

# ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



בעזרת ח' יתרון

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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)

## VAYIKRA

❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

### Dvar Torah

### Humility Uplifts

Normally, we think of a *mitzva* as something that should be done. Technically, of course, prohibitions are also called *mitzvos*, but when we speak of performing a *mitzva*, we mean a *mitzva* that should be performed rather than something that should not be done. Nonetheless, the *Torah* tells us (*Vayikra* 4:27): "If a person...shall sin unintentionally by performing one of *Hashem's* commandments that must not be done..." How does one perform a commandment that must not be done?

We can find an allusion here, says Rav Levi Yitzchok, to an important concept. It is well known that the true performance of a *mitzva* requires a large measure of humility. The person who performs the *mitzva* should contemplate the vast gulf that exists between him and *Hashem*. He should realize that he is nothing, a creature of no significance whatsoever, in the presence of the Infinite. Only then can a person's performance of a *mitzva* serve as an appropriate expression of his relationship with *Hashem* and his place in the grand scheme of things. If, on the other hand, a person is full of self-congratulation when he performs a *mitzva*, if he thinks about how great he is for performing it, then the *mitzva* really has little value.

This is the concept to which the *Torah* is alluding here. "If a person...shall sin unintentionally by performing one of *Hashem's* commandments that must not be done..." If he performs a *mitzva* in an inappropriate manner, then it is considered a sin rather than a *mitzva*. He has corrupted the essence of the *mitzva*, which is meant to bring a person closer to

*Hashem* and thereby arouse in him a powerful sense of humility.

As the *Zohar* explains, when the *Torah* tells us (*Shemos* 19:3) that Moshe “went up to *Hashem*”, it means that he continually strove to come ever closer to *Hashem*, to recognize and perceive the infinite greatness of *Hashem*, and consequently, his humility grew consistently until he became the most humble person on the face of the earth.

Moshe put a positive cycle into motion. He strove to come closer to *Hashem*, which inspired in him a great humility, which brought him even closer, which inspired even more humility. This connection is symbolized by the small *aleph* in the word *Vayikra*. Moshe’s humility qualified him to be summoned to *Hashem*.



## Story

Making a living was always a difficult hill to climb for the Jewish people in the villages of the Ukraine. Not many options were available to them, and those that were available were relentlessly exploited by aristocratic estate holders on whose land the villages stood. One available livelihood for Jewish people was the management of inns and taverns, where beer and liquor were served to the local gentiles. It was a risky business with many expenses, but it did provide a livelihood for many Jews.

In order to operate an inn or a tavern, it was first necessary to purchase a liquor license from the count who owned the village. Then there were heavy taxes on all the liquor sold in the establishment, taxes that were collected by a tax collector appointed by the count. This often thankless task on behalf of the nobles was also available to Jews.

In a certain small village, there lived a Jew who ran a tavern for the local count. Because there was not enough business in the tavern to support his family, he also worked as a tailor. Another Jew who lived in the village was employed as the count’s tax collector. The tax collector employed a number of gentile assistants whom he would send off every month to make the rounds of the taverns on the count’s estate. The tavern keepers were not eager to pay the taxes, but in general, they complied without too much difficulty. The tailor, however, was a surly fellow who almost never paid taxes without resistance.

One month, the tax collector’s assistant arrived at the tailor’s tavern to collect the liquor tax, and the tailor sent him away with a harsh tongue-lashing. The assistant knew from experience that it was always difficult to extract the tax from the tailor, but this time he seemed more obstreperous than usual. The assistant recruited several local ruffians and returned to the tavern to demand payment of the tax.

“If you don’t pay up,” said the assistant, “my boys will break every bone in your body.”

The tailor was furious. “Are you threatening me?” he shouted. “Are you coming into my tavern and threatening me with violence?”

He reached under a table and pulled out a massive club.

“We’ll see who will break whose bones,” he roared.

He ran at the tax collector’s assistant and his band of ruffians, and they fled. The tailor was not satisfied with the respite he had gained with his club. He marched out of his tavern and headed straight for the tax collector’s office. The tax collector was meeting with several of his assistants when the tailor burst into the room.

"Is this how you treat a fellow Jew?" he shouted at the tax collector. "How dare you send people to threaten to break my bones?"

"I never told anyone to threaten you," said the tax collector.

"Who believes you? You're just a dog."

"Why do you insult me?" said the tax collector. "I always treat you with respect. You are the arrogant one who sends my men away in a high-handed manner as if we are asking for money that you are not obligated to pay."

"I always pay in the end," said the tailor. "I just want to make you sweat for the money."

"Why should you make me sweat? Am I not trying to make a living just as you are?"

The tailor sneered. "You should sweat because you are nothing but a worthless dog. You deserve to be strung along." The tailor then let loose with a stream of such shocking invective that the tax collector grew red in the face.

"Get out of here right now!" he screamed.

"I will not," snapped the tailor. "I will stand here and say whatever I wish for as long as I wish, and there's nothing you can do about it."

The tax collector turned to his assistants. He was so angry that he could hardly speak.

"Show this man out," he said, trying to control his voice.

The assistants sought to escort the tailor from the office, but he kicked at them and refused to go. They grabbed his arms and tried to drag him away, but he struggled mightily against them, cursing and shouting all the while. Finally, they just shoved him out the door and slammed it shut behind him.

The tailor stumbled into the street. He took a few steps and then he pitched forward on his face, and his head struck a rock. Several bystanders rushed to his assistance. They saw the gash on his forehead and the blood that covered his face. The tailor was not breathing, and he had no pulse. He was dead.

The constables came and investigated, and it was established that the tailor had died by accident. He had provoked the tax collector's assistants, who had been justified in ejecting him bodily from the office. They ruled that his death had been unintentional, and the matter was laid to rest.

That Friday night, after his family went to sleep, the tax collector sat by himself and learned *Chumash* by the light of a sputtering candle that cast writhing shadows on the wall. A ghostly mist detached itself from the shadows and slowly materialized into the form of the dead tailor. The tax collector recoiled in horror. The translucent apparition moved to the door and opened it.

"Come inside, good friends," said the dead tailor.

A group of departed spirits floated through the door and arrayed themselves around the dead tailor.

"This is the man," said the dead tailor. "He caused my death. He ordered his assistants to throw me into the gutter, and the fall cracked my skull and killed me. The sorrow and suffering of the widow and orphans I left behind are on his head."

The tax collector was trembling. "Why are you all here?" he managed to ask.

"We are here to conduct a trial," said one of the spirits, "and decide your fate."

"Respected spirits," said the tax collector. "I am sorry that the tailor died, and I'm sorry that his widow and orphans are needy. But he brought it all on himself. He was a horrid

and arrogant man who caused me untold embarrassment and trouble."

"We will decide that at the trial," said the spirit. "Prepare your arguments."

"No, I do not agree," said the tax collector. "If we are to have a trial, it has to be by an earthly court of living *Rabbonim*."

"We are agreeable," said the spirit. "Do you have someone in mind?"

"Yes. I want the trial to take place in front of Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev."

"When?"

"On Tuesday. And until then take the tailor with you."

"Agreed."

After the spirits left, the tax collector remained in his chair trying to soothe his jangled nerves. Finally, he pulled himself together, checked all the locks and went to sleep. He lay in his bed for a long time, trying to fall asleep, his heart pounding relentlessly against his chest. Presently, his heart slowed down and he began to drift off into the welcome oblivion of sleep. Just then, the form of the tailor appeared before him again. He twisted away, but the tailor grabbed his arm and squeezed hard. The tax collector screamed and sat up. His wife, awoken by his screams, was standing over him.

"What's going on?" she said. "Are you all right?"

"Yes, I'm fine," he said.

"You were having a nightmare. Do you want to tell me about it?"

"Not really. You're right. It was a nightmare."

"Very well," she said as she went back to bed. "Go to sleep."

After *Shabbos*, the tax collector traveled to Berditchev. He went to Rav Levi Yitzchok's house and told him the entire story.

"Will your *Bais Din* hear my case?" the tax collector asked.

"Yes, we will," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "We will hear it today."

Rav Levi Yitzchok instructed the *Dayonim* to immerse themselves in the *mikve* seven times before they entered the hearing room. The *Dayonim* did as instructed. They entered the room and took their seats alongside Rav Levi Yitzchok. The tax collector presented his arguments at great length.

"Thank you," said Rav Levi Yitzchok when he had finished. "And now we will withdraw to deliberate our ruling."

"But wait," said one of the *Dayonim*. "We haven't heard from the other side yet. After all, this man is being held responsible for the death of the tailor. What do the spirits want him to do as compensation? We need to consider the widow and the orphans."

Rav Levi Yitzchok shook his head. "There is nothing to hear, and there is really nothing to consider. This tailor was a sly snake during his lifetime, and he is behaving like a sly snake even after his death. He did not die from a blow to the head, as he claims. He died from a burst gall bladder brought on by his own arrogance and bluster. But now he wants to make it seem that his death was the tax collector's fault so that he will have to support the widow and orphans. It is really outrageous."

The *Dayonim* stared at Rav Levi Yitzchok in amazement. The tax collector was sent out of the room, and the *Bais Din*, under the guidance of Rav Levi Yitzchok, deliberated. After a fair amount of time, they called him back in to hear the ruling.

"This is what we have decided," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "You will learn *Mishnayos* for the *neshoma* of the tailor until the thirty-day mourning period is over. Every year thereafter,

you will light a candle and say *Kaddish* for him on his *yahrzeit*. We have written down the ruling for you. Take this paper and place it on the tailor's grave."

After the tax collector traveled back to his village, he immediately went to the cemetery and placed the paper on the tailor's grave. The tailor's spirit never again appeared to him.



