

ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

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A Tzaddik, or righteous person, makes everyone else appear righteous before Hashem by advocating for them and finding their merits.

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

❧ BEREISHIS ❧

❧ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❧

Truth and Wisdom

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

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

Bas Eini. What better place could there be for a young *Torah* prodigy such as Rav Levi Yitzchok than Levertov?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"*Aleichem sholom*," the man replied.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I'm from Lizhensk."

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

"Yes."

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

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

"And who is your *Rebbe*?"

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

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

"My *Rebbe*'s greatness in *Torah* has no bounds. The entire world is open before him,

and when he speaks, I catch glimpses of the ultimate truth of the universe.”

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

“I’m sure he would,” said Rav Meilech.

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

The attendant who opened the door solemnly shook their hands. He nodded familiarly to Rav Meilech and asked both of them to wait. It would be a few minutes before the *Maggid* could see them. Other than that, they did not speak. The attendant did not ask who Rav Uziel was. As they waited, Rav Uziel saw that Rav Meilech grew more excited by the minute, and he too felt his breath quicken with anticipation.

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

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

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

“*Aleichem sholom*,” he finally managed to say.

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

“*Ryczywohl*.”

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

“Yes, I do.”

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

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

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

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

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

“Indeed?” said the *Maggid*. “I would like to hear more about this. Do you happen to

recall any of these *derashos* that you refuted?"

"Yes, I do."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Dvar Torah

When *Hashem* considered the enterprise of creation, the *Medrash* tells us, the Divine aspect of Truth objected. So what did *Hashem* do? He took Truth and hurled it to the earth, as it is written (*Tehillim* 85:12): "Truth will sprout from the earth".

What is this *Medrash* telling us? What was Truth's objection and how did *Hashem's* action address the objection? What is the meaning of *Hashem* hurling Truth to the earth?

The mission of a person in this world, explains Rav Levi Yitzchok, is to be a seeker of truth. He should try to discern the ultimate purpose of his existence and avoid being distracted from this quest by the demands of everyday life. He should try to distinguish that which is true and meaningful in life from that which is false and illusory.

The Divine aspect of Truth objected to creation, because it was almost inevitable that humankind would be distracted by the needs and rewards of material existence and would thereby be deflected from the quest for truth. Instead of drawing closer to *Hashem*, humankind would drift further and further away from Him.

Hashem considered this a valid objection, and He responded by hurling Truth to the earth. In other words, He implanted the need for Truth in the selfsame material world that threatened to be a distraction. He made it that all relationships required truthfulness. A person would not be able to conduct a solid relationship with his spouse, his children, his friends or his business associates if he were known to be a liar; of course, he could still lie and conceal his duplicity, but that would prove a difficult task. Therefore, in order to function in society people would need to condition themselves to be truthful. Once they developed within themselves a healthy respect for the truth, they could be truthful with themselves and embark on the quest for the ultimate truths in life.



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

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

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

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

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

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

Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

[תפילה הנמצאת בספר אלה המגן מבעל הפלא יועץ על פרשת ויצא עמוד כ"ד]
הריני מדליק נר זה למנוחת ולעילוי נשמת אבי / אמי מורתי / הצדיק _____
בן/בת _____, יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שתקבל ברחמים
וברצון כל מעשה הטוב שאני עושה, בין במחשבה, בין בדיבור, בין במעשה ויהיה הכל
לזכות ולמנוחת ולעילוי לנשמות עמך ישראל, ובפרט לנפש רוח ונשמה של אבי / אמי /
צדיק _____. יהי רצון שתהינה נפשותיהם צרורות בצרור החיים.

Translation:

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

See more at: www.yeshshem.com/hilulah.htm



❧ GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER ❧



YAHREZITS FOR BEGINING SHABBOS BEREISHIS

http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrtzeits/Tishrei/Cheshvan

Biographical information and yahrzeits compiled by Reb Manny Saltiel and www.anshe.org

* 29th of Tishrei ~ Begins Friday Night (Oct 16th)

* **Shimon HaTzaddik** of the *Anshei Knesses HaGedola*, [*Hamodia* 2005: 711 BCE], (313 BCE);

* **Rav Menachem Mendel** of Vizhnitz (1830-1885), author of *Tzemach Tzedek*. Named for his grandfather, Rav Menachem Mendel Hager of Kossov (1768-1825), founder of the Vizhnitz dynasty. Born to Rav Chaim of Kossov, who betrothed him to Miriam, daughter of Rav Yisrael of Rizhin, when his son was only six years old. The wedding took place in 1844. In 1854, he moved to Vizhnitz, a small town at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, thirty miles from the Romanian border. Shortly thereafter, his father was *niftar*. He assumed the mantle of Vizhnitz when he was only twenty-four. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Boruch, (5646/1885);

* **Rav Akiva Glasner**. A descendant of the *Chasam Sofer* and of Rav Akiva Eiger, Rav Glasner succeeded his father, Rav Moshe Shmuel Glasner, as Chief *Rav* of Klausenberg, Rumania, in 1922, and served there until the deportation of the Jews in 1944. He was deported to Bergen-Belsen, but was saved from there on the famous "Kasztner train". (Rudolf Kasztner was a non-religious Hungarian Zionist who struck a deal with Adolf Eichmann to save some 1,700 Jews in exchange for trucks. Years later, an Orthodox Israeli journalist accused Kasztner of acting improperly, and Kasztner sued for libel. After a celebrated trial, Kasztner lost. He was exonerated on appeal, but only posthumously, having been murdered in 1957. Among those saved by Kasztner was Rav Yoel Teitelbaum, the Satmar *Rebbe*. After the War, Rav Glasner lived in Zurich until his death at age seventy-one. His works include *Dor Dorim* and *Ikvei HaTzon*, (5717/1956);

* **Rav Shmuel Tzvi Danziger**, Alexander *Rebbe*. The son of Rav Yechiel Danziger and brother of Rav Yerachmiel Yisrael Yitzchok Danziger (1853-1910). Rav Shmuel authored *Tiferes Shmuel*. His son, Rav Yitzchok Menachem Mendel Danziger (1880-1943; author of *Akeidas Yitzchok*), succeeded him as *Rebbe*, (5684/1923).

* 30th of Tishrei ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Oct 17th)

* **Rav Tzvi Hirsh Chayos**, the *Maharatz Chayos*, *Rav* of Zolkov (1805-1855). Born in Brody to Rav Meir Chayos. He was a descendant of Rav Yitzchok Chayos, the *Zera Yitzchok*. The family could trace their lineage back to Dovid *HaMelech*. He received

semicha at the age of twenty-one from Rav Ephraim Zalman Margulies, *Rav* of Brody. Two years later, he was appointed *Rav* of Zolokova. In 1854, he became *Rav* of Kalisch. He was the author of *Sheilos U'Teshuvos Maharatz*, *Ateres Tzvi*, and *Divrei Horo'a*. His thoughts on *Shas* are printed in the back of *Gemoros* used today. Rav Tzvi Hirsch's son, Rav Yitzchok, was the *mechaber* of the *sefer Siach Yitzchok* on *Maseches Makkos*, (5616/1855);

✱ **Rav Moshe** from Shershov, (5587/1826);

✱ **Rav Avrohom Dovid Wahrman** of Butchatch (1771-1840). Born in Nadvorna, Galicia (today, in the Ukraine). In addition to learning with his father, Avrohom Dovid also studied under his uncle Rav Yehoshua Charif. At age ten, Avrohom Dovid became engaged to the daughter of Rav Tzvi Hirsch Kara of Butchatch, and he moved to that town to study under his future father-in-law. Beginning in 1791, Rav Avrohom Dovid served as *Rav* of Yazlowitz for twenty-four years. In 1814, Rav Tzvi Hirsch Kara died, and Rav Avrohom Dovid was offered the rabbinate of Butchatch in his place. It was there that he spent the remainder of his days. His best-known works are *Da'as Kedoshim* on parts of *Shulchon Aruch Yoreh De'ah*, and *Eishel Avrohom* on *Shulchon Aruch Orach Chaim*. The latter work is printed in the back of standard editions of the *Shulchon Aruch*. [Yated 2005 notes that Avrohom Oppenheim, author of *Aishel Avrohom* on *Shulchan Aruch*, was *niftar* on the 10th of *Cheshvan*], (5601/1840).

✱ **1st of Cheshvan ~ Begins Sunday Night (Oct 19th)**

✱ **Rav Yosef Engel**, *Rav* of Cracow and Vienna (1859-1919). Born in Austrian Poland, his *Rebbe* refused to teach him any longer when he reached the age of twelve, and between that age and his marriage at nineteen, he wrote eleven *seforim*. Among his *seforim* were *Gilyonei HaShas*, *Shiv'im Ponim LaTorah Lekach Tov*, *Asvan D'Oraysa*, and *Bais HaOtzar*, a Talmudic encyclopedia. His only child, Miriam, married the heir to the leadership of the Kotzker *Chassidim*, but he abdicated that position in order to remain near his father-in-law, Rav Yosef. At age forty-six, Rav Yosef left his wealthy father-in-law's home and, for the first time, had to seek a living. He found a position as one of several rabbinical judges in Cracow. During World War I, Rav Yosef fled with hundreds of other *Rabbonim* to Vienna, where he died, (5680/1919);

✱ **Rav Yisrael Shapira** (Spira), the Bluzhover *Rebbe* (1890-1989). A grandson of the *Bnei Yissoschor*, Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov. His *Divrei Torah* on the *parshos* and *Yomim Tovim* were published by his *talmidim* in the *sefer Shufra D'Yisrael* in 2007, (5750/1989);

✱ **Rav Yissochor Dov Ber**, the Velbrozher *Rebbe*, author of *Avodas Yissochor*, (5638/1877);

✱ **Rav Akiva Meir**, Velbrozher *Rebbe*, the *Divrei Ho'om*, son of the *Avodas Yissochor*, (5679/1918);

✱ **Rav Shmuel di Modena**, the *Maharashdam*, [2nd of *Cheshvan*, according to *Yated* 2006], (5306/1545).

