

# ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



נדפס באדיבות

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זכות רפואה שלמה  
מלכה בת רחל

*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)

✻ **VAYESHEV** ✻

✻ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ✻

Drawing From the Wellsprings of the Be'er Mayim Chaim

In Honor of His Upcoming Yahrzeit, 27<sup>th</sup> of Kislev

## Dvar Torah

### How the Brothers Judged Yosef

"To pasture" (37:12)

The *Be'er Mayim Chaim* cites the *mesora* to place a cantillation mark on the word *es*. He sees in this *mesora* a justification for the behavior of the holy twelve tribes, the *Shivtei Kah*, to underscore the fact that they were not liable for their actions toward Yosef, although their deeds were obviously wrong – trying to kill their brother and finally selling him, especially Yosef *HaTzaddik*, who symbolized righteousness, forcing him to descend to Egypt, into the depths of depravity and licentiousness (as *Mitzrayim* is known as *Ervos Ha'aretz*).

Obviously, explains the *Be'er Mayim Chaim*, all this was part of *Hashem's* plan, so that when *Bnei Yisrael* were liberated from there they would have demonstrated that they had succeeded in guarding the holy *Bris Kodesh*. This idea is based on our tradition (as cited in *Shir HaShirim Rabba* 4:12) that the *gan na'ul* ("locked garden") refers to the chastity of the

# Save the Date!

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ANNUAL DINNER

THIS  
*Motzei  
Shabbos!*

*December 1<sup>st</sup>*

MOTZEI SHABBOS · PARSHAS VAYESHEV

Ateres Charna

Reception 7:30 · Dinner 8:15



Guest Speaker  
Dr. David Pelcovitz

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*Kesep Torah Award*



RABBI & MRS.  
YOSEF LEBOVITCH

*Shem Tor Award*



MR. & MRS.  
DAVID NAMTALOV

males and the *gal naul* ("locked mound") refers to the purity and chastity of the females. They succeeded through the merit of Yosef HaTzaddik, who withstood the test and did not succumb to Potiphar's wife. Through his act Yosef overcame the great husk of impurity, broke its power and subdued it, paving the way for Bnei Yisrael to guard themselves and withstand the tests and trials of Mitzrayim, *Ervos Ha'aretz*. This was why Yosef had to descend first into Egypt, followed by Yaakov, allowing his sons to withstand – all together – the subjugation and slavery there, proving them worthy of *Kabbolas HaTorah*.

The *Be'er Mayim Chaim* now explains the motive of the holy *Shivtei Kah*. Even though *Hashem's* plans are in the backdrop, what motivated the holy brothers, the heads of the tribes, to act this way toward their brother Yosef? The *Be'er Mayim Chaim* explains that they judged him as being liable for the death penalty because he rebelled against Yehuda, and was therefore considered a rebel against the [future] kingdom of *Bais Dovid*; any such rebel is liable to capital punishment. Furthermore, since he told their father slanderous tales against them and the *Bris* of the Flesh corresponds to the *Bris* of the Tongue, they believed that perhaps he had blemished himself in the area of the holy *bris*. They therefore sat in judgment against him and ruled that he was liable for the death penalty. This is all hinted at by the traditional trop on the word *es*, since the tradition records that this is one of fifteen such instances. Fifteen equals the divine Name – *yud* and *hei* – which testifies that they remained the holy divine tribes, the *Shivtei Kah*, since their actions were guided by *Torah* and motivated by *Halocha*.



"And they said to one another, 'Here comes the dreamer'" (37:19).

The *Be'er Mayim Chaim* explains that they argued logically and said, "Look what we have here before us – we just sat in judgment and ruled that he is liable for the death penalty, and here he comes toward us! What is he doing here now? Isn't his presence proof of Divine Providence and that from Heaven they sent him to us to remove him from the world (Heaven Forbid)?"



"And now, let us kill him" (37:20).

Our sages taught that *ve'ata* ("and now") is a phrase symbolizing *teshuva* and *yira* (repentance and awe). This teaches us that they had *Yiras Shomayim* and spoke out of fear of *Hashem* and repentance (rather than out of hatred or jealousy).

The *Be'er Mayim Chaim* cites *Chazal* (*Bereishis Rabba* 84, 91) that the speakers in this *pasuk* – one brother to another – are none other than Shimon and Levi, and that they decided not to have mercy on someone whom they had judged as wicked, and to carry out the punishment as it had been handed down. Similar to Moshe's command to the tribe of Levi during the episode of *Chet Ha'eigel*, where the Torah testifies (*Devorim* 33:9), "And he did not recognize his brother...because they safeguarded Your word and covenant" –referring to the actions of *Shevet Levi* – here, too, they suspected Yosef of crimes against the *Bris Kodesh* and attacked him with the sword of retribution to avenge the covenant they suspected him of profaning, in fulfillment of that *pasuk* in *Devorim*: "he did not recognize his brother". The brothers were suspicious of him because, as *Dovid HaMelech* writes (*Tehillim* 89:35), "I shall

not profane my covenant; I shall not alter the utterance of my lips". This *pasuk* connects the lips and the *bris*; since Yosef spoke against them and accused them of wrongdoing, he sinned with his lips – and perhaps he had also profaned the *bris* as well.



## ***OHR HACHAIM***

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

### **Praises For The Holy Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh**

#### **The Great Light**

Rav Pinchas of Koritz once remarked that the *sefer Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* enlightens and illuminates any city where it is found and is a *shemira* (safeguard) for any home in which there is a copy. He once visited a certain town and told his followers that he saw a great light shining there. Upon confirming that there was a copy of the *Ohr HaChaim* nearby, he explained that that was the source of the great light.



#### **The Psak Halocha of the Divrei Chaim: the Ohr HaChaim Was Written With Ruach HaKodesh**

We can see the tremendous regard in which the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz held the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* from the following *teshuva* that he wrote regarding a *melamed* who dishonored the *Ohr HaChaim* by claiming that the *sefer* was not written with *Ruach HaKodesh* (*Shu"t Divrei Chaim* Vol. II *Yoreh De'a, Siman 105*):

It is unclear to me why you would doubt that *Ruach HaKodesh* may rest upon any who are worthy even now in today's generation. Surely the *mechaber* of the *Ohr HaChaim* wrote his *sefer* using *Ruach HaKodesh*; therefore, any *melamed* who contradicts this fact that the *Ohr HaChaim* had *ruach hakodesh* is an *apikores* and a non-believer, for he denies belief in the *Gedolim* of the generation, who testified that the *Ohr HaChaim* had *Ruach HaKodesh*. His disbelief in those *Gedolim's* testimony means that he is a *kofer be'ikar* – a scoffer, denier and heretic – and he mocks and ridicules the teachings of the sages of the *shas*. You did well to remove your children from him and not let him teach them. *Yasher ko'ach* to you in this matter.



### **The Holy Lights Of The Ohr Hachaim**

*"And now, let us kill him" (37:20).*

The *Ohr HaChaim* explains that since *Chazal* rule in *Bava Kama 26a* that if ten people all simultaneously attack and kill someone, they are all exempt, they all joined together as one,

so that they could not be found guilty. Nonetheless, asks the *Ohr HaChaim*, even if they were exempt and could not be found guilty in an earthly court, still the heavenly tribunal and *Hashem* would judge them, since obviously they could not escape divine judgment, even if they seek to circumvent human laws.

The *Ohr HaChaim* asks, so why did the *Shivtei Kah* decide to kill Yosef? What justification can we find for their actions, especially since not only was Yosef a *Tzaddik*, he was also their brother, their own flesh and blood?

Perhaps, suggests the *Ohr HaChaim*, the brothers judged him as an *ed zomem*, a “plotting” witness who spreads false testimony, as they assumed Yosef did when he brought back negative reports about them to their father Yaakov, in which he accused them of capital offences, like *ever min hachai* (eating limbs of a live animal) and *aroyos* (sexual misconduct).