## הילולא

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

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

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

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

Others say that it is the custom within *Klal Yisrael* to light a *yahrzeit* candle on the day that a relative or a *Tzaddik* has passed away. The lighting has no accompanying blessing, and people would like to express themselves in a *tefillah* 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 *tefillah*. Rav Papo was the *Rav* of the city of Selestria in Bulgaria. Bulgaria was a part of the Ottoman Empire at the time. The *tefillah* of the *Pele Yo'etz* is reproduced and translated below, as a public service.

### **Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle**

[תפילה הנמצאת בספר אלף המגו מבעל הפלא יועץ על פרשׁת ויצא עמוד כ"ד]

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צדיק \_\_\_\_\_. יהי רצון שתהינה נפשותיהם נפרדות בצרור החיים.

### Translation:

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

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



# GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER



## YAHRZEITS BEGINNING SHABBOS VAYIKRA

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

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

### ⇒ 7<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Friday Night (Mar 19<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Yitzchok** of Drovitch (Drohobich). He was the father of Rav Yechiel Michel, the *Maggid* of Zlotschov. In later years, Rav Yitzchok served as the official *Maggid* or *Mochiach* (admonisher) and *Dayan* in the *Bais Din* of Brod at the time when Rav Yitzchok of Hamburg was serving as the town's *Rav*. Rav Yitzchok's name is specifically attached to Drovitch, a town that lies forty miles south of Lelov and today is a major petroleum-refining center. Like many towns in this region, the town switched nationalities periodically during its history, starting off as a Ukrainian village, before becoming part of Galicia. In the fourteenth century Drovitch became Polish, when King Kazimierz annexed Galicia to Poland; then Austria seized the town in 1772 during a partition of Poland. Poland grabbed it back for twenty years just before World War II and today it is once more under Ukrainian control – minus its Jewish population. In 1939, Drovitch had about ten thousand Poles, ten thousand Ukrainians and fifteen thousand Jews. [*Hamodia* 2006 says 1744], (5518/1758);
- \* **Rav Pinchas Zelig**, *Rav* of Lask and *mechaber* of *Ateres Paz*, (5430/1670);
- \* **Rav Arye Leib Yelin** of Bialystok, *mechaber* of *Yefeh Einayim*, (5644/1884);
- \* **Rav Arye Yehuda Leib Epstein** (*Leibush II*) of Oztrov (1852–1928), son of Rav Yechiel Chaim of Oztrov and grandson of Rav Aryeh Yehuda Leib *HaLevi* (*Leibush HaGodol*), founder of the Oztrov dynasty. In his early teens, he married Rebbetzin Draizel, who herself learned *Gemora* and personally tested their five sons. Rav Leibush succeeded his father as *Rebbe* in 1888. His most famous follower was Rav Meir Yechiel *HaLevi Halshtok* of nearby Ostrovtsa. Rav Leibush was succeeded by his oldest son, Rav Avrohom Shlomo, who in turn was followed by his son, Rav Moshe Yechiel *HaLevi Epstein* (the *Aish Dos* of Oztrov, 1890–1971). Save for its 350-year-old cemetery, nothing remains today of the town of Oztrov. [*Hamodia* says 1914], (5688/1928);
- \* **Dr. Moshe Wallach**, founder of *Shaarei Tzedek* hospital, (5717/1957).

### ⇒ 8<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Mar 20<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Eliyahu ben Binyomin Wolf Shapiro MiPrague**, the *Eliyahu Rabba* on *Shulchon Aruch*, and *Eliya Zuta* on the *Levush* to *Orach Chaim*. He was a *talmid* of the *Mogen Avrohom* in his youth, (5420–5472/1660–1712);
- \* **Rav Eliyahu HaKodosh** of York, Rabbeinu Yom Tov, and several other British *Tosafists*, who perished at Clifford's Tower, during the Crusades. This is where the *Cherem* of York, forbidding Jews from ever sleeping in the City of York overnight, started, (4950/1190);
- \* **Rav Mordechai ben Rav Dov Ber Shapira** of Neshchiz (1740–1800). Descended from the *Maharal* of Prague and Don Yitzchok Abarbanel, Rav Mordechai was a *talmid* of Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotschov. His sayings were collected in *Rishpei Eish*. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Yitzchok of Neshchiz, (5560/1800);
- Rav Yechiel Michel ben Rav Aharon Tukachinsky** (Tikochinsky), *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Eitz Chaim* in Yerushalayim (1872 [or 1874]–1955). He authored many *seforim* relating the

*halachic observance in the Land and State of Israel (including Sefer Eretz Yisrael, Sefer HaShemita, Ir HaKodesh V'HaMikdosh, and others. He authored Gesher HaChaim on the laws of mourning, [also listed under the 25<sup>th</sup> of Teves], (5715/1955).*

## ⇒ 9<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Sunday Night (Mar 21<sup>st</sup>)

- \* **Rav Yosef Yoska** (Yozfe) *ben* Rav Pinchus Han Norlingen, *mechaber* of *Yosef Ometz*, (5397/1637);
- \* **Rav Yaakov Tzvi Yalish** (Yolles) of Dinov, the *Melo HaRo'im {Malei Roim}* (1778–1825). He was born in Premeshyl, but moved in with his grandfather, the *Rav* of Mezhibuzh, after his mother passed away at an early age. He was a *Chassid* of the *Chozeh* of Lublin, and also authored *Kol Yaakov* (on *Torah* and *Nach*). Dinov is a town 175 miles SSE of Warsaw, in the Lvov district. Jews are first noted in 1552. The Dinov *Chassidic* dynasty was started by Rav Tzvi Elimelech Shapira. By 1880, the Jewish population stood at 1,241 (total 2,784). Most of the Jews left Dynów for Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Austria at the outbreak of World War I, returning four years later to find the town virtually destroyed. On September 15, 1939, an SS unit arrived and rounded up three hundred men and shot them in the forest. The Great Synagogue was burned to the ground on the same day. The rest of the Jews were expelled to Soviet-held territory. Some 200–250 survived the war, most in the Soviet Union. Rav Yaakov Tzvi served as *Rav* in Dinov, and later of two other cities, but decided to devote himself to full-time learning and left *Rabbonus*. He also authored *Bais Va'ad LaChachomim* on the history of the *Tano'im* and *Amoro'im*, *Emes Le'Yaakov* on *Torah*, *Chinuch Bais Yehuda* (named for his grandfather) on *Chanuka*, *Parshas Derochim Zuta*, and his most famous sefer, *Melo HaRo'im*, (5585/1825);
- \* **Rav Arye Leib** *ben* Rav Binyomin Benish Levin, the *Tzaddik* from Yerushalayim, *Mashgiach*, *Yeshiva Eitz Chaim* (1885–1969). Immigrated to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1905, (5729/1969);
- \* **Rav Chaim Meir Hager**, the *Imrei Chaim* (1887–1972). Son of Rav Yisrael of Vizhnitz, he became the son-in-law of Rav Zev of Rachmistrivka. In 1910, he became *Rav* of Wilhovitz. After World War II, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael* and established Kiryat Vizhnitz in Bnei Brak, where he rebuilt *Chassidus Vizhnitz* as *Rebbe* for thirty-five years, (5732/1972).

## ⇒ 10<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Monday Night (Mar 22<sup>nd</sup>)

- \* Ritual for the tenth of *Nissan*: This is the day to take control of your lamb. This *mitzva* is not considered practicable since the destruction of the *Bais HaMikdosh*. It also only applies within *Eretz Yisrael*. The *Mekubolim* do this action as least once in their lifetime.
- \* **Miriam HaNevia**, the sister of Moshe and Aharon. After she passed away, the Well of Miriam stopped giving water until Moshe again hit the rock, even though *Hashem* told him to speak to the rock, (1270 B.C.E. some say 1272 B.C.E.);
- \* **Rav Betzalel HaKohen**, *Rav* of Vilna, *mechaber* of *Mareh Kohen* and *Shu't Reishis Bikkurim*. [Note: a *sefer* by the same name was written by Rav Dov Ber Baruchoff of Congregation Beth Israel in Malden, MA; *niftar Pesach* 1939], (5638/1878) [*Hamodia* says 11<sup>th</sup> of *Nissan*];
- \* **Rav Sholom Mashash**, *Sefardi Rav* of Yerushalayim, (1909–2003). Born in the Moroccan city of Meknes, a city of *Torah* known as the Yerushalayim of Morocco, Rav Sholom learned under Rav Meir Toledano until the age of fourteen. His father then sent him to learn under the great sage Rav Yitzchok Sabag. Writing in his *sefer*, *Tevu'as Shemesh*, Rav

Sholom declares, “The fact that I was able to grow in *Torah* may be credited to my father, who did not yield to the pressures and offers that I pursue lucrative positions in banks...Thus, all the credit for my *Torah* learning is his, too.” His other main mentor was his relative from both his paternal and maternal sides, Rav Yehoshua Birdugo, the *Ra’avad* of Meknes. In 1960, with the *petira* of the chief *Rav* and *Dayan* of Casablanca, Rav Dovid *Ibn Sussan*, Rav Sholom became its *Ra’avad* and chief *Rav*, serving there for thirty years. In 1978, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael* to take the position as chief *Sephardi Rav* of Yerushalayim. He was *niftar* on *Shabbos HaGodol* 5763, (5763/2003).

