

# ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



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זכות רפואה שלמה

מיכאל בן שלי

מלכה בת רחל

*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)

❧ **TAZRIA** ❧

❧ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❧

Sowing the Seeds of the Zera Kodesh

## Dvar Torah



*Isha ki sazria veyolda zochor – “If a woman conceives and gives birth to a boy...” (12:2).*

The heilige Ropshitzer Rav says that we ask Hashem, “Bring us back to You and we will return” (Eicha 5:21). Hashem says to us, “Come back to Me and I shall come back to you.” (Malochi 3:7)

Surely, explains the Ropshitzer, even though Hashem asks us to repent and return to Him first, of our own volition, still Hashem will fulfill the will of His children, especially when they are asking that He bring them back. We then do the opposite: we nullify our own will before His and we do *teshuva* first. Then both our words and Hashem’s are fulfilled.

Chazal say that Hashem asks us to open for Him a small opening the size of a needleprick and He will open for us a large opening the size of a grand hall (Shir HaShirim Rabba 5:3). This Medrash reflects the will of Hashem that we act first; even if our action seems small and insignificantly tiny, Hashem responds with help by enlarging the small opening we made. The Ropshitzer observes that Chazal say in Kiddushin 30b regarding the battle we wage against the *yetzer hora* that without Hashem’s help we simply fail; we cannot overcome the evil *yetzer* without Hashem’s help!

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The Ropshitzer concludes that the small opening we make the size of a needleprick also requires *Hashem's* help! Even that small effort requires strength that we don't have; without *Hashem* perhaps we cannot even open that small hole. This is why we cry out, calling to *Hashem*, "Return us to You, *Hashem*, and then we will return!" *Hashem* then considers this outcry to be the small opening of the needle and He enlarges it to open the gates of *teshuva*, bringing us inside!

When *Hashem* creates the soul, He grants her the power to overcome the evil *yetzer* and to do *teshuva*. However, this power is latent potential waiting for us to actualize it and to strengthen its bonds through *Yiras Hashem*. When we gather this strength from all our limbs we can be strong enough to overcome the evil *yetzer*.

This is why our *pasuk* begins saying, *Isha ki sazria veyolda zochor* - "If a woman conceives and gives birth to a boy...", alluding to our first seed; the planting of our seed is the effort we contribute when we push open that small opening the size of a needleprick. The sowing of seeds is the first step before germination and conception; the process of birth begins with seed, and the final stage is the actual birth of a baby boy. This is similar to the two songs: the feminine song of exile - *Golus* - and that of the first *Geula* called (*Shir HaShirim Rabba* 1:36) *Shira Chadasha* which was a song about the redemption which was temporal, for there was another exile that followed and another redemption that would follow as well. It is in the feminine form because it is like a female who gives birth several times and can have many children. But the future song that will herald the Final Redemption will be called *Shir Chodosh* because it is masculine and men cannot give birth. That is the song we aim for when our *pasuk* concludes with the birth of the baby boy.



## OHR HACHAIM

*"The gates of heaven opened up and I saw G-dly visions, the Creator of the four corners of the earth, and I gazed and meditated upon that which I had permission to, and began to explain at the beginning of Hashem's holy words" Ohr HaChaim, Bereishis*

### Praises For The Holy Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh

#### Named for the Ohr HaChaim

Rav Aharon of Karlin-Pinsk related on *Parshas Bolok* 5753:

Rav Yehoshua Heschel Holtovski used to visit the *tziun* of the holy Rav Chaim *ben Attar* often and used each opportunity to *daven* and achieve salvations on behalf of others, especially in times of trouble. One time, his own young son became very sick; the poor babe's life was in danger and the doctors had despaired of healing him by any natural medical means. Rav Holtovski went to the *tziun* of the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* and *davened* and shed many tears for his son's recovery. Afterward, he pledged to add the name "Chaim" to his son's name in honor of the *Ohr HaChaim*. His prayers bore fruit and were answered; shortly afterward, his son had a miraculous recovery and was healed, completely regaining his

strength! The child grew up to be Rav Chaim Yisrael Holtovski. (*Shivchei Chaim* page 173)



### Shabbos Nuch Dem Chulent

The Karliner Rebbe told one of his *Chassidim* that the best time to learn and study on *Shabbos* is after the *chulent* – “*Der bester zeman fun lernen iz Shabbos nuch dem chulent!*” Similarly, in one of his letters (*Kisvei Kodesh* p. 98), he wrote: “See to it that *Shabbos* after the *seuda* you do not lie down for a nap; instead, take a *sefer* and learn – and that study session should focus on the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh*.” (*Kovetz Bais Aharon VeYisroel* Year 18 *Gilyon* #5)



## The Holy Lights Of The Ohr Hachaim

### Tazria

“*And the Kohen shall see him and declare him impure*” (13:3).

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* asks why our *pasuk* says that a *metzora*’s status depends on the *Kohen*’s words. Why is it that the *Torah* requires the *Kohen* to declare whether or not the afflicted person is indeed *tomei*?

The *Ohr HaChaim* answers that because the *Kohen*’s position is to be the one who offers sacrifices and achieves atonement on our behalf, he is the one appointed over our status of impurity and sickness.

The *Ohr HaChaim* compares the *Kohen*’s agreement to the role played by the good angel on *Shabbos* night. *Chazal* teach us (*Shabbos* 119b) that two angels accompany a person home on Friday night from *shul* and observe if we have properly prepared for *Shabbos*. If the house is prepared, the good angel blesses us that next week should be just as good and the evil angel is compelled to answer *Amen*. If, however, Heaven forbid, our homes are not properly ready for *Shabbos*, then it is the task of the evil angel to pronounce a curse that our house should be this way next week as well and then the good angel is forced to answer *Amen*. The task of the *Kohen* who must declare impurity and consent to observing the *tuma* is likened to the good angel who is forced to answer *Amen* to the evil angel’s curse.

*Hashem* commanded the *Kohen* to be the agent that must agree and give his assent to the affliction and pronounce that the *tuma* has in fact taken hold and latched onto this afflicted Jew’s body until he does *teshuva*. *Hashem* will then heal him and expunge the impurity, erasing it from him.



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

[תְּפִילָּה הַנִּמְצָאת בִּסְפָר אֶלֶף הַמֶּגֶן מִבְּעַל הַפֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ עַל פְּרֶשֶׁת וַיָּצֵא עֲמוּד כ"ד]

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וּלְעִלּוֹי נִשְׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק  
בְּנִ/בִּת \_\_\_\_\_, יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים  
וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שָׁאֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל  
לְזָכוֹת וּלְמִנוּחַת וּלְעִלּוֹי לְנִשְׁמוֹת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפָרֶט לְנֶפֶשׁ רוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /  
צַדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_. יְהִי רָצוֹן שֶׁתְּהִינָה נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצִוּוֹר 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



### YAHREITS BEGINNING SHABBOS TAZRIA

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

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

#### \* **1<sup>st</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Friday Night (Apr 5<sup>th</sup>)**

- \* **Nodov and Avihu**, sons of Aharon *HaKohen*, (1309 BCE);
- \* **Rav Moshe Yosef Hoffman**, the *Dayan* of Pupa, (5688/1928);
- \* **Rav Elimelech ben Rav Chaim Meir Yechiel** of Grodzensk, *mechaber* of *Divrei Elimelech* and *Imrei Elimelech*. He also wrote *Aish Kodesh* and *Chovas HaTalmidim*. He was the father of the *Piazeczna Rebbe, hy"d*, (5652/1892);
- \* Today is also the birthdate of **Rav Nachman** of Breslov;

The name Nachman (נחמן) has a *gematria* of 148, which is the same *gematria* as *Pesach* (פסח). By studying some writing or making another connection to Rav Nachman we are able to utilize Rav Nachman's light to help us elevate ourselves in preparation for *Pesach* over the next fourteen days. Below are a few quotes from the writings of Rav Nachman:

It is recommended in the *Kabbola* and by Rav Nachman to follow the *Nissan minhag*.

- Always wear a smile. The gift of life will then always be yours to give;
- It is a great *mitzva* always to be happy;
- If you believe that breaking is possible, believe and know that fixing is possible;
- All the world is a very narrow bridge, and the most important thing is not to fear at all;
- Always remember: happiness is not a side matter in your spiritual journey; it is essential;
- Today you feel uplifted. Do not let yesterday and tomorrow bring you down.

