

# The Chelm Tails & T'filn Co.

by Philip Fishl Kutner

Everyone was wondering how did the Chelm Talis & T'filn Co. get listed on the NY Stock Exchange, the world's foremost stock exchange. After all, many people in America had never even heard of Chelm.

For years Reb Chaim was living, as they would say, hand to mouth. He was barely able to feed and clothe his 13 children. He toiled long hours at the sewing machine making taleysim and then going to the shed to cut the thongs for the t'filn

First he cut the shel-yad leather straps for the hands and then the shel-rosh for the head. The shed was filled with long black leather strips to be part of bar mitsve gifts along with the traditional taleysim.

When Reb Chaim's son, Charvey, came back from studying at the yeshiva in Warsaw he brought an iPod with him. This was no ordinary iPod it was a miniature iPod. In fact it was so tiny that it could fit into the little box of the shel-rosh. One need not be a rocket scientist to guess what Charvey said.

By programming the haftorah and all the prayers, the bar mitsve yingl could be perfect every time. Of course there was a period of experimentation until the iPod could be set perfectly in the shel-rosh box.

Charvey then proceeded to suggest that the taleysim should be modernized. The plain white with black or blue stripes was boring. What's needed is some colored pictures like tattoos. In fact it was suggested that a talis be personalized for each bar mitsve yingl. If he were interested in a particular sport or board game, they could be embroidered on the talis. While there are taleysim with scenes of Jerusalem etc. they are not personalized. Likewise, the gold trim adds color and helps add to the beauty of the talis.

Making a custom-made, embroidered talis and t'filn with an iPod inserted in the shel-rosh required a completely different method of operation. Much more space would be needed and additional help beyond just the labor of Reb Chaim.

The help problem was easily solved with 13 children. Each child was assigned a task and it was fitted into the child's day of school and study. Since there was no work on Saturday, it meant that Sunday was the day in which most of the work was done. Batik and silk dying skills were the domain of the girls, while the boys worked with the leather and the electronics.

## Chelm Talis & T'filn Comapany

At first the Chelm Talis & T'filn Co. was a local shop and then a production plant (the shed behind Reb Chaim's shtibl). Then it grew to a small building that was the old printing shop for the local paper and finally a new building at the edge of town.

As the demand increased geometrically, and the production kept falling behind the orders, even the new manufacturing plant became too small. At this point, not only were the 13 children employed, but all of the extended family and friends—nor yidn.

Stock was sold to raise money for the expansion, and then went on the Warsaw Stock Exchange. Because of the great demand for the products and the low production costs, the profit margin was very high. The stock split every week for a month.

The IPO (Initial Public Offering) was 1 euro. A month later it had split 4 times, and was listed at 100 euros. The sky was the limit. Word got out in the international markets that the greatest growth stock was not in Hong Kong, Tel Aviv, New York or London, but on the Warsaw Exchange.

The stock was being bought up in a buying frenzy that included; Gates, Buffet, Ellison, Walton Trump, Murdoch, and Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Al Saud. Of course the Prince would not have anyone know that he purchased a Jewish owned stock, so he had it set up in a dummy corporation.

It was at this point that The Chelm Talis & T'filn Co. was listed on the NY Stock Exchange. Sooner or later the balloon had to burst and the stock tumbled back down to a U.S. dollar and even lower.

With the glamour gone The Chelm Talis & T'filn Co. was kicked out of New York, and even Warsaw did not want the company listed. Reb Chaim was forced to go back to his shed behind his shtibl and make the old-fashioned taleysim and t'filn.

However, Reb Chaim still has the papers of the old stock, and anyone narish enough can purchase the worthless stock for a 100 dollar donation to *Der Bay*. Reb Chaim is doing this wonderful gesture in appreciation for all the free publicity he received from Fishl. The stock certificates will probably go fast. They will be distributed as long as supplies last. Sorry, *Der Bay* cannot send any refunds.