

ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



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A Tzaddik, or righteous person, makes everyone else appear righteous before Hashem by advocating for them and finding their merits.

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

☪ **VEZOS HABERACHA** ☪

HOSHANA RABBA – SHEMINI ATZERES – SIMCHAS TORAH

☪ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ☪

As we end *Sefer Devorim* and begin anew, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for allowing us into your life and home and hope that we gave the soul(s) some sustenance. We also appreciate all of those who send the weekly *Me'oros* to their mailing lists to be *mezakeh* others. As for the letters of encouragement, this is the strength that keeps us going forward.

A gezunta vinter!!!

Permissible Pride

Four years of support was all Rav Levi Yitzchok would pledge when Rav Yitzchok of Neshchiz married his granddaughter. Customarily, a young *Talmid Chochom* such as Rav Yitzchok was offered more than four years, but Rav Levi Yitzchok would not hear of it. He was adamant: four years and no more. Four years later, Rav Levi Yitzchok passed away, and then everyone understood why he could not offer more than four years. A *Tzaddik* feels when he is nearing his end, and a great *Tzaddik* feels it long before.

During the last years of his life, Rav Levi Yitzchok had to contend with a rival in Berditchev. One of the wealthy householders of Berditchev, who bore some resentment to Rav Levi Yitzchok for his courage and independence, invited Rav Yechiel Michel of Rachov to serve as a second *Rav* for those who sought an alternative to Rav Levi Yitzchok. The people of

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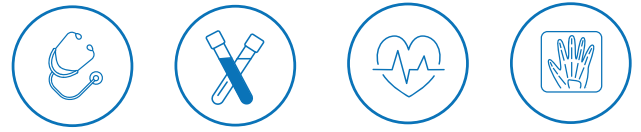
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Berditchev were upset with this development. They thought it would lead to acrimony and discord, but they were wrong.

Not long after he arrived in Berditchev, there was a *bris* in the main *shul*, and both Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rav Yechiel Michel were invited. They both arrived at the *shul* at the same time, and each one deferred to the other to enter first. They remained at a standoff outside the *shul* until the father of the child came out and said, "Let the Berditchever *Rav* enter first, since he is the *Rav* of the city." Only then did Rav Levi Yitzchok walk in before Rav Yechiel Michel. It was thus abundantly clear that these two *Tzaddikim* held each other in the highest esteem.

It soon also became clear to the people of Berditchev that despite the overt rivalry of Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rav Yechiel Michel, there was a covert friendship between the two.

When Rav Levi Yitzchok contracted his final illness and lay sick in bed, Rav Yechiel Michel also took to his bed with a high fever. Shortly thereafter, Rav Levi Yitzchok passed away. Rav Yechiel Michel was still bedridden, and his family withheld from him the tragic news. On the morning of the funeral, Rav Yechiel Michel called his son to his bedside.

"Why didn't you tell me about Rav Levi Yitzchok?" he demanded.

"How did you find out?" asked his son.

"I felt it. Tell Rav Yisrael Pikover, Rav Levi Yitzchok's son, that the funeral should pass by my house. I do not have the strength to come to the funeral, but I can come out to bid him farewell. I have important things to tell him."

A few hours later, the funeral procession stopped in front of Rav Yechiel Michel's house. Rav Yechiel Michel climbed down from his sickbed and came out to pay his last respects. He bent over the coffin and spoke inaudible words for a long time. The bystanders did, however, manage to catch his last words.

As he stood up, he quoted the *pasuk* (*Devorim* 16:9): "And you shall count for yourself seven weeks". Rav Yechiel Michel passed away exactly seven weeks later.



Dvar Torah

On the last day of his life, just before he went up to the mountain to return his soul to its Maker, Moshe said to the Jewish people (33:29), "You are fortunate, Yisrael. Who else is like you, a nation delivered by *Hashem*, the Shield of your deliverance, the Sword of your pride...?" Why was this acceptable? Wouldn't such self-congratulation lead to vanity and arrogance?

This kind of pride is permitted, explains Rav Levi Yitzchok, because pride in having *Hashem* as our Patron drives us to battle the *klippas* and rescue the holy sparks trapped within them. This may be the intent of the *Gemora's* statement (*Sota* 5a) that "it is permitted to have an eighth of an eighth" of pride. The Jewish people may indeed consider themselves fortunate that *Hashem* is the Shield of their deliverance. Their pride then serves as a sword to eradicate the *klippas* and rescue the holy sparks.



SHABBOS

Spiritual Pleasure

For Rav Levi Yitzchok, the time spent at the *Shabbos* table was a more profound spiritual experience than the time spent in *shul*. He never spoke about mundane matters during the entire *Shabbos*. And when he came to the table, his eyes lit up with a celestial fire.

He sang his introductory *zemiros*, made *Kiddush* and cut a slice of the *challa*. He brought the *challa* to his mouth and took a bite, his eyes closed to savor the pure ecstasy of the taste.

“*Oneg Shabbos!*” he cried out. “Ah, the pleasures of *Shabbos!*”

Once while he was sitting at the *Shabbos* table, the *yetzer hora*, the evil inclination, spoke into his ear. “Look at you sitting at the *Shabbos* table and taking such pleasure from the delicious foods. Do you get as much pleasure from the *tefillos* in the *shul?*”

“Absolutely not,” said Rav Levi Yitzchok.

“So how do you justify this to yourself?” insisted the *yetzer hora*.

“You cannot disturb my pleasure,” Rav Levi Yitzchok replied. “Eating on *Shabbos* is a *mitzva* from the *Torah*, while *davening* is a Rabbinic law, so of course I enjoy eating on *Shabbos* more than *davening*.”

Once, when Rav Levi Yitzchok was in Warsaw for a *Shabbos*, he conducted his *Shabbos* table in his customary manner. He bit into the *challa* and cried out, “*Oneg Shabbos! Oneg Shabbos! Oneg Shabbos!*”

The people at his table saw his face aflame with passion, and it seemed as if he was on the verge of expiring. One was a simple wagon driver, an unlearned man who lived for his regular glass of whiskey and slab of marbled meat. He stared at Rav Levi Yitzchok in amazement. He had never seen a person so overcome with ecstasy.

“*Rebbe!*” he called out. “I’ve wasted all my money.”

Rav Levi Yitzchok gave the man a quizzical look.

“I’ve spent so much money on the pleasures of this world,” he said, “and now I see that spiritual pleasures are so much greater. And they don’t cost any money!”

Such was the effect that Rav Levi Yitzchok had on those around him, even the simplest among them.

Someone once asked the *Kozhnutzer Maggid* why it was that Rav Levi Yitzchok was so poor when so many other *Chassidic Rebbes* were quite wealthy.

“It is simple,” explained the *Maggid*. “The *Gemora* says (*Bava Kama* 92a) that if a person *davens* for another Jew when he shares the same need he will be answered first. The *Chassidim* of the other *Rebbes* ask him to *daven* for them that they will be prosperous and that all their material needs will be fulfilled. Therefore, the *Rebbes* are answered first, and they become wealthy. But the *Berditchever Chassidim* know that spiritual pleasures are much greater, and they ask their *Rebbe* to *daven* for their spiritual advancement. Therefore, their *Rebbe* is answered first, gaining not material wealth but ever greater spiritual achievements.”



Dvar Torah

There are two kinds of *mitzvos*, those such as *tefillin* and *tzitzis* that deliver no pleasure to the body and those such as eating on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* that are pleasurable to the body; of course, even those *mitzvos* that provide pleasure must be performed for the purpose of fulfilling the will of *Hashem* rather than satisfying the desires of the body. The question arises, why indeed did *Hashem* give us *mitzvos* that are pleasurable to the body? Why put us in a position in which we might be distracted by the physical pleasure from the true purpose of the *mitzva*?

It is because the soul derives great pleasure from the performance of all *mitzvos*. It is thus purified and drawn toward its celestial origins where it encounters the eternal goodness in store for *Tzaddikim*. But a human being is comprised of both body and soul, and as long as the body is not properly purified, he cannot fully experience the eternal goodness in store for him. Therefore, *Hashem* gave us *mitzvos* that provide physical pleasure. And when a person overcomes his material desires and performs these *mitzvos* solely for the fulfillment of the will of *Hashem*, his body is also purified and elevated to the level of his soul.



STORIES ABOUT RAV LEVI YITZCHOK OF BERDITCHEV FOR SUKKOS

When do we receive the *Shefa* of the Seven Days of *Sukkos* and the Seven Days of *Pesach*?

Building the *Sukka*

The Klausenberger *Rebbe* told the following story about the holy Berditchever, who, in his youth, was already recognized as a child prodigy. The wealthy Rav Yisrael Peretz of Levertov took him as a son-in-law and cared for his every need so that the young *illuy* (genius) could sit and learn undisturbed. To his father-in-law's utter amazement and dismay, he received reports that his illustrious son-in-law was seen in the streets of the city carrying a heavy load of straw which he intended to use as *s'chach* (roofing) for his *sukka* for the upcoming festival. The burden weighed him down, and he was covered with dust and sweat from the exertion. His father-in-law, who was known as an honorable person, was greatly embarrassed by this public display of his son-in-law performing manual hard work like a common laborer. Later, he called Rav Levi Yitzchok in to rebuke him for his ways.

“But everything I did was for the sake of the *mitzva* of building a *sukka*,” explained Rav Levi Yitzchok. (In fact, the *poskim* discuss whether a person of public stature may engage in public labor building his *sukka*; See *Sha'arei Teshuva*, *Siman* 625.)

His father-in-law rebuked him sternly, saying, “But why sully yourself and embarrass us so by acting like a common porter? You should have approached my wagon driver and ordered him to load the straw on the wagon and to harness the horses, and he would have brought the straw home for you – to your house – in a dignified fashion!”

“I don't understand,” said Rav Levi Yitzchok in astonishment. “How could you expect me to give such a precious and important *mitzva* over to a wagon driver and horses?”

(*Shiur Chumash Rashi* taught by the Sanz-Klausenberger, *Parshas Chayei Sara*, 5734)



The Berditchever's Netilas Lulov

Rav Yitzchok of Neshchiz (who was married to the Berditchever's granddaughter) lived and ate with the holy Berditchever's family. He stated how it was the Berditchever's custom that no one was allowed into his private room during the time that he took the *lulov* and *esrog*. Then, the holy Rav Mordechai of Neshchiz (Rav Yitzchok's father) appeared to the Berditchever and asked him to teach his son how to shake the *lulov* and *esrog*. From then on, the holy Rav Yitzchok was the only one permitted to enter the Berditchever's private room when he shook *lulov* and *esrog*.

The Neshchizer related that he once observed when the holy Berditchever pronounced the blessing over the *lulov* and *esrog* – that he seemed to have vanished!

Afterward, he saw him emerge from between the bookcase and the wall, which was an opening that was simply too narrow for any man to fit through; nonetheless the *lulov* and *esrog* remained pristine and untouched in their beauty even though they should have been destroyed from being squashed there!

A different time, he observed that the Berditchever was aflame with excitement and rapture. In this state of *dveikus*, the *Kedushas Levi* ran toward the glass breakfront while holding the *lulov* and *esrog* in hand. The cabinet's doors were made of glass, and the Neshchizer was greatly frightened that the Berditchever would injure himself on the glass.

However, the moment that the Berditchever should have crashed through the closet, the breakfront stepped back, moving itself out of his way – and instead the Berditchever ran into the wall and emerged unscathed! (*Sifron Shel Tzaddikim* 11:14, pages 22–23)



Kavonos Lulov and Esrog

Rav Yitzchok of Neshchiz once related the following incident that occurred during Rav Levi Yitzchok's last year before his passing from this world:

“The Berditchever once called me into his private chambers to teach me the secret *kavonos* of shaking the *lulov* and *esrog*.

“The Berditchever's descendants were quite jealous since they had received no such honors. They came and asked the Berditchever why he was teaching this only to me and not to them.

“The Berditchever answered them thus:

“When the Neshchizer (Rav Mottele, Rav Yitzchok's father) will ask me in the World of Truth (after I pass on and we meet there) what I taught his son, Rav Yitzchok (who was married to the Berditchever's granddaughter), I will have to answer him. Therefore, I am teaching Rav Yitzchok the *kavonos* of the *lulov* and *esrog*!”

“So saying, he closed the door behind us and he taught me the aforementioned *kavonos*.”

(*Zichron Tov – Me'Avodas HaTzaddikim* #17, page 16)



The Rebbe's Heart

The holy Rav Shlomo, the Bobover *Rebbe*, once told:

It was the holy Berditchever's annual custom that immediately after selecting the most beautiful and exquisite *esrog* he would come home with his purchase and hide it away. So it remained hidden from sight and from the probing eyes and hands of the family and the *Chassidim*, until the *Kedushas Levi* himself had pronounced the *berocha* on it and used it for the *mitzva*.

One year, as they sat together at the table, the Berditchever went on and on, exclaiming praise after praise about just how beautiful and *mehudor* (exceptional) his *esrog* was! One of his sons desired very much to see it.

That night, after the house was still, and everyone lay in bed, the boy crept out of his room. In the still of night, he made sure that everyone was sleeping. When he was sure that his father, the Berditchever, was also asleep, he stole into his study and sought out the box where the *Rav's* beautiful *esrog* was hidden away. He approached the box, and carefully opened it. His heart pounding with excitement, he reached for the *esrog*, but no sooner had he laid his hand on it when he heard his father call out in a loud voice, "*Oy dos hartz – Oh my heart!*" Frightened, the boy pulled his hand away. He waited patiently until he was sure that his father had fallen back asleep – and reached for the *esrog* once more.

Again, just as his hand touched the *esrog*, grasping it to remove it from its secret hiding place, his father called out in a loud voice, "*Oy dos hartz – Oh my heart!*" Realizing that there must be some connection between his covert activities and his father's cries, he closed the box, left the room and went into his father's room instead.

He approached his father's bed and asked him, "*Tatte, why did you call out like that?*"

The Berditchever answered him: "*Epes drukt mich keseder un luzt mich nisht schlufen – something keeps pressing me and preventing me from sleeping!*"

The son, realizing the connection – that it was his touching the *esrog* that was pressing against his father's pure and holy heart – confessed, "It was me, *Tatte*. I'm sorry – I just wanted to see your beautiful *esrog*! You told us how exquisite it was and I wanted to hold it and see it myself!"

The Berditchever answered his son, "*Mein Kind – my child – it is known that it says in the holy Zohar (Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 21, page 56a) that the esrog is like the heart. When you touched my esrog, which I am always careful to hide from everyone until I fulfill the mitzva, I felt it in my heart!*"

(*Zochreinu LeChaim*, page 507)



How to Juice an Esrog

It is said regarding Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, that he was so aflame with excitement during the recitation of *Hallel*, that he would sometimes squeeze and crush the *esrog* he held in his hand! (*Sefer HaMo'adim IV, Sukkos*, page 95)



Shaking and Breaking the *Lulov*

When the holy Ruzhiner was but a child, just five or six years old, he visited Berditchev on *Sukkos* and this is what he saw:

The holy Berditchever was reciting *Hallel* with *lulov* and *esrog* in hand. Due to his otherworldly excitement, he was simply aflame with *hislahavus* and as he shook the *lulov*, it snapped! One after another they would break – again and again. Someone stood there and kept replacing the broken *lulovim* with new ones the entire time!

The holy Ruzhiner, just a boy at the time, stood there holding his own little *lulov* and remarked, “There are those who, due to their love of *Hashem*, simply cannot contain themselves and they break everything, and then there are those whose fear and awe of *Hashem* is so great that they don’t even dare to move at all!” (*Kanfei Yona* #47)



An *Esrog* and a Heavenly Promise

Rav Gronim related that there was once a great shortage of *esrogim* for the *Sukkos* holiday, and Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev was without an *esrog*.

He sent emissaries to wait at the crossroads to see if anyone traveling by might perchance have the fruit with him. The emissaries met a Jew who had an *esrog* – but he was not going to Berditchev and he wished to continue traveling. The emissaries asked him to stay in Berditchev for *Sukkos* in order to allow Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev to have the merit and opportunity to pronounce the *berocha* over the *esrog*, but the latter declined, explaining that he had been traveling far and wide for some time and that he now wished to spend the holiday at home with his family. He was unwilling to relent.