### ✳ **2<sup>nd</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Apr 6<sup>th</sup>)**

- ✳ **Rabbeinu Boruch**, father of the *Maharam* MiRottenburg, (5035/1275);
- ✳ **Rav Eliyohu Kalmankash**, *Rav* of Lublin, (5393/1633);
- ✳ **Rav Sholom Dovber Schneersohn**, the *Rebbe Rashab*, fifth Lubavitcher *Rebbe* (1860–1920). He is the *mechaber* of hundreds of major tracts in the exposition of Chassidic thought, (5680/1920);
- ✳ **Rav Yaakov Yosef Twersky**, Skverer *Rebbe* (1899–1968). In the summer of 1919, because of the pogroms in Ukraine that followed the Bolshevik Revolution, the family moved to Kiev. A few months later, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev*, his father, Rav Dovid, the Skverer *Rebbe*, was *niftar*, and the following fall, the remaining family left for Kishinev, Bessarabia (Moldavia). In 1925, Rav Yaakov Yosef married and moved to Belz. A few years later, he returned to Romania and led the Skverer *Chassidim* in Kolorash as their *Rebbe*. In the winter of 1945, he moved to Bucharest, from where he moved to the United States (in 1948). After establishing his court in Boro Park, then Williamsburg, he founded New Square in 1957, (5728/1968).

### ✳ **3<sup>rd</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Sunday Night (Apr 7<sup>th</sup>)**

- ✳ **It is taught that on this day of connection to the Tribe of Zevulun, it is good to read or scan the portion of the *mon* given in the desert, as this helps with a person's financial issues and sustenance. This represents a connection to sustenance and improved financial results for the day. The *Torah* verses that describe the initial offering of the *Nossi* of the Tribe of Zevulun are also read this day (see below for *tefilla*.)**
- ✳ **Rav Aryeh Leib Grossnass**, *mechaber* of *Lev Aryeh*, (5756/1996);
- ✳ **Rav Levi Yitzchok Slonim**, son of Rebbetzin Menuchah Rochel, daughter of the Mittlerer *Rebbe*, (5655/1895);
- ✳ **Rav Eliyohu Meir Finkel**, *Nossi Yeshivas Mir*, Yerushalayim, and father of Mirrer *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, (5757/1997);
- ✳ **Rav Dovid Stavsky**, (1930–2004). Served in the Columbus (Ohio) Jewish community for the last forty-seven years of his life, including as *Rav* of Beth Jacob Congregation. He graduated from Yeshiva University with a B.A. in Psychology in 1952, ordained at the RIETS in 1955, and earned a master's degree in Psychology from the Ohio State University in 1966. Served as chaplain in the United States Army as a First Lieutenant at Fitzsimons Army Hospital and was the post chaplain at Fort Carson in Denver, Colorado, from 1955–1957. He helped found Columbus Torah Academy in 1958, led the effort to build a *mikve* (ritual bath) in Columbus in 1970 and helped found the Columbus Community *Kollel* (learning center) in 1994, (5764/2004).

✳ **4<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Monday Night (Apr 8<sup>th</sup>)**

- ✳ **Rav Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenberg**, *mechaber* of *HaKesav VeHakabbola*, (5625/1865);
- ✳ **Rav Yochanon Twersky** of Rachmistrivka (1816–1895), son of the *Maggid* of Chernobyl, (5655/1895).

✳ **5<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Apr 9<sup>th</sup>)**

- ✳ **Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel** of Apt, the *Ohev Yisrael* (1755–1825). He learned under Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk and Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov. In 1800, he accepted the post of *Rav* of Apta. Although he held many other rabbinic positions, to the *Chassidim* he remained always the *Apter Rav*. He lived his last years in Mezhibuzh, the birthplace of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, (5585/1825);
- ✳ **Rav Moshe ben Shlomo Roke'ach**, Kiev-Zlotchover *Rebbe*, a descendant of Rav Elozor of Amsterdam. He is buried in Mount Judah Cemetery in Queens, New York, (5699/1939);
- ✳ **Rav Shneur Zalman Ashkenazi** of Lublin, *Rav* of Polotzk, Lublin, *mechaber* of *Toras Chessed*, (5590–5662/1830–1902);
- ✳ **Rav Reuven Yosef Gershonowitz**, the *Tzaddik* of Ofakim, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshiva* of the Negev, (5675–5755/1915–1995);
- ✳ **Rav Tzvi Elimelech Spira**, (1841–1924), *mechaber* of the *sefer Tzvi LaTzaddik*. Born to Rav Dovid of Dinov, son of Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov (the *Bnei Yissoschor*), he became very close to Rav Chaim, the *Sanzer Rav*, at a very early age. At the age of sixteen, he married Sora Horowitz, a great-granddaughter of Rav Naftoli Tzvi of Ropshitz. He was appointed *Av Bais Din* of Bluzhov. In 1874, with the passing of his father, his older brother, Rav Naftoli Hertz, became *Rebbe* of Dinov, but with his passing a few years later, most of the *Chassidim* followed Rav Tzvi Elimelech, (5684/1924).

✳ **6<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Apr 10<sup>th</sup>)**

- ✳ **Rav Shmuel Yehuda Katzenellenbogen** (1521–1597). The son of Rav Meir of Padua (the *Maharam Padua*), Rav Shmuel was born in Padua. He served on the *Bais Din* of Venice and became *Rav* of the city and headed its *Yeshiva*. His *sefer*, *Derashos Rav Shmuel Yehuda*, also called *Shteim Esrei Derashos*, is sometimes erroneously named *Derashos Mahari Mintz*, (5357/1597);
- ✳ **Rav Yaakov Temerlis**. Born in Worms, he traveled to Lublin and then Kremenitz, Poland. Late in life, he moved to Vienna. His *seforim* include *Sifra DiTzniyusa DeYaakov*, a kabbalistic commentary on the *Torah*, (5428/1668);
- ✳ **Rav Chaim Abulafya**, born in *Chevron*, *Rav* of Tzefas, Izmir (Turkey), Teverya (1660–1744), known as a miracle worker, (5504/1744);
- ✳ **Rav Aharon ben Rav Shmuel Yaakov Roth**, *mechaber* of the *sefer Shomer Emunim*. The *Shomer Emunim*, *Toldos Aharon* and *Toldos Avrohom Yitzchok* dynasties come from him, (5707/1947);
- ✳ **Rav Hillel ben Rav Zev Tzvi HaKohen Klein**, buried in Brooklyn's Washington Cemetery, (5686/1926);
- ✳ **Rav Meir ben Yaakov Schiff**, the *Maharam Schiff* (some sources say the 2<sup>1st</sup> of *Adar*), (5401/1641);
- ✳ **Rav Tzvi Hirsch** of Koristchover, a *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*;
- ✳ **Rav Meir Don Plotsky** (Plotzki) of Warsaw (1866–1928), the son of Rav Chaim Yitzchok Ber Plotzker from Kutno, a *Chassid* of Rav Chanoch Henich of Alexander, and then of the *Sfas Emes* of Ger. At the age of nine, Rav Meir Don was sent to learn in the *Yeshiva* of Rav Chaim

Eliezer Wachs, the *Nefesh Chaya*, in Kalisch. Shortly before his *bar mitzva*, he became a *talmid* of Rav Avrohom of Sochotchov, the *Avnei Nezer*, whom he considered his lifelong *Rebbe Muvhok*. He married at the age of fifteen and spent the next ten years in Dvohrt with his in-laws. In 1891, he became *Rav* in Dvohrt. Later he helped expose the forged *Yerushalmi* on *Kodshim*, claimed to be discovered by Shlomo Yehuda Friedlander, who also claimed he was a *Sefardi* named Shlomo Yehuda Algazi. At the age of thirty-six, he published his work on the *Sefer HaMitzvos* of the *Rambam*, called *Chemdas Yisrael*. In 1918, he became *Rav* of Ostrov-Mozbaisk in eastern Poland. He was voted chairman of *Agudas HoRabbonim* of Poland, a prelude to *Agudas Yisrael*. At the age of sixty, he left *Rabbonus* to head a large *Yeshiva* in Warsaw, known simply as the *Mesivta*. Rav Meir Don also authored *Kli Chemda* on *Chumash* and *Chemdas Shlomo* on *Orach Chaim*, (5688/1928).

## ✳ 7<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Thursday Night (Apr 11<sup>th</sup>)

- ✳ **Rav Yitzchok** of Drovitch (Drohobich). He was the father of Rav Yechiel Michel, the *Maggid* of Zlotchov. 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 Aryeh Leib Yelin** of Bialystok, *mechaber* of *Yefeh Einayim*, (5644/1884);
- ✳ **Rav Aryeh 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 Ostrovtza. 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).



