

ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

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A Tzaddik, or righteous person, makes everyone else appear righteous before Hashem by advocating for them and finding their merits.

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

CHUKAS-BALAK

❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

Dvar Torah - CHUKAS

Take the staff and gather the people, you and Aharon your brother, and speak to the rock before their eyes and it will give forth its waters. Take out water for them from the rock and give them and their flock to drink...And Moshe and Aharon gathered the people toward the rockface and said to them, "Hear now, you rebels, shall we draw forth water for you from this rock?" (20:8-10)

The *Apta Rav* points out something fascinating regarding our *pasuk*. He begins by asking some questions, such as: What difference did it make when drawing forth water from a cold, hard stone whether the water was drawn through speaking to it or through striking it with a staff? Wasn't there a *Kiddush Hashem* through the miracle of a stone giving water even when it was struck blows by the staff, so why did *Hashem* say they failed to sanctify the Divine Name? What does the *pasuk* mean by saying that the rock will give forth "its waters"? It sounds as if somehow the rock had water already naturally within it. Finally, in *pasuk* 10, what does the term *el pnei hasela* - "rockface" - describe?

In order to answer these questions the *Apta Rav* points out that *sela* is written with the letters *samech*, *lamed* and *ayin*, which in turn are all written out into three letters: *samech* is written *samech*, *mem*, *chaf*. *Lamed* is spelled *lamed*, *mem*, *dalet* and *ayin* is spelled *ayin*, *yud*, *nun*. The middle letters of all the names of the three letters that spell *sela* spell *mayim* - "water". You take a *mem* from *samech*, a *mem* from *lamed* and a *yud* from *ayin*. Thus, we see that within the rock there was indeed water hidden - in the form of the letters that spell *mayim*! The rock

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is a hard, cold, physical object but the letters that spell its name have their root source in refined, spiritual lights. This is how Moshe drew out *mayim* from *sela*, water from the rock.

The *pnei hasela* is the inside of the rockface; it refers to the letters that spell *sela* rather than latent energy and power found within it, which is the *mayim*.

Moshe was angered by the fact that the people were unable to connect to the level of *ayin*, the lofty level where all things come together and each individual becomes *botel* to the greater group. Moshe misunderstood *Hashem's* command to gather the people together. He thought this meant that once together they could reach this lofty level of *ayin* and *bitul*. This is why he was angered when they failed to do so and he called them *morim*, asking them, "Will we draw out the *mayim* [the latent energy] from this rock?"

Because Moshe was angered, he erred and then struck the rock twice. The first time knocked off the first three letters from *sela*: *samech*, *lamed* and *ayin*. The second blow struck off the final letters *kaf*, *dalet* and *nun*, leaving only the *mem*, *mem* and *yud*, which spells *mayim* – water.

The Apta Rav cites the *Medrash* in the *Yalkut* (*Chukas* #763), where *Chazal* tell us that the very staff that Moshe used was the same one that Yaakov held as he crossed the Yarden. What is the significance of this comment?

When *Hashem* told Moshe to take the staff he thought it meant to strike the stone. Had Moshe done what *Hashem* said and spoken to the *sela*, then something greater would have happened.

The Apta Rav explains that when a great *Tzaddik* is attached to *Hashem*, the *Tzaddik's* speech has the power to draw forth abundant blessings from nature and from sources where it is latent. However, Moshe erred and struck the rock, because the staff was Yaakov's and he had crossed the Yarden with it [*Chazal* say it had *Hashem's* Name inscribed on it]. The staff had special powers and Moshe assumed that the *Shem Hashem* on the staff was what was to draw out the latent waters from the rock rather than his refined, holy speech.

This was Moshe's sin. Because he was angered and struck the rock, Klal Yisrael failed to see the power of speech and failed to learn this lesson. Had they learned the secret of refined, elevated speech, they too would sanctify their mouths. We can all reach this lofty level if we guard our tongues and lips and do not blemish them with sin and forbidden speech, rather attaching them to the source of truth.

Instead, they said to themselves, "Moshe could bring water from a dry stone because he used a magical staff. We do not have access to such powers and so only he can do that. But really even anyone who sanctifies his speech could draw forth water and latent energy even from a dry stone with holy words spoken in purity and sanctity. There was a failure to teach them this lesson and so their *emuna* was lowered and their understanding of speech blemished.

May *Hashem* grant us the insight to understand just how lofty and holy our words can be!



Dvar Torah - BALAK

Ma tov u'ohalecha Yaakov mishkenosecha Yisrael – “How good are your tents, O Yaakov, and your tabernacles, Yisrael” (24:5).

The Apta Rav, in *Ohev Yisrael*, uses this *pasuk* to illustrate an experience that many of us have had in our *Avodas Hashem*. Sometimes we feel a great vitality and a spiritual awakening right away as soon as we begin the *Avoda*. Right at the start we are motivated to serve *Hashem* and we feel charged and exhilarated by this experience. However, at other times our *Avoda* may feel sluggish or dim and lack any form of vitality or motivation; only at the very end are we rewarded with a feeling of *dveikus* or a sense of accomplishment or achievement.

The Apta Rav categorizes these two forms of *Avoda* as corresponding to the two well-known archetypal spiritual levels of *ovdim*: those who serve *Hashem* are either of the *bechina* (aspect) of Yaakov, or on a higher level called Yisrael. Those who serve as Yaakov are characterized by the *Yud Akev*, which spells Yaakov; they feel the G-dliness at the heel, at the end of the *Avoda*, whereas those named Yisrael are characterized by *Li Rosh*, which spells Yisrael and means the head; they experience the *dveikus* at the head or forefront when their *Avoda* begins.

The Apta Rav says that our *pasuk* is a *berocha* that blesses us with the best form of *Avoda*. We are told how great it is when your *Avoda* in the form of Yaakov is like a tent. An *ohel* (tent) is a temporary dwelling; if our *Avoda* starts off on the wrong foot, only at the heel or end is it alive and meaningful – but this should be just a temporary state that passes. We are given the *berocha* that the higher level called Yisrael, which characterizes the *Avoda* of feeling immediate excitement and vitality right from the start should be as a *Mishkon*, a permanent dwelling. May we be blessed to dwell on this level always, *Amen!*



הילולא

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

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

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

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

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

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

as a public service.

Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

[תְּפִילָה הַנִּמְצָאת בְּסֵפֶר אֶלֶף הַמִּגֵּן מִבַּעַל הַפֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ עַל פְּרָשַׁת וַיֵּצֵא עֲמוּד כ"ד]

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלֹוֹי נְשָׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק _____
בֵּן/בַּת _____, יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ וְאֱלֹקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים
וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שְׁאֵנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל
לְזָכוֹת וְלְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלֹוֹי לְנַשְׁמוֹת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפָרֵט לְנַפְשׁ רֹחַ וְנַשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /
צַדִּיק _____ . יְהִי רְצוֹן שְׁתֵּהֵינָה נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצְרוּר הַחַיִּים.

Translation:

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

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



GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER



YAHREZITS BEGINNING SHABBOS CHUKAS

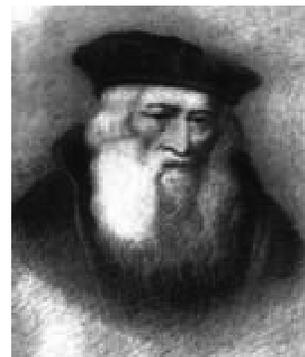
http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrzeit/Tammuz

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

12th of Tammuz ~ Begins Friday Night (Jul 3rd)

* **Rabbeinu Yaakov ben Osher**, the *Ba'al HaTurim* (1268 [some say 1270/5030]–1340/5100), son of the *Rosh*. He wrote a major work named *Tur*. The *mechaber* is simply known as *Ba'al HaTurim*, meaning author of the *Turim*. The *Ba'al HaTurim* revealed many secrets from the *Torah* in the *Gematria* of words, acrostics, forming of letters and word patterns within the Scriptures, and he revealed many novel *Torah* understandings from similar words used in other parts of the *Tanach*. His illustrious father, Rav Osher *ben* Yechezkel, famous as the *Rosh*, was one of the greatest Talmudists of his day. He was a *talmid* of the famous Rav Meir of Rothenburg, leader of German Jewry, who was imprisoned by the German government and held for ransom. Count Meinhard of Goitz, then head of the government, would have none but Rav Osher as surety for the raising of the ransom money. Rav Meir, however, forbade his people to ransom him, in order not to encourage the governors of other places to imprison Jewish scholars and leaders for ransom. While Rav Osher and the count negotiated for the release of Rav Meir, and Rav Osher tried to raise the huge sum from the various Jewish communities in Germany, Rav Meir was *niftar* in prison. Rav Osher now considered the negotiations as null and void, but the governor still demanded the ransom money and held Rav Osher responsible for it. Rav Osher, therefore, had to flee Germany,

and he successfully made his escape together with his family, among whom was Rav Yaakov, still a young boy. For many years before this happened, German Jewry had suffered terrible persecution and massacres, with the result that the great *Talmud* academies were slowly being destroyed. With the departure of Rav Osher from that country, a great period of Talmudic study in Germany came to an end, but it began to flourish anew in Spain, where Rav Osher finally settled. The Jewish community of Toledo accepted the German refugee as its chief *Rav*. He immediately set up a *Yeshiva* there, and he, with his children after him, exerted a strong influence upon Jewish life and scholarship in Spain, as well as elsewhere. When his father fled Germany with his entire family to Spain in 1803, Rav Yaakov first lived with his brother Rav Yechiel in Barcelona, and then moved to Toledo, where his father was *Rav*. His younger brother, Rav Yehuda, who would marry Rav Yaakov's daughter, succeeded the *Rosh* as *Rav* of Toledo, while Rav Yaakov himself preferred to take a position on the *Bais Din*. His monumental *halachic* work, the *Arba'a Turim*, includes virtually all opinions available to Rav Yaakov, as well as a wealth of customs. The many commentators on the *Tur* include those of Rav Yosef Karo (the *Bais Yosef*); Rav Moshe Isserles (*Darchoi Moshe*); Rav Yoel Sirkes (the *Bayis Chodosh*); Rav Yehoshua Falk (*Derisha uPerisha*); and Rav Yosef Escapa (the *Rosh Yosef*), who deals with only a part of the work. The *Chida* comments that without a proper study of the *Tur* and its commentaries, one cannot begin to determine *Halocha*. Rav Yaakov also authored *Sefer HaRemozim* (also known as *Kitzur Piskei HaRosh*), an abridged version of his father's compendium of the *Talmud*, quoted in *Sefer Meshorim*. Rav Yaakov was *niftar* in Toledo, (5100/1340);



- * **Rav Eliyohu Boruch Kamai**, Mirrer *Rosh Yeshiva* (b. 1840). A descendant of Rav Avrohom, the brother of the Vilna *Gaon*, Rav Elya was born in Telz. His father passed away when the boy was only two, and the boy's teacher was his stepfather and future father-in-law, Rav Chaim Zev Jaffe. Beginning in 1868, Rav Elya Boruch also succeeded Rav Chaim Zev as *Rav* of the town of Shkod, Lithuania. In 1899, Rav Elya Boruch was called to serve as *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Mirrer *Yeshiva*. In 1901, Rav Elya Boruch also became *Rav* of the town of Mir. When his co-*Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Avrohom Tiktinsky, retired in 1907, Rav Elya Boruch named his own son-in-law, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, to the faculty of the *Yeshiva*. Some of Rav Elya Boruch's lectures were published under the title *Zichron Eliyohu*. He was succeeded as *Rav* of Mir by his son, Rav Avrohom Zvi Kamai, who was massacred with 2,300 of his congregants on the 18th of *Cheshvan* in 1942, (5677/1917);
- * Release of Rav Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson of Lubavitch from Soviet prison, (5687/1927);
- * **Rav Eliyohu Yosef ben Rav Arye Leib Rivlin**. He taught *Chabad Chassidus* in Yerushalayim, and wrote *Ohalei Yosef*, (5565/1805–5625/1865).

✻ 13th of Tammuz ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Jul 4th)

- * **Rav Yitzchok Leib Sofer**, of Drohovitch, (5667/1907);
- * **Rav Moshe ben Rav Naftoli Hirsch Ravkash**, the *mechaber* of *Be'er HaGola*, a commentary on *Shulchon Aruch*. During the fury of the Cossacks in Vilna, most of the community did not believe that the danger was imminent, so they did not escape. A few of the great *Torah* scholars of that generation did, in fact, escape to freedom. Among them were the *Shach*, the *Sha'ar Ephraim* and the *Be'er HaGola*. He spent a few years in

Amsterdam until it was safe to return, (5431/1671);

- * **Rav Arye Leib** *ben* Rav Mordechai *HaLevi* Epstein, *mechaber* of *HaPardes*, (5535/1775);
- * **Rav Mordechai** of Kremnitz [Kremnica], one of the five sons of the Zlotschover *Maggid*, Rav Yechiel Michel, who were referred to as *Chamisha Chumshai Torah*. One of Rav Mordechai's brothers was Rav Moshe of Zvhill, the first Zvhiller *Rebbe*, (5580/1820);
- * **Rav Dovid** of Rachmistrivka, (5710/1950);
- * **Rav Chanoch Henoah Dov** *ben* Elozor Rubin, the Sassover *Rebbe* of London, (5680/1920);
 - Wearing of the yellow star was decreed mandatory for all Jews in the Baltic States, (5701/1941);
 - Minsk (Russia) was captured by the Germans, trapping about forty thousand Jews, (5702/1942);
 - The German army command, led by Erwin Rommel, reached El Alamein in Northern Egypt, 96 km west of Alexandria. After *Gedolim* in *Eretz Yisrael* held massive *tefilla* rallies, the Germans retreated.