As they were trying to persuade him, Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev himself arrived and begged the Jew to stay for *Sukkos* – yet still the Jew refused. Rav Levi Yitzchok said to him, “I promise you that in exchange for staying, you will be with me in my place in Heaven.”

When the stranger heard this promise from the holy *Tzaddik*, he agreed, and he traveled with them to Berditchev to stay for *Sukkos*. He entered an inn and the entire town rejoiced.

Rav Levi Yitzchok sent a proclamation to the innkeepers and throughout Berditchev that no one was to allow the stranger who was a guest to enter any of the *sukkos* to eat! The entire town was ordered to refuse him entry should the man request hospitality. The guest knew nothing of the conspiracy and when he left the *shul* after the *tefillos* and attempted to enter the *sukka* at the inn to make *Kiddush*, he was refused entry.

He began to shout and yell – to no avail. He went to the neighbors and asked their permission to enter their *sukkos* – but they, too, refused him entry. He understood that something was amiss and after questioning them, they admitted that Rav Levi Yitzchok had commanded them to bar his entry.

The guest ran to Rav Levi Yitzchok and asked him, “Why have you repaid me evil for the kindness I did for you?”

Rav Levi Yitzchok answered him, “If you relinquish the promise I made to you to be with me in Heaven I will allow you to enter the *sukka*.”

An inner battle raged within the guest. What should he do? Finally, he decided to forgive Rav Levi Yitzchok his promise as long as the *Rav* would allow him to fulfill the *mitzva*

of *sukka* with joy!

The next day Rav Levi Yitzchok invited the guest to his own personal *sukka* along with the important personages in town and explained his odd behavior. “Now, I once again promise you that you shall be together with me in my portion in Heaven,” said Rav Levi Yitzchok. “I wanted you to withstand this test, so that you should acquire the portion yourself and be worthy of my promise, rather than having received it as a gift!”

Such is the power of the *mitzva* of *sukka*! (*Shemuos VeSippurim* I)



A Broken Pitam and a Broken Heart

Once there was a great shortage of *esrogim* for the *Sukkos* holiday, and only after great exertion and much effort was an *esrog* acquired. One *esrog* for the entire city of Berditchev was brought to Rav Levi Yitzchok. It was understood that all the townspeople would come on the holiday to pronounce the *berocha* on this *esrog*.

The *shamash* said to himself, “Surely first Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev will say the *berocha* over the *esrog*, and after him all the important personages in town, and then afterward everyone else. I myself will be among the last people to hold and say the *berocha* on the *esrog*.”

He came up with an idea: he would wake up extra early and when no one was around, he would be the first to make the *berocha* and no one would be any the wiser! This is what he did. However, since he was in such a state of fear and panic, hurrying to finish his deed without being discovered, he accidentally dropped the *esrog* so that it fell and the *pitam* broke off! The *esrog* was *possul* – unfit for use by anyone!

The *shamash* was heartbroken; because of his misdeed the entire town of Berditchev now had no *esrog* at all! The *shamash* came crying heartrending tears of anguish and despair before the *Tzaddik*, Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev. He was sure that the *Rebbe* would rebuke him, berating him for his misdeed. However, Rav Levi Yitzchok simply used the episode to advocate on behalf of the Jewish people. He turned to *Hashem* and cried out, “*Ribbono Shel Olam* – Master of the World! See what a nation You have! See how they are worried and distressed to fulfill Your *mitzvos*!” (*Shemuos VeSippurim* I, page 249)



Hoshana Rabba

The Munkacszer *Rebbe*, *mechaber* of *Minchas Elozor*, was reciting the *Hoshanos* liturgy during the seventh day of *Sukkos*, known as *Hoshana Rabba*, when he related:

“The *Hoshana* liturgy follows the acrostic of the *alef bais* as it was composed by Rav Eliezer HaKalir (*Tosfos Chagiga* 13) and so, on each and every letter hang myriad spiritual worlds in the balance with infinite *kavonos* on every point.

“In fact, our master, the holy *mechaber* of the *Kedushas Levi* of Berditchev, was once reciting the midnight *tefillos* known as *Tikkun Chatzos*, mourning over the exile of the *shechina*, when he reached the *pasuk*: “And *Hashem Elokim* the Lord of Hosts called out crying and wailing in eulogy”.

“The *Kedushas Levi* cried bitterly and declared, ‘*Ribbono Shel Olam*! You are crying and so to speak You have every reason to cry! However, it is in Your hands to save Yourself!

Why do You not save Yourself! And then You need not cry anymore!”

And this is how the Munkacszer *Rebbe* explained the *pasuk*: “*Hoshana Lema’an’cha Elokeinu* – Please save us for Your sake, our G-d!” As our master, the *Kedushas Levi*, said: ‘You Yourself can save Yourself, and why, *Hashem*, do You not – so to speak – save Yourself speedily?’ (*Ketzas Rishumei Devorim Imros Tehoros – Hoshanos*, pages 1–2)



SIMCHAS TORAH

How Rav Levi Yitzchok Defeated the Yetzer And Left Him at the Amud

Rav Levi Yitzchok’s father-in-law was bursting with pride; the new genius he had secured for a son-in-law had been honored to recite the *pesukim* of *Atah Horeisa*, the prelude to the opening of the *Aron Kodesh* on *Simchas Torah* and the greatest honor that preceded the removal of the *Sifrei Torah* before the dancing would begin.

All eyes were on the young *Torah* scholar and his father-in-law. Rav Levi Yitzchok approached the *amud*, and picked up the *tallis*. However, to the bemusement of the assembled crowd, he paused for a moment of contemplation, and then placed the *tallis* back in its place. After a short while he again picked up the *tallis*, wrapped himself in it and then again uncovered his head and left it on his shoulders.

When he picked up the *tallis* for the third time, his new father-in-law was already red from embarrassment. The young *Tzaddik* seemed to be fighting a silent battle with an unseen opponent. Finally, in a dramatic, loud voice, Rav Levi Yitzchok threw the *tallis* down and called out to no one in particular, “If *you’re* a *Chassid* and a *Tzaddik* and a scholar, then *you* say *Atah Horeisa!*” and so saying, he walked back to his place.

His father-in-law was mortified. The entire *shul* was full of murmurs and head-shaking; clearly the new son-in-law was a bit unsteady and not so “with it” – but did he have to disgrace his father-in-law in public as well?

After *davening*, his father-in-law asked for an explanation of his unusual behavior. Rav Levi Yitzchok explained that as he had approached the *amud*, he had suddenly realized that he was not alone; his *yetzer hora* (evil inclination) was there with him.

“You don’t belong here,” he challenged the *yetzer hora*. “I have been selected to represent the community because I am a *Talmid Chochom*. What legitimacy do you have?”

“If you are a scholar, then I’m a scholar too,” the evil one replied. “Wherever you studied, whichever *Yeshivos* you attended, I was right there with you learning *Torah*; we were even *chavrusas!*”

“But I am a *Chassid*,” Rav Levi Yitzchok answered back. “I have just returned from the *Rebbe*, where I learned to *daven* as a *Yid* with *dveikus*.”

“I too am a *Chassid*. When you traveled to the *Rebbe*, I accompanied you. When you were initiated in the ways of *Chassidus* I was there too. I have every right to join you under that *tallis*.”

“I could not win,” Rav Levi Yitzchok confessed. “He was right. I admitted to myself that I had been living a lie. He and I were like partners in crime. I was almost ready to concede in despair, when I was seized by one last inspiration. With my remaining strength, I turned on my tormentor and cried, ‘If you are a *Chassid* and a scholar as you claim, then you lead the *tefillos*, you say *Atah Horeisa*,’ and I left him at the *amud*.”

Simchas Torah – He is Already There

Once, on *Erev Yom Kippur*, a Jewish innkeeper living near Berditchev was arrested by the *Poritz* – the gentile landowner – for not having paid his rent for a long period of time. He simply did not have the money to pay the rent. Business was poor; he had a large family; and on the day that the rent was due, he simply did not have the money.

In those days, the landowners were very powerful. In their own territories, they ruled like kings. So after waiting several days for his money and issuing a number of warnings, the *Poritz* simply locked up this Jewish innkeeper and his entire family on *Erev Yom Kippur*. He told the Jewish community that unless they presented him with the overdue rent – three hundred rubles, the family would rot away in an underground cell.

One of the greatest *mitzvos* is *pidyon sh’vuyim* (the redemption of captives). And so, one of the *Chassidim* in Berditchev took it upon himself to collect the money to redeem this family. He began collecting. Since it was the day before *Yom Kippur*, the people were especially sensitive and gave generously. But they did not give enough. It is not that they did not want to; just as the innkeeper had not had the money to pay his rent, they also did not have that much to give.

After collecting for several hours, the man had managed to gather less than fifty rubles.

He knew he needed three hundred, and he realized that at this pace he would never get the money before *Yom Kippur* – and might never get the money at all. He decided to take a rasher course of action, and headed to the neighborhood where the freethinking modern Jews lived. These were younger people, who worked with the non-Jewish landlords. They were wealthier, but their concern for their fellow Jews and for Jewish practice was less. Still, it was the day before *Yom Kippur*, and there would be no better time to approach them.

When he reached that neighborhood, he saw a hall filled with many people. There were Jews sitting there gambling, playing cards and drinking. The fact that in a few hours Jews all over the world would be saying *Kol Nidrei* did not appear to interest them.

The *Chassid* saw that the tables were filled with money. On any one of the tables there was enough money to redeem the family. He approached one of the tables and told the people, “Tonight is *Yom Kippur*, the time when *Hashem* forgives everyone. Why not prepare for the day? I have something constructive for you to do with your money. A family is in terrible need. Instead of wasting your money gambling, give it away for a good purpose.”

At first, the people just ignored him. But the *Chassid* was persistent. Finally, one of them told him, “You know what? You’ve put me into the *Yom Kippur* spirit! You see this vodka standing here on the table? It is *finif un ninesiker* (95 percent alcohol – that is 190 proof).”

The man filled an ordinary size drinking glass – not a small shot glass – and told him, “If you drink a glass of this *finif un ninesiker*, we will collect a hundred rubles for your cause from our table alone.”

The reaction of the *Chassid* was, “Are you crazy? How can I drink a glass of vodka that is 190 proof? In a couple of hours, it will be *Kol Nidrei*. After a full glass of this, I will be finished; there is no way I will be able to concentrate on my *tefillos*.”

But then a second thought came to his mind: “If they give me a hundred rubles, I will have a third of the amount I need to save this family. What should I be concerned with? Having a more spiritual *Yom Kippur* myself or doing everything I can to save the family? Who knows how long it will take to collect one hundred rubles any other way?”

And so, he made the decision to drink the glass of vodka. He downed the glass; and the gamblers kept their word and gave him the money. Afterward, his head pounding and spinning, he wobbled over to the next table and spoke to the people there, “You see your friends, they just gave me a hundred rubles to help a poor family. Why do you not do the same?”

The people told him, “You know what? We will do the same, but you will have to do the same, too. If you drink another glass of *finif un ninesiker*, we will also give you a hundred rubles.”

The *Chassid* began to plead with them, “Please – tonight is *Kol Nidrei*. As it is, I am going to be dizzy tonight, but if I drink another glass, I am just going to be out. You are going to give me the money anyway, so why make me do this?”

But the people demanded their entertainment. “Listen, either drink it or goodbye.”

Again the *Chassid* thought, “What is more important: my spiritual experience on *Yom Kippur* or the fact that I can get this family out of the dungeon earlier?”

He did not have to think long. And so he gave them their entertainment and drank the glass of vodka. They gave him the hundred rubles while laughing and jeering at him.

Afterward, quite drunk, he staggered over to a third table and asked them, with his speech a bit garbled, whether they would contribute to the cause. He explained in between hiccups that now he needed less than a hundred rubles. It was just hours before *Yom Kippur*, and they could make it possible for a poor family to spend the holiday outside the deep, dark, underground cell they were incarcerated in.

They were not interested in his explanations, but they were more than happy to continue the fun. So they made him the same offer: one hundred rubles for a glass of *finif un ninesiker*. He did not have to think much at all. Particularly after two glasses of vodka, it was very clear to him: “Forget about a more spiritual *Yom Kippur*; think about the family. With this glass, you can get them out today.”

He drank the third glass and they gave him the hundred rubles. Now he had all the money he needed to get the family out.

He asked the gamblers a favor, “Please, can someone help me get over to the home of this *Poritz* so that I can give him the money?”

The spirit of *Yom Kippur* must have indeed been in the air, for one of the gamblers excused himself from his company and drove the *Chassid* to the landowner’s home in his carriage.

The landowner was not happy to see a drunken Jew at his door, but he was very happy to get his three hundred rubles. After counting the money, he ordered that the family be released. Naturally, they were ecstatic. The innkeeper ran over to the *Chassid* and hugged him, thanking him profusely.

The *Chassid* was not interested in receiving thanks; he did not see anything special in what he had done. He asked the innkeeper one favor. “I will not be able to get to the *shul* by myself. Could you help get me there?”

Needless to say, the innkeeper obliged and brought the *Chassid* to the *shul*. There he lay down on one of the benches in a drunken state. His head pounding, the *shul* spun around and he knew that he would not be able to *daven*, but he wanted at least to sleep in the atmosphere of *Yom Kippur*.

Soon, people started coming to *shul* for *Kol Nidrei*. Everyone took his *Machzor* in hand

and *davened*. As the din of their *tefillos* began to rise, the *Chassid* woke up. He looked up and saw the *Aron Kodesh* open and people taking out *Torah* scrolls.

And so the drunk *Chassid* stood up, moved by the scene, and jumped up from his bench, ran up to the *bima* (the platform on which everyone was standing) and began shouting, “*Atah Horeisa LoDa’as Ki Hashem Hu Ho’Elokim – Eyn Od Milvado,*” the *tefilla* recited before the *Simchas Torah Hakofos*. (Although this is done every year before the *Kol Nidrei tefilla*, the other time each year that the *Torah* scrolls are taken out at night is the celebration of *Simchas Torah*.)

Everyone looked at him and began muttering against him, “What is he doing? Doesn’t he know tonight is *Yom Kippur*? In a few moments we will be reciting *Kol Nidrei*. What kind of joke is he playing? Is he drunk?” They were about to grab him and throw him out of the *shul*.

But the *Rebbe*, Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, turned around and said, “Leave him alone. He has the right to do what he is doing.”

Rav Levi Yitzchok, the *Tzaddik*, knew everything the *Chassid* had gone through. He began to explain to the congregation that the holidays of *Tishrei* follow in sequence. It is no mere coincidence that *Rosh HaShana* is followed by *Yom Kippur*, and then by *Sukkos*, *Shemini Atzeres* and *Simchas Torah*. A spiritual initiative begins on *Rosh HaShana*, continuing and intensifying until it reaches its peak on *Simchas Torah*.

“This person,” he said, pointing to the drunken *Chassid*, “has just displayed tremendous *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice). He sacrificed his own *Yom Kippur* experience to save a Jewish family. But he did not give up *Yom Kippur*; he sprang over it. His self-sacrifice enabled him to bypass all the intermediate levels and reach the level of *Simchas Torah*, the zenith of our *Avodas Hashem* throughout *Tishrei*.”

(Based on the story in *Chassidic Approach to Simcha*)



The anniversary of the *petira* of a *Tzaddik* is known as a *Hilula*, which means “A Day of Joy”.

One of the tools that *Kabbala* teaches is to connect to a *Tzaddik* (righteous person). The method to connect to a *Tzaddik* is to adopt the following ritual:

1) Learn the anniversary of his *petira* or, if this information is not available, the days of *Erev Rosh Chodesh*, *Rosh Chodesh* and the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month can be utilized for a connection.

2) Light a twenty-five-hour candle in his or her honor. There is no specific *berocha*. Some say the following: This candle is being lit in the merit of _____.

Others say that it is the custom within *Klal Yisrael* to light a *yahrzeit* candle on the day that a relative or a *Tzaddik* has passed away. The lighting has no accompanying blessing, and people would like to express themselves in a *tefilla* when lighting the candle. This is not only true on a *yahrzeit* but on every *Yom Tov* as well.

