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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)



❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

## Dvar Torah

### Pure Mouths

Before Hashem gave the laws of *kashrus*, the Torah tells us: "Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon, saying to them, 'Speak to the people of Yisrael...'" (Vayikra 11:1-2) The phrase "saying to them" seems to be superfluous here. What is its significance?

We find, explains Rav Levi Yitzchok, that when the Egyptian princess, Basya, pulled the infant Moshe from the water, she sent for a Jewish nursemaid (*Shemos* 2:7). According to *Rashi*, she had brought Moshe to many Egyptian nursemaids, but he would not suckle. The mouth that would one day speak to the Divine Presence could not nurse from an impure source.

The *Ramban* here (11:13) gives the reasons for the prohibition against impure animals. These animals have a cruel nature, and those who eat them are influenced toward cruelty and away from the innate kindness of the Jewish people. The *novi* (prophet) promises that someday all "your men and women...shall prophesy" (*Yoel* 3:1). Therefore, since all Jews are destined to speak with Hashem, their mouths must be free of all defilement.

This is what the Torah is implying in the phrase "saying to them". Because Hashem would one day be talking to them, they must immediately refrain from putting anything impure into their mouths. Furthermore, even on a lower level, because the Jewish people are always speaking to Hashem through *tefilla* and learning, they must guard the sanctity of their

mouths from the ingestion of impure food.



## Story

Quite near to Berditchev there lived an angry man. He had turned his back on the traditions of his ancestors, but that had not been enough for him. In fact, so strongly did his anger at *Hashem* burn in his heart that he also went on a campaign to violate every one of the *Torah's mitzvos* that could be violated in his place and time.

One day, he heard that the *Maskilim*, the so-called enlightened Jews who turned their backs on the *Torah*, were staging a play called "The *Rebbe*" in the Yiddish theater of Berditchev. The play made a mockery of *Chassidic Rebbes* and their practices and was causing a sensation within the irreligious circles among the Jews. As a prominent member of these circles, this angry man decided to travel to Berditchev and attend a performance of this play.

On the way to Berditchev, a thought occurred to him. It was not often that he went to Berditchev. So what did he want to accomplish on this trip? To entertain himself? To validate the scorn he felt for the religious, especially the *Chassidim*? It was not necessary to go to a play to achieve this. There was no need for fiction in the city of Berditchev, because the *Rav* of Berditchev was a perfect example of all that was detestable in religious Jewish life. With his passionate screams and uncontrolled antics, he was a living caricature of the foolishness of the *Chassidic* leaders. Why go to the theater when he could view one of the foremost real-life models for the play and fill his belly with laughter in the *shul* of Berditchev? The man resolved right then and there to skip the play and observe Rav Levi Yitzchok himself.

He arrived in Berditchev on Friday afternoon and checked into an inn that catered for the most part to non-Jewish travelers. The food served in the inn was, of course, non-kosher. The man settled into his room, and when darkness began to fall, he went to the *shul*. The show was about to begin. As he found a seat in the *shul*, he warned himself not to laugh out loud, because that might be dangerous. As he watched, Rav Levi Yitzchok walked to the *amud* and turned to the people.

"An angel sits on the tip of every blade of grass," he declared, his face aflame with passion. "And on top of that angel sits another angel. And all these angels together sing the praises of *Hashem*. Now it is our turn. *Lechu neranena lashem*. Come, let us all join together and sing the praises of the Master of the Universe."

Rav Levi Yitzchok's impassioned words penetrated the soul of the angry man. He felt as if an electric shock had gone through his body. He could hardly catch his breath. He sat transfixed throughout the evening, listening to the supernal singing of the holy *Rebbe* and his people, and he knew without any doubt that he too belonged among their number. This was his destiny and fulfillment – to abandon his old ways and become a *Chassid* of the holy sage of Berditchev and spend his days serving and following him.

After *Ma'ariv*, he approached Rav Levi Yitzchok's attendant.

"I need some help," he said. "I'm a traveler who just arrived in Berditchev this afternoon. I checked into such-and-such an inn, and after I was all settled in, I realized that it doesn't serve kosher food. It was too late to look for a different place, so I just came straight to *shul*. Could I possibly eat the meals here?"

The attendant gave the man a speculative look. He was perfectly familiar with that particular inn and what went on within the confines of its walls. No one stepping through its doors could think even for a moment that it was a place for a pious Jew. Clearly, this man had meant to spend *Shabbos* in an irreligious fashion but had since changed his mind. This man wanted to do *teshuva*.

“Certainly,” said the *shamash*. “You can eat right here at the *Rebbe’s* table.

The man sat at the end of the table and stared at Rav Levi Yitzchok in fascination, hanging onto his every word for the entire time. The next morning, he sat in *shul* and listened to Rav Levi Yitzchok as he davened and sang and danced with ecstasy before his Creator. During the meals, he remained at his place at the end of the table, not speaking a word but imbibing and digesting every word spoken by Rav Levi Yitzchok.

After *Shabbos*, he asked for a private audience with Rav Levi Yitzchok. As soon as he walked into the room, he threw himself on the ground and began to weep.

“*Rebbe*, I am such an evil person!” he wailed. “I want to do *teshuva*, but I don’t know how. If I were to write down all the sins that I have committed, the list would be longer than my arm. I have pursued every sin and deliberately committed it. And now that I want to do *teshuva*, I look at the path of destruction I left behind me, and I lose hope.”

“Do not lose hope,” said Rav Levi Yitzchok. “The door to *teshuva* is always open, no matter what you’ve done.”

“So what should I do now?”

“Go home, sell all your belongings and give the money to charity. Then come back here to Berditchev.”

“But I’m afraid to go home,” said the man, and he burst into tears again.

“Why?”

“Because I’m afraid I will lose my resolve. Right now I’m inspired to do *teshuva*, but if I return to my old environment I may slip into my old habits. And I don’t want to do that!”

Rav Levi Yitzchok nodded. “This is what you should do then. Go back and sell your belongings, but only give out half the money to charity. Bring the other half to Berditchev. Your obligation to come back here with the money will prevent you from slipping back.”

The man did as Rav Levi Yitzchok had instructed. When he returned to Berditchev, he served as a lowly attendant in the *shul*, performing the most menial tasks when he wasn’t studying. Eventually, over the course of a very long time, he rose in status, and toward the end of his life, he earned a seat of honor among the most distinguished *Chassidim* of Rav Levi Yitzchok.



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

[תְּפִילָה הַנִּמְצָאת בְּסֵפֶר אֶלֶף הַמִּגּוֹן מִבְּעַל הַפֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ עַל פְּרֻשֵׁת וַיֵּצֵא עֲמוּד כ"ד]

הַרְיֵנִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלִיּוֹת נְשָׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצַּדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_  
בְּ/בֵת \_\_\_\_\_, יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים  
וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטּוֹב שֶׁאֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכֹּל  
לְזָכוֹת וְלְמִנוּחַת וְלַעֲלִיּוֹת לְנִשְׁמוֹת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפֶרֶט לְנַפְשׁ רּוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /  
צַדִּיק \_\_\_\_\_ . יְהִי רְצוֹן שֶׁתִּהְיֶנָּה נְפֻשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצְרוּר הַחַיִּים.

#### 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)



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

☞ 28<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Friday Night (Apr 9<sup>th</sup>)

\* **Rav Moshe Halberstam** (1932–2006). Born in the town of Tshakawe, Galicia, to Rav

Yaakov Halberstam, he was a great-great-great-grandson of the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz. As a youth, he studied at *Yeshiva Bais Avrohom Slonim* under the *Nesivos Sholom* of Slonim. His *Rebbe Muvhok* was Rav Shmuel Wosner. He delivered *shiurim* for decades in a *kollel* for *halocha* that he headed and was a member of the *Eida Chareidis Bais Din*, and *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshivas Tshakawe*. In 1997, he was appointed a member of the *Badatz*. He published a collection of responsa called *Divrei Moshe*, founded the *Vaad HaRabbonim LeInyonei Tzedoka* and was the head of the *tzedoka Chibas Yerushalayim Kupas Rebbe Meir Ba'al HaNes*. His son-in-law, Rav Mattisyohu Deitch, founded the *Yad Rama* Institute under the guidance of the greatest *halachic* authorities of today, which deals with solutions for problems in *halocha* and medicine, (5766/2006):

- \* **Rav Shabsai Sheftl Horowitz II**, (1590–1660). The son of the *Shela HaKodosh*, Rav Shabsai studied under his father and under Rav Shlomo Ephraim Lunshitz. After his father left for *Eretz Yisrael*, he became *Dayan* of Prague. He then became *Rav* of Fuerth, then Frankfurt am Main and then Posen, where he founded a *Yeshiva*. In 1654, he was appointed *Rav* of Vienna. In 1649, he published his father's work, *Shnei Luchos HaBris*, along with his own extensive introduction, *Vavei HaAmudim*, (5420/1660);
- \* **Rav Yichye ben Yosef Tzalach**, the *Maharitz*, founder of the Baladi community of Yemen (1713–1805). He is described as “without question...the greatest *Rav* and exponent of Jewish law ever to have been produced by Yemen”. By 1795, he was serving on the *Bais Din* of Sanaa, (5565/1805);
- \* **Rav Yehoshua** of Ostrova, son of Rav Shlomo Leib of Lentcha, and *mechaber* of *Toldos Odom* (1819–1873). He was a *talmid* of Rav Moshe of Kobrin (whose *yahrzeit* is tomorrow), (5633/1873);
- \* **Rav Yosef Yozke** (or Yuzpe) Rosenberg of Zalkava, *mechaber* of *Yad Yosef* (on the first three *perokim* of *Bova Metzia*) and *Revid HaZohov*, (5665/1905);
- \* **Rav Yehoshua Pinchas Bombach** of Ushpetzin (or Oswiecim) [note: according to a frequently told story of the brothers, Rebbe Reb Elimelech and Rebbe Reb Zusha, this city would later be called Auschwitz, (5681/1921);
- \* **Rav Yissochor Leib Weinberg** of Slonim, (5688/1928);
- \* **Rav Arye Shapira**, *Rosh Yeshiva Volozhin* [also known as Valozhyn, Volozhy'n, Wolozyn, Volozine, and Wolozine; note: perhaps this is a typo, and is instead referring to Rav Rephael Shapira, the son-in-law of the *Netziv*, who succeeded him until 1881; or possibly Rav Yaakov Shapira (*niftar* 1936);
- \* **Rav Shem Klingberg** *ben* Rav Avrohom Mordechai, the *Zaloshytzer Rebbe* of Cracow, from the Komarna dynasty. Killed in a concentration camp. One of the greatest *Mekubolim* of his time, he wrote *sefer Oholei Shem*, (5703/1943);
- \* **Rav Aharon HaKohen Rosenfeld**, the Pinsk-Karlin *Rebbe* (1927–2001). For many years, he served as a *Maggid Shiur* in the *Eitz Chaim Yeshiva*, and then in the *Belz Yeshiva* in *Eretz Yisrael* and Belgium. When he was only thirty his wife was *niftar*, leaving him with five small children. He later married the widow of Rav Chaim Halberstam, who raised the orphans and brought them to marriage. On *Pesach* 1991, on the *Yahrzeit* of his grandfather, Rav Aharon of Karlin, he was appointed *Admor* of Pinsk-Karlin, (5761/2001).

## ✧ 29<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Apr 10<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Moshe Pallier** of Kobrin (1784–1858). A close follower of Rav Mordechai of

Lechovitch and his son, Rav Noach, he became the first *Rebbe* of the Kobrin dynasty in 1833. His teachings are collected in *Imros Taharos*, (5618/1858);

- \* **Rav Mordechai Sholom Yosef Friedman**, Sadigerer *Rebbe*, the *K'nesses Mordechai* (1897–1979), the son of Rav Aharon of Sadiger, and grandson of the second Sadigerer *Rebbe*, Rav Yisrael, (5739/1979).

## ☞ 30<sup>th</sup> of Nissan ~ Begins Sunday Night (Apr 11<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rabbeinu Yosef HaLevi ibn Migash** (*Rimigash*), *talmid* of the *Rif* (1077–1141). As head of the famous academy of Lucena, Spain, Rav Yosef taught numerous *talmidim*, including Rav Maimon, father of *Rambam*. *Rambam's* praise of Rav Yosef is uncharacteristically effusive. "The depth and scope of his wisdom astound all who study his words," said the *Rambam*. Having absorbed Rav Yosef's teachings from his father, *Rambam* refers to Rav Yosef as "my teacher", (4901/1141);
- \* **Rav Chaim Vital** (1543–1620), sometimes referred to as Rav Chaim Vital Calabrese, since his family was from Calabria, Italy. He was born in Tzefas, two years after his family moved there from Italy. Rav Chaim's father, Rav Yosef, was famed as an expert scribe whose *tefillin* were much sought after, having been written in holiness and purity, and with special kabbalistic intentions. At age fourteen, Rav Chaim studied the revealed aspects of *Torah* under Rav Moshe Alshich, one of the foremost *Rabbonim* in Tzefas, then studied *Kabbola* under the leading kabbalistic luminary in the world at that time, Rav Moshe Cordovero (*Ramak*). In the year 5330 (1570), Rav Yitzchok Luria (the *Ari*) came to Tzefas from Egypt. After the passing of his teacher, Rav Moshe Cordovero, Rav Chaim became attached to the *Ari*, quickly becoming his chief *talmid*. He describes his initiation into the *Ari's* new approach to *Kabbola* as follows: "When I [first] came to my teacher of saintly memory [the *Ari*] to study this wisdom under him, he was about to leave for Teverya. He took me with him. We boarded a boat, and as we were sailing [across the Kinneret] at a point opposite the arches of the Old Shul of Teverya, my teacher dipped a cup into the water and gave it to me to drink. He told me that now I would be able to grasp this wisdom [the teachings of *Kabbola*] for I had just drunk water from the well of Miriam [which is buried in the Kinneret]. From that time on I began to enter the depth of this wisdom." Within a year of his initiation into the *Ari's* teachings, Rav Chaim had become famous throughout *Eretz Yisrael* and the Diaspora as one of the great *Mekubolim*. When the *Ari* was *niftar* in 5332 (1572), a mere two years after Rav Chaim had begun studying with him, Rav Chaim was almost universally regarded as his successor. He began teaching the kabbalistic insights he had received from his master to his many *talmidim* and thus he became the revered leader of a significant group of *Mekubolim*. He also gained a reputation as a miracle worker, a healer and a master of practical *Kabbola*. He was able to discern the nature and history of the souls of men. In 5347 (1587), Rav Chaim was appointed a leading judge in the rabbinical courts in Yerushalayim. He remained in Yerushalayim for several years and then returned to Tzefas. He moved to Damascus in 5354 (1594) where he passed away in 5380 (1620) at the age of seventy-seven. He wrote *Eitz Chaim*, *Sha'arei Hakanos*, and *Sha'arei Kedusha* (a guide to achieving *Ruach HaKodesh* and *Nevua*), and edited and organized all existing manuscripts of the words of the *Arizal*, today known as *Kisvei Arizal*, (5380/1620);
- \* **Rav Avrohom Broide** of Frankfurt, (5477/1717);
- \* **Rav Nesanel Weil**, *Av Bais Din* of Karlsruhe and *mechaber* of *Korban Nesanel*. On October

17, 1750, he was elected to be *Oberland-Rabbiner* for both Markgrafschaften of Baden-Durlach and Baden-Baden, as well as all the Unterlande. His son, Rav Yedidya Taya Weil, is the *mechaber* of the *Haggoda Marbeh Lesaper*, (5529/1769);

- \* **Rav Yaakov Emden** (1698–1776), known as *Yaavetz* (Yaakov *ben* Tzvi), son of the *Chacham Tzvi*. Settled in Altuna in 1733. He was involved in a famous controversy over an amulet (*kameya*) written by Rav Yehonoson Eibeshutz, Rav Yaakov claiming that the amulet demonstrated an acceptance of *Shabsai Tzvi*, (5536/1776);
- \* **Rav Chaim Meir Yechiel** of Drohbitch, (5684/1924);
- \* **Rav Moshe Hershler**, editor of *Talmudic Encyclopedia* and publisher of many *Sifrei Rishonim*, (5751/1991);
- \* **Rav Yaakov Berav**, (5306/1546).

