

# 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)

✿ **EKEV** ✿

✿ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ✿

## **SERVING HASHEM ALONE CANNOT ENSURE SURVIVAL**

*"In order to make known to you that man does not live by bread alone" (Devorim 8:3)*

The *Avritsher* in *Bas Ayin* points out that the Hebrew word used for "alone" in our *pasuk* is *levado*, which has an extra *vov* at the end. Grammatically, the *pasuk* could have used the word *levad* for alone and left off the seemingly extra *vov*; since we know that no letter in the *Torah* is superfluous, the *Bas Ayin* seeks to understand the use of the word *levado* rather than the more straightforward *levad*?

He answers by teaching us a profound lesson in *Avodas Hashem*: when you love another person, you want him to be happy, even at your own expense. Even if you are not the one actively making him happy, the important thing is his personal happiness. The fact that someone else may be the cause of that happiness is beside the point – all that matters is that the one you love is happy.

In *Ahavas Hashem* the same holds true. If you truly and sincerely love *Hashem*, His satisfaction is your primary objective and all other considerations – such as whether you are the cause of His satisfaction – are secondary. Thus we see that true *Ohavei Hashem* always do *kiruv* and seek to draw others close in order to help them similarly serve *Hashem*, since the more *Yidden* who *daven*, learn and do *mitzvos*– the more *nachas Hashem* has from *Klal Yisrael*. Rather than seeking to do it all alone, a true *Ohev Hashem* seeks to enlist as many others as he can to fulfill *Retzon Hashem*. Clearly, *Ahava* is all-encompassing and inclusive rather than exclusive. A person who serves *Hashem* solely out of fear is less worried about other people; his primary concern is with himself and his own *Avoda*, rather than



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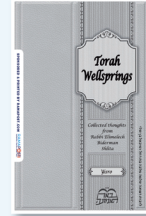
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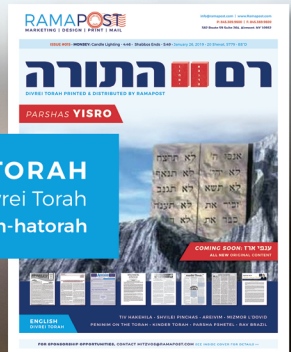
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encouraging others.

Furthermore, someone who truly loves *Hashem* draws his entire life force and sustenance from *Avodas Hashem*; his *Avoda*, *Torah* and *mitzvos* become his very life and sustenance, the very water he drinks, the air he breathes and . . .the very bread that he eats!

Now we can understand our *pasuk*: “Man does not live by bread alone...” Here we can read the *pasuk* so that the word *levado*– “alone”– refers to man, rather than to bread:“Man alone does not live by bread...”meaning that the “bread” – alluding to sustenance and vitality derived from *Avodas Hashem* – of someone who serves all alone, without enlisting others – on that type of bread, man cannot live. That lonely *Avoda* lacks the sustaining vitality to give life. Rather, he should enlist and encourage others to join him in his efforts toward *Avodas Hashem* and this will give him energy and life. May we merit this as well, *Amen*.



## 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 *berochah*. Some say the following: This candle is being lit in the merit of \_\_\_\_\_.

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

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

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

[תְּפִילָה הַנִּמְצָאת בַּסֵּפֶר אֶלֶף הַמִּגֵּן מִבְּעַל הַפֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ עַל פְּרֻשֵׁת וַיֵּצֵא עֲמוּד כ"ד]

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלֹוֵי נַשְׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_  
בֶּן/בַּת \_\_\_\_\_, יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים  
וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שֶׁאֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל  
לְזָכוֹת וְלְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלֹוֵי לְנַשְׁמוֹת עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפָרֵט לְנַפְשׁ רֹחַ וְנַשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /  
צַדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_ . יְהִי רְצוֹן שְׁתֵּהֵינָה נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים.

#### Translation:

Behold I am lighting this lamp for the resting and uplifting of the soul of my father/my mother/the *Tzaddik* \_\_\_\_\_ the son/daughter of \_\_\_\_\_. May it be Your will before you, *Hashem*, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that all my good deeds whether



in thought, speech or action be done for a merit and a resting and an elevation of the souls of your nation Yisrael. It should be especially for the soul of my father/mother/the *Tzaddik* \_\_\_\_\_. May it be Your will that their souls be bound in the bond of life.

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

See more at: [www.yeshshem.com/hilulah.htm](http://www.yeshshem.com/hilulah.htm)



## GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER



Yahrzeits Beginning Shabbos Ekev

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

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

### \* 18<sup>th</sup> of Av ~ Begins Friday Night (Aug 7<sup>th</sup>)

\* **Rav Moshe Bernstein**, *Rosh Yeshiva* Kamenitz. Born in the town of Turetz, he learned in Mir. He became the son-in-law of Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz. He hired Rav Elya Lopian as *Mashgiach* under the recommendation of Rav Moshe Aharon Stern, (5716/1956);

\* **Rav Tzvi Arye Twersky** of Zlatipoli-Tchortkov, (5728/1968);

\* **Rav Shlomo Chanoch** *ben* Rav Yechezkel *HaKohen* Rabinowitz, the fourth and last *Rebbe* of Radomsk, who perished with his family in the Warsaw Ghetto. He was a great-grandson of the *Tiferes Shlomo*. He was known for the network of *Yeshivos Kesser Torah* he had established throughout Poland and Galicia. The *Radomsker Chassidim* during the period between the two World Wars were counted among the three largest *Chassidic* movements in Poland, (5702/1942).

### \* 19<sup>th</sup> of Av ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Aug 8<sup>th</sup>)

\* **Rav Yaakov** *ben* Rav Machir Kuli (Culi), *mechaber* of *Me'am Loez* and *Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez* (5492/1732);

\* **Rav Shimon Sholom Kalisch**, the *Amshinover Rebbe* (1863–1954), born to Rav Menachem of Amshinov, a grandson of Rav Yitzchok of Vorka, founder of the Vorka-Amshinov dynasty. During his teens, Rav Shimon was sent to learn with his uncle, Rav Yeshaya of Peshis'cha. His uncle was so impressed with him that he took him as a son-in-law. In 1918, Rav Menachem of Amshinov passed away, and his older son, Rav Yosef, took his place as *Rebbe*. Rav Shimon was sent to Otvotzk, a suburb of Warsaw. He also became a member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah*. In 1933, he spent a full year in *Eretz Yisrael* with his son, Rav Yerachmiel Yehuda Meir. Although he wished to stay, his obligations forced him to move back to Europe. The *Rebbe* escaped to Kobe, Japan, along with a group of *talmidim* of *Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin*, and the entire *Mir Yeshiva*. After the war, he spent eight years in America. He passed away while planning his immigration to *Eretz Yisrael*. He is the *mechaber* of the *sefer*, *Mashmia Sholom*. His son, Rav Meir, became the *Amshinover Rebbe* in Bayit Vegan and was *niftar* in 1976, (5714/1954);

\* **Rav Naftoli** *ben* Rav Yehuda of Nemerov, one of the closest *talmidim* of Rav Nachman of Breslov and one of the two witnesses to the promise about reciting *Tikun HaKlali* at Rav Nachman's *kever*, (5620/1860);

\* **Rav Arye Leib Balchover** of Zaslev, *mechaber* of *Shem Aryeh*, (5611/1851);

\* **Rav Aharon Menachem Mendel** of Alesk, (5683/1923);

- \* **Rav Menachem Nachum** *ben* Rav Yitzchok Friedman of Boyan-Czernowitz (1868–1936/5696). The eldest of the *Pachad Yitzchok*'s four sons, he was the grandson of Avrohom Yaakov of Sadiger, (5696/1936).
- \* **20<sup>th</sup> of Av ~ Begins Sunday Night (Aug 9<sup>th</sup>)**
- \* **Rav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson** (1878–1944/5704), born to Rav Boruch Schneur, the eldest of the seven sons of the third Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel (the *Tzemach Tzedek*). He was a devoted *Chassid* of Rav Sholom Dov Ber Schneerson, the fifth Lubavitcher *Rebbe* (the *Rebbe Rashab*). After the *Rebbe Rashab* passed away, Rav Levi Yitzchok became equally dedicated to his successor, Rav Yosef Yitzchok, or the *Rebbe Rayatz*. Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana had three sons. The eldest, Rav Menachem Mendel, became the seventh Lubavitcher *Rebbe*. Rav Levi Yitzchok was considered one of the greatest *Talmudic* and *Kabbalistic* scholars of his generation. Rav Levi Yitzchok was chief *Rav* of the major Ukrainian city Yekaterinoslav (today called Dniepropetrovsk) during the bloody Bolshevik revolution and the subsequent Communist oppression until his arrest and exile. For his stance against Soviet efforts to uproot Jewish learning and practice, he was eventually arrested, tortured and banished to a remote village in Kazakhstan. His spirit, however, was not extinguished, even while his body was broken and eventually gave way to his early passing. Soviet Jewry is not alone in the debt of gratitude it owes to Rav Levi Yitzchok. His personal example serves as a shining beacon of inspiration for all of us today, and for all generations to come. We are also collectively indebted to Rav Levi Yitzchok and his life's partner, Rebbetzin Chana, for giving us their son, the *Rebbe*, whose application of their teachings and way of life to all the rest of us changed the very course of world Jewry, (5704/1944);
- \* **Rav Yehuda Zerachya Azulai**, a great-grandson of the *Chida*, (5630/1870);
- \* **Rav Eliezer** of Azipalle (Uzipoli), youngest son of Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Strettin, (5625/1865);
- \* **Rav Meir Rabinowitz** (1916–2006). The son of the Skolya *Rebbe*, Rav Dovid Yitzchok Eisik Rabinowitz, Rav Meir was born in Vienna during World War I. He spent three months in forced labor, and escaped with the help of Skolya *Chassidim*. Arriving in Manhattan's Lower East Side, he and his brother opened a Skolya *Bais Medrash*. He, his wife and daughter followed his father to Williamsburg, then to Boro Park. When the *Rebbe* was *niftar* in 1979, Rav Meir refused to take over and appointed his son-in-law, Rav Refoel Goldstein. Being entirely *mevatel* himself, he served his son-in-law with the same *kovod* he had shown his father, (5766/2006).
- \* **21<sup>st</sup> of Av ~ Begins Monday Night (Aug 10<sup>th</sup>)**
- \* **Rav Chaim Soloveitchik** of Volozhin and Brisk (1853–1918/5678). Son of the *Bais HaLevi*, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, Rav Chaim was born in Volozhin, but moved with his family to Slutsk while still quite young, when his father became *Rav* of the city. When Rav Chaim was twenty, he married Lifsha, the daughter of Rav Refoel Shapira, the son-in-law of the *Netziv*. Since Rav Refoel was a *Rosh Mesivta* in Volozhin, Rav Chaim moved there. When Rav Refoel moved away, Rav Chaim took the post of *Rosh Mesivta* of Volozhin in 1880. In 1892, following the closing of the Volozhin *Yeshiva*, Rav Chaim moved to Brisk where he succeeded his father as the community *Rav*. Rav Chaim is buried next to the *Netziv* in the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw. His oldest son was Rav Moshe, who was the father of Rav Yosef Dov and Rav Aharon Soloveitchik. His other famous son was Rav Yitzchok Zev (the *GRIZ*), also known as Rav Velvel, the Brisker *Rav* of Yerushalayim, (5678/1918);
- \* **Rav Alexander Sender** *ben* Rav Yitzchok of Komarna. His father was a *talmid* of the *Chozeh* of Lublin, (5578/1818);



- \* **Rav Dovid Hager** of Zebultov, *mechaber* of *Tzemach Dovid*. His father was Rav Menachem Mendel of Kosov. He is a son-in-law of Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov, (5608/1848);
- \* **Rav Aharon ben Rav Yissochor Dov Roke'ach**, fourth-generation Belzer *Rebbe* (1880–1957/5717). He escaped the Nazis and reached *Eretz Yisrael* in 1944, establishing his court in Tel Aviv. The current Belzer *Rebbe* is his nephew. The numerous stories of his *tzidkus* (righteousness) and miracles are legendary. Many of the great *Tzaddikim* in *Eretz Yisrael*, from all segments, were very close to him. He lost his whole family to the Nazis during the Second World War. The fascinating story of his escape can be read in *Rescuing the Rebbe of Belz*, published by Artscroll, (5717/1957).
- \* **22<sup>nd</sup> of Av ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Aug 11<sup>th</sup>)**
- \* **Rav Mordechai ben Hillel**, the “Mordechai” (~1230–1298). A descendent of the *Ravya*, he was a principal *talmid* of the *Maharam miRottenberg*, and a close friend of the *Rosh*. The Mordechai cites views of French and German authorities and brings the *piskei Halocha* of the *Tosefos* without the discussion. He, his wife and their five children were all burned at the stake during the Rindfleisch pogroms, when over 100,000 Jews in Bavaria and Austria were murdered, and well over a hundred communities disappeared, (5058/1298);
- \* **Rav Meir HaGodol** of Premishlan. One of the closest *Chassidim* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*; his grandson (also Rav Meir) became more famous than he, (5533/1773);
- \* **Rav Eliyohu HaKohen Dushnitzer**, *Mashgiach* of Lomza *Yeshiva* in Petach Tikva, *mechaber* of *Nachlas Eliyohu*. He was involved with the famous *dybuk* story, which also involved the *Chofetz Chaim*, (5709/1949);
- \* Rav Shmuel Meyuchas of Yerushalayim, (5531/1771).
- \* **23<sup>rd</sup> of Menachem Av ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Aug 12<sup>th</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 Thursday Night (Aug 13<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).