The author of the *Pele Yo’etz*, Rav Eliezer Papo (1785–1828), did in fact compose such a *tefilla*. Rav Papo was the *Rav* of the city of Selestria in Bulgaria. Bulgaria was a part of the Ottoman Empire at the time. The *tefilla* of the *Pele Yo’etz* is reproduced and translated below,

as a public service.

Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

[תפילה הנמצאת בספר אָלף הַמְגוֹן מִבְּעַל הַפֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ עַל פְּרֻשַׁת וַיֵּצֵא עֲמוּד כ"ד]
הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלִיּוֹת נְשָׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק _____
בְּ/בֵת _____, יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים
וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שְׁאַנִּי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל
לְזָכוֹת וְלְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלִיּוֹת לְנַשְׁמוֹת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפִרְט לְנַפְשׁ רּוּחַ וְנַשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /
צַדִּיק _____ . יְהִי רְצוֹן שְׁתֵּהֵינָה נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצְרוּר הַחַיִּים.

Translation:

Behold I am lighting this lamp for the resting and uplifting of the soul of my father/my mother/the *Tzaddik* _____ the son/daughter of _____. May it be Your will before you, *Hashem*, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that all my good deeds whether in thought, speech or action be done for a merit and a resting and an elevation of the souls of your nation Yisrael. It should be especially for the soul of my father/mother/the *Tzaddik* _____. May it be Your will that their souls be bound in the bond of life.

3) Learn about the person including history, culture, writings and teachings.

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

See more at: www.yeshshem.com/hilulah.htm



☞ GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER ☞



YAHREZITS FOR WEEK BEGINNING MOTZAI SHABBOS CHOL HAMO'ED

http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrzeits/Tishrei

Biographical information and yahrzeits compiled by Reb Manny Saltiel and www.anshe.org

* **20th of Tishrei ~ Begins Friday Night (Oct 18th)**

- * **Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel** of Cracow (1596–1663), son of Rav Yaakov Lubliner and the grandson (through his mother) of Rav Meir Katzenellenbogen, (5424/1663);
- * **Rav Boruch Yosef** of Sudlikov. He was the son of Rav Arye Leib of Sudlikov, who was a son-in-law of Rav Dovid *HaLevi* Horowitz, who was a son-in-law of the *Degel Machane Efraim*, (5645/1884);
- * **Rav Eliezer Papo**, *mechaber* of *Pele Yoetz* and *Damesek Eliezer* (1785–1827). Born in Sarajevo, he led the community of Selestria, Bulgaria, and was *niftar* at the early age of forty-one. He is considered the exemplary spokesman of the *Sefardi mussar* tradition of the eighteenth century. He promised in his will: “Whoever comes to my grave in purity after immersing in a *mikve*, and *davens* with a broken heart, I guarantee him that his *tefilla* will be accepted.” As such, his *kever* in Silestria, Bulgaria, is the destination of hundreds of visitors annually. His *talmid muvhok* was Rav Yoshiyohu Pinto. An outstanding Rabbinic scholar, he was deeply devoted to piety and spirituality and authored books on *Halocha*, homiletics and *mussar*, as well as being profoundly committed to *Kabbola*. One of his noted works is *Bais Tefilla*, which is filled with many different *tefillas* for specific situations, including one for the welfare of the Jewish people. Rav Papo’s *Hilula* occurs on *Chol HaMo’ed Sukkos*, and he discusses in his work, *Pele Yoetz*, the importance of *Chol HaMo’ed*. He cites the comment of *Chazal* that whoever disgraces the *Mo’ados* – referring to *Chol HaMo’ed* – forfeits his share in

the World to Come. The *Rav* lamented that many people are unaware of the severity of certain *mitzvos*, such as celebrating *Chol HaMo'ed* – and thus unwittingly lose their share in the next world. He urged Jews to consult a *Rav* to learn what is permissible and what is forbidden. As a result of not consulting a *Rav*, he observed, many people do not even eat, or eat very little, on *Chol HaMo'ed*, whereas *Halocha* requires eating and drinking more festively on *Chol HaMo'ed* than on ordinary weekdays. The *Pele Yoetz* urges all people who are “concerned for their souls” to study from books or from a *Rav* the laws of *Chol HaMo'ed*, so they know which activities are forbidden, and to eat and drink more festively on *Chol HaMo'ed*, to ensure that they do not forfeit their share in the eternal life. More generally, the *Pele Yoetz* adds that a G-d-fearing person will be sure to set aside regular time for *Torah* learning, to avoid denigrating the *Torah*. The *Rav* taught that he who fails to learn *Torah* is called *nozuf* – rejected by *Hashem*, and that this is especially important on *Chol HaMo'ed*, which is a time of judgment. The culmination of this judgment occurs on *Hoshana Rabba*, the final day of *Sukkos*. Therefore, *Rav Papo* taught that throughout *Chol HaMo'ed*, and certainly on *Hoshana Rabba*, we must perform as many *mitzvos* as possible, especially *Torah* study, in our effort to secure a favorable judgment. The *Pele Yoetz* concludes: “This [discussion] suffices for one who has a heart.” In spite of the brevity of his life, *Rav Papo* achieved depth and breadth in his Rabbinic scholarship, and left to posterity a significant literary legacy. His attitude was one of acceptance: whatever happened was for the best, since it was *Hashem's* will. Suffering and adversity were to be received with equanimity; they provided opportunities to demonstrate true faith in *Hashem* and to repent. He also taught that it was wrong to be overly concerned with earning a livelihood. One had to work for a living, not relying on a miracle to sustain him and his family, but income is determined by *Hashem*. If *Hashem* wants someone to be poor, he will be poor no matter how hard he works. And if *Hashem* wants him to be rich, he will be rich even if he does not work hard. We are all obliged to devote some time to making our living but must realize that our level of success is determined by *Hashem*. *Rav Papo* lived and worked in Bucharest as chief *Rav*, physician and philosopher. During the Russian-Turkish War he arrived in Selestria, Bulgaria, where he rescued the local population from a cholera epidemic, creating quarantine “belts” and infirmaries. He then served as *Rav* of the community of Selestria for the rest of his life, and was *niftar* there in 1827 at the age of forty-one. He called for a life of piety and acceptance of *Hashem*, and demanded total allegiance to Rabbinic tradition. He stressed the need to live according to traditional patterns and preferred the traditionalism of Moslem lands to the modernity of Europe. His ultimate focus was not on life in this world, but on the World to Come, (5588/1827);

- * **Rav Yaakov Yosef** *ben* Yehuda Leib (“Reb Yayvi Saba”), *Maggid* of Ostraha, (5552/1791);
- * **Rav Shimon** of Skrenovitz, (5687/1926);
- * **Rav Moshe Yosef Address** (1923–1991). Born to *Rav Yaakov Address*, he learned in the *Porat Yosef Yeshiva* in the Old City during his youth. There he became very close to the *Rosh Yeshiva*, *Rav Ezra Attia*. In 1952, he began to teach in the *Tzofiof shul* in the Bucharian neighborhood of Yerushalayim. On Friday mornings, he always taught *mussar*, mainly from the *sefer Pele Yoetz* (its *mechaber*, *Rav Eliezer Papo*, shares his *Yahrzeit*). These *mussar shiurim* were published later by a *talmid*, under the title *Kochvei Or*. He became *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Porat Yosef*, Yerushalayim. His son, *Rav Yaakov*, became *Rosh Kollel* of *Ma'alos Yosef*, and his son, *Aharon*, heads the various *chessed* projects started by *Rav Yosef*. He was *niftar* on his birthday (19th of *Tishrei*, according to *Yated* 2006), (5752/1991);

* **Rav Avrohom Yissochor England**, the Sosnovtza *Rav/Radziner Rebbe* of *Eretz Yisrael*, (1906–2005). Born in Krimelov to Rav Yeshaya, a grandson (and great-grandson) of the *Shach*, who served as *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* in Mondziuv and Sosnovitz (Sosnovtza). He became the son-in-law of the Radziner *Rebbe*, the *Tiferes Yosef*. When his father-in-law was *niftar*, the *Rebbe*'s son, Rav Shmuel Shlomo, became *Rebbe*. During World War II, he escaped to the forest and joined the partisans; there in the forest, he wore the same clothes for almost two years. After the War, he returned to Sosnovitz, where he served as *Rav* and *Av Bais Din*. In 1948, he moved to Brooklyn, and in 1952, he accepted an invitation to join *Chassidim* of Radzin in *Eretz Yisrael*. He founded Radziner *Botei Medrash* in Bnei Brak, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Yerushalayim, Netanya, Petach Tikva and Holon, and the *Sod Yeshorim Yeshiva* in Yerushalayim. He moved to Crown Heights in 1954, but moved back to Bnei Brak in 1971, (5766/2005).

* **21st of Tishrei ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Oct 19th)**

* **Rav Menachem Mendel** *ben* Rav Eliezer of Premishlan. A *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov* as well as of the *Maggid* of Mezritch, he settled in *Eretz Yisrael* in 1768. The actual year of his *petira* is unknown. However, it was probably before 1777, since a large contingency of *Chassidim* arriving that year apparently found him no longer living. His *Yahrtzeit*'s date, however, is well established. He had a lofty soul and he became the leader of thousands of *Chassidim* in Russia and Lithuania. When he was nine, his father took him to the *Ba'al Shem Tov* for a *berocha*, and later in life he would travel to Mezhibuzh from time to time to see his *Rebbe*. Rav Menachem's unusual abilities were apparent already at the age of nine. He quickly grasped his studies, and soon, there was no *melamed* available to teach him, so his father sent him to a veteran *melamed* known for his brilliance, Rav Dov Ber, the *Maggid* of Mezritch. This *melamed* was lame and endured much suffering, but his teaching abilities were extraordinary and Rav Menachem studied *Torah* with him. Rav Dov Ber loved his young *talmid*. He soon saw how talented he was and he lovingly shared his *Torah* treasures with him. Despite the fact that inwardly Rav Menachem was utterly *botul* and humble, all his acquaintances and teachers knew that he was very particular about how he dressed and how he looked. His clothing was always immaculate and dignified, his hat just so, and his hair arranged carefully. When, as a child, Rav Menachem first arrived at the *Ba'al Shem Tov*'s *Shabbos* celebration later than others, having taken time to dress properly, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* turned to him and when he saw the pure-faced child, his eyes lit up. That *Shabbos* was an uplifting one for the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and his *talmidim*. The boy observed the goings-on. The *Maggid* later went back to the *Ba'al Shem Tov*'s room to say goodbye. He also wanted guidance on how to proceed with his precocious *talmid*. The *Ba'al Shem Tov* said, "I see a boy who is truly lowly in his own eyes," and indicated that there was nothing to worry about. In *Adar* of 5524/1764, Rav Menachem Mendel left for *Eretz Yisrael* with hundreds of followers and their families. En route he passed through Polnoye where he stayed in a local inn, and went to visit Rav Yaakov Yosef, who lived there. Rav Yaakov Yosef had been the one to put the *Ba'al Shem Tov*'s teachings into writing. Said Rav Yaakov Yosef, "In the story, it was hinted that a young man would go along with you whose name goes from one end of the world to the other. Where is he?" A pleased look could be seen on Rav Menachem's face. He turned towards the entourage of *Chassidim* who had accompanied him and pointed to a young man. "This is the young man who is accompanying me. His name is Shneur Zalman..." (5531/1770?);

* **Rav Dovid Moshe Friedman**, the first Chortkover *Rebbe*, the fifth son of Rav Yisrael of

Ruzhin (1828–1903). He moved to Chortkov in 1865 to become *Rav*, a position he kept for over forty years. He is the *mechaber* of *Divrei Dovid*. Upon his *petira*, his son, Rav Yisrael, succeeded him, (5664/1903).

✳ **Rav Yechiel Michel Margoliyos**, *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*;

✳ **Rav Avrohom Shmuel Binyomin Sofer**, the *Cheshev Sofer* [or sometimes called the *Daas Sofer*]. He is a descendant of the *Chasam Sofer*, (5722/1961);

✳ **Rav Yaakov Arye Twersky**, the *Trisker Rebbe*, (5740/1979).

✳ **22nd of Tishrei ~ Begins Sunday Night (Oct 20th)**

✳ **Rav Aharon HaLevi Hurvitz** of Stroschel, primary *talmid* of the *Alter Rebbe* of Lubavitch, *mechaber* of *Avodas HaLevi* and *Sha'ar HaYichud*, (5589/1828);

✳ **Rav Shraga Feivel** of Gritza, (5609/1848);

✳ **Rav Moshe Shmuel Glasner** (1857–1924/5685). Rav Moshe, a great-grandson of the *Chasam Sofer*, was born in Pressburg and later moved with his family to Klausenberg, where his father served as *Rav*. Rav Moshe succeeded his father in that post in 1878 and filled it until 1923, when he settled in Yerushalayim. Rav Moshe's best known work is *Dor Revi'i* on *Maseches Chullin*. His other works include responsa and a *Torah* commentary, (5685/1924);

✳ **Rav Dovid Shapiro** of Sonik-Dinov, (5694/1933);

✳ **Rav Moshe Yaakov HaKohen Revikov (Ribikov)**, *Tzaddik nistar*, the “*sandlar* (shoemaker) of Tel Aviv”, upon whom the Chazon Ish said, “He is the head of the thirty six hidden ones of this generation!” (5727/1966);

✳ **Nadvorna Rebbe** of Petach Tikva, (5763/2002).

✳ **23rd of Tishrei ~ Begins Monday Night (Oct 21st)**

✳ **Rav Dovid Jungreis**, *Av Bais Din* Yerushalayim (1898–1971/5732). Rav Dovid's grandfather was Rav Moshe *HaLevi* Jungreis, a *talmid* of the *Ksav Sofer* and the *Av Bais Din* of Kashoi, while his father was Rav Boruch Reuven Shlomo, the founder of the *Eida HaChareidis*. He married Rebbetzin Miriam Pu'ah, a daughter of Rav Osher Zussman. In 1931, at the age of thirty-three, he was appointed *Dayan* in the *Eida HaChareidis' Bais Din*, joining Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld. His knowledge was so vast, the Satmar *Rav* once said, “If Rav Dovid is here, I don't need any *sefer*.” Rav Dovid's insightful *deroshos* were compiled by his *talmidim* into a *sefer* entitled *Ohr Dovid*. Rav Dovid had no children, (5732/1971);

✳ **Rav Chanoch ben Rav Moshe** of Cordova, one of the four *Shevuyim*, (4761/1000);

✳ **Rav Menachem Mendel** of Linsk, father of Rav Naftoli Tzvi of Ropshitz, (5563/1802).

✳ **24th of Tishrei ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Oct 22nd)**

✳ **Rav Moshe** of Dolina, *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, (5521/1760?);

✳ **Rav Eliyohu Guttmacher**, *Av Bais Din* Greiditz (1796–1874/5635). Born near Posen (Poznan) in eastern Germany (today, Poland), he became, at age nineteen, a *talmid* of Rav Akiva Eiger for four years. Rav Guttmacher published several pamphlets describing his ideas about the Redemption and the return to *Eretz Yisrael*. He also left behind many manuscripts on “traditional” *Torah* subjects, and some of his commentaries are published in the back of the standard Vilna edition of the *Talmud*, (5635/1874);

✳ **Rav Yaakov Yosef HaKohen Katz** of Polnoye (Polnayah, Polonnoye) (5439/1669–5542/1781);

- * **Rav Elchonon Sorotzkin**. Chairman of *Va'ad HaYeshivos* and son of Rav Zalman Sorotzkin (*mechaber* of *Oznayim LaTorah*), (5705/1944);
- * **Rav Avrohom Yehuda Leib ben Pinchas Zelig HaKohen Schwartz**, the *Kol Aryeh*, (5644/1883);
- * **Rav Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz**, the *Ribnitzer Rebbe*. He attended *Kishinev Yeshiva* in the 1920s and sat at the court of Rav Avrohom Mattisyohu of *Sthefanesht* in Romania. After emigrating from Russia in 1973, he lived in *Yerushalayim* and *Monsey*, New York. It is known that from the 1930s until the end of his life he fasted on all days when it is permitted to do so under Jewish Law. He is considered a great *Tzaddik* and *Ba'al Mofes*. He is buried in the *Vizhnitzer Cemetery* in *Monsey*, New York, (5756/1995);
- * **Rav Chaim Shaul Kaufman**, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshiva Tiferes Yaakov* of *Gateshead* (1938–2005). Born in *Berlin* as the youngest of eight children, he came to *Gateshead* in July 1939. He married *Lea Nagel* of *Antwerp*, (5766/2005).

