

The Early Years

Rabbi Bulman and I were classmates at Yeshiva University, and studied together under the Rav, zt"l. We were not part of the same *chavruta*, but we socialized together—especially on Friday nights, after the Shabbat meal, on Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn's Williamsburg section. Young Orthodox Jews of all schools—Torah Vodaath, Yeshiva University, Chaim Berlin, Chofetz Chaim—used to walk and talk, and the talk was often of the highest caliber (to the surprise, no doubt, of those who looked upon this weekly promenade with a jaundiced eye). What intrigued me about Nachman, and what evoked affection and respect, was both the content and form of his conversation. The content was always high and serious. He was a *yerei Shamayim* but never narrow or shallow. He lived and breathed *ahavat Yisrael*, and he was distressed about oh, so many things in the Jewish community that he loved! He was critical of the less *frum* and the too *frum*, let alone the non-*frum*. He approached almost all problems from the point of view of *musar* and

Chassidut, and I was amazed at the range of his knowledge. Equally impressive was his delivery—in a somewhat high-pitched voice; he was truly eloquent in both Yiddish and English, but especially the former. How I envied him—and how much I learned from him!

Nachman and I agreed on many things, and disagreed about many others. But whether we were of the same opinion or not, there was a mutual feeling of respect and, at least from me to him, admiration. I never found him to be provincial, and he was a *modeh al haemet*. Our friendship was not diminished by distance or long lack of contact; the rare occasions we met after he made *aliyah* reawakened in us the old, warm feelings of our youth.

Nachman is gone now, to my great distress, but I know that in the empyrean abode where his pure *neshamah* now rests, he is passionately lecturing the angels on a host of great issues. And they, messengers of the Almighty who are supposed to know only Hebrew, will no doubt find their heavenly hearts warmed by his literary, yet expressive, idiomatic and *zaftig* Yiddish.

Zol er hobn a lichtign Gan Eden!

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