

MEOROS HATZADDIKIM

— Lights Of Our Righteous —

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)

Parshas Behar & Parshas Bechukosai

CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA

לזכר נשמת

ר' זכרי' שמעון הכהן בן יצחק

Attached In Dveikus

Rav Yaakov Yosef Hakohen Katz

Toldos Yaakov Yosef (Bechukosai 2, Naso 12, Naso 17)

A parable: The king's son was lost and strayed from his father. He could not be brought back until one of the ministers removed his royal clothing and donned the simple clothing of a peasant. Then he was able to become friendly with and come close to the king's wayward son, who had likewise become a lowlife.

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Toldos Yaakov Yosef (Naso 17)

A person has ups and downs in his life. Before he falls, he must attach himself with rapture and *dveikus* to Hashem so that if he falls, he can elevate himself again from those fallen spiritual levels and at the same time elevate the sparks of others who have fallen. Thus every generation has its leader, and when he dons the lowly clothing of his generation, he attaches himself to them. This occurs through sin, that he is able to have some connection with them, and then, when he repents, he can bring them all back with him to his previous level. Just as one who descends into the pit first ties himself with a rope, so the *Tzaddik* attaches himself to the Creator before descending to the level of his generation. Thus we say, "*Yaakov chevel nachalosso* — *Yaakov's* inheritance is like a rope" (*Devorim* 32:9): grasp this rope, which is bound to the Holy One Himself.

Note: See also *Zohar* I:83a, 140b. The *Zohar* explains this idea with a parable: What is this compared to? It is like a man who wished to descend into a deep pit, but was afraid that he would not be able to ascend afterward and come back out. What did he do? He tied a knot in a rope outside the pit. He said, "Now that I tied this knot I can climb out with this rope." Similarly, when Avrohom was about to descend into Egypt, he first bound himself to his faith so that he could later come out.

Stories on the Parsha



The Only Way To Cancel The Decree

Rav Yosef of Yampola and Rav Boruch of Mezhibuzh were *mechutonim* (Rav Yosef's son Yitzchok married Rav Boruch's daughter Chana Chaya). The two *mechutonim* were on excellent terms and there was great love and friendship

between Rav Yosef and Rav Boruch. It was Rav Yosef's custom to visit Rav Boruch at least twice a year, on *Parshas Bechukosai* and on *Parshas Ki Savo*, when both the *rebukes* of the *tochocha* are read. After Shabbos, when Rav Yosef took his leave, Rav Boruch often accompanied his *mechuton* well past the town's border to escort him with honor.

During one of their visits, Rav Boruch urged Rav Yosef to meet him secretly in the forest. "I must speak with you urgently regarding an important matter in total secrecy. No one else should be around - no family, no *gabbo'im* - just you and me. Make sure that even the coachman should be a gentile!"

Rav Yosef heeded Rav Boruch, but as the two made their way they failed to notice Rav Yosef's son Yitzchok, Rav Boruch's son-in-law, secretly following them. When he saw that his father and his father-in-law had secreted themselves in the forest, he went to eavesdrop and learn what urgent matter had caused them to behave in a manner so secret, so bewildering and and so bizarre!

As the two *Tzaddikim* spoke, he stood listening intently, rooted to the spot in shock! This is what he heard:

"*Mechuton leiben!*" began Rav Boruch, "surely you saw what I saw written in the Heavens this year during *Rosh HaShana* and *Yom Kippur*."

"Yes, indeed," replied Rav Yosef, in a sad, somber tone, as he shook his head. "I saw a grave and great *kitrug* - a prosecution, against *Am Yisrael*, that is a heavy, dark decree!"

"*Mechuton leiben*, what did you do?" asked Rav Boruch.

"Unfortunately, everything I did failed. Nothing I did was able to cancel or rescind the decree," he concluded sadly.

"*Mechuton leiben*," this time Rav Yosef addressed Rav Boruch, "what do you propose that we should do?"

“There is no other way to end this decree. There must be two *Tzaddikim*, heads and leaders of the generation, who accept upon themselves to leave this world and with their passing atone for the generation and so cancel the decree!” Rav Boruch replied.

“I see no other greater *Tzaddikim* in this generation than you and I. I am ready and willing and so now I ask, *Mechutan leiben*, will you agree at once and do this? Will you join me? We must save the people! We must save the generation! Will you join me and do this?”

Rav Yosef hesitated. “Is there no other way? I need some time to think this over.”

“Time? There is no time! Way? There is no other way! *Klal Yisrael* is in mortal danger and you ask for time and other ways?!” bellowed Rav Boruch.

Rav Yosef saw that there was no other way and he acquiesced to Rav Boruch’s demands.

Hearing this terrible pronouncement and seeing that his father had agreed, Rav Yosef’s son Yitzchok could no longer hold back. How could he contain his anguish and bitter sobs at the thought that he would lose beloved father and father-in-law all at once? As he sighed and sobbed in misery, the sounds of his pain reached the two *Tzaddikim*.

Rav Boruch’s anger flared. “This was a secret meeting! No one else was supposed to be present or hear what we agreed to here! If you dare reveal anything you have seen or heard there will be nothing left of you but a pile of bones and your family a barren hillside! I am warning you, promise that you will never, ever reveal our plans so long as we live!”

Rav Yitzchok agreed.

By *Cheshvan* of that year, Rav Boruch grew weaker and weaker, until finally on *Chai Kislev* his holy soul departed. Before leaving this world, Rav Boruch said to those present about himself, citing *pesukim* from the *berocha* preceding *Pesukei*

Dezimra: "Boruch she'omar vehoya ho'olom - whenever Boruch says something, then all the worlds rejoice, because Chazal say that *vehoya* is a language connoting happiness and joy. *Boruch gozer umekayem* - Boruch rescinds and cancels harsh negative decrees from *Am Yisrael* and he fulfills all positive good decrees for *Bnei Yisrael*. Boruch omer ve'oseh - *Boruch omer* - Boruch says something, *veHaKodosh Boruch Hu oseh* - and the Holy One fulfills. I have never lied; the only falsehoods I utter are the words of my confession." And so he recited the sins of the *viduy* and was *niftar*. He commanded that his *Rabbeinu Tam tefillin*, his bed and some articles of silver be given to his beloved *mechuton* Rav Yosef of Yampola so that he would recite *Kaddish* for him.

Rav Yosef tried to visit his beloved *mechuton* Rav Boruch, and he journeyed to see him just one last time but it was too late. When he reached Tsherni-Ostra he felt the night fall and realized that Rav Boruch had passed on. After the *shiva*, he received the inheritance and recited the *Kaddish* that Shabbos night. Then he himself grew weaker until he passed away on 24 *Teves*. (Based on *Kehal Chassidim HeChodosh* 384 p. 18 and *Siach Eliezer HeChodosh* Introduction.)

Gedolim Be'misasm Yoser



**Yahrzeits for the 22nd of Iyar ~ Begins Friday Night
(05-09-2026)**



**Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Vilna - Beis Lechem Yehuda (5493 / 1733 - 293rd
Yahrzeit)**



Rav Yeshaya of Plonsk (5576 / 1816 - 210th Yahrzeit)

 **Rav Mordechai Shraga Feivush Friedman - Husyatiner Rebbe (5654 / 1894 - 132nd Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Mordechai Shraga of Husyatina (20 Iyar 1834 - 22 Iyar 1894) was one of the six sons of Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin who became the head of a dynasty in Galicia. His thousands of Chassidim included many prominent scholars.

 **Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandari - Sabba Kadisha (5690 / 1930 - 96th Yahrzeit)**

The *Saba Kadisha* ("Holy Grandfather"), was a distinguished *rav*, kabbalist and *rosh yeshiva* in his native home of Constantinople, (now Turkey) and later served as Chief Rabbi of Damascus, Syria, and Beirut, Lebanon. He moved to Tzefas, Teveria and then Yerushalayim. He was known for his stringent interpretation of *halacha* and his uncompromising dedication to Orthodox Judaism.

**Yahrzeits for the 23rd of Iyar ~ Begins Saturday Night
(05-10-2026)**

 **The Jewish Community of Worms (4856 / 1096 - 930th Yahrzeit)**

 **Dayan Sholom Bashari - Dayan in Yemen (5533 / 1773 - 253rd Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Yehoshua Heschel of Dinov (5574 / 1814 - 212th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Shimon Deutsch of Zelichov (5586 / 1826 - 200th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Moshe. One of the greatest disciples of the Chozeh of Lublin, the Kozhnutz Maggid, and the Apta Rav author of *Ohev Yisroel*. Some say he was also a talmid of the Rebbe, Reb Melech of Lizensk, author of *Noam Elimelech*.

 **Rav Moshe Shlomo Weiss - Av Beis Din of Rakowitz (5660 / 1900 - 126th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Alexander HaKohen Steinberger - Meoros Aish (5679 / 1919 - 107th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Shlomo Eliezer HaLevi Rottenberg (5704 / 1944 - 82nd Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Meshulem Zusha Yitzchok Halberstam (5704 / 1944 - 82nd Yahrzeit)**



Rav Chaim Yitzchok Chaikin (5753 / 1993 - 33rd Yahrzeit)

Rav Chaim was born in 1907 in Kossova, Lithuania. He was niftar in Sarcelles in 1993. Pupil of Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman in Baranovitch. Rav Chaikin studied for 12 years in the Radin Yeshiva. Of these years, he spent seven years, from 1926 to 1933, as one of the closest students of the revered Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan. In 1938 Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman suggested Rabbi Chaikin to be the Rosh Yeshiva of Chief Rabbi Ernest Weill's new yeshiva in Strasbourg-Neudorf. He served in the Neudorf Yeshiva, the "Yeshiva of France," until the advent of World War II. Upon his release in May 1945, he was hired as Rosh Yeshiva for the nascent Yeshiva in Aix-les-Bains.