The law is that a *ben Noach* is liable for the death penalty for these transgressions, even with the testimony of only one witness, even without forewarning and even from testimony from a relative (see *Rambam Hilchos Melochim* chap 9). The brothers therefore ruled that Yosef was an *ed zomem*, and that by trying to testify against them and falsely accusing them of crimes that carry the death penalty, he himself was guilty, and thus liable for capital punishment, and they were guiltless in *Hashem's* eyes for trying to kill him. In a human court, they could not have been proven as plotters since they all participated equally and simultaneously, exempting all of them.

All this happened through the chief Cause behind all causes - through *Hashem's* master plan.



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

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

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

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

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

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

## Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

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

הריני מדליק נר זה למנוחת ולעילוי נשמת אבי / אמי מורתִי / הצדיק \_\_\_\_\_  
בן/בת \_\_\_\_\_, יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שתקבל ברחמים  
וברצון כל מעשה הטוב שאני עושה, בין במחשבה, בין בדיבור, בין במעשה ויהיה הכל  
לזכות ולמנוחת ולעילוי לנשמות עמך ישראל, ובפרט לנפש רוח ונשמה של אבי / אמי /  
צדיק \_\_\_\_\_. יהי רצון שתהינה נפשותיהם צרורות בצרור החיים.

### Translation:

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

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



## GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER



YAHRZEITS BEGINNING SHABBOS VAYESHEV

[http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim\\_yahrtzeits/Kisleiv/Teves](http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrtzeits/Kisleiv/Teves)

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

### \* 23<sup>rd</sup> of Kislev ~ Begins Friday Night (Nov 30<sup>th</sup>)

\* **Rav Dovid** of Novardok, *mechaber* of *Galya Maseches*, (5598/1837);

\* **Rav Dovid Tevele Schiff**, *mechaber* of *Loshon Zohov*, and the son of Shlomo Zalman *HaKohen* Schiff, (5552/1791);

\* **Rav Elimelech** of Tosh (now Nytass), Hungary. Son of the founder of the Tosher dynasty, Rav Meshulem Feish Lowy, (5707/1946);

\* **Rav Shabsai Yudelevitz**, *Yerushalmi Maggid*, (5685–5757/1924–1996).

### \* 24<sup>th</sup> of Kislev ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Dec 1<sup>st</sup>)

\* **Rav Chaim Chizkiyohu Medini**, the *Sdei Chemed* (1832–1904). Rav Chaim was born in Yerushalayim and was married at eighteen. After his father was *niftar* two years later, Rav Chaim's cousins in Constantinople offered to support his learning if he moved there. After thirteen years in Turkey, he took the position of *Rav* in the small city of Karasubazar in Crimea. He served there for thirty-three years, fighting the forces of the Karaites, before moving back to Yerushalayim. He lived there for two years, then moved to Chevron, where he was appointed *Rav* of the city in 1880. His *Sdei Chemed* is a monumental, universally-acclaimed, eighteen-volume *Talmudic* and *halachic* encyclopedia.

### \* 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev ~ Begins Sunday Night (Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>) – 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Chanuka

\* **Rav Avrohom**, son of the *Vilna Gaon*, (5569/1808);

\* **Rav Yaakov Ettlinger** (1798–1871), son of Rav Aharon, *Rosh Yeshiva* of the local *mesivta*

in Karlsruhe, Germany, and grandson of the *Shaagas Aryeh*. In 1823, he was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva* of the *Bais Medrash* in Mannheim, and twelve years later became *Rav* and *Rosh Yeshiva* of Altona. He authored many *seforim*, including *Aruch LeNer*, *Binyan Tzion* and *Bikurei Yaakov*. He gave *semicha* to Rav Shimshon Refoel Hirsch after the latter learned with him for barely a year, (5632/1871);

\* **Rav Avrohom Mordechai Nissim Harari-Raful**, (5752/1991);

\* **Rav Yochonon Twersky**, the *Tolna Rebbe* (1906–1988). He was the son of Rav Dovid Mordechai of Tultchin, where his grandfather, Rav Menachem Nachum, was *Rav*. The latter had moved there from Tolna a year earlier, (5749/1988);

\* **Rav Refoel Avrohom Sharabi** (1875–1927). Son of Rav Sholom Mizrachi Sharabi, he was active in helping the victims of the Damascus blood libel. He authored *Divrei Shalom*, (5688/1927);

\* **Rav Chaim** of Antineya, the *Tal Chaim*, (5692/1931).

## \* **26<sup>th</sup> of Kislev ~ Begins Monday Night (Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>) – 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of Chanuka**

\* **Rav Avrohom ben Dovid, Raavad III**, also known as the *Ba'al HaSogos* (1121–1198). The third of three great Jews named Avrohom *ben Dovid* who lived in the same era, this Rav Avrohom was born in Provence in the small village of Puskeiras (Posquières) to a wealthy and prominent man who was close to Prince Roger. At the age of twelve he went to Lunel to study with Rav Meshulem *ben Moshe, mechaber* of *Hashlama* on the *Rif*. He married the daughter of Rav Avrohom *ben Yitzchok, Av Bais Din* (known as *Raavad II*), the *mechaber* of *Ho'Eshkol*. He then learned in the *Yeshiva* of Narbonne, headed by Rav Yosef *ben Marven HaLevi*. The *Ravad's* brief critical notes to the *Mishne Torah* are known for their abrasive quality. He objected to the *Rambam's* methodology of presenting normative rulings without indication of their sources of rationales. In his later years, he learned *kabbala*, and his two sons, Rav Dovid and Rav Yitzchok *Sagi Nohor*, were among Provence's first *mekubolim*. Among the *Raavad III's* greatest students were Rav Yitzchok *HaKohen* of Narbonne (the first commentator on the *Yerushalmi*), Rav Avrohom *ben Nosson HaYarchi* (*mechaber* of *HaManhig*), Rav Meir *ben Yitzchok* (*mechaber* of *HaEzer*), and Rav Asher *ben Meshulem* of Lunel, (4959/1198);

\* **Rav Elozor** of Kozhnitz [Kozienice]. Son of Rav Yisrael, the *Kozhnitzer Maggid*, his thoughts are recorded in *Likutei Mahara*. One of his *talmidim* was Rav Aryeh Yehuda Leib *HaLevi* Epstein (1837–1914), “Rebbe Leibush the Second,” *mechaber* of *Birkas Tov*, (5624/1863);

\* **Rav Meshulam Roth** (1875–1962). Born in Gorodenka, Galicia (now in Ukraine), his teachers in *Talmud* and *Halocha* were Rav Yaakov Weidenfeld (*Rav* of Grimaylov and father of the *Tschebiner Rav*, Rav Dov Berish Weidenfeld), Rav Avrohom Mendel Steinberg (*Rav* of Brody) and Rav Meir Arik (*Rav* of Bucach, and perhaps the leading Galician sage of the period). For a time, Rav Roth also studied with Rav Yehuda Modern of Sighet, from whom he gained a strong attachment to the works of the *Chasam Sofer*. After his marriage, he was elected *Rav* of Chorostkiv (Ukraine). Rav Roth was eventually elected *Rav* of Shatz (Suceava, Romania) and later Czernowitz (Tchernovitz), Ukraine, where he witnessed the community's destruction during the Holocaust. In 1944, Rav Roth managed to escape to *Eretz Yisrael*. [16 *Kislev*, according to *Yated* 2006 and 2007], (5723/1962);

