

ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



נדפס באדיבות

RAMAPOST
MARKETING | DESIGN | PRINT | MAIL

To add your shul, or request
additional copies, please email:

mitzvos@ramapost.com

זכות רפואה שלמה
מיכאל בן שלי
מלכה בת רחל



BEHAR ~ BECHUKOSAI



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)

❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

Sowing the Seeds of the Zera Kodesh

Dvar Torah

In *Zera Kodesh* to *Behar*, the *heilige Ropshitzer Rav* asks:

As a nation, *Am Yisrael* counts *Sefira* in order to purify our souls from filth and *tuma*. Is this some kind of *segula*? Is it some kind of supernatural process that we are automatically purged and purified just by counting the days of the *Omer*?

This cannot be, because we do see plenty of people who count *Sefira* and not only do they not cleanse and refine themselves for their past misdeeds, we see that they do not even desist from their current *tumas chet*, instead continuing their filthy activities, sinning and defiling themselves.

We therefore conclude, says the *Ropshitzer*, that the days of *Sefira* are meant to be days of *teshuva*. There are fifty gates of *teshuva* and counting the forty-nine days of the *Omer* leads us to the fiftieth gate, as the *pasuk* (*Vayikra* 23:16) tells us, "You shall count fifty days." The *pasuk* says we begin counting for seven weeks the day after *Shabbos*. Since the week is seven days long and *Shabbos* is the seventh day and we begin counting "the day after *Shabbos*", the day we begin counting is in effect the eighth day.

SPONSOR A DVAR TORAH

SPONSOR AN ENTIRE WEEK FOR **\$360**

Following Daas Torah, Ramapost is sharing the opportunity to sponsor weekly Divrei Torah.

The following publications are read by hundreds of people every Shabbos. Sponsor an individual Dvar Torah or the entire collection, in the zechus of a choleh, l'eiluy nishmas, or for someone in need. A small message can be put on the Dvar Torah of your choice which will be distributed across Monsey and online.

RESERVED
PARSHAS PINCHUS
ENTIRE WEEK OF
7/20/19



CHOOSE A DVAR TORAH TO SPONSOR
CONTACT US WITH A PARSHA AND OPTIONAL MESSAGE

\$180

Ram HaTorah
150 WEEKLY*
Compilation of Divrei Torah
(English & Hebrew)

\$126

Meoros Hatzadikkim
300 WEEKLY*
Dvar Torah &
Weekly Yahrzeits
(English)

\$100 (MONTHLY)

Divrei Chizuk
800 MONTHLY*
R' Gamliel Rabinowitz
(Hebrew)

\$100

Torah Wellsprings
200 WEEKLY*
R' Elimelech Biderman
(English / Yiddish)

\$54

Sichat Hashavua & Hitkashrut
125 WEEKLY*
(Hebrew)

\$*

Areivim
400 WEEKLY*
R' Shmuel Gluck
(English)

*CONTACT INFO@AREIVIM.COM

*AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED

The eighth attribute among the *Sefiros* is *Hod*, associated with healing the sick, which is why at *Matan Torah* all judgments were sweetened and all the sick were healed (*Tanchuma Yisro* #8).

The Ropshitzer explains that the days of *Sefira* – these days of *teshuva* – therefore rectify and sweeten all judgments and transfer the judgments onto our enemies instead of us! The forty-nine days spell *mem tes*, which means to lower or push down, hinting at the wicked, now subdued and pushed down before the *Tzaddik*. Forty-nine is also the *gematria* of the words for a good heart – *lev tov*. This is because in order to count down forty-nine days towards *Shavuos*, *Zeman Matan Toraseinu*, we need to acquire a good heart – a *lev tov*. The *gematria* of the fiftieth year, the *Yovel*, is also equal to *lev tov* (with the *kollel*), because whoever acquires a good heart goes free!

Our *pasuk* therefore talks about *Behar Sinai*, the location of *Kabbolas HaTorah*, and also teaches us about *Shemita*, a preparation for receiving the *Torah*, because the counting of *Sefira* and *Yovel* achieve the same end – to sweeten judgments and acquire a good heart, a *lev tov*.



OHR HACHAIM

“The gates of heaven opened up and I saw G-dly visions, the Creator of the four corners of the earth, and I gazed and meditated upon that which I had permission to, and began to explain at the beginning of Hashem’s holy words” Ohr HaChaim, Bereishis

Praises For The Holy Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh

Toil in Torah

Rav Avrohom of Strikov said, “When the *Ohr HaChaim* explained and expounded the forty-two *chiddushim* on our *pasuk* in *Bechukosai*, he himself was fulfilling *Rashi*’s comment to our *pasuk* that walking on the path of the *chukos* means that ‘you should toil and be *ameilim baTorah*.’” (*Dibros Kodesh Strikov Behar-Bechukosai* 5769)



The Forty-Two Explanations of Bechukosai Seileichu

There is a well-known tradition regarding the *Ohr HaChaim*’s exile while in Morocco and of some of the travels and travails that befell him during his *golus*.

Perhaps the most famous story is the following legendary tale whose tradition was passed down to us by the *Mekubol* Rav Moshe Yair Weinstock, who heard and received it from Rav Yisrael Yitzchok Reisman of the *Eida Chareidis*, who in turn received it from the *Rosh Mekubolim*, the *Gaon* Rav Chaim Shaul *HaKohen* Dewike, who heard it from the elders of *Aram Tzova* and the *talmidim* of the *Ohr Chaim*. The story goes like this:

During his exile, the *Ohr HaChaim* ended up one *Erev Shabbos* in a field. (The *Maamar Mordechai* of *Slonim* and other traditions say that there he met a giant who was a lumberjack and with each stroke of his axe, he said, “*Lekovod Shabbos Kodesh!*” Other traditions add that

he took the *Ohr HaChaim* over the river Sambatyon.) There he rested by a tree, and as he prepared for *Shabbos*, he sat and reviewed the *Parsha* of the week. His tremendous *dveikus* and erudition helped him toil and he arrived at forty-two explanations for the first *pasuk* in *Parshas Bechukosai!*

Seeing that *Shabbos* would soon arrive, the *Ohr HaChaim* entered the neighboring village and went to the local *shul* for *davening*. No one knew or recognized their illustrious guest; he was received as warmly as any wandering beggar Jew and was invited to one of the locals for the *Shabbos* meal upon the conclusion of the *tefillos*.

The *Ohr HaChaim* followed his host home for the *seuda* and afterward his host told him that they all met after the meal at the local *Rav's* home for a get-together in honor of *Shabbos*. There they sang and shared *Divrei Torah* and *Oneg Shabbos*. The host invited his unknown guest to join and *Rav Chaim ben Attar* agreed.

At the *Rav's* home they all sang *zemiros* and watched as the local *Rav* sank deep into thought. He was a holy man, who, the host explained, could delve into deep mysteries and achieve insight. The *Rav* was meditating and his face betrayed holy *dveikus* and otherworldly ponderings. When the *Rav* came back and his soul returned, he began to speak animatedly, telling them that he had just heard great deep *Torah* insights in the heavenly academies!

He then expounded on and explained the first *pasuk* of *Bechukosai* in fourteen different ways and concluded, "And I heard from the heavenly hosts - the *pamalya shel maala* - that in the *Mesiota Derokiya* these *chiddushim* are said in the name of the holy *Tzaddik Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar!*"

Everyone sat in stunned silence, marveling at the *Torah* insights and novel interpretations - everyone except the stranger. The guest in the back got up and broke the silence and made a motion of dismissal and declared, "He is not a *Gaon*, or a *Tzaddik*, or a *Kodosh* - he is not a *Rav*, just plain *Chaim ben Attar!*" No one knew that this wandering stranger was none other than *Rav Chaim ben Attar* himself, who, in his humility, sought to downplay himself and downgrade his honor. All they knew was that he had some *chutzpa!* The host tried to calm everyone down and the matter was soon forgotten. Until the next day, that is...

After *Shacharis* and the *seuda*, the Jews gathered at the *Rav's* home for singing and study. There the *Rav* again ascended on high and when he returned, proceeded to explain and teach an additional fourteen *chiddushim* and insights on the first *pasuk* of *Bechukosai*. Again, he concluded by saying, "And I heard from the heavenly hosts - the *pamalya shel maala* - that in the *Mesiota Derokiya* these *chiddushim* are said in the name of the holy *Tzaddik Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar!*"

Again, the audacity and *chutzpa* of the stranger was heard as he stood up and corrected the *Rav*: "He is not a *Gaon*, or a *Tzaddik*, or a *Kodosh* - he is not a *Rav*, just plain *Chaim ben Attar!*"

This was getting out of hand. The Jews were angry, the *Rav* was furious and barely could they all be restrained from attacking the insolent, brazen stranger. Just who did he think he was anyway? Little did they guess that he was in fact *Rav Chaim ben Attar!*

Finally, *Sholosh Seudos* came, and again for a third and final time the scenario played itself out: The *Rav* ascended and heard *chiddushim* and then he descended and shared with the

rapt audience another fourteen *chiddushim* and insights on the first *pasuk* of *Bechukosai* (a total of forty-two explanations) and again he concluded, saying, "And I heard from the *pamalya shel maala* that in the *Mesivta Derokiya* these *chiddushim* are said in the name of the holy *Tzaddik Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar!*"

The *chutzpadik* stranger stood up and again corrected the *Rav*. "He is not a *Gaon*, or a *Tzaddik*, or a *Kodosh* – he is not a *Rav*, just plain *Chaim ben Attar!*"

At this point the *Rav's* righteous anger could not be held back and he resolved to punish the stranger for the sake and honor of the *Torah* and had him incarcerated.

