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LIGHTS OF OUR RIGHTEOUS TZADDIKIM



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

Kedushas Levi, Parshas Noach (Bereishis 7:1)

❧ **VAYIGASH** ❧

❧ CHASSIDUS ON THE PARSHA ❧

Sowing the Holy Seeds of the *Zera Kodesh* – Rav Naftoli Ropshitzer

Dvar Torah

Three Pieces of Advice for Better Prayer

"And Yehuda went over to him [Yosef] and said, "Please, my master, may your servant please speak something into my master's ears" (Bereishis 44:18).

The holy Rav Naftoli Ropshitzer teaches us in *Zera Kodesh* that the *Torah* is teaching us here how to *daven* to Hashem. A person might say to himself, "How can I dare stand before Hashem? I am so unworthy to beseech Him, especially in light of my past misdeeds."

The Ropshitzer explains that the *Torah* gives us three pieces of advice to open our hearts and *daven*:

1. to remember *zechus avos*
2. to remember that we each have a divine soul
3. to remember that Hashem directly helps us and *davens* with us side by side

The Ropshitzer then describes these pieces of advice in detail:

The first piece of advice is that even when you feel yourself to be unworthy of *davening* to Hashem because you and your deeds are worthless, you should come before Him with your

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zechos avos – with the merit of your holy forefathers, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, so that even if you lack merit, through their *zechus* your prayers may be answered. He gives a *moshol* to illustrate this idea: Yaakov's inheritance and portion is known as *Yaakov chevel nachaloso*. A *chevel* also means a rope or cord. If we tie ourselves to the *avos*, binding ourselves tightly to the chain of their dynasty that links us, we can use this rope to achieve our goals. Just as someone down below who grasps the end of the rope and shakes it causes the top of the rope to respond to his movement below, so do we shake and move the higher world through our bond to the *Avos* (see *Shela HaKodosh, Toldos Odom Bais Hashem Bais Dovid* #16). Even if I am lowly, I am still a member of the family of Klal Yisrael and through my lineage I have the power to use my prayers to awaken all the heavenly worlds, so that *Hashem* should answer my *tefillos*, giving Him *nachas*.

The second piece of advice is to remember that we all carry within ourselves a divine portion – the *neshoma* – a *chelek Eloka mimaal* – a G-dly portion from above. When I *daven*, I am reattaching my *neshoma* to its origin, reconnecting myself to the source. This alone is good reason for me to be allowed to approach *Hashem* in prayer, just as in each word we utter many letters, bringing them together to form words, and each word we say comes from various parts of the mouth (the *Sefer Yetzira* teaches us how the mouth, teeth, tongue, throat and lips form the five groups of sounds of speech which are the guttural, lingual, labial and dental). Who has the power to connect all these disparate sources and bind them into one force of *tefilla*? Is it not my holy *neshoma* that gives me the power to *daven* and bind all these as one? This too should give us the push to feel we can and should pray.

The third and final piece of advice is to remind ourselves of the words of Chazal (*Berochos* 7a) that *Hashem* Himself *davens* as well. Furthermore, the Sages said (*Zohar* III 232a) that the *Shechina* spoke through Moshe. Likewise, *Hashem*, as it were, speaks through us, clothing Himself in our mouths when we *daven*. Although I may feel small, insignificant and unworthy to *daven* before *Hashem*, when *Hashem* in His great mercy and kindness witnesses that we hesitate, He clothes Himself within our mouths and *davens* with us, side by side.

Let us explain how the Ropshitzer rereads these pieces of advice in our *Parsha*: Yehuda stands for *tefilla*. In *Bereishis* 29:35 we learn that he was named Yehuda because his mother said, "This time I will thank *Hashem*." Thus, we see that his name indicates thanksgiving and praise. Yehuda also contains the four-letter *Shem Havaya* as well as an additional *dalet*. The *dalet* stands for *deleis leih migarme'ei kelum*, an Aramaic phrase that means "I myself am nothing". When a person reaches such a state of humility as represented by the *dalet*, whose literal meaning is "poor", he thanks *Hashem* because he realizes that without *Hashem* he is nothing. This is why Chazal say that *kol haneshoma tehallel Kah* – the soul praises *Hashem* for each and every breath – *al kol neshima uneshima* (*Bereishis Rabba* 14:9). The humble person realizes that everything he receives is a gift from above and that he is nothing without *Hashem*. This is what the *dalet* in Yehuda symbolizes – poor, humble thanksgiving to *Hashem*.

Let us now reread our *pasuk*:

The initials of *Vayigash eilov Yehuda* – "And Yehuda approached him" -- are *alef, yud* and *vov* – *ayo* – "from where?" This is the question we must ask ourselves when we step forward to approach *Hashem* in *tefilla* – from where do I seek to find the merit to have my prayers answered? I know I have past misdeeds; from where do I draw the *zechus* to *daven* to

Hashem? From where do I know that *Hashem* will stand close by me and answer me when I call to Him? Our *pasuk* hints at the three pieces of advice above: *Vayigash eilov Yehuda* – the final letters *shin*, *vov* and *hei* form the word *sheva*. These three letters represent the three *Avos*, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, in whose merit we ask *Hashem* to answer us even if we are unworthy: The *hei* was added to Avrohom *Avinu*'s name, changing it from Avrom to Avrohom. The *shin* replaced the *tzadi* in Yitzchok's name when he is called Yischok (see *Tehillim* 105:9). The *vov* is added to Yaakov's name, spelling it out completely as Yaakov. Thus, *sheva* reminds us to use *zechus avos*.

The *pasuk* continues, *Bi adoni* – “Please, my master”, alluding to the second piece of advice, remembering that we have a G-dly portion within us that we reconnect to the source; *bi adoni* – “Hashem is within me!” This knowledge gives me the right to *daven* and to be answered. The *pasuk* continues, *Adoni sho'al es avodov* – “My master asked of his servants” – this alludes to the Master, *Hashem*, making requests in prayer alongside us, His servants. This is the third and final piece of advice. *Sho'al* also means “lend”; *Hashem* “lends” us His divine portion, the soul, and, using this *neshoma*, we *daven*.

