

MEOROS HATZADDIKIM

— Lights Of Our Righteous —

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

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

Parshas Ki Sisa & Parshas Parah

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לזכר נשמת

ר' זכרי' שמעון הכהן בן יצחק

Waiting, Anticipating And Preparing For Shabbos

"And Hashem said to Moshe you should speak, safeguard my Shabbosos because they are a sign between us, to know that I am Hashem your sanctifier." (31:12-13)

Our sages (*Shabbos 10b; Beitzta 16a*) derived from here that whoever gives a gift to his friend must tell him so. The Holy One told *Bnei Yisroel*. "I have a great gift stored away in My treasury and her name is Shabbos." Surely Shabbos is a great gift, the light and sanctity which comes down from above into people's hearts, and

the holy spirit of sanctity and a renewed intellect and vitality which comes from the supernal world known as *Aravos* from which vitality and delights emerge since it houses the stores of life. (Chagiga 12b)

Truly a person should wait in anticipation for the gift of Shabbos all week long, waiting for the sanctity and vitality which is coming to him and surely this requires great preparation all six days of the week for Shabbos. And just as he prepares himself so will his grasp of Shabbos be, as the verse tells us (prev. 16:5) "and they prepared that which they brought," teaching us that a person must exert himself during the week and prepare so that he will have Shabbos. "Whoever exerts himself on Friday will eat on Shabbos and whoever does not from where will he eat?" (Avodah Zara 3a) And although a person may prepare himself it is still a great gift, because even if a person will prepare himself in many different ways, he is nonetheless unworthy of the great holiness and abundance bestowed to him by Hashem on the Shabbos day, as much as he prepares it is still a free gift. However he must prepare himself to have a vessel ready to accept it and the strength and energy needed to do so.

There are two components to the observance of Shabbos, and they are *Zachor* -remembering and *Shamor* - safeguarding. *Zachor* - remembering is the masculine aspect known as *duchrah* (the active giver) and *Shamor* - safeguarding is the feminine aspect known as *nukva* (the passive receiver) (*Zohar* I 28b). This means that a person who observes Shabbos in order to give Hashem pleasure and delight, that binds his soul up to the highest supernal place by observing Shabbos and he can serve Hashem with an expanded consciousness and send *shefa* and blessings above to all the worlds, he is the aspect of *Zachor* (the masculine active giver).

Then there are people who serve for their own benefit. And our sages say (*Shabbos* 118b) even if a person worships idols like the generation of *Enosh* if he observes Shabbos he is absolved and forgiven," the reason is that when a person sins he separates himself from the source of life and blemishes his soul (*Tikkunei Zohar Tikkun* 70) however when the sanctity of Shabbos arrives then the Holy One shines into all the hidden worlds a great luminous light and this illuminates a person's soul and then the soul can return to its source. This is the great gift since

by observing Shabbos according to all its laws then he is forgiven for all of his sins. So whoever has this in mind when he is observing Shabbos, this too is a good intention.

However there is an incorrect way as well, if a person were to have in mind when he is performing the *mitzvos* of Hashem in order to be rewarded even if that reward is something spiritual, nonetheless that is an aspect of the *nukva* (the feminine receiver) who desires to take and receive from Hashem, and the primary way for a person to serve Hashem should be to give and send forth shefa through his actions as it says (*Tehillim* 68:35) "Give power to G-d," (*Zohar* II 32b; *Eicha Rabbah* 1:33) This is why the verse says "*Ach* - However safeguard my *Shabboses*," because words like *Ach* and *Rak* are used to exclude (*Rashi* ad loc here on 31:13). This refers to the lower level since they are called *miyut* in Hebrew which means small. The least level is to at least safeguard my Shabbos on the level of *Shamor*. Because it is a sign, to know that I Hashem am sanctifying you," that through the sanctity of Shabbos I remove all forms of affliction from you and enlighten your soul and forgive your sins. And whoever can rise up to the level of the male (the active giver) is surely good.

The Tzaddik's Shabbos Guards Over All Bnei Yisroel

Or we can say that the verse hints to us another matter, that if all of *Bnei Yisroel* could observe Shabbos how great that would be! However although many of us, heaven forbid do not fulfill it properly the verse promises us that through the righteous ones in every generation who do observe Shabbos properly they give the Creator great pleasure and delight. A *Tzaddik* is called Shabbos as is known (*Zohar* II 94b). This is why the verse has the word *Ach* which means even those who minimally keep and observe Shabbos (*Ach* is a *miyut* as was explained above) they safeguard my *Shabboses*, through the *tzaddik* who is called *shabbos*, all of *bnei yisroel* are seen as observing the Shabbos and they will be safeguarded from all harm. And the merit of the righteous *tzaddikim* who properly observe the *shabbos* shall save the remnant of *yisrael* (*yeshaya* 31:5). "For it is a sign between You and me," the *tzaddik* is also called an *os* or a sign (*Zohar* I *Hashmatos* 266a) since he is like a sign or an imprint between *Knesses Yisroel* and the Creator.

“To know that I am Hashem who sanctifies you,” this signifies that through the *Tzaddik Hashem’s* sanctity is renowned, and made known. This is because the *tzaddik* draws knowledge into the world and he tells of the sanctity of G-d to other people. Through the sign of the *tzaddik* all the Jewish people are guarded from all harm and he uplifts them, he uplifts Hashem over them as if they all observed Shabbos properly.

A Taste of Olam HaBah

Another explanation is that the Holy One wishes to merit *Bnei Yisroel* with the coming world of *Olam haBah*, this is why he gave them the Torah and its commandments (Makos 23b). And the Holy One wishes to allow *Bnei Yisroel* a taste of the reward in that spiritual place known as *Olam HaBah*.

Therefore in order for them to taste it He gave them the Shabbos day since it is a spiritual day an example of the next world of *Olam HaBah* (*Berachos* 57b). On Shabbos everyone can recognize spiritual delights. However since we know that “there is no reward for *mitzvos* in this world,” (*Kiddushin* 39b) how can He give them pleasure and delight on Shabbos? Therefore Hashem gave them Shabbos as a gift.

(Rather than a reward which they deserve to be paid.) And it is true that there is no reward for the *mitzvos* themselves in this world. However Hashem can give a gift even in this lowly world, to allow those who do His will and observe the Shabbos a taste of the delight and pleasure of the next world - *Olam HaBah*.

This is why the verse says “*Ach - However observe my Shabboses,*” by observing Shabbos you will taste a spiritual delight, and this will serve as a sign for you regarding your future reward in the next world of *Olam haBah*. This is why the verse says, “because it is a sign, that I Hashem sanctify you” that by observing Shabbos you will come to know that I Hashem am the one who eternally sanctifies you for the future eternal world, to that day which is totally Shabbos forever (Mishna Tamid 7:4; Gemarra Rosh haShannah 31a) This what Hashem commanded *Moshe* to announce to *Bnei Yisroel* that this is the great gift which they will receive on Shabbos, not the *mitzvah*, since *Moshe* had already

announced all of the *mitzvos* to them. However here He made known to them the advantage which they would gain by observing this *mitzvah*, it would allow them to understand the reward waiting for them, that without Shabbos it would be impossible for them to understand it in this world, since it cannot be revealed in this world (Beitza 16a).

However this was not the case regarding Moshe who was able to taste this in his lifetime and see his reward in this world. This is not the reward for Shabbos, because Shabbos is itself the reward as our sages said (*Avos* 4:2) the reward for a *mitzvah* is the *mitzvah* itself. This is the pleasure and delight of observing Shabbos which is itself the reward. However Hashem did not announce this reward to the nations (Beitza 16a), He did not give them this gift which *Bnei Yisroel* receive on Shabbos and no stranger can mix in their joy and happiness. (Mishlei 14:10)

And to explain what we recite during the prayers on Shabbos (*Birkas Yotzer Shacharis* on Shabbos):

“There is no comparison to You, there is nothing except for You, there is nothing without You, for Who is like You?, There is no comparison to You, Hashem Our King in this world; and there will be nothing other than You Our King in the life of the Coming World; there will be nothing without You our Redeemer, in the days of *Moshiach* and there will be none like you at the Resurrection of the Dead.”

If a person serves Hashem to be rewarded this is not terrible as the sages derived (*Shabbos* 63a) “long days on the right,” (*Mishlei* 3:16) to those who do the right thing, “and on the left wealth, honor and glory,” so this form of service for reward is the left hand path. However it is not the primary way to serve, the primary form of Divine service is that the servant should not want anything for himself and not ask for anyone but for Hashem and this itself will be his reward the very fact that he is serving Hashem.

This why we say “there is no comparison to You, *Hashem* our G-d, in this world,” it means that I do not wish to have any delight or pleasure on this world. And if you say, I will serve Hashem so that I shall merit a portion in the next world which

is a spiritual form of pleasure and delight, this too is not considered avoda lishma, it lacks sincere intentions. However there in the world of souls some ask for spiritual rewards. But even there in the world of truth, there are *tzaddikim* who do not ask for anything more than G-dly wisdom.

As our sages say (*Berachos 64a*) "*Tzaddikim* have no peace in this world and not in the next world," this is why we say "there is no comparison to You, Hashem our G-d, in this world, and there will be nothing other than You, our King in the life of the Coming World," even there I want nothing more than Your G-dly truth. And if you say, I shall serve Hashem for the days of *Moshiach*, when Hashem will remove the darkness from our nation and the light and enlightenment will increase and people will achieve high levels and their physical body will become pure and refined - this too is not the primary way to serve.

We do not ask for "the Days of *Moshiach*," either "except for You alone," compared to You everything else is worthless. And not only the days of *Moshiach*, but even the pleasure which people will receive at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead is also incomparable, in fact no pleasure and delight can compare to the desire for G-dliness. Only to serve You and to be Your servant sincerely for Your sake without any desire for reward or self advantage.

Gedolim Be'misasm Yoser



**Yahrzeits for the 18th of Adar ~ Begins Friday Night
(03-07-2026)**



**Rav Alexander Ziskind - Yesod VeShoresh Ha'avoda (5554 / 1794 - 232nd
Yahrzeit)**



Rav Chanoch Henich HaKohen Levine - Choshvo Letova, Alexander Rebbe (5630 / 1870 - 156th Yahrzeit)

Rebbe Chanoch Henich HaKohen Levin of Alexander (1798-1870), leading disciple of R. Simcha Bunim of Peshischa and of the Yehudi HaKadosh of Peshischa. He was renowned in his youth for his prodigious brilliance, and for his Peshischa-Kotsk style of sharpness. He held a rabbinic position for close to 40 years. He first served as rabbi of Alexander and Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, and from 1859, as rabbi of Proshnitz. Only after the passing of the Chiddushei HaRim in 1866 did the elderly R. Henich agree to serve as rebbe, and lead the Chassidic courts of Kotsk and Ger. His disciples and relatives attested to the Divine inspiration he benefitted from, and the wonders and miracles which he performed.



Rav Shlomo Sofer (5690 / 1930 - 96th Yahrzeit)

Rav Shlomo was born in Pressburg on 28 *Tammuz* 5613/1853 as a *ben zekunim* to his father, Rav Avrohom Shmuel Binyomin, the *Kesav Sofer*. He became *Av Beis Din* of Bergsaz in 5644.



Rav Nachum Mordechai Friedman - Chortkover Rebbe (5706 / 1946 - 80th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yechezkel Levenstein - Reb Chatzkel (5734 / 1974 - 52nd Yahrzeit)

Reb Yechezkel or "Reb Chatzkel" as he was known was the spiritual leader (*mashgiach*) of two of the most illustrious yeshivas in the world, Mir and Ponovezh. With the outbreak of WW II in 1939, the Mirrer yeshiva continued to maintain its identity, in large measure due to the indefatigable spirit of Reb Chatzkel. After the war, Reb Chatzkel first came to the United States and began to deliver his lectures and serve as *mashgiach* in the newly founded Mir yeshiva. However, he soon found that America was totally uncongenial to his spirit, remarking that the materialism was contagious even when one is enclosed in the four amos of the yeshiva. Reb Chatzkel emigrated to Eretz Yisroel in 1949 beginning a fresh career as *mashgiach* of Mir and then at age 70 he became the *mashgiach* of Ponovezh.



Rav Moshe Weber (5760 / 2000 - 26th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Moshe Weber [18 *Adar A* 5760] was a central and beloved figure in Jerusalem's religious community. Nearly every day he went to the Western Wall from his home in Meah Shearim to pray and to help visitors wrap *tefillin*. Less publicly, he distributed enormous sums of *tzedakah* to the city's poor. It is known that, decades ago, the Lubavitcher Rebbe said of him that he is one of the holiest and kindest people in the world.



Rav Yitzchok Shlomo Zilberman (5761 / 2001 - 25th Yahrzeit)

**Yahrzeits for the 19th of Adar ~ Begins Saturday Night
(03-08-2026)**



Rav Dovid Shapira - Dinover Rebbe, Tzemach Dovid (5634 / 1874 - 152nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Yaakov Shimshon Hager of Kosov (5640 / 1880 - 146th Yahrzeit)



Rav Avrohom Dov Naftali Yerachmiel of Porisov (5672 / 1912 - 114th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yehuda Greenwald (5680 / 1920 - 106th Yahrzeit)



Rav Avrohom Steiner of Kerestir (5687 / 1927 - 99th Yahrzeit)



Rav Meir Yechiel HaLevi Halshtuk - Ostrovtzer Rebbe, Meir Einei Chachomim (5688 / 1928 - 98th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Meir Yechiel of Ostrovtze (19 Adar 1928) was a disciple of R. Elimelech of Grodzinsk, who said that he would account it a privilege if after his death R. Meir Yechiel would refer to him as his rebbe. An outstanding scholar who lived an ascetic lifestyle, he led a following of learned chassidim. His intricate sermons, which drew heavily on *gematria*, came to be known as "*Ostgrovtze pshetlach*." They have been collected in *Meir Einei Chachamim*, and his teachings on Bereishit in Or Torah.



Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld - Rav of Yerushalayim, Chochmas Chaim (5692 / 1932 - 94th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld [19 Adar 5692] studied under the Kasav Sofer at the renowned Pressburg Yeshiva in Austria-Hungary. He was a Torah leader of the Ashkenazi community in the Old City of Yerushalayim for nearly sixty years, and became its official head after the death of Rabbi Shmuel Salant in 1909.



Rav Shmuel Engel - Gaon of Radomishla, Maharash Engel (5695 / 1935 - 91st Yahrzeit)



Rav Emanuel Waltfreid of Pavinitz (5699 / 1939 - 87th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yitzchok Kalish - Amshinover Rebbe (5753 / 1993 - 33rd Yahrzeit)



Rav Yaakov Chaim Jofen (5763 / 2003 - 23rd Yahrzeit)

**Yahrzeits for the 20th of Adar ~ Begins Sunday Night
(03-09-2026)**



Rav Yoel Sirkis - Bach (5401 / 1641 - 385th Yahrzeit)

Rav Yoel was the Rabbi of Krakow and author of the *Bayit Chadash* ("Bach") commentary on the great Halachic work, the *Arba'ah Turim*. He served as Rav of Belz from שט"ב-שט"ד. The *Bach* was invited to serve as Rav in Shidlov which he gladly accepted. Afterwards he served as Rav in Brisk and from there as Rav of Cracow where he passed away 20 Adar א"ת.



Rav Yitzchok Yaakov Rabinowitz - Reb Itzele Ponevezher (5679 / 1919 - 107th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Rabinowitz (or as he was fondly known in the Torah world, Rabbi Itzele Ponevezher) was born in 5614 (1854). His father, a wealthy man by the name of Rabbi Shemuel Leib, was a great scholar who lived the final years of his life in Riga, where he was a famous businessman with a good reputation.



Rav Shabsai Ish Lipshitz - Tiferes Yaakov V'Segulos Yisroel (5689 / 1929 - 97th Yahrzeit)



Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (5755 / 1995 - 31st Yahrzeit)

Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was born in 5670/1910. His father was Harav Chaim Yehudah Leib Auerbach, *zt"l*. As a youth, Rav Shlomo Zalman studied in *Yeshivas Eitz Chaim*, where he was quickly recognized as an outstanding student. He was very close to the *Rosh Yeshivah*, Harav Isser Zalman Meltzer, *zt"l*. In 5707/1947, Rav Shlomo Zalman was invited by former *Rosh Yeshivah* Harav Yechiel Michel Schlesinger, *zt"l*, to serve as the *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Yeshivas Kol Torah*, where he stayed for nearly 50 years.



Rav Raphael Blum - of Kashau - Kasho (5765 / 2005 - 21st Yahrzeit)

Rav Refoel, was niftar in 2005. He was a *talmid* of R' Shaul Brach *zt"l*, *Rav*, *Rosh Av Beis Din*, and *Rosh Yeshiva of Kashau*. Rav Refoel learned in Rav Brach's *yeshiva* for twenty-five *zemanim*. In 1948, Rav Refoel arrived in Brooklyn, New York and began the work of transferring his *yeshiva* from Kashau. Shortly afterwards, Rav Refoel was appointed *rosh yeshiva* of the *Tzelemer Yeshiva Arugas Habosem*. At that time, Rav Refoel founded *Kehillas Kashau* in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn.



Rav Moshe Yehoshua Hager - of Vizhnitz, the Yeshuos Moshe (5772 / 2012 - 14th Yahrzeit)

The *Yeshuos Moshe*, Rav Moshe Yehoshua Hager, was born on 13 Sivan 5676/1916, in Vilchovitz, Romania to his mother, Rebbetzin Margalis, a daughter of Rav Ze'ev of Rachmastivka and to his father the *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz. Already during his father's lifetime, he was the *Rosh Yeshivah* of the *yeshivos* of Vizhnitz. When his father passed away in 5732/1972, he succeeded him as *Rebbe*, leading his flock for the next forty years. He was the *Nasi* of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* of *Agudas Yisrael*.

**Yahrzeits for the 21st of Adar ~ Begins Monday Night
(03-10-2026)**



Rav Meir Schiff - Maharam Schiff (5401 / 1641 - 385th Yahrzeit)



Rav Eliyohu HaKohen of Izmir - Shevet Mussar (5489 / 1729 - 297th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Eliyohu Hakohen of Izmir, Turkey [1650 - 1 Adar B 1729], is best known as the author of *Shevet Mussar*, a major work of Torah ethics and morality. He also wrote *Midrash Talpiot*. In the historical work, *Shem HaGedolim*, it states, "Rabbi Eliyahu HaKohen of Izmir wrote almost 40 books and turned many away from sin with his public lectures."



Rebbe Reb Elimelech Weissblum of Lizensk - Noam Elimelech (5547 / 1787 - 239th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk, was a major disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch, successor to the *Baal Shem Tov*, and the leading Rebbe of the subsequent generation in Poland-Galitzia. Most of the great Chassidic dynasties stem from his disciples. His book, *Noam Elimelech*, is one of the most popular of all Chassidic works.



Rav Yechiel Michel - Av Beis Din of Sipper, Mei Hashiloach (5604 / 1844 - 182nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Avigdor Halberstam of Dokla (5637 / 1877 - 149th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor - Kovno Rav (5656 / 1896 - 130th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor was one of the most famous Rabbis and Talmudic sages of the 19th century. He was born in Resh, government of Grodno, then part of the Russian Empire. His father, Yisrael Issar, was the rabbi of Resh and Rabbi Yitzchok Elchonon's first teacher. Young Yitzchok Elchonon made remarkable progress in his Talmudical studies, and was soon famous as a child prodigy. Rabbi Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor received his Rabbinical ordination from Rabbi Binyamin Diskin and also from the great Gaon Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac Chaver, Rabbi of Tiktin and Suwalki. In 1846 Rabbi Spektor was appointed Chief Rabbi of Nishvez, government of Minsk. In 1851 he accepted the position of Chief Rabbi of Novohrodok. In 1864 he was appointed chief rabbi of Kovno, the most prominent rabbinical position at the height of 19th century Lithuanian Jewry. Rabbi Spektor held this position until his passing in 1896.