➤ **2nd of Cheshvan ~ Begins Monday Night (Oct 20th)**

✱ **Rav Boruch Hager**, the Seret-Vizhnitz *Rebbe*, the *Mekor Boruch* (1895-1963). Born to Rav Yisrael of Vizhnitz and Rebbetzin Hinda, a daughter of Rav Meir Horowitz of Dzikov, Rav Boruch was named after his grandfather, the *Imrei Boruch* of Vizhnitz, who had passed away two years earlier. In 1912, Rav Boruch married Henia, a daughter of Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz. He married a second time, to Tzyril, a daughter of Rav Eliezer Nisan of Dzikov/Tsfas, in 1923. He then became *Rav* of Polein-Riskova, following which he served as the *Rav* of Kotzman, Romania, for nine years. He established a *Talmud Torah*, a

Bais Yaakov school and worked extensively for *Agudas Yisrael*. In 1935, Rav Boruch moved to Seret, a Romanian town of about two thousand Jews. The *Ahavas Yisrael* passed away soon afterward and Rav Boruch became the *Admor* of Seret-Vizhnitz. It is estimated that of about 150,000 Romanian Jews exiled to Transnistria (including all those from Seret), some ninety thousand perished of hunger, cold and persecution. Rav Boruch was ransomed for a huge sum in *Adar* of 1944 and made his way back to Romania. He finally moved to Antwerp, Belgium, in 1946, together with his brother, the *Imrei Chaim*, and they stayed there for close to a year. He arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* in *Sivan* 1947, and left for Haifa where he set up his court. There Rav Boruch established a *Yeshiva*, a *Talmud Torah* and other *Torah* institutions. This laid the groundwork for the establishment of the famous community of Ramat Vizhnitz, built on the side of Haifa's *Har Carmel*, laying its foundation stone on the 3rd of *Tammuz*, 1954. Sadly, Rav Boruch passed away at the age of sixty-eight before the culmination of his building project, (5724/1963);

- ✳ **Rav Elozor Simcha Wasserman.** The oldest son to his illustrious father, Rav Elchonon Wasserman, and a nephew of Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky, Rav Simcha learned at Novardok for several years, beginning shortly after his *bar mitzva*, under the *Alter* of Novardok. He was also very close to the *Chofetz Chaim*. After his last visit with him, his father sent him to Strasbourg, France, where he started a *Yeshiva* (at the time, the only *Yeshiva* in France). He stayed until 1938, when he moved to America. He first taught at *Torah Vodaas*, where he became close to Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz. He worked closely with Rav Aharon Kotler in the *Vaad Hatzalah* during World War II. In 1944, Rav Simcha established the *Bais Yehuda* Day School in Detroit, the first in Michigan, and appointed Rav Avrohom Abba Freedman as a *Rebbe*. Their first *Shavuos*, they were the only two to learn all night in the *Bais Medrash*. When Rav Simcha left in 1953, he left Rav Avrohom Abba, who stayed another fifty years. He then founded the West Coast Talmudic Seminary (WCTS), or *Ohr Elchonon* (named after his father) in Los Angeles. He asked *Chabad* to take over the building and school in 1977. In 1979, he and his *Rebbetzin* (daughter of the Novardok *Rav*, Rav Meir Abowitz) fulfilled a lifelong dream by moving to *Eretz Yisrael*. Together with Rav Moshe Chodosh, he established *Yeshiva Ohr Elchonon* in Yerushalayim. Rav Simcha and his *Rebbetzin* never had children, yet Rav Simcha was considered by many to be a leading authority on the subject of child-rearing, (5753/1992).

✳ 3rd of Cheshvan ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Oct 21st)

- ✳ **Rav Yisrael** of Ruzhin, (5611/1850);
- ✳ **Rav Yitzchok**, son of Rav Chaim of Volozhin, (5610/1849);
- ✳ **Rav Eliezer** of Dzikov, (5621/1860);
- ✳ **Rav Yosef Zundel** of Salant (Lithuania) (1786-1865), teacher of Rav Yisrael Salanter; learned under Rav Chaim of Volozhin. After Rav Chaim's *petira* in 1821, he would make trips to learn with Rav Akiva Eiger. Moved to *Eretz Yisrael* December 3, 1837. Father-in-law of Rav Shmuel Salant, (5626/1865);
- ✳ **Rav Yehuda Leib** of Kapust, (5627/1866);
- ✳ **Rav Eliyohu Horoshovsky**, *Rav* of Drohbitz and author of *Pnei Eliyohu* and *Ezor Eliyohu*, (5644/1883);
- ✳ **Rav Yitzchok Zelig Morgenstern**, the Sokolover *Rebbe* (1864-1939). Born in Kotzk, he was the great-grandson of the Kotzker *Rebbe*. Married at the age of eighteen, he became *Rav* of Sokolov, a town near Shedlitz, at the age of thirty. There he established the *Yeshiva Bais Yisrael*. In 1905, he succeeded his father as the *Rebbe* of Pilov. After a visit to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1924, he exhorted his followers to leave the Diaspora and settle the Land. After the outbreak of World War II, he moved to Otwock, a village outside Warsaw. His eldest

son, the *Rav* of Wengrov, was stabbed to death by the Germans, (5700/1939);

- ✳ **Rav Shabsi Sheftel Weill**, *Rav* of Simani, Hungary, (5704/1943);
- ✳ **Rav Mordechai Miller**, principal of Gateshead Seminary (1920-2000), one of the closest *talmidim* of Rav Eliyahu Dessler. Rav Miller held a postgraduate degree in law. He had a promising future in the professional world. His uncle had a law firm in London and with his great talents he would have been given a good position. But he gave it all up in order to spend his life *al haTorah ve'al ho'avoda*, (5761/2000);
- ✳ **Rav Avrohom Aba Zions** (1911-1995). Born in Brisk, Poland, his father passed away when Rav Aba was just nine years old. His mother would bring him to one of the *Talmidei Chachomim* in Brisk to have him tested every week. When Rav Aba was twelve years old, she sent him to learn at the *Yeshiva* of Rav Moshe Sokolovsky, author of the *Imrei Moshe*. Rav Aba was very close to the *Imrei Moshe* until the latter's *petira* in 1931, and he assisted with the publishing of the *Imrei Moshe's sefer* on *Maseches Beitza*, "*Melech Yom Tov*". After a few years, Rav Aba went to Kaminetz to learn under Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz. In or about the year 1936, Rav Aba returned to Brisk, starting a *Talmud Torah* there. Shortly after the outbreak of the war, Rav Aba escaped to Vilna. He was instrumental in the printing of Rav Boruch Ber's *sefer Bircas Shmuel*. From there he joined the *Mirrer Yeshiva bochurim* as they traveled to Kobe, Japan, and eventually to Shanghai, China. After the war, Rav Aba came to New York and accepted a position as *Rav* of Congregation *Knesses Yisrael* in the Bronx, where he served for twenty-eight years. In 1948, Rav Aba married Rivka Tellem, of Tavrig, Lithuania, whose family had settled in Newark, (5756/1995);
- ✳ **Rav Shimon Groner**, *Mashgiach*, *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin* (1932-2005), born in Brownsville, NY, to Rav Schneur Zalman and Fayga Rochel Groner. Rav Schneur Zalman was born in Yerushalayim, a scion of the well-known Grossman family, and was a *talmid* of *Yeshivas Eitz Chaim*. He passed away when Shimon was only fourteen. Rav Shimon went to Chaim Berlin, where the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Yitzchok Hutner, treated Shimon like a son. Rav Groner was married in 1959 to Nechama Dubba Fishbein and continued his learning in the *Kollel Gur Aryeh of Chaim Berlin*. He taught the seventh and ninth grades in *Yeshiva Ohr Yisrael* of Forest Hills and from there was called by Rav Hutner to help found the *Mesivta Chaim Berlin* in Flatbush. After four years, he became a *Maggid Shiur* in the *Bais Medrash*, and in 1978 was appointed *Mashgiach Ruchni*, a post he held for his remaining twenty-seven years, (5766/2005).

✧ 4th of Cheshvan ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Oct 22nd)

- ✳ **Rav Kalonimus Kalman Shapira**, *Piasetsna Rebbe*, author of *Chovas Hatalmidim* and *Aish Kodesh* (1889-1944);
- ✳ **Rav Aryeh Leib** [Aryeh Zev] ("Reb Leib") **Gurwitz**, *Rosh Yeshivas Gateshead*, author of *Roshei She'arim* (1982);
- ✳ **Rav Yaakov Yitzchak Dan Landa**, the *Strikover Rebbe*. The son of Rav Elimelech Menachem Mendel Landau, he was murdered by the Nazis (1943);
- ✳ **Rav Yoav Yehoshua Weingarten** of Kintzk, the *Chelkas Yoav* (1845-1923).

✳ 5th of Cheshvan ~ Begins Thursday (Oct 23rd)

- ✳ **Rav Tzvi Hirsch Kalisher**, (5635/1874);
- ✳ **Rav Moshe Birdogo**, son of Rav Avrohom. Rav Moshe resided in western Morocco and was known as the *Rosh Mashbir*, (5491/1730);
- ✳ **Rav Avrohom Rice**, pioneer of the Baltimore Jewish community and founder of one of the first Hebrew schools in the U.S., (5623/1862).

❧ 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

Shimon HaTzaddik, 29th Tishrei

In 3448, the Jewish people entered a time of great turbulence, both in the spiritual and material realms. Prophecy had come to a close, and Alexander the Great was conquering the known world. Fortunately, a great leader, Shimon *HaTzaddik*, deftly steered the people through uncharted waters. As *Kohen Godol* and head of the *Sanhedrin*, he embodied both religious and political power. (In the absence of the monarchy, the *Kohen Godol* represented the nation to the outside world. Previously, it was a purely religious office.) Indeed, he was so fair, just and beloved that Shimon was one of very few people to receive the appellation *HaTzaddik* – the Righteous – after his name.

The *Talmud* relates that five miracles occurred in the *Bais HaMikdosh* during his tenure. First, the red string that was hung in the *Bais HaMikdosh* during the *Yom Kippur* services turned white, symbolizing Yisrael's purity. Second, on *Yom Kippur* two sacrificial goats were designated: one to be offered in the *Kodesh HaKodoshim* (Holy of Holies), one to be cast off a cliff. The *Kohen Godol* drew lots with both hands to determine which goat should be used for which purpose. During Shimon *HaTzaddik*'s forty-year-tenure, the lot indicating the goat to be offered in the *Kodesh HaKodoshim* always turned up in his right hand, a sign of Divine favor. Third, every evening a full night's supply of

oil was put into each lamp of the *Menora*. Miraculously, the oil put into the western lamp burned for twenty-four hours, demonstrating the constant presence of *Hashem* in the *Bais HaMikdosh*. Fourth, although each *Kohen* received only a small portion of the *Lechem HaPonim* (the showbread), he felt satiated as if he had eaten a full meal. Fifth, the fire on the *Misbei'ach* (Altar) burned steadily without constant addition of wood. Sadly, after Shimon *HaTzaddik's* *petira* miracles of such magnitude were no longer manifest in the *Bais HaMikdosh*.



