

# 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 Emor & Lag B'omer

CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA

לזכר נשמת

ר' זכרי' שמעון הכהן בן יצחק

### The Pride Of Princes

**Rav Yisrael Taub, the Modzhitzer Rebbe**

The *Modzhitzer Rebbe*, in *Divrei Yisrael*, cites the *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* (Parshas Eikev), who explains that the *pasuk* (*Divrei Hayomim* II 17:6), "His heart was uplifted in the ways of Hashem," refers to serving Hashem with a feeling of pride and self esteem, that Hashem values and esteems you and that if we have in mind that "the entire world was created for our sake," (*Sanhedrin* 37a Rashi ad loc) then this feeling of pride and self esteem will save him from sin.

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Therefore, the opening *pasuk* in *Parshas Emor* says, "Speak to the *Kohanim*, the sons of Aharon." The Modzitzer explains that the *pasuk* is saying: "Remind them that they are the sons of Aharon. Remind them of their lofty status and importance, because they might forget their own importance, since *Tzaddikim* tend to be humble, as it says, "[Moshe and Aharon asked,] What are we?" (*Shemos* 16:7). Since they might forget who they are, we remind them that they have *yichus* - pedigree - and that they were born holy, not to make them arrogant or give them vanity or haughtiness, but rather that they should remember not to "make themselves impure among their people," because if they transgress, they will blemish their soul. Thus they need to be protected from such an event.

This is the meaning of the *Mishna Avos* 3:18: "Beloved are Yisrael, for they are called children of Hashem; it is a sign of even greater love that it has been made known to them that they are called children of Hashem," that if a prince, the son of the king, remembers his royalty, this in and of itself can protect him from sin, because if not he might belittle himself and behave improperly, like some coarse commoner, like a country bumpkin.

Therefore, says the *Modzitzer*, when *Rashi* says on the *pasuk* in *Emor* "to warn the elders about the young ones - *lehazhir gedolim al haketanim*," this can be interpreted in light of the above to mean that in order to protect ourselves from being besmirched and sullied by sin we need to uplift ourselves with pride and self esteem. This will uplift our heart to know that we are sons of the king, and as royalty we will then conduct ourselves as befits princes and princesses. (*Divrei Yisrael Emor*)

The *Modzitzer Rebbe* asks in *Divrei Yisrael (Emor)* why the *Mishna Avos* 1:12: "You should always be counted among the *talmidim* of Aharon HaKohen, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving others and drawing them near to Torah," seems to needlessly repeat itself by saying both "loving peace" and "pursuing peace." [If you love peace, surely you will pursue it.] Furthermore, the term *rodef* - pursue, usually connotes a battle with an enemy you need to chase, and not peace as is understood.

The Rebbe cites *Orach Lechaim Vayishlach*, in the name of Rav Shmelka of Nikolsberg, who asked a similar question regarding the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* 34:15: "Seek peace and pursue it." [Why both "seek" and "pursue"?] This is answered by the *Medrash (Bereishis Rabba 54:1 on Mishlei 16:7)*: "When Hashem is pleased with man's ways, his enemy [the *yetzer hora*] will also make peace with him." This is how to explain "seek peace." When you seek to make peace even with your enemy the *yetzer hora*, the best advice is "pursue him." He will then make peace with him. This is how the *Modzitzer* explains what we mean in our *Mishna* in *Avos*, "pursue peace": chase after the *yetzer hora* in order to make peace with him, as we explained.

Futhermore, the *Mishna* concludes by saying to "draw them close to Torah." The *Modzitzer Rebbe* explains further that fools believe that closeness to Hashem refers to honor and glory. Therefore, we say "draw them close to Torah." The only true closeness to Hashem is through *Torah*, not through honor. The truth is that those who draw close to Torah run away from honor and those who chase after honor run away from Torah. (*Divrei Yisrael Emor*)

## Meditations On How To Serve Hashem On This Day

### **Rav Elozor Yisroel of Sokolov**

Rav Elazar Yisroel Av *Beis Din* of Sokolov, author of *Omer Ha'Tenufah* teaches us:

Whether you are thanking Hashem for a personal miracle or for something that Hashem has done for others, it should enthuse you and bring you to praise Hashem. Similarly, the capacity to understand and intellectually grasp the greatness and loftiness of Hashem should excite us.

The full scope of thanking Hashem does not only pertain to the detail alone (for example, the miracle) , but rather gratitude must include thanking Hashem for the very fact that you merited to stand before Him in praise!

This is *hod sh'b'hod* - thanksgiving within thanksgiving:

With this type of thanksgiving you experience gratitude in a deeply inner way-- that you have even merited to [be in such a relationship with your Creator in which you can] thank and praise Hashem.

Rav Daniel Frisch author of *Masok M'Devash* in his sefer *U'Sefartem Lachem* adds:

We further thank (*hoda'ah* - as in the word *todah* - thank you) Hashem for granting us insight into the secrets and mysteries of the Torah which corresponds to the attribute of *hod* (see *Archei HaKinuim*) which reveals the superior light of Hashem's Divine Wisdom (rooted in *hod* see Pardes 23) through the holy Tanna, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, whose *hillula* is on this day and which corresponds to *hod* within *hod*.

[Under the influence of this day's attributes], try to praise and thank your fellow Jew; recognize the favors he does and all that he has done for you. Take note that *hod* corresponds in the body with the left foot, and in relation to time, with the morning hours since both are aspects of *hod*.

Have in mind to concentrate on the *berachah*, *Mekabetz Nidchei Amo Yisroel* in *Shemoneh Esrei* (whose attribute is *hod* according to the Arizal). Specifically, one should have the intention that Hashem gather in all the sparks of holiness from whatever we damaged, ruined, or blemished. This especially applies to those times when we forgot to thank Hashem and forgot to thank others for help we received or favors done, or being remiss in thanking someone on time. Another aspect to keep in mind is the improper study of secrets and mysteries of Torah since all such sins have their root in the attribute of *hod* and they are holding back redemption and the ingathering of our people from exile.

# Stories on the Parsha & Lag B'omer



## The Earthquake In Meron

In the year 5670 תר"ע on *Lag B'Omer*, there was a strong earthquake in Meron that killed many people. At the time, the Rebbe was on the roof of the *tzion*, dressed in his striped *kaftan* and fur *shtreimel*, meditating and *davening* with his eyes closed as if it was *Yom Kippur*. When the earthquake started, he told all his close followers and anyone else in his vicinity to draw near and stand beside him - and all those who heeded his words remained miraculously unharmed!

# Gedolim Be'misasm Yoser



**Yahrzeits for the 15th of Iyar ~ Begins Friday Night  
( 05-02-2026 )**



**Rav Zecharia Mendel Loeb of Belz - Be'er Heitev (5431 / 1671 - 355th  
Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Aryeh Leib Klausner - Rav of Cracow (5431 / 1671 - 355th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Zecharia Mendel. Nicknamed Reb Leib after his father-in-law, Rav Fischel, the rav of Cracow also known as *der hoicher* Reb Leib (the tall Reb Leib). He served as rav in various *kehillos* such as Peshmishel and Vienna. When his father-in-law passed away he was asked to succeed him as rav of Cracow where he remained until his passing.



**Rav Aryeh Leib Shapira of Vilna - Me'on Arayos (5521 / 1761 - 265th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Nesanel Weill - Korban Nesanel (5529 / 1769 - 257th Yahrzeit)**

The Sokachuver Rebbe the *Avnei Nezer* writes in the name of his father in law the *Kotzker* that he greatly esteemed the *sefer Korban Nesanel* and held it in high regard. "I heard from my father in law, the rebbe of Kotzk how he praised this sefer very much and I too have studied it and found a place in my heart." (Shu't Avnei Nezer Orach Chaim Siman Daled #17).



**Rav Shalom Teomim of Shtefanesht - Av Bais Din Shtefanesht, Ohr Hatorah (5588 / 1828 - 198th Yahrzeit)**

A nephew of the *Pri Megadim*, and a disciple in Chassidus of *Rav Baruch* of Mezibuz, the *Degel* and the *Kozhnytzer Maggid*. Rav Sholom Teomim was a famed *Mekubal* and *Av Bais Din* of Shtefanesht.



**Rav Chaim Meir Yechiel Shapira of Moglenitza - Tiferes Chaim (5609 / 1849 - 177th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Avi Ezri Zelig Shapira *av beis din* Greinitz and Perel Margalis. Born around תקמ"ט. His father was son-in-law and his mother was the daughter of the *Kozhnytzer Maggid*. He himself was the son-in-law of Rav Elazar, the son of the Rebbe Reb Meilech of Lizensk. His birth was a miracle that came about through the *berachah* of the *Berditchever Rav*, the *Kedushas Levi*.

**Yahrzeits for the 16th of Iyar ~ Begins Saturday Night (05-03-2026)**



**Rav Meir Lublin - Rav of Lublin, Maharam Lublin (5476 / 1716 - 310th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Gedaliah. Born around 1558 ש"ח in Lublin to a prominent rabbinic family. His paternal grandfather was Rav Asher of Cracow, the *mekubal*. Rav Meir was a disciple of Rav Yitzchok Shapira, Rosh Yeshivas Cracow, who also became his father-in-law when the Maharam wed his daughter, Esther. At a young age, he became Rosh Yeshiva in Lublin. This was during the years ש"מ - ש"ט. He is, perhaps, more well-known for his tenure in Cracow as Rav and Rosh Yeshiva. The Maharam's genius in Talmudic studies - especially in the area of the demanding discipline of Talmudic logic known as *pilpul* - is what he is legendary for.

 **Rav Menachem Mendel Hager of Zablitov (5641 / 1881 - 145th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Moshe Shmuel HaLevi Rottenberg of Kassan (5706 / 1946 - 80th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Yechiel Michel Feinstein (5763 / 2003 - 23rd Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein (1906-2003) was a great Lithuanian Rosh Yeshiva who after World War II lived in the United States and later in Eretz Yisrael. His father was Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchok Feinstein who lived in the town of Uzda, near Minsk which was then part of the Russian empire. Yechiel Michel was orphaned at the age of seven and went to live with and learn from his grandfather, Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, the rabbi of Uzda. Rabbi Yechiel Michel developed a close relationship then with his uncle, the famed Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein was soon recognized as a child prodigy, and was sent to the nearby city of Slutsk to study under the Rabbi of Slutsk, Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer who cherished this young genius.

 **Rav Tzvi Hirsch Rosenbaum of Kretchnif (5766 / 2006 - 20th Yahrzeit)**

He was a great great grandson of Rav Mordechai of Nadvorno. Born in Sighet in Romania's Marmorosh region, he went to study at *Yeshivas Ohr Torah* in Stanislav after his Bar Mitzvah. On *Tisha B'Av* 1945, he arrived in Eretz Yisrael. And opened his first *Beis Midrash* in Batei Ungarin. In 1975, he opened a *Beis Midrash* in Bnai Brak and in 1980, another one in Yerushalayim.

### **Yahrzeits for the 17th of Iyar ~ Begins Sunday Night ( 05-04-2026 )**

 **Rav Shaul Babad Teomim of Brisk & Cracow (5467 / 1707 - 319th Yahrzeit)**

Son of the Rebbe Reb Heschel of Cracow. Served as Rav in Brisk and Cracow. He was appointed the Asheknazi Rav in Amsterdam but passed away on the way there on 17 *Iyar* ה"תתע"ז and was buried in Gloga.

 **Rav Yechezkel HaLevi Landau of Prague - Noda B'Yehuda (5553 / 1793 - 233rd Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Yechezkel Landau, the Rav of Prague, was known by the name of his book *Noda B'Yehuda*. During his time he was the source par excellence to whom people turned for practical advice, and even until today his name shines like a star in the firmament of Judaism. The son of Rabbi Yehuda Levi, Rabbi Yechezkel Landau was born on *Cheshvan* 18, 5474 (1713) in Opatow, Poland. In 5506 (1745), Rabbi Yechezkel became the Rav of Jampol. He stayed there for six years, and then he was called upon to be the Rav of Prague. Rabbi Yechezkel died on *Iyar* 17, 5553 (1793) in Prague.



**Rav Moshe Chaim Ephraim Ashkenazi of Sudilkov - Degel Machane Ephraim (5560 / 1800 - 226th Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Ephraim of Sudilkov [17 Iyar 1800] was the son of R. Yecheiel Ashkenazi and Adel, the daughter of the *Baal Shem Tov*. He authored one of the first primers of Chasidic thought, *Degel Machaneh Ephraim* ("Banner of the Camp of Ephraim"), and thereafter was popularly known as "the *Degel*." His holy grandfather testified about him that he was a Talmudic genius. He served as the rabbi of Sudilkov for several decades, but then retired to Medzibuz, the town of the *Baal Shem Tov*, at the end of his life, where he passed away and is buried.



**Rav Isomor of Konskovoalle - Mishmeres Isomor (5591 / 1831 - 195th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Yisroel. A disciple of the Chozeh of Lublin, Rav Yisroel the Kozhnitzer Maggid and of the *Yid haKadosh* of Peshischa. He inherited a fortune from his father but distributed it all to *tzedaka*. He authored *Mishmeres Isomor* on the Torah.



**Rav Tzvi Hirsch Weill of Horodna - Zera Gad (5591 / 1831 - 195th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Yehoshua Heschel Babad of Tarnopol (5598 / 1838 - 188th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Boruch Mendel Baum of Stolin - Noda B'Shearim (5665 / 1905 - 121st Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Mordechai Twersky of Rachmistrivka (5680 / 1920 - 106th Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Mordechai ("Mottel") Twersky from Rachmistrivka (7 Iyar) moved to Yerushalayim from Europe in 1908. He was known for his sharp mind and many business men used to seek his advice. He himself was a skilled craftsman, who did complex engravings from silver and copper. His father, Rabbi Yochanan Twerski, son of the famous Rebbe Mottele of Chernobyl, was the first Rebbe of the Rachmistrivka dynasty.



**Rav Pinchos Twersky of Ostila - Sh'eris Le'Pinchos (5703 / 1943 - 83rd Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Nissan Lipa Alpert - Rabbi of Agudas Yisroel, Far Rockaway (5746 / 1986 - 40th Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Alpert, one of the most prominent and celebrated students of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein *zt"l*, was counted among the most distinguished rabbonim in this country. He was the son of Rabbi Shabbtai Alpert *zt"l*, the rabbi of Plonk in Lithuania, who was the nephew of the *Chofetz Chaim zt"l*. After receiving *semichah* from Rabbi Feinstein, Rabbi Alpert accepted a position as rebbe at Yeshivat Tiferet Yerushalayim and then, in 1967, was appointed a rosh yeshiva at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. In his later years, Rabbi Alpert also served as the spiritual leader of Agudath Yisroel of Far Rockaway. He was previously rabbi of *Kehillas Chevras Bochorim* on the East Side for many years.

**Yahrzeits for the 18th of Iyar ~ Begins Monday Night  
( 05-05-2026 )**



**Rav Shimon bar Yochai - Rashbi (3881 / 121 - 1,905th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Shimon bar Yochai, one of the most important sages in Jewish history, lived over 1800 years ago. Teachings in his name abound throughout the Mishnah, Gemorah, and Midrashim, while the Zohar, the primary source text of Kabbalah, is built around Rabbi Shimon's revelations to his inner circle of disciples. During the hours before his passing, on *Lag b'Omer*, he disclosed the "most sublime" secrets of Torah, in order to ensure that the day would always be an occasion for great joy, untouched by sadness because of the *Omer* period and mourning for him. The seminal importance of the Zohar in Jewish thought and the annual pilgrimage to Meron on *Lag b'Omer* are testimonies to his success.



**Rav Moshe HaKohen Narol - Rav of Metz, Kel Molei Rachamim (5419 / 1659 - 367th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Moshe Isserles - Rav of Cracow, Rema (5432 / 1672 - 354th Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Moshe Isserles known by the abbreviation *Rema*, was born in Cracow, Poland in the year 5280 (1520), and died at the age of 52, on Lag-Baomer. His father Yisrael was a learned as well as a wealthy man, and one of the elders of the community. When his son the *Rema* was 33 years old, he built the famous *Rema* synagogue in Cracow, which was still in existence when the Nazis occupied that ancient city. His chief teacher was the celebrated Rabbi Shalom Schechna of Lublin, who later became also his father-in-law.



**Rav Shlomo of Krasnov (5588 / 1828 - 198th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Uri of Rohtin (5649 / 1889 - 137th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Alter Eliyahu Rubinstein (5755 / 1995 - 31st Yahrzeit)**

Harav Alter Eliyahu was born on 17 *Kislev* 5707/1946, in Sighet, Romania. As a young child, he moved with his father, Harav Efraim Fishel Halevi Rubinstein, *z"l*, and his mother, *a"h*, to Eretz Yisrael, where they settled in Beit Gamliel. Rav Rubinstein was later appointed by the *Klausenburger Rebbe* to head the *Sanzer Kollel* in Yerushalayim, and afterwards installed as Rav of the *Heichal Tzvi beis medrash* of Sanz-Klausenburg in Batei Varsha in Yerushalayim, a post he filled from 5730/1970 until 5753/1993. In 5753/1993 he was appointed Rav of the *Shomrei Hachomos kehillah* in Ramat Shlomo, Yerushalayim, a position he filled until less than a year before his *petirah*, when he left to lead the Antwerp community. In *Sivan* of 5764/2004, he was installed as Rav of Antwerp, succeeding Harav Chaim Kreiswirth, *zt"l*.