Rav Itzele Ponevezher - Rosh Yeshiva in Slabodka & Ponovezh (5679 / 1919 - 107th Yahrzeit)



Rav Menachem Mendel of Fristik (5686 / 1926 - 100th Yahrzeit)



Rav Aryeh Leibush Halberstam of Sanz (5693 / 1933 - 93rd Yahrzeit)



Rav Moshe Dovid of Lafosh - Tehilla L'Moshe (5695 / 1935 - 91st Yahrzeit)

 **Rav Binyomin Fuchs - Av Beis Din of Barashov & Grosswardein (5696 / 1936 - 90th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Yitzchok Horowitz - Stutchiner Rebbe (5700 / 1940 - 86th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Shlomo Yosef Zevin (5736 / 1976 - 50th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Avrohom Dov Kohn (5748 / 1988 - 38th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Sholom Schnitzler - Tchaba Rav (5749 / 1989 - 37th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Doniel Schur (5766 / 2006 - 20th Yahrzeit)**

**YAHREZITS FOR THE 22ND OF ADAR ~ BEGINS TUESDAY NIGHT
(03-11-2026)**

 **Rav Yeshaya Shimonowitz - Rosh Yeshiva Rav Yaakov Yosef US**

 **Rav Yosef Bloch of Alesk-Stanov - Ginzei Yosef (5550 / 1790 - 236th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Chaim Meir Zev HaKohen Zelfreund - Shaarei Chaim (5592 / 1832 - 194th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Shlomo of Apta - Shvilei Torah (5593 / 1833 - 193rd Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Yitzchok Isaac Weiss of Svelive - Divrei Yitzchok (5654 / 1894 - 132nd Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Yaakov Perlow - Novominsker Rebbe, Shufra D'Yaakov (5662 / 1902 - 124th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Yechiel Michel Epstein - Aruch HaShulchon (5668 / 1908 - 118th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Eliezer Dovid of Radoshitz (5687 / 1927 - 99th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Avrohom Duber Kahana Shapira - Av Beis Din of Kovno, Devar Avrohom (5703 / 1943 - 83rd Yahrzeit)**



Rav Reuven Grozovsky - Rosh Yeshivas Kaminetz & Torah Vodaas (5718 / 1958 - 68th Yahrzeit)

Rav Reuven was a Torah giant who served as *Rosh Yeshiva* in the pre-war Kaminetzer Yeshiva and after the *Churban* in Yeshiva Torah Vodaas and Beth Medrash Elyon in Monsey. He was an engineer of the budding, fledgling Torah community in post war America. He was tremendously active in *hatzalah* work during the Holocaust and *moser nefesh* to try to save the remnant of European Jewry located in Europe, Siberia and Shanghai. Rav Reuven became perhaps the greatest voice of true *hashkafas haTorah* in the first decade after World War II when the difficult question arose of how G-d fearing Jews were to relate to the new phenomenon of the secular State of Israel.



Rav Yisroel Moshe Dushinsky (5763 / 2003 - 23rd Yahrzeit)

Rav Yisroel Moshe Dushinsky (1921-2003). Born in Chust, Hungary, to Rav Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky, Rav of Chust (later to become Rav and *Av Beis Din* of the *Eida Charedis* of Yerushalayim). The family moved to Eretz Yisrael in *Adar* of 1930. On *Erev Sukkos* of 1949, his father was *niftar*, and the 27-year-old Rav Yisroel Moshe was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva* of Dushinsky. In 1969, he was inducted as a member of the *Eidah Charedis*. He became *S'gan Beis Din* after the *Satmar Rebbe's petira* and the *Av Beis Din* in 1996.

**Yahrzeits for the 23rd of Adar ~ Begins Wednesday Night
(03-12-2026)**



Rav Chaim Chaik of Amdora - Chaim V'Chesed (5547 / 1787 - 239th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yitzchok Meir Alter Rotenberg of Gur - Chidushei Harim (5626 / 1866 - 160th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Rothenberg/Alter (23 *Adar* 1866) of Gur was the successor to Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotsk and the founder of the Gur dynasty. He was popularly known as the *Chiddushei HaRim*, the title of his classic work of Torah analysis and interpretation. His charisma and concern for the masses resulted in Gerrer chasidus having a very large following.



Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Rabinowitz of Biala - Divrei Binah (5665 / 1905 - 121st Yahrzeit)



Rav Meir of Shatz (5681 / 1921 - 105th Yahrzeit)



Rav Rephael Shapiro - Toras Raphael (5681 / 1921 - 105th Yahrzeit)

Rav Rephael Shapiro (1837-1921) was Rosh Yeshiva of the Volozhin yeshiva and a son-in-law of the "Netziv," Rav Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin. After the Volozhin yeshiva was closed down in 1892 by order of the Russian government (the *Netziv* had refused to comply with the authorities' restrictions on Judaic studies), he reopened it in 1899, however on a smaller scale. Rav Shapiro is known as the *Toras Refael* after his primary work.



Rav Shalom Sofer - Shulem Schreiber Rav of Brezhna (5689 / 1929 - 97th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Shalom Sofer (1855-1929) was the Chief Rabbi in Berezne, Ukraine. His father Rav Yisrael Ephraim Fischel Sofer was *Av Beis Din* in Nanash and died in 1898.



Rav Michel Dovid Rozovsky (5695 / 1935 - 91st Yahrzeit)



Rav Shlomo Zafrany (5730 / 1970 - 56th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yehuda Moshe Dancyger - Emunas Moshe (5733 / 1973 - 53rd Yahrzeit)



Rav Aharon Zilberfarb (5754 / 1994 - 32nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Yisroel Grossman (5767 / 2007 - 19th Yahrzeit)

Yahrzeits for the 24th of Adar ~ Begins Thursday Night (03-13-2026)



Rav Chaim Algazi of Kushta - Nesivos Hamishpot



Rav Yitzchok Eizik Margulies of Prague (5285 / 1525 - 501st Yahrzeit)



Rav Betzalel Yair Danziger of Lodz (5521 / 1761 - 265th Yahrzeit)



Rav Avrohom Tzvi HaKohen Rabinstein - Tzaddik Nistar of Makova (5590 / 1830 - 196th Yahrzeit)



Rav Binyomin Diskin of Horodna & Vilna (5616 / 1856 - 170th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yitzchok Meyer of Alesk (5664 / 1904 - 122nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Boruch Pinchos Rabinowitz - Skolya Rebbe, Otzar Hachaim (5680 / 1920 - 106th Yahrzeit)

The Rebbe was sixth-generation descendant of both the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and the *Zlotichver Maggid*. He traced his lineage to *Rashi*, *Maharal*, *Rema*, and the "Sheloh" (R. Yeshaya HaLevi Horowitz 1565-1630)



Rav Shlomo Elyashiv - Leshem Shevo Ve'achlama (5687 / 1927 - 99th Yahrzeit)

The Kabbalist Rabbi Shlomo Elyashiv (1841-1926) learned in the Telz Yeshiva, was one of the greatest Kabbalists in Lithuania, and served as Rabbi of Siauliai and Hommel. In 1924 he immigrated to Jerusalem and was known as one of the greatest Kabbalists. He wrote the series of books *Leshem Shevo Ve'Achlama*. Rav Kook said about his books that "No such book of Kabbalah has been published since the time of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero." His grandson was Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv.



Rav Bentzion Weisel - Av Beis Din of Tarda (5698 / 1938 - 88th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yitzchok Horowitz of Stitchin (5700 / 1940 - 86th Yahrzeit)



Rav Chaim Osher of Radoshitz (5701 / 1941 - 85th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yehoshua Menachem Arenberg - Teshuvos Dvar Yehoshua (5736 / 1976 - 50th Yahrzeit)

Rav Yehoshua Menachem was born on the 12th of *Teves* (1904) in Kemece. He immigrated to Eretz Yisrael in *Elul* of 1945 and settled in Yerushalayim. In 1947, he was asked to serve as the chief Rav of the Cyprus refugee camps, and he stayed there till the camps were disbanded. In 1949, he returned to Eretz Yisrael and was appointed chief Rav of Tel Aviv and Yaffo. He considered himself a *Belzer Chassid* and was very close with Rav Aharon of Belz.



Rav Gad Eisner (5745 / 1985 - 41st Yahrzeit)



Rav Eliyohu Boruch Finkel - Bircas Eliyohu (5768 / 2008 - 18th Yahrzeit)

Biographies of the Tzaddikim





Rav Chanoch Henich Levine Choshvo Letova, Alexander Rebbe (Adar 18, 5630 / 1870 - 156th Yahrzeit)



Rebbe Chanoch Henich HaKohen Levin of Alexander (1798-1870), leading disciple of R. Simcha Bunim of Peshischa and of the Yehudi HaKadosh of Peshischa. He held a rabbinic position for close to 40 years. He first served as rabbi of Alexander and Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, and from 1859, as rabbi of Proshnitz (in 1865, he retired from the rabbinate, and returned to Alexander as a private person). He was a descendant of R. Shmuel Schotten HaKohen of Frankfurt (the Maharshashach - who was also the grandfather of the Chasam Sofer). After he supported the Polish revolution in 1830, he was compelled to change his surname from Schotten to Levin. He was renowned in his youth for his prodigious brilliance, and for his Peshischa-Kotsk style of sharpness. All his actions were concealed, and with great wisdom. His sayings were penetrating and peppered with incisive humor, and he knew how to disguise exalted matters in jokes which only a precious-few would understand. He would frequently cite the saying of his teacher R. Bunim of Peshischa: "By us, all the negative commandments in the Torah can be condensed to one negative commandment - Do not be a fool! and all the positive commandments in the Torah can be encapsulated in one - be wise!".

While still a young man, his teacher the Yehudi HaKadosh appointed him as rebbe, by removing his spodik from his head and placing it on that of his young student, R. Henich, saying: "This spodik suits you well...". Following the passing of R. Bunim of Peshischa, R. Henich subjected himself to the authority of his colleague, Rebbe Mendel of Kotsk. After the latter's demise, R. Henich followed his (younger) colleague R. Yitzchak Meir Alter of Ger. Only after the passing of the Chiddushei HaRim in 1866 did the elderly R. Henich agree to serve as rebbe, and lead the Chassidic courts of Kotsk and Ger. His disciples and relatives attested to the Divine inspiration he benefitted from, and the wonders and miracles which he performed. His nephew testified that he was present when souls came down to him from Upper spheres, to request a reparation. These accounts were recorded in the new edition of his book Choshvo LeTova VeLikutim (published by Mossad HaRim

Levin, Jerusalem, 1990), see there.

The foreword of the new edition contains a beautiful description of the Chassidic legacy which R. Henich transmitted to future generations, and his molding of the character of the Ger Chassidic dynasty: "Alexander of Rebbe Henich was concealed for about seventy years; in those years the Peshischa Chassidism branched out into seventy facets. For decades, he stood as a disciple before his colleagues, subjected himself to their authority and enjoyed the Peshischa elevation in the hidden parts of his soul, until the crown of leadership was placed upon him... R. Henich of Alexander combined in his leadership all the wellsprings deriving from Peshischa. With rare and unparalleled wisdom, he merged a following of elite, truth-seeking Chassidim into a single unit, and they together rose to high levels of Torah and worship of G-d. He brought Peshischa, Kotsk and Ger together under one roof, selecting the unique points of each of them - their light, to create a center of Torah, Chassidism, sharpness, holiness and total devotion".

He was one of the teachers of the Sfat Emet, Rebbe of Ger (grandson of the Chiddushei HaRim), whom he appointed as his successor. His descendants were leading members of the Ger court, and his grandson R. Chanoch Tzvi HaKohen Levin Rabbi of Bendin was the son-in-law of the Sfat Emet. His disciples became the leading Torah scholars and rebbes of Poland, including: R. Ze'ev Nachum of Biala and his son Rebbe Avraham of Sochatchov author of *Avnei Nezer*; Rebbe Avraham of Porisov; R. Pinchas Menachem Justman Rabbi of Piltz; R. Yoav Yehoshua of Kintzck the *Chelkat Yoav*; R. Yitzchak Feigenbaum of Warsaw, and others. His teachings are recorded in his book *Choshvo LeTova*.

<https://www.kedem-auctions.com/en/content/letter-rebbe-chanoch-henich-alexander-%E2%80%93-regarding-trip-chiddushei-harim-ger-and-move>



Rav Shlomo Sofer (*Adar 18, 5690 / 1930 - 96th Yahrzeit*)

Rav Shlomo was born in Pressburg on 28 *Tammuz* 5613/1853 as a *ben zekunim* to his father, Rav Avrohom Shmuel Binyomin, the *Kesav Sofer*.

When he came of age in 5635/1875, he married Toiba Breindel, daughter of Rav Avrohom Isserel Phillip, becoming *Av Bais Din* of Bergsaz in 5644.

He authored *Chut HaMeshulosh*, detailing his ancestors' biographies, history and toldos

(Rav Akiva Eiger, *the Chasam Sofer* and the *Kesav Sofer*) and gathered their collected letters, published as *Igros Sofrim*. He also redacted, edited and published *Sefer Hazikoron* from the *Chasam Sofer*, *Chiddushei Chasam Sofer* and *Chiddushei Kesav Sofer* on the *Shulchon Aruch* and *Kesav Sofer* on the *Torah*, as well as *Chiddushei Kesav Sofer* on *Gittin*.

His son was Rav Simcha Shmuel Wolf. His daughters were: Sorel, wife of Rav Shmuel Reich, *Av Bais Din* of Verboi; Yecht, wife of Rav Eliyohu HaKohen Kahn, *Av Bais Din* of Vashrashnamni, *HY"D*; Chava Lea, wife of Rav Avrohom Shlomo Hirsch, his successor as *Av Bais Din* of Bergsaz, *HY"D*.



Rav Yechezkel Levenstein Reb Chatzkel (Adar 18, 5734 / 1974 - 52nd Yahrzeit)



(1884 - 1974) Reb Yechezkel or “Reb Chatzkel” as he was known was the spiritual leader (*mashgiach*) of two of the most illustrious yeshivas in the world, Mir and Ponovezh. He was grateful for having studied in Kelm where “I merited to grasp that all of man’s life is to awaken and enliven his soul”. In his old age he wrote: I was never attached to matters of this world (*olam Hazeih*) - and yet what a good (*olam Hazeih*) world did I enjoy.

After WW I he was invited to become *mashgiach* of the Lomza yeshiva in Petach Tikva, where he was very happy and successful. However, when the famed *mashgiach* of Mir, R. Yeruchem Levovitz, passed away in 1936 and he was invited to replace him, Reb Chatzkel assumed that position because he felt obliged to accept in order to retain the character of that illustrious institution.

With the outbreak of WW II in 1939, the Mirrer yeshiva continued to maintain its identity, in large measure due to the indefatigable spirit of Reb Chatzkel. While moving to Kobe, Japan and Shanghai during the war years, the Yeshiva miraculously remained an institution of the highest standard of learning and *mussar*.

After the war, Reb Chatzkel first came to the United States and began to deliver his lectures and serve as *mashgiach* in the newly founded Mir yeshiva. However, he soon found that America was totally uncongenial to his spirit, remarking that the materialism was contagious even when one is enclosed in the four *amos* of the yeshiva. Reb Chatzkel emigrated to Eretz Yisroel in 1949 beginning a fresh career as *mashgiach* of Mir and then at age 70 he became the *mashgiach* of Ponovezh.

Perhaps the great power and influence of Reb Chatzkel stemmed from the fact that he never ceased scrutinizing his own behavior, always seeking to improve and take control of his emotions and drives.

He concentrated on strengthening faith, never satisfied with what he had already achieved. The Chazon Ish said that Reb Chatzkel's faith was palpable. He denigrated the illusory values of contemporary culture. He wrote that though learning Torah was equal to all the mitzvas it was not the purpose of life; the purpose of life is the fear of heaven and the attachment to G-d (*deveikus*) (Ohr Yechezkel letters, #14). To the degree that a person considers something else of primary importance, to that degree has he made Torah secondary (Letter #364). Seven volumes of his works, *Ohr Yechezkel*, have been published, including a volume of letters.

Taken from Leaders in the Diaspora

<https://breslev.com/259060/>



Rav Moshe Weber (Adar I 18, 5760 / 2000 - 26th Yahrzeit)



Rabbi Moshe Weber [18 Adar A 5760] was a central and beloved figure in Jerusalem's religious community. Nearly every day he went to the Western Wall from his home in Meah Shearim to pray and to help visitors wrap *tefillin*. Less publicly, he distributed enormous sums of *tzedakah* to the city's poor. It is known that, decades ago, the Lubavitcher Rebbe said of him that he is one of the holiest and kindest people in the world. He published several volumes of Torah insights in *Yarim Moshe*. There is an ongoing periodical of his teachings distributed weekly called *Shemu V'Techi Nafshechem*, which also offers for sale his audio recordings.

<http://www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=rebbeBios>



Rav Meir Yechiel Halshtuk Ostrotzer Rebbe, Meir Einei Chachomim (Adar 19, 5688 / 1928 - 98th Yahrzeit)



Rabbi Meir Yechiel of Ostrovitz (19 Adar 1928) was a disciple of R. Elimelech of Grodzinsk, who said that he would account it a privilege if after his death R. Meir Yechiel would refer to him as his rebbe. An outstanding scholar who lived an ascetic lifestyle, he led a following of learned chassidim. His intricate sermons, which drew heavily on *gematria*, came to be known as "*Ostrovitz pshetlach*." They have been collected in *Meir Einei Chachamim*, and his teachings on Bereishit in Or Torah.

<http://www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=rebbeBios>



Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld Rav of Yerushalayim, Chochmas Chaim (Adar II 19, 5692 / 1932 - 94th Yahrzeit)



Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld [19 Adar 5692] studied under the Kasav Sofer at the renowned Pressburg Yeshiva in Austria-Hungary. He was a Torah leader of the Ashkenazi community in the Old City of Yerushalayim for nearly sixty years, and became its official head after the death of Rabbi Shmuel Salant in 1909.

<http://www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=rebbeBios>



Rav Yoel Sirkis Bach (Adar 20, 5401 / 1641 - 385th Yahrzeit)



Rabbi of Krakow and author of the *Bayit Chadash* ("Bach") commentary on the great Halachic work, the *Arba'ah Turim*.

Served as Rav of Belz from שטעב-שטעד as he signs himself in his *teshuvos Siman 78* as Rav of Belz.

Rav Chaim Meir Yecheiel of Mogolintza used to say that any sick person who was brought within four amos of the *Bach*, as he sat and studied Torah, would be healed instantly.

They say that he was so poor and his wages as Rav in Belz were so meager that he could not afford to purchase candles and so at night he had no choice but to study and review by heart. The townsfolk however were not only stingy but also lacking in the attribute of judging others favorably and giving them the benefit of the doubt. When they saw that the windows of the Rav's home were always dark at night they assumed he was asleep and concluded that "any Rabbi who isn't up at night engaged in Torah study is not worthy of serving as the Rav in Belz."

The *Bach* was invited to serve as Rav in Shidlov which he gladly accepted and as he left Belz behind he retorted back to the ungrateful citizens that "The reason why Sodom was overturned was not because Hashem couldn't think of any other punishment. Rather Hashem punished them measure for measure. Their behavior was to overturn all manner of things upside down and backwards, for example, instead of worrying about the Rav's livelihood and that their Rav should worry about their state of spirituality, they worried about his state of spirituality and whether he studied enough Torah and they thought the Rav should be the one to worry about the material state of the townsfolk and her poor! Therefore they were punished measure for measure and the city was overturned.

Afterwards he served as Rav in Brisk and from there as Rav of Cracow where he passed away 20 Adar את and is buried in the ancient *Bais HaChaim* adjacent the *Rema Shul*, alongside other great *Rabbonim* such as the *Rebbe* Reb Heschel and the author of *Maginei Shlomo*.

Rav Dovid of Lelov once remarked that when the *Bach* passed away and ascended on High they honored him to say a *derasha* in the heavenly academy of *Yeshiva Shel Maalah* but he refused to accept the honor until they would cool off *Gehinom* for thirty days so that the wicked would enjoy the respite from their sufferings, first. And so they did. (cited from Intro to *Shaar HaGilgulim*)



Rav Yitzchok Yaakov Rabinowitz Reb Itzele Ponevezher (*Adar I 20, 5679 / 1919 - 107th Yahrzeit*)

Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Rabinowitz (or as he was fondly known in the Torah world, Rabbi Itzele Ponevezher) was born in 5614 (1854). His father, a wealthy man by the name of Rabbi Shemuel Leib, was a great scholar who lived the final years of his life in Riga, where he was a famous businessman with a good reputation. We know little of Rabbi Itzele's childhood; no wondrous stories have been transmitted to us about the boy who would become a great of Israel. However one thing is clear: He was a child prodigy who possessed exceptional gifts.

He was 14 years old when he married Chava, the daughter of Rabbi Yaakov Dov Eisenstadt. His father-in-law, who was very wealthy, supported him for 28 years, and during that whole time he remained in his village studying Torah day and night, to the point that he became a great Gaon. During the entire time that he stayed in this village, he was not at all known in the Torah world. It was only in 5649 (1889), when he was appointed as the Rosh Yeshiva of the Slabodka yeshiva, that the Torah world discovered a new star appearing on the horizon. During his lectures to the students of the yeshiva, he proposed a new approach to the study of Talmud. It was an intellectual delight to listen to his lectures, and he hypnotized his listeners with his marvelous commentaries and original explanations. The students of the yeshiva loved and admired him not only for his lively mind, but also for his kindness, for he acted like a brother and a friend with them.

Rabbi Itzele remained as the Rosh Yeshiva of Slabodka for seven years, and it was thanks to him that the yeshiva grew and attained great distinction. Boys from all across Russia came to Slabodka to listen to his lectures, and he had hundreds of disciples. Among these were individuals who would become the greats of their generation and leading figures in the Torah world.