Shabbos ended and a strange wind picked up. The skies filled with dark, ominous clouds. An unseasonal storm was brewing, the likes of which no one had ever seen. As the gale rose and torrential rains lashed out, the frightened Jews ran to the *Rav* for help and guidance. The *Rav* ascended on high and was told, "The heavenly minister in charge of Gehinnom is in a rage! You have locked up *Rav Chaim ben Attar* in a cell and while he is jailed he cannot make *Havdola*. All *Shabbos* long, every week, Gehinnom is closed and sealed. The *Sar* (angel) wishes now to reopen it as he does every *Motzo'ei Shabbos* but he cannot because the *Ohr HaChaim* has not yet made *Havdola!* This dangerous storm is a manifestation of the *Sar* of Gehinnom's great anger and rage!" The *Rav* quickly had the *Ohr HaChaim* released and told him that in Heaven it had been revealed that all the insults and injuries the *Ohr HaChaim* had suffered had atoned for him and his exile was now over and he could go back home.

(When the *Maamar Mordechai* of Slonim would tell this, he added that they all heard a voice ring out and declare, "Return, O you wicked back to Sheol!" The land shook and all present trembled as they stood at the foot of the opening to Gehinnom!) The *Rav* begged the *Ohr HaChaim's* forgiveness and once granted the *Ohr HaChaim* returned to Sali. (*Shneim Asar Shiotei Yisrael*)



The Holy Lights Of The Ohr Hachaim

Below are just a few examples from among the forty-two explanations of Bechukosai that also connect with Pirkei Avos:

Way # 6: The *Ohr HaChaim* cites *Avos* chapter 2 that an *Am HaAretz* (*ignoramus*) cannot be a *Chassid*. This means that an *Am HaAretz* is actually forbidden to act like a *Chassid* and to try and take on various *chumros* (stringencies), because he does not understand what is appropriate and might decide to act in way he believes is pious and end up transgressing. The example given is that *Yom Kippur* is the holiest day of the year. There are various things that we must forgo on *Yom Kippur*, including abstaining from food and drink – five forms of affliction in all. The *Am HaAretz* might misconstrue this and because he knows *Yom Kippur* is the holiest day, he might transgress some of the five afflictions, thinking he is acting piously and doing holy things on a holy day, when instead his actions would be a terrible sin! Therefore, *Im bechukosai seileichu* – if you walk in My laws, says *Hashem* – and safeguard My *mitzvos* and do them – you shall safeguard the path by adding fences and boundaries to prevent mistaken transgression.

Way # 9: *Pirkei Avos* chapter 6 teaches that the *Torah* is acquired in forty-eight ways. The *Ohr HaChaim* sees this hinted at in our *pasuk*: *Hashem* says, “If you walk on the path of My laws and wish to acquire *Torah*, the condition is – safeguard My *mitzvos* and fulfill them and do them.” This refers to the forty ways of acquisition; if you fulfill these *kinyonim* you will acquire *Torah*. There are many barriers and different hindrances that prevent us from acquiring *Torah*; engaging in and fulfilling the forty-eight *kinyonim* helps us to overcome those hurdles and to acquire *Torah*.

Way # 12: *Pirkei Avos* chapter 3 says that whoever has wisdom in greater abundance than his deeds and actions, his wisdom endures; whoever has actions in greater number, however, his wisdom will not endure. The *Ohr HaChaim* sees this hinted at in our *pasuk*. *Hashem* says, “If you walk on the path of My laws” – if you toil in *Torah* and your *mitzva* observance complements your effort, then your wisdom shall not exceed your deeds. This is why *mitzva* observance is written in our *pasuk* immediately following the toil in *Torah*: “Safeguard My *mitzvos* and fulfill and do them”.

Way # 21: *Pirkei Avos* chapter 4 teaches, “You are forced to die against your will and forced to live against your will.” The *Ohr HaChaim* explains that *Tzaddikim* and *Ba’alei Torah* are different; unlike the average people to whom our *Mishna* in *Avos* applies, *Ba’alei Torah* can leave this world for the next world of their own free will whenever they wish. They simply decide to leave and even before their time has come and the King has called for them, they can go. He sees this hinted at in our *pasuk*: *Hashem* says, “*Im bechukosai* – then *seileichu* – If you toil in *Torah*, you can go, leaving whenever you wish to leave.”

Way # 30: *Pirkei Avos* chapter 3 says, “If there is no flour, then there is no *Torah*.” The *Ohr HaChaim* here and in *Haazinu* explains that if we see that *Hashem* has stopped the Heavens from giving rain and withheld a bounty of blessings, if there is no flour, the reason is because there is a lack of *Torah* study and observance on our part.

This is seen in our *pasuk*: *Hashem* says, “*Im bechukosai* – If you wish to have My *chok* – *chok* means food – if you want food, then – *seileichu* – walk on the path of *mitzva* observance and *Torah* study. The amount of rain and food produced depends on your observance and diligence in *Torah* study.



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 מורתִי / הצדיק
 בן/בת _____, יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שתקבל ברחמים
 וברצון כל מעשה הטוב שאני עושה, בין במחשבה, בין בדיבור, בין במעשה ויהיה הכל
 לזכות ולמנוחת ולעילוי לנשמות עמך ישראל, ובפרט לנפש רוח ונשמה של אבי / אמי /
 צדיק _____. יהי רצון שתהינה נפשותיהם צורות 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



GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER



YAHREITS BEGINNING SHABBOS BEHAR BECHUKOSAI

http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrtzeit/Iyar

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

* 20th of Iyar ~ Begins Friday Night (May 24th)

- * **Rav Chaim Avrohom Gagin** (1787–1848). Born in Constantinople, Turkey, to Rav Moshe, a descendant of Rav Chaim Gagin, a fugitive of the Spanish expulsion. Sadly, Rav Chaim Avrohom's father died when his son was just one year old. His second wife was the daughter of Rav Avrohom Sholom Sharabi, grandson of the *Rashash*, Rav Sholom Sharabi. After his marriage, he became *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Bais Kel*, founded by Rav Gedalia Chayun in 1737. He later became *Rishon Letzion*. His writings include *Mincha Tehora* on *Gemora Menochos*, *Chukei Chaim* (*halachic* responsa), and others, (5608/1848);
- * **Rav Yitzchok Eizik HaLevi Rabinowitz**, *mechaber* of *Doros HoRishonim*, a *Torah*-true history of the Jewish People, written to counter the historical inaccuracies of the *Maskilim*. He was also an important figure in the founding of *Agudas Yisrael*, (5674/1914);
- * **Rav Yosef Waltuch**, the *Tzaddik Nistar*, (5743/1983);
- * **Rav Meir Bransdorfer**, *mechaber* of *Keneh Bosem*, (5769/2009);

- * **Rav Mordechai** (“Mottel”) of Chernobyl (1770–1838), successor to his father, Rav Nachum, the *Meor Einayim*, he became the son-in-law of Rav Aharon the Great of Karlin and subsequently of Rav Dovid Seirkes. His eight sons all became major *Chassidic* leaders. One of them married the daughter of Rav Dov Ber of Lubavitch, (5598/1838).
- * **21st of Iyar ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (May 25th)**
 - * **Rav Yitzchok Eizik Segal**, *mechaber* of *Raza Meihemna*, (5543/1783);
 - * **Rav Yaakov Yosef HaKohen Rabinowitz** (1873–1902), the son of the *Chessed L’Avrohom* of Radomsk, who in turn was the son of the *Tiferes Shlomo*. During his abbreviated life, he served as *Rav* of two towns, Breznitz and Klobitz. His older brother, the *Kenesses Yechezkel*, included a lengthy *hakdoma* (introduction) in his *sefer*, *Emes L’Yaakov*, about the greatness of his brother, Rav Yaakov Yosef, (5662/1902).
- * **22nd of Iyar ~ Begins Sunday Night (May 26th)**
 - * **Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri**, the *Maharsha Alfandri* (1820–1930). Born in Istanbul, Rav Shlomo Eliezer served as the chief *Rav* in Istanbul, Damascus, and subsequently in Tzefas for twenty years. He passed away at age 110 in Yerushalayim. Many of his responsa are included in his book, *Saba Kadisha*, (5690/1930);
 - * **Rav Mordechai Shraga Feivish Friedman** of Husyatin (Gusyatin) (1835–1894). The sixth and youngest son of Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin, he married in 1850 (just four months before the *petira* of his father) and established a *Chassidic* court in Husyatin in 1861. As a result, the city became one of the most important *Chassidic* centers in Galicia, Jews comprising 4197 of the town’s 6060 residents in 1890. Sadly, the golden age did not last for long. Husyatin was heavily damaged during World War I, and then destroyed during World War II, (5654/1894).
- * **23rd of Iyar ~ Begins Monday Night (May 27th)**
 - * **Rav Sholom Bashari**, *Dayan* in Yemen, (5533/1773).
- * **24th of Iyar ~ Begins Tuesday Night (May 28th)**
 - * **Simcha HaKohen** of Worms, slain by Crusaders in a church for stabbing the bishop’s nephew after he had pretended to submit to baptism, (4856/1096);
 - * **Rav Yitzchok Feigenbaum**, *Rav* in Warsaw, (5671/1911);
 - * **Rav Binyomin Mendelsohn**, *Rav* of Komemiyus, one of the most prominent fighters for *Kedushas Sheviis*. Born in Plotzk at the end of the nineteenth century, his father was Rav Menachem Mendel Mendelsohn, a close *Chassid* of the Alexander *Rebbe*, who served there as *Rosh Yeshiva*. After World War I, Rav Binyomin married and opened a *Yeshiva* in Bodzanov. During his years there, he became a *Chassid* of the Gerrer *Rebbe*, the *Imrei Emes*. In fact, his notes were used to publish the *seforim* of the *Imrei Emes* decades after the War, as tens of thousands of pages of the *Imrei Emes*’s written *chiddushei Torah* were lost. With the *berocha* of the Gerrer *Rebbe*, Rav Binyomin moved to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1933, and was offered a position as *Rav* of Kfar Ata, not far from Chaifa, and served in that capacity for seventeen years. In 1951, Rav Binyomin left Kfar Ata and its *kehilla* of twenty thousand families and accepted the offer to become the *Rav* of a small, religious settlement in the Negev called Komemius, serving the community for the next twenty-seven years. One of the most defining aspects of his *Rabbonus* in Komemius was the fact that all the *mitzvos hateluyos ba’aretz* (land-based *mitzvos*), were kept fully. *Shemitta* was adhered to according to the opinion of the *Chazon Ish* with no reliance on the *heter mechira* that was almost unanimously accepted in those years. Rav Binyomin felt that keeping *Shemitta* was a key to bringing about the *Geula*. He was *moser nefesh* for *Shemitta* observance, not only in Komemius, but in other places as well. His letters, masterpieces of

hashkofa and *emuna*, were published posthumously in the *sefer Igros HaGrab*, (5739/1979);

- * **Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb** (1923–2005). Born to Rav Shlomo Gottlieb, *Rav* of the *Ohr HaChaim shul* in Philadelphia, the family moved to Yerushalayim in 1929. After learning at the Chevron *Yeshiva*, his family moved back to the United States, where he learned at *Torah Vodaas*. He married in 1946. In 1963, he moved back to *Eretz Yisrael* and was appointed general manager of the Chief Rabbinate, a position he held for fourteen years. He also assisted his father in *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Chaim Yosef*, founded in 1942. After his father's *petira*, Rav Akiva Moshe became responsible for it. He wrote *Bais Shlomo*, a biography of his father, and *Kerem Shlomo*, six volumes on *Chumash* and the *Mo'adim*, (5765/2005).

