

MEOROS HATZADDIKIM

— Lights Of Our Righteous —

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

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

Parshas Pekudei & Shabbos Mevarchim Nissan & Parshas Hachodesh

CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA

לזכר נשמת

ר' זכרי' שמעון הכהן בן יצחק

נדפס באדיבות

RAMAPOST
MARKETING | DESIGN | PRINT | MAIL

"ESSENTIALLY" ABOVE & BEYOND!

To add your shul, or request
additional copies, please email:
mitzvos@ramapost.com

לזכות רפואה שלמה
מלכה בת רחל
מיכאל בן שולמית יעקב
משה בן דבורה שירה
ואברהם יהודה בן שרה רבקה

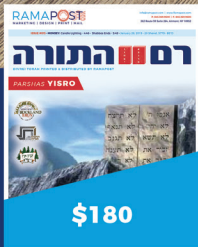
**“These Are The Reckonings Of The Mishkan, The
Tabernacle Of Testimony Which Were Reckoned At
Moshe's Request.” (38:21)**

SPONSOR A DVAR TORAH

SPONSOR AN ENTIRE WEEK FOR \$360

Following Daas Torah, Ramapost is sharing the opportunity to sponsor weekly Divrei Torah.

The following publications are read by hundreds of people every Shabbos. Sponsor an individual Dvar Torah or the entire collection, in the zechus of a choleh, l'eiluy nishmas, or for someone in need. A small message can be put on the Dvar Torah of your choice which will be distributed across Monsey and online.



\$180

Ram HaTorah
150 WEEKLY*
Compilation of Divrei Torah
(English & Hebrew)



\$126

Meoros Hatzadikkim
300 WEEKLY*
Dvar Torah & Weekly Yahrzeits
(English)



\$100 (MONTHLY)

Divrei Chizuk
800 MONTHLY*
R' Gamliel Rabinowitz
(Hebrew)



\$100

Torah Wellsprings
200 WEEKLY*
R' Elimelech Biderman
(English / Yiddish)



\$72

Sicha Hashavua Hitkashrut & Likutay Torah
125 WEEKLY*
(Hebrew / English)



\$54

Oneg Shabbos
50 WEEKLY*
Compilation of Divrei Torah
(English)



\$*

Areivim
400 WEEKLY*
R' Shmuel Gluck
(English)
*CONTACT INFO@

*AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED



SUBSCRIBE ONLINE!

FILL OUT THE ONLINE FORM TO SUBSCRIBE:
RAMAPOST.COM/SUBSCRIBE-DIVREI-TORAH

בסייד

Ramapost offers a weekly printed subscription to the following Divrei Torah:

Please fill out the online form at RAMAPOST.COM/SUBSCRIBE-DIVREI-TORAH to subscribe. We ask that your free printed divrei torah be picked up every Friday at our Monsey (Rt 59) or Wesely Hills/Pomona location.



Meoros Hatzadikkim
Dvar Torah & Weekly Yahrzeits (English)
Ramapost.com/meoros-hatzadikkim



Sichat Hashavua
(Hebrew)



Likutay Torah
(English)



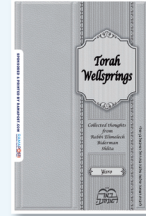
Oneg Shabbos
(English)



Hitkashrut
(Hebrew)



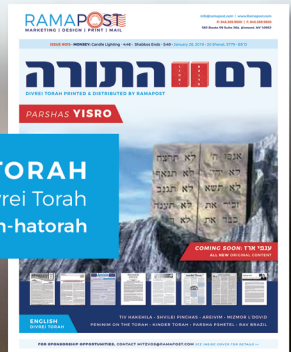
Ohr Chaim
(Hebrew)



Torah Wellsprings
R' Elimelech Biderman (English)



RAM HATORAH
Compilation of Divrei Torah
Ramapost.com/ram-hatorah



ENGLISH DIVREI TORAH



TIV HAKEHILA · SHVILEI PINCHAS · AREIVIM · ANFEI EREZ · MIZMOR L'DOVID · PENINIM · KINDER TORAH · PARSHA PSHETEL · RAV BRAZIL

RAM HATORAH is a free weekly compilation of divrei torah that is organized, printed and distributed by Ramapost to hundreds of readers. You can view/download past and present editions at



דברי תורה עברית



MONTHLY



RAMAPOST.COM/RAM-HATORAH. טיב הקהילה · שבילי פנחס · דברי חזק והתעוררות · חוט של חסד · המברך · דברי שיח

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT MITZVOS@RAMAPOST.COM

Our sages taught in *Ta'anis* (8b) that blessings do not rest on things that are measured and weighed. However here regarding the labor and work of the *Mishkan* which was all done according to exacting reckonings and specific measurements, even so blessing rested in it. As it says in *Shir HaShirim* (7:5)

“Your eyes are like the pools of *Cheshbon*.”

The root of the evil eye comes from the same source as Bila'am's power, that wherever he gazed there was a blight. This is because when that wicked individual would gaze upon something he separated and detached it from its root source up above, from the source of life since he was aflame in desire for that and it was important in his eyes, however he did not see the power of Hashem which was found in that object.

However regarding the offspring of the Jewish people it says in *Shir HaShirim* (7:5) “Your eyes are like the pools of *Cheshbon*,” even something that has measure and is counted (*Cheshbon* is a place but it also means a reckoning or measurements). Even regarding such things, their gaze is not harmful since each object which a Jew sees, he recognizes the power of the Creator that is in it. Since he attaches that object to its supernal root source, then with this gaze he is able to draw down blessings and shefa from the upper source to this object. This is the meaning of “Your eyes are like the pools,” the eyes become as pools and wellsprings of shefa, even to an object that is counted and reckoned - “*Cheshbon*.”

This then is the meaning of “These are the reckonings of the *Mishkan*,” in the *Mishkan* everything was counted and reckoned several times to be exact in the number, nonetheless there was blessing and the Divine presence of the *Shechina* rested there. All the more so here the counting and reckoning was for a Divine purpose. This is why it is written in the verse that it was reckoned “at *Moshe's* request,” since this counting came out of *Moshe's* mouth who was attached cleaving in dveykus and supernal sanctity, then it even added blessings.

Notes:

See *Zohar* I 68b “What is written regarding *Bilaam*? “The words of a man with an

open eye." (*Bamidbar* 24:15) He had an evil eye and everywhere he would gaze he would draw down a spirit of destruction. This is the manner in which he wished to gaze upon Israel, since he would destroy wherever his eyes would gaze." See also *Ramban's* commentary to *Bamidbar* 22:35.

See *Zohar* II 225:1 "Rav Yitzchak asked Rabbi Shimon, since we know that blessings do not rest on an object that has been counted and reckoned, why was everything in the mishkan counted and reckoned? It has been said that in any place where sanctity rests, then if the counting is also done for a holy purpose, then blessings continually rest there and do not depart.

From where is this known? From Ma'aser tithes. Since it is counted for a holy purpose, it is blessed, all the more so regarding the *mishkan*. However any other thing that does not come from the side of holiness, if they are counted or reckoned blessings do not rest there. Since the other side, known as the evil eye can have control over it. And since the evil eye can control it, blessings do not reside there."

Gedolim Be'misasm Yoser



**YAHREITS FOR THE 29TH OF ADAR ~ BEGINS FRIDAY NIGHT
(03-29-2025)**



Rav Yitzchok ben Rabbeinu Asher of Speyer (4956 / 1196 - 829th Yahrzeit)



Rav Shlomo HaKohen Rabinowitz of Radomsk - Tiferes Shlomo (5626 / 1866 - 159th Yahrzeit)

They called him the Tzaddik and author of the book "*Tiferes Shlomo*" of Radomsk. He is Grand Rabbi Shlomo Hakohen Rabinovitch of Radomsk (*Tiferes Shlomo*) - First Radomsker Rebbe. His book "*Tiferes Shlomo*" (1867-69) is considered one of the classic works of Chasidism and which is constantly being reprinted. He became Rov of Radomsk in 1842. Many wondrous stories are told about him.



Rav Avraham Shaag Zwebner of Kobelsdorf - Ohel Avrohom (5636 / 1876 - 149th Yahrzeit)

Born on 4 *Iyar* 5561/1801 in Freistat, Hungary. His father, Harav Yehoshua Leib Zwebner, was one of the outstanding students of the *Noda B'Yehudah*. Rav Avraham himself was a *talmid* of the *Chasam Sofer*. He served as Rav of Czeszté and then in Kobelsdorf, one of the "seven communities" in Hungary. In 1873 at age 72, Reb Avraham Shaag decided to make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael. His closest *talmid*, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, unable to part from his *Rebbe*, joined him.



Rav Chaim Shmuel Birnbaum - Maseh Choshev (5647 / 1887 - 138th Yahrzeit)



Rav Pinchos Nosson Safrin of Rudik (5692 / 1932 - 93rd Yahrzeit)



Rav Chaim Welfried of Lodz (5702 / 1942 - 83rd Yahrzeit)



Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky - Iyunim B'Mikrah (5746 / 1986 - 39th Yahrzeit)

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky (1891-1986) was born on the 21 *Adar*. On 11th Av 1937, he left for America. In 1945, he accepted the request of Reb Shraga Feivel Mendelovitz that he take up the position of *rosh yeshiva* in *Mesivta Torah Vodaas*, a position he kept for the rest of his life.



Dr. Joseph Kaminetzky (5759 / 1999 - 26th Yahrzeit)

Dr. Joseph Kaminetsky (1911-1999). Born in Brooklyn, he attended Yeshiva Rabbi Chaim Berlin, and later Talmudical Academy High School on East Broadway. When he began his tenure at *Torah Umesorah*, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools, in 1946, he set as his goal that every town and city with a Jewish population of at least 5,000 have a Jewish day school. In 1980, he retired and moved to Yerushalayim, to devote himself to full-time learning.



Rav Mordechai Hager - Vizhnitz Monsey Rebbe (5778 / 2018 - 7th Yahrzeit)

The *rebbe* was born on 18 *Tammuz* 5682, son of the fourth *rebbe of Vizhnitz*, Rav Chaim Meir Hager, *the Imrei Chaim*. Rav Mordechai, his wife, and family traveled to the United States, where he began serving as Rav of the *Vizhnitzer Chassidim* in America - first in Boro Park, and then in Williamsburg. In 5724 he moved to Monsey. The *rebbe's* brother was Rav Moshe Hager, the *Yeshuos Moshe zy"a*, the *Vizhnitzer Rebbe* of Bnei Brak. Rav Mordechai and his brother Rav Moshe Yehoshua assumed the mantle of leadership over 40 years ago with the passing of their father, the *Imrei Chaim*, with the *Yeshuos Moshe* leading the *kehillah* in Bnei Brak and Rav Mordechai leading the *kehillah* in Monsey, NY.

**Yahrzeits for the 1st of Nissan ~ Begins Saturday Night
(03-30-2025)**



Nadav and Avihu (2450 / -1311 - 3,335th Yahrzeit)



Rav Aryeh Leib - Rav of Belz & Horodna (5489 / 1729 - 296th Yahrzeit)

Rav Aryeh Leib was the son-in-law of Rav Zecharia Mendel, *mechaber* of the *Ba'er Heiteiv*. He served as Rav in Belz from 5473 until 5478, and was later appointed as Rav of Horodna in 5480.



Rav Yeshayahu Mordechai Bassan - Lachmei Todah (5499 / 1739 - 286th Yahrzeit)

(Some say the Yahrzeit is on the 2nd of Nissan)

Rav Yeshayahu Mordechai Bassan, born in 5433 (1673) in Verona, Italy, was the son of Rav Yisroel Chizkiyahu and was best known as the *rebbe* of the *Ramchal*, Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto. He studied under Rav Moshe Zakut (known as the *Ramaz* after his *sefer*, *Ramaz HaRomez*) in Mantuba, then served as rav in Padua from 5475-5482 (1715-1722). When his father-in-law, the *Rabach*, was *niftar* on 17 Teves 5490, he was chosen as his successor to the position of *Av Bais Din* in Reggio.



Rav Moshe of Vitebsk (5559 / 1799 - 226th Yahrzeit)



Rav Shmuel HaLevi Kellin - Machazit Hashekel (5566 / 1806 - 219th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Shmuel HaLevi Kellin (1724 - 1806) was the son of Rav Nosson Notah HaLevi and a descendant of Rav Nosson Notah Spira.



Rav Yosef of Zamotch - Mishnas Chachomim (5566 / 1806 - 219th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yisroel of Barnov (5630 / 1870 - 155th Yahrzeit)



Rav Elimelech Shapira of Grodzisk - Imrei Elimelech (5652 / 1892 - 133rd Yahrzeit)

Holy Rabbi Elimelech Shapira of Grodzisk (1824-1892), son of Rabbi Chaim Meir Yechiel the "Saraf [angel] of Moglintza" and grandson of Maggid of Koznitz and Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk. Among greatest righteous Torah giants in Poland, whose impact was great throughout the country. His rabbi, Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin, directed him to serve as leader and receive *Kvitlach*.



Rav Chaim Zundel Maccoby - Makoff - Kamenitzer Maggid (5676 / 1916 - 109th Yahrzeit)



Rav Moshe Yosef Hoffman - Rav & Av Beis Din of Pupa, Mei Be'er (5688 / 1928 - 97th Yahrzeit)

R. Moshe Yosef Hoffman, dayan of Pupa (1843-1928), was a leading Torah scholar of Hungary and Yerushalayim. Son of Michael Hoffman, disciple of the Chasam Sofer. He was appointed *dayan* and *posek* of Pupa in 1882. In 1909, he immigrated to Yerushalayim, where he established his Beis Medrash and earned the reputation of one of the foremost rabbis in the city. He authored *Mei Be'er* and *Mayim Chaim*.



Rav Elya Svei (5769 / 2009 - 16th Yahrzeit)

**Yahrzeits for the 2nd of Nissan ~ Begins Sunday Night
(03-31-2025)**



Rabbeinu Baruch (5035 / 1275 - 750th Yahrzeit)



Rav Binyomin of Lwow (5340 / 1580 - 445th Yahrzeit)

Rav Binyomin was the son of Rav Moshe. It is known that he authored the *seforim Tavnis HaBayis* and *Ohel Shel Simcha*. However, they have been lost over time.



Rav Eliyahu Kalmankash - Rav of Lublin (5393 / 1633 - 392nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Yeshayahu Mordechai Bassan - Lachmei Todah (5499 / 1739 - 286th Yahrzeit)

(Some say the Yahrzeit is on the 1st of Nissan)

Rav Yeshayahu Mordechai Bassan, born in 5433 (1673) in Verona, Italy, was the son of Rav Yisroel Chizkiyahu and was best known as the *rebbe* of the *Ramchal*, Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto. He studied under Rav Moshe Zakut (known as the *Ramaz* after his *sefer, Ramaz HaRomez*) in Mantuba, then served as *rav* in Padua from 5475-5482 (1715-1722). When his father-in-law, the *Rabach*, was *niftar* on 17 Teves 5490, he was chosen as his successor to the position of *Av Bais Din* in Reggio.



Rav Sholom DovBer Schneerson - Rebbe Rashab, Lubavitcher Rebbe (5680 / 1920 - 105th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Sholom-Dovber Schneerson [2 Nissan 5680], known as the *Rebbe Reshab*, was the fifth Rebbe of the Lubavitcher dynasty. He is the author of hundreds of major tracts in the exposition of Chassidic thought. In 1915, after 102 years of four Chabad rebbes living in Lubavitch, he transferred the center of the movement to Rostov-on-the-Don.



Rav Yaakov Yosef Twersky of Skver (5728 / 1968 - 57th Yahrzeit)

Rebbe Yaakov Yosef Twersky of Skver (1899-1968) was a leading Rebbe in the United States. Born in Skvyra, he served as Rebbe in Kalarash (Călărași, Romania). After the Holocaust, he reached New York, where he established his community in a distinctive neighborhood - New-Square, community reputed until this day for its conservative character, preserving authentic Chassidic Judaism like it was in the European Shtetls before the Holocaust.