For several reasons, Rabbi Itzele left the yeshiva and was named as Rav of the city of Gorzd, in the province of Kovno. There he also gave courses to young exceptional students who had traveled with him from the Slobodka yeshiva. He stayed in the Gorzd region for about two years, followed by which he became the Rav of the large and famous city of Ponevezh, whose name he carries (Rabbi Itzele Ponevezher).

Rabbi Itzele was greatly honored and cherished by the residents of Ponevezh. Having grown up in wealth, the rich did not impress Rabbi Itzele, nor was he biased towards them. He always did justice for the poor and needy, and he did not allow the rich to exploit their downtrodden workers. His goodness knew no bounds, and he gave others everything he had, whereas his family found it difficult getting by, even on his large salary. Seeing what Rabbi Itzele did with his money, the leaders of the city began remitting his salary directly to his wife. However the Rav found a new source of income for the poor: He sold his books and gave them the proceeds.

During his years as a Rav, Rabbi Itzele was in the habit of leaving his house a few hours before candle lighting on Friday and walking through town. When people saw him passing by, they would immediately close their shops. It happened that one merchant had a client enter his store from a back entrance. This grieved Rabbi Itzele, and when that merchant died Rabbi Itzele postponed the burial until the merchant's son guaranteed in writing that he would observe Shabbos correctly from that time on. Rabbi Itzele acted in this way not only in his own city of Ponevezh, but brought his Shabbos customs with him everywhere he lived.

During the First World War, Rabbi Itzele was forced to exile himself in Mariopol, in southern Russia. One Friday as he took his walk into town warning residents to close their shops before Shabbos, it happened that someone refused to obey him. He entered that man's shop and did not relent on his demand, speaking harshly to him and firmly insisting that he immediately close his business. The merchant, however, assaulted Rabbi Itzele and forcefully removed him from the premises. When news of the incident became known, the town was in turmoil. The merchant, upon learning who it was that he had assaulted, bitterly regretted his action and rushed to see Rabbi Itzele, throwing himself down at his feet and begging his forgiveness. Thus in recounting this incident, Rabbi Itzele would say that such an outcome made it worth being assaulted for Shabbos.

Rabbi Itzele also taught Torah to the Jewish population in Mariopol, and many were those who came to hear his lectures. He himself lived in great poverty, distributing the little money that he received from the wealthy to the students of the yeshiva.

Up until the year 5670 (1910), Rabbi Itzele did not get involved in communal affairs, and he spent the majority of his time responding to questions that were sent to him from near

and far. Along with Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk and Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski of Vilna, he founded an orthodox organization in Russia called Kneset Yisrael, which later merged with Agudath Yisrael in Frankfurt. He was continually traveling for the needs of the community, attending various meetings to deal with public problems and aptly defending the laws of the Torah and mitzvot. He did a great deal for the good of Jews by dealing with the Russian government, for Rabbi Itzele was the only rabbi who understood the Russian language well. He also knew how to speak with the authorities. Yet all this traveling undermined his health, and he aged prematurely because he was meticulous with respect to kashrus. He did not eat non-Jewish bread and he avoided milk and butter (and meat even more so). He took matzos with him and ate just matzah with tea. It's therefore not surprising that his health suffered as a result.

In 5678 (1918) Rabbi Itzele managed to leave Russia, where he had been in exile during the war years, and returned to Ponevezh in a state of utter exhaustion. He found the city destroyed by the terrible war and nearly deserted, with the remaining inhabitants dealing with a typhus epidemic. The Rav, who did not take his own health into account, spent a great deal of time visiting the sick, until he himself was struck by typhus. On Adar 20, 5678 (1918), Rabbi Itzele's lofty and pure soul ascended to Heaven.

https://hevratpinto.org/tzadikim_eng/137_rabbi_yitzchak_yaakov_rabinowitz.html



Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Adar I 20, 5755 / 1995 - 31st Yahrzeit)



Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was born in 5670/1910. His father was Harav Chaim Yehudah Leib Auerbach, *zt"l*.

As a youth, Rav Shlomo Zalman studied in *Yeshivas Eitz Chaim*, where he was quickly recognized as an outstanding student. He was very close to the *Rosh Yeshivah*, Harav Isser Zalman Meltzer, *zt"l*.

In 5690/1930 Rav Shlomo Zalman married Rebbetzin Chaya Rivka, the daughter of Harav Aryeh Leib Ruchamkin.

In 5704/1944, a *pre-shemittah* year, Rav Shlomo Zalman published *Maadanei Eretz*, which deals with *mitzvos* pertaining to the land. Besides his own *sefarim*, many other *sefarim* include his *halachic* decisions. The most famous of these is *Shemiras Shabbos Kehilchasah*, which includes thousands of his rulings on *hilchos Shabbos*.

Minchas Shlomo, a compendium of Rav Shlomo Zalman's *halachic* responsa, is required reading for every scholar and halachic authority. In addition, many of his articles on halachic issues were printed in numerous Torah journals. His *teshuvos* cover many fields of Jewish law such as medicine and technology.

In 5707/1947, Rav Shlomo Zalman was invited by former *Rosh Yeshivah* Harav Yechiel Michel Schlesinger, *zt"l*, to serve as the *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Yeshivas Kol Torah*, where he stayed for nearly 50 years.

Rav Shlomo Zalman loved and pursued peace. He was always on good terms with everyone, maintaining friendly ties with scores of *Torah* leaders and Chassidic luminaries. They in turn greatly admired and respected him, not only for his purity of character, his amazing *tzidkus* and his unparalleled *middos*, but also as one of the foremost halachic authorities of the time.

Before he entered his house, Rav Shlomo Zalman would straighten his attire. He once explained his reason for this: "*Ish v'isha zachu, Shechinah shruya beineihem*, 'If a man and woman are worthy, the Divine Presence rests between them.' And certainly one must honor the *Shechinah*!"

On 20 Adar I 5755/1995, Rav Shlomo Zalman was *niftar*. His *levayah* was one of the largest ever recorded in *Eretz Yisrael*, with an estimated 300,000 people in attendance.

Zecher tzaddik livrachah.

<https://hamodia.com/columns/day-history-20-adar-iimarch-27/>



Rav Raphael Blum of Kashau - Kasho (Adar I 20, 5765 / 2005 - 21st Yahrzeit)



Rav Refoel, was *niftar* in 2005. He was a *talmid* of R' Shaul Brach *zt"l*, *Rav, Rosh Av Beis Din*, and *Rosh Yeshiva of Kashau*. Rav Refoel learned in Rav Brach's *yeshiva* for twenty-five *zemanim*. Before World War II, Rav Refoel led a *yeshiva* in Mihalowitz. He was liberated from the Nazis on January 18, 1945 to the city of Arad in Romania. During the summer of 1945, Rav Refoel returned to Kashau and was influential in establishing the halachic status of survivors of the war, freeing them to remarry after determining that their spouses had been killed. In 1948, Rav Refoel arrived in Brooklyn, New York and began the work of transferring his *yeshiva* from Kashau. Shortly afterwards, Rav Refoel was appointed *rosh yeshiva* of the *Tzelemer Yeshiva Arugas Habosem*. At that time, Rav Refoel founded *Kehillas Kashau* in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. Eventually, Rav Refoel started *yeshivos* and a secluded village for Kashau *chassidim* in the forests of Westchester County, outside Bedford Hills. The village is known as *Kiryas Kashau* today.



Rav Moshe Yehoshua Hager of Vizhnitz, the Yeshuos Moshe (Adar 20, 5772 / 2012 - 14th Yahrzeit)



The *Yeshuos Moshe*, Rav Moshe Yehoshua Hager, was born on 13 *Sivan* 5676/1916, in Vilchovitz, Romania to his mother, Rebbetzin Margalis, a daughter of Rav Ze'ev of Rachmastrivka and to his father the *Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz*. Already during his father's lifetime, he was the *Rosh Yeshivah* of the *yeshivos* of Vizhnitz, and was known as a phenomenal

When his father passed away in 5732/1972, he succeeded him as *Rebbe*, leading his flock for the next forty years. He was the *Nasi* of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudas Yisrael*, and fought tirelessly to preserve religious standards in Eretz Yisrael.

Although he was the *Imrei Chaim's* first son and there were many great *tzadikim* after who to name the baby, his *zeide*, the *Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz*, advised that he be named Moshe Yehoshua, after the first two leaders of *Klal Yisrael*, explaining that "the child has the *neshamah* of a Jewish leader."

The *Rebbe* grew up in the home of the *Ahavas Yisrael* in Grosswardein, Hungary, and staunchly followed in his ways. The *Ahavas Yisrael* was extremely fond of his young *einikel*. He once told one of his *chassidim*: "I am not totally lost — as long as I see that I love my Moshe, I know that my heart is still attracted to the good ..."

Already in his early years, the *Rebbe* gained fame for his exceptional *hasmadah*, learning until the wee hours of the morning and, at least once a week, on Thursday nights, devoting the entire night to Torah study.

Even after his grandfather's Friday night *tisch*, which concluded in the early hours of the morning, the young Moshe Yehoshua would be seen immersed in the *sefer Chovos Halevavos*.

In Grosswardein he learned with leading *talmidei chachamim* including Harav Yitzchak Yaakov Weiss, *the Minchas Yitzchak, zt"l*, who later taught the *Rebbe shimush* in *halachah*.

Later, the *Rebbe* traveled to Vizhnitz to learn in the *yeshivah* of his uncle, the *Damesek Eliezer of Vizhnitz*. At the young age of 20 he received *semichah* from the leading *Rabbanim* of Hungary, who applauded his wide knowledge and understanding in all *halachos*.

After the *petirah* of the *Ahavas Yisrael*, the *Imrei Chaim*, who was Rav in Vilchovitz, moved to Grosswardein to assume his father's post, and the 20-year-old Harav Moshe Yehoshua was appointed Rav in Vilchovitz.

In 5702/1942, the *Rebbe* married Rebbetzin Leah Esther, the daughter of Harav Menachem Mendel of Dezh. After her passing, the *Rebbe* remarried, *tbl"c*, Rebbetzin Sheindel, the daughter of Harav Yehoshua Segal Deutsch, *zt"l*, Rav of Katamon.

The *Rebbe* was outstanding in his *shemiras einayim*. When he had to walk in the street, he would close his eyes and be led by a companion.

In Adar 5704/1944, when the Nazis invaded Hungary, the *Rebbe* fled to Grosswardein to be together with his father. The Jews of Grosswardein hid in bunkers, and those who could, fled to Romania.

From Romania, the *Rebbe* and his family made their way to Eretz Yisrael, arriving before *Shabbos Mevorchim Elul* 5704/1944.

His uncle, the *Damesek Eliezer*, appointed him *Rosh Yeshivah* in the new *Vizhnitz Yeshivah* in Tel Aviv. At that time, *Eretz Yisrael* was a spiritual and material wasteland; most of the *bachurim* were survivors who needed special care. The *Damesek Eliezer*, recognizing the *Rebbe's* unique expertise in *chinuch*, placed in his hands the responsibility of meeting all the needs of the *bachurim*. He was their *Rosh Yeshivah* and *maggid shiur*, *mashgiach*, *madrich* and material caregiver, bringing the *bachurim* to heights of Torah and *kedushah*.

In 5707/1947, after the *Imrei Chaim* arrived in Eretz Yisrael and established the *Vizhnitz* neighborhood in Bnei Brak, Harav Moshe Yehoshua was appointed Rav of the neighborhood, in addition to heading the *yeshivah* and delivering daily *shiurim*.

On 9 *Nisan* 5732/1972, his father, the *Imrei Chaim*, was *niftar* and Harav Moshe Yehoshua assumed the mantle of leadership, succeeding his father as *Vishznitzer Rebbe*.

Under the *Rebbe's* leadership, *Vizhnitz* blossomed and expanded in *Eretz Yisrael* and abroad, with the establishment of many *Torah mosdos*.

In his last years the *Rebbe* became very weak, yet despite his illness and frailty he continued to accept the *chassidim* and bestow his *brachos*. He would often hold *tischen* in his *beis medrash*.

The *Rebbe* was *niftar* on 20 *Adar* I 5772/2012, at the age of 95. He was buried next to his father in the *Vizhnitzer ohel* in the *Zichron Meir* cemetery in Bnei Brak.

The *Rebbe* was survived by his two sons, *Vizhnitzer Rebbes* in Bnei Brak and four daughters, the *Satmar Rebbetzin*; the *Skver Rebbetzin*; the *Belzer Rebbetzin*; and *Rebbetzin Hinda Ernster*.



Rav Eliyohu Shevet Mussar (*Adar 21, 5489 / 1729 - 297th Yahrzeit*)

Rabbi Eliyohu Hakohen of Izmir, Turkey [1650 - 1 *Adar* B 1729], is best known as the author of *Shevet Mussar*, a major work of Torah ethics and morality. He also wrote *Midrash Talpiot*. In the historical work, *Shem HaGedolim*, it states, "Rabbi Eliyahu

HaKohen of Izmir wrote almost 40 books and turned many away from sin with his public lectures."

<http://www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=rebbeBios>



**Rebbe Reb Elimelech Weissblum Noam Elimelech (Adar 21, 5547 / 1787 - 239th
Yahrzeit)**

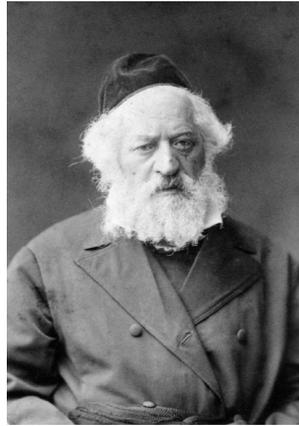


Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk [21 Adar 5547], was a major disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch, successor to the *Baal Shem Tov*, and the leading Rebbe of the subsequent generation in Poland-Galitzia. Most of the great Chassidic dynasties stem from his disciples. It is told that before he died, Rebbe Elimelech bequeathed the sight of his eyes to the Chozeh of Lublin, the spirit of his heart to the Kozhnutzer Maggid, the soul of his mind to Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Rimanov, and the power of speech to Rebbe Avraham Yehoshua Heshel of Apt. Other major disciples included Rabbi Naftali Tzvi of Ropshitz, Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov, and Rabbi Klonymos Kalman Epstein, known as the *Maor VaShemesh*. His book, *Noam Elimelech*, is one of the most popular of all Chassidic works.

<http://www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=rebbeBios>



Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor Kovno Rav (Adar 21, 5656 / 1896 - 130th Yahrzeit)



Rabbi Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor was one of the most famous Rabbis and Talmudic sages of the 19th century. He was born in Resh, government of Grodno, then part of the Russian Empire. His father, Yisrael Issar, was the rabbi of Resh and Rabbi Yitzchok Elchonon's first teacher. Young Yitzchok Elchonon made remarkable progress in his Talmudical studies, and was soon famous as a child prodigy. After his marriage he settled in the city of Vilkovisk where his in-laws lived. He received a large dowry from his father-in-law to invest and thereby be enabled to continue his studies. He briefly studied under Rabbi Elijah Schick and later under the Rabbi Binyamin Diskin Rabbi of Vilkovisk who was so impressed with him that he paired him up with his own cherished son, the prodigy Rabbi Yehoshuah Leib Diskin, who later became the much celebrated Chief Rabbi of Brisk and later in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor received his Rabbinical ordination from Rabbi Binyamin Diskin and also from the great Gaon Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac Chaver, Rabbi of Tiktin and Suwalki. In 1837 when Rabbi Spektor was a mere twenty year old, he was forced to seek means of employment as his dowry was lost due to the bankruptcy of his debtor. He became the rabbi of the town of Sabelin near Vilkovisk. After two years he traveled to the city of Karlin where he met the famous Rabbi Yaakov Bruchin, Chief Rabbi of the city of Karlin and author of "*Mishkenos Yaakov*" and "*Kehilas Yaakov*" who was considered one of the foremost rabbis of Russia. Rabbi Yaakov Bruchin was so favorably impressed by Rabbi Yitzchok Elchonon that he recommended him to the community of Baresa (Biaroza) who engaged him as Chief Rabbi. His fame in community matters and Rabbinical decisions

grew rapidly.

In 1846 Rabbi Spektor was appointed Chief Rabbi of Nishvez, government of Minsk. In 1851 he accepted the position of Chief Rabbi of Novohrodok. In 1864 he was appointed chief rabbi of Kovno, the most prominent rabbinical position at the height of 19th century Lithuanian Jewry. Rabbi Spektor held this position until his passing in 1896.

Rabbi Spektor was an indefatigable worker, and in the last forty years of his life, when he was steadily becoming more recognized as the foremost rabbinical authority in Russia, he maintained a large correspondence with rabbis, communities, philanthropists, and representative men in many parts of the world, who sought his advice and instruction on all conceivable subjects relating to Jews and Judaism. His sound reasoning and love of peace established him as truly one of the great leaders of Russian Jewry. He left great Talmudic works published under the name *Be'er Yitzchok*, *Ein Yitzchok*, and *Nachal Yitzchok*.

Rabbi Yitzchok Elchonon was in close touch with all developments of the Holy Land and the Jewish communities living there. He collaborated with Rabbi Shmuel Salant (1816-1909), the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem on all matters of concern which affected Palestine and the welfare of the Yishuv Hayashan. He assisted Rabbi Salant in the Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis charity and corresponded profusely in matters relating to the charity.

Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan passed away in Kovno on March 6, 1896. He was mourned by Jews worldover. May his memory be a blessing.

<https://rabbimeirbaalhaneis.com/Rabbi%20Yitzchak%20Elchanan%20Spector.asp>



Rav Reuven Grozovsky Rosh Yeshivas Kaminetz & Torah Vodaas (Adar 22, 5718 / 1958 - 68th Yahrzeit)



Rav Reuven was a Torah giant who served as *Rosh Yeshiva* in the pre-war Kaminetzer Yeshiva and after the *Churban* in Yeshiva Torah Vodaas and Beth Medrash Elyon in Monsey. He was an engineer of the budding, fledgling Torah community in post war America. He was tremendously active in hatzalah work during the Holocaust and moser nefesh to try to save the remnant of European Jewry located in Europe, Siberia and Shanghai. Rav Reuven became perhaps the greatest voice of true *hashkafas haTorah* in the first decade after World War II when the difficult question arose of how G-d fearing Jews were to relate to the new phenomenon of the secular State of Israel.

<https://matzav.com/rav-reuven-grozovsky-ztl-on-his-54th-yahrtzeit-today-22-adar/>



Rav Yisroel Moshe Dushinsky (Adar 22, 5763 / 2003 - 23rd Yahrzeit)



Rav Yisrael Moshe Dushinsky (1921-2003). Born in Chust, Hungary, to Rav Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky, Rav of Chust (later to become Rav and *Av Beis Din* of the *Eida Charedis* of Yerushalayim), he was his father's first son, when his father was 50 years old. After many years and many *brachos*, Rav Yosef Tzvi received a *bracha* from Rav Yechezkel Shraga of Shinava, who also gave him his *sefer*, *Ayalah Sheluchah*, printed in the memory of the *Shonava Rav's* son, Naftali, who was *nifter* on the 21st of *Kislev*, 1864. The following year, on the exact date of Reb Naftali's *yahrtzeit*, Yisrael Moshe was born. His middle name was in honor of his great uncle, the *Maharam Shick*. The family moved to Eretz Yisrael in *Adar* of 1930, one month before the *petirah* of Rav Yosef Chaim Zonenfeld. He was married to the daughter of Rav Dovid Yehoshua Gross, *Rosh Hakohol* of the *Satmar Kehillah*, in 1945. On *Erev Sukkos* of 1949, his father was *niftar*, and the 27-year-old Rav Yisrael Moshe was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Dushinsky*. In 1969, he was inducted as a member of the *Eidah Charedis*. He became *S'gan Beis Din* after the *Satmar Rebbe's petira* and the *Av Beis Din* in 1996.



Rav Yitzchok Meir Alter Rotenberg Chidushei Harim (Adar 23, 5626 / 1866 - 160th Yahrzeit)



Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Rothenberg/Alter (23 Adar 1866) of Gur was the successor to Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotsk and the founder of the Gur dynasty. He was popularly known as the *Chiddushei HaRim*, the title of his classic work of Torah analysis and interpretation. His charisma and concern for the masses resulted in Gerrer chasidus having a very large following.

<http://www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=rebbeBios>

HIS SEGULOS:

Segulah For Yiras Shamayim

Rav Yitzchak Meir Alter of Ger, the genius of Chassidus, used to say: “Mere mention of the *kedushah* and sanctity of the holy Yid HaKadosh is itself a *segulah* for *yiras Shamayim* and can cause the awe of Heaven to enter into the heart of man.”