14th of Tammuz ~ Begins Sunday Night (Jul 5th)

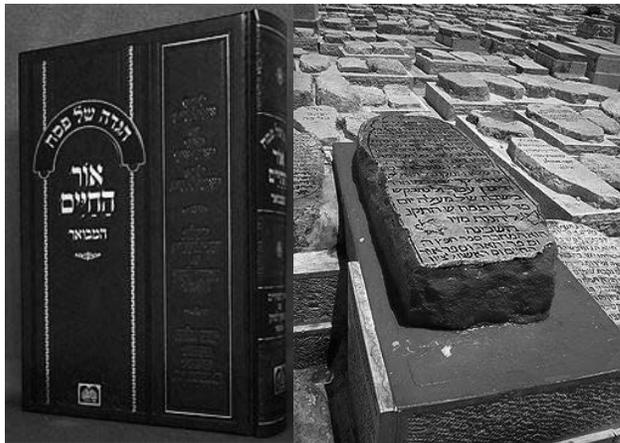
- * **Rav Yitzchok Isaac Rosenbaum** of Zutchka (b. 1906). Born in Romania to Rav Issomor Rosenbaum of Nadvorna, he was named after his mother's ancestor, Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Komarna. At an early age, his family moved to Czernovitz, whose 45,000 Jews constituted about 45 percent of the city's population. The first *Maskilim* settled in Czernovitz at the start of the nineteenth century, and their influence had grown so fast that, by 1849, they controlled the Board of the Jewish Community. It was in Czernowitz that secular Yiddishism held a major convocation and proclaimed Yiddish as the Jewish national language in 1908. After Rav Yitzchok Isaac married his wife, Chana, his father asked him to preside as *Rav* and *Admor* in the town of Vashkowitz. Two years later, he moved to Zutchka, where he remained until World War II. Soon after the war, Rav Yitzchok Isaac moved to Boro Park. After Rav Yitzchok Isaac's father passed away, he settled in Tel Aviv to take over his father's *Bais Medrash*, in 1973. In 1981, he relocated to Bnei Brak. One of the *Rebbe's* sons, Rav Nosson Dovid, took over the Zutchka *Bais Medrash* in Bnei Brak, (5760/2000);
- * **Rav Yosef** *ben* Rav Moshe Trani, the *Maharit* (b. 1568). Born in Tzefas, he married a descendant of Rav Yosef Caro, but fled Tzefas due to plague outbreak, returning to Tzefas to head a *Yeshiva* in 1594. He moved to Constantinople in 1604, becoming *Rav* of the city and leader of Turkish Jewry a few years later. He is best known for his *teshuvos*, (5399/1639);
- * **Rav Shmuel Shatin**, the *Kos Hayeshuos*. [According to some, 18th of *Tammuz*], *Rav* of Dramesht, (5479/1719);
- * **Rav Yaakov** *ben* Rav Yehuda Leib *HaLevi* Ruderman (b. 1901), *Rosh Yeshiva* of Ner Yisrael, Baltimore. Born on *Shushan Purim* in 1901 in Dolhinov, Russia, he studied in *Yeshiva Knesses Yisrael* in Slobodka, then headed by Rav Nosson Zvi Finkel (the *Alter*) and Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein. Among his colleagues in Slobodka were Rav Reuven Grozovsky; Rav Ruderman's first cousin, Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky; Rav Aharon Kotler; and Rav Yitzchok Hutner. In 1926, Rav Ruderman published his only written work, *Avodas HaLevi*. In 1930, Rav Ruderman joined his father-in-law, Rav Sheftel Kramer, at the latter's *Yeshiva* in Cleveland. In 1933, Rav Ruderman moved to Baltimore and founded the *Ner*

Yisrael Yeshiva, leading that *Yeshiva* for fifty-four years until his passing. His *petira* in 1987 followed less than one-and-a-half years after the passing of Rav Kaminetzky and Rav Moshe Feinstein. Rav Ruderman's students have published two volumes of his teachings posthumously: *Sichos Levi* contains *mussar*/ethical insights based on the weekly *Parsha*, while *Mas'as Levi* contains lectures on the nineteenth-century work *Minchas Chinuch* and other *Talmudic* and *halachic* insights, (5747/1987);

✳ **Rav Mordechai Attia**, great *Sefardi Rosh Yeshiva* in Yerushalayim, (5738/1978).

✧ 15th of Tammuz ~ Begins Monday Night (Jul 6th)

✳ **Rav Chaim** *ben* Rav Moshe *Ibn Attar*, the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* (b. 1696). Born into a well-respected family in Sali, Morocco, Rav Chaim spent his early years learning with his grandfather, whose name he shared. Rav Chaim's dream was to go to *Eretz Yisrael*. He arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* with thirty followers, four days before *Rosh HaShana* in 1742 and settled in Acco. Rav Chaim and his students spent *Yom Kippur* in the cave of *Eliyohu HaNovi* on Har Carmel. For *Purim* they were in Tzefas and Meron, where a great deal of time was spent studying the holy *Zohar*. On the 15th of *Elul* 1743, Rav Chaim finally arrived in Yerushalayim with his group. He immediately established a *Yeshiva* called *Knesses Yisrael* and a second secretive *Yeshiva* for the study of *Kabbola*. One of his new students was Rav Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai, the *Chida*, who was only eighteen years old at that time, (5503/1743);



✳ **Rav Arye Leib Ginzberg**, the *Shaagas Arye* (b. 1695/5455). Born in Pinsk, he was the son of Rav Osher, *Av Bais Din* of Pinsk. He is considered one of the greatest minds of his time. The *Vilna Gaon* said that the *Shaagas Arye* was greater than him in *nigleh* (revealed *Torah*), but not in *nistar* (concealed *Torah*). When he was still young, his family moved to Minsk. A widow in the city had a complete set of the *Shas* in her home and would loan *masechtos* to any *Talmid Chochom* who needed them. When Arye Leib was still a child, he borrowed *masechtos* from her. Thus, every day, he would complete one *masechta*, and then ask her to exchange it for a different one. In 1725, when he was only thirty, Rav Arye Leib was invited to serve as the *Rosh Yeshiva* of Minsk, but the laypersons forced him out, since he was unashamed to rebuke them when he felt that it was necessary. Shortly afterward, he was invited to serve as *Rav* of Volozhin (where he authored *Shaagas Arye*), and later in Metz, Germany. Prior to his *petira*, the *Shaagas Arye* made a *siyum* of *Shas*, which he had reviewed one thousand times during his lifetime. [*Yated* 2005 says 28th of *Tammuz* and 25th of *Tammuz*, according to *Yated* 2007], (5545/1785);

✳ **Rav Dovid Moshe Rosenbaum** of Kretchnif (Kretchinev, Kretchniv, Kretshniff), son of Rav Eliezer Zev Rosenbaum and son-in-law of Rav Chaim Mordechai of Nadvorna. Lived in Rechovot, (5729/1969);

✳ **Rav Mordechai Weinberg**, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Montreal, (5752/1992);

✳ **Rav Amrom Blau**, head of *Neturei Karta* in Yerushalayim (b. 1894). He was close with the

Brisker Rav, the *Chazon Ish* and many other *Gedolim* of the time and earned their respect. There is more than one *Neturei Karta* in Yerushalayim. The *shita* of his *Neturei Karta* was basically the same as that of the Satmar *Rebbe*, Rav Yoel. He fought against the desecration of *Shabbos* in *Eretz Yisrael*. His brother was Rav Moshe Blau of *Agudas Yisrael*. The *Neturei Karta* movement broke off from *Agudas Yisrael* in 1935 because of their insistence on total separation from the Zionist Jewish community. In 1938, Rav Blau and Rav Aharon Katzenellenbogen seceded from the *Eida Chareidis*. For the most part, the members of *Neturei Karta* are descended from Hungarian Jews who settled in Yerushalayim's Old City in the early nineteenth century and currently number about five thousand. Rav Blau was forced to surrender leadership of *Neturei Karta* in 1965, after he married Ruth Ben-Dovid, who was a divorced woman and a convert from Catholicism, two years after his first wife, Hinda, was *niftar*. She was also a former member of the French Resistance, who had rescued Rav Blau during the Holocaust. In December 2006, Satmar leaders condemned six *Neturei Karta* adherents as reckless outcasts for attending the Holocaust denial conference hosted by Iran. Rav Amrom Blau, as well as his successor, Rav Aharon Katzenellenbogen, was vehemently opposed to activities of this sort. As an indication of his disfavor, Rav Katzenellenbogen went to the Zionist Israeli secular court to enforce an order forbidding Moshe Hirsch to leave *Eretz Yisrael*, to prevent him from engaging in joint activities with Jew-hating Arabs, (5734/1974).

16th of Tammuz ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Jul 7th)

- * **Chur**, son of Kolev and Miriam, killed by the *Erev Rav* for his protest against making the Eigel, (1309/2451 or 1312 BCE). Chur did his *tikkun* (correction) in allowing himself to be killed by the *Erev Rav*, while this was the mistake that Aharon made in not allowing himself to be killed. Aharon saw the death of Chur and thought that he did not have to do the same action for his *tikkun*;
- * **Rav Shimon Moshe Diskin** (b. 1932), son of Rav Yehoshua Zelig Diskin, *Rav* of Periaslov (Ukraine) and Pardes Chana, and grandson of Rav Shimon Moshe Diskin. He learned at Ponevezh and the *Kaminitz-Knesses Bais Yitzchok kollel*. He served for twenty-six years as one of the *Roshei Yeshiva* of *Yeshiva Kol Torah*, (5759/1999);
- * **Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel** *ben* Rav Yitzchok Meir, the *Kapyschnitz Rebbe* (b. 1888). Named after the *Apta Rav*, the *Ohev Yisrael*, of whom he was a direct descendant, he was born in Husyatyn. His maternal grandfather was Rav Mordechai Shraga of Husyatyn, son of Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin. He moved with his father to Vienna at the outbreak of World War I. He succeeded his father, Rav Yitzchok Meir, on the first day of *Rosh HaShana* 1936, his father's *petira*. Only two years after Rav Avrohom Yehoshua became *Rebbe*, *Yiddishe* life was shattered by the German occupation of Vienna. The *Rebbe* was seized and forced to clean the streets to the amusement of the jeering Germans. On his arrival in America, the *Rebbe* settled in the Lower East Side of New York. The *Rebbe* was among the founding members of *Chinuch Atzmai* (semi-private religious school system in *Eretz Yisrael*), together with Rav Aharon Kotler. One of his most faithful followers was the *Ponovezher Rav*, Rav Yosef Kahaneman, (5727/1967);
- * **Rav Aharon Yosef Bakst** (Baksht), *Hy"d*. *Rav* of Shavel (b. 1867). Born in Ivey, as a young man in Volozhin, he caught the eye of Rav Yitzchok Blazer. He eventually moved to Kelm, where he became attached to Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv. He served in no less than thirteen cities, including Beisagola; Semiatitz; Tzaritzin; Poltave; Seduva; Lomza; and

Suwalk. He came to Shavel in 1930. He was killed in the Holocaust together with his son-in-law, Rav Isaac Rabinowitz of Telz. He was the last *Rav* of Shavel, (5701/1941).

☞ 17th of Tammuz ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Jul 8th)

The 17th of *Tammuz* is a morning-to-evening fast. The purpose of the fast is to remember the spiritual cause of the destruction of the walls of Yerushalayim as one step in the process of the destruction of the *Bais HaMikdosh*. This day should have been a day of happiness but we built the Golden Calf;

- * **Rav Yehuda ben Rav Osher**, son of the *Rosh*, a *Talmudic Sage*, (5109/1349);
- * **Rav Salman Mutzafi** (b. 1900), born in Baghdad to Rav Tzion Meir, who descended from an illustrious family of *Torah* scholars who first arrived in Baghdad during the Spanish expulsion. The person who had the greatest influence on Rav Salman during his childhood was the *Ben Ish Chai*. Every *Shabbos*, the young Salman accompanied his father to Baghdad's main shul to hear the *Ben Ish Chai's derosha*, which lasted for two hours and was attended by over two thousand people. In 1934, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael*. For two full years, he studied the nine volumes of *Siddur HaRashash*, with all of its kabbalistic *kavonos*. It is said that his prayers have successfully saved the Jewish people on many occasions, (5735/1975);
- * **Rav Shmuel Yaakov Weinberg** (b. 1923). The Weinberg family is from the Slonimer *Chassidic* dynasty, a Lithuanian *Chassidus*. The approach and relationship of the Slonim *Chassidim* to *Torah* has been similar to the classic *Litvishe* approach. The founder of the dynasty was Rav Avrohom *ben Yitzchok Mattisyohu Weinberg*, the *mechaber* of *Chessed L'Avrohom*. As a youth, Rav Weinberg studied in the *Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin Yeshiva* in New York City under Rav Yitzchok Hutner, a *talmid* of the *Alter* of Slobodka. Rav Weinberg married the only daughter of Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Ner Yisrael* of Baltimore and another *talmid* of the *Alter*. In 1964, Rav Ruderman sent him to Toronto, to preside as the *Rosh Yeshiva* of a branch that *Ner Yisrael* had established there several years earlier. Eight years later, when the *Yeshiva* in Toronto decided to become independent, he returned to Baltimore. Shortly before the *petira* of his father-in-law in 1987, Rav Weinberg was asked to preside as the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Ner Yisrael* in Baltimore. He was a member of the *Moetzes Roshei HaYeshivos* of *Torah Umesorah* for many years, and was very active in expanding the projects of this important organization, (5759/1999);
- * **Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Spiegel** (b. 1937), *Rav* of the Romanian *shul Kehal Shaarei Shomayim*, son of Rav Moshe Menachem Spiegel, the *Admor* of Ostrov-Kalushin (formerly of Brownsville, later of the Lower East Side), and the grandson of Rav Naftoli Arye Spiegel, the former *Rav* of Ostrov-Kalushin in Poland; a *talmid muvhok* of Rav Aharon Kotler, (5761/2001).

☞ 18th of Tammuz ~ Begins Thursday Night (Jul 9th)

- * **Rav Yehuda HaLevi Eidel** [Edel] of Slonim, born in Zamosc, Galicia, in 1757 or 1759. His most famous work was *Afikei Yehuda*. His *chiddushim* on *Seder Toharos* was considered indispensable for anyone studying this topic. Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk kept a copy on his table at all times. He also published a book on Hebrew synonyms called *Redifei Maya*, and his first book, *Safa leNe'emonim*, a treatise on grammar, was what caught the attention of the *Vilna Gaon*. He had five sons, all of whom became *Rabbonim*, (5565/1805);

- * **Rav Avrohom (Maskileison) ben Yehuda Leib** (b. 1788). He authored *Maskil L'Eisan* (*chiddushim* on parts of *Moed* and *Kodoshim*); *Be'er Avrohom* (*chiddushim* on *Shas*); *Nachal Eison* (*chiddushim* on the first two parts of *Rambam's Yad Chazoka*) and *Yad Avrohom* (*chiddushim* on *Yoreh De'a*; notes on *Sifre*), (5608/1848);
- * **Rav Moshe Dovid Ashkenazi**, *Rav* of Toltshova-Tzefas, (5615/1855);
- * **Rav Yaakov Arye Guterman** (b. 1792). A *Chassid* of the *Koehnitzer Maggid*, the *Chozeh* of Lublin, the *Yid HaKodosh* of Peshis'cha, and *Rav Bunim* of Peshis'cha, he took the mantle of leadership in Radzymin (Warsaw district) after the *petira* of the *Vorka Rebbe* in 1848. His *divrei Torah* were written in *Bikkurei Aviv* (on *Chumash*) and *Divrei Aviv* (on *Medrash* for *Sefer Bereishis*), (5634/1874);
- * **Rav Yehoshua** of Tomoshov, (5664/1904);
- * **Rav Chaim Meir Yechiel ben Rav Dov Beirish Shapiro**, (b. 1907), *Naroler Rav* who passed away just shy of his hundredth birthday. He was a grandson of the *Rav* of Narol, and a descendant of the *Sar Sholom*, the first *Belzer Rav*. When he was a young child, his family fled to Kashuai in Hungary, where his grandfather re-established his court. The family returned to Narol in 1924.

