

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 Tazria & Parshas Metzora

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לזכר נשמת

ר' זכרי' שמעון הכהן בן יצחק

"And The Kohen Shall See Him And Declare Him Impure" (13:3).

Rav Chaim Ibn Attar, the Ohr HaChaim

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

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

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

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

Gedolim Be'misasm Yoser



**Yahrzeits for the 1st of Iyar ~ Begins Friday Night
(04-18-2026)**



Rav Abba Shaul - Talmudic Sage



Rav Yaakov Beirav (5306 / 1546 - 480th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Yaakov Beirav [1 Iyar 1546] was born near Toledo, Spain. As a young man, he studied with Rabbi Yitzchak Abuhav. Subsequently, he wrote commentaries on the four sections of the Rambam and on Talmudic subjects and published a volume of responsa. After serving as a rabbinical leader in Fez, Morocco, and Cairo, Egypt, he became the chief rabbi of Tsfat.



Rav Nosson Nota Shapira - Mevo Shearim, Av Beis Din Hordona (5378 / 1618 - 408th Yahrzeit)

His disciple was Rav Binyamin Aharon Selnik author *Masas Binyamin*. He authored the *sefer Mevo Shaarim* and *Hagahos* on the *Shaarei Dura* of Rav Yitzchok ben Meir HaLevi in hilchos *issur ve'heter* and *kashrus*. He also authored the *sefer Imrei Shefer* on Peirush Rashi and a commentary on *Birkas HaMazon* as well as *chiddushim* and glosses on the Rif and Tur.



Rav Yosef Yuska - Chief Rabbi of Minsk (5460 / 1700 - 326th Yahrzeit)



Rav Tzvi Hirsch Ashkenazi - Chacham Tzvi (5478 / 1718 - 308th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Ashkenazi (1660-1718) was the rabbi of the Altona, Hamburg and Wandsbeck communities, and the chief rabbi of the Ashkenazi community in Amsterdam. He passed through many communities in Germany and Poland and also served as a rabbi in Lviv. He wrote the responsa "*Chacham Tzvi*". His son was Rabbi Yaakov Emden, known as the *Ya'avetz*.



Rav Yisroel Chaim Yosef Elyakim of Saloniki - Shem Yosef (5529 / 1769 - 257th Yahrzeit)

Author of *Shem Yosef* on Rambam (commentary on the Rambam). Laid to rest on Har Hazeisim.



Rav Shmuel Shmelke Horowitz of Nikolsburg - Divrei Shmuel (5538 / 1778 - 248th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Shmuel Shmelke HaLevi Horowitz of Nikolsburg (*Iyar* 1778) was a major disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch along with his younger brother, Rabbi Pinchas, who became the Rabbi of Frankfort (see above). Many of the leading rebbes in Poland and Galitzia were originally his disciples. Among the books he authored are *Divrei Shmuel* and *Nazir HaShem*.



Rav Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk - Pri Ho'oretz (5548 / 1788 - 238th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk/Horodok [5490 - 1 Iyar 5548] was an elder disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch and one of the earliest Chasidic rebbes. He led the first modern aliyah to Israel, in 1777, where he and three hundred Chasidim and others settled in Tzefat. After a few years most of the group moved to Teveria, where he is buried in the "*Students of the Baal Shem Tov*" section of the Old Cemetery.



Rav Akiva Yosef Schlesinger - Lev Ha'ivri (5682 / 1922 - 104th Yahrzeit)



Rav Avrohom Weinberg - Slonimer Rebbe, Beis Avrohom (5693 / 1933 - 93rd Yahrzeit)

Rav Avrohom Weinberg of Slonim - Baranovitch, the author of *Bais Avrohom* was the son of Rav Shmuel Weinberg of Slonim. After his father's passing in תרע"ו (1916)), the majority of the Slonimer chassidim became his followers. In תרע"ח he opened and founded the *Toras Chessed Yeshivah Gedolah* in Slonim together was Rav Moshe Midner who served as *mashgiach ruchani*. He was appointed the *Nasi* of *Kollel Reisin* of Eretz Yisroel which was founded by Rav Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk and Rav Avrohom Kalisker. He therefore traveled to help raise money to support the institutions and the chassidim in the Holy Land.



Rav Shmuel Boruch Zaku of Kurdistan & Yerushalayim (5754 / 1994 - 32nd Yahrzeit)

One of the leaders of Torah Jewry of Kurdistan. Born in תרנ"ט.



Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapira (5766 / 2006 - 20th Yahrzeit)

Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapira (1914-2006). Born to Rav Aryeh, the *dayan* of Bialystok and grandson of Rav Refael (the *Toras Refael*) of Volozhin, who himself was a grandson of the *Netziv*. In 1938 he fled to Eretz Yisrael. His cousin, the *Brisker Rav*, arrived in Eretz Yisrael around the same time. Rav Moshe Shmuel became one of his closest *talmidim*. After his marriage in 1946 he learnt in *Kollel Chazon Ish* for a year and then served as a *maggid shiur* in *Yeshivas Kol Torah* in Yerushalayim for three years. The *Chazon Ish*, to whom he became very close, requested him to open a *yeshiva* in Beer Yaakov together with the renowned *mashgiach*, Rav Shlomo Wolbe.

Yahrzeits for the 2nd of Iyar ~ Begins Saturday Night (04-19-2026)



Rav Yisroel of Bahpoli - Ateres Tiferes Yisroel (5611 / 1851 - 175th Yahrzeit)



Rav Moshe Rokeach of Karov (5643 / 1883 - 143rd Yahrzeit)




Rav Avrohom Yitzchok Glick - Av Beis Din of Toltchova, Be'er Yitzchok (5669 / 1909 - 117th Yahrzeit)

The renowned R. Avrohom Yitzchok Glick, (1826-1909) was a leading Hungarian *posek*. He served as Rabbi of Toltchova for more than 50 years (from 1858) and was considered one of the foremost *poskim* in Hungary.

 **Rav Moshe Zakan Mazuz of Djerba - Shaarei Moshe (5675 / 1915 - 111th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Moshe Zakan Mazuz of Djerba (1851-1915). He learned under Rav Chaim HaKohen, author of Lev Shomea. He was appointed Rav of Charah Zagira in 1905 and became Rav and Av Beis Din in Djerba in 1910. He authored Tzadik Venisgav; Shaarei Moshe (a collection of responsa); Shem Moshe, Shaarei Torah (pilpulim on Torah and Shas), Sever Panim (chidushim on Shas and on the Rambam).

 **Rav Avrohom Badush of Mexico - Me'oros Avrohom (5750 / 1990 - 36th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Tzvi Hirsch Zaks (5751 / 1991 - 35th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Yehuda Meir Abramowitz (5767 / 2007 - 19th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Yehuda Meir Abramowitz (1915-2007). He was the chairman of the Agudas Yisrael World Organization for many years (co-chairman with Rabbi Moshe Sherer when he was alive). He was one of the last *Talmidim* of Rav Meir Shapira.

**Yahrzeits for the 3rd of Iyar ~ Begins Sunday Night
(04-20-2026)**

 **Choni Ha'meagel**

 **Rav Yehuda Leib Fistiner of Kolomay (5505 / 1745 - 281st Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Aryeh Leib Tzintz of Plotzk - Melo Ho'omer, Maharal Tzintz (5593 / 1833 - 193rd Yahrzeit)**

Born in 5733 תקכ"ח. Rav in Plotzak and Tashknov, Poland. Known as the *gaon* of Plotzek. Passed away in תקצ"ג.

 **Rav Yeshaya Steiner of Kerestir - Reb Yeshayale M'Kerestir (5685 / 1925 - 101st Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Yeshayaleh Steiner of Kerestir was born to Rav Moshe and Hentshe Miraim Steiner in 5611/1851. He was orphaned from his father at age three and was raised and educated by his saintly mother who sacrificed much to give him a proper *chinuch*. Rav Shayaleh was a disciple of Rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz, and after his passing, he became a disciple of Rabbi Mordechai of Nadvorna. The Nadvoner Rebbe suggested that he move to the town of Kerestir (Karstir). In Kerestir he became a famous rebbe known as a miracle worker. It was said of him that he had an otherworldly ability to give others since he gave of himself in a supernatural manner. He gave away all his food and distributed all his money to charity. He gave until there was nothing left to give and so Hashem gave him more to give!



Rav Yitzchak Isaac Hager (5701 / 1941 - 85th Yahrzeit)

Rav Yitzchak Isaac Hager, son of Rav Menachem Mendel of Zavlto, was a scion and descendant of the Kossov-Vizhnitz dynasty. He lived in Berditchev and was renowned as a miracle worker, reciting *Tehillim* day and night.



Rav Yosef Breuer (5740 / 1980 - 46th Yahrzeit)

The Rav was born in 1882 in Papa, Hungary. His father Rav Shlomo Zalman a *talmid* of the *Ksav Sofer* was married to Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch, youngest daughter, Sophie. After Rav Hirsch's passing in 1888, Rav Shlomo Zalman was selected to replace him as the *Moreh Dasrah* of the Austrittsgemeinde (secession community) of Orthodox Jews in Frankfurt am Main, known as Khal Adath Yeshurun. The Rav immigrated to the United States in 1939 after being arrested by the Gestapo. Once in New York, the Rav took the initiative to start a congregation with the numerous German refugees in Washington Heights, which would closely follow the morale and customs of the Frankfurt community.



Rav Abba Mordechai Berman - Rosh Yeshivas Iyun Hatalmud, Iyun Hatalmud (5765 / 2005 - 21st Yahrzeit)

Rav Abba Berman, *Rosh yeshiva Iyun HaTalmud* (1919-2005). Born in Lodz, Poland to Rav Shaul Yosef, who considered the *Chofetz Chaim* his primary *rebbe*. He was a descendant of the *Kli Yakar*. After his *Bar Mitzvah*, Reb Abba began to learn at the Mir and became very close to Reb Yerucham Levovitz. He fled to Shanghai with the yeshiva at the outset of WW2, then migrated to America. He was one of the founders of the Mir in Brooklyn. In Brooklyn, he married Rebbetzen Itka Greenberg. After several years, he moved to Eretz Yisrael and founded *Yeshiva Iyun HaTalmud* in Bnei Brak. He also lectured frequently at Ponevezh. The *yeshiva* relocated to Yerushalayim, then to Kiryat Sefer in Modiin Ilit. His many *shiurim* were published in five *sefarim*, also named *Iyun HaTalmud*. He is survived by his Rebetzen and 6 daughters.

**Yahrzeits for the 4th of Iyar ~ Begins Monday Night
(04-21-2026)**



Chacham Mekubel Yaakov Sasportas - Tzitz Novel Tzvi, Rav of Amsterdam (5458 / 1698 - 328th Yahrzeit)

Son of Aharon. Published a book called *Tzitz Novel Tzvi*. The Gaon Rabbi Yaakov Sasportas was one of the great masters of Torah. He was a G-d fearing man that knew how to awaken and enliven the faith of Jews. Rabbi Yaakov was born in 5370 (1610) in Oran, Algeria. Born into an illustrious family that had been expelled from Spain, he was one of the descendants of Rabbi Moshe Ben Nachman, the *Ramban*. From his earliest years, Rabbi Yaakov surprised those around him by his thorough knowledge in all domains of Torah.



Rav Lipa Eichenstein of Sambor (5581 / 1821 - 205th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik - Beis Halevi (5652 / 1892 - 134th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik was truly one of the greatest and most amazing personalities that Lithuanian Jewry has given to the Jewish people. Stories concerning this Tzaddik and Gaon abound. People speak of his genius, sharp intellect, integrity, and finesse, and especially about his good heart, for he had a heart of gold. The son of Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Halevi Soloveitchik (who was the grandson of the Gaon of the generation, Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin), Rabbi Yosef Dov was born in 5580 (1820). From childhood, it was obvious that he was destined for greatness.



Rav Meir Borenstein of Sochatchov (5692 / 1932 - 94th Yahrzeit)



Rav Shmuel Eliyohu Taub - Third Modzhitzer Rebbe - Tel Aviv Rebbe (5744 / 1984 - 42nd Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Shmuel Eliyohu Taub (1905-1984) son of Rabbi Shaul Yedidya Eliezer the Modzhitz Rebbe (1887-Kislev 1948), ascended to Eretz Israel in 1936 and established his Beis Midrash. He was one of the leading rebbes in Eretz Israel and a member of Mo'etzes Gedolei HaTorah.

**Yahrzeits for the 5th of Iyar ~ Begins Tuesday Night
(04-22-2026)**



Rav Yeshaya Pick of Berlin - Yesh Seder l'Mishna (5559 / 1799 - 227th Yahrzeit)



Rav Meir Auerbach - Imrei Bina, Rav of Kalish (5638 / 1878 - 148th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Meir Auerbach (1815-1878) was born in Kovel near Kalish, an important city in central Poland, into a family who for centuries produced great rabbis. He was a descendant of Rabbi Shloma Zalman of Poznan who lived in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Rabbi Meir Auerbach's father, Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Auerbach, who passed away in 1846, was the Rabbi of Polotzk and Luntshitz and authored the sefer, *Divrei Chaim*. Rabbi Meir Auerbach was a towering gaon in Talmud. He became rabbi of the city of Kovel in 1840 at the tender age of 25. In 1846, Rabbi Auerbach was appointed president of the Jewish court, the *beis din*, in Kolo, where he served for nine years. He later became the Chief Rabbi of Kalisz/Kalish for four years. In 1860, after relinquishing the rabbinate of Kalish to Rabbi Chaim Elazar Wax, Rabbi Meir Auerbach traveled to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Yerushalayim.



Rav Boruch Meir Twersky of Azorinitz (5671 / 1911 - 115th Yahrzeit)



Rav Shmuel Shmelke Gintzler - Meishiv Nefesh (5671 / 1911 - 115th Yahrzeit)



Rav Eliezer Chaim Rabinowitz of Yampola - Siach Eliezer (5675 / 1915 - 111th Yahrzeit)



Rav Abba Yaakov HaKohen Borochof - Chevel Yaakov (5696 / 1936 - 90th Yahrzeit)

Yahrzeits for the 6th of Iyar ~ Begins Wednesday Night (04-23-2026)



Rav Levi ben Gershom - Ralbag (5104 / 1344 - 682nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Avrohom Katzenelbogen - Rav & Rosh Yeshiva in Lwow (5397 / 1637 - 389th Yahrzeit)

Son of Rav Yoel. Rav and Rosh Yeshiva in Lwow in the seventeenth century. He was born in Neustadt 1569) שט"ט). In שני"ג he became rav of Yanov near Lwow and then afterwards in Lwow around ט"שע"ר. For 23 years, Rav Avrohom led rabbonim, teaching Torah as rosh yeshiva. Only some of his responsa remain in the collections of his contemporaries.



