

ME'OROS HA'TZADDIKIM

LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



נדפס באדיבות



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לזכות רפואה שלמה
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 יעקב משה בן דבורה שירה
 ואברהם יהודה בן שרה רבקה

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

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)



❖ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❖

THE POWER OF RENEWAL

HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem – *"This month is for you the head of all months."* (Shemos 12:2).

The Sefas Emes cites the first Gerrer Rebbe, the Chiddushei HaRim, who said that aside from its simple way of being read, this pasuk can be reread as 'HaChiddush' Hazeh Lachem - the Chiddush is given over to you, meaning that the power of Hischadshus, the tremendous gift of renewal, is given over to Am Yisrael. This pasuk teaches that we, as Yidden, are a miraculous people who have the ability to constantly refresh and renew ourselves. The natural property of time causes things to grow old, moldy and stale. As time marches on, things break down, they rust and they get older and older, until they eventually expire. However, the power of Hischadshus was given to us to teach us the amazing power of renewal, freshness, youth and vigor. Thus, when Bnai Yisrael attach themselves to Hashem, they live a miraculous life where there is constant renewal and Hischadshus - so that nothing ever grows old and stale. Their Avodas Hashem can be in a constant state of renewal and freshness.



YOMIM TOVIM

The Chiddushei HaRim of Ger used to say: Parshas Bo has the kedusha and sanctity of Pesach, Parshas Beshalach is Shevi'i Shel Pesach, Parshas Yisro is Kabbalas HaTorah and

possess the sanctity of Shavous, Parshas Mishpatim corresponds to Rosh HaShanah because mishpatim are dinim – judgments, Parshas Shekalim corresponds to Yom Kippur because the pasuk says (Shemos 30:15), that the giving of Shekalim atone for sin and Parshas Pikudei corresponds to Sukkos because it mentions that the Jewish people travelled under the cover of the clouds of glory (40:36), which alludes to Sukkos (Sukkah 11b). Therefore, these Parshiyos have the tremendous Kedushah of all the holy holidays - the Yomim Tovim of the entire year. With the proper reflection, one can tap into this tremendous gift.



HOW RAV MOSHE LEIB SASSOVER CONSOLED HIMSELF

“And to all of the Jewish people, no dog barked or wagged its tongue.” (Shemos 11:7)

A regal coach, drawn by fine white horses, once passed Rav Moshe Leib Sassover. Sitting inside was the local Poritz, his wife and their young son. The aristocrats were elegantly dressed and sat in the plush carriage enjoying its comforts. Behind them however, Rav Moshe Leib beheld a terrible scene. There he saw a wretched looking group. When he drew closer to them, he was horrified to discover an entire family of Jews, dressed in rags and tatters, bound hand and foot and chained to the back of the coach. Surely, though the Tzaddik, this poor impoverished family owed the wicked duke some money and he had decided to end their lives in a most miserable way. It was almost time for the Kabbalas Shabbos prayers to commence, and when all the Jews would gather for Mincha - the wicked Poritz intended to drag the family bound to his coach, to their deaths!

I must save them, thought the Rebbe, but how? Then, he had an idea. Rav Moshe Leib approached the coach and began to heap lavish blessings and praise upon the young son of the Poritz. “What a beautiful and fine aristocratic boy! Such a fine example of noble breeding; why, surely he is fit to be a noble and gentle ruler. Majesty such as this, who could find elsewhere?!” He continued in such a manner for a while and both the Poritz and his wife were greatly pleased by the impressive sight. There stood a Tzaddik, a saint, all dressed in white in honor of Shabbos, with a flowing white beard, a regal bearing and shining countenance, blessing and praising their child. “What a precious child. Ahh, too bad, too bad,” he said sadly. “What?! What is too bad?” asked the Poritz, suddenly alarmed. “Too bad... Such a precious child...” and he kissed the young lad. “He must be guarded and protected from all harm. Such a shame, such a shame...” he said, as he shook his head.

“What is it?” asked the Poritz’s wife. “I fear,” explained Rav Moshe Leib, “from the sighs and anguish of that pack of lowlifes behind you. Don’t you realize that their aura of poverty and suffering can harm the precious child?” Immediately, the Poritz ordered them to be unchained and released.

Rav Moshe Leib gathered them together and brought them into shul. When he sought to begin davening Kabbalas Shabbos, he started stammering and he felt he could not pray as he was used to. “What has happened to me?” he cried. “How can I daven, with the same besmirched mouth with which I praised and kissed such a defiled rascal - the wicked Poritz’s son. With the very same mouth, I now wish to serve Hashem and sing his praise?!” Just then, he realized that the Kabbalas Shabbos begins with Lechu NeRanenah, which is the verse that

Perek Shirah attributes to the dogs. "If the dogs can sing this praise before Hashem," he consoled himself, "then surely I can too!" Comforted, Rav Moshe Leib's davening resumed its power and former potency.



הילולא

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 מורתִי / 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 צורות 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 ☞



Yahrzeits Beginning Shabbos Bo

http://www.chinuch.org/gedolim_yahrtzeit/Shevat

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

* 6th of Shevat ~ Begins Friday Night (Jan 31st)

- * **Rav Refoel Yom Tov** *ben* Rav Yisrael Lipman Halpern (Heilperin) of Bialystock, the *Oneg Yom Tov*, (5576–5639/1816–1879);
- * **Rav Chaim Tzvi Teitelbaum** of Sighet, the *Atzei Chaim*, oldest son of Rav Chananya Yom Tov Lipa Teitelbaum, the *Kedushas Yom Tov*, and brother of Rav Yoel Teitelbaum, the *Satmar Rav*. He succeeded his father as *Rav* of Sighet, (5686/1926);
- * **Rav Dovid Yitzchok** *ben* Rav Boruch Pinchus Rabinowitz, the *Skolya Rebbe* (1898–1979), *mechaber* of *Tzemach Dovid*, (5739/1979).

* 7th of Shevat ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Feb 1st)

- * **Rav Dovid Biderman**, the first *Lelover Rebbe* (1746–1814), son of Rav Shlomo Biderman. A close follower of the *Chozeh* of Lublin, he was known for his extraordinary compassion for, and inability to see faults in, his fellow Jews. His main *talmid* was Rav Yitzchok of Vorki, whose son, Yaakov Dovid, was the first *Amshinov Rebbe*. Two printed collections of stories about Rav Dovid are *Migdal Dovid* and *Kodesh Halulim*, (5574/1814);
- * **Rav Mordechai Dovid Ungar** (Unger), *Dombrover Rebbe*. The son of Rav Tzvi Hirsch Unger, Rav Mordechai Dovid was a *talmid* of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, Rav Avrohom Yehoshua Heschel of Apt, the *Chozeh* of Lublin, and the *Kozhnutzer Maggid*. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Yosef of Dombrov, (5707/1947);
- * **Rav Reuven Biala** of Chicago and Mountaindale, New York (1943–2006). Born in Cleveland to irreligious parents, he developed an interest in *Yiddishkeit* as a teenager, triggered by a *Bnei Akiva Shabbos* get-together. His father passed away when he was in his early teens, and his mother vehemently opposed his desire to learn in *Yeshiva*, but he ran away from home, and entered the *Telz Yeshiva* at sixteen. Rav Reuven married Chaya Singer from Pittsburgh. Following his marriage, he learned for a short time in New York, followed by Chicago, where he learned in *Telz Yeshiva*. His wife passed away at the young age of thirty-five. It was around this time that he began publishing and distributing *Torah Action Publications*, pamphlets on different topics of *halocha*. Rav Reuven remarried and moved to Mountaindale, New York. They raised another four children *b'derech haTorah*, (5766/2006);
- * **Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Neiman**, the *Pupa Rav* and *Belzer Dayan* in Montreal, (5679–5767/1919–2007).
- * **Rav Nosson Dovid Rabinowitz** of Partzov *ben* Rav Yaakov Yitzchok, *mechaber* of *V'Eileh HaDvarim Shene'emru L'Dovid*, (5580/1820);
- * **Rav Yitzchok Aharon Segal Itinga** *ben* Rav Mordechai Zev *HaLevi*, *mechaber* of *Shailos U'teshuvos Mahari HaLevi*, (5651/1891);
- * **Rav Mordechai Dovid Levin** *ben* Rav Boruch, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Eitz Chaim* and *mechaber* of *Darchei Dovid*, (5727/1967);
- * **Rav Tzvi Hirsch**, son of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, (5539/1779);
- * **Rav Refoel Shlomo Laniado**, (1740–1793). Originating from Spain through their progenitor, Rav Shmuel, the Laniado family was among the most famous and well-

established in the Syrian city of Chaleb. Rav Refoel Shlomo Laniado was a prolific writer, and he well known for several halachic works: *HaMa'alos LiShlomo*, *Bais Dino Shel Shlomo*, *Lechem Shlomo*, and *Kisei Shlomo*, (5553/1793);