After his grandfather's *petira*, in a decision made by *Gedolei Yisrael*, *Rav Chaim Meir* was appointed *Rav* and *Dayan* in Narol despite his young age. He received *heter horo'a* from the *Bais Din* in Lvov, and became a *posek* for *Belzer Chassidim*. After the Nazi invasion in 1939, he fled with his family to Taprov, where his father-in-law lived, and stayed until the summer. In June, all Jews who didn't have passports were seized by police and shipped to Siberia. The *Naroler Rav's* family managed to leave Siberia and reach Samarkand where survival was easier. In 1945, the *Rav* was permitted to leave Russia and go to the West. In 1946, he arrived in Antwerp, and began to give *shiurim* to the *Belzer Chassidim* who had arrived there. He was active among the refugees here too, helping to marry off orphans and setting up their homes.

In 1948, the *Naroler Rav* moved to Brooklyn. A *Belzer Bais Medrash* was founded, and the *Naroler Rav* appointed at its head. He gave many *shiurim*, among them a *shiur* on *Minchas Chinuch*, which he consistently gave for over seventy years. On *Rosh Chodesh Tammuz*, 1972, the *Naroler Rebbe* left America and settled in Bnei Brak, where he founded the *Naroler Bais Medrash*. The *Rebbe* leaves behind his son *Rav Berish*, *Rav* of Narol. (Some say the 17th of *Tammuz*), (5767/2007).



❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

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

בית הקברות הוא מקום מנוחת הצדיקים ומתוך כך הוא מקום קדוש וטהור התפילה נתקבלה שם יותר, אך אל ישים מגמתו נגד המתים, אך יבקש מהשי"ת שתן עליו רחמים בזכות

הצדיקים שוכני עפר, ויקיף הקברות, ויתן צדקה קודם שיאמר התחינות.

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



❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Shmiel Shmelka Rubin, 11th of Tammuz

The Sulitzer *Rebbe*

Far Rockaway, NY – The End of an Era

Rav Shmuel Shmelka Rubin, the Sulitzer *Rebbe*, represented, to all who knew him, the authentic *Chassidische Yiddishkeit* of Europe.

Rav Rubin was born in 1925, and was a scion of the Ropshitzer dynasty of *Chassidus*, descendants of Rav Naftoli Tzvi Horowitz of Ropshitz. Rav Naftoli Tzvi was a contemporary of the *mechaber* of the famed *Nesivos HaMishpot* on *Choshen Mishpot*, and studied with him. Rav Naftoli Tzvi was of the *Zera Kodesh*, a work that inspired those who learned it to reach remarkable heights in *Dveikus Bashem*.

“What defined him? He came to Far Rockaway when only the White Shul was here,” remarked Rav Amnon Nissan, a congregant. “He remained true to his *Chassidish Mesora* – unwavering.”

Rav Rubin came from an illustrious family. His father, Rav Yaakov Yisrael Yeshurun Rubin, was the *Av Bais Din* of Sulitza and Sasragen in Romania. He was the son-in-law of Rav Yissochor Ber Rosenbaum, the *Rebbe* of Stroznitz. Both of his parents were murdered in the Nazi Holocaust. A twenty-year-old Rav Rubin

saw what he must do – help rebuild *Torah* and the communities that no longer existed.

Rav Rubin had a special relationship with the Satmar *Rebbe*, Rav Yoel Teitelbaum. After the war, the Satmar *Rebbe* found his own unique task: to build up the *kehillos* that were devastated by the Nazis, *yimach shemom*. He saw a kindred spirit in the Sulitzer. At the *Rebbe's* prompting, Rav Rubin and his *Akeres Bayis* moved to Far Rockaway. The Sulitzer represented the dynamicism and vibrancy of Ropshitzer *Chassidus*. He arrived in Far Rockaway only a few years after the war.

They gave up all the conveniences of Brooklyn and came to a place where there were no *Chassidim*. The Rubin family had a number of children, who had few peers to play with. Rav Rubin was undeterred. He had come to establish a religious community. And establish he did.

Many times, in the beginning, they had no *minyán*. The Rubin home was the only house in town where a *meshuloch* could eat and sleep without a problem. He and his *Rebbetzin* were the paragons of *Hachnossas Orchim*. And *Meshulochim* flocked to stay in his home, even sleeping

on the floor when there were no beds.

“He always had a kind word and very insightful advice whenever we went to him,” remarked Mrs. Bruchie Goldfedder. “I was also quite surprised at his mastery of English.”

Yet although he could communicate in perfect English, in the shul and at home the family spoke Yiddish all the time. All the *deroshos* he delivered were in Yiddish, because they wished to hold on tightly to their *mesora* – their holy inheritance of Ropshitz. It was so very important to them.

Once, one of his *mispallelim* gave the *Rebbe* a ride to the Catskills in New York. Rav Rubin related to him that after they were released from the camps and entered the Displaced Persons camps, the need for *seforim* was most acute. He and another *bochur* found in a *Tahara* house of a Jewish cemetery just two *seforim*: One was the *Me’or Einayim* of the Chernobyler *Rebbe*, and the other was the *siddur* of the *Ba’al HaTanya*. Rav Rubin had found the *Me’or Einayim*. The *bochur*, however, was a descendant of the Chernobyl *Chassidish* dynasty. He asked Rav Rubin to exchange the *Seforim*. How could Rav Rubin refuse?

Years later, in Far Rockaway, as the *shul* was being built, Rav Rubin was in dire need of funds. A contractor was pressuring for payment with threats. That Friday night, a Lubavitch *mispallel* in the shul wished to use the *siddur* with his own *nusach*. Rav Rubin went to the attic to retrieve the old *siddur* he had saved after the war. The *siddur* fell down. In the binding there were thirteen one hundred American dollar bills.

The *Rebbe*, in his remarkable honesty, did not take the money. He searched high and low for the original owner of the *siddur*. Only when he was satisfied that it was truly *hefker* did he take the money and use it. He felt it was a *matona* (gift) from *HaKodosh Boruch Hu*.

At one point when the *Bais Medrash*

became too small for their living room, there was a large piece of land available on Beach 9th and Roosevelt Court. The land was adjacent to their house and was going on public auction. Mr. Fox, a lawyer, loved the *Rebbe* with heart and soul. He stood up at the platform of the auction and declared, “Please – do not bid against the *Rebbe*.” Those around listened. How could they not?

The entire lot was sold for \$15,000. The lot currently occupies the new building of the *Rebbe’s shul*, which was gradually improved until the beautiful structure we see today was completed. This, too, of course, was one of *Hashem’s nissim*.

The *Rebbe* would always write a Jewish date. He was trying to hold onto his *mesora*.

The *Rebbe* personified the *midda* of humility. Once, an incident occurred in *shul* where someone had received *Revi’i*, the fourth *Aliya* on a *Shabbos* morning. He felt that this *Aliya* was not in accordance with his honor and became angry. The *Rebbe*, from that point on, would take *Revi’i* himself, so that no one would ever feel slighted that it was not an important *Aliya*.

His love of people transcended barriers. Once, a child in a local *Yeshiva* was facing difficulty. He was acting out, as teenagers are wont to do. The mother was at her wits’ end as to what to do. Rav Rubin offered to learn with the young man himself. To everyone’s shock, he did. What was even more surprising was that the young man turned around and developed into a beautiful *Ben Torah*.

The *Rebbe* would never compromise, regardless of the pressure he faced. Rav Rubin personified the notion of *ki haim chayeinu*, yet he was not a supporter of learning *Shas* in English. When the ArtScroll Schottenstein *Talmud* first came out, he did not initially want it in the *shul*. No one, however, was terribly

upset with him in this regard because they knew that it came from his strong regard for the *mesora*. Eventually, he had to capitulate and people did bring it to the *Gemora shiurim*.

He was an extraordinary *Ba'al Chessed*. Many times he was short of funds; in order to survive, he would often have to borrow money. At no time, however, was he ever late in repaying. He would even pay his obligations a day before they were due.

A number of years ago, this writer was *zoche* to house an emergency guest, a *Rosh Kollel* from Mea She'orim who was stranded at Kennedy airport without his luggage. His *shtreimel* and *kapota* were on the way to England on a Thursday midnight flight and he was not allowed to board the plane. When this author went to the Rubin house to borrow a *shtreimel*, the Rubins offered the *Rosh Kollel* a choice of three. Such was the Rubin family's *Hachnossas Orchim* and *Chessed*.

He was humble and always tried to play a role in not showing off his vast knowledge of *Torah* and *Chassidus*.

The neighborhood of Far Rockaway soon deteriorated to the point where people started to move to Lawrence and beyond. This greatly grieved the *Rav* personally and affected the attendance of the *shul* as well. The *Rav* thought hard and invented the term West Lawrence. This was his brainchild.

Eventually, people did stop moving,

but he went a step further. He assured them that things would change and the market would rise again. The *Rav's* words were prescient. Far Rockaway became one of most expensive neighborhoods in New York. Much of this was on account of his wisdom. In spite of the neighborhood's initial decline, those who did move away walked to *shul* on *Shabbos*. Sometimes it would even be a half hour or an hour walk. They did this to attend the *Kehillas Yaakov shul* of Rav Shmuel Rubin.

Approximately twenty-five years ago, the *Rav* established a *Tehillim Kollel* in Yerushalayim. The *Rav* traveled to *Eretz Yisrael* and many people came to seek his advice there. He was loved by all.

The loss of the Sulitzer *Rebbe* certainly leaves a great void, not only in Far Rockaway, but throughout New York and the world. But the one consolation is that his dear son, Rav Yankel, a prodigious *Talmid Chochom* in his own right, is following in his remarkable father's footsteps – in all of his *mesoros*. As a *Ba'al Hachnossas Orchim*, Rav Yankel hosts the most important guests, as well as the near homeless. His friendly smile and behavior to all will assure that he will be successful just as his father was.

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www.vosizneias.com/133782/2013/06/19/far-rockaway-ny-the-end-of-an-era-the-sulitzer-rebbe/



Rav Yitzchok Isaac Rosenbaum, 14th of Tammuz

Zutchka *Rebbe*

The Zutchka *Rebbe* was my *Rebbe's* uncle; I merited seeing him a few times. One Friday night when I was a *bochur*, I wandered the streets of Bnei Brak looking for a *minyán* and asked where the *Nadvorna Bais Medrash* was. Since I was only a block away from the Zutchka *shul*,

the passerby figured I meant his *shul*; the Zutchka *shtiebel* was very close but when I went in I realized that this was not *Nadvorna*. Being that the Rosenbaums are all *Nadvorna einiklach* and that the Zutchka *Rebbe* was the *Nadvorna Rebbe's* uncle, the passerby directed me there and

so did *Hashgocha Protis*, for it was my only opportunity to have been *zoche* to daven with the *Rebbe*. His *davening* was on fire and unreal. He was elderly and weak but the *tefillos* poured out with *emes*. I will never forget how he broke down weeping when he recited the *berocha* in *Chazoras HaShatz* asking *Hashem* to rebuild Yerushalayim.



The Admor of Zutchka

By A. Cohen

A throng of thousands accompanied the *Admor* of Zutchka, Rav Yitzchok Isaac Rosenbaum, on his last earthly journey. He was *niftar* at the age of ninety-five.

The *levaya*, leaving his *Bais Medrash* on Be'er Mayim Chaim Street in Bnei Brak, was attended by many *Admorim* and *Rabbonim*, headed by the *Admorim* of Vizhnitz, Gur, Sadigora, Alexander, Sanz, Lublin, Strikov, Nadvorna, Chernobyl, Machnovka, Bohush, Cleveland, Kretchinef, Darag and Viaslava.

Before the departure of the procession, *hespedim* were delivered by Rav Shmuel *HaLevi* Wosner and Rav Shmuel Unsdorfer, who announced that in line with the custom of the *Admorim* of Nadvorna, all sons of an *Admor* who has passed away then preside as

Admorim.

Thus, the *niftar's* son, Rav Nosson Dovid, will preside in the *niftar's Bais Medrash* in Bnei Brak, while the sons who live abroad will preside in their places of residence.

Hespedim were also delivered by the *Admor* of Nadvorna-Chadera, as well as by Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein, the *Av Bais Din* of Ramat Elchonon, and by the *niftar's* son,



Rav Nosson Dovid.

In Yerushalayim, the *levaya* set out from Kikar Shabbos, where the *niftar's* son, the *Admor* of Stanislav, arriving from abroad directly to the *levaya* in Yerushalayim, delivered a *hesped*. Yet another *hesped* was delivered by the *niftar's mechutan*, the *Admor* of Erloi. From Kikar Shabbos, the *levaya* proceeded on foot to Har HaZeisim, where the *niftar's* forbears are buried.

Among the masses of mourners in Yerushalayim were many *Admorim*, including the *Admorim* of Belz, *Shomrei Emunim*, Rachmastrivka, Mazhmigrad, Toldos Avrohom Yitzchok, Zvhill, Stropkov, the *gaavad* of the *Eida HaChareidis*, members of the *BaDaTz* and many prominent *Rabbonim* and *Marbitzei Torah*.

Toward twilight, the *Admor* of Zutchka was buried in the cemetery on Har HaZeisim, where *hespedim* were delivered by the *Admor* of *Shomrei Emunim* and the *Admor* of Cleveland.



Biography

The *Admor* Rav Yitzchok Isaac Rosenbaum was born on the 21st of *Teves*, 5666 (1906), in the city of Chernobyl in the Bokivina region of Romania. His father was Rav Issomor, the venerable *Admor* of Nadvorna, and his mother was the righteous Malka, daughter of Rav Osher Yeshaya Rubin of Kolbisof, grandson of the *Rav* of Ropshitz. Rav Yitzchok Isaac was named after his grandfather, Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Komarna.

From his youth, he was known for his tremendous *hasmoda* and industriousness, traits that characterized him throughout his entire life, even in his final days. His father hired one of the prominent Chortkover *Chassidim*, Rav Yitzchok Shapira, to teach his sons.

When Rav Yitzchok Isaac was eight,

he and his family moved to Austria, and from there to the home of his grandfather in Kretchinef. Later on, they returned to Chernobyl, where he married Chana, daughter of Rav Nosson Dovid *HaKohen* Hollander, the *Rav* of the Galician city of Amsana. Immediately after his wedding, his father asked him to preside as *Rav* and *Admor* in the city of Vashkowitz. Two years later, he moved to Zutchka.

During the Holocaust, Rav Yitzchok Isaac left Zutchka on foot, along with his family and the entire community. On his back he bore a bag containing his manuscripts, of which he said: "This is my share of all my toil." Nazis, suspecting that they were espionage documents, confiscated them. In order to salvage the documents, the *Admor* gave all of his money to a Nazi officer who promised to return the manuscripts. Of course, the promise was not kept.

During the Holocaust, while living in the city of Balta, he experienced a miracle. The *Admor*, who occupied an upstairs room, hid fifty Jews in the cellar. Nazis arriving at his dwelling conducted a search, and found the *Admor* reciting *Tehillim*. They decided to hang him then and there, and asked, "Are you afraid of G-d?"

"Yes!" he decisively replied. They snatched the *Tehillim* and threw it out of the window, into the muddy yard. (He saved that *sefer Tehillim* until his final day.) Then they removed the *Rebbetzin* and the children from the room and placed a rope around his neck. The Nazi jeered, "Now pray."

