



A Life Changing Glimpse

The Friediker Rebbe describes the *avoda* of the Chossid Reb Zalman Arsher, a Sofer Sta"m in Lubavitch, and the glimpse he caught of the Tzemach Tzedek through a crack in the door of his room that changed his life and made him a Chossid.

Tzemach Tzedek's Tefillin

In Lubavitch there was a chassidisher *sofer* named Reb Zalman Arsher, who davened and did *safrus* work in the small *zal*. He was the *sofer* that proofread the *sefer Torah* that my uncle Raz"n wrote when I was eight-years-old.

Once, on my way home from *cheder*, I passed the small *zal* and saw Reb Zalman taking off his tefillin and kissing them with tears pouring from his eyes. I asked him why he was crying, and he motioned that he was still davening and couldn't speak. When he finished, he told me that he had been by the Tzemach Tzedek towards the end of his life when only selected Chassidim were allowed into *yechidus*. Passing the Tzemach Tzedek's room, he saw through a crack in the door the Tzemach Tzedek taking off his *shel rosh* and looking at it intently for a while before putting it away.

"That sight 'set me on my feet,'" Reb Zalman said. "What do we have from the *grobkeit* of *velt*?"

Reb Zalman Arsher was a Chossid of the Rebbe Maharash and later the Rebbe Rashab, but seeing the Tzemach Tzedek concentrate on his tefillin was what "set him on his feet" as a Chossid.

A Rov, a Mashpia, and a Dyadke

When the Rebbe Maharash sent Rav Yaakov Kupisker to be the *rov* in Moscow, he also sent and a Chossid from Polotzk¹ to be the *mashpia*.

Once, when a Chossid called Manevitz came to bid farewell to the Rebbe Maharash at the end of a visit to Lubavitch, the Rebbe Maharash said to him, "In Moscow you have a *rov* and a *mashpia*, but you still need a '*dyadke*'—a training coach. No one can replace him [the *dyadke*]; even a colonel cannot be a training coach..."

Reb Zalman Arsher was a man of fine character, he would daven *geshmak* and was generally a *geshmaker Yid*. Chassidim would call him a "*tzichtiger*"—["clean one"] because he wouldn't eat meat.

[A Chossid of the Rebbe Maharash once went into *yechidus* when he was in Petersburg and complained that there was no kosher meat in the city. The Rebbe Maharash replied, "It says that *עם הארץ אסור לאכול בשר*", literally translated as "an ignoramus may not eat meat." The word "*assur*" means tied down. An *am ha'aretz* is "*assur*"—"tied down"—to eating meat. You can survive without it.]

A Favor for a Yid

When I was in Petersburg in 5682 Reb Zalke Persitz came to me and said, "Today is 25 years from the day I became a Chossid.

"25 years ago I went into the Rebbe Rashab and he told me that just as every Yid is obligated to put on tefillin, he is obligated to set aside fifteen minutes a day to contemplate what favor he can do for another Yid in *gashmius* or *ruchnius*. I asked the Rebbe Rashab how I'll be able to keep up with this habit and he told me to find a *dyadke*. I asked who I should take as a *dyadke* and the Rebbe told me to take Reb Zalman Arsher. This *yechidus* is what made me a Chossid."

Reb Zalke was a Muscovite, one who didn't know of any *kuntzin*. At the end of every day Reb Zalke would write down the favors he had done for others that day. When he didn't find anyone to help, he would go to *shul* and discuss the situation of his *avodas Hashem* with Reb Zalman Arsher. ①

(ספר השיחות תש"ד ע' 60)

1. The precise name is absent from the *reshima*.