## ⇒ 11<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Mar 23<sup>rd</sup>)

- \* **Rav Moshe ben Nachman**, the *Ramban*, (1194 or 95–1270), was born a scion of a renowned rabbinical family, in Gerona, Spain, where he remained most of his life. He is known as a Talmudist, *Mekubol*, *halachist*, and a commentator on holy books. Commonly spoken of as the *Ramban* (after the initials in his name), or as *Nachmanides*, he was a *talmid* of the *Ramah* (Rabbeinu Meir *HaLevi Abulafia*), and was described by the *Ari HaKodosh* as the last of the ancient Kabbalistic school, who received direct transmission of the mystical secrets that were later concealed. The *Rivash* (Rav Yitzchok *ben Sheshet Perfet*) wrote of him: “All his words are like sparks of fire, and the entire community of Castille relies upon his halachic ruling as if given directly from *Hashem* to Moshe *Rabbeinu*.” His mentors in *Kabbola* were Rav Ezra and Rav Ezriel, both of Gerona. He also studied medicine, which he practiced professionally, as well as languages and physics. The *Ramban* authored the *Milchemos Hashem* on the *Rif Alfasi* against the critique of *Ba’al HaMa’or* and *Ravad*; he also wrote a work defending the *Bahag* against the *Rambam*’s criticisms of his classification of *mitzvos*; and he wrote the famous *Iggeres HaRamban* (see below). He also penned an account of his public disputation in Barcelona with the convert Pablo Christiani in 1263. After the disputation, the *Ramban* sojourned in Castille of Provence, where he began writing his monumental *Torah* Commentary, unique in that it not only interprets the *pesukim*, but also analyzes the topics, presenting them from a *Torah* perspective. The *Ramban*’s commentary on *Chumash* is multi-dimensional, including all methods of interpretation from simple *pshat* to esoteric *Kabbola*. He held that the *mitzva* of settling *Eretz Yisrael* applies even today and in 1267, at the age of seventy-two, after a difficult journey and much suffering, he settled there himself, in Acco, a *Torah* center at that time. He gathered around him a circle of *talmidim*. The *Ramban* spent *Rosh HaShana* in Yerushalayim, which was in a deplorable condition as a result of the havoc wrought by the Crusaders. He designated a desolate house as a *shul*, and brought in a *Torah* scroll from Shechem. In this *shul*, he gave a *derasha* on the laws of *Shofar*, and exhorted the inhabitants of *Eretz Yisrael* to be exceedingly careful that their actions be righteous, for they were like servants in the king’s palace. With *Rambam*’s help, the Jewish community in Yerushalayim, which had all but ceased to exist, began its revival. He passed away in the Holy Land in 1270. Various opinions place *Ramban*’s burial site at Chevron, near the Cave of Machpela; Haifa; Acco; or Yerushalayim, (5030/1270);
- \* **Rav Yeshaya Horowitz**, *mechaber* of *Shnei Luchos HaBris (Shela HaKodosh)* (1560–1630), born in Prague, where he became chief *Rav*. In his later years, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael* and became the chief *Rav* of Yerushalayim, (5390/1630);
- \* **Rav Shlomo Zalman Lipschitz**, *Chemdas Shlomo*, (5599/1839);
- \* This date is the birthday of the seventh *Chabad Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel

Schneersohn.

## ⇒ 12<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Mar 24<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Shlomo Zalman Lifshitz**, *Rav* of Warsaw, *mechaber* of *Chemdas Shlomo* [11<sup>th</sup> of Nissan according to *Yated* 2007]. Rav Shlomo was born in Posen, which was part of Poland at the time. Posen was a *Torah* metropolis for centuries. Its *Rabbonim* included the *Maharsha*, the *Maharal* and the *Levush*. (Rav Akiva Eiger would serve Posen, beginning in 1815.) Rav Shlomo learned under the son-in-law of the *Noda bi'Yehuda*, known as Yosef *HaTzaddik*, who was the *Rav* in Posen, for twenty-five years until his passing in 1801. After being supported by his father-in-law for twenty-two years, he took up the yoke of *Rabbonus* in about 1804. He was about forty years old at the time. His first position was in Nashlask, Poland. After fifteen years in Nashlask, Rav Shlomo moved to the Warsaw neighborhood of Praga, and in 1819 he became the first chief *Rav* of Warsaw, which boasted five thousand Jewish families and was the largest and wealthiest *kehilla* in Poland. An official 1826 census found that 2,500 *talmidim* were studying in 215 *chadorim*. However, an 1827 government report estimated that 25 percent of Polish Jews had no livelihood. After serving as *Rav* of Warsaw for twenty-five years, Rav Shlomo fell ill and passed away. Rav Shlomo was survived by his son, Rav Yoel, from his first marriage. (From *Yated* 2007. Main source: *MiGedolei HaChassidus*, Rav Avrohom Yitzchok Bromberg. *Hotza'as Bais Hillel*, Jerusalem 5742), (5599/1839);
- \* **Rav Menachem Mendel** of Bar, *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, (5525/1765);
- \* **Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus**, (1944–2001). Born to Rav Avrohom Chaim and Chava Pincus in the United States, he learned at Brisk in Yerushalayim. He married Chaya Mindel, daughter of Rav Mordechai Man, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Kenesses Chizkiyahu*, and continued his studies in Bnei Brak. Then, in 1981, upon the request of the *Steipler Gaon* and Rav Shach, he moved to the Negev to start up the community at Ofakim. He was killed in a car accident along with his wife and daughter, (5761/2001).

## ⇒ 13<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Thursday Night (Mar 25<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Yosef Karo**, *mechaber* of *Bais Yosef*, *Shulchon Aruch*, *Kesef Mishne* and *Maggid Meishorim*, (1488-1575). His first major work, the *Bais Yosef*, is a comprehensive commentary on the *Tur*; it took twenty years to write. In it, he gathered the opinions and decisions of all the major authorities up until his time and cross-referenced them. He ruled between differing views on the basis of a consensus between the three preeminent *halachic* authorities, the *Rif*, the *Rambam* and the *Rosh*. The work was completed in 1542, but he continued to refine it for the next twelve years, and published a second edition. After he had completed the *Bais Yosef*, Rav Karo made a summary of his rulings in the form of an index without reference to sources and titled it *Shulchon Aruch* ("Laid Table"). It was completed in 1555 in *Eretz Yisrael*; it was first published in Venice in 1565. Eventually, the *Rema*'s gloss (called *HaMapa* – "The Tablecloth") was published together with the *Shulchon Aruch* in Cracow in 1578, and together they became the universally recognized Code of Jewish Law. The *Rambam* had published his *Mishne Torah* without references for his rulings. The *Maggid Mishne*, a commentary on *Mishne Torah* written by Rav Vidal di Toulouse, had referenced six of the fourteen sections of the work, and Rav Karo set out to complete the references, while at the same time explaining the *Rambam*'s view and defending it from the *Ra'avad*. The *Kesef Mishne*, as it was called, was published in Venice between the years

1574–76, (5335/1575);

- \* **Rav Moshe ben Chaim Alshich** (1508–1593) [others say 1522–1570]. Born in Adrianople, Turkey, *talmid* of Rav Yosef Karo in Adrianople and Rav Taitatzak in Salonica. He authored *Toras Moshe*. His *talmidim* included Rav Chaim Vital and Maharitzat (Rav Yom Tov *ben* Moshe Tzahalon). He became a member of the *Bais Din* in Tzefas and is buried in Tzefas, (5353/1593);
- \* **Rav Menachem Mendel Schneersohn**, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, third Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, was born September 9, 1789 CE (29<sup>th</sup> of *Elul*, 5549) in Liozna, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He was known as the *Tzemach Tzedek* (“Righteous Sprout” or “Righteous Scion”), after the title of a voluminous compendium of *halacha* (Jewish Law) that he authored. He assumed the leadership of Lubavitch on the eve of *Shavuos* 5591 (May 5, 1831). His close friendship with Professor J. Berstenson, the czar’s court physician, often helped the delicate negotiations relating to the welfare of the Jewish community. The *Tzemach Tzedek* set up an organization called *Chevras Techiyas HaMeisim* to assist Jewish boy-soldiers, who were being recruited and converted to Christianity by the Russian army. These soldiers, known as Cantonists, were taken away from the Jewish community to other villages. Schneersohn arranged for his *talmidim* to pay them regular visits to keep up their spirits and discourage them from converting. In 1844–45, he took steps to increase the enrollment and viability of the Lubavitch *Yeshivos* in Dubroŭna, Pasana, Lyozno and Kalisz, expanding their enrollment to around six hundred *talmidim* in total. Repeated attempts by the Russian authorities to entrap him, using informers such as Hershel Hodesh, Benjamin the Apostate and Lipman Feldman, failed. He passed away on March 17, 1866 in Lyubavichi, in the Russian Empire. Several of his sons established *Chassidic* dynasties, (5626/1866);

**Rav Yoel Moskovitz** of Shatz, great-grandson of Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov. He was betrothed at the age of thirteen to Rebbetzin Miriam, the youngest daughter of Rav Meir of Premishlan. Rav Yoel served as a *Rav* in Vornika and Solitza and, after Rav Meir’s passing in 1850, he set up his court in Shatz, a town in the Bukovina district of Moldavia, an area that straddled modern-day Romania, Ukraine and Hungary. Shatz is now called Suceava or Suczawa. Although Shatz was Moldavia’s capital between 1388 and 1565, it was a provincial backwater of the Austrian Empire by the nineteenth century. According to an 1880 census, the town had 3,750 Jews, constituting 37 percent of the town’s total population of 10,104. Today’s population of over 100,000 people includes almost no Jews.

## ❖ 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*.”

בֵּית הַקְבָּרוֹת הוּא מָקוֹם מִנוּחַת הַצָּדִיקִים וּמִתּוֹךְ כֵּן הוּא מָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ וְטַהוֹר הַתְּפִלָּה נִתְקַבֵּלה  
שֶׁמְיֻתָּר, אֲך֒ אֲלִישִׁים מִגְמָתוֹ נִגְדַּה המִתִּים, אֲך֒ יִבְקַשׁ מִהְשִׁיָּת שִׁיחַת עַלְיוֹ רְחִמִּים בְּזָכוֹת  
הַצָּדִיקִים שַׁוְעַנִי עַפְרָה, וַיְקִיפַּת הַקְבָּרוֹת, וַיְתַן צְדָקָה קָודָם שִׁיאָמֵר הַתְּחִינָה.

