

# 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)

❁ **EIKEV** ❁

❁ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❁

Ahavas Yisrael ~ Ohev Yisrael

## Dvar Torah

*"And it shall be in the end, if you listen..." (Devarim 7:12)*

Commenting on our *pasuk*, the Apta Rav cites a *Medrash*, which itself brings a *pasuk* from *Tehillim* (126:6): "He shall go along weeping, carrying his seeds; he shall, in song, carrying his sheaves."

The Apta Rav illustrates the meaning behind this puzzling *Medrash* with the following *mashal* (parable):

There was once a Jew who had a hard time earning a living; he struggled to make ends meet. He was embarrassed to collect charity in his hometown, where everyone knew him, so he left home and travelled far away, to a place where no one would recognize him. He went from place to place collecting *tzedaka*, travelling far and wide from town to town, village to village, city to city.

After traveling many years, he reached the fabled cities of Chavila, renowned for their gold mines. Deep in the hearts of their mountains, diggers and excavators mined for gold from the depths of the earth. The mines also brought forth scintillating diamonds, jewels, and all manner of precious gemstones. In fact, the plethora of precious stones and metals was so

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great that the supply far outweighed the demand, and the marketplaces were filled with gold and gems for ridiculously low prices because no one wanted what everyone else had in plenty.

So common were such gems here that many a precious stone often lay on the ground or by the roadside, much as we treat worthless rocks and pebbles. However, if even the smallest of those common gems were sold and traded in our locales, their immense value would be staggering to the point of making us extraordinarily wealthy, beyond our wildest dreams!

Our collector had decided to settle there for the moment, and amid his travels, his clothes had worn out, so he had a new suit tailor made, and a new shirt sewn to replace his old, worn, threadbare garments. As previously explained in this new location, the precious gemstones were so plentiful, they even used them to make buttons! As such, our collector had a new shirt made complete with diamond and ruby buttons – and he thought nothing of it, having gotten so used to the way everyone devalued the gems and cared little for them, treating them as castoffs tossed unwanted by the roadside.

Finally, the day came when our collector headed back home. His long, wearying journey had taken him through many countries and many adventures. One day, he lost his way. As he wandered forlorn in the forests, he came across a man carrying a sack of old bread on his back. Our collector was tired and hungry – he had not eaten in days! When he saw the bread, he begged the man to eat.

Now this man was a wily and cunning trickster. His sack was full of old, moldy loaves of bread, yet he had covered them with a layer of fresh loaves to disguise his wares.

“What will you give me for this entire sack?!” inquired the cheat.

“All I have is a few stones,” replied our collector, hanging his head sadly and opening his satchel to reveal some odd gemstones he happened to have kept for curiosity’s sake.

The cheat saw what a great treasure he was being offered and seized the opportunity. “I’ll tell you what. You seem hungry and I feel bad for you... I will take those worthless old rocks and stones off your hands and give you my whole sack of bread!”

“Oh thank you! Thank you!” answered the hungry collector, and so they traded.

He ate a good loaf from the top and gathered his strength, then continued on until he found his way out of the maze of trees. He wandered along roads and trails, eating up all the good loaves, until finally, exhausted, he spotted home, sweet home! How he longed to return, having been separated from his dearest loved ones for so long!

His happy family came running out joyously to greet him, imaging the wealth he had amassed while he was away. To their dismay, all he carried was a smelly sack. aAnd worse, when he opened it, they soon saw it filled just with old, moldy bread!

They cried bitterly, “You were gone for so many years and all you have to show for your journey and absence is a sack of old, moldy bread!”

As he lay down his satchel and began unpacking the rest of his things, they soon saw one small stone tumble out. It had somehow escaped his notice beneath his tattered clothes and belongings. The beautiful gem’s facets caught the light as it sparkled, illuminating their tiny home, and reflecting off of their widening eyes!

Not long after, his wife spotted the buttons on his suit and shirt and declared in amazement, "My husband, your shirt is buttoned with gold, silver, diamonds, and rubies! We shall be rich!"

They rushed to appraise the value of the stones and were offered a thousand gold crowns! A princely sum, indeed. His wife and children seemed overjoyed, but the collector sat down and began to weep bitter tears of disappointment and remorse.

"Why are you crying?" they asked him, positively bewildered.

"You don't understand," explained the collector, in between sobs of despair. "I was in a place full of diamonds and gemstones, they lay everywhere in the streets of the marketplace, I could have filled all my pockets and satchels, if only I had remembered and realized how precious and valuable they were here! Not only did I not take almost any, I did worse – those I did take, I traded away, and for what? For a sack of old, moldy bread!" He carried on crying, inconsolable.

The Apta Rav explains our parable: When the soul leaves her heavenly abode to come down into our world here below, she eats the bread of shame. She comes to study Torah and do *mitzvos*, to earn her reward and justly work for what she deserves. Each and every *mitzvah*, whether *D'Oraisa* or *DeRabbanan* – whether Divine or Rabbinical in origin – is priceless, worth more than any gemstone or diamond. As it says in *Mishlei* (3:15), "The Torah is worth more than gold and pearls." This is why *Chazal* say (*Kiddushin* 39b), "There can be no reward for a *mitzvah* in this world, because nothing in this world can pay for the infinite value of even just one single *mitzvah*!"

Now, a wise man doesn't waste his time here in this world, continues the Apta Rav; rather, he seizes every moment he can to gather spiritual gold, silver, and gems by doing *mitzvos* or good deeds, and studying Torah at every opportunity. Even when engaged in worldly pursuits such as business, he strives to seek Hashem and follow the laws and halachos pertaining to honesty, integrity, and just business practices, fulfilling the command to "know Him in all your ways."

In contrast, the fools waste their time and while away the days with idle matters, idle chatter, nonsense, frivolous pursuits, and mindless games. Even if they do attend services, they talk during *davening* and miss the priceless opportunity during the *Chazan's* repetition to answer Amen – the value and reward for this *mitzvah* alone is immeasurable, and its punishment, if omitted, is also great.

We can now understand our *Medrash*, with a little help from Rashi. Our *pasuk* states, "*Ekev Tishmaun.*" *Ekev* literally means 'heel,' as in the heel of one's foot. Rashi's commentary interprets this word to allude to the *mitzvos* we belittle, trampling over them with our heel in disregard, as we casually walk over them, paying them little heed or, *Chalilah*, ignoring them completely.

The Apta Rav then lists several examples of *mitzvos* that many people tend to trample and step on, such as not talking during *davening*, and answering Amen to *berachos*. These are so easy to fulfill, and are potentially available every day, if we only seize the opportunity. How is it that these ubiquitous *mitzvos*, which are like precious gems, are treated as castoffs left by the road side, unnoticed and unwanted?! Not only do we not seize these opportunities,

says the Apta Rav, but instead we trade them for sacks of moldy bread, by talking and filling the air with idle chatter during *davening*.

Still, says the Ohev Yisroel, all Jews do *mitzvos*, and no matter what mistakes they make, every Jew still has redeeming value, as the *Gemora* says (*Chagiga* 27a), “Even the emptiest of Jews are as full of *mitzvos* as a pomegranate is full of pips!” Of course, sometimes they do answer Amen, and so they find at their journey’s end some stray gems in their satchel.

Now we understand why the *Medrash* cites the aforementioned *pasuk* in *Tehillim*, because at journey’s end, the foolish come crying, carrying seeds – meaning, just as sowing seeds seems like something small, yet great things grow from it, these *mitzvos*, such as *davening* without talking, and answering Amen, may appear insignificant in this world; however, in the higher worlds, their value is priceless. Then he will return in song, carrying his sheaves, when he seizes the opportunities we all have before us so many times throughout the days in this world, if only we pay them heed (*Sefer HaPanim* #31, 15:2, cited in *Yalkut Ohev Yisroel, Parshas Ekev*).



## Ohr HaChaim

“And now, what does Hashem ask of you...” (10:12)

The Ohr HaChaim explains that since after a person transgresses one of Hashem’s commandments, he or others may believe that their way back to repent and return is either sealed or distant, and would be a very daunting journey. Therefore the *pasuk* uses the word, *VeAta*, meaning, ‘And now.’ As Chazal explain in *Medrash Rabba*, *VeAta* refers to *teshuva*. We must seize the moment and take the opportunity to do *teshuva*, to repent and return, right now. The Ohr HaChaim thus rereads our *pasuk* as saying, “And if you sinned and transgressed against Hashem, and now, what does Hashem ask of you?” And now – at this moment, when you wish to repent and return to Him and do *teshuva* – how do you rectify this matter and fix your wrongdoings? Answers the *pasuk*: “By fearing Him.” This alone is sufficient to now appease Hashem and reconcile with Him once again.



“And to walk in his ways...”

Our *pasuk* continues, adding this second condition. The Ohr HaChaim here brings a Chazal from *Vayikra Rabba*: “If you have done bundles and bundles of transgressions, then do bundles and bundles of *mitzvos* to outweigh them.” In order to explain this, the Ohr HaChaim now cites the Rambam, who introduces a novel insight in his commentary to the *Mishna* at the end of *Meseches Makkos*: If a person angers Hashem with sin and transgression, then even if he does just one single *mitzvah*, yet fulfills it to its utmost potential, that single *mitzvah* has the power to give him merit both in this world and the next.

The Ohr HaChaim then clarifies the idea further by bringing the following *mashal*:

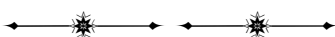
There were once two servants who served the same king. One of them was a faithful servant, whose perfect actions caused him always to find favor with the king; in fact, the king

never had reason to be angry with him, ever. One day, this faithful servant came before the king bearing a gift, an offering of a beautiful turtledove!

The second servant, however, was not faithful. He did not serve the king properly, neglecting his duties and angering his master. One day, he, too, showed up with a gift for the king: a large, fat ox.

Now, whose offering was more pleasing to the king? Naturally, we can imagine that the king shall rejoice and be happier even with the small, white, pure dove than with the fat ox, simply because of the nature of all the grief and anger that the second, unfaithful, neglectful servant caused the king in the first place!

This, says the Ohr HaChaim is why the *pasuk* tells the *Baal Teshuva*, “Walk in His paths, perform bundles of *mitzvos*” – because you angered Hashem when you transgressed, now, in order to do teshuva, you need bundles and bundles.



### **Ohr Hachaim Va'eschanan**

*Last week we did not have time to send these, but they are amazing Divrei Torah, so here they are:*

*“And you shall love Hashem with all your heart, with all your soul, and all your wealth and possessions.” (Devarim 6:5)*

The Ohr HaChaim brings the three types of material love that are listed in *Moed Katan*, 28a: Love for our children, love for ourselves and our life, and love of money and physical possessions. In the original language, these are *Banei, Chayei U'Mezonei*.

Now, says the Ohr HaChaim, these three loves are the collective desire and passion that most people in the world share. If even one of these objects of deep desire is missing, a person is as if dead and lost, Heaven forbid. If a person should lack two of them – for example, being poor and childless – this can cause a person much heartache and distress, to the point where he is spiritually crippled and feels as if his heart breaks within him. Even if he may strengthen himself and his heart, this can still fail because his emotions could likely overcome him in his grief.

The *mesechta* continues, informing us that having these things is not dependant on our *Avodas Hashem* or on our love for Him, meaning that even those who truly love Hashem could lack any of them.

In our *pasuk*, Hashem commands us to love Him even more than these three things (children, life, and money), even if, Heaven Forbid, they would be taken away from us. This is why the *pasuk* says to love Hashem “with all your heart” – this refers to our children, whom we love with all our hearts; “with all your soul” – this refers to our life; “and with all your material possessions.” Your love for Hashem must be greater than all these three and surpass them, even if they would be taken away.

The Ohr HaChaim then reverses this idea, explaining that if we are obligated to love Hashem more than our children, more than ourselves, and more than our money and possessions, and if our love for Hashem should so surpass the love for these that even if He were to take them away, we would still love Him, then how much more so should we love Hashem for having gifted us and granted us with any one of these three, and all the more so for those of us blessed with all three!

To help illustrate further just how great our love for Hashem must be, the Ohr HaChaim brings the following parable:

Imagine a childless person, longing for children to love and care for, and to carry on his name and legacy who is simultaneously also a pauper who is starving to death, lacking sustenance and nourishment. Then, imagine that a prophet visits, and reveals, in G-d's name, that He will heal his sickness, that one day he shall be healthy and his wife shall bear him children, and that they shall also be blessed with unimaginable wealth.

Can you imagine how much this person would love the bearer of these glad tidings, and how much he will love Hashem, the Master Who grants him these gifts and bestows upon him life, health, wealth, and children?!

This is what Hashem commands of us all, obligating us to love Him forever and always, as if He filled your lack, having given children to the barren and childless, so love Him with all your heart! And love Him with all your soul, as if He returned your very soul to you, healed you and saved you from death! And love Him with all your possessions, as if He granted you immense wealth when you were poor. All these descriptions are to help us understand and be able to actualize just how much we should love Hashem.

The Ohr HaChaim then offers another *mashal* to illustrate how greatly our souls desire Hashem, so much so that it surpasses any love we have ever possibly experienced in this world:

There was once a wealthy merchant who had many possessions, and much land and holdings. One day, he learned that his life was in grave danger where he currently resided, so he decided that he must travel far away, to a distant land, in order to save his life. He feared what may happen to his wealth while on this long journey, so he figured out a way to convert all his possessions to something he could carry. He sold all he owned and purchased a valuable gemstone worth thousands of golden dinars.

He went on his way and eventually arrived at a distant city in a far away land. There, he had hoped to build his fortune once more; however, by the time he arrived, he had already spent all his money, and having no other assets, he was left penniless and poor. So instead of the wealth he once enjoyed, he came to this new town as a pauper, living frugally like someone of no means.

Although our once wealthy merchant now lives like a vagabond, he can still gladly rejoice that he is out of harm's way, since his journey had saved his life, and he is now safe, in a safe land and peaceful city. Furthermore, all his great wealth from his home country is, in fact, still with him, in the form of the priceless gemstone.

The merchant's home country is This World, and all the possessions he acquired there are our *mitzvos*. The danger to his life while living there is the risk we all face during our time on Earth, that we may sin, thereby losing our merits and connection to Hashem, *Chalilah*. The gemstone, which he acquired by trading in his possessions, represents our *dveikus* to Hashem, which has the potential to grow stronger and stronger with each *mitzvah* accomplished here. His new, safe home is, of course, the Next World, and in this section of the *mashal*, the wealth he lacks represents actual material prosperity, worth nothing in the World to Come.

We now can see that this extends even to our existence in this world: Even if we lack physical wealth, or children, or perhaps any of Hashem's material blessings during our



lifetime, when we realize that true, eternal wealth comes in the currency of *mitzvos* and *dveikus*, we will understand that this is the only thing truly worth investing in.

Just as our merchant realized that his inability to rebuild his fortune, though disappointing at first, paled in comparison to the fact that his life was now no longer in danger; so too, we must realize that the precious gemstone of our *dveikus* and *mitzvos* ultimately outshines any other worldly pursuit – by a long shot.

Explains the Ohr HaChaim, when a person attaches to Hashem in *dveikus* and love, crowning Him King over himself and his life, this is a Heavenly acquisition worth more than all worldly wealth, because who or what can compare to Hashem?!

Though people may suffer and lack in this world, they can still rejoice in having acquired Hashem as their G-d, regardless of their Earthly circumstances. If they are fully invested in Him, then, at journey's end, when they reach their final destination in the Next World, they will safely have their priceless reward with them forever.



## הילולא

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

[תפילה הנמצאת בספר אלה המגן מבעל הפלא יועץ על פרשת ויצא עמוד כ"ד]

הריני מדליק נר זה למנוחת ולעילוי נשמת אבי / אמי מורתי / הצדיק \_\_\_\_\_  
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צדיק \_\_\_\_\_. יהי רצון שתהינה נפשותיהם צרורות בצרור החיים.

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)



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

### 23<sup>rd</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Friday Night (Aug 23<sup>rd</sup>)

- \* **Rav Moshe Adas**, a *Sefardi* sage from Yerushalayim, *mechaber* of *Poras Yosef*, (5729/1969);
- \* **Rav Dovid Sutton Dabbah** (1885–1949). Born and raised in Aleppo, Syria, he married in 1910, and was asked to serve as the *Rav* of Killis, Turkey, near the Syrian border. He returned to Syria in 1916, but his wife passed away at the age of twenty-five one year later. He remarried in 1918, and left for Yerushalayim in 1924, as daily life for Jews in Syria became quite difficult. Settling in the Bucharim neighborhood, he studied at the *Yeshiva Poras Yosef*. Several years later, he traveled to Argentina, hoping to raise funds for the Jews of Yerushalayim. Shortly after his arrival, the leader of the Syrian community in Argentina, Rav Shaul Sutton, was *niftar*, and Rav Dovid was asked to succeed him. He became *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* of Buenos Aires and authored *Yaaleh HaDas*, *chiddushim* on *gittin* and *mishpetei Bais Din*, (5709/1949);
- \* **Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky**, the Steipler *Gaon*, *mechaber* of *Kehillas Yaakov* (1899–1985/5745). His father, Rav Chaim Peretz, was a *shochet* in Hornesteipel. When Rav Chaim Peretz was sixty years old, his wife passed away, leaving him with three daughters. He asked his *Rav*, Rav Mordechai Dov, the son-in-law of Rav Chaim Sanzer, whether he should remarry. On the latter's recommendation, he married a young woman, and he fathered three sons. The oldest was Rav Yaakov Yisrael. His father was a *Chassid* of Rav Yaakov Yisrael of Cherkass, and he named him after his *Rebbe*. At the age of eleven, Rav Yaakov Yisrael was recruited to learn with Rav Yosef Yoisel Horowitz at Novardok. At nineteen, he was sent by the *Alter* of Novardok to head a *Yeshiva* at Rogatchov. After a stint in the Russian army, he was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva* of Novardok at Pinsk. The *Chazon Ish* sought him as a husband for his sister. He authored many works, most notably *Kehillas Yaakov*. His son, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, is a leading *Torah* authority in *Eretz Yisrael*, (5745/1985);
- \* **Rav Binyomin Aharon Solnik** of Podheitz, *mechaber* of *Mas'as Binyomin*, (5380/1620);
- \* **Rav Shimon Goldstein** (1942–2005). Born in Williamsburg to Rav Dovid and Rochel Goldstein, he learned in *Yeshiva Torah V'Daas*, and was orphaned of both his parents at a young age. He lived with his grandmother for a few years. After her *petira*, he moved into

the *Chaim Berlin* dormitory as a young teenager. He became very close to the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Yitzchok Hutner, who had a major *hashpo'a* on his *derech halimud* and *hashkofa*. Despite his difficult situation, he was one of the happiest *talmidim* in the *Yeshiva*. After his marriage, Rav Shimon continued learning in the *Yeshiva*, and joined the staff as a *Rav* three years later. Rav Shimon never left the *koslei Bais Medrash* for any other employment until the day of his *petira*, a beloved eighth-grade *Rebbe* for decades, (5765/2005).

## ✧ 24<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Aug 24<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Aharon** of Terbeli, *mechaber* of *Machaneh Aharon*, (5501/1741);
- \* **Rav Efraim Zalman ben Rav Menachem Margulies**, *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* of Brod. He authored many *seforim*, including *Bais Efraim*, *Olelos Efraim*, *Shaarei Efraim* and *Mateh Efraim*; perhaps his most famous work, it contains all the *halochos* pertaining to *Elul* and *Tishrei*, (5522/1762–5588/1828);
- \* **Rav Dovid Ortinberg** of Berditchev, the *Tehilla L'Dovid*, (5670/1910);
- \* **Rav Yitzchok Kovos HaSheni** (II), a *Sefardi* sage, (5614/1854);
- \* **Rav Sholom Halperin**, the *Vasloier Rebbe* (1857–1939), born to Rav Dovid Halpern, a son-in-law of Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin. At the age of seventeen, he married his cousin Chana Sora, the daughter of the first *Bohusher Rebbe*, Rav Yitzchok. When Rav Sholom was nearing forty years of age, the *Bohusher Rebbe* decided that it was time for his son-in-law to lead his own *Chassidim*, (5699/1939).

## ✧ 25<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Sunday Night (Aug 25<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Moshe Hager** of Antiniya, (5754/1994);
- \* **Rav Yeshayohu Menachem ben Rav Yitzchok** of Cracow, the originator of the *Heter Iska*, (5359/1599);
- \* **Rav Yaakov Meshulom Orenstein**, *Rav* of Lvov and *mechaber* of *Yeshuos Yaakov*, (5599/1839).

## ✧ 26<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Monday Night (Aug 26<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Noach Naftoli** of Kobrin, (5649/1889);
- \* **Rav Meir Ashkenazi**, *Rav* of Shanghai (1891–1954/5714), born in Tcherikov, in Russia's Pale of Settlement to Lubavitcher *Chassidim*. At the outbreak of the First World War, his family, together with many others, fled Russia to Manchuria. It was there, in the city of Harbin, that Rav Meir and Toiba Liba were married. Rav Ashkenazi and his family moved to the port-city of Vladivostok on the eastern coast of Russia. Not long afterward, in 1918, the community there appointed Rav Ashkenazi as their *Rav*. After seven years, he moved to assist the small Jewish community in Shanghai, China. Deteriorating conditions in Europe in the 1930s led to a slow stream of German, Austrian and Russian Jews into the Far East, which increased considerably at the outbreak of the Second World War. By the end of 1941, there were eighteen thousand Jewish refugees in Shanghai – ten times the number of Jews in Shanghai just ten years earlier, (5714/1954);
- \* **Rav Yoel Teitelbaum** of Sighet, the *Satmar Rav* (1888–1979/5739). A descendant of the *Yismach Moshe* (Rav Moshe Teitelbaum of Ujhel), “Rav Yoilish” traced his ancestry to the *Maharsha* and the *Rema*. He received his early training from his father, Rav Yomtov Lipa

Teitelbaum, *Rav* of Sighet and *mechaber* of *Kedushas Yom Tov*. He then became a *Chassid* of Rav Yechezkel Shraga Halberstam in Shinava (the *Divrei Yechezkel*). At the age of seventeen, he was appointed *Rav* of Musza in Czechoslovakia. After appointments at Orshova and Kroli, he became *Rav* of Satmar from 1935 to 1944. He was one of 1684 Hungarian Jews saved from the Nazi killing machine as a result of the negotiations of Rav Michael Ber Weissmandl with Adolf Eichmann. In 1946, he arrived in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn and rebuilt the Satmar community. He authored *Vayoel Moshe* and *Divrei Yoel* and is buried in Monroe, New York, a hamlet in upstate New York that he founded and built, (5739/1979);

- \* **Rav Eliyohu Boruch Goldschmidt** (1935–2000/5760). Rav Elya was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where his parents had moved in 1938, along with their three-year-old son, in flight from Nazi Germany. Rav Elya moved to Lakewood in 1960 and drew close to Rav Aharon Kotler. He spent twenty years at Lakewood, followed by another twenty years as *Mashgiach Ruchani* at *Yeshiva Gedola Zichron Moshe* of South Fallsburg. Rav Elya was suddenly *niftar* while working on a new *sefer* on *sholom bayis*, entitled *Dear Son*, planned as a counterpart to his best-selling *Dear Daughter* on the same subject, (5760/2000).

## ✧ 27<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Aug 27<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Yehuda Fatiya** (Pethayya; Pettiyah; Fattiah; Patia) (1859–1942/5702), Iraqi *Godol* and *Mekubol* and the foremost *talmid* of the *Ben Ish Chai*, who said that he was the reincarnation of the *Noda B'Yehuda*. He said that he had to come back to the earth for although in his last lifetime, he was a *Tzaddik*, he did not fulfill his *Torah* obligation to study *Kabbola*. So in this life, the study of *Kabbola* was his main focus and *tikkun*. Born in Baghdad, he eventually moved to *Eretz Yisrael*, where he was *niftar*. He authored fifteen *seforim*; his most famous *sefer*, *Minchas Yehuda*, is one of the most revelatory works about demons, how they act and deceive people. He was an expert in exposing these demons and casting them out. He relates a story about *gilgulim* (reincarnation) that includes the soul of Shabsai Tzvi. He also authored *Bais Lechem Yehuda* and *Yayin HaRoke'ach*, (5702/1942);
- \* **Rav Yehoshua Charif** of Cracow, *mechaber* of *Maginei Shlomo*, an attempt to resolve the questions of the *Ba'alei Tosefos* against *Rashi*. He was the great-grandfather of the *Pnei Yehoshua*. Born in Vilna at end of the sixteenth century, he arrived in Cracow in 1640 as *Rosh Yeshiva*, replacing Rav Yoel Sirkis (the *Bach*) as *Rav* a few months later. He held the position until Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller (*Tosefos Yom Tov*) became *Rav* in 1643. Among his *talmidim* was Rav Shabsai Cohen (the *Shach*), (5408/1648);
- \* **Rav Avrohom Mordechai Alter**, son of the *Chiddushei Harim* and father of the *Sfas Emes*, (5613/1853);
- \* **Rav Shmuel Tzvi Hirsch** *ben* Rav Avrohom Abish Horowitz of Spinka (1921–1997/5757), known as “Reb Hershele” of Spinka. He was the Spinka *Rebbe* of Williamsburg and grandson of Rav Yitzchok Weiss (1875–1944), who was the *mechaber* of *Chakal Yitzchok*, (5757/1997);
- \* **Rav Meshulom Feish HaLevi** *ben* Rav Mordechai Lowy, *Tosher Rebbe*, (5775/2015);
- \* **Rav Menachem Kohn** (1964–2006). Born to Mr. and Mrs. Yosef Yitzchok Eizik Kohn, both Holocaust survivors who had moved to Los Angeles after the war, he was the youngest of four brothers. A watershed in his life was his entry into the *Telshe Yeshiva* at the age of fourteen, following in the footsteps of his brothers who had also learned in *Telshe*. For the



next twenty-eight years, his *neshoma* became bound to the *Yeshiva* of Telshe, its *Roshei Yeshiva* and *Talmidei Chachomim*. Throughout the years, Rav Menachem penned his own *chiddushei Torah*, and a number of years ago he published two *seforim*, one on *Maseches Beitzta* and the second on *Maseches Mo'ed Koton*. He called the *seforim* *Ateres Avi*, in memory of his father. On the day before the accident that took his life, Rav Menachem went to Monroe to *daven* at the *tziyun* of the Satmar *Rebbe* on his *Yahrzeit*. He also went to visit the current Satmar *Rebbe*, (5766/2006).