## 1<sup>st</sup> of Iyar ~ Begins Monday Night (Apr 12<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Abba Shaul**, one of the Talmudic sages whose *Rebbe* was Rav Yochanon *ben* Zakkai;
- \* **Rav Yaakov Beirav**, born in Toledo, Spain. After serving as a rabbinical leader in Fez, Morocco, and Cairo, Egypt, he became the chief *Rav* of Tzefas. He reinstated *semicha* in *Eretz Yisrael*, (5234/1474–5306/1546);
- \* **Rav Menachem Mendel** of Vitebsk (1720 or 1730–1788). A close *talmid* of the *Maggid* of Mezritch, he – along with Rav Avrohom of Kalisk – led a contingency of three hundred *Chassidim* to *Eretz Yisrael* in what was the first large *aliya* of the *Talmidei HaBesht*, (5548/1788);
- \* **Rav Tzvi Hirsch Ashkenazi**, the *Chacham Tzvi* (1660–1718), learned in Salinka at fourteen years of age under Rav Eliyohu Covo. He married the daughter of the *Av Bais Din* of Altuna-Hamburg-Wandsbeck (AHU) in 1689, and succeeded him in 1705, becoming *Azhkenazi Rav* of Amsterdam in 1710. He went to Temishlev, Poland in 1714 and then to Lemberg (Lvov). He was the father of Rav Yaakov Emden, (5478/1718);
- \* **Rav Akiva Yosef Schlesinger**, the *Lev Ha'Ivri*, (5682/1922);
- \* **Rav Avrohom** of Slonim, the *Bais Avrohom* (1889–1933), grandson of the founder of Slonimer *Chassidus*, the *Chesed L'Avrohom*, (5693/1933);
- \* **Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapira** (1914–2006). Born to Rav Aryeh, the *Dayan* of Bialystok, he was the grandson of Rav Refoel (the *Toras Refoel*) of Volozhin, who himself was a grandson of the *Netziv*. As he was born during WWI, his family had fled from Bialystok to Minsk, where his uncle, Rav Chaim of Brisk, lived at the time. In 1933 Rav Moshe Shmuel left home and set out for *Yeshivas Ohel Torah* of Baranovitch headed by Rav Elchonon Wasserman. In the summer 1936, he moved to Mir, where he became a *talmid muvhok* of Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz of Kaminetz. In 1938 he fled to *Eretz Yisrael*. His father eventually joined him. His mother and two brothers remained behind and perished in the Holocaust. His cousin, the *Brisker Rav*, arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* around the same time and Rav Moshe Shmuel became one of his closest *talmidim*. After his marriage in 1946 he learned in *Kollel Chazon Ish* for a year and then served as a *Maggid Shiur* in *Yeshivas Kol Torah* in Yerushalayim for three years. The *Chazon Ish*, to whom he became very close, asked him to open a *Yeshiva* in *Be'er Yaakov* together with the renowned *Mashgiach*, Rav Shlomo Wolbe. In 1963 Rav Moshe Shmuel published the first volume of his sefer *Kuntrus HaBiurim*, which included his *shiurim* on *Gittin*, *Kiddushin* and *Nedorim*. He printed ten additional volumes over the years. He also wrote the *seforim Sha'arei Shemu'os* and *Zohov Misheva*.

Most of his voluminous writings are, however, still unpublished. Rav Moshe Shmuel was a member of the *Vaad HaYeshivos* for fifty years. In 1968, Rav Yechezkel Sarna and the *Bais Yisrael* of Ger invited him to join the *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* of *Agudas Yisrael*, (5766/2006).

- \* **Rav Shmuel Shmelke Horowitz** of Nikolsburg, known as Rebbe Reb Shmelke (1726–1778). The firstborn son of Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Chortkov, Shmuel Shmelke traced his ancestry back to the *Ba'al HaMo'or* and to Shmuel *HaNovi*. As a teenager, he and his brother Pinchas – who was to become the *Ba'al Haflo'a* of Frankfurt – learned *bechavrusa* and their *chiddushim* were printed by Rav Pinchas in a *kuntrus* called *Sheves Achim*. In their early years, Shmuel Shmelke and Pinchas studied *Torah* in non-*Chassidic* Lithuanian *Yeshivos*, but after traveling to Mezritch and meeting the *Maggid*, they became his ardent followers. After becoming a *Chassid*, Rebbe Reb Shmelke became *Rav* of Ritchval, the site of his *Yeshiva* that produced his many famous *talmidim*. After serving there for ten years, he became *Rav* of Shineve. In 1773, he was invited to become *Rav* of Nikolsburg in Moravia. Although he was there only five years, he made a powerful impact, and he remains associated with that city to this day. Among his *talmidim* are the *Chozeh* of Lublin, Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanov, Rav Yisrael of Kozhnitz, Rav Mordechai Banet and Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov. His homilies and *chiddushim* were published in *Divrei Shmuel*, and anthologies of his *Torah* thoughts were published under the titles *Imrei Shmuel*, *Nezir Hashem* and *Shemen HaTov*. [Yated 2006 and 2007 say 1<sup>st</sup> of Iyar], (5538/1778);

## 🌀 2<sup>nd</sup> of Iyar ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Apr 13<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Moshe Zakan Mazuz** of Djerba (1851–1915). *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* in Djerba, he authored *Tzaddik Venisgav*, *Shaarei Moshe* (a collection of responsa) and *Shem Moshe*, (5675/1915);
- \* **Rav Avrohom Badush** of Mexico, *mechaber* of *Me'oros Avrohom*, (5750/1990);
- \* **Rav Yehuda Meir Abromowitz**, (1915–2007). He was the chairman of the *Agudas Yisrael* World Organization for many years (co-chairman with Rav Moshe Sherer). He was one of the last *talmidim* of Rav Meir Shapira, (5767/2007);
- \* Birth of Rav Shmuel Schneersohn (2<sup>nd</sup> of Iyar 1834–13 Tishrei 1882), the fourth Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, known as “the *Rebbe Maharash*”. He was the seventh and youngest son of his predecessor, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, the *Tzemach Tzedek*.

## 🌀 3<sup>rd</sup> of Iyar ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Apr 14<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Choni HaMe'agel**, a famous personage from the *Talmud*. There are many famous stories about him including one about standing in a circle to beg *Hashem* for rain (see *Menochos* 94b, *Rashi*);
- \* **Rav Arye Leib Tzintz** of Plotzk, the *Maharal Tzintz*, *mechaber* of *Get Mekushar*, *Maayenei HaChochma* on *Bova Metzia*, *Yayin HaMesamei'ach* on *Hilchos Yayin Nesech*, and a *peirush* on *Pirkei Avos*, (5593/1833);
- \* **Rav Yeshaya Steiner** of Kerestir, (1851–1925). Born in Zbarav, Hungary, he lost his father at the age of three. When he was twelve, he was taken by his mother to Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Liska, the *Ach Pri Tevua*, whom he succeeded as *Rav* of Liska. He himself was succeeded by his son, Rav Avrohom, (5685/1925);
- \* **Rav Abba Berman**, *Rosh Yeshiva Iyun HaTalmud*, (1919–2005). Born in Lodz, Poland, to

Rav Shaul Yosef, who considered the *Chofetz Chaim* his primary *Rebbe*, he was a descendant of the *Kli Yokor*. After his *bar mitzva*, Rav Abba began to learn at the Mir and became very close to Rav Yerucham Levovitz. He fled to Shanghai with the *Yeshiva* at the outset of WWII, then immigrated to America. He was one of the founders of the Mir in Brooklyn. In Brooklyn, he married Rebbetzin Itka Greenberg. After several years, he moved to *Eretz Yisrael* and founded *Yeshiva Iyun HaTalmud* in Bnei Brak. He also lectured frequently at Ponevezh. The *Yeshiva* relocated to Yerushalayim, then to Kiryat Sefer in Modiin Ilit. His many *shiurim* were published in five *seforim*, also named *Iyun HaTalmud*. He is survived by his *Rebbetzin* and six daughters, (5765/2005);

- \* **Rav Yosef Breuer**, (1882–1980). Born to Sophie Breuer, youngest daughter of Rav Shimshon Refoel Hirsch and Rav Salomon Breuer, then *Rav* of Papa, Hungary. Rav Hirsch passed away in 1888 in Frankfurt, and in 1890, when Rav Salomon Breuer was chosen to succeed him, the family moved to Frankfurt. Yosef became his father's *talmid* and was ordained by him in 1903. He attended the universities of Giessen and Strasbourg, earning his PhD in philosophy and political economy in 1905. In 1911, Rav Breuer married Rika Eisenmann of Antwerp. He assumed his first rabbinical position in 1919 when he was appointed *Rav* of Frankfurt's *Klaus Shul*. Following *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, Rav Breuer and his family immigrated to Antwerp, and then to the Washington Heights section of Manhattan, (5740/1980).

## 4<sup>th</sup> of Iyar ~ Begins Thursday Night (Apr 15<sup>th</sup>)

- \* **Rav Yosef Dov (Yoshe Ber) Soloveitchik** of Brisk, the *Bais HaLevi*, father of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik. Rav Yosef Dov (1820–1892) was born in Nisvitzh, near Minsk, to Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik. Rav Yitzchok Zev was a grandson through his mother of Rav Chaim of Volozhin. Although Rav Yitzchok Zev was not a *Rav* he was known as a *boki* in *Shas* and *Shulchon Aruch*. By the time Yosef Dov was ten he knew *Maseches Bova Kama*, *Bova Metzia*, *Bova Basra*, *Berochos*, *Gittin* and *Kiddushin* by heart and was already writing his own *chiddushim*. When he was eleven his father brought him to Volozhin to learn under his uncle, Rav Itzeleh, the *Rosh Yeshiva* and son of Rav Chaim of Volozhin. After his marriage, his father-in-law supported him for thirteen years. In 1849, Rav Itzeleh of Volozhin passed away. Less than four years later, his successor, Rav Eliezer Yitzchok Fried also passed away. The *Rabbonim* decided that two descendants of Rav Chaim of Volozhin, the *Netziv* and the *Bais HaLevi*, would lead the *Yeshiva*. The *Netziv* would be *Rosh Yeshiva* and the *Bais HaLevi* would be assistant *Rosh Yeshiva*. The *sefer Bais HaLevi* is comprised primarily from the *shiurim* he gave in Volozhin. His *derech limud* was something that was completely new and original to the Volozhiner *Yeshiva* and was very different from the traditional way that *shiurim* were given there. His *sefer Bais HaLevi* was published in 1863. In 1865, a delegation from the city of Slutsk came to the *Bais HaLevi* to present him with a *Ksav Rabbonus* signed by all the respected members of the community and recommended by Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor, the Kovno *Rav*. The *Bais HaLevi* served as *Rav* of Slutsk for close to ten years, but his unbending battle against the *Maskilim* and the wealthy eventually forced him from the city. In 1865, a delegation from Brisk offered him the position of *Rav* to replace Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin who had just moved to *Eretz Yisrael*. The *Bais HaLevi* served as *Rav* in Brisk for seventeen years until his passing, (5652/1892);
- \* **Rav Yaakov Sasportas**, *Rav* of Amsterdam and antagonist of Shabsai Tzvi. He served as

envoy to the Spanish court in Morocco and later became head of the *Yeshiva* in Amsterdam. In his battle against Shabsaism, he produced *Tzitzis Novel Zvi*, in which he collected vast material, including pamphlets and letters, and refuted Shabsai Tzvi's messianism in detail, (5455/1695);

\* **Rav Shmuel Eliyohu Taub**, Modzhitzer-Tel Aviv *Rebbe*, (5744/1984);

\* **Rav Shimon Ba'al HaYissurim Moskowitz**, (5774/2014).



## ❁ 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 Yosef Yuzpa of Zalkava, 28<sup>th</sup> of Nissan

Excerpt from the upcoming Moisa Edition of *Ma'asei Avos*:

**Mishna 2:1 "What is the proper path that man should choose for himself?"**

The story occurred on *Shabbos Bereishis* in the *Bais Medrash* of Rav Yisrael of Tchortkov. Among the many guests was the then-Rav of Sanok, Rav

Meir Shapira, who later became famous as the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Chachmei Lublin* and the founder of the *Daf HaYomi* movement.

On *Shabbos* morning after *Kerias HaTorah* the door to the *Rebbe's* private room opened and the *Rebbe* himself made an unusual appearance where, before the astounded *Chassidim*, he honored the *Rav* of Sanok, Rav Meir Shapira, to bless the

new month and to lead the *tefillos* for *Mussaf*. This was an unusual occasion to say the least, but Rav Meir took the *amud*, and led the congregation. His powerful, sweet and melodious voice awoke a strong outpouring of the soul and a holy excitement among the *Chassidim* and many later recounted that the aura of sanctity resembled that of *Yom Kippur*. The sweet *niggun* and songs plucked the strings of their souls and they were all moved by Rav Meir Shapira's heartfelt *tefillos*.

Afterward, as the *Chassidim* passed before the *Rebbe* to receive his *Good Shabbos* blessing, Rav Meir too passed before him. "I did not know that the *Rav* of Sanok knew so well how to lead the prayers!" exclaimed the *Rebbe*.

