

# ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



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זכות רפואה שלמה

מיכאל בן שלי

מלכה בת רחל

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

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

❧ **VAYIKRA** ❧

❧ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❧

## משנכנס אדר מרבִּים משמחה

Shabbos Noam HaNeshomos




### Dvar Torah

#### The Tzaddik's Sins and His Teshuva

"And if a soul shall sin" (Vayikra 5:1)

The Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizhensk cites the *Zohar HaKodosh* (III:13), which understands our *pasuk* to be read as a question asked in astonishment: "How can a holy, lofty soul ever sin?" The *Zohar* understands the term *nefesh* here to refer to a holy, lofty level. The *Noam Elimelech* reapplies this new reading of our *pasuk* and asks regarding *Tzaddikim*, whose so called "sins" are really fine, delicate transgressions over some good custom or stringency, rather than the gross violations of the wicked who transgress grave sins. A *Tzaddik* like those lofty souls described by the *Zohar*, who transgresses even such a fine line, is greatly troubled and seized with trembling and fear over what he has done, as the *Zohar* exclaimed, "The

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*Tzaddik* asks himself how such a lofty, holy soul can sin!" In contrast the wicked sin, violating real laws and committing heinous crimes, yet they remain unmoved and undisturbed by their wicked behavior. A *Tzaddik*, however, sees even the slightest stringency and added measure as the strictest law, and thus, in his eyes, any misdeed is a grave sin and so he is greatly troubled over any perceived failings. It is as if he is now hearing live the very same oath that his soul swore before birth that he should be a *Tzaddik* and act righteously (as described in *Nidda* 30b).



## Story

### The *Tzaddik*'s Sins and His *Teshuva*

The *Chozeh* of Lublin entered the Rebbe Reb Elimelech's room and found the *Tzaddik* upset and in a very bad way. "Oy vey, what have I done?! Oy vey, what have I done!!!" cried the Rebbe Elimelech in anguish, again and again, over and over, weeping bitterly.

The *Chozeh* of Lublin was distraught to find his *Rebbe* in such a state and inquired as to what could have caused the *Tzaddik* to be so upset – what had he done?

"How can I not worry and be upset when a transgression has come my way and caused me to sin?!" the Rebbe Elimelech exclaimed.

The *Chozeh* asked his master what possible sin could have come his way. Broken-hearted, Rebbe Elimelech replied, "I interrupted the prayers by talking and conversing in idle matters!" and launched into a detailed explanation how once he had already begun the *Hodu* verses in *Pesukei DeZimra*, a sad woman of downtrodden spirit had come in crying her bitter heart out that her daughter was in the midst of labor and that they feared for her life. "And I interrupted to ask for her name and her daughter's name and this is the sin! I talked and interrupted the prayers!"

"But *Rebbe*," the *Chozeh* tried to calm his *Rebbe*, "surely this is a matter of *pikuach nefesh* and matters of life and death push aside and overtake all others," but this reasoning did nothing to stem the tide of tears nor to quell the *Tzaddik*'s pain. Rebbe Elimelech sighed that he had interrupted the *tefilla*. This continued until the *Chozeh* pointed out that in *Hodu* one is permitted to interrupt according to the *Halocha* because it precedes the *berocha* of *Boruch She'omar* according to the rite of *Nusach Sefard* which the *Chassidim* daven. This was no good either. "But," cried the *Noam Elimelech*, "according to *Nusach Ashkenaz* it is still a transgression because there, *Hodu* follows *Boruch She'omar* and one is forbidden to interrupt!"

In the end the *Tzaddik*, Rebbe Elimelech, remained inconsolable and was greatly distressed, remarking, "*Halevai!* I wish that my *teshuva* would be accepted!!!"

The *Chozeh* concluded this story with the following observation: "We must learn from this just how much we must fear sin and how much we should really worry over even some small, seemingly insignificant transgression, and to do *teshuva* before *Hashem*!" (*Ohel Elimelech* 294)



## ***OHR HACHAIM***

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

### **Praises For The Holy Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh**

#### **Moshiach of his Generation**

Rav Pinchas Koritzer said that studying the *Ohr HaChaim* is a *segula* for the *neshoma* like the *Zohar*, because Rav Chaim *ben Attar* had the soul of *Moshiach* in his generation just as Rav Shimon *bar Yochai* had in his own generation. (*Eden Tzion* 42)



#### **Like Dwarves**

Rav Sholom Teomim writes: "The *Ohr HaChaim's Torah* shines as strong as the sun at high noon, and illuminates all the supernal worlds and heavenly realms! This is because the *Ohr HaChaim* merited understanding and grasping the true depth of the light in our holy *Torah*, and we are like dwarves who ride on the shoulders of this giant! (*Ohr HaTorah*)



#### **Transformed into Someone New**

"I remember that I was just a young man," testified Rav Avrohom Dovid of Buczacz, "when I first began to study the *Torah* of the *Ohr HaChaim* and I felt that I was transformed into a new person! His lofty *kedusha* permeates his entire holy *sefer*." (*Imros Tzaddikim Sanz*)



### **The Holy Lights Of The Ohr Hachaim**

*Odom ki yakriv mikem korban Lashem* - "If a person should offer a sacrifice from among you to Hashem" (1:2).

