

# ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



נדפס באדיבות

**RAMAPOST**  
MARKETING | DESIGN | PRINT | MAIL

"ESSENTIALLY" ABOVE & BEYOND!

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

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

*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 VAYEISHEV/CHANUKA



❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

### The Strength to Refuse

In the year 1809, Rav Levi Yitzchok decided to take a trip to the city of Iasi in Romania, which is about two hundred miles from Berditchev. At the beginning of the week, he inquired with the local coachmen about the journey.

"How long does it take to get to Iasi?" he asked the coachmen.

"About a week," said one of them.

"More than a week," said another.

"Rebbe, tell me," said a third, "how long do you want it to take?"

"I want to be there before *Shabbos*," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "Can we get there before *Shabbos*?"

"Absolutely," he replied. "With the help of *Hashem*, we will be there before *Shabbos*."

"Then hitch up your horses," said Rav Levi Yitzchok. "We leave right away."

Rav Levi Yitzchok invited his son Rav Yisrael of Pikov to join him on the journey, and they set out immediately.

Along the way, they also stopped in Czernowitz to pay their respects to Rav Chaim Tirer, its *Rav*, the author of *Be'er Mayim Chaim*. Czernowitz, a somewhat modern city, was the home of many *maskilim*, followers of the Jewish Enlightenment, who sought to turn their backs on

the ancient Jewish traditions and embrace the values of the modern world. These *maskilim* persecuted Rav Chaim mercilessly until he finally decided to leave Czernowitz and accept the position of *Rav* of Mogilev in White Russia, far to the north. This was the state of mind in which Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rav Yisrael found Rav Chaim. They invited him to join them on their journey to Iasi, and he accepted.

As the coachman had reassured them, they arrived in Iasi early on Friday, and they immediately went to meet with Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel, who was the *Rav* of Iasi and author of *Oheiv Yisrael*, who would one day become famous as the *Rav* of Apta and Mezhibuzh. These great *Chassidic* leaders met together in privacy for a long time, and when they emerged they did not reveal the purpose of this meeting to anyone.

Twenty-five years later, Rav Yisrael of Ruzhin would visit Iasi and recall that mysterious meeting. "If *Soton* had known why the Berditchever *Rav* had wanted to come to Iasi, he would have set fire to the wheels of his coach."

The purpose of the meeting remains a mystery to this day.

Having discussed what they discussed, the *Chassidic* leaders went together to *shul* to welcome the arrival of *Shabbos*. Word of the Berditchever's arrival had spread quickly throughout Iasi and the surrounding villages, and a crowd of thousands, eager to hear the celestial sweetness of the Berditchever's prayers, awaited the sages outside the *shul*.

As expected, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel invited the Berditchever to lead all the prayers. Rav Levi Yitzchok in turn asked his son, Rav Yisrael, to lead *Mincha*, while he would lead *Kabbolas Shabbos* and *Ma'ariv*.

After *Mincha*, Rav Levi Yitzchok wrapped himself in a *tallis* and took his place before the *amud*. Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel left his designated place as the *Rav* and went to stand on the stairs leading to the *aron kodesh* to the immediate left of Rav Levi Yitzchok. Then Rav Chaim of Czernowitz came forward and stood on the stairs to the immediate right of Rav Levi Yitzchok.

A great shudder went through the crowd. Why had these holy sages arranged themselves as a tribunal configuration usually seen only on *Yom Kippur* during *Kol Nidrei*? Why had the three *Rabbonim* arranged to come together here in Iasi on this *Shabbos*? What sort of impending doom hung over the people of Iasi and indeed all the Jewish people? And if so, how would these sages prevail upon *Hashem* to annul the harsh decree?

As he sang the words of *Lecha Dodi*, Rav Levi Yitzchok lingered over the words, "*Kumi tze'i mitoch hahafeicha, rav loch sheves b'emek habocha, vehu yachmol alayich chemla*. Arise, depart from amidst the chaos. Long enough have you dwelt in the valley of weeping. He will grace you with compassion." He repeated them and repeated them once again. Then he fell silent and cocked his head to one side, as if he were listening for a sound, a sign – something. The vast crowd observed all of this in shock. Terror gripped their hearts, and remorseful sobs soon filled the eerie silence.

Finally, Rav Levi Yitzchok stirred and seemed to hear something no one else could hear, a sound that signaled Divine reprieve. He leaped into the air with great joy and concluded *Lecha Dodi* with ecstatic song.

Later that year, Rav Levi Yitzchok passed away, and a question arose as to who would

succeed him as chief *Rav* of Berditchev. A committee of the city's townspeople invited Rav Yisrael of Pikov to succeed his sainted father and awarded him a certificate of appointment.

At that time, Berditchev was also graced with the presence of Rav Ephraim Kalker, the son-in-law of Rav Yechiel, who was the son of Rav Moshe Chaim Ephraim, the Rav of Sudilkov, author of *Degel Machne Ephraim*, grandson of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*. Rav Ephraim Kalker usually spent *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur* in Berditchev and *Succos* with his *Rebbe*, Rav Tzvi Leib of Alik.

When the Berditchever passed away, Rav Ephraim Kalker proposed that Rav Tzvi Leib be appointed as his successor. Because of his great prestige and stature, Rav Ephraim's opinion was embraced by several of the most prominent householders of Berditchev, and they prevailed on the townspeople to offer the position to Rav Tzvi Leib. A delegation traveled to Alik to make the offer in person. Rav Tzvi accepted and accompanied them back to Berditchev to become its new *Rav*, much to the chagrin of Rav Levi Yitzchok's widow and his son Rav Yisrael, who had expected to step into his father's shoes.

Rav Tzvi Leib officiated as the *Rav* during all that *Shabbos*, and Rav Yisrael stayed away. But as the sun settled into the horizon and the people came together for *sholosh seudos*, Rav Yisrael decided to join them at Rav Tzvi Leib's table. When he arrived the ritual was already well under way.

As soon as Rav Yisrael entered, Rav Tzvi Leib stood up and called out, "Make way for the Berditchever *Rav*!" He moved over and seated Rav Yisrael next to him at the head of the table.

"Do not worry, Rav Yisrael," he said. "I acknowledge you as the *Rav* of Berditchev. Your father was sitting next to me just minutes ago as I was saying my *divrei Torah*, and he warned me not to encroach on that which is rightfully yours. I promised I would not spend another night in Berditchev." He paused. "He also gave me a message for you."

Rav Yisrael held his breath. "What did he say?"

"He said that had you been here during the *divrei Torah* he would have been able to appear to you every *Shabbos* during *sholosh seudos*."

True to his word, Rav Tzvi Leib left Berditchev right after *havdola* but not before stopping at Rav Levi Yitzchok's home and personally telling his *Rebbetzin* exactly what had transpired during *sholosh seudos*.

Rav Yisrael went onto serve as his father's successor as *Rav* of Berditchev. According to his father's specific instructions, he also incorporated some of his own thoughts in *Kedushas Levi*, his father's written legacy to the world.



## **Dvar Torah**

Yosef withstood the advances of Potiphar's wife. The *Torah* tells us that "*vayemo'en*, he refused" to succumb to her blandishments. The *ta'am* (cantillation note) over the word *vayemo'en* is a *shalsheles*, which directs the reader to chant the indicated syllable in three twists. Why is this *ta'am* attached to this word?

The three-tiered *shalsheles*, explains Rav Yisrael of Pikov, indicates that the merit of the

three patriarchs, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, enabled Yosef to resist the Egyptian temptress. Moreover, it may indicate the thoughts that went through Yosef's mind as she tried to draw him into sin. The prophet (*Amos* 5:15) speaks of "the remnant of Yosef", on which *Rashi* explains that the name Yosef can refer to the entire Jewish people.

Yosef realized that all three subdivisions of the Jewish nation – *Kohanim*, *Leviim* and *Yisraelim* – would suffer irreparable damage if he failed this crucial test, and this gave him the strength to resist. In addition, Yosef knew that he would ultimately be known by three names: Yosef, Yehosef and Tzofnas Pa'anei'ach, the last of which, according to *Targum Onkelos*, means "a person to whom hidden matters are revealed". It would thus be unacceptable for him to succumb to Potiphar's wife.



## **Kedushas Levi on Chanuka**

### The Salvation and Redemption of Chanuka Happens Again - in These Days as in Those

The Berditchever taught regarding the *nusach* of the *berocha*: "Who did miracles for our forefathers, in those days, in this time", that all the other miracles were above and outside the framework of time, such as the miracles in Egypt, the splitting of the sea and the splitting of the Jordan River. All these miracles were supernatural, whereas the miracles of *Chanuka* and *Purim* were both clothed in nature. On *Chanuka*, the *Chashmono'im* waged a war; on *Purim* it was through Esther's unique position as the queen. We therefore recite the *berocha* on *Chanuka* "Who did miracles . . . in this time". This means it was within the framework of time; in this world, *Hashem* did miracles within the natural order, even though all is from *Hashem*.

That is why this holiday is called *Chanuka*, since *Chazal* taught (*Sifri Matos* 30:2) that Moshe prophesied using the [exact] term "Zeh - this" and all the other *nevi'im* (prophets) prophesied using the [relative term] "Koh - like this". *Koh* refers to this world [where things are relative]. Moshe, however, who was always attached, cleaving to *Hashem* in *dveikus*, was above time; he used the [absolute] term *Zeh - this*.

Thus, *Chanuka* means *Chanu Koh* - they rested on *Koh*, they rested their understanding of these miracles on *Koh* - the relativism of this world, since the miracle was within the framework of time and the natural order.

Every year, during these days, that miracle is revealed once again, and *Hashem* sends His nation an abundance of blessings of salvation and redemption. This is as we recite during the *Shemone Esrei* prayer (*Nusach Al HaNissim*) "And to Your nation and people Yisrael You performed a great salvation and redemption as on this day," - *Kehayom* - as on this day - specifically. Today there will be a salvation and redemption during these days as it was during those days in the past.



**Kislev is the month** in which *Chanuka* occurs, for *Kislev* corresponds to Yaakov, and miracles are in the merit of Yaakov, [Note: The connection with the month of *Kislev* is the verse (*Bereishis* 50:11), "The Canaanite inhabitants of the land saw..." (*Mishnas Chassidim*,"

*Maseches Cheshvan-Kislev*, Chapter 1, *Mishna* 3), which was said at the time of the death of Yaakov, in the month of *Kislev*; See *Bnei Yissoschor* section on *Kislev - Teves*, Essay 1, Letter 1.] as is known; and therefore, the principal miracle of *Chanuka* occurred in this month. This month is also the third, counting from *Tishrei* as the beginning of the year, which corresponds to *Levi*, the third of the Tribes (See *Tikkunei Zohar*, *Tikkun* 18, 32; and in the *Kisei Melech* *ibid.*) And therefore, the miracle was accomplished through the agency of the *Chashmono'im*, for *Kohanim* belong to the Tribe of *Levi*.

{*Chanuka* falls in *Kislev*, the month of Yaakov's *petira*, in whose merit miracles occur. The month is also the third, counting from *Tishrei*, which corresponds to *Levi*, and that is why the miracle was performed by the *Kohanim* Family of the *Chashmono'im*.}

**The Principle** is that on *Rosh HaShana* and *Yom Kippur* the Holy One, Blessed is He, remembers His people for the good, but it is not until *Chanuka* that they perceive that good intellectually, for "...the eyes of the People..." (*Bamidbar* 15:24) [Note: The *pasuk* refers to a case where the *Sanhedrin* mistakenly ruled that a form of idol worship was permissible.] is explained by *Rashi* (*Taanis* 24a) as referring to the wise men of the people. [Note: See *Shir HaShirim Rabba* 1:15, 2; *Zohar HaKodosh* part 2, text beginning "*The sweet smell*".] And therefore, the celebration of *Chanuka* is by means of lamps, for they are a source of light and make vision possible. And afterward, the main celebration of *Purim* is through speech, for then *Megillas Esther* is read aloud in public, and on *Pesach* the main celebration is through deed, which is why we eat *matza*. [Note: On *Pesach*, speech is also a major component of the celebration, because we are obligated to recount the events of the Exodus at the *Seder*.] But again on *Chanuka*, sight and vision are primary, and its time of celebration is the month of *Kislev*, the connection to which is the verse (*Bereishis* 50:11), "The Canaanite inhabitants of the land saw..." (*Mishnas Chassidim*, *Maseches Cheshvan-Kislev*, Chapter 1, *Mishna* 3), that speaks in terms of "seeing".

{On the *Yomim Noro'im Hashem* remembers His people for good. But it is not until *Chanuka* that the people see that good in their minds' eyes. And that is why the celebration of the holiday involves lamps, for they are a **source of light**. Similarly, the main celebration of *Purim* is through speech, for then the *Megilla* is read. And the celebration of *Pesach* is through deed, for then we eat *matza*.}



**The inauguration of the *Mishkon* took place on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*** (*Shemos* 40:17), the inauguration of the first *Bais HaMikdosh* was in *Tishrei* (*Pesikta Rabbosi* 6:5) and the inauguration of the second *Bais HaMikdosh* took place in *Kislev* (*Chaggai* 2:10,18) [Note: The reference given in the text of the *Kedushas Levi* before us in *Melochim Aleph* is not correct.], each according to its special quality. The miracles which took place at the time of the *Mishkon* occurred close to *Nissan*; therefore, its inauguration took place then. And the second *Bais HaMikdosh*, in connection with which the miracle involving the *Chashmono'im* occurred in the month of *Kislev*, had its inauguration at that time. And the inauguration of the first *Bais HaMikdosh* occurred in the month of *Tishrei*. The underlying reason is this: The *Mishkon* represents what the body is capable of understanding in terms of the existence of a Creator, Blessed is He, and the *Bais HaMikdosh* represents what the *neshoma* (soul) is capable of

understanding in terms of the existence of the Creator of the Universe. And the time that the *neshoma* is most active in perceiving the Creator is *Tishrei*, because He forgives our wrongdoings at that time, while in *Nissan* the body is most active in perceiving the existence of a Creator of the Universe, for it is through miracles and wonders that the body recognizes Him.

{The inaugurations of the *Mishkon*, first *Bais HaMikdosh* and second *Bais HaMikdosh* took place in *Nissan*, *Tishrei* and *Kislev*, respectively.}

**Therefore**, the *Bais HaMikdosh* is called the Eternal House (*Melochim Aleph8:13*), because the *neshoma* is eternal while the body is transient. And the following statement of *Chazal* (*Eruvin 2a*) shows clearly that this is true: "How do we know that the *Bais Hamikdosh* is also referred to as a *Mishkon*, and that the *Mishkon* is also referred to as a *Bais Hamikdosh*?" For in truth there is a connection, by virtue of which the *neshoma* takes pleasure as well in what the body takes pleasure in, for it is the continued existence of the body that ensures the continued existence of the *neshoma* in this world, to serve the Creator. The opposite is also true, namely, that the *neshoma's* activity in serving the Creator is also a source of tranquillity for the body. And that is the reason why the *Mishkon*, which is more closely associated with the body, is also referred to as a *Bais Hamikdosh*, and why the *Bais Hamikdosh* is also called a *Mishkon*; upon reflection this will become obvious.

{Because the soul is eternal, the *Bais HaMikdosh* is called the Eternal House. But the *Bais HaMikdosh* is also called a *Mishkon*. And the *Mishkon* is also called a *Bais HaMikdosh*. For there is a connection between the two entities. The soul takes pleasure in what the body takes pleasure in, because it is the body that ensures the existence in this world of the *neshoma*, to serve *Hashem*. And the *neshoma's* activity in serving the Creator is also a source of tranquillity for the body.}

Now we will explain by an analogy, with the Help of Heaven, the statement of *Chazal* (*Shabbos 21b*) that **there is a disagreement as to whether it is permitted to use the light of the Chanuka lamp or whether such usage is prohibited**. The analogy is as follows: A mighty king comes to spend the night in the house of a poor person. Now, it is natural that when a mighty king comes to visit someone, one sees the magnificence of his wealth and his greatness, and this poor person also rejoices in his heart when he sees the great wealth of the king, wealth beyond anything he has ever seen before. But a different poor individual, who is also wise, does not rejoice over the great wealth of the king, for he knows that from the perspective of the king, his wealth is insignificant; rather, he rejoices in the very fact that the king has decided to spend the night with him, in his house. So it is when *Hashem*, May He be Blessed, performs miracles for human beings: one rejoices in receiving the benefit of the miracle itself, that *Hashem*, may He be blessed, has performed. This is analogous to the poor person who is very much impressed by the wealth of the king in and of itself; so does he rejoice in the miraculous kindness that was performed for him. But the other type of poor person does not rejoice in the miracles per se, for he realizes that the Holy One, Blessed is He, created all the Worlds and that He is omnipotent. Rather, his pleasure in contemplating the miracles derives from the fact that they are evidence that the Holy One, blessed is He, as it were, wears humanity as a garment, because He performs miracles for human beings. For this reason he feels joy as, in the analogy, the more sophisticated poor man rejoices that the

mighty king chose to spend the night and be involved with him. So again does the more sophisticated observer of miracles rejoice at the fact that the mighty and omnipotent King chose, as it were, to dwell among human beings.

