולהודות לך שוב, מפרספקטיבה של עשר שנים. "יש קונה עולמו בשעה אחת" אומרים חז"ל, וזה מתאים לך במעמד המיוחד ההוא, הבלתי נשכח בעוצמתו הרוחנית.

אני זוכרת אותך שר, שירה חרישית, דקה, נעימה, עדינה, חודרת לחדרי הלב, מרעידה את הנשמה, מחלחלת לכל מקום בגוף והופכת אותו לרוח. שירה שנשמעה כמו תפילה זכה, והביעה ענווה והשלמה כלפי שמיא.

דסי עצמה עיניים ואמרה: "דוד, כאשר אתה שר אני שומעת את המלאכים..."

וכל זה התרחש כחמש-שש שעות קודם שהחזירה דסי את נשמתה הזכה לבורא עולם.

על החוויה המיוחדת הזו, הבלתי נשכחת – להוביל נשמה זכה לבית גנוזיה, בליווי שירה ונגינה, אנו חבים לך תודה. אנו מברכים אותך, ביום חגך, שתזכה לאריכות ימים, ולהמשיך בשירה ובנגינה באירועים משמחים, בבית המקדש ובשמחת הגאולה הקרובה.

רמה שיף

“המורה שלי לאלף דברים”

אולי בכתב, כאשר העיניים הנוצצות נמצאות מעבר לכתף, קל יותר לספר על חבר קרוב, שנשאר חבר קרוב, למרות השנים ולמרות ההבדלים בתפיסת העולם.

את דיויד פשוט מצאתי על מדרגות האוניברסיטה ברמת-אביב, מכין את עצמו לשינה. האיש המצחיק הזה היה בטוח שאחריות היא ערך עליון. גם אם הוא צריך להגיע ללימודי העברית השכם בבוקר, אסור לוותר על שעות העבודה בקיבוץ אחרי הצהריים, וצריך למהר ולהתארגן לשינה בתל-אביב, גם אם אין אצל מי לישון, ופירוש הדבר שינה על המדרגות. אחרת, מה יעשה הקיבוץ בלי שעות העבודה של דיויד?

מאותו היום והלאה דיויד לך בבית הורי. אם לאבא היו אי אילו השגות, הרי שאמא אהבה אותו עד יום מותה.

בעצם, אם אדם ממשיך לגדול אחרי בגרותו ושירותו הצבאי, אחרי הנח"ל ומשפטי החברים, אז דיויד ואני גדלנו ביחד ולחוד. גדלנו זה לצד זה. אין לנו הורים משותפים אבל יש לנו כל-כך הרבה חוויות משותפות. משנת 1968 אנחנו מלווים אחד את השני. לעולם איננו מאבדים זה את זה. הייתי (אולי) המורה שלו לעברית, אבל מהר מאד הבנתי שהוא המורה שלי לאלף דברים אחרים.

אילו אפשר היה להזכיר לאיש בן השישים הזה כמה דימויים מעולם הקולנוע הטוב, שהיו עושים פעם לפני שישים, שבעים שנה בקליפורניה מקום הולדתו, הייתי מכנה אותו “סקרלט פימפרנל”. נעלם ומופיע שוב.

לבסוף הוא חזר לתמיד. תמיד היה בו הניצוץ היהודי שקשר אותנו, כי יהודים יש מכל מיני סוגים. אבל כאשר הוא חזר אז, עם אילנה היפה והעדינה, הייתה בו אש יהודית, לא רק ניצוץ.

אחרי כל הנדודים נעשה מעשה ההתיישבות, פתאום הייתה אפרת, פתאום גדלו ופרחו ילדים לתפארת וגם בימים הקשים והעצובים היו המעשה החינוכי

והנפש הרגישה, היכולת הנפלאה שלו לתקשר עם ילדיו יחד עם הדבקות שלו באמונה הדתית, נר לרגליו.