- * **Rav Mordecai Yosef Leiner** of Ishbitz (1800–1854 [some say 1878]), founder of the *Chassidic* Court at Ishbitz after leading a group of *talmidim* from the court of Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. Born in Tomashov, Poland in 1800, he was a childhood friend of Rav Menachem Mendel Morgenstern, later to become the Kotzker *Rebbe*, and they studied together in the school of the *Chassidic* Master, Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha. His *sefer*, *Mei HaShilo'ach*, is considered a fundamental work of Izhbitz and Radziner *Chassidus*. Among his *talmidim* were Rav Tzodok *HaKohen* of Lublin and Rav Leibel Eiger, (5614/1854);
- * **Rav Sholom Yosef Friedman** of Husyatin, brother of one of the first *Rebbes* of Husyatin, Rav Mordechai Shraga (the youngest son of the Rzhiner *Rebbe*, who had moved to Husyatin in 1865 and was *niftar* in 1894). Rav Sholom Yosef was the father of Rav Moshe of Boyan-Cracow (“Rav Moshenyu”), (5639/1879 [1851, according to some]);
- * **Rav Yosef Elyashiyov**. Born in the former Soviet Union to Rav Tzion, who was killed by the authorities for his efforts to promote *Yiddishkeit*, he moved from Samarkand to Tashkent after marrying; there, he and his wife raised their seven children. While living in Tashkent he had to spend seven years away from home — four years in custody on suspicion of underground religious activity and three years hiding from the KGB, who had him under surveillance for his activities to promote *Yiddishkeit*. In 1971, he managed to secure an exit visa and left his home and his family, traveling to *Eretz* Yisrael. He opened the first *Shaarei Tzion* institutions in 1980, naming them after his father. He then started a *kollel* with the goal of drawing *avreichim* from Bukharan families as well as a school in Kiryat Ono for Bukharan immigrants. Today, a total of 4,500 students, from kindergartners to *avreichim*, study at *Shaarei Tzion* institutions, (5767/2007).

* **8th of Shevat ~ Begins Sunday Night (Feb 2nd)**

- * **Rav Boruch** *ben* Rav Shmuel of Pinsk. In 1830, Rav Yisrael of Shklov, one of the closest *talmidim* of the Vilna *Gaon*, began an effort to locate the “Ten Lost Tribes”. Rav Boruch *ben* Rav Shmuel of Pinsk served as the messenger and departed from Tzefas with a letter of introduction to the king of the Lost Tribes. (The Ten Tribes were believed to have an independent kingdom where they practiced true *semicha* (rabbinical ordination) as handed down from Moshe *Rabbeinu* until the Fourth Century CE). Rav Boruch traveled through the Middle East for almost three years before he was murdered in Yemen, (5594/1834);
- * **Rav Yosef Meir Kahana**, the Spinka *Rebbe* of Yerushalayim, son of Rav Tzvi Hirsch Kahana. Rav Yosef Meir was succeeded by his son, Rav Mordechai Dovid Kahana, (5738/1978);
- * **Rav Menachem Breier**, father of the Boyaner *Rebbe*, (5767/2007);
- * **Rav Nosson Aminodov Yona** (*ben* Moshe Dovid) Cassuto of Florence (1909–1945). The son of the Florence *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Nosson became an ophthalmologist after receiving *semicha*. When the Mussolini government forbade Jews to serve as doctors, Rav Nosson became the chief *Rav* of Milan. He returned to Florence as their *Rav* in 1943. When the Nazis overran northern Italy in September of 1943, he hid his three children in a monastery, but he and his wife were arrested. He was transferred to Auschwitz in February 1944 and shot to death on a death march one year later. His wife, Chana, survived the war but was murdered by Arabs on the 4th of *Nissan* 1948, (5705/1945).

✧ **9th of Shevat ~ Begins Monday Night (Feb 3rd)**

- ✧ **Rabbeinu Nissim** *ben* Rav Reuven Gerondi, the *Ran* (1308–1376), *mechaber* of a commentary to the *Talmud* and a *halachic* commentary on the work of Rabbeinu Yitzchok Alfasi (the *Rif*). His extant commentaries on the *Rif* cover *mesechtos Shabbos, Pesochim, Ta'anis, Rosh HaShana, Beitzta, Sukka, Megilla, Kesubos, Gittin, Kiddushin, Shevu'os* and *Avoda Zara*. He wrote about a thousand responsa, of which only seventy-seven have been preserved, (5136/1376);
- ✧ **Rav Eliyohu Yisrael**, Rav of Alexander and *mechaber* of *Ar'a DeYisrael*, (5544/1784);
- ✧ **Rav Yisrael Yaakov** of Vilkomir, son of Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov, (5587/1827);
- ✧ **Rav Yaakov Heilbrun**, Rav of Zenta, (5609/1849);
- ✧ **Rav Yehosef Schwartz** (1805–1865). Born in Bavaria (Germany), he studied in the *Yeshiva* of Rav Nosson Adler. (This was not the same Rav Nosson Adler as the teacher of the *Chasam Sofer*, but perhaps his nephew, who later became chief Rav of the British Empire). Rav Schwartz also attended university (possibly the University of Wurzburg) where he studied languages, geography and astronomy. In 1829, he published his first map of the Holy Land, and in 1833, he settled in Yerushalayim. His *sefer, Divrei Yosef*, contains two parts: *Tevuos HaShemesh* about the proper way to calculate sunrise and sunset, and *Tevuos Ha'Aretz* about the borders of *Eretz Yisrael*, its cities and its flora and fauna. He also wrote *Pri Tevua* and *Pardes*, (5625/1865);
- ✧ **Rav Avrohom Aminov**, chief Rav of Shechunas HaBucharim in Yerushalayim, (5699/1939);
- ✧ **Rav Yeshayohu Zev Winograd** (1883–1956). Born in Stuchin, Lithuania, his father, Rav Pinchas Mordechai Winograd, was one of Poland's *Gedolei Torah* and the *mechaber* of *Toldos Aharon* on *Pirkei Avos*. When Yeshayohu Zev was eight years old, his family moved to Yerushalayim. In 1912, he was sent to Europe by the city's sages to raise funds for the needy of Yerushalayim. He made lengthy stops at Brisk, Biala and Warsaw. In 1920, he returned to Yerushalayim and dedicated himself to expanding *Yeshiva Etz Chaim*, the oldest educational institution in the *Ashkenazi* community (founded 1855). His major work was a *sefer* called *Shaarei Ziv*, with *chiddushim* on all of *Shas*, (5716/1956);
- ✧ **Rav Eliezer Silver** (1882–1968). Born in Kovno, Lithuania, to Rav Bunim Tzemach, Rav Silver studied in Dvinsk with Rav Yosef Rosen, the Rogatchover *Gaon*, and Rav Meir Simcha, the *Ohr Some'ach*. At the age of twenty-four, he received *semicha* from Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski. A year later he immigrated to the United States. Rav Silver held several rabbinical positions in New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. In 1931 he accepted an invitation to become Rav in Cincinnati, where he remained until his passing. He founded the American branch of *Agudas HaRabbanim* and established the *Va'ad Hatzola* to aid Jews in Europe during World War II, (5728/1968);
- ✧ **Rav Nachum Abba Grossbard**, *Mashgiach* of Ponovezh. His son is Rav Shmuel Grossbard, *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Telzstone *Yeshiva Gedola* in *Eretz Yisrael*, (5753/1993);
- ✧ **Rav Dovid** of Skver-Boro Park. Succeeded his father, Rav Yitzchok Twersky, known as Rav Itzickl Skverer (Skvirer), when the latter was *niftar* prematurely. Rav Dovid was succeeded by his son, Yechiel Michel Twersky, the Skverer *Rebbe* of Boro Park,



(5761/2001).