* **25th of Tishrei ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Oct 23rd)**

- * **Rav Levi Yitzchok** of *Berditchev* (1740–1809/5570). At the suggestion of his mentor, *Rebbe Reb Shmelke* of *Nikolsburg*, he traveled to *Mezritch* and became a close *talmid* of the *Maggid* of *Mezritch*. Following posts at *Zelichov* and *Pinsk*, he spent the last twenty-five years of his life in *Berditchev*. His teachings are contained in the posthumously published *Kedushas Levi*. He is traditionally mentioned with his mother's name, *Sora Sosha*, (5570/1809);
- * **Rav Moshe Sofer**, the *Chasam Sofer* of *Pressburg* (1762–1839/5600), who learned under Rav *Nosson Adler* of *Frankfurt* and Rav *Pinchas HaLevi Horowitz*, the *Ba'al Haflo'a* (a *talmid* of the *Maggid* of *Mezritch*). He was born in *Frankfurt-am-Mein*. His first position was as *Rav* in *Boskovitz* in *Moravia*. He married the daughter of the *Rav* of *Prosnitz* and was supported by his brother-in-law, *Rav Hirsch*. Unfortunately, *Rav Hirsch* eventually lost all his money, and the *Chasam Sofer* took a position as *Rav* in the *Moravian* city of *Dresnitz*. After five years in *Dresnitz*, *Rav Moshe* moved to *Mattersdorf*. The *Chasam Sofer* was appointed *Rav* of *Pressburg* in *Tishrei* of 1806, and he occupied that position for thirty-three years. After the *petira* of his first wife, *Rav Moshe* married the daughter of *Rav Akiva Eiger*. She bore the previously childless *Chasam Sofer* three sons and seven daughters, (5600/1839);
- * **Rav Dovid Matisyohu Rabinowitz**, *Biala Rebbe* of *Bnei Brak*, son of the *Chelkas Yehoshua*, *Rav Yechiel Yehoshua* of *Biala*, (5758/1997);
- * **Rav Yehuda Leib**, the *Maggid* of *Ostraha*, a *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, (5526/1765);
- * **Rav Binyomin** of *Zlazitz*, a *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*;
- * **Rav Yom Tov Lipman Helprin** (*Heilprin*), *mechaber* of *Kedushas Yom Tov*, (5555/1794).

* **26th of Tishrei ~ Begins Thursday Night (Oct 24th)**

- * **Rav Aharon** of *Zhitomir*, *mechaber* of *Toldos Aharon*. A *talmid muvhok* of *Rav Levi Yitzchok* of *Berditchev*, he succeeded *Rav Zev Wolf* of *Zhitomir* (the *Ohr HaMeir*) upon the appointment of the *Kedushas Levi*. His *Divrei Torah* were written down by one of his closest *talmidim*, *Rav Levi* of *Zhitomir*, after he heard them, at the end of every *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*, (5577/1816);
- * **Rav Osher** (I) of *Karlin*, the *Stoliner Rebbe* (1760–1828/5589), son of the *Rebbe*, *Rav Aharon HaGodol* of *Karlin*. When his father passed away, he was raised by his successor, *Rav Shlomo Karliner*, who became one of his main influences. *Rav Osher* later settled in *Stolin*, (5589/1828)

[1826, per *Hamodia* 2006];

Rav Yehuda Yudel Rosenberg (1859–1935/5696). Born in Skarashev, a small town near Radomsko, Poland, he served as *Rav* in Tarlow, and at age twenty-five, he was appointed *Av Bais Din*. In 1903, he published *Yodos Nedorim*, a commentary on *Rashi* and *Ran* to *Maseches Nedorim*. In 1905, he published *Sha'arei Zohar Torah*, an attempt to organize the *pesukim* of the *Torah* according to the *Zohar*'s teachings, (5696/1935).



❧ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❧

WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

The *Maharil*, in *Hilchos Taanis*, teaches us that the reason why there is a custom to visit the *Bais hachaim* on a fast is because “this place is the resting place of the *Tzaddikim* and is therefore sanctified, pure and holy and our tefillos are more readily heard, accepted and answered when *davened* on holy ground. When you *daven* there, do not make requests of the dead who are buried there; rather ask *Hashem* to answer you mercifully in their merit. Then circle around the graves and donate charity before reciting tefillos.”

בית הקברות הוא מקום מנוחת הצדיקים ומתוך כך הוא מקום קדוש וטהור התפילה נתקבלה שם יותר, אך אל ישים מגמתו נגד המתים, אך יבקש מהשי"ת שיתן עליו רחמים בזכות הצדיקים שוכני עפר, ויקף הקברות, ויתן צדקה קודם שיאמר התחינות.

The *Zohar* in *VaYeira* page 71 teaches us that if we suffer any calamity or tragedy we have the custom to go and daven at the kevorim of *Tzaddikim*. The reason for this is that we approach them with fasting, remorse and repentance, and we have in mind that the departed souls ask and *daven* for us before *Hashem* on High, as opposed to the prohibition against speaking to the dead which is an idolatrous practice where the idol worshippers sought out the impure dead souls and bodies using sorcery and witchcraft. Instead, beseech our *Tzaddikim* who, in *gan eden*, are truly alive, and ask through *tefilla* and fasting and *teshuva* alone.



❧ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❧

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Eliezer Papo, 20th of Tishrei

The Pele Yoetz

Rav Eliezer Papo was a major exponent of the *mussar* tradition. Born in Sarajevo in 1785, Rav Papo became an outstanding Rabbinic scholar, deeply devoted to piety and spirituality. He authored books of *Halocha*, homiletics, and *mussar*, and was profoundly committed to *Kabbola* as well. Rav Papo served as *Rav* of the community of

Selestria (Bulgaria). He was *niftar* in 1826 at the age of forty-one.

In spite of the brevity of his life, Rav Papo achieved remarkable depth and breadth in his Rabbinic scholarship, and left to posterity a significant literary legacy. It may be said that Rav Papo, in the early nineteenth century, was the exemplary

spokesman of the *Sefardi mussar* tradition of the eighteenth century.

Rav Papo stressed the need for sincere piety and saintliness. He generally felt that Jews should devote themselves to fulfilling *Hashem's* commandments, without worrying too much about the problems of this world. It is the World to Come that has ultimate value; it is that goal to which Jews should direct their lives.

His attitude was one of acceptance: whatever happened was for the best since it was *Hashem's* will. Suffering and adversity were to be received with equanimity; they provided opportunities to demonstrate true faith in *Hashem* and to repent.

Rav Papo taught that it was wrong to be overly concerned with earning a livelihood. To be sure, one had to work for a living, not relying on a miracle to sustain him and his family.

But income is determined by *Hashem*. If *Hashem*



wants someone to be poor, he will be poor no matter how hard he works. And if *Hashem* wants him to be rich, he will be rich even if he does not work hard. We are all obliged to devote some time to making our living but we must realize that our level of success is determined by *Hashem*.

Rav Papo stressed that one must have faith in the words of the Sages, submitting to their authority, and indeed,

practicing intellectual subservience to anyone greater than oneself. It is proper not to speak with definitive certainty, but to be open to the possibility that others may have more understanding of truth.

Rav Papo advocated a tradition-bound, static Judaism. He called for a life of piety and acceptance of *Hashem*. He demanded total allegiance to Rabbinic tradition, stressed the need to live according to traditional patterns and preferred the traditionalism of Moslem lands to the modernity of Europe. His ultimate focus was not on life in this world, but on the World to Come.

www.ou.org/judaism-101/bios/leaders-in-the-diaspora/rabbi-eliezer-papo-pele-yoetz



Rav Papo writes that if someone goes to the Mikva and comes to his kever to daven and he prays with a broken heart, he will intercede of his behalf in Heaven.

HaGaon Rav Yaakov Chaim Sofer points out that the Sefer Pele Yoetz is unique among the mussar seforim.

Most Mussar Sefarim either speak sharply or they softly encourage the reader to better his ways. Depending on one's spiritual makeup (Din or Chesed), he leans towards the Mussar that speaks to him more. Usually, one who leans toward one type of Mussar doesn't see much help from the other type. Sefer Pele Yoetz is unique in that it speaks to both kinds of people.

In fact, the Steipler would urge young bachurim to learn Sefer Pele Yoetz.



Rav Yaakov Yosef HaKohen Katz of Polnoye, 24th of Tishrei

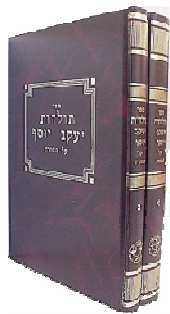
Mechaber of Toldos Yaakov Yosef

Rav Yaakov Yosef, the foremost *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, and one of the earliest champions of the *Chassidic* movement, was a descendant of the

Mekubol, Rav Shimshon of Ostropole, and Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller, *mechaber* of *Tosefos Yom Tov*, the famed commentary to the *Mishna*. His unique approach to

Chassidus combines his ancestors' field of expertise, blending scholarship in both *Kabbola* and *Halocha*.

While still a young man, Yaakov Yosef was appointed *Rav* of Sharogrod. Although he sharply opposed the budding *Chassidic* movement at that time, on one occasion he met the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and was closeted with him for several hours; he then emerged as an admirer of the new movement, becoming one of its leading proponents. His congregants, who disapproved of his change of heart, forced him to leave his post. He served as *Rav* of Rashkov and of Nemirov, and then in 1770 he became the *Rav* of Polnoye. He was revered for his unsurpassed piety and his dedication to *Torah* study.



Although the *Ba'al Shem's* closest *talmid*, he was not chosen to succeed the master upon his *petira*; the dynamic *Maggid* of Mezritch was chosen. Rav Yaakov Yosef's work, *Toldos Yaakov Yosef*, is a highly intellectual exposition of *Chassidic* philosophy; it occupies a preeminent place in *Chassidic* literature, and can be found on the shelf of every *Chassidic Bais Medrash*. It was the first book to be published by *Chassidim*. The *mechaber* weaves together kabbalistic and profound philosophical concepts, combining them with *Halachic* themes and organizing his material according to the weekly *Torah* portions. He quotes his mentor, the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, more than 280 times. This book was praised by many *Chassidic* giants. Rav Pinchas of Koretz called it "*Torah* from Gan Eden (Garden of Eden)".

He also authored *Ben Poras Yosef*, *Tzofnas Paane'ach* and *Kesones Passim*.

Rav Yaakov Yosef was older than the *Ba'al Shem Tov* (1698–1760), and while his

exact year of birth is unknown, it is believed that he lived more than 110 years. *Chassidim* refer to this giant of the spirit simply as "the *Toldos*". He left behind one righteous son, Rav Avrohom Shimshon, and one righteous daughter.



The Floating Bed

"Every word, every letter in this book, *Toldos Yaakov Yosef*, is precious," Rav Yayvi, the *Maggid* of Ostraha told his son, Getzel. "There is just one passage whose meaning eludes me." Rav Yayvi turned again to the obtuse section and pored over it for a long time but could not fathom its meaning.

"Come, Getzel," he announced to his son. "We are going to Rav Yaakov Yosef himself for an explanation." After many hours of travel, the carriage finally stopped in front of Rav Yaakov Yosef's house. They found Rav Yaakov Yosef lying in bed. It was several days before he would die.

"I have come to you for *Torah* knowledge. I bought your precious book and enjoyed it thoroughly, studying it closely from cover to cover. There was one passage, however, which I could not understand. I have come here to ask you for an explanation."

Rav Yaakov Yosef motioned to the bookcase where his volume stood among other books. "Bring it here and show me exactly which passage you are referring to."

The visitor did as he was told. As soon as he opened the book, it fell to the particular paragraph in question. He handed it to the man in the bed.

"Here, it says, 'I heard from my *Rebbe*, the *Ba'al Shem Tov*...'"

As soon as he began explaining, Rav Yaakov's face began to glow with an unearthly aura; his body appeared like a burning torch. The very bed he lay on rose in the air and hovered, surrounded by a pillar of fire!

“When he finished his explanation,” Rav Getzel would tell over many times in the years to come, “everything returned to normal. The fire disappeared and the bed rested once more on the floor with its occupant, an exhausted old man.”

“It is a sight I will never forget all my days,” Rav Getzel would say, swearing by his beard that it was all true. (*Sifrei Kodesh*)

May the merit of the *Tzaddik*, Rav Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye, protect us all, *Amen*.

www.dailyzohar.com



His Praises

Our Master, the Holy *Maggid* of Mezritch, often spoke about Rav Yaakov Yosef, praising his lofty spiritual levels and saying that Eliyohu *HaNovi* would reveal himself to the *Toldos*.

Rav Boruch of Mezhibuzh also lavished the *Toldos* with praise and related: “My grandfather, the holy *Ba'al Shem Tov*, saw that the angelic *Maggid* who studied with the *Toldos* was not from the realm of truth and he himself brought him a true *Maggid* with whom he then studied.”

Once when Rav Boruch was reciting the passage from the *Zohar Brich Shmeih*, which we recite when opening the Holy Ark, he recited the passage: “May I myself be counted among the *Tzaddikim*,” and then he mentioned specifically the holy *Rav* of Polnoye.

Once the Rebbe Reb Zusha of Hanipoli came to Zilkovi and stood in the local *shul* and *davened* in a certain spot. He felt that his *tefillos* were especially pure and refined, more so than usual, on a level as lofty as that of the holy *Ba'al Shem Tov* himself! He could not determine the reason for these feelings. However, the congregants had a simple explanation: “This is the spot that the *Toldos* once *davened* in!”

His Devotion

Though the *Toldos* often mentions teachings from his esteemed master and teacher, the holy *Ba'al Shem Tov*, sometimes his awe of the master and his holy lofty teachings was so great that we find he says things like “I received this mouth to mouth directly from my master and it cannot be written and explained in a book!” and based on the *pasuk* in *Mishlei* 25:2 “The honor and glory of *Hashem* is to hide matters.”

His manner of *davening* was full of intense and fiery devotion – so much so that his entire body shook and his flesh trembled! In fact he would often say about himself: “I find it easier to say ten novel interpretations of *Talmudic* hairsplitting logic than to *daven* just one time!”

He explained his enthusiasm’s need with a parable: “Once a smith taught his young apprentice how to use the forge and the skills of working metal, but the young man was unable to begin since he forgot to teach him the basics; he lacked that one essential ingredient – he forgot to demonstrate to the apprentice how to kindle the fiery coals!”

Similarly in service of *Hashem*, a *tefilla* infused with fiery enthusiasm and life causes the inner fire to combust and burst into flame.” This was true regarding his manner of studying and all holy acts – it was all done with energy, accompanied by loud noise and excited enthusiasm.



His Heritage and Yichus

A scion of great Rabbinic leaders, he was descended from such famous *Rabbonim* as Rav Shimshon of Ostropole; Rav Yosef Katz, *mechaber* of *Yesod Yosef*; and the *Tosefos Yom Tov*, Rav Yom Tov Lipman.



The Inheritance He Left Behind

Though the *Toldos* did not succeed his master as the next leader of the *Chassidic* movement (that was left to Rav Dov Ber, the *Maggid* of Mezritch), and no dynasty was founded after him, he left several important *seforim* and a number of *talmidim* as a spiritual inheritance to us.

Among his *talmidim* we find Rav Leib of Shpole; Rav Gedalia of Linitz, *mechaber* of *Teshuos Chen* on the *Torah*; and the famous Rav Yaakov Shimshon of Shpitevka.

(*LaYesharim Tehilla – Yosef Daas* page 15-17).



Samples of Some of His Pure and Holy Sayings

Attached in Dveikus

Toldos Yaakov Yosef (Bechukosai 2, Naso 12, Naso 17)

A parable: The king's son was lost and strayed from his father. He could not be brought back until one of the ministers removed his royal clothing and donned the simple clothing of a peasant. Then he was able to become friendly with and come close to the king's wayward son, who had likewise become a lowlife.



