

# 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)

 **SHEMOS** 

❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

## What is in A Name?

*"And these are the name of Bnei Yisrael" (Shemos 1:1).*

Rav Naphtali Ropshitzer in Zera Kodesh (Ki Seitzeh) cites the Holy Rimover Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel who said that each and every one of us has two names - one that is holy and another kind . . . the name of impurity which comes from the "Other Side." Each tzaddik has to work on himself and serve Hashem so that it is revealed to him what this impure name of tumah is so that he can transform it into a holy name as well.

## Giving Birth To Bnei Torah

*"Because the Jewish women are unlike the Egyptians they give life; even before the midwives arrive, they have already given birth" (Shemos 1:19).*

The Holy Modzitzer Rebbe in Divrei Yisrael explained this pasuk as follows: The midwife is the holy Torah, for whoever studies, toils and engages in Torah is called a "ben Torah," a child of the Torah - so the Torah is their mother and she has carried and given birth to them. This is what is meant by, "Do not forsake the Torah of your mother", (Mishlei 1:8). What have the Jewish mothers in the pasuk given birth to? Torah and good deeds! Similarly, Rashi's comments to Bereishis 6:9, that the toldos, descendants, of the righteous tzaddikim are their good deeds.

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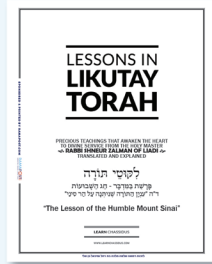
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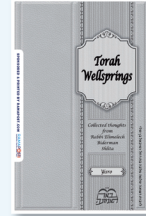
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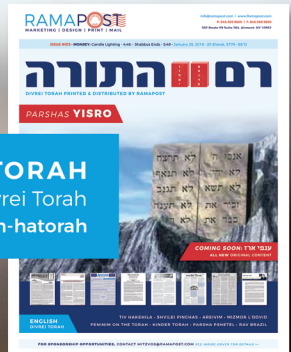
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Hence, the Modzitzer explains, being that the Egyptian exile was before the giving of the Torah, Pharaoh therefore thought that he and his people were equal to the Jews, because as Chazal tell us there was a prosecuting kitrug by the splitting of the sea claiming that both the Egyptians and Jews were idolaters (Shemos Rabba 21:7; Zohar Teruma 170b). Thus, Pharaoh believed that he could overcome them through his decrees. However, we know that even before Matan Torah, the Jews fulfilled the Torah and its commandments and did good deeds - they kept the Shabbos, the Bris of circumcision as well as ritual purity and sexual morality (as we know from Shir HaShirim 4:12 and the Midrash there).

This is what the pasuk is telling us: the Jewish women were unlike the Egyptian women! They are not the same - they are not idolatrous immoral women, they live through Torah and mitzvos. Therefore, even before the midwife comes, they give birth - even before Matan Torah, they are already engaged in Torah study and good deeds.

Whoever wishes to be experience Matan Torah and be a ben Torah, can do so - because if you engage in Torah and study it, you too will be born of the mother - our holy Torah.

## A Mind Enslaved

*“Do not give the people anymore straw to make into bricks as you did previously. Let them go out and find their own straw!” (Shemos 5:6).*

Rav Chanoch Henech of Alexander asked, “Wasn’t Pharaoh hurting his own economy and interests through this decree? At the end of the day, he was punishing himself, for if the Jewish slaves did not get straw and could not make bricks this would slow them down, make them unproductive and cause him lost work. What was the wisdom behind such a decision?!?”

The Rebbe is cited as giving the following answer: Pharaoh was wicked and cunning, he knew that harming their minds was worse than harming them physically. He therefore decreed that they not be given straw and their quota be upped. Now they would have no peace of mind. Instead of being free to dwell on ideas such as freedom, escape and serving Hashem etc. their minds will be occupied with only one thought alone - how and from where can we get more straw?!?” (Likkutei Eish, Niflaos Chadashos).

This mind control is the yetzer hara’s game; forcing us to labor away and work hard asking how and where can make more money, so our minds are enslaved and unable to think about when can we serve Hashem! It is the geulah we must ultimately strive to achieve and free your mind to dwell on Hashem - then the evil one’s plot is foiled.



## The Small Pharaoh Within Us All

The Toldos Yaakov Yosef teaches us in the name of the holy Ba’al Shem Tov, that just as there was a national exile or galus in Egypt, where Am Yisrael were exiled and Pharaoh held us as his slaves and Moshe led us and Hashem redeemed us to the geulah - so too on a microcosmic level, each of us is an Olam Katan. We all have within us our own personal exile, our personal moments of darkness where we are held prisoner by our own little Pharaoh - the yetzer hara or evil inclination and our own Moshe, the yetzer tov or good inclination, will

help and lead us out to our personal redemption and salvation, as we sing in Lecha Dodi Karva El Nafshi Ge'ulah!



*The Chiddushei HaRim would repeat this Mashal in the name of Rav Simcha Bunim (Rav Chanoch Henech of Alexander used the same Mashal with some differences, which maybe imy"h one day we shall study).*

There was once a wealthy squire who purchased the finest stallion. He was sure such a fabulous steed would awaken the greed of others, so to protect him from theft, he kept the steed in a stable behind lock and key and he set a guard to watch over him day and night.

Still, his rest and repose was troubled by bad dreams. In his worst nightmares, horse thieves had come in the middle of the night, breached his defenses and stolen his prize stallion from the stable. So, he got dressed, and clad in his nightshirt and pajamas, he came down to the stable to inspect his horse. There, he found the night watchman on guard, sunk deep in thought. "On what are you meditating," he asked? "I am thinking to myself and pondering problems of cosmic proportions such as 'When you nail a peg into the wall, where does the small portion of the wall that got knocked in, vanish to?'"

"Uh Huh, ok. You just keep pondering such thoughts," said the squire to the watchman.

He went back to lay down to sleep but his fears and anxiety gave him no rest. Again, he descended and went to visit his stable. His fears seemed to be for naught, for again he found everything in order as before and the watchman at his post deep in thought.

"What are you pondering now?!" the squire roused the watchman from his reveries. "I am pondering matters of vast import such as, when you eat a bagel, where does the hole go?!" "Uh, ok. Sure, no problem. You just keep guarding the horse."

When he came down a third time after being seized by suspicions of the worst kind of half formed fears, nightmares and dark thoughts gnawing at him that gave him no rest, he discovered the guard lost in thought as before.

"What are you considering now?" he asked. "Well now, I am pondering a perplexing puzzle! Now, if this stable is locked and I am sitting here the whole night watching on guard, so... how did the horse get stolen?!?"

Sometimes, if we focus too much on matters of no consequence - even though we think we are on guard against him, the evil inclination can find a way past our guard, the evil one can find a way in and then the yetzer hara steals the horse!

(Siach Sarfei Kodesh Yetzer Hara 14; VaYelaket Yosef).



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

One of the tools that *Kabbola* 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 *berochah*. 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

[תְּפִילָה הַנִּמְצָאת בְּסֵפֶר אֶלֶף הַמִּגּוֹן מִבַּעַל הַפֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ עַל פְּרֻשֵׁת וַיֵּצֵא עֲמוּד כ"ד]

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלִיּוֹת נִשְׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_  
בְּ/בֵת \_\_\_\_\_, יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים  
וּבְרְצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שֶׁאֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל  
לְזָכוֹת וְלְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלִיּוֹת לְנִשְׁמוֹת עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפָרֵט לְנַפְשׁ רּוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /  
צַדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_ יְהִי רְצוֹן שֶׁתִּהְיֶנָּה 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](http://www.yeshshem.com/hilulah.htm)



## ☞ GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER ☞



YAHREITS BEGINNING SHABBOS SHEMOS

[http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim\\_yahrtzeit/Teves](http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrtzeit/Teves)

Biographical information and *yahrzeits* compiled by Reb Manny Saltiel and [www.anshe.org](http://www.anshe.org)

### \* 21<sup>st</sup> of Teves ~ Begins Friday Night (Jan 17<sup>th</sup>)

\* Rav Yosef Shatzkes, *Av Bais Din* of Brod, (5631/1871);

\* Birthdate and *Yahrzeit* of **Shimon ben Yaakov Avinu**, (1567 BCE);

\* Rav Shlomo, *Rav* of Vilna at the time of the Vilna *Gaon*, (5552/1791);

- \* **Rav Eliyohu Eliezer Mishkovsky**, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Knesses Chizkiyohu* in Kefar Chassidim, *Eretz Yisrael*. The *Yeshiva Knesses Chizkiyohu* was founded in 1949 at the behest of the *Chazon Ish*. It was first located in Zichron Yaakov and was headed by Rav Noach Shimanowitz. Six years later, it moved to its permanent residence in Kfar Chassidim, under the guidance of the *Mashgiach*, Rav Eliyohu Lopian and the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Mishkovsky, (20<sup>th</sup> of *Teves*, according to *Yated* 2007), (5742/1981);
- \* **Rav Yisrael Dov** of Vilednik, the *She'eiris Yisrael* (1789–1849 or 1850). Also known as the *Maggid* of Vilednik, he was a *talmid* of Rav Mordechai Twersky (1770–1837), the Chernobyler *Rebbe*. During his lifetime, thousands journeyed to the *She'eiris Yisrael* for blessing, inspiration and consultation. Before he passed away, he told his *talmidim* that whoever would reach out and touch his door seeking help would be aided. Today, even thousands of non-Jews come to pray at his gravesite in their times of need. The *She'eiris Yisrael's* reputation continues to endure among generations of gentiles in the area, and many Jews from around the world travel to his *kever* in Vilednik, Ukraine, on his *Yahrzeit*, (5610/1849);
- \* **Rav Matzliach Mazuz**, the *Ish Matzliach* (1912–1971). The son of Rav Refoel and Rochel Mazuz, Matzliach was born on the island city of Djerba. When he was eleven, he was accepted into the *Yeshiva* of the eminent Rav Rachamim Chai Chavita *HaKohen*. After his marriage in 1930, Rav Matzliach moved to Tunis, where he served as a *Mashgiach Ruchani* in the *Chevras HaTalmud Yeshiva* for thirteen years. He was later appointed to the position of *Dayan* in the *Bais Din* of Tunis. Six hundred couples came to him for divorces between the years 1955–1958, and he managed to make *sholom bayis* between 75 percent of them. He founded the *Kisei Rachamim Yeshiva* in Tunis, named after his mentor, Rav Rachamim Chai Chavita. Years later, his sons reestablished this *Yeshiva* in Bnei Brak. In 1971, while Rav Matzliach was returning from a pre-dawn *minyán*, clad in *tallis* and *tefillin*, a group of Arabs attacked and killed him. Among Rav Matzliach's writings are: *Shu"t Ish Matzliach*, on the four parts of *Shulchon Aruch*, three of which are in print so far; *Kuntress HaMa'arochos*, which discusses the rules of issuing *halachic* decisions; *Matzliach Yeshua*, a collection of *chiddushim* on the *Shas*; and *Mogen V'Tzina*, answers to questions on the *Maharsha*. The rest of his writings are still in manuscript form. Rav Matzliach is survived by his sons: Rav Mayer, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Kisei Rachamim* in Bnei Brak and the leader of the Tunisian community in *Eretz Yisrael*; Rav Yosef Tzemach, the director and *Mashgiach Ruchani* of the *Yeshiva*; and Rav Rachamim, also a *Mashgiach Ruchani*. One of Rav Matzliach's daughters is married to Rav Yitzchok Barda, *mechaber* of Yitzchok Yeranen, and another to Rav Chanan Kablan, a *Dayan*, (5732/1971).