גם היום, כאשר הבית באפרת הוא הנמל וחנה-שרה וכל הילדים מסביבו, יודעים לחיות את חייהם ומישהו שם, מדליק את האור במגדלור, דיויד ממשיך לנדוד מסיבה זאת או אחרת, זה בכלל לא חשוב, דיויד הוא היהודי הנודד! איזה כיף שיש סיבה לחזור הביתה ולראות ילדים ונכדים ולהמשיך לגדול.

רוברט פרוסט אמר פעם:

“I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep.”

מה נאמר ומה נדבר, אני מקווה שתהייה לך נחת מכולנו ושלא נאכזב אותך.

שישים זאת רק ההתחלה, אז עד מאה ועשרים!

Happy Birthday to you, David Zeller, beloved brother of my beloved friend, Jacqueline Zeller Levine.

Your music has inspired me, and your devotion to family has touched me deeply. Meeting you has been one of the unexpected gifts of my friendship with Jacqueline.

Happy Birthday David and may you live to be 120!

With love,

Sandy Geller

Meeting you, David, at our CAJE conferences, and having you present at our Healing/Spirituality network pre-conferences was truly rewarding for all of us.

We are so glad to congratulate you on your milestone birthday...

MAZEL TOV, DAVID and of course, many more!

Judy Kaskel

Dovid, *shalom*,
I have the clear recollection of you singing for a friend of mine who was dying, and helping her transcend her suffering. You have opened the *neshamahs* of so many, helping them to reconnect, in their *tefilah* as in their daily lives.

Now it is your turn to receive, Dovid. May Hashem open your own "Channels of connection" to Him and help you draw down *devekut* to Him for all your days, *Ad me'ah v'esrim*.

Mazal tov!

Hannah Lasry

Dear David,
For me, our first meeting was surely remarkable in its unremarkableness.

But that must surely have been because we knew each other long before we ever met.

with love,

Moshe Mykoff

When I think of David, few things come to mind:
The second time I came to Israel, David picked me up from the airport and surprised me by taking me right to the Kotel.

Whenever I stayed at the Zellers, I remember staying up late in the night talking about deep things and it seemed like David never got tired. Whenever I have spoken to David on the phone, it seems he never has to get off.

So this is my experience of David: give, give, give and then give some more. My birthday wish for David is that we all learn to give like him.

Sara Mo Shapero

To my deepest of the deep soul-brother and holiest of the holy Visions-mate,

No words could ever express the depth of my gratitude to you for helping me climb down from the tree of sterile knowledge and opening up for me the heart-path of life.

All my love,

Yehoshua Starret

The first time I met David I was driving in my car listening to a tape that my wife had given me. And for days afterward the melody of a *niggun* he was chanting kept coming to me, and it still filters through my consciousness when I seem to need it most. I think it's the spirit of that chant that helped me know that David is someone I'd like to get to know, and his voice continues to inspire me every time I listen to his songs. David, thank you.

Rick Stone

I first met David in the mid seventies when we were on the faculty at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. I remember his wonderful music at the transpersonal conferences, particularly his singing "Listen, listen, listen, to my heart's song."

Thank you, David, for reminding me to listen to my heart, and for all your inspiring work in the world across the years.

"Love is the way we walk in gratitude." (ACIM)