## ✧ 28<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Aug 28<sup>th</sup>)

- ✧ The birthday of the *Maggid* of Mezritch;
- ✧ **Rav Yitzchok Akrish**, *mechaber* of the *sefer Kiryas Arba*, (5648/1888);
- ✧ **Rav Naftoli Tzvi Yehuda Berlin**, the *Netziv*, (1817–1893/5653), *Rosh Yeshiva* of Volozhin. He authored *Ha'amek Dovor*, a commentary on the *Chumash*; *Meromei Sodeh* on the *Talmud*; *Ha'amek Sh'eila*, on the *She'eltos* of Rav Achai Gaon; and *Meishiv Dovor*, a collection of his responsa. He was born in Mir, and became the son-in-law of Rav Yitzchok, son of Rav Chaim of Volozhin (1749–1821) when he was fourteen years old. In 1849, upon the *petira* of Rav Yitzchok, his father-in-law, Rav Yitzchok's older son-in-law, Rav Eliezer Yitzchok, was appointed to succeed him. However, he passed away five years later, and the *Netziv* was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva*, a position he held for forty years. Volozhin was forcibly closed by the Russians in 1893. Rav Naftoli Tzvi was a foremost luminary of his time. Among his children were Rav Chaim Berlin and Rav Meir Bar-Ilan [born to two different mothers], (5653/1893);
- ✧ **Rav Avrohom Chaim Ades** (1848–1925), born in Halab (Aram Soba), Syria, among the most ancient Jewish communities in the world. According to tradition, Jews lived there even before the destruction of the first *Bais HaMikdosh*. As a youngster, Rav Avrohom studied under Rav Mordechai Abadi and Rav Ezra Tawill *HaKohen*. At the age of twenty, he married the daughter of Rav Moshe Swed, *Rav* of Aram Soba. In 1896, Rav Avrohom immigrated to *Eretz Yisrael* and settled in Yerushalayim. Soon after his arrival, he learned at *Rehovos HaNohor*, a *Kabbola Yeshiva* in the Bucharian neighborhood. Among his *talmidim* were Rav Yosef Yedid *HaLevi*, Rav Shlomo Refoel Laniado, Rav Ezra Chamawi, Rav Ezra Attia (later to become *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Poras Yosef*), and Rav Yaakov Katzin, (5685/1925);
- ✧ **Rav Avrohom Yaakov HaKohen Pam**, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Torah V'Daas* (1913–2001/5761). Rav Pam's father, Rav Meir, was a product of Solobodka and Radin. As a child, Rav Pam studied in Kovna. His family later moved to the United States, where his father was appointed to the faculty of *Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin Yeshiva*. The thirteen-year-old began to study in *Torah V'Daas*. He became very close with the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Dovid Leibowitz, and Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz. After his marriage, he taught at *Torah V'Daas* for sixty years. After the *petira* of Rav Moshe Feinstein, he was appointed president of *Chinuch Atzmai* in the United States. He was also a member of the presidium of the largest *Torah* organization in America, *Torah Umesorah*. He founded the *Shuvu* organization for the *chinuch* of Russian children in *Eretz Yisrael*. He was loved by all. He is buried in Mount Judah Cemetery in Queens, New York, (5761/2001);
- ✧ **Rav Moshe Finkel**, born in Mir to Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel. He grew up with his great-grandfather, Rav Boruch Kamai, the *Rav* of Mir. He learned at Slobodka under his grandfather, Rav Nosson Zvi Finkel, the *Alter* of Slobodka, then at Kelm, where he learned

*bechavrusa* with Rav Povarsky, then at Baranovitch, under Rav Elchonon Wasserman and Rav Shlomo Heiman. Shortly before World War II, he immigrated to Yerushalayim and married the daughter of Rav Mordechai Dovid Levin, *mechaber* of *Darchei Dovid*. There, he worked diligently under his father for the Mir *Yeshiva*, (5669/1909–5764/2004).

## 29<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Thursday Night (Aug 29<sup>th</sup>)

- \* This day is considered *Yom Kippur Kotton*. Some have the *minhag* to fast and say *selichos* (even if they do not do this in other months), to give additional *tzedoka*, and to study an additional amount.
- \* **Rav Shmuel ben Rav Tzvi Salant**, *Rav* of Yerushalayim (1816–1909/5669). Born in Bialystok, Russia, his father passed away soon after his birth, and he was sent to study in Salant, Lithuania, where it had already been arranged that he would eventually marry Toiba, the eldest daughter of Rav Yosef Zundel of Salant, from whom Rav Shmuel took his surname. Soon after his marriage, Rav Shmuel moved to Volozhin, where he was appointed *Maggid Shiur*. He moved to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1841. From 1848 to 1851, Rav Shmuel served the Yerushalayim community as a *meshulach*. In 1878, he was voted in as chief *Ashkenazi Rav* of Yerushalayim to replace Rav Meir Auerbach who had just passed away. Rav Shmuel Salant managed to unify the many groups of *Azhkenazim* of Yerushalayim, and to lead them successfully for fifty years, (5669/1909);
- \* **Rav Menachem Mendel Alter** of Pavinitz. He went to his death in Treblinka with *yishuv hada'as*, *tzidkus* and *prishus*. He was a son of the *Sfas Emes*, Rav Yehuda Aryeh Leib, (5702/1942);
- \* **Rav Eliezer Zusia ben Rav Yisrael Avrohom Portugal**, the Skulener *Rebbe* (1897–1982/5742), from a small town, Sculeni (Skulen), in what was then northeastern Romania (now Ukraine). He was a *talmid* of the Stefanishter *Rebbe*. Just eighteen years of age when his father passed away, he became *Rav* of the town, a position he held for twenty years. The Sadigerer *Rebbe* persuaded the *Rebbe* to relocate to the large Jewish center of Czernovitz, home to a Jewish population numbering many thousands, to oversee Jewish education there. Toward the end of World War II, in March of 1945, he found himself, along with other Holocaust survivors and displaced persons, in the Russian-governed town of Czernovitz, Bukovina. Rav Portugal was particularly known for his work on behalf of Holocaust orphans and for his spiritual resistance against Romania's communist government. In 1962, he launched the crowning glory of his life's work – the *Torah* network of *Chesed L'Avrohom* in *Eretz Yisrael*, which eventually expanded to four *Chessed* homes and schools for hundreds of children from various tragic backgrounds, as well as a countrywide network of afternoon programs for children in public schools. More than fifty thousand children have gone through its ranks. He is buried in the Vizhnitzer Cemetery in Monsey, New York. His son, Rav Yisrael Avrohom, the present Skulener *Rebbe*, is one of the most respected *Tzaddikim* today, (5742/1982);
- \* **Rav Yosef Meir Twersky** of Makhnovka, son of Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Geshel from Skvira. Makhnovka is located in western Ukraine, thirteen miles SSE of Berditchev and ninety-six miles SW of Kiev. It is situated along the west bank of the Gnilopyat River, within the "Pale of Settlement" of the Russian Empire. In the census of 1897, the village of Makhnovka had 2,435 Jews out of a total population of 5,343 (about 45 percent). In 1939, the Jewish population of Makhnovka was 843. The Germans captured the town on July 14,

1941 and on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September executed 835 Jews in the Zhezhlevsk forest. A ghetto was then set up for the few hundred Jews still in the area. They were all murdered in a number of “Aktions” in 1942, (5617/1857);

✳ **Rav Shmuel Sperber** (1905–1985), born in Brasov, Transylvania, where his father, Rav Dovid, was the *Rav*. As a youth, Shmuel studied in the *Yeshivos* of Oyber-Visheve, Hungary, under the tutelage of Rav Eliezer Dovid Gruenwald and Rav Mendel Hager. After receiving *semicha* and marrying, Rav Sperber lived in Iasi, Romania. In 1931, after being attacked by anti-Semites, he decided to leave Romania and settle in England. There, he enrolled in law school at the University of London and also founded a *Yeshiva, Ohr Torah*. With the arrival in England of the large transports of German-Jewish children on the eve of the Holocaust, Rav Sperber became actively involved in comforting and educating them. At this same time, Rav Sperber became active in the Mizrachi movement, and he opened a camp in North Wales to prepare approximately two hundred children for life on a kibbutz. Later he moved to Manchester, where he continued to work with youth, and then back to London to become an adjunct professor at the University of London. In 1971, Rav Sperber settled in *Eretz Yisrael*. One of his sons is the *mechaber* of a multi-volume work on the history of *minhogim*/customs and of unusual ritual objects, (5745/1985).



## ✳ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ✳

### WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

The *Rebbe Reb Melech* in *Noam Elimelech* explains the reason why when we mention a *Tzaddik* who has passed on we say: *Zechuso Yogen Oleinu* (may his merit shield us). The *Noam Elimelech* asks: why would the *Tzaddik* give away his merit to someone else to shield him? Perhaps he would keep that merit for his own benefit in the next world! He answers that *zechuso* should not be translated as “merit” rather as *zach venoki* – “pure and refined”. When we say *Zechuso Yogen Oleinu*, we are asking that the purity and refinement that the *Tzaddik* underwent through his *Torah* study, sincerely motivated *lishma* – which refined him; this light should be drawn down over us all and stand by his generation to shield and protect us all. (*Parshas Bo*).



Those *Tzaddikim* who, during their lifetimes, awakened and roused the hearts and souls of the Jewish people, continue to do so even after they have passed on from this world. (*Atzei Chaim – Mishpotim*).



The *Tzaddikim* who reside in the world of truth are called *Melitzei Yosher*, for during their lifetimes they advocated on behalf of the Jewish people to protect them from all manner of prosecution, and they continue to plead our case and advocate on our behalf in the next world, just as *Chazal* teach us regarding Moshe (*Sota* 13b) that “Moshe passed away there” (*Devorim* 34:5) and yet it says in *Shemos* (34:28) that he was there with *Hashem*? The *Gemora* answers the contradiction by saying that just as in the first place he stood and served before *Hashem*, so does he now still stand and serve before *Hashem* till this day, advocating on our



behalf before *Hashem* just as he did in his lifetime - and so do all the *Tzaddikim* of each generation in the upper realms. (*Bais Yaakov – Zechor Bris*).



## ❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, 23<sup>rd</sup> of Menachem Av

The Steipler *Gaon*

### The Fiery Determination of Novardok

Everyone has his own portrait of each *Godol* he has come across. The following story of Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, the *Steipler Gaon*, is what comes to mind every time his name is mentioned. When he was drafted into the Russian Army and *Shabbos* approached, he marched right into his commander's office and let it be known that he would not be *Mechallel Shabbos*. The officer was so taken aback by the unprecedented *chutzpa* and suicidal gambit of this new recruit that he said he would allow him to keep *Shabbos* if he agreed to one condition. In a continuation of his stubbornness the *Steipler* said he did not even have to tell him what he has in mind because the answer was yes, he agreed.

"Okay," said the officer, "in that case, since you will give more work to your co-soldiers, they will have the privilege of beating you to their hearts' content."

Despite knowing the viciousness of these strong young men and their anti-Semitism, the *Steipler* not only happily accepted this savage near-death beating but he said that he carried these special moments with him for the rest of his life and was never able to do anything that could recapture or repeat the life that it pumped into his broken body. This was the way the *Steipler* approached every *mitzva* opportunity, *Kala K'Chamura*.

The *Steipler* was born in Hornesteipel in 1899 after his father, Rav Chaim Peretz, a sixty-year-old widower, received a *berocha* from the Hornesteipel *Rebbe*, a son-in-law of Rav Chaim of Sanz (the *Divrei Chaim*), that if he remarried he would be *zoche* to a son, after only having daughters. His father was a *shochet* and a great *masmid* and *yerei Shomayim*, and his young mother a great *tzaddeikes*. Together they had three sons, the oldest being Rav Yaakov Yisrael. In his youth Rav Yaakov Yisrael contracted life-threatening typhus, and, although he managed to survive, it caused permanent damage to his hearing.

After learning *Torah* from his father in his early years, at age ten his father sent him to Kremenchug to learn in a *Talmud Torah* organized by *talmidim* of *Yeshiva Slabodka*. A year later his father was *niftar*. He was recalled home to be with his broken mother, but when a contingent from *Yeshiva Novardok* came to the town to recruit on behalf of the *Alter* of Novardok, Rav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, his mother jumped at the opportunity to send her eleven-year-old son away from poverty to a place where he could fulfill his only dream of learning *Torah* and be provided with food at the same time.

At age nineteen, Rav Yaakov Yisrael was sent to Rogatchov to open a branch of the Novardok network of *Yeshivos* that spanned Russia. It was during this time that he was drafted into the Russian Army

to fight in the Bolshevik Revolution. Many stories exist regarding his unyielding determination to keep the *mitzvos*.

After he was freed from the army, the situation in Russia for the Jews deteriorated to the point where *talmidim* were sneaking across the border on a steady basis. This was a very dangerous undertaking and being caught could be fatal. When Rav Yaakov Yisrael's turn came, they were to be smuggled by a farmer who divided up the group among various family members. Rav Yaakov Yisrael was sent with the farmer's daughter. Worrying about being alone with her (*yichud*), he ran away straight into the arms of the Russians. He was jailed but soon managed to escape.

On his next attempt he needed to stop to relieve himself. Despite the fact that he could have waited until he crossed and his group refused to wait, he broke off from his group and missed his turn, not wanting to violate the aveira of *bal teshaktzu*. During his next attempt it was *mincha* time and he didn't want to miss the *zman*. He went to a quiet place in the forest to *daven* and after spending much time speaking to his Creator, oblivious to the whole world, when he finished, he realized his group had long gone. Lost in the forest, he started wandering until he found himself next to a *Bais Medrash*. When he asked someone where he was they told him he was in Slutzk, Poland. He had finally made it across the border!

From there he went to learn in Bialystok under Rav Avrohom Yoffen, a son-in-law of the *Alter*. He published his first *sefer* in 1924 and then word of his greatness in *Torah* spread. The *Chazon Ish*, who was then already in Bnei Brak, suggested Rav Yaakov Yisrael as a match for his sister, whom he eventually married, after seeing his *sefer Shaarei Tvuna* that was published in 1925. He then went on to become *Rosh Yeshiva* in the Novardok branch in Pinsk. In 1934, he moved to

*Eretz Yisrael* and settled in Bnei Brak, the town of his brother-in-law, the *Chazon Ish*.

The *Steipler Gaon* spent the rest of his life shunning the limelight, despite being the unofficial successor of his brother-in-law, the *Chazon Ish*, upon his *petira* in 1953. He spent most of his time in his modest surroundings learning *Torah*. Such greatness cannot be kept a secret and an audience with him was priceless for the throngs who came to learn from him, ask him questions, seek his advice, and receive his *berocha*. He was a role model of uncompromising determination in *kiyum* of every one of the *Taryag Mitzvos*. His *Torah* is treasured by *Bnei Torah* across the globe. Most of all, to many of us, his fiery image and example is forever etched in the forefront of our minds.

The *Steipler Gaon* returned his holy *neshoma* to its Maker on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of *Av*, 5745/1985. It is said that 200,000 people attended his *levaya*, the then-largest ever in Bnei Brak. *Yehi Zichro Boruch!*

[www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/The-Steipler-Gaon-](http://www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/The-Steipler-Gaon-)

[The-Fiery-Determination-Of-Novhardok/4002](http://www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/The-Steipler-Gaon-)



### **The Steipler Gaon – Taking Care of Living and Breathing Seforim**

Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, the *Steipler Gaon*, was especially *makpid* on *kevod hasefer*. The *sefer Toldos Yaakov* gives some examples of his diligence and sensitivity in his *kevod hasefer*.

- Once, when someone took out the wrong *sefer* for him, before returning it to its place on the shelf he made sure to learn something from it in order not to “embarrass” it.
- He would fix every rip in his *seforim*. When he rebound his *Shas* he said, “I have pleasure from the fact that my *seforim* have been restored with their proper honor.”
- If he would fall asleep on a *sefer* after learning until his last ounce of energy

dissipated, he would feel terrible about the lack of *kovod* for the *sefer*.

- Two of his *seforim*, *Bircas Peretz* and *Chayei Olam* were originally sold at cost price because he felt they were worthwhile to disseminate publicly. Afterward, he decided to raise the price because he felt it was not *kovod* for the *seforim* to be sold so inexpensively. The profits were given to *tzedoka*.

In many *shuls* and *Yeshivos* in *Eretz Yisrael*, there is a letter hung near the *seforim* shelves regarding the importance of returning *seforim* after using them and not leaving them on the table. It tells a story of a time that the *Steipler Gaon* finished learning in a *Yeshiva* not far his home. After walking approximately a hundred meters, despite the fact that walking was very difficult for him, he realized that he had not returned his *sefer* to its place. He then turned around, went back to the place he was sitting, returned the *sefer*, and then went home.

The *Steipler Gaon* was a living *Sefer Torah*. We may never reach his level of *Torah* but there is no reason we cannot reach his level of respect for the *seforim* that the *Torah* is written in.

[www.revach.net/hanhagos/maaseh-rav/The-Steipler-Gaon-Taking-Care-of-Living-Breathing-Seforim/2341](http://www.revach.net/hanhagos/maaseh-rav/The-Steipler-Gaon-Taking-Care-of-Living-Breathing-Seforim/2341)



### **The Steipler's Matza for the Seder**

One year, a *Talmid Chochom* in Bnei Brak was *niftar* before *Purim*. Shortly thereafter, one of the *Steipler's* close *talmidim* came to see him and discuss a matter concerning the *almona* (widow) of the *Talmid Chochom*.

In the midst of the conversation, the *Steipler* said suddenly, "*Pesach* is approaching. The *almona* will sit down the night of the *Seder* and be pained by her loneliness. She will remember that her husband always ate hand *matza* the night of the *Seder*, but most probably she would

not have bought hand *matza*. I'll give some of my *matza* to her."

The *Steipler* got up, took out his package of *matza* and gave some to his *talmid*. He said, "There's enough here for the night of the *Seder*. When you give her the *matza*, don't say that I sent it to her, because it's forbidden to give a present to a woman. Simply say that I gave you this to give over to someone who needs it."

The *talmid* later said, "It's impossible to describe in words the incredible excitement and tears in the house of the *almona* when I entered and said to her, "I have *matza* for you from the *Steipler* for the night of the *Seder*." (*Chaim Sheyesh Bohem: Halichos Vehanhogos*)

[www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/The-Steiplers-Matza-for-The-Seder/2129](http://www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/The-Steiplers-Matza-for-The-Seder/2129)



### **Buying Seforim in the Three Weeks**

The *Rema paskens* (OC 551:2) that the *issur* of building and planting in the three weeks and even nine days does not apply if it is for a *mitzva*. The *Mishna Berura* (14) says that if someone does not yet have children and is scheduled to get married after *Tisha B'Av*, he may buy clothing for the wedding even in the nine days.

The *Piskei Tshuvos* (10) says that based on this you may buy *seforim* in the nine days if you need the *sefer* to learn from. However, he brings that the *Steipler Gaon* (*Orchos Rabbeinu*) was *machmir* not to allow new *seforim* into his home in the three weeks.

One time when a box of *seforim* arrived during the nine days, he instructed his family members not to open it until after *Tisha B'Av*. So great was his *simcha* in learning new *seforim* that he was *makpid* for himself, since for him it was too joyous an event.

[www.revach.net/halacha/tshuvos/Steipler-Gaon-Buying-Seforim-In-The-Three-Weeks/4631](http://www.revach.net/halacha/tshuvos/Steipler-Gaon-Buying-Seforim-In-The-Three-Weeks/4631)



## Rav Binyomin Aharon Solnik of Podheitz, 23<sup>rd</sup> of Menachem Av

*Mechaber of Mas'as Binyomin*

Rav Binyomin Aharon Solnik, son of Rav Avrohom, was a *talmid* of the Rema and of the *Maharshal*, and one of the leading *Talmidei Chachomim* in Cracow.

After the *Rema's petira*, Rav Binyomin Aharon moved to Silesia and later to Podheitz. He corresponded in *halachic* matters with many *Gedolim* of his time, notably the *Maharam* of Lublin; Rav Yosef Steinhart, the *Zichron Yosef*; and Rav Mordechai Yaffe, the *Levush*. His *sefer Mas'as Binyomin* includes 112 *teshuvos*.

Rav Binyomin Aharon's sons were

all *Gedolim*. His son Rav Yaakov Yukel was the *mechaber* of *Nachalas Yaakov* on *Rashi's* commentary on the *Torah*. Rav Avrohom was *Rav* of Tarnopol and later *Rav* in Brisk.

His son-in-law was Rav Menachem Mann, *Rav* in Vienna and later chief *Rav* of Austria.

Rav Binyomin Aharon was *niftar* on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of *Av* 5370/1610.

*Zecher Tzaddik livrachah.*

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## Rav Dovid Ortinberg of Berditchev, 24<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

*The Tehilla L'Dovid*

Rav Dovid Ortinberg was the son of Rav Yisrael Tzvi, a descendant of Rav Zev Wolf of Zhitomir, the *Ohr HaMeir*, and of the inner group of *Chassidim* of the *Saraf* of Strelisk.

After the *petira* of the Strelisker *Rebbe*, Rav Yisrael Tzvi traveled to the court of the Ruzhiner *Rebbe*. His son, Rav Dudia, as he was called, was a devoted *Chassid* of the Ruzhiner and later of his children.

Shortly after his marriage, he was asked by the *kehilla* of Berditchev to serve as *Dayan* in their city. This was a prestigious position: the city was home to many *Talmidei Chachomim*, and it was just forty years since the *petira* of the *Kedushas Levi* of Berditchev, whose influence was still strongly felt. (After the *petira* of the *Kedushas Levi*, no one was ever named

*Rav* of Berditchev. He could be called *Dayan*, but not *Rav* of the city; no one could replace the *Kedushas Levi*.)

Even as *Rav*, Rav Dudia continued to travel to the Ruzhiner *Rebbe* and, after his *petira*, to his son Rav Avrohom Yaakov, the Sadigura *Rebbe* and, later, to the Boyaner *Rebbe*. He was noted for his utter *bittul* to his *Rebbes*, despite his being a *Rav*, or, as some *Chassidim* said, because he was a *Rav* and *Talmid Chochom*.

Rav Dudia wrote several well-known *Halocha seforim*: *Tehilla L'Dovid* on *Hilchos Shabbos* and *Shoham V'Yoshpeh* on the *Rambam*.

*Niftar* on the twenty-fourth of *Av* 5670/1910, he was buried in Berditchev.

*Zecher Tzaddik livrachah.*

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## Rav Sholom Halperin, 24<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

*The Vasloier Rebbe*

Among the many towns dotting the countryside of Romania is a town called

Vasloi. Although not a particularly important town, in the years before the

Second World War it became a household name among Jews across the country, for in it lived the famed *Tzaddik* Rav Sholom Halperin, who became known as the *Rebbe* of Vasloi. He was regarded by all who saw him as an *Ish Elokim* (holy man), and thousands came from far and wide to see him and to receive his *berocha* (blessing).

Rav Sholom was born on the fifteenth of *Shevat* 5617 (1857). His father was Rav Dovid Halperin, who was a son-in-law of the *Rebbe*, Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin. Rav Dovid was from a distinguished line of famous *Rabbonim* and *Gedolim*. Rav Dovid, however, refused to accept the yoke of *Rabbonus* (the Rabbinate), preferring to remain within the shadow of his *shver* (father-in-law), the Ruzhiner, where he could sit and learn without interruption.

Despite his reticence, Rav Dovid soon made a name for himself as a major *Talmid Chochom*. Blessed with a very sharp head, his comments and sayings were passed from mouth to ear. On one occasion, when the Ruzhiner gave him a *berocha* that *Hashem* should fulfill all his heart's desires, Rav Dovid asked, "Is that all?"

"Isn't that enough?" the Ruzhiner asked him back in surprise.

"There are things which happen to a person which he doesn't even dream of," Rav Dovid explained. "Did it ever occur to me that one day I would end up being the *Rebbe's* son-in-law? Yet it still happened!" The Ruzhiner smiled at Rav Dovid's original answer and blessed him that *Hashem* should help him in whatever he needed, even if he did not know that he needed it.

As a young child, Rav Dovid's son, Rav Sholom, was recognized as possessing an extraordinary mind and character. However, even these attributes were exceeded by his remarkable *hasmoda* (diligence) and the energy he invested in his learning and *Avodas Hashem*. Most of

his waking hours were spent delving deep into *Shas* (*Talmud*) and *poskim* (legal tracts) until he had a considerable reputation as a *Talmid Chochom*.

In 1873, when Rav Sholom turned seventeen, he married his cousin, Chana Sora, the daughter of the first Bohusher *Rebbe*, Rav Yitzchok. After his *chassuna* (wedding), he stayed on in Bohush, continuing to learn without interruption. Some of the Bohusher *Chassidim* did not take too kindly to the fact that Rav Sholom would only enter his *shver's* (father-in-law's) *tisch* after his *shver* was already seated, but Rav Sholom did not take any notice. His time was too precious to be wasted.