- * **Rav Ezra** of Gerona, a *talmid* of Rav Yitzchok *Sagi Nohor* (Isaac the Blind), the blind son of the *Ra'avad*. In around 1200, *Kabbola* had reached Gerona in Spain. Thereafter the city began to be regarded as one of the most prominent centers within the framework of esoteric thought. Among *Mekubolim* of the time, Gerona was already known as a “Mother of *Yisrael*” city. Rav Ezra was extremely well versed in *Kabbola* that he had learned from his father, who was the *Ramban*’s teacher, (4987/1227);
- * **Rav Yaakov Reischer**, *mechaber* of *Minchas Yaakov*, *Chok Yaakov*, *Iyun Yaakov*, and *Shvus Yaakov*, (5493/1733);
- * **Ezra HaSofer**, (313 BCE or 320 BCE);
- * **Nechemya HaNovi**;
- * **Rabbeinu Yosef**, son of Shmuel *HaNoggid*, and son-in-law of Rav Nissim *Gaon* of Kirouan, murdered in an Arab pogrom with another 1500 Jews in Spain, (4827/1067);
- * **Rav Yehuda (“Reb Yiddel”) Weber** (1920–2006), born in Vodkert, Hungary, to Rav Yissochor Weber, a descendent of the *Bach*, and Rebbetzin Chana, a niece of the *Arugas HaBosem*. After his *bar mitzva*, Yehuda was sent to learn in Pupa under Rav Yaakov Yechezkel Grunwald, the *Vayaged Yaakov*, the Pupa *Rebbe*, who was his *Rebbe Muvhok* for seven years. When Rav Yaakov Yechezkel was *niftar* at the age of fifty-nine, he was succeeded by his son, Rav Yosef Grunwald, the *Vayechi Yosef*. Rav Yehuda then served as *Mashgiach* of Pupa. When the *Yeshiva* was closed in 1944, Rav Yehuda spent six months in the local work camps before being deported to Bergen-Belsen. In 1946, his sister introduced him to his *Rebbetzin*, Batsheva. A year later, his sister, Miriam, married the Pupa *Rebbe*. Both families settled in Antwerp, then moved to Williamsburg, New York, in 1950. In 1952, he was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva* of the newly established Pupa *Yeshiva*, first located in Queens, then in Ossening, in Westchester County. Although his family stayed in Williamsburg, Reb Yiddel made the regular forty-mile drive for four decades, (5766/2006).

* **10th of Shevat ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Feb 4th)**

- * **Rav Meir** *ben* Yitzchok Katzenellenbogen, the *Maharam Padua* (1482–1565), born in Ellenbogen, Germany, founder of the Katzenellenbogen family. After studying in Prague, he went to Padua, Italy, and studied under Rav Yehuda Minz, whose granddaughter he married. He succeeded his father-in-law, Rav Avrohom Minz, as *Rav* of Padua. Among his contemporaries who sent him *sha'alos* were Rav Ovadia Sforno and Rav Moshe Isserles, the *Rema*.

His epitaph reads:

*The heavens are clothed in darkness
And we don sackcloth
Because of the departure of a saint
The foundation of the world, a prince pure
Who submitted with complete faith
To G-d and his religion
Better was his name than the choicest oil
Head of the Diaspora, Meir, a righteous man
Who departed on the 10th of Shevat
In the year 1565 this saint departed.*

[*Yated* 2006 says 30th of *Shevat*; *Yated* 2007 says 29th of *Shevat*], (5325/1565);

- * **Rav Sholom Mizrachi Didia** *ben* Yitzchok Sharabi (Hebrew: שר שלום מזרחי דידיע שרעבי),

born in 5480 (1720) in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen), was known as the *Rashash* (initials for "Rav Sholom Sharabi"). His father was *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Bais E-l*. Along with a number of other writings, Rav Sholom wrote a *siddur*, known as the *Siddur HaKavonos*, which is still used by *Mekubolim* today for *tefilla*. The great *Mekubol*, Rav Chaim Pelaji, testified that Rav Sholom Sharabi's soul was that of the holy *Ari* of Tzefas, and Rav Yitzchok Kaduri used to say, "One can have memorized all the written teachings of the *Ari*, and have studied them and the commentaries upon them in great depth, but if you have not learned the works of the *Rashash*, you have not yet entered into the study of *Kabbola*." The *Rashash* is considered the father of all contemporary *Sefardi Mekubolim*. On the 10th of *Shevat*, in the year 5542, he was *niftar* at the age of sixty-two, in Yerushalayim. He is buried on the Mount of Olives, where his grave is a pilgrimage site until this day, (5542/1782);

✳ **Rebbetzin Rivka Schneersohn** (1833–1914), a granddaughter of Rav Dov Ber, the second *Rebbe* of Lubavitch. At age sixteen she married her first cousin, Rav Shmuel, who later became the fourth Lubavitcher *Rebbe*. The *Bais Rivka* network of girls' schools is named after her. Surviving her husband by thirty-three years, for many years she was the esteemed matriarch of Lubavitch. She is the source of many of the stories recorded in the talks, letters and memoirs of her grandson, Rav Yosef Yitzchok (the sixth Lubavitcher *Rebbe*), (5674/1914);

✳ **Rav Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn**, the sixth Lubavitcher *Rebbe* (1880–1950). The son of Rav Sholom DovBer, he dedicated his efforts to the *Yeshiva* founded by his father, *Tomchei Temimim*. He was jailed by the Russian government for teaching *Torah*, and on his release, he settled in Riga, Latvia. He escaped to America in 1940. His son-in-law, the last Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, is buried next to him in Queens, New York. He is referred to as "the father-in-law" by the last Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, (5710/1950);

✳ **Rav Yitzchok Eizek Sher** of Slabodka (1875–1952). Born in Halusk, he studied in Volozhin under the *Netziv's* son-in-law, Rav Refoel Shapira, before moving to Slabodka. There he studied *b'chavrusa* with Rav Avrohom Grodzinski. In 1903, Rav Yitzchok Eizek married the *Alter's* youngest daughter, Mariasha Guttel, and moved to Kelm where he continued to learn diligently. He also studied for a brief period in the Mir, where his brother-in-law, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, served as *Rosh Yeshiva*. In 1911, the *Alter* appointed Rav Yitzchok Eizek to the position of *Rebbe* in the *Yeshiva*. In 1928, Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel went to *Eretz Yisrael*, along with the majority of Slabodka's students, and settled in Chevron. At that point, Rav Yitzchok Eizek was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva* of Slabodka's European division, with its *Mashgiach*, Rav Avrohom Grodzinski. On *Shabbos* morning, the sixteenth of *Av*, 1929, the Arabs massacred Chevron's Jews. After the massacre, the survivors reestablished the Chevron *Yeshiva* in Yerushalayim. Rav Yitzchok Eizek, at the advice of the *Chazon Ish*, reestablished the European branch of the Slabodka *Yeshiva* in Bnei Brak, (5712/1952);

✳ **Rav Rachamim Chai** ben Rav Chanina *HaKohen* Chavita, *Rav* and *Av Bais Din* of Djerba, Tunisia, *mechaber* of *Minchas Kohen* and *Simchas Kohen*, (5719/1959).

✳ 11th of Shevat ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Feb 5th)

✳ **Rav Dovid Nosson Deutsch**, son of Rav Yosef Yoel Deutsch, and the second *Rav* of Kretchenif. He authored *Nefesh Dovid* on *Chumash*, (5639/1879).

✳ **Rav Yehuda Leib** ben Dovid, *Rav* in Berlin and Dassau and *mechaber* of the *sefer Korban Eida*, (5566/1806);

✳ **Rav Chaim Yehoshua** ben Reuven *HaKohen* Blumenthal, *Rav* of Kaminetz, (5648/1888).