{Now we will explain, by way of an analogy, the disagreement as to whether it is permitted to use the light of the *Chanuka* lamp or not. A mighty king has come to visit two poor individuals. One is impressed by the king's wealth; the other, by the fact that the king has come to visit him. Similarly, when *Hashem* performs miracles; One person appreciates the miracle itself; the other, the fact that *Hashem* performs miracles for human beings.}

And this disagreement, where one opinion maintains that it is permitted to make use of the light of the *Chanuka* lamp, is in alignment with the idea that it is appropriate to rejoice that *Hashem*, may He be blessed, performed this miracle, whose benefit is in this world, **for him**, and this world exists **for the purpose of human beings benefiting from it**; for that reason this opinion considers it permissible to make use of the light of the *Chanuka* lamp. And the other opinion, that it is forbidden to make use of the light of the *Chanuka* lamp, corresponds to the perspective that we rejoice in *Hashem*, may He be blessed, Himself, for He chose to clothe His radiance, as it were, inhuman beings. From this perspective, any benefit derived from the miracle is inconsequential, and is only evidence of a much greater idea, far above the concerns of this world, and it is not permitted for human beings to make use of anything that is not of this world. Regarding such matters we are guided by the verse, "**...no eye has seen, O G-d, beside You...**" [Note: The full text of the verse quoted is, "*For since the beginning of the world man has not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither has the eye seen, O G-d, beside You, what He has prepared for them that wait for Him.*" (Yeshayohu 64:3) The *Talmud* cites this verse to demonstrate that *Torah* scholars do not condition their righteous behavior on any reward that they might receive in the World-to-Come; they prefer to trust *Hashem* regarding such matters.] (*Berochos* 34b). For that reason, this opinion holds that it is forbidden to make use of the light of the *Chanuka* lamp.

{The disagreement with regard to the permissibility of using the light of the *Chanuka* lamp depends on the difference in perspective with respect to *Hashem's* miracles. The view that one may appreciate the miracle in itself for the benefits that it has afforded human beings, will hold that it is permissible to use the light of the *Chanuka* lamp. The view that one should, rather, appreciate the fact that the infinite G-d has chosen to involve Himself with human beings, will assert that it is prohibited to use the light of the *Chanuka* lamp.}



## ☞ GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER ☞



YAHREZITS FOR WEEK BEGINNING PARSHAS VAYEISHEV

[http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim\\_yahrtzeits/Kislev/Teves](http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrtzeits/Kislev/Teves)

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

\* **26<sup>th</sup> of Kislev** ~ Begins Friday Night (Dec 11<sup>th</sup>) ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Chanukah

\* **Rav Avrohom ben Dovid, Raavad III**, also known as the *Ba'al HaSogas* (1121–1198). The third of three great Jews named Avrohom ben Dovid who lived in the same era, this Rav Avrohom was born in Provence in the small village of Puskeiras (Posquières) to a wealthy and prominent man who was close to Prince Roger. At the age of twelve he went to Lunel to study

with Rav Meshulem *ben* Moshe, author of *Hashlama* on the *Rif*. He married the daughter of Rav Avrohom *ben* Yitzchok, *Av Bais Din* (known as *Raavad II*), the author of *Ho'Eshkol*. He then learned in the *Yeshiva* of Narbonne, headed by Rav Yosef *ben* Marven HaLevi. The *Ravad's* brief critical notes to the *Mishne Torah* are known for their abrasive quality. He objected to the *Rambam's* methodology of presenting normative rulings without indication of their sources of rationales. In his later years, he learned *kabbola*, and his two sons, Rav Dovid and Rav Yitzchok *Sagi Nohor*, were among Provence's first *mekubolim*. Among the *Raavad III's* greatest students were Rav Yitzchok *HaKohen* of Narbonne (the first commentator on the *Yerushalmi*), Rav Avrohom *ben* Nosson *HaYarchi* (author of *HaManhig*), Rav Meir *ben* Yitzchok (author of *HaEzer*), and Rav Asher *ben* Meshulem of Lunel, (4959/1198);

- \* **Rav Elozor** of Kozhnitz [Kozienice]. Son of Rav Yisrael, the Kozhnitzer *Maggid*, his thoughts are recorded in *Likutei Mahara*. One of his disciples was Rav Aryeh Yehuda Leib *HaLevi* Epstein (1837–1914), "Rebbe Leibush the Second," author of *Birkas Tov*, (5624/1863);
  - \* **Rav Meshulam Roth** (1875–1962). Born in Gorodenka, Galicia (now in Ukraine), his teachers in *Talmud* and *halocha* were Rav Yaakov Weidenfeld (*Rav* of Grimaylov and father of the *Tschebiner Rav*, Rav Dov Berish Weidenfeld), Rav Avrohom Mendel Steinberg (*Rav* of Brody) and Rav Meir Arik (*Rav* of Bucach, and perhaps the leading Galician sage of the period). For a time, Rav Roth also studied with Rav Yehuda Modern of Sighet, from whom he gained a strong attachment to the works of the *Chasam Sofer*. After his marriage, he was elected *Rav* of Chorostkiv (Ukraine). Rav Roth was eventually elected *Rav* of Shatz (Suceava, Romania) and later Czernowitz (Tchernovitz), Ukraine, where he witnessed the community's destruction during the Holocaust. In 1944, Rav Roth managed to escape to *Eretz Yisrael*. [16 *Kislev*, according to *Yated* 2006 and 2007], (5723/1962);
  - \* **Rav Yehoshua Zelig Diskin**, *Rav* of Pardes Chana (1896–1970), born in Chislavichi, son of Rav Shimon Moshe Diskin (1872–1930), author of *Medrash Shimoni*. Rav Yehoshua wrote the preface to his father's *sefer*, entitled *Toldos HaMechaber*. His son, named for his father, Rav Shimon Diskin (1932–1999), was born in the town of Periaslov in the Kiev region of the Ukraine where Rav Yehoshua Zelig was *Rav*. He became one of the *Roshei Yeshiva* of *Kol Torah*. The Diskin family is descended from the *Maharal* of Prague and the *Chavos Yo'ir*, (5731/1970);
  - \* **Rav Dovid Hirsch Mayer**, *Rosh Yeshiva*, *Bais Binyomin*, Stamford, Connecticut (1947–2002). Son of Rav Yitzchok Zev Mayer (Nitra, Czechoslovakia), author of *Maharsha Ha'Oruch*, a close friend of Rav Michoel Ber Weissmandl. His mother, Leah, was the main character in the famous story of the woman who demanded a knife for her newborn son as she was being taken away to a concentration camp; she then circumcised her 8-day-old child. The child was Rav Dovid Hirsch's older brother, Menashe. The family survived and moved to America. Rav Dovid Hirsch learned at the Nitra *Yeshiva* in Mount Kisco, NY, then in Lakewood. He was close to Rav Shneur Kotler and Rav Nosson Wachtfogel and was instrumental in the founding of the Los Angeles *Kollel*. He founded *Bais Binyomin* in 1977, (5763/2002).
- \* **27<sup>th</sup> of Kislev ~ Begins Motzai Shabboa (Dec 12<sup>th</sup>) ~ 3<sup>rd</sup> day of Chanukah**
- \* **Rav Tzvi Hirsch Rosanish**, author of *Tesha Shitos*. He was the son of Rav Yissochor Berish, *Av Bais Din* of Podhajce, and grandson of Rav Yaakov Yehoshua of Cracow and Lvov, author of the *Pnei Yehoshua*, (5565/1804);
  - \* **Rav Chaim (Tirar) Czernowitz** (or Chernovitzer) (1760–1816), author of *Be'er Mayim Chaim*. Born near Butchatch, Galicia (now Poland), he studied under Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Botchatch and became a *Chassid* of Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov, Rav Shmelke of



Nikolsburg and the *Maggid* of Mezritch. He became *Rav* in Czernowitz in the Bukovina province of Romania, in 1789, and remained there for twenty-three years. In 1812, war broke out, and Bukovina was annexed by Austria. The new government issued harsh anti-Semitic decrees, resulting in Rav Chaim's departure, first to Botchan, then to *Eretz Yisrael*. He settled in Tzefas, where he lived privately for the last five years of his life. He is buried in Tzefas, (5577/1816);

✳ **Rav Yechiel Mechel** of Galina, son-in-law of Rav Meir of Premishlan, (5627/1866);

✳ **Rav Shaul Margulis** of Lublin, (5648/1887);

✳ **Rav Avrohom Yitzchok Kahan** (Kohn, Kahn), the *Toldos Aharon Rebbe* (1914–1996). Born to Shaindel Berocha of Tzefas and named for his great-grandfather, Rav Yitzchok Avrohom Heller of Tzefas, Rav Avrohom Yitzchok and his family were forced to leave *Eretz Yisrael* in 1918, moving to Honiad in the Zibenbergen region of Romania. There he learned in the town's *Yeshiva*, headed by Rav Avrohom Freund (father of Rav Moshe Aryeh Freund, later to head the *Badatz* in Yerushalayim). He eventually moved to the *Yeshiva* of Krulle, headed by Rav Yoel Teitelbaum, and moved with the *Yeshiva* to Satmar. He became very close to Rav Aharon (Arele) Roth, founder of *Shomrei Emunim* of Meah She'orim, and later married his daughter. When his mentor was *niftar* in 1947, Rav Avrohom Yitzchok became his successor. He authored *Divrei Emuna*. Following his *petira*, two of his sons became *Rebbes*. The younger son, Rav Duvid Kahn of Monsey, a *talmid* of the Satmar *Rebbe*, became the *Toldos Aharon Rebbe*. The elder son, Rav Shmuel Yaakov Kahn, a *talmid* of the Vizhnitzer *Rebbe*, became the *Rebbe* of a group that was named *Toldos Avrohom Yitzchok* after his father, whose main *Bais Medrash* is also in Meah She'orim, one block away from the *Toldos Aharon* building. Another son is a *Rosh Yeshiva* in Kiryas Yoel, New York. Rav Avrohom Yitzchok is said to have instructed his followers to learn the works of Rav Aharon *HaLevi* of Staroselye (Strashelye), which include *Sha'arei HaYichud VeHaEmunah*, *Shaarei Avoda* and *Avodas HaLevi*, (5757/1996);

✳ **Rav Boruch Yehoshua Yerachmiel Rabinowitz**, *Rebbe* of Munkatch and Chief *Rav* of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Cholon, *Eretz Yisrael*, (5675–5758/1914–1997).

## ✳ **28<sup>th</sup> of Kislev** ~ Begins Sunday Night (Dec 13<sup>th</sup>) ~ 4<sup>th</sup> day of Chanukah

✳ **Rav Avrohom Ravigo**. Born in Modena, Italy, he became highly esteemed as both a supporter of *Torah* and as a great *Torah* scholar himself. He and a party of twenty-five set sail from Livorno, Italy, for *Eretz Yisrael* in 1702. When they arrived in Yerushalayim, his wife, daughter, and closest *talmid* died in a plague. He opened a *Yeshiva*; among the ten *Rabbonim* who learned there was the son-in-law of Rav Yehuda *HeChassid*. After the *petira* of Rav Moshe *ben* Chaviv, Rav Avrohom was appointed *Rishon Letzion*. However, he passed away during one of his trips abroad trying to raise funds. His *talmid*, Rav Mordechai *ben* Yehuda Leib Ashkenazi, wrote *Eshel Avrohom* on the *Zohar* and other *Kabbalistic* teachings that he received from Rav Avrohom, (5745/1714);

✳ **Rav Avrohom Madjar**, *Av Bais Din* in Yerushalayim and author of *Divrei Sholom*, (5595/1834);

✳ **Rav Boruch Dovid Twersky** of Klintowitz, author of *Vayevorech Dovid*, (5686/1925);

✳ **Rav Ezra Hamway**, *Ra'avad* of Aram Tzova in Syria, (5706/1945);

✳ **Rav Eliyohu Meir Bloch** (1894–1955). Born on *Simchas Torah* in the small Lithuanian city of Telshe to Rav Yosef Leib, *Rav* and *Rosh Yeshiva* of Telshe, having assumed the helm of the *Yeshiva* from his father-in-law, Rav Eliezer Gordon, the founder of the *Yeshiva*. After his marriage, he spent twelve years as a *Rosh Yeshiva* at Telshe. When it became clear that the *Yeshiva* could not continue under the Soviets, the administration sent Rav Elya Meir and his

brother-in-law, the late *Rosh Yeshiva* Rav Chaim Mordechai Katz, on a mission to the United States, to raise funds to move the *Yeshiva* to either America or *Eretz Yisrael*. When they arrived, they learned of the Nazi invasion. They decided to restart the *Yeshiva* in Cleveland, (5716/1955);

✳ **Rav Chaim Mordechai Wainkrantz** (1920–2004). Born in Popov, Poland, he studied at the Novardok branch in Polutsk, then traveled to Bialystok to learn at the *Bais Yosef Yeshiva* under Rav Avrohom Yoffen. During World War II, he was exiled to Siberia. In 1947, he moved to America, married, and learned in *Kollel* for another ten years under Rav Yoffen. He then founded a *Yeshiva Ketana*. He was also *Maggid Shiur* at Congregation *Shomrei Emuna*. In his later years, he became *Rosh Yeshiva* at *Bais Yosef*, (5765/2004).

✳ 29<sup>th</sup> of Kislev ~ Begins Monday Night (Dec 14<sup>th</sup>) – 5<sup>th</sup> Day of Chanuka

✳ **Rav Aharon Shimon Shapiro** of Prague, (5440/1679);

✳ **Rav Chizkiya ben Dovid da Silva**, *mechaber* of *Pri Chodosh* on the *Shulchon Aruch*, born in Livorna, Italy, (5420–5459/1659-1698);

✳ **Rav Gedalya** of Linitz, *mechaber* of *Teshuos Chein*. Son of Rav Yitzchok, he was a *talmid* of the *Maggid* of Mezritch. Rebbe Nachman said about Rav Gedalya of Linitz that he was foremost in bringing people to *teshuva* in that generation, even though he never gave lectures and only sat and learned all day, (5564/1803);

✳ **Rav Tzvi Mordechai** of Plavna, (5627/1866);

✳ **Rav Shlomo HaKohen** of Vilna, *mechaber* of *Cheshek Shlomo*, (5666/1905);

✳ **Rav Boruch Hager** of Vishiva, (5705/1944);

✳ **Rav Yitzchok Shmuel Eliyohu Finkler** of Radoshitz (Radoszyce), (1902–1944), son of Rav Meir Menachem Finkler, (5623–5673/1862–1912);

✳ **Rav Yisrael** of Husyatyn and Rizhin. The son of Rav Mordechai Shraga and grandson of the Rizhiner *Rebbe*, he married Nechama Gitel, a granddaughter of his uncle, Rav Avrohom Yaakov of Sadiger, when he was fourteen years old. He was also the uncle of Rav Moshenyu of Boyan. In 1937, he moved to Tel Aviv, along with his son-in-law, Rav Yaakov, who would succeed him twelve years later, (5710/1949);

✳ **Rav Shlomo Dovid Kahana** of Warsaw and Yerushalayim, the *Avi Ho'Agunos*, (5714/1953);

✳ **Rav Zushe Waltner** (1918–2002). Born in Hungary, he traveled through Cracow and Switzerland until he was eventually admitted to England in 1937. There, Rav Waltner developed a very close relationship with Rav Eliyohu Dessler. After the war, Rav Waltner and Rav Arye Grossnass traveled to Europe to help the shattered remnants of European Jewry, and founded the *Yeshiva* in Sunderland to accommodate some of them. Traveling to Tangiers to recruit *talmidim* for Sunderland, he met Rav Shmuel Toledano, who soon built a *Yeshiva* building and then invited Rav Waltner to come and found a *Yeshiva*. At the advice of Rav Dessler, who consulted with the *Chazon Ish* on the matter, Rav Waltner accepted the challenge. There he set up a *Yeshiva* called *Eitz Chaim*. There are thousands of *Bnei Torah* and religious *balabatim* today who freely acknowledge that he is responsible for their spiritual life. He also established the *Otzar HaTorah* institutions in Morocco. Among his *talmidim* from Tangiers are Rav Shimon Pinto of Strasbourg and Rav Shlomo Farrache of Bnei Brak, (5763/2002).

