

# ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



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

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

EMOR

❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

## Dvar Torah

### The Role of Food

Only the *Kohanim* are permitted to eat *kodashim*, the holy meat of the offerings. But why are ordinary Jews forbidden to eat from it? It would seem that the holiness of the meat would be a reason that all people in a state of purity should be required to eat it in order to be uplifted. Why then are they forbidden to eat it?

The answer, explains Rav Levi Yitzchok, lies in a parable. A crowd of citizens pressed forward at the gates of the palace, all of them begging to be granted an audience with the king. The guards admitted a few citizens and dismissed the others.

"Why can't we see the king?" they shouted. "Why let the others through but not us?"

"The ones I let through," said the guard, "were wise people. They know how to behave once they enter the chamber of the king. But the rest of you are just a bunch of roughnecks. You may know what you want from the king but you do not have the wisdom to speak to him with the proper honor and respect. If you behave like buffoons in the presence of the king, he will be offended, and you would be guilty of a serious crime."

The *Kohanim* were bred to have the wisdom to conduct themselves properly in the presence of *Hashem*. *Hashem* therefore gave them an extra measure of sanctity so that they could eat from the offerings. But the rest of the people, who do not necessarily possess this kind of wisdom, were not endowed with the additional sanctity that would permit them to

eat from the offerings.

That is why the *Torah* tells us (*Vayikra* 22:16) that if the Jewish people other than *Kohanim* eat of the offerings “they will upraise (*vehisi’u*) the sin and guilt if they eat of the offerings that were sanctified ...” Their eating of the offerings will increase and upraise the sin and guilt, because they will have made themselves interlopers in the palace of the King, a place where they do not belong.



## Story

Food meant much more to Rav Levi Yitzchok than just something to eat, something to provide sustenance for the body. For Rav Levi Yitzchok, eating was an intense spiritual experience. Food was a medium of divine service.

Rav Yitzchok of Nezhchiz, who was married to Rav Levi Yitzchok’s granddaughter, often shared the meals at his grandfather-in-law’s table. One time, he sat at Rav Levi Yitzchok’s table on *Erev Yom Kippur*. Before the meal, Rav Levi Yitzchok related some profound and inspiring *Torah* thoughts. As he spoke, two tears emerged from his eyes and rolled down his cheeks.

“Now we can begin to eat,” he declared. “Please bring in the fish.”

The attendant brought in a platter of stuffed fish. Rav Levi Yitzchok took a small bite and said, “Just as this fish is filled, so may it be the will of *Hashem* to fulfill the desires of our hearts for the good.”

He then took a small taste of the *yoch*, the jelled liquid in which the fish had been cooked, and once again making a play on the Yiddish words, he said, “This *yoch* reminds us that *yachel Yisrael el Hashem* – the Jewish nation yearns for *Hashem*.”

With increasing joy, he did the same for each morsel of food brought to him, finding some allusion in it to the relationship of the Jewish people with *Hashem* and a reason for *Hashem* to accept their *tefillos*.

This was his attitude toward his own food. When it came to food for others, however, he enjoyed nothing more than providing them with the material benefits of food. His home was always open to guests, and his hospitality was legendary. In fact, on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*, he invited his *Chassidim* to join him at his table, and many of them took advantage of this offer.

The cost of serving full meals to so many people every week was excessively high, but Rav Levi Yitzchok never took money from anyone. He bore all the expenses from his own pocket.

“But your pockets are not that deep,” the *Rebbetzin* objected. “We are deeply in debt because of your generosity and hospitality. Why can’t you ask the *Chassidim* to share some of the expenses? I’m sure they would be glad to share the cost. Why don’t you just ask them?”

“It’s not so simple,” said Rav Levi Yitzchok. “The *pasuk* says (*Bamidbar* 28:2): *Es korbani lachmi le’ishai* – ‘My offering, My bread is for My fires’. The word *le’ishai* – ‘for My fires’ – can also be read as ‘for My people’. Giving bread to my people is my sacrificial offering to *Hashem*. That is what atones for all my sins. It has to be at my own expense.”

# הילולא

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

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

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

### Translation:

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

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





## ✻ GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER ✻



Yahrzeits Beginning Shabbos Emor

[http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim\\_yahrtzeit/Iyar](http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrtzeit/Iyar)

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

### ✻ 19<sup>th</sup> of Iyar ~ Begins Friday Night (Apr 30<sup>th</sup>)

- ✻ **Rav Meir ben Boruch**, the *Maharam MiRottenberg*, teacher of the *Rosh* (1215–1293). In 1286, Rudolf of Germany wanted to institute a new tax on the Jews of Germany. The Jews objected to this tax. The *Maharam* decided to leave Germany, but on the 4<sup>th</sup> of *Tammuz*, he was kidnapped by the bishop of Bazil and handed over to the emperor, who held Rav Meir captive in the Tower of Enzsisheim in Alsace. Rav Meir composed *Sha'ali Serufa Bo'eish*, which is included in the *kinnos* of *Tisha B'Av*. He was *niftar* in the prison and was not properly buried until the 4<sup>th</sup> of *Adar* in 1307, (5053/1293);
- ✻ **Rav Menachem Mendel** of Rimanov (1755–1815). He was introduced to *Chassidus* at the age of eleven when he met the *Maggid* of Mezritch. He studied *Torah* and *Chassidus* under Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg, together with two of his friends, the *Chozeh* of Lublin and the *Maggid* of Kozhnitz. His main teacher, however, was Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk. Among his *talmidim* were such outstanding *Chassidic* leaders as Rav Naftoli of Ropshitz and Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov. His teachings are collected in *Menachem Zion*, *Divrei Menachem*, and *Be'eros HaMayim*, (5575/1815);
- ✻ **Rav Yaakov Moshe Mordechai Soloveitchik** of Lucerne (1915–1995). His father was Rav Yisrael Gershon Soloveitchik, son of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk. Soon after his *bar mitzva*, he traveled to Kamenitz to study under Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz. He fled Poland to evade the draft, along with Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, and the two stayed in Switzerland until the end of World War II. After the war, they traveled to *Eretz Yisrael* and studied at the Lomza *Yeshiva* in Petach Tikva, where he shared a room with Rav Chaim Kanievsky. He moved to Lugano and then to Lucerne to head a *Yeshiva*, and married Rivka Ruchama, daughter of Rav Shmuel Zanvil Neuman, (5755/1995);
- ✻ **Rav Ezra Attia** of Syria, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Poras Yosef*, Yerushalayim, from 1925 to 1970 (1885–1970). He was born in Aleppo, Syria, in 1887, and was named after the *novi* Ezra because his mother, Leah, had had several miscarriages before his birth and gave birth to him after *davening* at Ezra's grave in Tedef, Syria. Rav Attia began his studies in Aleppo under Rav Yehuda Aslan Attia (possibly a distant relative), but he soon moved with his family to Yerushalayim. After his father passed away when Rav Attia was twenty, three leading *Sefardi* sages took upon themselves to support him so he could continue his studies. In 1907, Rav Attia began studying in the new *Yeshiva Ohel Moed* (which later became *Poras Yosef*) under Rav Refoel Shlomo Laniado and Rav Yosef Yedid. His studies were interrupted by World War I, and he fled to Egypt to avoid being drafted into the Ottoman Army. While there, he established *Yeshivas Keser Torah* in Cairo, which continued to exist until 1948. Returning to *Eretz Yisrael*, Rav Attia was appointed to head *Yeshiva Poras Yosef* and also to serve on the *Sefardi Bais Din*. He continued to head *Poras Yosef* until his *petira*, and among his *talmidim* were Rav Ovadia Yosef, Rav Ben Zion Abba Shaul, and leading *Rabbonim* of the Syrian communities in the United States and Panama, (5730/1970);
- ✻ **Rav Moshe Kopshitz** (1941–2004), great-grandson of Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, *Rosh*

*Yeshiva of Kol Yaakov and Rav of Yerushalayim's Romema neighborhood, (5764/2004).*

## ❖ 20<sup>th</sup> of Iyar ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (May 1<sup>st</sup>)

- \* **Rav Chaim Avrohom Gagin** (1787–1848). Born in Constantinople, Turkey, to Rav Moshe, a descendant of Rav Chaim Gagin, a fugitive of the Spanish expulsion. Sadly, Rav Chaim Avrohom's father died when his son was just one year old. His second wife was the daughter of Rav Avrohom Sholom Sharabi, grandson of the *Rashash*, Rav Sholom Sharabi. After his marriage, he became *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Bais Kel*, founded by Rav Gedalia Chayun in 1737. He later became *Rishon Letzion*. His writings include *Mincha Tehora* on *Gemora Menochos*, *Chukei Chaim* (*halachic* responsa), and others, (5608/1848);
- \* **Rav Yitzchok Eizik HaLevi Rabinowitz**, *mechaber* of *Doros HoRishonim*, a *Torah*-true history of the Jewish People, written to counter the historical inaccuracies of the *Maskilim*. He was also an important figure in the founding of *Agudas Yisrael*, (5674/1914);
- \* **Rav Yosef Waltuch**, the *Tzaddik Nistar*, (5743/1983);
- \* **Rav Meir Bransdorfer**, *mechaber* of *Keneh Bosem*, (5769/2009);
- \* **Rav Mordechai** ("Mottel") of Chernobyl (1770–1838), successor to his father, Rav Nachum, the *Meor Einayim*, he became the son-in-law of Rav Aharon the Great of Karlin and subsequently of Rav Dovid Seirkes. His eight sons all became major *Chassidic* leaders. One of them married the daughter of Rav Dov Ber of Lubavitch, (5598/1838).

## ❖ 21<sup>st</sup> of Iyar ~ Begins Sunday Night (May 2<sup>nd</sup>)

- \* **Rav Yitzchok Eizik Segal**, *mechaber* of *Raza Meihemna*, (5543/1783);
- \* **Rav Yaakov Yosef HaKohen Rabinowitz** (1873–1902), the son of the *Chessed L'Avrohom* of Radomsk, who in turn was the son of the *Tiferes Shlomo*. During his abbreviated life, he served as *Rav* of two towns, Breznitza and Klobitz. His older brother, the *Kenesses Yechezkel*, included a lengthy *hakdoma* (introduction) in his *sefer*, *Emes L'Yaakov*, about the greatness of his brother, Rav Yaakov Yosef, (5662/1902).

## ❖ 22<sup>nd</sup> of Iyar ~ Begins Monday Night (May 3<sup>rd</sup>)

- \* **Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri**, the *Maharsha Alfandri* (1820–1930). Born in Istanbul, Rav Shlomo Eliezer served as the chief *Rav* in Istanbul, Damascus, and subsequently in Tzefas for twenty years. He passed away at age 110 in Yerushalayim. Many of his responsa are included in his book, *Saba Kadisha*, (5690/1930);
- \* **Rav Mordechai Shraga Feivish Friedman** of Husyatin (Gusyatin) (1835–1894). The sixth and youngest son of Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin, he married in 1850 (just four months before the *petira* of his father) and established a *Chassidic* court in Husyatin in 1861. As a result, the city became one of the most important *Chassidic* centers in Galicia, Jews comprising 4197 of the town's 6060 residents in 1890. Sadly, the golden age did not last for long. Husyatin was heavily damaged during World War I, and then destroyed during World War II, (5654/1894).

## ❖ 23<sup>rd</sup> of Iyar ~ Begins Tuesday Night (May 4<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Sholom Bashari**, *Dayan* in Yemen, (5533/1773).