The *Rebbe* began to say *Vidui* from *oshamnu*, *bogadnu* until *rachum vechanun*.

When he reached these words, the Nazi stopped him and said, "Enough!" A commanding officer then entered and said, "Let the *Rav* live a bit longer."

As the Nazi was leaving, the *Admor's* son heard the Nazi mutter, "He's a saintly

man. G-d will punish."

The *Admor* publicly commemorated that miracle every year.

Immediately after the war, the *Rebbetzin* became deathly ill. However, she recovered miraculously and lived until 5742 (1982). After the war, the *Admor* reached Prague, and in 5707 (1947) published his *HaMe'oros HaGedolim* about the *Aseres HaDibros*. At the end of the *sefer*, he printed a letter of gratitude to his brother-in-law, the *Admor* of Kachnia of the United States, and to the *Admor's* wife, his sister, who helped secure his release. He then left for America, where he lived until 5733 (1973).

He established his *Bais Medrash* in Boro Park, where he was beloved by all. He was best known for his efforts to safeguard the honor of *Shabbos Kodesh*. During that period, a number of Jewish stores in the area were open on *Shabbos*. When he tried to correct the situation, people attempted to dissuade him, claiming that the storekeepers wouldn't listen to him out of fear that competitors might deprive them of their livelihoods. But he ignored these warnings and, every *Shabbos*, went to the stores with his *Chassidim* and pleaded with the storekeepers in a genial manner to close their shops. Sometimes he was forced to promise them financial help, in exchange for the *damage* that they believed would be incurred by closing their shops on *Shabbos*.

For ten consecutive years, he grappled with this problem, until he finally succeeded in closing all stores for *Shabbos*. He also succeeded in closing a nearby movie theater that was operating on *Shabbos*. Today, no one believes that stores were open on *Shabbos* in the heart of a *chareidi* neighborhood.

He initiated a novel idea in the United States of those days. He would place a set *Shabbos* table on an open truck. A driver would then drive through the Jewish neighborhoods and announce the time of

candle lighting.

For many years, he tried to find *halachic* solutions for the problem of opening bottle caps on *Shabbos*. In time, he founded the *Shoneh Halochos* enterprise in Bnei Brak for the review of *Hilchos Shabbos*.

In 5724 (1964), his daughter Shifra, who had been the wife of the *Admor* of Varadan, Rav Yosef Leifer, passed away. She was survived by three small daughters. Rav Yitzchok Isaac accepted his lot with love.

He was outstanding in his *kibbud ov vo'eim*, even in his final days. A long time after his father had passed away, he would send letters to his sisters every *erev Rosh HaShana*, saying that by honoring his oldest sister he was fulfilling the mitzva of *lerabos ochicha hagodol*.

After the *petira* of his father, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael* and began to preside in his father's *Bais Medrash* in Yad Eliyohu, Tel Aviv, where he was active on behalf of the education of Jewish children.

In 5741 (1981) he established his *Bais Medrash* in Bnei Brak, and two years later, moved to the current *Bais Medrash* on Be'er Mayim Chaim Street, where he founded a *kollel* and *Talmud Torah*. Later on, he also built a *mikve* in the building.

His home was open to all Jews at all hours, and he refused to designate reception hours. He claimed: "The Jews who seek me need a *yeshua* or an *eitza* now," stressing that this practice might arouse *rachamim* with *HaKodosh Boruch Hu*, so that all hours would be those of *rachamim* and *eis rotzon*.

His tremendous diligence was exemplary. Once, a great-grandson from abroad, studying in *Eretz Yisrael*, came to visit him. The *Admor* was so immersed in his studies that he did not recognize his own kin, and asked who he was. When the youth explained that he was the *Admor's* great-grandson, the *Admor* blessed him,

and returned to his studies. In his *sefer*, *HaTzniyus VeHayeshua*, he apologizes to his offspring for this behavior.

He pored over his *seforim* day and night, and the old-fashioned typewriter on which he personally typed out his many *chiddushim* was constantly on his table.

His *Avodas HaKodesh* was remarkable. He would go before the *teiva* on *Rosh HaShana* and *Yom Kippur* during all of the services, from the eve of the holiday until its end, including the *Torah* reading and the *shofar* blowing. After the prayer services, his face would glow, and he did not seem tired from the exertion.

He would often restore *sholom bayis* to families, and make peace among people. He did this in a most unassuming manner. He drew many closer to their Father in Heaven.

Once, a *ba'al teshuva* told him about his many difficulties. The *Admor* advised him to study *Orchos Tzaddikim*. When the young man claimed that he had no one with whom to study, the *Rebbe* held a daily *shiur* with him, which continued for two years. When questioned about that practice, the *Admor* replied, "What can I do if I benefit from the *shiur*?"

Once, he became very weak, and the community was asked to *daven* for his recovery. He recuperated, and during the weeks in which he felt better, he would shower *berochos* upon Am Yisrael.

On Sunday, the 13th of *Tammuz*, he felt ill, and was taken to Laniado hospital. During the ride to the hospital, his situation deteriorated. At the hospital, efforts were made to revive him, and top-ranking doctors were brought to his bed. At 1 a.m., he returned his pure soul to its Maker. At the time of his *petira* he was surrounded by a *minyán*, which recited *Pesukei HaYichud* and *Nishmas*.

Despite the late hour, the bitter news spread rapidly throughout the Kiryat Sanz neighborhood, and at 2:15 a.m. the *levaya*

left the hospital toward Bnei Brak.

He is survived by an illustrious family. Thirteen years ago, he merited seeing a fifth generation. His sons are: Rav Meir of Caracas, Rav Yisrael of Stanislav; Rav Nosson Dovid, the *Rav* of the Chassidei Zutchka community; and his sons-in-law, Rav Osher Yeshaya of Nadvorna-Chadera and Rav Yosef Leifer of Varadan. He is also survived by grandchildren and great-grandchildren, all of whom are following in his footsteps.

www.chareidi.org/archives5760/mattos/azuchka.htm



Zutchka vs. Rabbi X

I wanted to begin by telling a story of an encounter a friend had with a semi-prominent *Rav*, and then juxtapose it with a story describing how the Zutchka *Rebbe* reacted in a similar situation.

My friend had been married a few years, but things were not going well. The couple had decided on divorce, and they were on their way to the *Rav* to finalize the arrangement. But before they went inside they began to talk. They mutually experienced a longing that they had not experienced in months, or even years. Just before they crossed that irrevocable threshold they had decided that it was not too late to reconcile. Their deep attachment, which had been latent for much time, began to manifest itself in feelings ever closer to the surface, and decided that they wanted to make the marriage work.

They walked into the *Rav*'s quarters, and said with beaming faces, "We've changed our minds! We decided not to go through with the divorce!" The *Rav* opened his eyes wide, a vein about to burst from his forehead, and barked at them, "For this you waste my time? I've been sitting here FIFTEEN MINUTES waiting for the two of you. I could have been doing a hundred other things. Don't you know that I'm a

busy man?"

The previous Zutchka *Rebbe* was known never to utter a mundane word. He learned, he taught *Torah*, and accepted petitioners. *Torah* was his entire life. He did not even engage in worldly or mundane speech with his own family. When a granddaughter who lived close by and visited often came into his study one day, he asked, "Who is this?" So much was he involved in his learning. But when someone had a serious problem or a *Torah* matter to discuss, he availed himself completely to him. Once, after his daily *Halocha shiur* in the morning, a man came up to him, and said that he was having trouble following the *Rebbe*. The *Rebbe* established with him a one-on-one *shiur* on the spot, which lasted for several years. When the man came to the *Rebbe*, and said, "I feel as though I'm taking up the *Rebbe*'s valuable time," the *Rebbe* answered, "if you only knew of the great satisfaction I get every day from learning with you."

On one occasion, a couple had come to him in the evening. They wound up staying for four hours, past midnight. When his grandson later questioned him about the unusual amount of time spent with this couple he responded, "This couple was going to get a divorce. I was their last stop. I sat with them, and I delved deep into their hearts, and saw that there was much hope and yearning between the two of them. We talked out the matter, and now they are going to stay married. After all, doesn't it say that when a couple gets divorced the *mizbei'ach* (the altar) sheds tears? Well, tonight I am full of joy knowing that I spared the *mizbei'ach* any unnecessary sorrow. Four hours? Even a whole night would have been worth it for two precious *neshomos* (souls)."

A *Tzaddik*, concerned with the depths of the human soul.

www.rebbestories.blogspot.com/2009/07/zutchka-vs-rabbi-x.html

Rav Yaakov HaLevi Ruderman, 14th of Tammuz

Rosh Yeshiva Ner Yisrael Baltimore

This article originally appeared in *Yated Neeman*. We abbreviated it because of its length.

As we enter the *Yahrzeit* of the revered *Rosh Yeshiva* and founder of *Yeshiva Ner Yisrael* of Baltimore, the *Yated* presents highlights of his life as told by his *talmidim*. We thank the *talmidim* who shared with us their oral and written memories of the *Rosh Yeshiva*.

Hallowed Beginnings

Rav Ruderman was born on *Shushan Purim* in 5660 (1900) in Dolhinov, a small shtetl near Vilna. He was born late in life to his parents, Rav Yehuda Leib and Sheina, the first son after six daughters. Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky, Rav Ruderman's illustrious cousin who is named after the same person, related a fascinating story about how Rav Ruderman got his name. A year before his birth, an elderly, childless Jew named Reb Yitzchok assured Rav Yehuda Leib that he would have a son and made him promise to name the child Yitzchok. Thinking that it was unlikely that he would have a son, Rav Yehuda Leib half-jokingly agreed. A year later, when his son was born, his mother wanted to name him Yaakov after her father. A *shaila* was asked and the *psak* was that he be given both names: Yaakov Yitzchok.

Rav Yehuda Leib was a *melamed*. Rav Ruderman often stated that his father knew *Shas* with *Tosafos* well, but even though he may have eclipsed his father in learning, he did not even approach his level of *avoda* and *Yiras Shomayim*. Rav Yehuda Leib recognized his young son's prodigious talents and encouraged him to learn. The child was awakened early to learn a *blatt* before *davening* and was rewarded for every *daf* memorized. As a result, he mastered *Seder Noshim* and *Nezikin* before his *bar mitzva*.

Shortly before his *bar mitzva*, Rav Yehuda Leib took him for a *berocha* to the Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, Rav Sholom Ber. The *Rebbe* was so impressed that he blessed the boy that he should grow to be an *odom godol*. The *Rebbe* wanted the youth to learn in Lubavitch, but Rav Yehuda Leib chose instead to send him to Slonim.

The young *illui* from Dolhinov soon developed a remarkable reputation. At that time it was customary for Slabodka *talmidim* to seek exceptional *bochurim* to join Slabodka. The future Chevron *Rosh Yeshiva* Rav Yechezkel Sarna, who was already one of the *Alter* of Slabodka's closest *talmidim*, convinced the young genius to join Slabodka. That decision was undoubtedly a watershed in his life.

It was in the middle of World War I when Rav Ruderman joined Slabodka when it was in the city of Minsk after it had fled eastward, away from the approaching German Army. In Minsk, he merited meeting the revered *Godol HaDor*, Rav Chaim Brisker. It seems that Rav Chaim discerned tremendous potential in the young *illui* and realized that he would need special care to withstand wartime difficulties. Toward that end, unbeknown to Rav Ruderman, Rav Chaim arranged for a certain wealthy *Yid* to provide him with extra money so that his learning would not be adversely affected by hunger. Only after Rav Chaim's passing in 1918, when the support ceased, did Rav Ruderman become aware of Rav Chaim's role in caring for him.

The *Alter* also displayed an enormous amount of affection toward the youngster. He assigned Rav Yechezkel Sarna to serve as his *eltere bochur*.

Rav Ruderman learned with tremendous *hasmoda*, but he was completely unable to keep to *sedorim* of the *Yeshiva*. The *Alter* gave him latitude to

learn in his own way as long as he achieved the pre-set goals. It was decided that he would attempt to complete *Shas* that winter. Rav Ruderman would take long walks during which he would review *Gemoros* and *Sedorim* by heart. He was well on the way to reaching his goal when the *Alter* received a telegram shortly after *Sukkos* advising of the *petira* of Rav Yehuda Leib. Not wishing to interfere with his *talmid's* learning regimen, the *Alter* chose not to tell him the terrible news. Only after *Pesach*, when he had achieved his goal, was he informed of his father's passing. The *Alter* remarked that the completion of *Shas* would be a far greater *zechus* for his father's *neschoma* than all the recitations of *Kaddish* that he missed.

His *talmidim* in Baltimore understand their great *zechus* to have had a *Rebbe* whose every action was a reflection of the *Alter*. On the *Alter's* fiftieth *Yahrzeit*, Rav Ruderman and Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky were invited to Lakewood to speak. Rav Schneur Kotler related that when Rav Yaakov was unable to attend he stated, "The Baltimore *Rosh Yeshiva* is the most reflective personality of the *Alter* in our generation."

One thing in which Rav Ruderman particularly took pride was the fact that he merited receiving *semicha* from Rav Meir Atlas, the revered father-in-law of Rav Elchonon Wasserman. This *semicha* traced back to the Vilna *Gaon*, as Rav Meir Atlas had received *semicha* from Rav Eizele Charif, who was in turn a *musmach* of Rav Abbale Peslover, who had received *semicha* directly from the *Gaon*; thus Rav Ruderman was a direct link in this chain of the *mesora* back to the Vilna *Gaon*.



Building Torah in America

In 5684 (1924), Rav Ruderman married the daughter of Rav Sheftel Kramer, a son-in-law of Rav Shraga Feivel Frank and brother-in-law of Rav Isser

Zalman Meltzer, Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein and Rav Boruch Horowitz.

The *Rebbetzin* was his partner and helpmate in all his undertakings on behalf of *Yiddishkeit*. Not only did she free him from the yoke of responsibility in the material aspects of the house, but she was also instrumental in helping him achieve lofty spiritual pursuits. Later, when they moved to America and Rav Ruderman sought to build a *Yeshiva* in a country that had no understanding of the concept, it was the *Rebbetzin* who constantly encouraged him to persevere rather than be deterred by the numerous stumbling blocks placed in his way. It was the *Rebbetzin* who organized fundraisers and donations of staples for the *Yeshiva*. The *Rosh Yeshiva* was eternally grateful for all that she had done and, many decades later, upon her passing several years before his *petira*, the *Rosh Yeshiva* was simply inconsolable.

During the first years after their marriage, the *Rosh Yeshiva* devoted himself to complete immersion in learning. In 1931, the *Rosh Yeshiva*, *Rebbetzin* and their baby daughter immigrated to the United States. Rav Ruderman joined his father-in-law, Rav Sheftel Kramer, in the *Yeshiva* of New Haven that had relocated to Cleveland, where the latter served as *Menahel Ruchani*.