\* **22<sup>nd</sup> of Teves ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Jan 18<sup>th</sup>)**

- \* **Rav Shmuel Heller**, *Ashkenazi Rav* of Tsefas for forty years. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of *Teves* in 1837, he was discovered buried up to his neck in stones. He had been standing under the lintel of the *Bais Medrash Ari* at the moment of the earthquake. His wounds were so severe that he was bedridden for six months, and lost the use of one arm for the rest of his life. Rav Shmuel was a *talmid* of Rav Avrohom Dov Auerbach of Avritch (1765–1840), who spent ten years as *Rav* in Tsefas, (5645/1884);
- \* **Rav Yehuda Leib Eiger** (1816–1888). A grandson of Rav Akiva Eiger, Rav Leibel was born in Warsaw. He learned under Rav Yitzchok Meir Alter, the *Chiddushei HaRim* in Warsaw. At twenty, he married and moved to Lublin, where he *davened* at the *shul* of the *Chozeh*. There, he befriended Rav Yisrael, the *Chozeh's* son. He then moved to Kotzk. He

became a *Rebbe* after the *Rebbe* of Izbitza passed away in 1854. After his *petira*, his son, Rav Avrohom, printed his *seforim* *Toras Emes* and *Imrei Emes*, (5649/1888);

- \* **Rav Sholom Moskowitz** of Shatz, a Romanian town in the Bukovina district (1878–1958). A direct descendant (fifth generation) of Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov and a great-grandson of Rav Michel of Premishlan, he was named after his mother's great-grandfather, the *Sar Sholom* of Belz. After learning at Shatz, he traveled to the famed *Maharsham* (Rav Sholom Schwadron) of Berzhan to study practical *halocha* and to receive *semicha*. After leading a group of *Chassidim* in Cologne, Germany, Rav Sholom arrived in London, in 1927, where he served for thirty years. Among his *seforim* is a commentary on *Perek Shira*. He promised to help anyone who comes to his *kever* on a Friday morning and lights three candles (a tradition mentioned in *Sefer Tikkunim*). He is buried in the Enfield *Bais Kevoros*, London, England, (5719/1958).

### \* **23<sup>rd</sup> of Teves ~ Begins Sunday Night (Jan 19<sup>th</sup>)**

- \* **Rav Yehuda Arye Leib HaLevi Epstein**, known as Rav Leibush of Ople. Orphaned of his father, Rav Yechiel Michel Epstein, and his mother at a young age, Rav Leibush and his two younger brothers were supported by a simple Jew of Ostrovsta. He was a *Chassid* of the *Yid HaKodosh* and the *Chozeh* of Lublin. He became *Rav* of Ozerov in 1812. His most famous descendant was Rav Moshe Yechiel Michel *HaLevi* Epstein, the *Aish Da'as* of Ozerov, (5598/1837);
- \* **Rav Gedalia Hertz** (1914–1977). Born in Ujazd, near Tomashov, Poland, he left for the Lubavitch *Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim* in Warsaw after his *bar mitzva*. After some years, he went to Grodno to the *Yeshiva* of Rav Shimon Shkop. After marrying in 1935, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael* and entered the *Yeshiva Sfas Emes* in Yerushalayim. The following year, the *Gerrer Rebbe*, the *Imrei Emes*, decided to open a branch in Tel Aviv, which was later named *Yeshivas Chiddushei HaRim*; Rav Gedalia was chosen as *Rosh Yeshiva* while still in his early twenties. After the founding of the State of Israel, he was chosen to be the representative of the *Vaad HaYeshivos* to government officials and was instrumental in getting Ben Gurion to accept a deferral for all *Yeshiva* students. In 1955, Rav Gedalia became the *Rav* of the newly established *Yeshiva kehilla* in Sydney, Australia. In 1963, he returned to *Eretz Yisrael*, (5738/1977).

### \* **24<sup>th</sup> of Teves ~ Begins Monday Night (Jan 20<sup>st</sup>)**

- \* **Rav Naftoli Katz**, *mechaber* of *Semichas Chachomim* (1660–1719), descendant of the *Maharal*. Born in Ostracha, Ukraine, he passed away in Istanbul. His father, Yitzchok, a *Rav* in Stefan and a *darshan* in Prague, was *niftar* in 1670. Rav Naftoli married Esther Sheindl, daughter of Shmuel Shmelke Zak of Ostraha, and headed the *Yeshiva* that his father-in-law built for him. After Rav Shmuel was *niftar*, he succeeded him as *Rav* and *Av Bais Din*. In 1704 he became *Rav* of Frankfurt until 1711, when a fire broke out in his home and spread from there, burning down several hundred homes. Rav Naftoli was jailed and accused of setting the fire. When he was released, he left for Prague and Breslau and stayed with Rav Zvi Ashkenazi (the *Chacham Zvi*). They both excommunicated Nechemya Chayun, who wrote a book in favor of Shabbetai Zvi. He had fourteen children, seven sons and seven daughters. Rav Yaakov Emden, the son of the *Chacham Zvi*, married Rav Naftoli's daughter, Rochel. [*Hamodia* 2006 lists Rav Naftoli Katz, the *Semichas Chachomim*, as the 24<sup>th</sup> of *Shvat*], (5480/1719);
- \* **Rav Yosef** of Yampula, son of the Zlotchiver *Maggid*, (5573/1812);



- ✳ **Rav Shneur Zalman** of Liadi, affectionately called the *Alter Rebbe* (1745–1813), the *Ba'al HaTanya*. The *Rav* became a *talmid* of the *Maggid* of Mezritch at the age of thirty, studying with him for twelve years, and became the leader of *Chassidus* in Lithuania following the *Maggid's petira* in 1772. While raising money for the release of Jewish prisoners from Czarist jails, he was arrested on charges of treason and incarcerated in Peter-Paul Fortress in Saint Petersburg. There he astonished jailers and courtiers with his wisdom and piety. Eventually he was released, and moved to Liadi. In addition to the *Tanya*, he also authored the *Shulchon Aruch HaRav*. The *Rav* was a mystic, a communal activist, a philosopher, a halachic authority, a composer, a *talmudist* – but he was primarily a spiritual guide, who created a practical path that allows anyone to approach divinity. Although Rav Shneur Zalman lived in an era of change and unrest on a global scale, his life and teachings have continued to inspire. His *kever* is in Haditch, Ukraine, (5574/1813);
- ✳ **Rav Meir Eisenstadt**, also known as *Meir Ash*. His responsa were published by his son under the title *Imrei Eish*. He was *niftar* in Ungvár, (5622/1861);
- ✳ **Rav Avrohom Dov Berish Flamm** (1804–1873). Rav Flamm is considered to be the leading *talmid* of the Dubno *Maggid*, Rav Yaakov Kranz, although, in fact, the two never met. Rav Flamm was, however, the leading student of the *Maggid's* writings, and it was he, together with the *Maggid's* son, Rav Yitzchok Kranz, who edited them and prepared them for publication. Rav Flamm was himself a popular *Maggid*, and he held that post in several Polish and Lithuanian cities. Besides publishing the Dubno *Maggid's Ohel Yaakov* and *Sefer HaMiddos*, Rav Flamm wrote several works of his own. His *Yerios Ha'Ohel* and *Sefas Ha'Yeria* were printed together with *Ohel Yaakov*, while his *Shemen HaMor* is a free-standing work, (5634/1873);
- ✳ **Rav Moshe Yosef Teitelbaum** (1842–1897). The son of Rav Yekusiel Yehuda Teitelbaum, he was appointed *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* of Stropkov when Rav Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam returned to Sienawa in 1880. In 1891, he left the town for a post in Ujhely, Hungary, (5658/1897);
- ✳ **Rav Shmuel Borenstein**, the *Shem MiShmuel* from Sochatchov (1855–1926). He was born in Kotzk to Rav Avrohom Borenstein, the Sochatchover *Rebbe* and *mechaber* of *Avnei Nezer*. His grandfathers were Rav Nachum Ze'ev of Biala, the *Agudas Eizov* and Rav Menachem Mendel, the *Kotzker Rebbe*. Rav Shmuel considered Rav Chanoch Henoch of Alexander to be his *Rebbe*. After the *petira* of the Alexander *Rebbe* in 1870, the *Avnei Nezer* was made *Rebbe*, and his son followed him as his *Rebbe*. He was married in 1873, but after his wife was *niftar* in 1901, he remarried in 1903. Rav Shmuel served as *Maggid Shiur* in his father's *Yeshiva* in Sochatchov and helped him write *Eglei Tal* on the thirty-nine *melochos* of *Shabbos*, as well as *Avnei Nezer*. After his father was *niftar* in 1910, the *Chassidim* crowned Rav Shmuel their *Rebbe*. His *sefer* contains the thoughts of his famous father, (5687/1926);
- ✳ **Rav Avrohom Shmuel Binyomin Sofer** (II), the *Divrei Sofer* [Yated 12.28.07]. {Avrohom Shmuel Binyomin Sofer (I) was the eldest son of the *Chasam Sofer* and Sorel, daughter of Rav Akiva Eiger, and was known as the *Ksav Sofer*, (1815–1871)}, (5709/1948);
- ✳ **Rav Eliyohu Eliezer Dessler** (1892–1953). His father, Rav Reuven Dov Dessler, was a *talmid muvhok* of Rav Simcha Zissel of Kelm, and his mother was a granddaughter of Rav Yisrael Salanter and a niece of Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski. After learning in Kelm, he married a granddaughter of Rav Simcha Zissel. During the Bolshevik revolution, he moved

to London in 1927. In 1941, he founded the Gateshead *Yeshiva* and *kollel*. In 1948, he was asked by Rav Yosef Kahaneman to join the Ponevezh *Yeshiva* in Bnei Brak. Many of his thoughts and discourses are collected in *Michtov Me'Eliyohu*. [25<sup>th</sup> of *Teves*, according to *Yated* 2007], (5714/1953);

\* **Rav Moshe Mordechai Biederman**, the Lelover *Rebbe* (1904–1987). Son of Rav Shimon Nosson Nota Biederman, Moshe Mordechai was born in Yerushalayim. When he was just ten years old, his mother passed away and his father moved to Cracow, Poland, leaving him to the care of his grandfather, Rav Dovid. Five years later, after the *petira* of his grandfather, he traveled to Europe and established his place of learning at the Radomsker *shtiebel* in Cracow. He became very close to the Stoliner *Rebbe*, the Yenuka. When his father was *niftar* in 1930, the *Chassidim* looked to Rav Moshe Mordechai to become their new *Rebbe*. He stayed in Poland until right before the onset of the War, settling in Tel Aviv in 1944. [*Hamodia* Jan. 3, 2007] (5748/1987);

\* **Rav Mordechai Gifter** (1915–2001). Born in Richmond, Virginia, he moved to Baltimore with his family when his father noted the difficulty in teaching his son in a city without strong *Torah* resources. As a youth, he studied in the Rav Yitzchok Elchonon *Yeshiva* of New York City under his *Rav*, Rav Moshe HaLevi Soloveitchik. Rav Gifter studied together with Rav Nosson Wachtfogel, former *Mashgiach* of Lakewood and Rav Avigdor Miller of Flatbush in the *Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Yeshiva*. On the advice of his uncle, Rav Yehuda Leib Zer, one of the directors of the *Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Yeshiva*, Rav Gifter went to study in the Telz *Yeshiva* of Lithuania in the winter of 1932. He became very close to the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Avrohom Yitzchok Bloch. In the summer of 1939, Rav Gifter became engaged to the daughter of Rav Zalman Bloch. The wedding date was set for a year later. The couple married in the United States. With the expansion of the *Ner Yisrael Yeshiva* in Baltimore by Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, Rav Gifter was asked to deliver *chaburos* to the students. In 1943, Rav Gifter became a *Rav* in Connecticut, and later, his uncles, Rav Eliyohu Meir Bloch and Rav Chaim Mordechai Katz, founded the Telz *Yeshiva* in Cleveland. They asked him to join them as *Ra"m* and *Mashgiach*. He moved to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1976, founding the *Telz Yeshiva* in Kiryat Telz-Stone near Yerushalayim. However, three years later, the *Rosh Yeshiva* of Telz in Cleveland, Rav Boruch Sorotzkin, was *niftar*, and Rav Gifter returned to Cleveland to succeed him. And there he remained until his own *petira*, (23<sup>rd</sup> of *Teves*, according to *Yated* 2007), (5762/2001);

\* **Rav Moshe Akiva Tikochinsky**, *Mashgiach* of Slabodka *Yeshiva* in Bnei Brak. *Mechaber* of *Bein HaSh'moshos* and *HaYomom Bekadur Ha'aretz*, (5749/1988).