#### **The Medium Through Which Moshe Came Close to Hashem**

The *Ohr HaChaim* explains that when Bnei Yisrael saw how Moshe was chosen from among them all to be the one who was selected as spokesman, and they observed the great honor and glory bestowed upon Moshe to draw him close to the *Shechina*, they realized that the reason for this was because of Bnei Yisrael - in their merit and on their behalf was Moshe chosen [rather than on his own merit]. This is how the *Ohr HaChaim* reads our *pasuk*: *Odom ki yakriv* - "If a person is chosen to be drawn close to the *Shechina*" - *mikem* - "because of you and your merit is the reason that he is selected to be drawn close". This can be proven, says the *Ohr HaChaim*, because for some thirty-eight years that Bnei Yisrael were distanced from Hashem because of the sins of the *Eigel* (Golden Calf) and the *Meraglim* (Spies), for that duration, Hashem did not speak with Moshe either. (Only afterward, when Bnei Yisrael and Hashem were reconciled, did Hashem speak with Moshe, proving that the reason for speaking



to Moshe at all was because of Bnei Yisrael.)



### **Kiruv Rechokim – the Deeper Korban Lashem**

Our *pasuk* also hints at the idea that all great leaders should draw the hearts of Bnei Yisrael close to *Hashem* and to His *avoda*. This closeness is called a *Korban Lashem* [the word *Korban* is derived from the word *korov* – meaning “close” or “near”].

The *Ohr HaChaim* explains that when a person sins, this separates him from *dveikus* and cuts off the attachment between a *Yid* and his Father in Heaven. *Devorim* 4:4 teaches that we should be *dveikim* (attached) to *Hashem*, yet sin detaches and separates us, cutting us off from *Hashem*. Sin distances us from *Hashem*.

*Hashem* is upset about this and desires our closeness to Him. He therefore commanded that those who are distant should be drawn back close to Him, and rebuked and chastised for their misdeeds in order that they should return and reattach themselves to *Hashem*.

*Hashem* even punishes whoever looks away and attempts to ignore his children who have gone astray. The proof of this, says the *Ohr HaChaim*, is the reward promised to those who work in *kiruv* and actively work to draw *Hashem's* children back, as the *Tanna* in *Avos* Chapter 5 says: “Whoever gives merit to the masses – no sin shall come to him”. *Hashem* guards him from mistakes; the *Ohr HaChaim* says that this is a faithful proof.

Thus, the *Ohr HaChaim* says, *Odom ki yakriv mikem* – If an *Odom*, an important person, will draw close those who are the most lowly from among you, and bring back those who sinned, those who made mistakes and strayed, and distancing themselves and cutting themselves off from *Hashem* and *dveikus*, this drawing them close and bringing them back is called a *Korban* – an offering to *Hashem*, an offering of closeness, a sacrifice of nearness, of bringing wayward, distanced children back to their Father, of bringing the wild saplings back to their holy roots. Such a person who is engaged in *kiruv rechokim* need never offer any other offerings – neither vows nor gifts (*neder* or *nedova*), neither sin nor guilt offerings (*chatos* or *oshom*), because, as *Pirkei Avos* teaches, whoever works in *kiruv* and brings merit to the masses – no sin befalls him. For if there are no mistakes there is no need for *korbonos*. Furthermore, the *Ohr HaChaim* emphasizes that any person can do this and draw the masses back to *Hashem*, not just great *Tzaddikim*. This is our *Korban* to *Hashem*, offering His children back to Him.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Translation:

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

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



## GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER



YAHREZITS BEGINNING SHABBOS VAYIKRA

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

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

### \* 9<sup>th</sup> of Adar II ~ Begins Friday Night (Mar 16<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Mordechai Meisels**, the *parnes* of Prague, a great Jewish philanthropist who saved many Jewish lives in pogroms, (5361/1601 – Adar II);
- \* **Rav Shlomo Zalman** of Volozhin, brother of Rav Chaim Volozhin, (5516–5548/1756–1788);
- \* **Rav Menachem Mendel Stern** (1759–1834). He was a *talmid* of Rav Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lissa (*mechaber* of *Nesivos Hamishpot*, *Chavas Da'as*, and *Derech Chaim*). He succeeded Rav Yehuda HaKohen Heller (*mechaber* of *Kuntres HaSefeikos* and brother of the *Ketzos HaChoshen*) as *Rav* of Sighet, Hungary. Rav Stern was a *Chassid* of Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov and of Rav Mendel of Kossov. Among his works is *Derech Emuna*, (5594/1834 – Adar II);