**Yahrzeits for the 24th of Iyar ~ Begins Sunday Night
(05-11-2026)**



Rav Simcha HaKohen of Worms (4856 / 1096 - 930th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yehoshua Heschel Tzoref of Cracow (5480 / 1720 - 306th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yeshaya of Dinvotz - Talmid of the Maggid of Mezritch (5554 / 1794 - 232nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Eliezer Tzvi Safrin - Komarna Rebbe, Damesek Eliezer on Zohar, Ben Baisi (5658 / 1898 - 128th Yahrzeit)

Rav Eliezer Tzvi, the third *Komarno Rebbe*, was the son of Rav Yitzchok Isaac Yehuda Yechiel Safrin. His childhood was marked by suffering, poverty and deprivation. Despite this, he toiled in Torah study and he grew in Torah and Chassidus. Despite his fame and renown as *Rebbe* after his father's passing, he himself traveled to the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz.



Rav Yitzchok Feigenbaum - Chief Rabbi of Warsaw (5671 / 1911 - 115th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yisroel Sholom Yosef of Antonia - Nefesh Yishai (5704 / 1944 - 82nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Binyomin Mendelson - Rav of Kommemiyus (5739 / 1979 - 47th Yahrzeit)

Rav Binyamin Mendelson, Rav of Kommemiyus, one of the most prominent fighters for *kedushas sheviis* (1979). Born in Plotzk at the end of the 19th century, his father was Rav Menachem Mendel Mendelsohn. With the bracha of the *Gerer Rebbe*, Rav Binyomin moved to Eretz Yisroel in 1933, and was offered the position as Rov of Kfar Ata not far from Haifa and served in that capacity for 17 years. In 1951, Rav Binyomin left Kfar Ata and its *kehilla* of 20,000 families and accepted the offer to become the Rov of a small, religious settlement in the Negev called Kommemius, serving the community for the next 27 years.



Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb (5765 / 2005 - 21st Yahrzeit)

Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb (1923-2005). Born to Rav Shlomo Gottlieb, Rav of the *Ohr Hachaim shul* in Philadelphia, the family moved to Yerushalayim in 1929. After learning at the *Chevron Yeshiva*, his family moved back to the United States, where he learned at *Torah Vodaas*. In 1963, he moved back to Eretz Yisrael to help his parents. He was appointed general manager of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, which he held for 14 years. He also assisted his father in *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Chiam Yosef*, founded in 1942. After his father's death, Rav Akiva Moshe was responsible for it.

**Yahrzeits for the 25th of Iyar ~ Begins Monday Night
(05-12-2026)**



Rav Ozer of Klementov - Even Ha'ozar



Rav Binyomin Zev of Zolkova (5470 / 1710 - 316th Yahrzeit)

Son of Rav Meir. Av Beis Din Klimintuv. Author, *Even HaOzer*. Served as rav in Klimantuv and rosh yeshiva in Zolkova.



Rav Shaul HaLevi - Rav of the Hague, Binyan Shaul (5545 / 1785 - 241st Yahrzeit)



Rav Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lisa - Chavos Da'as, Rav of Lisa (5592 / 1832 - 194th Yahrzeit)

Yaakov ben Yaakov Moshe Lorberbaum of Lissa (1760-1832) was a Rabbi and Posek. He is most commonly known as the "*Ba'al HaChavos Da'as*" or "*Ba'al HaNesivos*" for his most well-known works, or as the "*Lisa Rav*" for the city in which he was Chief Rabbi.



Rav Chaim Hager of Kosov - Toras Chaim (5614 / 1854 - 172nd Yahrzeit)

Son of Rav Menachem Mendel of Kosov, founder of the Kosov-Vizhnitz dynasty. Author *Toras Chaim*. Father of first Vizhnitzer Rebbe. The second of three Admor Kosov-Viznitz Rebbes. He began to serve as rebbe after his father's passing in תקפ"ו.



Rav Yehoshua Osher Rabinowitz - Porisover Rebbe (5622 / 1862 - 164th Yahrzeit)



Rav Chaim Chori - Rosh Beis Din of Tunis, Motza Chaim (5717 / 1957 - 69th Yahrzeit)

Rav Chaim Chori, Rosh Beis Din in Tunis, author of *Motza Chaim*(1957). He immigrated to Israel from Jerba in 1955 and settled in Beersheva. Chori died two years later and was buried in the Beersheva cemetery.

**Yahrzeits for the 26th of Iyar ~ Begins Tuesday Night
(05-13-2026)**



Rav Saadia Gaon - Emunos Vedeos (4702 / 942 - 1,084th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Saadia ben Yosef, one of the last and most famous Gaonim, a great Talmudic scholar, Jewish philosopher and inspiring leader, was born in a small village near Fayyum, in Egypt (the site of the ancient city Pithom which together with Raamses was built by Jewish slaves under the Pharaohs). His family traced its origin from Yehuda, the son of Yaakov. His father, Rabbi Yosef, was a learned man and he was Saadia's first teacher. Saadia had excellent qualities and was a brilliant student. Before he reached the age of twenty years, he already wrote his first work, the Agron.



Rav Aharon Lapapa (5427 / 1667 - 359th Yahrzeit)



Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto - Ramchal, Mesilas Yeshorim (5506 / 1746 - 280th Yahrzeit)

Author of *Mesilas Yesharim*. Son of Rav Yaakov Chai and Diamenta (Margalit) Luzzato. Born around 1707 י"טת"ה in Padua, Italy. He was a child prodigy and his father hired the best teachers and tutors to teach him.



Rav Yitzchok Itzkowitz of Volozhin - Rav Itzele Volozhiner, Peh Kodosh (5609 / 1849 - 177th Yahrzeit)



Rav Shmuel Wilner - Av Beis Din of Helitch (5614 / 1854 - 172nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Yitzchak Isaac HaLevi Epstein - of Homel, Maamar Hashefelos V'Hasimcha (5617 / 1857 - 169th Yahrzeit)

Son of Rav Mordechai HaLevi Epstein, Rav Yitzchak Isaac was born around the year 5530 (1770). He received his primary education from his grandfather, Rav Dovid HaLevi Epstein, Chief Rabbi of Lutsk. In 5565 (1805), he was appointed as Rav of Homel. He was a disciple of the *Baal HaTanya*, Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, who was the founder of Chabad chassidus, as well as of his son Rav Dov Ber, known as the *Mittler Rebbe*, and his grandson, Rav Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*. At age seventy he began to lead followers. He dressed in the white garments of a *rebbe* but forbade chassidim to come from out of town.



Rav Shmuel Eliyohu Taub - Zvoliner Rebbe (5648 / 1888 - 138th Yahrzeit)



Rav Shimon Chaim Segal Pelter - Av Beis Din of Elad (5662 / 1902 - 124th Yahrzeit)



Rav Pinchos Rabinowitz of Kontikoziva - Avodas Yitzchok (5682 / 1922 - 104th Yahrzeit)



Rav Shlomo Goldman - Zhviller Rebbe, Reb Shlomke (5705 / 1945 - 81st Yahrzeit)

Rav Shlomo ("Shlomke") Goldman, the Zhviller Rebbe (1870-1945). The younger of the two sons of Rav Mordechai of Zhvil, and a descendant of Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov. When a pogrom in Zhvil targeted the his brother's compound and killed the *Rebbetzin* along with many of the Jews of the area, his brother, Rav Yaakov Yisrael, moved to Boston, and Rav Shlomo moved to Yerushalayim in 1926.

Yahrzeits for the 27th of Iyar ~ Begins Wednesday Night (05-14-2026)



Rav Avrohom Shmuel Bachrach of Worms (5375 / 1615 - 411th Yahrzeit)

Son of Rav Yitzchok. Born in Bumsela near Prague in 1575 (של"ה). He studied under the Maharal of Prague and married the Maharal's granddaughter, Chava. He served as Rav of several *kehillos* in Ashkenaz concluding his rabbinic career as Rav of Vermiza - Worms.



Rav Pinchos Elimelech of Zebarov (5589 / 1829 - 197th Yahrzeit)



Rav Aharon Aryeh of Leshkovitz (5655 / 1895 - 131st Yahrzeit)



Rav Shlomo Shneur Zalman Schneerson of Kapost - Mogen Ovos, Second Kaposter Rebbe (5660 / 1900 - 126th Yahrzeit)



Rav Eliezer Zev Rosenbaum of Kretchnif - Roza D'Shabbos (5704 / 1944 - 82nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Tzvi Hirsch Friedlander - Shaarei Hayoshor (5704 / 1944 - 82nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Shmuel Chamoula (5764 / 2004 - 22nd Yahrzeit)



Rebbetzin Yocheved 'Jackie' Wein (5766 / 2006 - 20th Yahrzeit)

Rebbetzin Yocheved "Jackie" Wein (1934-2006). Born in Vaskai, Lithuania, the youngest child of Rav Lazer and Rebbetzin Sarah Menucha Levin. The family moved to Detroit in 1938, to escape the growing terror in Europe. Rabbi Wein's rebbi, Rav Chaim Kreiswirth advised the brilliant young scholar to go into rabbonus, where he could contribute so much to *Klal Yisrael*.