\* **25<sup>th</sup> of Teves ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Jan 21<sup>st</sup>)**

\* **Rav Yechiel Michel Tukatchinsky (Tikochinsky)**, *Mashgiach* of Slabodka in Bnei Brak, and founder of *Yeshivas Mekor Chaim* in Yerushalayim. In 1925, he published a *sefer* called *Tekufas HaChama Uvirchosoh*, in preparation for the *berocha* made when the sun returns to the point at which it began at the time of Creation. He wrote a *sefer* called *Bein HaShmoshos*, published in 1929, which deals with the International Date Line. In 1941, he changed his mind altogether, as documented in his *sefer*, *Hayomom Bekadur Ha'aretz*, in which he shows that the new day begins twelve hours to the east of Yerushalayim.

\* **26<sup>th</sup> of Teves ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

\* **Rav Avrohom ben Dovid MiPosquières (Ra'avad)** (circa 1125–1198) was a Provençal *Rav*, a prolific commentator on the *Talmud*, on *Sefer Halochos* of Rav Yitzchok Alfasi (*Rif*) and

*Mishne Torah* of Maimonides (*Rambam*), and is regarded as a father of *Kabbola* and one of the key and important links in the chain of Jewish mystics. He was a product of the flourishing Jewish presence in Provence in the twelfth century, born in the south of France about 1125 and passing away at Posquières (meaning “place of wells”) on November 27, 1198. In that era, Christians and Jews created separate communities within the well-defended village of Posquières. *Ra'avad* (abbreviation for Rav Avrohom *ben* Dovid) acquired most of his *Talmudic* learning under the guidance of Rav Moshe *ben* Yosef and Rav Meshullom *ben* Yaakov of Lunel, and remained in Lunel after completing his studies, subsequently becoming one of the rabbinical authorities of that city. Next he went to Montpellier, where he remained for only a short time, and then moved to Nîmes, where he lived for a considerable period. Under the direction of *Ra'avad*, the rabbinical school of Nîmes was considered the chief seat of *Talmudic* learning in Provence. Besides being an active teacher, he wrote answers to hundreds of learned questions as well as a commentary on the whole *Talmud* and several compendia of rabbinical law. He is best known for his *Hasogos* on the *Rambam* and the *Rif*, but many of his other works are lost. The *Ra'avad* is often considered to be the source of the commonly used diagram of the *Sephiros* of the Tree of Life that was ultimately written down by his son Yitzchok the Blind. He considered Judaism a spiritual practice of deed, not of dogma, and followed an ascetic mode of life that gained for him the title of “the pious”. In spite of his asceticism, the *Ra'avad's* wealth and benevolence were famous. Not only did he erect and keep in repair a large school building, but he cared for the material welfare of the poor students as well. It was his great wealth that brought him into peril of his life, however. In order to obtain some of it, Elzéar, the lord of Posquières, had him cast into prison, where he might have perished, had not his persecutor's superior intervened. When Elzéar was banished, Rav Avrohom *ben* Dovid returned to Posquières (now named Vauvert) where he remained until his *petira*, (4959/1198);



- \* **Rav Avrohom Chaim** of Zlotchov, *mechaber* of *Orach LeChaim* and *Pri Chaim*. [Note: Rav Chaim Leib Epsztein was *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* at Czyzewo from 1729, then at Czyzewo, and finally at Kolszyn. He was *mechaber* of a *sefer* called *Pri Chaim*. There was also a *Rav* in Sokolow named Rav Chaim Leib from Kaluszyn, *mechaber* of *Pri Chaim*.], (5577/1816).

## \* **27<sup>th</sup> of Teves ~ Begins Thursday Night (Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>)**

- \* **Rav Shimshon Refoel Hirsch**, Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, (1808–1888). He was born in Hamburg, Germany. His father, Rav Refoel Aryeh (1777–1857), who changed the family name to Hirsch, was the son of Rav Menachem Mendel Frankfurter of Altuna (1742–1823). Rav Shimshon Refoel's father, though a merchant, devoted much of his time to Torah studies; his grandfather, Rav Menachem Mendel Frankfurter, was a talmid of Rav Yonoson Eibeshitz and was the founder of the Talmud Torah in Hamburg and unsalaried Rav of three neighboring congregations of Altuna, Hamburg and Wandsbeck (“AHU”); his great-uncle, Löb Frankfurter, was the author of several Hebrew works, including *HaRechasim LeBik'a* (הרכסים לבקעה), a Torah commentary. At the age of eighteen, Rav Shimshon Refoel went to Mannheim to learn at the Yeshiva of Rav Yaakov Ettlinger, author of *Aruch LaNer*. Rav Hirsch received *semicha* from Rav Ettlinger after learning there for a year. Thereafter, he

attended the University of Bonn. That education would serve him well later in life as he combated the forces of Reform with eloquence. When he was twenty-one, he was appointed Chief Rav of the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg. There, he married Chana Judel. Rav Hirsch remained in Oldenburg until 1841, when he was elected chief Rav of the Hanoverian districts of Aurich and Osnabrück, with his residence in Emden. During this five-year post, he was taken up almost completely by communal work, and had little time for writing. He did, however, found a secondary school with a curriculum featuring both Jewish studies and a secular program. He also authored *Iggros HaTzofon* (The Nineteen Letters), under the pen name Ben Uziel. One year later, he published *Chorev*. In 1847, he became Chief Rav of Moravia, a region of fifty thousand Jews in fifty-two communities, and which is now the Czech Republic. In 1851, he became the Rav of Frankfurt-am-Main, which he transformed into a Torah bastion. His best-known work is his classic six-volume commentary on Chumash. He is considered the intellectual founder of the Torah im Derech Eretz school of contemporary Orthodox Judaism and had a considerable influence on the development of Orthodox Judaism. Rav Hirsch passed away in 1888 in Frankfurt-am-Main and is buried there.

(Rav Shimshon Refoel Hirsch once went out of his way to see the Alps. When asked why, Rav Hirsch replied, “Because, when I get up to Heaven, I want to have an answer when Hashem says to me, ‘Nu, Shimshon, what did you think of My Alps?’”), (5649/1888);

- \* **Rav Shmuel Hillel Shenker.** His father, Rav Avrohom Shenker, was one of Rav Yisrael Salanter’s greatest *talmidim*. Rav Shmuel spent his early years in Slobodka, but was orphaned of his father at an early age. He thus traveled to the *Talmud Torah* in Kelm to absorb the *Torah* and *mussar* of the *Alter*, Rav Simcha Zissel of Kelm. After a number of years, he traveled to *Eretz Yisrael* with his relative, Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, who later became chief *Rav* of Yerushalaim. In 1895, Rav Shmuel Hillel married Laya Genendel, the eldest daughter of Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of *Iyar* 1944, his beloved son, Rav Mendel Shenker, passed away when he was only forty-six. Another year passed and another son was taken from him. Rav Yisrael, his youngest and most beloved son, passed away in the prime of his life on the 27<sup>th</sup> of *Teves* 1945, (5717/1956);
- \* **Rav Kalman Avrohom Goldberg** (1895–1968). A devoted *talmid* of the *Alter* of Novardok, he became *Rav* in Vasilkov and moved to America in 1926. In 1928, he was hired to head the *Bais Din* for *Adas Yisrael*, under Rav Velvel Margulies. After Rav Velvel’s *petira*, he became *Rav*, (5729/1968);
- \* **Rav Menashe Yitzchok Meir Eichenstein** of Ziditchov-Petach Tikva, (5732/1971);
- \* **Rav Avrohom Simcha HaKohen Kaplan**, chief *Rav* of Tzefas, (5751/1990);
- \* **Rav Pinchas Hirschprung**, chief *Rav* of Montreal (1915–1998). At the age of fifteen, he published a *Torah* journal, *Ohel Torah*, along with his friend, Rav Yeshaya Yosef Margolin, in Galicia. He then joined *Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin*, learning under Rav Meir Shapiro. At the outbreak of War World II, Rav Pinchas fled to Vilna, which was still neutral territory. In 1942, he acquired a visa to travel to Canada with a group of students from Mir and Lubavitch. When he arrived in Montreal, he was offered the position of *Rav* of *Kehillas Adas Yisrael*. When *Yeshiva Merkaz HaTorah* was established, Rav Pinchas became its *Rosh Yeshiva*. Eventually, he was appointed *Rav Ha’Ir* (chief *Rav*) of Montreal, (5759/1998).



## ❁ 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, ויקיף 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 Yosef Shatzkes, 21<sup>st</sup> of Teves

*Av Bais Din* of Brod

Rav Shatzkes was a *boki*, well versed in the *Gemora Yerushalmi*. Before he passed away, he requested that only a person well versed in *Yerushalmi* be buried beside him, because he wanted a *chavrusa* in the next world who could learn with him! The *chevra kadisha* read this and accepted it. They were astonished when

some time later, the *mechaber* of the commentary *Pnei Moshe* on the *Yerushalmi* visited Brod, got sick and passed away – and so he was buried next to Rav Shatzkes and became his *chavrusa* in *Yerushalmi* in *Olam HaBa!* (Pinkus of the Brod *Kloiz*, printed in *Arim VeImahos BeYisroel* Volume 6, p. 333)



#### Rav Yisrael Dov of Vilednik, 21<sup>st</sup> of Teves

*Mechaber* of the *She'eiris Yisrael*

Rav Yisrael Dov of Vilednik points out a *diyuk* in the words of *Chazal*: Dovid *HaMelech* did not “sin” – rather he was “mistaken” – because at the hand of Heaven

he was caused to err, in order to raise up the “fallen souls of Yisrael” (i.e. in generations to come). This is what *Chazal* mean when they say that Dovid *HaMelech*

only succumbed to “that incident” (with Bassheva) in order to teach us how to do *teshuva*. All those who have succumbed to “*p’gam habris*” can receive their *tikkun* through Dovid *HaMelech* (*She’eiris Yisrael-Vilednik, Shovavim Likkutim*). Through *Tehillim*, in particular, one will be brought to repentance, which will bring about the *tikkun*.



### **The Viledniker’s Mother (Famed Rav Shlomo Carlebach story)**

One day the holy Viledniker was told that the wife of one of his *Chassidim* had moved back to her parents. He was so heartbroken – he called the woman and this is what he said: “I want you to know, your husband loves you so much. He is up all night in the *shul*, reciting *Tehillim* and *davening* that you should come back to him, because he loves you so much. So I’m begging you, please, please, please, go back to your husband who loves you.”