- ✳ **Rav Aharon Menachem Mendel** of Radzimin, (5694/1934);
- ✳ **Rav Yechiel Schlesinger**, *Rav* and *posek* for *Kehal Adas Yeshurun*. In his youth, he learned in Slobodka and Mir *Yeshivos*. After his marriage in 1930, he set off for Ponevezh, Lithuania. During his time in Ponevezh, Rav Yechiel Michel also trained to become a *Dayan*, doing *shimush* in the *Bais Din* of the Ponevezher *Rav*. He was called to serve as a *Dayan* on the Frankfurt *Bais Din*, and as the head of Rav Breuer's *Yeshiva* there. In 1938, he decided that life as a Jew in Germany was becoming intolerable. Although he was offered the prestigious position of *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Torah Vodaas Yeshiva* in New York, he preferred to move to *Eretz Yisrael*. Once he reached Yerushalayim, a few days after *Pesach* (1939), he founded *Kol Torah Yeshiva*, setting a clear *Torah* path for German Jewry, (5709/1949);
- ✳ **Rav Chaim Ephraim Zeitchek**, *Mashgiach* of Novardok, Yerushalayim, and *Rosh Yeshiva Ohr Chodosh*, (5749/1989).
- ✳ **10<sup>th</sup> of Adar II ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Mar 17<sup>th</sup>)**
  - ✳ **Rav Pinchas** of Voldova, *mechaber* of *Bris Sholom*, (5423/1663);
  - ✳ **Rav Yosef Boruch HaLevi Epstein**, the *Gutteh Yid* of Neustadt, son of the *Ma'or VaShemesh*, (5627/1867);
  - ✳ **Rav Alexander Moshe Lapidus** (1819–1906). A *talmid* of Rav Yisrael Salanter, he authored *Divrei Emes*, (5666/1906);
  - ✳ **Rav Sholom Goldstein** (1923–1984). Born in 1923 in Romania to Rav Yechezkel Shraga Goldstein, a Deizher *Chassid* and a descendant of Rav Yaakov Koppel Chossid. Rav Yechezkel Goldstein immigrated to the U.S. and settled in Williamsburg when his son was eight. The youth was a popular activist of *Zeirei Agudas Yisrael*, who did *kiruv* work with children from less religious homes. In 1944, Rav Sholom married Rebbetzin Lea Necha Scheiner of Pittsburgh, and a year later he moved to Detroit in 1945, where he remained to build *Torah* for the following forty years, (5744/1984).
- ✳ **11<sup>th</sup> of Adar II ~ Begins Sunday Night (Mar 18<sup>th</sup>)**
  - ✳ **Rav Gershon Ashkenazi** (1625–1693). Born to Rav Yitzchok Ashkenazi in Holtz, Germany, he left home to learn in the *Yeshiva* of Rav Yoel Sirkes, the *Bach*, in Cracow, Poland. He was also a close *talmid* of Rav Yehoshua, the *Maginei Shlomo*. Rav Gershon lost his first wife in 1649, and subsequently married the daughter of Rav Menachem Mendel Kruchmal, the *Tzemach Tzedek*. But she too was *niftar* young, in 1654. His third wife, Rebbetzin Raizel, was *zocheh* to *arichus yomim*, outliving her husband by thirty years. Rav Gershon served as *Dayan* in Cracow, and in 1650 served the *kehilla* of Prussnitz, Moravia. With the *petira* of his father-in-law, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, in 1661, he became *Rav* of Nikolsburg and a year later of the entire province of Moravia. He served as chief *Rav* of Austria until the expulsion of 1670. At that point, he became *Rav* of Metz, Germany, where he remained until his *petira*. He is the *mechaber* of *Avodas HaGershuni*, which deals with a wide range of *halochos*. Much of what we know about the Chmielnicki massacres is based on this work. A prolific writer, he also composed *Tiferes HaGershuni*, comprising his *deroshos* on the *Torah*, and *Chiddushei HaGershuni* on *halocha*, [*Hamodia* says 10th of Adar] (5453/1693 – Adar II);
  - ✳ **Rav Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai**, (the *Chida*), (1724–1806). Arguably the *Sephardi* equivalent to the Vilna *Gaon*, the *Chida* was born in Yerushalayim. At the age of eighteen, he learned under Rav Chaim ben Atar (the *Ohr HaChaim*). His works include a collection of responsa known as *Yosef Ometz*, the *Shem HaGedolim* (a biographical work on 1,300 authors and 1,200 writings, dating back to the *Ge'onim*), and many others. He passed away in Livorno (Leghorn),