Rav Rephael Shapiro Toras Raphael (Adar 23, 5681 / 1921 - 105th Yahrzeit)



Rav Rephael Shapiro (1837-1921) was Rosh Yeshiva of the Volozhin yeshiva and a son-in-law of the "Netziv," Rav Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin. After the Volozhin yeshiva was closed down in 1892 by order of the Russian government (the *Netziv* had refused to comply with the authorities' restrictions on Judaic studies), he reopened it in 1899, however on a smaller scale. Rav Shapiro is known as the *Toras Refael* after his primary work. He ordained Rav Isser Yehuda Unterman, who had studied in the Kollel of the Volozhin Yeshiva before opening his own yeshiva in the neighboring Belarusian town of Vishnevo, and who would later become one of Israel's chief rabbis. In addition, Rav Shapiro gave *semicha* to Rav Moshe Satzkes, who was known as the Łomża Rov, and Rav Meir Joshua Rosenberg. Rav Shapiro was the father-in-law of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk and grandfather of Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapira, who settled in Eretz Yisroel in 1938 and years later joined the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudas Yisrael.

<https://yeshivavolozhin.org/rav-refael-shapiro/>



Rav Shalom Sofer Shulem Schreiber Rav of Brezhna (Adar II 23, 5689 / 1929 - 97th Yahrzeit)



Rabbi Shalom Sofer (1855-1929) was the Chief Rabbi in Berezne, Ukraine. His father Rav Yisrael Ephraim Fischel Sofer was *Av Beis Din* in Nanash and died in 1898.



Rav Boruch Pinchos Rabinowitz Skolya Rebbe, Otzar Hachaim (Adar 24, 5680 / 1920 - 106th Yahrzeit)



The Rebbe was sixth-generation descendant of both the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and the *Zlotichver Maggid*.

He traced his lineage to *Rashi*, *Maharal*, *Rema*, and the "*Sheloh*" (R. Yeshaya HaLevi Horowitz 1565-1630)

Skolye Beginnings: Skolye, a town in Western Galicia, Reb Baruch Pinchos, a *Ba'al Mofeis* (one who effects miracles) to whom Jews from far and wide flocked, made sure to devote time to his son, Dovid Yitzchok, a young prodigy, to develop his vast potential.

geni.com



Rav Shlomo Elyashiv Leshem Shevo Ve'achlama (Adar 24, 5687 / 1927 - 99th Yahrzeit)



The Kabbalist Rabbi Shlomo Elyashiv (1841-1926) learned in the Telz Yeshiva, was one of the greatest Kabbalists in Lithuania, and served as Rabbi of Siauliai and Hommel. In 1924 he immigrated to Jerusalem and was known as one of the greatest Kabbalists. He wrote the series of books *Leshem Shevo Ve'Achlama*. Rav Kook said about his books that "No such book of Kabbalah has been published since the time of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero." His grandson was Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv.

<https://winners-auctions.com/en/items/manuscript-of-the-kabbalist-rabbi-shlomo-elyashiv-author-of-the-leshem/>



Rav Yehoshua Menachem Arenberg Teshuvos Dvar Yehoshua (Adar 24, 5736 / 1976 - 50th Yahrzeit)

Born on the 12th of Teves (1904) in Kemece, Hungary, Rav Yehoshua Menachem studied in his youth under Rav Naftoli Hertz Bombach, *Av Bais Din* of Samvur, *mechaber* of *Givas HaLevona*, and later under Rav Meir Arik, *Av Bais Din* of Turna. He was awarded *semicha*

and ordained as a Rav and *posek* by Rav Horowitz of Provozhna and Rav Firer of Krasnu.

He married one of Sarah Schenirer's first *talmidos*, Hinda Leah Birnbaum of Cracow, and continued his studies there till the war. He was imprisoned in the Buchnia Ghetto and escaped to Slovakia, from where he made his way to Hungary. Together with his daughters he was among those saved on the Kastner train, arriving in 1944 in Switzerland in Caux.

He immigrated to Eretz Yisrael in *Elul* of 1945 and settled in Yerushalayim. In 1947, he was asked to serve as the chief Rav of the Cyprus refugee camps, and he stayed there till the camps were disbanded.

In 1949, he returned to Eretz Yisrael and was appointed chief Rav of Tel Aviv and Yaffo. He was Rav Unterman's chief advisor in matters of *Even Ho'Ezer* in which he was most proficient. He considered himself a *Belzer Chassid* and was very close with Rav Aharon of Belz.

When he passed away, Rav Aharon delivered the *hesped* in the *Belzer Yeshiva* on Aggripas Street in Yerushalayim and he was buried on *Har HaZeisim*. He left behind three daughters and six volumes of responsa, as well as a *sefer*, *Roshei Besomim*, on the *Roke'ach*.

Some of his *piskei halocha* include:

- It is *ossur* to return lands conquered by Yisrael in any way (Vol. II Siman 48);
- It is *mutar* to open bottles on Shabbos and *Yom Tov* (Vol. II Siman 45);
- Nowadays the *ikar mitzva* of lighting *Chanuka* candles is indoors and not outdoors (Vol. I Siman 40)

It is *mutar* to dance on Shabbos as is the *Chassidic* custom (Vol. II Siman 42;4).

Gedolim Be'Masayhem



Stories & Anecdotes

Rav Chanoch Henich Levine Choshvo Letova, Alexander Rebbe (Adar 18)

SICK OF MONEY AND FOOD

Rav Feivel of Gritza, (father of Rav Yechiel of Alexander) once approached the *Seraph of Kotzk* and said, "Good news! The wealthy Jewess Tamarel is supposed to arrive tomorrow and then we will have some money to relieve the abject poverty.

The Kotzker bellowed, "Money!!! *Fech* (Disgusting)!"

"From that moment on," related Rav Feivel, "money disgusted me so, that I simply could not handle any without becoming so nauseous that I almost vomited. It took me over six months before I was able to even touch money again without becoming sick."

Rav Chanoch Henich of Alexander once told *the Kotzker*, "Tonight I am preparing a seuda with fish and meat." The *Kotzker* thundered back, "Meat? Fish? Who needs those?! Bread and borscht are plenty!"

"From then on," admitted Rav Henich, "I could taste no flavor in any food save bread and borscht for the rest of my life. Every other food was loathsome to me, all except bread and borscht." When he traveled on Shabbos to the *Gerrer Rebbe, the Chiddushei HaRim*, he ordered that they cook borscht for Rav Henich so he could delight in the taste of *Oneg Shabbos*, otherwise what would he enjoy? (*Bais Kotzk* 29)

Rav Yechezkel Levenstein Reb Chatzkel (Adar 18)

THREE GIANTS OF EMUNA

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

YOU WOULD HAVE TO BE BLIND

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

ORDER AND INSANITY

Another *talmid* described how his room was situated above the lunchroom such that from his window he could see the *Mashgiach* walk on his daily route to the *Yeshiva*. The *Mashgiach's* daily routine was fixed: he walked straight past this *talmid's* window, never veering or even looking to his right or left, but walking straight to the *Yeshiva*. One day, the *talmid* noticed the *Mashgiach* stop, turn his head toward the lunchroom as if looking at something and only then did he continue on his regular routine. The puzzled *talmid* wondered what had caught the *Mashgiach's* eye. He didn't have long to wait before he found out.

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

I GOT BACK MY BITOCHON

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

“When I used to be the *Mashgiach* in the *Mir Yeshiva* I almost never received my monthly salary on time (because of the *Yeshiva’s* dire financial means or lack thereof). I trusted instead in Hashem and had *bitochon* that He alone would see to my *parnossa* from other sources. When I took up the position as *Mashgiach* in *Ponovezh* I began to receive my monthly salary on time and unfortunately I lost this level of *bitochon* in Hashem that I had regarding my *parnossa*. But now - *Chasdei Hashem* (thank G-d) - it is some eight months that I haven’t been paid (due to the *Yeshiva’s* staggering debts) and I now have my *bitochon* back in Hashem that He will send me my *parnossa* in another way, and this is why I am so happy and overjoyed! (*Otzros Rabbeinu Yechezkel*, p. 54-55)

HASHGOCHA PROTIS TRAINING

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

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

A SEVENTY-YEAR WARRANTY ON ALL MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

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

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

MIDDA KENEGGED MIDDA - MEASURE FOR MEASURE

In the days before the war, there were almost no private *Yeshiva* buildings; rather, the *Yeshivos* learned in local *shuls* and *Botei Medroshim* of the town or city where they were located. Once, one of the *gabbo'im* of the *shul* where the *Mashgiach's* *Yeshiva* studied was bothering and disturbing the *talmidim* of the *Yeshiva*. He disturbed the *talmidim* so often that his interference became simply unbearable. He constantly interrupted their studies – and one day he kicked them out of the *shul* in the middle of the learning *seder*! With no choice left, the *Yeshiva* relocated itself to a different town and *shul*.

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

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

They told Rav Chatzkel that it was on *Yom Tov* in the middle of *Birkas Kohanim* that his

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

When the *Mashgiach* heard this, he replied, "This is the story I have been expecting to hear for some time now. I knew that something like this must happen. Just as he did, so was done to him. When he expelled the *talmidim* from *shul*, I knew that *midda kenegged midda* - measure for measure - *Hashgocha Protis* would see to it that he too would be thrown out of *shul* one day." (*Otzros Rabbeinu Yechezkel*, page 77)

TEFILLA - SOUL FOOD

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

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

Rav Dovid Shapira Dinover Rebbe, Tzemach Dovid (Adar 19)

A HEALING HAND

Many have noticed that while the name Dovid is usually spelled, דוד *dalet, vav, dalet*, the name of the *Bnei Yissoschar's* son, Rav Dovid of Dynow is uniquely spelled as *dalet, vav, yud, dalet* - complete with a *yud*: דויד. The story behind this is as follows:

Rav Dovid of Dynow lay sick in bed and his condition was dire. His father, Rav Tzvi Elimelech entered the room and remarked:

“You know the *Gemara* in *Berachos* 5b tells us that when Rav Chiya Bar Abba was sick, he was visited by *Rav Yochanon* who gave Rav Chiya his hand and healed him while lifting him from his bed. Then when Rav Yochanon was sick, he was likewise visited by Rav Chanina who healed him by giving him his hand and lifting him out of his sickbed. When Rav Eliezer was sick in bed, Rav Yochanon visited him and offered him his hand. Taking Rav Eliezer's hand, Rav Yochanon lifted him out of his sick bed, and Rav Eliezer was healed.

“ Now, the Aramaic word for his hand is *yaday* which can be read as *yudei*. Your name is Dovid, which we find sometimes spelled in *Tanach* with a *yud*. So now I too give you a healing hand by adding the letter *yud* to your name - and it shall lift you up out of your sickbed!”

And so it was, thanks to his father, Rav Dovid was healed and he got up from his sickbed. From then on, he spelled his name Dovid with a *yud*: דויד.

(*Teshuas Tzaddikim* p. 455 in the name Rov of Nanash)

Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld Rav of Yerushalayim, Chochmas Chaim (Adar II 19)

RELIEF

A *talmid* of the greatest *Rabbonim* of Hungary, Rav Yosef Chaim came as a young man

together with his *Rebbe*, Rav Avrohom Shaag, to Yerushalayim, and at the end of his life he himself assumed the title of *Rav* of Yerushalayim. He steadfastly stood against the non-religious Zionists, whose aim and goal was to uproot *Yiddishkeit*. He collected for the poor, especially helping to marry young, impoverished couples to establish new Jewish homes.

Rav Yosef Chaim was also an expert *mohel* who had performed thousands of *bris milas*. He would often be found in *Sha'arei Tzedek* hospital checking the newborns before and after the *bris*. Once, the parents of a sick child approached Rav Yosef Chaim and begged the Rav to bless their son and *daven* for him, for the child was very sick and his life was in danger. Customarily in such situations we often add a name such as Alter, Chaim or Rephael, but Rav Yosef Chaim told them to add Hillel to the little boy's name. From now on he would be Moshe Hillel. Why Hillel? Rav Sonnenfeld explained that the *Gemora* always calls Hillel by the name Hillel HaZoken, "Hillel the elder" - and thus it too is a *segula* for *arichus yomim* (a long life). The young child recovered and was soon healthy, living to the age of sixty-five, the same gematria as the name Hillel (*heh*=5, *lamed*=30 and *lamed*=30).

Once, a distraught *kalla* and her upset parents arrived to seek Rav Sonnenfeld's advice. Rav Yosef Chaim had made the *shidduch*, and he was also very upset. It seemed that someone had spoken *loshon hora* and told the *kalla's* family that their future *chosson* had developed a speech impediment and was stuttering. The "proof" was that he was no longer seen during morning *seder* in *Yeshiva*, because he was embarrassed to be seen stuttering in public! The parents pleaded with the Rav, saying, "We could accept this as a decree from on high and continue with the *shidduch* for if it is Hashem's will, we will accept it, but the *kalla* is so disappointed, she refuses to continue with such a *shidduch* at all!"

Rav Sonnenfeld was very upset because he knew the *chosson* personally and he knew that he did not stutter. Furthermore, he knew the real reason for his frequent absences from *Yeshiva* during *sedorim*: he had an uncle, a *choshuve talmid chochom* who reviewed *Shas* daily. Sadly, his uncle had recently taken ill and was confined to his home and his eyesight had deteriorated. The *Yeshiva bochur* was visiting his uncle, helping him to review his learning and studying with him *Shas*, since his uncle could not read till he recovered.

“You have been told lies, falsehood and terrible *loshon hora* - worse than this, you and your daughter have accepted it as true. Therefore I myself can guarantee you that it is utterly false. Come back to me tomorrow and I will prove it to you!”

“*Kevod HaRav* - honorable Rav - please do not delay us another day. Our poor daughter wishes to know the truth; please don’t push us off!” begged the parents.

“*Chas vesholom*,” responded Rav Yosef Chaim. “I am not pushing you off with needless delay, rather I have not yet davened *Ma’ariv*, when we ask of Hashem - *Vesakneinu be’eitza tova milfonecha* - ‘please give us good advice,’ and therefore I will *daven* and give you a good piece of advice tomorrow.”

The parents returned the next day and Rav Yosef Chaim told them, “You have greatly sinned in hearing and accepting *loshon hora* from jealous, wicked people who obviously wish to ruin this *shidduch*. I shall now rectify the matter. The *kalla* must do *teshuva* for accepting such *loshon hora* as well. Her *teshuva* will be to dress up as an Arab washerwoman. Then she should approach the *chosson’s* uncle’s home and offer her cheap services to clean his home and wash his clothes. As she does this, she will be present and overhear the *chosson* herself. He will never recognize her, but she will hear as he learns and studies Torah with his uncle. This will demonstrate that he does not stutter and that the lies spread about him are slander and that this is the true reason for the absence from *Yeshiva*.”

All parties agreed. The *kalla* dressed up as an Arab washerwoman and did her duties in the *chosson’s* uncle’s home.

What relief! She cried pure tears of joy as she saw her *chosson* and heard his clear, strong voice articulate the *Gemora*. The *chasuna* was later celebrated with great *simcha*!

(*Ner Yehoshua*)

Rav Yoel Sirkis Bach (Adar 20)

THE SECRET HIDDEN TZADIK OF CRACOW

There is a well-known story that in Cracow, where the *Bach* was the chief Rav, there was a great, wealthy man who used to feed the poor in secret. Every week the poor of Cracow would come to the local butcher and baker and would be able to get free meat, bread and *challos*. No one in Cracow knew that the rich man was secretly funding this charity. In fact, to the outside world, the rich man appeared stingy and tight-fisted. When the charity collectors came around he ignored them (having given all his charity money to fund the poor people's food). He continued in this way for many years; no one knew his secret. The townsfolk assumed he was just a wicked, stingy old man. The wealthy man liked it better this way, since he knew that any honor he would have received in this world detracted from his heavenly reward for charity.

One day, the old wealthy man passed away. The *chevra kaddisha*, knowing his openly wicked ways as a miser, dug his grave outside the cemetery gates, a spot reserved for the wicked. Even the *shammash* of the gravediggers gave the corpse's backside a good slap and chuckled, saying, "Well, in your lifetime, you never gave any charity, so let's see you be charitable in the grave!" The townsfolk disparaged the dead man with jeering, booing and hissing, and he was buried amidst insults and dishonor. Meanwhile, in Heaven, his judgment was to go straight to *Gan Eden*, bypassing the *Soton's* accusations, for charity done in secret covers over all sins and iniquities, and further, he had shunned honor and suffered dishonor in death.

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

However, the *Soton* was given free reign to punish the townsfolk in Cracow for their dishonor of the truly righteous rich man. A great plague attacked the city and the death toll mounted daily. The city elders dispatched a representative to Rav Yoel Sirkis, *mechaber* of the *Bach* on the *Tur*.

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

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

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Adar I 20)

RAIN, RAIN DON'T GO AWAY

Rav Yitzchok Freiman once told how, on a very rainy day in Yerushalayim, walking side by side to *shul* at a quick pace, Rav Shlomo Zalman grew visibly tired. As he sidestepped puddles, a small sigh escaped his lips.

Quickly recovering himself, he said out loud, "May Hashem not hear the *tefillos* of the wayfarers and travelers - we want rain!" He then began to explain the *Gemora* that discusses this idea: "Why did the *Kohen Godol* daven to Hashem on *Yom Kippur* that He not accept the *tefillos* of wayfarers and travelers? Surely, if the traveler is a *Tzaddik* he will not daven for the rain to cease when it is needed. And if he is wicked his *tefillos* will anyway not be heeded? Rather, the *Kohen Godol* was worried about an *ehrlischer Yid* who won't actually ask for the rain to cease but might just sigh at the discomfort, because the rain might bother him at the moment. Such a small sigh from an *ehrlischer Yid* can cause a great stir in the Heavens - so take heed!"

THE NEW HADAS AND THE OLD MESORA

Rav Shmuel Havlin once related that one year there was a shortage of *hadassim*. They discovered that a certain type of *hadass* grew in many Yerushalmi gardens and it did fulfill the requirements; it was *meshulosh* and an expert horticulturalist verified that it was from the same genus and species as the *hadass* we use.

Who then could *pasken* this *sheila*? Only Rav Shlomo Zalman, a respected *posek* who

nonetheless did not shirk from *paskening* regarding modern technology and advances. The matter was presented to Rav Shlomo Zalman but he would not permit the use of the new type of *hadassim*. This *hadas*, he explained, is different from the one for which we have a *mesora* in *Am Yisrael*. Even if someone would argue that the *hadas* we use today is the wrong one, still we would prefer it over the new one. Why? Because the new one has no *mesora*. Better we all sit together with *Klal Yisrael* in *Gehinnom* than all alone in *Gan Eden*!

THE SIMPLE ROSH YESHIVA AND THE LEARNED TAXI DRIVER

Rav Dovid Nadav related an incident from 1984:

“When Rav Shlomo Zalman used to arrive as *Rosh Yeshiva* to deliver his *shiur* in *Kol Torah* he would often be flanked on all sides by *bochurim* who wished to catch a glimpse of him or ask a quick question. The *bochurim* noticed that the taxi driver was *zoche* to long conversations, sometimes lasting several minutes, before the *Rosh Yeshiva* exited the taxi. One day, the conversation lasted some ten minutes. We were jealous. What could the *Rosh Yeshiva* discuss for so long with the driver when we wanted his attention?

“I dared to have the *chutzpa* and approached the young, non-religious taxi driver and asked him what he and the *Rosh Yeshiva* discussed.

““What? You mean he is a *Rosh Yeshiva*?! I never would have believed it! I met him some years ago and he seemed like a nice old man and he asked and inquired about me, my family and background. When I told him I had once attended a religious school in my youth, he asked me if I remembered any stories from *Tanach*. I told him whatever I remembered about *Bereishis* and he seemed very interested. So each time I study stories and *Sipurei Mikra*, children’s books, and tell him stories about *Tanach* and he always listens and seems so interested that I always study more to tell him more stories. I would never have guessed he was a *Rosh Yeshiva*!”

ONE OF THE FAMILY

I once met a simple Jew who had emigrated from the former Soviet Union and who had no family in Eretz Yisrael. He and his entire family were permanent fixtures at all the *Auerbach* family *simchas*. When questioned how he was related, maybe a distant relative, he told the following tale of *Ahavas Yisrael*:

He had once met Rav Shlomo Zalman years ago and the Rav asked him about his background and family. When the young man admitted he had no family and was struggling all alone in Eretz Yisrael, Rav Shlomo Zalman said, "Listen, let's be friends! My schedule is packed and very busy, so let's arrange for you to meet and befriend my children. Then, when you attend our family *simchas*, we can also meet there and continue our joint mutual friendship!"

And so he befriended the Auerbach family and at each *simcha* he showed up with all his family as a relative. There he would happily meet and greet his "friend" Rav Shlomo Zalman. In fact, he became so much a part of the family that when his wife was due and gave birth early, he divided all his kids among the Auerbachs to stay - where else but with his new family?

(All taken from HaTorah HaMesamachas biography of Rav Shlomo Zalman, p. 276-280)

A GAON IN DEED

<https://jewishaction.com/tribute/gentle-giant-rabbi-shlomo-zalman-auerbach-ztl/>

It has been said that Reb Shlomo Zalman's everyday actions were as much a lesson to us as his scholarly discourses and halachic rulings. In this, too, "he was a *gaon*," writes long-time disciple, Rabbi Yehoshua Neivirt. He truly exemplified the injunction to behave in a manner which "would cause the name of God to be beloved on your account."