In 1933, Rav Ruderman decided to accept a position as *Rav* of the *Tiferes Yisrael Shul* in Baltimore with the understanding that he could use the facilities for a *Yeshiva*.

The *Yeshiva's* early growth intensified through the recognition and support of prominent *Rabbonim*. Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, *Menahel* of *Mesivta Torah Vodaas* and unquestionably one of the most important figures in the development of *Torah* in America, sent *bochurim* from New York whom he thought would benefit. Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky sent his children from Toronto, which in those days was

considered a major distance away. Rav Yehoshua Klavan, one of the foremost *talmidim* of Rav Boruch Ber and the *Rav* of Washington, D.C., was among the staunchest supporters of the *Yeshiva*. He not only sent a son to learn in the *Yeshiva*, he even raised funds for the upkeep and growth of the *Yeshiva*. Furthermore, during the winter months, when Rav Ruderman would occasionally suffer from laryngitis, Rav Klavan would come from Washington to deliver the daily *shiur*. Rav Naftoli Zvi Yehuda Riff, a grandson of the *Netziv* and the *Rav* of Camden, New Jersey, was also extremely helpful.



Total Immersion in Torah

Without a doubt, it was the power of the *Rosh Yeshiva's* total immersion in *Torah*; his contagious *Ahavas Torah* and his complete belief in the eternity of *Torah* that enabled him to become the quintessential *Rosh Yeshiva* and *Torah* builder. His love of *Torah* was such that it overcame even the most natural human limitations. Once, during the early years of the *Yeshiva* at its current campus, a fire broke out in the building where the *Rosh Yeshiva* lived. Everyone immediately evacuated the building. Suddenly Rav Ruderman ran back into the burning building, exclaiming, "I forgot an absolutely irreplaceable item!" What was the item for which he risked his life? His very rare copy of the *sefer Nesivos HaMishpot* on Rabbeinu Yeruchem.

His dedication to learning knew no bounds. His encyclopedic knowledge of *Talmud Bavli*, *Yerushalmi*, *Rishonim*, *Poskim*, *Acharonim* and *teshuvos* set a lofty standard for which to strive. The *Rosh Yeshiva* stimulated lively discussions, thereby deepening interest and broadening horizons, by challenging his students to bring proof from one *Gemora* to a seemingly unrelated issue.

He constantly focused the attention

of his *talmidim* and their awareness to the breadth and inter-relationship of all of *Torah*. He was always involved in a *kushya*. In fact, he would say that he used questions as memory keys with which to remember the *Gemora*. Therefore, he was always ready with a penetrating query or comment that would lend insight to whatever *Gemora* one mentioned. He lived with his questions and was constantly seen with his lips moving, as he was totally and consistently absorbed in learning.

Rarely was his sleep at night not disturbed by the *kushya* with which he went to bed. This total involvement was transmitted to his *talmidim*.

On par with his love for *Torah*, was the *Rosh Yeshiva's* love for his students. If ever a *talmid* asked him a good question or related a nice *sevara*, his face would radiate delight. When one of the *talmidim* had the good fortune to ask or say something that was new to him, he would be ecstatic. Many *talmidim* had the fortune to be embarrassed by the *Rosh Yeshiva* when they would be reminded years later of an insightful *Torah* thought that they themselves had long since forgotten.

A revealing incident occurred when he was learning in Slabodka and a visitor arrived bearing a copy of the newly published *sefer Ohr Somei'ach*. The young *bochur* asked to borrow the *sefer* but was refused permission as the man planned to continue his journey the following day. Rav Ruderman was undaunted. He borrowed the *sefer* for one night promising to return it in the morning. Overnight he went through and mastered the *sefer* in its entirety!

On another occasion, the *Rosh Yeshiva* was once undergoing a lengthy medical procedure. The doctor, wishing to distract the *Rosh Yeshiva* from the pain and unpleasantness, engaged him in small talk. Throughout the procedure the *Rosh Yeshiva* continuously nodded his head in agreement. After leaving the clinic, he

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explained to the *talmid* accompanying him a wonderful approach to the *sugya* that had occurred to him in the midst of the procedure. He then suddenly interrupted himself, “By the way, perhaps you heard what the doctor was saying to me? I nodded to him out of respect, but what did he want?”

The *Rosh Yeshiva* once complained to his *talmid*, Rav Yisrael Dov Kaplan, today *Rosh Kollel* in Bayit Vegan, “Nowadays, people do not learn. When I was fifteen, learning in Slabodka we would get up at five in the morning and go to sleep after midnight. We learned fifty *blatt* a day, every day!”

Once on a long trip, the *Rosh Yeshiva* was accompanied by two *bochurim* from the *Yeshiva*, who decided to utilize the duration of the journey to go over several pages of *Maseches Berochos* that they had committed to memory. The *Rosh Yeshiva* was seated right in front of them and they noticed that he was shifting about in his seat uncomfortably. From time to time he walked around and fixed them with a piercing look. “What kind of *Gemora* are you using over there – is it a different *girsah*?” he asked. Scarcely concealing their pride, the *bochurim* replied, “We don’t have a *Gemora*, we’re going over what we learned by heart!” The *Rosh Yeshiva*, with a smile on his face, proceeded to quote the exact language of the *Gemora*.

When he was already in his eighties, a *talmid* relates, “I went to *daven Mincha* with the *Rosh Yeshiva* and he complained that the strong medicines he was taking for his numerous ailments caused him to forget. The *talmid* asked, “Has the *Rosh Yeshiva* forgotten any *Tosafos* in *Shas*?” Immediately, the *Rosh Yeshiva* banged his cane and forcefully said, ‘No! No! No *Tosafos*. I mean a *chiddush* in a difficult *Rambam* that I once said – I have trouble remembering in its entirety.” The *talmid* related that the way in which he could not even contemplate the horror of forgetting a

Tosafos was an indication of *Ahavas Torah* and devotion to *Torah* that remained with him forever.



Transmitting Torah

Rav Ruderman would show *talmidim* a letter that he received from the Steipler *Gaon* in 5719 (1959). The Steipler sent him a letter requesting financial assistance for printing the first volume of his magnum opus *Kehillas Yaakov*. In the letter, the Steipler wrote that he had seen and learned Rav Ruderman’s *sefer Avodas HaLevi* that he had written in his youth and it features “wonderful *chiddushim* on the most difficult areas of the order of *Kodshim*”. In the letter, the Steipler encourages Rav Ruderman to write more such *seforim*. After showing the letter to the *talmid*, Rav Ruderman said, “I have enough *chiddushim* to write ten more volumes of *Avodas HaLevi*, but I am now writing *leibidige seforim*, living *seforim*, my *talmidim*.”

The *Rosh Yeshiva* continued, “Teaching takes full concentration, as the *Gemora* teaches that only if a *Rebbe* is similar to a *Maloch* should one seek to learn *Torah* from him. We know that a *Maloch* cannot do more than one *shelichus*, one job at a time. Teaching *talmidim* preoccupies me so completely that I cannot sit and write *seforim*.” Indeed, the *Rosh Yeshiva* invested tremendous effort into teaching and shaping each *talmid*.

The *Rosh Yeshiva* established thousands of *talmidim*. Among them, hundreds became *Gedolei Torah* and *Marbitzei Torah* who continue his legacy and illuminate the *Torah* world with their *shiurim* and *chiddushei Torah*. Although of course, there was a special focus on establishing *talmidim* who would become *Torah* giants in their own right, the *Rosh Yeshiva* understood the individual character of each *talmid* and encouraged them, each in his own way, to make *Torah*

a central part of their lives.



Individualized Chinuch

Talmidim of *Ner Yisrael* felt that the *Rosh Yeshiva* loved them as a father loves his son. He took an active interest in their needs, listened to their problems and shared their burdens. They, in turn, became greatly attached to him. His relationship with his *talmidim* was very much predicated on an explanation of *Chazal* on the *pasuk* “and you shall teach them to your sons”. *Chazal* say that sons are referring to *talmidim*. “Why, then,” the *Rosh Yeshiva* asked, “did the *pasuk* not write, “and you shall teach them to your pupils?”

“In order to teach us,” he explained, “that *talmidim* are akin to sons. Just as a son never stops being a son, neither does a *talmid* stop being a *talmid*. A *Rebbe* must never imagine that his *talmid* is beloved to him only when he is under his tutelage, receiving his guidance and instruction and that when this period comes to an end, so does the special relationship. The truth goes far beyond this, for upon becoming a *talmid* he becomes a son of his *Rebbe*. Even when he embarks on his own path, he should remain a son; the bond should not weaken.” This is the way in which the *Rosh Yeshiva* interacted with his *talmidim*. *Talmidim* who visited him after intervals of ten years or more still felt the same warm relationship they remembered from their years in *Yeshiva*.

His emulation of the *Alter* was not simply in treating his students as children; rather, it was in all facets of *chinuch*. He would try to handle each of his *talmidim* in a manner suited to that individual. When it came to delivering rebuke, Rav Ruderman would explain that if he would dare speak to his students in the way the *Alter* rebuked even the greatest *Baalei Mussar* publicly, they would have fled the *Yeshiva* instantaneously. In fact, when the *Rosh*

Yeshiva found it necessary to rebuke the whole *Yeshiva*, he would speak very positively even while calling the *talmidim* to task.

Rav Ruderman often cautioned that dealing with *bochurim* is *dinei nefoshos*, a matter of spiritual life and death, and cannot be taken lightly. There were instances when members of the *Yeshiva's Hanhola* thought that a specific *bochur* should be expelled. The *Rosh Yeshiva* consistently held firm to his convictions, explaining that one never knows what the future holds for such a *talmid*; perhaps with a bit more patience he would develop properly. By and large, he lived to see his position vindicated.

From the manner in which the *Alter* cared for Rav Ruderman's every need, he learned that it is every *Rosh Yeshiva's* obligation to deal with every aspect of his *talmid's* life, spiritual and material. The *talmidim* of *Ner Yisrael* all attest to their *Rebbe's* exceptional care and concern for them. He served as a source of strength, inspiration and advice when they were beset with problems. Regardless of the difficulty or complexity of a situation, the *Rosh Yeshiva* could always be relied on for the requisite counsel and comfort. Throughout the years there were many *bochurim* who came to the *Yeshiva* as refugees or from homeless and troubled backgrounds. They found a home in the *Yeshiva* and a father in the *Rosh Yeshiva*.

In addition, Rav Ruderman loved his *talmidim* and took great pride in those *talmidim* who entered the great profession of *Melamdei Torah*. The clearest proof of this love and pride was his almost regular referral to the verse in *Doniel* (12:3): *V'hamaskilim yazhiru k'zohar horokia, umatzdikei horabim kekochovim l'olom vo'ed*. Rav Ruderman would cite the comment of the *Maharsha* that says, “Just as the stars and moon are in the sky throughout the day, even though they are not seen, so too the teacher remembers and

ponders his students even years later.”



The Beauty of Middos

Rav Ruderman's *middos*, his sensitivity to others and feelings of another's pain, were legendary. These *middos* were the product of a lifetime of *Avodas Hashem*. A *talmid* relates how in 1982 he came to the *Rosh Yeshiva's* house to walk him to *Mincha*. When he greeted the *Rosh Yeshiva*, he noticed a broken-hearted expression on his face. The *Rosh Yeshiva* said, "I just heard that Rav Schneur Kotler is very sick. The *Gemora* says," continued Rav Ruderman, "that if a *Talmid Chochom* is sick, one must beg *Hashem* for his recovery to the extent that one must *become sick over his plight*." Right then and there, the *Rosh Yeshiva* burst into bitter tears. Only after somewhat composing himself did he go to *Mincha*.

For the next two days, the *Rosh Yeshiva* was unwell and unable to emerge from bed. Dr. Jakobovitz, the resident *Yeshiva Lane* physician, came to check him and could not find anything wrong. "I, however," explained the *talmid*, "knew what had happened. The *Rosh Yeshiva* had *davened* with such effort – he became sick over Rav Schneur's plight just as the *Gemora* dictates."

Rav Ruderman was a treasure trove of stories, many of which provided his *talmidim* with insight and understanding of his own behavior. The special care and deference that he exhibited toward his *Rebbetzin* had its source in a story he had heard from the *Chofetz Chaim*. The *Chofetz Chaim* once happened to be with Rav Nochum of Horodna on *Chanuka* evening. It was several hours into the night and still, Rav Nochum had not lit the candles. Finally, very late at night, long after the streets had emptied of people, Rav Nochum's wife returned home. Only then did Rav Nochum light the *Menora*, long after the time prescribed by *Halocha*.

Unable to contain his curiosity, the *Chofetz Chaim* asked Rav Nochum for an explanation. Rav Nochum answered, "The *Halocha* dictates that if one only has enough money for *ner Shabbos* or *ner Chanuka*, *ner Shabbos* takes precedence because of its *sholom bayis* component. My wife," continued Rav Nochum, "is *moser nefesh* to ensure that I devote my life to *Torah* and *Avodas Hashem*. She enjoys being present for lighting the *Chanuka Menora* and that makes it my responsibility to wait for her and forgo lighting at the proper time."

The *talmidim* witnessed many occasions when the *Rosh Yeshiva* patterned his actions on the lessons of this story. A case in point was at the Agudah convention. One of the highlights of the convention was Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky's address after *Sholosh Seudos*. The audience would sit in rapt attention listening until long after *Shabbos* was over. Invariably, Rav Ruderman would leave in the middle to call his *Rebbetzin*. He would always apologize to Rav Yaakov and they would remind one another of the story of Rav Nochum.

One poignant incident made a tremendous impact on the *Rosh Yeshiva* and was a clear depiction of how a *Rebbe's* actions influence his *talmidim*. A group of women, wives of *talmidim* of the *Rosh Yeshiva* who live in *Eretz Yisrael*, asked for an audience with the *Rosh Yeshiva* when he attended the last *Knessia Gedola* in 5740/1980. After inquiring after their families, the *Rosh Yeshiva* questioned why they had requested this meeting. They replied that they wished to express their *hakoras hatov*; they felt that their husbands treated them with greater respect and deference because they had seen how the *Rebbe* treated his *Rebbetzin*.

The *Rosh Yeshiva* taught many lessons in consideration for others by personal example. A *talmid* recounts that before joining the *Yeshiva*, he came to the

Rosh Yeshiva's house to be tested. In mid-conversation, he suddenly pushed over an inkwell, leaving what would become a permanent stain on the sofa. The *talmid* was in a quandary, but the *Rosh Yeshiva* continued speaking as though nothing had happened while simultaneously attempting to cover the stain to ease the *bochur's* anguish. When he saw that his attempts were not helping, he began to reassure the *talmid* that nothing happened!

True, words alone are often somewhat of a cliché and the expression on a host's face usually reveal a true picture of his feelings. "In this case," the *talmid* related, "the *Rosh Yeshiva* was able to genuinely persuade me with his great wisdom that nothing had happened." Any damage to the sofa paled into insignificance compared to the suffering of a human being.