**Yahrzeits for the 3rd of Nissan ~ Begins Monday Night
(04-01-2025)**




Rav Aryeh Leib Grossnass - Lev Aryeh




Rav Shmuel Yehuda Katzenellenbogen (5357 / 1597 - 428th Yahrzeit)

 **Rav Efraim Ashkenazi (5532 / 1772 - 253rd Yahrzeit)**


 **Rav Binyomin Zev Tzvi Wolf of Zbariz - Razin D'Oraysa (5582 / 1822 - 203rd Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Eliyahu Meir Finkel - Nasi Yeshivas Mir, Yerushalayim (5757 / 1997 - 28th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Dovid Stavsky (5764 / 2004 - 21st Yahrzeit)**

Rav Dovid Stavsky (1930-2004), served in the Columbus (Ohio) Jewish community for the last past 47 years of his life, including as Rabbi of Beth Jacob Congregation.

**Yahrzeits for the 4th of Nissan ~ Begins Tuesday Night
(04-02-2025)**

 **Rav Dovid of Kaminka (5487 / 1727 - 298th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Aharon Shmuel of Stefin - Vetzivoh Hakohen (5574 / 1814 - 211th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg - Hakesav Vehakabalah (5625 / 1865 - 160th Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi was born in 5545 (1785) in Lissa, in the province of Posen, Germany. This city was renowned as a center of Torah scholarship, as well as for its great rabbanim. The father of Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg, Rabbi Gamliel, was a nurse. It seems that Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi began his education in the city of his birth by studying Torah with the local Rav. At that time the Rav of Lissa was the Gaon Rabbi Zechariah Mendel, the son of the Gaon Rabbi David Tebla (the previous Rav of Lissa). Rabbi Zechariah Mendel was a friend of Rabbi Akiva Eiger, whom he corresponded with.

 **Rav Eliezer Yerucham Baron of Radoshitz (5652 / 1892 - 133rd Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Yochanon Twersky of Rachmastrivka (5655 / 1895 - 130th Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Yochanon Twersky, (4 Nissan 1895) the first Rachmastrivka Rebbe was known for his humility. He was the last to pass away of the eight sons of Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl and was highly respected among the righteous of the generation.

 **Rav Pinchos Chaim Klein - Av Beis Din of Selish (5683 / 1923 - 102nd Yahrzeit)**

**Yahrzeits for the 5th of Nissan ~ Begins Wednesday Night
(04-03-2025)**



**Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel of Apta, Mezhibuzh - Ohev Yisroel, Apta Rav
(5585 / 1825 - 200th Yahrzeit)**

The *Apta Rav* author of *Ohev Yisroel* was born in Żmigród, Poland in 1748, he passed away on 5th of *Nissan* 1825, he was laid to rest in Mezhibuzh and his *matzeiva* is in the same Ohel as the *Baal Shem Tov*.



Rav Osher Zolky - Rav & Av Beis Din of Sanz (5590 / 1830 - 195th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yehoshua Freund of Kraly (5608 / 1848 - 177th Yahrzeit)



**Rav Shneur Zalman Fradkin of Lublin - Toras Chessed (5662 / 1902 - 123rd
Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Shneur Zalman Fradkin of Lublin [5 *Nissan* 5662], A chasid of the Tzemech Tzedek and Maharash of Lubavitch, was chief rabbi in Polotsk and then Lublin. When he made aliyah to the Holy Land, he became a major rabbinical figure in the Jerusalem community. He is best remembered for his important scholarly book, *Toras Chessed*.



**Rav Malkiel Tzvi HaLevi Tenenbaum of Lomza - Divrei Malkiel (5670 / 1910 -
115th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Malkiel Tzvi HaLevi Tennenbaum (1847-1910), a prominent rabbi and *posek* of his generation, was renowned for his great Torah genius and wrote many responsa, which were printed in the seven-volume Responsa *Divrei Malkiel*. He was known as a holy person and many approached him for blessing and deliverance. Rav Herzog wrote about him that "in addition to his halachic brilliance, he was well-versed in kabbalah and studied Torah secrets well into the night".



**Rav Tzvi Elimelech Spira of Bluzhov - Tzvi Latzaddik (5684 / 1924 - 101st
Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Reuven Yosef Gershonowitz - Tzaddik of Ofakim, Rosh Yeshiva of
Yeshivat Ha'Negev (5755 / 1995 - 30th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Reuven Yosef was born in Lapitsh in the Minsk area of the Ukraine, he was taken by his father to the *yeshiva katana* in Lida at the age of 10. He continued his learning at Kamenitz in 1931, under Rav Baruch Ber. In 1936, Rav Reuven joined his family in Eretz Yisrael; he became a *talmid* of the *Lomza Yeshiva* in Petach Tikva. In 1946, he began giving *chaburos* in the *yeshiva*. In 1965, he became *rosh yeshiva* of *Chemdas Shmuel* in a *moshav* called Chemed. In 1976, Rav Reuven was called upon to serve as *rosh yeshiva* of *Yeshivas Hanegev* in Netivot.

**Yahrzeits for the 6th of Nissan ~ Begins Thursday Night
(04-04-2025)**



Rav Yaakov Temerlis (5428 / 1668 - 357th Yahrzeit)



Rav Chaim Abulafia of Teveria - Chacham Chaim Abulafia of Teveria (5504 / 1744 - 281st Yahrzeit)

(Some say the Yahrzeit is on the 7th of Nissan the 16th of Nissan)

Rav Chaim was born in Chevron in 5420 (1660). When he returned to Eretz Yisrael from Turkey, Rav Chaim was asked to serve as Rav of Tzefat. In the year 5485 (1725), Rav Yisrael Benveniste passed away and Rav Chaim was chosen to succeed him as the Chief Rabbi of Izmir. After serving as Rav of Teveria for four years and rebuilding the *kehillah*, Rav Chaim passed away on 6 (some say 7) *Nissan*.



Rav Yerucham of Tarnow (5659 / 1899 - 126th Yahrzeit)



Rav Meir Dan Platzky - Klei Chemdah (5688 / 1928 - 97th Yahrzeit)

The Prodigy of Kutno. "Rabbi Meir Dan", as he was called and known among the Jews of Poland, was a giant among rabbis. He served as the rabbi of the community of Dvart [Warta], the rabbi of the community of Ostrow Mazowiecka, and in his last days as head of the *Mesivta yeshiva* in Warsaw, the capital of Poland. He was one of the devoted and sharpest Chassidim of Ger.



Rav Aharon Roth - Shomer Emunim (5707 / 1947 - 78th Yahrzeit)

Rav Ahrele Roth, founder of *Chassidus Shomrei Emunim*, came to Yerushalayim in 1925. He was known for his fervent and emotional style of *tefilla*.

Biographies of the Tzaddikim



Rav Shlomo Rabinowitz Tiferes Shlomo (Adar 29, 5626 / 1866 - 159th Yahrzeit)

They called him the Tzaddik and author of the book "*Tiferes Shlomo*" of Radomsk. He is

Grand Rabbi Shlomo Hakohen Rabinovitch of Radomsk (Tiferes Shlomo) - First Radomsker Rebbe. His book "*Tiferes Shlomo*" (1867-69) is considered one of the classic works of Chasidism and which is constantly being reprinted. He became Rov of Radomsk in 1842. Many wondrous stories are told about him.

Grand Rabbi Shlomo Hakohen Rabinovitch of Radomsk (*Tiferes Shlomo*) - First Radomsker Rebbe The second Rebbe of Radomsk was Harav Avrohom Yissochor ZT"L, the *Chesed L' Avrohom* (1843 - 1892) . The third Rebbe of Radomsk was the Harav Yechezkel ZT"L, the *Knesses Yechezkel* (1864 - 1910).

geni.com



Rav Avraham Shaag Zwebner Ohel Avrohom (Adar 29, 5636 / 1876 - 149th Yahrzeit)



Born on 4 *Iyar* 5561/1801 in Freistat, Hungary. His father, Harav Yehoshua Leib Zwebner, was one of the outstanding students of the *Noda B'Yehudah*. Tradition has it that the family name changed due to a remark made by the *Noda B'Yehudah*: "When words of Torah roar, from Reb Yehoshua Leib's mouth, the world shakes." From then on, he was known as Reb Leib Shaag, based on the *pasuk*, "*Aryeh shaag, mi lo yira* — A lion has roared, who isn't frightened?" (*Amos* 3:8)

Rav Avraham himself was a *talmid* of the *Chasam Sofer*. Orphaned from his father at a young age his mother sent him to Pressburg. At age 18, the *Chasam Sofer* made his *shidduch* with Leah, the orphaned daughter of Rav Avraham Ha'Levi Shpitz, of Prossitz, Moravia.

He served as Rav of Czeszté and then in Kobelsdorf, one of the "seven communities" in Hungary. In 1873 at age 72, Reb Avraham Shaag decided to make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael. His closest *talmid*, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, unable to part from his *Rebbe*, joined him. He passed away Shabbos, 29 *Adar* 5636/1876, 3 years later and was laid to rest on Har HaZeisim.

He authored the following *seforim* *Ohel Avraham* (1881) responsa, and his *Derashot ha-Rosh* (1904) .



Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky Iyunim B'Mikrah (Adar 29, 5746 / 1986 - 39th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky (1891-1986). Born on the 21 *Adar*, in Dolhinov, he left for Minsk at the age of 11. Among his friends there were the future Rav Reuven Grozovsky, and the young Aaron Kotler. Shortly after *Pesach* in 1905, Reb Yaakov and Reb Aaron traveled to Slobodka to learn under the supervision of the *Alter of Slobodka*. Reb Yaakov also learned in Slutsk. During World War I he took refuge in Lomza in the *yeshiva* of Reb Yechiel Michel Gordon. On 22 *Sivan* 1919, he married the Rebbetzin Ita Ettel. On 11th *Av* 1937, he left for America. In 1945, he accepted the request of Reb Shraga Feivel Mendelovitz that he take up the position of *rosh yeshiva* in *Mesivta Torah Vodaas*, a position he kept for the rest of his life. His *chidushim* were printed in his *seforim* *Emes LeYaakov*, on Torah and on *Shas*. As he requested, he was buried in Brooklyn, since he pointed out that most of his family live in America and would not always be able to travel to his *kever* in Eretz Yisrael. From this, his last request we learn yet another chapter of his feelings for others.



Dr. Joseph Kaminetzky (Adar 29, 5759 / 1999 - 26th Yahrzeit)

Dr. Joseph Kaminetsky (1911-1999). Born in Brooklyn, he attended Yeshiva Rabbi Chaim Berlin, and later Talmudical Academy High School on East Broadway. After high school, he became a member of the very first class of Yeshiva College, from which he graduated magna cum laude in 1932. He later earned his doctorate in education from Teachers College at Columbia University. When he began his tenure at *Torah Umesorah*, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools, in 1946, he set as his goal that every town and city with a Jewish population of at least 5,000 have a Jewish day school. In those days, there was only a handful of *yeshivos* and day schools; there are now 600 such schools with 170,000 students all over the United States. In 1980, he retired and moved to Yerushalayim, to devote himself to full-time learning.



Rav Mordechai Hager Vizhnitz Monsey Rebbe (Adar 29, 5778 / 2018 - 7th Yahrzeit)



The *rebbe* was born on 18 *Tammuz* 5682, son of the fourth *rebbe* of *Vizhnitz*, Rav Chaim Meir Hager, *the Imrei Chaim*.

As a child he was very close to his grandfather, the *Saba Kadisha* “*Ahavas Yisrael*” of *Vizhnitz*. In 5702, he went to study under Rav Yoel of Satmar, whose views against zionism and the *medina* he adopted and followed zealously, and then for two years by Rav Yosef Greenwald of Pupa (the *Vayechi Yosef*). Throughout his life, he would consider them as his primary *rebbe*s.

In 5704, as the world closed in on Hungarian Jewry, Rav Mordechai escaped to Bucharest,

Romania, where he stayed for the duration of the war. Every year, Rav Mordechai celebrated *Lamed Dalet* of the *Omer*, the day on which he escaped and was saved.

He married Feiga Malka, the daughter of Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Twersky, the *Skverer Rebbe* in 5705. After she passed away without children, in 5706 he married her younger sister Sima Mirel.

Rav Mordechai, his wife, and family traveled to the United States, where he began serving as Rav of the *Vizhnitzer Chassidim* in America - first in Boro Park, and then in Williamsburg. In 5724 he moved to Monsey.

The *rebbe's* brother was Rav Moshe Hager, the *Yeshuos Moshe zy"a*, the *Vizhnitzer Rebbe* of Bnei Brak, father of the present *rebbe*s of *Vizhnitz* Bnei Brak. Rav Mordechai and his brother Rav Moshe Yehoshua assumed the mantle of leadership over 40 years ago with the passing of their father, the *Imrei Chaim*, with the *Yeshuos Moshe* leading the *kehillah* in Bnei Brak and Rav Mordechai leading the *kehillah* in Monsey, NY.

He passed away on 29 *Adar* 5778. The *rebbe* left behind 14 children, 8 sons and 6 daughters. All his sons assumed positions as *rebbe* in their respective communities worldwide.



Rav Aryeh Leib Rav of Belz & Horodna (*Nissan 1, 5489 / 1729 - 296th Yahrzeit*)

Rav Arye Leib was the son-in-law of Rav Zecharia Mendel, *mechaber* of the *Ba'er Heiteiv*.

He served as Rav in Belz from 5473 until 5478, and was later appointed as Rav of Horodna in 5480. His *talmid* Rav Arye Leib Epstein, *mechaber* of *Sefer Hapardes*, testified that he studied Torah all day and night and, although his deeds were secret, he testified that all the days of the week he never undressed himself at night (to put on pajamas and go to sleep in his bed). Rather, his best sleep was through the naps he took while sitting and learning, studying Torah in his chair. He passed away *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* 5489/1729.



Rav Yeshayahu Mordechai Bassan Lachmei Todah (Nissan 1, 5499 / 1739 - 286th Yahrzeit)

(Some say the Yahrzeit is on the 2nd of Nissan)

Rav Yeshaya Mordechai was born in Verona in 5433, the son of Rav Yisrael Chizkiya. He studied under Rav Moshe Zakuth (*Ramaz*) in Mantuba and became the *Rebbe* of the *Ramchal*.

After his father was *niftar* in Padova in 5444, he remained there studying and teaching Torah. He also opened a Yeshiva there.

Eventually, he moved to Mantuba and studied in the *Ramaz's Yeshiva* for three years between 5455 and 5458. During this time, he received *semicha* from the *Rabbonim* in Mantuba. After the *Ramaz* was *niftar*, during *Sukkos* of 5458, he moved to Rav Yehuda Briel's Yeshiva. Eventually, he returned to his birthplace in Verona, where he studied under Rav Mordechai Bassan. Rav Mordechai added his own *semicha* as *posek* and *moreh horo'a*, as well as in *dinei momonos* - monetary matters - to his beloved *talmid* in addition to the *semicha* he had received back in Mantuba.

In 5461 he married Yocheved, the daughter of Rav Binyomin Kohen Vitaly of Reggio, and settled there to live near his father-in-law. In 5462 His son Rav Yisrael Binyomin was born.

Between 5475 and 5482, he returned to teach Torah in Padova. Among his *talmidim* there was the famed Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, the *Ramchal*, *mechaber* of *Mesillas Yeshorim*, as well as Rav Yitzchok Marini and Rav Yeshaya Romanin. In 5483 his father-in-law requested that he come back to Reggio. Due to his age and failing health he needed his help running the *kehilla* and teaching Torah.

When his father-in-law, the *Rabach*, was *niftar* on 17 *Teves* 5490, he was chosen as his successor to the position of *Av Bais Din* in Reggio.

During the strife from Rav Chagiz and the *Rabbonim* of Venice against the *Ramchal*, he stood by his beloved *talmid* and defended him from the accusations as best he could.

He grew ill in 5497 and went to seek medical attention in Verona. After he returned to Reggio he was *niftar* on 2 Nissan 5499, just a short time after his return.

Rav Yeshaya Mordechai is the *mechaber* of *Toras Shlomim*, *Lachmei Toda*, *Eglei Dol*, *Imrei Yosher* and *Kur Zohov*.

He was *niftar* in the middle of writing the final *teshuva* in *Shu"t Lachmei Toda*, regarding a *Sefer Torah* full of strangely shaped letters. The last word he wrote was *kosher* when he collapsed.