"I too did not know this," said Rav Meir innocently, "until the *Rebbe* revealed this to me as well!"

The *Rebbe* invited Rav Meir to *kiddush* and after the meal they secreted themselves in the *Rebbe's* private room for a long, drawn-out conversation. When Rav Meir left the *Rebbe's* room, his face shone with a supernal other-worldly aura.

During that conversation, Rav Meir's powerful gift of *tefilla* was mentioned once again, on which he commented, "If I have such a gift, perhaps I should become a *chazzan*; it would be appropriate, since I am a descendant of Rav Pinchas Koretzer, before whom all the gates of *tefilla* were open!"

Upon hearing these words the *Tchortkover* suddenly grew serious and after a few moments he said, "*Rav* of Sanok, allow me to tell you a tale about the holy *Rebbe* Reb Zusha of Aniploi, the brother of the illustrious *Rebbe* Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk.

"Once, when Rav Zusha was wandering in self-imposed exile from land to land, he arrived in Galicia. He had heard of Rav Yuzpa, the famous *Rosh Yeshiva* of

Zolkava, and decided to travel there, since his wondrous *shiurim*, discourses in *Talmudic* topics, were quite legendary. Rav Zusha traveled there and when he reached Zolkava he entered Rav Yuzpa's *Yeshiva*. At that time, Rav Yuzpa was in the midst of a *Talmudic pilpul*, a deep discussion of the tractate's *sugya*, and all his *talmidim* were absorbed in his profound words so that no one noticed Rav Zusha's appearance in the *Yeshiva* at all.

"Rav Zusha was dressed as a wandering vagabond, in tattered rags, with his walking stick and bundle in hand. He went and sat in the corner and listened as well to the *Talmudic* discourse Rav Yuzpa delivered without removing his eyes from the orator for even a moment.

"After the lecture had ended, Rav Zusha approached the *Rosh Yeshiva* and said to him, 'Thank you so much! You deserve such a *yasher ko'ach* for the lecture you delivered! I have heard of your great erudition and scholarliness from afar and about your wonderful lectures and therefore I decided to travel and hear them for myself first hand. Believe me, it was well worth the long and arduous journey!'

"Rav Yuzpa heard the words of praise and answered, 'Well, I am glad that you enjoyed the lecture and that you heard words of *Torah* wisdom which you enjoyed, so I understand why I find favor in your eyes. However, how can you find favor in my eyes? Why, I do not yet have the pleasure of knowing you! Who are you and where are you from?'

"Oh, how can a vagabond such as myself find any favor in anyone's eyes? I do not even know how to learn or study *Torah*. Why, I know nothing at all!' declared Rav Zusha.

"Impossible,' countered Rav Yuzpa. 'It cannot be that you have no wisdom or sanctity. I sense that deep inside you there is some hidden treasure which causes you to find favor in my eyes.'

“I only know how to *daven*,” concluded Rav Zusha.

“Well, what Jew doesn’t know how to do that? Every Jew knows how to *daven*,” exclaimed Rav Yuzpa with wonder.

“But I know the proper way to *daven* before the Master of the World!” added Rav Zusha.

“If so, reveal it to me. Teach me the secrets of your *tefilla*,” requested Rav Yuzpa.

“Very well then. Come, let us go somewhere private and I will open the gates of prayer before you,” suggested Rav Zusha.

“And so,” concluded the Tchortkover *Rebbe* to Rav Meir Shapira, “the two entered a room and secluded themselves. Rav Zusha taught the *Rosh Yeshiva* the secrets of *tefilla* and they pierced deep into Rav Yuzpa’s soul. He grew aflame with excitement and declared, ‘I will leave my *Yeshiva* and go after this man, just as Elisha followed Eliyohu – and then perhaps during that time I will learn at least how to *daven* just one proper *tefilla* in my lifetime! I will learn to stand before the Master of the World in *tefilla* and to concentrate with true purity. Yes, I will get up right now and leave my *Yeshiva*!’

“No, no, Rav Yuzpa,” countered Rav Zusha. ‘Let me explain something to you. Our Sages taught us that just as man’s facial features are different from one another so too are their minds different. There are millions and billions of people living in this world, and each one has a

different face from the other. And just as their outer appearance differs, so does their inner essence, their souls and their purpose in life, even though each soul can achieve its own personal beauty equally. Why did *Hashem* create so many people? Because each of them has his unique purpose to fulfill a lofty and supernal goal. Just as there are many people, there are many goals and aspirations for each individual. Each person has to fulfill his own aspirations and goals with the tools, talents and character traits that *Hashem* has given him. This is why our Sages taught that one should always study from where his heart desires, since man’s heart aspires to his personal goal that *Hashem* expects him to fulfill. You, Rav Yuzpa, have the talent and power to inspire *talmidim* and teach them *Torah*. Heaven gifted you with this ability to deliver such beautiful *Talmudic* lectures and discourses. Leave the gates of *tefilla* for someone like me,’ concluded Rav Zusha.”

The Tchortkover ended the tale and turned to Rav Meir Shapira, who understood the meaning of the *Rebbe*’s words. Later in life, when Rav Meir was the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Chachmei Lublin*, he told those close to him about that *Shabbos* in Tchortkov, saying, “With that story the *Rebbe* put me in my proper place and set me on the proper path in life to fulfill my unique mission and purpose: to teach and spread *Torah* through the *chinuch* of the next generation of *Am Yisrael* – the Jewish nation.”



## Rav Chaim Ben Yosef Vital, 30<sup>th</sup> of Nissan

*Talmid Ha'Arizal*

### How Rav Chaim Vital Came to the Arizal and Drank From Miriam’s Well

Rav Chaim Vital lived in Damascus and for a period of some months the *Arizal*

kept coming to him in his dreams each night and spoke with him, urging him to come to Tzefas to learn from him. “Come and I shall reveal to you secrets that have never before been revealed since the

Creation of the world!” Rav Chaim, however, took no heed of these nightly visions, and assumed at the time that his own learning was superior to the *Arizal*'s – after all, he had already authored his own *sefer* of commentary on the holy *Zohar*. One day, after contemplating the matter, Rav Chaim finally agreed to visit the *Arizal* and see for himself if his nightly visions were true and what the *Arizal* could teach him.

He traveled to Tzefas and and approached the *Arizal*, testing him through a certain *ma'amar* in the *Zohar*, a very difficult passage that Rav Chaim Vital already thought he understood very well. The *Arizal* revealed the meaning of the passage of *Zohar* together with profound, hidden secrets that were so powerful and awesome that when Rav Chaim Vital heard them he felt his soul almost leaving his body! Rav Chaim then asked about the meaning of a different passage of *Zohar* and the *Arizal* opened for him many more openings of great spiritual light. Eventually, Rav Chaim became humbled before the *Arizal* like a servant before his master. When he asked for another explanation, the *Arizal* held up his hand and replied, “Sorry, the boundary is here. You are unworthy of knowing more.”

Hearing this, Rav Chaim was extremely distressed. He went home, donned sackcloth and began to cry and wallow in ashes and dirt, pouring the ashes on himself and wailing, bemoaning his unworthiness, begging to be found worthy of studying *Toras HaKabbola* from the

*Arizal*. He fasted and cried all night in prayer to *Hashem*.

The next day he fell before the *Arizal*, kissing his hands and feet and the hem of his robes and cried, prostrating himself, begging to be worthy of studying and learning from him. “Please, for *Hashem*'s sake, do not send me away empty-handed!”

The *Arizal* responded, “Really I should turn you away for having held back so long from coming before me for some three months. However, your fasting and mourning in sackcloth and ashes have succeeded and now I shall not hold back any more secrets of *Torah* from you.”

Rav Chaim sat among the *talmidim* but he would learn and forget, learn and forget, again and again, over and over – until they traveled to Teverya.

When they reached Teverya they took a small boat and sailed on the waters of the Kinneret. They sat in the boat together, Rav Chaim Vital and the *Arizal*, until they reached two large pillars, the ruins of an ancient *shul*. The *Arizal* took a small flask and filled it with water from between the sunken pillars and gave Rav Chaim Vital to drink, and told Rav Chaim, “Now you will be able to hold onto this wisdom and stop forgetting, for these waters are from the wellsprings of the *Be'er Miriam*.” Rav Chaim stopped forgetting and was able to remember and gain insight into the depths of wisdom of the secrets of *Torah*. (*Shivchei Ha'Arizal*)



## **Rav Shmuel Shemlke Ben Tzvi Hirsch HaLevi Horowitz of Nikolsburg, 1<sup>st</sup> of Iyar**

### **Like Shmuel HaNovi**

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

the *Novi*.



### **His Yeshiva and his Demands From His Talmidim**

In order to be accepted to his

*Yeshiva*, every new student had to accept the following rules and conditions:

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



### **The Storm and the Shofar**

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

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

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

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

“I thought at any moment we would

drown and I would come face to face with my Maker. I was so excited to meet and see *Hashem*, how could I refrain from singing and dancing?!” was Rav Moshe Leib’s reply.

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



### **Overburdening Eliyohu**

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

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

thought was how he must have burdened the prophet!

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



### **Canceling the Vilna Gaon's Decree**

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

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

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

was.

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

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

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

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

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



## Rav Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk, 1<sup>st</sup> of Iyar

*Mechaber of Pri Ha'Aretz, Talmid of the Mezritcher Maggid and Founder of the Chassidische Yishuv in Eretz Yisrael*

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

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

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

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

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

*Tzaddikim* described the Vitebsker manner of prayer as follows: He *davens* like someone so lowly that he is covered in unsightly boils and desires to enter the

king's chamber to speak with His Majesty. He pushes his way in, is rejected and cast out, yet pays no heed to the guards and servants. He pushes and forces his way in again and again to gain an audience with the king to plead for his very soul.

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

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

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



## Rav Yeshaya Ben Moshe Steiner of Kerestir, 3<sup>rd</sup> of Iyar

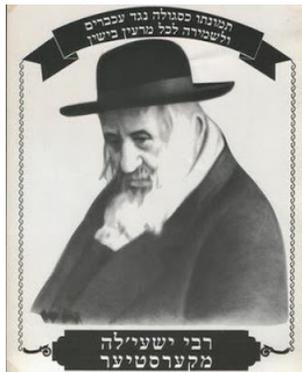
Affectionately Known as Reb Shaya'le Kerestir

### The Magical, Vanishing Laundromat

When Rav Yissochor Beirish Ruben arrived in America after the Second World War, he arrived poor and penniless. One of the Jews who recognized the *Tzaddik's*

*gadlus* and *tzidkus* began to spread the word that one of Rav Yeshayale Kerestir's *einiklach* had arrived and was now available for counsel and *berochos* in Manhattan's Lower East Side. Among the

many *Yidden* who sought his *berocha* came a wealthy Jew from Bridgeport, Connecticut, who explained that he saw an advertisement proclaiming a grandson of the *Tzaddik* Rav Yeshayale Kerestir had arrived. He took out four *kemiyos* (amulets) that the Kerestirer had written and handed one to Rav Rubin as a gift, along with a handsome donation as a *pidyon* and told Rav Rubin the following story behind the *kemiyos* that he kept and treasured:



In the days before the First World War, he had made his way from Hungary and settled in the East Side of Manhattan. In those days, the washing machine was a new invention and an expensive luxury. This Jew had a *kliger kop* and had a brilliant idea to make a *parnossa*. Knowing that most people could not afford a washing machine, he took out loans, invested in several of the new expensive machines and opened one of the first laundromats. Here people could rent and use the machines to do their laundry, benefit from them and pay for their use in an affordable manner without having to purchase one.

The laundromat was a very successful enterprise and the Jew soon became wealthy. His neighbors were jealous and one of them copied his idea, opening a laundromat just down the street on the opposite side. His clientele of fellow *goyim* grew since they preferred to do the laundry with him, while the Jew's business dwindled and dwindled. The Jew was very upset and told his woes to a *Shad"ar* – a *meshulach* who at that time was sleeping there as his guest from Hungary.

“Back home in Hungary there is a wonder *Rav*, a *Rebbe* and *Tzaddik* in

Kerestir, whose *berochos* and *yeshuos* are famous. Surely he can help you. Send a *kvittel* and a *pidyon* with me and I will be sure to bring the matter before the *Rebbe*.”

The Jew did so and in no time a parcel arrived, containing four amulets with instructions from the Kerestirer *Rebbe* that the Jew was to affix each *kemiya* to one of the four walls of the laundromat, and so he did.

The nefarious plans of his non-Jewish neighbor did not end with stealing his customers. Apparently, he wasn't satisfied with just taking away business; he decided to hatch a plan to put a sure end to any chance of this Jew's success. He hired an arsonist and paid him to set the store on fire. He gave the arsonist the exact address of the Jew's laundromat and waited to hear news of his wicked scheme's success. Meanwhile, it was *Shabbos* night and the stores were all closed. The would-be arsonist arrived at the location where the address said the store should be but try as he might, he searched high and low and could find no laundromat at the said address! After fruitlessly searching for some time, he almost gave up when he asked a passerby where the laundromat was. They pointed him to the non-Jew's laundromat, which was just down the street. Thinking that his boss must have made a mistake with the store's number, since it was on the same street (not knowing that his boss who hired him also owned a laundromat), he set fire to the *goy's* laundromat. The sirens blared and the fire trucks came to put out the conflagration. When the police arrived together with the fire inspector, they immediately recognized that the evidence pointed to arson. They tracked the materials down to the arsonist, arrested him and he confessed to the crime and pointed to his hired boss as the culprit. The *goy* was arrested and sentenced to many years in prison for arson, fraud and other crimes.

The *kemiya* that the Jew gave Rav Rubin contained the *sheimos* that formed the *roshei teivos* of the *pasuk* in *Bereishis* 19:11, “And the men at entrance of the house they [the angels] struck with blindness from young to old and they failed to find the entrance”. So had this bully been blinded; wondrously the accomplice had failed to find the laundromat, even though it had been right in front of him! (As heard from Rav Yitzchok Zelteneich, who heard it from his father-in-law Rav Yissochor Beirish Rubin – *Mofes HaDor* p. 469–471)



Reb Shaya’le was one of the most famous *Chassidic Rebbes* from Hungary of the early twentieth century. He was a *talmid* of Rav Chaim Halberstam of Sanz and Rav Mordechai Nadvorna.

His picture is believed by many Jews to be an amulet of protection. Many storekeepers have his picture in their stores to keep away mice. In the picture, one can see that the *Rebbe* was facing down. Legend says that once Rav Chaim of Sanz placed his hands on Rav Yeshaya’s head to bless him. From that point on, Reb Shaya’le never raised his head.