The parents of a retarded child came to Reb Shlomo Zalman to discuss institutionalizing him. When he asked what the boy said about the proposal, they replied that it had not occurred to them to ask him. Reb Shlomo Zalman was irate. "You intend to evict him from his home and consign him to a strange place with a regimented atmosphere," he told them. "He must be encouraged and not allowed to feel that he is being betrayed."

He asked to see the youngster and the parents fetched him. "What is your name, my boy?" the *gaon* asked.

"Akiva."

"Akiva, my name is Shlomo Zalman. I am the *gadol hador*, the greatest Torah authority of this generation, and everyone listens to me. You will be entering a special school now; I

would like you to represent me and look after all of the religious matters in your new home.”

The boy’s eyes were riveted to Reb Shlomo Zalman’s face and the awestruck parents sat with their mouths agape as the Rav continued. “I shall now give you *semichah* which makes you a rabbi and I want you to use this honor wisely.”

For many years, the local grocery store in Reb Shlomo Zalman’s neighborhood was run by a widow. To operate such a store consumed every ounce of the woman’s strength. Delivery vans would pull up at dawn and the truckers would deposit crates of milk and dairy products on the sidewalk. Later, the widow would drag them inside when she opened the store. One day, to her delight, she saw that the crates had been placed at the front entrance, considerably easing her workload.

This phenomenon recurred the following morning and continued day after day. One morning, the widow felt that she should thank the drivers personally, so she made a point of arriving at the store very early. However, to her amazement, when the vans appeared the men deposited her delivery on the edge of the sidewalk as they had always done in the past. Perplexed, she stood on the pavement wondering how the heavy crates had transported themselves to her door, when suddenly the figure of Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach appeared, *tallis* bag under his arm. One by one, he lifted the heavy crates, deposited them in front of the grocery store, and hurried off to *shul*.

Reb Shlomo Zalman once confided to Reb Meir Goldvicht that when he was young he was easily irritated. “So,” he explained, “I informed my fiancée as soon as we became engaged that I wished to establish a simple method whereby I would never come to anger. She agreed to give me her full support, whatever that method should be. Then, in the *cheder yichud*, when we were alone for the first time after the *chuppah*, I told her the method I had devised.” He concluded with a twinkle in his eye, “The method was that if we were ever to disagree about anything — she is right!”

After 54 years of marriage, the Rebbetzin passed away. At her funeral Reb Shlomo Zalman was heard to utter the following remarkable words: “It is customary to request forgiveness from the deceased. However, I have nothing to ask you forgiveness for.

During the course of our marriage never did anything occur that would require either of us to ask the other's forgiveness..."

When Rav Shlomo Zalman passed away, a beggar in *Sha'arei Chesed* sobbed in her anguish: "Now who will say 'good morning' to me every day?" (*Mi yagid li boker tov?*)

Towards the end of her life Reb Shlomo Zalman's mother-in-law lost her sight and she could no longer recite *Tehillim* as she had so loved to do in the past. Reb Shlomo Zalman taped the entire book of *Tehillim*, so she could continue her practice.

Shortly before he passed away he advised a young family member, "Learn well. Eat well. Sleep well. And always smile."

Dr. Abraham of Shaarei Zedek Hospital recalls that Reb Shlomo Zalman never disparaged an individual with whom he disagreed. He would merely say, "*Aich zeh yachol lihyot?*" (How can that be?)"

Though he was the greatest halachic authority of our day, and was particularly skilled at solving modern-day questions, Reb Shlomo Zalman abhorred any and all titles appended to his name. In his will, he requested that his headstone be no higher than that of his parents and he stipulated that "you may add to the headstone the following words. 'He developed disciples in the *Yeshiva Kol Torah* and disseminated Torah to the many.' Should someone wish to say words of eulogy, I strongly request that they be concise and not say words of praise about me."

Most of the vignettes above are adapted from the book by Hanoach Teller, *And From Jerusalem His Word*, distributed by Feldheim Publishers.

<https://jewishaction.com/tribute/gentle-giant-rabbi-shlomo-zalman-auerbach-ztl/>

Rav Moshe Yehoshua Hager of Vizhnitz, the Yeshuos Moshe (Adar 20)

SHABBOS IN LIZENSK WITH THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S CHAZZAN

The *Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz* related how the *Zaslover Chazzan* who served as the *chazzan* for the holy *Baal Shem Tov*, arrived one *erev Shabbos* in Lizensk to spend *Shabbos* with the author of the *Noam Elimelech*.

Reb Melech's *talmidim* were unsure of what to do: Should they honor the *chazzan* with the *amud*, allowing him to *daven kabbalas Shabbos*, or would this upset the holy rebbe's *kavannos* and disrupt his devotions? Their hesitation was soon to become irrelevant when the rebbe, Reb Melech himself, honored the *chazzan* to lead the *tefillos* and begin *kabbalos Shabbos*.

"Please for the sake of the *Baal Shem's* honor, would you be our *chazzan*?" asked the Rebbe Elimelech.

Rav Mordechai agreed.

The *chazzan* stepped up to the *amud* flanked by a choir that would accompany his melodious *tefillos*. As soon as the *tefillah* commenced, however, Rebbe Elimelech could not hold back. With great reluctance, the rebbe interrupted the *chazzan* and choir, "Please, I am sorry—it's just too much!" complained Rebbe Elimelech. "I cannot contain the *dveykus* this brings on!"

The *Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz* paused in telling of the tale to explain that the rebbe, Reb Melech couldn't withstand it because "it opened up for him new vistas in the supernal realms, so much so, that the great light that came from it was too strong to absorb!"

"After *kabbalos Shabbos*," continued the *Yeshuos Moshe*, "Rebbe Elimelech drew the *Zaslover chazzan* close but asked him to please not *daven* for the *amud* in Lizensk anymore.

"On *Motzaei Shabbos* as the *Zaslover chazzan* took his leave, the rebbe, Reb Melech asked him to relate some story about the holy *Baal Shem Tov*. The *chazzan* spoke of the

Baal Shem's love and awe in serving Hashem and specifically how his soul would experience an *aliyas neshama* - a state in which he would wander around supernal realms just we move around here below!"

"The *Zaslover* continued, 'Another aspect of the *Baal Shem Tov's* purity in *avodas Hashem* is his recitation of *Hallel*. We know that ordinarily, when we recite the *Hallel HaGadol*, each verse is recited by a specific angel. When the Holy *Baal Shem Tov* recited *Hallel HaGadol*, he waited first to hear how each *malach* recited each *pasuk*; only then would he himself repeat each *pasuk* after the angels had said them! '"

HE WAS NOT BORN AS THE BERZHONER RAV

The *Maharsham's* father, Rav Moshe, was a *talmid* of Rav Meir of Premishlan, and he himself received *semicha* from the *mechaber* of *Shoel UMeishiv* and from Rav Shlomo Kluger of Brod. The *Maharsham* also traveled to see many *Tzaddikim*, including Belz, Stretin, Zidichov, and Tchortkov.

The *Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz* related how his grandfather, the *Ahavas Yisrael*, sent his father, Rav Chaim Meir, to be tested for *semicha* by the *Maharsham*, the *Gaon of Berzhon*. He was not born as the *Berzhoner Rav* - he had to work at it, continued the *Yeshuos Moshe*. For example, every Shabbos he studied and completed the entire *Maseches Shabbos*. Do you have any idea what *chazora* on the entire *Maseches Shabbos* means? However, this is a case in point - the very fact that he reviewed it weekly caused him to know it so well by heart, like you and I recite *Ashrei!* That is how one must accustom oneself from the younger years to study and review. What was his greatness? He knew how to use his time wisely and how to use each opportunity to serve Hashem, his Creator. He would review his learning countless times - this is the way *Gedolim* reach greatness.

The *Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz* related how when the *Berzhoner Rav* grew old and lay on his sickbed, many great *Talmidei Chachomim* came to visit him. As they stood outside his room they began to discuss whether or not in today's times there was a *mitzvah* to give gifts of *Matnos Kehuna*. Hearing the heated discussion, the *Berzhoner Rav* turned to Rav Meir Shapira and asked what was being discussed. When he was told the topic, he replied, "This is answered explicitly by the *Darchei Moshe* in *Hilchos Mezuzah!*"

Upon hearing his words, they thought that in his old age his wisdom had dimmed and

senility had crept up on him, for why would such a topic be discussed in the laws of *Mezuza*?

When the *Berzhoner Rav* heard them continuing to discuss the matter, he asked if they had looked up the *Darchei Moshe*. When they did, they were astounded to see that he was correct! He then asked someone to bring a copy of his *Shulchon Aruch* and when it was brought they all saw written in his volume how he had reviewed the entire *Shulchan Aruch* four hundred times, when he began the cycle and when each review concluded! (Sarfei Kodesh Vizhnitz, p. 231-234)

THE HOLY SIDDUR HA'SHELAH

On Shabbos and *Yom Tov* the *Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz* davened from the *Shela HaKodosh siddur* that he inherited from the *Tzemach Tzaddik*. He used to say about this *siddur*, "I remember holding this *siddur* in front of my *Zeide* during *Nishmas!* Holy Jews held this *siddur* in their hands!" Once, when someone tried to hand him a different *siddur*, the *Rebbe* pointed toward the *Siddur Shela*, indicating his preference for davening from that *siddur*. He turned to the approbations and pointed out that which the *Tzaddik Rov Yoel Sirkis, mechaber of Bayis Chodosh - the Bach on the Tur -* wrote in his *haskoma*: "I promise that whoever davenes from this *siddur*, his prayers shall not return empty - and not remain unanswered!" (Sarfei Kodesh p. 350)

(Translator's note: I remember as a *bochur*, when I asked the *Sulitzer Rebbe, zt"l*, of Far Rockaway why he davened from the *Siddur Shela*, he showed me the same *haskoma* of the *Bach* and pointed out these holy words to me as well.)

Rav Eliyohu Shevet Mussar (Adar 21)

GIRDED WITH A SERPENT BELT

Rav Chaim Palagi told how once the *mechaber of Shevet Mussar* woke early one morning and rose to study Torah. When he put on his belt, he did not notice that he had in fact accidentally lifted a live, long serpent from the floor and tied it around his own waist! It was dark and he could not see, and so he simply tied the snake like a belt. In this manner, the *Tzaddik* sat himself down and studied Torah. As he sat shuckling back and forth in motion to the singsong words of learning, the knot became slowly undone and the snake

unwound itself and slithered off, miraculously, not biting the *Tzaddik*. To commemorate this miracle, Rav Eliyohu authored the *sefer Ezor Eliyohu* - "The belt of Eliyohu". From his holy works of Torah we can see that this story is not farfetched for someone of such stature, may his merit shield us! (*Tenufa Chaim*, by Rav Chaim Palagi, Shoftim 15)

Rebbe Reb Elimelech Weissblum Noam Elimelech (Adar 21)

KNOWING THE TZADDIK

The holy Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev once traveled with his *talmid*, Rav Aharon of Zhitomir, *mechaber* of *Toldos Aharon*, to the city of Lizensk. There they stayed together with Rebbe Reb Elimelech in his home. Rebbe Reb Elimelech questioned the Berditchever, saying to him, "Why are you stealing away all of my own *talmidim*?" (This was because many great *Torah* scholars left Rebbe Reb Elimelech to study under the Berditchever.)

The Berditchever answered Rebbe Reb Elimelech with humility, "*Vaymens bin ich den? Ich bin zich ayer talmid oich!* - And just whose *talmid* do you think I am? I am also your *talmid*! Thus, all my *talmidim* are therefore your very own *talmid's talmidim*!" With this humble answer, he was able to placate and satisfy Rebbe Reb Elimelech. Afterward, the Berditchever continued on his way to attend to some matters while his *talmid*, Rav Aharon of Zhitomir, remained behind and continued studying in Rebbe Reb Elimelech's *Bais Medrash*.

Rebbe Reb Elimelech did not realize this, and when one night he walked in and found Rav Aharon sitting there learning, he was surprised and asked Rav Aharon, "Why did you not continue traveling with your *Rebbe*?" Rav Aharon answered Rebbe Reb Elimelech, "*Mein Rebbe ken ich. Bin ich gebliben ba aych zu kenen!* - My *Rebbe* I already know. I remained behind to get to know you as well!" Hearing this, Rebbe Reb Elimelech got all worked up. He seized Rav Aharon and began to shake him by the lapels of his clothing and declared, "*Dein Rebbe kenstu? Afilu zein zhupstze kenstu nisht, bifrat im alein!* - You think you really know your *Rebbe*? Why, you don't even know his lapels, let alone really know him and how great he is!"

(*Avodas Levi*, page 98)

NOAM ELIMELECH ON EREV SHABBOS AFTER IMMERSING IN THE MIKVA

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow said, "On *Erev Shabbos Kodesh*, after immersing in the *mikveh* is when I can understand a shtickel of *Noam Elimelech*." (*Ohel Elimelech* 192)

THE TWO STRANGERS WHO ARRIVED IN LIZENSK WITH NO GARMENTS

Rav Moshe Lelover and his nephew Rav Noson Dovid Shidlovitzer were fast friends. Each year they exchanged gifts for Pesach: Rav Moshe of Lelov sent Rav Nosson Dovid wine and brandy for Pesach and Rav Nosson Dovid sent back *shemura matzos*.

One year the *shaliach* arrived from Rav Moshe of Lelov with the customary gift and as the *gabbai* counted out the payment, the *shaliach* requested a higher sum. "Pay him as he asks," answered Rav Nosson Dovid to the reluctant *gabbai*. After he was paid, the *shaliach* delivered the wine and brandy.

"The rebbe Reb Melech of Lizensk was sitting together with his circle followers, the *chevrya kadisha*, when two Jews appeared at the door of the *beis medrash*. Normally, guests were very welcome in Lizensk, but to the astonishment of the *chevrya*, their rebbe, the Noam Elimelech peered at the two guests and declared":

'Why look at that! Did you ever see such a peculiar sight? Two Jews with no garments whatsoever?!'

The *talmidim* were perplexed. What was the rebbe talking about? They scrutinized the visitors and try as they may, could not comprehend what their rebbe meant. As far as they could tell, the two strangers were dressed in typical garb just like anyone else.

But the rebbe calling out to the newcomers, 'You two come here. Tell me how can it be that you have no garments?'

'But rebbe,' protested one of the *talmidim* of the Rebbe Elimelech, 'they are dressed just like all of us are.'

'I see that you do not see what I see, answered the rebbe, 'I do not refer to material clothes. No, my dear *talmidim*, these two Jews are lacking their spiritual garments. They are naked of all *mitzvos*!'

'It's true!' cried the two guests in distress, "if the rebbe's holy eyes can see it, then it is unfortunately true!'

'Come now, explain what you could have done to divest yourselves from any spiritual garment whatsoever. What contemptible act could be the cause of your spiritual nakedness?' the rebbe pressed.

'Oh rebbe, it is due to our great sin," they declared, "for we have wronged the holy Rebbe Rav Michel Zlotshuver!"

"Aha! So, I am correct," continued the Rebbe Reb Melech. "Now explain yourselves; tell us what you have done to Rav Michel'eh Zlotshuver that could bring this kind of punishment?" This is what they told him:

'We two were once business partners in Zlotshuv. We had vast wealth, a large two-family mansion by the fortified wall in the wealthier section of the city; we were well off in all respects. We had a bookkeeper who he kept all our accounts. He preserved all our records and handled all the contracts and paperwork behind our business deals. He was also our neighbor. He owned a fine home that bordered our own.

'One day we set our sights on his house. We decided that we just had to buy it. That way, we could extend our living quarters and build a garden for our leisure and relaxation. We made him an offer and he flat out refused.

"Gentleman," he responded emphatically, "the answer is no. My home is worth at least six hundred gold rubles and your offer, though generous, does not interest me in the least. I am well off and content and I like my estate. I have no desire to sell and you too should be ashamed of your greed!"

'We were incensed. Who was he to tell us to be ashamed? Who was he to call us greedy? How dare he refuse our offer? We warned him that should he not agree we would terminate his employment and cease our business dealings with him.'

"That is blackmail! I will not cave in to extortion. Terminate my employment and I will open my own business; I have no fear of your threats!" This, we did; and so, he did. We

fired him and he opened a shop selling goods from his home. But the wheel of fortune turned backwards on our former bookkeeper and his business failed. Soon he descended into great debt.

'In order to pay off his debts and satisfy the creditors who kept calling to collect, he turned to friends and relatives for help. But soon his situation deteriorated even more and he was left utterly bankrupt .

'He asked his relatives to intercede with us on his behalf, asking if we would perhaps kindly re-employ him as before when he was our faithful accountant. We greedily saw our chance. We agreed on two conditions. First, that he come back to work at one third his former salary, and second, that he sells us his home at a third of the fair market value. Having no alternative, he agreed. He wrote up the contract of sale and we got ourselves a bargain! Or so we thought.

'He was clever; when he wrote out the contract, in place of the standard clause where it says:

"All this has been contracted **willfully without duress**," he wrote instead:

"All this has been contracted **against my will under coercion and duress.**"

We didn't bother reading the fine print. All we saw was that the price was as agreed. We signed the contract of sale which transferred ownership to our names.

'Before a month had passed, the accountant died. He had been so heartbroken and depressed that he had lost all will to live. In our wickedness, we rejoiced that now we could simply proceed with our former plans of demolition, expansion, and renovation. But a hitch in our scheme arose. The accountant's relatives began to arrive from far and wide to seek a claim of his vast fortune.

'It seems that his children and relatives all lived far away. They had not heard the recent turn of events. How he had been laid off and reduced to poverty? How he had sold his estate? They still believed that he had left them an inheritance worth coming to claim.

'The townsfolk introduced us to them as his former employers and the accountant's relatives began to search for his will along with the deed to his home.

"Why do you all search in vain?" we asked derisively. "Your dearly departed father left you nothing more than a few rubles; all his wealth was spent in paying off his debts and creditors." We then explained how he had been recently laid off and had failed in his new business venture.

"Where is the deed to his home?" they asked nervously.

"Sorry," we returned shaking our heads in mock sadness, "there is no deed. Here is the bill of sale. Your father sold us the estate for two hundred rubles of which virtually nothing remains after covering his vast debts."

'In disbelief they began to yell and accuse and we soon found ourselves seated across from them as defendants. They were suing us and we stood trial in the beis din of the Rav of Zlotshuv, Rav Yechiel Michel Zlotshuver. Rav Michel presided over our hearing. He was a saintly man-- a *tzaddik* and a miracle worker.

'The trial began routinely enough. The deceased accountant's children stated their claim to their father's inheritance and said that we wrongfully laid hands on his estate at a third of its market value using some form of chicanery .

"Well what do you say against the claim?" asked the Rav.

"Let us end this swiftly," we stated confidently and produced the bill of sale. "Here you have the contract, signed and dated. We are the owners of this property; the deceased sold it to us fairly."

'We handed over the contract and the rav scrutinized the wording. When he read the fine print, he pointed to the words: "All this has been contracted against my will under coercion and duress."

'Seeing this, the rav was indignant over the injustice.

“Is this what you call fair and straightforward !?” he thundered, pointing to the words of the contract. “This document is a sham; I have never seen such falsehood! This is ‘*sheker ayn lo raglaim* (falsehood has no feet to stand on’).

‘The Zlotshuver set his holy gaze on the offending clause as we sat stunned at what occurred next. The holy Hebrew letters-- having been falsely written in support of deceit—were unloosed from the page by the holy gaze of the tzaddik. The letters ascended heavenward until the contract was one blank white page. The tzaddik smiled.

‘Then in righteous anger he turned towards us and yelled: “So, you think you can fool me and make a mockery of this beis din and do the deeds of Lavan, the trickster and fraud?”

He emphasized the name “Lavan”, which also means “white” in Hebrew, as he shook the now blank white page before our eyes, and before all those in the courtroom.

“Do you take us all for fools? What contract is blank? What bill of sale is a plain empty page?” With that, he tore the contract up before our eyes.

‘The accountant’s children cheered and went to claim the estate. After we had recovered from our shock, it was we who were incensed. Instead of accepting the miracle we had witnessed as proof of the rav’s holiness and righteousness, we hardened our hearts and plotted revenge. Rav Michel of Zlotshuv would pay for what he had done-- embarrassing us in public and robbing us from our ill-gotten property. And so, filled with vengeful thoughts, we approached the duke with our plan.

‘We introduced ourselves as wealthy merchants from Zlotshuv.

“Your honor the duke.”

“Jews! Filthy Jews!” he frothed in anger, “That’s what you all are: thieves and liars. You are always stealing from me-- always claiming you cannot pay your rent; yet year by year you renew your leases. Annually, you request that I lower the rent fees because you cannot pay!”

‘This was exactly the opportunity for which we had been waiting, for in it, we saw our

chance to slander Rav Michel.

“Yes, your Excellency; that is why we are here. We know the cause and source of all your troubles and we have come to help his Excellency regain his wealth.”