## ❧ 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 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 *Rebbs*, 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.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-24-avaugust-20/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-24-avaugust-20/)



### 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).

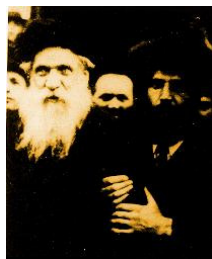
Rav Sholom was born on the fifteenth of *Shevat* 5617 (1857). His father was Rav Dovid Halperin, who was a son-in-law of the *Rebbe*, Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin. Rav Dovid was from a distinguished line of famous *Rabbonim* and *Gedolim*. Rav Dovid, however, refused to accept the yoke of *Rabbonus* (the Rabbinat), 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 *neshoma* (soul) ascended to *shomayim*.

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



## Rav Tzvi Arye Twersky of Zlatipoli-Tchortkov, 18<sup>th</sup> of Av

Rav Tzvi Arye Twersky, born in 5550/1890, was the son of Rav Mordechai Yosef of Zlatipoli. In 5673/1913, he married the daughter of Rav Yisrael of Tchortkov and settled near his father-in-law.

With the advent of World War I, Rav Herschel, as he was fondly called, fled with his father-in-law to Vienna, along with many other *Rebbes* of the Ruzhin dynasties.

Following the *petira* of his father on the 26<sup>th</sup> of *Iyar* 5689/1929, Rav Herschel was appointed *Rebbe*. He reluctantly accepted but remained in Vienna with his brothers-in-law, Rav Nachum Mordechai and Rav Dov Ber.

When the Nazis took over Austria, Rav Herschel was sent to the Dachau concentration camp together with his nephew, Rav Shlomo Friedman, son of Rav Mordechai Nachum. Following many

miracles, they were both freed and able to make their way to *Eretz Yisrael*, settling in Tel Aviv.

Following the *petira* of his nephew, Rav Shlomo, in *Cheshvan* 5619/1958, Rav Hershel was named *Rebbe* of the Tchortkover *Chassidim* as well.

He wrote the *seforim HaTov V'Hatachlis* and *Emuna V'Daas* on *Hashkofa*.

Rav Hershel was *niftar* on the 18<sup>th</sup> of *Av* 5628/1968 at the age of seventy-eight and buried on Har HaZeisim.

The Zlatipoli-Tchortkov dynasty is being perpetuated by his only grandson, Rav Chaim Michael Biberfeld, *shlita*, in London.

*Zechuso yogen aleinu.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-18-avaugust-14/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-18-avaugust-14/)

## Rav Shimon Sholom Kalisch, 19<sup>th</sup> of Av

The Amshinover Rebbe

The *Chassidim* recount that after the *petira* of Rav Yitzchok of Kalisch (the founder of the line of *Rebbes* of Vorki and Amshinov), his son Rav Yaakov Dovid went from Amshinov to Kotzk. Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk asked him if he had seen his father, Rav Yitzchok of Vorki, in a dream, and Rav Yaakov Dovid said that he had not. Rav Menachem Mendel then said to him, "I saw your father. I was looking for him in the world above because I wanted to see him. Therefore I asked where our Rav Yitzchok was, and the ministering angels told me to go look for him in a higher abode. At first I looked for him among the *talmidim* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, but they told me that he was in a higher abode. I then looked for him in the abode of the *Acharonim*, of the *Bais Yosef* and the *Rema*, but I did not find him there. Finally, I went to the abode of the *Amoro'im*, and when I asked where our Rav Yitzchok was, they told me that he could be found by a river not far from there. I approached the river and found him standing, bent over his cane, looking at the river. 'Rav Yitzchok,' I asked him. 'What are you doing here?' He replied, 'This river is made from the tears of the Jewish people. I cannot leave this place.'"

This story is typical of all the *Rebbes* of Vorki and Amshinov, among them being Rav Shimon Sholom Kalisch of Amshinov. All these *Rebbes* possessed an extraordinary love for the Jewish people.

Rav Shimon Sholom was born to Rav Menachem, the *Rebbe* of Amshinov, in 5643 (1883).

From an early age he demonstrated great intelligence and a heart filled with kindness. Everyone loved him, but his father, Rav Menachem, loved him the most. He would say to him, "Shimoli, my son, *Chassidus* has three principles: Love of

*Hashem*, love of *Torah*, and love of *Eretz Yisrael*." In fact, Rav Shimon saw in these the guiding principles of his life, and he strived with all his might to acquire them and to make them an integral part of his character.

In his youth, he walked about in his father's *Bais Medrash* and chatted with the *Chassidim* who came to him for help. He spoke to their hearts and encouraged them, making sure to provide them with something to eat and drink, as well as a place to sleep.

Later on he married the daughter of Rav Yeshaya Kalisch of Peshis'cha, his uncle. At his father-in-law's home, he advanced in *Torah* and *Chassidus* to such a degree that he became a great *Chassidic* leader.

After the *petira* of his father, Rav Shimon Sholom inherited a portion of his *Chassidim*. He settled in Otbootsk, near Warsaw, and directed its community with great love. His *Chassidim* purchased a villa in the forest for him, and his *Bais Medrash* was always full of Jews who came there seeking his advice. The *Rebbe* knew a tremendous amount about business and industry, and great industrialists came to see him for business advice.

His noble appearance, long beard, and pleasant-looking and smiling face made a great impression on those who saw him. He behaved with extreme modesty, which earned him the hearts of the Jewish masses. The *Rebbe* saw only the good in people, and to him there were no evil Jews; there were only bitter and unhappy people who were worthy of immense pity. Whoever had problems could find refuge with the *Tzaddik* of Amshinov.

For close to thirty years, the *Rebbe* led the *Bais Medrash* of Otbootsk. Crowds rushed to his *Bais Medrash* on *Shabbos*

and the holidays, and the talks he gave to the *Chassidim* revealed his great love for every Jew.

In 5694 (1934), he left for *Eretz Yisrael*, where he remained for more than a year. Upon his return to Poland, he was filled with praise for the Holy Land and was in the habit of saying, "I am a Jew of *Eretz Yisrael*." He was preparing to go and settle there, when all of a sudden the Second World War erupted and the *Rebbe* had to flee from Warsaw. He first found refuge in Lithuania, the center of the *misnagdim*, but something surprising then happened: the *misnagdim* also went to him for advice and blessings! Many saw a *Chassidic Rebbe* for the first time in their lives, and they were impressed by the radiance of his face, his way of life, and his charisma. Many devoted themselves to him and became his followers.

From Lithuania he wandered as far as Japan, and finally ended up in Shanghai, China, where he stayed for the remainder of the war. During his exile in Shanghai, the *Rebbe* revealed his character by his splendor and the goodness of his heart. His home was open to everyone, and around him gathered *Yeshiva talmidim* who had managed to flee war-torn Europe. He cared for these refugees with great devotion and provided them with food. He also prevented them from giving up hope, reminding them that deliverance can come

in the wink of an eye. Thanks to these good deeds of his, many escaped annihilation.

After the war, the *Rebbe* arrived safely in the United States. His *Chassidim* purchased a house for him in Borough Park, Brooklyn, and there he reopened his *Bais Medrash*, this time in the land of America. There too he made numerous *Chassidim*, and many were those who came to see him. The *Rebbe* turned many away from sin, as *Shabbos* desecrators began to observe it because of him. He built *Talmud Torahs* and *mikves*, and he participated in many conferences designed to strengthen *Torah* observance. Before long, the *Rebbe* had won over the Jews of America and his home became a center of attraction for all types of Jews.

In 5714 (1954), he decided that his place was in *Eretz Yisrael*, where his *Chassidim* impatiently awaited him, and so he purchased a ticket and prepared to leave. However, the *Rebbe* suddenly fell ill, and on the 19th of *Av* his soul departed in holiness and purity. His *Chassidim* brought his body to *Eretz Yisrael* and buried him in Teverya.

The *Rebbe* left behind an only son, Rav Meir Kalisch, who settled in Yerushalayim and founded the *Shem Olam Yeshiva* in memory of his illustrious father.

[www.hevratpinto.org/tzadikim\\_eng/155\\_rabbi\\_shimon\\_shalom\\_kalish.html](http://www.hevratpinto.org/tzadikim_eng/155_rabbi_shimon_shalom_kalish.html)



## Rav Yaakov Kuli, 19<sup>th</sup> of Av

Rav Yaakov Kuli was born in *Eretz Yisrael* in 5449/1689 or 5450/1690. His father, Rav Machir, was a scion of an honored family that had come from either France or Germany. Rav Machir was the son-in-law of Rav Moshe *ibn* Chaviv, the *mechaber* of *Get Poshut*.

At this time, the Turkish regime was very cruel to the Jewish *yishuv* in Yerushalayim, and Rav Yaakov and his

family moved to Tzefas. In Tzefas their fate was not much better, and in 5474/1714, they relocated to Constantinople.

Rav Yaakov edited various important *seforim*. The first fruit of his literary activity was the publication of the writings of his grandfather. Rav Moshe *ibn* Chaviv (the *Maharam Chaviv*) was *niftar* in 5456/1696, when Rav Yaakov was still a young boy, but the influence he had on his



young grandson was immense.

While working on his grandfather's writings, Rav Yaakov formed a close relationship with the *Rav* of Constantinople, Rav Yehuda Rosanes, *mechaber* of *Mishneh LaMelech* on the *Rambam*. He appointed Rav Yaakov as *Dayan*.

In 5487/1727, Rav Yaakov published his grandfather's work *Shammus Ba'Aretz*, a three-volume work on a few *Masechtos*: *Yom Teru'a* on *Maseches Rosh Hashana*, *Tosefes Yom HaKippurim* on *Yoma*, and *Kappos Temorim* on *Sukka*.

In that same year Rav Yehuda Rosanes was *niftar* and Rav Yaakov was entrusted with the job of preparing his manuscripts for print. Even for a *Talmid Chochom* of his caliber, it meant a task of several years.

The next year, 5488/1728, Rav Yaakov edited the *sefer Parshas Derochim*. Three years later, he finally published his grandfather's *Mishneh LaMelech*, one of the most famous commentaries on the

*Rambam's Mishneh Torah*, enriched with numerous notations of his own. To both these works Rav Yaakov wrote a preface.

Rav Yaakov also edited his grandfather's *Ezras Noshim*, at the beginning of which there are two responsa of his own.

The most important work of Rav Yaakov and the one for which he is best known is his commentary on the *Torah* and *Nach* entitled *Me'am Lo'ez*. This work is a very elaborate, encyclopedic commentary in Ladino, dealing with all aspects of Jewish life, with material taken from the *Gemora*, the *Medrash* and early Rabbinic literature.

Rav Yaakov also wrote a *halachic sefer* called *Simonim L'Oraisa*, which remained in manuscript.

Rav Yaakov was *niftar* on the 19<sup>th</sup> of *Av* 5492/1732.