He was known as a miracle worker and a great *ba’al chessed*. Thousands came to his funeral. At one point during the eulogies, the mailman from the town, who was not Jewish, spoke up in the middle and said, “You don’t have any idea who this man was. I personally handled his mail, and I know that he himself supported hundreds of poor families throughout Hungary.

[Editor’s note: Whenever I have visited his



*ohel* in Hungary, numerous non-Jews came forward to extol his virtues that were retold throughout their generations. The people who lived nearby felt it was a ‘*zechus*’ to have him close by and always took proper care of his gravesite.

There are numerous stories of non-Jewish people who came to him for blessings too].



### The Famous Mouse Story

His greatest pleasure was to host a very elaborate *Melave Malka*, the meal that follows *Shabbos*, on Saturday night. Often he would have his *Chassidim shecht* fresh chickens for his meal. He would always distribute the food himself – in a hidden way. For instance, he would put his hand in a bag and distribute *challos* to those present, and there were always exactly the number of *challos* needed. As soon as the last person got his portion, they looked in the bag and it was empty. Many people testified to that fact from the previous generation who witnessed this phenomenon firsthand.

One *Motzo’ei Shabbos*, while Reb Shaya’le was eating this special *Melave Malka* meal, a *Chassid* came to him with an urgent request. He was a man who had a warehouse full of foodstuffs and he made his living by buying and selling food. For the past number of months, his warehouse had been taken over by mice that were eating his grain and other commodities, and his entire livelihood was threatened. He asked Reb Shaya’le for a blessing that the mice should leave his warehouse.

At that time, each small town in Europe was ruled by the



local church pastor. Some of the pastors were kind toward the Jews and others were very harsh. Reb Shaya'le asked the *Chassid* if the pastor of the town he lived in was kind or harsh. The *Chassid* replied that he was very harsh toward the Jews. Reb Shaya'le then instructed the *Chassid* to go to his warehouse and to tell the mice, "Reb Shaya'le says to go to the estate of the pastor." The *Chassid* followed the *Rebbe's* advice and instantly hundreds of mice raced out of the warehouse, all heading in the direction of the pastor's estate. The *Chassid's* business was saved, and ever since, Jews who have been plagued with this problem have used Reb Shaya'le's picture to rid their homes of mice.



### **Preparing for Tefilla**

When *Chassidim* peeked through his keyhole before *Mussaf* on *Rosh HaShana* expecting to see him immersed in holy *kavonos*, they were amazed to see him cutting up the cakes to distribute to the congregation.



### **Nobleman's Request**

Once, a nobleman who was also a government official approached Reb Shaya'le to request his help. He had a son who was very sick and had heard that he was a wonder *Rebbe*. He promised the *Rebbe* that he would help the Jews who were forcefully conscripted into the army.

Reb Shaya'le raised his holy eyes to Heaven and exclaimed, "*Hashem*, there are many non-Jews who persecute us. If you need to claim a soul, pick one of them. At least this man will help the *Yidden*."

Immediately, word came that the child was beginning to recover until he was completely healed. The man kept his word and forged medical conditions for *Yidden* so they would be released from the army. With time, his scheme was discovered and he was brought to trial. He again ran to Reb Shaya'le and asked for his help. The *Rebbe* assured him that all would be well. That night, the courthouse that housed all the records that were to be used against the official was overrun by thousands of mice who ate through all the records. Naturally, the case was promptly dismissed.

[Editor: I have also heard from people who remembered the child of this government official, and they attested that he too was an unbelievable *Oheiv Yisrael* and always declared that he owed his life to the *Rebbe*].



### **Caring Even After His Petira**

When he sensed that his *petira* was near, he asked his son to immediately cook copious amounts of food and prepare abundant drinks, since he realized that a lot of people would come to his funeral and the weather was unusually hot. Everyone would be busy with his funeral and would not realize that the masses were hungry.



## **Rav Aryeh Leib, 3<sup>rd</sup> of Iyar**

The *Maharal Tzintz*

Who was this extraordinary *Tzaddik*? His name was Rav Aryeh Leib (*Maharal*) *Tzintz*. This *Gaon* wrote many *seforim*, and he was very interested in seeing that they were printed and distributed. That is why he made the

promise he did (see below).

Indeed, there are many stories told of people who were helped in miraculous ways after they undertook to print the *seforim* of the *Gaon*. The organization dedicated to the publication of the

*Maharal's seforim* knows of many cases of people who have seen *yeshuos* that were clearly miraculous. These involve recovery from life-threatening diseases, obtaining good *parnossa*, finding proper *shidduchim* and *nachas* from children.



### **This Week's Segula for Parnossa**

(Please note: I am not affiliated with this organization in any way. I have seen a *yeshua* for *parnossa* by using this *segula* and by printing *seforim* from the *Maharal Tzintz* and my *Rebbe, Shlit"u*, the Clevelander, told me that he also did so once and saw a *yeshua* in it. As such, I am presenting it for his *Yahrzeit* on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of *Iyar*.)

Praga, a suburb of the European Jewish capital of Warsaw, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of *Iyar*, 5593 – more than 180 years ago! The *Gaon* and revered Rav Aryeh Leib Tzintz, known as the *Maharal Tzintz*, or the *Gaon MiPlatzek*, lay on his deathbed surrounded by his most senior *talmidim* (one of whom was the famous *Chiddushei HaRim* of Gur). The great man's soul would soon be parted from his pure body as it traveled to rest on high, in the place reserved for only the holiest and purest.

An atmosphere similar to *Neila* (closure) on *Yom Kippur* pervaded the room. The *talmidim* were looking at the face of their *Rebbe*, a man who taught *Torah* to thousands and had given blessings and salvation to everyone who ever knocked at his door, but now his lips did not stop as he mumbled incessantly. Some of the *talmidim* were bending forward and cupping their ears to hear him say, "What is the difference between learning *Torah* here and learning it in the world above...?"

Suddenly, the *Tzaddik* awakened and his eyes were wide open. His hand pointed to the wooden board in the corner of the room and he asked that it be brought

to him. With whatever strength he still had, he wrote on the board the text that he wanted engraved on his *matzeiva* (headstone). The *talmidim* watched silently as this mighty *Torah* scholar wrote; finally, his wonderful promise was written: *I will be an intermediary with Hashem (meilitz) in the World to Come for anyone who tries to bring to publication the books that I have compiled.*

The looks of astonishment on his *talmidim's* faces did not leave his pure eyes. The shock and emotion had gripped everyone around him. This was not an empty statement. It was a promise that was all-encompassing and comprehensive, and it will be etched in stone forever, for all generations. It was to be the epitaph engraved into eternity at his final resting place ...

For a short moment, he spoke in a clear voice, "When a man hangs a sign on his store, he is telling us that he has something to sell!"

This "sign" has survived until now and is the holy message of our *Rebbe*, the *Tzintz Rebbe*, of blessed memory, as he lies in the main cemetery located in Genesha Street in Warsaw. The many writings about all aspects of the *Torah* published by the *Maharal Tzintz* have been reprinted on many occasions over the years, and those who have been involved in their publication have been rewarded with wonderful prosperity, both spiritual and material.

"And these were not mere words, for we have seen and heard of the amazing miracles that have been visited through this act, for they are no longer on a downward slide and thanks to this *mitzva* they have been saved and healed." (*Shem HaGedolim*)

"Indeed, he promised good things to all who try to help in publishing his work, and this is what has happened for everyone involved." (Rav Tzodok *HaKohen* of Lublin)

“This is a *segula* for all kinds of problems and will help many!” (*Orchos Rabbeinu HaSteipler*, of blessed memory)

To download and print *seforim* go to <http://hebrewbooks.org/advanced.aspx> and copy and paste a search for צינץ under author. This will help you find many free *seforim* to download and print

Send a *kvittel*:  
[http://www.tzintz.org/system/scripts/show\\_page.cgi?page=kvitel](http://www.tzintz.org/system/scripts/show_page.cgi?page=kvitel)

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## Rav Yosef Dov HaLevi Ben Yitchok Ze'ev Soloveitchik of Brisk, 4<sup>th</sup> of Iyar

The *Bais HaLevi*

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

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

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

himself out as a wagondriver.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The young Yosef Dov had never

done any manual labor. His soft hands, so used to caressing pages of the *Gemora*, were soon bruised and bleeding from the hard leather harnesses, and burned from the hot tar and pitch used to smear the coach wagon's wheels for the long journey. Nonetheless, young Yosef Dov did not complain. As tired as he was, he sat holding the reins while the coachman snoozed and his young mind reviewed the *Torah* he was excited to discuss with Rav Shlomo Kluger! He was so absorbed that the horses wandered off the road. The bumps woke up the coachman; startled, he quickly took charge of the horses and set them back on the road.

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

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

"You say you are the grandson of Rav Chaim of Volozhin?" the servants said doubtfully, and even Rav Shlomo Kluger had his own doubts as to the identity of the rough-looking youth whose torn clothes, dirty, cut hands and appearance were more of a coach driver than that of a *Yeshiva*

*bochur*-grandson of *Talmidei Chachomim*. "Where is your letter of introduction?"

Yosef Dov had none, but in place he pleaded to show his prowess. "Let me instead discuss the answer to the difficult *Rambam* I have prepared," and so he demonstrated his *Torah* knowledge and convinced Rav Shlomo Kluger of his true identity.

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

Brodie was filled with *Talmidei Chachomim* and the entire town, young and old, packed the *shul*, to see and hear the young prodigy that Rav Shlomo Kluger had honored to deliver the *derosha*. When I say everyone came, I mean everyone, even our coachman! When he saw who the *Rav* and scholar delivering the *Shabbos derosha* was he almost fainted! He began to cry and sob hysterically! He approached young Yosef Dov and begged his forgiveness.

"I am so sorry I treated you so harshly and even slapped you!"

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



## Schlissel Challa

There is a *minhag* to bake *schlissel challa* (*schlissel* means "key" in *Yiddish*) for the *Shabbos* after *Pesach*. *Schlissel challo*s are best known as a *segula* for *parnossa*, though there are other reasons for it, as we will soon see. Some bake the *challa* with an actual key inside, some make the *challa* in the shape of a key and some put sesame seeds on top in the form of a

key. There are those who make the *challa* flat to look like *matzos*. We will discuss this later on. The *Ohev Yisrael* says about *schlissel challa* that “the *minhogim* of our fathers are most definitely *Torah*”. There are many reasons given for this *minhag* of baking *schlissel challa*; we will go through some of them. (Some of the items written below can also be found in *Ta’amei Minhogim*, *Nitei Gavriel*, *Sefer HaTodo’a* and *Minhag Yisrael Torah*).

First, the second *mishna* in *Rosh HaShana* says that on *Pesach* we are judged on the grains, *parnossa*. Rabbeinu Nissim asks: if we are judged on *Rosh HaShana*, then how are we judged on *Pesach*? He answers that on *Pesach* it is determined how much grain there will be in the coming year for the world, but on *Rosh HaShana* it is decided how much of that grain each individual receives. The *Meiri*, however, says that on *Rosh HaShana* it is decided if one will live or die, suffer or not and other such things, but *Pesach* is when we are judged on the grains. Based on this, there are customs in *Sephardi* communities to do things *Motzo’ei Pesach* as a sign that we want *Hashem* to give us livelihood. In Aram Soba (Syria) and Turkey, they put wheat kernels in all four corners of the house on *Motzo’ei Pesach* as a sign of prosperity for the coming year. (*Moed L’Kol Chai* - Rav Chaim Palagi, *Bais HaBechira*). From a *mishna* we already see that there is a connection between *Pesach* and *parnossa*.



### **Reasons for Schlissel Challa**

1) In *Shir HaShirim* (which we read on *Pesach*) it says רָעִיתִי פְתָחֵי לִי אֲפָתֵי – “Open for Me, My sister, My beloved”. *Chazal* say that *Hashem* asks us to open up for Him a small hole like the tip of a needle and He will open up a huge hole for us. Also, *Klal Yisrael* is called a bride and they are called the *bechina* (aspect) of bread. During *Pesach*, all the upper gates and minds are open and after *Pesach* they close and we need to open them. Therefore, we put a key in the *challa* after *Pesach* to hint at us opening a small “hole”, through the *mitzva* of *Shabbos* (and, if I might add, the *mitzva* of *challa*), and now *Hashem* should open up all His goods from his storehouses and the heavens, like He gave the *mon* to our forefathers in the month of *Iyar*, and this *Shabbos* we bless the month of *Iyar*.

2) After *Pesach* is when the *mon* stopped falling and we brought the *Omer*. From then on we needed to eat from the produce of the ground; we needed *parnossa*, since until now we had the *mon*. It is known that everything has a gate. Therefore, just as we *daven* to *Hashem* to open up the gates of *parnossa*, we have a *minhag* to put the form of a key on the *challo*s to allude that *Hashem* should open up the gates of *parnossa* for us.

3) During *Sefira* we count forty-nine days till *Shavuos*, the fiftieth day, which is the *sha’arei bina*. We go from gate to gate, and each gate has a key. That is why we make an image of a key on the *challa*.

4) It says in *Shir HaShirim* 1:11 תִּזְכֹּרֵנוּ זָהָב וְכֶסֶף לְךָ עִם נִקְדוֹת הַכֶּסֶף – “We will make for you circlets of gold with spots of silver”. Regarding the *Mishkon* it says זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנַחֲשֵׁת, putting *zohov* (gold) before *kessef* (silver). In *Bereishis*, regarding the creation of the world, the first day it says *yehi ohr*, which is *chessed* (represented by silver) and the second day represents *gevura*, which in turn represents gold. The reason is that regarding the creation of the world it was pure *chessed*, as is written: “The world was built on *chessed*” (*Tehillim* 89:3), and therefore *chessed*, which is representative of *kessef*, precedes *gevura*, which is representative of *zohov*. Regarding the *Mishkon*, however, *Hashem* had to, so-to-speak, contract (*tzimtzum*) the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) to dwell in it, and *tzimtzum* is from the aspect of *gevura*. Thus, *zohov* precedes *kessef* with regard to the *Mishkon*. However, the *zohov* written there has the *nekuda* (vowel sound) of a פֶּתַח (it has a *pasach* instead of the usual *komatz*). It says

הַחֶסֶד (Shemos 38:24), and that is the *nekuda* of *chessed* – the *nekuda* of *chochma*. And פתח (the vowel) also means “opening” like פתח ושער - from there comes all the kindness. Putting it all together, this that we say in *Shir HaShirim* תּוֹרֵי זֶהָב נֶעֱשֶׂה לָךְ עִם נִקְדוֹת הַכָּסֶף means that the *Mishkon* was made with *zohov*, the aspect of *tzimtzum*, but with the *nekuda* of *kessef*, meaning the word *zohov*, instead of having the usual vowel, *komatz* is written with the *nekuda* of *pasach*, which is *chessed*. And the *Shabbos* after *Pesach* is always in the second week of the *Sefira*, which is *gevura*, the aspect of *zohov*, except that it is *menukod* with *kessef*, *nekudas pasach*. Through this we say that we will open up all the gates of blessings, and since every gate has a מפתח (key), we make the image of a key on the *challa*.