His son and successor, Rav Yisrael Binyomin, who published his father's *sefer*, completed the *teshuva*, *paskening* that the *Sefer Torah* was kosher to use because such letters have a genuine tradition.



Rav Shmuel Kellin Machazit Hashekel (Nissan 1, 5566 / 1806 - 219th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Shmuel HaLevi Kellin (1724 - 1806) was the son of Rav Nosson Notah HaLevi and a descendant of Rav Nosson Notah Spira, author of *Megaleh Amukos*. He was a renowned and holy Talmudist with followers numbering in the thousands. He authored *Machatzis Hashekel* on *Magen Avraham*, *Orach Chaim*; a *sefer* which has opened the gates to understanding the *Magen Avraham*.



Rav Elimelech Shapira Imrei Elimelech (Nissan 1, 5652 / 1892 - 133rd Yahrzeit)

Holy Rabbi Elimelech Shapira of Grodzisk (1824-1892), son of Rabbi Chaim Meir Yechiel the "Saraf [angel] of Moglitz" and grandson of Maggid of Koznitz and Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk. Among greatest righteous Torah giants in Poland, whose impact was great throughout the country. His rabbi, Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin, directed him to serve as leader and receive *Kvitlach*. [Eventually, he sent a lengthy letter to author of *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz regarding great holiness of Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin and his righteous sons].

In his old age when he was already grandfather to many grandsons (many of which served in the leadership, such as Rabbi Yisrael of Grodzisk and Rabbi Yisrael Perlow, the

“Yenuka” [baby] of Karlin), he remarried to daughter of Rebbe of Chantshin, who bore him two sons in his old age; Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman of Piaseczno (author of *Chovas HaTalmidim*) and Rabbi Yishayahu Shapira (The *Admor HaChalutz*). After his demise, his wife Rabbanit Chana Bracha, served in the leadership; she received *Kvitlach* and even wore a four-cornered garment (Encyclopedia of Chassidism, p. 627). Was blessed with longevity and passed away in 1939. Many of the Polish Rebbes were among his disciples; most famous of them is Rabbi Yechiel Meir HaLevi, rebbe of Austrovtza. Authored *Imrei Elimelech* and *Divrei Elimelech*.

<https://www.kedem-auctions.com/en/content/mikdash-melech-%E2%80%93-signatures-and-stamps-rebbe-rabbi-elimelech-shapira-grodzisk-and-sons>



Rav Moshe Yosef Hoffman Rav & Av Beis Din of Pupa, Mei Be'er (Nissan 1, 5688 / 1928 - 97th Yahrzeit)

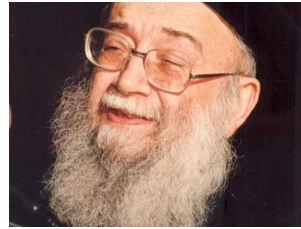


R. Moshe Yosef Hoffman, dayan of Pupa (1843-1928), was a leading Torah scholar of Hungary and Yerushalayim. Son of Michael Hoffman, disciple of the *Chasam Sofer*. He was appointed *dayan* and *posek* of Pupa in 1882. In 1909, he immigrated to Yerushalayim, where he established his Beis Medrash and earned the reputation of one of the foremost rabbis in the city. He authored *Mei Be'er* and *Mayim Chaim*.

<https://www.kedem-auctions.com/en/content/sefer-yetzirah-%E2%80%93-warsaw-1884-%E2%80%93-signature-rabbi-moshe-yosef-hoffman-dayan-pupa>



Rav Elya Svei (Nissan 1, 5769 / 2009 - 16th Yahrzeit)



Rav Elya Svei was the Rosh Yeshiva of the Talmudical Yeshiva of Philadelphia together with Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky, and was world renowned known for his incisive, brilliant and clear shiurim, and his ability to offer sage advice to thousands of Jews worldwide. He was a primary *talmid* of Rav Aharon Kotler. He was married to the daughter of Rav Avraham Kalmanowitz the founder of the American branch of the Mir Yeshivah. Until his illness in the period before his death, he was regarded as one of the leaders of Charedi Jewry, and was a member of the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* and chairman of the Rabbinic Administrative Board of Torah Umesorah. A sefer, *Ruach Eliyahu* was published based on recordings, culled from cassettes of *shmuessim* that he delivered in Yeshiva as well as those that he delivered in other various venues. Some recordings of his *shmuessim* and shiurim can be heard or downloaded [here](https://torahdownloads.com/s-195-rabbi-elya-svei.html) <https://torahdownloads.com/s-195-rabbi-elya-svei.html>.



Rav Binyomin (Nissan 2, 5340 / 1580 - 445th Yahrzeit)

Rav Binyomin was the son of Rav Moshe.

It is known that he authored the *seforim Tavnis HaBayis* and *Ohel Shel Simcha*. However, they have been lost over time.

On his *matzeiva* was inscribed: "He was the *Sar HaTorah*, a *Gaon Yaakov*, very much praised as he plunged down into the depths of *Halocha*, and a master and *boki* in the rooms of Torah. Even when he grew old and lost his vision, he would study with sharp *pilpul* in *Talmud* in the *Yeshiva*, and all the *Gedolim* relied on his *teshuvos*. When they

questioned him, it was like asking of the word of G-d.”



Rav Yeshayahu Mordechai Bassan Lachmei Todah (Nissan 2, 5499 / 1739 - 286th Yahrzeit)

(Some say the Yahrzeit is on the 1st of Nissan)

Rav Yeshaya Mordechai was born in Verona in 5433, the son of Rav Yisrael Chizkiya. He studied under Rav Moshe Zakuth (*Ramaz*) in Mantuba and became the *Rebbe* of the *Ramchal*.

After his father was *niftar* in Padova in 5444, he remained there studying and teaching Torah. He also opened a Yeshiva there.

Eventually, he moved to Mantuba and studied in the *Ramaz's Yeshiva* for three years between 5455 and 5458. During this time, he received *semicha* from the *Rabbonim* in Mantuba. After the *Ramaz* was *niftar*, during *Sukkos* of 5458, he moved to Rav Yehuda Briel's Yeshiva. Eventually, he returned to his birthplace in Verona, where he studied under Rav Mordechai Bassan. Rav Mordechai added his own *semicha* as *posek* and *moreh horo'a*, as well as in *dinei momonos* - monetary matters - to his beloved *talmid* in addition to the *semicha* he had received back in Mantuba.

In 5461 he married Yocheved, the daughter of Rav Binyomin Kohen Vitaly of Reggio, and settled there to live near his father-in-law. In 5462 His son Rav Yisrael Binyomin was born.

Between 5475 and 5482, he returned to teach Torah in Padova. Among his *talmidim* there was the famed Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, the *Ramchal*, *mechaber* of *Mesillas Yeshorim*, as well as Rav Yitzchok Marini and Rav Yeshaya Romanin. In 5483 his father-in-law requested that he come back to Reggio. Due to his age and failing health he needed his help running the *kehilla* and teaching Torah.

When his father-in-law, the *Rabach*, was *niftar* on 17 *Teves* 5490, he was chosen as his successor to the position of *Av Bais Din* in Reggio.

During the strife from Rav Chagiz and the *Rabbonim* of Venice against the *Ramchal*, he stood by his beloved *talmid* and defended him from the accusations as best he could.

He grew ill in 5497 and went to seek medical attention in Verona. After he returned to Reggio he was *niftar* on 2 *Nissan* 5499, just a short time after his return.

Rav Yeshaya Mordechai is the *mechaber* of *Toras Shlomim*, *Lachmei Toda*, *Eglei Dol*, *Imrei Yosher* and *Kur Zohov*.

He was *niftar* in the middle of writing the final *teshuva* in *Shu"t Lachmei Toda*, regarding a *Sefer Torah* full of strangely shaped letters. The last word he wrote was *kosher* when he collapsed.

His son and successor, Rav Yisrael Binyomin, who published his father's *sefer*, completed the *teshuva*, *paskening* that the *Sefer Torah* was kosher to use because such letters have a genuine tradition.



Rav Sholom DovBer Schneerson Rebbe Rashab, Lubavitcher Rebbe (Nissan 2, 5680 / 1920 - 105th Yahrzeit)



Rabbi Sholom-Dovber Schneerson [2 *Nissan* 5680], known as the *Rebbe Reshab*, was the fifth Rebbe of the Lubavitcher dynasty. He is the author of hundreds of major tracts in the exposition of Chassidic thought. In 1915, after 102 years of four Chabad rebbes living in Lubavitch, he transferred the center of the movement to Rostov-on-the-Don.



Rav Yaakov Yosef Twersky (Nissan 2, 5728 / 1968 - 57th Yahrzeit)

Rebbe Yaakov Yosef Twersky of Skver (1899-1968) was a leading Rebbe in the United States. Born in Skvyra, he served as Rebbe in Kalarash (Călărași, Romania). After the Holocaust, he reached New York, where he established his community in a distinctive neighborhood - New-Square, community reputed until this day for its conservative character, preserving authentic Chassidic Judaism like it was in the European Shtetls before the Holocaust.

<https://www.kedem-auctions.com/en/content/tehillim-printed-slavita-%E2%80%93-copy-rebbe-yaakov-yosef-skver>



Rav Dovid Stavsky (Nissan 3, 5764 / 2004 - 21st Yahrzeit)

Rav Dovid Stavsky (1930-2004), served in the Columbus (Ohio) Jewish community for the last past 47 years of his life, including as Rabbi 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 Masters degree in Psychology from The Ohio State University in 1966. Served as Chaplain in the United States Army as a First Lieutenant at Fitzsimmons 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 *mikvah* (ritual bath) in Columbus in 1970, helped found the Columbus Community *Kollel* (learning center) in 1994.



Rav Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg Hakesav Vehakabalah (Nissan 4, 5625 / 1865 - 160th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi was born in 5545 (1785) in Lissa, in the province of Posen, Germany. This city was renowned as a center of Torah scholarship, as well as for its great rabbanim.

The father of Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg, Rabbi Gamliel, was a nurse.

It seems that Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi began his education in the city of his birth by studying Torah with the local Rav. At that time the Rav of Lissa was the Gaon Rabbi Zechariah Mendel, the son of the Gaon Rabbi David Tebla (the previous Rav of Lissa). Rabbi Zechariah Mendel was a friend of Rabbi Akiva Eiger, whom he corresponded with.

We know little about the childhood of the young Yaakov Tzvi. There is one thing, however, that we do know, which is that he was extremely diligent and almost never stopped studying Torah.

Even though Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi was great in Torah and very learned in Hebrew, he did not want to become a Rabbi. He went into business and did quite well in it, yet even then he did not neglect his Torah study, which he practiced assiduously. As it turned out, the wheel of fortune changed and his business deteriorated. It was at that time that he was offered the rabbinical position in the city of Koenigsburg, at which point he realized that Heaven desired that he should become a Rav. Thus he accepted the position, which he assumed in 1831 at the age of 46.

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi believed that he could find peace and quiet in the tent of Torah, but as it turned out he plunged himself into the fight against the Enlightenment movement and various currents of the Reform movement. All of a sudden he was thrown into a new world, one different from the one he had lived in all his life. In his hometown, Jews studied Torah and the spirit of tradition reigned supreme. However in Koenigsburg, strange winds had already begun to blow, and the Enlightenment movement desired to take the place of traditional Jewish life.

Far from enclosing himself in the tent of Torah, Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi placed himself in the first wave of those fighting the assimilationists and Reformers, calling upon people with fiery words to be vigilant and defend the holiness of Israel. He was very determined, and since all Jewish tradition was sacred in his eyes, he defended it with all his strength.

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi would normally not attend a wedding unless he knew that the young couple would conduct themselves in accordance with Torah laws. One day, an important man who had become distant from Judaism invited the Rav to officiate at the marriage of

his daughter. Knowing that the young couple did not observe Halachah, the Rav refused. However the man, who was very influential, went to the authorities and obtained an order that obliged the Rav to marry his daughter.

Constrained and forced to comply, the Rav officiated at the wedding. Yet instead of saying, "According to the law of Moshe and Yisrael," he said in a loud voice, "According to the law of Frederic the Great."

During those difficult times, Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi wrote a commentary on the Torah. True, there had been several Bible commentators in Germany before him, but their analyses had not been accepted by faithful, orthodox Jews, for the spirit of the Enlightenment movement hovered over them. That is what drove Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi to write his own commentary on the Torah, which he entitled Hakesav Vehakabbalah. The goal of this work was to show how Scripture (Hakesav) and the Oral Law (Vehakabbalah) formed a whole, and that both were given by one single shepherd, Moshe our teacher. Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi's explanations connected the direct meaning (pshat) to the hidden meaning (drash).

In his commentary, Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi followed the steps of the Vilna Gaon. One day, Rabbi Yisrael of Shklov, a disciple of the Gra, was asked wherein lay his teacher's power. In response, he took a Bible out of the library and said, "This is the power of my teacher and Rav the Gra. He was in full possession of this book to a degree that is unimaginable, knowing its every letter." Rabbi Israel continued and said, "My teacher the Gra believed that 'There is nothing which is not alluded to in the Torah,' and he knew how to discover and show how all the Oral Law was hidden within the written Torah."

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg walked in the paths of the Gra, and he strived with all his might to meld the written text with oral tradition. His commentary is a tremendous work in which we can see his eminence in Torah. It also demonstrates his tremendous scholarship, knowledge of the Hebrew language, and his sharp, clear, and irrefutable logic.

Haketav Vehakabbalah was well received throughout the Diaspora, and that alone makes it worth transcribing the following letter. It is an excerpt from a reply that Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi gave to the Gaon and Tzaddik Rabbi Eliyahu Guttmacher, the Rav of Greiditz. In it he states: "The Rav's great desire to see my work on the Torah is in my opinion

inappropriate, for it is not intended for a Gaon such as himself, but for people of lesser stature, for it seeks to repair the breach of ungodliness that has the audacity to ascribe falsehood to our teachers, the Sages of the Oral Law. I thank G-d that this explanation [given by my commentary] pleased our brothers in Poland and Russia. I have heard that in certain communities, instructors now teach it to young boys, and that in certain places a person has been placed in the Beit Midrash to explain the parsha of the week with this commentary every Shabbat. May the study of Torah return to all its initial glory! However for the Gaon, this commentary is useless” (Sinai, vol. 65, bk. 5-6).

This letter shows the modesty of the author of Hakesav Vehakabbalah, a man who believed that he was writing not for the great of his generation, but for “people of lesser stature.” He was a man who rejoiced in the fact that teachers in Poland and Russia were using his book. This letter also shows that groups were being formed each Shabbat to study the parsha of the week alongside his commentary. It is therefore not surprising that over the years, there have been five editions of the abridged version published.

Other than Hakesav Vehakabbalah, Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg wrote a commentary on the Siddur called Iyun Tefillah. This book was printed with his commentary Derech HaChaim, which also enjoyed great success and was republished four times.

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg was the Rav of Koenigsburg for 34 years. Following a short illness, he died at two o'clock in the morning on Thursday, Nissan 10, 5625 (April 6, 1865). He was 80 years old.

Before his death, he ordered that no eulogies be given at his funeral. In his will, he expressed his desire that his commentary be read in public three times a week, after the Torah reading, during the first 30 days of mourning that followed his funeral.

https://www.hevratpinto.org/tzadikim_eng/109_rabbi_yaakov_tzvi_mecklenburg.html



Rav Yochonon Twersky (Nissan 4, 5655 / 1895 - 130th Jahrzeit)

Rabbi Yochonon Twersky, (4 Nissan 1895) the first Rachmastrivka Rebbe was known for his humility. He was the last to pass away of the eight sons of Rabbi Mordechai of

Chernobyl and was highly respected among the righteous of the generation.

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



Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel Ohev Yisroel, Apta Rav (Nissan 5, 5585 / 1825 - 200th Yahrzeit)



Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heschel [of blessed memory: 5515 - 5 Nissan 5585 (1755-March 1825 C.E.)] the Apter Rebbe, was born in Żmigród, Poland in 1748. He was a main disciple of the Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhinsk. He is also often referred to as "the *Ohev Yisrael*," both after the title of the famous book of his teachings, and also because its meaning ("Lover of Jews") fits him so aptly. He was laid to rest in Mezibuz. His *matzeiva* is in the same ohel as the *Baal Shem Tov*. The Kapishnitzer Chasidic dynasty descends from him.