Alexander the Great

In 3448, Alexander marched through the *Eretz Yisrael*, bringing Persian rule to an end. Filled with trepidation, the Jews sent a delegation of *Kohanim* led by

Shimon *HaTzaddik*, all dressed in their priestly raiments. Upon approaching Alexander, they were astounded when the great conqueror prostrated himself before Shimon! When asked the reason for such inexplicable behavior, Alexander replied that before his battles a vision of Shimon appeared to him promising victory. After arising, Alexander promised to treat the Jews benignly. In appreciation, the Jewish people honored Alexander in two very special ways. First, all male *Kohanim* (according to some opinions, all male Jews) born that year would be named Alexander. Second, a new dating system for documents would be instituted, one based on Alexander's rule. This system was known as *Minyan Shtaros* and lasted more than a thousand years.

www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2833935/jewish/

Shimon-Hatzadik-Simeon-the-Just.htm



Rav Yisrael Freidman, 3rd of Cheshvan

The Heilige Rizhiner

As told to me by one of my great teachers, the Holy Sulitzer *Rebbe*, Rav Shmelka Rubin of Far Rockaway, New York.

During one of his travels, the *Heilige Rizhiner*, Rav Yisrael Freidman, was once challenged by two *Misnagdim* (opponents of *Chassidus*):

"It is very difficult for us to understand the ways of you so-called *Chassidim*. We arise well before daybreak and daven *Shacharis* at *netz* (sunrise). After we finish davening, we stay in the *shul*. Still wearing *tallis* and *tefillin*, we study *Mishnayos*.

"You so-called *Chassidim*, on the other hand, daven *Shacharis* late and then after your *tefilla*, you bring out *mezonos* and *bronfen* (cake and brandy) and sit together around the table eating, drinking

and singing and wishing each other '*L'Chayim*!' Everyone calls you people *Chassidim* ('pious ones') while we're labeled *Misnagdim*? It should be the other way around!"

The *gabbai* (attendant) of the *Heilige Rizhiner* could not restrain himself. He called out, "Of course! Your entire *Avodas Hashem* is performed with no heart, in such a cold, calculated, lifeless manner. It is no wonder that you study *Mishnayos* afterwards – in keeping with the *minhag* (custom) to study *Mishnayos* in memory of those who have passed away. We *Chassidim*—our davening and *Avodas Hashem* is alive! We are aflame and full of excitement! Well, doesn't a living man on fire need a '*L'Chayim*'—a sip of strong brandy to match his fiery devotion?!"

"I am sure you realize that he is

incorrect," said the *Heilige* Ruzhiner. The *Rebbe* continued, "I will explain the real reason for our way of davening and why we recite *berochos* and wish each other 'L'Chayim' after davening.

"Since the destruction of the *Bais HaMikdosh*, our *tefillos* take the place of the *korbonos* (sacrifices). When a person davenes before his Maker, the *yetzer hora* (evil inclination) wants nothing more than to confuse him and introduce all manner of foreign thoughts into his head. This causes the *korban* to be *pigul*, for a foreign thought renders a *korbon* ineligible for the *mizbei'ach* and ruins the chances of our *tefillos* succeeding. Then the *yetzer hora* prosecutes against these prayers and proves them unworthy of being answered or fulfilled. However, we *Chassidim* discovered a way to solve this problem, and battle against the *yetzer hara*.

"After davening, the *Chassidim* sit together, raise their glasses in a toast and wish each other 'L'Chayim,' while blessing one another with life, health, happiness, *parnossa*, *nachas*, children and much more. The *yetzer hora* sees them eating and drinking and concludes that they have finished davening and does not bother to prosecute them or their *tefillos* and *berochos*.

"*Tefilla* can be said in any language, and so, when *Yidden* come together and say 'L'Chayim' and they begin to bless one another from the depths of their hearts, the *yetzer hora* leaves them alone. At that point all their *tefillos* and *berochos* ascend On High and are immediately answered and accepted."

The mere mention of the word "Ruzhin" is enough to conjure up stories of fabulous wealth and undreamed-of treasures. Indeed, the *Rebbe* of Ruzhin was already a legend in his own lifetime. All of his personal belongings, even his everyday cutlery, were made of the most expensive materials. The buttons on his *bekeshes* were made of solid gold,

studded with diamonds, and his pillowcase was woven from pure gold thread. Even though the reasons for the *Rebbe's* conduct were not understood by most people, he was regarded as one of the greatest *Tzaddikim* of his time.

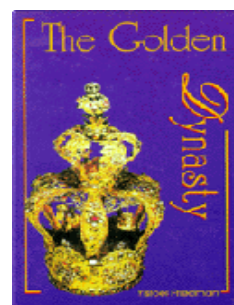
Many were the praises heaped on him by the *Gedolim* of his era: the *Szanzer Rav*, the *Divrei Chaim*, said he could testify that the *Rebbe* of Ruzhin was

constantly *moser nefesh* for *Hashem*, every second of the day. *Rav Moshe*

Kobrine exclaimed that even in the times of the *Tanno'im* and *Amor*

o'im the *Rebbe* would have been considered a special person and that even when he blinked his eyes it was only *lesheim shomayim*. The *Chiddushei HaRim* spent three weeks traveling to the *Rebbe* in order to speak to him, and he later declared that during the half hour they had spent together, the *Rebbe* had taken him through half the *Torah*! Similar sentiments were echoed by the *Apter Rav* who used to say that he had never seen anybody as well versed in the *Torah* as the *Ruzhiner*.

The *Rebbe* was born to *Rav Sholom*, the *Rebbe* of *Prohibisht* (who was a son of *Rav Avrohom HaMalach*, the son of the *Maggid* of *Mezeritch*) and his wife *Chava* a day after *Rosh HaShana* in the year 1797. Even before he was born they knew that their child was destined for greatness. When *Rebbetzin Chava* was pregnant she went to see the *Apter Rav* to ask for his *berocha*. He stood up for her as she came into the room, telling her that he was standing up for the *Sefer Torah* she was carrying inside her. As a small child his phenomenal level of *kedusha* was noticeable. When he was only a few years old he would often cry bitter tears but would refuse to disclose the reason for his crying. When his father told him that as a



father he had the right to decree that his son tell him the reason for his tears, he answered, "I am thinking to myself how many times I have lifted up my hands today *shelo lesheim shomayim* (not for the sake of Heaven)."

When Rav Yisrael was six years old he met Rav Shneur Zalman, the *Ba'al HaTanya*. Rav Shneur Zalman later related how deeply impressed he had been with a question the six-year-old child had asked him. The *Rebbe* had asked about an apparent contradiction in *Krias Shema*. When a person says the *pasuk* of *Shema Yisrael*, he must totally annul himself until he comes to appreciate that *Hashem* is One and that he and everything else cease to exist in comparison. If so, how is it immediately possible to fulfill the next *pasuk* of loving *Hashem*, having just totally annulled all personal feelings? In reply, the *Ba'al HaTanya* told him a very deep explanation which took a few hours to relate, and the *Rebbe* understood every word.



It was at this time that Rav Yisrael's father, Rav Sholom, was *niftar*, and he was succeeded by his eldest son, Rav Avrohom, who was just sixteen at the time. Rav Sholom was *niftar* on *Erev Sukkos* and the same night Rav Avrohom sat at the head of the table in his father's place. Among Rav Sholom's *Chassidim* were a few who were not so happy with the confident attitude of the new young *Rebbe*. They were not pleased that he had become *Rebbe* without first obtaining the *berocha* of elder *Tzaddikim*. Sensing their displeasure, Rav Avrohom related the following story.

There was once a king who spent a fortune building a new palace. When it was finished he invited his subjects to come and view the palace, promising a reward to anyone who could find a fault with any aspect of the new building and furnishings. Among the many experts who came to inspect the building was a simple villager.

The man looked at the beautiful rooms and saw a picture hanging on the wall of a drunken man walking in the street holding a cup of wine. The villager went straight to the king and told him that he had found a major fault with the drawing. In the picture the man was holding a full cup and that was an impossibility. A drunkard sways from side to side and the wine in the cup would certainly have spilled. In reality the cup could be no more than half full. The king agreed with him, rewarding him handsomely.

Pleased with his success, the man looked for more mistakes and soon proclaimed that he had found another fault, this time on a picture of the royal crown. The diamond did not suit the crown at all. This time, however, the king commanded his servants to punish the man for his insolence. The villager could not understand his crime and when he asked for an explanation the king said, "When it comes to a drunkard then you can offer your opinion, but how dare you, an uneducated man, offer an opinion about the royal crown?!"

At the age of seven, Rav Yisrael became engaged to the daughter of Rav Moshe, the *Rosh Yeshiva* of Berditchev. The Berditchever *Rov*, Rav Levi Yitzchok, came to the engagement. As he came into the room and saw the *chosson*, he lifted up his eyes and exclaimed, "*Hashem*, You haven't got many *chassonim* like him!"

When Rav Yisrael was thirteen years old the *chasuna* took place. When Rav Yisrael turned sixteen his older brother, Rav Avrohom, was *niftar*, leaving no children. He was then succeeded by Rav Yisrael. Despite his tender age, he immediately began to attract masses of followers. The famous *Chozeh* (Seer) of Lublin said that even though *Chazal* say a person does not achieve true understanding before he is forty years old, Rav Yisrael was an exception. Similar sentiments were also heard from Rav Uri of Strelisk. Before Rav Uri was *niftar* at the

age of seventy he instructed his *Chassidim* that after his *petira* they should adopt Rav Yisrael as their *Rebbe* even though he was then still in his twenties.

Not long after Rav Yisrael became *Rebbe*, the famous 'Ostilla Chasuna' took place. To this *chasuna* of two major dynasties came an estimated seventy thousand *Chassidim*, including dozens of great *Tzaddikim*. The oldest guest was the Apter Rav, the grandfather of the *chosson*. As such he sat at the head and was the center of attraction. When the Ruzhiner entered the hall, the Apter Rav called out, "Make way, make way." The Apter Rav's children did not find it fitting that their father should belittle himself so much, and told their father so. The Apter Rav ignored their pleas, telling them, "Do you know who is coming? The *Melech Yisrael* (King of Yisrael) is coming."

On another occasion, when Rav Yisrael's *gartel* fell on the floor, the Apter Rav picked it up and rewound it around Rav Yisrael's body, saying that he was fulfilling the mitzva of *gelilas Sefer Torah*. Stories such as these left a deep impression on the *Chassidim* and thousands began to flock to Prohibisht. The building where Rav Yisrael lived became too small and he moved to the town of Ruzhin, not far from Kiev in Russia, by the name of which he is known until today.

