

# 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)

## 🕎 VAYEILECH ~ SHABBOS SHUVA ~ YOM KIPPUR 🕎

🕎 CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA 🕎

### Dvar Torah Unknown Depths

We are told (31:1) that Moshe, on the last day of his life, “went (*vayeilech*) and spoke these words to all of Yisrael”. The enigmatic word in this *pasuk* is *vayeilech* - “he went”. Where did he go?

Our Sages use two different expressions, explains Rav Levi Yitzchok, regarding the person who stands before the *amud* to lead the *tefillos* of the congregation. Sometime they call him *hayoreid lifnei hateiva* - “the one who goes down before the ark”, and sometimes they call him *haoveir lifnei hateiva* - “the one who passes before the ark”. Why is this so? Because there are two types of *Tzaddikim*. There is one kind of *Tzaddik* who is led by his *tefillos*. He utters the words of the *tefillos* and attaches himself to them; when they rise he rises with them. And then there is a higher kind of *Tzaddik* who actually takes the words and directs them upward. The *Tzaddik* who is led by the *tefillos* is called a *yoreid*; he descends and needs to be uplifted from the depths by the *tefillos*. The *Tzaddik* who leads the *tefillos* is called an *oveir*, because he is above the words of the *tefillos*.

All his life, Moshe was on the higher level, a level so high that people could not even begin to appreciate it. He was able to direct his *tefillos* upward. He led the words of the *tefillos*, and they followed him. But as he approached the end of his life, the exceedingly high level of wisdom he had always enjoyed was no longer available to him. Therefore, he “went and

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spoke". He had to go toward the words; they led him.



## Story

There was a kind of benign competition between Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev and Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk. A number of Rav Elimelech's best *talmidim* had left his *Yeshiva* to join Rav Levi Yitzchok, and Rav Elimelech was not too pleased with this development.

One time, Rav Levi Yitzchok traveled to Lizhensk to visit Reb Elimelech. He brought along with him his *talmid*, Rav Aharon of Zhitomir, who would one day author the noted *sefer Toldos Aharon*.

"So why are you stealing away my *talmidim*?" Rav Elimelech asked Rav Levi Yitzchok when they were alone together.

"How can you say I'm taking your *talmidim*," said Rav Levi Yitzchok, "when I myself am your *talmid*? It follows that when your *talmidim* are with me it is as if they're still with you."

Reb Elimelech smiled, somewhat placated.

When Rav Levi Yitzchok continued on his way, Rav Aharon stayed behind in Lizhensk.

Later that day, Reb Elimelech walked into the *Bais Medrash* and saw Rav Aharon sitting and learning there.

"Why are you still here?" asked Reb Elimelech in bewilderment. "Your *Rebbe* has already left this morning."

"I know," said Rav Aharon. "I stayed behind on purpose."

"But why?"

"Because I already know my *Rebbe*. Now I wanted to get to know you."

Reb Elimelech's eyes flashed fire. "Do you think you know your *Rebbe*?" he snapped. "Why, you don't even begin to know his lapels, let alone the true greatness of the man himself."



## YOM KIPPUR

### Exalted Thoughts

Once on *Yom Kippur*, there was a great commotion in Heaven. A group of *Malochim* (angels) contended that it was time to bring the Final Redemption, since Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev was already preoccupied with all the mystical thoughts that went through the head of the *Kohen Godol* in the *Bais HaMikdosh* on *Yom Kippur*. If the world had come to a point where a mere mortal could be absorbed in such thoughts even while the Jewish people were still in exile, how much more powerful his thoughts would be if they were redeemed and the *Bais HaMikdosh* rebuilt. Therefore, it would seem that the time for the redemption had at long last arrived.

“Not so fast,” declared *Soton*. “I will grant you that Rav Levi Yitzchok is a great *Tzaddik*, but that is only because he is the beneficiary of *mochin illo’in*, divinely inspired exalted thoughts. If he should be deprived of this privilege, he would revert to being an ordinary man. He would never be able to attain the way of thinking of the *Kohen Godol* on *Yom Kippur*. For such a man, there is no need to bring the redemption.”

“No, he is truly great,” said Rav Levi Yitzchok’s defenders.

“Then let us test him,” said *Soton*.

The Heavenly Court agreed to the test and removed the *mochin* from Rav Levi Yitzchok. Just at that moment, Rav Levi Yitzchok was engrossed in an exceedingly profound and illuminated state of expanded consciousness. Suddenly, he felt himself plunge into a dismal abyss. A clammy darkness descended over him. He opened his eyes and began to *daven*, and he realized that his *tefillos* were now no different from those of any simple man in the street.

Much disturbed, Rav Levi Yitzchok left Berditchev and traveled to Kozhnitz to be with his *talmid*, the Kozhnitzer *Maggid*. He explained his predicament to the *Maggid*, and the *Maggid* offered to help him as best he could. He provided Rav Levi Yitzchok with a small room in which he would have complete privacy. In addition, he made sure that all Rav Levi Yitzchok’s needs were met so he could focus without distraction on his spiritual situation.

Rav Levi Yitzchok remained in self-imposed isolation for six months. He spent a great deal of time on his *tefillos*, not because his mind was engaged with exalted thoughts, but rather because it took him a very long time to concentrate fully on the words.

One *Shabbos* morning, as the *Maggid* stood before the *amud*, he reached the *berocha* of *Yismach Moshe* and cried out, “*Yismach Moshe bematnas chelko*. Let Moshe rejoice in the portion gifted to him.” He said these words with overwhelming concentration, and as he recited them, he thought, “May Rav Levi Yitzchok also rejoice in the portion gifted to him.”

At that moment, the *mochin* that had been removed from Rav Levi Yitzchok were all returned to him. In a flash, Rav Levi Yitzchok’s whole world was illuminated with a brilliant, celestial light. Rav Levi Yitzchok was as overjoyed as a blind man from whose eyes the veil of darkness had been removed, and he returned to his former exalted spiritual stature.



It is well known that the ideal atonement of *Yom Kippur* results from the realization that nothing exists other than *Hashem*. This is the state of *ayin*, of nothingness, as opposed to the state of *yesh*, of the material. The true state of the world is *ayin*, while the state of *yesh* is only an illusion. The struggle of the *Tzaddikim* in their lives is to reach this understanding and live in the world of *ayin*. That is when a person is closest to *Hashem* and most worthy of atonement for his failings.

This may be the purpose of all the *Kohen Godol*’s *hishtachavaiois*, when he prostrates himself on the floor of the *Bais HaMikdosh* on *Yom Kippur*. In doing so, he is expressing his understanding that he and all he possesses belong to *Hashem*, for there is nothing in the world beside Him.



*Five True Stories for Yom Kippur – From a Soviet labor camp to an ISIS prison, inspiring stories of people who clung to observing Yom Kippur, despite the odds, great and small.*

By: Dr. Yvette Alt Miller and Aish

### **Steven Sotloff: Facing Yerushalayim**

After Islamic terrorists brutally murdered American-Israeli journalist Steven Sotloff, his story of enormous courage and faith finally emerged.

An American-born Jew reporting from the Muslim world, Steven downplayed his religion and the fact that he was an Israeli citizen. When he was captured by terrorists in Syria in 2013, he did all he could to hide his Judaism from his captors. Steven's family, terrified that if his captors knew Steven was Jewish they would do more to harm him, laid low, erasing all trace of their connection to their son from the internet and refraining from making public appeals for his release.

Yet despite the grave danger he was in, on his last *Yom Kippur*, Steven Sotloff managed to outwit his captors, fasting and even *davening* in the direction of Yerushalayim on this holy day. A former prisoner who was held with Sotloff recalls: "He told them he was sick and didn't want to eat, even though we were served eggs that day. He used to pray secretly in the direction of Jerusalem. He would see in which direction (his Muslim captors) were praying, and then adjust the angle."

In the middle of terrorist-controlled Syria, surrounded by murderous thugs dedicated to the eradication of Jews and the Jewish state, one Jewish, Israeli man was unbowed, observing *Yom Kippur* under the very noses of his captors.



### **The Soviet Guard**

For years, Mendel Futerfas defied the Soviet Union. Studying *Torah* was strictly forbidden by the Soviet authorities – even possessing Jewish books was grounds for imprisonment – but Mendel risked his life day in and day out, educating his fellow Soviet Jews in secret. Finally, one day, he was discovered by the authorities and sentenced to forced labor in one of the USSR's feared labor camps in Siberia.

There, Mendel tried to keep as many of the *mitzvos* as possible, but it wasn't easy. One *Yom Kippur*, he felt particularly low. Without a *machzor*, the *Yom Kippur tefilla* book, he was only able to recite a few *tefillos* from memory. One was *V'chol Ma'aminim* – "We all Believe" – but this *Yom Kippur*, Mendel had a difficult time believing the words. In such a dark place, he wondered, was it really possible to have such faith?

Just then, Mendel noticed one of the prison guards – a rough-looking man with a big scar across his face – staring at him. Frightened, Mendel tried to look as if he wasn't fasting and *davening*, but the guard came toward him. Speaking quietly, the guard said, "I have seen you *davening* today. I know you are fasting today. I want you to know I am fasting as well. I know it's *Yom Kippur* today, yet I don't know a single thing about Judaism except a *tefilla* my grandmother taught me when I was a child called *Modeh Ani*. I have been repeating this *tefilla* all day, and I want you to know you are not the only one celebrating *Yom Kippur*."

After fourteen long years, Mendel was able to escape from his gulag and make his way

to *Eretz Yisrael*, where he dedicated his life to teaching *Torah*. It is not known what happened to the Jewish guard.

Thanks to Rav Shlomo Zarchi for transcribing this oral history.



### **Arrested for Blowing the Shofar**

Under Turkish and then British rule, Jewish activity at the Western Wall – the last remaining remnant of the *Bais HaMikdash* in Yerushalayim and the holiest site of the Jewish people – was severely constrained. British law codified the restrictions on Jews who wanted to *daven* at the Wall: Jews were not allowed to recite *tefillos* loudly, they could not bring a *Torah* to the Wall, and they were forbidden to sound the *shofar*.

On *Yom Kippur*, 1930, at the conclusion of the *Neila* service, recited just before sundown, a sound rang out that had not been heard at the Western Wall in generations: the ringing blast of a *shofar*. A young *Rav*, Moshe Segal, had smuggled a *shofar* to the Western Wall, and blew it at its traditional place at the end of the *Yom Kippur* service.

Rav Segal was soon arrested, but in the intervening years, other Jewish boys – all in their teens – took his place. Each year from 1930 to 1947, Jewish teenagers smuggled *shofaros* to the Wall, concealed them under their clothing, and blew them at the end of *Yom Kippur*. The boys worked in teams of three, aiming to blow the *shofar* at each end of the Wall and in the middle. Avrohom Caspi, who was sixteen when he blew the *shofar* at the Western Wall in 1947, remembers being told, “You’ll be the first, and if you don’t succeed or are caught, someone else will do it.”

British soldiers arrested the boys who blew the *shofar*. Each one was tried and sentenced to prison for terms of up to six months. Still, the volunteers were undeterred. “We swore to give our lives for the resurrection of the Jewish people,” explains Yaakov Sika Aharoni, who blew the *shofar* at the Wall at age sixteen in 1936.

When Jordan captured the Old City of Yerushalayim, they forbade any Jew from setting foot near the Western Wall for nineteen years. In 1967, Israel liberated the Wall, allowing all people – Jews, Muslims and others, access – and the *shofar* once again rang out. Avrohom Elkayam, who was thirteen when he blew the *shofar* at the Western Wall in 1947, was fighting in the area, and quickly made his way to the Wall. An Israeli soldier was standing by the Wall, blowing a *shofar*, and Avrohom asked him if might have a turn as well. Avrohom blew the *shofar*, and a nearby soldier asked him why it was so important for him to sound this *shofar*.

Avrohom Elkayam explained he had been one of the last people to sound the *shofar* at the Western Wall, in 1947. The soldier then introduced himself, telling him that he was the first one to blow the *shofar*. It was Rav Segal who had started the yearly tradition back in 1930.



### **Sandy Koufax’s Most Famous Game**

In 1965, Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Sandy Koufax was at the top of his game. Nicknamed “the Man with the Golden Arm”, his skill had helped propel the Dodgers to the World Series. The Dodgers faced the Minnesota Twins. The opening game was scheduled for

Metropolitan Stadium in the Twin Cities, on October 6 – a date that happened to be *Yom Kippur*.

Although he didn't consider himself particularly religious, Koufax didn't have to think twice. "There was never any decision to make," Koufax later recalled, "because there was never any possibility that I would pitch. *Yom Kippur* is the holiest day of the Jewish religion. The club knows I don't work that day." Koufax sat out the game, and became best known not for his amazing skill on the field, but for his principled stand.

The Dodgers lost that game without Koufax, but with his help in the rest of the World Series, they won the 1965 Pennant. Koufax was named Most Valuable Player of the season. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1972.



### **In the Polish Trenches**

One of the most unusual *Yom Kippur* services did not take place in a *shul*. The year was 1939. World War II had just been declared, and Hitler's forces were battling in Poland, struggling for control of that country. Warsaw, the Polish capital, was under direct attack.

Augmenting the Polish army's efforts to repel the Nazi invaders, the Jews of Warsaw rallied to dig protective trenches around their city. *Yom Kippur*, 1939, dawned on a city under siege. Homes and *shuls* had been destroyed in German raids; Warsaw, battered daily from the Luftwaffe, was bracing for a ground assault.

Poland's army excused the Jewish residents of Warsaw from helping prepare defensive reinforcements on *Yom Kippur*, recognizing that it was a Jewish holy day. Yet, newspapers at the time reported, many of Warsaw's Jews had no place to go – their homes and *shuls* lay in rubble – and instead they rallied at the city's barricades and desperately helped dig defensive trenches. Fighting-age men were in the army; those who remained were old men and children.

Together, they worked feverishly, all the while reciting the *Yom Kippur* service.

The Jews – many of them elderly *Rabbonim* – recited *Tehillim* and *Vidui*, the *Yom Kippur* confessional *tefilla* while they dug the defenses. Under constant air attack, the elderly men and children together met each exploding bomb with a loud shout of "*Shema Yisrael!*"



## **Chassidic Rosh HaShana Stories**

The following story is especially appropriate for *Yom Kippur*:

Torrents of rain beat down on his face, but the tempest did not prevent *Chassidic* master Rav Leib Sora's from reaching the village. It was only several hours before the beginning of *Yom Kippur*. He was some distance from his intended destination, but was relieved to learn that in this village, too, there would be a *minyan* (quorum of ten) with which to *daven* – eight local villagers would be joined by two men who lived in the nearby forest.

Rav Leib immersed himself in preparation for the holy day, in the purifying waters of a river which ran by the village, ate the meal which precedes the fast and hastened to be the first in the little wooden *shul*. There he settled down to recite the various private devotions

with which he was accustomed to inaugurate the Day of Atonement.

One by one, the eight local villagers arrived in time to hear the words of *Kol Nidrei*. Together with Rav Leib, there were now nine. But there was no *minyan*, for it transpired that the two Jewish foresters had been imprisoned on some malicious libel.

“Perhaps we could find just one more Jew living around these parts?” asked Rav Leib.

“No,” the villagers all assured him, “there’s only us.”

“Perhaps,” he persisted, “there lives here some Jew who converted out of the faith of his fathers?”

The villagers were shocked to hear such an odd question from the stranger. They looked upon him quizzically.

“The doors of repentance are not locked even in the face of an apostate,” Rav Leib continued. “I have heard from my teachers that even when one pokes about in the ashes, one can light upon a spark of fire...”

One of the villagers now spoke up.

“There is one apostate here,” he ventured. “He is our *poritz*, the squire who owns this whole village. But he has been sunk in sin for forty years now. You see, the gentile daughter of the previous squire fell in love with him. So her father promised him that if he converted and married the girl, he would make him his sole heir. He didn’t withstand the temptation, so he did exactly that...They had no children, and his wife died many years ago; he now lives alone in his great big house. He is a cruel master, and deals especially harshly with the Jews on his land.”

“Show me his mansion,” said Rav Leib.

He removed his *tallis* in a flash, and ran as fast as he could in the direction of the mansion, with his white skullcap on his head and his white *kittel* billowing in the wind. He knocked on the heavy door, opened it without waiting for a response, and found himself confronting the squire. For a few long moments they stood in silence face to face, the *Tzaddik* and the apostate. The latter’s first thought was to summon one of his henchmen to seize the uninvited intruder and hurl him into the dungeon in the backyard. But the luminous countenance and the penetrating eyes of the *Tzaddik* softened his heart.

“My name is Leib Sora’s,” began the visitor. “It was my privilege to know Rav Yisrael, the *Ba’al Shem Tov*, who was admired also by the gentile noblemen. From his mouth I once heard that every Jew should utter the sort of *tefilla* that was first said by Dovid *HaMelech*: ‘Save me, *Hashem*, from bloodguilt.’ But the word used for ‘blood’ (*domim*) can also be translated as ‘money’. So my teacher expounded the *pasuk* as follows: ‘Save me, so that I should never regard money as my L-rd...’

“Now my mother, whose name was Sora, was a holy woman. One day, the son of one of the local gentry took it into his head to marry her, and promised her wealth and status if she would agree, but she sanctified the name of Yisrael. In order to save herself from that villain, she quickly got married to an old Jewish pauper who was a schoolteacher. You did not have the good fortune to withstand the test, and for silver and gold you were willing to betray your faith. Realize, though, that there is nothing that can stand in the way of repentance. Moreover, there are those who in one hour earn their portion in the World to

Come. Now is that hour! Today is the eve of *Yom Kippur*. The sun will soon set. The Jews who live in your village are short one man to make up a *minyan*. Come along now with me, and be the tenth man. For the *Torah* tells us: "The tenth shall be holy unto *Hashem*."

The squire paled at the words spoken by this white-clothed man with the singular face. And meanwhile, down the road, the eight local villagers waited in *shul*, huddled together in frozen dread. Who could tell what calamity this odd stranger was about to bring down upon their heads?

The door burst open, and in rushed Rav Leib, followed closely by the *poritz*. The latter's gaze was downcast, and his eyelashes were heavy with tears. At a sign from Rav Leib, one of the villagers handed the apostate a *tallis*. He enveloped himself in it, covering his head and face entirely. Rav Leib now stepped forward to the holy Ark, and took out two scrolls of the *Torah*. One he gave to the oldest villager present, and the other - to the *poritz*. Between them at the *bima* stood Rav Leib, and he began to solemnly chant the traditional tune for the opening lines of the *Kol Nidrei tefilla*: "By the sanction of *Hashem*, and by the sanction of the congregation...we declare it permissible to *daven* together with those who have sinned..."