*Zecher Tzaddik livrachah.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-19-avaugust-15/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-19-avaugust-15/)



## Rav Menachem Nachum of Boyan-Czernowitz, 19<sup>th</sup> of Av

The oldest of the *Pachad Yitzchok's* four sons, Rav Menachem Nachum, was born on the 21<sup>st</sup> of *Kislev* 5629 (1869). Being the firstborn, his father made a *pidyon haben* (redemption of the firstborn son) when he was thirty days old. When the infant was carried in, people noticed that he had kicked off part of the blanket covering him and commented about his vigor. The *zeide* (grandfather), Rav Avrohom Yaakov of Sadiger, remarked, "It seems that this child will not succeed in concealing his holiness." The words of the Sadigerer *Rebbe* were borne out in later years. The child grew up to become the famous Rav Menachem Nachum, noted for his fiery zeal in his worship of *Hashem*.

Every Friday night, when Rav

Menachem Nachum recited *kiddush*, his face was afire like a torch. He became so excited when he uttered the first words, that the cup shook violently in his hand and most of the wine spilled. Often the cup fell from his hand, but the *Rebbe* was so engrossed in the words that he never realized that his cup had been refilled and replaced in his hand.

Those who saw his *kiddush* never forgot it, even many years later. In a letter, one of his *Chassidim* described the *kiddush*: "At the appointed time the *Rebbe* arrived, his appearance like that of a *malach* (angel). In a lion's voice he started to recite *kiddush*, all the while our hearts were thumping with fright. Within the first few seconds, all the wine had spilled from

the cup – such was his *dveikus* (attachment to *Hashem*). I don't believe that anyone who was there wasn't moved to thoughts of *teshuva*."

When one of Rav Menachem Nachum's *Chassidim* described his *avoda* to his youngest brother, Rav Mordechai Shlomo, he exclaimed, "What's the *chiddush*? My brother is on the *madreiga* (level) of *Tzaddikim* from previous generations."

Similarly, when he would say *Torah*, it was also with great *dveikus*, often accompanied with sighs and sobs. By the end of the *tisch*, (the *Rebbe's* table) there wasn't a dry eye in sight. The *Chassidim* returned



home after *Shabbos* purified and uplifted from what they had seen and heard. An extraordinary story is told from when Rav Menachem Nachum was still a young child. A group of *Chassidim* were busy discussing *Moshiach* and the final *geula*. In the middle of their conversation, Rav Menachem Nachum came over to them and told them, "When *Moshiach* comes, we will be the generals." One of the *Chassidim* proceeded to ask the young boy when he thought *Moshiach* would finally come. Rav Menachem Nachum started to answer him, but as he was about to explain, he suddenly fainted. When word of the incident reached the ears of his *zeide*, he warned his *Chassidim* that from then on they could not speak to him regarding such topics!

Rav Menachem Nachum grew up under the close scrutiny of his *zeide*. He acquired a prominent place among the elder *Chassidim*. Blessed with an excellent memory, he helped transcribe the *Divrei Torah* that his *zeide* delivered during the *tisch* on *Shabbos*. A letter written by Rav Dudia of Berditchev (*mechaber* of the classic *sefer Tehilla LeDovid*), bears

testimony to the young boy's brilliance. In the letter, written when Rav Menachem Nachum was just twelve years old, he writes, "The additions between the lines are the sections of the *Rebbe's Torah* that I wasn't able to recall and was reminded of by the young Rav Menachem Nachum *shlit"a*."

Rav Menachem Nachum was not just a son to his father, but a fervent *Chassid* also. At the *chassuna* (wedding) of one of the children of the Belzer *Rav*, Rav Yissochor Dov, in 1899, the Belzer *Rav* asked Rav Menachem Nachum, who had attended the *chassuna*, to stay for *Shabbos Sheva Berochos*. Rav Menachem Nachum refused, telling him that when he left Boyan he had not told his father that he would be away for *Shabbos*. The Belzer *Rav*, however, did not take 'no' for an answer and told him that he could tell his father that he had been pressured into staying for *Shabbos*. Rav Menachem Nachum still refused and answered, "I have never yet excused myself to my father!" The Belzer *Rav* was extremely impressed with his response and did not press him further, and when Rav Menachem Nachum left on his journey home, the Belzer *Rav* accompanied him to the station as a sign of respect for him.

To what extent Rav Menachem Nachum respected and stood in awe of his father can be seen from his *tzavo'a* (ethical last will) which he wrote before his *petira*. In it he wrote, "I command that they bury me in the hut where the holy body of my father *zt"l* is buried, but it should be as far away from my father's *kever* (grave) as possible."

The Boyaner *Rebbe* also held his son in high esteem, relying on him as his representative on various occasions. One year, during one of the winter months, bad weather prevented the Boyaner *Rebbe* from being able to perform the *mitzva* of *Kiddush Levona*. The last possible night to be *mekadesh* the *levona* (to bless the new

moon) arrived, and still there was no sign of the moon. The *Chassidim* became worried that their failure to perform the *mitzva* was a bad omen of things to come. They asked the *Rebbe* to *daven* that the clouds should clear so that they should not miss out on this important *mitzva*. The *Rebbe* instructed them to go to his son, Rav Menachem Nachum, and tell him in his name that he should see to it that there be a clear *levona*. Rav Menachem Nachum accepted the *shlichus* and a few minutes later the clouds cleared, leaving the moon shining brightly for all to see.

The Boyaner *Rebbe* trained his son to take over his position. On one occasion the Boyaner *Rebbe* spoke of his wish to live in *Eretz Yisrael*. He told his *Rebbetzin*, “We will go and settle in *Eretz Yisrael*, and as for the *Chassidim*, *Boruch Hashem* we have whom to leave them with.”

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 changed his plans and the Boyaner *Rebbe* was forced to flee to Vienna where he was *niftar* on the 17<sup>th</sup> of *Adar* 5677 (1917). For the Boyaner *Chassidim* this second blow was enough almost to break them. Not only had the *Rebbe*’s court in Boyan been totally destroyed, they had now lost their crown as well.

Rav Menachem Nachum decided to move to Czernowitz, where there was a large Boyaner *Bais Medrash* that had been opened many years earlier. Vienna was overcrowded with refugees and the atmosphere of confusion and turmoil was not conducive to rebuilding Boyaner *Chassidus*.

Next to the *Bais Medrash*, a large court was built. From there Rav Menachem Nachum was able to lead his *Chassidim* in style as his father had done in Boyan. On the arrival of the new *Rebbe* in Czernowitz, thousands turned out to accompany him as he entered his new court for the first time.

The *Rebbe*’s court became a magnet for the thousands of Boyaner *Chassidim*, a

beacon of light in the ever-darkening gloom. The *Rebbe* would sit and listen to the woes and worries of his *Chassidim*, as one by one they loaded him with the problems in their hearts. Due to the war many had lost their homes and their jobs, and they had no one to help them. For hours on end, day after day, the *Rebbe* would sit and listen to their woes as they poured out their hearts to him, leaving his room only after he had succeeded in comforting them, convincing them that through their *bitochon* combined with the *zechusim* of the *Tzaddikim*, all would turn out for the best.

Even when the situation seemed hopeless, the *Rebbe* still did not rest from *davening*, begging *Hashem* to help His *Yidden* and improve their lot. A *Chassid* whose sister was lying in hospital in critical condition came to the *Rebbe*, begging him to *daven* for her. The *Chassid* gave the *Rebbe* an enormous sum of money as a *pidyon* (soul redemption), hoping that it would help his sister somehow. The *Rebbe*, however, did not accept the money and told him, “What do you want? To bribe me with money?” Hearing the *Rebbe*’s negative reply, the *Chassid* started to cry, begging the *Rebbe* to have pity on his sister and save her. The *Rebbe* took the *pidyon*, and after he wished the ill lady a speedy recovery asked the man to leave the room. No sooner had the door shut, than the *Rebbe* started to pace up and down in great *dveikus*, imploring *Hashem* to have mercy and revoke the decree. The same day the woman had a miraculous recovery, living to an old age. On one of the rare occasions that the *Rebbe* spoke about himself, he said, “It doesn’t take me long to understand the problems of others, and it doesn’t take me long to secure a *yeshua* (favorable outcome) for them.”

The *Rebbe* took onto himself the worries of *Klal Yisrael*, carrying the heavy burden on his shoulders. Only through superhuman strength was he able to soldier



on, not allowing the constant problems to break him. On one occasion, after he heard of a particularly distressing problem, he commented to one of his close *Chassidim*, “*Chazal* (our sages) tell us, if a person has a problem he should speak it over with others. One person on his own cannot cope with a problem and therefore *Chazal* advise us to speak over the problem with a second person... *Nu*, and what should I do?” The *Rebbe* added with a sigh, “I sit here the whole day and everyone tells me their problems and I have to bear it all!”

Besides the thousands of Boyaner *Chassidim* living in Europe, the *Rebbe* also had many *Chassidim* living in *Eretz Yisrael*. Due to the high costs involved, most of them could not afford to go to see the *Rebbe*. Therefore, it was with great *simcha* (joy) that they received the news that the *Rebbe* had agreed to their request to visit *Eretz Yisrael*.

During the four weeks that the *Rebbe* spent in *Eretz Yisrael*, he infused new life into his *Chassidim*. He took a ship from Trieste to Alexandria in Egypt from where he traveled by train, arriving in Lod on the 15<sup>th</sup> of *Iyar* 5687 (1927). From Lod, the *Rebbe* traveled to Tzefas, where an estimated crowd of four thousand people came out to welcome him. While in Tzefas, he went to *daven* at the *kever* of the *Arizal* and the other *Tzaddikim* buried there. His *tefillos*, which were accompanied by hot tears, aroused the many onlookers. After he finished *davening*, he spoke a few words. “When one realizes the greatness of the *Gedolim* (luminaries) buried here, and thinks that we were *zoche* to have them as our leaders, it is possible to come to *gaava* (arrogance) *chas vesholom*. Instead, one has to make sure, as my holy *zeide* from Sadiger once said, ‘When a person remembers the *kedusha* (holiness) of the *zeides* and compares it to our own lowly *madreiga*, he becomes humble and small in his own eyes and not *chas vesholom* haughty.”

In a letter from one of the *Chassidim* who accompanied the *Rebbe*, he wrote, “When these words left the *Rebbe*’s mouth, tears streamed down from his eyes. All those around him also cried with true broken hearts, and I could not stop myself from crying along, and cried then with such a broken heart like I have never cried before.”

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of *Sivan*, the *Rebbe* left for Yerushalayim, and again thousands turned out to meet him with the *Rav* of Yerushalayim, *Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld* at their head. Despite the royal welcome, the *Rebbe* was not *besimcha* (joyful). He told his *Chassidim*, “In Yerushalayim one sees the *Churban* (destruction) in every corner.” His body became covered in boils and blisters from his anguish. His pain was such that he couldn’t sleep at night and spent the time pacing up and down in his room.

When the *Rebbe* arrived back in Czernowitz, he told his *Chassidim*, “The reason for my trip was to heal my *neshoma*, (soul) and even though the journey was very difficult, my *neshoma* gained from the trip. If *Hashem* helps a person to prepare himself properly in *chutz laaretz*, (outside *Eretz Yisrael*), then when he arrives in *Eretz Yisrael*, he truly feels the *kedusha* (holiness) of the land in all his bones.”

For almost twenty years, the *Rebbe* led his flock. In his last years, as the threats from Germany became louder and louder, his whole being was totally given over to entreating *Hashem* to annul the evil decrees. When a *Chassid* asked him for a *berocha* (blessing) to a certain problem, he answered, “Now isn’t the time to worry about people’s private problems; now is the time to worry about the *klal* (community) as a whole.” To a second person he commented, “The plight of the *Yidden* doesn’t leave my mind for a second.” Although his *tefillos* had always been full of sighs and tears, in his last years his tears became a veritable flood as he poured out

his heart in constant *tefilla*.

Although the *Rebbe* had been suffering for a number of years from a severe kidney disorder, he had managed to conceal it from even his closest *Chassidim*. Although he suffered terrible pains, in his typical way he had managed to hide it.

The severity of his pain can be seen from what the *Rebbe* wrote in his *tzavo'a*: "Even though *Chazal* say that a person only suffers if he has sinned, and who can say that they are innocent from sin? A person knows how he has acted, and I don't *chas vesholom* feel that I have committed such a sin that I should have received such suffering...". His pains were such that his *zeide*, the Sadigerer *Rebbe*, said, "Tzaddikim accept suffering on themselves to atone for the sins of the generation."