Italy, (5566/1806);

- ✳ **Rav Eliezer Lipman**, father of Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk and Rebbe Reb Zusha of Annipoli, (date of *petira* unknown);
- ✳ **Rav Mordechai Posner**, *Rav* of Ursha and brother of Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, (5583/1823);
- ✳ **Rav Shmuel Strashun** (Shtrasen/Shtershun; Shtrasson), the *Rashash* of Vilna (1794–1872). He was a *Rav* and a very wealthy banker in Vilna; he also administrated a free loan fund. His commentary on virtually the entire *Talmud* is printed in most editions of the *Talmud*, (12th of *Adar*, per *Yated* 2006; 13th of *Adar* 1885 per *Yated* 2008), (5632/1872 – *Adar* II);
- ✳ **Rav Avrohom Borenstein** (Bornsztain) of Sochatchov (Sochaczew, near Warsaw), (1839–1910), *mechaber* of *Avnei Nezer* (seven volumes of responsa) and *Eglei Tal* (encyclopedia of the laws of *Shabbos*). He was born in Bendin to Rav Ze'ev Nachum, *mechaber* of the *Agudas Eizov*, a descendant of the *Rema* and the *Shach*, and the *Rav* of Elkush and Biala. In 1853, he married Sara Tzina, one of the two daughters of the Kotzker *Rebbe*; the *Rebbe* was his daily *chavrusa* for almost seven years. After the *petira* of his father-in-law in 1859, Rav Avrohom accepted the *Chiddushei HaRim* of Ger as his *Rebbe*. After the *petira* of the *Chiddushei HaRim* in 1866, he accepted Rav Chanoch Heinich *HaKohen* of Alexander as his new *Rebbe*. In 1883, he became *Rav* of Sochatchov. His lectures in the *Yeshiva* lasted six to eight hours, often starting at midnight and continuing until morning, except for a fifteen-minute break when he napped. Rav Borenstein is frequently quoted in his son's classic work, *Shem MiShmuel*, (5670/1910);
- ✳ **Rav Yosef Rosen** of Dvinsk, the *Gaon* of Rogatchov, *mechaber* of *Tzofnas Pane'ach* (1858–1936). His father, Rav Fishel Rosen, was a leader of the Jewish community of Rogatchov in general, and of the Lubavitcher *Chassidim* in particular. When he was *bar mitzva*, his father brought Rav Yosef to the *Rav* of Slutsk, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, the *Bais HaLevi*. Together with Rav Chaim (Rav Yosef Dov's son), Rav Yosef learned with the *Bais HaLevi* for an entire year. He then learned with Rav Yehushua Diskin in Shklov. When he was eighteen, he married the daughter of Rav Moshe Garfinkel, a Gerrer *Chassid* in Warsaw, who supported the couple for eight years. In 1891, he took the position of *Rav* in Dvinsk, a position he kept until his *petira*, (5696/1936);
- ✳ **Rav Shmuel Brudny**, *Rosh Yeshivas* Mir (1915–1981), born in Smorgon, Lithuania, between Oshmina and Vilna. At fourteen years of age, he entered the Rameilles *Yeshiva* in Vilna under Rav Shlomo Heiman. Three years later, he entered the Mirrer *Yeshiva* under Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel. Whereas his parents and siblings were murdered by the Nazis, he escaped to Shanghai. After the *Yeshiva* relocated to New York, he was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva*, (5741/1981);
- ✳ **Rav Yehoshua Moshe Orenstein**, *mechaber* of *Yam HaTalmud*, (5584/1824).
- ✳ **12<sup>th</sup> of Adar II ~ Begins Monday Night (Mar 19<sup>th</sup>)**
  - ✳ **Rav Moshe Pardo**, founder of *Or HaChaim* Seminary in Bnei Brak;
  - ✳ **Rav Pinchas Hager** of Borsha (1869–1941). He was raised not only by his father, the *Imrei Boruch* of Vizhnitz, but also by his grandfather, Rav Menachem Mendel, the *Tzemach Tzaddik* of Vizhnitz. When he was only eighteen, Rav Pinchas was thrust into the position of a *Rebbe* in Borsha, a town on the Vishiva River at the foot of the Carpathians. Borsha was one of the 160 Jewish communities of the approximately 500-square kilometer Maramures (Marmerosh) district of northwestern Romania. After the outbreak of the First World War, the *Rebbe* fled to Budapest, and then to Vishiva and Sighet after the war. In 1926, his son, Rav Alter Menachem



Mendel, succeeded him as *Rebbe* in Borsha. He and his two brothers perished in the Holocaust, (5701/1941);