The same *talmid* paid the *Rosh Yeshiva* a visit more than three decades later. Drinks were served and another accident occurred. This time, a cup of cream spilled, not on the sofa but on the *Rosh Yeshiva's* pants. The reaction was identical. The conversation continued as if nothing had happened. The *Rosh Yeshiva* shifted his legs under the table and once again managed to convince the *talmid* that nothing happened!

The *Rosh Yeshiva* and *Rebbetzin* had one child, *Rebbetzin Chana Weinberg*.

His son-in-law, Rav Yaakov Weinberg, succeeded him as *Rosh Yeshiva* until his passing twelve years later. They were blessed with six grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren, who were privileged to surround the *Rosh Yeshiva* during his last days. After the *petira* of the *Rebbetzin*, their grandchildren, the *Yeshiva's Menahel Ruchani*, Rav Beryl and Mrs. Aviva Weisbord, moved with their children into the *Rosh Yeshiva's* home to care for him. The beauty and grace with which they discharged their obligation helped the *Rosh Yeshiva* cope with the loss of his *Rebbetzin* and added immeasurably to the quality of his later years. The *Rosh Yeshiva* was constantly grateful and continuously expressed his tremendous *hakoras hatov* to the Weisbords.

The *Rosh Yeshiva's* entire eighty-seven years comprised one long song of *Torah, limud haTorah*, teaching *Torah*, living with the *middos* dictated by the *Torah* and giving *kevod haTorah*. On the 14th of *Tammuz*, 5747 (1987), the *Rosh Yeshiva* passed on to join his exalted *Rebbeim*, the *Alter* of Slabodka and the giants of the era who pre-deceased him. His *levaya* in Baltimore was one last manifestation of *kevod haTorah*, as thousands flocked to *Ner Yisrael* to bid farewell to the last link to the greatness of Slabodka in our times.



Rabbeinu Chaim Ben Attar, 15th of Tammuz

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh*

[Some say 14th of *Tammuz* – see Rav Moshe Franco of Leghorn/Livorno, intro to *Meor Chaim*)

The Ner HaMaarovi has Gone Out

In the year 5503 on *Parshas Balak* during *Sholosh Seudos*, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* suddenly told the *talmidim*, "I believe that the *Ner HaMaarovi*, the Western Candle,

has been extinguished." After *Havdola* the *talmidim* asked the *Ba'al Shem* what he meant. He explained to them, "The holy *Tzaddik*, the *mechaber* of the *Ohr HaChaim*, has left this world. The way I know this is because there is one secret regarding *Netilas Yodayim* (when we wash our hands before *HaMotzi*), and this secret is only revealed to one *Tzaddik* in each

generation. Until today, this secret was given to the *Ohr HaChaim* – and now that secret has been revealed to me. I realized that if I have been given this secret I must be the only one who knows – and this must mean that the *Ohr HaChaim* is no longer with us in this world.” (Gloss *Menachem Tzion* to *Shem HaGedolim Seforim Alef Siman* 54)



Winning the War

When the Husyatiner *Rebbe* was visiting *Eretz Yisrael* during the Second World War, the Germans had already reached Syria and General Rommel was near Egypt. The *Rebbe* and his *Chassidim* arrived on the 15th of *Tammuz*, the *Ohr HaChaim's Yahrzeit*, at his *kever*. Everyone feared that the Nazis would reach *Eretz Yisrael* and the *Rebbe* poured out his heart with *Tehillim* to prevent this. After the *Tehillim*, the *Rebbe's* face was aflame and he lay his head on his arm for a moment. When he lifted his head he was smiling and he declared, “The trouble has passed and is gone. No sword of war shall pass through our holy land!” The *Tepliker Rav* asked the Husyatiner how he could confidently say such a thing. The *Rebbe* answered that he gazed at the *tziun* of the *Ohr HaChaim* and saw on it the Divine Name *YHV”H*. He took this as a clear sign that the danger had passed. A day or so later the German Nazis, may their bones decay, suffered devastating defeats near Egypt and Syria, and they lost the Russian

front of the war. Thus, in the merit of the *Ohr HaChaim*, *Eretz Yisrael* was saved and spared from the Nazis.



After Three Times They Gave Up

Rav Chaim Uri Lipshitz used to tell this story about the *Ohr HaChaim* that he heard from the Arabs:

After the Six-Day War, when *Yerushalayim* was under Jordanian rule, the Jordanians decided to renovate and destroy the Jewish cemetery at the Mount of Olives. They began using a tractor to demolish *kevorim* but when the tractor reached the *kever* of the *Ohr HaChaim* the tractor overturned, killing the Arab driver. That did not deter them, however, and they sent a second tractor, which for some reason broke down just as it reached the *Ohr HaChaim's kever*. They fixed the tractor and had the engine repaired, and then the second tractor also turned itself over and the driver was seriously injured. Finally, they decided to use a metal sledgehammer to demolish the *kever* by hand, but this time somehow the hammer flew out of the worker's hands and struck the foreman in the head. Finally, they admitted that the Divine Hand must be involved and they gave up! From then on their nefarious plot was over; never again did the Jordanians try to demolish the *tziun* of the *Ohr HaChaim*, and eventually control of the *Bais HaChaim* returned to Jewish hands. (*Hillula Kadisha*, 15th of *Tammuz*, page 612)



לעילוי נשמת
מרת מינדל הארטשטיין
בת ר' משולם זאב וואלף מייער ע"ה
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Zera

Shimshon



Balak

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

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

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

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

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

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

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

לזכר נשמת

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מייכאל זצ"ל
בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

להצלחת כל ישראל

מה טובו אהלך יעקב (כד' ה')

How good are your tents, Yaakov (24:5).

The Zera Shimshon asks that if Bila'am's intention was to praise the tents of Yaakov (the Batei Kenesi'os) why did he add the word **מה**, *how* good etc. why didn't he just say it as a statement – The tents of Yaakov are good?

As well, why did Bila'am choose to refer to the Jewish people as Yaakov?

The Zera Shimshon explains that the Mekubolim teach (Rikanti Va'eschanan) that the secret of the Mezuzah is that the word **מזוזה** becomes **זו** מות – death is removed, meaning that a structure with a Mezuzah protects those that are inside from death.

As well, the 'inside' of the word **מזוזה** is **זו** which has the numerical value of twenty six – the same numerical value as the name of Hashem (הוי"ה).

The 'outer' letters of **מזוזה** are **מת** – death. Implying the name of Hashem separates the **מ** from the **ת** and protects us from death.

Shuls - Batei Kenesi'os, are exempt from the obligation of placing a Mezuzah on their doorposts. This is because they are intrinsically places of life. They therefore, do not need the Mezuzah to save those in them from death.

When Bila'am said these words, *"How good are your tents, Yaakov"* he was referring to the Batei Kenesi'os. This is why he said **מה טובו** as opposed to only **טובו** since the words **מה טובו** have the numerical value as the word **חיים** – life. They both equal sixty eight. This hints to the fact that the Batei Kenesi'os are places of life.

This is also why he specifically chose to refer to the Jewish people by the name Yaakov. The passuk says (Micha 7:20) *תתן אמת ליעקב*, *"Bestow truth to Yaakov"*. The word **אמת** has the same make-up as the word **מזוזה**. This is as follows. The **מ** and the **ת** are clearly the same in both words. And the **א** is in reality made up of two **י** and a **ו**. These letters have the numerical value of twenty six – the same as the name of Hashem (הוי"ה) which itself is also hinted to in the word **מזוזה** as explained.

Since the trait of Yaakov is the trait of **אמת**, which has the same properties as the word Mezuzah, Bila'am used the name Yaakov since it is most connected to what he was saying. (The words were in reality placed in his mouth by Hashem as he himself told Balak.)

This also explains what the Gemara says (Ta'anis 5b) that Yaakov Avinu did not die. Since Yaakov Avinu's trait is the trait of **אמת** and the properties of this word negate death (as explained above) therefore, Yaakov Avinu did not die.

לעילוי נשמת דוד בן תמר



Chukat Balak

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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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

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

MASKIL LEDAVID



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

The Council of Hashem Prevails

"He sent messengers to Balam son of Beor to Petor, which is by the River of the land of the members of his people, to summon him saying, "Behold! a people has come out of Egypt, behold! it has covered the surface of the earth and it sits opposite me"

(Bamidbar 22:5)

This verse seems puzzling. Why did Balak's message to Bilam include the fact that Am Yisrael came out of Egypt? This information was well known and clear to all since their redemption was preceded by the Ten Plagues, which declared Hashem's name throughout the world (Shemot 9:16). Similarly, when Hashem split the sea for Bnei Yisrael, all the peoples became agitated and gripped with terror from seeing Hashem's power and how He leads His people with signs and miracles (ibid 15:14). In light of this, it seems strange that Balak saw fit to point out the fact that Am Yisrael left Egypt when this matter was evident to all.

Chazal tell us that Balak was a greater sorcerer than Bilam, and he possessed many more powers of impurity than him. If Balak's power of impurity was so great, why did he need to send messengers to Bilam asking him to curse Am Yisrael, when he could have done this himself using his own powers? As we see, this request required Balak to humiliate himself by pledging to repay Bilam with many promises, so that he would agree to carry out the mission of cursing Bnei Yisrael. Seemingly, Balak could have saved himself all this bother and embarrassment by cursing Bnei Yisrael himself, without asking for Bilam's help?

This question is even more compelling in light of the fact that Balak knew that Bilam was the nations' prophet, and certainly Hashem will not allow him to curse His Chosen Nation to whom He gave the Torah. It is difficult to understand how Balak was so sure of himself that Bilam would be able to curse Am Yisrael, despite the fact that rational thinking would reason that Hashem will prevent him from doing so.

One can reconcile these questions according to the sefer 'Shema Yisrael', which quotes Rabbi Moshe Medinor. He explains Balak's words (Bamidbar 22:5), "Behold! a people has come out of Egypt", as implying that behold, Am Yisrael has come out of Egypt which is a place of impurity and filth. Egypt is termed 'the land's nakedness', because of its inherent immorality. However, despite Am Yisrael dwelling inside this filthy place, "behold! it has covered את עין הארץ", the surface of the earth" (ibid), meaning that they covered their materialistic, worldly eyes (עניניהם הארציות), to prevent them from gazing at forbidden sights.

Balak knew that wherever there is immorality, Hashem's presence departs and the destroyer is given permission to destroy. Therefore, Balak wished to make Bnei Yisrael sin by gazing at forbidden sights and defiling

their eyes, but he did not succeed since Bnei Yisrael had accustomed themselves to guarding their eyes already while in Egypt, a place flooded with immorality. Am Yisrael merited being redeemed from the forty-ninth level of impurity and elevating themselves to the forty-ninth level of purity since they were careful to guard their eyes from all the forbidden sights in Egypt. This is the merit that enabled them to be redeemed from that exile.

The tzaddik, Rabbi Shlomo of Radomsk (Tiferet Shlomo al HaTorah, Balak), states: "A person's main holiness is dependent on guarding his eyes. The more he guards his eyes from looking at forbidden sights, the more he sanctifies himself and grows in levels of Torah and fear of G-d. This is why it says, (Bamidbar 15:39), 'and not explore after your heart and after your eyes after which you stray.'" The eyes and heart are procurers for sin (Bamidbar Rabba 10:2) and they cause a person to contemplate bad thoughts, even immoral reflections.

Now we can understand why Balak turned to Bilam and did not rely on his own powers to cause Bnei Yisrael to stumble. He knew that when Am Yisrael were in Egypt, the source of all impurity and filth, they safeguarded the purity of their eyes so as not to stumble with forbidden sights, and this is why they merited redemption. If so, Am Yisrael's purity is what prevails in their merit and saves them from all kinds of troubles. The commentaries tell us that it was this 'purity of the eyes' that caused Am Yisrael to be distinctive and set apart from the Egyptians in three ways: They did not change their names, their attire and their language, meaning that they were particular about modesty and the way they dressed, they did not foul their mouths with immoral speech, and their names too were taken from a holy and pure source. It was in this merit that they were redeemed from Egypt.

Being aware of this, Balak chose this introduction in his message to Bilam, informing him that since Am Yisrael's abstention from immorality in Egypt was their redeeming factor, it would be necessary to develop a clever strategy to bring them to sin, which would then remove Hashem's presence from them.

Let us take note of Hashem's great kindness to us in revealing the nation's wicked plans, by inserting fear in their hearts to single-handedly cause Yisrael to stumble. Hashem does this intentionally because He knows that if our enemies would smite us secretly, the damage would be manifold and we would have no chance of being saved from them. But since their evil plans are brought to light, blessing no longer rests on their deeds, and they only succeed in smiting Yisrael in a way that allows for revival, forgiveness and pardon.

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Marseille, France

18 - The Maharal of Prague



Walking in their Ways

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

A Release of Faith

My dear friend, R' Moshe Gopez shlita, was sitting shivah in Eretz Yisrael for a family member. I arrived to perform the mitzvah of comforting the mourners, and also delivered a shiur in Mishnayot for the elevation of the soul of the deceased. I intended to travel to Yerushalayim after the Ma'ariv prayers. Mr. Yechiel Ben-Moshe, manager of a branch of Bank Mizrachi, offered to drive me to my destination. His friend, Mr. Nachmani from Mexico, joined us. He wanted to ask my advice regarding an issue he was dealing with.

During the course of our trip, Mr. Nachmani related that a relative in Mexico had been kidnapped. His captors had been holding him for the past month, demanding the astronomical sum of ten million dollars for his release. Due to the complicated situation, there was a real danger to his life.

After a few moments of thought, the following words came from my mouth, of their own accord, "B'ezrat Hashem, your relative will be released by the end of this week." I myself was shocked at my words.

Mr. Yechiel Ben-Moshe joined me for a most uplifting Shabbat in Ashdod. After Shabbat, he packed up his belongings and turned on his cell phone, which had been off all Shabbat. Suddenly, a call came in from his friend, Mr. Nachmani. He tripped over his words in his excitement at relating that my words had come true. During Shabbat, the level of security slackened, and the abducted man snatched the opportunity to escape to home and safety. The joy of his family and friends knew no bounds. They all witnessed the actualization of my berachah, in the merit of my holy forefathers, zy"a.

When I was notified of his release, I turned to those around me and said, "See how great is faith in Hashem. One who places his trust implicitly in Hashem is helped in a supernatural way."

Hashem allowed me to invoke the merit of my ancestors and bless the captive with a speedy freedom in their merit.

The Haftarah

"The remnant of Ya'akov will be" (Micha 5-6)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about Hashem's kindness that He performed with Am Yisrael, by directing Bilam's heart to bless the people. This is the same topic as the Parsha which tells us about the wicked Balak, king of Moav and the wicked Bilam who intended to curse Am Yisrael, however, in the end, they blessed them.

Guard Your Tongue

One is forbidden to live in proximity to 'ba'alei lashon hara' (habitual speakers of lashon hara), and all the more so is it forbidden to sit among them and listen to their conversation, even if one does not intend to accept what they say since he allows himself to listen to their words.



