

# MEOROS HATZADDIKIM

— Lights Of Our Righteous —

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

**Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)**

## Parshas Emor & Sefiras Haomer & Pirkei Avos

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ר' זכרי' שמעון הכהן בן יצחק

### Answering Kaddish

#### The Tur & Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller

The *sefer Chayei Adam* states that the *Anshei Kineses HaGedola* (Men of the Great Assembly) decreed that *Kaddish* be said daily. The source is a *pasuk* in *Parshas Emor*, 'I will be sanctified amongst the Children of Israel' (*Vayikra* 22:32).

The *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* 56) cites a *pasuk* in *sefer Yechezkel* describing *milchemes Gog and Magog*. In the midst of that final war, Hashem will reveal Himself, 'I will be exalted (*vi'his'gadilti*) and I will be sanctified (*vi'his'kadishti*) and I will make Myself known in the eyes of many nations; and they will know that I am Hashem' (*Yechezkel* 38:23). After the initial revelation His Name will be exalted, as the *pasuk* states, 'On that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One' (*Zechariah* 14:9). His Name can only be complete after Amalek is defeated in that final war as the *pasuk* tells us, 'For the hand is on Hashem's throne.' *Shemos* 17:16 - see *Rashi* there who says For there is a hand on the throne of the Eternal: The hand of the Holy One, blessed be He, was raised to swear by His throne, to have a war and [bear] hatred against Amalek for eternity. He, swore that His Name will not be complete and His throne will not be complete until the name of Amalek is completely obliterated. And when his name is obliterated, the Divine Name will be complete, and the throne will be complete. Therefore by saying *Kaddish* and answering *Amen Yehei Shemay Rabbah* we are declaring that great day will come, when Hashem will reveal His greatness to the entire world and destroy Amalek.

Rav Yom Tov Lipman Heller writes in *Ma'adanei Yom Tov* (citing the text of the *Gemara Berachos Daf 3* which reads: Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said that whoever answers [*Kaddish*], *Amen, Yehei Shemay Rabba Mevorach*, responding with all his strength [up in the Heavens], they tear up the judgments of seventy years against him. That is why the *Birkas HaTorah* was established using the Divine four letter name of loving kindness, YH"V"H.)

The definition of *Shemay Rabbah Mevorach* is that while we are praying, we are asking that the Divine Name of *Shem Yud-Hay* should become whole through our redemption as we say that Hashem's throne and Name are incomplete.

Also [a second request is that we are asking, May] His Divine Name be blessed - *mevorach*. The *Tosafos* in the commentary to *Daf 3* explain this answer differently, interpreting *Yehei Shemay Rabbah Mevorach* as [one single prayer], 'May His great Name be blessed.'

*Rashi* explains the meaning of “a decree of seventy years” as a decree that may have been made in his youth. I believe the meaning refers to a person’s entire lifetime, as the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* (90:10) tells us that an average lifetime is seventy years. The *Gemara* is telling us that all the decrees and harsh judgments that have been decreed or leveled upon a person throughout his entire life shall be canceled, nullified, ripped and torn up.

In his commentary, *Divrei Chamudos*, Rav Heller continues:

I cited two explanations for *Amen, Yehei Shemay Rabba* in my commentary *Ma’adanei Yom Tov* and there is a practical difference in outcome between the two different interpretations. According to the first explanation, that *Amen, Yehei Shemay Rabbah* is a prayer that the name *Yud-Hay* be increased and completed, the glosses of *Hagahos Ashri* cites the *Ohr Zarua* that we should not interrupt or pause in between the words *Shemay* and *Rabbah* since it is one fluent idea. However, you may pause between the words *Rabba* and *Mevorach* since, according to this interpretation, the word *mevorach* is a separate prayer. It’s a new request that, besides completing the name Ya”h into the four letter name YH”V”H, we are also asking that it be blessed forever for *olam haba - mevorach le’alam u’l’olmei olmaya*.

According to the second interpretation of the *Tosafos* that explain that *Shemay Rabba* means His great Name, and there should be no pause between *Rabba* and *Mevorach* either since it is all one single cohesive prayer. It does not mean [as the first opinion] that His name should be great and completed, rather that His great Name be blessed. . .Furthermore, the *Beis Yosef* cites a *midrash* and concludes that we should not pause or interrupt between *Olmaya* and *Yisbarach* (*Ma’adanei Yom Tov* and *Divrei Chamudos* on *Rabbeinu Asher - The Rosh* Berachos 3:8-9 and 3:61).

## The Reward For A Mitzva Is A Mitzva

**Rav Avrohom Shmuel Binyomin Sofer**

MISHNAH AVOS 4:2 “The reward for a mitzvah is a mitzvah,”

Rav Shmuel Binyamin Sofer, author of Kesav Sofer explains our Mishnah using two other statements of Chazal: Whoever is greater than his fellow, his *yetzer hara* (evil urge) is also greater (Sukkah 52a). Another Mishnah in Pirkei Avos (5:23) states that according to the pain and effort, so is the reward.

Whoever is urged by his *yetzer hara* to sin and transgress but overcomes that *yetzer* and defeats him, earns great reward. This itself makes the mitzvah greater and more important since he is rewarded according to the pain and effort exerted. The reward for fulfilling the mitzvah is commensurate with the amount of strain and difficulty he endures in overcoming his desires and controlling his passions! This in turn causes a cyclical reaction: Each mitzvah he performs makes him more righteous and transforms him into a greater person. That elevated state causes his *yetzer hara* to grow even stronger and prove more formidable in preventing him from fulfilling the next mitzvah. As a result of this dynamic, each subsequent mitzvah is deemed a greater accomplishment than the next one and so on.

This then, is how the Kesav Sofer reads our Mishnah: The reward for the mitzvah previously done is that the upcoming mitzvah will be even greater. (Kesav Sofer Tehillim 84:5)

# Stories on the Parsha & Sefiras HaOmer & Pirkei Avos



Lost In The Forest

The *Ba'al Shem Tov* taught that our thoughts of repentance and feelings of remorse actually originate from a *bas kol*, a heavenly voice, that calls to us daily to repent (see *Avos* 6:2).

Rav Simcha Bunim illustrated this idea with a parable:

A father and son were traveling together in a coach laden with wares that they planned to sell at the annual spring fair. They passed through a forest, and the young boy, seeing the beautiful spring blossoms around, declared, "Father, please allow me to stop here and pick some of these beautiful flowers!"

The father shook his head and said, "No, my son. If you stop to pick the flowers while I continue onward, you may not be able to catch up and you will get lost."

"Please, Father, I will pick flowers slowly, and as you travel on I will call out to you. As long as you answer me and I hear your voice, I will know your location. Then all I need to do is to travel in the direction of your voice, and I will not lose my way. Once I have picked enough flowers, I can catch up to you and we will travel on together."

The father agreed, and the son alighted from the wagon to pick flowers while his father continued onward. Soon the father called out to his son, "My son, my son!" But there was no answer. The father covered his face with his hands in despair and said, "Had you heard my voice, you could follow it and find your way! But if you don't even hear my voice, you have likely lost your way!"

# Gedolim Be'misasm Yoser



**Yahrzeits for the 19th of Iyar ~ Begins Friday Night  
( 05-17-2025 )**



**Rav Meir ben Boruch - Maharam of Rottenberg (5053 / 1293 - 732nd Yahrzeit)**

Rav Meir Ben Baruch, popularly known by the abbreviation 'MaHaRaM' (Moreinu Horav Reb Meir) of Rothenburg, Talmudist and Paytan (religious poet), was born in Worms, Germany, nearly eight centuries ago, around the year 1220. In his youth he studied at Wurtzburg and at Mainz in the Yeshivas of the leading Talmudists of those days. Later he went to France to study in the well known French Yeshivas, particularly in the Yeshivah of the great Rabbi Yecheiel ben Yosef of Paris. Rabbi Meir, became universally acknowledged as the leading authority on Talmud and Jewish law, and many communities in France, Italy and Germany frequently turned to him for instruction and guidance in all religious matters and on various points of law.



**Rav Petachya Lida - Yad Kol Bo (5511 / 1751 - 274th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Menachem Mendel Turim of Rymanow - Rymanover Rebbe, Menachem Mendel of Pristik, Pristiker, Menachem Tzion (5575 / 1815 - 210th Yahrzeit)**

In *Ateres Menachem*, we learn that Rav Menachem Mendel was born around 5505 in Neustadt, Poland, and studied in the illustrious *Yeshiva* of the Rebbe Reb Shmelka of Nikolsberg in Moravia. There, he became a member of the Chassidic movement and eventually a *talmid muvhok* of the Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizhensk in Galicia.



**Rav Moshe Taub of Kaliv - Eis Ratzon (5696 / 1936 - 89th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Moshe Taub was Rebbe in his ancestral city of Kalov where he served as Rebbe until his passing away in Budapest on 19th of *Iyar* 5696. He authored the *sefer Eis Ratzon*.



**Rav Pinchos Twersky of P'shemishel (5705 / 1945 - 80th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Ezra Attiya of Syria - Rosh Yeshiva Porat Yosef - Yerushalayim (5730 / 1970 - 55th Yahrzeit)**

He was the Sephardic *gadol* of Eretz Yisrael molding a generation whose influence reverberated around the world. But Rav Ezra Attiya was even more — he was the *abba* to every impoverished *bochur* who knew the Rav would never turn anyone away. When Rav David Attiya *shlita* is asked what he most remembers about his father Rav Ezra Attiya *ztz"l* — one of the greatest Torah teachers in Eretz Yisrael in the last century — he replies without missing a beat “His learning. He didn't waste a minute. He was always learning Torah.”



**Rav Yaakov Moshe Mordechai Soloveitchik of Lucerne (5755 / 1995 - 30th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Yaakov Moshe Mordechai Soloveitchik of Lucerne (1915-1995). His father was Rav Yisrael Gershon Soloveitchik, son of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk. Soon after his *Bar Mitzvah*, he traveled to Kamenitz to study under Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz. He fled Poland to evade the draft, along with Rav Ahron Leib Shteinman, and the two stayed in Switzerland until the end of World War II. After the war, they traveled to Eretz Yisrael and studied at the *Lomza Yeshiva* in Petach Tikva, where he shared a room with Rav Chaim Kanievsky. He moved to Lugano and then Lucerne to head a *Yeshiva*.



**Rav Moshe Pinchos Kopshitz - Rosh Yeshiva Kol Yaakov & Rav of Romema (5764 / 2004 - 21st Yahrzeit)**

**Yahrzeits for the 20th of Iyar ~ Begins Saturday Night (05-18-2025)**



**Rav Mordechai Twersky of Chernobyl - Likutei Torah (5597 / 1837 - 188th Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Mordechai Twersky was born in Chernobyl to the famous Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl (author of the book *Ma'or Einayim* and a disciple of the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and the Maggid of Mezritch). Chasidim flocked to Rabbi Mordechai and many nearby towns appointed him as their maggid.



**Rav Yitzchok Eizik HaLevi Rabinowitz - Doros Harishonim (5674 / 1914 - 111th Yahrzeit)**



**Mekubel Yosef Waltuch - Mekubel of Yerushalayim (5743 / 1983 - 42nd Yahrzeit)**

Rav Yosef Waltuch was born in Poland on the 30th of *Tishrei* 5682/1921. When he was eight years old his father, Rav Simcha Bunim, a descendant of the Zlotchover Maggid, moved the family to Eretz Yisrael. In Yerushalayim, Rav Yosef merited a close connection with Rav Shlomo of Zhvill, also a descendant of the Zlotchov dynasty. Besides his connection with the Zhviller Rebbe, Rav Yosef was also close with Rav Mordechai Sharabi, Rav Moshe Mordechai of Lelov, and Rav Meir Abuchatzeira of Ashdod.



**Rav Meir Bransdorfer - Keneh Bosem (5769 / 2009 - 16th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Meir Bransdorfer was born on the 27th of *Elul* 5694/1934 in Antwerp. His father, Rav Shlomo, was a descendant of Rav Yissochor Shlomo Teichtel, *mechaber* of *Mishnas Sochir*. During World War II, the family went into hiding in France, and in the summer of 5705/1945 they moved to Eretz Yisrael. Rav Meir became close to Rav Aharon Roth, the *Shomrei Emunim Rebbe*. After the latter's *petira*, he grew close to his son-in-law, the *Toldos Aharon Rebbe*, who cited him as a prime example of *hasmoda* (diligence) and *Ahavas HaTorah*. Rav Meir had received *semicha* at the age of twenty-two, and at thirty became a *moreh horo'a* and the Rav of the *Toldos Aharon* community. In 5721/1961 he was appointed to oversee all inyenei *shechita* and *mikvaos*. Rav Meir was a *mohel mumcheh*; he served as *mohel* at more than three thousand *brisos*.

**Yahrzeits for the 21st of Iyar ~ Begins Sunday Night  
( 05-19-2025 )**



**Rav Yitzchok Isaac HaLevi of Premisla - Raza Meheimno (5543 / 1783 - 242nd Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Shimon Shlomo Wertheim of Savaran (5562 / 1802 - 223rd Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Yaakov Yosef HaKohen Rabinowitz - Emes L'Yaakov (5662 / 1902 - 123rd Yahrzeit)**

**Yahrzeits for the 22nd of Iyar ~ Begins Monday Night  
( 05-20-2025 )**



**Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Vilna - Beis Lechem Yehuda (5493 / 1733 - 292nd Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Yeshaya of Plonsk (5576 / 1816 - 209th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Mordechai Shraga Feivush Friedman - Husyatiner Rebbe (5654 / 1894 - 131st Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Mordechai Shraga of Husyatina (20 Iyar 1834 - 22 Iyar 1894) was one of the six sons of Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin who became the head of a dynasty in Galicia. His thousands of Chassidim included many prominent scholars.



**Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandari - Sabba Kadisha (5690 / 1930 - 95th Yahrzeit)**

The *Saba Kadisha* ("Holy Grandfather"), was a distinguished *rav*, kabbalist and *rosh yeshiva* in his native home of Constantinople, (now Turkey) and later served as Chief Rabbi of Damascus, Syria, and Beirut, Lebanon. He moved to Tzefas, Teveria and then Yerushalayim. He was known for his stringent interpretation of *halacha* and his uncompromising dedication to Orthodox Judaism.

**Yahrzeits for the 23rd of Iyar ~ Begins Tuesday Night  
( 05-21-2025 )**



**The Jewish Community of Worms (4856 / 1096 - 929th Yahrzeit)**



**Dayan Sholom Bashari - Dayan in Yemen (5533 / 1773 - 252nd Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Yehoshua Heschel of Dinov (5574 / 1814 - 211th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Shimon Deutsch of Zelichov (5586 / 1826 - 199th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Moshe. One of the greatest disciples of the Chozeh of Lublin, the Kozhnitzer Maggid, and the Apta Rav author of *Ohev Yisroel*. Some say he was also a talmid of the Rebbe, Reb Melech of Lizensk, author of *Noam Elimelech*.



**Rav Moshe Shlomo Weiss - Av Beis Din of Rakowitz (5660 / 1900 - 125th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Alexander HaKohen Steinberger - Meoros Aish (5679 / 1919 - 106th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Shlomo Eliezer HaLevi Rottenberg (5704 / 1944 - 81st Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Meshulem Zusha Yitzchok Halberstam (5704 / 1944 - 81st Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Chaim Yitzchok Chaikin (5753 / 1993 - 32nd Yahrzeit)**

Rav Chaim was born in 1907 in Kossova, Lithuania. He was niftar in Sarcelles in 1993. Pupil of Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman in Baranovitch. Rav Chaikin studied for 12 years in the Radin Yeshiva. Of these years, he spent seven years, from 1926 to 1933, as one of the closest students of the revered Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan. In 1938 Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman suggested Rabbi Chaikin to be the Rosh Yeshiva of Chief Rabbi Ernest Weill's new yeshiva in Strasbourg-Neudorf. He served in the Neudorf Yeshiva, the "Yeshiva of France," until the advent of World War II. Upon his release in May 1945, he was hired as Rosh Yeshiva for the nascent Yeshiva in Aix-les-Bains.

**Yahrzeits for the 24th of Iyar ~ Begins Wednesday Night  
( 05-22-2025 )**




**Rav Simcha HaKohen of Worms (4856 / 1096 - 929th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Yehoshua Heschel Tzoref of Cracow (5480 / 1720 - 305th Yahrzeit)**



**Rav Yeshaya of Dinvotz - Talmid of the Maggid of Mezritch (5554 / 1794 - 231st Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Eliezer Tzvi Safrin - Komarna Rebbe, Damesek Eliezer on Zohar, Ben Baisi (5658 / 1898 - 127th Yahrzeit)**


Rav Eliezer Tzvi, the third *Komarno Rebbe*, was the son of Rav Yitzchok Isaac Yehuda Yechiel Safrin. His childhood was marked by suffering, poverty and deprivation. Despite this, he toiled in Torah study and he grew in Torah and Chassidus. Despite his fame and renown as *Rebbe* after his father's passing, he himself traveled to the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz.

 **Rav Yitzchok Feigenbaum - Chief Rabbi of Warsaw (5671 / 1911 - 114th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Yisroel Sholom Yosef of Antonia - Nefesh Yishai (5704 / 1944 - 81st Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Binyomin Mendelson - Rav of Kommemiyus (5739 / 1979 - 46th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Binyamin Mendelson, Rav of Kommemiyus, one of the most prominent fighters for *kedushas sheviis* (1979). Born in Plotzk at the end of the 19th century, his father was Rav Menachem Mendel Mendelsohn. With the bracha of the *Gerer Rebbe*, Rav Binyomin moved to Eretz Yisroel in 1933, and was offered the position as Rov of Kfar Ata not far from Haifa and served in that capacity for 17 years. In 1951, Rav Binyomin left Kfar Ata and its *kehilla* of 20,000 families and accepted the offer to become the Rov of a small, religious settlement in the Negev called Kommemius, serving the community for the next 27 years.

 **Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb (5765 / 2005 - 20th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb (1923-2005). Born to Rav Shlomo Gottlieb, Rav of the *Ohr Hachaim shul* in Philadelphia, the family moved to Yerushalayim in 1929. After learning at the *Chevron Yeshiva*, his family moved back to the United States, where he learned at *Torah Vodaas*. In 1963, he moved back to Eretz Yisrael to help his parents. He was appointed general manager of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, which he held for 14 years. He also assisted his father in *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Chiam Yosef*, founded in 1942. After his father's death, Rav Akiva Moshe was responsible for it.

## **Yahrzeits for the 25th of Iyar ~ Begins Thursday Night ( 05-23-2025 )**

 **Rav Ozer of Klementov - Even Ha'ozar**


 **Rav Binyomin Zev of Zolkova (5470 / 1710 - 315th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Meir. Av *Beis Din* Klimintuv. Author, *Even HaOzer*. Served as rav in Klimantuv and rosh yeshiva in Zolkova.

 **Rav Shaul HaLevi - Rav of the Hague, Binyan Shaul (5545 / 1785 - 240th Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lisa - Chavos Da'as, Rav of Lisa (5592 / 1832 - 193rd Yahrzeit)**

Yaakov ben Yaakov Moshe Lorberbaum of Lissa (1760-1832) was a Rabbi and Posek. He is most commonly known as the "*Ba'al HaChavos Da'as*" or "*Ba'al HaNesivos*" for his most well-known works, or as the "Lisa Rav" for the city in which he was Chief Rabbi.

 **Rav Chaim Hager of Kosov - Toras Chaim (5614 / 1854 - 171st Yahrzeit)**  
Son of Rav Menachem Mendel of Kosov, founder of the Kosov-Vizhnitz dynasty. Author *Toras Chaim*. Father of first Vizhnitzer Rebbe. The second of three Admor Kosov-Viznitz Rebbes. He began to serve as rebbe after his father's passing in תקפ"ו.

 **Rav Yehoshua Osher Rabinowitz - Porisover Rebbe (5622 / 1862 - 163rd Yahrzeit)**

 **Rav Chaim Chori - Rosh Beis Din of Tunis, Motza Chaim (5717 / 1957 - 68th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Chaim Chori, Rosh Beis Din in Tunis, author of *Motza Chaim*(1957). He immigrated to Israel from Jerba in 1955 and settled in Beersheva. Chori died two years later and was buried in the Beersheva cemetery.

# Biographies of the Tzaddikim



**Rav Meir ben Boruch Maharam of Rottenberg (Iyar 19, 5053 / 1293 - 732nd Yahrzeit)**



Rav Meir Ben Baruch, popularly known by the abbreviation 'MaHaRaM' (Moreinu Horav Reb Meir) of Rothenburg, Talmudist and Paytan (religious poet), was born in Worms, Germany, nearly eight centuries ago, around the year 1220.

In his youth he studied at Wurtzburg and at Mainz in the Yeshivas of the leading Talmudists of those days. Later he went to France to study in the well known French Yeshivas, particularly in the Yeshivah of the great Rabbi Yechiel ben Yosef of Paris. Rabbi Yechiel was known as a saintly Rabbi and outstanding Talmudist, and it was he who defended the Talmud in the reign of Louis IX. However, the Talmud was subsequently condemned by the enemies of Israel to be publicly burnt on Friday, June 17, 1244, (Erev Shabbos Chukas, 5004), in Paris. Rabbi Meir was an eyewitness to this public burning of twenty-four wagonloads of Talmudic manuscripts, and he bewailed this tragedy in his celebrated "*Kina*" *Shaali serufah* which we say on Tisha b'Av.

The following year Rabbi Meir, already a famous Talmudist, returned to Germany, where he became the rabbi of several large communities successively. Finally he settled in Rothenburg, where he maintained, at his own cost, a famous Yeshivah. Among his disciples were many scholars who later became leading Talmudists and codifiers, notably Rabenu Asher ben Yechiel ("ROSH") and Rabbi Mordecai ben Hillel Ashkenazi.

Rabbi Meir, became universally acknowledged as the leading authority on Talmud and Jewish law, and many communities in France, Italy and Germany frequently turned to him for instruction and guidance in all religious matters and on various points of law. Affectionate and rare titles were bestowed upon him in their communications, such as 'Father of Rabbis', 'Light of the Exile', etc. Rabbi Meir humbly gave his opinion and advice to all enquiries, and his responsa, of which about 1,500 have been preserved, and commentaries are of great importance not merely to advanced students of the Talmud, but also to the students of Jewish life and customs of those days.

Rabbi Meir wrote no large single work, but many notes, commentaries and expositions. His writings include: *Piske Eruvin* on the laws of the Eruv; *Halachos Pesukos*--a collection of decisions on controversial points of Jewish law; *Hilchos Berachos*--on the blessings; *Hilchos Aveilus* on the laws of mourning; *Hilchos Shechitah* on the ritual slaughtering of animals for Kosher meat, etc.

Those days were full of persecution for the Jews of Germany, and they lived in constant fear for their property and life. In the year 1286, Rabbi Meir took his entire family and set out for Eretz Yisrael, together with a group of well-to-do friends. In the Eretz Yisroel they hoped to continue their work in behalf of their persecuted brethren. However, while passing through Lombardy, Rabbi Meir was recognized by an apostate Jew who was accompanying the archbishop of Mainz. The archbishop had Rabbi Meir arrested and taken back to Germany. There by order of King Rudolph, Rabbi Meir was imprisoned in the fortress of Ensisheim and held for ransom. The king knew that the Jews would give away their last mark to redeem their beloved Rabbi, and indeed the sum of 20,000 marks was raised for Rabbi Meir's freedom. Rabbi Meir, however, forbade his friends and followers to pay any ransom for him. In his selflessness he knew that once ransom were paid for him, every noted Rabbi in Germany would be arrested and held for ransom by the greedy and cruel German rulers of those days. Thus Rabbi Meir preferred to remain in prison, and even die there, in order to save many others from a similar fate.

For seven years Rabbi Meir remained a prisoner in that fortress, until his passing in 1293. During this time his disciples were permitted to meet with him, and he was even able to compose several of his works within the prison walls. After he died, his body was not surrendered until 14 years later, when a heavy ransom was paid by a generous Jew, Alexander Suskind Wimpfen of Frankfort. In return Alexander Suskind requested only that after his own death his body should be laid to rest by the side of the saintly Rabbi Meir. His wish was carried out when he died a year later, and in the ancient Jewish cemetery of Worms two tombstones stood erected side by side, one for the great and saintly Rabbi Meir ben Baruch, and the other for Alexander Suskind Wimpfen of Frankfort.

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/111856/jewish/Maharam-of-Rothenburg.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/111856/jewish/Maharam-of-Rothenburg.htm)



**Rav Menachem Mendel Turim Rymanover Rebbe, Menahem Mendel of Pristik, Pristiker,  
Menachem Tzion (Iyar 19, 5575 / 1815 - 210th Yahrzeit)**



In *Ateres Menachem*, we learn that Rav Menachem Mendel was born around תק"ה in Neustadt, Poland and studied in the illustrious yeshivah of the Rebbe Reb Shmelka of Nikolsberg in Moravia. There, he became a member of the Chassidic movement and eventually a talmid muvhak of the rebbe, Reb Melech of Lizensk in Galicia. Eventually, Rav Mendel married and lived with his in-laws in Pristik. His father-in-law was a misnaged-- opposed to Chassidus-- and threw his son-in-law and daughter out when he found out that they had joined the "cult". They suffered poverty and privation for years, becoming so poor and destitute that they lacked food, wood, and other basic needs.

Eventually, after the Rebbe Elimelech's passing, news of Rav Mendele's sanctity and erudition spread and he began to lead a flock of followers and chassidim in Rymanow. Tzaddikim said that for some twenty-two years he delivered a weekly sermon about *Parshas HaMon* which drew down *parnassah* (sustenance) for all *Klal Yisroel*. He was a staunch opponent of new fashions and modes of dress and fought against any immodesty he perceived in the dress of *Bnos Yisroel*. His talmid and disciple, Rav Yechezkel Pannet of Karlsberg, wrote a famed letter describing Rav Mendele's *kedushah* and defending him from his detractors.

His biographical stories were published as *Ateres Menachem*, and his *divrei Torah* are found in several collections: *Divrei Menachem*, *Menachem Tzion*, and others.

He passed away on 19 *Iyar* תקע"ה and was succeeded by his holy *gabbai*, Rav Tzvi Hirsch MeShares haKohen of Rymanow.

## **HIS SEGULOS:**

### **Parnassa - Parshas Hamon**

There is a well-known *segula* to study *Parshas HaMon shnayim mikra ve'echad Targum* from the *Rymanower*.

### **Ner Neshama Candles**

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow said if a person makes a *neder* (vow) to donate candles for the sake of a certain soul, known as "*neiros neshama*," that neshama will venture even to the lowest depths of *sheol* to do a favor for the donor. Even if the donor had come to fall--sinking to the deepest depth-- that *neshama* would descend to take him out of there, thus saving him.