\* **Rav Yehoshua Zelig Diskin**, *Rav* of Pardes Chana (1896–1970), born in Chislavichi, son of Rav Shimon Moshe Diskin (1872–1930), *mechaber* of *Medrash Shimoni*. Rav Yehoshua wrote the preface to his father's *sefer*, entitled *Toldos HaMechaber*. His son, named for his

father, Rav Shimon Diskin (1932–1999), was born in the town of Periaslov in the Kiev region of the Ukraine where Rav Yehoshua Zelig was *Rav*. He became one of the *Roshei Yeshiva* of *Kol Torah*. The Diskin family is descended from the *Maharal* of Prague and the *Chavos Yo'ir*, (5731/1970);

\* **Rav Dovid Hirsch Mayer**, *Rosh Yeshiva, Bais Binyomin*, Stamford, Connecticut (1947–2002). Son of Rav Yitzchok Zev Mayer (Nitra, Czechoslovakia), *mechaber* of *Maharsha Ha'Oruch*, a close friend of Rav Michoel Ber Weissmandl. His mother, Leah, was the main character in the famous story of the woman who demanded a knife for her newborn son as she was being taken away to a concentration camp; she then circumcised her eight-day-old child. The child was Rav Dovid Hirsch's older brother, Menashe. The family survived and moved to America. Rav Dovid Hirsch learned at the Nitra *Yeshiva* in Mount Kisco, NY, then in Lakewood. He was close to Rav Shneur Kotler and Rav Nosson Wachtfogel and was instrumental in the founding of the Los Angeles *Kollel*. He founded *Bais Binyomin* in 1977, (5763/2002).

\* **27<sup>th</sup> of Kislev ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Dec 4<sup>th</sup>) – 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of Chanuka**

\* **Rav Tzvi Hirsch Rosanish**, *mechaber* of *Tesha Shitos*. He was the son of Rav Yissochor Berish, *Av Bais Din* of Podhajce, and grandson of Rav Yaakov Yehoshua of Cracow and Lvov, *mechaber* of the *Pnei Yehoshua*, (5565/1804);

\* **Rav Chaim (Tirar) Czernowitz** (or Chernovitzer) (1760–1816), *mechaber* of *Be'er Mayim Chaim*. Born near Butchatch, Galicia (now Poland), he studied under Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Botchatch and became a *Chassid* of Rav Yecheil Michel of Zlotchov, Rav Shmelke of Nikolsburg and the *Maggid* of Mezritch. He became *Rav* in Czernowitz in the Bukovina province of Romania, in 1789, and remained there for twenty-three years. In 1812, war broke out, and Bukovina was annexed by Austria. The new government issued harsh anti-Semitic decrees, resulting in Rav Chaim's departure, first to Botchan, then to *Eretz Yisrael*. He settled in Tzefas, where he lived privately for the last five years of his life. He is buried in Tzefas, (5577/1816);

\* **Rav Yecheil Mechel** of Galina, son-in-law of Rav Meir of Premishlan, (5627/1866);

\* **Rav Shaul Margulis** of Lublin, (5648/1887);

\* **Rav Avrohom Yitzchok Kahan** (Kohn, Kahn), the *Toldos Aharon Rebbe* (1914–1996). Born to Shaindel Berocha of Tzefas and named for his great-grandfather, Rav Yitzchok Avrohom Heller of Tzefas, Rav Avrohom Yitzchok and his family were forced to leave *Eretz Yisrael* in 1918, moving to Honiad in the Zibenbergen region of Romania. There he learned in the town's *Yeshiva*, headed by Rav Avrohom Freund (father of Rav Moshe Aryeh Freund, later to head the *Badatz* in Yerushalayim). He eventually moved to the *Yeshiva* of Krulle, headed by Rav Yoel Teitelbaum, and moved with the *Yeshiva* to Satmar. He became very close to Rav Aharon (Arele) Roth, founder of *Shomrei Emunim* of Meah She'orim, and later married his daughter. When his mentor was *niftar* in 1947, Rav Avrohom Yitzchok became his successor. He authored *Divrei Emuna*. Following his *petira*, two of his sons became *Rebbs*. The younger son, Rav Duvid Kahn of Monsey, a *talmid* of the Satmar *Rebbe*, became the *Toldos Aharon Rebbe*. The elder son, Rav Shmuel Yaakov Kahn, a *talmid* of the *Vizhnitzer Rebbe*, became the *Rebbe* of a group that was named *Toldos Avrohom Yitzchok* after his father, whose main *Bais Medrash* is also in Meah She'orim, one block away from the *Toldos Aharon* building. Another son is a *Rosh Yeshiva* in Kiryas Yoel, New York. Rav Avrohom Yitzchok is said to have instructed his followers to learn the works of Rav Aharon *HaLevi* of Staroselye (Strashelye), which include *Sha'arei HaYichud*



*VeHaEmunah, Shaarei Avoda and Avodas HaLevi, (5757/1996);*

- \* **Rav Boruch Yehoshua Yerachmiel Rabinowitz**, *Rebbe* of Munkatch and chief *Rav* of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Cholon, *Eretz Yisrael*, (5675–5758/1914–1997).

\* **28<sup>th</sup> of Kislev ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Dec 5<sup>th</sup>) – 4<sup>th</sup> Day of Chanuka**

- \* **Rav Avrohom Ravigo**. Born in Modena, Italy, he became highly esteemed as both a supporter of *Torah* and as a great *Torah* scholar himself. He and a party of twenty-five set sail from Livorno, Italy, for *Eretz Yisrael* in 1702. When they arrived in Yerushalayim, his wife, daughter, and closest *talmid* died in a plague. He opened a *Yeshiva*; among the ten *Rabbonim* who learned there was the son-in-law of Rav Yehuda *HeChassid*. After the *petira* of Rav Moshe *ben Chaviv*, Rav Avrohom was appointed *Rishon Letzion*. However, he passed away during one of his trips abroad trying to raise funds. His *talmid*, Rav Mordechai *ben Yehuda Leib Ashkenazi*, wrote *Eshel Avrohom* on the *Zohar* and other *Kabbalistic* teachings that he received from Rav Avrohom, (5745/1714);
- \* **Rav Avrohom Madjar**, *Av Bais Din* in Yerushalayim and *mechaber* of *Divrei Sholom*, (5595/1834);
- \* **Rav Boruch Dovid Twersky** of Klintowitz, *mechaber* of *Vayevorech Dovid*, (5686/1925);
- \* **Rav Ezra Hamway**, *Ra'avad* of Aram Tzova in Syria, (5706/1945);
- \* **Rav Eliyohu Meir Bloch** (1894–1955). Born on *Simchas Torah* in the small Lithuanian city of Telshe to Rav Yosef Leib, *Rav* and *Rosh Yeshiva* of Telshe, having assumed the helm of the *Yeshiva* from his father-in-law, Rav Eliezer Gordon, the founder of the *Yeshiva*. After his marriage, he spent twelve years as a *Rosh Yeshiva* at Telshe. When it became clear that the *Yeshiva* could not continue under the Soviets, the administration sent Rav Elya Meir and his brother-in-law, the late *Rosh Yeshiva* Rav Chaim Mordechai Katz, on a mission to the United States, to raise funds to move the *Yeshiva* to either America or *Eretz Yisrael*. When they arrived, they learned of the Nazi invasion. They decided to restart the *Yeshiva* in Cleveland, (5716/1955);
- \* **Rav Chaim Mordechai Wainkrantz** (1920–2004). Born in Popov, Poland, he studied at the Novardok branch in Polutsk, then traveled to Bialystok to learn at the *Bais Yosef Yeshiva* under Rav Avrohom Yoffen. During World War II, he was exiled to Siberia. In 1947, he moved to America, married, and learned in *Kollel* for another ten years under Rav Yoffen. He then founded a *Yeshiva Ketana*. He was also *Maggid Shiur* at Congregation *Shomrei Emuna*. In his later years, he became *Rosh Yeshiva* at *Bais Yosef*, (5765/2004).