Yahrzeits for the 28th of Iyar ~ Begins Thursday Night (05-15-2026)



Rav Shlomo Avrohom Eliyohu Green of Bnei Brak - the tailor Mekubel



Shmuel Hanavi (2982 / -779 - 2,804th Yahrzeit)

Son of Elkana and Chanah. (The *yahrzeit*, according to Shulchan Aruch: 28th of *Iyar*; according to Megillas Taanis: 29th of *Iyar*)



Rav Yitzchok of Kurbeil - Baal Hachotem, Sma"K (5040 / 1280 - 746th Yahrzeit)



Rav Moshe Leib Tziltz - Shu't Milei D'Avos, Rav & Av Beis Din of Nikolsburg (5591 / 1831 - 195th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yaakov Aryeh Twersky of Trisk (5678 / 1918 - 108th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yechizkiya Fisch - Av Beis Din of Hadas, Lev Yechizkiya (5704 / 1944 - 82nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Yechezkel Shraga Weinberger (5704 / 1944 - 82nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Yerachmiel Yehuda Meir Kalisch - Rebbe of Amshinov (5736 / 1976 - 50th Yahrzeit)

Son of Rav Shimon Sholom of Amshinov. A descendant of the Vurka dynasty. Born Shushan Purim 1901 תרס"א in Peshischa. In תשי"ד he was crowned as Amshinover Rebbe and he moved to Eretz Yisroel with his mother the daughter of Rav Yeshaya Kalisch of Peshischa. At first he lived in Tel Aviv and afterwards in Yerushalayim where he established Shem Olam the Amshinover yeshivah.

Biographies of the Tzaddikim



Rav Mordechai Shraga Feivush Friedman Husyatiner Rebbe (Iyar 22, 5654 / 1894 - 132nd Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Mordechai Shraga of Husyatina (20 Iyar 1834 - 22 Iyar 1894) was one of the six sons

of Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin who became the head of a dynasty in Galicia. His thousands of Chassidim included many prominent scholars.

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Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandari Sabba Kadisha (Iyar 22, 5690 / 1930 - 96th Yahrzeit)

Background: *The Saba Kadisha* ("Holy Grandfather"), was a distinguished rav, kabbalist and rosh yeshiva in his native home of Constantinople, (now Turkey) and later served as Chief Rabbi of Damascus, Syria, and Beirut, Lebanon. He moved to Tzefas, Teveria and then Yerushalayim. He was known for his stringent interpretation of halacha and his uncompromising dedication to Orthodox Judaism.

The *Saba Kadisha* was born in Ottoman-controlled Constantinople about 1826 to a distinguished family of *Talmidei Chachamim*. His father, Yaakov, was a *Talmud Chochem*; his grandfather, Rav Ḥayyim ben Yaakov Alfandari, authored *Maggid MiReishit*, and his great-grandfather, Rav Yaakov ben Ḥayyim Alfandari, authored *Mutzel MiEish*. His mother, Chana, also came from an illustrious family.

As a youth, Shlomo Eliezer was noted for his sharp understanding of Torah subjects. Yet he refused to accept a rabbinical position or to wear the customary dress of the city's sages. He did agree to join the *Vaad Haruchani* (Spiritual Council) of Constantinople and accepted the position of *rosh yeshiva* in a *yeshiva* which the city's Jews founded for him. In the latter post, he taught many outstanding *talmidei chachamim*, including Rabbi Chaim Hezekiah Medini, later known as the *Sdei Chemed*.

Damascus: In 1897, the *Saba Kadisha* decided to leave Constantinople to accept the position of Chief Rabbi of Damascus. There he founded a *yeshiva* which produced dozens of students who served as rabbis and *dayanim* in Sephardic communities in the region.

Tzefas: In 1904, he immigrated to Palestine. At first he lived for several years in the city of Haifa, but then accepted the invitation of the Torah leaders of Tzefas to serve as their Chief Rabbi, a position he held until 1918.

Rav Yisroel Ber Odesser: In 1918, Rav Yisroel Ber Odesser, a Breslover Chassid, became a personal attendant to Rav Shlomo Eliezer, who was living in Teveria at the time. After seeing Rav Odesser recite *Tikkun Chatzot* one night, however, the *Saba Kadisha* refused to let him attend him anymore, and instead treated him as a young colleague.

Yerushalayim: In his final years, Rav Alfandari suffered many ailments, for which he sought medical treatment in Yerushalayim. Although he tried to travel incognito, many Torah leaders desired to meet him when they found out he was in their city. One of these *gedolim* was Rav Ezra Attiya, who later became *rosh yeshiva* of *Porat Yosef Yeshiva*. The *Saba Kadisha* held Rav Attiya in high esteem, and would always stand up for him when he visited.

In 1925, Rav Alfandari developed a serious illness while in Teveria. He refused to be treated in the local hospital, where the rules of *tzniut* (modesty) were not meticulously observed and was taken to Shaarei Zedek Hospital in Yerushalayim instead. After he recovered, Yerushalayim's sages begged him to stay in their city. He rented an apartment in the Ruchama neighborhood (today Mekor Baruch, near Zichron Moshe.)

Here he hosted meetings with many prominent Torah scholars who came to consult with him and speak with him in learning. These included: Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem; Rav Velvel Mintzberg, leader of the Ashkenazi community in the Old Yishuv; Rav Avraham Weinberg of Slonim, author of *Birkas Avraham*; and Rav Yitzchak Abuchatzera, brother of the Baba Sali and a Torah sage in his own right.

Views and Chumrahs: It is no wonder the *Saba Kadisha* and the *Minchas Eluzer* had much in common. Like Aharon Hakohein, '*Shelo Shina*' who did not change, both led their flock with 'old world values' and refused to adapt to many 'modern' societal changes.

The *Saba Kadisha* forbade the shaving of beards, even using scissors or depilatory cream. He even refused to speak with a *talmid chacham* who did not have a beard, even if the discussion concerned the Talmud. Legend has it that he would not allow any single men to enter his room and would have them sent away with the message to get married. In his youth he traded Torah letters with Rabbi Akiva Eiger. He was very careful to wake up *Chatzos* each night and cry over the *Churban*.

During his move from Syria to Palestine, the *Saba Kadisha* stopped off in Beirut, where many questions were addressed to him regarding *shmita* (the laws of the Sabbatical year). His responses indicate that he strongly opposed the *heter mechira* which Israel's Chief Rabbinate had adopted to spare its farmers from loss.

Like the *Minchas Eluzer*, the *Saba Kadisha* was a strong opponent of the Zionist Nationalist Council, which, in British Mandate Palestine, automatically enlisted all Jews, unless they opted out. Rav Alfandari signed legal rulings obligating every Jew to opt out.

The Sun Sets: Rav Alfandari contracted pneumonia in May 1930 and was treated by the famed Dr. Moshe Wallach of Shaarei Zedek Hospital. His disease worsened, however, and he passed away May 20, 1930 / 22 Iyar 5690. His *levaya* was attended by thousands, as his *talmidim* carried his *aron* on foot from his home all the way to Har Hazeisim-the Mount of Olives. He was over a hundred years old. The street on which he lived in Yerushalayim was named in his memory.

Published Works: All of Rav Shloma Eliezer's responsa and halachic rulings were published posthumously. These include: *She'eilot U'teshuvot MaHaRSHa*, (Yitzchak Nissim, Jerusalem 1932); *She'eilot U'teshuvot Saba Kadisha*, (D. Y. Weiss, Jerusalem, 1973-4.); His letters were collected in *Masos Yerushalayim*, *Kumi Roni* and *Amudei Arazim*.

May the merit of the Holy Tzadik Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandari protect us all.

Yehi Zichro Baruch!

Author's note: This article is being presented as part of The Monsey Mevaser 'Jerusalem Personalities' series. The author gleaned this tribute information from related articles in the Jewish media and The Eternal Light. *Zechuso Yagen Aleinu!*



Rav Shimon Deutsch (Iyar 23, 5586 / 1826 - 200th Yahrzeit)

Son of Rav Moshe

One of the greatest disciples of the Chozeh of Lublin, the Kozhnitzer Maggid, and the Apta Rav author of *Ohev Yisroel*.

Some say he was also a talmid of the Rebbe, Reb Melech of Lizensk, author of *Noam Elimelech*

He passed away on 23 Iyar תקפ"ו in Radzin



Rav Chaim Yitzchok Chaikin (Iyar 23, 5753 / 1993 - 33rd Yahrzeit)



Rav Chaim was born in 1907 in Kossova, Lithuania. He was niftar in Sarcelles in 1993. Pupil of Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman in Baranovitch. Rav Chaikin studied for 12 years in the Radin Yeshiva. Of these years, he spent seven years, from 1926 to 1933, as one of the closest students of the revered Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan. In 1938 Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman suggested Rabbi Chaikin to be the Rosh Yeshiva of Chief Rabbi Ernest Weill's new yeshiva in Strasbourg-Neudorf. He served in the Neudorf Yeshiva, the "Yeshiva of France," until the advent of World War II when he enlisted as a soldier in the French Foreign Legion. Captured by the Germans, he was a prisoner of war in Germany for 5 years. Upon his release in May 1945, he was hired as Rosh Yeshiva for the nascent Yeshiva in Aix-les-Bains. Faithfully transmitting the values and teachings of the Chofetz Chaim to his thousands of students, Rabbi Chaikin lead the yeshiva for 48 years until his death.



Rav Eliezer Tzvi Safrin Komarna Rebbe, Damesek Eliezer on Zohar, Ben Baisi (Iyar 24, 5658 / 1898 - 128th Yahrzeit)

Son of Rav Yitzchok Isaac Yehudah Yechiel Safrin

Third Komarno Rebbe

Born around תק"ץ in Samvur, Galicia to his father Rav Yitzchok Isaac and his mother Gittel, the daughter of Rav Avrohom Mordechai of Pintshuv.

His childhood was marked by suffering, poverty and deprivation. Despite this, he toiled in Torah study and he grew in Torah and Chassidus.

