

# ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

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*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)

## משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה

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

❧ TERUMAH/ZACHOR ❧

❧ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❧

### Dvar Torah

### The Throne of Glory

The loops of the *Mishkon* hangings were made of *techeiles*, sky-blue thread. According to the *Gemora* (*Sota* 17a), *techeiles* resembles the blue sea, which resembles the blue heavens, which in turn resemble the Throne of Glory.

The concept of using the *techeiles* here, says Rav Levi Yitzchok, relates to the construction of a house. It begins with the birth of a thought and an image in the mind of the prospective owner. From there, it advances to the preparation of detailed plans that will be the blueprint for the construction. Then the building is actually constructed according to the blueprint. Finally, the owner moves into the house, and it fulfills its original purpose.

The construction of the *Mishkon* also followed these four stages. It all began with the thought that emanated from the Throne of Glory, advanced to actual plans, was put into action and resulted in the final structure. The *techeiles* was made as part of the *Mishkon* in its finished form, the final stage of construction, to remind us of the sea, which is the symbol of action, the third stage of construction. The sea then reminds us of the spreading heaven, the

second stage of construction, which in turn reminds us of the Fount of all existence, the Throne of Glory.



## Story

Rav Levi Yitzchok's *shamash* walked through the streets of Berditchev, stopping passersby every once in a while to ask, "Do you know where I can find a man named Reb Shlomo *ben Yuta*?" But no one had ever heard of such a person. The *shamash* was becoming frustrated. Rav Levi Yitzchok had specifically told him to find and bring this person, but how was he to fulfill his mission if no one knew who he was?

Finally, he met a man who offered a glimmer of hope. "I can't say I know such a person," said the man. "But perhaps you want Shlomo who lives in a shack at the edge of the city. He is a simple Jew, very poor. He is a *melamed* for very young children, and otherwise, he keeps pretty much to himself. If you want, I'll give you exact directions."

"It's worth a try," the *shamash* said doubtfully. "Thank you for your help."

The *shamash* found the shack and knocked on the door. A nondescript man opened the door.

"Are you Reb Shlomo *ben Yuta*?" asked the *shamash*.

"Yes, that is my name."

"I am Rav Levi Yitzchok's *shamash*. He asked me to invite you to come see him."

The *melamed* looked at the *shamash* thoughtfully and nodded. "I will come in a few hours."

The *shamash* looked at him in surprise but did not comment. He took his leave and returned to Rav Levi Yitzchok to report.

When the *melamed* arrived at Rav Levi Yitzchok's house later that day, Rav Levi Yitzchok came out to greet him at the door.

"Welcome, Reb Shlomo," he said. "I am so glad you could come."

He led the *melamed* into his room and the two men sat down. For a long time, they sat there, their faces radiant, their lips utterly silent. After two hours, they stood up and burst into laughter. They shook hands, and the *melamed* left.

"May I ask," said the *shamash*, "what just transpired here?"

"I heard in the heavens," said Rav Levi Yitzchok, "that a terrible decree was about to be issued against the Jewish people of our district. It seems that the nobles of the *Sejm*, the Polish parliament, were seriously considering driving us into exile. I *davened* for redemption and was told that it would be helpful if I enlisted the help of Reb Shlomo *ben Yuta*, a hidden *Tzaddik* whom Eliyohu *HaNovi* visits regularly.

"When you brought him here, we both sat down and considered the situation. The prospect of all of our Jews torn from their homes and their livelihoods was so horrifying that we could not even speak a word. So we just sat there and *davened* silently.

"There is a tradition in the *Sejm* known as the Golden Rule, by which any single nobleman can veto a decision by simply standing up and saying, 'I object.' As we followed

the proceedings, we saw one nobleman after another throwing his support to the proposal of expulsion. And then Eliyohu walked into the chamber in the guise of a Polish nobleman and declared, 'I object.' Just those two words. The entire initiative immediately collapsed. What's more, the noblemen began to accuse one another of proposing such a ridiculous law that would undoubtedly have caused grievous damage to the country.

"The turnabout in the fortunes of the Jewish people was so dramatic that we couldn't help but laugh with joy. And so we laughed and laughed and laughed. And then Reb Shlomo went home."

The *shamash* was astounded by the story. It was as if Rav Levi Yitzchok always had one foot planted in this world and the other planted in the upper worlds, always alert for threats to the Jewish people and exerting himself to avert them.

Many years later, after the passing of Rav Levi Yitzchok, Rav Nachum of Czernobyl was standing near the *amud* on *Yom Kippur* night, about to begin *Kol Nidrei*. And then he stopped and waited. No one knew why or for whom he was waiting as the minutes crept by in utter silence. Finally, Rav Nachum stepped forward and began to sing.

Afterward, several people came over and asked if he would explain the mysterious minutes of silence.

"As I was about to begin," said Rav Nachum, "I saw the holy Berditchever in Heaven lying prostrate on the ground and holding onto the Throne of Glory with all his might. I waited for him to finish his entreaties before I began *Kol Nidrei*."



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

הריני מדליק נר זה למנוחת ולעילוי נשמת אבי / אמי מורתי / הצדיק \_\_\_\_\_  
 בן/בת \_\_\_\_\_, יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שתקבל ברחמים  
 ובִּרְצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב שְׁאֵנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וְיִהְיֶה הַכֹּל  
 לְזִכּוֹת וּלְמִנוּחַת וּלְעִלּוֹי לְנַשְׁמוֹת עַמִּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבִפְרֹט לְנַפְשׁ רוּחַ וְנַשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /  
 צַדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_ . יהי רצון שתהינה נפשותיהם צרורות בצרור החיים.

Translation:

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

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



## ❁ GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER ❁



YAHREITS BEGINNING SHABBOS TERUMAH

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

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

### \* **8<sup>th</sup> of Adar ~ Begins Friday Night (Feb 19<sup>th</sup>)**

- \* **Rav Eliyohu ben Avrohom Shlomo HaKohen Ha'Itamari** of Izhmir, Turkey, *mechaber* of *Shevet Mussar*, (5489/1729 – Adar II);
- \* **Rav Shmuel Dovid Ungar** of Nitra, a descendant of Don Yitzchok Abarbanel, (5705/1945);
- \* **Rav Gershon** of Lotzk, a *talmid* of the *Mezritcher Maggid*, (5548/1788);
- \* **Rav Aryeh Leib Hanover** (1715–1789). Son of the *Pnei Yehoshua*, he married the daughter of Rav Yechiel Michel Halperin, *Rav* of Berzhan. After posts at Skohl and Sevirz, he was asked to serve as *Rav* at Hanover at the age of forty-one. He was a fierce opponent of the supporters of Shabbetai Tzvi. His *chiddushei Torah* are printed in the *sefer Pnei Aryeh* on *Maseches Bava Kamma*, (5549/1789);
- \* **Rav Yosef Yedid**, *mechaber* of *Yemei Yosef*, (5690/1930);
- \* **Rav Avrohom Noach Paley** of Shklov-Yerushalayim, (5692/1932);
- \* **Rav Moshe Aharon Stern** (1926–1998). Born in New York, he was a grandson of the famed *Tzaddik*, Rav Yaakov Yosef Herman (subject of the book *All for the Boss*). In his youth, Rav Moshe Aharon studied at *Yeshiva Torah Vodaas*. At age eighteen, he traveled to *Eretz Yisrael* and enrolled in the *Kamenitz Yeshiva*, where he remained for the rest of his life, serving as *Mashgiach* for the last twenty years of his life, (5758/1998);

**Some historical events from the 8<sup>th</sup> of Adar.** (These are not coincidental, but rather occur on a specific day as they relate to the energy of that day.)



- The Jews of Barbados were granted permission to take an oath on the “Old Testament”, 5434/1674. This was a first for the New World. 151 years later, in 5585/1825, also on the 8<sup>th</sup> of *Adar*, the Jews of Maryland were allowed to take a non-Christian oath. A declaration of belief in *S’char v’Onesh in Olam Haba* was part of their oath;
- *Yeshiva Eitz Chaim*, the first elementary school with secular studies in the U.S., was established in 5646/1886;
- Deportation of the Jews from Thrace, 5703/1943.

### ✧ 9<sup>th</sup> of Adar ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Feb 20<sup>th</sup>)

- ✧ **Rav Mordechai Meisels**, the *parnes* of Prague, a great Jewish philanthropist who saved many Jewish lives in pogroms, (5361/1601 – *Adar II*);
- ✧ **Rav Shlomo Zalman** of Volozhin, brother of Rav Chaim of Volozhin, (5516–5548/1756–1788);
- ✧ **Rav Menachem Mendel Stern** (1759–1834). He was a *talmid* of Rav Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lissa (*mechaber* of *Nesivos Hamishpot*, *Chavas Da’as*, and *Derech Chaim*). He succeeded Rav Yehuda *HaKohen* Heller (*mechaber* of *Kuntres HaSefeikos* and brother of the *Ketzos HaChoshen*) as *Rav* of Sighet, Hungary. Rav Stern was a *Chassid* of Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov and of Rav Mendel of Kossov. Among his works is *Derech Emuna*, (5594/1834 – *Adar II*);
- ✧ **Rav Aharon Menachem Mendel** of Radzimin, (5694/1934);
- ✧ **Rav Yechiel Schlesinger**, *Rav* and *posek* for *Kehal Adas Yeshurun*. In his youth, he learned in Slobodka and Mir *Yeshivos*. After his marriage in 1930, he set off for Ponevezh, Lithuania. During his time in Ponevezh, Rav Yechiel Michel also trained to become a *Dayan*, doing *shimush* in the *Bais Din* of the Ponevezher *Rav*. He was called to serve as a *Dayan* on the Frankfurt *Bais Din*, and as the head of Rav Breuer’s *Yeshiva* there. In 1938, he decided that life as a Jew in Germany was becoming intolerable. Although he was offered the prestigious position of *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Torah Vodaas Yeshiva* in New York, he preferred to move to *Eretz Yisrael*. Once he reached Yerushalayim, a few days after *Pesach* (1939), he founded *Kol Torah Yeshiva*, setting a clear *Torah* path for German Jewry, (5709/1949);
- ✧ **Rav Chaim Efraim Zeitchek**, *Mashgiach* of Novardok, Yerushalayim, and *Rosh Yeshiva Ohr Chodosh*, (5749/1989).

### ✧ 10<sup>th</sup> of Adar ~ Begins Sunday Night (Feb 21<sup>st</sup>)

- ✧ **Rav Pinchas** of Voldova, *mechaber* of *Bris Shalom*, (5423/1663);
- ✧ **Rav Yosef Boruch HaLevi Epstein**, the *Guttes Yid* of Neustadt, son of the *Ma’or VaShemesh*, (5627/1867);
- ✧ **Rav Alexander Moshe Lapidus** (1819–1906). A *talmid* of Rav Yisrael Salanter, he authored *Divrei Emes*, (5666/1906);
- ✧ **Rav Sholom Goldstein** (1923–1984). Born in 1923 in Romania to Rav Yechezkel Shraga Goldstein, a *Deizher Chassid* and a *descendant* of Rav Yaakov Koppel Chossid. Rav Yechezkel Goldstein immigrated to the U.S. and settled in Williamsburg when his son was eight. The youth was a popular activist of *Zeirei Agudas Yisrael*, who did *kiruv* work with children from less religious homes. In 1944, Sholom married Lea Necha Scheiner of Pittsburgh, and a year later he moved to Detroit in 1945, where he remained to build *Torah* for the following forty years, (5744/1984);

✧ **11<sup>th</sup> of Adar ~ Begins Monday Night (Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

- ✧ **Rav Gershon Ashkenazi** (1625–1693). Born to Rav Yitzchok Ashkenazi in Holtz, Germany, he left home to learn in the *Yeshiva* of Rav Yoel Sirkes, the *Bach*, in Cracow, Poland. He was also a close *talmid* of Rav Yehoshua, the *Maginei Shlomo*. Rav Gershon lost his first wife in 1649, and subsequently married the daughter of Rav Menachem Mendel Kruchmal, the *Tzemach Tzedek*. But she too was *niftar* young, in 1654. His third wife, Rebbetzin Raizel, was *zocheh* to *arichus yomim*, outliving her husband by thirty years. Rav Gershon served as *Dayan* in Cracow, and in 1650 served the *kehilla* of Prussnitz, Moravia. With the *petira* of his father-in-law, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, in 1661, he became *Rav* of Nikolsburg and a year later of the entire province of Moravia. He served as chief *Rav* of Austria until the expulsion of 1670. At that point, he became *Rav* of Metz, Germany, where he remained until his *petira*. He is the *mechaber* of *Avodas HaGershuni*, which deals with a wide range of *halochos*. Much of what we know about the Chmielnicki massacres is based on this work. A prolific writer, he also composed *Tiferes HaGershuni*, comprising his *deroshos* on the *Torah*, and *Chiddushei HaGershuni* on *halocha*, [*Hamodia* says 10<sup>th</sup> of Adar] (5453/1693 – *Adar II*);
- ✧ **Rav Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai**, (the *Chida*), (1724–1806). Arguably the *Sefardic* equivalent to the Vilna *Gaon*, the *Chida* was born in Yerushalayim. At the age of eighteen, he learned under Rav Chaim ben Atar (the *Ohr HaChaim*). His works include a collection of responsa known as *Yosef Ometz*, the *Shem HaGedolim* (a biographical work on 1,300 authors and 1,200 writings, dating back to the *Ge'onim*), and many others. He passed away in Livorno (Leghorn), Italy, (5566/1806);
- ✧ **Rav Eliezer Lipman**, father of Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk and Rebbe Reb Zusha of Annipoli, (date of *petira* unknown);
- ✧ **Rav Mordechai Posner**, *Rav* of Ursha and brother of Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi, (5583/1823);
- ✧ **Rav Shmuel Strashun** (Shtrasen/Shtershun; Shtrasson), the *Rashash* of Vilna (1794–1872). He was a *Rav* and a very wealthy banker in Vilna; he also administrated a free loan fund. His commentary on virtually the entire *Talmud* is printed in most editions of the *Talmud*, (12<sup>th</sup> of Adar, per *Yated* 2006; 13<sup>th</sup> of Adar 1885 per *Yated* 2008), (5632/1872 – *Adar II*);
- ✧ **Rav Avrohom Borenstein** (Bornsztain) of Sochatchov (Sochaczew, near Warsaw), (1839–1910), *mechaber* of *Avnei Nezer* (seven volumes of responsa) and *Eglei Tal* (encyclopedia of the laws of *Shabbos*). He was born in Bendin to Rav Ze'ev Nachum, *mechaber* of the *Agudas Eizov*, a descendant of the *Rema* and the *Shach*, and the *Rav* of Elkush and Biala. In 1853, he married Sora Tzina, one of the two daughters of the Kotzker *Rebbe*; the *Rebbe* was his daily *chavrusa* for almost seven years. After the *petira* of his father-in-law in 1859, Rav Avrohom accepted the *Chiddushei HaRim* of Ger as his *Rebbe*. After the *petira* of the *Chiddushei HaRim* in 1866, he accepted Rav Chanoch Heinich *HaKohen* of Alexander as his new *Rebbe*. In 1883, he became *Rav* of Sochatchov. His lectures in the *Yeshiva* lasted six to eight hours, often starting at midnight and continuing until morning, except for a fifteen-minute break when he napped. Rav Borenstein is frequently quoted in his son's classic work, *Shem MiShmuel*, (5670/1910);

