

In Memory of Shlomi

By: Yigal Cohen

Delivered at the service 30 days after Shlomi's death.

I searched for the right words to say about the loss, about the void created by the death of Shlomi in the prime of his life – but I could not find them. Words cannot express the sorrow, the pain, the hollowness, or the awful feeling we have when a person's life ends at a tender age.

I looked for words from a person whose poetry was his calling, Haim Nachman Bialik, who wrote:

There was a man - and see: he is no more;
before his time this man died,
and his life's poetry in mid-air stopped;
and oh, so sad!
One more song he had
and now the song is lost forever!

We lost many songs with Shlomi's passing, a great deal of joie de vivre that we will encounter no more, the broad smile we will no longer see but which will remain etched in our minds, the warm handshake we will always remember. And we are unable to express the sorrow, even with the words of the national poet.

But I did find words to say about Shlomi's life, his deeds, the goodness of his heart and his ways. And I thought that if I told of his actions and his ways, those deeds could exalt and uphold his memory.

Our sages taught us that when a person goes to the next world, the good deeds that he performed are what remain after he dies. For this is a human being's legacy; not the money he accumulated, not the words that he spoke, not the abstract principles that he stood for, but his deeds. Deeds with which he influenced his surroundings during his lifetime. Deeds with which he expressed his diligence, his dedication and integrity, and through which his true personality was revealed.

The *mishna* tells us about the importance of deeds. When the moment of Rabbi Akavia Ben Mahalalel's death approached, his son requested that he instruct his friends to appoint him to a position. Rabbi Akavia told his son not to make such a request. The son asked if his father had found fault in him. Rabbi Akavia answered, "No. Your deeds will draw you near and your deeds shall push you away." In other words, you will be judged based on your actions and not based on my requests or recommendation.

If during life one's deeds bring him closer to those around him or, God-forbid, push him further away, then certainly after one's passing, when he is in the World of Truth, we are obligated to tell of his deeds in his memory.

I first met Shlomi six years ago when he began working at the company. He worked with me for about five years, until I moved to another position. I remember the interview with him almost as if it took place today. Before Shlomi, we didn't understand the role of a "wirer" in the company. We didn't know if we needed a wirer on a full-time basis or not, and in fact, Shlomi taught us the role of the wirer in the company.

When Shlomi arrived for the interview, after a short time spent getting to know him, I was impressed by Shlomi's personality. I said to him, "Look, we haven't yet decided if we should staff this position, but right now we have a rack here that needs to be installed. Go work for a few days, finish it up, and in the meantime, we'll make our decision."

Shlomi got up, with his smile, and went to install the rack. When he finished and we saw the outcome of his work, we understood that this was something completely different. This rack was unlike any other rack in NDS. Shlomi had hands of gold. He loved his work and knew how to produce the highest quality. His work was art for him, and not just a rack for lab testing.

Shlomi also had a good head. Over time Shlomi learned to plan racks and entire labs and became the authority in this area. No one built a lab or even ordered equipment before first consulting with Shlomi. After a certain period of time in the company it became difficult for us to define Shlomi's job. He was much



more than a wirer. Was he a lab technician? Was he a lab builder? We didn't know.

He was constantly learning and frequently surprised me with something new that he'd learned. Once he brought up something related to planning, and once it had to do with suppliers and orders, or another time it was about getting to know new equipment. Once Shlomi devised a detailed plan for a new type of computer-safe, which saved more than two-thirds of the rack space. Shlomi mastered the issues relating to cooling, ventilation, mechanics, transportation and installation, which were all required for instituting use of this new safe.

Shlomi also had a heart of gold. He loved to help. He'd love to take a disorganized lab and rebuild it. I don't remember an occasion on which I had to ask Shlomi to stay late, but I do remember many times when Leon or Avner (his direct managers) told me, "For the past two weeks Shlomi has been working twelve hour days." Shlomi would help out with everything. He never refused; on the contrary, you'd ask him to do something small and he'd do something thoroughly and completely.

Whoever came into contact with Shlomi came to respect him, to like him and to admire his work. Lab managers consulted with him. Project managers sent him to customer installations around the world. Shlomi took apart and rebuilt all of the racks in the huge NDS server room. One time we were meeting with government representatives who were visiting the company. Suddenly, one of them said to his friend, "Have you seen NDS's labs? They are the nicest ones in Israel." These were two people whose jobs were to go from company to company in Israel and to examine labs. A great deal of that compliment was thanks to Shlomi.

This week we read the portion of *Toldot*, which speaks in praise of diligence and work. The *Torah* states, "And Yitzchak sowed in that land and found in the same year a hundred fold." In other words, the crops were 100 times more abundant than the quantity of seeds. "And God blessed him." And the *midrash* explains, "because he planted, he was blessed". There is no blessing without effort. We can merit God's blessing only through diligent, dedicated work. The *Torah* adds, "And Yitzchak again dug the wells of water which they had

dug in the days of Abraham.” Our rabbis teach us in the midrash, “great are the tzadikim who engage in settling the world.” And we know that the deeds of the fathers set the path for the sons. Shlomi adopted a path of diligence, hard work and dedication. He merited the blessing of successful work and a family he established and raised together with Yaffa, may she be blessed with a long life.

There is no comfort for this loss, but I want to tell the family, and especially his children, that all of us here loved Shlomi and his deeds. Continue to be proud of him and his way of life.

May his memory be blessed!

Yigal Cohen has a B.Sc. in Mathematics and Economics, and an honors graduate degree in Computer Sciences from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. For the last 12 years he has been working at NDS R&D, QA and various management positions. As present, he is the NDS-TI Vice President, Smart Card Software. He worked as the QA Director as Shlomi’s manager for 5 years, during this period, the reliability and functioning of the NDS labs were significantly improved. As such they became the standard used for testing all systems delivered in the company.

