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I was requested by those gathering material about the city of Częstochowa, its righteous men and great ones and about all those who brought it fame among the Jewry in Poland, to participate in this great *mitzvah*.

I thought about this and asked myself, "Of whom should I write if not of my Teacher and Master in Torah and Chassidism, the great light in the lives of the Jews in Poland, which shone during his last years on Częstochowa and its residents, the *Rebbe* of Pilica *ztz"l*, in whose shade I was privileged to huddle and drink in his Torah and wisdom?"

This is indeed a difficult task, for if I were to set forth his genealogy and biography, I would need to compose a large book and not limit myself to this short article, in which I can only recount the smallest part of his saintly ways in matters of Torah and pious deeds that I saw and heard. I am sure that others, among his admirers, will be found to mention, in our book, his origins, the essence of his character and his propitious deeds prior to his settling in our city of Częstochowa.

I would like to present just a few incidents. I remember the following occurrence:

Early one the morning, when the worshippers at his study-hall were already wrapped in their prayer-shawls and had donned their phylacteries and were awaiting the *Rebbe's* entrance to commence the service, four small boys and girls burst into the prayer-house, all four weeping and uttering such cries that horrified the congregation and, from their mouths, came the heart-rending pleas, "Woe to us! Woe, our father!"

One of the worshippers, who knew that the children were the sons of Reb Izaak Jonatan Rubinsztajn, a pious man with Torah knowledge and also a well-known local flour merchant, ran to this man's house, which was on ul. Warszawska, in front of the *Rebbe's* apartment. He found him in bed, literally dying, with his wife and the rest of his children and those of his poor wife around him (I should mention the dying man's misfortune, who after losing the wife of his youth and remaining with his orphans, he married a second wife, who had children from her first husband and, over the course of time, they had other children together. He had to provide for all the three groups of children).

When the *Rebbe ztz"l* heard the details of the affair, he ordered the children, who had burst into his prayer-house, to open the "Holy Ark" and to pray to God that he should save their dying father. The *Rebbe* shut himself up in his room and ordered us to recite psalms and to pray for Reb Izaak Jonatan's life. When we had concluded saying psalms and saw that the *Rebbe* was still closeted in his chamber and had not come out to pray, we became very concerned and his *shames*, Reb Ezriel, knocked on the door. Receiving no response, we approached the door and listened carefully. We heard as if the *Rebbe* was speaking with someone. Reb Ezriel feared that, during the recitation of psalms, some follower had entered and was bothering the *Rebbe*. The *shames* opened the door and discovered that there was no one there but the *Rebbe*, who was prostrated on the floor and praying fervently for the dying man. Afterwards, the *Rebbe* raised himself up and entered the prayer-house, crowned with phylacteries and wrapped in his prayer-shawl and we all prayed together for the sick man's life.

To the joy of the congregation, God heard his prayers and, after a few days, the man recovered and went on to become the father of twelve children, his own and those of his second wife. All the doctors who had treated the patient said that it was “a miracle from heaven”, for he had no longer any natural hope of recovery.

Another characteristic incident, which should be mentioned in our book and which inspired great wonder in its day, is the story of Dawid Windman. The repentant barber-surgeon (who is also mentioned in our book) was once called to the *Rebbe*, when the latter was not feeling well and they had a conversation (but nobody knew what they spoke about), after which this medic changed into a different man. He began growing a beard and observing the religious precepts assiduously. He was henceforth a “repentant sinner”, all due to the influence of the *Rebbe* of Pilica. He also became the doctor who treated the *Rebbe* for his illnesses.

Also, on the dreadful *Shabbes* (*Vayishlach* portion, 10th Kislev 5681) on which the *Rebbe's* sainted soul departed in holiness and purity, when the *Rebbe* felt unwell during the “third meal”, he called for Dawid Windman. But it had been decreed from God and his pure soul came to rest and our Master ascended into heaven by a whirlwind¹!

As my words draw to a close, I wish to praise the Lord for having given me the privilege to enjoy the radiance of the *Rebbe's* Torah and holiness, literally to his last day, for on the Thursday of *Vayishlach* – two days before his death – I was in his chamber for a lesson in “*Yoreh De'ah*” [Halachic laws] and this privilege, which I was given, will console me for the *tzadik ztz"l* (and for the whole House of Israel in Częstochowa, who were annihilated by the relentless enemy, may his name and memory be obliterated!).

¹ [TN: Not literally; the expression is Biblical – see 2 Kings 2:1.]