* 12th of Shevat ~ Begins Thursday Night (Feb 6th)

- * **Rav Chaim (Capoci) Kapusi** (1540–1631), one of the noted *Rabbonim* of Egypt, a *Torah* sage who knew the revealed and the secret *Torah*. Born in Algiers, he moved with his family to Egypt in his early years. He was especially close to Rav Yosef Bagiliar, who studied with the *Ari* in Tzefas. This close friendship with Rav Yosef brought him into contact with the *Gurei Ari* (students of the *Ari*, Rav Yitzchok Luria), so that he is numbered among them. He was known as a miracle worker. He became *Rav* and *Dayan* in Egypt. He passed away at the age of ninety-one and is buried in the Cairo Jewish cemetery. He authored *Sifsei Chaim* (unpublished) on the *Sifri* and the *Mechilta*, and *Be'or HaChaim* on *Chumash*, which was published about three hundred years after his *petira* (some say he was *niftar* on the 13th of *Shevat*), (5391/1631);
- * **Rav Tzvi Hirsch Shor**, *mechaber* of *Toras Chaim*, (5395/1635);
- * **Rav Boruch Kapilish** of Lublin, (5499/1739);
- * **Rav Meir Atlas**, one of the foremost *Rabbonim* in Lithuania in the late eighteen hundreds and early nineteen hundreds (1848–1926). He helped found the *Yeshiva* of Telshe in 1875 and brought Rav Eliezer Gordon to head it. Rav Meir's daughter, Michle, was married to Rav Elchonon Wasserman, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Baranovich. Rav Meir first served as *Rav* in Libau, Kurland, and subsequently in Salant, Kobrin and Shavli, (5686/1926);
- * **Rav Zev Dov Zamoshitz**, *mechaber* of *Minchas Zikoron*, (5702/1942);
- * **Rav Shmuel Chamoula**, (5702–5764/1942–2004);
- * **Rav Shabtai Aton [Atun]**, *Rosh Yeshiva Reishis Chochma* (1925–2006). Born in Yerushalayim's Old City to Rav Ben-Tzion, one of the ten founders of *Yeshiva Poras Yosef* in the Old City, Rav Shabtai learned at his father's *Yeshiva* and was appointed *Rav* of the Yerushalayim neighborhood of Malcha. In 1957, he was appointed the spiritual leader of *Yeshiva Poras Yosef*, under the *Roshei Yeshiva* Rav Ezra Attia and Rav Yaakov Addes. It was at this time that the *Yeshiva* moved from the Old City to Geula. In Teves 1960, Rav Aton was widowed and left with four small children. In 1967, he opened *Yeshiva Reishis Chochma*. At first, the *Yeshiva* was located in the Yerushalayim neighborhood of Mekor Boruch, after which it moved to its present location in Sanhedria Murchevet, (5766/2006).



❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

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

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

The *Zohar* in *VaYeira* page 71 teaches us that if we suffer any calamity or tragedy we have the custom to go and daven at the kevorim of *Tzaddikim*. The reason for this is that we approach

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



❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Yosef Meir Kahana of Spinka, 8th of Shevat

A Kohen Meyuchos

Rav Alter Kahana of Ziditshov/Spinka, the son of Rav Yosef Meir, testified that they have a pedigree of *yichus* that traced back their family tree directly to the *mechaber* of *Kuntres HaSefeikos*, Rav Yaakov Yosef *HaKohen*, who in turn traced his lineage directly back to Eli *HaKohen*.

Rav Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky, the chief *Rav* of Yerushalayim, used to send all those who asked which *Kohen* to use for a *Pidyon Haben* to go to Rav Yosef Meir Kahana of

Spinka, because he was a *Kohen* with a strong pedigree and reliable *yichus*.

Once, an elderly Jew, a *bechor* (firstborn), came to Rav Aharon of Belz, complaining of pain, suffering and various calamities. The Belzer *Rav* told him to go and redeem himself a second time, using Rav Yosef Meir Kahana as his *Kohen*. And so he did. From then on, he was transformed into a new person! (*Otzar Pidyon HaBen*, Vol I p. 87, p. 66 footnote 9)



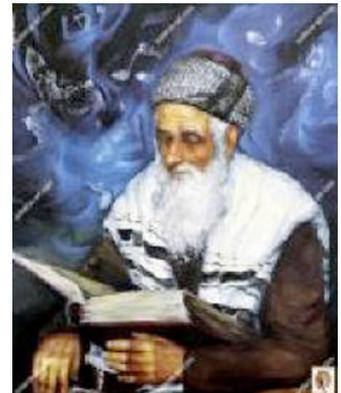
Rav Sholom Ben Yitzchok Mizrachi Sharabi, 10th of Shevat

The Rashash

One of the great Yemenite *Torah* leaders and one of the foremost *Mekubolim* of his day and the leading *Mekubol* in Yerushalayim, Rav Sholom Sharabi, otherwise known as the *Rashash*, was born in Sharab, Yemen, in 5480/1720. After being miraculously saved from a difficult situation, Rav Sholom made a vow to go to the Holy Land in order to live in Yerushalayim, where he arrived after a journey that led him through India, Baghdad and Damascus. Although he had already established himself in his previous countries of residence as a significant *Torah* scholar and *mekubol*, he was determined to keep his abilities hidden in

Eretz Yisrael. The *Rashash* approached the *Rosh Yeshiva*, Rav Gedalia Chayon, and applied for the job of *Shamash*. This way he was able to stay anonymous, yet quench his thirst for *Torah* in this great *Yeshiva*.

He would stand innocently in the corner during *shiurim* as if he were not part of the *shiur*, yet he was listening intently. His official job was to wake up the *talmidim* for



tikkun chatzos (midnight prayers), arrange the *seforim*, and bring water. No one dreamed that this “*Shamash*” was actually a great *Talmid Chochom*. When difficult questions arose that could not be answered by anyone in the *Yeshiva* the *Rashash* would leave an anonymous note with the correct answer between the *Rosh Yeshiva’s seforim*. This happened on a number of occasions and left the *Rosh Yeshiva* and all the *talmidim* bewildered as to who the author could have been, since the *Rosh Yeshiva* had decreed on all the *talmidim* that they must reveal the author.

One day, when the daughter of the *Rosh Yeshiva* saw the *Rashash* sticking a paper inside her father’s *sefer* she immediately notified her father. Under pressure from the *Rosh Yeshiva*, the *Rashash* was forced to admit what he had been doing all along. Although he pleaded with Rav Gedalia to let him remain hidden, Rav Gedalia took his daughter’s revelation as a sign from *Shomayim* that it was time for the *Rashash* to be revealed. From then on the *Rashash* became very close with the *Rosh Yeshiva* and in time married his daughter.

After Rav Gedalia’s *petira*, the *Rashash*, at only twenty-seven years old, was appointed *Rosh Yeshiva*. He wrote a *peirush* on the *Arizal’s Kabbola* work *Eitz Chaim* (written by Rav Chaim Vital) of which Rav Yedidiya Abulafia said that whoever learns *Eitz Chaim* without the *peirush* of the *Rashash* is like a blind man feeling his way in the dark. Among his most famous writings is the *Siddur HaRashash* in which is written special *kabbalistic kavonos* for *Tefilla* which have become the standard for all *Mekubolim* today.

Among his *talmidim* were the *Chida* and the *Maharit Algazi*, who became the *Rosh Yeshiva* after the *petira* of the *Rashash*. His great son, Rav Yitzchok Sharabi, left in his *tzavo’a* (will) a request to bury him in disgrace and throw him into his *kever* as a *kapora* for once acting

against the wishes of his father, the *Rashash*. Naturally, upon his *petira*, the *Chevra Kadisha* refused to carry this out. During the *levaya* they were attacked by the local Arabs and everyone was forced to leave the *niftar* and flee for their lives. The attackers then flung the body which rolled down the hill in disgrace to its final resting place.