✳ 1<sup>st</sup> of Teves ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Dec 15<sup>th</sup>) – 6<sup>th</sup> Day of Chanuka

✳ **Avrohom Ovinu** (1638 BCE) (*Bava Basra* 91a). [According to others, his *yahrzeit* is the 1<sup>st</sup> of *Tishrei* or *Nissan* (*Mo'ed Koton* 28a)];

✳ **Rav Yo'ir Chaim Bachrach** (1638–1702), *mechaber* of *Chavos Yo'ir*. His grandmother,

Chava, was a granddaughter of the *Maharal* of Prague. Her husband, Rav Shmuel, the *Rav* of Worms, was murdered during a pogrom in 1615, and she never remarried. Chava lived in Worms until her grandson Yo'ir Chaim's thirteenth birthday at which time she undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land but was *niftar* on the way. Rav Yo'ir Chaim esteemed her to such an extent that the title of his most famous work, *Chavos Yo'ir*, is based on her name. One of his works, *Mekor Chaim*, a major commentary on the *Shulchon Aruch Orach Chaim* was ready to be printed when the commentaries of *Taz* and *Mogen Avrohom* were printed. Sadly, Rav Yo'ir Chaim withdrew his own commentary. Besides his *halachic* expertise he had complete mastery of all the sciences and music and had a deep interest in history. He also wrote poetry. He compiled a forty-six-volume encyclopedia on many topics. In 1689, the Worms community was decimated by the French. Gradually, it was rebuilt. In 1699, he was finally appointed *Rav* of Worms, where his father and grandfather had served before him. He served for only three years until his *petira*, (5463/1702);

- \* **Rav Masoud Rephael Alfasi**. Born in Fez, Morocco. Leader of the Tunisian Jewish community. *Niftar* in Tunisia, (5535/1774);
- \* **Rav Avrohom Moshe** of Peshis'cha, son of Rav Simcha Bunim, (5589/1828);
- \* **Rav Yosef HaMa'aravi**, *ba'al mofes*, buried in Kfar Elchamama in Tunisia, (5300/1539);
- \* **Rav Yitzchok Eizik Langner**, sixth Stretyner *Rebbe* (1906–1979). Born to Rav Moshe Langner, the fifth Stretyner *Rebbe*; his sister became the Tolner *Rebbetzin*. In 1921, his father moved the family from Galicia to Toronto. He married in 1929, but he and his wife never had children. In 1959, he succeeded his father, (5740/1979);
- \* **Rav Mordechai Shlomo Berman**. Born in Russia to the *mekubol*, Rav Yehuda Leib Berman, who authored a commentary to the *Arizal's Eitz Chaim*, Rav Mordechai Shlomo and his family moved to Tel Aviv when he was still young. He attended *Yeshiva Chabad* before his *bar mitzva* and learned under Rav Dovid Povarsky. When his teacher became *Rosh Yeshiva* of Ponevezh, he took his young *talmid* with him. When the *Chazon Ish* found out about the *illui*, he had him move into his home and cared for him as a son. At Ponevezh, he became the *talmid muvhok* of the *Roshei Yeshiva*, Rav Dovid Povarsky and Rav Shmuel Rozovsky. In time, the *Chazon Ish* married him off to his niece, the daughter of the Steipler *Gaon*. He became *Rosh Mesivta* of Ponevezh at the age of twenty, and later became *Rosh Yeshiva*, (5692–5765/1931–2004).
- \* 2<sup>nd</sup> of Teves ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Dec 16<sup>th</sup>) – 7<sup>th</sup> Day of Chanuka
  - \* **Rav Yaakov Tzvi** of Porisov, (5649/1888);
  - \* **Rav Yitzchok HaLevi Kroiz**, *Yerushalmi*, grandson of Rav Eliezer Yosef, Belzer *Rebbe*;
  - \* **Rav Mordechai Zev Orenstein**, *Rav* of Lvov, (5547/1786).
- \* 3<sup>rd</sup> of Teves ~ Begins Thursday Night (Dec 17<sup>th</sup>) 8<sup>th</sup> Day of Chanuka (Zos Chanuka)
  - \* **Rav Avrohom Brandwein** of Stretyn, the second of four sons of Rav Yehuda Tzvi of Stretyn, who was the foremost student of Rav Uri of Strelisk. Rav Avrohom succeeded his father as the *Rav* of Stretyn, after his father's *petira* in 1854. Rav Avrohom left four daughters, and many of the Stretyner *Chassidim* followed his son-in-law, Rav Uri Rohatyner, and Rav Uri's son, Yehuda Tzvi, after him. Other *Chassidim* of Rav Avrohom followed Rav Nachman of Bursztyn, who was *niftar* in 1914, (5625/1864);
  - \* **Rav Yaakov HaKohen Gadisha** (1851–1909), *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* of Djerba, Tunisia, *mechaber* of *Kochav Yaakov*, *Me'il Yaakov* and *Halichos Yaakov*, (5670/1909);
  - \* **Rav Yechezkel Ezra Yehoshua HaLevi**, *Rav* of the Iraqi community in Yerushalayim, (5702/1941);

\* **Rav Chaim Leib Shmuelevitz**, *Rosh Yeshiva* Mir (1902–1979), born in Stutchin, Poland, where his father, Rav Alter Rephael, was *Rosh Yeshiva*. His mother, Ettel, was the daughter of Rav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, the *Alter* of Novardok. In 1920, both of his parents suddenly passed away, and Rav Chaim was left to care for his younger brother and two younger sisters. When Rav Chaim was twenty-two, Rav Shimon Shkop, *Rosh Yeshiva* in Grodno, invited him to join his *Yeshiva*. Within three years, Chaim was appointed to a lecturing post in the *Yeshiva*. Rav Chaim continued his studies in Mir where the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, chose him as a suitable match for his daughter. With the outbreak of World War II, he remained with the *Mirrer Yeshiva* in its exile in Shanghai for five years. After the war, he lived for a short while in America. With the establishment of the *Mirrer Yeshiva* in Yerushalayim, he immigrated to *Eretz Yisrael* and served as its *Rosh Yeshiva*. Rav Chaim authored *Sichos Mussar*, (5740/1979).



## ❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

### STORIES & ANECDOTES

#### Rav Elozor Ben Moshe Elyokim Breyah of Kozhnitz, 26<sup>th</sup> of Kislev

Rav Elozor of Kozhnitz had a custom: he was very strict regarding travel on *Erev Shabbos* and would never travel anywhere after midday, no matter how short a distance and no matter what the circumstances – no exceptions.

Rav Elozor was once traveling home on *Erev Shabbos*. When they were just a few miles from their destination, the *Rebbe* noticed that the time of day was *Chatzos*. Since it was midday and the *Rebbe* was careful not to travel after *Chatzos* on *Erev Shabbos*, he refused to travel any further and ordered the *gabbai* to stop.

“We will spend *Shabbos* here in this village,” explained the *Rebbe* to the shocked *gabbai*. When the *gabbai* went to see to their lodgings, he discovered that fewer than ten Jews lived in this village and that wherever they could stay the food and provisions would be simple, meager and certainly not the *Shabbos* delicacies they were accustomed to for honoring *Shabbos*.

“*Rebbe*, please, we are just a few miles from home – we must continue!” declared the *gabbai* as the *Rebbe* shook his head in refusal. “But *Rebbe*, it’s just

another half hour!” pleaded the *gabbai*, “and there is no food in honor of *Shabbos* here – they don’t even have a *minyan*!”

All his protests fell on deaf ears. “You know,” explained Rav Elozor calmly, “that under no circumstances do I travel after *Chatzos*, and so I will go no further.” So saying, the *Rebbe* went to immerse himself in the river to purify himself for *Shabbos*.

Meantime, while the *Rebbe* was busy preparing and immersing, the *gabbai* set off toward Kozhnitz. He decided that if the *Rebbe* was so obstinate as to stay, he could still gather *Shabbos* food and bring it back with time to spare. When the *gabbai* arrived in Kozhnitz and word spread throughout the city that the *Rebbe* was spending *Shabbos* alone with no *minyan*, just half an hour away, the *Chassidim* gathered, and scores of *yungeleit* and *bochurim* began making preparations to travel to the *Rebbe*. When the *gabbai* arrived in the small village with the *Shabbos* food there came with him tens of *Chassidim* and the *Shabbos* ended up being an uplifting, spiritual experience for

all.

The *Rebbe* was greatly pleased and told the *Chassidim* a story:

The holy *Chozeh* of Lublin owned a special white *bekesche* that he always wore when he was honored as the *mohel* at a *bris mila*. Once, the *Chassidim* noticed that the *Chozeh* donned the special white robe even when he was not performing a *bris*, and as there was no circumcision the entire day, their wonder only grew. It was the custom that on *Purim* the *talmidim* were allowed to ask any questions they wished. The *Chassidim* asked the *Chozeh*, “Why did the *Rebbe* wear the white robe even though he wasn’t a *mohel* that day?” The *Tzaddik* answered them with a story:

There was a wealthy but miserly merchant who came to conduct some business in Lublin. He was delayed in his business and with half an hour to *Shabbos* he found himself in Lublin with no relatives or acquaintances where he could find lodgings to spend *Shabbos*. As he was stingy, he did not wish to rent a hotel room or pay for his lodgings and so, not knowing anyone, he decided after running out of any other ideas, to head to the *Rebbe’s hoif*. Although he was not a *Chassid*, he trusted the *Chessed* of the *Rebbe* and the *Chassidim* to provide him with food and lodgings for *Shabbos* for free. And so it was. On *Motzoei Shabbos* he headed to the *Rebbe* with a *kvittel* and a *pidyon*, a note of petition with his name to ask for the *Rebbe’s* blessing and a small donation. Paltry indeed – he was so miserly that his half-coin donation was merely symbolic. The *Rebbe* nonetheless accepted both his *pidyon* and his *kvittel*, blessed him and he

went on his way.

After the miser passed away, his soul arose to the heavenly worlds and continued until it reached a certain point where one of the angels stopped him from continuing.

“Stop! You can go no further, explained the angel, for you have a blemish in your *bris mila*.”

“What? How can this be?” protested the miser. “I was once visiting the *Tzaddik*, the *Chozeh* of Lublin, whose eyes can see from one end of this world to the other; if I had a blemish wouldn’t he have let me know and rectified the matter?”

The angel took his protest and argument to the court, which ruled that he had a good point. They ruled that he had permission to ask the *Rebbe* for a *tikkun* and so he did, and that is why the *Rebbe* wore his white *mohel’s bekesche*, which he normally wore for a *bris mila*, since he rectified that Jew’s *bris*.

“And now,” concluded Rav Elozor of Kozhnitz to his *Chassidim*, who had come to spend *Shabbos* together in the village with him, “if that miser wasn’t a *Chassid*, and only visited the *Rebbe* on the pretext of saving himself the fare of a hotel lodging for the weekend, and only donated a paltry half coin as a *pidyon*, yet in Heaven they saw fit that the *Chozeh* should do him a favor and rectify him with a *tikkun*, just think how much more so are you true *Chassidim*, desiring favor and blessings, since you came specifically to spend *Shabbos* here with me! Just think what blessings and favors await all of you!” and he promised them all manner of *berochos*. (*Yafe Sichoson Radomishla* II p. 6:9)



## Rav Chaim Ben Shlomo Tirar of Czernowitz, 27<sup>th</sup> of Kislev

Mechaber of *Be'er Mayim Chaim*

### The Promise

When the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* was

*Rav* of Czernowitz, there was a *bochur* who wanted to be *chazzan*, but the heads of the

congregation were against it, until Rav Chaim convinced them to allow him. From then on, this *bochur* became an avid *Chassid* of the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* and attended to his *Rebbe's* needs all the time.

After many years, before the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* moved to *Eretz Yisrael*, he promised his young *Chassid* and attendant that if he ever needed his assistance or a salvation of any kind he should mention his name and picture his face, and that he would save him.

Many years later, when this young man was in the *mikve*, he accidentally slipped and fell into the boiling hot water of the heating pit. In those days some of the *mikvaos* were built in such a way that one of the pits was filled with water that was heated and boiling hot and this was mixed together with cooler water for bathing. Everyone thought that surely there was no way he could have survived, but when they pulled out his "body" they discovered that not only was he alive, he appeared like a new person.

When they asked him how he had survived he told them of the *Be'er Mayim Chaim's* promise before leaving for *Eretz Yisrael* and that even though now the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* was no longer alive, his promise lived on. "When I fell into the boiling water, I immediately pictured the *Tzaddik's* face and form, and the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* came and anointed my entire body with fragrant oil from *Gan Eden*, healing me completely! (*Maasei Tzaddikim* p. 81)



### **A Head Taller**

It is a well-known fact related by many *Tzaddikim* that on *Shabbos* the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* was a head taller than on weekdays. Rav Dov Beirish Weidenfeld, the *Tchebiner Rav*, used to explain this phenomenon as follows: It simply means that during the week the *Tzaddik* was so

intimately involved in suffering the pain and anguish of *Hashem's* Divine Presence, the *Shechina*, in Her exile, that he was bent over in mourning. However, on *Shabbos Kodesh* he felt the awesome sanctity and holiness of *Shabbos*, especially according to his own lofty level, so much so that this straightened him out and everyone clearly saw that he was indeed a head taller on *Shabbos* than on weekdays. (*Yafeh Sichoson* II #45)



### **A True Taste of Shabbos**

(This is a very famous story about the *Be'er Mayim Chaim*; I have even heard a version that was told by Reb Shlomo Carlebach.)

Hershel was a pure comedian, one of a rare breed. He didn't just tell jokes; he breathed them. Certainly, it seemed to the people in his village of Mosayov in the Marmorash area that he had never drawn a serious breath in his life. He lived for laughs. Nothing was sacred or out of bounds to make fun of. Fear of *Hashem* was absolutely foreign to him. The grin never left his face.

As might be expected, Hershel soon became the most popular guy in Mosayov among the idle, the crude, the silly and the drinkers. Whenever there was a crowd of people on the street or in the village tavern laughing hilariously, it was guaranteed that in the middle was to be found Hershel, perfecting his craft.

Hershel himself was not numbered among the unemployed. He made a nice living as a seller of livestock. As his business took him to all the neighboring towns and villages, his reputation as a comic spread throughout the Marmorash region.

Each year he would travel to the annual great livestock fair in Czernowitz. Another person who consistently attended the fair was the *Rav* of the city, the well-

known *Tzaddik* and scholarly author, Rav Chaim of Czernowitz. He would circulate among the merchants and give them the opportunity to contribute to the many worthy causes that he was involved in for helping needy people and educational institutions.

One year, the fair took place from Sunday through Friday. By the last day the *Tzaddik* had already gathered a significant sum. As he made his final rounds of the stalls, he came across a large group laughing raucously, slapping their thighs and winking at each other. No doubt about it – Hershel the Mosayover must be in the midst of them. And in top form, too.

Rav Chaim thought to slip around them inconspicuously. He knew that from these crude, empty-headed types he could not expect much ‘business’ anyway. But Hershel was quicker than him. “Hey! Holy *Rebbe! Sholom Aleichem!*” he called out, still grinning from the last joke he had just successfully cracked.

“*Aleichem sholom*, my fellow Jews,” responded the *Rav* warmly. The die was cast. Now he could no longer turn away. “Perhaps you gentlemen would care to take a share in the great *mitzva* of *tzedoka*?”

“And why would you need charitable contributions?” asked Hershel, still smirking.

“For *pidyon shevuyim* – redeeming Jews in captivity, called the greatest *mitzva* of all,” the *Rav* responded promptly. “There is a poor, unfortunate Jew who owes a large debt of 1500 *zylotas* (Polish gold currency) to his noble. Now he is languishing in a dungeon.”

Hershel’s companions were all grinning in anticipation. They waited eagerly for their friend’s witty riposte in the rabbi-jester dialogue.

Hershel put his hand in his pocket and took out 1500 *zylotas*, all the money he had brought with him to replenish his livestock. “Here you are, *Rav*,” he said

quietly, with a strange look on his face. “Here is the entire sum you need for the redeeming captives *mitzva*.”

All the onlookers were startled for a moment, but then they realized this must be one of Hershel’s clever jests. The naive *Rav* would put out his hand for the money, and Hershel would pretend to give it to him and then at the last moment he would snatch it back, making a fool of the gullible scholar.

But the *Tzaddik* was not so naive after all. He held back, and simply gazed at the clownish Hershel thoughtfully.

“No, No,” exclaimed Hershel, as his face took on a fully serious expression. “I really mean it. No joke. Please. Take the money.” As he spoke the words, he approached the *Tzaddik* and pushed into his hand the bulging wallet he had drawn out of his pocket.

The astonished *Rav* felt himself overwhelmed with emotion: excitement and relief at being able to secure the release of the poor imprisoned Jew, amazement that such a lowly soul could ascend to the highest of peaks in the briefest of moments. His cheeks were flushed; warm tears pooled at the corners of his eyes.

Hershel himself was stunned. He couldn’t understand what he had just done. It had been a spontaneous impulse that had overcome him, but why had it been so irresistible?

