

B''H<sup>1</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> Av 5751, 24<sup>th</sup> July 1991

**Dear friend and cousin Herszl Klein n''y<sup>2</sup>!**

I have just received your letter regarding your grandiose project dedicated to the second generation of *Częstochower landsleit* saved from the camps. I have always admired you with great respect for your upright and effortful work, filled with energy to do anything possible to commemorate the town of our birth, Częstochowa. Throughout all these years, I have obviously been aware of the hard times you went through in Montreal, both materially and with your health. I wish you good health and success in all your good deeds and, above all, to be able to complete this current project with great success!

**Your cousin, Benjamin [Borzykowski]**

## **Rabbi Benjamin Borzykowski**

I was born in Częstochowa and liberated on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1945. My wife, Hendel, was born in Pilica and liberated, on that same day, in HASAG-Pelcery. We lived in Rome, Italy, for almost five years, where we founded the renowned *Meor Ha'Golah* Yeshiva, for the surviving children of the Holocaust survivors.

In July 1949, we arrived in Montreal. Mrs Borzykowski was among the first pioneers to build and lay the foundation stone of the renowned *Beis Ya'akov* School<sup>3</sup>. Over the course of the last forty-five years, both of us have been immersed in the orthodox education system. Looking back, we may say, "Thank God, who has brought us thus far". We helped and lent a hand in the building of the wonderful Jewish community in Montreal, and transformed what was a barren desert, in the spiritual sense, into a blossoming "vineyard of the Lord of hosts"<sup>4</sup>.

Not wishing to go into the religious and philosophical problem of the Holocaust, I only wish to present here one single aspect of the many that convinced me to dedicate my strengths to re-building a true Jewish generation, and to fill the huge void that has been left after the Holocaust.

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 1943, during the deportation of the 500 Jews to Radomsko-Treblinka, the entire group of "cobblers" came out late to the *Appell* [Ger., rollcall], whereupon the German ghetto leader, [Otto] Überschar, punished us and put us on the transport to Radomsko.

When the commotion broke out, over the shooting of the fighters Izio Fajner and Mendel Fiszlewicz, I attempted, along with a few others, to run over to the other side, where those fit for work were standing and, although they constantly shot at us, we crossed over safe and sound.

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: Heb. acronym of "Boruch Ha'Shem", or "Blessed be the Name (of God)"; one of various formulas traditionally used by orthodox Jews with which to head any written correspondence.]

<sup>2</sup> [TN: Heb. acronym of "Nero Yoir", or "May his candle shine"; as in Judaism the soul is likened to a candle, this expression means "may he live long".]

<sup>3</sup> [TN: Network of ultra-orthodox girls-only schools.]

<sup>4</sup> [TN: In Heb. in the original; quote from Isaiah 5:7 – "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant:"]

However, when I ran, I lost the cap off my head. The gendarmes immediately began looking for the man, who was not wearing a cap, in the great January frost. As I stood there bareheaded, I asked my neighbour if he could perhaps do something to save me. How astonished I was, when my neighbour said to me that I was, in fact, lucky, because he had decided to escape from the camp, and had taken a beret with him. He took out the beret and put it on my head. I was not recognised, and I was saved.

This and many other happy coincidences brought me to the conviction, that it was not just for myself that I survived, but to act for the future of our generation.