- \* **Rav Yosef Rosen** of Dvinsk, the *Gaon* of Rogatchov, *mechaber* of *Tzofnas Pane'ach* (1858–1936). His father, Rav Fishel Rosen, was a leader of the Jewish community of Rogatchov in general, and of the Lubavitcher *Chassidim* in particular. When he was *bar mitzva*, his father brought Rav Yosef to the Rav of Slutzk, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, the *Bais HaLevi*. Together with Rav Chaim (Rav Yosef Dov's son), Rav Yosef learned with the *Bais HaLevi* for an entire year. He then learned with Rav Yehushua Diskin in Shklov. When he was eighteen, he married the daughter of Rav Moshe Garfinkel, a Gerrer *Chassid* in Warsaw, who supported the couple for eight years. In 1891, he took the position of Rav in Dvinsk, a position he kept until his *petira*, (5696/1936);
- \* **Rav Shmuel Brudny**, *Rosh Yeshivas* Mir (1915–1981), born in Smorgon, Lithuania, between Oshmina and Vilna. At fourteen years of age, he entered the Rameilles *Yeshiva* in Vilna under Rav Shlomo Heiman. Three years later, he entered the Mirrer *Yeshiva* under Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel. Whereas his parents and siblings were murdered by the Nazis, he escaped to Shanghai. After the *Yeshiva* relocated to New York, he was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva*, (5741/1981);
- \* **Rav Yehoshua Moshe Orenstein**, *mechaber* of *Yam HaTalmud*, (5584/1824).

\* **12<sup>th</sup> of Adar ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>)**

- \* **Rav Moshe Pardo**, founder of *Or HaChaim* Seminary in Bnei Brak;
- \* **Rav Pinchas Hager** of Borsha (1869–1941). He was raised not only by his father, the *Imrei Boruch* of Vizhnitz, but also by his grandfather, Rav Menachem Mendel, the *Tzemach Tzaddik* of Vizhnitz. When he was only eighteen, Rav Pinchas was thrust into the position of a *Rebbe* in Borsha, a town on the Vishiva River at the foot of the Carpathians. Borsha was one of the 160 Jewish communities of the approximately 500-square kilometer Maramures (Marmerosh) district of northwestern Romania. After the outbreak of the First World War, the *Rebbe* fled to Budapest, and then to Vishiva and Sighet after the war. In 1926, his son, Rav Alter Menachem Mendel, succeeded him as *Rebbe* in Borsha. He and his two brothers perished in the Holocaust, (5701/1941);
- \* **Rav Yosef Adler**, the *Turda Rav*. Turda is a city with a history of over two thousand years. It is famous for its salt mine (Salina Turda), whose origins date back to the Roman times. In June 1942, following impressive German victories in Russia and following the Romanian army's advance in the Caucasus, Prime Minister Ion Antonescu agreed to implement the "Final Solution" with regard to Romanian Jews. The first transports were to depart from southern Transylvania, from the districts of Arad, Timisoara and Turda, (5737/1977);
- \* **Rav Chaim Dovid HaLevi** (1924–1998). *Sefardic* chief Rav of Tel Aviv for the last twenty-five years of his life, he was known to many as the *mechaber* of the multi-volume responsa *Aseh Lecha Rav*, on many contemporary *halachic* and *hashkafic* issues, and a six-volume *halachic* work entitled *Mekor Chaim*, (5758/1998).

\* **13<sup>th</sup> of Adar ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Feb 24<sup>th</sup>)**

- \* **Rav Yochanon Sofer**, Erlau *Rebbe*, (5776/2016 – Adar I);
- \* **Rav Yehuda HeChassid**, *mechaber* of *Sefer Chassidim* (1150–1217). His father, Rav Shmuel (1120–1175), led a famous *Yeshiva* in Speyer, and served as Rav Yehuda's *Rebbe*. (*Yated* 2007 says 8<sup>th</sup> of Adar), (4977/1217);

- \* **Rav Moshe Langner**, the fifth Strettiner *Rebbe*, born to Rav Yehuda *Hirsch*, *Rebbe* in the town of Strettin. In 1921, he moved the family from Galicia to Toronto, (5719/1959 – Adar II);
- \* **Rav Moshe Feinstein** (1895–1986). Born in Uzda (near Minsk), Belorussia, he was the son of Rav Dovid Feinstein, who was a grandchild of the *Be'er HaGola*. His mother was Feige Gittel, daughter of Rav Yechiel, *Rav* of Kopolia. He joined the *Yeshiva* of Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer in Slutzk at the age of twelve. At the age of sixteen, Rav Moshe completed *Shas* and *Shulchon Aruch*. He was *Rav* of Lyuban from 1921 to 1936. He escaped the Stalinist regime in 1936 and settled in New York as *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Tiferes Yerushalayim*. He authored *Igros Moshe*, *Dorash Moshe* and *Dibros Moshe*, (5746/1986 – Adar II).

## \* **14<sup>th</sup> of Adar ~ Begins Thursday Night (Feb 25<sup>th</sup>)**

- \* **Rav Ze'ev Wolf** of Zhitomir, *talmid* of the *Maggid* of Mezritch, *mechaber* of *Or HaMeir*, one of the early foundation texts of *Chassidus*, (5560/1800);
- \* **Rav Shimon Schwab** (1908–1995). Born in Frankfurt am Main, Rav Schwab learned at Mir and Telshe before becoming *Dayan* in Darmstadt, and *Rav* in the district of Ichenhausen in Bavaria. Escaping Nazi Germany in 1936, Rav Schwab served as *Rav* in Baltimore, then in New York in the Washington Heights area, following Rav Yosef Breuer, (5755/1995);
- \* **Rav Menashe Frankel** of Lizhensk (1903–1965). Born in Yadlowa in eastern Galicia to Rav Shlomo Zalman Frankel, *Rav* of the town. He married the daughter of Rav Yechezkel *HaLevi* Landau, *Rav* of Lizhensk, and remained in Lizhensk. He was elected *Dayan*, and when his father-in-law was *niftar* in 1938, he became *Rav* of the city. Lizhensk was one of the first cities to fall to the Nazis in 1939. Rav Menashe escaped, but was sent to Siberia, then to Uzbekistan (Bukhara). He settled in New York in 1948 and founded his own congregation, *Ateres Shlomo*, (5725/1965);
- \* **Rav Yaakov Osher Kopf**, grandson of the *Lelover Rebbe*, Rav Moshe Mordechai Biederman, (5715–5765/1955–2005).



## ❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

### WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

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

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

The *Zohar* in *VaYeira* page 71 teaches us that if we suffer any calamity or tragedy we have the custom to go and daven at the kevorim of *Tzaddikim*. The reason for this is that we approach them with fasting, remorse and repentance, and we have in mind that the departed souls ask and



*daven* for us before *Hashem* on High, as opposed to the prohibition against speaking to the dead which is an idolatrous practice where the idol worshippers sought out the impure dead souls and bodies using sorcery and witchcraft. Instead, beseech our *Tzaddikim* who, in *gan eden*, are truly alive, and ask through *tefilla* and fasting and *teshuva* alone.



## ❧ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❧

### STORIES & ANECDOTES

**Rav Eliyohu Ben Avrohom Shlomo HaKohen Ha'Itamari of Izhmir, Turkey, 8<sup>th</sup> of Adar**

*Mechaber of Shevet Mussar*

#### **Girded With a Serpent Belt**

Rav Chaim Palagi told how once the *mechaber* of *Shevet Mussar* woke early one morning and rose to study *Torah*. When he put on his belt, he did not notice that he had in fact accidentally lifted a live, long serpent from the floor and tied it around his own waist! It was dark and he could not see, and so he simply tied the snake like a belt. In this manner, the *Tzaddik* sat himself down and studied *Torah*. As he sat *shuckling* back and forth in motion to the

singsong words of learning, the knot became slowly undone and the snake unwound itself and slithered off, miraculously, not biting the *Tzaddik*. To commemorate this miracle, Rav Eliyohu authored the *sefer Ezor Eliyohu* – “The belt of Eliyohu”. From his holy works of *Torah* we can see that this story is not farfetched for someone of such stature, may his merit shield us! (*Tenufa Chaim*, by Rav Chaim Palagi, *Shoftim* 15)



#### **Rav Chaim Efraim Ben Osher Zeitchik, 9<sup>th</sup> of Adar**

*Ra”m in Ohr Chodosh, Mechaber of HaMeoros HaGedolim*

#### **A Siberian Gemora**

Rav Zeitchik was *Rosh Yeshiva* in Buczacz when he was drafted into conscription in the Russian army. Eventually he was taken to Siberia, where half a kilo of bread and water from the distant, icy ravines were his only means of sustenance and nourishment, since all local water was poisoned and unfit to drink. The people, including himself, were unkempt and dressed in rags and tatters, sick, exhausted and in despair.

One day, Rav Chaim volunteered to draw the water from the far-off well, a distance of over three kilometers of frozen Siberian wasteland. His reason was that he

had discovered somehow that a Jew lived in that area. Secretly, he hid the buckets and made his way, sneaking from tree to tree, from grove to grove, until he reached this Jewish family. He edged closer to the house and indeed discerned a *mezuza* on the doorpost. When the lady of the house answered his feeble knocking and saw a man dressed in rags, she was fearful of him as an escapee from the Siberian camps, but she was compassionate and offered him a treasure: a slice of bread! She was amazed when he shook his head. No, he didn't want the bread. “I am a Jew. I don't want your bread. Please, do you have a *sefer*?”

She called her husband. “I am so sorry,” the husband told Rav Zeitchik. “I

am not a *Rav* – I only own one single *sefer* and I am not willing to part with it – it is a *Gemora*.”

“Please,” begged Rav Zeitchik and began to cry. “Please have mercy on me!” he sobbed. “At least give me just one *daf*! Don’t leave me like this!”

And so the *ba’al habayis* tore the *Gemora* in half. It was an edition of *Nedorim* and *Nozir*, and Rav Zeitchik got *Maseches Nedorim*. There was no one happier in the world at that moment!

The disinterested guards and workmen paid no heed to the safety of the working conditions; they did not value the

lives of their charges much at all. And so one day as he was working, chopping and sawing wood, a heavy branch fell on Rav Chaim’s head and injured him. He fell to the ground, bleeding from the wound. His fellows gathered him up and were about to transport him to the local hospital for medical attention, when he stopped them. Before they took him any further, he directed them to make a stop on the way to the grove where he had hidden his secret treasure that he refused to leave behind – his torn portion of *Maseches Nedorim*, so that he could take it with him to the hospital! (*Hirhurei Teshuva, Maamar 27*)



### Rav Yosef Boruch HaLevi Epstein, 10<sup>th</sup> of Adar

The *Gutte Yid* of Neustadt

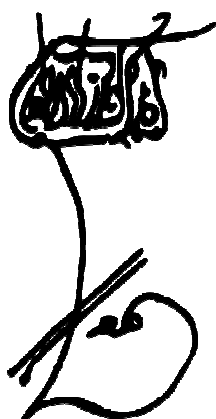
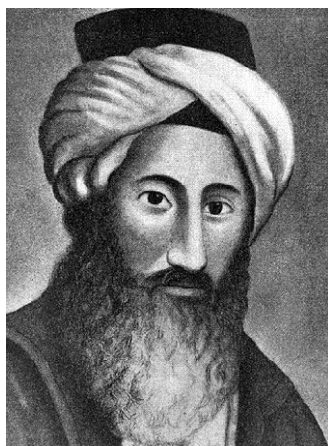
The Sanzer *Rav* once made a *siyum* upon completing the entire *Shas*. One of the guests who joined him for the *siyum* was the son of the holy *Ma’or VaShemesh*, who was known as the “*Gutte Yid* of Neustadt”. This hidden *Tzaddik* tried to conceal his greatness. He was not known as a great scholar, but was often seen reciting *Tehillim*, much like the simple townspeople.

During the *siyum*, he told the Sanzer *Rav* that he too was celebrating a *siyum*, because he had completed the entire *Tehillim*. The Sanzer *Rav* replied, “Would you like to make an exchange? I will give you all the merit I earned from studying the entire *Shas*, and you will give me the merit of your *Tehillim*.” The *Gutte Yid* refused the offer, and it stayed at that.