The *heilige* Ropshitzer also tells us that *sheva* has the same *gematria* as the name of the healing angel – the *Maloch* Refoel ($shin = 300 + vov = 6 + hei = 5 = 311$) = ($reish = 200 + pei = 80 + alef = 1 + lamed = 30 = 311$)

This teaches us that the merit of the *Avos* alluded to by the *sheva* (as we explained) draws down healing and *refua*. *Refua* itself contains and includes all manner of salvation. This is proven by the fact that even though usually a *Maloch* only has one *shelichus* (*Bereishis Rabba* 50:2), when the *Maloch* healed Avrohom *Avinu*, he also saved Lot. This, says the Ropshitzer, proves that healing includes all other forms of help and salvation. Since *sheva* equals Refoel – the *zechus avos* draws down healing as well as all other forms of aid.

May the *zechus* of the *Avos* draw down *refuos*, *yeshuos* and *hatzola* for all of Klal Yisrael, Amen!



Story

The *Zechus Avos* of the Ropshitzer

How the Ropshitzer eventually became a *talmid* of Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizhensk

The following tradition was related by Rav Avigdor, the *Av Beis Din* of Novo Sanz, who heard it from his grandfather, the *Divrei Chaim*:

When the two *Tzaddikim*, Rebbe Reb Melech of Lizhensk, and his brother, Rebbe Reb Zusha of Hanipoli, were wandering together in self-imposed exile, they suffered extreme deprivation, going from place to place like beggars, sleeping on benches in the *Bais Medrash*, often fasting for lack of food, simultaneously loving and drawing their fellow *Yidden* to *teshuva*, *Ahavas Hashem* and *Ahavas Yisrael* wherever their holy feet led them. This journey served as a *kappora* for all Klal Yisrael, as well as to perfect themselves, and lasted some nine years. Toward the end of their travels they ended up in Linsk for *Shabbos*.

The *Rav* of Linsk was the renowned *Gaon*, Rav Mendel Linsker, the father of Rav Naftoli Ropshitzer. The two holy brothers came dressed in rags and tatters, and this is how

they appeared in the *Bais Medrash* of the Linsker *Rav*. No one took any notice of them all *Shabbos* long. No one invited them to partake of a Friday night meal and they were reduced to eating whatever crumbs of bread they carried in their packs. The same scenario repeated itself *Shabbos* day and at *Sholosh Seudos*, when they drew close to hear the *Divrei Torah*. They thought it was strange that no one took any notice or invited them at all and wondered at this fact even as they drew close on *Motzo'ei Shabbos* to hear the *berocha* of *Havdola* and recite *borei me'orei ho'aish* on the candle.

It was then that the young lad Naftoli laughed at them and poked fun, calling them silly names. "Ha! Ha!! *Meleich - Freilich*, and *Zisha - Kishya!!!*"

His father, Rav Mendel Linsker, turned to the two holy brothers and remarked, "You think I don't recognize you or know who you are? If I had wandered in self-imposed exile as long as you two, my face would look better and more radiant than yours! You would do better to rectify the world by eating more than by fasting!"

He gave them three coins for charity and sent them on their way. When they examined the coins, they discovered them to be three silver francs, a princely sum indeed. They were worried that this was a mistake, but Rebbe Reb Zusha exclaimed, "Wait, the *Rav* told us to serve *Hashem* by eating. Let's see if this money is enough to purchase all the food we need, then we can give back the change; if not, we will know it's no mistake." They spent an additional year this way in *golus* and when they again stopped in Linsk, the *Rav* snapped his fingers and said, "Now you have succeeded in fulfilling my intentions!"

Later, the Rebbe Elimelech became well known as a great *Tzaddik* and *Rebbe*. When the Linsker *Rav* passed away, his son Rav Naftoli wanted to travel to Rebbe Reb Elimelech and study under him and become his *talmid*. He was deterred, however, by the memory of how he had poked fun at the *Tzaddikim* as a young boy. Nonetheless, after some hesitation, Rav Naftoli decided to approach Rebbe Reb Elimelech, ask his forgiveness and to ask the *Rebbe* to accept him as a *talmid*.

The Rebbe Reb Elimelech had the ability to know from Wednesday on who would be his upcoming guests for *Shabbos*. As soon as Rebbe Reb Melech felt that Rav Naftoli was traveling to Lizhensk for *Shabbos* he warned his *gabbo'im* and his *shamash*, "When the Ropshitzer arrives, do not let him into my rooms without my express permission!"

When Rav Naftoli arrived in Lizhensk, the *shamash* came straight to Rebbe Reb Elimelech to report on his arrival. When Rav Naftoli approached the threshold, Rebbe Reb Elimelech stopped him from entering through the doorway, and declared, "Here comes the son of that murderer!" and he slammed the door in his face, barring his entry. At that moment the Ropshitzer fainted.

Rebbe Reb Elimelech gave him some brandy to revive him and sent him on his way. The Ropshitzer took the remaining brandy with him and went to the *Bais Medrash*. There he found a throng of *Chassidim* in heated discussion about an upcoming *simcha*, a wedding to take place that evening between two orphans. The problem was that the *chosson* lacked a *tallis* as his gift and there were no drinks or food to be had! The *chasuna* was in danger of being canceled.

When Rav Naftoli heard this news, he went into town and, since he was from a wealthy family, he had no trouble borrowing some money and purchasing other goods on

credit. Quickly he bought all the missing items: a new *tallis* for the *chosson* and food and drinks for the wedding feast! Soon the *chosson* and *kalla* were brought in and the Ropshitzer set a lavish banquet before them. Then he got up and stood himself on the table in front of all assembled and he began to recite *badchonus* – *grammen*, rhymes, jokes and all manner of witty and clever songs and dances to bring cheer to the crowd and a smile to the lips of the *chosson* and *kalla*! Everyone was overjoyed and there was great *simcha*!

(The *sefer Ayala Shelucha* describes one of the *gematrias* that Rav Naftoli employed during his *badchonus*, how he blessed the couple that their union should be beautiful and good – *der zivug zol oleh yafeh*.)