* **25th of Iyar ~ Begins Wednesday Night (May 29th)**

- * **Rav Yaakov Loeberbaum** of Lisa, *mechaber* of *Chavas Daas* and *Nesivos HaMishpot*, (5592/1832);
- * **Rav Ozer** of Klementov, *mechaber* of *Even Ha'Ozer* on *Shulchon Aruch*, (5470/1710);
- * **Rav Chaim Hager** of Kosov, *mechaber* of *Toras Chaim* (1795–1854), son of Rav Menachem Mendel Hager of Kosov, *mechaber* of *Ahavas Sholom*, grandson of Rav Yaakov Kopel, and father of the first Vizhnitzer *Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel Hager, the *Tzemach Tzaddik*, (5614/1854);
- * **Rav Chaim Chori**, *Rosh Bais Din* in Tunis, *mechaber* of *Motza Chaim*, (5717/1957);
- * **Rav Shaul HaLevi**, *Rav* of The Hague and *mechaber* of *Binyan Shaul*, (5545/1785).

* **26th of Iyar ~ Begins Thursday Night (May 30th)**

- * **Rav Sa'adia ben Yosef Gaon** (882–942). Born in Fayum (the former name of Cairo), Egypt, he led an all-out war against the Karaites when he was just twenty-three, criticizing their theories with articulately advanced arguments. In 915, he moved from Egypt to Teverya to further his studies. However, the *Yeshiva* of Sura in Babylonia invited him to join them. Six years later, in 928, he was appointed *Gaon* of the *Yeshiva*. Two years later, a rift between him and the *Reish Golusa*, Rav Dovid ben Zakai, over a *Bais Din* decision, prompted Rav Sa'adia's move to Baghdad. He returned seven years later, having mended the relationship. His most famous written work is *Ha'Emunos VehaDeyos*, the first Jewish philosophy book, originally written in Arabic and translated into Hebrew by Rav Yehuda *ibn* Tibbon. His translation of the *Chumash* into Arabic is used by Yemenite Jews to this day, (4702/942);
- * **Rav Aharon Lapapa** (1590–1667). Born in Magnesia (Manisa), Turkey, he was a *talmid* of Rav Avrohom Motal and Rav Yosef Trani in the *Yeshivos* of Salonika and Constantinople. Late in life, on *Rosh Chodesh Iyar* in 1665, he was appointed *Dayan* of Smyrna (Izmir), effectively splitting rabbinical functions with Rav Chaim Benveniste. On the 6th of *Teves* that year, Shabbesai Tzvi proclaimed Rav Benveniste “supreme *Rav*” of Smyrna, no doubt having learned of Rav Aharon's disbelief of Messianic claims. As such, he was forced to remain homebound. Some of his responsa and *chiddushim* to *Tur Choshen Mishpot* were published in *Bnei Aharon*, (5427/1667);
- * **Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto**, the *Ramchal* (1707–1747), *mechaber* of *Mesilas Yeshorim*, *Derech Hashem*, *Pis'chei Chochma* (138 chapters on the entire scope of the *Kabbala* in what many authorities consider the most systematic manner ever achieved), and *Daas Tevunos*. Born in Padua, Italy, the *Ramchal* was a *talmid* of Rav Yitzchok Lampronti, *mechaber* of the *Pachad Yitzchok*, the first major Talmudic encyclopedia ever assembled. The novelty of his approach drew opposition from a number of his contemporaries. Partially as a result of this opposition, the *Ramchal* left his native Italy in 1735 and settled in Amsterdam. In 1743, he traveled to *Eretz*

Yisrael and settled in Acco. He died in a plague a few short years later, along with his wife and his son. The Vilna *Gaon* declared that the *Ramchal* had the most profound understanding of *Yiddishkeit* that any mortal could attain. He furthermore stated that if the *Ramchal* had been alive in his generation, he would go by foot from Vilna to Italy to sit at his feet and learn from him. According to a *mesora*, the *Gaon* was going to *Eretz Yisrael* to be a *talmid* of the *Ramchal* but then found out that the *Ramchal* was *niftar* and so returned to Vilna. There is also a *mesora* that the *Ramchal* was a *gilgul* of Rav Akiva; the two are buried right next to each other. The *Ramchal* was *niftar* when he was forty, the number of years said to make up for the first forty years of Rav Akiva's life, prior to his *teshuva*, (5507/1747);

- ✳ **Rav Yitzchok ben Chaim** of Volozhin (1779–1849 or 1851), the son of, and successor to, Rav Chaim of Volozhin. Rav Yitzchok's works include *Mili D'Avos* on *Pirkei Avos* and a *Torah* commentary entitled *Peh Kodosh*. Father-in-law of Rav Naftoli Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (the *Netziv*), (5609/1849 or 5611/1851);
- ✳ **Rav Shmuel Eliyohu** of Zhvill, (5648/1888);
- ✳ **Rav Shlomo ("Shlomke") Goldman**, the Zhviller *Rebbe* (1870–1945), the younger of the two sons of Rav Mordechai of Zhvill, and a descendant of Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov. When a pogrom in Zhvill targeted his brother's compound and killed the *Rebbetzin* along with many Jews in the area, his brother, Rav Yaakov Yisrael, moved to Boston, and Rav Shlomo moved to Yerushalayim in 1926. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Gedalia Moshe, (5705/1945).



❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

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

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

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



❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Yosef Waltuch, 20th of Iyar

Tzaddik Nistar – “the holy street sweeper”

Rav Yosef Waltuch was born in Poland on the 30th of *Tishrei* 5682/1921. When he was eight years old his father, Rav Simcha Bunim, a descendant of the Zlotchover *Maggid*, moved the family to *Eretz Yisrael*.

At a very young age he lost his mother, but Rav Yosef found comfort in learning *Torah*. A *masmid*, he was rarely seen without a *sefer* in his hand.

In Yerushalayim, Rav Yosef merited a close connection with Rav Shlomo of Zhvill, also a descendant of the Zlotchov dynasty. He was also Rav Yosef's *shadchan*. All Rav Yosef's ways were based upon Rav Shlomke's directives.

Rav Yosef lived in the Old City of Yerushalayim, and learned *Kabbola* on a daily basis in the nearby *Yeshiva Bais Kel*.

Besides his connection with the Zhviller *Rebbe*, Rav Yosef was also close with Rav Mordechai Sharabi, Rav Moshe Mordechai of Lelov, and Rav Meir Abuchatzeira of Ashdod.

Rav Yosef's wife was ill all her life, spending much of her time in the hospital, but he never complained, accepting this as a Heavenly decree.

Rav Yosef always carried two heavy bags full of *seforim*, mainly *Kabbola*. One reason for this was that he did not want to lower his hands (the *Gemora* says that Rav Yehuda *HaNosi* was called *Rabbeinu HaKodosh* because he did not lower his

hands). Another reason was that he did not want to shake hands with everybody he met; this way his hands were always full.

Rav Yosef was outstanding in all facets of the *Torah*.

Like many other *Tzaddikim nistorim*, Rav Yosef chose belittling work; he was a street sweeper in Tel Aviv. He was known as “the holy street sweeper”.

Although he lived in Tel Aviv, Rav Yosef *davened* at the *Kosel* at least once a week.

During his visits to Yerushalayim, Rav Yosef met with many of the city's famed *Mekubolim*.

Fluent in many of the *Arizal's* works, Rav Yosef delivered *shiurim* across *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Meir Abuchatzeira from Ashdod, son of the *Baba Sali*, was a close friend. Rav Yosef often went to Ashdod to visit Rav Meir and discuss *Kabbola*.

When Rav Meir was *niftar* on the 17th of *Nissan* 5743/1983, Rav Yosef said that he could not continue in this world without him. Just over a month later, on the 20th of *Iyar* 5743/1983, Rav Yosef was *niftar*. He was sixty-two.

He was buried on *Har HaZeisim* in Yerushalayim.

Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-20-](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-20-iyarmay-20/)

[iyarmay-20/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-20-iyarmay-20/)



Rav Meir Bransdorfer, 20th of Iyar

Mechaber of *Keneh Bosem*

Rav Meir Bransdorfer was born on | the 27th of *Elul* 5694/1934 in Antwerp. His

10 ❖ Behar - Bechukosai / MeOros.HaTzaddikim@gmail.com

father, Rav Shlomo, was a descendant of Rav Yissochor Shlomo Teichtel, *mechaber* of *Mishnas Sochir*. Rav Shlomo was married in Hungary and moved to Antwerp following his *chasuna*, where Rav Meir was born.