### Rav Chaim Yosef Dovid Ben Refoel Yitzchok Zecharya Azulai, 11<sup>th</sup> of Adar

The *Chida*



Rav Chaim Yosef David Azulai, better known by his acronym “*Chida*,” (which contain the initial letters of his name – it was also his signature) was one of the greatest *Sephardic* sages of his time.

He was born in *Yerushalayim*, but spent more than fifty years of his life abroad, during which time he longed for *Eretz Yisrael*. Although he was unable to realize his dream of moving back to *Eretz Yisrael* during his lifetime, his longings were not in vain. Some 154 years after his

*petira* in Laverne, Italy, he was reburied on *Har Hamenuchos* in *Yerushalayim*.



### **Childhood**

Rav Chaim Yosef David Azulai, the son of Rav Refael Yitzchak Zarchia Azulai, was born in 5384 in *Yerushalayim*. He descended from an illustrious family that had lived in Spain until the Expulsion. It then moved to the Moroccan city of Fez, and eventually to Chevron.

The founder of the Azulai family was Rav Avraham Azulai, author of many important *Torah* works, among them *Chessed l'Avraham*, *Sefer Shoshana* and *Hagahos al HaRambam*. (He was also the *Rav* in the famous story that went down to retrieve the Caliph's sword that fell in the *Ma'aros HaMachpela* and met the *Avos*).

The *Chida* was born premature, and he was so lifeless and feeble at his birth that the midwife who delivered him was certain that he wouldn't survive for more than a few hours. The *Chida's* grandmother, however, wrapped him in blankets and remained by his crib until he gained weight and became healthy.

The *Chida* was a childhood prodigy. At the age of six, he began to study in the *Bais Yakov Bais Medrash*, where his uncle, Rav Yona Navon, taught.

He began to write *chiddushim* and *drashos* even before his *bar mitzva*. After his *bar mitzva*, his father and Rav Yona trained him to write *halachic* responses. When Rav Yona went abroad on a *shlichus*, he corresponded with the *Chida*, and a strong bond of friendship that transcended the ordinary *rebbe-talmid* relationship developed between them.

The young *Chida* was also very close with Rav Yom Tov Elgazi, and the two studied together from many years. Rav Elgazi succeeded the Rashash as the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Bais Kel*, and was also the *Sephardic* chief *Rav* from 1776-1802.

### **With The Ohr HaChaim**

The *Chida* then studied in the *Knesses Yisrael Yeshiva*, founded by the *Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh*, Rav Chaim ben Attar.

The *Ohr HaChaim* arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* in *Av* 5402, and settled in *Yerushalayim*. But he passed way just eleven months later, at the young age of forty-seven.

During this brief period, the *Chida* studied under the *Ohr HaChaim* and absorbed much of the *Ohr HaChaim's* piety and *kedusha*. In his writings, the *Chida* cites many of the *Ohr HaChaim's* practices and insights.

The *Chida* also served many other sages, such as Rav Yisrael Meir Mizrachi, author of *Pri Ha'aretz*; Rav Yitzchak *HaKohen* Rappaport, author of *Battei Kehuna*; and the two great *kabbalists* Rav Gedalya Chayon and Rav Shalom Sharabi.



### **A New Yeshiva and a New Talmid of the Ohr HaChaim**

When the *Tzaddik* Rav Chaim ben Attar came to live in *Eretz Yisrael*, his main focus was to establish a holy lofty *Yeshiva* and *Bais Medrash*, whose purpose was to study *Torah lishma* on the highest level. Its students would sit all day immersed in their studies, never uttering any mundane words, wrapped in *tallis*, crowned in *tefillin* and unifying the *Shechina* as they studied *Gemora* and *Rambam*, delving into the depths of the *Talmud*, swimming in its seas and immersing in the words of *dvar Hashem zu Halocha*. As he himself testified in a letter written on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of *Shevat tov-kuf-bais* to the financial supporters of the *Yeshiva* in Mantuba, Italy, he named the *Bais Medrash* "*Heichal Ahava – Medrash Kenesses Yisrael* – the Chamber of Love", to awaken *Hashem's* love for *Kenesses Yisrael* (*Kenesses Yisrael* alludes to the *Shechina*). From the

Diaspora, Rav Chaim *ben Attar* brought with him *talmidim*, and gained new ones in Yerushalayim – among whom was the great Rav Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai – the *Chida*. (*Ner HaMaaravi*, ch. 24 p. 227)



### **The Chida's Testimony on the Ohr HaChaim's Preparation for Kiddush**

Once, when the *Chida* was on one of his travels in the lands of Ashkenaz, one of the *Admorim* asked him to relate a story that described his *Rebbe's* holy *avoda* in *nigla* and in *nistar*, and here is one of the tales he told:

The *Ohr HaChaim* had a special *minhag* to prepare himself to make *Kiddush* on *Shabbos*. Every *Erev Shabbos* he would sit and study and review with his *talmidim* the laws of testimony and witnesses – *Hilchos Eidus* in the *Rambam*. They would especially review the laws dealing with what things disqualified a witness and rendered him *posul* – unfit to give testimony. They studied this in order to do full *teshuvah* [over any of these disqualifications.] Not only did the *Ohr HaChaim* do this as a preparation before making *Kiddush*, but when he picked up the *Kiddush* cup to recite the *berocha* over it, he would be aflame with such excitement and thoughts of *teshuvah* and *kedusha* that all those present were also seized with pangs of regret and remorse so great that they would beg and plead that they too should merit to be *eidim kesherim* (proper witnesses) to testify to the Creation of the world in six days! (By Rav Yitzchok Alfaya in *Kuntres HaYacheli* Section *Bais Hashem* Chapter *Middos Tovos* #18)



### **The Ohr HaChaim's Berocha That He Should be Like Aharon HaKohen**

Rav Yekusiel Yehuda of Sanz-Klausenberg told the following story one *Sholosh Seudos* [see *Shefa Chaim* on

*Parshas Naso tov-shin-mem-daled*] (also found in the *kuntres Tav Chaim* as a prelude to certain editions of the *Chida's sefer Shem HaGedolim*):

Although the *Chida* was counted among the younger of the *Ohr HaChaim's talmidim*, still Rav Chaim *ben Attar* greatly admired him, drew him close and bestowed upon the *Chida* a special and unique *berocha* that from Heaven the *Chida* should be sanctified with the *kedusha* of Aharon *HaKohen*!

At first the *Chida* misconstrued his *Rebbe's* meaning and thought he had been blessed with the ability to give *berochos* to Am Yisrael *be'ahava* just as Aharon and the *Kohanim* bless the Jewish people. However, decades later, the true meaning of this special *berocha* was revealed in the following amazing manner:

In his old age, the *Chida* ended up in Leghorn, Italy, which the Jews know as Livorno. He had refused the position of *Rav* again and again, although the various communities' elders and leaders tried to have him take up the post. Instead, the *Chida* preferred to sit and learn *Torah* uninterrupted except for a four-year stint when he took up the post of *Rav* while he was in Egypt. Nonetheless, although he held no official title or position, all the Jews knew of his greatness and accorded him the honor and respect due to a sage and *Talmid Chochom*, one of the *Gedolim* of the generation.

One day, a community leader came before the *Chida* and complained to him that his wife had been seen alone in the company of another man. "If this is so," said the *Chida*, "you must divorce her, give her a *get* and she loses any rights to collect her *kesuba*."

The *Dayonim* heard his decision and were baffled; how could he decide such a matter without any testimony or evidence? But they dared not contradict his ruling. The *Chida* asked that the wife be



summoned to the place in the *Bais Medrash* where he sat and studied, immersed in *Torah*. The *Chida* tried to persuade her gently and kindly to accept a *get* of divorce from her husband, but the woman was brazen and arrogant. She answered the *Rav* back with *chutzpa* and as she spat back her arguments to the *Rav*, the *Chida* remembered the *berocha* he had received from the *Ohr HaChaim*, his *Rebbe*, all those years ago.

Turning to the insulting woman, the *Chida* asked, "Please, I have just one request. Listen as I read aloud to you a portion from the *Parsha* in the *Torah*."

The arrogant woman acquiesced to this one request and stood still as the *Chida* took out a *Torah* and began to recite the *Parsha* of *Naso* where the *Torah* describes the *sota*. As the *Chida* read the *pesukim* the woman began to leave in the middle – but she did not escape in time, for just as she reached the stairs, the *Chida* concluded reading the *Parsha* of the *sota*, and no sooner did he finish the last words than she stopped with her foot resting on the step, while her face contorted and her eyes bulged out of their sockets. With a shriek she collapsed and dropped dead. Hearing her outcry, many people rushed to the scene as she breathed her last, and witnessed this miraculous event.



### **What Delayed the Ohr HaChaim From His Shiur in Yeshiva**

Rav Chaim Yosef Arye Prager of Brisk writes how the *Chida* once met the *Gaon* Rav Dovid Ashkenazi of Bichov, who lived in Teverya and was sent by Rav Avrohom Kalisker to collect funds for the nascent and struggling *Chassidishe yishuv* there. Rav Dovid traveled in the west for some seven years collecting, and on one of his travels he met the *Chida* in Livorno. During their discussion about how greatly esteemed his *Rebbe*, the *Ohr HaChaim*, was among the *Chassidim*, the *Chida*

replied humbly that he did not consider himself worthy of being called a true *talmid* who knew the *Ohr HaChaim*, claiming that he was just someone who had studied there in his *Yeshiva*. He then related to Rav Dovid the following amazing story about his *Rebbe*, Rav Chaim ben Attar, the *Ohr HaChaim*:

Once, the *Ohr HaChaim* was late to arrive at the *Yeshiva*. This was uncharacteristic of him and all the *talmidim* who had gathered at the appointed time for his shiur wondered at this departure from custom. When the hour grew late and the delay continued, the *Chida* gathered his courage and himself went to his *Rebbe's* home to see what the delay was about and to call on the *Ohr HaChaim*. When he got there, he engaged Rav Chaim in conversation and the *Ohr HaChaim* told the *Chida* in a totally nonchalant and dismissive manner as part of the conversation, "I was late because I was stuck on a difficult *Tosafos* which I simply couldn't unravel or understand at all until...Rabbeinu Yitzchok, one of the *Ba'alei Tosafos*, came and explained to me what he meant."



### **It Was Only L'shem Shomayim**

The *Ohr HaChaim* used to make frequent trips with his *talmidim* to *daven* at *kivrei Tzaddikim* in Yerushalayim. The *Chida* described one such trip that he himself went on and accompanied the *Ohr HaChaim* and what he saw the *Ohr HaChaim* do on that occasion:

"In my youth I merited to travel together with the wondrous holy *Chassid*, our Master, Rav Chaim ben Attar and the students of his *Yeshiva*, to travel to *daven* at the *kivrei Tzaddikim* in Yerushalayim. When we reached the *matzeiva* of the *Rav*, author of the *sefer Pri Chodosh*, we watch as the *Rav* [the *Ohr HaChaim*] remained there alone for some fifteen minutes or more, *davening* at the *kever*, and his lips

moved as he was talking and we understood that he was asking *mechila* from the *Pri Chodosh* that he be forgiven [for Rav Chaim ben Attar, in his *sefer Pri To'ar*, would rule against him and argue on some of his points] and that all that he did was purely *L'shem Shomayim* (for the sake of Heaven)." (*Shem HaGedolim*, Section on *Seforim*, Entry for *Pri To'ar*)



### **In The Bais E-l Yeshiva**

The *Chida* also learned in the *Bais E-l Yeshiva*, where he was one of the most outstanding students. He was a member of a special association founded by the *Rashash* called *Chevras Ahavas Sholom*. This association included twelve of the *yeshiva's* top students.

The members of this association adopted many practices that were intended to help them perfect their character traits and achieve piety.



### **Fire Of Dissension**

In *Eretz Yisrael* at that time, a group known as the Committee of *Eretz Yisrael's* Trustees in Constantinople supervised the activities of *Yerushalayim's* *Sephardic* community and its leaders. It also represented them before the Turkish rulers.

Most of the officials on the committee were not G-d fearing and, quite often, they overstepped each other's jurisdictions. Although the sages of *Yerushalayim* made its decisions and regulations, committee officials attempted to gain control of the city's public affairs and to interfere in local appointments. As a result, great discord prevailed between the members of the committee and *Yerushalayim's* sages and residents.

In 5422, a sharp dispute arose between *Yerushalayim's* residents and Rachamim Cohen, one of committee's

representatives in *Yerushalayim*. In the end, he was placed in *cherem*.

Eventually, tempers flared to such an extent that the members of the committee resigned from their positions. Since the *Sephardic* community in *Yerushalayim* was dependent on the committee in Constantinople for its livelihood and for its influence on local Turkish officials, it decided to send a delegation of distinguished *chachamim* to Constantinople to bring about reconciliation.

The *Chida* was appointed head of this delegation. He was joined by Rav Yom Tov Elgazi, Rav Shmuel Elchadif, Rav Chaim Elfanderi, Rav Avraham ben Asher and Rav Yeshayahu Azulai, his son.

Before reaching Constantinople, the *Chida* learned that the members of the committee had reinstated Rachamim Cohen, despite the ban on him. The *Chida* decided that it would be futile, at that point, to try and negotiate with them. As a result, he decided to return to *Yerushalayim*. However, *Yerushalayim's* prominent residents sent him many messengers to try and convince him to continue on to Constantinople.

The *Chida* and his delegation reached Egypt and waited there, hoping that the situation would soon become clearer. They couldn't return to *Yerushalayim* because of their fear of the advocates of the appointment of Rachamim Cohen.

This dispute had adverse effects on the *Sephardic* community in *Yerushalayim*, since the committee no longer raised funds for them or kept the Turkish rulers in line. During this period, the *Sephardic* community suffered from a famine that took the lives of 300 of its members.