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



Rav Shneur Zalman Fradkin Toras Chesed (Nissan 5, 5662 / 1902 - 123rd Yahrzeit)

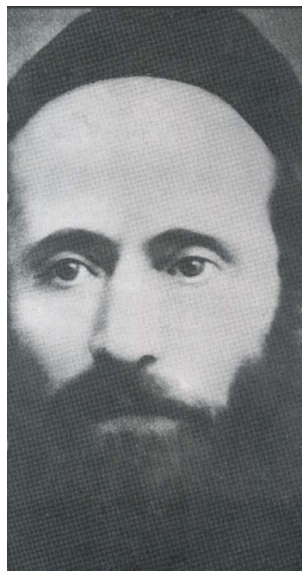


Rabbi Shneur Zalman Fradkin of Lublin [5 Nissan 5662], A chasid of the Tzemech Tzedek and Maharash of Lubavitch, was chief rabbi in Polotsk and then Lublin. When he made aliyah to the Holy Land, he became a major rabbinical figure in the Jerusalem community. He is best remembered for his important scholarly book, *Toras Chesed*.

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



Rav Malkiel Tzvi Tenenbaum Divrei Malkiel (Nissan 5, 5670 / 1910 - 115th Yahrzeit)



Rav Malkiel Tzvi HaLevi Tennenbaum (1847-1910), a prominent rabbi and *posek* of his

generation, was renowned for his great Torah genius and wrote many responsa, which were printed in the seven-volume Responsa *Divrei Malkiel*. He was known as a holy person and many approached him for blessing and deliverance. Rav Herzog wrote about him that "in addition to his halachic brilliance, he was well-versed in kabbalah and studied Torah secrets well into the night".

<https://www.kedem-auctions.com/en/content/letter-author-divrei-malkiel-lomza-1907>



**Rav Reuven Yosef Gershonowitz Tzaddik of Ofakim, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Ha'Negev
(Nissan 5, 5755 / 1995 - 30th Yahrzeit)**

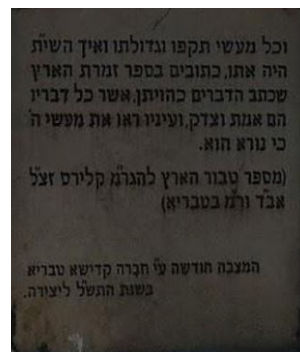
Born in Lapitsh in the Minsk area of the Ukraine, he was taken by his father to the *yeshiva katana* in Lida at the age of 10. He continued his learning at Kamenitz in 1931, under Rav Baruch Ber. In 1936, Rav Reuven joined his family in Eretz Yisrael; he became a *talmid* of the Lomza Yeshiva in *Petach Tikva*. In 1946, he began giving *chaburos* in the *yeshiva*. In 1965, he became *rosh yeshiva* of *Chemdas Shmuel* in a *moshav* called Chemed. At first he kept his position at Lomza *yeshiva*, giving two *shiurim be'iyun* on two different *masechtos* every Monday, but the Lomza *yeshiva* closed a short while thereafter. In 1976, Rav Reuven was called upon to serve as *rosh yeshiva* of *Yeshivas Hanegev* in Netivot.

matzav.com



**Rav Chaim Abulafia Chacham Chaim Abulafia of Teveria (Nissan 6, 5504 / 1744 - 281st
Yahrzeit)**

(Some say the Yahrzeit is on the 7th of Nissan the 16th of Nissan)



Rav Chaim was born in Chevron in 5420 (1660).

His *yichus* traces back to Rav Chaim Abulafia, "*Hamusmach HaZaken*" of Chevron. The *Chida* writes in *Shem Hagedolim* that their *yichus* traces back to *Shevet Yehudah* and *Malchus*.

As a young boy, his family moved to Yerushalayim where he studied in the *Bais Yaakov-Viga yeshivah*, (founded by Rav Yaakov Chagiz) under the auspices of the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Moshe Galanti. He also studied under Rav Shlomo Algazi HaZaken and along with Rav Chizkiyahu de Silva, known as the *Pri Chadash*, who was a colleague. There he earned his *semichah* ordination and was sent to Tzefat to teach and serve as the rav of the city.

He gave *derashos* every Shabbos and Yom Tov, and published them as *Etz Chaim* in Izmir and *Mikra'ei Kodesh Chiddushei Halachos*, as well as three volumes of *Yosef Lekach*, *derushim* on the Torah. He also authored *Yashresh Yaakov* on the *Ein Yaakov aggados* of the *Talmud*, and *Shevus Yaakov* on the same subject. He also authored *Chanan Elokim*, *derashos* and *pilpulim* (where he included *chiddushim* from *Be'er LeChai* and *Chaim V'Chessed* by his maternal grandfather, Rav Yitzchak ibn Jamil of Hebron).

He left on *shlichus* as a fundraiser to help his poor brethren in Hebron, *travelling* to Turkey at age 29 in 5459 (1699), then to Saloniki and eventually to Izmir. There he met Rav Yisrael Benveniste, the successor to his father Rav Chaim Benveniste, who authored *Shiurei Knesset HaGedolah* on *Shulchan Aruch*. Rav Chaim Abulafia and Rav Yisrael sparred and jostled in *halachah*. One day, the young *shadar* (acronym for *shaliach d'rabbanan*, messenger of the *rabbanim*) would return to Izmir, not as a fundraiser but as its rav.

When he returned to Eretz Yisrael, Rav Chaim was asked to serve as Rav of Tzefat. In the year 5485 (1725), Rav Yisrael Benveniste passed away and Rav Chaim was chosen to succeed him as the Chief Rabbi of Izmir. Amsterdam also sent letters of appointment, but drawn by its peace and quiet, Rav Chaim chose Izmir, and it was there that he published his *sefarim* during his tenure.

He had a profound influence on the *kehillah*, and even the Christian and Muslim populace

revered him. As Rav, he looked out not only for their spiritual welfare but for their material welfare as well. Their economic status was very depressed at that time, and he used his many talents to change the face of the *kehillah*.

He had long harbored a wish to rebuild Teveria (which sat desolate with no *shul* or *bais medrash* for some seventy years) and some say that Eliyahu Hanavi appeared to him in a dream and urged him to do so.

After serving as Rav of Teveria for four years and rebuilding the *kehillah*, Rav Chaim passed away on 6 (some say 7) or (Encyclopedia says 16) *Nissan* 5504 (1744) at the age of 84.



Rav Meir Dan Platzky Klei Chemdah (*Nissan 6, 5688 / 1928 - 97th Yahrzeit*)



The Prodigy of Kutno

“Rabbi Meir Dan”, as he was called and known among the Jews of Poland, was a giant among rabbis. He served as the rabbi of the community of Dvart [Warta], the rabbi of the community of Ostrow Mazowiecka, and in his last days as head of the *Mesivta* yeshiva in Warsaw, the capital of Poland. But holding these positions per se did not add luster to his name; rather it was because of his great personality that these communities themselves became renowned. This personality sprouted and grew in the very heart of Chassidic Poland. He was educated in the lap of pure Chassidism to become a pillar of Torah and education.

Rabbi Meir Dan was born in Kutno in the year 5627 [1866-1867] to his father Rabbi Chaim Yitzchak Plotzky, a scholar and ardent Chassid, one of the followers of the Chassidic rebbe Rabbi Chanoch Henich of Alexander. After the latter's death he became one of the important followers of the *rebbe of Ger*, the author of *S'fas Emes*, and was among his inner circle. His mother, Mrs. Gela, was a distinguished woman and one of the most righteous and well known women of Kutno, who implanted in her beloved son the love of Torah and *yiras Shomayim* from the moment he could understand, even before he went to *cheder*.

When he was only eleven months old Rabbi Meir Dan came down with a mortal disease. The doctors in Kutno refused to treat him any further, as they saw no possibility of saving his life. His father Rabbi Chaim Yitzchak rushed to the house of his teacher, Rabbi Chanoch Henich Hacoheh of Alexander, and bitterly poured out his heart about his terrible trouble. The rebbe gave him a blessing for a complete recovery, but Rabbi Chaim Yitzchak remained there, immersed in pain. He knew what the doctors of Kutno had said before he left his house. He had left his baby son at the very edge of death.

“Why are you worried? You will yet derive much pleasure from him. He will be a great rabbi in Israel,” the great rebbe said. Rabbi Chaim Yitzchak pulled himself together at that moment, and no longer hurried to get back to the bed of his sick child. He stayed for a while in Alexander in the presence of his teacher and rabbi. Then the little Rabbi Meir Dan gradually regained his strength. When he grew up and gained understanding, he was found to have exceptional abilities, an unusual acuity of mind. He was already thought of as a prodigy even before he was brought to the cheder.

His father Rabbi Chaim Yitzchak was never a wealthy man. He barely made a living as a clerk and trusted employee, a bureaucrat for wealthy Jews who owned great woodlands in western Poland. Generally his work, whether in the forest or in a village, was located close to where they felled trees. Rabbi Chaim Yitzchak wandered from place to place along with his family and his brilliant son. But his mother was concerned about his studies. So she went out and sold her jewelry and engaged exceptional teachers, who stayed in the villages with her family and taught the little Rabbi Meir Dan. He rapidly progressed in the levels of Torah study to the point where he was considered a great prodigy. When Rabbi Meir Dan eulogized his mother after her death he highlighted the greatness of her spirit, her rare moral qualities and the extraordinary deeds of a young

woman who would sell her jewelry in order to have higher caliber teachers, who shared their high level of knowledge.

When Rabbi Meir Dan was nine years old he was no longer in the hands of wandering teachers. Even the best of them had nothing more to teach the young prodigy. So despite his young age his parents sent him to Kalish, to the yeshiva of the *Gaon* Rabbi Chaim Eliezer Wachs, the rabbi of the city and author of *Nefesh Chaya*. At first visitors to the rabbi's house had doubts about what such a young child was doing there and attending the rabbi's lectures, even if he were gifted. But once Rabbi Wachs examined Rabbi Meir Dan he immediately included him in the group of his best students. From that time on he never stopped loving him and caring for his needs. After a few years Rabbi Meir Dan moved to Sochachow [Sochaczew], to the yeshiva of the Chassidic *rebbe* Rabbi Avraham, author of *Avnei Nezer*, a place where exceptional scholars and giants of the Torah tended to concentrate. The lectures of the *gaon* of Sochachow were replete with such sharpness and depth that even adult students with great abilities at times found them difficult to comprehend. Nevertheless, the young Rabbi Meir Dan quickly succeeded in becoming part of this elite group. When he was thirteen years old his father arranged a Bar Mitzvah celebration in Kutno and invited all the leaders of the city to the event. Rabbi Meir Dan himself composed a discourse, which overwhelmed all those who heard it with its acuity and profundity. Word of the talk reached his teacher and rabbi, the *rebbe* of Sochachow. When Rabbi Meir Dan returned to his yeshiva he was asked to reprise his discourse that had become known. This veteran prince of the Torah listened to his young student and said, "One can debate what he said, but he built a beautiful structure and it would be a shame to bring it down when it is just as likely that it will stand...."

Head of the Yeshiva of Dvart

In Dvart, located in this district, a city full of wise men and sofrim [scribes; authors], great Chassidim and excellent scholars, there lived at that time Rabbi Mordechai, a Chassid and a learned man, a wealthy man and a man of good deeds. His wife was Mrs. Sheina Reizel, a righteous woman who grew up in the house of her uncle, the *Gaon* Rabbi Chaim Auerbach, chief of the rabbinical court of Linschitz [Leczyca].

Rabbi Mordechai had three daughters. The two older of them were married to great scholars who eventually served as rabbis. The first was Rabbi Yosef, chief of the rabbinical

court of Kletcheva [Kleczew], and the second the *Gaon* Rabbi Menachem, chief of the rabbinical court of Kozminka [Kozminek]. For the youngest of his daughters, the talented and outstanding Tziril, Rabbi Mordechai sought an exceptional young man who was known as an outstanding gaon of note. In Sochachew at the *yeshiva* of the *rebbe* Rabbi Avraham he found the young Rabbi Meir Dan and took him as the groom for his daughter.

Rabbi Mordechai spent much money on the dowry and gifts. In the year 5642 [1882] Rabbi Meir Dan married his bride when he was just fifteen years old. His father-in-law Rabbi Mordechai spent a great deal of money so that Rabbi Meir Dan could acquire a large library and also took care of all his needs. For ten years Rabbi Meir Dan worked at studying Torah and became a great scholar, having no worries about his subsistence or that of his family, being reliant on the support of his father-in-law. In his sefer, *Chemdas Yisrael*, Rabbi Meir Dan says, "I am morally obligated to mention for good and blessing at the beginning of my book the name of my dear rabbinical, righteous and just father-in-law, who walked a straight path and loved Torah and its students, Rabbi Mordechai, may his memory be a blessing, and my dear and righteous mother-in-law, Mrs. Sheina Reizel, may she rest in peace, who supported me for ten years, when all my needs were dependent upon them in all matters, and I was able to study and teach worthy students."

The grandfather of Rabbi Meir Dan, his father's father, was an outstanding *gaon* and Chassid and multi-talented man, named Rabbi Yisrael. He died in the year 5643 [1882-1883] when Rabbi Meir Dan was seventeen. On the day of his death the grandfather called for his grandson, asked him to put his hand on his heart and to swear that he would study with all his heart and soul and that he would cultivate innovative and profound ideas about the Torah. His grandfather's request never left the memory of Rabbi Meir Dan up until his final day. (This information is found in the introduction to his book, *Chemdas Yisrael*, Volume I, where he adds that he named his book after his esteemed grandfather.)

For a short time Rabbi Meir Dan studied in Dvart by himself. But soon a number of young men came to him, and he began to deliver his lectures to them. From that time on there was never an absence of a *yeshiva* around him. In the house of his rich father-in-law, surrounded by love and devotion, Rabbi Meir Dan dedicated himself to learning and teaching, day and night. He was always found in the midst of his studies. His *yeshiva*

grew, and it became famous in the surrounding area and beyond. Its students were deeply attached to their teacher, the young *gaon*, whose name became well known in the entire world of Torah as one of the sharpest minds of his generation, a genius in Halacha and a genius in understanding. He diligently and rapidly went through both of the two Talmuds and the early and later commentators. He was a *gaon* whose sharpness of mind did not detract from the breadth of his knowledge and whose breadth of knowledge did not diminish his acuity.

Rabbi Meir Dan was a Chassid in every fiber of his being. He adhered to pure Chassidism with all his heart and soul and to his studies with enthusiasm and awe, with holiness and purity. He related to every iota of the Torah with fear and trembling, but also with love and soulful devotion. Study was never for him a matter of pleasure, but rather a holy undertaking. The Torah obligates every part of one's body, not just the mind and intelligence. Therefore he worked in the field of Torah with literally with all his strength. He approached the study of the Torah with a real hunger, as if he had never studied it before. Every day he would set aside time to infuse into his heart the love of Torah. Thus, there was no limit or parallel to his love of the Torah.

Gaon and Chassid

He was one of the devoted and sharpest Chassidim of Ger. He had a permanent place at the house of prayer of the Chassidim of Ger in Dvart, which was full of extraordinary men of learning and Chassidim, both old and young, enthusiastic in their service to God. His limitless devotion to Chassidism was planted in his heart by his father, Rabbi Chaim Yitzchak, and by his grandfather, Rabbi Yisrael. And so he maintained this precious heritage in every aspect. From a very young age he would frequently visit the holy ambience to be found at the court of the Chassidic *rebbe* Rabbi Aryeh Leib of Ger, author of the *S'fat Emet* [The Language of Truth]. After the latter's death he accepted the authority of the Chassidic *rebbe* Rabbi Avraham Mordechai of Ger.