The *Tzaddik* wished to bless his donor appropriately, but wasn’t sure how. For Rav Chaim, life turned on one hinge: *Shabbos*. He had even written a unique book, *Sidduro Shel Shabbos*, explaining according to mystical principles the exaltedness and holiness of the Seventh Day. But how was that relevant to the loutish man who stood before him? Nevertheless, he thought to himself, such a deed deserves the greatest blessing of all. Still brimming with enthusiasm, he exclaimed:

“I bless you that, in the merit of this great *mitzva* that you have done, you will experience the true taste of *Shabbos*.”

Hershel was still numb. He nodded his head as if he understood what the *Tzaddik* was talking about and answered, “*Amen*.”

On Sunday Hershel returned to Mosayov. Since he had no money, there was no reason to remain in Czernowitz. Still, he remained his cheerful, joking self.

As the week progressed, however, he began to feel a strange feeling welling up inside him, a spirit of holiness, something he had never felt before in his life. When Friday dawned and the feeling was even more intense, he realized that it must be connected to the oncoming *Shabbos*, and that this *Shabbos* would definitely be like no other he had ever experienced.

He went shopping to purchase appropriate food, and he could barely control his trembling. As the hours went by, his inner upheaval grew stronger and stronger. He didn't know what would be.

All those who encountered Hershel that *Shabbos* could hardly recognize him. Was that really him – singing, dancing, studying, praying with ecstasy? Hershel could barely recognize himself! His entire being was bursting with the pleasure of *Shabbos*.

It was the talk of the town. The idea that Hershel the clown could be caught up in a *Tzaddik*-type of intense love of *Shabbos* cracked up everyone who heard it

even more than Hershel's intentional jests. They even entertained the possibility that he had gone insane.

But then the news spread about what had happened at the livestock fair in Czernowitz – of the incongruous charitable deed that Hershel had done and the extraordinary blessing of the *Tzaddik*. People began to consider the issue more seriously.

After that *Shabbos*, Hershel returned to his customary light-hearted joking manner. But by the following *Shabbos* he was again overwhelmed by the same spirit of holiness. It was as if there were two Hershels: the weekday persona and the special *Shabbos* one.

Weeks went by, and months, without change in his situation. Hershel felt himself cracking under the strain of his dual personality. He decided to travel back to Czernowitz to discuss his situation with the *Tzaddik* who had blessed him.

Rav Chaim told him that in order to absorb the taste of *Shabbos* without spiritual and psychological damage, he would have to refine his weekday behavior. Hershel decided to stay on in Czernowitz in order to attach himself to the *Tzaddik* and to learn from him. He did so, and became a completely different person as his daily lifestyle changed to be harmonious with his weekly *Shabbos* elevation.

Translated and freely adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from *Sichas HaShavua* #461.



## Rav Gedalya Ben Yitzchok of Linitz, 29<sup>th</sup> of Kislev

Mechaber of Teshuos Chen

### So Deep

Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev writes in his letter of approbation to the *sefer Teshuos Chen*:

“Rav Shmuel Yehuda Leib, the son of the *Tzaddik*, the *Gaon* and holy flame, our

Master Gedalya, showed me his father's holy writings. I saw them and studied them and they are among the loftiest things in the world.” (*Haskoma to Teshuos Chen*)

The Berditchever *Rav* said further that many people were unable to delve



deep enough to understanding the meaning behind the holy *mechaber* because his writings are so profound.

(Publisher's Introduction to *Teshuos Chen*)



### **Why Must Eliyohu HaNovi Precede Moshiach?**

The prophet Malachi proclaims (3:23), "Behold I am sending you Eliyohu HaNovi before the great and awesome day of Hashem." Rav Gedalya of Linitz writes that he received a tradition from his masters and teachers that *Moshiach* will be able to advocate on behalf of all *Klal Yisrael* and find their merits. This *limud zechus* will cause everyone to be filled with feelings of remorse and regret, known as *hirhurei teshuva*, leading them to become *Tzaddikim*.

This concept unlocks the gates of light; it illuminates the words of *Chazal* and allows them to be understood. For *Chazal* taught that [*Moshiach*] *ben Dovid* will only come to a generation that is either totally unworthy and guilty or to a generation that is all totally worthy and meritorious – *kulo chayav* or *kulo zakai*. *Moshiach* will be *melamed zechus* (find merit), give everyone the benefit of the doubt and advocate on behalf of all of them; they will then all do *teshuvah* and be meritorious.

The problem is those who are *baalei machlokes*, masters at causing arguments,

strife and disagreements. If *Moshiach* will try to find merit with one side, the other will be guilty by default, and if *Moshiach* attempts to justify the other side, the opposing faction must also by default be wrong.

And so *Hashem* must send Eliyohi HaNovi first, one day before *Moshiach* arrives, in order to make *sholom* in the world. Then afterward *Moshiach* will arrive speedily in our days and will be *melamed zechus* on everyone; the entire world will then be meritorious. (*Teshuos Chen* p. 114)



### **The Holy Challa of Rebbetzin Perel**

Rav Levi Yitzchok and his *Rebbetzin* once spent *Shabbos* in the town of Linitz at the home of the local *Rav*, the famed *Tzaddik* and *talmid* of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, Rav Gedalya of Linitz, *mechaber* of *Teshuos Chein*. The Linitzer *Rebbetzin* gave the honor of braiding the *challo*s for *Shabbos* to Rebbetzin Perel, the Berditchever *Rebbetzin*.

When Rebbetzin Perel braided the *challa* in honor of *Shabbos*, she whispered a personal prayer: "*Ribbono Shel Olam* – Master of the world! I beseech You – help my Levi Yitzchok, when he recites the blessing of *Hamotzi* over the *challa*, to have in mind the same holy *kavonos* and intentions that I had at the time I braided them."



## **Rav Shlomo HaKohen of Vilna, 29<sup>th</sup> Of Kislev**

Mechaber of Cheshek Shlomo

Rav Shlomo *HaKohen* was born in Vilna in 5588/1828. His father, Rav Yisrael Meir *HaKohen*, served as a *Dayan* on the Vilna *Bais Din*. Rav Shlomo learned under his older brother, Rav Betzalel, whom he mentions in his *seforim*, and later under Rav Yitzchok Shirvaniter. At sixteen, Rav

Shlomo had already finished the entire *Shas*. Rav Shlomo's glosses on the *Gemora* were published in the Vilna Edition *Shas* under the name *Cheshek Shlomo*. His *halachic* responsa were published under the title *She'eilos U'teshuvos Binyan Shlomo*. Rav Shlomo was a *Dayan* in Vilna

for nearly forty years.

It is related that when thieves once broke into his house, he ran home and checked to see if his copy of *Rabbeinu Yerucham* was still there. (*Rabbeinu Yerucham* was an expensive and rare *sefer* at the time). Upon seeing that it was untouched, he declared, “*Boruch Hashem*, nothing was stolen.”

The *Chofetz Chaim* said that Rav Shlomo, who was a *Kohen*, was ready for *Moshiach*'s arrival and was fluent in all *Halochos* pertaining to *Kohanim* and the *Avoda* in the *Bais HaMikdosh*. Rav Shlomo was *niftar* on the 29<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev*, the fifth day of *Chanuka*, 5666/1905, at the age of seventy-seven.

*Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.*



## Rav Avrohom Moshe Ben Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha, 1<sup>st</sup> of Teves

Rav Avrohom Moshe's recitation of *Tehillim* was a great and lofty form of *Avodas Hashem*. Because he was a very weak individual he needed to lie in bed while saying *Tehillim*. He was so involved in saying *Tehillim* that it was described as if he was cooking and boiling and his bed would shake to and fro. The doctors warned that this practice was endangering his health and they asked the *Chassidim* to ask his mother to command him with a parental decree for the sake of *Kibbud Av vaEim*, the obligation to honor his parents, that he stop saying *Tehillim*! Instead she allowed him to recite only one chapter! And he was also allowed to look in the *Tehillim* and not say them aloud.

He was once visited by the Alter Vorker *Rebbe* and Rav Avrohom Moshe explained to him the meaning of the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 85:5): *hofer kaas'cha imonu* – “annul your anger with us”. We would have expected it to read *me'imonu* – “annul your anger from us”. The Vorker was silent and waited to hear his explanation. Rav Avrohom Moshe continued with a parable: There was once a kaiser who was perpetually angry. What did they do? They brought before him his only child, which caused his anger to depart. We too ask *Hashem*, “Annul Your anger with us; use us, *Hashem*, like that beloved only child – use us to annul Your anger and quiet Your wrath.” (*Yemos Olom* p. 141 #4)



## Rav Mordechai Zev Orenstein, 2<sup>nd</sup> of Teves

Rav of Lvov

Rav Mordechai Zev Orenstein, born in Zlakovah in 5495/1735, was the son of Rav Moshe, the *parnass* of the *kehilla*. The other sons of Rav Moshe included Rav Menachem Mendel of Zlakovah and Rav Meshulam Zalman Ashkenazi, *Rav* of Pomrein. Rav Moshe was a grandson of the *Chacham Tzvi*. Rav Mordechai Zev was a *Gaon*, fluent in all facets of the *Torah*. At the young age of nineteen, he was appointed *Rav* in Kaminka; later he was *Rav* in Yompala. In 5532/1772, he was

appointed *Rav* of Satnov, and this appointment led to his being named Chief *Rav* of Poland. Rav Mordechai Zev married the daughter of Rav Shaul Charif, *Rav* of Alesk. They had one son, Rav Yaakov Meshulam Orenstein, the *Yeshuos Yaakov*.

After his wife's *petira*, Rav Mordechai Zev married the daughter of the *noggid*, Rav Elyokim Getzel of Lubertov. With his *zivug sheini*, his second son, Rav Moshe Yehoshua Heschel, *Rav* of Tarnigrad, was born, as well as several

daughters. His sons-in-law were Rav Aryeh Leib Katzenellenbogen, *Rav* of Brisk; Rav Yudel Broida, the *mechaber* of *Zichron Yehuda*; Rav Yitzchok Etinga, *Rav* of Lvov; Rav Avrohom Abish Ashkenazi of Broida; and Rav Dov Berish Heilprin of Brezhan.

In 5538/1778, Rav Mordechai Zev was chosen to serve as *Rav* of Lvov in place of Rav Shlomo of Chelema, the *Mirkeves HaMishna*. Rav Mordechai Zev was pleased to be appointed *Rav* in the same

city in which his grandfather, the *Chacham Tzvi*, had earlier lived, while the *kehilla* was happy to have such a famous and admired *Rav*. In Lvov, Rav Mordechai Zev founded a *Yeshiva* and headed it, teaching many *talmidim* who went on to become *Gedolei Yisrael* and *Rabbonim*. Rav Mordechai Zev served as *Rav* of Lvov until his *petira* on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of *Teves* 5547/1786, at the age of fifty-two.

*Zecher tzaddik livrachah.*



## Rav Yaakov Tzvi Ben Yehoshua Osher of Porisov, 2<sup>nd</sup> of Teves

Grandson of the *Yid HaKodosh*, *Mechaber* of *Atara Lerosh Tzaddik*

On *Zos Chanuka*, the Porisover *Rebbe* declared that *Chanuka* is a *segula* for having children. He explained that the reason is because *peru urevu*, the commandment to be fruitful and multiply and have a family, is the first *mitzva* in the *Torah*, whereas *Chanuka* is the final *mitzva* enacted by *Chazal*. *Sefer Yetzira* teaches us that we must connect the beginning to the end and the end to the

beginning. There are *Keser Mitzvos* in total. *Keser* is 620 in *gematria*, which includes the 613 biblical commandments and the seven *mitzvos deRabbonon*. A *keser* (“crown”) is a circle, where the end and beginning meet. Thus, the first *mitzva* and the last *mitzva* meet each other, where the beginning and end of the circle join. (*VaYakhel Shlomo BeSofo*)



## Rav Yechezkel Ezra Yehoshua HaLevi, 3<sup>rd</sup> of Teves

*Rav* of the Iraqi community in Yerushalayim

Rav Yechezkel Ezra Yehoshua *HaLevi* was born in Baghdad, around 5612/1852. As a *bochur*, he learned in the *Bais Zilcha Bais Medrash*. In 5649/1889, Rav Yechezkel was appointed to run the organization that collected funds on behalf of the poorer *chassanim* and *kallos* in Baghdad.

He moved to *Eretz Yisrael* in 5657/1897 and settled in Yerushalayim. Ten years later, in 5667/1907, he and other *Rabbonim* founded *Yeshivas Shoshanim L'Dovid* for the Iraqi *kehilla*. Rav Yechezkel traveled abroad a number of times on behalf of this *Yeshiva*, including to Egypt. He was also the president of the committee

of the Iraqi community in Yerushalayim.

In 5682/1922, Rav Yechezkel traveled on behalf of the local Iraqi community to Baghdad to solicit support for those who lived in *Eretz Yisrael* and to encourage more Iraqi Jews to move there. He was known as a spellbinding *darshan*; many flocked to his weekly *Shabbos* afternoon *derashos* in *Bais Knesses Shoshanim L'Dovid*. Rav Yechezkel was the *mechaber* of numerous *seforim*: *Arugas HaBosem* on the *aggodos of Shas*; *Tehilla v'Tiferes* on *Tehillim*; *Simchas Yom Tov* on the *Haggoda shel Pesach*; *Shiros v'Tishbachos*, *piyutim* and poems; *Minchas Oni*, a *mussar* work; and others. Some of

his works remain in manuscript form. Rav Yechezkel was *niftar* on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Teves

5702/1941.

*Zecher tzaddik livrachah.*

## Rav Chaim Ben Alter Shmuelevitz, 3<sup>rd</sup> of Teves

*Rosh Yeshiva Mir*

Rav Fisher related the following account:

In the summer of *tov-shin-lamed-alef*, I was driving my car past the Bais Yisrael neighborhood in Yerushalayim, when suddenly I noticed Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz standing by the bus stop, waiting. I stopped my car and offered him a ride. "Listen, you don't know where I am traveling to and I don't wish to take you out of your way, so I don't want to get into your car," the *Rosh Yeshiva* answered.

"I am traveling in the same direction as you anyway."

"How do you know which way I am headed?" smiled the *Rosh Yeshiva* in response, and I answered him the same: "And how does the *Rosh Yeshiva* know which way I am headed?"

In the end, the *Rosh Yeshiva* admitted defeat to my coaxing and arguments, and agreed to get into my car.

As soon as he was settled, I turned to the *Rosh Yeshiva* and asked, "Where to?"

"To Chevron, to the *Kivrei Avos!*" answered Rav Chaim.

"That's exactly where I was going," I bantered back. We continued on our way till we arrived not far from *Kever Rochel*. We were prevented from continuing by a large Arab demonstration taking place following the Egyptian president's death. This violent demonstration was

accompanied by rock-throwing toward our vehicle and I had no choice but to turn the car around and head back, seeing that our way was blocked and dangerous.

After a few minutes, the *Rosh Yeshiva* asked, "Why are we headed back?"

"Because," I answered naively, "they are throwing rocks at us and it's dangerous!"

At this, the *Rosh Yeshiva* began to cry and he declared, "No! That's not why! That's not the reason! We are headed back because from *Shomayim* they aren't giving me the opportunity – I don't have the *zechus* to *daven* at the *Kivrei Avos!* The demonstration, the Arabs, the rocks – all these obstacles are against me, personally, to prevent me from getting to the *Avos*. Through my numerous sins I have been prevented, because I don't have the *zechus* to *daven* at the *Kivrei Avos*." And so he continued to cry.

This memory is something that will always be with me, explained Rav Fisher, and from that trip I learned hands-on that if ever anything in life is a failure, if ever something doesn't work out the way I chose or decided, the fault lies solely with me. I am he who was found unworthy; I did not have the *zechus* (merit) – and I am the cause of my own failures." (*Sefer Shemuos Tovos*)



## SPECIAL CHANUKA EDITION

*Hachona Shel Mitzva - Preparing for Mitzvas Hadlokas Neuros Chanuka*

Whenever a person performs any *mitzva*, no matter which, even if he does not fully

understand the meaning behind the *mitzva* or even if he fails to comprehend its essence – so long as he understands that this is a divine commandment and that *Hashem* ordered him to do it, he fills the entire world with holiness, which spreads throughout the world.

When a person purchases oil to light the *Chanuka* candles and receives this oil in hand, this act has the power to bring holiness into the entire world and to cause them all to return and do *teshuva*. This requires *dveikus* and attachment to *Hashem*, to cleave and bind oneself to the Creator of Genesis and to perform the *mitzva* for the sake of His blessed Name. Regarding this awesome act and moment, it is said *yesh koneh olomo beshaa achas* – “there are those who acquire their [share or portion] in the [coming] world in one moment”. In this one moment we can acquire the entire world and bring about *teshuva*!