Wherever the *Rebbe* went crowds came to see him. The *Rebbe* traveled in a beautiful carriage drawn by four white horses. On one occasion, the *Rebbe* was asked how he keeps himself from having haughty thoughts when he sees the many people pushing to see him. The *Rebbe* answered the question with a *moshol*:

There was once a king who ruled over a country that was too big for him to control by himself. He therefore appointed a governor over each province. One day the king decided to visit one of his faraway

provinces that he had never been to before. When the king arrived he asked the governor to accompany him for a stroll through the main street of the area. As they walked down the street together, crowds began to push each other to get a better view of their governor. The king, however, was not recognized by anyone. In the commotion to see the governor, the king got pushed and shoved around along with everyone else. Can you imagine how embarrassed the governor must have been? His importance came only from the king; he must have felt terrible to see that the king was getting pushed around! "Similarly," ended the Ruzhiner, "when I see the way people try to honor me, I think to myself, 'If only they would honor *Hashem* like this as well,' and it makes me so upset that the idea of becoming haughty doesn't even occur to me!"

The *Rebbe* laid great emphasis on sanctifying his thoughts. He regarded it as one of the most important factors of a person's *madreiga* (spiritual level). He constantly exhorted his *Chassidim* to strive toward this *madreiga*. At the very least the first thoughts a person has when he wakes up in the morning should be about *Hashem*. These first pure thoughts then stand the person in good stead for the rest of the day, even while he is working or eating. The *Rebbe* himself testified that if he were left alone in a house without any *seforim* for one hundred years he would not forget about *Hashem* for even one second. Often, from his great *dveikus* to *Hashem*, he would go into a deep trance and remain so for hours at a time. His constant awareness of *Hashem's* presence was noticed by all. The famed *Tzaddik*, Rav Mordechai of Nadvorna, would say that if one wanted to see true fear of *Hashem*, one need only watch the conduct of the Ruzhiner: his knees would knock together with fright that he was standing in *Hashem's* presence.

One year, on *Rosh HaShana*, no

signal was received from the *Rebbe's* private room that he had finished davening *Shemone Esrei*. The *Rebbe's* eldest son, Rav Sholom Yosef, went into the room and saw that his father was still on the first page of *Shemone Esrei*. Rav Sholom Yosef turned the pages of the *machzor* for his father until the end of *davening*. Later the Ruzhiner explained what had happened. When he realized that he was standing in front of *Hashem*, he suddenly found himself so overcome with fear that he was unable to move even his arm –as if he had been paralyzed –and therefore was unable to turn over the pages of the *machzor* to continue *davening*.



Although from the outside it appeared that the *Rebbe* enjoyed all the comforts of this world, nothing could be further from the truth. In reality, the *Rebbe* afflicted himself terribly, denying his body even the basic necessities. This point is illustrated by the famous story of the *Rebbe's* boots. The *Rebbe* used to wear a magnificent pair of boots. It was rumored that even the Czar of Russia was jealous of these boots. Made of solid gold and studded with diamonds and other precious stones, they were the envy of all who beheld them. Once on a bitterly cold night the *Rebbe* went out in his boots to sanctify the New Moon. The *Rebbe* stood for a long time in the snow *davening*. When he left, the *Chassidim* noticed blood where he had been standing.

An investigation of the *Rebbe's* boots revealed that they had no soles. Every time the *Rebbe* wore them he was really walking barefoot and when he stood on the snow his feet became stuck to the icy ground, causing them to bleed when he left. When this story became known, even those people who had until then been opposed to his extravagant lifestyle, bowed their heads in deference, acknowledging that the *Rebbe's* every action was only for the sake of Heaven and not for his own pleasure.

The *Rebbe* would go for days on end without eating. On one occasion he commented that when the time came for him to be born, his *neshomo* did not want to descend into this lowly world until the body promised the *neshomo* that it would not partake of this world, only what it would need for its basic survival.

When the *Rebbe* was asked why he chose to follow an extravagant lifestyle unlike the other *Tzaddikim* of the time who lived in poverty, he answered as follows, "We find that the two traits of humility and wisdom are intertwined. Only somebody who is truly wise can acquire the trait of humility, and similarly, only someone who is truly humble can become wise. Moshe *Rabbeinu* is called the most humble of men, and if so, he must also have been the wisest. Shlomo *HaMelech* is known as the wisest of all men and therefore must have also been the most humble. The reason Moshe is praised for his humility is because a *Rav* has the right to be *mochel* on his *kovod* (forgive personal slights). A king, however, even if he wants to, may not be *mochel* on his *kovod* (*melech shemochal al kevodo, ein kevodo mochul*). Therefore Shlomo could only be praised for his wisdom. "What can I do?" said the *Rebbe*, "it has been thrust on me from Heaven to take the way of royalty. It wasn't my choice and I haven't the ability to exempt myself from this *derech*."

In keeping with this *derech*, the *Rebbe* would often comment that a *Yid's* biggest *aveira* is when he forgets that he is a '*ben melech*' – the son of a king: *Hashem*. As long as a person remembers who he is, he is less likely to fall to lower standards.



The *Rebbe's* fame spread far and wide and people came to see him from all over. From Germany, Rav Shamshon Refoel Hirsch traveled especially to Ruzhin. Afterward, when he was asked what impression the *Rebbe* had made on him, he answered, "It is quite unbelievable to see

how all the money and *kovod* is brought to him, and he himself is totally uninterested in it. His one and only concern is how to increase *Kevod Shomayim* and the *kovod* of *Klal Yisrael*."

Indeed, the *Rebbe* was constantly occupied with trying to lift the *Yidden* up from their poverty and problems. As a small child he used to go to the cattle market and tell the butchers which animals were *treif* and therefore should not be bought. When the *Rebbe's* father heard of this he ordered his son to cease this practice. The young Ruzhiner protested that he wanted to save the *Yiddishe* butchers from losing their money.

The *Rebbe* sought to lighten the heavy burden of the *Yidden* as much as possible. When it was decreed that all the *Yidden* had to change their way of dress to that of the *goyim*, most of the *poskim* of the time held that a person should give up his life rather than change his mode of dress. When the *Rebbe* was asked what he held, he answered, "Yaakov *Ovinu* received the *berochos* from his father Yitzchok dressed in Eisov's clothes."

Even people who had fallen from the correct path could hear a warm word from the *Rebbe*. In the times of the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and his *talmidim*, it was mainly the elite who found a place at the *Rebbe's* table. The Ruzhiner, however, sought to include even the simple and unlearned. He would constantly remind his *Chassidim* about the importance of being with a *Rebbe*. He would say that even if they didn't learn anything new whilst in Ruzhin, it was still worth the effort to come.

Although always occupied with lofty thoughts, the *Rebbe* was able to speak to every person on his own level. When a simple person told him that he did not know how to do *teshuva*, the *Rebbe* retorted, "And to sin you did know? You just did it without thinking twice and later you realized that you had done an *aveira*. Now too, if you start mending your ways

the *teshuva* will follow automatically."

To another person, the *Rebbe* advised that his *teshuva* would be to *daven* only using a *siddur*. Even the smallest *berocha* should only be said from a *siddur*. In due course, this *ba'al teshuva* became known as a well-respected *Tzaddik*.

The *Rebbe* would do his utmost to help others. He would say that just like metal becomes hot when placed in fire and freezing cold when placed in the cold, similarly he himself feels the pain and suffering of every *Yid* from one end of the



The Ruzhiner shul "Tiferes Yisroel" (Nisan Bak Shul) in the old city of Yerushalayim

The Ruzhiner shul "Tiferes Yisrael"
(Nisan Bak Shul) in the Old City of
Yerushalayim

world to the other. Not for nothing did the aged *Rebbe* of Vorka, Rav Yitzchok, proclaim that *Ahavas Yisrael* such as he had seen in Ruzhin was not to be found anywhere else!

When news arrived in Ruzhin of an evil decree against the *Yidden*, the *Rebbe* would lock himself up for weeks at a time in his private quarters to *daven* that *Hashem* annul the decree. At such times it was literally impossible to see or speak to him; not even his closest family or *gabboim* were granted access.

In his *tefillos* the *Rebbe* would constantly be *melamed zechus* on the *Yidden*. He would often repeat that when the Berditchever Rav would see a person carrying his *tallis* and *tefillin* on the way to *shul*, he would remark about the *tzidkus* of such a person who leaves his

warm bed every morning in order please *Hashem*. If so, then what can one say nowadays when a person who leaves his home to go to *shul* doesn't know if his children are going to be snatched away to the army while he is out? Such a person can be likened to the *Ba'al Shem Tov* himself!



The *Rebbe* cared not only for the *Yidden* in his vicinity but also for those from far and wide. He took a special interest in helping those living in *Eretz Yisrael*. At that time it was extremely difficult to live in *Eretz Yisrael*. Only four thousand from *Yidden* inhabited the land in very primitive conditions. A large number of them lived on money sent by *Kollel Volhin*. This organization administrated most of the needs of those in the Holy Land.

The *Rebbe*, who headed *Kollel Volhin*, was in charge of raising and distributing the money to the needy. As a direct descendent of Dovid *HaMelech*, the *Rebbe* felt that it was his duty to see to their welfare. Anyone who wanted to immigrate to *Eretz Yisrael* had first to obtain the *Rebbe's* permission, otherwise he would not receive money from the *Kollel*. The *Rebbe* insisted that every person going to live in *Eretz Yisrael* must be able to support himself for the first three years; only afterward would he be paid by the *Kollel*. Through this the burden was eased on those already there.

Then word reached the *Rebbe* that the Russian Czar intended to build a big church in the Old City of Yerushalayim, the *Rebbe* summoned Rav Nisan Bak who lived in Yerushalayim and was one of the *Rebbe's* faithful *Chassidim*. The *Rebbe* gave him a sum of money and told him to rush and buy the plot of land before the Russians did so. Rav Nisan arrived there a few days ahead of the Russians and succeeded in buying the plot of land. When the Czar heard that the land had been snatched out of his hands he exploded in a fit of rage about the *Rebbe*

who always got in his way. The Czar was forced to buy a different plot of land, known today as the Russian Compound. With the money the *Rebbe* sent, a big *shul* was built. The *shul* was known as the "Rav Nisan Bak Shul" and stood until 1948 when it was destroyed by the Arabs.