Rav Yitzchok Horowitz of Hamburg (5527 / 1767 - 259th Yahrzeit)



Rav Leibush of Mezritch (5535 / 1775 - 251st Yahrzeit)



Rav Yosef Moshe Eisenberger - Maggid Mishna (5541 / 1781 - 245th Yahrzeit)



Rav Moshe Eichenstein of Sambor - Tefilla LeMoshe (5600 / 1840 - 186th Yahrzeit)



Rav Chaim Avrohom Gagin - Mincha Tehorah (5608 / 1848 - 178th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yosef Meir Weiss of Spinka - Imrei Yosef, Founder of the Spinka dynasty (5669 / 1909 - 117th Yahrzeit)

The Imrei Yosef was born on 18 Adar in the year 5598 (1838) in the town of Munkacz (Mukachevo). His father was Rav Shmuel Weiss, ra'avad, or head of the Munkacszer Beis Din. The Spinka rebbe was a prominent Torah scholar, and talmid of the Maharam Asch, Rav Meir Eisenstadter, the rabbi of Ungvar (Uzhhorod), and of Maharam Asch's son, Rav Menachem Eisenstadter also of Ungvar. In chassidus, he was a disciple of Rebbe Shmuel Shmelke of Selish, and also of his uncle, the kabbalist, Rav Yitzchak Eizik Weiss of Svalyava.



Rav Dov Berish Zeitlyn of Vilna (5680 / 1920 - 106th Yahrzeit)



Rav Moshe Shimon HaLevi Levy - Yismach Lev (5700 / 1940 - 86th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yaakov Chaim Perlow of Stolin (5706 / 1946 - 80th Yahrzeit)



Rav Menachem Mendel Halberstam of Stropkov (5714 / 1954 - 72nd Yahrzeit)



Rav Dov Ber Spitzer (5741 / 1981 - 45th Yahrzeit)

Rav Dov Ber served as Rav in Agord before the war, and afterwards in Deish; later he became Rav of Zichron Yaakov in Far Rockaway, New York. In his later years he lived in Bnei Brak.



Rav Refoel Binyomin Levine - Rosh Yeshiva Beis Aryeh - Yerushalayim (5762 / 2002 - 24th Yahrzeit)

Rav Refoel Binyomin Levine, son of Rav Aryeh Levine. Rav Refoel studied in the *Eitz Chaim Talmud Torah*, and was very close to its *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer. He continued his studies in the *Chevron yeshiva* in Yerushalayim and the *Lomza yeshiva* in Petach Tikvah. When the *Beis Aryeh yeshiva* opened, Rav Refoel's father, Rav Aryeh Levine asked him to serve as its *menahel ruchani*, a position he occupied until his final day. He was also a *Dayan* in the *Beis Din Tzedek* of the *Ashkenaz-Perushim* community founded by Rav Shmuel Salant. (1925-2002)



Rav Tzvi Hirsch Tevel (5766 / 2006 - 20th Yahrzeit)

Rav Tzvi (Hersh) Tevel (1916-2006). Born in Dinov, Galicia, he began learning at *Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin* when he was 17. At the age of 22, he became *Rosh Yeshiva* in *Yeshiva Divrei Chaim* in Cracow. After his marriage, he moved to Boro Park in 1951, establishing a *shul - Siach Hasadeh* - in 1966. For two years, he also ran a *yeshiva, Zichron Yaakov*.

Yahrzeits for the 7th of Iyar ~ Begins Thursday Night (04-24-2026)



Chaim Moskowitz (Rabinowitz) of Satinov (5600 / 1840 - 186th Yahrzeit)



Rav Chaim Moshe Reuven Elazary (5744 / 1984 - 42nd Yahrzeit)

Rav Chaim Moshe Reuven Elazary was a student of the *Slobodka Yeshiva*, first in Europe and then in Chevron. He began his rabbinic career in the Bronx, and also taught at a *yeshiva* in Brooklyn. After 1929, he succeeded his father-in-law, Rav Ephraim Pelcovitz, as rabbi of Congregation Agudas Achim in Canton, Ohio. In 1972, Rav Elazary settled in Petach Tikva.

Biographies of the Tzaddikim



Rav Yaakov Beirav (Iyar 1, 5306 / 1546 - 480th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Yaakov Beirav [1 Iyar 1546] was born near Toledo, Spain. As a young man, he studied with Rabbi Yitzchak Abuhav. Subsequently, he wrote commentaries on the four sections of the Rambam and on Talmudic subjects and published a volume of responsa. After serving as a rabbinical leader in Fez, Morocco, and Cairo, Egypt, he became the chief rabbi of Tsfat.

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



Rav Nosson Nota Shapira Mevo Shearim, Av Beis Din Hordona (Iyar 1, 5378 / 1618 - 408th Yahrzeit)

His disciple was Rav Binyamin Aharon Selnik author *Masas Binyamin*.

He authored the *sefer Mevo Shaarim* and *Hagahos* on the *Shaarei Dura* of Rav Yitzchok ben Meir HaLevi in *hilchos issur ve'heter* and *kashrus*.

He also authored the *sefer Imrei Shefer* on *Peirush Rashi* and a commentary on *Birkas HaMazon* as well as *chiddushim* and glosses on the *Rif* and *Tur*.

He passed away on 1 Iyar ש"ז

He had three sons: Rav Yitzchok, Rav Yissachar and Rav Shlomo who was the father of Rav Nassan Neta of Cracow author *Megaleh Amukos*



Rav Tzvi Hirsch Ashkenazi Chacham Tzvi (Iyar 1, 5478 / 1718 - 308th Yahrzeit)



Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Ashkenazi (1660-1718) was the rabbi of the Altona, Hamburg and Wandsbeck communities, and the chief rabbi of the Ashkenazi community in Amsterdam. He passed through many communities in Germany and Poland and also served as a rabbi in Lviv. He wrote the responsa "*Chacham Tzvi*". His son, Rabbi Yaakov Emden, known as the *Ya'avetz*, relates that during his father's visit to England, his portrait was painted in secret in oil colors, in a precise fashion, so much so that when seeing the painting "I staggered back, as if he were standing before me".

<https://www.kedem-auctions.com/en/content/portrait-rabbi-tzvi-hirsch-ashkenazi-chacham-tzvi-original-painting-and-interesting>



Rav Yisroel Chaim Yosef Elyakim Shem Yosef (Iyar 1, 5529 / 1769 - 257th Yahrzeit)

Author of *Shem Yosef* on Rambam (commentary on the Rambam)

Laid to rest on Har Hazeisim



Rav Shmuel Shmelke Horowitz Divrei Shmuel (Iyar 1, 5538 / 1778 - 248th Yahrzeit)



Rabbi Shmuel Shmelke HaLevi Horowitz of Nikolsburg (*Iyar 1778*) was a major disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch along with his younger brother, Rabbi Pinchas, who became the Rabbi of Frankfort (see above). Many of the leading rebbes in Poland and Galitzia were originally his disciples. Among the books he authored are *Divrei Shmuel* and *Nazir HaShem*. Rav Shmuel Shmelke's daughter Chava married Rav Elozor Rokeach of Brody, who later became Rav of Amsterdam.

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



Rav Menachem Mendel Pri Ho'oretz (Iyar 1, 5548 / 1788 - 238th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk/Horodok [5490 - 1 Iyar 5548] was an elder disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch and one of the earliest Chasidic rebbes. He led the first modern aliyah to Israel, in 1777, where he and three hundred Chasidim and others settled in Tzefat.. After a few years most of the group moved to Teveria, where he is buried in the "Students of the *Baal Shem Tov*" section of the Old Cemetery. His works include *Pri HaAretz* and *Likutei Amarim*.



**Rav Avrohom Weinberg Slonimer Rebbe, Beis Avrohom (Iyar 1, 5693 / 1933 - 93rd
Yahrzeit)**



Rav Avrohom Weinberg of Slonim - Baranovitch, the author of *Bais Avrohom* was the son of Rav Shmuel Weinberg of Slonim and son-in-law of Rav Tzvi Morgenstern of Lomaz, a descendant of the *Kotzker*. He was also known as Rav Avraham Weinberg II (2nd) of Slonim. After his father's passing in 1916 (תרע"ו), the majority of the Slonimer chassidim became his followers. Since his older brother Rav Yissocher Leib remained in Slonim, he moved to Baranovitch where he established the new center for Slonimer Chassidus. In תרע"ח he opened and founded the *Toras Chessed Yeshivah Gedolah* in Slonim together was Rav Moshe Midner who served as *mashgiach ruchani*.

He also maintained a consistent and good relationship with the Slonimer Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel and visited there in תרפ"ט. He was appointed the *Nasi* of *Kollel Reisin* of Eretz Yisroel which was founded by Rav Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk and Rav Avrohom Kalisker. He therefore traveled to help raise money to support the institutions and the chassidim in the Holy Land.

In (1933), תרצ"ג he visited Eretz Yisroel and made the *shidduch* between Rav Sholom Noach (later known as the *Nesivos Sholom*) and Chava, the daughter of the *Birkas Avrohom*.

He passed away on 2nd day of *Rosh Chodesh 1 Iyar* (1933). תרצ"ג

His son Rav Shlomo Duvid Yehoshua *HY"D* succeeded him

He authored the *sefer, Bais Avrohom*, a collection of his teachings recorded by Rav Sholom Noach, the *Nesivos Sholom*, and Rav Yitzchok Matisyahu Luria.



Rav Shmuel Boruch Zaku (*Iyar 1, 5754 / 1994 - 32nd Yahrzeit*)



One of the leaders of Torah Jewry of Kurdistan. Born in תרנ"ט.



Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapira (*Iyar 1, 5766 / 2006 - 20th Yahrzeit*)

Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapira (1914-2006). Born to Rav Aryeh, the *dayan* of Bialystok and grandson of Rav Refael (the *Toras Refael*) of Volozhin, who himself was a grandson of the *Netziv*. As he was born during WW I, his family had fled from Bialystok to Minsk, where his uncle, Rav Chaim of Brisk, lived at the time. In 1933 Rav Moshe Shmuel left home and set out for *Yeshivas Ohel Torah* of Baranovitch headed by Rav Elchonon Wasserman. In the summer 1936, he moved to Mir, where became a *talmid muvhak* of Rav Baruch Ber Lebowitz of Kaminetz. In 1938 he fled to Eretz Yisrael. His father eventually joined him. His mother and two brothers remained behind and perished in the Holocaust. His cousin, the *Brisker Rav*, arrived in Eretz Yisrael around the same time. Rav Moshe Shmuel became one of his closest *talmidim*. After his marriage in 1946 he learnt in *Kollel Chazon Ish* for a year and then served as a *maggid shiur* in *Yeshivas Kol Torah* in Yerushalayim for three years. The *Chazon Ish*, to whom he became very close, requested him to open a *yeshiva* in Beer Yaakov together with the renowned *mashgiach*, Rav Shlomo Wolbe. In 1963 Rav Moshe Shmuel published the first volume of his *sefer "Kuntrus HaBiurim"*. It included his *shiurim* on *Gittin*, *Kiddushin* and *Nedarim*. He printed ten additional volumes

over the years. He also wrote the *seforim* "Shaarei Shemu'os" and "Zahav Misheva." Most of his voluminous writings are, however, still unpublished. Rav Moshe Shmuel was a member of the *Vaad HaYeshivos* for fifty years. In 1968 Rav Yechezkel Sarna and the *Beis Yisrael* of Ger invited him to join the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* of *Agudas Yisrael*.



Rav Avrohom Yitzchok Glick Av Beis Din of Toltchova, Be'er Yitzchok (Iyar 2, 5669 / 1909 - 117th Yahrzeit)



The renowned R. Avrohom Yitzchok Glick, (1826-1909) was a leading Hungarian *posek*. He served as Rabbi of Toltchova for more than 50 years (from 1858) and was considered one of the foremost *poskim* in Hungary. Many rabbis took pride in the *semicha* they received from him, and some Hungarian communities considered a *semicha* from him as a precondition to appointing a rabbi. He extensively studied the writings of his grandfather, the Maharam Bennet [father of his father-in-law, R. Yeshaya Bennet, Rabbi of Nagykálló (Kalov)], and he published his books: *Parshat Mordechai*, etc.

<https://www.kedem-auctions.com/en/content/halachic-responsum-rabbi-avraham-yitzchak-glick-rabbi-tolcsva>



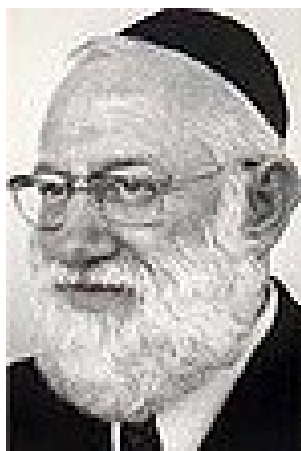
Rav Moshe Zakan Mazuz Shaarei Moshe (Iyar 2, 5675 / 1915 - 111th Yahrzeit)

Rav Moshe Zakan Mazuz of Djerba (1851-1915). He learned under Rav Chaim HaKohen, author of Lev Shomea. He was appointed Rav of Charah Zagira in 1905 and became Rav and Av Beis Din in Djerba in 1910. He authored Tzadik Venisgav; Shaarei Moshe (a collection of responsa); Shem Moshe, Shaarei Torah (pilpulim on Torah and Shas), Sever Panim (chidushim on Shas and on the Rambam).

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Rav Yehuda Meir Abramowitz (Iyar 2, 5767 / 2007 - 19th Yahrzeit)



Rav Yehuda Meir Abramowitz (1915-2007). He was the chairman of the Agudas Yisrael World Organization for many years (co-chairman with Rabbi Moshe Sherer when he was alive). He was one of the last *Talmidim* of Rav Meir Shapira.



Rav Aryeh Leib Tzintz Melo Ho'omer, Maharal Tzintz (Iyar 3, 5593 / 1833 - 193rd Yahrzeit)

Born in 5733 תקכ"ח

Rav in Płotzak and Tashknov, Poland

Known as the *gaon* of Płotzek

Passed away in תקצ"ג.



Rav Yeshaya Steiner Reb Yeshayale M'Kerestir (Iyar 3, 5685 / 1925 - 101st Yahrzeit)



(1851-1925 / 5611- 5685)

Rabbi Yeshayaleh Steiner of Kererstir was born to Rav Moshe and Hentshe Miraim Steiner in 5611/1851. He was orphaned from his father at age three and was raised and educated by his saintly mother who sacrificed much to give him a proper *chinuch*.

By age twelve, his mother realized that it was in her son's best interest to be in a true *makom Torah*. With great self-sacrifice, she sent the young boy away from home to study under the rebbe, Rav Tzvi Hirsch Lisker, author of *Achi Pri Tevuah*. Rav Tzvi Hirsch would eventually become his *rebbe muvhak*.

The Liska Rav sent him to study in the yeshivah in Semihali. Within half a year, all the locals knew of the young budding genius from whom they began to seek out his heartfelt blessings. They would hand him a coin and request that he recite Tehillim on behalf of the sick and ill. They saw wonders as the result of his supplications and soon, word spread that at the fair, it would be best if Rav Shayaleh would stand beside them as they traded so that in his merit they would be assured of their success in trading.

Rav Shayaleh was a disciple of Rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz, and after his passing, he became a disciple of Rabbi Mordechai of Nadvorna. The Nadvoner Rebbe suggested that he move to the town of Kerestir (Karstir). In Kerestir he became a famous rebbe known as a miracle worker.

After about half a year, the Lisker brought him back to help as his *gabbai* and he recognized his immense potential. He treated him with honor and respect and allowed the young tzaddik the opportunity to learn from his holy ways. After some time, his rebbe recognized his disciple's own hidden and holy ways. Rav Shayaleh was appointed to distribute the challos at his rebbe's *tisch* to the many guests. They said regarding this that once he continued giving out challos even when the sack was empty! Eventually, this miraculous distribution moved on from Liska to Kerestir where Reb Shayaleh would give out chulent from his pot and continue ladling out portions, long after the pot was empty!