A deep sigh broke forth from the depths of the broken man's heart. No man there could stand unmoved, and they all wept with him. Throughout all the *tefillos* of the evening, and from dawn of the next day right until nightfall, the *poritz* stood in *tefilla*, humbled and contrite. And as his sobs shook his whole body as he recited the confession, the other nine shuddered with him.

At the climax of the *Ne'ila* service, when the congregation was about to utter together the words "*Shema Yisrael*", the *poritz* leaned forward until his head was deep inside the holy Ark, embraced the *Torah* scrolls that stood there, and in a mighty voice that petrified those present, cried out, "Hear, O Yisrael, *Hashem* our G-d, *Hashem* is One!" He then stood up straight, and began to declare with all his might, "*Hashem* is G-d!" With each repetition his voice grew louder. Finally, as he cried it out for the seventh time, his soul flew from his body.

That same night they brought the remains of the *poritz* to burial in the nearby town. Rav Leib himself took part in the purification and preparation of the body for burial, and for the rest of his life observed the *Yahrzeit* of this penitent every *Yom Kippur* by saying *Kaddish* for the elevation of his soul.

Adapted by: Yerachmiel Tilles

Bibliography: Rav Leib Sora's (1730-1796) lived a solitary life of wandering, in which he devoted himself to the great *mitzva* of redeeming Jewish captives. He was held in great esteem by the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, founder of the *Chassidic* movement.



### **Like the Avoda of the Kohen Godol or Higher than a Maloch?**

The Sanz-Klausenberger related the following story, as he heard it from Rav Tevli of Dukla:

"I was told this story by Rav Tevli of Dukla, who heard it from his father-in-law, Rav Yosef Moshe, who heard it from Rav Yitzchok Ettinger, who heard it from the mouth of the *mechaber* of *Yeshuos Yaakov* himself. It happened when the *Yeshuos Yaakov* was but a young *avreich* living in Yaroslav (a city of *Misnagdim*, opponents of *Chassidus*)." This is the story he

told:

One year on *Erev Yom Kippur*, the *Rav* of Berditchev arrived in town. When he entered the *shul* for *Kol Nidrei*, he came in crawling on his hands and feet – such was his awe and self-negation before *Hashem!* He approached the *amud* and began to recite *Kol Nidrei* with great reverence and fervor. None of us assembled knew the guest's identity, but nonetheless he was allowed to continue leading the *tefillos* before the congregation. He had the sweetest voice we had ever heard, and we could tell by the tone and feeling with which he said those stirring *tefillos* that this was a person of great stature.

After concluding *Ma'ariv*, he went on to recite the liturgy known as *Shir HaYichud* before the Ark and then he began reciting the entire sefer *Tehillim* out loud. He stayed there, standing on his feet and saying *Tehillim*, the entire night!

In the morning, when the men started arriving in *shul*, we found him standing there in the same position that we had left him. Without budging from his place, he simply went on to recite *Adon Olom* and led the *tefillos* for *Shacharis*. Then he proceeded to read from the *Torah* and lead the services for *Mussaf*.

I began to doubt whether this being was human or a *Maloch* from Heaven! His powerful, sweet voice and his unceasing outpouring of emotion were nothing short of angelic. But when the congregation recited their responses and he stood silent I concluded that he must be human. Then he came to the *ne'ila tefilla*. He raised his voice and roared out the words like a lion, and not one person in the entire congregation was left unmoved. Anyone who had not yet done *teshuva* was filled with remorse and everyone there repented. We were sure that only a *Maloch* from Heaven could have such powers!

After *Yom Kippur* had ended and we had davened *Ma'ariv*, I decided to follow him and see where he was staying. I wanted to see if he would conclude his fast and eat as human beings do. Perhaps he truly was a *Maloch* who had no need to eat or sleep!

I watched as he listened to *Havdola* that someone recited and then asked those present, "Please bring me something to revitalize me and fill my hungry soul!"

Immediately they brought him some cake, cookies and fruit to eat, knowing that anyone would be hungry after such a day. "No, no," he protested, declining the food offering. "This is not what I had in mind. Please bring a *Maseches* (tractate) *Sukka*."

They brought him the requested volume, and he took the *Gemora* to his room saying that he needed to rest a bit. I followed him and peeked into his room. What I saw had no resemblance to rest. I saw him sitting enraptured in studying the *mesechta* aflame with devotion. I myself could not stay up. I was tired and I fell fast asleep. When I awoke, it was morning. I peeked into the Berditchever's room and found him still sitting there and learning. While I slept, he had managed to learn almost the entire *Masechta!*

"This," interjected the Sanz-Klausenberger, "was the *Kedushas Levi*, about whom his son, *Rav Meir*, writes in his introduction to the first volume of his *sefer Kesser Torah*: 'Everyone in the world knows that my father had thousands of *talmidim* whose hearts my father set

aflame teaching them *Gemora, Rashi* and *Tosafos*, as well as the works of the *poskim* and codes of law. Their hearts were excited to serve *Hashem* when they heard his *Torah* guiding them on the straight path to serve *Hashem*.'

"Though he served *Hashem* at every moment with such fervor that would make even *Malochim* and fiery *serofim* jealous," concluded the Sanz-Klausenberger, "he could not rest knowing that he did not studied enough *Torah* on the day of *Yom Kippur*. Only after the entire *Masechta* of *Sukka* was his mind appeased. What then can we say about ourselves?"



## Kabbalistic Meditation for an Easy Fast as taught by the holy *ARI*

Take a glass of water, as the last action you take before the fast begins. Take 9 sips of water, turning the glass counterclockwise 1/2 turn after each sip. Meditate on the following thoughts after each sip and before you rotate the glass counterclockwise.

**Sip 1: Chessed of Chessed or, in English, Right of Right.**

חסד שבחסד

**Sip 2: Gevura of Chessed or, in English, Left of Right.**

גבורה שבחסד

**Sip 3: Tiferes of Chessed or, in English, Center of Right.**

תפארת שבחסד

**Sip 4: Chessed of Gevura or, in English, Right of Left.**

חסד שבגבורה

**Sip 5: Gevura of Gevura or, in English, Left of Left.**

גבורה שבגבורה

**Sip 6: Tiferes of Gevura or, in English, Center of Left.**

תפארת שבגבורה

**Sip 7: Chessed of Tiferes or, in English, Right of Center.**

חסד שבתפארת

**Sip 8: Gevura of Tiferes or, in English, Left of Center.**

גבורה שבתפארת

**Sip 9: Tiferes of Tiferes or, in English, Center of Center.**

תפארת שבתפארת

**Have an Easy Fast!**

# 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 *berocha*. Some say the following: This candle is being lit in the merit of \_\_\_\_\_.

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

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

## Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

[תְּפִילָה הַנִּמְצָאת בְּסֵפֶר אֶלֶף הַמִּגּוֹן מִבְּעַל הַפֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ עַל פְּרִשְׁת וַיֵּצֵא עֲמוּד כ"ד]

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וּלְעִלּוּי נַשְׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_  
בֵּן/בַּת \_\_\_\_\_, יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים  
וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שְׁאֵנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וְיִהְיֶה הַכֹּל  
לְזָכוֹת וּלְמִנוּחַת וּלְעִלּוּי לְנַשְׁמוֹת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבִפְרָט לְנַפְשׁ רוּחַ וְנַשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /  
צַדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_ . יְהִי רְצוֹן שְׁתִּהְיֶנָּה נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצְרוּר הַחַיִּים.

### Translation:

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

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





## ❁ GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER ❁



Yahrzeits for Week Beginning Shabbos Vayeilech

[http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim\\_yahrzeits/Tishrei](http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrzeits/Tishrei)

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

### \* 6<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei ~ Begins Friday Night (Oct 4<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Binyomin Zev Eiger**, *Rav* of Leipnik, (5566/1805);
- \* **Rav Aryeh Leib**, the *Shpoler Zeide*, (5572/1811);
- \* **Rav Avrohom Kalfon**, *Rav* of Tripoli, Libya, (5580/1819);
- \* **Rav Mordechai** of Tolna, (5632/1871);
- \* **Rav Noach Shachor** of Biale, (5670/1909);
- \* **Rav Yisrael Taussig** of Kiryas Mattersdorf, Yerushalayim, (5728/1967);
- \* **Rav Tzvi Hirsch HaKohen Kupshitz** of Yerushalayim, (5736/1975).

### \* 7<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Oct 5<sup>th</sup>)

- \* Birthday and *Yahrzeit* of **Zevulun ben Yaakov Avinu**, (2311/1450);
- \* Birthday of **Dina bas Yaakov Avinu**, (2312/1448). She was the daughter of Yaakov and Lea. Lea had great power to change circumstances through her *tefillos*. She did not desire to have a son at that time, and *davened* that the child she was carrying would be a girl. Hashem listened to her *tefillos* and switched the baby's gender, and Dina was born. When Yaakov and his family, including Dina, finally made their way back to *Eretz Yisrael* (Canaan at that time), there was a very bloody war with Esav and his army on the way, in which Yaakov was the victor. Just afterward, Dina was kidnapped and violated by Shechem, the son of Chamor. Shechem fell in love with her, perhaps drawn to the extraordinary beauty and enormous spiritual power latent in this young girl. He agreed to convert and have all the men of his city circumcised. However, while the townspeople were recovering from their circumcision, Dina's brothers, outraged, took retribution upon the male population of the city;
- \* **Rav Noach** of Lechovitz (5535/1775–5593/1832 or 5594/1833), son of Rav Mordechai, the founder of the Lechovitz dynasty. As he had no sons, his *Chassidim* were divided as to his successor: some went to his *talmid*, Rav Moshe of Kobrin, some to his son-in-law, Rav Mordechai, and some to his nephew, Rav Shlomo Chaim of Koidenov. His *Divrei Torah* were kept but only written down by the previous Slonimer *Rebbe* as *Toras Avos*, (5593 or 5594/1832 or 1833);
- \* **Rav Dovid Oppenheim** (5424/1664–5497/1736), born to Rav Avrohom Oppenheim in Worms. When he was young, he studied in the city of Metz, under Rav Gershon Ashkenazi (*mechaber* of *Avodas HaGershuni*) and Rav Yaakov, the father of the *Chacham Tzvi*, as well as in the *Yeshiva* of Rav Yitzchok Binyomin Wolf (*mechaber* of *Nachlas Binyomin*). In *Elul* of 1689, at the age of twenty-five, he succeeded Rav Binyomin Banet as *Rav* of Nikolsburg, which included the entire state of *Maherin*. In 1702, he became *Rav* of Prague. In time, Rav Dovid was appointed *Rav* of the entire state of Moravia and, eventually, *Rav* of all Bohemia and served as *Rav* in Vienna. His eventual successor as *Rav* of Prague was the *Noda B'Yehuda*. His vast library serves as a tribute to his outstanding personality. The catalogue of the books in his library, published under the title *VaYikain Dovid*, lists hundreds of books, (5497/1736);

- \* **Rav Menachem Nachum** of Makarov, fourth of the eight sons of Rav Mordechai, the Chernobyler *Maggid*. He married Hinda Mattel, daughter of Rav Yosef *HaLevi* Horowitz, the *Admor* of Turchin, who in turn was the son of the *Chozeh* of Lublin. In 1833 he became *Rebbe* in the town of Makarov, (5612/1851).
- \* **8<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei ~ Begins Sunday Night (Oct 6<sup>th</sup>)**
  - \* **Rav Boruch Schneerson**, father of the *Ba'al HaTanya*, (5550/1789);
  - \* **Rav Shimon Sofer**, *Rav* of Sandra and Paks, (5691/1930);
  - \* **Rav Shlomo Benzion Twersky** of Chernobyl, (5700/1939);
  - \* **Rav Binyomin Zeilberger**, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshiva Bais HaTalmud* of Bensonhurst (5681/1921–5766/2005). Born in Koenigshausen, Germany, shortly after *Pesach* in 1936, he was sent to learn at the *Mirrer Yeshiva* in Poland, due in part to his parents' fears of Hitler. He was *zoche* to hear a few *shmuessen* by Rav Yeruchom before the *Mashgiach* was *niftar* two months later. In 1939, he traveled with the *Mir Yeshiva*, first to Vilna, then to Japan and Shanghai. In 1947, he traveled to America to learn in the newly established *Mirrer Yeshiva*. Soon, he married the daughter of Rav Yisrael Chaim Kaplan, a son-in-law of Rav Yeruchom. After the *chasuna*, Rav Binyomin joined *Yeshiva Bais HaTalmud*, which had recently been established by members of the *Mir*. There he remained as *Rosh Yeshiva* for decades, (5766/2005);
  - \* **Rav Elozor Nissan Teitelbaum** of Drohobich, son of the *Yismach Moshe* and father of the *Yetev Lev*, (5616/1855);
  - \* **Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel Rabinowitz** of Lublin, (5693/1932);
- \* **9<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei ~ Begins Monday Night (Oct 7<sup>th</sup>) ~ Erev Yom Kippur**
  - \* **Rav Avrohom Saba**, *mechaber* of *Tzror HaMor*, (5280/1519);
  - \* **Rav Avrohom Abali ben Rav Chaim HaLevi Gumbiner** (1634–1682). Born in Gumbin, he witnessed the massacre of his parents in the Chmielnitzki pogroms at the age of eighteen. He escaped to Lissa, and then to Kalish, where he became *Rosh Yeshiva* and afterward *Dayan* of the city. He is the *mechaber* of *Mogen Avrohom*, a definitive commentary on the *Orach Chaim* section of the *Shulchon Aruch*. He also authored *Zayis Ra'anana* on *Yalkut Shimoni*, (5443/1682) [According to *Hamodia* 2005 – 3<sup>rd</sup> of *Tishrei*];
  - \* **Rav Yitzchok Yehuda Shmeliks**, the *Bais Yitzchok* of Lemberg, (5666/1905);
  - \* **Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik** (Rav Velvel) of Brisk, also referred to as the *Griz* (5646/1886–5719/1959). Son and most prominent *talmid* of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, he succeeded his father in Brisk, survived World War II and moved to *Eretz Yisrael*. Among his descendants are Rav Dovid and Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik, (5720/1959);
  - \* **Rav Eliezer Zusman Sofer**, *mechaber* of *Et Sofer*, (5663/1902);
  - \* **Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel Twersky**, *Admor* of Machnova-Bnei Brak, grandson of the *Maggid* of Chernobyl (5655/1895–5748/1987) [10<sup>th</sup> of *Tishrei*, according to *Yated* 2006].
- \* **10<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Oct 8<sup>th</sup>) ~ Yom Kippur**
  - \* **Zecharia ben Yehovada Kohen Godol**. This is not Zecharia *HaNovi*;
  - \* **Rav Akiva ben Rav Yosef**, who was murdered *al kiddush Hashem* in Caesaria, (123 or 135). Born in the year 50, he received most of his teaching from Rav Eliezer *HaGodol*. Rav Akiva was one of four *Tanno'im* who entered the *Pardes*. The others were Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, and

Acher [Elisha *ben Avuya*]. According to some, Rav Akiva was the redactor of the *Sefer Yetzira*. Rav Akiva is the loftiest soul ever to come into the world and yet his path to *Torah* was through *teshuva*. There are many stories in the *Talmud* and elsewhere surrounding Rav Akiva;

- \* **Rav Achai Gaon**, son of Rabba *bar* Ahuva. Rabba was one of the *Tanno'im* who was involved in redacting the *Talmud*, as was Rav Achai, (4271/510);
- \* **Rav Naftoli Chaim ben Rav Meir** of Dzhikov, (5655/1894);
- \* **Rav Yehuda Leib HaLevi Ashlag** of Yerushalayim, also known as the *Ba'al HaSulam* (Author of the Ladder) in reference to his magnum opus, the *Sulam*, a commentary on the *Zohar* (1886–1954/5715). In the *Sulam*, Rav Ashlag translated the *Zohar* into Hebrew from the original Aramaic and he also reedited the *Etz Chaim*, the definitive Lurianic work on essence and cosmology. To this he added a commentary transposing the somewhat abstract notion of “receptacle” (*kli*) into the experientially more accessible term “desire” (*rotzon*) in all its many permutations. This work is known as the *Talmud Esser Sefiros*. He was born in 1886 in Łódź, Congress Poland, Russian Empire, to a family of scholars connected to the *Chassidic* courts of Porisov and Belz. Rav Ashlag reputedly studied *Kabbola* from the age of seven, hiding pages from the book *Etz Chaim* (The Tree of Life) of Rav Yitzchok Luria (also known as the *Arizal*) in the *Talmudic* tractate he was meant to be studying. By nineteen, Rav Ashlag’s knowledge of the *Torah* was profound enough for the *Rabbonim* of Warsaw to confer upon him the title of *Rav*. Rav Ashlag lived in *Eretz Yisrael* from 1922 until his *petira* in 1954 (except for two years in England). In addition to his *Sulam* commentary on the *Zohar*, his other primary work, *Talmud Esser Sefiros*, is regarded as the central textbook for *talmidim* of *Kabbola*. Rav Ashlag systematically interpreted this wisdom and promoted its wide dissemination. In line with his directives, many contemporary adherents of Rav Ashlag’s teachings strive to spread *Kabbola* to the masses. He also wrote many other articles and essays including *Matan Torah* (Gift of the *Torah*), Article on Peace, Article on Freedom and many others. In the 1930s, Rav Ashlag, then in his fifties, gathered around him a group of *talmidim*, including Rav Yehuda Tzvi Brandwein. Rav Ashlag differs fundamentally from all *Mekubolim* of the past, who studied and taught *Kabbola* in a concealed manner, in that he felt a great need to reveal and clarify the teaching of *Kabbola* to the masses. This was because he saw that the evil inclination in people (human egoism) would rise to an altogether new height in this era of humanity, creating internal suffering felt as a meaningless and confused existence. He taught that through intensive study of *Kabbola*, a person’s desire to give to others is developed in relation to this goal. Rav Ashlag believed that the coming of the *Moshiach* meant that humans would attain this quality which would allow them to give up their selfishness and devote themselves to loving each other for the sake of life’s purpose, as stated in the commandment “love thy neighbor as thyself”, (5715/1954);
- \* **Rav Avrohom Binyomin Silberberg**, the Pittsburgher *Rav*, (5722/1962);
- \* **Rav Moshe Yitzchok ben Rav Naftoli Elimelech Gevirtzman**, “Reb Itzikel” of Pshevorsk and Antwerp, Belgium, a great beloved *Tzaddik*. He was a descendant of the *Noam Elimelech* and was said to be one of the thirty-six hidden *Tzaddikim*, (5737/1976);
- \* **Rav Shlomo Shimshon Karelitz** (5670/1910–5762/2001). Born in Vilna on *Tisha B’Av*, his father, Rav Mayer, was a *Moreh Tzedek* and the right-hand-man of the *Chofetz Chaim* and Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky. His grandfather was Rav Shemaryohu Karelitz, the *Rav* of Kosova.