Meanwhile, Rebbe Reb Elimelech was expecting Rav Naftoli to come back, but after waiting he told his *shamash* that he had no choice but to *daven Maariv*, even though he could see it would not be successful. He then said that he would eat supper, but delayed in favor of reciting *Tikkun Chatzos*, mourning the destruction of the *Bais HaMikdosh*. However, this *tefilla* too was unsuccessful and Rebbe Reb Elimelech was left dissatisfied with his unsuccessful attempts at *Maariv* and *Tikkun Chatzos*. The *Rebbe* was downcast and he reasoned that if both his *Maariv* and *Chatzos* had failed, perhaps he was guilty of some wrongdoing.

“There is a *chasuna* tonight; perhaps boys and girls are engaged in mixed dancing or some other sinful behavior and I need to protest,” he reasoned. “Please go and see if anything improper is going on and report back to me,” asked the *Rebbe* of his *shamash*.

Meanwhile, the Ropshitzer had dressed up as a hunchback and used flax to make himself a long, silly beard, and he stood disguised on the table engaged in *badchonus*, rhymes, jokes, dancing, and playacting. The *shamash* did not recognize him, but Rav Naftoli recognized the *shamash* all right! He jumped off the table, grabbed the *shamash* and began to dance with him until the *shamash* felt all his bones mending and straightening out. The *shamash* felt a great spiritual bliss and was drawn in, mesmerized by the performance, standing transfixed with no desire to go back.

Seeing that the *shamash* had left and not returned, Rebbe Reb Elimelech decided, “I must go myself and see what needs to be done!” When the *shamash* saw Rebbe Reb Elimelech approaching from afar, he quickly ran out to him and said, “Please, *Rebbe*, don’t go in there. It’s not honorable for your stature – there is some crazy lunatic in there who grabs random newcomers and dances with them on and on. Surely he will grab you too, *Rebbe*! Also, there is no improper behavior at the *chasuna* itself. Hearing these words, the *Rebbe* turned to go back home.

In the morning, the Ropshitzer barged through Rebbe Reb Elimelech’s door and asked, “So, *Rebbe*, how was your *Chatzos* last night?”

“Naftultshe, how do you know about my *chatzos*?” countered Rebbe Reb Elimelech.

The Ropshitzer answered, “We were together on high; they forbade Your Honor to enter, yet I was allowed access. The reason I was given a pass to enter is because I made everyone happy at the *chasuna* and in *shomayim* they did not want your mournful *Chatzos* to disrupt the *simcha* of the wedding.” (Gan Hadasim p. 7-10)



OHR HACHAIM

"The gates of heaven opened up and I saw G-dly visions, the Creator of the four corners of the earth, and I gazed and meditated upon that which I had permission to, and began to explain at the beginning of Hashem's holy words" Ohr HaChaim, Bereishis

Praises For The Holy Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh

Saved Through the Zechus of Studying the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh

Approximately fifty years ago there was a Jew whose roots were firmly entrenched in Husyatiner *Chassidus*. His parents and grandparents had all been ardent *Chassidim* and followers of the *Rebbe*, but new and strange winds of change were blowing across Europe, sweeping away many a young person with secular Zionism, Socialism, Communism, Bundism and many other man-made philosophies that promised a redemption from the filthy, infested ghettos of oppression in Europe into the enlightened world!

Our protagonist was also swept away by these winds of change and he left his roots and traditions behind, as he made his way to Palestine to work the land, building a new life full of promise! How disappointed he was to discover that dreams and promises were one thing and reality was something else. Eventually, he began to reabsorb his heritage and love for his family's traditions, embracing religious life once again. One Husyatiner tradition that he became especially attached to was the weekly study of the holy *sefer Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* on the *Parsha* as his father had done before him each *Shabbos*.

Once, when he was very sick, he fainted and left his earthly body behind, as his soul soared to the supernal realms. There, he reached the heavenly court and recognized that he was standing before two judges – the *Dayanim* of the *Bais Din Shel Ma'ala*. Also present was the prosecution – the angels of *kitrug* – waiting to seal the judgment against him. Just then, the third judge entered, the *Av Bais Din*, the head of the court, and he sat down between the other two *Dayanim*, asking them emphatically, "Has this Jew fulfilled his allotted time on Earth? Has he lived out his life and is it time for him to leave the world and come here?"

Without waiting for a response, he continued, "Why should he not continue to live his life out? Does he not study the *sefer Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* on the weekly *Parsha* each *Shabbos*?! We should let him continue his studies in the *sefer*..." Immediately, he was released and removed from that heavenly chamber and with that, he awoke, healthy, once again in this world.

About two weeks later, he met the *Rebbe*, Rav Yisrael of Husyatin, who was walking flanked by two *Chassidim* who were escorting him. Immediately, our protagonist recognized the *Rebbe's* face: here was the *Av Bais Din* who had sent him back to life, healthy, in the *zechus* of his weekly study of the *Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh*! The *Rebbe* approached him and blessed him with *arichus yomim veshonim tovos* – many long, healthy, happy years, with *berocha* and *hatzlocha*! (*Shivchei Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh* p. 21)



The Holy Lights Of The Ohr Hachaim

The *Ohr HaChaim* asks an obvious question: All the time that Yosef was alive in Mitzrayim, his father Yaakov thought him dead, mourned for him and suffered (see *Bereishis* 45:26). What was the reason that Yosef refrained from contacting Yaakov? Why didn't his father's suffering and anguish move him to reveal that he was alive in Egypt?

This is how the *Ohr HaChaim* builds the question: While Yosef was enslaved we can rest assured that he was either unable to contact his father or that he tried but failed to do so. But once he was appointed as viceroy to Pharaoh we may question why he never wrote to Yaakov any letter to lessen his father's anguish and suffering. Furthermore, during the years of famine, when there was constant traffic between Canaan and Mitzrayim, he could have contacted Yaakov. Once he met his brothers and recognized them, and discovered that his father was alive, he could have sent word to his father immediately! Who allowed Yosef to prolong Yaakov's mourning and wait so long before revealing that he was alive?

The *Ohr HaChaim* gives several answers to this question:

Truly *Hashem's* ways are many and varied, and He decreed that these events must unfold in this way. Because Yaakov himself spent twenty-two years away from his own father Yitzchok and was unable to honor him, he was repaid with twenty-two years of pain and suffering. Additionally, *Hashem* had decreed two hundred and ten years of exile, yet Yaakov had to descend with great wealth and honor. All these prophetic decrees would not have been fulfilled had Yaakov descended to Egypt sooner. However, these explanations are divine reasons why the scenario had to play out the way it did; they do not actually explain or justify Yosef's own actions.

