

Living with Pride

THE MAGGID SHIUR



The custom in the Chebiner Yeshiva among the *banhalab* was that at least one of the staff would attend every *simchah* of the students. This task was rotated among the *rebbeim*, for while some of the *simchas* were local, others were farther away from Chebin, making attendance time-consuming and

strenuous.

At the engagement of one of their students, the designated *rebbe* in the rotation was the yeshiva's *mashgiach*, **R' Binyamin Rimer**. This engagement party was taking place in the south of Eretz Yisroel, a four-hour trip each way, meaning an all-nighter on his end. For what? For a *vort*.

R' Binyamin pleaded with his father, R' Mordechai, the Rosh Yeshiva, to make an exception and waive the rule, since this would destruct the next day's learning and the learning of all his students, but his father wasn't swayed. "This is the yeshiva's rule, and it must be followed through."

Without questioning, R' Binyamin headed out on the long journey. When he eventually got to the hall, he saw that it was crowded with participants, guests going in and out every second. Other than the *chosson* himself, no one recognized him, causing him to think that his trip was a waste of time.

Once he made his way in, the *chosson* noticed him and brought him to the head table, serving him majestically. After a short while, the *mashgiach* was asked to say a several words in honor of the *simchah*.

Using his unique ability of speaking, R' Binyamin delivered a powerful speech. As many prominent speakers close their speech, R' Binyamin too, closed by praising the *chosson*, extoling him, how cherished he is in the yeshiva, how all his friends adore him, and how he succeeds in his learning. With that, he concluded his speech.

Three years later, R' Binyamin was walking down the street and saw that same *chosson*, now a youngerman, walking toward him with *sefarim* in his hands. He had the appearance now of a *chashuva* man, no longer a *yeshiva bachur* but an *avreich* who took his learning seriously. This shocked R' Binyamin, as from what he remembered of him, he'd expected this *chosson* to have gone to work the day after *sheva brachos*. As a *bachur*, he hadn't utilized his time properly, showed zero interest in learning, and thus he'd figured that he probably wouldn't continue learning after marriage.

When the *avreich* approached, they greeted each other amicably, and R' Binyamin asked him where he was and what he was doing.

"I'm a *maggid shiur* in a *cheider*, and I'm really thriving from my learning and teaching."

The *mashgiach* questioned him as to how he pulled that off. "Was that the original plan when you got engaged?"

"No," he responded. "When I was in *shidduchim*, I anticipated that I would be getting a job after I get married."

"So, what changed?" asked the *mashgiach*.

"Do you recall how you attended my *vort*?" asked the youngerman.

"Sure I do," responded the *mashgiach*. "It was a *vort* that I'm not going to forget so fast. The eight-hour trip kept me up the entire night."

"Well, those heartwarming words you delivered by the *vort* greatly impacted me. After hearing those words, my *temimos'dike* father-in-law was in awe over me — his new son-in-law. After the *vort*, he approached his wife, my mother-in-law, and started telling her how they struck lucky by getting such a wonderful son-in-law. They had such admiration for me that I simply had to live up to my name.

"After the *chasuna*, I started to take to it. I started learning properly and grew tremendously. I took pride in my 'name,' empowering me to live up to it.

"That was the changing point of my life. Had you not delivered that speech, showering me with all that honor, I don't know where I would be today. Thanks to your warm words and positive reinforcement, I stand here with pride as a *maggid shiur*."



THE WAGON RIDE

Due to the extreme poverty in his family, Shmuel went to work at an age when all his peers were still in *cheider* just to help his family meet the bare minimum. He made numerous attempts to set himself up in business, in the end, he found his talents were in importing and exporting. This was of great benefit to him, for besides being able to support his immediate family and his parents, he was able to travel in luxury with his own horse and buggy as he made deliveries from city to city.



Munkatch was known for its great *tzaddik*, the **Minchas Elazar**, and young Shmuel sought ways to associate with him and get his guidance and *chizuk*. One of the best times to meet the Rebbe was when the Rebbe had to attend a gathering or a *simchah* thus needed to be taken to it. Shmuel would offer the Rebbe a ride, allowing him the chance to speak with the Rebbe uninterrupted. Although the Rebbe learned most of the time on the journey, Shmuel was still able to get in some time to discuss his pertinent matters.

Shmuel would pay off the boys in the Rebbe's yeshiva to tell him when the Rebbe was traveling. Still, Shmuel didn't always get the opportunity, as it was snatched up by someone else, or sometimes he was unavailable when the Rebbe needed a ride.

One day, Shmuel was informed that the Minchas Elazar would be going to a faraway bris and needed to be transported all the way there. Shmuel excitedly jumped at the opportunity, chartering a special chariot for the occasion.

When the Rebbe saw the luxurious chariot, he was taken back. "Is this for me?!" he exclaimed. "You're going to sit on the bench by the rider while I sit in

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the comfortable leather? Not at all." He headed to the other side of the chariot to the driver's entrance. "I'll be sitting with you on the bench," and so he did.

Years passed, and Shmuel endured much suffering as WWII came and uprooted everything he'd built up and everything he knew. He was confronted with many challenges. During the war the Nazis took everything he had. There was one thing that he managed to hide, and that was a picture of the Rebbe.