Of course, no one was allowed to see inside the pot; the rebbe would simply ask if they needed more. And if anyone requested more, he got some, even when it was clear that the pot was empty and that, long before, all the portions the pot could possibly hold had already been distributed. In fact, very little had even been cooked and prepared, yet somehow, there was always more than enough and plenty to go around!

It was said of him that he had an otherworldly ability to give others since he gave of himself in a supernatural manner. He gave away all his food and distributed all his money to charity. He gave until there was nothing left to give and so Hashem gave him more to give!

After his service and studies under the Liska Rav, he studied under Rav Chaim Halberstam of Sanz. There, he demonstrated his way of giving. For instance, the Sanzer Rav once requested a large sum and Rav Shayaleh had some 600 reinish in his pockets. The Divrei Chaim asked, and Rav Shayele gave. He emptied out pocket number one.

"Don't you have anymore?" asked the Sanzer Rav.

He emptied out the second pocket. The Sanzer kept asking until Rav Shayaleh had given him the entire sum. Rav Chaim wondered out loud about Rav Shayaleh's giving nature and exclaimed how generous he was.

On 4 *Nissan* 5635/1875, he married Sarah bas Yitzchok Yona, the son-in-law of Rav Shaya Hakohen Gadol of Kerestir. Rav Shayale's Shabbos *aufruf* was conducted by his rebbe Rav Mordechai of Nadvorna who promised him that although there was no one around to shower the young groom with candies--as is the custom-- instead, he, the rebbe, will shower the *chassan* with followers and chassidim!

After a rough start in Liska where he lived in dire poverty, Rav Mordechai advised him to move to Kerestir and told him that there, he would find success. Like the Sanzer and Lisker, Rav Mordechai held Rav Shayaleh in great esteem and urged him to take on the role of leader and rebbe. Thus, he was appointed rebbe and if chassidim came to Rav Mordechai from Kerestir and the environs seeking his blessings, he sent them back to Rav Shayaleh for salvation saying they belonged to him. When Rav Mordechai found out that they were not calling up Rav Shayaleh for his *aliyah* to the Torah with the title of "Rebbe, Master and Teacher," he admonished them to do so.

Despite his success, he had profound humility. He continued to sign his name as "Yeshaya ben Moshe who used to be *meshamesh* the holy tzaddik of Liska"!

He passed away on 3 *Iyar* 5685/1925 and was laid to rest in Kerestir.

After his passing his *tziyun* became a central location for those seeking blessings and salvation and this continues to be the case until this day.

His successor was his only son, Rav Avraham of Kerestir. His sons-in-law were Rav Raphael Gross of Berbesht, Rav Shmuel, Rav Yisroel Avraham Alter Landau AvBeisDin Edelin.



Rav Yitzchak Isaac Hager (*Iyar* 3, 5701 / 1941 - 85th *Yahrzeit*)

Rav Yitzchak Isaac Hager, son of Rav Menachem Mendel of Zavlto, was a scion and descendant of the Kossov-Vizhnitz dynasty. He lived in Berditchev and was renowned as a miracle worker, reciting *Tehillim* day and night.

During the first World War he fled to Vienna. When the Nazis entered Austria in 1938, he

fled to Belgium. He passed away on 3 *Iyar* 5701 (1941) in exile in Zonhoven and was laid to rest in Antwerp.

His *rebbetzin* and sons Moshe and Yisroel all perished in the Holocaust.



Rav Yosef Breuer (*Iyar* 3, 5740 / 1980 - 46th *Yahrzeit*)

The Rav was born in 1882 in Papa, Hungary. His father Rav Shlomo Zalman a *talmid* of the *Ksav Sofer* was married to Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch, youngest daughter, Sophie. After Rav Hirsch passing in 1888, Rav Shlomo Zalman was selected to replace him as the *Moreh Dasrah* of the Austrittsgemeinde (secession community) of Orthodox Jews in Frankfurt am Main, known as Khal Adath Yeshurun.

Rav Yosef attended the local *yeshiva*, *Torah* Lehranstalt, which his father founded. Upon his fathers passing, in 1926, Rav Yosef was installed as the *Rosh Yeshiva* of the communal school system.

The Rav immigrated to the United States in 1939 after being arrested by the Gestapo. Once in New York, the Rav took the initiative to start a congregation with the numerous German refugees in Washington Heights, which would closely follow the morale and customs of the Frankfurt community. In addition, he founded Yeshiva Rabbi Shimshon Refael Hirsch, a *yeshiva* elementary school and high school named after his illustrious grandfather. He also founded a teachers' seminary for girls that would be renamed the Rika Breuer Teachers' Seminary after his wife's passing.

Towards the end of his life, the name Levi was added to his own name as a blessing to recover from an illness.

Among the Rav's philosophical views was the concept of *Torah im Derech Eretz* which was first introduced in Germany by Rav Hirsch.



Rav Abba Mordechai Berman Rosh Yeshivas Iyun Hatalmud, Iyun Hatalmud (*Iyar* 3, 5765 / 2005 - 21st *Yahrzeit*)

Rav Abba Mordechai Berman *zt"l*, *rosh yeshiva* of *Yeshivas Iyun HaTalmud*, had the merit of learning firsthand from the Torah giants of the previous generation. One of our generation's great *marbitzei Torah*, he spent years turning out *talmidei chachomim* in

Eretz Yisroel and in the US.

Abba Mordechai Berman was born on *Tu BeShevat* 5679 (1919) to Rav Shaul Yosef, *rosh yeshiva* of *Yeshivas Toras Chessed* in Lodz, a leading *talmid* of the *Chofetz Chaim* and a descendent of the *Kli Yokor*. His unusual abilities were evident even when he was very young.

When his father took Mordechai along during a visit to the *Chofetz Chaim*, the latter quizzed him on "*HaMafkid*," the third chapter of *Bovo Metzia*, and declared the six-year-old was destined for greatness. "Keep him hidden," the *Chofetz Chaim* told the boy's father. The *Chofetz Chaim* said that if the *Vilna Gaon* had been kept more hidden in his youth, he would have been bigger.

After his *bar mitzvah* HaRav Shaul Yosef sent Abba Mordechai to *Yeshivas Mir*, where he cleaved to HaRav Yeruchom *zt"l* and became one of his closest *talmidim*. Later he said upon arrival at Mir he had already mastered four *masechtos*.

Despite his young age Abba Mordechai was accepted by the leading *talmidim* at the *yeshiva*, including HaRav Chaim Shmuelevitz. The students at the *yeshiva* nicknamed him Abba Einstein the *Lodzer*. Once, when he was making a special campaign for *chizuk* in the *yeshiva*, HaRav Yeruchom declared, "If I had ten Abba Lodzers at the *yeshiva* I would not have to do anything to promote *chizuk* for years at a time." For years Abba Mordechai was the first *bochur* in the *beis medrash* and the last to leave.

From the time of his arrival at Mir until his *petiroh* HaRav Berman's entire life revolved around the holy Torah, which he labored over with all his might, producing profound insights. At Mir every week he would present *chiddushim* on *Seder Kodshim* before HaRav Eliezer Yudel Finkel, who once said that no other *bochur* at the *yeshiva* could give a *chaburoh* on *Seder Kodshim* like Abba Lodzer.

He remained with the *yeshiva* during its period of exile in Shanghai, where he studied with HaRav Nachum Partzovitz who noted his depth and toil in Torah. At the time Abba Mordechai was simultaneously studying *Kiddushin*, *Nozir* and *Oholos be'iyun* and he committed to memory 105 of the *Ravad's* challenges to the *Rambam* on the *halochos* of *tumas meis*. Once he recalled that during these years at *Yeshivas Mir* he was able to

visualize 1,000 pages of *gemora* he had learned by heart.

While in Shanghai, when the *yeshiva* received a copy of *Rabbenu Chaim Halevy's chiddushim* on the *Rambam*, he learned the book by heart between the *sedorim*. HaRav Reuven Fine recalls that in Shanghai whoever wanted to know a *pshat* in the *sefer* would ask Rav Abba. He later said that that *sefer* was one of his main influences in learning.

It was a very difficult period for him since he was the only member of his family that was not trapped in Poland. He tried to help them as best he could, but was not successful.

After the Second World War he arrived in the US, where he was among the founders of *Yeshivas Mir* there. Later he moved to Eretz Yisroel, where he started *Yeshivas Iyun HaTalmud* in Bnei Brak. He and his *yeshiva* moved many times, having been at various stages over the course of some 40 years in Bnei Brak, Far Rockaway, Monsey, Yerushalayim, and Kiryat Sefer. In addition to the *shiurim* he delivered at the *yeshiva* he also gave *shiurim* and *chaburos* to *talmidim* thirsting for Torah, including a group from *Yeshivas Ponovezh* that would meet at his home to absorb his brilliant Torah teachings. Young and old would gather around him to enjoy his clarity on every topic.

His *shiurim* were phenomenal. He would devote all of his strength to paving a smooth course for an understanding of each and every *sugya* and he knew how to use every ounce of a student's ability to comprehend. His vast knowledge and warmth drew every *ben aliya* earnestly seeking Torah.

His *talmidim*, many of whom now serve as *roshei yeshivos*, *dayonim* and *marbitzei Torah*, grew very attached to their rebbe, and many formed a father - son relationship with him. They saw him as a compassionate father figure who sought only their best interests, navigating them along the path leading to *Beis Hashem* based on the teachings he had received from his *rabbonim*, who were among the *gedolei Yisroel* of the prewar generation.

The last twenty-five years of his life were spent in Eretz Yisroel, where he had always longed to be. His final residence was Kiryat Sefer in Modi'in Illit. His profound *shiurim* were published in five volumes, which reveal his depth, straight thinking

and clear *chiddushim*. His shiurim on *Kodshim* are considered a fundamental source for gaining an understanding of these difficult *sugyos*.

He also left behind writings on all of the *sugyos* in the *Shas*, which he toiled over throughout his lifetime. Once he told one of his *talmidim*, "Whenever I answer a question I understand and see before me all of the pages I am asked about."

During the last few years of his life, he gave *shiurim* at the branch of *Yeshivas Knesses Yitzchok* in Kiryat Sefer. Just one week before his *histalkus* he delivered his last *shiur* and participated in the distribution of stipends through the Bnei Brak organization, *Uchsavtom*, despite his frail condition.

At his *levaya*, held on a Thursday evening, at the *yeshiva* in Modi'in Illit, *hespeidim* were given by HaRav Avrohom Yitzchok Barzel, HaRav Hillel Zaks, the deceased's son-in-law HaRav Mordechai Altusky, HaRav Tuvio Novik, HaRav Moshe Hillel Hirsch, and HaRav Refoel Wolpin, speaking in the name of the *talmidim*.

Following the eulogies, the *levaya* proceeded through the streets of Kiryat Sefer with thousands of local residents following the *mittoh* to the city's entrance. From there the body was taken to Yerushalayim's Shamgar Funeral Hall for *taharoh* before the procession continued on to *Yeshivas Mir*.

At *Yeshivas Mir*, eulogies were delivered by HaRav Aryeh Finkel, HaRav Shmuel Auerbach, HaRav Shlomo Brevda, the deceased's son-in-law, HaRav Avrohom Orenstein, and HaRav Moshe Wolpin, his closest *talmid*. The procession then continued on its way to Har Hamenuchos, where he was buried after midnight.

HaRav Abba Mordechai Berman *zt"l* was survived by six daughters married to prominent *rabbonim*: HaRav Sholom Rosengarten, *R"m* in *Yeshivas Ohel Torah* in Monsey, HaRav Mordechai Altusky, one of the *roshei yeshivas* of *Yeshivas Torah Or*, HaRav Avrohom Orenstein, a *ram* at *Yeshivas Bircas Moshe*, HaRav Moshe Twersky, a *ram* at *Yeshivas Toras Moshe*, HaRav Eliyohu Feldman, a prominent *avreich* in Yerushalayim, and HaRav Chaim Oded Kagan, a *ram* at *Yeshiva Ner Yisroel* in Baltimore. He also left behind grandchildren and great-grandchildren carrying on his spiritual legacy as well as thousands of *talmidim* mourning the loss of their beloved *rebbe*.



Chacham Mekubel Yaakov Sasportas Tzitz Novel Tzvi, Rav of Amsterdam (Iyar 4, 5458 / 1698 - 328th Yahrzeit)

Son of Aharon. Published a book called *Tzitz Novel Tzvi*

The Gaon Rabbi Yaakov Sasportas was one of the great masters of Torah. He was a G-d fearing man that knew how to awaken and enliven the faith of Jews.

Rabbi Yaakov was born in 5370 (1610) in Oran, Algeria. Born into an illustrious family that had been expelled from Spain, he was one of the descendants of Rabbi Moshe Ben Nachman, the *Ramban*.

From his earliest years, Rabbi Yaakov surprised those around him by his thorough knowledge in all domains of Torah. At the age of 12, he completed the study of all the tractates of the Talmud, and already by that time had a perfect understanding of the Tur. In 5388 (1628), he became famous and recognized as one of the great rabbis of his generation, yet he was only 18 years old. He was made Dayan of the rabbinical court of the city of Tlemcen in Algeria.

Rabbi Yaakov sat on the court of Tlemcen for about eight years. At that very time, the Shabbsai Tzvi movement had spread all the way to Morocco, and many were those that believed that the false Moshiach Shabbsai Tzvi had really been sent by Hashem to deliver Yisrael from exile.

Rabbi Yaakov Sasportas vehemently opposed them and denounced the blind faith that claimed to make Shabbsai Tzvi the Moshiach. Rabbi Aaron Hasabeoni of Fez and Rabbi Daniel Toledano of Meknes fought alongside Rabbi Yaakov against this messianic movement, and in fact the fears of these Gaonim proved true. The numerous Jews that had been swept up by the Shabbsai Tzvi movement abstained from fasting on the ninth of Av, which caused in its wake a decline in the performance of *mitzvos* in general.

Rabbi Yaakov was imprisoned in 5406 (1646) by the governor of Tlemcen on a false

accusation that his adversaries had brought against him. He was only released after his family paid a large ransom. He thereafter left Tlemcen and settled in Sale, Morocco.

For two years, Rabbi Yaakov sat on the rabbinate in the city of Sale. However, a famine struck the entire country, forcing Rabbi Yaakov to leave. Accompanied by his family, he traveled to Amsterdam, where he was welcomed with great honor by the Jews of the community. There he was named director of the great Etz Chaim Yeshiva. Rabbi Yaakov continued to lead an intensive fight against the Shabbsai Tzvi movement that had by this time spread throughout Europe. During this fight, he stayed in contact through correspondence with the great Rabbis of Morocco, whom he conferred with in order to find a way of stopping the spiritual epidemic that was ravaging the Jewish people.

The fight against the false messianic movement was not that easy, for the chief rabbis of the day had let themselves be entrapped and fascinated by Shabbsai Tzvi. They considered him to be the Moshiach. At the cost of great effort, Rabbi Yaakov Sasportas, the head of those fighting against Shabbsai Tzvi, managed to remove the mask of the false moshiach and prove to everyone that he was nothing but a charlatan and a crook.

Finally, Shabbsai Tzvi was imprisoned by the government and forced to choose between death and renouncing his religion. Shabbsai Tzvi, it comes as no great surprise, chose the second option: He converted to Islam.