When Rav Sholom was nearing forty years of age, the Bohusher *Rebbe* decided that it was time for his son-in-law to emerge from behind his *seforim* and begin to lead his own *Chassidim*. To this end, the Bohusher *Rebbe* sent him to the town of Radukan, where he was received with open arms by its many inhabitants. The *Yidden* (Jews) of the town rejoiced at having Rav Sholom in their midst, and indeed after a short time his *gadlus* (ability, greatness) was recognized by those around him, and they crowned him their *Rebbe*, opening a large *Bais Medrash* (*shul* and study hall) for him.

In 1907, a pogrom descended on the town. Roving bands of armed *goyim* had been circulating in the area and they decided to attack the Jews of Radukan. In a panic, the *Yidden* fled to the large court of Rav Sholom, where they gathered, awaiting their fate. The local *goyim*, however, did not want to lose Rav Sholom, for they had also been witness to the power of his *berochos*; they surrounded the *Rebbe's* building and forcefully prevented the armed bands from harming the *Yidden*.

On another occasion, when news

arrived of an imminent pogrom, Rav Sholom enclosed himself in his room and, taking out a packet of cigarettes, he started to smoke, all the while deep in thought. No sooner had he finished one cigarette, than he started the next one. The *Rebbe's* room started to fill up with a cloud of smoke. Outside, in the streets, a fog started to descend on the town. As the cloud of smoke thickened in the *Rebbe's* room, so too did the fog intensify. The fog became so thick that it was almost impossible to see anything more than a few feet away. The *goyim* were forced to call off their pogrom and thus the *Yidden* were saved.

For more than thirteen years, Rav Sholom lived in Radukan, leading his flock with an iron hand. Even though the *Haskola* (Reform movement) had managed to penetrate most of the towns in Romania, in Radukan, Rav Sholom stood firm, preventing them from gaining a foothold. However, even he was not able to totally stop their spread and, in 1909, a school was opened by the *maskilim* (reformers) of the area.

Rav Sholom warned the heads of the *kehilla* (community) that if the school was not shut down immediately, he would move out of Radukan. His words, however, were not taken seriously, and after being invited by his *Chassidim* in nearby Vasloi to move to their town, he left Radukan.

Not long after Rav Sholom left Radukan, *Middas HaDin* (retribution) descended on the town, causing them to repent their ways. One of the heads of the new school was found murdered with his wife lying next to him. Searches were made to find the killer, but to no avail. A few days later, a second *Yid* was found murdered in his shop, together with his wife and daughter, and not long afterward, a third *Yid* was found killed. Like the first *Yid*, these other two *Yidden* had also been instrumental in opening the new school. If all this was not enough, a plague also descended on the town, bringing severe

illness to many of the children in the school.

At an emergency meeting arranged by the *kehilla*, it was decided to send a delegation to Rav Sholom to ask forgiveness for having caused him to leave the town and to ask him to move back. When the delegation arrived in Vasloi, Rav Sholom told them that he forgave them all and, even though he would not move back to Radukan, he would, however, come for a visit. The news that Rav Sholom had forgiven them and was even coming for a visit brought a festive atmosphere in Radukan and a beautiful *kabbolas ponim* (reception) was arranged.

During the *kabbolas ponim*, all the members of the *Haskola* came one by one to apologize to him and to beg his forgiveness with broken hearts. Rav Sholom told them that he had never had even the slightest *hakpoda* (stringency, i.e. resentment) against them and he reassured them that all would return to normal. A few days after Rav Sholom left, the murderer was found and duly punished, and peace and quiet returned once again to the streets of Radukan.

In Vasloi, a large court and *Bais Medrash* were built. Although many had flocked to Rav Sholom while he had lived in Radukan, in Vasloi even more came to see his *avoda*. Every Friday night, the whole town would assemble around Rav Sholom's *tisch* to watch him as he recited *Kiddush*, his soul-piercing voice causing many a heart to miss a beat.

Not only did the *Yidden* regard Rav Sholom as an *Ish Elokim* (holy man). The local *goyim* would also stand in awe of him every time he walked along the street. The *Rav* of Vasloi, Rav Dov Rabinovitz, told the following story: "I was once walking along the streets of Vasloi when suddenly a beautiful carriage stopped alongside me and from inside it emerged the governor of Vasloi. He walked up to me and asked, 'Tell me, are you the *Rav* of the town?'



“When I answered him in the affirmative, he said to me, ‘But you don’t seem to be a *Rav*,’ and he explained himself, saying, ‘Surely, you know the famed Rav Sholom Halperin. He was once walking in the forest around Vasloi, and on his way he passed by a group of soldiers who were under my command. The second my soldiers caught a glimpse of this *Rav* they became so scared that they bolted in fright in every direction. Others remained rooted to the spot, too petrified to move.’ As the governor finished, he said to me, ‘But when people see you coming they don’t feel any fear at all, so how is it possible that you are a *Rav*?’”

Among the main trials that were the lot of the *Yidden* in Europe was the attraction of Zionism and all that it entailed. Although in Poland and Galicia the *Gedolim* (sages) had seen the dangers involved in their ideas and had by and large managed to prevent its spread, in Romania it spread like wildfire, trapping in its net not just the simple people but many *Rabbonim* and *Talmidei Chachomim* too.

Rav Sholom was among the few *Gedolim* who fought against the new movement tooth and nail. Many attempts were made to try to convince him to change his mind, but they all ended in failure. One of the heads of the local Zionist movement told Rav Sholom that he did not understand why Rav Sholom did not support *aliya* to *Eretz Yisrael*, considering that in Romania, the Jews were surrounded on all sides by anti-Semites who constantly sought to make their lives a misery.

Rav Sholom took out a map of the Middle East and showed it to the man, saying, “Look, here is Syria and here is Egypt and Iran and Iraq. More than one hundred million Arabs live in these countries and you think you will be able to live in peace? I am telling you that they will fight against the *Yidden* until *Moshiach* will come and redeem us.”

Rav Sholom’s fight against Zionism

knew no compromise. If a *Rav* who had Zionist leanings came to see Rav Sholom – and in Romania there were many such *Rabbonim* – he would not offer him a seat but would let the *Rav* stand the whole time. When the *Gabbo'im* (attendants) tried to convince Rav Sholom to offer such *Rabbonim* a seat, he told them, “What are you worried about – are you scared they won’t come again? I really don’t want them to come again!”

Another area in which the *Haskolo* managed to make major inroads into Romanian Jewry in general was regarding the sanctity of *Shabbos*. Many of the *Yidden* became lax in keeping the laws of *Shabbos* and would keep their shops open on *Shabbos* like during the week. The town of Vasloi was one of the few places in Romania where such a thing was unheard of. On the few occasions that someone dared to open his shop on *Shabbos*, Rav Sholom would march down to the shop and stand outside until the shop was hastily closed down.

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, thousands of Russian soldiers descended on Vasloi. When their commander saw Rav Sholom’s large courtyard, he decided that it would be ideal for his headquarters. The commander called Rav Sholom’s *Gabbo'im* and ordered them to vacate the court by *Shabbos*. If by *Shabbos* they hadn’t left the court, then they would all be forcibly evicted.

The *Gabbo'im* begged the commander to change his mind, but to no avail. The *Rebbe* with all his family had to leave by *Shabbos*. When Rav Sholom heard the news he did not react at all – as if it had nothing to do with him. As Friday drew near, his *Chassidim* begged Rav Sholom to leave the court and not to cause a *Chillul Hashem* and *Chillul Shabbos* through being evicted on *Shabbos*, but Rav Sholom ignored their pleas. Friday afternoon arrived – and still Rav Sholom showed no interest in moving; in desperation his

*Chassidim* demanded to know his reasons for not leaving the court. In a soft and determined voice, Rav Sholom told them, "The commander will not live to carry out his plan."

In order to occupy a private building, the law required that the takeover first be approved by a certain high-ranking officer in Bucharest. The commander, who anyhow had to go to Bucharest for an important meeting, went by himself to obtain permission for his new headquarters, which he received without a problem. The commander traveled back to Vasloi by express train, which was due to arrive early *Shabbos* morning.

Just outside Vasloi the train came to a halt. The commander, thinking that they had arrived, opened the carriage door to leave the train. As he opened the door, the train started to move again. The sudden jolt caught the commander off-guard and he fell onto the rails where he was crushed to death by the moving train. From then on, Rav Sholom was left in peace, his name uttered in awe by *Yidden* and *goyim* alike.

Amongst the constant stream of *Chassidim* who came to Vasloi were quite a number of great *Talmidei Chachomim*, who would come to speak in learning with Rav Sholom. One of the greatest *poskim* in Romania, Rav Chaim Mordechai Roller, *mechaber* of the classic *sefer Be'er Chaim Mordechai*, had become close with Rav Sholom from his days in Bohush.

Rav Chaim Mordechai would come to Vasloi once a month. Each time he came, they would close themselves in a room for hours on end, engaging in deep *Talmudic* discussion. Rav Chaim Mordechai would not cease praising Rav Sholom, saying that he was one of the major *Talmidei Chachomim* of the generation, someone truly familiar with any topic.

Rav Sholom also excelled in *Kabbola*. One of the famous *Mekubolim* of Yerushalayim, Rav Osher Zelig Margolios,

lived for a short time in Romania. During his stay there, he was a frequent visitor in Vasloi. Every time he came across a passage in *Kabbola* that he wasn't able to understand, he would ask Rav Sholom, who would answer him straight away. Even many years later, Rav Osher Zelig would say that although one cannot compare living in *Eretz Yisrael* to living in *Chutz La'Aretz*, (abroad) he did miss being able to ask Rav Sholom his questions.

In Rav Sholom's later years, his *Chassidim* decided that it was necessary to make an extension to his court. After the extension was completed, the *Chassidim* wanted Rav Sholom to go and look at the new quarters that had been built. Rav Sholom, however, refused their request. The inspection could wait until *Erev Pesach*, when he would have an opportunity to view the new rooms while carrying out *Bedikas Chometz* (the search for *chometz*). To go now in the middle of the year would be a waste of precious time, which could be better spent learning.

Indeed, those who still remember Rav Sholom recount that even more impressive than all the miracles that he performed was his unbelievable *hasmoda* (diligence). Every spare second was utilized for learning. Rav Sholom would forgo buttering his bread during mealtimes. The time was simply too precious to be wasted on such trivial pursuits.

Despite his fierceness against anything that was deemed a threat to *Torah-true Yiddishkeit*, he led his *Chassidim* like a true shepherd, caring for all their problems and worries. Every broken heart was sure to be warmly received and Rav Sholom would comfort and console everyone. Even those who had strayed from the path of *Yiddishkeit* would be given his undivided care and attention until their problems had been solved. At the same time, Rav Sholom would try to convince them to better their ways.

He would often say that it is

forbidden to give up hope on any *Yid*, however low he has fallen, for every *Yid* has in him a spark which, when ignited, will bring him back to *Torah* and *Mitzvos*. In this *derech* (way) he explained the words of the *Gemora* in *Maseches Berochos*, that a person must always ensure that his *Yetzer HaTov* (good inclination) controls his *Yetzer HoRa* (bad inclination) and not vice versa. If the person feels that his *Yetzer HoRa* is gaining control, then he should learn *Torah* in order to defeat it. If the *Yetzer HoRa* is not subdued through his learning, he should recite *Kerias Shema*. If this also does not help, he should remind himself that a person does not live forever and one day he will have to account for his actions.

Rav Sholom would say that these three different methods mentioned in the *Gemora* allude to the three different types of people in *Klal Yisrael*: The first category are the *Talmidei Chachomim* – those who learn *Torah*. Afterward come those who,

even if they cannot learn, still fear *HaKodosh Boruch Hu*, putting their trust in *Hashem* and *davening* three times daily. The last category is the *Yid* who has fallen by the wayside, and although he does not keep the *Torah* and *Mitzvos*, he still remembers to come once a year to *shul* on his parents' *yahrzeits* (anniversary of their *petiros*) to recite *Kaddish* for them. One should not despair even of such a person; he is still capable of conquering his *Yetzer HoRa* if he has the will to do so. In keeping with his words, Rav Sholom was '*mekareiv*' (brought close) every *Yid* who knocked on his door, no matter how far he had strayed.

Almost until his last day, Rav Sholom continued his *avoda* as usual. On his last *Shabbos*, he recited *Kiddush* in the *Bais Medrash* as every week. On Friday, the twenty-fourth of *Av* 5699 (1939), Rav Sholom's holy *neschoma* (soul) ascended to *shomayim*.

[www.nishmas.org/gdynasty/chapt18.htm](http://www.nishmas.org/gdynasty/chapt18.htm)



## Rav Yaakov Meshulom Orenstein, 25<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

The *Yeshuos Yaakov*

Rav Yaakov Meshulom served as the head of Lwów's Rabbinical court for some thirty-five years and authored the famed work *Yeshuos Yaakov* on the *Shulchon Aruch* and another *peirush* (commentary) on the *Chumash* by the same title.

The following three tales should illustrate to us some of the greatness of the *Yeshuos Yaakov*, the Lemberger *Rav*, Rav Yaakov Orenstein:

Similar to Rav Yosef Shaul Natanson, Rav Yaakov Orenstein was also not predisposed to agree with the *Chassidic* movement, yet he was not among its open opponents. The Klausenberger *Rebbe* used to tell how he had heard from the chief *Rav* of Nasoyd, who had himself heard from the Klausenberger's great uncle, the Shinover *Rav*, how much the *Yeshuos Yaakov*

honored the *talmidim* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*. Once, he was visited by the Apter *Rav*, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, and in honor of his guest he asked that his *Rebbetzin* should prepare something. The *Rebbetzin* made a swift batch of *milchig* pancakes and they were served to the Apter. As he took his fork and knife to cut the pancakes, something happened and suddenly he was seen pushing the plate away.

"Please tell me, Lemberger *Rav*," asked the Apter *Rav*, "from where did these pancakes come?" The host paled and asked what was wrong. When the assembled saw that the Apter was not eating, they stood waiting to see what would happen next. They soon heard the *Rebbetzin* calling out, "Don't serve the pancakes! Don't eat the

pancakes!”

When she was told that in fact her guest had refrained, she explained that in her haste to prepare the pancakes, she had made the milky buttery batter herself and asked one of the maid girls in the kitchen to fry them up. The girl, not realizing that the pancakes were full of milk, had accidentally fried them on a pan used for meat dishes. Seeing what seemed to be an open display of supernatural insight, the *Yeshuos Yaakov* turned to his guest for an explanation. The Apter *Rav* calmly explained why he had pushed his plate away: “When I cut the pancake, the milk and butter squirted into my eye! Seeing that this food had such *chutzpa* I knew it must not be kosher! Kosher food just does not behave that way!” Although the Apter *Rav* was, of course, jesting, the Klausenberger said nonetheless the idea illustrates that even regarding inanimate objects there is a difference between purity or sanctity and impurity or profanity.

In another story, the well-known *talmid* of Rav Mendele, the Kotzker *Rebbe*, known by the title of his work, the *Chiddushei HaRim*, and later the first Gerrer *Rebbe*, visited Lemberg. He wished to be granted an audience with the Lemberger *Rav*, Rav Yaakov Orenstein, to explain the ways of Kotzker *Chassidus* to him and to quell the false rumors spread about them. Rav Yaakov’s son, Rav Mordechai Ze’ev, who would also one day serve as the chief *Rav* of Lwów (Lemberg) greeted the *Chiddushei HaRim* and discussed many matters with him. Seeing that his guest from Warsaw was a great *Torah* scholar, who professed to be a Kotzker *Chassid*, no less, Rav Mordechai Ze’ev was confused. He began to ask about many of the nasty rumors that he had heard about the *Chassidim* and their strange ways and antics, but the *Chiddushei HaRim* waved them away as slanderous lies. Later that evening, Rav Mordechai Ze’ev took the *Chiddushei*

*HaRim* to meet with his father, Rav Yaakov, the Lemberger *Rav*. Upon entering his study, the *Yeshuos Yaakov* was seen meeting with a merchant who had come to ask a question regarding a matter in Jewish law. “*Vos machstu?*” asked the Lemberger *Rav*.

Understanding the question to mean in its plainest sense, “How do you do?” the merchant answered, “Thank G-d, I am well in health and regarding wealth, there is work, *Boruch Hashem...*”

The Lemberger *Rav* cut him off impatiently, asking once more, “I asked you ‘*Vos Machstu?*’”

Temporarily confused, the merchant began again to say the same thing. Then the Lemberger *Rav* thundered back, “But I asked you, ‘*Vos Machstu?*’”

“I beg your pardon, *Rav*,” said the flustered merchant, but I have already attempted to answer the same question posed to me now almost three times.”

The Lemberger *Rav* explained, “Yes, but you are not answering my question; you are telling me about your physical state of being, but I asked you, ‘*Vos Machstu?*’ I meant how are YOU doing: spiritually, how are you? Do you have times set aside for the study of *Torah* and for *tefilla*? Do you make an accounting of your charitable work and so forth? That is YOUR true state of affairs.” The *Chiddushei HaRim* was greatly impressed by the Lemberger *Rav*’s ways.

When he had answered the merchant’s questions, the Lemberger *Rav* turned to his guest and immediately began asking him questions in learning and difficult contradictions in *Gemora*. The two began to swim through the sea of *Talmudic* logic. Rav Yaakov was of course testing his guest, who his son claimed was a true scholar, despite being a *Chassid*. The study and learning grew so intense that after several hours had passed, the two dueling *Rabbonim* sat in deep concentration alone



(for everyone else had already left) with wet towels wrapped across their foreheads to keep their minds cool, and prevent their brains from overheating! Seeing that his guest was indeed a *Talmid Chochom*, Rav Yaakov proceeded to ask him about the rumors he too had heard.

“Vicious slander and lies!” exclaimed the *Chiddushei HaRim*. Having seen a clear demonstration of his guest’s *Talmudic* acumen, the Lemberger *Rav* was ready to hear and accept his explanations and was later no longer counted among the opponents of Kotzk.

Finally, it is told that one day before Rav Yaakov Orenstein had renounced his opposition to *Chassidus*, he was seized with a great desire to meet with and learn from one of the *talmidim* of the *Ba’al Shem Tov* to see if their way was indeed false. That night, a *Tzaddik* appeared to him in a vision, in his dream. “You are mistaken in your opposition,” the *Tzaddik* claimed.

“But why do they *daven* so late, even after the required time for the recitation of the *Shema*?” he asked.

The *Tzaddik* replied, “Even if their preparations cause the time for the *Shema* to have passed, still they truly recite the *Shema*, which, as the *pasuk* says, must be recited “with all your heart and soul”, whereas many *misnagdim*, our opponents, fulfill the dictum to recite the *Shema* on time, but whatever it is that they are saying, it is not the *Shema*, for they do not say it with all their heart and soul.”

When the Lemberger *Rav* awoke, he remembered the strange dream. Soon afterward, the holy Ropshitzer visited, and when the Lemberger *Rav* met him, he was astonished to see the *Tzaddik* from his dream.

“*Nu*, Lemberger *Rav*,” quipped Rav Naftoli Ropshitzer, “is the question still bothering you or has it been resolved?”



## Rav Noach Naftoli of Kobrin, 26<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

Rav Noach Naftoli, born in 5596/1836, was the son of Rav Yisrael Yaakov, who was the son of the famed Rav Moshe of Kobrin. He was the son-in-law of his uncle, Rav Boruch Chaim Levin, a son-in-law of Rav Moshe of Kobrin.

Following the *petira* of his grandfather, Rav Moshe of Kobrin, on the twenty-ninth of *Nissan* 5618/1858, Rav Noach Naftoli was appointed *Rebbe* by a group of his grandfather’s *Chassidim*. (Most of the *Chassidim* accepted Rav Avrohom of Slonim as their *Rebbe*.)

Rav Noach Naftoli was known as an outstanding *Talmid Chochom*. His

appearance was regal.

On the twenty-sixth of *Av* 5649/1889, at the age of sixty-three, Rav Noach Naftoli was *niftar* in Komin, while cutting the bread at his table.

His sons, Rav Dovid Shlomo of Kobrin and Rav Aharon Levi of Diamatshcve, succeeded him as *Rebbe*.

Many of Rav Noach Naftoli’s *Divrei Torah* were printed in the *sefer* of his grandfather, *Amoros Tehoros*, under the title *Maamorim Tehorim*.

*Zechuso yogen oleinu.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-26-avaugust-22/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-26-avaugust-22/)



## Rav Yoel Teitelbaum, 26th of Menachem Av

The Satmar Rav

One *Motzo'ei Shabbos Kodesh, parshas Eikev*, the Tosher Rebbe sat at *Melave Malka* with his *Chassidim* and related:

This upcoming twenty-sixth of *Av* is the *Yahrzeit* of the holy Satmar Rav.

Even before he was born, the Sanzer Rav, *mechaber* of *Divrei Chaim*, testified as to his upcoming greatness.



Rav Yoel's father, the *mechaber* of *Kedushas YomTov*, was childless for

many years and when he came before his Rebbe, the Sanzer Rav, the *Divrei Chaim* promised him in a letter that he would have children blessed by *Hashem*. His prophetic words were, of course, fulfilled: the *Kedushas Yom Tov* had two luminaries, his sons Rav Yoel of Satmar and Rav Yoel's brother, the holy *mechaber* of the *Atzei Chaim* of Sighet, as well as several daughters. From the sanctity and righteousness of these two brothers alone, we see that the Sanzer Rav's blessings were fulfilled and that the *Kedushas Yom Tov* merited children blessed by *Hashem*. The *Kedushas Yom Tov's* grandfather, the *Yetev Lev* of Sighet, was similarly blessed at his wedding by Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Rymanow that he, too, would merit children, generations blessed by *Hashem*. Obviously the Satmar Rav was one of the blessed descendants of this *berochah*.

(The Tosher Rebbe, *Shlit"a* related the story of the *Yetev Lev's chassuna* in greater detail on *Motzo'ei Shabbos Parshas Toldos* in the context of Rav Hirschel of Rymanow's *Yahrzeit*.)

Rav Hirsch of Rymanow was a

*Kohen* and had the *minhag* to bless *Klal Yisrael*, bestowing abundant *berochos* and goodness upon them. Whatever he said was fulfilled. When he was younger, before he became well known, he still had great power to dispense *berochos*, as I heard from my grandfather about the *chassuna* of the *Yetev Lev* of Sighet and this is the story he told me (here the Tosher Rebbe, *Shlit"a* retold the story heard from his grandfather):

When the *Yetev Lev* married the daughter of Rav Moshe Dovid Ashkenazi, the *Av Bais Din* of Taltsheva, the grandfather, the *mechaber* of *Yismach Moshe*, gave his son, Rav Elozor Nissan (the father of the *chossun*) a certain amount of money to distribute as *tzedoka* to the poor who were present at the *chassuna*. Amongst the poor there was one particular pauper who, having received the allotted amount of *tzedoka* which Rav Elozor Nissan distributed to each one, insisted that he add more money to the amount and asked for a certain very large sum, so large that Rav Elozor Nissan kindly told him that the money was not his and he could not use his discretion to give one pauper such a princely sum.

He turned and went to his father, the *Yismach Moshe*, related the pauper's request and asked him what to do.

"I wish to see this pauper," said the *Yismach Moshe*, and from his room the crowd parted so as to allow him to peer through the door and see the face of the anonymous pauper who had requested such a sum of *tzedoka*. When the *Yismach Moshe* saw who it was, he turned



to his son, Rav Elozor Nissan, and told him to give the poor man the entire sum of *tzedoka* he had requested, without arguing.

When the pauper received the money, he blessed Rav Elozor Nissan and the *chosson*, the *Yetev Lev*, with a great *berocha*,

promising them that from this marriage would come forth generations of holy, righteous descendants. Afterward, he vanished without a trace.



Many years later, when the *kalla's* father, the *Taltsheca Rav*, prepared to move to *Eretz Yisrael*, his son-in-law, the *Yetev Lev*, accompanied him to visit many *Rebbes* and *Tzaddikim*, among them Rav Hirsch Rymanower. The *Yetev Lev* immediately recognized his face – it was the pauper who had attended his wedding so many years before, who had blessed him with descendants who would be *Tzaddikim*. Among those descendants was the *Satmar Rav*.

When the *Satmar Rav* was a six-year-old lad, he merited visiting the holy sanctuary of Rav Mordechai'leh of Nadworna. Rav Mordechai'leh asked the young child what he was studying in *cheder*. Rav Yoel answered that he studied *Chumash* with *Rashi's* commentary. Rav Mordechai'leh *farhered* (tested) him and was pleased to see he knew the material well. He then told him to be very diligent in studying *Chumash* with *Rashi* every week, saying, "Mordechai'leh knew several great men, who, in their older years, they did not know where *HaKodosh Boruch Hu* dwells, because they were not diligent in studying *Chumash* with *Rashi*." He promised the young Rav Yoel that if he would diligently study *Chumash Rashi* week by week, he would rise to very high levels.

The holy *Satmar Rav* fulfilled these words all his life. The words of Rav Mordechai'leh were very precious to him: every day after *davening*, while still adorned in *tallis* and *tefillin*, the *Satmar Rav* studied *Chumash* and *Rashi*; even in his old age when this practice was difficult and taxing for him, he never gave it up.

The *Satmar Rav's* *kochos* in *tzedoka* were very great. He would give out huge sums to the poor and destitute, looking after their needs and helping to care for them.

When he was *Rav* in Kroli in his younger years, the *Satmar Rav* asked his *gabbai* to invite the wealthy Rav Chaim Shtern of Pest and explain that he had an urgent and important matter of business to discuss with him. When Rav Shtern arrived in Kroli, Rav Yoel explained the reason for his summons: "You should know that in Pest, there are approximately forty families I know of who are so destitute that they cannot even put bread on their tables. I am asking you to please see to it that at least their needs for *Shabbos* are taken care of."