(Ateres Menachem p. 235)

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow promised that during his lifetime he would shake and move all the worlds for anyone who lights a candle for the merit of his soul and even after his death, he would repay the favor for that person. (Menachem Tzion in the name of Rav Yisroel Mordechai Teitelbaum, *Hadras Kodesh*, in the name of the Rebbe of Nasuad)

### **Shooting A Bow And Arrow On Lag Baomer**

There is a well-known *minhag Yisrael*, a custom that young students have, to shoot with a bow and arrow in displays of archery on *Lag BaOmer*.

Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dynow, *mechaber* of *Bnei Yissoschor*, says he heard that Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow explained the reason behind this *minhag* as follows:

It is known (*Yerushalmi Berochos* 9:2) that in the days of Rav Shimon bar Yochai the rainbow was not seen. On the day of his ascension we mark this occasion and

commemorate the absence of the rainbow with the bow and arrow. (*Bnei Yissoschor Iyar* 3:4)

### **Gazing Upon A Tzadik**

Rav Moshe Teitelbaum of Uhjel taught in the name of Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow that whoever merits true knowledge - *daas sheleima* - when such a person sees a *Tzaddik* and gazes upon him, he can learn true *Torah* from every limb as he himself [Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow] testified that he learned *Torah* from his own *Rebbe*, Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, from all of his limbs *mamash*. (*Tefilla leMoshe, Noach* 39b)

### **Noam Elimelech On Erev Shabbos Kodesh, After Immersing In The Mikvah**

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow said, "On *Erev Shabbos Kodesh*, after immersing in the *mikveh* is when I can understand a *shtickel* of *Noam Elimelech*." (*Ohel Elimelech* 192)

### **This Week's Segula In Honor Of Rav Menachem Mendel Of Rimanov, Yahrzeit - 19Th Of Iyar**

There is a well-known *segula* to light a candle for the elevation of Rav Mendele's soul known as *le'ilui nishmas*, on the day of his *Yahrzeit*. In the London edition of *Menachem Tzion*, the publisher notes: I received a well-known tradition from Rav Yisrael Mordechai Teitelbaum - who in turn received this tradition from many *Tzaddikim* - that Rav Mendel Rimanover himself said that when he was still alive he had the power to shake all the supernal worlds up and that after his passing he would consider it a tremendous favor and in turn do a favor for one who lights a candle for the merit and in honor of his *neshoma*.

So light a candle and say, "*Le'ilui nishmas HaRav HaTzaddik Menachem Mendel ben Rav Yosef zy"a*." Then *daven* to Hashem in his merit.

Rav Doniel Frish, *mechaber* of the *Mosok MiDevash* on the Zohar would say that he knows many people who merited salvations by doing this *segula*.

The holy Rav Mendel of Rimanov said that if a person makes a *neder* (vow) to donate candles and lights them on behalf of a departed soul, then that soul can journey even down into the deepest pits and the lowest depths of the *sheol tachtis* to do a favor for the donor and they can even rescue him from the lowest place in *sheol tachtis* as well, heaven forbid. (*Ateres Menachem* 235)

### **Reciting The Pesukim Of The Mishkan Befor Davening**

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow taught that it is a *segula* to recite the *pesukim* of the *mishkan* before *davening*. He learned this concept from *parshas VaYakhel* (35:4) where it says *asher tziva Hashem* - Hashem commanded us to do this, to erect a *mishkan* where we could serve Him. It is therefore a *segula* before *davening* to recite the *pesukim* of the *mishkan*, for then it is considered as if we built a *mishkan*, entered it and davened to Hashem from within. (Menachem Tzion, Kol Yaakov Melo HaRo'im, Vayikra, Behaalos'cha)

### **'Vehayisa Ach Sameiach'**

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow taught the following:

"And you were happy," - והיית אך שמח (Devarim 16:15) The final letters-- ס"ת חת"ך --of the words of this *pasuk* spell a Divine Holy Name of the angel of livelihood, of *parnassah*. This is a hint that *simchah*, joy, is a *segulah* for *parnassah*.

(Toldos Noach Likkutim 35:1 cited by Yalkut Menachem p. 232)



### **Rav Moshe Taub Eis Ratzon (Iyar 19, 5696 / 1936 - 89th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Moshe Taub was Rebbe in his ancestral city of Kalov where he served as Rebbe until his passing away in Budapest on 19th of *Iyar* 5696. He authored the *sefer Eis Ratzon*. His son Rav Menachem Shlomo Taub of Kalov Williamsburg succeeded him and transplanted the chassidus to New York in the US after World War II. His grandson and namesake Rav

Moshe Taub Shlita is the current *Kalover Rebbe* of Williamsburg NY.



**Rav Ezra Attiya Rosh Yeshiva Porat Yosef - Yerushalayim (Iyar 19, 5730 / 1970 - 55th Yahrzeit)**



He was the *Sephardic gadol* of Eretz Yisrael molding a generation whose influence reverberated around the world. But Rav Ezra Attiya was even more — he was the *abba* to every impoverished *bochur* who knew the Rav would never turn anyone away. More than four decades after Rav Ezra's passing his son Rav David Attiya one of Yerushalayim's elder *dayanim* reveals his father's secret formula for success.

When Rav David Attiya shlita is asked what he most remembers about his father Rav Ezra Attiya *ztz"l* — one of the greatest Torah teachers in Eretz Yisrael in the last century — he replies without missing a beat “His learning. He didn't waste a minute. He was always learning Torah.”

For Rav David Attiya 87 a prominent *dayan* and former member of the Chief Rabbinical Court in Jerusalem who spends his own days poring over *seforim* that was Rav Ezra's legacy to his son. But for the thousands of students and disciples he nurtured during the 45 years he served as *rosh yeshiva* of *Yeshivat Porat Yosef* until his passing on 19 *Iyar* 5730 (1970) he was their leader as well as their master educator and the one person who perhaps more than anyone raised up the status of Sephardic *Torah* scholarship in the last century. Among Rav Attiya's most famous students were Rav Ovadiah Yosef, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu, Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul, Rav Yehuda Tzadka and Rav Yitzchak Kaduri.

Rav David Attiya is a venerable figure in his own right as one of Jerusalem's elder *dayanim*. And like his father his short stature is overpowered by his towering scholarship nobility and gentility — it's easy to match him with the descriptions that his father's

students shared of Rav Ezra. For Rav Ezra was not only a brilliant *talmid chacham* but he had a mission: He taught his *talmidim* how to convey the study of *Gemara* for generations to come.

“The Torah was in his pocket” his son remembers of the sage who passed away 46 years ago this week and who had honed a certain logical thought process in *Gemara* study that attracted both Sephardic and Ashkenazic scholars alike. “One of the Ashkenazic sages of Jerusalem wanted to learn with him a complex *sugya* that left many questions. My father as was his *derech* first learned with him again the basic *sugya* itself — *Gemara Rashi Tosafos* — and then mentioned the words of the *Maharsha* which he considered a fundamental part of understanding every *sugya*. I was a boy then and I remember seeing how every difficulty and obstacle seemed to fall away as they learned it in its simple explanation.”

Rav David says this was his father’s trademark style in learning and he taught an entire generation of scholars how to unravel complicated passages.

“He was famous for getting his students used to learning the *pshat* and then to be very careful in the study of *Rashi* and *Tosafos*” Rav David explains. “He would often tell me ‘Lots of questions are saved if a person learns the simple meaning patiently and in depth and takes care not only to read every word carefully but also every letter.’ ”

His clarity of thought didn’t go unnoticed by other *gedolim* of the time. Once after the *Chazon Ish* paid Rav Ezra a visit he exclaimed “The *Rosh Yeshivah* possesses the power of reasoning like one of the *Rishonim*.”

mishpacha.com



**Rav Yaakov Moshe Mordechai Soloveitchik (Iyar 19, 5755 / 1995 - 30th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Yaakov Moshe Mordechai Soloveitchik of Lucerne (1915-1995). His father was Rav Yisrael Gershon Soloveitchik, son of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk. Soon after his *Bar Mitzvah*, he traveled to Kamenitz to study under Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz. He fled Poland to evade the draft, along with Rav Ahron Leib Shteinman, and the two stayed in

Switzerland until the end of World War II. After the war, they traveled to Eretz Yisrael and studied at the *Lomza Yeshiva* in Petach Tikva, where he shared a room with Rav Chaim Kanievsky. He moved to Lugano and then Lucerne to head a Yeshiva and married Rivka Ruchama, daughter of Rav Shmuel Zanvil Neuman.



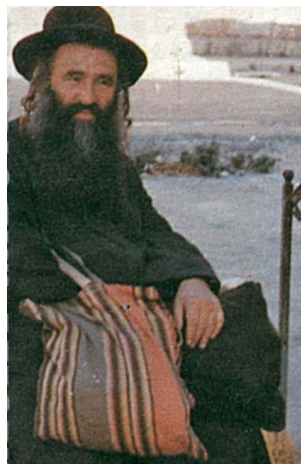
**Rav Mordechai Twersky Likutei Torah (Iyar 20, 5597 / 1837 - 188th Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Mordechai Twersky was born in Chernobyl to the famous Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl (author of the book *Ma'or Einayim* and a disciple of the *Ba'al Shem Tov* and the Maggid of Mezritch). When he was required to choose a surname, Rabbi Mordechai chose the name Twersky, for the city of Teveria where Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk and his disciples had settled. Chasidim flocked to Rabbi Mordechai and many nearby towns appointed him as their maggid. He conducted his court with wealth, which had not been his father's custom. Nonetheless, he ate very little and felt practically no enjoyment from material pleasures. Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl passed away in Kiev on the 20th of *Iyar* 5597 (1837).

<https://www.inner.org/spiritual-masters/rabbi-mordechai-of-chernobyl-out-of-the-closet>



**Mekubel Yosef Waltuch Mekubel of Yerushalayim (Iyar 20, 5743 / 1983 - 42nd Yahrzeit)**



Rav Yosef Waltuch was born in Poland on the 30<sup>th</sup> of *Tishrei* 5682/1921. When he was eight years old his father, Rav Simcha Bunim, a descendant of the Zlotchover *Maggid*,

moved the family to Eretz Yisrael.

At a very young age he lost his mother, but Rav Yosef found comfort in learning Torah. A *masmid*, he was rarely seen without a *sefer* in his hand.

In Yerushalayim, Rav Yosef merited a close connection with Rav Shlomo of Zhvill, also a descendant of the Zlotchov dynasty. He was also Rav Yosef's *shadchan*. All Rav Yosef's ways were based upon Rav Shlomke's directives.

Rav Yosef lived in the Old City of Yerushalayim, and learned *Kabbola* on a daily basis in the nearby *Yeshiva Bais Kel*.

Besides his connection with the Zhviller *Rebbe*, Rav Yosef was also close with Rav Mordechai Sharabi, Rav Moshe Mordechai of Lelov, and Rav Meir Abuchatzaira of Ashdod.

Rav Yosef's wife was ill all her life, spending much of her time in the hospital, but he never complained, accepting this as a Heavenly decree.

Rav Yosef always carried two heavy bags full of *seforim*, mainly *Kabbola*. One reason for this was that he did not want to lower his hands (the *Gemora* says that Rav Yehuda *HaNosi* was called *Rabbeinu HaKodosh* because he did not lower his hands). Another reason was that he did not want to shake hands with everybody he met; this way his hands were always full.

Rav Yosef was outstanding in all facets of the Torah.

Like many other *Tzaddikim nistorim*, Rav Yosef chose belittling work; he was a street sweeper in Tel Aviv. He was known as "the holy street sweeper".

Although he lived in Tel Aviv, Rav Yosef *davened* at the *Kosel* at least once a week.

During his visits to Yerushalayim, Rav Yosef met with many of the city's famed *Mekubolim*.

Fluent in many of the *Arizal's* works, Rav Yosef delivered *shiurim* across *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Meir Abuchatzeira from Ashdod, son of the *Baba Sali*, was a close friend. Rav Yosef often went to Ashdod to visit Rav Meir and discuss *Kabbola*.

When Rav Meir was *niftar* on the 17<sup>th</sup> of *Nissan* 5743/1983, Rav Yosef said that he could not continue in this world without him. Just over a month later, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of *Iyar* 5743/1983, Rav Yosef was *niftar*. He was sixty-two.

He was buried on *Har HaZeisim* in *Yerushalayim*.

*Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.*

[www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-20-iyarmay-20/](http://www.hamodia.com/features/day-history-20-iyarmay-20/)



**Rav Meir Bransdorfer Keneh Bosem (*Iyar* 20, 5769 / 2009 - 16th *Yahrzeit*)**

Rav Meir Bransdorfer was born on the 27<sup>th</sup> of *Elul* 5694/1934 in *Antwerp*. His father, Rav Shlomo, was a descendant of Rav Yissochor Shlomo Teichtel, *mechaber* of *Mishnas Sochir*. Rav Shlomo was married in *Hungary* and moved to *Antwerp* following his *chasuna*, where Rav Meir was born.

During *World War II*, the family went into hiding in *France*, and in the summer of 5705/1945 they moved to *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Meir became close to Rav Aharon Roth, the *Shomrei Emunim Rebbe*. After the latter's *petira*, he grew close to his son-in-law, the *Toldos Aharon Rebbe*, who cited him as a prime example of *hasmoda* (diligence) and *Ahavas HaTorah*. The *Toldos Aharon Rebbe* stood up for him despite Rav Meir's much younger age.