“I am listening,” replied the duke.

“There is a Rabbi in Zlotshuv named Rav Yechiel Michel. It is he who runs the affairs of the Jewish community and it is he who rules that no Jew may compete with his fellow Jews in business. The rav is ruining free enterprise by suppressing all competition. In this way, he forces your hand since no Jew dares to bid against another Jew. That is why no one bids on renting your estates when another Jew already has the contract. In this way, they keep the same contract and pay less each year. With no threats to have them turn a profit or live up to your demands, they are secure.”

‘When the duke heard this he was enraged, “My tavern, inn, flour mill, and all my farms and holdings are all being run into the ground by this Rabbi?!”

“Yes,” we said, “and his injunction is the same in the entire district.” This incensed the duke even more.

‘The duke called together all the Polish noblemen, squires, and poritzim of the district to a lavish celebration to be held two months hence. The invitation included the spectacle of an execution—that of the local rabbi who was the root of all their financial losses.

‘We were overjoyed; soon we would be rid of the nuisance of a rabbi. Meanwhile, two Jewish merchants arrived at the duke’s estate to peddle their wares and the cook took a liking to a pair of earrings from the selection. The peddler, thinking that the scullery maids had surely heard some news that could be to his business advantage, decided to exchange the item for news. It was quite possible to learn of something useful about the duke’s business dealings that could turn him a profit.

‘He was stunned at what he heard as the cook began sharing the news about how their rabbi’s life was in danger.

“How can this be?” The peddler thought aloud. “Since when does the duke involve himself in the rabbis’ affairs?”

“Yes sir,” the cook nodded her head importantly, “all I’m saying is this-- the duke’s men have been busy preparing the household for a grand party. I’ve been cooking night an’ day to feed a hundred hungry nobles. And what’s more--the entertainment for the night is your rabbi’s execution!”

‘The horrified peddler was in a real dilemma. On the one hand, he was worried that this piece of gossip was nothing more than a fantastic story concocted by one of the more imaginative minds of the duke’s household. On the other hand, what if it was somehow true? He must rush off to warn the rav right away!

‘When he arrived though, he found that his way to the rav’s study was barred by the faithful *gabbai*. “Oh no you don’t; you can’t disturb the rav’s rest. He has just lain down for a well-deserved rest and here you come to bother him with some silly story. How can you believe that the duke would bother about the rav? Who ever heard such utter nonsense!?”

‘The peddler was convinced by the *gabbai*’s skepticism and having told his story, was relieved that the *gabbai* didn’t believe a word of it. He wished he had his earrings back. The *gabbai*, having deflected the peddler, was satisfied. The rav, however, had heard the commotion from inside his study. He had also overheard the entire story. At least now, he could be prepared.

‘Within two months, all the local noblemen, squires, *poritzim* and their wives, along with their entourages, arrived at the duke’s palace. We also came to witness the rav’s downfall firsthand.

‘The lavish party was a drunken spree of wild music, gluttony, and debauchery. The wild carousers jeered and called for the death of the rav as they stuffed their faces and poured mug after mug of beer and ale down their greedy throats.

‘Meanwhile the Jewish community sat in mourning, stunned at the turn of events, for the duke had sent an armed guard to escort their beloved rav to the palace for trial which was

like a death warrant. Not only was the rav's life in danger, they knew all too well that such events were followed by pogroms carried out by the local rabble of peasants. The Jewish community recoiled in fear from what awaited them should the duke carry out this malevolent act. The rav, for his part, walked calmly along, offering words of strength and comfort to his flock. "Keep the faith; hold strong. Have emunah and bitachon. Trust in Hashem's salvation!"

Meanwhile, the duke retired to his inner chamber. Fifteen halls, rooms and corridors lay between him and his rowdy guests. This was the law of the land-- that he who sentenced a person to death was not permitted to witness the execution. And so, the duke made his way to await the rabbi's fate. The executioner sat sharpening his blade and the duke's daughter stood waiting to view the event. Rumor of the rav's handsome features had reached her and she wanted to deliver a slap to his face before they would lop off his head.

However, all their wicked plans failed instantly.

"The rav arrived and ascended the platform. The executioner's axe was raised, the duke's daughter outstretched her hand and the crowd's eyes were fixed eyes on the victim, when suddenly they froze as if they had all been turned to stone. They stood petrified.

"The axe hung in its place above his head; the duke's daughter's hand halted mid-swing, and the jeering faces of the guests were fixed in their contorted expressions like gargoyles.

"This was the scene outside as the rav calmly walked from room to room, hall to hall, corridor to corridor until he reached the duke's inner chamber. He pushed open the door.

"Why is it so silent out there!? And who are you who dare to enter unannounced and unwelcome!?"

"It is I, your guest, Yechiel Michel of Zlatshuv," replied the rav.

"No, no it cannot be!" cried the duke in disbelief. He ran from room to room, hall to hall, chamber to chamber, screaming louder as he encountered each of the frozen figures from

the large gathering. When he came to his daughter, a wail escaped his constricted throat, “No! My beloved daughter, my only child! What has happened? What have you done to her; what have you done to them? Please, I beg you, honored, holy, rabbi-- reverse your spell and release them from your enchantment and I shall grant you anything: gold, silver, riches, honor and glory, anything! I shall reveal the identity of your accusers and have them hung in your place!”

“Hold your words,” declared the rabbi. I order you to release my accusers. Further, you are to utter an oath, a pledge to G-d, that from now on, you shall harm no Jew in your lands. Let them rent your property fairly and tax them fairly. Promise me that no Jew will come to harm and I will pray that your daughter and guests will return, to their previous states. For it is no spell, but the wrath of G-d Almighty Himself that has petrified these people and only He can release them.”

“Yes, I swear it” said the duke “please pray!”

‘Rav Michel davened and the people returned to normal. We were released and we ran away in shame. The holy rav had repaid our wickedness with mercy and we were reduced to the state you see before you. Our punishment on High was that we were left bereft of all good deeds and naked of any spiritual garments; all our *mitzvos* were taken from us.’

“Now you understand my disciples,” asked the Rebbe Elimelech, “why these two go before me with no garments of *mitzvos*?” Then he turned his attention to the men, “But you two have now confessed your crimes, admitted your guilt and expressed remorse. This is the formula for *teshuva*. I now declare that your path to repent has begun. No longer shall you wander naked with no garments of *mitzvos*. From now on, your *tikkun* shall begin and you will once again accrue *mitzvos* and good deeds. You will begin to dress yourselves anew, for your shame and repentance have been accepted by the Heavenly tribunal of *beis din shel maalah* through this confession. And I shall guide your way back to *teshuva* and *tikkun*.”

‘Having finished the story, Rav Moshe Lelover released me and let go of my hand. “You see” said Rav Nosson Dovid said, “I told you it was worth paying him extra to hear such a story as that. That is why Rav Moshe Lelover held your hand so long; he must have imbued you with all the details of the tale-- the vitality of its lesson coursing through his

hand to yours so that you could faithfully retell it all to us in detail, word for word.”

Hisgalus HaTzaddikim p. 43 cited in Ohr Zarua LaTzaddik intro to Aron Eidus pp. 87-92)

Rav Noson Duvid gave his beloved uncle a parting gift, a beautiful silver *kos shel beracha*. A handwritten engraving on the lip of the silver goblet asks his uncle to *daven* for him, his wife and two children: “Noson Duvid ben Golda for refuah for his eyes; his wife, Devorah Perel bas Yuta and their children, their son, Tzemach Baruch and daughter Sarah Yuta—may she have an easy delivery and healthy children.” A photo of this silver becher is in Toras Rebbe Noson Duvid p. 182.

EATING OUT OF THE SAME BOWL

The *Maggid*, Rav Boruch of Rika, was a *melamed* who hired himself out as a private tutor to teach Torah in the homes of various *Yidden*. He was being “interviewed” for a new position as private melamed in the home of none other than Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, *mechaber* of the *Kedushas Levi*. This is how Rav Levi Yitzchok checked out Rav Boruch: He had Rav Boruch undress and then Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev examined each limb of his entire body, one at a time, for any “flaws”! Only once he had gone over his entire body and found him flawless did he allow Rav Boruch to be a melamed in his home. After the year ended, Rav Levi Yitzchok requested that Rav Boruch tutor in his home the following year as well, with one condition: “You must eat with me from the very same bowl.” The *Maggid*, Rav Boruch, replied that such a condition required him to think the matter through.

At the time, the two holy brothers, Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizhensk and Rebbe Reb Zusha of Hanipoli were passing through and the *Maggid*, Rav Boruch, took the opportunity to ask their opinion. He explained Rav Levi Yitzchok’s condition to his employment, that they eat together from the same bowl, and Rebbe Reb Elimelech answered him thus:

It says in the pasuk: “And Aharon and all the elders of Yisrael, with the father-in-law of Moshe, came to eat bread before *Elokim*.” (Shemos 18:12) The *Gemora* asks: why does it say “before *Elokim*”? Didn’t they eat before Moshe? Rather, whoever partakes of a meal where Torah scholars eat together is as if he benefited from the shining rays of the Divine Presence. Now, asked the *Noam Elimelech*, why does the *Gemora* think that this is such a question? Obviously they did eat before Hashem, since the entire world is full of His glory.

The answer is that when one eats in the presence of a *Tzaddik*, his overbearing fear and awe of the *Tzaddik* overshadows the fear of Hashem. They feared Moshe - the Rav and *Tzaddik* - and thus their fear of Hashem was lacking. The *Maggid* understood from *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech's answer that it is better to forgo always constantly eating with such a *Tzaddik* from the same bowl.

SHABBOS IN LIZENSK WITH THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S CHAZZAN

The *Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz* related how the *Zaslover Chazzan* who served as the *chazzan* for the holy *Baal Shem Tov*, arrived one *erev Shabbos* in Lizensk to spend *Shabbos* with the author of the *Noam Elimelech*.

Reb Melech's *talmidim* were unsure of what to do: Should they honor the *chazzan* with the *amud*, allowing him to *daven kabbalos Shabbos*, or would this upset the holy *rebbe's kavannos* and disrupt his devotions? Their hesitation was soon to become irrelevant when the *rebbe*, Reb Melech himself, honored the *chazzan* to lead the *tefillos* and begin *kabbalos Shabbos*.

"Please for the sake of the *Baal Shem's* honor, would you be our *chazzan*?" asked the *Rebbe Elimelech*.

Rav Mordechai agreed.

The *chazzan* stepped up to the *amud* flanked by a choir that would accompany his melodious *tefillos*. As soon as the *tefillah* commenced, however, *Rebbe Elimelech* could not hold back. With great reluctance, the *rebbe* interrupted the *chazzan* and choir, "Please, I am sorry—it's just too much!" complained *Rebbe Elimelech*. "I cannot contain the *dveykus* this brings on!"

The *Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz* paused in telling of the tale to explain that the *rebbe*, Reb Melech couldn't withstand it because "it opened up for him new vistas in the supernal realms, so much so, that the great light that came from it was too strong to absorb!"

"After *kabbalos Shabbos*," continued the *Yeshuos Moshe*, "*Rebbe Elimelech* drew the *Zaslover chazzan* close but asked him to please not *daven* for the *amud* in Lizensk anymore.

“On *Motzaei Shabbos* as the *Zaslover chazzan* took his leave, the rebbe, Reb Melech asked him to relate some story about the holy *Baal Shem Tov*. The *chazzan* spoke of the *Baal Shem*’s love and awe in serving Hashem and specifically how his soul would experience an *aliyas neshama* - a state in which he would wander around supernal realms just we move around here below!”

“The *Zaslover* continued, ‘Another aspect of the *Baal Shem Tov*’s purity in *avodas Hashem* is his recitation of *Hallel*. We know that ordinarily, when we recite the *Hallel HaGadol*, each verse is recited by a specific angel. When the Holy *Baal Shem Tov* recited *Hallel HaGadol*, he waited first to hear how each *malach* recited each *pasuk*; only then would he himself repeat each *pasuk* after the angels had said them! ”

HOW THE OHEV YISRAEL BECAME A TALMID OF THE NOAM ELIMELECH

In the city of Zavanitz there were smugglers who would smuggle goods without paying the levied taxes and there was rampant desecration of the Shabbos. The *Apta Rav*, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, was greatly upset by their behavior and sharply rebuked them. Rav Shmelka, the son of Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov, wished to travel and visit the *Apter*, but since he hailed from Zavanitz he was worried that the *Apter* would ask him from where he was and, upon hearing that he was from Zavanitz, he would not let him even cross his threshold!

His friends advised him to completely ignore any questions about where he was from and simply to introduce himself as Rav Moshe Leib Sassover’s son. And so it was that when the *shamash* asked him who he was, he told him the son of the *Sassover*. When the *Apter* heard this he ran over to Reb Shmelka and greeted him warmly shaking his hand with both hands. He lit candles in his honor, donned finer clothes in his honor and seated him in a special chair reserved for honored guests shrugging off all protests, saying, “Why, but you are my *Rebbe*’s son!”

While Rav Shmelka was thus seated the *Apter Rav* told him, “Let me tell you a story about when I was the Rav of Kolbesov. I was back then a young man, an *avreich*, and I lived in the house set aside for the Rav. Now this house was vey large and my small family occupied only one wing. The winters were freezing and my salary was barely enough to feed us and certainly not enough to squander on heating such a large home. So, although it was furnished, we lived in only one wing.

I sat and learned *lishma*, sincerely for the sake of Heaven, and I had plenty of free time since it was a small city with few affairs that needed my attention or intervention. I often studied together with my son and as we were immersed in our studies *lishma*, nothing disturbed us. We were not *Chassidim*, and since our primary *avoda* was Torah study, we even looked upon their ways with disdain and counted ourselves as *Misnagdim* (opponents to Chassidus).

One day two anonymous travelers passed by and knocked at my window, asking if I had room for guests. "Why, yes," I answered, "the entire second wing is at your disposal."

They unloaded their luggage and made themselves at home. I noticed that they seemed like holy individuals and whatever conversations they had among themselves always sounded lofty and that they spoke about things pertaining to *Avodas Hashem*, yet I was too busy with my studies to take their "idle chatter" seriously. I thought that my *derech* (path) was correct and shrugged them off.

They were my guests for some three days and on the third day as they prepared to continue on their way they came to take their customary leave of me. One of them began to engage me in conversation and to tell me a story. I was greatly troubled since they were detracting from my learning and from my sincere Torah study, yet it would have been rude of me just to interrupt him and so I listened as politely as I could. When he finished the first story he began to tell me another one! At this point my hair stood on end. I was so disturbed at this waste of my precious time. When he finished, the other guest began to tell me a tale as well and the pain I felt was death itself! Finally, they finished the third story and left on their way.

Some three months passed and I found that I understood the meaning of the first story and that I had needed it. Some three more months passed and I found that I understood my need for the second story and three months later for the third story. I was shocked to see how they were able to understand what I would need and what would befall me over the course of this entire year.

I understood that this must be through *Ruach HaKodesh* and I hoped that Hashem would grant me another opportunity to reunite with these two holy individuals. Two years later I looked up out of the window and saw them both traveling past in their carriage. I could

not miss such an opportunity! I ran outside to catch them and draw their attention. I was in such a rush I did not dress myself in my coat or my *spodik* (the fur hat worn by important personages such as the town *Rav*) and I ran in my shirt after their coach, chasing it across town. When I finally caught up with them near the inn I asked them in between catching my breath as to their destination. "We are *headed* to Lizhensk, to the *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech," they explained.

"Can I join you?" I asked.

They agreed on the condition that I go to the market while they davened and get some provisions for the journey such as some rolls, bagels and butter. I completely forgot myself, town *Rav* or not, and in just my shirt I went and bought the bread and butter. When I returned, they had finished their *tefillos* and told me to hurry and get ready. I quickly ran home, got dressed, grabbed my *tallis* and *tefillin* and jumped into their carriage.

"We are taking you to the Rebbe Elimelech," they explained, "since we can tell that your soul's root is bound to his."

And so they did. The Rebbe Elimelech became my mentor and I became a *talmid*. Those two holy *Tzaddikim* were your father, Rav Moshe Leib Sassover, and Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev.

Afterward, Rav Moshe Leib would often say that he should get *shidduch* gelt, a broker's fee for making the match between the *Apter* and the Rebbe Elimelech. To this the *Berditchever* responded, "And I should get double your fee since I also brought the Rebbe Reb Elimelech and the Rebbe Reb Zusha to the *Maggid* of *Mezritch!*"

(*Kisvei Rav Yoshe* #11 p116; *Devorim Areivim* II #2 p. 53-54)

HOW THE ROPSHITZER EVENTUALLY BECAME A TALMID OF REBBE REB ELIMELECH OF LIZHENSK

The following tradition was related by Rav Avigdor, the *Av Beis Din* of Novo Sanz, who heard it from his grandfather, the *Divrei Chaim*:

When the two *Tzaddikim*, Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizensk, and his brother, Rebbe Reb Zusha of Hanipoli, were wandering together in self-imposed exile, they suffered extreme deprivation, going from place to place like beggars, sleeping on benches in the *Bais Medrash*, often fasting for lack of food, simultaneously loving and drawing their fellow *Yidden* to *teshuva*, *Ahavas Hashem* and *Ahavas Yisrael* wherever their holy feet led them. This journey served as a *kappora* for all *Klal Yisrael*, as well as to perfect themselves, and lasted some nine years. Toward the end of their travels they ended up in Linsk for *Shabbos*.

The *Rav* of Linsk was the renowned *Gaon*, *Rav Mendel Linsker*, the father of *Rav Naftoli Ropshitzer*. The two holy brothers came dressed in rags and tatters, and this is how they appeared in the *Bais Medrash* of the *Linsker Rav*. No one took any notice of them all *Shabbos* long. No one invited them to partake of a Friday night meal and they were reduced to eating whatever crumbs of bread they carried in their packs. The same scenario repeated itself *Shabbos* day and at *Sholosh Seudos*, when they drew close to hear the *Divrei Torah*. They thought it was strange that no one took any notice or invited them at all and wondered at this fact even as they drew close on *Motzo'ei Shabbos* to hear the *berocha* of *Havdola* and recite *borei me'orei ho'aish* on the candle.

It was then that the young lad *Naftoli* laughed at them and poked fun, calling them silly names. "Ha! Ha!! *Meleich - Freilich*, and *Zisha - Kishya!!!*"

His father, *Rav Mendel Linsker*, turned to the two holy brothers and remarked, "You think I don't recognize you or know who you are? If I had wandered in self-imposed exile as long as you two, my face would look better and more radiant than yours! You would do better to rectify the world by eating more than by fasting!"

He gave them three coins for charity and sent them on their way. When they examined the coins, they discovered them to be three silver francs, a princely sum indeed. They were worried that this was a mistake, but Rebbe Reb Zusha exclaimed, "Wait, the *Rav* told us to serve *Hashem* by eating. Let's see if this money is enough to purchase all the food we need, then we can give back the change; if not, we will know it's no mistake." They spent an additional year this way in *golus* and when they again stopped in Linsk, the *Rav* snapped his fingers and said, "Now you have succeeded in fulfilling my intentions!"

Later, the Rebbe Elimelech became well known as a great *Tzaddik* and *Rebbe*. When the *Linsker Rav* passed away, his son Rav Naftoli wanted to travel to Rebbe Reb Elimelech and study under him and become his talmid. He was deterred, however, by the memory of how he had poked fun at the *Tzaddikim* as a young boy. Nonetheless, after some hesitation, Rav Naftoli decided to approach Rebbe Reb Elimelech, ask his forgiveness and to ask the *Rebbe* to accept him as a *talmid*.

The Rebbe Reb Elimelech had the ability to know from Wednesday on who would be his upcoming guests for Shabbos. As soon as Rebbe Reb Melech felt that Rav Naftoli was traveling to Lizhensk for Shabbos he warned his *gabbo'im* and his *shamash*, "When the *Ropshitzer* arrives, do not let him into my rooms without my express permission!"

When Rav Naftoli arrived in Lizhensk, the *shamash* came straight to Rebbe Reb Elimelech to report on his arrival. When Rav Naftoli approached the threshold, Rebbe Reb Elimelech stopped him from entering through the doorway, and declared, "Here comes the son of that murderer!" and he slammed the door in his face, barring his entry. At that moment the *Ropshitzer* fainted.

Rebbe Reb Elimelech gave him some brandy to revive him and sent him on his way. The *Ropshitzer* took the remaining brandy with him and went to the *Bais Medrash*. There he found a throng of Chassidim in heated discussion about an upcoming *simcha*, a wedding to take place that evening between two orphans. The problem was that the *chosson* lacked a *tallis* as his gift and there were no drinks or food to be had! The *chasuna* was in danger of being canceled.