Rav Chaim answered Rav Yoel, "Surely I will fulfill what the *Rav* is asking of me, on one condition – that the *Rav* does not make me a *Chassid*!"

Rav Yoel smiled and answered sweetly, "*Mein tei'ere kind* (My precious child)! Why, if you fulfill my request and take care of fulfilling the needs of the poor, I will be *your Chassid*!"

(Based on *Avodas Avoda Sichos Kodesh II*)



### Teaching Us To Stand Tall In America

The *Tchebiner Rav* would marvel at the *Brisker Rav's* depth in learning and the *Brisker Rav* would marvel at the *Tchebiner Rav's* breadth of *Torah* knowledge. Both of them were in awe of the *Satmar Rav's* breadth and depth of *Torah* wisdom. So the story goes. Not only was the *Satmar Rav*



the architect of *Chassidische* life in post-war America, but he was one of the generation's greatest *Torah* scholars and *poskim*. He was truly a living legend.

Rav Yoel Teitelbaum was born on the eighteenth of *Teves* 5647/1887 to his father Rav Chananya Yom Tov Lipa, the *Rebbe* in the Hungarian town of Sighet. He was a direct descendant of the *Yismach Moshe* and the *Yetev Lev*. After being childless for many years, the *Kedushas Yom Tov* had two sons: Rav Chaim Tzvi, the *Atzei Chaim* of Sighet, and Rav Yoel. Rav Yoel or Yoilish as he was called, was a wonder child. His *bar mitzva derosha* kept the crowd spellbound and was the big news the next day in the newspapers. In a practice that lasted through his life, Rav Yoel often did not sleep in a bed, instead learning through the night by forcing himself awake by placing his feet in bucket of freezing cold water.

Rav Yoel got married at the age of seventeen to Chava Horowitz, the daughter of the *Plancher Rebbe*. His gravely ill father was *Mesader Kiddushin* and was *niftar* two weeks later. After the *petira* of the *Kedushas Yom Tov*, Rav Yoel's older brother, the *Atzei Chaim*, became *Rebbe* and *Rav* of Sighet. Rav Yoel quietly moved to the neighboring town of Satmar, where he hoped to grow in *Torah* away from the limelight and his father's *Chassidim*. Things didn't work out that way, and within a year, due to pressure from his many admirers, Rav Yoel was leading his own *Kehilla* and *Chassidim*.

Rav Yoel's first official position was as *Rav* of Orishiva, Czechoslovakia, which he accepted in 1911 at the age of twenty-four. It was there that he gained a reputation as a fearless *kano'i*, padlocking a wedding hall and not letting the *seuda* proceed, after the *ba'alei simcha* (hosts) violated his warning against mixed dancing. It was during his years in Orishiva after opening a *Yeshiva* that Rav Yoel's

*halachic psak* became sought after, with *shailos*

pouring in from all over Hungary. In 1924, after Rav Yoel felt he had brought



Orishiva to the level of *Yiddishkeit* required, he accepted a similar position in Kroli. The ten years he spent in Kroli was, in his opinion, some of the best years of his life, learning and teaching *Torah*. Due to pressure upon the vacancy of the position of the *Rav* of Satmar, in 1934 he acceded and moved back to his adopted town of many years before. By this time he was already recognized by the likes of Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz as the leader of Hungarian Jewry and one of the *Gedolei HaDor*.

From the outbreak of World War II until the Nazi beasts invaded Hungary, the *Rebbe* did not sit still. He was actively involved in the rescue efforts of his Polish brethren. When the Nazis invaded, Rav Yoel was fortunate to be awarded a seat on the famous Kastner train, after Rudolf Kastner's mother appeared to him in a dream and told him that if the Satmar *Rav* was not on the train, all its passengers would not survive. The Kastner train was a trainload of people who were to be taken out of Nazi-occupied territory to freedom in Switzerland as part of a deal between the Zionist leader in Hungary, Rudolf Kastner, and the Nazi hierarchy. Although originally intended for important Hungarian Zionist members and their families, many members of the *Chareidi* community were also able to get on. The train did not initially go to Switzerland as promised, but after a detour and a four-month layover in the infamous Bergen-Belsen death camp (albeit in a special section), they were finally sent on their way.



After the war, Rav Yoel moved to Eretz Yisrael. However, shortly thereafter, through

*Hashgoch* a *Protis*, he

embarked on a fundraising trip to New York and ended up settling



there. While Rav Aharon Kotler and Rav Moshe Feinstein rebuilt non-*Chassidische* Jewry, Rav Yoel laid the foundations for *Chassidische* America. Rav Yoel knew exactly what he wanted and built it according to the script he wrote.

While he was often at odds *halachically* and *hashkafically* with Rav Aharon and Rav Moshe, they all had the greatest mutual respect and admiration, so much so that when Rav Aharon asked the Satmar *Rav* not to drive his car after *Shekia* (sunset) on Friday, which the Satmar *Rav* held was permitted until a later *zman*, he obeyed without question.

The Satmar *Rav* built Williamsburg into a bastion of Satmar *Chassidus* and founded *Kiryas Yoel* with many *Mosdos* of *Chinuch*, a great deal of *Torah* learning, and their enviable *Chessed* network, which reaches Jews from all walks of life, regardless of affiliation and background. But more than just building Satmar, he was a “*Rebbe’s Rebbe*”, in his fatherly way guiding many other transplanted *Chassidische* courts and helping them rebuild and firmly plant their roots on the once-*treife* soil of America. The *Rebbe* taught us how to stand tall in America and be proud Jews just like we were in the *shtetlach* of Europe. For this all of American Jewry and even world Jewry has a great amount of respect and gratitude. The Satmar *Rav* was *niftar* on the twenty-sixth of *Av* 5639/1979. *Yehi Zichro Boruch*.

[www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/The-Satmar-Rov-Rav-Yoel-Teitelbaum-Teaching-Us-To-Stand-Tall-In-America/4007](http://www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/The-Satmar-Rov-Rav-Yoel-Teitelbaum-Teaching-Us-To-Stand-Tall-In-America/4007)

[www.Ravshimon.com/tzadikim/showz.php?p=satmar.htm](http://www.Ravshimon.com/tzadikim/showz.php?p=satmar.htm)



Rav Yitzchok Hutner, *Ra”m* of Chaim Berlin and *mechaber* of *Pachad Yitzchok*, used to say that the Satmar *Rav* was able to see with a far-reaching vision, greater than many other *Rebbes* and *Rabbonim*, saying, “He sees further than all of us.”

He once told the following story which demonstrated this far-reaching vision:

Once, two messengers arrived from Eretz Yisrael to visit the offices of *Agudas Yisrael* in America. They told how recently, many missionaries had been traveling from village to village and from city to city, attempting to turn Jews away from *Yiddishkeit* toward Christianity. The *Rabbonim* in Eretz Yisrael asked the *Rabbonim* of the *Aguda* to sign a letter of protest against these missionary activities, which would then be sent to the Israeli prime minister, protesting the missionaries’ nefarious activities.

Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, as well as Rav Hutner and Rav Kalmanovitch and others discussed the issue, wrote up such a letter and protested vehemently against what was going on. They decided to enlist the help and support of the Satmar *Rav* as well, thinking that perhaps he too would sign the letter.

Two important *Rabbonim* acted as messengers and visited the Satmar *Rav* in his home, asking him to sign the letter and pledge his support in protest against the missionary activities in Eretz Yisrael.

The *Rav* read the letter and answered them, “I cannot sign this letter.” The Satmar *Rav* then offered the following explanation as to why he would not sign: “I know that in the next few days the Israeli

prime minister has a trip scheduled to Italy. Surely he will take the opportunity to visit the Vatican and meet with the Pope.

“Once he receives this letter, I believe that he will take it with him, show it to the Pope and use it as a tool to find favor in the pontiff’s eyes. He will wave our letter of protest and say to the Pope, ‘See – they asked me to intercede against missionary activities, but no – even though Eretz Yisrael is a *medina* for *Yidden*, we believe in freedom of religion, and each religion has the right to practice unhindered and teach its ideas to anyone. See – even though the American *Rabbonim* protest against me, we – the Israeli government – pay them no heed and do not listen to them.’”

The Satmar *Rav* concluded and said, “I believe the Israeli prime minister will take this letter to the Pope and thereby cause a great *Chillul Hashem* (desecration of *Hashem*’s name) – and so I cannot sign a letter which will be used in such a way.”

The messengers thought that the Satmar *Rav* was simply pushing them off with excuses. They did not believe that what he said was true, nor did they take it seriously at all. The letter was signed, sealed and delivered to the Israeli prime minister without the Satmar *Rav*’s signature.

A few weeks later, they all saw just how prophetic the Satmar *Rav*’s words were; they all came true – not one word was false. The prime minister of Eretz Yisrael took the letter with him to the Vatican, showed it to the Pope and the entire episode became public news. Then we all understood that a divine spirit of intuition spoke through the Satmar *Rav*, and through his *Torah* and righteousness he had the power and foresight to see what would indeed happen.

Rav Yitzchok Hutner concluded, “*Der Satmar Rav hot gezen far ois mit a pur chodoshim vus es vet zayn* – the

Satmar *Rav* saw a few months ahead what would be!” (*Moshiyan Shel Yisrael* II, page 20)



### **The Satmar *Rav*’s *Berocha***

Once, after the war, a young man approached the Satmar *Rav* for a *berocha*. “What makes you think I can give you a *berocha*?” asked the *Tzaddik*.

“Someone whose opinion counts even in heaven surely has the right to bestow *berochos*,” answered the young man.

“Well, if you could prove that were true about me, surely I would bestow my *berocha* upon you. Any person who knows that

someone’s opinion counts in heaven is worthy of a *berocha*!” smiled the Satmar *Rav*. “Pray tell, how you would know such a thing.”

The young man told how, as they were



*Rav Yoel bowing before King Carol II of Romania, 1936.*

almost liberated, he and a friend ran in search of food to feed their starving brethren. The Nazis caught them both and hanged his friend immediately.

“They would have hanged me too on the spot, except that I had done some favors for a few officers and they decided to at least grant me one final wish as thanks for my good deeds. I asked to be able to see my mother one last time and to say goodbye. At first they protested that the women’s camp was too far and it would

take too long, but finally they agreed. They took me to her and as I stood there before her, I said goodbye, explaining that they were going to kill me. My mother fainted on the spot. As they were taking care of her to revive her, she came to and whispered to me, 'You will live! You will live!'

"I was dragged away by the Nazis and as they led me to the gallows, the

American forces attacked and began to rain heavy artillery and bombs on the



camp. The noise and explosions caused the Nazis to flee for cover and I escaped. Later, when the American officers liberated us, I was reunited with my mother. I asked her how she knew I would live. She told me that when she fainted, she rose up before the Heavenly tribunal and saw many *Tzaddikim* with long beards and *hadras ponim* (radiant countenances). She did not recognize any of them till she spotted the Satmar Rav, whom she recognized from her childhood in Rumania. 'Rebbe, Rebbe, save my son!' she cried to him, 'Have mercy.'

'Do not worry,' said the Satmar Rav, 'he will live.' Then she woke up."

So saying, the young man turned to the Satmar Rav and said, "You see, Rebbe, my mother told me how your opinion counts in heaven and I am living proof!"

"Well said," smiled the Satmar Rav – and gave him his *berocha*.

(*Yiddish Licht* Vol. 33 No. 8 Kislev 5742, pages 9–12)



The Satmar Rav used to speak against a few misguided souls, who, in their

campaigns, would always seem to find shortcomings among religious Jews, yet somehow always managed to find only merits and good among the wicked.

Such people, he said, were characterized by the *pasuk* in *Mishlei* 17:15: "He who vindicates the wicked and condemns the righteous – *also both* are an abomination to Hashem." The Satmar Rav asked why the *pasuk* needs to say that *also both* of these are an abomination. Isn't someone who makes wicked people appear righteous an abomination even alone – and isn't someone who villanizes righteous people also an abomination on his own?

The truth is that each separately can be understood. If someone is always looking for the cloud's silver lining and seeking to make everything appear good, always searching for merits and trying to see people in a positive light, we can understand that just maybe he will even make the wicked appear to be righteous. Conversely, someone who paints everyone in a negative light and sees shortcomings and demerits everywhere, he too can be misled by his temper to see righteous people as having faults.

But someone who simultaneously errs to the point where he only sees the righteous as wicked and the wicked as righteous? Surely, that is an abomination to *Hashem* when he always does both of these!



### **The Satmar Rav Holds \$1,000 for Happiness**

The Satmar Rav, Rav Yoel Teitelbaum, was famous for giving out huge sums of money to people who came to ask him for help. One day a man came from *Eretz Yisrael* and asked him for money to marry off his daughter. The Satmar Rav asked him how much he needed. The man quickly calculated the cost of an apartment,



the wedding, and all the other expenses and said that he needed \$30,000.

The Satmar *Rav* then left the room and came back with a stack of bills. The man counted it and saw that it was \$29,000. His happiness knew no bounds. He went out literally dancing in the streets.

One of the people with the Satmar *Rav* asked him why he left him a thousand dollars short, rather than donating the entire amount. The Satmar *Rav* answered that had he given him the full amount he would have initially been ecstatic. However, a few minutes later, he would have been upset at himself for not asking for more. I wanted the man to be happy. By giving him \$29,000, the man was ecstatic that he got as much as he could ever have dreamed for.

[www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/The-Satmar-Rov-Holds-1000-For-Happiness/4697](http://www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/The-Satmar-Rov-Holds-1000-For-Happiness/4697)



### **Satmar Rebbe – I Am a Person, Not Your Mitzva**

Once when the Satmar *Rebbe* was leaving the hospital after an illness, a very pushy person insisted on helping get his coat on. The Satmar *Rebbe* told him that he did not need his help, although he really did. When asked for an explanation, he said that this person did not want to help an old weak Jew; rather he wanted the *mitzva* of *Bikur Cholim* – and he was not a *cheifetz shel mitzva*.

[www.revach.net/avodah/ahavas-yisroel/Satmar-Rebbe-I-Am-A-Person-Not-Your-Mitzva/3824](http://www.revach.net/avodah/ahavas-yisroel/Satmar-Rebbe-I-Am-A-Person-Not-Your-Mitzva/3824)



### **Parshas Eikev: Satmar Rav – The Beginning of the Big Year**

*Einei Hashem Elokecho bah meireishis hashana v'ad acharis shana* – “The eyes of *Hashem* are always upon it, from the beginning of the year until year’s end” (11:12). The Satmar *Rebbe* asks, “Why

does the *pasuk* say for *reishis* – *hashana*, but for *acharis* it only says *shana*?”

He answers that the nature of people is that in the beginning of a new year, when people are in the *teshuvah* mode, they say, “This year I will be better. This year I will give more *tzedoka*, I will watch my anger, and learn more *Torah*. This will be THE year!” But when the year passes and he didn’t fulfill any of his “New Year Resolutions”, he sees that the year, which he thought would be THE year, turned out to be “just another year”. The *pasuk* says for *reishis hashana* – in the beginning he thinks this year will be *hashana* – the year, but at the end of the year it’s only *acharis shana* – just another year.

We say in the *Kedusha of Mussaf*: *Hein go’alti es’chem acharis kereishis* – “When will I redeem you?” says *Hashem*. “When *Acharis kereishis* – the end of the year will be like the beginning.” When all the promises and resolutions that one makes before *Rosh HaShana* will still be in place at the end of the year, that is when the *Geula* will come!

[www.revach.net/parshas-hashavua/quick-vort/Parshas-Eikev-Satmar-Rov-The-Beginning-Of-The-Big-Year/2646](http://www.revach.net/parshas-hashavua/quick-vort/Parshas-Eikev-Satmar-Rov-The-Beginning-Of-The-Big-Year/2646)



*Rav* Yoel of Satmar was a descendant of the *Yismach* Moshe, *Rav* Moshe Teitelbaum of Ujhel, and the *Yetev Lev*. He traced his ancestry to the illustrious *Maharsha* and *Rema*. He was a gifted child who received his early *Torah* instruction from his father, *Rav* Chananya Yomtov Lipa Teitelbaum, *Rav* of Sighet, and mechaber of *Kedushas Yom Tov*. While yet a young man, he showed great promise as a *Talmudic* scholar and was acclaimed for his deep piety. While devoting the major part of his day to the analytic research of *Talmud* and *Halocha*, he immersed himself for several hours each day in the study of the great books of *Mussar* (ethics), such as *Chovos HaLevovos* by *Rav* Bachya *ibn* Pakuda. He



became a *Chassid* of Rav Yechezkel Shraga of Shiniava, who was the son of Rav Chaim of Sanz. At the age of seventeen, Rav Yoel was appointed *Rav* of Musza, Czechoslovakia.

He subsequently served as *Rav* of Orshova and Kroli, and in 1935 he assumed the post of *Rav* of Satmar, where he officiated until 1944. At the time, he was miraculously saved from the claws of the Nazis as one of the 1,684 Hungarian Jews on the famous “Kastner train”. This group was allowed to leave for Switzerland with a stopover in Bergen-Belsen, as a result of the negotiations Rav Michoel Ber Weissmandel of Nitra had conducted with Adolf Eichmann.

After spending about two years in *Eretz Yisrael*, the Satmar *Rav* arrived in the United States in 1946. Settling in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn where he immediately set out to rebuild the *Chassidic* community. Initially, his followers consisted mainly of Holocaust survivors. With his strong and outspoken personality, he breathed new life into them, giving them guidance and inspiration. A staunch defender of the *Torah* way of life, he forcefully opposed even the slightest innovation or deviation from tradition. With his charismatic personality, illustrious scholarship and deep piety, he attracted thousands of new *Chassidim*. He established large *Yeshivos* and girls' schools in America and *Eretz Yisrael* and erected a small town, *Kiryas Yoel*, with a big *Yeshiva* and elegant home on the outskirts of Monroe, New York.

Rav Yoel firmly believed that a Jewish state would be established only upon the coming of *Moshiach*. As a result, he spoke out sharply against Zionism and any group participating in the Israeli government. He did not oppose living in *Eretz Yisrael*. Satmar *Chassidim* in *Eretz Yisrael* reject any form of monetary

assistance from the government.

The writings of Rav Yoel, which have gained wide acceptance, were published under the titles *Va'yoel Moshe* and *Divrei Yoel*. These volumes comprise his *halachic* novellae, responsa, sermons and essays. In a clear and concise language, he expounds his views that reflect his vast knowledge and valiant spirit. The towering personality of the Satmar *Rav* has injected his *Chassidim* and other *Chassidic* sects with a sense of pride and self esteem, raising the standards of *Torah* observance to great heights. He left an indelible imprint on his *Chassidim* and on *Torah*-observant Jewry at large.

Rav Yoel had three daughters from his first wife, but no children from his second righteous wife *Rebbetzin Alte Faiga* (1912-2001)

whom he married in 1937. His success would not have been possible without her great support and acts of tremendous kindness. Rav Yoel was succeeded by his nephew, Rav Moshe Teitelbaum.



Rav Yoel and his Satmar movement are “notorious” to this day for giving and raising huge amounts of *tzedoka* to religious and non-religious Jews in need. This doesn't usually get as much attention as their anti-Zionist beliefs. Although Satmar is large (numbering around 250,000 worldwide) and very influential, it has not received much positive publicity, and is often subject to stereotyping.

[www.Ravshimon.com/tzadikim/showz.php?p=satmar.htm](http://www.Ravshimon.com/tzadikim/showz.php?p=satmar.htm)



## Rav Yehuda Fatiya of Yerushalayim, 27th of Menachem Av

Born: Bagdad, Iraq, 1859; *Niftar: Eretz Yisrael, 1942 – Mekubol*

Rav Fatiya rose to be the foremost *talmid* of the *Ben Ish Chai*. He said regarding himself that he was the reincarnation of Rav Yechezkel Landau, a great *Ashkenazi halachist, mechaber* of the *Responsa Noda B'Yehuda*. Rav Fatiya said that he had to come back to the earth for, although in his last lifetime, he was a *Tzaddik*, he did not fulfill his *Torah* obligation to study *Kabbola*. So in this life, the study of *Kabbola* was his main focus and *tikkun* (rectification).

Among his many works, which include multiple commentaries to the holy *Zohar* and *Eitz Chaim*, Rav Yehuda authored *Minchas Yehuda*. In it, he writes of his experiences with earth-bound souls, and the exorcisms that he performed. Even among *Mekubolim*, this is not the norm. Rav Fatiya was a step above the rest. Rav Fatiya was a master at detecting the presence of spirits and demons and an expert in the art of exorcism. However, he also knew that people many times make up or imagine things to be that are just not true. He never simply accepted someone's word that he was in contact with a spirit or demon. In order to ascertain that person's credibility, Rav Yehuda would test him to see if he really was having an other-worldly experience or not.

*Minchas Yehuda* by Rav Fatiya is one of the most revelatory works about demons and how they act and deceive people in the most malicious ways. Rav Fatiyah enumerates a number of personal experiences in which he witnessed how demons appeared to people in dreams and while awake in all kinds of forms with the intent of deceiving them for some unknown devious purpose. Rav Fatiya was an expert in exposing these demons and casting them out. He has recorded the procedures for doing these things in his work.

### Rav Yehuda Fatiya about dreams...

Rav Yehuda Fatiya explains in detail how to distinguish between dreams that come from angels and those which come from demons. He gives a warning that demons are not stupid and know very well how to seduce people as they sleep. These unclean entities have learned the art of replication and can show an individual in their dreams false Heavenly and sublime spiritual symbols. The person will believe that he is receiving a holy Heavenly message, whereas in fact the soul is being deceived into becoming an agent of evil. Just as there are unscrupulous people in this world seeking to dupe and deceive others for their own personal gain, so are there spiritual beings that wish to do the same. The dream world is the realm of the unconscious; as such, it is the rightful domain of spirits both good and evil. Therefore, when we dream, we must be very cautious. We must learn how to control our dreams. A dream interpreter must also be aware that not all message dreams come from holy sources.

“When a man's soul ascends above as he sleeps, if he is sinful then his soul is cast about from place to place by the forces of the powers of evil; this is why one sees himself in a dream in another country or in another land” (*Zohar* III, page 222b).

Rav Fatiya brings down examples of how demons appear in dreams in the form of *Tzaddikim* or as “ascended masters”. They can show dreamers images of the heavens, the holy throne, or even Kabbalistic symbolism. All this is their attempt to convince the dreamer to believe in that which they send to him. In this way, the forces of evil ensnare for themselves another soul. The demons always begin by showing one images of holiness to convince the person that what he is seeing in his dreams is “kosher”. Then, after the soul is convinced and believes in what it is being

shown, the demons lead him step by step, until eventually the person sinks into mental illness. In this state, the demons can control the person's mind and body. The only way to avoid the onset of such a demonic attack is the recitation of the full order of the nighttime *Shema Yisrael tefilla*.

Rav Fatiya explains the difference between angelic dreams and demonic dreams as follows. An angelic dream is a message dream. Therefore, during the dream the dreamer will remain calm and reposed, almost unemotional, regardless of what is seen. The dreamer will watch the dream vision like watching a film, while the image's inner meanings will somehow be imprinted on his mind. Upon awakening, the dreamer is not frightened or alarmed. Although he is perplexed about what to do next, the next step always seems to become manifest. Such was the case with Pharaoh. After he awoke from his dream, he knew he needed it interpreted. Intuitively, he felt that the interpretations his wise men were giving him were all wrong. He knew something was missing. Only then did his cupbearer speak to Pharaoh about Yosef. Pharaoh had never heard of Yosef to that day. Yet, that day forever changed the lives of both men and both nations. *Hashem* gave Pharaoh his dreams. *Hashem* inflicted Pharaoh's wise men with stupidity. *Hashem* brought Yosef to Egypt, made him a dream master and brought him before Pharaoh, all in accordance with the Divine plan.

A demonic dream takes on a different form. During a demonic dream, a person feels great agitation. He may feel a weight on his chest as if someone is sitting on him. The dream images are confusing and blurry. No clear mental message is received. He awakens with feelings of anxiety and panic. He feels an inner conviction toward a certain course of action, yet no logical or permissible means avail themselves. The person is then led to

believe that his family, friends or community is holding back from him some form of "unmanifest destiny". The forces of evil then return in dreams to confuse the person even further, making him suspicious of others around him. Eventually, paranoia sets in and is soon followed by schizophrenia. All this occurred because the person opened himself to foreign outside influences without first being on a proper level of *kedusha* (holiness) to defend himself. (*Minchas Yehuda*)

[www.Ravshimon.com/tzadikim/showz.php?p=fatiyah.htm](http://www.Ravshimon.com/tzadikim/showz.php?p=fatiyah.htm)



A Story of Possession - The Evil Soul of the False Messiah Shabsai Tzvi Strikes from Beyond the Grave ~ Copyright © 1995 by Ariel Bar Tzadok. All rights reserved.

### **Introduction**

Rav Yehuda Fatiya was truly a remarkable man, a master Mekubol, as the following story will show. This rendering is more of a paraphrased translation than literal. I sometimes changed tenses, and added a needed word that is implied (but not in) the original text. I have chosen this format to bring this piece to you so that you can get the feel of the original flow that the piece has to it.

There are many lessons within this episode. Those who work today with *Yichudim* and exorcisms rely heavily on Rav Yehuda's work as a guide to how to recognize spirits and how to deal with them once they have been identified. This episode unfortunately is not unique. Demonic possession is not limited to the realm of the horror film. Whenever we as Jews violate the *mitzvos*, we become open to spiritual-psychic attack. I offer this translation so as to open the eyes of those who do not see. Remember, this story is real. We have an insider's view of what happened. Know that a lot of stories going on around us today are similar to this one.