**Rav Dovid Hecksher - Rosh Yeshiva Kol Torah - Yerushalayim (5758 / 1998 - 28th Yahrzeit)**

**Yahrzeits for the 19th of Iyar ~ Begins Tuesday Night  
( 05-06-2026 )**



**Rav Meir ben Boruch - Maharam of Rottenberg (5053 / 1293 - 733rd Yahrzeit)**

Rav Meir Ben Baruch, popularly known by the abbreviation 'MaHaRaM' (Moreinu Horav Reb Meir) of Rothenburg, Talmudist and Paytan (religious poet), was born in Worms, Germany, nearly eight centuries ago, around the year 1220. In his youth he studied at Wurtzburg and at Mainz in the Yeshivas of the leading Talmudists of those days. Later he went to France to study in the well known French Yeshivas, particularly in the Yeshivah of the great Rabbi Yecheiel ben Yosef of Paris. Rabbi Meir, became universally acknowledged as the leading authority on Talmud and Jewish law, and many communities in France, Italy and Germany frequently turned to him for instruction and guidance in all religious matters and on various points of law.



**Rav Petachya Lida - Yad Kol Bo (5511 / 1751 - 275th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Menachem Mendel Turim of Rymanow - Rymanover Rebbe, Menachem Mendel of Pristik, Pristiker, Menachem Tzion (5575 / 1815 - 211th Yahrzeit)**

In *Ateres Menachem*, we learn that Rav Menachem Mendel was born around 5505 in Neustadt, Poland, and studied in the illustrious *Yeshiva* of the Rebbe Reb Shmelka of Nikolsberg in Moravia. There, he became a member of the Chassidic movement and eventually a *talmid muvhok* of the Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizhensk in Galicia.



**Rav Moshe Taub of Kaliv - Eis Ratzon (5696 / 1936 - 90th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Moshe Taub was Rebbe in his ancestral city of Kalov where he served as Rebbe until his passing away in Budapest on 19th of *Iyar* 5696. He authored the *sefer Eis Ratzon*.



**Rav Pinchos Twersky of P'shemishel (5705 / 1945 - 81st Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Ezra Attiya of Syria - Rosh Yeshiva Porat Yosef - Yerushalayim (5730 / 1970 - 56th Yahrzeit)**

He was the Sephardic *gadol* of Eretz Yisrael molding a generation whose influence reverberated around the world. But Rav Ezra Attiya was even more — he was the *abba* to every impoverished *bochur* who knew the Rav would never turn anyone away. When Rav David Attiya *shlita* is asked what he most remembers about his father Rav Ezra Attiya *ztz"l* — one of the greatest Torah teachers in Eretz Yisrael in the last century — he replies without missing a beat “His learning. He didn't waste a minute. He was always learning Torah.”



**Rav Yaakov Moshe Mordechai Soloveitchik of Lucerne (5755 / 1995 - 31st Yahrzeit)**

Rav Yaakov Moshe Mordechai Soloveitchik of Lucerne (1915-1995). His father was Rav Yisrael Gershon Soloveitchik, son of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk. Soon after his *Bar Mitzvah*, he traveled to Kamenitz to study under Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz. He fled Poland to evade the draft, along with Rav Ahron Leib Shteinman, and the two stayed in Switzerland until the end of World War II. After the war, they traveled to Eretz Yisrael and studied at the *Lomza Yeshiva* in Petach Tikva, where he shared a room with Rav Chaim Kanievsky. He moved to Lugano and then Lucerne to head a *Yeshiva*.



**Rav Moshe Pinchos Kopshitz - Rosh Yeshiva Kol Yaakov & Rav of Romema (5764 / 2004 - 22nd Yahrzeit)**

**Yahrzeits for the 20th of Iyar ~ Begins Wednesday Night (05-07-2026)**



**Rav Mordechai Twersky of Chernobyl - Likutei Torah (5597 / 1837 - 189th Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Mordechai Twersky was born in Chernobyl to the famous Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl (author of the book *Ma'or Einayim* and a disciple of the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and the Maggid of Mezritch). Chasidim flocked to Rabbi Mordechai and many nearby towns appointed him as their maggid.



**Rav Yitzchok Eizik HaLevi Rabinowitz - Doros Harishonim (5674 / 1914 - 112th Yahrzeit)**



**Mekubel Yosef Waltuch - Mekubel of Yerushalayim (5743 / 1983 - 43rd Yahrzeit)**

Rav Yosef Waltuch was born in Poland on the 30th of *Tishrei* 5682/1921. When he was eight years old his father, Rav Simcha Bunim, a descendant of the Zlotchover Maggid, moved the family to Eretz Yisrael. In Yerushalayim, Rav Yosef merited a close connection with Rav Shlomo of Zhvill, also a descendant of the Zlotchov dynasty. Besides his connection with the Zhviller Rebbe, Rav Yosef was also close with Rav Mordechai Sharabi, Rav Moshe Mordechai of Lelov, and Rav Meir Abuchatzaira of Ashdod.



**Rav Meir Bransdorfer - Keneh Bosem (5769 / 2009 - 17th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Meir Bransdorfer was born on the 27th of *Elul* 5694/1934 in Antwerp. His father, Rav Shlomo, was a descendant of Rav Yissochor Shlomo Teichtel, *mechaber* of *Mishnas Sochir*. During World War II, the family went into hiding in France, and in the summer of 5705/1945 they moved to Eretz Yisrael. Rav Meir became close to Rav Aharon Roth, the *Shomrei Emunim Rebbe*. After the latter's *petira*, he grew close to his son-in-law, the *Toldos Aharon Rebbe*, who cited him as a prime example of *hasmoda* (diligence) and *Ahavas HaTorah*. Rav Meir had received *semicha* at the age of twenty-two, and at thirty became a *moreh horo'a* and the Rav of the *Toldos Aharon* community. In 5721/1961 he was appointed to oversee all inyenei *shechita* and *mikvaos*. Rav Meir was a *mohel mumcheh*; he served as *mohel* at more than three thousand *brisos*.

**Yahrzeits for the 21st of Iyar ~ Begins Thursday Night  
( 05-08-2026 )**



**Rav Yitzchok Isaac HaLevi of Premisla - Raza Meheimno (5543 / 1783 - 243rd Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Shimon Shlomo Wertheim of Savaran (5562 / 1802 - 224th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Yaakov Yosef HaKohen Rabinowitz - Emes L'Yaakov (5662 / 1902 - 124th Yahrzeit)**

# Biographies of the Tzaddikim



**Rav Aryeh Leib Klausner Rav of Cracow (Iyar 15, 5431 / 1671 - 355th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Zecharia Mendel

Nicknamed Reb Leib after his father-in-law, Rav Fischel, the rav of Cracow also known as *der hoicher* Reb Leib (the tall Reb Leib) ).

He served as rav in various *kehillos* such as Peshmishel and Vienna.

When his father-in-law passed away he was asked to succeed him as rav of Cracow where he remained until his passing.

He was a great tzaddik as well as expert in *halacha*. He authored a Yiddish sefer, *Tikkunei Teshuva Eretz Tzvi*, a compilation of several mussar works on the topic of *teshuvah*.

His son, Rav Zecharya Mendel, was the author of *Be'er Heitav* on *Shulchan Aruch*. His daughter married Rav Shaul, the son of the famed rebbe, Reb Heschel of Cracow, author of *Chunakas haTorah*.

He passed away on 15 *Iyar* 1771) תל"א) in Cracow and was laid to rest beside the rebbe, Reb Heschel.



**Rav Nesanel Weill Korban Nesanel (Iyar 15, 5529 / 1769 - 257th Yahrzeit)**



The Sokachuver Rebbe the *Avnei Nezer* writes in the name of his father in law the *Kotzker* that he greatly esteemed the *sefer Korban Nesanel* and held it in high regard. "I heard from my father in law, the rebbe of Kotzk how he praised this sefer very much and I too have studied it and found a place in my heart." (Shu't Avnei Nezer Orach Chaim Siman Daled #17).



**Rav Shalom Teomim Av Bais Din Shtefanesht, Ohr Hatorah (Iyar 15, 5588 / 1828 - 198th Yahrzeit)**



A nephew of the *Pri Megadim*, and a disciple in *Chassidus* of Rav Baruch of Mezibuz, the *Degel* and the *Kozhnitzer Maggid*. Rav Sholom Teomim was a famed *Mekubal* and *Av Bais Din* of Shtefanesht, he was the author of *Ohr HaTorah* and *Ohr HaShabbos* as well as a commentary on the *Bris Menuchah* called *Avodas Yom HaKippurim*.



**Rav Chaim Meir Yechiel Shapira Tiferes Chaim (Iyar 15, 5609 / 1849 - 177th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Avi Ezri Zelig Shapira *av beis din* Greinitz and Perel Margalis

Born around תקמ"ט

His father was son-in-law and his mother was the daughter of the *Kozhnitzer Maggid*.

He himself was the son-in-law of Rav Elazar, the son of the *Rebbe Reb Meilech* of Lizensk.

His birth was a miracle that came about through the *berachah* of the *Berditchever Rav*, the *Kedushas Levi*. (This is told in the stories below.) The *Berditcher* said the child would one day illuminate the entire world, and named him *Meir*, but as a *segulah* for a long life added *Chaim* before, and *Yechiel* after. Thus, he was named *Chaim Meir Yechiel*.

In his youth he became gravely ill and when they recited his name before the *Chozeh*,

asking him to daven for the sick child, he said: "I see that he will be the future leader of the Kozhnitzer dynasty."

He was a disciple of the Chozeh, the Apta Rav, the Ohev Yisroel, and his uncle Rav Moshe of Kozhnitz.

He was also a colleague of the Chiddushei haRim of Ger.

He began leading a community in תקפ"ה and his *beis medrash* in Mogolintza quickly became a large chassidic center in Poland.

Due to his fiery *kedusha* he was nicknamed the fiery angel, or *seraph*.

Before his passing, he told Rav Yaakov Dovid of Amshinov, "I had a vision and saw my *rebbe* and other tzaddikim. My *rebbe* told me to prepare, for up in *Gan Eden* they are honoring me to say the *derasha* for *parashas Emor*.

He passed away on 15 *Iyar* תר"ט laid to rest in Warsaw.

Me'Oros Kedushas Levi pp. 450-451



**Rav Meir Lublin Rav of Lublin, Maharam Lublin (*Iyar 16, 5476 / 1716 - 310th Yahrzeit*)**

Son of Rav Gedaliah

Born around 1558 שי"ח in Lublin to a prominent rabbinic family.

His paternal grandfather was Rav Asher of Cracow, the *mekubal*.

Rav Meir was a disciple of Rav Yitzchok Shapira, Rosh Yeshivas Cracow, who also became his father-in-law when the Maharam wed his daughter, Esther.

At a young age, he became Rosh Yeshiva in Lublin. This was during the years שמב-שמו.

He is, perhaps, more well-known for his tenure in Cracow as Rav and Rosh Yeshivah; he did, however, serve as the head of Lwow's rabbinical court for some twenty years as well. Eventually, he settled back in his home town of Lublin.

The Maharam's genius in Talmudic studies--especially in the area of the demanding discipline of Talmudic logic known as *pilpul*-- is what he is legendary for. His mastery of *pilpul* is clearly demonstrated in his works on Jewish law and responsa.

Among his more well-known students, we can count: Rav Yeshaya Horowitz, author of the *Shelah HaKadosh*; Rav Noson Shapira, author of *Megaleh Amukos*; Rav Yehoshua of Cracow, the author of *Maginei Shlomo* and his responsa, *Pnei Yehoshua*; as well as Rav Avraham, the son of the *Masas Binyamin*.

Footnote: Among his works that have come down to us are: *Meir Eynai Chachamim*, novella on the Talmud and its commentaries, Rashi and the Tosfos; *Manhir Eynai Chachamim*, one hundred and forty responsa; *Meor HaGolah*, a commentary on the Tur and Beis Yosef; *Meor HaKatan*, a commentary on *Shaarei Dura*; *Ner Mitzvah*, a commentary on the Smag; and *Torah Ohr*, a biblical commentary on the weekly parshah.

The Maharam was an outspoken critic a number of his own contemporaries and he took issue with many of the works on Jewish law of his day. Remarkably, he even contended with the *Shulchan Aruch*, the Rema's glosses, and even with the Sem"a's commentary. Among the incisive remarks found in his responsa are the fact that he finds their logic inadequate, that he finds their conclusions in Jewish law faulty, and that he was not inclined to even study them.

This attitude may have been one of the leading causes for his dismissal from his post of rabbi in Lwow according to the following legendary episode recorded in the work *Matzvos Kodesh* and cited in *Anshei Shem* and *Ir HaTzedek*:

Once, the author of *Aysan HaEzrachi*, Rabbi Avraham Shrentzel, made a wedding and married off his son. He invited many guests, among them noted personalities and rabbis including the Maharam. At the end of the affair, out of respect for the great rabbi, Rav Avraham proceeded to escort him home.

The Maharam however, distracted as he was with his own thoughts, took no notice of this escort until he reached his own doorstep. Once he was home, his wife, noting that the well-known Avraham Shrentzel was escorting her husband, turned to the Maharam and pointedly remarked: "Why don't you notice who is escorting you? Is your own honor so much greater that you ignore his? Could you not honor him by acknowledging his presence or engaging him in conversation?"

The Maharam replied, "And what about his own rebbe and teacher, the author of the Sem"ra? Why did he not join his student and escort me home? Was the Sem"ra's honor so great that he did not feel the need to honor me as well?"

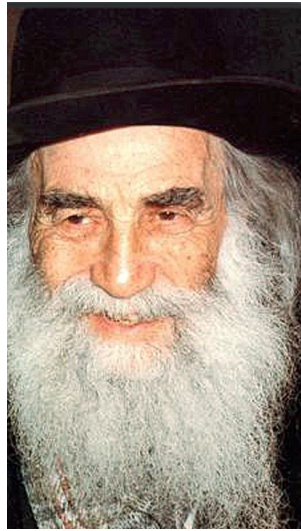
When Rav Avraham Shrentzel heard his own rebbe demeaned, he decided to stand up for the Sem"ra's honor by having the Maharam removed from office. After the wedding, he summoned the public leaders of the community as well as the heads of the Council of the Four Lands and exerted every influence against the Maharam until he succeeded in having him dismissed.

At that time, the city of Lublin sent after him and asked him to serve as their rabbi. The Maharam left Lwow for his hometown, Lublin to serve as their rabbi.

He passed away 16 Iyar 1616) ש"ע).



**Rav Yechiel Michel Feinstein (Iyar 16, 5763 / 2003 - 23rd Yahrzeit)**



Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein (1906-2003) was a great Lithuanian Rosh Yeshiva who after World War II lived in the United States and later in Eretz Yisrael.

His father was Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchok Feinstein who lived in the town of Uzda, near Minsk which was then part of the Russian empire. Yechiel Michel was orphaned at the age of seven and went to live with and learn from his grandfather, Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, the rabbi of Uzda. Rabbi Yechiel Michel developed a close relationship then with his uncle, the famed Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein was soon recognized as a child prodigy, and was sent to the nearby city of Slutsk to study under the Rabbi of Slutsk, Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer who cherished this young genius.

During the Bolshevik revolution Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer fled with the Slutsk Yeshiva from Belarus to Lithuania taking along his son in law Rabbi Aharon Kotler. For the next several years Rabbi Yechiel Michel religiously attended the lectures of Rabbi Meltzer and Rabbi Kotler. At the age of seventeen, Rabbi Yechiel Michel transferred to the Mir yeshiva in Poland, where he became a student of the great leader of Mussar Rabbi Yeruchim Levovitz. In Mir, Rabbi Yechiel Michel befriended Rabbi Dovid Povarsky, who later became the dean of Ponevez Yeshiva. At the same time the Mir Yeshiva hosted such illustrious scholars as Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz and Rabbi Aryeh Leib Malin. Despite being surrounding by such luminaries in Torah, Rabbi Yechiel Michel was nonetheless

thought of as the genius of his yeshiva. At the suggestion of his mentor Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer, Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein went to the city of Brisk in Belarus to study under the illustrious Chief Rabbi of Brisk, Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soloveichik.

Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein was fearful of being conscripted into the army. He travelled to Radin to consult with Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, the Chofetz Chaim, who was astounded at Rabbi Yechiel Michel's broad knowledge of Talmud. He stayed in Grodno for half a year, where he studied under Rabbi Shimon Shkop. He then returned to Brisk to continue his studies under Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soloveichik. He would return to the Mir Yeshiva for the summer months and for the month of Elul. When World War II broke out, Many Yeshivohs transferred to Vilna. When students of the Mir Yeshiva left for Vilna, Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein went along with them. In Vilna, Rabbi Yechiel Michel was befriended by the great leader of European Jewry, Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzensky, who heaped tremendous praise on him.

From Vilna he joined the Mir Yeshiva which travelled to Japan to wait out the war. In 1941, Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein arrived in the United States of America with Rabbi Aharon Kotler. Rabbi Kotler opened a yeshiva in Lakewood, New Jersey and at the same time Rabbi Yechiel Michel was invited to serve as Mashgiach at the Yeshiva Heichal Rabbeinu Chaim Halevi in Boston under Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveichik. But that same year, Rabbi Yechiel Michel accepted an invitation by his uncle Rabbi Moshe Feinstein to serve at his side as the head of Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim which was located in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Rabbi Yechiel Michel soon gained great fame for his deep Talmudic lectures. The Agudas Harabbanim, under the leadership of Rabbi Eliezer Silver and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein also appointed Rabbi Yechiel Michel a member of the organization, and he played a crucial role in helping save refugees from the Holocaust in Europe.