The *Ohr HaChaim* justifies Yosef's behavior as praiseworthy. First, he says that Yosef feared for his life from his brothers. The *Ohr HaChaim* explains that as soon as Yosef was exiled in Egypt, he could not contact Yaakov because he feared that his brothers would discover his whereabouts. They had already attempted to take his life and had sold him into slavery. The brothers' embarrassment at their actions against Yosef would be very great and Yosef feared their revenge. Yosef was worried that if he contacted Yaakov and his brothers discovered that he was alive they would track him down and attempt to finish him off! He also feared that Yaakov might curse his brothers and they would die, and that perhaps they would try to kill him before any of that occurred.

After he was released from prison and rose to a high-ranking position as viceroy, he was no longer concerned that he would be killed. He then held back from contacting his father for a different reason. *Chazal* say (*Bava Metzia* 59a), "Better that someone should fling himself into a fiery furnace than embarrass his friend publicly." Yosef applied this dictum to himself and worried lest he embarrass his brothers before Yaakov, Yitzchok and any other members of his family. Perhaps he also still feared that they would attempt to kill him even now when he was viceroy; the *Medrash Tanchuma* says that the *Maloch* Gavriel had to scatter them to forestall their plot to harm Yosef. Yosef might have feared them even after the famine brought them to Egypt, until after he fed them and befriended them once more. But after showing them his mercy and love he was no longer afraid that they would harm him. All this was revealed to be *Hashem's* way of running the world, arranging events through *hashgocha protis* so that they unfolded to fit the Master Plan. Then they no longer bore him any malice or grudge. This also removed any feelings of shame or embarrassment before Yaakov because everyone could clearly see the hand of *Hashem* in the way that history unfolded. Still, the *Tanchuma* tells us that *Hashem* needed to send a *Maloch* to save Yosef. We also could not

expect Yosef to rely on this *Maloch* who saved him before to save him again now, because we may not rely on miracles to save us. For these reasons, Yosef is blameless in not having contacted Yaakov.

הילולא

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hebrew Tefilla for Lighting a Yahrzeit or Hilula Candle

[תפילה הנמצאת בספר אלה המגן מבעל הפלא יועץ על פְּרִשֶׁת ויצא עמוד כ"ד]

הַרִינִי מִדְּלִיק נֵר זֶה לְמִנוּחַת וּלְעִילּוּי נַשְׁמַת אָבִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / הַצִּדִּיק _____
בֶּן/בֵּת _____, יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֶּקִּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְבֹּל בְּרַחֲמִים
וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה הַטוֹב שְׁאֵנִי עוֹשֶׂה, בֵּין בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה, בֵּין בְּדִבּוּר, בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה וַיְהִי הַכָּל
לְזָכוֹת וּלְמִנוּחַת וּלְעִילּוּי לְנַשְׁמוֹת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּבְפֶרֶט לְנַפְשׁ רוּחַ וְנַשְׁמָה שֶׁל אָבִי / אִמִּי /
צִדִּיק _____. יְהִי רָצוֹן שְׁתֵּהֵינָה נַפְשׁוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים.

Translation:

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

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

4) Study some of his teaching or writings.

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





❁ GEDOLIM BE'MISASAM YOSER ❁



Yahrzeits Beginning Shabbos Vayigash

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

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

✧ 7th of Teves ~ Begins Friday Night (Dec 14th)

- ✧ **Rav Moshe Dovid Walli** (Vally; Vali) (1697–1777). The foremost *talmid* of the *Ramchal* in Padua, Italy, he practiced as a physician in Padova. When the *Ramchal* was forced to leave Italy, Rav Moshe Dovid was appointed head of his academy in Padua. Also known as the *Rama" d Vali*, he wrote a commentary on *Chumash* (*Ohr Olam* on *Bereishis*; *Bris Olam* on *Shemos*; *Avodas HaKodesh* on *Vayikra*; *Shivtei Kah* on *Bamidbar*; *Mishneh LaMelech* on *Devorim*), *Nach* and *Likkutim*, (5538/1777);
- ✧ **Rav Tzvi Hirsch**, son of the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, (5540/1779);
- ✧ **Rav Rephoel Shlomo Laniado** (1740–1793). Originating from Spain through their progenitor, Rav Shmuel, the Laniado family was among the most famous and well established in the Syrian city of Chaleb. Rav Refoel Shlomo Laniado was a prolific writer, and is well known for several *halachic* works: *HaMaalos LeShlomo*, *Bais Dino Shel Shlomo*, *Lechem Shlomo* and *Kisei Shlomo*, (5554/1793);
- ✧ **Rav Mordechai Yosef Leiner** of Izhbitz (1800–1854 [1878, according to *Yated* 2007]), founder of the *Chassidic* Court at Izhbitz, after leading a group of *talmidim* from the court of Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. Born in Tomashov, Poland, in 1800, he was a childhood friend of Rav Menachem Mendel Morgenstern, later to become the *Kotzker Rebbe*, and they studied together in the school of the *Chassidic* Master, Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha. His *sefer Mei HaShilo'ach*, is considered a fundamental work of Izhbitz and Radziner *Chassidus*. Among his *talmidim* were Rav Tzodok *HaKohen MiLublin* and Rav Leibel Eiger, (5615/1854);
- ✧ **Rav Sholom Yosef Friedman** of Husyatin (1879 [1851, according to *Yated* 2007]). Son of the first *Rebbe* of Husyatin, Rav Mordechai Shraga (the youngest son of the *Rizhiner Rebbe*, who had moved to Husyatin in 1865 and was *niftar* in 1894. He was the father of Rav Moshe of Boyan-Cracow ("Reb Moshenyu"), (5640/1879);
- ✧ **Rav Yosef Elyashiyov**. Born in the former Soviet Union to Rav Tzion, who was killed by the authorities for his efforts to promote Judaism, he moved from Samarkand to Tashkent after marrying; there, he and his wife raised their seven children. While living in Tashkent he had to spend seven years away from home — four years in custody on suspicion of underground religious activity and three years hiding from the KGB, who had him under surveillance for his activities to promote Judaism. In 1971, he managed to secure an exit visa and left his home and his family, traveling to *Eretz Yisrael*. He opened the first *Shaarei Tzion* institutions in 1980, naming them after his father. He then started a *kollel*, with the goal of drawing *avreichim* from Bukharan families, as well as a school in Kiryat Ono for Bukharan immigrants. Today, a total of 4,500 students, from kindergartners to *avreichim*, study at *Shaarei Tzion* institutions, (5768/2007).