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 Yitzchok of Drovitch, 7<sup>th</sup> of Nissan

##### **Such a Lowly Soul Uplifted to Such Great, Dizzying Heights**

Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotschov related that when he first came before the holy *Ba'al Shem Tov*, the *Ba'al Shem* asked that he be honored and then told those present, "You should know that he is the son of Yitzchok of Drovitch. Now, let me tell you that his father was given by Heaven

such a small soul of such lowly stature, that there is almost no one in this generation who has such a small and lowly, insignificant soul. However, he uplifted this soul to staggering, dizzying heights – to the level of the holy *Tanna Rav Shimon bar Yochai!*" (*Agra Depirka* by Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dynow, *Mechaber of Bnei Yissoschor* #29)



#### Rav Mordechai Ben Rav Dov Ber Shapira of Neshchiz, 8<sup>th</sup> of Nissan

The *Rishpei Aish*

##### **Doctor Maimonides Helps Heal for Rav Mottele Neshchizer**

Rav Yitzchok of Neshchiz related about his father Rav Mordechai: One time, the *Rambam* himself appeared before my father and complained why my father did not study his *sefer*, the *Yad HaChazoka* (also known as the *Mishne Torah*). My father responded that he was very busy and preoccupied with communal matters and inundated with requests from congregants and other Jews requesting all manner of blessings and salvation. The *Rambam* then told my father that at least he should keep his *sefer* on the table at all times and he promised that if any sick person came before my father or if someone would

request his *berocha* to heal the sick, then if my father would open the *Rambam's sefer* and study it, he, the *Rambam*, would send a *refua* and heal him. And so it was that the *Rambam's sefer* was always on my father's table." (*Layeshorim Tehilla* p. 78)

Rav Mordechai of Slonim used to tell how Rav Mottele Neshchizer boasted that had he inherited his *Rebbe*, Rav Michele Zlotschover's cup and table, he would have had the power even to resurrect the dead!



Once, when Rav Mottele was in fact staying in Zlotschov, a certain young girl took ill. As she took a turn for the worse,

the doctors feared for her life and her family dispatched someone to seek the *Tzaddik*'s aid. Rav Michele Zlotschover's widow approached Rav Mottele and told him of the young bride-to-be, who was just betrothed, who now lay in her sickbed at death's door!

"Please," she beseeched the *Tzaddik*, "I have heard rumors that you said if you had my husband's cup and table you could even revive the dead; please use them to save this girl before she joins them and leaves this world!"

Rav Mottele took a knife, scraped some wood off the Zlotschover's table and mixed it with coffee in his *Rebbe*'s former cup, instructing that the girl drink the concoction.

Miraculously, she was healed!



### **The Holy Snuffbox**

The *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz inherited Rav Mottele Neshchizer's snuffbox from his holy father, the *Ahavas*

*Yisrael* of Vizhnitz. The *Imrei Chaim* used to leave it on his *shtender* and from time to time he would take from the snuff inside it. He related that the *Ahavas Yisrael* used to grasp the holy snuffbox during the recitation of *Malchiyos*, *Zichronos* and *Shoforos* on *Rosh HaShana* and would retell the following tale of how his father and their relatives fled Vizhnitz during the First World War:

"My holy father, the *Ahavas Yisrael*, had Rav Mottele Neshchizer's snuffbox in his pocket when the wicked Cossacks stopped them and accosted my family, searching them in order to steal any valuables. One of the Cossacks desired the snuffbox, but as soon as he put his soiled hands on it, he began to shake and tremble, and he quickly threw it aside as if it had burned him! My holy father picked it up and took it back. The truth is, said the *Imrei Chaim*, that it wasn't the Cossack who tossed aside the snuffbox – no, no, it was the other way around! It was the holy snuffbox that tossed *him* aside!"



## **Rav Chaim Meir Ben Yisrael Hager, 9<sup>th</sup> of Nissan**

*The Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz

### **It's Always Yom Tov or Chol HaMoed Here**

It is well known that all year long Rav Chaim Meir, the Vizhnitzer *Rebbe*, lived in a *Yom Tov* atmosphere. We know that the *Parsha* read awakens the times and the feelings, and so it was that each *Parsha* the *Rebbe* lived the *Yomim Tovim* mentioned therein. There was no *Parsha*, *Haftora* or some connection to the upcoming *Yom Tov* that he ever missed. Whether it was explicit, hinted at in some *gematria* or *roshei teivos* or *notrikon*, he would always connect his *Divrei Torah* to *Yom Tov*, and this would create a holiday atmosphere.

The space in between the *Yomim Tovim* was for the *Rebbe* like *Chol HaMoed* and as soon as one *Yom Tov* ended, the next *Yom Tov* commenced with almost no break between them. As winter began he was already preparing for *Pesach* and at the end of summer the upcoming high holidays of the *Yomim Noro'im* were already beckoning him and found their way into his every nuance and being. *Nissan* and *Tishrei* held hands and embraced as their sanctity permeated one another and spread their ethereal *kedusha* over all and this poured down and descended upon all who basked in the *Rebbe*'s light and glory.

When his son printed the third

volume of *Imrei Chaim* and gave it to the Gerrer Rebbe, the *Bais Yisrael*, telling him that it was Volume 3 on the *Moadim*, the Gerrer Rebbe remarked, “And do you mean



## Rav Yeshaya Ben Avrohom HaLevi Horowitz, 11<sup>th</sup> of Nissan

The *Shnei Luchos Habris* – *Shela HaKodosh*

### I Have Come Back for Lack of Mussar

Rav Yosef Shmuel, *mechaber* of the *Mesores HaShas* and *Av Bais Din* of Frankfurt DeMain, had a group of *talmidim*, *Talmidei Chachomim*, whose custom was to each study a topic privately until they had delved into its depths. In the evening they gathered together with their *Rebbe* at their head and he would teach the topic, answer their questions, draw conclusions and remove any doubts. They studied together in this manner until they had completed the entire *Shas* – the whole *Talmud*. You can only imagine to what depths they delved, studying *Shas*. The *Chida* also testified that Rav Yosef Shmuel studied the entire *Shas* some forty-two times, and that for some twenty-five years he studied *Torah* while standing on his two feet and that he learned *lishma*!

After Rav Yosef Shmuel passed away and was buried, an awesome and frightening incident took place. As the *chabura* of students came together to study, they all saw their *Rebbe* and teacher, Rav Yosef Shmuel, standing there at his spot where he had always stood during his life. They were all frightened by this specter, but Rav Yosef Shmuel calmed them and explained his return:

“Do not be afraid or alarmed. I will soon return to my place in the afterlife, but I have returned to tell you what happened to me. After I departed, I came before the heavenly court and immediately the *Bais Din Shel Maala* ruled that I deserved Gan Eden and appointed me a spot to be beside the *Tzaddik*, the holy Rav Yeshaya HaLevi Horowitz, *mechaber* of the *Shela*

to tell me that the other two volumes are not about the *Moadim*?” (*Meir HaChaim* II p. 154)



*HaKodosh*. However, the *Shela HaKodosh* intervened and protested, saying, ‘I oppose this new neighbor, because I authored the *sefer Shnei Luchos HaBris* full of *mussar* and *Yiras Hashem*. It teaches Bnei Yisrael to serve *Hashem*, and I cried many tears over my *sefer* as I composed it, but the *Gaon*, Rav Yosef Shmuel, although he taught the entire *Shas*, did not engage in *mussar* and did not rebuke his *talmidim*.’

“The *Bais Din* heard the *Shela*’s arguments and ruled that although they were justified they could not overrule and remove me from my proper place. They therefore sent me back down to you to rectify my shortcomings in lack of teaching *mussar* and so I am here, concluded Rav Yosef Shmuel, to admonish and encourage you all to study *mussar*. From now on study *mussar* daily before your learning.”

The *chabura* all agreed and accepted his words and his soul departed and was not seen again. (Introduction to *Be'er Yitzchok* on the *Torah*)



### The Tosasfos From Heaven for the Bearer of Rabbeinu Tam's Soul

The *Chida* writes: I heard from Rav Hirsch of Balchov that when the Rebbe Reb Heschel of Cracow traveled to Vilna, fleeing the Cossacks and Chmielniczki during the riots of *Tach* and *Tat*, and he arrived before the *Av Bais Din*, Rav Sheptil Horowitz, *mechaber* of *Vovei HoAmudim* and son of the *Shela HaKodosh*, he did not recognize the Rebbe Reb Heschel or respect his greatness.

The Rebbe Reb Heschel then asked

the son of the *Shela* to explain a *Tosafos* and he said he would study it but could not understand the *Tosafos* at all. He fasted and cried and then his own father, the *mechaber* of the *Shela HaKodosh* himself, appeared to him in a dream. His father explained to him the meaning and explanation of the *Tosafos*. He also admonished and warned him to honor the great Rebbe Reb Heschel for he had the soul of Rabbeinu Tam. Reb Sheptil awoke and immediately sent for the Rebbe Reb Heschel and honored him, explaining the *Tosafos* to him. The Rebbe Reb Heschel exclaimed and remarked in public, “The only way you got this explanation was a revelation from Heaven!” (*Maagal Tov*)



### **The Holy Siddur HaShela**

On *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* the *Yeshuos Moshe* of Vizhnitz davened from the *Shela HaKodosh siddur* that he inherited from the *Tzemach Tzaddik*. He



## **Rav Menachem Mendel of Bar, 12<sup>th</sup> of Nissan**

*Talmid of the Ba'al Shem Tov*

### **Bitochon to Quench Thirst**

Rav Pinchas of Koritz told: Once, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* was traveling together with Rav Menachem Mendel of Bar, when Rav Menachem Mendel grew very thirsty and the *Ba'al Shem* promised him that if he had true *bitochon* and trusted in *Hashem*, then *Hashem* would send him water to drink.

No sooner said than done, and a non-Jew appeared suddenly before them, searching for his lost horses. “I have been searching for my horses now for some three days. Have you seen any trace of them?” The *Ba'al Shem* and Rav Menachem Mendel replied that they had not and asked for some water, which the non-Jew supplied.