## ✳ 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 Sholom Dovber Schneersohn, 2<sup>nd</sup> of Nissan

The Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch

##### The Coach

Rav Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch was once traveling with a group of *Chassidim*. At one point, the coachman stopped at a roadside watering trough. After the horses had drunk their fill, he steered them back onto the road, cracked his whip over their backs and cried, "Fools! Do you think that I gave you to drink so that the hay you devour should be more tasty? I gave you to drink so that you should be better able to pull the coach!"

Inside the wagon, the expression on the *Rebbe's* face grew serious. After a while, he said to his *Chassidim*, "We are all drawing the Supernal Chariot through our positive and G-dly deeds. It is to this end that *Hashem* provides us with sustenance and vitality. So, we must never lose sight of the true purpose of our material resources – that they enable us to carry out our mission in life.

"A horse needs to be reminded with the whip. But the human being should suffice with more subtle pointers as to how to order his priorities..."



##### Hashovas Aveida

Yehoshua Binyomin was a poor *Chassid* who lived in Russia over a hundred years ago. He had been blessed with a large family, and he loved them all very much.

That's why it pained him so much that he had to struggle so hard just to feed them. Usually he took any odd job he could find, but sometimes things were slow. There were not always jobs available, and his debts kept growing.

Finally, the grocery store gave its last warning: no more credit. Either Yehoshua had to pay up his bill, or forget about getting any more food.

Then the landowner said he wanted

all his back rent or else Yehoshua and his family would be thrown out.

To make things worse, the young man who had been teaching his children *Torah* announced that if he didn't get his back pay, he was quitting.

Then came the fire.

No one knows exactly how it started. Twenty houses burned down. The flames leapt from one house to the next. In minutes the village was all ablaze.

Yehoshua's house was spared, but all his belongings were ruined. Many of his friends' homes were totally destroyed. His spirits were at an all-time low.

Of course Yehoshua *davened* every day. In those days, who didn't *daven*? But now he felt he really HAD to *daven*. He poured out his broken heart to *Hashem* and begged Him for a miracle...only a miracle could save him! Deep down, he felt sure *Hashem* wouldn't disappoint him.

And the miracle happened!

Sort of.

It was Friday, just an hour before *Shabbos*. Yehoshua was walking slowly home after another fruitless week of searching for work, when he noticed a wallet lying in the mud by the side of the road. He bent down and picked it up. There was no identification. Only a bunch of papers and...three hundred rubles! It was a small fortune. *Hashem* had answered his *tefillos*!

The money would save him! He could pay his debts and even have money left over! Then suddenly he stopped.

"What am I thinking? Have I lost my mind? Surely this belongs to someone! How could I take the money? It's a commandment...a *mitzva*...to return something that's lost!"

Then he thought, "One minute! If I don't take the money someone else will. The owner probably gave up on it anyway. I could just take the money and throw the

wallet back on the ground. After all, the money was as good as gone!"

Then he had another idea. "Maybe I'll USE the money and then LATER I'll give it back."

Yehoshua was very confused. His poverty made it hard for him to think straight. He felt guilty about keeping the money, but at the same time he couldn't come up with a good reason not to. It was clearly a miracle from *Hashem*.

In the depths of his confusion, he realized that he couldn't possibly come to a clear decision. So he decided to just wait. He hid the wallet in his house, and resolved to make up his mind after *Shabbos*.

That night, he arrived in *shul* worried and confused, with three issues still on his mind: how to pay his debts, what to do about the wallet, and how to forget about it all until *Shabbos* was over. On *Shabbos* you're not supposed to worry about money.

As troubled as he was, Yehoshua couldn't help noticing one of the wealthier townspeople, Rav Pinchas Leib, sitting in a back corner. He also looked like he was trying hard not to be sad.

Yehoshua walked over and asked him what was wrong. At first Rav Pinchas, who was usually a good-natured and talkative person, just tried to shrug it off, as if nothing was the matter.

Yehoshua insisted that he should tell him what was bothering him. "Was it the fire?"

"Ahhhh! I'll tell you the truth," said Pinchas Leib with a heart-breaking sigh. "Oy, the fire. Yes, my house was badly damaged, but I accept that. It was the hand of *Hashem*. What I can't get over is my wallet. It had a lot of money in it. But more important than that, it was full of papers – all my valuable papers that I saved from the fire. Those papers are my real fortune. Somehow I lost it! I don't know how. I know it's *Shabbos*, but...well...I just can't

stop thinking about it.”

“Don’t worry!” Yehoshua cried with excitement. “Pinchas Leib, my dear friend, I found your wallet! It’s in my house. I found it before *Shabbos*!”

Pinchas Leib couldn’t believe his ears. He jumped up, hugged Yehoshua with joy, and thanked him over and over again at least twenty times.

Immediately after *Shabbos*, Rav Pinchas went to Yehoshua’s house. When he saw his wallet he was so happy that he gave Yehoshua the three hundred rubles as a reward. But Yehoshua refused to take it! He had gotten used to the idea of not keeping the money, and decided that the *mitzva* itself was enough of a reward.

Rav Pinchas pleaded and argued.

It didn’t help. Yehoshua stood his ground. He wouldn’t take a penny.

Now he really needed a miracle. His children were hungry. And the rent was due!

Suddenly he thought of the *Rebbe*! Why hadn’t he thought of it earlier? He would travel to the *Rebbe*, Rav Sholom Dovber, the fifth *Rebbe* of Lubavitch, to ask for a *berocha*, or at least for advice. Either one would surely help!

Two days later he was in Lubavitch, standing before the *Rebbe*, pouring out his heart about his troubles with the landlord, the grocery store and the tutor. But the *Rebbe* seemed to ignore all this.

“Has anything good happened to you recently?” the *Rebbe* asked.

Yehoshua was dumfounded. He couldn’t figure out what the *Rebbe* meant...something good? Suddenly he remembered the wallet.

“Excellent,” said the *Rebbe*. “You have nothing to worry about! In the merit of returning the lost item you will be repaid ten-fold! Meanwhile, if you are offered a job to be a *chazzan*, a cantor, take it.”

He thanked the *Rebbe* gratefully and

backed out of the room. But when he was alone he thought, “A *chazzan*? I’m not a cantor! I’ve never been a cantor in my life. Who would want me as a cantor?”

Two days later, when he arrived back home, a carriage was waiting in front of his house. Out stepped two respectable-looking Jews who came straight over to Yehoshua and asked him if he would come to their town to be the cantor for *Rosh HaShana*! They even offered him an advance of twenty rubles (about two months’ wages).

“Me?” he thought. “A *chazzan*? I’m no *chazzan*! Sometimes people say I have a nice voice, but...” then he remembered the *Rebbe*’s words. “OK, I’ll do it!” They were very happy.

Yehoshua practiced seriously to be ready to lead the *tefilllos* on the awesome days of *Rosh HaShana*. When the time arrived, all his troubles and his broken heart proved to be his biggest asset. The *mispallemim*, who had enough troubles of their own, were moved by the simple sincerity of his *tefilllos*. They even invited him back for *Yom Kippur* with a raise in salary...which they also paid in advance.

After *Yom Kippur*, the head of the community thanked him over and over again. “Unfortunately,” he apologized, “I couldn’t find you a carriage to take you home. It seems they have all been hired by travelers. So please accept this money to pay for an extra night or two in the hotel, if you need it. I hope you don’t mind trying to find a carriage on your own. I haven’t come up with anything. I’m sorry. Please forgive me for not making proper arrangements.”

The next morning Yehoshua realized how bad the situation really was. Literally every carriage was gone. Someone suggested that he speak to an old man who had once been a carriage driver several years back. Perhaps, for the right price, he might be willing to take the job.

Yehoshua headed for the old man’s

house, a ramshackle hut on the outskirts of the town. When he got there and opened the door, he realized that he had come for nothing. The old man was totally blind, and was lying sick in bed, scarcely able to breathe! It seemed like he was dying.

Yehoshua turned to go.

“Ehhh? Is that you, Alexi?!” the old man called weakly. “Did you call the priest? Is he coming? I don’t think I’ll last much longer.”

The old man seemed to think that Yehoshua was someone else. In order to calm him down a bit, Yehoshua answered, “Yes, yes, the priest is coming.”

“You know, Alexi,” the old man wheezed in half a whisper, “you know I have no children. There is some money...I want you to have it. It won’t help me where I’m going. It’s buried in the back yard under the large brown rock. I stole it from a Jewish passenger over twenty years ago. Go and take it. I only used some of it. As far as I know, the Jew isn’t even alive any more. Heh heh!”

Yehoshua left the old man, ran outside into the yard, pushed over the rock and, sure enough, there was the wallet.

Quickly he put it in his pocket. Then, fearing that Alexi would return any moment, Yehoshua ran back to town as fast as his legs would carry him.