The *rebbe*s of Ger had a deep love for this young and exceptional *gaon*. There were very few like him in his generation. At the same time, every word that came out of the mouth of the *rebbe* was like a law for him, and every demand or request an obligation for which he was prepared to go through fire and water to fulfill. Rabbi Meir Dan viewed Chassidism as an integral part of the obligations incumbent upon every Jew of recent generations. Only

Chassidism would prevent deviations in thought and action in our bereft generations, assuming that Chassidism was directed by a true *tzadik*, a saint of Israel.

Every person needs some real submission, and not only of the heart. Just as prayer needs to be expressed with your mouth, so, too, every submission needs to be expressed in actions. A person who has no teacher, no rabbi, and does not submit to anyone only diminishes his own stature. No matter who he may be there is a higher power above him and God helps him, Rabbi Meir Dan posited. Thus, he viewed in Chassidism an activity which supplemented his study of Torah and good work, and without which everything is deficient. Later in his life, when he was on a mission in America, he was asked by one of the Mitnagdic rabbis, “A *gaon* like you, who has mastered every aspect of the Torah, why do you need to travel so much and why do you need to submit to the *rebbe* so much?” Rabbi Meir Dan replied, “We learn that ‘thunder was created in order to straighten out the crookedness of the heart’. This teaching seems surprising and incomprehensible. For a person who infuses into his heart much Torah, his work consists of prayer, fear and love of God, the fear of sin and adherence to the blessed Creator. Is he not yet able to rid the crookedness from his heart with the strength of his Torah and fear of God? Must he wait until a day of rain, thunder and lightning storms in order to be able to expel the crookedness?”

“From this analogy we understand,” Rabbi Meir Dan went on, “that this crookedness, which is the fertile source of all poison and bitterness, cannot be cured by the person himself. Rather he needs help. The Chassid does not wait until a stormy day. He travels to the *rebbe*, who guides and directs him and prunes the wild growths that envelop the heart and soul of a person. He learns to know submission, its nature and substance. He absorbs his *rebbe's* Torah and teachings like a pupil before his master. He learns from his manner, his conversation and his conduct of affairs. His *Torah* knowledge is not diminished thereby, but rather his stature is only straightened.”

In the year 5663 [1902-1903] Rabbi Meir Dan published his *sefer*, *Chemdas Yisrael*, to which some of the greatest rabbis of the generation gave their enthusiastic endorsements. Among them were his teacher, Rabbi Avraham of Sochachew, the *Gaon* Rabbi Chaim Soloveichik, chief of the rabbinical court in Brisk [Brest-Litovsk], the *Gaon* Rabbi Eliyahu Chaim Meisel, the rabbi of Lodz, and others. They adorned the rabbi-author with the greatest of titles, they crowned him as being an awesome *gaon*, a prince of the Torah. But

Rabbi Meir Dan, in printing their endorsements, edited out all the compliments that were directed at him, but made do only with references to “the rabbi.”

Most of the hours of the day he devoted to his holy work. He delivered several lectures to the students in his yeshiva per day. But in addition to this he was aware of everything that was going on in his community, Dvart. He served as the address for every bitter soul and every trouble that afflicted the people of the city or its environs, and never stinted in any effort to assist anyone who asked for help. He saw himself as responsible for the well being and health of all the poor and suffering, the widows and orphans in his community and the surrounding area. He never ceased in his devotion to the downtrodden.

Before the last world war ended the position of the rabbinate in Ostrow Mazowiecka became vacant. The rabbi of the community, Rabbi Yosef Kalish of Amshinov, was chosen as the Chassidic rebbe and chief of the rabbinical court of Amshinov in place of his father, the Chassidic *rebbe* Rabbi Menachem, who had just died. The people of the community of Ostrow Mazowiecka chose the *Gaon* Rabbi Meir Dan as their rabbi and teacher. As usual, Rabbi Meir Dan took no final step until he had consulted with his teacher and rabbi, the Chassidic *rebbe* Rabbi Avraham Mordechai of Ger. When the rabbi came to ask his question, the *rebbe* replied, “For a few years, why not?”

Rabbi Meir Dan no longer hesitated. He left Dvart and went to Ostrow Mazowiecka, where his reputation was as a great *gaon*, a prince of the Torah, a devoted rabbi and courageous fighter, one of the greatest rabbis of his generation, and a paver of the paths to Torah Judaism. In Ostrow Mazowiecka, as in Dvart, he immediately took the lead in all communal activities. He stood at the gates as a father and patron, responsible for everything that occurred within. He did not flinch before anyone, nor did he put up with anyone. He saw in the rabbinate a holy mission whose responsibilities must be fulfilled with devotion.

As the situation in Poland calmed down, the question of the organization of traditional Judaism once again rose to the fore. Rabbi Meir Dan was co-opted to this service, and was appointed as one of the leaders of *Agudas Yisrael*. The founders of this new movement were faced with a difficult problem, that of establishing a budget for the organization's activities. Without adequate financial resources it was clear that it would be impossible to establish a mass movement, with centers, hundreds of branches, and thousands of

educational and other institutions.

Therefore it was by decided by the organizers of the Organization of the Faithful of Israel (a/k/a *Agudat Yisrael*) to send a high level delegation to England and the United States to encourage orthodox Jews to organize and offer their full support to the new movement. Chosen as head of the delegation was Rabbi Meir Dan Plotzky. Its members consisted of the Gaon Rabbi Asher Lemel Spitzer, chief of the rabbinical court of Kirchendorf [Kirchdorf], Rabbi Dr. Meir Hildesheimer of Berlin, Germany, Dr. Nathan Birnbaum, Rabbi Yosef Lev, who later served as rabbi in London, and Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Levin, may he live and be well, who headed the delegation only in England.

Rabbi Meir Dan was everywhere received royally. Rabbis and those knowledgeable about the Torah trembled before this great *gaon*, who was rightfully thought of as a prince of the Torah and a pillar of education. But the delegation did not succeed in raising the needed sums. Rabbi Meir Dan, who had a kind and gentle soul, did not succeed, as he was not adept at the games of honorifics by which fundraising was accomplished in America in those days. He did know how to flatter people, especially the nouveau riche, who were ignorant of Torah, did not have the fear of Heaven, and did not have the same charitable impulses to which Rabbi Meir Dan was accustomed.

Rabbi Meir Dan then returned to Poland. But a great shock now befell the state that had just attained its new political independence, after more than a hundred years of subjugation to Russia, Germany and Austria. The Bolshevik Red Army invaded Poland and attempted to conquer her anew. The Polish Army quickly retreated westward. In a relatively short time the soldiers of communist Russia had arrived at the gates of Warsaw.

He published his *sefer*, *Klei Chemdah*, on the Torah, which quickly captured the hearts of the Torah community in Poland and beyond. Major endorsements were given to this book by leading contemporary Torah scholars. Among them were the *Gaon* Rabbi Yosef Rosen, the *Gaon* Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, the *Gaon* Rabbi Yosef Engel and others. The book was quickly sold out and made the name of its author famous as one of the sharpest *geonim* [pl. of *gaon*]. He also published the second volume of his *sefer*, *Chemdas Yisrael*, which included rabbinic responsa, lectures and moral discourses that Rabbi Meir Dan had delivered since he was appointed as rabbi and chief of the rabbinical court. These were only a few of the thousands of responses that the rabbi had sent to communities near and

far, to hundreds of rabbis and *dayanim* [pl. of *dayan*] who had turned to him with all manner of serious issues and complicated questions. He responded quickly, precisely and clearly to every inquirer. He did not avoid deciding difficult matters of Jewish law, although he occasionally surrounded his replies with other topics, meandering through the Talmud and the early and later decisors in the course of clarifying the law.

At its first convention in 5682 [1921-1922], at which hundreds of rabbis took part, Rabbi Meir Dan was elected as chairman of the executive committee of the Association of Rabbis of Poland. He functioned in this framework principally in matters revolving around issues of *Halacha*. He refused to get involved in any activity that involved improving the economic status of rabbis. He left this matter to other rabbis.

In Agudas Yisrael

The *Gaon* Rabbi Meir Dan was active and involved in the organization of the *Agudas Yisrael* movement in Poland. Its firm establishment was important to him, and he did much on its behalf. The rabbi saw *Agudas Yisrael*, then known as The Organization of the Faithful of Israel, as very serious force for the strengthening of the ramparts of religion, for saving future generations for Judaism, for the prevention of the domination of anti-religious movements in the Jewish community, and for the rule of Torah in the life of the nation. Therefore he sharply opposed and totally rejected the wish of certain rabbis to appear politically unaffiliated. "At a time when full loyalty to the Torah has become a political party matter, how can a rabbi who fulfills his Torah mission see himself as unaffiliated? What rabbi can remain indifferent to the question of whether the Torah is that which determines all the ways and means of the life of the nation, or whether other factors, national or class ones, do?" he asked.

Even within the orthodox *Agudas Yisrael* movement Rabbi Meir Dan had his own distinct ideas and approach. A fundamental debate was then being undertaken in the new movement on the following question: who has the right to join *Agudas Yisrael*? The debate originated in Germany, Slovakia and Hungary, where separate orthodox communities existed [independent of the general Jewish community]. There were those who argued that only members of such separate communities could join *Agudas Yisrael*, since following the rulings of the giants of the Torah of the previous generation separate orthodox communities had been established. This would oblige every orthodox Jew to join

these separate entities. There were even those who forbade joining the general communities, which included the non-religious and even the anti-religious, and whose provisions did not comply at all with the explicit Halacha. As opposed to them there were those who argued that it would be inappropriate to limit the world organization to the framework of the separate communities, and that it was incumbent upon *Agudas Yisrael* to include all Jews who observed the word of God, and not to prevent any Jew who indentified with its principles to join. Rabbi Meir Dan joined in this debate. As soon as he returned from the *Agudas Yisrael* mission to England and the United States he ceaselessly demanded that the gates of *Agudas Yisrael* should be opened to the maximum extent

in order to attract the masses to its ranks. Everything should be done so that the masses would join the movement in every locale, without being overly concerned with the minutiae of their observance. The very fact of their joining and being active within the framework of *Agudas Yisrael* under the authority of the leaders of the Torah would bring about a turning point in their lives and in all their actions. He voiced this opinion on every occasion, whether in the conferences of *Agudas Yisrael* or in the meetings of the *Moetzet G'dolei Hatorah* [The Council of Torah Greats], to which body he was elected on the very day of its founding.

Alongside the establishment of *Agudas Yisrael* in Poland was also founded the *Tz'irei Agudat Yisrael* [Young Agudat Yisrael]. Clubs were set up for young orthodox [men], along with libraries for its members and other religious youth. Many of the leading Chassidic rebbes and other rabbis in Poland were strongly opposed to the very idea of setting up of religious libraries. A religious youth should study Torah. So, too, should the working youth devote every free hour to Torah and its works, and not waste time reading books of literature, meaningless stories, which may contain poison dangerous to the soul.

But the young orthodox activists, who worked to establish clubs and libraries for the religious working youth, found a champion in Rabbi Meir Dan Plotzky, who saw this as an imperative of the times. "The libraries for youth will prevent the reading of forbidden and dangerous books that corrupt the soul, and do not, Heaven forefend, prevent the study of the Torah," he ruled.

When in 5682 [1922] the national convention of *Agudas Yisrael* in Poland convened in Warsaw, Rabbi Meir Dan delivered an enthusiastic and fiery speech. He demanded of the

masses to sanctify the name of Heaven by committing themselves to this undertaking. He energized the thousands who attended the convention who applauded enthusiastically. At the conclusion of his words a resounding sound blasted forth from the mouths of thousands, *Sh'ma Yisrael Adoshem Elokeinu Adoshem Echad* [Hear O Israel, the Lord Our God the Lord Is One]. This scene uplifted Rabbi Meir Dan. This lecture found particular favor in his eyes, to the point where it was printed in his book, *Klei Chemdah* (in the section dealing with the weekly biblical portion of *Nitzavim*).

During his decades at his *yeshiva* in Dvart, to which many young men streamed, and during his service as rabbi of Ostrow Mazowiecka, he nurtured thousands of students. As he approached sixty he began to pine for the days of his youth, before he had burdened himself with the onus of the rabbinate and when his time was completely free for spreading the *Torah*, for learning and teaching. When he was approached to accept the post as head of the *Mesivta* yeshiva in Warsaw, at which hundreds of young men studied, he responded positively. He even agreed to travel once again to the United States to raise the money needed to expand the yeshiva, to absorb hundreds of additional students, and to secure its existence. Thus, in the year 5686 [1926] the *Gaon* Rabbi Meir Dan left on this mission to the United States and remained there for many months.

Upon his return from the United States Rabbi Meir Dan resigned his position as rabbi of Ostrow Mazowiecka, to the distress of many of its residents who were tied to the rabbi with strong bonds of love and friendship. A spacious apartment was rented for him at 7 Marianska Street in Warsaw. The rabbi began his new job as head of the *Mesivta* yeshiva and began to give his opening lectures on the Laws of the Sanctification of G-d's Name of the Rambam. The rabbi hoped that in Warsaw, the capital of Poland and the largest Jewish community in those days, he could contribute to the Jewish and religious community, whether in the framework of Agudas Yisrael or the Association of Rabbis, etc.

Rabbi Meir Dan refused at first to have a synagogue in his home. He would attend one of the many Chassidic shuls of Ger in Warsaw, as just one Chassid among many. "From now on I am no longer a rabbi and am free from any of the requirements of praying at any one particular place," he said gratefully. He was fortunate in his new position, and planned to expand the framework of the yeshiva, to raise its status, and to transform it into a center of Torah learning in Poland. Thus, many young men began to stream to Warsaw, applying to the *Mesivta*, the reputation of whose head was widely spoken of. Hundreds of young

men, sharp and excellent, from all over Poland wanted to study Torah directly from the mouth of the leading *gaon* of the generation.

But the happiness of Rabbi Meir Dan did not last long. Just a few months after his arrival in Warsaw he fell ill with a disease from which he never recovered. The disease got worse day by day, to the distress of his many admirers, students and friends.

Even as he lay in his sick bed the *gaon* did not stop learning with enthusiasm, innovating ideas about the Torah. In the Compendium of Sermons that was published by the Association of Rabbis in Poland, Volume IX, in the year 5690 [1929-1930], page 16, the Chassidic rebbe Rabbi Yitzchak Zelig of Sokolow wrote, "Our colleague, the Chassid and *Gaon* Rabbi Meir Dan, chief of the rabbinical court of Ostroveh, just a few days before his death wrote me a letter reminding me to pray with him that he would be cured of his illness. He also wrote a note to clarify the text of the *Mechilta* on the weekly Bible portion of *Vayakhel*. I replied to him briefly to gladden him with words of Torah, knowing that words of Torah would make him feel better and that the light of the Torah will make him live. My reply did not reach him before he went up to heaven, to our great regret. I greatly loved his words of Torah that he innovated when he was beset with pain (may we not know of such), and this was Torah that he taught despite all this and remains to his credit."

It is told that shortly before his death an expert physician, one of the great doctors of Poland, stood at his bedside. The doctor said to him that if you invest all your desires in a particular matter, and you derive maximal unlimited pleasure from it, it will stimulate strength within you that will help fight the disease and you might be able to overcome it.

When the doctor left, the *Gaon* Rabbi Meir Dan said, "In fact I have been fortunate to be counted among the type of rabbis who are sufficiently knowledgeable to deal with very serious and complex questions. So if I invest all my strength in this, it is clear that I will derive great pleasure from it, that I will be strengthened. But this will not be strength but rather pride, conceit, egoism. It is better to die than to fall into the morass of pride...."

In his last days he even wrote a will, saying that it might even help to lengthen his days. In his will he asked his sons, the *Gaon* Rabbi Yisrael Natan and the *Gaon* Rabbi Chanoch Henich, to publish the lectures that he gave on the observance of the Shabbos and to print

his many Torah novellae. His pain grew from day to day, but it did not detract from his great concentration until the last moment of his life.

On the sixth day of *Nissan* 5688 [March 27, 1928], the *Gaon* Rabbi Meir Dan departed for on high, not quite attaining the age of sixty-two. There was much mourning after the death of this *gaon* and honored one of his generation. Many eulogies were given about him all across the Jewish world.