Afterward, Rav Menachem Mendel

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

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



### **Bothersome Thoughts**

Rav Mendel of Bar once related, “In my youth, I once grew excited in the midst of my *davening* and thought to myself, ‘How dare you pray before *Hashem*, since you are so full of sin, besmirched with misdeeds and evil?’ This thought simply

shattered my heart and broke me. Afterward, though, I simply could not rid myself of this negative thought, which I had fooled myself into thinking was positive. I rid myself of the delusion when I consoled myself in the following way: ‘Why do I never have these thoughts when I sit myself down to eat a good meal?’ [Thinking, how

dare I eat a good meal before *Hashem* since I am so besmirched and blackened by sin? Why does my heart not break when I am about to eat?] In this way, I pushed these thoughts away and was rid of them.” (*Shivchei HaBa’al Shem Tov HaSholem* #103)



## Rav Shimshon Dovid Ben Chaim Avrohom Pincus, 12<sup>th</sup> of Nissan

### Why?

There was once a terrible boating accident and a young man was killed. His non-observant mother, devastated, found herself in *shul* for the first time in her life and confronted Rav Pincus with the age-old question: Why? “Why did *Hashem* do this to me?!”

Rav Pincus did not bat an eyelid and responded on the spot, “For eighteen years you had and loved this young child. In all of that time, did you ever just once thank *Hashem* for that gift?” Knowing that the

answer was no, he continued, “If you had done so perhaps he wouldn’t have been taken from you...My purpose is not to cause you more pain,” explained Rav Pincus. “My purpose is to make you realize that you still have other children and a good life left. You have much to be thankful for – thank *Hashem* for what you have and appreciate it. Start asking yourself – why, why did *Hashem* bless me with all these gifts? – and thank Him while you have them and it’s not too late.” (*Haggoda Tiferes Shimshon* p. 353)



## Rav Moshe Ben Chaim Alshich of Tzefas, 13<sup>th</sup> of Nissan

### A Soul for *Peshat* and Not *Sod*

Rav Moshe Alshich greatly desired to study the secrets of *Kabbola*, especially since word of the *Arizal*’s teachings began to spread. He was distressed that others had been chosen while he was neglected and tearfully he came begging before the *Arizal*, kissed the hem of his clothing and fell before his feet, kissing them, and wept, “Master, what sin have I committed? Of what crime am I guilty that you do not draw me close as a *talmid* like Rav Chaim Vital and Rav Yitzchok Falcon?”

The *Arizal* answered him that his soul had not come down into this world to study *Kabbola* and the secrets of *Torah*; rather, he was to master and disseminate the simpler, revealed form of *Torah* called

*peshat*, because in a previous *gilgul* (incarnation) his soul had already mastered *Kabbola*, for he was a spark of the soul of *Chutzpis* the *Meturgemon* (translator). “If you think I am just making excuses to put you off,” said the *Arizal*, “I shall give you a sign that will prove my words true: tomorrow, as I pass by on the road with my *talmidim* to go and greet *Shabbos* and accept the *Shabbos* day – if you see us passing by, it is a sign that I have been putting you off with excuses. If, however, you fail to see us pass you by on the road, it is a sign that I am telling you the truth.”

And so it was that Rav Moshe Alshich prepared himself, purchased provisions for *Shabbos*, dressed in *Shabbos* clothes and sat all ready and prepared by

midday at the roadside waiting eagerly for the *Arizal* and his students to pass by. Finally, after waiting some time, a great, overwhelming tiredness passed over Rav Moshe and he fell asleep. He slumbered on as the *Arizal* passed by with his *talmidim* and did not wake and did not see them. After they had passed him, the *Arizal* sent back some students to wake him so that he would not be left at the roadside alone and in danger. When he awoke he was startled, confused and upset at having somehow missed the *Arizal* when he had passed right by!

"Didn't I tell you," admonished the *Arizal*, "that your soul has not come to the world this time to study *Kabbola*? Do not burden yourself with this matter any longer! Instead work on your *seforim* to teach *peshat* and they will become famous worldwide and generations afterward will study them." From then on the *Alshich* did not seek to study *Kabbola* with the *Arizal* any more. (*Shivchei HaArizal*)

Similarly, the *Chida* writes in *Shem HaGedolim* #101 that when the *Arizal* refused to teach the *Alshich Kabbola* the *Alshich* complained and the *Arizal* responded that Rav Moshe Alshich's soul in its present *gilgul* came to perfect the aspect of *derush* and not *sod* – sermons and not secrets.



### **A True Cheat and Swindler Agrees to the Alshich's Derosha**

The *Minchas Elozor* of Munkacsz told the following story:



### **Rav Menachem Mendel Ben Sholom Shachna Schneersohn of Chabad-Lubavitch, 13<sup>th</sup> of Nissan**

*Mechaber of Tzemach Tzedek*

#### **Where is Zeidy?**

When the *Tzemach Tzedek* was a

The *Arizal* testified that he witnessed the entire heavenly host – the *pamalya shel maala* – all go together to hear the *deroshos* of Rav Moshe Alshich and therefore he also went to hear his holy words when he sat and sermonized in public.

One time, the *Arizal* was present when Rav Moshe Alshich was giving a *derosha* about Lovon *HaArami* and how he swindled, tricked and hoodwinked Yaakov. The *pasuk* says he cheated Yaakov *aseres monim* and this, explained the *Alshich*, meant ten times ten, or a hundred times over! He then proceeded to explain and detail each of the hundred ways in which Lovon cheated Yaakov this way and that. The audience sat mesmerized and transfixed, enjoying the *derosha* and how the *Alshich* enumerated again and again the tricks that Lovon had employed against Yaakov one hundred different ways. During this *derosha*, the *Arizal* laughed and left.

Afterward, they asked the *Arizal* why he had laughed. The *Arizal* explained that he actually saw Lovon *HaArami* standing beside the *Alshich* as he spoke and gave his *derosha*. "With each explanation of the hundred deceptions, Lovon nodded his head, agreeing with the *Alshich* saying, 'Yup, that's it...that's true...that's exactly how I did it and tricked Yaakov and cheated him that time. Yes, and that's the other way I cheated him again...uh huh...' That's what made me laugh," explained the *Arizal*. (*Masaos Yerushalayim* Day 9 Footnote 17 page 190)

young child, his grandfather, Rav Shneur Zalman, the *Alter Rebbe* of *Chabad*, once

held the young lad in his arms and the child stroked his grandfather's beard, saying, "Zeidy! Zeidy!"

"No," said the *Alter Rebbe*, "that's just Zeidy's beard. Where is Zeidy?"

The child pointed to his grandfather's head, and said, "At du iz Zeidy! – Here is Grandfather!"

"No, that is just Zeidy's head – but where is Zeidy?"

The child pointed to various places but each time received the same answer. Eventually, he jumped off his grandfather's lap and went to play. He then pretended he hurt himself and cried out, "Zeidy, Zeidy!"

"What is it?" came the *Alter Rebbe*, all concerned.

The *Tzemach Tzedek* smiled and pointed to him, "At dos iz der Zeidy! – Now this is the Zeidy for sure."

Rav Rafoel Nachman Kahn concluded this story and added, "When someone answers to his name being called, that is his essence – that is who he is." (*Shemuos Vesippurim* Vol. 1 p. 53)



### **Hashgocha Protis**

Once, when the *Tzemach Tzedek*



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

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

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

was in Petersburg for some matter, a Jew, a stranger, did him a favor. Some time later this Jew came before the *Rebbe*, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, and explained that it was he who had done him the favor.

"And what favor can I do for you in return?" asked the *Rebbe*.

"Please explain *hashgocha protis* to me."

And so the *Tzemach Tzedek* explained in detail the whole concept, yet the Jew still did not understand.

"Come, I will show you." The *Tzemach Tzedek* took him and they approached the window together. "See that village and the wagon full of bales of hay in the distance, driven by a non-Jewish wagon driver? Now see behind them there is a Jew holding a small toothpick, using the fallen hay to pick his teeth? This Jew had something stuck in his teeth and he couldn't *daven*. He is one of the *lamed-vov Tzaddikim*. In *shomayim* they await his *davening* but he couldn't *daven* because of his teeth. Now that village, the wagon driver, his wagon and the hay were all created so this *Tzaddik* can pick his teeth and *daven*. That is *hashgocha protis*.

"Now I understand," concluded the Jew. (*Shemuos Vesippurim* Vol. 1 p.54–55)

# Zera

## Shimshon



## Vayikra

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

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

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

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

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

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

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

לכדר נשמה

רביינו שמשון חיימן כרבנן מיכאל יצ”ל

בעל הורע שמשון זי”א

ויה”ר שיתקיים בנו ברכתיו של אוטו צדיק

לזכר נשמה

יעקב יצחק בן שושנה אסתר

לרפואה שלימה

רוני דינה בת סמי

דוד בנו שירה

ליוג'ה גנון בנהורה

אלישיב נעם בת רחל

להצלחה

היא”ר נהם צבי ברודל ומשבחתו

ויקרא אל משה (א' א')

And Hashem called Moshe (1:1)

The Medrash (Rabba 1:15) says any Talmid Chacham that does not possess wisdom and understanding is less significant than a dead animal. This is seen by the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu, who was the master of all prophets and the father of all the wise people, and even he did not enter the Mishkan until Hashem called him.

The Zera Shimshon asks a number of questions on this Medrash.

1) How can it be that a dead animal can be superior to a human being? All the more so, better than a Talmid Chacham?

2) As well, how is this concept seen from the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu did not enter the Mishkan without being called?

3) Also, how indeed is it possible that a Talmid Chacham does not possess wisdom?

The Zera Shimshon explains this Medrash as follows.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 92b) says that it is forbidden to have mercy on anyone that does not possess wisdom.