Armed with the knowledge this episode will provide, you may become more aware of what is really going on in the hearts and minds of those around us. May *Hashem* bless and protect his people *Eretz Yisrael* from all our enemies, seen and unseen, corporeal and non-corporeal. *Amen!*



### **HoRuchos Mesaperos – The Spirits Speak**

On Monday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Kislev 5663, a man named Reuven *ben Moshe Mani ben Rahama* came to me. He was possessed by a spirit named David Yohana. While I was yet working with him, another man, Yehezkel Ezra *ben Yisrael* came to me. His family name is Bakhur. He said to me that for a number of years evil thoughts would pop into his head as though from nowhere. During the silent *Amida tefilla*, or during *Kaddish* or *Kedusha*, he would hear a voice within him saying, “Give up your religion, convert and become a Christian” (G-d forbid).

These thoughts were so powerful that they would disturb his concentration, preventing him from answering the *Kaddish* or *Kedusha*. It had not been twenty years since he had gone to Rav Yosef Chaim (the *Ben Ish Chai*) who sent a letter to Rav Eliyahu Mani in Chevron. The response was that (Bakhur) had a great *klipah* (evil shells/husks) within his heart, and that he (Rav Mani) could not help him.

The *Ben Ish Chai* consulted with me at that time and told me to write a *mezuzah*, and prescribed that Bakhur should wear it over his heart. This, however, had no effect. Therefore he had returned to me to inquire whether he had a spirit within him. Being that Bakhur was an honest, G-d-fearing man, I consented to his request. I started to perform *Yichudim* (Unifications, a specific form of Jewish meditation in Kabbalistic Jewish mysticism, especially denoting the complete meditative method developed by the *Arizal*) by his ear, the *Yichudim* used

against spirits. Thus the breath of the *Yichud* enters into his ear, and then into his organs, for the breath of the *Yichud* disturbs the breath of the spirit.

While I was reciting the *Yichudim* into his ear, Bakhur started to laugh. I asked him what he was laughing about; he answered and said that he can almost hear another person inside himself, and he is very viciously cursing you, saying this one’s *Rav*, Yosef Chaim (the *Ben Ish Chai*) advised you to wear a *mezuzah*, he should take the *mezuzah* and place it up his *Bais HaBoshes* (the embarrassing place) (G-d forbid). Now his *talmid* has become the *Rav*. He is only half of his *Rav*, Yosef Chaim. In this way did the spirit curse me and mock me.

Upon hearing all this, I returned to recite *Yichudim* by his ear numerous times, without interruption, until such a time that the spirit was cursing, twisting and turning within Bakhur’s heart. But I would not pay the spirit any mind. In the end Bakhur inquired of the spirit within him, and he said, “Ask Yehuda what he wants from me.”

I said to him, “I want to know from what city you come and what is your name. I want you to tell me the absolute truth. If you lie to me, I will show you what I can do by placing severe punishments and sufferings upon you.”

The spirit answered Bakhur saying, “There have been a number of people like Yehuda who tried to get me to reveal my name, but they weren’t able to get anything from me. I am stronger than stone. I do not open up to just anyone.”

I said to the spirit, “If so, I will continue to try, and we will see who will be successful in the end. If you are truly a strong spirit and are accustomed to sufferings, then prepare yourself to suffer the travails of the the *Yichudim*, for they are like an unquenchable flame, and they are more painful than hell itself; for I will not leave you alone until you truthfully tell



me your name and whence you came. You will suffer all this pain for nothing, because you do not submit to me. You are causing all this suffering to fall upon you, and not me.”

I started again to recite *Yichudim* by Bakhur’s ear as I did previously; I also blew the *Shofar* close to his ear with the meditations that are appropriate for this.

Bakhur started to scream. “Enough, enough!! I surrender.”

The spirit now wanted to tell me his name and place of origin. Yet I wasn’t ready to listen. For I know it is the way of the spirits to be like Pharaoh; they only surrender for a moment, then go back to being stiff-necked. Therefore I decided to show the spirit the power of the Holy Names.

Only when I was finished with the *Yichudim* was the spirit tired and worn down, and asked me to give him time to relax from his travails.

Afterward, the spirit asked me, “Why do you seek to know my name and place of origin? Why do you need to know this?”

I said to the spirit, “So that I can rectify your soul and allow you to ascend to the Garden of Eden, so that you won’t suffer from being earthbound anymore.”

The spirit said, “This is not possible, not for you or for your rectifications. I do not wish to go to the Garden of Eden.”

I said to the spirit, “Again you challenge me?” I brought my mouth close to Bakhur’s ear so as to again recite the *Yichudim*. The spirit then screamed within Bakhur’s mind, and said he would reveal his name.

He said his name was Dovid *ben Savti ben Rivka* from the city of Izmir (Turkey). He said that he was an apostate and that he had slept with gentile women, and that he left no children, and that he had possessed Bakhur some seventeen years earlier.

The spirit then asked why I had flipped the world over on him. He said, “I have never hurt (Bakhur) or caused him any harm, and if you are so concerned about these insignificant thoughts, I will be careful from now on not to cause him evil thoughts. Just leave me here in my place, for if I were to leave, where would I go? Where would I find rest?”

Bakhur said to the spirit, “Go to *Gehinnom*.”

The spirit answered, “I am not yet worthy to enter into *Gehinnom*, for I am guilty of sleeping with a menstrual woman, a gentile woman, and a prostitute. Please don’t go again to Yehuda, for I can’t stand it. Let me stay here in my place, and I will not bother you further.”

All these things did the spirit speak within Bakhur’s mind, and he (Bakhur) would speak them to me. Being that I really didn’t want to deal with spirits, I made a condition with the spirit. If he would return and place evil thoughts in Bakhur’s mind, I would set my hand against him.

Only a few short days had passed when the spirit returned to his evil ways and brought evil thoughts into Bakhur’s mind. Bakhur came to me and related what was happening.

I started to recite *Yichudim* by his ear. I commanded the spirit that this time to truthfully tell me his name, for the angel who oversees the *Yichudim* had already revealed to me the spirit’s name and place of origin. (This frightened the spirit.) I told the spirit that I would continue to recite a number of *Yichudim* by Bakhur’s ear until he revealed to me his name, just as the angel had told it to me.

The spirit was very disturbed by this, and he said his name was Tzvi, and that his mother’s name was Rivka, and that he was from Izmir. I commanded him to tell me the truth; for initially the spirit said his name was Dovid *ben Savti*, and now he said his name was Tzvi.

I asked him outright, “Aren’t you none other than the notorious Shabsai Tzvi from Izmir, who made himself to be a messiah?”

The spirit answered that this was the truth. I asked him, “If so, you died in the year 1666; it has not been 237 years from your death. Tell me where you have reincarnated until now? How were you judged?”

The spirit answered me mockingly, “Even if you get for yourself enough paper to write a book and enough pens (I will not tell you), for these things are none of your business. Now, you are late for your class in the *Yeshiva*. Your *talmidim* are awaiting you, they are looking for you. How much time will you waste, delaying here with me?”

I saw that what he said was true. I arose and left for the *Yeshiva*. I decided I would finish this work tomorrow. While in the *Yeshiva* I met Rav Shimon Aharon Agasi; I related to him this matter of Shabsai Tzvi, and how he had possessed the soul of Bakhur. Rav Shimon went and told these things to Rav Yosef Chaim (the *Ben Ish Chai*). Together they warned me not to continue with Shabsai Tzvi, fearing he would hurt me, G-d forbid.

The next day, Bakhur came to me, and I started *Yichudim* for Shabsai Tzvi. From within Bakhur, Shabsai Tzvi began again to curse me with awful curses. Bakhur would tell me all.

I stopped the *Yichudim*, and started to speak gently to the spirit, words that would touch his heart. I spoke with him, saying, “Let me ask you some questions: What is my strife with you? Do you think that I wish to take revenge for what you did when you were alive?”

The spirit answered that he did not think this. I asked him, “Do you really think my intent with these *Yichudim* is to cause you harm so that I will receive a Heavenly reward for my endeavors with Bakhur?”

The spirit said, “It’s not that.”

I said, “For Bakhur is a poor man, he cannot pay me for my services. Why then do you think I am troubling myself taking time away from my learning, if not for the sake of your soul? For is it still not a spark from G-d above? Can it not shine like the most brilliant pearl? It is only due to sin that you have fallen. The Holy One, blessed by He, is above all, and the Source of all. It is by His design that you entered into Bakhur’s body, so that by such, your soul would have a limit and end to its sufferings by the work I am doing with you. I am making the endeavors to rectify you. What then is my sin, my blemish, that you curse me with all these horrible curses?”

The spirit said to me, “I can’t stand the sufferings of the *Yichudim*.”

I said to him, “It is the way of the world that if a person is sick from an illness deep inside the body, the doctor has to open up the body in order to remove the cause of the illness. Even if this causes much pain, the person suffers it so that he can get well. He doesn’t curse the doctor. As for me, it is not my way to discuss things in such depth with the spirits, for the vast majority of them are quite ignorant, and can’t tell the difference between what is good for them and what is bad. However, I know what I know. I know that you are a very learned individual. You know how to judge for yourself what is for your own good and what is not. Therefore, I am correct in what I am doing with you, and your curses can have no effect upon me; for I know that your soul does not truly wish to curse me. It is the *klippa* that surrounds you that is forcing you to act thus. Therefore, I forgive your soul.” These were my words with Shabsai Tzvi that I spoke with kindness and respect (toward him). Rav Yosef Chaim and Rav Shimon Agasi had both told me to be aggressive with him.

When I finished my words, the spirit answered me in the words of a wise man. “I will not conceal from you a thing. For even

though I suffer from the *Yichudim*, like a man who has wounds in the flesh, and along comes the doctor who covers the wounds with vinegar and salt, until it can hurt no more; yet, when the *Yichud* is finished, I do feel that my flesh has softened, and that the wounds are healing. I feel at ease. And now, I agree with your path. I want you to perform *Yichudim* upon me. And even if I jump or scream, pay no attention to my pain, for I scream due to the tremendous pain.”

I told him that this was still not enough. “When a person becomes drunk, and stumbles around, falling into a pit of mud, he cries out to those passing by to help him up. It goes without saying that the one in the mud helps those helping him to pull him out of the mud. He doesn’t depend on them to do all the work. In relation to this I ask you not to place your full burden upon me. I will work to remove the *klippa* from surrounding you on the outside, but you must make the efforts to remove your *klippa* from within yourself. *Hashem* will help us both.”

The spirit answered, “Yes. Yes, let’s do it and prosper.”

I started performing a number of *Yichudim*, and the spirit would scream horrible screams. Yet I would not pay attention to his screams until I was exhausted from performing the *Yichudim*. The spirit also was tired and exhausted from all his travails. It was not able to speak anything for a good amount of time.

After this I asked the spirit if the *Yichudim* had helped rectify him. The spirit said, “Yes, yes, your honor, I feel that the weight of the *klippa* is lighter upon me.”

I then asked him, “How thick is the *klippa* that is left upon you?” The spirit answered, “Without exaggeration, it is at least two feet thick.”

I asked him, “I have one question to ask you: tell me, does the ball of the sun revolve around the earth, or is it stationary

in the heavens, or it is suspended in the air of this world?”

The spirit answered me, “Do you wish for me to enter my head between the great mountains (meaning the souls of the *Talmudic Sages*, dwelling above) so that they will crush my head? What you find written in the books, learn. I have no business in these matters.”

I asked the spirit a number of other questions, yet here I will only write the answers that were given to me, and from the answers I’m sure that you will understand what the questions were.

The spirit continued, “I am he, Shabsai Tzvi. My death was by hanging. I did not repent of my sins. I was buried in a gentile cemetery. While I was yet alive the *klippa* would materialize before my eyes. They are what caused me to become evil. I did not keep myself in holiness. [The spirit told me that] he had reincarnated numerous times that cannot be counted. He merited to achieve the levels of *nefesh* and *ruach*. When the *neschoma* started to manifest within him is when it happened what happened. Now he acknowledges that Moshe, our teacher, upon him be peace, is true, and that his prophecy is true, and that his *Torah* is true. Yet all this will bear him (the spirit) no fruits; for being that he is dead, he is not obligated to observe the *mitzvos* (*Shabbos* 30a). The merits he had earned from any *mitzvos* that he did perform are already gone.

[At this point, Rav Yehuda inserts this side note: Evil spirits can only speak in the heart, but not in the mouth. I give witness to this. In 1914 a virgin woman came to me who was then thirty-five years old. She was blind in both her eyes. She had reincarnated within her the soul of a *Rav* that was of my generation, whom I had known very well.

With all this, he would only speak within her heart and not within her mouth, even though she was blind. She did not

study *Torah*, and this *Rav* was attracted to her while he was still alive. Even now he was trying to get her commit a sexual sin with another *Rav*, saying that from their union would the Messiah be born. Yet, she did not listen at all to his voice. After performing *Yichudim* and making efforts, the identity of this *Rav* was made known to me, as well as the fact that he had desired her...This then is the reason why the spirits speak only in the heart, and not in the mouth. They do not want to be recognized. This way they can be mocking and maligning.

In *Sha'ar HaGilgulim* 22, 22A, it is written, "When one reincarnates in a person, it is done in one of two ways. The first deals with the souls of the wicked, who after their deaths are not even worthy to enter into *Gehinnom* (hell) – they enter into the bodies of living persons here in this world. The second manner is when a soul impregnates a person by what is called an *ibbur*. This soul bonds (with the living person) in great secrecy. Thus, if that person then commits a sin, the incarnated soul within can then overpower the soul of that person whom they are inhabiting, and cause that person to sin further and to deceive it into going in an evil direction. Until here are the words of the *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*. It is possible that what the *Rav* (the *Arizal*) meant here when he referred to the souls who "bond (with the living person) in great secrecy" is that they do this for the reason mentioned above, so that they will be recognized, and thus they will be free to mock and otherwise trouble the public.]

Let us return to our subject. With regards to Bakhur, he was the reincarnation of the *ruach* (aspect of the soul of Shabsai Tzvi). The *nefesh* aspect was still living in an animal in the forest. It did not want to be in this place, nor did it want to ever reincarnate in the body of a Jew. It wanted to stay in the forest. (Regarding Shabsai Tzvi), he was thirty-five

years old when he died. I asked him a number of other questions that he did not want to answer me, for he was still encased in a *klippa* two feet thick.

After five days, I again spoke with the spirit in a softer tone, and I saw that he had relented tremendously. He was actually remorseful over the sins that he had done. He was now very anxious for me to try to complete his rectification. He now abundantly blessed me and the members of my family. He said he wasn't saying all this (talk about repentance) for my sake, but rather because it was true.

(He told me) that his first sin was that he had fallen victim to committing adultery. And that it is true what they say about him, that he had had a homosexual affair while he was wrapped in his *tallis* and *tefillin*. He even once sent a young man to have an illicit adulterous affair with his own wife Sora, telling the boy what was written in the *Torah*, "All that Sora says to you, listen to her."

After his death he was punished with demonic beatings for twelve years. Until now he had always reincarnated into wild animals. Being in Bakhur was his first time possessing a human. He then explained to me why he was able to enter into Bakhur to possess him, the reason being that once Bakhur, when a young man, gave a young girl a (forbidden) kiss.

This Bakhur did thirty years ago. Prior to this, the spirit said, he would hang around Bakhur's proximity, because Bakhur was from the same source soul as he, the spirit, was. (The teachings referencing this are in *Sefer HaLikutim, Yirmiyohu* 8:14)...For the sake of one forbidden kiss was an opening created for the spirit to come in and possess Bakhur. Yet the spirit is judged (and punished) every Friday, from the second hour of the day through the fourth hour and a half. The spirit told me that he is punished alongside the spirit of Yeshu *HaNotzri* in boiling feces. Regarding myself, the spirit told me,



that I am here reincarnated for the second time, and that fifteen years ago I merited to receive the *ruach* level of soul. The spirit said that it was *Hashem* who brought him to me, in order for me to rectify him.

Regarding Bakhur, he must learn *Zohar* every day, in the early hours of the predawn morning, as well as after his meal, for the sake of the elevation of the soul of Shabsai Tzvi *ben Rivka*. He must go to the *mikve* every day. He must not be concerned with the evil thoughts that pop up in his mind. And when they do pop up, he should recite the *pasuk*: *Rochash libi dovor tov* – “My heart is astir with a good thing” (*Tehillim* 45:2) and meditate upon the holy Name *resh ches shin*.” Also meditate upon the holy Name *Kibel Rinat Ameycha* (*KRA STN* – tear the *Soton*) and the evil thoughts will be nullified.

From that day onward, the spirit of Shabsai Tzvi would request of Bakhur that he study more and more *Zohar* every day, more than the day before, even if this meant taking time out from making a living. When it came to going into the *mikve*, the spirit would cause Bakhur to

hurry so fast that he would almost fall down the stairs into the water. The spirit would also awaken him every morning early, in time for *tefilla*.

The spirit also requested of me that I should recite *Yichudim* for him every day into Bakhur’s ear, including the blowing of the *Shofar*. The spirit thought that by doing all this maybe he would merit to enter *Gehinnom*.

I asked the spirit when he would leave Bakhur. He told me not to ask. When he was ready to enter into *Gehinnom* he would leave Bakhur, without having to be asked. And in truth, this is the way it was. For after a few days, Bakhur was no longer being disturbed in his sleep, I examined him and found no traces of the spirit of Shabsai Tzvi. Thus ends a true story of demonic possession, what caused it and what efforts need be made to rectify such a terrible situation. Let us all learn from this a lesson, to safeguard and protect ourselves. Evil surrounds us. It can only be neutralized by the good within us. And there is no good but *Torah*, the word of the living G-d.



## Rav Shmuel Tzvi Hirsch Horowitz,

“Reb Hershele” of Spinka



Reb Hershele was the son of Rav Avrohom Abish Horowitz (1897–1944), Kruler *Rav* and son-in-law of Rav Yitzchok Isaac Weiss (1875–1944), much adored Spinka *Rebbe* and *mechaber* of *Chakal Yitzchok*; son of Rav Yosef Meir Weiss

(1838–1909), founding Spinka *Rebbe* and *mechaber* of *Imrei Yosef*. Reb Hershele served his grandfather as personal attendant, attending to him twenty-four hours a day, sleeping in the same room. Rav Avrohom Abish and Rav Yitzchok Isaac

were murdered in the Holocaust. Reb Hershele lost both his parents and grandfather.

In 1947, Reb Hershele arrived in America and settled on the Lower East Side, establishing a *Bais Medrash* on East 7<sup>th</sup> Street. His piety drew many adherents and, in 1961, he moved his *Bais Medrash* to Keap Street in Williamsburg. That *Bais Medrash* endures to this very day. Hundreds of people beleaguered his doorstep daily, seeking his advice and blessing. Sadly, the *Torah* flame people knew as Reb Hershele burned its last on Friday night, *Shabbos Re'eh*, 27<sup>th</sup> of Av, August 29, 1997, collapsing while saying *Divrei Torah* during his holy *tisch*, in the presence of his *Chassidim*. Thus was a holy

personality taken from within our midst.

Reb Hershele was succeeded by five sons. They are: Rav Yissochor Dov Berish Horowitz (*niftar* 2007), late Spinka *Rebbe* of Williamsburg, eldest son of Reb Hershele Spinka. Rav Yissochor Dov Berish was succeeded by his eldest son, Rav Yosef Meir Horowitz, Spinka *Rebbe* in Williamsburg; Rav Avrohom Abish Horowitz, *Bais Yitzchok Isaac Spinka Rebbe* in Williamsburg; Rav Yitzchok Isaac Horowitz, *Toldos Zvi Spinka Rebbe* in Williamsburg; Rav Nuta Horowitz, *Bais Avrohom Spinka Rebbe* in Boro Park; and Rav Naftoli Horowitz, *Krula Rebbe* of Williamsburg, all of whom nobly carry on with pious devotion to Heaven as their father taught by example.



## Rav Meshulom Feish HaLevi Lowy, 27th of Menachem Av

Tosher *Rebbe*

I have very fond memories of the *Rebbe* and have tremendous *hakoras hatov* for the *chessed* and love he bestowed upon me among the many other thousands of people he saw and helped. The *Rebbe* guided me and I learned a tremendous amount from his *derech*. He also shepherded me to my current *Rebbe*, whom I personally heard him call 'Mordechai *HaTzaddik*'.

One of the last times I saw him was on a *Motzo'ei Shabbos* in Fort Lauderdale, Florida when I was asked to walk with him for his daily 'exercise'. The *Rebbe* held onto my arm and while we walked he stopped and asked me for a story of a *Tzaddik l'kovod Melave Malka*. I repeated the famous story of Rav Mendele M'Riminov, that once the *Tzaddik* needed money to marry off a bride whose parents had passed away. After knocking on numerous doors, Rav Mendele saw he was still very short of his goals.

While walking home late at night, he noticed the tailor's light was still on and

decided to visit him. The tailor was honored that the *Rebbe* had come to him and after the *Rebbe* explained his plight, the tailor asked, "How much money in total does the *Rebbe* need?"

The *Rebbe* said, "Two thousand gold coins."

The tailor went into his safe and removed two thousand gold coins and told the *Rebbe* as follows: "I scrimped and saved for the last two years in order to buy a new machine to make my work easier, but how can I keep it for myself when I see the *Rebbe* and an orphaned bride in pain!"

The *Rebbe* was overwhelmed and proceeded to bless this *Tzaddik* of a tailor and wished him among other things that he should be blessed with riches.

The *Rebbe's*



blessings came to fruition and the tailor became phenomenally wealthy. When Rav Mendele once went to visit his *Rebbe*, Rebbe Reb Melech, his *Rebbe* (who saw this episode with his holy eyes) took Rav Mendele to task, asking how he had permission to grant such phenomenal wealth to one person.

Rav Mendele explained, “*Rebbe*, I only wished upon him to become a regular wealthy man. However, this tailor gives of his heart and money without any *cheshbon* (calculations) – so in Heaven they also gave and continue to give to him without any *cheshbon*!!”

The Tosher *Rebbe* stopped in his tracks and craned his head to look at me and gave me a wonderful smile.

The story of Rav Mendele epitomizes the essence of the Tosher *Rebbe*. He was one of the last links to the previous generation.

One quick story:

A wealthy *Yid* once came to the *Rebbe's Purim tisch*. When he took leave of the *Rebbe*, the *Rebbe* asked him numerous questions about *tzedoka* issues. During their conversation, this wealthy man mentioned to the *Rebbe* that he would be traveling to Rebbe Reb Elimelech's *kever* for the *Yahrzeit*.

The *Rebbe* then made a request. He knew of a descendant of Rebbe Reb Elimelech who was getting married soon – and would this wealthy fellow mind collecting money for this cause on the plane to Poland. The man replied that it made him feel a bit uncomfortable; couldn't he just write out a check for any amount the Tosher *Rebbe* requested? The *Rebbe* refused and insisted that he personally collect a sum of money and that it could not come from the wealthy man's pocket.

Having no choice, the man did as he was asked and collected quite a bit of money for the cause. After arriving back in the U.S., this fellow received a call in

middle of the night (par for the course) from the Tosher *Rebbe*, asking him if he could please bring the *tzedoka* money to Rebbe Reb Elimelech's descendant. The *Rebbe* was adamant that he should drop off the money that morning. The fellow did as the *Rebbe* asked.

Later that day, this wealthy man's child was crossing the street when he saw a dog and froze in middle of the street, as a result of which, *l"o*, he got hit by a bus and was trapped under the bus's axle. After extricating the child, it was determined that the child's scan showed he had brain damage. The father frantically called the Tosher *Rebbe* for a *berocha* and the *Rebbe* replied, “If you dropped off the money, then nothing will be wrong with your child!”

*Tzaddik gozer v'HaKodosh Boruch Hu mekayeim...*After several days the child was released from the hospital with nary a broken bone.

Later on when he made a *seudas hado'a* at the Toshe *Rebbe*, the *Rebbe* told everyone present that this wasn't his *mofeis*; he just saw a calamity befalling the *Yid* and was looking for some kind of *zechus* to save him. The *Rebbe* knew that Rebbe Reb Elimelech promised to intercede before *Hashem* on behalf of anyone who helps his children. That is why this wealthy fellow could not give the money from his pocket and had to go collecting and get a bit embarrassed – because only through some hardship would it force this *nes*.

I personally know the fellow from this story and have seen this child and can attest he is completely healed.

Let us remember this story when we get bombarded for *tzedoka* on the *Yomim Noro'im* and are fortunate to be on the other side of the door. It is with a bit of difficulty and adversity that we can ‘force’ the *yeshua*!!!

On the eve of *Rosh Chodesh Elul*,



may *Hashem* accept our *tefillos* quickly – may the *Rebbe* be a *meilitz yosher* for *Klal Yisrael* and may we all be *zoche* to a personal and collective *geula*, *Amen!!*

*Zechuso Yogein Oleinu!!*



The *Torah* world was plunged into mourning on the 27<sup>th</sup> of *Menachem Av* 5775 with the petira of the Tosher *Rebbe*, Rav Meshulom Feish Lowy, at the age of ninety-three.

One of the eldest and most venerated *Rebbs* of the generation, the Tosher *Rebbe* was frequently hospitalized in recent years. Since *Adar* 5768/2008, when he contracted severe pneumonia, his health had been in a state of decline.

Communities all over the Jewish world *davened* fervently for his recovery, and the name Rav Meshulom Feish *ben Tzirel* was constantly on the lips of those who admired him, as his health fluctuated over the past years.

Several weeks after the pneumonia, the *Rebbe* recovered and returned home to Tosh, in Canada, although very weak. When he appeared in the *Bais Medrash* that *Purim*, the *Chassidim* cried with joy at what was seen as a medical miracle.