In his youth, he still knew his uncle Rav Moshe of Samvor and Rav Yehudah Tzvi of Rozla. He studied under his father and was a *talmid muvhak* of Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Zidatshuv.

He also traveled to meet with and learn from other *gedolei haChassidus* such as the Sar Sholom of Belz, Rav Eliezer of Dzhikov, Rav Duvid of Dynow and Rav Meir'l of Premishlan.

He married Channa Sarah, the daughter of Rav Yosef Shener of Turka. Her Yahrzeit is 2 Shevat; she passed away in תר"ן.

The following episode is described in his father's *sefer, Zohar Chai*: Before his passing, Rav Yitzchok Isaac appeared robed in all white and called over his son, Rav Eliezer Tzvi. He commanded his mother to dress in her Yom Tov clothes and pearls for the occasion which was to witness her son's ascension as rebbe and leader. He added that he should wear white on Shabbos from now on as one fit to do so.

It was in this visitation, he appointed his son as successor to lead the chassidim as the next *rebbe*.

Despite his renown as rebbe, after his father's passing, he himself traveled to the Divrei

Chaim of Sanz.

He authored *Damesek Eliezer* which comprises 7 volumes of commentary on the Zohar, as well as *Ben Baisi* on Torah and Tehillim, *Zaken Beisi* on *Pirkei Avos*, and *Ohr Eynaim* an Encyclopedic 2 volume work on Kabbalah. The Sanzer Rav helped him publish the *sefer*, *Ohr Eynaim* which became a vital work for *Klal Yisroel*.

He left behind a daughter Tzipa, the wife of Rav Tzvi of Rozli the 2nd and sons, Rav Menachem Monish, Av Beis Din Falshtin; Rav Avraham Mordechai of Borislov; Rav Yaakov Moshe, his successor in Komarno; and Rav Pinchos Nasan of Rudik.

In the introduction to *Ben Baisi*, his son Rav Monash writes that he heard from his father the following remark:

Rav Tzvi of Zidatshuv corresponds to the attribute of *chessed*;

Rav Moshe of Samvor corresponded to the attribute of *gevurah*;

Rav Yehudah Tzvi of Rozla corresponded to the attribute of *tiferes*;

Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Komarno corresponded to the attribute of *netzach*;

Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Zidatshuv corresponded to the attribute of *hod*;

Rav Eliezer Tzvi himself corresponded to the attributes of *yesod* and *malchus*;

Therefore, he passed away on 39th day Tal of the Omer corresponding to *netzach* of *yesod*. (*Netzach* was his father, Rav Yitzchok Isaac. He was *yesod*).

All he spoke of before his passing related to shalom, peace (which corresponds to *yesod*) and before he passed away, he called his son Rav Monash and said to him, "Shalom and Shalom" and his soul departed.



Rav Binyomin Mendelson Rav of Kommemiyus (Iyar 24, 5739 / 1979 - 47th Yahrzeit)

Rav Binyamin Mendelson, Rav of Kommemiyus, one of the most prominent fighters for *kedushas sheviis* (1979). Born in Plotzk at the end of the 19th century, his father was Rav Menachem Mendel Mendelsohn - a close chassid of the Alexander Rebbe - who served there as *Rosh Yeshiva*. After World War I, Rav Binyomin married and opened a *yeshiva* in Bodzanov. During his years there, he became a chassid of the *Gerer Rebbe*, the *Imrei Emes*. In fact, his notes were used to publish the *sefarim* of the *Imrei Emes* decades after the War, as tens of thousands of pages of the *Imrei Emes'* written *chiddushei Torah* were lost. With the *bracha* of the *Gerer Rebbe*, Rav Binyomin moved to Eretz Yisroel in 1933, and was offered the position as Rov of Kfar Ata not far from Haifa and served in that capacity for 17 years. In 1951, Rav Binyomin left Kfar Ata and its *kehilla* of 20,000 families and accepted the offer to become the Rov of a small, religious settlement in the Negev called Kommemius, serving the community for the next 27 years. One of the most defining aspects of his rabbanus in Kommemius was the fact that all of the *mitzvos hateluyos ba'aretz* - land based *mitzvos*, were kept with great alacrity. *Shemitta* was adhered to according to the opinion of the *Chazon Ish* with no reliance on the *heter mechira* that was almost unanimously accepted in those years. Rav Binyomin felt that keeping *Shemitta* was a key to bringing about the *geula*. He was *moser nefesh* for *Shmitta* observance, not only in Kommemius, but in other places as well. His letters, masterpieces of *hashkafa* and *emuna* were published posthumously in the *sefer Igros HaGrab*.



Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb (Iyar 24, 5765 / 2005 - 21st Yahrzeit)

Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb (1923-2005). Born to Rav Shlomo Gottlieb, Rav of the *Ohr Hachaim shul* in Philadelphia, the family moved to Yerushalayim in 1929. After learning at the *Chevron Yeshiva*, his family moved back to the United States, where he learned at *Torah Vodaas*. He married in 1946. In 1963, he moved back to Eretz Yisrael to help his parents. He was appointed general manager of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, which he held for 14 years. He also assisted his father in *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Chiam Yosef*, founded in 1942. After his father's death, Rav Akiva Moshe was responsible for it. He wrote *Beis Shlomo*, a biography of his father, and *Kerem Shlomo*, six volumes on *chumash* and the

moadim.

matzav.com



Rav Binyomin Zev (Iyar 25, 5470 / 1710 - 316th Yahrzeit)

Son of Rav Meir

Av Beis Din Klimintuv

Author, *Even HaOzer*

Served as rav in Klimantuv and rosh yeshiva in Zolkova.

Besides his *chiddushim* on several tractates (*Even Ozer*), he authored *chiddushei dinim* on *Shulchan Aruch*.

He passed away on 25 *Iyar* 1710 ט"ו in Zolkova.

On his matzeiva was inscribed: "A pure, holy man who taught Torah in a yeshiva and authored many *seforim*. He never left the tent of Torah."



Rav Yaakov Lorberbaum Chavos Da'as, Rav of Lissa (Iyar 25, 5592 / 1832 - 194th Yahrzeit)

Yaakov ben Yaakov Moshe Lorberbaum of Lissa (1760-1832) was a Rabbi and Posek. He is most commonly known as the "*Ba'al HaChavos Da'as*" or "*Ba'al HaNesivos*" for his most well-known works, or as the "Lisa Rav" for the city in which he was Chief Rabbi.

Biography

Rabbi Lorberbaum was the great-grandson of the Chacham Tzvi, Rabbi Zvi Ashkenazi; he was therefore related to Rabbi Yaakov Emden. According to one tradition, his father,

Rabbi Yaakov Moshe died before he was born, and his relative, Rabbi Yosef Teomim, the rabbi of Bursztyn, brought him up. This accounts for the common name that both father and son share. Another tradition states that before he was born, his father fell ill, and dreamed that he would recover in the merit of the son that would be born to him. In the merit of his future son, the father took his name-to-be. He studied under Rabbi Meshulam Igra. He was head of the Beis Din in Kalish (Kalisz). In 1809, he agreed to become the Rav in Lisa (today known as Leszno, Poland), where he enlarged his Yeshiva's enrollment. Hundreds of scholars came to study there in the years of his leadership. Among his students were Rabbi Eliyahu Gutmacher, Rabbi Shraga Feivel Danziger, who were supporters of their colleague Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, and his Chovevei Zion movement.

Along with Rabbi Akiva Eiger and Rabbi Akiva Eiger's son-in-law, the Chasam Sofer, Rabbi Lorberbaum vehemently fought against the *maskilim*, the reformers of the Jewish Enlightenment. In 1822, he left Lissa and returned to Kalish, where he wrote many of his works. He lived there for ten years. He was widely respected as a *posek*, and is one of three authorities on whom Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried based his rulings in the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, the well known precis of Jewish law. Similarly, the *Chochmas Odom*, by Rabbi Avrohom Danzig, was written in consultation with Rabbi Lorberbaum (as well as Rabbi Chaim Volozhin).

His status was such that it is reported that Rabbi Akiva Eiger once fainted when he was honored with an *Aliyah* in the lieu of Rav Yaakov. (See *Shimusha Shel Torah*, Rabbi Meir Tzvi Bergman.)

Rabbi Lorberbaum died in Stryj (then in Galicia) on 25 May 1832.

geni.com



Rav Chaim Hager Toras Chaim (*Iyar 25, 5614 / 1854 - 172nd Yahrzeit*)

Son of Rav Menachem Mendel of Kosov, founder of the Kosov-Vizhnitz dynasty

Author *Toras Chaim*

Father of first Vizhnitzer Rebbe

Born in תקנ"ה

The second of three Admor Kosov-Viznitz Rebbes

Son-in-law of Rav Yehudah Meir Shapira, the son of Rav Pinchos Koretzer

He traveled to many tzaddikim including the Chozeh of Lublin who said of Rav Chaim: "Happy and praiseworthy are those who gave birth to him, for he is a guardian of the Holy Covenant of the *Bris Kodesh*." (Esser Tzachtzachos 9)

He began to serve as rebbe after his father's passing in תקפ"ו.

He passed away on 25 *Iyar* in the year, תרי"ד .

His divrei Torah are published in his *sefer, Toras Chaim*.



Rav Chaim Chori Rosh Beis Din of Tunis, Motza Chaim (*Iyar 25, 5717 / 1957 - 69th Yahrzeit*)



Rav Chaim Chori, Rosh Beis Din in Tunis, author of *Motza Chaim*(1957). He immigrated to Israel from Jerba in 1955 and settled in Beersheva. Chori died two years later and was

buried in the Beersheva cemetery.

matzav.com



Rav Saadia Gaon Emunos Vedeos (Iyar 26, 4702 / 942 - 1,084th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Saadia ben Yosef, one of the last and most famous Gaonim, a great Talmudic scholar, Jewish philosopher and inspiring leader, was born in a small village near Fayyum, in Egypt (the site of the ancient city Pithom which together with Raamses was built by Jewish slaves under the Pharaohs). His family traced its origin from Yehuda, the son of Yaakov.