In 1946, Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein immigrated to Palestine to reunite with his mentor Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soloveichik of Brisk. He married Rabbi Soloveitchik's daughter Lifsha. Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer, his former Rosh Yeshiva at Slutsk, who had also immigrated to Palestine, officiated at the wedding. Rabbi Yechiel Michel moved to Tel Aviv in 1952 to establish a yeshiva, but frequently travelled to Bnei Brak to consult with the Chazon Ish on important issues. In 1973 Rabbi Yechiel Michel moved to Bnei Brak and opened a yeshiva where he gave more than seventeen complex lectures per week.

Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein passed away in 2003. His many wonderful lectures on the Talmud are being prepared for publication. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein is a signatory on the historic 1979 Kol Koreh (broadside) on behalf of Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis Salant, together with such Torah giants such as Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky, Rabbi Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky The "Steipler", Rabbi Shloma Zalman Auerbach, Rabbi Elazar Simcha Wasserman, Rabbi Dovid Povarsky, Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, Rabbi Shmuel Birnbaum, and many, many others. May their memory be a blessing to all.

<https://www.rabbimeirbaalhaneis.com/Rabbi%20Yechiel%20Michel%20Feinstein.asp>



**Rav Tzvi Hirsch Rosenbaum (Iyar 16, 5766 / 2006 - 20th Yahrzeit)**



He was a great great grandson of Rav Mordechai of Nadvorno. Born in Sighet in Romania's Marmorosh region, he went to study at *Yeshivas Ohr Torah* in Stanislav after his *Bar Mitzvah*. There he became close to Rav Dovid Halevi Ish Horowitz, *author of Imrei Dovid*. The day after *Purim* 1944, the Germans entered Sighet, quickly setting up a ghetto. On 3 *Iyar*, the Germans took away Reb Tzvi Hirsh's grandfather, the *Kretchinefer Rebbe*, and the entire family, sending them to Auschwitz. After six weeks there, Rav Tzvi Hirsch was transferred to a forced labor camp in Shuterberg where he worked in the kitchen. On *Tisha B'Av* 1945, he arrived in Eretz Yisrael. And opened his first *Beis Midrash* in Batei Ungarin. In 1975, he opened a *Beis Midrash* in Bnai Brak and in 1980, another one in Yerushalayim. Rav Tzvi Hirsch was a true *talmid chochom* in both *nigla* and *nistar*, and many miracles are ascribed to him. He was succeeded by his son Rav Zeidel Rosenbaum (*Kretchnif Rebbe* in New York) and his son Rav Nissan Chaim Rosenbaum (*Kretchnif*

*Sighet Rebbe* in Yerushalayim) He also left many dedicated *talmidim*.

matzav.com



**Rav Shaul Babad Teomim (*Iyar 17, 5467 / 1707 - 319th Yahrzeit*)**

Son of the Rebbe Reb Heschel of Cracow. Served as Rav in Brisk and Cracow. He was appointed the Asheknazi Rav in Amsterdam but passed away on the way there on 17 *Iyar* ו"ח and was buried in Gloga.



**Rav Yechezkel Landau Noda B'Yehuda (*Iyar 17, 5553 / 1793 - 233rd Yahrzeit*)**



Rabbi Yechezkel Landau, the Rav of Prague, was known by the name of his book *Noda B'Yehuda*. During his time he was the source par excellence to whom people turned for practical advice, and even until today his name shines like a star in the firmament of Judaism.

The son of Rabbi Yehuda Levi, Rabbi Yechezkel Landau was born on *Cheshvan* 18, 5474 (1713) in Opatow, Poland. Up to the age of 13, he studied Torah with Rabbi Yitzchak Halevi of Ludmir, as well as with the Rav of the city, Rabbi Moshe Yaakov of Krakow, who greatly liked this young boy with a sharp mind. Together they discussed difficult problems posed by the Gemara.

At the age of 14, he went to the town of Brody and there he studied with very devoted

young men. At the age of 18, he married a girl by the name Liebe, the daughter of Rabbi Yaakovka of Dubno, and went to live with his father-in-law there. Yet after a short time, he persuaded his father-in-law to come live in Brody, which was then a town filled with sages and scholars. There he was welcomed as one of the “Sages of Kloiz,” a famous Beit Midrash that included great Torah scholars.

In 5506 (1745), Rabbi Yechezkel became the Rav of Jampol. He stayed there for six years, and then he was called upon to be the Rav of Prague. There he directed a great yeshiva that attracted so many students that he was forced to study with them in the yard of the main synagogue. He gave courses in Gemara each day, and on Friday he taught the parsha of the week along with Rashi’s commentary. He loved his students like a father loves his children, and he was very happy to see them succeed. Among his students were such great rabbis as Rabbi Avraham Danzig (author of *Chayei Odom*) and others.

Rabbi Yechezkel had a fixed rule that, be it in Torah study or in his approach to Mussar, the main thing was not abstract study but action. It was not the discussion that counted, but the final conclusion. This is why he often comes back, in his responsum and lectures, to the point that the essential thing is not to deny oneself or fast, but to perform good deeds. On the other hand he wrote, “The main thing is diligence in study. One must study Torah works that have true meaning, mishnayos with Tosafos Yom Tom, the Gemara, the Poskim, the Chumash, Neviim and Kesuvim, as well as books on Mussar.”

All this, however, applied to others. With his own person, he was very strict and denied himself. His disciple Rabbi Eliezer Fleckles testifies that to his old age, he did not sleep in a bed, but rather with his head on a bed and his body on some chairs. He also wore a coarse haircloth on his body, and he taught while standing. From the 17th of *Tammuz* until the beginning of *Av*, he ate no animal products, and from *Rosh Chodesh Av* to *Tisha B’Av*, he only ate dry bread.

Like a shepherd faithful to his flock, Rabbi Yechezkel also devoted himself to the needs of the community. He enacted decrees, dealt with government ministers and emperors, and built up institutions that promoted tzeddakah and chesed. All aspects of Jewish life progressed in accord with his decisions.

Rabbi Yechezkel died on *Iyar* 17, 5553 (1793) in Prague. He ordered that neither praises

nor orations be multiplied at his funeral, that a large headstone not be placed on his grave, and that no glorious titles be inscribed on it. He left numerous works behind, including *Noda B'Yehuda*, *Hatzlacha* (Tzion L'Nefesh Chaya) on the Talmud, *Ahavat Tzion*, and *Dagul Mei'Revavah*.

[https://hevratpinto.org/tzadikim\\_eng/100\\_rabbi\\_yechezkel\\_landau.html](https://hevratpinto.org/tzadikim_eng/100_rabbi_yechezkel_landau.html)



**Rav Moshe Chaim Ephraim Ashkenazi Degel Machane Ephraim (Iyar 17, 5560 / 1800 - 226th Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Ephraim of Sudilkov [17 Iyar 1800] was the son of R. Yechiel Ashkenazi and Adel, the daughter of the *Baal Shem Tov*. He authored one of the first primers of Chasidic thought, *Degel Machaneh Ephraim* ("Banner of the Camp of Ephraim"), and thereafter was popularly known as "the *Degel*." His holy grandfather testified about him that he was a Talmudic genius. He served as the rabbi of Sudilkov for several decades, but then retired to Medzibuz, the town of the *Baal Shem Tov*, at the end of his life, where he passed away and is buried.

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

**HIS SEGULOS:**

**Segulas For Learning Sefer Degel Machane Ephraim**

The *Berditchever Rav* author of *Kedushas Levi* wrote that "I am assured that this *sefer* will enliven and inspire the hearts of our brethren *Bnei Yisroel* and set them aflame to serve Hashem with *avodas haBoreh Baruch Hu*." (*Haskamah to Degel*)

The *Chozeh of Lublin* said that "Surely the author (who was a *gaon* and G-dly man)'s merit shall aid and help all who study these words that came out from his holy mouth and when they recite them in the name of the author his lips will move in the grave and who will act as an advocate on our behalf because *tzadikim* are even greater in death than in life." (*Haskamah to Degel*)

The *Ahavas Yisroel* of Vizshnitz once told his son the *Damesek Eliezer* that the *heilige Rizhiner* testified to his followers and Chassidim that just to study the holy *Sefer Degel Macheneh Ephraim* is a *segulah* for good children - *Lernen in Degel iz mesegual tzi gitte kinder!* (*Siach Zekenim* 5 p.42)



**Rav Isomor Mishmeres Isomor (Iyar 17, 5591 / 1831 - 195th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Yisroel

A disciple of the Chozeh of Lublin, Rav Yisroel the Kozhnitzer Maggid and of the *Yid haKadosh* of Peshischa

He inherited a fortune from his father but distributed it all to *tzedaka*

He authored *Mishmeres Isomor* on the Torah

He passed away 17 Iyar תקצ"א



**Rav Mordechai Twersky (Iyar 17, 5680 / 1920 - 106th Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Mordechai ("Mottel") Twersky from Rachmistrivka (7 Iyar) moved to Yerushalayim from Europe in 1908. He was known for his sharp mind and many business men used to seek his advice. He himself was a skilled craftsman, who did complex engravings from silver and copper. His father, Rabbi Yochanan Twerski, son of the famous Rebbe Mottele of Chernobyl, was the first Rebbe of the Rachmistrivka dynasty.

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



**Rav Nissan Lipa Alpert Rabbi of Agudas Yisroel, Far Rockaway (Iyar 17, 5746 / 1986 - 40th Yahrzeit)**



Rabbi Alpert, one of the most prominent and celebrated students of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein *zt"l*, was counted among the most distinguished *rabbonim* in this country. He was the son of Rabbi Shabbtai Alpert *zt"l*, the rabbi of Plonk in Lithuania, who was the nephew of the *Chofetz Chaim zt"l*.

Upon his arrival in America, Rabbi Alpert immediately entered *Yeshivas Tiferes Yerushalayim*. He had the privilege of developing a close relationship with Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. After receiving *semichah* from Rabbi Feinstein, Rabbi Alpert accepted a position as *rebbe* at *Yeshivas Tiferes Yerushalayim* and then, in 1967, was appointed a *rosh yeshiva* at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. He was the first *rosh kollel* of the *Kollel L'Horaah Yadin-Yadin* established by RIETS to prepare *poskim*.

In his later years, Rabbi Alpert also served as the spiritual leader of Agudath Yisroel of Far Rockaway. He was previously rabbi of *Kehillas Chevras Bochorim* on the East Side for many years.

Rabbi Alpert was a renowned talmudic scholar and left behind many distinct novellae in Torah and *halachah*. He published the *Beis Habechirah* of the *Meiri* on *Bava Metziah*, along with his own scholarly notes. In addition, he compiled a commentary of the *Raavad* on *Bava Metziah*. Other published writings of his include *Limmudei Nissan* on the Torah, as well as on *Maseches Beitzah*.

Rabbi Alpert was also known as an extraordinary *darshan*—a preacher who was able to excite his audience. Only a short while before his own passing, he delivered an emotional eulogy at the funeral of his rebbe, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein *zt"l*, and his audience was able to sense that this premier *talmid* would soon, tragically, join his great teacher. Rabbi Alpert passed away at the age of 58 and was laid to rest on Har Hazeisim in Yerushalayim.

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### **Rav Shimon bar Yochai Rashbi (Iyar 18, 3881 / 121 - 1,905th Yahrzeit)**



Rav Shimon bar Yochai, one of the most important sages in Jewish history, lived over 1800 years ago. Teachings in his name abound throughout the Mishnah, Gemorah, and Midrashim, while the Zohar, the primary source text of Kabbalah, is built around Rabbi Shimon's revelations to his inner circle of disciples. During the hours before his passing, on *Lag b'Omer*, he disclosed the "most sublime" secrets of Torah, in order to ensure that the day would always be an occasion for great joy, untouched by sadness because of the *Omer* period and mourning for him. The seminal importance of the Zohar in Jewish thought and the annual pilgrimage to Meron on *Lag b'Omer* are testimonies to his success.

### **HIS SEGULOS:**

### **Shooting A Bow And Arrow On Lag Baomer**

There is a well-known *minhag Yisrael*, a custom that young students have, to shoot with a bow and arrow in displays of archery on *Lag BaOmer*.

Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dynow, *mechaber* of *Bnei Yissoschor*, says he heard that Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow explained the reason behind this *minhag* as follows:

It is known (*Yerushalmi Berochos* 9:2) that in the days of Rav Shimon bar Yochai the rainbow was not seen. On the day of his ascension we mark this occasion and commemorate the absence of the rainbow with the bow and arrow. (*Bnei Yissoschor Iyar* 3:4)



**Rav Moshe Isserles Rav of Cracow, Rema (*Iyar* 18, 5432 / 1672 - 354th *Yahrzeit*)**



Rabbi Moshe Isserles known by the abbreviation *Rema*, was born in Cracow, Poland in the year 5280 (1520), and died at the age of 52, on Lag-Baomer.

His father Yisrael was a learned as well as a wealthy man, and one of the elders of the community. When his son the *Rema* was 33 years old, he built the famous *Rema* synagogue in Cracow, which was still in existence when the Nazis occupied that ancient city.

His chief teacher was the celebrated Rabbi Shalom Schechna of Lublin, who later became also his father-in-law.

At the age of 30, the *Rema* returned from Lublin to his native city of Cracow, and founded there a great Yeshivah. Being quite wealthy, the *Rema* supported the pupils of his

Yeshivah at his own expense.

The *Rema* was regarded as one of the greatest scholars of his time, and his decision upon a point of Jewish law was unanimously adhered to in all Polish and German communities.

Rabbi Moshe Isserles is the author of many important works on Jewish law and philosophy, and he became famous as a codifier, whose decision was the last word in Jewish law. His chief work in the field of Halacha (code) was a commentary on the Turim of Rabenu Yakov ben Asher entitled "*Darkei Moshe*", and his Mappah ("Table Cloth") for the Shulchan Aruch ("Prepared Table") written by his contemporary Rabbi Yoseph Caro. This work was published in his lifetime.

Another important work is his. *Shalos Uteshuvos* (responsa), containing 132 questions addressed to him by various Rabbis on points of law, and his answers. This work was published after his death. As most of these questions were of a practical nature concerning everyday-life, many Rabbis found in this work an important and most reliable guide.

Altogether ten of his works were printed, and several others were not printed. His works give proof of the *Rema's* many-sided learning and greatness, in Talmud as well as in philosophy, astronomy and history.

The *Rema* died on the 18th of *Iyar* (Lag Baomer) in the year 5332 (1572) in Cracow. The famous Rabbi Shlomo Luria (RaSHaL) who was one of the *Rema's* noted pupils said of him: "From Moses (Maimonides) to Moses (Isserles) there was none like Moses (Isserles)," and this was also inscribed upon his tombstone.

On Lag Baomer, his *Yahrzeit*, many Jews from Cracow and the surrounding towns and villages, would visit his *kever* in pious reverence.

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/111847/jewish/Rabbi-Moshe-Isserles-The-Remo.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/111847/jewish/Rabbi-Moshe-Isserles-The-Remo.htm)



**Rav Alter Eliyahu Rubinstein (Iyar 18, 5755 / 1995 - 31st Yahrzeit)**

Harav Alter Eliyahu was born on 17 Kislev 5707/1946, in Sighet, Romania. As a young child, he moved with his father, Harav Efraim Fishel Halevi Rubinstein, *zt"l*, and his mother, a *h*, to Eretz Yisrael, where they settled in Beit Gamliel.

Before his *bar mitzvah* he was a *talmid* of the *Kretchenifer Rebbe*, *zy" a*, in Rechovot, later continuing his studies in Kiryat Sanz, Netanya, under the *Klausenburger Rebbe*, *zy" a*, who recognized his talents and taught him personally. Indeed, he was considered a *talmid muvhak* of the *Rebbe*.

Rav Rubinstein married the daughter of Harav Yeshoshua Deutsch, *zt"l*, Rav of the Katamon section of Yerushalayim. The *Klausenburger Rebbe* was the *shadchan*. After his wedding, Rav Rubinstein, together with a select group of *yungeleit*, learned daily *horaah shiurim* with the *Rebbe*, who granted him *semichah*.

Rav Rubinstein was later appointed by the *Klausenburger Rebbe* to head the *Sanzer Kollel* in Yerushalayim, and afterwards installed as Rav of the *Heichal Tzvi beis medrash* of Sanz-Klausenburg in Batei Varsha in Yerushalayim, a post he filled from 5730/1970 until 5753/1993. During this period Harav Rubinstein published his *sefer Migdanos Eliyahu*.

The Rav left many manuscripts of his *chiddushim*, including hundreds of halachic responsa.

In 5753/1993 he was appointed Rav of the *Shomrei Hachomos kehillah* in Ramat Shlomo, Yerushalayim, a position he filled until less than a year before his *petirah*, when he left to lead the Antwerp community.

In *Sivan* of 5764/2004, he was installed as Rav of Antwerp, succeeding Harav Chaim Kreiswirth, *zt"l*. During the short period he served that *kehillah*, he won their hearts. He took part in their joys and sorrows, his door was open to all who sought advice, and he expended great effort to attend community functions.

Rav Rubinstein was also known for steering clear of *machlokes* and preventing strife among *Yidden*.

