

ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



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לזכות רפואה שלמה
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יעקב משה בן דבורה שירה
ואברהם יהודה בן שרה רבקה

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)

❧ **KI SISA** ❧

❧ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❧

BROKEN TABLETS & BROKEN JEWISH HEARTS

The only reason klal yisrael sinned was to teach us how to repent and do teshuva (Avoda Zara 4b).

The Slonimer Rebbe in Nesivos Shalom, points out that based on this Gemara, the parsha of the egel - the story of the sin of the golden calf, is in reality a parsha of teshuva. It contains timeless lessons for us about repenting. He points out that when Hashem said to Moshe Rabbeinu that his nation had sinned, Moshe Rabbeinu had not yet broken the tablets. Moshe Rabbeinu did not break the luchos until he observed Am Yisrael dancing and exulting before the golden calf. Why is it that Moshe Rabbeinu only broke the tablets when he witnessed the dancing?

The Slonimer explains that within every sin, Hashem created the very antidote to the act of transgression: Remorse. Even when a Jew sinks down to the lowest place, Hashem, in His Infinite Mercy, prepared a way back to return. This is teshuva. Teshuva is the remorseful, brokenhearted feeling of regret and the pangs of conscience that we feel after the sin. Once the transgression has been done, the very act of having sinned causes us to regret having done so. When we look back at what we did and are remorseful and brokenhearted, that in itself is the Teshuva built into the act of sin that serves as an antidote and medicine.

This is why Moshe Rabbeinu did what he did. Chazal credit Moshe Rabbeinu's

smashing of the luchos as the most courageous act Moshe Rabbeinu ever did in his life. Chazal explain this as the meaning of the words in the pasuk (Devarim 34), the “strong hand,” described at the very end of Moshe Rabbeinu’s life as one of his crowning achievements. Why was the breaking of the tablets so significant?

The Nesivos Sholom points out that Moshe Rabbeinu waited to smash the luchos only once he saw Bnai Yisrael dancing with the calf. The reason why he did this was because he knew and understood the secret of Teshuva - the key to proper Teshuva is a remorseful, broken heart.

When Hashem said to Moshe Rabbeinu, “Your nation has sinned,” he went to observe them - he thought he would surely find them rolling on the floor, beating their breasts in anguish and remorse over their grievous mistake? When he saw that not only weren’t they remorseful, but that they were dancing in joy and exulting - that is when he felt that hope had been lost, for proper teshuva and repentance requires remorse and a broken heart.

This was when Moshe Rabbeinu did the most courageous thing. He took the luchos, the tablets that Hashem Himself had fashioned had engraved, and right before their eyes, he smashed them. And in effect, he broke their hearts. For what Jewish soul is not stirred nor moved by such a sight? In fact, the Torah testifies that when they saw this, they were so stricken with grief and remorse that they began to act as mourners. Moshe had succeeded in breaking their hearts by breaking the luchos. **A shattered Torah is a shattered Jewish heart.** It is only the Torah which could make the Jews repent and return. *A shattered, broken heart will not be despised by Hashem* (Tehillim 51). True teshuva comes from brokenhearted remorse and recognition of the depth of sin and only the power of Torah can make us understand this.



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

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

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

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

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

The author of the *Pele Yo’etz*, Rav Eliezer Papo (1785–1828), did in fact compose such a

tefilla. Rav Papo was the *Rav* of the city of Selestria in Bulgaria. Bulgaria was a part of the Ottoman Empire at the time. The *tefilla* of the *Pele Yo'etz* is reproduced and translated below, as a public service.

Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

[תְּפִילָּה הַנִּמְצָאת בְּסֵפֶר אֶלֶף הַמִּגֵּן מִבְּעַל הַפֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ עַל פְּרֶשֶׁת וַיֵּצֵא עֲמוּד כ"ד]

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וּלְעִלּוֹי נְשָׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק
בְּ/בֵּית _____, יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים
וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שֶׁאֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחְשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל
לְזָכוֹת וּלְמִנוּחַת וּלְעִלּוֹי לְנִשְׁמוֹת עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפֶרֶט לְנַפְשׁ רּוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /
צַדִּיק _____ . יְהִי רְצוֹן שֶׁתְּהִינָה נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצְרוּר הַחַיִּים.

Translation:

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

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



GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER



Yahrzeits Beginning Shabbos Ki Sisa

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

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

* **18th of Adar ~ Begins Friday Night (Mar 13th)**

- * **Rav Alexander Ziskind**, born in Brzhen, but lived most of his life in Horodna (Grodno, Belarus), Lithuania, the product of the teaching of Rav Aryeh Leib Epstein, *Rav* of Nikolsburg. He authored the mussar work *Yesod V'shoresh Ha'avoda*, which teaches how one should behave every hour of the day and *kavonos* for *tefillas* and *mitvos*, as well as *Karnei Ohr*, a commentary on the *Zohar*, (5460–5554/1700–1794 – *Adar II*);
- * **Rav Chanoch Henoah HaKohen**, (1798–1870), Alexander *Rebbe*. He was a *talmid* of Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha, Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk and the *Chiddushei HaRim*, (5630/1870 – *Adar II*);
- * **Rav Nachum Mordechai Friedman**, Tchoortkover *Rebbe*, (5706/1946 – *Adar II*);
- * **Rav Yechezkel Levenstein**, *Mashgiach* of Ponevezh, (1885–1974). Born in Warsaw in 1896 to Osminer *Chassidim*, he lost his mother at age five. At thirteen, he joined the *Yeshiva* at Lomza. Early in life, he moved to Radin to learn with the *Chofetz Chaim*. There, he met the *Mashgiach*, Rav Yeruchom Levovitz, who was a *talmid* of the *Alter* of Kelm. He then learned in Kelm, where he was fortunate to enjoy the close attention of Rav Tzvi Hirsch Broide (son-in-law of the *Alter*), at whose table he ate his *Shabbos* meals. In 1919, while Rav Yeruchom was serving as *Mashgiach*, the *Mirror Yeshiva* was exiled from its hometown

of Mir, Poland, into Russia and then to Vilna. Rav Chatzkel, who was then learning in Mir, was asked by the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, to supervise the *Yeshiva's* spiritual welfare until Rav Yeruchom returned. Rav Chatzkel was approached by Rav Aharon Kotler, who headed *Yeshiva Eitz Chaim* in Kletsk, to come and serve as *Mashgiach ruchani* in his *Yeshiva*. Rav Chatzkel accepted. In 1935, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael* to serve as *Mashgiach* of *Yeshivas Lomza* in Petach Tikva, which was headed by Rav Reuven Katz, but he moved back to serve as *Mashgiach* in Mir after the *petira* of Rav Yeruchom. After two years in America, he served as *Mashgiach* at the Mir in *Eretz Yisrael*, then, upon the passing of Rav Dessler, at Ponevezh, (5734/1974);

✳ **Rav Moshe Weber**, (1914–2000) would go to the Western Wall from his home in Mea She'orim nearly every day to *daven* and to help visitors lay *tefillin*. Less publicly, he distributed enormous sums of *tzedoka* to the city's poor. The Lubavitcher *Rebbe* said of him that he was one of the holiest and kindest people in the world. He published several volumes of *Torah* insights in *Yorim Moshe*. There is an ongoing periodical of his teachings distributed weekly called *Shemu Us'chi Nafshechem*, which also offers for sale his audio recordings, (5760/2000);

✳ **Rav Yitzchok Shlomo Zilberman**, (5688–5761/1928–2001).

✳ **19th of Adar ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Mar 14th)**

✳ **Rav Dovid** of Dinov, father of Rav Tzvi Elimelech Shapira. Rav Dovid was the *mechaber* of *Tzemach Dovid* and the son of Rav Tzvi Elimelech, the *Bnei Yissoschor*, (5634/1874);

✳ **Rav Meir Yechiel Haldshtok**, founder of the court of Ostrovitze, (1851–1928), a *talmid* of Rav Elimelech of Grodzinsk, a scion of the Kozhnutzer dynasty. Ostrovitze was one of two courts in Poland known for their *Yeshivos* and high level of learning; the other was Sochatchov. Rav Meir Yechiel's intricate sermons, which drew heavily on *gematria*, came to be known as "Ostgrovtze *pshetlach*". They have been collected in *Meir Einei Chachomim*, and his teachings on *Bereishis* in *Ohr Torah*, (5688/1928);

✳ **Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld**, *Av Bais Din* and *Rav* of Yerushalayim before the State of Israel was established, (5608–5692/1848–1932 – *Adar II*);

✳ **Rav Yehuda Greenwald**, *Av Bais Din* of Satmar, *mechaber* of *Shevet MiYehuda*, (5680/1920);

✳ **Rav Shmuel Engel**, (1853–1935). Born in Tarno, Galicia, he was *Rav* of Radomishla (Radimishla) from 1888. Authored *Sheilos Uteshuvos Maharash*, (5695/1935);

✳ **Rav Yitzchok Kalisch**, *Amshinover Rebbe*, New York. Son of Rav Yosef Kalisch of Amshinov, grandson of Rav Menachem Kalisch of Amshinov, (5753/1993);

✳ **Rav Yaakov Chaim Jofen** (Yaffen), *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Bais Yosef* and the son of Rav Avrohom Jofen, the son-in-law of the *Alter* of Novardok. Following his *bar mitzva* he studied at Baranovich for one year under Rav Dovid Rapaport, and then for a year under Rav Elchonon Wasserman. During these two years he lived with his uncle, the *Mashgiach*, Rav Yisrael Yaakov Lubchansky. Later he returned to Bialystok to study under his father at *Yeshivas Bais Yosef*. In 1941, he arrived in the U.S. with his father. He began giving *shiurim* that year at *Yeshivas Bais Yosef*, and continued to do so for the next sixty years, (5677–5763/1917–2003 – *Adar II*).

✳ **20th of Adar ~ Begins Sunday Night (Mar 15th)**

✳ **Rav Yoel Sirkis** of Cracow, the *Bach*, (1561–1641), *mechaber* of *Bayis Chodosh* on the *Tur*, in which he traces each law to its source in the *Gemora*. In his youth, he studied under Rav Shlomo Leibush of Lublin and Rav Meshulom Feivush in Brisk. He had several rabbinic

appointments throughout Poland, lastly as chief *Rav* of Cracow in 1619. He was the teacher and father-in-law of Rav Dovid *HaLevi*, the *Taz*, (5401/1641);

✳ **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach**, (1910–1995), born in the *Sha'arei Chessed* neighborhood of Yerushalayim to Rav Chaim Yehuda Leib Auerbach, *mechaber* of *Chacham Lev* and *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Shaar HaShomayim*. Rav Shlomo Zalman learned at *Eitz Chaim Yeshiva*. He married Chaya Rivka Ruchamkin on *Erev Purim* 1930. During the following nineteen years he wrote *Meorei Eish* on the laws of electricity, *Ma'adanei Ha'aretz* on laws regarding agriculture in *Eretz Yisrael* and a commentary on *Shev Shma'atsa*. In 1949, he left *Eitz Chaim* to succeed Rav Yechiel Schlesinger as *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Kol Torah Yeshiva* in the Rechavia section of Yerushalayim. He was the *mechaber* of *Minchas Shlomo*. His brother-in-law was Rav Sholom Schwadron. His *Piskei Halocha* on *Shabbos* are found throughout the *sefer Shmiras Shabbos Kehilchosa*, written by his *talmid*, Rav Yehoshua Neuwirth, (5755/1995);

✳ **Rav Refoel Blum**, the *Kashau Rav*, who replanted his *Chassidic* community from Europe to Bedford Hills in Westchester County, New York, (5670–5765/1910–2005).