No sooner did he arrive back than he heard a man calling him, “Hey mister, need a carriage? My ride just canceled on me! Where do you want to go? I’ll give you a good price.”

In a day’s time he was back home.

When he arrived, he told his wife the entire story and showed her the wallet. Together they opened it. It was packed full with notes in large amounts! Eagerly Yehoshua and his wife counted it. It was three thousand rubles, exactly ten times the amount he had returned to Rav Pinchas! Just as the *Rebbe* had said.

## **In Two Places at Once?**

One day, a distraught woman showed up in the town of Lubavitch. Women usually did not wander about all alone one hundred years ago, but this poor woman had made an arduous week-long journey because someone had told her that the Lubavitcher *Rebbe* could help her.

“Is this where Rebbe Sholom Dovber is? I must see him,” she pleaded to one of the *Rebbe*’s secretaries. “I’ve come from so far away, and your *Rebbe* is my only hope. Please, I must see him! Only he can help me.” But her cries were to no avail; the *Rebbe* wasn’t receiving.

“If you write your request on a paper I promise that I will give it to the *Rebbe* and the *Rebbe* will see it, but I can’t promise more than that. I’m sorry,” he said apologetically.

With no other choice the poor woman found a quiet place to sit and write her request. She was an *aguna*, a living widow. Her husband had strayed from *Yiddishkeit* about two years previously and had then upped and left her. She had no source of income, three hungry children to feed and she could not remarry without receiving an official divorce bill (*get*) from her husband. But she had no way of tracking him down, and no one even knew where to begin. The woman was at her wits’ end; she had no money, no husband, no experience, and now her last hope, the *Rebbe*, was vanishing before her eyes.

“The *Rebbe* probably won’t even pay attention to my letter,” she said to herself. But she handed it in and hoped for the best.

The answer was fast in coming. Less than an hour later the *Rebbe*’s secretary stood facing her with good news.

“The *Rebbe* says that you should travel to Warsaw.”

She was overjoyed! But her smile faded as she realized that there was no more to the message.

“But where in Warsaw? What should



I do there?"

"That is all the *Rebbe* answered," replied the secretary. "I'm sorry, there was no more."

She even wrote in another letter asking for some details, but no response was forthcoming this time.

When the *Chassidim* heard the story they took up a collection and bought her a round-trip train ticket with enough money for a month's room and board. Two days later, there she was, standing bewildered in the Warsaw train station with her old suitcase and no idea where to go or what to do next.

People were rushing by her, occasionally bumping into her; someone almost knocked her over, but she just stood there. She had the address of a hotel on a crumpled piece of paper in her hand. She took it out of her pocket but she didn't want to walk anymore. She was tired and just wanted to give up. "The children are in good hands," she thought to herself. She was alone and confused and she wanted to cry. Someone else bumped into her. "Maybe I'll just go back home." The thought was still in the corner of her mind when she heard someone say, "Excuse me."

She snapped out of her reverie and saw standing before her a neatly dressed Jew with a reddish beard. "Excuse me," he said in Yiddish, "I noticed that you have been standing for a long time. Are you feeling all right? Perhaps I can be of some help? Are you waiting for someone?"

"I'm here because the Lubavitcher *Rebbe* said..." and she mechanically repeated her entire story. "Tell me," said the man when she had finished, "what was your husband's name and what did he look like?"

"Ehh, well..." She was still in a semi-daze. "His name was Feivel, but I'm sure he changed it. And he was heavyset. He walked with a sort of a limp, and he had a thick, black beard, but I'm sure he's shaved

the beard off, and he has a sort of mark on his forehead. It's been two years – who knows how he looks now...."

She almost began to weep when he interrupted her. "I think I know where he is. Please follow me. It's not far from here." He escorted her out of the station, down the street to a large, busy intersection, and gave her directions how to go from there to a certain tavern. "I believe that your husband is sitting in the back of that bar, playing cards and gambling."

After everything she'd been through, she asked no questions. She just nodded to the stranger and began walking according to his directions. And after an hour she found it! She took a deep breath and entered the dimly lit tavern, dragging her suitcase and feeling terribly out of place.

She made her way through the smoke and noise to the back of the room and stared blankly at the figures sitting there, waiting for her eyes to adjust to the dark.

Suddenly one of the gamblers turned, looked at her and let out a cry of horror. "Sora!!! How did you know I was here? How did you get here?!" She could see more clearly now, and the man who was speaking looked something like her husband. He was thinner, with no beard...but it was him!

When she explained how the *Rebbe* had sent her and how some Jew gave her directions from the station, he began pacing back and forth like a madman, running his fingers through his hair, waving his arms and repeating to himself, "I don't know any Jews, I don't know any *Rebbe*!! How could anyone know? How?"

He was so affected by the miracle that he began weeping, and then fell to his knees begging her forgiveness. One thing led to another and one month later, he shamefacedly returned home with her and repented completely of his evil ways.

The next year she traveled again to

Lubavitch, but this time to thank the *Rebbe*. The *Rebbe*'s secretary arranged that she would stand outside the *Rebbe*'s door, and when the *Rebbe* came out, she could thank him personally and give him a letter of gratitude.

She took her place and stood there, holding her letter and waiting nervously. Then the big moment arrived, the door opened and the *Rebbe* emerged. She took one look at him...went into a swoon, and fell unconscious to the floor!

When she came to, a doctor was kneeling over her. "You were so excited that you passed out," he explained, as she began to sit up.

"Was that the *Rebbe*?" she asked. "Was that him?"

"Why certainly," the doctor answered. "Why do you ask? Didn't you know that that was the *Rebbe*?"

"Because," she said, "that was the man I saw in Warsaw. He was the one who helped me in the Warsaw train station!"

Later, the *Rebbe*'s secretary made some calculations. He recalled that on the same day on which the woman claimed to have seen the *Rebbe* in the Warsaw train station, he had entered the *Rebbe*'s room and found the *Rebbe* sitting motionless for a long time, oblivious to his surroundings, as though he were "somewhere else".

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## Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel of Apt, 5<sup>th</sup> of Nissan

The Ohev Yisrael

### How the Ohev Yisrael Became a Talmid of the Noam Elimelech

In the city of Zavanitz there were smugglers who would smuggle goods without paying the levied taxes, and there was also rampant desecration of the *Shabbos*. The Apter *Rav*, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, was greatly upset by their behavior and sharply rebuked them.

Rav Shmelke, the son of Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov, wished to travel and visit the Apter, but since he hailed from Zavanitz he was worried that the Apter would ask him where he was from and, upon hearing his answer, would not let him even cross his threshold!

His friends advised him to completely ignore any questions about where he was from and simply to introduce himself as Rav Moshe Leib Sassover's son.

And so it was that when the *shamash* asked him who he was, he told him that he was the son of the Sassover. When the Apter heard this, he ran over to Rav Shmelke and greeted him warmly. Shaking his hand with both hands, he lit candles in his honor, donned finer clothes in his honor and seated him in a special chair reserved for honored guests, shrugging off all protests, saying, "Why, but you are my *Rebbe*'s son!"

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

was furnished, we lived in only one wing.

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

“One day two anonymous travelers passed by and knocked at my window,



asking if I had room for lodgers and guests. ‘Why, yes,’ I answered, ‘the entire second wing is at your disposal.’ They unloaded their luggage and made themselves at home. I noticed that they seemed like holy individuals and whatever conversations they had among themselves always sounded lofty. They spoke of things pertaining to *Avodas Hashem*, yet I was too busy with my studies to take their “idle chatter” seriously. I thought that my *derech* (path) was correct and shrugged them off.

“They were my guests for some three days, and on the third day, as they prepared to continue on their way, they came to take their customary leave of me. One of them began to engage me in conversation and to tell me some story. I was greatly troubled, since they were detracting from my learning and from my sincere *Torah* study, yet it would have been

rude and ill-mannered for me to interrupt him – so I listened as politely as I could. When he had finished the first story he began to tell me another one! At this point, my hair stood on end, I was so disturbed at this waste of my precious time. When he finished, the other guest began to tell me a tale as well and the pain I felt was death itself! Finally, they finished the third story and went on their way.

“Some three months passed and I found that I understood the meaning of the first story and that I had needed it. Some three more months passed and I found that I understood the need I had for the second story – and three months later for the third story. I was shocked to see how they were able to see what I would need and what would befall me over the course of that entire year. I understood that this must be through *ruach hakodesh* and I hoped that *Hashem* would grant me another opportunity to reunite with these two holy individuals. Two years later, I looked out of the window and saw them both traveling in their carriage past my window. I could not miss such an opportunity! I ran outside to catch them and draw their attention. I was in such a rush that I did not dress myself in my coat or my *spodik* (the fur hat worn by important personages such as the town *Rav*) and I ran in my shirt after their coach, chasing it across town.