On *Shabbos Hagadol* he addressed the *kehillah* in Antwerp regarding the difficulties local *Yidden* were having with *parnassah*, and exhorted the wealthy members of the community to help their less fortunate brethren.

During his last week, he gave a *shiur* on *Sefiras Ha'omer* to Antwerp *yeshivah bachurim* before their departure to Eretz Yisrael for the summer *zman*.

Significantly, during his final days, Rav Rubinstein mentioned a number of times that he wanted to be in Eretz Yisrael on *Lag BaOmer*. At 2 a.m., the night of *Lag BaOmer*, the Rav's *neshamah* returned to Hashem.

He was buried on Har Hamenuchos.

*Zechuso yagen aleinu.*

hamodia.com



**Rav Meir ben Boruch Maharam of Rottenberg (*Iyar 19, 5053 / 1293 - 733rd Yahrzeit*)**



Rav Meir Ben Baruch, popularly known by the abbreviation 'MaHaRaM' (Moreinu Horav Reb Meir) of Rothenburg, Talmudist and Paytan (religious poet), was born in Worms, Germany, nearly eight centuries ago, around the year 1220.

In his youth he studied at Wurtzburg and at Mainz in the Yeshivas of the leading Talmudists of those days. Later he went to France to study in the well known French Yeshivas, particularly in the Yeshivah of the great Rabbi Yechiel ben Yosef of Paris. Rabbi

Yechiel was known as a saintly Rabbi and outstanding Talmudist, and it was he who defended the Talmud in the reign of Louis IX. However, the Talmud was subsequently condemned by the enemies of Israel to be publicly burnt on Friday, June 17, 1244, (Erev Shabbos Chukas, 5004), in Paris. Rabbi Meir was an eyewitness to this public burning of twenty-four wagonloads of Talmudic manuscripts, and he bewailed this tragedy in his celebrated "*Kina*" *Shaali serufah* which we say on Tisha b'Av.

The following year Rabbi Meir, already a famous Talmudist, returned to Germany, where he became the rabbi of several large communities successively. Finally he settled in Rothenburg, where he maintained, at his own cost, a famous Yeshivah. Among his disciples were many scholars who later became leading Talmudists and codifiers, notably Rabenu Asher ben Yechiel ("ROSH") and Rabbi Mordecai ben Hillel Ashkenazi.

Rabbi Meir, became universally acknowledged as the leading authority on Talmud and Jewish law, and many communities in France, Italy and Germany frequently turned to him for instruction and guidance in all religious matters and on various points of law. Affectionate and rare titles were bestowed upon him in their communications, such as 'Father of Rabbis', 'Light of the Exile', etc. Rabbi Meir humbly gave his opinion and advice to all enquiries, and his responsa, of which about 1,500 have been preserved, and commentaries are of great importance not merely to advanced students of the Talmud, but also to the students of Jewish life and customs of those days.

Rabbi Meir wrote no large single work, but many notes, commentaries and expositions. His writings include: *Piske Eruvin* on the laws of the Eruv; *Halachos Pesukos*--a collection of decisions on controversial points of Jewish law; *Hilchos Berachos*--on the blessings; *Hilchos Aveilus* on the laws of mourning; *Hilchos Shechitah* on the ritual slaughtering of animals for Kosher meat, etc.

Those days were full of persecution for the Jews of Germany, and they lived in constant fear for their property and life. In the year 1286, Rabbi Meir took his entire family and set out for Eretz Yisrael, together with a group of well-to-do friends. In the Eretz Yisroel they hoped to continue their work in behalf of their persecuted brethren. However, while passing through Lombardy, Rabbi Meir was recognized by an apostate Jew who was accompanying the archbishop of Mainz. The archbishop had Rabbi Meir arrested and taken back to Germany. There by order of King Rudolph, Rabbi Meir was imprisoned in

the fortress of Ensisheim and held for ransom. The king knew that the Jews would give away their last mark to redeem their beloved Rabbi, and indeed the sum of 20,000 marks was raised for Rabbi Meir's freedom. Rabbi Meir, however, forbade his friends and followers to pay any ransom for him. In his selflessness he knew that once ransom were paid for him, every noted Rabbi in Germany would be arrested and held for ransom by the greedy and cruel German rulers of those days. Thus Rabbi Meir preferred to remain in prison, and even die there, in order to save many others from a similar fate.

For seven years Rabbi Meir remained a prisoner in that fortress, until his passing in 1293. During this time his disciples were permitted to meet with him, and he was even able to compose several of his works within the prison walls. After he died, his body was not surrendered until 14 years later, when a heavy ransom was paid by a generous Jew, Alexander Suskind Wimpfen of Frankfort. In return Alexander Suskind requested only that after his own death his body should be laid to rest by the side of the saintly Rabbi Meir. His wish was carried out when he died a year later, and in the ancient Jewish cemetery of Worms two tombstones stood erected side by side, one for the great and saintly Rabbi Meir ben Baruch, and the other for Alexander Suskind Wimpfen of Frankfort.

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/111856/jewish/Maharam-of-Rothenburg.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/111856/jewish/Maharam-of-Rothenburg.htm)



**Rav Menachem Mendel Turim Rymanover Rebbe, Menahem Mendel of Pristik, Pristiker, Menachem Tzion (Iyar 19, 5575 / 1815 - 211th Yahrzeit)**



In Ateres Menachem, we learn that Rav Menachem Mendel was born around תק"ה in Neustadt, Poland and studied in the illustrious yeshivah of the Rebbe Reb Shmelka of Nikolsberg in Moravia. There, he became a member of the Chassidic movement and

eventually a talmid muvhak of the rebbe, Reb Melech of Lizensk in Galicia. Eventually, Rav Mendel married and lived with his in-laws in Pristik. His father-in-law was a misnaged-- opposed to Chassidus-- and threw his son-in-law and daughter out when he found out that they had joined the "cult". They suffered poverty and privation for years, becoming so poor and destitute that they lacked food, wood, and other basic needs.

Eventually, after the Rebbe Elimelech's passing, news of Rav Mendele's sanctity and erudition spread and he began to lead a flock of followers and chassidim in Rymanow. Tzaddikim said that for some twenty-two years he delivered a weekly sermon about *Parshas HaMon* which drew down *parnassah* (sustenance) for all *Klal Yisroel*. He was a staunch opponent of new fashions and modes of dress and fought against any immodesty he perceived in the dress of *Bnos Yisroel*. His talmid and disciple, Rav Yechezkel Pannet of Karlsberg, wrote a famed letter describing Rav Mendele's *kedushah* and defending him from his detractors.

His biographical stories were published as *Ateres Menachem*, and his *divrei Torah* are found in several collections: *Divrei Menachem*, *Menachem Tzion*, and others.

He passed away on 19 *Iyar* ה'תקע"ח and was succeeded by his holy *gabbai*, Rav Tzvi Hirsch MeShares haKohen of Rymanow.

## **HIS SEGULOS:**

### **Parnassa - Parshas Hamon**

There is a well-known *segula* to study *Parshas HaMon shnayim mikra ve'echad Targum* from the *Rymanower*.

### **Ner Neshama Candles**

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow said if a person makes a *neder* (vow) to donate candles for the sake of a certain soul, known as "*neiros neshama*," that neshama will venture even to the lowest depths of *sheol* to do a favor for the donor. Even if the donor

had come to fall--sinking to the deepest depth-- that *neshama* would descend to take him out of there, thus saving him.

(Ateres Menachem p. 235)

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow promised that during his lifetime he would shake and move all the worlds for anyone who lights a candle for the merit of his soul and even after his death, he would repay the favor for that person. (Menachem Tzion in the name of Rav Yisroel Mordechai Teitelbaum, *Hadras Kodesh*, in the name of the Rebbe of Nasuad)

### **Shooting A Bow And Arrow On Lag Baomer**

There is a well-known *minhag Yisrael*, a custom that young students have, to shoot with a bow and arrow in displays of archery on *Lag BaOmer*.

Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dynow, *mechaber* of *Bnei Yissoschor*, says he heard that Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow explained the reason behind this *minhag* as follows:

It is known (*Yerushalmi Berochos* 9:2) that in the days of Rav Shimon bar Yochai the rainbow was not seen. On the day of his ascension we mark this occasion and commemorate the absence of the rainbow with the bow and arrow. (*Bnei Yissoschor Iyar* 3:4)

### **Gazing Upon A Tzadik**

Rav Moshe Teitelbaum of Uhjel taught in the name of Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow that whoever merits true knowledge - *daas sheleima* - when such a person sees a *Tzaddik* and gazes upon him, he can learn true *Torah* from every limb as he himself [Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow] testified that he learned *Torah* from his own *Rebbe*, Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, from all of his limbs *mamash*. (*Tefilla leMoshe, Noach* 39b)

## **Noam Elimelech On Erev Shabbos Kodesh, After Immersing In The Mikvah**

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow said, "On *Erev Shabbos Kodesh*, after immersing in the *mikveh* is when I can understand a *shtickel* of *Noam Elimelech*." (*Ohel Elimelech* 192)

## **This Week's Segula In Honor Of Rav Menachem Mendel Of Rimanov, Yahrzeit - 19Th Of Iyar**

There is a well-known *segula* to light a candle for the elevation of Rav Mendele's soul known as *le'ilui nishmas*, on the day of his *Yahrzeit*. In the London edition of *Menachem Tzion*, the publisher notes: I received a well-known tradition from Rav Yisrael Mordechai Teitelbaum - who in turn received this tradition from many *Tzaddikim* - that Rav Mendel Rimanover himself said that when he was still alive he had the power to shake all the supernal worlds up and that after his passing he would consider it a tremendous favor and in turn do a favor for one who lights a candle for the merit and in honor of his *neshoma*.

So light a candle and say, "*Le'ilui nishmas HaRav HaTzaddik Menachem Mendel ben Rav Yosef zy"a*." Then *daven* to Hashem in his merit.

Rav Doniel Frish, *mechaber* of the *Mosok MiDevash* on the Zohar would say that he knows many people who merited salvations by doing this *segula*.

The holy Rav Mendel of Rimanov said that if a person makes a *neder* (vow) to donate candles and lights them on behalf of a departed soul, then that soul can journey even down into the deepest pits and the lowest depths of the *sheol tachtis* to do a favor for the donor and they can even rescue him from the lowest place in *sheol tachtis* as well, heaven forbid. (*Ateres Menachem* 235)

## **Reciting The Pesukim Of The Mishkan Befor Davening**

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow taught that it is a *segula* to recite the *pesukim* of the *mishkan* before *davening*. He learned this concept from *parshas VaYakhel* (35:4) where it says *asher tziva Hashem* - Hashem commanded us to do this, to erect a *mishkan* where

we could serve Him. It is therefore a *segula* before *davening* to recite the *pesukim* of the *mishkan*, for then it is considered as if we built a *mishkan*, entered it and davened to Hashem from within. (Menachem Tzion, Kol Yaakov Melo HaRo'im, Vayikra, Behaalos'cha)

### 'Vehayisa Ach Sameiach'

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow taught the following:

"And you were happy," - והיית אך שמח (Devarim 16:15) The final letters-- ס"ת חת"ך --of the words of this *pasuk* spell a Divine Holy Name of the angel of livelihood, of *parnassah*. This is a hint that simchah, joy, is a *segulah* for *parnassah*.

(Toldos Noach Likkutim 35:1 cited by Yalkut Menachem p. 232)



### **Rav Moshe Taub Eis Ratzon (Iyar 19, 5696 / 1936 - 90th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Moshe Taub was Rebbe in his ancestral city of Kalov where he served as Rebbe until his passing away in Budapest on 19th of *Iyar* 5696. He authored the *sefer Eis Ratzon*. His son Rav Menachem Shlomo Taub of Kalov Williamsburg succeeded him and transplanted the chassidus to New York in the US after World War II. His grandson and namesake Rav Moshe Taub Shlita is the current *Kalover Rebbe* of Williamsburg NY.



### **Rav Ezra Attiya Rosh Yeshiva Porat Yosef - Yerushalayim (Iyar 19, 5730 / 1970 - 56th Yahrzeit)**



He was the *Sephardic gadol* of Eretz Yisrael molding a generation whose influence reverberated around the world. But Rav Ezra Attiya was even more — he was the *abba* to every impoverished *bochur* who knew the Rav would never turn anyone away. More than four decades after Rav Ezra's passing his son Rav David Attiya one of Yerushalayim's elder *dayanim* reveals his father's secret formula for success.

When Rav David Attiya shlita is asked what he most remembers about his father Rav Ezra Attiya *ztz"l* — one of the greatest Torah teachers in Eretz Yisrael in the last century — he replies without missing a beat “His learning. He didn't waste a minute. He was always learning Torah.”

For Rav David Attiya 87 a prominent *dayan* and former member of the Chief Rabbinical Court in Jerusalem who spends his own days poring over *seforim* that was Rav Ezra's legacy to his son. But for the thousands of students and disciples he nurtured during the 45 years he served as *rosh yeshivah* of *Yeshivat Porat Yosef* until his passing on 19 *Iyar* 5730 (1970) he was their leader as well as their master educator and the one person who perhaps more than anyone raised up the status of Sephardic *Torah* scholarship in the last century. Among Rav Attiya's most famous students were Rav Ovadiah Yosef, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu, Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul, Rav Yehuda Tzadka and Rav Yitzchak Kaduri.

Rav David Attiya is a venerable figure in his own right as one of Jerusalem's elder *dayanim*. And like his father his short stature is overpowered by his towering scholarship nobility and gentility — it's easy to match him with the descriptions that his father's students shared of Rav Ezra. For Rav Ezra was not only a brilliant *talmid chacham* but he had a mission: He taught his *talmidim* how to convey the study of *Gemara* for generations to come.

“The Torah was in his pocket” his son remembers of the sage who passed away 46 years ago this week and who had honed a certain logical thought process in *Gemara* study that attracted both Sephardic and Ashkenazic scholars alike. “One of the Ashkenazic sages of Jerusalem wanted to learn with him a complex *sugya* that left many questions. My father as was his *derech* first learned with him again the basic *sugya* itself — *Gemara Rashi Tosafos* — and then mentioned the words of the *Maharsha* which he considered a fundamental part of understanding every *sugya*. I was a boy then and I remember seeing

how every difficulty and obstacle seemed to fall away as they learned it in its simple explanation.”

Rav David says this was his father’s trademark style in learning and he taught an entire generation of scholars how to unravel complicated passages.

“He was famous for getting his students used to learning the *pshat* and then to be very careful in the study of *Rashi* and *Tosafos*” Rav David explains. “He would often tell me ‘Lots of questions are saved if a person learns the simple meaning patiently and in depth and takes care not only to read every word carefully but also every letter.’ ”

His clarity of thought didn’t go unnoticed by other *gedolim* of the time. Once after the *Chazon Ish* paid Rav Ezra a visit he exclaimed “The *Rosh Yeshivah* possesses the power of reasoning like one of the *Rishonim*.”

mishpacha.com



**Rav Yaakov Moshe Mordechai Soloveitchik (Iyar 19, 5755 / 1995 - 31st Yahrzeit)**

Rav Yaakov Moshe Mordechai Soloveitchik of Lucerne (1915-1995). His father was Rav Yisrael Gershon Soloveitchik, son of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk. Soon after his *Bar Mitzvah*, he traveled to Kamenitz to study under Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz. He fled Poland to evade the draft, along with Rav Ahron Leib Shteinman, and the two stayed in Switzerland until the end of World War II. After the war, they traveled to Eretz Yisrael and studied at the *Lomza Yeshiva* in Petach Tikva, where he shared a room with Rav Chaim Kanievsky. He moved to Lugano and then Lucerne to head a Yeshiva and married Rivka Ruchama, daughter of Rav Shmuel Zanvil Neuman.



**Rav Mordechai Twersky Likutei Torah (Iyar 20, 5597 / 1837 - 189th Yahrzeit)**

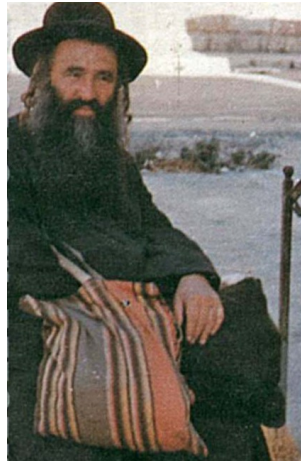
Rabbi Mordechai Twersky was born in Chernobyl to the famous Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl (author of the book *Ma’or Einayim* and a disciple of the *Ba’al Shem Tov* and

the Maggid of Mezritch). When he was required to choose a surname, Rabbi Mordechai chose the name Twersky, for the city of Teveria where Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk and his disciples had settled. Chasidim flocked to Rabbi Mordechai and many nearby towns appointed him as their maggid. He conducted his court with wealth, which had not been his father's custom. Nonetheless, he ate very little and felt practically no enjoyment from material pleasures. Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl passed away in Kiev on the 20th of *Iyar* 5597 (1837).

<https://www.inner.org/spiritual-masters/rabbi-mordechai-of-chernobyl-out-of-the-closet>



**Mekubel Yosef Waltuch Mekubel of Yerushalayim (*Iyar* 20, 5743 / 1983 - 43rd *Yahrzeit*)**



Rav Yosef Waltuch was born in Poland on the 30<sup>th</sup> of *Tishrei* 5682/1921. When he was eight years old his father, Rav Simcha Bunim, a descendant of the Zlotchover *Maggid*, moved the family to Eretz Yisrael.