His father, Rabbi Yosef, was a learned man and he was Saadia's first teacher. Saadia had excellent qualities and was a brilliant student. Before he reached the age of twenty years, he already wrote his first work, the *Agron*, the first Hebrew dictionary and grammar. It was a great help to Hebrew poets and writers of sacred poems. The famous poet and commentator on the Torah, Rabbi Avrohom Ibn Ezra, who lived about two hundred years later, praised this work highly, and considered its author as the earliest authority on the Hebrew language.

Rabbi Saadia became even more famous when he began his writings against the Karaites. The Karaites, were a sect of Jews which came into being many years before Saadia. Which denied the authority of the Talmud, believing only in the T'NaCh, had become very strong and influential in Saadia's time, especially in Egypt.

Rav Saadia - he was barely twenty three years old when he declared "war", against the powerful Karaites. Indeed, Saadia's writings which proved the falsity of the whole Karaite doctrine, had a tremendous impact, and many Karaites or would-be Karaites, began to see the light. The leaders of the Karaites, seeing that they could not defeat the young scholar in a battle of wit and scholarship, began to persecute him by open hostility. Fanatical Karaites broke into his home, and ransacked and destroyed his writings and books. Rabbi Saadia's very life was in peril, and he could no longer remain in his native land. Soabbi Saadia left Egypt and went to the Holy Land, from there he continued his relentless fight against the Karaite.



Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto Ramchal, Mesilas Yeshorim (Iyar 26, 5506 / 1746 - 280th Yahrzeit)



Author of *Mesilas Yesharim*

Son of Rav Yaakov Chai and Diamenta (Margalit) Luzzato

Born around 1707 ה'תס"ז in Padua, Italy. He was a child prodigy and his father hired the best teachers and tutors to teach him.

After bar mitzvah, he studied in the Yeshivah of Rav Yehuda Mintz (Mahari Mintz) in Padua where his uncle, Rav Yashaya Bassan, author of *Shut Lachmei Todah*, served as Rosh Yeshiva. Rav Yitzchok Chaim HaKohen Katz Cantarini (*min ha'chazzanim*) served as his rebbe and teacher. He taught him *dikduk* and *lashon*, grammar and rhetoric. The Ramchal became a master poet and authored at least two poems that survived, titled, *Tefilah v'Shir al Geulas Mitzrayim* for leil Pesach, and, *Tefillah v'Shir L'Matan Torah* for Shavous. He mastered Shas, Zohar, and all the kisvei Arizal by age fourteen. By age seventeen, he authored the sefer, *Lashon Limudim* about Hebrew poetry, grammar, and rhetoric.

In תפ"ו at around age eighteen/nineteen, he received *semicha* alongside his friend, colleague, and disciple, Rav Moshe David Valli, whom he met when he joined the *chevra*

of *Mevakshei Hashem* known as *Meitivei Tza'ad* in Padua. There he also met and befriended the great Rav Yaakov Chazak—later, Rav of Padua-- regarding whom the Chida writes that he never saw *keri* his entire life, he was so pure and righteous!

Rav Yeshaya Basan left Padua for Reggio in תפ"ב due to the request of his father-in-law, Rav Binyamin Kohen, that he succeed him in this position since Rav Binyamin was of advanced age and his health was failing. The Ramchal took over the yeshiva in Rav Yeshaya's absence. At the same time, he continued his spiritual growth in the aforementioned chevra where he advanced his studies in the secrets of Torah, eventually mastering them on a level that was above all his colleagues.

The Ramchal testified before Rav Binyamin Kohen that on Rosh Chodesh Sivan ה'תפ"ז, he fell asleep while he was engaged in a kabbalistic *yichud*, and when he awoke, he heard a voice saying "I have descended to reveal deep secrets from the Holy King." The voice said that he was a maggid sent from Heaven on High to reveal to the Ramchal secrets and then proceeded to teach him further *yichudim* so that he might merit the revelation of Eliyahu HaNavi. Another voice then taught him the secrets of *Koheles*. Eliyahu told him that the archangel Metatron would also visit him and Rav Moshe Chaim eventually learned to discern between the three of them whenever they visited and taught him. Additionally, many holy souls descended and revealed themselves to him in the form of men. (Igros Ramchal 15) One particular maggid was revealed as *Shemaiel* (Igros Ramchal 29).

At age twenty-five, the Ramchal married Tzipora, the daughter of Rav Dovid Pinchi of Mantuba. She bore him his only son named Dovid Chaim after his father and grandfather.

Eventually, he settled in Amsterdam where he taught only the revealed Torah in the yeshivah. This is where he published his sefer, *Mesillas Yesharim*.

In תק"ג, he fulfilled his dream to settle in Eretz Yisroel. He set sail for the Holy Land and eventually settled in Akko. Eventually, he brought over his wife and son. Unfortunately, he perished in a plague together with his son and wife at age thirty-nine on 26 Iyar תק"ו in Akko near Tiveria and was laid to rest in Eretz Yisroel near the Tanna, Rabbi Akiva.



Rav Yitzchak Isaac Epstein of Homel, Maamar Hashefelos V'Hasimcha (Iyar 26, 5617 / 1857 - 169th Yahrzeit)

Son of Rav Mordechai HaLevi Epstein, Rav Yitzchak Isaac was born around the year 5530 (1770). He received his primary education from his grandfather, Rav Dovid HaLevi Epstein, Chief Rabbi of Lutsk.

In 5565 (1805), he was appointed as Rav of Homel. His discourses were deep and profound, and his tefillos were quite lengthy. Tradition has it that his *davening* once took eight hours, during which he remained standing in a fixed position, without moving, the entire time.

He was a disciple of the *Baal HaTanya*, Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, who was the founder of Chabad chassidus, as well as of his son Rav Dov Ber, known as the Mittler Rebbe, and his grandson, Rav Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*.

It was said of Rav Yitzchak Isaac that he was so attached to his mentors and *rebbe*s that to hear their chassidic discourses and lectures was for him, literally a matter of life and death!

The *Tzemach Tzedek* testified that his genius was so vast that it stretched from one end of the world to the other.

When one of the opponents of chassidus called him for a debate in Mogilev, he was challenged to answer questions on the *Bavli* and *Yerushalmi*. He answered them so well and with such skill that he amazed his opponent and all those present.

He was often sent as a *shaliach*, an emissary and representative of the Chabad *rebbe*s on various missions, including a meeting with Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin as well as to the capital city of St Petersburg. He attended two rabbinical conferences there in 5612 (1852) and 5615 (1855).

At age seventy he began to lead followers. He dressed in the white garments of a *rebbe* but forbade chassidim to come from out of town.

Among his most famous disciples were Rav Hillel of Paritsch, Rav Menachem Nachum of Tsheringov, Rav Aryeh Leibush Epstein, Av Beis Din of Lviv, Rav Moshe Meirov, Rav Elazar Ziva of Mazur and his son Rav Aryeh Leib of Dinberg.

He was a prolific author whose works include:

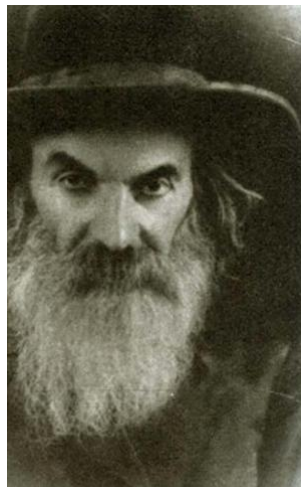
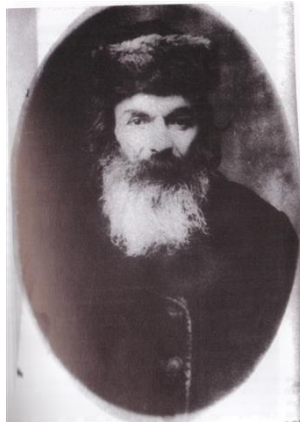
Chanah Ariel al HaTorah, Chanah Ariel Ma'amarim (Various topics), *Chanah Ariel on Matzah* and *Arba Kosos, Ma'amer Hashiflus V'hasimcha, Ma'amer Yetzias Mitzrayim, and Ma'amer Shte HaMeoros.*

He passed away on 26 Iyar 5617 (1857) and was laid to rest in Homel. His grave became a pilgrimage site for locals seeking *yeshuos*.

He left behind one son, Rav Yaakov Yosef, and two sons-in-law, Rav Eliezer Shimon Tomarkin and Rav Tzvi Dov Latker, who succeeded his father-in-law in Homel.



Rav Shlomo Goldman Zhviller Rebbe, Reb Shlomke (Iyar 26, 5705 / 1945 - 81st Yahrzeit)



Rav Shlomo ("Shlomke") Goldman, the Zhviller Rebbe (1870-1945). The younger of the two sons of Rav Mordechai of Zhvil, and a descendant of Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov. When a pogrom in Zhvil targeted the his brother's compound and killed the *Rebbetzin* along with many of the Jews of the area, his brother, Rav Yaakov Yisrael, moved to Boston, and Rav Shlomo moved to Yerushalayim in 1926. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Gedaliah Moshe.



Rav Avrohom Shmuel Bachrach (Iyar 27, 5375 / 1615 - 411th Yahrzeit)

Son of Rav Yitzchok

Born in Bumsela near Prague in 1575) (של"ה).