\* **29<sup>th</sup> of Kislev ~ Begins Thursday Night (Dec 6<sup>th</sup>) – 5<sup>th</sup> Day of Chanuka**

- \* **Rav Aharon Shimon Shapiro** of Prague, (5440/1679);
- \* **Rav Chizkiya ben Dovid da Silva**, *mechaber* of *Pri Chodosh* on the *Shulchon Aruch*, born in Livorna, Italy, (5420–5459/1659-1698);
- \* **Rav Gedalya** of Linitz, *mechaber* of *Teshuos Chein*. Son of Rav Yitzchok, he was a *talmid* of the *Maggid* of Mezritch. Rebbe Nachman said about Rav Gedalya of Linitz that he was foremost in bringing people to *teshuva* in that generation, even though he never gave lectures and only sat and learned all day, (5564/1803);
- \* **Rav Tzvi Mordechai** of Plavna, (5627/1866);
- \* **Rav Shlomo HaKohen** of Vilna, *mechaber* of *Cheshek Shlomo*, (5666/1905);
- \* **Rav Boruch Hager** of Vishiva, (5705/1944);
- \* **Rav Yitzchok Shmuel Eliyohu Finkler** of Radoshitz (Radoszyce), (1902–1944), son of Rav Meir Menachem Finkler, (5623–5673/1862–1912);

- \* **Rav Yisrael** of Husyatyn and Rizhin. The son of Rav Mordechai Shraga and grandson of the Rizhiner *Rebbe*, he married Nechama Gitel, a granddaughter of his uncle, Rav Avrohom Yaakov of Sadiger, when he was fourteen years old. He was also the uncle of Rav Moshenyu of Boyan. In 1937, he moved to Tel Aviv, along with his son-in-law, Rav Yaakov, who would succeed him twelve years later, (5710/1949);
- \* **Rav Shlomo Dovid Kahana** of Warsaw and Yerushalayim, the *Avi Ho'Agunos*, (5714/1953);
- \* **Rav Zushe Waltner** (1918–2002). Born in Hungary, he traveled through Cracow and Switzerland until he was eventually admitted to England in 1937. There, Rav Waltner developed a very close relationship with Rav Eliyohu Dessler. After the war, Rav Waltner and Rav Arye Grossnass traveled to Europe to help the shattered remnants of European Jewry, and founded the *Yeshiva* in Sunderland to accommodate some of them. Traveling to Tangiers to recruit *talmidim* for Sunderland, he met Rav Shmuel Toledano, who soon built a *Yeshiva* building and then invited Rav Waltner to come and found a *Yeshiva*. At the advice of Rav Dessler, who consulted with the *Chazon Ish* on the matter, Rav Waltner accepted the challenge. There he set up a *Yeshiva* called *Eitz Chaim*. There are thousands of *Bnei Torah* and religious *balabatim* today who freely acknowledge that he is responsible for their spiritual life. He also established the *Otzar HaTorah* institutions in Morocco. Among his *talmidim* from Tangiers are Rav Shimon Pinto of Strasbourg and Rav Shlomo Farrache of Bnei Brak, (5763/2002).



## ❁ 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 Elozor Ben Moshe Elyokim Breyah of Kozhnitz, 26<sup>th</sup> of Kislev

Rav Elozor of Kozhnitz had a custom: he was very strict regarding travel on *Erev Shabbos* and would never travel anywhere after midday, no matter how short a distance and no matter what the circumstances – no exceptions.

Rav Elozor was once traveling home on *Erev Shabbos*. When they were just a few miles from their destination, the *Rebbe* noticed that the time of day was *Chatzos*. Since it was midday and the *Rebbe* was careful not to travel after *Chatzos* on *Erev Shabbos*, he refused to travel any further and ordered the *gabbai* to stop.

“We will spend *Shabbos* here in this village,” explained the *Rebbe* to the shocked *gabbai*. When the *gabbai* went to see to their lodgings, he discovered that fewer than ten Jews lived in this village and that wherever they could stay the food and provisions would be simple, meager and certainly not the *Shabbos* delicacies they were accustomed to for honoring *Shabbos*.

“*Rebbe*, please, we are just a few miles from home – we must continue!” declared the *gabbai* as the *Rebbe* shook his head in refusal. “But *Rebbe*, it’s just another half hour!” pleaded the *gabbai*, “and there is no food in honor of *Shabbos* here – they don’t even have a *minyán*!”

All his protests fell on deaf ears. “You know,” explained Rav Elozor calmly, “that under no circumstances do I travel after *Chatzos*, and so I will go no further.” So saying, the *Rebbe* went to immerse himself in the river to purify himself for *Shabbos*.

Meantime, while the *Rebbe* was busy preparing and immersing, the *gabbai* set off toward Kozhnitz. He decided that if the *Rebbe* was so obstinate as to stay, he could

still gather *Shabbos* food and bring it back with time to spare. When the *gabbai* arrived in Kozhnitz and word spread throughout the city that the *Rebbe* was spending *Shabbos* alone with no *minyán*, just half an hour away, the *Chassidim* gathered, and scores of *yungeleit* and *bochurim* began making preparations to travel to the *Rebbe*. When the *gabbai* arrived in the small village with the *Shabbos* food there came with him tens of *Chassidim* and the *Shabbos* ended up being an uplifting, spiritual experience for all.

The *Rebbe* was greatly pleased and told the *Chassidim* a story:

The holy *Chozeh* of Lublin owned a special white *bekesche* that he always wore when he was honored as the *mohel* at a *bris mila*. Once, the *Chassidim* noticed that the *Chozeh* donned the special white robe even when he was not performing a *bris*, and as there was no circumcision the entire day, their wonder only grew. It was the custom that on *Purim* the *talmidim* were allowed to ask any questions they wished. The *Chassidim* asked the *Chozeh*, “Why did the *Rebbe* wear the white robe even though he wasn’t a *mohel* that day?” The *Tzaddik* answered them with a story:

There was a wealthy but miserly merchant who came to conduct some business in Lublin. He was delayed in his business and with half an hour to *Shabbos* he found himself in Lublin with no relatives or acquaintances where he could find lodgings to spend *Shabbos*. As he was stingy, he did not wish to rent a hotel room or pay for his lodgings and so, not knowing anyone, he decided after running out of any other ideas, to head to the *Rebbe’s hoif*.

Although he was not a *Chassid*, he trusted the *Chessed* of the *Rebbe* and the *Chassidim* to provide him with food and lodgings for *Shabbos* for free. And so it was. On *Motzoei Shabbos* he headed to the *Rebbe* with a *kvittel* and a *pidyon*, a note of petition with his name to ask for the *Rebbe's* blessing and a small donation. Paltry indeed – he was so miserly that his half-coin donation was merely symbolic. The *Rebbe* nonetheless accepted both his *pidyon* and his *kvittel*, blessed him and he went on his way.

After the miser passed away, his soul arose to the heavenly worlds and continued until it reached a certain point where one of the angels stopped him from continuing.

“Stop! You can go no further, explained the angel, for you have a blemish in your *bris mila*.”

“What? How can this be?” protested the miser. “I was once visiting the *Tzaddik*, the *Chozeh* of Lublin, whose eyes can see from one end of this world to the other; if I had a blemish wouldn't he have let me know and rectified the matter?”

The angel took his protest and argument to the court, which ruled that he had a good point. They ruled that he had permission to ask the *Rebbe* for a *tikkun* and so he did, and that is why the *Rebbe* wore his white *mohel's bekesche*, which he normally wore for a *bris mila*, since he rectified that Jew's *bris*.