And this is what she said, “*Rebbe*, let it be clear to you: I didn’t leave my husband because I don’t love him. On the contrary, I love him so much. But *Hashem* hasn’t blessed us yet with children, and a house without children is more destroyed than the *Bais HaMikdosh*. A house without laughter, without crying of children, is so lonely, so empty. I couldn’t bear it anymore, so I went back to my parents’ home. But *Rebbe*, if you want me to go back to my husband, bless me with children.” She was a very clever woman, so she added, “*Rebbe*, if you bless me with children, bless me to have a son like you.”

The holy Viledniker just smiled and said to her, “I’ll be so happy to bless you to have a son like me, but you have to promise me something: If you will be a mother like my mother, then you will have children like me. Let me tell you about my mother: It should never happen to any child in the world. My father left the world when I was

seven, and I had a brother who was only five years old, and my mother was taking care of us. My mother was so good to us; *gevult* was she sweet – *gevult* was she holy – *gevult* was she beautiful. One morning, she woke up and she said, ‘*Yisraelk’le mien tier kind* [Yisrael’ek’le, my precious son], please bring me a *siddur*. I have to *daven* but I am too sick to get out of bed.’ I brought my mother the *siddur* and she held it in her holy hands. This is what she said: ‘Master of the world, *Tatte Zeese, Heilege Tatte* [Sweet Father, Holy Father], I’m so sick. I can’t even *daven*. But Master of the World, You know the truth; if I won’t take care of my children, there is nobody else who will take care of them. So just for the sake of my children, *Tatte Zeese, Master of the world, make me well.*’ I swear to you: she got up, she was well.

“One more story about my mother: Can you imagine how many tears my mother shed, how many *tefillos* she offered, when she kindled the lights before *Shabbos*? I was so little, yet I knew; the only one who prayed more than my mother, was the *Kohen Godol* on *Yom Kippur* in the Holy of Holies. So one Friday she was crying so much, and I guess she bent over the candles, and her tears fell on the candles. When she opened her eyes, it was already *Shabbos*. There were no more candles. The tears extinguished the fire. My mother said, ‘Master of the World, *Heilige Tatte in Himmel* [Holy Father in Heaven], I can’t live without the light of *Shabbos*. Master of the world, Master of the world, Master of the world, how can I have *Shabbos* without my *Shabbosdike licht* [light of *Shabbos*]? But it’s already *Shabbos*, so I’m begging You, Master of the world, please – You, You Master of the world, rekindle my light, rekindle my *Shabbosdike Licht*.”

The Viledniker *Rebbe* said to the woman, “I swear to you, I saw a hand coming down from Heaven and kindling the lights of *Shabbos*.”



In one of the cities in the Ukraine a terrible plague broke out. As the death toll rose, the community leaders decided to seek out sinners and transgressors, for they felt if they could root them out they could stop the plague from spreading and taking lives.

There was one family in town where it was well known that the husband and wife did not live together, because he was a simpleton and she was sophisticated. Since their family matters were well publicized the council determined that the wife must be at fault; surely it was her infidelity and promiscuous behavior that had brought this plague upon them. They decided to give her lashes. After they had meted out their punishment to atone for her suspected sins, the woman could not hold back her shame. She declared boldly that she was pure and blameless and that their accusation and suspicions were false. She asked that they travel to the *Tzaddik*, the Viledniker *Rebbe*, to whom all secrets were revealed and all things known, so that he too could reveal her righteousness and proclaim her not guilty and clear her besmirched reputation.

When they arrived she immediately began to scream and berate the community leaders. But the *Tzaddik* turned to her and said, "My dear woman, hold your tongue, for though you are blameless for the sin they have accused you of, nonetheless you are worthy of lashes. For it has been decreed in Heaven that you are to be punished. So what if your husband is no wise man?! Is that a reason for your mistreatment of him? You ignore him and his love, and his wretched soul is so pained by your mistreatment of him that he has sat and sobbed through many chapters of *Tehillim*. He has true *yiras shomayim*. In Heaven they heard his cries and anguish and have judged you guilty and sentenced you to lashes, which you have rightfully received. Now go home and act like a good kosher Jewish wife and all shall be well." It was then that the woman turned to the

*Tzaddik* and said, "If the *Rebbe* will promise me a son as righteous as he himself is, then I will listen to everything the *Rebbe* tells me to do."

"You wish to merit a son such as I am? Well, if you wish to have a son like me, you must be as my mother was. If you will be like my mother then you will merit such a son."

The woman asked, "How was the *Rebbe's* mother?"

"Let me tell you of my mother," answered the Vildeniker.

"When I was very young I was orphaned from my father. I was raised by my mother, but when I was just nine or ten she became deathly ill. As she lay in bed, wasting away, she called me over and asked for a *sefer*.

"I knew that she could not read Hebrew, so I was amazed, but asked her which *sefer* I should bring. 'Whichever *sefer* you wish – it does not matter,' my mother answered.

"I brought her a large volume which was the *Rif's* commentary to the *Talmud*. My mother took the *Rif* in her hands and said: '*Heilige Osios! Bet dem obishter das mein Yisrael Ber zol zein ein erlicher yid! - Holy Letters, please approach and beseech Hashem that my son Yisrael Ber will be a holy and righteous Jew!*' For she foresaw her untimely passing and knew that she would not live to raise me.

"Now," concluded the Viledniker, "do you understand the type of mother I had? When you will be like her, then your son will be like me."

(cited from the story told by Eliezer Dov Friedman in the name of Rav Betzalel Vilshansky – *She'eiris Yisrael*, p. 14-15)



#### **From the Rav's writing:**

"The *Torah* was given over in seventy languages clearly explained" . . .  
"The holy *Torah* itself is (written using)

holy letters. They are initially en clothed in the holy tongue (Hebrew). Afterward, they are clothed in sackcloth in thousands of different vestments and it contains the entirety of those seventy languages.

...I heard from my master, the holy *Rebbe* of Czernobyl, that it was revealed to him from heaven in a dream that for three hundred years they are preparing and organizing the limbs of the *Moshiach*. He was told that it is hinted to in a *Rashi* that this preparation and organization is using *La'az*, foreign languages, meaning to say that *Moshiach's* limbs are prepared specifically through foreign languages; this is a very deep thing indeed. This is because *Moshiach's* concept is to cause all the nations to call out clearly in their language in *Hashem's* name



(*Tzefania* 7:15) because *Moshiach* is revealed once the seventy languages have been gathered together from among the seventy angelic princes which are sackcloth garments for *Torah*, and become nullified to the *Torah* as we all call out in *Hashem's* name. Not so when the *Torah* was given, when there were seventy distinct languages, and they were including at that time in the holy *Torah*. However, in the future, all the power of the seventy languages will be nullified completely, as it says in *Tzefania* above.

Truthfully, the final task of refinement called *Birurim* is achieved through languages, since every word and idea contains a spark of holiness and that spark is refined and uplifted through true unifications and combinations using foreign languages to elucidate and explain the holy *Torah*. This is the purpose of the unifications and upliftment of the holy sparks. Therefore when you study and learn you should translate all you learn specifically into *La'az* - a foreign language. This rectifies sinful thoughts and evil thoughts which cause the holy sparks to fall into the realm of the broken vessels.”



## Rav Sholom of Shatz, 22<sup>nd</sup> of Teves

*Mechaber of Ohr HaGonuz*

There is a photo of the Shatzer taken with his permission. Written on its reverse side is the *pasuk*: *ba'avur tihey yiroso al pneichem levilti secheto'u* – “in order that fear of *Hashem* be on you to prevent you from sin”. This is the story of such a special photo and its signature:

Once, the Shatzer's daughter, *Rebbetzin Chaya*, came to visit and requested a photo. Initially he refused, and quipped, “What will you do with such a photo? Will it help your *Yiras Shomayim*?” She said that yes, it would – and so he agreed and stipulated that he would inscribe the photo on its reverse, which is

why his photo is inscribed by himself as a *segula* for *Yiras Shomayim*.

(*Ohr HaGonuz* II, *Kuntres Likkutei Dibburim* 18)



The *Kever* of the *Rebbe* is known as a place where many people see miracles.

He promised that if one comes to his *kever* Friday morning, lights three candles and accepts a good practice upon himself, the *Rebbe* will invoke the merit of his forefathers to help that person with what he needs. However, he strongly warns the



individual about reneging that which he

accepted upon himself!



## Rav Naftoli HaKohen Katz of Pozna, 24<sup>th</sup> of Teves

*Mechaber of Semichas Chachomim*

### A Holy Aura

Once, when a young *Tzaddik* was a *Yeshiva bochur*, he was unsure about which *Yeshiva* to attend, until a heavenly voice directed him to Pozna, to the *Yeshiva* of the *Semichas Chachomim*. When the young *Tzaddik* arrived and attended a *shiur*, he was greatly astonished to see a bright, shining aura, burning like a candle, above the head of the *Maggid Shiur*, the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Naftoli Katz, *mechaber* of the *Semichas Chachomim*!

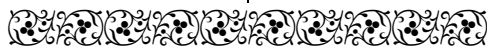
He decided to shadow the *Rosh Yeshiva* and try to learn what special deeds he must have accomplished to earn such a shining aura like a burning flame. And so he tagged along and observed that he fed many guests, including the poor and indigent at his table – but this was not enough reason. He further investigated and discovered that he served his guests himself and personally attended to their needs, even while he himself ate nothing, for he was fasting – yet he concluded that this too was not enough reason for the shining aura. He continued to follow the *Rav* around and witnessed how he slept. He stole into his bedroom, hid himself and saw how Rav Katz closed the door, locked

it, opened a sealed chest, took out a stone and lay down on the ground and slept on the stone as a pillow! After about an hour, he rose, went over to the bed, messed up the sheets, covers and pillows and rearranged them to make the bed appear slept in, and proceeded to study *Torah* secretly. This, he concluded, was the reason why he merited the shining aura of a candle burning above his holy head! (*Teshuas Tzaddikim* p. 480–481)



### Guard Your Eyes

The Spinka *Rebbe*, *mechaber* of *Imrei Yosef*, used to be very careful to guard his eyes from inadvertently gazing at or seeing any forbidden sights. So much so, that when he walked outside in the street he kept one eye closed; the other he opened just a small slit to see. One day, he studied the *sefer Semichas Chachomim* and saw written there that whoever gazes with only one eye is doing something that has a negative sign. This is because the wicked Bilaam was one-eyed. From then on, he would walk with both eyes shut and someone would lead him. (Introduction to *Chakal Yitzchok*, *Maamar* 5:1)



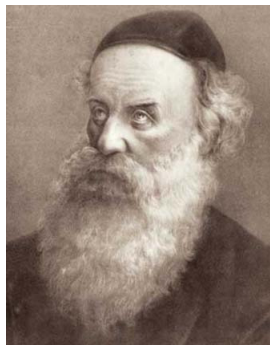
## Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, 24<sup>th</sup> of Teves

*The Ba'al HaTanya, Founder of Chabad Chassidus, Der Alter Rebbe*

There was once a *Chassid* of the *Alter Rebbe* who was a peddler of goods and made a living traveling from town to town selling his items. One time, during a *yechidus*, the *Rebbe* asked him questions and, after hearing the *Chassid's* responses, the *Alter Rebbe* advised him always to

carry with him three *challos*. The *Chassid* did not understand why the *Rebbe* would give him such a strange instruction, but he did exactly as the *Rebbe* had instructed, trusting that one day he would understand why he got such advice from the *Rebbe*.