During World War II, the family went into hiding in France, and in the summer of 5705/1945 they moved to *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Meir became close to Rav Aharon Roth, the *Shomrei Emunim Rebbe*. After the latter's *petira*, he grew close to his son-in-law, the *Toldos Aharon Rebbe*, who cited him as a prime example of *hasmoda* (diligence) and *Ahavas HaTorah*. The *Toldos Aharon Rebbe* stood up for him despite Rav Meir's much younger age.

Rav Meir married the daughter of Rav Shimon Dov Krischevsky, who had served as secretary of the Diskin Orphanage Home, as well as secretary to Dr. Moshe Wallach, head of Shaare Zedek Hospital.

Rav Meir had received *semicha* at the age of twenty-two, and at thirty became a *moreh horo'a* and the *Rav* of the *Toldos Aharon* community. The *Minchas Yitzchok*, Rav Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss, entrusted him with all matters of *shechita*; he said that whatever Rav Meir *paskened* was accepted in *Shomayim*.

Rav Meir was close to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, who sent him *shailos* in

halocha. Indeed, he was greatly esteemed by *Gedolei Yisrael* everywhere.

In 5721/1961 he was appointed to oversee all *inyenei shechita* and *mikvaos*.

With time, Rav Meir became a leading *posek* and received *shailos* from all over the world. He was called upon twenty-four hours a day. Everyone knew that he was always available, as he was up most of the night, learning.

It was known that Rav Meir learned *Torah mitoch ha'dchak* (in poverty). He lived in a one-room apartment in Botei Ungarin.

Together with his friend, Rav Moshe Halberstam, Rav Meir became a *Chaver HaBadatz* in Elul 5756/1996, when the *Gaavad*, Rav Moshe Arye Freund, was *niftar*.

Rav Meir was a *mohel mumcheh*; he served as *mohel* at more than three thousand *brisos*.

Rav Meir was *niftar* on the 20th of *Iyar* 5769/2009 at the age of seventy-five. He was buried on *Har HaZeisim*, next to his father and his *Rebbes*, leaving behind a family of *Marbitzei Torah* and *Talmidei Chachomim*.

Many of his *teshuvos* were published in the four-volume *She'eilos U'teshuvos Keneh Bosem*.

Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.



Rav Mottele Chernobyler, 20th of Iyar

The Chernobyler Maggid

A Rebbe's Debt to a Hitchhiker

Weekly *Chassidic* Story #805 (s5773-34 / 19th of *Iyar* 5773)

As he approached Chernobyl, the *Chassid* was in a happy mood. And why not? Silently he counted his blessings: a loving wife and children, a flourishing business, and soon he would be in the

presence of his holy *Rebbe*, the famous Rav Mordechai of Chernobyl.

With these thoughts in mind he was enjoying the scenery, when suddenly he spotted a poor Jew trudging along with a bundle on his shoulders. Stopping the carriage, he offered the traveler a lift, which was gratefully accepted.

For the first few miles both men were silent. But after a few minutes the poor Jew turned to the *Chassid* and asked him where he was headed. "To Chernobyl," the man replied, "to my holy *Rebbe*."

"Aha!" the traveler said with a smile. "So you're going to Mottele."

The *Chassid* was immediately offended. How dare this shabby-looking fellow refer to his holy *Rebbe* in such a familiar manner, as if they were intimates! On second thought, he decided to remain quiet.

"Are you indeed one of Mottele's *Chassidim*?" the stranger persisted. "Yes," the man replied curtly in an attempt to end the conversation. "What *chutzpa!*" the *Chassid* thought to himself. Under other circumstances he would have put this impudent clod in his place, but he had no wish to ruin the journey further.

But the stranger was clearly in the mood to talk. "How do I know that you're really a *Chassid*?" he inquired. The *Chassid* was very surprised by the question and said nothing.

"A man is measured by his deeds, and especially by his pocket," the stranger continued. "I'll tell you what – if you will pay me the twenty gold coins your *Rebbe* owes me, I will believe that you are his *Chassid*."

The *Chassid* was shocked. What kind of nonsense was this? "If you can prove to me that my *Rebbe* owes you the money I will gladly pay his debt," he blurted out. The stranger smiled and fished around in his knapsack until he found a piece of paper: a promissory note for twenty gold coins, signed by the *Tzaddik* of Chernobyl. The *Chassid* examined it carefully. Yes, it really did appear to be the *Rebbe*'s signature, and try as he might he could not find any evidence of forgery. Nodding his head, he folded the note several times and placed it in his snuffbox. He then took out his moneybag, counted

out exactly twenty gold coins and pressed them into the stranger's hand.

The rest of the journey was conducted in silence. On the outskirts of Chernobyl they reached a crossroads and the stranger asked to be let off. Before he climbed down from the carriage, he thanked the *Chassid* for his kindness and blessed him with success.

The *Chassid* watched the stranger walk off into the distance. Within minutes the man and his bundle were no bigger than a tiny dot that eventually disappeared over the horizon.

The *Chassid* took out the promissory note and inspected it even more closely, but again could find no fault with it. By that time, however, he realized that he had arrived in Chernobyl. With more important things to attend to, he slipped the note back into his snuffbox and promptly forgot about it.

It was a busy Friday when he arrived, and Chernobyl was filled with hundreds of other Jews who had come to bask in the *Rebbe*'s presence. *Shabbos* was spent in a state of spiritual elevation. To the *Chassid*, the opportunity to *daven* with the *Rebbe* and hear his words of *Torah* was nothing less than a foretaste of Paradise.

When *Shabbos* was over the *Chassid* requested a private audience with the *Rebbe*. Oddly, the first thing the *Rebbe* asked him was whether he had any snuff with him. "Certainly," the *Chassid* replied, immediately proffering his snuffbox. As he opened it he saw the note he had forgotten about, and after a moment's hesitation handed it over to the *Rebbe*, who had noticed him pause.

"How did this come into your hands?" the *Rebbe* asked him. The *Chassid* related the whole unlikely story of the stranger who had claimed that the *Rebbe* owed him money, and was shocked when the *Rebbe* verified it as true. "As Divine Providence has led you two to meet, I can

reveal to you that that stranger is one of the thirty-six hidden *Tzaddikim* in every generation in whose merit the world exists,” he explained, adding that he had taken it upon himself to uphold him financially.

An involuntary shiver passed through the *Chassid's* body. A hidden *Tzaddik* had traveled in his carriage – and he hadn't known! He had even mistaken him for an impudent clod...

Noting his distress, the *Rebbe* eased his mind. “Don't worry, you've done nothing wrong,” he reassured him. “If you were chosen to share in the *mitzva* of supporting a hidden *Tzaddik*, there is no doubt that it is a good sign.”

From that day on, each year during his annual visit the *Chassid* gave the *Rebbe* twenty gold coins for the hidden *Tzaddik*. And for the rest of his life he hoped to meet the stranger again. But it never happened.

Source: Supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition on [//lchaimweekly.org](http://lchaimweekly.org) (#668), with permission.



Chassidic Story # 272

(s5763-16/ 27th of *Teves*)

Master of the Universe: Enough Already!

There was a servant in the house of the *Tzaddik*, Rav Mordechai (“Mottel”) of Chernobyl, who used to stoke the fire in the winter stove. He was afflicted with severe psoriasis, and was covered from head to toe with painful boils and other skin eruptions. It seemed like he was always bleeding, whether from the disease itself or from being unable to refrain from scratching at the relentless itching.

Whenever the *Rebbe* saw him, he never said a word to him, even though he undoubtedly noticed the young man's terrible suffering. His household and his *Chassidim* were astonished, for the *Rebbe's* tremendous empathy for Jews in pain of

any form was well known.

One day, upon rising early in the morning, the Chernobyler came upon the servant crying and groaning in pain, furiously scratching at his head and other parts of his body, with blood oozing down from all over. The *Tzaddik* lifted his eyes and said, “Master of the Universe: let it be enough already!”

That same day, the servant suddenly died.

Now the *Rebbe's* household and the *Chassidim* were even more amazed. Realizing that the turn of events was certainly out of the ordinary, they pleaded with the *Rebbe* for an explanation. Finally, he told them the following story:

His father, the famous *Tzaddik*, Rav Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, was desperately poor; the family was always teetering on the brink of starvation. There was, however, a certain rich person in the town who loved the *Tzaddik* very much, and he used to provide the *Rebbe* with nearly all his household needs.

It came to pass that when this rich man realized how dear he was to the *Rebbe*, it went to his head and he proposed to Rav Nachum that the *Tzaddik's* son marry his daughter. Of course, he would pay all the expenses of both sides as well as provide a handsome dowry, he confidently told the Chernobyler.

The *Rebbe* turned him down.

The man continued to argue and plead his case, but the *Rebbe* was steadfast in his refusal. As a result, the man transformed from the *Tzaddik's* biggest supporter into his fiercest enemy. Not only did he cease his financial aid, he actively sought to aggravate him, and was constantly inventing new plots to make the Chernobyler's life even more difficult.

One time, he somehow found out that Rav Nachum's married daughter was due to go to the *mikve* that night. His antagonism had so festered in him that he

actually decided to hire some ruffians to pursue her through the streets on her way home afterward. They did so in a brutish, obnoxious manner, and she was forced to flee with all her might through narrow side streets and filthy back alleys. Finally she reached the haven of her home, exhausted and upset. She crossed the threshold, collapsed on the floor, and fainted.

As you can imagine, this caused a great commotion in the *Rebbe's* home. It was only after immense effort that the household was able to bring her back to herself. When Rav Nachum found out that his daughter's suffering was a result of the rich man's evil plan, he was enraged.

Shortly thereafter, the rich man died.

When his case came before the Heavenly Court, the judges were about to issue a harsh judgment against him because of his aggression toward a great *Tzaddik* and the suffering he had caused him. But then a defending angel arose and pointed out the rich man's large number of good deeds, his accomplishments in *Torah* study, and how he had even generously supported the *Rebbe* and his household for many years.

Other heavenly beings joined in, in favor and against. Finally, it was decreed that he would be given the chance to appease Rav Nachum. If he succeeded, he would be granted the rewards for the many good deeds he had accomplished in his lifetime.