The *Rashash* was *niftar* in Yerushalayim in 5542/1782 at the age of fifty-seven. He promised that in times of *tzora* (trouble), whoever *davens* at his *kever* with great *kavona* will be answered. He is buried on *Har HaZeisim* and on his *yahrzeit*, the 10th of *Shevat*, many petitioners go to learn and *daven* there. *Yehi zichro boruch*.

www.revach.net/article.php?id=1706



The Sar Sholom and the Siddur Rashash

The first Belzer *Rav*, the *Sar Sholom*, had a *Chassid* who always traveled to *Eretz Yisrael* to procure an *esrog* for the *Rebbe* for *Sukkos*. One summer, when this *Chassid* was preparing for the journey, the *Rebbe* gave him an additional mission: to procure the *sefer Nahar Sholom* and the various volumes of the *siddur* of the holy *Rashash*, which was rare back then, and only available as a hand-written manuscript – and only in *Yeshiva Beis E”l* in the old city of Yerushalayim.

The *Chassid* accepted the mission and when he traveled to *Eretz Yisrael* he succeeded in procuring the manuscripts of the *Rashash’s*



writings, as well as the *siddur* for the *Sar Sholom*.

When word reached the *Rebbe*, his joy knew no bounds, and when he heard of his *Chassid's* arrival, the *Tzaddik* dressed in *Shabbos* clothes and went out to the city limits to meet the approaching caravan and horses. When the *Chassid* saw the *Rebbe* approach, bedecked in his *Shabbos* finery, he alighted and approached the *Rebbe*.

“Where are the *seforim* of the holy *Rashash*?” inquired the *Rebbe*.

The *Chassid* pointed to one of the trunks and, to his amazement, the *Rebbe* lifted the heavy trunk off the horse and carried it by hand himself all the way back to town!

Afterward, the *Rebbe* closeted himself in his room for some three days straight to study the *seforim*. When he emerged on the fourth day, a holy light shone from his countenance and he declared, “For some years now I greatly desired to study the *sefer Nahar Sholom* and the *siddur* of the *Rashash*. Now that I have achieved my heart’s desire and have studied them, I see that we are both of the same mind on certain matters; many things I thought, the *Rashash* also teaches!” The *Rebbe* then handed out cake and *bronfen* and they drank *lechaim!* (*Moron HaRashash*, p. 232–235)



The Chazon Ish in Beis E”l – and the Attempt at Hastening the Geula

When the *Chazon Ish* visited the *Kosel* and the Old City, together with Rav



Rav Yosef Yitzchok Ben Sholom Dovber Schneerson of Chabad Lubavitch, 10th of Shevat

The Rayatz

The Panicked Nurse

In 1947, only a few years before Rav Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn (the *Rayatz*), sixth *Rebbe* in the *Chabad-Lubavitch*

Osher Zelig Margolios, he stopped at the famed *Yeshiva* of the *Mekubolim, Beis E”l*, where he sat studying by heart in *dveikus* and remarked when he departed, “It is a great *zechus* to visit such a holy *Beis Medrash* of the *Rashash*, where great, holy *Tzaddikim* studied and *davened* with the secrets of *Hashem – sod Hashem liyerei’ov!*”

There in the *Yeshiva* is a side room where a hole leads down a stairway to a wide courtyard where a cavern is found. In this cavern, the *Tzaddikim* meditated in *hisbodedus* (seclusion), using *yichudim* and kabbalistic prayers and devotions. The *Chazon Ish* entered that room, descended those stairs, entered that cavern and declared, “This is truly a good place for *hisbodedus*.” There are those who claim that what happened in that cavern was that the *Rashash*, together with the *Chida* and Rav Chaim DiLaRoza fasted three days straight, *davened*, engaged in *yichudim*, rolled in the snow and attempted to hasten the end of days and the coming of *Moshiach*. After three days, they heard a heavenly voice declare, “My sons, you are forbidden to hasten the end; I must separate you so that you three do not remain as a group. I decree that one of you must go into exile!”

The three *Tzaddikim* drew lots and so it was that the *Chida* sold his possessions and left for Livorno, Italy, where he lived out the rest of his days. (Based on *Rav Pe’alim* and *Chibas Yerushalayim* as cited in *Moron HaRashash*, p. 241–244)

dynasty, passed away, his son-in-law and eventual successor, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, traveled to Paris. His mother had made it out of Communist Russia. The

Rebbe, who had escaped from Europe to the United States in 1941, arrived in Paris to greet his mother, whom he had not seen for more than fifteen years, in order to escort her back to the United States.

In Paris, he met a group of Lubavitch *Chassidim* who had survived the Holocaust and very much wanted to immigrate to the United States but could not get visas. They asked him that upon his return he tell the *Rebbe Rayatz* of their plight and request that he awaken compassion and mercy upon them in Heaven. Rav Menachem Mendel explained to them that they must be a little naïve to think that the *Rayatz* needs to be directly informed in order to be made aware of their problems. In order to make his point he told them the following story:

At the time, the *Rayatz* was ill and required a certain injection of drugs every day. A private nurse would come to his study at 770 at a set time in order to administer the injection. One day, the nurse was a few minutes late. When she knocked on the door of his study there was no answer. Usually, there were *gabbo'im* from the *Rayatz's* secretariat around, but this time there was no one there. So she slowly opened the door to his study. When she walked in she saw him sitting at his desk, his eyes gazing off into the distance, obviously unaware that she had entered. He had the look of someone who was not in this world altogether. She had never seen anything like this and was certain that something had happened to him – perhaps he had even lost consciousness.

She ran out looking for someone from the family or the staff. She encountered the *Ramash* (as the *Rebbe-to-be* was known in those days), who quickly came into the room and approached his father-in-law to hear what he was mumbling. He heard the *Rebbe Rayatz* reciting by heart and with the *Torah* melody the words of the Song of the Sea, *Oz Yoshir*. It was as if the *Rayatz* was praying.

So, immediately he realized that the *Rayatz* was in a state of communion (with *Hashem*) and that he was not sick. This state is known as disembodiment and the person seems to have lost touch with reality (the truth is very much the opposite, as we will see in a moment). Indeed, after a few minutes, the *Rayatz* seemed to snap out of it.

But the *Rebbe* sensed that there was a reason for all this. He decided to do some research and learned that during those very moments that the *Rayatz* was in a state of communion and disembodiment, thousands of miles away, a small group of *Chassidim* had tried to cross the Russian-Polish border illegally. If they had been caught, they would have been summarily executed. During those critical moments, the *Rebbe Rayatz* had awakened the mercy of Heaven that they be successful.

The *Rebbe-to-be* told the *Chassidim* in Paris that after hearing this story they should understand that the *Rebbe Rayatz* does not need anyone to tell him when to awaken mercy on his *talmidim*. Every *Chassid* is always on his mind. He sees and knows exactly what is happening with him, and continually sacrifices himself and prays for every one of them.

This is an important story to make us reflect that the *Rebbe* is indeed thinking of each one of us, and continually awakening the mercy of Heaven upon us.

One more point to take with us from this story is that there is a powerful connection between saying the Song of the Sea and awakening mercy in Heaven. If the *Rebbe* noted what the *Rayatz* was saying (he could have told the story without noting what the *Rayatz* had been saying during his disembodiment), it means that we should be aware of it. If you think about someone who needs Heavenly mercy and recite the Song of the Sea with sincerity and the proper intent, you will be awakening the Heavens to be merciful with him. This is true both for an individual and for the

entire Jewish people.

The Song of the Sea appears in *Parshas Beshalach*, the *Torah* reading of the week during which the 10th of *Shevat* – the *Rayatz's Yahrzeit* – usually falls, making this story and its teaching particularly suited to the date.

Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the translation/rendition on inner.org, which is based on a talk by Rav Yitzchok Ginsburgh at a children's gathering in Ramat Aviv

www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=791-20

(Actually, he told there two stories. For the other, here is the link:

www.inner.org/spiritual-masters/yosef-yitzchak-schneersohn-rayatz-1.php)



One Angel of Mercy Versus One Thousand

Rav Shlomo Kazranovsky told how once the *Rebbe Rayatz* sent him and his son-in-law, the *Rashag*, on a *shelichus* mission to Toronto, Canada. Due to the snow, the transportation was delayed and they were stranded at the hotel. As they sat, several *Chabad Chassidim* arrived, as well as one of the local *Rabbonim*, who told the following story:

“One of my *ba'alei batim*, a member of our congregation, was sick, and lay in the hospital as his sickness spread and attacked his body, causing him to be bedridden and unable to walk. When I found out, I personally went to visit him. His family told me that his condition was very serious and that I could not even go in to see him, but he heard my voice and called them to tell me to come in.