## **Chief Rav Of Egypt**

When the *Chida* arrived in Egypt, the local Jews recognized his greatness and appointed him chief *Rav*. Nonetheless, the *Chida* suffered greatly in Egypt due to his longings for *Yerushalayim*.

Eventually, the *Chida* once more tried to effect a reconciliation with the committee in Constantinople. This time, he succeeded.

Many of *Yerushalayim's* sages, who had fled to Egypt due to the dispute, returned to *Eretz Yisrael*. But the *Chida*, who was bound by a contract to preside as Egypt's chief *Rav* for five years, could not join them.



## **In Chevron**

When the *Chida's* tenure ended, he and his family left Egypt and headed for *Eretz Yisrael*. In 5429, they settled in Chevron.

The *Chida* remained in Chevron for three years. While there, he wrote the majority of his famous *Birchei Yosef* on the *Shulchan Aruch*.

In 5413, Chevron's sages pleaded with him to go abroad once more, this time on behalf of the Jews of Chevron, whose financial situation was dire.

At that time, the function of *meshulach* on behalf of the Jewish settlement in *Eretz Yisrael* was always assigned to the most dignified and eminent *chachamim*. The *Chida* was only twenty-nine when he set out on his journey, which included over 148 cities. Among those cities were Alexandria, Laverne, Ferrara, Modena, Venice, Frankfurt a Main, Mainz, Bonn, Dusseldorf, Amsterdam, Hague, London, Dover, Paris, Bordeaux, Toulouse and Nice.

In Germany, he suffered many disgraces. Its community doubted the veracity of his credentials, and claimed that

he was a fraud. He wasn't invited to give *drashos* in their synagogues, or even given decent lodgings. Things changed once he reached Italy and Paris, where he was treated with much respect, and its prominent Jews helped him collect money.

Upon his return to *Eretz Yisrael* in 5418, he continued to study and to disseminate *Torah* in Chevron.



## **Second Trip Abroad**

In 5433, Chevron's community once again asked him to go abroad on their behalf. During this mission, which also lasted more than five years, he visited 156 cities.

One of his first stops was Tunisia, where he was placed in a detention house for forty days, as were all Oriental visitors to that country. During that period, he prepared his renowned *Shem HaGedolim* for publication.

When he was released, he headed for Laverne, where his daughter lived, and printed *Shem HaGedolim* and *Birchei Yosef* there.

While in Italy, he received a letter from Chevron, stating that the Turkish ruler had cast all of the city's Jews into a ghetto because a blood libel had been circulated against them. The ruler had threatened to slay them if they didn't provide him with a large ransom fee.

The *Chida*, who was greatly distressed by this letter, appealed to Italy's Jews to raise the necessary money to redeem Chevron's Jews. They responded to his appeal, and he soon dispatched the funds to *Eretz Yisrael*.

This journey, like his previous one, was fraught with hardship, disgrace and danger. Customs officials who were wary of his mode of dress also harassed him.

## **Not Only A Meshulach**

While abroad, the *Chida* was very careful not to be on the road on *erev Shabbos*. He was also very scrupulous about his *kashrus* observance, and only ate at the homes of prominent *talmidei chachamim*.

During his trips, he visited the graves of *tzaddikim* such as the *Rama* of Paneu, Rav Moshe Zakuta and Rav Eliyohu Mizrachi. He also visited many *Gedolei Yisrael*.

In addition, he not only collected money for the Jews of Chevron, but also inspired the Jews of the communities he visited to correct their shortcomings.

In Laverne, he exhorted its Jewish residents not to read secular literature, and tried to stem the ever-increasing influence of the *Haskala* movement.

He also strengthened many of the educational networks in Tunisia, and gave *shiurim* in *mussar* throughout France.

Being a great lover of books and learning, these trips were a great opportunity for the *Chida*. He spent all available time in the libraries of the cities he visited, studying ancient manuscripts and books.



## **Mission Accomplished**

The *Chida's* beautiful features and majestic bearing made a deep impression on everyone, Jew and non-Jew alike. He was regarded as a saintly man, whose prayers were acceptable On High and whose blessing was therefore very desirable. Many a diplomatic mission took him to the courts and castles of kings and princes. When he visited King Louis XVI of France in the beautiful castle of Versailles, and before he had a chance to introduce himself, the king was obviously so greatly impressed that he asked what country's ambassador this visitor was. The king, one

of the most powerful rulers in Europe, had never seen a more stately and impressive looking ambassador!

This and many other incidents we learn from *Chida's* diary, which was later published under the name "*Ma'agal Tov*," (the Good Circle). In it, the author records his observations and experiences in the course of his travels. They give us an insight into the political, economic, and religious life of those days.

The *Chida* became known as a great authority on books and manuscripts. His wonderful memory helped him to acquire a vast store of knowledge and facts. He used to buy all the books he could afford, but he could not afford to buy many. However, throughout his travels he gathered material, made notes, and planned his writings.

When his mission ended, he remained in Laverne. It appears that he stayed there because it had excellent printing houses where he could publish his many writings, as well as wealthy people willing to sponsor these endeavors.

While in Laverne, he published two to four *seforim* each year. These works were warmly received by the Jews of the Diaspora and were distributed in Italy, Turkey, Poland, Russia, North Africa, Syria and *Eretz Yisrael*.

In Laverne, he spent his entire day studying. Nonetheless, he had a tremendous influence on the community.

Recognizing his greatness, Laverne's Jews addressed *halachic* questions to him and consulted him on many issues. He refused, however, to accept any public position, and declined the offer to preside as Laverne's chief *Rav*.

As his fame spread, communities throughout the Diaspora turned to him for assistance, and asked him to pray for them.

Despite the honor he was accorded abroad, he yearned to return to *Yerushalayim*. His reasons for remaining



in Laverne until his *petira* are unclear. It is believed that he was worried that the Jews in *Eretz Yisrael* wanted to appoint him to the position of *Sephardic* chief *Rav*, which, in his humility, he did not want to accept.

Even though he was far from home, he remained deeply concerned for the plight of the Jews of *Eretz Yisrael*, and would assist all of the emissaries who came to Italy on their behalf.



### **His Petira**

The *Chida*, who suffered from many ailments throughout his life, was *niftar* on the eleventh of Adar, 5466, at the age of 83. His *petira* was mourned by Jews all over the world. In Laverne, *hespedim* were delivered by Rav Yaakov diMedina and Rav Chaim Shlomo Abulafia. Many additional *hespedim* were given in Turkey, North Africa, Germany, Poland, Tunisia, France, Syria and *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Yosef Refael Chazan of Turkey, author of *Chikrei*, called him "a *gadol hador* who atoned for the entire generation."

Rav Yosef Dovid Zitzenheim of France, author of *Yad David*, said, "He was one of the most exalted *Torah* figures of our times, who studied *Torah* incessantly, until the day of his *petira*."



### **'Please Do This Task By Yourself'**

One of Rav Mordechai Eliyohu's early predecessors as *Rishon L'Tzion*, *Sephardic* Chief *Rav* of *Eretz Yisrael*, was Rav Yitzchak Nissim, who had a special appreciation and admiration for the *Chida*. One of Rav Nissim's friends was Dr. Shlomo Umberto Nachon, a native of Livorno (Leghorn), where the *Chida* lived the end of his life and was buried.

In the late 1950's, Dr. Nachon learned that the Italian authorities wished

to build a highway through the Jewish cemetery of Livorno. He quickly informed Chief *Rav* Nissim and, understanding the urgency of the situation, they decided it was time to move the *Chida* to *Eretz Yisrael*. Dr. Nachon made the arrangements with the authorities in Livorno, and in 1960 Rav Nissim commissioned, after much coaxing, the then thirty-one-year-old Rav Mordechai Eliyohu, who was known to be intimately familiar with the *Chida*'s writings, to head a team of esteemed *Sephardic rabbonim* (which included Rav Yisrael Abuhatzaira, the *Baba Sali*, and his brother the *Baba Haki*, Rav Yitzchak Abuhatzaira, chief *Rav* in the city of Ramle, who was an expert in Jewish burials in his native Morocco) for the reintering of the bones of the *Chida* in *Yerushalayim*.

Rav Eliyohu related that when he arrived at Lod Airport with the other *rabbonim*, he met with the agency representative who had brought the bones of the *Chida* in a small wooden coffin. When the *Rav* saw it, he was appalled "What is this?" he asked. "The bones of the *Chida* are rolling around in a miniature coffin? How can such a thing be?"

He asked that a larger coffin be brought, so that the bones could be transferred to it and be laid out properly for an honorable burial. Then he requested that the *Baba Haki*'s driver go with his driver, and that they immerse in a *mikva* [ritual bath], and afterwards buy a Phillips screwdriver to open the coffin.

When they returned, Rav Mordechai Eliyohu made a large hole in the bottom of the new large coffin so that there would be no barrier between the bones and the soil upon burial, but temporarily closed the hole with a stopper. Then the small coffin was inserted into the larger one.

Rav Eliyahu had the small coffin opened, whereupon he put his hand in to arrange the bones. But after a few moments, he trembled and closed his eyes.

Saying in a broken voice that he had no power to do it, he asked pleadingly that the *Chida* 'please do this task by yourself' to put his own bones in order!

Immediately, a powerful, almost explosive sound was heard, the coffin began to shake, and a rattling sound -- made by the *Chida's* remains striking the coffin's walls -- was heard. All the other *rabbonim* fainted on the spot. Rav Mordechai did not faint, explaining afterwards that his absorption in the *mitzva* helped him remain conscious.

It was beyond belief! The banging and shaking continued until, bone by bone, until the entire skeleton was arranged perfectly -- in the merit of the holy *Rav*, the *Chida*!

*"Hashem will grant you special Providence, and bring my remains out of this place."* [Bereishis 50:25]

*"He said to me, 'Can these bones live?'...As I prophesied, there was a roaring sound, and the bones came together and joined one another.... 'I am going to open your graves; I will take you out of your graves, My People, and bring you to the Land of Israel.'" [Yechezkel 37:3, 7, 12]*

Thousands accompanied the funeral procession from the *Yerushalayim* neighborhood of Sanhedria to the cemetery at *Har HaMenuchos*. At the burial, Rav Eliyohu described the events that had taken place as "*Nisei nissim*--absolute miracles."

At a later date, Rav Mordechai Eliyohu announced that whoever needs personal salvation can go to pray at the grave of the *Chida*.

It is no wonder that when Rav Mordechai Eliyohu passed on to his heavenly great reward fifty years later that he was buried near the *Chida* on *Har HaMenuchos*!

The *Chida* had finally come home.

His memory continued to live in the hearts of his people. Many Jews used to

make pilgrimages to his grave or send *kvittlach* to be deposited there, praying that the saintly *Rav* be an intercessor for them in the Heavenly Court.

(Ed. Note: Rav Mordechai Steiner *Shlita* related that the *B'nei Yisasschar* often was quoted that even if he can't always find the source for the *Chida's Torah chidushim*, he fully believes that they are accepted by the *Bais Din Shel Ma'ala* and his *segulos* are *kodesh* and *divine*. See *B'nei Yisasschar Tishrei* 4:14:39).



### **Kabbala teaches that Esther was a reincarnation of Eve.**

Esther: Scent from Above

From the teachings of Rav Tzvi Elimelech (Shapira) of Dinov

The *Midrash* states: "*Hadassa*" [Hebrew for "myrtle"] is [another name for] Esther. In the same way that myrtle has a sweet smell but a bitter taste, so was Esther sweet for Mordechai, yet bitter to Haman. (*Esther Rabba* 6:5)

...Esther sweet for Mordechai, yet bitter to Haman.

The *Chida* wrote: Esther was a reincarnation of Eve, the Serpent was enclothed in Haman, and Mordechai was the reincarnation of Yaakov, as recorded by the students of the *Ari HaKodosh*. Thus, Esther (as Eve) was bitter to Haman, who was the Serpent, who had brought her to sin - and sweet to Mordechai, who, as a reincarnation of Yaakov, was also the reincarnation of Adam. (*Dvash L'pi* 5:2)

And here I come to add, in accordance with what I've written on many an occasion, that every one of the [five] senses was recorded in the account of the sin of Adam - except that of the sense of smell. Therefore, understand that the sense of smell wasn't ever really blemished, and for this reason it is a thing which the soul

[*Neshama*] gets pleasure from, as opposed to the body.

Thus, the scent was sweet to Mordechai. (And also because he himself is called "pure myrrh" [see *Targum Onkelos* on *Shemos* 30:23]. Thus, "[Mordechai] shouted a great shout" (Esther 4:1) for "the voice is good for [the quality of] spices". (*Yerushalmi Talmud*, *Yoma* 23a)

And the taste was bitter to Haman, for [it was him, as] the Serpent, who seduced Eve [to sin essentially with] the sense of taste [and received his punishment from the reincarnation of Eve, measure for measure].

[From *B'nei Yisasschar*, *Adar* 7:10]



### **Mordechai was the reincarnation of Yaakov and Haman the reincarnation of Esau.**

From Yaakov to Mordechai

From the teachings of Rav Chaim Yosef David Azulai

[When Yaakov saw that Esau was coming] he went ahead of [his family] and bowed down seven times until he reached his brother. (*Bereishis* 33:3)

It says in *Sefer Hakinuyim* that Mordechai was the reincarnation of Yaakov and Haman the reincarnation of Esau. Since Yaakov did wrong by bowing before Esau seven times, Mordechai came and repaired Yaakov's failing by refusing to bow down to Haman.

Yaakov was guilty of giving a false impression....

[The question is:] how could Yaakov, the most perfect of the patriarchs, bow down to the wicked Esau? He surely knew that it is forbidden to greet an evildoer.

[The answer is:] Yaakov did not do anything wrong. When he prostrated himself he was bowing down to the *Shechina* that was coming to meet him.

Then why is it counted as a failing that needs rectification?