In his last year, his illness became worse and the doctors decided that he would have to undergo an operation. The *Rebbe*, however, refused to hear of it. The family decided to ask the *Rebbe's* cousin, the Sadigerer *Rebbe*, Rav Avrohom Yaakov, to try to persuade the *Rebbe* to change his mind. The Sadigerer *Rebbe* agreed and went especially to Czernowitz to speak to the *Rebbe*. On various occasions the

Sadigerer *Rebbe* would relate the following story, which he himself had witnessed:

When he opened the door to the room where the *Rebbe* was lying in bed, he stopped in shock. Standing next to the bed was the *Rebbe's* father, the *Pachad Yitzchok* of Boyan. Immediately, the Sadigerer *Rebbe* closed the door and went away. An hour later, the Sadigerer *Rebbe* returned and when he opened the door for the second time, the *Pachad Yitzchok* was still standing there in the same place. The Sadigerer ended this story saying, "From this incident I understood that his days were numbered, and he was already busy preparing to leave this world."

Ten days before his *petira*, the *Rebbe* agreed to travel to Vienna to undergo medical treatment. After a few days his condition took a sudden turn for the worse.

During his last hours on the 19<sup>th</sup> of Av 5696 (1936) he lay peacefully in bed, his face radiant as he prepared himself to meet his Creator. His whole being glowed with *kedusha* as his holy *neshoma* ascended. *Zechuso yogein oleinu*.

[www.nishmas.org/gdynasty/chapt6.htm](http://www.nishmas.org/gdynasty/chapt6.htm)



## Rav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, 20<sup>th</sup> of Av

Rav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson was born in 1878, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of *Nissan*, in the town of Podrovnah (near Gomel), to Rav Boruch Schneur and *Rebbetzin* Zelda Rochel Schneerson. Rav Levi Yitzchok was the eldest of four children: two brothers, Rav Shmuel and Rav Sholom Shlomo, and one sister, *Rebbetzin* Rada Sima. His father, Rav Boruch Schneur, was a great-grandson of the third Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, known as the *Tzemach Tzedek*.

As a small child, Rav Levi Yitzchok showed signs of being a prodigy, as the *Rebbe Rayatz* would later write: "Already

from a young age, his extraordinary talents were discovered." He mastered *Kabbala*, *Talmud*, and *Chassidic* philosophy and was ordained by the leading *Torah* authorities of his time, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk and Rav Eliyohu Chaim Meizel of Lodz.

In 1900, at the age of twenty-two, Rav Levi Yitzchok, who had already become renowned as a *Kabbalistic* and *halachic* scholar, married *Rebbetzin* Chana Yanovsky. The daughter of Rav Meir Shlomo Yanovsky, the *Rav* of Nikolayev and *Chassid* of the *Rebbe Maharash*, the fourth Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, young *Rebbetzin*

Chana was known as a scholar in her own right. Rav Sholom Dov Ber Schneerson, the fifth Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, had suggested the match. The wedding took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> of *Sivan*, in Nikolayev, where Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana would remain for almost a decade.

Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana gave birth to three sons: Menachem Mendel, Dov Ber and Yisrael Arye Leib. The eldest, Menachem Mendel, was born on the 11<sup>th</sup> of *Nissan* 1902 and would grow up to become the seventh Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, known as the *Rebbe*.

In 1909, at age thirty-one, Rav Levi Yitzchok was called upon to serve as *Rav* of the Ukrainian city of Yekatrinoslav (known today as Dniepropetrovsk). The fifth *Rebbe*, Rav Sholom Dovber Schneerson, was instrumental in securing the position, and he sent letters to various community leaders, including Sergei Pavlov Fallei, one of the city's most respected members of the Zionist movement. Rav Levi Yitzchok also met with Menachem Ussishkin, a community activist who had served as secretary of the First Zionist Congress. Following his appointment as *Rav*, Rav Levi Yitzchok eventually assumed the position of chief *Rav* and served the community for thirty-two years, until 1939.

Aside from a small *Chassidic* constituency, the Jewish community of Yekatrinoslav included many non-religious professionals, who also held Rav Levi Yitzchok in great esteem. His wife, Rebbetzin Chana, who was fluent in several languages, contributed to her husband's success and influence as a communal leader.

During his years of leadership, Rav Levi Yitzchok resolutely engaged in religious activism, never giving in to the ever-growing pressure from Soviets. He oversaw the building of a new *mikve* and clandestinely officiated at weddings and circumcisions. One area of particular note was his involvement in the production of

kosher-for-*Pesach matzos*. As all factories in Russia were owned by the government, it was their policy that set the standard for the *matza* production.

Yet, even the Soviets knew that for the Jews to purchase their *matzos*, they would require a *Rabbinic* authority to provide *halachic* certification. When they turned to Rav Levi Yitzchok, who was renowned as the chief *Rav* of a prominent city, he demanded that he be allowed to install his own *rabbinic* supervisors, otherwise he could not offer certification. When they refused, Rav Levi Yitzchok remained steadfast. He traveled to Moscow and met with the Bolshevik revolutionary, Mikhail Kalinin, to explain his position. Rav Levi Yitzchok's efforts bore fruit and the Soviets relented. The *Pesach matzos* would be produced under the proper *rabbinic* standards.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of *Nissan* 5699 (March 28, 1939), at three o'clock in the morning, four agents of the NKVD arrived at the Schneerson home on 13 Barikadna Street.

Stationing guards at each of the doors, they began to search the house. Rifling through the thousands of folios of Rav Levi Yitzchok's written works on *Kabbola*, *Halocha*, and *rabbinic* correspondence, they confiscated his *rabbinic* ordination certificates and a petition from the community of Jaffa that he emigrate and serve as chief *Rav*, along with visas for the entire family.

Finally, at six o'clock in the morning, after they had ended their search, Rav Levi Yitzchok was arrested for his activities on behalf of Judaism in the Soviet Union. After more than a year of torture and interrogations in Stalin's notorious prisons, Rav Levi Yitzchok was tried in Moscow and sentenced to five years of exile in Central Asia. Rebbetzin Chana subsequently followed him to be with him at his remote location of exile.

Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin



Chana's first home in Chi'ili was a single room in the dwelling of a crude Tartar couple who had a young child. The room had no door and was damp, muddy and filled with swarms of mosquitoes. They lived in extreme poverty and discomfort, with no privacy. Though they never discussed it, pangs of hunger tormented them. Once, they did not taste a piece of bread for an entire month.

With World War II ravaging Europe, many refugees and displaced people ended up in the Kazakhstan region where Rav Levi Yitzchok had been exiled. Rav Levi Yitzchok soon became well known among the Jewish refugees. Large groups of men and women, especially those women whose husbands were taken away for the war effort, would visit the esteemed *Rav* and his wife, seeking counsel on various matters.

With meager resources at their disposal, and facing a constant threat to their very lives, Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana heroically reached out to their brethren in need, helping in every which way, materially and spiritually.

In 1944, as Rav Levi Yitzchok's sentence was nearing its end, his physical condition began to deteriorate. Though he was unaware of this, a serious illness was spreading through his body, severely weakening him. Meanwhile, friends in nearby Alma Ata resolved to secure the *Rav's* release. They contributed thousands of rubles, giving most of their wealth, in order to acquire the proper permits for the relocation. After six weeks fraught with setbacks and obstacles, they were finally able to obtain the release documents.

Immediately after *Pesach*, Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana left Chi'ili and arrived in Alma Ata. In this large city, their living conditions improved somewhat, and they worked more vigorously to help others in need. Yet, through the summer, the *Rav's* illness grew worse. A young friend made a special trip from Leningrad

to Alma Ata, together with a well-known doctor. The doctor did not have a good prognosis for the *Rav*. He had no cure for his ailment.

Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana endured those heartbreaking days with exceptional strength and fortitude. Despite the dire conditions, they continued to welcome any depressed or broken person into their home, attending to his or her specific needs and providing food when necessary.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of *Av*, Rav Levi Yitzchok's condition turned critical. Although he was no longer able to speak, he still continued to murmur words of *Torah* or *Tehillim*. That evening, Rebbetzin Chana took a short rest so that she would have the strength to continue caring for him; when she awoke, she found the house filled with people. Her husband had returned his pure soul to its Maker.

[www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/117515/jewish/Rabbi-Levi-Yitzchak-Schneerson.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/117515/jewish/Rabbi-Levi-Yitzchak-Schneerson.htm)



Once as part of the census, the Russian government sent out a questionnaire asking several queries of its citizens. Among the questions was: "Do you believe in G-d?"

Many Jews were inclined to answer in the negative because they feared arousing government suspicion and/or losing their jobs. When the *Rebbe's* father learned of this, he gave an impassioned sermon, explaining that denying belief in *Hashem* was equivalent to heresy. No matter what the risks, every Jew was obligated to answer affirmatively.

Among his listeners was a government employee whose wife had already filled out the census form for him, stating that he did not believe. The words of the *Rebbe's* father motivated him so powerfully that he went to the census office and asked the government to correct the

form. He wanted to be listed as a believer.

Later when the *Rebbe's* father was arrested, his interrogators asked him how he had dared to make such statements. He answered that his words were totally in support of the government. "Jews inherently believe in *Hashem*," he told his questioners. "I was merely exhorting them to tell the truth and not lie to the government."

[www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/2658219/jewish/Do-you-believe-in-Gd.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2658219/jewish/Do-you-believe-in-Gd.htm)



The following story happened in the USSR in 1935, a time when Soviet oppression was at its peak, and the KGB was tracking all Jewish activity as "counterrevolutionary" and "anti-government":

One night, at 11 o' clock, a knock was heard on the door of Rav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, the chief *Rav* of the city of Dnepropetrovsk. An older woman entered the apartment. She looked around nervously to make sure that there was no one there besides the *Rav* and his family.

"*Rav*," she whispered. "I have come from a distant city that I cannot identify by name. In another hour, at midnight, my daughter and son-in-law will be here too. They are both serving in high-level government positions; coming here is fraught with danger for them. It was only after I begged and pleaded with them to go to a *Rav* who would arrange a proper Jewish wedding for them that they promised me they would. But they set the condition that the *chupa* (wedding ceremony) would take place at your home, honored *Rav*, and nowhere else. I came in advance to give you time to prepare for their arrival."

At exactly midnight, the couple arrived. They were immediately brought into a side room so that no one would see them.

The *Rav* began to prepare for the marriage ceremony. First, he needed to get a *minyan* (quorum of ten adult male Jews). By now it was after midnight. The streets were empty, deserted; not a living creature could be seen. Where would it be possible to get another eight to complete a *minyan* at this hour?

The marriage needed to take place that night at any cost. A delay could not be afforded. It was necessary to get eight "kosher" Jews, people who could be relied upon to keep a secret and not tell anyone what they had seen. Otherwise, the lives of the *Rav*, the young couple, and everyone present would be in danger.

Within half an hour, the room held nine men. Only one was missing, a tenth man for the *minyan*.

What did the *Rav* do?

In Rav Levi Yitzchok's apartment building, a young Jew had been assigned by the government to serve as head of the housing committee. It was his responsibility to spy and keep careful tabs on any irregular movements in the home of the *Rav*, and verify that no religious ceremonies were taking place. It was to him that the *Rav* sent a messenger, asking him to come.

When he arrived, Rav Levi Yitzchok told him that he wanted him to serve as the tenth man of a *minyan*, so that he could conduct a Jewish wedding for the young Jewish couple who was getting married that night.

"Me?!" he jumped back as if bitten by a snake.

"Yes, you!"

The young man rushed to the windows and closed all the shutters. Then he sat down quietly, and alertly watched the unfolding events.

The *Rebbetzin* brought a big tablecloth to serve as the *chupa* canopy, and four of those present, like living posts, held up its four corners.

When the *kesuba* (marriage contract) was drawn up, the bride and groom were summoned from their hiding place in the other room. The bride's face was veiled, and the groom tried to cover his face, too, so he would not be recognized.

The ceremony began. No candles were lit due to the bride and groom's fear of discovery. Seven circles were conducted around the groom as is customary, and the *Rav* arranged the marriage and recited the blessing over the wine. The groom put the ring on the bride's finger and said, "Behold you are betrothed to me..." The ceremony was complete.

It was now 1:30 a.m. The bride and groom hurried to vacate the premises, as did all the other participants – except for two.