“I heard that the Lubavitcher *Rebbe* is in America,’ the sick man said. ‘Please write to him and ask him how can I redeem myself and get well!’

“I quickly sent a telegram to the *Rebbe Rayatz*, explaining the situation, and his answer arrived back quickly as well: ‘Tell the sick man that they are in the midst of constructing a Lubavitcher

Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim in Montreal and that he should donate one thousand dollars, because an angel of one thousand is worth more than of one hundred, as we say: *im yesh olov maloch meilitz achad minI olef.*’

“I quickly brought the *Rebbe's* reply to the hospital. The family heard and one uncle said in disgust, ‘You see – already these people find ways of squeezing out money.’

“I kept my silence and brought the *Rebbe's* holy words to the sick man. He heard me read the letter and immediately told his son, ‘Quick – send the money to Montreal – I want to live!’

“And so they did. A few days later, the family told me what had happened. Apparently, the doctor came in anger and accused them of using another doctor and changing the medication and treatment without notifying the hospital or staff. When the family argued and countered that they had done no such thing, the doctor replied, ‘If so, it's a miracle! For his entire disease is abating and leaving him and his body is going back to normal, resuming its functions, and he will be released completely well in a few days' time!’

“This is indeed what happened. Afterward, the son asked me if he had to delay his wedding. ‘I was engaged and we pushed off the wedding date because of my father's sickness. Now that he is well again, we wished to proceed, but my uncle whom you met at the hospital suddenly died.’

“I told him not to push off the wedding again.” (*Shemuos Vesippurim* I, p. 218–219)



What is Chassidus and What is Tanya?

An entry from the journal of the *Rayatz* in the year *tov-reish-pei-tes*, in America:

An American Jew approached me

and asked, “What is *Chassidus* and what is *Tanya*?”

I answered him, “*Chassidus* is a *emes lichtiker leibedikeit* – A truly shining life! And *Tanya* is a collection of advice and healing for sick souls. It is a work culled from the positive benefits and virtues that people have, as well as their shortcomings. It is unlike other written works by authors because only when you follow the advice and do what it says – only then can you understand what it says for you to do. (*Shemuos Vesippurim* I, p. 219–220)



Holy Matbei'os With Holy Instructions

Rav Refoel Kahn, father of the *Rebbe's chozer*, Rav Yoel Kahn, once told how once the *Rebbe Rayatz* was invited to a *Melave Malka* in the year *tov-reish-tzadi*

in the USA.

At the *Melave Malka*, two *gevirim* (wealthy Jews) were present and the *Rebbe Rayatz* gave each of them a silver *matbei'a*, a coin given as a *segula* for *shemira* and *berocha*. To one of the *gevirim* he gave instructions that he should carry the *matbei'a* on his person at all times. To the other he told him that he should sew the *matbei'a* onto his *tallis kotton* (his *tzitzis* garment).

Everyone present was surprised and amazed as to the reason behind the *Rebbe Rayatz's* different instructions to each of the *gevirim*, until they compared notes. One said, “Now, isn't that puzzling – the *Rebbe* told me to sew this coin onto my *tallis kotton*, but I don't even wear one!”

Then they all realized the intention behind the *Rebbe's* holy instruction. (*Shemuos Vesippurim* III, p. 222 #123)



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

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

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

(מתוך אמונה טהורה) בדרך המסורה (והתנהגה כאשה כשרה) לכל משפחתה,

היא הודה היא הדרה - נקיה וטהורה היוצר וצר צורה (וקיבלה הגזירה)

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תמליץ טוב בעד משפחתה היקרה
ותקים לתחיה לקץ הימין מהרה
ת'נצ'ב'ה'

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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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

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

**MASKIL LEDAVID**

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

How Do You Spend Your Money?

"Please speak in the ears of the people: Let each man request of his fellow and each woman from her friend silver vessels and gold vessels" (Shemot 11:2)

At the time of the redemption, the Jewish people became very wealthy, as a result of the valuables that they took from the Egyptians before they left and also from the spoil that was flung onto the shore after the Egyptians drowned. While they were still in Mitzrayim, Hashem commanded them, "Let each man request of his fellow and each woman from her friend silver vessels and gold vessels", and later it says (Shemot 12:36), "They emptied Egypt", on which the Sages comment, "They made it like the depths of the sea that has no fish". The spoil that they gathered from the seashore also added to their wealth, to the extent that Chazal say that every Jew left with ninety Libyan donkeys, laden with an abundance of silver and gold. Moshe Rabbeinu even had to lead them away by force, as it says, (Shemot 15:22) "Moshe caused Israel to journey from the Sea of Reeds". Chazal explain that this expression implies that he made them journey against their will since it was hard for them to take leave of the treasures of gold there.

It is interesting to note that the spoil that they took out from Egypt was given to them on loan and not as a gift, as it says, "Each woman shall borrow from her neighbor" (Shemot 3:22). Later too, the verse tells us, "They borrowed from the Egyptians silver vessels, gold vessels and garments" (Shemot 12:35), whereas concerning the spoil from the sea, this expression of 'borrowing' is not used. This indicates that it was given to them as a gift. Why this distinction?

It could be that Hashem specially gave Am Yisrael part of the wealth as a gift and part on loan, so that if a person comes and claims that it is hard for him to keep the mitzvot since many of them involve a considerable expense, for example when buying quality tefillin, mezuzot or arba minim, Hashem will answer him that he should know that part of what he owns was not given to him as a gift, it is rather on loan from Hashem.

It is true that a part of his resources was given to him for his personal needs but the rest is on loan so that it should be easier for him to fulfil the mitzvot. In reality, he is only taking care of Hashem's possessions that are entrusted to him so that he can fulfil the mitzvot and is not therefore even using his own personal money.

Tzaddikim who long to fulfil Hashem's will, take even the portion of their resources that Hashem gives them for their own needs, and consecrate it to Hashem. They willingly sacrifice it for a higher purpose, to fulfil "You shall love Hashem...with all your resources". Chazal explain these words as meaning, "with all your money". This is why Chazal say (Chulin 91a), "The money of

tzaddikim is more precious to them than their bodies". Because they understand how many mitzvot and good deeds they can accomplish with their money, whether it is enhancing a mitzvah, giving charity or performing acts of kindness, this is why their money is dear to them. They use it as a means to bring pleasure to their Creator.

Rabbi Chaim Pinto zy"א, had a custom never to go to sleep at night before distributing to the poor any money that he had in his possession. He understood that if he was given money, it was only for the sake of fulfilling the mitzvah of tzedakah. Why should it remain in his own pocket for no purpose? This is the kind of person about whom we can say that his money is precious to him, for he understands the true value of money as a means of increasing his share in the World to Come.

Fortunate is the one who understands where to invest his money. A person can, chalila, inherit gehinom with his money, or alternatively, use it to acquire mitzvot and good deeds and merit the public and in this way he will merit Gan Eden.

Chazal tell us (Baba Batra 11a), about the king Mubaz who 'wasted' his treasures on the poor during a year of drought. His family came to him and said: Your ancestors set aside all kinds of valuables, and added their own silver and gold to the previous generation's store, and you are wasting your ancestors' valuables and your own? He answered: My ancestors put away treasures down below; I am storing my treasures up in the Heavens. My ancestors stored in a place which is in the control of the human hand; I am storing in a place where the human hand has no control. My ancestors stored something that bears no fruit; I am storing something that gives forth fruit. My ancestors stored treasures of money; I am storing treasures of the soul. My ancestors stored for others; I am storing for myself. My ancestors stored for this world; I am storing for the Next World, as it says, "Your righteous deed will precede you and the glory of Hashem will gather you in" (Yeshayahu 58:8).

This is the way of the righteous who understand the great value inherent in the money that they possess, using it for Heavens' sake.

These stories are extremely powerful. We are talking about tzaddikim who clearly understood that their money was given to them on loan, as a means of fulfilling Torah and mitzvot. Therefore, when they were presented with a mitzvah opportunity, they happily gave away all the money that the situation required. This was the only reason they were given the money in the first place. We are commanded (Devarim 14:22), "רשעת רשע", you shall tithe. The second part of the compound verb הִשַׁעַתְתָּ הִשַׁעַתְתָּ, you shall tithe, can be read הִשַׁעַתְתָּ, you will become rich. Chazal teach on this verse that if you give tithes, you will become rich (and will then be able to perform more mitzvot).