Although the *Rebbe* longed to go and settle in *Eretz Yisrael*, he was unable to forsake his *Chassidim*. He used to say that if he came to *Eretz Yisrael* he would be asked why he had come without his *Yidden*. On one occasion the *Rebbe* spoke about the final *Geula* and said that it would begin with the gradual immigration of *Yidden* to *Eretz Yisrael*. Just as in the times of Ezra there was no miraculous redemption as in Egypt, similarly in our times, if the generation will not be worthy, the redemption will also take place in a natural way.

The countries of the world will decide to give the *Yidden* *Eretz Yisrael* as a land of their own and the *Yidden* will come back and rebuild the land. There will be great miracles but they will be hidden in the circle of nature, and after this we will see the Final Redemption. As the *Rebbe* finished these words he sighed and said, "Of course it bothers us that the *Geula* should start in such a way, but we have no more strength to wait. However it will be, let it start already."



The Russian Czar and the various *maskilim* of the time were greatly distressed by the power the *Rebbe* wielded. Through his royal conduct, the *Rebbe* greatly uplifted the level of the downtrodden masses. The *maskilim* had long been plotting to bring about the *Rebbe's* downfall, but without any success. When the *Rebbe* was forty years old, he was arrested on charges of having had a hand in a murder. An informer brought evidence that the *Rebbe* had ordered the execution of a second informer. As the *Rebbe* was taken away into custody he said, "*Gam ki*

eilech be'gei tzalmoves lo iro ra.' Even as I am to be locked up I am not afraid. One thing however upsets me, though: '*ki atta imodi*', that You, *Hashem*, will be with me; the *Shechina* will also be in *Golus* with me.

Following the orders of the Czar himself, the *Rebbe* was locked up in the notorious Kiev dungeons. The *Rebbe* spent twenty-two months locked away under terrible conditions in a small, dark and damp cellar. No charges were ever brought against him, nor was he ever put on trial. The *Rebbe* was then transferred to a second prison in Kamenitz for six months until he was finally freed on *Shushan Purim*. A few days after the *Rebbe* was freed he was given a tip-off that the Czar had decided to rearrest him on charges of rebellion and had already passed a sentence of life exile to Siberia. The *Rebbe* was left with no option but to flee Russia.

As soon as the authorities realized that the *Rebbe* had disappeared, soldiers were sent to look for him and prevent his escape. The *Rebbe* crossed the border into Austria in the middle of the night, and the Russians, having narrowly missed recapturing him, returned home empty-handed. The Russian Czar, however, did not give up and demanded that Austria send the *Rebbe* back to Russia.

Meanwhile, 'witnesses' were produced who testified that the *Rebbe* was really an Austrian citizen who had disappeared many years ago and had finally returned home to Austria. The Russians, however, also had witnesses to contradict this story and insisted on his return. The Austrian Government, however, refused to comply. They knew that the *Rebbe* would attract tens of thousands of *Chassidim* who were good for the economy and businesses of the area. The *Rebbe* was simply too valuable an asset to lose.

When Rav Yitzchok of Vorka came to visit the *Rebbe* soon after he arrived in Austria, the *Rebbe* told him that he had not been imprisoned for his own sins, for in his

life he had never transgressed even the smallest *issur derabonon*.



Not long after the *Rebbe* settled in Austria he was asked by one of his *Chassidim* why he did not take revenge against the Russian Czar. Everyone knew that the *Rebbe* was able to work miracles, so why didn't he seek to destroy the Czarist regime?

"Do you believe in all the miracles that took place when *Hashem* took the *Yidden* out of Egypt?" the *Rebbe* asked him.

"Of course I believe," answered the *Yid*.

"And do you believe that *Hashem* still has the same power to perform such miracles?" the *Rebbe* continued, and the *Yid* answered him again, "Of course, *Rebbe*, I believe!"

"If so," the *Rebbe* asked him, "can you explain to me why *Hashem* does not punish the Czar for all his wicked actions?" If *Hashem* doesn't feel that it is time to punish him, what's the wonder if I also keep quiet?"

The time came, however, that the *Rebbe* felt he could not keep quiet any longer. A few days before *Purim*, the *Rebbe* asked that one of his *Chassidim* dress up as the Russian Czar on *Purim*. The *Chassidim* understood that the *Rebbe* had deep *kavonos* in his request, and it wasn't just going to be a show. On *Purim*, the *Rebbe* was in the middle of his *Purim Seuda*, when suddenly the door opened and in walked the dressed-up "Czar". The *Rebbe* rose respectfully to his feet and addressed the "Czar". "Your Majesty the Czar, you have decreed harsh decrees against my people. I ask you, please annul these harsh decrees."

The "Czar", however, refused: it was impossible to retract. The *Rebbe's* face became more serious as he once again asked, "Please, I beg of His Majesty to have

pity and rescind the decrees."

"No, it is impossible, it cannot be done," the "Czar" answered with impudence.

The *Rebbe's* face turned white and, getting up from his chair, the *Rebbe* came over to the "Czar" and in an emotional voice ordered him immediately to leave the room and never return. Afterward the *Rebbe* sank down into his chair and in a broken voice he said, "*Chazal* tell us, '*Ein lecho odom she'ein lo sho'oh*.' Every person comes to the world to fulfill a specific task. Had this *Chassid* realized that he should have agreed to annul the decrees, automatically in Russia they would also have been annulled. A great pity that this opportunity has been lost."



The *Rebbe* settled in the town of Sadiger. Some years earlier Rav Chaim Kosover had promised the people of the town that one day a great *Tzaddik* would come to live there, and would make the name "Sadiger" famous for all generations. Once again the *Rebbe* set up a magnificent court with a big *shul*. Tens of thousands flocked to Sadiger, and indeed all the people of the area became his *Chassidim*. The *Rebbe* lived in Sadiger for ten years until his *petira*. A few months before he was *niftar* he started to drop broad hints of his imminent departure. Just before *Rosh HaShana* 1851 he told his sons that he had prepared extremely beautiful living quarters for himself and he would be moving there after the *Yomim Tovim* were over. As he walked into his *Bais Medrash* on *Yom Kippur*, he put his hands on the *mezuzah* and announced that he would be a *kapora* for *Klal Yisrael*. Right after *Sukkos* the *Rebbe* became ill and was *niftar* on the third of *Cheshvan*.

A few hours before he was *niftar* he asked one of his close *Chassidim* if he knew what Esther *davened* before she went to Achashverosh. Without waiting for an answer the *Rebbe* himself answered, "She

asked *Hashem* that He either help the *Yidden* or take her from this world." These were the *Rebbe's* last words before his *petira*: "Rav Yehuda *HaNossi* testified about himself that he never had enjoyment from this world, not even the amount of a small finger, and I testify about myself that I did not enjoy this world – not even the amount of a bit of thread (*kechut hasa'ara*). The reason for my grand and royal conduct was totally *lesheim shomayim*."

With these words the *Rebbe* was *niftar*. He was only fifty-four years old. The doctor who examined him diagnosed that the *Rebbe* was *niftar* because his heart had given way in its longing to be reunited with its Creator. The *Rebbe's* son, Rav Avrohom Yaakov, used to say that just as on *Shabbos*, *Gehinnom* is shut, the same is true on his father's *yahrzeit*, the third of *Cheshvan*: *Gehinnom* is also closed. This statement can be reinforced with a story which occurred about eighty years ago.

A lady whose father was *niftar* on the third of *Cheshvan* had a dream a few days later in which her father appeared to her and told her that since he had passed away on the Ruzhiner's *yahrzeit*, he was let straight into *Gan Eden*. The lady immediately wrote to her brothers and sisters who lived in different towns in Europe, informing them of her dream. A few weeks later she received letters from all of her brothers and sisters and each one told over the same dream that she had. And each one had the dream on the same night!



The *Rebbe's derech* was carried on through his six sons. Each of them moved to a different town where they set up their own courts. The *Rebbe* thought very highly of all his sons. He used to say that just like one used to come to seek guidance from the *urim vetumim* in the times of the *Bais HaMikdosh*, in the same way people would come to ask them for advice. The *Rebbe's* oldest son, Rav Sholom Yosef,

was *niftar* less than a year after his father and was succeeded by his son Rav Yitzchok, who became the first Bohusher *Rebbe*. The Ruzhiner's second son, Rav Avrohom Yaakov, took his father's place in Sadiger. He had two sons, the eldest, Rav Yitzchok, was the first Boyaner *Rebbe* and the younger son, Rav Yisrael, was *Rebbe* in Sadiger. The third son of the Ruzhiner was Rav Dov Ber, who was *Rebbe* in Lieov and the fourth son, Rav Menachem Nachum, was *Rebbe* in Sthefanesht. Rav Dovid Moshe, the Chortkover *Rebbe*, was the fifth son and Rav Mordechai Shraga, the Husyatiner *Rebbe*, was the sixth son.

In addition to his sons, the Ruzhiner also had four daughters. The eldest

daughter, Chaya Malka, was married to Rav Yitzchok of Skver. The next daughter, *Gitel*, was married to Rav Yosef Mansohn. Their elder son Rav Levi Yitzchok was *Rebbe* in Ozeranah and their second son Rav Chaim Dov was *Rebbe* in Brod. The third daughter, Miriam, was married to Rav Menachem Mendel of Vizhnitz, founder of the famous Vizhnitzer dynasty. The last daughter, Leah, was married to Rav Dovid Halpern. Their son, Rav Sholom Halpern, was the founder of the Vasloier dynasty. Through his six sons Ruzhiner *Chassidus* spread far and wide, bringing *Yidden* closer to their Father in Heaven *ad bi'as go'el tzedek, Amen*.

www.nishmas.org/gdynasty/chap1.htm



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

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

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

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

Zera Shimshon - Bereishis

בראשית ברא אלוקים (א' א')

In the beginning Hashem created (1:1)

Rashi points out that the Torah refers to Hashem by the name Elokim as opposed to הויה. When Hashem acts with judgment, He is referred to as Elokim and when He acts with mercy, He is referred to as הויה. Here, Hashem is called Elokim since when Hashem decide to create the world, He wanted the it to be governed by strict justice. However, looking into the future, Hashem saw that such a model would fail. Hashem therefore brought in the trait of mercy and only then added the attribute of exacting justice to ensure that the world would endure.

The Zera Shimshon asks - what was the original plan and why did Hashem seemingly change His mind?