He studied under the Maharal of Prague and married the Maharal's granddaughter, Chava.

He served as Rav of several *kehillos* in Ashkenaz concluding his rabbinic career as Rav of Vermiza - Worms. When the Jews of Worms were expelled, he joined them. The privations and hardships of exile proved too much for him.

He passed away on Tuesday 27 Iyar 1615 ה'שע"ה at the young age of forty years old.

He was laid to rest in the village of Alsbach near Tzvinburg on the mountainside.

His *teshuvos* and his son's, Rav Moshe Shimon Bachrach, were printed together in the *sefer, Chut HaShani* by Rav Yair Chaim Bachrach.

His son, Rav Moshe Shimshon Bachrach of Worms, author *Shemen HaMaor*, wrote a *kinnah* (a poem) lamenting his father's passing which was printed in many editions of his son's, *Shu"t Chavas Yair*.

His grandson, Rav Yair Chaim Bachrach, was the author of *Chavas Yair* which he named in honor of his grandmother - Rav Avraham Shmuel's wife - Chava, the granddaughter of the Maharal.

She outlived her illustrious husband for thirty-three years. The *Chavas Yair* praises her scholarship and erudition. She was known both for her Torah and tzedaka. He testified that she was so learned and well-versed in Torah texts that when scholars argued, the gedolim turned to her to address their Torah queries and to resolve their Torah disputes. She passed away on her way to Eretz Yisroel in Sofia in 1651) (ת"א).



Rebbetzin Yocheved 'Jackie' Wein (Iyar 27, 5766 / 2006 - 20th Yahrzeit)

Rebbetzin Yocheved "Jackie" Wein (1934-2006). Born in Vaskai, Lithuania, the youngest child of Rav Lazer and Rebbetzin Sarah Menucha Levin. (Reb Lazer was a *talmid* of Kelm and learned with the *Chofetz Chaim* for five years.) The family moved to Detroit in 1938, to escape the growing terror in Europe. By the time of his *petirah*, fourteen years ago, he was respected as the Chief Rav of Detroit. In the mid 1950s, Jackie, a young woman trained as a qualified teacher (at the urging of the legendary Rav Simcha Wasserman,) married Rabbi Berel Wein, son of Rav Zev and Esther Wein, who was the daughter of Rav Chaim Tzvi Rubenstein, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Bais Medrash L'Torah*. The young couple set up their new home in Chicago. In the early sixties, after several productive years in Chicago, Rabbi Wein's rebbi, Rav Chaim Kreiswirth advised the brilliant young scholar to go into rabbonus, where he could contribute so much to *Klal Yisrael*. When a position became available in Miami, the Weins packed up and moved South. But before they left, Rav Wein was instrumental in founding the *Telshe Yeshiva* in Chicago. The family remained in Miami for about a decade, until the early seventies, when Rabbi Wein became the Rabbinic Administrator of the OU, and then founded the *kehilla* of *Bais Torah* in Monsey, New York. In addition to raising her young family, Jackie, a trained teacher, accepted a fourth grade teaching job at Yeshiva Spring Valley, a position she held until they moved to Eretz Yisrael. In 1994, when the Weins moved to Eretz Yisrael she once again accepted the role of Rebbetzin with grace, reaching out from their new home in Rechavia, near the Shaarei Chesed neighborhood, where Rav Berel serves as a Rov.



Shmuel Hanavi (Iyar 28, 2982 / -779 - 2,804th Yahrzeit)

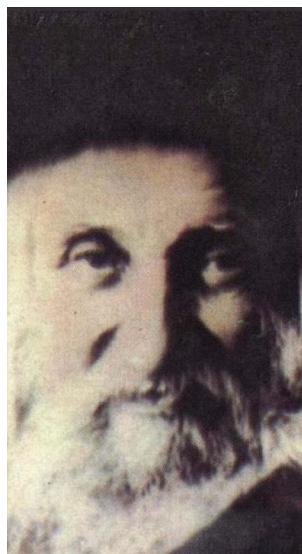


Son of Elkana and Chanah

(The yahrzeit, according to Shulchan Aruch: 28th of *Iyar*; according to Megillas Taanis: 29th of *Iyar*)



Rav Yerachmiel Yehuda Meir Kalisch Rebbe of Amshinov (Iyar 28, 5736 / 1976 - 50th Yahrzeit)



Son of Rav Shimon Sholom of Amshinov

A descendant of the Vurka dynasty

Born Shushan Purim 1901 תרס"א in Peshischa

Son in law of Rav Yaakov Aryeh Morgenstern of Vishkov a descendant of the Kotzker dynasty

He fled with his father to Vilna from there to Shanghai and on to the United States.

In תשי"ד he was crowned as Amshinover Rebbe and he moved to Eretz Yisroel with his mother the daughter of Rav Yeshaya Kalisch of Peshischa.

At first he lived in Tel Aviv and afterwards in Yerushalayim where he established Shem Olam the Amshinover yeshivah.

He was a symbol of true boundless *Ahavas Yisroel* and beloved to all. His humility was legendary and for many years he did not allow anyone to call him rebbe.

His daily regimen was above time and often his Shabbos ended on late Sunday mornings. Rav Yaakov Aryeh Yeshaya Mikovski (his son in law Rav Chaim Milkovski's son) was named as his successor.

Gedolim Be'Masayhem



Stories & Anecdotes

Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandari Sabba Kadisha (Iyar 22)

I STAND FOR THE HONOR OF HASHEM

“Warm yourself by the fire of the Sages but beware lest you be burned by their coals; their bite is like a fox, their sting like a scorpion and their words are fiery coals” (Avos 2:15).

Rav Ovadia Yosef used to illustrate our Mishna with the following story about the chief Rav of Constantinople, the Saba Kadisha, Rav Shlomo Alfandri:

After the Spanish Expulsion, Turkey was once of the countries that welcomed Jews in the hopes that their commerce would enrich her coffers. Among the relaxed laws enacted to welcome them was an exemption from army service so that Jewish young men would not be caused to desecrate Shabbos and be exposed to treif food and influences.

However, as time went on and the new sultan, Abid Al Hamid, emerged, he acted to conscript Jews into compulsory army service of the Ottoman Empire. Those Jews close to the ruler and his underlings sought to find favor in their eyes and they urged their Jewish brethren to comply with the sultan’s wishes. The body governing the Jews’ spiritual wellbeing was also in favor of army enlistment, and in the end the only obstacle was the Firman, a document that had been granted by the previous king to the *Chacham Bashi*, Rav Moshe HaLevi. Using the previous exemption, Rav Moshe HaLevi could prevent the enlistment of the Jews, and the pressure mounting against him was enormous. The Jews wanted to appease the new sultan and garner his favor and the favor of other government ministers, and chief among them was one of the wealthiest Jews in Constantinople, who was very close to the sultan. They all began to pressure the *Chacham Bashi* to relinquish the previous Firman of exemption and hand it back to the sultan.

One of the lone opposing voices that stood staunchly against enlistment was that of the chief Rav of Constantinople, Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri. He argued that enlistment would cause mass *chillul Shabbos* and exposure to eating treif and foreign influences. When the sultan heard this he was enraged and he summoned Rav Alfandri. When the Rav came before Abid Al Hamid, the sultan was struck dumb by his holy appearance and dared not harm the Rav. However, the wealthy merchant from Constantinople continued to disagree with the Rav and sought all ways and means to ensure that army enlistment would become a reality. Finally, Rav Alfandri told him that if he would not give up and change his ways, his end would be bitter indeed. When the latter refused, the Rav turned

away sadly and threatened him with one final stroke, declaring that Hashem would not forgive him for his actions.

The wealthy merchant left his home that day to head out to the sultan and find a way to achieve his goal, but he never made it there! As he crossed his own threshold he suffered heart failure and died on his own doorstep!

During the *levaya*, Rav Alfandri forbade anyone to eulogize the niftar. Even though the wealthy merchant's son and other dignitaries and government officials begged the Rav to allow a hesped for the sake of the honor of the sultan and the man's high rank and position, the Rav stood his ground and refused. "You talk of his honor and the sultan's but I am an *Eved Hashem*; I stand for the honor of Hashem, Master and King of the World. It is His honor I seek and I will not change my mind or bend my will to you." Even the hefty bribe of a purse full of money would not sway the Rav, and the man was buried in dishonor and disgrace.

Afterward, Rav Alfrandri was awarded by the sultan the title of *Chacham Bashi*, when he was appointed chief Rav of Damascus. There he ruled as Rav and *Dayan* with the legal backing of the authority of the sultan as well as the Torah and was thus able to run the Jewish community as he saw fit and punish any transgressors who would oppose him. (*Anaf Etz Avos* p. 136-7)

AISH KODESH

There is a well-known story related by the elders of Tzefas that one of the women who lived in close proximity to Rav Alfandri's home was once on her roof porch on a hot summer day to cool off, as many did in the summer, when she became terrified at the sight of a fire blazing on Rav Alfandri's roof and in his home! She ran quickly to seek help, and as she approached the *Saba Kadisha's* home, Rav Alfandri's *talmid*, Rav Aharon Ben Shimon, with whom he was engaged in *Torah* study, heard the commotion, and came out. Rav Ben Shimon assured the distraught woman that there was no danger and the blazing fire she had witnessed was the *Aish Kodesh*, the fiery flames of the intense *Torah* study they were engaged in at that time and what a *zechus* she had that she was *zoche* to witness it. He asked her to keep the matter a secret and she did so, not revealing this amazing fact until the *Saba Kadisha* had left this world. (*Toras Aharon* p. 17)

THE BERACHOS OF THE SABA KADISHA

A Turkish Pasha once visited Tzefas and Rav Alfrandri's reknown as a holy Rav from Constantinople drew him to seek the chief Rav's blessing. "Please bless me," requested the Pasha of the Chacham.