Rav Meir married the daughter of Rav Shimon Dov *Krischevsky*, who had served as secretary of the *Diskin Orphanage Home*, as well as secretary to Dr. *Moshe Wallach*, head of *Shaare Zedek Hospital*.

Rav Meir had received *semicha* at the age of twenty-two, and at thirty became a *moreh horo'a* and the Rav of the *Toldos Aharon* community. The *Minchas Yitzchok*, Rav Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss, entrusted him with all matters of *shechita*; he said that whatever Rav Meir *paskened* was accepted in *Shomayim*.

Rav Meir was close to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, who sent him *shailos* in *halocha*. Indeed, he was greatly esteemed by *Gedolei Yisrael* everywhere.

In 5721/1961 he was appointed to oversee all *inyenei shechita* and *mikvaos*.

With time, Rav Meir became a leading *posek* and received *shailos* from all over the world. He was called upon twenty-four hours a day. Everyone knew that he was always available, as he was up most of the night, learning.

It was known that Rav Meir learned *Torah mitoch ha'dchak* (in poverty). He lived in a one-room apartment in Botei Ungarin.

Together with his friend, Rav Moshe Halberstam, Rav Meir became a *Chaver HaBadatz* in Elul 5756/1996, when the *Gaavad*, Rav Moshe Arye Freund, was *niftar*.

Rav Meir was a *mohel mumcheh*; he served as *mohel* at more than three thousand *brisos*.

Rav Meir was *niftar* on the 20<sup>th</sup> of *Iyar* 5769/2009 at the age of seventy-five. He was buried on *Har HaZeisim*, next to his father and his *Rebbes*, leaving behind a family of *Marbitzei Torah* and *Talmidei Chachomim*.

Many of his *teshuvos* were published in the four-volume *She'eilos U'teshuvos Keneh Bosem*.

*Zecher Tzaddik livrocha.*



**Rav Mordechai Shraga Feivush Friedman Husyatiner Rebbe (Iyar 22, 5654 / 1894 -  
131st Yahrzeit)**

Rabbi Mordechai Shraga of Husyatín (20 Iyar 1834 - 22 Iyar 1894) was one of the six sons of Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin who became the head of a dynasty in Galicia. His thousands of Chassidim included many prominent scholars.

<http://www.ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=rebbeBios>



**Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandari Sabba Kadisha (Iyar 22, 5690 / 1930 - 95th Yahrzeit)**

Background: *The Saba Kadisha* ("Holy Grandfather"), was a distinguished rav, kabbalist and rosh yeshiva in his native home of Constantinople, (now Turkey) and later served as Chief Rabbi of Damascus, Syria, and Beirut, Lebanon. He moved to Tzefas, Teveria and then Yerushalayim. He was known for his stringent interpretation of halacha and his uncompromising dedication to Orthodox Judaism.

The *Saba Kadisha* was born in Ottoman-controlled Constantinople about 1826 to a distinguished family of *Talmidei Chachamim*. His father, Yaakov, was a *Talmud Chochem*; his grandfather, Rav Hayyim ben Yaakov Alfandari, authored *Maggid MiReishit*, and his great-grandfather, Rav Yaakov ben Hayyim Alfandari, authored *Mutza! MiEish*. His mother, Chana, also came from an illustrious family.

As a youth, Shlomo Eliezer was noted for his sharp understanding of Torah subjects. Yet he refused to accept a rabbinical position or to wear the customary dress of the city's sages. He did agree to join the *Vaad Haruchani* (Spiritual Council) of Constantinople and accepted the position of *rosh yeshiva* in a *yeshiva* which the city's Jews founded for him. In the latter post, he taught many outstanding *talmidei chachamim*, including Rabbi Chaim Hezekiah Medini, later known as the *Sdei Chemed*.

*Damascus*: In 1897, the *Saba Kadisha* decided to leave Constantinople to accept the position of Chief Rabbi of Damascus. There he founded a *yeshiva* which produced dozens of students who served as rabbis and *dayanim* in Sephardic communities in the region.

*Tzefas*: In 1904, he immigrated to Palestine. At first he lived for several years in the city of Haifa, but then accepted the invitation of the Torah leaders of Tzefas to serve as their Chief Rabbi, a position he held until 1918.

*Rav Yisroel Ber Odesser:* In 1918, Rav Yisroel Ber Odesser, a Breslover Chassid, became a personal attendant to Rav Shlomo Eliezer, who was living in Teveria at the time. After seeing Rav Odesser recite *Tikkun Chatzot* one night, however, the *Saba Kadisha* refused to let him attend him anymore, and instead treated him as a young colleague.

*Yerushalayim:* In his final years, Rav Alfandari suffered many ailments, for which he sought medical treatment in Yerushalayim. Although he tried to travel incognito, many Torah leaders desired to meet him when they found out he was in their city. One of these *gedolim* was Rav Ezra Attiya, who later became *rosh yeshiva* of *Porat Yosef Yeshiva*. The *Saba Kadisha* held Rav Attiya in high esteem, and would always stand up for him when he visited.

In 1925, Rav Alfandari developed a serious illness while in Teveria. He refused to be treated in the local hospital, where the rules of *tzniut* (modesty) were not meticulously observed and was taken to Shaarei Zedek Hospital in Yerushalayim instead. After he recovered, Yerushalayim's sages begged him to stay in their city. He rented an apartment in the Ruchama neighborhood (today Mekor Baruch, near Zichron Moshe.)

Here he hosted meetings with many prominent Torah scholars who came to consult with him and speak with him in learning. These included: Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem; Rav Velvel Mintzberg, leader of the Ashkenazi community in the Old Yishuv; Rav Avraham Weinberg of Slonim, author of *Birkas Avraham*; and Rav Yitzchak Abuchatzera, brother of the Baba Sali and a Torah sage in his own right.

*Views and Chumrahs:* It is no wonder the *Saba Kadisha* and the *Minchas Eluzer* had much in common. Like Aharon Hakohein, '*Shelo Shina*' who did not change, both led their flock with 'old world values' and refused to adapt to many 'modern' societal changes.

The *Saba Kadisha* forbade the shaving of beards, even using scissors or depilatory cream. He even refused to speak with a *talmid chacham* who did not have a beard, even if the discussion concerned the Talmud. Legend has it that he would not allow any single men to enter his room and would have them sent away with the message to get married. In his youth he traded Torah letters with Rabbi Akiva Eiger. He was very careful to wake up *Chatzos* each night and cry over the *Churban*.

During his move from Syria to Palestine, the *Saba Kadisha* stopped off in Beirut, where many questions were addressed to him regarding *shmita* (the laws of the Sabbatical year). His responses indicate that he strongly opposed the *heter mechira* which Israel's Chief Rabbinate had adopted to spare its farmers from loss.

Like the *Minchas Eluzer*, the *Saba Kadisha* was a strong opponent of the Zionist Nationalist Council, which, in British Mandate Palestine, automatically enlisted all Jews, unless they opted out. Rav Alfandari signed legal rulings obligating every Jew to opt out.

*The Sun Sets:* Rav Alfandari contracted pneumonia in May 1930 and was treated by the famed Dr. Moshe Wallach of Shaarei Zedek Hospital. His disease worsened, however, and he passed away May 20, 1930 / 22 Iyar 5690. His *levaya* was attended by thousands, as his *talmidim* carried his *aron* on foot from his home all the way to Har Hazeisim-the Mount of Olives. He was over a hundred years old. The street on which he lived in Yerushalayim was named in his memory.

*Published Works:* All of Rav Shloma Eliezer's responsa and halachic rulings were published posthumously. These include: *She'eilot U'teshuvot MaHaRSHa*, (Yitzchak Nissim, Jerusalem 1932); *She'eilot U'teshuvot Saba Kadisha*, (D. Y. Weiss, Jerusalem, 1973-4.); His letters were collected in *Masos Yerushalayim*, *Kumi Roni* and *Amudei Arazim*.

*May the merit of the Holy Tzadik Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandari protect us all.*

*Yehi Zichro Baruch!*

Author's note: This article is being presented as part of The Monsey Mevaser 'Jerusalem Personalities' series. The author gleaned this tribute information from related articles in the Jewish media and The Eternal Light. *Zechuso Yagen Aleinu!*



**Rav Shimon Deutsch (Iyar 23, 5586 / 1826 - 199th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Moshe

One of the greatest disciples of the Chozeh of Lublin, the Kozhnitzer Maggid, and the Apta Rav author of *Ohev Yisroel*.

Some say he was also a talmid of the Rebbe, Reb Melech of Lizensk, author of *Noam Elimelech*

He passed away on 23 Iyar תקפ"ו in Radzin



**Rav Chaim Yitzchok Chaikin (Iyar 23, 5753 / 1993 - 32nd Yahrzeit)**



Rav Chaim was born in 1907 in Kossova, Lithuania. He was niftar in Sarcelles in 1993. Pupil of Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman in Baranovitch. Rav Chaikin studied for 12 years in the Radin Yeshiva. Of these years, he spent seven years, from 1926 to 1933, as one of the closest students of the revered Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan. In 1938 Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman suggested Rabbi Chaikin to be the Rosh Yeshiva of Chief Rabbi Ernest Weill's new yeshiva in Strasbourg-Neudorf. He served in the Neudorf Yeshiva, the "Yeshiva of France," until the advent of World War II when he enlisted as a soldier in the French Foreign Legion. Captured by the Germans, he was a prisoner of war in Germany for 5 years. Upon his release in May 1945, he was hired as Rosh Yeshiva for the nascent Yeshiva in Aix-les-Bains. Faithfully transmitting the values and teachings of the Chofetz Chaim to his thousands of students, Rabbi Chaikin lead the yeshiva for 48 years until his death.



**Rav Eliezer Tzvi Safrin Komarna Rebbe, Damesek Eliezer on Zohar, Ben Baisi (Iyar 24, 5658 / 1898 - 127th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Yitzchok Isaac Yehudah Yechiel Safrin

Third Komarno Rebbe

Born around תק"ץ in Samvur, Galicia to his father Rav Yitzchok Isaac and his mother Gittel, the daughter of Rav Avrohom Mordechai of Pintshuv.

His childhood was marked by suffering, poverty and deprivation. Despite this, he toiled in Torah study and he grew in Torah and Chassidus.

In his youth, he still knew his uncle Rav Moshe of Samvor and Rav Yehudah Tzvi of Rozla. He studied under his father and was a *talmid muvhak* of Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Zidatshuv.

He also traveled to meet with and learn from other *gedolei haChassidus* such as the Sar Sholom of Belz, Rav Eliezer of Dzhikov, Rav Duvid of Dynow and Rav Meir'l of Premishlan.

He married Channa Sarah, the daughter of Rav Yosef Shener of Turka. Her Yahrzeit is 2 Shevat; she passed away in תר"ן.

The following episode is described in his father's *sefer, Zohar Chai*: Before his passing, Rav Yitzchok Isaac appeared robed in all white and called over his son, Rav Eliezer Tzvi. He commanded his mother to dress in her Yom Tov clothes and pearls for the occasion which was to witness her son's ascension as rebbe and leader. He added that he should wear white on Shabbos from now on as one fit to do so.

It was in this visitation, he appointed his son as successor to lead the chassidim as the next *rebbe*.

Despite his renown as rebbe, after his father's passing, he himself traveled to the Divrei

Chaim of Sanz.

He authored *Damesek Eliezer* which comprises 7 volumes of commentary on the Zohar, as well as *Ben Baisi* on Torah and Tehillim, *Zaken Beisi* on *Pirkei Avos*, and *Ohr Eynaim* an Encyclopedic 2 volume work on Kabbalah. The Sanzer Rav helped him publish the *sefer*, *Ohr Eynaim* which became a vital work for *Klal Yisroel*.

He left behind a daughter Tzipa, the wife of Rav Tzvi of Rozli the 2nd and sons, Rav Menachem Monish, Av Beis Din Falshtin; Rav Avraham Mordechai of Borislov; Rav Yaakov Moshe, his successor in Komarno; and Rav Pinchos Nasan of Rudik.

In the introduction to *Ben Baisi*, his son Rav Monash writes that he heard from his father the following remark:

Rav Tzvi of Zidatshuv corresponds to the attribute of *chessed*;

Rav Moshe of Samvor corresponded to the attribute of *gevurah*;

Rav Yehudah Tzvi of Rozla corresponded to the attribute of *tiferes*;

Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Komarno corresponded to the attribute of *netzach*;

Rav Yitzchok Isaac of Zidatshuv corresponded to the attribute of *hod*;

Rav Eliezer Tzvi himself corresponded to the attributes of *yesod* and *malchus*;

Therefore, he passed away on 39th day Tal of the Omer corresponding to *netzach* of *yesod*. (*Netzach* was his father, Rav Yitzchok Isaac. He was *yesod*).

All he spoke of before his passing related to shalom, peace (which corresponds to *yesod*) and before he passed away, he called his son Rav Monash and said to him, "Shalom and Shalom" and his soul departed.