The *Chazon Ish*, Rav Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz, was Rav Shlomo Shimshon's uncle. When he was fourteen, Rav Shlomo Shimshon left Kosova and went to the *Mirrer Yeshiva*, where he became the *talmid muvhok* of its *Mashgiach*, Rav Yerucham Levovitz. Shortly before the rise of the Third Reich, Rav Shlomo Shimshon and his parents moved to *Eretz Yisrael*. Several years later, he served as a *Dayan* on the *Petach Tikvah Bais Din*. His publications included *Divrei Shlomo* and *Shu"t Ateres Yisrael on Choshen Mishpat* and *Even Ho'Ezer*, (5762/2001).

### \* **11<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Oct 9<sup>th</sup>)**

- \* **Rav Dovid HaLevi**, *Maggid* of Steppin and a *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, (5571/1810).
- \* **Rav Tavyomi**, also known as Rav Tavot, known from comments written about him in the *Gemora*. Here is one example: Rava said: I used to say that there is no truth in the world. A certain sage – Rav Tavot by name, and some say he is called Rav Tavyomi – once told me that if he were given all the universe he would not alter his words. Once this Rav Tavot happened by a certain place – Kushta [meaning Truth] was its name – and [the people there] never altered their words, and not a single one of them ever died before his time. [Rav Tavot] wed one of their women and she bore him two sons. One day his wife was washing her hair. Along came her neighbor and knocked on the door. He, thinking it lacking in propriety [for his wife to be seen thus], said to her [the neighbor], “She is not in.” Both his sons died. The residents came to him and said, “What has happened?” He told them, such and such happened. They answered, “Please, leave our midst and do not tempt death to visit our people” (*Sanhedrin* 97a). Even a truthful person like Rav Tavot or Rav Tavyomi, a fifth-generation Babylonian *Amora* (sage), who was prepared to give all in order not to lie, preferred telling a white lie to being immodest. The outcome, however, speaks for itself: his white lie is presented as no different from any other falsehood, whose punishment according to the tale is the untimely death of his sons. Uttering a falsehood harms the order of the universe, (4111/350);
- \* **Rav Huna berei Mar Zutra**, known for his comments in the *Gemora*, (4227/466);
- \* **Mar bar Rav Ashi**, known for his comments in the *Talmud*, (4227/466);
- \* **Rabbeinu Yitzchok HaLevi** from Speyer, the *Riva*, a *talmid* of *Rashi*, (4893/1133);
- \* **Rav Avrohom Abish** of Frankfurt, the *Bircas Avrohom*, (5529/1768);
- \* **Rav Tzvi Arye** of Alik, (5572/1811);
- \* **Rav Menachem Mendel** of Bohush, (5703/1942).

### \* **12<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei ~ Begins Thursday Night (Oct 10<sup>th</sup>)**

- \* **Rav Avrohom Maloch**, the son of Rav Dov Ber, the *Mezritcher Maggid*, (5501/1741–5537/1776). According to his peers, his teaching was “out of this world” which is why he was named the *Maloch* (Angel). Rav Avrohom learned *Kabbala* from the *Maggid* and the revealed *Torah* from Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the teacher chosen by his father. When Rav Avrohom's first wife passed away, he married the daughter of Rav Feivel of Kremenitz, *mechaber* of *Mishnas Chachomim*. He wrote *Chessed L'Avrohom*, a commentary on the *Torah*, *Talmud*, *Mishna* and *Yomim Tovim*. His grandson was Rav Yisrael of Rizhin, (5537/1776);



\* **Rav Yechiel Michel** of Zhvill, the second Zhviller *Rebbe*. His father, Rav Moshe (the first Zhviller *Rebbe*), was one of the five sons of the Zlotchover *Maggid*, Rav Yechiel Michel, (5617/1856).



## ❁ 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 Aryeh Leib of Shpolya, 6<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei

*The Shpoler Zeide*

*Rav Aryeh Leib* was a disciple of *Rav Pinchas* of Koretz. For a long time *Rav Aryeh Leib* was a '*nistar*', a hidden *tzaddik*, until he was "forced" to reveal himself. The *Shpole Zeide* was a folk *rebbe*: singing, dancing, joyful. He consoled, encouraged, counseled, gave remedies, made peace between man and wife and between parents and children, defended the weak, threatened the strong with spiritual punishment, and stood up in defense of the abused Jewish *arrendators* [lessees]. He

was well-known as a man who intimidated the aristocrats, who would beat their "*Moshkes*," let dogs loose upon them and throw them with their families into dark cellars. Like other *tzaddikim* of his generation, the *Shpole Zeide* distributed everything he had to the poor. Like a true folk *rebbe*, he was a loyal spokesman for the Jews before heaven. He would always argue before the Master of the world: "What do you want from your people Israel? In their place, in such a bitter exile,

another people would not keep one commandment. Yet Your people Israel keep the commandments and perform so many good deeds."

The Shpoler *Zeide*, was antagonistic to *Rav* Nachman of Breslov. When some of the *Zeide's* students heckled *Rav* Nachman, the *Zeide* censored them. Every movement needed opposition, he explained. He had been providing a service.



### How he received the name: The Shpoler Zeide...

For many years the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, who founded the *chassidic* movement, was a "hidden *tzaddik*" and very few were aware of his greatness. During these years, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* visited many towns and villages throughout Eastern Europe. On one such occasion, he stayed at the home of *Rav* Baruch in the city of Uman. Although *Rav* Baruch had never met his unexpected guest before, he greeted him warmly and provided him with his best hospitality. For example, when he saw the *Ba'al Shem Tov's* skinny and emaciated horse, he immediately gave him a healthier and stronger animal of his own. That night *Rav* Baruch noticed a strange light radiating from his visitor's bedroom. Out of curiosity, he peeped through the keyhole. The intensity of the light, combined with the realization that his guest must be a very righteous individual, caused *Rav* Baruch to faint. At the sound of his fall, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* opened the door. On seeing his host lying there unconscious, he immediately tried to revive him.

When *Rav* Baruch opened his eyes, he started to cry. "Please forgive me," he begged. "I had no idea that you were such a great and righteous person. If I had known, I would have shown you much more respect." The *Ba'al Shem Tov* reassured him that he had not treated him disrespectfully at all and asked him why he had fainted. "I saw that you were bathed in

a great light," replied *Rav* Baruch. "And there was a man dressed in white with a long beard who was standing with you." "The old man was your distinguished ancestor, the *Maharal* of Prague," explained the *Baal Shem Tov*. "The *Maharal* of Prague knew that you are destined to have a holy son that will bear his soul. You have merited the privilege of such a holy son since you and your wife Rachel are G-d fearing people who do so much charity. You are to name your child *Aryeh Leib* after the *Maharal*".

As *Rav* Baruch did not yet have any children, he was very excited about receiving such a blessing. Sure enough, about a year later his baby son was born. The *Ba'al Shem Tov* attended the *bris milah*. During the ceremony, the turn came for one of the guests to bless the child, all the spectators heard a strange blessing. The poor man (*The Ba'al Shem Tov*) placed his right hand upon the baby and said, "My father once explained the whole concept of a *Bris* (circumcision) as entering the covenant of *Avraham Avinu*. It was written 'And *Avraham* was old - *Zaken*.' *Zaken* also means grandfather. Our forefather *Avraham* became the grandfather of *Klal* Israel. Let it be *Hashem's* will, that you shall be a grandfather (*Zeide* in Yiddish) to the Jews."

His blessing caused everyone to smile. Later, if someone chanced to meet the happy parents he would ask them how the *Sabale* (little grandfather) was coming along. And the name *Saba* (*Zeide*) stuck to the boy for the rest of his life.

May the merit of the *tzaddik Rav Aryeh Leib* protect us all, *Amen*.

[www.rabbishimon.com/tzadikim/showz.php?p=shpole.htm](http://www.rabbishimon.com/tzadikim/showz.php?p=shpole.htm)



### The Rebbe's Cossack Dance

*Rav* Leib, the Shpoler *Zeide*, once led the congregation in prayer on Friday night in the *shul* of *Rav* *Avraham*

*Hamalach* ("the Angel"), son of the *Maggid* of Mezritch, successor to the *Ba'al Shem Tov*. After the singing of "*Lecha Dodi*", the *Zeide* danced for a long time -- wondrous dances spinning round and round with astonishingly quick and graceful steps. Those watching saw his tremendous enthusiasm as he seemed to cast off his material self in joyous dance.

Watching the *Zeide* dance, the *Malach* was extremely moved. Afterwards, he went over to him and said, "I see that Your Honor is an expert in the art of dancing. It is also apparent that you know the secrets of dancing before the *Shabbos* Bride and Queen, unifying the Name with every step of yours! Tell me, where did you learn to dance so beautifully?"

The *Zeide* said that he had learned the secret from the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, and the art of dance from *Eliyahu HaNavi* (*Eliyahu the Prophet*). This is the story he told:

During the period when the *Zeide* was traveling from town to town in self-imposed exile, he heard about a village Jew who had not paid his rent to the local *poritz* (landowner). While the *poritz* was not an especially evil man, his estate manager was a wicked drunkard and a Jew-hater who persuaded the nobleman to punish the Jewish villager severely.

There was a deep pit in the *poritz's* courtyard where prisoners were let down by rope. Once a week a little bread and water was sent down to the unfortunate man inside. The prisoner would remain in the pit until the *poritz's* next birthday, when he would be taken out, dressed in a bearskin, and led by a man -- known as the "bear-keeper" -- who was an expert dancer. The "bear" and his "keeper" would go to the *poritz's* lavish birthday party, to which all the noblemen from the surrounding countryside were invited, as well as the *poritz's* family and friends.

Then the "bear-keeper" would signal

the band to strike up a tune. If the gentile "keeper" was able to dance better than the Jewish "bear," the Jew would be thrown to the ground and the cruel guards would seize him and hurl him at a pack of vicious dogs. If, however, the Jew danced better than his "keeper," he would be set free. Not only that, but he would be given permission to attack his "keeper" and beat him to death.

Naturally, it was next to impossible for the Jewish prisoners to save themselves, as they did not know how to dance to the gentile tunes. Not only that, but the prisoners were exhausted and weakened by their long ordeal in the pit and the heavy bearskin they were forced to wear made moving difficult. From the start, they were doomed.

"*Eliyahu*," the *Zeide* of *Shpoler* said, "commanded me to go to the village and hire myself out as a tutor. Once there, I was to find out how it was possible to free the Jewish prisoner in the pit.

"After I discovered where the pit was located on the *poritz's* property, *Eliyahu* ordered me to take the Jew out of the pit and put myself in his place so that, on the *poritz's* birthday, I would dance better than my 'keeper.'

"I told him that I did not know how to dance, and could certainly not dance better than the 'keeper.' He then taught me all kinds of dances and their names. When I knew all the dance steps perfectly, I lowered myself into the *poritz's* pit, calmed the prisoner and refreshed him with a little whiskey, and switched clothes with him, putting on his filthy worn out garments. The prisoner went up the ladder I had lowered, pulling it up behind him, and I stayed in the pit in his place, awaiting the big day.

"It came at last. At midnight, I heard drunken laughter. My 'keeper' was the wicked estate manager. He pulled me out of the pit and dressed me in a bearskin. Then

he led me, with a rope around my neck, in front of the merrymakers to the *poritz's* palace. I crawled on all fours so that it should not occur to them I was not the same Jew, and groaned as if I was in pain and unable to walk.

"My arrival was greeted with raucous laughter. All the guests were highly amused at the spectacle of a humiliated Jew. Suddenly, the signal was given and the announcement made: If the 'bear' danced best, he would be set free. If not, the dogs would teach him to dance!

"There was more loud laughter from the guests. A lively *Kazak* (Cossack) tune began, and my 'keeper,' the estate manager, began to dance. I began to dance, too, but slowly and sluggishly, as would be appropriate for a half-starved man who hadn't stretched his legs in weeks. The audience enjoyed it immensely, as they waited for me to drop in my place, exhausted.

"To their surprise, I gradually stepped up my pace, until finally I was dancing more quickly and also more beautifully than the shocked estate manager. He tried to keep up, but in his drunkenness he lost his balance and fell to the ground. The audience switched their preference, as they cheered me on and mercilessly taunted the fallen 'keeper'. I too made fun of him, and began to sing in time with the gentile music, 'Hupp Kazak, haha haha haha, up Cossack, get up if you can.' Then I jumped on him with a bear's roar and began to rain blows on him until some of the guests stopped me.

"The *poritz* could not accept my victory, and once again gave the signal for another round of music to start. It was a different melody this time, a *marzurka*, but the result was the same: the Jew in the bearskin danced wonderfully while the gentile fell to the ground and was beaten. At last, I was declared the winner and set free."

The *Shpoler Zeide* finished his story and smiled. "Now you understand where I learned to dance so well."

*Rav Avraham Hamalach* replied, "If so, your dances are better than our prayers!"

[Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from "Stories of Elijah the Prophet" (Yisrael Klapholtz), "Stories my Grandfather told me" (Mesorah) by Zev Greenwald and from chassidic oral traditions] ~  
[www.ascentofsafed.com/Stories/Stories/5769/594-29.html](http://www.ascentofsafed.com/Stories/Stories/5769/594-29.html)



### **Fit To Be Tried**

The famine in Russia that year was worse than anybody could ever remember. Slowly but surely the markets became bare and soon there was only a meager selection of vegetables and the barest amount of groat bread and margarine for sale.

Letters from all over Russia began to arrive in Shpola. These emergency messages were addressed to the *Tzaddik*, the *Shpoler Zeide*, for he had always been able provide for the poor and downtrodden of his people. He was called the *Zeide*, (grandfather) on account of his great spiritual and practical benevolence. He himself was in such anguish over the famine that he could only partake of a few bites of bread and some tea for weeks on end. Who could beseech *Hashem* that the decree be rescinded. Even the Gentiles looked to the Jews for help them, and the Jews looked to the *Shpoler Zeide*. Still, *Hashem* wasn't answering prayers for food. The famine spread.

The *Shpoler Zeide* decided on a bold course of action. He requested 10 of the generation's most venerated *Tzaddikim* including, *Rav Zusha* of Anipoli, *Rav Shimshon* of Shipitovka and *Rav Wolf* of Zhitomir, to meet with him in Shpola.

When they had all finally arrived a few days later, he seated them around a long and broad table then arose to address them. "My Masters', I have decide to press charges and to take the Almighty to court.

While according to the law of the *Torah*, the plaintiff must take his case to the place where the defendant is located, nevertheless *Hashem* is called *Makom* (the place) and there is no place devoid of His presence. Not only this, but as we all know, a place where there is a gathering of 10 men is considered a dwelling place of the *Shechinah* (divine presence). Therefore, the court case will conduct here in this chamber". The attendant then announced, "*Rav Aryeh Leib ben Rachel* hereby summons the Almighty to a lawsuit in this location three days from now."

For the next three days, the *Tzaddikim* fasted and prayed, allowing no one to interrupt them. On the fourth day, wrapped in his *Tallis* and crowned in his *Tefillin*, the *Shpoler Zeide* instructed his attendant to call the court to order.

The *Shpoler Zeide* presented his case. "In the name of all of the men, women and children in Russia, I come to claim that the defendant, The Almighty, is failing to live up to His obligation to His People. Instead of sustaining them as is written, "He opens up His hand and satisfies every living thing with His favor" (*Tehillim* 145), he is allowing them to perish from hunger." "Does not the *Torah* itself state, 'For the Children of Israel are bondsmen to me, they are my bondsmen . . .'? (*Shemos* 25:55) They belong to the Almighty for eternity. And doesn't the Law as stated in the *Mechilta* and the *Talmud* require the master to provide for the wife and children of the bondsman? How can the Almighty disregard His own *Torah*?

Now, I can imagine that some prosecuting angel might argue in the defense of the Almighty that these servants do not serve the Master properly as they should. 'Nevertheless', I would answer him, 'Where is written that if the servant is lazy and unfaithful therefore his wife and children should suffer? Furthermore, it is all the fault of the Master Himself. For He burdened His servants with a *Yezter Hara*

(base inclination), which constantly tries his loyalty. I am confident that were it not for this *Yezter Hara*, they would provide the Almighty with the most praiseworthy service."

With that, the *Shpoler Zeide* fell silent. He slumped into his chair, exhausted from the ordeal of bringing a lawsuit against the Almighty. Clutching his head in his hands, he awaited the verdict.

The judges huddled, discussing the case amongst themselves for some time in hushed, solemn tones. Finally, *Rav Zusha* rose to his feet to announce the verdict.

"The court finds", he declared, "that justice is with *Rav Aryeh Leib ben Rochel*. The Almighty is therefore obligated to find whatever means He deems appropriate to provide for His people. It is our prayer that the Heavenly Court concur with the decision of this court."

Then all the *Tzaddikim* rose to their feet, and declared the verdict aloud three times in unison, sealing the outcome.

The *Shpoler Zeide* jumped to his feet with great joy, and called for refreshments to be served. The food restored their strength a bit and they buoyantly drank *L'Chayim* together, celebrating the victory. Then each *Tzaddik* left to return to his home town in expectation of the salvation to come.

It was only five days later that the Russian government announced that they would soon be bringing inexpensive wheat and other grains from Siberia over a previously inaccessible route. The price of available grain plunged, as merchants scrambled to cash in before the arrival of the new stock.

Within the month, new supplies were on the market. That whole year, even the family with the most humble of means had plenty to eat.

[www.nishmas.org/stories/fittried.htm](http://www.nishmas.org/stories/fittried.htm)



## The Shpoler Zeide's Purim play

Once a Jew named *Reb Mendel* came to the *tzaddik Rav Aryeh Leib* of Shpola, asking for help. At a glance, the *rebbe* could see that he was terribly upset.

"*Rebbe*, I don't know what to do!" the man said. "A year ago, I left my home in Rumania to come to Russia, together with my wife and family. We hoped to get a new start in life, but we've had no luck. In addition to all the expenses of moving, which I don't know how I'll pay, I have now received official papers demanding that I appear in court on charges of stealing money from the government."

"Believe me, *Rebbe*, I never touched a penny that wasn't mine in my whole life. I don't know what it's all about. *Rebbe!* What am I to do?"

"Don't be worried," said *Rav Aryeh Leib*, trying to calm him down. "Tell me, where is the trial to take place?"

