

Beyond the niggunim, beyond the nusach, the shuls singing his *kabbalat shabbat* everywhere, beyond the man himself, his chessed, his unconditional love for Yidden and all humanity, beyond his pioneering trips venturing into Germany and Poland to start the healing process, for me, Shlomo Toirah remains his unacknowledged enduring legacy.

His sweetness permeated his teachings and affected his selection of sacred texts. His was famous for carrying a suitcase of seforim and was hardly ever seen without his head in a sefer. Despite his attested erudition in Talmudic studies and *acharonim*, his heart was elsewhere.

Poring over the “*seforim bakedoshim*” he was at home in the Chabad masters as he was in Polish Chassidus (Pshische, Kotzk, Ishbitz, Reb Zadok and Reb Leibele Eiger) and as he was in Reb Nachman’s Torah. People asked him what kind of chosid he was: an Ishbitzer or a Breslover? But the question betrayed an ignorance of Shloimo’s own unique NEW Toirah, a new Hassidus.

Born before the calamity of the Shoah, the events that decimated Am Yisrael haunted him and affected his Toirah.

He was in fact, mining the texts of the Hassidic Masters for an archive that would become the very substrate and platform for his own unique Post-Holocaust message. The Piacetzna Rebbe and Klauzenberger Rebbes pointed the way for his own trajectory that blended song and Toirah.

Reb Nachman spoke of the interaction between niggun and Toirah, the Piacetzna spoke of Divine weeping, and Shloime weaved the sacred texts of these masters into his own unique archive of shiurim, an oral archive of his own Toirah that sang and cried as he delivered it. I cannot fail to weep as we watch him on video Sunday mornings courtesy of the Carlebach Shul. What is it about his Toirah that melts the stone heart?

Other Rebbes have seforim name after them: the Toras Emes, the Likutei Mehoran, The Sfas Emes, etc, and Shloimele? let’s reserve a suggestion until the end.

A Toirah that Shloimele might have suggested, a psbetl in his line of thinking: (remember to hum his niggun while reading)...

Parshas Beha’alosecha (Num. 12:20) is the shabbes of healing, based on the the last Aliyah, when Miriam the prophetess is afflicted with Tzaraas and Moshe prays on her behalf : **“El na, refah na lah”** . Based on this passuk Reb Leibele Eieger writes that all healing for Klal Yisrael flows from this Shabbat. As is known, all his Shabbes Toirah in some way refers to his two passions, Shabbat and Bris, and here the Rebbe suggests that ALL healing flows to the rest of the year from this specific Shabbat. It is an auspicious time then, to pray for healing, since the Ribbono shel Olam is open to our prayers now in ways other times are not, the way He was moved by Moshe Rabbeinu’s prayer in this Shabbat parsha.

But what is the relevance of this *passuk* referring to Miriam specifically with Klal Yisrael? Why would healing an individual relate to all Am Yisrael for all time? For this the Rebbe alters the punctuation of the verse. Rather than placing the “comma” after *El Na*, “Please Hashem, heal her please” he places it **after** the next word *Refah*....meaning now as follows: “Please Hashem heal, (all of Klal Yisrael- and included among them) please her too!” In a unique semantic twist worthy of the best midrash, the Rebbe has troped on the double use of the word “na” -please, (for the second “na” seems redundant)- “Hashem **please**- heal **please** her”; but by splitting the verse into two phrases ,

one referring to the klal-, the other the prat-the individual, he makes sense of the double lashon of “na”.

Moshe **haya anav mikol adam**. Rashi glosses on the word *anav* “*shafal vesoveil*”. I can readily understand the word *shafal* as in the word *shifllus* meaning “lowly” or humble. But the surprising addition of the gloss *soveil* adds a new dimension hitherto untapped. Rashi implies that to be *soveil* means to “stand oneself” to literally be able to suffer oneself, one’s flaws, ones character defects, one’s addictions, literally the “peckel” we each carry as we go through life, including our resentments, fears and hidden secrets. Moshe teaches us that *anivus* or humility also includes the element of acceptance of oneself as God has created us, warts ‘n all. It’s a theology of imperfection!

“Yes my genes gave me such and such, my environment gave me such and such, my past abuse, the things I have done to others, what others have done to me, all have brought me to this sacred moment in time where I stand

before You Lord.” And I accept all this as I struggle to live in Your presence! Resentment for my sister! Of course not! I just feel HER pain!. Lord please heal HER!” This Moshe teaches us is true humility according to Rashi.