The Zera Shimshon offers an interesting answer. He explains that the fact that Hashem added mercy to the creation of the world, is in truth not a deviation from the original plan. What the addition of mercy does is that it gives the sinners time rather than punish them immediately. However, this serves to their detriment since when there is no immediate retribution, they continue to sin. Once they accumulate a large amount of sin, Hashem punishes them appropriately. So in essence, this mercy has a severe flipside since it holds off punishment until the wicked have sinned so greatly that they are severely punished.

Thus, in reality, even the attribute of mercy has a component of strictness to it. With this, the Zera Shimshon explains that Hashem never changed His mind, the only question was how to actualize the attribute of judgment in the world, immediately, or after a certain amount of time.

The Zera Shimshon deliberates that perhaps, had Hashem created the world with exacting judgment, the moment a person sinned, he would have been punished on the spot. Such a system would have, at a first glance, significantly lessened the amount of wicked people in the world. Why then does Rashi say that in this mode would fail? If anything, it would guarantee that there would be much less sinners?

The Zera Shimshon answers that even so, there is a significant flaw with this model. Had the world not been created with the added factor of mercy, there would have been no mercy between humans. Everything would have been decided with exacting justice. (A person who did not work, should not be given charity. There would be no concept of helping someone who needed help.) This would create hate and strife. So although people would not sin to Hashem, the relationship between humans would be catastrophic. Such a world could only fail. For this reason Hashem had to combine exacting justice with the attribute of mercy.

With this, the Zera Shimshon explains the following Medrash. The Medrash says (Bereishis Rabba 12:5), that with the light that Hashem originally created, Adam Harishon was able to see from one side of the world to the other. However, when Hashem looked into the future generations and saw their wicked ways, He hid this light for the benefit of the righteous people in the world to come.

The question is - for Hashem, there is no difference between the present and the future. If Hashem knew that there would eventually be wicked people, why did He create this light only to conceal it?

The Zera Shimshon explains that this light was created for the world that would have been governed by strict judgment. In such a world where the people were not sinners (at least not to Hashem), they would have been worthy to use this light. When Hashem modified the strict judgment with mercy, this gave room for wicked people to flourish and Hashem had to create a new light who's flipside was darkness to mirror the ability of the wicked to flourish alongside the righteous without being punished immediately. (It would seem that the original light was of an entirely different nature, not light the way we know it, who's opposite is darkness.)

Thus, the creation of lights mirrored the question of how the world should operate. The only difference is that although Hashem did not change His mind, as explained, nonetheless, the light that would have been used in the original model of the world (which was created through Hashem original 'desire') could not have been used in the modified version that was created together with mercy, and therefore, a new form of light had to be created.

Interestingly, the attribute of mercy that allows the wicked to sin, is the attribute that the wicked always rely on. They continue sinning, never fearing that their actions will catch up with them because they expect Hashem's mercy for them to be endless.

The righteous are the exact opposite. They always fear the original attribute of strict justice and act accordingly. Eventually though, the mercy extended to the sinners turns back into its original exacting justice and the wicked are paid up in full. While the righteous ones, enjoy the world the way Hashem created, fearing the original attribute of exacting justice but Hashem acting with them with mercy.

Bereishit

October 17th 2020
29th of Tishri 5781

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Hilula

29 - Rabbi Saliman Barzani, the
Chacham Bashi of Kurdistan

30 - Rabbi Kalafeh Giv of Constantin

1 - Rabbi Chiya Fontrimoli, a Dayan
in Izmir

2 - Rabbi Ya'akov Samaneh, a Dayan
in Rakesh

3 - Maran Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, Chief of
Mo'etzet Chachmei HaTorah

4 - Rabbi Kolonymous Shapira, author
of 'Chovat Hatalmidim'

5 - Rabbi Moshe Bardugo, author of
'Rosh Mashbir'

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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

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

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



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

The Edifice of Torah and Mitzvot is Built on Foundations of Faith

"In the beginning of G-d's creating the heavens and the earth"

(Bereishit 1:1)

The foundation and root of the entire Torah is faith. Prior to the fulfillment of mitzvot and Torah study, man must possess complete faith in the Creator. This is the basis on which it is possible to build an everlasting edifice of Torah and yirat shamayim. This is why the Torah begins with Bereishit which speaks about the creation of the world, of heaven and earth and all they contain.

Our Sages teach us that the world was created through the utterances of Hashem. Hashem did not create the world through a work of craftsmanship or with a specific machine, but only through speech, as in "For He spoke and it came to be" (Tehillim 33:9). When Hashem said "Let there be light", light was immediately created, and so forth with every part of the creation. Look at how many factories, inventions and other sciences are in this world, and behind the materialization of all these stands millions of people who planned and designed their development. We must contemplate this idea and contrast it with the fact that Hashem created the world through utterances alone!

We often hear about scientists who complete their University studies and perceive themselves as all-knowledgeable, and this 'intelligence' brings them to deny the Creator of the world. But what can simple man grasp of this amazing creation that he can deny a Creator?! He comes with a claim that the world created itself... Everyone knows that something that is self-made is created crooked, even a tree that grows by itself will lean over to the side. If we want the tree to grow straight, we must support it with a rod. The world was created with such precision and exemplary order. Is it at all possible that this can happen by itself?!

A certain scientist once came to the Ibn Ezra and claimed that the world created itself. Noticing a beautiful painting in the room, he was duly impressed and asked the Ibn Ezra which artist created this beautiful piece of art. The Ibn Ezra replied with affected innocence that a cat bumped into in a jar of ink which then spilt onto the paper, and this is how the picture came about. The scientist was insulted and retorted, "Do you think I am a fool?" The Ibn Ezra replied, "And how can it be that such a beautiful world, sketched with such precision, can happen by itself?!" Therefore, a person's primary obligation is to instill complete faith in Hashem in his heart, that Hashem is the One who "spoke and it came to be, He commanded and it stood firm". This is the foundation on which a person can build an edifice of Torah, mitzvah observance, and good deeds.

Man must continue to strengthen and intensify his faith in Hashem also in his daily life, to know that Hashem watches over him with an open eye and that there is Divine Providence in every step of the path he takes in life. If he plans a certain schedule for himself but his day follows a different pattern, he should know that "the counsel of Hashem, only it will prevail" (Mishlei 19:21). It is Hashem who changed the course of his day. Sometimes Hashem does not fulfil a person's innermost desires, for He knows that it will not be to his benefit, and on the contrary, his present situation is the best thing for him. If G-d forbid a bad decree is pronounced on a person, he will not be able to evade and escape this decree. Even if he planned to take a certain path, Hashem will change his route to lead him to the place where he will meet his death r"l. As the Gemarah says (Succah 53a), "A person's legs are the guarantors to take him to the necessary destination". Who is the One who directs his legs? Divine Providence. Therefore, man must believe with all his heart that it is the Hand of G-d that rules all events, and that Hashem's ways are hidden from our eyes so that we do not know exactly what is good for us, but "Hashem will do what is good in His eyes" (Divrei Hayamim I, 19:13).

This is man's entire purpose in coming to This World, to fulfil the mitzvot and be a faithful servant to his Creator and withstand all the challenges that stand in his path. The Parsha tells us (Bereishit 3:1), "Now the serpent was cunning beyond any beast of the field that Hashem G-d had made". Chazal say that the snake said, "I know that Hashem said 'for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die'. I will go and deceive Adam and his wife and they will eat (from the Tree of Knowledge) and be punished, and then I will inherit the Earth for myself."

Seemingly, if the snake was so cunning and was able to seduce Adam and his wife not to listen to Hashem's command and implant heresy in them, why did Hashem choose the snake to wait on Adam and Chava? Was there not a dearth of more suitable creatures that could have served them? But just as we explained, the main purpose of man's descent to This World is so that he should know to withstand the trials and be successful in overcoming the stumbling blocks that the Yetzer Hara sets up in his path. Therefore, Hashem specifically chose the snake to serve Adam and Chava so that it should try to deflect and seduce them from the correct path, so that the trial should be greater and more formidable, and thereby Adam and his wife will emerge more powerful by resisting the temptations of the Yetzer Hara. Although the outcome was different, the immensity of the test is not diminished.



Walking in their Ways

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

Shabbat Kodesh U'Mevorach

The grandson of the liturgical poet and tzaddik Rabbi David Chasin zya"l, was seriously ill and hovering between life and death. For an entire month, the family beseeched me to visit him in the hospital and bless him, but unfortunately, due to my many obligations and the needs of the public, I was unable to do so and despite my strong desire to pay him a visit, it was pushed off again and again.

About a month later I finally found the time to visit him and approached his hospital room.

I knew that his situation was grave and that he was unconscious and connected to different life-support machines. Despite this, the family rejoiced when they saw me and came to greet me, asking me to enter the patient's room and bless him.

I entered his room. Now I could see for myself how close he was to death and I was filled with deep sadness, for I understood that although it was not my fault, I had come too late. In my great distress, I stood and prayed for him from the depths of my heart, after which I left the room.

I had just left his room when I heard the patient's wife running after me and calling excitedly:

"Harav, Harav, my sick husband suddenly began to speak. He asked to eat something after weeks of not being able to put anything in his mouth! Honored Rav, please bless my husband again, surely this blessing will have the power of healing him from his illness."

I once again blessed the patient and wrote my blessing on a paper, as I am accustomed to doing so as to give the blessing validity and strength. For some reason, at that moment the words "Shabbat Kodesh u'mevorach" stood before my eyes. So I added these words to my blessing. I then folded the paper and handed it to the family.

After Shabbat, the patient passed away and I understood in retrospect why the words "Shabbat Kodesh u'mevorach" had suddenly come to mind when I blessed him. It was a hint that his death would follow his delighting in Shabbat, as indeed was the case.

The Haftarah

"Yonatan said to him, 'Tomorrow is the New Moon'" (Shmuel I, 20)

The connection to the Parsha: The day following this Shabbat (Sunday) will be Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan. This is the connection to the Haftarah in which the verse says, "Tomorrow is the New Moon".

Guard Your Tongue

The Prohibition of Lashon Hara

The definition of lashon hara is speech that degrades someone or speech that can cause someone harm. If someone speaks negatively about his friend, this is called lashon hara even if it is clear that it will not cause any harm to his friend. The actual occupation with someone else's shortcomings is forbidden in and of itself.

Telling over something that may cause someone harm, whether financial, physical, emotional or any other form of damage, is considered as lashon hara, even if what he says is not necessarily negative.