✳ **Rav Itzele Ponevezher**, *Rosh Yeshiva* in Slabodka and Ponevezh, (5679/1919);

✳ **21st of Adar ~ Begins Monday Night (Mar 16th)**

✳ **Rav Meir Schiff *HaKohen***, the *Maharam Schiff*. Born in Frankfurt am Main, he became *Rav* of the nearby town of Fulda at the age of seventeen. His *chiddushim* on the *Talmud* are terse, incisive and profound. Soon after being appointed *Rav* of Prague, he was *niftar* at the age of thirty-six and was buried in Frankfurt, (5401/1641);

✳ **Rav Elimelech** of Litzhensk, *mechaber* of *Noam Elimelech*, (1717–1787). Learned under the *Maggid* of Mezritch. Among his *talmidim* were Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heshel of Apta, the *Chozeh* of Lublin, the *Maggid* of Kozhnitz, and Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov, (5547/1787);

✳ **Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Spector**, *Rav* of Kovno (1817–1896), lived in Kovno 1866–1896, the third son of Rav Yisrael Isser *ben* Elchonon, the *Rav* of the Lithuanian town of Roush, located in the Grodno district. After he married (Sora Raizel), he moved to Volkovisk, where his father-in-law comfortably supported him. The *Rav* in Volkovisk at that time was Rav Binyomin Diskin. A great luminary himself, he was also famous for his illustrious son, Rav Yoshua Leib Diskin, the *Rav* of Brisk, who later moved to *Eretz Yisrael*. Rav Binyomin Diskin was so impressed with Yitzchok Elchonon that he set up a special *chavrusa* to study with him *Choshen Mishpot* two hours a day. In 1837, when he was twenty years old, he accepted the offer to become *Rav* of the small village of Zebelen, and then became *Rav* in Baraze in 1839. He became *Rav* of Novardok in 1851 and *Rav* of Kovno in 1864. He held the position in Kovno for thirty-two years. He authored *Be'er Yitzchok* and *Ein Yitzchok* (both *teshuvos*) and *Nachal Yitzchok* on *Choshen Mishpot*, (5656/1896);

✳ **Rav Shlomo Yosef Zevin**, editor of the Talmudical Encyclopedia, (5736/1978);

✳ **Rav Yitzchok Horowitz** of Stetchin, (1862–1940). His father was a direct descendant of Rav Naftoli Tzvi of Ropshitz, and his uncle was the *Imrei Noam* of Dzikov. Rav Yitzchok was succeeded by his son Rav Yehuda, who moved to New York before passing away in 1982, (5700/1940);

✳ **Tchaba Rav** of London, (5749/1989);

✳ **Mr. Avrohom Dov Kohn**, principal of Gateshead Seminary, (5748/1988);

✳ **Rav Doniel Schur**, a strong presence in Cleveland's Jewish community as a *Rav*, *mohel* and educator. He was appointed *Rav* of *Bais Medrash HaGodol-Heights Jewish Center*,

(5766/2006).

✧ **22nd of Adar ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Mar 17th)**

- ✧ **Rav Yaakov** of Novominsk, father of Rav Yehuda Aryeh Perlow of Vlodova (1878–1961) and Rav Alter Yisrael Shimon Perlow of Novominsk, (5662/1902);
- ✧ **Rav Yechiel Michel HaLevi Epstein** (1829–1908). Born in Bobroysk, *mechaber* of the *Aruch HaShulchon*, Rav of Novardok for thirty-four years, father of Rav Boruch HaLevi Epstein (*mechaber* of *Torah Temima*) and grandfather of Rav Meir Bar-Ilan, with whom he learned in Novardok, (5668/1908 – *Adar II*);
- ✧ **Rav Eliezer Dovid** of Radoshitz, (5687/1927);
- ✧ **Rav Avrohom Dov Ber Kahana-Shapiro**, chief Rav of Kovno before and during World War II (1870–1943). Born in Kobrin on *Yom Kippur*, his father, Shlomo Zalman, was a descendant of Rav Chaim Volozhiner. Rav Avrohom attended the Volozhin *Yeshiva*. He was president of the *Agudas HoRabbonim* of Lithuania and came to America in March 1924 with Rav Kook and Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein, to collect funds for *Torah* institutions in *Eretz Yisrael* and Europe. His *piskei halocha* can be found in the *sefer D'var Avrohom*, (5703/1943);
- ✧ **Rav Reuven Grozovsky**, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Kamenitz and *Torah Voda'as*, (1896–1958), successor of Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz at Kaminetz. When Rav Reuven was a young man studying in the Slobodka *Yeshiva*, his father, the *Dayan* of Minsk, passed away. His colleagues at Slobodka included Rav Yaakov Yitzchok HaLevi Ruderman, Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky, Rav Aharon Kotler and Rav Yitzchok Hutner, (5718/1958);
- ✧ **Rav Yisrael Moshe Dushinsky**, (1921–2003). Born in Chust, Hungary, to Rav Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky, Rav of Chust (later to become Rav and *Av Bais Din* of the *Eida Chareidis* of Yerushalayim), he was his father's first son, born when his father was fifty years old. After many years and many *berochos*, Rav Yosef Tzvi received a *berocha* from Rav Yechezkel Shraga of Shinava, who also gave him his *sefer*, *Ayala Shelucha*, printed in memory of the Shinava Rav's son, Naftoli, who was *niftar* on the 21st of *Kislev*, 1864. The following year, on the exact date of Rav Naftoli's *yahrzeit*, Yisrael Moshe was born. His middle name was in honor of his great uncle, the *Maharam Shick*. The family moved to *Eretz Yisrael* in *Adar* of 1930, one month before the *petira* of Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld. He was married to the daughter of Rav Dovid Yehoshua Gross, *Rosh HaKohol* of the Satmar *Kehilla*, in 1945. On *Erev Sukkos* of 1949, his father was *niftar*, and the twenty-seven-year-old Rav Yisrael Moshe was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva* of Dushinsky. In 1969, he was inducted as a member of the *Eida Chareidis*. He became *S'gan Bais Din* after the Satmar *Rebbe's petira* and the *Av Bais Din* in 1996, (5763/2003 – *Adar II*);
- ✧ **Rav Yeshaya Shimonowitz**, *Rosh Yeshiva Rav Yaakov Yosef*, (5758/1998).

✧ **23rd of Adar ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Mar 18th)**

- ✧ **Rav Chaim Cheikel** (Chaikel) of Amdur (Indura). Born to Rav Shmuel in Karlin, he was a *talmid* of the Vilna *Gaon*, and later became a *talmid* of Rav Dov Ber, the *Maggid* of Mezritch. Rav Chaim became one of the first *Chassidic Admorim* in 1772–73. He authored *Chaim Vochesed*. Amdur is about twenty-five miles south of Grodno (Horodno). Amdur and Grodno are located in the northwest corner of what is now the independent country of Belarus, close to the Lithuanian and Polish borders. During the Cossack revolt of 1648 against Polish landowners and gentry, over 100,000 Jews, mostly in Ukraine and southern Belarus, were murdered. However, the marauders did not advance north to the Grodno region. Jews comprised 80 percent of the population in Grodno at that time. Rav Chaim's

daughter married Moshe, the brother of Aharon, founder of Karlin *Chassidus*. Rav Chaim was succeeded by his son, Rav Shmuel of Amdur, (5547/1787);

- * **Rav Yitzchok Yaakov Rabinowitz** of Biala (*Divrei Bina*), youngest son of Rebbe Nathan Dovid, son-in-law of Rebbe Yehoshua of Ostrovoh (the *Toldos Odom*), and great-grandson of Yaakov Yitzchok Rabinowitz, the *Yid HaKodosh* of Peshis'cha, (5665/1905 – *Adar II*);
- * **Rav Refoel Shapiro**, the *Toras Refoel*, *Rosh Yeshiva* Volozhin, (1837–1921). After the Volozhin *Yeshiva* was closed down in 1892 by order of the Russian government, he reopened it, on a smaller scale, in 1899. He was a son-in-law of the *Netziv* and the father-in-law of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk, (5681/1921 – *Adar II*);
- * **Rav Michel Dovid Rozovsky**, (1869–1935). Born in Svarjen, near Stoibetz, he learned in Mir and Volozhin. After his marriage, he was appointed *Rav* in Grodna, in which capacity he remained for forty years. He was the father of three sons: Rav Yehoshua Heschel, who served as *Rav* in Grodna, until he was murdered by the Nazis; Rav Yosef, who served as *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Ohr Yisrael* in Petach Tikva; and Rav Shmuel, who would become *Rosh Yeshiva* in Ponevezh in Bnei Brak, (5695/1935);
- * **Rav Yitzchok Meir Alter** of Ger (*Chiddushei HaRim*), (1799–1866). The founder of the Gerrer dynasty and the grandfather of the *Sfas Emes*, Rav Yitzchok Meir was able to trace his lineage back to Rav Meir *ben Boruch* (the *Maharam*) of Rottenberg (1215–1293). His mother, Chaya Sora, was orphaned early in life and was raised by her relative, the Kozhnutzer *Maggid*. The *Maggid* had a great influence on Yitzchok Meir during the latter's early years. As he grew, he became a *talmid* of Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha and then Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. At the insistence of the *Chassidim*, the *Chiddushei HaRim* became leader after the death of the *Kotzker*. At the first *Chassidic* gathering over which he presided, he declared, "Rav Simcha Bunem led with love, and Rav Menachem Mendel with fear. I will lead with *Torah!*" He had thirteen children and outlived them all, a tremendous personal tragedy. Yet, he accepted it all with love, (5626/1866);
- * **Rav Shlomo Zefrani**, born in Aram Soba (Aleppo). He became a close *talmid* of Rav Ezra Sha'in. Together with Rav Moshe Tawil, he founded the *Degel HaTorah Yeshiva*. His community supported him as well as the *Yeshiva*. At the age of sixty-eight, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael* and settled in Tel Aviv. He lived there for nine years, until his *petira*, (5730/1970);
- * **Rav Yehuda Moshe Danziger** (Danzcyger), Alexandria *Rebbe* of Bnei Brak (*Emunas Moshe*), (5733/1973);
- * **Rav Yisrael Grossman**, (1922–2007). Born in the old city of Yerushalayim, Rav Yisrael studied at the *Yeshiva* of Rav Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky, where he learned *Maseches Kiddushin* thirty times. He later learned at *Yeshiva Kaminetz*. After Rav Boruch Shimon Schneerson became *Rosh Yeshiva* in Tchebin, Rav Yisrael replaced him as *Rosh Yeshiva* in *Yeshiva Chabad*, where he remained for thirty years. He also served as a *Dayan* for the *Bais Din* of *Agudas Yisrael* for over forty years and later opened a *Bais Din* for monetary laws with Rav Betzalel Zolti and helped found *Mifal Hashas*. He was also very involved with *Chinuch Atzmai*, (5767/2007).