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Hilula

6 - Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman, author of 'Oneg Yom Tov'

7 - Rabbi David of Lelov

8 - Rabbi Yosef Gian, Av Beit Din of Bengazi

9 - Rabbi Ya'akov Katina, author of 'Rachmei Ha'Av'

10 - Rabbi Shalom Mizrachi, the Rashash Hakadosh

11 - Rabbi Chaim Toledano

12 - Rabbi Rafael Pinto zy"א



Walking in their Ways

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

The Power of the Yetzer Hara

The following story emphasizes how the yetzer hara tries with all his might to mislead a person and prevent him from performing mitzvot:

One Chol Hamoed Pesach (5771) when I was receiving people, a bachur, whose external appearance told me that he was far from being a G-d fearing Jew, came in to see me. But as he spoke, I soon understood that with G-d's help, he merited recognizing the true light, and he was now on the path of repentance. Hearing this brought me great joy.

I tangibly saw the Hand of Hashem as he explained how he was introduced to me. This happened a few days before the chag, when he was in the Beit Midrash. He noticed my sefer 'Kerem David', on Pirkei Avot. He started reading it and was most inspired. That is what gave him the idea of trying to get an audience with me.

I thanked Hashem for this merit, and of course I encouraged him to strengthen his connection with Hashem and his adherence to the correct path. In order to bring him closer, I suggested that he join me the following morning for Shacharit, in the Beit Knesset where I usually pray, to which he happily agreed.

To my great dismay, that night my throat began bothering me and felt very sore. My fever rose and I began to shiver. I felt most unwell and lay awake the whole night. Only towards morning did I fall asleep for a short time.

When I awoke, I felt the yetzer hara turning to me, pretending to worry for my health. I heard an inner voice telling me, "You shouldn't go to pray today in the Beit Knesset. You are tired and weary, all your bones ache. Besides, you didn't sleep the whole night and Chazal tell us that an onus (a person compelled) is exempt from fulfilling the mitzvot."

I was almost convinced by his argument and thought about praying at home by myself. But suddenly I remembered about this bachur who was taking his first steps closer to a religious way of life. I had invited him to come and pray with me today in the Beit Knesset! I imagined that he would probably come, as he promised. And if he wouldn't see me there, this might dampen his enthusiasm and connection with religion. Not wishing to take responsibility for this, I immediately pulled myself together and got ready to leave the house. Indeed, when I came to the Beit Knesset he was already waiting for me by the entrance with his hand outstretched to greet me. After the tefillah, I again spoke to him pleasantly and encouraged him in his mitzvah observance and love of Hashem.

This episode showed me the intense power of the yetzer hara, who stoops to any means in order to incite a person to slacken in his avodat Hashem. We must take great care not to let ourselves be enticed even once.

The Haftarah

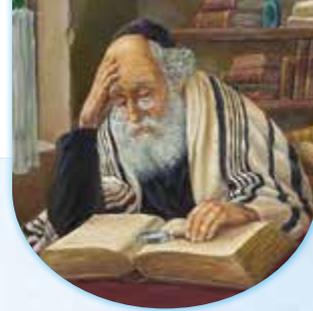
"The word that Hashem spoke" (Yirmiyahu 46)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about Pharaoh's punishment and the destruction of Egypt. The Parsha too speaks about the last three plagues and the destruction of Egypt.

Guard Your Tongue

A Heavenly Voice Rings Out

If a rumor goes around that somebody did something or said something not in accordance with the Torah, either a serious or even minor transgression, it is forbidden to accept and believe this information. One may only take precautions until the matter is clarified.



Words of our Sages

Segulot from Maran Sar HaTorah

"He will not permit the destroyer to enter your homes to smite" (Shemot 12:23)

In the sefer 'Beit Imi', the Rabbanit R. Tzivyon, daughter of Maran Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita, describes how her parents received a large number of beautifully designed 'asher yatzar' cards from Rabbi Shimshon Halperin, for my mother to distribute to their many visitors.

Ima distributed thousands of these cards to all different woman, encouraging them to say the blessing word for word and with great concentration. (Ima also hung a placard on the wall, with the blessing written out clearly, and was particular to recite from this. Abba too is particular about this). She writes that her mother attested that women who took upon themselves to recite the blessing from the text and with concentration, merited great salvation. Ima recommended this segula for different problems, especially for digestive problems.

Ima told us the following story: A woman from chutz la'arezt came to see me and poured out her heart about several challenges that occurred to her one after another. I really wanted to help her, so I told her about the segula of 'asher yatzar' that has helped so many. I suggested to her that she should take upon herself to recite the blessing with concentration, from inside the text. I wanted to tell her about the great advantage of this blessing, but she excitedly claimed, "Who better than I knows about the great advantage of this segula!"

This is what the woman told Ima: "Half a year ago, my father became unwell and had to undergo a complicated heart operation. After the operation, the doctor came out to us and uneasily informed us that it was possible that our father was incapacitated during the operation, and will not have control of his needs. His words fell on us like a hard blow and we did not know what to do. Without any other solution, I decided that all I could do was pray to Hashem in Heaven. I also wished to accept something upon myself as a merit for my father.

Since I normally pray in English because I find it hard to pray in Lashon Hakodesh, I made a resolution to recite the asher yatzar blessing from the text, in Lashon Hakodesh. If I thought this was an easy commitment, I was soon proved wrong. It was actually very hard. Each blessing took me about half an hour, and sometimes I had to recite it in the middle of the night when my eyes were drooping with tiredness!"

"But," finished the woman, "the segula bore fruit and after about three weeks, my father recovered completely!"

Ima knew of a wide range of segulot and healing remedies for all different areas. I would like to stress that our family is most particular about the halacha of reciting the following prayer, before taking any kind of medication:

"יהי רצון שיהיה עסק זה לי לרפואה שלמה כי רופא חייבם אתה".

"May it be Your will that this act should grant me a complete recovery, for You heal ungrudgingly."

For toothache: This segulah comes from my grandfather, the Steipler: After reciting in Kiddush Levanah, "Just as I dance toward you but cannot touch you, so may none of my enemies be able to touch me for evil" one should add, "and may I (or so and so) not suffer from toothache".

Once the Savta Rabbanit Kanievsky had an acute toothache. Saba mentioned her name in Kiddush Levanah and immediately afterwards her pain subsided. Savta mentioned this to Abba, but warned him that he shouldn't speak about it. She was worried that Saba would become known as a miracle worker and then many people will come to him which would take him away from his learning.



Torah Study Brings Light

The plague of Darkness holds a wonderful, inspiring message for Am Yisrael.

Hashem wanted Bnei Yisrael to see the difference between darkness and light, between the Egyptians who sit in great darkness and Bnei Yisrael for whom there was great light, "But for all the Children of Israel there was light in their dwellings". Hashem wished to impart a message to Bnei Yisrael, concerning their future spiritual continuity: They should know that it is not money that brings longed for happiness and it is not gold that brings light, for the Egyptians, with all the valuables that they possessed, lived a life of darkness and obscurity. For one who does not possess the Torah will never be happy and will never feel satisfaction despite his great wealth.

On the other hand, Bnei Yisrael had "light in their dwellings", for in a short time they would stand at the foot of Har Sinai and receive the Holy Torah. And a great light shines on the one who possesses Torah and fulfills Hashem's commandments. Immense happiness fills his heart and he is joyful throughout his life. This is what Hashem wanted the Jewish people to realize: It is not worth it for them to chase after silver and gold for this ultimately leads to destruction, darkness and obscurity. One should only pursue Torah and mitzvot for it is this alone which affords happiness and one who occupies himself with this, merits a great light.

Indeed, the Jewish people took this message to heart and from that moment, shunned silver and gold, not falling captive to its glitter. During the plague of Darkness, the Jewish people entered the Egyptian homes and discovered all their hidden treasures and even though they could have taken whatever they wanted, they did not touch anything, for they understood that wealth does not have substance. Anyone who wastes time chasing after riches will simply end up in darkness.