"Here in Russia," *Reb Mendel* replied. "They wanted to take me back to Rumania, but the Russian government protected me."

"Good. It's best to be on your own ground. Is there a date for the trial?"

"Yes, it's scheduled for ---."

"Have it changed," the *rebbe* said sharply. "Do everything in your power to make sure the trial takes place on *Purim* day! Do you have a lawyer?"

"No, *Rebbe*. Not yet!"

The *rebbe* paused for a moment and then said, "*Reb Mendel*, I'll make you a deal. I know a certain girl who is soon to get married. The poor girl is an orphan, with no father or mother to help her. I am trying to do what I can. She still needs 300 rubles for the wedding. If you get me the money for her, I will get you a good lawyer."

*Reb Mendel* was overjoyed. 300 rubles was a lot of money, but *Reb Mendel* immediately handed the sum to the *rebbe*.

Filled with good hope, he turned to go.

"Wait, *Reb Mendel*. How will you know who your lawyer is?" said the *rebbe*. *Reb Mendel* gazed at the *rebbe* without speaking. "Listen, don't worry. He will meet you in the courtroom on *Purim* day. You will be able to recognize him by his white hat and red gloves. Is that a good enough sign?"

*Reb Mendel* smiled gratefully. "Thank you, *Rebbe*," he said.

*Reb Mendel* returned home and immediately began carrying out the *rebbe's* instructions. He began going to the offices of the court, filing papers and speaking to officials in order to have the date of the trial changed. At first, he met with no success. Refusing to take no for an answer, he kept on trying, until at last he succeeded. The trial was set for *Purim* day.

Shortly before the trial, *Reb Mendel* sent a letter to the *rebbe* enclosing more money to be distributed to the needy on *Purim*, and asking for the *rebbe's* blessing.

Finally, the day of the trial arrived. In the *Shpoler Zeide's shul*, everyone was in an excited *Purim* mood.

Following his yearly custom, *Rav Aryeh Leib* prepared to make his *Purim* play. He gave instructions to his students and to the people of the town who would be the actors, but no one really knew what the play was about.

One of the townsfolk was instructed to play the part of a Jew named *Reb Mendel*. Another was to be *Reb Mendel's* old friend who had turned against him, and was in fact the chief witness for the prosecution.

The judge was to be played by the *Rav* of the town. The prosecutor, who was trying to prove *Reb Mendel's* guilt, was told to cover his face with black paint. The *Shpoler Zeide* himself dressed up as *Reb Mendel's* lawyer. He put a white scarf around his fur *shtreimel*, and wore red gloves.

The trial began. First the “chief justice” read the charges. Then the “prosecutor” with the black face tried to tell the court what a terrible person “*Reb Mendel*” was, a hardened criminal and a thief. However, all the townsfolk watching the play kept interrupting him and laughing at everything he said.

Next, “*Reb Mendel’s* former friend” took the stand. He told the court that the true reason “*Reb Mendel*” had moved to Russia was in order to run away from the law. He had found a chest of golden coins belonging to the government of Rumania, and now he was trying to make off with the money.

Then two “witnesses on *Reb Mendel’s* side” were called to take the stand. They testified just the opposite. They told the court how they had seen the “friend” demanding a huge sum of money from *Reb Mendel*. When *Reb Mendel* refused to give him the money, the “friend” threatened to make big trouble.

Finally, the Shpoler *Zeide*, dressed up as *Reb Mendel’s* lawyer, made his speech. He showed how the whole case was based on a lie, made up by the wicked “friend.” He proved that there never was a chest of gold; and even if there had been one, and *Reb Mendel* had found it, the Rumanian government could not legally claim a penny. Everyone was spellbound, and hung on to his every word.

At last came the verdict. The “judge,” who was the *Rav* of the town, declared *Reb Mendel* innocent. *Reb Mendel’s* wicked “friend” was reproached and sent off in shame. The “prosecutor”

with the black face was grabbed and pushed out of court, and told to go wash his face.

Then the Shpoler *Zeide* and all his followers sat down to their festive *Purim* meal. In the middle of their rejoicing, a message from the real *Reb Mendel* arrived. The trial had gone splendidly! He was free! He would return to Shpola at once.

A few days later, *Reb Mendel* showed up and told everyone about the trial and his wonderful lawyer. People opened their eyes in disbelief. It was exactly what had happened in the Shpoler *Zeide’s Purim* play!

*Reb Mendel* could not wait to see the *tzaddik*. “Thank you, *Rebbe*,” he said. “You sent me an amazing lawyer. Everyone said they had never heard anyone like him before! Most important of all, here I am. Free! He saved my life!”

“I am so glad to hear it,” said the *rebbe*. “Do you by any chance know who that lawyer was?”

“No, *Rebbe*,” *Reb Mendel* replied.

“So I will tell you. He was a holy angel from heaven, created by the charity you gave to help that orphan girl get married.

“If you are lucky, you may see him again. After 120 years, when you will be summoned to *Hashem’s* court in heaven to account for what you did in this world, he may come again to be your lawyer and to speak in your defense!”

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## Rav Noach of Lechovitz, 7<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei

Someone once asked Rav Noach of Lechovitz, “Isn’t *tefilla* what we do when we praise the King for all the great things that He does, or ask Him to fulfill our needs? Why does the *Gemora* call it a

service, an *avoda*, of the heart?”

Rav Noach responded, “The heart is like a field. It is only after a field has been well worked that one can plant in it and

look forward to a good harvest. Before a field is worked, it is not worthy of being called a field. It is merely a desolate plot of land. The heart is the same. *Tefilla* works our hearts out thoroughly and gives us the ability to connect to *Hashem* and feel the way a Jew should!”

[www.hamodia.com/features/taanis-2/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/taanis-2/)



### **The Brokenhearted Sinner**

Once, Rav Noach was in the company of his father's *talmid*, Rav Michele, when someone asked, “Who is preferable: a sinful man who actually sins, yet deep inside he is heartbroken over his misdeeds, recognizing how low he has fallen, or someone who does not actually sin, but his mind is full of bad thoughts while he considers himself a *Tzaddik*?” They debated and agreed that they preferred the brokenhearted sinner. At least in the end he decides to do *teshuva*, whereas the other, delusional fellow will never do so.

(*Toras Avos, Teshuva*).



### **The Ba'al Shem Tov's Implants**

Rav Noach of Lechovitz taught that the *Ba'al Shem Tov* came down to this world to implant the roots of sincere humility and true joy and *simcha* into the hearts of *Bnei Yisrael*. Their opposites are depression, sadness and frivolous cheer.

Rav Noach of Lechovitz was the son of Rav Mordechai, the founder of the Lechovitzer dynasty. He was born in 5534/1774.

He was the *talmid* of his father and also of Rav Boruch of Mezhibuzh. Following the *petira* of his father in 5570/1810, the *Chassidim* appointed Rav Noach as his father's successor, despite being just thirty-six years old. Although the *Chassidim* accepted him, Rav Noach refused to serve, saying that he felt that the elder and leading *talmid* of his father, Rav Michel of Lechovitz, should be the new *Rebbe*. Finally, Rav Noach did agree to become *Rebbe*, and many flocked to his court.

Although Rav Noach did not write down his *Divrei Torah*, they were recorded by the Slonimer *Rebbe*, the *Nesivos Sholom*, and printed as *Toras Avos*. In the *sefer* were also *Divrei Torah* of other *Rebbes* of the Lechovitz dynasty.

Rav Noach was *niftar* on the 7<sup>th</sup> of *Tishrei* 5593/1832 at the age of sixty-eight.

As Rav Noach had no sons, his *Chassidim* separated after his *petira*. Most went to his *talmid*, Rav Moshe of Kobrin; some to his son-in-law, Rav Mordechai; and some to his nephew, Rav Shlomo Chaim of Koidenov.

Zechuso yogen oleinu.

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-7-tishrei-october-1/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-7-tishrei-october-1/)



## **Rav Binyomin Zeilberger, 8<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei**

Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Bais HaTalmud

Rav Binyomin Zeilberger was born in 5682/1922 in the small German village of Koenig-Shaufen, not far from Wurzburg. In one of his *seforim*, Rav Binyomin writes that his father was an *ish tom v'yoshor, v'yerei Elokim* — “a straight, upright and

G-d-fearing person.”

Rav Binyomin was educated in the German-Jewish schools of that time, where he learned both Jewish and secular subjects. Rav Shmshon Refoel Weiss, a German Jew who had learned in the Mirrer

*Yeshiva* in Poland, was a teacher there. Rav Weiss often sent his *talmidim* on trips to visit the Mirrer *Yeshiva*. One of these *bochurim* told the young Binyomin Zeilberger, fourteen years old at the time, about his trip and the impression it made on him. Binyomin became enamored of the idea of going to learn in Mir.

At that point, Rav Binyomin was at a crossroads: he had to decide which of two German schools he would attend to complete his studies. "If I have to change schools, why shouldn't I go to the Mirrer *Yeshiva*, about which I have heard such glowing reports?" he thought.

Soon afterward, his parents realized that the situation for Jews in Hitler's Germany was deteriorating. They decided it would be a good idea for their son to leave Germany, so they allowed him to go to learn in Mir.

He arrived in Mir after *Pesach* of 5696/1936. At that time, the *Mashgiach*, Rav Yeruchem Levovitz, was ailing. Nevertheless, the fourteen-year-old *bochur* from Germany managed to hear several *shmuessen* from the *Mashgiach* before his *petira* two months later. Rav Yeruchem's countenance and his approach to *mussar* had a profound impact on the *bochur*. He attached himself to the great *talmidim* of the Rav and through them forged a bond to *Toras hamussar* of Rav Yeruchem.

As the winds of war gathered over Europe in 1939, Rav Binyomin fled Poland with the Mirrer *Yeshiva* to independent Vilna, Lithuania. As is known, the *Yeshiva* ultimately made its way across Russia to

Japan and finally settled in Shanghai, where it remained for the duration of the war.

Arriving in America with the *Yeshiva* in 5707/1947, Rav Binyomin learned in the newly established Mirrer *Yeshiva* in Brooklyn, New York. He married the daughter of Rav Yisrael Chaim Kaplan, son-in-law of Rav Yeruchem and a *ba'al mussar* who was *Rosh Yeshiva* and *Mashgiach* of *Bais Medrash Elyon* in Monsey. With his marriage, Rav Binyomin became a grandson to Rav Yeruchem Levovitz.

After his *chasuna*, Rav Binyomin joined the newly established *Yeshiva Bais HaTalmud*. Within its walls he transmitted *Torah* and *yira* to generations of *talmidim* for the rest of his life, vigilant to ensure that the *Yeshiva's* unique *ruach* would remain unchanged from that forged by its founders.

During the last segment of his life, when Rav Binyomin was diagnosed with a terminal illness, the grandeur of a lifetime of *Torah* and *middos* was revealed. Although he was often in great pain, family members never heard him complain or cry out in pain. On the contrary, one usually saw him with a smile on his face.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of *Tishrei* 5766/2005, Rav Binyomin Zeilberger was *niftar*. He was buried on *Har HaZeisim* next to his illustrious father-in-law, Rav Yisrael Chaim Kaplan.

*Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/this-day-in-history-7-tishreiseptember-11/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/this-day-in-history-7-tishreiseptember-11/)



## Rav Elozor Nissan Teitelbaum of Drohbach, 8<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei

Rav Elozor Nissan Teitelbaum was the son of Rav Moshe, the *Yismach Moshe* of Ujhel. He was born in Shineve in *Tammuz* 5546/1786.

His father quotes some of the

*chiddushim* he composed in his young years.

Rav Elozor Nissan married the daughter of Rav Aharon, *Rav* of Chodorov. He settled in Drohbach, where his wife's

grandfather, Rav Nachum, *parnas* of the city, lived.

He became *Rav* in Sighet in 5594/1834, remaining for six years.

In 5600/1840 he moved to Ujhel, where his father lived. That year he received an offer to serve as *Rav* in Drohbich, and he returned there.

The next year, following the *petira* of his father, Rav Elozor Nissan was offered the position of *Rav* of Ujhel, but he turned down the offer, preferring to remain where he was.

Although *Chassidim* began coming

to Rav Elozor Nissan, he turned them away.

Unlike his father, Rav Elozor Nissan did not write down his *Divrei Torah*. Some of his *chiddushim* and *deroshos* are quoted by his father, and more by his son, Rav Yekusiel Yehuda, the *Yetev Lev*.

His other sons were Rav Shmuel, *Rav* of Gorlitz, and Rav Nachum, *Rav* of Drohbich. His son-in-law was Rav Yisrael *HaKohen* Rappaport of Tarnow, *mechaber* of *Shailos U'Teshuvos Mahari HaKohen*.

*Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/this-day-in-history-8-tishreiseptember-12/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/this-day-in-history-8-tishreiseptember-12/)



## Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel Rabinowitz of Lublin, 8<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei

Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel Rabinowitz was the son of Rav Yitzchok Yaakov of Biala, *mechaber* of *Divrei Bina*. He was born in Ostrova in 5635/1875, when his father was living near his father-in-law, Rav Yehoshua of Ostrova.

He married the daughter of Rav Shimon Chaim Alter, the brother of the *Sfas Emes* of Gur.

Following the *petira* of his father, the *Divrei Bina*, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of *Adar II* 5665/1905, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel served as *Rebbe* in Chelm. Later he settled in Lublin, where he was known as the Biala *Rebbe* of Lublin. He was a great

*masmid* and *Talmid Chochom*.

He was *niftar* in Lublin on the 8<sup>th</sup> of *Tishrei* 5693/1932, at the age of fifty-eight.

His sons were Rav Aharon Dovid of Lentshna, Rav Shlomo and Rav Tzvi. His son-in-law was Rav Boruch Mordechai Weinberg, son of Rav Yissochor Arye Leib of Slonim.

The *Divrei Torah* of Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel on *Bereishis* and *Shemos* were published under the name *Yeshuos Avrohom*.

*Zechuso yogen oleinu.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-8-tishreioctober-2/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-8-tishreioctober-2/)



## Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik (Rav Velvel), 9<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei

The Brisker Rav

### The Brisker Rav Doesn't Know About Shema, but Knows About Closing A Gemora

The *Shulchon Aruch* says that if a person does not say *Krias Shema* right before sunrise, he must still say it as early as possible and not wait until the *shiur*.

Rav Michel Shurkin (*Meged Givos Olam* 2:3) tells a story that he heard from Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapira about someone who came to the Brisker Rav and told him that he has a *chavrusa* (a fixed session of learning) before *davening*. He wanted to know if he may learn then or he must *daven* right away in order to say *Shema* as

close to *Netz HaChama* as possible.

The Brisker *Rav* answered that he did not know the answer to his question. However, he said, "Since there exists a possibility of doubt, the general rule that I suggest one should follow is one never closes his *Gemora* if there is the slightest doubt in the world that he must do so."

[www.revach.net/avodah/olam-hatorah/The-Brisker-Rav-Doesnt-Know-About-Shema-But-Knows-About-Closing-A-Gemara/4581](http://www.revach.net/avodah/olam-hatorah/The-Brisker-Rav-Doesnt-Know-About-Shema-But-Knows-About-Closing-A-Gemara/4581)



### **The House of Brisk Became Chassidish When it Came to the Shineva Rebbe**

One time when a number of Sanzer *Chassidim* came to visit the Brisker *Rav*, he told them that he was a *Shineva Chassid*. (The *Shineva Rebbe*, *Rav Yechezkel Halberstam*, was the son of the *Divrei Chaim*, the founder of the Sanzer dynasty, *Rav Chaim Halberstam*). They all looked at him in shock. The Brisker *Rav* – the leader of Lithuanian Jewry – a *Chassid*?!?

The Brisker *Rav* then told them that when the *Shineva Rebbe* came to Brisk, the people of Brisk came out to greet him carrying torches in his honor. His grandfather, the *Bais HaLevi*, was among them. The Brisker *Rav* said, "I know with certainty that absolutely nothing impressed my grandfather except for *Torah* and *Yiras Shomayim*. If he went to greet the *Shineva Rebbe*, it was because apparently he was head and shoulders above everyone else in those areas. Therefore I am a *Shineva Chassid*!"

One time, when the *Shineva* came to visit the *Bais HaLevi*, he was accompanied by many *Chassidim*. Before the entrance to the house, he told his *Chassidim* that they should not accompany him into the house. The *Bais HaLevi*, a *Misnagged*, did not approve of their ways. He might therefore not appreciate all the *Chassidim* entering.

Apparently, the *Bais HaLevi* was right near the door waiting to greet his

guest and overheard the conversation. He turned to the *Shineva* and said, "*Sholom Aleichem* and *Boruch HaBa*." Then he smiled and said, "May the *Rebbe* of *Shineva* enter and may his *Chassidim* enter with him. Consider yourselves to be in a house of *Chassidim*!"

[www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/The-House-Of-Brisk-Became-Chassidish-When-It-Came-To-The-Shineveh-Rebbe/4247](http://www.revach.net/stories/gadlus/The-House-Of-Brisk-Became-Chassidish-When-It-Came-To-The-Shineveh-Rebbe/4247)



### **The Divrei Chaim is Happy Being a Hedyot and the Brisker Rav a Boor**

The Brisker *Rav* was once in *Krenitz* and stayed in the home of one of the *Talmidei Chachomim* of the city. When putting on his *tefillin*, the Brisker *Rav* looked in the mirror to make sure his *Tefillin* were straight. His host became very upset since the great *Divrei Chaim* was vehemently against people looking in the mirror to check their *tefillin*.

Not having the nerve to confront the Brisker directly, his host left the *sefer Divrei Chaim* with a bookmark on the relevant *teshuva* on the breakfast table, to send the Brisker *Rav* a not-so-subtle message.

Upon arriving at breakfast and seeing the *sefer*, the Brisker *Rav* realized the problem and called over his host. He said to him, I see you are a *Chassid*, so I will explain this to you in terms you will understand. One time when it rained on *Sukkos* everyone left the *sukka*, except the *Divrei Chaim*. They asked him why he would not leave, since the *Gemora* says that whoever remains in the *sukka* in the rain is a *hedyot* and is making a mistake. The *Divrei Chaim* answered, "You can call me a *hedyot* but I cannot leave my beloved *sukka*."

"Similarly," explained the Brisker *Rav*, "you can call me a *boor* (a big *Am Ha'Aretz*), as the *Divrei Chaim* calls someone who looks in the mirror to put on *tefillin*. However, I will still look in the

mirror because all I care about is that I wear my *tefillin* in accordance with *Halocha*. (*Peninim U'Parp'ro'os Al HaTorah*).