“And now,” concluded Rav Elozor of Kozhnitz to his *Chassidim*, who had come to spend *Shabbos* together in the village with him, “if that miser wasn't a *Chassid*, and only visited the *Rebbe* on the pretext of saving himself the fare of a hotel lodging for the weekend, and only donated a paltry half coin as a *pidyon*, yet in Heaven they saw fit that the *Chozeh* should do him a favor and rectify him with a *tikkun*, just think how much more so are you true *Chassidim*, desiring favor and blessings, since you came specifically to spend *Shabbos* here with me! Just think what blessings and favors await all of you!” and he promised them all manner of *berochos*. (*Yafe Sichoson Radomishla* II p. 6:9)



## Rav Chaim Ben Shlomo Tirar of Czernowitz, 27<sup>th</sup> of Kislev

Mechaber of *Be'er Mayim Chaim*

### The Promise

When the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* was *Rav* of Czernowitz, there was a *bochur* who wanted to be *chazzan*, but the heads of the congregation were against it, until Rav Chaim convinced them to allow him. From then on, this *bochur* became an avid *Chassid* of the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* and attended to his *Rebbe's* needs all the time.

After many years, before the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* moved to *Eretz Yisrael*, he promised his young *Chassid* and attendant that if he ever needed his assistance or a salvation of any kind he should mention his name and picture his face, and that he would save him.

Many years later, when this young man was in the *mikve*, he accidentally slipped and fell into the boiling hot water of the heating pit. In those days some of the *mikvaos* were built in such a way that one of the pits was filled with water that was heated and boiling hot and this was mixed together with cooler water for bathing. Everyone thought that surely there was no way he could have survived, but when they pulled out his “body” they discovered that not only was he alive, he appeared like a new person.

When they asked him how he had survived he told them of the *Be'er Mayim Chaim's* promise before leaving for *Eretz*

Yisrael and that even though now the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* was no longer alive, his promise lived on. "When I fell into the boiling water, I immediately pictured the *Tzaddik's* face and form, and the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* came and anointed my entire body with fragrant oil from *Gan Eden*, healing me completely! (*Maasei Tzaddikim* p. 81)



### **A Head Taller**

It is a well-known fact related by many *Tzaddikim* that on *Shabbos* the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* was a head taller than on weekdays. Rav Dov Beirish Weidenfeld, the Tchebiner *Rav*, used to explain this phenomenon as follows: It simply means that during the week the *Tzaddik* was so intimately involved in suffering the pain and anguish of *Hashem's* Divine Presence, the *Shechina*, in Her exile, that he was bent over in mourning. However, on *Shabbos Kodesh* he felt the awesome sanctity and holiness of *Shabbos*, especially according to his own lofty level, so much so that this straightened him out and everyone clearly saw that he was indeed a head taller on *Shabbos* than on weekdays. (*Yafeh Sichoson* II #45)



### **A True Taste of Shabbos**

(This is a very famous story about the *Be'er Mayim Chaim*; I have even heard a version that was told by Reb Shlomo Carlebach.)

Hershel was a pure comedian, one of a rare breed. He didn't just tell jokes; he breathed them. Certainly, it seemed to the people in his village of Mosayov in the Marmorash area that he had never drawn a serious breath in his life. He lived for laughs. Nothing was sacred or out of bounds to make fun of. Fear of *Hashem* was absolutely foreign to him. The grin never left his face.

As might be expected, Hershel soon became the most popular guy in Mosayov among the idle, the crude, the silly and the drinkers. Whenever there was a crowd of people on the street or in the village tavern laughing hilariously, it was guaranteed that in the middle was to be found Hershel, perfecting his craft.

Hershel himself was not numbered among the unemployed. He made a nice living as a seller of livestock. As his business took him to all the neighboring towns and villages, his reputation as a comic spread throughout the Marmorash region.

Each year he would travel to the annual great livestock fair in Czernowitz. Another person who consistently attended the fair was the *Rav* of the city, the well-known *Tzaddik* and scholarly author, Rav Chaim of Czernowitz. He would circulate among the merchants and give them the opportunity to contribute to the many worthy causes that he was involved in for helping needy people and educational institutions.

One year, the fair took place from Sunday through Friday. By the last day the *Tzaddik* had already gathered a significant sum. As he made his final rounds of the stalls, he came across a large group laughing raucously, slapping their thighs and winking at each other. No doubt about it – Hershel the Mosayover must be in the midst of them. And in top form, too.

Rav Chaim thought to slip around them inconspicuously. He knew that from these crude, empty-headed types he could not expect much 'business' anyway. But Hershel was quicker than him. "Hey! Holy *Rebbe! Sholom Aleichem!*" he called out, still grinning from the last joke he had just successfully cracked.

"*Aleichem sholom*, my fellow Jews," responded the *Rav* warmly. The die was cast. Now he could no longer turn away. "Perhaps you gentlemen would care to take

a share in the great *mitzva* of *tzedoka*?”

“And why would you need charitable contributions?” asked Hershel, still smirking.

“For *pidyon shevuyim* – redeeming Jews in captivity, called the greatest *mitzva* of all,” the *Rav* responded promptly. “There is a poor, unfortunate Jew who owes a large debt of 1500 *zylotas* (Polish gold currency) to his noble. Now he is languishing in a dungeon.”

Hershel’s companions were all grinning in anticipation. They waited eagerly for their friend’s witty riposte in the rabbi-jester dialogue.

Hershel put his hand in his pocket and took out 1500 *zylotas*, all the money he had brought with him to replenish his livestock. “Here you are, *Rav*,” he said quietly, with a strange look on his face. “Here is the entire sum you need for the redeeming captives *mitzva*.”

All the onlookers were startled for a moment, but then they realized this must be one of Hershel’s clever jests. The naive *Rav* would put out his hand for the money, and Hershel would pretend to give it to him and then at the last moment he would snatch it back, making a fool of the gullible scholar.

But the *Tzaddik* was not so naive after all. He held back, and simply gazed at the clownish Hershel thoughtfully.

“No, No,” exclaimed Hershel, as his face took on a fully serious expression. “I really mean it. No joke. Please. Take the money.” As he spoke the words, he approached the *Tzaddik* and pushed into his hand the bulging wallet he had drawn out of his pocket.

The astonished *Rav* felt himself overwhelmed with emotion: excitement and relief at being able to secure the release of the poor imprisoned Jew, amazement that such a lowly soul could ascend to the highest of peaks in the briefest of moments. His cheeks were flushed; warm tears

pooled at the corners of his eyes.

Hershel himself was stunned. He couldn’t understand what he had just done. It had been a spontaneous impulse that had overcome him, but why had it been so irresistible?

The *Tzaddik* wished to bless his donor appropriately, but wasn’t sure how. For *Rav* Chaim, life turned on one hinge: *Shabbos*. He had even written a unique book, *Sidduro Shel Shabbos*, explaining according to mystical principles the exaltedness and holiness of the Seventh Day. But how was that relevant to the loutish man who stood before him? Nevertheless, he thought to himself, such a deed deserves the greatest blessing of all. Still brimming with enthusiasm, he exclaimed:

“I bless you that, in the merit of this great *mitzva* that you have done, you will experience the true taste of *Shabbos*.”

Hershel was still numb. He nodded his head as if he understood what the *Tzaddik* was talking about and answered, “*Amen*.”

On Sunday Hershel returned to Mosayov. Since he had no money, there was no reason to remain in Czernowitz. Still, he remained his cheerful, joking self.

As the week progressed, however, he began to feel a strange feeling welling up inside him, a spirit of holiness, something he had never felt before in his life. When Friday dawned and the feeling was even more intense, he realized that it must be connected to the oncoming *Shabbos*, and that this *Shabbos* would definitely be like no other he had ever experienced.

He went shopping to purchase appropriate food, and he could barely control his trembling. As the hours went by, his inner upheaval grew stronger and stronger. He didn’t know what would be.

