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'Chicken Soup with Chopsticks' deals with intermarriage question

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an unfortunate experience he had in Israel with Orthodox Jews. Shabbos was just minutes away and the sun was on the verge of setting. Botwinik had become lost in a maze of streets, trying unsuccessfully to find his way to his sister's home before the onset of the Sabbath. Frantically, he stopped a group of gentleman and asked directions, but none would stop to help him. Anger and disappointment abounded over their refusal to come to his aid. After all, he reasoned, "I am a fellow Jew."

Months later, upon repeating his disillusioning tale, a rabbinic sage wisely cautions Botwinik not to "judge Judaism by the Jews."

Eventually Botwinik comes to the conclusion that he could, if he had to, go against his family, his friends, his relatives and his community in order to intermarry. But he couldn't go against the Torah's prohibition of intermarriage.

Does the relationship with his Chinese girlfriend continue?

Does Belinda convert? Do they eventually marry?

For that, you will have to pick up "Chopsticks" and start slurping.

the beauty and culture of Judaism's rich history with his beloved.

What I found so enlightening about "Chicken Soup with Chopsticks" is the lengths Botwinik goes to seek answers that are right for him. He is persevering, patient, and relentless in his quest to feel comfortable with choosing a Chinese woman as his wife. His soul searching, his pushing of the limits, his questioning nature in both humorous and not-so-humorous ways brings him to a point where he begins to see his religion in a way he has never seen prior to this journey.

Midway through "Chopsticks," Botwinik tells of

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'Chicken Soup with Chopsticks' - searching for answers to intermarriage questions



Authorred by Jack Botwinik

external struggle for truth in an interfaith relationship. His ultimate dilemma: Is it wrong to date a gentile?

Botwinik's quandary is a relevant issue. Forty-seven percent of new marriages involving a Jewish partner are intermarriages, according to the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-2001.

"Chicken Soup with Chopsticks" is a book that depicts the spiritual odyssey of a young man from an observant family seeking answers to the rightness of his relationship with a Chinese young woman. Botwinik feels guilt, tension, and confusion. In his own words, he said, the book is the story of my "encounter with a wonderful Chinese woman and how the budding relationship catapulted us on a spiritual jour-

ney into the unknown...it is a tale of inner struggle, questioning, hope...and a desperate and urgent quest for Truth."

Upon introducing her to his family as "just a friend" and subsequently her sharing a meal with his family, Botwinik's father turned to him and remarked in Yiddish, "We hope you find somebody Jewish like her."

When his parents find out the relationship with Belinda is more serious than just friendship, they urge him to end the relationship immediately.

Botwinik challenges his family, confronts his demons, searches for the right fit in Judaism, all the while looking for ways to share

by Iris Ruth Pastor
Managing editor

There are dozens of recipes for chicken soup: lemony chicken soup, south-of-the-border chicken soup, chicken soup with roasted vegetables, Hard Rock Cafe homemade chicken soup, chicken noodle soup, chicken soup with matzah balls, and Cajun chicken soup. There are also dozens of varieties of "recipes" for chicken-soup-eating Jews who go out on dates: those Jews who date only Jews, those Jews who date Jews and non-Jews, those Jews who date only non-Jews, those Jews who date mostly Jews, those Jews who date mostly non-Jews.

"Chicken Soup with Chopsticks," by Jack Botwinik deals with his own internal and