“When I finally caught up with them near the inn, I asked them, in between catching my breath, as to their destination. ‘We are headed to Lizhensk, to the Rebbe Reb Elimelech,’ they explained.

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



grabbed my *tallis* and *tefillin* and jumped into their carriage.

“We are taking you to the Rebbe Elimelech,” they explained, ‘since we can tell that your soul’s root is bound to his.’ And so they did. The Rebbe Elimelech became my mentor and I became a *talmid*.



Those two holy *Tzaddikim* were your father, Rav Moshe Leib Sassover, and Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev.”

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

(*Kisvei Rav Yoshe* #11 p116; *Devorim Areivim* II #2, pages 53–54)



## The Writings Left Over from the Tzaddik

Rav Meshulam Zisha of Zinkov, grandson of the Apter *Rav*, related a story he had heard from his father, Rav Yitzchok Meir of Zinkov, about Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev. Once the Berditchever was visiting the Apter *Rav* in Kolbosov, and he asked to see some of the Apter *Rav*’s writings on the *parsha*. The Apter *Rav* happily lent them to Rav Levi Yitzchok. Rav Levi Yitzchok was so immersed in his *Avodas Hashem* that he completely forgot

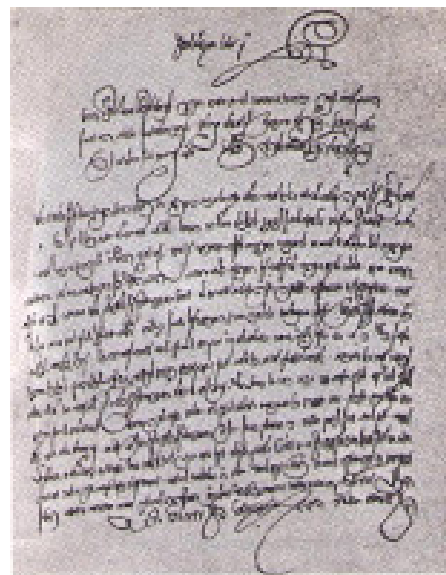
to return the writings to the Apter *Rav*. After Rav Levi Yitzchok passed on, these writings were found among his own writings, and the publishers thought that these belonged to Rav Levi Yitzchok as well, and they published them mistakenly in his name.



## As told by Rav Shlomo Carlebach

One ordinary night, the Apter *Rav* made a feast. When the holy Apter makes a feast it is okay with everybody, but the *Chassidim* wanted to know why he was making a feast that particular night. This is the story he told:

Somewhere, somewhere, lived a very wealthy Jew. As wealthy as he was, he spent half his fortune to buy a cup for Eliyohu *HaNovi*. At the *Seder* on *Pesach* night you need a special cup for Eliyohu. You put it on the table and you believe that he is coming to drink from it. So this man put his heart and soul and half his fortune into buying a cup for Eliyohu *HaNovi*.



Then the saddest thing happened. Suddenly he became very poor, he lost everything, but G-d forbid, he would never sell the cup of Eliyohu *HaNovi*. When it came to two days before *Pesach* and he didn’t have enough money to buy *matza* – he had nothing – he said to his wife, “I’m sorry to tell you, we have to sell the cup of Eliyohu *HaNovi*. It’s very good to have a



cup for Eliyohu if you have a *Seder*, but if you don't even have a *Seder*, what good is the whole thing?" His wife refused; she would not let him sell the cup of Eliyohu *HaNovi*. They had a little fight, and by *Erev Pesach* morning he was very upset with her.

"What do you mean you are not selling the cup? You don't even have *matza*!" She still refused to sell the cup. He was very angry with her. "I'm going to the *Bais Medrash*," he said. "We don't have anything to eat at home and I have nothing to do, so I might as well be studying."

He had just left when a very wealthy man knocked on the door and asked if this was the home of the very great and learned scholar so-and-so. She told him it was. "I have come from a very far country. I heard of your husband and I would like to be at the *Seder* with you."

The woman said, "I would very much like to invite you to the *Seder*, but we have nothing to eat."

"Oh, that's no problem," he says, "I'm a very wealthy man. Here is money. Do me a favor, buy food for the whole week because I want to spend *Pesach* with you."

He left her a sack of gold pieces, asked when she was beginning the *Seder*, and promised to be back on time. So the woman prepared a beautiful *Seder*. The poor husband came home very late. He was sure there would be no *Yom Tov* candles and no *matza* in his house. What a surprise when he came in and found a great feast!



She said, "We can't start the *Seder* yet, because we have to wait for the rich man," and she told him the whole story. They were waiting, waiting, waiting. He didn't show up.

Finally, it was twenty minutes before midnight. You have to eat *matza* before midnight, so they ate fast, rattled off the *Seder*, and had a feast, but they were really sad that their guest hadn't shown up. Then, when the time came for the man to open the door for Eliyohu *HaNovi*, he wanted to get up, but suddenly he couldn't keep himself from falling asleep. The door opened and Eliyohu *HaNovi* came in – the rich man. He said to the woman, "Thank you so much. I am so glad you didn't sell my cup." He blessed her with the greatest blessings in the world. When he walked out the husband woke up again.

"What's happening? I don't know why I fell asleep."

She told him the whole story of why he fell asleep. "You didn't get to see Eliyohu *HaNovi* because you wanted to sell his cup, but I was so strong that, thank G-d, I didn't sell the cup, so he spoke to me."

Finally, this little *Yiddele* passed away and he came up to Heaven. He really deserved Heaven and he was just about to slip through the door when Eliyohu *HaNovi* came along and said, "Not while I'm around, brother." This is a very deep story.

Deep down, Eliyohu probably realized the man didn't really believe in Eliyohu *HaNovi*, he didn't really believe in miracles. So what are you doing in Heaven?

So Eliyohu *HaNovi* blocked his way. What could he do? He didn't deserve *Gehinnom*, so he wasn't going to *Gehinnom*, but he couldn't get into Heaven either. He just sat by the gate. Four years later, his wife came, and Eliyohu *HaNovi* came to greet her with all the *Tzaddikim*, and all the holy people. They wanted to take her into *Gan Eden* right away, but she

was a faithful woman and she wanted to know where her husband was. They told her Eliyohu *HaNovi* wouldn't let him in yet; he wasn't ready for Heaven. She said, "If my husband isn't going in, neither am I." So they were both sitting at the gates of Heaven.

The holy Apter said, "Yesterday, Eliyohu *HaNovi* came to see me. I told him, "Eliyohu, really, cut it out. How long are you going to make them sit like that by the gates of Heaven? Let them in already!" So Eliyohu promised me last night that he would let them in today. So tonight I am making a feast in their honor, to greet them in Heaven."



It was in Mezhibuzh, on the night of the fifth of *Nissan*, ten days before *Pesach*, 1829, that Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, the *Ohev Yisrael* of Apt, departed this world. On the very same night, in the holy city of Teverya, on the shore of the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee, *Eretz Yisrael*), people heard a knocking on the windows of *Kollel Vohlin*, one of the organizations responsible for the fair distribution of funds in support of the struggling religious Jews from Europe in *Eretz Yisrael*. Inside was the caretaker, alone, the one who held the keys to the gates of the cemetery. The voice from outside said, "Go outside and follow the bier of the *Rav* of Apt!"

He ventured outside and was chilled by terror, for the bier was being followed by a grim retinue of myriad human forms from the Other World. One of these followers intimated to him that this was the funeral procession of the *Tzaddik* of Apt; he had passed away in Mezhibuzh, and *malochim* had borne his coffin for entombment in the soil of the Holy Land.

The beadle repeated his story in the morning. People refused to believe him, until on the suggestion of an elderly sage they went together to the cemetery, and there they found a newly-covered grave.

Letters from Apt later confirmed that the *Tzaddik* had indeed passed away on that very day. Before his passing, he had cried out to Heaven in bitter protest over the length of the exile. Why was the *Moshiach* tarrying so long? And in his heartache he had wept and said, "Before Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev left this world



he promised that he would not rest, nor allow the *Tzaddikim* in the World of Truth to rest, until their insistent pleas would bring about the Messianic Redemption. But when he arrived there, the saintly souls in the Garden of Eden found spiritual delight in his company, and ascended with him to the palaces of supernal bliss – until he forgot his own promise. But I will not forget!"