And so it happened one day that the *Chassid* was traveling before *Shabbos* and he lost his way. *Shabbos* was approaching soon, so he quickly tried to find a place to stay. He knocked on a house and the owner came out with a friendly smile. They exchanged greetings and the *Chassid* explained to the man that he needed a place to stay the night. The man invited him in and led him to his room. Now, this man was a non-Jew, and when he opened the door and led the *Chassid* into the room, the *Chassid* realized that there was a friend that was going to be staying with him that night. It was a huge dog, the size of the *Chassid* himself! He realized that his host was not as friendly as he had first appeared to be and quickly turned around to go back. By this time the door was locked and the non-Jew told him that “in this room people go in but they do not come out.”



The *Chassid* became very afraid. He figured that being in a room with such a friend he did not have long to live. He started *davening* to *Hashem* and saying *vidui* (confession). He noticed that the dog was just sitting in his corner. So the *Chassid* began *davening mincha*. Still, the dog was quiet. He then *davened kabbolas Shabbos* and *maariv*. The *Chassid* remembered that he had three *challos* with him, so when he found some water in the room, he washed and made *kiddush* on the bread. The dog listened to *kiddush*, so to speak, and afterward was very excited. The *Chassid* realized that the dog wanted some *challa*, so he ate a small piece and gave the dog the rest of the loaf. Needless to say, the rest of the night he did not sleep; with such a friend in the room, who could sleep? Morning came and the *Chassid davened shacharis* – and the scene repeated itself

with the *challa*.

After *Shabbos* the owner of the house opened the door to the room carrying a broom and bucket, planning to clean up the bones of the man. Lo and behold – he found the *Chassid* sitting in one corner and the dog in the other. So he screamed at the dog, “Get that Jew – eat him!” But the dog wouldn’t move. The *Chassid* realized that when you feed a dog, you become its owner. So he said to the dog, “Get that man!” The dog jumped on the non-Jew and tore him apart.

Then the dog took the Jew by his *kappota* and dragged him to the forest. There, he took him to a place where the *Chassid* found a great treasure, a chest filled with gold coins. The non-Jew had acquired it all by killing and stealing from his former “guests”. The dog grabbed the Jew again and took him outside the forest near his village. At that point the dog dropped dead. The Jew realized where he was and made his way home. Before going home he stopped by the *Alter Rebbe* to tell him all that had transpired. The *Rebbe* took him in and told him the following: “The dog was a *gilgul* (reincarnation) of a Jew who did not properly fulfill the *mitzva* of eating after making *kiddush*. His punishment was to be stuck in the body of this dog. When you made *kiddush* for him this was his rectification. The reason he took you to show the gold coins is because he wanted to repay you for helping him accomplish his *tikkun* so that he could go to *Gan Eden*.” The *Rebbe* told the *Chassid* that he should open a business with the gold coins. This the *Chassid* did and became a rich man.

Needless to say, the *Chassid* then realized why the *Rebbe* had given him the seemingly strange instruction to carry three *challos* with him at all times.



**A mitzva is made to be performed only when it is clothed in the ways of**

**nature.**

After his arrest, Rav Shneur Zalman was at once escorted to the secret cells of the dreaded Peter-Paul fortress in Saint Petersburg, where he was to spend over seven weeks until his miraculous release on the 19<sup>th</sup> (*Yud-Tes*) of *Kislev*, 1798. For the first three weeks he was held under severe conditions – the lot of those impeached for rebellion against the Czar. The rationale for this was simple: one of the principal charges against the *Rebbe* was that he had treacherously raised funds for Russia's traditional enemy, the Turkish sultan. (He had collected money through the charity boxes of the *Rav Meir Ba'al Hanes* Fund for the support of his *talmidim* in the Holy Land, which was then under Turkish rule!)

This interrogation took place not there, but in the headquarters of the Tainy Soviet, the Secret Council on the other side of the Neva River, so that the *Rebbe* had to be taken across each time by ferry.

On one such occasion, the *Rebbe* asked the gentile official accompanying him to stop the ferry so that he could stand and recite *Kiddush Levona*, the blessing recited over the new moon. He refused, whereupon the *Rebbe* said, "If I want to, I can stop the boat myself."

And indeed, after the man again refused to oblige, the boat stopped in the middle of the river. The *Rebbe* then recited the *pesukim* of *Tehillim* 148, which are said before the blessing over the moon, but did not pronounce the blessing itself. The ferryman realized that unusual forces were at work. He begged the *Rebbe* to release the boat. The ferry then proceeded on its way.

When the *Rebbe* again asked the official to stop the boat, he asked, "What will you give me in exchange for the favor?"

In reply, Rav Shneur Zalman gave him a blessing. The man then demanded it in writing, and the *Rebbe* recorded it on a note in his own handwriting.

In later years, when that official rose

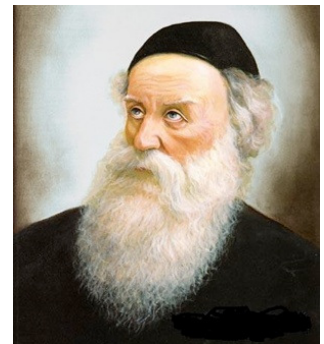
to a position of power and enjoyed an old age of honor and prosperity, he treasured that note, which he kept under glass in a heavy gold frame. Indeed, it was seen and read by a renowned *talmid* of the *Rebbe* by the name of Rav Dov Zev, who, before he was appointed *Rav* of the *Chassidic* community in Yekaterinoslav, lived in Stradov, where he was given the main responsibility of teaching *Chassidic* philosophy and guiding the *Chassidim* in observance and self-refinement. He had heard from an aged *Chassid* that there lived a gentile squire not too far from Stradov who was the son of the official who had received that written blessing from Rav Shneur Zalman halfway across the River Neva. The son too revered the note in the frame, he said. Hearing this, Rav Dov Zev made it his business to locate that nobleman, and was thus able to see the note.

One year on the 19<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev*, on the anniversary of Rav Shneur Zalman's release, Rav Yosef Yitzchok related the above episode and added that as a boy he had been left with a question. Since the *Rebbe* had already stopped the boat, why did he not recite the *berocha* as well, and then he would not have to depend upon the favor of the gentile? When he grew older, he continued, and had grasped the approach

of *Chassidus* more profoundly, he understood that there was a point of principle involved. The *Rebbe* had been obliged to act as he did, for a *mitzva* is made to be performed only

when it is clothed in the ways of nature, and not through supernatural means.

He added incidentally that the very fact that a manuscript page of Rav Shneur Zalman's handwriting should be found in



the hands of a gentile is a mystery known only to the Knower of Secrets.



In 1812, Napoleon's *Grande Armée* invaded Russia, with the self-proclaimed "liberator's" aim to bring the whole of Europe under his hegemony.

Around that time, Rav Schneur Zalman of Liadi wrote to one of his *talmidim*:

If *Bais* – B[onaparte] will be victorious, Jewish wealth will increase, and the prestige of the Jewish people will be raised; but their hearts will disintegrate and be distanced from their Father in Heaven. But if *Aleph* – A[lexander] will be victorious, although Israel's poverty will increase and their prestige will be lowered, their hearts will be joined, bound and unified with their Father in Heaven. And this shall be your sign: in the near time, the apple of your eyes will be taken from you... (Igros Kodesh Admor HaZoken, letter #64)

[This was a famed and raging dispute, mainly between the Ba'al HaTanya and Rebbe Reb Mendele of Riminov (who were chaverim) with regard to who should win: the Czar of Russia or Napoleon. Rebbe Reb Mendele felt that although there was a threat of assimilation under Napoleon, nevertheless the Jews suffered tremendously under the Russian Czar and felt it was time to live under the freedom of rights that Napoleon's win offered. Although Napoleon ultimately lost, Rebbe Reb Mendele's curse came true in later years, when the Czar's entire family was savagely wiped out.]

The *Chassid* to whom this letter was addressed, Rav Moshe Maizlish of Vilna, was no mere bystander to these events. At Rav Schneur Zalman's behest, Rav Moshe served as a spy for the Russians, passing on information he picked up in the French general command, where he worked as an interpreter, to the czar's generals.

When Napoleon's advancing armies approached Rav Schneur Zalman's hometown of Liadi, the *Rebbe* was forced to flee. The *Rebbe* left Liadi with sixty wagons carrying his extended family and many of his *Chassidim*, escorted by a troop of soldiers attached to the convoy by express order of the czar.

A few miles out of Liadi, the *Rebbe* suddenly requested from the officers accompanying the convoy that they provide him with a light carriage, two good horses and two armed drivers. Taking along some of his own people, the *Rebbe* rushed back to Liadi. Upon arriving back at his own home, he instructed that a careful search be made to see if any of his personal items had been left behind. After a thorough search, a pair of worn-out slippers, a rolling pin and a kneading bowl were found in the attic. The *Rebbe* instructed that these be taken along, and that the house be set on fire. He then blessed the inhabitants of the town, and quickly departed.

No sooner did the *Rebbe* leave the town than the first scouts of the French army entered Liadi from the other side. Shortly thereafter, Napoleon himself, accompanied by his generals, arrived at the *Rebbe's* residence, only to find the house engulfed in flames. A proclamation was issued throughout the town and the surrounding

villages promising a generous reward in golden coins to anyone who could produce an object belonging to the Jewish *Rav*, or a coin he had received from the *Rebbe's* hand. But nothing was found.



Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, winter of 1812-1813

For more than five months, as Napoleon advanced across Russia, took

Moscow and then embarked on his disastrous retreat, the *Rebbe's* entourage wandered from town to town and from village to village, only narrowly avoiding the swath of carnage cut by the French army as it moved through the country.

The *Rebbe* rode in the third wagon. In the first wagon sat his grandson, Rav Nachum, with two military officers. Whenever they arrived at a crossroads, the entire procession would halt while Rav Nachum walked to the third wagon to ask Rav Schneur Zalman which way to proceed. At times, the *Rebbe* would reply without moving from his seat; other times, he would walk to the crossroads, lean on his staff and meditate for a while before issuing his directive.

On one occasion, Rav Nachum erred in his understanding of the *Rebbe's* instruction and the convoy took the wrong turn. When the error was revealed, Rav Schneur Zalman instructed that they continue along the road already taken, but said with great regret in his voice, "How fortunate it is when the grandson follows the grandfather; how unfortunate it is when the grandfather must follow the lead of the grandson."

Many trials and tribulations followed that wrong turn in the road, culminating in their arrival in the town of P'yene.

The *Rebbe's* convoy arrived in P'yene in the dead of winter, on the eighth day of *Teves*, 5573 (December 1812). P'yene was a good-sized town, consisting of some three hundred large houses and courtyards, many of which were empty, as the men were away at war. The generous townspeople provided housing and kindling free of charge to the refugees.

Ten days later, the *Rebbe* fell ill. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of *Teves*, *Motzo'ei Shabbos* following *Shabbos Parshas Shemos*, at 10:30 in the evening, after reciting the *havdola* prayer marking the close of the

holy *Shabbos*, he returned his soul to its Maker.

Shortly before his passing (by one account, "after *havdola*, several minutes before giving up his soul in purity to *Hashem*") the *Rebbe* penned a short discourse titled "The Humble Soul".