(*Binas Yisrael Chanuka* page 67b)

Rav Melech Biderman related a story that I believe illustrates the above teaching well:

Many decades ago, when Australia was still a barren spiritual wasteland and before many holy *kehillos* were established there, a *Chassid* visited the land down under for business. It was Thursday and by now our *Chassid* was worried where he would spend *Shabbos*. He decided to enter a fish store, trusting that surely here a Jew would come to buy fish *lichvod Shabbos Kodesh*. And so it was, that the proprietor handed a customer a large fine fish, whereupon the *Chassid* turned to the customer and asked if by any chance he was Jewish. Answering in the affirmative, the customer warmly invited the *Chassid* to his home for *Shabbos*. Our *Chassid* was overjoyed and amazed at the mansion where his host brought him. Gate after gate of the grounds opened up before them, as they drove toward their destination, a palatial home where he would spend *Shabbos* in grandeur in honor of the holy day. As our *Chassid* delighted his hosts with *divrei Torah* and was plied with good food and drink, he noticed something odd; in the display case where the family’s beautiful silver was proudly on display, among the expensive silver articles was a broken flask of oil. Puzzled by this strange phenomenon but ashamed to embarrass his host with awkward questions, the *Chassid* held his tongue all *Shabbos* long, until *Motzoei Shabbos*. As he took his leave and thanked his host, he conspiratorially whispered the burning question, “Pray tell me why you have a broken old flask of oil among your most expensive silver.” The host answered his query with a story:

“When I was but twelve years old, my father passed away and I had no choice but to go out and seek employment to help feed and clothe my mother and siblings and support them. I was very successful and eventually grew wealthy and forgot all about my upbringing and my Jewish roots. I decided to live my life as I pleased with no second thought to *Yiddishkeit*. Eventually, I forgot all our traditions.

“One day, as I was going on my way, I chanced upon a young boy who stood crying bitterly. On the pavement beside him lay a broken flask of oil. ‘What is wrong, young man, and why are you crying?’ I asked in sympathy.

“As the boy told me his sad tale, he burst into fresh sobs. ‘Tonight is the first night of *Chanuka* and we need to light candles. My father and I are very poor and we have little money. He borrowed a few coins from our neighbor and asked me to go out and buy oil for lighting candles. He warned me sternly to make sure that I would not drop the flask or it would break and I did my best...but...but,’ his lip trembled, ‘a c-c-cat jumped out just now

and fr-fr-frightened me and I dr-dr-dropped the flask and now it broke!' And he wept in misery, crying, 'How can I face my father without the flask of oil in hand?'"

Explained the wealthy host to the *Chassid*, "This simple sentence uttered by the pure child echoed in my ears with a personal retort toward me: 'How can I face my Heavenly Father, *Hashem*, without the flask of oil in my hands?!' My heart went out to the boy and I pressed a few coins into his hands. As he dried his tears I asked him to please go and purchase two new bottles of oil and to guard them well – one for himself and his father – and one for me. That night, I was a changed person, and I resolved to mend my ways. I lit the *Chanuka* candles as I had not done for many years. From that moment I returned to my heritage and *mitzva* observance, from details to stringencies. I kept the broken flask of oil as a memento to remind myself of my own personal *Chanuka* miracle. (*Be'er HaChaim Chanuka* p. 43–45)



### **The Tzaddik's Flaming Fire**

Once, the Neshchizer related how one of the *Tzaddikim* told the Berditchever that after witnessing his great over-exertions and wild movements during prayer he now had an answer to a difficulty in understanding *Rashi's* commentary regarding the lighting of the *Menora*. *Rashi* writes that the *Torah* praises Aharon for not making any changes – *lehaggid shevacho shel Aharon shelo shina*. "If, however, they would have honored you, my esteemed colleague, with lighting the *Menora*, surely you would have made some changes; you would have accidentally poured all the oil onto the ground, as you would be shaking and jumping from one corner to the next during your recitation of the blessing!" (*Zichron Tov Inyenei Tefilloso* #33 p. 37)



### **Cooling Off in the Snow**

The *Chassid* Rav Shaul Leib Gantz used to relate the following story every year on *Chanuka*, and this was his tale:

Once, on *Chanuka*, the holy Ropshitzer was seen entering his home while his feet were sore and bleeding. When his family questioned him as to why he appeared so bruised and injured, he answered that he had been rolling in the snow (in those days this was a common form of self-affliction for penitents to atone for their sins). When his family exclaimed their surprise that an elderly *Tzaddik* such as himself still felt the need for such heavy measures of torture and self-affliction, he explained himself by telling them the following story:

"When I was a young man, I was filled with a great burning desire to see the holy Berditchever *Rav* light *Chanuka* candles! Nothing could deter me: not the long distance or the lack of funds for travel. And so, in the dead of winter, in the bitter cold, I began my trip and set out on foot toward Berditchev. Since I had no money, not only was transportation out of the question, but I spent my nights sleeping on the hard benches of the *Bais Medrash*, warming myself by the oven in the cold, winter nights with neither a blanket nor a cover. Many a day I froze as the bitter winds bit at me, and the frost hung on my beard and

whiskers. I relied on the hospitality of strangers for food and eventually a carriage driver spotted me and had mercy on me, taking me part of the way gratis.

Finally, I reached Berditchev, cold and hungry, but with a fire burning inside me goading me on. When I reached the Berditchever *Rav's* home, my heart leaped, but when I entered, it dropped into my stomach.

"The Berditchever's home was not like the homes of today – large and well furnished – it was but a small, cramped flat with only two rooms. In the larger room gathered a great many Jews who, like myself, had come to observe the holy *Tzaddik's avoda* in lighting the *Chanuka* candles. How, I thought to myself, will I ever see the Berditchever with such a crowd here preceding me? I grew dismayed at the thought that all my efforts could have been in vain. But I was determined at all costs to see the Berditchever *Rav* – and then I had an idea. I began to creep on the ground on all fours in between the legs of the assembled crowd.

"This was in the Ukraine in the winter; all the assembled were wearing heavy boots caked with mud and clay. Nonetheless, I continued on all fours, pushing my way through the crowd of booted feet as I was stepped on and jostled. Obviously, when I emerged, I was covered in bruises and mud but I had succeeded in reaching the far side of the room. Thus, on my hands and knees, I peered through the cracks and crevices of the ill-fitted wooden double doors and this is what my eyes beheld:

"There stood the holy Berditchever *Rav*, *mechaber* of *Kedushas Levi*, his face aflame, his excitement and ecstasy palpable as he stood pouring oil into his *Menora*! Of course there was more oil on the floor than there was in the *Menora* but I had seen enough!

"Now understand, my children," concluded the Ropshitzer, "that today I once again remembered that *Chanuka* and the look in the Berditchever *Rav's* eyes; his excitement set me aflame once more, and the only way I could contain myself and cool off was to roll in the snow, which is what I just did." (*Otzar Ephraim Behaalosecha*)



### **What Does the Graf Know About Oneg?**

In the courts of the Rizhiner dynasty on *Chanuka*, when lighting the *Menora*, they used to tell the following story about the *Tzaddik Rav Levi Yitzchok* of Berditchev:

Once, the holy Berditchever *Rav* entered his *Bais Medrash* on *Chanuka* and observed a group of *Chassidim* assembled, speaking in undertones. When they noticed the Berditchever approaching, their hushed whispers ended and they stood silently, embarrassed.

"What were you discussing?" asked the Berditchever. Abashed, the *Chassidim's* cheeks burned red with shame, as they stood silent, unanswering. However, the Berditchever was not so easily dissuaded, and he pursued the matter once again. "Nu, what were you discussing, eh?"

Finally, one of the *Chassidim* confessed, "*Rebbe*, we were discussing the Graf Potatzski, the local squire, and how much wealth and material comfort he has. He has it all – why, even in the heat of summer if the fancy strikes him to ski, and of course there is no snow to be found, he gathers sacks and sacks of sugar and skis on the sugary mountains of artificial snow!"

The Berditchever looked back at them and countered, "Does the Graf light *Chanuka* candles?"

"Of course not, *Rebbe!*" answered the astonished *Chassid*. "The Graf is a gentile!"

"Well then," answered the Berditchever, declaring with finality, "then surely he has never tasted any true *simcha* in his life at all!" (*Yalkut Bnei Bina*)



## *A Freilichen Chanukah*

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

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

She transmitted a strong value system stressing *Emunas Hashem* and *Tzaddikim*. Her love for stories of *tzaddikim* gave her *chiyus* and she conveyed that *chizuk* to anyone who met her. In her eighty-nine years of life, there wasn't one person who had an untoward word or adverse feelings about her. She loved her family deeply and immensely. May *Hashem* console her family and may she be a constant *melitza yeshura*, אמן.

(מתוך אמונה טהורה) בדרך המסורה (והתנהגה כאשה כשרה) לכל  
משפחתה, היא הודה היא הדרה - נקיה וטהורה היוצר וצר צורה (וקיבלה  
הגזירה) נפטרה בש"ט בת תשעים שנה ביום כ"ד לחודש כסלו (ערב חנוכה)  
שנת תשע"ח לפ"ק תמליץ טוב בעד משפחתה היקרה ותקים לתחיה לקץ  
הימין מהרה ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'



ויהי כהיום הזה ויבא הביתה לעשות מלאכתו (למ' יא')

And it was on that day, Yosef entered the house to do his work (39:11)

The Zera Shimshon brings the following Dvar Torah in the name of his father, Rav Nachman Michoel Nachmani, to explain the test of Yosef Hatzaddik.

Rashi brings that one of the opinions in the Gemara is that when the passuk says that Yosef Hatzaddik came to do 'his work', it means that he to sin. Rav Nachman Michoel asks - how can the Gemara take this word out of context? Besides for the word מלאכתו, meaning his work, the pessukim are very clear that Yosef Hatzaddik repeatedly refused to sin with the wife of Potiphar. How then can the Gemara understand the simple meaning of the word of מלאכתו, out of context and seemingly contradictory to everything the pessukim clearly relate about Yosef Hatzaddik withstanding the test?

As well, the Gemara says (Sota 36b), that Yosef had a letter added to his name in merit of sanctifying Hashem's name in secret. This is seen from the passuk (Tehillim 81:6) that spells the name יוסף with an additional ה-יהי. The Gemara then goes on to explain how Yosef Hatzaddik went to the house to do his work, meaning to sin, but his father's image appeared to him and said that he would not be on the Kohen Gadol's breastplate if he sinned and with that Yosef Hatzaddik fled the house.

Rav Nachman Michoel asks - that first the Gemara seems as though it wishes to tell Yosef Hatzaddik's praises for withstanding this test and sanctifying Hashem's name in secret and then the Gemara says how Yosef Hatzaddik came to the house with the intention to sin and only left when his father's image appeared to him. This is not an impressive feat. In fact, it is safe to assume that even a great sinner would refrain from sin after witnessing something like that?

Rav Nachman Michoel answers that indeed, the Gemara is trying to show the righteousness of Yosef Hatzaddik. He explains as follows.

There is a concept that (only) great tzaddikim can place themselves in a situation where they will have to overcome their Evil Inclination. This is what Yosef Hatzaddik's intention was when he entered the house on that day. Therefore, the pessukim that clearly describe how Yosef did not listen to the wife of Potiphar are obviously the truth. Nevertheless, he also chose on that day to intentionally place himself in a situation of temptation and win over his Evil Inclination.

In fact, Rav Nachman Michoel points out that when the passuk describes how Potiphar's wife repeated her requests, it says, ויהי כדברה אלו יום | יום, and it was as she spoke to him every day. There is a pasek (|) in between the two words of יום. This shows that Yosef Hatzaddik distanced himself more each day from the wife of Potiphar.

However, the Medrash Rabba (87:4) says that Yosef Hatzaddik was informed that he would be tested in this vey test. This is why he began to eat and drink as Rashi says (39:7), because he knew that that was the only way that the he could be tested. If he would fast, the Evil Inclination would never be able to take hold of him. This explains Yosef Hatzaddik's seemingly out of place behavior of eating and drinking while his father was mourning over him.

Rav Nachman Michoel understands that the vision of Yaakov Avinu to Yosef Hatzaddik was in reality what occurred in Yosef Hatzaddik's head. He imagined his father's disappointment in his head and he strengthened himself by reminding himself that he would not appear on the Kohen Gadol's breastplate. With this he was able to stand up to the test.

Rav Nachman Michoel adds that the wife of Potiphar threatened to lie to Potiphar, telling him the opposite of the truth which placed Yosef Hatzaddik's life in danger since in all probability, Potiphar would have killed him. This placed Yosef Hatzaddik in a situation that he possibly could have excused himself for sinning since his life was in danger and the sin was in secret and not a public desecration of Hashem's name. With all these justifications, Yosef Hatzaddik still sanctified Hashem's name in secret. The Gemara stresses that it was in secret since others in this situation of life and death may have relied on the fact that it was not in public to be lenient. (This is a complicated halachic issue with many details. One must see all relevant poskim to fully understand the words of Rav Nachman Michoel). Yosef Hatzaddik did not rely on this. And this is what the Gemara is trying to bring out.

The Gemara continues to show Yosef Hatzaddik's level of strength by explaining that he placed himself in this situation and he was the one that brought up the image of his father to enable him to fight the Yetzer Hara. This is why the Gemara makes mention of it, since it is a show of Yosef Hatzaddik's greatness and not a miracle that occurred.

Rav Nachman Michoel clarifies that only someone like Yosef Hatzaddik's who understood the severity of sin and knew what was at stake if he failed this test was allowed to place himself into such a test. However, regular people and even tzaddikim, are prohibited to place themselves in such situations as the Gemara (Sanhedrin 107a) teaches one should never place himself in a situation of temptation.

Zera Shimshon

Vayeisheiv

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

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

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

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

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

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

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

לזכר נשמת

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מיכאל זצ"ל

בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

זכות רבינו יעמוד לר' חיים דוד

בן טובא חוה וכל משפחתו

להצלחה ברכה שפע רב

וסייעתא דשמיא מרובה בכל

מעשה ידיו ובכל הענינים

לעילוי נשמת הרב חיים שאול בן בנימין

זצ"ל

לרפואה שלימה יוכבד בת דבורה וימלא ה'

כל משאלות ליבה לטובה

לזכות זיווג הגון בקרוב ממש לשישנה נחמה

בת חנה פסא ורקבה רויזא בת פייגא

Vayeishev

December 12<sup>th</sup> 2020  
26<sup>th</sup> of Kislev 5781

881



**Paris • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moché**

32, rue du Plateau • 75019 Paris • France  
Tel: 01 42 08 25 40 • Fax: 01 42 06 00 33  
hevratpinto@aol.com

**Jérusalem • Pninei David**

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israël  
Tel: +972 2643 3605 • Fax: +972 2643 3570  
p@hpinto.org.il

**Ashdod • Orh 'Haim Ve Moshe**

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashod • Israël  
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527  
orothaim@gmail.com

**Ra'anana • Kol 'Haïm**

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israël  
Tel: +972 98 828 078 • +972 58 792 9003  
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



**Hilula**

26 - Rabbi Avraham Ben David, the Ra'avad

27 - Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kahen, the Admor of Toldot Ahron

28 - Rabbi Ezra Chamou

29 - Rabbi Yisrael Friedman

1 - Rabbi Yair Chaim Bachrach, author of 'Chavat Yair' Responsa

2 - Rabbi Yitzchak son of Rabbi Yehudah Abarbanel

3 - Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz, Rosh Yeshiva of Mir

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

# Pachad David

Published by Mosdot "Orot Chaim U'Moshe" in Israel

Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"á



**MASKIL LEDAVID**

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

## The Tactic of the Greeks

Contemplating the period when the Greeks reigned leads us to a surprising difficulty. It is well-known that the majority of Am Yisrael ended up following the ways of the Greeks who almost succeeded in their perverted plot "to make them forget Your Torah", G-d forbid. Only a handful of Jewish people remained faithful to Hashem Yitbarach and His Torah.

This fact is most puzzling. For how it can be that right inside Yerushalayim, while the Beit Hamikdash still stood and Am Yisrael merited seeing the Kohanim and the Leviim in their service, as well as witnessing the ten miracles that were present in the Beit Hamikdash (c.f. Avot 5:7), so many Jews became Hellenists and were swayed by the counsel of these wicked people?

The answer lies in understanding the tactic that lay behind the method of the Greeks. They did not approach Am Yisrael and demand that they immediately cease observing Shabbat or any of the other central mitzvot and foundations of authentic Judaism, rather they approached them with small, seemingly innocent, suggestions that concerned minor matters, about which the simple Jew says to himself, what is so bad about this? They are simply offering various gymnasiums and sports games that do not involve any immodesty or debauchery.

Those parents who lacked the wisdom to understand the extent of this stumbling block, sat back in serenity and sent their children to participate in all these activities, for on the face of it they did not seem to be of harmful influence. But they should have realized that although the actual sport involved no prohibitions, it is

necessary to inquire about the instructor and find out who is this educator under whose guidance they are playing, and just as important, with which kind of company are they mixing. Do they have a pure Torah outlook and follow the spirit of tradition, or G-d forbid, the opposite? And when faced with a teacher or instructor who is a wicked Greek and possesses indecent middot and a decadent outlook, he will certainly instill his false and misleading opinions in the children, infusing the impressionable children with a negative influence which endangers their entire spirituality, to the extent of uprooting all Torah values and commandments with which they were educated.