Yaakov was guilty of giving a false impression to his wives and his children, causing them to think that he was bowing down to Esau.

Mordechai repaired this misstep by refusing to bow down to Haman.

זכר צדיק וקדוש לברכה



## **Rav Avrohom Ben Ze'ev Nachum Bornstein of Sochatchov, 11<sup>th</sup> of Adar I**

*Mechaber of Avnei Nezer Eglei Tal*

### **The Broken Shidduch**

There was once a *Chassid* from Warsaw whom everyone nicknamed Der Kleine Moishelch, who made a *shidduch* for his daughter. Soon after, they discovered that the *chosson* had a lung disease, and when the *kalla* found out, she refused to continue with the *shidduch*. The father of the *kalla* received permission from a *Bais Din* to dissolve the *shidduch*, but when the *chosson* heard this, he suffered such great distress that the *agmas nefesh* amplified his disease. His condition worsened from

day to day, until finally he died, sick and heartbroken.

Afterward, the former *kalla* also grew ill and as she lay in her sickbed, she complained that the departed spirit of her former *chosson* kept vigil at her side, constantly imploring her to follow him and that he was taking her to court...in the *Bais Din Shel Ma'ala* (the Heavenly Court)! This continued for some days and her condition worsened, until her father was worried and the doctors began to despair of her ever getting better! And so her father traveled to

Sochatchov to the *Avnei Nezer*. When the holy *Rebbe* heard how the departed *chosson* stood by her bed ordering her to a *Din Torah* in *Shomayim*, he grew excited and roared:

“Heh! The *Halocha* is that we rule that he who sues in rabbinical court must follow the sued to his *Bais Din* in his locale! Now go back home and tell your daughter in my name that if the departed *chosson* returns, she should tell him that back in Sochatchov they say that if he has any reason to sue her in *Bais Din*, they need not take the matter up before the *Bais Din Shel Ma’ala*; rather, they should take the matter up with me right here in Sochatchov and he can take her to a *Din Torah* here! She should repeat this to him three times.”

And so it was. She did so and after the third time he never returned, she recovered and never saw him again.



### **The Rebbe’s Ahavas Yisrael**

Rav Moshe Duvid’l once took the place of the usual *shamash*, Rav Avrohom Yitzchok, who was called to Warsaw for an important matter, and he tended to the *Avnei Nezer*’s needs. Once, early in the morning, the *Avnei Nezer* approached Reb Moshe Duvid’l and told him, “Quick – bring me some water to wash, but hurry, now the air is pristine and clean of all sins and crimes and from all worldly desires. It is an opportune time to learn *Torah*. Take care that no one disturbs me at all. Even if a person should come with a golden crown, do not bring him before me!”

And so the *Tzaddik* sat himself down to learn, aflame with the fire of *Torah*! Soon a person arrived in modern dress, clean-shaven and wearing a short jacket and asked to see the *Rebbe*. Moshe Duvid’l laughed at him. “Right now you want to see the *Rebbe*?” Especially since the *Rebbe* had expressly forbidden him to bring anyone in. The guest offered Moshe

Duvid’l fifteen gold rubles for his trouble, a vast sum. Reb Moshe Duvid’l was struck with awe. He took the gold fifteen-ruble coin, entered the *Rebbe*’s study and told the *Tzaddik* what had transpired, showing him the coin he stood to earn.

The *Rebbe* wondered aloud, “What?! Do you mean to say that you can earn such a vast sum through me? Bring him in! Just remember – three minutes and no more!”

Reb Moshe Duvid’l pocketed the coin and brought the guest before the *Rebbe*. He waited. After about ten minutes, he could no longer hold back and came in to extricate the man from the *Rebbe*’s room. What he heard was the *Rebbe* telling him, “Remember to fulfill these three things that I said, and she will have a *yeshua*!”

The man left and that was that.

One day Moshe Duvid’l was in Kalisch, when a frum, bearded Jewish stranger in a long coat approached him and asked, “Do you come from Sochatchov?” When he applied in the affirmative, the stranger asked further, “And do you sometimes attend to the *Rebbe*?”

“Yes,” answered the bewildered Moshe Duvid’l, whose bewilderment and wonder only grew when the Jew grasped him warmly and said, “If so, you must come to my house to celebrate with us and enjoy a fancy meal.”

So saying, he steered Moshe Duvid’l off to his home. When the stranger entered, he ordered his wife to quickly prepare a lavish feast. “Prepare a *seuda* for the man who saved your life – here he is!”

And so it happened that our bearded, long-frocked friend was none other than our formerly beardless, short-jacketed stranger, who had once paid Moshe Duvid’l handsomely to get in to see the *Rebbe*. He explained that his wife had been very sick, almost at death’s door, and he had traveled to Sochatchov to seek the *Rebbe*’s blessing and advice. Among the



three things that the *Tzaddik* had told them to do to save his wife's life was to transfer all his children from the modern schools into the traditional *cheder*. At first, his wife had resisted, but eventually she agreed, and as soon as she did, she got better and better.

"And now she is as fit as a fiddle and healthy as can be!"

They gifted Moshe Duvid'l handsomely and sent him off to Kalisch in style. See just how much *Ahavas Yisrael* the *Rebbe* had, concludes the *mechaber* of the *sefer Abir HaRo'im*. In order that Moshe Duvid'l earn a nice tidy sum, the *Tzaddik* the *Rebbe* gave up a few precious minutes of his holy morning learning!



### **The Value of the Avnei Nezer's Torah in Shomayim**

Just how precious that time was in the story above can best be illustrated by the next two tales:

Once, Rav Gronim of Gur, the *ba'al koreh* for the *Sefas Emes*, told of how he visited the *Avnei Nezer* for *Sukkos* when he still lived in Kroshnivitz. He was the *Rebbe's* guest and he slept in the *Rebbe's sukkah*.

"The *Rebbe* himself made the bed and patted down the sheets and blankets to guarantee a comfortable and warm repose. I lay down to sleep and the *Rebbe* sat down to learn, aflame with excitement and *hislahavus*! The *Rebbe* kept checking to see I was asleep and so I made myself as if I was sleeping and just then torrential rain began to fall. It was so strong and buffeted the *sukkah* so hard that the floor was already full of water. I peeked out and saw the *Rebbe* approach the window in the *sukkah*. He opened the window and called out, saying, "What *chutzpa* these clouds have, that they dare *mevatel* me and disturb my learning!!!"

No sooner had the *Tzaddik* uttered

this admonishment, than the rain stopped and the clouds discontinued their downpour!" See how precious the *Tzaddik's Torah* study was in the Heavens!



### **The Undervalued Torah of the Avnei Nezer to Those Who Sought His Berochos**

It is also a well-known fact among all who came to Sochatchov that the *Rebbe* would often repeat this saying: "If people only knew and realized what good favors I could accomplish for them through my *Torah* study, no one would ever dare cross my threshold again [to ask for a *berocha*]." (*Abir HaRo'im*, Volume II, 283, 288, 291–292 )



### **The Avnei Nezer and Eglei Tal**

The *Avnei Nezer's* father, Rav Ze'ev Nachum, was the *Rav* in Biala. The *Avnei Nezer's* future father-in-law, Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, once revealed to Rav Ze'ev Nachum how he merited having such a holy son:

It was *Purim*, and all over the world the *Yidden* rejoiced. So much so that even all the greatest *lomdim*, those *Yidden* who always sat and studied *Torah*, were also busy with preparations and joyful *Purim* business. There was no one studying *Torah*! No one, that is, except Rav Ze'ev Nachum. Since the world cannot exist if no there is no *Torah*, Rav Ze'ev Nachum was at the time supporting the entire world!

Meanwhile, in Heaven, there was a great uproar. No one was studying *Torah*! ... until they discerned Rav Ze'ev Nachum, and it was decided on high that his reward would be a gifted son, a child whose light of *Torah* would illuminate the entire world that he had saved. This was the reason his first-born son would be the *Avnei Nezer*. So revealed the Kotzker. (*Abir HaRo'im* 7)

Even in his youth, the *Avnei Nezer's*

power of *Torah* was already apparent. He once sat learning *Torah* in the *Bais Medrash* when a crowd of crying *Yidden* came in. The crowd began to tearfully recite *Tehillim* and *daven* for the *refua* of a terribly sick Jew whose end was near. Perhaps Heaven would have mercy! Their cries and loud *tefillos* disturbed the *Avnei Nezer's* learning. "Listen," he told them, "if you promise to *daven* quietly and not disturb my study, I in turn promise you that he will recover." The crowd heeded the young *Torah* scholar and, amazingly, the dying man recovered!

The *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz tested the young genius as a possible suitor for his daughter. Afterward he remarked that "he learns like the *Noda BeYehuda*, but I cannot take him as a *chosson* for my daughter – he is too sharp for me!"

The *Seraf* of Kotzk, Rav Menachem Mendel, took him instead for a son-in-law, and as he stood under the *chupa*, the Kotzker declared, "May it be Your will, *Hashem*, that his sick, weak body be able to hold such a great, genius mind!"

Not long after they were married, the Kotzker's daughter, the *Avnei Nezer's* wife Sora, burst into her father's home, crying uncontrollably. Amid sobs she explained that her young husband had contracted pneumonia and was coughing up blood.

"No need to worry," the Kotzker told

her, "he will live a long life. He is named Avrohom and you are Sora – the *pasuk* says, "Avrohom and Sora were old, coming along in days."

Sure enough, this *berocha* was fulfilled, until age seventy-two, when the *Avnei Nezer's Rebbetzin* passed on. He then grew weak and sick, and realized that because his father-in-law had blessed him through this *pasuk*, it had tied him to Sora's long life. Now that hers had ended, his *berocha* was up as well. When the *Imrei Emes* of Gur came to console him on his wife's passing, he related the above story, his father-in-law's blessings, and the explanation of how he realized that now his end was near as well.

On the last day of his life, he arose early and his son and family were at his bedside. His condition had rapidly deteriorated since his wife's passing and they saw he was breathing his last. He motioned them to help him and he prepared himself, purified himself, and donned his *tefillin* for the final time. As he *davened Shemone Esrei*, he grew weaker, and during the *berocha* of *mekabetz nidchei amo Yisrael*, he motioned for them to remove his *tefillin*. A light of peace and tranquility shone from him as he recited this *berocha*, and he passed away with a heavenly kiss. May his merit shield us. (*Al HaTzaddikim ve'al HaChassidim*, p. 186–191, *B'darchei Polin HaAveilos*)



### Rav Moshe Feinstein, 13th of Adar

In November 1921, when Rav Moshe Feinstein was the chief Rav of the town of Luban, a certain *Torah* scholar from the town fell seriously ill with a very unusual disease, the main symptom of which was that his tongue swelled up enormously. The doctors could not figure it out, and soon the man was on his deathbed from this illness.

Rav Moshe went to visit him. As soon as he walked into the sick man's room, the man sent everyone else out, saying he had to speak to Rav Moshe in private.

After everyone left, the sick man turned to Rav Moshe and told him that he knew why he had contracted this bizarre

illness. It quickly became clear that talking was difficult for him because of his tongue. He said that the week before, when the weekly reading was Vayeira, he had given a sermon in which he had berated the daughters of Lot for what they had done. In it he spoke very harshly about their act (Bereishis 19: 30–38) and criticized them, especially the brazenness of the older one in naming the child after the deed [Moav – “from Father”] and thereby publicizing it to everyone. He questioned why they merited having Moshiach descend from them, considering what they had done [Moshiach has to be a descendant of Dovid HaMelech, who is a descendant of Rus, the convert from Moav, the grandson of Lot].

He then related to Rav Moshe that the night before, two elderly women had come to him in a dream, identifying themselves as the daughters of Lot. They were upset at the way he had spoken about them and wanted to respond. They told him that he should not have accused them of being depraved and committing such shameful acts. He should have considered that they were from the family of Avrohom and everything they did had a purpose.

They explained that they thought they were the last people on earth to

survive the destruction and they had to ensure the continuity of mankind. That required them committing such an act, even though it was heinous. According to their perspective, they had no other choice.

Nevertheless, they felt that they had to publicize it, because if they did not, future generations might make a deity out of any child born to them, for they would consider it a miraculous birth! After all, no other man was around and surely they would not have lived with their own father! No matter how shameful, they had to ensure that everyone understood that there is no such thing as a birth without a father.

They concluded that that is exactly the reason they merited having Moshiach descend from them – because of the self-sacrifice they had displayed through their actions.

Lastly, they told him, that is why he had to be punished [through his tongue] measure for measure, for the harsh words he had spoken against them.

He concluded telling the story to Rav Moshe, turned to the wall, and passed away.

(Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from [lifeinisrael.blogspot.com](http://lifeinisrael.blogspot.com) as translated from Igros Moshe, Volume 8, Introduction.)



### Rav Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir, 14<sup>th</sup> of Adar

In Zhitomir lived a *mohel* (one who performs circumcisions) and *shochet* (kosher slaughterer) who was a close follower of the well-known *Rebbe*, Rav Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir, one of the inner circle of disciples of the *Maggid* of Mezritch. Once he was invited to be the *mohel* at a *bris mila* (circumcision ceremony) in a nearby village. Since the *bris* was scheduled to take place early on Sunday morning, he decided to travel there on *Motzo'ei Shabbos*. On the way, however, he got lost when the path went through a dark forest.

After a long time wandering about, he saw in the distance a shining light. Immediately he set out in that direction. As he got closer, he saw a house. He went in, and there was a crowd of men sitting around a long table, with a distinguished-looking old man at the head. The latter was expounding *Torah*, and everyone was listening intently. The *Chassid* listened too, and was quite impressed by the brilliant insights.

Shortly after, several of the listeners came over to him and said, “Nu? How do you like our *Rebbe's* words of *Torah*? Do

you approve?”