Two weeks ago the *Rebbe* attended the marriage of his great-granddaughter. Yesterday his condition deteriorated drastically; he was classified as critical and his family was summoned. In the afternoon hours, he was *niftar*.

The *Rebbe* was born in 5682/1922 in the village of Nirtosh, known as Tosh to the Jewish population. His parents were Rav Mordechai Segal Lowy, the eldest son of Rav Elimelech of Tosh, and Rebbetzin Tzirel, the daughter of Rav Yaakov Fekete of Nirbator.

In 5690/1930, his father was appointed *Rav* of nearby Demetcher.

At the age of twelve, the *Rebbe* traveled to Kalov, to the *Yeshiva* headed by

his great-uncle, the *Rav* of the city, Rav Menachem Braude, the *Be'er Menachem*. At that young age he was noted for his *hasmoda* and devotion to his learning and was recognized as an *iluy*.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of *Kislev* 5703/1943, his grandfather passed away, and his father, Rav Mordechai, was appointed *Rebbe*.

In 1943, the *Rebbe* was drafted to the forced labor brigades in Hungary and sent to camps in Koschitza and Margita. The overseers treated him as if he were crazy, because of his piety, and that made it possible for him to maintain a religious lifestyle.

In March 1944, Hungary was captured by the Germans. In April, the Jews of the region were assembled, among them the members of the Lowy family, into the Nirgehaze ghetto, and from there they were sent to Auschwitz. Most of the *Rebbe's* extended family perished there, and his father, the *Rebbe*, was murdered on *Rosh Chodesh Elul* 5704/1944.

After the Red Army entered Margita, the *Rebbe* was released from the labor camp. He then traveled to Arad, Mako and finally to Kleinwardein.

In 5706/1946 he married Rebbetzin Chava, the daughter of Rav Yehuda Weingarten of Yerushalayim, a descendant of the *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech of Litzhensk.



He was appointed by the survivors of Tosher *Chassidus* to serve as the *Rebbe* in Nirgehaze, where he stayed for two and a half years. He served there as a *Dayan* on the special *Bais Din* that helped *agunos* remarry after the war. At that point, fear of the communist regime led him to instruct his community to leave the country.

After two years in Austria, in *Adar*



5711/1951 the *Rebbe* arrived in America. He first lived in Williamsburg, and later moved to Montreal, Canada, where his older brother, Reb Chaim Yosef, lived. Their sister, Fraidel, the wife of Rav Shmuel Meir Leifer, also survived the war.

As soon as he arrived in Montreal, the *Rebbe* decided to establish his community outside the city in order to avoid the influences of the outside world.

In 5723/1963, the *Rebbe* established a Chassidic neighborhood named Kiryas Tosh in the Boisbriand suburb, about thirty kilometers from Montreal. Over the years many *Chassidim* flocked to him, and there are also Tosher communities in Brooklyn, Monroe, London, *Eretz Yisrael* and Belgium.

A full range of institutions was established in Tosh, including schools for boys and girls, a *Yeshiva Gedola* and *Yeshiva Ketana*, and anything else a Jewish community needs. Today, some four hundred families live there.

The Tosher *Rebbe* loved peace and harmony and would pursue it; he avoided discord like fire. He was known for his *Ahavas Yisrael* and disbursed tremendous sums for *tzedoka*. He was admired by all, and people from across the spectrum streamed to his court. Thousands of *Chassidim* from the United States and Canada, from *Eretz Yisrael* and from Europe, visited him regularly, especially for *Shabbosos* and *Yomim Tovim*, to witness his holy visage and to receive a *berocha* from him. Among those



who came were many *Chassidim* of other courts, as well as *Litvishe Yidden*, businessmen, *Sefardim* and *Ashkenazim*.

The *Rebbe's Avodas HaKodesh* was carried out with tremendous *mesirus nefesh*, the *Chassidim* relate, and note that until his final days he made sure to complete the entire *Sefer Tehillim* every day, no matter what. He spent most of his day *davening*, as each *tefilla* took many hours. Only after an exhausting *Maariv* did he allow himself to eat something — a meal that was breakfast, lunch and supper in one.

His *Divrei Torah* and stories were printed in the *seforim Avodas Avoda*.

The *Rebbe* was widowed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of *Elul* 5756/1996 of his Rebbetzin Chava. He subsequently married Rebbetzin Malka Lowy.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of *Teves* 5758, the *Rebbe's* eldest son, Rav Mordechai, son-in-law of Rav Yechezkele Mertz, was *niftar* at the age of fifty. The *petira* occurred in the middle of *Shacharis*, when Rav Mordechai was saying *Krias Shema*. Since it was on a Friday, the *Rebbe* carried on his *avoda* throughout *Shabbos* as if all were regular, to the astonishment of the *Chassidim*.

The *Rebbe's* other son, Rav Elimelech serves as the *Rav* of Kiryas Tosh. His surviving daughters are Rebbetzin Tzirel Fish, Rebbetzin Fradel Katz, and Rebbetzin Sossie Kahana. The *Rebbe's* daughter, Rebbetzin Berocha Chana Mayer, predeceased him.

The *Rebbe* is also survived by many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

*Zechuso yogein oleinu.*

[www.hamodia.com/2015/08/12/the-tosher-rebbe-zya-harav-meshulem-feish-lowy/](http://www.hamodia.com/2015/08/12/the-tosher-rebbe-zya-harav-meshulem-feish-lowy/)



## Rav Avrohom Yaakov HaKohen Pam, 28<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

Rosh Yeshiva of Torah V'Daas

### The Majesty of Man

By: Rav Mordechai Kamenetsky

How do you capture the essence of an elderly man, stricken with a devastating and – ultimately – fatal disease, who insists on attending a fundraising event, having to be brought by ambulance and stretcher? With every last ounce of his failing strength he dressed in his Shabbos finery and left his home for the sake of ten thousand children he had never seen with his eyes but had touched with his heart and soul.

How do you write believable stories of a man who would cry bitter tears when hearing the plight of individuals in need?

How do you convey the essence of a person whose *mesiras nefesh* (self-sacrifice) for *Torah* transcended the constraints of his aged and stricken body?

No one who was privileged to meet Rav Avrohom Pam, the *Rosh Yeshiva* (dean) of Brooklyn's *Yeshiva Torah V'Daas*, will ever forget the warm smile that sparkled for every person: the strong or weak, rich or poor, observant or those searching to find the correct path.



### In the Beginning

Rav Pam was appointed a *Maggid Shiur* (*Talmudic* lecturer) in *Torah V'Daas* in 1939. With secularism running rampant even in the Orthodox community, motivating young Jewish American boys to follow their spiritual heritage in those days was a daunting challenge. But the future *Rosh Yeshiva* excelled in doing just that. To him, every *talmid* was a world unto himself.

Once, one of Rav Pam's *talmidim* was caught secretly studying math during a *Gemora* class. The *talmid* explained that he

was afraid that he had not mastered the subject and was going to fail a test. Instead of taking offense at the slight, Rav Pam assured the boy that if he would study the day's *Gemora* lesson with diligence, then he himself would tutor him after class. Math, as it just so happened, was an area of the *Rav's* expertise.

Rav Pam's *talmidim* were truly like his children. Rav Moshe Francis, a founder of the Chicago Community *Kollel*, which has had a major impact on the strengthening of Jewish observance and scholarship in the Midwest, remembers that he was once speaking with Rav Pam at a wedding when someone asked, "Is this your son?"

Rav Pam did not hesitate. "*K'ben*," he responded. "Like a son."



### Life Partner

In 1943, Rav Pam married Sora Balmuth. Although Rav Pam often expressed his gratitude for having chosen the right path in life, there was one choice that he forever emphasized to his *talmidim*, in a manner exceeding any other. He always expressed great gratitude to the Creator for having merited a *Rebbetzin* who tended to his every need, enabling him to pursue a life filled with divine service and *Torah* study.

The *Rebbetzin* put order to the thousands of requests for appointments, advice and letters of approbation. Rav Pam constantly expressed his gratitude for her ever-present care and concern, not only for the physical amenities of his daily life, but for enabling him to grow in spirituality as well.

The *Rosh Yeshiva's* emphasis on the importance of mutual respect in marriage found expression in his gentle reminders to

*talmidim* to celebrate their wedding anniversaries every year, and without fail.

When Yosi Heber, a close *talmid* of Rav Pam, became engaged, the *Rosh Yeshiva* was one of the first to be called with the good news. Immediately, Yosi was asked if a date had been set for the wedding. It was August 22. "Why, that's my anniversary!" exclaimed the *Rosh Yeshiva*. "It will be easy to remember!" Not one to forget an important date or miss an opportunity, Rav Heber made it his practice to send out an anniversary card to Rav Pam and his *Rebbetzin* every year thereafter. As the years passed, he made a point of sharing his *nachas*, joy, with the Pams and included a picture of the children as each addition to his family arrived.

In Rav Pam's final year, the card was sent out a bit early. During *shiva* (the seven-day period of mourning) the *Rebbetzin* motioned to Rav Yosi Heber, that she had something to tell him.

"I wanted you to know that I mentioned to Rav Pam on Tuesday, that I received your anniversary card. I took it to the hospital and read it to the *Rosh Yeshiva* and he reacted to it. It was the last time he reacted to anything!"

A small, inconsequential thing like an anniversary when used correctly can become another solid brick in the foundation of a marriage and the development of future generations. This was another aspect of the *Rosh Yeshiva's* ability to take the small and commonplace things in life and elevate them to tools of greatness.

Well after midnight, after the devastating news of the *Rosh Yeshiva's* passing reached the world, some of Rav Pam's closest *talmidim* made their way to the house to join the *Rebbetzin* and offer whatever solace they could. Upon entering the house, they were shocked to discover the *Rebbetzin* at work on her ironing board. To their astonishment, she

responded, "I am simply ironing Rav Pam's *tallis* and *kittel* for the burial tomorrow. I know it's late at night, but this is my last chance to honor him."



### **The Quintessential Humble Man**

Rav Pam never wore the traditional frock (Prince Albert coat) of a *Rosh Yeshiva* and always wore a simple fedora, not a Hamburg or up-brim hat, as most *Yeshiva* deans wear.

Rav Pam would leave his hat in the public cloakroom of *Mesivta Torah V'Daas*, alongside those of his *talmidim*. Once, he innocently took his hat, not realizing someone, obviously not knowing to whom it belonged, had mistakenly balanced his coffee mug on its back brim.

The mug immediately came flying down from the shelf, shattering in a cacophony of ceramic shards. Without hesitating, Rav Pam went to get a broom and shovel. He insisted on sweeping up the mess by himself. Then, he went to the local hardware store to get a replacement mug. He could not find the exact matching color and so he wrote a note. In his meticulously crafted expression and perfect lettering, he attached this message to the mug:

I was negligent in my actions and I shattered your mug. I have bought this one to replace it. I hope that you forgive me. In the event that this replacement does not suffice, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange compensation.

The note was signed simply:  
Avrohom Pam.

(Author's note: The note from Rav Pam was cherished by the mug's owner, much more than the replaced mug. It is framed and hangs on his wall!)

Rav Pam had learned for himself

and taught others that you never lose by keeping quiet.

Of course, that viewpoint only applied to personal honor; when it came to *Chillul Hashem*, there was never a moment of silence!

Many years ago, Rav Pam and his *Rebbetzin* made their only visit to *Eretz Yisrael* together. They stayed in Yerushalayim, but when Rav Pam visited Bnei Brak, the Ponovezh *Yeshiva* was holding its annual *Yarchei Kalla* summer program. Rav Pam saw this opportunity to sit and study in virtual anonymity, and decided to stay in the *Yeshiva* setting.

The Pams moved into the dorm specially set up for the *Yarchei Kalla* families, and for two weeks, Rav Pam sat and learned. After two weeks, he was invited to a lifecycle event in the Ponovezh Dining Room, when he saw some people whispering. Then, suddenly a distinguished man approached.

“*Torah V’Daas Rosh Yeshiva*, please sit up front at the head table.”

The next morning, realizing that his identity was compromised, he and his wife returned immediately to Yerushalayim.



### **Leadership**

Rav Pam would lead the charge of *Torah* sages who decried improper business practices or fraudulent dealings with government agencies. He did not differentiate between stealing on an individual, institutional or governmental level. It was all prohibited and he let it be known, emphatically and insistently.

Though he was often the featured speaker at conventions of *Agudas Yisrael* and other important venues with the ears of people focused on his every word – when he left the podium, he was as always the humble giant and master of simplicity.

A *talmid* recalls how he was in a car

with Rav Pam and a *talmid* his own age, who was also named Avrohom. His stop came first and upon leaving the car he turned to his peer, wishing him, “Good night, Avrohom.”

Rav Pam, unfazed at being addressed so informally and not realizing that the message was intended for the other *talmid*, simply smiled and returned the farewell. “Good night to you, too.”



### **Shuvu**

In 1990, when the floodgates of the Soviet Union burst open, Jewry was faced with the prospect of hundreds of thousands of souls potentially being lost to secular oblivion. Rav Avrohom Yosef Leizeron of the *Chinuch Atzmai* organization recalls years later that he was present at the annual *Agudas Yisrael* convention that year and was among those who spoke to the *Rosh Yeshiva* of the spiritual disaster facing the children.

At that year’s keynote session, Rav Pam made an impassioned plea to begin a network of schools in *Eretz Yisrael* for the children of these Russian immigrants.

That *Motzo’ei Shabbos*, he convened a meeting of the wealthy and influential participants at that year’s convention.

On the way to the meeting, he met a *talmid*, whom he would later call a “partner” and a “friend”, Rav Avrohom Biderman. He brought him along to the meeting. It was at that meeting that Shuvu was born, and then and there Rav Pam appointed Rav Avrohom Biderman as chairman.

Rav Pam lived and breathed Shuvu. It became his focus and his *nachas* over the course of the last decade of his life.

Laymen ready to donate five or ten thousand dollars to Shuvu would increase their contributions tenfold after hearing Rav Pam’s impassioned pleas.



Rav Pam would often cajole laymen to give *tzedoka* with self-sacrifice. He once told Rav Sidney Glenner of Chicago that the challenge of the last generation was, quoting the words of the central *Shema tefilla*, *b'chol nafshecha* – giving up one's life. The challenge of this generation is *b'chol m'odecha* – giving up one's money for the causes of *Torah*.

### **Outlook**

There were a few expressions that bothered Rav Pam. He did not like it when people would talk about the *amahliger yohren*, the good old days, when everything was so pure.

He felt that we must do our best to improve our generation without deriding it. And, if someone felt that it was once better, he did not want him lamenting the fact. Rather, he wanted to see him act in a way that would raise the level of this generation.

He stressed the need to be exacting when speaking. He asked his *talmidim* to refrain from the vernacular that infiltrated the *Yeshiva* world from the street. He felt it was unbecoming for them to express themselves in a less than articulate manner, and once told the boys that they should remove “whatchamacallit” from their vocabularies.

A close *talmid* approached him after one lecture. “What is wrong with ‘whatchamacallit?’” he asked.

“It shows you are not thinking,” he replied.

As a young man, Rav Pam was traveling home on the New Lots Avenue subway line when he spotted a five-dollar bill lying face down.

He mentioned the find to his wife, who responded, “Perhaps we can purchase a special treat with the new-found money.”

Rav Pam hesitated. “I cannot. How can we enjoy something special when there is someone out there who is broken-hearted?”

Rav Moshe Francis, dean of Chicago's Community *Kollel*, remembers how an impoverished man came to Rav Pam toward the end of a study session in the *Yeshiva*. He closed his *Gemora*, and told his *talmid*, “This is a *mitzva* that will not be performed by anyone else here. Therefore, I must stop studying the *Torah*.”

He then excused himself and took the man home for a meal.

A man once came to Rav Pam in desperate straits. He asked the *Rosh Yeshiva* to contact certain philanthropists on his behalf. Rav Pam responded that he had just called them all for other charities. He was unable to help the man. He gave him what he could from his own money and the man left.

Less than half an hour later, the man realized he had left something in Rav Pam's study. When he came back he found Rav Pam crying over his inability to help the poor man.



### **Honesty**

It was a late wedding and Rav Pam, who did not have a driver, was one of the last to leave. It was a blustery winter night. As no one who stayed offered him a ride, he shared a taxi with a *talmid* who later related this story:

The cab driver started to drive away from the hall when Rav Pam noticed that the man had not turned up the meter flag. The ride would therefore not be recorded into the travel log. Assuming that it was an oversight, the *Rosh Yeshiva* mentioned that the meter was not running.

“My boss,” the driver exclaimed, “he's a *ganev* (thief)! I should make a lot more than he offers me. It's okay to moonlight once in a while, even if I am on his time! Anyway, what's the difference to you? The fare is twelve bucks. Do you mind if I keep all of it?”

Rav Pam was adamant – it was not

honest.

“Listen,” said the driver. “It’s my way or the highway. I saw you shivering on this freezing night. I stopped. I picked you up and I’m takin’ you home. Let me just do my thing. What does it bother you if I make some spare cash?”

Rav Pam sighed. “I’ll tell you what. Run the meter. I will pay you double. Give your boss what is coming to him and keep the same amount for yourself.”

The driver agreed. At the end of the trip the meter showed twelve dollars. Rav Pam paid him twenty-four dollars and gave him a tip of two dollars.



### **Every Child, an Entire World**

Rav Simcha Lefkowitz, Associate Dean of *Yeshiva* of South Shore, related that a few years ago, the *Yeshiva* had to dismiss a particular talmid for an action that clearly defied the *Yeshiva*’s standards and policies.

Pressure from the parenting committee and others could not influence the staff, which had thought long and hard before rendering their decision.

The young man had heard his teachers, Rav Leib Wolf, and Rav Yehuda Horowitz, constantly talk about the greatness of their *Rebbe*, Rav Pam. And so, on the slight chance that Rav Pam would hear his story, the young man called the *Rosh Yeshiva* who instructed him to come to *Torah V’Daas* an hour before *mincha*.

The boy was brought before the *Rosh Yeshiva*, where, frankly and openly, he told him what he had done and the ramifications of his actions. Rav Pam chided him strongly about his indiscretion and left him thoroughly chagrined.

Then they broke for *davening*.

Once the services ended, Rav Pam changed his demeanor. “I see that you are

truly an *ehrlicher bochur* – devout lad – and you will start anew.” The boy, by now repentant and unable to speak, nodded his head and Rav Pam agreed to help.

The next day, Rav Lefkowitz was sitting in his office when the phone rang.

The soft voice on the other end of the line said, “This is Avrohom Pam.” The *Rosh Yeshiva* went on to ask that the boy be returned to the *Yeshiva* despite the ramifications the administration anticipated. “It is on my head.”

Rav Lefkowitz needed no cajoling. After all, he mused, it is not often that a member of the Council of Torah Sages calls on behalf of a *talmid* he has only met once in his life!

The postscript is vintage Rav Pam. The *talmid* went on to become a prized pupil in the *Yeshiva*, won the valedictory award for religious studies, and became an outstanding talmid in one of the most prestigious *Yeshivos* in *Eretz Yisrael* after he graduated from the South Shore *Mesivta, Ateres Yaakov*.

There was once a child who was unable to advance to the next grade level, as his skills were way below that of his anticipated grade level. There was no way the principal would allow the boy to advance into first grade. The frantic mother called Rav Pam, who in turn called the principal.

“If a tutor would bring him up to grade level over the summer, would you allow him to enter first grade?” As soon as the principal agreed, Rav Pam arranged for a *talmid* of the *Yeshiva* to spend the summer learning with the child, for which Rav Pam paid from his own pocket.



### **At the End**

Rav Pam’s efforts in his final public appearance surpass any human capacity.

It took him literally two hours to

dress and come to greet the gathering, all for the sake of the future of the children of Shuvu.

Though many will remember his strong demeanor, his light gait and uplifting spirit before his terrible illness, no one will ever forget his indefatigable self-sacrifice throughout the last years of his life. His determination and zeal for spreading the divine Word in spite of his waning strength will give us strength for endless generations. His ethical teachings will remind all of us to walk in his ways, a true example of the ultimate walking in the ways of the *Torah*.

The tragic news emanated from the hospital room in Brooklyn, packed with *talmidim* and family members, and reverberated throughout the *Torah* world that whole night. Rav Pam had returned his soul to his Creator.

Tens of thousands traveled to *Yeshiva Torah V'Daas* to pay homage to this *Torah* giant.

As per his request, there were no eulogies, only *Tehillim* and expressions of gratitude spoken by his oldest son, Rav Aharon.

May his memory be a blessing and may he be a heavenly advocate for *Klal Yisrael*.

Rav Mordechai Kamenetzky is the *Rosh Mesivta* (Dean of the high school) of the *Yeshiva* of South Shore. He is also the *mechaber* of *Torah.org's* weekly Parsha Parables (*Drasha*) *shiur*.

[www.torah.org/features/firstperson/ravpam1.html](http://www.torah.org/features/firstperson/ravpam1.html)



### **A True Jewish Leader**

By: Rav Avi Shafran

Late the evening of August 16, 2001, the Jewish world became immeasurably poorer. Though most Jews may never have heard of Rav Avrohom Pam, who returned his soul to his Creator that night, he was

beloved and revered for decades throughout the Orthodox community as one of the truly great spiritual leaders of our generation.

The funeral, mere hours after “Rav Pam”, as he was known, departed this world, drew thousands to *Torah V'Daas*, the *Yeshiva* he led for over three decades in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn. The building, where his body lay, was packed to overflowing, and the crowd spilled over into the streets below.

The powerful attendance – despite the fact that much of Brooklyn’s Orthodox community summers in the Catskill Mountains, three to four hours’ drive away – reflected the special nature of the man those who had gathered had come to honor.

The funeral was not lengthy; the deceased – not surprisingly to anyone who knew him – had left explicit orders that there be no eulogies. There was recitation of several chapters of *Tehillim*, one of Rav Pam’s sons said a few tearful words and the long funeral procession made its way to a Queens cemetery where the *Rosh Yeshiva* and member of the Council of Torah Sages was laid to rest.

In times like ours, authority and importance are often measured in newspaper column-inches; success, in stock portfolios; and influence, by the phone numbers in one’s electronic organizer. There are parallel universes, however, with very different laws of nature, and the Orthodox world is one.

Rav Pam lived humbly, both in demeanor and in trappings. He was a physically small man who lived in a small house and spoke in a small voice. Yet tens of thousands of Jews considered him a *Godol* – literally, “large,” a spiritual giant.

They regarded his words as gems to be gathered, even when his message consisted of criticism. For his listeners knew – from his reputation, his demeanor

and the unmistakable pain on his face – that Rav Pam’s exclusive motivations were fear of *Hashem* and love for fellow Jews.

Before thousands at an *Agudas Yisrael* convention, he movingly bemoaned what he perceived to be an erosion of *sholom bayis* – “peace in the home” – among Jewish families. Jewish children can only breathe and thrive, he said quietly, his heart in every word, in “an atmosphere of harmony and sweetness”, and spouses must always show the deepest respect for one another.

“Where,” he asked his listeners, “is the feeling for the mother of one’s own children, for the father of one’s own children?”

Honesty and integrity were also recurrent themes of Rav Pam’s. Too ill to attend the *Agudas Yisrael* national convention toward the end of his life, he nevertheless “addressed” the crowd in a pre-recorded video appearance on large screens positioned throughout the huge convention center.

While he cautioned against being judgmental of others and noted the extreme financial pressures that bear so heavily on many Orthodox families and institutions, he decried financial wrongdoings on the part of Orthodox Jews as a “desecration of *Hashem*’s name”.

It makes no difference, he continued, whether one is acting as an individual or on behalf of an institution, or whether one is dealing with a fellow Jew, a non-Jew or a government. Meticulous honesty, he told the packed but hushed room, is the mandate of every Jew, and must be the hallmark of everyone claiming to be observant.

He reminded his listeners that the *Gemora* teaches that the first question a Jew is asked in the World to Come is: “Did you conduct your financial dealings with *emuna* [integrity]?” *Emuna*, he went on to explain, also means “faith”, alluding to the

fact that faith in our Creator as the source of our daily bread is antithetical to acting dishonestly.

Rav Pam’s deep concern for proper behavior encompassed the personal realm no less. Once, standing in his *Yeshiva*’s hallway, he seemed distraught. When asked what the matter was, he sadly recounted how he had just heard one of the boys say, “Shut up.” And he wouldn’t even pronounce the offensive phrase; he spelled it out, in a whisper.

Perhaps above all, he was powerfully dedicated to making authentic Jewish education available to all Jewish children – the “jewels in the crown” of *Hashem*, as he once wrote. Thus he worked tirelessly on behalf of Jewish educational causes both in the United States and in *Eretz Yisrael*, prime among them an organization he personally founded, Shuvu. It provides young immigrants to *Eretz Yisrael*, largely from the former Soviet Union, with a comprehensive Jewish education in an open and loving environment, helping both the children and their parents reconnect with their Jewish religious heritage.

The guest of honor at Shuvu’s tenth anniversary dinner mere months ago, Rav Pam was presented with a scroll that, when it was unfurled, stretched clear across the large banquet hall. It contained a paragraph of heartfelt appreciation for the *Rav* – and the signatures of the ten thousand boys and girls enrolled in Shuvu schools in *Eretz Yisrael*.

A Jewish tradition has it that worthy individuals, even after their *petiros*, are able to intercede with *Hashem* on behalf of the Jewish people. All Jews, whether they knew of Rav Pam during his life or not, would do well to recognize the profound loss to us all that his *petira* represents. But all of us can take some comfort as well in the fact that he will surely be a *meilitz yosher*, an interceder of integrity on behalf of his people during these troubled and frightening Jewish times.