When Rav Naftoli heard this news, he went into town and, since he was from a wealthy family, he had no trouble borrowing some money and purchasing other goods on credit. Quickly he bought all the missing items: a new *tallis* for the *chosson* and food and drinks for the wedding feast! Soon the *chosson* and *kalla* were brought in and the *Ropshitzer* set a lavish banquet before them. Then he got up and stood himself on the table in front of all assembled and he began to recite badchonus - grammen, rhymes, jokes and all manner of witty and clever songs and dances to bring cheer to the crowd and a smile to the lips of the *chosson* and *kalla*! Everyone was overjoyed and there was great *simcha*!

(The *sefer Ayala Shelucha* describes one of the *gematrias* that Rav Naftoli employed

during his *badchonus*, how he blessed the couple that their union should be beautiful and good - *der zivug zol oleh yafeh.*)

Meanwhile, Rebbe Reb Elimelech was expecting Rav Naftoli to come back, but after waiting he told his *shamash* that he had no choice but to daven *Maariv*, even though he could see it would not be successful. He then said that he would eat supper, but delayed in favor of reciting *Tikkun Chatzos*, mourning the destruction of the *Bais HaMikdosh*. However, this *tefilla* too was unsuccessful and Rebbe Reb Elimelech was left dissatisfied with his unsuccessful attempts at *Maariv* and *Tikkun Chatzos*. The *Rebbe* was downcast and he reasoned that if both his *Maariv* and *Chatzos* had failed, perhaps he was guilty of some wrongdoing.

“There is a *chasuna* tonight; perhaps boys and girls are engaged in mixed dancing or some other sinful behavior and I need to protest,” he reasoned. “Please go and see if anything improper is going on and report back to me,” asked the *Rebbe* of his *shamash*.

Meanwhile, the *Ropshitzer* had dressed up as a hunchback and used flax to make himself a long, silly beard, and he stood disguised on the table engaged in *badchonus*, rhymes, jokes, dancing, and playacting. The *shamash* did not recognize him, but Rav Naftoli recognized the *shamash* all right! He jumped off the table, grabbed the *shamash* and began to dance with him until the *shamash* felt all his bones mending and straightening out. The *shamash* felt a great spiritual bliss and was drawn in, mesmerized by the performance, standing transfixed with no desire to go back.

Seeing that the *shamash* had left and not returned, Rebbe Reb Elimelech decided, “I must go myself and see what needs to be done!” When the *shamash* saw Rebbe Reb Elimelech approaching from afar, he quickly ran out to him and said, “Please, *Rebbe*, don’t go in there. It’s not honorable for your stature - there is some crazy lunatic in there who grabs random newcomers and dances with them on and on. Surely he will grab you too, *Rebbe!* Also, there is no improper behavior at the *chasuna* itself. Hearing these words, the *Rebbe* turned to go back home.

In the morning, the *Ropshitzer* barged through Rebbe Reb Elimelech’s door and asked, “So, *Rebbe*, how was your *Chatzos* last night?”

"*Naftultshe*, how do you know about my *chatzos*?" countered Rebbe Reb Elimelech.

The *Ropshitzer* answered, "We were together on high; they forbade Your Honor to enter, yet I was allowed access. The reason I was given a pass to enter is because I made everyone happy at the *chasuna* and in *shomayim* they did not want your mournful *Chatzos* to disrupt the *simcha* of the wedding." (*Gan Hadasim* p. 7-10)

BADCHAN EXTRAORDINAIRE

When Rav Naphtali Ropshitzer first came before the Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizensk author of *Noam Elimelech*, the *rebbe* sent him away and said he wasn't looking for *meyuchasim*, those of illustrious lineage. Rav Naphtali was very brokenhearted and he cried as he left. Just then his ears caught notes of joy and music. He inquired after the songs and merriment and found himself at a *Yiddishe Chassunah*. As was the custom the wedding needed a *badchan* to tell jokes and make everyone happy. Rav Naphtali used his wit and clever ways to use joke and rhyme to compose grammen and to delight and enrapture the audience and bring joy to *Chosson* and *Kallah* with words as *Rashi* on *Berachos* 6b explains.

Meanwhile the holy Rebbe Reb Melech was trying to recite the lamentations of *Tikkun Chatzos* and something was preventing him. Something was holding him back. He sent his *shamash* to seek out the disturbance, perhaps somewhere in the vicinity there was a sinner and a criminal whose tainted deeds were holding his prayers back? The *shamash* searched to no avail. He back empty handed. The *rebbe* was undeterred and he sent him forth again to seek and search, this time he came upon the wedding and in the midst of the celebrations he spotted the same *yungerman* who his holy *rebbe* had cast out. This must be the cause of the *rebbe's* disturbance. He went back and reported to the Rebbe Elimelech that surely the *yungerman's* jokes and frivolous banter was what was obstructing his prayers. "No, you and I have it all wrong," explained the Rebbe Elimelech as realization dawned on him, "this *yungerman* has caused all the entire heavenly hosts on high to delight and rejoice in the *simcha* of *Chosson* and *Kallah*. Therefore that is why my sad lamentations are unacceptable on high. This is why I cannot recite *Tikkun Chatzos* for making them happy is like rebuilding one of the ruins, the very same ruin mentioned in *Berachos* 3a, there it says that in the ruins a voice like a dove calls out and cries Woe to My children, because of their sins I destroyed My house, burned My sanctuary and dispersed them to be exiled among the nations! And now though when there is such joy,

who can cry and lament at a time like this!” ended the Rebbe Elimelech. (as heard from R’ Moshe Weinbach *shlit’a*, *Mashpia Ruchani* of Clevelander Shul - Beitar Elite)

THE LIGHT OF THE REBBES GARTEL

Related by the rav of Madin, a grandson of the Ropshitzer:

Rebbe Elimelech had a custom that after the afternoon *minchah* service he would converse with his close followers. He would then proceed to a special private room to pray the evening *ma’ariv* service in seclusion, purity, and sanctity. Rav Naftali Ropshitzer, a disciple of the *Rebbe*, yearned to also be in that room. He constantly wished to observe the deeds of his *Rebbe* and so wanted to see how he prayed there. Once, he stole into the room unnoticed and hid beneath the bed. The holy *Rebbe* entered and closed the door behind him. He took out his *gartel* and proceeded to fasten it about himself.

The first time the *Rebbe* wound the *gartel* about his waist, the entire room was filled with an awesome unbelievable light. The second time he tied the *gartel*, the light grew in intensity until the *Ropshitzer* could no longer endure it. He grew weak and found himself feeling faint. He could not help himself and called out in a loud voice. *Rebbe Elimelech* heard the cries of distress coming from his disciple and recognized their source. “Naftali, my son, are you here?” the *Rebbe* asked. “Fortunately you did not remain here for the third and final time I wound the *gartel*. If you had remained, your soul would have surely left your body from the intensity of the great light.”

(*Eser Tzachtzachos* 27; *Ohel Elimelech* 248)

THE DEVEIKUS OF REBBE ELIMELECH

The son-in-law of the *Rebbe* of Dzikov once related that the holy master Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz was eating *shalosh seudos* with his teacher, the *Noam Elimelech*. He sat at the table, observing the *Rebbe*, and realized that if Rebbe Elimelech continued in his state of rapture, his soul could, Heaven forbid, expire and leave his body. The *Ropshitzer* banged on the table and said jokingly, “The verse says that Hashem will turn to us from His place in mercy. One can ask: Are there brooms in Heaven with which to sweep?” (The Yiddish expression *kehern*, to turn, is the same word used for sweeping with a broom.) “The answer is that the verse simply means that He should turn from His place with mercy.”

This witty remark disturbed the *Rebbe*, for it had interrupted Rebbe Elimelech's state of rapture. Rav Naftali Ropshitzer, not wanting to face the *Rebbe's* disapproval, fled, running from the table back to his lodgings.

Rebbe Elimelech sent someone to call him back. When Reb Naftali returned, Rebbe Elimelech said to him, "How dare you interrupt my state of *deveikus* and ecstasy!"

Reb Naftali told his holy teacher, "We still need the *Rebbe* to remain here in this world."

Rebbe Elimelech realized that his *talmid's* intentions had been honorable and said, "*Yasher ko'ach!*" and he honored the *Ropshitzer* with leading the *bentching*.

(*Devarim Areivim*, p. 21; *Ohel Elimelech* 300)

THE GENERAL OF GEHINNOM

The *Dzhikover's* custom was not to draw out the third Shabbos meal too long into the night. One of the chassidim was in Krenitz and was an eyewitness to this custom:

He told how as soon as three stars appeared, they would bring candles to the *Rebbe's* table (because the *tisch* was conducted in the dark) and the *Rebbe* related, "rebbe, Reb Elimelech used to conduct his *sholosh seudos* long, long into the night. Once, a general came to the *rebbe's* *tisch* and tried to press *rebbe*, Reb Meilech to end the *seuda* and *daven Maariv*, but the *rebbe* paid him no heed. Because this 'general,' in fact, was the minister of *gehinnom!* But *rebbe*, Reb Elimelech did not fear him. I, however, do fear him, so I said, 'Bring *mayim acharonim* and let's *bensch!*'" (*Mareh Aish* #117)

ADAM'S SIN

The *Rebbe* Reb Zisha once asked his brother, "My beloved brother, in the holy writings it is written that all the souls were once included and contained in Adam, the first man. If so, we must also have been there at the moment he sinned and ate from the tree of knowledge. Why didn't we prevent him from doing so?" The *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech answered him thus: "Brother, we were obliged to let him eat the fruit. If he had not, the serpent's lie would still stand and would never have been proven false. The serpent said to him, 'Your eyes will open and you will be as Hashem, knowing good and evil and able to create worlds.' This is why Adam had to eat the fruit - once he did so, he saw that even

though he had eaten of the fruit, he was still just a human being and no more.” (*Ohel Elimelech* 272)

THE WEDDING AT THE INN

When the two brothers the *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech and the *Rebbe* Reb Zisha were wandering disguised as beggars in self-imposed exile, they spent the night in a kretchma, an inn, in which a wedding was being celebrated. The two brothers were among the poor people who had gathered to partake of some of the food, as was the custom in those days. The wedding guests were a rough and crass bunch. Their spirits were merry from drink, and they began to poke fun at the unfortunate poor people. After each round of dancing, they summarily snatched up a poor man, threw him to the ground, and honored him with a string of abuse. Then they would start another round of dancing, throw the poor beggar once more to the ground, and treat him to another round of slaps and punches.

Since the *Rebbe* Reb Zisha was sitting nearest to the crowd, he was the honored recipient of the abuse. Rebbe Elimelech, sitting in the corner, was left alone while his hapless brother suffered the brunt of the abuse. In truth, Rebbe Elimelech was quite jealous of the suffering his brother had merited, for he was being given the opportunity to atone for his sins. He decided it was his turn to receive such an “opportunity.” He waited until Reb Zisha was sitting down after another bout of abuse and the crowd was busy dancing. He whispered into Reb Zisha’s ear, “My beloved brother, let us switch places. Sit here on my seat and I will sit on yours, and then you can rest a bit from the beatings you have received.”

They quickly switched places, and the rowdy group came again to snatch their victim. They were about to drag the *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech for a beating when one of the group shouted, “It isn’t fair to keep beating only this guest. Let us take that one who is sitting in the corner and honor him with a few blows so that he will be sure to remember this wedding!”

Sure enough, they once more grabbed the poor Reb Zisha from the corner thinking that he had not yet tasted a beating. After they had finished, the *Rebbe* Reb Zisha said to his brother, “See, my beloved brother, whoever is destined to be struck will be struck wherever he sits. They seek him out and deal him his due portion.” (*Ohel Elimelech* 177).

HOW HASHEM GIVES TZEDAKAH

The holy *Tzaddik*, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, the *Apta Rav*, once told how Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizhensk was once his guest and spent the night. The *Apta Rav* said, "During his stay, I gave him his own room. I once entered his room and observed and overheard how the Rebbe Elimelech sat and began to recite and review his actions. He was tallying his deeds and misdeeds and trying to calculate whether he deserved a portion in *Olam HaBa*, and this is what he said to himself:

"*Nafshi, nafshi!* O woe is me, my soul, my soul! You are unworthy of *Olam HaBa!*' He proceeded to list all his shortcomings and then attempted to comfort himself:

"Even if you are truly unworthy, never fear - still Hashem, in His infinite mercy and kindness, will grant you a portion in *Olam HaBa*, because our sages taught (*Sota* 14a) that Hashem Himself fulfills the entire Torah: He comforts mourners, marries off brides and grooms and does acts of kindness and charity. Now *Olam HaBa* is not physical, so there is no food or drink there, so how can Hashem fulfill acts of charity there? Rather, He acts charitably by granting even such unworthy people as ourselves a portion in *Olam HaBa*; He gives them this portion as a gift and a charitable act."

GREAT REWARD FOR A GOOD DEED

Once Rebbe Reb Elimelech was on his way to the *mikve* accompanied by another Jew, when he heard a heavenly voice call out, "He who helps Rebbe Reb Shmelke overcome the wicked people in Nikolsburg will be assured a portion in the World to Come!" Rebbe Reb Shmelke had suffered terribly at the hands of some of the local residents. Rebbe Reb Elimelech asked the fellow who was with him if he had heard anything. The man had not. The Rebbe said to himself, "Since I heard this myself, it is a sign that I must journey to Nikolsburg." He set off for Nikolsburg, and when he arrived he went straight to the house of Rebbe Reb Shmelke and asked him permission to give a discourse in the *shul* and rebuke the congregation. "And what good will it do for you to scold them?" Rebbe Reb Shmelke replied. "They will accept no *tochocha*." But Rebbe Reb Elimelech insisted, and finally Rebbe Reb Shmelke gave in and granted him permission.

Rebbe Reb Elimelech went to the *shul*, where many people had gathered to hear his discourse, and he began to lecture. It seemed he had set out to prove to them how several sins listed in the Torah could actually be permitted. This type of speech was quite to their

liking, and it whetted their palates for more. And so it was announced that Rebbe Reb Elimelech would speak again in the *shul* the next day, and the congregation returned in droves; almost the whole town showed up to hear the discourse.

This time Rebbe Reb Elimelech proceeded to prove to them how false were yesterday's proofs and how all the sins in the Torah are quite grave and it is forbidden to transgress even the slightest of prohibitions of the *Rabbonim's* enactments and decrees. His words stirred feelings of repentance and regret in their hearts until they began to cry. "Our own Rebbe [referring, of course, to Rebbe Reb Shmelke] told us these truths, only we refused to listen to him. We must all go to beg his forgiveness and make amends."

They went to their Rebbe and fell on their faces, begging for forgiveness. They promised to listen and heed his words from then on - now that Rebbe Reb Elimelech had proven to them that their Rebbe's words were true.

Having accomplished his mission, Rebbe Reb Elimelech asked to be granted leave from the Rebbe Reb Shmelke and he left town.

When he left Nikolsburg, he heard another heavenly voice proclaim, "Since you have aided the Rebbe Reb Shmelke, we grant you that anyone you bless within the next twenty-four hours shall be blessed."

Rebbe Reb Elimelech walked and walked for almost a whole day, and yet he did not encounter a single Jew to bless. The Rebbe cried before Hashem, "Here You have given to me this gift for twenty-four hours and whom will I bless with it?" Suddenly, he saw a woman walking in the field and immediately he began blessing her. She became frightened and fled. The *Rebbe* called after her, "Do not be afraid! I am not an evil man, Heaven forbid. Tell me: where are you from and what is your occupation?" She stopped running and answered his questions, then allowed Rebbe Reb Elimelech to finish blessing her and they each went on their way.

When the woman arrived home, she told her husband about the stranger and his blessings. Sure enough, their fortune turned for the better, and their standard of living grew until they were quite wealthy. Seeing the result of the *Tzaddik's* blessing, the couple believed that this man had been Eliyahu HaNovi in disguise, for they saw with their own

eyes that all their handiwork was blessed. This couple established a fine home with servants in the city, and the wealthy man gave his servants permission to distribute donations up to a gold dinar without even consulting him.

Time passed, and Rebbe Reb Elimelech and his brother Rebbe Reb Zusha were traveling together, collecting charity to free captives, when they heard about this wealthy and charitable man. They traveled to his city and called on him, and his servants came to give them a donation. They refused the amount the servants offered, though they were being offered a golden dinar. They insisted on seeing the affluent man himself.

When they entered the rich man's home, his wife saw them and recognized Rebbe Reb Elimelech. She was so overcome that she fainted, causing a great commotion in the household. When she came to, she told her husband that this man was Eliyahu HaNovi who had blessed her several years earlier.

Rebbe Reb Elimelech immediately declared that he was not Eliyahu HaNovi, and he had not come to take away their wealth, Heaven forbid. On the contrary, he was happy to see that his blessings bore fruit. The wealthy man asked them how much they needed to collect to redeem the captives. "Five hundred coins," they said. The rich man left the room and soon returned with the entire sum. But they refused his generous gift, saying that they wanted to let other Jews have a hand in the merit of this great *mitzva*.

After much entreaty and pleading by the rich man, they accepted from him half the amount.

(*Sichos Tzaddikim* 17).

THE REBBES SOUP

Rav Mendele Rimanover was one of the four main *talmidim* of the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk.

Before Rav Mendele Rimanover was revealed as a *Tzaddik* and Rebbe possessing *Ruach HaKodesh*, divine intuition, he appeared at Rebbe Reb Elimelech's table as just another Chassid, a regular devoted follower.

One Shabbos, the *Rimanover* was sitting with all the other Chassidim when the *shamash* brought in the Rebbe's soup and placed it in front of the Rebbe. The Rebbe took the bowl of soup in his hands, overturned it, and spilled its contents onto the table. Suddenly gripped with fear, the *Rimanover* shouted, "Oy! Rebbe! Surely they will put us all in jail. You must stop immediately!"

The other guests almost burst out laughing at hearing such strange remarks coming from Rav Mendele, but they restrained themselves in the presence of their holy Rebbe. Rebbe Reb Elimelech said to Rav Mendele, "Relax, my son, we are all safe. We are all here right now." The others were astonished at the Rebbe's remarks until Rebbe Reb Elimelech explained what had transpired that had led him and Rav Mendele to say what they did.

A high-ranking government official had decided to pass a harsh decree against the Jews. He had tried many times before, unsuccessfully, to write out charges and have the king stamp and seal them with his ring. Today, he wrote out the charges once again, determined that this time nothing would stop him from carrying out his wicked plan. He was about to use sand to blot the ink and dry it when I overturned my soup bowl. The official became momentarily confused, picked up the inkwell instead, and proceeded to spill ink all over the accusatory letter he had just written! This young man," the Rebbe concluded, indicating Rav Mendele, "was able to witness what I did, but only by divesting himself fully from the physical world. He forgot that we were in fact here in this room. He imagined that I had actually used my hand and physically overturned the inkwell. He became frightened, and in his terror he called out, for fear that we would be arrested for my actions." Now everyone understood how lofty a level of *Ruach HaKodesh* this young man could perceive. (*Ohel Elimelech* 185)

Once, Rav Mendel of Rimanov told his teacher, Rebbe Reb Elimelech, that he actually saw the *Maloch* who removes the light before the darkness and the darkness before the light (as described in the first *berocha* of the *Ma'ariv* service). The Rebbe Reb Elimelech responded, "But I have already seen this *Maloch* in my youth!"

(*Ohel Elimelech* 156).

AN AUTHOR PAR EXCELLENCE

A Rav once asked the Rebbe Elimelech if he was engaged in writing anything or authoring

a sefer [called a chibur, which also means “connection” or “attachment”]. “I have been in the process of authoring something and putting together something - a chibur - for some forty years now,” replied the Noam Eliemelech, “but it’s still not finished.”

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

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

HALLEL ON PARSHAS BESHALACH

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

As soon as the *Noam Elimelech* began to say Torah, the *Kaliver* jumped up away from the table and began to run to and fro in the entire house, singing *Hallel* at the top of his voice! Everyone present was very surprised by such aberrant behavior. Afterward, the *Kaliver* explained himself: “When the *Rebbe* said Torah about the weekly *Parsha*, I was infused by such excitement and it set me aflame with such *hislahavus* that I imagined myself to be in the midst of offering the *Korban Pesach* - and so I sang *Hallel!*” (*Ohel Elimelech* #274)

MIRACULOUS HANDS TO ATONE FOR THE VERY FIRST SINS

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

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

Hearing this the Rebbe was greatly troubled. He quickly went over to the stove where the flames were merrily crackling beneath a pot cooking something suspended above the fire.

“The hand that sinned shall be burned!” declared the Rebbe, aflame with emotion to atone for his infantile misdeeds and childish misdemeanors, and, to the horror of all present, the Rebbe Elimelech burned his hands in the fire!

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

ESCAPE FROM GAN EDEN

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

TEARS OF TESHUVA

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

A SHTICKEL EMES!

