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### November 29, 2008: The Grace of Religious Believers

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Title: The Grace of Religious Believers

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11/29/2008--Do you remember how the Amish reacted to the murder of young schoolchildren in their community? Do you remember how shocked the world was at their forgiveness and generosity? They did not give in to hate. It was quite a comparison to how we all reacted to 9/11.

Now read the reaction of a different religious community, the Lubavitch, to the murder of Rabbi Holtzberg and his wife in Mumbai. Hear again the grace and care. Hear again how we are never to hate in response to evil. Hear again the promise of a better world, while we strive to improve this world every day.

Now, I ask you, fellow secularists, how are we going to live a life like this? Where will the resources and wisdom and peace come from? I don't know, but in the meantime we must draw our Religions close and learn what we can from them

Dear Friends,

Our hearts are shattered at the news from Mumbai where Rabbi Gabi and Rivka Holtzberg, emissaries of the Lubavitcher Rebbe- Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, of righteous memory- were among those murdered in the terrorist attack on the Chabad House there. Tonight their little son Moshe'le, who was miraculously rescued, will mark his second birthday.

Gabi and Rivka uprooted themselves from a life of comfort and convenience to live thousands of miles away from the familiar surroundings of New York and Israel, and moved to India. There they inspired and cared for the local Jewish community, scores of Jewish tourists and business people who frequented their Chabad House. The Holtzberg's shared their love of Yiddishkeit and the warmth of their family with people of all backgrounds in India. And now they have made the ultimate sacrifice for our faith and community. They lived and died as exemplars of the Jewish people on the frontlines. May their souls be bound up in the eternal bonds of life and may their family be comforted among the mourners of Zion.

We have no words, we have no answers. We don't begin to understand G-d's ways, nor are we expected to. Only G-d Himself can restore the light of Moshe'le's life and comfort him and the rest of this aching world. And until He does that, we must continue their life's work. They deserve no less.

We will continue to try and emulate Gabi and Rivka, to seek out our brothers and sisters in every corner of our community, in every corner of the globe - with love and commitment - with acts of goodness and kindness, until that day when G-d Himself will wipe the tears from every face.

It's almost Shabbat. Candle lighting time tonight is 4:39. In a world that has suddenly become darker, we must bring in more light. We urge every Jewish woman to help transform that darkness with the light of Shabbat candles this Friday and every Friday. We call on every person to increase their mitzvot - acts of goodness and kindness - until the day G-d fulfills His promise to us and gives us a world transformed, perfected and redeemed.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Yisroel and Chani Altein