* **24th of Adar ~ Begins Thursday Night (Mar 19th)**

- * **Rav Yitzchok Eizik Margulies** of Prague, (5285/1525);
- * **Rav Chaim Algazi** of Kushta, *mechaber* of *Nesivos HaMishpot*, *talmid* of Rav Shlomo Algazi, *Rav* of Rhodes. [Dr. Fred Rosner cites Rav Chaim Yitzchok Algazi in *Responsa Derech Eitz Chaim*];

- * **Rav Betzael Yair Danziger** of Lodz, (5521/1761);
- * **Rav Binyomin Diskin** of Horodna and Vilna, (5604/1844);
- * **Rav Yitzchok Meyer** of Alesk, (1829–1904). Born in Belz to Rav Chanoch Heinech of Alesk, *mechaber* of *Lev Somei'ach*, and Rebbetzin Freide, daughter of the *Sar Sholom* of Belz. After learning with his maternal grandfather, he became a *Chassid* of Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin, and later of his son, Rav Dovid Moshe of Chortkov. With his father's *petira* in 1884, Rav Yitzchok became *Rav* in Alesk. He had one daughter, and his son-in-law succeeded him, (5664/1904);
- * **Rav Yitzchok** of Stutchin, (5700/1940);
- * **Rav Chaim Osher** of Radoshitz, (5701/1941);
- * **Rav Yehoshua Menachem Ehrenberg**, (1904–1976). Born in Kemesce, Hungary. In 1921, he moved to Tarnow to learn in the *Yeshiva* of Rav Meir Arik. Living in Cracow, Rav Ehrenberg published his first *sefer*, *Roshei Besomim* on the *Roke'ach*, in 1937. During World War II, he was interned in the Cracow ghetto. He was included in the "Kastner train", escaping to Switzerland. In 1945, he moved to Yerushalayim. In November of 1947, he heeded the request of Rav Herzog to be the chief *Rav* of the internment camp on Cyprus; he stayed until the camp was entirely dismantled and came back to *Eretz Yisrael* on the last ship. He was then appointed *Av Bais Din* in Yaffo. When Yaffo was joined to Tel Aviv, he served as a specialist on *Gittin*, and was widely regarded as the foremost *posek* in this area. He wrote the *sefer Teshuvos Dvar Yehoshua*, (5736/1976 – Adar II);
- * **Rav Gad (God'I) Eisner**. Taught at the *Talmud Torah* of Rav Gershon Eliyohu Liz in Lodz before World War II, and for many years was *maggid shiur* and *mashgiach ruchani* at *Yeshiva Chiddushei HaRim* in Tel Aviv, (5745/1985);
- * **Rav Meir Soloveitchik**, (5776/2016 – Adar II).



❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

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

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

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

❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Yechezkel Levenstein Ben Yehuda Levi, 18th of Adar

Mashgiach of Mir and Ponovezh

The *Chazon Ish* used to say that there were three giants of *mussar* who excelled in *emuna*: In Rav Eliyohu Eliezer Dessler we see his greatness in *emuna* of mind, in Rav Eliyohu Lopian we see his greatness in *emuna* of the heart, and in Rav Chatzkel Levenstein we see that he had *emuna* in his hands – he had experiential *emuna*, the kind you can touch and feel with your very hands! (*Otzros Rabbeinu Yechezkel*, p. 23)



You Would Have To Be Blind

One of his *talmidim* described how during a *mussar shmuess* in *Yeshivas Ponovezh*, the *Mashgiach*, Rav Chatzkel, stood up and yelled loudly with emotion, “You can experience *emuna* and feel *emuna* with your hands! You would have to be blind not to see *emuna* in every step we take – you need to shut your eyes tight in order not to experience and see for yourselves that the entire world and everything in it runs according to Someone up above!” (*Otzros Rabbeinu Yechezkel*, p. 23)



Order and Insanity

Another *talmid* described how his room was situated above the lunchroom such that from his window he could see the *Mashgiach* walk on his daily route to the *Yeshiva*. The *Mashgiach*'s daily routine was fixed: he walked straight past this *talmid*'s window, never veering or even looking to his right or left, but walking straight to the *Yeshiva*. One day, the *talmid* noticed the *Mashgiach* stop, turn his head

toward the lunchroom as if looking at something and only then did he continue on his regular routine. The puzzled *talmid* wondered what had caught the *Mashgiach*'s eye. He didn't have long to wait before he found out.

During the *mussar shmuess* he heard the *Mashgiach* ask incredulously, “When you walk past the lunchroom and observe all the cups, bowls, plates and cutlery neatly arranged all in their places in order...does anyone think this happened all by itself? Did the plates and cups fly in the air and land perfectly arranged in order?! Obviously someone set them in order and put them away. You would have to be insane to entertain the fanciful notion that they could arrange themselves this way on their own, just as you have to be insane to believe that this world was created all by itself!” (*Otzros Rabbeinu Yechezkel*, p. 23)



I Got Back My Bitochon!

Rav Sholom Shwadron used to tell the following story: The *Mashgiach*, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, was known always to walk around with a serious expression on his face that reflected his awe and reverence – *Yiras HaRomemus* – that permeated his very being and all his 248 limbs and 365 sinews. Once, one of his *talmidim* was extremely surprised to walk in and find the *Mashgiach* smiling broadly – a rare sight indeed. The *talmid* queried the *Mashgiach* as to the source of his smile and Rav Chatzkel responded:

“When I used to be the *Mashgiach* in the Mir *Yeshiva* I almost never received my monthly salary on time (because of the

Yeshiva's dire financial means or lack thereof). I trusted instead in *Hashem* and had *bitochon* that He alone would see to my *parnossa* from other sources. When I took up the position as *Mashgiach* in Ponovezh I began to receive my monthly salary on time and unfortunately I lost this level of *bitochon* in *Hashem* that I had regarding my *parnossa*. But now – *Chasdei Hashem* (thank G-d) – it is some eight months that I haven't been paid (due to the *Yeshiva's* staggering debts) and I now have my *bitochon* back in *Hashem* that He will send me my *parnossa* in another way, and this is why I am so happy and overjoyed! (*Otzros Rabbeinu Yechezkel*, p. 54–55)



Hashgocha Protis Training

The *Mashgiach* used to relate that when his daughters were still young he would give them small change if they would think about ways to see *Hashgocha Protis* in their home and in their lives. And this *Hashgocha* was easily observed in how the *Mashgiach's* household was run, as the level of poverty was great, and yet, when they would tell him what they had seen and discovered, for each story he would pay them a coin. (*Otzros Rabbeinu Yechezkel*, p. 73)

One of his daughters, Zlata Malka Ginsberg, related, “My father *zt”l* used to educate me using *chinuch* in the ways of *Hashgocha* using a variety of methods. One of his methods was to give me a notebook; he promised that if I filled in one daily occurrence of *Hashgocha Protis* he would buy me a prize. And true to his word, once the notebook was full, he bought me a prize, even though this cost him dearly because of our poor financial situation and his lack of means, because to my father, the need to recognize *Hashgocha Protis* was so important that it was worth the money.” (*Mipihem*, p. 196, cited in *Otzros Rabbeinu Yechezkel*, p.73)



A Seventy-Year Warranty on All Maintenance and Repairs

The *Mashgiach* was once walking with one his *talmidim* when they passed by a drainpipe that was leaking. Upon observing this, the *Mashgiach* pointed it out to his *talmid* and remarked, “How old is this drainpipe? Probably not more than decade. And it is made of metal, and see how it is already cracked and leaking! The human body is made of soft flesh, not metal, and carries things worse than water! Our own “drains and pipes” are soft flesh and they carry such hazardous materials that are acidic and toxic like urine and waste, yet they last decades and decades, an entire lifetime; a span of seventy years or more can go by with no mishap. From my flesh I see the Divine!”

A different time, the *Mashgiach* asked rhetorically, “How is it that the machine we call man does not break down and need maintenance and repair as often as other machines and mechanisms do? Take a watch for example, whose mechanisms and gears are all enclosed in a metal casing shut tight. Still, every few years, it requires some maintenance to keep its timing and precision; it must be opened, dusted, cleaned and wound, and it can easily break down. Man is made not of iron, silver, or copper, but of flesh – and still sometimes he can live his whole life of some seventy years or more with nothing breaking down and no maintenance needed! (*Otzros Rabbeinu Yechezkel*, p.76)



Midda Kenegged Midda – Measure for Measure

In the days before the war, there were almost no private *Yeshiva* buildings; rather, the *Yeshivos* learned in local *shuls* and *Botei Medroshim* of the town or city where they were located. Once, one of the *gabbo'im* of the *shul* where the *Mashgiach's* *Yeshiva* studied was bothering and disturbing the *talmidim* of

the *Yeshiva*. He disturbed the *talmidim* so often that his interference became simply unbearable. He constantly interrupted their studies – and one day he kicked them out of the *shul* in the middle of the learning *sefer*! With no choice left, the *Yeshiva* relocated itself to a different town and *shul*.

For years afterward, whenever the *Mashgiach* met anyone who hailed from that town he asked that person about the town, its *shul* and the welfare of the *gabbai* – until one day someone reported that the *gabbai* had died.

“And how did he die?” asked the *Mashgiach*.

They told Rav Chatzkel that it was on *Yom Tov* in the middle of *Birkas Kohanim* that his heart stopped and he died. In *Chutz La’Aretz, Birkas Kohanim* is a special occasion that takes place only on *Yom Tov* and the *shul* was in a quandary – what should they do? To interrupt the *Kohanim* in the middle of reciting *Birkas Kohanim* was impossible, yet there was a dead body in *shul* and the *Kohanim* were forbidden to become impure from *tumas meis*. They had no choice and decided that they had to take his body and deposit it outside the *shul*.