✳ **Rav Yosef Adler**, the Turda Rav. Turda is a city with a history of over two thousand years. It is famous for its salt mine (Salina Turda), whose origins date back to the Roman times. In June 1942, following impressive German victories in Russia and following the Romanian army's advance in the Caucasus, Prime Minister Ion Antonescu agreed to implement the "Final Solution" with regard to Romanian Jews. The first transports were to depart from southern Transylvania, from the districts of Arad, Timisoara and Turda, (5737/1977);

✳ **Rav Chaim Dovid HaLevi** (1924–1998). *Sephardi* chief Rav of Tel Aviv for the last twenty-five years of his life, he was known to many as the *mechaber* of the multi-volume responsa *Aseh Lecha Rav*, on many contemporary *halachic* and *hashkafic* issues, and a six-volume *halachic* work entitled *Mekor Chaim*, (5758/1998).

### ✳ **13<sup>th</sup> of Adar II ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Mar 20<sup>th</sup>)**

✳ **Rav Yehuda HeChassid**, *mechaber* of *Sefer Chassidim* (1150–1217). His father, Rav Shmuel (1120–1175), led a famous *Yeshiva* in Speyer, and served as Rav Yehuda's *Rebbe*. (*Yated* 2007 says 8<sup>th</sup> of *Adar*), (4977/1217);

✳ **Rav Moshe Langner**, the fifth Stettiner *Rebbe*, born to Rav Yehuda Hirsch, *Rebbe* in the town of Stettin. In 1921, he moved the family from Galicia to Toronto, (5719/1959 – *Adar II*);

✳ **Rav Moshe Feinstein** (1895–1986). Born in Uzda (near Minsk), Belorussia, he was the son of Rav Dovid Feinstein, who was a grandchild of the *Be'er HaGola*. His mother was Feige Gittel, daughter of Rav Yechiel, Rav of Kopolia. He joined the *Yeshiva* of Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer in Slutsk at the age of twelve. At the age of sixteen, Rav Moshe completed *Shas* and *Shulchon Aruch*. He was Rav of Lyuban from 1921 to 1936. He escaped the Stalinist regime in 1936 and settled in New York as *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Tiferes Yerushalayim*. He authored *Igros Moshe*, *Dorash Moshe* and *Dibros Moshe*, (5746/1986 – *Adar II*).

### ✳ **14<sup>th</sup> of Adar II ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Mar 21<sup>st</sup>) Purim**

✳ **Rav Ze'ev Wolf** of Zhitomir, *talmid* of the *Maggid* of Mezritch, *mechaber* of *Or HaMeir*, one of the early foundation texts of *Chassidus*, (5560/1800);

✳ **Rav Shimon Schwab** (1908–1995). Born in Frankfurt am Main, Rav Schwab learned at Mir and Telshe before becoming *Dayan* in Darmstadt, and Rav in the district of Ichenhausen in Bavaria. Escaping Nazi Germany in 1936, Rav Schwab served as Rav in Baltimore, then in New York in the Washington Heights area, following Rav Yosef Breuer, (5755/1995);

✳ **Rav Menashe Frankel** of Lizhensk (1903–1965), born in Yadlowa in eastern Galicia to Rav Shlomo Zalman Frankel, Rav of the town. He married the daughter of Rav Yechezkel HaLevi Landau, Rav of Lizhensk, and remained in Lizhensk. He was elected *Dayan*, and when his father-in-law was *niftar* in 1938, he became Rav of the city. Lizhensk was one of the first cities to fall to the Nazis in 1939. Rav Menashe escaped, but was sent to Siberia, then to Uzbekistan (Buchara). He settled in New York in 1948 and founded his own congregation, *Ateres Shlomo*, (5725/1965);

✳ **Rav Yaakov Osher Kopf**, grandson of the Lelover *Rebbe*, Rav Moshe Mordechai Biederman, (5715–5765/1955–2005).

### ✳ **15<sup>th</sup> of Adar II ~ Begins Thursday Night (Mar 22<sup>nd</sup>) Shushan Purim**

✳ **Rav Zvi Hirsch Kaidanover** of Vilna and Frankfurt, *mechaber* of *Kav HaYoshor*, (5472/1712 – *Adar II*);

✳ **Rav Yosef Leifer** of Pittsburgh, the *Tzidkas Yosef* (1891–1966). Born to Rav Ber of Satmar,

Rav Yosef was a descendant of Rav Meir *HaGodol* of Premishlan. After marrying and living in Krula for seven years, he traveled to America in 1924 to raise funds for his orphaned sisters (his father was *niftar* when Rav Yosef was fifteen years old). One of his stops was Pittsburgh, and he decided to stay. His brothers, Rav Meir and Rav Sholom, also came to America, taking positions in Cleveland and Brighton Beach respectively. His youngest son, Yitzchok Eizik, passed away when he was eleven. Two other sons, Rav Yissochor Ber and Rav Mordechai, were murdered by the Nazis in 1944. Only his oldest son, Rav Avrohom Abba, escaped and succeeded him after his *petira*. Rav Avrohom Abba moved to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1970 and founded *Yeshiva Tzidkas Yosef* in Ashdod, (5726/1966);