## 24<sup>th</sup> of Iyar ~ Begins Wednesday Night (May 5<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Simcha HaKohen** of Worms, slain by Crusaders in a church for stabbing the bishop's nephew after he had pretended to submit to baptism, (4856/1096);
- \* **Rav Yitzchok Feigenbaum**, *Rav* in Warsaw, (5671/1911);
- \* **Rav Binyomin Mendelsohn**, *Rav* of Komemiyus, one of the most prominent fighters for *Kedushas Sheviis*. Born in Plotzk at the end of the nineteenth century, his father was Rav Menachem Mendel Mendelsohn, a close *Chassid* of the Alexander *Rebbe*, who served there as *Rosh Yeshiva*. After World War I, Rav Binyomin married and opened a *Yeshiva* in Bodzanov. During his years there, he became a *Chassid* of the Gerrer *Rebbe*, the *Imrei Emes*. In fact, his notes were used to publish the *seforim* of the *Imrei Emes* decades after the War, as tens of thousands of pages of the *Imrei Emes*'s written *chiddushei Torah* were lost. With the *berocha* of the Gerrer *Rebbe*, Rav Binyomin moved to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1933, and was offered a position as *Rav* of Kfar Ata, not far from Chaifa, and served in that capacity for seventeen years. In 1951, Rav Binyomin left Kfar Ata and its *kehilla* of twenty thousand families and accepted the offer to become the *Rav* of a small, religious settlement in the Negev called Komemius, serving the community for the next twenty-seven years. One of the most defining aspects of his *Rabbonus* in Komemius was the fact that all the *mitzvos hateluyos ba'aretz* (land-based *mitzvos*), were kept fully. *Shemitta* was adhered to according to the opinion of the *Chazon Ish* with no reliance on the *heter mechira* that was almost unanimously accepted in those years. Rav Binyomin felt that keeping *Shemitta* was a key to bringing about the *Geula*. He was *moser nefesh* for *Shemitta* observance, not only in Komemius, but in other places as well. His letters, masterpieces of *hashkofa* and *emuna*, were published posthumously in the *sefer Igros HaGrab*, (5739/1979);
- \* **Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb** (1923–2005). Born to Rav Shlomo Gottlieb, *Rav* of the *Ohr HaChaim shul* in Philadelphia, the family moved to Yerushalayim in 1929. After learning at the Chevron *Yeshiva*, his family moved back to the United States, where he learned at *Torah Vodaas*. He married in 1946. In 1963, he moved back to *Eretz Yisrael* and was appointed general manager of the Chief Rabbinate, a position he held for fourteen years. He also assisted his father in *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Chaim Yosef*, founded in 1942. After his father's *petira*, Rav Akiva Moshe became responsible for it. He wrote *Bais Shlomo*, a biography of his father, and *Kerem Shlomo*, six volumes on *Chumash* and the *Mo'adim*, (5765/2005).

## 25<sup>th</sup> of Iyar ~ Begins Thursday Night (May 6<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Yaakov Loeberbaum** of Lisa, *mechaber* of *Chavas Daas* and *Nesivos HaMishpot*, (5592/1832);
- \* **Rav Ozer** of Klementov, *mechaber* of *Even Ha'Ozer* on *Shulchon Aruch*, (5470/1710);
- \* **Rav Chaim Hager** of Kosov, *mechaber* of *Toras Chaim* (1795–1854), son of Rav Menachem Mendel Hager of Kosov, *mechaber* of *Ahavas Sholom*, grandson of Rav Yaakov Kopel, and father of the first *Vizhnitzer Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel Hager, the *Tzemach Tzaddik*, (5614/1854);
- \* **Rav Chaim Chori**, *Rosh Bais Din* in Tunis, *mechaber* of *Motza Chaim*, (5717/1957);
- \* **Rav Shaul HaLevi**, *Rav* of The Hague and *mechaber* of *Binyan Shaul*, (5545/1785).



## ❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

### WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

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

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

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



## ❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

### STORIES & ANECDOTES

#### Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimano, 19<sup>th</sup> of Iyar

##### Do It for His Sake

“Rav Elozor Ish Bartosa says: Give Him what is His, because you and yours are His” (*Avos* 3:8).

Rav Ovadia Yosef used to illustrate our *Mishna* with the following story:

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimano once sat studying and teaching *Torah* with his *talmidim* when a pauper entered the *Bais Medrash*. Some people naturally awaken sympathy and our pauper was an especially bedraggled and sad sight that tugged at the *Tzaddik's* heartstrings. The *Rebbe* sent his *gabbai* to fetch a golden *dinar* from his wallet in the next room and the *Rebbe* handed the surprised and grateful pauper one gold coin. The poor beggar was dumbstruck and overjoyed at

his good fortune. A gold *dinar* was a handsome, large donation, and he effusively thanked the Rimano and went on his way.

Afterward, the *Rebbe* had second thoughts. He began to feel troubled that he had given the pauper *tzedoka* out of feelings of mercy, compassion and sympathy, rather than to fulfill the *mitzva* of *tzedoka* for the sake of *Hashem*, as *Rashi* comments on *Teruma* – “Take *teruma* and give it *lishmi* – for the sake of My Name,” says *Hashem*.” The *Rebbe* decided that he would call his attendant again and send him after the pauper.

The pauper was meanwhile happily on his way, smiling at his good fortune. The poor man had gone some distance when

behind him he heard the *Rebbe's* attendant calling after him, running to catch his breath. The pauper froze and his eyes darkened. "Oh no! Surely the *Rebbe* made a mistake when he gave me a gold *dinar* and he has sent his *gabbai* after me to exchange it for a silver one!"

Still, having no choice, he turned sadly around and headed back to the *Rebbe's hoif*, following the *gabbai's* lead.

When they returned, the *Rebbe* had the *gabbai* bring the wallet and to the pauper's total astonishment, not only did the *Rebbe* not take his gold *dinar* away, but he proceeded to hand him another gold coin! This was too much! The pauper smiled, turned to the *Rebbe* and taking courage from the *Tzaddik's* kindness, asked boldly, "*Rebbe*, I am sorry, I don't understand. If Your Honor wished to give

me two gold coins, why couldn't the *Rebbe* have done so at once rather than call me back? The *gabbai* gave me quite a turn and I suffered a fright and was very downcast and disappointed until just now," he concluded, confused.

The *Tzaddik* smiled and explained, "In *Parshas Re'eh* the *pasuk* tells us *noson titein* – 'you shall surely give *tzedoka*'. Why does the *pasuk* use a double expression? It tells us that if you give out of feelings of sympathy, give once more for the sake of the *mitzva*. This is what I did. The *pasuk* also says, 'Your heart shall not be evil when you give him'. I interpret this *pasuk* to mean that the first time you give *tzedoka* do not do so because of the feelings in your heart, that you feel bad for the pauper; therefore give again, and do so for the sake of *mitzvas tzedoka*. (*Anaf Etz Avos* p. 183)



## Rav Mottele, 20<sup>th</sup> of Iyar

Chernobyler *Maggid*

### The Lamed Vov Tzaddikim Coarse Fabrics

It was well known that Rav Mordechai of Chernobyl used to raise money to free captives and his specialty was to collect *tzedoka* to sustain the thirty-six hidden *Tzaddikim*.

The Chernobyler *Maggid* was once visited by a Jew who brought a *kvittel* and a *pidyon*. In his letter of petition he requested of the *Tzaddik* a *berocha* for children. "*Rebbe*, my wife and I are childless and we seek a *yeshua*. Please give us a *berocha* and grant us children!" he begged.

Rav Mottele answered him, "There is a tailor who is one of the thirty-six hidden *Tzaddikim*. His custom is that once he finishes tailoring the clothes that he sews, he then blesses his customers that they should wear their clothing in happiness and good health! You should travel to that tailor and have him sew your suit of

clothes," advised the *Maggid*. "Then, afterward, when he is finished and offers you his customary blessing, you will respond and ask how you can be happy without a child. When the tailor hears you are childless, he will bless you with children and through the *berocha* of that hidden *lamed vovnik*, you will have a *yeshua* and be blessed with children!"

The *Chassid* took the Chernobyler *Maggid's* advice and began to search high and low for this tailor. The tailor was not well known and so the search took some time. Finally, the *Chassid* located a tailor of whom it was rumored that he concluded his business with a blessing for health and happiness. When the *Chassid* came before the tailor, however, he saw an ordinary, coarse-looking individual, whose clumsy-looking hands and aloof demeanor suggested that he was no fine tailor and not a skilled craftsman. Our *Chassid* had brought two bales of material with him, one

for a fine silken overcoat and suit and another of coarser fabric for pants. He decided that he was too worried that the tailor might ruin his silk and so he hired him to make a pair of pants. "If the *Rebbe* is correct, then I will get the same *berocha* at the conclusion of the job, no matter what the tailor sews," reasoned the *Chassid*.

The tailor measured and fitted our *Chassid* and then labored and sewed the pants. Afterward, the *Chassid* paid and thanked him, whereupon the tailor blessed him, "May you wear these pants in good health and happiness!" The *Chassid* replied as he had been instructed and the tailor responded with a *berocha* that our *Chassid* and his wife merit having a baby boy! The *Chassid* was overjoyed and he traveled to the Chernobyler *Maggid* to tell him the good news.

"And then he blessed us that we should have a baby boy!" concluded the *Chassid* before the *Maggid*, who, for some reason, was quiet and shook his head to and fro ever so slightly and sighed in apparent dismay.

"Yes," said the *Maggid*, "the *Tzaddik's* *berocha* will be fulfilled and you will have a baby boy! However," he explained to the *Chassid*, "I advised you to have the tailor sew you a fine silk suit. Had you heeded my advice," he paused, fixing the *Chassid* with a piercing glance, "you would have merited a *zaydene kind* – a baby boy with *middos* as fine as silk! You, however, decided to have him sew for you a coarse fabric pair of pants, and so you will have a baby boy, but his *middos* will be as coarse of the fabric of those pants you gave the *lamed vovnik* to sew you!"



### **How Much Is Mud Worth?**

Rav Mottele of Chernobyl arrived in a certain town and was dismayed that one of the wealthiest Jews did not come to visit him. When he sent his *gabbai* to see the

wealthy resident and ask him why he hadn't yet called on the *Rebbe*, the *baal habayis* responded rudely, "I would gladly welcome the *Maggid* into my home! It's not the *Rebbe* I don't want, it's the *Chassidim*! Listen, I have a fine home expensively and tastefully furnished and decorated by fine silks, elaborate, finely woven rugs and carpets, and the *Chassidim* will come in and ruin them with their heavy, muddy boots! Tell the *Rebbe* that he is welcome without his *Chassidim*!"

The attendant relayed the message. The *Maggid*, who was collecting, as usual, on behalf of the thirty-six hidden *Tzaddikim*, agreed. As was customary, the host was expected to gift the *Tzaddik* a sizable donation, but the *Rebbe* stopped at the threshold and explained that he had only agreed to enter the house and no more.

"I agreed to enter, but if you want me to mount the stairs and enter your sitting room, you will have to increase the donation by each stair I climb!"

The wealthy host agreed and by the time the *Rebbe* sat at the table he was looking at a large sum of money indeed. "Now," said the *Maggid*, "I hear that you fear mud and dirt! Let me see if I cannot change your mind and shift your perspective just a bit with the following story:

"There was once a wealthy merchant who traveled in a fine coach pulled by strong, healthy steeds. As he traveled through the forest one day he came upon a rundown, rickety old wagon stuck in the mud. The poor Jew, struggling to dislodge it, had two broken-down old mares, whose bony, weak bodies struggled unsuccessfully to pull the wagon out of the squelching muck. The wealthy merchant dismounted and harnessed his own horses to the wagon but this too was insufficient. Finally, he disrobed, divesting himself of his fine overcoat and silk gloves, and they climbed together into the mud side by side, pulling

and pushing, until he finally saved the sinking Jew and his wagon from certain death in the swampy mire.

“After many years, the merchant left this world and came to the world of judgment. As he stood before the heavenly tribunal, the black prosecuting angel brought wagons full of sins to weigh on the scales of justice, while white-robed angels of mercy and defense also brought wagons full of merits and *mitzvos*, attempting to balance and tip the scales in his favor. To his horror, it wasn’t enough! The scales tipped to the side of judgment against him! Then the defense brought the merit of saving the life of the Jew in the swamp. They took the whole wagon, with the Jew and the horses – and the weight of them all balanced the scales as they swayed to and fro. Just then another angel piped up and yelled to the *Bais Din Shel Maala*, ‘You

forgot to add all the mud! This wealthy, refined individual got down in the squelching, stinking mud, sullied his fine waistcoat and breeches and stank of filth to save his fellow Jew – surely all that mud counts for something!’

“And they heaped on all the mud, which tipped the scales in his favor,” concluded the *Rebbe*, his eyes dancing.

The merchant froze; he understood the message all too clearly. It was his past life in the story; the *Maggid* meant his previous *gilgul*. He got up, walked to the door, swung it open wide in welcome and declared to the *Chassidim* outside, “Come in! Come in! Welcome and don’t forget not to wipe your muddy boots on the mat. In fact, the more mud the better!!!” (*Yehi Ohr* #230-231)



## Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri, 22<sup>nd</sup> of Iyar

The *Saba Kadisha*, Chief *Rav* of Constantinople, Damascus and Tzefas

### **I Stand for the Honor of Hashem**

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

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

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

However, as time went on and the new sultan, Abid Al Hamid, emerged, he

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

exemption and hand it back to the sultan.