At a very young age he lost his mother, but Rav Yosef found comfort in learning Torah. A *masmid*, he was rarely seen without a *sefer* in his hand.

In Yerushalayim, Rav Yosef merited a close connection with Rav Shlomo of Zhvill, also a descendant of the Zlotchov dynasty. He was also Rav Yosef's *shadchan*. All Rav Yosef's ways were based upon Rav Shlomke's directives.

Rav Yosef lived in the Old City of Yerushalayim, and learned *Kabbola* on a daily basis in

the nearby *Yeshiva Bais Kel*.

Besides his connection with the Zhviller *Rebbe*, Rav Yosef was also close with Rav Mordechai Sharabi, Rav Moshe Mordechai of Lelov, and Rav Meir Abuchatzaira of Ashdod.

Rav Yosef's wife was ill all her life, spending much of her time in the hospital, but he never complained, accepting this as a Heavenly decree.

Rav Yosef always carried two heavy bags full of *seforim*, mainly *Kabbola*. One reason for this was that he did not want to lower his hands (the *Gemora* says that Rav Yehuda *HaNosi* was called *Rabbeinu HaKodosh* because he did not lower his hands). Another reason was that he did not want to shake hands with everybody he met; this way his hands were always full.

Rav Yosef was outstanding in all facets of the Torah.

Like many other *Tzaddikim nistorim*, Rav Yosef chose belittling work; he was a street sweeper in Tel Aviv. He was known as "the holy street sweeper".

Although he lived in Tel Aviv, Rav Yosef *davened* at the *Kosel* at least once a week.

During his visits to Yerushalayim, Rav Yosef met with many of the city's famed *Mekubolim*.

Fluent in many of the *Arizal's* works, Rav Yosef delivered *shiurim* across *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Meir Abuchatzaira from Ashdod, son of the *Baba Sali*, was a close friend. Rav Yosef often went to Ashdod to visit Rav Meir and discuss *Kabbola*.

When Rav Meir was *niftar* on the 17<sup>th</sup> of *Nissan* 5743/1983, Rav Yosef said that he could not continue in this world without him. Just over a month later, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of *Iyar* 5743/1983, Rav Yosef was *niftar*. He was sixty-two.

He was buried on *Har HaZeisim* in Yerushalayim.

*Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-20-iyarmay-20/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-20-iyarmay-20/)



**Rav Meir Bransdorfer Keneh Bosem (Iyar 20, 5769 / 2009 - 17th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Meir Bransdorfer was born on the 27<sup>th</sup> of *Elul* 5694/1934 in Antwerp. His father, Rav Shlomo, was a descendant of Rav Yissochor Shlomo Teichtel, *mechaber* of *Mishnas Sochir*. Rav Shlomo was married in Hungary and moved to Antwerp following his *chasuna*, where Rav Meir was born.

During World War II, the family went into hiding in France, and in the summer of 5705/1945 they moved to Eretz Yisrael.

Rav Meir became close to Rav Aharon Roth, the *Shomrei Emunim Rebbe*. After the latter's *petira*, he grew close to his son-in-law, the *Toldos Aharon Rebbe*, who cited him as a prime example of *hasmoda* (diligence) and *Ahavas HaTorah*. The *Toldos Aharon Rebbe* stood up for him despite Rav Meir's much younger age.

Rav Meir married the daughter of Rav Shimon Dov Krischevsky, who had served as secretary of the Diskin Orphanage Home, as well as secretary to Dr. Moshe Wallach, head of Shaare Zedek Hospital.

Rav Meir had received *semicha* at the age of twenty-two, and at thirty became a *moreh horo'a* and the Rav of the *Toldos Aharon* community. The *Minchas Yitzchok*, Rav Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss, entrusted him with all matters of *shechita*; he said that whatever Rav Meir *paskened* was accepted in *Shomayim*.

Rav Meir was close to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, who sent him *shailos* in *halocha*. Indeed, he was greatly esteemed by *Gedolei Yisrael* everywhere.

In 5721/1961 he was appointed to oversee all *inyenei shechita* and *mikvaos*.

With time, Rav Meir became a leading *posek* and received *shailos* from all over the world.

He was called upon twenty-four hours a day. Everyone knew that he was always available, as he was up most of the night, learning.

It was known that Rav Meir learned *Torah mitoch ha'dchak* (in poverty). He lived in a one-room apartment in Botei Ungarin.

Together with his friend, Rav Moshe Halberstam, Rav Meir became a *Chaver HaBadatz* in Elul 5756/1996, when the *Gaavad*, Rav Moshe Arye Freund, was *niftar*.

Rav Meir was a *mohel mumcheh*; he served as *mohel* at more than three thousand *brisos*.

Rav Meir was *niftar* on the 20<sup>th</sup> of *Iyar* 5769/2009 at the age of seventy-five. He was buried on *Har HaZeisim*, next to his father and his *Rebbes*, leaving behind a family of *Marbitzei Torah* and *Talmidei Chachomim*.

Many of his *teshuvos* were published in the four-volume *She'eilos U'teshuvos Keneh Bosem*.

*Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.*

# Gedolim Be'Masayhem



Stories & Anecdotes

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**Rav Chaim Meir Yechiel Shapira Tiferes Chaim (Iyar 15)**

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## THE BERDITCHEVER'S BERACHAH FOR THE SERAPH'S BIRTH

One Purim, the holy rav of Berditchev was visiting the Koznitzer Maggid. When the Maggid sent the customary gift of *mishlo'ach manos* to the Berditchever, he delivered it through his son-in-law, the rav of Grenitz, who acted as his agent. "The custom," the Maggid explained, "is that we pay the emissary a fee called *sechar shelichus*. Perhaps the Berditchever will bless you with a son as your reward." (The rav of Grenitz didn't yet have any children.)

The Maggid's son-in-law fulfilled his duty and delivered the *mishlo'ach manos* to the Berditchever, who upon receiving the gift began running back and forth across the room, unable to contain his excitement. When the Berditchever calmed down, he noticed that the rav of Grenitz was still waiting in the room. He walked over to him and said, "You wish to receive your fee of *sechar shelichus*, is that right? I promise to pay you when I take my leave of your father-in-law."

Later, when Rav Levi Yitzchak came to bid farewell to the Koznitzer Maggid, he said, "Please grant me a parting gift — one of your silver vessels."

"You may choose any of the silver vessels and take it for your own," said the Maggid. The Berditchever pointed to an exquisite silver Chanukah menorah, which he knew the Maggid cherished and had required considerable means to acquire. Nonetheless, the Maggid readily agreed, and the Berditchever picked up the menorah as his own.

To everyone's astonishment, he immediately handed over the menorah to the rav of Grenitz and said, "You will have a son, and the Maggid will light this menorah on Chanukah until your son reaches the age of bar mitzvah. When he turns thirteen, you will pass this menorah on to your son to light and it will belong to him."

So it was. The rav of Grenitz had a son who grew up to become Rav Chaim Meir Yechiel, the fiery angel of Mogalintza.

Another version of this story passed down by tradition, was related by the Tzanz-Klausenberger Rebbe:

"I was once visiting my brother-in-law (Rav Yaakov Yitzchak Shapira, a son-in-law of the

Rudniker and descendant of the holy Saraf of Mogalintza), and I noticed that he owned a red silk dress with silver buttons. I thought this was bizarre and asked him about it. He told me that the Koznitzer Maggid's daughter was married to Rav Avi Ezra Zelig of Grenitz for many years and had not borne any children who survived long. Every time they had a child it would die soon after the birth.

"Once, the Berditchiver was in Koznitz and the Koznitzer Maggid mentioned that his daughter was visiting. He described how unfortunately she had no children because none of the babies had survived. The Kedushas Levi remarked, 'Well, of course! They are drawing down such lofty souls from the supernal worlds that they simply cannot endure in this world.'

He turned to the Koznitzer's daughter and said to her, 'If you wish your children to survive, you should dress in a red dress with twelve silver buttons. Then perhaps the child you bear will live.'

"They made her such a dress, and lo and behold she had a child and he survived. This child was none other than the Seraph of Mogalintza, a holy rebbe and a tzaddik."

"My mother was a great tzaddeikes," the Mogalintza Rebbe used to say in his humility, "who brought down lofty souls into this world that were so special they could not survive here. When they sewed her a gaudy dress that was unbecoming her modesty and refined spirit, she gave birth to a child just as lowly and coarse!"

(Pe'er Yisrael 15, p. 11; Shefa Chaim, Pinchas, vol. 19, p. 198)

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### **Rav Yechezkel Landau Noda B'Yehuda (Iyar 17)**

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#### **'HE WHO INCREASES CHARITY INCREASES PEACE'**

"He who increases charity increases peace (Avos 2:8).

Rav Ovadia Yosef used to illustrate our *Mishna* using the following story:

A winter storm raged outside one night as Rav Yechezkel Landau of Prague, author of the *Noda B'Yehuda*, sat and studied in his room when he was startled by the sounds of loud

weeping. He hurried outside to see what had happened and found a small non-Jewish boy sitting on a rock shivering and crying in the rain. "What is the matter?" asked the rav. The boy explained, "I am orphaned from my mother-- and my father, the baker, remarried a cruel woman. My stepmother forces me to sell bread all day and collect the money. I hand over the profits each night before I am allowed home to eat, drink, and rest. I sold all my bread and on the way home I realized that somehow I lost all the money! What shall I do?" the boy ended miserably, "If I go home, she will beat me mercilessly. So I stayed here, but it is cold and I am hungry."

The Rav asked how much money he had lost and gave him the amount as a gift including a few coins to buy something to satiate his hunger.

About thirty years later, on *Shevi'i Shel Pesach*, there was a knock on Rav Landau's door. He opened the door and a gentile man stood there with something on his mind. "I would like to disclose a secret to you which relates to a matter of life and death" he began. I remember your kindness from some many years before and will never forget how you saved me from my wicked stepmother's wrath, fed me, and cared for me. I am here to repay you by saving your life and the lives of all of the Jews of Prague! There is a wicked priest who called all us bakers to a meeting and told us of a plot he devised. He urged us all to poison the loaves we bake after the holiday when the Jews come and purchase our bread. He promised us eternal reward and that all our sins would be absolved. Rabbi, I am here to warn you and save you and innocent Jews of Prague from his nefarious scheme!"

The *Noda B'Yehuda* thanked him and hatched a plan of his own. He proclaimed a warning in all the *shuls* of Prague: The Rav has forbidden any Jew in the city from buying the bread from the gentile bakers. All the Jews of Prague heeded the ruling and were saved! (*Anaf Etz Avos* p. 108)

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### **Rav Moshe Chaim Ephraim Ashkenazi Degel Machane Ephraim (Iyar 17)**

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#### **STUDY OF THE EVOLUTION OF A CHASSIDIC TALE**

The story as I always knew it, and as I have it printed in my translation of *Noam Elimelech* - *MiPeninei Noam Elimelech*, page 75:

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov once related to Rav Moshe Chaim Efraim of Sudilkov, the *mechaber* of *Degel Machaneh Efraim* and grandson of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*:

“My holy master and teacher, Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk, used to meditate on the awe and fear of Hashem every day. Each day when he would do this, his whole body would shake and tremble, and fear and trepidation would seize him. Everyone present could see him trembling violently from the sheer awe of Hashem and the majesty of Hashem. All his tendons and ligaments could be seen, thick and taut as ropes; his face would change colors and a certain vein below his ear would begin bulging.

“I received a tradition from my Rebbe that there is a vein located below the ear that only trembles from fear of the day of death. With my Rebbe, this vein trembled daily from his great fear of Hashem.”

(Source: *Eser Tzachtzachos 2*; *Seder Doros HeChodosh*, part 4).

See also *Ohel Elimelech #2* same as above and in *Ateres Menachem #8* it ends by saying that the *Degel* praised him, saying, “This Chassid knows how to look well.”

#### **ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS**

Once, Rav Mendele of Rimanov was visiting the *Degel Machaneh Efraim* of Sudilkov, who asked him who his Rebbe was. Rav Mendele answered him that his Rebbe was Rebbe Reb Elimelech. And he [the *Degel*] asked him [Rav Mendele] to relate a story about him [Rebbe Reb Elimelech]. And he told, “It is known that every person has a certain vein beneath his ear, which does not shake or tremble during his entire life except at the moment of death, Heaven save us! This very vein would tremble on a daily basis with my Rebbe, Rebbe Reb Elimelech, due to the awe and fear of Hashem.” To which the *Degel* replied, “From such a Chassid I derive satisfaction and pleasure, since he knows what to tell.”

(Introduction to *Imrei Yosef Spinka, Shemos*).

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In the *seforim Yehi Ohr 130* and *Gedulas Yehoshua*, the version of the story is similar,

except that Rav Mendele meets and tells it to Rav Boruch of Mezhibuzh (the *Degel's* brother), who answers, "A fine Rebbe and a fine *talmid*."

The *mechaber* of *Kedushas Noam Elimelech*, in his footnotes to page 111, attempts to resolve this contradiction by saying that perhaps Rav Mendele visited both brothers and told them the same story when queried regarding his Rebbe. While this is indeed possible, in all likelihood this is an example of a story that, in its being retold has much garbled factual information. For example, the attribution of the tale to Rav Mendel of Rimanov and Rav Elimelech of Lizensk is consistent in both traditions, whereas Rav Boruch and his holy brother, the *Degel*, are the ones who are interchanged.

This happens often when two *Tzaddikim* are either brothers or similarly disposed. For example, we find several stories about Rebbe Reb Elimelech and his brother, Rebbe Reb Zusha of Hanipoli, where they are exchanged, and between Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev and Rav Moshe Leib Sassover, who, although not related by blood, were known to be almost inseparable in their quest to redeem Jewish captives and have therefore many tales recording their friendship and interactions.

### **THE REAL STORY?**

"The holy Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizensk, *mechaber* of the *Noam Elimelech* told his *talmidim* when they asked him who they should accept as Rebbe [after his passing]:

He told them to go to Rav Moshe Chaim Efraim, the *Ba'al Shem Tov's* grandson, *mechaber* of the *Degel Machaneh Efraim*. His *talmid*, Rav Mendele Pristiker (as the *Rimanover* was known before he was in Rimanov), traveled to Sudilkov on Friday *Erev Shabbos Kodesh*. He went straight to the Rav's home and asked the attendant to announce his arrival to get permission to say *Sholom Aleichem*, and the *Sudilkover Rav* asked him to enter.

The holy *Degel* could not stand the Rebbes who came from Poland (Galicia), since people said that they fasted often and that they did not really understand how to serve Hashem out of love and awe. He always said, "Whoever fasts and afflicts his body is diminishing his soul, since man was created in the *Tzelem Elokim* - in the image of Hashem, with a duality of both body and soul. And the true path, serving Hashem with both, was foreign to them [the Polish Rebbes]."

And he considered it [fasting] a grave sin, as our Sages said: "One who is fasting is called a sinner, since the primary service is to complete one's body's physical limbs and the soul's spiritual limbs so that they should correspond in sanctity, solely devoted to serving Hashem. This is known from the ways of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*.

When Rav Mendele of Pristik entered, he was not warmly greeted and he was therefore downcast. When the *Degel* saw his despondence, he drew him close and said, "My brother, till now, were you a talmid of a different *Tzaddik*, a great Rav who served Hashem properly?"

He answered, "I have been faithfully attending to and serving my master and teacher, the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk, may his memory be a blessing."

When the *Sudilkover Rav* heard the name of the holy Rebbe Reb Elimelech, he grew very excited and his soul was aflame. The *Degel* said to Rav Mendele, "What amazing thing can you tell me that you saw there?"

The *Degel* thought to himself, "Now I will truly discern who Rav Mendele is, since every person's inner being can be recognized by what they praise and hold dear. Now he would see and hear what Rav Mendele would tell; would it be miracles and wonders, some salvation that his Rebbe did or similar things? Or would it be true awe of Heaven and *dveikus*, cleaving in rapture to Hashem?"

The *Tzaddik* from Pristik (Rav Mendele) said, "On a daily basis I saw that when my master meditated on the fear and awe of Hashem, all his bones would tremble and shake. A great fear and trepidation would seize him, and all present could clearly see his entire form violently trembling from the fear and awe of Hashem's majesty and greatness!

"All his veins and sinews became thick like pipes and his face changed [colors?]. Beneath his ear there is one sinew, which I received from my master's tradition that this sinew only fears the day of death, and this vein too - I saw it shake with the fear and awe of Hashem!"

The Rav of Sudilkov said, "Your grasp is so great! And if the spiritual level of the Chassidim of Poland is so, I did not realize this was true." Afterward he drew Rav Mendele

even closer.

### **EDITOR'S COMMENTS**

This story's end matches those we have traditionally from other great *Rabbonim*. However, it fills in a few missing pieces that make this story sound more complete and believable. First, for the first time we have a reason given for why Rav Mendele - a known *talmid* of Rebbe Reb Melech - was traveling to the *Degel* at all - his Rebbe had passed away and beforehand had told him to go there.

Second, we are told here for the first time why the *Degel* would have asked Rav Mendele about Rebbe Reb Melech and why Rav Mendele answered him thus. In other words, we are told why the *Degel* would have given a "Polish Rebbe'le" a cold reception: it was not due to some petty argument; it was due to a great *machlokes* concerning the true *derech* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov* in serving Hashem.

