

Remember the day of Shabbos to sanctify it. (20:8)

Horav Moshe Zalmen Grossman, zl, believed that the term *shomer Shabbos* aptly translated, “You shall guard the *Shabbos*,” is an exhortation to watch over the *Shabbos*. A soldier who is charged with guard duty does not dare sleep. Thus, *Rav Zalmen Shomer Shabbos*, as he was consequently called, remained awake the entire *Shabbos*, engaged in learning and singing, delving into esoteric studies. It was known that *Rav Zalmen* could be found all Friday night in the *Karliner bais hamedrash* in Meah Shearim. In those days, poverty was the primary concern of Yerushalayim’s observant community. People simply had no money to purchase the bare staples of life. Furthermore, if they became ill, they could neither afford to visit a doctor nor purchase the necessary medicine that was critical to their cure. To this end, *Rav Zalmen* formed the *Ezras Cholim*, Help for the Sick, organization which provides funds for doctor visits and medicine. Since he had no one from whom to raise these funds, it is understandable that *Rav Zalmen* racked up huge debts. He realized that he would have to go to America to fundraise. He took leave of his family, traveled halfway around the world, and arrived in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. He rented a small apartment, which became his home away from home for the next few years.

A certain *Karliner chassid* woke up one Friday night with a miserable migraine headache. The man was beside himself with pain. Nothing he did or took relieved his excruciating pain. He decided to get dressed and take a walk. A migraine can cause a person to walk trance-like, which was the case with this *chassid*. He realized after a while that he had strayed from his house. Where does one go in middle of the night when he has no clue how to return to his apartment? He decided that the best place would be *Rav Zalmen’s* apartment. He was awake all Friday night. He would knock on his door. Perhaps, by elevating his *Shabbos* experience with someone like *Rav Zalmen*, he could moderate some of the pain.

The *chassid* knocked on *Rav Zalmen’s* door – to no avail. This was very strange. Surely *Rav Zalmen* was home. Where else would he be in middle of the night? He began to worry; something must be very wrong. When he pressed his ear against the door, he thought he heard faint cries from within, as if someone in intense pain was crying for help. He did not need more than that. He woke up a neighbor whose son immediately ran to the police station. An officer promptly returned and broke open the door to *Rav Zalmen’s* apartment. They found *Rav Zalmen* writhing on the floor in excruciating agony, the victim of a burst appendix. He was rushed to the hospital, where it was touch and go for a little while. Finally, the doctor declared that *Rav Zalmen’s* life had been saved. His friend, who could not sleep and wandered the streets in middle of the night, had been Hashem’s agent to save *Rav Zalmen’s* life. *Rav Zalmen*, who had in the past always guarded over *Shabbos*, earning for himself the *nom de plume*, *Rav Zalmen Shomer Shabbos*, now had a new saying: *Ki eshmerah Shabbos, Keil Yishmeraini*, “If I watch over *Shabbos*, Hashem will watch over me.”