When the *Mashgiach* heard this, he replied, “This is the story I have been expecting to hear for some time now. I knew that something like this must happen. Just as he did, so was done to him. When he expelled the *talmidim* from *shul*, I knew that *midda kenegged midda* – measure for measure – *Hashgocha Protis* would see to it that he too would be thrown out of *shul* one day.” (Otzros Rabbeinu

Yechezkel, page 77)



Tefilla – Soul food

The *Mashgiach* Rav Chatzkel Levenstein would often repeat and review the words of the *Kuzari* that *tefilla* is like food for the soul, nourishing the soul like bread nourishes the body. *Shacharis* is breakfast and it should keep you satisfied until lunchtime – *Mincha*, he used to say. He used to give the following *moshol*: A hungry man once went to a store and purchased a variety of food and provisions to satiate his hunger that could last him some weeks. He stuffed the food into all his pockets, alas to no avail. The fool remained hungry and couldn’t understand why!

Of course the fool remained hungry – he filled his outer garments with food and never satisfied his true inner self by eating the food! So too do we run after fulfilling our lusts and desires for all manner of *gashmiyus*, yet we are never satisfied, because while the externals are stuffed, our inner being remains starving. The soul thirsts and if only the pockets of the outer garment called the body are filled, then the thirst and hunger of the inner true self – the soul – remain. But if someone were to ignore the pangs of hunger in his stomach and *daven* a good *tefilla* and learn a *geshmak seder*, he could feel satiated and satisfied, because this is what it means “to do without”. The body can go without and you can feel fine, whereas the soul must be satisfied or the cravings and unquenchable thirst remains. (Otzros Rabbeinu Yechezkel, *Tefilla*, p. 55)



Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, 19th of Adar

Av Bais Din and *Rav* of Yerushalayim

Before the modern Zionist movement began at the end of the nineteenth century, there was already a Jewish community living in *Eretz Yisrael*,

which was committed to the *Torah* path. This spiritual community later became known as the *Yishuv HaYoshon* – the Old Settlement. Part of the *Yishuv*

HaYoshon had been living in the Land for many centuries. This ancient community was reinforced by the followers of the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and the *Vilna Gaon* who came to the Land in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The majority of the members of this community lived in cities such as Yerushalayim, Teverya and Tzefas; moreover, in Yerushalayim – during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – they began to build new Jewish neighborhoods outside the walls of the Old City. During this period, they also began to establish agricultural settlements, where people could work the Holy Land in the holistic spirit of the *Torah*. Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld became a major leader of this community, and he was very much involved in the efforts to renew and strengthen Jewish life in the Holy Land. As Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld said, *Eretz Yisrael* is “the Holy Land, to which *Hashem* affords special supervision, from which *berocha* emanates to the rest of the world, and in which *Hashem's* prophets foresaw the future happiness of all humanity.”

Rav Yosef Chaim was born on the 6th of *Kislev*, 5609 (1848), and he passed away on the 19th of *Adar II*, 5692 (1932). We will share with you three stories that reveal his deep understanding of the ethical teachings of *Halocha*:

It is written: “You shall safeguard the *matzos*” (*Shemos* 12:17). In Hebrew, the word *matzos* has the same letters as *mitzvos*; thus, the sages explain that the *pasuk* can be read as: “You shall safeguard the *mitzvos*”. In the following story, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld finds within this teaching of the sages an ethical message:

Rav Yosef Chaim took painstaking care when baking his *matzos* to ensure that everything should proceed according to the strictest standards, beyond the minimum requirements of the *Halocha*. This stricter standard is known as *mehudar*. It once happened that one of those assisting him in *matza* baking pointed out to him that one of the workers kneading the dough was not

doing such a good job in terms of the stricter standards. He suggested to Rav Yosef Chaim that the worker be admonished and told to work faster and more efficiently.

Rav Yosef Chaim declined, however, saying, “I refuse to distress a poor worker by admonishing him to work harder than he already does, just because I want my *matzos* to be a notch more *mehudar*! I, for my part, am willing to undergo the greatest effort and expense to improve the quality of my *matza*. Furthermore, I *daven* that *Hashem* grant me the merit of having *matza* that meets the strictest standard, and I trust that *Hashem* will accept my *tefilla*, for He knows how intense my desire is to fulfill this *mitzva* in the best possible manner. However, to obtain *mehudar matzos* at the expense of rebuking a poor laborer – the gain in terms of *mitzva* quality would be canceled out by the loss!”

Rav Yosef Chaim did not want to achieve a higher standard of “kosher for *Pesach*” *matza* at the expense of hurting the worker’s feelings. Consideration for someone’s feelings is also a *mitzva*, as the *Torah* states: “You shall not hurt the feelings of one another” (*Vayikra* 25:17). Rav Yosef Chaim added that perhaps this is what the sages had in mind when they said that the words “safeguard the *matzos*” can be read as “safeguard the *mitzvos*”. This is to teach us, said Rav Yosef Chaim, to take the following approach: “When baking *matzos*, one must remember that there are other *mitzvos* besides *matza* in the *Torah*, and that care should be taken to observe them scrupulously as well!”

A *chazzan* (cantor) is the person who leads the congregation in *tefilla*. Rav Nachum Bergman served for many years as the *chazzan* on the High Holidays in the Yerushalayim *shul* where Rav Yosef Chaim *davened* (prayed). He usually led the *tefillas* during *Mussaf* – the concluding section of the morning prayers. One year, Rav Nachman Bergman passed away at the end of the month of *Elul*, just over a week

before *Rosh HaShana*. It was generally assumed that Rav Nachman's son, who although was quite capable of leading the service, would not succeed him that year, as there is a custom that someone who is in a period of mourning does not lead the services on *Shabbos* or on a *Yom Tov*. The reason a mourner is not permitted to be a *chazzan* on these holy days is out of respect for the feelings of the congregation, so that the mourner's sadness not mar the joyous spirit of these days. Rav Yosef Chaim told the *gabbo'im* (shul officials) who were in charge of organizing the services, that they should not worry about who would serve as *chazzan* on *Rosh HaShana*. The *gabbo'im* therefore assumed that Rav Yosef Chaim would lead the *tefillos* that year.

On the first day of *Rosh HaShana*, Rav Yosef Chaim went over to the departed *chazzan's* son, Rav Shimon, and asked him to approach the podium and serve as *chazzan* for *Mussaf*. The *gabbo'im* – along with everyone else in the congregation – were puzzled at the *Rav's* unconventional action.

After the services, Rav Yosef Chaim explained to the wondering circle of people who gathered around him the basis for his decision not to follow the usual custom. The reason a mourner is not generally permitted to lead the services on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*, he explained, is out of respect for the feelings of the congregation, so that the mourner's sadness not mar their spirit on these holy days. Imagine, however, how the unfortunate widow would feel if, at the point in the service where, in the past, she had heard her husband chant with soulful tones the introductory *tefilla* of *Mussaf, Hinneni He'Ani MiMa'as*, she now heard a new and unfamiliar voice chant this *tefilla*. The heart of this so recently bereaved woman would certainly ache terribly. What greater honor for the congregation could there be than for it to ease her sorrow by letting her hear the sweet tones of her son's voice, so

much like his father's, take up the chant he had sung for so long.

Rav Yosef Chaim also told the congregants that the need to avoid causing added grief to the widow takes precedence over the usual custom, as causing pain to a widow constitutes a *Torah* prohibition (*Shemos* 22:21).

A wealthy woman who had been married for many years without bearing children came to the *Rav* of Budapest with a large sum of money. She wanted to donate the money to the *Rav* in order that he would *daven* for her to be blessed with children.

"I'll give you an *eitza* (a piece of advice)," said the *Rav*. "Send the money to Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, the *Rav* of Yerushalayim. He's a great *Tzaddik*. *Hashem* will surely listen to his *tefilla* and you'll merit *zera shel kayoma*."

The woman agreed to the *Rav's* suggestion, and she sent the money to the *Rav* of Yerushalayim. A few weeks passed and the husband of the woman came to the *Rav*, and complained bitterly to him, "Why did you send the money without my knowledge?! I demand that you send a letter immediately to the *Rav* of Yerushalayim requesting that he return the money."

The *Rav* was very upset by the husband's demand and said, "I'll give you the whole amount from my pocket, as long as you don't demand the money back from the *Rav* of Yerushalayim."

While they were still discussing the details of getting the money back, the postman arrived with an envelope from Rav Yosef Chaim. The *Rav* opened the envelope and was astounded to find a letter in it from the *Rav* of Yerushalayim accompanied by the full amount of money the man's wife had sent to him.

The *Rav* had written, "I received the letter with the money enclosed. However, since the *Rav* wrote that the woman gave him the money, I suspected that she might

have done this without the permission of her husband. Because of this, I am sending back the money, and I request from the *Rav* that he return the money to the woman as quickly as possible. It should be understood that I did not refrain from fulfilling the woman's request because of this. I *davened* fervently for her, and may my *tefillos* be accepted before *Avinu*

Shebashomayim.”

The above stories help to connect us to the loving holiness of this great sage. Through studying the lives and deeds of the great sages of previous generations, we become their spiritual children, and this connection becomes a source of *berocha* and merit for us.



Rav Dovid of Dinov, 19th of Adar I

The Tzemach Dovid

Once, the *Chassidim* sat in the *Bais Medrash* together next to the *Rebbe's* study, discussing the best way to serve *Hashem*. Would it be better to study and serve *Hashem* late into the night, or would it be better to go to sleep early and rise early for *Avodas Hashem*? As they were discussing this, the *Tzemach Dovid's* door opened and the *Rebbe* came in and said, “What are you doing here now! Go to bed!” The *Chassidim* got their answer!

Then the *Tzemach Dovid* explained the *avoda* of sleep with a *moshol* (a parable):

A person once lent money and took something as collateral for the loan. The

way of the world is that whoever holds on to collateral doesn't take care of it well, till the day he has to return it. Then he cleans it off, dusts it and polishes it so that it looks as good as new before it is to be returned to its owner. Similarly, each and every one of us has a holy soul, a *neshoma* that *Hashem* has entrusted us with as collateral from Him, so to speak. Therefore, each and every one of us must see to it that we safeguard the soul; at least every evening, therefore, when we give her back to our Maker, we should see to it that we clean and keep the *neshoma* pure from any stains that might besmirch her.



Rav Yoel Sirkis, 20th of Adar

Bayis Chodosh – Bach on the Tur

There is a well-known story that in Cracow, where the *Bach* was the chief *Rav*, there was a great, wealthy man who used to feed the poor in secret. Every week the poor of Cracow would come to the local butcher and baker and would be able to get free meat, bread and *challos*. No one in Cracow knew that the rich man was secretly funding this charity. In fact, to the outside world, the rich man appeared stingy and tight-fisted. When the charity collectors came around he ignored them (having given all his charity money to fund the poor

people's food). He continued in this way for many years; no one knew his secret. The townsfolk assumed he was just a wicked, stingy old man. The wealthy man liked it better this way, since he knew that any honor he would have received in this world detracted from his heavenly reward for charity.