He was assigned two angels who would escort him to Rav Nachum and who would subsequently bring him back to the Heavenly Court.

The rich man's soul came to the Chernobyler and begged forgiveness for all

the pain and aggravation he had caused him while still alive in this world. The *Rebbe* told him to enumerate one by one each of the offenses he had committed. At each one the *Tzaddik* responded, "I forgive him with all my heart."

Finally, they reached the episode with Rav Nachum's daughter. "NO!" cried out the *Rebbe*. "This I may not forgive. This was a crime against my holy ancestors and against Heaven; not just against my daughter and me."

Immediately, the escorting angels took him and returned to the Heavenly Court, where a second decree was issued. He would be reincarnated, and in his next lifetime would suffer from terrible physical afflictions.

After the Chernobyler passed away and his son, Rav Mordechai, succeeded him, Rav Nachum appeared to his son in a dream and asked him to take the youth with the skin diseases into his house. The second Chernobyler *Rebbe* did so. When he saw how much the man was suffering, he refrained from offering to help, because he knew it was an atonement for the sins of the man's previous life. Finally, however, Rav Mordechai could no longer hold back. He forgave the man for the abuse of his family, and the soul's spiritual rectification was completed. Then the man's soul returned to heaven.

[Translated and freely adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles (and first published in *Kfar Chabad Magazine* – English) from *Nifle'os HaTzaddikim*, p. 23–24. You may distribute this e-mail as long as full attribution is given, including Ascent's e-mail and internet addresses.]

www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=272-18



Rav Binyomin ben Rav Menachem Mendel Mendelsohn, 24th of Iyar

Rav of Komemiyus

Poor Seed

5711, the second year of Moshav

Komemiyus, was a *Shemitta* year.

My name is Dov Weiss and I was part

of the group of about thirty religious young men who started the agricultural settlement *Moshav Komemiyus*, in the south of *Eretz Yisrael*. It was in 1950, after we had completed our army service. I was still a bachelor then. Among the founders was also the well-known *Torah* scholar and rabbinical authority, Rav Binyomin Mendelsohn, of blessed memory. He had previously immigrated to *Eretz Yisrael* from Poland and had served as the *Rav* of Kfar Ata.

At first we lived in tents, in the middle of a barren wilderness. The nearest settlements to ours were a group of several *kibbutzim* associated with the left-wing *Shomer HaTzair* movement: Gat, Gilon and Negva. Several of our members supported themselves by working at Kibbutz Gat, the closest to us, doing different types of manual labor. Others worked in agriculture, planting wheat, barley, rye and other grains and legumes. I myself drove a tractor. Our produce, which grew throughout the fifteen thousand or so dunam [nearly four thousand acres] allotted us, we sold to bakeries and factories.

At that time, there were not yet water pipes reaching our *moshav*. We had to content ourselves with what could be grown in dry, rugged fields. Every few days we would make a trip to Kibbutz Negva, about twenty kilometers distant, to fill large containers with drinking water.

The second year we were there, 5711 on the Jewish calendar (fall 1950–summer 1951) was the *Shemitta* year which comes every seventh year, in which the *Torah* commands to desist from all agricultural work (see *Vayikra* 25:1–7). We were among the very few settlements in *Eretz Yisrael* at the time to observe the laws of the Sabbatical year and refrain from working the land. Instead, we concentrated on building, and succeeded that year in completing much of the permanent housing. The *moshav* gradually developed

and expanded, and more and more families moved in, as well as a number of young singles. By the end of the year we already numbered around eighty people.

As the *Shemitta* year drew to its completion, we prepared to renew our farming activities. For this we required seed to sow crops, but for this purpose we could only use wheat from the sixth year, the year that preceded *Shemitta*, for the produce of the seventh year is forbidden for this type of use. We went around to all the agricultural settlements in the area, near and far, seeking good quality seed from the previous year's harvest, but no one could fulfill our request.

All we were able to find was some old wormy seed that, for reasons that were never made clear to us, was laying around in a storage shed in Kibbutz Gat. No farmer in his right mind anywhere in the world would consider using such poor quality seed to plant with, not if he expected to see any crops from it. The *kibbutzniks* at Gat all burst into loud, derisive laughter when we revealed that we were actually interested in this infested grain that had been rotting away for a few years in some dark, murky corner.

“If you really want it, you can take all that you like, and for free, with our compliments,” they offered in amusement.

We consulted with Rav Mendelsohn. His response was, “Take it. The One who tells wheat to sprout from good seed can also order it to grow from inferior, wormy, leftover seed as well.”

In any case, we had no alternative. So we loaded on a tractor all the old, infested seed that the kibbutz had offered to us free of charge and returned to Komemiyus.

The laws of *Shemitta* forbade us to plough and turn over the soil until after *Rosh HaShana*, the beginning of the eighth year, so we did not actually get to sow the seed until the next month, *Marcheshvan*. This was two or three months after all the other farmers had already completed their

planting.

That year, the rains were late in coming. The farmers from all the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* gazed upward longingly for the first rain. They began to feel desperate, but the heavens were unresponsive, remaining breathlessly still and blue.

Finally it rained. When? The day after we completed planting our thousand dunam of wheat fields with those wormy seeds, the sky opened up and the rains exploded down to saturate the parched earth.

The following days we were nervous in anticipation, but we turned our attention to strengthening our faith and trust in *Hashem*. Anyway, it did not take a long time for the hand of *Hashem* to be revealed clearly to all. Those wheat fields that were planted during *Shemitta*, months before the first rain, sprouted only small, weak crops. At the same time, our fields, sowed with the old, infested seed and long after the appropriate season, were covered with an unusually large and healthy yield of wheat, in comparison to any standard.

The story of the “miracle at Komemiyus” spread quickly. Farmers from all the agricultural settlements in the South came to see with their own eyes what they could not believe when they heard the rumors about it.

When the farmers from Kibbutz Gat arrived, they pulled a surprise on us. After looking in open-mouthed astonishment at the impressive, bountiful quantity of wheat flourishing in our fields, grown from the infested seeds they had provided us, they decided to renege on their generosity. They announced they wanted payment for the tractor load of old, rotten wheat they had scornfully given us for free only a short

time before.

Even more startling, they said they would file a claim against us in *Bais Din*, the rabbinical court, and with Rav Mendelsohn himself, no less! Probably they figured that in a secular court such a claim wouldn't have the slightest possible chance of gaining them even a single penny.

Rav Mendelsohn accepted their case seriously, and in the end judged that we should pay them. He explained that the reason they gave it for free was because they thought it worthless for planting, while in truth it really was excellent for that purpose. We were astonished to hear his ruling, but needless to say, we complied.

The whole story became an extraordinary *Kiddush Hashem*, a glorification of *Hashem*, in the eyes of people throughout the country. Everyone agreed it was a clear fulfillment of *Hashem's* promise in the *Torah*:

“And if you shall say, ‘What will we eat in the seventh year? Behold we may not plant, nor harvest our produce!’ I will command My blessing to you....” (*Vayikra* 25:20-21).

[Translated and freely adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from Sichat HaShavua #721.]

Translator's note:

If you are in *Eretz Yisrael* in the months before *Pesach*, an expedition to the Komemiyus *matza* bakery is worthwhile, even if only to see, and the quality of their hand-made *shmura matza* is famous worldwide.

Yerachmiel Tilles is co-founder and associate director of *Ascent-of-Safed*, and editor of *Ascent Quarterly* and the *AscentOfSafed.com* and *KabbalaOnline.org* websites. He has hundreds of published stories to his credit.

www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=168-15



Rav Yaakov Ben Yaakov Moshe Loeberbaum, 25th of Iyar

Rav of Lisa, Mechaber of Chavas Da'as and Nesivos HaMishpot on Shulchon Aruch,

Siddur Derech HaChaim and Haggoda Ma'asei Nissim

“Be cautious in judgment” (Avos 1:1).

Rav Ovadia Yosef used to illustrate our *Mishna* with the following story about Rav Yaakov of Lisa, *mechaber* of *Nesivos HaMishpot*:

There once came before Rav Yaakov Loeberbaum of Lisa two litigants arguing over a golden *dinar*. “Rav, I was walking in the *shuk* and I found a golden *dinar* on the floor and picked it up,” said one.

“It’s mine! It had just fallen out of my pocket!” interrupted the other. “It’s mine, since I never gave up hope of recovering it!”

Something about the oily, greasy manner of the second litigant and the way he acted and his tone gave it away that he was surely a thief and a scoundrel. Rav Yaakov didn’t believe him; his intuition was that he was dishonest.

In order to judge the case properly and arrive at the truth, he sent out the second litigant and called the finder of the gold coin closer to him. Rav Yaakov took the coin and called out in a voice so loud that anyone outside listening could surely

hear, “See here, see this notch on the coin, it’s like a scratch just below the first letter of the coin. It’s a true *siman* (*Gittin* 27b) and if anyone were to use that *siman* as proof, this coin would surely be given back to him.” Rav Yaakov then called back the second litigant who had been eavesdropping the entire time.

Rav Yaakov turned toward him and asked, “Can you offer any *siman* as proof that this *dinar* is yours?”