*"For the truly humble soul,"* Rav Schneur Zalman wrote, *"its mission in life lies in the pragmatic aspect of Torah, both in studying it for oneself and explaining it to others, and in doing acts of material kindness in lending an empathizing mind and counsel from afar regarding household concerns, though the majority, if not all, of these concern things of falsehood...For although the divine attribute of Truth argued that man should not be created, since he is full of lies, the divine attribute of Kindness argued that he should be created, for he is full of kindnesses...And the world is built upon kindness."*

[www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/465708/jewish/The-Passing-of-Rabbi-Schneur-Zalman-of-Liadi.htm#footnote1a465708](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/465708/jewish/The-Passing-of-Rabbi-Schneur-Zalman-of-Liadi.htm#footnote1a465708)



Following his release from imprisonment in Saint Petersburg on the 19<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev*, 5559 (1798), an event which marked the *Chassidic* movement's decisive victory over its opponents, Rav Schneur Zalman of Liadi sent a letter (the letter forms the second chapter of *Igeres HaKodesh*, part IV of *Tanya*) to all his followers, warning them against any feelings of pride and superiority over their antagonists. The letter begins by quoting the *pasuk* (*Bereishis* 32:11) [in *Parshas Vayishlach*, which was read on the *Shabbos* before Rav Schneur Zalman's release] in which Yaakov says to *Hashem*, "I am diminished (*kotonti*) by all the kindnesses...You have shown Your servant."

Rav Schneur Zalman explains: "The meaning of this is that every kindness

bestowed by *Hashem* upon a person should cause him to be exceedingly humble. For a [divine] kindness is [an expression of]... 'His right hand does embrace me' (*Shir HaShirim* 2:6) – *Hashem* is literally bringing the person close to Himself, far more intensely than before. And the closer a person is to *Hashem*... the greater the humility this should evoke in him... This because 'all before Him is as naught' (*Zohar*, part I, 11b); so the more 'before Him' a person is, the more 'as naught' [does he perceive himself to be]... This is the attribute of Yaakov...

"The very opposite is the case in the contrasting realm of...*kelipa* (evil): the greater the kindness shown a person, the more he grows in arrogance and self-satisfaction.

"Therefore, I come with a great call to all our community regarding the many kindnesses which *Hashem* has shown us: Assume the attribute of Yaakov... Do not feel yourselves superior to your brethren (i.e. the opponents of *Chassidus*); do not give free rein to your mouths regarding them, or hiss at them, G-d forbid. [I] strictly warn: Make no mention [of our victory]. Only humble your spirits and hearts with the truth of Yaakov..."

Rav Schneur Zalman's great-grandson, Rav Shmuel of Lubavitch, once remarked: "If the *Rebbe* would have omitted the words 'with the truth of Yaakov' from his letter, he would have gained fifty thousand additional followers. But the *Rebbe* demanded truth."



### **The Black Carriage**

By: Reb Yerachmiel Tilles

The 19<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev* is celebrated throughout the *Chassidic* world as the day of the liberation of the founder of *Chabad*, Rav Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745–1812). Rav Schneur Zalman was arrested by the czarist regime under

the accusation that his teachings undermined the imperial authority, and his release allowed the vigorous growth of *Chassidus* and the uninhibited dissemination of its teachings.

During the "intermediate days" of *Sukkos* of 1798, an armed officer arrived in Liozna to arrest Rav Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the *Chabad* movement. Deciding that it would be advisable at this point to take the biblical advice, "Hide yourself for a brief moment" (*Isaiah* 26:20), the *Rebbe* slipped out a side door. The officer returned to his headquarters empty-handed.

Back in the house, the *Rebbe* decided that if the agent were to return, he would allow himself to be arrested. Some say that he decided this only after consultation with Rav Shmuel Munkes, one of his close *Chassidim*, who happened to be in the *Rebbe's* home at the time. Rav Shmuel reputedly said to the *Rebbe*, "If you are a true *Rebbe*, you have nothing to fear by being arrested. If you are not, you deserve whatever they will do to you (!), for what right did you have to deprive thousands of *Chassidim* from enjoying the pleasures of this world?"

When the officer reappeared on the day after *Simchas Torah*, which fell on Thursday that year, the *Rebbe* did not hide. Within a few hours, he was already seated in the infamous "Black Mary", the carriage reserved by the Czarist regime for rebels who were under capital sentence. Covered on all sides with heavy black metal panels, and with no windows whatsoever, it was designed to cast dread on all those who saw it. Guarded by heavily armed soldiers, the ironclad black carriage pulled out of Liozna on Thursday night and clanked its fearsome way down the highway to Saint Petersburg, via Vitebsk and Nevel.

At half past ten the next morning, some six hours before candle-lighting time, the *Rebbe* asked that they stop where they were until after *Shabbos*. The officer in

charge ignored his request. A moment later the axles of the carriage broke. No sooner had they repaired them, than one of the horses collapsed and died. Fresh horses were brought, but they could not move the carriage from its place. By this time the gendarmes gathered that it would be impossible to press on with their journey against the *Rebbe's* will, so they asked their prisoner if they could detour to a nearby village and spend the next day there. The *Rebbe* refused, but did agree that the carriage be moved off the highway to an adjacent field.

The spot at which the *Rebbe* spent that *Shabbos* is about three miles from the village of Seliba-Rudnia, which is near the town of Nevel. An old *Chassid* who survived into the twentieth century, Rav Michael of Nevel, used to relate that he knew *Chassidim* who were able to point out the exact spot at which the *Rebbe* had spent that lonely *Shabbos*. He himself had gone

there to see it with his own eyes. All the way there he had seen old and drooping trees on both sides of the road, but that memorable spot was marked by a tall tree with luxuriant foliage.



**Commentary from Rav Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn, the sixth Rebbe of Chabad:**

The story of the *Rebbe's* journey to Saint Petersburg gives tangible testimony to the statement that whatever happens to a *Tzaddik* – and especially to a *Tzaddik* who is a leader of Jewry – takes place only with his consent. Indeed, not only the *Rebbe*, but every *Tzaddik* likewise rules over all material matters. What the *Torah* has to say about the created

universe is decisive: all temporal matters are subject to the dominion of the *Torah*.

When the *Rebbe* did not want to travel further, the wagon came to a halt, and it came to a halt where and when the *Rebbe* so desired. Had the wagon stood still at candle-lighting time, this would have been not at all remarkable. For such things we find concerning even an unwitting reaction, as it is written: “No evil shall befall the righteous” (*Proverbs* 12:21). But that the wagon should stand still at ten-thirty on Friday morning, and not budge – this is a palpable wonder of *Hashem*, like an overt miracle.

From all of the above it should be abundantly clear that one whose word carried weight over material things, as was the case with the *Rebbe*, had the option of not being imprisoned at all, and of not hiding, even for a solitary hour. If he did go nevertheless, this was for the sake of a profound purpose involving the service of *Hashem*.

The patriarch Avrohom opened the channel of self-sacrifice for the sanctification of *Hashem's* Name, and the *Rebbe* opened the channel of self-sacrifice for *Chassidic* service of *Hashem*. From all of this one can gather that the whole episode of the *Rebbe's* imprisonment was only a garment worn by choice, in order to avoid making use of supernatural means.

Truth to tell, this subject warrants a detailed explanation, especially since this would provide at least an inkling of an appreciation of the *Rebbe's* quintessential inner love for Jews in general, for he wanted every individual to start living with zest in his *Torah* study, and in his divine service according to the teachings of *Chassidus*, and his love for *Chassidim* in particular. And this love the *Rebbe* planted in the *Rebbes* who succeeded him. Such a deep-seated and quintessential love is everlasting, throughout all the generations until the coming of *Moshiach*, when it will be granted us, at the time of *techiyas*

*hameisim* (the Resurrection of the Dead), to gaze directly upon the living and luminous countenances of the *Rebbes*.

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### **The Judgment and the Advice**

Rav Noach was a devoted *talmid* of Rav Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the *Alter Rebbe* of *Chabad*, who lived in eighteenth-century Russia. Rav Noach's son eventually married the *Alter Rebbe's* daughter and from that union came the *Rebbe*, known as the *Tzemach Tzedek*. To this day, the memory of Rav Noach is honored among Lubavitchers, who tell this story about him:

After Rav Noach passed away and came before the Heavenly Court, they looked into his case and found that he had been a very good Jew. All his life he had observed the commandments as best he could and never missed any opportunity to perform an additional *mitzva*.

Now, as is well known (*Avos* 4:11), when a Jew fulfills a *mitzva*, a holy *malach* (angel) is created from that very act. These angels, it is said, will come to testify on behalf of the soul after death. And the more properly and sincerely he does the *mitzva*, the stronger the *malochim* will be. So it happened when Rav Noach stood before the Heavenly Court that thousands upon thousands of luminous *mitzva malochim* came to his trial, saying, "I was born from such-and-such a good deed performed by Rav Noach when he was alive on earth."

The Heavenly Court was very impressed by the testimony of all these *mitzva malochim* and was about to decide that Rav Noach should go immediately to *Gan Eden* ("Paradise"). But suddenly another *malach* appeared, a dark one. It stood before the Court and said, "I was created from a sin that Rav Noach committed during his life on earth." Then the *malach* revealed to the Court exactly what the sin had been.

The three judges who sit on the Heavenly Court deliberated thoroughly. On the one hand, Rav Noach was a pious man who had led a basically righteous life, so he deserved to go to *Gan Eden*. But on the other hand, he had committed the sin. Just as no good deed ever goes unrewarded, so does no sin ever go unpunished. Finally, the Court decided to give Rav Noach two choices: he could spend a half hour in *Gehinnom* ("Purgatory") now, to atone for the sin, and then go straight to *Gan Eden*, or he could avoid the pain of *Gehinnom* by reincarnating on earth once again and making up for the sin there.

Rav Noach answered: "With all due respect to this Court, I would like to consult with my *Rebbe*, Rav Schneur Zalman, before I make a decision. All my life I never did anything concerning my spiritual life without first asking the *Rebbe's* advice. And so I would like permission to ask the *Rebbe* about this now."

The Court consulted the Heavenly Records and found that it was indeed true. Rav Noach never did anything important without first asking the *Alter Rebbe's* advice. "Very well," the Court replied. "You may return to earth in spirit and consult with your *Rebbe* about your decision."

Back on earth, Rav Schneur Zalman was sitting at the table as usual, learning *Torah* with his *Chassidim*. Then the soul of Rav Noach appeared to him and posed the question: "Earth or *Gehinnom*?" The *Rebbe* turned to his *Chassidim* and said, "Rav Noach is here right now, and he is asking what judgment he should choose: a half hour in *Gehinnom* or to be born in this world another time."

The *Chassidim* said nothing. What could they say? If the *Rebbe* wasn't prepared to decide, how could they presume to speak for him? So they sat there in silence, waiting to hear what the *Rebbe's* answer would be.

The *Alter Rebbe* put his hand on his



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forehead, then rested his elbow on the table and concentrated very deeply. For a long time he just sat there in silence, turning the question over in his mind, weighing all the consequences. Then came the answer: “*Gehinnom* - to Purgatory!”

As soon as the *Rebbe* had said the word “*Gehinnom*”, the *Chassidim* all heard a voice cry out in anguish, “Oy, *Rebbe!*” At the same moment they saw, burned into the wall by the door, the outline of a human hand!

From this the *Chassidim* understood what a spiritual danger it can be for a soul to be born into this world. Better to spend half an hour in the fires of Purgatory than a whole lifetime on earth once again!

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### **Derelict in his Duties**

A *talmid* once came before the *Ba'al HaTanya* and asked to be taught a new lesson in *hisorerus* – awakening excitement for *davening*. When the *Ba'al HaTanya* asked him what type of *davening* he had focused on till now, the *Chassid* answered with the following amazing example:

I was once called in to deal with an official matter with the Russian authorities. As I stood outside the courthouse I noticed a prisoner, a former soldier in uniform, being mercilessly and cruelly beaten. When I asked the reason for such punishment, I was told that this soldier was being punished for being derelict in his duty. It was winter and bitterly cold outside. “He came back from his duty with frozen ears!” they thundered. “This soldier is supposed to be on guard duty,” continued one of the officers. “How can it be that a soldier who is charged with duty to guard His Majesty the Czar would have frozen ears?! The very

fact that he is fulfilling his duty to His Majesty the Czar, the very fact that he is fulfilling His Majesty’s command – that should warm his whole being and should cause his blood to boil from head to toe and circulate throughout his entire being as it resonates with his duty! How could his ears freeze, if not that he was derelict in his duty!”