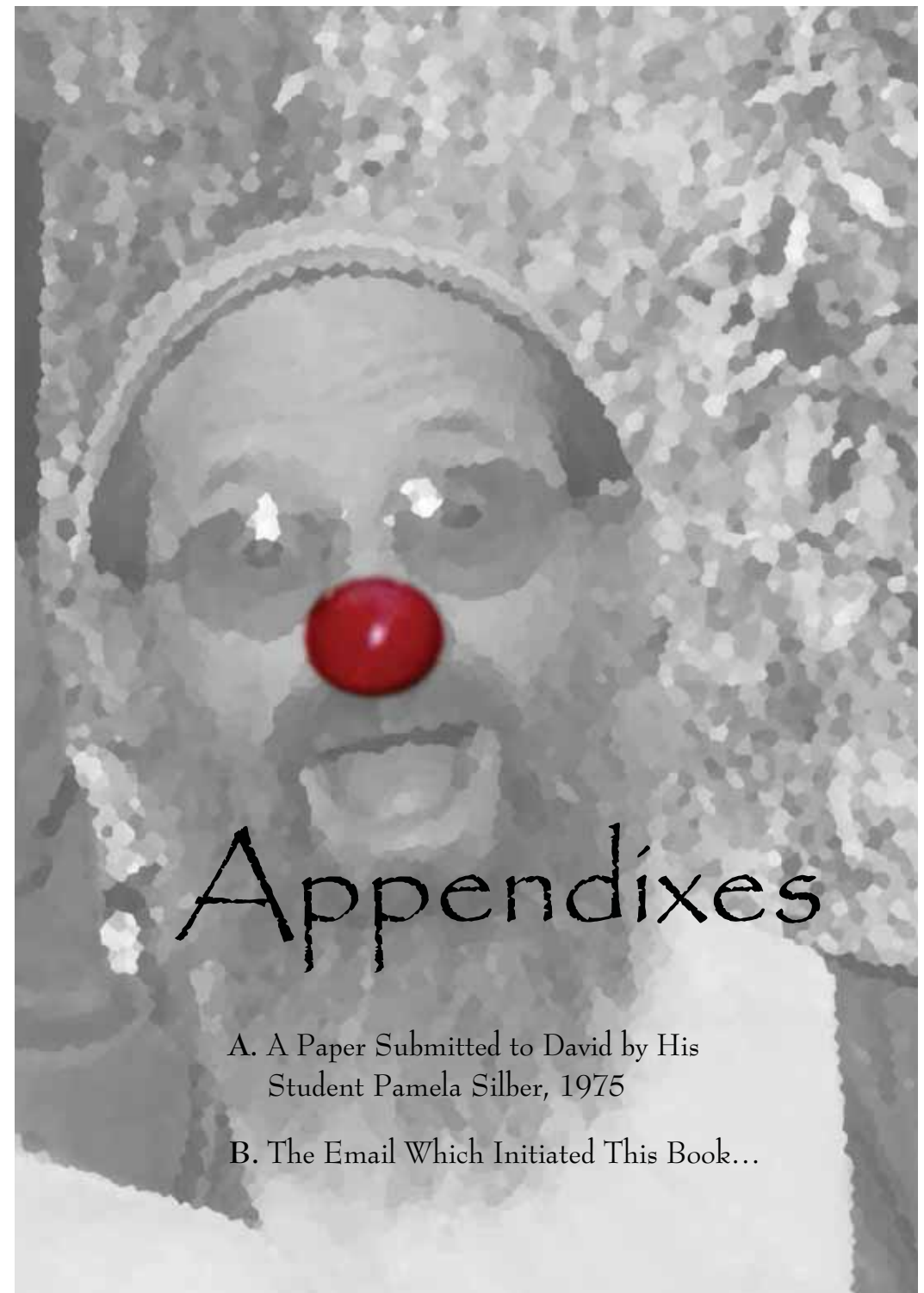
Frances Vaughan

דוד היקר מאוד,

מהודרו ועד שבת...

באהבה,

שחר אלרז (זיידר)



APPENDIX A

A Paper Submitted to David by His
Student Pamela Silber, 1975

SEMINAR
April 13, 1975


I CHING



One of the special qualities of David Zeller is his ability to constellate an atmosphere where time stops, one is together with one's self (the Self), and nothing is more important for that moment than that moment.

David gave a seminar on the I Ching; but more broadly, he presented the Taoist conception of the universe. He feels it is more important for one to obtain a grasp of the "universe of meaning" which underlies the I Ching than to go into details. (Which is better stalks or coins; which side is 3 anyway?)

Early in man's consciousness he must have become aware of the patterns in nature: the sun rises and sets producing the great light and the great darkness. Forces in nature, thunder, water, wind, act upon each other; they represent the principles of the universe and their behavior is a reflection of the laws of the universe.