In my opinion, this is the essence of the game, Chanukah dreidel (sevivon, spinning top) that is customary to play on Chanukah. It serves as a reminder for us that the Greeks 'revolved' the outlook of the Jews and diverted them from the straight path, similar to the spinning top which begins its rotation at a certain point and finishes in a different spot.

At first the Greeks approached the Jews with insignificant, petty matters which on the face of it seemed meaningless. They suggested taking their children to various, apparently harmless, activities and in this way, they instilled their inappropriate views in their hearts. In their innocence, the simple Jews did not comprehend the hidden trap and serenely justified themselves, "What of it, our children are young"... The tragic end was parents who sacrificed their lives to sanctify Hashem's Name, while their children were the ones from whom the Greeks succeeded in uprooting any spark of Judaism and attachment to Torah and mitzvot.



## Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoan Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

### The Power of Holiness

I once participated in a function on behalf of a Torah institution in France. The mayor of the city, an atheistic gentile, was also in attendance.

Throughout the evening, many people approached me to receive my blessings for success and *siyata dishmaya*, in the merit of my esteemed ancestors. I was surprised to find this atheist also waiting to receive my blessing. This was quite surprising. I knew this man to be an out-and-out Communist and a categorical condemner of anything hinting to religion. What was he doing asking for a blessing from a Rabbi, cut from a vastly different cloth than himself?

Unable to contain my curiosity, I asked, "Tell me, please, what makes you ask for the blessing of an Orthodox Rabbi when you clearly denounce the existence of G-d?"

He enthusiastically replied, "I have been standing at the side, watching you dispense blessings to anyone and everyone who comes to request. I finally realized that so many people cannot be asking for empty blessings. There must, therefore, be validity to your blessings."

As I contemplated the words that this non-Jew had uttered, I strongly felt the power of an event that had taken place for the honor of Torah. It had the ability to breathe sanctity even into non-Jews.

I also realized that this power of holiness is capable of changing even an atheistic outlook of someone who is severed from Hashem, such as this Gentile. Certainly, then, it has the ability to bring back the soul of a Jew, which was hewn from the Heavenly Throne itself.

## The Haftarah

**"Sing and be glad"** (Zechariah 2-4)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah mentions the lights and the Menorah that the navi Zecharya saw in a prophecy, a topic that corresponds to this time of the year when we kindle the Chanukah lights.

## Guard Your Tongue

### Lashon Hara Without Hatred

Even if the one speaking lashon hara includes himself in his negative narrative and says that he too possesses this negative trait or performed this act, it is still considered as lashon hara.

This ruling is derived from the words of the prophet Yeshaya, "For I am a man of impure lips and I dwell among a people with impure lips" (Yeshaya 6:5). Hashem held these words against him, even though he included himself.

Moreover, it is forbidden to speak lashon hara even if it is clear that the speaker does not have bad intentions and has no intention of causing damage. This is why it is forbidden to speak negatively even about one's close family members.



## In Our Father's Path

### When a Secular Jew lights Chanukah Lights

"How can I briefly prove to a secular Jew the existence of a Creator and the truth of the Torah?"

No simple dilemma. The one who brought this question to the Gaon Rabbi Chaim Greineman zt"l for the advice of da'at Torah, was the Gaon and tzadik, Rabbi Aryeh Schechter zt"l. On one occasion he related: "I used to lecture at many seminars about human relationships and marital harmony, as you might know. I look like someone from bygone days, from the Middle Ages, with a big beard and peyot. When I would begin my lecture on these topics to this audience of secular Jews, they regarded me in wonder. "We are apparently at the wrong address," they thought to themselves. "This type of character will lecture to us about communication and interpersonal relationships?! Nu, indeed!"

And what happened in the end?

"Not more than five minutes passed and all the partitions would fall down. They were drawn to the content, their previous opinions and stigmas disappeared. One of the reasons that caused these secular Jews to open themselves up to change and eventually return to the correct path, was the understanding that they were living a mistake. They had no real idea of what Judaism and observant Jews were all about."

Harav Chaim Greineman zt"l answered Harav Schechter's query by saying, "Tell the secular Jew that we constitute a negligible percentage of humanity, yet nevertheless all of mankind is occupied with us day and night."

"And I add," Harav Schechter says (see sefer 'Aryeh Sho'eg'), "that would there be a small, marginal group who would do all kinds of strange things, even nonsense and real futilities, would someone pay attention to them?! At most people would chuckle derisively for a moment and then turn back to their own occupations, forgetting all about this strange phenomenon. If so, why do the Gentiles care that we – a tiny group - observe customs different to them? Why do they persecute us and go to such lengths to annihilate us physically and spiritually?"

The answer is that our very existence is proof that their way is incorrect, and it is this proof that they wish to erase. They cannot bear the living and constant proof that the way of the Torah is the correct path.

Secular Jews joyously celebrate the days of Chanukah just as we do. It could be that in some way these days are more fateful for them than for us, since if not for the Chanukah lights they would fall to the depths.

During the time of the Chozeh of Lublin, there was an informer in the village who caused the Jews much trouble by informing on them to the authorities. One day during Chanukah the talmidim brought their Rebbe a kvitel (note) on which they had penned their moving request: The Rebbe should use his powers to seriously punish the informer so that he will no longer cause evil to any of the Jews.

The Rebbe turned to them, "Do you not know what this informer is doing now? He is shaking worlds!"

The talmidim approached the informer and asked him what he was doing when the Rebbe uttered those words. The informer looked at them in surprise and said, "What do you mean? I was kindling the Chanukah lights; it was time to light!"

This shows us that even the kindling of Chanukah lights of someone as low as that informer, has a great effect in all the worlds.



## Pearls of the Parsha

### The Trouble is that We Don't Converse!

*"So, they hated him, and they could not speak to him peaceably" (Bereishit 37:4)*

Rabbi Yehonatan Eibeshitz zya"א points out that the main problem was that they could not talk to each other, for had they discussed the matter, it is quite possible that they would have found a way to alleviate the hatred that characterized the relationship between Yosef and his brothers.

He added: This idea is the pitfall of all disagreements, the fact that no one wishes to speak to his fellow and each side is not prepared to hear and understand the other side. If the picture was different, it would be possible to peaceably resolve many arguments which stem from jealousy and hatred.

### Ya'akov Believed that He Would Witness the Resurrection of the Dead

*"But his father kept the matter in mind" (Bereishit 37:11)*

The sefer 'Divrei Shaul' quotes in the name of Rabbi David Asher Zelig Ehrlich zt"l, that the word 'א', the, comes to include something. Ya'akov Avinu said, "Are we to come, I and your mother", yet surely Yosef's mother had already passed away? Nevertheless, Ya'akov waited with anticipation for the dream to be fulfilled in its entirety, meaning that Rachel too will come to bow down to Yosef.

Why was this?

The Midrash (Bereishit Rabba 84:10) tells us that Ya'akov Avinu a"ח thought that the resurrection of the dead would occur in his lifetime. If so, Rachel would also come and bow down to Yosef.

### Crisis Gives Birth to Opportunity for Growth

*"But he left his garment in her hand, and he fled, and went outside" (Bereshit 39:12)*

Adding another implication to the simple meaning of the verse, the Admor of Spinka shlita, in the name of Rabbi Hershele Lisker zt"l, explains that the word 'בגדו', his garment, comes from the word 'בגדו', betrayer.

The Yetzer Hara came to Yosef Hatzadik and whispered in his ear: "Why are you running away? Since when are you such a tzadik? I know exactly who you are deep inside, how much betrayal you have within you! What came over you just now to act like a tzadik?"

But Yosef Hatzadik left his garment with her. He answered the Yetzer Hara: Despite all this betrayal I have in me, despite all the downfalls, despite all the times I was not successful... still the image of the face of my Father in Heaven stands in front of me. I can still take this opportunity...

"He left his garment", implies take my betrayal, my downfalls, for they do not disturb me. I can grow together with them, particularly because of them. They will be my impetus for growth, not a pit to make me stumble and despair...

### Only with Hashem's Help

*"The prison warden did not scrutinize anything that was in his charge inasmuch as Hashem was with him" (Bereishit 39:23)*

Rabbi Rafael Halevi zt"l, the son of the Brisker Rav, told over that when they fled to Vilna in 5700, his father questioned the above verse:

The verse stresses that the prison warden did not find anything for which to accuse Yosef, for Hashem was with him. In essence, Yosef's prison sentence was due to a false charge; he was entirely innocent. Therefore, the question is why he required special Heavenly Assistance so as not to be found guilty?

But, the Brisker Rav pointed out, we see from this that without the special siyata dishmaya of Hashem being with him that he merited, the prison warden would have found new injustices with which to charge Yosef at every step.

It was only due to "inasmuch as Hashem was with him", that the warden did not invent any false charges which could have stood to his detriment.

## Treasures

Based on the teachings of  
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon  
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya  
Pinto, shlita



### Whoever Stumbles Can Start a New Page!

I saw a question asked by Harav Hagoon Rabbi Ben Zion Abba Shaul zt"l. As we know, the Greeks decreed three harsh rulings on Am Yisrael, forbidding them to observe Shabbat, the sanctification of the new month, and Brit Milah. However, the reason why they wished to obliterate the sanctification of the new month is unclear. It is easy to understand why they chose Shabbat, for it is the source of blessing and faith in Hashem. For six days a person toils and earns money, and despite his ability to work and earn also on the Shabbat day, he nevertheless closes his business and rests. This serves to implant great faith in Hashem, that his livelihood and life is from Him alone.

This reminds me of an acquaintance who travelled to Miami to collect funds for a certain Yeshiva. I gave him the phone number of a certain philanthropist who supports our holy institutions. When he approached him this wealthy man said, "Since Rabbi David shlita sent you, I am prepared to give you the amount that I had designated for his institutions, with his permission, of course". Indeed, I received a call from him, asking for my consent.

At that moment I thought to myself, why does it have to be the entire amount? Maybe half is good enough? And anyway, what kind of sum is he talking about, maybe it is a huge amount of money?! But I immediately strengthened my faith in Hashem, saying that everything is from Him Yitbarach and whatever has been ascribed for me in Heaven will come to me anyway. Hashem has many ways and many messengers. I expressed my consent that the philanthropist should give that person the entire amount. Indeed, "But as for one who trusts in Hashem, kindness surrounds him" (Tehillim 32:10). Not half an hour passed and I received another phone call from the philanthropist. He explained that with G-d's help he had just now closed on a most lucrative deal and he wishes to donate to our holy institutions from the profits. This donation was so considerable that it valued twenty times more than that which he had given my acquaintance. This is a clear lesson in the extent that faith and trust in Hashem Yitbarach brings blessing and abundance to a person.

All this, the power of faith in Hashem Yitbarach, is what the precious Shabbat implants in us. Therefore, we can understand why the Greeks wished to abolish it and considered it a thorn in their flesh. We can also understand why they forbade us to observe brit milah because it is the holy sign, the connection and signature in our very flesh that we are Hashem's servants. This is why the Greeks wished to do away with it. However, why did they care if we sanctify the New Month and recite a blessing over the New Moon? How did this mitzvah disturb them more than any of the other mitzvot that they did not abolish?

With siyata dishmaya I would like to suggest that the essence of Rosh Chodesh is something deep and lofty. The words Rosh Chodesh, 'ראש חודש', come from the term 'ראש חדש', a new head. Meaning that a person can begin a new page for himself and a new chapter in his life. Even though he fell and stumbled, nevertheless he has the power to forget the past, repent for his transgressions and begin again new. This being the case, Rosh Chodesh manifests the theme of renewal which is an important foundation in Avodat Hashem. To begin again each day anew, not continuing with yesterday's ways. This is the idea behind the renewal of the moon, which slowly becomes smaller and disappears, yet once again appears and shines strongly.

The essence of Rosh Chodesh teaches us very significant matters, both the idea of constant renewal in our Avodat Hashem and also repentance from our past ways and the opportunity to begin a new page. The Greeks knew and understood this, and that is why they put a special stress on abolishing the sanctification of the New Moon more than any other mitzvot.

## A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



**T**he Chamberlain of the Cupbearers and the Chamberlain of the Bakers who were imprisoned together with Yosef the tzadik, both dreamt a dream but could not understand its interpretation. That morning Yosef noticed that they were not looking their usual selves and asked them why they appear downcast.

Hagaon Rabbi Reuven Elbaz shlita ('Mishkani Acharecha') points out an interesting concept. Why did Yosef care that these people were not in a good mood that day? What was his concern if they were aggrieved? It is reasonable to assume that Yosef was not bored while in prison; he certainly reviewed all the Torah that he studied with his father. The verse says that Ya'akov Avinu loved Yosef "since he was a child of his old age". Chazal tell us that Ya'akov taught Yosef all the Torah that he studied during the fourteen years he spent in the Beit Midrash of Shem and Ever. If so, throughout the time that Yosef was in prison he reviewed all that he had learnt with his father, so why did he care if these two gentiles were upset and aggrieved? And besides, how did he even notice this?

Contemplating the matter will enable us to understand how Yosef achieved the eminent role of becoming ruler over the entire land of Egypt.

During his imprisonment, Yosef treated all the inmates with pleasantness and amiability. No doubt every morning when he would meet the

Chamberlain of Cupbearers and the Chamberlain of the Bakers, he would smile at them and inquire after their welfare.

So, on that morning when Yosef met them and asked how they are feeling, they did not reply with their customary answer. Their faces were downcast, and since they felt that he was truly interested in their welfare, they opened their hearts to him and told him about the strange dream that each of them dreamt.

It follows that Yosef's entire salvation and elevation to greatness, which eventually came about through the Chamberlain of the Cupbearers, was founded on his conduct of greeting each person with a smile and pleasant countenance. Yosef the tzadik was not capable of ignoring someone who looked sad. This is the sign of a true leader. One who wishes to benefit every single person, Jew and non-Jew alike.

Assisting a Non-Jewish child and the Results

Several years ago, on Chanukah, there was a gathering in Moscow in which the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, participated. The Chief Rabbi of Russia, Harav Berel Lazar shlita was also present.

During the course of the event, the President stood up and began delivering a moving speech. These were his words:

"Listen well, Jews, to a story that took place here in Russia. In a certain neighborhood lived a poor family who had a young child. This child was unfortunate because his parents worked hard for their living, from morning till night, and they would leave him alone at home, sometimes even without any food.

There was a Jewish family who lived in this same neighborhood,

and when they noticed the young child alone at home, they asked him if he had what to eat. When he replied in the negative, they made sure that he had food to eat each day, and on Shabbatot and Chagim even invited him to eat together with them at their table. And so over a long period of time, they 'adopted' this non-Jewish child and provided for all his needs."

When Putin finished his moving story he added:

"I am this child that I just told you about! I cannot forget how this Jewish family showed concern for me. Until today I still remember their rituals of washing hands before the meal, the recital of 'hamotzi' before eating bread and the blessing of 'birkat hamazon' on completion of the meal."

Today this poor child is the President of this large country and his attitude towards the Russian Jews is sympathetic, something almost unprecedented in all European countries. All in the merit of that family who showed concern for the needs of an unfortunate, non-Jewish child.

Who is like Your people Israel.

Bnei Yisrael are benevolent even with non-Jews. Doing good with each and every person is something that we learn from Yosef Hatzadik, for he inquired about the welfare of those non-Jews who were spending time with him in prison.

That is why the Egyptian king found him suitable to act as ruler of his country and to be "the provider to all the people of the land". For only one who constantly seeks ways to do good to others, is fitting for leadership.

## MeOros Ramchal Chanukah

The *Chanukah* candles light up the light of the *Shechina* to take us out of *galus*

"O house of Yaakov, come and let us go in the light of *Hashem*." (*Yeshaya* 2:5)

The *Ramchal* explains that there are two types of *Shechinah* – *illa* and *tata*, higher and lower, correspondingly Leah is the embodiment of the supernal higher *Shechinah illa* and Rachel embodies the lower *Shechinah tata*. . .

The *Ramchal* then teaches us that the *kavanah* we must have in mind when lighting *Chanukah* candles is that the candle or *Ner* in Hebrew corresponds to Leah and when we light this candle it illuminates Rachel as she descends down to the worlds of *biy"ra* (*beriah, yetzira, assiyah*).

The *menorah* [of the *bais hamikdash*] had seven branches which correspond to the seven lower *sefiros* of *Atik*. When we light our *menorah*, it corresponds to the menorah that was in the *bais hamikdash* which had seven branches, and then we cause Leah to illuminate Rachel as she descends to *biy"ra*.