Appendix I - Rabbi Plotzky's Visits to the United States

U.S. passenger ship list records confirm that Rabbi Plotzky made two trips to the United States:

He arrived in New York City on the S.S. Adriatic from Southampton on May 27, 1921 (under the name Majer Don Plocki, age 54, Rabbi [written over "Priest"], from Ostrowo, Lomza Gubernia, Poland), traveling with Rabbi Josef Srul Lew, another member of the *Agudas Yisrael* delegation (see below). They were both marked as non-immigrants on three-month visits, with their trips being financed by the "Israel World Organisation" [sic]. Their destination was 194 Henry Street, New York.

He arrived on the S.S. Mauretania from Cherbourg on May 14, 1926 (under the name Majer-Don Plocki, age 58, Rabbi [written over "Rev'd."], from Ostrow, Poland, Warszawska 22). He was marked as planning to remain permanently, with his destination being Congregation Beth-Chasidim of Poland. He was also listed as having a medical condition, a hernia.

The 1921 visit is described in several sources, including the book, "The Struggle and the Splendor," by the late Rabbi Moshe Sherer (published by *Agudath Israel* of America, 1982), which is a history of that organization. Rabbi Sherer writes that in 1921 "a distinguished European Agudath Israel delegation came to the United States seeking to strengthen *Torah* allegiance and organize an *Agudah* movement here. Led by one of the outstanding *gaonim* of Poland, the *Ostrover Rav*, Rabbi Meir Don Plotzky, the group included Rabbi Asher Spitzer of Kurdorf [Kirchdorf], Slovakia, Rabbi Dr. Meir Hildesheimer of Berlin, Dr. Nathan Birnbaum, and Rabbi Joseph Lev."

This material is made available by JewishGen, Inc. and the Yizkor Book Project



Rav Aharon Roth Shomer Emunim (Nissan 6, 5707 / 1947 - 78th Yahrzeit)



Rav Ahrele Roth, founder of *Chassidus Shomrei Emunim*, came to Yerushalayim in 1925. He was known for his fervent and emotional style of *tefilla*. 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*.

Gedolim Be'Masayhem



Stories & Anecdotes

Rav Shlomo Rabinowitz Tiferes Shlomo (Adar 29)

L'CHAIM HASHEM, GOOD NIGHT

Once Rav Yosef of Neustadt came to visit the *Tiferes Shlomo* in Radomsk. As the two *tzaddikim* sat side by side enjoying each other's company, Rav Yosef asked if the *Tiferes Shlomo* could share an anecdote from his *rebbe*, Rav Fishel of Strikov since the *Tiferes Shlomo* was one of his disciples. The *Tiferes Shlomo* related how strong was Rav Fishel's *emuna* (faith) in *hashgacha pratis* (Divine Providence). "He always believed that anything and everything that happened was directly related to him and specifically for his sake.

For example, when the weather turned cold, the frost would make immersion in the *mikvah* a formidable ordeal. He would say: "I believe with full faith - *b'emuna sheleima* that this a test from Hashem whether I will immerse despite the cold and discomfort; but know, you Evil one, *yetzer hara* that you will not dissuade me nor block me from serving Hashem!"

Another story the *Tiferes Shlomo* shared was that before retiring to bed each night, Rav Fishel would take a *glezzeleh bronfen* (a glass of brandy or liquor) in hand and wish Hashem, "*L'Chaim! L'Chaim Ribono Shel Olam sheAta MeKor HaChaim veChai HaChaim - a gitte Nacht! L'Chaim, L'Chaim* Master of the World; You are the source of all life; I wish you a good night!"

He wished Hashem *L'Chaim* and a good night in Yiddish.

Rav Fishel even once explained the reason behind this unusual *minhag* (custom) of his:

“You must know that there are sick Jews everywhere in the world, and oftentimes it is at night that suffering intensifies. I attempt to bring some relief to them with my *L’Chaim* to Hashem based on the principle that He suffers in our suffering. I wish Hashem a good night, if He wants a peaceful night free of pain and distress, He must heal all the Jews’ suffering first! And so, I drink to Hashem and wish Him a good night - *Gitte Nacht!*”
(*Siach Sarfei Kodesh*)

YOUTHFUL PAST TRANSFORMED INTO MERIT THROUGH THE OHR HACHAIM

When Rav Chaim Dovid, the doctor of Piotrkow, lay on his sickbed, he was visited by the *Tiferes Shlomo*. The *Rebbe* found the good doctor crying and he thought that he was crying over the misdeeds of his youth, since he was a *ba’al teshuva*. The *Tiferes Shlomo* asked him, “Why are you crying? Don’t worry your past. Those days will fall away and be forgiven and forgotten.”

Rav Chaim Dovid answered the *Tiferes Shlomo*, “I do not wish them to fall away and be forgotten. Rather, I wish to do *teshuva* out of love! Then all my intentional transgressions will be transformed into merits! And in the merit of studying the *sefer Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* on a weekly basis and memorizing it, surely they will all become *zechuyos* (merits)!” (*Kodesh Hillulim* p. 75)

ELIYOHU HANOVI'S GIFT

The *Tiferes Shlomo* was a *talmid* of Rav Yeshaya of Peshedburz (Przedbórz), a *talmid* of the *Chozeh*. Once, the *Tiferes Shlomo* was there for *Shabbos* and Rav Yeshaya was not feeling well; as a result, all the *tefillos* and *seudos* were conducted in the *Rebbe’s* room, with a small gathering of a *minyán* of students and *talmidim*. The *Tiferes Shlomo* was among them, as was also a Rav who was envious of the honor and affection that Rav Yeshaya bestowed upon the *Tiferes Shlomo*. At the *tisch*, knowing that the *Tiferes Shlomo* would be honored to sing *zemiros*, he began to sing through all the *zemiros* so that the *Tiferes Shlomo* would not have any chance to sing at all. On *Motzo’ei Shabbos*, Rav Yeshaya honored the *Tiferes Shlomo* with singing after *Havdola*, and he sang *HaMavdil* with sweet *dveikus*. Rav Yeshaya was so pleased that he reached his holy hand into the inner pocket of his *Shabbos bekeshah* and pulled out a golden *rendel*. He handed it to the *Tiferes Shlomo*, saying, “Now, how does a golden coin come into the pocket of my

Shabbos kaftan? Since I finished studying *Hilchos Shabbos* in my youth I have never yet transgressed its laws, even *beshogeg* (by accident), so we must conclude that *Eliyohu HaNovi* placed this coin in there just for you!”

(*Otzar Yisrael* #3)

THE KEY TO PARNOSSA

The *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz used to say that the key to *parnossa* lies in the hands of the *Tiferes Shlomo*.

(*Otzar Yisrael* #13)

BLESSINGS DISGUISED WITHIN HOLY CURSES

The *Tiferes Shlomo* was also a *talmid* of Rav Meir of Apta, the *mechaber* of *Ohr LaShomayim*. He said that his custom to curse others and thereby bring about a *yeshua* (a salvation) is a tradition he learned and received from the *Ohr LaShomayim*, who received it as a tradition going back all the way to Avrohom Avinu. As it says regarding Avrohom - *umevorchecha avarech umekalelcha a'or* - usually translated as: “I shall bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you”. However, the *pasuk* does not say *umekalelcha akalel* - it says *a'or* - *ohr* means “light”. Thus we can translate these words as: “those whom you curse I shall enlighten” - *der leichten* we can use [disguised blessings as] curses to shine a bright light on *yiddishe neshomos* and do them favors.

It is well known how the *Tiferes Shlomo* used his powers to curse and strike, thereby saving others. Once, when he returned from the *mikve* on *Erev Shabbos*, he grew angry and cursed and yelled at the simple *shamoshim* who cleaned the *mikve*, “There was a mess and there were not enough towels!” They cowered in fright and tried to run away.

The next week they made sure there were plenty of towels and everything was in order. “Why is everything in order? Why are there enough towels?” raged the *Tzaddik*. “Why, oh why did you take away any reason for me to be angry - and why didn't you leave me cause to curse and rage?!!!”

Once, he yelled and screamed at the *Chassidim*, “Why do you come here? Go! Go home, even now, even on *Shabbos*! That's right! I give you permission to leave! Right now! Why

do you sin by coming and wasting my time?!" One of the *Chassidim* packed his bags and, taking his suitcase in hand, he was ready to leave then and there. "Fool! You don't understand what I am doing!" said the *Tiferes Shlomo*.

(*Otzar Yisrael* #15-17)

WINNING THE LOTTERY

Once, the *Tiferes Shlomo* chased the *Chassidim* with a towel and began hitting them; one of the *Chassidim* couldn't run away fast enough and he received a whipping from the towel that the *Rebbe* was wielding.

The *Chassid* was saddened and distraught by the blow he had received, and he thought to himself, "Woe is me! What will be with me this year, now that the *Rebbe* hit me? When he got home, he was so distressed that he fell ill in bed. The *Chassidim* approached the *Rebbe* and told the *Tiferes Shlomo* how the *Chassid* was in bed, suffering because of the *Rebbe's* blow. "Call that *batlan*, the lazy good-for-nothing, and bring him here to me so I can give him forty lashes - then the fool will win the lottery!" said the *Tzaddik*. And so it was - the *Chassid* won the lottery of forty thousand silver rubles!

(*Otzar Yisrael* #18)

TIFERES SHLOMO ON THE SEDER

The symbolism of the *kittel*, as perceived by the *Tiferes Shlomo*, Rav Shlomo of Radomsk, is most striking and powerful. Rav Shlomo, as he donned his *kittel* before the *Seder* would pause and begin to cry, "*Heilige Bashefer* (Holy Creator), may all the *neshomos* that join us here tonight find the proper *tikkun* (rectification) for their needs." (Touched by the Seder, by Rav Yechiel Spero, Mesorah Publications) The symbolism of the *kittel*, as perceived by the *Tiferes Shlomo*, Rav Shlomo of Radomsk, is most striking and powerful. Rav Shlomo, as he donned his *kittel* before the *Seder* would pause and begin to cry, "*Heilige Bashefer* (Holy Creator), may all the *neshomos* that join us here tonight find the proper *tikkun* (rectification) for their needs." (Touched by the Seder, by Rav Yechiel Spero, Mesorah Publications)

Rav Avraham Shaag Zwebner Ohel Avrohom (Adar 29)

HIS BERACHAH FULFILLED

An elderly woman from the city of Kleinvardein arrived in Yerushalayim asking where the *kever* of Rav Shaag was? When asked why she had come all this way just to *daven* at his *kever*, she told the following story:

“My mother was our holy Rav’s maid almost one hundred years ago, and at that time the Rav Shaag was entrusted with a large sum of money to safeguard and look after. Since he was so deeply engrossed in studying Torah, he accidentally left this money in the *sefer* he was learning from at the time. Later on, when he finished studying he closed the *sefer* and replaced it back on the shelf.

After a some time, the owner of the money came asking for it, but the Rav couldn’t find it. The Rav began to suspect that perhaps his maid had taken it, so he repaid the owner from his own pocket.

When the *Yom Tov* of *Pesach* approached, the Rav was cleaning the pages of his *seforim* looking for crumbs of *chametz*, and he found the money in the *sefer* that he had been studying.

Upon discovering his error, Rav Shaag realized that he had suspected his innocent maid. He called her and explained the whole story, asking her to forgive him, as tears streamed down his face. He added that he was willing to grant whatever she asked for.

My mother, on her part, told him that she was *moichel* him completely, and that she would only ask for one thing - his *berachah*. She had been married already fifteen years, but didn’t have any children. Our *rebbe bentshed* her and saying, ‘This year you shall have a child.’ ”

The elderly woman continued: “I am that child born of his *berachah*. All her life my mother yearned to come to the Holy Land and *daven* by the *kever* of that *tzaddik*. Now, Hashem, has given me the opportunity to come and fulfill my mother’s wish.” (*Ha'Ish Al Ha'Choma*)

Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky Iyunim B'Mikrah (Adar 29)

REB YAAKOV KAMENETSKY IN HONOR OF HIS YAHRTZEIT, 29 ADAR

by D. Rachelson

In Koloshova, the family of R' Binyomin Kamenetsky was not particularly distinguished. A Torah-observant home where the father worked and earned a respectable livelihood, things would have remained just the same had Heaven not ordained otherwise. In an interesting twist of fate, the father of Reb Binyomin, a timber-dealer and owner of a large flour mill, lost all his business in one night due to the decree of the Russian Tzar.

Thus, after the birth of their son Yaakov on 21 *Adar*, Reb Binyomin moved to a tiny hamlet by the name of Dolhinov. Reb Yaakov later pointed out that had it not been for this move, he would probably have grown up an ordinary businessman and would never have absorbed the unquenchable love of Torah that was prevalent in this small village.

His father would take him on Friday night at two in the morning to the *beis medrash* where the place hummed with learning as though it was midday. The hall was full of people studying *Torah*, each one according to his level: one learned a *shiur* on *Alshich*, another on *gemora*, and yet another a *shiur iyun*.

In the cheder of this village the hours were long, so long that Reb Yaakov's mother would pack together with his lunch an oil lamp to be used when darkness fell and the boys continued learning.

At the age of eleven, he left home to learn in the *yeshiva* of Minsk. After he passed the entry exam of the *rosh yeshiva*, HaRav Shlomo Glovenchitz, the latter still doubted whether he should accept him, due to his youth. "You are not even *bar mitzvah* yet."

With childish innocence, the young Yaakov replied, "Well, I came here to learn, not to be the tenth man of a *minyan*."

After a time, the Kamenetsky household moved to Minsk where they hosted the friends of Reb Yaakov, amongst others the future Rav Grozovsky, *zt"l*, and the young Aaron Kotler, *zt"l*.

Shortly after *Pesach* in 5665 (1905), Reb Yaakov and Reb Aaron traveled to Slobodke to learn under the supervision of the *Alter of Slobodke zt"l*. Reb Yaakov also learned in the *Yeshivos* of Slutzk, Krinik and Moltsh.

During World War I he took refuge in Lomza in the *yeshiva* of Reb Yechiel Michel Gordon *zt"l*. On 22 *Sivan*, 5679 (1919), he married the Rebbetzin Ita Ettel, daughter of the *Mashgiach* Reb Ber Hirsch Heller, *zt"l*, known in Slobodke as "*Der Yunger Mashgiach*."

From 5681 to 5686, he learned in a *kollel* in Slobodke that was known for its distinguished members and subsequently he took on the Rabbinate in various places.

On 11th Av 5697 (1937) he left for America. His plan was to collect money for the Slobodke *Kollel* and to cover the debts he incurred from his years as *rov* in Zitivian, but in fact his future lay in being the "*manhig hador*" and *Hashgocho* forced him to stay in America, where he was appointed *rov* in Toronto. In 5705 (1945), he accepted the request of Reb Shraga Feivel Mendelovitz, *zt"l*, that he take up the position of *rosh yeshiva* in *Mesivta Torah Vodaas*. From this standpoint he disseminated Torah for the rest of his life, standing as a sentry on duty for the Torah's ideals.

Reb Yaakov merited to live a long life, his mind lucid and clear till the very end. His *chidushim* were printed in his *seforim Emes LeYaakov, on Torah and on Shas*.

On 29th *Adar* 5746 (1986), his pure soul left this world. As he requested, he was buried in Brooklyn, since he pointed out that most of his family live in America and would not always be able to travel to his *kever* in Eretz Yisroel. From this, his last request we learn yet another chapter of his feelings for others.

The words of *Chazal* in *Pirkei Ovos* "*Ohev es habrios umekarvon laTorah*" were the guides and practice of Reb Yaakov throughout his life. Not differentiating between young and old, elderly and even little children, or those who didn't live according to the Torah way of life, Reb Yaakov loved them all.

"Loving your fellow Jew is a mitzvah in the Torah, and in addition it's a *segulah* that if the

love is given according to the Torah it will bring its recipients closer to Torah and to Hashem." So said Reb Yaakov and so did he.

Reb Yaakov was once in the waiting room of a doctor's surgery. Waiting together with him was a young Jewish boy from a totally nonobservant home. Reb Yaakov took a ball and began playing with the child. The *talmid* accompanying Reb Yaakov was astonished, and pointed out to Reb Yaakov his wonder at the Rov's behavior. "This child will think that a religious rabbi sits and plays ball instead of learning -- or at least he should talk to the boy, convince him to become a *baal teshuvah*."

