



IN TRIBUTE TO CHAZZAN BINYAMIN GLICKMAN Z"L

13 MARCHESHVAN 5782



David Katz serves as the CFO of OU Israel. This week he shares with us a wonderful tribute to a beloved mentor who impacted his life.

Torah Tidbits thanks David Katz for sharing these touching words with our readership.

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Shabbat Morning, ל"ב לעומר, י"ז באייר תשכ"ז, (May 27,1966) was the day I made my first appearance on stage as a member of the Beth Jacob Congregation Boys' Choir, conducted by my beloved mentor Chazzan Binyamin Glickman ז"ל.

The mere fact that I so vividly remember that day, over 55 years ago, proves to me what an important day that was in my life. To me, it was the day "I made it to the big leagues" as they say in baseball lingo.

Chazzan Glickman ז"ל passed away a few weeks ago on י"ג מרחשוון and I need a way to do something that now I am unable to do, to thank him from the bottom of my נשמה for what he taught me and for the meaning that he added to my life.

I call R' Binyamin ז"ל my Rebbi, because he taught me to love the part of

my Jewish Life that I frequent most often, Tefila. Through his Nusach and melodies, he made each Tefila special in its own right. Each tune had a unique association with a specific Yom Tov or life cycle event. The Kaddish he sang on Pesach was different than the one he sang on Shabbat and the tune he sang for מי שעשה ניסים לאבותינו in Birkat Hachodesh was a heads-up for the upcoming Chag of the new month. He was adamant that a section of davening that spoke about a major theme like Malchiyot and Shofarot, required a major themed melody while an emotional and compassionate Tefila, like Zichronot, required a minor and softer melody. This simple, but cardinal rule assisted me in understanding Tefilot better. He bemoaned and cringed at Baalei Tefillah that made their davening into a Chassidic Song Festival. Nusach was Kadosh and those who desecrated it were scorned upon. (Not publicly of course but his body language told it all.)

The story we would relive together when we saw each other was the time he brought me back from choir practice, in his blue Rambler, dropping me off across the street from my house. As I got out of the car and

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saw my mother ע"ה sitting in our breakfast room watching me cross, I began to run across the street, not noticing the oncoming car. As soon as I started to cross, the car hit me and knocked me to the ground. I was down for about three seconds, got up and continued to run across the street as if nothing had happened. I don't remember Chazzan Glickman's reaction then, all I know was I was fine and wanted to tell my mother what transpired at choir practice.

At 11 and a half years old, I was still in the choir, and on Selichot night I was given the solo of הנשמה לך. As I tried to hit the high note of the piece, I cracked, plain and simple my voice cracked. The next day Chazzan Glickman took me to his voice teacher, Dr Bachrach, who concluded that my voice was changing and that I should be relieved of my choir duties for the next 2 years. Almost exactly two years later, in the summer, a few weeks before the Yamim HaNoraim, Chazzan Glickman called me and asked me to meet with him. At the meeting he handed me a cassette and said that it was a recording of Mussaf for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and that he wanted me to be the Chazzan at the Bnei Akiva Minyan for the Yamim HaNoraim. In retrospect, that was the greatest gift that anyone has ever given me, the chance and responsibility to be a Shaliach Tzibur on the Yamim HaNoraim, something that, thanks to him, I never take lightly. The Tefilot as a choir member for Yamim HaNoraim were obviously different than the rest of the year. For these Tefilot, we had a designated conductor, Dr Stuart Venner, as opposed to the other Shabbat and Holiday choir performances where Chazzan Glickman himself would also conduct us. I



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am assuming that Chazzan Glickman felt that he could not concentrate with proper Kavana on the Tefilot of the Yamim HaNoraim if he needed to also conduct. He was greater than life on the Yamim HaNoraim and I watched in awe during his rendition of the Tefilot. I especially noticed the tear he shed while reciting ממנעו. To me, this meant he was the real thing

Thanks to Chazzan Glickman, my life is full of שירה ותינונים. His passion for Tefila and how it is supposed to be offered and presented in the Beit Knesset has been a guiding light for me and my family.

People have often asked me where I learned to daven the way I do and it is with great pride and humility I tell them that I learned from best, from Chazzan Binyamin Glickman.

תהא נשמנו צרורה בצרור החיים.