"My *berochos* require humility in order to be received," answered the *Saba Kadisha*. "You must dismount from your horse and bow your head before me so that I may bless you."

The Pasha agreed; he dismounted and bowed his head before Rav Alfrandri and the *Saba Kadisha* blessed him that Hashem should grant the Pasha success on condition that he would work to benefit and safeguard his Jewish subjects. (*Oros Mimizrach* p. 147)

THE KIDDUSH LEVONA THAT FORETOLD WAR

The elders of Tzefas used to tell how one of the nights during *Chodesh Nissan*, after Chacham Alfrandri had concluded reciting the *berocha* of *Kiddush Levona*, they noticed that his gaze was drawn heavenward and his eyes gazed at some distant object. Then he clapped his hands in despair and sorrow and sighed a great heavy sigh of anguish. When asked what he saw that troubled him so, the *Saba Kadisha* responded, "I see drawing near a great war; soon an outbreak of war will strike the world harshly," and not long afterward the First World War broke out. (*Oros Mimizrach* p. 147)

PLEASE DECREE THAT MOSHIACH MUST COME

When the *Munkaczer Rav*, Rav Chaim Elozor Shapira, came to Eretz Yisrael, he traveled to Yerushalayim especially to meet with the *Saba Kadisha*, Rav Alfrandri, who had now exceeded one hundred and ten years and who, after leaving the chief rabbinate of Tzefas, was living in the holy city.

During the visit, the *Munkaczer* conversed in *Loshon Kodesh* with a *Sefardi* accent so that the *Saba Kadisha* could understand him; the Rav had been practicing and he made of the elder *Tzaddik* and holy Rav a unique and wondrous request. He revealed that he had brought a holy, secret letter, an epistle, an *igeres sesorim* that he had inherited from the holy Komarna *Tzaddik*, Rav Yaakov Moshe Safrin, foretelling that the way to bring the *Geula* closer depended on the decree of the *Tzaddik HaDor*. If the *Tzaddik HaDor* would decree that *Moshiach* must come, then this would hasten the *Geula*. The *Munkaczer Rav*

held that Rav Alfandri was worthy and on the level of someone who could make this decree! He then asked the *Saba Kadisha* to do so. However, Rav Alfandri refused, stating in his humility, "I am not a *Tzaddik*." This conversation took place eight days before the *Saba Kadisha* left this world on the 22nd of *Iyar*. (*Oros Mimizrach*, page 153)

DEFIES THE SULTAN

Rav Shlomo Eliezer displayed his willingness to take a firm stand in a highly charged political situation which found him challenging the views of his entire community.

The issue at hand was the drafting of Jewish soldiers into the sultan's army, a decree fraught with spiritual peril. Originally, the Jews who had fled the Spanish Inquisition to the Ottoman Empire were exempted from the army by the sultan. In Rav Shlomo Eliezer's day, however, a new sultan, Abdul Hamid II, decreed that all non-Muslims must enlist.

The city's rabbanim tried to reverse the edict, without success. Eventually they decided to accept the decree rather than provoke the authorities. The *Vaad Haruchani* issued a directive urging the region's Jews to go ahead and enlist.

Rav Shlomo Eliezer was the only one who protested this course of action. At the *Vaad* meeting, he declared, "Since serving in the Turkish army involves Shabbos desecration and the defiling of oneself with non-kosher food, enlisting in the army is considered a *Chillul Hashem*. We must not yield to Sultan Abdul Hamid. If we are firm, Hashem will help us." After this declaration, he burst into tears.

One of the community's wealthy members had some influence in the sultan's court. Yet this Jew, too, backed the draft decree. One day, as this man visited the palace to oversee certain aspects of the decree, he fell unconscious and died.

The next day, a huge gathering assembled at the wealthy man's funeral. At that time, it was customary for Rav Shlomo Eliezer to deliver the first eulogy at every funeral, and no one dared precede him. But today, the Rav stayed home. Community representatives came to plead with him to speak, or at least to let others speak without him, but he refused. The sons of the wealthy man came to offer him a large sum of money which he could use for *tzedaka*, but still he refused. "Yesterday I visited your father and asked him not to collaborate with the sultan," the rav explained. "But he defied me. Therefore, I

cannot honor him."

In the end, none of the city's rabbis eulogized the man.

Sultan Abdul Hamid was furious when he heard about Rav Shlomo Eliezer's efforts to cancel the draft decree. He summoned the rabbi to the palace, intending to punish him for inciting the Jews against him. But when the sultan met the rabbi and heard his position, he was very impressed with him. He even granted him the title of *Chacham Bashi*, with the power to issue edicts in the Jewish community.

In the end, the draft was not enforced due to internal conflicts in the royal court.

Rav Binyomin Mendelson Rav of Kommemiyus (Iyar 24)

POOR SEED

5711, the second year of Moshav Komemiyus, was a Shemitta year.

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

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

At that time, there were not yet water pipes reaching our *moshav*. We had to content ourselves with what could be grown in dry, rugged fields. Every few days we would make

a trip to Kibbutz Negva, about twenty kilometers distant, to fill large containers with drinking water.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rav Yaakov Lorberbaum Chavos Da'as, Rav of Lisa (Iyar 25)

'BE CAUTIOUS IN JUDGEMENT' (AVOS 1:1)

Rav Ovadia Yosef used to illustrate this *Mishna* with the following story about Rav Yaakov of Lisa author of *Nesivos HaMishpat*:

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

“It’s mine; it had just fallen out of my pocket!” interrupted the other “I never gave up hope of recovering it so it still belongs to me!”

There seemed something about the second litigant’s shifty manner and oily tone that gave away that he was a thief and a scoundrel. Rav Yaakov’s senses told him that was that this man was dishonest.

Determined to back up his intuition with something more with which to judge the case properly, he sent second litigant out of the room and called in the finder of the gold coin. Rav Yaakov took the coin and called out in a voice so loud that anyone in the adjoining

room could hear, “See here, see this notch on the coin? It’s like a scratch just below the first letter. It’s a true *siman* [as is found in] (Gittin 27b)! If anyone were to use that *siman* as proof, this coin would surely be given back to him!”

Rav Yaakov then called back the second litigant who had been eavesdropping the entire time.

Rav Yaakov turned towards the second litigant and asked, “Can you offer any *siman* as proof that this dinar is yours?”

“Yes rabbi!” he answered happily, “There’s a scratch below the first letter which must be as legitimate a *siman* as any to prove that this is my coin!”

The rabbi opened his hand and showed the would-be-thief the coin. The satisfied smirk of this shady character quickly became a frown as the rabbi said, “Well, I guess this isn’t your coin then, because this coin is clean as a whistle-- no scratches on it at all. I guess you should go and look for the coin that you dropped because this coin belongs to the one who found it!” (*Anaf Etz Avos* p. 4)

Rav Chaim Hager Toras Chaim (Iyar 25)

I WOULD RECOGNIZE ELIYOHU HANOVI

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

The *Toras Chaim* once said about the *zemer Eliyohu HaNovi* recited as part of the *Motzo’ei Shabbos Melava Malka zemiros*, “We sing *ashrei mi shero’a ponov bachalom* - happy is he who saw Eliyohu HaNovi’s face in a dream - but who knows what Eliyohu HaNovi looks like? If no one knows what he looks like, how would he be able to recognize him in a dream? I, however, concluded the *Toras Chaim*, would be able to recognize him if I saw him in a dream because I once saw him when I was awake, with my father the *Ahavas Sholom*, and this is how it happened:

“When I was a young child,” told the *Toras Chaim*, “I often used to sleep in my father’s

bed. One night, I was awakened from my sleep to the sound of a conversation taking place between my father and someone else in the room. I looked up and was amazed to see an elderly man with a shining countenance sitting on my father's chair and my father sat at his side. I was upset by this - who dared take my father's seat at the head of the table? My father said to the guest: 'Eliyohu, here in bed lies my *Chaim'nyu* - I would like you to give him a *berocha!*'

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

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

THE APTA RAV'S APPROVAL

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

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

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

In Kosov, a lavish welcome had been prepared at the *Ahavas Sholom's* home to welcome the guest from Apt. When the *Apta Rav* realized that he had been fooled, he was very angry and upset. He took two cups of *mashke* and asked the *Chassidim* who were dressed

as guards to drink them. The *Toras Chaim*, the *Ahavas Sholom's* son, realized that if the *Chassidim* drank the cups of wine, the *Apta Rav* would send them away from this world as a punishment.

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

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

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

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

THE COSSACK HAS PLENTY OF MONEY

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

"*Rebbe*, what will I do with your *berocha*?" said the bewildered Chassid. "I need cash now! Your father used to give me the money I needed, not just a *berocha*!" said the exasperated Chassid.

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

than I - and he will give you!"

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

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

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

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

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

THE KOHEN GODOL WHO ATONES FOR YOU

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

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

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

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

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

"He had no choice but to explain his reason for travel by admitting his sin and suffering their stares and jeers.