Rabbi Yaakov was in contact with one of the great scholars of that era, Rabbi Menashe Ben Israel. In 5425 (1665), they embarked together for England with the goal of requesting the English King for permission to allow Jews to live in his country.

The trip was crowned with success, and numerous Jews left Holland to live in England. Rabbi Yaakov was named Rabbi of the Jewish community of London.

Rabbi Yaakov thought at that time that he could finally live in peace, but again he was forced to take up the baton of the wandering Jew. A terrible epidemic erupted in England and claimed many victims. As a result, Rabbi Yaakov left England for Hamburg, Germany, where he served as Rabbi.

In 5453 (1693), Rabbi Yaakov returned to Amsterdam, where he was named Rabbi of the

city's Ashkenazi Jewish community.

In 5458 (1698), Rabbi Yaakov died at the age of 88, after having enjoyed his final years.

https://hevratpinto.org/tzadikim_eng/035_rabbi_yaacov_sasportas.html



Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik Beis Halevi (*Iyar 4, 5652 / 1892 - 134th Yahrzeit*)



Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik was truly one of the greatest and most amazing personalities that Lithuanian Jewry has given to the Jewish people. Stories concerning this Tzaddik and Gaon abound. People speak of his genius, sharp intellect, integrity, and finesse, and especially about his good heart, for he had a heart of gold.

The son of Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Halevi Soloveitchik (who was the grandson of the Gaon of the generation, Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin), Rabbi Yosef Dov was born in 5580 (1820). From childhood, it was obvious that he was destined for greatness. People say that when he was seven years old, he already completely knew several chapters in tractates Nashim and Nezikin with the commentary of the Rambam.

He entered the renowned Volozhin yeshiva at a young age, and there he became famous for his keen intelligence. The Rosh Yeshiva and his great uncle, Rabbi Yitzchak (the son of Rabbi Chaim, the founder of the Volozhin yeshiva), rejoiced over his presence and said of him, "This boy is destined to become great." In fact, sometime afterwards Rabbi Yosef Dov became very great in Torah, and while still young he was named as the Rosh Yeshiva of the Volozhin yeshiva. Several reasons forced him to quit this position after ten years,

whereupon he was named as Rav of the town of Slutzk.

By nature, Rabbi Yosef Dov was a man of truth. He never demonstrated any partiality towards anyone, and he fought against every powerful and wealthy person who wanted to lord it over people. One day in Slutzk, it happened that a Reformer (a completely dishonorable man) was called up to the Torah. He ascended the Bimah and began to recite the blessing for the Torah reading with the intonation of a religious, G-d fearing Jew: "...Who has chosen us from among all the peoples and given us His Torah."

Upon hearing this, Rabbi Yosef Dov began to laugh. He said, "He certainly did not recite this blessing in vain, for if the Torah had been given to the other peoples, he would have felt obliged to carry it out in its smallest detail so he could be viewed as a perfect goy! However since the Torah was given to Israel, he feels free to reject its yoke, and that's why he said the blessing with such sincerity by emphasizing, 'and given us His Torah' - to us, not to non-Jews - because he doesn't feel obliged to carry it out!"

In addition to his greatness in Torah, Rabbi Yosef Dov had a caring heart that was open to all who were poor or dejected. He faithfully cared for the needs of the community and did much for the city's poor. During one year of scarcity, he established an organization called "Food for the Poor" which he himself directed. He went from house to house collecting money for the needy, and his home was open wide to the downhearted and every soul in pain. Even when he himself was lacking, he spent his last cent on *Tzedakah*.

One day a very poor Rav from a small town appeared at his home. Rabbi Yosef Dov warmly welcomed him and invited him to eat something, during which time they spoke of Torah. After the final blessing, the guest arose and Rabbi Yosef Dov noticed that his shoes were torn. He then called one of his sons over and whispered in his ear, "Take off your shoes and give them to this Rav."

Rabbi Yosef Dov also studied Torah in great depth and with razor-sharp acuity. He carried out the mitzvah of *Tzedakah* with detailed aforethought and he treated the poor wisely.

Rabbi Yosef Dov was a man who was very firm in his opinions, ones that represented the views of the Torah. The verse that states, "You shall fear no man" (Deuteronomy 1:17) was a guiding light for him in every aspect of life.

One day the leaders of the community of Slutzk came to him and complained about the deterioration of the town's religious situation. The Rav replied that authenticity had the upper hand, for unbelievers truly do not believe, which is why they succeed. As for those who observe Torah and mitzvot, they don't do so with complete sincerity, which is why the unbelievers have the upper hand.

His love for truth brought him much trouble and disappointment. He left his position as Rav of Slutzk, and for several years he devoted himself to Torah study in holiness and purity, without the rabbinate and without a livelihood.

After the departure of Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin (the Rav of Brisk) for the Holy Land, the leaders of the Brisk community came to ask Rabbi Yosef Dov to take his place as their Rav, to which he agreed.

Rabbi Yosef Dov was accorded great honor in Brisk, and his fame spread throughout the Jewish world as a Rav par excellence. In Brisk he found rest and tranquility for his disquieted soul, and he was able to study Torah in peace and also write his marvelous four-part collection of responsa, *Beis Halevi*, and a commentary entitled *Yad Halevi*.

After a brief illness, Rabbi Yosef Dov died on *Iyar 4*, 5652 (1892). He not only left behind his books, but also his children, who themselves were great in Torah. Among these was Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik, who enlightened the world through his Torah and wisdom.

https://hevratpinto.org/tzadikim_eng/125_rabbi_yossef_dov_soloveitchick.html



**Rav Shmuel Eliyohu Taub Third Modzhitzer Rebbe - Tel Aviv Rebbe (*Iyar 4, 5744 / 1984*
- *42nd Yahrzeit*)**

Rabbi Shmuel Eliyohu Taub (1905-1984) son of Rabbi Shaul Yedidya Eliezer the Modzhitz Rebbe (1887-Kislev 1948), ascended to Eretz Israel in 1936 and established his Beis Midrash. He was one of the leading rebbes in Eretz Israel and a member of Mo'etzes Gedolei HaTorah.



Rav Meir Auerbach Imrei Bina, Rav of Kalish (Iyar 5, 5638 / 1878 - 148th Yahrzeit)

Rabbi Meir Auerbach (1815-1878) was born in Kovel near Kalish, an important city in central Poland, into a family who for centuries produced great rabbis. He was a descendant of Rabbi Shloma Zalman of Poznan who lived in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Rabbi Shloma Zalman authored many scholarly works and was recognized in his generation as a holy man. Rabbi Meir Auerbach's father, Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Auerbach, who passed away in 1846, was the Rabbi of Polotzk and Luntshitz and authored the *sefer, Divrei Chaim*.

Rabbi Meir Auerbach was a towering gaon in Talmud. He became rabbi of the city of Kovel in 1840 at the tender age of 25. In 1846, Rabbi Auerbach was appointed president of the Jewish court, the *beis din*, in Kolo, where he served for nine years. He later became the Chief Rabbi of Kalisz/Kalish for four years. In 1860, after relinquishing the rabbinate of Kalish to Rabbi Chaim Elazar Wax, Rabbi Meir Auerbach traveled to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Yerushalayim. Rabbi Shmuel Salant, the chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim, was about to embark on a lengthy voyage to Europe on behalf of the impoverished communities in Israel and appointed Rabbi Meir Auerbach to serve as Chief Rabbi in his absence. After several months, when Rabbi Shmuel Salant returned, Rabbi Auerbach was prepared to relinquish his role as Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim back to Rabbi Salant. Rabbi Salant, wisely saw the tremendous benefit of having Rabbi Auerbach remain involved in communal affairs. He convinced Rabbi Auerbach that, as sole Chief Rabbi, he was caught up in overseeing the financial viability of the community, it left him little time to fill his role.. He thus persuaded Rabbi Auerbach to stay on as the assistant Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim.

As assistant Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Auerbach assisted Rabbi Shmuel Salant in the spiritual and material wellbeing of Yerushalayim and continued to play a most critical role in all the communal affairs of the country. Rabbi Auerbach also played an essential role on the Yerushalayim Rabbinical Board of Directors of the Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis Salant charity founded in 1860 by Rabbi Shmuel Salant. The Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis Salant archives contains hundreds of letters from all over the world that were written to him in his capacity as a Rabbinical Board Director of the Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis Salant charity

fund. Rabbi Auerbach had made investments in several successful enterprises in Poland before he emigrated to Eretz Yisroel and made a comfortable living. He therefore refused to take any salary from his rabbinical functions. On the contrary, Rabbi Auerbach freely distributed charity to institutions and individuals, especially widows and orphans. In 1866 when the cholera plague rained death and destruction on Yerushalayim and all the various Ashkenazi groups and organizations were in disarray, Rabbi Shmuel Salant and Rabbi Auerbach saw the urgent need work harmoniously and in unison for the benefit of the *klal*. To this end, they decided that it would be a tremendous advantage for the entire city to create an umbrella organization which would unite all its various factions. Thus, was born the Vaad Haklali which eventually became the central institution which dealt with all Yerushalayim's issues, both financial and spiritual.

Rabbi Auerbach was revered as a great man by all the foreign diplomats who had offices in Palestine, particularly the Russian Consul. Once an incident occurred that the crown prince, the son of the Emperor of Russia Alexander II, became ill. The Emperor sent a request to Rabbi Auerbach via the Russian Consul that he gather together a group of scholars to pray for the welfare of his son. Rabbi Auerbach complied with the royal request and sent a telegram to the Emperor with his promise that the boy will get well. At the very moment that the Emperor read the telegram, the royal physicians came to inform His Highness that his son was miraculously coming out of danger. As a token of his appreciation, the Emperor sent Rabbi Auerbach a personal handwritten letter thanking him for the prayers. He also included a gift of one thousand rubles to distribute to the poor scholars of Yerushalayim.

Rabbi Auerbach was extremely devoted to the continued growth and welfare of the growing population in Yerushalayim and sought to open up new neighborhoods for expansion. Together with Rabbi Shmuel Salant, he assisted Rabbi Yosef Rivlin and Rabbi Yoel Moshe Salomon in building the neighborhood of Nachalat Shiva, which was the first Jewish neighborhood of Yerushalayim built in modern times outside the walls of the Old City. The cornerstone laying ceremony for the new neighborhood took place on Lag B'Omer, the 18th of *Iyar*, in the year 5629 (1869), and by 1875, some 50 Jewish families were living in the area. Rabbi Auerbach also took center stage in the establishment of the neighborhood of Meah She'arim. He was very beloved to all segments of the community. He was appointed as Honorary President of the Yeshiva Etz Chaim, the Bikur Cholim Hospital, and the Churvah Shul, Beis Yakov. His reputation as a great scholar is evident

by his monumental work on the Shulchan Aruch called *Imrei Binah*.

Rabbi Auerbach instituted a restriction in Yerushalayim on playing musical instruments at weddings as a sign of mourning for the destruction of the Holy temple, a custom which is still upheld. On the fifth of *Iyar* in 1878, Rabbi Meir Auerbach passed away unfortunately at the relatively early age of sixty-three. Rabbi Shmuel Salant once again remained alone to lead Yerushalayim Jewry. May the memory of Rabbi Meir Auerbach be a blessing.



Rav Avrohom Katzenelbogen Rav & Rosh Yeshiva in Lwow (*Iyar 6, 5397 / 1637 - 389th Yahrzeit*)

Son of Rav Yoel

Rav and Rosh Yeshiva in Lwow in the seventeenth century.

He was born in Neustadt 1569) ש"כ"ט (.

He studied under his uncle, Rav Yitzchok ben Rav Moshe Katzenelbogen. In ש"ג he became rav of Yanov near Lwow and then afterwards in Lwow around ש"ע"ד.

His predecessor to the rabbinate was Rav Moshe Charif who had recognized Rav Katzenelbogen's erudition. It was due this fact that Rav Charif gave up his post in deference to Rav Avrohom.

For 23 years, Rav Avrohom led rabbonim, teaching Torah as rosh yeshiva. Only some of his responsa remain in the collections of his contemporaries.

Rav Avrohom was the head of the rabbinical court of Lwow. He was the grandfather of the renowned Knesses Yechezkel who mentions him with the appellation, "unique in his generation."

He passed away 6 *Iyar* 1637) ש"צ"ז (.



Rav Yosef Meir Weiss Imrei Yosef, Founder of the Spinka dynasty (Iyar 6, 5669 / 1909 - 117th Yahrzeit)



(1838-1909)

The Imrei Yosef was born on 18 *Adar* in the year 5598 (1838) in the town of Munkacz (Mukachevo). His father was Rav Shmuel Weiss, ra'avad, or head of the Munkacszer Beis Din.

The Spinka rebbe was a prominent Torah scholar, and talmid of the Maharam Asch, Rav Meir Eisenstadter, the rabbi of Ungvar (Uzhhorod), and of Maharam Asch's son, Rav Menachem Eisenstadter also of Ungvar.

In chassidus, he was a disciple of Rebbe Shmuel Shmelke of Selish, author of *Tzeror Hachaim*, and also of his uncle, the kabbalist, Rav Yitzchak Eizik Weiss of Svalyava.

An ardent chassid from his youth, in his early years he travelled to the Rebbe, the Sar Shalom of Belz, who testified that he has a "good brain." He also opened a yeshivah in Bursha and travelled to Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Vizhnitz and to Rav Chaim of Sanz, author of *Divrei Chaim*.

According to tradition, the Imrei Yosef learned a particular *avodah*, a novel approach to *avodas Hashem* from each of his primary rebbes:

From the Sar Shalom of Belz, he learned the derech of Torah study; from his *rebbe*

muvhak, Rav Aizikel Zidichover, he learned then *derech ha'tefillah*; and from the Divrei Chaim of Sanz, he learned the *derech* of *avodas Hashem* through *chessed*.

After his second marriage in Munkacsz, he began to study under his *rebbe muvhak* who was his relative, Rebbe Yitzchak Eizik of Zidichov (Zydaczow Galicia). The Mahari considered the Imrei Yosef to be his most illustrious talmid and would sit with him daily and converse for hours about wisdom and fear of Heaven, while at other times they studied *seforim hakedoshim Likutei Torah V'Shas*.

In 1870, his teacher, the Zidichover appointed him as a chassidic rebbe, but he refused to receive chassidim during his teacher's lifetime. Only in 1876, did he finally concede, heeding his rebbe, Rav Chaim of Sanz who also ordained him as a rebbe. From then on, he began receiving chassidim in Spinka in the Maramureş region where he lived with his third wife, the daughter of Reb Ezra Yaakov Bash of Spinka.

Rav Yosef Meir Weiss' name quickly spread throughout Hungary and Galicia, and thousands of Chassidim became his disciples. Among them, were many prominent Torah scholars such as Rav Shalom Mordechai Schwadron, also known as the Maharsham of Berezhan, Rav Yaakov Gottlieb, who was AvBeisDin Miskoltz, and Rav Meir Schwartz, who was AvBeisDin Podoheitz. He also had close ties with tzaddikim of his times such as: Rebbe Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam of Sighet, author of *Yetev Lev*; Rav Dov Beirish of Dolyna; Rebbe Yechezkel Shraga of Shinova, author of *Divrei Yechezkel*; and others.

He was reputed for his amazing erudition in both revealed and hidden realms of the Torah. When he traveled to Rav Chaim of Sanz, the rebbe welcomed him and they discussed Kabbalistic works at length.