These were people who held Communist Party cards. They took their cards out of their pockets, approached Rav Levi Yitzchok, and said emotionally, "As of now, *Rav*, we are with you and we do not want to part from you. All of this" – pointing to their cards – "is worth nothing to us when we are with you, honored *Rav*..."

From the memoirs of Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson (1880-1964), mother of the *Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory.

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[www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/960577/jewish/A-Tenth-Man-for-the-Minyan.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/960577/jewish/A-Tenth-Man-for-the-Minyan.htm)



## Rav Eliezer of Uzipoli, 20<sup>th</sup> of Av

Rav Eliezer was a *Chassidic* leader, son of the *Tzaddik* Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Strettin (who was the foremost talmid of the famous *Chassidic Rebbe*, Rav Uri of Strelisk). He was born in Poland.

Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Strettin had four righteous sons, who he said were the incarnations of Dovid *HaMelech's* warriors. He said about his son Eliezer, that he performed his spiritual work with a great degree of concealment and modesty that even fooled the *Soton*.

Like his father, Rav Eliezer *davened* and sang with tremendous joy. He showed a great deal of love toward all Jews, never displayed anger, and distributed great amounts of money to *tzedoka*. He was known as a man of miracles and wonders.

Rav Eliezer was *niftar* in Strettin and left behind two sons, Rav Nachum of Burstein and Rav Uri of Stanislav.

[www.dailyzohar.com/](http://www.dailyzohar.com/)



## Rav Chaim, the Brisker Rav, 21<sup>st</sup> of Av

### Rav Chaim HaLevi Soloveitchik – a Bigger Ba'al Chessed or Gaon?

It is said that Rav Chaim Brisker was a *Ba'al Chessed* of unimaginable greatness, but this part of his character was overshadowed by his genius. The *Chofetz Chaim* was a *Gaon BaTorah* beyond comprehension but this *Gadlus* was

overshadowed by his character.

His house was open to the public and people would make themselves at home as if they owned the place. At times Rav Chaim would not go to sleep because someone was in his bed. The Brisker *Rav* said that his father's home was much worse than a *Reshus HoRabbim* (public area). If



you made your bed in the street, the authorities would come and take it away. In his father's house, there were no rules and people did whatever they wanted.

In 1895, after a fire destroyed many homes in Brisk, Rav Chaim slept on the floor in the hallway of the *shul* and, despite the pleas of his family, refused to sleep in his home when so many *Yehudim* did not have a roof over their heads.

Rav Chaim hated money and when it came into his hands, he made sure it did not remain in his possession very long, certainly not overnight. His family would hide any money they had in the house. At some point, the *Kehilla* of Brisk stopped giving him his paycheck and gave it only to his wife, because he would disburse it immediately to the poor.

To describe his *chessed* is impossible. To try to describe his *Torah* is downright chutzpa. We will share one story that gives a glimpse of how he felt about *Kevod HaTorah*. One *Motzo'ei Shabbos*, after spending many hours dictating twelve pages of *chiddushim* into the wee hours of the morning to one of the *shochtim* in Brisk who would write for him, he stopped and reached out for the papers and tore them into shreds, declaring, "False *Torah* cannot exist. The world only needs authentic *Torah!*"

Rav Chaim was the son of the *Bais HaLevi*, Rav Yosha Ber Soloveitchik, the *Rav* of Brisk. He married the daughter of Rav Refoel Shapiro, the son-in-law of the *Netziv*. He had three sons: Rav Velvel, who succeeded him and is known as the Brisker *Rav*, who escaped Europe during the Holocaust with his older sons (Rav Yosef Dov, Rav Dovid, Rav Refoel and Rav Meir) and replanted the Brisker dynasty, with *Yeshivos* and all, in Yerushalayim; Rav Moshe Soloveitchik, who immigrated to the United States and became *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon*, where he was succeeded by his two sons, Rav Yosha Ber and Rav Aharon; and Rav

Yisrael Gershon, whose son was Rav Moshe Soloveitchik of Switzerland.

Before becoming *Rav* of Brisk, at a very young age Rav Chaim was co-*Rosh Yeshiva* of Volozhin, together with his wife's grandfather, the *Netziv*. In the early years of the *Netziv's* tenure at Volozhin, Rav Chaim's father, the *Bais HaLevi*, was co-*Rosh Yeshiva* with the *Netziv*, but their vastly different personalities forced them to split up. Rav Chaim's famous *talmidim* included, first and foremost, his sons as well as Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, Rav Elchonon Wasserman and Rav Shimon Shkop.

Rav Chaim was *niftar* on the 21<sup>st</sup> of *Av* 5678/1918. Through these *talmidim* and the *Yeshivos* who follow his *Derech HaLimud*, as well as every *ben Torah* who gets a *geshmak* out of repeating a *chiddush* from Rav Chaim, Rav Chaim continues to live in the hallowed halls of every *Yeshiva* today and in the heart, mind and mouth of every serious *Talmid Chochom*.

*Yehi Zichro Boruch!*

[www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/Reb-Chaim-Halevi](http://www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/Reb-Chaim-Halevi)

Soloveitchik-A-Bigger-Baal-Chesed-Or-Gaon/3995



### **Rav Chaim Brisker's Glass Does Not Shatter**

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik made a *Seudas Mitzva* in his house. The table was set with his finest glass and china in honor of the occasion. One of the the participants got up from the table and accidentally took the tablecloth with him as he got caught on it. The tablecloth crashed to the floor with all its expensive and delicate contents falling to the ground.

Everyone was horrified and turned to look at Rav Chaim, waiting for his reaction. Rav Chaim told everyone not to worry and assured them that nothing broke. They slowly approached the wreckage and unraveled the tablecloth. Sure enough every single piece was intact and nothing was damaged.

All eyes turned to Rav Chaim for an

explanation. Rav Chaim explained that he was not a *novi* or a miracle worker. He only knew the *Kabbola* that he had from Rav Chaim Volozhin. Rav Chaim Volozhin said that no harm will ever come to something bought from money earned honestly and fairly. Rav Chaim said that since all his money was earned fairly he was sure that nothing could have broken. And so it was.

[www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Rav-Chaim-Briskers-Glass-](http://www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Rav-Chaim-Briskers-Glass-Doesnt-Shatter/4141)

[Doesnt-Shatter/4141](http://www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Rav-Chaim-Briskers-Glass-Doesnt-Shatter/4141)



### **Rav Chaim Soloveitchik's Door**

Rav Chaim Brisker was an incredible *Ba'al Chessed*. His home was totally *hefker* to all those who wanted to enter. People ate his food, took away his *seforim*, and even slept in his bed, leaving him nowhere to sleep some nights. His concern for others was so great that it did not dawn on anyone that they were inconveniencing him – and they probably weren't. His house was the local “hangout” for anyone who had nowhere to go.

Someone once asked why he had a door on his house if it performed no function whatsoever, since it was always open. The answer was obvious. According to one *dei'a* (*halachic* opinion), in order to put a *Mezusa* in a doorway, it needs to have a door. The door is there just to make sure that the *Mezusa* is 100 percent *l'chat'chila*. Why else would someone have a door?

[www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/Rav-Chaim-Soloveitchiks-Brisker-](http://www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/Rav-Chaim-Soloveitchiks-Brisker-Door/4259)

[Door/4259](http://www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/Rav-Chaim-Soloveitchiks-Brisker-Door/4259)



### **Rav Chaim Soloveitchik's Demands**

In the home of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, everything was *hefker*. Anyone off the street could come in and take whatever they wanted and no one in the family was allowed to utter a single word. Families would sometimes come in and take a room for themselves and no one would say anything.

His son, the Brisker *Rav*, said that he

once came to his own bed at night and found someone lying in it. He had no place to sleep that night but did not say anything to anyone about it.

Rav Dovid Soloveitchik said that one time his father, the Brisker *Rav*, was writing a *D'var Torah* that his father, Rav Chaim, had told him to write for him. As he was in middle of writing, a *schlepper* barged in from the street and asked the Brisker *Rav* for the pen. The Brisker *Rav* told him he would give it to him in a minute when he had finished writing. When Rav Chaim heard this, he screamed, “What is going on here that we don't lend our pens...?!” (*Holchei Nesivos – Middos Tovos*)

[www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/Rav-Chaim-Soloveitchiks-](http://www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/Rav-Chaim-Soloveitchiks-Demands/4941)

[Demands/4941](http://www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/Rav-Chaim-Soloveitchiks-Demands/4941)



### **Rav Chaim Brisker Heeds the Bubba Meisa**

One time Rav Chaim Soloveitchik paid a visit to his elderly cousin. When he walked into the house, a button fell off his coat. His cousin quickly took out some thread and sewed the button back on while Rav Chaim was wearing the coat, which is said to make someone forget his *Torah*. Rav Chaim then employed the known antidote and took the edge of the collar and put it in his mouth.

Puzzled, Rav Chaim's cousin said to him, “Do you really believe in these *Bubba Meises*?”

Rav Chaim answered that when it came to anything to do with forgetting *Torah* he did not play around – and he even took *Bubba Meises* very seriously. (*Dirshu Chizuk*)

[www.revach.net/avodah/olam-hatorah/Rav-Chaim-Brisker-Heeds-](http://www.revach.net/avodah/olam-hatorah/Rav-Chaim-Brisker-Heeds-The-Bubba-Meisa/3891)

[The-Bubba-Meisa/3891](http://www.revach.net/avodah/olam-hatorah/Rav-Chaim-Brisker-Heeds-The-Bubba-Meisa/3891)

### **Rav Chaim on Chessed**

A person who closes his *Gemora* because he must perform a *Chessed* is considered to have his *Gemora* still open. A person who opens his *Gemora* to avoid

doing a *Chessed* is considered to have his *Gemora* still closed.

www.revach.net/daily-headline/headline/Rav-Chaim-on-Chesed/5097



## Rav Aharon Roke'ach of Belz, 21<sup>st</sup> of Av

When Rav Aharon of Belz hastily dressed and left the *mikve* when his father Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz wanted to come in, his father said, "If my body were as holy as his I wouldn't feel the need to ever go the *mikve*." The *Shineve Rav* once said about Rav Aharon that it seemed the *Yetzer Hora* completely forgot about him.

Rav Yeshayale Tchchoiver said that Rav Aharon never committed any *aveira*. There was only one *pasuk* that he was not *mekayem*: *Ein Tzaddik baaretz asher yaaseh tov v'lo yecheta* – "there is no person in the world who only does good and does not sin". This *pasuk* the flawless Rav Aharon did not keep.

Rav Meir Arik said that even more amazing than his *Gaonus* in *Torah* was his awesome *Kedusha*. From his youth, Rav Aharon ate once a day and slept only two hours a night. "What should I do? My body doesn't need more," he would say. "But for those who need more it is forbidden for them to afflict themselves."

Rav Aharon was born in 1880, the *bechor* (firstborn) of the Belzer *Rebbe*, Rav Yissochor Dov. Rav Aharon was a *Gaon* in all facets of *Torah*, and even in his lifetime his father delegated *psak Halocha* to his young son, Rav Aharon. In 1927, Rav Yissochor Dov was *niftar* and during the *levaya* Rav Aharon, who was then forty-seven years old, was crowned the next *Rebbe* of the Belzer dynasty.

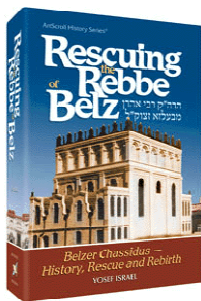
In the 1930s, Belz flourished under Rav Aharon's leadership. Rav Aharon was a strong leader and took a stand against the inroads of the *Haskola* in

Belz, making many new *takonos*. Rav Aharon's fame spread throughout Europe, so much so that when the Nazis invaded, Rav Aharon was one of their top targeted *Rabbonim* and his capture became a priority for them. Belz was invaded on *Hoshana Rabba* in 1939, which set off four years of miserable and miraculous wandering and escape, until a worldwide effort brought Rav Aharon and his brother safely to the shores of *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Aharon was weakened both physically and emotionally after his *kehilla* and his entire family were killed. Rav Aharon spent years hiding and avoiding capture in ghettos including in Sokal, Premishlan, Vizhnitz, Bochnia and Budapest, Hungary, before his final escape. In Budapest he was *mechazek* the Jews who had not yet felt the vicious claws of the Nazis but were about to, although they did not believe it would happen.

