

GIVING WITH RACHAMIM

FRIENDS TALK ABOUT RACHAMIM (RAMI) ANTIAN, A'H, WHO WAS NIFTAR THIS YEAR ON SHMINI ATZERES IN ERETZ YISROEL – PARTICULARLY ABOUT HIS OUTSTANDING GENEROSITY

AN OPEN HAND

Rami's friend Rabbi Moshe Dickstein relates:

As many know, every Motzaei Shabbos Rami would sit at home and distribute *tz'daka* to anybody who asked for help. People would come and he would write checks without extensive questioning concerning why they needed the money. The smallest amounts were hundreds of dollars.

Despite our friendship, I never asked Rami for a donation for my work or for others. When people requested me to ask Rami for money on their behalf, I would tell them that Rami's heart and pocket were open, and they didn't need *protekzia*.

It once happened, though, that I was asked to speak on behalf of a Jew who had gotten into serious debt which affected his *parnasa*, his family, and even his health. This was the first time I called on Rami. After two sentences he asked me to send somebody over to pick up a check.

Without knowing who the person was, Rami wrote a check for \$25,000.

HATZALA!

A *shliach* in Eretz Yisroel who ran magnificent *mosdos* was in serious debt to the point that he had to leave the country because of being unable to repay the many creditors. Both his personal situation as well as that of

the *mosdos* were quite bad.

Rami called all the creditors to his office, where he discussed the repayment of the money, had them sign that they had no future claims against the *shliach*, and wrote checks to cover all the *shliach's* debts, which were estimated as being close to a million dollars!

Rami once said he asked the Rebbe what his shlichus is, and the Rebbe wrote back three things. Rami only revealed one of them – the T'mimim.

L'CHATCHILA ARIBER

For a number of years the Yeshiva Tomchei T'mimim in Migdal HaEmek was under the administrative directorship of Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Grossman, the *rav* of the city. He personally accepted responsibility in front of the Rebbe to take care of the *yeshiva*. At a certain point the relationship became unraveled and the *yeshiva* began operating

independently. For a long period of time the *yeshiva* functioned without financial backing, and was in dire straits.

Just when it looked as though the *yeshiva* would have to close, Rami announced (he was *menahel* of the Chabad *yeshiva* in Tzfas at the time) that he was taking the *yeshiva* under his wing until a new *menahel* would be found, even though he was in debt because of the *yeshiva* in Tzfas (debts for which he had taken loans on the black market and for which he was threatened by the creditors).

He turned to various people and took on additional loans of hundreds of thousands of dollars with which he sustained the *yeshiva* for ten months until the present *menahel*, Rabbi Levi Vilomovsky, took over. Even then, Rami continued helping the *yeshiva* until the new *menahel* had things under control.

HOSPITALITY

Many people knew that when they arrived in the U.S. they could find hospitality at Rami's spacious house. They could see that Rami's hospitality was wholehearted.

Hundreds of *chasanim* can testify that the *Kiddush* made on the Shabbos *oifruf*, which was made in the *shul* in the basement of Rami's house, with dozens and sometimes hundreds of guests (mainly *bachurim* who had no other place to eat) eating a full Shabbos meal – was sponsored



by Rami.

Rami once said he asked the Rebbe what his *shlichus* is, and the Rebbe wrote back three things. Rami only revealed one of them – the T'mimim. Indeed, the T'mimim were his steady guests. Hundreds of T'mimim remember the Shabbos meals in his house, all with abundance and an *ayin tova*, meals that lasted from afternoon until *Motzaei Shabbos*.

DEAR TO HIS HEART – THE GEULA

The most important thing to Rami was Moshiach and *Geula*. He dedicated most of his fortune to finance projects that would disseminate the *besuras ha'Geula*. Many remember the Keren HaMilyon (the Million Dollar Fund) that he started for this purpose. For a number of years, close to four million

dollars went through this fund!

There was no *shliach* who turned to him for help for a Moshiach project who didn't receive his assistance.

Rabbi Zimroni Tzik: "It's hard to estimate and evaluate, even quantitatively, the countless projects done by Chabad Houses around the world thanks to the fund, which had long bypassed the million dollar mark.

"When Rami had to leave everything behind in the U.S. and return to Eretz Yisroel, he had a limited sum remaining, enough to bring his family over, and not much more. The average man would've guarded that money in order to begin anew, but Rami preferred giving the money to an organization that disseminates the *besuras ha'Geula*, saying: This is the last of my money

and it is dedicated to this alone!"

HARD WORK

For years, Rami supported the summer camps for children in Tzfas, which his friend, Moshe Dickstein, ran.

"He always operated in a *l'chatchila aribber* way. He made sure we opened camps for the children of all the neighborhoods of Tzfas, Canaan, the south and center of the city. Although he was hard-pressed for money, he paid the counselors nicely and asked me in exchange that I demand more effort and work on their part.

IN SOMEONE'S HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Rami was the *menahel gashmi* of the Chabad *yeshiva* in Tzfas for many years. He traveled to various countries to fundraise, and



sometimes experienced miracles. Someone once gave him the address of a wealthy man living in a distant village in Germany. Rami took a taxi to the man's house. It started snowing before he got to the man's house. The driver lost his way, and there they were in the middle of the night in some unfamiliar village in Germany.

It was freezing, so having no other choice, Rami knocked at the door of a home which still had a light on. He told the person who opened the door that he had gotten stuck, and asked if he could come in and warm up until the morning. The man agreed and graciously welcomed him in.

The two got into a conversation and Rami told him about his purpose in coming to Germany. The man's face lit up and he told Rami that he was a Jewish businessman. He gave a handsome donation and even organized a group of fellow

businessmen for a dinner, raising a great deal of money for the *yeshiva*.

ONE WITH A "GOOD EYE" IS BLESSED

More on fundraising from Rabbi Boaz Kali:

"When I began working in Chabad schools, I was sent by Rabbi Leibel Schildkraut to meet with Rami and to consult with him about fundraising. Rami was the *menahel gashmi* of the *yeshiva* in Tzfas at that time, and had amassed a great deal of experience in fundraising.

Rami sat with me for hours, initiating me into the intricacies of successful fundraising. I once went to Switzerland to fundraise and met Rami, who was there for the same reason. When he saw me he told me not to waste my time there, but to go to Milano.

At first I hesitated. He worked hard to convince me, and I took the

train to Milano, where I was very successful. Until this day I am very successful in Italy.

Although competition in fundraising is not generally welcome, Rami shared his sources wholeheartedly.

FATHER AND SON

A close friend relates: When Rami was becoming *frum*, he came to me one day looking very serious. He asked me to sit down with him to write a letter to the Rebbe, "like a son writes his father," as he put it. He asked the Rebbe for a *tikkun t'shuva* for his past life.

I knew that the Rebbe's approach to all those who asked this question was to focus on the future, and I thought this would be Rami's answer too, but the Rebbe answered him like a father writing his son, and gave him a path of *t'shuva* for each thing he had written, which was rare indeed.