In Our Father's Path

A Jewish Soul Strives for Good

"This is the account of the descendants of Adam" (Bereishit 5:1)

The Holy Zohar says that two angels accompany man wherever he goes and these angels are certain strengths that a person receives from his intellect. Each person is embedded with the power of holiness, and in contrast, he also contains the power of impurity. The power of holiness comes from the holy soul, as we say in the morning blessings, "My G-d, the soul You placed within me is pure". The intention is that Hashem gave man a soul that is compared to 'breath', (the Hebrew word for soul, 'הַנֶּפֶשׁ', contains the same root letters as the Hebrew word for breath, 'הַנְּשִׁימָה'), and just as man cannot survive without breathing, so he cannot survive without a soul.

The Gaon Rabbi Yissachar Meir zt"l, explained to his talmidim that there are heretics who claim that man does not possess a soul, therefore by nature he does not strive to benefit others unless it will result in some personal advantage for him, for example, if it will bring him honor or he will be repaid for this good in the future, and other similar benefits.

The truth is that there is no concept of 'chesed shel emet', true unbiased kindness, among the nations of the world, as the Gemarah (Baba Batra 10b) says: "Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai said to his talmidim, my son, what is the meaning of the verse (Mishlei 14:34), 'Charity will uplift a nation, but the kindness of regimes is a sin'? Rabbi Eliezer answered and said, 'Charity will uplift a nation' refers to Yisrael as it says (Shmuel II, 7:23), 'And who is like Your people, like Israel, a unique nation on earth'. 'But the kindness of regimes is a sin', every act of charity and kindness the Gentiles do is considered as a sin for them since they only do it to brag about it."

This teaches us that the Gentiles perform acts of charity only when it benefits them with personal pleasure. But this is not the case with Bnei Yisrael, since they strive to do good even if will bring them no benefit or pleasure. When a Jew performs a charitable act for his friend, he derives pleasure and satisfaction from the actual deed, therefore he tries to carry out his kind deeds in secret, in a way that no one will be aware of his actions, even including the recipient of the good, and it is this that affords him the greatest pleasure.

There are Jews who sacrifice themselves to give charity secretly without any thoughts of recompense or pleasure, and this is the meaning of the verse, "Charity will uplift a nation", the Jew is elevated through his mitzvah of charity and the act itself is that which brings him great satisfaction.

Many Jews who strive to go in Hashem's ways fulfill the dictum, "Just as He is Merciful so you should be merciful". There is a proliferation of chesed organizations among religious Jews. When, G-d forbid, someone has to undergo an urgent operation, there are those selfless individuals who will invest much effort in helping him with whatever he requires, without thought of compensation. These people enjoy doing chesed without fanfare and without a write-up the next day in the newspaper, "So and so did such and such". They act for Heaven's sake and their pleasure stems from the actual deed of chesed. However, this is a pleasure that can be felt only by one who possesses a G-dly soul, for the soul strives to come closer to its Creator.

There is a now-religious Jew who lives in Bnei Brak who works for the medical organizations. He has strong connections with the consulate, and when he picks up the phone to the embassy and says, "It is so and so speaking", the embassy immediately sets aside all its affairs and makes sure to sign the visa and all other necessary documents of approval for flying a sick patient to America.

The medical organizations also have a strong relationship with the airline companies and when it is necessary to arrange a flight for a patient, even in the middle of the night, they call up the different companies who meet their request and make room for the patient on the next flight.

This is an entire enterprise of chesed that is carried out not for the sake of receiving a reward. This is the power of the G-dly Jewish soul that strives to do good.



Pearls of the Chag

Who Sustains Who?

"Let us make Man" (Bereishit 1:26)

Chazal ask, "Why was Adam created last of all the creation? The answer is, if he merits, we say to him, you preceded the creation, (meaning, being the pinnacle of creation everything was created before him and for him), if he does not merit, we say to him, the mosquito preceded you".

Rabbi Yitzchak of Varka explained this with an apt mashal:

There are two kinds of wagon drivers: Concerning the first one, Hashem wishes to provide him with a livelihood therefore He sends him a horse and wagon. The second wagon driver is of a different category: Hashem who sustains the entire world wishes to sustain the horse, so He sends him a wagon driver who will take care of his needs...

The two wagon drivers have the same source of livelihood, but what a great difference there is between them!

While for one, the horse works for him, for the second, he toils his entire life for the horse...

This is the meaning of the Midrash: Why was man created last? If he does not merit we tell him the mosquito preceded you, you were created so as to sustain the mosquito with your blood...

The Creation of the Woman Was Hashem's Wish Alone

"Then Hashem G-d fashioned the side that He had taken from the man into a woman" (Bereishit 2:22)

In the morning blessings, the woman recites the blessing, "for having made me according to His will". One explains this by saying that she is expressing acceptance of the judgement, meaning that the woman would not have agreed to be created in this way, but this was Hashem's will.

The sefer 'Avnei Zikaron' offers a different intention. On the contrary, the woman is giving praise to Hashem Yitbarach for being created a woman. Why does she prefer to be a woman? For when Hashem created man He said to the angels, "Let us make Man", and Rashi explains that Hashem as if took counsel with the ministering angels to teach us that the greater one should always consult with those lower than him as if the angels were partners in the agreement to create man. However, the creation of the woman was done by Hashem alone and this is why the woman recites the blessing, "for having made me according to His will".

The Difference Between the Fruit and its Juice

"The woman said, 'The serpent de-

ceived me, and I ate'" (Bereishit 3:13)

What kind of answer is this that the woman said, "The serpent deceived me" (in the sense of tempted me), surely she should have listened to Hashem's command and not to the words of the snake?

Furthermore, the Midrash brings that Chava squeezed a bunch of grapes and gave the juice to Adam (some commentaries hold that the Tree of Knowledge was a vine). Why she did not offer him the actual grapes?

Rabbi Shlomo Meir Pariente zt"l of Tunisia, in his sefer 'Imrei Shefer' asks this question and offers the following answer:

The Gemarah (Rosh Hashanah 12b) brings that a person who vows not to eat grapes, is permitted to drink wine that is produced by squeezing grapes. This is different from other prohibitions such as orlah (eating fruit within the first four years of planting the tree) where the wine squeezed from grapes is forbidden just like the fruit itself.

Taking this into account, it could be that the reason why Chava squeezed out the juice of the grapes and gave it to Adam to drink, was at the 'advice' of the snake who proved from the law of making vows that one is only forbidden to eat the fruit itself, while one may drink the juice that is extracted from the fruit. The snake misled Chava since this ruling is only applicable to vows where we go according to the person's words, but with other prohibitions, there is no difference between the fruit and its juice. Therefore, since Adam was forbidden to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, the juice of its fruit was also prohibited. This is what lies behind Chava's answer of "The snake deceived me".

Honoring One's Wife is a Segulah for Wealth

"By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread" (Bereishit 3:19)

The Gemarah (Baba Metzia 59a) says that Rava commanded the people of Machoza to honor their wives so that they should become wealthy, since honoring one's wife is a segulah for wealth.

What is the connection between the two ideas?

The Maggid Rabbi Elimelech Biderman shlita explains that the woman was given the curse, "he [the husband] shall rule over you", while the husband was cursed with "by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread". This being the case, Heaven says, if you do not force her curse on her, of "he shall rule over you", and instead you show her respect and appreciation, measure for measure you too will not be pressured with your curse of "by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread" and you will merit wealth...

Treasures

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



The Importance of Continuity in Spiritual Elevation

Continuity in Avodat Hashem without cessation and breaks is an essential element in serving Hashem. We learn this concept from Adam Harishon who was Hashem's own handiwork and who achieved elevated and sublime levels. Chazal say (Sefer Avoseinu 22) that Adam Harishon walked around in Gan Eden just like one of the angels and studied Torah with Hashem, as it says (Bereishit 2:15), "and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it".

What is the implication of "to work it and to guard it"?

To work the garden through the study of Torah and the performance of positive commandments and guard it by refraining from forbidden activities.

Adam Harishon was so holy and pure that the creations make a mistake and thought him to be a god, even coming to prostrate themselves before him. Adam said to them, why are you bowing to me?! Let us go together and crown as King over us the One who created us. Adam himself went ahead and crowned Hashem as King, and they all answered after him, "Hashem has reigned, He has donned grandeur".

If Adam Harishon was on such a great and holy level, how did he dare transgress Hashem's wish and violate His command by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, an act which resulted in such terrible destruction for the entire creation? Why was he unable to control himself and overcome his inclination evil?

The answer is because he interrupted the continuity of his spiritual elevation and Torah study. Had Adam Harishon continued his occupation in the Torah that he studied with Hashem in Gan Eden even when at home, had he not taken a break, the Yetzer Hara would certainly not have had the power to overcome him. But when Adam returned home after studying Torah in Gan Eden and immediately began having a regular conversation with his wife Chava, which severed the continuity of his learning, the Satan immediately found a fitting opportunity to seduce him and defeat him with sin. Chazal have told us (Avot 3:9), "One who interrupts his review...bears guilt for his soul" since when Torah study is interrupted and there is no continuity, this Torah is at a great disadvantage. (Taking a rest to renew one's strength is not the same as interrupting.)

That is why we read this Parsha specifically following the Days of Awe, to teach man that he is forbidden to halt the spiritual growth that he merited during these holy days. Immediately following Yom Kippur, he should add more holiness and purity to his soul and strengthen himself in Torah study and mitzvah observance with more courage and with more vigour. If he is lazy and says, I will take a break and wait a short time and then I will resume my spiritual growth, in the end, he will lose everything and who can discern his end, as indeed happened to Adam Harishon.



TIMELY MESSAGE

Shabbat is the source of blessing and this particular Shabbat that stands before us is doubly special for its unique inherent powers. On this Shabbat, we merit beginning the Torah anew and it is the first Shabbat after the Chagim when we return to the routine of reading from the Parsha of the week. It holds a precious and powerful treasure and is capable of effecting the final redemption and the arrival of Mashiach!

Let us then strengthen ourselves intensely in guarding this rest day, and thereby open up the gates of redemption and blessing!

Rabbi Asher Kovalski shlita relates the following story about his grandfather the banker, Rabbi Shmuel Strauss z"l.

It was a Friday morning, in Karlsruhe, Germany and Rabbi Shmuel was about to leave for another day's work in the bank that he owned. Since he had been invited to a Brit Milah which would take place immediately after work, he decided to wear his Shabbat suit to work so that he would be able to go straight to the celebration.

As was his daily custom, at the end of the day's work Rabbi Shmuel collected together all the money that was in the bank to take it to his home. Rabbi Shmuel put the bundles of cash into his jacket pocket and then left the bank to go to the Brit.