Moshe becomes the paradigm of disinterested ego-less prayer since he prays only for his sister despite her Lashon hara, thinking only of her pain. Moshe becomes the first ‘Rebbe’ thinking only of the Hasid. The Rebbe - like Shloime sees a seamless transition between the interpretive strategies in reading Torah and the deepest way of connecting to others, sisters, friends, klal Yisrael, humanity. The role model Moshe reflects in this reading as concerned only with the pain of the other is reflected in Shloime’s life. Torah becomes a manual of spiritual compassionate discipline, no longer an academic exercise.

And what of Aaron Hakohein? why wasn’t he punished? The commentators struggle with this question but Shloime might say, after what he had already suffered was any further punishment possible? Can you punish a Yid after losing a child-two children, any further? Aaron was *mekabel lashon hara*, not because he was a gossiper - chas veshalom-, rather he too was identifying with Miriam’s pain. And Miriam? *lashon hara*? really? Of course not! Like David Hamelech whose supposed “sin” was really to open the gates for Teshuva for Am Yisrael, she too was showing the way for Am Yisrael to receive the blessings of **Refuah**, of healing.

Notice how the Reb Leibele insists on basing his Chassidic teaching on the midrashic reading of the text, consistent with the Polish school of Hassidic Masters (unlike the Habad masters). He insists first and foremost on a scholarly reading of the text only then followed by his unique spiritual insight that Shabbat is the channel by which flows “shefa” or Divine grace from above. Shloime too, never forgot the roots of talmudic erudition where he had shone as a bochur, and an iluy, and his Toira reflects his ability to “hold his own” in that world too.

Shloime was all about healing a generation of broken souls. Born to survivors who either had forsaken the tradition by virtue of assimilation, or loss of faith, he combed the world mining for lost souls. He also mined those Hassidic texts as a source for his unique healing Toirah. His Toirah was the opposite of mussar. It never belittled or demeaned. It elevated and enriched, it encouraged and supported. It inspired and calmed the soul. For those of us born into a different tradition (education through ridicule) Shloime was a doctor for the soul, whose words healed the broken heart and whose Toirah was a *sam ba-chayim* a true healing potion.

His Toirah always focused on the pain of the Yid and his connection to the “Heilige Basheffer” the Ribbono Shel Olam. But his unique contribution, his “*chiddush*” was that no Yid, nowhere he had been, despite what he had done, was still precious to the divine. His message was directed everywhere, his song reached everywhere. Even when the Lubavitcher Rebbe was busy re-building Am Yisrael in his own unique (and as yet unacknowledged) response to Hitler (you wanted to destroy every Jew in Europe! I will build a Chabad house in every town in the world!), nevertheless he excluded Poland from this equation. No Chabad house in Poland! Poland remained the dark hole of the universe, Poland remained unfixable. Poland had no tikkun.

And then came Shloime. Krakow will never be the same! His tears opened the floodgates not only by merely showing up there, (in the town that centralized the roundup of southern Polish yidden before their deportation,) but by his niggunim composed there (sung by all at seudah shlishis) and his Toirah (his haunting words that echo today about the healing of the fires of Auschwitz by the rebirth of the lights of Yerushalayim). Since his reaching out to all Poland, Jews have “come out of the woodwork” in Poland, rediscovering their roots. (And of course there is now a Chabad house in Krakow!).

So what shall we, his Chassidim, name his as yet unedited sefer? The sefer that will contain all his Toira and encapsulate his mission down here in this world? Remember his unique contribution was not only his Toirah, but his singing Toirah! his niggunim. If you understood and appreciated his niggunim without his Toirah, or his Toirah without his niggunim you’ve missed Shloime Toirah!!! What then will he be known as, by his sefer? That unique melding of song and words, healing and compassion, love and empathy.

I might suggest “Rinah shel Torah” but then the Netziv had already “copyrighted” the title for his commentary on Shir haShirim suggesting that Toirah learning IS its own song,

but Shloime felt that we needed to feel the song, hear the song, to open the heart to the singing words of his Toirah. Let’s all think about the name for his sefer, he would want that, he would noddingly approve from heaven.

So we let another year pass, and cry out “Shloimele, please be a *meilitz yosher* for klal Yisrael, play that guitar alongside Dovid Hamelech well! and tell them we need a yeshuah and a refuah from above on this Shabbat shel Refuos for gans klal yisrael.

Zechos Yagen Aleinu ve-al kol Yisrael.