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

THE TEFILLA OF THE NOAM ELIMELECH

The *Saba Kadisha* of Radoshitz, in his *sefer, Niflaos* (volume 1, pages 21-22), recorded an amazing story about the formulation of the *Noam Elimelech’s* “Prayer Before Praying”. The story goes like this:

When he was a child, the *Saba Kadisha* was once visiting Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk. He was talking with Chassidim from the Rebbe’s inner circle in front of the *Rebbe’s* home when several extremely tall men came and hurried into the house. When

they reached the doorway, they had to stoop down to enter since they were so unusually tall. The holy *Rebbe* closed the door behind them before the Chassidim could catch a glimpse of their faces. They waited outside until the visitors left to see if they could recognize them. Again, the Chassidim were astonished when the men left. They did so in such a hurry that they could not make out the men's features and just saw their backs; they left so fast they almost vanished. The Chassidim realized that something unusual had just taken place, and they decided to investigate and find out what had occurred.

The elder Chassidim among them approached the *Rebbe* and asked him to explain the strange incident. This is what the *Rebbe* told them:

“When I realized that most people cannot concentrate properly on their *tefillos* anymore due to the awesome burdens of earning a livelihood, and they lack the time and the understanding to concentrate fully, I decided to rewrite the standard formula for the *tefillos*. I would write a new, short and concise version that would be equally understood and grasped by everyone.

“The holy Members of the Great Assembly, the *Anshei Knesses HaGedola* (the original authors of the standard *tefillos* from the time of the Talmud), realized what I intended. They came here to ask me not to change even one *tefilla* from their established formula. I took their counsel and discussed the matter with them. They advised me to establish a *tefilla* to *daven* before the formal *tefilla* service. This would help anyone who lacks the concentration and proper devotions that are necessary for all formal *tefillos*.” This “*tefilla* before *tefillos*” is the *Yehi Rotzon tefilla* printed in many *siddurim* in the name of *Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk*.

(*MiPeninei Noam Elimelech*, p. 315).

THE DAY THE YETZER HARA RETIRED

When the two holy brothers, the *Rebbe* Reb Melech and the *Rebbe* Reb Zisha wandered together in self-imposed exile to rectify the world and bring *Yiddishe kinder* to *teshuva*, they once entered an inn and found a group of elderly, idle Jews who sat around drinking and playing cards. Seeking to rouse their hearts and awaken them to *teshuva*, Rav Elimelech turned to Reb Zisha and said to him, “Zisha, *zog!* Say something!” Reb Zisha knocked on the table to get their attention and told them:

“*Rabbosai*, you should know that the *yetzer hora* quit his job and retired!”

“Why did he quit?” they asked.

Reb Zisha explained, “Once, the *yetzer hora* went to *Gan Eden*, and there he saw all kinds of *neshomos* of sinners and wicked people. In life, all these people were the *yetzer’s* gang, always living a *krum* lifestyle. When he saw them in *Gan Eden*, he wondered how they got there! He was told that they had done *teshuva* and mended their ways, and so they no longer belonged to him. Now their place was in *Gan Eden*.

“If so, all my hard work is for nothing,” he complained. “I spend all my time tricking people to sin, causing them to stumble and transgress, and here they just go and do *teshuva* and become upstanding, reputable citizens of *Gan Eden*! That’s it! I quit!” And he retired. In his place a different angel was given the job of testing and trying to tempt others to sin.

Later, the former *yetzer hora* met the new one and asked the angel how his job was going. “Oh, my job is just fine,” answered the new *yetzer hora* smugly.

“How come you are so satisfied?” wondered the old *yetzer hora* aloud. “If you expend all your efforts and hard work to get people to sin and transgress, and then they just go and do *teshuva* and escape off to *Gan Eden*, what’s the point, eh?”

“Oh, that’s easy,” answered the new *yetzer*. “You see, I am smarter than you and I learned from your failures. Your mistake was that you went after the younger generation. Those youngsters have their whole lives ahead of them and so they have plenty of years left to do *teshuva* and go to *Gan Eden*. I go after the elderly people with no time left. Idle, sinful old geezers like these...” and so saying, Reb Zisha pointed at the throng of card players, having got his message across. “They,” concluded the new *yetzer*, “have no time left to do *teshuva* and you’ll never find them in *Gan Eden*. They will die wicked! (Needless to say, they internalized the message, did *teshuva* and escaped the *yetzer’s* clutches as well!) (Otzar HaSippurim, Volume III - Chapter 10)

THE HEAVENLY HEALER THAT PAID A HOUSE CALL

Elazar Nissan was the only son of Rav Moshe Teitelbaum of Uhjel, author of *Yismach*

Moshe. When Elazar Nissan was nine years old, he fell precariously ill. The *Yismach Moshe* and his wife watched with growing despair as their child burned with fever while the doctors gave little hope for his recovery.

The *Yismach Moshe* decided that his son's life was dependent on the *tefillos* of someone greater than himself. He appointed two faithful Jews as his emissaries and sent them to Lizensk to beseech Hashem in the merit of the tzaddik, the Rebbe Reb Melech. "When you arrive at the *beis hachaim*," Rav Moshe explained, "say out loud that you vow a *neder* to give a coin to *zedakah* for the sake of the *neshama* that will approach the holy soul of the Rebbe Reb Elimelech on High.

Tell him that we have arrived to *daven* to Hashem at his *tziyun*. What will happen," explained Rav Moshe further, "is that your vow will stir up all the *neshamos* that are hovering near the *tziyun*. They will each wish to deliver the coin to the holy tzaddik for charity since, in the world of truth known as *olam ha'emes*, the merit of a *mitzvah* is a very precious and valuable asset. Therefore, all the *neshamos* will vie to be the one that succeeds in reaching the Rebbe Reb Elimelech first and having the coin's merit be ascribed to their own *neshama*. After this all transpires, you can approach the *tziyun* of the Noam Elimelech and *daven* there for my son's *refuah*." The *Yismach Moshe* then added: "Please pay attention to your watches and note the time when you *daven* at the *tziyun* so we can compare the timing when you return." The *shluchim* listened carefully to the *rebbe's* request and started on their way as agents to fulfill the request.

Sometime later, the child awoke from his feverish dreams and called out: "*Tatty Tatty!*" When the *Yismach Moshe* hurried over, young Elazar Nissan told him: "From now on I will get better, I won't be sick anymore and I will get up out of bed and be healthy again!" Overjoyed, the *Yismach Moshe* asked, "my son, how do you know this?" "Because *Tatty*," explained the child, "just this very minute a great *rebbe* came to see me." He then described perfectly just how the Rebbe Reb Melech looked. "He gave me a *berachah* that I would get better and be healthy from now on!"

The *Yismach Moshe* checked his watch. Off course when the *shluchim* returned and they compared notes, the time of the child's miraculous recovery and the time that they were *davening* at the *tziyun* matched exactly! (*Tehillah L'Moshe*)

NO CHIDDUSH

The *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz once told Rav Shimon Sofer of Cracow regarding his father the *Chasam Sofer* that:

“It was no *chiddush* that your father the *Chasam Sofer* was so great and holy and rose to such heights when he had a rebbe such as Rav Nassan Adler.

Regarding whom I heard from my own rebbe Rav Naphtali of Ropshitz who heard in turn from his rebbe the Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizensk author of *Noam Elimelech* who said that ‘for many years a soul such as Rav Nosson Adler’s had not descended to this world besides the soul of the *Baal Shem Tov*.’”

THE QUESTION THAT RAV AVROHOM AZULAI POSED TO THE NOAM ELIMELECH

The author of *Chesed L’Avraham*, Rav Azulai, asked Rebbe Elimelech after they had already entered the higher worlds, “How is it that I authored ten *sefarim* and merited that they are even studied in the heavens, but at the mere mention of the name of the Rebbe Reb Elimelech, there is a great tumult in the heavens? What did you do to merit this?”

Rebbe Elimelech answered, “Every erev Shabbos, my household was full of such awe that even the maids would fall down crying and begging each other for forgiveness saying, ‘Forgive me if I offended you all week long!’ They would cry and forgive one another as people do on *erev Yom Kippur*. This great feeling of awe emanated from me because of my awe of the approaching holy Shabbos day.” (Ohel Elimelech 197)

THE GREATNESS OF REB ELIMELECH

Rav Shmuel of Karov was originally from Neustadt near Cracow when he heard of the Rebbe Elimelech and travelled to study under him.

When he initially arrived the Rebbe Elimelech rebuked him saying “I can smell the stench of something rotten coming from you!” Rav Shmuel was at first taken aback and greatly offended. But after hearing his new rebbe and mentor repeat this rebuke several times over during the weeks he spent in Lizensk, Rav Shmuel began to review his own deeds. He decided that surely he had some character flaws and that the moral failing that his rebbe meant must be arrogance and false pride. Then after he began to work on this flaw

the Rebbe Elimelech drew him close.

At the time there was a cholera epidemic that plagued the region and Rav Elimelech sought a *segula* to end the plague.

One of the local villagers had an older daughter. Aged thirty six that he was unable to marry off due to his poverty and inability to provide her with a suitable dowry.

He approached the Rebbe Elimelech and since there was a well known *segulah* against plagues and epidemics to marry of the poor, indigent and orphans, Rav Elimelech proposed a match and made her a *shidduch* with the water carrier who was a thirty year old orphan.

The Kozhnitzer Maggid grabbed a fiddle and the Chozeh from Lublin cracked jokes acting as a jester and badchan to entertain the assembled at what was to be sure a wedding never to forget.

Rav Elimelech turned to Rav Shmuel and said to him, "come let us go together to *simchas chassan ve'kallah* and lets make the groom (*chosson*) and bride (*kallah*) happy."

As they stood they heard the grammen - the rhymed couplets of Yiddish prose and verse that the Chozeh of Lublin used to entertain the dancing guests.

Rav Elimelech asked Rav Shmuel of Kariv "Can you see how the fire dances and swirls surrounding them all?" When Rav Shmuel replied in the negative that he could not see it, "here you must have some speck or dirt clouding your vision," so saying Rav Elimelech took out his handkerchief and proceeded to clean and rub Rav Shmuel's eyes. Then Rav Shmuel saw for himself how the fire danced around the merrymaking partygoers and dancers!

Then the tzadik himself joined the dance and Rav Elimelech danced for longer than an hour!

He then declared "*Chessed veEmes*" is the same *gematria* and has the numerical value of *Chassan* and *Kallah*!

Then Rav Elimelech davened: "*Ribono Shel Olam* - Master of the World! In the merit of our dancing *mitzvah tantz* may we merit to put out at least one fiery coal that was prepared for us in *Gehinom!*"

(Ohel Elimelech 153)

A TRUE STORY REGARDING RAV ELIJAHU BAAL SHEM OF CHELM

Rav Moshe Duvid Shtrum of Tarnov once told how Rav Shimeleh Zelichover *HY"D* the famed mashgiach of Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin once entered the beis medrash of Rav Aryeh Leibush of Sanz and he asked the yungeleit that were gathered there a question: He asked them "why is that Rav Aryeh Leib does not recite *LeDovid Hashem Ori*, whereas in Shinuva (the son of tthe Divrei Chaim) they do recite it?! (the Divrei Chaim also did not recite it) they had no answer and he so told them "I will tell you a true story regarding Rav Eliyahu Baal Shem of Chelm:

"There was a decree of expulsion from the local squire, he was childless and he ordered all the Jews there to pray for him to have children and if they failed he would expel them all from his environs. Rav Eliyahu Baal Shem promised him a son within 12 months." The holy Rav Yisrael Baal Shem Tov retold this tale to his disciples and he told them "don't think that this came easily to Rav Eliyahu Baal Shem. At first Rav Eliyahu turned to the forces of holiness and when this failed he turned to the forces of darkness from the other side when this too failed, he laid his own life down on the line and turned to the leader of all the forces of evil himself," the Baal Shem Tov concluded "and as a punishment for forcing the hand of Heaven as it were, so to speak, don't assume that he was punished by sixty flames, instead he was told that he would lose all his *nefesh, ruach* and *neshama*, however since he laid his life down and self sacrificed himself to save the Jews, instead the heavenly decree was that two of the enacted prayers that he had instituted and they were: the recitation of *LeDovid Hashem Ori* and the second was the recitation of *KeGavna*."

Rav Shimeleh Zelichover concluded: "it is known for example the Rebbe Reb Meilech of Lizensk did not recite *KeGavna* whereas the Apta Rav the Ohev Yisroel did not recite *leDovid Hashem Ori* (in this manner the talmidei HaBaal Shem kept up the tradition of reciting these tefilos enacted by Rav Eliyahu Baal Shem while still the decree was fulfilled)."

(cited from Nezer HaKodesh Minhagei Ropshitz pg147)

Rav Aryeh Leibush Halberstam (Adar 21)

A TRUE STORY REGARDING RAV ELIYAHU BAAL SHEM OF CHELM

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(cited from Nezer HaKodesh Minhagei Ropshitz pg147)

Rav Chaim Chaike Chaim V'Chesed (Adar 23)

DIRTY RAGS FOR THE KING

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

Once upon a time there was a king who employed a troupe of royal weavers and tailors. The craftsmen had the job of tailoring, sewing and fixing all the royal garments. Each one was given a different garment that needed tailoring, fitting, sewing and some other work. Whatever garments they finished that day were then handed over to the king's wardrobe. There was one servant, explained Rav Chaikel, who was incompetent and lazy; instead of fixing and tailoring the king's garments, he ruined them and reduced the beautiful clothes to rags! At the end of the day each tailor brought his fixed garments to the king's wardrobe for safekeeping. The king sat on his throne and as each beautifully tailored garment was presented, shining and dazzling, the king smiled, nodding his approval, until the turn came of the lazy, incompetent servant. He arrived holding a bundle of rags and deposited them before the king for his wardrobe, overcome with such shame and disgrace [that he fainted!](*Sippurei Chassidim*)

YIRAS SHOMAYIM

Rav Yitzchak Isaac of Kormana said that Rav Chaika of Amdur's *Yiras Shomayim* was so great that all his hair fell out, leaving him bald ! He also said this in the name of Rav Herschel of Zidachov, who used this concept to illustrate a *pasuk* in *Parshas Tazria* (*Vayikra* 13:40): "If the hair of a man's head falls out, he is bald and pure". If all of a man's hair falls out because he fears *Hashem*, he is surely pure, because this is indeed a lofty level, just like Rav Chaikel of Amdur!" (*Nesiv Mitzvosecha, Nesiv Emuna, Heichal HaBerocha, Ki Sisa*)

A FIERY ANGEL

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

Rav Yitzchok Meir Alter Rotenberg Chidushei Harim (Adar 23)

AYIN TOVAH

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

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

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

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

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

"And what have you accomplished by this feat of worrying for just a minute?" his wife

demanded.

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

HE IS JUST LIKE HIS NAME

Rav Alexander Zisha of Platzk and Rav Feivel of Gritza were colleagues, they studied together in the *yeshivah* of Rav Yaakov of Lisa, author of *Chavas Daas*. They became disciples of the *Chozeh of Lublin*. One day they brought the *Chiddushei HaRim's kvitel* to the *Chozeh* who remarked upon reading the name on the note, “He is just like his name, Meir: he shines all of the worlds with light!” From then on, the *Chiddushei HaRim*, the founder of the *Gerrer* dynasty, held himself a disciple and *talmid* of the *Chozeh*. (*Meir Einei haGola* pp. 54-55, 144)

A TZADDIK IS BORN

Rav Avrohom Mordechai Alter of Warsaw was the *Chiddushei HaRim's* eldest child, and, like all the other children of Rav Yitzchok Meir of Ger, he was unwell. The *Chiddushei HaRim* had lost all his other children and now Rav Avrohom Mordechai, just thirty years old, was sick again; death was calling at his door and it looked like he would succumb and leave the world with no son as his heir. The doctors had given up hope, and it seemed like Rav Avrohom Mordechai was already in the final throes of death, when his childhood friend, Rav Yaakov Arye of Radzimin, leaned over and whispered in his ear, “I have one piece of advice left for you, my dear friend: ask Hashem to grant you life, long enough to merit having a son you don't yet have!”

The *Chiddushei HaRim* also approached the sickbed and told his dying son, “You must know that it is a *mitzva* to desire to live, as it says, ‘Choose life - *uvocharta vachaim!*’ Please, my son, strengthen yourself - choose life and get well!”

Rav Avrohom Mordechai strengthened himself and with Herculean effort and his last strength, he sat up and cried out, “*Ribbono Shel Olam*, please grant me the gift of life so that I can have a son - I shall name him Yehuda, as it says, ‘This time - *odeh es Hashem* - I shall thank G-d!’”

A miracle occurred and Rav Avrohom Mordechai recovered! The next year, he did indeed

have a son, and with Rav Chaim Meir Yechiel, the *Seraph* of Mogolintza, as his *sandak*, the baby was brought into the bris of Avrohom Avinu and named “Yehudah Leib” as promised! Rav Avrohom Mordechai told his wife, Esther, “I named him Yehuda and he will cause all the hearts of *Klal Yisrael* to praise and give thanks - *lehodos LaShem!*” The *Sefas Emes* used to say about himself, “My father named me Yehuda, which means “thanksgiving”, because he was healed from his sickness in my merit, and I feel this within me as well; each day and night I never tire of ceaselessly giving thanks - *lehodos LaShem!*” (*Marbitzei Torah BeOlam HaChassidus*, Vol, II p. 83-84)

Rav Shalom Sofer Shulem Schreiber Rav of Brezhna (Adar II 23)

“WHO APPOINTED YOU A MURDERER?”

“Just look how his hands are shaking,” one *shoichet* pointed out to his friend, one of the other *shoichtim*. His friend just shook his head in silent agreement. It wasn’t the elder *shoichet*’s fault; he had simply reached a venerable old age, and as old age set in, so did rheumatism, and trembling hands. One thing the townsfolk agreed on: they no longer trusted the *shoichet*’s unsteady hands; they wanted him to retire. But the *shoichet* had his pride and refused to be forced into retirement. He and the townsfolk reached an impasse, with neither wishing to yield.

In the middle of the dispute, a new rabbi arrived—and with him, new hope for the resolution of the town’s problem. Rav Sholom Sofer (scion of the illustrious family of the *Chasam Sofer*) was hired to replace their recently retired rabbi. At the time, he was but a *yungerman*, a young *avreich* lacking the authority to remove the old *shoichet* from his position. Yet, as each side became more entrenched in their opinion, *machlokes* took over the town. Distinct feuding lines were drawn with some supporting the respected, but elderly *shoichet*, and others opposing him because of his shaky hands.

“How can you dare retire our beloved *shoichet* who has dedicated his life to ensuring that we eat kosher meat? Have you no shame?” argued one side.

“How can you not retire an old *shoichet*? It is precisely our dedication to kosher meat that forces us to replace someone whose hands tremble and can no longer serve as a competent *shoichet*! Have you no *yiras shomayim*?” argued the other side.

The new Rav, observing the controversy decided to speak with the *Shoichet*. He advised him as follows: "Look, my good *shoichet*, you see how bitter this dispute is. I am on your side; I don't think there is any substance to their complaint. As a new rabbi here however, I lack the authority to take any concrete action to help you keep your position and put an end to the *machlokes*. My suggestion is that you go to the *gaon*, Rav Moshe Yosef Teitelbaum of Uhjel and ask him to test your abilities. Once he sees that your abilities as *shoichet* have not deteriorated, he will surely write you a letter of approbation. He will attest to the fact that the meat is kosher and that will settle the matter!"

The *shoichet* agreed and left for Uhjel.

When the *Uhjler Rav*, Rav Moshe Yosef Teitelbaum saw the *Shoichet*, he saw for himself how unsteady his hands were. Yet, he was unwilling to embarrass the elderly man. The rav suggested the following:

"I don't have time this minute to sit and write up the letter. I have an idea; you go back home and as soon as I have the time, I shall write up a letter and send it straight to your rabbi, Rav Sofer back in Brezhna where you live."

The *shoichet* agreed and returned home.

Some time passed and the *yohrzeit* of the *Yismach Moshe* approached. When Rav Sholom Sofer made his way to Uhjel for the *yohrzeit*, he stopped in to visit Rav Moshe Yosef as well.

"Well, well, I owe you a letter," apologized the *Uhjler Rav* to the *Brezhner Rav*, Rav Sofer. "Please check what has happened to the letter you wished me to compose." He pointed to a stack of papers on top of which lay letter rendered illegible due to a great blot of ink smeared all over it.

"Let me tell you the story of this letter: When I met your *shoichet* and I saw firsthand how his hands shook I realized I should write to you. Still, I didn't want to shame the poor old man so I sent him home and promised to send you the letter. When I finally sat down to write the letter and address it, I fell asleep. As I slept, I had a dream. In my vision I saw my venerable *zeide*, the holy *Yismach Moshe* who questioned me in consternation:

“If they are searching high and low across the whole country for a murderer, someone who wishes to harm the livelihood and to shame an old man, spilling his blood, couldn’t they find anyone better than you?”

When the vision ended, I awoke with a start and the ink pot tipped over and ink spilled over the freshly written letter and ruined it, just as you see it here. I took this as a sign that I was not to be the one to send you this letter. Therefore, I haven’t sent you anything until today.” (*Teshuas Tzaddikim* p. 511)

לעילוי נשמת לזכר עולם יהי' צדיק



התנא רבי חנינא בן דוסא

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

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

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