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

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

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

Afterward, Rav Alfrandri was awarded by the sultan the title of *Chacham*

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



### **Aish Kodesh**

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



### **The Berochos of the Saba Kadisha**

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

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

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



### **The Kiddush Levona that Foretold War**

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



### **Please Decree that Moshiach Must Come**

When the Munkaczer *Rav*, Rav Chaim Elozor Shapira, came to *Eretz*

Yisrael, he traveled to Yerushalayim especially to meet with the *Saba Kadisha*, Rav Alfandri, who had now exceeded one hundred and ten years and who, after leaving the chief rabbinate of Tzefas, was living in the holy city.

During the visit, the Munkaczer conversed in *Loshon Kodesh* with a *Sefardi* accent so that the *Saba Kadisha* could understand him; the *Rav* had been practicing and he made of the elder *Tzaddik* and holy *Rav* a unique and wondrous request. He revealed that he had brought a holy, secret letter, an epistle, an *igeres sesorim* that he had inherited from the holy Komarna *Tzaddik*, Rav Yaakov Moshe Safrin, foretelling that the way to bring the *Geula* closer depended on the decree of the *Tzaddik HaDor*. If the *Tzaddik HaDor* would decree that *Moshiach* must come, then this would hasten the *Geula*. The Munkaczer *Rav* held that Rav Alfandri was worthy and on the level of someone who could make this decree! He then asked the *Saba Kadisha* to do so. However, Rav Alfandri refused, stating in his humility, “I am not a *Tzaddik*.” This conversation took place eight days before the *Saba Kadisha* left this world on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of *Iyar*. (*Oros Mimizrach*, page 153)



## **Rav Yaakov Ben Yaakov Moshe Loeberbaum, 25<sup>th</sup> of Iyar**

*Rav of Lisa, Mechaber of Chavas Da'as and Nesivos HaMishpot on Shulchon Aruch,*

*Siddur Derech HaChaim and Haggoda Ma'asei Nissim*

### **“Be cautious in judgment” (Avos 1:1).**

Rav Ovadia Yosef used to illustrate our *Mishna* with the following story about Rav Yaakov of Lisa, *mechaber* of *Nesivos HaMishpot*:

There once came before Rav Yaakov Loeberbaum of Lisa two litigants arguing over a golden *dinar*. “*Rav*, I was walking in

the *shuk* and I found a golden *dinar* on the floor and picked it up,” said one.

“It’s mine! It had just fallen out of my pocket!” interrupted the other. “It’s mine, since I never gave up hope of recovering it!”

Something about the oily, greasy manner of the second litigant and the way he acted and his tone gave it away that he

was surely a thief and a scoundrel. Rav Yaakov didn't believe him; his intuition was that he was dishonest.

In order to judge the case properly and arrive at the truth, he sent out the second litigant and called the finder of the gold coin closer to him. Rav Yaakov took the coin and called out in a voice so loud that anyone outside listening could surely hear, "See here, see this notch on the coin, it's like a scratch just below the first letter of the coin. It's a true *siman* (*Gittin* 27b) and if anyone were to use that *siman* as proof, this coin would surely be given back to him." Rav Yaakov then called back the second litigant who had been eavesdropping the entire time.

Rav Yaakov turned toward him and

asked, "Can you offer any *siman* as proof that this *dinar* is yours?"

"Yes, *Rav!*" he answered happily. "Just look at the notch below the first letter. That scratch is as good a *siman* as any that this is my coin!" he concluded with a satisfied smirk that quickly became a frown as the *Rav* retorted, "Well, I guess this isn't your coin, then!" The *Rav* opened his hand and showed the coin to the ashamed would-be thief, his head now bowed in defeat. "Because this coin is clean as a whistle – no scratches on it at all! I guess you should go and look for your lost coin that you dropped, because this coin belongs to the one who found it!" (*Anaf Etz Avos* p. 4)



## Rav Chaim Ben Menachem Mendel of Kosov, 25<sup>th</sup> of Iyar

*Mechaber of Toras Chaim and Father of the First Vizhnitzer Rebbe*

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

### **I Would Recognize Eliyohu HaNovi**

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

"When I was a young child," told the *Toras Chaim*, "I often used to sleep in my father's bed. One night, I was awakened from my sleep to the sound of a conversation taking place between my father and someone else in the room. I

looked up and was amazed to see an elderly man with a shining countenance sitting on my father's chair and my father sat at his side. I was upset by this – who dared take my father's seat at the head of the table? My father said to the guest: 'Eliyohu, here in bed lies my Chaim'nyu – I would like you to give him a *berocha!*'

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

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



## The Apta Rav's Approval

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

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

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

In Kosov, a lavish welcome had been prepared at the *Ahavas Sholom's* home to welcome the guest from Apt. When the Apta Rav realized that he had been fooled, he was very angry and upset. He took two cups of *mashke* and asked the *Chassidim* who were dressed as guards to drink them. The *Toras Chaim*, the *Ahavas Sholom's* son, realized that if the *Chassidim* drank the cups of wine, the Apta Rav would send them away from this world as a punishment.

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

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

"Chaim'nyu!" chastised the *Ahavas*

*Sholom*, "stand up so the *Rebbe* can see you properly!"

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



## The Cossack Has Plenty of Money

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

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

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

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

The *Chassid* did not understand the *Rebbe's* strange references to imaginary Cossacks. He only understood too well that

without the money he needed to pay the *poritz*, he was now in serious trouble. He went home sad and distressed. When his wife asked if the *Rebbe* had given him the money, the *Chassid* answered bitterly, "He is no *Rebbe*."

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

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

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



### **The Kohen Godol Who Atones for You**

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

He would often dress very simply in a *shpentzer*, a short leather coat worn by peasants, tied with a coarse rope as a belt! He also had a large bird coop full of chickens, geese and ducks, and would often be seen feeding them or checking that

others were handling them and feeding them on time. Needless to say, such simple behavior did not appear very *Rebbish* or refined and caused some to wonder.

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

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

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

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

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

"Finally, after the long journey,

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

"However," concluded the *Toras Chaim* to the *Chassid*, "Davka through the *Kohen* did he achieve his atonement!" The

*Chassid* got the hint. (*Sarfei Kodesh* p. 435)



### Grabbing and Saving Neshomos

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



לזכר נשמת אמנו החשובה, נפש יקרה ועדינה

אשה יראת ה' ובעלת מדות טובות

מרת זיסל ז"ל בת הרה"ה מו"ה מאיר זאב הכהן כ"ץ ע"ה הי"ד מעיר נירעדהאז יע"א

ונכדת הרה"ק רבי אהרן צבי טערקלטיוב זי"ע מבריד

אשת הרה"ח מו"ה אברהם חיים ע"ה גאלדענבערג

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

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

She loved her family deeply and immensely. May *Hashem* console her family and may she be a constant *melitza yeshura*, אמן.

(מתוך אמונה טהורה) בדרך המסורה

(והתנהגה כאשה כשרה) לכל משפחתה,

היא הודה היא הדרה - נקיה וטהורה היוצר וצר צורה (וקיבלה הגזירה)

נפטרה בש"ט בת תשעים שנה

ביום כ"ד לחודש כסלו (ערב חנוכה) שנת תשע"ה לפ"ק

ותקים לתחיה לקץ הימין במהר תמליץ טוב בעד משפחתה היקרה תנ"צ'ב'ה'



# 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 Emor*

CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA

### The Pride Of Princes

The Modzitzer Rebbe, in *Divrei Yisrael*, cites the *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* (*Parshas Eikev*), who explains that the *pasuk* (*Divrei Hayomim* II 17:6), “His heart was uplifted in the ways of Hashem,” refers to serving Hashem with a feeling of pride and self esteem, that Hashem values and esteems you and that if we have in mind that “the entire world was created for our sake,” (*Sanhedrin* 37a Rashi ad loc) then this feeling of pride and self esteem will save him from sin.

Therefore, the opening *pasuk* in *Parshas Emor* says, “Speak to the *Kohanim*, the sons of Aharon.” The Modzitzer explains that the *pasuk* is saying: “Remind them that they are the sons of Aharon. Remind them of their lofty status and importance, because they might forget their own importance, since *Tzaddikim* tend to be humble, as it says, “[Moshe and Aharon asked,] What are we?” (*Shemos* 16:7). Since they might forget who they are, we remind them that they have *yichus* - pedigree - and that they were born holy, not to make them arrogant or give them vanity or haughtiness, but rather that they should remember not to “make themselves impure among their people,” because if they transgress, they will blemish their soul. Thus they need to be protected from such an

event.

This is the meaning of the *Mishna Avos* 3:18: "Beloved are Yisrael, for they are called children of Hashem; it is a sign of even greater love that it has been made known to them that they are called children of Hashem," that if a prince, the son of the king, remembers his royalty, this in and of itself can protect him from sin, because if not he might belittle himself and behave improperly, like some coarse commoner, like a country bumpkin.

Therefore, says the Modzitzer, when Rashi says on the *pasuk* in *Emor* "to warn the elders about the young ones - *lehazhir gedolim al haketanim*," this can be interpreted in light of the above to mean that in order to protect ourselves from being besmirched and sullied by sin we need to uplift ourselves with pride and self esteem. This will uplift our heart to know that we are sons of the king, and as royalty we will then conduct ourselves as befits princes and princesses. (*Divrei Yisrael Emor*)

The Modzitzer *Rebbe* asks in *Divrei Yisrael (Emor)* why the *Mishna Avos* 1:12: "You should always be counted among the talmidim of Aharon HaKohen, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving others and drawing them near to *Torah*," seems to needlessly repeat itself by saying both "loving peace" and "pursuing peace." [If you love peace, surely you will pursue it.] Furthermore, the term *rodef* - pursue, usually connotes a battle with an enemy you need to chase, and not peace as is understood.

The *Rebbe* cites *Orach Lechaim Vayishlach*, in the name of Rav Shmelka of Nikolsberg, who asked a similar question regarding the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* 34:15: "Seek peace and pursue it." [Why both "seek" and "pursue"?] This is answered by the *Medrash (Bereishis Rabba* 54:1 on *Mishlei* 16:7): "When Hashem is pleased with man's ways, his enemy [the *yetzer hora*] will also make peace with him." This is how to explain "seek peace." When you seek to make peace even with your enemy the *yetzer hora*, the best advice is "pursue him." He will then make peace with him. This is how the Modzitzer explains what we mean in our *Mishna* in *Avos*, "pursue peace": chase after the *yetzer hora* in order to make peace with him, as we explained.

Futhermore, the *Mishna* concludes by saying to "draw them close to *Torah*." The Modzitzer *Rebbe* explains further that fools believe that closeness to Hashem refers to honor and glory. Therefore, we say "draw them close to *Torah*." The only true closeness to Hashem is through *Torah*, not through honor. The truth is that those who draw close to *Torah* run away from honor and those who chase after honor run away from *Torah*. (*Divrei Yisrael Emor*)

## Answering Kaddish

The sefer Chayei Adam states that the *Anshei Kineses HaGedola* (Men of the Great Assembly) decreed that Kaddish be said daily. The source is a pasuk in Parshas Emor, 'I will be sanctified amongst the Children of Israel' (Vayikra 22:32).

The Tur (Orach Chaim 56) cites a pasuk in sefer Yechezkel describing *milchemes* Gog and Magog. In the midst of that final war, Hashem will reveal Himself, 'I will be exalted (*vi'his'gadilti*) and I will be sanctified (*vi'his'kadishti*) and I will make Myself known in the eyes of many nations; and they will know that I am Hashem' (Yechezkel 38:23). After the initial revelation His Name will be exalted, as the pasuk states, 'On that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One' (Zechariah 14:9). His Name can only be complete after Amalek is defeated in that final war as the pasuk tells us, 'For the hand is on Hashem's throne.' Shemos 17:16 - see Rashi there who says For there is a hand on the throne of the Eternal: The hand of the Holy One, blessed be He, was raised to swear by His throne, to have a war and [bear] hatred against Amalek for eternity. He, swore that His Name will not be complete and His throne will not be complete until the name of Amalek is completely obliterated. And when his name is obliterated, the Divine Name will be complete, and the throne will be complete. Therefore by saying Kaddish and answering *Amen Yehei Shemay Rabbah* we are declaring that great day will come, when Hashem will reveal His greatness to the entire world and destroy Amalek.

Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller writes in *Ma'adanei Yom Tov* (citing the text of the Gemara Berachos Daf 3 which reads: Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said that whoever answers [Kaddish], Amen, Yehei Shemay Rabba Mevorach, responding with all his strength [up in the Heavens], they tear up the judgments of seventy years against him. That is why the Birkas HaTorah was established using the Divine four letter name of loving kindness, YH"V"H.)

The definition of Shemay Rabbah Mevorach is that while we are praying, we are asking that the Divine Name of Shem Yud-Hay should become whole through our redemption as we say that Hashem's throne and Name are incomplete.

Also [a second request is that we are asking, May] His Divine Name be blessed - mevorach. The Tosafos in the commentary to Daf 3 explain this answer differently, interpreting Yehei Shemay Rabbah Mevorach as [one single prayer], 'May His great Name be blessed.'

Rashi explains the meaning of "a decree of seventy years" as a decree that may have

been made in his youth. I believe the meaning refers to a person's entire lifetime, as the pasuk in Tehillim (90:10) tells us that an average lifetime is seventy years. The Gemara is telling us that all the decrees and harsh judgments that have been decreed or leveled upon a person throughout his entire life shall be cancelled, nullified, ripped and torn up.

In his commentary, Divrei Chamudos, Rav Heller continues:

I cited two explanations for Amen, Yehei Shemay Rabba in my commentary Ma'adanei Yom Tov and there is a practical difference in outcome between the two different interpretations. According to the first explanation, that Amen, Yehei Shemay Rabbah is a prayer that the name Yud-Hay be increased and completed, the glosses of Hagahos Ashri cites the Ohr Zarua that we should not interrupt or pause in between the words Shemay and Rabbah since it is one fluent idea. However, you may pause between the words Rabba and Mevorach since, according to this interpretation, the word mevorach is a separate prayer. It's a new request that, besides completing the name Ya"eh into the four letter name YH"V"H, we are also asking that it be blessed forever for olam haba - mevorach le'alam u'l'olmei olmaya.

According to the second interpretation of the Tosafos that explain that Shemay Rabba means His great Name, and there should be no pause between Rabba and Mevorach either since it is all one single cohesive prayer. It does not mean [as the first opinion] that His name should be great and completed, rather that His great Name be blessed. . Furthermore, the Beis Yosef cites a midrash and concludes that we should not pause or interrupt between Olmaya and Yisbarach (Ma'adanei Yom Tov and Divrei Chamudos on Rabbeinu Asher - The Rosh Berachos 3:8-9 and 3:61).

## Everything Is From Hashem Except Yiras Shamayim

The Apta Rav, in Ohev Yisrael, says that really everything is from Hashem. He notes that even when we perform the mitzvos everything is from Hashem; the fact that we merit to study Torah or give tzedoka - all that is really a gift from Hashem. He quotes the pesukim to testify to this fact: "because everything is from You and from Your hand we have given it all to You" (Divrei HaYomim I 29:14).

Therefore, concludes the Apta Rav, the primary Avodas Hashem is to focus on the one and only thing we can truly give Hashem from us and from us alone: Yiras Shomayim - to fear Hashem. The need for Yiras Shomayim and what its purpose serves are illustrated by the following moshol that the Apta Rav gives us in Ohev Yisrael here:

If a person were to own a vast array of rich oils, a fine selection of expensive, exquisite wines and mounds of finely sifted white flour, it would all go to waste if there were nowhere to store it all. Without a cellar, storehouse, winery, granary and silo, all these precious commodities would be lost and ruined. Similarly, a man can have wisdom, insight, knowledge and all manner of fine traits and good attributes, but without the Yiras Shomayim to act as a holding vessel all these would go to waste and be discounted and lost forever!

When we accept Hashem's yoke with Mesiras Nefesh and Yiras Shomayim, we are creating a kli to accept, hold onto and safeguard all the aforementioned middos. The Apta Rav ties this all into Sefiras HaOmer with gematrias and kabbalistic hints, but the main point is that we need Yiras Shomayim; without it we can lose everything we work so hard to hone, refine and achieve.

## Even If We Fail To Understand

The heilige Ropshitzer tells us that when we count the Omer, we draw down shefa and berocha. Even though we do not understand all the many kavonos of the Sefira and the various tikkunim and sefiros, still everything is rectified by the help of Hashem.

The Ropshitzer explains that this is similar to the nusach of Birkas HaMitzva that we all recite before performing any mitzva: Boruch ata Hashem Elokeinu Melech ho'olom asher kideshonu bemitzvosov - "Who has sanctified us through the commandments". The Ropshitzer notes that the Nusach HaBerocha is not "Who sanctified us through the act of fulfilling the mitzvos"; that would have been asher kideshonu ba'asiyas hamitzva. The fact that we do not say that Hashem sanctified us through the act of fulfilling the mitzva proves that He sanctifies us through the very commandment, even if we do not merit to perform and fulfill the mitzvos as we described, with all the various kavonos, even if we do not know the kavonos and do not understand the lofty and sublime depth of what we are doing - still Hashem has sanctified us with His mitzvos, not with how we do them but with their very essence! We don't need to understand it; they will still work and draw down the shefa of blessings for us as Hashem intended.

## Pesukim About Sefiras Haomer In Our Parsha

In Meor HaChaim, Rav Moshe Franco cites several teachings from the Ohr HaChaim's deroshos in Italy regarding the pesukim about Sefiras HaOmer in our Parsha. Here are some of those teachings:

Usefartem lochem mimochoras haShabbos - "And you shall count for yourselves from the day after Pesach" (23:15).

In Shemos (24:10) the pasuk says, "And they saw the G-d of Yisrael and beneath His feet was like the work of a sapphire stone". The Ohr HaChaim asks why the pasuk says kema'aseh - "the work of"? What is the significance of this description?

He answers that there is a difference between the souls of Bnei Yisrael and those of the other nations. The souls of the nations are like glass, whose shine, luster and brilliance do not compare to that of jewels and gemstones, especially the sapphire. The souls of Bnei Yisrael, however, are in fact compared to the brilliance and lustrous shine of the sapphire, as is known that the souls of Bnei Yisrael were hewn from the Throne of Glory - the Kisei HaKovod - which is compared to the sapphire. This is what our pasuk in Shemos is referring to: the throne beneath the feet of Hashem, which is likened to sapphire.

Any gemstone quarried in its natural state requires work. After it is mined and removed in its raw state it does not have the shine and brilliance we are used to seeing. It requires the work of a skilled craftsman and gemologist to use tools to hone, cut, polish and create those shining facets that a cut gemstone has, which then shine with a brilliant, lustrous light. This work is the kema'aseh referred to in our pasuk in Shemos: the shining, brilliant light beneath the feet of the Shechina is like the light of a brilliant sapphire after it has been skillfully worked, cut and polished.

This is the hint in our pasuk in Emor as well. Usefartem lochem - sefartem has the same linguistic meaning as sapphire: make yourselves shine like a sapphire by counting fifty days. Then you must have in mind that you are working your soul like a craftsman cuts and polishes a gemstone from a rough, raw uncut stone into a brilliant jewel, whose lustrous shine is as brilliant as a sapphire!

### **Praises for the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh**

#### **Toil in Torah**

Rav Avrohom of Strikov said, "When the Ohr HaChaim explained and expounded the forty-two chiddushim on our pasuk in Bechukosai, he himself was fulfilling Rashi's comment to our pasuk that walking on the path of the chukos means that 'you should toil and be ameilim baTorah.'" (Dibros Kodesh Strikov Behar-Bechukosai 5769)

### **The Forty-Two Explanations of Bechukosai Seileichu**

There is a well-known tradition regarding the Ohr HaChaim's exile while in Morocco and of some of the travels and travails that befell him during his golus.

Perhaps the most famous story is the following legendary tale whose tradition was passed down to us by the Mekubol Rav Moshe Yair Weinstock, who heard and received it from Rav Yisrael Yitzchok Reisman of the Eida Chareidis, who in turn received it from the Rosh Mekubolim, the Gaon Rav Chaim Shaul HaKohen Dewike, who heard it from the elders of Aram Tzova and the talmidim of the Ohr Chaim. The story goes like this:

During his exile, the Ohr HaChaim ended up one Erev Shabbos in a field. (The Maamar Mordechai of Slonim and other traditions say that there he met a giant who was a lumberjack and with each stroke of his axe, he said, "Lekovod Shabbos Kodesh!" Other traditions add that he took the Ohr HaChaim over the river Sambatyon.) There he rested by a tree, and as he prepared for Shabbos, he sat and reviewed the Parsha of the week. His tremendous dveikus and erudition helped him toil and he arrived at forty-two explanations for the first pasuk in Parshas Bechukosai!

Seeing that Shabbos would soon arrive, the Ohr HaChaim entered the neighboring village and went to the local shul for davening. No one knew or recognized their illustrious guest; he was received as warmly as any wandering beggar Jew and was invited to one of the locals for the Shabbos meal upon the conclusion of the tefillos.

The Ohr HaChaim followed his host home for the seuda and afterward his host told him that they all met after the meal at the local Rav's home for a get-together in honor of Shabbos. There they sang and shared Divrei Torah and Oneg Shabbos. The host invited his unknown guest to join and Rav Chaim ben Attar agreed.

At the Rav's home they all sang zemiros and watched as the local Rav sank deep into thought. He was a holy man, who, the host explained, could delve into deep mysteries and achieve insight. The Rav was meditating and his face betrayed holy dveikus and otherworldly ponderings. When the Rav came back and his soul returned, he began to speak animatedly, telling them that he had just heard great deep Torah insights in the heavenly academies!

He then expounded on and explained the first pasuk of Bechukosai in fourteen different ways and concluded, "And I heard from the heavenly hosts - the pamalya shel maala - that in the Mesivta Derokiya these chiddushim are said in the name of the holy Tzaddik Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar!"

Everyone sat in stunned silence, marveling at the Torah insights and novel

interpretations - everyone except the stranger. The guest in the back got up and broke the silence and made a motion of dismissal and declared, "He is not a Gaon, or a Tzaddik, or a Kodosh - he is not a Rav, just plain Chaim ben Attar!" No one knew that this wandering stranger was none other than Rav Chaim ben Attar himself, who, in his humility, sought to downplay himself and downgrade his honor. All they knew was that he had some chutzpa! The host tried to calm everyone down and the matter was soon forgotten. Until the next day, that is...

After Shacharis and the seuda, the Jews gathered at the Rav's home for singing and study. There the Rav again ascended on high and when he returned, proceeded to explain and teach an additional fourteen chiddushim and insights on the first pasuk of Bechukosai. Again he concluded by saying, "And I heard from the heavenly hosts - the pamalya shel maala - that in the Mesivta Derokiya these chiddushim are said in the name of the holy Tzaddik Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar!"

Again the audacity and chutzpa of the stranger was heard as he stood up and corrected the Rav: "He is not a Gaon, or a Tzaddik, or a Kodosh - he is not a Rav, just plain Chaim ben Attar!"

This was getting out of hand. The Jews were angry, the Rav was furious and barely could they all be restrained from attacking the insolent, brazen stranger. Just who did he think he was anyway? Little did they guess that he was in fact Rav Chaim ben Attar!

Finally Sholosh Seudos came, and again for a third and final time the scenario played itself out: The Rav ascended and heard chiddushim and then he descended and shared with the rapt audience another fourteen chiddushim and insights on the first pasuk of Bechukosai (a total of forty-two explanations) and again he concluded, saying, "And I heard from the pamalya shel maala that in the Mesivta Derokiya these chiddushim are said in the name of the holy Tzaddik Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar!"

The chutzpadik stranger stood up and again corrected the Rav. "He is not a Gaon, or a Tzaddik, or a Kodosh - he is not a Rav, just plain Chaim ben Attar!"

At this point the Rav's righteous anger could not be held back and he resolved to punish the stranger for the sake and honor of the Torah and had him incarcerated.

Shabbos ended and a strange wind picked up. The skies filled with dark, ominous clouds. An unseasonal storm was brewing, the likes of which no one had ever seen. As the gale rose and torrential rains lashed out, the frightened Jews ran to the Rav for help and guidance. The Rav ascended on high and was told, "The heavenly minister in charge of

Gehinnom is in a rage! You have locked up Rav Chaim ben Attar in a cell and while he is jailed he cannot make Havdola. All Shabbos long, every week, Gehinnom is closed and sealed. The Sar (angel) wishes now to reopen it as he does every Motzo'ei Shabbos but he cannot because the Ohr HaChaim has not yet made Havdola! This dangerous storm is a manifestation of the Sar of Gehinnom's great anger and rage!" The Rav quickly had the Ohr HaChaim released and told him that in Heaven it had been revealed that all the insults and injuries the Ohr HaChaim had suffered had atoned for him and his exile was now over and he could go back home.