“Yes!” answered the *Chassid* enthusiastically. Several times now they approached him, and the same dialogue was repeated. Finally, he left and found his way.

The *mohel*'s custom was to go to his *Rebbe*'s house every day, in order to gaze at his holy face. That Sunday, upon his return, he went directly there. This time, however, the *Rebbe*'s attendant did not allow him to enter. Then, on Monday and Tuesday, he again refused to let him in. Surprised, the *Chassid* finally asked him, “What is going on? Why won't you allow me to see the *Rebbe*?”

“Because the *Rebbe* told me not to,” replied the attendant.

“Oh, no!” exclaimed the *Chassid* in dismay. “Why not? Surely there is a reason. Please, have mercy on me! Ask the *Rebbe* what I have done. What is my sin to deserve such a terrible punishment – to be denied access to the *Rebbe*?”

The attendant went in, and soon returned with a reply. “The *Rebbe* said to tell you that the house in the forest belongs to the Evil Forces. Since you approved and accepted their words, you became connected to them. Therefore, he cannot admit you in his presence.”

The *Chassid* was crushed. “But the *Rebbe* must know how I can rectify this,” he said to the attendant. “Please, please go in again and ask him what I should do.”

Back came the answer, “You have to go again on a *Motzo'ei Shabbos* to that forest and find that house. Then, each time they expound *Torah*, respond, ‘*Feh, feh, feh,*’ and spit. That is how you can escape their clutches.”

The *Chassid* set out that very *Motzo'ei Shabbos*. He found the house in the forest, and the same people were sitting around the same table with the same elder again saying amazing words of *Torah*.

Again, the students approached him to ask what he thought. Although the depth and creativity of the *Torah* were overwhelming, he thought of his beloved *Rebbe* and his wretched exile from him and regained control of himself. “*Feh, feh, feh!* Impure, impure, impure!” he screamed and spat emphatically.

Everyone froze. There was absolute silence. All heads turned toward him, and a few approached him menacingly. “Wait,” their leader said to them. He addressed the *Chassid*, “Who are you to dare to speak thus?”

“I am a follower of the holy *Rebbe*, Rav Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir.” The leader turned again to his ranks.

“Bring the record books of our *Torahs*,” he exclaimed. “All the *Torahs* that were spoken and written with improper, self-serving intentions are contained there. If his *Rebbe*'s name appears in our books, this follower of his is ours to do with as we wish. If not, we have to let him go.”

Two huge tomes were brought out. Every page was turned and examined. Nowhere appeared the name of Rav Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir. Incredibly, he had never once wavered from learning *Torah* purely for the sake of *Hashem* and His commandments.

The *mohel* left the house in the forest in peace, trembling in excited anticipation of his return to Zhitomir, and to once again be privileged to see the *Rebbe*'s holy face.

(Source: *Living Jewish*: Translated and adapted by Rav Yerachmiel Tilles from *Rishimas Devorim* Vol I – Rav Yehuda Chitrik's four-volume series. [I also heard an almost identical story told by someone who heard it from a Vizhnitz *Rebbe*, but the *Rebbe* in the story was Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk, not the Zhitomirer. I added some details from that lengthier version. — Y.T.]



# Zera Shimshon

## Teruma

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

He served as Rav of Modena, Pisa, 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

ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם (כה' ח')

*You shall make for me a Mikdash and I will dwell amongst them (25:8)*

The words, amongst them, seem incorrect. The passuk should have ended off saying, and I will dwell in it, referring to the Mishkan that the Jews were to build?

The Zera Shimshon explains that the structure of the Mishkan mirrors the body and soul as well as the role of the Jewish people. The Mishna says (Avos 1:2), that the world stands on three pillars, Torah, Avoda and Chessed. The way Hashem created the universe hints to these three concepts. There is the world of angels, the world of planets and this world. The world of angels corresponds to the pillar of Torah. There is a Beis Din in Heaven and there is always Torah being studied and discussed there (see Medrash Rabba, Bereishis 49:2). The world of planets corresponds to the pillar of Avoda (korbanos). Firstly, every day there is a renewed obligation to offer two korbanos. Secondly, we find that as an 'atonement' for making the moon smaller, Hashem commanded us to bring a korban on Rosh Chodesh (Chullin 60b). This world corresponds to the concept of Chessed as the passuk says, (Tehillim 89:3), עולם חסד יבנה, the world is (re)built with kindness.

Every person's body mirrors this idea and every individual person is therefore appropriately called a small world. The head corresponds to the world of angels and is the part of the body that is involved in Torah study. The vital organs correspond to the world of the planets which keeps the body functioning. Corresponding to this world, which is a perishable creation, are the organs that allow the body to clean itself.

The soul as well is made up three parts. The soul of intellect, which is highest soul and therefore corresponds to the world of the angels. The soul that allows one to speak, which is the next level and therefore corresponds to the world of planets. The lowest level is the soul (animalistic) desires which corresponds to this world.

The Mishkan too, mirrors this order. The Kodesh HaKadashim, holies of holies, corresponds to the world of angels. It houses the Aron that has the Keruvim, angels, on it, which in turn holds the Torah. The Ohel Mo'ed houses the Menora and the Shulchan. The Menora has seven braches corresponding to the seven stars of Leches (planets) and the Shulchan has twelve loaves of bread corresponding to the twelve Mazalos. The Chatzer, courtyard of the Mishkan, where the Korbanos are slaughtered, corresponds to this world which is a world of perishables.

As well, the three kinds of metals donated to Mishkan mirror these three levels. Gold represents the highest world. In fact, the Medrash says (Bereishis Rabba 16:2), that mankind should not even have been given access to gold. Silver, corresponds to the world of planets, as silver is called כסף, money, and money is in constant cycle, by one person today and by someone else the next day - similar to the cycle of the planets. Copper is the lowest level and therefore corresponds to this world.

This is why the passuk says that the Jews should build the Mishkan and Hashem will dwell 'amongst them'. By Hashem dwelling in the Mishkan which was built to mirror the entire creation, He is essentially dwelling in them, in every person who is mirrored by the Mishkan.

זכות רבינו יעמוד לר' חיים דוד בן טויבא חוה וכל משפחתו להצלחה ברכה שפע רב וסייעתא דשמיא מרובה בכל מעשה ידיו ובכל הענינים

לרפואה שלימה  
אברהם צבי בן פינא  
נחת דקדושה  
משה שמעון בן שולמית  
לסייעתא דשמיא בכל  
הענינים  
יצחק ישעיה בן רות רפאלה  
ושמולית בת יענטל

Terumah  
Shabat Zakhor  
February 20<sup>th</sup> 2021  
8<sup>th</sup> of Adar 5781

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Hilula

8 - Rabbi Eliyahu HaKohen of Izmir,  
author of 'Shevet Mussar'

9 - Rabbi Yehuda Hachassid, author of  
'Sefer Chassidim'

10 - Rabbi Beryl Eisenstein, Rosh  
Yeshiva of Kiryat Melech

11 - Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai,  
the 'Chida'

12 - The holy brothers, Shemaya and  
Achiya, Harugei Lod

13 - Rabbi Yochanan Sofer, the Admor  
of Erlau

14 - Rabbi Shem Tov ben Rabbi Yitzchak  
Ben-Elad

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

# Pachad David

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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"a



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

## The Need to Construct a Mishkan

**"They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them"** (Shemot 25:8)

It is interesting to contemplate why Hashem asked us to build a House for Him in the form of a Mishkan, for even if we were to gather together all the Upper and Lower Worlds, they could not contain the greatness of Hashem and the Awesomeness of His Glory, as Moshe indeed wondered. If so, what was the point of building a house for Hashem's presence if it cannot contain it?

The answer could be that Hashem does not challenge man with a test that he is not capable of overcoming. It is a lucid principle that a person never has to cope with a challenge that is beyond his ability to withstand and clearly, the greater the person, the greater is his ability to prevail over challenges. During their stay in the Wilderness, Am Yisrael merited living a miraculous existence. Their clothes and shoes did not wear out, they achieved the level of angels who had no physical needs, and Hashem spoke with them face to face. This is why they were called the Dor De'ah, The Enlightened Generation. This being the case, the very elevated level of Am Yisrael should have given them the strength to surmount the test of constructing a Golden Calf, despite seeing that Moshe Rabbeinu had delayed in descending the mountain. This test was not too great for their level, on the contrary, being the Dor De'ah they should have triumphed but in the end, their inclination overcame them and they stumbled with the Golden Calf.

We are told (Shemot 14:31) "They had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant". Bnei Yisrael's faith in Hashem was powered through their belief in Moshe Rabbeinu their leader. He was the one who brought them to faith in Hashem. Since they did not have sufficient merit of their own because they had not yet accepted the Torah, all that Bnei Yisrael merited during their stay in the Wilderness was in the merit of Moshe Rabbeinu and this brought them to faith in Hashem. He personified the Divine Presence and from him, they drew upon the strength to serve Hashem.

When Moshe ascended to Heaven, Bnei Yisrael felt a great lack since they accomplished all their Avodat Hashem through him. So Moshe Rabbeinu, who realized the extent to which Bnei Yisrael were attached to him and considered him their spiritual role model, told them before he ascended the mountain that they should approach Ahron and Chur from whom they will be able to obtain strength for their service of Hashem. But Bnei Yisrael, due to their complete dependence on Moshe, felt that they were floundering in his absence and when he delayed in descending they lost all hope and built the Golden Calf.

The important principle that we can derive from this is that man, by his very essence, requires a connection with a certain spiritual figure. When Bnei Yisrael were in Egypt they became attached to the personage of Pharaoh and considered him a god since the Nile rose up towards him (Rashi, Bereishit 47:10). When Bnei Yisrael saw that Pharaoh was lowering himself to Moshe, they exchanged

their reliance on Pharaoh for complete dependence on Moshe. And when Moshe delayed in descending the mountain, Am Yisrael were afraid that their leader and savior had died so they searched for a new intermediary figure through whom they could connect to Hashem and serve Him, for without this they felt lost. However, by making the Golden Calf they returned to the Egyptian abomination, for the Egyptians worshiped flock and cattle.

Hashem recognized this weakness in His people and wanted to detach them completely from this custom. Thus Hashem prevented Moshe from descending on time because He considered Bnei Yisrael, on their level, as capable of transcending the challenge and able to abstain from building the Golden Calf. This would enable them to conclude that one must serve Hashem directly without any intermediary. However, since Bnei Yisrael did not overcome this challenge, Hashem told Moshe, "Go, descend, for your people has become corrupt" (Shemot 32:7). Since they consider you as the leader and spiritual guide through whom they can connect to Hashem, they fell to the low level of building a Golden Calf, similar to the abomination of Egypt.

Hashem's desire to detach them from this custom stemmed from the reality that man is given an allotted time span in This World, after which he passes away. And Moshe Rabbeinu too, despite being a spiritual giant, will eventually go in the way of every human being. So if Bnei Yisrael do not accustom themselves to serve Hashem directly without any intermediary, when Moshe dies they will suddenly find themselves lost and baffled by the absence of a spiritual figure to lead and guide them in their service of Hashem.

Hashem asked Bnei Yisrael to build Him a Mishkan, a dwelling place for the Divine Presence so that this will serve as the place from which they will draw the strength and power for their service of Hashem. Hashem stressed, "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them". It does not say 'among it' but 'among them', to teach us that each person must make himself into a Mishkan, a dwelling place for Hashem's Presence. For the Mishkan too was destined to be destroyed and similarly, the two Batei Mikdash that were later built. If a person does not prepare himself to be a receptive vessel for the Divine Presence, he will in the future once again find himself confused and deliberating. In this connection we are told, "In a place where there are no leaders, strive to be a leader" (Avot 2:5). The first Mishkan served as an example for man that he must prepare his own personal resting place for the Shechina.

Today when we do not have a Beit Mikdash through which we can draw upon physical and spiritual strength, we are accustomed to praying by the gravesites of the tzadikim. It is the merit of the tzadik that helps us receive the blessing, he is not, G-d forbid, the one who brings the blessing. Rather, through his merits, he acts as Hashem's messenger.





## Walking in their Ways

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

### Healing and Salvation

I was once invited to a large event in Eretz Yisrael on behalf of a tzedakah cause. When I arrived at the venue, I noticed numerous prominent Rabbanim who could each deliver rousing speeches of inspiration and chizuk to the assembled. Sensing that my presence was superfluous, I turned to leave, planning to attend another function where other people were waiting to hear me speak. Just as I was about to leave, a wheelchair-bound woman approached me and asked if she could have just a few moments of my time to tell me her story. I agreed.

The woman related that before she had become an invalid, she used to deliver shiurim of chizuk for Jewish women on the topics of Yirat Shamayim and Mussar, thereby drawing their hearts closer to our Father in Heaven. But now that she was physically limited, she could not continue this practice. This pained her very much.

She added that she had ten children at home, bli ayin hara, and her handicap hindered her in raising them. She also felt deeply disappointed that she could not lecture to the women anymore. For this reason, she asked that I bless her in my fathers' merits that she should have a complete recovery.

Just then, I heard an announcement

that the organization was still short of approximately twenty thousand dollars which they needed desperately. I made a silent vow that if this woman would recover, I would raise this sum on my own.

After some time, with great Heavenly kindness, the woman was once again able to walk on her own. I turned to the issue at hand – how would I collect the money that I had promised? Since Hashem saw how distressed I was and how important it was to me to follow through with my commitment to raise these funds, He sent His salvation in a most astounding way.

A wealthy individual contributed Si-frei Torah to a Beit Knesset in Yerushalayim and invited me to the Hachnasat Sefer Torah. Of course, I participated in the joyous event and the philanthropist was so overcome with gratitude that he handed me a closed envelope and stated that it contained money for tzedakah purposes. It felt like a check was inside. I asked him, "Is it true that this check is written for the sum of twenty thousand dollars?"