Then this awakens the seven lower *sefiros* of *Atik* to draw them up and bring them, along with us, out of the exile of *galus* where we now we transform all evil into good as is the secret of the supernal *yichud* - unity.

This is what the *pasuk* means when it says "let us walk in the light of *Hashem*," (*Yeshaya* 2:5) when you go down to *beriyah* in order to unite and send down *shefa* upon us then we must have in mind to repair Leah [*Shechinah illa*] so she can in turn repair Rachel [*Shechinah tata*] through the *Ner Chanukah* as we explained.

**Why did the *Yavanim* Greeks decree against *Bris Milah* and Why does *Eliyahu* come to every *bris milah*?**

**"Behold I am hereby sending you *Eliyahu HaNavi*," (*Malachi* 3:23)**

There was a time when *Bnei Yisroel* failed to circumcise because they lacked the healing of the North wind. Due to this failure the Greeks came and decreed against circumcision.

## *Apta Rav – Chanuka, A Meditation For Ner*

The Apta Rav in *Ohev Yisroel* tells us that the three *yichudim* – meditations for the candle are explained in the writings of the holy *Arizal* as follows:

The Hebrew word for candle is *Ner* spelled *Nun Reish* whose *gematria* equals 50 plus 200 = 250.

The following Divine Names equal the same *gematria* value of 250 when added together:

$YHV''H=26$   $EHY''H=21$  (יהו"ה אהי"ה)

$YH''VH=26$   $ELOKIM=86$  (יהו"ה אלהים)

$YH''VH=26$   $ADN''Y=65$  (יהו"ה אדני)

For the purpose of working out the math please use this chart:

1	<i>Aleph</i>	א
2	<i>Bais</i>	ב
3	<i>Gimel</i>	ג
4	<i>Dalet</i>	ד
5	<i>Heh</i>	ה
6	<i>Vav</i>	ו
7	<i>Zayin</i>	ז
8	<i>Ches</i>	ח
9	<i>Tes</i>	ט
10	<i>Yod</i>	י
20	<i>Kaf</i>	כ
30	<i>Lamed</i>	ל
40	<i>Mem</i>	מ
50	<i>Nun</i>	נ
60	<i>Samech</i>	ס
70	<i>Ayin</i>	ע
80	<i>Peh</i>	פ
90	<i>Tzadi</i>	צ
100	<i>Koof</i>	ק
200	<i>Reish</i>	ר
300	<i>Shin</i>	ש
400	<i>Tav</i>	ת

The Apta Rav then teaches us what each Divine Name means to us through our *derech avodah* – this means how we can relate to the aspects of the Divine revelation, how they can guide us, shape us, mold us and influence us to grow spiritual, improve and better ourselves to feel the Divine light of *Hashem* in our lives.

He begins with the Divine Name *EHY"VH* and teaches us that:

When a person purifies and refines his **thoughts** connecting and binding them only to *Hashem*; and accepts upon himself to only serve *Hashem* with love and sincerity and with great yearning all the days of his life this is an aspect of the Divine Name *EHY"VH*. The name literally translated means I shall be – in the future tense, and when we bind that to the next Divine Name of *YH"VH* true being (is was and will be) this unites the two names together in the union of a *yichud* between *YH"VH EHY"VH*.

Then when a person purifies and refines himself, ensuring that all his **deeds** and **actions** should only be solely for the sake of *Hashem's* honor and glory and he unites all his abilities and his acts and deeds to Divine Name of *YH"VH* true being this unites the two names together in the union of a *yichud* between *YH"VH ELOKIM*.

And finally when a person accepts upon himself the yoke of the kingship of Heaven – *ol malchus shomayim* and crown *Hashem* as king over all his entire body and all its limbs, and prepares a proper living space for *Hashem* to dwell in his heart and body, and he safeguards his mouth and tongue from frivolous chatter and idle **speech** and forbidden talk, instead always speaking words of *Torah*, this is an aspect of unity in the union of a *yichud* between the two names *YH"VH ADN"Y*.

In order to internalize the holy words of the *tzaddik*, the *Apta Rav* here in *Ohev Yisroel* on *Chanuka* let us try to explore some of the method to apply this teaching practically through our *derech avodah*.

### *The 3 levels of Thought, Action and Speech*

The *Apta Rav* outlined three corresponding garments of the soul to the three unifications of the Divine Names. The three garments of the soul are explained in depth by the fourth chapter of the *Tanya Kadisha* of the *Alter Rebbe* and founder of *Chabad*, *Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi*. These three are called garments because they are not the soul itself but rather clothe it externally so that just as what we wear both hides our body yet expresses ourself – for example wearing a uniform or symbol reveals our position, social standing and occupation to others, so too the garments of the soul express the soul to the outside world.

And just as garments can be worn or taken off and removed at will, we can control these garments as well and thereby shape and hone our soul's interactions with the world. A *mitzvah* is truly complete when it involves all aspects of the three garments of the soul, thought in the *kavanah* or aim of the *mitzva* and its purpose, speech in the blessings recited over the *mitzva* or the actual verbal aspect such as *mitzvos* that involve speech such as reciting *Shema*, davening, and studying *Torah*, and action by doing the *mitzva* and fulfilling the practical act such as giving a coin to *tzedaka*.

[Although the three garments are usually written in the order of internal to external from thought, the most internal to speech and finally to action the most external the *Apta Rav* explains the *yichudim* as corresponding to the garments in the order of thought,



action and speech.

Perhaps this mirrors the way we light the candles on *Chanuka* so that first we have in mind that we are about to do a *mitzva* focus and meditate on what we are about to do, this is the level of thought. Then we actually light the *menora*, this is the level of action. Afterwards we sing praises and songs by the light of the candles and this is the final level of garment of speech.]

Therefore using this introduction, we can apply the *Apta Rav's* teaching practically as follows:

While reciting the blessing when we say the word *Ner* we can meditate on these three sets of Divine Names that equal the gematria of *Ner*. The thoughts of our *kavanas haMitzvah* express the first *yichud* of  $YHV^H=26$   $EHY^H=21$  (יהו"ה אהי"ה). The action of our lighting the candle expresses the second *yichud* of  $YH^H=26$   $ELOKIM=86$  (יהו"ה אלהי"ם). The spoken words of the *berachos* and later the songs and praises express the third *yichud* of  $YH^H=26$   $ADN^Y=65$  (יהו"ה אדנ"י).

(Since the *mitzva* of *Chanuka* is minimally *Ner Ish uBayso* we can have this in mind every night we light the first candle and fulfill the *mitzva* even though we will be lighting many candles.)

After lighting when we gaze at the candles, we can further meditate on how we can better our thoughts, speech and actions by *sur me'ra veasay tov* – refraining from evil destructive ways and moving towards positive and corrective action.

So that we clear our minds of negative pessimistic belief that we cannot change direct *sur me'ra* instead directing our thoughts positively *veasay tov* towards *tikkun*. We can do this by gazing at the light of the holy candles that represent the miracle of *Chanuka* and feel the Divine Light of *Hashem* enlightening our mind and thought. Cleansing us and purifying us, refined as the first *yichud* of  $YHV^H=26$   $EHY^H=21$  (יהו"ה אהי"ה).

Next day when we light the candles and whenever we do other active positive mitzvos such as giving charity - *tzedaka* we can think about how we are redirecting our energy away from destructive acts, misdeeds and transgressions instead channeling them into positive action, good deeds and mitzvos this is the second *yichud* of  $YH^H=26$   $ELOKIM=86$  (יהו"ה אלהי"ם).

Then finally as we say *HaNeiros HaLalu* and sing *Maoz Tzur* and other *Chanuka* songs and the *Tehilim* of praise we can cleanse our mouth, tongue and lips that spoke negatively, saying slander, falsehoods and words that lacked trust and faith in *Hashem*. By our song and praise we sanctify our mouth and speech redirecting them to express the third *yichud* of  $YH^H=26$   $ADN^Y=65$  (יהו"ה אדנ"י).

## Mishlei ha'Ba'al Shem Tov

*Collected from Ba'al Shem Tov on the Torah and other sources – fleshed out and embellished, while trying best to remain truth & faithful to the original vision.*

### ***Parshas Miketz***

Rav Yaakov Yosef of Polnoy in *Ben Poras Yosef* (74b) cites the *Midrash Rabbah* (89) that comments on the word *Miketz* – comparing it with the pasuk (Iyov 28:3) “He put an end to darkness,” - we know that every Divine spark is like an entire spiritual edifice made up of 248 limbs and 365 sinews, that so long as that spark is imprisoned within an inanimate object, plant or animal – it is jailed like a bound prisoner – who cannot stretch out his limbs in his cramped cell, in his prison his head rests on his knees, prostrated in a position of a prisoner. Whoever can release and emancipate the jailed spark and uplift them from the lowly inanimate, plant or animal to a human speaker, is freeing them from their jail and there is no greater form of *pidyon shevuyim* – redeeming of captives than this! As I heard from my master and mentor the *Ba'al Shem Tov*:

There was once a prince who had committed such crimes against the king that he was imprisoned for his offenses. The once proud prince was manacled and chained, sent to slave in the dungeon.

A lobbyist who was schooled and an expert in court etiquette and advocacy did his best to convince the authorities to have the prince set free. The prince emerged from darkness to light and from slavery to freedom.

On that day the prince, the former prisoner, finally arrived back home. When his father the king finally gazed once more on the face of his son, the king's joy was tremendous and his happiness knew no bounds at being reunited with his lost son.

Surely when the time arrives for the lobbyist turned advocate's reward, it will be double the standard to cause the king such joy!

The *Ba'al Shem Tov* explained that this was exactly the parallel parable for the reward we receive when we elevate the Divine sparks and release them from their earthly prison, reuniting them with their Heavenly Supernal Father the King, on High.

Ultimately, the supreme Justice Himself will be the only One to determine how and when the darkness shall end, and until how long will the prison sentence continues and our exile jails us as prisoners of hope, and when do we finally go free and are redeemed, and who shall be he that sets us finally free.

## *Shnei haMeOros haGedolim - Chanuka*

Rav Levi Yitzchok, author of *Kedushas Levi* – the Heilige Berditchever Rav

### Kindling The Soul To Do A *Mitzva* With Fiery Enthusiasm

The *Gemara* in *Shabbos* (22b) asks is it the lightning of the *menora* that fulfills the *mitzva* or the setting down of the *menora* in place that fulfills the *mitzva*?

The *Gemara* concludes that the same opinion who holds that lighting fulfills the *mitzva* holds that if the candles go out you are obligated to relight them. Whereas the opinion that argues that setting the candles down fulfills the *mitzva* holds that if they go out, you need not relight them.

The Berditchever Rav that in reality there is no dispute between the two opinions.

He resolved their apparent dispute by explaining the meaning of the *berachah* that we recite over lighting the candles: We say “*asher kideshanu be'mitzvosav ve'tzivanu le'hadlik ner chanukkah*,” this means that *Hashem* sanctified us with all of His commandments to kindle – this means to light ourselves aflame with the fires of excitement and *hislabavus*. Fiery enthusiasm or *hislabavus* comes from the Hebrew word for a flame – *lahav* therefore when we say to light or kindle, we mean the flame inside us of fiery passion for *mitzvos*. We need to use that fiery passionate excitement to ignite and kindle the candle – the *ner* that stands for our *Nefesh Ruach* – our soul and spirit (whose acronym *Nun Reish* spell *Ner* a candle). The word *Chanuka* means to inaugurate and initiate through *Chinuch*. This is then the way for a person to initiate his own process of self-education – *chinuch* for all the rest of his life he must ignite the flame of fiery passion in his soul to light the candle within.

This explanation of the *berachah* will help us explain our *Gemara's* original question whether it is the lightning [of the *menora*] that fulfills the *mitzva* or the setting down of the *menora* in place that fulfills the *mitzva*?

The deeper meaning of the question asked is – *hadlaka oseh mitzva* is it only true that if we perform the *mitzva* when we are lit and aflame with *hislabavus*, is it only when we are on fire that we fulfill the *mitzva*? Then it is called a *mitzva* because I am performing it with passionate enthusiasm? Or perhaps *hanacha oseh mitzva* – maybe setting is a *mitzva* – maybe I can perform and fulfill the *mitzvos* even *be' hanacha* calmly and quietly without any passion or fiery enthusiasm?

This also explains the *Gemara's* conclusion that although ideally *le'chatchila* you should be excited and aflame still - *kavsa zakuk la* – if your passionate enthusiasm wanes until it

goes out, like a snuffed candle, still *zakuk la* you still have to do it even without the *hislahavus*.

As *Rashi* teaches in his commentary to the *pasuk* “And you shall set these words of Mine upon your heart,” (*Devarim* 11:18) “Even after you have been exiled, make yourselves distinctive with My commandments: Put on *tefillin* and make *mezuzos*, so that these will not be new to you when you return.”

According to the other opinion that *hanacha oseh mitzva* – the setting down [of the *menora* in place] that fulfills the *mitzva*, he also holds that ideally *le'chatchila* you should be excited and do *mitzvos* with *hislahavus* if possible, but he is saying since that is not always possible you must still do them, *hanacha oseh mitzva* – the calm performance is also a *mitzva* therefore he says a settled calm *mitzva* still counts as a *mitzva*. The meaning of his conclusion that *kavsa ayn zakuk la* is even if your flame was extinguished like a candle snuffed out *ayn pay* no attention to that, rather *zakuk la* go and do the *mitzva* anyway despite this, as *Rashi* said above [even in exile do the *mitzvos* and prepare yourself for the homecoming when you can do them again in an ideal state.] Based on our explanation they do not argue with another, rather one opinion is simply saying what the ideal is *le'chatchila*, whereas the other is speaking after the fact *bi'di'aved* what we do now. However, both agree that the ideal is to do *mitzvas* with passionate *hislahavus* and both agree that even at times when you lack any feelings of *hislahavus* do the *mitzvos* and perform them even without feeling that excitement. Until such time as when from on High They will have mercy upon you and grant you an expanded mind and broaden your horizons – *mochin gedolim* to do the *mitzvos* with fiery enthusiasm and great *teshuva*. (Based on *Imrei Tzaddikim*)

## Victory Of The Weak Over The Strong

The Berditchever asked for the meaning of what we say when we recite in *Al HaNissim* that *Hashem* handed victory of the strong over to the weak – *giborim be'yad chalashim*, but at first glance this is difficult to accept as true since we know that the *Chashmonaim* were strong soldiers and courageous warriors, how then can we explain this?

He answers that Josephus tells us that on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of *Kislev* a large Jewish force went out to battle the outnumbered Greeks and the larger Jewish force was defeated. Then the next day on the 24<sup>th</sup> of *Kislev* the sons of *Chashmonaim* went out to battle and they were greatly outnumbered, this fits well with what we say in *Al HaNissim* – that victory was handed to the few over the many, *rabim be'yad meatim*.

Since in this case the winning side of the *Chashmonaim* were outnumbered, so they were the few – the reason for their victory was their simple faith and trust in *Hashem*.

Whereas the day before when the Jews greatly outnumbered the Greek forces they were too self-confident and believed in themselves and their own force and strength, now

however the very fact that the *bnei Chashmonaim* were few in number made them believe themselves to be weaker in strength, therefore they had no self-confidence and no false trust in their own assured victory by sheer strength or number.

Rather they placed all their trust and faith in *Hashem* alone that He will perform a miracle for them, and that is how and why they achieved victory. They believed themselves to be weak and that is why they won, even though in reality they were strong and courageous. Therefore, to commemorate and remember their trust in *Hashem* we recite that *Hashem* handed victory of the strong over to the weak – *giborim be'yad chalashim* – in their hearts they believed themselves to be weak. (Based on *Imrei Tzaddikim*)

Ohev Yisroel

*Collected from the holy tzadik of Apta-Mezibuz*

*Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heschel - the Apta Rav.*

**In order to understand the meaning of the miracle of *Chanuka* we ask what was it?**

Why did *chazal* establish the commemoration of this miraculous event specifically over the miracle of the oil and not to commemorate the military victory? Which was itself a great wonder and a public display demonstrating great courage and might. Was this not a greater miracle than that of the oil?

We also need to understand why the wicked leaders decreed that we right on the horns of the ox that we have no portion in the G-d of Israel (*Bereishis Rabbah* 2). Why did they ask us to inscribe this specifically on the horns of the ox?

By answering these questions, we will explain many other wondrous things that seem incomprehensible and mysterious.

**When Anointed the Temple Vessels Came Alive**

When Betzalel fashioned the temple vessels for the *bais hamikdash* he fashioned the *aron* and *kelei kodesh* fully and completely based on the vision that Moshe *Rabbeinu* was shown at Mount Sinai. However, although the vision was fulfilled externally, the vessels remained incomplete since they lacked one key element: life. This living life force was the true fulfillment of the Divine Will, and without this key element, the Creator's true design remained incomplete and unfulfilled until the *keilim* were *nimshach be'shemen hamishcha* – only once Moshe *Rabbeinu* anointed the holy vessels by the anointing the oil was this complete.