- ✱ **Rav Chaim Kamil**, *Rosh Yeshiva* Ofakim, one of the prime builders of *Torah* in the Negev (1933–2005). As a *bochur*, he learned in *Yeshiva Slobodka* in Yerushalayim. Following his marriage to the daughter of Rav Mordechai Porush, he learned at the Mir and became a *talmid muvhok* of Rav Chaim Shmuelewitz. After many years, he was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Me'or Einayim* of Rachmistrivka in Yerushalayim, and from 1979 at Ofakim. He was survived by his daughter, (5765/2005 – *Adar II*).



## ❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

### WHAT'S BEHIND YAHREIZ MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

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

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

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



# ❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

## STORIES & ANECDOTES

### Rav Shmuel Strashun, 11<sup>th</sup> of Adar II

The Rashash of Vilna

*HaGaon Maran* Rav Ovadia Yosef related the following story about Rav Shmuel Strashun, the *Rashash* of Vilna:

The *Rashash* ran a free-loan *gemach* where he lent handsome sums to needy individuals. He was, however, extremely strict about returning the loans on time. Once there came a G-d-fearing tailor to borrow the sum of one thousand rubles for a period of three months. When the date arrived the borrower entered the *Rashash's* study to repay the loan. The *Rashash* sat engrossed in a deep *sugya* and so the tailor paid his debt and left the money on the page of the *Gemora* that the *Rashash* was studying from.

The *Rashash* was so engrossed in his learning that he paid no attention to the tailor and did not notice the proceedings at all. His attention was completely diverted to the *sugya* at hand and all he noticed was someone standing and saying something; out of habit and courtesy he simply nodded his head in acknowledgment, which the tailor misinterpreted as an acknowledgment of the debt repaid! When the *Rashash* finished his study of the complex *sugya* he closed the volume of *Talmud*, returned the *sefer* to the shelf, with the money unnoticed, still inside!

After another month had passed, when the *Rashash* checked his *gemach's* ledger, he noted the outstanding loan. He sent word to the tailor that he had an outstanding debt and he was asked to appear and pay up the loan.

The tailor appeared before the *Rashash* and explained that he had repaid the loan a month before. "How can that be?" said the *Rashash*. "Where then is your

receipt? I do not remember you coming and paying."

The tailor insisted that he had repaid the loan and since the *Rashash* had been so busy learning he had not troubled him to ask him to write a receipt. The *Rashash* countered that his custom was always to write a receipt to acknowledge the repayment of a loan and record it in his ledger. The tailor stuck to his story and stubbornly insisted that he had paid up the debt in full.

The *Rashash* decided to take him to *Bais Din*, and the matter became public knowledge. As the rumors and stories spread, the majority of the public opinion was in favor of the *Rashash*, and many openly disparaged, shamed and ostracized the tailor for his audacity to cheat and steal from the *gemach* and to further accuse the *Rashash* of lying. The tailor bore the brunt of the people's displeasure and was transformed to the lowliest citizen of Vilna. Many of his customers deserted him, and his livelihood suffered as no one wanted to deal with a good-for-nothing thief! The tailor's son, who was learning in *Yeshiva*, was so embarrassed at his father's ruined reputation, that he left *Yeshiva* and hid his shame.

Time passed and the *Rashash* reviewed his learning and removed the very same volume of *Talmud* to study the same knotty, complex *sugya* as before. When he opened the *Gemora*, to his amazement, he found money inside! Bills that added up to the sum of one thousand rubles lay there in the *Gemora*. In seconds the matter had resolved itself, and he realized that the tailor's story must have been true! He had

come to repay the loan, and seeing the *Rashash* so involved in learning he hadn't troubled him for a receipt. His face paled as he realized the implications of the matter and what he had done to the tailor, his reputation and his family!

He sent for the tailor and admitted his error. He saw the tailor walk in but it was not the same tailor he had previously known. Now, standing before him, was a sad, forlorn, broken individual with a shadow cast over his once fair face. "Please forgive me for my mistake!" cried the *Rashash*. "I will call the congregation together and stand before them, confess my mistake and publicly declare you guiltless and innocent!"

The sad tailor explained, "Honorable *Rav*, I appreciate what you wish to do, but what will your confession and admission achieve? Look at me! I am the laughing stock of all Vilna. People hate and despise me, and shame me and my name. My reputation and business are ruined and my livelihood is gone. My son ran away from *Yeshiva*, he is so ashamed. Even if the *Rav* were to publicly exonerate me, people will just say that the *Rav* did this as a favor to help me extricate myself from my situation

and that I am not really innocent." He hung his sad head as the *Rashash* pondered the truth of his words and what to do!