One day, the old wealthy man passed away. The *chevra kaddisha*, knowing his openly wicked ways as a miser, dug his grave outside the cemetery gates, a spot reserved for the wicked. Even the

shammas of the gravediggers gave the corpse's backside a good slap and chuckled, saying, "Well, in your lifetime, you never gave any charity, so let's see you be charitable in the grave!" The townsfolk disparaged the dead man with jeering, booing and hissing, and he was buried amidst insults and dishonor. Meanwhile, in Heaven, his judgment was to go straight to *Gan Eden*, bypassing the *Soton's* accusations, for charity done in secret covers over all sins and iniquities, and further, he had shunned honor and suffered dishonor in death.

Meanwhile, the poor came in droves begging for food and sustenance from the butcher and baker. The butcher and baker turned them away empty-handed, explaining that they had been giving them charity from a secret donor who was no longer around. Then they realized who their true benefactor had been – all too late!

However, the *Soton* was given free reign to punish the townsfolk in Cracow for their dishonor of the truly righteous rich man. A great plague attacked the city and the death toll mounted daily. The city

elders dispatched a representative to Rav Yoel Sirkis, *mechaber* of the *Bach* on the *Tur*.

"Please, holy, saintly *Tzaddik*! Save us and all of Cracow before we have no choice but to demote you from the position of chief *Rav* and choose someone who can save us!" he cried.

The *Bach* asked for three days. He prayed and asked Heaven to reveal the reason for the decree. When the *Soton* revealed to him the entire story, how the rich man had charitably sustained the poor in secret and how he had been buried in shame and disgrace, he quickly summoned the elders and the city council and explained the situation to them. Then he and the elders immediately went to the *bais hachaim* (cemetery). When they arrived at the cemetery to disinter and remove the rich man's body and rebury him in honor, the *shammas* who had disparaged and ridiculed the corpse died on the spot. They buried him instead in the spot reserved for the wicked outside the cemetery gates. They then reburied the rich man in his proper place with honor befitting a *Tzaddik*.



Rav Elimelech Ben Eliezer Lipman of Lizhensk, 21st of Adar

The Noam Elimelech

Rav Eliezer Lipman and his wife Miroush, well-to-do small-town merchants, were known as pious and charitable people. Of their seven sons, two rose to great fame in the world of *Chassidus*: *Rebbe* Reb Meshulom Zusha of Anipoli and *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk. Even as young boys, the two brothers immersed themselves in *Torah* study, in both its revealed and mystic forms, particularly the *kabbalistic* teachings of the *Ari HaKodosh* (Rav Yitzchok Luria, 1534–1572).

For a number of years they went into self-imposed exile, wandering from town to town, spreading *Torah* and inspiring people to mend their ways. The brothers

became attracted to the growing movement of *Chassidus*, becoming outstanding *talmidim* of the *Maggid* of Mezritch.

Rebbe Reb Elimelech became one of the leading figures of *Chassidus*. He developed the idea of making the personality of the *Tzaddik* the focal point of a *Chassid's* existence; he believed that the *Tzaddik*, the accomplished righteous man, has the mission "to give life to all the worlds by virtue of his Divine soul". This concept is expressed in his book *Noam Elimelech*, which is one of the principal works on *Chassidus*.

Among his *talmidim* were such leading figures as the *Chozeh* (Seer) of

Lublin, the *Maggid* of Kozhnitz, Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanov, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel of Apta, Rav Naftoli Tzvi of Ropshitz, Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov, and Rav Klonymos Kalman Epstein, known as the *Ma'or VaShemesh*. A man of unrivaled greatness, he was admired by his *talmidim* and has been so by *Chassidim* through the ages.

Rebbe Reb Elimelech left behind three righteous sons: Rav Elozor of Lizhensk, Rav Lipa Eliezer of Chemelnick and Rav Yaakov of Maglanitza, as well as two daughters: Esther Etil and Mirish.

Rebbe Reb Elimelech said, “One should always see the good attributes of another person and never see his shortcomings.” It stands to reason from this that good educators can identify individual qualities in each child and “fan the flames”, to evoke enthusiasm and love for *Torah*, set a strong, spiritual and developmental foundation and bring out potential.



Stale Coffee

Once, when *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk and his brother, *Rebbe* Reb Zusha, visited their spiritual master, the *Maggid* of Mezritch, the *Maggid* told them that he would like to offer them some food, but all he had was some left-over coffee from *Shabbos*. They arrived on a Monday and the coffee was from *Shabbos*! So he served them the stale coffee. Much later, *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech and *Rebbe* Reb Zusha said, “That coffee kept us going for a whole year!”

(*Chassidic* custom teaches us that remnants of a meal, or even a drink, from a holy person, has a special potency and even a healing property. But perhaps the idea in this story is also that being served by their *Rebbe* transmitted to them spiritual power. That is, because the *Rebbe* was holy, he treated them as if they were holy – and that

energized them to live up to their *Rebbe's* view of them.)



Food from Gan Eden

Toward the end of his life, *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech ate very little, and even the entreaties of his friends and relatives had little effect. One time, when his son, Rav Elozor, pleaded with him to eat enough to sustain life, *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech said, “I wish I could eat, but my body rejects all things physical. Ah! One time, during my years of wandering in exile, I lodged at an inn near a certain village, and there I ate a delicious soup. If that were available, I could eat it. But the inn is so far away!”

Many years later, Rav Elozor happened to be in that village, and sought out the inn to which his father had referred. He asked the hostess whether he might have some of her special soup, and she said, “How I wish I could serve you the food that is appropriate for a great person like yourself.

But we are very poor. Very few travelers pass this way, and we just have enough flour and beans to eat for our meals. I will be glad to make a bean soup for you.



When Rav Elozor tasted the soup, he experienced a spiritual delight, as though he were eating of the offerings of the *Mizbei'ach* (Altar) in the *Bais HaMikdosh* in Yerushalayim. He asked the hostess, “Please tell me, what ingredients do you use for this soup?”

The woman began crying. “I am so sorry that it is so meager. I do not have any spices to put in. All I did was cook the beans with water, and then I *davened* to

Hashem: ‘Master of the Universe! You have provided me with the *mitzva* of preparing a meal for a special guest. If only I had meat, vegetables and spices, I would prepare a meal for him that would befit him, but I have nothing. But You, Master of the Universe, have everything. You have *Gan Eden* (Paradise), where there are all the finest scents and flavors. Please put some of these in the soup, so that my holy guest can enjoy his food.’“

Rav Elozor thought, “Now I know why my father longed for this soup. This pious woman’s sincere *tefillos* were answered, and the soup did indeed have the taste of *Gan Eden*.”



Hashem’s Will

One night, while on their wanderings, *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech and his brother, *Rebbe* Reb Zusha, were stranded in a village inn where a wedding was in progress. The drunken peasants, seeing the two

bearded brothers hiding behind the large stove, grabbed *Rebbe*



Reb Zusha and made him perform a dance, while goading him, poking and jabbing at him from all sides. Round and round poor *Rebbe* Reb Zusha danced, to the uproarious laughter of the rowdies. Between dances, *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech whispered, “Why do they always pick on you?”

“It is *Hashem’s* will,” *Rebbe* Reb Zusha sighed.

“You know what, let’s change places,” *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech suggested. “They can’t tell us apart. The next time they’ll grab me, and you will get some rest.”

So *Rebbe* Reb Zusha took his

brother’s place behind the stove. Just then one of the peasants roared, “This time, let’s get the one behind the stove! The other one danced enough!”

When it was all over, *Rebbe* Reb Zusha said, “When something is *Hashem’s* will, it will come to pass, no matter what we do.”

May the merit of the *Tzaddik* *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk protect us all, *Amen*.

www.rabbishimon.com/tzadikim/showz.php?p=elimelech.htm



An Author Par Excellence

A *Rav* once asked the *Rebbe* Elimelech if he was engaged in writing anything or authoring a *sefer* [called a *chibur*, which also means “connection” or “attachment”]. “I have been in the process of authoring something and putting together something – a *chibur* – for some forty years now,” replied the *Noam Eliemelech*, “but it’s still not finished.”

“Please show me this *chibur*,” requested the *Rav*.

“It’s still not complete. I am working on the *chibur* of my heart to my Creator, you see,” explained the *Tzaddik*. (*Kisvei Ri Shuv* of Brisk #6)



Hallel on Parshas Beshallah

Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Kaliv was once in Lizhensk during *Parshas Beshallah*. The *Rebbe* Elimelech asked the Kaliver to be absent when he recited *Torah* at the *tisch* for some secret reason that the *Rebbe* would not divulge, but the Kaliver did not wish to miss the opportunity to hear the *Rebbe’s* *Chassidic* discourse and so he remained.

As soon as the *Noam Eliemelech* began to say *Torah*, the Kaliver jumped up away from the table and began to run to and fro in the entire house, singing *Hallel*

at the top of his voice! Everyone present was very surprised by such aberrant behavior. Afterward, the Kaliver explained himself: “When the *Rebbe* said *Torah* about the weekly *Parsha*, I was infused by such excitement and it set me aflame with such hislahavus that I imagined myself to be in the midst of offering the *Korban Pesach* – and so I sang *Hallel!*” (*Ohel Elimelech* #274)



Miraculous Hands to Aton for the Very First Sins

The *Chakal Yitzchok* of Spinka related, “The *Rebbe* Reb Melech once entered the kitchen and observed a baby being nursed by his mother. The child acted as all infants do, kicking and hitting his mother and generally striking out with his limbs with wanton abandon. The *Rebbe* chuckled and admonished the baby, “No, no, my child – don’t you know the *Torah* forbids striking and hitting a parent?!”

The *Rebbe* Elimelech’s mother was also present and she was very amused. “Don’t you realize that all babies behave this way? Why do you think you were any different?” she challenged him.



Hearing this the *Rebbe* was greatly troubled. He quickly went over to the stove where the flames were merrily crackling beneath a pot cooking something suspended above the fire. “The hand that sinned shall be burned!” declared the *Rebbe*, aflame with emotion to atone for his infantile misdeeds and childish misdemeanors, and, to the horror of all present, the *Rebbe* Elimelech burned his hands in the fire!

Later, when a miracle occurred and his hands healed, returning to their original

state, the *Rebbe* would display a hand to the *Chassidim* and say, “See this hand? I wasn’t born with it – it grew back miraculously through *Hashem*’s mercy and kindness!” (Introduction of *Chakal Yitzchok* to *Imrei Yosef Spinka* on *Shemos*. See also *Divrei Chaim Sanz, Parshas Ki Savo* p. 275)



Escape From Gan Eden

The *Tiferes Shlomo* of Radomsk once testified that if the *Rebbe* Elimelech were allowed to perform just one more *mitzva*, he would seize the opportunity to run away from *Gan Eden* to do that and fulfill *Hashem*’s will! (*Ohel Shlomo Radomsk*, Vol. II #10)



Tears of Teshuva

Rav Levi Yitzchok Bender used to say that for some six years the *Rebbe* Elimelech would dip his bread in his own tears [through doing *teshuva*]! (*Siach Sarfei Kodesh Breslov*, Vol. III #634)



A Shtickel Emes!