All those who encountered Hershel that *Shabbos* could hardly recognize him. Was that really him – singing, dancing,

studying, praying with ecstasy? Hershel could barely recognize himself! His entire being was bursting with the pleasure of *Shabbos*.

It was the talk of the town. The idea that Hershel the clown could be caught up in a *Tzaddik*-type of intense love of *Shabbos* cracked up everyone who heard it even more than Hershel's intentional jests. They even entertained the possibility that he had gone insane.

But then the news spread about what had happened at the livestock fair in Czernowitz – of the incongruous charitable deed that Hershel had done and the extraordinary blessing of the *Tzaddik*. People began to consider the issue more seriously.

After that *Shabbos*, Hershel returned to his customary light-hearted joking manner. But by the following *Shabbos* he was again overwhelmed by the

same spirit of holiness. It was as if there were two Hershels: the weekday persona and the special *Shabbos* one.

Weeks went by, and months, without change in his situation. Hershel felt himself cracking under the strain of his dual personality. He decided to travel back to Czernowitz to discuss his situation with the *Tzaddik* who had blessed him.

Rav Chaim told him that in order to absorb the taste of *Shabbos* without spiritual and psychological damage, he would have to refine his weekday behavior. Hershel decided to stay on in Czernowitz in order to attach himself to the *Tzaddik* and to learn from him. He did so, and became a completely different person as his daily lifestyle changed to be harmonious with his weekly *Shabbos* elevation.

Translated and freely adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from *Sichas*

*HaShavua* #461.



## Rav Gedalya Ben Yitzchok of Linitz, 29<sup>th</sup> of Kislev

Mechaber of *Teshuos Chen*

### So Deep

Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev writes in his letter of approbation to the *sefer Teshuos Chen*:

“Rav Shmuel Yehuda Leib, the son of the *Tzaddik*, the *Gaon* and holy flame, our Master Gedalya, showed me his father's holy writings. I saw them and studied them and they are among the loftiest things in the world.” (*Haskoma to Teshuos Chen*)

The Berditchever *Rav* said further that many people were unable to delve deep enough to understanding the meaning behind the holy *mechaber* because his writings are so profound.

(Publisher's Introduction to *Teshuos Chen*)



### Why Must Eliyohu HaNovi Precede Moshiach?

The prophet Malachi proclaims (3:23), “Behold I am sending you Eliyohu *HaNovi* before the great and awesome day of *Hashem*.” Rav Gedalya of Linitz writes that he received a tradition from his masters and teachers that *Moshiach* will be able to advocate on behalf of all *Klal Yisrael* and find their merits. This *limud zechus* will cause everyone to be filled with feelings of remorse and regret, known as *hirhurei teshuva*, leading them to become *Tzaddikim*.

This concept unlocks the gates of light; it illuminates the words of *Chazal* and allows them to be understood. For *Chazal* taught that [*Moshiach*] *ben Dovid* will only come to a generation that is either

totally unworthy and guilty or to a generation that is all totally worthy and meritorious – *kulo chayav* or *kulo zakai*. *Moshiach* will be *melamed zechus* (find merit), give everyone the benefit of the doubt and advocate on behalf of all of them; they will then all do *teshuva* and be meritorious.

The problem is those who are *baalei machlokes*, masters at causing arguments, strife and disagreements. If *Moshiach* will try to find merit with one side, the other will be guilty by default, and if *Moshiach* attempts to justify the other side, the opposing faction must also by default be wrong.

And so *Hashem* must send *Eliyohi HaNovi* first, one day before *Moshiach* arrives, in order to make *sholom* in the world. Then afterward *Moshiach* will arrive speedily in our days and will be *melamed zechus* on everyone; the entire world will

then be meritorious. (*Teshuos Chen* p. 114)



### **The Holy Challa of Rebbetzin Perel**

Rav Levi Yitzchok and his *Rebbetzin* once spent *Shabbos* in the town of Linitz at the home of the local *Rav*, the famed *Tzaddik* and *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, Rav Gedalya of Linitz, *mechaber* of *Teshuos Chein*. The Linitzer *Rebbetzin* gave the honor of braiding the *challo*s for *Shabbos* to Rebbetzin Perel, the Berditchever *Rebbetzin*.

When Rebbetzin Perel braided the *challa* in honor of *Shabbos*, she whispered a personal prayer: “*Ribbono Shel Olam* – Master of the world! I beseech You – help my Levi Yitzchok, when he recites the blessing of *Hamotzi* over the *challa*, to have in mind the same holy *kavonos* and intentions that I had at the time I braided them.”



### **Rav Shlomo HaKohen of Vilna, 29<sup>th</sup> Of Kislev**

Mechaber of Cheshek Shlomo

Rav Shlomo *HaKohen* was born in Vilna in 5588/1828. His father, Rav Yisrael Meir *HaKohen*, served as a *Dayan* on the Vilna *Bais Din*. Rav Shlomo learned under his older brother, Rav Betzalel, whom he mentions in his *seforim*, and later under Rav Yitzchok Shirvaniter. At sixteen, Rav Shlomo had already finished the entire *Shas*. Rav Shlomo's glosses on the *Gemora* were published in the Vilna Edition *Shas* under the name *Cheshek Shlomo*. His *halachic* responsa were published under the title *She'eilos U'teshuvos Binyan Shlomo*. Rav Shlomo was a *Dayan* in Vilna for nearly forty years.

It is related that when thieves once

broke into his house, he ran home and checked to see if his copy of *Rabbeinu Yerucham* was still there. (*Rabbeinu Yerucham* was an expensive and rare *sefer* at the time). Upon seeing that it was untouched, he declared, “*Boruch Hashem*, nothing was stolen.”

The *Chofetz Chaim* said that Rav Shlomo, who was a *Kohen*, was ready for *Moshiach's* arrival and was fluent in all *Halochos* pertaining to *Kohanim* and the *Avoda* in the *Bais HaMikdosh*. Rav Shlomo was *niftar* on the 29<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev*, the fifth day of *Chanuka*, 5666/1905, at the age of seventy-seven.

*Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.*





# SPECIAL CHANUKA EDITION

## Hachona Shel Mitzva - Preparing for Mitzvas Hadlokas Neiros Chanuka

Whenever a person performs any *mitzva*, no matter which, even if he does not fully understand the meaning behind the *mitzva* or even if he fails to comprehend its essence – so long as he understands that this is a divine commandment and that *Hashem* ordered him to do it, he fills the entire world with holiness, which spreads throughout the world.

When a person purchases oil to light the *Chanuka* candles and receives this oil in hand, this act has the power to bring holiness into the entire world and to cause them all to return and do *teshuva*. This requires *dveikus* and attachment to *Hashem*, to cleave and bind oneself to the Creator of Genesis and to perform the *mitzva* for the sake of His blessed Name. Regarding this awesome act and moment, it is said *yesh koneh olomo beshaa achas* – “there are those who acquire their [share or portion] in the [coming] world in one moment”. In this one moment we can acquire the entire world and bring about *teshuva*!