The *Rashash* had an idea, his face flushed with excitement and he declared, "Send for your son to come to me, for I wish to take him as my grandson-in-law, a *chosson* for my granddaughter. Then everyone will see the truth and know that you must be innocent."

A gleam shone in the once-dull eyes of the tailor as his disbelieving ears heard the words of the *Rashash*. As his eyes shed tears of joy he grasped the *Rashash's* hands and kissed them. He had never, in his wildest dreams, expected this! To be the *Rashash's mechutan*? He departed with true affection.

A few days later the news spread – the debt had been repaid before, the mistake was admitted, the lost money was found and the tailor's son was engaged to the *Rashash's* granddaughter. The community leaders agreed, a match made in Heaven – but who would have had the audacity to suggest such a *shidduch* to the *Rashash* if not for Heaven?

(*Anaf Eitz Avos*, p. 222)



## Rav Moshe Feinstein, 13<sup>th</sup> of Adar II

Igros Moshe

Rav Elimelech Biderman related:

Rav Mordechai of Zvhiller, before he became *Rebbe*, needed twenty-six thousand dollars for an upcoming *chasuna*. He went to the office of the *Eitz Chaim Yeshiva*, where he studied, and asked the director of the *Yeshiva* to give him the addresses of wealthy donors in America, because he wanted to send them letters, asking for money for the *chasuna*.

The director did not want to give him the addresses (because he wanted their support for the *Yeshiva*) so he gave Rav

Mordechai Zvhiller some old addresses from people who used to support the *Yeshiva*, but hadn't given a donation for a long time.

When Rav Mordechai returned home with the list, his wife rebuked him, "Do you really think that these are going to help you? The director certainly gave you the addresses of people who don't have money any more." Rav Mordechai explained to her that he was doing *hishtadlus*.

"If your goal is *hishtadlus*, why do



you have to send letters to all of them? Just send one letter, and that will be your *hishtadlus...*” she chided.

Rav Mordechai replied, “You’re right. I’ll send only one letter.”

He sent off one letter and soon received an envelope in return with a check for twenty-six thousand dollars inside. Rav Mordechai went to the director to thank him for the addresses.

The manager was shocked. “You mean your letters were answered?”

“Not the letters. I only sent one letter, and I received twenty-six thousand dollars.” And he told him the name of this *ba’al tzedoka*.

The manager called up this *ba’al tzedoka* and asked, “I see that you have money, because you just gave one of our *talmidim* twenty-six thousand dollars for *hachnossas kalla*, so why did you stop sending money to the *Yeshiva*?”

The man replied, “I don’t have money any more. The money was from my daughter, who is a *kalla*. After her engagement, we discovered that she has an illness. We went to Rav Moshe Feinstein, and asked him whether we must tell the *chosson* and the *mechutonim* about it. Rav

Moshe inquired as to the nature of the illness, and then ruled that we don’t need to say anything. ‘However,’ Rav Moshe advised, ‘if your daughter has some money of her own, it is a good idea for her to give it for *hachnossas kalla*. In the merit that she helps another *kalla* go to the *chuppa*, she will also merit going to her *chuppa*.’ Just then, we received Rav Mordechai’s letter, and his request for *hachnossas kalla*. My daughter works, so she had some money saved up. She emptied her account, and immediately sent it to Rav Mordechai, for his daughter’s wedding.” Rav Mordechai had *bitochon*, and received all the money he needed with one letter.



This story is an example of *hashgocha protis*. Immediately after Rav Moshe advised them to donate money for *hachnossas kalla*, Rav Mordechai’s letter arrived in the mail.

(*Wellsprings, Parshas Teruma*, by Boruch Twerski)



## Rav Zvi Hirsch Kaidanover, 15<sup>th</sup> of Adar II

The Kav HaYoshor

Rav Tzvi Hirsch was the son of Rav Aharon Shmuel Kaidanover. As famous as his *sefer Kav HaYoshor* is, we know little about the *mechaber* himself and his life. The little we do know can be gleaned from what he writes in the introduction to his *sefer* and his father’s *seforim*, many of which the *Kav HaYoshor* printed. His father’s *seforim* include: *Birkas HaZevach* on *Kodshim*, *Tiferes Shmuel* on the *Rosh*, and *Birkas Shmuel* on the *Chumash*, as well as *Shu”t* and responsa *Emunas Shmuel*.