The Sifsei Chachamim writes on the verse (ibid 12:36), "Hashem gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians and they granted their request", that "the Egyptians lent them their valuables against their will. For when the Egyptians saw that the Jewish people could have taken whatever they wanted during the days of darkness since there was no way they could protest, yet they desisted, this granted them favor in their eyes, so they agreed to lend them their possessions, even though it was against their will to do so."

This shows us that Bnei Yisrael did not run after the Egyptians' possessions, for they understood that one who runs after silver and gold, one whose head is immersed in wealth and in amassing a fortune, leads a life of darkness. On the other hand, one who runs after Torah and mitzvot, merits a life of happiness and light, "But for all the Children of Israel there was light in their dwellings".

Pearls of the Parsha

Impossible to Distance Oneself from the Creator

"Hashem said to Moshe, "Come to Pharaoh, for I have made his heart stubborn" (Shemot 10:1)

There is a famous question that many ask: Why does it say "Come to Pharaoh" and not "Go to Pharaoh"?

Rabbi Chanoch Tzvi of Bendin, the son-in-law of Rabbi Yehuda Leib of Gur, the Sfat Emet, writes in his sefer "Yecha'en Pe'er":

My wife, the Rabbanit Feige, explained it in this way:

Hashem Yitbarach, as if, was calming Moshe in advance of his difficult mission of going to speak to the king of Mitzrayim, and says to him, "Come with me. Both of us together will go to Pharaoh..."

The tzaddik Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, offers another beautiful idea: Hashem did not tell Moshe, "Go... (to Pharaoh)", for one can never separate oneself from Hashem's presence! It is impossible for a person to distance himself from his Creator, since "the whole world is filled with His glory". Hashem therefore said to Moshe, "Come with me to Pharaoh, I am with you wherever you go!"

Pharaoh's Name Hints to the Plague

"Hashem said to Moshe, "Come to Pharaoh, for I have made his heart and the heart of his servants stubborn" (Shemot 10:1)

The Mefarshim wonder how Moshe knew to tell Pharaoh about the plague of Locusts since Hashem did not mention anything about this plague? Here is just one explanation:

The Chatam Sofer brings in the name of the Gaon Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli zya"א, that the letters 'בּוּמ"ף', letters pronounced using the lips, are interchangeable since they are all uttered using the same source. So too the letters 'אחה"ע' which are all guttural sounds, are also interchangeable.

So, if we change the 'פ' of 'פרעה' to a 'ב', and the 'ע' to 'א', and then rearrange the letters, it will spell the word 'ארבה', locust. Through saying 'בא' פרעה, Hashem was hinting to Moshe, put the letters 'בא' into 'פרעה'.

This explains the continuation of the verse, 'למען שתי אתני אלה בקרב', translated as, "so that I can put these signs of Mine in his midst". The word 'אתני' can also be translated as 'letters', meaning 'put these two letters (of 'בא') in him', and you get 'ארבה'. This is the plague with which you must now smite Egypt!

Learn from the Animal

"And our livestock, as well, will go with us" (Shemot 10:26)

The Malbim zt"l writes:

Our animals will go with us willingly, for they desire to be offered as sacrifices before Hashem, just as Chazal tell us that the bull that Eliyahu Hanavi offered ran happily to the altar, while the bull that the false prophets offered, refused to go to the altar, and from here we learn a lesson how to serve Hashem.

If an animal that does not possess intelligence, longs to be offered as a sacrifice for Hashem, how much more so should we human beings, who have been blessed with intelligence, long to serve Hashem.

It Does Not Refer to the Egyptians

"Please speak in the ears of the people: Let each man request of his fellow" (Shemot 11:2)

Since when is an Egyptian considered a 'fellow'?

The Vilna Gaon presents a novel idea: 'Fellow' does not refer to the Egyptians, but rather to the Jewish people. They were told to request silver and gold vessels from their fellow Jews, for when a Jew performs kindness with his friend, then in this merit, Hashem will influence the non-Jews to give to them too, measure for measure.

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



In the middle of the Parsha, we find the wonderful miracle of "But against all the Children of Israel, no dog shall whet its tongue" (Shemot 11:7). One can ask why there is a difference between the reward that the frogs received and the dogs' reward? The frogs who sacrificed their lives and entered the ovens, merited remaining alive, as the Ba'al Haturim explains (Shemot 8:1), whereas we are commanded to throw carcasses and non-kosher meat to the dogs, until this very day. Why were the frogs given a reward that lasted only a few years, while the dogs' reward is valid for all their future generations?

Rabbi David of Tulna answers that from here we have a proof that controlling oneself from saying something hurtful to one's friend, is considered a much greater sacrifice than jumping into a fire for one's friend. So great is the power of silence. It says in the Midrash (Esther Rabba 6): "Rachel seized the spindle of silence. She saw her gifts (that she should have received from Ya'akov) in her sister's hand and remained quiet. Binyamin, her son, also seized the attribute of silence. His stone in the Breastplate was called 'ישפה', 'Yashfeh', which hints that although he was aware of the selling of Yosef, he kept quiet. The word 'ישפה' can be split up into two, 'ישפה', there is a mouth, yet he was silent."

The holy Rebbe, Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov used to say: "When someone keeps his mouth closed even just once, and controls himself not to become angry, it is worth more than fasting a thousand fasts!"

Silence is a sign of inner strength. It is an expression of depth and a

manifestation of resolve and emotional stability. Silence is the peak of all attributes. We are familiar with the famous words of the Vilna Gaon, quoted in his letter in the name of the Midrash: "For every single moment that a person keeps his mouth closed, he merits the hidden light that no angel or creature can imagine!"

One Who Bays Like a Donkey is a Donkey

In the marketplace in the Old City of Jerusalem, stood a young boy holding a tray of warm bagels, which he wished to sell to earn a few coins. One of the merchants noticed that the tray looked extremely valuable. It seemed to be an antique piece, made of gold. Since he realized that the child who was holding the tray had no idea of its true value, he approached him and said: "My child, if you want, I will take all the bagels from you, together with the tray, and pay you one hundred shekels". The child was clever and thought to himself that if this man is offering to pay one hundred shekels, it must be worth at least one hundred and ten and so he refused the offer.

He decided to test how determined the man was to buy the tray. He made the following offer: If you want, we can make an exchange: If you give me your donkey, you can take the tray. The man's immediate agreement was a proof that the tray was obviously worth several thousand... He then told the man that he will carry out the exchange only if he demonstrates the noise that a donkey makes. The man immediately started baying like a donkey.

The child realized that if this person was willing to bay like a donkey in the middle of the crowded market place, it must be that the tray that he is holding is worth tens of thousands. "Listen to me," he told the merchant. "That's not the way to do it. Does a donkey stand on two legs?!" The man imme-

diately crouched down on all fours and continued baying loudly.

Meanwhile, tourists gathered around and started filming this unusual and amusing event. Now the child went further with his calculations and said, if he is willing to embarrass himself to such an extent, what I am holding in my hands must be worth several million. He then ended the give and take with his final clever remark: "Listen, you can get up... I don't do business with donkeys!"

"How foolish am I," thought the man to himself in disappointment, "Had I kept quiet from the beginning and only asked how much he wants for the tray with the bagels, it would already be in my hands. I bayed like a donkey, I am a donkey!"

The nimshal: We often come face to face with people to whom we have a lot to say. Or it could be that during an argument we think that we have the perfect retort. But it is important to understand that it is not always worth speaking up. Keeping quiet during an argument is more likely to bring blessing since, during a disagreement, one does not weigh up one's words and they can ultimately cause more damage than good.

Silence, then, is not only a way of staying away from sin. Keeping quiet is in reality a silent song. Not just a song but the most magnificent song, more beautiful than anything we have ever heard. Chazal tell us, which shira song holds up the world? "The world only exists for the one who constrains himself during an argument, as it says, 'He suspends the earth upon nothingness'". (The Hebrew word for 'nothingness', 'בלימה', can also mean 'one who constrains'.) When a person knows how to keep quiet for the sake of Heaven, when he is desperate to say something, to offer a sarcastic taunt or prove that he has the upper hand, but instead his silence shouts out for the honor of Hashem, this is the epitome of greatness!

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