Toldos Yaakov Yosef (Naso 17)

A person has ups and downs in his life. Before he falls, he must attach himself with rapture and *dveikus* to *Hashem* so that if he falls, he can elevate himself again from those fallen spiritual levels and at the same time elevate the sparks of others who have fallen. Thus every generation has its leader, and when he dons the lowly clothing of his generation, he attaches himself to them. This occurs through sin, that he is able to have some connection with them, and then, when he repents, he can bring them all back with him to his previous level. Just as one who descends into the pit first ties himself with a rope, so

the *Tzaddik* attaches himself to the Creator before descending to the level of his generation. Thus we say, “Yaakov *chevel nachalosso* – Yaakov's inheritance is like a rope” (*Devorim* 32:9): grasp this rope, which is bound to the Holy One Himself.

Note: See also *Zohar* I:83a, 140b. The *Zohar* explains this idea with a parable: What is this compared to? It is like a man who wished to descend into a deep pit, but was afraid that he would not be able to ascend afterward and come back out. What did he do? He tied a knot in a rope outside the pit. He said, “Now that I tied this knot I can climb out with this rope.” Similarly, when Avrohom was about to descend into Egypt, he first bound himself to his faith so that he could later come out.



Faith:

By doing a *mitzva* with full faith and with attachment to *Hashem* through *dveikus* and with delight, this *mitzva* then incorporates within it all 248 positive and 365 negative commandments. This is as our Sages taught (*Makkos* 24a): “Chavakuk came and established all the *mitzvos* on one principle: ‘A righteous *Tzaddik* will live by faith.’ (Chavakuk 2:4)

(*Toldos, Parshas Chayei Sora*).

Just as the heart gives life to all the limbs of the body, so is the commandment of faith the source and root of all the 248 positive commandments. This is an aspect of the positive commandment of “*Anochi – I am Hashem your G-d*” (*Shemos* 20:2), which is the source of them all. And faith is also love, which is the root of all things. When a *mitzva* contains both faith and love together a person who fulfills it merits life in the next world as the *Rambam* writes in his commentary to the *Mishna* (end of *Makkos*).

(*Toldos Parshas Yisro*)

Love of Hashem:

Love is drawn by none other than faith, which is a form of attachment and *dveikus* to *Hashem*. And when one does even one *mitzva* with both elements of love and faith, he is then attached to the root of all faith and it is as if he fulfilled all 613 commandments. This is because the *Torah* and its commandments all emanated from *Hashem's* very essence, which is true unity and therefore by fulfilling one *mitzva* completely and with love, which is *dveikus*, this *mitzva* captures through this unifying factor all the others.

It is therefore as if he has fulfilled all the *mitzvos*, which are the whole of His unity and are one complete *partzuf*, so to speak.

(A *partzuf* is a *Kabbalistic* construct in the system of the *Arizal* whereby the *sefiros* or attributes of the divine form complete sets of ten.)

(*Toldos Parshas Yisro*)

What is most difficult regarding the commandment to love *Hashem* is the fact that we are commanded to do what at first glance seems to be something contrary to man's ability. (That is we are being asked to feel an emotion which we would normally classify as almost involuntary. To rephrase the question, how can we be forced to feel love?)

However, the truth is that through attachment and connection to the *Torah* and the path of *Hashem*, his heart will fill with love for *Hashem* on its own. This is also true regarding joy, (another emotion with regard to which we could ask the same question) he will then rejoice in loving *Hashem* etc.

(*Toldos Parshas Shelach*)

Love of Am Yisrael:

“Love your fellow as yourself” (*Vayikra* 19:18). All Jews are rooted together in unity. Therefore, one should

never push away another Jew with two hands, rather etc. (the left pushes aside while the right hand draws near).

Because if one pushes away his fellow, he is in effect pushing himself away, since he is pushing away a portion of that unity and it is as if he is pushing the entire unified whole.

(*Toldos Parshas Chayei Sora*)

The Heavenly Voice

The *Mishna* in *Avos* (6:2) tells us of a heavenly voice called a *bas kol*, which calls out to us on a daily basis to repent and return to *Hashem*. The *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* writes that his master and teacher, the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, asked, “What point is there in a daily heavenly voice that no one hears?!”

He answered that on high, where the heavenly voice originates, there are no words and there is no speech; there is only the spiritual realm known as *Olam HaMachshova* — the universe of pure thought. Therefore, any thoughts a person has of repentance, any urges to return to *Hashem* and His path, those thoughts and feelings are not his own. Rather, that is the sound of the heavenly voice. Through our thoughts of repentance, we do truly hear the *bas kol*. (*Kesser Shem Tov*).

Against Excessive Fasting

Quoting from a letter that the *Ba'al Shem Tov* had written to him, Rav Yaakov Yosef wrote: “Do not overly engage in fasts and self-mortification. Such practices lead to depression or anger. But the reason you should especially refrain from these practices is because, rather than improving your *avoda*, they prevent you from studying *Torah* and serving *Hashem* properly.” (*Ben Poras Yosef*).



The Uninvited Guests for the Seder Night

A young couple had recently married in some obscure township in the district of Vilna, and the bride began to observe some strange behavior in her husband. He would rise at midnight and recite the *Tikkun Chatzos* – the midnight *tefilla* lamenting the exile; at daybreak each day he would immerse himself in the *mikve*; and he kept reading a certain book which he kept hidden under his pillow.

The young girl told her father, who went and took the hidden *sefer* from beneath the pillow. He opened the book and his entire world went black – the *sefer* was the *Toldos Yaakov Yosef*, whose *mechaber* was known as one of the leaders of the “Sect” – Rav Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye! His own son-in-law had become ensnared by the dreaded cult of *Chassidim*!

When he next saw his son-in-law, he spewed forth his anger and fury over his son-in-law’s head, pouring a torrent of oaths and admonishments on him. When he saw that this had no effect at all, he changed his approach, and attempted instead to use some gentle persuasion to try to turn him away from the evil path he had chosen. But to no avail – he saw that it was no use arguing and cajoling and instead he decided to demand that he divorce his daughter and give her a *get*. The young *chosson* refused to do either; he was bound to the *Chassidic* movement with all his soul, and he did not want to divorce his wife.

His father-in-law saw the situation was hopeless, so he turned and poured out his woes to his fellow townsmen for help and advice as to how to rid himself of this son-in-law. This threw the little town into turmoil, some held that all forms of pressure should be applied to force the young man to divorce his wife while others pointed out that a divorce issued under duress was invalid and that the poor bride would find herself in the middle of a labyrinth of Rabbinic responsa to decide if her *get* was kosher. The only way in their

opinion was to offer the husband large sums of money so that he would agree to give the divorce on his own free will.

The entire town became a cauldron of boiling and heated arguments until the episode eventually reached the ears of the *poritz*, the noble gentile ruler and landowner who ruled that region. This *poritz* was an old colonel. And when he heard that the whole uproar began with a book, he asked who its *mechaber* was.

He was told that it was an individual who had misled his fellow Jews from the true path of the *Torah*; and that his name was Yaakov Yosef the *Kohen*, from the town of Polnoye.

Upon hearing this, the *poritz* asked to see the book. He himself looked at the title page and saw the name of the book and its *mechaber* printed in Russian at the bottom. He commanded that the young man, his wife and his father-in-law, as well as all their friends and relatives be brought before him. When all the parties had arrived, the *poritz* spoke:

“The time has now come to relate an incident which happened to me in my youth. Listen carefully please, and hear me out.

“Many years ago, when I was serving as a Polkovnik (полко вник or colonel), I was encamped one winter with my unit near Polnoye. We received the order to move the camp. The procedure for such occasions was a full lineup at daybreak during which the men were given their orders.

“At roll call, three soldiers were found to be missing. So I ordered some other soldiers to go to nearby Polnoye to locate them and bring them back. After a little while they returned, but with the strangest report. They had located all three soldiers together in one house that was lit by candlelight. At the head of the table sat an old man of impressive appearance. The three missing soldiers were standing there,

speechless and dumb, frozen and unable to move neither hand nor foot, as if paralyzed. I didn't believe such a strange story, so I sent off a different group of soldiers to verify the first report. But they returned with the same story.

"I decided to go there myself. I took a few soldiers with me, and when I entered and saw the old man looking like an angel from heaven sitting at the table in deep meditation, I felt deep inside me fear, trembling and awe. And I saw the missing soldiers, standing there deaf and dumbstruck, as if nailed to the floor.

"I finally mustered up enough courage to dare to disturb his holy thoughts, and said, 'I see, sir, that you are a holy man. My soldiers here have to leave this place today together with the whole battalion. So could your honor please do something so that we will be able to move and walk out of here?'

"The old man answered, 'No doubt they have stolen something. If you remove the stolen objects from their pockets they will be able to leave.'

"Immediately we began searching their pockets, and found that they were full of all manner of silver vessels and objects. As soon as we removed them from their pockets, two of the men walked normally and left, but the third remained frozen and paralyzed, unable to move. His friends said, 'He must have something hidden in his boot.' And so it was. We discovered a small silver cup, hidden in his boot. We removed it and he too was able to move once more and he left."

How did this all happen? It was the first night of *Pesach*. When the *Seder* was over the family had all gone to sleep, leaving the head of the house, Rav Yaakov Yosef himself, sitting at the table all night in holy meditation. The door of the house had been left open, for this night is *leil shimurim*, a night guarded against all harmful beings. The three soldiers had

passed by, and seeing through the windows that everyone was asleep, and the front door ajar, had simply walked in and began stuffing their pockets with leftovers and *matza* from the table. Then they began stealing all the silver utensils which had been placed on the table in honor of the *Seder*. As soon as they had perpetrated their crimes they discovered that they could not move to leave, until the colonel released them.

"Now when I saw this wondrous thing," continued the *poritz*, "I asked the holy *Rav* to bless me twice. First with children, for I was childless back then; and second, with a long life. He agreed, and blessed me. Then I asked him to tell me when my end of days would be.

"The end of man's life is a secret matter that cannot be revealed,' he said. 'But you should know that just before the end of your life an episode will present itself to you when you publicize my name among those Jews who do not know me.' The *Rav's* blessings were fulfilled. G-d blessed me with children, and as you see for yourselves, I have lived till old age.

"Now tell me," concluded the *poritz*, "is there anyone among you who would still speak a word against a holy man like that? No one here should see it as a sin that this young man should study a book written by such a holy man of G-d! I am now ordering you that you make peace between yourselves at once – and let no one here dare lay a hand on this young man!"

All those present were electrified by the old *poritz's* tale and they all promised to follow his instructions and to stop bickering and live in peace.

"It is now clear," added the old *poritz*, "that the end of my life is near, for the last words of the holy man have been fulfilled. However, I am very pleased that I have been able to bring peace between you, thanks to the name of the holy *Rav* who is now in Gan Eden." And indeed, a few

months later the old *poritz* passed away.
(*Sippurei Chassidim Al Ha'Moadim* #310)



Buying the Toldos to Save Berditchev

Rav Chaim Elozor Shapira of Munkasz, *mechaber* of *Minchas Elozor*, told the following story:

When Rav Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye printed his holy *sefer*, the *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* on the *Torah*, he traveled to Berditchev on the day of the trade fair. He brought with him two hundred copies to sell.

He rented a storefront and placed a copy or two of his book open in the window to display it to passersby who might be interested in purchasing it. He was sure without a doubt that anyone who read just a few lines and saw what he had written would run to snatch up a copy.

However, when some interested potential buyers asked him the price of a volume and the *Toldos* answered them that the price was a *rendil* (a very valuable gold coin worth hundreds of dollars), they laughed and went on their way, saying, "For a whole *rendil* we can buy a new wardrobe and shoes to match!"

Days passed with no sales and the fair was drawing to a close. The *Toldos* was despondent and began to feel very disappointed.

Somehow, word got to the Berditchever and the *Kedushas Levi* knew the entire story. He told his faithful *Rebbetzin* the entire story. "Our dear friend, Rav Yaakov Yosef, has come here to Berditchev to sell his new *sefer* at the fair. His asking price is too high and I am afraid that in his anger and disappointment at his situation the entire city will be punished as a result."

Based on her husband's sage advice the *Rebbetzin* decided to sacrifice one of her prized possessions.

She quickly hurried off and went to

pawn her *shterntichel* (a beautiful crown of silver or gold and diamonds) for the sum of two hundred *rendils*. She handed the entire sum of money to the Berditchever so that he could purchase all the *seforim* and save the town from the impending tragedy.

The holy Berditchever took a young man as his emissary and gave him the entire sum, a small fortune and asked him to try and bargain with the *Toldos*. "Ask him to give you a discount if you buy forty or fifty books," explained the Berditchever. He hoped thereby to make the sale seem authentic so that the *Toldos* would not suspect a thing.

However, when he approached the *Toldos*, the latter would not budge a cent from his asking price. No matter how the young man haggled and tried to wheel and deal, the *Toldos* stubbornly replied, "Even if you were to take the entire lot of two hundred books, I will not lower the price by even a *kopeck*."

Finally, the young man purchased all two hundred *seforim* for the entire sum. Afterward, the *Toldos*, having finished his business, decided to visit the *Rav* of Berditchev before taking his leave of the city.

When he came to visit the Berditchever, he excused himself for not having visited sooner, since he had been busy with the *mitzva* of selling his *seforim*.

The *Toldos* then recounted to him the entire story of how pained he had been that at first no one bought any of his *seforim*. "However," concluded the *Toldos*, "finally *Hashem* sent me a young man with a good head on his shoulders, who really appreciated my *sefer* and valued it so much that he bought all two hundred copies for the price I asked!"

The Berditchever listened and smiled, "Really – you don't say!" was all he remarked at the wondrous tale.

(*Otzar HaSippurim* Vol. IV #15 p.29-31, *Chodesh BeChodsho Munkasz Nisan* 5757 Volume 37 page 52)

Rav Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz, 24th of Tishrei

The Ribnitzer Rebbe

Rav Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz, the Ribnitzer *Rebbe*, was born in the mid 1890s in the town of Barashan, Romania. By 1973, when he left Russia, he was one of the last *Rebbses*. After leaving Russia, he settled in *Eretz Yisrael*, where he lived in the Sanhedria section of Yerushalayim. A number of years later he moved to the United States, where he lived in Miami, Los Angeles and Brooklyn, before eventually settling in Monsey, New York.

While in the USSR, the Ribnitzer *Rebbe* lived as a pious, Heaven-fearing Jew and inspirational leader, as if the Communists and Stalin did not exist. He did not forgo anything, not even immersing daily in the waters of the *mikve*, which often involved chopping ice on a frozen river, or *davening* with a *minyán*. He continued to spread *Torah*, to perform circumcisions and kosher slaughtering, and to encourage Jews to send their children to underground *Torah* schools. He was interrogated, jailed and even placed in front of a firing squad, but he always seemed to miraculously escape and return to his “counterrevolutionary” activities.

From the 1930s until the end of his life, the Ribnitzer *Rebbe* fasted on all days when it is permitted to do so under Jewish law.

As a *mohel* (circumciser), the Ribnitzer *Rebbe* performed thousands of circumcisions on Jewish children under the Communist regime. As one of the only *mohelim* who was not intimidated by the government, he would travel all over the country in order to bring another Jewish child into the covenant of Avrohom *Avinu*.



Rav Mendel Futerfas, a distinguished Lubavitcher *Chassid* [a survivor of fourteen years of Siberian exile, a maintainer of the *Chabad* underground *Torah* school network in those days, and himself the hero of many extraordinary *Chassidic* stories], related that the Ribnitzer was once approached by the wife of a Russian general, who wished the *Rebbe* to come clandestinely and circumcise her son. Her husband, a sworn Communist, obstinately refused to allow the child to be circumcised, lest his career in the army be jeopardized.



During World War II, when her husband was called to the front, she sent a message asking the *Rebbe* to come.

“I accompanied the *Rebbe* on the trip as *sandak*,” Rav Mendel related, “and when we arrived at the house we were whisked into the cellar, where the child was ready and waiting. The *Rebbe* performed the procedure, but the child began bleeding profusely. Neither salve nor medicine was able to stop the bleeding.

“The child began to turn yellow and shudder. Upon seeing this, the mother became hysterical and began screaming, ‘Is this the reward I get for my sacrifice bringing my son to be entered into the covenant of our patriarch Avrohom?’ The baby lost consciousness, whereupon the horrified mother also lost consciousness.