When the *Rebbe* Elimelech was *niftar*, two of his *talmidim*, Rav Uri Strelisker and Rav Gavriel MiTschuk, came together and sobbed unrelentingly, crying bitter tears and saying, “A *shtickel emes iz geven oif dem oilom, hut men es oich aveckgenumen fun inz!!* – There was at least a piece of truth in this world, and now that too has been taken away from us!!” (*Devorim Areivim*, #40)



Allusions to Rav Elimelech in the Torah

Rabbeinu Ephraim, one of the *Rishonim*, says that every *tzadik* that is destined to be *mechadesh* in *Torah* is alluded to in the *Torah*. (Rabbeinu

Ephraim, Terumah) The Rebbe, Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk authored Noam Elimelech, considered one of the most important works of the Talmidei Baal Shem Tov. It therefore stands to reason that there are hints to him in the parshios of Ki Sisa and Vayakhel-Pekudei surrounding the day of his passing on Sunday, כ"א אדר תקמ"ז. Here are some of them.

It is known that there is no section for Parshas Vayakhel in Sefer Noam Elimelech, though there is a piece on Vayakhel in the section for Pekudei. It is said that his son, Reb Elazar, who put together the sefer, did this because 21 Adar, except on rare occasion, falls out in the week that Vayakhel is read. This is similar to the yarzeit of Moshe Rabbeinu usually falling out the week of Parshas Tetzaveh, which doesn't contain his name. (Ohel Elimelech 289)

ויקהל "he gathered" is appropriate because he spoke so much about Yidden gathering together and being like one, as he says in his tefila before davening: שגורא כל – "Everyone should see the positive of their friends and not their shortcomings." The parsha starts off: ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל. The first letters of ויקהל equal 131, the exact gematria of אלימלך. He passed away in a regular year in the week of Vayakhel-Pekudei which can mean "remember to gather" – be b'achdus. The first words of Pekudei are אלה פקודי המשכן, משכן העדת, and their first letters also equal אלימלך.

The first posuk of Vayakhel goes on to say ויאמר אלהם אלה הדברים אשר צוה ייִקְוֹיִק לעשת אתם. The words אלה הדברים equal 297, the gematria of אלימלך. The first letters of ויאמר equal 297, and the next word, אתם, has the same letters as אמת. The last letters of אתם equal 650 – the gematria of אמת. With the kolel, it equals ההפקר כמדבר, alluding to the last piece

of Noam Elimelech in Parshas Devarim. It is on the words אלה הדברים – equal to the gematria of אלימלך – and he says that a tzadik needs to be ההפקר כמדבר to help out those in need of בני חיי מזוני.

The first few pesukim of Vayakhel speak about שבת, and tzadikim are compared to שבת. His name, אלימלך בן אלעזר, is equal to שבת. (There are many different ways his father's name is spelled. I got this spelling from his signature on a letter he wrote.)

His exceptional humility was well known. A misnaged once showed his disdain for the sefer Noam Elimelech by placing it on the floor under the bench he was sitting on. The misnaged asked the Baal Hatanya, who was present, what kind of person the author of the sefer was. The Baal Hatanya replied that even if he would have placed the author under the bench, he wouldn't have said anything. אלימלך equals סמאל, which the Bas Ayin says is equal to ענוה, since humility is the weapon against the satan.

The gematria of אלימלך, using the method of מנצפ"ך, equals 611 – תורה. This in turn is equal to סמאל לילית, as the Torah is the antidote to yetzer hora. The beginning of Ki Sisa says: כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקדיהם: ונתנו איש כפר נפשו ונתנו איש כפר נפשו לייִקְוֹיִק לפקדיהם ונתנו איש כפר נפשו לייִקְוֹיִק בפקד אתם. His first wife was a descendant of many great tzadikim including the Rokeach. Her name, שפרינצא, is equal to תשא. The first letters of רבי. איש כפר are also equal to 611 (תורה, as mentioned above). In the first part of his Hanhagos Ha'adam, he writes that the first thing one should do is learn Gemara, Rashi, Tosafos and mefarshim – each person according to their ability. Afterwards, learn poskim, starting with Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim. He goes on to say how one should constantly daven to come to the truth.

There is a kabbala that if one davens at his kever, they will be helped as if he was alive and they won't leave this world without doing teshuva. (Ohel Elimelech 261) Two bochurim once told the Sar Sholom of Belz they were very happy because they just came from the kever of the Rebbe, Reb Meilich, and now they won't die without teshuva. He told them: "You're worried about dying with teshuva; in Tzetal Koton, he teaches us how to LIVE with teshuva!" He passed away on the 21st day of Adar. The Name of Hashem, אִי־קִי־ק, is equal to 21. Reb Nachman of Breslov says this Name represents teshuvah, since it means, "I will be", meaning now that one is doing teshuvah he begins to live, because before that it is better if he wouldn't have been born, as the Gemara says. (Likutei Mohoran 6:2) He passed away the day after Ki Sisa – the 21st parsha - was read. The letter ה represents teshuva, since if one falls through the bottom, he can climb back in through the top. (Menachos 29b) If you spell out אִי־קִי־ק with the letter ה, it is אִי־קִי־ק־ה – equal to 151 – the gematria of מקוה. The Maharil in Hilchos Erev Yom Kippur, brought down by the Magen Avrohom (606:4) brings an opinion that the main reason for מקוה is teshuva. If you spell out וִי־קִה־ל - וו יוד קוף הָה לָמַד – it equals 122 – an expression of teshuva. There are 122 pesukim in Vayakhel. This is the milui of the Name אִי־קִי־ק spelled with Alephs - אִי־קִי־ק־א (the milui is 122 - א - א). Reb Mendel of Riminov and Reb Chaim of Kosov said that after immersing in the mikva Erev Shabbos one can understand a little Noam Elimelech. (Ohel Elimelech 192; Even Shesia 5:2) Perhaps this is also alluded to here, as וִי־קִה־ל is equal to מקוה, and אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים is equal to אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ.

He passed away the day after Ki Sisa was read. רַבֵּנוּ בַּח"י on the second posuk starts discussing Elimelech in Megilas Rus and ends off the section with the words וַיָּמָת

וַיָּמָת. (Interestingly, רַבֵּנוּ בַּח"י is equal to אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ. (Interestingly, רַבֵּנוּ בַּח"י is equal to אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ with the kolel) The full posuk (Rus 1:3) is: וַיָּמָת אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ אִישׁ נַעֲמִי וְתִשָּׂאֵר הָיָא וְשֵׁנֵי בְנֵיהּ. The word נַעֲמִי hints at אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ as in אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ. (Also אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ with the 4 letters equals נַעֲמִי). The last letters of אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ equal אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ, and the last letters of אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ equal אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ with the kolel equal תַּקְמָ"ז (the year he was niftar).



The Four Main Talmidim

Though he had numerous great talmidim, there are four talmidim that he singled out with a specific spiritual inheritance. Reb Avrohom Yehoshua Heshel of Apta – the Ohev Yisroel received his spiritual power of the mouth. Reb Yaakov Yitzchok – the Chozeh of Lublin received his spiritual vision (hence the name "Chozeh"). Reb Yisroel of Kozhnitz received the spiritual power of his heart. Reb Menachem Mendel of Riminov received the spiritual power of his intellect. I would like to suggest they are alluded to in the posuk, וַיָּמָת אֱלֹהֵי מִלְכָּךְ אִישׁ נַעֲמִי וְתִשָּׂאֵר הָיָא וְשֵׁנֵי בְנֵיהּ, which speaks about Elimelech's passing and leaving over children. One who teaches his friend's son Torah is considered as if he gave birth to him. (Sanhedrin 19b)

אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ contains the initials of אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ with the 8 letters equals אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (Apta Rov). אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ with the 8 letters equals יְעֻקֵּב יִצְחָק (Chozeh) and אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (Kozhnitzer Magid). Alternatively, אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ with the 8 letters equals יְעֻקֵּב יִצְחָק הַלֹּוֹי. The last letters of אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ equal אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ with the kolel equal אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (Riminover). Interestingly, if you add the first letters of all their names together - אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ יְעֻקֵּב יִצְחָק הַלֹּוֹי, אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ יְעֻקֵּב יִצְחָק הַלֹּוֹי, אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ יְעֻקֵּב יִצְחָק הַלֹּוֹי, אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ יְעֻקֵּב יִצְחָק הַלֹּוֹי - they equal אֱבֵרָהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ exactly.

The hint given for the 122 pesukim of Vayakhel is סְנוּאָה. I saw in the name of Reb Dovid Feinstein shlita that this is a hint to the סְנוּאָה "burning bush." When

Moshe encountered the burning bush it says: וירא מלאך ד' אליו בלבת אש מתוך הסנה וירא והנה אכל הסנה בער באש והסנה איננו אכל. The 3 times סנה is mentioned can allude to the first 3 parts of Tzetel Koton that speak about how one should imagine a fire burning till the sky and going into it al Kiddush Hashem. However, Tzetel Koton starts off saying "these are the things you should live by". When it says the סנה wasn't consumed, it means we should be lit up to live al Kiddush Hashem. והסנה is equal to 126, which is 6 times אִקִּיִּק. A few pesukim later is when Hashem reveals Himself as אִקִּיִּק אשר אִקִּיִּק. והסנה אִקִּיִּק equals 5 letters equals אִקִּיִּק, alluding to his teachings not being forgotten after his passing.

The first piece of Tzetel Koton says that when one is not learning and sitting idle, he should imagine himself going into a fire al Kiddush Hashem. By doing this he will have the mitzvas asech d'oraisa of ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל. This is hinted to in the posuk: לא תבערו אש בכל משבתכם ביום השבת, which can mean: On Shabbos - alluding to Olam Habah - don't suffer the fire of Gehinom due to all one's wasted time (alluded to by (בכל משבתכם). Instead, one can use his idle time acquiring the mitzvas asech d'oraisa of ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל as just mentioned. This is hinted at by reading the posuk another way: לא - If one is doing nothing; he is idle. light a fire (by doing what the

Tzetel Koton suggests, as mentioned). בכל משבתכם - at any the time you are resting. The Seder Krias Shma Shel Hamita of the Arizal contains a vidui that has a section corresponding to each of the four capital punishments. Each one of these corresponds to one of the four ways of spelling out שבת ביום השבת. equals שבת, and יודיקיוזאיקי, and שבת can be an expression of teshuva, and (יודיקיוזאיקי 63) is the Name that is connected to the punishment of "burning."