When Rav Chaim Elozor of Munkatsch visited the holy sites in the Land in 1930, he asked about among the oldest citizens of Teverya as to whether any of them knew where the Apter *Rav* was buried. They led him to a certain stone slab in the old cemetery that their hoary elders, who were now in the World of Truth, had shown them – the place where the *Ohev Yisrael* had been brought to rest.

[Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition in *A Treasury of Chassidic Tales* (ArtScroll), as translated by our esteemed colleague, Uri Kaploun, from *Sipurei Chassidim* by Rav S. Y. Zevin.]



Once, *tzedoka* collectors came to the home of the holy *Rav* of Apt, the *Ohev*

*Yisrael*, on the day before *Pesach*, to collect *matzos* for the needy. The *Rebbetzin* was busy preparing for *Yom Tov*, and others went to provide *matzos* for the collectors. In the bustle, they mistakenly took the *shemura matza* that had been baked on the day before *Pesach* for the *Rav* and were placed under a special cloth, and gave them to the collectors, who took them before the *Rebbetzin* came into the room.

When the *Rebbetzin* entered the room, she saw that the *shemura matza* was not there. She investigated, and learned that they had been given to the *tzedoka* collectors. She quaked, and her heart was struck in her chest; she did not know what to do. She feared telling her holy husband about this. She decided to take regular *matza*, which she placed beneath the cloth in place of the others, and she pretended to know nothing of what had happened. The holy *Rav* conducted the *Seder* with the plain *matza*.

After *Pesach*, a couple came before the *Rav* to divorce. The *Rav* asked the husband, "Why do you wish to divorce your

wife?"

The husband replied that this wife did not want to cook for *Pesach* in implements which had not been used for soaked *matza* (*gebrokts*).

The *Rav* instructed to call for his *Rebbetzin*. He told her, "Tell me the truth: what sort of *matzos* were placed before me for the *Seder*?"

The *Rebbetzin* was silent, afraid to say.

He asked again, "Please tell, and do not fear."

The *Rebbetzin* answered, "Normal *matzos*." And she told what had happened.

The *Rav* told the husband, "See, my son. I ate normal *matza* on the first night of *Pesach*, pretending that I did not know and was not aware so that I would not come to anger, or, G-d forbid, to a quarrel. And you want to divorce your wife over soaked *matza*?"

The *Rav* made peace between them, and they left.



## Rav Aharon Roth, 6<sup>th</sup> of Nissan

Mechaber of Shomer Emunim

Rav Ahrele Roth, founder of *Chassidus Shomrei Emunim*, came to *Yerushalayim* in 1925. He was known for his fervent and emotional style of *tefilla* and worship. In Satmar, Hungary, at the time, he was viewed as being inordinately intense, and became somewhat of a curiosity. Such was his manner of conducting himself that the *talmidim* from the Satmar *Yeshiva* were banned from visiting or even laying eyes on him. It is said that he often had to change his shirt up to three times during *Shabbos*-morning *tefillos*. He often stretched out the *davening* to four or five hours, such was his intensity. [I have read that he instituted the practice that all the *shuls* in Europe in

which his *Chassidim* *davened* were forbidden to light the fires in the warming ovens during the cold winter days. He instructed that his *Chassidim's* *tefillos* should be sufficient to warm them up and keep them from freezing. They say that the windows of such *shuls* glistened with condensation due to the intense heat generated inside them despite the lack of ovens to heat them!] When he moved to *Yerushalayim* in 1925 he had decided to become a *sofer* (a scribe), but his teacher quickly realized that this was no





ordinary human being and, soon after, Rav Ahrele Roth founded *Shomrei Emunim*.

On one occasion at a *simcha*, the *Rebbe* was dancing fervently in the middle of a circle. Amidst his ecstasy he opened his eyes, and noticed a man with a disturbed face, perhaps a *Misnagged* (opponent of *Chassidim*), looking on with contempt. Rav Ahrele broke the circle, took the man by the hand, and began to dance. A circle, once again, formed around, and Rav Ahrele looked up into the man's eyes. The man was shaken by this look, and almost lost his equilibrium. But just then he began to feel the *niggun* resonate. As the dancing became more intense, this seemingly unhappy fellow was visibly transformed, and by now he had lost his self-consciousness. Still dancing with Rav Ahrele, hand in hand, he felt as if he were soaring. Never before had he conceived of such ecstasy. Rav Ahrele knew well that the view from inside the circle is much different from the view on the outside. The man never looked back. He became a devoted *Chassid* of the *Rebbe*. Such was Rav Ahrele's intensity and influence.

Rav Avrohom Meir Ziswein was a *Chassid* and follower of Rav Tzvi Elimelech Spira of Bluzhov. When the Bluzhover moved to Pest, Rav Avrohom Meir heard of a certain special *bochur*, a young man who outshone all his peers in the *Yeshiva* in Weitzin; this young man's true *yiras shomayim* (fear of Heaven), sterling character and fiery *avoda* drew Rav Avrohom Meir to seek to bring him under the wings and guidance of the Bluzhover who was to become his *Rebbe*. The young man was none other than Rav Aharon Roth.

Once, Rav Avrohom Meir recounted his initial impressions of the young, budding *Tzaddik*:

Believe me, when I first met Rav Ahrele in Weitzin, I was sure that in no time he would grow to be a leader of no less than a thousand *Chassidim* and that one

day I would have to wait in line by the door to gain an audience with him and speak my mind. However, this was not to be, for this sterling *Tzaddik* had no wish whatsoever to become a well-known and famed *Rebbe*; instead, he loathed and hated the *Rabbonus* and the limelight. He shirked from fame and renown and pushed away the masses. Instead he sought to light a flame in the hearts of *Yidden*, to ignite the spark of the *pintele yid*, fill them with awe and fear of Heaven, true faith and strong, pure *emuna*, and a desire and passion for serving the Almighty Creator! His primary work was to gather around coarse, simple Jews with broken hearts, and to uplift them and aid them to grow and expand till they became precious vessels serving *Hashem* with no ulterior motives. He did not want any *sheine yidden*, accomplished Jews, scholars and good characters who had already reached any level of devotion and did not need him to raise and uplift them. For such *Chassidim* he had no desire at all.

Once, one of the fine, *sheine Yidden* of *Yerushalayim* approached Rav Ahrele in my presence and said to him, "Rav Ahrele, begin your *tefillos* on *Shabbos* just one hour earlier at seven thirty in the morning and I will bring you two hundred accomplished *yungeleit* to *daven* with you!"

"Listen," explained Rav Ahrele, "I cannot possibly fulfill your request. We finish our *tisch* late – after *chatzos* – and we must wake on *Shabbos* later than during the week so that we have properly rested for our devotions. Then there are *hachonos*, spiritual preparations and the *mikve* and it all takes time; I cannot possibly begin one hour earlier."

When the latter had departed, Rav Ahrele turned to us and said, "I didn't really tell him the entire truth. All the excuses I made are true indeed; however, the real *emes* is that I do not wish to begin my *davening* one hour earlier precisely because it would attract them. I start



davening one hour later so that those two hundred *yungeleit* should not come to me! I don't look for finished, accomplished *sheine yidden*, especially those who have a hard time listening to what I say. They cannot humble and subjugate themselves – I have nothing to do with such Jews! I

search specifically for a *golem* – a shapeless mass that I can fashion with my own hands into a form that can serve *Hashem* – these I can transform into shining *yungeleit* who accept my words with truth and humility.” That was the way of the *Shomer Emunim*.



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

A Talmid of the Ba'al Shem Tov

From my new upcoming book on *Simcha*:

### **What *Simcha* Can Accomplish**

A wedding procession once passed by the home of the Rebbe Reb Zusha. Upon hearing the music and seeing the procession, the Rebbe Reb Zusha went outside and began to dance and make merry before the groom and bride. When he had finished and come home, the members of his household berated the *Tzaddik* that it was dishonorable for an elderly *Rebbe* such as himself to go out and dance in the streets.

“Let me tell you a story,” answered the Rebbe Reb Zusha, (and he spoke of himself humbly, in the third person as was his custom): “In Zusha’s youth, Zusha was a *talmid* of the Zlotschover *Maggid*. Once, during our studies together, the *Maggid* grew impatient with Zusha and he yelled at Zusha. Afterward, he regretted this and asked Zusha to forgive him. ‘Of course *Rebbe*, I forgive you,’ was Zusha’s reply. Then again before Zusha lay down to sleep, again the *Maggid* showed up and asked forgiveness. ‘Yes, yes, *Rebbe* – I forgive you!’ was Zusha’s reply again.

“Then, as I lay down in bed before sleep had overcome me, his saintly father, Rav Yitzchok of Drovitch, may his memory be a blessing, appeared to me. Rav Yitzchok turned to me and said, ‘I left one son, just one precious son in this world before I died, and you wish to destroy him all

because he insulted and yelled at you?!’ he accused.