[www.revach.net/hanhagos/maaseh-rav/The-Divrei-Chaim-Is-Happy-Being-a-Hedyot-And-The-Brisker-Rov-A-Boor/2871](http://www.revach.net/hanhagos/maaseh-rav/The-Divrei-Chaim-Is-Happy-Being-a-Hedyot-And-The-Brisker-Rov-A-Boor/2871)



### **The Brisker Rav Sleeps Tight as the Bombs Rain Down**

Whenever the Brisker *Rav* was in a place fraught with danger, he would search high and low to find the safest place of refuge. He would obsessively weigh the pros and cons of each place and endlessly debate what to do. Even when he decided he was wrapped in fear of his decision.

Yet when he was trapped in Warsaw away from his home and family at the outbreak of World War II, as Warsaw was being bombarded by the Nazi war machine, he did not make any issue of his place of shelter and always looked calm and went to sleep peacefully.

When asked to explain this seemingly strange behavior, he said that when he was in a place of danger, he had a *Chiyuv Min HaTorah* to protect his life. He treated this like any other *mitzva* and wanted to make sure he fulfilled his obligation in the best way possible. The consequences of erring would mean causing his own death and he would be held responsible for it. This was a scary undertaking. "However," he explained, "right now in Warsaw there is no safe place and any possible shelter is equally dangerous. That means that I have no responsibility to take action. Of course I am relaxed. It is the *Kiyum HaMitzva* that worries me, not the Nazi bombs."

[www.revach.net/hanhagos/maaseh-rav/The-Brisker-Rov-Sleeps-Tight-As-The-Bombs-Rain-Down/3816](http://www.revach.net/hanhagos/maaseh-rav/The-Brisker-Rov-Sleeps-Tight-As-The-Bombs-Rain-Down/3816)



### **Brisker Rav: Look Inside to See if it's**

### **Night**

When he lived in Brisk, the Brisker *Rav* was *noheg* to wait a long time after *shekia* (sunset) before he considered it *tzais hakochovim* (nightfall). In Brisk, the time between sunset and nightfall was rather lengthy. He continued this *minhag* even after coming to *Eretz Yisrael*, where in a short period of time after *shekia* it is completely dark.

*Rav* Yechezkel Abramsky went to the *Rav's* home one night after *shekia* to ask him about this *minhag*. Why was the *Rav* so *makpid* to wait so long? If the *Rav* would come outside he can plainly see with his own eyes that it is already pitch black!

The Brisker *Rav* answered him that he was looking in the wrong place to find the night sky. Instead of looking outside he should come in and look inside the *Gemora*. What one sees on the outside is not interesting!

[www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Brisker-Rov-Look-Inside-To-See-If-Its-Night/4189](http://www.revach.net/stories/story-corner/Brisker-Rov-Look-Inside-To-See-If-Its-Night/4189)



### **Kol Nidrei Night with the Brisker Rav**

One year after *Kol Nidrei*, the Brisker *Rav* took his son in law, *Rav* Yechiel Michel Feinstein, to go for a walk. Perturbed, *Rav* Yechiel Michel asked the Brisker as delicately as possible, if this was the time they should be taking a stroll. The Brisker *Rav* answered, "I am surprised at you. If this is not the time to take a walk, then we should never go any day of the year. This walk, however, is not for pleasure; it is for my health as instructed by my doctor. Therefore there is no difference between *Yom Kippur* and any other day. (As told by *Rav* Moshe Shmuel Shapira – *Uv'Dos V'Hanhagos L'Bais Brisk*).

[www.revach.net/hanhagos/maaseh-rav/Kol-Nidrei-Night-With-The-Brisker-Rov/2849](http://www.revach.net/hanhagos/maaseh-rav/Kol-Nidrei-Night-With-The-Brisker-Rov/2849)

## Rav Akiva ben Yosef, 10<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei

Among the many great figures in Jewish history, Rav Akiva arguably represents a combination of everything that is heroic about the Jewish people more than anyone else. At the least, he is one of the most beloved figures in Jewish history, a person whose influence and stature are a source of inspiration throughout the ages. Whatever one says about Rav Akiva one can never say enough. The *Talmud* (*Menochos* 29a) compares him favorably to Moshe, which is the ultimate compliment in the Jewish lexicon. He is the national hero of the Jewish people for all time.

There are numerous reasons for this:

First, Rav Akiva represents every man, so to speak. He did not descend from Jewish aristocracy or nobility (see *Berochos* 27a). He came from a family of converts. There is an opinion that his father was a convert. If not his father, then certainly his grandfather was. Not only that, but he descended from the evil general Sisera, who was the persecutor of the Jews at the time of Devora. *Chazal* tell us that the descendants of Sisera, Nevuchadnetzar and even Homon studied *Torah* and became prominent Jews. In our time also there are descendants of German officers and SS, as well as descendants of Communists, who found their way to the Jewish people, and even in areas of prominence in the *Torah* world.

Nevertheless, Rav Akiva's lineage created a social handicap. It says to care for converts thirty-six times in the *Torah*. There is no *mitzva* that is repeated so many times. The reason is because it is human nature to be clannish, to not like outsiders. Therefore, the *Torah* emphasizes over and over again that we are also strangers.

Although Rav Akiva began life handicapped in the sense that he lacked pedigree in a society that honored pedigree, he turned it into something positive by

becoming the symbol of "every man" who has within him the ability to rise above his limitations and become truly great.



### Water Wears Down Rock

Rav Akiva had a second great handicap. During the first forty years of his life he was unlettered and unschooled. In fact, he made fun of the *Tzaddikim* of that generation.

Imagine! A scholar so great that he would be compared to Moshe was an illiterate man in mid-life! He had to go with his young child to school to learn to read the Hebrew alphabet. And not only was he unlearned, but resentful of those who were. The *Talmud* records him as saying that he had such hatred for *Torah* scholars during those years that had he had the chance he would have bitten them like a wild donkey (*Pesochim* 49b).

What turned him around? Once, after despairing that he could ever comprehend the *Torah*, he saw water dripping onto a rock and even though the water fell drop by drop, it had eroded the rock. The *pasuk* says: "Water wears down rock" (*Iyov* 14:19). Even great stones are rubbed smooth by the force of the water. This became Rav Akiva's motto. If water can wear down a stone, Akiva can become a scholar...

If water can wear down a stone, then every Jew can and will study *Torah*...

If water can wear down a stone, the Jewish people can overcome Rome...

If water can wear down stone, then the *Bais HaMikdosh* can be rebuilt...



### His Marriage and Rise to Prominence

While still illiterate, Akiva became

chief shepherd to one of the wealthiest men in *Eretz Yisrael*, Kalba Savua (so named because anyone who entered his house hungry like a dog, *kalba*, went out satiated, *savua*). Once, he chanced to meet Kalba Savua's daughter, Rochel, who was so impressed with his character that she consented to marry him – on the condition that he would devote himself to *Torah* study.

When the wealthy father-in-law learned of their marriage he disinherited them, and the couple lived in dire poverty (*Nedorim* 50a). However, Rochel continued to believe in him and encouraged him to leave home to study *Torah*, as was the custom. He left for twelve years and then returned. Before greeting his wife, he overheard her say to a neighbor, "If he wanted to go back for another twelve years, I would gladly agree to it." He then returned to his studies for another twelve years.

In those twenty-four years, he studied under great men like Rav Eliezer *ben* Horkenus and Rav Yehoshua *ben* Chananya. Even Rav Tarfon, whom we meet all the time in the *Talmud* with Rav Akiva, was originally his teacher. Nevertheless, Rav Akiva rose to become a colleague with them. He rose because of his great tenacity – because water wears down rock.

After twenty-four years, he returned home with 24,000 *talmidim*, head of the largest *Yeshiva* in *Eretz Yisrael*. Although his reputation preceded him, Kalba Savua did not know that the great man coming to town was his son-in-law, Akiva. Nevertheless, he had been harboring regrets over his vow to disinherit his daughter and decided ask the great man if he could annul his vow.

"Had you known that her husband would become a great man, would you have vowed?" Rav Akiva asked him.

"Why, if he even knew one chapter,

even one law!" Kalba Savua answered.

Rav Akiva then said, "I am he."

He bowed and kissed him on his feet, and gave him half his assets (*Kesuvos* 62b–63a).

The *Talmud* (*Nedorim* 50a–b) tells us that during the course of his life Rav Akiva became wealthy from three different sources. The first was from his father-in-law, Kalba Savua. The second was from a shipwreck. A large treasure had been hidden in the front part of the ship and when it washed up on shore Rav Akiva found it. The third source of his wealth came from his second wife. After Rochel died, he married the widow of the Roman procurator, Turnus Rufus ("Turnus" meaning "Tyrannus"), who was brutal to the Jews. Nevertheless, his wife had a different soul and after he died she converted to Judaism. Rav Akiva eventually married her, and she brought with her the wealth of Turnus Rufus. [The *Gemora* relates a fascinating story of how she helped Rav Akiva and why she married him. She made him promise her that after they pass from this world – she would be next to him in *Olom HaBa*].

Rav Akiva was a wealthy man from different sources, but it was not the wealth that made the man. It was Rav Akiva's inner wealth that made Rav Akiva.



### **The Meaning of Love**

Rav Akiva was wont to say: "Love your fellow man as yourself – this is the great rule in the *Torah*." He fulfilled it in many ways. No one dispensed more charity than he. He was in charge of charity organizations and supported all the poor people.

It was Rav Akiva who said that if all the *Torah* is considered holy, then Shlomo's "Song of Songs" – which uses the love between a man and woman as a metaphor for the love between *Hashem*

and *Klal Yisrael* — was the “Holy of Holies”.

It is one thing to love others and love *Hashem* when things are going well. However, it is another thing to feel and express that love when times are tough. Rav Akiva suffered tremendously throughout his life in many ways, experiencing all sorts of terrible events and defeats. Indeed, he lived the life of *Iyov*. Yet his soul churned out songs of love. When Rav Akiva was being tortured to death by the Romans he said, “Loving *Hashem* with all one’s soul means even if He takes your life.”

Rav Akiva’s favorite maxim was, “All that *Hashem* does is for the good.” Once, after he was unable to find any place to sleep in a certain city, he passed the night alone in the forest and repeated his maxim calmly, “All that *Hashem* does is for the good.” Then, one after another, a lion devoured his donkey, a cat killed his rooster and the wind extinguished his candle. Each time he said, “All that *Hashem* does is for the good.” When dawn arrived, he discovered that a band of robbers had fallen upon the city and carried its inhabitants into captivity. Only he had escaped because his donkey and rooster were not around to make any noises and his extinguished candle did not give away his location (*Berochos* 60b).

Rav Akiva’s teacher was Nachum *Ish Gamzu*, who would always say, “This too is for the good.” Rav Akiva similarly lived by the rule that whatever happens is for the good. He furthermore understood that from the bad, good can come. From the problems, from the adversity, we can build something good.

Therefore, we find that Rav Akiva laughs when others weep. While Rav Akiva was walking with some colleagues they came upon the *Bais HaMikdosh* in its destroyed state. The other *Tzaddikim* wept, but Rav Akiva laughed.

“Why are you laughing?” they asked.

“Why are you weeping?” he replied.

“Why are we weeping? Look at the Temple Mount. Is that not something to weep over?”

“For that very reason I laugh.”

Then he explained that alongside the *nevua* that the *Bais HaMikdosh* would be destroyed was the *nevua* that the *Bais HaMikdosh* would be rebuilt and the Jewish people redeemed. “Until I saw that the *nevua* of doom was fulfilled, I thought that it was not meant literally. However, now that I see that the negative *nevua* is fulfilled literally, I know that the positive *nevua* will also be fulfilled literally. From the bad, I see the good. From the troubles, I see the redemption.”

His colleagues replied: “Akiva, you have consoled us!”

Rav Akiva said: “Beloved are sufferings” – a person should appreciate troubles, because from the troubles we grow. Without troubles, a person does not access the deepest recesses of his potential. A great person becomes greater from great troubles. That was Rav Akiva’s view on life. That was Rav Akiva.



### **Supporting Bar Kochba**

Although Rav Akiva suffered greatly in his life and experienced many calamitous events, arguably the worst was the disastrous Bar Kochba rebellion. Indeed, he was one of the leading supporters of Bar Kochba and declared him to be the *Moshiach*. One might have thought that after the debacle of Bar Kochba, Rav Akiva would fall apart, especially considering that he was a very old man by then, well over a hundred years old. He had every reason to go to his death quietly.

Yet, he started all over and taught *Torah* to five *talmidim* who would become the next generation of *Torah* leaders.

Although the man who had once had 24,000 *talmidim* now had only five, it was through these five that the Jewish people were rebuilt. They did what Bar Kochba couldn't do. They beat Rome. They became the "waters that wear down rock". Thus, Rav Akiva literally saved the *Torah*.



### **With "One" on his Lips**

When Hadrian issued his terrible decrees outlawing the practice of *Yiddishkeit*, and in particular making it illegal to teach *Torah* on pain of death, it was Rav Akiva who boldly stood up in a public square and began teaching *Torah*. The Romans, indeed, arrested him and put him in prison. In the same prison was his friend Papus, who was caught for selling goods on the black market. "Happy are you, Rav Akiva," Papus told him, "that you were arrested for teaching *Torah*. Woe to Papus, who was arrested for trying to make a few dollars."

Rav Akiva was executed by the Romans in the city of Caesarea where even today one can see the ruins of the Hippodrome, the arena where the Romans executed people publicly. Even as they tortured him to death he recited the final words of a Jew, the great proclamation of faith in *Hashem* and His oneness: "Hear, O Yisrael, *Hashem* is our G-d; *Hashem* is one."

His *talmidim*, who stood nearby as the Romans were flaying his flesh with iron combs, asked, "Even till now?" Are you still thinking about your obligations to *Hashem* even at this horrific, tragic moment?

"All my life," he said to them, "I waited for the opportunity to show how much I love *Hashem*, and now that I have the opportunity, should I waste it?"

Then, he died with the word 'One' on his lips, the *Talmud* says (*Berochos* 61b).

According to legend, Eliyohu *HaNovi* came together with his *talmidim*

and took his remains from the field of execution to a cave outside the city of Teverya, which is today the traditional place that we mark as the burial place of Rav Akiva. However, Rav Akiva is not dead. Rav Akiva is alive within each and every one of us. Every hero and martyr that the Jewish people have had since is Rav Akiva. Every moment of love is Rav Akiva. Every piece of *Torah* is Rav Akiva.

That is why the Jewish world treasures him. That is why he is the hero of heroes. He possessed all the great human traits that the Jewish people possess: love, compassion, warmth, humor. He became every Jew at his best even under the darkest circumstances. He became the person who whose humanity is victorious in the end despite unparalleled suffering. He became the water that wears down stone.

[My *Rebbe* was once asked why there aren't so many people flocking to Rav Akiva like they do to Rav Shimon *bar* Yochai? He replied: "Rav Akiva elevated himself to such a high plane in Heaven that he has nothing to do with this world]. May Rav Akiva always intercede on our behalf.

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### **Rochel, Rav Akiva's Wife**

Rav Akiva was not one of the fortunate ones who are born to riches, or into the house of a scholar. He had to get everything the hard way. He was born the child of a very poor family and became an ignorant shepherd, one of the many who took care of the thousands of flocks of the wealthy Kalba Savua, about whose riches the *Talmud* tells many stories. The daughter of this great man was a beautiful and G-d-fearing girl. The richest and most learned young men of that time would have considered themselves fortunate to marry her. But Rochel, Kalba Savua's only child,

the heir to his riches, had observed the shepherd, Akiva, and some inner voice told her that this ignorant youth had the makings of a great scholar. On the condition that he would leave her father's work to go and study *Torah*, she married him secretly.

As Rochel refused one young man after the other, Kalba Savua found out about her pact with his former shepherd. He was very angry and he vowed that he would have nothing to do with her or her husband. Gladly, the only child of the richest man of those days left all the luxuries and comforts to which she had been used, and went to live with Akiva in a shack, sleeping on a bundle of straw, and working hard with her own, soft hands, so that her husband could devote himself to the study of *Torah*. Once, when she could not find work, she even cut off her beautiful long hair to sell it, so that she would have some money with which to buy a dry crust of bread for both.

Yet even in their poverty, they were willing to share with others the little they possessed. Once a poor man passed the shack of Akiva and Rochel, and begged, "Pray, good people, let me have a handful of straw. My wife is sick and I have nothing to bed her on."

At once Akiva shared his own bundle of straw with the poor man, remarking thus to Rochel, "See, my child, there are those who fare worse than we." The poor beggar, say our sages, was none other than Eliyohu *HaNovi* who had come to test Akiva's good heart.

After Akiva had mastered the basic knowledge of the *Torah*, his wife and he agreed that he was to go to the academy of the great scholars of those days, headed by Rav Eliezer, to devote twelve years to intensive study. Thus the two parted and for twelve long years Rochel slaved to support herself, while her husband grew to become one of the most learned of all men who ever lived. At the end of twelve years

Rav Akiva returned to his wife, as he had promised. When he came before the shabby old shack he heard a conversation between his wife and a neighbor who was taunting Rochel for being foolish enough to wait and slave for her husband who had left her to study *Torah*. "You could live in riches and luxuries, if you were not so foolish," said the woman.

"For my part he could stay away another twelve years at the *Yeshiva* to acquire more knowledge," was Rochel's reply.

Full of pride and admiration for his great wife Rav Akiva turned around to do as Rochel wanted him to do.

At the conclusion of the twenty-four years Rav Akiva had become the most famous of all living scholars. From near and far came the youth of Yisrael to study under his direction.

Accompanied by 24,000 *talmidim*, Rav Akiva returned home in a triumphant journey from city to city, welcomed everywhere by the highest nobility. The masses, rich and poor, turned out when he came home to Yerushalayim.

Kalba Savua, too, was among those who tried to get close to the master. Suddenly Rav Akiva saw his *talmidim* trying to hold back a woman dressed in ragged clothes. At once he made his way through the crowd to greet the woman and led her to the chair by his side. "If not for this woman I would be an ignorant shepherd, unable to read the *alef-bais*. Whatever I know, I owe to her," Rav Akiva declared.

The whole huge crowd bowed in respect before the woman to whom Rav Akiva owed his great scholarship. Kalba Savua, too, suddenly discovered who his son-in-law was. Publicly he expressed his regret for having treated his daughter and her husband so badly. Now all his wealth would be theirs.

Thus ends our story of Rochel, Rav

Akiva's wife, whose heroism and self-sacrifice gave us the great Rav Akiva.



### **The Wisdom of Rav Akiva**

A heathen once came to Rav Akiva, and asked him, "Who created the world?"