As Rav Mendele realized what the *Degel* asked him, he answered with an example of *Yiras Shomayim*, genuine fear and awe of Heaven - something the *Degel* valued as authentic *avoda*, as opposed to the miracle-working that he despised of the "Polish Rebbes".

Without all these details, it remains a mystery as to why Rav Mendele visited the *Degel* and why, of all things that he witnessed by the great Rebbe Reb Melech, he chose this example to relate to the *Degel*, and why the *Degel* was pleased with it.

### **HIS BIRTH - THE DANCE AND THE PROMISE**

It was *Simchas Torah* and the holy *Baal Shem Tov's* disciples danced in whirling circles of spiritual fire as the holy *Shechinah* Herself descended and rested on the merrymakers. Their holy joy and delight ignited a flame of ecstasy in the midst of which the *Baal Shem's* saintly pious daughter Adel caught sight of one of the *talmidim*, who was standing alone, apart on the side watching the circuits, longing to join them but unable to do so.

This was none other than the Rav of Bar, Rav Duvid Leikes and she approached him and asked why he didn't joy the dancing that *Simchas Torah*?

In answer Rav Duvid responded by pointing to his feet where Adel easily saw the cause of his painful predicament. In his excited dancing, Rav Duvid's old worn shoes had finally

given out, the leather bands that tied them had torn and cracked. The rips and tears prevented him from joining alongside his colleagues the rest of the holy *Chevraya Kadisha* in the dance. Without shoes how could he dance?

No sooner did Adel receive his response and understand his problem she told him: "Do not worry I can give you a new pair of shoes on condition that you bless me a baby boy, that which I have not yet merited until today!"

Growing serious Rav Duvid's face took on a look of intense concentration until he nodded his agreement and promised, that by next year she would merit a baby boy. And so it was that a year later their eldest baby was born and Rav Yechiel and Adel had a son and named him Moshe Chaim Ephraim.

*(Mekor Ephraim, Shivchei HaBesht)*

#### **KEFITZAS HADERECH**

That *Motzaei Shabbos* the horses' hooves thundered as the coach of Rav Meir HaGadol of Premishlan made its way across the dark countryside. "Rebbe, where are we headed?" asked the puzzled wagon driver. "We are on our way to visit my colleague the holy Rav Yisroel Baal Shem Tov for *Melave Malka*," answered Rav Meir calmly. Hearing this amazing pronouncement, the wagon driver's eyes opened wide in disbelief. He turned his head towards his passenger and exclaimed "But rebbe, Mezhibuzh is a far journey away from Premishlan, we will never get there in time for *Melave Malka*!"

"Not to worry," answered Rav Meir calmly, "We shall have *kefitzas haDerech* - I think we will arrive there shortly." Towns and villages zoomed by at supernatural speed. They were going so fast that the scenery became a blur of color and lights. As the wind whipped his hair about in disarray the wagon driver felt that he was no longer controlling the coach, he himself had become a passenger on a speeding bullet train headed for some distant destination. And then amazingly they had arrived in Mezhibuzh!

As they alighted, Rav Meir approached and entered the home of the holy *Baal Shem*. "*Berichim HaBaim*, Rav Meir" the *Baal Shem* greeted his friend as if it was an everyday occurrence that a guest from distant Premishlan appeared in Mezhibuzh on *Motzaei Shabbos*. "*Berichim HaNimtza'im*," Rav Meir replied, "I came to join you for seudas

*Melave Malka*, and I have brought a *refuah* to heal your sick daughter Adel. But first I have a special request, I wish to honor the occasion with a festive meal of meat, and I will trust no one to prepare me such a feast except for your daughter Adel herself.”

At this the *tzadik's* smile faltered for a moment. “My daughter is very weak and she suffers greatly. Her pain and anguish confine her to her room and she has been bedridden for some time now. Let me see her condition and see if she up to the task.” The *Baal Shem's* daughter Adel had been sick for some time now and she lay in her sickbed listening in disbelief to the conversation between her father and their visitor. Then, came a knock on her door. “Come in” she answered weakly. The *Baal Shem* entered and gazed lovingly at his sick daughter. “My dear, a great guest has arrived, Rav Meir of Premishlan, he wishes for you and only you to prepare the *Melave Malka* feast, do you have the strength to do so?” As these conversations were taking place, Adel could feel the pain ebbing and growing weaker. As it faded away she felt renewed and rejuvenated. With newfound strength she answered in a steady voice, “Yes Tatty, I feel better and the more we speak the stronger I feel. The pain has subsided and I think that, yes, I can get out of bed and prepare the meal.” So saying she pulled back the covers and got up. Quickly she got ready and went to prepare the *seudah*.

By the wall, her two holy children Baruch and Ephraim lay side beside in a crib. One day they would grow up to be great *tzadikim*, known as the Rebbe Reb Baruch of Mezibuz and Rav Chaim Moshe Ephraim of Sudilkov author of *Degel Machneh Ephraim*. Just then as Adel went to prepare the meal one of children began to cry. She approached the crib, and as she reached to pick him up the second child too, began to cry. So Adel scooped them both up in her arms out of the crib and carried them together to comfort them. As soon as she had done so a loud rumbling noise was heard and everyone was astonished to see how the wall by the crib had broken and collapsed. Its rubble was strewn over the wreckage of the crib, where moments before the two young babies had lain. It was a miracle, they were saved!

When the *Baal Shem* heard the commotion he came and saw the miracle for himself. There stood a crib full of rubble, rocks, sticks and stones and there stood Adel clutching the crying babies to her, full of emotion. The holy *Baal Shem* turned to Rav Meir: “Obviously they revealed to you from on High to visit me, they chose a worthy *shaliach* to save my grandchildren, obviously they didn't choose me for this task,” he said humbly,

“sometimes you need a *tzadik* to fix things just right, this is why you came here for *Melave Malka*, to heal my daughter and save her sons! (As related by Rav Yissocher Ber of Nadworna *Sippurim veToldos* by Rav Reuven Menachem Leifer of Ungvar printed in the back of an edition of the *Degel* published in Hungary by Rav Avraham Nosson Barnet of Shamloya)

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### **Rav Shimon bar Yochai Rashbi (Iyar 18)**

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#### **THE POWER OF RASHBI**

Rav Aharon of Karlin wrote in *Bais Aharon* that “Just as *HaKodosh Boruch Hu* is for everyone, so too is *Rashbi* for everyone, even for the lowliest.”

The *Nesivos Sholom* explains this to mean that a great *Tzaddik* is so great that he not only loves the righteous Jews but he finds something beloved and precious even in the lowliest, wicked Jew as well. This is the level of *Moshiach*, who will be able to love even the most wicked as much as the greatest *Tzaddik*! He uses this idea to explain the story of *Rashbi* in *Gemora Shabbos*. When *Rashbi* exited his cave of exile, he observed people working in the fields and exclaimed in wonder, “How can they leave behind the eternal reward of Torah study for this world and its temporary business?!”

His eyes burned whatever he gazed upon, and a heavenly voice proclaimed, “I didn’t let you out of the cave to destroy my world!”

He and his son went back in for a year, saying, “The judgment of the wicked in *Gehinnom* is a twelve-month sentence.”

Asks the Slonimer *Rebbe* in *Nesivos Sholom*, “Why did they judge themselves as wicked and sentence themselves to twelve months again in the cave?” He answers that their lack of ability to love those people who were simple, lowly and worked the fields in this temporal world as opposed to being occupied in Torah study was their lack, and this is why they judged themselves as wicked and reentered the cave to rectify this failing. When he emerged, *Rashbi* was the epitome of the *Tzaddik yesod olom* (“a righteous foundation of the world”) and that is why his great, awesome light was revealed and shines on *Lag BaOmer*, which falls out on the *Sefira* of *Hod ShebeHod*, the *Sefira* which is the lowest

and deepest form of harsh judgment. For his light and love shines down below to even the lowest and deepest depths, to love every Jew, even the wicked, and to find within even the lowest place light and love.

Regarding such a love and such ability, my *Rebbe*, the *Clevelander Rebbe Shlit" a* once told me the following tale: There was once an informant, whose terrible ways constantly plagued the Jews. The *Tzaddikim* and *Chassidim* gathered to put an end to him once and for all and to excommunicate him and sentence him to death for being a *rodef*! They approached the *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, Rav Zeev Wolf Kitzes, to complete their quorum and join their *minyán*, but to their astonishment he refused! He explained himself and said, "One day in the future, the righteous *Moshiach* will finally arrive! He will conquer the lands and the hearts of many. All the nations will rush to greet him and subjugate themselves before his reign and his might, and all the exiles will return. As word of his dominion spreads, Jews will flock to him from far and wide - all kinds of Jews, all...except one! There will be one black-hearted, dark, obstinate fellow, who will remain in the exile, scoffing to the final day. Then the nations will send emissaries and dignitaries, bearing gifts and offerings. Gold, silver, precious stones and treasures, yet *Moshiach* will scoff at them all. Then the Jews will also wish to bestow upon him a gift, but seeing how he despises ordinary wealth, they will search far and wide to bring *Moshiach* the most precious gift...that of a *Yiddishe Neshoma* - a Jewish soul! They will search and scour the entire exile and find none; everyone has come, everyone except for...one miserable soul. They will locate him and bind and gag him and carry him kicking, screaming and flailing all the way to Yerushalayim! There, they will bring the king *Moshiach* the most precious gift: a Jewish soul, unblemished and untarnished, and he will forge him anew into a *ba'al teshuva*. Be it known that it is revealed to me from on high that that precious soul resides in your informant and *moser*!

Now I ask you - tell me the truth - are you really willing to annihilate this most precious soul, the gift of the *Moshiach*, of whom it says *yovilu shai lamora* - "they will bring a gift to the master"?

### **STUDYING ZOHAR**

When the *Rebbe* Reb Boruch of Mezhibuzh would study the holy *Zohar*, he would begin with the *Shaar Blatt* (the title page) and would explain it as follows:

*Ze hasefer haZohar shechiber haTanna Rav Shimon bar Yochai* - "This is the *Sefer HaZohar* authored by the Tanna Rav Shimon bar Yochai." Rav Boruch explained this:

*Ze hasefer - Dos iz a sapir* - this is a brilliant sapphire! *HaZohar - vos er laycht in alle olomos* - whose splendor illuminates all of the worlds! *Asher chiber - vos iz mechaber idishe hertzer tzum Tatten in Himmel* - which attaches and binds Jewish hearts to their Father in Heaven! *Tanna - er lernt iz az se'iz du a Bashefer oif der vellt* - he teaches us that there is a Creator in the world! *Mihu Zeh?* He asked himself rhetorically, Who is this? and answered *Zehu* - this is Rav Shimon bar Yochai, may his merit shield us! (*Otzar Yisrael* 118)

### **A DIFFERENT WAY TO LOOK AT IT**

The holy Rizhiner was plagued by an informant, a *rodef* and a *moser*, who constantly chased after the *Tzaddik*. He used to mock him and jest, "Why doesn't the holy Rebbe just punish me and condemn me to die?!"

The holy Rizhiner heard this and said to his *Chassidim*, "When *Rashbi* left the cave to which he was exiled and he saw the informant Yehuda ben Gerim, he said, 'Is he still around?' He gazed upon him and turned him into a heap of bones! Isn't it a wonder that *Rashbi* was so angry and upset at him that he would do that?! Rather, when *Rashbi* said, 'Is this man still around?' he was asking himself a question: 'Perhaps he is still around because I have not yet succeeded in rectifying all that I need to in myself.' So the *Talmud* says he gazed upon him - this means *Rashbi* gazed intently upon himself and began to make a reckoning, a *cheshbon hanefesh* regarding his own spiritual standing. As he did this, Yehuda ben Gerim was transformed into a pile of bones [proving that *Rashbi* had now sufficiently rectified himself and this wicked informant had no longer any reason to be here alive]. Thus," concluded the Rizhiner, "as long as this wicked informant was still around it meant that he had not rectified himself completely yet. How would it help to punish him and cause him to leave this world? Another person will come to take his place! Only when he rectified himself would the informant have no place here either! (*Be'eros HaMayim Be'er Sheva* p. 60)

### **INSIDE, ITS YOM KIPPUR; OUTSIDE, ITS SIMCHAS TORAH**

Once the holy Rizhiner asked a visitor who had been in Meron on *Lag BaOmer* to describe the event. The *Chassid* described how *Lag BaOmer* is observed in Meron at the *kever* of

*Rashbi* and explained the way it felt, using the comparison that the great emotions inside were similar to *Yom Kippur*, whereas outside it felt like *Simchas Torah!*

This is no contradiction, for the awakening is the same awakening, both coming from Rav Shimon bar Yochai! Inside, it is felt and experienced one way and outside a different way. The *simcha* in Meron is also *nisht kein poshuta simcha* - “not a simple, mundane joy”; rather, it is a supernal, holy joy - *a hecher simcha!* (*Imros Tehoros* 49)

### **EMUNA PESHUTA**

Rav Dovid Biderman of Lelov once told how on one of his visits to Meron on *Lag BaOmer* he stayed in Tzefas and walked on foot to Meron. As he traveled, he passed an older woman also on her way to Meron. She was very old and frail, and accompanied by a Jew dressed in the manner of the *Sefardim*. They went very, very slowly, as the path to Meron is uphill and rises higher and higher. When she finally reached the entrance to the burial cave, she sat down and began to weep, and cried out in Hebrew with a *Sefardic* accent, “Rav Shimon, *Shechinta BeGaluta!* - the Divine Presence, the *Shechina* is in exile!” Afterward, she made a petition and requested some prayer in Arabic that Hashem should have mercy and gather in all the exiles. She then kissed the *tziun*, and made her way slowly back to Tzefas! Rav Dovid Lelover was so moved by her simple, pure faith that he declared, “*Epes mit aza temimus tzigegangen* - She came all this long way with such faith and she prayed her prayer!” (*Imros Tehoros* 49)

Rav Mottel Avritcher (a descendant of the *Bas Ayin*) once told how one *Lag BaOmer* in Meron he watched a *Sefardi* Jew who was present at the *hadloka* - the bonfire lit in honor of the holy Tanna Rav Shimon bar Yochai. This Jew was so moved and excited that his pure heart was aflame and he shouted out, “*Och yah, Rav Shimon!*” And so saying he tossed his cloak into the flames to be consumed in honor of the *Tanna*. This did not calm him and he called out again louder, “*Och yah, Rav Shimon!*” And proceeded to toss into the bonfire another article of clothing! He continued to do so, until he was left standing in his *tallis kotton* and his breeches. At this point he began ecstatically dancing, aflame with delight and awe. Moved to emotive expression, he danced and sang with such passion and fire that it seemed that if he could have, he would have thrown himself into the bonfire in honor of *Rashbi!* (*MiZekenim Esbonon* I 102)

## STORIES OF RASHBI FROM THE ZOHAR AND MEDRASH

One day, as *Rashbi* left his home, he observed that the world appeared dark and menacing, as if a great cloud had covered the land and blocked the light of day. *Rashbi* turned to his son Rav Elozor and said, "This is no chance occurrence. Obviously Hashem wishes to do something. Let us see what He has planned to do in the world! *Rashbi* and his son exited the city limits and before them stood a terrible angel, as tall as a mountain, and from his mouth poured forth thirty tongues of flame!

*Rashbi* asked the angel, "What are you planning to do?"

"I am about to destroy the world because there aren't thirty *Tzaddikim* to be found to safeguard it," answered the angel.

"Go and tell my Creator that Bar Yochai is here in the world and that he is comparable to thirty *Tzaddikim*!"

The angel went before the Throne of Glory and delivered *Rashbi's* message. Hashem answered the angel, "Go and destroy the world and do not pay any attention to Bar Yochai!"

The angel returned to destroy the world again. Once more *Rashbi* saw him and commanded him, "If you do not return to deliver a message, I will send you to the depths from which you shall not arise, to the place of the fallen angels who were cast down from Hashem!" *Rashbi* continued his message and said, "Tell Hashem that if there aren't thirty *Tzaddikim*, twenty are enough, as it says in the story of Avrohom and Sodom and Amora, and if twenty are not enough, then let ten suffice, as it says there. And if there aren't ten *Tzaddikim* found, then two should be enough, as it says that two witnesses can give testimony. And if you cannot find two then there is at least one and I am that one, as it says *Tzaddik yesod olom* - 'a *Tzaddik* is the foundation of the world!'"

At that moment, a heavenly voice rang out and proclaimed, "Happy and praiseworthy is your portion, Rav Shimon, for Hashem decrees and you cancel and abolish it. Regarding you it is said, *Retzon yerei'ov yaaseh* - 'Hashem fulfills the will of those who fear Him.'" (*Zohar Bereishis* 33a)

Once, *Rashbi* arrived in Lod and there was a plague there. He witnessed many stricken dying and remarked, "All this is happening now while I am present in town?! I command this decree be abolished!"

A heavenly voice rang out and proclaimed, "*Mazikim* - evil and damaging forces - depart from this city immediately, because Rav Shimon bar Yochai is in town! Even though Hashem has decreed, *Rashbi* has abolished it."

Immediately, the plague ceased. Rav Chanina was impressed at the greatness and stature of *Rashbi* and told Rav Meir of this. Rav Meir replied, "Who can praise and compare to *Rashbi*? Even Moshe *Rabbeinu*, who sent Aharon with the incense to stop the plague during Korach's rebellion, still had to have Aharon act, yet *Rashbi* abolished the decree and stopped the plague by the power of speech alone!" (*Zohar Chodosh Rus* 103a)

In Tzidon there was a couple who lived together for over ten years. They loved one another dearly but they had no children. They came before Rav Shimon bar Yochai and asked him to help them divorce through a *get*.