In *Eretz Yisrael*, Rav Aharon settled in Tel Aviv where he worked to replant Belz from the ashes of destruction. *Eretz Yisrael* was *zoche* to have Rav Aharon for thirteen years, first in Tel Aviv and later in Yerushalayim. Rav Aharon was not *zoche* to have any children from his marriage after the war and was succeeded by the current Belzer *Rebbe*, Rav Yissochor Dov, the son of his younger brother, Rav Mordechai, the *Admor* of Bilgoray who never left his side through all his trials and tribulations.

Rav Yissochor Dov was born to Rav Mordechai in 1948 in *Eretz Yisrael* but was orphaned when he was only one year old when Rav Mordechai was suddenly *niftar* in 1949. He was then raised by his uncle, Rav Aharon, who was *niftar* on the 21<sup>st</sup> of *Av* 5717/1957 at the age of seventy-seven.





Rav Aharon is buried on *Har HaMenuchos* in the *Chelkas HaTzaddikim* next to Rav Moshe Feinstein and the Tchebiner Rav.

*Yehi Zichro Boruch.*

[www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/The-Holy-Aharon-Of-Belz-Reb-Aharon-Rokeach-The-Belzer-Rov/4687](http://www.revach.net/stories/gedolim-biographies/The-Holy-Aharon-Of-Belz-Reb-Aharon-Rokeach-The-Belzer-Rov/4687)



### **The Belzer Rav's Taxi Lesson**

When bending over to get into a taxi, Rav Aharon of Belz quipped that you can learn from here that in order to get anywhere in life, a person must first lower himself completely.

-Rav Moshe Aharon Stern, *Mashgiach* of Kaminetz

[www.revach.net/daily-headline/headline/The-Belzer-Rovs-Taxi-Lesson/4686](http://www.revach.net/daily-headline/headline/The-Belzer-Rovs-Taxi-Lesson/4686)



### **Rav Binyomin Mendelson Cancels his Trip to the Chazon Ish After Showing his Kvittel to the Belzer Rav**

Rav Binyomin Mendelson was the legendary *Rav* of the famous religious farming settlement of Komemius. He would be *mechazek* the farmers to keep all the *mitzvos* of agriculture in *Eretz Yisrael*, especially the great challenge of *Shmitta*. He would often visit the Belzer Rav, Rav Aharon, for a *berocha* for the settlement's *hatzlocha*.

One time a baby boy was born in Komemius and the father wanted Rav Mendelson to be the *sandek*. Rav Mendelson declined the honor because he had already been *sandek* at the *bris* of the man's older son and the *Rema* says that one person should not be *sandek* twice,

since it is a *segula* for wealth and we want to spread it around. The father was insistent that the *Rav* take the *Kibud* and since some people are *noheg* to give it to the *Rav* more than once, Rav Mendelson was in a quandary.

He decided to travel to Bnei Brak to ask the *Chazon Ish* his opinion on the matter. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Rav Mendelson decided to go into the Belzer Rav with a personal *Kvittel* and *Kvittlach* from all the people of Komemius hoping to get a *berocha*.

When he came in to the Belzer Rav, he passed him all the *kvittlech*. Rav Aharon then told Rav Mendelson that he would only read Rav Mendelson's *kvittel* and not the rest of them, since when the *Rav* gets a *bracha* it flows to all his constituents as well, so it was unnecessary to read each individual request.

Then the Belzer Rav went on to explain himself. He said the *Rema* says that we do not allow one person to be a *sandek* twice, since we want to spread the wealth. However, said Rav Aharon, we know that there is a *minhag* to give it to the *Rav* more than once. We see from this *minhag* that when the *Rav* gets a *berocha* it goes to everyone, and therefore he can be *sandek* many times without hoarding the wealth.

When Rav Mendelson heard these prophetic words, he accepted the *berocha* of the Belzer Rav and headed straight back to Komemius without any more questions. And of course he gladly accepted *sandeka'us* at the *bris*.

[www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Rav-Binyomin-Mendelson-Cancels-His-Trip-To-The-Chazon-Ish-After-Showing-His-Kvittel-To-The-Belzer-Rov/4688](http://www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Rav-Binyomin-Mendelson-Cancels-His-Trip-To-The-Chazon-Ish-After-Showing-His-Kvittel-To-The-Belzer-Rov/4688)

The-Belzer-Rov/4688



### **Rav Meir HaGodol of Premishlan, 22<sup>nd</sup> of Av**

Rav Meir was born in 5471/1711 to Rav Yaakov of Premishlan, known as

*Yaakov Ish Tom*. Rav Yaakov traced his *yichus* to Rav Yaakov of Korbil, the *Rishon*

who wrote *She'eilos U'Teshuvos Min HaShomayim*. Rav Meir's son was Rav Aharon Leib, who was the father of the well-known Rav Meir'l Premishlaner. Rav Meir's other sons were Rav Dovid of Kalisch and Rav Pesach Chassid.

In his younger years, Rav Meir supported himself by selling goods for various vendors. Even among the local gentiles he gained a reputation as "Meir the trustworthy", for his fair business practices and *ehrllichkeit*.

After a while, Rav Meir gave up working so he would be free to learn in the *Bais Medrash* all day. He suffered debilitating poverty but stood steadfast in his decision to devote himself entirely to the service of *Hashem*.

One day a merchant showed up in town with a honeycomb, insisting that he would only sell it to "Meir the Trustworthy" and no one else. In no hurry to conclude his shiurim, Rav Meir made the merchant wait until the end of the day. Later that night, after returning from the *Bais Medrash*, Rav Meir paid a high price for the honeycomb (his *ehrllichkeit* would not let him buy it for less), even though he was forced to borrow money to do so.

Taking it apart, the *Rebbetzin* discovered that there was barely any honey in the honeycomb; but then, inspecting it more closely, she found that it concealed a huge sum of money. Rav Meir refused to

derive benefit from his *metzia* without further investigation. In the end, after satisfying himself that this was indeed *yad Hashem*, he kept the money.

When his grandson, Rav Meir'l of Premishlan, told this story, he added, "Great *malochim* put the money there, because of his strong *middas habitochon*."

According to a *mesora*, Rav Meir *HaGodol* wrote a *sefer* called *Ohr Toraso shel Rav Meir*, but the *sefer* was burned.

*Zechuso yogen oleinu.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-22-avaugust-18/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-22-avaugust-18/)



### Tied up Above

Rav Meir of Premishlan's trek to immerse in the *mikve* attracted much attention. The *mikve* was situated at a point in a river on the slope of a tall mountain. When the road was icy, the people had to detour around the mountain so as not to slip. Rav Meir, however, would march straight up the mountain and would never falter. When asked by some youngsters the secret to his success he responded, "*Az mir zenen tzi gebinden oyven falt min nisht arup hinten* – When one is connected Above, one does not fall down!"

*Toras Menachem* 5711, volume 2, page 105



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



### **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.

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-23-avaugust-19/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-23-avaugust-19/)



# Zera

# Shimshon



# Ekev

The Zera Shimshon, Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachmon Michael Nachmani, was born in 5467 (1706/1707) into an illustrious family with great Rabbinical lineage. He studied the revealed and concealed parts of the Torah by the Torah greats of his day.

He served as Rav of Modena, Pisa, Sayna and Rigvov, Italy, and was recognized as a holy and pious individual, as well as a tremendous Torah scholar in all areas of Torah. He passed away on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Elul 5539 (1779).

His Seforim were named, Toldos Shimshon (The 'Offspring' of Shimshon) on Pirkei Avos and Zera Shimshon (The 'Seed' of Shimshon) on the Parshi'os of the Torah. In his introduction, he explains that since his only son had died during his lifetime, he wrote his Seforim to perpetuate his own memory after his passing.

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

*"I implore of you with ten terms of supplication to choose from my Chiddushim (novella) the piece that finds favor in your eyes, for your learning will sooth my soul etc..."*

*"This righteousness will stand by you forever – to 'eat' in this world, and be satiated in the next. In this merit, Hashem will repay you with children, health and sustenance.*

*"...and now my brothers and friends etc. do a true kindness, and with your eyes you will see children and grandchildren surrounding your table, houses filled with all that is good, wealth and honor will not cease from your children..."*

לזכר נשמת

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב מיכאל נחמן זצ"ל

בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

~ THE JEWISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE CAN RECEIVE REWARD FOR THEIR MITZVOS IN THIS WORLD.

~ THE MERIT OF ONE PERSON DOING THE MITZVOS BRINGS BENEFIT TO THE MASSES.

ושמרת את המצות וגו' אשר אנכי מצוך היום לעשותם (ז' יא')

והיה עקב תשמעון את המשפטים האלה וגו' ושמר ה' אלקיך לך את הברית ואת החסד וגו' (ז' יב')

*You shall observe the commandments etc. that I command you today, to perform them. (7:11)*

*This shall be the reward when you heed these laws etc. Hashem will watch for you the covenant and the kindness etc. (7:12)*

Last week's Parsha ends off with Hashem telling the Jewish people to keep the Mitzvos. The words in this Passuk are written in the singular tense. The first Passuk in this week's Parsha, a continuation of this commandment - to keep the Mitzvos, changes to the plural tense. Why does the Torah change its way of wording the same message from one Passuk to the next?

Before he answers this question, the Zera Shimshon infers an amazing concept from the fact that the Torah switches from the singular tense to plural tense.

The Passuk in last week's Parsha says, "...that I command you today to perform them." On the word 'today', Rashi brings from Chazal, that we must do the Mitzvos 'today' – in this world, but only receive our reward 'tomorrow' – in the next word. This because we do not receive reward for our keeping the Mitzvos in this world (Kiddushin 39b).

The Zera Shimshon infers that since the concept of not receiving reward in this world for keeping the Mitzvos is derived from the Passuk that commands us to keep the Mitzvos in the singular tense, it follows that this rule is only true regarding a private person. However, the Jewish people as a whole can indeed receive benefits, in this world, from their keeping of the Mitzvos.

This, he further proves from the first Passuk of this week's Parsha. The Passuk commands the Jewish people to keep the Mitzvos and Hashem promises that – "*This shall be the reward when you heed these laws etc. Hashem will watch for you the covenant and the kindness etc.*" Here, the Jewish people receive a clear promise from Hashem that they will receive reward in this world for their keeping of the Mitzvos. If the rule is true - that we are not awarded in this world for keeping the Mitzvos, how do we understand the promise Hashem made in this passuk?

This, says Zera Shimshon, proves that since the source of this principal (that one does not receive reward for his Mitzvos in this world) is derived from the Passuk that speaks in singular tense, it in fact only applies to the individual. However, the Jewish people as a whole, can receive reward – even in this world, for keeping the Mitzvos.

To explain why the Torah switches from the singular tense to the plural tense, the Zera Shimshon says the following:

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 111a), when discussing who will merit being redeemed at the end of days, brings an argument between R' Yochanan and Reish Lakish in understand the Passuk that says, "*I shall take one from a city and two from a family, and I shall bring you to Tzion.*" Reish Lakish says the Passuk is to be understood as is - only one person from a city and two people from an entire family will merit being redeemed. R' Yochanan responded to Reish Lakish that Hashem is not pleased that you say such things – that the Jewish people will be diminished to such a small number. Rather, the Passuk means that even in the merit of one righteous person in a city, the entire city will be saved. Since we always go in accordance with the opinion of R' Yochanan over that of Reish Lakish, here too, it will be as R' Yochanan explains.

Based on this, the Zera Shimshon explains that this is why the Torah begins with the commandment to keep the Mitzvos in the singular tense and then switches to the plural tense. It is to teach R' Yochanan's lesson – that one person who keeps the Mitzvos, his merit protects the masses. "*You shall observe the commandments etc. that I command you today to perform them*" – singular tense. In the merit of the individual who keeps the Mitzvos, Hashem will consider it as though the masses kept the Mitzvos – "*this shall be the reward when you heed these laws etc. Hashem will watch for you the covenant and the kindness etc.*" - plural tense – the merit will serve to protect many people.



Eikev

August 8<sup>th</sup> 2020  
18<sup>th</sup> of Av 5780

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Hilula

18 - Rabbi Dov Bar Eliezerov

19 - Rabbi Ya'akov Kuli, author of 'Me'am Lo'ez'

20 - Rabbi Yosef Tzubari

21 - Rabbi Ahron Roke'ach, the Admor of Belz

22 - Rabbi Mordechai Bar Hillel, author of 'Mordechai'

23 - Rabbi Yisrael Ya'akov Kanievsky

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

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

# Pachad David

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

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



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

## Torah and Yirat Shamayim Achieved Through Contemplation

**"Now, O Israel, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d"**

(Devarim 10:12)

Moshe Rabbeinu tells the people that Hashem is not asking of them something considerable, rather an easy task, Yirat Shamayim. It appears from Moshe's words that Yirat Shamayim is something easy to attain. But this is surprising, for we well know how hard it is to achieve the virtue of Yirat Shamayim.