The man was stupefied at my declaration. "How does the Rav know that?"

But I just smiled to myself and passed on the envelope to its appropriate destination, just as I had promised. I clearly felt how Hashem had answered my prayer by honoring my pledge.

## The Haftarah

**"Shmuel said"** (Shmuel I, 15)

The connection to the Parsha: Since this week is Parshat Zachor, we read the Haftarah which talks about annihilating Amalek for going to war against Yisrael at the time of Shaul HaMelech.

Ashkenazim read from **"So said Hashem"** (ibid 15:2)

## Guard Your Tongue

### Explain and Appease

One who causes damage to his friend is obligated to appease him and ask for his forgiveness, even if the friend is unaware of this damage.

For example, if a certain employee was unaware that he was being considered as a potential candidate for advancement and a different worker transgresses the prohibition of lashon hara by bringing something to the boss's attention which causes him to withhold the promotion, he must approach his co-worker, explain what happened and ask his forgiveness.

But, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter is of the opinion that if telling the employee will cause him distress, it is preferable to leave out this step among the other stages of repentance.



## In Our Father's Path

### Why Did the Admor Straighten Out the Banknotes?

The Rebbi of Kretshnif shlita related that every time after his father, the holy Rabbi David Moshe of Kretshnif zt"l, would finish receiving people in his home, he would take the 'pidyon' money that was given to him by his Chasidim and those who came to ask for blessings, take out the crumpled notes and straighten them with his hands with great attention.

"I asked my esteemed father zt"l why he straightens the notes, surely the value of the notes remains the same whether they are straight or creased?!"

The Admor answered in a beautiful manner: "The money I receive for 'pidyon' I distribute to charity, to those people who come to me and pour out their distress about their difficult financial situation. I straighten out the notes so that together with the money that they need so desperately, I leave them with a good feeling, for providing this good feeling is just as important as giving the money..."

This story, points out HaRav Eliezer Yudowsky shlita, demonstrates a very important message: The mitzvah of charity is not restricted to money, food or drink. There are many ways to fulfil this precious mitzvah and even when one fulfils it with money, one must know how to do it so that the mitzvah should be carried out in perfection.

In Sha'ar Nedivut of the sefer 'Orchot Tzadikim', it is written that there are three concepts in charity:

Some give charity with their money, some with their bodily selves, and others with their wisdom.

In fact, every person must seize each of these three aspects and be the one who is always willing to help his friend and every Jew no matter what, and also share his wisdom with others to the best of his ability. Just one example out of many could be to lend one's sefarim to others. There is a well-known ruling from HaGaon Rabbi Moshe Feinstein zt"l that every Jew has an obligation to separate ma'aser (a tithe) from his time too and not just from his money, to help others advance in their Torah study and fear of G-d.

One who is charitable with his money is not exempt from being charitable with his self, even while giving his money to tzedakah. This is the meaning of the Chazal, "One who whitens his teeth to his friend (i.e. smiles at him) is greater than one who gives him milk to drink". There are numerous other sayings that Chazal have expressed on this matter, which stress the need to give charity with a pleasant countenance so as to leave the receiver with a pleasant feeling.



## Pearls of the Parsha

### A Donation for the Sake of Heaven

*"Let them take for Me a portion" (Shemot 25:2)*

Rashi explains, "For me": For My sake (My name)". Several Torah commentaries explain Rashi's intention at length; we will offer the fitting interpretation from the sefer 'Bikurei Reuven' who explains the Rashi in the name of HaGaon HaTzadik Rabbi Yosef Adas zt"l.

The Gemara (Berachot 63a) on the verse "A man's holies shall be his, and what a man gives to the Kohen shall be his", expounds that this means that if a person tries to save money and desists from giving the Kohanim their rightful gifts according to the law, in the end, he will require the services of the Kohen when his wife is unfaithful.

This matter is hinted at in Rashi's words, "Let them take for Me – for My sake". The Holy Torah guides each Jewish person to offer his donations as per the ruling and not be stingy. Why? "For My sake", so that G-d forbid one should not have to erase "My Name" that is written on the parchment and erased in the bitter waters that the Sotah must drink, for this will be the end of one who holds back the rightful gifts of the Kohanim.

### The True Purpose of Wealth

*"This is the portion that you shall take from them: gold, silver and copper" (Shemot 25:3)*

The wealth that Hashem bestows on His creations, Rabbeinu Bachaye points out in his sefer 'Kad v'Kemach', was only created for the sake of using it to perform mitzvot.

The source for this lies in the words of the Midrash: "Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said, the world was not fitting to use gold. So why was it created? For the Mishkan and the Beit HaMikdash, as it says (Bereishit 2:12), "The gold of that land is good", as it says (Devarim 3:25), "this good mountain and the Lebanon", which refers to the Beit Mikdash.

### To Sing, Praise, and Bless His Great Name

*"You shall cover it (the Ark) with pure gold" (Shemot 25:11)*

As an allusion, the Siftei Kohen writes that the word 'זהב', gold, stands for 'זמרה, הלל, ברוך', song, praise and blessing. This hints to the fact that man should say words of Torah during the meal at his table, and also offer songs and praises at his table, and should recite the appropriate blessing on each food that Hashem created.

### The Children are our Guarantors

*"You shall make a Cover of pure gold" (Shemot 25:17)*

Rabbi Avraham Saba zt"l, in his sefer 'Tzror HaMor', offers a reason for the name 'כפרת', Cover:

"Because the Cover serves as an atonement for all their offspring (as the word 'Kaporet', Cover, can also be translated as atonement). The Gemarah brings the verse, 'Through kindness and truth iniquity will be forgiven' and it also says, 'that the sin of the house of Eli would never be atoned for by sacrifice or meal-offering'. Chazal expound on this: 'By sacrifice or meal-offering' it will not be atoned, but it will receive atonement by the words of Torah that are greater than all the offerings... (Rosh Hashanah 18a).

As we know, the Torah was created for the sake of engaging in it constantly and no person can do this besides young children who have the strength. They were the ones who became the guarantors for their fathers at the Receiving of the Torah. When we do not engage in Torah, Hashem demands payment from the guarantors, as it says, 'and as you have forgotten the Torah of your G-d, I, too, will forget your children'. Therefore, it says, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You have established strength'. They are the ones who annul harsh decrees, as it says, 'to silence foe and avenger'.

It has been said that 'ולשון רכה תשבר גרם', 'and a soft tongue breaks strong anger' stands for 'תינוקות של בית רבן גזירות רעות מבטלות', 'young children annul harsh decrees'.

This is why the verse about making the Cover (i.e. the atonement) is followed by 'You shall make two Cherubim of gold', which alludes to the infants and young children who engage in Torah, according to the Targum who translates 'ילד', child, as 'רביא', (which has the same root letters as 'כרובים', Cherubim), corresponding to the idea that they are the ones who protect Am Yisrael."

## Treasures

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



## Man Must Renew his Strength in His Service of Hashem

*"Tachash skins, acacia wood" (Shemot 25:5)*

Chazal say (Shabbat 28b) that the tachash was a beautiful, multi-colored animal that was created for the purpose of building the Mishkan and then disappeared and is no longer found. So the entire reason for its creation was only for a specific time. The question is, why did Hashem create a special creature at the time of the building the Mishkan and then conceal it? Seemingly He could have made it a permanent creation so that it would be ready for its use in the Mishkan. And if the goal was that it should be a rare, unique creature that would be sighted only at the time of building the Mishkan, Hashem could have hidden it away in the distant forests and revealed it only when it was needed for the Mishkan. What lies behind this special act of creation specifically for the sake of the Mishkan?

It seems that one can derive the following lesson from the creation of the tachash. Hashem wished to teach us that just as the Mishkan required a specific item, the skin of the tachash which was unavailable in the world, and therefore Hashem fashioned a special creation, so too man who is comparable to the Mishkan, (his mind is compared to the Aron HaBrit, his eyes to the Menorah, his mouth to the Shulchan etc.), must create and form within himself renewed strength to elevate himself in his service of Hashem. Even if his strength is waning, he should not give up but should toil with his last remaining strength, as it says in Mishlei (2:4-5), "If you seek it as [if it were] silver, if you search for it as [if it were] hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of Hashem, and discover the knowledge of G-d". This implies that if a person wants to understand the extent to which he must toil to acquire Yirat Shamayim and understanding of the Torah and what strengths he possesses for this, he should try to create a visual picture of the strength he would invest to search for silver and hidden treasures.

Let us picture an extremely tired man who is long bereft of strength and since he is overcome with tiredness he leaves everything and lays his head down to rest somewhat. It is quite clear to all that if this person would suddenly receive a phone call announcing that he had won the lottery, he would immediately jump up like a lion, forget his tiredness and run to claim his prize because he is afraid of missing the chance. How sad it is that there are people who run after money and work the entire day but when the time comes for them to immerse themselves in Torah study, suddenly their tiredness overwhelms them and they cannot keep their eyes open to learn.

This requires much work on one's middot, to create renewed strength for the sake of studying Torah which is more precious than gold and pearls. Since Hashem wanted to teach man that he must create new strengths when it comes to Torah study, even in a situation when it seems like a truly new creation of something from nothing, He therefore, did not create the tachash during the Six Days of Creation but singled out its creation for the time of the building of the Mishkan. Man, who is like a miniature Mishkan, should know that he must cleave to Hashem's ways and renew his strength when it comes to studying the Torah and fulfilling its mitzvot.





## A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

**W**ith the building of the Mishkan, explains HaGaon Rabbi Reuven Elbaz shlita in his sefer 'Mishkani Achareicha', Am Yisrael merited 'taking' Hashem, as if, as an additional gift to the Torah that they already merited receiving. In this context, "Take for Me a portion" is translated as 'Take Me as a portion'.

Chazal teach us that every person who came to the Mishkan or Beit Hamikdash could feel the Divine Presence that rested in it, to the extent that they could draw upon Divine Inspiration just by being in the place. Just as it says about Yonah ben Amitai, "He was of those who would go to Yerushalayim on the festivals and enter the Simchat Beit Hasho'eva and the Divine Spirit rested on him".

Hashem cannot 'separate' from the Torah. He loves it. He delights in it every day. Because of this, He asks Yisrael to 'take Him', so that He can continue dwelling next to the Torah.

This demonstrates how important and precious the Torah is: "It is more precious than pearls, and all your desires cannot compare to it" (Mishlei 3:15).

The Torah's importance creates a double obligation for us: Not only is each person obligated to study Torah himself, to set fixed study times and participate in Torah shiurim, but he must also be concerned about others! Each Jew must go out among the people, "to graze in the gardens and to pick roses", to search for Jewish souls who are loitering in the streets, befriend them and bring them closer to the Holy Torah!

Baruch Hashem, our generation sees the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Navi Amos (8:11), "Behold, days are coming, the word of the Lord Hashem Elokim, when I will send hunger into the land; not a hunger for bread nor a thirst for water, but to hear the words of Hashem". There is a thirst for Judaism in just about every place, a thirst to hear the words of Hashem. Crowds assemble at every event where the goal is to spread the message of the Torah. The Beit HaKnesset is full to capacity, people are prepared to stand in a crowded room just to hear words of inspiration.

Underneath the external mane of hair, behind the tasteless clothing, hides a Jewish soul. A soul that is thirsty to hear, a soul that is screaming with a mighty cry: "Please! Give me food! Give me Torah!"

The media tries to present the opposite picture but one cannot change the facts of reality! The Batei Knesset all over are full of people who wish to return to their Father in Heaven.

On the contrary, "But as much as they would afflict it, so it would increase and so it would spread out". Young irreligious Jews come to join our Yeshiva. They heard the message that the media propagates, they read the newspapers where they were fed with poison against the Torah, against Bnei Torah, against religious coercion and came to check out the matter from close range...

They peeked and became 'victims'. They sampled and savored the taste. "Taste and see that Hashem is good" (Tehillim 34:9).

Here is just one story out of many:

One day, an irreligious twenty-two-year-old fellow came to our Yeshiva and asked if he could join the Yeshiva for a short time.

"Who sent you here?" I asked him.

"A certain newspaper" was his reply.

"Are you writing an article for them?" I asked.

"No! I read an article in the newspaper and wish to hear and experience first-hand what actually happens."

"What did you read there?" I asked with interest.

He began to relate the story that had been published, concerning a young couple who became religious. The husband was the son of one of the well-known shipyard owners in the country. The parents from both sides protested loudly: "They snatched our children from us!" But their children claimed, "No one forced us. We were not put under any pressure". But their words did not stop the parents from declaring, "religious coercion". The husband's parents turned to a famous psychologist for advice on "how to speak to their child's emotions and persuade him not to take such hasty steps"...

The manner in which the psychologist answered the parents, published in the newspaper, was amazing. He told them, "First of all, calm down! 'Common troubles are already half the consolation'. You should know that this 'plague' exists all over the country. I too have a daughter who adopted a religious lifestyle..."

"I came here", finished the young man who today is an outstanding avreich, "to investigate from close up what this 'religious coercion' is all about."

Indeed, this bachur noted that we do not force anything down anyone's throats. Each person chooses to return out of his own free will. They simply sampled the sweet taste of the Torah and willingly chose to attach themselves to this way of life.

Precious jewels are spilling in the streets; valuable treasures are being thrown into the garbage cans! Let us spring into action, gather these diamonds and polish them, and return wayward sons to their Father in Heaven.



# MEOROS HATZADDIKIM

— Lights Of Our Righteous —



## Parshas Teruma

### How to Achieve *Dveykus* Partners with Hashem in Fulfilling *Mitzvos*

"Take for Me *terumah*", (*Shemos* 22:2)

Rav Shtainer taught that the wording of our *pasuk* "to take" is a bit odd and strange since, at first glance, we would have assumed it should have said "give Me *terumah*", rather than take for me.