The Spinka *nusach ha'tefillah* resembled and followed those of Zidichov. Rav Yosef Meir's fervent *tefillos* inspired multitudes of his chassidim.

Many tales and stories are told of the miraculous wonders he performed, through his blessings and counsel with *ruach hakodesh* (Divine Inspiration).

His son the Mahari of Spinka testified that his father's *berachos* "achieved salvation and that many barren women bore children through his *tefillos*. His *tefillos* also healed the

sick... I can almost say that every word emitted from his holy mouth was answered..." (Introduction to the sefer, Imrei Yosef, named Asara Maamaros).

The Imrei Yosef had multiple challenges in his life. Hardships included his losing two wives to illness. He had become ill as well, but was miraculously cured through a *berachah* from his rebbe, Rav Aizikel of Zidichov. He would fast every Wednesday as a *zechus* for the *kinderlach* of Klal Yisroel.

After his passing on 6 *Iyar* 5669 (1909) at age 71, his *ohel* became a renowned place for prayer and salvation.

In 5732 (1972), his remains were disinterred and reinterred in the Segulah Cemetery in Petach Tikva, Eretz Yisroel.

His *chiddushei Torah* were published in his magnum opus and namesake, the 7 volume *Imrei Yosef* on Chumash and Moadim. He also published his rebbe's sefer, *Likutei Mahari*.

His son and successor was Rav Yitzchok Isaac named after his rebbe the Zidichover. His sons-in-law where: Rav Nachman Kahana AvBeisDin of Spinka and Rav Avigdor Pollak, who was his third rebbetzin's son from her previous husband, Rav Yonasan Pollak of Seloshi.

His biography, *Pe'er Yosef* by Rav Alexander Sender Weiss of Spinka contains a *kuntres Berachos VeHodaas* that recounts the customs and ways of the rebbe during the weekdays and holidays as well as the *nusach Hakafos* for Simchas Torah.



Rav Dov Ber Spitzer (*Iyar* 6, 5741 / 1981 - 45th *Yahrzeit*)

He married Zissel, the daughter of Rav Chaim Tzvi Ehrenreich of Mad (grandson of the *Kol Arye* of Bergsaz and Mad).

Rav Dov Ber served as Rav in Agord before the war, and afterwards in Deish; later he became Rav of Zichron Yaakov in Far Rockaway, New York. In his later years he lived in Bnei Brak. He authored the *sefer Toldos Kol Arye* about Rav Avrohom Yehuda HaKohen

Schwartz of Bergsaz and Mad.

He passed away in New York on *Motzo'ei Shabbos, Parshas Behar*, 5741.



Rav Refoel Binyomin Levine Rosh Yeshiva Beis Aryeh - Yerushalayim (Iyar 6, 5762 / 2002 - 24th Yahrzeit)

Rav Refoel Binyomin Levine, son of Rav Aryeh Levine. Rav Refoel studied in the *Eitz Chaim Talmud Torah*, and was very close to its *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer. He continued his studies in the *Chevron yeshiva* in Yerushalayim and the *Lomza yeshiva* in Petach Tikvah, where he studied *bechavrusa* with Rav Reuven Katz, the *rov* of Petach Tikva. He married Channah Liba, daughter of *Rav Chaim Shraga Feivel Frank*, the *rav* of the Yemin Moshe neighborhood in Yerushalayim. After his marriage, he continued his studies in the *Mirrer yeshiva* under Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel. When the *Beis Aryeh yeshiva* opened, Rav Refoel's father, Rav Aryeh Levine asked him to serve as its *menahel ruchani*, a position he occupied until his final day. He was also a *Dayan* in the *Beis Din Tzeddek* of the *Ashkenaz-Perushim* community founded by Rav Shmuel Salant. (1925-2002)



Rav Tzvi Hirsch Tevel (Iyar 6, 5766 / 2006 - 20th Yahrzeit)

Rav Tzvi (Hersh) Tevel (1916-2006). Born in Dinov, Galicia, he began learning at *Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin* when he was 17 where his *chavrusa* was Rav Chaim Kreiswirth. At the age of 22, he became *Rosh Yeshiva* in *Yeshiva Divrei Chaim* in Cracow. After his father was murdered by the Nazis, Rav Tevel escaped to Russia with his mother and six siblings. After his marriage, he moved to Boro Park in 1951, establishing a *shul - Siach Hasadeh* - in 1966. For two years, he also ran a *yeshiva, Zichron Yaakov*. He authored several volumes of *Tzion L'nefesh* and another *sefer* called *Gilyonei Tzvi*.



Rav Chaim Moshe Reuven Elazary (Iyar 7, 5744 / 1984 - 42nd Yahrzeit)

Rav Chaim Moshe Reuven Elazary was a student of the *Slobodka Yeshiva*, first in Europe and then in Chevron. He began his rabbinic career in the Bronx, and also taught at a *yeshiva* in Brooklyn. After 1929, he succeeded his father-in-law, Rav Ephraim Pelcovitz, as rabbi of Congregation Agudas Achim in Canton, Ohio. (His father had been in Canton since 1914, and in 1929 moved to Bridgeport, Connecticut.) In 1972, Rav Elazary settled in Petach Tikva. He left numerous published and unpublished works and articles, many of them exhibiting the influence of Rav Nosson Zvi Finkel, *the Alter of Slobodka*. Rav Elazary's brothers, Rav Betzalel and Rav Yisrael, were among those murdered by Palestinian Arabs in the 1929 Chevron massacre. (1984)

Gedolim Be'Masayhem



Stories & Anecdotes

Rav Tzvi Hirsch Ashkenazi Chacham Tzvi (Iyar 1)

THE DEATH OF THE GOLEM

Rav Yaakov Emden writes: I heard from my father's holy mouth (the Chacham Tzvi) regarding the golem that was created by my ancestor Rav Eliyahu Baal Shem of Chelm. After he saw that the golem grew too strong, Rav Eliyahu feared that he would destroy the entire world.

Therefore, Rav Eliyahu removed the Divine Name that was on the forehead of the golem, by so doing the golem lost his life and became dust and earth once more. However, the golem injured Rav Eliyahu and the golem scratched his face while Rav Eliyahu was attempting to detach the Divine Name from the golem by force. I also received the tradition that because the golem was created to fight against the goyim and take retribution and vengeance against them, therefore afterwards the wicked hounded Rav

Eliyahu and he had to hide from them in fear. (She'elas Ya'abetz Volume II Siman 82)

Rav Shmuel Shmelke Horowitz Divrei Shmuel (Iyar 1)

TRUTH AND WISDOM

Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev is most famous for being one of the greatest of the early Chassidic masters, an extraordinary *Tzaddik* aflame with love for Hashem and His people. At the same time, he was an outstanding *Gaon* who served as the Rav and head of the rabbinical court in the city with which he is associated. He did not, however, take the post of Rav of Berditchev until 1785, when he was forty-five years old. Before that, he was Rav in several other cities, the first of which was Ryczywohl. The illustrious Rav Schmelke of Nikolsburg had been the Rav of Ryczywohl before being invited to serve as Rav of Nikolsburg. When he left, he was succeeded by his brilliant talmid, Rav Levi Yitzchok, who was only twenty-one years old.

Rav Levi Yitzchok came to be a *talmid* of Rav Schmelke because of a dream he had. After his marriage to his wife Perel, Rav Levi Yitzchok lived in the home of his wealthy father-in-law Rav Yisrael Peretz in the city of Levertov. Rav Levi Yitzchok did not feel that Levertov was the place for him. He yearned to study in the *Yeshiva* of Rav Schmelke, but his father-in-law insisted that he remain in Levertov. At that time, Levertov was a bright star in the Torah galaxy. Among its illustrious *Talmidei Chachomim* were Rav Yosef Thumim, the author of *Pri Megodim*, and Rav Yissochor Ber of Zlotchov, the author of *Mevaser Tzedek* and *Bas Eini*. What better place could there be for a young Torah prodigy such as Rav Levi Yitzchok than Levertov?

As time went on, Rav Levi Yitzchok's discontent manifested itself in his physical appearance.

"Why do you look so drawn?" his father-in-law asked him.

"Every night I dream," he said, "that I must go study with Rav Schmelke."

"Very well. If your heart is so set on it, then you must go."

Rav Levi Yitzchok became one of the star *talmidim* that Rav Schmelke brought to the holy Rebbe Rav Ber, the *Maggid* of Mezeritch and successor to the *Ba'al Shem Tov* as leader of the Chassidic movement. The others were Rav Yisrael, who later became the *Maggid* of Kozhnitz, and Rav Yaakov Yitzchok, who later became known as the *Chozeh* of Lublin.

There was another young prodigy living in Ryczywohl at the time Rav Levi Yitzchok became its Rav. His name was Rav Uziel Meisels, and he was the future author of *Kerem Shlomo*, *Tiferes Uziel* and *Eitz HaDaas Tov*. Recently married, he was living in the home of his wealthy father-in-law while he was learning Torah.

Rav Levi Yitzchok was a fiery *Chassid* of the *Maggid* of Mezeritch and emulated his ways. When he prayed or made *berochos*, his body trembled uncontrollably, and he would cry out at the top of his lungs in an ecstasy of devotion. Rav Uziel was not accustomed to this kind of behavior. It offended his sensibilities, and he disapproved. Since he was wealthy and learned, he felt no need to conceal his distaste for Rav Levi Yitzchok's behavior, even though Rav Levi Yitzchok was the Rav of the city.

The first time Rav Uziel attended one of Rav Levi Yitzchok's *deroshos*, he sat quietly among the people with his hands folded in his lap, listening to the Rav's words with intense concentration. Rav Levi Yitzchok began by posing a number of sharp and perplexing questions regarding a difficult *sugya*. Then he rigorously proved one point after another with numerous citations and seemingly impeccable logic, laying foundation upon foundation until he had built a stunning intellectual edifice and resolved all the questions and difficulties in one sweeping revelation of the true meaning of the *sugya*.

Those among the audience who were able to follow the intricacies of Rav Levi Yitzchok's reasoning were awed by his insight and genius. Rav Uziel, however, was not so impressed. He pointed out an inconsistency in Rav Levi Yitzchok's reasoning, whereby the entire edifice collapsed. Rav Levi Yitzchok listened quietly. Then he nodded his head and walked away. Rav Uziel felt it was his duty to expose the Rav's flaws, and he was pleased that he had done so. In the course of the next few months, this scenario repeated itself several times. Rav Levi Yitzchok would deliver a dazzling *derosha*, and Rav Uziel would dismember it with a few surgical arguments and questions.

One time, Rav Uziel had occasion to travel to a distant town, and his father-in-law placed

his carriage drawn by three fine horses and his coachman at his disposal. As he traveled along the road in plush comfort, he noticed a Jewish man with a bundle slung over his shoulder trudging along the roadside. Rav Uziel ordered his coachman to stop the carriage.

"*Sholom Aleichem*," he called out to the traveler.

"*Aleichem sholom*," the man replied.

"Where are you going?" asked Rav Uziel. "Perhaps I can give you a lift. Why should you tire yourself out going on foot when you can ride in comfort with me?"

"I am going to Mezeritch," said the man.

"Perfect. We will be passing that town, and it will be my pleasure to take you to your destination."

The man smiled. "Thank you so much. I will gladly take you up on your offer."

Rav Uziel helped the man into the carriage. Then he gave the signal to his coachman, and they continued on their way.

Rav Uziel extended his hand. "My name is Uziel Meisels. And what is yours?"

"I am Elimelech. You can call me Meilech."

"You look like a *Talmid Chochom*, Rav Meilech. I would love to hear some words of Torah from you."

Rav Meilech shook his head. "It is true that I try to learn a little bit, but I can see that you are the one who is the *Talmid Chochom*. And you are obviously wealthy. Torah and greatness in one place! No, Rav Uziel, it is you who should be saying words of Torah."

"Well, perhaps later. By the way, Rav Meilech, where are you from?"

"I'm from Lizhensk."

"Lizhensk? You are certainly a long way from home. And you're going to Mezeritch?"

"Yes."

"Very interesting. Why are you going to Mezeritch? What business do you have there?"

"That is where my Rebbe is. I am going to learn Torah from him."

"And who is your Rebbe?"

Rav Meilech's face lit up. "The Rebbe Rav Ber, the holy *Maggid* of Mezeritch."

Rav Uziel stroked his beard and knitted his brows. "You are not a young boy any more, Rav Meilech, and I can see just by looking at you that you're a real *Talmid Chochom* in your own right. Why then must you travel so far to learn Torah? Is he such a genius? Does he have what no one else possesses?"

"My Rebbe's greatness in Torah has no bounds. The entire world is open before him, and when he speaks, I catch glimpses of the ultimate truth of the universe."

Rav Uziel was intrigued. "If he is indeed so great, I would like to meet him and see his greatness for myself. Do you think I could come with you to Mezeritch? Would he meet me?"

"I'm sure he would," said Rav Meilech.

When they reached Mezeritch, Rav Uziel alighted from the carriage together with Rav Meilech. He instructed his coachmen to stable the horses and get him a room at the inn. Then he walked together with Rav Meilech to the house of the *Maggid* of Mezeritch.

The attendant who opened the door solemnly shook their hands. He nodded familiarly to Rav Meilech and asked both of them to wait. It would be a few minutes before the *Maggid* could see them. Other than that, they did not speak. The attendant did not ask who Rav

Uziel was. As they waited, Rav Uziel saw that Rav Meilech grew more excited by the minute, and he too felt his breath quicken with anticipation.

Finally, the door opened, and they were shown into the *Maggid's* presence. Rav Uziel took one look at the *Maggid's* face, alight with a spiritual glow such he had never seen before, and he shrank back.

"Now, whom should I greet first?" said the *Maggid*. "Should it be you, Meilech, because you are a *Talmid Chochom*? But our guest is also a *Talmid Chochom*, and a wealthy man besides. Perhaps I should greet him first." He closed his eyes and mulled over this question for a moment. Then he looked up. "*Sholom aleichem*, Meilech! *Sholom aleichem*, Rav Uziel!"

Rav Uziel was so flabbergasted that it took him a moment to gather his wits and respond. How could the *Maggid*, who had never laid eyes on him, know his name?

"*Aleichem sholom*," he finally managed to say.

"Where are you from, Rav Uziel?" said the *Maggid*.

"Ryczywohl."

"Ah, Ryczywohl. So you know my *talmid* Rav Levi Yitzchok."

"Yes, I do."

"What do you say to his brilliance and vast knowledge? He is an amazing genius. Wouldn't you agree?"

Rav Uziel did not want to contradict the *Maggid*, but he felt compelled to answer honestly. He cleared his throat and took a deep breath.

"Actually," he said, "I am not very impressed with him."

The *Maggid* lifted his eyebrows. "And why would you say that?"

"Because on a number of occasions I've pointed out errors and inconsistencies in his *derashos*, and each time, he nodded his head and retracted."

"Indeed?" said the *Maggid*. "I would like to hear more about this. Do you happen to recall any of these *derashos* that you refuted?"

"Yes, I do."

"Good. Then tell me what he said and also the errors you pointed out."

Rav Uziel had a phenomenal memory, and he was able to repeat several of Rav Levi Yitzchok's *derashos* almost word for word. Then he posed the arguments whereby he had forced Rav Levi Yitzchok to retract his words.