I would like to explain the idea in the following way. Yirat Shamayim is indeed not hard to acquire, it is only the hindrances that disturb our Avodat Hashem that make it difficult for us to acquire this trait. The greatest hindrance is when a person is unable to differentiate between good and bad, between straight and crooked, therefore he cannot achieve Yirat Shamayim. For when one does not cleave to Torah alone, but also enjoys and is enthusiastic about the futilities of this world, then the power of Torah does not have an influence on this person and does not afford the feelings of Yirat Shamayim that one requires for the war against the Evil Inclination.

My illustrious ancestor, Rabbi Yeshayahu Pinto zya"a, based the name of all his sefarim on the word 'kesef' (silver/money), for example 'Kesef Nivchar', 'Kesef Mezuak'. When he was asked why he chose these names, he answered that he wished to impart an important principle for success in Torah. Every person has a leaning towards and a love for silver and gold. Even if one possesses much wealth, he is still not satisfied and continually seeks strategies and suggestions to increase his assets. However, to be successful in Torah a person is obligated from the start to know and understand the precious value of the Torah, and then take all the leanings and love that he has for this world, including all the effort that he would put forth to acquire more wealth, and turn all his heart's desires towards Torah alone, until he can apply to himself the verse, "My soul yearns, indeed it pines, for the courtyards of Hashem" (Tehillim 84:30). The word 'בנספה', yearns, is derived from the term 'כסף', money, implying that a person must direct all the leaning he has towards money, to Hashem and His Torah. Only when a person understands the precious value of the Torah, can he then be successful in Torah. Only when he understands deep in his heart that he must give up

all the pleasures and futilities of life so as to acquire Torah, will he then merit Torah, as Chazal explain (see Berachot 63b), "Torah is only sustained in one who kills himself over it".

I once had reason to visit one of the higher floors of a multi-storied building, and on contemplation, I realized that the higher I climbed, the cleaner the building was. The ground floor was very dirty, the first floor less so, and so forth. The reason is that all occupants of the building pass through the ground floor, even those who occupy the second and third floor, while only those who occupy the upper floors are the ones to use those floors. That is why the higher stories are cleaner.

This taught me a great lesson. The more a person is connected to materialism and physical matters, the more sullied he is, while the more a person elevates himself and detaches himself from the futilities and pleasures of this world, the cleaner he is. It is most important for man to realize that there is no value to the impermanence of the world, and anything that this world offers, including all its pleasures, were only given to serve the one who is a servant of Hashem Yitbarach. They have no intrinsic value of their own. Only through contemplating this idea can one acquire Torah and Yirat Shamayim.

David Hamelech tells us (Tehillim 8:4), "When I behold Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars that You have set in place". This implies that man must contemplate and consider every matter, even the smallest and simplest, and derive a lesson from it, for personal growth and elevation is achieved mainly through the power of contemplation. When a person does not contemplate his ways, he spiritual growth is stunted, as it says (ibid 82:5), "They do not know nor do they understand, they walk in darkness". In the absence of contemplation, a person can G-d forbid fall from the level that he has achieved in one small moment. In addition, if one does not abhor the futilities of this world, one cannot grow and elevate oneself, and one can never achieve the true purpose, Yirat Shamayim, which is a result of Torah study and constant contemplation of Hashem's deeds.

This is the reward that man receives when he lives a life of contemplation and does not live like an animal. Rather, if he abhors worldly pleasures then he merits cleaving to Torah and acquiring Yirat Shamayim.



## Walking in their Ways

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

### Faith Pays Off

I was once asked to help a particular Rabbi raise funds for his institutions. I arranged an appeal and Hashem shined His favor on me. Within one day, I managed to amass a respectable amount of money. All that was left for me to do was wait for this Rabbi to come and collect the money.

A short time before the Rabbi was supposed to arrive, I received a phone call from a wealthy man. He asked that I bless him with deliverance from the troubles that he was experiencing. In order to have a basis for my blessing, I asked that he make a donation to the tzedakah organization of the aforementioned Rabbi. The man was only too pleased to agree and said that he would bring over the money the following Tuesday. He would give it to me after participating in the weekly shiur that I deliver in the Beit Haknesset.

That Tuesday, another Rabbi appeared in the synagogue. He was a humble tzaddik who had also come to raise money. When he succeeded in raising the sum of three hundred euro, his joy knew no bounds. The wealthy man with whom I had spoken the week before, assumed that this Rabbi was the one I had referred to in our phone conversation, therefore he hurried over to him and handed him the generous sum of one thousand euro.

"Honored Rav," he then told me, "I transferred the money directly to the Rabbi, exactly as you advised me."

I was most surprised since the Rabbi I had mentioned was nowhere in sight. "Where did you see him?" I asked.

"Right here, in the Beit Haknesset," he answered.

I then understood his mistake. "You gave your donation to a different Rabbi, not the one that I had in mind," I explained, "but this is obviously from Hashem."

I thought to myself that the Rabbi who received the wealthy man's donation had imagined he would raise only several hundred euro, but in the end he merited leaving with the considerable sum of one thousand three hundred euro! It must certainly have been his faith in Hashem that caused him to be so successful, way beyond his expectations.

## 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 from sections of faith in Hashem and His Torah.

## Guard Your Tongue

### Even Though He Did Not Sin

The Sefer Chassidim writes (siman 22): "If one finds oneself with a group of men, one of whom commits something inappropriate but the identity of the perpetrator is unknown, one must say, 'I was the one who did this', even though he did not sin. This shows the responsibility of one Jew to another.



## In Our Father's Path

### The Preacher from Prague

A central theme that repeats itself many times in the Torah, is the power of hearing and listening, meaning inclining one's ear to hear words of rebuke and mussar. This Parsha too begins with the words "This shall be the reward when you hearken". This implies that everything is dependent on the power of hearing and internalizing what we are told.

Regarding the giving over of rebuke and mussar to others, Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim of Bavel zya" a (the Ben Ish Chai) relates the following story: An Ashkenazi, European Rav once came to Bagdad. The people asked him, 'Whom do we have the honor of meeting?' to which he replied, 'I am the preacher from Prague'. Since the townspeople had never met the preacher, they believed him, accorded him great honor and asked him to enlighten the townspeople with his words.

Several merchants who had come to this town were also present at his address. One of them, who was familiar with the preacher from Prague, immediately realized that he was not the person he was pretending to be. He turned to him and asked, "Why do you call yourself 'the preacher from Prague'?"

The speaker answered: "The word 'מוכיח', preacher, is not only derived from the term 'תוכחה', rebuke, but also from the term 'הוכחה', proof. I have evidence of the correct way to conduct oneself in this world. I used to be a wealthy man and travelled around the entire world. I even travelled to far-off America, which involves a long and dangerous journey lasting three months on the open sea, exposed to pirates and terrifying storms. I observed all the pleasures that the entire world has to offer and all the different wealthy people from one end of the world to the other. I personally met people who were happy and contented, yet they suddenly fell terribly ill. What kind of lives do they have? Neither home nor family could help them in this situation.

And I myself used to own fifteen vineyards that brought in a yearly profit of millions. I had twenty fields of crops that provided me with such and such, thirty thousand sheep and a hundred cows with whose milk I could support a dozen large families. I possessed a hundred stores and twenty ships, hard cash in the bank and ready money in my pocket, besides several stock bonds in the government.

All of a sudden, my wealth took a downward turn and eventually disappeared. I have nothing, I am a destitute man who goes around begging for donations. I don't even have enough for one meal; I am as naked as the day I was born.

Look at me, I am a walking lesson that wealth cannot be relied upon! Our riches are compared to a fine strand of hair and the entire universe on which we tread is likened to a broken shard and fleeting dream! The wheel goes round and in just one moment Hashem "humbles the haughty and lifts the lowly"!

These are not mere empty words; I can show you 'receipts' for all that I am telling you. This being the case, am I not fitting to hold the title 'the preacher of Prague?!' I hail from the town of Prague and my townspeople were all shocked at what happened to me and took this lesson to heart. This is why I call myself 'the preacher from Prague'!"...

The Ben Ish Chai appreciated his sincere and correct assertions and even recorded them in his sefer 'Od Yosef Chai'. For one who rebukes others, must first tell himself those very things!





## Pearls of the Parsha

### One Must Study Torah in Order to Live

*"You shall teach them to your children to discuss them" (Devarim 11:19)*

A father, whose son studied in the Chafetz Chaim's Yeshiva in Radin, came to the Chafetz Chaim and told him that in his opinion, his son has spent enough time studying Torah and he wishes to ask for permission, and a blessing, for his son to begin assisting him in his business.

"Why should he stop his Torah studies?" asked the Chafetz Chaim.

"What should I tell you, Rebbi," the father replied, "as far as I see it, he will never be the second Rabbi Akiva Eiger. So at least he should assist me with my livelihood."

"What is your profession?" asked the Chafetz Chaim.

"I am a greengrocer in the local market and it is hard work."

"I am surprised at you," the Chafetz Chaim responded. "Why do you work so hard? After all, you'll never be the second Rothschild. So why bother!"

"What do you mean?!" the father objected. "One must work in order to live!"

"Indeed you are right, and one must also study Torah in order to live!" was the tzaddik vehement reply.

### Blessings from the Master of Blessings

*"You will be blessed above all other peoples" (Devarim 7:14)*

Rabbi Maimon Abu of Mostaganem poses the following question in his sefer 'Bnei Reuven'. Since Hashem Himself blesses Yisrael, as it says (ibid 13) "He will love you, bless you and multiply you", what is the meaning of the blessing in the following verse, "You will be blessed above all other peoples", literally meaning 'You will be blessed by all the peoples'.

He answers by quoting the Midrash on the verse "They blessed Rivka and said to her, 'Our sister, may you come to be thousands of myriads'" (Bereishit 24:60). "Rabbi Berachye and Rabbi Levi in the name of Rav Chama bar Chanina said, why was Rivka not remembered until Yitzchak prayed for her? So that the idol-worshippers should not say, 'our blessing bore fruit'. Only once "Yitzchak entreated opposite his wife, because she was barren" then "Hashem allowed Himself to be entreated by him, and his wife Rivka conceived" (Bereishit 25:21-22).

This answers the above question. Here too, so that the nations should not

say 'our prayers bore fruit', it will be necessary for Hashem to make sure their blessings are not fulfilled, as with Rivka. Yet since Hashem wants us to be blessed, He therefore preceded their blessing with His own blessing, as the verse says "He will... bless you". Since this is the case, even if the Jewish people are blessed by the nations, as it says "You will be blessed by all the peoples", they do not have to be concerned since they have already been blessed by Hashem. The nations too will not be able to say 'our prayers bore fruit' since their blessing was preceded by Hashem's blessing to His people.

### Eretz Yisrael's Presence Throughout the World

*"In order to prolong your days and the days of your children upon the Land that Hashem has sworn to your forefathers to give them" (Devarim 11:21)*

Rabbi Yochanan was told that there were extremely old people living in Bavel. Rabbi Yochanan was surprised, since was the promise of long life not said only concerning Eretz Yisrael, as it says, "In order to prolong your days and the days of your children upon the Land that Hashem has sworn to your forefathers"? But when he heard that they attend the Batei Knessiot and Batei Midrashot morning and evening, he was placated (Berachot 8a).

This seems surprising. Since Rabbi Yochanan thought that it was only possible to merit long life in Eretz Yisrael, why was he appeased when he heard that they pray morning and evening in the Batei Knessiot? Does the verse not say explicitly that life is only prolonged in the Land?

Rabbi Yosef Adas zt"l explains that the 'Shevet Mussar' tells us that when the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed, Hashem dispersed its stones throughout the world, and wherever one of these stones fell, a Beit Knesset was built on that spot. That is why our Batei Knessiot are called a "Mikdash Me'at", a small Beit Hamikdash.

So since the Babylonians prayed morning and evening in their Batei Knessiot, the place where Hashem dispersed the stones of the Beit Hamikdash, these places were considered like Eretz Yisrael itself.