“I was terrified,” Rav Mendel went on. “We could have been killed if something happened to this child, and even worse, imagine the *chillul Hashem*, the

disgrace of *Hashem's* name in the world, that would have come about if the child died while undergoing *bris mila!*

“I looked at the Ribnitzer *Rebbe's* face at that moment, and it seemed to be aflame. His head was thrown back and his hands were raised to the Heavens in intense tefilla. As he said the words *bedomayich chayi* – ‘By your blood shall you live,’ the child, who had been completely still and showed no signs of life, awoke, and his bleeding stopped!

“I could not believe my eyes and exclaimed, ‘The *Rebbe* is performing miracles!’ Turning to me, the *Rebbe* responded calmly, ‘Eliyohu *HaNovi*, who is also the *Maloch* present at every

circumcision, is here – this took place under his jurisdiction.”

[Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from an article in Hamodia (Magazine Section) by Avrohom Birnbaum, Wikipedia, and oral transmissions from elder *Chassidim*.]



Sanegoran Shel Yisrael

Rav Levi Yitzchok Derbarmdiger of Berditchev, 25th of Tishrei

Mechaber of the Kedushas Levi

The Passing of the Berditchever

There is a tradition from the *Maggid* of Petriva and Rav Yisrael of Vizhnitz that Rav Levi Yitzchok passed away right after *Sukkos*. They related that the Berditchever grew weak after *Yom Kippur*, and his condition was life-threatening. He *davened* that he might live a little longer so that he would merit to fulfill the *mitzva* of waving the four species, which he yearned and waited for all year long. His *tefillos* were answered and he lived until *Isru Chag* (the day after *Sukkos*). He passed away on the night of the twenty-fifth of *Tishrei*.

When news spread of his passing, one of the *Chassidim* of Rav Boruch of Mezhibuzh rushed to tell his *Rebbe*. Rav Boruch was known to criticize Rav Levi Yitzchok's ways, and the *Chassid* thought he was bringing “good” news. Instead, Rav Boruch practically fainted and began to cry and wail in distress.

He admonished the harbinger of

such terrible news. “Don't think that when I spoke against Rav Levi Yitzchok I did so in order to diminish his stature or blemish his honor! Rav Levi Yitzchok rose to the loftiest levels, to the highest spiritual realms above that of even the ministering angels, and I was afraid they would harm him in their jealousy. Therefore I used trickery and guile to hide my intentions and pretended to belittle and mock his holy ways to silence their jealous accusations.”

When Rav Nachman of Breslov talked about the passing of Rav Levi Yitzchok, he said, “Even the average individual should feel the loss of a *Tzaddik* such as Rav Levi Yitzchok. Everyone now feels that there is something lacking in the world. There is a depressed mood everywhere. One might feel it in his business, which no longer runs as smoothly as before. Another might feel it in his bones, which somehow seem displaced. If your eyes are truly open, you will see that

the world has become dark, for a great light has been extinguished in the world. A great candle's light has been snuffed out and the world has filled with a great darkness."

"The Berditchever said before he passed away that when he arrived in the next world he would not rest nor give any other *Tzaddik* respite until he succeeded in bringing *Moshiach*." Thus spoke Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel of Apta and Mezhibuzh on the day he left this world. Before he passed away, the Apter Rav cried and wailed about our bitter exile. Why does *Moshiach ben Yishai* tarry so long? That is when he mentioned the Berditchever's promise. "However," he concluded, "when he ascended on high, they showed him such lofty spiritual levels and engaged him in such magnificent supernal chambers that he grew distracted and forgot his mission.

"I, however, will not forget!"

Sources:

Toldos Kedushas Levi (Munkacz) 8:103;
see also *Sichos HaRan* 196.

Toldos Kedushas Levi (Munkacz) 8:108;
Eser Oros 3:22.

Toldos Kedushas Levi (Munkacz) 8:105;
see also *Sichos HaRan* 196.

Otzar HaSippurim, vol. 18, p. 25.



Once, the holy brothers, Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk and Rebbe Reb Zusha of Hanipoli, arrived in the town of Ritshival where, at the time, Rav Levi Yitzchok, *mechaber* of the *Kedushas Levi*, was serving as *Rav*. He was still a young *avreich* at the time and this was his first position, though later he would be famous as the *Rav* of Berditchev.

It was late at night and all the streets of Ritshival were dark. The only house that had any light emanating from it was Rav Levi Yitzchok's, since he was up late studying *Torah* by candlelight. They knocked on the door and even at such a late hour the *Rav* was happy to receive them

and graciously welcomed his unexpected guests. He set about fulfilling the *mitzva* of *hachnossas orchim*, setting up their beds for the night. When he finished they laid themselves down to sleep.

As they laid down, the Berditchever continued his studies and devotions while they asked one another, "Who is this *Rebbel'eh* to whom Eliyohu *HaNovi* makes a regular appearance?" Rav Levi Yitzchok heard them speaking about him and understood that their pauper's dress was but a ruse and that these were no simple travelers if they could discern such a thing.

He turned to the two brothers and said, "Are you not the well-known brothers who are wandering in self-imposed exile from town to town and city to city across the land?"

"Yes," they admitted.

"Do you know how to learn?" he asked.

"Yes," they answered. "What about the hidden secrets of the *Torah* – can you study that as well?" he asked.

"Yes," answered the brothers.

"And what about the *kavonos*, the *Kabbalistic* and divine secrets of the *Birkas HaMozon* – the Grace After Meals?" he asked further.

"Yes, we know that as well," answered the brothers.

"Then please teach them to me!" asked Rav Levi Yitzchok. The two guests were unable to refuse their honorable host's request and they explained the *kavonos* to him. Then, the Berditchever himself repeated these very same *kavonos*, except that he said them with vitality and with a certain special sanctity and holiness that made his words simply shine! The two guests were very taken with the way their host spoke, since they had never before heard such a recitation in such a way! When he finished he told them, "This is nothing; if you really wish to hear more, things such as you have never heard or

dreamed of, let your legs take you on a journey to Mezritch, where the great *Maggid* lives and your souls will be enlivened!”

The holy brothers, who understood the hidden secrets he had demonstrated and who had seen with their very own eyes how Eliyohu *HaNovi*'s presence here was a common occurrence, later traveled to Mezritch and became *talmidim* of the great *Maggid*, the holy *Ba'al Shem Tov*'s successor.

(Sippurei Tzaddikim HaAchim Al HaKedoshim Rebbe Elimelech MiLizhensk veRebbe Zusha MeHanipoli – Brooklyn tav shin mem gimmel)



Praying for your enemies

Before he became the Berditchever *Rav*, Rav Levi Yitzchok was harassed constantly because of his *Chassidic* tendencies.

[In fact, due to his relentless harassments – the *Chevraya Kaddisha*, consisting of the ten top *talmidim* of the Mezritcher *Maggid*, put the *Misnagdim* in *cheirim* (excommunication). As soon as they uttered their *cheirem*, the *Maggid* stepped into the room and berated them for what they had done. He said that due to the *cheirem* they had pronounced, they would lose their 'head' that year (meaning the *Maggid* would pass away); however, they did gain that *Chassidus* would overtake the *Misnagdim*].

Once, right before *Shabbos*, he was literally chased out of the town. Then, the townspeople took his *Rebbetzin* and his family and deposited them on a wagon full of animal dung and sent them on their way.

His *Chassidim* and *talmidim* were furious at this outright indignity. They ran to all of Rav Levi Yitzchok's contemporary *Tzaddikim* in order request that they ask *Hashem* to punish these townspeople for their dastardly and unforgivable

transgression.

However, they all replied that when they went to *daven*, they saw that Rav Levi Yitzchok was already there, beseeching *Hashem* to forgive them and not to let any harm come to these townspeople.



Lamenting the destruction of the Bais HaMikdosh

Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev once spent the night at a small, unassuming Jewish inn somewhere in Poland. As was his custom, he awoke at midnight to recite *Tikkun Chatzos*, the midnight lamentations for the destruction of the *Bais Hamikdosh*.

When the innkeeper heard someone crying in the middle of the night, he jumped out of bed to investigate. He was shocked to find the famous *Chassidic Rav*, Rav Levi Yitzchok, sitting on the floor, sobbing hysterically. “*Rebbe*,” he interrupted him, “what happened? Why are you crying?”

Rav Levi Yitzchok told the innkeeper that he was crying over the destruction of the *Bais HaMikdosh*.

“What’s that?” asked the innkeeper.

Rav Levi Yitzchok explained that the *Bais HaMikdosh* was the one physical place on earth that housed *Hashem*'s presence. He described how the *Kohanim* offered the *korbonos*, and how the Jewish Nation's *tefillos* were funneled directly to *Hashem*'s Holy Throne. He told the innkeeper how the Romans had destroyed our people's glory, and that, as a result, we were dispersed among the nations. The innkeeper started crying bitterly at the immensity of the tragedy that had occurred to the Jewish people.

Rav Levi Yitzchok tried to comfort the innkeeper. “*Tisha b'Av* is the day set aside to mourn the destruction of our *Bais HaMikdosh*,” he began. “The intensity of our mourning lessens at noon. Until noon

we are not allowed to sit on a chair or do any work; after noon, we are allowed to sit on a chair and work. Yet, the actual destruction of the *Bais HaMikdosh* occurred at noon, and continued on until the following day. The *Bais HaMikdosh* burned from the afternoon of *Tisha b'Av* until the afternoon of the following day." The innkeeper was confused. If the *Bais HaMikdosh* was burning, then it would seem that we should intensify our mourning, rather than make it less.

"But we lessen our mourning because, with the destruction of the *Bais HaMikdosh*, *Hashem* took out His anger on bricks and stones – and not on our people. Had *Hashem's* full wrath been directed to the Jewish people, we, the Jewish Nation, would have been completely destroyed. There would have been nothing left of us. So in a sense, it was a manifestation of *Hashem's* loving-kindness that He destroyed the building – even such a holy building – instead of destroying our holy People."

Rav Levi Yitzchok continued speaking to the innkeeper, consoling him for the destruction of the mere bricks and stones that comprised the *Bais HaMikdosh*. "We must be so grateful, so happy, that *Hashem* took out His wrath on an edifice, and not on us, His beloved people. Come, let us dance, let us rejoice that *Am Yisrael Chai*, we, the Jewish People, are alive. We exist – could there be a greater reason for rejoicing?"

And with that, the two men, the great *Chassidic Rebbe*, Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, and the simple innkeeper, started dancing. They danced in abandon, with sheer joy that *Hashem* in his mercy had kept His people alive. They danced and they danced – and continued dancing. They made so much noise that several of the *Chassidim* who were traveling with Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev woke up from the ruckus.

They ran into Rav Levi Yitzchok's

room and were surprised to see the *Rebbe* and the innkeeper prancing about like two young children, singing and clapping, twirling and prancing.

"What happened? Why are you dancing?" one of them asked.

The simple innkeeper stopped dead in his tracks. Spreading his hand wide, he broke into a beatific smile and beamed, "Because the *Bais HaMikdosh* was destroyed!"

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Rectifying A Lost Soul

When Rav Levi Yitzchok came to Berditchev he asked if anyone still remembered the great and holy Rav Leiber who was once there in Berditchev who had had a *mikve*. One of the elders spoke up that he remembered from when he was sixteen – he even remembered where the *mikve* was and he showed the *Rav*. Rav Levi Yitzchok asked them to dig there in that place; they dug but there was not enough water. They continued digging until they hit water, but it was so shallow that it only reached their knees.

Rav Levi Yitzchok then asked if there were any other elders who might remember the *shamash* who used to clean the *shul* and who was found hanged (or, based on another tradition, burned)? They found another elder and he remembered the *shamash* who was at the time an elder himself who had hanged (or burned) himself. The Berditchever went together with the elders to the place where the *mikve* had been dug, not far from where Rav Leiber was buried, disrobed and placed one foot in the *mikve* and began to explain.

Rav Leiber was the *Rav* before Rav Levi Yitzchok in Berditchev. He came to Rav Levi Yitzchok in a dream, telling him: "The *shamash* of the *shul* was a simple and

pious individual who was greatly involved in serving *Hashem*. So much so that one *Erev Shabbos* while he was busy kindling the large candelabrum that hung as a chandelier from the shul's ceiling, he asked *Hashem*, 'Master of the World! What can I give to You? What can I do for You? I will give myself to You!' And he hanged himself (or burned himself) mistakenly for the sake of Heaven. Since the *shamash* sinned by committing suicide, his soul knows no peace in the higher worlds."

"However," said Rav Levi Yitzchok, "since his intentions were lofty, for the sake of *Hashem*, there is an opportunity to rectify his soul. Rav Lieber explained to me that the only way to rectify the *shamash's* soul is for me to immerse myself in Rav Lieber's *mikve* not far from his *tziun*."

And then the elder was able to see

the departed soul of the *shamash* whom he recognized, standing there. Rav Levi Yitzchok turned to the soul of the *shamash* and said, "If you can help me get enough water to immerse I will be able to rectify you." As soon as Rav Levi Yitzchok entered the pit, the *mikve* filled with enough water to immerse. (Another tradition says that as soon as they dug there was enough water, but it kept refilling with the dug earth and mud, until Rav Levi Yitzchok entered the pit and then it filled with water).

Rav Levi Yitzchok then said, "Why should this *shamash* be considered guilty? Everything he did was really solely for *Hashem!*" So saying, he immersed and rectified the *shamash's* soul.

(Based on *Kisvei Rav Yoshe* #1 page 120, *Siach Sarfei Kodesh* (Breslov) Vol III #614).



Rav Moshe Sofer of Pressburg, 25th of Tishrei

The Chasam Sofer

Rav Moshe Sofer, better known by the name *Chasam Sofer* (from the title of his book, taken from the words *Chiddushei Torah Moshe Sofer*), was among the *Ge'onim* and *Tzaddikim* loved by all people and whose name is considered holy.

Rav Moshe Sofer was born on the 7th of *Tishrei* 524 (September 14, 1763) in Frankfurt-am-Main in Germany. His father, Rav Shmuel, was a man filled with wisdom and fear of *Hashem*, and he became known for his work as a scribe. This was a family profession, hence the name *Sofer* ("scribe" in Hebrew). Rav Moshe's mother was known in town as Reisel the *Tzaddeikes* because of her many acts of charity.

What follows is the story of Rav Moshe Sofer's birth: For twenty years, Rav Shmuel and his wife, Reisel, were unable to have children, and they both multiplied their *tefillos*, fasts and gifts to *tzedoka*. At the end of these twenty years, Reisel

conceived and gave birth to a boy. She felt the birth approaching on the day before *Shabbos Shuva*, around nighttime, and she was very much afraid of profaning *Shabbos* because of it. She sent for the *Rav* of the town, Rav Avrohom Abush, and asked him to help her by ordering that they wait until she give birth before welcoming *Shabbos* in *shul*, for normally *Shabbos* was received very early. Accepting her request, the *Rav* said, "It is certain that the child who will emerge from this *Tzaddeikes* will be among the great men of *Klal Yisrael*." That child, of course, was Rav Moshe Sofer.

At the age of nine he began to study with one of the greats of his time, the *Gaon* and *Chassid*, Rav Nosson Adler of Frankfurt-am-Main. Even though he learned *Torah* from other great *Rabbonim*, Rav Moshe Sofer always considered Rav Nosson as his principle teacher. He ate and slept at the *Rav's* home, learning not only *Torah* from him, but also how to conduct

himself. He also learned *Torah* with Rav Pinchas Horowitz, *mechaber* of the *Haflo'a*. The young Moshe would deliver *Chiddushei Torah* from one of his *Rebbes* to the other. On the way, he thought up and wrote his own *Chiddushim* on those of the two Torah giants — *Chiddushim* that were printed many years later in his *seforim*.

In his old age he described to his *talmidim* the dedication he had for his teacher: “I was a faithful *talmid* of my teacher. I cut wood and drew water for him. And that is what supported me. Serving the *Torah* is more important than studying it.”

He also told his *talmidim* the following:

“One day I went with my teacher on a long journey during winter. While traveling he wanted to eat some bread that he had, but there was no water to wash his hands with. I got down from the wagon, took my teacher’s glass, and I filled it with ice. I held it with my two hands until the ice melted and became water, enough for him to wash his hands with, and then I gave it to him. I was a faithful *talmid* of my teacher, and I received his teachings directly from him.”