5) The previous four reasons are all brought by the *Ohev Yisrael* in *Shabbos Achar Pesach* and *Likutim Parshas Shemini*. There is a fifth reason brought by the *Ohev Yisrael*, also based on the *pasuk* תּוֹרֵי זֶהָב נֶעֱשֶׂה לָךְ עִם נִקְדוֹת הַכָּסֶף, connecting the Written and Oral *Torah* to *challa*. (See *Ohev Yisrael, Shabbos Achar Pesach*)

6) The *matza* we eat on *Pesach* is supposed to instill in us *Yiras Hashem*. And *yira* is compared to a key as we see from the following *Gemora* in *Maseches Shabbos* 31a–b: “*Rabba bar Rav* Huna said: Any person who has *Torah* but does not have *Yiras Shomayim* is comparable to a treasurer who has the keys to the inner parts (of the treasure house) but the keys to the outer area were not handed to him. How can he get to the inner parts (if he can’t first get into the outer parts)?” Therefore, we put a key in the *challa* the *Shabbos* after *Pesach* to show we want the *yira* obtained from the *matzos* to stay with us, because if one has *yira* then the *Torah* will stay attached to him. (*Yismach Yisrael*)

7) The *Rambam* lists at the beginning of *Hilchos Chometz U’matza* that there are eight *mitzvos* (three positive and five negative) involved there. The key we put in the *challa* alludes to this *Rambam*: the letters of מפתח (key) spell חַי מִצּוֹת פִּיֵת [חַי פִּיֵת bread, representing the *chometz*” and מַי is for *matza*; these allude to *Hilchos Chometz U’matza*, and the חַי is the eight *mitzvos* involved]. (*Tzvi LaTzaddik*)

8) The *Shabbos* after *Pesach* we make *challos* that look like *matzos*, as an allusion to the *matzos* that were eaten on *Pesach Sheini*. And we put a key in it to allude to the “gates” being open until *Pesach Sheini*. (*Imrei Pinchas*)

9) The *minhag* is to put keys in the *challa* and make them in the form of *matzos*. The reason is that in these seven weeks of *Sefira* we are supposed to work on our *Avodas Hashem* until we reach the level of the first night of *Pesach*. The way to do this is to put the “left into the right”, meaning mix the trait of *ahava* (right side) with *yira* (left side). In this second week of *Sefira* we have these two traits in our hands, since the first week of *Sefira* is *chessed* – *ahava*, and the second week is *gevura* – *yira*. That is why we make the *challa* look like *matza*. *Matza* is representative of the *yetzer tov*, the right, and *chometz* is representative of the *yetzer hora*, the left. Now, we have *challos* which are true *chometz*, in the form of *matza*; “the left is in the right”, *chometz* in *matza*. (*She’eiris L’Pinchas*)

10) There are many reasons given for the *schlissel challa*, and I say that the *schlissel challos* are the keys to *parnossa*. (*Segulas HaBeShT V’talmidov*, quoting *Nachlas Yaakov*)

11) The *Yismach Yisrael* cites the holy *Kozhnitzer Maggid* that the *Shabbos* after *Pesach* is called *Geleh* or *Gilui Matzos*! This is the *Shabbos* that reveals what the *matzos* have done. Eating *matza* which the *Zohar* calls *Michla DeAsvasa* or *Michla DiMehaymenusa*, the bread of healing and the bread of *emuna* and faith is supposed to ingrain something deep within us. You are what you eat; your body is made up of the building blocks of the nutrients from the food we ingest, digest and build from. Eating *matza* – unleavened bread of healing and faith – is supposed to change our biological, chemical and spiritual makeup and inject us

with a dose of health and faith – truly a bread of *asvasa* – healing and *mehaymenusa* – faith. Thus after eating and living off *matza* for a week, the first *Shabbos* afterward the *matzos* are revealed and all the potential work they have instilled in us is actualized and we can observe the results.

The *Yismach Yisrael* also uses this to explain our custom of using keys to knead *challos* also known as *Schlissel Challa*. Keys allude to *Yiras Shomayim*, fear and awe of Heaven, as in the teaching of *Chazal* (*Gemora Shabbos* 31) that whoever has acquired *Torah* learning, yet lacks *Yiras Shomayim* – fear and awe of Heaven – is compared by the Sages to someone who seeks to enter the king’s treasury. He has been given the keys of *Torah* to unlock the inner gates, but he is lacking the keys to the outer gates that he must unlock first (since he lacks *Yiras Shomayim*). How is he to enter without the outer keys?! Thus we see that awe, *Yiras Shomayim*, is compared to keys. Thus we can say that he who lacks these keys cannot enter the storehouses and treasuries of the *Torah* and the *Torah* cannot enter him either! Thus, when we knead our *challos* with the keys we are symbolically saying we are instilling *Yiras Shomayim* in our bread, and when we eat and partake of this bread, *Yiras Shomayim* will permeate us and our beings and essence as the *matzos* did. This *Shabbos*, the actualized potential of *Yiras Shomayim* from our *matzos* will be instilled and revealed in us.

May *Hashem* help that it permeate ourselves and the lives of our families and loved ones, instilling in us all *ahavaso veyiraso* – love and awe of *Hashem* and *Torah*. Amen!



### **Different ways of making *Schlissel Challa***

As mentioned above (reasons 8, 9 and 11) there are those who make the *challa* round and flattish for this *Shabbos*, in the image of *matza*.

Some make the *challa* in the shape of a key.

Some attach a piece of dough in the shape of a key. *Breslov Customs for Pesach* (p. 57) says this is the *minhag* of the family of Rav Elozor Kenig and of Manistritch.

*Sefer HaTodo'a* mentions making the image of a key with sesame seeds on top of the *challa*. These first three customs can, perhaps, be seen from the wording of the *Ohev Yisrael* in one place where he says we put the image of a key on the *challa*.

Some place an actual key in the *challa*. Perhaps this is done because of the wording in many places implying that one should indent the *challa* with a key.

Either way it is done, the key or image of the key is usually on top. An interesting observation about this: the *Gemora* quoted by the *Yismach Yisrael* (reason 6), about the key, is at the top of *daf* 31b. At the bottom of the *daf* is the *mishna* mentioning the women’s *mitzva* of *challa*. Here the key is on top and the *challa* on the bottom.



### **Conclusion**

The *Gemora* in *Ta’anis* says that there are three keys that *Hashem* controls directly, without the assistance of *malochim*. They are: rain, which the *Gemora* explains is *parnossa*; childbirth (or conception); and *Techias HaMeisim* (Resurrection of the Dead). If I may humbly add, when we are making the *challa* we should have in mind the *parnossa* of others as well, those who don’t have children and most importantly *daven* for *Techias HaMeisim*.

Either way one performs this *minhag*, they are all correct and all have holy sources.

When I started writing this I did not realize how much information there was on this *minhag* which is done only once a year. I learned a valuable lesson. Every *minhag* and of course every *mitzva* has many holy reasons behind it and it is not done just because someone decided that it was a nice thing to do, as some say. The more I looked into *schlissel challa*, the more I found in *seforim* written by *Rabbonim* who were *geonim* in every part of *Torah*, *nistar* and *nigleh*, and *Tzaddikim* in every respect, “between *Hashem* and man” and “between man and man”. They were able to understand reasons for every little action we do as a way of serving *Hashem*. May we all be blessed with *parnossa berevach* together with all of *Klal Yisrael*.

Note: It is said in the name of Rav Dovid of Tolna that one should make sure the dough separated as *challa* is burnt completely until no part of it is edible. In addition to being the ideal way to burn the *challa*, he says that if a *dovor tomei* eats the unburned *challa*, it can cause one’s children to go off the *derech, chas v’sholom*.

The *segula* that I received from my *Rebbe*, the Clevelander *Rebbe, Shlit”a*, of Ra’anana, is that on the first *Shabbos* after *Pesach* you “knead the *challa* dough” with a key. In fact, that is the custom recorded and found in the *sefer Ohev Yisrael* of the *Apta Rebbe*. Our custom is (I wash the key first in soap and hot water) to knead the *challa* dough and poke the key into the dough while reciting the “open the *she’orim*” *tefillos* found in most *zemiros benschers* at the end of the *zemiros* for *Melave Malka*, where we ask *Hashem* to open many gates for us. Other people I have seen also bake a key shape on the *challa*, but I didn’t receive any such tradition.

The *Ohev Yisrael* says:

לשבת שאחר הפסח המנהג הוא מימים קדמונים לנקוב את החלות בשבת שלאחר פסח במפתחות, ונעשה על החלה צורת מפתח.

In at least three other places the *Ohev Yisrael* uses similar wording to ונעשה על החלה צורת מפתח. This is probably where the *minhag* of some to bake a key shape image on the *challa* comes from.

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

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

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

She loved her family deeply and immensely. May *Hashem* console her family and may she be a constant *melitza yeshura*, אמן.

## תפלה על הפרנסה:

הרה"ק מהר"י מבעלזא זי"ע

התבטא כמה וכמה פעמים שמפתח הפרנסה  
נמצא בידיו של הרה"ק ר' ישעי' לע קרעסטירער זי"ע

ע"כ אנו מעתיקים תפילה נוראה זו על הפרנסה

עֵינַי כָּל אֵלֶיךָ יְשׁוּבָה, וְאַתָּה נוֹתֵן לָהֶם אֶת אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ פּוֹתַח אֶת  
יְדֶךָ, וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן. רְבוּנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם תֵּן לִי פְרִנְסָה  
בְּכָבוֹד קֹדֶם שְׂאֲצִטְרֶךָ לָהּ, בְּאִפְן שְׂאֲזַכֶּה לְסוּר מֵרַע וְלַעֲשׂוֹת הַטּוֹב  
בְּעֵינֶיךָ תָּמִיד וְלִהְיוֹת בְּרָצוֹנְךָ הַטּוֹב בְּאִמַּת כִּי אַתָּה יוֹדֵעַ כַּמָּה  
הַפְּרִנְסָה מְבַלְבֶּלֶת אוֹתִי וּמוֹנֵעֶת אוֹתִי וּמְחַלְשֶׁת דַּעְתִּי מִלְּהִתְחַזֵּק  
בְּעֲבוּדָתְךָ

רְבוּנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, יְדַעְתִּי כִּי אֲנִי רְחוּק מִפְּרִנְסָה בְּכָבוֹד מְאֹד מְאֹד,  
כִּי פִגְמֹתַי נִגְדָּךָ מְאֹד, הִרְעוֹתִי אֶת מַעֲשֵׂי וְקִפְחֹתִי אֶת  
פְּרִנְסָתִי אֲבָל בָּאתִי לְפָנֶיךָ מְלֵא רַחֲמִים כְּעֵנִי בַפֶּתַח, כְּדֹל וְאֲבִיוֹן  
הַמְחַזֵּיר עַל הַפֶּתַחַיִם, פּוֹרֵשׁ כַּפָּיו שׂוֹאֵל וּמְבַקֵּשׁ מִתְּנַת חֲנָם וְנִדְבַת  
חֶסֶד, שֶׁתְּחַנְּנֵנִי בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים לְבַד, בְּחֶסְדֶּיךָ הָעֲצוּמִים לְבַד, וְתִזְמִין  
לִי פְרִנְסָתִי מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְתִתֵּן לִי כָּל צָרְכֵי וְכָל צָרְכֵי אֲנָשֵׁי בֵיתִי וְכָל

התלויים בי וכל הגלויים אלינו קודם שנצטרף להם, כי עינינו לך לבד  
תלויות, עינינו לך לבד מצפות ומחכות:

**רבוננו** של עולם אתה הוא לעלא מן כל העלות והסבות, ואתה  
יכל לסבב סבות לטובה ברחמיך הרבים, באפן שיגיע לנו  
הפרנסה בנקל בלי שום בלבולים ובלי שום טרדות ויגיעות ובלי  
שום סבות על פי דרך הטבע, רק שתזמין לנו ברחמיך הרבים  
הפרנסה בנקל ובמהירות גדול, ותהיה נמשכת הפרנסה אלינו  
לטובה בהרחבה גדולה ונצפה לברר הפרנסה בקדשה גדולה, שנצפה  
לאכל ולשתות בקדשה ובטהרה גדולה, באפן שנצפה שתתברר  
אכילתנו ושתיתנו, ויהיו נעשים מהם ברורים קדושים בבחינת  
קטרת, עד שיהיו נעשים מהם אמרי שפר, שהם ברכות והודאות  
לשמן הגדול והקדוש ואלו האמרי שפר יעלו ויתחברו עם המלך,  
ויהיה נעשה מהם עטרה להמלך ונצפה לראות העטרה הזאת, כמו  
שכתוב: "צאינה וראינה בנות ציון במלך שלמה, בעטרה שעטרה לו  
אמו ביום חתנתו, וביום שמחת לבו" ונצפה לראות את המלך ביפיו,  
כמו שכתוב: "מלך ביפיו תחזינה עיניך" ואל תעבב פרנסותינו  
בשביל זה, כי אתה "כל תוכל ולא יבצר ממך מזמה", כי אתה יכל  
לסבב סבות לטובה באפן שתבא לנו הפרנסה במהירות גדול בלי  
שום עפוב כלל, ובלי שום עסק וסבה ובלי שום טרדא כלל, ועם כל  
זה נצפה לראות המלך ביפיו "בעטרה שעטרה לו אמו" הנעשית מן  
האמרי שפר המתבררים על ידי הפרנסה והאכילה וקדשה וקיים  
לנו מקרא שכתוב: "הגואל משחת חייכי המעטרכי חסד ורחמים  
המשביע בטוב עדיך תתחדש כנשר נעוריקי":

**אבינו** שבשמים עשה למענך ורחם עלינו ותסבב סבות לטובה,  
באפן שתגיע לנו הפרנסה קודם שנצטרף לה, ותזמין  
לנו כל צרכינו בכבוד ובנחת, ובהתר ובקדשה גדולה, ובהרחבה  
ונחת גדול ותצילנו מחובות והלואות, ותעזרנו לסלק מהרה כל  
החובות והלואות שאנו מחייבים מכבר, ותשמרנו מעתה מלבא  
לידי חוב עוד לעולם, כי אתה יודע שהחובות וההלואות מבלבלים