"G-d created the world," Rav Akiva replied.

"Prove it to me," persisted the heathen.

"Come back tomorrow," Rav Akiva told him. The following day the heathen came back, and Rav Akiva engaged him in conversation.

"What are you wearing?" Rav Akiva asked him.

"A cloak, as you see."

"Who made it?" Rav Akiva asked.

"The weaver, of course."

"I don't believe it; prove it to me!" Rav Akiva persisted.

"What proof do you want? Cannot you see that the weaver has made the cloth?"

"Then why do you ask for proof that G-d created the world? Cannot you see that the Holy One, blessed be He, created it?"

And to his *talmidim*, Rav Akiva added, "My children, just as the house is proof of the builder, and the cloth is proof of the weaver, and the door is proof of the joiner, so this world proclaims that *Hashem* created it."

Rav Akiva had learned and studied the *Torah* more deeply and extensively than anyone else, yet he was very humble, for he knew that the *Torah* is endless, for it is the wisdom of *Hashem*. Said he, "All my learning is no more than like the fragrance of an *esrog*; the one who scents it, enjoys it; but the *esrog* loses nothing. Or it is as one who draws water from a spring, or lights a candle from a candle."

No wonder Rav Akiva despised a

conceited and vain man, whose learning only filled him with self-importance and vanity. Of such a man Rav Akiva said, "He is like a carcass lying on the road; whoever passes it puts his fingers to his nose, and hurries away from it."

The following story also illustrates his humility and respect for the *Torah*.

Rav Akiva was once called upon to read to the congregation a portion of the *Torah*, but he did not want to do it. His amazed *talmidim* asked him, "Master, have you not taught us that the *Torah* is our life and the length of our days? Why did you refuse to read it to the congregation?"

And Rav Akiva replied, simply, "Believe me, I had not prepared myself for it; for no man should address words of *Torah* to the public unless he has first revised them to himself three or four times."

Rav Akiva did not keep his learning to himself, but had many *talmidim*, more than any other single teacher, no less than 24,000 *talmidim* at one time. Some of the greatest *Rabbonim* of the next generation were among his *talmidim*, as, for example, Rav Shimon *bar* Yochai, whose *Yahrzeit* is observed on *Lag Ba'Omer*. Together with another great sage, Rav Chanina *ben* Chakinai, Rav Shimon went to Bnei Brak to learn *Torah* from Rav Akiva, and they stayed there for thirteen years!

Quoting a passage from *Koheles* (11:6): "In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not rest your hand," Rav Akiva explained it to mean: "Teach *talmidim* in your youth, and do not stop teaching in your old age."

It is customary to say *Perek* (Ethics of the Fathers) on *Shabbos*, beginning with the *Shabbos* after *Pesach*. Some say it until *Shavuos*, others throughout the summer.

The *Talmud* relates a story in *Shabbos* 156b that Rav Akiva's daughter once went to the market to buy things for her home. As she passed a group of

stargazers and fortune-tellers, one of them said to the other, "See that lovely girl? What a dreadful calamity is awaiting her! She is going to die on the very day of her wedding. Mark my word!"

Rav Akiva's daughter overheard the words of the stargazer, but paid no attention to him. She had often heard it from her great father that he who observes the *mitzvos* of the holy *Torah* need fear no evil.

As the happy day of her wedding approached, she had forgotten all about that stargazer. On the day before her wedding, there was much to do, and at night she went to bed, tired but happy. Before going to bed, she removed her golden hairpin and stuck it in the wall, as she had done before.

The following morning, she pulled her pin from the wall, and in doing so dragged a small but very poisonous snake with it. Horrified, she realized that she had killed the snake that was lurking in the wall's crevice when she had stuck the pin into the wall the night before. What a wonderful miracle!

Then she remembered the words of

the stargazer, and shuddered.

She heard a knock on the door. "Are you alright, daughter? I heard you shriek," her father said. Then he saw the dead snake still dangling from the pin. She told her father what had happened.

"This is indeed a miracle," Rav Akiva said. "Tell me, daughter, what did you do yesterday? There must have been some special *mitzva* that you performed yesterday to have been saved from this."

"Well, the only thing that I can remember was this. Last night, when everybody was busy with the preparations for my wedding, a poor man came in, but nobody seemed to notice him, so busy everybody was. I saw that the poor man was very hungry, so I took my portion of the wedding-feast and gave it to him."

Rav Akiva had always known that his daughter was very devoted to the poor, but this was something special, and he was very happy indeed. Thereupon Rav Akiva went out and declared, "Charity delivers from death' (*Mishlei* 10:2). And not just from an unnatural death, but from death itself."



## Rav Moshe Yitzchok Gevartzman (Reb Itzikel), 10<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei

Rav of Pshevorsk

Rav Moshe Yitzchok was born in the year 1882 (5642) in the town of Gorlitz in Galicia to Rav Naftoli Meilich and Chana Breindel Gevartzman. A few years later they moved to Shinev, where he spent many hours with his father's brother-in-law, the Shineva *Rav*, and where he absorbed holiness and saw greatness firsthand. After World War I, when he was a married man, he moved to the town of Pshevorsk. It was there that he began making a *tisch* on Friday nights.

Soon, though, winds of war swept through Europe. Germany and Russia

made a pact to conquer Poland and split it in half. Reb Itzikel, who had been living in Poland, found himself under Russian jurisdiction. The Russians issued a law that everyone had to register; they would then be issued a Russian identity card. Reb Itzikel strongly advised the people against registering. Soon afterward the Russians rounded up all the people who had not registered and herded them off to the frigid wasteland of Siberia. The people who had followed Reb Itzikel's advice were obviously distraught. "For this we didn't register?"

“Today is the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of *Sivan*,” said Reb Itzikel, calming everyone down. “On this day, Achashveirosh sent the second letters, which annulled the decree. Surely this is an auspicious day and we will merit to be saved.”

Just a little while later, the Germans broke the pact and conquered the part of Poland that had been controlled by the Russians. The *Yidden* who had registered were deported. Those who had been sent to Siberia eventually survived the war.

After the war Reb Itzikel lived in Paris. When people from Antwerp pleaded that he come there to live, he moved to Belgium in 1957, settling in Antwerp’s Mercator Straat. Antwerp, in the postwar years featured a mix of survivors. The majority were more modern. All were still broken and pained by their experiences during the war.

When the *Rebbe* arrived he brought with him the fire of prewar *Chassidus*. The survivors, many of whom had never seen a *Chassidische Rebbe* before, were drawn to the warmth of *Chassidus* and basked in its fires. In time, going to Reb Itzikel during the *Asseres Yemei Teshuva* was part and parcel of the *Yomim Noro’im*, as much a part of those days as doing *kaporos*.

What began as a small trickle of visitors eventually grew over the years into a stream of *Yidden* who would come even from London to see the *Rebbe*. One of them was Reb Y. Honig. After several years of going to Antwerp, he sent his son, a young *bochur*, to spend *Sukkos* with the *Rebbe*. This son stayed for four years. Reb Itzikel had said, “Stay here with me.” And so the



young *bochur*, Chaim Honig, remained and served as *gabbai* until the *Rebbe* passed away four years later.

What is the image that one envisions of a *Rebbe’s hoif* (court)? A beautiful building surrounded by a huge courtyard? Hundreds of people milling about, each one waiting to catch a glimpse of the *Rebbe*? Long lines of people snaking their way forward, awaiting their turn to make their request? And secured in the inner sanctuary is the *Rebbe*, who has closeted himself inside, until the door handle turns — and when it does, the *Chassidim* surge forward with bated breath?

Reb Itzikel’s *hoif* was nonexistent. Neither in the physical realm, in the way things looked, nor in the way people approached the *Rebbe* was there a resemblance to the picture painted above.

“It was all very old and dilapidated, with a total open-house policy. The *Rebbe’s* bedroom, kitchen, and *Bais Medrash* were all on one floor, and everyone was invited to come in at any time,” Reb Chaim Honig, the *gabbai*, explains. “This *heimishkeit* was so discernible that an elderly *Yid* who wasn’t one of the *Chassidim* — I don’t know if any of the *Chassidim* would have gone so far — once saw the *Rebbe* washing for bread.

“Ah,” he said, clapping Reb Itzikel on his back, ‘have a good appetite, *Rebbe*.’ I try to imagine such a scene happening today with any of the *Rebbes*. It’s so unthinkable that it’s laughable.”

Since hundreds of people strove to consult with Reb Itzikel, one would imagine it was difficult to get in to see him. “Not at all,” says the *gabbai*. “People would stride into the *Rebbe’s* room at any hour of the day. The door to his room was never allowed to be closed. He yearned to be available to every *Yid* who sought him out. The *Chassidim* would push the door open completely and hand the *Rebbe* their *kvittel*. A *Yid* once hurried in and said,

'Please read my *kvittel* quickly. I have to travel now.' If I would close the door to afford the *Rebbe* some privacy, he would open it, saying, sharply, 'We don't close doors.'

(*Mishpacha Magazine*)



From a young age, Reb Itzikel was already known as a miracle worker. It was so common, that people used to say that miracles were so numerous that they could even be found under the table.

Reb Itzikel was well known for his miraculous deeds.



Numerous people still have blank pieces of paper that Reb Itzikel gave them that they used to cross borders instead of their passports (see photo).

Rav Yisrael Dovid Neivener once retold a fantastic story that he himself witnessed.

It was the custom of Reb Itzikel's household to slaughter a chicken for him to eat on Mondays and Thursdays. One Monday, his daughter came in to tell him that she had never experienced the problem she was having at the moment. She simply could not bring the chicken to be slaughtered since it was fighting her hysterically and kept jumping out of her hands. Try as she might, she just could not overpower it.

Reb Itzikel said to those who were with him, "Come, let's go and see what the problem is." As soon as he looked at the bird, he declared, "Of course. This is a *Shabbos* chicken! Take a different hen for

me to eat during the week and leave this one for the holy day."

On Thursday, the *Rav* said to those who were with him, "Come, let's go and see the situation today." Lo and behold, the chicken was calm and serene and practically gave itself over to the *Tzaddik's* daughter to take it to be prepared to be eaten in holiness, by the holy saint, on the holiest day of the week.



Reb Itzikel opened his *Bais Medrash* in Mercatorstraat, Antwerp, and in a short time he became a magnet for the many downtrodden *Yidden* scattered across Europe who had lost all and everything during the war.

When Reb Itzikel was asked why he did not attempt to found *Yeshivos* or other *mosdos*, he answered, "Everyone comes down to this world for a different purpose. Some *Tzaddikim* are sent to improve the *ruchniyus*, others are sent for *gashmiyus*. My job is to see to *gashmiyus*."

Reb Itzikel remained true to his word and due to his advice and his *berochos*, many people were helped to set up new homes and to marry off their children in a fitting way. Many are the stories told of the miracles that people witnessed as a direct result of the *Rebbe's berochos*.

On *Yom Kippur* 5636 (1976), when Reb Itzikel was in his ninety-fifth year, his holy *neshoma* ascended to the *Yeshiva shel maa'la*. Reb Itzikel left behind no sons, and his one and only son-in-law, Reb Yankele, was crowned the new *Pshevorsker Rebbe*.



### Let's make wealthy people...

Reb Itzikel used to go around at night collecting *tzedoka*. One night, after making the rounds at the usual wealthy fellows in town, Reb Itzikel came home disappointed with the night's take.

Reb Itzikel went into the *Bais Medrash* opposite his house, and encountered some of his *Chassidim* who



were busy with their *shiurim*. He approached them and said, “If the people in this town aren’t ready to give money to *tzedoka*, I’ll have no choice – I’ll have to ‘make’ my own wealthy *Yidden* who’ll give me money for *tzedoka*.” He requested that those *Chassidim* go into business and gave each one exact instructions in what business to take on and how he should operate it. From day one, every single person he blessed and instructed that day had tremendous *hatzlocha* and eventually became very wealthy philanthropists. Till this day, these philanthropists support Reb Itzikel’s grandchildren.

Reb Itzikel also established a *bais tavshil* (soup kitchen). He hired a master cook who prepared abundant amounts and Reb Itzikel made sure it was staffed and available almost twenty-four hours a day. The sweet smell of freshly baked goods wafted through the air in the wee morning hours when the *Chassidim* came to *shul* and lasted throughout the day and into the late hours of the night. Reb Itzikel himself ate from that kitchen in order to make everyone feel comfortable. Numerous times was Reb Itzikel seen in the kitchen with his sleeves rolled up, helping with the cooking. Once, a certain *Rav* came to visit Reb Itzikel and the *gabbo'im* went looking for him, finally locating him in the kitchen with an apron helping with the preparations of the day.

Reb Itzikel’s mantra was, “Help *Yidden* – the more the better!!”

Once, before *davening Shacharis*, Reb Itzikel noticed that there was no milk left in the coffee room. Reb Itzikel motioned to a nearby *bochur*, handed him

money and told him to go immediately to the market and buy milk. The *bochur* replied that he had not yet *davened Shacharis*. Reb Itzikel replied, “From your *davening Shacharis*, I’m not sure what the outcome will be, but the milk you bring back I’m sure will satiate numerous *Yidden* – go quickly now and buy the milk!!”

Reb Itzikel never sought to establish a *Talmud Torah* or *Yeshiva* because he wanted to feel a closeness to his *Chassidim* and was worried that a *Yeshiva* would take away time from being available to his *Chassidim*.

To the people who came to him for a *berocha* for *parnossa*, he would say, “Give such and such amount to *tzedoka* and you’ll be helped.” He had a vest with numerous pockets that he allocated funds to – one was for orphans, another for poor people’s weddings. There were numerous times when he mentioned to *Chassidim* who came in with a *kvittel* – pointing to a certain pocket, “This pocket for widows is still empty.”

One of the interesting things with Reb Itzikel was the *knubbel*-giving (garlic distribution) on *Motzo’ei Shabbos*. Wondrous tales and *segulos* were known to come about when the *Rebbe* distributed it from a bowl during *Melave Malka*. To some, he gave one clove, to others many cloves. Every clove had a *cheshbon* and usually the receiver knew why the *Rebbe* had given him that amount. People used to drop money into the bowl and Reb Itzikel mixed the money with the garlic cloves. It was known to be an *eis rotzon* and people asked for *yeshuos* and *berochos* during the time he mixed the money and the cloves.

Once, when Reb Itzikel was weak, the *gabbo'im* closed the door to his room to let him rest. Upon noticing that his room was locked, Reb Itzikel insisted his *gabbo'im* open the door to the masses. When the people filed in, Reb Itzikel remarked, “Fools, if you knew what I know regarding the garlic cloves, you would

break down my windows and doors in order to come in and get the cloves!”

Reb Itzikel was also very keen on the stories that he retold on *Motzo’ei Shabbos* about previous *Tzaddikim*. He was very particular to retell the story exactly how he heard it with all the details. A lot of the stories, especially from the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz and his children, in whose house he grew up, were recited with a special *chein* and grace. People who attended these *Melave Malkas* said they felt that the story came alive and sometimes even felt transported through time as if they were living through the actual story.

Reb Yanke’le (Reb Itzikel’s son-in-law, who assumed the position of *Rebbe* after Reb Itzikel’s *petira*), recounted many times that he felt a responsibility to relate these stories of *Tzaddikim* because he believed he was saved during the Holocaust in order to relay to the masses these stories so that they should know that there once were true *Tzaddikim*. He was fond of

saying that these stories bring *emuna* and belief to *Bnei Yisrael*. Reb Yanke’le used to say that after a person passes from this world, one of the questions he will be asked is: “How did you carry on (deal) with faith?” which he translated to mean that the Heavenly Court would ask if he dealt with disseminating stories of *Tzaddikim* that inspired people to *emuna* and a closeness to *Hashem*.



When the *mikve* was built, the *gabbo'im* posted a sign (as many *mikva'os* are wont to do in today’s times) that it is forbidden to go to the *mikve* without paying. Reb Itzikel immediately requested that the sign be removed because “in his *mikve* no one can ever write or say “it is **forbidden** to immerse”.

(*Der Blick*)



## Rav Avrohom Maloch, 12<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei

The Angel

### The “Golden Chain”

The *Maggid* of Mezritch once effected an unprecedented spiritual unification, which caused such joy in Heaven that he was asked to name his reward. “I didn’t do it for a reward,” he replied. But when pressed, he asked for a “golden chain” – that is, that all his descendants should be *Tzaddikim*. His wish was granted.

Through many years of marriage, the *Maggid* remained childless. After he met the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, his master declared that despite his frailty, he would live long and father a son so pure and holy that people would hardly think him human.

Born in 1741, that son was known as Rav Avrohom the *Maloch* (angel), because

an angel appeared to his mother to herald his birth, and because he was as angelically free of temptation as his sainted father.



### A Tzaddik’s Youth

The only accounts of his youth tell us that Rav Avrohom learned *Kabbala* from the *Maggid* and the revealed *Torah* from Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the teacher chosen by his father.

Rav Shneur Zalman once complained to the *Maggid* that even during their study sessions, Rav Avrohom insisted on explaining the *Halocha* and *Aggoda* kabbalistically.

“Don’t worry,” the *Maggid* reassured him. “You learn your way and

he'll learn his. Just show him the outward cloak of the *Torah*, and he'll show you what lies within."

Indeed, according to a tradition passed down by Rav Yisrael of Rizhin, Rav Avrohom's grandson, the *Chabad* school of *Chassidic* thought derives primarily from the *Maloch*.

From his earliest youth, Rav Avrohom led an otherworldly existence. He would remain in his room the entire day, crowned with *tefillin* and engrossed in study. Enveloped in his *tallis*, he could neither see nor be seen. Thus he shielded himself from the material world and anything entrenched within it.

Rav Yisrael of Rizhin recalled: "When Rav Zusha of Anipoli uttered *Hashem's* Name, he was seized with such fear that his limbs trembled, and his blood ran cold. He had to ask *Hashem* to insulate him against such awe. But my grandfather was an angel who subsisted on nothing more than a pigeon skin a day. His fear of *Hashem* never left him for a moment."

The *Maloch's* otherworldliness was so extraordinary that when his father sought to find him a wife, he exclaimed, "How can one descend to such physicality?" Only because of the sanctity of the *mitzva* did he agree to marry.



### **A Match Made in Heaven**

When Rav Avrohom's first wife passed away, the *Maggid* sent two distinguished men of Mezritch to the town of Kremenitz to arrange for his son to wed the daughter of Rav Feivel, mechaber of *Mishnas Chachomim*.

Rav Feivel's *Rebbetzin* was quite amused by this notion, for she had never heard of the *Maggid*, and her daughter was only twelve years old. But Rav Feivel agreed to the match.