Rav Nosson did not want Rav Moshe to depend on him, but rather pushed him to be independent and known for his brilliant abilities and noble character. Even though he did not want to become a *Rav*, he was a faithful *talmid*, and after getting married he became the *Rav* of the community of Dresnitz in Moravia. He was then thirty-two years old. From there he moved to Prossnitz, then to the important Orthodox community of Mattersdorf, Hungary. As soon as he arrived there, he established a *Yeshiva* that *talmidim* flocked to from all around.

Rav Moshe stayed in Mattersdorf for eight years, and throughout Hungary he became famous as a *Rav*, *Posek*, and teacher of *Torah*. When the renowned *Rav* of Pressburg, Rav Meshulam Igra, passed

away, people came to offer his position to Rav Moshe Sofer.

Rav Moshe became the *Rav* of Pressburg at the start of 5567 (1806), and he stayed there for thirty-three years.

Upon arriving in Pressburg, he opened a great *Yeshiva* from which *Torah* and its *Halachic* rulings emerged, as well as many great individuals who illuminated the Diaspora. Except on *Tisha B'Av*, he never missed giving courses to hundreds of *talmidim*. He even gave discourses on the night of *Yom Kippur*.

The *talmidim* who emerged from his *Yeshiva* helped him in his battle against those who wanted to introduce the Reform movement to Pressburg. We know his famous saying: “That which is novel [literally, ‘the new harvest’] is forbidden by the *Torah*.” According to the *Chasam Sofer*, the Reform movement disavows the G-d of Yisrael and His *Torah*, as well as the Jewish people and their special traits.

The city of Pressburg would henceforth be known as “the Yerushalayim of Hungary”. Wherever they were in Pressburg, the eyes of Jews turned to the *Chasam Sofer's Bais Medrash*. The greats of his generation sent him *Halachic* questions, and community heads and leaders traveled to Pressburg to get the *Chasam Sofer's* advice and directives. Furthermore, Rav Moshe Sofer considered himself not only the *Rav* of the city, but also pushed himself, according to the needs of the hour, to take care of far-off communities, some of which were thousands of miles away. During that time people said, “From out of Pressburg comes the *Torah*.”

In 5593 (1833), the government agreed to give Jews equality under the law. The joy of the masses was immense, and the leaders of the city’s Jewish community asked their *Rav* to express his views on it. The *Chasam Sofer* stepped up to the podium and said, “In my opinion, not only

is there no reason to rejoice in this, but on the contrary, this is a decision that we should regret. To what can this be compared? It is like the son of a king, whom his father exiled. After a certain time, the king sends him some builders to construct a palace for him abroad, but to the great surprise of the builders, the son bursts into tears and says, ‘Now I believe that I will stay in exile even longer. Otherwise, my father would not have taken the trouble to build me a palace here in exile.’” The *Chasam Sofer* continued and said, “Now, I am afraid that the King of kings wants to leave us in exile even longer.” He then burst into tears, he and the entire community with him.

Rav Moshe Sofer’s greatness in *Torah* was equaled, if perhaps surpassed, by his great humility. Responsa numbering 1,370 were published in his name, without counting his commentaries on the *Talmud* (in several volumes) as well as books filled with his discourses, all of which were published after his *petira*. This is because he did not allow his responsa to be published while he was alive. What follows is the marvelous way in which he explained his decision to those who asked for one of his works: “I have heard, your greatness, that you learned that I wrote a discourse and desire that I should send it to you. My heart does not yet allow me to do this. Actually, you and most people – who are greater and better than myself, or at least at the same level – do not need me. As for the small number of those who are at a lower level, why should I trouble myself for such a tiny minority? I write whatever *Hashem* inspires me to write in books, and they are at everyone’s disposal. Whoever wants to copy one, may do so. That is what our ancestors did before there was printing, and I am not obligated to do more.”

On the 25th of *Tishrei*, 5600 (October 3, 1839), Rav Moshe Sofer cried out with a powerful voice, “*Shema Yisrael*,” and his soul departed in purity. At his

funeral, more than ninety manuscripts in book form were carried by his *talmidim* as they followed his casket.

www.hevratpinto.org/tzadikim_eng/105_rabbi_moshe_sofer_the_chatam_sofer.html



At his first marriage, he was promised that he would be supported for several years. However, the hand of *Hashgocha* caused his brother-in-law, who had taken the responsibility upon himself, to lose his business and Rav Moshe was forced to go into *Rabbonus*.

He started as *Rav* in Dresnitz and later went on to Mattersdorf. Subsequently, he became *Rav* of the illustrious *kehilla* of Pressburg.

Spreading *Torah* was his lifelong aim, as he himself once testified that not a day passed without him being *marbitz Torah berabim*. Whenever an appeal to take up a position in another town came, the *Chasam Sofer* would always stress this condition – that he be available to teach *Torah* to *talmidim*.

By his second marriage, he became the son-in-law of the *Gaon* Rav Akiva Eiger, as he married his daughter Sorel. He was *zoche* to have three sons and several daughters – each of whom married distinguished *Talmidei Chachomim*.

Rav Moshe was the *posek*, not only of his own generation, but also of those to follow.

His words were accepted throughout *Klal Yisrael* and already in his lifetime Rav Mordechai Banet said of the *Chasam Sofer*, “*Halocha keMoshe bechol mokom!*”

His *talmidim* were the great leaders of the next generation, among them personalities such as the *Maharam Ash* and the *Maharam Shick*.

In his time the Reform movement began to spread its “enlightened” philosophy. The *Chasam Sofer* realized the

urgency of quelling this uprising against authentic Judaism and he went out to war against them with his fire of holiness. Coining his famous battle-cry: “*Chodosh ossur min haTorah*,” he used these words as the basis of the *derech* to be followed for all times; to separate completely from the Reformers and to form independent *kehillos*. Thus, he saved the rest of Austro-Hungarian Jewry from being ensnared in the “enlightenment” trap, and to this day we live according to the *Chasam Sofer*’s holy ideals, ensuring the continuity of *Torah* and *mesora*.

His *Chiddushim* were printed after his *petira*, covering all subjects of the *Torah*. They are, among others, *Chiddushei Shas*, *Chiddushei Shulchan Aruch*, *Sheilos Uteshuvos*, *Chiddushim al HaTorah*, *Deroshos* and *Shiras Moshe*.

On the *Yom Tov* of *Sukkos* in the year 5600 (1840), the *Chasam Sofer* took ill. The people of Pressburg and, in fact, *kehillos* far and wide, arranged a constant vigil of *Tehillim*, begging for a *refua* for the *Godol HaDor*. However, the decree had been sealed and on the 25th of *Tishrei* the Heavenly angels won the struggle over this holy soul and the *neshoma* of the *Chasam Sofer* returned to its source.

At his huge *levaya*, fifty of his *talmidim* carried the notebooks of his *Chiddushei Torah*. All the *Yidden* of the surrounding areas and their *Rabbonim* gathered to pay their last respects to a giant of their time. To the sound of loud weeping, the greatest *Rabbonim* eulogized him and then crowned his son, the *Ksav Sofer*, as his successor.

He is buried in the old cemetery in Pressburg, where to this day thousands descend to the underground *kever* to daven for *yeshu’os*.

Zechuso yogen oleinu.



One cold winter day, the *Gaon*, Rav

Nosson Adler, was traveling together with his esteemed *talmid*, the *Chasam Sofer*. The horses pulling the wagon were trudging through the heavy snow with great difficulty. Suddenly, one of the horses collapsed and died, and the second horse was not strong enough to pull the wagon alone. The wagon driver, having no other choice, starting walking to the nearest village to obtain an additional horse. The two venerated passengers waited in the wagon.

Eventually, the wagon driver returned, leading a...donkey. When Rav Nosson saw the donkey, he descended from the wagon, and began to dance happily in the snow. “*Rebbe*,” asked the *Chasam Sofer*, “why are you so happy?”

“Don’t you see?” asked Rav Nosson. “The wagon driver brought a donkey instead of a horse. Who would have ever thought that I would merit fulfilling the *mitzva* of “Do not plow with an ox and donkey together”? At home in Frankfurt, I never imagined that I would merit fulfilling this *mitzva*. Now that, *Boruch Hashem*, I merited it, I am filled with joy!”

The passengers instructed the wagon driver to return the donkey, and he brought back a horse in its place. (*Vekorosa LaShabbos Oneg*)

www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Rav-Nosson-Adler-Dances-For-The-Donkey/1787



Erev Tisha B’Av – The Chasam Sofer’s Cupful of Tears

Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld told the following story about the *Chasam Sofer*. On *Erev Tisha B’Av*, Rav Moshe Novomesta, a *ben bayis* of the *Chasam Sofer*, saw the *Chasam Sofer* go into a room and lock the door. Curious as to what his great *Rebbe* was doing, he peeked through the keyhole. He saw the *Chasam Sofer* learning *Megillas Eich*a and crying bitter tears, which he caught in a glass cup.

Later, at the *Seuda HaMafsekes* (the mourner's meal before the fast), the *Chasam Sofer* drank the tears from this glass, like the *pasuk* says in *Tehillim* (80:6): *vatashkeimo bidmo'os sholish* – “and gives them tears to drink in great measure”.

When Rav Moshe Novomesta later moved to Yerushalayim he tried to do the same thing. However even with putting all his efforts into his crying he could not muster up enough tears to fill the glass. (*Oros U'Nesivos* 4:12)

www.revach.net/hanhagos/maaseh-rav/Erev-Tisha-BAV-The-Chasam-Sofers-Cupful-Of-Tears/2585



Pressburg Yeshiva

So high was the standard of learning in the holy Pressburg *Yeshiva* that it was said to be equal to the *Yeshivos* in the times of *Tanno'im* and *Amoro'im* in Pumpedisa and Neharde'a.

Just as in those times the teachers had to lower their standard artificially in order to be able to transmit *Torah* to their *talmidim*, so too the *Chasam Sofer*, master and teacher, had to conceal his true greatness so that his *talmidim* would be able to receive and learn *Torah* from him. The *Chasam Sofer* once mentioned that it took him much strength to hide his *madreiga* so that his *talmidim* could look at his face!

He learned with his *talmidim* as though he were learning the material for the first time, so that each one would be able to comprehend. The *Rav* always said that *HaKodosh Boruch Hu* doesn't need *Malochim* in this world. *Hashem* wants human beings who live *al pi Torah*.

His second son, Rav Shimon Sofer, later *Rav* in Cracow, recounted that sometimes during his learning with *talmidim*, the mind of the holy *Chasam Sofer* would be full of many new *Chiddushim* and *pilpulim*, disturbing his

train of thought and teaching. At this point, the *Rebbe* would burst into loud crying, saying the *tefilla* of *Ahava Rabba* and begging *Hashem* to have mercy on him and not to give him *Chiddushim* now as it interfered with his *harbotzas Torah* on the level of his *talmidim*.

Not always was the *Chasam Sofer* successful in hiding his greatness. His older son, the *Ksav Sofer*, related an amazing story.

As a child, the *Ksav Sofer* was once ill in bed. Since his mother was tired, she asked the *Chasam Sofer* to keep an eye on the child until he fell asleep.

His fever gave him no rest and the child kept jumping out of bed, and tossing and turning in bed. At one point he lay watching his father. The *Chasam Sofer* stood by the window, his shining countenance turned toward the heavens, absorbed in his thoughts. Suddenly, his face lit up with an immense joy.

When the *Ksav Sofer* asked for an explanation the *Chasam Sofer* tried to change the subject and distract his attention. But the sick boy insisted that if his father didn't reveal the reason for his sudden happiness, he'd jump out of bed yet again.

The *Chasam Sofer*, wanting his son to rest and recover, decided to give him the true answer. “My dear son, the holy *Malochim* were now changing shifts in *Shomayim*. When they change their *mishmoros*, they change too their song and praise of *Hashem*. It was this change of singing that brought a smile to my face.”

The *Chasam Sofer* added to his son, who was lying quaking in fear from the awesome words of his father, “and let me bless you that when you grow up, you too should merit to hear the *shira* of the *Malochim*.”

His second son, Rav Shimon Sofer, as a little boy, once came to his mother with a question. “We say in *Kedusha*:

Nekadeish es shimcha bo'olom, kesheim shemakdishim oso bishmei morom – “Let us sanctify Your name in the world just as they sanctify Him in the heavenly spheres...” Do we know then how the *Malochim* sanctify the name of *Hashem* up in Heaven?”

His mother was surprised by her son's clever query and sent him with it to his great father. The *Chasam Sofer* listened to the question and told his son that next time he was in *shul* at the time when they say *Kedusha*, he should stand near him. The next day the boy waited with bated breath for the *shliach tzibbur* to reach *Nekadeish es shimcha*...and stood close to his father. The *Chasam Sofer* wrapped up his young son in his *tallis*.

When *davening* was over the boy went home and happily told his mother that he now understood how the *Malochim* sanctify *Hashem* in the Heavens!

www.chareidi.org/archives5772/yomkippur/fschasamykr72.htm



The Chasam Sofer's Final Minutes

Ashrei ish sheba l'kan v'talmudo b'yado (Pesochim 50a). In the final days of his life, the *Chasam Sofer* reviewed all the *Torah* he had learned in order to come to *Shomayim* with his *Torah* intact. In the last few hours of his life he realized that three *Chiddushim* of his were no longer clear in his mind. He quickly called for his close *talmid*, Rav Menachem Katz, who lived not too far from Pressburg, where the *Chasam Sofer* lay deathly ill.

Rav Menachem reviewed with him these *Chiddushim* and then the *Chasam Sofer's* face lit up, content that he would return his *neshoma* to *Shomayim* with all the *Torah* still with it. As soon as they finished reviewing, the *Chasam Sofer* screamed to Rav Menachem Katz, who was a *Kohen*, “Run out, I am dying!” As soon as Rav Katz ran out, he heard the *Chasam Sofer* say, “*Shema Yisrael*,” as his holy

neshoma departed to the heavens.

Rav Katz later said about his *Rebbe* that he had such a good heart, that he held back the departure of his *neshoma* until he was sure that Rav Katz was safely outside without violating the *mitzvos* of the *Kohen*.

www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/The-Chasam-Sofers-Final-Minutes/4114



Chasam Sofer – When Tefillos Don't Work

When the great *Gaon*, Rav Meshulam Igra was sick, the people beseeched *Hashem* with *tefilla* to spare his life. Their *tefillos* went unanswered and Rav Meshulam was *niftar*. Seeing the disappointment of the people, the *Chasam Sofer* stood up to be *maspid* him as follows: He told a *moshol* of a broken ax trying to chop down a tree. The mightiest logger can swing away all day at the tree but if the ax is broken it will not help.

Surely, said the *Chasam Sofer*, when people gather to *daven* with *kavona*, *Hashem* answers their *tefillos* and grants their request. However, the tool for *tefilla* is the mouth, and when the mouth is contaminated with forbidden speech it simply doesn't function properly. No matter how hard one *davens*, broken mouths cannot accomplish the task.

www.revach.net



Chasam Sofer – When You're Past the Point of No Return

The *Chasam Sofer* explains the famous *mishna* at the end of *Yoma*: *Omar Rav Akiva ashreichem Yisrael lifnei mi atem mitaharim u'mi mitaher eschem avichem shebashomayim* as follows: There are fifty levels of *tuma*. As long as a person has not reached the fiftieth level, he can still do *teshuva* and come back. However, once he reaches the fiftieth level, it is impossible for him to come back by

himself. Only through the *chessed* of *Hashem* can a person return from this depth.

The *Chasam Sofer* explains that *mi* is spelled *mem-yud*, and has the numerical value of fifty. *Lifnei mi* – “before fifty” *atem mitaharim* – “it is still within your power to purify yourself”. However, *u’mi* –the person who has already sunk to the fiftieth level, he cannot purify himself. So what happens to him? *Mitaher es’chem avichem shebashomayim* – his caring Father in Heaven purifies him from the uncleanable mess he has made of himself.