(*Binas Yisrael Chanuka* page 67b)

Rav Melech Biderman related a story that I believe illustrates the above teaching well:

Many decades ago, when Australia was still a barren spiritual wasteland and before many holy *kehillos* were established there, a *Chassid* visited the land down under for business. It was Thursday and by now our *Chassid* was worried where he would spend *Shabbos*. He decided to enter a fish store, trusting that surely here a Jew would come to buy fish *lichvod Shabbos Kodesh*. And so it was, that the proprietor handed a customer a large fine fish, whereupon the *Chassid* turned to the customer and asked if by any chance he was Jewish. Answering in the affirmative, the customer warmly invited the *Chassid* to his home for *Shabbos*. Our *Chassid* was overjoyed and amazed at the mansion where his host brought him. Gate after gate of the grounds opened up before them, as they drove toward their destination, a palatial home where he would spend *Shabbos* in grandeur in honor of the holy day. As our *Chassid* delighted his hosts with *divrei Torah* and was plied with good food and drink, he noticed something odd; in the display case where the family’s beautiful silver was proudly on display, among the expensive silver articles was a broken flask of oil. Puzzled by this strange phenomenon but ashamed to embarrass his host with awkward questions, the *Chassid* held his tongue all *Shabbos* long, until *Motzoei Shabbos*. As he took his leave and thanked his host, he conspiratorially whispered the burning question, “Pray tell me why you have a broken old flask of oil among your most expensive silver.” The host answered his query with a story:

“When I was but twelve years old, my father passed away and I had no choice but to go out and seek employment to help feed and clothe my mother and siblings and support them. I was very successful and eventually grew wealthy and forgot all about my upbringing and my Jewish roots. I decided to live my life as I pleased with no second thought to *Yiddishkeit*. Eventually, I forgot all our traditions.

“One day, as I was going on my way, I chanced upon a young boy who stood crying bitterly. On the pavement beside him lay a broken flask of oil. ‘What is wrong, young man, and why are you crying?’ I asked in sympathy.

"As the boy told me his sad tale, he burst into fresh sobs. 'Tonight is the first night of *Chanuka* and we need to light candles. My father and I are very poor and we have little money. He borrowed a few coins from our neighbor and asked me to go out and buy oil for lighting candles. He warned me sternly to make sure that I would not drop the flask or it would break and I did my best...but...but,' his lip trembled, 'a c-c-cat jumped out just now and fr-fr-frightened me and I dr-dr-dropped the flask and now it broke!' And he wept in misery, crying, 'How can I face my father without the flask of oil in hand?'"

Explained the wealthy host to the *Chassid*, "This simple sentence uttered by the pure child echoed in my ears with a personal retort toward me: 'How can I face my Heavenly Father, *Hashem*, without the flask of oil in my hands?!' My heart went out to the boy and I pressed a few coins into his hands. As he dried his tears I asked him to please go and purchase two new bottles of oil and to guard them well – one for himself and his father – and one for me. That night, I was a changed person, and I resolved to mend my ways. I lit the *Chanuka* candles as I had not done for many years. From that moment I returned to my heritage and *mitzva* observance, from details to stringencies. I kept the broken flask of oil as a memento to remind myself of my own personal *Chanuka* miracle. (*Be'er HaChaim Chanuka* p. 43-45)



### The Tzaddik's Flaming Fire

Once, the Neshchizer related how one of the *Tzaddikim* told the Berditchever that after witnessing his great over-exertions and wild movements during prayer he now had an answer to a difficulty in understanding *Rashi's* commentary regarding the lighting of the *Menora*. *Rashi* writes that the *Torah* praises Aharon for not making any changes – *lehaggid shevacho shel Aharon shelo shina*. "If, however, they would have honored you, my esteemed colleague, with lighting the *Menora*, surely you would have made some changes; you would have accidentally poured all the oil onto the ground, as you would be shaking and jumping from one corner to the next during your recitation of the blessing!" (*Zichron Tov Inyenei Tefilloso* #33 p. 37)



### Cooling Off in the Snow

The *Chassid* Rav Shaul Leib Gantz used to relate the following story every year on *Chanuka*, and this was his tale:

Once, on *Chanuka*, the holy Ropshitzer was seen entering his home while his feet were sore and bleeding. When his family questioned him as to why he appeared so bruised and injured, he answered that he had been rolling in the snow (in those days this was a common form of self-affliction for penitents to atone for their sins). When his family exclaimed their surprise that an elderly *Tzaddik* such as himself still felt the need for such heavy measures of torture and self-affliction, he explained himself by telling them the following story:

"When I was a young man, I was filled with a great burning desire to see the holy Berditchever *Rav* light *Chanuka* candles! Nothing could deter me: not the long distance or the lack of funds for travel. And so, in the dead of winter, in the bitter cold, I began my trip and

set out on foot toward Berditchev. Since I had no money, not only was transportation out of the question, but I spent my nights sleeping on the hard benches of the *Bais Medrash*, warming myself by the oven in the cold, winter nights with neither a blanket nor a cover. Many a day I froze as the bitter winds bit at me, and the frost hung on my beard and whiskers. I relied on the hospitality of strangers for food and eventually a carriage driver spotted me and had mercy on me, taking me part of the way gratis.

Finally, I reached Berditchev, cold and hungry, but with a fire burning inside me goading me on. When I reached the Berditchever *Rav's* home, my heart leaped, but when I entered, it dropped into my stomach.

"The Berditchever's home was not like the homes of today – large and well furnished – it was but a small, cramped flat with only two rooms. In the larger room gathered a great many Jews who, like myself, had come to observe the holy *Tzaddik's avoda* in lighting the *Chanuka* candles. How, I thought to myself, will I ever see the Berditchever with such a crowd here preceding me? I grew dismayed at the thought that all my efforts could have been in vain. But I was determined at all costs to see the Berditchever *Rav* – and then I had an idea. I began to creep on the ground on all fours in between the legs of the assembled crowd.

"This was in the Ukraine in the winter; all the assembled were wearing heavy boots caked with mud and clay. Nonetheless, I continued on all fours, pushing my way through the crowd of booted feet as I was stepped on and jostled. Obviously, when I emerged, I was covered in bruises and mud but I had succeeded in reaching the far side of the room. Thus, on my hands and knees, I peered through the cracks and crevices of the ill-fitted wooden double doors and this is what my eyes beheld:

"There stood the holy Berditchever *Rav*, *mechaber* of *Kedushas Levi*, his face aflame, his excitement and ecstasy palpable as he stood pouring oil into his *Menora*! Of course there was more oil on the floor than there was in the *Menora* but I had seen enough!

"Now understand, my children," concluded the Ropshitzer, "that today I once again remembered that *Chanuka* and the look in the Berditchever *Rav's* eyes; his excitement set me aflame once more, and the only way I could contain myself and cool off was to roll in the snow, which is what I just did." (*Otzar Ephraim Behaalosecha*)



### **What Does the Graf Know About Oneg?**

In the courts of the Rizhiner dynasty on *Chanuka*, when lighting the *Menora*, they used to tell the following story about the *Tzaddik Rav Levi Yitzchok* of Berditchev:

Once, the holy Berditchever *Rav* entered his *Bais Medrash* on *Chanuka* and observed a group of *Chassidim* assembled, speaking in undertones. When they noticed the Berditchever approaching, their hushed whispers ended and they stood silently, embarrassed.

"What were you discussing?" asked the Berditchever. Abashed, the *Chassidim's* cheeks burned red with shame, as they stood silent, unanswering. However, the Berditchever was not so easily dissuaded, and he pursued the matter once again. "Nu, what were you discussing, eh?"

Finally, one of the *Chassidim* confessed, "*Rebbe*, we were discussing the Graf Potatzski, the local squire, and how much wealth and material comfort he has. He has it all – why, even

in the heat of summer if the fancy strikes him to ski, and of course there is no snow to be found, he gathers sacks and sacks of sugar and skis on the sugary mountains of artificial snow!"

The Berditchever looked back at them and countered, "Does the Graf light *Chanuka* candles?"

"Of course not, *Rebbe!*" answered the astonished *Chassid*. "The Graf is a gentile!"

"Well then," answered the Berditchever, declaring with finality, "then surely he has never tasted any true *simcha* in his life at all!" (*Yalkut Bnei Bina*)



The *Kedushas Levi* says that women have a tremendous ability to gain from the lights of *Chanukah*. He states that each night of *Chanukah* is *mesugal* for different things for women to *daven* for.