The Maharsha explains this Gemara to mean that a person ‘who does not possess wisdom’ means someone who thinks that he can survive on his own wisdom and does not need to pray for Hashem’s assistance. This is why it is forbidden to have mercy on such a person. Of course, we must have mercy on everyone, especially on someone who is lacking in any way. However, a person who lives, thinking that he is charge and he does not have to come on to Hashem – he lacks wisdom by his own choice and that is why the Gemara says one may not have mercy on him.

For a Talmid Chacham who undoubtedly knows that everything is under Hashem’s control, the reason why he would lack wisdom, which the Maharsha explains to mean - he does not pray to Hashem for assistance, is because he relies on his own merits and does not feel that he has to pray for what he needs. Therefore, when the Gemara speaks about a Talmid Chacham who does not have wisdom, it does not literally mean that he does not possess actual wisdom, as explained above.

It is for this reason that the Gemara says that a dead animal is better than a Talmid Chacham without wisdom.

This is based on the explanation of the Iyun Yaakov Gemara (Shabbos 108a) that in reality a dead animal should be allowed to be eaten, however, Hashem forbade it in the Torah so that it can be given to the dogs as a reward for the fact that they heeded Hashem’s command not to bark when the Jewish people left Egypt.

Thus, a dead animal shows how Hashem takes care of all his creations, since carcasses are fed to the dogs for the above-mentioned reason. Therefore, the carcass of the dead animal is better than a Talmid Chacham who does not show that he needs to come on to Hashem Who takes care of all of His creations.

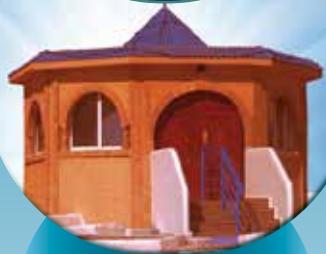
Moshe Rabbeinu is a proof to this as well, since he did not rely on his many merits to enter the Mishkan, rather he waited until he was called by Hashem. This shows that no matter how great of a tzaddik a person is, he should not rely on his merits – the opposite of the Talmid Chacham that does not possess ‘wisdom’, and relies on his merits and doesn’t pray for his needs.

לעילוי נשמת דוד בן תמר

# Vayikra

March 20<sup>th</sup> 2021  
7<sup>th</sup> of Nisan 5781

895



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## Hilula

- 7 – Rabbi Chaim Abulafia, Av Beit Din of Teveria
- 8 – Rabbi Eliyahu Shapira, the 'Elyah Raba'
- 9 – Rabbi Aryeh Levin
- 10 – Rabbi Shalom Mashash, Av Beit Din of Yerushalayim
- 10 – Miriam the Prophetess a"h
- 11 – Rabbi Moshe son of Rabbi Nachman, the Ramban
- 12 – Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Ziditchov
- 13 – Rabbeinu Yosef Karo
- 14 – Rabbi Yosef Tzvi HaLevi Dunner, Av Beit Din of London

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

# Pachad David

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

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

**MASKIL LEDAVID**

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



## Hashem's Love of Moshe

**"He called to Moshe, and Hashem spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying"** (Vayikra 1:1)

Rashi writes: "From the Tent of Meeting" (the Tabernacle). This teaches that the voice stopped and could not be heard outside the Tent of Meeting. "Saying": Go and tell them 'divrei kivushin', words of reproach, 'for your benefit He is speaking to me', as we find that the entire thirty-eight years that Bnei Yisrael wandered around in the Wilderness... Moshe did not receive any prophecy from Hashem."

We can ask why Hashem spoke to Moshe Rabbeinu a"h from the Tabernacle and not straight into his own tent?

There is an additional point that requires clarification: In the commentary of the holy Rabbeinu Yoel of Satmar zt"l, he quotes the above Rashi and brings the following observation. We find in Chazal (Ta'anit 16a) that 'words of kivushin' refers to words that capture the hearts of the people, causing them to repent and return to the correct path, while seemingly here, Moshe Rabbeinu's words were one's of praise, telling them that Hashem was talking to him for their benefit?

He also writes that the following Yalkut Shimoni is difficult to understand: "Moshe might have thought that Hashem was speaking to him for his own benefit, so the verse says 'saying', which implies that Hashem spoke to him for Yisrael's benefit and not for his own benefit. Another explanation: Moshe might have thought that Hashem was speaking to him only for the benefit of the people, so the verse says 'saying', implying that Hashem spoke to him for his own benefit." There is an essential difference as to why Hashem spoke to Moshe, was it for his own benefit or for the benefit of the people?

This can be explained by first introducing a different concept. Moshe's exceptional greatness as the Father of all prophets, "the man of G-d" as the Torah calls him, is well-known. He was the one who instilled in us that words of Torah are only sustained by those who have a humble spirit. Every person must feel like "When a man brings an offering from among you", meaning that he must consider himself as the offering. He must nullify and subdue himself just like the animal that stretches out its neck for slaughter.

This must be the intention of those who study and toil in Torah. One must wish to become knowledgeable and understand the will of Hashem and not, G-d forbid, use the Torah for one's own glory. Rather, one should approach the Torah with humility and submission. Moshe Rabbeinu a"h instilled in us this important outlook. He personified toiling in Torah without considering himself as anything special. He was the humblest of all men, as the Torah testifies (Bamidbar 12:3), "Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth!".

This attribute of humility, the crown of all worthy and noble middot, finds expression in the beginning of Parshat Vayikra, with the letter 'alef' that is written smaller than the other letters. When young children first begin to learn the Holy Torah, they are taught sefer Vayikra. Moshe Rabbeinu himself felt that he is only beginning to study Torah like a young child since the words of the Torah were so precious in his eyes, to the extent that even the small 'alef', the first letter young children are taught to read, was so dear to him. This is the meaning of 'אֱלֹהִים', which can be re-arranged to spell 'הָאֱלֹהִים', they should cherish the 'alef'.

That is the reason why young children begin with Parshat Vayikra, so that the words of Torah should be precious in their eyes just as they were precious to Moshe, the leader of Bnei Yisrael.

We can see the extent of Moshe's humility from the fact that even just before his death when Moshe bequeathed his spiritual legacy to Bnei Yisrael, he implored Hashem saying (Devarim 3:24), "You have begun to show Your servant". Meaning at the age of one hundred and twenty, after forty years of being in Hashem's Presence, seeing what no other human being ever saw, ascending to Heaven and surviving without food and drink, solely engaged in Torah, he nevertheless felt that he is only now beginning to understand the words of Hashem. This was Moshe Rabbeinu's level of humility, he considered himself like a small 'alef'.

Now we have an answer to the question we asked above. We have a tradition from our Rabbis that "A person is led on the path he wishes to take" (Makot 10b). Therefore, seeing His servant Moshe's attribute of humility, Hashem told him, out of his affection for him, that He was only revealing Himself to him for the benefit of Bnei Yisrael, while Hashem in fact considered it as speaking to Moshe for his own benefit, for he was equal to all Bnei Yisrael. While it is correct that Moshe considered the revelation as being on account of the importance of Bnei Yisrael, Hashem actually spoke to Moshe due to his worthiness and His love of him.

This explains why Hashem's voice had to go through the Tabernacle, for the Tabernacle of Testimony and the Tent of Meeting hints to Am Yisrael, since this is what their lives revolved around. Speaking to Moshe from the Tabernacle showed that it was for the benefit of Bnei Yisrael. Even that which was for his own benefit, Moshe Rabbeinu considered as for the benefit of the people.

Since Moshe Rabbeinu understood that Hashem spoke to him for the benefit of Bnei Yisrael, he recognized that it could only happen if Bnei Yisrael were worthy. Therefore, Hashem advised him to tell them words of reproach. Meaning that he should tell them to constantly be in a state of prayer and repentance so that in their merit and for their benefit Hashem will continue speaking to him.

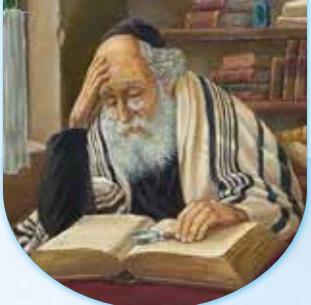
This idea reconciles the term 'words of kivushin', which the Satmar Rebbe zt"l questioned is generally understood as words that capture the hearts of the people causing them to repent, while seemingly here his words were one's of praise, telling them that Hashem was talking to him for their benefit. However, the two implications are intertwined. Moshe Rabbeinu, the faithful shepherd, begs Bnei Yisrael: Hashem only speaks to me in your merit, it is not for my own benefit. Therefore, continue following in the path of Hashem and subdue yourselves before Him. Then, in this merit, Hashem will speak to me for your benefit.

What follows from this discussion is that man must love Hashem wholeheartedly, without limit. He should constantly examine and calculate his steps to see if he is doing enough to reach this goal. This is the meaning of the words "He called to Moshe... from the Tent of Meeting". Hashem, in His great kindness, calls upon every Jewish soul to form a connection with and cleave to the Tent of Meeting. Through this, his love for Hashem will be as firm as a peg and will not falter.



## Walking in their Ways

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



### A Picture for Posterity

Rabbi David Elbaz, shlita, is the principal of the Jewish school in Paris. He related that once, while straightening up his office, he decided to throw out old binders which were dusty and no longer had any use.

Suddenly, from one of these binders, a photograph slipped out. It was a picture of a student who had learned in his institution years ago. Rabbi Elbaz picked up the picture and placed it on his desk. Whenever he came across it, he would give it a quick glance, remembering his dear disciple.

After two days, his phone rang shrilly. The voice on the other end asked if Rabbi Elbaz remembered this student whose photograph sat before his eyes. Rabbi Elbaz was stunned at the "coincidence". He replied that for the past two days, this student's picture had sat on his desk. The voice on the other end had some bad tidings. A short time before, this boy had been killed in a serious car accident, rachmana litzlan.

Rabbi Elbaz was shaken by the news. He was filled with dread and came to me to ask if there was some sort of Heavenly message for him in the fact that he had found the photograph two days before the boy died.