May we all be *zoche* to clean ourselves of all our *aveiros* and have a *gmar chasima tova*.

www.revach.net



Chasam Sofer: Loving Your Esrog to Death

Sometimes during *Sukkos*, an *esrog* can turn brown from holding it too much. Even in a case where the change in coloring would normally make it *possul*, the *Chasam Sofer* says that in this case it is still *kosher*, provided it came from holding it on *Sukkos* (and not before *Sukkos*). The reason, he says, is because *shiyarei mitzva zeh hiduro* – “the remains of a *mitzva* are its beauty”.

Rav Yechiel Michel Stern, in *Sefer Kashrus Araba’as HaMinim*, writes that we should rely on this *heter* only on *Chol HaMo’ed* where the *mitzva* is *D’Rabonnon*, and not on the first day where the *mitzva* is *Min HaTorah*. However he brings from the *Shu”T Zecher L’Yehosef* that he was *matir* even on the first day.

www.revach.net



Reality Follows the Law

In Europe it was the custom to fatten up geese in the months preceding *Pesach*, since many families refrained from

using any oil other than goose fat on the holiday. For six to eight weeks the geese would be fed a full bucket of corn twice a day, so that by the time the holiday arrived they would be so huge they could barely waddle.

Two religious giants of the early nineteenth century, the *Chasam Sofer* and the *Yismach Moshe*, differed in their rulings as to whether the practice of force-feeding rendered the geese not kosher. The question revolved around whether or not the sharp corn grains that were forced down the throats of the birds would damage the esophagus, thus making the birds *treif* (unable to live another year, and therefore not kosher to eat).

The *Chasam Sofer* held that the esophagus would not necessarily be damaged, and so he ruled the practice permissible. (Of course, the geese had to be carefully checked before being consumed to prove that they were kosher by the process described later.) His contemporary, the *Yismach Moshe*, felt that since the corn kernels were sharp, the likelihood was that the birds would be rendered *treif* by the force feedings. He ruled that geese fed in this manner would not be permissible.

The two corresponded back and forth, each presenting learned arguments to prove his point, their dispute purely “for the sake of Heaven”. Finally, the *Chasam Sofer* suggested that instead of theorizing, they should put their rulings to a practical test. Each was to take ten geese and fatten them up. Then they would slaughter them, fill the esophagus with air and float them in a full tub of water. If the esophagus was damaged, air bubbles would escape into the water, thus proving that the bird was *treif*. If no bubbles were seen, the bird would be kosher.

When the birds were duly fattened and slaughtered, an amazing thing took place. All the birds from the household of the *Chasam Sofer* proved to be kosher, whereas all the birds of the *Yismach Moshe*

tested *treif!*

So it was seen that the legal rulings of these two great giants dominated the physical reality, proving the axiom that the rulings of true *Torah* authorities determine the actuality of a physical situation.

Rav Moshe Teitelbaum (1759–28 Tammuz 1841), known as the *Yismach Moshe* after the title of his book of *Torah* commentary, was famed both as a scholar and wonderworker. A *talmid* of the *Chozeh* of Lublin, he was instrumental in the spread of *Chassidus* in Hungary. His descendants founded the dynasties of Satmar and Sighet.

Rav Moshe Shreiber (1762–1839), was a giant of *Torah* known as the *Chasam Sofer*, after the title of his volumes of responsa which have been significant to a high degree in the modern development of Jewish law and thought.

Adapted from L'Chaim #217

By Yerachmiel Tilles ~

[www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article__cdo/aid/380272/jewish/Reality-](http://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article__cdo/aid/380272/jewish/Reality-Follows-the-Law.htm)

[Follows-the-Law.htm](http://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article__cdo/aid/380272/jewish/Reality-Follows-the-Law.htm)



Eating Gebrochts

Some *Chassidim* of the *Tzaddik* of Sanz were in Pressburg on *Pesach*, guests at the *Chasam Sofer's* table. Among *Chassidim*, it is the custom to avoid eating *gebrochts* (*matza* that has come into contact with liquid). This is a *chumra* that *Misnagdim* have not adopted; hence, the *Chasam Sofer* ate *kneidlach* on *Pesach*.

When the *Chassidim* were served *kneidlach*, they were in a quandary, because they had never eaten *gebrochts* – and they knew how *makpid* the Sanzer *Rav* was with regard to this *minhag*. One *Chassid* did not eat the *kneidlach*. The other reasoned, “I’m sitting at the table of the *Godol HaDor*. Who am I to be more strict than he is?” and he ate the *kneidlach*.

When they reported their visit to the *Tzaddik* of Sanz, the latter said to the *Chassid* who ate the *kneidlach*, “You have earned *Olam HaBa*.” To the *Chassid* who had refused to eat them, the *Tzaddik* said, “You had better stand near me on *Yom Kippur*, and I will try to elicit forgiveness for you.”

Adapted from *Four Chassidic Masters* by Rav Dr. Abraham Twerski (page 194–195)



[Some say the story happened with the Sanzer’s daughter-in-law, who was barren for many years and was also a relative of the *Chasam Sofer* and merited to eat at his *Seder*. When the *Chasam Sofer* saw her discomfort in eating the two *kneidlach*, he reassured her that he would shoulder the responsibility. Even though she had that guarantee in hand, she still only allowed herself to eat only one *kneidel*.

When she returned to Sanz, the *Rebbe* called her in and told her that since she ate only one *kneidel* at the *Chasam Sofer's Seder* table, she would only be *zoche* to one child].



On his sickness before his petira

The *Chasam Sofer* suffered tremendously with an illness that blocked his bodily functions. When asked by his *talmidim* why he suffered such an ailment, he replied that when he became the *Rav* in Pressburg, there was a *shiur* that was instituted by the previous *Rav* that discussed *Hilchos Bris*. When he became *Rav*, he contemplated that the *Hilchos Bris* was already thoroughly disseminated and instituted other *Halochos* that should be transmitted. He felt that he was punished *midda knegged midda* for that minor infraction.



Rav Dovid Matisyohu Rabinowitz, 25th of Tishrei

The Biala Rebbe of Bnei Brak

Rav Dovid Matisyohu Rabinowitz was born in Shedlitz, Poland, on *Erev Chanuka* 5689/1928. His father was Rav Yechiel Yehoshua, later *Rebbe* of Biala. The child was named Dovid after his great-grandfather, Rav Nosson Dovid of Shidlovtza, and Matisyohu was added since his *bris* was on the seventh day of *Chanuka*.

As a small child, he woke up early to learn *Torah*, and he *davened* with fiery intent.

During the difficult years of the war, his father was exiled to Russia. Young Dovid Matisyohu, along with two of his brothers and his sister, escaped to Tehran, Iran. The children came to *Eretz Yisrael* on the transport known as *Yaldei Tehran*, “the children of Tehran”.

When Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, the *Ponevezher Rav*, heard that the children of the Biala *Rebbe* had come to *Eretz Yisrael*, he made a special effort to arrange placements for them that would ensure they would lead *Torah* lives. Rav Dovid Matisyohu went to the *Ponevezh Yeshiva*, where he was noted for his constant learning and his warm *tefillos*; he was often asked to lead the *tefillos* on *Yomim Tovim*.

Rav Dovid Matisyohu got married and later received *semicha* from Rav Yosef Tzvi Kalisch of Skernevitz, the *Rav* of Bnei Brak, a scion of the Vorka dynasty.

Rav Yechiel Yehoshua arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* in 5707/1947 and was

reunited with his children. He began rebuilding the Biala dynasty after the Holocaust.

After the *petira* of his father on the 21st of *Shevat* 5742/1982, Rav Dovid Matisyohu founded his court in Bnei Brak, where he spread *Torah* and *Chassidus* with passion and fire. He had great *dveikus* in *tefilla* and *avoda*.

Rav Dovid Matisyohu spent one *Shabbos* every year, during the Three Weeks, in the Old City of Yerushalayim, near the *Kosel*.

He was *niftar* on the 25th of *Tishrei* 5758/1997 at the age of sixty-nine.

His sons, *ybl”c*, are: Rav Yaakov Menachem, the Biala *Rebbe* in Bnei Brak; Rav Shmuel Yair, who serves as *Rav* in his brother’s *Bais Medrash* in Bnei Brak; Rav Avrohom Yerachmiel, the *Rebbe* of Ostrova-Biala in Yerushalayim; Rav Yirmiyohu, the *Rebbe* of Biala-Lentchna in Beit Shemesh; and Rav Aharon Shlomo Chaim Elozor, the Biala *Rebbe* in Boro Park.

His sons-in-law are Rav Yehuda Zev Volf Kornreich, the Shidlovtza *Rebbe* in Yerushalayim, and Rav Yaakov Hager, son of the Seret-Vizhnitzer *Rebbe*.

Some of Rav Dovid Matisyohu’s *Divrei Torah* were published with the titles *Orchos Dovid* and *Lahavas Dovid*.

Zechuso yogen oleinu.

[www.hamodia.com/features/this-day-in-history-26-tishreiseptember-](http://www.hamodia.com/features/this-day-in-history-26-tishreiseptember-30/26-Tishrei)

30/26 Tishrei



Rav Aharon of Zhitomir, 26th of Tishrei

Mechaber of Toldos Aharon

Rav Aharon of Zhitomir, son of Rav Mordechai, was recognized at a young age

as a *Talmid Chochom*. He supported himself by working, rather than by

assuming a Rabbinical position. He gave fiery *deroshos* to be *mechazek limud haTorah*.

In the *sha'ar* of his *sefer*, *Toldos Aharon*, he is identified as one of the leading *talmidim* of Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev. After the *petira* of Rav Zev Wolf of Zhitomir, the *Ohr HaMeir*, Rav Levi Yitzchok appointed Rav Aharon as his successor. Rav Levi Yitzchok warned the community of Zhitomir to heed his every word.

The *Ohev Yisrael* of Apta, Rav Yisrael of Pikov, son of Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, and Rav Mordechai of Chernobyl all wrote warm *haskomos* to *Toldos Aharon*, attesting to the great *tzidkus* and high *madreigos* of its *mechaber*. Rav Aharon was considered a *k'dosh elyon*.

He was the *Maggid* in Zhitomir for three years, and then moved to Hungary, where he was active in spreading *Toras HaChassidus*, especially in the cities of Krali and Ashver where he lived. His *deroshos* brought people to *teshuva*. Some listeners became his *Chassidim*.

Rav Aharon was *niftar* on the 26th of *Tishrei*, a day after the *Yahrzeit* of his *Rebbe*, Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev. He was buried in Zhitomir.

When his *talmidim* saw that his end was near, they began to cry.

"Why are you crying?" Rav Aharon asked them. "The end of every person is death."

"How can we not cry when our *Rebbe* is leaving us?" they answered. "We will be left a flock without a shepherd. The other *Tzaddikim* of the generation are more hidden in their *Avodas Hashem*, unlike our *Rebbe*, to whose *derech* in *Avodas Hashem* we have become accustomed."

"Know," said Rav Aharon, "that before *Moshiach* comes there will be *Tzaddikim* who will be greater than me,

and with what they do, they will be *meyached* more *yichudim* than we accomplished, even with our learning and *davening!*"

One of his closest *talmidim*, Rav Levi of Zhitomir, wrote down his *Divrei Torah* after every *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*. Rav Aharon himself edited these notes. *Toldos Aharon* was first printed in Berditchev, shortly after his *petira* in 5577, by his son-in-law, Rav Mordechai, and Rav Mordechai's father, the *noggid*, Rav Yakir Shimshon of Zhitomir. Other *Divrei Torah* of Rav Aharon are printed in *Pisgomin Kaddishin*.

www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-26-tishrei-october-20/



How Rav Aharon Became a Talmid of the Berditchever

Rav Yitzchok Neshchizer related one *Shabbos* during the month of *Menachem Av* how the holy Rav Araleh (Aharon) of Zhitomir was originally a *talmid* of the Vilna *Gaon*. However, that path was unacceptable to his heart. He heard that in Zelichov there was a certain Rav Levi Yitzchok who ran a *Yeshiva* there. (The Berditchever was still *Rav* in Zelichov at the time).

Rav Araleh visited his *Yeshiva*, and there the Berditchever saw him from far away, five seats away from him, and did not even turn toward him at all. Even though all of Rav Araleh's questions were good and right on target, Rav Levi Yitzchok initially paid him no heed and he did not answer him. He said that as long as he had in him even a vestige of haughtiness or arrogance, he would not draw him close.

Afterward, when the Berditchever felt that he had refined himself enough, he drew him close and sat Rav Aharon next to him. They studied together the *Gemora* that relates that if one finds a bill of debt that proves liability, why should he not return it? The Berditchever explained this

to Rav Aharon as: "If you find your own liability, why should you not return to Hashem and repent fully?!"

(Zichron Tov – MeAvodas HaTzaddikim #4, Page 12).



Knowing the Tzaddik

The holy Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev once traveled with his *talmid*, Rav Aharon of Zhitomir, *mechaber* of *Toldos Aharon*, to the city of Lizhensk. There they stayed together with Rebbe Reb Elimelech in his home. Rebbe Reb Elimelech questioned the Berditchever, saying to him, "Why are you stealing away all of my own *talmidim*?" (This was because many great *Torah* scholars left Rebbe Reb Elimelech to study under the Berditchever.)

The Berditchever answered Rebbe Reb Elimelech with humility, "*Vaymens bin ich den? Ich bin zich ayer talmid oich!* - And just whose *talmid* do you think I am? I am also your *talmid*! Thus, all my *talmidim* are therefore your very own *talmid's talmidim*!" With this humble answer, he

was able to placate and satisfy Rebbe Reb Elimelech. Afterward, the Berditchever continued on his way to attend to some matters while his *talmid*, Rav Aharon of Zhitomir, remained behind and continued studying in Rebbe Reb Elimelech's *Bais Medrash*.

Rebbe Reb Elimelech did not realize this, and when one night he walked in and found Rav Aharon sitting there learning, he was surprised and asked Rav Aharon, "Why did you not continue traveling with your *Rebbe*?" Rav Aharon answered Rebbe Reb Elimelech, "*Mein Rebbe ken ich. Bin ich geblichen ba aych zu kenen!* – My *Rebbe* I already know. I remained behind to get to know you as well!" Hearing this, Rebbe Reb Elimelech got all worked up. He seized Rav Aharon and began to shake him by the lapels of his clothing and declared, "*Dein Rebbe kenstu? Afilu zein zhupstze kenstu nisht, bifrat im alein!* – You think you really know your *Rebbe*? Why, you don't even know his lapels, let alone really know him and how great he is!"

(*Avodas Levi*, page 98).



לזכר נשמות אמנו החשובה, נפש יקרה ועדינה, אשה יראת ה' ובעלת מדות טובות
מרת זיסל ז"ל בת הרה"ה מו"ה מאיר זאב הכהן כ"ץ ע"ה הי"ד
מעיר נירעדהאז יע"א ונכדת הרה"ק רבי אהרן צבי טערקלטויב זי"ע מבריד
אשת הרה"ח מו"ה אברהם חיים ע"ה גאלדענבערג

She was a Holocaust survivor who never let that period of time define her life. Although she lost most of her family - she claimed that Hashem gave her an amazing life. She had a unique knack of making everyone who encountered her feel like they were the most important loved person. Her inimitable smile never left her face.

She transmitted a strong value system stressing *Emunas Hashem* and *Tzaddikim*. Her love for stories of *tzaddikim* gave her *chiyus* and she conveyed that *chizuk* to anyone who met her. In her eighty-nine years of life, there wasn't one person who had an untoward word or adverse feelings about her. She loved her family deeply and immensely. May Hashem console her family and may she be a constant *melitza yeshura*, אמן.

(מתוך אמונה טהורה) בדרך המסורה (והתנהגה כאשה כשרה) לכל משפחתה,
היא הודה היא הדרה - נקיה וטהורה היוצר וצר צורה (וקיבלה הגזירה)
נפטרה בש"ט בת תשעים שנה ביום כ"ד לחודש כסלו (ערב חנוכה)
שנת תשע"ח לפ"ק תמליץ טוב בעד משפחתה היקרה ותקים לתחיה לקץ הימין מהרה תנצ"ב/ה'

בסייד

WISHING YOU & YOUR FAMILY A

חג כשר ושמח



▷ THE RAMAPOST TEAM ◁

Shraga Rayl Dani Luv Sarah Frudy Nikki