In Our Father's Path

Life in the Jungle Follows Exceptional Order

"Then Hashem uncovered Bilam's eyes" (Bamidbar 22:31)

During life, we meet up with the concept of "Hashem uncovered" on a constant basis. When going through life in this world, man does not perceive certain happenings, even things which he experiences, until Hashem 'opens the eyes of the blind'. Hashem decides to open his eyes and he suddenly becomes aware.

The Maggid, Rabbi Elimelech Biderman shlita, quotes from the sefer 'M'sod Si'ach Chassidim', where the following incident is related. Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar zya"a, the Holy Ohr HaChaim, once addressed his congregation, advising them to consider themselves among the students of Rabbi Meir who said (Avot 4:12), "Reduce your business activities and engage in Torah study". From now on, he advised them, they should concern themselves with their business affairs only during the first three days of the week, while the rest of the week they should devote to Torah study alone. Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar zya"a promised them that he can guarantee that their income will not be affected in any way and they will not feel any lack.

Indeed, all the townspeople as one obeyed his words, which automatically changed their entire way of life. Within a few weeks, their regular business associates became accustomed to the fact that from Wednesday until Sunday, these people were not available for commerce. From that time on the townspeople saw many blessings in their work and even though they cut down the amount of time they were involved in business, they were no less well-off.

This is how things carried on for several years, until the Holy Ohr HaChaim zya"a left his town to settle in Eretz Yisrael. Morocco's glory now departed and from then on, their impulse started growing steadily and they began to doubt their simple, innocent faith that reducing their occupation in business does not reduce their income. Eventually, they totally forgot about the commitment that they had accepted upon themselves while the Holy Ohr HaChaim was still Rav in their town, and they once again began managing their businesses throughout the week. While they thought that this will surely double their income, they were astounded to see that on the contrary, they were not left with any more money, and their great toil had not brought them profit. This was a clear demonstration of the truth of their Rav's words, how income that is fixed by Heaven is not dependent on the degree of man's toil...

The Maggid also quoted the Radak on the verse (Tehillim 145:17), "Righteous is Hashem in all His ways". Our eyes perceive animals devouring each other, as a cat preys on a mouse and devours it, and we do not understand the justice in this!

But the truth is that Hashem determined that the time had come for this mouse to die, so He sets into motion that this mouse should 'present itself' to the cat who will devour it as a means of satisfying its hunger. This means that it is not the cat who killed the mouse, rather it died because its time had come, but Hashem who runs the world brought it to the cat since as it was anyway destined to die, it should rather occur through the cat so as to be its source of nourishment. The Radak writes, "With justice and uprightness He provides each being with its sustenance, and even though animals devour other animals, for example, a cat devours a mouse, and similarly the lion, bear, tiger and other animals that prey on other animals, and also birds that prey on other birds, all is justice from Him, for while those animals were alive, He also provided food for them, but when their time comes to die, it has been previously decreed that their death should sometimes be the cause of satisfaction for other animals."



Pearls of the Parsha

Where Did All the Resurrected People Run To?

"This is the teaching regarding a man who would die in a tent" (Bamidbar 19:14)

Chazal tell us, "The Torah only endures in one who kills himself over it".

Rabbi Chaim Brisker's zt"l once related the following powerful illustration:

Imagine to yourselves that one-day, Heaven decides to allow all deceased people to get up from their graves for one hour. In this hour they may do whatever they wish. When the matter became known in this world, all swarmed to the cemetery to reunite with and welcome their dear ones. But as soon as the graves opened, all the dead stood up and ran as quickly as they could to the Beit Midrash, where they sat and learnt Torah with a great and awesome diligence. They showed no interest in looking at or speaking to anyone in this world.

This is Chazal's intention when saying, "The Torah only endures in one who kills himself over it". It implies that the Torah endures only in one who considers his time in this world as if it was given to him as an opportunity to get up from his grave for one hour, which he uses to run to the Beit Midrash...

One Cannot Be a Messenger to Carry Out a Sin

"Do not refrain from going to me, for I shall honor you greatly, and everything that you say to me I shall do" (Bamidbar 22:16-17)

We have a rule that one cannot make someone a messenger to carry out a sin. The one who sends is not liable for the deed which the messenger performs, but if the sender promises to reward him for doing so, then he is considered as the person's messenger (and the sender is liable), for the messenger is only committing the sin because of the reward.

This then, explains Rabbenu Yohantan Eibeshitz zt"l, is what Balak was implying to Bilam when he said, "Do not refrain from going to me". Do not be afraid that you will be harmed by being my messenger to perform the sin of cursing Am Yisrael, for "everything that you say to me I shall do". Since I am prepared to pay you in full for your act, your mission will be on my account and you will not be harmed because of it. Therefore, "so go now and curse this people for me", as my messenger, and you have no reason to fear being punished.

Mistakes Always Repeat Themselves

"Behold! the people will arise like a lion cub and raise itself like a lion; it will not lie down until it consumes prey" (Bamidbar 23:24)

Why did Amalek imagine that he would succeed in overcoming Yisrael? "Amalek is the first among nations, but its end will be eternal destruction" (Bamidbar 24:20)?

From where did Amalek derive the courage to fight against Am Yisrael after seeing all the miracles that were performed for them?

The Chatam Sofer zya"l explains that the word 'עמלק', Amalek, is an acronym for **ק**הת, **ל**וי, **מ**שה, **ע**מרם, Amram, Moshe, Levi, Kehot. Amalek realized that his name hints to these four great personalities, and he understood this to mean that he has the power to fight against them.

But Amalek did not take into account that the last letter of each of their names spells 'מיתה', death, (**מ**שה, **ק**הת, **ל**וי, **ע**מרם), meaning that whoever fights against them will die.

This reckoning is hinted at in the verse "Amalek is the first (ראשית) among nations", meaning that the first letter of each of these four, called the heads (ראש) of Yisrael and each one a nation, spells Amalek. This is why he thought that he would succeed in fighting them. The verse continues, "but its end will be eternal destruction", the end, meaning the last letter of their names, spells 'death', eternal destruction. This shows that Amalek's end is destruction and death.

Treasures

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



Moshe was Distressed Only About the Honor of Heaven

Man's main purpose in this world is to increase the honor of Heaven and sanctify His Holy Name in public. We find that Moshe and Aharon unintentionally diminished Hashem's honor, by hitting the rock instead of speaking to it as they had been told, as it says (Bamidbar 20:12), "Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the Children of Israel". Due to this they received a severe punishment and did not merit bringing the people to the Holy Land.

Of course, this claim against Moshe and Aharon was a very subtle one because Hashem is particular with His pious ones by a hair's breadth. There is no doubt that throughout his life Moshe Rabbeinu a"l was zealously concerned about His Great Name. He sacrificed his soul to increase and glorify the honor of Hashem Yitbarach in the world.

We find an example of this in this week's Parsha. When Bnei Yisrael sinned and spoke against Hashem and against Moshe, Hashem sent the people the fiery serpents who bit them, causing many of the nation to die. When Moshe cried out to Hashem to stop the plague, Hashem replied (Bamidbar 21:8), "Make yourself a fiery [serpent] (שרף) and place it on a pole". However, in place of a fiery serpent, Moshe Rabbeinu made a serpent, as it says (ibid 21:9), "Moshe made a serpent (נחש) of copper and placed it on the pole".

How do we understand the fact that Moshe did not fulfill Hashem's command in an exact way?

The Mefarshim answer that the serpents (נחשים) came as a punishment for speaking lashon hara about Hashem, which was, in fact, the sin of the first serpent (which caused Adam and Chava to sin), while the fiery serpents (Seraphim) were a punishment for speaking lashon hara about Moshe, who is referred to as an 'angel', as it says (ibid 20:16), "He sent an emissary (מלאך) and took us out of Egypt". An angel is also called a Seraph, as it says "the Seraphim were standing above Him". Therefore, one who offends the honor of talmidei chachamim is punished by being bitten by a Seraph, as the Tanna says (Avot 2:10), "their (the Sages) hiss is the hiss of a Seraph (serpent)".

When Moshe cried out to Hashem, Hashem replied, "Make yourself a Seraph, a fiery serpent" meaning Hashem was distressed about and had mercy on the slight to Moshe's honor, more than he was concerned for His own honor. This is why He commanded him to make a Seraph, for it hints to the slight to Moshe's honor. But Moshe Rabbeinu a"l, who out of his great humility was concerned for Heaven's honor more than for his personal honor, therefore made a 'nachash' which hints to the slighting of Hashem's honor. It was the primeval snake, in Hebrew the nachash, that spoke disparagingly about Hashem. Moshe was willing to forgo the slight to his personal honor and was not distressed about it, rather he cared only about the honor of Heaven.

This shows us the extent to which Moshe Rabbeinu was careful with Hashem's honor. His entire aspiration in life was to increase His honor and intensify Hashem's Kingship in the eyes of the people. But here Moshe made a mistake and hit the rock, which as we said, was considered a very subtle sin of diminishing Hashem's honor, in comparison to Moshe's lofty level, and this is why he was punished.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Chazal tell us (Sanhedrin 105b) that all Bilam's blessings turned into curses, besides the blessing of "How goodly are your tents, O Ya'akov, your dwelling places, O Israel", which was said regarding the Batei Knessiot and Batei Midrashot.

The wicked Bilam's true desire was that the Batei Knessiot and Batei Midrashot of Am Yisrael should all be wiped out. He wanted a world without Talmudei Torah, without Yeshivot and without Kollelim.

Hashem said to him: Although I gave you permission to go with the leaders of Moav and speak, Am Yisrael will remain alive and in existence forever, for they have their Batei Midrashot which will re-establish themselves generation after generation!

This is why the blessing of "How goodly are your tents, O Ya'akov" remained unchanged, and the wicked will therefore never succeed in uprooting Torah from Am Yisrael, until the end of time.

Indeed, right until today we clearly see the proliferation of Batei Midrash and holy Yeshivot, expanding the boundaries of holiness and fear of G-d.

Establishing a Yeshiva in His Memory

From my youth, relates the Gaon Rabbi Reuven Elbaz shlita, Rosh Yeshiva of 'Ohr HaChaim', my soul felt a special connection to the Torah of the Holy Ohr HaChaim, who was the light of Yisrael and its central pillar. I would find special delight in studying his holy words.

Over the years, Eretz Yisrael became home to many Yeshivot, but a Yeshiva in memory of the holy master, Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar zt"l (the Ohr HaChaim), had not yet been estab-

lished. The Ohr HaChaim would search for Jews who had wandered far away from the correct path in life, and introduce them to true life through the study of the Torah. I came to a decision that with Hashem's help, I will build an institution in memory of this holy man of G-d. I too wished to bring people closer to Hashem, to show love for even the most distant Jew and focus on his soul that was carved from the Throne of Glory.

Immediately following the six-day war, we indeed established this Yeshiva. Hashem blessed me with the inner strength and courage to frequent various places from where I drew the youths to the Beit Midrash, youngsters who would be playing in the streets on Shabbat with a cigarette in their mouths...

There is a pious, honorable Rosh Yeshiva who lives in the same neighborhood as the Yeshiva. He is the father of a large family who naturally has considerable expenses, yet despite this fact, he donates a respectable sum to the Yeshiva every month.

Once when we met up I asked him incredulously: "I am in awe of the honorable Rosh Yeshiva. You have many children to support, why do you go to such lengths to assist our yeshiva?"

"You should know", my neighbor the Rosh Yeshiva replied with emotion, "I consider it as 'protection money', your shade offers me protection..."

"You are protected by our shade?" I was surprised, "Why?"

Before you established the yeshiva, my young children would not dare go outside after seven in the evening. As soon as it grew dark they would be terrified to venture outside. Empty-headed youth would be walking around, spreading their fear over the entire neighborhood. Yet over time, in the merit of your holy Yeshiva, they all became talmidei chachamim and G-d fearing Jews!"

We are delighted that Hashem gave us the merit to continue passing on

the Torah of the Holy Ohr HaChaim, engraving the memory of Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar on our Yeshiva which spreads the light of the Ohr HaChaim.

After the six-day war, when the Jews were once again allowed to enter the Old City, I went to the Holy Ohr HaChaim's gravesite and I was shocked at what the Jordanians had done to the cemetery. These wicked people had smashed many tombstones, yet the grave of the Holy Ohr HaChaim had remained intact.

There was an Arab worker employed by the Blue Band company, who used to supply the principal of the Talmud Torah, 'Hamesorah', with margarine produced by this factory. One day when they met up, the Arab related to the principal that he had personally witnessed two Jordanians about to smash the Ohr HaChaim's tombstone, when suddenly a boulder fell on them, killing them on the spot.

"I was also supposed to break the tombstone together with them," the Arab related, "but I told them that I am not prepared to do this, and then I ran for my life. This is how I remained alive!"

The holy Gaon Rabbi Gershon of Kitov zt"l (brother-in-law of the holy Ba'al Shem Tov), who later moved to Eretz Yisrael, asked the Holy Ohr HaChaim why he speaks to people who show no fear of G-d. He replied: "What should I do, this is my approach. I reach out to those who are distant and bring them closer to Hashem!"

This was the approach of the Holy Ohr HaChaim, who returned those who had gone astray to the Rock that hewed them, and this too is the approach of the Yeshiva that is named in memory of the Holy Ohr HaChaim.

In his letters, the Holy Ohr HaChaim wrote expressly that he will pray for all those who support his Yeshiva, both in This World and in the Next World. Indeed, all those who assisted the Holy Ohr HaChaim merited seeing wonders.

MEOROS RAMCHAL

PARSHAS CHUKAS PARAH

'*Da Gezeiras Oraysa*' is the Aramaic translation of Targum Onkelus for the opening pasuk of Parshas Chukas, '*Zos Chukas HaTorah*', 'These are the decrees of the Torah' Bamidbar (19:2)

Background:

Trial of the Talmud

The Disputation of Paris (French: Procès du Talmud), also known as the Trial of the *Talmud*, took place in 1240 at the court of the King Louis IX of France.

On the date of June 12, 1240 twenty-four carriage loads of *Talmudic sifrei kodesh* were set on fire in the streets of Paris. The Disputation set in place a train of events which culminated in a burning of a huge number of *sifrei kodesh*, on June 17, 1242.

This event is cited by *Magen Avrohom* to *Orach Chaim Siman 580* (תק"פ) from the *Halachos* and Laws of the Four Fasts in *Shibolei HaLeket* (#263 רסג) as cited by *Tanya Rabasi* also in Laws of the Four Fasts (#58 נח).

The date given is the year 5004, on Friday of *Parshas Chukas* and therefore it is commemorated by *parsha* rather than a Jewish calendar date.

The Maharam M'Rottenburg, who was an eyewitness, composed the *kinnah*, '*Sha'ali Serufa Ba'Aish*', One of the *Kinos* recited every *Tisha B'Av* (*Kinah* 41) about this event.

On 20 Sivan ה'תצ"א the *Ramchal* wrote the following letter as a response to someone who asked him about the incidents:

Regarding the question you asked me about the decree of the *seforim*, although I refrained from discussing these matters, your Honor is the honor of the *Torah* and I won't hold back from revealing this to you since it is a great matter.