✧ 8th of Teves ~ Begins Motzai Shabbos (Dec 15th)

- ✧ **Rav Yosef Dov HaKohen Lieberman**. Rav Lieberman was a well-known figure in Williamsburg as the *Menahel* of *Torah Vodaas* and *Tzeilemer Yeshivos*. His *Daf Yomi Shiur* is still remembered by many. He was *niftar* at the age of ninety-four in 1986 after delivering

his regular *shiur* on Friday morning, (5747/1986);

✳ **Rav Boruch Tzvi HaKohen Moskowitz.** Rav Moskowitz was the post-World War II *Rav* and *Rosh Yeshiva* of Paksh. He was a close *talmid* of the *Keren L'Dovid*. He is the *mechaber* of many *seforim*, including *Tenuvos Boruch* on *Sugyos*, *Mishmeres Tzvi Al HaTorah* and *Nishbah L'Avosecha* on *Pirkei Avos*. He left many *talmidim* in America, *Eretz Yisrael* and England, (5711/1950).

✳ **History:** A *taanis tzibbur* (communal fast) was declared to commemorate the translation of the *Torah* to a foreign language (Greek) under King Ptolemy (*Shulchon Aruch Orach Chaim* 580:2).

✳ **9th of Teves ~ Begins Sunday Night (Dec 16th)**

✳ **Ezra Hasofer and Nechemya** (313 BCE or 320 BCE);

✳ **Rav Ezra** of Gerona, the Ramban's teacher in Kabbalah. He himself learned Kabbalah from Rav Yitzchak Sagi-Nahor, son of the Ravad III (1227);

✳ **Rabbeinu Yosef**, son of Rav Shmuel HaNaggid, and son-in-law of Rav Nissim Gaon of Kirouan. He was murdered in an Arab pogrom with another 1500 Jews in Spain (1067);

✳ **Rav Yehudah** ("Reb Yiddel") Weber, *Rosh Yeshiva* of the newly established Pupa Yeshiva, first located in Queens, then in Ossining, in Westchester County (1920-2006).

✳ **10th of Teves ~ Begins Monday Night (Dec 17th)**

✳ **Zecharia ben Berechya ben Ido HaNovi** (320 or 313 BCE);

✳ **Malachi HaNovi** (320 or 313 BCE). His *petira* ended the era of prophecy;

✳ **Rav Yehuda Eilenberg**, *mechaber* of *Minchas Yehuda*, (5371/1610);

✳ **Rav Nosson Sternhartz** (or Sternberg) of Breslov, *mechaber* of *Likutei Halochos*. As a young man, he lived in Nemirov, nine miles north of Breslov. Despite family opposition, Nosson became the *talmid* who recorded Rav Nachman's thoughts, edited his writings and wrote the early history of the Breslover *Chassidim*, (5605/1844);

✳ **Rav Meir Sholom Rabinowitz** of Kalushin (1851–1901). Born to Rav Yehoshua Osher of Zelichov, the son of the *Yid HaKodosh* of Peshis'cha, he became a son-in-law of his older brother, Rav Yaakov Tzvi of Porisov, *mechaber* of *Atara Lerosh Tzaddik*. He served as *Rav* of the *kehillos* of Porisov, Gravlin and Kalushin. He became *Rebbe* after the *petira* of his brother in 1889. Many of his ideas in *Torah* and *Chassidus* were recorded by his son and successor, Yehoshua Alter, in the *sefer Nahar Sholom*, (5662/1901);

✳ **Rav Noach** of Hordishitz, (5664/1903);

✳ **Rav Refoel Wexelbaum**, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Itri;

✳ **Rav Yechezkel Halshtuk**, the Ostrovitzer *Rebbe* (1887–1942), born to Rav Meir Yeziel, founder of the court of Ostrovitz (Ostrowiec), a town that lies along the Kamienna River, a tributary of the Vistula, and which is situated in the Polish highlands just north of the Swietokrzyskie Mountains. At eighteen, Rav Yechezkel married Rebbetzin Baila Mirel, daughter of Rav Naftoli of Meilitz, who was a grandson of Rav Naftoli of Ropshitz. In 1911, he was appointed *Rav* of the town of Inovlod; and ten years later, he was appointed *Rav* of Nashelsk. He succeeded his father as *Rebbe* after the latter's *petira* in 1928. He founded a *Yeshiva* named *Bais Meir*, in honor of his father. He and twenty of his *Chassidim* were murdered by the Nazis during *davening* on the night of *Assora BeTeves*. His *Rebbetzin*, seven sons and one son-in-law were all murdered by the Nazis. Some of his writings were published after the war under the name *Kodshei Yechezkel*, (8th of *Teves*, according to *Yated* 2006 and *Yated* 2007), (5703/1942);

- ✳ **Rav Shabsai Yogel**, born in Piask, Russia (1875–1957). After studying in Eishishock as a youngster, he learned in Volozhin until it was closed by the Russian authorities, at which time he returned to Piask until he married Liba Kletzkin from Slonim. He then moved to Slonim and learned in one of the Novardok *kollelim*. In 1906, he was asked to head the Slonim *Yeshiva*, founded by Rav Shlomo Zalman Kahana in 1816. The *Yeshiva*'s first *Rosh Yeshiva* was Rav Avrohom Weinberg, who later became the founder of the Slonimer *Chassidic* dynasty. In 1929, Rav Shabsai visited *Eretz Yisrael* for the first time; two months later, his son Shlomo perished in the Chevron massacres. During the early years of World War II, Rav Shabsai and his family moved to *Eretz Yisrael*. Since the *Yeshiva* in Slonim had been destroyed by the Nazis, he rebuilt it. He decided to do so in Ramat Gan, which at that time was a spiritual wasteland, (5718/1957).
- ✳ **Rav Avrohom Abba Leifer**, the Pittsburgher *Rebbe*, the *Admor* of Petersburg-Ashdod. *Mechaber* of *Emunas Avrohom*, son of Rav Yosef (*Tzidkas Yosef*), and son-in-law of Rebbe Issomor of Nadvorna. His son, Mordechai Yissochor Dov Ber Leifer of Pittsburgh, is *mechaber* of *Pisgomei Orais*, (5750/1989).

