

Discovered in Alabama

A young man named Avraham ("Avrumel") Greenbaum lost his entire family in the Holocaust. After the war, he came to America and wanted nothing to do with Judaism. He changed his name to Aaron Green, moved to Alabama and married a woman there, who, miraculously, was Jewish.

The day his oldest son Jeffrey turned thirteen, they were not going to celebrate his *bar mitzvah*. Instead, Aaron decided to recognize the day by taking Jeffrey to the mall and buying him anything he wanted there.

When they went into a big electronics store and were browsing, Jeffrey's eye caught something in an antique shop across the way. He was mesmerized. He couldn't take his eyes off what he had seen.

He told his father, "I don't want anything from the electronics store. I want to go across to the antique shop." When they got there, the boy pointed to an old wooden *menorah* and said, "That's what I want for my *bar-mitzvah*."

His father couldn't believe it. He was letting his child buy anything he wanted in the whole mall and this is what he was choosing? He tried to talk him out of it, but couldn't.

Aaron asked the shop-owner the price of the *menorah*. To his surprise, the man replied "Sorry, that's not for sale."

Aaron said, "What do you mean? This is a store." He offered a lot of money for it.

Again the owner refused, this time explaining, "I found out the history of this *menorah*. A man constructed it during the war and it took him months to gather the wood. It survived, but he did not. It's going to be a collector's item. It's not for sale."

Meanwhile, Jeffrey kept telling his father, "That's what I want. All I want is the *menorah*." So Aaron Green kept offering more money until the owner finally agreed to sell.

The boy was so excited. He took the *menorah* up to his room and played with it every day. One day the parents heard a crash from Jeffrey's room. They ran upstairs and saw the *menorah* shattered to pieces. The father yelled at his son for being so careless, as he paid so much money for it.

Afterwards, Aaron felt bad about his reaction. He suggested to his son, "Let's try to glue it back together."

While holding one of the pieces, the father noticed a piece of paper wedged inside. He pulled it out and started reading. Tears welled up in his eyes and soon after he fainted.

His family threw water on him and revived him. "What happened?", they asked.

He replied, "Let me read you this letter. It was written in Yiddish, so I'll translate.

"To whoever finds this *menorah*, I want you to know that I constructed it not knowing if I would ever have the opportunity to light it. Who knows if I will live till Chanukah to see it being kindled? In all probability, going through this war, I will not. But if Providence brings this *menorah* to your hands, you who are reading this letter, promise me you will light it for me and for us, my family, and those who gave their lives to serve G-d Al-mighty."

Aaron Green then looked up at his family and, in a choked-up voice with tears still in his eyes, said, "The letter is signed by my father."

They were all speechless. That family recognized the Divine Providence involved and they returned to living their lives according to Torah and *mitzvot*. How could they not! The hand of G-d was undeniable, taking a *menorah* from Europe and bringing it back to the family in a remote mall in Alabama, inspiring them to return to Torah-true Judaism.

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*Source:* Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from a submission by Chayim Berkowitz of Tsfat (formerly of Miami), who received it from Yosef Hurwitz, whose son-in-law and daughter, **Rabbi Yosef and Mrs. Binah Goldwasser, are the co-directors of "Chabad of Mobile" and heard it from the family.**

[*Author's concluding paragraph:*]

*Chanukah* means to re-dedicate. It's a time to rededicate ourselves and come closer to the Creator.