

Ch.Z. Rozen

## The “Repentant Sinner”

Barber-surgeon Dawid Windman’s barbershop was located in the alleyway between ul. Krakowska and ul. Rzeźnicka.

This medic was a godless man. He scoffed at everything held sacred in Judaism and at its traditions and publicly desecrated the Sabbath.

On Saturdays, he would go round to Reb Duwid Hofer, who was an observant *Chassid*, and commit transgressions intentionally. Reb Duwid would plead with him and demand that he leave the house, but the barber-surgeon would burst out laughing and jeer.

Suddenly, his soul underwent a transformation. No one knew what had brought about this change.

Windman turned into a “repentant sinner” and became very religious and god-fearing, observing even the slightest precept.

Every morning, he came to the Old Study-Hall and, in the evening, holding a prayer-book, he would offer up such supplications that people deemed him insane.

He began to implore the lads studying at the study-hall to teach him Torah and would not leave them alone. He would sit for long hours, listening very attentively to the Talmud lessons.

His appearance also drew attention. With an upright posture, graced with a beard and clad in the long garb of the ultra-orthodox Jews, he would march along ul. Warszawska, from the Dziubas house to the study-hall.

He drew close to ultra-orthodox homes, those same homes which he had, previously, come to offend, but whose company he now desired. He played the violin well and would invite young men, to his house, who knew how to sing Chassidic tunes and whom he accompanied on his violin.

He returned to his profession and gained renown as a professional and expert healer. The ultra-orthodox factions treated him with admiration and, over the course of time, he gained the trust of wide circles in town.

The *Rebbe* of Pilica, when approached by one of his followers seeking remedy and cure, would send him to Reb Dawid Windman for advice. Doctors also treated him respectfully. Dr Konieczpolski, when called upon to attend to a patient, would recommend taking medications that the medic Dawid Windman prescribed.

After examining a patient and prescribing medicine, the “repentant sinner” would repeat the name of the medication out loud and add, “This medicine is meant to cure so-and-so disease and may God grant you a full recovery”.

Reb Dawid Windman married the daughter of the Halachic authority Reb Józef Klajnplac and they had two children. (Both he and his family perished in the Holocaust.)