I calmed him down, assuring him he had nothing to be afraid of. His finding the picture was only a sign that his pupil's passing was imminent.

This incident should teach us all a life lesson. We are all living on a temporary visa, here today and gone tomorrow. Therefore, it would be wise to prepare food for the long journey ahead. This is Torah and mitzvot, the only fare which sustains a person in the World to Come.

Since the sign was sent specifically to the school office, I instructed Rabbi Elbaz to arrange an assembly to inspire the members of the school. He should share his story of the picture with everyone gathered. This would give them pause for thought about the end of all men. They would certainly be aroused to entertain thoughts of teshuvah, which would be to the merit of the pure soul of this young man.

### The Haftarah

**"This people which I fashioned for Myself"** (Yeshaya 43)

The connection to the Parsha: In the Haftarah, Israel is accused of not bringing the offerings to Hashem, while the Parsha speaks about the laws concerning the service of the offerings.

### Guard Your Tongue

#### It Will Be Impossible to Repent Completely

The main prohibition of lashon hara is "You shall not be a gossipmonger among your people". However, the Chafetz Chaim enumerates the large number of positive and negative commandments that a person transgresses if he is not careful about the prohibition of lashon hara and rechilut. A 'ba'al lashon hara', referring to one who habitually speaks lashon hara, can easily amass a considerable number of sins, more than is possible when committing any other prohibition. That is why Chazal say, "For three transgressions a person is punished in This World and receives no portion in The World to Come: idolatry, illicit relations and murder, and lashon hara is equal to and above them all".

Furthermore, it is not possible for a ba'al lashon hara to appease and ask forgiveness from all those who were hurt by all the lashon hara he spoke. He cannot repent fully for his sins because it will be hard for him to remember all those who were hurt and even if he remembers, he will not be able to reach them all, including future generations who were harmed. Therefore, he will not achieve forgiveness

### In Our Father's Path

for us to spark the momentum, to allow it to lead us to fulfil our true desire: To give pleasure to our Creator!

Sefer Vayikra begins with the law of a Jew who sins unintentionally. In order to refine and purify himself, he is required to bring an animal offering for atonement. He purchases a healthy bull and goes to Yerushalayim, to the Beit Hamikdash, to offer his sacrifice. But for his offering to be accepted willingly, there is an important and critical condition: The offering must be brought with desire, with a sincere desire to atone for his sin, repent and draw closer to the Creator.

But what if a person does not understand the importance of the matter and does not want to bring his offering? If he brings his offering without true will and desire, it seemingly will not afford him the intended benefit? Chazal come and reconcile this problem: We are told to force him until he says he wants to offer; we force him to want!

Inside the heart of every Jew, points out HaRav Kovalesky, shlita in 'Peninei Parshat Hashavua', burns a constant, powerful flame of desire, the aspiration and desire to do good, fulfil the will of his Creator and give Him pleasure. Every Jew, in every situation and every place, possesses this spark. His past or future does not make a difference. This spark will continue to burn inside him. It must only be set alight, the spark must be kindled, giving life to the glowing coal and enabling it to transform into a flaming fire that guides his actions. The more we are aware of this latent desire, the more we internalize that it beats in our hearts, the easier it will be

Once, towards the end of Adar, the Rabbanim of our Yeshiva approached the Admor, HaRav Sholom Ber of Lubavitch zt"l, to ask his advice about a certain bachur who had recently joined the Yeshiva. His conduct and way of speech were worldly and far from the Yeshiva way of life. "He is completely detached from the spiritual life of the Yeshiva, totally immersed in This World, in repulsive materialism. How can we help him?" They wished to know.

"During the day, he should attend all the study sessions," instructed the Rebbe and then added a surprising order: "After that, every evening on completing his learning, he should set aside some time to work hard at cleaning for Pesach. He should exert himself, polish, scour and scrub. The physical effort expended in Pesach cleaning possesses a segulah to cleanse the body from the materialism that governs it and bestow quality, spiritual life!"

The Rabbanim were surprised but they did as the Rebbe instructed. They were astounded to see the great change that took place in the bachur's heart. Indeed, the physical exertion cleansed his soul from the materialism in which it was enveloped, and lent him a spiritual aura and true aspirations, to the extent that he later became one of the acclaimed personalities among the Lubavitcher chassidim.

It transpires that the cleaning for Pesach, the intensive physical labor, the hours of rigorous work over several weeks, creates a deep turnaround in the soul. As the holy Rabbi Pinchas of Koritz zt"l revealed to us, the cleaning and scrubbing on Erev Pesach of the entire house, the re-organizing, getting rid of garbage and junk, is what leads to a cleansing and renewal of the soul.

Let us search out and pursue every opportunity of expending effort to clean and scrub because not we are not only cleaning the dirt on the floors, but we are renewing our souls, cleansing ourselves and allowing ourselves to connect to the elevated moments of general renewal that the festival of Pesach affords!



## Pearls of the Parsha

### Treasures

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



#### The Shofar Was Left as an Eternal Remembrance

"And the Kohen shall cause it all to go up in smoke on the Altar" (Vayikra 1:9)

"It all": Including the horns and the hooves" (Torat Kohanim).

Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar zya"a, the Holy Ohr HaChaim asks:

Why, when Avraham Avinu offered up the ram as a burnt offering, did he leave the horns to serve as Shofrot (see Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer Ch. 31) and did not offer them up on the Altar?

The Ohr HaChaim offers several explanations:

It could be that in fact, he did place everything on the altar, but the heat caused the horns to fly off the altar and as the Mishna says (Zevachim 86a) says, "Whatever flies off the altar should not be returned".

Another explanation could be that since the Torah had not yet been given, whoever observed the Torah [as Chazal tell us (Yoma 28b)], Avraham Avinu fulfilled the entire Torah], observed it of their own free will and did so whenever there was no reason to act differently. But, when there was a G-dly revelation not to observe a Torah command, they were permitted to act in that way, for example, the marriage of Tamar and Yehuda, or Ya'akov marrying two sisters.

In this case too, the horns of the ram were kept as a remembrance by Avraham Avinu due to a prophetic vision (Midrash Bereishit Rabba 56:9) and that is why he did not burn them on the altar.

#### There Are Commandments and There Are Commandments

"When a ruler sins, and commits one from among all the commandments of Hashem his G-d that may not be done, unintentionally, and becomes guilty" (Vayikra 4:22)

The words "and commits one from among all the commandments of Hashem his G-d that may not be done" seem redundant, for if a ruler sins, he is certainly transgressing a forbidden act?

The Divrei Yoel of Satmar asks this question and adds another puzzling aspect. Why does the Torah call the sin a 'commandment'?

The Divrei Yoel answers by explaining an important principle in Avodat Hashem. The Yetzer Hara does not approach man and openly seduce him to sin, rather he blinds his eyes and persuades him that the act he is about to commit is a mitzvah, a 'commandment', although really it is a great sin. When faced with a Jewish ruler, the Yetzer Hara will certainly not persuade him to sin in an outright manner, but will indirectly blind him and make him think that the sin is a mitzvah.

This, then, is the explanation of "and commits one from among all the commandments of Hashem", meaning that he makes a mistake and thinks that he is doing a mitzvah, but the truth is "that may not be done", it is forbidden to perform this kind of commandment because in fact it is a sin.

On these lines, the darshanim add in jest:

A Jew once mistakenly entered a reform Temple and noticed a sign hanging on the eastern wall stating "וְתַלְמֹד תּוֹרָה כִּנְגָד כְּלָמָד", "And the study of Torah is equivalent to them all". He immediately asked, "Since when is Torah study important to you? And what a proclamation!"

This was their ready answer: "We read the sign from left to right, as the English language is read, so it reads, "כְּלָמָד כִּנְגָד תּוֹרָה וְתַלְמֹד", "All are against Torah and Talmud".

#### The Soul Sins

"Speak to the Children of Israel, saying: When a soul will sin" (Vayikra 4:2)

"There are ten things that serve the soul" (man's main source of vitality), says the Midrash. "The esophagus for food, the windpipe for sound, the liver for warmth, the lungs for drink, the intestines for grinding (the food), the spleen for laughter, the stomach for sleep, the gall-bladder for jealousy, the kidneys for thoughts, the heart to conclude (the thought within the deed) and the soul is above them all. Hashem said to the soul, 'I made you more distinguished than them all and you go and steal and rob and sin? As it says, 'When a soul will sin'.

#### Hashem Called Moshe Using an Expression of Closeness

There are many stories concerning our Gedolim who experienced revelations from the Upper Worlds.

It is related about the esteemed Maran Rabbeinu Chaim Pinto zya"a, that once during the Mussaf prayer he merited this experience of 'aliyat neshama'. Similarly, the Ba'al Shem Tov zt"l, while washing his hands for the third Shabbat meal, understood that the holy 'Ohr HaChaim' had passed away at that moment. He became aware of this through an 'aliyat neshama'.

Therefore, if a person sanctifies himself and conquers his inclination, elevating himself in Torah and yirat shamayim, he is considered greater than the angels. The angels stand ready to serve their Creator at all times and are prepared to fulfil any mission they are asked to carry out, while man who lives in This World, even though he has temptations and desires, for example, lashon hara, immorality, pride and honor, yet despite all this, he is ready to shout and declare "We will do and we will obey" and only seeks the closeness of Hashem without paying attention to the persuasions of the Yetzer Hara, will certainly achieve a higher level than angels. About him it says (Tehillim 103:20), "the strong warriors who do His bidding". He is called a strong warrior because he conquers his Yetzer Hara. This is the reason why the Midrash compares Am Yisrael to the level of angels who conquered their inclination and declared "We will do and we will obey".

