

B'Yachad

Shvat 5759 • 1999

TOGETHER

A TREE, A SPRING AND OFFSPRING

by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

“How can I bless you when you already have everything?” This is what Rav Yitzchak said to Rav Nachman when he asked him for a bracha.

“Shall I bless you with Torah knowledge – you are already a Torah scholar! Shall I bless you with wealth – you are already a man of great resources! Shall I bless you with children – you already have them!”

Rav Yitzchak found the solution to his problem by recalling a parable.

A man wandered in the desert – weary, hungry and thirsty. He came upon a tree with sweet fruits, a pleasant shade and a stream of water flowing beneath it. He ate

from its fruits, drank from its water and relaxed in its shade. As he was about to depart a refreshed traveler, he turned to the tree and said:

“Tree, oh tree, how can I bless you? Shall I bless you that your fruits should be sweet – they are already so! Shall I bless you with a pleasant shade – you already have it! Shall I bless you that a stream of water pass beneath you – one already does! All I can bless you with is that all the trees which are offspring of you shall be like you.”

“Thus,” concluded Rav Yitzchak, “I can only bless you in the same manner – that all of your offspring shall be like you.”

On Tu B’Shvat, the Rosh Hashana of the trees, we at Ohr Somayach like to think of ourselves as trees blessed by Hashem to have offspring – our beloved talmidim in Eretz Yisrael and throughout the world – like ourselves, blessed with the same dedication to learning and spreading Torah and to insuring that their offspring will be like them.

RABBI GAVRIEL ELIYAHU KLATZKO

zatzal

by Rabbi Larry Shain

Only two and a half years ago, Rabbi Gavriel Eliyahu Klatzko *zatzal*, or Reb Gavriel as he was known to us, arrived upon the shores of South Africa to be employed by Ohr Somayach of South Africa. Little did we know that the enormous impact he would have would be over such a short time.

He, his wife Yocheved and his children were initially brought out to join the Ohr Somayach Kollel in Johannesburg. Within a short time, it became very apparent that Reb Gavriel had an enormous talent to empathize with and touch the lives of all who came into contact with him. The deep *ahavas Yisrael* which characterized his personality is perhaps the single most important trait required for any *kiruv* worker.

Reb Gavriel possessed this quality in great measure and it was immediately utilized by the organization to further the outreach work of Ohr Somayach.

It was a clear demonstration of *hashgocho* that at this precise time, an opportunity arose for the establishment of a new *minyán* and *kiruv* center by Ohr Somayach, specifically designed to meet the needs of students and young professionals of the Johannesburg community. There could not have been a better candidate for the job – and so was born the Sunny Road Center.

Rabbi Klatzko was the heart of the enormously successful project. The *minyán* and associated *kiruv* projects grew by leaps and bounds. *Shabbos minyanim* were regularly attended by 200 young people; Lag B’Omer, Simchas Torah, Shavuos dinner and much more, were attended by 300 plus. In-house and out-of-town Shabbatonim were a regular occurrence and the Sunny Road Center was the talk of the town.

Rabbi Klatzko was at the center of all activities. The home that he and Yocheved built was one of enormous

chesed and *hachnosas orchim*. Never a Shabbos nor a Yom Tov meal would go by without many guests surrounding their table. The relationship that they established with every young person was nurtured and treasured by both *rebbe* and *talmid* alike.

Reb Gavriel’s personality was such that these young people would open their hearts to him with their most private and intimate issues and he would take them to heart and act upon them with love and concern. A number of *shidduchim* came about via the Sunny Road project and Gavriel and Yocheved would take full responsibility for the *shidduch*, and on more than one occasion this was even to the extent of finding the money for *hachnosas kallah*, for those who, for whatever reason, could not afford a *chasuna*.

The outpouring of grief and sorrow at the short *levaya* in Johannesburg – prior to the flight to Eretz Yisroel on Sunday morning the 8th of November – that was attended by hundreds within one hours notice, was but a small indication of the great love and esteem felt for him by so many of the local Johannesburg community.

He was beloved by *talmidim* and colleagues alike and his presence will be sorely missed. As was expressed at a *hesped* in Johannesburg, just as his four children will ultimately be a source of *zechus* to his *neshamah*, so will his hundreds of *talmidim*. For many of them, he was fully responsible for the mitzvos they keep; in all of them, he is a great factor and inspiration, and always will be, in their share of Torah and mitzvos.

May his memory be a blessing to us all. *Yehi Zichro Baruch*

Rabbi Shain is Director of Ohr Somayach South Africa. This appreciation is written on behalf of the hanholo and staff of Ohr Somayach South Africa.