**Rav Binyomin Mendelson Rav of Kommemiyus (Iyar 24, 5739 / 1979 - 46th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Binyamin Mendelson, Rav of Kommemiyus, one of the most prominent fighters for *kedushas sheviis* (1979). Born in Plotzk at the end of the 19th century, his father was Rav Menachem Mendel Mendelsohn - a close chassid of the Alexander Rebbe - who served there as *Rosh Yeshiva*. After World War I, Rav Binyomin married and opened a *yeshiva* in Bodzanov. During his years there, he became a chassid of the *Gerer Rebbe*, the *Imrei Emes*. In fact, his notes were used to publish the *sefarim* of the *Imrei Emes* decades after the War, as tens of thousands of pages of the *Imrei Emes'* written *chiddushei Torah* were lost. With the *bracha* of the *Gerer Rebbe*, Rav Binyomin moved to Eretz Yisroel in 1933, and was offered the position as Rov of Kfar Ata not far from Haifa and served in that capacity for 17 years. In 1951, Rav Binyomin left Kfar Ata and its *kehilla* of 20,000 families and accepted the offer to become the Rov of a small, religious settlement in the Negev called Kommemius, serving the community for the next 27 years. One of the most defining aspects of his rabbanus in Kommemius was the fact that all of the *mitzvos hateluyos ba'aretz* - land based *mitzvos*, were kept with great alacrity. *Shemitta* was adhered to according to the opinion of the *Chazon Ish* with no reliance on the *heter mechira* that was almost unanimously accepted in those years. Rav Binyomin felt that keeping *Shemitta* was a key to bringing about the *geula*. He was *moser nefesh* for *Shmitta* observance, not only in Kommemius, but in other places as well. His letters, masterpieces of *hashkafa* and *emuna* were published posthumously in the *sefer Igros HaGrab*.



**Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb (Iyar 24, 5765 / 2005 - 20th Yahrzeit)**

Rav Akiva Moshe Gottlieb (1923-2005). Born to Rav Shlomo Gottlieb, Rav of the *Ohr Hachaim shul* in Philadelphia, the family moved to Yerushalayim in 1929. After learning at the *Chevron Yeshiva*, his family moved back to the United States, where he learned at *Torah Vodaas*. He married in 1946. In 1963, he moved back to Eretz Yisrael to help his parents. He was appointed general manager of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, which he held for 14 years. He also assisted his father in *Yeshiva Rabbeinu Chiam Yosef*, founded in 1942. After his father's death, Rav Akiva Moshe was responsible for it. He wrote *Beis Shlomo*, a biography of his father, and *Kerem Shlomo*, six volumes on *chumash* and the

*moadim.*

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**Rav Binyomin Zev (Iyar 25, 5470 / 1710 - 315th Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Meir

*Av Beis Din* Klimintuv

Author, *Even HaOzer*

Served as rav in Klimantuv and rosh yeshiva in Zolkova.

Besides his *chiddushim* on several tractates (*Even Ozer*), he authored *chiddushei dinim* on *Shulchan Aruch*.

He passed away on 25 *Iyar* 1710 ט"ו in Zolkova.

On his matzeiva was inscribed: "A pure, holy man who taught Torah in a yeshiva and authored many *seforim*. He never left the tent of Torah."



**Rav Yaakov Lorberbaum Chavos Da'as, Rav of Lissa (Iyar 25, 5592 / 1832 - 193rd Yahrzeit)**

Yaakov ben Yaakov Moshe Lorberbaum of Lissa (1760-1832) was a Rabbi and Posek. He is most commonly known as the "*Ba'al HaChavos Da'as*" or "*Ba'al HaNesivos*" for his most well-known works, or as the "Lisa Rav" for the city in which he was Chief Rabbi.

### **Biography**

Rabbi Lorberbaum was the great-grandson of the Chacham Tzvi, Rabbi Zvi Ashkenazi; he was therefore related to Rabbi Yaakov Emden. According to one tradition, his father,

Rabbi Yaakov Moshe died before he was born, and his relative, Rabbi Yosef Teomim, the rabbi of Bursztyn, brought him up. This accounts for the common name that both father and son share. Another tradition states that before he was born, his father fell ill, and dreamed that he would recover in the merit of the son that would be born to him. In the merit of his future son, the father took his name-to-be. He studied under Rabbi Meshulam Igra. He was head of the Beis Din in Kalish (Kalisz). In 1809, he agreed to become the Rav in Lisa (today known as Leszno, Poland), where he enlarged his Yeshiva's enrollment. Hundreds of scholars came to study there in the years of his leadership. Among his students were Rabbi Eliyahu Gutmacher, Rabbi Shraga Feivel Danziger, who were supporters of their colleague Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, and his Chovevei Zion movement.

Along with Rabbi Akiva Eiger and Rabbi Akiva Eiger's son-in-law, the Chasam Sofer, Rabbi Lorberbaum vehemently fought against the *maskilim*, the reformers of the Jewish Enlightenment. In 1822, he left Lissa and returned to Kalish, where he wrote many of his works. He lived there for ten years. He was widely respected as a *posek*, and is one of three authorities on whom Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried based his rulings in the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, the well known precis of Jewish law. Similarly, the *Chochmas Odom*, by Rabbi Avrohom Danzig, was written in consultation with Rabbi Lorberbaum (as well as Rabbi Chaim Volozhin).

His status was such that it is reported that Rabbi Akiva Eiger once fainted when he was honored with an *Aliyah* in the lieu of Rav Yaakov. (See *Shimusha Shel Torah*, Rabbi Meir Tzvi Bergman.)

Rabbi Lorberbaum died in Stryj (then in Galicia) on 25 May 1832.

geni.com



**Rav Chaim Hager Toras Chaim (Iyar 25, 5614 / 1854 - 171st Yahrzeit)**

Son of Rav Menachem Mendel of Kosov, founder of the Kosov-Vizhnitz dynasty

Author *Toras Chaim*

Father of first Vizhnitzer Rebbe

Born in תקנ"ה

The second of three Admor Kosov-Viznitz Rebbes

Son-in-law of Rav Yehudah Meir Shapira, the son of Rav Pinchos Koretzer

He traveled to many tzaddikim including the Chozeh of Lublin who said of Rav Chaim: "Happy and praiseworthy are those who gave birth to him, for he is a guardian of the Holy Covenant of the *Bris Kodesh*." (Esser Tzachtzachos 9)

He began to serve as rebbe after his father's passing in תקפ"ו.

He passed away on 25 *Iyar* in the year, תרי"ד .

His divrei Torah are published in his *sefer, Toras Chaim*.



**Rav Chaim Chori Rosh Beis Din of Tunis, Motza Chaim (*Iyar 25, 5717 / 1957 - 68th Yahrzeit*)**



Rav Chaim Chori, Rosh Beis Din in Tunis, author of *Motza Chaim*(1957). He immigrated to Israel from Jerba in 1955 and settled in Beersheva. Chori died two years later and was

buried in the Beersheva cemetery.

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# Gedolim Be'Masayhem



## Stories & Anecdotes

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**Rav Menachem Mendel Turim Rymanover Rebbe, Menahem Mendel of Pristik, Pristiker, Menachem Tzion (Iyar 19)**

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### **BORUCH HASHEM, I AM COLD AND HUNGRY**

Rav Mendel of Rymanow was but a young man when he began his pilgrimages to Lizensk to the *rebbe*, Reb Melech. He was poor and had not a coin to his name. His clothes were simple and old, and the harsh winter brought the kind of bitter cold that creeps into your bones.

With no alternative, Rav Mendel hired himself out as watchman. He would travel about with the coaches and travelers. While the coachmen and the travelers spent the night at the inn, Rav Mendel remained, outside in the cold, guarding the coach and the horses against thieves.

On one particular trip, snow fell relentlessly and traveling was hard. Finally, night fell and the coach reached its destination. As the coachman and his customers entered the warm inn, Rav Mendel braved the bitter elements outside, shivering under his threadbare coat, shaking in his hole-filled shoes, and waiting for the dawn as he stood guard.

It was so cold, he ran back and forth, clapping his hands and rubbing them together for warmth. Soon, he began to hop on one foot and then on the other. This routine soon

became a dance as he hopped and clapped, singing in *simcha*, "Baruch Hashem I am cold! Praised by the Lord I am freezing! Baruch Hashem I am starving!"

Another coach arrived at the inn and as the travelers alighted, they witnessed a bizarre scene before them. There in the bitter cold night, an obviously poor man danced and sang! "What are you singing?" They asked in astonishment.

"I am praising Hashem for making me so healthy that I can properly feel my hunger," answered Rav Mendel.

"And why don't you eat?" They asked.

"I have no money" he answered. The travelers decided to take care of Rav Mendel; they brought him into the warm inn and placed someone else as a watchman. They fed him until he was sated and when his wits returned, he declared, "Had I not sang and danced, praising Hashem, I would still be cold and hungry!" (*Chassidim MiSaprim* #44)

#### **TRUE CHASSIDIM**

Rav Yaakov Yitzchok, the *Chozeh of Lublin* once asked Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow if he had any followers and Chassidim? "Yes, we do," responded Rav Menachem Mendel.

"And in what way are they Chassidim?" inquired the *Chozeh* further.

"Our Chassidim, my followers," answered Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow, "study in depth *halocha* and *Tosfos*."

"If so," replied the *Chozeh*, "then they are indeed true Chassidim!" (*Bais Menachem* 5:2)

Similarly, regarding the study of *halocha* and *Tosfos*, Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow said that he never understood the secret of the matter until recently, that those laws and *halochos* forgotten during the *aveilus* over Moshe (see *Temura* 16a) were returned to us by Osniel ben Kenaz during the days of *Sefiras HaOmer*. Therefore, it is a *minhag Yisrael*, which has the status of Torah, to study *halocha* and *Tosfos* during these holy days. (From the letter *Igeres HaKodesh* of Rav Yechezkel Paneth of Karlsberg, originally published in

*Shu"t Mareh Yechezkel Siman 104* {it is known that on the thirty-fourth day of the *Omer*, the *yahrzeit* of Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow, they found the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz reviewing this *teshuva* and his eyes poured forth tears of longing. *Derech Yivchar* by Rav Chaim Betzalel Paneth of Tash and son of the *Mareh Yechezkel*}

### **AHAVA RABBA - HOW GREAT IS THE LOVE!**

An elder Linsker *Chassid* once told that he heard himself how Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow asked, "What did *Bnei Yisrael* do from the time of *Rosh Chodesh Sivan* until *Kabbolas HaTorah*? They had not yet received the Torah so they were not yet studying it!"

He (Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow) answered, "In the interim they were all reciting the *berocha Ahava Rabba* - How great is the love!" (*Kisvei Chassidim Yalkut Menachem* 290)

### **NOAM ELIMELECH ON EREV SHABBOS AFTER IMMERSING IN THE MIKVA**

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rymanow said, "On *Erev Shabbos Kodesh*, after immersing in the *mikveh* is when I can understand a *shtickel* of *Noam Elimelech*." (*Ohel Elimelech* 192)

### **GUIDED BY THE RIF**

Once, in his youth, Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov was studying in the *Bais Medrash* under Rav Doniel Yaffe in Berlin. He studied the works of the *Rif* on the *Talmud* diligently, and his soul thirsted for self-perfection. Once, he learned so much in one sitting that his tongue stuck to his palate. He began to *daven* deep in his heart and cried to Hashem to enlighten him and brighten his darkness. He *davened* and *davened*, until he fell into a deep sleep and dreamed. In his dreams he saw the *Rif* himself. The *Rif* showed him an image of Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk and told him to travel to the Rebbe, for there he would succeed in attaining his goal.

(*Ohel Elimelech* 183)

### **THE REBBES SOUP**

Rav Mendele Rimanover was one of the four main *talmidim* of the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk.

Before Rav Mendele Rimanover was revealed as a *Tzaddik* and Rebbe possessing *Ruach*

*HaKodesh*, divine intuition, he appeared at Rebbe Reb Elimelech's table as just another Chassid, a regular devoted follower.

One Shabbos, the *Rimanover* was sitting with all the other Chassidim when the *shamash* brought in the Rebbe's soup and placed it in front of the Rebbe. The Rebbe took the bowl of soup in his hands, overturned it, and spilled its contents onto the table. Suddenly gripped with fear, the *Rimanover* shouted, "Oy! Rebbe! Surely they will put us all in jail. You must stop immediately!"

The other guests almost burst out laughing at hearing such strange remarks coming from Rav Mendele, but they restrained themselves in the presence of their holy Rebbe. Rebbe Reb Elimelech said to Rav Mendele, "Relax, my son, we are all safe. We are all here right now." The others were astonished at the Rebbe's remarks until Rebbe Reb Elimelech explained what had transpired that had led him and Rav Mendele to say what they did.

A high-ranking government official had decided to pass a harsh decree against the Jews. He had tried many times before, unsuccessfully, to write out charges and have the king stamp and seal them with his ring. Today, he wrote out the charges once again, determined that this time nothing would stop him from carrying out his wicked plan. He was about to use sand to blot the ink and dry it when I overturned my soup bowl. The official became momentarily confused, picked up the inkwell instead, and proceeded to spill ink all over the accusatory letter he had just written! This young man," the Rebbe concluded, indicating Rav Mendele, "was able to witness what I did, but only by divesting himself fully from the physical world. He forgot that we were in fact here in this room. He imagined that I had actually used my hand and physically overturned the inkwell. He became frightened, and in his terror he called out, for fear that we would be arrested for my actions." Now everyone understood how lofty a level of *Ruach HaKodesh* this young man could perceive. (*Ohel Elimelech* 185)

Once, Rav Mendel of Rimanov told his teacher, Rebbe Reb Elimelech, that he actually saw the *Maloch* who removes the light before the darkness and the darkness before the light (as described in the first *berocha* of the *Ma'ariv* service). The Rebbe Reb Elimelech responded, "But I have already seen this *Maloch* in my youth!"

