

Beloved former Talmud Torah teacher Shoshana Friman returns to Winnipeg for first visit in more than 30 years

Shoshana Friman still recalls all her students' names

By **BERNIE
BELLAN**

In the late 1960s the Talmud Torah and Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate began a move that would prove to change the face of Jewish education in this city ever since: The importation of teachers from Israel.

The idea behind the new focus on bringing Israeli teachers to Winnipeg was to expose the often-jaded students to younger, modern teachers who were also observant Jews. Often the teachers would come as couples. Most would stay here a few years, but eventually they would leave - either for a different city in North America, or to return to Israel.

Among the first group of teachers to arrive here were Shoshana and Gad Friman. In the few years that the Frimans were here, they cast an indelible impression upon hundreds of students - Gad as a teacher in the collegiate, and Shoshana as a teacher in the elementary school. (Both of them also taught adult education at the Rosh Pina for a while.)

When an announcement appeared in this paper that a reception was to be held at the home of Faith Kaplan on November 2nd for Shoshana



Former Talmud Torah teacher in conversation with former student Matthew Lazar (now Dr. Matthew Lazar).

Friman, I decided to head down to see how many of her former students might be there. Although I had never been taught by Shoshana herself, my mother was a student of hers, and the two of them developed a deep bond. As well, I had stayed at the Friman home in Ra'nana in 1974, during my first-ever visit to Israel.

When I entered the Kaplan home that Sunday afternoon, I was quite amazed at the size of the throng that had gathered there. Over the course of the afternoon, more than 50 former students and colleagues came to renew acquaintances with Shoshana Friman. Amazingly, she could recall each and every student by name.

During the course of the reception, Friman spoke of her time in Winnipeg, of her long-held ties to many of her former students, and of her love for this city. Although she spoke only in Hebrew, it was fairly easy to follow her clear and precise enunciation.

She ended her remarks by telling a story of two friends: Shimon and Levi.

Shimon and Levi, she said, had gone for a hike
(Cont. on page 13. See "Shoshana Friman".)

Shoshana Friman

(Cont. from page 7.)

in the desert when they became lost. After wandering for a very long time, and with their water running short, Shimon lost his temper and slapped his friend Levi in the face, saying "This is where you brought me to die!"

Shimon was so upset that he picked up a stick and wrote in the sand: "This is where my friend Levi hit me!"

Nonetheless, Shimon and Levi trudged on in search of water. Eventually they chanced upon a water hole, and Shimon jumped in to quench his thirst. Unfortunately Shimon couldn't swim, and he quickly found himself going under. Levi jumped in and pulled Shimon to safety.

Upon his rescue by Levi, Shimon grabbed another stick and carved this inscription on a rock: "Here my friend Levi saved my life when he rescued me from drowning."

Levi turned to Shimon and asked him: "Why is it that when you were angry with me you carved a message in the sand, yet when you were grateful to me, you carved it into a rock?"

Shimon answered: "When a true friend does something that makes you angry, the anger will dissipate like the grains of sand, but when that friend does something wonderful for you, that deed will be etched in your memory forever."

That is how Shoshana Friman compared the bonds she formed with her former students. She noted that she has kept up a correspondence with many of them, and the mutual fondness that was on display that Sunday afternoon bears testament to the indelible impression that one teacher formed upon so many of her students.