“Reb Gavriel” doing what he did best.

SPOTLIGHT on an Alumnus

by Victor Hyman

Dr. Tuvia Meister had a fairly common beginning for a former talmid of Ohr Somayach. Starting from a non-religious home in New York Dr. Meister pursued a medical career from a young age and became “tuned in” to Judaism in medical school.

Dr. Meister has been an incredible example of drive and determination. In his book *The Meister Plan*, Dr. Meister explains how it was a television show about a dying 19 year old Jewish boy that led him to finally have a bar mitzvah and pursue Torah and mitzvos. When Rav Eliezer Menachem Shach, *shlita*, heard this story, he said it was the first time he had ever heard of anything good come from television!

The following years would see Dr. Meister graduate medical school, come to Ohr Somayach, marry, finish *Mishnayos* 10 times, the *Bavli*, the *Mesechtos Ketanos*, *Mechilta*, *Sifra*, *Sifrei*, *Mishneh Torah* and *Sefer Hamitzvos*, *Tanach*, *Talmud Yerushalmi* and *Tosefta*.

During this Torah *tour d’force*, Dr. Meister developed an investment strategy that allowed him to learn Torah full time with only a few hours of work each week to supplement his investment income, and to retire at age forty. He also developed a method for learning that can only be called meticulous, dedicated and ingenious. In *The*

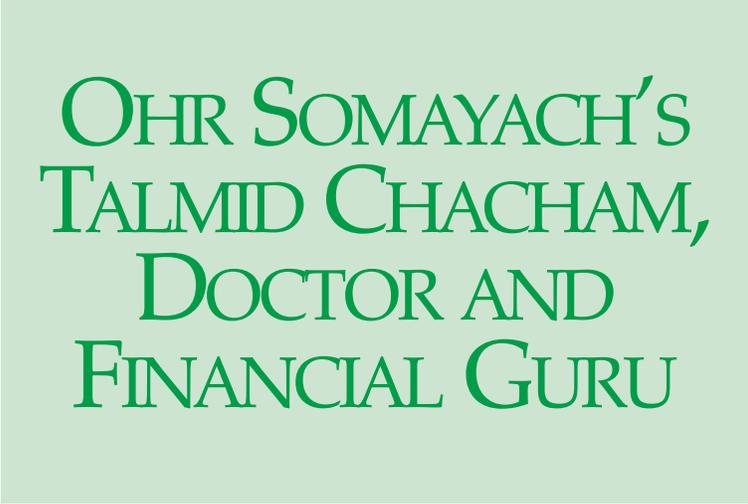
Meister Plan he shares his strategies for learning and earning.

Rabbi Chaim P. Scheinberg, *shlita*, Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivas Torah Ohr, notes in his *haskama* that Dr. Meister’s book “shall serve to highlight the importance of using money to allow one to continue a serious commitment to *limud hatorah*.” With that in mind, *The Meister Plan* is designed both for

has used his investment security to afford himself more time to learn, anyone can combine working and learning with his plan to finish not just *Shas* but all of Torah, and at the same time save for a comfortable retirement. For example, with Dr. Meister’s system, if a new father started the 20 year learning plan and put aside just \$2000 at the birth of a child, with only \$40 per week over the next 20 years, he could accumulate over \$300,000 with very little time invested in maintaining the portfolio.

Dr. Meister’s book is based on a system of setting achievable goals in learning and investing small amounts of money regularly, as he says: “My philosophy fits the economic circumstances of most *frum* families. It’s a hands-off philoso-

phy; that’s the beauty of it. If you’re *frum*, you really should not be constantly monitoring the stock market; that’s not a good way to spend your time,” and others in both fields agree. *The Meister Plan* carries *haskamas* from Rabbi Chaim P. Scheinberg, *shlita*, and from Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, *shlita*. It also contains approbations from Donald R. Nichols, author of *Starting Small, Investing Smart* and Nathan Sax, Vice President of Mercantile Safe Deposit and Trust Company and The Munk Group. It is published by Shaar Press and available at your local Jewish bookseller.



OHR SOMAYACH'S TALMID CHACHAM, DOCTOR AND FINANCIAL GURU

people working or in kollel.

The learning strategy that Dr. Meister developed will allow someone with drive and determination to cover an extraordinary amount of ground in a very short period of time. In chapter four, Dr. Meister provides outlines for study plans to finish all that he has accomplished in just 10 - 20 years!

Replete with real world examples of how to fit in an extra “*daf*” between x-rays or finish the Talmud while waiting in the public library, Dr. Meister writes with warmth and an understanding of the financial demands of a *frum* family. While Dr. Meister himself

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at the New York Hilton

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