“‘*Rebbe*,’ I entreated him, ‘Zusha has already forgiven him twice with all my heart and soul!’

“‘Humph, you call that forgiveness?’ Rav Yitzchok challenged me back. ‘Come with me and I will teach how to truly forgive someone completely.’

“And so I got out of bed, dressed and followed Rav Yitzchok as he led me toward the bathhouse. When we got there, Rav Yitzchok commanded Zusha to disrobe and enter the waters of the *mikve* and submerge and immerse myself completely three times under the waters, and with each submersion to recite wholeheartedly that I forgave his son, the Zlotschover *Maggid*. Zusha did so.

“When I finished, I saw that Rav Yitzchok’s faced glowed and shone brightly with a blinding other-worldly light. I asked him what the source of such a shining countenance was, and he taught Zusha that he merited such a shining light because he was careful and diligent in fulfilling the three rules of Rav Nechunia *ben* HaKaneh (mentioned in *Megilla* 28a):

1. I never honored myself through my fellow’s shame.
2. I never went to bed before having forgiven anyone who had caused me any pain.
3. I was easy-going with my money

for charitable causes.

“Furthermore,” added Rav Yitzchok, ‘you should know that whatever I achieved through diligence in fulfilling these three rules, can also be achieved through *Simcha* – joy.’

“Therefore,” concluded the Rebbe Reb Zusha, “when I saw the wedding procession and the opportunity to rejoice, I ran outside to dance and grasp the opportunity to rejoice in *Simcha shel mitzva!*” (*Sippurei Chassidim*).



### **A Revealing P'sak Din**

The *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz used to relate how once Rav Yitzchok of Hamburg sat together with Rav Yitzchok of Drovitch to *pasken* (rule over) a matter of Jewish law.

The case before them involved a wealthy merchant from Brode who had passed away suddenly, leaving no will. Another merchant claimed that the dearly departed owed him a loan that had never been repaid and that the orphans should pay him from their inheritance.

Rav Itzikel Hamburger ordered the orphans to swear the traditional oath that their father had not left any instructions regarding such a debt and that they were then exempt by *halocha* to pay it.

Rav Yitzchok of Drovitch, however, said, “My esteemed colleague – the *halocha* is on your side. What should I do, though – how can I agree when I see the soul of the departed standing right here and he confesses that he does indeed owe the money?”

“Sorry, the *Torah* is not in Heaven,” insisted Rav Itzikel Hamburger. “We must rule according to the *halocha*. Besides, you say you see him, but I don’t.”

To which Rav Yitzchok of Drovitch replied, “Nu.” At that moment, Rav Itzikel Hamburger’s eyes and ears were opened, and when he too heard the words of the *meis* (dead person), he fainted! When he was revived, he turned to his colleague and stated, “Nonetheless, the *Din Torah* is with the side of the orphans.” He wrote up the judgment, to which Rav Yitzchok of Drovitch affixed his signature, and the orphans were sent on their way.



To be said on Gimmel Nissan, the day of Zevulun’s Nosi

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלוקי ואלוקי אבותי  
שיהיו מזונותי ופרנסתי ופרנסת אנשי ביתי  
עם מזונות אנשי כל עמך בית ישראל,  
מוכתרים ומאומתים ומצדיקים בידיך.  
ואל תצריכני לידי מתנת בשר ודם ולא לידי הלואתם,  
אלא לידך המלאה והרחבה. עיני כל אליך ישרו,  
ואתה נותן להם את אכלם בעתו. פותח את ידך ומשביע לכל חי רצון.  
יהיו לרצון אמרי פי והגיון לבי לפניך, ה' צורי וגואלי.

אתה הוא ה' האלקים הָזֶן וּמַפְרִיֵּס וּמַכְלִיֵּל  
מִקְרָנֵי רָאִמִּים עַד בִּיצֵי כְנָסִים  
הַטְרִיפְנִי לַחֵם חֶקִי וְהַמְצֵא לִי וּלְכָל בְּנֵי בֵיתִי  
מִזֻּנוֹתַי קוֹדֶם שְׁאֶצְטַרְךָ לָהֶם בְּנִחַת וְלֹא בְצַעַר בְּהִתֵּר וְלֹא בְאִסּוּר  
בְּכַבּוּד וְלֹא בְבִזְיוֹן לַחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם מְשַׁפֵּעַ בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה

**מִשְׁפַּע בִּרְכָה עֲלִיּוֹנָה כְּדֵי שְׂאוּכַל לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנָךְ  
וְלַעֲסוֹק בְּתוֹרָתְךָ וְלִקְיָם מִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְאֵל תִּצְרִיכֵנִי לִידֵי מִתְנַת בְּשֵׁר וְדָם  
וַיִּקְיָם בִּי מִקְרָא שְׁפָתַי פֹּתַח אֶת יָדְךָ וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רְצוֹן:**

It is known that the day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Nisan is *mesugol* for *parnossa*. The source for this is *Sefer Chaim V'Sholom* (*Vayeitzei*), from the Munkatcher Rav (the *Minchas Elozor*) who says he heard from Rav Yechezkel Shraga of Shiniva (*Divrei Yechezkel*) that the day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Nisan, when the *Nosi* of Zevulun is read, is *mesugol* for *parnossa* and *ashirus*. This sounds like any one of the other numerous *segulos* for *parnossa*. That's why I think it's a disservice to tell anyone this without also telling him what it says before that on the very same page.

He starts off the page by explaining that *וּלְזִבּוּלֵן אָמַר שְׂמָה זִבּוּלֵן בְּצִאתְךָ* means that through Zevulun's *הוצאות* (hinted by *בצאתך*) for *Torah* (his giving money to Yissochor so he can learn *Torah*) the *Torah* is his reward, but Zevulun will also be happy (*שמה*) in this world immediately since he needs to make more money in order to support *Talmidei Chachomim*. This seems to be the lesson we should take out of it. By supporting people who learn *Torah* – everyone according to his means – we can be worthy of getting *parnossa*. This should get those people who speak disparagingly of *Talmidei Chachomim* who are supported to stop speaking thus, as really the *Talmidei Chachomim* are doing the giver a favor.

*וּלְזִבּוּלֵן אָמַר שְׂמָה זִבּוּלֵן* is equal to *באמת*, hinting at dealing honestly. *וּלְזִבּוּלֵן אָמַר שְׂמָה* is also *meramez* to *simcha* being *mesugol* for *parnossa*. Rav Nosson Breslover once told someone with financial troubles that *simcha* is *mesugol* for *parnossa*. The man replied that it was difficult to be happy in his present situation. Rav Nosson responded, "But what won't a person do for *parnossa*?" (The same story is told over with the *Yismach Yisroel* of Alexander.) Rav Mendel Riminover says a *remez* to *simcha* being *mesugol* for *parnossa* is the last letters of *את ידך* and *והיית אך שמה* are the same and they are a Name connected to *parnossa*. The first letters of *וּלְזִבּוּלֵן אָמַר שְׂמָה* are equal to the first letters of *והיית אך שמה*. This is also *meramez* in the *Mishna*: *איזה הוא עשיר השמה בחלקו*. How does one become an *עשיר*? – *השמה בחלקו* – by being happy with one's lot.

*פרשת המן* reminding us of *המן זבולן*.

Lea said regarding *וּלְזִבּוּלֵן* that Hashem had given her a *זבד טוב*. *Rashi* says that this means as *Onkelos* translates it, *חלק טב* – "a good portion". The *gematria* of *זבד* is equal to *הצלחה*. The word *וּלְזִבּוּלֵן* in *ב"ש* is *עשפכט*, equal to 479 – the *gematria* of *בזעת*, as in *בזעת אפיק תאכל לחם*. The last letters of *וּלְזִבּוּלֵן אָמַר שְׂמָה* equal *לחם*. This *pasuk* teaches us that although there are people who seem to amass great wealth without breaking a sweat, the *pasuk* is teaching that if one thinks *בזעת אפיק*, meaning one's own efforts are what makes – as the *pasuk* says: *ואמרת בלבבך כחי ועצם ידי*, then no matter how much one may have, it will never be enough (as *Chazal* teach that if one has a hundred he wants two hundred). Then despite all you may have, *תאכל לחם*, it seems like you only have bread. The *gematria* of *בזעת* with the *kollel* is equal to the last letters of *וואמרת בלבבך כחי ועצם ידי*. The *posuk* then says: *עד שובך אל האדמה כי ממנה לקחת כי עפר אתה ואל עפר תשוב* – which can be read as: until he does *teshuva* and realizes that he is just dust and powerless, as *Avrohom Avinu* said: *ואני עפר ואפר* – "I am but dust and ashes". When someone comes to the realization that every single great idea and every single penny comes only from *Hashem*, (as is hidden in the *pesukim*, *אליף* is equal to *אליף*, which alludes to *Hashem* who is One and the *אלוהי של עולם* and the first letters of *כחי ועצם* equal twenty-six, *Hashem's Name*) then even if he only has

bread, he feels like he has everything, as the *Mishna* says: איזה הוא עשיר השמח בחלקו. He is then taken out of the curse of *בזעת אפך תאכל לחם*. *Hashem* is saying אפך, meaning “(by the sweat of) your face”. When you take the ך off to make it אפי which would be referring to *Hashem*, then you have the first letters of ידך – פותח את ידך – we ask *Hashem* to “open His hand” since we can’t do anything on our own. We can then realize there is only One Who controls everything, as *בזעת שמוע ישראל ד' אלקינו ד' אחד* with the *kollel* is equal to אחד.