Rav Gamliel Rabinovitz shlita said no one should make light of going to go to the kever of the Noam Elimelech. However, he said that one should remember that at the kever of a tzadik you connect to his nefesh but when you learn the sefer of a tzadik you connect to his ruach - a higher level. His point is that whether we go or not we should learn from his teachings. He went on to say that if you learn Tzetel Koton you become "mamash a talmid of the Rebbe Reb Meilich." Reb Nachman of Breslov teaches that the image of a tzadik can be found in his sefer. (Likutei Mohoran 192)

גדולים צדיקים במיתתן יותר מבחייהן - "Tzadikim are greater in death than in life." הרבי ר' אלימלך בן זכאי (Chulin 7b) May the zchus of אלמלך בן זכאי protect us and all of Klal Yisroel and bring all the refuos and yeshuos begashmios u'breruchnios!



Rav Chaim Chaika Ben Shmuel of Amdur, 23rd of Adar

Mechaber of Chaim Vachessed, Talmid of the Mezritcher Maggid

Dirty Rags for the King

Once, right before bedtime, Rav Chaikel fainted. The *Chassidim* had difficulty reviving him, and when they did he explained the reason for his fainting with a parable. This is the *moshol* he told:

Once upon a time there was a king

who employed a troupe of royal weavers and tailors. The craftsmen had the job of tailoring, sewing and fixing all the royal garments. Each one was given a different garment that needed tailoring, fitting, sewing and some other work. Whatever garments they finished that day were then

handed over to the king's wardrobe. There was one servant, explained Rav Chaikel, who was incompetent and lazy; instead of fixing and tailoring the king's garments, he ruined them and reduced the beautiful clothes to rags! At the end of the day each tailor brought his fixed garments to the king's wardrobe for safekeeping. The king sat on his throne and as each beautifully tailored garment was presented, shining and dazzling, the king smiled, nodding his approval, until the turn came of the lazy, incompetent servant. He arrived holding a bundle of rags and deposited them before the king for his wardrobe, overcome with such shame and disgrace [that he fainted!](*Sippurei Chassidim*)

Yiras Shomayim

Rav Yitzchak Isaac of Kormana said that Rav Chaika of Amdur's *Yiras Shomayim* was so great that all his hair fell out, leaving him bald ! He also said this in the name of Rav Herschel of Zidachov, who

used this concept to illustrate a *pasuk* in *Parshas Tazria* (*Vayikra* 13:40): "If the hair of a man's head falls out, he is bald and pure". If all of a man's hair falls out because he fears *Hashem*, he is surely pure, because this is indeed a lofty level, just like Rav Chaikel of Amdur!" (*Nesiv Mitzvosecha, Nesiv Emuna, Heichal HaBerocha, Ki Sisa*)



A Fiery Angel

Some relate the following saying from the *heilige* Rishiner, others from the Rebbe Reb Zisha: *Memeint az Reb Chaikel iz givein a bosor vedom, yetzt is er a malach vesorof vus brent be idem Kisei HaKovod* – "Some thought that Rav Chaikel was a flesh and blood human being, but now they all agree that he is a fiery angel standing before the Throne of Glory! (*Toldos Rav Chaim Chaikel of Amdur* p. 3)



Rav Yitzchok Meir Ben Yisrael, 23rd of Adar

The Chiddushei Harim, First Gerrer Rebbe

The *Chiddushei HaRim* said that he worked on himself for some seventeen years to acquire the trait of *ayin tova* (a good eye) that allowed him to see only the best traits and good in other people. His grandson, Rav Pintshe of Piltz, *mechaber* of *Sifsei Tzaddik* testified that he worked on himself tirelessly to be able to see only the good in other Jews and ignore any shortcomings or evil. Once he became a *Rebbe*, however, and many *Chassidim* traveled to him seeking his *berochos* and advice and he wanted to help each and every one of them, he realized that he had no choice but to recognize their shortcomings so that he could advise them what to correct and help them on their path to *teshuva*.

The *Chiddushei HaRim* once declared, "I have the power and ability to

remove the *Yetzer Hora* completely from all the limbs of a person so that he will be ready to accept the yoke of *Malchus Shomayim*, but that is not *Hashem's* will. He wills instead that we have a *yetzer* and that we struggle with it and overcome it.

When their financial situation was dire indeed, the *Chiddushei HaRim's* wife complained that they lacked basic needs. The *Rebbe*, however, seemed to ignore her words and sat and learned, studying *Torah* and *davening* as if everything was fine. When his wife expressed her surprise at him and asked, "Doesn't everyone worry about their *parnossa*, and you sit there and study and *daven* as if everything is fine? Don't you worry at all about our financial situation?" he countered, "How do you know I don't worry about it?"

She answered, “I don’t see you worrying! All I see is that you *daven* and learn regularly as if nothing has changed.”

The *Rebbe* responded, “Your father took me as his son-in-law because I was a prodigy in *Torah* – an *illui*. So whatever requires much effort I can accomplish quickly because of my keen mind. The same worrying that people worry for three

days straight I can worry in a minute!”

“And what have you accomplished by this feat of worrying for just a minute?” his wife demanded.

“And what does he who worries for three days straight accomplish? At least I finish with all the worry in a minute!” (*Meir Einei HaGola* p. 304–306, Vol III #10)



Rav Gershon Ashkenazi of Kitov, 23rd of Adar

The *Ba'al Shem Tov's* Brother-In-Law

Meeting the *Ohr HaChaim*

There are various traditions regarding how and when the *Ba'al Shem Tov's* brother-in-law met Rav Chaim ben Attar, *mechaber* of the *Ohr HaChaim*, in *Eretz Yisrael*:

After the printing of the *chumashim Ohr HaChaim* in Venice in the year *tov-kuf-bais*, they reached the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, who greatly rejoiced in them. He found in them an author whose heart and soul were filled with emotion and excitement for *Avodas Hashem*. He sent his brother-in-law, Rav Gershon of Kitov, to Yerushalayim to visit Rav Chaim ben Attar's *Yeshiva*. He told Rav Gershon that Rav Chaim ben Attar had two *Yeshivos*, one where they studied *nigle* (the revealed *Torah*) and one where they studied the hidden secrets of *Toras HaKabbola*. The *Ba'al Shem* warned Rav Gershon to try to attend the *Yeshiva for nistar* and not to reveal to the *Ohr HaChaim* who he was, hiding his identity until the *Ohr HaChaim* would feel it and understand for himself.

When Rav Gershon arrived he requested permission to hear a *derosha* from the *Ohr haChaim*. Permission was granted and he studied in *Yeshivas HaNigle* for about a week. Afterward, he requested admission to the other *Yeshiva* for *Kabbola*.

“Who revealed to you that I have a

Yeshiva for nistar?”

He answered that his brother-in-law, the *Ba'al Shem*, had told him. The *Ohr HaChaim* did not know him, but he scrutinized Rav Gershon from head to toe and declared him fit and ready to study *Kabbola*. After studying there for three days, the *Ohr HaChaim* gave word to prevent him from coming back and Rav Gershon found his way blocked from entry. When Rav Gershon approached the *Rav's* house to find out why he had been banned, the *Ohr HaChaim* saw him and said, “I am angry at you. Why didn’t you say your brother-in-law was the *Ba'al Shem Tov*? You just said, ‘Rav Yisrael *Ba'al Shem*!’ I don’t know any Rav Yisrael *Ba'al Shem*, but I know who the *Ba'al Shem Tov* is! I know him from seeing him in the supernal worlds!” and he no longer allowed Rav Gershon access to the *Yeshiva*, explaining that he needed no other *Rebbe* or *Rav* if he already had the *Ba'al Shem Tov*. (*Doresh Tov Tshortkov, Acharon Shel Pesach* p. 194)

Rav Yitzchok of Neshchiz related on *Motzoei Shabbos Parshas Behaalosecha, tov-reish-kaf-zayin*:

Rav Gershon of Kitov met the *Ohr HaChaim* in *Eretz Yisrael* and told him about his brother-in-law the *Ba'al Shem Tov*. The *Ohr HaChaim* replied that he had heard of him and that his name was

Yisrael. Rav Gershon Kitover also asked the *Ohr HaChaim* why he kept a certain *talmid* in his *Yeshiva* whom Rav Gershon had seen behaving improperly, unbecoming for a *Yeshiva* student. "This is our way," answered the *Ohr HaChaim*. "We draw closer those who are distant – we are *mekarev rechokim*." (*Zichron Tov* p. 16 #8)

When Rav Gershon of Kitov traveled to *Eretz Yisrael*, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* told him to meet with the *Ohr HaChaim*. "If he doesn't know of his greatness, send him regards from me and tell him I see him in *Moshiach Heichal* – the supernal palace, where *Moshiach* sits on a throne and studies the *Ohr HaChaim*."

When Rav Gershon came to *Eretz Yisrael*, he arrived at the *Ohr HaChaim's Yeshiva* and asked why he studied with *talmidim* who behave inappropriately; others say that he asked why he studied with people with lowly souls.

The *Ohr HaChaim* asked Rav Gershon from where he hailed. When he said that he was from Polnoy, the *Ohr HaChaim* responded that he should return the following day. The next day, the *Ohr HaChaim* told him, "I saw your *Rebbe* and he is a very great man."

Rav Gershon then related his regards from the *Ba'al Shem* and relayed the *Ba'al Shem's* message. The *Ohr HaChaim* responded, "I don't know what favor he does me by revealing my greatness. Tell him I saw the Angel of Death and that he stands with one foot on Polnoy and the other on the entire world." This was a hint at the danger facing European Jewry and that they would need mercy. He also responded that the reason he studied with people with lowly souls was because he sought to redeem holy sparks from places that they had been captured and held hostage. (*Kisvei Ri Shuv* of Brisk)

Rav Gershon once remarked: I hope my entire *Olam HaBa* will be as pleasant as the *Olam HaBa* our *Rebbe*, the *Ba'al Shem*

Tov, earns when he smokes his pipe!"



Famous letter from Rav Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov to his brother-in-law, Rebbe Gershon of Kitov

On *Rosh HaShana* of the year 5507 (1746 CE) I performed, by means of an oath, an elevation of soul, as known to you, and saw wondrous things I had never seen before. What I saw and learned there is impossible to convey in words, even face to face...I ascended from level to level until I entered the chamber of the *Moshiach*, where the *Moshiach* learns *Torah* with all the *Tanno'im* and *Tzaddikim* and also with the Seven Shepherds...I asked the *Moshiach*, "When will the Master come?" And he answered, "By this you shall know: When your teachings will become public and revealed in the world, and your wellsprings burst forth to the farthest extremes – that which I have taught you and you have comprehended – and they also shall be able to perform unifications and elevations as you, then all of the 'shells' will cease to exist, and there shall be a time of good will and salvation."