This could be the meaning of the verse "He called to Moshe". Why does it not say 'He said' or 'He spoke'? "He called" is an expression that the verse uses for the angels, as it says, "And one [angel] will call another and say" and "will call" is an expression of closeness. The word 'נֶאֱגָד', 'will call', adding an extra one for the word itself, has the same numerical value as 'קָרְבָּן', which can be re-arranged to spell 'קָרְבָּן', close, implying that just as the angels have a close connection to Hashem, so Hashem used the same expression of closeness to call Moshe Rabbeinu because He loves him and calls him by his name. Moshe Rabbeinu's great closeness to Hashem stemmed from his many mitzvot and good deeds.

Therefore, the Midrash says "Bless Hashem, O His angels", this refers to Moshe and Aharon whose closeness to Hashem was above the norm. Closeness to Hashem was the only thing that mattered to them in This World. This was their singular desire and toil in This World. Therefore, when Moshe Rabbeinu wished to sanctify and purify himself, he left his wife since he did not want to have any form of connection to the material world. All he sought was a closeness to Hashem, as it says (Tehillim 73:28), "But for me, G-d's nearness is my good".



# A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

## Save the Tension

When Should Kimcha D'Pischa be Given to Benefit the Needy?

The laws of Pesach begin with the following introductory halacha: "Thirty days before Pesach, one begins studying the laws of Pesach." The Rema writes, "And it is customary to buy wheat to distribute to the poor for their Pesach needs". The Chafetz Chaim zt"l, in 'Sha'ar Hatzion', asks in the name of the 'Beit David': This is a specific law brought by the Talmud Yerushalmi (Baba Batra 1:4) so why does the Rema define it only as a custom?

Several commentaries answer that the Rema indeed lays it down as a custom. For according to the Yerushalmi, it is enough to donate money for Kimcha D'Pischa on Erev Pesach itself or close to the festival, while the Rema brings it adjacent to the halacha about studying the laws of Pesach thirty days before the festival and writes "And it is customary...". The 'and' implies that the custom to buy wheat for distribution should also be observed already from Purim (which is thirty days before Pesach).

To illustrate the reason for this custom, HaRav Aharon Toisig shlita relates a most telling story (Korban L'Torah on Haggadah Shel Pesach):

A certain talmid served as a voluntary driver for the Posek, HaGaon Rabbi Moshe Feinstein zt"l, who as we know, considered every minute precious and calculated his time precisely. This talmid told over the following story in which he was involved.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein zt"l once participated in an important meeting with his contemporaries, the leaders of American Jewry, the Gaonim Rabbi Aharon Kotler zt"l and Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l. They discussed pertinent topics, made appropriate decisions, and then at ten o'clock Rabbi Moshe asked for permission to leave. He entered his car and asked his driver to take him to a certain hall where a wedding was taking place.

"A wedding of a talmid?" the driver asked in interest. "No", Rabbi Moshe replied.

"A relative?"

"Would it be a relative, my Rabbanit would also participate."

The driver probed no further.

They arrived at the wedding hall and the driver parked the car. He then accompanied the distinguished Posek to the hall. What excitement his entry caused! The mechutan welcomed him with great honor and Rabbi

Moshe showered him with blessings. "I am from the Kallah's side," Rabbi Moshe introduced himself, "a relative who is personally acquainted with her. You merited a treasure, appreciate it!" The driver listened to the exchange and was astounded.

The mechutan too was surprised: "We had no idea that the Rav is a close family member. We would have invited the Rav to the chuppah!" Rabbi Moshe replied, "I would have come with pleasure, but I was involved in an important meeting concerning public affairs. I left before the end and hurried here!"

Rabbi Moshe was led to the top table and unlike his custom, he stayed for a considerable amount of time. A long line formed to wish the 'family member' mazal tov. Each of the guests introduced himself, explained how he was related and expressed his joy that he is now a relative of the Gadol Hador. With patience and affability, Rabbi Moshe accepted the blessings and blessed the guests, serenely waiting for the Chatan and Kallah to come out of the Yichud room. As the band played the welcoming tunes, he got up and danced with the Chatan. The fervor soared. He repeatedly praised the Kallah, her distinguished lineage, personality and upright middot, to the delight of the Chatan. As he left the hall, accompanied by blessings from the hosts, he turned to a young girl and asked, "Can you please call the Kallah and ask her to come to the mechitzah?!"

The Kallah was called and Rabbi Moshe, accompanied by his driver, went over to the mechitzah. She was utterly moved. "You are my relative," Rabbi Moshe explained simply, "Of course I came. You are joining a beautiful family." He blessed her profusely while the Kallah was moved to tears, answering 'Amen' with her entire heart.

Back in the car, the driver could not contain himself. "Can I ask the Rav a question?"

"On the way to the hall, the Rav said that the wedding was not of a relative, the proof being that the Rabbanit did not come".

"I will explain", answered Rabbi Moshe.

"Several days ago, while I was sitting and learning, the Rabbanit entered and said, 'A Kallah is here for a blessing'.

I told her to come inside, blessed her wholeheartedly and returned to my studies.

Several moments later the Rabbanit entered and said that the Kallah was standing in the corridor, weeping. "I do not know what is wrong, the Kallah refuses to say". I asked her to come inside. She entered, still crying, and explained that she is a Yerushalmi, from the Old Yishuv, and her parents are bitterly poor. They do not have a penny. She became engaged to an American boy from a well-to-do family, who stated that they are prepared to cover all the wedding expenses on condition that the wedding takes place in America. Without a choice, she agreed to go to America. But she has no-one

here and feels so alone. Her sobs intensified. She was about to become part of an unfamiliar, extended, close-knit family, and she feels lost and lonely..."

"How can I help you?" I asked.

She replied, 'If the Rav would come to my wedding and introduce himself as my relative, my value will immediately rise in their eyes and they will treat me with respect and admiration'.

"How can I lie and pretend, G-d forbid?" I wondered aloud.

The Kallah answered, 'Rabbi, is there such a thing as a Jewish person who has no relative?! There is no such thing. If so, I am a relative, even if only a distant relative'. With this, she took out an invitation from her bag and handed it to me..."

The driver was still left with one question:

"Why was important to the Rav to take the time to call the Kallah, wait for her and bless her? She already received your blessings?"

"You must understand," explained Rabbi Moshe in his pleasant manner, "She asked me to come, it was important for her that I come. She put such hope into this as the way to be regarded with esteem by her new family. In another hour or two the wedding will end, she will certainly ask her husband if I came and she will be delighted to hear that indeed I came.

But meanwhile, for another hour or two she would be left in doubt. Although the family are making her happy and dancing for her, she isn't calm. Her happiness is not complete.

What will I not do to save her one hour of tension?!"

Don't Leave Him Anxious!

And what about all the destitute, who have no idea how they will celebrate the approaching Pesach festival?

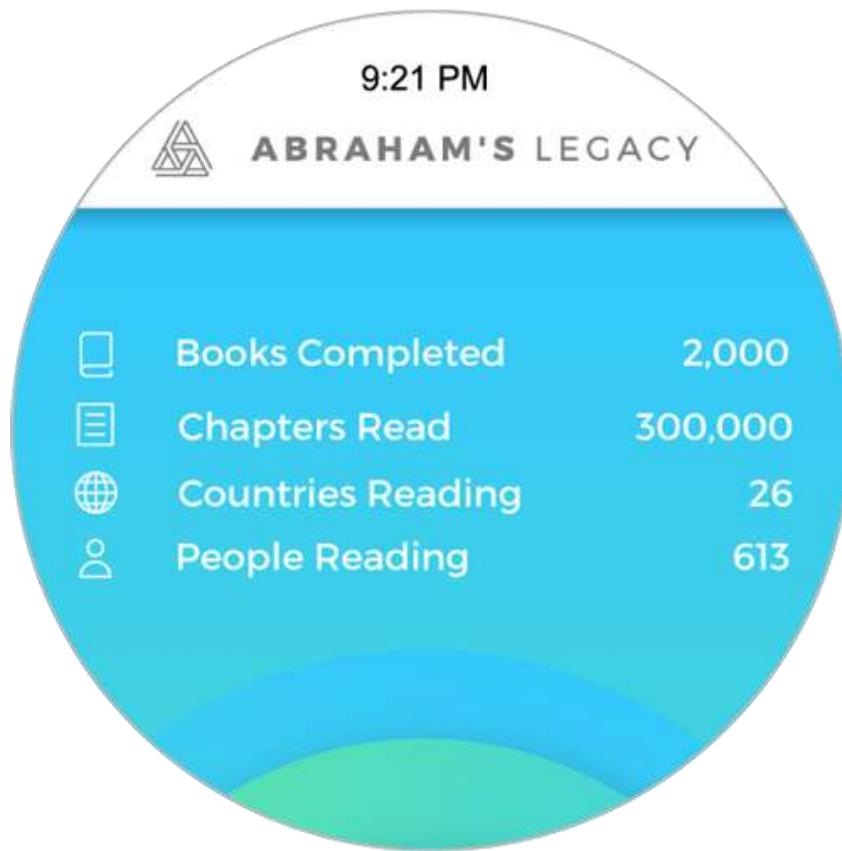
In truth, people are concerned for them and are in fact collecting money for Kimcha D'Pischa. Don't worry, in the end, they will have what to eat, even in abundance. The words of the Vilna Gaon zt"l are well known. The verse writes "For a seven-day period you shall eat matzot... Matzot shall be eaten throughout the seven-day period" (Shemot 13:6-7). Why is the command repeated and why the first time is 'הצמ' (matzah, written without a 'vav') yet the second time with a 'vav'? The answer is that there is one command for eating matzah and a second command to take care that others should also have matzot to eat. Therefore, the first time 'הצמ' is written 'lacking', because for yourself you are permitted to cut back and save. However, when it comes to others you should take care of them with expansiveness and abundance. But don't leave them apprehensive until Erev Pesach!

This concept is true not only concerning the poor and Kimcha D'Pischa. If you can help someone, make him happy, do it as soon as you can, and the earlier the better!

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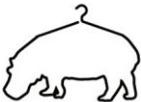
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