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Local artist says that `everything comes out of Torah'

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When Nejume Grodziensky was growing up in Peru, her unusual first name morphed into Noemi, a Latin version. The middle syllable of her given name was meant to be pronounced with a throaty "ch" sound, which the young artist of Polish descent thought sounded ``too Jewish."

When she moved to Florida, she reclaimed her original name after hearing it pronounced by an American. She discovered that her name was related to the Hebrew word, *neshama*, which means soul.

"Everything reinforces my own roots. I realize that everything comes out of Torah," said the young-looking grandmother who has an art studio in Aventura.

In Spanish, she found out that Noemi translates to consolation. So Grodziensky's full translation of her name is ``consolation of the soul."

As a Reiki master, healer, hypnotherapist, artist, tarot reader, and massage therapist, giving consolation to the soul is what she does on a daily basis. She even practices mind control and is becoming certified for past lives regression therapy.

Last year, Grodziensky traveled alone to India to explore a culture she had always felt drawn to. In regression therapy, she has helped others gain insight into their present life

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by exploring their past lives, but had never performed a regression on herself. Since childhood, she has always found comfort in Indian fabrics and incense. Her room was decorated with Hindi handicrafts and her bedspread and pillows had Indian designs.

“ I always thought the dresses were so feminine, sexy and exotic. I think I must have lived there in a past life. I always wanted to go to India, but never could. When I was young I studied in Israel, then got busy with marriage and raising a family. I never felt free to go to India before.”

Once there, she felt a connection. “ It was like a dream. It's really a paradise in a nature sense and the people were so beautiful. India was like a fantasyland for me.”

While in Dharamsala, she requested to meet the Dalai Lama. It had been one of her dreams.

Before Grodziensky could ask him the meaning of life, he asked her a question: “ How have the Jewish people in the world managed to stay together and continue to survive against all odds?”

‘I told him, ‘ Love, love, love. It's what keeps the world together.’ The Dalai Lama's love and respect for [the Jewish people] is because of what we are, and of how we have stayed together in all our difficult times and sufferings. I have a photo with him, I am holding his hands, he is looking into my eyes and I am looking into his, connecting with him in such an almost divine way.”

The woman who had rejected her name as a child, learned from the Dalai Lama and her travels in India, that returning to one's roots is the quickest route to peace for “those who are seeking answers and alternatives. The man of today runs away from his roots, runs away from himself . . . Be thankful for your ancestors, for the roots they have given you, and when you feel strong enough to nourish your roots, do it and learn from the divine,” said Grodziensky, who has two grown children -- a son and daughter -- living in South Florida.

Grodziensky has been called the Peruvian Chagall.

“ They called me that in Peru. I don't think I deserve the comparison, but I'm flattered. The way I interpret subjects and colors is similar to artist Marc Chagall's style. We come from the same source. Our blood is Russian and our technique is European. Our art is connected to the spiritual and mystical.”

A specialist in yoga breathing, Grodziensky plans to travel to Bangalore, India in January to study sudharshan kriya, an ancient breathing technique. While there, she will also paint an inspirational mural -- using her favorite theme of mysticism and angels -- on a monastery wall. She also plans to meet once again with the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, then travel to Nepal, and maybe Israel.

She has learned ways to bring harmony to her life and the lives of others, and one day she hopes to use those peace-inducing methods to the Middle East.

“ I've been with terrorists and I've seen the cleansing of their souls, hearts and heads. Now I believe in the love of God. They have anger inside, not love. It's really very simple. There is nothing sophisticated or chemical about it. Only love. They have pain and anger. When I am there, I will know what to do. With love, you can conquer anything.”