(When the Maamar Mordechai of Slonim would tell this, he added that they all heard a voice ring out and declare, "Return, O you wicked back to Sheol!" The land shook and all present trembled as they stood at the foot of the opening to Gehinnom!) The Rav begged the Ohr HaChaim's forgiveness and once granted the Ohr HaChaim returned to Sali. (Shneim Asar Shivtei Yisrael)

## *Gedolim Be'misasm Yoser*



### Yahrzeits For Parshas Emor

***Rav Menachem Mendel Turim Rymanover  
Rebbe, Menahem Mendel of Pristik,  
Pristiker, Menachem Zion (Iyar 19)***

In Ateres Menachem, we learn that Rav Menachem Mendel was born around 5505 in Neustadt, Poland, and studied in the illustrious Yeshiva of the Rebbe Reb Shmelka of Nikolsberg in Moravia. There, he became a member of the Chassidic movement and eventually a talmid muvhok of the Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizhensk in Galicia. Eventually, Rav

Mendel married and lived with his in-laws in Pristik. His father-in-law was a Misnagged (opposed to Chassidus) and threw out his son-in-law and daughter when he found out that they had "joined the cult." They suffered poverty and privation for years. So destitute were they, that they lacked food, wood, and other basic needs.

Eventually, after Rebbe Elimelech's petira, news of Rav Mendele's sanctity and erudition spread, and he began to lead a flock of

followers and Chassidim in Rymanow. Tzaddikim said that for some twenty-two years he delivered a weekly sermon and derosha about Parshas HaMon and that drew down parnossa for all Klal Yisrael. He was a staunch opponent of new fashions and modes of dress and fought against any immodesty he perceived in the dress of Bnos Yisrael. His talmid Rav Yechezkel Pannet of Karlsberg wrote a famed letter describing his kedusha and defending him from his detractors.

His biographical stories were published as Ateres Menachem, and his divrei Torah appear in several collections, such as Divrei Menachem and Menachem Tzion.

He was niftar on 19 Iyar 5575 and was succeeded by his holy gabbai Rav Tzvi Hirsch MeShores HaKohen of Rymanow.

### **His Segulos:**

#### ***Parnassa - Parshas Hamon***

There is a well-known segula to study Parshas HaMon shnayim mikra ve'echad Targum from the Rymanower.

#### ***Ner Neshama Candles***

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow said if a person makes a neder to donate candles for the sake of a certain soul, that neshoma ventures even to the lowest depths of She'ol to do a favor for the donor. Even if the donor himself sank to the lowest depths, that neshoma would descend to save him and take him out of there.

(Ateres Menachem 235)

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow promised that during his lifetime he would shake and move all the worlds for him and even after his death he would repay the favor for whoever lights a candle for the merit of his soul. (Menachem Tzion in the name of Rav Yisrael Mordechai Teitelbaum, Hadrass Kodess in the name of the Rebbe of Nasuad)

#### ***By Studying Ha'azinu, Each Of Us Can Know Where We Are Holding In Our Derech Avoda***

Rav Chatzkel of Shinowa said in the name of Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow that by studying *Ha'azinu*, each of us can know where we are holding in our *Derech Avoda*.

#### ***Shooting A Bow And Arrow On Lag Baomer***

There is a well-known *minhag Yisrael*, a custom that young students have, to shoot with a bow and arrow in displays of archery on *Lag BaOmer*.

Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dynow, *mechaber* of *Bnei Yissoschor*, says he heard that Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow explained the reason behind this *minhag* as follows:

It is known (*Yerushalmi Berochos* 9:2) that in the days of Rav Shimon bar Yochai the rainbow was not seen. On the day of his ascension we mark this occasion and commemorate the absence of the rainbow with the bow and

arrow. (*Bnei Yissoschor Iyar 3:4*)

### **Gazing Upon A Tzadik**

Rav Moshe Teitelbaum of Uhjel taught in the name of Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow that whoever merits true knowledge - *daas sheleima* - when such a person sees a *Tzaddik* and gazes upon him, he can learn true *Torah* from every limb as he himself [Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow] testified that he learned *Torah* from his own *Rebbe*, Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, from all of his limbs *mamash*. (*Tefilla leMoshe, Noach 39b*)

### **Noam Elimelech On Erev Shabbos Kodesh, After Immersing In The Mikvah**

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*)

### **Rav Meir ben Boruch Maharam of Rottenberg (Iyar 19)**

### **Rav Moshe of Kaliv Eis Rotzon (Iyar 19)**

### **Rav Petachya Lida Yad Kol Bo (Iyar 19)**

### **Rav Pinchos Twersky of P'shemishel (Iyar 19)**

### **Rav Yaakov Moshe Mordechai Soloveitchik (Iyar 19)**

Rav Yaakov Moshe Mordechai Soloveitchik of Lucerne (1915-1995). His father was Rav Yisrael Gershon Soloveitchik, son of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk. Soon after his Bar Mitzvah, he traveled to Kamenitz to study

under Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz. He fled Poland to evade the draft, along with Rav Ahron Leib Shteinman, and the two stayed in Switzerland until the end of World War II. After the war, they traveled to Eretz Yisrael and studied at the Lomza Yeshiva in Petach Tikva, where he shared a room with Rav Chaim Kanievsky. He moved to Lugano and then Lucerne to head a Yeshiva and married Rivka Ruchama, daughter of Rav Shmuel Zanvil Neuman.

### **Rav Ezra Attiya Rosh Yeshiva Porat Yosef - Yerushalayim (Iyar 19)**



He was the Sephardic gadol of Eretz Yisrael molding a generation whose influence reverberated around the world. But Rav Ezra Attiya was even more — he was the abba to every impoverished bochur who knew the Rav would never turn anyone away. More than four decades after Rav Ezra's passing his son Rav David Attiya one of Jerusalem's elder dayanim reveals his father's secret formula for success

When Rav David Attiya shlita is asked what he most remembers about his father Rav Ezra Attiya ztz"l — one of the greatest Torah teachers in Eretz Yisrael in the last century — he replies without missing a beat "His learning. He didn't waste a minute. He was always learning Torah."

For Rav David Attiya 87 a prominent dayan and

former member of the Chief Rabbinical Court in Jerusalem who spends his own days poring over seforim that was Rav Ezra's legacy to his son. But for the thousands of students and disciples he nurtured during the 45 years he served as rosh yeshivah of Yeshivat Porat Yosef until his passing on 19 Iyar 5730 (1970) he was their leader as well as their master educator and the one person who perhaps more than anyone raised up the status of Sephardic Torah scholarship in the last century. Among Rav Attiya's most famous students were Rav Ovadiah Yosef Rav Mordechai Eliyahu Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul Rav Yehuda Tzadka and Rav Yitzchak Kaduri.

Rav David Attiya is a venerable figure in his own right as one of Jerusalem's elder dayanim. And like his father his short stature is overpowered by his towering scholarship nobility and gentility — it's easy to match him with the descriptions that his father's students shared of Rav Ezra. For Rav Ezra was not only a brilliant talmid chacham but he had a mission: He taught his talmidim how to convey the study of Gemara for generations to come.

"The Torah was in his pocket" his son remembers of the sage who passed away 46 years ago this week and who had honed a certain logical thought process in Gemara study that attracted both Sephardic and Ashkenazic scholars alike. "One of the Ashkenazic sages of Jerusalem wanted to learn with him a complex sugya that left many questions. My father as was his derech first learned with him again the basic sugya itself — Gemara Rashi Tosafos — and then mentioned the words of the Maharsha which he considered a fundamental part of understanding every sugya. I was a boy then

and I remember seeing how every difficulty and obstacle seemed to fall away as they learned it in its simple explanation."

Rav David says this was his father's trademark style in learning and he taught an entire generation of scholars how to unravel complicated passages.

"He was famous for getting his students used to learning the pshat and then to be very careful in the study of Rashi and Tosafos" Rav David explains. "He would often tell me 'Lots of questions are saved if a person learns the simple meaning patiently and in depth and takes care not only to read every word carefully but also every letter.' "

His clarity of thought didn't go unnoticed by other gedolim of the time. Once after the Chazon Ish paid Rav Ezra a visit he exclaimed "The Rosh Yeshivah possesses the power of reasoning like one of the Rishonim."

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***Rav Moshe Kopshitz Rosh Yeshiva Kol Yaakov & Rav of Romema (Iyar 19)***

***Rav Mordechai Twersky Likutei Torah (Iyar 20)***

***Mekubel Yosef Waltuch (Iyar 20)***

***Rav Yitzchok Eizik Halevi Rabinowitz Doros Harishonim (Iyar 20)***

***Rav Yitzchok Isaac Halevi of Premisla Raza Meheimno (Iyar 21)***

***Rav Shimon Shlomo of Savaran (Iyar 21)***

***Rav Yaakov Yosef Hakohen Rabinowitz Emes L'Yaakov (Iyar 21)***

***Rav Mordechai Shraga Feivush Friedman Husyatiner Rebbe (Iyar 22)***

***Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandari Sabba Kadisha (Iyar 22)***

**Rav Yeshaya of Plonsk (Iyar 22)**

**Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Vilna Beis Lechem  
Yehuda (Iyar 22)**

**Rav Yehoshua Heschel of Dinov (Iyar 23)**

**Rav Shlomo Eliezer Halevi Rottenberg  
(Iyar 23)**

**Rav Alexander Hakohen Steinberger  
Meoros Aish (Iyar 23)**

**Rav Meshulem Zusha Yitzchok  
Halberstam (Iyar 23)**

**Rav Moshe Shlomo Weiss Av Beis Din of  
Rakowitz (Iyar 23)**

**The Jewish Community of Worms (Iyar 23)**

**Rav Eliezer Tzvi Safrin Komarna Rebbe,  
Damesek Eliezer on Zohar, Ben Baisi (Iyar  
24)**

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Rav Eliezer Tzvi, the third Komarno *Rebbe*, was the son of Rav Yitzchok Isaac Yehuda Yechiel Safrin.

Born around 5590 in Samvur, Galicia, he was the son of Rav Yitzchok Isaac and Gittel, daughter of Rav Avrohom Mordechai of Pintshuv.

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

In his youth he knew his uncles, Rav Moshe of Samvor, and Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Rozla. He studied under his father and was a *talmid muvhok* of Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Zidatshuv.

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

He married Chana Sora, the daughter of Rav Yosef Shener of Turka. Her *yahrzeit* is 2 *Shevat*; she was *niftar* in 5650.

As described in his father's *Zohar Chai*, before his *petira*, Rav Yitzchok Isaac called over his son, Rav Eliezer Tzvi, robed in all white, and commanded his mother to dress in *Yom Tov* clothes and pearls for the occasion to witness her son's ascension as *Rebbe* and leader, and to wear white on *Shabbos* from then on as one fit to do so. So saying, he appointed him as successor to lead the *Chassidim* as the next *Rebbe*.

Despite his fame and renown as *Rebbe* after his father's passing, he himself traveled to the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz.

He authored *Damesek Eliezer*, 7 volumes on the *Zohar*, as well as *Ben Baisi* on *Torah* and *Tehillim*, *Zekan Beisi* on *Pirkei Avos*, and *Ohr Einayim*, an encyclopedic two-volume work on *Kabbola*. The Sanzer *Rav* helped him to publish the *sefer Ohr Einayim* and so it became a vital work for *Klal Yisrael*.

He left behind a daughter, Tzipa, the wife of Rav Tzvi of Rozli II; a son, Rav Menachem Monish, *Av Bais Din* of Falshtin; Rav Avraham Mordechai of Borislov; Rav Yaakov Moshe, his successor in Komarno; and Rav Pinchas Nosson of Rudik.

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

- Rav Tzvi of Zidatshuv corresponded to the attribute of *Chessed*

- Rav Moshe of Samvor corresponded to the attribute of *Gevura*
- Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Rozla corresponded to the attribute of *Tiferes*
- Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Komarno corresponded to the attribute of *Netzach*
- Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Zidatshuv corresponded to the attribute of *Hod*
- Rav Eliezer Tzvi himself corresponded to the attributes of *Yesod* and *Malchus*

Therefore he passed away on thirty-ninth day of the Omer (Tal), corresponding to Netzach of Yesod (Netzach was his father, Rav Yitzchok Isaac and he was Yesod. All he spoke of before his *petira* related to *sholom*, peace (which corresponds to *Yesod*), and before he passed away he called his son Rav Monash and said to him, "*Sholom* and *sholom*," and his soul departed.