We can explain this wording based on the *Midrash Tanchuma* (Chapter 7) that *Hashem* said, whenever you do a *mitzvah*, take Me along with you, as it says, "take for Me *terumah*."

This concept is explained in the *seforim ha'kedoshim* as follows, that when *Hashem* observes the Jewish people fulfilling a *mitzva*, He also wants to participate, as it were, and to so to speak partner with them. He also desires to do that *mitzva*, that is why He said "take for Me *terumah*", do that for Me too and on My behalf. So that when you fulfill the *mitzva* have Me in mind, says *Hashem*.

This is true regarding all the *mitzvos* and not just *terumah*. *Hashem* wants to join up with us and cooperate alongside us in partnership and in unison so that man and the *Shechina* become partners in doing a *mitzva* together. Therefore, when we fulfill a *mitzva* with proper intent and *kavana*, it is considered as if the *Shechina* joined in and partnered together with us. Then surely when you do a *mitzva* together with the *Shechina*, you merit *dveykus* - a bond of rapture to be elevated and sanctified to the blessed Creator.

This is the secret of the *pasuk* "take for Me *terumah*", because by so doing you merit to become a vehicle for the expression of Divinity, a chariot for the *Shechina*. When we merit to be a *merkava* and chariot for the *Shechina*, it is counted as if we did the *mitzva* together with *Hashem*. In this same manner, the *seforim* explained the *pasuk* in *Shemos* (12:28) regarding the *Korban Pesach* offering, that "Moshe and Aharon did so," why does the *pasuk* have to tell us that, what is the new novel - *chiddush* here?! Off course we expect Moshe and Aharon to do so!

The *seforim* answer that although Moshe and Aharon knew many meanings, intentions and meditative *kavanos*, *yichudim* and unifications, however when they observed *Bnei Yisroel* fulfilling the *mitzvos* with *temimus* - in a simple straightforward and innocent manner, then they too desired to fulfill the *mitzvah* in the exact same manner as the *Klal Yisroel* did.

Therefore, the *pasuk* testifies that they did so - they went and did it just like the rest of *Klal Yisroel*, they fulfilled it because *Hashem* so commanded - and so did Moshe and Aharon do so, *keyn asu* - in the same manner of *temimus* and *peshitus*, just like the rest of the Jewish people.

וְהִקְמַתְּ אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן כְּמֹשֶׁפֶטוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִרְאִיתָ בְּהָר־

"And you shall erect the *Mishkan* according to its proper manner, as you will have been shown on the mountain." (*Shemos* 26:30)

In the *Midrash Sifri* 8, it says that Moshe made believe it was he who erected the *mishkan* when in reality it was *Hashem* Himself. We can explain this based on the *pasuk* cited by the *Panim Yafos* on the *Gemara Shabbos* 88b that *Chazal* said regarding the *pasuk* "and they stood at the bottom of the mountain" (*Shemos* 19:17) that *Hashem* held the mountain over their heads and threatened them that if they accepted the *Torah* all would be well but if not, He would bury them, then and there!

The *Panim Yafos* asked why should they be punished for refusal to accept the *Torah*? He responded that this was not a punishment, rather the mountain skipped and danced up from its place because the *kedushas haTorah* that *Bnei Yisroel* were about to receive and accept; therefore, if they received and accepted it - then the mountain would settle back in its proper place since the entire dance, hop and skip was because of their preparation to receive the *Torah*.

Perhaps, said Rav Shtainer, that here as well, no sooner than Moshe grasped hold of the *mishkan*, it elevated itself due to Moshe's stature and in his honor. That is why the *pasuk* attributes the establishment and erection of the *mishkan* to Moshe - it was his sanctity and *kedusha* that he saw demonstrated at the mountain; just as the mountain danced and skipped in honor of *Bnei Yisroel*, so too the *mishkan* behaved in a similar manner.





# MEOROS HATZADDIKIM

— Lights Of Our Righteous —



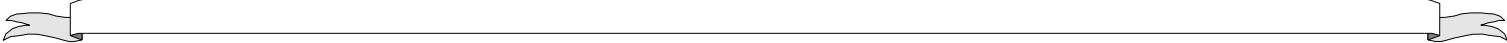
## Parshas Mishpatim / Shekalim

The *Bnei Yissascher Derush* 6 for *Shabbos Shekalim* teaches us that the *roshei teyvos* of the *pasuk*: תתק"ל כל העובר על הפקידים equals the *gematria* of 906 = תתק"ל. This is the same *gematria* as the thirteen rectifications of the beard – י"ג תיקוני דיקנא that allude to the thirteen attributes of mercy. *Chazal* said in *Megillah* 13b that it was revealed before the Master of the World that Haman was destined to weigh his *shekalim*, therefore *Hashem* also commanded us to give *shekalim* to precede his by our own shekels in *Adar*. We see that the *shekalim* awaken Divine Mercy over the Jewish people and this is alluded to by the *pasuk* that has the *gematria* of 3 times 72 (*Ayin Bais*) alluding to the thirteen attributes of mercy.

The *Bnei Yissascher* asks what is so great about our *shekalim* against Haman's, since during his time the *bais hamikdash* was destroyed and since it was not standing, there were no *shekalim* to donate, there was no actual *mitzvah* of *shekalim* to stand against Haman. However, the matter can be explained by the *Gemara Rosh Hashanah* 17b on the *pasuk* in *Shemos* 34 "and *Hashem* passed over His face and called out" - this teaches us that *Hashem* wrapped Himself up in a *Tallis* like a prayer leader – *shaliach tzibur* and taught Moshe the order of the prayers (thirteen attributes of mercy). That whenever the Jewish people sin, you should recite this order of prayers and I will forgive them.

The meaning of the statement could be that they should recite this order or perhaps it implies that we should emulate *Hashem's* attributes (*Shabbos* 133b) just as He is merciful, so too we should be merciful, etc. Now, the simple and straightforward meaning of reciting this order is that we should just actually say and vocalize *Hashem's* thirteen Divine attributes. We might ask ourselves the following question: who can prove to us that this is indeed the true meaning of the *pasuk*? Perhaps, it does mean to emulate *Hashem's* attributes to attain atonement rather than vocally reciting them? However, we can answer based on the fact that





the first attribute is *E-l*, and here we cannot say just as He is *E-l* so you should also be *E-l*! Rather, we must say that the simple meaning is not just to emulate *Hashem's* attributes but rather that we should actually speak out and recite the order of these attributes with our mouths in a vocal recital. Then, when we call out to Him in a loud voice, He shall respond and answer our prayers and not leave us empty-handed.


This explanation illustrates for us the way that Rav Pinchos haLevi Horowitz, the author of the *Hafla'ah*, who explained that the *piyut* we recite during *Selichos* preceding the thirteen attributes of mercy says '*E-l* - You ordered us to say thirteen attributes,' that the attribute of *E-l* is what orders us to actually verbally and vocally recite the thirteen attributes themselves rather than trying to emulate them, as we just explained that *E-l* cannot be emulated.

The *Bnei Yissaschar* further tells us that this is also what Esther meant when she davened *Tehillim* (22) *E-li E-li* why have You forsaken me? We should ask ourselves of all the Divine Names why did Esther invoke this one? Furthermore, what does the rest of the *pasuk* mean: My salvation is far away the words of my cries are distant. It seems that even in earlier generations the meaning of the aforementioned *pasuk* was unclear and not yet set soundly one way or another, do we recite the thirteen attributes verbally or do we attempt to emulate *Hashem* and walk in His ways (*Devarim* 11:22) emulating Him and His ways just as He is merciful so should you too also be merciful?

Now, something that is unclear and has not been decided or ruled upon in *halachah* down here is not decided by Heaven - since the *Torah* is not in the Heavens, rather They await the decision of the lower earthly court's ruling on the matter. Now at the time of the harsh decree in the past, surely Mordechai and Esther called and cried out to *Hashem* during those days of fasting and they certainly verbally recited the thirteen attributes of mercy, therefore when Esther called out using the Divine Name *E-l* - she proved that the *halachah* was that it is sufficient to verbally recite the thirteen attributes and there is no need to actually emulate them by action. Since we cannot emulate *E-l*, therefore that Name proves that the thirteen attributes are meant to be recited rather than emulated to achieve atonement as *Hashem* prescribed to Moshe.

Mordechai and Esther along with *Klal Yisroel* - all recited the thirteen attributes of mercy and that is why Esther said *E-li E-li*, why have You 'seemingly' forsaken my cries and my calls, why is my salvation distant since I have verbally recited the thirteen attributes as You asked and since that is sufficient why does my salvation still seem so far off and distant?

And although we know that the *halachah* is that we must in fact emulate *Hashem* and walk in His ways and that we must strive to be merciful as He is, still, it is sufficient to verbally



recite the thirteen attributes rather than actually fulfilling them, to achieve our salvation and be forgiven. Similarly, the *mitzvah* of *shekalim* was also verbal at that time, because the *bais hamikdash* was destroyed and we were prevented from physically bringing the *shekalim*, here too the verbal vocal recitation of *parshas shekalim* should also count and suffice in place of the actual physical *shekalim* themselves just as recitation of the thirteen attributes suffices in place of the emulation and actual fulfillment of those attributes. Therefore, by reciting the *parshas Shekalim* during *chodesh Adar*, *Hashem* counted it for the Jewish people as if they had actually brought the *shekalim* to the *bais hamikdash* to cancel and thwart the *shekalim* of Haman. Therefore, the *pasuk kol haover al hepekudim* equals the *gematria* of thirteen times *ayin bais*, alluding to the thirteen attributes of Divine Mercy - the recitation of which acted together with the recitation of *parshas Shekalim* to thwart the wicked Haman's *shekalim*.

Furthermore, the *pasuk* can also hint to us atonement – since *kol haover al hepekudim* can be read and translated to mean – whoever transgresses the *pekudim* - the *mitzvos* and commandments of *Hashem*, and caused the destruction of *bais hamikdash* by those transgression, nonetheless by reciting the thirteen attributes of mercy and mentioning the memory of the *shekalim* by verbally reciting them during this month, should cancel and thwart Haman's *shekalim* and this occurs annually again and again, year after year, that the mere mention of the memory of the *shekalim* during this month achieves the necessary salvation to thwart Haman's *shekalim*. These are the words of the *Bnei Yissaschar*.

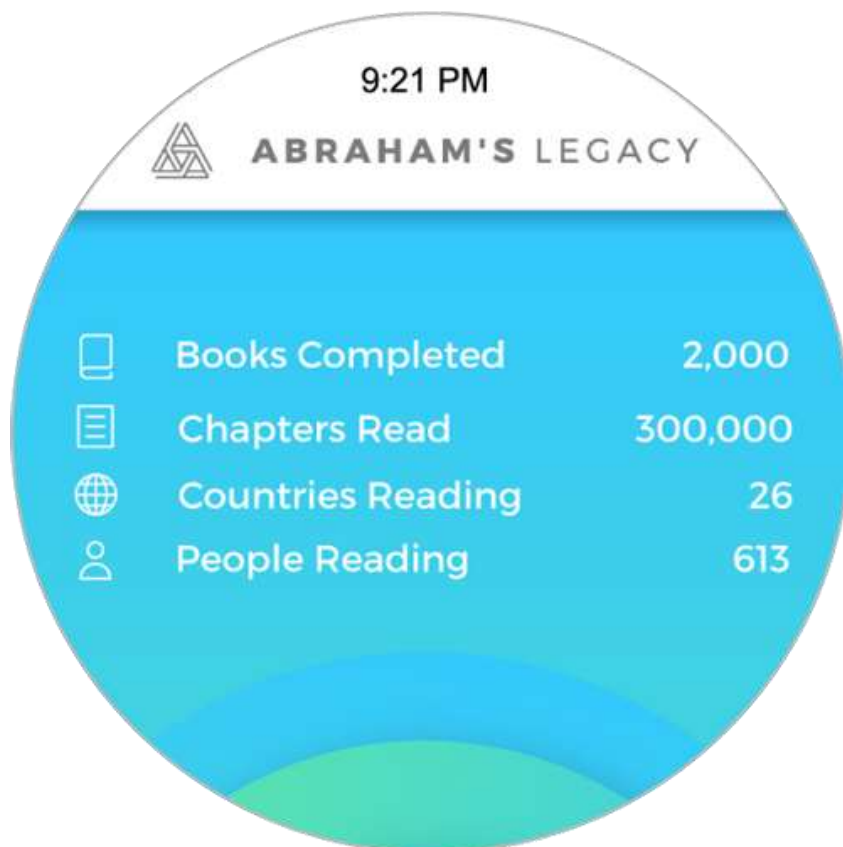
Based on this we can explain the words of the poet, the light of Your shining countenance is upon us, O lofty Master, we are asking of *Hashem* to show us His kind favor – represented by the light of His shining countenance, in the merit of the weight of the *shekels* that we shall bring in His rebuilt house, the *bais hamikdash*, thereby we shall thwart the *shekels* of Haman, our wicked adversary. The poet continues to say that though we no longer have a *bais hamikdash* - since it was destroyed due to our sins, still the righteousness of this *parshas Ki Sisa*, should count for us as if we actually brought them - that by the recitation of *parshas Shekalim* - we should be considered as if we actually fulfilled them, and that this merit protect and safeguard us from Haman's *shekels* and thwart him. May we merit *Hashem's* Divine protection from all harm, and may we merit only His great influx of bountiful blessings and *shefa*, openly revealed to us, and by the recitation of *parshas shekalim* and the thirteen attributes of mercy - may we draw close to *Hashem* and see His openly revealed loving kindness with our final salvation for all our nation, *Amen*.



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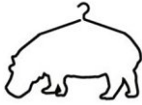
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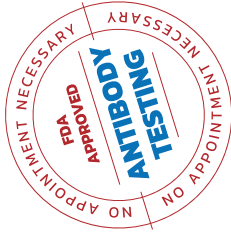
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