Reb Yaakov explained, "I saw that with this boy, it is impossible to talk about *Yiddishkeit* or *mitzvos*. He comes from a family so far removed from anything Jewish. I just wanted that his picture of a *frum* Jew should remain one of a pleasant person, so I played ball with him. Who knows, perhaps this impression will one day have an effect on him and he will come closer to Torah and mitzvos."

"Once, after my regular study session in my father's home," recounted his son Reb Avrohom, "my father told me that a man and his daughter would soon be coming and requested that I remain in the room when he received the guests. Naturally, I fulfilled his request, but I was quite surprised, for usually when people came to my father I would leave the room and allow them to discuss matters in privacy. When the two of them entered, Reb Yaakov chatted with them, enquiring as to their welfare, occupation, where the father works, which school the daughter goes to, what she learns and more general questions. During the conversation, my father patted me affectionately on the shoulder, and introduced me. 'This is my little baby Avrohom,' and continued the conversation. A few minutes later the visit was over and the two of them left the house."

Reb Avrohom continued his story, "I was incredulous, wondering what this was all about. I was at the time nearing the end of my 40s and never had I heard my father referring to me as 'my little baby.' My father turned to me and explained, 'Listen, my son, to what took place here. This father and his daughter, who is the youngest of the family, had a wonderful relationship. He brought her up and educated her in the Torah way, and she accepted and absorbed everything he taught. All was fine, until one day, the father introduced her to a friend of his, saying, 'And this is my little baby.' Feeling humiliated by the expression, the daughter was deeply hurt and refused to talk to her father. The latter

was broken, since he had not meant to degrade her and his expression was just one of affection for his youngest daughter. She, however, would not be reconciled, and slowly began to cut off all contact with her father.'

"Near despair, the father turned to Reb Yaakov knowing that he was the one to turn to. Indeed, Reb Yaakov felt the father's pain, fearing that the girl may perhaps even rebel against her father and her Torah upbringing, *chas vesholom*, and advised him to bring his daughter to his house on Wednesday. 'For that is when I have a *shiur* with my youngest son, Avrohom. Tell your daughter you have an appointment with me and, if she likes, she may join you.' The daughter was delighted at the privilege of being allowed to go to Reb Yaakov and she arrived together with her father. Some time later, the father contacted Reb Yaakov, thanking him profusely for his wise help and told him that as they left the Rabbi's house, the girl turned to her father. 'I see Daddy, that even Reb Yaakov called his son his baby even in front of strangers although he is already a grandfather. Apparently, it's an expression of love of a father to his child,' she enthused. Peace had returned to the household of the man."

Engraved on the heart of all his young students are the words spoken by Reb Yaakov at the end of the summer holidays. During the long vacation, Reb Yaakov would travel to Camp Ohr Shraga and learn with the young bochurim as chavrusos. During these sessions of learning in partnership he would not allow any disturbance although his "*chavrusoh*" was many years younger, so that the young boy would not be hurt.

When the summer days were over, Reb Yaakov would turn to his "*chavrusos*" and say, "*Yom Kippur* is soon upon us and it's time to make a reckoning. When two people learn together it is very possible that one can unintentionally not treat the other with due respect. I therefore beg your *mechiloh* in case I slighted you at all in any way."

One of his *talmidim* retells that he was present when Reb Yaakov was writing a letter in the name of the *gedolim* of America to Reb Yechezkel Abramsky concerning the problem of autopsies. For five long minutes, Reb Yaakov sat, pondering how to acknowledge Reb Yechezkel's Rebbetzin in the letter, who had been the widow of R' Yechiel Michel Gordon, since this was not a private letter, but represented many *gedolim* and *roshei yeshivos*. After considerable thought he was pleased to find the right phrase "and we send our *brochah* to all who are present in the shadow of *Rabbeinu* and his Torah," implying the

talmidim as well as the Rebbetzin.

Reb Yaakov was relieved by this flash of inspiration as he turned to his *talmid*, "when the letter arrives, R' Yechezkel will probably call his Rebbetzin and show her that she is still remembered in America, thus we will have the *mitzvoh* of gladdening the heart of an *almonoh*."

<http://www.chareidi.org/archives5761/vayakhel/features2.htm>

Rav Sholom DovBer Schneerson Rebbe Rashab, Lubavitcher Rebbe (Nissan 2)

THREE CUSTOMS

The *Rebbe Rashab* of Lubavitch taught and commanded his son, the *Rebbe Rayatz*, to fulfill three practices, one of which was that he should study *Chumash* with *Rashi* and the commentary of the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh*. (*Shivchei Ohr HaChaim*)

NOT AN IMPOSTER

When the *Rebbe Rashab* began his tenure as *Rebbe*, his brother, the *Raza*, was asked if he thought that his brother the *Rashab* was worthy of being a *Rebbe*. The *Raza* answered, "All things have a middle ground between their two extremes. For example, between a pauper and wealthy man is the middle class. Between the two extremes of a cruel and kind man there is also a middle path. But between a normal person and a *Rebbe* there is no "in-between"! Either he is a *Rebbe* or an imposter - and my brother is no imposter!" (*Shmuos VeSippurim* Vol. 1 p. 78)

Rav Yaakov Yosef Twersky (Nissan 2)

HIS APPRECIATION OF THE OHR HACHAIM

From when he was just six years old Rav Yaakov Yosef of Skver studied the entire commentary of the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* on the weekly *Parsha*, all by himself. He would constantly speak about how important the study of the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* is and once remarked: "*Ich veis nisht viazoy ich valt gekent a'durech di letzteh fiftzig yohr ohn Ohr HaChaim* - I don't know how I would have survived the last fifty years of my life

without the *Ohr HaChaim!*" (*Toldos Yaakov Yosef Skver* p. 22)

Rav Yaakov Yosef of Skver used to say, "The first *Chassidishe sefer* is the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh.*" (*Be'or HaChaim* p. 241)

Rav Yaakov Yosef of Skver used to say that every word in the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* is an entire body of *Yiddishkeit* and that there is almost no *Chassidus* of which the *Ohr HaChaim* is not the bread and butter of its basis to the extent that one can fully and truly say that the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* is the one *sefer* that has been most widely accepted by the most Chassidim (*Nachlas Tzvi Kovetz* 7 p. 52)

WITHOUT THE OHR HACHAIM HOW CAN YOU BE A JEW?

Rav Yaakov Yosef of Skver used to say that every word of the *Ohr HaChaim* is like a whole Torah in and of itself. He even said, "One cannot be a full-fledged Jew without studying this holy *sefer!*"

If ever a *bochur* suffered a downturn in his *Yiras Shomayim*, the *Rebbe* ordered him to study the *Ohr HaChaim* even on non-*mussar* topics, because he said that studying his holy words was a *segula* to work on the soul.

SIMCHAS TORAH IN SKVER

Rav Neta Freund once told how every year on *Simchas Torah*, Rav Yaakov Yosef of Skver would complete the *Ohr HaChaim* and then begin studying it anew from *Bereishis*. He then danced with the *sefer Ohr HaChaim* in hand like we dance with a *Sefer Torah*. Whoever witnessed this event can begin to understand the profound connection that Skverer Chassidus has with the *Ohr HaChaim*.

(Sources: *Hillula Kadisha* p. 317-318)

Rav Yochanon Twersky (Nissan 4)

THE SOUL OF YOCHONON BEN ZAKKAI

Rav Mordechai of Czernobyl was once enumerating the praises of his holy sons. As he did so he designated whose soul stemmed from which source and which soul he drew down to

each child. When he reached Rav Yochanon he said that he had the soul of Rav Yochanon ben Zakkai. When these words were repeated before Rav Yochanon of Rachmistrivka himself, he said, "Surely this is true. My name is Yochanon and my holy father is surely meritorious and therefore Zakkai, which means that I am Yochanon ben Zakkai!" (*Sefer HaYachas Czernoble* 15:1)

Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel Ohev Yisroel, Apta Rav (Nissan 5)

SEFER TORAH

When the holy *Rizhiner* was still young he attended a wedding where many great *tzaddikim* and *Chassidic Rebbes* were present. During the *chasuna*, his *gartel*, the sash worn around the waist, fell off. The holy *Apta Rav*, recognized as one of the elders and leaders of *Chassidus* at the time, himself bent down to gird and retie the *gartel* of the *Rizhiner*. When many of the crowd expressed shock that such an elder *Rebbe* had bent down and humbled himself before such a young *tzaddik*, the *Apta Rav* remarked: What do they want? I just fulfilled a *mitzva*, I was doing *gelila* and retying a *Sefer Torah!*" (*Tiferes Yisrael*)

THE WRITINGS THAT WERE LEFT OVER FROM THE TZADDIK

Rav Meshulam Zisha of Zinkov, grandson of the *Apta Rav*, related a story he had heard from his father Rav Yitzchak Meir of Zinkov regarding Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev. Once the *Berditchever* was visiting the *Apta Rav* in Kolbosov, and he asked to see some of the *Apta Rav's* writings on the *parashah*. The *Apta Rav* happily lent them to Rav Levi Yitzchak. Rav Levi Yitzchak was so immersed in his *avodas Hashem* that he completely forgot to return the writings to the *Apta Rav*. After Rav Levi Yitzchak passed on, these writings were found among his own writings, and the publishers thought that these belonged to Rav Levi Yitzchak as well, and they published them mistakenly in his name.

AHAVAS YISRAEL

The *Apta Rav* once said that he can testify before all the Heavenly Hosts - the *Pamalia Shel Maala* - that he is a true *Ohev Yisrael*.

"This is because," he said, "whenever I do a *mitzva* and recite the formula *LeShem Yichud Kudsha Berich Hu uShechintei Beshem Kol Yisrael* - "to unify Hashem and the *Shechina*

and I declare in the name of all *Klal Yisrael*" - I have in mind that every member of *Bnei Yisrael*, even the lowliest of them, should have an equal merit and portion in this *mitzva* as I myself do. This is true *Ahavas Yisrael*. (*Kav Venoki - Vezos Berocha* 37b)

The *Apta Rav's* intense *Ahavas Yisrael* was so well known that his *einikel*, the *Ramaz* of *Zhinkov*, wrote in the introduction to *Ohev Yisrael* that the reason he named his *Zeide's* *sefer Ohev Yisrael* was: "because he had a treasured saying, which was that he could be proud of this attribute, of his love for *Bnei Yisrael*, that he could testify to it even before the Heavenly Court, the *Beis Din Shel Maala*, that this *Ahavas Yisrael* was bound to his heart. Before he passed away he commanded his children that nothing else should be written on his *matzeiva* except the words *Ohev Yisrael* - and so it was."

HASHEM ALONE SHALL REDEEM US

The *Rav* of *Zavanshtick* related that once he was serving *Rav Yaakov Shimon* the son of *Rav Pinchas Koretzer*, when they were visited by the holy *Apta Rav*, *mechaber* of *Ohev Yisrael*, who stayed with them.

During the visit they sat together and the *Apta Rav's* face shone like a fiery flame. He asked, "My good friend and beloved of Hashem, *Rav Yaakov Shimon*, do you know the reason why in times past there were many *Tzaddikim* in each generation, whereas now Hashem has removed them from our midst and has left us with but a few specks and grains?"

Rav Yaakov Shimon did not utter a sound. After repeating his question several times, with *Rav Yaakov Shimon* sitting silently without responding, the *Apta Rav* said, as his face shone with an otherworldly flame, "If Your Honor, Master of Torah, refuses to answer, I will. It says (*Yeshaya* 3:1), 'The L-rd Hashem, Master of Legions, is removing from *Yerushalayim* and from *Yehuda* support of men and support of women.' *Loshon HaKodesh* has ten expressions to explain the meaning of the word *mishon* - "support" - as those expert in languages understand."

And then the spirit rested upon him and he spoke and explained the ten ways to translate *mishon*. Afterward, he continued his remarks by saying (*Yeshaya* 2:11), "'And Hashem alone will be exalted on that day.' *Rav Shimon bar Yochai's* generation should have been redeemed in his merit, but all his generation relied on him - and so they were not

redeemed. The holy *Arizal's* generation should have been redeemed in his merit, but all his generation relied on him, thinking he would redeem them - and so they were not redeemed. Similarly, the holy *Ba'al Shem Tov's* generation should have been redeemed in his merit, but all his generation relied on him and so they were not redeemed. In each generation there were single great individuals who stood out and whose souls were so elevated that *Klal Yisrael* trusted they would be the redeemers, relying upon them to be their saviors. Thus, the redemption failed to come and they were not redeemed. Before *Moshiach's* coming *Hashem* will remove from Yehuda and Yerushalayim all support - both male and female; all those lofty souls that *Klal Yisrael* relied upon for support will be taken away, leaving *Klal Yisrael* with no one to rely on except *Hashem* - and then the *Geula* will come!"

He concluded by saying, "This is why the *pasuk* tells us that on that day *Hashem* alone shall be exalted: *Klal Yisrael* will have no one else left to lean on or rely upon for support except *Hashem* - then the redemption will come." The *Zavanshticker Rav* concluded the story by saying that when the *Apta* said the *pasuk* "*Venisgov Hashem levado bayom hahu*" - he roared the words so loudly that the walls shook!

BRIBERY EVEN BLINDS THE EYES OF THE TZADDIKIM

"Because bribery blinds the wise and distorts the words of the Tzaddikim" (23:8).

Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Komarna writes (*Heichal HaBerocha Mishpotim 2:4*) that according to our Sages in *Kesubos 105a*, even a complete *Tzaddik* who takes a bribe will be blinded. However, this statement is wondrous and strange indeed, says the *Komarna*. How can someone who takes bribes be called a complete *Tzaddik*?! The answer to this, explains the *Komarner*, can be understood based on the following true story about the *Apta Rav*, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, *mechaber of Ohev Yisrael*:

In his younger days, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel was Rav in Kolbasof and served as a *Dayan* in the rabbinical court of that city and its environs. He once sat with two other judges to rule on a matter of some importance, when the other two had accepted a bribe to rule in favor of one of the litigants in the case. They tried to rule on this matter in favor of the man who had bribed them but the *Ohev Yisrael* kept insisting that their judgment was incorrect and inconsistent with the *Halocha*. The other *Dayanim* advised this man to bribe the *Ohev Yisrael* as well. The litigant, however, realized that it would not work

because the *Ohev Yisrael* was a *Tzaddik* and would never accept a bribe from him directly.

They gave the litigant an idea - to place the bribe money secretly into the pockets of his *Rosh Chodesh bekesh*, the long fine satin coat he wore in honor of *Rosh Chodesh*. The man filled the Rav's pockets with gold and no one knew. When the Rav sat in judgment, he was amazed that all of a sudden he began to hear the "truth" in their arguments and that their previously false and skewed judgments now sounded correct to him. However, he knew it was wrong and so he kept pushing off ruling on the matter. The *Ohev Yisrael* was confused how his judgments could be so perverted and clouded as to agree to something he knew in his heart to be wrong and against the *Halocha*.

Then came *Rosh Chodesh*. When he went to put on his garments, he felt them to be unusually heavy. The *Ohev Yisrael* was dumbfounded when he placed his hands in his pockets and discovered them to be full of gold coins. He questioned his household and found out that the litigant had been spotted visiting his rooms. He realized that he must have been secretly bribed! Now he understood why his previous judgments were being perverted and how his mind was being distorted by the bribe that he had unknowingly received! He summoned the litigant and the latter admitted to his attempt to bribe the Rav. Immediately, the Rav handed him back the bribe money and removed himself from the case.

Now, said the *Ohev Yisrael*, I understand the *pasuk* that says bribes "distort the words of *Tzaddikim*". Even a complete *Tzaddik* who accepts a bribe unknowingly will have his words and judgments distorted!

HOW THE OHEV YISRAEL BECAME A TALMID OF THE NOAM ELIMELECH

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

His friends advised him to completely ignore any questions about where he was from and

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

While Rav Shmelka was thus seated the *Apter Rav* told him, "Let me tell you a story about when I was the Rav of Kolbesov. I was back then a young man, an *avreich*, and I lived in the house set aside for the Rav. Now this house was 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 as we were immersed in our studies *lishma*, nothing disturbed us. We were not *Chassidim*, and since our primary *avoda* was Torah study, we even looked upon their ways with disdain and counted ourselves as *Misnagdim* (opponents to Chassidus).