“Yes, *Rav!*” he answered happily. “Just look at the notch below the first letter. That scratch is as good a *siman* as any that this is my coin!” he concluded with a satisfied smirk that quickly became a frown as the *Rav* retorted, “Well, I guess this isn’t your coin, then!” The *Rav* opened his hand and showed the coin to the ashamed would-be thief, his head now bowed in defeat. “Because this coin is clean as a whistle – no scratches on it at all! I guess you should go and look for your lost coin that you dropped, because this coin belongs to the one who found it!” (*Anaf Etz Avos* p. 4)



Rav Chaim Ben Menachem Mendel of Kosov, 25th of Iyar

Mechaber of Toras Chaim and Father of the First Vizhnitzer Rebbe

The *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz told the following stories about his illustrious forebear, the *Toras Chaim* of Kosov:

I Would Recognize Eliyohu HaNovi

The *Toras Chaim* once said about the *zemer Eliyohu HaNovi* recited as part of the *Motzo’ei Shabbos Melava Malka zemiros*, “We sing *ashrei mi shero’a ponov bachalom* – happy is he who saw Eliyohu HaNovi’s face in a dream – but who knows what Eliyohu HaNovi looks like? If no one knows what he looks like, how would he be able to recognize him in a dream? I, however, concluded the *Toras Chaim*, would be able to recognize him if I saw him

in a dream because I once saw him when I was awake, with my father the *Ahavas Sholom*, and this is how it happened:

“When I was a young child,” told the *Toras Chaim*, “I often used to sleep in my father’s bed. One night, I was awakened from my sleep to the sound of a conversation taking place between my father and someone else in the room. I looked up and was amazed to see an elderly man with a shining countenance sitting on my father’s chair and my father sat at his side. I was upset by this – who dared take my father’s seat at the head of the table? My father said to the guest: ‘Eliyohu, here

in bed lies my Chaim'nyu – I would like you to give him a *berocha*!

“When I heard that this was none other than Eliyohu *HaNovi*, I was seized with fear and trembling and hid beneath the covers. Eliyohu *HaNovi* reached in below the covers, placed his holy hands on my head and gave me a *berocha*. I took a peek from underneath the covers and saw his holy face!”

“And so therefore I tell you,” concluded the *Toras Chaim*, “that if I saw him in a dream, I could recognize him because I saw him when I was awake!” (*Sarfei Kodesh* 429–430)



The Apta Rav's Approval

There was once a dispute between Rav Yitzchok of Radvil and the *Ahavas Sholom* of Kosov regarding one of the *shochtim* in Nadworna. When the *Kosov Chassidim* heard that the Apta Rav seemed to side with the Radviller, they decided to get the Apter to meet with their *Rebbe*, the *Ahavas Sholom*, instead.

One day, they heard that the Apta Rav was on his way to meet Rav Yitzchok of Radvil and they set out to put their plan into action. It was well known that when the Apta Rav traveled he used no passport to cross borders; instead, he always carried a *mezuzah* with him and showed this at the crossing to the gentile guards, who would examine his pass and then wave him on.

This time, however, there was a problem. When the Apta Rav presented his *mezuzah*-passport, the border guards arrested him and took him for questioning to Kosov. This was because the border guards were none other than the *Ahavas Sholom's Chassidim*, disguised as border guards manning an imaginary border crossing.

In Kosov, a lavish welcome had been prepared at the *Ahavas Sholom's* home to welcome the guest from Apt. When the

Apta Rav realized that he had been fooled, he was very angry and upset. He took two cups of *mashke* and asked the *Chassidim* who were dressed as guards to drink them. The *Toras Chaim*, the *Ahavas Sholom's* son, realized that if the *Chassidim* drank the cups of wine, the Apta Rav would send them away from this world as a punishment.

“Don't drink the wine!” he warned them, and he blocked the *Chassidim* and covered the cups, preventing them from drinking.

“Who is this young man who thinks he can interfere in matters not his own?” asked the Apta Rav.

“Chaim'nyu!” chastised the *Ahavas Sholom*, “stand up so the *Rebbe* can see you properly!”

When the Apta Rav's gaze fell on the *Toras Chaim*, he was greatly impressed and he left the matter as settled. (*Sarfei Kodesh* 429–431)



The Cossack Has Plenty of Money

The *Ahavas Sholom* had a *Chassid* who was an innkeeper. His small inn and tavern were leased from the local Polish nobleman and after the Jew had paid the *poritz*, his *parnossa* was meager indeed. He was always late on his payments and was always coming to the *Kosover Rebbe* and asking for help. The *Ahavas Sholom* would, on these occasions, open his desk drawer and hand the *Chassid* whatever money he needed to pay off his debts. When the *Ahavas Sholom* passed on, and his son the *Toras Chaim* took over as *Rebbe*, the *Chassid* continued to come and visit the new *Kosover*, yet now, when he described his financial woes and his need for funds, the *Toras Chaim* did not give him any money, only a *berocha*.

“*Rebbe*, what will I do with your *berocha*?” said the bewildered *Chassid*. “I need cash now! Your father used to give me

the money I needed, not just a *berocha*!" said the exasperated *Chassid*.

"My father," replied the *Toras Chaim*, "had a special *berocha* from *Shomayim* that his desk and his drawers should always help the needy and never lack funds. He could always open his desk drawer and find whatever he needed. I have not inherited this *berocha* and thus cannot do so, but don't worry, the Cossack has plenty of money to spare – much more than I – and he will give you!"

And on that enigmatic note the *Rebbe* bid his *Chassid* farewell.

The *Chassid* did not understand the *Rebbe's* strange references to imaginary Cossacks. He only understood too well that without the money he needed to pay the *poritz*, he was now in serious trouble. He went home sad and distressed. When his wife asked if the *Rebbe* had given him the money, the *Chassid* answered bitterly, "He is no *Rebbe*."

He went sadly to sleep and was awakened suddenly in the middle of the night to the sound of loud knocking and banging on his front door. When he opened it, he saw standing before him a stranger, a tall Cossack who immediately told him, "I am in a rush to join the war and I had to leave in haste. I have no one trustworthy to guard my money until I return...if I ever come back, that is. When I asked around these parts for someone I could trust with my life they all said that you were the most trustworthy person. Here, take this money," and he handed the bewildered Jew thousands of gold coins. "Safeguard it for me until I come back. If I ever come back, give it to me!" So saying, he left into the night without another word.

The Jew hid the money and the next day set out for Kosov. When he told the *Rebbe* the strange tale, the *Rebbe* smiled and said, "There is no longer any Cossack, and no longer any war. He is never coming back – the money is yours!"

Needless to say, the *Chassid's* faith in his *Rebbe* was restored and he had plenty to pay the *poritz*. (*Sarfei Kodesh* 433-434)



The Kohen Godol Who Atones for You

The *Toras Chaim* was one of a kind when it came to hiding his true nature and concealing his greatness.

He would often dress very simply in a *shpentzer*, a short leather coat worn by peasants, tied with a coarse rope as a belt! He also had a large bird coop full of chickens, geese and ducks, and would often be seen feeding them or checking that others were handling them and feeding them on time. Needless to say, such simple behavior did not appear very *Rebbish* or refined and caused some to wonder.

There once arrived a *Chassid* who found the *Toras Chaim* dressed as described, standing, ordering the farm hands to feed the hens and geese and acting in a very non-*Rebbish* manner. Seeing the *Chassid's* obvious astonishment and dismay, the *Toras Chaim* told him a story:

"Many years ago, when the *Bais HaMikdosh* stood, there was an elderly Jew who lived far from Yerushalayim and had never yet been there and thus had never seen the *Bais HaMikdosh*. He once inadvertently sinned and this accident caused him to be liable to bring a *Korban Chatos*. And so this elderly Jew set off to offer his sin offering, not knowing the way to Yerushalayim.

"As he traveled, he had no choice but to ask for directions. All the passersby and travelers laughed and wondered, 'How can such an old Jew not know the way to Yerushalayim, to the *Bais HaMikdosh*? Haven't you ever been there, and why are you going now?!"

"He had no choice but to explain his

reason for travel by admitting his sin and suffering their stares and jeers.

“When he finally arrived, he experienced the same torment again and again. First, when he was laughed at, gawked at and jeered at for his lack of knowledge as to where to purchase an animal for a *korban*, then by others when he asked for directions to Har HaBayis. ‘An elderly man such as yourself still sins? What, don’t you know where they sell *Korbonos*? Didn’t you realize you need to buy two – one for a *Chatos* and one for a *Shelomim*? Don’t you know the way to Har HaBayis? What do you mean you were never there before?’ And so on...

“Finally, after the long journey, suffering the distance, time, effort, money, jeers and insults of folk who could not believe his ignorance, the elderly Jew reached the *Bais HaMikdosh* and approached the *Kohen Godol* who was busy and in the middle of the *Avoda*. Our elderly Jew looked up and gazed at the *Kohen* and saw a man dressed in short pants standing barefoot, with bloodstains covering his clothes and body. The elder stood bemused and wondered to himself, ‘For this barefooted butcher did I have to travel and suffer such a long, arduous journey full of insults?!’

“However,” concluded the *Toras Chaim* to the *Chassid*, “*Davka* through the *Kohen* did he achieve his atonement!” The *Chassid* got the hint. (*Sarfei Kodesh* p. 435)



Grabbing and Saving Neshomos

On the *Toras Chaim's Yahrzeit*, the *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz once remarked, “*Chai* (18th) *Iyar* is *Lag BaOmer*, the *Yahrzeit/Hillula* of Rav Shimon bar Yochai. On one side of that calendar date, a week before, is the *Yahrzeit* of my *Zeide*, the *heilige* Ropshitzer (11th of *Iyar*) and on the other side is the *Yahrzeit* of my *Zeide*,

the *Toras Chaim* (25th of *Iyar*) – they all grab *neshomos* and pull them out of Gehinnom! (*Sarfei Kodesh* p. 451)



The Thief

There was once a *Purim shpiel* where the *Chassidim* dressed up and played on *Purim* before the *Rebbe*. The play that they were enacting included as one of the star performers the part of a *ganev* – a thief. When this character was introduced, the *Rebbe*, the *Toras Chaim*, stood up, pointed at the actor and yelled out, “A thief must be imprisoned at once!” The *Chassidim*, seeing the serious look on their *Rebbe's* face and realizing it was *Purim*, assumed that this was “all part of the show” and they merrily escorted the *ganev* into a room and locked him up. The *Toras Chaim* held on to the key and so the play continued without the *ganev* acting his role. When the play ended they heard banging and yelling from the locked room. “Help, Help, let me out! Let me out already!”