As they wrote the *teno'im* (engagement agreement), the *Maggid's*

emissaries stressed that the wedding must not be delayed. The wedding and week of *sheva berochos* abounded in rejoicing, festivity and *Divrei Torah*. The bride's mother returned to Kremenitz filled with joy, for she had never seen anything like it.

Rav Avrohom's new wife was not a simple woman. Twice, she dreamed that a tribunal of distinguished-looking sages wanted to take away her husband, but she screamed and pleaded his case. In the third occurrence of this dream, the court decreed, "Your defenses are so strong that we will allow him to remain with you for another twelve years." The next morning, the *Maggid* thanked her profusely for her efforts, which had granted his son another twelve years of life.

After his *petira*, the *Maggid* appeared to his daughter-in-law in a dream whenever necessary. One night he told her, "Tell your husband to change rooms, or at least to move his books into your room." Her husband, however, dismissed the matter. The next night, a fire broke out in Rav Avrohom's room, burning his entire library.



### **A Successor to the Maggid**

Prior to his passing, the *Maggid* privately instructed Rav Shneur Zalman to see to it that Rav Avrohom succeed him. If his son refused, he continued, Rav Menacham Mendel of Vitebsk should be the successor. During *Chanuka* of 1772, after the week of mourning for Rav Dov Ber, Rav Yehuda Leib *HaKohen*, Rav Zusha and Rav Shneur Zalman accepted the *Maloch's* authority.

Yet, Rav Avrohom did not succeed his father as the leader of the *Chassidic* movement. Instead, he settled in Fastov, far from the center of *Chassidus*, where he lived in isolation.

He himself said, "A certain type of *Tzaddik* cannot lead his generation, for

they cannot relate to him. Due to his great intellect, he cannot sink low enough to uplift them.”



### **The Inheritance**

The *Maggid* often warned his son about the dangers of self-affliction. Even after his *petira*, he appeared to his son with his strictures, stressing the obligation to honor one's father, even posthumously.

“What do I have to do with you,” Rav Avrohom replied, “my father of flesh and blood? My soul yearns for my exalted Father!”

“My son,” inquired Rav Dov Ber, “if I am not your father, why did you accept your inheritance?”

“I hereby renounce it,” declared the *Maloch*. That moment, fire engulfed his house, consuming everything the *Maggid* had bequeathed him.

Shortly thereafter, on the eve of *Yom Kippur*, Rav Avrohom donned the white, silken *bekeshe* his father had worn on the High Holidays. But when he entered the shul, the flame of a lit candle leaped onto the robe and incinerated it.

Thus were severed his ties to his forebears and to all flesh and blood.



### **Words of Rebuke**

When Rav Avrohom once visited his father-in-law in Kremenitz the whole town came out to greet the wondrous man known to everyone as the *Maloch*. But Rav Avrohom ignored them and merely stared at a tall mountain. The people anxiously awaited a word from the *Maloch*, but he remained lost in thought.

Among those present was a young *Misnagged* who was very impressed with his own learning and lineage, and very unimpressed by Rav Avrohom's strange behavior. Unable to restrain himself, he

demanded, “Why are you staring at that mountain for so long? It's only a clump of earth!”

“I am staring in amazement,” the *Maloch* replied. “How could such a simple clump of earth be haughty enough to become a tall mountain?”

The young man trembled and squirmed as these words penetrated his heart.



### **To Mourn a Loss**

Eager to meet the *Maloch*, Rav Yitzchok of Radwill, son of Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlatachov, went to Rav Avrohom's *shul* on *erev Tishah B'Av*. Everyone sat on the floor, and the *chazan* began his lamentful reading. Suddenly, the *Maloch* uttered a bitter, painful cry: “*Eicha!*” He then placed his head between his knees and fell silent. After *Eicha* and *kinnos*, the congregation went home. But Rav Avrohom remained bent over. Rav Yitzchok waited for him until midnight, when he too, left.

To his astonishment, when Rav Yitzchok returned to *shul* the next morning, he found the *Maloch* in the same position, absorbed in mourning the *Bais HaMikdosh*. Every so often he lifted his head from the tear-stained floor to wail, “Hasn't the *Moshiach* come yet?” Rav Yitzchok then understood why he was known as an angel.



### **A Very Special Matza**

Every *Pesach*, Rav Avrohom baked *shmura matzos* for his father, who trusted no one else. One year the *Maloch* sent his father three *matzos* with one of the *Maggid's talmidim*, Dr. Gordia. Intrigued by these holy *matzos*, which he knew were baked with lofty intent, Dr. Gordia couldn't resist taking one for himself and replacing it with one of his own.

At the *Seder* that night, after tasting only a small piece of *matza*, Dr. Gordia suddenly felt as if his entire body were burning. “The *Rebbe!*” he gasped.

The members of his household rushed to the *Maggid*, who prescribed a remedy. The next day, Rav Dov Ber said that only because Dr. Gordia was his doctor had he been allowed to remain alive. Otherwise, the intense *kedusha* of the *matza* would have consumed him.



### **The Appearance of a Tzaddik**

The *Maloch's* appearance struck awe in all who beheld him, even other *Tzaddikim*. One *Tzaddik* prepared himself for a month before visiting him. The minute he saw Rav Avrohom putting on *tefillin*, he shuddered and fled without even greeting him.

The *Ba'al Shem Tov's* grandchildren, Rav Moshe Chaim Efraim and Rav Boruch, once came to gaze upon the *Maloch*. Afraid to enter his room, they peeked through a window instead. When Rav Avrohom arose and Rav Boruch looked into his face, he became so frightened that he grabbed his brother and ran, leaving behind his *seforim* and his coat in his haste.

Rav Nachum of Chernobyl once performed a *bris mila*, and Rav Avrohom served as the *sandek*. A large crowd gathered in the shul, eager to see the reclusive *Maloch*. But when he arrived, all but twenty of the people bolted, and the *shamash* was afraid to speak to him. When the *Maloch* approached the *bima*, Rav Nachum became so startled that he dropped the *moהל's* knife, and forgot whether he had pronounced the blessing over the *mila*.

When he returned home, Rav Nachum sat down, silent and bewildered. His attendant brought him coffee, and twice he refused, saying, “How can we

drink when we know that there is a man who serves *Hashem* with such loftiness?”

The *Maloch's* *Avodas Hashem* was very intense. Once, as he *davened*, his soul began to depart from his body. Rav Shneur Zalman instructed those near him to replace his *Rashi tefillin* with those of *Rabbeinu Tam*. Only then did he return to his normal self.



### **The Maloch's Passing**

On his final *Yom Kippur*, the *Maloch* became very weak. By the time of the *Neila* service, he could no longer speak. Asked if a message should be sent to Rav Nachum, the *Maloch* nodded his agreement. Two days later, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Tishrei* 1776, the *Maloch* was niftar.

Rav Nachum learned of Rav Avrohom's *petira* a few days later, on *Sukkos*. Banging his head against the wall, he cried continuously for two hours. Finally, his *Chassidim* carried him into the *sukka* and said, “*Rebbe*, remember that today is *Yom Tov!*” Only then did he regain his composure and recount the *Maloch's* greatness.

Rav Avrohom lived only thirty-six years – just long enough, *Chassidim* say in the name of Rav Meir of Premishlan, to liberate the soul of the pious Rav Yisrael of Rizhin from the “treasure house of souls”.

Rav Yisrael of Rizhin himself believed that his grandfather, Rav Avrohom, was that rare *Tzaddik* capable of clinging to his Creator constantly.

When Rav Moshe of Savran noted that Rav Avrohom did not live very long, Rav Yisrael retorted, “Irrelevant! One only comes into this world to accomplish what is good for his soul. Once he finishes, he returns to the Source, whence his soul was hewn.”

Rav Pinchas of Koretz once remarked that had Rav Avrohom lived longer, all the *Tzaddikim* would have

accepted his authority.



### **Messages in a Dream**

After the week of *shiva*, Rav Avrohom's *Rebbetzin* came to Fastov to receive her husband's bequest. Rav Avrohom's followers tried to comfort her, but she was inconsolable. That night she dreamed that she entered a great, beautiful palace, where she beheld her husband, his face radiant with joy, and several distinguished-looking elders.

"My wife always complained that I was overly abstemious," he told them, "and she was justified. I therefore beg her forgiveness in your presence."

"You are forgiven wholeheartedly," she replied.

"The *Torah* allows her to remarry," Rav Avrohom continued, "especially since she is only twenty-four years old. I will not prevent her. But if she agrees not to marry another, I will cover all her expenses, and those of her children. And when she comes home, each child will already have an appropriate match."

When she returned home, her children immediately found good *shidduchim* (matches), and her business improved and provided for all her needs. The *Maloch* continued to appear in her dreams whenever necessary.

When the *Rebbetzin* of Rav Nachum of Chernobyl passed away, Rav Nachum considered taking Rav Avrohom's widow as his wife. He sent the *Maloch's* son, Rav Sholom Shachna, to discuss it with her.

One night, on the way to his mother's home, Rav Sholom Shachna dreamed that his father was standing at the entrance to a magnificent palace, his hands reaching its ceiling. "Who dares to enter my palace?!" the *Maloch* shouted. When he awoke, Rav Sholom Shachna realized that he and Rav Nachum had overstepped their bounds.

### **Friends Reunited**

After *davening* at the grave of his friend, Rav Avrohom, Rav Yisrael of Politzk, a *talmid* of the *Maggid*, returned home and informed the *Chevre Kadisha*, "I am about to pass away. The *Maloch* has summoned me because he is alone. Bury me next to him." He then climbed into bed, closed his eyes, and was *niftar*. The *Chevre Kadisha* honored his wishes.

Years later, Rav Shneur Zalman passed Fastov but did not enter the town, lest Rav Avrohom summon him as well.



### **His Teachings and Writings**

Some of Rav Avrohom's teachings appeared in his work *Chessed L'Avrohom* (Czernowitz, 1851; Yerushalayim, 1997). In line with his departure from the ways of the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and the *Maggid* with his self-mortification, he hardly mentions them in this work. He aspired to strip away the physical outer layers and reach the highest level of *Chassidus*, "nothingness", by crushing desires and vices, and cultivated an extraordinary humility. He vehemently protested against concrete discussions of lofty concepts derived from the Upper Worlds, for this he saw as a physical embodiment of the spiritual. Thus, the introduction to *Chessed L'Avrohom* railed against those who taught *Kabbala* publicly and reduced it to comprehensible terms. Similarly, he viewed attempts to explain the divine in human terms as a violation of Jewish belief in an incorporeal G-d.

Rav Avrohom attributed the decline of the *Chassidic* idea through the generations to the terrible sufferings of exile, which, ironically, should have propelled the nation toward its *Tzaddikim*, through whom goodness and perfection reach the Lower Worlds.

The *Maloch* perceived the *Tzaddik* as central to redemption. The Jews could

rise spiritually only by rallying around him, while he in turn would encompass them all and cleave to *Hashem*.

Despite this image of the *Tzaddik* as a man of the people who provides for everyone, he himself withdrew from the world allowing no one into his domain. The foundation of *Chassidus* is the *Rebbe*, the *Tzaddik* of the generation; Rav Avrohom was the *Tzaddik* without the generation.

The essence of Rav Avrohom's teachings lies perhaps in two famous sayings. Quoting a *tefilla* recited on *Shabbos*: "And all who stand erect shall bow before You", he explained, "Only after reaching his full stature can one completely nullify and subjugate himself, and bow to the Eternal."

Elsewhere in the *Shabbos* liturgy, we

proclaim, "There is none comparable to You, *Hashem*, our G-d, in this world; and none beside You, our King, in the World to Come..." Said the *Maloch*, "If, Heaven forbid, there were a split second without Your inspiration and providence, what could this world give me? What pleasure would I derive from the coming of *Moshiach* or the resurrection of the dead? But if You are here, everything is here; for nothing can compare to You and the great delight and pleasure of Your influence. There is no satisfaction like that which we gain from You."

Forever seeking the satisfaction to be gained from *Hashem* – this was the way of the *Maloch*, the way of an angel in human form.

[www.nishmas.org/maggid/chapt9.htm](http://www.nishmas.org/maggid/chapt9.htm)



## HACHONOS – ADVANCE PREPARATIONS FOR YOM KIPPUR

The *Chasam Sofer* teaches us that *Avodas Hashem* requires advance preparation. You must prepare yourself even a hundred times with a hundred *hachonos* so that even one single *avoda* will come out properly. So how should we prepare ourselves for the *teshuva* of the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva* and the *Selicha*, *Mechila* and *Kappora* that is *Yom HaKodosh – Yom Kippur*?



### **SEGULAS SHABBOS TESHUVA**

The Gerrer *Rebbe*, the *Bais Yisrael*, writes (*Bais Yisrael vaYeilech tov-shin-tesvov*) that the first *Shabbos* of the new year can give us the vitality and *chiyus* we need to charge us up for the entire coming year! The *Medrash* tells us that when Odom *HoRishon* sinned, he did *teshuva* on the first *Shabbos* of creation, and his *teshuva* was accepted. Odom then infused that *Shabbos* with the power of *teshuva* so that all subsequent generations would share the

power of *teshuva*, to return to *Hashem*.



### **SEGULAS ASSERES YEMEI TESHUVA**

Rav Yonoson Eibeshutz, in his *sefer*, *Yaaros Devash* (Vol I *Derush Alef*) teaches further that the seven days between *Rosh HaShana* and *Yom Kippur* correspond to the seven days of the week and thus, if we seize each day as an opportunity to do *teshuva*, this is a *teshuva* for that entire actual day. For example, when we do *teshuva* on a Sunday or Monday of the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva*, that *teshuva* is for all past Sundays and Mondays of our lives; such *teshuva* repairs all past Sundays and Mondays that we blemished with past misdeeds and mistakes. This can help us rectify all the days of our lives!

This is why this *Shabbos* is known as *Shabbos Teshuva*: it is so holy that its *kedusha* is laden with the power to give us all the ability to reach *teshuva sheleima* (complete repentance); by being *mesaken*

this *Shabbos*, we rectify all *Shabbosos* of the year!

An example of the power of *Shabbos* for *teshuva* can be found in the following story found in the *sefer Shlosha Edrei Tzon* page 79, about the *Tzaddik* Rav Dov Beirish of Oshpitzin:

There was an assimilated Jewish doctor practicing medicine in Oshpitzin, who boasted of the fact that he had once studied under the *Gaon* Rav Boruch Frankel, *mechaber* of *Boruch Ta'am* of Leinick, the famed father-in-law of the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz. Despite his knowledge of *Torah* he was completely assimilated and was an *apikores* who reveled in sin, living a life of *hefkerus* (abandon) while disparaging *Chazal* (the Sages), *Torah* and his *mesora*.

One day this doctor grew ill. Day by day he grew sicker and sicker. Being a physician, he attempted to diagnose and treat his own illness – but with no improvement. Prescription after prescription and attempt after attempt yielded no results until his situation grew quite serious. When he felt that he was on the verge of death and that his situation was grave indeed, he began to feel intense pangs of remorse over his lifestyle, and how he had abandoned *Torah* and *mitzvos*. He decided to do *teshuva* and called the heads of the *kehilla*, asking them to tell the *Rebbe* Rav Dov Beirish that he wanted to do *teshuva*. The *Roshei HaKohol* were sure that the *Rebbe* would simply refuse. Nonetheless, they hastened to fulfill the dying man's last wishes. That day was *Shabbos*, and when they came to the *Rebbe's* home and explained the reason for their visit, the *Rebbe* heard them out and sat there silently for a few moments. He then said to them, "In *Shulchon Aruch* we find that the *Turei Zohov* in his commentary explains the *Gemora Shabbos* (118b): 'Whoever keeps *Shabbos* and all its laws, even if he is an idol

worshipper like the generation of Enosh, he is forgiven'. The *Ta"z* asks the question: if he has not done *teshuva*, how does keeping *Shabbos* help? And if he has done *teshuva*, what is so special about keeping *Shabbos*? He has already repented fully!

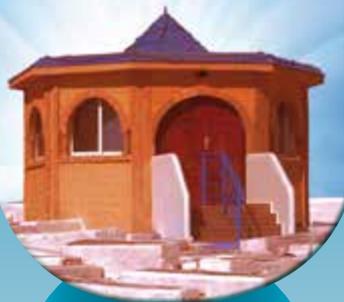
"It seems that it must be referring to a case where he did *teshuva*, but cannot be forgiven for transgressing *mitzvos* which are punishable by *koreis* (being cut off) and *misas Bais Din* (capital punishment), as the *Gemora* explains. The *Gemora* here is presenting a *chiddush* (novel idea): that if, after doing *teshuva*, he keeps *Shabbos* and all its laws, his *teshuva* does indeed effect his forgiveness. This is what the *Ta"z* teaches us. If he did *teshuva* during the week, his *teshuva* is held up. However, if he did *teshuva* on *Shabbos*, that *teshuva* has the power to grant forgiveness even to someone who sins as the generation of Enosh did with idolatry, which was a very serious form of *chillul Hashem*! Since our doctor here has done *teshuva* on *Shabbos*, now go and tell him that if his *teshuva* is real and true, and his remorse genuine, he will recover and live."

This doctor changed his life around completely. He hired a Jewish woman to teach his wife the *halochos* (laws) of Jewish life; he smashed and discarded his dishes and kashered his kitchen, from that day forward acting as a Jew for the rest of his life. Rav Beirish commanded him not to relate the miraculous story of his recovery and he continued to live in Oshpitzin for another year and a half before moving to the city.

This demonstrates for us the power of *Shabbos* and the secrets of *teshuva* it contains. When we do *teshuva* on *Shabbos* our *teshuva* can atone for even the gravest and harshest of sins. (Adapted from *Imrei Chein VaYeilech-Shabbos Teshuva* by Rav Chuna Halpern of London)



גמר חתימה טובה!!



Investing Thought in Performing Mitzvot

**"So that they will hear and so that they will learn and they shall fear Hashem, your G-d"** (Devarim 31:12)

The Ben Ish Chai zt"l writes: "Gather together the people—the men, the women, and the small children, and your stranger who is in your cities—so that they will hear and so that they will learn, and they shall fear Hashem, your G-d, and be careful to perform all the words of this Torah." The word 'this' comes to teach us that the way to fulfill the Torah commandments and all the details of its laws, is defined by the Sages of the generation who assemble many gatherings, to teach the people the correct path to follow and the correct way to behave. This is why Moshe Rabbeinu a"h, established that the Jewish people must expound on the laws every single year; the laws of each festival for that festival, the laws of Pesach on Pesach, the laws of Atzeret on Atzeret."