(*Ohel Elimelech* 156).

## DO IT FOR HIS SAKE

“Rav Elozor Ish Bartosa says: Give Him what is His, because you and yours are His” (Avos 3:8).

Rav Ovadia Yosef used to illustrate our Mishna with the following story:

Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov once sat studying and teaching Torah with his talmidim when a pauper entered the Bais Medrash. Some people naturally awaken sympathy and our pauper was an especially bedraggled and sad sight that tugged at the Tzaddik’s heartstrings. The Rebbe sent his gabbai to fetch a golden dinar from his wallet in the next room and the Rebbe handed the surprised and grateful pauper one gold coin. The poor beggar was dumbstruck and overjoyed at his good fortune. A gold dinar was a handsome, large donation, and he effusively thanked the Rimanover and went on his way.

Afterward, the Rebbe had second thoughts. He began to feel troubled that he had given the pauper *tzedoka* out of feelings of mercy, compassion and sympathy, rather than to fulfill the mitzva of *tzedoka* for the sake of Hashem, as Rashi comments on Teruma - “Take teruma and give it *lishmi* - for the sake of My Name,’ says Hashem.” The Rebbe decided that he would call his attendant again and send him after the pauper.

The pauper was meanwhile happily on his way, smiling at his good fortune. The poor man had gone some distance when behind him he heard the Rebbe’s attendant calling after him, running to catch his breath. The pauper froze and his eyes darkened. “Oh no! Surely the Rebbe made a mistake when he gave me a gold dinar and he has sent his *gabbai* after me to exchange it for a silver one!”

Still, having no choice, he turned sadly around and headed back to the Rebbe’s *hoif*, following the *gabbai*’s lead.

When they returned, the Rebbe had the *gabbai* bring the wallet and to the pauper’s total astonishment, not only did the Rebbe not take his gold dinar away, but he proceeded to hand him another gold coin! This was too much! The pauper smiled, turned to the Rebbe and taking courage from the Tzaddik’s kindness, asked boldly, “Rebbe, I am sorry, I don’t understand. If Your Honor wished to give me two gold coins, why couldn’t the Rebbe have done so at once rather than call me back? The *gabbai* gave me quite a turn and I suffered

a fright and was very downcast and disappointed until just now,” he concluded, confused.

The Tzaddik smiled and explained, “In *Parshas Re’eh* the *pasuk* tells us *noson titein* - ‘you shall surely give *tzedoka*’. Why does the *pasuk* use a double expression? It tells us that if you give out of feelings of sympathy, give once more for the sake of the mitzva. This is what I did. The *pasuk* also says, ‘Your heart shall not be evil when you give him’. I interpret this *pasuk* to mean that the first time you give *tzedoka* do not do so because of the feelings in your heart, that you feel bad for the pauper; therefore give again, and do so for the sake of *mitzvas tzedoka*. (*Anaf Etz Avos* p. 183)

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### Rav Mordechai Twersky Likutei Torah (Iyar 20)

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#### HOW MUCH IS MUD WORTH?

Rav Mottele of Chernobyl arrived in a certain town and was dismayed that one of the wealthiest Jews did not come to visit him. When he sent his *gabbai* to see the wealthy resident and ask him why he hadn’t yet called on the *Rebbe*, the *baal habayis* responded rudely, “I would gladly welcome the *Maggid* into my home! It’s not the *Rebbe* I don’t want, it’s the *Chassidim*! Listen, I have a fine home expensively and tastefully furnished and decorated by fine silks, elaborate, finely woven rugs and carpets, and the *Chassidim* will come in and ruin them with their heavy, muddy boots! Tell the *Rebbe* that he is welcome without his *Chassidim*!”

The attendant relayed the message. The *Maggid*, who was collecting, as usual, on behalf of the thirty-six hidden *Tzaddikim*, agreed. As was customary, the host was expected to gift the *Tzaddik* a sizable donation, but the *Rebbe* stopped at the threshold and explained that he had only agreed to enter the house and no more.

“I agreed to enter, but if you want me to mount the stairs and enter your sitting room, you will have to increase the donation by each stair I climb!”

The wealthy host agreed and by the time the *Rebbe* sat at the table he was looking at a large sum of money indeed. “Now,” said the *Maggid*, “I hear that you fear mud and dirt! Let me see if I cannot change your mind and shift your perspective just a bit with the following story:

“There was once a wealthy merchant who traveled in a fine coach pulled by strong, healthy steeds. As he traveled through the forest one day he came upon a rundown, rickety old wagon stuck in the mud. The poor Jew, struggling to dislodge it, had two broken-down old mares, whose bony, weak bodies struggled unsuccessfully to pull the wagon out of the squelching muck. The wealthy merchant dismounted and harnessed his own horses to the wagon but this too was insufficient. Finally, he disrobed, divesting himself of his fine overcoat and silk gloves, and they climbed together into the mud side by side, pulling and pushing, until he finally saved the sinking Jew and his wagon from certain death in the swampy mire.

“After many years, the merchant left this world and came to the world of judgment. As he stood before the heavenly tribunal, the black prosecuting angel brought wagons full of sins to weigh on the scales of justice, while white-robed angels of mercy and defense also brought wagons full of merits and *mitzvos*, attempting to balance and tip the scales in his favor. To his horror, it wasn’t enough! The scales tipped to the side of judgment against him! Then the defense brought the merit of saving the life of the Jew in the swamp. They took the whole wagon, with the Jew and the horses - and the weight of them all balanced the scales as they swayed to and fro. Just then another angel piped up and yelled to the *Bais Din Shel Maala*, ‘You forgot to add all the mud! This wealthy, refined individual got down in the squelching, stinking mud, sullied his fine waistcoat and breeches and stank of filth to save his fellow Jew - surely all that mud counts for something!’

“And they heaped on all the mud, which tipped the scales in his favor,” concluded the *Rebbe*, his eyes dancing.

The merchant froze; he understood the message all too clearly. It was his past life in the story; the *Maggid* meant his previous *gilgul*. He got up, walked to the door, swung it open wide in welcome and declared to the *Chassidim* outside, “Come in! Come in! Welcome and don’t forget not to wipe your muddy boots on the mat. In fact, the more mud the better!!!” (*Yehi Ohr* #230-231)

### **A REBBE'S DEBT TO A HITCHIKER**

Weekly *Chassidic* Story #805 (s5773-34 / 19<sup>th</sup> of *Iyar* 5773)

As he approached Chernobyl, the *Chassid* was in a happy mood. And why not? Silently he

counted his blessings: a loving wife and children, a flourishing business, and soon he would be in the presence of his holy *Rebbe*, the famous Rav Mordechai of Chernobyl.

With these thoughts in mind he was enjoying the scenery, when suddenly he spotted a poor Jew trudging along with a bundle on his shoulders. Stopping the carriage, he offered the traveler a lift, which was gratefully accepted.

For the first few miles both men were silent. But after a few minutes the poor Jew turned to the *Chassid* and asked him where he was headed. "To Chernobyl," the man replied, "to my holy *Rebbe*."

"Aha!" the traveler said with a smile. "So you're going to Mottele."

The *Chassid* was immediately offended. How dare this shabby-looking fellow refer to his holy *Rebbe* in such a familiar manner, as if they were intimates! On second thought, he decided to remain quiet.

"Are you indeed one of Mottele's *Chassidim*?" the stranger persisted. "Yes," the man replied curtly in an attempt to end the conversation. "What *chutzpa*!" the *Chassid* thought to himself. Under other circumstances he would have put this impudent clod in his place, but he had no wish to ruin the journey further.

But the stranger was clearly in the mood to talk. "How do I know that you're really a *Chassid*?" he inquired. The *Chassid* was very surprised by the question and said nothing.

"A man is measured by his deeds, and especially by his pocket," the stranger continued. "I'll tell you what - if you will pay me the twenty gold coins your *Rebbe* owes me, I will believe that you are his *Chassid*."

The *Chassid* was shocked. What kind of nonsense was this? "If you can prove to me that my *Rebbe* owes you the money I will gladly pay his debt," he blurted out. The stranger smiled and fished around in his knapsack until he found a piece of paper: a promissory note for twenty gold coins, signed by the *Tzaddik* of Chernobyl. The *Chassid* examined it carefully. Yes, it really did appear to be the *Rebbe*'s signature, and try as he might he could not find any evidence of forgery. Nodding his head, he folded the note several times

and placed it in his snuffbox. He then took out his moneybag, counted out exactly twenty gold coins and pressed them into the stranger's hand.

The rest of the journey was conducted in silence. On the outskirts of Chernobyl they reached a crossroads and the stranger asked to be let off. Before he climbed down from the carriage, he thanked the *Chassid* for his kindness and blessed him with success.

The *Chassid* watched the stranger walk off into the distance. Within minutes the man and his bundle were no bigger than a tiny dot that eventually disappeared over the horizon.

The *Chassid* took out the promissory note and inspected it even more closely, but again could find no fault with it. By that time, however, he realized that he had arrived in Chernobyl. With more important things to attend to, he slipped the note back into his snuffbox and promptly forgot about it.

It was a busy Friday when he arrived, and Chernobyl was filled with hundreds of other Jews who had come to bask in the *Rebbe's* presence. Shabbos was spent in a state of spiritual elevation. To the *Chassid*, the opportunity to *daven* with the *Rebbe* and hear his words of *Torah* was nothing less than a foretaste of Paradise.

When *Shabbos* was over the *Chassid* requested a private audience with the *Rebbe*. Oddly, the first thing the *Rebbe* asked him was whether he had any snuff with him. "Certainly," the *Chassid* replied, immediately proffering his snuffbox. As he opened it he saw the note he had forgotten about, and after a moment's hesitation handed it over to the *Rebbe*, who had noticed him pause.

"How did this come into your hands?" the *Rebbe* asked him. The *Chassid* related the whole unlikely story of the stranger who had claimed that the *Rebbe* owed him money, and was shocked when the *Rebbe* verified it as true. "As Divine Providence has led you two to meet, I can reveal to you that that stranger is one of the thirty-six hidden *Tzaddikim* in every generation in whose merit the world exists," he explained, adding that he had taken it upon himself to uphold him financially.

An involuntary shiver passed through the *Chassid's* body. A hidden *Tzaddik* had traveled in his carriage - and he hadn't known! He had even mistaken him for an impudent clod...

Noting his distress, the *Rebbe* eased his mind. "Don't worry, you've done nothing wrong," he reassured him. "If you were chosen to share in the *mitzva* of supporting a hidden *Tzaddik*, there is no doubt that it is a good sign."

From that day on, each year during his annual visit the *Chassid* gave the *Rebbe* twenty gold coins for the hidden *Tzaddik*. And for the rest of his life he hoped to meet the stranger again. But it never happened.

Source: Supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition on //lchaimweekly.org (#668), with permission.

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### **Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandari Sabba Kadisha (Iyar 22)**

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#### **I STAND FOR THE HONOR OF HASHEM**

"Warm yourself by the fire of the Sages but beware lest you be burned by their coals; their bite is like a fox, their sting like a scorpion and their words are fiery coals" (*Avos* 2:15).

Rav Ovadia Yosef used to illustrate our Mishna with the following story about the chief Rav of Constantinople, the Saba Kadisha, Rav Shlomo Alfandri:

After the Spanish Expulsion, Turkey was once of the countries that welcomed Jews in the hopes that their commerce would enrich her coffers. Among the relaxed laws enacted to welcome them was an exemption from army service so that Jewish young men would not be caused to desecrate Shabbos and be exposed to treif food and influences.

However, as time went on and the new sultan, Abid Al Hamid, emerged, he acted to conscript Jews into compulsory army service of the Ottoman Empire. Those Jews close to the ruler and his underlings sought to find favor in their eyes and they urged their Jewish brethren to comply with the sultan's wishes. The body governing the Jews' spiritual wellbeing was also in favor of army enlistment, and in the end the only obstacle was the *Firman*, a document that had been granted by the previous king to the *Chacham Bashi*, Rav Moshe HaLevi. Using the previous exemption, Rav Moshe HaLevi could prevent the enlistment of the Jews, and the pressure mounting against him was enormous. The Jews

wanted to appease the new sultan and garner his favor and the favor of other government ministers, and chief among them was one of the wealthiest Jews in Constantinople, who was very close to the sultan. They all began to pressure the *Chacham Bashi* to relinquish the previous Firman of exemption and hand it back to the sultan.

One of the lone opposing voices that stood staunchly against enlistment was that of the chief Rav of Constantinople, Rav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri. He argued that enlistment would cause mass *chillul Shabbos* and exposure to eating treif and foreign influences. When the sultan heard this he was enraged and he summoned Rav Alfandri. When the Rav came before Abed Al Hamid, the sultan was struck dumb by his holy appearance and dared not harm the Rav. However, the wealthy merchant from Constantinople continued to disagree with the Rav and sought all ways and means to ensure that army enlistment would become a reality. Finally, Rav Alfandri told him that if he would not give up and change his ways, his end would be bitter indeed. When the latter refused, the Rav turned away sadly and threatened him with one final stroke, declaring that Hashem would not forgive him for his actions.

The wealthy merchant left his home that day to head out to the sultan and find a way to achieve his goal, but he never made it there! As he crossed his own threshold he suffered heart failure and died on his own doorstep!