"I have just one request - please do not refuse me," said the *Tzaddik*. "Just as when you were united in marriage there was a feast, please eat, drink and make a banquet now that you wish to go your separate ways."

The couple fulfilled the *Tzaddik's* request and they held a large, festive banquet and invited friends and scholars. As the tables lay laden with food and drink, in the midst of the merriment, when the husband's heart was glad with wine, he turned to his wife and remarked, "See, all my goodness and wealth is here before you - please choose any precious object here and take it with you back to your father's house!"

She was greatly moved by his words, and when she observed that he had been plied with much wine and had grown drowsy and fallen asleep, she asked the servants to carry him and place him in a bed at her father's home. When the husband awoke from his deep slumber, he gazed about and discovered that he was in a strange bed and not at home. He turned and saw his wife sitting beside him and asked her where he was. When she replied that he was in her father's home, he asked why she had done this.

"I was told that I could take any precious object home with me. I found nothing more precious than you, and so I took you home!"

The couple came back and stood before *Rashbi* and told him the entire tale. When he heard this and saw their love for one another, he stood up and prayed on their behalf for mercy and they were blessed with children. (*Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabba*)

#### **IN THE MERIT OF RAV SHIMON**

Once, Rav Shimon met a *Maloch* (angel), who was on a mission to destroy the world. Rav Shimon told the *Maloch* to return to Hashem and tell the Master that bar Yochai and his son's merits are enough to reverse the decree. When the *Maloch* returned to Hashem, he was told to return to Rav Shimon and tell him that bar Yochai was not enough. When the *Maloch* met Rav Shimon again and told him what the *Ribbono Shel Olam* told him, Rav Shimon - although his humility kept him from saying his name directly - nonetheless did tell the *Maloch* to "return and say that Rav Shimon bar Yochai does not agree."

When the *Maloch* returned to Hashem and repeated Rav Shimon's words, Hashem agreed that Rav Shimon's merits were enough to save the world.

(As heard from Rav Steiner, *Shlit"a*).

#### **WHEN THEY STOPPED PUBLISHING THE OHR HACHAIM HAKADOSH**

I once heard from a Bershader chassid that Rav Pinchos Koretzer used to say that studying the sefer Ohr haChaim haKadosh is a *segulah* for the *neshamah*, similar to studying the Zohar haKadosh.

This is because *Rashbi* had the *neshama* of Moshiach of his generation, and also Rav Chaim ben Attar author of the Ohr haChaim haKadosh also had the *neshama* of Moshiach of his generation. He ordered his descendants, the Shapiro grandchildren of the Slovita Press to publish the Sefer Ohr haChaim HaKadosh and that that would save them from evil and harm. They fulfilled his command until there were so many published editions of the Ohr haChaim, that the seforim greatly outnumbered the demand and there were no buyers left to purchase copies. Therefore, they stopped publishing copies of the *sefer*, that very year that they ceased publishing the Ohr haChaim the infamous libel occurred and they were falsely accused. (Migdal Oz pg 268 cited by Likkutei Imrei Pinchos Sha'ar haTorah 15)

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## Rav Moshe Isserles Rav of Cracow, Rema (Iyar 18)

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### STUDYING WITH ELIYOHU HANOVI

In *Adas Tzaddikim* it relates that when the *Rema* became *Av Beis Din* Cracow, he took Rav Chaim as his *segan* (assistant rav) and that when the *Rema* traveled, Rav Chaim acted as chief rabbi in the *Rema's* place as *Av Beis Din*.

It happened, that Rav Chaim's wife passed away. The *Rema* was so dependent on Rav Chaim and the communal responsibilities so great that all *shidduch* suggestions for Rav Chaim were discounted. Everyone anticipated the *Rema's* approval of some match. Rav Chaim, seeing how things were going, took matters into his own hands. Tradition has it that he made a secret match through a *shadchan* with a local baker. The simple, but pious, baker supplied his illustrious son-in-law to be, with all the *seforim* he would need along with a hidden room to study undisturbed. The *Rema* returned one day to find Rav Chaim melancholy. He surmised that it was for lack of a suitable match and proposed that he would indeed find Rav Chaim a new wife. Rav Chaim staged that he wished to visit his family and left with intentional fanfare. He was escorted by the *Rema* and the townspeople out of the city limits where he dressed in simple clothes, gathered a *minyán* at the baker's residence and married his daughter in a clandestine *chuppah*. After the wedding, he set himself up in the room provided by his father-in-law and studied happily and undisturbed for some two years until he was discovered.

There was a plague in Cracow and someone assumed that the secretive baker's son-in-law whom no one knew must be the culprit behind some crime that made Cracow guilty. Such was the desperate calculation of people trying to find some reason why the plague had struck their city. Rav Chaim was summoned before the *Rema*, and was found to have been hiding all this time! Consequently, Rav Chaim was released and cleared of all charges.

"Why did you hide; what was your sin? And why are you laughing?" asked the *Rema* when he saw Rav Chaim laugh.

"I hid because the communal responsibilities were too much for me and it disturbed my Torah study," Rav Chaim explained. "I laughed because these simple people were so quick to judge me and I can see they were just all too happy to whip me soon as you gave them

the word. Apparently, my sin was that my Torah study was so good that I almost grew arrogant. But then, Hashem put me in a situation where I would be shamed!”

When the *Rema* went to visit him to see what he meant, he overheard Rav Chaim studying with someone else. But when he came inside, Rav Chaim was alone.

“I command *you* to reveal who was here!” said the *Rema*.

Rav Chaim admitted he had been studying with *Eliyahu HaNavi*.

“And he is still here with us,” said Rav Chaim.

Eliyahu then told the *Rema* that he studied with Rav Chaim, not because Rav Chaim was greater than the *Rema*, but because the *Rema*’s greatness and strength in Torah was too much for him [Eliyahu Hanavi]!

#### **A TZADDIK DECREES, AND HASHEM DOES NOT ALLOW HIM TO ERR**

The *Ben Ish Chai*, in his sefer of commentaries on *Aggodos HaShas*, cites Rav Avrohom Palagi, who told:

There was a dispute between *Moron* the *Bais Yosef*, Rav Yosef Karo, *mechaber* of the *Shulchon Aruch* and the *Rema*, Rav Moshe Isserles, regarding permission for an *aguna* to remarry. The *Rema* permitted her to remarry, whereas the *Bais Yosef* had forbidden it. The angelic *Maggid* that taught the *Bais Yosef* revealed to him that actually the *Bais Yosef* was initially correct and that her husband was still alive and, of course, she was forbidden to remarry. However, explained the angelic *Maggid*, as soon as the holy *Rema* ruled she was permitted, the husband passed away and this released her. Because Hashem does not allow *Tzaddikim* to err, he saved the *Rema* from error; as soon as he wrote his *psak*, the husband died and she was permitted to remarry! (*Ben Yehoyoda* to *Maseches Yevomos* p.121, citing the *sefer Vayaan Avrohom* p. 62)

#### **TZEDOKA**

The Pshervorsker Rebbe told:

When the *Rema* was chief Rav of Cracow, there was a Jewish resident named Yankel

whom everyone nicknamed Yankel Treiger - Yankel Shikir - Yankele Shabbos! In trade, he was a *vasser treiger* - a water carrier and a porter for heavy loads - and this explained that nickname. His other nicknames were given for his other well-known practice - his drinking. Every *Erev Shabbos*, a familiar scenario played itself out: Yankel Treiger became Yankel Shikir, as he gathered his savings from his earnings that week and headed off to the local tavern to buy honey mead and drink himself into a stupor. As he drank, with each sip he would say, "Ahh, Shabbos, Shabbos! Shabbos is coming!" And this explained his final nickname, *Yankele Shabbos*.

This *Erev Shabbos* began as usual. Yankel Treiger was seen heading to the tavern. As the coins jingled merrily in his pocket waiting to be spent, he heard a voice of despair above him from the window open to the street. "There he goes to spend his money on booze and get *shikir* while my children and I starve this Shabbos!"

Yankel froze. He had a good heart and it had just broken when he heard that sad sigh. He turned and saw the face of a mournful Jewish mother staring at him from the window. Without a second thought or moment's hesitation, he gave his hard-earned coins to the overjoyed mother, who did not starve that Shabbos. That Shabbos, Yankele Shabbos earned his name and that poor family had food to eat.

On that Shabbos, Yankele Shabbos came home and passed away. On *Motzo'ei Shabbos* his spirit came back and visited the holy *Rema* and told him the entire tale. "In *Shomayim* I heard that that woman was a *gilgul* of Esther HaMalka. She came back as a poor woman because when the *Bais Din Shel Maala* heard her case, the prosecution insisted that she was a wealthy queen and she needed to prove her loyalty to Torah as a pauper. Now, as for me, a sinner I wasn't and a not a *Tzaddik* either. I was bereft of merits and *mitzvos* except this *tzedoka* that I gave on *Erev Shabbos*, and so they gave me the job to be the *Shliach Bais Din*. And so I come now to you, honorable Rav, in my capacity as messenger of the heavenly Court, to warn you to collect *tzedoka* from the poor! You always give *tzedoka* and collect from the wealthy, but I am here to teach you to collect from the poor as well!" At first the *Rema* thought Yaakov was jesting until he realized that he had passed away - and then he took the warning seriously. From then on, when the *Rema* collected *tzedoka*, he collected from the poor as well as the wealthy. (*BeOholei Tzaddikim Cracow #20*)

## THE CRITIC AND THE TOSAFIST

The *Rema* was a wealthy individual and it was his custom to pay a certain Jew to be his personal critic (*mochiach*). It was the critic's job to observe the *Rema's* behavior and to criticize him, giving him *mussar* and *tochocha* (reproof) about any misdeed or action that was found lacking. Once, before *Shacharis*, the *Rema* was studying a difficult *Tosafos* and he busied himself to answer and reconcile the opinion of *Rabbeinu Tam*. After he finally succeeded, he noticed that he had been so preoccupied with his study that he did not notice the passage of time until he was late for *Shacharis!*

Feeling that this was truly improper for the chief Rav of Cracow to come late to *shul* and knowing that his personal critic would give it to him, he felt nonetheless that he had no choice but to go and try to excuse himself. As he entered the *shul*, he expected the critic to approach but the latter stayed in his place.

After *davening*, the *Rema* himself approached the critic and asked him why he had not criticized his lateness.

"Rebbe, I quit, I shall no longer serve as your critic," said the *mochiach*.

"But, why?" asked the *Rema* in astonishment.

"Before you came to *shul*, Rebbe, you were preceded by a personage of holy stature who approached me and asked me not to criticize you. He identified himself to me as none other than the *Tosafist Rabbeinu Tam* himself, and asked me to pardon you on the grounds that you were so engaged in answering the difficulties in his Talmudic comments that I should let you off the hook. Rebbe, that's it, I am through! Anyone whom *Rabbeinu Tam* vouches for and asks me not to criticize - I will never criticize again!" (*Sifsei Tzaddikim*).

## THE TALE OF THE TWO GRAVES IN THE JEWISH QUARTER OF CRACOW

In the center of the Jewish quarter of Cracow there are two small low walls of stone and these are their story: During the reign of King Sigmund II there was a tax collector named Shlomo Zeligman who was a *Kohen*. This *Kohen* decided to ignore the Torah law that forbids a *Kohen* to marry a divorcee and he announced his intentions to the *Rema*, the chief Rav of Cracow. The *Rema* not only forbade the unholy marriage, he declared a vow

of excommunication, a *cherem* (ban) on anyone who would serve as a witness to such a sinful union. Incensed, Shlomo used his connections and approached His Majesty the king himself and denounced the *Rema* for not marrying him and his wife-to-be. The king sent soldiers and ordered the *Rema* to appear before him.

The *Rema* did not deny the charges and explained to the king that it was against the Torah. Nonetheless, the king commanded the *Rema* to marry the couple at once. He was escorted by the soldiers to the square in the center of the Jewish quarter, where stood the couple beneath the wedding canopy waiting for the Rav to officiate.

The *Rema* was shocked that a large crowd had gathered around to witness the event and he approached the two, thundering toward the crowd, "Stand back and distance yourselves from these two wicked sinners at once!"

The crowd was taken aback and quickly stepped back at the holy chief Rav's warning. No sooner had the *Rema* turned away from them and occupied himself with his holy thoughts than a great cry and uproar issued from the onlookers - the ground had opened up beneath the couple and they had been swallowed up by the earth itself!

The crowd quickly dispersed. Meanwhile, news of the miracle spread quickly, and the king, fearing divine wrath, sent his soldiers back to the *Rema* with an apology and the soldiers brought the chief Rav back to the king. There, the *Rema* declared that the king was not rebellious against the Torah, for he did not know or understand the laws, and so he was blameless. The king was so relieved that he asked the *Rema* what token he wished for, and the *Rema* asked that two stone walls be built to mark the graves of the two dead sinners so no *Kohen* would accidentally tread over their graves and become *tomei*.  
(*Tiferes Avos*)

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**Rav Menachem Mendel Turim Rymanover Rebbe, Menahem Mendel of Pristik,  
Pristiker, Menachem Tzion (Iyar 19)**

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**BORUCH HASHEM, I AM COLD AND HUNGRY**

Rav Mendel of Rymanow was but a young man when he began his pilgrimages to Lizensk to the *rebbe*, Reb Melech. He was poor and had not a coin to his name. His clothes were

simple and old, and the harsh winter brought the kind of bitter cold that creeps into your bones.

With no alternative, Rav Mendel hired himself out as watchman. He would travel about with the coaches and travelers. While the coachmen and the travelers spent the night at the inn, Rav Mendel remained, outside in the cold, guarding the coach and the horses against thieves.

On one particular trip, snow fell relentlessly and traveling was hard. Finally, night fell and the coach reached its destination. As the coachman and his customers entered the warm inn, Rav Mendel braved the bitter elements outside, shivering under his threadbare coat, shaking in his hole-filled shoes, and waiting for the dawn as he stood guard.

It was so cold, he ran back and forth, clapping his hands and rubbing them together for warmth. Soon, he began to hop and one foot and then on the other. This routine soon became a dance as he hopped and clapped, singing in *simcha*, "Baruch Hashem I am cold! Praised by the Lord I am freezing! Baruch Hashem I am starving!"

Another coach arrived at the inn and as the travelers alighted, they witnessed a bizarre scene before them. There in the bitter cold night, an obviously poor man danced and sang! "What are you singing?" They asked in astonishment.

"I am praising Hashem for making me so healthy that I can properly feel my hunger," answered Rav Mendel.

"And why don't you eat?" They asked.

"I have no money" he answered. The travelers decided to take care of Rav Mendel; they brought him into the warm inn and placed someone else as a watchman. They fed him until he was sated and when his wits returned, he declared, "Had I not sang and danced, praising Hashem, I would still be cold and hungry!" (*Chassidim MiSaprim #44*)

### **TRUE CHASSIDIM**

Rav Yaakov Yitzchok, the *Chozeh of Lublin* once asked Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow if he had any followers and Chassidim? "Yes, we do," responded Rav Menachem

Mendel.

“And in what way are they Chassidim?” inquired the *Chozeh* further.

“Our Chassidim, my followers,” answered Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow, “study in depth *halocha* and *Tosfos*.”

“If so,” replied the *Chozeh*, “then they are indeed true Chassidim!” (*Bais Menachem* 5:2)

Similarly, regarding the study of *halocha* and *Tosfos*, Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow said that he never understood the secret of the matter until recently, that those laws and *halochos* forgotten during the *aveilus* over Moshe (see *Temura* 16a) were returned to us by Osniel ben Kenaz during the days of *Sefiras HaOmer*. Therefore, it is a *minhag Yisrael*, which has the status of Torah, to study *halocha* and *Tosfos* during these holy days. (From the letter *Igeres HaKodesh* of Rav Yechezkel Paneth of Karlsberg, originally published in *Shu”t Mareh Yechezkel Siman* 104 {it is known that on the thirty-fourth day of the *Omer*, the *yahrzeit* of Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow, they found the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz reviewing this *teshuva* and his eyes poured forth tears of longing. *Derech Yivchar* by Rav Chaim Betzalel Paneth of Tash and son of the *Mareh Yechezkel*})

#### **AHAVA RABBA - HOW GREAT IS THE LOVE!**

An elder Linsker *Chassid* once told that he heard himself how Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow asked, “What did *Bnei Yisrael* do from the time of *Rosh Chodesh Sivan* until *Kabbolas HaTorah*? They had not yet received the Torah so they were not yet studying it!”

He (Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow) answered, “In the interim they were all reciting the *berocha Ahava Rabba* - How great is the love!” (*Kisvei Chassidim Yalkut Menachem* 290)

#### **NOAM ELIMELECH ON EREV SHABBOS AFTER IMMERSING IN THE MIKVA**

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow said, “On *Erev Shabbos Kodesh*, after immersing in the *mikveh* is when I can understand a *shtickel* of *Noam Elimelech*.” (*Ohel Elimelech* 192)

#### **GUIDED BY THE RIF**

Once, in his youth, Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov was studying in the *Bais Medrash*

under Rav Doniel Yaffe *in* Berlin. He studied the works of the *Rif* on the *Talmud* diligently, and his soul thirsted for self-perfection. Once, he learned so much in one sitting that his tongue stuck to his palate. He began to *daven* deep in his heart and cried to Hashem to enlighten him and brighten his darkness. He *davened* and *davened*, until he fell into a deep sleep and dreamed. In his dreams he saw the *Rif* himself. The *Rif* showed him an image of Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk and told him to travel to the Rebbe, for there he would succeed in attaining his goal.