✳ **11th of Teves ~ Begins Tuesday Night (Dec 18th)**

- ✳ **Rav Moshe** of Ostraha, *mechaber* of *Arugas HaBosem*, (5545/1784);
- ✳ **Rav Shlomo Eiger**, *mechaber* of *Gilyon Maharsha*, son of Rav Akiva Eiger, (5612/1851);
- ✳ **Rav Shlomo Zalman Ullman** of Makava, *mechaber* of *Yerios Shlomo*. Son of Rav Sholom Charif, Rav Shlomo Zalman served as *Rav* of Rendick for two years and of Makova, Hungary, for thirty-nine years. He fought against any inroads of the Reform movement for much of his life. At the end of his *sefer*, Rav Shlomo Zalman added *Kuntres Bais Yad*, where he expounds on fourteen differences in the *sugya* of *eid echod ne'eman b'issurim*. This *kuntres* is the basis of many *halochos* of *issur ve'heter*, (5626/1865);
- ✳ **Rav Yehoshua Horowitz** of Dzikov, *mechaber* of *Ateres Yeshua*, (5673/1912);
- ✳ **Rav Dovid Twersky** of Zlatipoli, eldest son of Rav Yochonon of Rachmastrivke, the son of Rav Mordechai of Chernobyl. Rav Dovid married Rebbetzin Bas-Tzion Tzipora Feiga, daughter of Rav Aharon of Karlin. With his father's *petira*, Rav Dovid became *Rebbe* in Rachmastrivke, along with his brothers, but moved his court to Zlatipoli, (5675/1914);
- ✳ **Rav Moshe Bergman**, *Rosh Yeshiva*, *Rashbi Yeshiva*, (5738/1977);
- ✳ **Rav Yaakov Yosef Shlomo Halperin**, the Vasloier *Rebbe*, grandson of the first Vasloier *Rebbe*, Rav Sholom Halperin. His father, Rav Chaim Dov Halperin, was the *Rebbe*'s only son and moved from Romania to *Eretz Yisrael* in 1950 and was *niftar* in 1957. Rav Yaakov Yosef himself was succeeded by his son Rav Avrohom Shimshon Sholom, who lives in Bnei Brak, (5745/1984);
- ✳ **Rav Shmuel Dovid Tzvi Mayer** (known as Rav Dovid Hirsch), *menahel* of *Yeshiva Bais Binyomin* in Stamford, Connecticut, (5764/2003).

✳ **12th of Teves ~ Begins Wednesday Night (Dec 19th)**

- ✳ **Rav Moshe Margulies**, *mechaber* of *Pnei Moshe* on the *Yerushalmi*, (5542/1781);
- ✳ **Rav Moshe** of Pshevorsk, *mechaber* of *Ohr Pnei Moshe*, (5566/1805);
- ✳ **Rav Mordechai Chaim Kastelanitz** of Teverya, known as "Reb Mottel Slonimer", (5714/1953).

✳ **13th of Teves ~ Begins Thursday Night (Dec 20th)**

- ✳ **Rav Moshe ben Dovid Biderman**, the Lelover *Rebbe* (1776–1850 or 1851). Born in abject poverty, he married Rachel Rivka, a daughter of the *Yid HaKodosh* of Peshis'cha. After the

latter's *petira* in 1813, he became a *Chassid* of Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshis'cha, along with his friend, Rav Yitzchok of Vorki. In 1843, he finally agreed to a leadership position, agreeing to be *Rav* of the community of Przedborz, Poland. In the last years of his life, he decided to move to *Eretz Yisrael*. He and many of his *Chassidim* arrived at Akko on *Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan*. He traveled to Yerushalayim, but immediately took ill. Tragically, between the illness and the Arabs, he was never able to *daven* at the *kosel*, his life-long dream. He was succeeded by his son, Rav Elozor Mendel; a vibrant community of Lelover *Chassidim* still exists in *Eretz Yisrael* today. Sadly, the community in Przedborz – about 4,500 Jews – was liquidated at Treblinka, (5611/1850);

- ✳ **Rav Menachem Mendel** of Vishiva, the *She'aris Menachem*, (5702/1941);
- ✳ **Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon**, *Rosh Yeshivas Lomza*. Among the *Roshei Yeshiva* who traveled to the United States to raise funds during World War II were Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel from Mir, Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon from Lomza, Rav Aharon Kotler from Kletzk, Rav Shimon Shkopf from Grodno, Rav Elchonon Wasserman from Baranowitz and Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz from Kamenetz, (5726/1965);
- ✳ **Rav Yitzchok HaKohen Huberman**, the *Tzaddik* of Raanana. (1896–1977). He was born in Tomashov (Tomaszow Lubelski), near Lublin. An 1895 census reveals that, out of a population of 6,077, over half the citizens, 3,646, were Jews. The first *shul* in this town was built in 1594, but after the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648–49, only eighteen of the original two hundred families still remained. The most famous Jew of the town was the Kotzker *Rebbe*, Rav Menachem Mendel Morgenstern of Tomashov, who lived there until he left for Kotzk. Rav Yitzchok became a follower of the *Imrei Emes* of Ger and, after his mentor's *petira*, of his son, the *Bais Yisrael*. In 1940, Josef Stalin deported 200,000 Polish Jews, including Rav Yitzchok, to forced labor camps in Siberia and elsewhere. This saved their lives, since most of those left behind were murdered by the Nazis when they invaded Russia, a year later. After the war, Rav Yitzchok served as a *Rav* for six years in Germany before moving to *Eretz Yisrael*, and settling in Raanana. Rav Yitzchok wrote a collection of *chiddushim* on *Megillas Esther* and entitled it *Higida Esther*, in his mother's memory, (5738/1977).