During the *levaya*, Rav Alfandri forbade anyone to eulogize the niftar. Even though the wealthy merchant's son and other dignitaries and government officials begged the Rav to allow a hesped for the sake of the honor of the sultan and the man's high rank and position, the Rav stood his ground and refused. "You talk of his honor and the sultan's but I am an *Eved Hashem*; I stand for the honor of Hashem, Master and King of the World. It is His honor I seek and I will not change my mind or bend my will to you." Even the hefty bribe of a purse full of money would not sway the Rav, and the man was buried in dishonor and disgrace.

Afterward, Rav Alfrandri was awarded by the sultan the title of *Chacham Bashi*, when he was appointed chief Rav of Damascus. There he ruled as Rav and *Dayan* with the legal backing of the authority of the sultan as well as the Torah and was thus able to run the Jewish community as he saw fit and punish any transgressors who would oppose him. (*Anaf Etz Avos* p. 136-7)

## **AISH KODESH**

There is a well-known story related by the elders of Tzefas that one of the women who lived in close proximity to Rav Alfandri's home was once on her roof porch on a hot summer day to cool off, as many did in the summer, when she became terrified at the sight of a fire blazing on Rav Alfandri's roof and in his home! She ran quickly to seek help, and as she approached the *Saba Kadisha's* home, Rav Alfandri's *talmid*, Rav Aharon Ben Shimon, with whom he was engaged in *Torah* study, heard the commotion, and came out. Rav Ben Shimon assured the distraught woman that there was no danger and the blazing fire she had witnessed was the *Aish Kodesh*, the fiery flames of the intense *Torah* study they were engaged in at that time and what a *zechus* she had that she was *zoche* to witness it. He asked her to keep the matter a secret and she did so, not revealing this amazing fact until the *Saba Kadisha* had left this world. (Toras Aharon p. 17)

## **THE BERACHOS OF THE SABA KADISHA**

A Turkish Pasha once visited Tzefas and Rav Alfrandri's reknown as a holy Rav from Constantinople drew him to seek the chief *Rav's* blessing. "Please bless me," requested the Pasha of the Chacham.

"My *berochos* require humility in order to be received," answered the *Saba Kadisha*. "You must dismount from your horse and bow your head before me so that I may bless you."

The Pasha agreed; he dismounted and bowed his head before Rav Alfandri and the *Saba Kadisha* blessed him that Hashem should grant the Pasha success on condition that he would work to benefit and safeguard his Jewish subjects. (*Oros Mimizrach* p. 147)

## **THE KIDDUSH LEVONA THAT FORETOLD WAR**

The elders of Tzefas used to tell how one of the nights during *Chodesh Nissan*, after Chacham Alfandri had concluded reciting the *berocha* of *Kiddush Levona*, they noticed that his gaze was drawn heavenward and his eyes gazed at some distant object. Then he clapped his hands in despair and sorrow and sighed a great heavy sigh of anguish. When asked what he saw that troubled him so, the *Saba Kadisha* responded, "I see drawing near a great war; soon an outbreak of war will strike the world harshly," and not long afterward the First World War broke out. (*Oros Mimizrach* p. 147)

## PLEASE DECREE THAT MOSHIACH MUST COME

When the *Munkaczer Rav*, Rav Chaim Elozor Shapira, came to Eretz Yisrael, he traveled to Yerushalayim especially to meet with the *Saba Kadisha*, Rav Alfandri, who had now exceeded one hundred and ten years and who, after leaving the chief rabbinate of Tzefas, was living in the holy city.

During the visit, the Munkaczer conversed in *Loshon Kodesh* with a *Sefardi* accent so that the *Saba Kadisha* could understand him; the Rav had been practicing and he made of the elder *Tzaddik* and holy Rav a unique and wondrous request. He revealed that he had brought a holy, secret letter, an epistle, an *igeres sesorim* that he had inherited from the holy Komarna *Tzaddik*, Rav Yaakov Moshe Safrin, foretelling that the way to bring the *Geula* closer depended on the decree of the *Tzaddik HaDor*. If the *Tzaddik HaDor* would decree that *Moshiach* must come, then this would hasten the *Geula*. The *Munkaczer Rav* held that Rav Alfandri was worthy and on the level of someone who could make this decree! He then asked the *Saba Kadisha* to do so. However, Rav Alfandri refused, stating in his humility, "I am not a *Tzaddik*." This conversation took place eight days before the *Saba Kadisha* left this world on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of *Iyar*. (*Oros Mimizrach*, page 153)

## DEFIES THE SULTAN

Rav Shlomo Eliezer displayed his willingness to take a firm stand in a highly charged political situation which found him challenging the views of his entire community.

The issue at hand was the drafting of Jewish soldiers into the sultan's army, a decree fraught with spiritual peril. Originally, the Jews who had fled the Spanish Inquisition to the Ottoman Empire were exempted from the army by the sultan. In Rav Shlomo Eliezer's day, however, a new sultan, Abdul Hamid II, decreed that all non-Muslims must enlist.

The city's rabbanim tried to reverse the edict, without success. Eventually they decided to accept the decree rather than provoke the authorities. The *Vaad Haruchani* issued a directive urging the region's Jews to go ahead and enlist.

Rav Shlomo Eliezer was the only one who protested this course of action. At the *Vaad* meeting, he declared, "Since serving in the Turkish army involves Shabbos desecration and the defiling of oneself with non-kosher food, enlisting in the army is considered a *Chillul Hashem*. We must not yield to Sultan Abdul Hamid. If we are firm, Hashem will

help us." After this declaration, he burst into tears.

One of the community's wealthy members had some influence in the sultan's court. Yet this Jew, too, backed the draft decree. One day, as this man visited the palace to oversee certain aspects of the decree, he fell unconscious and died.

The next day, a huge gathering assembled at the wealthy man's funeral. At that time, it was customary for Rav Shlomo Eliezer to deliver the first eulogy at every funeral, and no one dared precede him. But today, the Rav stayed home. Community representatives came to plead with him to speak, or at least to let others speak without him, but he refused. The sons of the wealthy man came to offer him a large sum of money which he could use for *tzedaka*, but still he refused. "Yesterday I visited your father and asked him not to collaborate with the sultan," the rav explained. "But he defied me. Therefore, I cannot honor him."

In the end, none of the city's rabbis eulogized the man.

Sultan Abdul Hamid was furious when he heard about Rav Shlomo Eliezer's efforts to cancel the draft decree. He summoned the rabbi to the palace, intending to punish him for inciting the Jews against him. But when the sultan met the rabbi and heard his position, he was very impressed with him. He even granted him the title of *Chacham Bashi*, with the power to issue edicts in the Jewish community.

In the end, the draft was not enforced due to internal conflicts in the royal court.

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### **Rav Binyomin Mendelson Rav of Kommemiyus (Iyar 24)**

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#### **POOR SEED**

5711, the second year of Moshav Komemiyus, was a Shemitta year.

My name is Dov Weiss and I was part of the group of about thirty religious young men who started the agricultural settlement *Moshav Komemiyus*, in the south of Eretz Yisrael. It was in 1950, after we had completed our army service. I was still a bachelor then. Among the founders was also the well-known Torah scholar and rabbinical authority, Rav

Binyomin Mendelsohn, of blessed memory. He had previously immigrated to Eretz Yisrael from Poland and had served as the Rav of Kfar Ata.

At first we lived in tents, in the middle of a barren wilderness. The nearest settlements to ours were a group of several *kibbutzim* associated with the left-wing *Shomer HaTzair* movement: Gat, Gilon and Negva. Several of our members supported themselves by working at Kibbutz Gat, the closest to us, doing different types of manual labor. Others worked in agriculture, planting wheat, barley, rye and other grains and legumes. I myself drove a tractor. Our produce, which grew throughout the fifteen thousand or so dunam [nearly four thousand acres] allotted us, we sold to bakeries and factories.

At that time, there were not yet water pipes reaching our *moshav*. We had to content ourselves with what could be grown in dry, rugged fields. Every few days we would make a trip to Kibbutz Negva, about twenty kilometers distant, to fill large containers with drinking water.

The second year we were there, 5711 on the Jewish calendar (fall 1950–summer 1951) was the *Shemitta* year which comes every seventh year, in which the Torah commands to desist from all agricultural work (see *Vayikra* 25:1-7). We were among the very few settlements in Eretz Yisrael at the time to observe the laws of the Sabbatical year and refrain from working the land. Instead, we concentrated on building, and succeeded that year in completing much of the permanent housing. The *moshav* gradually developed and expanded, and more and more families moved in, as well as a number of young singles. By the end of the year we already numbered around eighty people.

As the *Shemitta* year drew to its completion, we prepared to renew our farming activities. For this we required seed to sow crops, but for this purpose we could only use wheat from the sixth year, the year that preceded *Shemitta*, for the produce of the seventh year is forbidden for this type of use. We went around to all the agricultural settlements in the area, near and far, seeking good quality seed from the previous year's harvest, but no one could fulfill our request.

All we were able to find was some old wormy seed that, for reasons that were never made clear to us, was laying around in a storage shed in Kibbutz Gat. No farmer in his right mind anywhere in the world would consider using such poor quality seed to plant with,

not if he expected to see any crops from it. The *kibbutzniks* at Gat all burst into loud, derisive laughter when we revealed that we were actually interested in this infested grain that had been rotting away for a few years in some dark, murky corner.

“If you really want it, you can take all that you like, and for free, with our compliments,” they offered in amusement.

We consulted with Rav Mendelsohn. His response was, “Take it. The One who tells wheat to sprout from good seed can also order it to grow from inferior, wormy, leftover seed as well.”

In any case, we had no alternative. So we loaded on a tractor all the old, infested seed that the kibbutz had offered to us free of charge and returned to Komemiyus.

The laws of *Shemitta* forbade us to plough and turn over the soil until after *Rosh HaShana*, the beginning of the eighth year, so we did not actually get to sow the seed until the next month, *Marcheshvan*. This was two or three months after all the other farmers had already completed their planting.

That year, the rains were late in coming. The farmers from all the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* gazed upward longingly for the first rain. They began to feel desperate, but the heavens were unresponsive, remaining breathlessly still and blue.

Finally it rained. When? The day after we completed planting our thousand dunam of wheat fields with those wormy seeds, the sky opened up and the rains exploded down to saturate the parched earth.

The following days we were nervous in anticipation, but we turned our attention to strengthening our faith and trust in Hashem. Anyway, it did not take a long time for the hand of Hashem to be revealed clearly to all. Those wheat fields that were planted during *Shemitta*, months before the first rain, sprouted only small, weak crops. At the same time, our fields, sowed with the old, infested seed and long after the appropriate season, were covered with an unusually large and healthy yield of wheat, in comparison to any standard.

The story of the “miracle at Komemiyus” spread quickly. Farmers from all the agricultural settlements in the South came to see with their own eyes what they could not believe when they heard the rumors about it.

When the farmers from Kibbutz Gat arrived, they pulled a surprise on us. After looking in open-mouthed astonishment at the impressive, bountiful quantity of wheat flourishing in our fields, grown from the infested seeds they had provided us, they decided to renege on their generosity. They announced they wanted payment for the tractor load of old, rotten wheat they had scornfully given us for free only a short time before.

Even more startling, they said they would file a claim against us in *Bais Din*, the rabbinical court, and with Rav Mendelsohn himself, no less! Probably they figured that in a secular court such a claim wouldn't have the slightest possible chance of gaining them even a single penny.

Rav Mendelsohn accepted their case seriously, and in the end judged that we should pay them. He explained that the reason they gave it for free was because they thought it worthless for planting, while in truth it really was excellent for that purpose. We were astonished to hear his ruling, but needless to say, we complied.

The whole story became an extraordinary *Kiddush Hashem*, a glorification of Hashem, in the eyes of people throughout the country. Everyone agreed it was a clear fulfillment of Hashem's promise in the Torah:

“And if you shall say, ‘What will we eat in the seventh year? Behold we may not plant, nor harvest our produce!’ I will command My blessing to you....” (*Vayikra* 25:20-21).

*[Translated and freely adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from Sichat HaShavua #721.]*

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**Rav Yaakov Lorberbaum Chavos Da'as, Rav of Lisa (Iyar 25)**

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**'BE CAUTIOUS IN JUDGEMENT' (AVOS 1:1)**

Rav Ovadia Yosef used to illustrate this *Mishna* with the following story about Rav Yaakov of Lisa author of *Nesivos HaMishpat*:

Two litigants once came before Rav Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lisa arguing over a golden dinar. "Rabbi, I was walking in the *shuk*, and I found a golden dinar on the floor and picked it up," said one.

"It's mine; it had just fallen out of my pocket!" interrupted the other "I never gave up hope of recovering it so it still belongs to me!"

There seemed something about the second litigant's shifty manner and oily tone that gave away that he was a thief and a scoundrel. Rav Yaakov's senses told him that was that this man was dishonest.

Determined to back up his intuition with something more with which to judge the case properly, he sent second litigant out of the room and called in the finder of the gold coin. Rav Yaakov took the coin and called out in a voice so loud that anyone in the adjoining room could hear, "See here, see this notch on the coin? It's like a scratch just below the first letter. It's a true *siman* [as is found in] (Gittin 27b)! If anyone were to use that *siman* as proof, this coin would surely be given back to him!"

Rav Yaakov then called back the second litigant who had been eavesdropping the entire time.

Rav Yaakov turned towards the second litigant and asked, "Can you offer any *siman* as proof that this dinar is yours?"

"Yes rabbi!" he answered happily, "There's a scratch below the first letter which must be as legitimate a *siman* as any to prove that this is my coin!"