I stood in wonder and great distress as to the length of time necessary for this – when could this be? But from what I learned there – three potent practices and three holy Names, easy to learn and explain – my mind settled and I thought that possibly by means of these, men of my nature will be able to achieve levels similar to mine...But I was not given permission all my life to reveal this...But this I may inform you and may *Hashem* help you, your way shall ever be in the presence of *Hashem* and never leave your

consciousness in the time of your *tefilla* and study. Every word of your lips intend to unite: for in every letter there are worlds, souls and divinity, and they ascend and connect and unite, and afterward the letters connect and unify to become a word, and (then) unify in true unification in divinity. Include your soul with them in each and every state. And all the worlds unify as one

and ascend to produce an infinitely great joy and pleasure, as you can understand from the joy of groom and bride in miniature and physicality, how much more so in such an exalted level as this. Surely *Hashem* will be your aid and wherever you turn you will succeed and reach greater awareness. "Give to the wise and he will become ever wiser."



לזכר נשמת אמנו החשובה, נפש יקרה ועדינה
אשה יראת ה' ובעלת מדות טובות מרת זיסל ז"ל
בת הרה"ח מו"ה מאיר זאב הכהן כ"ץ ע"ה הי"ד
מעיר נירעדהאז יע"א

ונכדת הרה"ק רבי אהרן צבי טערקלטויב זי"ע מבריד
אשת הרה"ח מו"ה אברהם חיים ע"ה גאלדענבערג

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

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

(מתוך אמונה טהורה) בדרך המסורה (והתנהגה כאשה כשרה) לכל משפחתה,

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תמליץ טוב בעד משפחתה היקרה

ותקים לתחיה לקץ הימין מהרה

ת'ניצ'ב'ה'

שבת שלום ומבורך

Gut Shabbos

Addendum to Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt”l

Two stories that I just heard that are phenomenal and give you an unbelievable perspective on this *tzaddik*.

Once, Rav Sonnenfeld was walking the streets of *Yerushalayim* and he heard a young girl crying outside her school. Inquiring as to why she was crying, he was told that the girl’s mother is terribly sick and she was supposed to be picked up by a family member and in the turmoil must’ve forgotten.

Rav Yosef Chaim took the child’s hand and walked her home. Upon entering the apartment, he saw what a depressed state this family was in. He bent down to the child and said the following: “I promise you two things; one – that your mother will have a *refuah sheleima*; two – I promise you that your mother will walk you down the *chuppah*.”

And so it was. Her mother got better, and when this young girl became of marriageable age, every *shidduch* that was *redt* to her was nixed by this young girl. She was a sought-after girl and no one understood why the *shidduchim* were going in such a difficult direction. Eventually, her younger brother and sister skipped her and got married. After all the children in the house got married and this ‘young’ girl was in an ‘older’ state, a ‘simple’ *shidduch* was *redt* and the girl agreed and the *shidduch* came to fruition.

After the *sheva brachos*, her mother passed away. At the *levaya*, the *kalla* went up to the bier and asked *mechila* from her mother for giving her *tzar* (aggravation) during the years that she procrastinated and didn’t marry earlier. However, she explained that she was full of *emunah* and was so sure that Rav Yosef Chaim’s *beracha* would come through and that her mother would walk her down the *chuppah*, she also didn’t want her younger brother and sister to miss out on having their mother walk them down too. She knew that her mother would be alive to walk her down the *chuppah* no matter how late she got married, thus giving her siblings a wonderful selfless opportunity to have their mother walk them down too.



In the same vein, another story happened when a *chosson* at his wedding got cold feet and fled the scene. There was a big turmoil and in the midst of this Rav Yosef Chaim came into the hall. After hearing what happened and feeling tremendous angst for the *kallah*, Rav Yosef Chaim walked over to the *chosson's* friends that were gathered in a circle discussing this anomaly.

Rav Yosef Chaim asked: "Who wants a guaranteed life with A long lifespan, unbelievable kids and a steady *parnassa* in addition to a guaranteed *Olam HaBa*? They all answered 'yes', however he said that if you want this guarantee, you must agree to meet the *kallah* and if she is amenable to this *shidduch*, proceed immediately with this wedding in order to save a *kallah* from major embarrassment. Only one young man agreed to this scenario and Rav Yosef Chaim walked this young man to the *kallah* and gently explained what happened and after a few hours, the young man and the *kallah* agreed to proceed and continue with a substituted *chosson*. Rav Yosef Chaim stayed at the wedding and blessed the union again and stated that he guarantee will come to fruition.

I heard this story from the person who recently interviewed this man. As years went by, the *tzaddik's* triple [quadruple?] *beracha* was realized. He lived a long life with his wife in harmony, had unbelievable children and great, great grandchildren and always had a steady *parnassa*. He believes that the last part on the *tzaddik's beracha* of *Olam Haba* will be realized too *amus"h*. He claimed that was the best deal he ever did in his life.



MeOros HaRamchal

PARSHAS KI SISA

KEEP *SHABBOS* AND BRING THE *GEULAH*

You shall speak to *Bnei Yisroel* saying “However you must observe my *Sabbaths*,” (*Shemos Ki Sisa* 31:13-14)

The *Ramchal* explains the plural of *Shabbosai* – 2 *Sabbaths* refers to the two supernal *Shabbosim* of the *partzuf Zeir Anpin* known as Leah and Rachel.

[Among the five partzufim in the supernal realm of Atzilus which represent the abundant shefa of light from the Infinite Ayn Sof to the worlds. Leah represents the sefirah of Malchus of the partzuf Ima – Mother and is known as Alma Illah the higher world since Malchus of Ima is a high world. Rachel corresponds to the partzuf known as Nukvah of Z”A, and is called the Alma Tata the lower world that sends its shefa to the worlds below Atzilus known as Beriah, Yetzira and Assiyah. See Keser VeHaKavod to Zohar VaYechi 223a]

When we keep *Shabbos* we are rectifying both of the supernal *Shabbosim* up on high.

This is the secret [deeper meaning] of what *Chazal* meant when they taught that “If *Am Yisroel* kept two *Shabbosim* according to *halachah* we would be immediately redeemed.”

Because the exile or *galus* is caused by our distance from our roots, from Leah and Rachel. This is the secret of the *pasuk* in *sefer Rus* (4:11) כרחל וכלאה אשר בנו שתיהם את בית ישראל. Just like Rachel and just like Leah who both together built the house of Israel.

When we keep 2 *Shabbosim* according to *halachah* we reattach and reunite ourselves, connecting back to our roots properly and they are Leah and Rachel and this redeems us. . .

The *pasuk* also says “And you kept *Shabbos*. . . whoever desecrates *Shabbos* will surely die – מות יומת,” the first death refers to this world of *Olam HaZeh* and *Yumas* refers to the coming world of *Olam HaBah*.

This world corresponds to the secret of Leah and Rachel corresponds to *Olam HaBah*. Whoever keeps *Shabbos* according to *halachah* has a portion in both worlds as we explained. The opposite is also true, whoever does not keep *Shabbos* and desecrates it has no portion in these two worlds.

Whoever keeps *Shabbos* according to *halachah* and has a portion in both worlds as it says ‘*Shabbos Shabbason* – שבת שבתון,’ *Shabbos* in this world and *Shabbos* in the next world.

Zera

Shimshon



Ki Sisa

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 Reggio, 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 6th 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 נחמן מייכאל זצ"ל
בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א
ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

לזכות כל

ישראל לבריאות ולביטול הגזירות

ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת (לא', כו')

And the Jewish people shall observe the Shabbos (31:16).

The Gemara (Shabbos 118a) says whoever takes pleasure in Shabbos, merits 'a reward without borders.'

The Zera Shimshon explains this puzzling statement by first asking the following questions

If the Gemara is referring to material reward, how can someone merit a reward that has no boundaries? Even if the person would receive the entire world, he would still be receiving something with boundaries. As well, there are many people that take pleasure in Shabbos. How then can each one get a reward without boundaries? If the Gemara is referring to the eventual reward in the world to come, then all the reward in the world to come, not only the reward for Shabbos, is limitless and without boundaries?

The Zera Shimshon explains this Gemara as follows:

Ideally, Hashem wants to bestow good to every person without any boundaries. However, due to a person's lack of merit and his indulgence in worldly pleasures, strict judgment holds back that good and limits it to less than Hashem would want to bestow upon that person. This is part of how Hashem created the world to run.

The power of the prosecution only gains strength when a person follows his desires and pursues worldly pleasures. On the other hand, when a person works to benefit his soul and serve Hashem, the forces that prosecute against him from receiving Hashem's goodness, cannot cause anything to be held back from him. (Obviously, even within this rule, there are many aspects that we cannot understand since only Hashem knows the secrets of how He truly runs His world.)

The Zohar (Vayakhel 93b) says, that on Shabbos the forces of evil hide – even they 'rest' on Shabbos.

This is what the aforementioned Gemara means to teach. The Gemara specifically says that one who 'takes pleasure' in Shabbos merits a borderless reward, as opposed to saying, one who 'keeps' Shabbos etc. The Gemara means to imply that even though on Shabbos, one enjoys it through eating and drinking, which regularly would be considered chasing worldly pleasures, still, this does not give the prosecutors power over him (when done properly and with the correct intention) to limit the good that Hashem wishes to bestow upon him.

Therefore, the usual forces that would try to minimize the reward that he should receive for keeping Shabbos since he also enjoyed it with physical pleasures, have no power. Thus, his reward will be without the usual borders that the accusing angels try to limit his reward to.

In other words, according to the Zera Shimshon, the Gemara doesn't mean that he will merit a limitless reward, rather, his reward will be complete and without the usual borders attached by the prosecuting forces.



The Zera Shimshon says that when a person prepares for Shabbos and awaits its coming, each and every week, he rectifies many souls that need rectification and did not attain their rectification while they were alive!

🕯️ שבת שלום 🕯️

לעילוי נשמת - לזכר עולם יהי' צדיק

התנא רבי תנינא בן דוסא

הרה"ק רבי משה חיים בן הרה"ק ר' יעקב זצוקללה"ה זי"ע

הרה"ק רבי ישעיה בן הרה"ק ר' משה שטיינער מקערעסטיר
זצוקללה"ה זי"ע

הרה"ק רבי חיים זאנוויל בן הרה"ק ר' משה אבראמאווויטש
מריבניץ זצוקללה"ה זי"ע

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מוה"ר שלום בן הרה"ח אברהם חיים ז"ל
מוה"ר יצחק מאיר זאב בן הרה"ח אברהם חיים ז"ל
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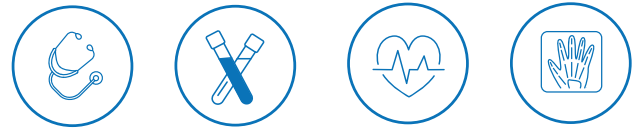
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