The Ben Ish Chai zt"l writes further: "Chazal tell us that it is a mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur and to increase the amount one would normally consume at a meal. The Mekubalim zt"l write that if a person is able to, he should eat the amount that he would normally consume over two days, that which is required for this day as well as for the next day, the Holy Day of Yom Kippur, in order to rectify this day with eating. In addition, a person should perform all his deeds for the sake of Heaven and Hashem will not withhold goodness from those who walk in perfect innocence. These are the pure words of the Ben Ish Chai.

This matter requires clarification since we find many times that Chazal warn us about abstaining as much as possible from excessive eating. For example, the Ramban writes that the command "You shall be holy", (Vayikra 19:2) means that one should not indulge in permissible things and not fill one's stomach even with that which is permitted. In addition, we also need to understand why on Yom Kippur we are commanded to abstain from five different acts in order to fulfill the command of "you shall afflict yourselves". Would it not suffice just to fast and abstain from eating food?

The answer seems to be that even though we all fulfill mitzvot, the question to be asked is, how do we fulfill them? A person can perform a mitzvah by rote without the mitzvah meaning anything to him, whereas someone else may pay attention to the significance of the mitzvah and fulfill it with thought and intention of the heart. As the Chafetz Chaim said, a person must know that a commandment from Hashem is like a medal that one receives from the King and when performing the mitzvah, he should keep in mind that he is performing a G-dly commandment and he should rejoice when fulfilling the wish of Hashem. However, if a person for example wears tzitzit out of habit without paying attention to the fact that he is performing a mitzvah, he certainly will not enjoy the merit of the tzitzit protecting him.

On Yom Kippur we have been commanded to observe five afflictions. The intention is in order to awaken us to perform this mitzvah with true feeling, instead of observing the affliction by rote. Therefore, Chazal forbade certain things such as anointing oneself and wearing leather shoes etc., so that we should contemplate the commandment of "you shall afflict yourselves" and fulfill it with sincere intention and thought.

We will now explain why the Torah commanded us to eat on the ninth and the Mekubalim teach us that we should eat on this day also for the tenth. Rabbeinu Yonah in Sha'arei Te-

shuva (sh'ar 4), defines three reasons for this eating: Firstly, it is considered as the se'udat mitzvah of Yom Kippur. Secondly, in order that we should have strength to pray the next day and lastly it is a show of our joy on the arrival of the Day of Atonement. The Ari z"l writes that this excessive eating is an affliction for the neshama and just like one afflicts the body so one also afflicts the soul. However, all these reasons do not reconcile the difficulty of why we need to consume an amount of food that we would normally eat over two days. This is excessive eating that doesn't afford us any enjoyment.

The answer must be that it is well known that it is impossible for the body to exist without eating and drinking. If a person does not eat or drink he will die of hunger or thirst. Now on the Day of Judgement, we come before Hashem, alive with our souls contained within our bodies, but we must make a reckoning. Did we eat in order to satisfy our physical desires or was it purely for the sake of sustaining ourselves? Therefore, the Torah commands us to eat extra on the ninth day and then when we sit down to the se'uda hamafseket, we will force ourselves to eat without any appetite. This will cause us to contemplate and wonder—is this the way that I ate throughout the year, simply for the sake of sustaining my body without any appetite or desire? And this will be a lesson for him the entire year to know how to eat and for what purpose to eat. This is the reason why Chazal commanded us to increase the amount that we eat on this day, so that this will automatically have an effect on all our meals throughout the year. As the Shulchan Aruch (siman 231) determines, a person must always eat for the sake of heaven. Eating on this day for the sake of heaven will have an effect that his other consumptions will also be for the sake of heaven. In addition, eating large amounts on the ninth and then not eating at all on the tenth, adds affliction to the day of Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur is the day when we must recite vidui (confession) and accept commitments upon ourselves. Usually, at the start of the night a person feels thirsty and in the morning he suffers from the lack of his normal routine for example if he usually drinks coffee. In the afternoon he starts to feel hungry but later on, towards Mincha, he no longer feels the hunger and if he is asked whether he is hungry he will say no! This is why the Torah gives us five afflictions. The prohibition of eating and drinking helps us to feel at the beginning of this holy day that this day is different and it is time to change one's habits. Once a person 'gets over' this difficulty, the other afflictions serve to remind him of the potency of the day, for example washing one's hands until one's knuckles, and wearing cloth shoes instead of leather footwear.

And even if a person becomes accustomed to these other prohibitions and doesn't feel the importance and significance of the day, Hashem says I forgive and pardon you with kindness and mercy as is written, "For on this day He shall provide atonement for you to cleanse you; from all your sins before Hashem shall you be cleansed". Despite Hashem's kindness, it is certainly correct to strive to be deserving of a good inscription. We should feel enthusiasm when fulfilling the mitzvot, as if it is the first time performing this mitzvah, and invest sacrifice and great effort, so that we not come to fulfill the mitzvot by rote.

May it be His will that we carry out all our actions for the sake of Heaven in order to bring pleasure to our Creator. Amen v'Amen.

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Hilula

6 - Rabbi Ya'akov Yosef Harofeh

7 - Rabbi Ya'akov Antebi

8 - Rabbi Avner Yisrael Hatarfati, Av Beit Din Fez

9 - Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Saloveitchik

10 - Rabbi David Knafo, Av Beit Din Mogador (Essaouira)

11 - Rabbi Shlomo Bochbot

12 - Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zvhill



## Walking in their Ways

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

### Writing Torah Thoughts is Considered Like Offering Sacrifices

I knew someone, an author of many published sefarim, whose outlook on life did not correlate with my own hashkafot, therefore I did not give much credit to his sefarim. When I received them as a gift from him, I put them straight in genizah...

It once happened that I had a difficult question on a certain Chazal, and when I came to the Beit Midrash I noticed a certain sefer. I opened it and to my amazement it posed the very question that I was contending with. I did not look at the author's answer, rather, with Hashem's help, I tried to find a solution on my own. Only once I resolved the difficulty did I check what conclusion the author had come to, and I saw that he answered the question exactly as I had explained it...

Wishing to know the name of the author, I turned to the front of the sefer and to my surprise it was written by that same talmid chacham with the problematic outlook. At that moment, I immediately felt great love for him and removed any objections towards him from my heart. I sat down and wrote him a letter of approval and praised him for his wonderful insights. From then on we became close friends. This is an instructive example of how chiddushei Torah (novel Torah insights) that are published cause an increase in love and brotherhood between man and his friend and foster peace in the world.

Now we can understand the words of the 'Sefer Chassidim' who writes that one who writes down chiddushei Torah is considered as if he has brought a sacrifice, for just as a korban atones for the person who sinned and makes peace between him and Hashem, so one who writes chiddushei Torah merits to unite hearts and increase love and brotherhood between man and his fellow.

This is the reason why specifically in our generation there is an enormous amount of sefarim being written, since in the period before Mashiach's arrival the satan tries to increase hatred and competition between people and he invests his utmost to sow the seeds of hatred between man and his fellow and to increase division and argument between different sectors. His entire goal is to delay the redemption. But Hashem in His great kindness gave us an outpouring of talmidei chachamim who publish their chiddushei Torah and this becomes an antidote against the yetzer hara, for these chiddushim only increase love and friendship. Every sefer that is published unites the hearts and cools the differences of opinion between people.

## The Haftarah

"Return, Israel" (Hoshea 14, followed by Micha 7)



The connection to Shabbat: This haftarah is read between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur since it speaks about the idea of repentance, and these are days of favor and repentance.

## Guard Your Tongue

### Hashem has Mercy in the Merit of our Fathers

A person must take care not to rejoice in the downfall and disparagement of his friend, as it says: "When your foe falls, be not glad, and when he stumbles, let your heart not be joyous, lest Hashem see and it be displeasing in His eyes" (Mishlei 24:17).

This sin awakens the power of strict judgment on the person. It has the power to destroy just like the sin of idolatry. A person should always consider that according to his own sins and shortcomings, he too is fitting to be disgraced and disparaged, but Hashem has mercy on him in the merit of his fathers.



## Words of our Sages

### A Selection of Customs from Hagaon Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l, regarding Yom Kippur

Hagaon Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l would often speak about the great obligation to appreciate and value every minute of this great and Holy Day. He would repeat the reason for saying the 'Kol Nidrei' prayer at the start of Yom Kippur, where we free ourselves of past and future vows, since it serves to cleanse the mouth from the sin of unfulfilled vows, so that our prayers will be fitting to be accepted.

He wrote in his notes, "The main focus of our prayers on this Holy Day should be for spiritual matters. This is in accordance with the Chazal: "'and my salvation (yishi)' – this refers to Yom Kippur', since the word 'salvation' (yeshu'ah) is found in the Torah and in our prayers mostly concerning spiritual salvation. For example, "I called You, save me, and I will keep Your testimonies" (Tehillim 119:146) and "The splendor of greatness and the crown of salvation" in the Shabbat Mincha prayer. However, one should not suffice with prayers for one's own personal (spiritual) requests, but one should also pray for the public and for the exile of the Shechina, according to a broader interpretation of the verse, "Moshe heard the people weeping 'in their family groups'...and the wrath of Hashem flared greatly" (Bamidbar 11:10).

About an hour before beginning the shacharit prayer, he would awaken his grandson who slept in his room and together they recited Tehillim, as it is written "Arise! Call to your G-d!" (Yonah 1:6), since every single moment of this holy day is more precious than pure gold.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman would say: "Throughout the years there have been many people who did not fast on Yom Kippur due to health concerns, and they lived long and good lives". There is a story told about a sick person who was told by his doctor to eat normally on Yom Kippur. Rabbeinu cautioned him to carry out his doctor's instructions without being stringent in the slightest. Right until the end of his life, he made it his practice during the days leading up to Yom Kippur and on Erev Yom Kippur, to personally visit people, whom he knew to be sick or weak, and determine if they were permitted to fast. (He took the trouble to measure the correct size dish for those who had to be particular about eating shiurim.) He invested much thought into the way that he addressed each person, finding the words that would speak to that individual to convince him to obey his doctor's orders.

If he thought that the sick person's difficulty lay in the fact that being allowed to eat was an expression of the grave danger regarding his health situation, he would tell him: "Many people over the years did not fast on Yom Kippur due to health concerns and they lived long and good lives." If he perceived that accepting the fact that they would not fast on Yom Kippur was an emotional difficulty, he would explain with sensitivity that the Torah commandment of "You shall observe My decrees...and by which he shall live" (Vayikra 18:5), is also a very important and precious mitzvah."

He was once told that a famous specialist visited two of the Gedolei Yisrael before Yom Kippur, and after examining each one he expressed his opinion that they must not fast on Yom Kippur. One of them cried out of great distress, whereas the other one reacted calmly and said: "The One who commanded us to fast on Yom Kippur also commanded us not to fast in this situation". Rabbeinu said that the second reaction is the correct and straight way of thinking that a person should choose.



## Pearls of the Parshah

## Treasures

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



### What Does the Creator Regret?

*"Hashem, your G-d, He will cross over before you" (Devarim 31:3)*

The holy Ohr Hachaim zya"l explains these words to mean that Hashem, your G-d, He will cross over your sins (in the sense of pass over).

The sefer 'Harei Besamim' quotes the verse "I made [you] and I will bear [you]" (Yeshaya 46:4) and brings the interpretation of the Midrash: "I made the yetzer hara and I will bear the sin". This is in line with what it says "and whomever I have harmed" (Micha 4:6), meaning that Hashem regrets creating the yetzer hara.

This clarifies the Chazal on the verse "ה רובעיו" - Hashem passed before him and proclaimed". Chazal say that the words 'passed before him' teaches that Hashem wrapped Himself like a shaliach tzibbur (chazan). (Vaya'avur is a reference to the expression vaya'avur lifnei hateivo, referring to the chazan). What does 'like a shaliach tzibbur' mean? Like a shaliach tzibbur who fulfills the obligation of the congregation.

The law is that one who is not obligated in a certain matter cannot fulfil the obligation of other people. If so, how can Hashem be a shaliach tzibbur to bear the sins of Am Yisrael when He has no obligation to repent? But since Hashem, as if, regrets creating the yetzer hara, and regret is one of the conditions of repentance, He can fulfil the obligation of His people.

This is the meaning of "Hashem, your G-d, He will cross over before you". He passes before the congregation, to bear the sins of Bnei Yisrael.

### Concealed Within the Concealment

*"But I will surely have concealed My face on that day" (Devarim 31:18)*

Why does the verse use a double expression of 'haster aster' – I will surely have concealed?

The holy Ba'al Shem Tov writes that sometimes a person feels distant from Hashem, therefore he makes an effort to come closer to Him. But a much worse tribulation is when Hashem conceals from the person even the feeling that He is distant from him and so he is convinced that he is close to Him, when in reality he is very far away...

This is the implication of the repetition 'haster aster'. Hashem will hide the actual concealment from Am Yisrael and they will have no idea that they are far from Him. This punishment is much worse, since there is no way to repair the distance for the person sees no reason to invest effort in coming closer to his Creator.

### Why Is the Yetzer Hara Considered a Fool?

*"For I know its inclination" (Devarim 31:21)*

The wisest of all men calls the evil inclination "an old and foolish king" (Kohelet 4:13). The intention is not, as the Chafetz Chaim explains, that the yetzer hara is actually a fool, on the contrary we see that he has the power to trap even the cleverest person in his net and there is no such thing in this world as a righteous person who does only good and does not sin.

Rather, the intention is that the yetzer hara is called after his profession. Just like a shoemaker is one who makes and repairs shoes and one who sews clothes is called a tailor, the yetzer hara is called a fool. Why? Because his main profession is to make people foolish, he makes them into fools. Once he has achieved this, it is much easier to persuade a fool to sin.

### Feeling the Imprint Throughout the Year

Every year on Yom Kippur as the mincha prayer approaches, I suddenly start shuddering, since the shadows of the evening can already be felt and who knows what has been decided and sealed for us? At the time of neilah a person must realize that there are two kinds of neilot- closures. One is the closure of Hashem who seals the judgement of the person, and the second type concerns the person himself who knows how he is concluding with Hashem, either in a position of descent or in a position of growth and commitment to come closer to his Creator.

It is important to realize that one must feel 'Rosh Hashana' the entire year. The same fear of judgement that one experiences on Rosh Hashana should remain with a person throughout the year, as Chazal say (Rosh Hashana 15b): According to the opinion of Rabbi Yosi, every day is like Rosh Hashana since a person is judged every day as it says, "that you inspect him every morning and observe him every moment?" (Iyov 7:18). And they said, according to which opinion do we pray every day for sick people? According to Rabbi Yosi. The Rishonim write that the halacha is determined according to Rabbi Yosi. Therefore, a person must take the fear of judgment that he feels on Rosh Hashana and divide it up throughout the year, apportioning a bit for every day.

Every single day a person should remember that there is Yom Kippur and he should be careful not to stumble. Just like if on Rosh Hashana a person commits an aveirah and when someone brings this to his attention by saying, "What are you doing? It is Rosh Hashana today!" he is immediately taken aback. So too throughout the year a person should remain with some small feeling of Rosh Hashana or Yom Kippur so that this will remind him and prevent him from stumbling.

This is the reason why Chazal 'extended' Yom Kippur and said that also the day before should be a day of affliction, in the form of additional eating. In this way, these two days will have a sufficient amount to distribute throughout the year, each day the portion that it requires to remind a person what his goal is in this world, as it says, "Take words with you and return to Hashem".



# "LET HER BE PRAISED"

Portrayal of the True 'Eshet Chayil'  
In memory of Rabbanit Mazal Madeleine Pinto

**שְׂקֵר הַחֵן וְהַבֵּל הַיְפִי אִשָּׁה יֵרָאֵת ה' הִיא תִתְהַלָּל**

**"Grace is false, and beauty vain; a woman who fears Hashem, she should be praised"**

The famous Maggid, Rabbi Shalom Shwadron zt"l, heard this story from Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian zt"l, who told over:

The Rav of Eliska, who was a great tzaddik, told me that in his youth he looked through the community records of the town of Lisa, where Rabbi Ya'akov, the author of the 'Netivot Hamishpat' was Rav, and read of a terrible story that took place with the daughter of the Netivot.

This daughter was a widow who was about to marry off her daughter, the granddaughter of the Rav. They hired a wagon in order to travel to the nearby town to buy clothes and wedding necessities for the kallah. The non-Jewish wagon driver who knew the purpose of their trip, understood that they were carrying a nice sum of money. What did he do? Instead of driving them to their destination, he changed directions and instead travelled to his home on the outskirts of Lissa. Once they arrived, he hurried to call his friends and together they robbed the passengers of all the money that they had saved. Since the group of wicked men were afraid that the two women would report them to the authorities, they tied them up with ropes, and then went to bring wood to build up the fireplace, intending to throw them to the flames. In this way no trace of their remains will be found, leaving them free of any possible claim against them.

The mother and daughter lay trembling on the ground, bound up in ropes. Waiting for the fire to build up, the robbers meanwhile sat down by the table and started discussing how to divide out the money. Who deserves more and who less... The wagon driver demanded to receive a double portion, since he was the one who instigated the whole idea, whereas his

friends on the other hand claimed that he must divide out the money equally between all of them.

Time passed and the argument grew more heated. Suddenly the door opened and there stood a German officer whose attention had been attracted by the vulgar shouts. As soon as they noticed his presence, the goyim stood up and fled.

Realizing that something strange was going on and this was no innocent argument, the officer looked around and was astonished to find two women bound up with ropes, crying on the ground. They were tremendously relieved to explain the story and begged him to help them.

The officer took a knife, cut the ropes and returned the money which had been left on the table. They were free to return home...

That night, the Netivot appeared to his daughter in a dream and told her:

"You should know that when I found out about this calamity, I went up to a high place and begged for mercy for you, but I wasn't answered. Why not? Since you transgressed the prohibition of yichud (seclusion) with the goy. I went up to an even higher place, and again begged for mercy for my daughter and granddaughter and asked that the merit of the Torah that I proliferated through my sefer 'Netivot Hamishpat' should stand in your stead. After detailing your righteousness and how much you despise external and superficial beauty, my request was accepted and you were saved. From now on be extra careful with the prohibition of yichud."

The story was told by the daughter to the head of the community in Lisa, who recorded it in their community records as an eternal remembrance, so that people should understand who is considered a true G-d fearing person. One who despises the fleeting vanities of this world, she is the one who is fitting to be praised.



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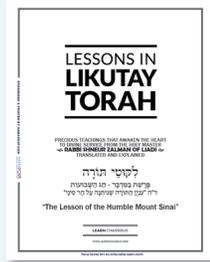
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