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

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

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

finished the first story he began to tell me another one! At this point my hair stood on end. I was so disturbed at this waste of my precious time. When he finished, the other guest began to tell me a tale as well and the pain I felt was death itself! Finally, they finished the third story and left on their way.

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

I understood that this must be through *Ruach HaKodesh* and I hoped that Hashem would grant me another opportunity to reunite with these two holy individuals. Two years later I looked up out of the window and saw them both traveling past in their carriage. I could not miss such an opportunity! I ran outside to catch them and draw their attention. I was in such a rush I did not dress myself in my coat or my *spodik* (the fur hat worn by important personages such as the town *Rav*) and I ran in my shirt after their coach, chasing it across town. When I finally caught up with them near the inn I asked them in between catching my breath as to their destination. "We are *headed* to Lizhensk, to the *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech," they explained.

"Can I join you?" I asked.

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

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

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

Berditchev.

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

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

HOW HASHEM GIVES TZEDAKAH

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

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

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

THE APTA RAV'S APPROVAL

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

One day, they heard that the *Apta Rav* was on his way to meet Rav Yitzchok of Radvil and

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

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

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

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

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

"*Chaim'nyu!*" chastised the *Ahavas Sholom*, "stand up so the Rebbe can see you properly!"

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

HIS DEPARTURE FROM THIS WORLD

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.]

A TRUE STORY REGARDING RAV ELIYAHU BAAL SHEM OF CHELM

Rav Moshe Duvid Shtrum of Tarnov once told how Rav Shimeleh Zelichover *HY"D* the

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

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

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

(cited from Nezer HaKodesh Minhagei Ropshitz pg147)

Rav Chaim Abulafia Chacham Chaim Abulafia of Teveria (Nissan 6)

Please note that this story is repeated another date due to a discrepancy in the Yartzeit Date

THE TWO MOSHIACHS

This story was heard from the chief Rav of Teverya, Rav Yaakov Chai Zerihan:

When Rav Chaim ben Attar, *mechaber* of the *Ohr HaChaim*, arrived in Teverya, he went to

the *Bais Medrash* and found a group of *talmidim* sitting together and studying under their master and teacher Rav Chaim Abulafia, who sat teaching them Torah and studying with them, supported by many cushions and pillows propped on either side for his comfort. When the *Ohr HaChaim* saw all the cushions and pillows, he said quietly to himself in wonder, “Does the Torah deserve this? [How can he relax and disrespect the *Torah* like that?]”

Rav Chaim Abulafia saw the *Ohr HaChaim* and immediately called out in a loud voice, “The *Chacham Chaim* has come to us!” When the *Ohr HaChaim* approached, Rav Chaim Abulafia rose to his feet and stood to greet him, reciting the *pasuk*, “Arise before your elders - *mipnei seiva sokum*,” and they sat and studied together *sugyas* of *Shas*. Rav Chaim ben Attar was amazed at Rav Chaim Abulafia’s great scholarship, erudition and breadth of knowledge in Torah. Then Rav Chaim Abulafia told the *Ohr HaChaim*, “The Torah does deserve this and requires it, due to my advanced age and weakness!” The *Ohr HaChaim* then asked his forgiveness.

Afterward, they left together to the *kever* of the Tanna Rav Akiva and, not to waste time, they rented an animal to take Rav Chaim Abulafia, who was some ninety-three years old at the time. When they arrived at the cave of the Tanna, Rav Abulafia dismounted from the donkey and they honored one another to enter first. Rav Chaim ben Attar sat and wept, “Woe are we that both *Moshiachs* have arrived here together at the right time!”

A great fog and mist crept over them and hid them from view. Whisperings and low conversation between them were heard as they both wept quietly. Those present later surmised that it was revealed to both Rav Chaims that they would pass away, one a year after the other. And so it was, that due to our sins Rav Chaim ben Attar passed away on the fifteenth of *Tammuz* 5503 and Rav Chaim Abulafia in *Nissan* of that following year 5504. (*Hillula Kadisha* p. 308 cited from *Yalkut Yosef* p. 42)

Rav Aharon Roth Shomer Emunim (Nissan 6)

A TZADDIK A KANNO'I AND AN OHEV YISROEL

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*.

There is no question that Rav Ahrele Roth was a *kanno'i*, an extreme anti-Zionist who fought against the influences of Zionism and who felt that its ideology was false and foreign. Some examples of his *kano'us* are described by one of his close *talmidim*, Rav Eliyohu HaKohen Shteinberger:

Rav Ahrele would have nothing to do with the Zionist Rabbonim, especially with the chief Rav. When he heard that one of his *talmidim* was commissioned to write a *Sefer Torah* by a shul in Tel Aviv for the *illuei neshoma* of the first chief Rav, he forbade his *talmid* from completing the *Sefer Torah*. The *sofer* had already completed *Sefer Bereishis* and the *gabboim* of the shul in Tel Aviv were so upset that they refused to pay for any of the work. And so Rav Ahrele compensated the *sofer* the entire sum from his own pocket.

Another time after the terrible news of the Holocaust reached Israel, an assembly was called together in the *Churva shul* of Rav Yehuda HeChassid to declare the upcoming

Wednesday as a public fast. The invitation came in the name of the second chief Rav, and Rav Ahrele refused to allow any of his *talmidim* or *Chassidim* to participate. When Rav Dushinsky similarly forbade it, they both designated Monday as a fast instead. The organizers tried to change Rav Ahrele's mind, going so far as to send the *Gerrer Rebbe's* son to plead with Rav Ahrele, but he refused flat out to have anything to do with any assembly that the Zionist chief Rav would participate in.

Another example was his abhorrence of the new Ivrit language, which the Zionists had established. Rav Ahrele forbade his followers to speak and use this language, claiming that it would defile them. When one *talmid* once wrote out a *teno'im* between *chosson* and *kalla* and wrote the Hebrew word for furniture as *rehitim*, Rav Ahrele tore up the contract when he reached that word and said that he would not allow any Modern Hebrew words to be used!

In contrast, however, to other extremists and *kano'im*, Rav Ahrele was a *Tzaddik* and an *Ohev Yisrael*. His *kano'us* was based on emes and on his unceasing search for truth and his unyielding *Ahavas Hashem*, *Ahavas HaTorah* and *Ahavas Yisrael*. Here are a few examples stories from the same witness and author, who wrote the above examples of *kano'us*:

When Rav Amram Bloi, whom Rav Ahrele greatly admired for his staunch opposition to the Zionist ways, assembled protests on Shabbos against the *Chillul Shabbos* that the soccer games in Yerushalayim were causing to thousands of Jews, Rav Ahrele and his *Chassidim* joined in the protests. He sent all his *Chassidim*, adults and *bochurim*, to the protest for two *Shabbosos* in a row. Afterward, Rav Ahrele saw that the *bochurim* might be negatively influenced by seeing things that were inappropriate and he forbade them from taking part in further protests. Rav Amram Bloi was upset by this and he sent Eliyohu Shteinberger to Rav Ahrele to try to persuade him to change his mind and send the *bochurim* to protest. Rav Ahrele was adamant in his refusal and sent Rav Shteinberger back to Rav Amram Bloi with the following message: "Go tell Rav Amram in my name that if he takes upon himself the complete and total responsibility for the sin that if the *bochurim* should see unsightly forbidden things and blemish their holy vision and eyes, then I will send them on that condition." Eliyohu Shteinberger went back and gave Rav Amram Bloi Rav Ahrele's message and of course Rav Amram was afraid to accept such a responsibility and the *bochurim* did not participate.

Another example of Rav Ahrele's understanding of when *kano'us* was inappropriate was when the former secretary to the chief Rav (then retired) showed up in Rav Ahrele's *shul* one Shabbos. This Chassid was a scion from holy families yet still his former position as secretary to the Zionist chief *Rav* did not endear him to Rav Ahrele's *Chassidim* - so much so that they did not even let him sit down. When Rav Ahrele saw this, he called the man over and gave him a seat. Several of the *Chassidim* came up to and whispered to him this person's identity and former position, but Rav Ahrele shrugged them off and ignored them. When *Krias HaTorah* commenced, Rav Ahrele told them to give him an *aliya* like all guests and after *davening* he asked him to sit down for the *Kiddush*. Again, some of the *Chassidim* approached Rav Ahrele and whispered in his ear this person's identity and past position, but their whispered protests fell on deaf ears. Rav Ahrele shoed them off and retorted angrily to them, "Do you want to be the one to teach me to be a *kano'i*!?" After *davening* the guest asked the *gabbai* permission to speak with Rav Ahrele privately and he was in there for an hour. After he came out, Rav Ahrele told the *gabbai*, "You have to know when to be a *kanno'i* and when it's better not to be a *kanno'i*. You see, he was crying and begging me to help him do teshuva and crying over how low he had sunk from his former lofty stature after he came from such a good family. I had to give him *chizuk*. I am sure that his illustrious forebears will all thank me very much for helping him." (*Uvda DeAharon* Ch. 28)

לעילוי נשמת לזכר עולם יהי' צדיק



התנא רבי חנינא בן דוסא

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

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

הרה"ק רבי חיים זאנוויל בן הרה"ק ר' משה אבראמאווויטש מריבניץ זצוקללה"ה זי"ע

זכותו הגדול יגן עלינו ועל כל ישראל אמן

הרה"ח אברהם חיים בן מוה"ר שלום ז"ל

מרת זיסל בת מוה"ר מאיר זאב הכהן ז"ל

מוה"ר שלום בן הרה"ח אברהם חיים ז"ל

מוה"ר יצחק מאיר זאב בן הרה"ח אברהם חיים ז"ל

מוה"ר משה יחזקאל-ל שרגא בן הרה"ח אברהם חיים ז"ל

מרת שרה ביילא בת מוה"ר ארי' לייב ז"ל

ר' יוסף בן שמואל הלוי ז"ל

ר' ברוך בענדיט חיים בן יצחק יעקב ז"ל

ימליץ טוב בעד משפחתו היקרה

ויקום לגורלו לקץ הימין במהרה

ביסוד
ר. דניאל ד דהן
סופר ס"ת"ם מוסמך

Rabbi Daniel David Dahan, Sofer Stam
Tel: 646 387 5683. Email: Sofersogood4@gmail.com
Checking, writing, and sale of Sefer Torah, Tefillins,
Mezuzot, and Megillot. ✪ SAME DAY SERVICE ✪

Contact us for your dream custom closet



HIPPO CLOSETS

Free Estimates
347.760.3600
HippoClosets@gmail.com

GA GIBRALTAR ABSTRACT TITLE AGENCY

ARE YOU PURCHASING OR REFINANCING?
CALL US FOR A QUOTE!
845.362.3863 • ORDERTITLE@GIBALTARNY.COM

ROSENBLUM ARCHITECTURE

TODD ROSENBLUM • rosenblumarchitecture.com

845.364.0337 • 200 East Eckerson Road Suite 230 E
914.522.6793 • New City, NY 10956
todd@adaparch.com

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A STRAUSS CLEANING

We Specialize in Commercial Jobs:
- Offices
- Schools
- Shuls
- Retail Stores
- Event Spaces

Free Estimate
Call now at 201-742-3136

LR HOME INSPECTIONS

LENNY ROSENFELD
845.517.0300
inspections613@gmail.com
WWW.LRINSPECTIONS.COM
NY State License # 1330185

Serving Rockland, Westchester, NYC 5 Boroughs

MOSHE STAMM LICENSED BROKER

SPECIALIZING IN GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE

omni MANAGED HEALTH

p: 718.252.9555 ext. 2207
e: moshe@omnimh.com
w: www.omnimh.com

ROCKLAND TRANSFERS CAR SERVICE



- Airport car service (departures and arrivals)
- City to City
- Per Hour Hire
- School (out-of-town) Drop-off and Pick-up
- Reliable and Safe
- Fixed Rates
- No Added Fees
- Credit Cards Accepted

Easy Booking Online



Reserve Online
www.RocklandTransfers.com
Call / Text
(845) 288-8888

CHEVRA L'BITACHON OF ROCKLAND COUNTY

Chevra L'Bitachon is a community security organization which trains and manages members of the community to become guards for their own shuls and mosdos as well as other security related resources.

For more info, please contact us at info@clbrc.org or call/whatsapp **845.704.1205**
(add us to whatsapp to see our regular security related updates)

UNLIMITED ISRAEL™
ON ISRAEL'S MOST RELIABLE NETWORK
P: 845-371-9800

TELETECH SECURITY & COMMUNICATIONS

FIRST//CLASS LEASING

Sullivan County Labs
Certified Environmental Testing
How Well Do You Know Your Well?

COMMON TESTS:
• Bacteria
• Nitrates
• Metals
• Volatile Organic Compounds
• Petacides / Herbicides
• Etc.

845-SAFE-H2O
PICKUPS AVAILABLE IN MONSEY AND SURROUNDING AREAS
www.sullivancountylabs.com

35+ Years
OF SERVING THE COMMUNITY

- WILLS & TRUSTS
- ELDER LAW
- PROBATE
- TRUST ADMINISTRATION
- HALACHIC WILLS
- TAX PLANNING
- MEDICAID PLANNING
- ESTATE PLANNING
- SPECIAL NEEDS PLANNING
- ASSET PROTECTION

Emanuel Haas, Esq. Ari J. Zaltz, Esq.

Haas & Zaltz, LLP
845.425.3900
INFO@HAASZALTZ.COM | WWW.HAASZALTZ.COM
365 ROUTE 89 | SUITE 231 | AIRMONT, NY 10952

As an independent agency we shop several companies to find you the right coverage and the right price.

Wise Men Insurance Services
support@wisemeninsurance.com
Ph 845-579-2978 Fax 845-231-6224

DJ KAEJ

FOR ALL YOUR SIMCHA NEEDS!

347.618.5028
bookings@djkaej.com

POMONA ENTERPRISES CORP.
Custom Home Builders
845-354-0018

WWW.POMONAENTERPRISES.COM

ROCKLAND ERUV

JUNKBOYZ PRESERVATION

LITTLE RACER PARTY RENTALS

- Bumper Cars!
- Slot & RC Cars!
- Party Activities!

Little Racer Party Rentals, LLC offers full service race car parties/events including Bumper Cars, Hot Wheels, Slot Cars and other activities brought directly to you. Outdoor and Indoor Options!

(201) 571-3617
INFO@LITTILERACERPARTYRENTALS.COM
WWW.LITTILERACERPARTYRENTALS.COM #LittleRacerPartyRentals @littileracerpartyrentals

To inquire about placing your free ad here, please email mitzvos@ramapost.com

7701

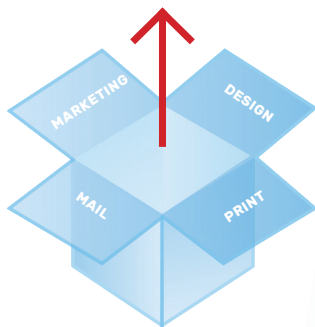
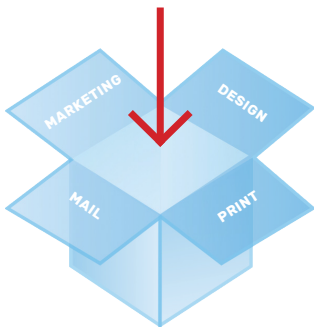


WE DO IT ALL RIGHT HERE.
FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION.

In The Box

THAT'S WHAT MAKES US

Out of The Box



RAMAPOST. ABOVE AND BEYOND.

info@ramapost.com | www.Ramapost.com | P: 845.369.9600 | F: 845.369.9601

382 Route 59 Suite 264, Airmont, NY 10952

TWO LOCATIONS

To better serve you!



CARE 365

1 MAIN STREET
(ON THE CORNER OF ROUE 59 & 306)
MONSEY, NY
10952

☎ 845.CARE.365

CLOSE TO HOME



CARE 365 NORTH

1633 ROUTE 202, SUITE #100
(RAMAPO PLAZA SHOPPING CENTER)
POMONA, NY
10970

☎ 845.CARE.365

NEW LOCATION!