אוֹתָנוּ מְאֹד מִמַּעַט עֲבוֹדָתְךָ שְׁאֵנוּ מְכִינִים עֲצָמֵנוּ בְּכֹל עֵת לְהִתְחִיל  
בְּעֲבוֹדָתְךָ בְּאֵמֶת

רַחֵם עָלַי וְעַלִּינוּ אָבִינוּ אָב הַרְחֵמוּן, הֲיֵן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כֵּלּוּ בְטוֹבוֹ  
בְּחֵן וּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים, וְתֵן לִי וּלְכֹל חֲבֵרְתָנוּ וּלְכֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל  
פְּרִנְסָה בְּכַבּוֹד קֹדֶם שְׁנִצְטָרְךָ לָהּ, בְּאִפְּן שֶׁלֹּא נִצְטָרְךָ לְהַטְרִיד דַּעֲתָנוּ  
בְּהַפְרִנְסָה כֵּלּוּ וְאֵל תִּצְרִיכֵנוּ לֹא לְיַדִּי מִתְנַת בְּשָׂר וְדָם וְלֹא לְיַדִּי  
הַלְוֹאתָם, כִּי אִם לְיָדְךָ הַמְּלָאָה הַפְּתוּחָה הַקְּדוּשָׁה וְהַרְחֵבָה שֶׁלֹּא  
נִבּוֹשׁ וְלֹא נִכְלָם לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד וְנִזְכָּה לְבָרֵךְ הַפְּרִנְסָה בְּקֹדֶשׁ וּבְטָהֳרָה  
גְּדוֹלָה בְּבַחֲיִנַת קְטָרֶת הַמְּשִׁיחַ אֶת הַלֵּב וְתִבְיֵא לָנוּ אֶת מְשִׁיחַ צְדָקָנוּ  
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, וַיְמַלֵּךְ עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם כֵּלּוּ  
וַיִּקְרָא בָנוּ מְהֵרָה מְקָרָא שְׁכֵתוֹב: "מַלְךְ בְּיַפְיֹו תַחֲזִינָה עֵינֶיךָ תִּרְאִינָה  
אֶרֶץ מִרְחָקִים" בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, אָמֵן כֵּן יְהִי רְצוֹן:

# תפילה על הפרנסה

לאומרו ביום ג' באייר  
יומא דהילולא של הצדיק בעל מפתח הפרנסה  
הרה"ק רבי ישעיה מקרעסטיר זי"ע

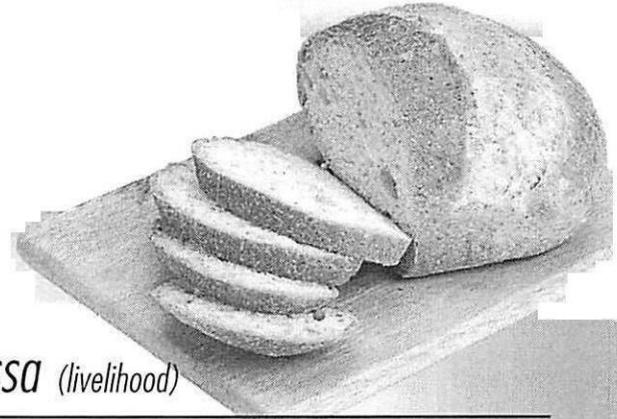
רבוֹן הָעוֹלָמִים, אַתָּה הוּא גְדוֹל הַעֲצָה וְרַב הָעֲלִילָה אֲשֶׁר עֵינֶיךָ פְּקוּחוֹת עַל  
כָּל דְּרָכֵי בְנֵי אָדָם לַתַּת לְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד דֵּי פְרִנְסָתוֹ וְדֵי מַחְסוֹרוֹ, וְנָתַתְּ לָנוּ  
צְדִיקֵי אֲמַת הַמְּשִׁיעִים לְבְרִיּוֹתֶיךָ שִׁבְעַת חַיִּים וּבְרָכָה וְשִׁפְעֵ קֹדֶשׁ, וּבְרַחֲמֶיךָ  
הַרְבִּים נָתַתְּ בְּעוֹלָמְנוּ אֶת רַבִּי יִשְׁעִיָּה בֶן רַבִּי מֹשֶׁה זָכַר צְדִיק לְבְרָכָה, כִּי הוּא  
הַמְּשִׁבִיר לְכָל עִם הָאָרֶץ וּבִידוֹ הַפְּקֻדָּת מִפְּתַח שֶׁל פְּרִנְסָה.

וְהִנֵּה בְּאַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה אֲנִי עֹבֵדְךָ (פְּלוּגֵי בֶן פְּלוּגִית) לְהַתְּחַנֵּן וּלְעַמֵּד  
לְפָנֶיךָ וּלְבַקֵּשׁ רַחֲמִים בְּיוֹמָא דְהִלּוּלָא דִּילֵיהּ כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר רַבִּי חֲמַא בְּרַחֲמֵי  
גְדוֹלִים צְדִיקִים בְּמִיתָתָם יוֹתֵר מִבְּחַיֵּיהֶם, לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר בְּחַיִּים חַיּוֹתָם  
וְאִף יוֹתֵר, שֶׁבְּזָכוֹת הַצְּדִיק הַקְּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה תִּזְמִין לִי וּלְכָל בְּנֵי בֵּיתִי פְּרִנְסָה בְּרוּחַ  
וּבְקִלּוֹת בְּלֹא עֲמַל מְרֻבָּה, וְתִקַּל מֵעַלֵּינוּ אֶת קִלְלַת אָדָם הַרְאִשׁוֹן לְבִזְעַת  
אִפְסָה תֹאכַל לַחֵם כִּי קִשָּׁה עָלֵינוּ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד, וּלְפָנֶיךָ אֲדוֹן הַנִּפְלְאוֹת אִין קִשִּׁי  
וּמַעֲכָב כָּלִל מְלוֹזֵן אוֹתָנוּ בְּלֹא טְרַח גְּדוֹל.

עֲזֹרֵנִי נָא רַבוֹן הָעוֹלָמִים הֲזֵן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כְּלוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים שְׂתַסְפִּיק  
לִי וּלְכָל בְּנֵי בֵּיתִי כָּל צְרֻכָנוּ בְּהַאי עֲלָמָא בֵּין בְּמַזוֹן בֵּין בְּלְבוּשׁ בֵּין בְּדִירָה בֵּין  
בְּכָל דְּבַר שִׁיבּוֹא לְפָנֵינוּ, וְאֵל אֲצִטְרֵךְ לְטַל מִיַּדִּי בְּשׂוֹר וְדָם אִף בְּתוֹרַת הַלּוֹאָה,  
כִּי אִם מִיַּדְךָ הַמְּלָאָה הַפְּתוּחָה הַקְּדוּשָׁה וְהַרְחֵבָה יִשְׁפַע לָנוּ שִׁפְעֵ גְדוֹל בְּכָל  
עַת כְּפִי מִזֶּה שֶׁנֶּצְטְרֵךְ לוֹ, וְאֵל יַחֲסֹר לֹא לִי וְלֹא לְמִי מֵאַנְשֵׁי בֵּיתִי דְּבַר מְכָל  
צְרֻכֵינוּ עַד עוֹלָם.

אֲנָא עֹשֶׂה עִמִּי צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד בְּזָכוֹת שְׁעֵשָׂה הַצְּדִיק רַבִּי יִשְׁעִיָּה בֶן רַבִּי מֹשֶׁה  
עִמָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְתִרְבֶּה לְחַנּוּגֵי בְּמִדָּה טוֹבָה וּמְרֻבָּה, וְאֵל תְּשִׁיבֵנִי רִיקָם  
בְּבוֹאֵנִי לְשֵׁאת תְּחַנּוּגִים לְפָנֶיךָ וְתִבְרַכְנִי בְּרָכָה שְׁלֵמָה, כִּי אַתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה:





## Prayer for Parnassa (livelihood)

May it be Your Will, Hashem, our God and the God of our fathers that my provisions and my livelihood and the provisions and livelihood of my household together with the provisions and livelihood of the entire Jewish people be encompassing, appropriate and virtuous in Your hands.

May we never be in need of the gifts of man nor of their loans but only of Your hand which is full, open, holy and generous. And may my work and all my dealings be blessed and not destitute, for life and not for death. And may I merit that no desecration of the Name of Heaven occur through me, and that I may be among the beneficent and those that influence for good to everyone at all times and fill my hand with Your blessings and satiate me of your goodness, as You did with those that emerged from Egypt. For You are blessed and bring blessings to the Universe. The eyes of all look expectedly to You, and You give them all their food in its proper time. You open Your hand, and satisfy the desire of every living being. (Psalms 145:16) Cast your burden upon Hashem, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the falling of the righteous. (Psalms 55:23) And grant the holy and pure souls that pray to Hashem for my sake and because of me to lift my horn and raise my fortune in order that I will be able to serve You wholeheartedly for eternity. Amen.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א-לקינו וא-לקי אבותינו. שיהיו  
מזונותי ופרנסתי ומזונותי ופרנסת בני ביתי עם מזונות  
ופרנסת כל עמך בית ישראל, מכתרים ומאמרים  
ומצדקים בידי, ואל תצריכני לידי מתנת בשר ודם ולא  
לידי הלואאתם, כי אם לידי המלאכה הפתוחה, הקדושה  
ההרבה, והיא מלאכתי וכל עסקי לברכה ולא לעניות,  
לחיים ולא למות, ותופני שלא יחלל שם שמים על ידי,  
ואיזה מן המועילים ומשפיעים טוב לכל אדם תמיד,  
ותמלא ידי מברכותיך ושבענו מטובך, כמו שעשית  
ליוצאי מצרים, כי אתה ה' ברכת ומברך לעולם. עיני  
כל אליך ושברו ואתה נותן להם את-אכלם  
בעתו, פותח את-ידיך ומשביע לכל-הי רצון: השלך  
על-יהודה והבך והוא יכלכלך לא-יתן לעולם מוט  
לצדיק. ואתן נשמות הקדושות והטהורות. העתירו אל  
ה' בעדי ובגללי, ירים קרני ויגביה מזלי. למען אוכל  
לעבדו בלבב שלם כל ימי עולם. אמן.

לכות בנימין אלעזר בן שרה ברכה

From Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (1522-1570), a famous Kabbalist

# Zera Shimshon

## Shemini

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

וידבר אהרן אל משה וגו' (י' יט')

And Aharon spoke to Moshe etc. (10:19)

The pessukim are speaking about how Moshe Rabbeinu got upset since the Korban that he had said should be eaten and would bring forgiveness to the Jewish people was burnt. Moshe Rabbeinu directed his words at Elazar and Itamar, Aharon Hakohen's children. However, it is Aharon that responds to Moshe Rabbeinu that he was in mourning.

Rashi writes that although Moshe Rabbeinu was upset with Elazar and Itamar and it was towards them that his reproach was directed, still, it was Aharon Hakohen who responded to Moshe Rabbeinu. The Medrash learns from here the meaning of proper respect. Elazar and Itamar felt that it was inappropriate for them to respond in the presence of their father. Therefore, although they were the ones being reprimanded, it was Aharon Hakohen who responded to Moshe Rabbeinu on their behalf. The Sifri adds, that if one thinks that Elazar failed to respond because he did not have what to answer (and not because of his respect for his father), one only has to look at the passuk in Bamidbar (31:21) that says how Elazar had no difficulty speaking in front of Moshe Rabbeinu and the Nesi'im (see later for details). Thus, here were he refrained from responding, it could only have been out of deference for his father.

The Yefeh To'ar asks that the proof that the Medrash brings from later on in the Torah is not a good proof. Just because in that scenario Elazar knew the halacha, does not mean that here he also knew the halacha and could have answered for himself? Perhaps here he was quiet because he did not know the halacha (and not out of respect for his father) and in Bamidbar he did know the halacha, which is why he spoke up?

The Zera Shimshon answers this question as follows.

There were three times were Moshe Rabbeinu got upset and as a result forgot a certain halacha (Vayikra Rabba 13:1). Forgetting means that Moshe Rabbeinu knew the halacha before he got upset and only forgot it once he became upset. Being that he knew the halacha before he got upset, there is no question that he taught it to Aharon Hakohen's children who were his primary students.

This we see in the scenario in Bamidbar were Elazar taught the Jewish people the relevant halachos how to purify all the metal utensils they amassed during the war with Midyan. Being that Moshe Rabbeinu had gotten upset that the Jews failed to kill the women, he forgot this halacha. Elazar, who was his student, had already been taught this halacha by Moshe Rabbeinu earlier and was therefore able to teach it to the Jewish people.

Based on this reasoning, the Zera Shimshon explains that here too when Moshe Rabbeinu got upset and forgot the halacha, Elazar, who had already been taught the correct halacha by Moshe Rabbeinu, would have been able to explain himself to Moshe Rabbeinu. The only reason why he did not must have been out of respect for his father since he did not want to speak up in front of his father. This answers the Yefeh To'ar's question.

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

לזכות רחמים בן יוכבד שיזכה  
לשוב בתשובה שלימה בקרוב  
לזכות רפואה שלימה משה  
שניאור זלמן בן רחל  
ולזכות רפואה שלימה משה בן  
לאה

לזכות כל עם ישראל  
בכל מקום שהם

# Shemini

April 10<sup>th</sup> 2021  
28<sup>th</sup> of Nisan 5781

## 898



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## Hilula

28 - Rabbi Shabtai Horowitz, author of 'Vavai Ha'amudim'

29 - Rabbi Mordechai Shalom Yosef Friedman of Sadigura

30 - The Mekubal Rabbi Chaim Vital zya"á

1 - Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapira, Rosh Yeshiva of Be'er Ya'akov

2 - Rabbi Ya'akov Yosef, Rosh Yeshiva of Chazon Ya'akov

3 - Rabbi Reuven Sharbani

4 - Rabbi Yosef Dav Halevi Saloveitchik

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"á



## MASKIL LEDAVID

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

### "I Will Be Sanctified Through Those Who Are Nearest to Me" One Can Also Live Al Kiddush Hashem

"Moshe said to Aharon: Of this did Hashem speak, saying: "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest Me, thus I will be honored before the entire people"; and Aharon was silent" (Vayikra 10:3)

Nadav and Avihu died after bringing an alien fire before Hashem, as the verse tells us, "The sons of Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, each took a fire pan, they put fire in them and placed incense upon it; and they brought before Hashem an alien fire that He had not commanded them" (Vayikra 10:1). The question is, why does Hashem say about their death, "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest to Me", which implies that they were close to Hashem, if they died after sinning by bringing an alien fire before Him?

