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חסידים הראשונים

Stories of the Early Chassidim

Reb Shmuel Ber Barisover, the Rashdam

Reb Shmuel Ber Barisover became a Chossid in the times of the Mittlerer Rebbe. He was then a Chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe MaHaRash and the Rebbe Rashab. He was considered one of the great Chassidim, and was a Mashpiya in the town of Borisov. He was very honored by the Rabbeim, and when he came to Lubavitch, he stayed in a room in the house of the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe Rashab used to call him הרש"ם, which is a Roshei Teivos of מבראריסאוו דובער זשמואל ר' שמואל ר' דהחסיד.

Here is a story of how he met the Mittlerer Rebbe.

Reb Shmuel Ber of Borisov became a Chassid in the town of Tshashnik. He learnt by the Chossid, the Mashpiya Reb Mordechai of Horodok.

One day, Reb Shmuel Ber and his friends found out that the Mittlerer Rebbe was going to be passing through a nearby town on his way to visit the Ohel of the Alter Rebbe (in Haditch). So they, as many Chassidim did, went to that town, hopefully to see the Rebbe, hear a Maamar and maybe even have a Yechidus.

However, when the Rebbe came to the town, he sent a message to all Chassidim that had gathered there that he would not be taking anyone into Yechidus and also would not say Maamorim. The Chassidim were very upset about this, but Reb Shmuel Ber thought of a plan to figure out a way that he would at least be able to see the Rebbe.

He became friendly with the Rebbe's helper, Reb Meir Tzvi, and Reb Meir Tzvi let him help with simple jobs like bringing the water. This way Reb Shmuel Ber was able to be close to the Rebbe's room.

He had the zechus to be able to hear the Rebbe daven Maariv, and then when Reb Meir Tzvi went in to give the Rebbe a hot drink, Reb Shmuel Ber was able to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe.

In the middle of the night, the Rebbe went out of his room and passed through the room where Reb Shmuel Ber was. The Rebbe looked at him with a look that went right through him, and Reb Shmuel Ber felt two opposite things. On one hand he got very scared, but on the other hand he felt very excited. He knew the Rebbe was going to pass through again on the way back to his room, but he did not have the courage to stay there, so he hid behind the door.

After Davening (Shacharis the next morning), the helper told him that the Rebbe had asked who he was, and that maybe the Rebbe would want to see him.

When he heard this, Reb Shmuel Ber became very frightened and was not able to think clearly, but Hashem gave him the wisdom that he should say Tehillim, and this is what he did until he was called in to the Rebbe's room.

When he entered the Rebbe's room, he became completely confused, and could hardly say a word. All he managed to say was, "Rebbe, I want to be a chossid."

The Rebbe answered him, Chabad is using your seichel, understanding, and thinking deeply about what you learned. If you *horeve* (work hard), you will be a chossid. Hashem should give you long life."

Reb Meir Tzvi warned him that he should not tell anyone of the zechus he had to see the Rebbe. After the Rebbe left the town, later that afternoon, Reb Shmuel Ber met up with his friends and returned to Tshashnik. He did not say a word about his Yechidus to anyone.

When he returned to Tshashnik, the Mashpiya Reb Mordechai felt that something special happened with him. He told him that he felt רוח טהרה was on him, and commanded him to say what had happened. Reb Shmuel Ber then told his Mashpiya all that had happened to him.

[From HaTamim where this story is taken from the writings of the Frierdiker Rebbe.]