My own personal meeting and experience with Rav Pam was on *Purim* many years ago. I was taken by one of my *Rebbeim*, Rav Jay Yaakov Schwartz (formerly *Mora DeAsra* of Oceanside LI, but today of Beit Shemesh, *Eretz Yisrael*) for a *berocha* from Rav Pam. I was a *chutzpadik* American teenager, so what did I ask for? A *berocha* that I should be *zoche* to be able to learn *Kol HaTorah Kulah!* And the *Tzaddik* smiled, warmly clutched my hand and gave that to me! It was on *Purim*, a time that *tefillos* can be answered, and to this day I believe it is the source for any *hatzlocha* I have in learning.

I had a kind of closure which came full circle when years later I attended the *Siyum HaShas* together with Rav Schwartz and many other Oceansiders and Rav Pam was the speaker who introduced *Maseches Berochos*, the only *mesechta* I had made a *siyum* on at the time. He began with the first *Tosafos* in *Shas*, something I had studied over and over (since I didn't know much else), and I was amazed and literally speechless when the answers I had written to *Tosafos's* questions many months ago, after hours of review and diligence, were what Rav Pam was saying, and, in the name of the *Pnei Yehoshua!* Until this day I attribute that experience solely to his *berocha*. I had come full circle.



Rav Avrohom Yaakov Pam was born in Vidz, a small village in Lithuania. His father, Rav Meir, was an exceptional *Torah* scholar. Rav Pam would tell his family and *talmidim* that his father almost never went to bed. He would learn until he dozed off from fatigue, and would wake up in the

middle of the night and return to his studies. His mother was a learned and pious woman. Rav Pam would say about her that since she was incapable of seeing bad in people, she never could speak ill of anyone. She was also fluent in the entire *Tanach* and was expert at using its lessons to comfort the downtrodden.

Rav Meir Pam first learned in *Knesses Bais Yitzchok*, and later in the *Chofetz Chaim's Kollel Kodoshim*, where two of his colleagues were Rav Elchonon Wasserman and Rav Yosef Kahaneman, the future *Ponevezher Rav*. Rav Kahaneman later was the *Rav* of Vidz for a while, and invited Rav Meir to give lectures in the *Yeshiva* there. In 1927, Rav Meir Pam came to the United States. After securing positions as a *Talmud* lecturer in *Yeshiva* Rav Chaim Berlin and as *Rav* of the *Bais Medrash HaGodol* in Brownsville, he brought over his family.

When Rav Avrohom Pam was eleven years old, his parents sent him away from home to a *Yeshiva*. There was a time when he slept on a bench in the local *shul*, but nothing deterred him from learning as long and intensely as he could. He was part of a special group of youngsters in Slabodka, where he became a frequent *Shabbos* guest of Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky. It was a warm relationship that was to be resumed many years later when Rav Kamenetzky became *Rosh Yeshiva* in *Torah V'Daas*.

When Rav Pam returned to America he became a *talmid* in *Torah V'Daas* in Brooklyn. He remained there for the rest of his life. Rav Pam's teaching career began at *Yeshiva Torah V'Daas* in 1938, when was appointed a *Talmudic* lecturer there. Holding various teaching positions at *Torah V'Daas*, Rav Pam spent over sixty years there, including even teaching mathematics, utilizing his degree from City College. For many years he delivered the *semicha* class to *talmidim* studying toward *Rabbinic* ordination.

Rav Pam was totally unassuming in

his dress, his speech, as well as in his mannerisms. Rav Pam was a great *Talmudic* scholar, but he was famous for his humility and soft-spoken style. He was one of the great spiritual leaders of our generation and a member of the Council of Torah Sages of *Agudas Yisrael*.

Rav Avrohom Yaakov Pam had tremendous concern for families in *Eretz Yisrael* and the *Rav Meir Ba'al HaNes* Salant charity fund. Rav Pam is a signatory on the historic 1979 *Kol Koreh* (broadside) on behalf of *Rav Meir Ba'al HaNes* Salant, together with such *Torah* giants as Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky the “*Steipler*”, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Elozor Simcha Wasserman, Rav Dovid Povarsky, Rav Yechiel Michel Feinstein, Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, Rav Shmuel Birnbaum and many, many others. May their memory be a blessing to all.

[www.Ravmeirbaalhaneis.com/Rav%20Avrohom%20Yaakov%20Pam.asp](http://www.Ravmeirbaalhaneis.com/Rav%20Avrohom%20Yaakov%20Pam.asp)

### **Rav Avrohom Pam: “Then They Will Call Me Humble”**

One time someone introduced Rav Avrohom Pam, the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Torah V'Daas*, with all sorts of flattering comments, including calling him the *Godol HaDor*. Rav Pam got up and gave his speech without making any remarks about the introduction.

Afterward, someone close to him approached him and asked his normally humble *Rebbe* why he did not protest or at least deflect any of the comments made about him. Rav Pam answered that at that point, the only thing it would have accomplished was that people would have said, “He is so humble as well!”

May this great *Tzaddik* be a lesson and inspiration in true humility!

[www.revach.net/hanhagos/maaseh-rav/Rav-Avrohom-Pam-Then-They-Will-Call-Me-Humble/3228](http://www.revach.net/hanhagos/maaseh-rav/Rav-Avrohom-Pam-Then-They-Will-Call-Me-Humble/3228)



## **Rav Naphtali Tzvi Yehuda ben Yaakov Berlin, 28<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av**

*Netziv* of Volozhin

### **Keviyas Itim = Shalom Bayis**

Rebbe Meir used to say: Engage minimally in business and occupy yourself with *Torah* (*Avos* 4:12)

When Rav Ovadiah Yosef used to teach this *Mishna* from *Pirkei Avos* he would illustrate it with the following story found in the *sefer Mekor Baruch* - Volume III page 843:

There once came before the *Netziv* a friend who was known all about as a tremendously successful businessman. The friend told the *Netziv* with a sorrowful sigh, “I must reveal before you the truth, everyone knows me for my financial success and my material well-being, and honestly thank *Hashem*, I can testify that regarding my friendships, my livelihood and my business I have no complaints. I

have many friends, business associates and contacts and my standing in society is good. I have a successful business and everything seems to be running just fine. Yes, that is until I cross the threshold and enter my home which I cannot call my domain! No sooner do I come home that I find myself downcast, downtrodden, alone, forsaken and forgotten! My wife ignores my needs, she treats me like a useless good for nothing. She never asks my opinion on any matters, instead she rules our house like a Queen. She is strong willed whereas I am by nature kinder and softer, she displays might and I am bending and soft spoken. All the servants have by now fallen in line to her manner of running the home. They all follow her orders and hers only, leaving me on the sidelines like a spectator whose

presence has no meaning or consequence - I feel like I am living alone in my own personal *Gehinom* - Oh, please help me and advise me what to do to regain my standing at home and my wife's respect, love and care?"

The *Netziv* asked his sad friend to describe his daily schedule and his friend filled his ears with a busy day full of business meetings, lunches, deals and so on and so forth. "Don't you have any free time?" asked the *Netziv* surprised. "No, my business is so busy I have no time left in my day for anything unrelated," declared the friend. "And what about your *Torah* study?" inquired the *Netziv*, who knew full well that his friend knew how to learn and could study *Torah* if he so wished. The friend hemmed and hawed and admitted that he had been neglecting his *Torah* study. "Now let me advise you thus," continued the *Netziv*, "it says in *Mishlei* 16:17, that when *Hashem* is pleased with a man's ways then also his enemies shall make peace with him as well. Now *Chazal* tell us in the *Midrash* that the enemies described here refer to none other than his wife. As it says in *Micha* 7:6, a man's enemies are the people of his household and a man's wife is his very household as it says in *Shabbos* 118b and *Tosfos* in *Berachos* 51a, that tells us that as the wife runs most household matters, she is called the *Bayis*.

Now we know that in *Bereishis*, Adam's wife Chava is described as *Ezer*

*KeNegdo*, and in *Yevamos* 63a, *Chazal* say that if he merits she is an *ezer* and helpmate and if not she is *kenegdo* against him. Further, we know in *Sotah* 17a, that *Chazal* also tell us that if a man and wife are at peace - the *Shechina* resides with them and if not a fire consumes them. Now you see clearly what your problem is don't you? In order that *Hashem* find your ways pleasant so that your enemy wife should make peace with you - you must establish and set aside times for *Torah* study. When you are *kovea itim leTorah*, then *Hashem* will find your ways pleasing once again. Now, rearrange your daily schedule around your study sessions and see the results and fruits of your labor as your wife will once again know her place. I can tell you," added the *Netziv* in conclusion "that from my own personal experience, only when I acquired my proper portion in *Torah* did my standing at home with my wife change to its proper way and manner."

After the *Netziv* passed away, this friend and businessman visited the *Netziv's* son Rav Chaim Berlin and told him this story while holding his hands, clasping them warmly and kissing them affectionately, "Your father's advice saved my life, my standing. My marriage slowly but surely became blessed by *Hashem* and my *Shalom Bayis* was restored and my standing repaired. My house now runs with the foundations of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*, I owe your father everything!" (*Anaf Etz Avos*, pages 270-272)



### Rav Shmuel Salant of Yerushalayim, 29<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

A gem that is unique in its multifaceted beauty is not left long at the jewelers. The first buyer with a keen eye recognizes its worth and is ready to pay dearly for it. Rav Shmuel Salant was taken as a *chosson* already at the age of ten, for his exceptional talents were already well known.

His humility perhaps outweighed his greatness. In accordance with Rav Shmuel's wishes, the only praise written on his headstone on *Har HaZeisim* is that he was given a written *semicha* by Rav Abele, the famous *Dayan* of Vilna, though it is not noted there that this was when he was just *bar mitzva*!

As a seven-year-old, he was once ill and in bed. The doctor who checked him saw that his mouth was full of blisters. Turning to the boy's parents, the doctor explained that if the tongue isn't clean, it's a sure sign of a malfunctioning stomach.



"Is there anyone who can truly say his mouth is clean?" retorted the sick child. "*Chazal* tell us in the *Gemora Bova Basra* that most people are guilty of theft and everyone of *loshon hora!*"



Throughout the seventy years of his *Rabbonus* in Yerushalayim, Rav Shmuel was to the public as a loving father, and even more, a faithful servant. The *Rav* was always available and reception hours were an unknown. In fact, he placed his table close to the door so that whoever would need him, at any hour, would just come to the door and find the *Rav* ready to hear a *shaila* or listen to a Jew's troubles.

When he was asked why he did not set aside specific times for receiving the public, the *Rav* replied, "A person must emulate the ways of *HaKodosh Boruch Hu*. We say every day in *Bircas HaMozon* that *Hashem* feeds us and provides all our needs, *tomid bechol yom uvechol eis uvechol sho'oh* – "always, every day, every time and every hour". Am I more important than *HaKodosh Boruch Hu*?"



The first, and perhaps longest-lasting, innovation of Rav Shmuel Salant in Yerushalayim was the establishment of the *Talmud Torah* system for boys that we know today worldwide.

Rav Shmuel had noticed that not all the Jewish boys received a formal education. Those parents who could afford it would hire a *melamed* to teach a few boys together. Often they would learn in the *melamed's* house in a small room, under cramped conditions, with not enough *seforim*. Meanwhile, those children whose parents had no means with which to pay a private *melamed* would wander aimlessly in the streets.

Grasping the situation and perceiving the dangers therein to the boys' spiritual growth, Rav Shmuel gathered together all the parents of the city and presented a novel idea: the *Rav* would appoint a *melamed* who would teach all children, irrespective of their parents' financial means. He would be paid a regular wage, which would be the *Rav's* responsibility. Aside from this, he, Rav Shmuel, would rent a suitable building so that classes could be carried out in spacious rooms.

Within a short time, all the children of Yerushalayim, rich and poor alike, were learning under the new *Talmud Torah* system. The *Rav* personally saw to every detail, even checking the boys' school bags, to check that they all had food. When he saw one that was bare of even a piece of bread, he would place some nourishing food into the bag.

With the new *cheder*, the standard of *Torah* was raised dramatically in Yerushalayim. From these youngsters grew the new generation of *Talmidei Chachomim* in Yerushalayim, a generation that looks back with pride to the institution that built them. The mosad named *Eitz Chaim* still stands proudly today in the center of Yerushalayim and continues to educate the coming *doros*, to learn and to love *Torah*. (Editor's Note: My father learned in *Eitz Chaim* as a child and some of his fondest memories took place within its walls).



In Yerushalayim, anecdotes and accounts of Rav Shmuel Salant's sharp wisdom abound.

The *Rav* was once standing at the door of his house and, upon seeing a man passing by, he beckoned to him to come in. As soon as the man had entered, the *Rav* locked the door securely. Quickly, he instructed a member of his family to summon two *Dayonim* and a *sofer* who lived in the vicinity. When all were present, the *Rav* raised his voice sternly at the bewildered man. "Tell me your name and that of your wife and instruct the *sofer* to write a bill of divorce for your wife."

The stranger composed himself and blatantly denied everything. "Forgive me, *kvod HaRav*, I think the *Rav* is mistaken. I am not married and have no wife to divorce. I have no idea what the *Rav* is talking about."

Ignoring his glib talk, the *Rav* began to shout, "Give your wife a valid *get*, according to *Halocha!* You'll meet a bitter end if you do not heed my words!"

After a few minutes, the man's facade crumbled and he gave in. The bill of divorce was written up and the *Rav* sent the man free on his way.

Shocked by the pace and bizarre turn of events, the *Dayonim* wondered, "How does the *Rav* know this stranger? How does he know that he must divorce his wife?"

"A few months ago, there were public notices everywhere that a man had disappeared after refusing to give his wife a *get*, leaving her an *aguna*. The notice displayed a picture of the man and requested anyone who saw him to report him immediately. When this man passed by my house, I recognized him and decided to act fast and extract the *get* from him *al pi Torah*, thereby saving his wife from her predicament."



The *Rav's pikchus* saved a community as far away as Poland from what would have been an ugly pogrom.

In the month of *Tammuz* 5665 (1905), a telegram arrived at the home of the *Rav* of Rishon LeTzion, Rav Yaakov Shaul Elishar. It was a lengthy telegram of one hundred and thirty-three words, apparently written by the *Rav* of Novominsk. It reported a story of two Novominsker Jews who had moved to Yerushalayim. They had given false testimony that five gentiles were involved in a murder. The five were condemned to a harsh sentence. In the event that this would be carried out, the local *goyim* would no doubt exact a bloodthirsty revenge on all the Jews.

"Please," the letter read, "would the *Rav* send a telegram stating that the two admitted they had testified falsely? Then all the Jews of the city will be saved."

Rav Elishar reread the letter, not knowing what to make of it. Gathering the *askonim* of Rishon LeTzion, they could come to no decision. Was the letter authentic, or could it be just a ruse to get the people of Novominsk into trouble? No solution was found and the *Rav* decided they would take the telegram together to Rav Shmuel Salant and whatever he decided would be the final word.

Due to the danger involved, they awoke the *Rav* from his sleep when they arrived. Rav Shmuel, who was already almost ninety years old, listened to the *shaila* and then glanced at the telegram. Immediately, he discerned the intent behind it.

"The telegram looks too long. No *Rav* would write so many words. Such a lengthy message could only have been written by the *goyim* themselves and perhaps they forced the *Rav* to sign at the end. No doubt they want us to report that Jews are false witnesses and whip up the fury of the masses against the *Yidden*."

The venerable *Rav* then gave his sage advice: "Avoid giving a direct answer and say you have no idea of any witnesses at all."

Rav Elishar obeyed the *Rav* and promptly sent a telegram back, saying that since he was a Turkish citizen, it was forbidden for him to mix into the laws of other countries and that he had no idea of any Jews who had come from Novominsk.

A few weeks later, the Jewish newspaper in Warsaw had a full report of the sharp wisdom of Rav Shmuel Salant, who had saved the Jews of Novominsk. Had the *Rabbonim* fallen into the trap of the false telegram, the *goyim* would have been severely incited against the Jews and who knows how far their anger would have taken them, *chas vesholom*.

[www.chareidi.org/archives5773/shofetim/fsrsalntshf73.htm](http://www.chareidi.org/archives5773/shofetim/fsrsalntshf73.htm)



Rav Shmuel Salant (1816– 1909) was a renowned *Talmudist* and *Torah* scholar who followed the customs of the *Gaon* of Vilna. From 1841 until his passing in 1909 he served as the *Ashkenazi* chief *Rav* of Yerushalayim.

Rav Shmuel Salant was born in 1816 in the city of Volknik near Bialystok, then part of Russia. His father, Rav Tzvi, was the *Rav* of the town, as well as the *Rav* of Trakai, near Vilna. Rav Shmuel's mother, Risa, daughter of Rav Shimon, immigrated to *Eretz Yisrael* in her old age. She passed away on the 5<sup>th</sup> of *Tishrei* in 1857 and was buried on *Har HaZeisim* in what is known today as the *Sefardi* section. In his early youth Rav Shmuel studied with his father. Unfortunately, Rav Tzvi passed away when Shmuel was but a child. Relatives of the young Shmuel sent him to the city of Keidan to study under Rav Tzemach Shapiro, known as Rav Tzemach Drubianer, who later became one of the great leaders of the city of Vilna.

In Kaiden, at the tender age of ten, Rav Shmuel, who was already renowned as a child prodigy, became engaged to Fruma Shapiro, the daughter of Rav Shimon Merkel Shapiro (the son of Rav Avrohom Shapiro) who was the chief *Rav* of Birz and brother to Rav Salant's mentor, Rav Tzemach Shapiro. The marriage took place after Rav Shmuel Salant's *bar mitzva*. Rav Salant had a daughter from this marriage. After his wedding Rav Shmuel and a group of *Torah* scholars traveled to Lithuania to the city of Salant to study under the famed Rav Tzvi Hirsch Brodah. For reasons unknown, the marriage of Rav Shmuel and his young wife Fruma ended in divorce after three years. The famed *Tzaddik*, Rav Yosef Zundel of Salant, highly respected Rav Shmuel as an exceptional prodigy and outstanding *Tzaddik*. Rav Yosef Zundel had a daughter, Tova (1816-1869), who was a pious woman, and in 1834 offered Rav Shmuel her hand in marriage. After his marriage to Tova, Rav Shmuel adopted his father-in law's surname, Salant.

(Rav Yosef Zundel Salant was a *talmid* of Rav Chaim Itzkowitz of Volozhin (Rav Chaim Volozhiner), who in 1803 founded the famed Volozhin *Yeshiva*. Following the *petira* of Rav Chaim of Volozhin in 1821, Rav Yosef Zundel would make trips to Posen to study with Rav Akiva Eiger (1761–1837). Rav Zundel was the spiritual mentor of Rav Yisrael Lipkin Salanter (1810–1883), who would later be immortalized as the father of the Mussar Movement.) In 1837, Rav Yosef Zundel Salant immigrated to Yerushalayim from Lithuania. Rav Zundel refused support from public funds and instead made a living in the vinegar business. At that time the *Ashkenazi* settlement in Yerushalayim was very small and had no judicial court. Only the *Sefardi* community had an established *Bais Din*. Upon his arrival in Yerushalayim, Rav Zundel established an informal *Bais Din* in his courtyard to serve the local *Ashkenazi* community.)

After his marriage Rav Shmuel Salant moved to the city of Volozhin where he was appointed *Talmud* lecturer in the Volozhin *Yeshiva*.

In 1840, due to health reasons and upon the advice of doctors, Rav Shmuel Salant took his family and traveled to *Eretz Yisrael*. En route, in Constantinople, he met and befriended Sir Moses Montefiore, who was on his way to defend the Jews falsely accused in the Damascus Blood Libel. Sir Moses subsequently traveled to *Eretz Yisrael* seven times during his lifetime and developed a profound respect for Rav Shmuel Salant. Together they would collaborate on many projects for the benefit of the fledgling *Ashkenazi* community.

Rav Salant arrived in Yerushalayim in 1841, rejoining his father-in-law and about five hundred other *Ashkenazim* who had preceded him in 1838. There were about five thousand Jews in *Eretz Yisrael* at that time, living mainly in Yerushalayim, Tzefas, Teverya and Chevron. Smaller communities were in Yaffo, Chaifa, Peki'in, Acco, Shechem and Shfaram. A large part of the Jewish settlement studied full-time and was supported by donations from Jews in the Diaspora. This age-old practice of supporting scholars in *Eretz Yisrael* who studied full time was known as *Chaluka*.

Upon his arrival in Yerushalayim, Rav Shmuel Salant moved into a tiny two-room apartment without windows in the courtyard of the *Churva*, "the ruins of Rav Yehuda the *Chassid*". Here in this modest apartment he would live and work for the next fifty years. In his capacity as chief *Rav*, he met with the great sages and prominent people of the era to discuss communal matters, in addition to the continuous stream of plain folk who came to consult with him.

Rav Salant could not have come at a more auspicious time. The *Ashkenazi* community had grown in size considerably

and urgently needed a strong *Torah* scholar to stand at the helm of an official *Ashkenazi Bais Din*. With the arrival of Rav Salant, the scope and dimension of the temporary *Ashkenazi Bais Din* changed dramatically. In this very same courtyard Rav Salant established an authorized permanent *Bais Din* for the *Ashkenazi* community. Sitting with him on the Rabbinical court were his brother-in-law Rav Uri Shabbetai and Rav Binyomin Dovid of Vilna. This was the first established *Ashkenazi Bais Din* in Yerushalayim for centuries. Rav Salant would thus serve as the chief *Ashkenazi Rav* of Yerushalayim for the next seventy years!

As chief *Rav*, Rav Salant was also in charge of administering the *Kollel Ashkenazim* and its concomitant *Chaluka* system, an age-old practice of supporting scholars in *Eretz Yisrael* who studied full time. A large part of the Jewish settlement was supported in this manner by donations from Jews in the Diaspora. Rav Salant traveled often to Europe to raise funds for the impoverished Jewish settlement and managed to visit most major cities of Lithuania and Poland.

In 1850, while visiting Vilna, he met with the committee that oversaw the assignment of funds to the Holy Land. Rav Salant presented a plan for setting up a *Yeshiva* of higher learning. His plan met with approval and upon his return to *Eretz Yisrael* he quickly set up the *Yeshiva* in the *Menachem Tzion shul* and began to deliver daily lectures there. By 1855 the *Yeshiva* had successfully grown to major proportions. The *Yeshiva* was named *Eitz Chaim* with Rav Shmuel Salant and Rav Yeshaya Berdaky at the helm. By the turn of the twentieth century *Yeshiva Eitz Chaim* had a total enrollment of almost one thousand *talmidim*! The remarkable success of the *Yeshiva* ensured that a whole new generation of pious scholars would be

ready to guide the populace and forge the path of the country for future generations.

The year 1860 was a time of universal poverty and hardship and the communities in *Eretz Yisrael* began an unprecedented descent into abject poverty, the likes of which they had not seen in decades. Rav Meir Auerbach (1815–1878), the chief *Rav* of Kalisch, arrived from Poland that year. Rav Salant appointed him to take his place as chief *Rav* of Yerushalayim in his absence, while Rav Salant traveled to Germany, Amsterdam and London on behalf of the community. In Germany he also met with the *Rav* of Wurzburg, Rav Seligmann Baer Bamberger (1807–1878), one of the last great *Geonim* of German Jewry. They discussed the status of the various *Kollelim* in Yerushalayim and ways to manage them. Although new settlements in *Eretz Yisrael* were being funded by their mother countries, the communities that had been living in *Eretz Yisrael* for centuries no longer had a source of income. Hundreds of people died of hunger, particularly young children and infants. The situation threatened to engulf the entire country.

Upon the return of Rav Salant from Europe in 1860, Rav Meir Auerbach wanted to step down and return the post of *Rav* of Yerushalayim back to Rav Salant. Rav Salant, in his keen wisdom and insight, saw the tremendous benefit of having Rav Auerbach involved in communal affairs. He convinced Rav Auerbach to stay on to assist him since he himself was caught up in overseeing the financial viability of the community and therefore had little time to fill his role as sole chief *Rav*. Rav Auerbach was thus persuaded to remain in the Yerushalayim Rabbinate together with Rav Salant. As assistant chief *Rav*, Rav Auerbach assisted Rav Shmuel Salant in the spiritual and material wellbeing of Yerushalayim and continued to play a most critical role in all the communal affairs of the country. Rav Auerbach also played an

essential role on the Yerushalayim Rabbinical Board of Directors of the Rav Meir Ba'al HaNes Salant charity founded in 1860 by Rav Zundel and Rav Shmuel Salant. In rising to the monumental challenge of administering to the desperate financial woes of the vast majority of families in *Eretz Yisrael*, Rav Shmuel Salant had thrown himself into communal work and particularly the central Rav Meir Ba'al HaNes Salant charity fund which provided for destitute and impoverished families and saved them from oblivion. During Rav Shmuel Salant's lifetime and later until after World War I, with the unanimous backing and blessing of all the great Rabbinical leaders around the world, all charity collected throughout the world on behalf and in the name of Rav Meir Ba'al HaNes was under the sole jurisdiction of the Rav Meir Ba'al HaNes charity fund and distributed by Rav Shmuel Salant.

In 1866 when the cholera plague rained death and destruction on Yerushalayim and all the various *Ashkenazi* groups and organizations were in disarray, Rav Shmuel Salant and Rav Auerbach felt that it would be a tremendous advantage to the entire city to create an umbrella organization uniting all the various factions and which would work harmoniously and in unison for the benefit of the *klal*. Thus was born the *Vaad HaKlali*, which eventually became the central institution dealing with all Yerushalayim's vast and varied issues, both financial and spiritual.