***Rav Yehoshua Heschel Tzoref (Iyar 24)***

***Rav Yeshaya of Dinvozt Talmid of the Maggid of Mezritch (Iyar 24)***

***Rav Yisroel Sholom Yosef of Antonia Nefesh Yishai (Iyar 24)***

***Rav Yitzchok Feigenbaum Chief Rabbi of Warsaw (Iyar 24)***

***Rav Binyomin Mendelson Rav of Kommemiyus (Iyar 24)***

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Rav Binyamin Mendelson, Rav of Kommemiyus, one of the most prominent fighters for kedushas sheviis (1979). Born in Plotzk at the end of the 19th century, his father was Rav

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

***Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb (Iyar 24)***

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Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb (1923-2005). Born to Rav Shlomo Gottlieb, Rav of the Ohr Hachaim shul in Philadelphia, the family moved to Yerushalayim in 1929. After learning at the

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

***Rav Yaakov Lorberbaum Chavos Da'as  
(Iyar 25)***

***Rav Chaim Hager Toras Chaim (Iyar 25)***

***Rav Yehoshua Osher Rabinowitz Porisover  
Rebbe (Iyar 25)***

***Rav Ozer of Klementov Even Ha'ozar (Iyar  
25)***

***Rav Chaim Chori Rosh Beis Din of Tunis,  
Motza Chaim (Iyar 25)***

***Rav Shaul Halevi Rav of the Hague,  
Binyan Shaul (Iyar 25)***

## *Gedolim Be'Masayhem*



### STORIES & ANECDOTES

**Rav Menachem Mendel Turim**  
Rymanover Rebbe, Menahem  
Mendel of Pristik, Pristiker,  
Menachem Tzion (Iyar 19)

**Boruch Hashem, I Am Cold  
And Hungry**

When Rav Mendel of

Rymanow began his pilgrimages to Lizhensk to the Rebbe Reb Melech, he was but a young man. He was poor and

had not a coin to his name. His clothes were simple and old and the winter was cold, bitter, and harsh – the kind of cold that gnaws into your bones.

With no alternative, Rav Mendel hired himself out as watchman. He would travel about with the coaches and travelers. While the coachmen and the travelers spent the night at the inn, Rav Mendel remained in the cold outside, watching the coach and the horses, guarding against horse thieves.

The snow came down relentlessly and the journey was hard. Finally, night fell and the coach reached its destination. As the coachman and his customers entered the warm inn, Rav Mendel braved the bitter elements outside, shivering under his threadbare coat, shaking in his hole-filled shoes, waiting for the dawn as he stood guard.

It was so cold, he ran to and fro, clapping his hands and rubbing them together for warmth. Soon he began to hop on one foot and then on the other. This routine soon became a dance, hopping and clapping as he sang in *simcha*,

*“Boruch Hashem, I am cold! Praise be Hashem, I am freezing! Boruch Hashem, I am starving!”*

Another coach arrived at the inn and as the travelers alighted, they witnessed a bizarre scene before them. There, in the cold, bitter night, danced and sang a poor soul!

“What are you singing?” they asked in astonishment.

“I am praising Hashem for making me so healthy that I can properly feel my hunger,” answered Rav Mendel.

“And why don’t you eat?” they asked.

“I have no money,” he answered.

The travelers took charge of Rav Mendel, brought him inside into the warmth, placed someone else as watchman, fed him till he was sated, and when his wits came back to him, he declared, “Had I not sang and danced, praising Hashem, I would still be cold and hungry!” (*Chassidim Mesaprim #44*)

### **True Chassidim**

Rav Yaakov Yitzchok, the *Chozeh* of Lublin once asked Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow if he had any followers and *Chassidim*? “Yes, we do,” responded Rav Menachem Mendel.

“And in what way are they *Chassidim*?” inquired the *Chozeh* further.

“Our *Chassidim*, my followers,” answered Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow, “study in depth *halocha* and *Tosfos*.”

“If so,” replied the *Chozeh*, “then they are indeed true *Chassidim*!” (*Bais Menachem* 5:2)

Similarly, regarding the study of *halocha* and *Tosfos*, Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow said that he never understood the secret of the matter until recently, that those laws and *halochos* forgotten during the *aveilus* over Moshe (see *Temura* 16a) were returned to us by Osniel ben Kenaz during the days of *Sefiras HaOmer*. Therefore, it is a *minhag Yisrael*, which has the status of *Torah*, to study *halocha* and *Tosfos* during these holy days. (From the

letter *Igeres HaKodesh* of Rav Yechezkel Paneth of Karlsberg, originally published in *Shu"t Mareh Yechezkel Siman 104* {it is known that on the thirty-fourth day of the *Omer*, the *yahrzeit* of Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow, they found the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz reviewing this *teshuva* and his eyes poured forth tears of longing. *Derech Yivchar* by Rav Chaim Betzalel Paneth of Tash and son of the *Mareh Yechezkel*})

### **Ahava Rabba - How Great Is The Love!**

An elder Linsker *Chassid* once told that he heard himself how Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow asked, "What did Bnei Yisrael do from the time of *Rosh Chodesh Sivan* until *Kabbolas HaTorah*? They had not yet received the *Torah* so they were not yet studying it!"

He (Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow) answered, "In the interim they were all reciting the *berocha Ahava Rabba* - How great is the love!" (*Kisvei Chassidim Yalkut Menachem* 290)

### **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)

# Zera Shimshon

## Emor

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

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

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

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

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

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

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

לזכר נשמת

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מיכאל זצ"ל

בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

לזכות רחמים בן יוכבד שייכה  
 לשוב בתשובה שלימה בקרוב  
 לזכות רפואה שלימה משה  
 שניאור זלמן בן רחל  
 ולזכות רפואה שלימה משה בן  
 לאה

לזכות כל עם ישראל  
 בכל מקום שהם

כל מום לא יהיה בו (כב' כא')

*It shall not have any blemish in it (22:21)*

There is a prohibition to create a blemish in a Bechor, the firstborn animal that goes to the Kohen. The Gemara learns this prohibition from the above-mentioned passuk. However, the Gemara learns (Menachos 56b), that this is only applicable to a Bechor animal that is complete and unharmed. If the animal already has a blemish, then there is no longer a restriction from making a blemish in the animal.

With this halacha the Zera Shimshon explains why everyone possesses a Yetzer Hara and cannot have complaints on Hashem for this.

Being that without the involvement of the Yetzer Hara, it is impossible to have progeny, inherently, the Yetzer Hara has a stake in the creation of every person. As well, during childbirth, every child causes his mother suffering and sometimes puts her into great, life threatening danger. Adding to this, sometimes the child will be the cause that his mother does not fast on Yom Kippur or that Shabbos is desecrated because of him. If fact, the Gemara says (Shabbos 156a), that someone who is born on Shabbos and (although by no choice of his own) caused Shabbos to be desecrated, passes away on Shabbos. (It is interesting to note that there were great Tzaddikim that would do teshuva for the pain they caused their mothers during childbirth.)

For all these reasons, a person does not enter this world perfect. He is considered flawed and therefore the Yetzer Hara can claim a share in this individual. Just as when the Bechor is born with a blemish, there is no prohibition to add a blemish, metaphorically, the individual that came through the urge of the Yetzer Hara, who caused his mother pain etc. cannot have complaints that the Yetzer Hara has a stake in him. These reasons cause him to be considered flawed and have a connection to the Yetzer Hara. The Yetzer Hara therefore has the right to enter him.

The work of the human being is to eradicate the hold that Yetzer Hara has on him. Instead of being unhappy with the fact that due to circumstances out of his control, the Yetzer Hara has a hold in him, he should face his mission, knowing that this is what Hashem wants from him.

This, explains the Zera Shimshon, is the intent in the words of the Mishna that teaches (Avos 4:26) 'You are created against your will and you are born against your will'. The Mishna is explaining to a person that the fact that he has a Yetzer Hara is something that is not in his control. Nevertheless, rightfully, the Yetzer Hara can claim a share in the person due to the aforementioned reasons. The Mishna is saying that a person's job now is to fight that Yetzer Hara and not to complain about it being unfair that through no fault of his own, the Yetzer Hara has some sort of share in him.

The Mishna then says, 'Against your will you will have to give an account for your actions'. A person has to know that the abovementioned reasons will not exempt him from his actions. A person's job is to realize the situation he finds himself in and act accordingly, not look back and complain.

זכות רבינו ימליץ טוב בעד רבקה רחל בת שיינדיל בלומא לזרע של קיימא במהרה  
 זכות רבינו יעמוד לר' חיים דוד בן טויבא הוה וכל משפחתו להצלחה ברכה שפע רב וסייעתא דשמיא  
 מרובה בכל מעשה ידיו ובכל הענינים



# MEOROS HATZADDIKIM

— Lights Of Our Righteous —



## Parshas Kedoshim

*Rashi* says this *parsha* was recited in assembly – we can explain this based on what the holy *seforim* teach us that in every generation there is a special specific *tikkun* that is required to be rectified and repaired more so than other matters. In this generation, at the heels of *Moshiach* – the *ikvasa deMeshicha*, says Rav Mordechai is a time for *tikkun* in matters of *kedusha* and sanctity.

The proof for this is that there has never before been a generation that has had such difficult *nisyonos* in matters of *kedusha* as in our generation, even *dor ba'mabul* probably did not have such tests and trials as in our generation! This proves that this matter has been given to us to rectify and repair, since *Hashem* does not give us matters for a test or trial that unless we are meant to repair and rectify them.

And this matter is cited by the holy *seforim* (See for example *Shevet Mussar*) that if an individual wishes to know what their primary mission in this world and what personal matter it is that they need to work on and rectify - whatever gives them the most difficulty and hardship, whichever matter is your greatest test or trial that is your *tikkun*!

The same rule applies to the entire generation on a global scale as well, surely if there are so many *nisyonos*, specifically in regards to this matter, surely that is what we are meant to rectify and repair in this generation above all else.

And surely you can pass this test and withstand the *nisayon*, for *Hashem* does not send us tests or trials that we cannot pass or withstand and therefore if we are being tried and tested with such *nisyonos* it is a *siman* and a sign that we can pass the test. Only we must ask and beg of *Hashem* to help us fulfill His will and to set aside specific set times for *Torah* study, because by doing so you will draw near to *Hashem*.

Therefore, in our generation when we need to sanctify matters of *kedusha* and fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Kedoshim TiHeyn*, whether in matters of guarding our thoughts and our eyes from forbidden thoughts and forbidden sights, as well as *kadesh atzemecha be'muttar lach* – sanctifying matters of *reshus* where we can make even permitted matters holier.

So that you do not act like a *naval be'reshus haTorah*, and do whatever your heart desires fulfilling all your *ta'avos* and rather to act and do things for the sake of your Creator and to give Him *nachas* and satisfaction. As is cited by the *Shulchan Aruch Siman 231*, that it is incumbent on us, that all our actions should be done for the sake of Heaven – *leShem Shomayim* as is explained there at length. Surely, when we strengthen ourselves in these matters, we bring the final redemption nearer and closer, as is known from the *seforim* that the word for a test or trial – *nisayon* also means to be raised up and uplifted, so that as we pass our tests and trials we are drawn closer and nearer to *Hashem*. So that if we rectify and repair these matters that have become *parutz* – too open and in need of repair in our generation, then surely we will merit the great light of the final redemption and *dveykus* and rapture in *Hashem*, *Amen*.







# MEOROS HATZADDIKIM

— Lights Of Our Righteous —



## Parshas Emor

### Sefiras ha'Omer

**Count For Yourselves from the day after *Shabbos* – they shall be seven perfect – complete full weeks**

Rav Mordechai cites the *Midrash VaYikra Rabbah* 28:3, “When are they considered perfect and complete?” When they fulfill the Divine will of *Hashem*, we can attempt to explain this statement of the *Midrash* based on the concept taught in the *seforim*, that although each and every *mitzvah* has behind it various deep lofty secrets and meanings - besides all those intents and *kavanos* - we must have in mind the most basic and simple *kavanah* to give *Hashem* a *nachas ruach* and satisfaction that we are fulfilling His command and will. This is explained by *Chazal* in *Rosh HaShanna* 16a, where the *Gemara* asks why we blow *Shofar*? And responds that The Merciful One – *Rachmana* said blow! That is the most basic and fundamental *kavanah* that we can have in mind – to do the *mitzvah* because *Hashem* said so!