TAO is represented by a circle which is in constant motion. "We can't stop it, not really, but if we did it would look like this:"  These are the primal opposites. They are perhaps more appropriately called complementaries since this conveys far better the sense of opposites being completed by each other. One side needs the other for completion and movement.

	yin	yang
	earth	heaven
	receptive	creative
	material	spiritual
	night	day
(passive)	attractive	active
	female	male
	---	---
	-	+
	(electricity)	

"These basic opposites are in play, in dance, and that gives rise to everything." This play, dance, movement, fluctuation, is constant; therefore, "the only thing which does not change is change itself."

David spent much time on each of the 8 trigrams as they are crucial to understanding the hexagrams. A trigram is composed of three lines and has a particular image associated with it.

— — — — — — — — —	Mother (earth, substance, the receptive)	— — — — — — — — —	Father (heaven, spirit, the creative)
-------------------------	--	-------------------------	---

By introducing a complement line in each position of the above trigrams we get the 6 children. (Sex is determined by the "different" complement line, and the age of "child" by its placement.)

Female children represent
devotion in its various
 stages

— — — — — — — — —	Eldest daughter The Gentle, penetrating, wood, (gentle penetration)
-------------------------	--

— — — — — — — — —	Middle daughter The Clinging, Fire, eye (clarity, adaptability)
-------------------------	--

— — — — — — — — —	Youngest daughter The Joyous, Lake (joyous tranquility)
-------------------------	---

Male children represent
the principle of
 movement in its various
 stages

— — — — — — — — —	Eldest son The Arousing, Thunder, first emergence of light (beginning of movement)
-------------------------	--

— — — — — — — — —	Middle son The Abyssal, Water, depth, deceptive obstacle (danger in movement)
-------------------------	---

— — — — — — — — —	Youngest son Keeping Still, Mountain, meditation (completion of movement)
-------------------------	--

The 64 hexagrams are formed by making all possible combinations of the 8 basic trigrams. From knowing well the image and action of a trigram, one can begin to see how a particular quality or archetypal situation is produced by a combination of two of them. For example:

#6 Conflict	— — — — — — — — — — — — — — —	"The upper trigram, whose image is heaven, has an upward movement; the lower trigram, water, in accordance with its nature, tends downward. Thus the two halves move away from each other giving rise to the idea of conflict." p.28
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A hexagram is composed of yin and yang lines. By "throwing" the coins and counting up heads or tails, one obtains a 6, 7, 8 or 9. 7 (yang) and 8 (yin) are stable and are called old lines. A 6 (yin) or a 9 (yang) is made from all tails or all heads and is unstable because it can easily change into its opposite. They are called young lines because they will grow up and change.

From the discussion of hexagrams came the following:

"Finding out what the real question is that you are asking is half the work (of using the I Ching)."

"It doesn't matter which side of the coin you call, 3 or 2; just decide one way then stick to it."

"The process of asking the I Ching a question is the process of opening up, of being receptive."

"A hexagram is a probability; given this situation, then that is likely to happen. But if you know what is behind the situation (the archetypal basis) then one can act and change the situation and therefore the probability."

"The Hurrying Halted Hexagram (#54) doesn't necessarily mean don't do it. It just says: here's what's happening, there is an element of the infatuation in the situation so watch out!"

To apply some of the concepts that we had been discussing, David asked for a volunteer question. The following was asked: "What is the situation of the Analytical Psychology Club?"

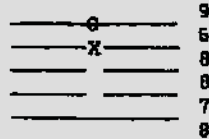
The resulting hexagram was #4 Youthful Folly

The two top lines were changing lines, a 6 and

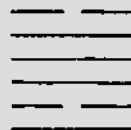
a 9. This hexagram refers to the "immaturity of

youth and its consequent lack of wisdom, rather

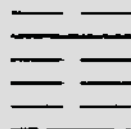
than mere stupidity." p.20n



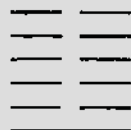
David showed us how one can expand the meaning of a single hexagram by discovering what are the associated hexagrams. Here are some examples:



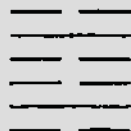
Opposite hexagram is obtained by changing every line. #49 Revolution, refers to a time of big change.