The Holy Ohr HaChaim explains that Nadav and Avihu's sin was that the fire they brought was not a fire that Hashem had commanded them to bring. This implies that aside from this sin, they did not sin in any other way. We will clarify his holy words: When a person sins, besides the actual act that he performs counter to Hashem's will, he also sins with his thoughts for Hashem commanded him to perform a certain mitzvah and due to his laziness or lust, he sins and does not fulfill the mitzvah. It follows that his thoughts too, and not just the act, were contrary to the will of Hashem.

But, although Nadav and Avihu sinned with an act of offering a fire they had not been commanded about, their thoughts were entirely for Heaven's sake because on the contrary, they wished to draw even closer to Hashem and understood that bringing an alien fire would lead to their deaths. Nevertheless, they were even prepared to die as long as they could offer a korban to Hashem and draw even closer to Him.

This is why Hashem calls Nadav and Avihu His 'nearest' ones. For even though they died on account of their sin, nevertheless this sin contained an element of Kiddush Hashem (sanctification of G-d's Name) because their entire will was to come closer and cleave to their Creator even more, to the extent that they sacrificed their lives for this goal.

The mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem applies to every Jewish person but does not just include the obligation to die for the sanctification of His Name like Nadav and Avihu, one must also live 'al Kiddush Hashem'. When a person overcomes his temptations and withstands difficult, considerable challenges that Hashem sets in his path, this demonstrates his great love for and closeness to the Creator. And then about him, too, Hashem declares, "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest Me". For the more a person surrenders his personal wishes and temptations in the face of Hashem's will, the more it demonstrates his closeness to Hashem and in this way, he indeed becomes His nearest one.

I once met someone who was overcome by a moment of holy fervor. He stated that he wishes to sanctify G-d's Name but does not know how to go about this. I told him that Kiddush Hashem does not need to be a public act amid great exposure, rather even if when he is alone in his bedroom he overcomes his desires and acts in accordance with Hashem's wish alone, he has sanctified G-d's Name and become much closer to Him.

But this person asked me to help him consider what action

he could take. I therefore asked him if he has a non-kosher phone in his pocket. He replied in the positive so I told him that if he takes out his phone and smashes it to pieces even though it is an expensive device, and instead purchases a kosher phone, this would be an act of total surrender of his desires before Hashem and he will receive the reward reserved for those who sanctify His Name. Since all his friends will ask him what happened to his phone and why he changed his number, it will cause a great Kiddush Hashem.

It was hard for him to go along with my request and he began to explain how essential the phone was for his livelihood. However, he said that he is prepared to use it for work purposes only, which does not involve any prohibitions.

I told him Rashi's explanation on the verse (Divrei Hayamim II, 33:15), "He removed the strange gods and the image from the Temple of Hashem and all the altars that he had built on the Mountain of the Temple of Hashem and in Yerushalayim, discarding them outside the city". Menashe sinned, and also caused the public to sin, by serving avodah zara, but later repented. However, instead of smashing the idols to smithereens, he threw them behind the wall of Yerushalayim. It could be that he did not break them because they were expensive and he felt bad about the financial loss. But Rashi explains that the fact that he did not smash them is why his son and successor returned to his father's evil ways, brought back all those strange gods and worshipped them. Had Menashe smashed the idols, his son might not have purchased new ones to worship, but since they were available behind the wall, he returned to his father's avodah zara.

Kiddush Hashem means completely renouncing one's personal desires and despite the difficulty and financial loss involved, bowing only to Hashem's wish. Just like someone might spend a large sum on purchasing a beautiful Etrog or to buy the honors in the Beit Knesset, so too must he eradicate the evil that dwells in his pocket and home, even if they were very expensive devices and it will involve a great loss, for in this way he demonstrates his great love for Hashem and no amount of money can withstand this love.

An Avreich who sits and studies Torah the entire day also publicly sanctifies Hashem's Name, for every person wishes to provide for his family in a respectable manner. He dreams of purchasing different objects that make life easier, for example, a nice car, a beautiful home, and many other pleasures with which this World is inundated. However, he forgoes his desires for Hashem's sake and makes do with little just so that he can do His will and sit in Yeshiva or Kollel and study Torah day and night. There is no greater Kiddush Hashem than this! Even if all this is done privately, Hashem sees his deeds and considers him as His near one.

Similarly, a wife who demonstrates self-sacrifice by encouraging her husband to continue devoting himself to Torah study and the service of Hashem, receives a great reward in Heaven and she too will be considered as His near one.

Every person who arrives in the World of Truth desires only to come as close as he can to Hashem and enjoy the Glory of His Presence. But Hashem only draws close those who annulled their will and performed His will, for it is he alone who is considered as truly close to Him.



## Walking in their Ways

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

### A Contribution to the Creator

Many Jews from around the world came to celebrate the wedding of my son, Rabbi Moshe Aharon, shlita, which took place in Eretz Yisrael. Among the attendees was the eminent philanthropist, Mr. Matzliach. He generously supports our holy institutions and donated a beautiful Sefer Torah to our Beit Hakeneset in Ashdod, written by the former Rav of the community, Rabbi Yosef Yakobi, zt"l.

The day after the wedding, Mr. Matzliach asked to meet with Rabbi Yakobi who had written the Sefer Torah he had donated. To my regret, I informed him that Rabbi Yakobi had suddenly passed away.

The man was in shock. "Rabbi Yakobi was young and looked healthy. How could it be that he died so suddenly?"

I replied, "Listen to the words you just uttered. About this it says, 'and the living should take it to heart'. You are a businessman whose head is constantly involved in material matters and you could be in danger of forgetting Hashem, chas v'shalom, by regarding This World as the primary place of life.

"Hashem therefore sent you this message as a wake-up call. The sudden, tragic passing of this great man should teach you that this world is transient. Nobody lives forever."

My words entered his heart and he asked what he could do to keep this powerful message alive within him. I replied that he should undertake some commitment that would advance him spiritually.

"I will donate a sizeable sum to charity," he offered.

I was happy with his generosity but told him that he gives tzedakah in any event and thank G-d he is a man of means who is generous with his money.

Now was the time to undertake an additional mitzvah through which he would merit further closeness with his Creator.

## The Haftarah

"David again gathered" (Shmuel II, 6)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah tells about the death of Uzzah who was punished for reaching out and grasping the holy Aron, whereas the Parsha speaks about the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Ahron Hakohen, who died when approaching before Hashem.

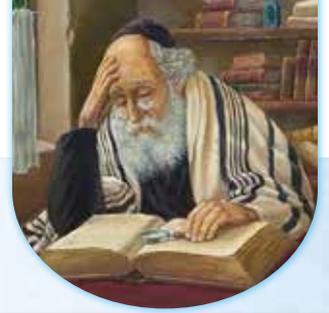
## Guard Your Tongue

### Lashon Hara in Subtext

One of the forms of 'avak lashon hara' can be caused precisely due to caution in guarding one's tongue. If a person says that he doesn't want to say lashon hara about someone, these words can imply that he is aware of something derogatory about him.

To say "I would prefer not to speak about so and so" is forbidden because of 'avak lashon hara'.

When a person is faced with this kind of situation, he must try to direct the conversation to a different topic or hint that he does not have any information about the person in question.



## In Our Father's Path

### So What if I am Sensitive to Certain Medications?

The entire creation, so Chazal tell us, was created as a corresponding system to the Holy Torah and the fulfillment of its mitzvot. "He looked in the Torah and created the world" (Zohar HaKadosh, Terumah). Therefore, the way we conduct ourselves in This World is supposed to be derived from the Torah. It is the Torah that guides and navigates us how to consider each part of the creation in the correct, purposeful and true way. This is why only the Sages and Gedolei Yisrael, who are well-versed in the Torah, possess the power through their crystal clear vision, to decide that right is right and left is left.

Only they, who draw their entire outlook in life from the Torah, are capable of discerning the difference between 'kalah ilan' (the color blue derived from a vegetable source) and the very similar color, light blue; between something permissible and something to stay away from. For through the wisdom of the Torah, they enjoy a vibrantly clear vision of the entire gamut of the creation. It is the window through which they merit a penetrating, deep, untainted and pure understanding of everything in their line of vision.

HaGaon Rabbi Yisrael Zicherman shlita, relates that he heard the following from one of the doctors who attended the tzadik, Rabbi Dov Yaffe zt"l, Mashgiach of Yeshivas 'Kfar Chassidim' when he was hospitalized towards the end of his life. One day the doctor wished to give Rabbi Yaffe a certain medication and first asked him, as he was accustomed to doing, if he is sensitive to any kind of medication and which medications he is taking at present.

The Mashgiach turned to the doctor with a smile, "What difference does it make? If you want to give me a certain medication, what difference does it make if I am sensitive to a different medication, or what else I am taking besides this medication?"

The doctor answered the Mashgiach at length: "Look, before prescribing any medication for a pa-

tient, one is required to take the patient's entire condition into account. Sometimes combining a medication from a certain group can impair the effect of a different medication. Sometimes one medication might be beneficial for the heart but in certain situations, might damage the kidneys, or on the other hand, a medication that aids liver function might sometimes cause damage to the intestines. Every medication has its own calculations and factors that must be taken into account and therefore on no account may one give a patient a certain medication without clarifying his entire situation."

When the doctor left his room, the Mashgiach turned to his visitors and said, "Did you hear how medication is prescribed? When giving medication to a patient, it is important to get the full picture. This is a great lesson for our Avodat Hashem!"

"For example", the Mashgiach continued, "concerning rebuke. Even when the Torah deems it is necessary to rebuke someone, there are those who rebuke harshly, in an outburst of anger, without meticulously taking into account the range of problems that the rebuke may cause the offender, or without being aware of his general spiritual situation, of the gain versus the loss."

"The doctor taught us today that first of all, before offering rebuke, one must assess and examine thoroughly, what are his sensitivities? What is his general situation? It is not certain at all that one may admonish him. Sometimes, not only will it not help, but it will even cause damage, and for this one needs the discretion and knowledge of a professional doctor".

Rav Zicherman shlita concluded, "This idea can also be applied to the concept of 'emunat chachamim':

Woe to the naive patient, who lacks a basic understanding of the nature of various illnesses and their healing, if he relies on his own understanding and contrary to the doctor's opinion, pulls out some kind of medication from his supplies that he deems suitable to bring him relief. His decision might exacerbate his condition and even bring about his death, G-d forbid.

Every thinking person knows that only a doctor who specialized in medicine for many years, studied the essence of each illness in depth, is familiar with the nature of medications and their ramifications, besides having a comprehensive view of the patient's entire situation, is competent to decide which specific medication will be beneficial for which illness and the exact dose each patient requires.

This must be our approach towards the Torah sages and Elders of the generation".



## Pearls of the Parsha

### The Death of Tzadikim Hints to Future Happenings

*"And He will become wrathful with the entire assembly" (Vayikra 10:6)*

The Hebrew word 'יקצוף', He will become wrathful, is written in the future tense but since Nadav and Avihu had already died, it would seem more fitting to have said "And He became wrathful with the entire assembly", in the past tense.

The sefer 'Eidut Biheyosef' (256) offers a wonderful explanation, quoting the famous words of Rabbi Heschel of Cracow who explains that there are two reasons why tzadikim die. One reason is so they should not see the troubles of the generation and a second reason is to atone for the generation. The difference between the two is that according to the first reason, all the tzadikim would need to die, while according to the second reason, to achieve atonement it is enough that just one tzadik dies.

This explains wonderfully that as in this case both Nadav and Avihu died and not just one tzadik, it seemingly proves the reason that tzadikim die is so that they should not witness the suffering of the generation. Am Yisrael derived from this that some imminent tribulation would befall them, and that is why the verse uses the future expression "He will become wrathful with the entire assembly".

### Creatures That May Not Be Eaten, As a Stringency

*"To distinguish between the contaminated and the pure, and between edible creatures and creatures that may not be eaten" (Vayikra 11:47)*

A precise look at the wording of the verse gives rise to the following question: Should it not have said "between edible creatures and inedible creatures"? Why in fact does the verse end with the words "that may not be eaten" that seems to imply that the person is prevented from eating it?

Rabbi Chaim Ya'akov Gottlieb zt"l answers this question in his sefer 'Yagel Ya'akov', according to the disagreement among the Rishonim concerning a fish called 'brobota'. According to several Rishonim, even though this fish loses its scales when it leaves the water, nevertheless since it has scales when in the water, it is considered as a pure creature.

However, Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid says that even though it is a permitted fish, one who consumes it will not merit eating from the livyasan. He writes that Rabbeinu Ephraim at first permitted this fish but after he was told in a dream that he was permitting vermin, he withdrew his ruling and forbade it, declaring that anyone who desists from eating this fish will merit being showered with blessings.

It follows that even those who forbade eating the fish only forbade it as a stringency (chumra).

This Gemara can be used to clarify the intention of the above verse. "The edible creatures", refers to those creatures that are permitted according to the Torah, while "and creatures that may not be eaten", refers to creatures that are forbidden according to the Torah. Saying "may not be eaten" in place of "inedible" hints to the fact that there is a type of fish, like the 'brobota', that is permitted according to the Torah, however it is considered as "may not be eaten" by man, in line with the stringency of Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid and Rabbeinu Ephraim. This is why the verse ends by saying "and the creature that may not be eaten".

### A Wonderful Segulah to be Blessed with Boys

*"To distinguish between the contaminated and the pure" (Vayikra 11:47)*

This is the closing verse of Parshat Shemini, adjacent to the following Parsha of Tazria where it says "When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male".

Why is this verse adjacent to Parshat Tazria?

The Gemara (Shevuot 18b) reveals the reason why they are put next to each other and the auspicious significance that we can derive from it. This is what the Gemara says:

"Rabbi Chiya bar Abba says, Rabbi Yochanan said: Anyone who makes Havdalah over wine on Motzei Shabbat will merit male children, as it says "to distinguish (להבדיל) between the contaminated and the pure" which is followed by "when a woman conceives and gives birth to a male".

Here we have an assured segulah from our Holy Chazal, that one who requires salvation to be blessed with male children, should make Havdalah over a cup of wine on Motzei Shabbat and through that, with Hashem's help, he will merit the salvation he awaits.

## Treasures

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



### The Rectification Will Come from Crying and Repentance

*"The entire House of Israel shall bewail the conflagration that Hashem ignited" (Vayikra 10:6)*

Nadav and Avihu knew that on the day of the dedication of the Mishkan there would be enormous joy in Heaven and on earth. Joy in Heaven that Hashem actualized His desire to dwell with His children down below as it says (Shemot 25:8), "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them", and joy on earth since the descent of the Shechina was a sign for Am Yisrael that Hashem had forgiven them for the sin of the Golden Calf. Nadav and Avihu were concerned that maybe due to this joy, Bnei Yisrael would not rectify the impression caused by the sin of the Golden Calf that blemished both worlds, but will be satisfied with the feeling of joy that Hashem is descending to rest His Shechina among them.