Also, since the Gemara tells us that in the future the Batei Knessiot and Batei Midrashot of Bavel will be re-established in Eretz Yisrael, they are therefore considered like Eretz Yisrael, and this is why Rabbi Yochanan was appeased when hearing these words.

## Treasures

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



### Man is the Ruler of his Thoughts

*"Now, O Israel, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d"*

(Devarim 10:12)

On the words "only to fear", Rashi expounds, "Our Sages learnt from here that everything is in the hands of Heaven besides Yirat Shamayim."

Moshe told Bnei Yisrael that everything Hashem asks of them is dependent on Yirat Shamayim, and by having Yirat Shamayim they will be able to achieve all other attributes. The Gemara asks on this (Berachot 33b), "Is Yirat Shamayim something small and easy to achieve?" From the way Moshe addresses the people, it seems that Yirat Shamayim is something simple that is easy to acquire. How can this be said about Yirat Shamayim when Chazal have already told us 'all is in the hands of Heaven besides Yirat Shamayim'?

The Gemara answers that for Moshe Rabbeinu, Yirat Shamayim was indeed a small and easy matter, therefore he used this expression when talking to Bnei Yisrael.

The Holy Ba'al Shem Tov said that there are many people whose outside appearance confirms that they observe the Torah and mitzvot, but if we look a little bit deeper into their actions we will see that they are lacking Yirat Shamayim and everything they do is simply a matter of habit devoid of Yirat Shamayim. The Ba'al Shem Tov adds that this reality is a result of those people not giving preference to Hashem Yitbarach, therefore their faith is lacking and this causes a lack in their Yirat Shamayim.

When a person gets up in the morning and his head is occupied with his personal, materialistic affairs, these thoughts accompany him throughout the day and therefore he is too troubled to concern himself with Hashem's will. On the other hand, when a person awakens in the morning and announces loudly, "I gratefully thank You, O living and eternal King", his first thoughts that were given over completely to Hashem, continue accompanying him throughout the day. It therefore follows that all his deeds will be carried out with Yirat Shamayim and with the desire to achieve a higher wisdom.

Everything is dependent on the matter to which we give precedence, to that with which we start our day. Each person must ask himself if his day begins with his personal desires and other materialistic matters, or by mentioning Hashem's Name in gratitude, for returning his soul with great mercy. This is why Chazal said (Berachot 33b), 'Everything is in the hands of Heaven besides Yirat Shamayim'. This is true because it is the person alone who decides where to focus his thoughts on awakening since it is he alone who has control over his thoughts.





## A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

**T**here is a story told about a straightforward Jewish simpleton who posed the following question to his Rav:

"Rabbi, I have a passionate yearning to become a 'ben Olam Haba', to merit Eternal life, but I am an Am Ha'aretz (unlearned) and I do not know how to go about achieving this. I am unable to set aside fixed times for Torah study. Show me the Torah way of life in short!"

"Listen to me well and engrave this in your memory," the Rav replied. "Imagine to yourself that there is only one mitzvah to accomplish, that you are the only Jew in the world, and you are required to fulfill mitzvot today only!"

On hearing these words, the simpleton was very happy. If this is the case, it is simple indeed! He quickly left the Rav's home but the Rav called after him:

"Wait, don't rush away. I wish to explain my words!"

But the simpleton kept on walking quickly and called over his shoulder: "There is nothing to explain, Rabbi! I am not stupid in the least. I understood your words well!"

The man hurried to his store where he sold remnants of material. An elderly Jew entered, chose a piece of material and paid.

He accidentally paid three diners instead of two.

The seller noticed but let the buyer leave without saying anything.

Afternoon approached. The man locked his store and went home to eat.

"You can wash your hands," his wife said. "I am ready to serve the food."

"You can bring the food right away," her husband replied. "We no longer need to wash our hands before partaking of bread!"

The woman was astounded and looked at him questioningly.

"This morning I went to see the Rav, and he ruled that I am only obligated to fulfill one mitzvah. Since I already put on Tefillin today and I also prayed, this is more than enough for today. And tomorrow I will even

be exempt from this. The Rav said that I only need to fulfill mitzvot today!"

His wife's mouth hung open in astonishment. She had not yet collected herself when someone knocked on the door.

An elderly man entered. "I bought a piece of material in your store," he said, "and I just realized that I paid three diners instead of two."

"You are right," answered the store owner calmly, "but what of it? Today I spoke to the Rav and he instructed me to imagine that I am the only Jew in the world. If so, I consider you as a non-Jew and one is not obligated to correct a non-Jew's mistake"...

Now it was the elderly man's turn to stare at him in shock, while the wife began screaming.

"Help! My husband has lost his mind!" The elderly man too began to scream and the husband fled from his home.

He stood in the street and said to himself, "One minute, they are actually right. Who would not be stupefied on hearing these words? One Jew, one mitzvah, one day?! All that happened to me is the Rav's fault. He was the one who instructed me to behave in this strange manner! And with determined steps he turned to the Rav's home to demand an explanation.

The Rav took one look at his face and nodded, "You returned, after all," he said, "I did ask you to come back and allow me to explain my intentions."

Before he had a chance to reply, the man's wife burst into the Rav's home: "Help us, Rabbi, my husband has gone crazy!"

The Rav calmed her down and then the elderly Jew appeared, breathing hard. He had come to ask the Rav to bring the store owner to a din Torah...

The Rav addressed them all. "Listen carefully. It is true that I told him these three instructions, but now let me explain.

The first thing I said was that you should imagine that there is only one mitzvah to fulfill. This was my intention: We have been commanded with six hundred and thirteen mitzvot so the lazy person tells himself, this mitzvah that came my way, I can let it pass. If I do not fulfill this particular mitzvah, I will fulfill a different mitzvah in its place. And even if he decides to fulfill that mitzvah, he says to himself, what's the rush, it won't run away.

He is sitting with a sefer and permits himself to dream. It is true that there is

a mitzvah of Torah study, but it won't run away. I can learn a bit later instead.

A poor man comes and asks for a donation but the wealthy man shrugs his shoulders. He has plenty of money, but maybe he will donate to the next poor person who comes knocking on his door...

This is why I told you not to start making calculations when it comes to mitzvot. You should imagine that there is only this mitzvah in front of you, and nothing else. Only this Torah study, only this prayer, only this mitzvah that came your way.

I also told you to imagine that you are the only Jew in the world. Why?

Because when one is asked to donate for a certain cause, each person excuses himself by saying, why was I approached? There are other people besides me. And so the poor man is pushed away from one to another and remains destitute.

When it is time to attend one's Torah shiur, each person says to himself, 'why should I leave my house tonight when it is pouring with rain? There will still be many participants even if I don't attend'. In the meantime, the shiur is scarcely attended.

The same idea lies behind thinking that one has today only to fulfill the mitzvot. In this way, you will not push off the mitzvot for a different day, which will cause you to push them off completely."

This delightful mashal, says the Maggid Rabbi Ya'akov Galinsky zt"l, is a demonstration of the verse in this week's Parsha, "The entire commandment that I command you today you shall observe to perform" (Devarim 8:1). This verse requires clarification. Since all Bnei Yisrael were being warned about all the Torah commandments, why is it written in the singular ("the entire commandment") and why is it addressed to the individual ("that I command you"), yet ends in the plural ("you shall observe")?

The wording of the verse is a message for each one of us. We should consider each mitzvah as if it is the only one, "the entire commandment"! Similarly, a person should imagine that he is the only one in the world, "that I command you", and he should focus on today alone, "today". This attitude will endow one with the ability to fulfill all the mitzvot!

## *MeOros Ramchal - Parshas Eikev*

### **Mining the Essential Ores of the Spiritual Realms**

“A land whose stones are iron” (8:9) this refers to the spiritual light that defines the builders of the land [אבניה - *avanayha* is transformed to be read as בוניה – *bonayha*] are of iron the metal which corresponds to the spiritual universe of *Assiyah* – the world of Action, as is known that the four metals correspond to the four spiritual universes and they are gold corresponding to *Atzilus* the world of Emanation, silver corresponding to *Beriyah* the world of Creation, copper corresponding to *Yetzira* the world of Formation, and iron corresponding as we said to *Assiyah* the world of Action.

The reason is that our physical bodies are from the World of *Assiyah* and Action and this is why the forces of darkness known as the *sitra achra* try to attach themselves to us. Since *Assiyah* is rectified by the *tikkun* of *Yetzira* therefore a body can be transformed into an angelic being, as were Chanoch and Eliyahu *haNavi* [both transformed from a human physical body into angels.]

“From her mountains shall mine copper,” (ibid) the mountains refer to the lofty supernal beings in the spiritual universes above, the mining of copper alludes to the *Shefa* that comes from *Yetzirah* which corresponds to copper as we explained.

### **How Moshe Repaired the Dessert with a Forty Day Tikkun**

“When I ascended up to the mountain to take down the stone tablets” (9:9-10)

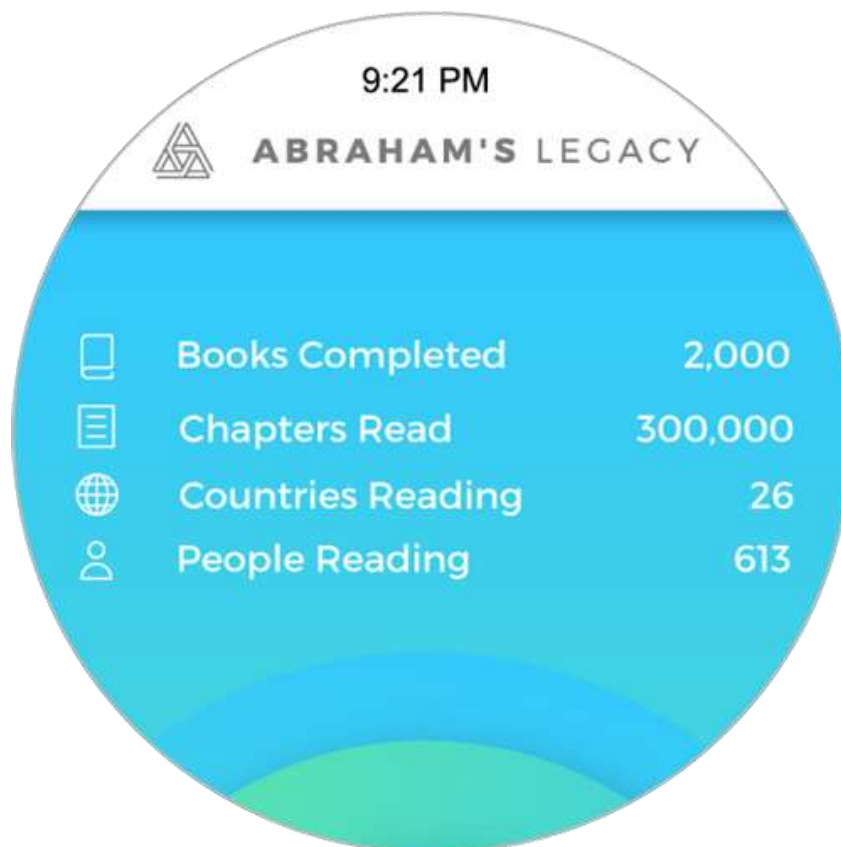
The secret of the forty days Moshe spent on Mount Sinai to receive the tablets can be explained by first explaining the mystery of the desert, where the power of the forces of darkness *sitra achra* rule. There are four difficult *klippos* – shells and husks of impurity found in the dessert wastelands and they are the secret of snakes, serpents, scorpions and thirst as is known. Each of these *klippos* is subdivided further into ten levels and this equals the mystery of the number forty.

Before being able to accept the *luchos* – the tablets it was necessary to first conquer these four levels of the forces of darkness – the *klippos* of the desert and this is why forty days were needed to rectify and repair this matter.

The reason why he fasted during these forty days was because the most effective way to conquer the *sitra achra* is fasting since the evil inclination within us known as the *yetzer hara* can easily rule a person when he eats and drinks and indulges in the physical world. However, when a person fasts and uplifts himself to a spiritual realm then the *sitra achra* has nowhere to hold onto since it cannot latch onto or grasp spiritual *ruchniyos* matters therefore Moshe defeated the *sitra achra* through fasting and thereby uplifted himself to a spiritual plane where those forces had no hold.

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