



RABBI SHMUEL MARCUS

SPIRITUAL LEADER FOR CHABAD IN LOS ALAMITOS, CALIFORNIA, LEAD SINGER OF "8TH DAY"

Rabbi Shmuel Marcus is a Chabad Rabbi with a global reach. In the late 90's, he was assistant rabbi at the Central Synagogue in Kharkov, Ukraine. He then earned his rabbinical ordination from Machon L'Smicha in Melbourne, Australia. Marcus worked as a project manager at Chabad's Kehot Publication Society in New York, where he played a crucial role in initiating the Heritage Series and overseeing the digitization and publication of the Annotated Tehillat Hashem Siddur. In 2003, Marcus and his wife, Bluma, founded the Chabad of Cypress and the Hebrew High of OC, both of which have been instrumental in promoting Jewish education and community outreach in the region.

Marcus is an accomplished singer-songwriter, having published over 100 songs. He is the lead singer in the popular Chassidic Pop Band 8th Day, which he formed with his brother, Bentzion Marcus, in 2004. Spotify and radio stations in Israel and around the world regularly play his Chassidic-themed tunes. Find the band at my8thday.com.

He is also the author of the books *Chicken Kiev*; *The Ballad of the Yarmulka Kid*; and *Your Story of Freedom*. He currently serves as the editor of the international Chabad magazine. You can reach him at chabadofcypress@gmail.com.

Rooftop Champagne in Italy

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I just got back from Italy. The trip had singing gondoliers and rooftop champagne, all to prove my absolute love for my wife, to my wife. It is similar to the ring I gave her years ago and to those matching earrings I'm saving up for. True love is invisible and intangible and it requires effort. Absolute confirmation and verified proof of my love would be a wonderful climax but it would be the end of our romantic story.

Proof is important on an x-ray and in a court of law, but it is a mistake to try and fit all of life's adventures into a "proof" box. And God is not the only invisible and intangible thing that can't be proven.

Take the X Factor, for example. It's called "X" because it is there, although we can't put our finger on it. We can't know what ingredients make a hit song. Researchers ran the all-time top 100 Billboard songs through an algorithm to determine what makes a song a success. It was like trying to catch a rainbow with your bare hands.

I worry this book will reinforce old positions. The believer will see proof of a creator in everything yet the skeptic will remain unsure about an invisible God. And they're both right.

Human proof of a creator is solely based on what we see within creation. So, the believer only knows God's actions, and what an unknowable God does. The skeptic is correct that we can't know what this unknowable God is.

Does the believer wonder why God is both knowable and unknown, seen and unseen, here yet intangible?

Here's my thought: True love, art, and God by definition cannot completely fit into a proof box like a smoking gun or calculated numbers. Ironically, it's these allusive intangible parts of life that push us to reach the unreachable.

Furthermore, a "provable" God would allow our belief, but the "un-provability" of God allows us to seek to bridge the gap between creation and Creator. It's the intangibility of love that makes our hearts grow fonder.

There's enough proof in this book for those who need it. Logically, a painting has a painter, and the perfect creation has a Creator, so the believer is fine. My takeaway is that God sees value in the unknowable, unprovable parts of life. It's what pushes us the hardest to reach higher and deeper.

If this book works, the believer might be sitting at home with his "proof of God" trophy while the skeptic is still out there exploring the deepest unknowable parts of the Creator and a wonderful Divine story continues.

For me, it's the invisible and intangible things in life that made me discover what rooftop champagne tastes like in Italy. And it's Divine.