They were apprehensive that if Bnei Yisrael would only be occupied with their joy and not vacate their attention to completely rectify the sin of the Golden Calf which caused the Shechina to depart, the same thing might happen once again if they do not utilize this day of the dedication of the Mishkan for rectification.

Nadav and Avihu fulfilled the verse, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting". They thought that it will be a good thing if they die on the day the Shechina descends so that Bnei Yisrael will cry over their death and through that, they will be aroused to repent and purify themselves completely from any trace of this or any other sin. As a result, Hashem will continue to rest His Presence among them.

Nadav and Avihu understood that through only the actual joy at the Shechina's descent, Bnei Yisrael will not achieve complete rectification; it will come about specifically through crying over their death, just as it is preferable to go to a house of mourning, for this will arouse them to search their souls and contemplate why Hashem had to remove His Presence from them, and ponder their role and purpose in This World.

Hashem agreed with Nadav and Avihu and therefore said (Vayikra 10:6), "The entire House of Israel shall bewail the conflagration that Hashem ignited" since Nadav and Avihu sacrificed their souls for Am Yisrael's sake and their death would be the catalyst for Am Yisrael's full repentance. In this merit, the Shechina will not hurry to depart.



## A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

### Why Did the Ice Cream Melt?

Concerning Kosher Nutrition and How it Benefits Us from a Torah Perspective

Kosher nutrition, the Holy Torah reveals to us, is the very key and magical formula for a person's success in his religious way of life. Food that is held up to a meticulous standard of kashrut, bolsters and fortifies, improves and advances. Food that is heaven forbid not kosher, food that is not fit to be eaten, spreads poison in a person's soul, contaminates his capacity to comprehend, stops up his mind and prevents it from developing.

This magical formula is guaranteed, as it were, with the signature of the most expert scientist on the planet, Who is aware of all the food products in the world and Who created all the different kinds of nutrition. Only the Creator of the World who conceived all of these and understands all of their ingredients, is aware of the results of research that will take the scientific world another few hundred years, at least, to discover. He has merited us with a Heavenly formula for advantageous nutrition that leads to improving the quality of our lives and attaining the peak of our aspirations in all spheres of life.

All those who are familiar with Jewish history are aware that it is saturated with thousands of stories of bravery of Jews sacrificing their lives for the sake of adhering to kashrut, even to the extent of self-starvation for lengthy periods of times, often under substandard conditions. This week's Novel Look at the Parsha is dedicated to the remarkable personality of HaGaon HaRav Avraham Ganchovsky zt"l about whom it is related ('Vayomer Hineni') that he ate meat and chicken only after being absolutely certain about all the halachic aspects. However, there were many years when for some reason, he was stringent and ate only vegetables, milk products, eggs and bread.

After washing his hands and reciting

the blessing over bread, he first ate the bread with great meticulousness and concentration (just as we are instructed to consume the first kezayit of bread within two minutes) and after that, it is hard to know whether this was due to his concentration on Torah thoughts that he had no idea what he was putting into his mouth, or because he had lost all taste in food, however it seemed to the onlooker that he was engaged in hidden and sublime service while eating. If for example, he would be given a tray with slices of bread, a lump of butter, salad, jam, cheese, milk, water and sugar, he ate in order of what appeared on the tray. He ate the cheese, then put the lump of butter into his mouth. After swallowing it he ate the vegetable salad and then the jam, just like that, one food after another, sweet or spicy, with patience, pleasantness, and simplicity. For what difference does it make how the vitamins enter the body...

He ate without acts of abstention and external acts of devotion. Even during the Shabbat meals, he did not eat like one who enjoys his food but only in honor of the Shabbat, without paying any attention to the particulars of the food. (Nevertheless, he would praise the Rabbanit again and again, "The food is so good, gives me strength", "absolutely wonderful", and other expressions from the depth of his heart.)

In addition, a close talmid testifies: I was his chavruta for about four years and often at lunchtime they brought him hot food but he never ate the food while it was hot. It appeared as if this was not deliberate, but simply because he was always in the middle of a Maharsha or Rashba and did not want to interrupt his learning, so automatically the food grew cold. But it could very well be that this involved some halachic stringency or a form of breaking his temptation for food etc., and it was always his way to hide his holy conduct.

One of his talmidim related: I once noticed that at the side of the table there was some food left over from yesterday's lunch. I tidied the table and of course, threw yesterday's leftovers in the garbage. When the Rav entered the dining room he asked, "Where is the portion of food that was here?" I was surprised that the Rav was showing an interest in food and inquired, "Why does the Rav need it?"

"Today is Rosh Chodesh and I saved this food from yesterday for a Rosh Chodesh meal!" I apologized and helped him get hold of different food in honor of Rosh Chodesh...

Since he was accustomed to eating an additional dish in honor of Rosh Chodesh, he would go to the store to buy something. He took whatever he noticed on the shelf or whatever the store owner suggested. In his later years, he drank wine in honor of Rosh Chodesh. The story is told that once he was in a rush and the store owner suggested that he buy ice cream. He took it, paid, placed it on the table in his room and then went up to the Beit Midrash to learn and forgot about the world around him. Just before sunset, he remembered that he had not yet eaten the special dish in honor of Rosh Chodesh, so he quickly went down to his room and of course found the ice cream melted on his table...

Another time he specifically delayed eating the ice cream so that it should melt... It was when a spirited Avreich suggested that he eat ice cream in honor of Rosh Chodesh. In his modesty, he did not make a big deal out of this request and agreed with his characteristic naturalness. The Avreich brought him a portion of ice cream on a plate and then Rabbi Avraham began a fascinating Halachic discussion about the blessing one recites over ice cream; what ice cream is made from and how the ingredients have an effect on the correct blessing. The Avreich delved into the subject together with him and eventually when they concluded their discussion, the ice cream had melted and that is how he ate it from the plate, praising the Avreich warmly for the special ice cream...

Incidentally, his acquaintances and family members never heard him using the word 'tasty'. He would only use words such as 'good', 'special', 'healthy', 'fortifying', 'excellent' and other similar expressions. His holy conduct was amazingly attuned to his Torah way of life where he was particular not only about the kashrut of the foods and different stringencies but also conducted himself with behaviors through which he suppressed his temptations and pure enjoyment of food, which he dedicated instead to his service of Hashem with exceptional integrity and wisdom.



# MEOROS HATZADDIKIM

— Lights Of Our Righteous —



## *Parshas Shemini*

**This is what Hashem commanded you to do...**

Rav Mordechai cites a *Midrash* that was cited by the *Ohr haChaim baKadosh*, that tells us that our *pasuk* refers to removing and expunging the *yetzer hara* from our midst.

Now it is known that in the Heavens above there are 12 gates corresponding to the twelve tribes and that each and every one of us has a root soul that is connected to one tribe and one particular gate of those twelve. Our prayers and *tefillos* ascend heavenward and on High they enter through the proper corresponding gate.

This is why some *tzaddikim* davened with a particular *nusach baTeffila*, whereas others davened with a completely different *nusach*, as is known that there are various texts and editions of the *nusach baTefillah* that differ from one another. The reason for these differences among the rites and rituals is based on the explanation given above that each *tzaddik* has his corresponding gate that pertains to his individual root soul or *shoresh neshama*, and therefore there is no contradiction as to why one *tzaddik* davens one way while another davens a different way with different *nuschoas* and with different texts.

The same rule applies to the various customs and *minbagim*. We find among us that each and every custom and minhag has its source and they are all equally valid and non-contradictory. By adhering to and following our *minbagim*, our *avodah* is acceptable before the Creator and there are many true valid paths that reach the same Place – *HaMakom*.

The question is how do we discover and find out what is our *shoresh neshama*? How do we know where we belong and from where our root soul comes from? The holy *seforim* teach us, that we all have to follow our family traditions and the customs that have been passed down to us from generation to generation from our holy forebears, our *rebbe*s and ancestors. Surely *Hashem* saw to it using *Hashgacha* and Providence that our *shorashim* of our *neshomos* correspond to our physical parents and ancestors that we were born into - this particular family with that particular lineage and history with traditions and customs that fit our souls. Therefore, a person should be careful and wary before changing customs and changing what he has inherited and has been passed down to him from his parents and forebears. This pertains to the *nusach* text of the rites of prayers that we follow the custom and *nusach* of our ancestors.



The *seforim* do mention that those who have no known tradition and do not know what their ancestor's customs were, should in such a case *daven nusach Arizal* - which corresponds to the thirteenth gate which covers all the other twelve. The primary way is to follow our forefathers and hold fast to family tradition and *daven* like our parents and ancestors and *rebbs* did, because we each have our individual corresponding gate in Heaven.

Now, it is furthermore well-known that when the evil *yetzer hara* seeks to distance us from *Hashem*, he begins to persuade us to cancel and ignore the customs and *minbagim* - which may seem to us as annoying petty details. This further distances us, so therefore, remember that it is a very important principle to adhere and hold fast to family traditions: the *minbagim* of our *rebbs* and parents.

Rav Mordechai illustrated this with a story:

The Apta Rav, author of *Ohev Yisroel* once arrived in a town where the chief rabbi was the author of the *Baruch Ta'am*, Rav Frankel Teomim. In that locale, there was an enactment that any *shochet* who wishes to slaughter kosher meat must present his knife to the *rav* for inspection. Because the Apta Rav, the *Ohev Yisroel* had many *chumros* - various strictures and stringencies, therefore, everywhere he went he took along with him a personal *shochet*, and his own personal slaughterer would see to it that everything was in order and that all his *chumros* and guidelines were adhered to as best as could be. However, here in this town the *shochet* was required to present his knife for inspection before the *rav*, the *Baruch Ta'am* and he ruled that it had thirteen imperfections and nicks and he invalidated the knife! The Apta Rav heard this and remarked: "In truth that knife was sharp and smooth and had not a single nick or blemish! However, the archangel *Matat* arrived and made it appear as if the knife was nicked and blemished dull, because if the knife would have been as sharp as it always was then the *Baruch Ta'am* would have been amazed and impressed and then he would also have accepted upon himself my strictures and stringencies as well. However, Heaven saw to it that he should not change his customs and not deviate from his *minbagim*. (Furthermore, the *Baruch Ta'am* was not a member of the *chassidic* movement, and if the knife would have been found to be sharp and kosher, perhaps the *Baruch Ta'am* would have been persuaded to follow the ways of the *Ohev Yisroel*, seeing as to how careful and meticulous he was and how *machmir* the *chassidim* are). Therefore, *Hashem* caused it to be that the knife should appear nicked damaged and blemished."

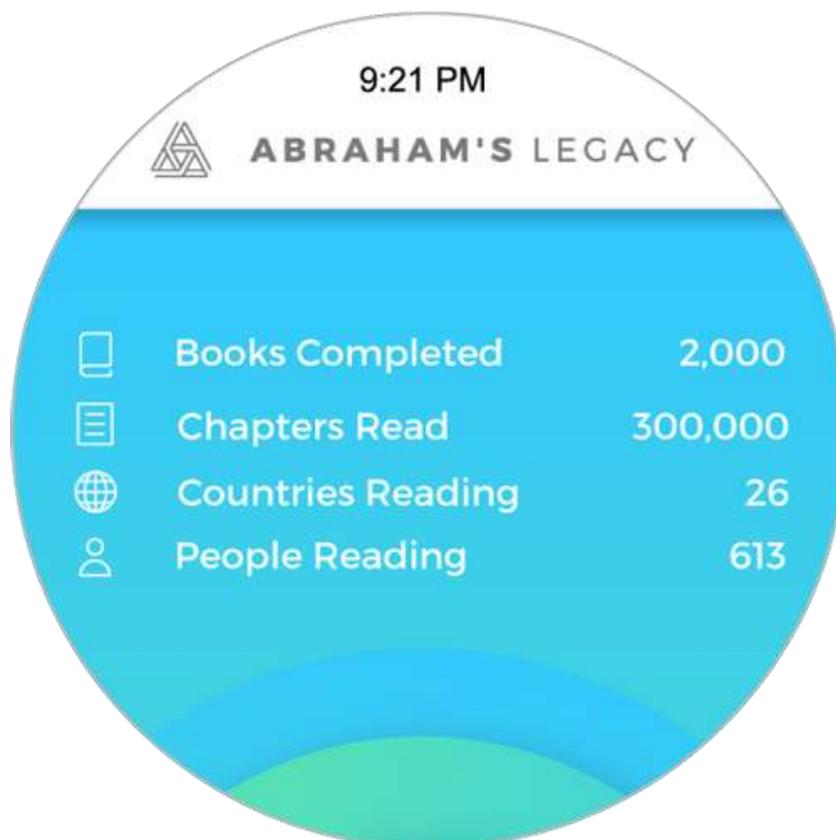
The lesson learned is, that surely each one of us should hold fast and strong to our own *minbagim* and customs of our forefathers and *rebbeim*. And not to change anything, Heaven forbid, and rather we should desire to reach the ways of our forefathers - wishing we could follow in their footsteps as the *seforim* explain that when we say - would that my deeds could touch those of my forebears. The word used is *Yegiah* - to reach or touch, and what we mean is even a *negia be'alma*, even just a slight touch would be great as surely we do not imagine ourselves to be on their level or to ever succeed in reaching their stature and *madreigos*.

This is why our *pasuk* says - *zeh ha'davar* - this is the matter - the word *zeh* (*Zayin*=7; *Hay*=5; together they equal 12) hints at the twelve gates - that *Hashem* commanded us to do and fulfill - this refers to how we should conduct ourselves - each going in our traditions and customs as we learned from our forefathers and *rebbs*. As the *Midrash* cited above says that the *yetzer hara* must be expunged from our midst, that refers to evil in our hearts that attempts to get us to swerve from our ancestral paths and ignore our cherished *minbagim* and traditions, so that we Heaven forbid distance ourselves from *avodas Hashem*. As the *Chasam Sofer* said, that the so called enlightenment in Berlin began with mockery, when they belittled and mocked the *minbagim* and traditions of *Am Yisroel*, and if we continue in the ways of our fathers, we shall merit to draw close to *avodas Hashem, Amen*.



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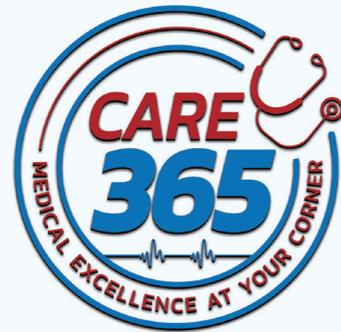


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