

Izaak Jakobi

The *Shtiebel* of the Radoszyce *Chassidim*

One of the *shtieblech* of renown in our city was that of Radoszyce, among whose members was my father and also, in our youth, my brother and me. This *shtiebel* and its members had no small bearing on the development of my life and I shall never forget them.

These Jews were almost all craftsmen. Some had relinquished their labour due to medical reasons or because their financial situation had improved and had become merchants in the trade closest to their former profession, barring one large family who had been merchants ever since I had known them, that of Reb Srul Baron z"l.

We have no information as to how and when the Radoszyce Chassidic dynasty attained a following in our city. In 1932, when I was already in the Land [of Israel], I heard that inter-city transportation to Radoszyce had been instated and that "pilgrimages" to the *Rebbe* were occasionally organised. The most prominent among these *Chassidim* were Reb Srul Baron and his sons Berl, Rubin, Leizer, Leibisz and Hillel (the latter making Aliyah in the 1920's and living in Hadera).

They were nicknamed "The *Radoszycers*". Almost all of them dealt in grocers' goods.

We should also mention Reb Herszel Berliner who, in his youth, had been a tinsmith, from which he had earned his livelihood. He eventually became a wealthy man and traded in tin, iron and metal goods. Reb Herszel was then the one who actually determined the course of events at the *shtiebel*. Reb Awrum Jochimek had also been a tinsmith in his youth. He was a straight and honest man and became Reb Herszel Berliner's business partner.

One of the good deeds in which the Radoszyce *Chassidim* excelled was "discreet charity". These charming and dear Jews would set aside part of their own money for important townspeople in need - and not necessarily members of the *shtiebel* - who struggled financially. There was no special fund, but when someone came and announced that so-and-so was in need of aid, the sum would be immediately found and given over to the beneficiary.

One of the *Chassidim*, Reb Aron Stopnicki, who in his youth had been a glazier and later became a trader in glass wares, was the "pride of the *shtiebel*". He was the regular leader of the *Mysef* service on holidays and the High Holidays and was a great philanthropist who gave to all the different institutions, including the Zionist ones.

He visited Palestine in 1926, intending to settle there but, for some unknown reason, did not fulfil his aspiration (and he perished together with his friends and comrades).

Reb Motel Zuzowski was cabinetmaker. He worked during most of his years at the Crafts School in our city, where he trained hundreds of youths in his profession. He made *Aliyah* in the 1930's and desired to continue in his line of work. But his wish was not granted and he dedicated himself to Torah study to the end of his days. He died in Jerusalem.

Reb Szlojme Szwarcbaum had also been a tinsmith in his youth. Later, he became rich and opened a factory for knives and steel products.

Reb Hendel Lenczner was a cobbler. He toiled arduously to earn his livelihood and was the *shtiebel's* first *gabay*.

Reb Szmul Altman was a *melamed* at the "*Machzikei Hadas*" *cheder*. He taught for most of his life. A quiet and humble man, he was the *shtiebel's* second *gabay*. His livelihood was scarce, which was obviously quite depressing for him but, when he came to the *shtiebel*, his spirit was revived and he was cheerful and gracious.

Reb Mojsze Diament was a hatter and the *shtiebel's* neighbour. The *shtiebel* and his apartment shared a common separating wall. He liked to go before the pulpit on the High Holidays and other holidays. He put his dwelling at the *shtiebel's* disposal and it served as the women's section. He gave the larger part of the proceeds thereof over to the *shtiebel*.

Reb Icze Kongrecki was an upholsterer. He was an expert on the Talmud and *Midrash* and joined the Radoszyce *Chassidim* late in his life. He was a great zealot in matters pertaining to the *Rebbe*, taking every opportunity to harangue on frequent visits to the *Rebbe* and the conveyance of monies to him.

Reb Jakób Hauptman was a tinsmith, from which he earned his livelihood honourably to his last day. He taught his sons to love the People and Land of Israel. He persevered in the service of God, with dedication and spiritual ecstasy. Like many of his comrades at the *shtiebel*, he gave generously to "discreet charity" for the needy and Torah scholars. He visited the sick extensively and provided for their families.

These Jews, whom I have mentioned, are just a tiny part of the *Chassidim* at the *shtiebel* and the worshippers there and the honour of those whom I have not mentioned here was by no means smaller.



(These Jews and their traditions were destroyed, but their memory shall live forever on and may the Avenging God avenge their deaths!)