

One day Shalom was talking with Rav Moshe Shmuel, and Rav Moshe Shmuel mentioned that he had learned with Reb Leib Malin in Bialystock. That's where both of them were from, but Reb Leib was older. Shalom told him that I had studied under Rav Leib, so he asked Shalom to ask me to send me something of my own. I had nothing typed, so I sent him the notes on my lectures on Bava Kama that Rav Yossele Zeinwirth took down. Rav Moshe Shmuel loved them. That's how we met.

## RAV SHACH AND KORACH

I sometimes get invited to speak at Ramat Elchanan in Bnei Brak. To get invited there, you have to be pretty high quality. Nobody's invited Friday night for *Kabbolas shabbos* except for me. Rav Berl Povarsky and Rav Boruch Mordechai Ezrachi get invited *bein hazmanim*.

I speak there at least four times a year. I like to go there because I have a kind of mob hysteria. Big crowds get me excited. Rav Yechezkel Abramsky once came here to Itri for Yosef Kamenetsky's bar mitzvah. Within three minutes he was at the podium, delivering a lecture. His wife told him, "Chezkel, are you that hungry?"

He told her, "When I see students who want to study Talmud, I'm like an alcoholic who sees a bottle."

Rav Abramsky was a really wonderful man, a sensitive soul, and a real scholar. The Brisker Rov once said that everybody steals from his father, but Abramsky was the best because at least he didn't spoil it. I heard him say it myself. WE NEVER GOT TO KORACH.

## SAUL LIEBERMAN

Saul Lieberman was a son-in-law of Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan, Rabbi Chaim Berlin's brother. He had an encyclopedic knowledge of Talmud, and he was a genuine intellectual. But he was very frustrated because he felt he should have been the first Chief Rabbi of Israel. It was out of this frustration that he went to the Jewish Theological Seminary. He altered the traditional text of the *kesubah* (marriage contract). He was thumbing his nose at the world of traditional Torah scholarship.

When Lieberman came to Israel, the Brisker Rov acted like he was his best friend. They asked him why, and he had a one-word explanation, "*Mishpochah* (family)." They were cousins.

One of the Rov's sons, I think it was Meir, got engaged to a girl from a family called Benedict. I was invited to the engagement party. The Brisker Rov was sitting next to Saul Lieberman. I saw it. On Lieberman's other side was the Mir Rosh Yeshiva, Reb Leizer Yehudah Finkel. At that time Lieberman was *persona non grata*.

There was a Jew who lived in Jerusalem back then named Solomon. He wrote a *sefer* called *Nesivos HaKodesh* on *Zevachim*. He was a big *tzaddik* (saint). He had been a

rabbi in Shanghai. He was the father of Rabbi Solomon in Petach Tikvah. This gentleman came to the Brisker Rov one day and says, "Rebbe, you're the big warrior against Zionism, but whenever you mention Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan, you refer to him respectfully as *der feter* (the uncle)."

The Rov said, "What do you want? He's *mishpochoh*."

Solomon said, "So what do *you* want from all the Jews who admire Rav Kook, who had so much love for the Jewish people?"

The Brisker Rov got mixed up for a few days because of that.

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Leiberman was good friends with Rav Hutner. They were both students of Rav Kook, and they palled around in New York back in the fifties. They both used to go to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Library because there were lots of *seforim* (volumes of religious scholarship) there. Rav Hutner had a beard as black as coal back then. He wore a short jacket. Leiberman was once standing there in the library and who should come in but his friend, Rav Hutner. Leiberman says in Yiddish, "Here comes G-d's dog."

Rav Hutner retorted, "Better to be a dog of G-d than to be a god to dogs." Rav Hutner told me that one himself.

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When I was a young man, I was sitting on Shabbos with Goldie at a glatt kosher hotel in Miami Beach. Right in front of us were Elie Wiesel and Saul Leiberman. Leiberman was dipping his tea bag into boiling hot water, cooking on Shabbos. I was strongly motivated to tell him. Goldie was against it. I told her, "But Goldie, it's frum to tell him." I felt Leiberman didn't know what he was doing.

I was feeling antagonistic toward him. I went over to him and I poked him a bit. I said, "Saul, what you're doing is *bishul* (cooking)."

He didn't know me. He says, "There's no prohibition against coloring with foods."

I said, "You jerk, I'm not talking about coloring. I'm talking about cooking." So I did my duty as an Orthodox Jew.

His friend Elie Wiesel is what you call a career Holocaust survivor. When you see him he has a face that he turns on, and you see the Holocaust, you see Auschwitz in his face. He made a fortune on it. He is "Mr. Holocaust." I've met him on many occasions.

AN HONEST BUCK