The rabbi opened his hand and showed the would-be-thief the coin. The satisfied smirk of this shady character quickly became a frown as the rabbi said, "Well, I guess this isn't your coin then, because this coin is clean as a whistle-- no scratches on it at all. I guess you should go and look for the coin that you dropped because this coin belongs to the one who found it!" (*Anaf Etz Avos* p. 4)

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## Rav Chaim Hager Toras Chaim (Iyar 25)

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### I WOULD RECOGNIZE ELIYOHU HANOVI

The *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz told the following stories about his illustrious forebear, the *Toras Chaim* of Kosov:

The *Toras Chaim* once said about the *zemer Eliyohu HaNovi* recited as part of the *Motzo'ei Shabbos Melava Malka zemiros*, "We sing *ashrei mi shero'a ponov bachalom* - happy is he who saw Eliyohu HaNovi's face in a dream - but who knows what Eliyohu HaNovi looks like? If no one knows what he looks like, how would he be able to recognize him in a dream? I, however, concluded the *Toras Chaim*, would be able to recognize him if I saw him in a dream because I once saw him when I was awake, with my father the *Ahavas Sholom*, and this is how it happened:

"When I was a young child," told the *Toras Chaim*, "I often used to sleep in my father's bed. One night, I was awakened from my sleep to the sound of a conversation taking place between my father and someone else in the room. I looked up and was amazed to see an elderly man with a shining countenance sitting on my father's chair and my father sat at his side. I was upset by this - who dared take my father's seat at the head of the table? My father said to the guest: 'Eliyohu, here in bed lies my *Chaim'nyu* - I would like you to give him a *berocha*!'

"When I heard that this was none other than Eliyohu HaNovi, I was seized with fear and trembling and hid beneath the covers. Eliyohu HaNovi reached in below the covers, placed his holy hands on my head and gave me a *berocha*. I took a peek from underneath the covers and saw his holy face!"

"And so therefore I tell you," concluded the *Toras Chaim*, "that if I saw him in a dream, I could recognize him because I saw him when I was awake!" (*Sarfei Kodesh* 429-430)

### THE APTA RAV'S APPROVAL

There was once a dispute between Rav Yitzchok of Radvil and the *Ahavas Sholom* of Kosov regarding one of the *shochtim* in Nadworna. When the *Kosov Chassidim* heard that the *Apta Rav* seemed to side with the *Radviller*, they decided to get the *Apter* to meet with

their *Rebbe*, the *Ahavas Sholom*, instead.

One day, they heard that the *Apta Rav* was on his way to meet Rav Yitzchok of Radvil and they set out to put their plan into action. It was well known that when the *Apta Rav* traveled he used no passport to cross borders; instead, he always carried a *mezuzah* with him and showed this at the crossing to the gentile guards, who would examine his pass and then wave him on.

This time, however, there was a problem. When the *Apta Rav* presented his *mezuzah*-passport, the border guards arrested him and took him for questioning to Kosov. This was because the border guards were none other than the *Ahavas Sholom's Chassidim*, disguised as border guards manning an imaginary border crossing.

In Kosov, a lavish welcome had been prepared at the *Ahavas Sholom's* home to welcome the guest from Apt. When the *Apta Rav* realized that he had been fooled, he was very angry and upset. He took two cups of *mashke* and asked the *Chassidim* who were dressed as guards to drink them. The *Toras Chaim*, the *Ahavas Sholom's* son, realized that if the *Chassidim* drank the cups of wine, the *Apta Rav* would send them away from this world as a punishment.

"Don't drink the wine!" he warned them, and he blocked the *Chassidim* and covered the cups, preventing them from drinking.

"Who is this young man who thinks he can interfere in matters not his own?" asked the *Apta Rav*.

"*Chaim'nyu!*" chastised the *Ahavas Sholom*, "stand up so the *Rebbe* can see you properly!"

When the *Apta Rav's* gaze fell on the *Toras Chaim*, he was greatly impressed and he left the matter as settled. (*Sarfei Kodesh* 429-431)

#### **THE COSSACK HAS PLENTY OF MONEY**

The *Ahavas Sholom* had a *Chassid* who was an innkeeper. His small inn and tavern were leased from the local Polish nobleman and after the Jew had paid the *poritz*, his *parnossa*

was meager indeed. He was always late on his payments and was always coming to the *Kosover Rebbe* and asking for help. The *Ahavas Sholom* would, on these occasions, open his desk drawer and hand the Chassid whatever money he needed to pay off his debts. When the *Ahavas Sholom* passed on, and his son the *Toras Chaim* took over as *Rebbe*, the Chassid continued to come and visit the new *Kosover*, yet now, when he described his financial woes and his need for funds, the *Toras Chaim* did not give him any money, only a *berocha*.

"*Rebbe*, what will I do with your *berocha*?" said the bewildered Chassid. "I need cash now! Your father used to give me the money I needed, not just a *berocha*!" said the exasperated Chassid.

"My father," replied the *Toras Chaim*, "had a special *berocha* from *Shomayim* that his desk and his drawers should always help the needy and never lack funds. He could always open his desk drawer and find whatever he needed. I have not inherited this *berocha* and thus cannot do so, but don't worry, the Cossack has plenty of money to spare - much more than I - and he will give you!"

And on that enigmatic note the *Rebbe* bid his Chassid farewell.

The Chassid did not understand the *Rebbe's* strange references to imaginary Cossacks. He only understood too well that without the money he needed to pay the poritz, he was now in serious trouble. He went home sad and distressed. When his wife asked if the *Rebbe* had given him the money, the Chassid answered bitterly, "He is no *Rebbe*."

He went sadly to sleep and was awakened suddenly in the middle of the night to the sound of loud knocking and banging on his front door. When he opened it, he saw standing before him a stranger, a tall Cossack who immediately told him, "I am in a rush to join the war and I had to leave in haste. I have no one trustworthy to guard my money until I return...if I ever come back, that is. When I asked around these parts for someone I could trust with my life they all said that you were the most trustworthy person. Here, take this money," and he handed the bewildered Jew thousands of gold coins. "Safeguard it for me until I come back. If I ever come back, give it to me!" So saying, he left into the night without another word.

The Jew hid the money and the next day set out for Kosov. When he told the *Rebbe* the strange tale, the *Rebbe* smiled and said, "There is no longer any Cossack, and no longer any war. He is never coming back - the money is yours!"

Needless to say, the Chassid's faith in his *Rebbe* was restored and he had plenty to pay the poritz. (*Sarfei Kodesh* 433-434)

### **THE KOHEN GODOL WHO ATONES FOR YOU**

The *Toras Chaim* was one of a kind when it came to hiding his true nature and concealing his greatness.

He would often dress very simply in a *shpentzer*, a short leather coat worn by peasants, tied with a coarse rope as a belt! He also had a large bird coop full of chickens, geese and ducks, and would often be seen feeding them or checking that others were handling them and feeding them on time. Needless to say, such simple behavior did not appear very *Rebbish* or refined and caused some to wonder.

There once arrived a Chassid who found the *Toras Chaim* dressed as described, standing, ordering the farm hands to feed the hens and geese and acting in a very *non-Rebbish* manner. Seeing the Chassid's obvious astonishment and dismay, the *Toras Chaim* told him a story:

"Many years ago, when the *Bais HaMikdosh* stood, there was an elderly Jew who lived far from Yerushalayim and had never yet been there and thus had never seen the *Bais HaMikdosh*. He once inadvertently sinned and this accident caused him to be liable to bring a *Korban Chatos*. And so this elderly Jew set off to offer his sin offering, not knowing the way to Yerushalayim.

"As he traveled, he had no choice but to ask for directions. All the passersby and travelers laughed and wondered, 'How can such an old Jew not know the way to Yerushalayim, to the *Bais HaMikdosh*? Haven't you ever been there, and why are you going now?'

"He had no choice but to explain his reason for travel by admitting his sin and suffering their stares and jeers.

“When he finally arrived, he experienced the same torment again and again. First, when he was laughed at, gawked at and jeered at for his lack of knowledge as to where to purchase an animal for a *korban*, then by others when he asked for directions to Har HaBayis. ‘An elderly man such as yourself still sins? What, don’t you know where they sell *Korbonos*? Didn’t you realize you need to buy two - one for a *Chatos* and one for a *Shelomim*? Don’t you know the way to Har HaBayis? What do you mean you were never there before?’ And so on...

“Finally, after the long journey, suffering the distance, time, effort, money, jeers and insults of folk who could not believe his ignorance, the elderly Jew reached the *Bais HaMikdosh* and approached the *Kohen Godol* who was busy and in the middle of the *Avoda*. Our elderly Jew looked up and gazed at the *Kohen* and saw a man dressed in short pants standing barefoot, with bloodstains covering his clothes and body. The elder stood bemused and wondered to himself, ‘For this barefooted butcher did I have to travel and suffer such a long, arduous journey full of insults?!’

“However,” concluded the *Toras Chaim* to the Chassid, “*Davka* through the *Kohen* did he achieve his atonement!” The Chassid got the hint. (*Sarfei Kodesh* p. 435)

#### **GRABBING AND SAVING NESHAMOS**

On the *Toras Chaim’s* *Yahrzeit*, the *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz once remarked, “*Chai* (18th *Iyar* is *Lag BaOmer*, the *Yahrzeit/Hillula* of Rav Shimon bar Yochai. On one side of that calendar date, a week before, is the *Yahrzeit* of my *Zeide*, the *heilige Ropshitzer* (11th of *Iyar*) and on the other side is the *Yahrzeit* of my *Zeide*, the *Toras Chaim* (25th of *Iyar*) - they all grab *neshomos* and pull them out of *Gehinnom*! (*Sarfei Kodesh* p. 451)

# Segulos Yisroel



# SEGULOS FOR PARSHAS EMOR & SEFIRAS HAOMER & PIRKEI AVOS

## Chai Rotel Mashke

The *Ta'amei HaMinhogim* says that numerous people who have had difficulty having children, finding a *shidduch*, recovering from an illness or attaining a livelihood were successful only after they donated *Chai Rotel* for the *Lag Ba'Omer* celebrations in Meron.

*Rotel* is an ancient measurement: eighteen rotel is roughly fifty-four liters.

Rav Yehuda Leib Horenstein writes that he met two people on *Lag Ba'Omer* in Meron who donated *Chai Rotel* and had children after more than ten years of marriage. The *Bobover Rav*, the *Kedushas Tzion*, sent a letter from Poland to his Chassidim in Eretz Yisrael asking them to donate *Chai Rotel* in Meron on this holy day on behalf of a couple who did not have children.

Rav Hillel Lichtenstein of Kolomaya wrote a *sefer* titled *Shirei Maskil*, which, in his words on the title page, “brings about *parnossa vechalkola* (sustenance and livelihood).”

In the introduction, he explains why:

“I saw the poverty of my people and I realized that it was the *klippa* of *Amolek*, the angel of death, the evil inclination, who are one and the same being that causes us to sin through laziness in fulfilling the *Torah*, which is food for the soul, and he detracts from our *parnossa*, as it says in *Kiddushin*: “My sinful actions have caused me to lose my *parnossa*”. Therefore I wrote this *sefer*; through learning these teachings, whoever wishes to have abundant sustenance in his household should study them and defeat the evil one.”

כי עבור זה שראה ראיתי את עני ממי בערן השפם והפרנסה שבמוהיר מאד נתמעטה משה שמתי אל לבי מה הוא סיכת דבר זה ונודע לי שקליפת עמלק היא היא הגורמת למעט הפרנסה) עיין קהלת יעקב ערך ממ (וטעם הדבר משום שהוא עמלק והוא השטן והוא היצהר שאומנתו היא להסית ולהדיח לבני אדם שיתעצלו בקיומה של תורה שהיא היא מזון הנשמה ועיכ נסתבב להתמעט מזון הגוף כרתנן) סוף קדושין (הרימותי את מעשי וקפחת את פרנסתי לכן עבור אהבת אחי ועמי טרחתי ולקטתי מעט אמרים וסדרתי אותם בכללים שונים שיסודתם מל שרשי מורה כאלה שגורמים שפע ופרנסה ומעתה כל הרוצה לזכות

לפרנס את ביתו בריוח ולא בצמצום, בנחת ולא בצער, יר עיניו בראשו לעיין בהם ועיך יהי זריז לקיים הכא להרגך השכם להרגו למחות שם עמלק וכוחו שלא לשמוע לו בהסתתו באלה, ובזה אפשר לפרש כוונת) פסוק יט בראשית סימן ג (מל דרך רמוז בזעת אפך תאכל לחם הכוונה רת [2] של בזעת אפך הוא יתמחה את זכר עמלק והיינו לקיים ולעשות מה שמבואר בכללים האלה! ולשבר כוחו של המסית עיך תזכה תאבל לחם לשפע ופרנסה כריות ובנחת

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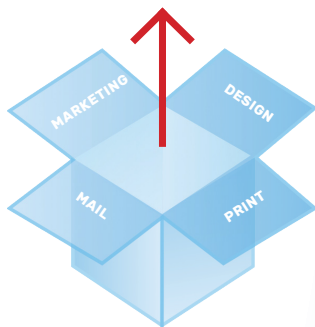
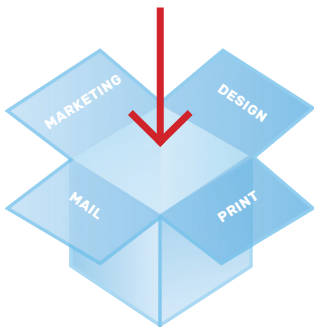


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