(*Ohel Elimelech* 183)

### THE REBBES SOUP

Rav Mendele Rimanover was one of the four main *talmidim* of the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk.

Before Rav Mendele Rimanover was revealed as a *Tzaddik* and Rebbe possessing *Ruach HaKodesh*, divine intuition, he appeared at Rebbe Reb Elimelech's table as just another Chassid, a regular devoted follower.

One Shabbos, the *Rimanover* was sitting with all the other Chassidim when the *shamash* brought in the Rebbe's soup and placed it in front of the Rebbe. The Rebbe took the bowl of soup in his hands, overturned it, and spilled its contents onto the table. Suddenly gripped with fear, the *Rimanover* shouted, "Oy! Rebbe! Surely they will put us all in jail. You must stop immediately!"

The other guests almost burst out laughing at hearing such strange remarks coming from Rav Mendele, but they restrained themselves in the presence of their holy Rebbe. Rebbe Reb Elimelech said to Rav Mendele, "Relax, my son, we are all safe. We are all here right now." The others were astonished at the Rebbe's remarks until Rebbe Reb Elimelech explained what had transpired that had led him and Rav Mendele to say what they did.

A high-ranking government official had decided to pass a harsh decree against the Jews. He had tried many times before, unsuccessfully, to write out charges and have the king stamp and seal them with his ring. Today, he wrote out the charges once again, determined that this time nothing would stop him from carrying out his wicked plan. He was about to use sand to blot the ink and dry it when I overturned my soup bowl. The

official became momentarily confused, picked up the inkwell instead, and proceeded to spill ink all over the accusatory letter he had just written! This young man,” the Rebbe concluded, indicating Rav Mendele, “was able to witness what I did, but only by divesting himself fully from the physical world. He forgot that we were in fact here in this room. He imagined that I had actually used my hand and physically overturned the inkwell. He became frightened, and in his terror he called out, for fear that we would be arrested for my actions.” Now everyone understood how lofty a level of *Ruach HaKodesh* this young man could perceive. (*Ohel Elimelech* 185)

Once, Rav Mendel of Rimanov told his teacher, Rebbe Reb Elimelech, that he actually saw the *Maloch* who removes the light before the darkness and the darkness before the light (as described in the first *berocha* of the *Ma'ariv* service). The Rebbe Reb Elimelech responded, “But I have already seen this *Maloch* in my youth!”

(*Ohel Elimelech* 156).

#### **DO IT FOR HIS SAKE**

“Rav Elozor Ish Bartosa says: Give Him what is His, because you and yours are His” (Avos 3:8).

Rav Ovadia Yosef used to illustrate our Mishna with the following story:

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov once sat studying and teaching Torah with his talmidim when a pauper entered the Bais Medrash. Some people naturally awaken sympathy and our pauper was an especially bedraggled and sad sight that tugged at the Tzaddik's heartstrings. The Rebbe sent his gabbai to fetch a golden dinar from his wallet in the next room and the Rebbe handed the surprised and grateful pauper one gold coin. The poor beggar was dumbstruck and overjoyed at his good fortune. A gold dinar was a handsome, large donation, and he effusively thanked the Rimanover and went on his way.

Afterward, the Rebbe had second thoughts. He began to feel troubled that he had given the pauper *tzedoka* out of feelings of mercy, compassion and sympathy, rather than to fulfill the mitzva of *tzedoka* for the sake of Hashem, as Rashi comments on Teruma – “Take teruma and give it *lishmi* – for the sake of My Name,’ says Hashem.” The Rebbe decided that he would call his attendant again and send him after the pauper.

The pauper was meanwhile happily on his way, smiling at his good fortune. The poor man had gone some distance when behind him he heard the Rebbe's attendant calling after him, running to catch his breath. The pauper froze and his eyes darkened. "Oh no! Surely the Rebbe made a mistake when he gave me a gold dinar and he has sent his *gabbai* after me to exchange it for a silver one!"

Still, having no choice, he turned sadly around and headed back to the Rebbe's *hoif*, following the *gabbai's* lead.

When they returned, the Rebbe had the *gabbai* bring the wallet and to the pauper's total astonishment, not only did the Rebbe not take his gold dinar away, but he proceeded to hand him another gold coin! This was too much! The pauper smiled, turned to the Rebbe and taking courage from the Tzaddik's kindness, asked boldly, "Rebbe, I am sorry, I don't understand. If Your Honor wished to give me two gold coins, why couldn't the Rebbe have done so at once rather than call me back? The *gabbai* gave me quite a turn and I suffered a fright and was very downcast and disappointed until just now," he concluded, confused.

The Tzaddik smiled and explained, "In *Parshas Re'eh* the *pasuk* tells us *noson titein* - 'you shall surely give *tzedoka*'. Why does the *pasuk* use a double expression? It tells us that if you give out of feelings of sympathy, give once more for the sake of the mitzva. This is what I did. The *pasuk* also says, 'Your heart shall not be evil when you give him'. I interpret this *pasuk* to mean that the first time you give *tzedoka* do not do so because of the feelings in your heart, that you feel bad for the pauper; therefore give again, and do so for the sake of *mitzvas tzedoka*. (*Anaf Etz Avos* p. 183)

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### **Rav Mordechai Twersky Likutei Torah (Iyar 20)**

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#### **HOW MUCH IS MUD WORTH?**

Rav Mottele of Chernobyl arrived in a certain town and was dismayed that one of the wealthiest Jews did not come to visit him. When he sent his *gabbai* to see the wealthy resident and ask him why he hadn't yet called on the Rebbe, the *baal habayis* responded rudely, "I would gladly welcome the *Maggid* into my home! It's not the Rebbe I don't want, it's the *Chassidim*! Listen, I have a fine home expensively and tastefully furnished and decorated by fine silks, elaborate, finely woven rugs and carpets, and the *Chassidim*

will come in and ruin them with their heavy, muddy boots! Tell the *Rebbe* that he is welcome without his *Chassidim!*”

The attendant relayed the message. The *Maggid*, who was collecting, as usual, on behalf of the thirty-six hidden *Tzaddikim*, agreed. As was customary, the host was expected to gift the *Tzaddik* a sizable donation, but the *Rebbe* stopped at the threshold and explained that he had only agreed to enter the house and no more.

“I agreed to enter, but if you want me to mount the stairs and enter your sitting room, you will have to increase the donation by each stair I climb!”

The wealthy host agreed and by the time the *Rebbe* sat at the table he was looking at a large sum of money indeed. “Now,” said the *Maggid*, “I hear that you fear mud and dirt! Let me see if I cannot change your mind and shift your perspective just a bit with the following story:

“There was once a wealthy merchant who traveled in a fine coach pulled by strong, healthy steeds. As he traveled through the forest one day he came upon a rundown, rickety old wagon stuck in the mud. The poor Jew, struggling to dislodge it, had two broken-down old mares, whose bony, weak bodies struggled unsuccessfully to pull the wagon out of the squelching muck. The wealthy merchant dismounted and harnessed his own horses to the wagon but this too was insufficient. Finally, he disrobed, divesting himself of his fine overcoat and silk gloves, and they climbed together into the mud side by side, pulling and pushing, until he finally saved the sinking Jew and his wagon from certain death in the swampy mire.

“After many years, the merchant left this world and came to the world of judgment. As he stood before the heavenly tribunal, the black prosecuting angel brought wagons full of sins to weigh on the scales of justice, while white-robed angels of mercy and defense also brought wagons full of merits and *mitzvos*, attempting to balance and tip the scales in his favor. To his horror, it wasn’t enough! The scales tipped to the side of judgment against him! Then the defense brought the merit of saving the life of the Jew in the swamp. They took the whole wagon, with the Jew and the horses - and the weight of them all balanced the scales as they swayed to and fro. Just then another angel piped up and yelled to the *Bais Din Shel Maala*, ‘You forgot to add all the mud! This wealthy, refined individual got

down in the squelching, stinking mud, sullied his fine waistcoat and breeches and stank of filth to save his fellow Jew – surely all that mud counts for something!’

“And they heaped on all the mud, which tipped the scales in his favor,” concluded the *Rebbe*, his eyes dancing.

The merchant froze; he understood the message all too clearly. It was his past life in the story; the *Maggid* meant his previous *gilgul*. He got up, walked to the door, swung it open wide in welcome and declared to the *Chassidim* outside, “Come in! Come in! Welcome and don’t forget not to wipe your muddy boots on the mat. In fact, the more mud the better!!!” (*Yehi Ohr* #230-231)

### **A REBBE'S DEBT TO A HITCHIKER**

Weekly *Chassidic* Story #805 (s5773-34 / 19<sup>th</sup> of *Iyar* 5773)

As he approached Chernobyl, the *Chassid* was in a happy mood. And why not? Silently he counted his blessings: a loving wife and children, a flourishing business, and soon he would be in the presence of his holy *Rebbe*, the famous Rav Mordechai of Chernobyl.

With these thoughts in mind he was enjoying the scenery, when suddenly he spotted a poor Jew trudging along with a bundle on his shoulders. Stopping the carriage, he offered the traveler a lift, which was gratefully accepted.

For the first few miles both men were silent. But after a few minutes the poor Jew turned to the *Chassid* and asked him where he was headed. “To Chernobyl,” the man replied, “to my holy *Rebbe*.”

“Aha!” the traveler said with a smile. “So you’re going to Mottele.”

The *Chassid* was immediately offended. How dare this shabby-looking fellow refer to his holy *Rebbe* in such a familiar manner, as if they were intimates! On second thought, he decided to remain quiet.

“Are you indeed one of Mottele’s *Chassidim*?” the stranger persisted. “Yes,” the man replied curtly in an attempt to end the conversation. “What *chutzpa*!” the *Chassid* thought

to himself. Under other circumstances he would have put this impudent clod in his place, but he had no wish to ruin the journey further.

But the stranger was clearly in the mood to talk. "How do I know that you're really a *Chassid*?" he inquired. The *Chassid* was very surprised by the question and said nothing.

"A man is measured by his deeds, and especially by his pocket," the stranger continued. "I'll tell you what - if you will pay me the twenty gold coins your *Rebbe* owes me, I will believe that you are his *Chassid*."

The *Chassid* was shocked. What kind of nonsense was this? "If you can prove to me that my *Rebbe* owes you the money I will gladly pay his debt," he blurted out. The stranger smiled and fished around in his knapsack until he found a piece of paper: a promissory note for twenty gold coins, signed by the *Tzaddik* of Chernobyl. The *Chassid* examined it carefully. Yes, it really did appear to be the *Rebbe*'s signature, and try as he might he could not find any evidence of forgery. Nodding his head, he folded the note several times and placed it in his snuffbox. He then took out his moneybag, counted out exactly twenty gold coins and pressed them into the stranger's hand.

The rest of the journey was conducted in silence. On the outskirts of Chernobyl they reached a crossroads and the stranger asked to be let off. Before he climbed down from the carriage, he thanked the *Chassid* for his kindness and blessed him with success.

The *Chassid* watched the stranger walk off into the distance. Within minutes the man and his bundle were no bigger than a tiny dot that eventually disappeared over the horizon.

The *Chassid* took out the promissory note and inspected it even more closely, but again could find no fault with it. By that time, however, he realized that he had arrived in Chernobyl. With more important things to attend to, he slipped the note back into his snuffbox and promptly forgot about it.

It was a busy Friday when he arrived, and Chernobyl was filled with hundreds of other Jews who had come to bask in the *Rebbe*'s presence. Shabbos was spent in a state of spiritual elevation. To the *Chassid*, the opportunity to *daven* with the *Rebbe* and hear his words of *Torah* was nothing less than a foretaste of Paradise.

When *Shabbos* was over the *Chassid* requested a private audience with the *Rebbe*. Oddly, the first thing the *Rebbe* asked him was whether he had any snuff with him. "Certainly," the *Chassid* replied, immediately proffering his snuffbox. As he opened it he saw the note he had forgotten about, and after a moment's hesitation handed it over to the *Rebbe*, who had noticed him pause.

"How did this come into your hands?" the *Rebbe* asked him. The *Chassid* related the whole unlikely story of the stranger who had claimed that the *Rebbe* owed him money, and was shocked when the *Rebbe* verified it as true. "As Divine Providence has led you two to meet, I can reveal to you that that stranger is one of the thirty-six hidden *Tzaddikim* in every generation in whose merit the world exists," he explained, adding that he had taken it upon himself to uphold him financially.

An involuntary shiver passed through the *Chassid's* body. A hidden *Tzaddik* had traveled in his carriage - and he hadn't known! He had even mistaken him for an impudent clod...

Noting his distress, the *Rebbe* eased his mind. "Don't worry, you've done nothing wrong," he reassured him. "If you were chosen to share in the *mitzva* of supporting a hidden *Tzaddik*, there is no doubt that it is a good sign."

From that day on, each year during his annual visit the *Chassid* gave the *Rebbe* twenty gold coins for the hidden *Tzaddik*. And for the rest of his life he hoped to meet the stranger again. But it never happened.

Source: Supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition on [//lchaimweekly.org](http://lchaimweekly.org) (#668), with permission.

# Segulos Yisroel



# SEGULOS FOR PARSHAS EMOR & LAG B'OMER

## Chai Rotel Mashke

The *Ta'amei HaMinhogim* says that numerous people who have had difficulty having children, finding a *shidduch*, recovering from an illness or attaining a livelihood were successful only after they donated *Chai Rotel* for the *Lag Ba'Omer* celebrations in Meron.

*Rotel* is an ancient measurement: eighteen rotel is roughly fifty-four liters.

Rav Yehuda Leib Horenstein writes that he met two people on *Lag Ba'Omer* in Meron who donated *Chai Rotel* and had children after more than ten years of marriage. The *Bobover Rav*, the *Kedushas Tzion*, sent a letter from Poland to his Chassidim in Eretz Yisrael asking them to donate *Chai Rotel* in Meron on this holy day on behalf of a couple who did not have children.

Rav Hillel Lichtenstein of Kolomaya wrote a *sefer* titled *Shirei Maskil*, which, in his words on the title page, “brings about *parnossa vechalkola* (sustenance and livelihood).”

In the introduction, he explains why:

“I saw the poverty of my people and I realized that it was the *klippa* of *Amolek*, the angel of death, the evil inclination, who are one and the same being that causes us to sin through laziness in fulfilling the *Torah*, which is food for the soul, and he detracts from our *parnossa*, as it says in *Kiddushin*: “My sinful actions have caused me to lose my *parnossa*”. Therefore I wrote this *sefer*; through learning these teachings, whoever wishes to have abundant sustenance in his household should study them and defeat the evil one.”

כי עבור זה שראה ראיתי את עני ממי בערן השפם והפרנסה שבמוהיר מאד נתמעטה משה שמתי אל לבי מה הוא סיכת דבר זה ונודע לי שקליפת עמלק היא היא הגורמת למעט הפרנסה) עיין קהלת יעקב ערך ממ (וטעם הדבר משום שהוא עמלק והוא השטן והוא היצהר שאומנתו היא להסית ולהדיח לבני אדם שיתעצלו בקיומה של תורה שהיא היא מזון הנשמה ועיכ נסתבב להתמעט מזון הגוף כרתנן) סוף קדושין (הרימותי את מעשי וקפחת את פרנסתי לכן עבור אהבת אחי ועמי טרחתי ולקטתי מעט אמרים וסדרתי אותם בכללים שונים שישודתם מל שרשי מורה כאלה שגורמים שפע ופרנסה ומעתה כל הרוצה לזכות לפרנס את ביתו בריוח ולא בצמצום, בנחת ולא בצער, יר עיניו בראשו לעיין בהם ועיכ יהי זריז לקיים הכא

להרגך השכם להרגו למחות שם עמלק וכוחו שלא לשמוע לו בהסתתו באלה, ובזה אפשר לפרש כוונת) פסוק יט בראשית סימן ג (מל דרך רמז בזעת אפך תאכל לחם הכוונה רת 7 של בזעת אפך הוא יתמחה את זכר עמלק והיינו לקיים ולעשות מה שמבואר בכללים האלה !ולשבר כוחו של המסית עיכ תזכה תאבל לחם לשפע ופרנסה כריות ובנחת

### **Shooting A Bow And Arrow On Lag BaOmer**

There is a well-known *minhag Yisrael*, a custom that young students have, to shoot with a bow and arrow in displays of archery on *Lag BaOmer*.

Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dynow, *mechaber* of *Bnei Yissoschor*, says he heard that Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow explained the reason behind this *minhag* as follows:

It is known (*Yerushalmi Berochos* 9:2) that in the days of Rav Shimon bar Yochai the rainbow was not seen. On the day of his ascension we mark this occasion and commemorate the absence of the rainbow with the bow and arrow. (*Bnei Yissoschor Iyar* 3:4)

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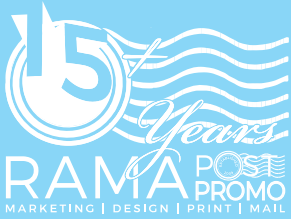
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