

ACT IScene 2

SETTING: Shul in Bais Chana with tables and chairs/benches.

AT RISE: TEFILLA CHOIR sits, swaying over their siddurim. Some can be over-enthusiastic, closing their eyes and lifting their hands, or burying their faces in the siddur. SHIFRA CHANA sits downstage, davening robotically, sitting straight backed and unmoving. The music begins and the TEFILLA CHOIR sings, interspersed with short monologues by SHIFRA CHANA, during which the music pauses, choir freezes, and SHIFRA CHANA is in the spotlight. When the choir finishes, they all take their siddurim and leave gradually, chatting with each other as they go. SHIFRA CHANA sits and watches them with a slight frown on her face. VONNIE bounces in, and looks around. When she sees SHIFRA CHANA, her face lights up.

VONNIE

(flops down easily next to SHIFRA CHANA)

There you are! I was looking all over for you. The pancakes are almost all gone. You better come quick if you want any!

(looks at her closely)

What's wrong?

SHIFRA CHANA

I don't know. I'm just not... It's not... I don't...

(stands up and paces  
uneasily)

I don't get it. How does all this mean anything to anyone?  
Everyone is talking about how they feel so inspired by  
prayer and I just... I don't.

(groans and sits back  
down with head in her  
hands)

Is there something wrong with me?

VONNIE

(slowly)

Is there anything you like?

SHIFRA CHANA

(looks up sharply)

Of course! I think Judaism is beautiful! I love the feeling  
of camaraderie, and singing on Friday nights is pretty  
swell too. But...

(pauses to gather her  
thoughts. Then flies out  
passionately)

Don't you feel that all of these details are just overkill?  
Does G-d really care if I eat cheese 4 hours or 6 hours  
after meat? Am I really **that** important in the grand scheme  
of things? Does G-d really care about each of my little  
actions all that much?

(sits back down and  
takes VONNIE's hands  
uneasily)

You don't hate me, do you?

VONNIE

(distractedly)

What? Hate you? Of course not!

(pauses in deep thought)

I wish I could answer you, but I'm not that knowledgeable  
just yet. I do know someone who is though.

SHIFRA CHANA

I don't feel comfortable asking Rabbi Friedman about this...

VONNIE

(interrupting)

Not Rabbi Friedman. Why don't you write to the Rebbe?

SHIFRA CHANA

(cynically)

I should ask the Rebbe this question? The Rebbe has much more important things to worry about.

VONNIE

What can it hurt? If the Rebbe is too busy, then you won't get an answer.

(thinks for a moment)

In any case, it might help you to put all your feelings down on paper.

SHIFRA CHANA

(unenthusiastic)

I guess so.

VONNIE

(jumps up energetically)

Great! I'll leave you to it then!

SHIFRA CHANA

(alarmed)

What? Right now?

VONNIE

(mischievously)

Why not? There's no time like the present. Here.

(pulls a pen from her

bag and hands it to

SHIFRA CHANA)

You can even use my pen. Good luck!

(VONNIE flounces off stage. SHIFRA CHANA stares after her bemusedly, then shakes her head. She uncaps the pen, pulls the paper closer to her, and looks down at it for a few moments. Music starts and LETTER CHOIR slowly files in, standing around SHIFRA CHANA, who eventually begins her letter, writing hesitantly at first, but gaining speed and passion as she continues. As the choir finishes, SHIFRA CHANA folds her letter and walks downstage. Curtains close behind her. She paces for a bit while tempestuous music plays and then walks purposefully SL. She knocks and MRS FELLER answers the door.)

MRS FELLER

Shifra Chana! What a surprise! What can I do for you?

SHIFRA CHANA

Do you have a few minutes?

MRS FELLER

Of course! What's the matter?

(Music for DON'T GO starts.)