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

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

"However," concluded the *Toras Chaim* to the Chassid, "*Davka* through the *Kohen* did he

achieve his atonement!" The Chassid got the hint. (*Sarfei Kodesh* p. 435)

GRABBING AND SAVING NESHAMOS

On the *Toras Chaim's* *Yahrzeit*, the *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz once remarked, "*Chai* (18th *Iyar* is *Lag BaOmer*, the *Yahrzeit/Hillula* of Rav Shimon bar Yochai. On one side of that calendar date, a week before, is the *Yahrzeit* of my *Zeide*, the *heilige Ropshitzer* (11th of *Iyar*) and on the other side is the *Yahrzeit* of my *Zeide*, the *Toras Chaim* (25th of *Iyar*) - they all grab *neshomos* and pull them out of *Gehinnom*! (*Sarfei Kodesh* p. 451)

Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto Ramchal, *Mesilas Yeshorim* (*Iyar 26*)

HIS LIFE

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

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

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

Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto was a *talmid* of one of the greatest *Rabbonim* and *Mekubolim* in Italy at the time, Rav Yeshaya Bassan, from early on to age fifteen, when Rav Bassan left Padua to fill his father-in-law's rabbinical position. Rav Bassan's father-in-law was the

great *Mekubol* Rav Binyomin HaKohen, who was himself a *talmid* of the famous *Mekubol*, Rav Moshe Zacuto. So *Ramchal*'s teachings clearly followed the path of a well-known kabbalistic tradition. *Ramchal* himself some profound meetings with Rav HaKohen at the end of the latter's life in which he discussed his own kabbalistic insights. We will cite one of *Ramchal*'s revealing letters to the elder *Mekubol* shortly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Hashem, who is righteous and who searches all hearts, is my witness in Heaven and my testimony on high as to why I have kept (my revelations) secret from your honor... But now that the matter is public knowledge... I am very pleased to hear that you know of it... (and) I am especially glad to know that your honor, in his goodness and integrity, accepts it as true and reliable... “G-d-fearing people come to me every day to hear the new things that Hashem tells me. Many young men who had once walked in the vain ways of young people have now, thank Hashem...returned to Hashem, and come to me to receive *Tikkunim* (rectifications) for their (past) deeds.

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

He then went into further detail as follows:

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

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

“I never saw him but I did hear his voice as it spoke through my own mouth. He then allowed me to ask him questions. After about three months he revealed to me the *Yichuddim* I would have to recite to be worthy of having Eliyohu reveal himself to me. He then charged me to compose a work on *Koheles* on the basis of the mystical meaning of its *pesukim* that he had revealed to me, and Eliyohu came and imparted his own secrets to me. (The *Maggid*) said that Metatron, the great prince, would be coming to me and that I would know that it is he because of what Eliyohu had said. From then on I came to recognize each of my visitors. Souls whose identity I know are also revealed to me. Each day I write down the new ideas each of them imparts to me. All these things happen while I lie prostrate, with my face to the ground, and I see the holy souls in human form as in a dream.”

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

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

Some rather unkind things were said about *Ramchal*, though his defenders did laud his trustworthiness as well as his piety. A great deal of *Ramchal's* correspondences from that time and later have survived, and it is thus evident that despite and throughout it all, he defended his experiences stoutly while maintaining his lofty perch. In any event, threatened with excommunication, *Ramchal* swore not to transmit the *Maggid's* revelations or teach *Kabbola*.

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

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

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

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

May the memory of the righteous be a blessing for us all!

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RAV MOSHE CHAIM LUZZATTO'S PRAISES

Rav Yaakov Yosef of Ostrog testified that he heard from the Maggid of Mezritch about the Ramchal that, "His generation did not understand him or appreciate his great righteousness." (Printer's Introduction to *Kelach Pischei Chochmah Koretz*)

The Rav Simcha Zisel, the Alter of Kelm testified that the Vilna Gaon said: "I saw a great light descend to this world in the form of the sefer, *Mesilas Yesharim*."

In his introduction to the *Mesilas Yesharim*, the Mahari Maltson wrote that when the sefer first came out, the Vilna Gaon said: "A new light had come into the world. If the Ramchal was still alive, I would walk on foot to see him and meet him face to face." He wrote further that the GR"A reviewed the sefer often. When the Gaon received the Ramchal's sefer, *Adir BaMarom*, a commentary on the Rashbi's *Idra Rabbah*, he dressed in Yom Tov clothes to celebrate.

It is known that the GR"A said if he had been in the Ramchal's generation he would have walked 12 milin to meet him. Also, it was known that the Kohznitzer Maggid studied *Mesilas Yesharim* as a prerequisite to any effort to ascend spiritual levels. (Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz in his *haskama* to *Mesilas Yesharim Mevuar*)

The Kohznitzer Maggid once said that any of the lofty spiritual levels that he himself attained were all thanks to the sefer, *Mesilas Yesharim*. (Dor Deah)

There is a tradition that the Apta Rav, author of *Ohev Yisroel*, said that his entire spiritual direction in life and his primary *chinuch* (education) came first and foremost from *Mesilas Yesharim* (*Mesilas Yesharim HaMevuar Yakrus v'Chavivus Toras Ramchal* p. 13)

I received a tradition from my holy forefathers that the mother of the heilige Ropshitzer commanded him in his youth to study *Mesilas Yesharim*, and he did so all the days of his life. He testified regarding himself that "mein mahus is *Mesilas Yesharim* - My entire being is *Mesilas Yesharim*." (kisei Rav Chacham Tzvi Halberstam)

Rav Moshe Teitelbaum, author of *Yismach Moshe*, testified: "I received a tradition from the Mezritcher Maggid in the names of Rav Yosef of Mezritch and Rav Pinchos Koretzer that the sefer, *Kelach Pischei Chocmah* is *bahir v'tahor* - luminous and pure!" (Avkas

Rochel Moadim p. 91)

When Rav Shlomo Halberstam of Bobov taught his talmidim in his yeshivah in Vishnitsa, he opened each shiur with a study in *Mesilas Yesharim* and other *mussar seforim*. (Kerem haChassidus vol. 2)

The Vizhnitzer Rebbe *shlit" a*, Rav Yisrael Hager writes in his *haskama* to *Mesilas Yesharim haMevuar* that the sefer, *Mesilas Yesharim* was known to Rav Chaim Meir, the Imrei Chaim, by heart and that his own father, Rav Moshe the Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz, compelled the yeshiva students to study it as part of their daily *mussar* regimen.

The rebbe of Pinsk-Karlin recalled how in his youth, one *Elul*, he and several other *yungeleit* came before Rav Moshe Mordechai of Lelov and asked him which *sefer* they should study to prepare themselves during *Elul* towards the approaching days of *selichos* and the *Yomim Noraim*? *He* thought for a few minutes and answered them: "During these days, it would be proper for you to study *Mesilas Yesharim* every day for about ten minutes before you eat." (From his *haskama* to *Mesilas Yesharim Mevuar*)

I remember in my youth how I once entered the inner sanctum of the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz and I asked him which *mussar sefer* I should study on a constant basis. He answered me immediately: "*Mesilas Yesharim* is what you should study and attach yourself to, and then *vesti zany a erlicher yid* - then you can become an *erlicher*, pious Jew." (Rav Naphtali Moskowitz, the Meilitzer of Ashdod, in his *haskama* to *Mesilas Yesharim Mevuar*)

I saw how my father [the previous Pittsburger Rebbe] was especially fond of the sefer, *Mesilas Yesharim*. From the day he set his mind to it, the holy *sefer* never left his hands. He himself testified to me that in his youth he had memorized it by heart and I saw how until his last days on this earth, he studied it intensely and added his own comments and ideas as he reviewed it. He had the custom to purchase a brand-new copy each time he completed the sefer. In the new copy, he would enter further comments and novel insights for himself--all this in order to increase his enthusiasm as if it was the very first time he had even studied the *sefer*. Happy are the eyes that saw this! (Pittsburger Rebbe *zt'l* of Ashdod in his *haskama* to *Mesilas Yesharim Mevuar*)

It is said in the name of the founder of the Mussar Movement himself, Rav Yisrael Salanter, that he used to say, "It is easier to author the entire Shas-- the whole Talmud-- than to write even just one chapter of *Mesilas Yesharim*." (Mesilas Yesharim HaMevuar Yakrus v'Chavivus Toras Ramchal)

Rav Yosef Weinstock, the *mekubal*, had a custom to study *Mesilas Yesharim* every day. When his daughter passed away from illness on Yom Kippur, he was supposed to sit *shiva* until the 14th of *Tishrei* (Sukkos), but his pain at giving up his daily *Mesilas Yesharim* shiur was so intense that he asked and received permission from the *Minchas Yitzchok* to continue his the *shiur* as usual! (Mesilas Yesharim HaMevuar Yakrus v'Chavivus Toras Ramchal)

The Ramchal also authored *Tehillim*--see: www.HebrewBooks.org/56107 --as well as a daily regimen of *pesukim* on trust in Hashem and hope for the ultimate redemption. The latter was built on six foundations: Trust, Hope, Wish, Unity, Love, and Truth. See: *Pesukei Kivui L'Ramchal* www.HebrewBooks.org/56107 and another version here: <https://ramhal.net/doc/Pesuka-Kivuy.pdf>

Rav Shlomo Goldman Zvhiller Rebbe, Reb Shlomke (Iyar 26)

THE EREV YOM KIPPUR GANAV'S FEELINGS

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

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

At some point, when there was a lull in the tides of people and the tense rush quieted

down and finally the house was empty, the *Rebbe* and his son went back toward the *Rebbe's* room - but the holy aura of the approaching *Yom Kippur* was broken by the sounds of someone searching around in the *Rebbe's* desk drawers in his room! A *ganav* - a thief! On *Erev Yom Kippur*, in the *Rebbe's* room, obviously tempted by the large sums from the *pidyonos* of the Chassidim!

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

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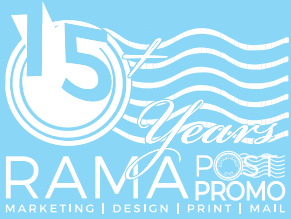
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