And so they judged him worthy of punishment. This made a great impression on me and with this manner of meditative contemplation on His Majesty and my duty to *Hashem*, I *davened* with *hisorerus* for some six years. But now I am ready for something new!” (*Otzar Yisrael*, p. 261)



### **The Sefer HaTanya**

Some say that when the *heilige Berdichever Rav* learned *Tanya* for the first time he exclaimed, “Wondrous Wonder!!! How did he [Rav Shneur Zalman, the *mechaber*] manage to get such a great G-d into such a small *sefer*?!” (*Yiftach Libeinu BeSoraso*, p. 312)

Rav Ahrele Roth, *mechaber* of *Shomer Emunim* and founder of the *Toldos Aharon Chassidus*, once visited the Satmar *Rav*, Rav Yoel, in *Chutz La'aretz*. During their conversation, Rav Ahrele asked a question on the *pasuk* (*Bereishis* 4:7), which teaches that although you desire evil you can overcome the *yetzer hora*. *Rashi* comments there: “If you so will it, you can defeat him.” Rav Ahrele asked the Satmar *Rav*, “How do you get such a will to begin with? From where can you acquire the will to defeat the *yetzer*?”

For that, answered the Satmar *Rav*, you need to study the *sefer HaTanya*. (*Teshuas Tzaddikim* p. 495, in the name of *Zechor LeAvrohom*)



## Rav Eliyohu Eliezer ben Reuven Dov Dessler, 24<sup>th</sup> of Teves

*Mechaber of Michtov Me'Eliyohu*

Rav Dessler was born and raised in a *mussar* environment, his parents scions of Rav Yisrael Salanter, founder of the *mussar* movement and *talmidim* of Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv of Kelm. He used to joke that in his youth all of Kelm where he was sent to study at age thirteen (and called by his maternal uncle, Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, a *wunderkind*) was an incubator for *mussar*, as he used to fondly recall how his meals were served by a relative who always fed him the same bland tasteless bowl of oats, day after day, for years. After such training on such plain fare, he laughed, every dish was a tasty one!

His hometown was Homil, a bastion of *Chassidus*, and it is very possible that when he was forced back there after the

German conquest of Kelm, that he learned *Chassidus* and added that to his more mystical interpretations and approach of *Chassidus*-infused *mussar*.

He worked tirelessly after the war to help rebuild *Yiddishkeit* from the flames. In Gateshead, England, he gathered about himself great *talmidim* and *yungeleit* to create the *kollel*, the boarding school, the teachers' seminary and many other institutions. He had *talmidim* in London and Manchester as well, for whom he cared spiritually and physically, and taught many students across England. Eventually, he was called upon to be the *Mashgiach* of Ponevezh in *Eretz Yisrael*, where he served until he was *niftar*.



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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.

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# Shemot

January 18<sup>th</sup> 2020  
21<sup>st</sup> of Tevet 5780

## 835



Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

# Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"á

MASKIL LEDAVID



Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

## Why Did Moshe Rabbeinu Wish to Evade the Mission?

**"The wrath of Hashem burned against Moshe and He said, "Is there not Ahron your brother, the Levi? I know that he will surely speak; moreover, behold, he is going out to meet you and when he sees you he will rejoice in his heart" (Shemot 4:14)**

Hashem revealed Himself to Moshe in the burning bush and told him to go to Bnei Yisrael and announce the imminent redemption. He should inform them that Hashem was about to redeem them from Mitzrayim with signs and wonders, guide them through the Midbar, give them the Torah and then bring them into the Promised Land. Hashem presented Moshe with signs and wonders to perform for Bnei Yisrael, so that they should believe that he is Hashem's messenger and not only fabricating this information.

Moshe Rabbeinu does not wish to perform this mission that Hashem asked him to carry out and pleads with Hashem that he is unsuitable for the task since he is "heavy of mouth and heavy of speech". Even though Hashem promises Moshe that He will be with him, as it says, "I shall be with your mouth", Moshe continues to refuse and tries with all his might to get out of this command. Once Moshe felt that he had already presented all his arguments and he can no longer refuse, he suggests to Hashem "send through whomever You will send". He was implying that Ahron, who was accustomed to carrying out these kinds of missions, should perform this mission too and redeem Am Yisrael from Mitzrayim (Shemot Rabba 3:16).

In light of the exchange that took place between Hashem and Moshe, we are left with a question: From where did Moshe garner the strength and dare to refuse Hashem time after time, despite Hashem giving him the power to perform wonders and miracles and promising him Divine protection? We would imagine that if Hashem chose Moshe, he should have performed the mission without questioning since Hashem knows who is the most suitable person to carry out a task. How do we understand Moshe's resistance?

We can reconcile the matter in the following way: Hashem took note of how Moshe conducted himself with the people. Despite his princely status, he lowered himself and went to observe his brothers' burden, even sharing the burden with them. In addition, after killing an Egyptian man using the Holy Name and hiding him in the sand, Datan and Aviram reported this act to Pharaoh who wished to take away his position and even kill him. In fact, since the Egyptian was no longer alive, Moshe could have denied any connection to the deed as there was a lack of sufficient proof. By Datan and Aviram not being able to prove their case, the king could have killed them, claiming that they had come with a false report. But Moshe, due to his greatness, preferred to leave the palace and flee for his life, in

order not to cause any trouble for Datan and Aviram with the king.

Seeing Moshe's great compassion for his people, how he was constantly troubled by their suffering and looked for ways to lighten their burden, Hashem chose him as the leader for His people. He considered Moshe to be the most suitable individual to redeem Bnei Yisrael from the Egyptian bondage.

Due to Moshe Rabbeinu's great modesty and self-effacement, he was very concerned that as a result of this mission that he was about to be entrusted with, he might start to feel superior to Bnei Yisrael and become proud and arrogant. This is why he tried time and again to 'convince' Hashem that he was unsuitable. Moshe certainly had no desire, G-d forbid, to emerge victorious from this argument with Hashem. The opposite is true: Since Moshe was so afraid of pride and conceit which could chalila blemish his yirat shamayim, this is why he tried to get out of the mission.

Chazal tell us (Brachot 32b), "Everything is in the hands of heaven, besides yirat shamayim". The meaning is that in all other areas of life, like Torah study and mitzvah fulfillment, a person can merit Heavenly assistance to succeed and progress. But on the other hand, there is one specific area where the Upper World has no power and all elevation and growth in this area is dependent solely on a person's will. That realm is yirat shamayim, where a person's level is entirely due to his desire and personal growth. This being the case, we can say that despite Hashem promising to be with Moshe and affording him special protection, Moshe was still concerned about performing this mission since yirat shamayim is something that is acquired independently, therefore Hashem's special protection will not help to ward off pride which could impair his yirat shamayim.

When Moshe realized that all his arguments and claims had been refuted by Hashem, he said, "send through whomever You will send!". He did not mention Ahron's name specifically, since Moshe knew that his brother Ahron was humble and modest, as the Torah tells us (Shemot 16:7), "for what are we that you should incite complaints against us?". The word וּבַחֲנוּנוֹ, "for what are we", is missing the letter 'alef', (it is normally written וּבַחֲנָנוֹ), since the 'alef' signifies the fact that he negated his ego and independence and made himself out to be nothing. Since we are told that "the fulfillment of a person's will is his honor" and "in the way that a person wishes to go, he is led", and also because of the fact that Hashem told Moshe that indeed Ahron will rejoice at his brother Moshe's good fortune, Moshe can infer from this that the mission will not blemish his good middot and he will be able to continue serving Hashem with fear and submission.

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## Hilula

21 - Rabbi Matzliach Mazuz hy"d

22 - Rabbi Shmuel Heller

23 - Rabbi Avraham Plagi

24 - Rabbi Yissachar Meir, Rosh Yeshivat Hanegev

25 - Rabbi Ya'akov HaLevi of Chassidei Beit El

26 - Rabbi Shalom Yitzchak Mizrachi

27 - Rabbi Yitzchak of Krakow, author of 'Siach Yitzchak'



## Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoan Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

### A Challenging Calling

A few days before the end of the secular year, a Jew informed me that he was invited to an Xmas celebration.

"Do you intend to go?" I asked.

"Of course not," he replied. "And it is in the merit of the Rav."

"In my merit?" I was perplexed. "How is that?" I did not remember ever discussing the matter with him.

He explained, "I once heard a recording of a lecture from the Rav, titled Sacrifice. The Rav expounded on the ability our nation inherited from our Avot, to withstand challenges. Now, after receiving an invitation to their gentile celebration, I was faced with a difficulty. I thought to myself that if I was endowed with the strength to stand firm and not participate in this non-Jewish party, I will make use of that power and indeed I declined the offer. Instead, I fixed a study session with a prominent Rabbi during that time."

I kissed him on the head and proclaimed, "How fortunate are you in this world as well as in the Next."

How far-reaching is the effect of one inspirational speech! How great is man's power to sacrifice himself for the sake of his Creator! This is in the merit of our Avot and Imahot, who paved the path for us by sacrificing their entire lives for the sake of fulfilling Hashem's command.

When our holy forefathers withstood tribulations, they were the first and only ones to stand staunchly against the entire world. Let us learn from their courageous deeds, which give us the power as well as the responsibility to emulate them, in spite of the many difficulties involved.

## The Haftarah

**"The words of Yirmiyahu the son of Chilkiyahu"** (Yirmiyahu 1,2)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah tells about Yirmiyahu who at first refused to perform the mission that Hashem requested from him by saying that he doesn't know how to speak for he is just a youth. In this Parsha Moshe Rabbeinu tried to absolve himself of Hashem's mission by saying that he is not a man of words.

Ashkenazim read from Yeshaya 27, **"[Days] are coming when Ya'akov will take root"**.

## Guard Your Tongue

### Forbidden to Believe

It is forbidden to believe lashon hara even if it is said in front of the person being spoken about, if he does not admit his guilt. All the more so, if he does not say it in the person's presence, but only adds that he would dare to say it in front of him, it is forbidden to believe him for the above reason.

Due to our numerous sins, this is, unfortunately, something that causes many people to stumble...



## Words of our Sages

### The Miracle of the Shabbat Candles

**"And this staff you shall take in your hand, with which you shall perform the signs"** (Shemot 4:17)

The Bnei Yissachar, in Ma'amarei HaShabbatot (Klal 3:5), quotes the Midrash on the verse, "G-d blessed the seventh day", where five Sages expound on the way in which Hashem blessed the Shabbat: Rabbi Eliezer says, He blessed it with 'ner', with light. On this the Midrash brings a wonderful story: 'Rabbi Eliezer said, I once lit the candles on Friday night and on Motzei Shabbat I came and found that nothing had burnt away.'

The Bnei Yissachar asks: When Chazal tell us something, they wish to teach us a lesson. Is the story that happened to the Tana Rabbi Eliezer something unusual?! We are talking about exceedingly holy Tana'im and Amora'im who lived above nature. But would such a thing happen to a regular Jew?

"Indeed," he declares, "we must derive from this that this is how it is for every Jewish person, the Shabbat candles burn for longer than candles lit during the week, this one has a large amount and the other has a small amount." In parentheses, he adds, "It seems to be that those who understand know that this is true".