*Rashi* on the words, *בזעת אפך*, says: “after you toil a lot”. But many toil and barely put food on the table! לאחר שתטריח בו הרבה – “after you toil” can mean two things: 1) After you are done with thinking that your own toil makes *parnossa*. 2) Reading it with a comma, לאחר שתטריח, בו הרבה. After toiling hard by working on your *emuna*, then הרבה. This doesn’t mean quantity, rather quality. There will be lots of *shefa*; the money will come from the side of *kedusha*, as opposed to one who thinks he gets money on his own, and has the money coming from the “other side”. A *remez* to this is that בו הרבה is the same *gematria* as טהור.

The Munkatcher *Rav* shows how the name of זבולן is equal to ninety-five, which will be equal to the Names of *Hashem* – “קיי”ק אדנ” – when *Moshiach* comes. After he speaks about the *segula* for *parnossa*, he says that we should understand that *Nisan* is a time of *Geula*. As *Rav Gamliel Rabinovitz* constantly says, we need *parnossa* to live but we should remember that *Hashem* has no house, no wife (we are in *golus*), most of his children don’t know how to say *Shema*. He says that *Hashem* doesn’t even have bread, so to speak, as we say in *korbonos*: את קרבני לחמי. He says that besides constantly saying, “Give me, give me,” we should ask *Hashem* to rebuild His house.

We should all remember that the *berocha* of *parnossa* on this day comes from supporting *Talmidei Chachomim*. May we all be *zoche* to have *parnossa berevach* and do good things with it, and may we be *zoche* to realize what we are missing without *Hashem’s* House, so that we can *daven* properly for its rebuilding.



לזכר נשמות אמנו החשובה, נפש יקרה ועדינה  
אשה יראת ה' ובעלת מדות טובות מרת זיסל ז"ל  
בת הרה"ח מו"ה מאיר זאב הכהן כ"ץ ע"ה הי"ד מעיר נירעדהאז יע"א  
ונכדת הרה"ק רבי אהרן צבי טערקלטייב ז"ע מבריד  
אשת הרה"ח מו"ה אברהם חיים ע"ה גאלדענבערג

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

She transmitted a strong value system stressing *Emunas Hashem* and *Tzaddikim*. Her love for stories of *tzaddikim* gave her *chiyus* and she conveyed that *chizuk* to anyone who met her. In her eighty-nine years of life, there wasn't one person who had an untoward word or adverse feelings about her. She loved her family deeply and immensely. May *Hashem* console her family and may she be a constant *melitza yeshura*, אמן.  
(מתוך אמונה טהורה) בדרך המסורה (והתנהגה כאשה כשרה) לכל משפחתה, היא הודה היא הדרה  
-נקיה וטהורה היוצר וצר צורה (וקיבלה הגזירה) נפטרה בש"ט בת תשעים שנה ביום כ"ד לחודש  
כסליו (ערב חנוכה) שנת תשע"ח לפ"ק תמליץ טוב בעד משפחתה היקרה ותקים לתחייה לקץ הימין  
מהרה תנ"צ ב'ה'



# Zera Shimshon



# Tazria

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

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

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

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

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

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

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

לזכר נשמת

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מיכאל זצ"ל

בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

לזכות חיים דוד בן מייבא חוה להצלחה וסייעתא דשמיא בכל מעשה ידי ובכל הענינים

זכות רבינו זיע"א יעמוד לזיווג הגון בקרוב עבור שושנה נחמה בת חנה פעסא ולרפואה שלימה ליוכבד בת דבורה ולכל משפחתה שימלא הקב"ה משאלות לבם לטובה במהרה ולזכות רבקה רוזא בת פייגא לזיווג הגון בקרוב בתוך שאר ישראל לזכות החפץ בעילום שמו לזווג בניו ובנותיו בקרוב בזכות רבינו זיע"א

והובא אל אהרן הכהן (יג, ב')

*And he shall be brought to Aharon the Kohen (13:2).*

The Zera Shimshon asks why is it the Kohen that decides if the Tzra'as is pure or impure? Shouldn't it be done by a Rav or a Talmid Chacham who usually are the ones that decide the Halacha?

As well, the Medrash (Rabbah 15:8) says that when Moshe Rabbeinu heard that Aharon was going to have to check Tzra'as, he was very distressed. He felt that it was below Aharon's dignity to be checking other people's leprosy. Hashem responded to Moshe Rabbeinu, "Does he not benefit from the twenty four gifts that the Kohen receives?"

On this Medrash, the Zera Shimshon asks - how was Moshe Rabbeinu's concern about Aharon's honor addressed by Hashem's answer?

The Zera Shimshon answers this as follows:

Tzra'as primarily comes as a result of speaking lashon hara. When someone speaks lashon hara about another's shortcomings and flaws, in reality, he himself has that very deficiency that he is trying to bring out about his friend. This is taught in the Gemara (Kiddushin 70a) that says, anyone who invalidates another, does so (subconsciously) with a flaw that he himself has. As well, the Gemara says (ibid 71b) that if a person is constantly quarreling with others it is a sign that there is a flaw in his lineage.

The Gemara (ibid) says that Hashem only rests his divine presence on families that have a pure lineage. The Rambam (Terumos 6:2) rules, that Teruma may only be eaten by a Kohen that has a known, pure lineage.

This is why the Kohanim were the ones that were nominated to check Tzra'as. Being that the Kohanim had to have a pure lineage in order to be able to eat Teruma and Kodshim, Hashem wanted them to know who it was that got Tzra'as since Tzra'as is a symbol of someone who is at ill with other which itself is a sign of an impure lineage. By knowing who comes from impure lineage, the Kohanim can stay away from marrying them and thus keep their families pure!

This also sheds light on Hashem's answer to Moshe Rabbeinu who claimed that having to check other's Tzra'as is below Aharon's dignity. To this Hashem responded, "Does he not benefit from the twenty four gifts that the Kohen receives?"

Simply, it would seem that Hashem was saying that Aharon had to earn the twenty four gifts, and checking Tzra'as was one of the ways of earning them.

Based on the above however, the Zera Shimshon explains that Hashem meant to tell Moshe Rabbeinu that since Aharon ate from the twenty four different gifts and only the Kohanim of pure lineage were allowed to eat from these gifts, he (and his descendants) had to be the ones to check for Tzra'as. By doing so, they would know who did not have a pure lineage (the quarrelers that were afflicted with Tzra'as) and would keep away from marrying those families. In turn, their own families of pure lineage who would be able to eat from the twenty four gifts received by the Kohen.

(Do Not Read On Shabbos) BH The Sefer Ma'amar Sod Etzba Elokim from R' Shimshon of Ostropoli (1599-1648) is now available (Another R' Shimshon who's torah we work on BH. Not to be confused with the Zera Shimshon). The famed 'Erev Pesach Letter' that was revealed to R' Shimshon in a dream with an assurance of life, honor and prosperity to those who learn it once a year and especially on Erev Pesach. **This assurance, Ashkenazic, Sephardic and Chassidic gedolim for generations attributed great miracles to.** In this sefer (which is also available in Hebrew) the dazzling calculations of R' Shimshon on the ten plagues, are enhanced exponentially by the brilliant explanation of the Shemesh U'Magen. Join the many that have been blown away by the revelations of this Sefer. (The English edition includes other numerical, Pesach related pieces by R' Shimshon and a biography on R' Shimshon.) For those that can access the web, go to lulu.com and type in 'Maamar Sod' in the search box. Otherwise, call 1.844.212.0689 and ask for ISBN 978-0-359-52672-7 (Hebrew) or ISBN 978-0-359-52668-0 (English)

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