❁ HILLULA DE'TZADDIKA ❁

WHAT'S BEHIND YAHRZEIT MEANINGS & CUSTOMS

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

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

The *Zohar* in *VaYeira* page 71 teaches us that if we suffer any calamity or tragedy we have

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



❁ GEDOLIM BE'MASAYHEM ❁

STORIES & ANECDOTES

Rav Avrohom Abba Leifer, 10th of Teves

Pittsburgher Rebbe

Saved By A Prayer

Of the three brothers learning in European *Yeshivos*, only Rav Avrohom Abba survived the Holocaust. The Nazis in charge of Czernowitz ordered all Jews to sew a yellow badge on their coats and to shave their beards. The Pittsburgher Rebbe did not shave his beard, and he once went outside to accompany a visitor home without remembering to put on his coat, on which the yellow badge was sewn. When the Nazi officials saw him, they arrested him and brought him to a large courtyard where thousands of Jews had been rounded up for deportation.

Though most of the captured Jews spoke bleakly about their fate, Rav Leifer displayed strong *emuna* (faith in *Hashem*) and immersed himself in heartfelt prayer. Two days later, when the men were being led into cattle cars, an SS officer instructed Rav Leifer to stand to the side. After the transport left, the officer said to him, "You should know that in the past few days, I observed all of you, and I heard everyone talking with despair in their voices, except for you. You were busy praying to your God, so know that your God has heard your prayers and you are free to go." The Rebbe ran back to his father-in-law's house, where his family was already mourning his

demise. He recounted this story of his personal redemption at every *Pesach Seder*.



A Holy Messenger

In 1970, the Rebbe decided to move to *Eretz Yisrael*. He chose the coastal city of Ashdod for his new base, though at the time the city had very few religious Jews and almost no *Chassidim*. The reason why he chose this city was based on a dream he had, in which a man who identified himself as Chasdai *ibn* Shaprut (the foreign minister of the caliph of Córdoba some one thousand years earlier) appeared to him and asked him to establish his court in Ashdod, promising him success.



The Niggun That Celebrated the Broken Engagement

The Pittsburgher Rebbe's talent for composing heart-rending melodies sung worldwide is well known. Here is the story behind the *niggun Yismechu HaShomayim*:

The Rebbe was always involved in the fight against assimilation and when a Jew from Florida appeared before the Pittsburgher Rebbe and cried that his daughter was engaged to be married to a

goy, the *Rebbe* was so moved and distressed by his plight that he pledged to stop at nothing to rescind the harsh decree. He flew to Florida and against all odds fought and used all his ways and means until succeeded, in an almost supernatural manner, to cancel the marriage and avert the decree.

When the *Rebbe* returned to

Ashdod, he thanked *Hashem* for his successful endeavor and that his efforts to cancel the intermarriage had borne fruit. As a thanksgiving, he composed the well-known *niggun* for *Yismechu HaShomayim*, which is still sung to this day among Pittsburger *Chassidim* and others who appreciate heartfelt *Yiddish gezangen*. (*Avrohom Bechoro* p. 33)



Rav Shlomo ben Rav Akiva Eiger, 11th of Teves

Rabbi Akiva Eiger's Berocha

Rav Shlomo Eiger was a genius in *Torah*, even though he was involved in worldly business dealings with heads of state, politicians, merchants and businessmen of the highest ranks, who would come to conduct business deals at all times of the day. Of course, as a *Talmid Chochom* and son of the renowned *Gaon*, Rav Akiva Eiger, Rav Shlomo also ran a *Yeshiva* and taught many *talmidim* with great *iyun* and *pilpul* – intense depth and minute hair-splitting logic. Often an important minister would come for some matter and this would inevitably interrupt their lesson. Fortunately, and almost miraculously, Rav Shlomo always seemed to be able to return and pick up the thread of his logic, argument, *chiddush* or point of debate seamlessly – as if there had been no interruption whatsoever!

Once, after such an occasion and a *shiur* was interrupted, yet Rav Shlomo resumed as if nothing had changed, his *talmid*, Rav Davidson, asked, “*Rebbe*, how

is it that you can resume your *shiur* and pick up exactly where you left off without having to pause and review?! Its amazing!”

“It is all due to my father’s *berocha*!” explained Rav Shlomo Eiger. “When I was a *chosson* under the *chuppa*, my father gave me a *berocha*. He said, ‘You are now marrying into an important, wealthy family, your father-in-law has many business dealings and you will be leaving my care and will inevitably become involved in these matters, which will force you to interrupt your studies and teaching. My *berocha* is that you should be able to immediately resume your learning, study and teaching *Torah* without losing your train of thought and to pick up exactly where you left off without need for review or preparation – and this will give you peace in your *Torah* study!’ *Boruch Hashem*, as you can see,” concluded Rav Shlomo, “my holy father’s *berocha* was fulfilled!” (*Chut HaMeshulash* p. 224 footnotes)



Rav Yehoshua ben Meir Horowitz, 11th of Teves

The Dzhikover Rebbe, Mechaber of Ateres Yeshua

Please Don't Lick the Bones

Once, on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* during the *Rebbe's Rosh Chodesh seuda*, the *Tzaddik* entered, looked around and

declared, “I see here many soldiers have gathered, now I wish to admonish you all – although you may be forced to eat *treifos*, I beg you, do not lick the bones in delight!”

The *Chassidim* were very confused by the *Rebbe's* declaration and admonishment, since only *Chassidim* were present with not a single soldier among them. After several years, however, when the conscription and draft began and many of them indeed entered the army to fight in the First World War, the *Tzaddik's Ruach Hakodesh* and pronouncement rang in their ears, as now they were soldiers indeed. (*Zichron Yehuda*, Dzhikov p. 52)



The General of Gehinnom

The Dzhikover's custom was not to draw out the third *Shabbos* meal too long into the night. One of the *Chassidim* was in

Krenitz and was an eyewitness to this custom. He told how as soon as three stars appeared, they would bring candles to the *Rebbe's* table (because the *tisch* was conducted in the dark) and the *Rebbe* related, "Rebbe Reb Elimelech used to conduct his *Sholosh Seudos* long, long into the night. Once a general came to the *Rebbe's tisch* and tried to press Rebbe Reb Meilech to end the *seuda* and *daven Maariv* but the *Rebbe* paid him no heed. This general was the minister of *Gehinnom*! But Rebbe Reb Elimelech did not fear him. I, however, do fear him, so bring *mayim acharonim* and let's *bensch*!"