The *Mezritcher Maggid* explained the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* 138:2 “for You have magnified Your word far beyond Your Name.” If a person only has in mind when he does a *mitzvah* all kinds of Divine Names and unifications and *kabbalistic yichudim*, then surely he will not be able to have them all in mind since each and every *mitzvah* has endless *kavanos*. However, if he has in mind the simple straightforward intent to fulfill *Hashem's* command and Divine Will and to give *Hashem* satisfaction and *nachas ruach*, then that covers them all and suffices. That is what the *pasuk* cited means, for You have magnified Your word, far beyond Your Name - that to fulfill Your word and do what You asked of us is magnified far greater and more precious to You *Hashem* than Your Name – than all the *kabbalistic Shemos* of all Your Divine Names!

Perhaps, concluded Rav Mordechai, this is also *peshat* in our above-cited *Midrash* – when are they considered perfect whole and complete? When are our *mitzvos* considered as done wholly, fully and completely? Answers the *Midrash*, when we fulfill the Divine will of *Hashem* our Creator, when we have that *kavanah* and intent in mind to do *mitzvos* because *Hashem* said so in order to give Him *nachas* and satisfaction, then it is as if we had all the highest *kavanos* in mind and only then is it actually considered as if we did the *mitzvos* perfectly with total completion.



# EMOR

May 1<sup>st</sup> 2021  
19<sup>th</sup> of Iyar 5781  
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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

# Pachad David

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

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



**MASKIL LEDAVID**

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

## Cast Upon Hashem Your Burden and He Will Sustain You

**"When you shall enter the Land that I give you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring an Omer from your first harvest to the Kohen"**  
(Vayikra 23:10)

The Torah commands us to bring an Omer from the first harvest to the Kohen, following which we must begin counting seven weeks, which are the fifty days until the festival of Shavuot, the Giving of the Torah. Our Sages ask: Why does Hashem command us to bring this Omer offering to the Kohen? And why do we have to count fifty days from Pesach until Shavuot? Seemingly, Hashem could have commanded Bnei Yisrael to celebrate Shavuot on the sixth of Sivan, even without counting the preceding fifty days.

The answer could be that the reason why Bnei Yisrael were redeemed from Egypt was for the sake of receiving the Torah and inheriting the Land, where they could fulfil the mitzvot dependent on the Land and build the Beit Hamikdash. Hashem knew that Am Yisrael would start wondering, "What will be with our livelihood?" For if they dedicate their days to Torah study and mitzvah observance, how will they provide for their needs?

Therefore, Hashem commanded Bnei Yisrael that immediately upon entering the Land they should bring an Omer of the first harvest to the Kohen, so as to reinforce the idea that it is not their strength or might that brings them wealth, rather Hashem in His goodness and kindness is the One who sustains and provides for man, in accordance with his deeds (Alshich Vayikra 23:9-10). If Bnei Yisrael follow the path of Torah and mitzvot, Hashem will lavishly provide for their needs, without them needing to exert themselves or labor for it. However, it is impossible to supply man's sustenance without any effort on his part, for Adam Harishon and all mankind were cursed with "By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread". But, there is sweat and there is sweat, and one who is particular to follow in the path of Hashem will not have to trouble himself excessively.

This is what lies behind the Omer offering; it served to instill in Bnei Yisrael the message that their sustenance is not dependent on their toil alone, rather Hashem is the One who provides for and sustains every living creature, from the horns of the re'em (a large animal) to the eggs of lice. He is the One who will provide for their livelihood, if they obey His voice and cleave to His Torah.

Immediately after Bnei Yisrael bring this offering to the Kohen, they begin counting the Omer out of anticipation for the Giving of the Torah. This proves

the dedication of all their vigor and intent for the Torah alone, with the knowledge that it is only Torah that endows man with goodness and blessing. This can be compared to a young man who eagerly awaits his wedding day and so counts the days that remain until he will wed his bride. The more the days pass and the longed-awaited day approaches, the more his excitement and joy escalates. Similarly, Bnei Yisrael were commanded to count the Omer in anticipation of Matan Torah, to thereby prove their great desire to receive the Torah, since it is this alone that endows them with life and opens the storehouses of Heaven to shower them with abundant blessings and goodness.

Chazal relate (Shemot Rabba 52:3) the following incident: "A talmid of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai left Eretz Yisrael and returned wealthy. The other students saw this and were jealous; they too wished to go to Chutz La'aretz. Rabbi Shimon became aware of this so he took them to the Pagei Madon valley and prayed, 'Valley, valley, fill up with golden dinars'. It began filling up with golden dinars. He said to them, 'If you are asking for gold, here is gold – take it! But know that anyone who takes now is taking from his portion in the World to Come, since the reward for Torah is reserved for the World to Come, as it says, 'She joyfully awaits the last day'."

When his students heard this, they understood their master's hidden rebuke and through being strengthened with the knowledge of the great reward that awaits those who follow in the correct path, they discarded all the treasures they had collected, while repeating to themselves that true wealth and happiness awaits them in the Next World.

According to Rabbi Shimon, the entire world stands on Torah alone, therefore he saw no reason for man to go out and toil for his livelihood. He firmly believed that Hashem would take care of the livelihood of one who studies Torah and toils in Avodat Hashem (Berachot 35b).

Today, we are extremely far from the lofty level of Rabbi Shimon who was entirely holy for Hashem. However, even just contemplating his sublime stature has the power to strengthen our faith and make us realize that "Man's sustenance is determined for him from the beginning of the year to year's end", by the Master of all who examines our deeds and delivers His ruling accordingly. This is the meaning of the verse (Tehillim 55:23), "Cast upon Hashem your burden and He will sustain you", for through placing your trust in the Creator that He will take care of your livelihood, you will merit "He will sustain you".

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## Hilula

19 - Rabbi Ezra Attia, Rosh Yeshiva 'Porat Yosef'

20 - Rabbi Yosef Velatoch

21 - Rabbi Reuven Pinto, Rav in Marrakesh

22 - Rabbi Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri, the Saba Kadisha

23 - Rabbi Shmuel Florentine, Rav of Salonika

24 - Rabbi Baruch ben Chaim, Rav of 'Sha'arei Tzion'

25 - Rabbi Chaim Churi, Av Beit Din of Guavas



## Walking in their Ways

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

### Resolute in Her Decision

A woman once called me up to say that her newborn was having trouble breathing and was in critical condition. She requested my blessing for his complete recovery.

In order for my blessing to take effect, I asked the woman to undertake the mitzvah of dressing modestly, like all good Jewish daughters. B'ezrat Hashem, in the merit of my holy ancestors, her son would recuperate from his respiratory condition. The woman did as I asked and her baby's condition improved.

However, after some time his situation deteriorated. The mother phoned me again, in a fury. "If the child dies, G-d forbid, I will revoke my commitment to dress modestly!"

I was very pained at her words and told her, "In Tehillim (24:3) we read, 'Who may ascend the mountain of Hashem, and who may stand in the place of His sanctity?' In this world, there are two types of tests. There are challenges sent by Hashem in order to awaken a person to repent for his sins. These are referred to as 'who may ascend the mountain of Hashem.' And there are others which are sent to test one's level of faith and devotion toward his Maker. These are called, 'who may stand in the place of His sanctity.' It is certainly difficult to ascend in levels of spirituality, but it is many times harder to retain the holy level one has achieved.

"You faced the first type of challenge at your son's birth. You faced it admirably, accepting upon yourself to be more stringent with modesty. Now Hashem is testing you with a different type of challenge. He wants to examine if you are consistent in your resolution, or if it was just a passing whim, undertaken temporarily for your son's recovery.

"B'ezrat Hashem, when you show determination to unconditionally uphold your pledge, despite the Yetzer Hara seducing you to stop, you will merit the recovery of your young son."

Baruch Hashem, this woman courageously withstood her trial and even further strengthened her fear of G-d. She merited seeing salvation and her son recovered completely.

## The Haftarah

**"But the Kohanim, the Levites, descendants of Tzadok"** (Yechezkel 44)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah mentions the laws pertaining to the holiness of the Kohanim, according to the instructions of Yechezkel HaNavi. The Parsha too discusses the holy conduct required of Ahron HaKohen's offspring.

## Guard Your Tongue

### Examine the Source Carefully

Even if one personally witnessed inappropriate behavior, the deed must not be hastily judged. That is, one never really knows all the motivations and other details behind the scenes, and similarly, in the case of an argument, we cannot usually accurately determine which of the sides involved is correct. One must carefully examine all the facts before coming to the conclusion that one has a clear understanding of the situation. And even then... More than anything, it is important to be familiar with all the laws concerning this prohibition, before deciding that the seemingly 'guilty' party has indeed transgressed.



## In Our Father's Path

### How Do We Observe the Mitzvot?

We may wonder why we define ourselves as 'Torah observant Jews'. What exactly are we trying to observe? A careful look in the Holy Torah reveals that the term 'observe' is mentioned several times, an example of which we find in this week's Parsha: "You shall observe My commandments and perform them" (Vayikra 22:31). So what exactly is this 'observing' that the Torah commands us and how do we carry it out?

Rabbi Reuven Karlenstein zt"l addresses this topic in his sefer 'Yeichi Reuven'. He writes that in fact, it is possible to interpret the words "You shall observe My commandments", according to its simple meaning: an expression of guarding. We are being commanded to guard the mitzvot and protect them so that they should not become spoiled; to preserve the quality of the mitzvot. If a person does not pay attention and performs a mitzvah without heart, joy or thought, it does not have much value.

He quotes a beautiful explanation in the name of Rabbi Shalom Schwadron zt"l, on the verse, "You shall safeguard the matzot" (Shemot 12:17). The Mechilta expounds: "Do not read it 'matzot' but 'mitzvot' (In Hebrew both words have the same letters). Just as one does not leave matzah dough to rise, so one should not neglect a mitzvah opportunity. If a mitzvah comes your way, perform it immediately." Asks Rabbi Shalom, why does the Torah specify this rule particularly in reference to this verse and not in any other place?

He replies: "Wonder of wonders! In order for a matzah to become chametz, it is not necessary to do any act with one's hands, it is enough just to leave the matzah alone. If dough that is made from water and flour is left to rest without doing anything to it, it will automatically rise.

Therefore, specifically on this verse the Torah alludes to this lesson and stresses: Do not forgo a mitzvah opportunity. Meaning, you should know that to spoil a mitzvah and lose it, it is not necessary to perform any negative act. If you don't stand guard over it, it will quickly get lost or ruined.

When a person recites the blessings after a meal, it is a time of closeness to Hashem. In the second blessing "We thank You", we are claiming something mighty. We are thanking Hashem for His covenant and His Torah! Chazal tell us, "One who does not recite the [section of] covenant and the Torah has not fulfilled his obligation [of grace after meals]." However, even if he does recite this section but his thoughts are elsewhere, he loses out big time! The sefer 'Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah' and other sefarim write that if one says the blessings but does not pay attention to what one is saying, even though one has mentioned the covenant and Torah, one loses the value of the mitzvah. Just through a lack of observation and appropriate concentration on the words one is reciting, one greatly minimizes the value of this blessing, which is a Torah obligation!

When a person wakes up in the morning he should think to himself: "Ah, I will soon merit laying tefillin!" But sometimes he wakes up and the first question that comes to his mind is, "What's the time? Maybe I can sleep for another five minutes..." Let us stop to think for a moment: How can he long to sleep? It's almost time to put on tefillin! Feel excited! The mitzvah of tefillin! Wait for it with anticipation!

"You shall observe My commandments and perform them". This, then, is the preparation required for mitzvot. If one merits 'observing' the commandments, then 'performance' will follow.



## Pearls of the Parsha

### Remaining Calm Even on a Fast Day

*"They shall not make a bald spot on their heads, and they shall not shave an edge of their beard; and in their flesh they shall not cut a gash" (Vayikra 21:5)*

Since Kohanim are short-tempered, explains Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim zy"l, the Ben Ish Chai, this verse comes to warn them about the trait of anger. Chazal say (Pesachim 66b), "One who becomes angry, if he is wise, his wisdom disappears". Where is wisdom found? In the head. Therefore, the Kohanim were warned: "They shall not make a bald spot on their heads", they should not become angry so as not to lose the wisdom they have in their heads.