After the seudat Brit, Rabbi Shmuel rushed home and began preparing for Shabbat. He later left for the Beit Knesset which welcomed him with its uplifting atmosphere. After the Friday night prayers and hearty blessings of 'Shabbat Shalom', Rabbi Shmuel gathered his guests and children and set off for home.

While he was walking home, he was suddenly taken aback by a feeling of heaviness in his jacket pocket. What could it be, he immediately asked himself? Overcome by an instinct of fear, he put his hand inside his pocket and discovered the hidden treasure. All the money that he had col-

lected from the bank that morning, was right there in his pocket!

He was shocked. He stood rooted to the spot and for a short moment a battle played out in his heart. To continue home with all the money in his pocket? Was it permitted? Forbidden? There is no way he can continue walking while carrying money in his pocket! On the other hand, it was clear to him that discarding the money right here meant the loss of a certain fortune!

The battle waged for but one moment. After that, with his face shining with the joy of a mitzvah, he moved half a step to the side of the road and shook out the contents of his pocket onto the ground. With every bundle that fell his smile grew wider, with every ruble that rolled to the ground another stone rolled off his heart. When his pocket was empty, he felt great relief, immense joy, and mainly, a deep feeling of excitement. He had finally merited sacrificing something substantial for the sake of Shabbat. Hashem prepared for him an opportunity to forgo a fortune for the sake of the holiness of Shabbat!

His steps grew lighter and he entered his home as if in a dance. He did not share the incident with his family members since he suspected that maybe one of them might take it too hard. They might feel upset about the lost fortune, which will impede their Shabbat joy. Not so Rabbi Shmuel. He rejoiced at the opportunity and Shabbat passed by with a great spiritual uplift, he was captivated by the holiness of Shabbat!

On Motzei Shabbat, Rabbi Shmuel gathered his family together and told them that they had become paupers. "It sounds distressing," he said immediately, "but the truth is, there is no news more joyful than this. I sacrificed all my wealth for the sake of Shabbat, I left all my money completely abandoned in the main street of the town. I am moved to tell you that we merited sacrificing for the sake of the Shabbat day, how fortunate are we and how good is our lot!" he called out, and invited his children to join him in a dance to celebrate the mitzvah, singing "They shall rejoice in Your kingship, those who observe the Shabbat and call it a delight"...

The family members delighted in their shared joy. They had merited losing a for-

tune, they sacrificed all their wealth for the sake of the beloved Shabbat. Is there a more sublime merit than this?!

Nevertheless, when the moving and joyful occasion came to an end, Rabbi Shmuel considered the fact that he might be obligated to put forth some effort, to return to the place where he had abandoned his money and see if anything was still left. It definitely seemed unreasonable and illogical, such a huge sum lying at the side of a main thoroughfare for twenty-four hours in a city teeming with thousands of Gentiles, what chance is there that the money will still be there? Nevertheless, why not try...

He took a small torch and set off for the location. Right in front of his eyes that grew round in astonishment, was all the money lying there on the ground. Sorted bundles of crisp notes, everything was lying there, in exactly the same spot, as if a hidden sheet had covered the money for the last twenty-four hours and no one had noticed it!

He bent down to the ground and picked up wad after wad, another bundle and another bundle. He stood and counted the money and discovered that there was not one ruble missing. All the money was there, no one had touched it!

With extraordinary excitement, he quickly ran home and once again gathered all his family together. "I have good news to share, not as good as the previous news but still good news!" he announced. "When we gathered previously I was happy to announce that we sacrificed all our money for the sake of Shabbat, we were excited at the news that we had lost all our wealth for the sake of guarding the holiness of Shabbat. Now I discovered that the blessed Shabbat day guarded the blessing of money, and I found all the money, there is not a penny missing!"

From that Shabbat on, Rabbi Shmuel's many business ventures flourished with exceptional success. Whatever he touched merited unusual Heavenly blessing. He became well-known as an extremely wealthy individual. The blessing of Shabbat is what brought blessing to his business and granted him the greatest business deal of all!

MeOros Ramchal Bereishis

Melech haMoshiach and the Refinement of Creation – Separating Good From Within Evil

“In the beginning of *Elokim's* creation of the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was astonishingly empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the spirit of *Elokim* was hovering over the face of the water.” (*Bereishis* 1:1-2)

Chazal learned that everything was created on day one, from the word in our *pasuk* “*es HaShomayim*” the word *es* – comes to include the *toldos* - products or descendants of the Heavens and the Earth (See *Rashi* (1:14) citing *Midrash Bereishis Rabbah* 1:14). Furthermore, *Chazal* also said (*Midrash Bereishis Rabbah* 1:4) that one of the six things that preceded the Creation was the name of *Moshiach*.

After citing these *Midrashim*, the *Ramchal* says that it is the *Melech haMoshiach* who is inferred by the word *es* in our *pasuk*. This further supported by the fact that the *Moshiach* we are referring to will be *Moshiach ben Dovid* whose root source is in the supernal attributes of *Tiferes* and *Malchus*. Therefore, when our *pasuk* says ““In the beginning of *Elokim's* creation of the heavens and the earth.” Heaven and Earth refers to *Zo”N* – the *middos* of *Tiferes* and *Malchus*, and *Es* refers to their *toldos* – *Melech haMoshiach* whose root is in *Shomayim* – Heaven *vaAretz* – Earth – *Tiferes* and *Malchus*.

Regarding *Melech haMoshiach*, the *navi* *Yeshaya* (53:5) said - “But he was pained & wounded because of our sins, crushed because of our iniquities.” that too refers to an aspect of the *Malchus* because just as *Malchus* refers to the *Shechina* in her current state of exile suffering alongside her is *Melech haMoshiach's* soul. Therefore, since this refers to *Malchus* alone (and not *Tiferes*) only Earth is said in the next *pasuk* to be *Tohu vaVohu* – astonishingly empty. This refers to the four *klippos* – the husks and shells of impurity where *Moshiach* and the *Shechina* are in exile. However, regarding *Tiferes*, the next *pasuk* says “the spirit *ruach Elokim* was hovering over the face of the water,” since *ruach* comes from *Tiferes* – and this spirit illuminates the soul of *Moshiach* who is sunk in the wicked waters (see *Tehillim* 124:5 *Malbim* & *Metzudas Dovid* explain the poetic metaphor of intentional wickedness like a rushing gush of a river that seems to intentionally destroy) this part of his soul attached to *Malchus* is in *galus* treading water, and the attribute of *Tiferes* strengthens her. The word hover is *merachefes* – which spells *tipach mar* – which means to conquer the bitter ones. This refers to the soul of *nishmas Moshiach* who because of our sins of *Klal Yisroel* is in *golus* treading among the *klippos* in the filth that is the hardest and most difficult to overcome – that greatest enemy of all *Amalek* whose gematria is *Mar* – bitterness. *Moshiach's* soul is strengthened by the *ruach Elokim* to defeat the bitter enemy, *Amen*.

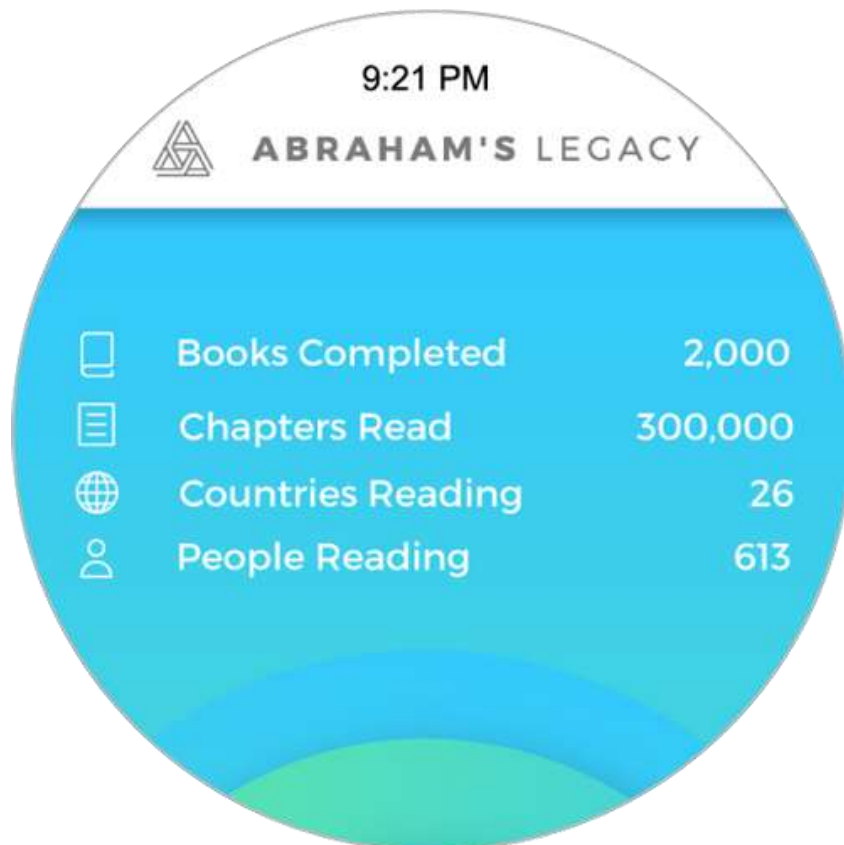
Next, *Hashem* said "Let there be light," and there was light.” (*Bereishis* 1:3) this refers to *Elokim* the supernal Mother *Imma* Who gives birth to *Zo”n* never leaving us and always standing by us, like a Mother, She shines the light for *Moshiach's* soul so he can see the way out to help the *Shechinah* comes out of exile. Therefore *Yehi* = 25 which spells *Koh* referring to the *Shechinah*. . . .

Then *Hashem* makes two *birurim* – two separations and refinements. This is referred to in the next *pasuk* when *Hashem* separates between the light and the darkness (*Bereishis* 1:4 “separated between the light and between the darkness.”) The first *birur* is the taking out of *ochel mitoch pesoles* – removing the good from the bad. The next *birur* that *Hashem* makes is a further refinement where He even takes out bad from good – *pesoles mitoch ochel*. [Translator's comment – notice that on *Shabbos* the *halachah* is that we are forbidden to do *borer* and remove *pesoles* from *ochel* – maybe – It seems to me that this hints at the idea that we ourselves do not have the strength to do this *tikkun* of taking out the good that is mixed in to evil itself and refining and separating it out. That is a *tikkun* that *Hashem* does and not us so that we are not fooled by the forces of darkness and tricked into thinking we are doing a *tikkun* when the opposite Heaven forbid could be true.] Then *Hashem* can refine and remove even the good that is within the *klippah* itself and separate it and bring that back to *kedushah*.

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