"Very well," said the *Maggid* when he was finished. "I want you to listen closely while I explain to you what Rav Levi Yitzchok said and meant, and you will see that there was no basis at all for the objections you raised."

The *Maggid* patiently explained what Rav Levi Yitzchok had said, and as he spoke, and as the structure of the argument was reconstructed with great clarity, all the objections were shown to be baseless. Rav Uziel suddenly realized that this was exactly what Rav Levi Yitzchok had intended - that it was he who had misunderstood. He found it deeply disturbing that he should have missed the essential points of the *derashos* when the logic was so clear. And at the same time, he was overcome with amazement at the genius of the *Maggid* before whose eyes, it seemed, the entire Torah, the revealed and the hidden, lay open like a book.

"Rebbe, you are the light of Yisrael!" he cried out. "I am so grateful that I now see the truth in Rav Levi Yitzchok's words. It is so clear now, that I cannot imagine how I did not see it before. But I don't understand why he retracted. Why didn't he just answer my questions?"

"He certainly could have done that," said the *Maggid*. "But he does not care about his own honor, and he didn't want to humiliate you."

As soon as he left the room, Rav Uziel sent the carriage and coachman back with a message to his family that he would be staying in Mezeritch for an extended time. He had found the wellspring of Torah from which he would drink for the rest of his life.

THE THREE VISITORS

The Rebbe of Dzikov would relate the following tale every year: The holy Rebbe of Belz told the holy Rebbe of Kominka the reason behind a trip that the Rebbe Reb Elimelech made to see Rebbe Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg. Once, the three Avos, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, visited Rebbe Reb Elimelech. He asked them how the coming year would fare. They answered him that all the *tefillos* of the past had been accepted for good, more so than in previous years. The next year they came again, but this time they said the opposite: none of the *tefillos* were able to ascend properly. If not for the four pillars of the world, the world would not have been able to continue existing. Rebbe Reb Elimelech asked the Avos to reveal the identity of these four pillars. They told him that one of these four was Rebbe Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg. Rebbe Reb Elimelech traveled to Nikolsburg to see the Rebbe. When he arrived at Rebbe Reb Shmelke's door unannounced, Rebbe Reb Shmelke ran toward Rebbe Reb Elimelech and said to him, "Who are the other three?" (*Ateres Zekeinim*, p. 24; *Ohel Elimelech* 9)

GREAT REWARD FOR A GOOD DEED

Once Rebbe Reb Elimelech was on his way to the *mikve* accompanied by another Jew, when he heard a heavenly voice call out, "He who helps Rebbe Reb Shmelke overcome the wicked people in Nikolsburg will be assured a portion in the World to Come!" Rebbe Reb Shmelke had suffered terribly at the hands of some of the local residents. Rebbe Reb Elimelech asked the fellow who was with him if he had heard anything. The man had not. The Rebbe said to himself, "Since I heard this myself, it is a sign that I must journey to Nikolsburg." He set off for Nikolsburg, and when he arrived he went straight to the house of Rebbe Reb Shmelke and asked him permission to give a discourse in the *shul* and rebuke the congregation. "And what good will it do for you to scold them?" Rebbe Reb Shmelke replied. "They will accept no *tochocha*." But Rebbe Reb Elimelech insisted, and finally Rebbe Reb Shmelke gave in and granted him permission.

Rebbe Reb Elimelech went to the *shul*, where many people had gathered to hear his discourse, and he began to lecture. It seemed he had set out to prove to them how several sins listed in the Torah could actually be permitted. This type of speech was quite to their

liking, and it whetted their palates for more. And so it was announced that Rebbe Reb Elimelech would speak again in the *shul* the next day, and the congregation returned in droves; almost the whole town showed up to hear the discourse.

This time Rebbe Reb Elimelech proceeded to prove to them how false were yesterday's proofs and how all the sins in the Torah are quite grave and it is forbidden to transgress even the slightest of prohibitions of the *Rabbonim's* enactments and decrees. His words stirred feelings of repentance and regret in their hearts until they began to cry. "Our own Rebbe [referring, of course, to Rebbe Reb Shmelke] told us these truths, only we refused to listen to him. We must all go to beg his forgiveness and make amends."

They went to their Rebbe and fell on their faces, begging for forgiveness. They promised to listen and heed his words from then on - now that Rebbe Reb Elimelech had proven to them that their Rebbe's words were true.

Having accomplished his mission, Rebbe Reb Elimelech asked to be granted leave from the Rebbe Reb Shmelke and he left town.

When he left Nikolsburg, he heard another heavenly voice proclaim, "Since you have aided the Rebbe Reb Shmelke, we grant you that anyone you bless within the next twenty-four hours shall be blessed."

Rebbe Reb Elimelech walked and walked for almost a whole day, and yet he did not encounter a single Jew to bless. The Rebbe cried before Hashem, "Here You have given to me this gift for twenty-four hours and whom will I bless with it?" Suddenly, he saw a woman walking in the field and immediately he began blessing her. She became frightened and fled. The *Rebbe* called after her, "Do not be afraid! I am not an evil man, Heaven forbid. Tell me: where are you from and what is your occupation?" She stopped running and answered his questions, then allowed Rebbe Reb Elimelech to finish blessing her and they each went on their way.

When the woman arrived home, she told her husband about the stranger and his blessings. Sure enough, their fortune turned for the better, and their standard of living grew until they were quite wealthy. Seeing the result of the *Tzaddik's* blessing, the couple believed that this man had been Eliyahu HaNovi in disguise, for they saw with their own

eyes that all their handiwork was blessed. This couple established a fine home with servants in the city, and the wealthy man gave his servants permission to distribute donations up to a gold dinar without even consulting him.

Time passed, and Rebbe Reb Elimelech and his brother Rebbe Reb Zusha were traveling together, collecting charity to free captives, when they heard about this wealthy and charitable man. They traveled to his city and called on him, and his servants came to give them a donation. They refused the amount the servants offered, though they were being offered a golden dinar. They insisted on seeing the affluent man himself.

When they entered the rich man's home, his wife saw them and recognized Rebbe Reb Elimelech. She was so overcome that she fainted, causing a great commotion in the household. When she came to, she told her husband that this man was Eliyahu HaNovi who had blessed her several years earlier.

Rebbe Reb Elimelech immediately declared that he was not Eliyahu HaNovi, and he had not come to take away their wealth, Heaven forbid. On the contrary, he was happy to see that his blessings bore fruit. The wealthy man asked them how much they needed to collect to redeem the captives. "Five hundred coins," they said. The rich man left the room and soon returned with the entire sum. But they refused his generous gift, saying that they wanted to let other Jews have a hand in the merit of this great *mitzva*.

After much entreaty and pleading by the rich man, they accepted from him half the amount.

(*Sichos Tzaddikim* 17).

LIKE SHMUEL HANOVI

Rebbe Reb Shmelke lived for fifty-two years like Shmuel HaNovi. He used to say that his soul was a spark of Shmuel HaNovi except that because they added the name Shmelke he was not completely like the *Novi*.

HIS YESHIVA AND HIS DEMANDS FROM HIS TALMIDIM

In order to be accepted to his *Yeshiva*, every new student had to accept the following rules and conditions:

He must learn with all his soul and all his strength and not ever go to bed or to sleep, rather to study until he collapsed from fatigue. He once passed by a student who lay in the hallway, apparently collapsed from tiredness, his head on his folded jacket instead of a pillow. When he awoke, Rebbe Reb Shmelke berated and chastised him: if he still had the strength to fold his jacket and lay down on it, he still had strength left to learn - and that was unacceptable!

THE STORM AND THE SHOFAR

Once, a foreign ruler summoned Rebbe Reb Shmelke before him. The Rebbe Reb Shmelke traveled together with his talmid, Rav Moshe Leib Sassover. Together they journeyed by ship and were at sea for many weeks. It was the night of *Rosh HaShana* when a great sea storm raged and began to toss the ship to and fro among the high waves. The entire crew was seized with fear and thought that at any moment they might capsize and drown. Rebbe Reb Shmelke was deep in meditation while Rav Moshe Leib Sassover sang and danced all night, singing *Shiras HaYom - oz yoshir Moshe* - bellowing in a loud voice!

Every few minutes Rebbe Reb Shmelke asked if it was already dawn, as he sat in eager anticipation, burning with hislahavus, aflame with excitement for the upcoming moment when he could blow *shofar*!

As soon as dawn broke, Rebbe Reb Shmelke blew the *shofar* and immediately the storm ceased, the waves calmed down and the sea returned to normal. They were saved!

Afterward, Rebbe Reb Shmelke asked Rav Moshe Leib why he sang and danced.

"I thought at any moment we would drown and I would come face to face with my Maker. I was so excited to meet and see Hashem, how could I refrain from singing and dancing?!" was Rav Moshe Leib's reply.

When they came before the king, Rebbe Reb Shmelke's regal, stately appearance filled them all with awe, respect and reverence. They saw he was a G-dly man and so they freed him of any charges and wrongdoing. *Tzaddikim* who retold this story explained further that it wasn't Rebbe Reb Shmelke's *shofar* blowing that calmed the sea, not at all; rather it was his *ga'aguim* - his pining, heartfelt desire all night long for the opportunity to fulfill the *mitzva* that did it.

OVERBURDENING ELIYOHU

After Rebbe Reb Shmelke's passing, the *Apta Rav* went to comfort his widow and hear any wondrous tales she would relate about her husband, *olov hasholom*.

The widow told him how once in the middle of his nightly learning session his candle burned low and went out. In distress, he walked out to seek a candle, forgetting that he was on the second floor. He stepped out onto the balcony, saw a person holding a candle coming toward him, thanked the stranger profusely, and entered, rekindling his light with the new candle and...it was then that he was struck midstride by the following realization: he was on the second floor! Who could have come toward him from the ground level, and who could have handed him a candle? It must have been Eliyohu HaNovi, was his conclusion, and the mere thought that he had burdened and troubled Eliyohu HaNovi to bring him, the lowly Reb Shmelke, a candle! The thought troubled and bothered him to the point of tears, distress and despondency. He never realized how much in *Shomayim* they must have valued his Torah study to send Eliyohu. His humility was so great, all he thought was how he must have burdened the prophet!

(*Yehi Ohr* p. 253-256 300, 301, 303, 305)

CANCELING THE VILNA GAON'S DECREE

Rebbe Reb Shmelke Nikolsburger was a *talmid* of the great *Mezritcher Maggid*, Rebbe Reb Dov Ber. In the *sefer Shemen HaTov* the following story is cited in the name of the *Apta Rav*, *mechaber* of *Ohev Yisrael*:

Originally, Rebbe Reb Shmelke and his brother Rav Pinchas Horowitz, *mechaber* of the *Haflo'a*, were both *talmidim* of the *Vilna Gaon*. The *Gra* decided to gather a *minyán* and convene a *Bais Din* to sit and decree preventing anyone from marrying any of the *Mezritcher Maggid's talmidim*. Counted among the *Dayonim* in this *Bais Din* were Rebbe Reb Shmelke and the *Haflo'a*. When word of the pending decree reached Rebbe Reb Ber's ears he sent his *talmidim*, Rav Avrohom Kalisker and Rebbe Reb Zusha, to Vilna to attempt to prevent the decree. He advised them and gave them the following idea how to draw near the *Gra*: "When you come to Vilna the *Gaon* will be dealing with certain *Tosafos* and studying it with his *talmidim* and discussing its meaning. I will teach you a way to explain this *Tosafos* and when you present the solution to the *Gra*, he will be impressed and draw you near."

And so it was. When the *Vilna Gaon* asked the identity of the two anonymous strangers who were obviously *Talmidei Chachomim* of some caliber since they could explain such a difficult *Tosafos* so well, they told him the truth, that they were *talmidim* of Rebbe Reb Ber, the *Maggid* of Mezritch. And so there was no decree, Rebbe Reb Shmelke and his brother the *Haflo'a* both decided to leave for Mezritch and see for themselves who this *Maggid* was.

In the *sefer Maasei Tzaddikim* it describes their first encounter with the *Maggid*: When Rebbe Reb Shmelke suggested they travel to the *Maggid*, his brother countered, "And what will be with all the *bitul Torah* on the way?"

"I have heard that he is a great *Gaon* and that he is great in Torah as well," answered Rebbe Reb Shmelke, and so his brother agreed and they traveled to Mezritch. They were extremely disappointed by their initial encounter on *Erev Shabbos* when, instead of engaging them with *Divrei Torah* and a *pilpul* as they expected, the *Maggid* told them he needed to prepare to greet the *Shabbos Queen* and dismissed them. Likewise his *Sholosh Seudos Torah* disappointed them, as they expected a *pilpul* and a discourse as they were accustomed, and not Chassidus. They decided to take leave of the *Maggid*.

"Before you go on your way, please take leave of Rebbe Reb Zusha as well," asked the *Maggid*.

And so they both went to the *Bais Medrash* and found Rebbe Reb Zusha, who challenged them, "It says in the *Medrash* in the name of *Chazal* that if your Rav is compared to an angel then you can ask Torah from his mouth and study, and if not, then no, but I ask you - have you ever met or seen an angel? If you cannot recognize an angel, then how would you know if your Rav is comparable to one and whether or not you can accept Torah from him?"

The two brothers agreed, and said to one another that such profound wisdom from Rebbe Reb Zusha proves that his master and teacher the *Maggid* must truly be as an angel great in Torah. They stayed and became devoted *talmidim*. (*Menora HaTehora* p. 9 #1 and #2)

LOVE EACH AND EVERY JEW

For a long time, the *Maharsham* was confused with a problem that bothered him

considerably. Being a *Kohen*, one of his *mitzvos* was *bircas kohanim* which automatically touches on another commandment: "*Levoreich es amo Yisroel be'ahavo.*" He wondered how it is possible to love every *Yid*, for even Dovid Hamelech says that evildoers are his enemies. Yet the *Zohar Hakodosh* expressly points out that one who does not love all *Yisroel* should refrain from saying *bircas kohanim*!?

The words of R' Schmelke of Nikolsburg that he came across one day, put him at ease. The Rebbe writes that since we are commanded to love every Jew, at least the few good deeds and worthy character traits of a *rosho* can be loved, for surely even a *rosho* has something good about him. The idea pleased him and from then onwards he went up to *bircas kohanim* with a pacified conscience and heart full of love for every *Yid*.

Rav Menachem Mendel Pri Ho'oretz (Iyar 1)

THE VITEBSKER'S GREATNESS

Rebbe Reb Zusha said regarding him, "Just as Eretz Yisrael is higher than all the lands so is Rav Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk higher than all the *Tzaddikim*."

The *Mezritcher Maggid* sent him to Reisin to teach them *Yiras Shomayim* and good *middos*. He dressed Rav Menachem Mendel in his own *kaftan*, gave him his staff and sent him on his way. When Rav Menachem Mendel Vitebsker returned, the *Maggid* asked him how he had fared.

"I found whole hearts and torn clothes and I exchanged them for broken hearts and whole clothes. Everywhere I went they called me a lamdan and a sage but I knew the truth about my lowly stature."

"You did well," replied the *Maggid*.

Tzaddikim used the following parable to explain why Rav Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk conducted himself with majesty although he was truly humble and brokenhearted: Someone had a valuable diamond and was afraid it would be stolen. He therefore hid the gemstone in his garbage can in such a filthy place that no one would ever think to search for it there. Similarly, the *Vitebsker* hid his humility beneath the false veneer of majesty

and arrogance.