The *Chassidim* turned to the *Toras Chaim* but the *Rebbe* refused to open the door and held firmly onto the key. This strange scene continued for some time until there came running and panting a resident of a neighboring village. “Help me!” he cried, “Someone came and stayed at our home and this ‘guest’ stole all our valuables and jewelry!” So saying he described none other than the actor, the “*ganev*”. Sure enough, the *Rebbe*, the *Toras Chaim*, pulled out the keys and handed them over to the *Chassidim*, who unmasked the actor and discovered that he really was a thief! The Jew recognized him and the *ganev* was forced to return all the stolen valuables to their rightful owner.



The Tailor's Niggun

The *Toras Chaim* had the custom to

eat the third *Shabbos* meal alone. His son, the future *Tzemach Tzaddik*, and founder of the Vizhnitzer dynasty, was very eager to be present and so he hid himself in the room to observe the *Sholosh Seudos* meal.

The *Toras Chaim* sensed his son's presence and caught him hiding. When he emerged, the *Toras Chaim* took the *Tzemach Tzaddik* by the hands and began to sway with him to and fro, gently leading him toward the door. Once at the entrance, they stopped, and the *Toras Chaim* said to him the following cryptic remark: "In Broide there sits a tailor with eleven children, in a house that is warmed and light. The table is covered with a white cloth and on the table sits a bowl of hot soup. As the steam rises in eddies of vapor

toward the heavens, the tailor sits with his hat askew and sings this song..." and so the *Toras Chaim* sang the opening bars to the famous introduction to *Kol Mekadesh* as sung by Vizhnitzer *Chassidim* till this day with some slight changes. Afterward, the *Toras Chaim* finished the *niggun* and he said to the *Tzemach Tzaddik*, "But you, my son, will not sing as the tailor sings; you will sing it as so..." And he sang the *niggun* exactly as it is sung today. From then on the *Tzemach Tzaddik* adopted this *niggun* for *Kol Mekadesh*. The *Imrei Chaim* used to say, "We do not know who the tailor from Broide is, and I doubt that my great-grandfather knew either. Perhaps he was one of the *Lamed Vav* – the thirty-six hidden *Tzaddikim* in each generation."



Rav Shlomo Ben Mordechai Goldman of Zhvill, 26th of Iyar

The *Rebbe's kevod habriyos* – his compassion and caring for his fellow Jews – was on such a level that it astonished others. Here is a well-known anecdote:

The Erev Yom Kippur Ganav's Feelings

It was *Erev Yom Kippur* in Zhvill. The *Rebbe* had four *gabbo'im* sitting outside, simultaneously writings *kvittlach* and refereeing the throngs queued outside the *Rebbe's* door, the multitude of *Chassidim* and non-*Chassidim*, all the Jews of Zhvill, waiting patiently for the opportunity to receive the *Rebbe's berocha Erev Yom HaKodosh!* Just then, the door to the *Rebbe's* inner sanctum opened and he quickly departed for his short visit to the old *Bais HaChaim*, where his forebears, Rav Moshele and Rav Michele, were buried, to *daven* in their *zechus* for a *kappora* for Am Yisrael. When the *Rebbe* returned, the audiences and *berochos* continued well into the *seuda* itself.

At some point, when there was a lull in the tides of people and the tense rush quieted down and finally the house was empty, the *Rebbe* and his son went back toward the *Rebbe's* room – but the holy aura of the approaching *Yom Kippur* was broken by the sounds of someone searching around in the *Rebbe's* desk drawers in his room! A *ganav* – a thief! On *Erev Yom Kippur*, in the *Rebbe's* room, obviously tempted by the large sums from the *pidyonos* of the *Chassidim!*

The *Rebbe's* son felt an arm on his shoulder restraining him. The *Rebbe* shrank back against the wall and allowed the thief who, panic-stricken at his discovery, fled. The entire time, rather than to confront the brazen thief, the *Rebbe* did his best to ease the *ganav's* discomfort and shame. He pretended not to notice and avoided him, averting his gaze. Such was the *Rebbe's* compassion toward the *ganav* stealing from him on *Erev Yom Kippur*. (*Tzaddik Yesod Olom* p. 193–194)



Rav Sa'adia Gaon, 26th of Iyar

From *Returnity*: Rav Chaim of Czernowitz in his *Sidduro Shel Shabbos* tells us this story:

Teshuva — Every Day

Once, one of Rav Sa'adia Gaon's *talmidim* visited him unexpectedly in the night. To his bewilderment and fear, he found his *Rebbe* rolling around in the freezing ice and snow.

“*Rebbe!*” the *talmid* exclaimed. “Surely this is not necessary! Are your sins so great that you must resort to such excruciatingly painful forms of self-affliction? If a great *Rav* such as yourself, who always safeguards himself from any blemish, even from sinful thoughts, afflicts himself like this, what can we say about ourselves? We who are full of sin from the days of our youth — why, afflictions worse than death would be too good for the likes of us!”

“My son,” Rav Sa'adia Gaon replied, “you should know that I have never done this before, because I knew that I never committed a transgression that would require this of me. But recently I traveled to a certain town and found lodgings at the local inn, which was owned by a Jewish innkeeper. The innkeeper didn't recognize me — he didn't even know that I was a learned man who knew much *Torah* — and he treated me like any other guest.

“Then the news spread that I, Rav Sa'adia Gaon, had come to town. Men, women and children gathered to show their respects as befits a great *Rav* and *Torah* scholar. When the innkeeper saw that the local townspeople had come to honor me, he, too, began to show me his respect and served me with great honor at every opportunity.

“When I was ready to depart, the entire community gathered to escort me, and this innkeeper fell before my feet,

prostrating himself on the ground and pleading with me to forgive his earlier behavior, his slight on my honor and on the honor of the *Torah*. I told him that surely he had honored me to the best of his abilities. But he persisted and begged forgiveness for the way he had treated me at first. ‘Please,’ he cried, ‘I did not know then of the greatness of my master and teacher! I did not honor you properly as befits someone of your stature. I treated you as a commoner, and for this I beg your forgiveness. Please, *Rav*, forgive your servant for his neglect. I did not yet realize your greatness!’

“These words,” said Rav Sa'adia Gaon, “penetrated the depths of my heart. This innkeeper fell to his knees, begging forgiveness at my feet for his past misdeeds, for the sake of the honor of a mere mortal.

“All the more so when it comes to serving the Creator! I know all too well that my understanding and appreciation of His greatness and majesty grow daily, commensurate with my *avoda* and my love and fear of Him. Therefore, I am begging Him for forgiveness for my past misdeeds. I am afflicting myself in this way that He forgive my lack of service, and the deficiency of my love and fear of Him in the past. For it distresses me greatly — how could I not have served *Hashem* properly in the past, in light of my appreciation of His greatness and awe today?

“Not only am I repenting my past misdeeds, but I recognize *Hashem's* greatness more and more each day as my divine service grows. So I repent my past and do *teshuva* daily over yesterday's mistakes and my lack in showing proper honor and glory toward *Hashem* based on what I know today.”

Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato, 26th of Iyar

The Ramchal, Mechaber of Mesilas Yeshorim

After seeing the *Mesilas Yeshorim*, the Vilna *Gaon* said that if the *Ramchal* were still alive he would travel across Europe by foot to learn from his wisdom. Unfortunately, the *Ramchal*, who lived a short life, filled with persecution and suspicion, was *niftar* when the Vilna *Gaon* was just seventeen and the two never met. About *Mesilas Yeshorim*, he said, “This book is witness to the greatness of its author, and his extraordinary vision of the human potential for elevation...”



His Life

There are certain lives that are inherently captivating, and Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato's was certainly that. Born in Padua, Ital in 1707 to wealthy parents, he took to literature and *Torah* studies early on. In fact, that early interest in literature served his writing style well throughout his life, and his *Torah* studies formed the basis of his literary output.

He obviously mastered all of *Tanach*, *Talmud* and all sorts of rabbinical commentaries and *halachic* codes, as one can see by his profuse and authoritative quotations from traditional sources throughout his writings. And he also acquired a profound command of *Kabbola* since he was known to have memorized all the writings of the *Ari* when he was fourteen.

Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato was a *talmid* of one of the greatest *Rabbonim* and *Mekubolim* in Italy at the time, Rav Yeshaya Bassan, from early on to age fifteen, when Rav Bassan left Padua to fill his father-in-law's rabbinical position. Rav Bassan's father-in-law was the great *Mekubol* Rav Binyomin HaKohen, who was himself a *talmid* of the famous *Mekubol*, Rav Moshe Zacuto. So *Ramchal's* teachings clearly followed the path of a well-known

kabbalistic tradition. *Ramchal* himself some profound meetings with Rav HaKohen at the end of the latter's life in which he discussed his own kabbalistic insights. We will cite one of *Ramchal's* revealing letters to the elder *Mekubol* shortly.

At age seventeen, *Ramchal* joined a small, clandestine group of pietists known as *Mevakshei Hashem* (“Seekers of Hashem”). Among the things they demanded of their members, aside from devout and altruistic allegiance to *Torah* study and *mitzva* observance, was that each member commit himself to a set and inviolable study schedule that was solely dedicated to the well-being of the Jewish Nation and to *Tikkun HaShechina* (the rectification of the Divine Presence in the world). The entire group especially concentrated on an around-the-clock study of the *Zohar*, with each member taking his turn, and the next in line starting his course of study some fifteen minutes before the previous member ended his (as the one following him started *his* study session fifteen minutes beforehand) to ensure a smooth flow of study. *Ramchal* received *semicha* (formal ordination) at age nineteen, while yet a member of *Mevakshei Hashem*.

The phenomenon that most especially defined his life was the series of occasions that a *Maggid* (a Heavenly Agent) appeared to him and provided him with direct instruction, starting at age twenty. While the experience itself was personally uplifting and enlightening, and allowed *Ramchal* the sort of profound insights that affected his works (and even provided the very wording in several instances), it also led to the great and terrible polemic that plagued him for years and nearly closed off his works from us.

We will now quote from the remarks

of a *talmid* of *Ramchal*, Rav Yekusiel Gordon, made in a letter about some of these appearances to a leading Italian *Rav*, when the *Ramchal* was twenty-two:

“There is a young man here, tender in years, (who) is a holy man: my master and teacher...Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto. For these past two and a half years a *Maggid* has appeared to him...who reveals wondrous mysteries to him... With the approval of the Holy One, blessed be He and His *Shechina*, the *Maggid* ordered him to compose a Book of the *Zohar*, called in Heaven ‘The Second *Zohar*’...