Once anointed the vessels were filled with a *chiyus* – a vitality and life force that literally made them come alive. This is similar to what we know from *Chazal* about the cherubs – the *keruvim* (See *Bava Basra* 99a, *Rashbam* there and *Zohar* III 59a) [the cherubs were fashioned to resemble a male and female in union and when the Jewish people were in harmony they too miraculously turned to face one another, whereas when *Bnei Yisroel* were in strife, they too emulated us and miraculously moved and turned away from one another.] This was due to the anointing oil of *shemen hamishcha* that drew down a vital life force into the holy vessels and animated them, bringing them to life.

### **Oil is *Shefa* and *Chochmah***

This is the secret of the anointing oil - *shemen hamishcha*, since oil corresponds to the supernal attribute of wisdom – *chochmah* regarding which it says that wisdom animates and gives life to its possessors. Therefore, anointing the vessels with this oil animated them and brought them to life, because of the holy oil upon them.

Similarly, the *pasuk Tehillim* 133:2 teaches us that the oil drips down to flow through all the *midos* and attributes – so that from the oil of wisdom there is an influx of *shefa* that flows downwards carrying life and drawing down this wisdom, down to all the *middos*, and all the worlds, and we are the ones who draw this all down. As is known that *Bnei Yisroel's* job is to draw down an influx of blessings and abundance of *shefa* to give power to the right side to overcome the left and to thereby incorporate and include the left into the right. This draws down *shefa* and vitality over all the worlds and all the supernal attributes or *middos*.

However, the wicked government of the Greeks wanted to give power to the left over the right since that is where they draw their own life and vitality from. By doing so they tried to contaminate and defile the oils, heaven forbid. They sought to contaminate and defile the *shefa* that is known as oil as we explained above.

### **The Horn of the Ox Power of the Left**

It is further known that in the vision of the celestial chariot the lion was on the right side and the ox on the left side. This is the source of the power of the left, therefore they told the Jewish people to inscribe on the horn of the ox – specifically there – because the horn represents the power of the ox, the power of the left.

They wanted *Bnei Yisroel* to agree with and cooperate with the left and help them run the world with their leftist agenda, to declare, heaven forbid the heresy that they have no portion in the G-d of Israel. This was the desire of the wicked and the forces of evil known as the *klippas*.

## The Thirteen Breaches

There is a continuous supernal flow from the celestial sphere where there are thirteen rivers flowing with *parsimon* oil which pours down to nourish the attributes of foundation and kingship. So long as the flow continues unabated the world is filled with an abundance of supernal blessings, an influx of joy and delight and supernal light.

Therefore the wicked Greek government ordered its minions to correspondingly breach the wall thirteen times, and as *Chazal* said (*Middos 2:3*) the Greeks did in fact break through the wall of the temple courtyard – the *azara*, thirteen breaches into the *heichal*, all in order to defile and contaminate the oils and thereby interrupt the supernal flow of the holy *shefa* and influx.

## Why we observe eight days of *Chanuka*

When Matisyahu *Koben Gadol* saw this breach, he was filled with holy vengeance and garbed himself in the robes and vestments of majesty (*Hod*) and kingship (*Malchus*). He rectified and repaired as much as he could of the breach, up to the eighth attribute known as *notzer chessed* – the secret supernal *mazal* and why we observe eight days of *Chanuka*.

This alludes to the great *tikkun* effected by the sons of the *Chashmonaim* - the holy *Kobanim* that reached up to the eighth attribute.

## Yehudah the Macabee

Yehudah the Macabee son of Matisyahu *Koben Gadol* girded himself in holy vengeance. The deeper meaning of the name Macabee is a *notrikon* for *Mi Kamocha BaE-ilim Hashem?* "מי כמוכה בא"לים" – and with personal self-sacrifice he jumped into the fray and attacked the thousands of our enemies and yelling for vengeance by G-d's sword he attacked and conquered. By his attachment to *Hashem* and bond with Torah he was victorious and succeeded in defeating them. They considered themselves as nothing and by doing so, lowering and humbling themselves to the point of being willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, laying down their very lives for *Hashem*, His *Torah* and the Jewish people. Doing so they reached the ultimate supernal level of *Ayin* – nothingness total self-effacement and *bitul* to the Creator which is the supernal higher world of *Ayin*. Once they ascended to such a high level, they reached a state of existence where even opposites can simultaneously coexist equally, and they can be exchanged and overturned from their previous state. Then all matters took a turn for the best, and the thirteen breaches were overturned to the thirteen rivers flowing with *parsimon* oil. The first of the thirteen attributes (of mercy) is *E"l* which means power or strength as in (*Yechezkel 17:13*) "the mighty of the land." And from this Divine Name and attribute we draw all power and strength. This gave them the power and strength to achieve victory and defeat G-d's

enemies and repair the eighth attribute as we explained above.

Thereby, *Hod* (majesty) repaired *Malchus* (kingship) which was damaged by the angelic minister of Esav when he touched Yaakov's thigh (*Bereishis* 32:26) this was repaired by their military victory. All military victories are achieved by a rectification of *Hod* the secret power of *Gevura* – might and courage as it says *Tehillim* 45:4 “gird your sword on your thigh O heroic warrior! Your majesty *Hod* and glory *Hadar*.”

And we need to try and understand how could *Kobanim* who descend from the attribute of *chesed* and loving kindness act with such displays of bravery, strength and courage – characteristics of *gevurah*?

### ***Chessed, Gevurah and Hod the Diagonals***

We know from the holy *Zohar* (I 266b) that Aharon *haKohen* corresponds to *Hod* – majesty since he is counted among the seven shepherds the *tzaddikim* - Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef and Dovid, where Aharon occupies the fifth spot corresponding to *Hod* (majesty) [So that the entire list each correspond to the seven supernal attributes: Avraham to *Chessed*, Yitzchok to *Gevurah*, Yaakov to *Tiferes*, Moshe to *Netzach*, Aharon to *Hod*, Yosef to *Yesod* and David to *Malchus*.] We also find in the holy *Zohar* (ibid) that Aharon *haKohen* corresponds to the attribute of *chesed* loving kindness as well.

By awakening our hearts, we can resolve this apparent contradiction as follows: The *sefirotic* relationship between the supernal Divine attributes flows both from top to bottom and also diagonally. When *Hashem* desired to draw down loving kindness and save His beloved people while simultaneously take vengeance against their enemies He saw that by achieving a military victory the best benefit and kindness would reach all of *Klal Yisroel*. Then supernal *chesed* influences the vessels *Gevurah* by a diagonal flow where left and right forces intertwine and are incorporated and included within one another. Then from the vessels of *Gevurah* this flows down towards *Hod*. From here salvation and kindness were drawn down to aid the Jewish people. They were empowered with strength and courage, bravery and might to defeat and conquer their enemies, this is how Aharon *haKohen* can be simultaneously both *Chessed* and *Hod*. It depends on what is needed at that particular time, whether to garb ourselves in the spiritual garments of the attribute of *chesed* to dress in the guise of *gevurah*.

In this manner the miracle of the Matisyahu and his sons the *Kobanim* was cloaked. It was a form of *gevurah she'be'chesed* – might and power within loving kindness. Though they were *Kobanim* they acted with might and courage, strength and bravery using the vessels of *gevurah* an act of *Hod* and majesty. This was the true way to serve *Hashem* and incorporate the left into the right, as *Bnei Yisroel Bnei E"l Chai* – sons of the living G-d.



In this manner they achieved victory by uplifting the power of the right and purifying all of the holy sacred oils. Therefore, we can now understand why we commemorate the miracle primarily over the oil. Since it represents the abundance of blessings that the *Kobanim* the sons of *Chashmonaim* drew down through their great purity and sanctity as we explained.

The miraculous military victory followed almost as an automatic consequence of this and therefore our sages, *Chazal* instituted (*Middos* 2:3) to bow down and prostrate ourselves 13 times in the temple courtyard known as the *azara* – to correspond to the thirteen breaches that the wicked enemy breached the wall as we cited previously above. Bowing down and prostrating ourselves illustrates drawing down the abundance of influx of *shefa* from above down below.

### **Illuminating Even the Lowest Places**

There is a hint of *Chanuka* in *Chazal's aggada* (*Bava Metzia* 59a) “If your wife is short bend down to whisper in her ear,” this alludes to the mystery of the lighting of the *Chanuka* candles – and it can be understood in the light of the writings of the *Arizal* and the *Shelah haKadosh*, that the secret of the mitzva of lighting *Chanuka* candles is below the height of ten *tefachim*, study it there and understand.

### **A Story - A Most Bewildering Preparation for Lighting the *Menora***

The *tzaddik* Rav Dovid of Tolna prepared to light the *Chanuka* candles as the crowd of *chassidim* surrounding him pushed and jostled to get a better look and gaze at the *tzaddik's avodah*, unexpectedly the *rebbe* turned away from the unlit candles and instead turned towards one of the *chassidim* and walked over to him and asked a question that sent ripples of puzzled whispers through the crowd, and caused many an eyebrow to rise up in amazement and wonder. . . what the *tzaddik* asked his follower as this:

"Tell me, your wife's name is *Gutz'a* right? She is significantly shorter than you, if you wish to tell her something what do you do? Do you bend down to whisper in her ear or does she rise up to tell you?"

After this puzzling question, the *rebbe* did something even more puzzling, without waiting for an answer he walked back, recited the *berachah* and lit the candles!

Our *chassid* was surprised to say the least, but not only him, the whispers that went to and fro through the crowd all asked the same question, what did the *rebbe* mean by this bizarre question? They reasoned: Surely, the *chassidim* believed, there must be some secret mystery to the *tzaddik's* bizarre question?

Present at the time was none other than Rav Dovid of Tolna's great nephew, Rav Mordechai Dov of Horensteipel. He too witnessed the strange event, but unlike the

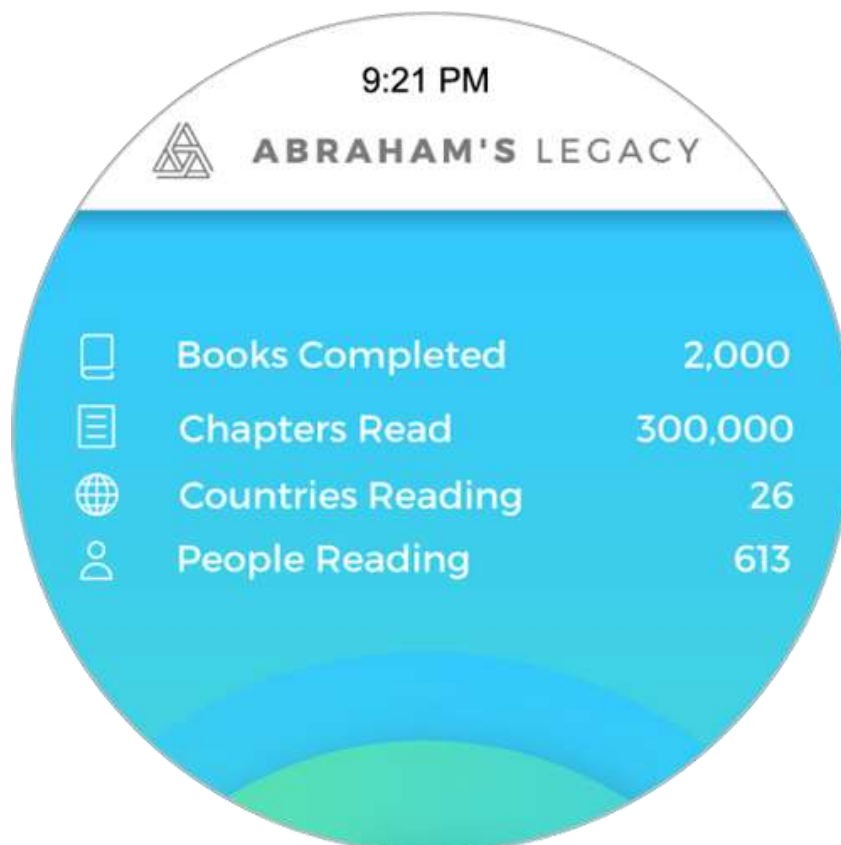
*chassidim* he believed he understood his great uncle's hidden intentions. When he saw the bewilderment of the *chassidim*, he decided to reveal to them what he thought he knew:

I will explain to you my holy uncle's intention, as far as I can understand. For you see the *Gemara* says (*Sukka* 5a) the *Shechina* never went down below ten *tefachim*, however the exception to this rule are the *Chanuka* candles, when we light the candles on *Chanuka* the best way to perform this *mitzva* is ideally to set them below ten *tefachim* in height, close to the ground. This draws down the light of the *Shechina* even below ten, to brighten and illuminate even the lowest and darkest of places as is hinted at in the writings of the *Arizal* that this is the secret deeper meaning of the *Gemara's* proverb in *Bava Metzja* - if your wife is short bend down and whisper to her. That is what my holy uncle was hinting at!" (If your wife alluding to the *Shechina* – is short, if you wish to draw down the light of the *Shechina* down even below ten *tefachim* to illuminate the darkest places, bend down and whisper to her, lower yourself, humble yourself and light the candles below ten *tefachim* and whisper to her.) (*Sippurei Chassidim*)



# Abraham's Legacy A Social Network for Prayer.

Complete the book of tehillim 1000's of times a day collectively



Let's storm the Heaven's together – Join today!!

## WHAT IS ABRAHAM'S LEGACY?

Creating Technology that Enables us to Serve Hashem as One.

Never worry about breaking up the book of tehillim again. With Abraham's Legacy you can complete the book of tehillim thousands of times a day collectively with the entire world. Simply tap to pray and Abraham's Legacy will give you the next chapter in the global count.

***Abraham's Legacy is a 100% leshem shamayim initiative created in memory of Avraham ben Pauline A'H.***

A Social Network for Prayer.

***When someone's life is in the balance every tefillah counts!***



### PRAY

Click to pray and receive the next chapter in the global count.



### STATS

Track how many books have been completed, chapters read, countries reading and people reading around the globe.



### NOTIFICATIONS

Set up daily notifications reminding you to read tehillim.

# לעילוי נשמת - לזכר עולם יהי' צדיק

התנא רבי תנינא בן דוסא

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

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

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

זכותו הגדול יגן עלינו ועל כל ישראל אמן



הרה"ח אברהם חיים בן מו"ה שלום ז"ל  
מרת זיסל בת מוה"ר מאיר זאב הכהן ז"ל  
מוה"ר שלום בן הרה"ח אברהם חיים ז"ל  
מוה"ר יצחק מאיר זאב בן הרה"ח אברהם חיים ז"ל  
מרת שרה ביילא בת מוה"ר ארי' לייב ז"ל

ימליץ טוב צעד משפחתו היקרה ויקום לגורלו לקן הימין צמחרה

# TIMELESS CUSTOMER SERVICE



## TIME AND ATTENDANCE FOR HEALTHCARE

- Timekeeping | Scheduling | Accruals | PBJ
- Superb **CUSTOMER SERVICE** to achieve your goals
- Manage Union, DOH and DOL requirements
- Interface with your existing payroll system
- Track staff overages and avoid costly OT
- Robust analytics and custom reporting
- Extended support hours, including legal holidays
- Choice of biometric time clocks
- Affordable leasing options available

**REDUCE PAYROLL COSTS**  
BY CONTROLLING BUDGETED LABOR



**914.777.2121**  
**WWW.SBVWM.COM**

TAKE 10% OFF  
AN EXTRA  
WITH MENTION OF THIS AD

FOR ALL YOUR  
MARKETING  
NEEDS  
WE GOT  
YOUR BACK



WE GO ABOVE & BEYOND & WE DO IT ALL UNDER ONE ROOF

**RAMAPOST** ESTABLISHED 2009

MARKETING | DESIGN | PRINT | MAIL



ASK ABOUT OUR DIGITAL + SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING



**NEED  
CARE?  
WE'RE  
HERE!**



For now we are  
keeping the  
12-12 hours

**Sun. - Thu.** 12 pm - 12 am

**Fri.** 12 pm - 8:30 pm

**Shabbos/Sat.** 5 pm - 1 am

Last patient check-in is 10 minutes before hours listed

1 Main Street • Monsey, N.Y. 10952

**ON THE CORNER OF ROUTE 59 & 306**

**WE'RE EASY TO REMEMBER... 59 + 306 = 365**

**845-CARE-365 | 845-371-7200**

info@ramapost.com | www.Ramapost.com  
P: 845.369.9600 | F: 845.369.9601  
382 Route 59 Suite 264, Airmont, NY 10952

ת"ס

5780

# Happy Chanukah

MAY YOUR EIGHT NIGHTS BE FULL OF LIGHT + JOY



THE RAMAPOST TEAM

*Sharon Rajch Dani Ziv Lior Nikki Sarah Shanna Fruch*