Tzaddikim described the Vitebsker manner of prayer as follows: He davens like someone so lowly that he is covered in unsightly boils and desires to enter the king's chamber to speak with His Majesty. He pushes his way in, is rejected and cast out, yet pays no heed to the guards and servants. He pushes and forces his way in again and again to gain an audience with the king to plead for his very soul.

The Vitebsker came to Eretz Yisrael together with Rav Avrohom Kalisker and some three hundred Chassidim to found the new *yishuv* of *Talmidei Ba'al Shem Tov*.

During the voyage a storm threatened to capsize the boat and drown them, until the Vitebsker cried out, "Master of the World - *Ribbono Shel Olam* - remember the suffering and shame I had to endure when I took leave of Rav Boruch Mezhibuzher and the honors they bestowed upon me that shamed me! How they swept the floor before me and treated me like royalty!"

Apparently, his humility was so great and his shame so real that *Hashem* heard his *tefillos* and the storm abated. Another time, when a gale threatened them, the Vitebsker lowered himself into the turbulent waters and, ignoring the protests of his colleagues, proceeded to tovel in the sea, like a *mikve* until he achieved salvation and saved them by sweetening the harsh judgment, canceling the decree and stopping the storm. (*Yehi Ohr* p. 115 #204, 205, 207, 208, 215, 216, 217)

Rav Avrohom Weinberg Slonimer Rebbe, Beis Avrohom (Iyar 1)

HOW CAN I RELAX AND REST WHEN MY MASTER IS IN EXILE?

Although he was rebbe in Baranovitch, Rav Avrohom of Slonim, often traveled from place to place for Shabbos. When one of his wealthy followers offered to pay for him to take a well-deserved vacation, he refused, claiming that he instead needed to fundraise for *Kollel Reisin* in Eretz Yisroel. When the wealthy *chassid* generously offered to make up the difference, the rebbe revealed the truth: "How can I sit comfortably home or rest when my Master, the holy *Shechina*, is exiled, wandering from Her home?"

THE REBBE WAS SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO ME

It was Shabbos, *parshas Yisro* in Warsaw, Poland, and the great *tzaddik*, Rav Avrohom of Slonim Baranovitch, held his *tisch* among many *chassidim*. A *yungerman* who was suffering greatly from ill health arrived at the *tisch* and heard the rebbe's *divrei Torah*:

“And Moshe approached the fog - the opaque darkness where Hashem was’ (Shemos 20:18)

“There are three types of darkness that affect the lives of *Yid*: clouds, darkness, and fog. Each one is more difficult than the other and fog is the worst and most difficult darkness than them all.

“A darkness as thick as fog means that it is so opaque even when you light a torch it cannot help you see! Moshe was able to enlighten even such a darkness for *Bnei Yisroel* to help them understand that even there in the fog, is Hashem!”

When the *yungerman* heard these words through the fog of his own pain he was greatly moved. After the *tisch*, he entered the *tzaddik*'s inner sanctum and cried out, “Surely rebbe, you meant those words just for me, right?!”

WHY DID YOU COME TO ME?

Rav Avrohom of Slonim Baranovitch, once turned to one of his followers and asked him:

“What did Yisro hear when he ‘came’? He heard of the splitting of the sea and of the war with Amalek.” (*Rashi Yisro 18:1* from *Zevachim 116a*, and *Mechilta*, combining the views of Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Eliezer)

Some people come to me to be enlightened by the spiritual *avodas Hashem* like the splitting of the sea. Others come to me because they are battling their inner foes - the evil one, the *yetzer hara* - like the war with Amalek.

Tell me, why did you come to me; for which purpose are you here?” (Based on Intro to *Bais Avrohom*)

Rav Yeshaya Steiner Reb Yeshayale M'Kerestir (Iyar 3)

A SHOWER OF CHASSIDIM

The Shabbos before his own *chasuna*, Rav Yeshayeh'leh came to spend Shabbos with Rav Mordechai'leh. Rav Mordechai'leh displayed warmth, open affection and honored him very much. It was Rav Mordechai'leh who recognized Rav Yeshaya'leh as the *Liska Rav's* successor and he therefore appointed him to be a rebbe and a leader among the Jewish people and publicized his greatness and spread word among the chassidim. Before Rav Yeshaya'leh got an *aliyah* that Shabbos, Rav Mordechai'leh declared publicly addressing the Chassidim: "There is no one here to shower you with sweets [as is the custom to throw sweets and candies over the *chassan*] but instead I will shower you with Chassidim!"

A BARRELL FULL OF GOLD COVERED IN SHMATTES

After Rav Hershel Lisker passed away the Chassidim were unsure as to who should succeed him as the next rebbe and leader and they decided amongst themselves to travel together to ask the holy opinion of Rav Mordechai'leh of Nadvorna. The Lisker Chassidim arrived together with Rav Yeshaya'leh as he was the *Lisker rebbe's gabbai* always serving the holy *rebbe* in his inner sanctum.

They listed various possible candidates to Rav Mordechai and he responded "In my opinion Rav Yeshaya'leh should succeed the *Liska Rav!*" However the chassidim did not agree and remained unable to accept this since they argued that Rav Yeshaya'leh was not the son of a rebbe and how therefore could here he succeed the *Liska Rav?*

Rav Hershel Lisker's descendants also came to complain to Rav Mordechai that by appointing Rav Yeshaya'leh as the *Liska Rav's* successor he was usurping their inheritance and taking away their rightful position and source of income. Rav Mordechai listened to them and their arguments and then he turned around and stood in front of the window gazing outside into the distance. The Chassidim gathered around the window to see what the Nadvorna *rebbe* was gazing at and scrutinizing, but all they saw were a few bales of hay and straw strewn about. Rav Mordechai opened his holy mouth and declared with customary humility: "If *Mordechai'eh* would point with his finger at those bundles of straw and declare that this is a rebbe what would people say about that? All Mordechai'leh is saying is that there is a hidden barrel filled with gold, but it is covered in *shmattes* and filthy rags. All Mordechai'leh is doing is removing the rags and taking off the *shmattes*, then all of you will see the gold!" "I ask you to allow Rav Yeshaya'leh to

remain in Liska, it would be a great favor and do good for you and for many generations hence!" However Rav Mordechai's advice and requests fell on deaf ears and Rav Yeshaya'leh had no choice but to leave Liska. Instead Rav Mordechai of Nadvorna advised him to move to Kerestir.

And so it was that Rav Yeshaya'leh went to Kerestir and it was transformed into the source of *shefa* and *beracha* that we know of until this very day. When a chassid once asked Rav Mordechai if it was permitted to give Rav Yeshaya'leh a *kvitel* of petition to ask him to bless him and *daven* for him, Rav Mordechai'leh responded by rising up from his seat to his full height and declaring emphatically that: "It says in *Sanhedrin* 89 that he who holds back prophecy, not on I nor you do I wish what it says there, rather I will not hold back my prophecy and I tell you that in the Heavens above it has been decided and established that Rav Yeshaya'leh is the successor who inherits the Liska Rav."

Rav Mordechai'leh himself moved to Kerestir and for the first year and a half that Rav Yeshaya'leh was there Rav Mordechai supported and strengthened the new rebbe, Rav Yeshaya'leh, to lead and be a rebbe. All those who came to Rav Mordechai for his blessing and advice were refused and turned away, instead he ordered them to first seek the counsels and blessings of Rav Yeshaya'leh. He also refused emphatically to receive any *kvitelach* anyway in Rav Yeshaya'leh's domain and surroundings saying that they belonged to Rav Yeshaya'leh alone.

May his holy merit shield us all.

A KADDISH

Rav Yeshaya Gross a descendant of Rav Yeshaya'leh of Kerestir, from Williamsburg wrote: It is well known that our great grandfather Rav Yeshaya'leh of Kerestir had no male heir they all died very young. When his son Rav Avrhame'leh grew ill his mother travelled to Rav Mordechai'leh of Nadvorna and asked for a blessing for her son's recovery, "Why do you come to me?" asked Rav Mordechai in surprise, "your own husband Shaya'eh has an open road with no hindrances in Heaven above!" The Rebitzen however would not let up and continued to beg the *Nadvorna rebbe's* blessings, "I promise you that after 120 years on this earth you shall indeed have someone to recite *Kaddish* for you." And so it was. The Rebitzen passed away on 22 *Tammuz* תרפא while Rav Yeshaya'leh was *niftar* 3 *Iyar* תרפג and Rav Avrahame'leh passed away 18 *Adar* תרפז just as Rav Mordechai had promised they both had some to recite the *Kaddish* after them.

RAV SHAYALEH'S SAGE ADVICE

Rav Yoel was very close and on very friendly terms with Rav Shayaleh of Kerestir and from time to time they would visit one another and send regards and greetings. Rav Yoel used to say that Rav Shayalah was a world class genius a *velts Chacham!*

It so happens that there was a well known problem in Uhjel, a serious breach in the fence erected by Chazal and the Torah. There were many simple uneducated Jews whose work among the goyim forced them to have to wear leather shoes even on Tisha B'Av and therefore they made the error that they mistakenly believed that since they were forced to wear leather shoes while working for the gentiles they therefore believed that they could continue to wear these shoes all day long, even coming to shul on Tisha B'Av morning itself while wearing leather shoes for Shacharis and to recite *kinnos* and from there they each went to their jobs to work for the *goyim*.

This was the first year that Rav Yoel was serving as the Rav of Uhjel, and the leaders of the community were worried that when he would witness this breach of the halachah and the acts of the unlettered uneducated Jews he would publicly humiliate and rebuke the offenders and cause a new rift in the community!

Therefore, in order to prevent communal strife they sought out the new Rav to placate him and explain the erroneous beliefs and mistake of these ignorant congregants.

The heads and leaders of the *kehillah* sought an audience with the Rav and told him that when he would witness this foolish custom and see how the ignorant Jews come to shul on Tisha B'Av wearing leather shoes and that they have already become accustomed to this foolish incorrect custom for so many years he should forgive them and not rebuke them since better that they remain shogeg and sin unintentionally than mezidim willful and rebellious transgressors! no?

When the Rav Yoel heard this he was completely taken by surprise and he asked them: "Do you mean to tell me that on the day that our holy bais hamikdash was destroyed and went up in flames these Jews will come to shul in leather shoes?!"

"What should we do?" exclaimed the leaders of the community, "I hereby declare," said the Rav, "that I cannot remain heading the rabbinate in such a place where some

members of the community so brazenly go against the halachah in a public display of disregard for Jewish law and something so clearly stated black and white in Shulchan Aruch!"

The communal leaders did not know what to do and so they departed the house of the Rav downcast. Meanwhile, Rav Yoel did not know what to do. . .after a few days it so happened that Rav Yoel was in Kerestir for a din Torah and as was his custom he went to visit Rav Shayaleh and inquire as to his welfare and well being.

During their conversation Rav Yoel presented his problem to Rav Shayaleh, asking for his sage advice, how could Rav Yoel possibly extricate himself from this predicament?! "Regarding this matter your best bet is to discuss the matter with rabbiner Roth!" was Rav Shayaleh's terse response. Needless to say such a response astonished Rav Yoel, who could not understand how the rabbi of the status quo congregation could possibly advise or aid him in this matter?!

Rav Shayaleh did as was his custom and he closed his eyes and laid back in a trance like manner and appeared almost as if he was asleep. Rav Yoel posed his question, "what connection does rabbiner Roth have to the matter and what possible answer could he have for me?" Rav Shayaleh again responded: "Discuss this matter with rabbiner Roth and your honor shall see success!" was his blessing and reply.

The strange and bizarre advice seemed out of place, and Rav Yoel had misgivings and said to himself: "Although Rav Shayaleh is a world renowned sage but I think this time he has missed his mark. . ."

However, when he arrived back in Uhjel he decided to give Rav Shayaleh's advice a shot, what did he have to lose already?!

Rav Yoel asked that someone go visit rabbiner Roth and request him to visit, explaining that Rav Yoel had an urgent matter to discuss with him.

Rabbiner Roth was extremely surprised that the Rabbi of the Orthodox congregation wanted to seek a meeting and speak with him, out of respect he hurried over to Rav Yoel's home to see what was the matter. "Please rabbiner Roth I have an urgent request of you, during your Shabbos sermon please mention to your congregants about the upcoming day

of Tisha B'Av and how it commemorates our national tragedy, teach them the history of the destruction of Jerusalem and our holy temple that was set aflame twice on this fateful tragic date and how throughout the generations Jews world over have fasted and mourned over the destruction and that one of the customs was to refrain from wearing leather shoes."

When rabbiner Roth heard the modest request it seemed odd but he agreed and so his sermon did indeed contain the content as requested. When Rav Yoel heard the news that rabbiner Roth had indeed kept his word he had the solution, he himself spoke before his congregants and chastised and rebuked them: "What shame and how will you face the fact that even the status quo congregation has heard the strict stringency of mourning on Tisha B'Av and refraining from wearing leather shuls and how will it look when even they all know this and yet the Orthodox congregants blatantly flagrantly ignore the law and publicly walk around in leather shoes on Tisha B'Av?! What shame and disgrace!?"

The sage advice of Rav Shayaleh did the trick and it worked, all the members of the kehillah that year showed up in shul on Tisha B'Av and not one was wearing the shameful leather shoes on their feet! (Mofes HaDor)

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik Beis Halevi (Iyar 4)

'APPLY YOURSELF TO THE STUDY OF TORAH FOR IT IS NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN JUST INHERIT' (AVOS 2:17)

Rav Yosi says: Apply yourself to the study of Torah, for it is not something you can just inherit" (Avos 2:17).

Rav Ovadia Yosef used to tell the following story about the *Bais HaLevi* to illustrate this Mishna:

When Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik was still a *bochur* learning in the Volozhiner Yeshiva, he heard from his uncle, Rav Yitzchok, about the great Gaon Rav Shlomo Kluger, his greatness in Torah and *Yiras Shomayim*. This sparked in him a great desire to meet Rav Kluger and discuss words of Torah and bask in his glory. The only problem was that Rav Shlomo Kluger lived in Brodie, and Galicia and Volozhin were very distant from one another. The young Yosef Dov had no money and no way of reaching his far-off destination. One day, he overheard guests in the Yeshiva discussing their travel plans,

saying that their destination lay in Brodie. Now he hatched a plan to fulfill his dream! He approached the coachman and explained to him that he wanted to hire himself out as a wagondriver.

“Surely the journey is long and you need the extra help? I can take over the horse’s reins so you can rest and help you feed and harness the horses when we stop over.”

The coachman looked at the pale, scrawny frame of this *Yeshiva bochur*, who was not used to doing any hard-physical labor, and doubted that he could handle the job.

“And what are you asking as a wage?” he countered skeptically.

“I have a need to travel to Brodie and so I am willing to work for free. My sole wage will be a bed to sleep in when we stop for the night and some simple food for the journey.”

That settled it - free help was an idea that appealed to the coachman.

“All right,” he agreed. “Let’s start by harnessing the horses and readying the wheels for the journey.”