Why did this incident occur, for nothing happens without a reason as its root source. This is the secret of *Zos Chukas haTorah* as translated in Aramaic *Da Gezeiras Oraisa* and there is a well known hint alluded to here (see *Magen Avrohom Orach Chaim* 580 cited above).

This secret corresponds to the red heifer the *parah adumah*. The Divine Presence of the *Shechinah* sacrifices herself to be burned by the harsh flames of judgment in order to save *Am Yisroel* – the Jewish people. She is given over to purify the contaminated, who have no other way to be purified except through her. They have been contaminated by the highest degree of impurity *tumas meis* – and have no other rectification or *tikkun* other than this.

This is itself the *tumah* of exile and *galus*, and this is the secret of the *pasuk* “They have sat me down in dark places like the dead of the world,” therefore this is “the burnt elevation offering which ascends unto the pyre all night long,” however we need an awakening down here below, and when we had a *bais hamikdash* we had the ashes of the *parah adumah*.

Now that the *bais hamikdash* was destroyed and we no longer have the ashes of the *parah adumah* we need the actual *Torah* herself to self sacrifice herself and be burned for our sakes to save us and all of *klal Yisroel*, and this rectifies and repairs the *galus ha'Torah*.

Just as when the ashes of one *parah* ended and were all used up we needed to make more using another, similarly one *tikkun* lasts for a certain amount of time and then as the forces of evil grow stronger and add more prosecutions and level additional accusations against us we need another *tikkun*.

The truth is that this can be prevented by the protective fence erected when we killed ourselves with exertion over *Torah* study – כשהיו ישראל ממיתים עצמם על ד"ת as *Chazal* learned in the *derasha zos haTorah adam ki yamus baohel* – therefore this *pasuk* was learned through this *derasha* in this *parsha* and not in any other *parsha*.

However, now there awoke a great accusation that has been leveled against *Bnei Yisroel*, and the *Torah* has self sacrificed herself for our sakes even to be burned to save us. However, regarding this matter I cannot reveal more since it is not the proper time.

The truth is that the *Torah* shows herself as if she was handed over to foreigners as it says *Yeshaya* 8:16 “fasten this warning and seal the *Torah* teaching on my students.” But instead she escapes them and is guarded by Divine protection by the heroes of *Bnei Yisroel*. Therefore, *ibid pasuk* 17 “I shall await *Hashem* Who has concealed His face, from the house of Jacob and I shall hope to Him.” since we cannot escape the *hester panim*, of *Hashem's* hidden ways, there is however hope, since she was not given over into the hands of the impure and these matters are ancient traditions. *Hashem* has shown all this and revealed it to me although I cannot elaborate further.

The truth is that in these places the accusations leveled against the *Torah* were greater because insufficient people killed themselves over *Torah* study and instead pursued worldly pleasures and idle pursuits as it was all over Italy.

I know that it could have been much worse and that the accusations were so great that they could have had reached further and had far reaching consequences but thank *Hashem* I stopped it but preempting the matter and *Hashem* willing all of the Jewish people shall be healed from this blow.

I saw the future five months ago and began a process of a great repair and a *tikkun* that I will now reveal to your honor, the honor of the *Torah*. This advice and remedy I gave to all of the Italian congregations, may *Hashem* watch over them, to be saved from the snares of their enemies.

They must watch over and not give up on this great matter. And this is the learning *seder* we set up in our *bais medrash* as *Rashbi* says in the holy *Zohar VaYeitze* 151a. So long as this voice does not cease - nothing will have any power over you, therefore *Torah* shall never cease and so long as the *talmidei chachamim* unite in *Torah* the evil one has no power to defeat or conquer them.”

Therefore, we established a *seder limud* with no interruptions whatsoever. We selected seven individuals that would divide up their time from morning until evening and never be silent, and they made a condition that their *limud* and studies are only solely for the sake of *tikkun* am *Yisroel*.

They are therefore united as one being and one person with one purpose and they do nothing for themselves only for the sake of all *Am Yisroel*.

This is their *seder*: Immediately after *Shacharis* one of them sits down in the designated prepared place and studies until the next person comes to relieve him of his duties. Then he takes the *sefer* from him and continues from the place where the first one left off, until he is relieved of duty by the third and so on.

They do so until nightfall when the stars come out, day by day and each of them while immersed in their studies acts like someone in the middle of *Shemone Esrei*, without any interruptions at all, and he does not stop until the second one comes to relieve him of his duty so that not even for one moment is there any interruption in the voice of *Kol Torah*.

The subject of study is the *sefer Zohar*, the *Tikkunim* and *Zohar Chadash*. They study each day of the week and we know that this is what *Hashem* chose as needed to cancel the decree especially as a protective barrier against the harsh decree.

May the wise sages not cast this matter over their shoulders not turn their backs on this matter for if I had the power and influence, I would establish this *seder limud* in all places and locations. Please your honor take my advice and may it be a merit for you because there is no greater remedy to benefit and grant merit to all *Yisroel*. May each individual do so in their place for the matter is not difficult and we are thank *Hashem* successful and we have many such beautiful *sedarim* and study sessions such as this.

(*Ramchal uBnei Doro* pg233, *Yarim Moshe* pg215)

MEOROS RAMCHAL BALAK

THE FUTURE VICTORY THE WAR TO END ALL WARS LIKE A LION AFTER ITS PREY

“Behold, a people that rises like a lioness and raises itself like a lion. It does not lie down until it eats its prey and drinks the blood of the slain.” (Balak 23:24)

The *Ramchal* teaches us that it is well known that *Am Yisroel* need to wage many wars and fight many battles until we reach the final stage and can rest from our hard work and labor.

The final war will be the war of Gog and MaGog when *Am Yisroel* rise up like a lion and lioness and take vengeance, revenging ourselves against our enemies among the nations of the world which pressured us and hurt us during the exile.

Then in that future time we shall conquer them, and they will subjugated to us, under the power and control of *Am Yisroel* and many will become converts out of sheer fear and fright seeing it as an advantage to be Jewish and counted among *Am Yisroel*.

To those enemies we declare the words of the *navi*, the prophet says “And the Lord shall go forth and wage war with those nations, like the day he waged war on the day of the battle.” (*Zecharia* 14:3)

This is how the *Ramchal* explains our *pasuk* in *Balak* “Behold, a people that rises like a lioness and raises itself like a lion.” That the nature of a lion is that when he sees a person lying prostrate on the ground feigning death then the lion leaves him be and goes away.

If, however the lion sees that a person starts up with him and attacks or eggs him on the lion attacks and casts his aggressor to the ground and defeats him.

The war of Gog and MaGog is the final attempt of the forces of darkness, when the *sitra achra* makes a last ditch effort to rule over *kedusha* and tries to overcome and conquer the side of holiness.

This is the time of a final refinement that must be done. Then *Hashem's* true unity and unification shall be revealed as the emanatory of all Creation. *Bnei Yisroel* cannot rest until they fulfill their mission which is the refinement of and recovery of all the sparks of holiness and those holy souls that the *sitra achra* and forces of darkness stole away from the side of holiness and *kedushah*.

This is the meaning of the *pasuk* here that “ It does not lie down until it eats its prey,” the prey refers to those sparks that were seized and stolen by the forces of darkness that we must refine and release with the power and prowess of a lion going after its prey.

The *pasuk* continues “and drinks the blood of the slain.” This refers to the *klippas noga* the glowing husks and shells of impurity that is a mixture of good and evil (referring to those physical things that can be utilized for goodness or heaven forbid drag us down to sin depending on our actions) which in the future must be completely subsumed into the side of good.

This is referred to as the blood of the other *klippas* since just like blood is the life force flowing through a person, the goodness and sparks of holiness of *klippas noga* gives life to the other *klippas* who cannot live without this life blood. As long as there remains any argument, prosecution or accusation against us, then the forces of evil can steal away the lights from the side of holiness and bring them under the power and rule of the other side known as *sitra achra*.

In the future at the time of the rectification and *Tikkun* we will free and redeem those sparks from the *sitra achra* and bring them back to the side of holiness.

They are referred to as “the slain,” since they have no life force of their own and depend upon us and the good we do and the deeds and actions of people is what gives them life.

When there will no longer be any blemish and damage to repair among us then everything will be in a state of repair and rectification known as the *tikkun* and then the other side of darkness the *sitra achra* will have no where left to make a last stand and it shall fall and be defeated. “And He has concealed and swallowed up death forever.” (*Yeshaya* 25:8)

Rav Levi Yitzchok's vort

In Rav Berger's *Eser Oros* 3:44 in the Name of Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev we learn a valuable lesson:

Rav Tzvi Yechezkel Michelzoh of Plunsk related how Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev was once *davening* and saying the words: "May Your nation the House of Israel need not each other and not any other nation," ולא יצטרכו עמך ישראל זל"ז [זה לזה] ולא לעם אחר, [This *Tefillah* appears both in the *Chazan's* repetition of the *Yom Kippur Mussaf* and for *Parnassah* at the conclusion of reciting *Tehillim*].

The *tzaddik* paused and cried out these words: "What evil would there be in it if a Cossack enters a Jewish store and purchases a few hundred rubles worth of merchandise?"

[In other words, why should we not need the favors of the gentiles to help us out financially? What problem would there be in such a situation that we are required to daven asking that it not be so?]

"The explanation is," answering his own question, the *tzaddik* responded "that when a person is judged up above in the supernal world they stand others more sinful people alongside him and they compare them one next to the other, and compared to the sinful newcomer the first person is judged to be much more righteous since compared to the sinful deeds of the newcomer he is more of a *tzaddik*. They continue to do this comparing one Jew to the other until they reach such a final wicked Jew that they need to bring a foreigner from another nation to compare against him to make him comparatively righteous. This is the explanation of the *tefillah* "that we need not be compared not to each other and not any other nation," rather than being comparatively righteous we should be considered a true righteous *tzaddik* standing alone all on our own.

כתב לי ידי"נ [ידיד נפשי] מחותני הגאון החסיד מפלונסק הנ"ל שפ"א [שפעם אחת] אמר הגה"ק [הגאון הקדוש] מבארדיטשוב בתפלתו ותן לכל איש ואיש די מחסורו וכו' ולא יצטרכו עמך ישראל זל"ז [זה לזה] ולא לעם אחר. עמד וצעק בזה"ל [בזה הלשון] מה רע יש בזה אם יבא קאזאק לחנותו של ישראל ויקנה ממנו סחורה בעד כמה מאות ר"כ [רובל כסף]. אכן הכוונה כי מביאין את האדם לדין בעולם העליון ונמצא שחטא. אז מביאין אדם אחר שחטא יותר והראשון צדיק נגדו. וכן הלאה. עד הרשע האחרון, אז מביאים מעם אחר. וממילא גם הוא צדיק נגדו. וזה לא יצטרכו וכו' זל"ז ולא לעם אחר רק להיות צדיק וטוב מצד עצמו

ודפח"ח

Parashas Balak - 5780 – “They Called Him Mike”

This essay is based on the biography of an outstanding Jew named “Reb Elimelech Tress – His Era, Hatzalah, and the Building of an American Orthodoxy” by Yonason Rosenblum.

The last prophecy of the Prophet Bilaam was of the time of Mashiach: *“A star has issued from Yaakov, and a scepter-bearer has risen from Yisroel, and he shall pierce the nobles of Moav and undermine all the children of Shes (Rashi, citing Onkelos, “All the nations” for they all issued from Shes, the son of Adam, the First Man). Edom shall be a conquest and Seir shall be the conquest of his enemies... He saw Amalek and declaimed his parable and said: ‘Amalek is the first among the nations, but its end will be eternal destruction.’ ” (BaMidbar 24:17-18, 20)*

Mike’s accomplishments were mainly his saving of tens of thousands of Jews trapped by the Nazis during the Holocaust (in truth, miniscule compared to the six million actual victims), contributions to the building of Agudas Yisroel and American Orthodoxy, the inculcation of joy and “Yiras Shamayim” into a generation of boys and girls at many yeshivas and seminaries, and Camp Agudah and Camp Bnos.

Rabbi Shabse Frankel, a Vaad Hatzalah activist, wrote this description of Mike’s attitude towards Hatzalah work: “To save people, to help people, he worked day and night. He was never tired, and he never said ‘no.’ One time, I had an urgent meeting, and I felt his presence was necessary. His wife was just back from the hospital with a new baby. But he said that he would go if his wife agreed and we could find some help for her. Mrs. Tress, of course, agreed.”

“Talking about reports received from Europe that Jewish bodies were being used to manufacture soap, Mike would weep uncontrollably. In the midst of discussing his Washington meetings with his Pirchei groups, he would sometimes start sobbing so violently that he could not catch his breath, as he described how Jews could be saved and nothing was being done. On Erev Pesach, I spoke to Switzerland and received the most tragic and distressing news about our great ‘gedolim,’ scholarly and righteous Jews, and fellow Jews in Poland. I couldn’t sit at the Seder Table with the stark and realistic truth revolving in my mind. I berated myself at how completely indifferent we had become to the entire situation and that it was vital for us to drop our complacency and do everything possible to give quick and immediate aid to those thousands who are living in such abject misery in the ghettos of Poland.”

“The War Years were one long Fundraising Campaign in behalf of the Jews of Europe. In the end, the most powerful testimony to Mike’s fundraising is not captured by gross receipts, but rather in hundreds of stories of simple Jews who were moved to give money they did not have. The most dramatic of the fundraising campaigns was triggered by letters received in late November of 1943 and signed by the Satmar Rav, the Nitra Rav, Rabbi David Ungar, and his son-in-law, Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandl. These letters described the possibility of saving thousands of Jews hiding in forests on the Polish-Hungarian border by bringing them to Hungary. The price was put at \$250 per Jew. Responding to the appeal, yeshivas and day schools for boys and girls everywhere were closed. Some of these youngsters manned the telephones for 72 hours. Over a few short weeks, the various Agudah groups raised nearly \$100,000 to be sent to Rabbi Weissmandl.”

Mike died at a very young age, of a painful heart ailment. The operation was successful, but he had a stroke, which caused him to drift in and out of consciousness. When he was unconscious, he was found repeating the names of his children over and over again. The following Sunday morning, Mike was “niftar.” Shortly thereafter, Mike’s son, Tzvi, went to Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetski with two questions: The first was, “How was it possible that Mike had died at so young an age, when he was promised “Arichas Yamim” by Rav Elchonon Wasserman? Rav Yaakov responded, “Arichas Yamim” has meaning either with regard to time or with regard to “ma’asim,” good deeds. Mike was clearly one of those for whom the promise was regard to ‘ma’asim.’ The second question was in regard to why Mike had to suffer so much? Rabbi Yaakov responded that HaShem had originally created the world to function only guided by ‘Midas HaDin.’ But HaShem soon realized that most people in the world could not exist in a world where only ‘Midas HaDin’ was the guiding principle. So He added ‘Midas HaRachamim’ to the mixture, allowing the world to function according to ‘Midas HaDin’ only for certain special individuals, and Mike was one of those.

L’Illuy Nishmas beni, Aharon Baruch Mordechai ben Pinchas Menachem

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