(*Mareh Aish* #117)



Rav Moshe Sofer of Pshevorsk, 12th of Teves

Mechaber of Ohr Pnei Moshe

Shirei Menochos

The *Bnei Yissoschor* writes: When I was a young lad I used to sometimes wait on the great renowned *Tzaddik*, Rav Moshe Sofer of Pshevorsk. He was well known as a *Ba'al Madreiga* (of lofty spiritual stature) and *Ba'al Ruach HaKodesh*. He had the custom to keep leftover cakes and sweets

that had been baked and prepared in honor of *Shabbos*, so that when an important guest visited during the week he would honor him with these delicacies, calling them *Shirei Menochos* – the leftovers of the *mincha* offering! (*Bnei Yissoschor, Maamar Chodesh Tammuz-Av*)



Rav Mordechai Chaim Kastelanitz, 12th of Teves

"Reb Mottel Slonimer"

A Niggun Made from a Golden Mitzva

(As told by Rav Kalman Menachem Shapira, the *Piaseczno Rebbe*, on *Motzo'ei Shabbos Parshas Noach*, 5767, freely translated from Hebrew by Yitz)

This story comes from Reb Mottel Slonimer. Reb Mottel Slonimer once passed by a house, from where he heard a very powerful but sad *niggun*, which touched the heart. He wondered, "This feels like a very *heilige* (holy) *niggun*". Upon entering the house, he asked the *ba'al habayis* (master of the house) to

explain what this *niggun* was all about. And here our story begins.

He mentioned that he was born in Teverya (Tiberius), and was orphaned from both of his parents at a young age. He supported himself as a fisherman, who worked through the night, sleeping during the daytime. After several years, he eventually got married, and shortly thereafter, they had a son. Not long after the *pidyon haben* (redemption of the first-born son), his wife passed away. He was left alone with the young child. Fortunately,

he had good neighbors in Teverya, who helped bring up his son, as he needed to go out to fish every night. *Boruch Hashem*, they were quite successful.

When his father would come home from work each morning, his young son would serve him a hot cup of tea, help him get undressed and bring him his slippers and a towel with wish to refresh himself. Despite their impoverished living conditions, the father and son developed a very deep bond with one another.

The boy grew up, got married and moved to a town in the southern part of *Eretz Yisrael*, far away from Teverya. In those days, a journey from Teverya to the south of *Eretz Yisrael* could take several hours, even the good part of a day. The son was financially successful, and from time to time would send his father a golden Napoleon coin, which was worth a lot of money. His father asked him in a letter: "Why do you do this? Why are you sending me these coins?"

His reply: "*Abba*, you gave so much of yourself for me, you did so much for me, and we were so close. I want you to save these golden Napoleon coins, and when you have enough, you'll be able to purchase a decent house in which to live." And so it was – he eventually had enough golden coins with which to buy a proper dwelling in Teverya.

Later on, he received an urgent telegram message from his daughter-in-law: "Come quickly, your son is very ill!"

The father made the long journey to the south of *Eretz Yisrael*. Arriving at his son's home, he stood by the sick man's bedside, praying for him, as only a father can. (The *Rebbe* then told of the *Chofetz Chaim*, that when his son was very ill, no one told him about it, and the son passed away. He then scolded them, "Why didn't you tell me? Don't you know that the tears of a father can resurrect the dead?") And indeed here, the father stood and prayed

and cried for his son, and the young man recovered.

The father returned to Teverya, and once more, the son began to send him the golden Napoleon coins. And again, the father wrote his son: "Why do you do this? Why are you sending me these coins?"

This time, the son replied, "*Abba*, I want you to save these coins so that you can have a 'pension fund' for your old age, when you cannot work anymore." So again, the father saved these coins. As they accumulated, they indeed became a viable source of 'pension' funding.

Sure enough, he again received an urgent letter from his daughter-in-law: "Come quickly, your son is very ill!"

And once more, he made the long journey to the south. This time, however, by the time he arrived, it was too late – his son had passed away. All he could do was to cry at his bedside.

After the *shiva* (seven-day mourning period), he returned home to Teverya – to an empty house. He was back to "square one" – an orphan with no one and nothing in this world. He was so depressed that he wanted to die. One night, he had a dream, in which he saw his son in *Gan Eden*, lying in a golden bed. He began to run toward his son, but his son withdrew – he didn't want his father to touch him, to come into the *Olam HaEmes* (the next world, the "world of truth" after *petira*).

"I want to be with you again, next to you," the father told his son.

"No, you need to stay in this world, and do *mitzvos*!" was the son's reply. "Do you see this golden bed I'm in? This is made from the golden Napoleon coins that I sent you, from the *mitzva* of *Kibbud Av va'Em* (honoring one's parents)."

"But I just want to be with you!"

Then, in the dream, the son began to sing a *niggun*. And he continued to sing it, as his father joined in. They sang it together for a long time, until eventually

the father learned to sing it alone. And then, the son disappeared and the dream was over.

"Then I awoke," said the father to Reb Mottel Slonimer. "And whenever I'm sad, I sing this *niggun*. This is the



niggun my son taught me."

Said Reb Mottel Slonimer: "This is the *niggun* of *Kibbud Av va'Em*." What is

the *niggun*? This is the *niggun* that connected the father to his son, and to the next world... [Adds Yitz:] A *niggun* made from the Golden *Mitzva* of *Kibbud Av va'Em*.

The Piaseczno *Rebbe* then explained how many of the words of his great-uncle, the first Piaseczno *Rebbe*, written in his *seforim*, are like *niggunim*: they sing to us and connect us to him.

Zechuso Yagein Aleinu, may the *Rebbe's* merits protect us!

www.heichalhanegina.blogspot.com/2006/10/niggun-made-from-golden-mitzva.html



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

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

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