It is common that on a fast day, even people who are generally calm become more easily agitated and provoked, therefore it is necessary to insert a special warning not to become angry on fast days.

This is alluded to in the above verse: The Hebrew word for beard is spelt zayin, kuf, nun. The letter preceding zayin is vav, the letter preceding kuf is tzadik and the letter mem precedes the nun. These letters, re-arranged, spell tzom, the Hebrew word for fast. The Torah says, "They shall not make a bald spot", Kohanim must not become angry so that they should not lose their wisdom as a result. And "...an edge of their beard" the side of the beard, referring to tzom, the letters that precede beard, "they shall not shave".

Above all, "in their flesh they shall not cut a gash", they must also protect their health and not grow angry.

### Patience Always Pays Off

*"The son of an Israelite woman went out" (Vayikra 24:10)*

Rashi explains that the son of an Israelite woman went about in the camp scoffing about the show-bread: "A king normally eats warm, freshly baked bread. So why should Hashem have cold, nine-day old bread in the Tabernacle?"

The Ozneyim L'Torah expounds on the moral lesson this contains: A person is obligated to observe the mitzvot exactly according to the law, whether he understands their reason or not. A person must instill in his heart that when he doesn't understand some conduct of Hashem or one of the Torah commandments, it is only due to his limited perception. The fact that he finds something hard to comprehend will then have no effect on his performance.

The way the blasphemer behaved is a proof of this concept. He began by scoffing at the mitzvah of the show-bread since he was unable to understand it, and that confusion led to him later on pronouncing G-d's Name and blaspheming.

According to his perception, it was appropriate for a king to eat warm, fresh bread every day and not nine-day old, stale bread. But had he believed that "the judgements of Hashem are true, altogether righteous" and waited a week, he would have seen that the bread was still warm after eight days. He then would have been saved from this serious sin and its punishment.

### Sanctification - Beginning or End?

*"You shall sanctify him, for he offers the food of your G-d" (Vayikra 21:8)*

The Maharam of Rotenberg points out that the phrase "you shall sanctify him", appears twice in the Torah. The first time is at Har Sinai "Bound the mountain and sanctify it" and the second time is in this week's Parsha, "You shall sanctify him [the Kohen], for he offers the food of your G-d".

Chazal explain that we sanctify the Kohen from the beginning, as his holiness is innate, without any work on his part – nor does it grow during his lifetime – and this is demonstrated by giving him the first aliyah of the Torah reading and honoring him first to recite the zimun. Therefore, when it says "you shall sanctify him" referring to the Kohen, it is written at the beginning of the verse. This is in contradistinction to the Talmid Chacham, whose level of holiness grows all his life, and therefore the "sanctify it" referring to the Giving of the Torah is written at the end of the verse, for the sanctification of a Talmid Chacham is best demonstrated at the end, as it says, "For the sake of the holy ones who are [interred] in the earth". It is only after his passing that his holiness is recognized, as it says, "Behold, He cannot have faith even in His holy beings".

Similarly, the honor of a Talmid Chacham is demonstrated at the end of the Torah reading, in accordance with the ruling "The greatest one rolls up [the Sefer Torah]".

## Treasures

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



### Anger Makes One Lose One's Presence of Mind

*"The son of an Israelite woman went out" (Vayikra 24:10)*

Rashi writes: Where did he go out from? Rabbi Levi says that he left his share in the World to Come... And the Mishna says that the Beit Din of Moshe ruled against him. He came to pitch his tent in the camp of Dan but they said to him, 'What brings you here?' He replied, 'I am a descendant of Dan.' They said, 'It is written "each man by his banner according to the insignias of their father's household".' He went to the Beit Din of Moshe and they ruled against him, so he began blaspheming.

Rashi explains that he began debating with the tribe of Dan for he wished to pitch his tent in their portion since his Jewish mother, Shlomit bat Dibri, descended from the tribe of Dan. But the Danites told him that the Torah rules that inheritance goes according to the father and since his father was a non-Jew, he was not entitled to a portion in their inheritance. Since the son of the Israelite did not agree with this answer, he went to the court of Moshe where they ruled in favor of Dan. Out of great anger and rage with this ruling, he began blaspheming the Name of G-d.

This demonstrates the severity and danger of the trait of anger. One who becomes immersed in it loses his senses and displays a lack of self-control. As it says (Nedarim 22a), "One who becomes angry is seized by all kinds of Gehinom". This means that besides inheriting Gehinom in the Next World, the dangerous spirits that can be found in This World, messengers of Gehinom, will harm him. It is no secret that many have suffered nervous breakdowns, heart attacks, strokes and other maladies r"l, as a result of enormous rage.

In light of Rashi's words we can conclude that the blasphemer deteriorated to this low level of cursing G-d's Name, since he was overcome with such great rage. Besides this, he also renounced the truth and denied a reality that was well-known. Despite being aware of the enormous miracle that occurred with the show-bread, he scoffed at it, for as we explained, anger makes a person lose his senses and totally disrupts his rational mind.

It also seems possible to add that the tribe of Dan, on their part, did not act appropriately; they were too strict with him. One can say that had Dan been more accommodating with him and allowed him to pitch his tent in their portion, he would not have come to disgrace Hashem's Name and scoff at the show-bread. Since they dealt harshly with him, the severity of his act is also attributed to them, for had they received him nicely they could have prevented all the mockery and enormous anger that resulted.

# A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



## Educate Youngsters with Love

*Chinuch Thoughts from the Great Roshei Yeshivot*

If we turn our attention skyward and take a look at the stars, they appear as nothing more than tiny dots of light. But the truth is, stars are huge masses – some are even ten times larger than the Earth itself.

A Torah-based outlook compares teachers of young children to stars, as Chazal say (Baba Batra 8b): "Those who teach righteousness to the multitudes [will shine] like the stars, forever and ever" - this refers to those who instruct young children. This week's Parsha begins by referring to those who are entrusted with instructing the public, "Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and tell them". Chazal point out an apparent redundancy in the verse. Why was it necessary to say "and tell them" after it has already said "say"? They answer that this teaches that the adult Kohanim were cautioned regarding the children.

The tzadik Rabbi Chaim Friedlander zt"l, Mashgiach of Ponivezh Yeshiva, raises the question of why those who teach young children are compared to stars.

He explains that despite the fact that when educators and teachers of young children fulfil their role, the importance and impact of what they are doing is not always felt, in truth, they are actually creating worlds. Teachers and parents earn tremendous merits for every talmid/child who grows up and follows the path that was instilled in him, for it is a clear result of their investment and care. If they were successful with his education, the success endures and continues to have an effect on all the following generations. The opposite is also true: A flawed education can result in deterioration for many generations to come.

Rabbi Eliezer Turk shlita, in his sefer 'Otzroteihem Amaleh', relates that HaGaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita used to learn

with his young sons every day, and even finished Shas with several of them before they reached Bar Mitzvah. When Rabbi Chaim was asked why he did this – for are young children capable of grasping complicated sugyot in Eiruv and Nidah? – he replied in his measured manner:

"I wanted to show them that finishing Shas is not something unattainable. This itself would encourage them and fill them with the aspiration to continue learning and completing masechtos."

This is the implication of the Chazal, "If there are no lambs there are no goats and if there are no goats there are no lambs". If we want our offspring to grow up with the correct outlook in life, we must instill in their pure souls, already from a young age, all the principles that are important to us. We must imprint the value of Torah in their hearts, the longing to grow in Torah and gather its treasures, even while they are still infants.

In a similar vein, the esteemed Admor of Kalev zt"l related that when he was in the Auschwitz concentration camp during the war, he met a young boy who was wandering around, constantly mumbling to himself. The Admor approached him and asked: "What are you constantly mumbling?" At first the boy recoiled in fright. All the prisoners were bald and lacked any sign of Jewishness on their faces. He had no idea who this being, who had picked on him, was, and what his intentions were.

But after the Admor identified himself the young boy answered: "I constantly repeat to myself the eternal verse 'Hear, O Israel: Hashem is our G-d, Hashem, the One and Only'. My mother hy"d would repeat this verse to me morning and night, from when I was still in the cradle. This is the only verse that I know by-heart and it accompanies me through all the difficulties that I am now experiencing in this terrible war."

## Waves of Love

One of the vital principles in education, stresses HaRav Turk shlita, is love. Love is so essential because it forms a soul connection between the Rav and talmid and paves the way for the educator to make use of his gifts and professional tools.

Without this presence of love between Rav and talmid, the Rav is incapable of having an effect on the talmid's inner be-

ing. All he can do is make him do certain things, even if he possesses the most professional and successful educational tools. The opposite is also true: The more the Rav loves his talmid and forms a close relationship with him, treating him with affection, his chances of influencing him positively grow in proportion.

A distinguished Rosh yeshiva in Yerushalayim relates that when he established his Yeshiva Ketana, he approached the esteemed Admor of Slonim shlita, and asked to hear words of guidance.

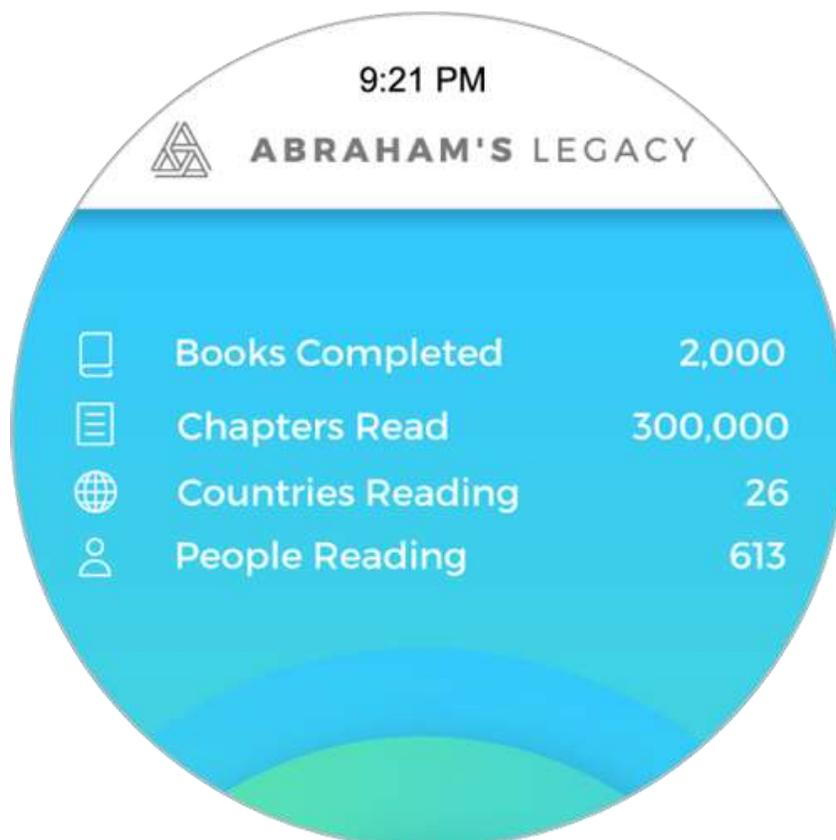
The Admor told him the following: "My father, the 'Netivot Shalom' of Slonim zt"l would say that when a teacher or Maggid Shiur enters his class on the first day of the year and meets his talmidim for the first time, even before opening his mouth he is obligated to sit quietly for a moment, and gaze with loving, compassionate eyes at his dear talmidim who are sitting in the room, and try and fill his heart with sincere love for them. For it is only when he loves them that he can have a true influence on them. Love for one's talmidim is critical and essential for the entire relationship between Rav and talmid."

Rabbi Abish Eizen shlita relates that when he was a talmid in the Eitz Chaim Talmud Torah, he merited travelling several times, as part of an organized trip by the Talmud Torah, to Maran the Chazon Ish zt"l who tested them on their learning and blessed them. During those visits, he merited hearing the Chazon Ish speaking to the melamed and telling him approximately these words: "A melamed must know that if he greets every single talmid, when he arrives at the Talmud Torah in the morning, with a wide smile, the talmid on his part will return this gesture with two smiles and his whole day will run differently."

The Chazon Ish further instructed the melamed that the entire relationship between a Rav and his talmid, his measure of influence and soul-connection, depends on his pleasant countenance, his patience and demonstrations of love and affection that he shows to his talmid. This is the only way to succeed in opening his heart and having a far-reaching influence on him.

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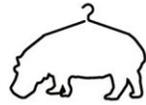
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