The Maggid, Rabbi Ahron Toisig shlita, told over the following story:

Every Friday night I give a shiur in Vizhnitz. Four years ago I mentioned the above explanation from the Bnei Yissachar and I examined the topic at length. On Sunday I received a phone call:

"I live in Yerushalayim and work in the stock-exchange in Ramat Gan. I work together with a certain Jewish man who lives on a Kibbutz. He is a Holocaust survivor, who is unfortunately far from any religious observance, G-d forbid not deliberately. He questioned me about the idea of the Shabbat candles burning for longer. He wanted to know if it was really true. I told him that Harav Toisig said that he can testify that it is true."

This Kibbutznik said: "I am going to experiment. My wife will light Shabbat candles for a few weeks and if we see that indeed they stay alight for longer, I promise to return to my roots." Due to this, the man on the phone wished to know the source of the statement.

Two months later, he called me again and told me that his friend from the Kibbutz was extremely moved and told him that every Shabbat his candles burn for longer than the expected time, and in light of this he has already started praying three times a day and he began laying tefilin after fifty years of neglecting this mitzvah!

Before Rosh Hashanah, this Jew from the Kibbutz asked to speak to me on the phone. He started crying bitterly. "You don't know me," he said, "I can talk to you and cry. I had fallen so low r"l, G-d forbid not deliberately. I was left alone, without any family. Know, that only in the merit of the 'Bnei Yissachar' that I witness every Shabbat, do I now keep Shabbat in full and have returned to Torah observance..."



## Pearls of the Parsha

### The Redemption Will Bring Comfort

*"And these are the names of the children of Israel" (Shemot 1:1)*

Why were Esav and Yishmael not subjected to the Egyptian bondage? Were they not also children of Avraham Avinu a"h?

The answer can be understood through the following mashal, brought by the 'Midrash Avcir':

Rabbi Elazar said, to what can this be compared? To one who borrows money from the king and after a few days the borrower dies, leaving behind two children. One flees and the other one is one of the king's officers. The king said to the officer: I demand that you be the one to repay your father's loan! The son replied: Because I serve you I need to lose out? The king replied: Nevertheless, I will reward you greatly and when the second son is captured I will give him to you as a servant.

So too concerning the future, it says: "And [those of] the southland will inherit the Mountain of Esav" (Ovadhiah 1:19). In the end Esav and Yishmael will become our servants.

### A Person's Name Affects His Essence

*"The name of the first was Shifrah and the name of the second was Puah" (Shemot 1:15)*

Why did Pharaoh change Yocheved and Miriam's names to Shifra and Puah, which are Egyptian names?

The Rebbe of Riminov zt"l explains: Pharaoh knew that as long as the midwives, Yocheved and Miriam, are called Jewish names, there is no way he can challenge them with this cruel decree of killing Jewish children. Therefore, he first commanded them to change their names to 'Shifra' and 'Pu'ah', hoping that Egyptian names will have an effect on their state of mind and change their essence and character, to the extent that they will now be capable of murdering Jewish children. Only after that did he order them, "if it is a son, you are to kill him".

A person's name is his essence. It is absorbed in his innermost being and greatly influences his spirit and character.

### The Mouth Is Our Weapon

*"...and they cried out. Their outcry went up to Hashem" (Shemot 2:23)*

Am Yisrael's most powerful weapon is its mouth. "The voice is the voice of Ya'akov but the hands are the hands of Esav."

Esav lives by the sword, while the power of Am Yisrael is through their mouth. Their prayers are heard on high and they are saved in the merit of their Torah study. But as every soldier knows, it is not enough to go out to battle equipped with a rifle and ammunition. Even knowing how to aim and shoot is not enough. There is another basic requirement: The rifle must be spotless and rust-free!

In this vein, the 'Od Yosef Chai' explains that a person who desires to see his prayers answered and having an effect must take care that his mouth be unsoiled by forbidden speech, lashon hara, mockery, falsehood and tale-bearing.

Bnei Yisrael guarded their tongues in Mitzrayim and Chazal tell us, "They did not change their language". In this merit, their cry rose up to Heaven and they were redeemed from their exile.

### Starting the Mitzvah Brings Heavenly Assistance

*"So now, go! I shall be with your mouth" (Shemot 4:12)*

Rabbeinu Chaim Ben Attar zya"a, the holy Ohr Hachaim, explains that Moshe Rabbeinu did not understand why Hashem chose him to go and speak to Pharaoh if he has "sealed lips"?!

What did Hashem answer him? "So now, go!" I only perform miracles for those who begin the mitzvah. Once they have taken some action, they then merit Heavenly assistance and will see miracles.

This teaches us that one who wishes to merit Divine assistance should take the first step and then help will come.

## Treasures

Based on the teachings of  
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon  
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya  
Pinto, shlita



### Moshe's Birth

***"The woman conceived and gave birth to a son. She saw that he was good and she hid him for three months" (Shemot 2:2)***

At the Shabbat table, my son n"y was asked about Yocheved giving birth to Moshe at the age of one hundred and thirty. We do not find that the Torah describes the wonder and excitement of the population on hearing that a baby had been born to someone so old. On the other hand, when Sara Imeinu gave birth to Yitzchak at the age of ninety, which is forty years younger than Yocheved was when she gave birth, the Torah clearly writes about the elation and amazement at the great miracle. Sara herself laughed in her heart and did not believe that this miracle would indeed occur to her.

My son was asked why Yitzchak's birth was cause for great celebration, while Moshe's birth passed relatively quietly, even though Yocheved was much older than Sara?

One can answer that since when Yitzchak was born, there was no Torah in the world and Hashem's sovereignty was not recognized by the general population, therefore Sara giving birth at such an old age caused great excitement and awe. The people at that time did not believe that there is a Power capable of changing the normal order of the world, allowing a woman to give birth despite her advanced age. On the other hand, when Moshe was born, the tribe of Levi were studying Torah in the Yeshiva in Goshen. Bnei Levi understood that the power of Torah can change nature and bring about great miracles. Since they were aware of Hashem's power of running the world above the confines of nature, Moshe's birth was not a cause for surprise. They believed that the Torah protects those who study it and bestows the possibility of deliverance, even in a miraculous way.

As far as the rest of Bnei Yisrael were concerned, those who were not counted among the tribe of Levi and not involved in Torah study, it could be that due to their extremely harsh bondage, they were not open to noticing what was going on around them and did not have time to contemplate the miracle. The Egyptians, on the other hand, despite being far from Torah observance, were aware of an elevated power that their slaves possessed. They, therefore, attributed the birth of a baby to an elderly mother, to just another miracle in the chain of miracles that enable Am Yisrael to exist.

# A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



## **"Moshe grew up and went out to his brethren and observed their burdens"**

(Shemot 2:11)

"What does it mean 'and he observed'? He saw their suffering and cried and said, I am sorry for them, if only I could die instead of them, for there is no harder work than the work of mud, and he would bend his shoulder and help each one of them. If he saw a heavy burden on a small person and a light burden on a big person, and a man's burden on a woman and a woman's burden on a man, and an elderly person's burden on a young man, and a young man's burden on an elderly person, he would put set aside his honor and go and straighten their load. He would make as if he was helping Pharaoh (and not the Jews). Hashem said: You left your occupation and went to observe the pain of Yisrael and acted like a brother to them, I will leave the Upper and Lower Worlds to speak to you" (Shemot Rabba 1:27)

Moshe Rabbeinu merited being Yisrael's savior since he joined in their suffering. On the words "and observed their burdens", Rashi writes: "He set his eyes and heart to feel their pain". The Alter of Kelm explains that Moshe Rabbeinu did not behave as most people do, joining in other people's pain for a short time and then continuing with their lives. But he 'set his eyes', he used his wisdom to constantly paint a picture of their suffering in front of his eyes, to the extent that he was as concerned for them as one who is concerned for his own self.

In order to feel and share someone else's burden, to understand, help and pray for him, it is essential before all, to perceive him, as it says, "and he observed their burdens".

Concerning Avraham Avinu, it says "He lifted his eyes and saw: And behold! Three men were standing over him. He perceived, so he ran toward them". Harav Shach zya"l explains these words in the following way: "Avraham Avinu, first

of all, saw other people. When you see another person clearly, you understand what he needs".

In a talk given by Rabbi Noach Weinberg zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of 'Aish HaTorah', he spoke about the subject of 'sharing in another's burden'. He cried out earnestly that in fact every single person carries a private load on his back, a load packed with difficulties and struggles which he must cope with. Whether it is problems of self-esteem, plans that did not come to fruition, failures, doubts, incompatibility... This is all part of the challenge of progression in life.

A person's external appearance does not necessarily reflect his inner world. Sometimes those who carry the heaviest baggage, on the surface appear to be happy and carefree. Many people prefer to hide their feelings. A person who appears to be calm and put together, might really be coping with an intense inner storm.

Rabbi Weinberg challenged his talmidim: "Study people well and try to imagine what is going on inside them. Understand that other people's problems, their dreams and hopes, are no less real than yours. Just like you, everyone carries some kind of burden. Focus on this and ask yourself: "What are they carrying around?" Use your imagination to feel how this load makes life hard for them.

"Be sensitive. Is this person happy or sad? Vulnerable or resilient? Apprehensive or confident? Pay attention and then you will be capable of sharing his challenges.

"The first place to put these ideas into practice," Rabbi Weinberg zt"l explained, "is with your family and friends. A lack of understanding and empathy is the main cause of resentment among family members. When you go home, try to understand what your wife is feeling. Think about what she does every day so that the house should function properly. Talk about this and show her that you understand that she works hard. Look for different ways to make her life easier.

"Another example: A bachur who comes home and buries his head in a newspaper while going through a plate of food, insults his parents. He gives the impression that his house is at his disposal, with parents in the background who pay for his expenses. Take a moment to notice your mother when you arrive home. What is

she thinking about? Is something bothering her? Is she happy about something? Pay attention!

"Our children must be our primary concern. We love them and feel their hurt when they are in pain. But are we capable of feeling where they are holding? To "get into one's children's shoes" can be a very hard task, for it requires recognition of the fact that they are independent people. The implication of this perception is that it is time to stop focusing on the pain they have caused you by not fulfilling your dreams, and to start focusing on the way their challenges are affecting them."

This is the task incumbent on every Jew: To share in another person's burden and feel for their suffering.

## **Pray for Classmates**

The following story recently came to light: Somebody went into Maran Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita and told him about a Yeshiva bachur who has two older sisters who have not yet found their match. "This matter troubles the bachur greatly, to the extent that he cannot concentrate on his learning. His mother tchy' told me that many times when he returns home, even before saying hello, he asks if there is any news about his sister."

In the name of this bachur, he asked Maran for a beracha that his sisters should find their match quickly, which will enable him to continue striving in Torah.

What did Maran shlita answer him?

"I would like to give you some advice. Take a paper and write down: 1. To commit to be exceptionally careful not to speak lashon hara. 2. Not to speak critically about anyone 3. Not to bear a grudge against anyone 4. It is also very important that no one should bear a grudge against them, therefore if there is any likelihood that they caused someone to suffer, they should appease them and ask for forgiveness, and ask that they no longer hold a grudge. 5. They should pray for other friends who need shidduchim.

When he finished writing everything down, he showed the paper to Maran, who approved what was written.

This is the lesson that we can derive from "He set his eyes and heart to feel their pain".

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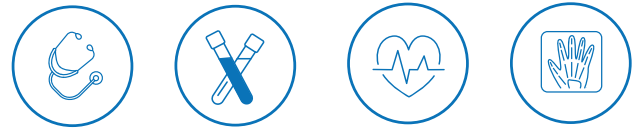
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