Apparently, in the year *Tav Tes Vav*, there was some kind of pogrom in which Rav Shmuel describes how he was attacked, and left naked and bleeding in the streets while thieves stole all his worldly possessions. He uses the introduction to *Birkas HaZevach* as a *Korban Toda* to thank *Hashem* for sparing his life and that of his wife and son, saving them from death, till he escaped and fled to Mehrin and then to Nikolsburg. In the introduction to his father’s *sefer*, *Birkas Shmuel*, which his son printed after his father’s passing (it

contains many teachings from Rav Tzvi Hirsch in *Kabbola* interwoven with his father's teachings), the *Kav* completes the story and adds: When we were attacked and stricken in Poland, in the city of Lublin and its environs, the wicked enemies attacked us by the sword and they struck and almost killed me. My father tried to escape and fell from a great height and his leg was dislocated. I had the sword literally on my neck and my two sisters were murdered. My father begged for mercy and I was spared since the rest of his children were murdered. We lost all our money, worldly possessions and many holy *seforim*, and were lucky to escape with our lives and the clothes on our backs. I was left in the gutter, in the dirt and licking dust and ash, but *Hashem* had mercy and saved us and my father succeeded in redeeming me and saving my life.

If that were not enough suffering, the *Kav HaYoshor* describes how later, in his adult life, he and his family were imprisoned due to false charges brought about through a vicious libel against him. His family was imprisoned in Slutsk and he wandered far and wide raising money to bribe the officials to release them. He reached Frankfurt am Main and there he raised the money to print his father's *seforim*. He saw the imprisonment as a heavenly punishment for not printing his father's *seforim* and thus made a vow to do so. He sold them together with his own *sefer* to raise the money needed to redeem his wife and children from captivity.

His *seforim* were warmly received by all *Gedolei Yisrael*, and were extremely popular, especially because of the stories interspersed with *mussar*, as well as the Yiddish translation that he himself composed, all of which are included in the first edition. The stories and Yiddish made the *sefer* popular and accessible to simpler Jews and women, who were either unfamiliar with or even totally ignorant of *Loshon HaKodesh*.


The *Toras Chessed* said that the *Noam Elimelech* studied the *Sefer Kav HaYoshor* 102 times like the *gematria* of the word *Kav*. The *Kozhnitzer Maggid* said that any statement of the *Zohar* studied in the *sefer Kav HaYoshor* has the *segula* to awaken others and bring them to *hisorerus* even more than studying the same *ma'amar* in the *Zohar* itself. (*Meir Einei Chachomim, Emor*)

Rav Moshe Aryeh Freund writes in his *haskoma* that the *Sar Sholom* of Belz said that he studied the *sefer Kav HaYoshor* 102 times and drew all his *Yiras Shomayim* (fear of Heaven) from it. The *Chasam Sofer* in his *tzavo'a* (will) writes that the female members of his family should all study Yiddish works of *mussar* and *aggados Chazal*. The *Lev HaLvri* comments that he meant the *Kav HaYoshor* and similar *seforim*. He lived a long life and passed away on the 15<sup>th</sup> of *Adar II*, *Shushan Purim, Tav Ayin Bais*, and was buried in Frankfurt.



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

# Zera Shimshon



## Vayikra

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

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

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

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

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

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

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

לזכר נשמת

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מיכאל זצ"ל

בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

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

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

ויקרא אל משה ('א' א')

*And Hashem called Moshe (1:1)*

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

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

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

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

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

The Zera Shimshon explains this Medrash as follows.

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

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

For a Talmid Chacham who undoubtedly knows that everything is under Hashem's control, the reason why he would lack such a basic trait, which the Maharsha explains to mean - he does not pray to Hashem for assistance, is because he relies on his own merits and does not feel that he has to pray for what he needs. Therefore, when the Medrash speaks about a Talmid Chacham who does not possess knowledge, it does not literally mean that he does not have actual knowledge, rather he does not realize that even he must turn to Hashem, and not rely on his Torah merit.

The carcass of a dead animal teaches this. The Iyun Yaakov (Shabbos 108a) explains that in reality a dead animal should be allowed to be eaten since if an animal that was killed (slaughtered) by man is permissible to eat, surely one that was killed by Hashem should be kosher! However, Hashem forbade it so that it can be given to the dogs as a reward for the fact that they heeded Hashem's command not to bark when the Jewish people left Egypt.

Nonetheless, the animals only get their food after they call out to Hashem as that passuk says (Tehillim 147:9), that Hashem gives animals their substance *after* they call out to Him.

Thus, the carcass of the dead animal teaches that although every animal's sustenance is carefully preplanned by Hashem (in this case the dog's food), nevertheless, even though it was based on the dogs 'merits', he must still first call out to Hashem for his food. Therefore, the carcass of the dead animal is more significant than a Talmid Chacham who thinks that he does not need to call out to Hashem and relies on his own merits.

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

לרפ"ש ולזיווג בקרוב לרבקה נבון בת חנה

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