In 1878 Rav Meir Auerbach passed away, and once again the entire burden fell on the shoulders of Rav Salant and he returned to his post as chief *Rav* for Ashkenazim. In 1888 Rav Salant's eyesight began to fail. He did not, however, allow this debilitating disability to stop his wide-ranging activities in the communal affairs of the country. In 1900 he enlisted as his assistant in the Rav Meir Ba'al HaNes Salant charity fund Rav Eliyohu Dovid Rabinowitz-Teomim, chief *Rav* of Mir, and



world-famous scholar and author. Rav Rabinowitz-Teomim was born near Kovno in 1845. In 1873 he was invited to the Rabbinate of Panevez, the fifth-largest city in Lithuania. Twenty years later he was appointed chief *Rav* of Mir. At the turn of the century Rav Rabinowitz-Teomim settled in *Eretz Yisrael* and was immediately chosen by the ailing Rav Salant to assist him. For five years they worked tirelessly together for the benefit of the Jewish settlement. Unfortunately, Rav Rabinowitz-Teomim predeceased Rav Salant, passing away in 1905 at the early age of sixty.

Rav Salant was regarded as a distinguished *Talmudist* and an excellent and sagacious leader. Many of his positions in Jewish law are known through the writings of his *talmidim*. He was also known for his moderation and tolerance of all classes of Jews. Although serving as the *Ashkenazi* chief *Rav*, he carried on excellent relations with chief *Rav* and *Chacham Bashi* Rav Yaakov Shaul Elyashar, his *Sefardi* counterpart, and they acted in harmony and unison concerning the welfare matters of the community.

Among the myriad accomplishments of Rav Salant for the community was the founding of the Bikur Cholim Hospital. Rav Salant encouraged people to move into new neighborhoods outside the Old City walls, and during his tenure as chief *Rav*, the population of Yerushalayim grew from five thousand to thirty thousand Jews.

Rav Shmuel Salant was also instrumental in collecting the necessary funding to build the Bais Yaakov *shul*, located in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Yerushalayim. The cornerstone was laid in 1856 in the presence of Rav Salant, and other dignitaries such as Baron

Alphonse James de Rothschild, brother of Edmond James de Rothschild, who dedicated much of his life supporting the Jews of Palestine. It was officially named *Bais Yaakov* after their father James (Yaakov) Rothschild. It remained Yerushalayim's main *shul* until the twentieth century, when it was reduced to rubble by Jordanian soldiers during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

Rav Shmuel Salant passed away on Monday, August 16/29<sup>th</sup> of Av 1909 and was buried the next day on *Har HaZeisim* in the *Perushim* section alongside his father-in-law, Rav Zundel Salant. Many of Yerushalayim's great leaders, who were also friends and colleagues of Rav Shmuel Salant, are interred in that very same area: Rav Rabinowitz-Teomim, Rav Chaim Berlin, Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin, Rav Yitzchok Blazer, Rav Meir Auerbach, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, Rav Eliyohu Kletzkin and many others.

On the following day, Tuesday August 17, 1909, the New York Times had a lengthy column reporting the passing of Rav Salant along with a biography of his life.

Before he left this world, Rav Salant inscribed his last will and testimony and pledged that all who continue supporting the Rav Meir Ba'al HaNes Salant charity will merit heavenly blessings and divine mercy.

The remarkable legacy of Rav Meir Baal HaNes Salant is vibrantly alive and potent to this very day. Stories abound of men and women who, during personal need and crisis, experienced miraculous help when they gave charity to this holy fund.

[www.rabbimeirbaalhaneis.org/](http://www.rabbimeirbaalhaneis.org/)



## Rav Eliezer Zusia Portugal, 29<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

The Skulener *Rebbe*

### **Shachris with the Skulener Rebbe Brings Success**

The following story was told over by Rav Shlomo Mandel, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshiva* of Brooklyn:

He has a relative, a diamond dealer, who was walking to the train station in order to get to a very important business meeting. As he passed by the Skulener *Bais Medrash*, a man asked him to help the Skulener *Rebbe*, Rav Eliezer Zusia Portugal, complete a *minyán* for *Shacharis*. The diamond dealer, who, of course, had already *davened*, responded that he was in a hurry, but the man convinced him to stay and help the *Rebbe's minyan*. He walked into the *shul* and saw that they were still short the required ten for a *minyán*, but he was there already, so he stuck around. They finally gathered the required ten men and started to *daven* at the *Rebbe's* usual deliberate pace. The man kept glancing at his watch and realized that he was going to miss his important business meeting. At this point, he couldn't leave and ruin the *minyán*, so he stayed.

To make a long story short, he missed his important meeting. However, that day turned out to be his most successful day in business ever, despite missing an important meeting. Rav Shlomo Mandel concluded, "After a *Shacharis* with the Skulener *Rebbe*, of course it was his most successful day in business!"

*Zechuso Yogen Oleinu*

[www.zchusavos.blogspot.com/2007/08/shachris-with-skulener-rebbe-brings.html](http://www.zchusavos.blogspot.com/2007/08/shachris-with-skulener-rebbe-brings.html)



### **Chessed L'Avrohom: For All the Rebbe's Children**

In 1960, the Skulener *Rebbe*, Rav Eliezer Zusia Portugal, and his son, Rav Yisrael Avrohom, were released from a

Communist Romanian prison where they had been held for almost a year. Intense public pressure from the leading *Gedolim* of that era, including the Lubavitcher, Kapishnitzer, Sadigerer and Boyaner *Rebbs*, coupled with diplomatic intervention from United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, had allowed them to immigrate to the United States.

Although they had been locked away from the eyes of world Jewry for decades, the *Rebbs'* holiness and efforts on behalf of Romanian wartime orphans were well known. Their arrival was met with jubilation and reverential devotion among Jews from all walks of life.

Almost immediately after they settled in Crown Heights, they formed a network of orphanages in *Eretz Yisrael* to provide material and spiritual sustenance to hundreds of orphaned children and children who came from homes where the parents were either unfit or unable to care for them. Their goal was to help these children grow up, marry and raise *Torah*-true generations. The organization was *Chessed L'Avrohom*.

To this day, the Skulener *Rebbe* guides *Chessed L'Avrohom*. Orphanages in Bnei Brak, Meron and Kadima are staffed by teachers, house parents and a full roster of educational professionals. The children receive a *chareidi chinuch* in a loving and nurturing environment. Wherever possible, the birth parents are invited to participate in the child's upbringing, even if only in a limited way. And every child's *simcha* becomes a *Chessed L'Avrohom* family occasion, as milestones like *bar mitzvas* and weddings are arranged and sponsored by the organization.

After-school programs in Chadera, Kiryat Ata, Nahariya, Ashkelon and Ashdod

give public-school children the opportunity to thrive in a wholesome *Torah* atmosphere. Summer camps, national outreach and alumni programs, *Shabbatonim*, separate educational programming for married men and women

and a vocational training center help young people develop the social and other skills necessary to lead productive lives.

[www.5tjt.com/chesed-lavraham-for-all-the-rebbes-children/](http://www.5tjt.com/chesed-lavraham-for-all-the-rebbes-children/)



## Rav Yosef Meir Twersky of Makhnovka, 29<sup>th</sup> of Menachem Av

Rav Yosef Meir Twersky was born in 5620/1860 in Skver. He was the son of Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel of Skver.

Rav Yosef Meir was the son-in-law of Rav Menachem Nachum Twersky of Loyav, like him a descendant of the Czernobyl dynasty.

After the *petira* of his father in 5246/1886, Rav Yosef Meir was appointed *Rebbe* in the village of Makhnovka in Ukraine.

His court attracted many thousands of *Chassidim*, and his influence was tremendous. Rav Yosef Meir was revered by his generation; many *Tzaddikim* said that he was worthy of being among the *talmidim* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*.

Rav Yosef Meir was known as a *boki* in *sifrei Kabbola*. He endured fasts and

other self-inflictions.

During World War I, many *Yidden* found refuge in his *Bais Medrash*, despite the *mesirus nefesh* this demanded of him.

Rav Yosef Meir was *niftar* on *Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul* 5677/1917 in Makhnovka. He was fifty-seven.

His son, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heshel, succeeded him as *Rebbe*. He later moved to *Eretz Yisrael*, where he rebuilt the Makhnovka court in Bnei Brak.

Rav Yosef Meir's sons-in-law were Rav Dovid Leib Twersky; Rav Nachum Twersky of Zlotipoli, the son of Rav Dovid of Skver; and Rav Yehoshua Roke'ach of Yaroslav.

*Zechuso yagen oleinu.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-29-avaugust-25/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-29-avaugust-25/)



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

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

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

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



Eikev

August 24<sup>th</sup> 2019  
23<sup>rd</sup> of Av 5779

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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, z"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"ta



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

## The Essence of the Golden Calf Still Prevails

**"Then I saw and behold! You had sinned to Hashem, your G-d; you made yourselves a molten calf; you strayed quickly from the way that Hashem commanded you"** (Devarim 9:16)

In Parshat Eikev Moshe repeats all of Bnei Yisrael's sins and all the ways in which they angered Hashem, despite Hashem showing them His good and merciful Hand. One of the gravest sins that Bnei Yisrael committed in the Midbar was making the Golden Calf. It is the leading accusation against them and something for which we have suffered the consequences of throughout all the generations and still do.

We will try to explain why it is specifically the sin of the Golden Calf that is the chief allegation and for which Am Yisrael continues to be punished and to pay for this sin committed by a previous generation. There is yet another difficulty: Why did Bnei Yisrael choose to make a molten calf of gold, in place of taking a live calf from the numerous cattle that they possessed? Yet the greatest incredulity is how Bnei Yisrael, who were called the 'Dor De'ah' (enlightened generation), who witnessed Divine miracles and saw the Shechina face to face, fell to such a low level and committed one of the severest sins. They merited living in a most miraculous manner in the Midbar- their clothes did not wear out, they did not have to relieve themselves, food fell from the Heaven and the well of Miriam accompanied them wherever they went. This being the case, how could they behave so blindly with such ingratitude and anger Hashem by making a molten calf of gold?

We can answer these questions according to the Chazal (Sanhedrin 97a) that says, "Ben David (Mashiach) will only come when not a single coin remains in the pocket".

This seems like a surprising statement. What is the connection between the arrival of Mashiach and destitution? Can Hashem not hasten the redemption even when we are in a state of plenty?

When Bnei Yisrael came out of Mitzrayim, they were drawn after silver and gold. After the splitting of the sea and the drowning of the Egyptians, Hashem had to pull them away from the shore by force, since they were animatedly gathering the large amount of spoil that the sea spewed forth after the Egyptians drowned. Rashi expounds on the verse (Shemot 15:22) "Moshe caused Israel to journey from the Sea of Reeds" – "He made them journey against their will." The Bnei Yisrael left Mitz-

rayim with great wealth, for Hashem commanded them to borrow silver and gold vessels from the Egyptians, without intending to return them, in order to fulfil Hashem's promise to the Avot that their sons will leave Mitzrayim with great wealth. Despite their riches, they eagerly gathered the spoil that lay on the sea shore, since they attached great significance to silver and gold. There is no doubt that these commodities are necessary for a person's existence; Chazal even tell us (Avot 3:17), "If there is no flour there is no Torah", however the question is how much importance a person attaches to money and whether or not it is his ultimate aspiration.

Money must be given the appropriate status that it deserves and one must take care not to squander it on trivial matters, since only fools waste their money at their own expense. But a person must take care that money should not become a source of arrogance for him and he should not take pride in his money by thinking that "My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth!" (Devarim 8:17). Instead a person should repeat to himself that everything that he owns is from Hashem and it is Him alone who decides who will be rich and who will be poor. When a person's entire interests are money and possessions and he is constantly thinking about ways to increase his wealth and honor, he quickly becomes a slave to his money- it becomes like his god and a real avodah zarah.

Parshat Eikev comes to impart the important lesson that a person should subordinate himself and behave like the heel (Eikev is from the word akev- heel), that is found in the lowest place in a person's body. Only when a person lowers himself and is ready to devote himself to Torah study whilst subsisting on little, can he serve Hashem with his entire heart.

All those who think that they can simultaneously increase their materialism and their Torah learning, are making a grave mistake. As we said, these two realities contradict each other and are directly opposed to each other. If materialism occupies a person's mind, the Holy Torah will quickly lose its favor in his eyes, since his passion to increase his material wealth is stronger than his fervor for Torah and mitzvot.

Only when the hearts of Bnei Yisrael are unconstrained by money and it is no longer found in their possessions, will Hashem be able to reveal His Shechina; it will be a time of "His kingdom reigns over all" (Tehillim 103:19).

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Hilula

23 - Rabbi Yisrael Ya'akov Kanievsky

24 - Rabbi Yishmael HaKohen, Rav of Tzfat, hy"d

24 - Rabbi Ezra Shayu

25 - Rabbi Shmuel Meyuchas

26 - Rabbi Yoel Tajtelbaum, the Admor of Satmar

27 - Rabbi Yehuda Moshe Patiah

28 - Rabbi Avraham Chaim Addas

29 - Rabbi Ya'akov Bardugo, author of 'Shufreha D'Ya'akov'





## Walking in their Ways

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

### Money? No Thank you!

A businessman once came to me and asked for a blessing to succeed in a certain business deal. He promised that if my blessing indeed comes to fruition, he will share the profits equally with me. This was certainly an enticing offer - he estimated the revenue at millions of Euro.

The truth is that at first I wanted to make him sign that he will indeed keep his promise. However, after a moment of introspection, I told him that I am prepared to bless him but I do not wish to share the profits since I am afraid of the challenge of wealth which can take a person away from the straight path and cause him to love his money more than he loves His Creator.

Those who were present at the time were astounded to hear this. They could not believe that I was so easily relinquishing such enormous gains with which, with Hashem's help, I could establish many yeshivot and increase Hashem's honor in the world.

I explained that indeed such sums could be used as a tool to disseminate Torah, and in addition, I will be relieved from the enormous pressure each month anew to cover the overheads of our institutions. However, because of the great danger inherent in wealth, I prefer to be preoccupied with raising money for the mosdot, rather than being tried and tested with this most difficult challenge. Who knows if I and my family, who have never become accustomed to a life of riches, will have the strength to withstand this test?

It is well known that my grandfather, the esteemed Tzaddik Rabbi Yeshayahu Pinto zya"n, named all his sefarim with names that included the word 'kessef' - money. ('Kessef Nivchar', 'Nivchar Mikessef', 'Kessef Nimass', 'Keiss', 'Mezusak', 'Kessef Tzoref' and more). My grandfather (may his virtue stand us in good stead, amen) explained that it is the way of the world to possess a deep love for money; a person longs to increase his wealth well above what he requires to take care of his basic needs.

The hidden message in this that he wished to convey is that just as it is crystal clear to a person that he cannot survive without money, so he must by himself know that he cannot survive without the Holy Torah. If only he would achieve the level of loving his Creator at least as much as he loves his money.

## The Haftarah

"Zion said" (Yeshayahu 49)

The connection to Shabbat: This Haftarah is the second of the seven special 'Haftarot of Comfort' that are read starting with the Shabbat following Tisha B'Av. They are chapters of comfort for the Bnei Yisrael, aside sections of faith in Hashem and His Torah.



## Guard Your Tongue

### Even Without Disparagement

The following halacha refers to a person who repeats to others what someone said about them or did to them. "I heard that he said such and such about you; I heard that he did/plans to do... to you". Even if his statement has no negative connotation and he has no unfavorable intentions when repeating this information and even if you would ask him, he would not deny that he said it, either because of the truth of the matter or because this was not his intention in repeating what the person said or did, he has still transgressed the prohibition of rechilus (gossip).



## Words of our Sages

### Is it Worthwhile Becoming Angry?

**"To do that which is evil in the eyes of Hashem, to anger Him"** (Devarim 9:18)

The trait of anger, recollections of which we would love to erase from our memories, is well defined by our Sages z"l: Two of the four types of temperament that are spoken about in Avot are: 'One who is angered easily and pacified easily', and 'one who is easily angered and hard to pacify'. Rabbi Yosef Mugarbi shlita explains in his sefer 'Avot Ubanim' that those who fit in to the category of 'angered easily', are the kind of people that are easily irritated. Whether at home, at work or on the road, if something does not work out for them in the way that they expect, they immediately become angry.

On the other hand, they are 'pacified easily'. This kind of person can come home, shout at his family, argue with them, even causing a most unpleasant scene, and suddenly, only a few minutes later, he is back to himself as if nothing happened. He doesn't hold a grudge and easily relinquishes his anger.

Chazal tell us that this type of person - 'his gain is offset by his loss'. He behaves like a fool, like a small child who is irritated by every little thing, but is also quickly appeased.

We are all familiar with people like this, whose lives are not lives. They lose themselves over every small irritation. Even if they are pacified easily, who wants to be in proximity of a person who constantly gets angry? People also scorn him for they already know that he shouts and yells and then a few moments later calms down and apologizes. This person is not regarded favorably by other people, and foremost in his own eyes. This is why "his gain is offset by his loss".

What does this mean?

As an illustration imagine a person whose bank account is overdrawn by a hundred thousand dollars. If he deposits four thousand dollars, this money will be swallowed up by his debt and won't make any significant difference to the balance. So too with a person who is constantly angry, even if he is pacified within a short time, what is this gain worth in contrast to what he lost through his anger?

It is not hard to find reasons to become angry or aggravated. But we are obligated to overcome this natural leaning and acquire the trait of patience.



## Pearls of the Parshah

### Healing Through the Letters of the Torah

*"Hashem will remove from you every illness" (Devarim 7:15)*

A poor man once came to Harav Ya'akov of Radzimin zt"l, and complained about his bitter lot: In addition to lacking sufficient means of livelihood, he lately began suffering from certain health ailments.

The Rebbe told him: Since there are no vowels in the Sefer Torah, one can read the words "v'haisir Hashem mimcha kol choli (Hashem will remove from you every illness)" as "v'haisir Hashem mi-mach (mach refers to a poor person). According to this reading the meaning of the verse is that Hashem will remove from the mach, from the poor person – every illness.

The blessing of the tzaddik was indeed fulfilled and the poor man regained his health.

### Satiation is Appreciated Through Experiencing Hunger

*"He afflicted you and let you hunger, then He fed you the manna that you did not know, nor did your forefathers know" (Devarim 8:3)*

Where is the praise in the fact that Hashem afflicted the Bnei Yisrael and made them suffer hunger? This appears to be something negative; what was Moshe's goal in mentioning something seemingly 'bad' that Hashem did to His children? Besides, why would Hashem want to do such a thing?

The 'Mikdash Levi' explains that this 'bad' was in fact something positive. Hashem knew that if He would immediately inundate Bnei Yisrael with good, they will naturally not appreciate the good and will not gain the true benefit from it.

Therefore, He first afflicted them and let them hunger, and only then, "He fed you the manna". The point of this was so that they would derive the full benefit and thank their Creator wholeheartedly!

### The Life-force of One's Limbs is Dependent on Mitzvot

*"The entire commandment that I command you today you shall observe to perform, so that you may live" (Devarim 8:1)*

To which mitzvah does this verse refer? In light of the fact that the Torah already mentioned "This shall be the reward when you hearken to these ordinances" at the beginning of the parsha, the question is even stronger. What is the above verse adding?

The holy Ohr Hachaim zya"l both asks and answers:

This verse only comes to warn a person that all the mitzvot of the Torah are considered like one extensive mitzvah with one foundation and edifice and when a person is not careful with even one small mitzvah, he is missing a part in 'acquiring the mitzvot' and it is considered as if he hasn't fulfilled any of the mitzvot in their entirety.

The Torah follows with a demonstration of this idea: "...so that you may live". Just like if one of a person's 248 limbs are hurting him, it has an effect also on his other limbs and the fact that the other limbs are healthy doesn't offer him any relief for this pain, so it is with mitzvot- performing other mitzvot does not make up for a laxity in a particular mitzvah.

In addition, the Ohr Hachaim explains, the life force of a person's limbs and sinews are dependent on performing the mitzvot. We have 248 limbs just as there are 248 positive commandments and our 365 sinews correspond to the number of negative commandments. When a person is lax in performing a certain mitzvah, he is losing out on the life force of a certain limb.

## Treasures

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



### Contemplation is the Way to Achieve Torah and Yirat Shamayim

"Now, O Israel, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d, to go in all His ways and to love Him" (Devarim 10:12)

Moshe Rabbeinu tells Bnei Yisrael that Hashem is not demanding something too immense from us, but rather something easy – only to fear Hashem (yirat shamayim). It seems from Moshe's words that yirat shamayim is something easy to achieve, whereas we know how hard it is to achieve true fear of G-d?

We can explain this concept in the following way: Indeed, it is not difficult to achieve yirat shamayim, rather if we are having a hard time acquiring this trait, it is due to the presence of deterrents that hold us back in our avodat Hashem. The biggest factor is when a person does not know how to differentiate between good and bad, between straight and crooked, therefore he does not possess yirat shamayim. If a person is not committed solely to Torah but also has a desire for and finds pleasure in the fleeting gratifications of this world, the power of Torah cannot have an influence on him and it doesn't give the person the feeling of yirat shamayim that he needs to overcome his battle with the yetzer hara.

I was once making my way up to one of the higher floors in a building, and I noticed that the higher floors were much cleaner than the lower floors. The ground floor was very dirty while the first floor was less so, and so it progressed, the higher we climbed the cleaner the area was. The reason is that the ground floor is the most heavily used- all those entering the building pass through this area, including the people who live on the second and third floors. But the higher floors are only used by those who live on those floors; the ground floor occupants don't step there. The higher one climbs, the less number of people and the cleaner it becomes.

I took this as a moral lesson. The more a person is connected to materialism, the more 'contaminated' he is; the more a person elevates himself and distances himself from the fleeting pleasures of this world, the 'cleaner' he is. It is vital to understand that all the pleasures of this world do not have any intrinsic value; they are only here to assist a person so that he can better serve Hashem. Contemplating this idea is the only way to acquire Torah and yirat shamayim.





# "LET HER BE PRAISED"

Portrayal of the True 'Eshet Chayil'  
In memory of Rabbanit Mazal Madeleine Pinto

**פִּיהָ פִּתְחָהּ בְּחַכְמָה וְתוֹרַת־חֶסֶד עַל־לְשׁוֹנָהּ**

**"She opens her mouth with wisdom,  
and the teaching of kindness is on her  
tongue"**

When Rabbi Elazar came to this verse, he wondered, what is 'Torat chessed'? Is there Torah that is chessed and Torah that is not chessed?

The Gemara (Succah 49b) explains this concept: "Torah that is learnt in order to pass on to others is 'the teaching of kindness', whereas Torah that is learnt not for the sake of teaching others is considered Torah that is not kindness."

This is a most important foundation. 'Torat chessed' is Torah that its owners do not keep for themselves but rather involve others. With great generosity they are delighted to share their knowledge with one and all. Not every 'marbitz Torah' (one who teaches Torah to others) can be accredited with the title of 'The teaching of kindness is on his tongue'. This can only be said about someone who teaches Torah not for the sake of glorifying his own name and becoming famous. 'Torat Chessed' is only fitting in the absence of seeking honor, in a place of great humility. For such a person his motivation in disseminating Torah is not a selfish one but one of kindness.

The distinguished Rabbanit a"h, Marat Mazal Pinto zya"a, was a most fitting example of 'Torat chessed'. She performed many acts of kindness both with her resources and with her very being. In addition, she also merited passing on this exceptional trait to her upright offspring, as we see clearly from the life of her son, the esteemed Gaon and tzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlita, who is a living example of 'Torat chessed', both with his dissemination of Torah to all walks of life all over the world, and in being a pillar of kindness, all of which he performs without any personal interests or goals.

All those who were fortunate to be acquainted with the Rabbanit knew that whenever she spoke, it was

with words of wisdom, just like a talmid chacham who only opens his mouth with wisdom, as the Gemara tells us, "Even the mundane conversation of talmidei chachamim needs Talmud". This means that in their everyday conversation there are to be found Torah teachings. Even when she spoke about performing kindness, it was with a method about how to perform kindness in the correct way - how to lend people money while ensuring that they will repay, how to give charity in a way that will encourage those on the receiving end to find a way out of their privation. The kindness that she performed was intertwined with wisdom, just like the true 'Eishet Chayil' who before lecturing about wisdom or kindness, tests it in her own life.

## **In the Merit of the Rabbanit**

The wife of the Gaon Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer zt"l, was the one who urged him to publish his sefer 'Even Ha'ezel'. After Rabbi Moshe Mordechai, the brother-in-law of the 'Even Ha'ezel', published a sefer, his wife asked him with curiosity: "Why don't you print your chiddushim (novel Torah thoughts)?" His answer was simple: "I don't have any chiddushim and I don't have what to publish".

"How can it be", wondered the Rabbanit, "after years of being a Rosh Yeshiva you don't have any of your own chiddushim?" "I have chiddushim", Rabbi Isser Zalman replied, "but they are few and far between and are not enough to fill a sefer."

"If so", the Rabbanit suggested, "print what you have, even if it is just a small pamphlet and when you have more chiddushim you can immediately publish another section. In this way after some time you will be able to put together a substantial, quality sefer."

The Rav accepted his wife's suggestion, and printed one volume. Sometime later he printed another volume, and this eventually developed into the famous sefer 'Even Ha'ezel' on the Rambam. Rabbi Isser Zalman would say that this sefer came to light entirely in the merit of his Rabbanit, Baila Hinda.

Indeed, "She opens her mouth with wisdom".

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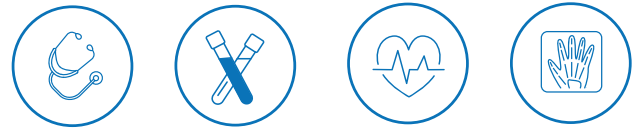
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