- ❖ **1<sup>st</sup> night** - Not to be lonely or depressed;
- ❖ **2<sup>nd</sup> night** - *Shidduchim* and *Shalom Bayis*;
- ❖ **3<sup>rd</sup> night** - Healthy, happy and good children. (The *Chasam Sofer* says when you cry in front of the candles - you can be sure your *teffilos* will be answered);
- ❖ **4<sup>th</sup> night** - (Four *Imahos*) To be a conventional woman within her own space who is true to her essence;
- ❖ **5<sup>th</sup> night** - (*Chamisha Chumshei Torah*) *Daven* your husband and children should be a *talmidei chachamim*. (By the 5<sup>th</sup> night, more of the *menorah* is lit up. You can *daven* for more revelation and light in your life);
- ❖ **6<sup>th</sup> night** - *Simcha*. (You can have everything and still be sad, so this is an opportunity to *daven* for *simcha*);
- ❖ **7<sup>th</sup> night** - Blissful *Shabbos Kodesh* infused with *zmiros*, *divrei torah* by your *seuda*. *Shabbos* is source of all *bracha*;
- ❖ **8<sup>th</sup> (Zos) night** - *Mesugal* for barren women. (The number eight is above nature. According to *Kabbalah*: because the world was created in seven days so the number eight is considered beyond creation). Very powerful day to *daven* for yourself and others who weren't yet *zocheh* to children.

The *Kedushas Levi* says if you are planning to start something new, if you start on *Chanukah* it will surely be blessed.

## *A Freilichen Chanukah.*



Say it (especially with your children) at least once a day:

Based on *Chovos HaLevavos* - Duties of the Heart ~ *Sha'ar HaBitachon* - the Gate of Trust

There are 7 qualities that *Hashem* has that can strengthen our trust in Him:

1. *Hashem* loves me.
2. *Hashem* is with me, wherever I may be. And He is always ready to help me.
3. *Hashem* is stronger and cleverer than anyone in the world. And He can find

solutions to any problem there is – even if it may seem impossible.

4. *Hashem* knows what is best for me, better even than I myself can know.

5. Just as He has helped me already numerous times on the path I travel, He shall help me again.

6. No one can do anything at all to help me or harm me, besides *Hashem* who controls everything over the entire world.

7. The Master of the World desires and searches for ways to act with *chesed* – loving kindness more than the nicest, kindest person you could ever imagine.



I heard this wonderful word from **Reb Yisroel Meir Zaks** from Eretz Yisroel

**When we encounter pressure in our lives we have to remember the following:**

Pressure in Hebrew is לחץ – (צלח)

If we remember to surround ourselves with Hashem – ה' and we truly believe in Hashem's salvation, then when you add ה' (Hashem – ה') in front and in the end of לחץ – then you turn the pressure into הצלחה, Hatzlacha (Success)

לזכר נשמת אמנו החשובה, נפש יקרה ועדינה  
אשה יראת ה' ובעלת מדות טובות  
מרת זיסל ז"ל

בת הרה"ה מו"ה מאיר זאב הכהן כ"ץ ע"ה הי"ד מעיר נירעדהאז יע"א  
ונכדת הרה"ק רבי אהרן צבי טערקלטיוב זי"ע מבריד  
אשת הרה"ח מו"ה אברהם חיים ע"ה גאלדענבערג

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

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

(מתוך אמונה טהורה) בדרך המסורה  
(והתנהגה כאשה כשרה) לכל משפחתה,  
היא הודה היא הדרה - נקיה וטהורה  
היוצר וצר צורה (וקיבלה הגזירה)

נפטרה בש"ט בת תשעים שנה ב"ד לחודש כסלו (ערב חנוכה) שנת תשע"ח לפ"ק

תמליץ טוב בעד משפחתה היקרה ותקים לתחיה לקץ הימין מהרה ת'נצ'ב'ה'

# Zera Shimshon



## Vayeishev

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 6<sup>th</sup> of Elul 5539 (1779).

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

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

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

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

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

לזכר נשמת

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מיכאל זצ"ל

בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

יִקְחָהוּ וַיִּשְׁלְכוּ אוֹתוֹ הַבְּרֵה וְהַבּוֹר רַק אֵין בּוֹ מַיִם (לִז' כַּד')  
...and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. (37:24)

The Gemara (Shabbos 22a) says that the pit that Yosef was thrown into was void of water however it contained snakes. This Gemara is brought down in middle of the where the Gemara discusses the halachos of Chanuka. It is preceded by the halacha that says that if one lights a Menora higher than twenty amos, he did not fulfill his obligation. The well known question is - what is the fact that the pit that the Shevatim threw Yosef into contained snakes, doing right in middle of the halachos of Chanuka, specifically the halacha requiring the Menora to be lit under twenty amos?

The Zera Shimshon explains the connection as follows:

The reason why a Menora cannot be lit above twenty amos is because above twenty amos the Menora cannot be seen and there is no Pirumay Nisa - public recognition of the miracle.

The question is - why do we only publically commemorate the miracle of the oil when there was another miracle - the war that the Makkabim won against the Greeks?

The Zera Shimshon offers a tremendous chiddush that in fact the reason why we light the Menora is to commemorate the victory on the battle field. The Greeks wanted to destroy us spiritually and in order not to follow their decrees, the Jews rose up in battle to overthrow them. Being that the Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 2:4) refers to the exile of the Greeks as 'darkness', to commemorate our victory over them we light oil candles!

However, the question arises as to why we must publicize this miracle, after all Hashem had no choice but to save us? He placed in an exile that wanted to snuff out our souls and He must therefore save us?

The Zera Shimshon explains that the answer to this question is dependent on the argument between R' Yehuda and the Chachamim (Sanhedrin 76b). R' Yehuda holds that if someone makes a snake bite a person, since the poison of the snake is between its teeth, he is liable for the person's death. The Chachamim hold that the snake has control to spit out its poison if it wishes and therefore, even by placing a snake's teeth on someone else, one cannot be entirely blamed for his death.

The enemies of the Jewish people are compared to snakes (Yirmia 8:17, Tehillim 58:5). According to the Chachamim this would mean that placing the Jews in exile doesn't by design spell their death sentence, since like the snake, the poison is expelled by will - not automatically. Therefore, when there is a decree against the Jewish people (it is because of their actions, not an intrinsic reaction of the nations that they find themselves amongst), and Hashem saves us we must publicize the miracle.

This however, is only if we follow the opinion of the Chachamim. Perhaps though, the halacha is like R' Yehuda which would mean that the second we find ourselves in galus we are in mortal danger and Hashem has no other choice but to save us? Thus, freeing us of our obligation to commemorate the miracle in a public way?

For this reason the Gemara, immediately after it says that one must light under twenty amos which is to publicize the miracle, it brings the fact that the pit Yosef was thrown into was full of snakes. This is because the passuk (37:21) praises Reuven for saving Yosef by throwing him into the pit. However, if the pit was full of snakes, why does the passuk say that Reuven saved Yosef? He had him thrown to his death?

It must be that the halacha is like the Chachamim - that a snake will not automatically kill and therefore by throwing Yosef there he was saving him from being killed outright by the Shevatim. This proves that a Menora must be placed under twenty amos to publicize the miracle since the halacha is like the Chachamim.

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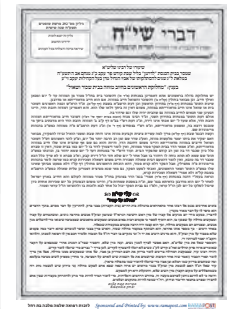
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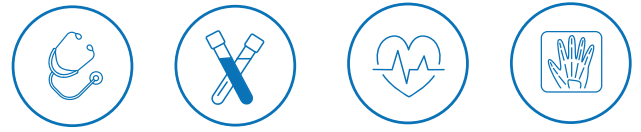
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