Mirror image is obtained by turning it upside-down. #3 Difficulty at the Beginning refers to birth pains resulting from something new.



Nuclear trigrams (from book II). #24 Turning Point refers to the end of darkness and the first new light (winter solstice). (See APC Newsletter, December 1974)



"Changed" hexagram is obtained by changing 6's and 9's into the opposite. #29 The Abyssal refers to a dangerous "objective situation to which we must become accustomed". p.122 (the heart is locked up within the body)

Throughout the seminar I was impressed both by David's understanding of the I Ching and by his ability to transmit this understanding not through "teaching" or "instruction" (the mind), but through feeling and his own special relatedness to the material (the heart). The seminar group included people having little or no experience with the I Ching as well as those well acquainted with the book. I felt David, because he spoke from a place deep within himself, spoke equally to all of us.

As the seminar drew to a close and after discussion about "the Club" (resulting from the hexagram), I became aware of a special value the Club has for me. Some of my most nourishing experiences have come from small seminars where a special feeling of meaning and eros is present. Those recent seminars that immediately come to mind are Betty Smith's seminar on Mythology (given last year), Russ Lockhart's seminar on Hillman (last fall) and this most recent one of David Zeller on the I Ching.

(Quotes with page numbers refer to the single volume edition of the I Ching by Wilhelm/Baynes. All other quotes are, hopefully, faithful to David Zeller.)

Pamela Silber

BULLETIN COMMITTEE: Pamela Silber, editor, 348 23rd St., Santa Monica 90402; Maxine Friend, in charge of mailing, 2600 Kaitum Ave., L.A. 90064, phone 475-2719.

Appendix B

THE EMAIL WHICH INITIATED THIS BOOK...

From: Manya Hillel [mailto:manyaz@hotmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 14, 2006 3:41 PM
Subject: Rabbi David Zeller's 60th Birthday - SECRET PLAN

Dear friends and family,

1. This is a total surprise!! Do not let him hear about this!
2. We know this is rather short notice, but it'll have to do...
3. This mail was sent to David's entire address book.
Please excuse us if this is irrelevant...

Our husband and father, Rabbi David Zeller's 60th birthday is coming up in about a month. Lately he published his book (which We're sure you've all read. If not, you can get it here: <http://davidzeller.org/book>) "Soul of the Story: Meetings with Remarkable People", telling about many of the people who influenced his life, touched his soul, and helped him become who he is today. We've decided to try to collect stories from people who were influenced by **him**.

We'd love to present him with a special edition for his birthday, called "**The Story of a Soul: Meetings with a Remarkable Person**". We are sure that many of you have had special meetings or encounters with our father and husband over the years, which undoubtedly left their marks on your soul and your directions in life.

We'd be so glad if you can find the time to write about a remarkable meeting you had with David Zeller ASAP, and send it to manyaz@hotmail.com. There are many people we've lost touch with, so **please** pass this on to **anyone** you can think of who may be interested (and don't forget to CC us).

THE DEADLINE IS JUNE 9TH, which leaves us only 2 weeks to prepare and print the book.

You can write about the first time you met him, or any other meaningful meeting. You can quote a special insight that inspired you, tell about a special chant or song that moved you, and so on. You can write under what circumstances you met him, and how it influenced your spiritual development.

The stories will be edited, so don't be afraid to write, even if you don't consider yourselves professional writers... Also, we have no size limit. From 2 sentences to 2000 – everything will be greatly appreciated.

To help us keep track the progress on this project, please reply now, notifying us whether you think you're going to write anything. Of course, we can't take no as an answer...

As soon as the book will be ready, we'd love to send it to you by e-mail.

Thanks in advance,
Love and blessings
The Zellers