The young Yosef Dov had never done any manual labor. His soft hands, so used to caressing pages of the Gemora, were soon bruised and bleeding from the hard leather harnesses, and burned from the hot tar and pitch used to smear the coach wagon’s wheels for the long journey. Nonetheless, young Yosef Dov did not complain. As tired as he was, he sat holding the reins while the coachman snoozed and his young mind reviewed the Torah he was excited to discuss with Rav Shlomo Kluger! He was so absorbed that the horses wandered off the road. The bumps woke up the coachman; startled, he quickly took charge of the horses and set them back on the road.

“You lazy slouch!” he yelled at the poor *Yeshiva bochur* and aimed a good slap right across his face. “That will teach you to keep the horses on the road!” he berated him.

Yosef Dov said nothing; he accepted the rebuke and resolved to work harder. Eventually, after several harsh days of travel they reached their destination. The young *Yeshiva bochur* knew no one in Brodie and immediately began asking for Rav Shlomo Kluger’s home. When the door was opened, they found a dirty, unkempt, disheveled vagabond at the door, in place of the *Yeshiva bochur* that this tramp claimed he was.

“You say you are the grandson of Rav Chaim of Volozhin?” the servants said doubtfully, and even Rav Shlomo Kluger had his own doubts as to the identity of the rough-looking youth whose torn clothes, dirty, cut hands and appearance were more of a coach driver than that of a *Yeshiva bochur*-grandson of Talmidei Chachomim. “Where is your letter of introduction?”

Yosef Dov had none, but in place he pleaded to show his prowess. “Let me instead discuss the answer to the difficult Rambam I have prepared,” and so he demonstrated his Torah

knowledge and convinced Rav Shlomo Kluger of his true identity.

“I apologize for mistaking you and not believing your word. Your Torah is true and to make it up to such a budding Gaon and Talmid Chochom, this Shabbos in shul, you will be honored to deliver the *derosha* in my place!” invited Rav Shlomo Kluger.

Brodie was filled with Talmidei Chachomim and the entire town, young and old, packed the shul, to see and hear the young prodigy that Rav Shlomo Kluger had honored to deliver the *derosha*. When I say everyone came, I mean everyone, even our coachman!

When he saw who the Rav and scholar delivering the Shabbos *derosha* was he almost fainted! He began to cry and sob hysterically! He approached young Yosef Dov and begged his forgiveness.

“I am so sorry I treated you so harshly and even slapped you!”

Rav Soloveitchik forgave him wholeheartedly. “If you had slapped me for not knowing Torah and called me a simpleton and one who doesn’t know how to learn, you would be liable, but you told the truth. After all, when it comes to knowing how to handle the coach and drive the horses I am a true *am haaretz!*” (Anaf Etz Avos 2:17)

Rav Avrohom Katzenelbogen Rav & Rosh Yeshiva in Lwow (Iyar 6)

RAV AVROHOMS PROFICIENCY

A wondrous story about him was copied from the *Matzeivas Kodesh*:

Rav Avrohom Katzenelbogen was appointed as the chief rabbi and head of the rabbinical court. Rav Moshe Charif, the son-in-law of Rav Sheftel Horowitz (the son of the *Shel’ah*) preceded him, and Rav Avrohom was at the time rabbi of the city of Janow. Once, Rav Avrohom was visiting for a conference of the Counsel of the Four Lands, and the proprietor of the inn where he was staying informed him that there would be no meat for Shabbos. The reason was, he explained, that the slaughtered animal had been rendered *treif* (not kosher) by the current rabbi. Hearing this, Rav Avrohom proceeded to don his Shabbos hat, which was attire reserved for great rabbis of major cities, and went to visit the chief rabbi.

When the chief rabbi’s servant saw him, he proceeded to bar his entry, citing his *chutzpah* at donning a Shabbos hat when he was the rabbi of a small unimportant town! The chief rabbi heard the commotion and asked the servant to allow Rav Avrohom to enter.

“To what do I owe the honor of your visit?” asked Rav Charif. “I came to discuss a matter of Jewish law with you,” replied Rav Avrohom. He then began to discuss a theoretical case of the laws of kashrut and ritual slaughter. “And if the slaughtered ox should have such and such signs?” asked Rav Avrohom. With flawless reason, Avraham tactfully demonstrated through the “theoretical case” that the animal was in fact kosher and its meat should be permitted.

When rabbi Charif realized his error, he summoned the other rabbis and said to them, “This rabbi’s proficiency in learning is obvious and he is greater than I; henceforth, I remove myself from this position, since he is more fitting than I am as rav.” So it was, that rabbi Moshe Charif removed himself from the position of chief rabbi and left for Olianov. Rav Avrohom Ashkenazi Katzenelbogen took his place.

Rav Yitzchok Horowitz (Iyar 6)

RUACH HAKODESH

Although Rav Itzikel was a *Misnagged*, the *Ba’al Shem Tov* held Rav Itzikel in great esteem for his *emes*, and would even send *Chassidim* to Brodie to visit Rav Itzikel and speak against *Chassidus* to give him *nachas ruach* (satisfaction)! The *Ba’al Shem Tov* testified that Rav Itzikel had *Ruach HaKodesh*, which rested upon him from *Rosh Chodesh Elul* until the great fair at Krasna when he was disturbed by the litigations and Dinei Torah he had to arbitrate between merchants and customers from the business at the trade fair. Others say the *Ba’al Shem* said that not only was *Rav Itzikel* the *Godol HaDor*, he was holy, calling him a *kodosh*, and said that from *Elul* until *Cheshvan* he was simply out of this world! (*Kuntres Zichron Yitzchok*, printed in *Ohel Naftoli* # 212)

RECOVERING THE MONEY

On his way to the great fair in Leipzig was a Jew from Lithuania. He had in his possession a monetary loan to conduct business and buy and sell at the fair.

It was *Erev Shabbos* and he stopped at a Jewish inn, whose proprietor was well known for his piety and hospitality. As it was *Erev Shabbos* and the *Shabbos* approached, our traveler handed over his money to the innkeeper, known for his *Yiras Shomayim*, to guard until after *Shabbos*. Unfortunately, that *Shabbos*, the innkeeper was attacked by a

debilitating illness. All Shabbos he lay in bed burning with fever and sadly on *Motzoei Shabbos*, he passed away!

A day or so after the funeral, our traveler approached the *almona* and *yesomim*, expressed his sorrow and regret at their loss and asked them to return his money that he had given her husband and their father for safekeeping. The widow and the orphans, however, answered, bewildered, that they knew nothing of any money. The parties approached the Rav, Rav Itzikel of Hamburg, to render a *pesak halocha* on the matter and judge the case. "If the *almona* and *yesomim* swear that they know nothing, then they are clear," and they were willing to swear on the spot.

"No, that is unnecessary," said the traveler. "Obviously they must be telling the truth. I don't want them to swear in Hashem's name needlessly," and so the matter seemed to end.

However, our traveler was now in a serious quandary. What should he do? He couldn't travel on to the fair, for he had no money with which to conduct any business and how could he turn around and head home - wouldn't they assume he had stolen the money? He turned bitterly to Rav Itzikel day after day and asked for his advice and help in recovering the money, but strangely Rav Itzikel's answer did not seem serious: "I told you already several times," Rav Itzikel insisted. "If you really want to know where your lost money is, I can summon the *niftar* before us and he will testify where he put it!"

Having heard this answer already more than once, our traveler lost his patience and spat out, "Fine, if that's what the Rav says (he thought the Rav must be speaking sarcastically), summon the *niftar* already!"

Rav Itzikel, however, grew solemn and serious. He turned to the *shammas* and said, "Take my staff, go to the *Bais HaChaim*, to the newly dug grave of the innkeeper, and summon him in my name to a *Din Torah*!"

The *shammas* obeyed the Rav and soon returned from the *Bais HaChaim*.

"The *niftar* is present. If you wish, please repeat your story in front of him and he will answer."

Our traveler stood there bewildered, seeing no one, but if the Rav said...and he launched into his tale about how he had arrived *Erev Shabbos* “and I gave the money to the innkeeper for safekeeping and he got sick and died and no one knows where the money is now,” he concluded, feeling a bit silly. Rav Itzikel paused as if listening. The traveler saw and heard nothing.

Then Rav Itzikel said, “The *niftar* says that if we examine the volume of *Tur Orach Chaim Hilchos Shabbos* in this and that *siman* we will find the money there, because this is the volume he was studying at the time you gave him the money for safekeeping and this is where he hurriedly placed it.”

So saying, the Rav urged our traveler to do so, and when the *almona* opened the *sefer*, there was his money, just as Rav Itzikel had told him! (Kuntres Zichron *Yitzchok*, printed in *Ohel Naftoli* # 216 as told by Rav Avrohom Segal Ettinger heard from Avrohom Binyomin Kluger, who heard it from Rav Shlomo Kluger when he lived in Brodie, from elders who still remembered Rav Itzikel of Hamburg)

Rav Yosef Meir Weiss Imrei Yosef, Founder of the Spinka dynasty (Iyar 6)

HIS COMPASSION TOWARD THE WICKED

The *Chakal Yitzchok* of Spinka wrote about his father the *Imrei Yosef*:

I once heard him tell and I think he said outright that he could hear the cries of the wicked calling out from *Gehinnom* and from *kaf hakela*, and that the angel who rules Purgatory, called the *Sar Gehinnom*, warns the *Tzaddikim* not to *daven* on behalf of the *resho'im*. However, a true *Tzaddik* pays him no heed and *davens* for them. He also once told how the reason why he sits and conducts *Sholosh Seudos* for so long into the night past the time *Shabbos* ends (as his custom was to say *Torah* and tell stories for a long time) was because he had mercy and compassion for the *reshoim*, that they should not be returned to *Gehinnom* right after *Shabbos* (and I understood from him that as long as he sat and conducted his *Sholosh Seudos tisch* they refrained from sending the *reshoim* back into *Gehinnom*). He once told us a story about the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz, who said that the *Rif*, *Rav Alfasi*, had the power to prevent the wicked from being returned to *Gehinnom* as long as he kept *Shabbos Sholosh Seudos*, and this was his custom as well - to lengthen

and stretch it out as long as he could. (Introduction to *Imrei Yosef* Vol. I *Bereishis*, Eser *Maamoros* 9:6, 9:8)

THE SALES, GIFTS AND LOANS OF REBBES

The *Imrei Yosef* of Spinka once came to serve as *sandek* at a *bris*. There was a great gathering from all the environs to see the *Tzaddik*. After the *seuda*, the *Imrei Yosef* was honored with leading the *bensching*. As the *Tzaddik* recited *Birkas HaMozon* from the *Siddur Arizal* as was his custom, one of the *Chassidim* stood listening behind the *Rebbe's* chair.

As the *Rebbe* reached the words, "Please [Hashem] do not require us to benefit from the gifts of flesh and blood nor need their loans," the *Rebbe* became very excited. The *Chassid* who was listening, however, was troubled by the following thought: How could the *Rebbe* become so excited and *daven* to Hashem not to need the gifts of others, when the *Chassid* knew full well that at the conclusion of the *Birkas HaMozon*, the *Rebbe* would sit down and begin to accept *pidyonos* and *kvitlach*, monetary gifts traditionally given along with the notes of supplication that the *Chassidim* presented to the *Rebbe*, asking him to *daven* for them, effect a salvation and bless them? Wasn't it hypocritical of the *Rebbe* to *daven* for *parnossa* from Hashem alone and not to benefit from the gifts of flesh and blood, when everyone knew that in just a few minutes he would be given monetary gifts from the *Chassidim*?

But the *Chassid* checked himself; he knew that *Chazal* say anyone who thinks thoughts against their *Rebbe* is as if he thinks against Heaven, and so he tried to push these negative thoughts out of his head.

The *Rebbe*, however, seemed to somehow know exactly what his *Chassid* was thinking. As he concluded *bensching*, he turned around to the *Chassid* and asked aloud, "It seems almost contradictory for me to ask Hashem not to benefit from people's gifts. However, *Chazal* composed the same *nusach* of *Birkas HaMozon* for everyone to recite, whether they benefit from their own handiwork and toil or whether they benefit from others.

Those *Rebbes* of whom the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* says, 'And he gave him from the gold of Sheba and he prayed on his behalf,' they accept *pidyonos* and monetary gifts to pray for their *Chassidim* who are devoted and connected to them. Their entire *parnossa* is made up

of gifts from people! How can they recite this *nusach* in *Birkas HaMozon*?" The Spinka *Rebbe*, the *Imrei Yosef*, answered his own question. "When a *Rebbe* accepts a *pidyon* for *davening* on behalf of his *Chassid* and the *Chassid* experiences a salvation and is delivered through that *yeshua*, this is not a gift; it is, in fact, a financial business transaction, the payment given for goods just like any other business deal where there is buying and selling involved. The *Rebbe* who prays has not received a free gift, since in exchange for his *tefillos* he granted the *Chassid* a *yeshua*. But if the *Rebbe's* *tefillos* were not immediately answered, then the money given is like a loan, which is repaid once the prayers are answered and the *yeshua* granted. If the prayers remain, Heaven forbid, unanswered, then the money remains a true free gift, since nothing was given to the *Chassid* in exchange. This is what the *Rebbes* *daven* for when they recite *Birkas HaMozon* and ask of Hashem, 'Please let us not benefit from the gifts of flesh and blood and not need their loans.' They are asking that the *tefillos* and *berochos* they give their *Chassidim* in exchange for the *pidyonos* and *kvitlach* they receive should be answered, granted and fulfilled so that the monetary transaction is not considered a loan or a gift but rather a fair exchange of goods and services rendered for payment!" (Rav Yaakov Yosef Weiss, Introduction to *Imrei Yosef Moadim* Vol. 1)

SHABBOS SHEKALIM

Rav Melech Biderman told how two brothers, Rav Meir and Rav Zanvil Kahana, came together to visit the *Tzaddik*, the *Imrei Yosef* of Spinka, on *Parshas Shekalim*. Both brothers had suffered greatly and needed a *yeshua*: Rav Meir's wife was ill and they had no children, and Rav Zanvil's children were weak and sickly.

On *Erev Shabbos*, Rav Meir entered and asked for a *beracha*. He was told to donate a *pidyon* of a hundred gold coins and he would have a complete salvation! And so he did. His brother did not have time to enter the *Rebbe's* room before *Shabbos* and instead approached on *Shabbos*. At the *tisch* the *Chassidim* have the *minhag* to donate bottles of wine, and as each *Chassid* laid down his bottle at the table, Rav Zanvil approached. Soon it was his turn and he laid down his bottle and asked the *Rebbe* for a *beracha* for his sick children. The *Imrei Yosef* blessed them with a *beracha* for a *refua sheleima* and then he explained:

On *Shabbos Shekalim* all *tefillos* can be answered! The *Gemara* says in *Berachos* 26b that the *tefillos* were instated by *Chazal* to correspond to the *korbanos*. Now the purpose of

the *machatzis hashekel* donation was to raise the funds needed to purchase the *korban tamid* for the entire upcoming year. Thus, the *mitzva* of *shekalim* prepared the *korbanos* for the entire year. *Shabbos Shekalim* is therefore a time when we can *daven* for the prayers of the entire year to be accepted and fulfilled *lerachamim uleratzon* - and be answered! Needless to say, both brothers' prayers were fully answered and they got their needed salvation! (*Pe'er Yosef* p. 25)

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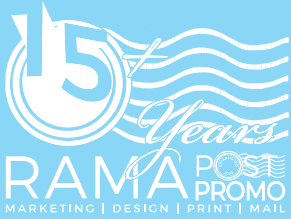
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