He explained to his grandchildren that the support he got from the picture was the kind respect that the Rebbe administered to him on that ride, and that picture reminded him of that episode. If not for that encouragement the Rebbe showed him at that time, he wouldn't have the courage to withstand the challenges. (Hear on *Stories to Inspire*, from Mr. Charly Harari, relaying this about his very own grandfather)



THE WRONG CHILD



A positive word can positively affect a person, even if it was not intended. When a person hears positive words, they fill them with energy and enthusiasm. This story is relayed by **R' Elimelech Biederman**, who says that this story was told to him directly from the *rebbe* who it happened to.

There was a child with many challenges. He didn't get along with his friends and was misbehaving in all areas. Whatever he did went sour. At home, he didn't listen to his parents, only causing them stress and tension. When his father questioned him on what he was learning, he couldn't recall anything, and he didn't understand anything his father tried to go over with him. In short, things weren't going well for him at all.

When the time came for the fathers to meet the *rebbe*, the boy's father expected the worst: how his son disturbs the class, how he doesn't listen, and how he must get him help...

When it was this father's turn, he sat down at the *rebbe's* desk and introduced himself as the father of Shlomie. The *rebbe's* face lit up. "Shlomie! Shlomie is one of the best boys in my class. He is such a pleasure to have and a pleasure to deal with. He understands everything that I teach him, and when there are boys that don't understand, he's the go-to boy that all the boys turn to. I'm so privileged to have Shlomie in my class."

The father assumed that the *rebbe* was giving him the standard introduction before he dropped the bomb on what Shlomie was really like, but the *rebbe* just continued praising Shlomie to no end.

Understandably, the father was shocked. "Is he sure that he's talking about my son?" the father thought. "I hadn't known this about him. All I know about him is that he is such a troublemaker."

"Are you sure you got the right Shlomie?" the puzzling father asked the *rebbe*.

"Of course," the *rebbe* replied. "Shlomie is my pride student."

Well, the father was assured that there was no mistake, and thus he went home very happy to have been spared the embarrassment he had been expecting. But what made him even happier was the fact that the son he thought was a failure was essentially succeeding. By far, this was more exciting than anything else.

Upon returning home, his son anxiously approached him, asking what his *rebbe* had said about him. To Shlomie's surprise, his father repeated his *rebbe's* unending praise and accolades. "Your *rebbe* said that you're the star of the class, and that the entire class benefits from you. He is very proud of your excellence, and he just wants to see you continue growing and exceeding."

Hearing this, Shlomie thought to himself, "If that is how my *rebbe* views me, then I must not be as bad as I think. If he views me so, I must live up to my reputation." From then on, he turned over a new leaf in his life. He started putting in his all, trying to stand to his name.

The end of the story doesn't have to be told, but as you probably guessed, the *rebbe* had indeed confused the two Shlomies in his class. Nonetheless, the mistake turned out to be exactly what Shlomie had needed to hear, and it was what turned his life around.

This recalls a question that came to the desk of the *mashgiach*, **R' Chatzkel Levenstein**. Boys in the yeshiva came to question the custom of the friends of the *chosson* making a *sheva brachos* for him, where they get up and praise him. Many times, they get up and exaggerate with praises that are far from the truth, showering the *chosson* with traits he's never exhibited, and they were concerned about *m'd'var sheker tirbak*. They thus approached the *mashgiach* for his opinion on this matter.

R' Chatzkel replied with sharp words: "This generation has a sickness. No one praises anyone else. People don't express to each other how they are respected. The only time they do so is by a *sheva brachos*. And now you're coming to uproot that too? It is the only thing left over from the days in which compliments were given freely, and we must not get rid of it."

From the words of R' Chatzkel, we see a powerful thing. We need inner pride, and he was not going to let it go, however much it may have been over-exaggerated when delivered.



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

An ordinary-looking fellow in Boro Park was super successful in *sh'miras einayim*, guarding his eyes. His success was out of the norm, and this envied his friend. "Do you perhaps have no *yetzer hara*," the friend asked him, "allowing you to withstand this challenge? How do you succeed to such milestones against such a strong *yetzer hara*?"

"No," the man responded. "That is not the case. I have a *yetzer hara*."

"Do you perhaps have a weaker *yetzer hara*, allowing you to withstand the challenge?"

"No," he confirmed. "I have an ordinary *yetzer hara* like any other person. I have the same challenges that everyone has. Sometimes it's easier, and sometimes it's exceptionally hard."

"So, how do you succeed in such an outstanding way?"

"I'll tell you the story behind my motivation. As a *bachur*, I controlled my eyes in an exceptional manner. At that point, I hadn't had such a *yetzer hara*, and so it was relatively easy.

"One year on Purim, under the influence of alcohol, a *bachur* approached me in the Chebiner Yeshiva, shaking me like a lulav. He then asked me for a *brachab*. 'You're the *tzaddik* of Chebin,' he told me. 'You're the one withstanding this challenge in the greatest way, and so I'm asking you for a *brachab*. I'm not asking a *brachab* from anyone aside you. On this special day, I only want a *brachab* from the most special individual.'

"Those positive words penetrated my heart. Every time that I'm faced with such an opportunity, I remind myself that 'I'm the *tzaddik* from Chebin. Does it befit me not to guard my eyes?!"

"Although that drunk *bachur* was clueless as to what he'd told me the very next day, nonetheless, his inspiration stayed with me all this time, reminding me who I am and preventing me from any downfalls."