

Lipman Rajcher

## The Pilcer Rebbe ztz"l

Although our Teacher, *Rebbe* Pinches Menachem ztz"l, came to Częstochowa from Wieruszów, we called him "*The Pilcer Rebbe*", after his first rabbinical post in Pilica (Kielce *gubernia* [Province]). The *Rebbe* was a *tzadik* of the age, an extraordinarily assiduous studier, whose mouth literally never stopped uttering words of Torah. I, personally, often saw that, on his way to the *mikvah*<sup>1</sup> on Friday, he took with him a *Mishna* or another book, which he studied right up to his immersion.

Followers from all corners of Poland came to him every *Shabbes*. They would flood the Częstochowa streets, wearing their *shtreimels* and silken caftans. Those who prayed with the *Rebbe* had the special pleasure of hearing the fine prayer-leaders Reb Mendel Froman [and] his son Reb Jukel, as well as Reb Mordche Wajnsztok and his choir.

The Częstochowa Jews were proud that such a great *tzadik* lived there. In times of trouble, they went to the *Rebbe*, where they always found a comforting word and good advice on private affairs.

The *Rebbe* passed away in Częstochowa, on *Shabbes*, 10<sup>th</sup> Kislev 5681 [21<sup>st</sup> November 1920], at dusk. The death caused great bereavement and tears, not only in town, but also throughout Poland. Hundreds of *Chassidim*, Rabbis and *Rebbses*, came to the funeral, with the *Gerer Rebbe* and many of his followers at the head.

There was a quarrel regarding the burial site. Pilica demanded that he be buried in Pilica and Częstochowa argued that he had died in Częstochowa. A rabbinical court was appointed, which ruled that he be buried in Częstochowa.

In accordance with his will, the *Rebbe* was immersed in the Old *Mikvah*. *Chassidim* heroically went into the ice-cold water, where they immersed the great deceased one.

[Also] in accordance with his will, his tomb was not covered with any roof.

Every *yuhrzeit*, thousands of *Chassidim* would come to Częstochowa and made merry and prayed at his tomb, disregarding the frost of the month of Kislev.

The Rabbi of Pabianice, Reb Mendele Alter z"l, the *Gerer Rebbe's* brother, who had been one of the [Pilica] *Rebbe's* great followers, also came for every *yuhrzeit*.

The grave and tombstone remained undamaged to the last day, which was considered a miracle from heaven.

His son, the Rabbi of Wieruszów, was appointed as his successor (of whom a grandson of his writes separately in "*Sefer Częstochowa*").

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<sup>1</sup> [TN: Ritual bathhouse for purification; all *Chassidim* "purify" themselves before *Shabbes*, holidays and any "serious" religious endeavour, even daily morning prayer services.]