“This is what happens (when the *Maggid*, referred to here as “the angel”, appears): The angel speaks out of *Ramchal*’s mouth but we, his *talmidim*, hear nothing. The angel begins to uncover great mysteries to him. Then my master orders Eliyohu to come to him, and he comes to uncover mysteries of his own. Sometimes, Metatron, the great prince, also comes to him, as well as the Faithful Shepherd (Moshe), our forefather Avrohom, Rav Hamnuna the Elder,...the *Moshiach*, and Odom...

“To sum up, nothing is hidden from him. At first, permission was only granted (from Heaven) to reveal to him the mysteries of the *Torah*, but now all sorts of things are revealed to him. But no one outside our circle knows of it... As he has demonstrated to all, no one before him has had this kind of merit since the time of Rav Shimon *bar* Yochai (the *mechaber* of the *Zohar*).”

Ramchal himself spoke of the revelations, among other things about himself, in one of his letters to Rav Binyomin HaKohen, whom we cited above.

“*Hashem*, who is righteous and who searches all hearts, is my witness in Heaven and my testimony on high as to why I have kept (my revelations) secret from your honor... But now that the matter is public knowledge... I am very pleased to hear that you know of it... (and) I am especially glad

to know that your honor, in his goodness and integrity, accepts it as true and reliable... “G-d-fearing people come to me every day to hear the new things that *Hashem* tells me. Many young men who had once walked in the vain ways of young people have now, thank *Hashem*...returned to *Hashem*, and come to me to receive *Tikkunim* (rectifications) for their (past) deeds.

“At this time *Hashem*...wished to reveal a new light (to the world) in the category of the *Zohar*... He chose me for this in His mercy. If you were to ask me about the kind of preparations (I engage in to deserve this), what could I say? The truth is that it has come about through *Hashem*’s love alone and has little to do with my preparations for it. Nonetheless, it is also true that I have been zealous for years about reciting *Yichudim* (mystical recitations of particular Divine Names). I perform a different *Yichud* practically every fifteen minutes, and I do this even now, thank *Hashem*... And the Creator now uses me as the instrument for the fulfillment of His purpose.”

He then went into further detail as follows:

“On the first of *Sivan* in the year 5487 (1727), as I was reciting a certain *Yichud*, I fell into a trance. When I awoke, I heard a voice saying, ‘I have descended in order to reveal the hidden secrets of the Holy King.’ For a while I stood there trembling, but I soon took hold of myself. The voice kept on speaking and revealed a particular secret to me.

“At the same time on the second day I made sure to be alone in the room, and the voice reappeared to reveal another secret to me. One day he revealed to me that he was a *Maggid* sent from Heaven and he gave me certain *Yichuddim* that I was to recite in order for him to appear again.

“I never saw him but I did hear his voice as it spoke through my own mouth.

He then allowed me to ask him questions. After about three months he revealed to me the *Yichuddim* I would have to recite to be worthy of having Eliyohu reveal himself to me. He then charged me to compose a work on *Koheles* on the basis of the mystical meaning of its *pesukim* that he had revealed to me, and Eliyohu came and imparted his own secrets to me. (The *Maggid*) said that Metatron, the great prince, would be coming to me and that I would know that it is he because of what Eliyohu had said. From then on I came to recognize each of my visitors. Souls whose identity I know are also revealed to me. Each day I write down the new ideas each of them imparts to me. All these things happen while I lie prostrate, with my face to the ground, and I see the holy souls in human form as in a dream.”

Word of these revelations came to the *Rabbonim* of the time, and while many of them were effulgent in their praise of the young *Mekubol*, some others (of great prominence) were flabbergasted by the idea of so young a person being privy to such revelations, and they did all they could to stifle him.

As dumbfounding as the thought of denying *Ramchal's* brilliance and the level of his revelations appear to us now, it was rooted in something quite rational. For only some hundred years previously, the false Messiah, Shabbesai Tzvi (d.1676) had wreaked havoc throughout the Jewish world, and nearly undid the foundations of *Yiddishkeit*, G-d forbid. The entire Jewish community was still reeling from the experience in *Ramchal's* time and beyond. The whole matter is a subject unto itself, but suffice it to say that the leaders of *Ramchal's* generation were rightly leery about a new false Messiah and any more subsequent threats to our people.

Some rather unkind things were said about *Ramchal*, though his defenders did laud his trustworthiness as well as his piety. A great deal of *Ramchal's*

correspondences from that time and later have survived, and it is thus evident that despite and throughout it all, he defended his experiences stoutly while maintaining his lofty perch. In any event, threatened with excommunication, *Ramchal* swore not to transmit the *Maggid's* revelations or teach *Kabbola*.

He left Italy for Amsterdam in 1735, and while passing through Germany he appealed to the rabbinical authorities there to advocate for him to the Italian *Rabbonim*. They refused and instead forced him to sign a statement denouncing his own experiences. Most of his writings were burned, though some did survive.

He was able to pursue his studies of *Kabbola* relatively unhindered while in Amsterdam, and was accepted as a great man there. Earning a living as a diamond cutter, he continued writing but refused to teach. It was in this period that he wrote his magnum opus, *Mesilas Yeshorim* (Path of the Just), as well as *Derech Hashem* (the Way of Hashem), *Da'as Tevunos* (Knowing the Reasons) and more.

A major rabbinic near-contemporary, who praised *Ramchal's* writing was Rav Eliyohu of Vilna, the Vilna *Gaon* (1720-1797), the most authoritative *Torah* sage of the time who was also a great *Mekubol*. He is reported to have said after reading *Mesilas Yeshorim*, that were *Ramchal* still alive, he (the *Gaon*) would have walked from Vilna to learn at his feet. The holy *Maggid* of Mezritch (Dov Ber, the successor to the *Ba'al Shem Tov*) also praised the “*Chassid* of Padua” and his works to the *Chassidim*. And to this day, *Ramchal* is praised from all corners of the Jewish world as a great mystic, moralist, teacher, *Tzaddik* and writer.

He left Amsterdam for *Eretz Yisrael* in 1743 and settled in Acco. A few years later, he and his family died tragically in a plague, and he was buried near Rav Akiva in Teverya.

Text Copyright © 2007 by Rav Yaakov Feldman and Torah.org.



SUBSCRIBE ONLINE!

FILL OUT THE ONLINE FORM TO SUBSCRIBE:
RAMAPOST.COM/SUBSCRIBE-DIVREI-TORAH

בסייד

Ramapost offers a weekly printed subscription to the following Divrei Torah:

Please fill out the online form at RAMAPOST.COM/SUBSCRIBE-DIVREI-TORAH to subscribe. We ask that your free printed divrei torah be picked up every Friday at our Monsey (Rt 59) or Wesely Hills/Pomona location.



Ram HaTorah

Compilation of Divrei Torah (English & Hebrew)

Ramapost.com/ram-hatorah
SEE BELOW



Meoros Hatzadikkim

Dvar Torah & Weekly Yahrzeits (English)

Ramapost.com/meoros-hatzadikkim



Hitkashrut

(Hebrew)



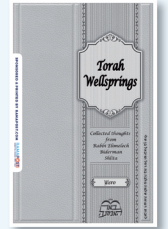
Sicht Hashavua

(Hebrew)



Ohr Chaim

(Hebrew)



Torah Wellsprings

R' Elimelech Biderman (English \ Yiddish)



רם התורה

SEE BELOW FOR THE DIVREI TORAH THAT ARE CURRENTLY INCLUDED IN RAM HATORAH:



ENGLISH DIVREI TORAH



TIV HAKEHILA · SHVILEI PINCHAS · AREIVIM · MIZMOR L'DOVID · PENINIM · KINDER TORAH · PARSHA PSHETEL · RAV BRAZIL



ענפי ארץ: COMING SOON!
ALL NEW ORIGINAL CONTENT

RAM HATORAH is a free weekly compilation of divrei torah that is organized, printed and distributed by Ramapost to hundreds of readers. You can view/download past and present editions at



דברי תורה עברית



MONTHLY



RAMAPOST.COM/RAM-HATORAH. טיב הקהילה · שבילי פנחס · דברי חזק והתעוררות · חוס של חסד · המברך · דברי שי"ח

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT MITZVOS@RAMAPOST.COM

WE ARE YOUR
ONE-STOP SHOP
 TO MARKETING SUCCESS



WE ARE A ONE-STOP ADDRESS FOR ALL YOUR MARKETING, GRAPHIC DESIGN, PRINTING & MAILING NEEDS.



MARKETING



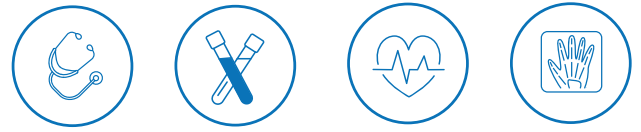
DESIGN



PRINT



MAIL



WHAT DO THESE HAVE IN COMMON?

THEY'RE ALL **EXACTLY WHAT THE COMMUNITY ORDERED™**

The result of two years of research, **Care365** is Rockland's one and only geocare center.

Step in for medical services designed around the local community's actual health needs:



INSTANT CARE UNIT

State-of-the-art walk-in health center, open late every single day of the year, offering *Throat Cultures, onsite X-ray, CT scan, sonogram, express blood test, EKG and more*

ADVANCED SPECIALTIES UNIT

Only facility in the tri-state area skilled in detecting and treating *atherosclerosis and COPD*—in addition to offering *onsite infusions, life - saving cardio devices and more*



Under Rabbinical guidance & advice, Care365 is owned by frum Jews & non-Jews.

1 MAIN STREET • MONSEY, N.Y. 10952

ON THE CORNER OF ROUTE 59 & 306

@CARE.365

845-371-7200 | WWW.CARE365.COM